

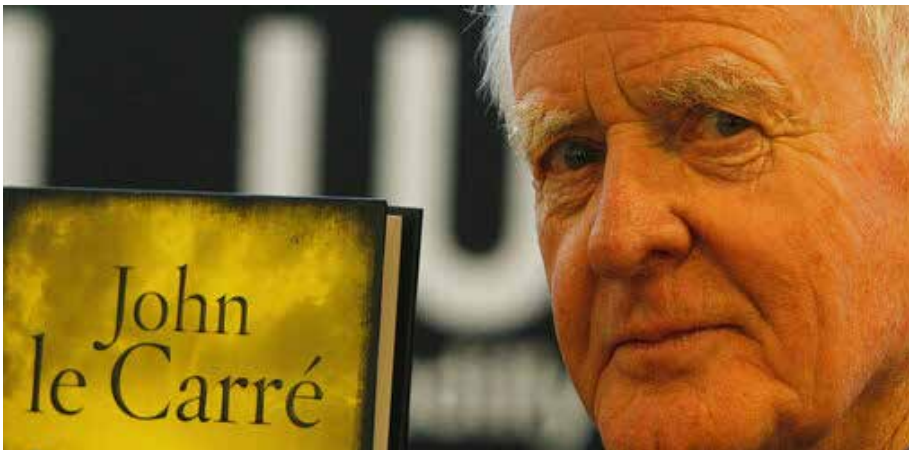


AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Cultured, cosmopolitan and industrious

The death of John le Carré in December attracted a huge amount of interest. He was hailed as a great writer of spy thrillers. William Boyd, himself a leading spy writer, wrote, "John le Carré didn't invent the literary spy novel. He joined a tradition, and made it new and invigorating." In a tribute on *BBC Radio 4*, Boyd said, "He introduced this idea of difficulty and complexity into the spy novel."



But, of course, there was much more to le Carré than *George Smiley* and *The Circus*. "Thematically, le Carré's true subject is not spying," Tim Garton Ash wrote in *The New Yorker* some years ago. "It is the endlessly deceptive maze of human relations: the betrayal that is a kind of love, the lie that is a sort of truth, good men serving bad causes and bad men serving good."

Jason Cowley, one of our leading critics and editor of *The New Statesman*, wrote in 2015, "In many ways, le Carré is an elegist, and the major espionage novels

he wrote in the 1960s and 1970s have a peculiarly sad English music — all long shadows and recessions."

But there is another subject, much closer to the interests of members of the AJR, that also fascinated le Carré, especially in his early books in the 1960s: Germany, Jews and refugees. It's a central preoccupation in his early work and yet hardly received any attention when he died.

George Smiley already appears in le
Continued on page 2

MARCHING ON

This month's Journal has a definite artistic flavour, with news of a fascinating restitution case and stories of members' artistic connections complementing our normal dose of Art Notes.

We also have a number of reflections on Holocaust Memorial Day, including a compelling argument for why other genocides matter.

Finally, we draw your attention to our new feature *The Next Generations*, on page 13. This will become a staple item for the Journal, reflecting the fact that a large proportion of AJR members are now drawn from the second and third generations.

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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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Cultured, cosmopolitan and industrious (cont.)

Carré's very first book, *Call for the Dead* (1961). Samuel Fennan kills himself soon after being interviewed by Smiley and Smiley is called in to investigate. Fennan was an outsider, Jewish, "[T]he eternal Jew, cultured, cosmopolitan, self-determinate, industrious..."

Smiley soon becomes embroiled in a conspiracy involving East German spies based in Britain. But what is interesting is that Dieter Frey, who runs the spy ring, and Fennan's wife, Elsa, are both German Jews who spent time in the camps and Elsa has been based in Britain since the war.

The first time we hear about Elsa Fennan she is described as "'a somewhat unusual woman. Foreign. Jewish, too, I gather, suffered badly in the war...'" Smiley's boss tells him, "'I'm told she suffered in the war, persecuted and so forth.'"

When Smiley first meets her, le Carré writes, her face was "worn", "the face of a child grown old on starving and exhaustion, *the eternal refugee face* [my emphasis], the prison-camp face, thought Smiley." Later, she tells Smiley, "'Look at me,' she said. '... I dreamed of long golden hair and they shaved my head. I dreamed of a beautiful body and they broke it with hunger.'"

Dieter Frey, the East German spy, is also Jewish. He too was in the camps. His father died in a camp. Brilliant, Dieter was a former student of Smiley's in Germany before the war. These Jewish Holocaust survivors are not peripheral to the plot. They are the key figures in the story.

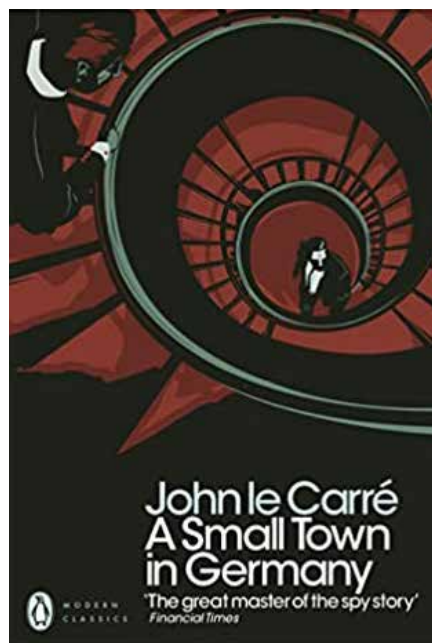
This isn't a one-off for le Carré. His next book, *A Murder of Quality* (1962), is also set in England, this time the plot is about a murder involving an English public school and an old friend asks Smiley to investigate. There are only a couple of passing references to Jews, but an organisation called The Public Schools Committee for Refugee Relief plays a curiously prominent part in the book and there are references to refugees from Hungary in 1956. In both books, middle England rubs up against Jews and refugees.

Le Carré's breakthrough novel was *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* (1963).

During a brief return from Berlin, the title character Alec Leamas begins an affair with Liz Gold, in her early 20s "and Jewish." Another key figure is Fiedler, the deputy head of East German security. Fiedler is the son of German Jewish refugees. Leamas gets caught up in a deadly struggle between Fiedler and his boss, the viciously antisemitic Hans-Dieter Mundt.

In *The Looking Glass War* (1965) an East German refugee crosses the border and offers to sell the British information about Soviet military installations along the border between West and East Germany. The British train a Polish refugee, Fred Leiser, to go behind East German lines and the second half of the book tells his story. As ever, the book is not just about spies. It's about loyalty and betrayal, the relationship between Leiser, the Polish refugee outsider, and the posh British insiders.

Le Carré's fifth novel, *A Small Town in Germany* (1968), was one of his best and the last before the great Smiley trilogy in the 1970s. Set in Bonn in 1968, it's a classic spy thriller. A minor official has defected from the British Embassy with secret papers. But what's interesting is that the man who defected, Leo Harting, is a Jewish refugee. Again, much of the novel is about Harting the outsider and the insiders who work at the Embassy, posh, public school and Oxbridge.



A Small Town in Germany is widely regarded as one of le Carré's best novels

"There's a smell, that's all. Refugee background, emigrated in the thirties... Professional expatriate." "Not a *proper* diplomat." "Know what they say about refugees: they lose everything except their accents. Dead right, you know. Trouble with Leo was, he wanted it all back." There's something else about Harting. He wants to get to the heart of Nazi war crimes conducted during the war which his colleagues and the Germans want hushed up.

Jews, refugees and the Holocaust are not marginal subjects in le Carré's early novels. They are right at the heart of them, before his later work on *Karla*, *The Circus* and *The Cold War*. Partly because le Carré had spent so much time in Germany when he worked for British intelligence. Before the KGB, his real subject was Germany and memories of the Holocaust and the war. Perhaps also because it fed into his long-time fascination with outsiders and insiders. Englishness was one of his great subjects and he used Jews and refugees to contrast with his English world of public schools, Oxbridge, gentlemen's clubs and British intelligence.

Finally, long before the Holocaust became fashionable in British fiction in the late 1970s and '80s, le Carré used it to explore dark moral issues about the recent past. A tribute in *The Times of Israel* said that it was "a visit to the 'unbeautified camps' of Belsen and Dachau soon after the war that had a searing impact on the impressionable young novelist-in-the-making and proved to be a defining life experience: 'To this day,' he says, 'there is no museum and no film, however fine, not even a book, that can compare with the living impact of those places on me.' One year later, he was back, this time as a young conscript — an intelligence officer — to trawl the 'refugee cages' and question those who had been washed up from eastern and central Europe. 'Every day brought its tales of human tragedy,' he says. 'Every day brought its reminders that whatever minor inconveniences I had suffered in my own life, they were a joke when set beside the real thing. And every day brought its Jews. Broken families with broken suitcases. These people are my business, I thought. There is something between their eyes and mine.'"

David Herman

An Unexpected Second Legacy

London's leading sight loss charity is benefiting from a legacy almost 50 years after the benefactor's death. **The Vision Foundation, formerly the Greater London Fund for the Blind (GLFB), has found itself at the centre of a poignant and intriguing story of lost art, Nazi persecution and post war politics, thanks to the generosity of Irma Löwenstein Austin who fled Vienna for London soon after Germany's annexation of Austria in 1938.**

Irma and her husband Oscar Löwenstein were prominent members of Vienna's Jewish community in the 1920s and 30s and owned a large collection of fine art. In 1938 they were forced to divulge their artworks under the Nuremberg Laws and these were sold under duress. Oscar died soon after reaching London and Irma later remarried, outliving her husband and with no children of her own. When she died on 24 April 1976, she left the majority of her estate to the GLFB.

In 2018 three paintings by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, one of the most influential Austrian artists of the Biedermeier period (1815 to 1848), came to light in German galleries. They were known to have been part of the Löwenstein collection which had been intended for the Führermuseum in Linz. As Irma Löwenstein Austin's heir, the Vision Foundation had rights of restitution.

In May 2019, with pro bono advice from international law firm Charles Russell Speechlys (CRS), specialist art lawyers on the complex cross jurisdictional interplay of Austrian, German and English law, the three Waldmüllers were formally restituted to the Vision Foundation by the German



The Grandparents' Visit by Waldmüller – one of the paintings recently sold

Federal Government. Explains CRS art lawyer Tim Maxwell, "A tragic yet fascinating case and a wonderful legacy, the restitution of these artworks was complex and required careful navigation of various laws."

Two of the paintings, *Preparing the Celebration of the Wine Harvest* and *The Grandparents' Visit*, were brought to auction at the Dorotheum in Vienna with the help of art advisors Cadell & Co who, recognising the importance of the case to the Vision Foundation, also undertook the work pro bono and advised on the best route to market. The paintings attracted great interest and sold for a total of €383,900. The third painting, *Das Gutmütige Kind (Der Bettler)* [*The Good-natured Child (The Beggar)*] will be auctioned at the Dorotheum this Spring with an estimate of €150,000 – 200,000.

"It is very rare for a charity to be the benefactor in a restitution case of this nature. We felt truly humbled," says Tamsin Baxter, Director of Development at the Vision Foundation. "After everything Irma Löwenstein Austin must have gone through in her life, it is truly remarkable that almost 50 years since her death she is still supporting a cause that meant so much to her during her life. Our pledge to Irma is that these paintings will be used for good through our work with blind and partially sighted people."



Irma Löwenstein's 1938 application for an export permit, stamped by the Nazi controlled Central Office for Monument Protection

Irma Löwenstein Austin never gave up hope of being reunited with her art collection and continued to try to track down paintings and sculptures which had been seized by the Nazis. Foreign Office correspondence after WW2 reveals that, while she had the support of the British, French and American representatives on the quadripartite Restitution Committee of the First Bezirk (District) of Vienna on her claim, this was blocked by the Soviet representative. Although she succeeded in bringing some pieces to London and proceeds of their sale went to the GLFB on her death, there are still many pieces unaccounted for.

The Vision Foundation has documents from 1938, including Irma Löwenstein's application for an export permit, stamped by the Nazi controlled Central Office for Monument Protection, a photograph of *Der Bettler* hanging in her Vienna apartment and facsimiles of the Foreign Office correspondence showing her efforts to reclaim her art.

For further information relating to the Löwenstein legacy please contact Mark Ellis, Head of Communications at the Vision Foundation, mellis@visionfoundation.org.uk.

Photographs credit of the Dorotheum and the BDA-Archiv.

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Three different exhibitions are reviewed this month covering an audio adventure, the First Ladies of America and the winners of a leading photographic portrait prize.

As exhibitions continue to close due to Covid – the much awaited *Francis Bacon* at the **Royal Academy**, *Dürer* and *Jan Matejko* at the **National Gallery** – the ever resourceful **Ben Uri** has introduced its online **Brief Lives** series, a new audio adventure which, over the next few weeks, will share the stories of leading artists from their collection. Beginning with **Frank Auerbach**, it includes **David Bomberg, Jacob Epstein, Martin Bloch, Dora Holzhandler, Eva Frankfurter** and many more. They are a brilliant way of keeping us in touch with great art during visiting restrictions. Visit benuri.org **The First Full-Scale Audio Adventure**.

Meanwhile I took an online glance at Washington's **National Portrait Gallery's** *Every Eye is Upon Me: First Ladies on Display*. Too late for the current First Lady, Jill Biden, but Melania Trump in white suit and high hat is a formidable, if inscrutable picture of elegance with hand on heart, American style, photographed by **Mark Wilson**. You see a host of other first ladies of the White House, spanning 250 years, from Martha Washington (unidentified artist), to Pat Nixon and Eleanor Roosevelt, Nancy Reagan,



Eden by Lydia Goldblatt

Lady Bird Johnson and Hilary Clinton. It features over 60 paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs and personal memorabilia reflecting the accomplishments of the incumbents themselves.

The exhibition shows how classical formalism in the portraits gave way to looser, modern portrayals, in line with the evolving roles of the first ladies themselves. From the mid-20th century, First Ladies became advocates for change; social causes in the case of Eleanor Roosevelt, illegal drugs for Nancy Reagan, or the political prominence of lawyer Hillary Clinton who pioneered health care education during her husband's eight year presidency.

Pat Nixon is shown seated at the window, in a blue blouse and blue background, looking formal and contemplative (**Robert Vickrey**, Tempera on Masonite)

Hillary Clinton (**Ginny Stanford**) is profiled by the artist in a lemon suit against a black background, whose gold edging reflects her blonde hair, is a lesson in restrained feminine power. In contrast Nancy Reagan (**Aaron Shikler**, oil on paper) in a bright red shirtwaister, seems to invite you in for a cup of tea and a chat.

But while these portraits are conventional in style, **Amy Sherold's** standout lifesize oil painting of Michelle Obama is a full on depiction of the first African-American First Lady. Obama is seated in a thinker's pose, in a striking, long, full skirted chemise topped dress. The dress is sassy; white background with asymmetrical flag-like coloured stripes. The subject's skin is a monochromatic graphite against a cool, blue background, contrasting with her coal black hair. The image itself has a panther-like, fearsome quality, lacking in the warmth and optimism we associate with Obama. Sherold referenced Pete Mondrian's primary coloured grids and the hand-sewn quilts made by African-American women in Alabama. Scheduled to end on May 23, you can view the exhibition website at: <https://npg.si.edu/portraits/collection-highlights/first-ladies>

On our side of the pond London's **National Portrait Gallery** shows the winners and finalist of the **Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2020**. **Alys Tomlinson** won first prize for her black and white series, *Lost Summer*, featuring London school-leavers, dressed up for their prom, cancelled due to Covid. The two boys and a girl look sad and dreamy in their best gear.

Lydia Goldblatt won second prize for *Eden*, a portrait of her young daughter, lonely and bemused in a tent in her beautiful garden, symbolising the isolation brought on by the pandemic. Lydia's achievement is of particular interest to the AJR as she is the grand-daughter of Katya and Walter Strauss, who were refugees from Germany. Katya accompanied frequent Kindertransports to Britain, returning each time to Germany pick up another trainload of children.

Third prize went to **Yolanda Y. Liou** for her challenging portrait of plus size model advocate *Enam Ewura Adioa Asiam*. The nude model poses defiantly, with an insouciant – take me as I am – glare.

This arresting portrait references traditional nude painting when the capture of light on the body's curves was celebrated, as against the contemporary desire for slimness. The exhibition concludes on March 31, and can be seen online at www.npg.org.uk/photoprize

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**CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



NO MORE WAR



Valley of Tears, the dramatic series recently shown on Israeli TV and which has been bought by HBO in America, deals

with events in the Golan Heights at the outbreak of the Yom Kippur war. It had me and many other viewers spellbound for several weeks.

Although several of my friends and acquaintances have told me that they are unable to watch it as it brings back too many painful memories, I find myself compelled to watch. I quite understand their attitude, and am almost surprised at my own ability to persist through every graphic scene. I admit that I find it difficult to sleep afterwards, but some obsessive preoccupation with the events of that traumatic time brings me back to the screen every week.

I was living in Israel at that time, and in fact gave birth to my third Sabra child two days before the war broke out. My stay in the maternity ward was cut short that Shabbat which also happened to be Yom Kippur when the silence of that day of rest, prayer and contemplation was shattered by the sound of the sirens echoing through the Jerusalem air. I managed to listen to the news on

my portable radio, so knew that war had broken out. All the mothers were told to leave the hospital with their babies, and that is what most of us managed to do somehow, while Israel's population was being mobilised to deal with the crisis.

The scene in our home was one of confusion, with our two young children eager to meet their new sibling, my husband and I trying to find the best place to put the baby's cot and keep us all away from any falling bombs (we had experienced the Six Day war in Jerusalem and expected to experience bombardment again). Alongside all this was our need to try to gain what information we could from our recently-acquired TV set.

Our experience of the Six Day War six years earlier led us (and most other people, too, I presume) to expect the war to be over quickly, but as we all know now, that was far from the case. As the days dragged on and grim news started coming from the various fronts (and we at the rear were not given all the facts until much later), the idea that matters were not going well eventually sank in.

With two young children and a newborn baby to look after, our attention was soon focused on getting through the day and the night. Our apartment on the top storey left us feeling exposed, but there was no air-raid shelter nearby other than the flat of our downstairs neighbour, who was

away. Although the fact that there was no bombardment surprised us at first, we knew that there was heavy fighting in both the north and the south of Israel, and hoped that the border with the kingdom of Jordan to the east would remain quiet.

Now, when I watch the dramatic reenactment of what went on at the time in the Golan Heights, I realise that I was completely unaware of the many tragedies that were unfolding not so very far from my home. The threat to Israel's existence was more real than we could have imagined, and it is only because of the courage and sacrifice of our soldiers that we are still here today.

The price that was paid in life and limb was heavy beyond all imagination, and there are those among us who still today bear the mental and physical scars of that war. Since then I have translated memoirs written by senior officers who fought in the war, and they have left a deep impression on me.

The way the TV series depicts what happened then has been criticised on various counts, but in my view if it serves any purpose it is to drive home the message that no matter how bad things are here, how rotten our politicians, how decadent our society, how irrelevant our daily concerns, anything, and I mean anything, yes anything, is better than war.

AJR CONNECT

If there is one thing that living during a pandemic has taught us, it is that reaching out to others is more important than ever. We have all learned new ways of communicating, be that by email, Zoom, telephone calls or old fashioned letter writing.

At AJR, we are always encouraging our members to keep in touch both with us, and with each other. With this in mind,

we are launching **AJR Connect**. We are sure that members would like to contact other AJR members, who share similar experiences to themselves, or originate from the same areas. Perhaps you would like to be in touch with other Kinder, or someone from your hometown of, say, Danzig? Maybe you are second generation, and would like to chat to a member who has a similar background to your parent, or is also second generation like you?

We will introduce members to each other and they can keep in contact through whatever means that they are comfortable with. If you would like to make Zoom calls,

we can help you learn how to do that too. We are also happy to help you organise small groups to make a connection together.

We are in the coldest, darkest part of the year, and in lockdown to boot; but spring is around the corner, and there are good things to look forward to. Making new friends could be on that list!

For more information, please contact:

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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.

ANOTHER HMD OPINION

My thoughts on HMD are the opposite of those expressed by Frank Bright (February). I admit that the industrial killing of European Jewry was unique, and tragic, but HMD's purpose is surely not just to remember but also to teach Never Again, and yet! So I welcome remembering on that day the atrocities committed in so many countries since, and each year a new Genocide has to be added. This year it was the Ughyars of China. Proof of man's inhumanity to man. It does not diminish the tragedy of our Holocaust. Teaching of the Holocaust to present generations must not only be of the past, but must emphasise Tolerance, especially in this new climate of xenophobia.
Elsa Shamash, London N6

GREAT ZOOMS

I listened this week to the following Zooms: *Spies, Lies and Double Agents* and the *Galicia Jewish Museum, Poland*. I just want to congratulate AJR on organising such brilliant speakers. They were both very well informed and great communicators.

I look forward to listening in to future Zooms including *British Jewry - The Pre-Expulsion Community* and David Barnett's next talk. In these difficult Covid times, it is very uplifting to hear such wonderful speakers.

Thank you all at AJR for your continuing excellent work.
Stephen Sommer, Farnham, Surrey

Seeing Jo Briggs, your editor, on Zoom reminded me of the interesting local meetings we had every month and my subsequent reports for the *AJR Journal*, which were a labour of love. Also seeing Susan Harrod brought back warm memories of many outstanding outings to historical sites, as well as the 5-day mini-holidays to memorable places over the years.

I enjoy the *Journal's* entire output, from David Herman's slice of history to the Letters' page highlighting current topics, the *Art Notes* which allow us to read about exhibitions and yearn to see in situ sometime in the future, poignant stories of survival

against all odds, and Dorothea's *Letters from Israel*. The search notices serve a purpose and hopefully get the response requested.

Coming up to date are the Zoom meetings in the pipeline, a great finale to my reading enjoyment.

I joined the AJR in Richard Gruenberger's time and also became a volunteer shortly afterwards, befriending refugees in my area and giving them the comradeship they needed. Happily they all became good friends of mine.

So you can see how much I appreciate your hard work in making sure the *AJR Journal* continues to give nostalgia and pleasure to its members every month. Every good wish for your continued success.
Meta Roseneil, Buckhurst Hill, Essex

THE AJR JOURNAL AT 75

I read with great interest your articles on 75 years of the *AJR Journal* (January). However, you underestimated the contribution of refugees and their children to headships of Oxford colleges - you should note in addition at least Ivor Crewe and me, children of refugees, and Walter Bodmer, a refugee himself. There is a remarkably long list of Jewish heads of Oxford colleges and many more than I have identified may well have refugee roots, either in the 1930s or earlier. It is a great testimony to British freedom and acceptance.

This site may be of interest
www.oxfordjewishheritage.co.uk/oxford-jewish-heritage/modern-period-1656/personalities/197-jewish-heads-of-oxford-colleges
Baroness Ruth Deech, House of Lords

EU REALITY

I can understand where Anthony Grenville is coming from (Letters, February) but the lesson of compassion learned in WW2 is misplaced in the European drama of mass migration that peaked in 2015.

Jews who had roots in Europe for centuries were made displaced persons by a racist

criminal state. They found themselves escaping across Europe, seeking asylum in the first safe destination that would take them, in what might define the horror of being displaced and persecuted.

This is illustrated by the tragic story of the *SS St Louis*, in 1939, a ship carrying 900 German Jews who were refused landing in Cuba and, eventually, having been refused landing elsewhere, were returned to their Hitlerite persecutors in Germany.

Whilst compassion is natural to be shown today for the victims of the people traffickers, one should not assume that moral equivalence exists between the refugees from Hitler escaping the Holocaust, and a very large movement of population from Africa, the Middle East and Asia gaining entry into Europe on the shirrtails of a relatively small number of genuine war refugees, encouraged to think they would not have to prove asylum or at least would be dealing with a very lax system of granting citizenship. In 2015, 1.5 million migrants had entered Germany in one year alone, of which only 244,000 had been escaping Syrians.

Judgment of this issue was clouded, even at the time, by a false impression in media reports that a large percentage of the migrants were children, and emotions and argument were manipulated to convince EU citizens to accept a narrative of the rights-based, free movement tropes shared by the EU's elites.

I am fully aware of the lessons, political and moral, of the Holocaust, having a mother who went into hiding as a child refugee and thankfully escaped deportation from the Vichy internment camp at Rivesaltes.
Greg Lubinsky, London NW6

PROUD TO BE GERMAN?

I am sure other readers will have been equally appalled to read Peter Gumbel's views of Britain (February). What should also be known is that the author has lived in France for the last 12 years. His misgivings about Brexit are shared by many of us but his vitriolic assertions about a surge in racism, xenophobia, national exceptionalism and

deeply held prejudices against foreigners are not only wildly exaggerated but less noticeable here than in many European countries. All this could safely be dismissed as fake journalism if it were not for his long, even more caustic article in the *New York Times* on 1 January, under the title *Britain Has Lost Itself*, in which he also stated the country to be “Inwardly polarized, absurdly self-aggrandizing” and predicted that the separation from the EU will “...sap Britain’s political vibrancy and diminish its role on the world stage”.

Mr Gumbel also informs us that his Jewish refugee grandparents “...would weep to see the country today” and that Brexit “made it impossible to be British and European at the same time” which makes him feel orphaned. To compensate Gumbel tells America that he drinks tea, loves Marmite, *Monty Python* and ‘fair play’.

The *New York Times* is read by millions worldwide. It is difficult to assess the damage this article has done but anxious American friends have been in contact with me.

Walter Wolff, London NW2

Note from Editor: Mr Wolff was not the only AJR member to respond to this article. Ron Leaton of London NW8, who is an Auschwitz survivor, was particularly upset to read of anyone being “proud to be German”. Meanwhile a review of Peter Gumbel’s book *Citizens of Everywhere*, on which his *NY Times* and *AJR Journal* articles were based, appears on page 16 of this issue and the author himself invites feedback via contact@petergumbel.com

BREXIT ‘GOT DONE’

Having read Mr Landes’ letter (February), I would like to give my thoughts on the statement referring to the UK separating from “the most historically antisemitic continent in the world.” Mr Landes’ letter implies that there has been no, or less, historical antisemitism in this country. Is Mr Landes aware that all Jews were expelled from England in 1290 only to be recalled by Oliver Cromwell in 1657?

In addition I recently read George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda*, which is a very good comment on British attitudes to its Jewish community during the 19th century. Many within the UK considered Jews as “outsiders”, not worthy of the full rights of British citizens. Fast forward to the last century, we all know that the UK’s attitude to the influx of refugees from Nazism was ambivalent - indeed a “half open door” was a brilliant description by Victor Ross (January). In the biography of Klaus Fuchs by Nancy Thorndike Greenspan, the description of the way in which “enemy aliens” were treated during internment was absolutely appalling and an implicit antisemitism and fear of “the outsider” was responsible for this

In addition, has Mr Landes read Stefanie Zweig’s *Nowhere in Africa* where the Brits treated the German and Austrian refugee community in Kenya in the same disparaging way in which they treated the Blacks? My thesis has always been that we should never demonise one continent or a country but should reach out and work with them. I strongly believe that in order to defeat antisemitism we need to work together with other countries to encourage tolerance and enlightenment. We should not withdraw within nationalistic boundaries as we have sadly done in Brexit.

Andrew Nelson, Leeds

DISRUPTED LIVES

My mother had her own kindergarten in Koenigsberg in the early 1920s. One of her pupils was the emeritus Chief Rabbi-to-be, Immanuel Jacobowitz.

In 1933, when Hitler came into power, my father was a paediatrician in Berlin’s Jewish Hospital.

Both my parents escaped to Holland where they ran out of funds. A Jewish philanthropic organisation lent them money to go to England.

As Britain did not at that time recognise German medical degrees, my father studied again in Glasgow. Later he established his own practice in Ruislip.

Derek Demant, Stanmore, Middx.

LOOKING FOR?

DR. HILDE JACOBI

Prof. Dr. Hans-Friedrich Müller at the University of Trier, is looking for information about Dr. Hildegard (Hilde) Jacobi, née Joseph, who was born on 27 December 1910 in Trier. Dr. Jacobi gained her doctorate in 1934 at the Faculty of Law in Cologne, emigrated to Britain in 1939, was Lecturer at the Institute of World Affairs in London. She passed away c.2006 and was married to Dr. Hans Jacobi.

muellerh@uni-trier.de

FRIEDRICH HASS

Jacob Balding is researching the wartime experiences of his grandfather Friedrich Hass, who was born in Ukraine - Zaporizhzhia in 1920. His family was deported to camps in Kazakhstan and Siberia while he himself fought for the Red Army in Grozny-Chechnya before being forced to work for the Wehrmacht as an interpreter in northern Germany between 1941-1945. Jacob believes that Friedrich was imprisoned in Bergen-Belsen or Neuengamme although his documents simply list Transit camp 44B, centre number: 1218 in Kiel, region: Schleswig-Holstein.

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Deeds or misdeeds?

Following the recent death of the spy George Blake, Martin Mauthner assesses a new book on another Soviet spy, codenamed 'Agent Sonya', and here reappraises her motivation for espionage.

How should we, with hindsight, judge Ursula Kuczynski? She was a refugee who, as a Communist secret agent codenamed 'Agent Sonya', spied on Nazi Germany, but later passed the West's atomic secrets to Moscow?

Ben Macintyre does not condemn her in his recent and racy biography, *Agent Sonya - Lover, Mother, Soldier, Spy* (Viking). Author of popular works around espionage, such as his book about Kim Philby, he concludes that 'She spent her adult life fighting for something she believed to be right, and died knowing that much of it had been wrong...she had fought Nazism ... and helped the Soviet Union keep nuclear pace with the West, ensuring a fragile peace.'

His *Agent Sonya* is not the first book about Ursula and her left-wing family (about whom the National Archives contain 94 bulky files). Among earlier books are: *A Matter of Intelligence*, by Charmian Brinson and Richard Dove - names familiar in AJR circles; and *A Political Family*, by the journalist and author John Green. *Near and Distant Neighbours: A New History of Soviet Intelligence*, by the Cambridge historian Jonathan Haslam, puts Ursula's (mis)deeds into a deeper historical perspective.

I asked Green and Haslam how they viewed someone whom many hitherto considered 'a notorious traitor'.

John Green told me: Anyone who has read my book on the family and/or Ben Macintyre's biography will better understand why Ursula became a Soviet agent and why she gave the Soviet Union the blueprints for making a nuclear bomb, which Britain and the USA were trying to keep secret.



Ursula, the eldest girl, is standing next to Jürgen

As a Jewish girl growing up in pre-Hitler Germany, experiencing antisemitism first-hand and grasping what was happening in Europe, she decided not to stand on the sidelines and watch idly as the Nazi horror unfolded. At that time (the early '30s), the only power standing up to Hitler was the Soviet Union, and it was therefore not surprising that many Jews became communists and supporters of the Soviet Union.

As for the war period, even those who were not pro-Soviet at the time felt that, if only one country (the USA) had nuclear weapons, the world would become a dangerously unbalanced one. Some scientists thought the best way of preventing that scenario was by sharing nuclear knowledge with the Soviet Union, which was an ally during the war.

I don't think Ursula should today be considered infamous; her actions should be assessed in that historical context.

Jonathan Haslam told me: These people did a lot of damage. But they did so largely in ignorance. They were not like Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, John Cairncross, Anthony Blunt, etc., who had direct access to policy-making in London and Washington and knew what the truth actually was.

In their defence, as in the defence of those Russians who earnestly served the Soviet régime at home or in Russian-



Ursula and her first husband Rudolf Hamburger in China

occupied Europe (think of the Polish-born German literary critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki, for example, working for the Polish secret police), one has to acknowledge that they - particularly the Jews who survived the Shoah - were left disoriented by the war, sorry victims in a world of lies.

Stalin incorporated many foreigners - 'friends' - who believed that, since the Soviet Union was beating back fascism, Moscow was an honest partner of the Western democracies; they had no idea that Stalin had far reaching plans to dominate postwar Europe. Stalin understood that you have to dominate Europe, to dominate the world.

Some unbalanced American historians, with access to all the information you can imagine, still believe that Stalin did no wrong in this; so perhaps one should not be so harsh about those Europeans in the 1940s who were convinced they were on the side of good and the United States the side of evil.

Only after the 20th party congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 were the scales removed from their eyes. Those who worked for the other side after Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin obviously stand in a category apart, for which I am at a loss for words.

Photographs courtesy of the *Kuczynski Family Archive*.

ARTISTIC CONNECTIONS & A CONUNDRUM

The Arts have always played an enormous part within the Jewish community, especially in Europe, and the massive contribution made by Jewish refugees to British culture is widely recognised. Here at the *AJR Journal* we have recently been contacted by two different AJR members regarding different works of art, one of which has a very different origin.



Portrait by Joseph Oppenheimer

Anthony Portner wrote to us about two of his relatives, both painters, who were amongst the many artists arriving in England before the war. One of these was Joseph Oppenheimer, who was already a very well-known artist before he left Germany in 1933.

Oppenheimer painted many famous and not so famous people over the years including Albert Einstein, Deborah Kerr, Yehudi Menuhin and Otto Klemperer. He also painted beautiful landscapes, city scenes and much else, and is generally regarded as an impressionist painter, although his style varied considerably in view of his long painting career.

There have been major exhibitions of his works in the past but he is now not in fashion. Interestingly, he very much liked

living in England which he did between 1902 and 1908. In 1908 he married Anthony's great aunt Fanny Sternfeld and it was at her insistence that he returned to Berlin as she was not prepared to be separated from her sister, Lily Portner (Anthony's grandmother).

Joseph Oppenheimer was very helpful in Anthony's family's arrangements to come to England in early 1938, thanks to his contacts. It is said that he was a friend of the equerry to George VI.

Another artistic relative of Anthony's was Alex Portner who, whilst never so well known as Oppenheimer, also painted charming pictures - many of them on wood. Born 1920 in Berlin, he was greatly influenced by the likes of Otto Dix and members of the Red Group during the turmoil of 1930s Germany before escaping



Artist Alex Portner with actress Margaret Rurgerford beside his portrait of her



A 1995 commemorative poster from Theresienstadt for the opera *Brundibar*

to Britain in 1939, where he served in the British Army.

After the war he exhibited extensively, both in mixed and one-man shows, and became a popular portrait painter in the 1960s. He is also credited with accidentally discovering what he came to refer to as 'Organic Wood Painting' whilst cleaning spilled paint off a wooden floor after taking LSD. His paintings went through various developments in styles though the human situation remained central, and his sitters included such celebrities as Sidney James, Hattie Jaques, Margaret Rutherford and London socialite Lily Sigall.

A very different artistic talent is on display in the above commemorative poster for the children's opera *Brundibar*, which **Janine Casillas** recently found amongst her late father's personal effects.

The opera, by Adolf Hoffmeister with music by Hans Krása, was performed by the children of Theresienstadt concentration camp, as part of the Nazis' strategy for deluding the Red Cross that the children were not being maltreated. Of course most of those children were later killed at Auschwitz.

There is a great deal going on in the artwork and Janine wonders whether any of our readers are able to shed light on what the various components represent?

LIGHTING THE DARKNESS



Naga Munchetty hosted the National HMD Ceremony



HRH The Prince of Wales recorded a powerful message from Clarence House



Ernest Simon lighting a candle in his window

This year's Holocaust Memorial Day took place while the whole country was in lockdown, bringing massive restrictions to the types of activities and events that could be run. Here Farayi Mungazi, senior communications officer for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust explains how the organisation managed to bring people together to mark Holocaust Memorial Day during the lockdown.

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is all about bringing people together – across boundaries of age, ethnicity and faith – to learn from the past and create a better future. At no other time are so many Holocaust and genocide survivors gathered in one place at one time.

But with the UK Ceremony moving online due to lockdown rules, we at the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) found ourselves in uncharted territory.

How could we commemorate in fitting ways? How could we bring together the nation's political, civic and faith leadership? And how could we keep survivors of the Holocaust and genocide at the heart of the commemorations?

Clearly, a digital event is not the same as

a real Ceremony, which offers a unique opportunity to mingle with, honour and interact with survivors. For HMDT Chief Executive Olivia Marks-Woldman OBE, the welfare of survivors is always the top priority: "As with everything else, we've had to change how we mark HMD this year. Our priority was to keep contributors, especially Holocaust survivors, safe. We are so grateful to everyone who made HMD happen this year," she says.

Despite the disappointment of not having an in-person event, everyone within the Trust is immensely proud of the remarkable resilience and tenacity shown by survivors, not only to contribute to this year's HMD but also to overcome the adversity of a global pandemic and continue sharing their experiences.

Our first act was to throw out our original plans for materials for local HMD activity organisers, and develop a completely new range of resources, *HMD Together*. These were designed for organisers to plan and deliver online ceremonies and activities, so that HMD could still be marked around the country in meaningful ways.

We are particularly proud that these resources supported organisers in running interactive and engaging activities, as well as the more formal ceremonies.

Next, we decided to create an online UK Ceremony that would try and find an opportunity in the situation – reaching

thousands of people across the globe, and with content that was developed specially for the digital format.

The Holocaust is and should be at the centre of the day. But one of the first things we learn from the steps that led to the Holocaust is that 'never again' is a hollow phrase. Similar patterns have been seen in recent genocides. HMD is the annual opportunity for people across the UK to come together to remember millions of lives destroyed in the Holocaust, all victims of Nazi Persecution and those who were targeted and slaughtered in more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

In the words of Holocaust survivor Martin Stern MBE: "The same Nazis who persecuted and murdered Jews, who were hardest hit, also did the same to their opponents, Gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, disabled people, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and other groups. Who am I to say that my life is more valuable than one of theirs?"

"It is a glory of the Jewish people that out of this unique horror which is nevertheless of universal relevance it has responded with vast contributions to knowledge and understanding of benefit to all mankind. By absolutely including others in our response, we truly demonstrate what it means to be a Jew. These days the neighbour we are commanded to love as ourselves may live in Darfur."

SS DURING LOCKDOWN



Chineke! performed between moving tributes to the victims of genocide and testimonies from survivors



The London Eye lit up purple

As Patron of HMDT, HRH The Prince of Wales, recorded a powerful video message from Clarence House for this year's Ceremony and urged people to ensure survivors' stories are not forgotten even as the number of Holocaust survivors continues to shrink.

He said: "As I speak, the last generation of living witnesses is tragically passing from this world, so the task of bearing witness falls to us".

Reflecting on this year's theme - *Be the light in the darkness* – HRH added: "This is not a task for one time only; nor is it a task for one generation, or one person. It is for all people, all generations, and all time. This is our time when we can, each in our own way, be the light that ensures the darkness can never return."

The UK Ceremony, hosted by the BBC's Naga Munchetty, ended with a national moment to Light the Darkness: at 8pm, people across the country lit candles and placed them in their windows to mark HMD. It was quite something to hear the BBC News presenters talk about "people across the country now lighting candles in their windows to mark Holocaust Memorial Day", and to see the HMD candle glowing

in the window of 10 Downing Street.

Ahead of the Ceremony some of the nation's top Premier League footballers, including Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes and Liverpool's Jordan Henderson, had called the nation to unite and Light the Darkness.

Many iconic landmarks and billboards across the UK were lit up in purple - a colour of remembrance - including the London Eye, Wembley Stadium, Blackpool Tower, and the Tyne Bridge in Newcastle.

We were also delighted to learn that our virtual UK Ceremony was watched by an international audience.

As Holocaust survivor, Peter Lantos BEM, said: "From beginning to end it was most successful: well-balanced, informative, emotional, or restrained as necessary and deeply moving in places. Most unusual at such difficult events, there was not, in my opinion, a single false note. An evening I will remember for a long time."

We are so grateful to members of the AJR for your support for HMD. As you well know, we must continue to honour the past in order to create a safer present - and a better future.



The London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames displayed posters and banners around the borough to 'safely' educate local residents about HMD.

This one, displayed in Teddington, commemorated Regina Jonas, the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi. She died in Auschwitz.

Another poster, based on research by pupils at the local Hampton School (see *AJR Journal*, April 2020), recalled that Rolf Metzger, aged just 10, was sent by his parents on the Kindertransport. He stayed for some time at 52 Lebanon Park, Twickenham, along with nine other Jewish boys also fleeing Nazi persecution.

Why other genocides matter

Last month Frank Bright argued that genocides other than the Holocaust should not be memorialised on Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) and indeed that HMD should be ignored or replaced. Martin Stern presents a contrary view.

The Holocaust was unique and is beyond full comprehension. Most of humanity has little or no knowledge of it. Even in Britain some ignorant people want to resume it and in some countries such people are common. George Santayana's statement that those who forget their history will have to repeat it has a corollary; those who deny history actually wish to repeat it. We owe it to our descendants and to those who perished to forestall that to the utmost of our ability.

Education is key. This means teaching facts, putting them into context and teaching enquiry and discussion to promote positive interactions instead of hatred of people for being different.

Expecting perfection from humanity is unrealistic. But though mass horrors still happen daily, history shows that we can improve. We no longer torture or normally kill for a perceived insult.

Education is not easy. Historical facts are beyond the capacity of any single brain, are open to interpretation and are never fully known. Education is not like programming a robot but about leading out of people their potential ability to think and find evidence for themselves in a better way, building on the past.

Every society in the world uses ceremony to endorse positive behaviours and teach the lessons of the past. I can go to a Buddhist temple in Tokyo and see ceremonial behaviour similar to that in a Shul. There's a reason for that.

Holocaust Memorial Day was agreed to memorialise and teach about the



Martin Stern with the MBE medal he received in 2018

Holocaust and is primarily for non-Jews. Jews have Tisha b'Av and Yom HaShoah and don't need Holocaust Memorial Day. But the rest of the world does. Without it or some equivalent Santayana's curse hangs over us.

And not only us. The Nazis persecuted Jews particularly but also Gypsies, homosexual people, the disabled, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and other groups. Mass murder and genocide were not new to the world. Raphael Lemkin argued in 1933 for genocide to be made a crime in international law, giving the Armenian genocide as an example.

In every Nazi-occupied country collaborators persecuted Jews and 'bystanders' stood by. The Nazis could not have murdered remotely the number without them. Do Jews not have a legitimate complaint that others did not do enough to intervene?

If so, how could I answer a charge that I did not take much interest in the fate of non-Jews? It is only if I show the same humanity to others that I expect towards myself that my moral case stands up. This does require justice for both sides of a conflict, realism and action as far as is in one's power.

If we memorialise Jews as victims of the Holocaust we should memorialise others similarly persecuted and murdered. There are problems here, I agree, but we cannot morally or logically escape the attempt.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is Government funded and operates to rules. It memorialises the atrocities which occurred during the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution and in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. By having a clearly delineated set of examples based on the Holocaust we place beyond doubt that it is about all humanity and not only about Jews who care only about Jews.

Unique as it was, the Holocaust shares features with every other genocide. This isn't strange. You are unique, but you are also a member of the human race. Lessons about other genocides are to be learned from the Holocaust and vice versa. The perpetrators of the Holocaust learned from other genocides such as the Armenian genocide. Other perpetrators have learned from the Holocaust.

Amongst the many ways the Holocaust was unique are two which people may overlook. The first is that it has been studied incomparably more than any other genocide. A vast literature and body of expertise is available for mankind to learn from. The second is that Jews, the victim group, have by a huge margin produced more scholarship on why people do such things than any other victim group in history. We should be intensely proud of that, and by including other genocides in our educational activities we help ensure this scholarship benefits all mankind.

Hillel said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I?" By absolutely including others in our response we truly demonstrate what it means to be a Jew. These days the neighbour we are commanded to love as ourselves may live in Darfur. Including other genocides in Holocaust Memorial Day, far from detracting from Holocaust remembrance, adds to it and does the justice we are commanded to pursue.



THE NEXT GENERATIONS

The Association of Jewish Refugees

A FUTURE FOCUS

This is the first of a new monthly feature in the *AJR Journal*, a timely addition as the magazine passes its 75th anniversary.



Danny Kalman with his father Henry (Hans) in 1968

Nearly half of AJR's members are now 'next generations' and one of the AJR's strategic objectives is to develop initiatives for these generations. I am delighted to head up a new committee to help create and implement this plan.

I became a Trustee of the AJR in July last year, after becoming deputy chair of its Kindertransport committee, supporting Sir Erich Reich. My personal interest stems from the experiences of my father and uncle who arrived as Kinder from Frankfurt in April 1939, having been sponsored by relatives in Sheffield, where I was born.

My father, who was 14 when he arrived, passed away 20 years ago and rarely spoke about his childhood experiences. I became interested in my family history only latterly and now, at the age of 68, have started to find out more about my background. I recently had a DNA test (through My Heritage) which revealed that I am 91.8% Ashkenazi Jewish, 3.7% Sephardic north African, 3% Middle Eastern and 1.5% Baltic - an unsurprising result. Later this year, pandemic permitting, my brother and I have been invited to visit the city of Frankfurt to further discover 'our roots'.

The AJR's new 'next generations' committee will work closely with other second generation groups and will promote their activities here. This column will also share information from a wide range of sources and provide a forum for others to share ideas.

In the near future the majority of AJR members will be drawn from the 'next generations'. We hope AJR can play an important part in their lives, just as it has for their parents and grandparents. They will gradually become the torch bearers to share the stories of their families and keep alive their legacies. After all, as Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and Nobel peace prize winner, famously proclaimed in 2002: 'Whoever listens to a witness, becomes a witness'.

Danny Kalman

Chair, AJR Next Generations Committee

MY HERITAGE

AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman considers some key questions about his own family background.

Who within your family was a Holocaust survivor or refugee?

My grandmother, Sally, came from Cologne on a domestic visa on 31 August 1939. Her parents and brother perished; her mother at Chelmno, father at Buchenwald and brother, Max, after whom I am named, after having been deported to Zbaszyn as part of the Polenaktion.

How old were you when you learned about your heritage?

I have always been interested in genealogy, writing my first family tree on a roll of wallpaper in primary school. My interest in the fate of my relatives in the Shoah began in earnest when I was 18.

How has it affected you personally?

It forms a huge part of my identity and I feel compelled to research and document my family story. It also gives me an insight into the lives – and dislocation – of the refugees, and sensitises me to injustice.

What is the most important message you want to pass on to your own children?

That while they are fortunate to live in a free country, freedoms can be hard won and that part of their heritage is a great grandmother who fled from Germany, but who was born in Poland, part of the Austro-Hungarian empire that is today the Ukraine. I would also like to think that one day one of them will take up the search for as yet undiscovered pieces of family history.

NEXT GENERATION EVENTS

The Research Centre for German & Austrian Exile Studies conference **The Second and Third Generation: Experiences of the Descendants of Refugees** will explore all the different ways that children and grandchildren have been impacted, focusing on both the relationship and the differences between the generations.

9 – 11 March

<https://modernlanguages.sas.ac.uk/events/event/20105>

The visual artist **Judith Tucker** will talk about her mother, Berlin-born writer Eva Tucker (1929-2015), who came to the UK in 1939 with her mother.

8 March at 6pm

<https://insidersoutsidersfestival.org/event/eva-tucker/>

Tim Locke will tell how his mother and uncle, Ruth and Raimund Neumeyer, both baptized as Lutherans, came via the Kindertransport. Tim's narrative will be interwoven with Ruth's audio testimony.

16 March at 7pm

<https://www.generation2generation.org.uk/?p=2819>

The Lie that won't die

Alfred Wiener and the Bern Trial of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*

The *AJR Journal* is delighted to feature the first in what will be a series of short vignettes from the archives of the Wiener Holocaust Library's archives. Written by Senior Archivist Howard Falksohn, these features help to bring to life some of the Library's hidden treasures which we believe will be of interest to our readers.

Most of you will have heard of the *Protocols of The Elders of Zion* and some of you will be familiar with the central role this text has played in the reinforcement of antisemitic propaganda for the last 100 years. Less well known is the role that our founder, Alfred Wiener, played in the prosecution of those responsible for its re-emergence in Switzerland during the 1930s.

Firstly let us remind ourselves what the *Protocols* are or, at least, what they purport to be and how they came into existence.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion are alleged to be the minutes of a secret meeting of Jewish leaders which took place in Basel in the late 1890s, in

which a plan to dominate the world is laid out consisting of 24 themes or 'protocols' ranging from the control of the world economy, the news media, even moral attitudes, to the destruction of civilisation as it was then known. In fact the document is a fabrication, the full extent of which was revealed to a journalist on the London Times, Philip Graves (1876-1953), in Istanbul in 1921. The latter published a series of articles revealing the deception. An expatriate anti-bolshevist monarchist working for the American Red Cross in Istanbul, Mikhail Raslovlev (1892-1987), showed Graves a rare surviving copy of a pamphlet entitled *The Dialogue in Hell between Machiavelli and Montesquieu* by Maurice Joly, 1864. A close textual analysis of this pamphlet showed that the *Protocols of the The Elders of Zion* was in fact a fabrication in large part plagiarised from the former text and otherwise crudely adapted to appear as an original document. This earlier pamphlet had been written by Maurice Joly, an anti-authoritarian pamphleteer, to foment opposition to the then Emperor Napoleon III in France by portraying the latter as an evil conniving cynical demagogue. Raslovlev claimed to have obtained the pamphlet from a former colonel in the Czarist secret service, the Ochrana.


Russia in the late 1890s, bubbling with unrest, was ruled by Nicholas II, an inexperienced, easily influenced

leader, who relied on advisors to help him make decisions. His most trusted advisor, Sergei Yulievich Witte (1849-1915), a liberal-minded modernist was advocating a departure from the traditionalist conservative ways and counselled a closer relationship with Europe which he felt would benefit Russia through improved trade relations etc. This was much to the annoyance of other, less favoured, advisors who lurked in the shadows and who wanted Russia to maintain the status quo. One of these was Pyotr Ivanovich Rachkovsky (1851-1910), the head of the foreign department of the Russian Imperial secret service, Ochrana, based in Paris. He hatched a plan to thwart the modernisation. He commissioned Matvei Golovinski (1865-1920), an employee of the Ochrana in Paris, with a track record in fabricating evidence for the Russian secret police, to produce a seemingly authentic text which would attribute the drive towards modernisation in Russia to an alleged cunning plan by the Jews to dominate the world. Russia was already used to antisemitic pogroms so it was thought that it wouldn't take much to convince a wider audience of this fictitious plan.

The full text of *The Protocols* was first made publicly known worldwide when it was published by Sergei Aleksandrovich Nilus (1862-1929), a Russian antisemitic religious writer and mystic, in 1905 in the second edition of his book about the coming of the Antichrist: *The Great within the Small and Antichrist, an Imminent Political Possibility. Notes of an Orthodox Believer*.

So *The Protocols* was a malicious fabrication against the Jews conceived to address a specific problem at a particular period in Russian history.

The text was to be published many times over and despite its unequivocal exposure as a fraud by Graves in 1921, continued to



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Alfred Wiener



Front cover of *The Great within the Small and Antichrist, an Imminent Political Possibility. Notes of an Orthodox Believer* by Sergei Aleksandrovic Nilus (1862-1929).

have traction and to be used as 'proof' of a Jewish world conspiracy.

After the Russian revolution many so-called White Russians made Western Europe their home. France, especially Paris, and Switzerland were among the most popular destinations. Many of these expatriates were monarchists, virulently anti-socialist and blamed freemasons, financiers and above all the Jews for the world's ills.

In June 1933 the United Jewish Communities of Switzerland and the Jewish Community of Bern filed a lawsuit in the Bern District Court against the disseminators of another version of *The Protocols* entitled *Die Zionistische Protokolle. Das Programm der internationalen Geheimregierung*. The defendants were members and sympathisers of the Swiss National Front, and the Bund Nationalsozialistischer Eidgenossen, the president of which was Theodor Fischer (1895-1957). The plaintiffs used a Swiss law of 1916 against indecent literature but the broader objective was to prove the Protocols to be a forgery and in doing so stem the tide of antisemitism. The plaintiffs' case was upheld. Walter Meyer (1885-1941), the trial judge, ruled in

May 1935 that the text of the Protocols was plagiarised from an earlier pamphlet by Maurice Joly, published anonymously in Brussels in 1864, proving that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was a fabrication. However, in November 1937 the Bern Court of Appeal overturned the 1935 judgement stating that whilst *The Protocols* was obscene in the literary sense, it was regarded as a political tool and therefore could not legally be termed indecent. Their authenticity, it was therefore argued, was irrelevant. The defendants felt vindicated and the plaintiffs understandably very disappointed.

A number of Jewish organisations and individuals were asked to support the plaintiffs in their action, amongst which was The Jewish Central Information Office (the forerunner of the Wiener Holocaust Library) which produced a detailed bulletin of the trial's proceedings.

Alfred Wiener (1885-1964) (the co-director of the JCIO), invited by the plaintiff's lawyers, took part in strategy meetings to plan the prosecution of the case and was an observer of the final part of the proceedings. He played a significant role in the formulation of

expert questions. He made contact with numerous news agencies and organised the international reporting of the trial. He also evaluated the considerable correspondence confiscated from Boris Tödtli (1901-1944), the Russian Swiss exile and antisemitic agitator responsible for coordinating the defendants' case. Finally, Wiener was instrumental in acquiring a substantial archive of material pertaining to the Bern Trial from the plaintiff's lawyers, Boris Lifschitz (1879-1967) and Georges Brunschvig (1908-1973).

Notwithstanding at least two further exposures of the *The Protocols* as fraudulent by a US Senate Judicial Sub-Committee in 1964 and in a post-Communist Russian court in 1993, the forgery has continued to be peddled as fact up to the present day. To mention a few instances of publication: a Japanese language edition appeared in 1987; Hamas published a version in 1988; in 1990 a version appeared in Damascus; in 1992 versions appeared in Mexico and Turkey; in 2000 there appeared versions in Louisiana and Lebanon and in 2002 a number of Arab television channels broadcast the series *Knight without a Horse* based on *The Protocols*....

REVIEWS

CITIZENS OF EVERYWHERE: SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY IN THE AGE OF BREXIT

Peter Gumbel
Haus Publishing

In the reactionary, right-wing circles that dominated politics and society in Wilhelmine Germany before 1918, it was common to hear the term 'vaterlandslose Gesellen', literally 'fellows without a fatherland', applied pejoratively to supposedly unpatriotic groups like socialists or Jews. Both groups could be tarred with the brush of un-German lack of patriotism, the socialists because of their loyalty to the Socialist International, representing the workers of all nations, and the Jews because of their solidarity with co-religionists across national boundaries. The best translation of 'vaterlandslose Gesellen' is arguably 'rootless cosmopolitans', the term adopted by Stalin for the anti-Jewish campaign that he launched after the Second World War.

On 5 October 2016, speaking at the Conservative Party Conference, Theresa May alleged: 'If you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere.' It is unlikely that the hapless Prime Minister was aware of the lineage of her remarks; her interest in foreigners appears to have extended little beyond making Britain a 'hostile environment' for them. But her remarks incensed Peter Gumbel, the son and grandson of Jewish refugees from Germany, who studied at the University of Bristol and then enjoyed a notable career as an international journalist, working, amongst others, for the *Wall Street Journal*.

Gumbel saw himself as typical of the modern cosmopolitan who works and lives in a number of countries – he has been resident in Paris since 2002 – and who does not feel himself confined to one nationality or national identity. For him, the 'delusion of national exceptionalism' that has gripped Britain since Brexit represented a betrayal of the core values of openness, tolerance and pragmatic liberalism that his grandparents and parents had so admired and loved in Britain. More than that: it was in defence of those values that his uncle Maxi had given his young life on the Normandy beaches, after volunteering to

serve in the British forces. Gumbel decided to take German citizenship, partly for reasons of convenience, but partly because he considered that Germany was now a truer repository of the values that he treasured than post-Brexit Britain. As the descendant of Jewish refugees, he was aware of the historical irony inherent in that decision, but felt nevertheless that in becoming a German citizen he was in a sense bringing his family history full circle. He remarks sadly that his grandparents would have been heartbroken to see Britain turning its back on Europe.

This is a book that readers will like or dislike according to their political convictions. Those, like this reviewer, who share Gumbel's views, will admire his skilful interweaving of family history with current politics and with reflections on the nature of ethnic and national identities. Those who prefer a clean break with 'Europe' and all that it means to them will find the book harder to enjoy – though perhaps thought-provoking.

Anthony Grenville

THE ART OF RESISTANCE: MY FOUR YEARS IN THE FRENCH UNDERGROUND

By Justus Rosenberg
William Collins

An incredible story of bravery, escape and survival is narrated in this extraordinary memoir by Justus Rosenberg whose four years in the French Resistance helped countless Jews survive against all odds.

Written with amazing recall when the author was 98, he describes how his parents originated from Mława, a Polish shtetl near East Prussia absorbing the German language and culture. They had eloped to the Free City of Danzig where his childhood was full of sunny memories excelling at school while enjoying a love affair at 16 with his mother's close friend.

But all feelings of safety came to an abrupt end when Nazi demonstrators violently targeted local Jewish businesses and attacked their owners. Justus was shocked by what he saw and his parents packed him off to Paris to continue his studies. They did not meet again for 16 years. Before leaving he visited his grandfather in Mława and uncle in Berlin. It was the last time he saw either of them.

Studying at the lycée he explored the French capital absorbing the language and culture

before enrolling at the Sorbonne. The violence of Kristallnacht spread to Danzig and his parents fled.

Meanwhile in June 1940 the Germans invaded Paris, life changed abruptly so, with a friend, Justus decided to join the French army. As his request was refused he plumped for the Polish army instead becoming involved in the nightmare evacuation of Paris, literally missing the boat by a whisker near Bayonne.

Eventually he ended up in Marseille in the "unoccupied zone" and following a chance encounter became involved with a refugee network which would smuggle thousands of Jews out of Germany. Still a teenager he mastered the world of counterfeit documents, black market currency and clandestine mountain passes. Through this work and later with the French resistance he helped provide a safe passage to many intellectuals including Hannah Arendt, Marc Chagall, André Breton and Max Ernst.

He was helped by fluency in languages and his Aryan looking appearance with blonde hair and blue eyes. But by August 1942 his luck turned and he was transported to a detention camp bound for a Polish labour camp. Feigning illness to get out, the last thing he expected was to actually have an appendectomy performed! Afterwards he slipped into clothes – smuggled into hospital by an underground operative dressed as a priest – and gingerly pedalled away by bike.

There followed an intensive period of undercover resistance training in rural France, covert assignments gathering intelligence and retrieving ammunition dropped from the British planes overhead. Soon it was tough guerrilla training and living rough as a maquisard. As the war drew to a close he helped American liberators navigate the maze of small villages suffering a narrow escape when seriously injured after his jeep hit a landmine.

Justus decided to make his home in America and a useful epilogue narrates what happened to those he knew. Apart from his incredible bravery and skill what comes over most is how much survival was down to luck, chance and the shadowiness of the French resistance. The identity of some of those involved remains a mystery to this day.

Janet Weston

NEW BOOKS

RESISTANCE: VOICES OF EXILED WRITERS
 By the Exiled Writers Ink Organisation.
 Palewell Press



Exiled Writers Ink celebrates its 20th anniversary with this anthology dedicated to those resisting oppression in all its many forms and to those who died fighting for their just cause.

The book comprises one chapter for every year from 2000 to 2020. Each chapter represents an aspect of the organisation's literary activism work and support for those resisting human rights abuse. From Kosova, Ethiopia and Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, the Uyghurs, Iran, Kurdistan and the Western Sahara, plus many other areas, and culminating with a chapter on #BlackLivesMatter, these are the voices of writers in exile, championing their causes and resisting the attempt of powerful groups to suppress the truth.

INTERMENT IN BRITAIN 1940: Life and Art Behind the Wire
 By Ines Newman, with Charmian Brinson, and Rachel Dickson
 Vallentine Mitchell

When the artist Hugo Dachinger was asked to paint the portrait of inveterate diarist Wilhelm Hollitscher a new friendship was born. Both men, refugees from the Nazis, were interned in the Huyton Internment Camp in 1940. Hollitscher's diary provides a vivid and fascinating account of daily life in the camp along with wider political comment, while Dachinger staged exhibitions of his work in the camp entitled *Behind the Wire*. The context is set by three chapters. Professor Charmian Brinson writes about the history of internment and Churchill's shameful policy to 'collar the lot'; Rachel Dickson of the Ben Uri Gallery, elucidates Dachinger's work in the camp and Ines Newman, the granddaughter of Wilhelm Hollitscher, provides a portrait of her grandfather's background and life.

YESTERDAY'S TODAYS
 By Anneliese Johnson (AJR member)
 Self-published

This is the story of a young Jewish girl who survived Treblinka. When an uprising

was organised by some prisoners, a revolt broke out in the camp. Desperately she tried to escape through the barbed wire, and after a struggle, got free. Running for her life she found a farmer's family who sheltered her until the end of the War. Anneliese also shares her harrowing experiences from before, during and after WW2. In East Germany she was living in fear under communist rule. She tried to escape twice to reach safety in the West of Germany. Finally she succeeded. There, she met a British soldier who brought her to England where she found everlasting happiness and peace.

ROCK THE CRADLE
 By Marie Paneth
 2nd Generation Publishing

The remarkable journal of an art teacher who helped rebuild the shattered lives of the children who were brought to the Windermere Reception Camp in the Lake District in the summer of 1945. Only recently discovered in the US Library of Congress, Marie Paneth's journal charts the daily challenges she faced as she tried to reach out to the children and heal the mental scars inflicted by years of unremitting oppression.

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OBITUARIES

HELGA BROWN (née STEINHARDT)

Born: 15 March 1928, Butzbach
Died: 18 January 2021, Abingdon



Helga grew up in Butzbach and Frankfurt, Germany, in the 1930's. A Jewish child, she had to stay in the schoolroom while her non-Jewish classmates played outside at break time so that she did not 'contaminate' them.

Journeys home from school would often take her past blazing Jewish buildings.

The family home was searched by the SS several times a week, often at 5 a.m. Helga's father, Hugo, had his employment as a teacher in a state school terminated as Jews were no longer permitted to be employed in public service. He was fortunate to then be appointed housemaster at a Jewish boys' home and school in Frankfurt. He was later arrested and sent to Buchenwald. He had to prove he was emigrating to be released.

The 10-year-old Helga and her elder sister Lore wrote to prominent people overseas pleading for help to escape the Nazi persecution. One letter was addressed simply to "Lord Rothschild, London" and he passed it to his cousin James.

James and Dorothy de Rothschild of Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire arranged for Helga and her family to travel to England, along with 31 boys from the school, aged 8-16. On

Helga's 11th birthday she travelled with her family and the first 21 of the "boys" to Harwich, along with many 'Kindertransport' passengers. She later reminisced how 'green and pleasant' her first views of England were.

The Rothschilds provided a large house, 'The Cedars', for the family and boys, on the Waddesdon estate. Many of the locals were very accepting of the German newcomers but a small minority was not so keen. As the boys grew up, some left for new lives overseas, some joined the British forces and others were employed on the Waddesdon estate. Helga enjoyed conversing with them and their own extended families as time went by. Her language skills were a great asset and even within recent years she undertook translation work. For many, 'The Cedar Boys' family was all they had, as their parents and relatives were Holocaust victims. Plaques in the Waddesdon Manor grounds and a Cedar tree commemorate the Cedars family.

Helga read languages at Manchester University where she met her future husband, Tom, and they both became teachers. They were happily married for 55 years and had six children, followed by fourteen grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

So many owe their lives to the persistence of Helga and her sister in writing those letters.

Andrew Walker-Brown

HANS HERMANN MEYER

Born: 11 April 1921, Lübeck
Died: 4 January 2021, Kent

Hans was born into a wealthy Jewish family. They were founders of the new synagogue and his father Martin was a partner in a prosperous law firm. It was a privileged upbringing with household staff and holidays nearby in Travemünde and further afield.

But in 1933 life became increasingly difficult and dreams of going to the Sorbonne like his brother, and becoming an architect were squashed when Jewish children were marked down at school. He was an academic child no longer, although suddenly he excelled at PE where the teacher was anti-Nazi. So he was forced to leave at 15 taking a job in a brush factory to learn a trade. Attempts by the family to leave were thwarted when the German arranging plans made off with their money.

The family felt increasingly desperate but help was at hand from an unlikely source. Since the First World War his Uncle Oscar – a distinguished orthopaedic surgeon – had been having an affair with an opera singer. Jeanne was related to the human rights crusader Helen Suzman and the actress Janet Suzman. Through these connections with the Sonnenberg family the Meyers escaped on March 1, 1937 virtually penniless after paying punitive fees again. Before leaving they visited family in the UK seeing crowds at Downing Street during the abdication crisis.

Hans fled with his parents to Palestine continuing education at night school. He worked in metrology at Lod (now Ben Gurion) Airport and saw the likes of General de Gaulle. Life was different although not safe, with shooting in the streets and falling bombs damaging his parents' apartment.

In 1946 he came to England studying mechanical engineering at University College, London. Later he trained in chemical engineering becoming Managing Director of the Olefins branch at BP Chemicals. Originally Hans worked in Manchester



where he met Barbara at a dance and they married in 1953. Soon he got a job in London and they moved to Surrey with their small daughter Janet. Three more daughters were born there including Vivienne who sadly died of Leukaemia at 18 in 1977 and Helen of cancer when she was 52. Felicity is a consultant surgeon, and he had seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Barbara and Hans received a telegram from the Queen on their diamond anniversary and loved globetrotting. Hans had always travelled for work particularly to America, Japan and Europe as well as closer to home in Scotland and Wales. Hans was one of the youngest surviving cousins on both sides of the family and the house was full of continental visitors at weekends. His taste was eclectic, the family had holidays at home and abroad, particularly Holland visiting his sister Käthe, a concentration camp survivor who lived to 104. Hans himself liked good food and we would all enjoy Sunday lunch in a restaurant. He continued to travel in extreme old age including a Danube cruise at 97. A very erudite and knowledgeable man, he was fiercely independent. The day before being taken ill he had driven to Waitrose for shopping. The last time I saw him he was planning his 100th birthday – to go back to Lübeck where he'd celebrated at 95!

He was a skilled craftsman, an excellent linguist, tamed a wild garden and enjoyed photography and reading. He joined the Civil Defence controversially passing the exams despite being "a foreigner". He was chairman of both the local Leukaemia Research fundraisers and residents association.

My husband Philip and I had a lovely holiday with him in Eastbourne in August which he thoroughly enjoyed. It reminded him of all the wonderful AJR vacations in the resort and happy times he'd had with the group, including trips to places as far apart as Glasgow and Norway, meetings, social activities and of course Glyndebourne. AJR was truly a lifeline for Hans – and he treasured the friendships made.

Janet Weston



CELIA TREITEL

Born: 21 August 1925, Berlin
Died: 3 August 2019, London

RENATE TREITEL (née EICHELGRÜN)

Born: 6 August 1931, Berlin
Died: 13 July 2020, London

My mother, Renate Treitel, was the only child of Leonard Eichelgrün, a civil engineer, and Lotte, a dentist. After Leonard was beaten up by Nazi thugs, the family moved to the UK, in 1936, evading a suspicious Nazi neighbour as they fled. The family settled in Temple Fortune, where Renate attended Henrietta Barnett School.

Despite speaking no English on arrival, Renate made excellent progress, particularly in Maths. She left school at 16 but, very unusually for a girl in the 1940s, decided on a career in chartered accountancy.

So unusual was she that, in 1949, she was interviewed by The Accountant magazine. "It is very exciting being almost a pioneer in a profession still primarily for men," she explained. "I really enjoy being the solitary girl at lectures". When she qualified at her first attempt in 1954, she was one of only 5 UK women to pass that year (compared to around 500 men).

She met my father, Kurt Treitel, a fellow Berliner, AJR member and a Kindertransportee, the following year, and knew straight away that this was the man she wanted to marry. They were married for 62 years, had four children, and four grandchildren.

Celia (left), Kurt and Renate Treitel, who all arrived separately from Berlin between 1936 and July 1939 and who all passed away within a two year period leading up to last July. Kurt and Renate were married for 62 years. Kurt's obituary appeared in our January 2018 issue.

My aunt, Kurt's sister, Celia (Cilly) Treitel, was also born in Berlin, the middle child of Theodor, a lawyer, and Hanna. Celia and her parents received visas to leave only in July 1939. As there was no room for her to stay with her parents in the UK, she was sent to live with the Dow family, who treated her as one of their own.

During the War, the Dows moved to Penderyn in Wales, where Celia trained in typing and shorthand. In 1945, she enlisted in the US Army, so returning to Berlin, but this time as part of the occupying force. Catching TB in war-torn Germany in 1950 put an end to her army career; luckily, the recent discovery of penicillin meant she recovered, after a two-year period of isolation. Celia then enjoyed a long career in secretarial work, settling in Chingford where she was an active member of the Labour Party.

Both ladies are remembered for their dauntless personalities, warm sense of humour and wide cultural interests.

Caroline Treitel

ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Monday 1 March @ 2.00pm	Flora Selwyn - 105 Not Out https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85074023659
Monday 1 March @ 6.00pm	Book Club: <i>How to be a refugee</i> - Simon May www.eventbrite.com/e/in-conversation-with-simon-may-author-of-how-to-be-a-refugee-tickets-139474679521
Tuesday 2 March @ 2.00pm	Rabbi Jonathan Hughes - From football to the pulpit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87574714207
Wednesday 3 March @ 2.00pm	Jeremy King OBE - The Ivy, The Wolseley and other restaurants www.eventbrite.com/e/in-conversation-with-jeremy-king-obe-founder-of-the-ivy-and-the-wolseley-tickets-140049157801
Thursday 4 March @ 2.00pm	Judy Lash-Balint - Filling in the gaps that our parents left blank https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83001636446
Monday 8 March @ 2.00pm	Mike Levy - Harwich Kindertransport Memorial https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83231043711
Monday 8 March @ 2.00pm	Judith Tucker – My mother, the writer Eva Tucker https://insidersoutsidersfestival.org/event/eva-tucker/
Tuesday 9 March @ 2.00pm	Rabbi David Mitchell – Being Third Generation https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83290740125
Wednesday 10 March @ 2.00pm	Book Club Discussion (no speaker) about <i>Grown Ups</i> by Marian Keyes https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89495996834
Wednesday 10 March @ 4.00pm	Agnes Kaposi Talk - Red Star, Yellow Star https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89914173222
Thursday 11 March @ 2.00pm	Elkan Levy - Cromwell and the Rabbi (Talk 2) https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86343945718
Monday 15 March @ 2.00pm	David Harris - The History of JFS https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81071994012
Tuesday 16 March @ 2.00pm	Nick Dobson - Agatha Christie's travels https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84749306335
Wednesday 17 March @ 2.00pm	Laura Nicholls - The Roman Baths https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87237774987
Thursday 18 March @ 2.00pm	Anita Peleg - Her Mother's Work https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82943376563
Monday 22 March @ 4.00pm	Book Launch: Hella Pick – <i>Invisible Walls</i> AJR Book Club with Hella Pick, author of <i>Invisible Walls</i> Tickets, Mon, Mar 22, 2021 at 4:00 PM – Eventbrite
Tuesday 23 March @ 2.00pm	Andrew Leigh - The History of Nightingale Hammerson https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83912406831
Wednesday 24 March @ 2.00pm	Gillian Walnes Perry MBE - A Day at the Palace, A Night at the Oscars https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85796074034
Thursday 25 March @ 2.00pm	Pam Fox - Kosher Hotels in Bournemouth https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88214537270
Tuesday 30 March @ 2.00pm	Judy Karbitz – Classic Hollywood: Elegance, Romance and Scandals! https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84610396758
Wednesday 31 March @ 2.00pm	Fiona Power - The history and famous students of Harrow School https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81556335786

AJR DEPUTY



AJR will shortly appoint a representative to the Board of Deputies, the organisation which comprises nearly 300 representatives elected by synagogues and Jewish communal organisations around the

UK, who together formulate policy and implement programmes to promote and safeguard the rights of British Jews to maintain our right to live in peace and our rights to enjoy our customs and practices.

If you are interested in standing for this position or require more information, please contact Carol Hart on **07966 884 782** or carolhart@ajr.org.uk.

The deadline for applications is Tuesday 6 April.

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