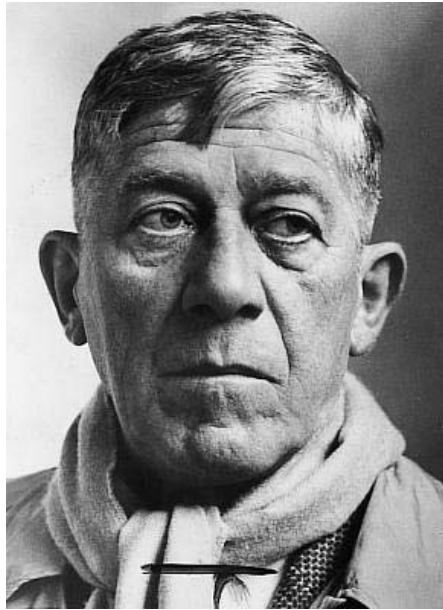


The Free German League of Culture

Today, it is hard to imagine that the AJR was once overshadowed by other organisations claiming to represent the refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain. Yet this was the case during the wartime years, when the Free German League of Culture (FGLC, Freier Deutscher Kulturbund) was active as the body representing the refugees from Germany, and the Austrian Centre those from Austria. These were politically inspired organisations, aiming to represent all anti-Nazi refugees from Germany or Austria irrespective of religion or race, unlike the AJR, whose constituency was the Jewish refugees irrespective of nationality.

Both the FGLC and the Austrian Centre were founded in 1939, just before the outbreak of war. Both had an impressive record in gaining membership among the refugees and in providing their members with valuable social and cultural services, under very unfavourable wartime conditions. The refugees were then 'enemy aliens' who, forced to flee from their native lands, were living as uprooted, impermanent emigrants in a country that could devote scant attention to their welfare. The importance of the FGLC and the Austrian Centre can be gauged by the affection with which they are still remembered by those who benefited from their services. They form a significant, but largely forgotten chapter in the early history of the refugees from Hitler in Britain.

The publication of a full-length historical study of the FGLC is greatly to be welcomed. *Politics by Other Means: The Free German League of Culture in London 1939-1946*, by Charmian Brinson and Richard Dove, published by Vallentine Mitchell in 2010 (253 pages, £45 hardback), is a thoroughly researched and impeccably scholarly account that tells the absorbing story of its subject in a way



FGLC honorary president Oskar Kokoschka

that is very readable and easily accessible to lay readers. It complements the study *Out of Austria: The Austrian Centre in London, 1939-1947*, by Marietta Bearman and others, published by Libris (London) in 2004.

As the authors say in their admirably clear introduction, the FGLC was the foremost cultural, social and political organisation representing anti-Nazi Germans in Britain during the war. At its peak, it had some 1,500 members, but many more people attended the impressive list of cultural events that it put on. It produced a newsletter, *Freie Deutsche Kultur*; it had a lively youth wing, the Freie Deutsche Jugend; it created a university in exile, the Freie Deutsche Hochschule (Free German Institute of Science and Learning); and, when the time was ripe for political activity, it formed the core of the Free German Movement, which sought to rally all anti-Nazi Germans behind a single political agenda and to plan for a democratic, peaceful post-war Germany. These were substantial achievements.

The FGLC was founded early in

1939 at an informal meeting held at the Hampstead home of the refugee lawyer and painter Fred Uhlman. It was formally constituted at a meeting on 1 March 1939, when Uhlman was appointed chairman, and four honorary presidents were elected: the artist Oskar Kokoschka, the drama critic Alfred Kerr, the writer Stefan Zweig and the film director Berthold Viertel. The presence of these eminent names indicates the importance of culture to the League and to its political aims. It had close relations with the small group of German Communists who had fled to London. Its strategy mirrored Communist tactics during the Popular Front period of the 1930s: to use a programme of cultural and artistic events to enlist the support of a broad spectrum of left-liberal, culturally and politically progressive opinion and to weld it into an anti-Fascist alliance under Communist control.

The FGLC advertised itself as politically neutral, describing itself as 'a German, anti-Nazi, anti-Fascist, non-party, refugee organisation'. Refugees from Hitler could not have created a campaigning left-wing organisation in the conditions of 1939, as the British authorities would not have permitted it. Communist influence over the League should not be overestimated: of the eight members of its executive committee, only three, Hans Schnellenberger, the League's secretary, the composer Ernst Hermann Meyer and the actor Gerhard Hinze, were Communists. When the anti-Communist Uhlman was replaced as chairman later in 1939, his successor was the non-aligned left-winger Hans Flesch (Flesch-Brunning). From December 1939, the FGLC had premises of its own, at 36a Upper Park Road, Belsize Park, London.

The League was established as an anti-Fascist organisation, aiming to mobilise a substantial section of the refugees from

continued overleaf

THE FREE GERMAN LEAGUE OF CULTURE *cont. from page 1*

Germany around a platform of anti-Fascist political and cultural activity. Its first declared objective was 'to preserve and advance Free German Culture'. It believed that since culture inside Germany had been destroyed, suppressed or distorted by the Nazis, it was the responsibility of those in exile to preserve the true heritage and traditions of German culture. The term 'exile' is significant, for it implied that once Nazism had been defeated, the refugees in Britain would return to Germany, bringing their brand of progressive, democratic German culture with them. The League saw its members as Germans temporarily in exile, but the great majority of those who had fled Hitler saw themselves as Jewish refugees, permanently estranged from Germany and unwilling to return.

If the FGLC could not openly campaign politically in Britain and was instead obliged to use culture as 'the continuation of politics by other means', it did so most energetically. It was divided into five sections – for writers, actors, artists, musicians and scientists – and it was within these culturally defined sections that much of its work was carried out. The writers included figures like Max Zimmering and Jan Petersen, as well as the young Erich Fried (an Austrian). The Artists' Section had figures of international renown in Kokoschka and John Heartfield. Music, predictably, was a particular strength: the Musicians' Section included figures like Ernst Hermann Meyer and Fritz Berend and helped to launch the careers of such youthful prodigies as Norbert Brainin of the Amadeus Quartet and the pianist André Asriel, who made his career in East Germany.

The actors created a number of successful revues in the style of the Berlin cabaret, notably *Going, Going – Gong!*, staged at the Arts Theatre in 1939, and *Mr Gulliver Goes to School*, staged at the FGLC's own Little Theatre in Upper Park Road, one of several witty and intelligent revues scripted by Fritz Gottfurcht and Egon Larsen. The Scientists' Section included scholars of many disciplines; under the leadership of figures like the economist Jürgen Kuczynski, the educationalist Hans Siebert and the economist and sociologist Alfred Meusel, it gave rise to the Free German Institute.

In the early part of the war, the FGLC

was restricted to such non-political but invaluable tasks as rendering assistance to those of its members who had been interned and carrying out social welfare activities generally, to mitigate the many problems of homelessness, loneliness and restrictive government regulation that affected the refugees. Only after the entry of the Soviet Union into the war in June 1941 was the League able to embark on political work. Victory over Hitler was its primary objective. It sought to integrate the refugees into the war effort against Germany; it campaigned to support the Soviet Union and to promote Anglo-Soviet friendship; and it strove to attract British friends and patrons to its conception of the democratic, progressive Germany that would rise from the ashes of the Third Reich.

The specifically political dimension of the FGLC was embodied in the Free German Movement, which held its inaugural meeting at Holy Trinity Church Hall in Finchley Road on 25 September 1943. The FGM leadership included important Communist figures like Johann Fladung, Wilhelm Koenen and the brothers Max and Siegfried Zimmering, as well as people of other political persuasions. But the FGLC's push towards a new post-war politics for Germany brought hitherto latent conflicts to the surface. A group of non-aligned, left-liberal members of the League, mostly intellectuals and writers, suspicious of the influence wielded by the Communists and their enthusiasm for the Soviet Union, broke away in January 1943 to form Club 1943, the distinguished refugee cultural forum that survives to this day.

The FGLC failed to bridge the divide between the political exiles from Hitler, a number of whom shared its political views

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Views expressed in the *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

Intern Jan will be missed by all

Jan with 'befriender' Michael Warner

It was with some trepidation that I welcomed Jan Botsch, from Tübingen in south-west Germany, to the AJR a year ago. This was the first time the AJR had worked alongside ARSP (Action Reconciliation Services for Peace) and had had a full-time intern. However, within days my fears were allayed and Jan became an integral part of the team.

Jan spent one day a week at the AJR Centre, where he helped members; regularly attended and supported the team at the Hendon and Ealing regional groups; and befriended two clients. In his 'spare time' in the office, he set up and ran the computer help project, as well as writing the articles for the volunteer newsletter and updating the application process for new volunteers. Everyone at AJR will miss Jan's warm smile, calming manner, sense of humour and compassionate nature.

Carol Hart
Head of Volunteer Services

and were eager to return to Germany (mostly to the Soviet Zone), and the Jewish refugees, who were largely non-political and had no wish to live in Germany ever again. The AJR, which made no secret of its disapproval of the Free German Movement, proved better attuned to the needs and aspirations of the Jewish majority among the refugees. While the FGLC was urging the refugees to return to Germany, the AJR, along with its sister organisations in America and Palestine, was submitting to the United Nations Conference at San Francisco in 1945 a statement demanding that Jews from Germany should have the right to remain in their countries of refuge and should not be treated as Germans. The FGLC was wound up in 1946. Sixty years later, it has at last found the historical recognition it deserves.

Anthony Grenville

The future of the AJR

As we approach our 70th anniversary, we at the AJR are planning how best to continue to serve our members with the delivery of social, welfare and financial services to more than 3,000 individuals across the country.

From our origins as a self-help group to our current status as a modern, outward-looking organisation, our unique and specialist work with Holocaust refugees and survivors is unrivalled and we can rightly be proud that our life-changing assistance and intervention have helped to enhance our members' lives.

Our dedicated Social Services team and committed Volunteers attend to the day-to-day requirements of those of our members with the greatest need while, through our regional groups, former refugees and survivors have the opportunity to socialise, hear from an eclectic mix of expert speakers, and be reunited with friends.

The AJR Centre in Cleve Road continues to provide a warm setting for kosher lunches, entertainment and outings and, judging by its correspondence columns alone, the *AJR Journal* reaches the parts that other publications cannot.

But all this comes at a great cost. As the AJR's Chairman, Andrew Kaufman, highlighted at the AGM in June, the stark fact is that the AJR operates at a considerable deficit, with our expenditure almost £1,500,000 greater than our income.

This shortfall is met through the

receipt of legacies and we cannot overstate our gratitude to those members who remember the AJR in their wills. Put simply, their forethought and generosity are enabling us to continue to provide our much-needed services.

Today, the membership of the AJR is an assortment of former refugees from Central Europe, survivors from the camps, child survivors, Kinder and second generation. Counter-intuitive as it may sound given that our first-generation members have an average age of 86, the AJR is looking firmly to the future and to how we can best continue to blend our continental heritage whilst preparing to be at our busiest in the coming years.

At this time of economic difficulty, it is likely that the most vulnerable in society will face cuts in welfare payments. Also, as with many other organisations, the returns on our investments have suffered during the worst of the present financial crisis.

We can also expect in the very near future a tailing off of support from the Claims Conference for our emergency and homecare programmes.

It is with these pressures in mind that we are asking you to consider leaving a legacy to the AJR. After ensuring that your families and friends are adequately provided for, a residual legacy to the AJR Charitable Trust will help to guarantee that our vital services can continue for as long as necessary.

Michael Newman

Director, Media and Public Relations

We are grateful for legacies received from those named below during 2009

Lizzie Anderson
Louise Barnard
Mr L Branin
Edith Cross
Elizabeth Eisner
Edith Greenwood
Dr MHE Hulbert
Dr W Jonas
Dorothea Kaiser
Julius Kiwi
Ilse Kurnik
Frank G Manning
Frank G Marshall
Martha Marx
Mark May
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Selma Meyer

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Martha Francisca Nuki
Anna Elsa Rado
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The Chairman,
Management
Committee and Staff
wish all
AJR members a
Happy, Healthy and
Peaceful New Year

As written in The Book of Fate: How Albanians rescued Jews fleeing Nazism

Scarlett Epstein OBE: *Many Jews fleeing Nazism found a safe haven in Albania, where the population, irrespective of which religion they followed, shared a 'code of honour' – besa – which dictated that they risk their own lives to save Jews. Natasha Korn, whose family was persecuted by the Nazis in Odessa, has lived in Albania since 2003 with her American husband, who works there with the Peace Corps.*

What if it were I who had found him naked and shaking from terror with the letter 'J' stamped on his forehead and a prayer for mercy in his eyes? What if it had been my country under Nazi occupation and it had been the death penalty for hiding a Jew? What if it had been I and my entire family of 17 who had been transported almost 100 km from our native Monastir to Skopje to a concentration camp where we were all to live our last day?

I try to imagine myself as one of this Jewish family. I try to feel the way they did when they decided to save one man to carry on the family name. They drew lots and Joseph pulled the straw of salvation. His loved ones collected all the money and valuables they had and he paid it all in ransom for his freedom.

It is at least 155 km from Skopje to Tirana, the Albanian capital, where Joseph found shelter until the end of the war. There is no information about all the people who helped him escape. I found, among other incredible life-saving stories, the names of only three families in Apostol Kotani's book *The Jews in Albania over the Centuries* (Tirana, 1996).

It was midnight when Joseph knocked at the door of Tirana eye specialist Kristofor Kristidhi. 'His shabby clothes and long beard showed just how much he had suffered,' recalls Dr Kristidhi. 'I helped him with some new clothes and sheltered him in my house for some time before I could find other safe places for him to stay. We hid him at first in villages around Tirana, then in Durrës, and again in Tirana' (Kotani, p.190).

Nora Sheko (Imami) says Joseph was sheltered in Irakli Lako and came to her house in Elbasani Street in Tirana from Dr Kristidhi: 'He was a young man, thin, swarthy and nice. When he took his hat off, I was shocked when I saw the "J" stamped on his forehead. I cursed the Nazis who had done it to him. The story of his escape from the Nazis and how much he had suffered on his journey from Skopje touched me deeply. He told me how the Nazis had rounded them up in a camp in Skopje':

There were 17 members of my family. We were all anxious to know what was going to happen to us. When we learned we were all going to die, we decided that one of the men in our family had to escape in order to carry on the family name. We drew lots and I, Joseph, was



Joseph Kambi with Aneta and Margarita Kristidhi, Durrës, 1943

the chosen one. My family handed all their money and valuables over to me and I walked up to one of the less fearsome-looking German guards. I offered him the money in exchange for letting me out. He accepted and I left. That same night, I learned later, all the prisoners had to undress and they were burned the next day.

Naked as I was, I travelled through the night and finally came upon a village, where I found a cattle shed and hid in the straw. In the morning, when the owner came to feed his cattle, he found me there. He was shocked to see me naked with my forehead stamped and my sad face. 'What are you doing here?' he asked me. 'I will be destroyed, I will be dead! Please leave immediately!' he yelled. I told him my story and gave him a choice: he could either help me or hand me over to the Germans. Fortunately for me, he chose to help me. He gave me some local clothes, a hat to hide my forehead and a bag with bread and cheese and guided me out of the village. After endless days of suffering, I arrived at Korça and finally made it to Tirana.

'All the time Joseph was talking,' said Nora, 'I was crying in pain. As I was making a morning coffee for him, he said to me: "Nora, you remind me of my sister-in-law though no one in my family is alive any longer."

'We kept him hidden in our home for a few months, aware of the enormous risk. Once he asked me: "Are you not scared, Nora? You have a time bomb under your roof which could go off any moment!" I answered: "Whatever is written [in The Book of Fate]." My husband and I had made up our minds to see it through to the end and protect him and, thank God, we did' (Kotani, pp.191-92).

Apostol Kotani was the first to reveal the names of those saved in Albania and the names of those who saved them. He found them in documents in the State Archive, by personal investigation, by visiting many parts of Albania, and by

interviewing numerous people, many of them no longer alive. Satisfied his research was complete, he published his book *The Jews in Albania over the Centuries*.

Kotani does not analyse why the Albanians acted in the way they did, but his book is extraordinarily powerful in the stories it pieces together and the hope it inspires.

When I read of the industrial methods employed to kill millions of people and when I see the photos of endless lines of emaciated, naked humans, like Botticelli's drawings of the Last Judgment, waiting in front of the gas chamber to be murdered, I feel a huge sense of loss and it leaves me without hope and with great shame. Yet, when I read about people saving people, it fills my spirit with hope and pride.

When I read Kotani's book as well as Harvey Sarnar's *Rescue in Albania* (Cathedral City, California: Brunswick Press, 1997), I realised that the treatment of the Jews by the Albanians and Albania is unique throughout the history of their coexistence. I needed to clarify what was unique about this treatment during the Second World War.

I realised that all the Albanians were saving all the Jews. By this I mean that Albanian Christians, Albanian Muslims and the Albanian government all took equal risks and made equal sacrifices in saving Jews: '[R]eligion doesn't affect national custom' (Edith Durham, *High Albania* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), p.125).

When I say all Jews, I mean that they did not discriminate between the Jews who lived in Albania before the war (300 of them) and the Jews who came there legally or illegally before and during the last war – hundreds, perhaps thousands of them (Sarnar, p.33), escaping from other countries to Albania or via Albania.

Bulgarians also saved Jews – but only their own – and sent the 11,400 Jews from Macedonia to the death camps. Joseph was one of the Jews destined to die in Macedonia but to survive in Albania.

What makes the Albanians' treatment of the Jews unique is that they acted in this way when the rest of the world (excluding Sweden and a number of brave individuals) acted in the opposite way. Albanians did not have their world-famous humanists

continued opposite

REFUGEES IN FAR-AWAY PLACES

A preponderance of the Jewish refugees from Central Europe went to the UK, the USA and Palestine/Israel. Others, in smaller numbers, found shelter in Sweden, Albania, Turkey, South Africa, etc. Some finished up, often very isolated, in far-away places. I know of at least four such locations.

I met **Professor Robert Heilig**, a distinguished Viennese physician, in 1969. As the first invitee by the Indian government under the Commonwealth Education Co-operation Scheme, I toured India and lectured at numerous places. One of these was at the University of Jaipur. The Acting Vice-Chancellor and Head of the Chemistry Department, Professor R. C. Mehrotra, was a former PhD student at Birkbeck College, where he had been before my time. I had met him on his not infrequent visits to Birkbeck. During my Jaipur stay, I was collected one evening by Mehrotra and his wife and taken to the residence of the Governor of Rajasthan, Dr S. Hukam Singh (the ex-speaker of Lok Sabha) for an evening of classical Indian music and dancing (dancing by Sunal Mansingh). There were about 60 guests. The only other Europeans present were a Professor Robert Heilig and his wife Annie, both ex-Viennese. Professor Heilig was a cardiologist, then aged 72. He had left Vienna after the Anschluss and had lived in India for about 30 years. He was a former Professor of Medicine at Mysore and Jaipur and had also practised in Bombay.

A very interesting and enjoyable typical Indian evening. Everybody squatted cross-legged and shoeless on the floor. In May 2009 I heard through my highly valued and enthusiastic correspondent at the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (AAC), Professor Peter Michael Braunwarth, that the Heiligs had returned to Vienna in 1971 after he had experienced a heart problem in Jaipur. In Vienna, they both lived to a ripe old age – Robert to 92, Annie to almost 100. Professor Braunwarth also told me he had met them accidentally in a cinema



Professor Robert and Annie Heilig, Vienna, 1986

although he had corresponded with Heilig earlier about one of his Vienna patients, who had occurred in the Schnitzler diaries, which Braunwarth was editing. The library in Jaipur has been named after Heilig in view of his distinguished service to Indian medicine.

During my army service in the Second World War, I spent some time with the Queen's Royal Regiment stationed in Bangkok. There I met in 1945-46 a German-Jewish refugee couple, **Dr and Mrs Hofbauer**. He was a medical doctor, who had practised in Bangkok and had survived the Japanese occupation. The Hofbauers managed to emigrate to the USA after the war and the last I heard of



Dr and Mrs Hofbauer with Robert Shaw, Bangkok, 1945-46

them was in a letter written on the boat taking them to their new homeland.

In 1937 I spent a summer holiday in the Kinderheim in Kirchberg am Wechsel in Austria. I was 12 years old at that time. The owners of the camp, **Walter Grünwald and his wife**, were both rather portly figures. He used a motorbike with a sidecar (I remember riding in it) and we

were told that his speedometer had been doctored to give a lower reading so that his wife wouldn't worry.

A few years ago I found old photographs from that camp and on the back of one of them it said Karli Djerassi. **Professor Carl Djerassi**, just over a year older than I, is a most eminent chemist, who achieved great success both in industry and in academia. He is now Professor Emeritus at Stanford University, USA. Among his many achievements is that he helped to develop the first oral contraceptive and he is known as the 'father of the contraceptive pill'. Carl has also become a well-known writer and dramatist. He told me he had met Walter Grünwald around 1955 in Bolivia, where he ran the small Austria Hotel in La Paz. What a pity I didn't know this earlier as I had visited La Paz with my wife Leyla in 1986. We had at that time visited Chacaltaya, the world's highest ski resort, served by a ski lift at 5,421 m and a view over Lake Titicaca. Chacaltaya, which in the local language, Aymara, means Cold Road, had one of South America's highest glaciers. Since our visit the glacier has shrunk rapidly and by 2009 it had completely disappeared. By sheer chance, a picture of this former glacier appeared in the *Sunday Times Magazine* (29 November 2009). It now shows only dry slopes and bare rocks due to global warming.

My paediatrician in Vienna was a Dozent **Dr Richard Lederer**. I liked him very much and had made him some figures out of coloured wax (I believe it was a basket containing flowers or fruit), which I found on his display in a glass cabinet of the waiting room of his surgery. I was told he had left Vienna for Baghdad in 1938, but in spite of all my efforts I have been unable so far to find out any more about him. He, and many other refugee doctors driven out by the Nazis after the Anschluss, are mentioned on the website (complete with photograph) (<http://ub.meduniwien.ac.at/blog/?p=654>)

Robert A. Shaw

continued from previous page

but they had their code of honour, which was not written down but imbibed with their mothers' milk. The code demands that anyone who knocks at the door and asks for shelter is treated better than the family's own children. As far as is known, not one Albanian stained his or her honour by not helping a Jew, despite the death penalty such help could incur. All who were saved in Albania might repeat after Edith Durham 'And it will be long before I shall forget my hospitable and gallant hosts who took me in and gave me of their best,

and who lived up to their code, counting their life as nothing when it was a case of keeping honor spotless' (p.157).

Reading and thinking about the people of Albania, the country in which I am now living, causes me to ask myself each time I go and see who is knocking at my door – what if it's someone who needs help? And what if this person is related to the hundreds of Albanians ready to sacrifice their lives saving, who knows, possibly even one of my relatives?

Joseph Kambi lives in Israel now. He settled there after the liberation of

Albania, married, had children and fulfilled the final hope of his exterminated family. He has remained in touch with Nora Sheko, one of his Albanian saviours. When Nora's husband died, he sent her some money and a black garment. Every letter of his ends: 'Dans l'attente de vous servir!' (I am waiting to serve you) (Kotani, p.193).

I feel that what the Albanians did to save Jews during the Holocaust is also 'waiting to serve' each of them and their Country of Eagles. I hope it is written!

Natasha Korn



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

'THE ORDER OF TREMBLING ISRAELITES'

Sir – Peter Phillips (July) has written such a farrago of errors, half-truths and prejudices that it is difficult to know where to begin.

He does not like the Haredim or Yisrael Beiteinu. That is his privilege. But to suggest that they are responsible for Israel's low status in the eyes of the world is as absurd as to suggest that anti-Semitism is the fault of the Jews. He is disappointed with the way Israel has turned out. So are we all, but the miracle is that Israel has survived at all, faced as it is with the implacable hatred of wide sections of the Muslim world, the hostility of much of the former Christian West, bedazzled by *raison d'état* and sheer funk, and – last but not least – the betrayal by so many Jews, blinded from reality by the leftist ideology that pervades our political and cultural environment.

While espousing moral relativity except when it comes to Israel, so that the Arab refusal to talk peace is met only by ever further demands for Israeli concessions, this ideology has no difficulty in allying itself with the demands of some of the most primitive regimes in the world, united only by their demonisation of Israel. It is not easy to be odd man out when most of the world is prepared to let Israel and the Jewish people go under, something which Mr Phillips's father would have understood from his experiences of the 1930s.

Mr Phillips and other members of what Namier called the 'Order of Trembling Israelites' should lift their eyes from their navels and see how Israel is treated as a pariah, ripe for destruction, just as the Jews were treated in the 1930s. Daniel Johnson, writing in the current issue of *Standpoint*, can see this: '[T]his summer may also prove to be the last interlude of calm before a war of annihilation is being unleashed against the Jewish people and against the state of Israel in the first instance.'

Chilling words. Alas, they may be closer to the truth than the vapid outpourings of Mr Phillips.

Incidentally, on a personal note, as a past chairman of the Oxford University Jewish Society, I take exception to Mr Phillips's characterisation of that body as religious. By no means. Instead, it sought and obtained members of all types of religious affiliation, and of none, who

wished to seek the company of their fellow Jews.

Lionel Blumenthal, London NW11

Sir – So today's Israel is not the place Peter Phillips knew. If he was honest to himself, nor is the UK what it was when he grew up. Significant reasons for this are the decline of the Church and religion and the rise of European secularism and the G-d of human rights. As a lawyer, how can he be proud of a country where, even after ten years, one is not able to deport the likes of a terrorist rabble-rouser like Abu Hamza to the US but a UK court offers no redress against a group of persons who trash a factory and cause major damage, all in the false belief that they are the arbiters of the rule of law? I would say this is the new fascism. If that is what Peter Phillips admires, good luck to him. He is making the same mistake as his ancestors in the 30s.

Peter Simpson, Jerusalem

Sir – I was thoroughly confused by Peter Phillips's article. The meaning he gave to the figure of speech which he used to describe the Israeli action in Gaza in December 2008-January 2009 – '[S]hoot first, ask questions later' – cannot possibly be used to describe the sequence of events unless one has to scrape the bottom of the barrel trying to find fault.

Rockets had been fired from Gaza since 2001. By January 2009 no fewer than 8,600 rockets had been launched against Israel in general and Sderot in particular, leading to 28 deaths and several hundred injured as well as widespread psychological trauma and disruption of daily life. The counter-attack, 'Cast Lead', took place at least seven years after the start of the indiscriminate and continuous bombardment of Israel by Palestinians. Waiting for seven years is hardly 'shooting first'.

As far as the pre-state struggle against the British goes, to which he alludes by mentioning the two British sergeants, it is as well to remember that British troops shot dead, shot and severely injured and clubbed unarmed Jews, men and women, on the *Exodus* in 1947 all of whom had been through the horrors of the camps. The rest were forcibly returned to prison camps in Germany, Popenorf and Am Stau near Lübeck, and fed lower than DP rations as punishment. There they stood in

cages while the Germans walked up and down smiling.

What best describes the attitude displayed on the letter pages of our journal towards a beleaguered Israel from the vantage point of the UK is yet another figure of speech: 'I'm all right, Yenkele!'

Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk

Sir – If you google Col. Richard Kemp's address to the UN emergency session on human rights on 16 October 2009 you will find the antidote to the accusations made against Israel by both some Jews and the general media concerning its military action in Gaza. Col. Kemp was the commander of British forces in Afghanistan.

There is again so much international fuss directed against Israel's decision to build houses in the 'occupied' West Bank and East Jerusalem, lawfully occupied after a war. Russia's and Poland's occupation of conquered German territories after the Second World War was greeted with approbation. There is no overt protest against China's occupation of Tibet and the establishment of Chinese settlements there. Is it because Israel is a small (Jewish?) nation, while China is large and powerful and – let's face it – provides us with cheap goods?

Col. Kemp's address to the UN received no publicity, no headlines ...

Alex Lawrence, Marlow

Sir – Once again Peter Phillips is giving us his biased and uninformed views on Israel. Why does he not check his facts before claiming that Israel shoots first and asks questions later?

Fact. Israel waited seven years before retaliating to the Hamas rocket attacks. If Winston Churchill had waited that long before retaliating to Germany bombing, neither he nor I would be here now.

Fact. Israel asked the Turkish flotilla repeatedly to enter peacefully into the port, where after a search it would be escorted into Gaza. Their response was 'Go back to Auschwitz!' The Israeli commandos then boarded the first ship, which was filled with armed insurgents, not peaceful volunteers bringing vital supplies. The aim of the insurgents was to provoke the Israelis – which they did – by shooting and fighting them, injuring and capturing several commandos in the process. It was only then that the Israelis began shooting, as clearly the aim of the insurgents was to capture several Israeli soldiers and add them to Gilad Shalit in captivity. The other boats all entered peacefully, which fact seems to have been forgotten.

There are many websites where these facts can be checked and I would advise Mr Phillips to do so before repeating what he hears and reads in the media.

As for his criticisms of the Israeli

government, there is a good way to implement them: go on *aliyah* and protest through the ballot box.

Thea Valman, London NW11

Sir – When the first pioneers came to Palestine they decided to shed the ‘ghetto mentality’ and fight for their country come what may. This is why they won’t stand for any nonsense from the Arabs or anybody else. Their attitude was aggravated by the British Mandate – ‘pussy-footing’ to the Arabs and pacifying them by keeping out refugees from Nazi oppression. They fought for the Jewish state as envisaged by Herzl. I wholeheartedly endorse their decision not to not stand for any hostile attitude. They are in the right and they know it!

Incidentally, when I was about to go to Palestine on Youth Aliya in 1938, we were encouraged to get married so that two of us could get out on one permit. And I wasn’t yet 15!

(Mrs) A. Saville, London NW4

Sir – How sad that Peter Prager’s (August) tears for the Palestinians keep flowing! The British created Jordan from our land and then invited the surrounding Arabs to it, keeping Jews out! All until 1948. These are the so-called Palestinians – why are they not going back if they are so poor with all the millions from England and Europe’s donations they are getting? And it’s *not* the West Bank – it’s Judea!

Clare Parker, London NW3

Sir – Marcel Ladenheim (August) equates the US with ‘its Guantanamo Bay prison camp’, and Britain with Russia and China, in naming countries which one could not – or should not – love. I wonder why he chose to live here?

Nicholas Marton, Bromley

A BIG THANK YOU

Sir – I would like to say a big thank you to all the staff at AJR, who are working so hard and efficiently in making life so much easier for us ‘old uns’. Since joining the AJR, my life has been much easier and I have met so many wonderful people. Also, a big thank you to Susanne Green and Ruth Finestone for another wonderful holiday at Lytham St Annes. They worked so hard to make sure we had a good time and we all did! As it’s nearly the new year, I wish all staff and readers a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Rachel Hunter, Sheffield

Sir – A great many thanks for the Imperial War Museum brochure you included with the August issue of the Journal. I have not been able to visit their very laudable Holocaust Exhibition because of our physical inability – much less the sites at Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, where my family died. Your thoughtful inclusion with the Journal is much appreciated, as

is all the work you do.

Werner Conn, Lytham St Annes

A HIERARCHY OF SUFFERING?

Sir – It is both interesting and amusing that the two issues ‘Who is a Jew?’ and ‘Who is a Holocaust survivor?’ come round again and again in the Jewish press. Of course, there can be no one answer, only a wide range of opinions. It only becomes problematic when a person or group insists that they have the ‘only answer’ and every deviation from this one answer is wrong.

It is clear to me that every Jew alive in Europe today is affected to some extent by the Nazis’ determination to eradicate all Jews from Europe, and perhaps even from the planet. According to Nazi policy, none of us should be here today, and there were people ready to further this policy in every country in Europe. Levels of recognition of survival are a personal matter. Who am I to reject anyone’s identity as a Holocaust survivor? There are Gypsy camp survivors (not many) and other, non-Jewish Holocaust survivors too.

Similarly, I accept anyone’s identity as a Jew. Is it not one of the important ‘lessons of Auschwitz’ that there is only one human race to which we all belong? So-called races are inventions: they are cultural groups, not races. While we have no choice but to belong to the human race, we can choose our cultural group. Inventing races takes this vital choice away when someone else, such as the Nazis, decides you are born a certain ‘race’.

The word ‘holocaust’ was first coined and fairly widely used about communities of Christians herded into their churches and burned alive by the Ottoman Turks. So there are many second-, third- and fourth-generation Christian survivors of the Ottoman holocaust. Sadly, as the human race, we have great difficulty refraining from categorising some people as more deserving and some as less deserving of something or other!

Ruth Barnett, London NW6

Sir – It was agreed some time ago that the term ‘Holocaust survivor’ is applied only to someone who was in a concentration camp (in Europe) and was alive on 9 May 1945 or later. Bending this simple definition for whatever reason is considered rather painful by the very few genuine survivors still alive.

Roman Licht (Mauthausen Number 86853), London NW8

Sir – I must reply to your correspondents who seem to have missed the point of my letter. I in no way sought to minimise the suffering of concentration-camp survivors, as my poem ‘A Hierarchy of Suffering?’ clearly shows. I merely wished to point out that rigid distinctions do scant justice to the experience of very young children torn from their home environment and

left without identity and relatives. If they managed, despite these severe traumas, to make a life for themselves they too can be called ‘survivors’.

Martha Blend, London N10

‘THE UNHOLY LAND’

Sir – I’m not a ‘Kind’ (though just old enough to have been one), but a comfortably assimilated British Jew. Sometimes I wonder if I’m Jewish at all, but I feel a Jew most strongly when Jews are oppressed or oppress others.

Frank Bright (August) is not fair in virtually blaming the Palestinians (‘Arabs’, in his letter) for the loss of his relatives in the Holocaust. What colonised people – which is what the Palestinians were under the Mandate – would approve the entry in to their already occupied country of ‘tens of thousands’ of people, just because those people had their own Koran which deemed it their ‘Promised Land’ (though very few German Jews thought like that)?

Blame for the Holocaust remains with its perpetrators, and with the British, French, American and Russian governments, who stood by and not only watched its preparation but did business with, and sometimes even encouraged, those perpetrators (Halifax congratulating Hitler on Germany being a ‘bulwark against Communism’, Stalin and his pact).

When we understand that the Palestinians too were victims of the Holocaust, we might find ourselves on the road to a brighter future in Israel/Palestine – the ‘Unholy Land’, as I prefer to call it.

Nicholas Jacobs, London NW5

NEW BIOGRAPHY OF WHITE ROSE ACTIVIST

Sir – I was glad to see Susan Cohen’s review in your August issue of Frank McDonough’s biography of Sophie Scholl. It is perhaps worth noting that a comprehensive biography of Sophie Scholl has just been published in Germany: *Sophie Scholl. Biographie*, by Barbara Beuys (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2010). It is based on all the documents relevant to the history of the Scholls and the White Rose resistance group deposited in the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich.

Professor Ernst Sondheimer, London N6

‘VOTE, VOTE, VOTE FOR CLEMENT ATTLEE?’

Sir – Re Dr Grenville’s very interesting front-page article on Churchill and Attlee (July): the Yugoslav response to the 1945 election that I have seen quoted was ‘Your Mr Churchill – will he now take to the hills?’

George Schlesinger, Durham

DUNERA PASSENGERS ‘SAVED BY ILL-TREATMENT’

Sir – I must take issue with Martin D. Stern (August), who brought up the

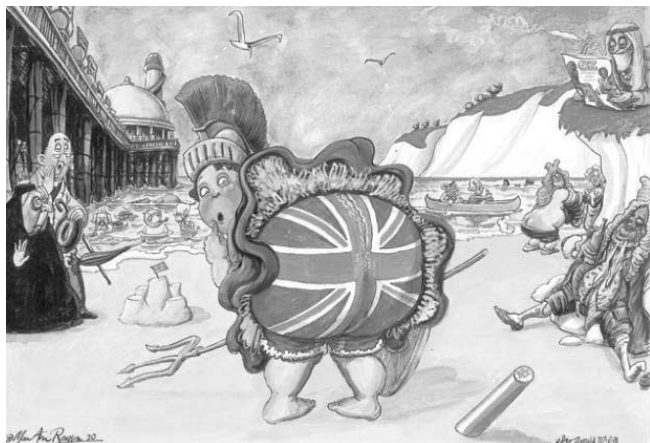
continued on page 16

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

For a portraitist, **John Singer Sargent** was a remarkable seascape artist. **The Royal Academy's** exhibition **Sargent and the Sea**, until 26 September, contains none of the pre-Raphaelite paintings which made him the Van Dyck of his day.

Born in Florence to an American ship-owning dynasty, Sargent loved beaches, children bathing and – famously – oyster women laden with baskets, bonnets and children, whom he depicts walking in beach puddles, lit by sun on water and, later, returning exhausted in the dark. There's little evidence of the artist who became notorious for his full-length portrait of socialite Madame Gautreaux in an off-shoulder black dress which so



Rude Health Cartoonist Martin Rowson's postcard from Britain

shocked the Parisian elite. The sea is less controversial and this work, painted in Normandy, Brittany, Nice and Capri, betrays his sense of the climate, the light, the surf and the wind moving the sand on the beach.

On transatlantic journeys Sargent became fascinated by the wildness of the ocean and Atlantic gales. While the Norman coastline – duller, cloudier, crepuscular – captured his imagination, one painting of Capri releases the full majestic colours of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Few artists have so successfully captured his sense of wind and weather and the fragility of scenes conveyed in the aqueous light.

Francis Alÿs: A Story of Deception, at **Tate Modern**, speaks of failed

expectation, broken promises, false hope. His videos have a touch of Dadaism but a political statement looms too. From his studio in Mexico City, Belgian-born Alÿs examines the absurdity of effort in city life. In one video, he pushes an ice block around town until it melts; its symbolism suggests frustration at the lack of social improvement. In another video, he leads a circle of sheep endlessly around the flagpole in the ceremonial square. It alludes to civil servants once being paraded in the city to show government support who bleated like sheep to imply their powerlessness. In another, a red VW Beetle is driven up a steep hill accompanied by a brass band rehearsal. With each pause the driver takes his foot off the accelerator and the car rolls downhill. For Alÿs this suggests Latin American delayed modernity. In 2004 Alÿs walked along Jerusalem's green line dribbling a can of green paint behind him at a time when the separation fence was being constructed to the east of the green line.

In **Tate Britain's Rude Britannia: British Comic Art**, until 5 September, the grotesque, rude or subversive are a matter of their time. The show, dating back to the social satire of **Hogarth's** day, includes witty contributions from cartoonists and comedy writers like **Steve Bell**, **Harry Hill** and **Gerald**

Scarfe. Most loveable are **Donald McGill's** once-banned, now innocuous sexy postcards and **Beryl Cook's** hilarious fat ladies. There's a grinning Tony Blair filming himself on his mobile phone against a bomb blast, and Churchill's black dog – a metaphor for his depressive state. *Death to the Fascist Fruit Boys* is a menacing installation by **Shaun Doyle** and **Mally Malinson** which includes a 'dead' hot dog in an open bun with its boots on, bleeding tomato ketchup.

Annely Juda Fine Art

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

Autobiography of a violinist OF EXILE AND MUSIC:

A TWENTIETH CENTURY LIFE

by **Eva Mayer Schay**

West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 220 pp., paperback

This is the autobiography of a Jewish professional violinist, born in Cologne, who had a varied and interesting career. She kept a diary, from which she frequently quotes, and had access to many old letters, both sent and received, extracts from which provide valuable insight into the letter-writer's motives and feelings. Furthermore, the narration is interspersed with quotations of direct speech, which are to some extent probably based on 'poetic licence', as they may go back to her early childhood and could not possibly be remembered. All this is done with great skill, resulting in an entertaining style that is easy to read and never boring.

Eva Schay's parents decided to emigrate soon after the Nazis came to power and went to Mallorca. She recalls an idyllic childhood there, but for various reasons it was decided in 1936 to re-emigrate to South Africa and the family settled down in Johannesburg.

She knew when she was about nine years old that she wanted to play the violin and, after finishing school, she became a music student. On graduation, she went to London to study further with the well-known teacher Max Rostal.

In 1956 she felt she should rejoin her mother in South Africa and in due course joined the orchestra of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. After three years her contract was not renewed (presumably because she had befriended an African couple) and she then gained a position with the Durban Civic Orchestra. Her mother was a strong opponent of the apartheid regime and the author shared her views. As the anti-black laws introduced by the government became increasingly restrictive, they both decided to leave the country and came to Britain in 1961.

In London the author at first worked as a freelance, playing as an extra or deputy with BBC orchestras, for musicals, and with the English Chamber Orchestra. In 1968 she joined the orchestra of the English National Opera on a permanent basis, remaining with them until her retirement in 1998. She loved the job, particularly enjoying the conductorships of Charles Mackerras, Reginald Goodall in Wagner, and Mark Elder.

An entire chapter is devoted to her life with Henry Mayer, whom she married

in 1967. He had originally been a naval architect, but had, before the author met him, changed course completely and become a mental health social worker. As he turned out to be a manic depressive, life with him was often extremely difficult and, on one occasion, he tried, unsuccessfully, to commit suicide. Despite all this, the author looks back to her married life with gratitude and fondness.

The title of this book is a little puzzling – few of us would have considered ourselves as being ‘in exile’ after arriving in this country. The term implies that we would have hoped to return to Germany one day, whereas that was not in our minds – we were looking forward to become fully-fledged citizens of Britain. The author refused to work in Germany but for many years did not feel ‘at home’ anywhere.

The book is likely to appeal to anybody interested in classical music, but possibly less so to others. It would benefit from a little less detail: is it necessary to quote the exact date when the author played quartets with some friends, or the works they played, or the names of the friends? While the book is well produced, some potential readers might be put off by the small typeface, while the many photos – printed on the same pages, and therefore the same paper, as the text – are not as well reproduced as on glossy paper.

Fritz Lustig

Becoming a proper Englishman MR ROSENBLUM'S LIST, OR FRIENDLY GUIDANCE FOR THE ASPIRING ENGLISHMAN

by Natasha Solomons

*Sceptre 2010, 320 pp., £12.99
hardback*

Many readers of the *AJR Journal* will remember the little blue book *Helpful Information and Guidance for Every Refugee*. The hero of this novel, Jack Rosenblum, took the blue book very much to heart and, in his enthusiasm to become a proper Englishman, expanded the list of do's and don'ts to over 150 items.

One item which caused him particular concern was that to be a true Englishman he had to join a golf club! Unfortunately, no golf club would accept him as he was a Jew. The solution: to create his own golf course.

He and his long-suffering wife therefore moved to a cottage in Dorset to achieve his aim. Apart from the fact that he had no knowledge of golf and that the land was completely unsuitable, he anticipated no problems!

The amusing yet sympathetic descriptions of his efforts cause the reader to vary between sniggering at his stupidity and naivety and admiring his optimism and persistence. Even the destruction of his early achievements by an alleged mysterious giant woolly-pig doesn't deter him.

Jack neglects his carpet factory in

London and spends all his resources and energy on the golf course and studying books and articles by past masters of golf. In addition to his aim of becoming a true Englishman, he wants his daughter, who is already at Cambridge, to be proud of him.

The locals, at first hostile to the 'Krauts', eventually take Jack and Sadie 'Rose-in-bloom' to their hearts. Sadie's recipes from her mother's cookbook help considerably in this. Lasting personal friendships are formed with some of the agricultural workers and Jack is delighted when he and Sadie are invited to the home of the local squire, Sir William Waegbert. However, the invitation is intended purely to make fun of them in front of the other guests and Sir William's subsequent behaviour sharply lowers Jack's regard for the aristocracy.

Eventually, despite many setbacks, and not in the way he intended, Jack achieves his ambition to be accepted as an Englishman.

There are fine descriptions of life in Dorset and of its landscape, as well as of local mythical folklore. In the background, to balance the humour, especially for Sadie, there is the memory of 'before' and of her parents and brother, lost in the Shoah. Parts of the book are somewhat sentimental and whimsical, but this seems appropriate in the rural setting of most of the book.

Altogether, this book is an enjoyable, light read and can safely be recommended.

George Vulkan

Edmund Wolf – a divided life

Edmund Wolf was an important member of the Austro-Jewish refugee community but not known to many by name. There was a good reason – a life divided by living in England but working mainly in Germany in the years after the war.

The Literaturhaus in his native Vienna has recognised his attachment to his mother tongue, notwithstanding his detachment from his motherland, with an exhibition devoted to his prodigious output as playwright, broadcaster, journalist and TV director, and the publication of a 184-page Festschrift to mark the 100th anniversary of his birth in April this year.

He started life agreeably enough as a Wunderkind of theatre, member of the Reinhardt Seminar, successful playwright and dramaturge of the Volkstheater at 25. His course was set fair as a writer of comedies for an international audience.

Except that it wasn't. As the shadows of oppression lengthened, Wolf, politically more astute than many of his contemporaries, decided to explore what opportunities might lie in England, but with as yet no idea of emigration. The year 1938 changed all that and ruled



out a return to Austria. His golden youth ended abruptly with the outbreak of war, internment and deportation.

Returning to England in 1942 marked the beginning of Wolf's long association with the BBC, first as translator and presenter, later and until 1963 as Programme Director of the German Service. But this was never enough of an outlet for his creative drive. Plays continued to pour from his pen and in 1952 *Räubergeschichte* had its premiere in Vienna and became a worldwide hit,

translated, filmed, applauded wherever seen – except in England. There were other plays, some of them written in English, but the English theatre, and especially the West End stage, proved out of reach.

Wolf's inventive energy demanded another outlet and he found it by writing, pseudonymously at first, for the German press. Soon a steady stream of reports, feuilletons, personal profiles and political commentaries attracted the attention of the German media, and in 1963 Wolf was able to give up his employment by the BBC to become a journalistic force under his own name.

The move into press journalism and soon into TV documentary direction marked the third and, in some ways, the most successful phase of Wolf's career, as he became one of Germany's foremost TV *auteurs* with some 80 documentary features to his credit, among them the renowned reconstruction of the Arab terrorist attack on a Lufthansa plane, *LH615 – Operation München*, which earned him the Bambi, German TV's Oscar, and set a new standard for realistic docudrama.

These successes, achieved in such

continued on p.11

Searching on

What started me thinking was a radio programme on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. A Daniel Mendelsohn was being interviewed about his award-winning international bestseller *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million*, regarding his consuming interest in the fate of his uncle's family in Ukraine. Daniel never knew his uncle but for a photo – and I didn't know my mother but for a passport and a death certificate. Daniel set out to find the fate of his uncle and family and who they were. And, at this late stage in my life, this sparked a similar question: What do I know of my mother?

My mother died when I was 19 months old. The death certificate states that she died at the age of 34 of 'retroperitoneal cellulitis' – whatever that is – at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Newcastle, New South Wales. But I knew very little about her.

My father Hans, a graduate from Munich and Bonn, left Willich in North Rhine-Westphalia for England in 1933 and, as the family story goes, met Grete Rosenthal, my mother-to-be, on a train in England. She was from Hildburghausen, Thuringia, on her way to employment as a housemaid



The Rosenthal home in Hildburghausen, Thuringia, central Germany

and they got chatting. They connected again through the AJR in London and in 1938 came to Australia, where they married and I was born. Hans applied to have his parents and in-laws follow them to Australia, but for three of them it was too late. His mother had died in Willich of liver cancer, his father in Theresienstadt, and my mother Grete's father in Buchenwald. Grete's mother, Mathilde, my grandmother, *did* get out to join us.

After my mother's death, for two years or so my father, with the help of Mathilde, struggled on, now working as an upholsterer, having had to train in something in England to support

himself and her, my grandmother, totally bereft of family but me.

The Jewish community in Newcastle, New South Wales was wonderful to my father – the support and friendship they gave is immeasurable. Through connections with the community, my father eventually remarried, to a girl from Sydney, and brought her into the home in Newcastle. But things didn't go well between her and Mathilde and my grandmother knew she had to find a place of her own. She had very poor English and I was her translator. My Saturday morning visits to her left me in rather a torn state. My stepmother was raising me, resenting my connection to my grandmother, and I couldn't rationalise the mess in my early teenage years. When I was 14 my grandmother passed away. Her husband had died in Buchenwald, their son, Siegfried Rosenthal, in the Battle of the Aisne in France in the First World War, and her daughter, my mother, in Newcastle. I was the only living relative of this part of the Rosenthal family.

All I have of my mother is her 'Alien's Certificate of Registration' – Grete Rosenthal, 47 Wentworth Road, Golders Green, London NW11 – with her photo and some needlework she must have done in her teens. No memory whatsoever of any conversations about her. When you are young you look forward – now I was looking back and all I could see was a passport and a death certificate. My father died in 1979 and, as I read so often in so many other cases, we had never spoken of 'before'.

Then, suddenly, after many years, a second cousin on my grandmother's side living in New York contacted me with data about the family. We each had our family origins in Thuringia, at that time in East Germany, so obtaining information was near impossible and, of course, there was no internet.

Time passes. Bits of information dribbled in. Then a reconnection after many years with a fraternal cousin – Joan living in Hale in the UK, a wonderful and warm contact. Visits to Australia, visits to England and now the wonders of Skype. In May 2009 Joan, surfing the net, saw there would be a Rosenthal *Stolperstein* placing in Hildburghausen in August 2009. I made immediate contact. Person A passed me to person B, who put me in touch with the contact in Hildburghausen, a

Herr Bernd Ahnike – the genie in the bottle. No one could have done more for me. And it wasn't easy: he speaks no English and my German had gone with my grandmother's death. With the help of Joan as translator and Google translation, Bernd and I understood each other. There was no way I could



The Rosenthal *Stolpersteine*

get to Germany for August but, since my children would all be in Europe in December, why not tie a journey in with a visit to them in December?

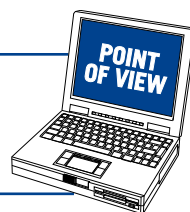
I'd taken the first small step. I arrived at Frankfurt railway station after a 23-hour flight from Australia, in the coldest December for 30 years, heading for Hildburghausen.

Europe travels by rail! Three train changes to Hildburghausen with three minutes for one change and one minute for the next – and it worked! And there was Bernd at this tiny railway station to greet me and, somewhere from the subconscious, bits of my German came back – enough to make rough conversation.

I thought I'd get to Hildburghausen, look around and acquire a feeling for how my mother had spent her early years. But Bernd had organised every day. First was a visit to my mother's and grandparents' home – a large building recently renovated now with a coffee and cake shop on the ground floor. I found it quite emotional to be inside the house my mother and grandparents had lived in. Bernd arranged a gathering of elders who had been around in my grandparents' time and they had some insights and memories of the time.

Each year Hildburghausen holds a Kristallnacht service for the Jews at a commemoration plinth where the last synagogue had stood. Last year they delayed it to coincide with my visit – a wonderful honour for my family. Each day of my four-day visit was filled. A visit to the beautifully kept old Jewish

continued opposite



A bizarre delusion

With the conclusion of the World Cup, the world has reverted to its second favourite pastime – slagging off Israel. The front page of *The Economist* a couple of weeks ago proclaimed 'Israel's siege mentality'. But Israel is indeed under siege – from Iran's surrogates Hezbollah in the north and Hamas in the south. Since 2006 the UN Human Rights Council has passed 25 resolutions, of which 20 are against Israel. Then there are the loony left and the British trades unions and, at the supposed other end of the political spectrum, the neo-fascist fringe.

But where are British Jews in all this? Some of them, of course, have enjoyed slagging off Israel for years, just like a few Jews were permitted to join gentile golf clubs in the old days. Others have remained silent, yearning to join the party but restrained by trivial considerations like truth and decency. But now that is ending. Criticising Israel is open to everyone.

Criticism comes at a number of levels. I have the right to criticise the government of Britain because that's where I live and pay taxes. The government needs to listen to me because I (among many others) vote for it. I also have the right to criticise the governments of totalitarian countries, where the citizens themselves risk execution or imprisonment if they speak up. World criticism of the stoning of an Iranian woman apparently had some effect – and the ayatollahs are deciding whether to hang her instead.

But my right to criticise the governments of foreign democratic countries is more circumscribed. To make it legitimate and not merely *kvetching*, I have to convince the citizens of that country that they are doing things wrong. How should I do it? The Reform Movement's proposed 'policy review' is not going to send the inhabitants of Sderot scurrying to their shelters. Jews for Justice for Palestinians is fond of putting adverts in *The Times*, claiming that this is the way to persuade Israel to change its policies. That's rubbish. Israelis do not, in general, read *The Times*. With greater

legitimacy, I can make donations to Israeli charities that agree with my views – the left-wing New Israel Fund perhaps or the right-wing Im Tirtzu.

If I have a serious contribution to make to Israeli policy, then I can write to *Ha'Aretz* or the *Jerusalem Post* (as I occasionally do) or email my relatives in Israel to say, for example, that Avigdor Lieberman is not fit to be a bouncer in a clip joint. *Ha'Aretz* is (legitimately) awash with criticism of the Israeli government and, if an idea is worthwhile, it might be adopted, but – let's face it – most *kvetching* is from people who are trying to salve their consciences at Israel's expense. If they could extract even a verbal concession from the Palestinians admitting Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, then Israelis might take them seriously.

The popular view is that British Jews are entitled to make an input to Israeli policy because they love Israel. But the effect of their public criticism in Britain is to focus on Israel as the main obstacle to world peace, a position shared by George Galloway, Abu Hamza and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Where are the Jews for justice to Christians in Arab countries? Jews against Saudi racism? Jews against judicial mutilation? Jews against the Darfur and Rwanda massacres? Jews against China's illegal occupation of Tibet, an area a hundred times larger than the West Bank?

Peter Phillips complained in these columns in July that he was disillusioned with Israel. Tough! What did he do to build it up? And what other country founded since the Second World War has done better? I am personally much more disappointed that, overwhelmingly, the Muslim countries and the Africans have failed to create decent democratic societies since they were freed from colonial rule.

Anglo-Jews have the bizarre delusion that they are entitled to govern Israel. But how would we feel if the Israelis criticised the British? How about British Israelis for justice to the Irish or the Iraqis or the Afghans? It's a shame that a Druze living in Haifa has more say in Israeli policy

than a Jew living in Hampstead, but that's democracy. British Jews have a perfect right to *kvetch* about anyone – Fabio Capello, BP, Robert Mugabe, Israel – and it's fun. But we shouldn't kid ourselves that it will do any good, and it may well do harm. In the words of the late Hugo Gryn, 'Do not run with the dogs who seek to destroy Israel.'

Bryan Reuben

EDMUND WOLF *cont. from page 9*

profusion and with such apparent facility, came at a high cost in political infighting, particularly at the Bayerische Rundfunk, where Wolf's artistic integrity was often at odds with political correctness and left-leaning *bien-pensants*. There was blood on the floor of the editing suite when Wolf, by now nearly 80, presented what he hoped would be his crowning achievement – a six-part series to be called *Hitler und die Generäle*, a meticulous depiction of relations within the German High Command. Perhaps it was an over-ambitious undertaking for a non-domiciled Jew. Powerful counter-pressures asserted themselves from the left and the right and the 'safe hands' in between, and Wolf's work was cut down to size, leaving him with just two films and a broken heart.

He was all of one piece, a man of non-negotiable convictions, rigid yet riven by conflicts he could never escape – a committed Jew who was not a believer, at home in England but having to seek professional acceptance in Germany, and, above all, haunted by the sense of a legacy unfulfilled, that of a man of the theatre.

Perhaps he would have derived a measure of contentment from another legacy: his son Martin has become Britain's – perhaps the world's – most read economic commentator, writing in the *Financial Times* for the enlightenment of those who guide our destinies; his younger son has followed his father into TV journalism as well as immersing himself in the study of Chinese language and culture; his daughter-in-law is a professor of public administration at the University of London; and his granddaughter is the Director of the New Schools Network, consulting with government on changing the climate of education.

Victor Ross

'Searching on' *continued*

cemetary, a visit to the cenotaph that commemorates the soldiers from Hildburghausen who died in the Great War that includes my Uncle Siegfried's name, long discussions with the help of my cousin Joan on the history of the Jews of the area, and a visit to the nearby town of Gleichermiesen, which can trace its history of Jewish families back to the thirteenth century – and, after much soul-searching on my behalf,

a visit to Buchenwald. Joan couldn't find the courage to come with Bernd and me, but I can only say that this extremely sobering and puzzling grey visit was for me a mind-searing memory.

Four full days walking in their footsteps. What did I learn of my mother's early years? I learned to imagine their lives – but of her very little. There are no photos and no history that we can yet find. I've been

inside the home. I've seen the schools and I've been treated with kindness and great respect and, as far as I can make out, sincere regret from the generation of German people who are my age. The local newspaper interviewed me and we are hopeful that the coverage this interview received will find more contacts and there is a glimmer of light. I will search on.

Peter Lion

INSIDE the AJR

'Hero of the Holocaust'



(from left) Steve Mendelsson, Denis Avey, Jeanette Rubenstein, Rachael Hunter, Otto Jakubovic

The Harold Cantor Suite was filled to capacity when Sheffield CCJ and AJR combined to hear the remarkable 91-year-old Second World War veteran Denis Avey relate his experiences as a PoW in a camp adjacent to the synthetic rubber plant I. G. Farben outside Auschwitz. In 1944 Denis befriended a Jewish slave labourer, known to him as Ernst, and persuaded him to change places in each other's camp for two nights so he could gather evidence of the cruelties there. He became so traumatised that it took him 60 years to recount the horrors he saw. Ernst survived and emigrated to the USA. Earlier this year, Denis was awarded the 'Hero of the Holocaust' medal by Prime Minister Gordon Brown and is being considered by Yad Vashem for the title 'Righteous among the Nations'.

Steve Mendelsson

Next Sheffield meeting: 5 Sept

Kent History of the Quakers

We were delighted to see a recovered Esther back, and enjoyed an interesting talk by Betty Raymond on the origins and history of the Quakers. The founding of the Quakers, by George Fox in 1650, was a rebellion against the fixed views of Christianity, stressing the equality of all – clergy and laity alike.

Inge Ball

North London Anthony Grenville speaks about his book

We were privileged to have as our guest speaker Dr Anthony Grenville, Consultant Editor of the *AJR Journal*. His talk, on his recently published book on German and Austrian refugees, stimulated a lively discussion.

Herbert Haberberg

No meeting in September due to Jewish holidays. Outing 28 Sept: Visit to London attractions

Pinner The Jews of Kerala

Edna Fernandez told us there had been two Jewish groups in Kerala – the 'black Jews', who settled there at the time of Solomon mostly as traders, and the 'white Jews', who arrived shortly after the destruction of the Temple. Relations between the groups were never very good. Now, both have moved to Israel with their prejudices still largely intact.

Fascinating stuff.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: 2 Sept. Alan Cohen, 'Women of the Bible'; Outing: 28 Sept: Visit to London attractions

Bromley Lots of lively conversation

At our social get-together, we talked about our background, our memories, and Israel – the changes that have taken place and our experiences there. Lots of lively conversation.

Eva Byk

Ealing Co-authors speak

Helen Fry spoke about her book on the many loves of concert pianist Harriet Cohen, whilst her co-author, James Hamilton, spoke about the novel *Goodnight Vienna* and its sequel *Moonlight over Denmark*.

Gerald Wold

No September meeting due to Jewish holidays

Scotland and Newcastle Get-together



Holocaust Memorial Day Trustee Paula Cowan and Glasgow member Michael Sankie

Meeting at the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, we had a successful event

with a well thought-out programme. Sue Kurlander spoke about the AJR's Social Services and introduced a young German intern at the AJR, Jan Botsch of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace. We then divided into three lively discussion groups: 'Second Generation'; 'The Way Forward'; 'Are HMD and Yom Hashoah Remembered the Way You Wish?' Later Paula Cowan, a Holocaust Memorial Day Trustee, spoke about Holocaust education in Scotland. We concluded with a showing of the film 'Churchill's German Army'.

Halina Moss

Iford Life and times of Max Reinhardt

Dr Fred Rosner spoke about Max Reinhardt and the many people he influenced in Vienna and later in the USA. Max Reinhardt passed away aged 80 in New York in 1943 and his funeral was attended by many members of the New York Jewish community, who recalled his numerous famous productions.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 1 Sept. Suzanne Bardgett of the Imperial War Museum

Great start for new HGS venue

We kicked off to a great start at our new venue, Hammerson House, when Helen Fry spoke to us about her book on the life and loves of the renowned pianist Harriet Cohen. Our new venue enables resident AJR members to attend Group meetings - including the remarkable Dr Edith Kaufman, who at the age of 106 enjoyed this morning immensely.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 13 Sept. Howard Falksohn (Wiener Library), 'Children of the Third Reich'

Hendon and Temple Fortune outing to Westcliff

The Hendon and Temple Fortune Groups had a lovely outing to Westcliff. All present

were asked to give their names and state where they were born and how they arrived in the UK. Lunch was delicious. Essex Chairman Otto Deutsch, who was a guide for many years, gave us a most interesting tour of Westcliff, Southend and Shoeburyness. A most successful excursion, highly appreciated by all participants.

Rosette Wolf

Next Essex meeting: 14 Sept. David Barnett, 'London's First Hotels'

The Rothschilds and the refugees



(from left) Dr John Goldsmith, Colette Warbrick, Eric Cohen

At our annual lunch in the Liverpool Reform Synagogue hall, Colette Warbrick of the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor spoke to us about the extensive work the Rothschilds did to help Jewish children escape from Nazi Germany. She also spoke about the Cedars, the house in which children from Frankfurt saved by the Rothschilds lived.

Guido Alis

Next meeting: 2 Sept

Brighton & Hove Sarid 'Jews and the Mind'

Professor Gerald Curzon spoke about depression among Jews. Providing us with a historical review of the 'Jewish mind', he quoted philosophers and psychiatrists and pointed out that 25 per cent of Nobel Prize winners were Jews.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 20 Sept. David Merron, 'The Kibbutz in Crisis'

Northern Get-together

Guest speaker Gillian Walnes of the Anne Frank Trust



Over 80 people attended the Northern Groups Get-together in Manchester. An interesting programme was eagerly anticipated by those from mainly Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield and a few from further afield such as Israel. Sue Kurlander spoke about AJR social work services, while Michael Newman spoke about the AJR and the importance of legacies. Keynote speaker Gillian Walnes MBE, Co-director of the Anne Frank Trust UK, delivered an inspirational talk on the myths and misconceptions of Anne Frank's story. Delegates chose from 10 discussion groups on subjects including the Kindertransport, the second and third generations, and the Middle East. The anticipation with which we awaited the day did not disappoint, with old friends reunited, new friendships made and 80 people learning so much more about this wonderful Jewish organisation. May we enjoy many more of these events in the future!

Eric Cohen, Second Generation (Liverpool)

Cardiff Argentina, Jews and Germans

The Wiener Library's Howard Falksohn gave us an illustrated talk on the popularity of Argentina, even before the First World War, among Jews and Germans alike.

Marian Lane

Café Imperial The story of the Dunera

An interesting morning spent surfing the web looking at the latest BBC documentary on the *Dunera*. Two of our members, Peter Eden and Willie Field, were on the ship and feature in the programme.

Esther Rinkoff

Eastbourne A perfect holiday

I joined an AJR holiday to Eastbourne for the first time and thoroughly enjoyed myself. I found everything just perfect. I liked the outing to Rye, including the free cream tea, and the musical show at the local theatre. I met a lot of friends but, most of all, I felt secure – there was always Carol, Annie, Joseph and Andrea to help out and they couldn't do enough for us.

Rita Brent

Leeds CF A lively meeting

At another lively meeting, we discussed the topic 'Should we have more contact with Jewish communities on the Continent?' We were also shown photos of the interesting London visit held earlier in the spring. An outing to Temple Newsam museum plus a visit to the theatre are planned.

Barbara Cammerman

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

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Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

Radlett 'London's First Hotels'

The development of the modern hotel was one of many unforeseen consequences of the industrial revolution, David Barnett told us. He gave an interesting account - much enjoyed by his audience - of one of the byways of recent social history.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 15 Sept. David Merron, 'The Kibbutz in Crisis'

'REMEMBERING FOR THE FUTURE'

Sunday 12 September 2010

at the Royal Armouries, Leeds
First, Second and Third Generation
AJR members

are invited to an

Inter-Generational

Question Time-style event

aiming to promote dialogue

between the generations

For further details, please contact

Susanne Green on 0151 291 5734

or at susanne@ajr.org.uk

Wembley Get-together

A sixth-form JFS pupil on work experience joined in our discussions of topics of interest. She also learned much from hearing of members' endeavours to escape Nazi persecution and finally find refuge in the UK.

Myrna Glass

No September meeting due to Jewish holidays

'CHURCHILL'S GERMAN ARMY'

The National Geographic Channel screened the documentary 'Churchill's German Army' in April 2009. Appearing in this unique film were members of the AJR who fought heroically for Britain during the Second World War.

We will be showing a screening on

Thursday 21 October 2010

at 2.00 pm for 2.30 pm

at **Pinner United Synagogue**

5 Cecil Park, Pinner

To reserve your place, please call

Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070

£2 charge for refreshments

continued on page 15

Norfolk (Norwich)

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Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

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Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)

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South West Midlands (Worcester area)

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Max and Jane Dickson
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Wembley

Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)

Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)

Fred Austin 01384 252310

Paul Balint AJR Centre

15 Cleve Road, London NW6

Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 15 September 2010

Andrea Littleton
'Graphology'

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

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special
interest group

Monday 6 September 2010

Axel Reiserer

**'Is the Far Right on
the Rise Again?'**

KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH

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Reservations required

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Monday, Wednesday & Thursday

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**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS
CLOSED ON TUESDAYS**

September Afternoon Entertainment

Wed 1	Paul Coleman
Thur 2	Ronnie Goldberg
Mon 6	KT Lunch – Kards & Games Klub
Tue 7	CLOSED
Wed 8	Michael Heaton
Thur 9	CLOSED – <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>
Mon 13	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 14	CLOSED
Wed 15	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 16	Madeleine Whitson
Mon 20	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Movie Matinee
Tue 21	CLOSED
Wed 22	Mike Marandi
Thur 23	CLOSED – <i>Succot</i>
Mon 27	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 28	CLOSED
Wed 29	Michelle Wolf
Thur 30	CLOSED – <i>Shemini Atzeret</i>

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

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

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

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

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birth

Congratulations to **Helga and Gunter (George) Lazarus** on the birth of their grandson Zach Charlie, a brother for Jake Freddie.

Death

Kaye, Evelyn Ruth, lately of Marlow, Alan's wife. Born Vienna 4 April 1930; Kindertransportee December 1938; died 18 July 2010. Firmly supported and associated herself with KT and AJR activities whilst never losing her love for the city and country of her birth. 'Irreplaceable.'

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AJR 3-DAY TRIP TO GLASGOW

We are delighted to offer a 3-day visit to Glasgow from Monday 4 October to Wednesday 6 October

The cost will be in the region of £250 per person, including hotel accommodation and breakfast

PROVISIONAL ITINERARY

Monday 4 October
Burrell Collection and Pollok Park · Dinner with Entertainer at Glasgow Reform Synagogue

Tuesday 5 October – Edinburgh
Tour of Scottish Parliament · Holyrood Palace and Queen's Gallery
Royal Yacht Britannia · Glasgow King's Theatre – 'Calamity Jane'

Wednesday 6 October
Garnethill Synagogue and Archives · Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

For further details, please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk

Please note: members will be expected to arrange and fund their own travel to and from Glasgow

ADVERTISEMENT RATES

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

The Austrian National Library

At a commemorative ceremony at the Austrian National Library in June, the Austrian National Fund symbolically accepted three of 8,363 books seized during the National Socialist era, the previous owners of which were unable to be traced. The works were handed over in compliance with the Art Restitution Law.

Accepting the books, Secretary General Mag. Hannah Lessing said: 'Since the enactment of the Art Restitution Law ... in 1998 art objects are now being transferred to the National Fund for the first time and their proceeds can be used to benefit the victims of National Socialism.'

The transferred books were subsequently repurchased by the National Library for 135,000 euros. Hannah Lessing announced that '[T]he proceeds from these one-time looted objects will be received by those people

who are most entitled to them – those who, like the former owners of these books, were persecuted by the National Socialist regime. Those who, unlike the former owners, were lucky enough to survive particularly require our assistance in their old age.'

The publications which were transferred are 'objects which without exception bear no indications as to the identities of their former owners,' the National Library stressed in a press release. The provenance report, which was completed in December 2003, listed 52,403 objects which had been acquired by the National Library during the National Socialist regime. On the basis of this report and of the examination by the Art Restitution Advisory Board, in recent years 35,217 individual objects have been restituted to the rightful heirs of the persecuted former owners.

In 2006, in order to reach out to the rightful owners of looted property, the National Fund set up its own art database at www.artrestitution.at. This has enabled a targeted online search for art and cultural objects today located in the museums and collections of the Republic of Austria or the City of Vienna which, according to the current status of the provenance research, were possibly seized during the National Socialist era.

It has also emerged that since the beginning of the year, the holdings of the parliamentary library have been subject to examination with regard to their provenance and potential restitution.

Written enquiries should be sent to the AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL or to mnewman@ajr.org.uk

Michael Newman

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

Hendon 'Diversity of Faith'

Rabbi Daniela Thau gave us a fascinating overview of nine religious faiths, beginning with the Zoroastrians, founded in 6000 BC, up to the Bahai, founded in 1844.

Annette Saville

No meeting in September due to Jewish holidays. Outing: 28 Sept: Visit to London attractions

'Enduring success' of St Annes holiday

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the organisers, Ruth Finestone and Susanne Green. Their loving care, kindness and patience are the principal reason for the holiday's enduring success.



Ron and Barbara Ibbitson

The holiday is a vital and irreplaceable means for AJR Northern members to maintain links with each other, renew and strengthen our friendships, and enjoy a relaxed and enjoyable break away. There is a real sense of common identity and a strong, unique bond among us which the holiday has always helped to foster and for which I and many other members are very grateful.

For people of my generation (I am 90), the social/emotional need to spend extended time together with fellow members is paramount and our AJR holiday is the only way we can still do this. Please carry on the wonderful work to let us look forward to another holiday in St Annes.

Susi Linton

All 21 of us had a most enjoyable holiday in St Annes. We had four second-generation members with us and we all enjoyed each other's company.

It was most moving to hear the story of second-generation member Ron Ibbitson and his family. Ron's mother passed away about five years ago, leaving nine children, all brought up as Christians. Just before she died, she gave Ron a shoebox containing documents showing that she came to this country with the Kindertransport in 1939 and was, in fact, Jewish.

Only Ron and one of his brothers were interested. Ron got in touch with the AJR and tried to find out as much as he could about his heritage. He and his wife Barbara spent the week with us in St Annes. They joined in with the candle-lighting and Kiddush on Friday evening and Ron went to synagogue on Friday evening and again with other holiday members on Shabbat morning. It was heart-warming to see how moved he was.

Once again, Ruth and Susanne looked after us all with love and the utmost care and we look forward to doing it all again next year, G-d willing: Next St Annes holiday: 26 June-3 July 2011. *Ann Cohen*

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to meet old friends again. Ruth Finestone and Susanne Green worked so hard to make our holiday enjoyable. We sang songs from our childhood and relived some of our happier past. Thank you again for making all this possible!

Lisa Vincent

West Midlands (Birmingham) Annual garden party

We held our annual garden party in Eileen and Ernst Aris's attractive house and garden

again, this year on a lovely summer's day. Our thanks to our hosts for good company and a delicious meal. *Hanna Cooper*

Cleve Road The escape of Danish Jewry

Copenhagen-born Blanche Benedick told the story of the Danish-Jewish community's escape to neutral Sweden from the Nazis with the help of the Danish authorities. More of Blanche's story can be read in her book *Journeys: Children of the Holocaust Tell Their Stories*. *David Lang*

Outing: 16 Sept. Foundling Museum

Bristol/Bath Refugee nurses

We had a delicious summer lunch courtesy of Kitty and Gabriel before hearing Tashia Scott speak about the initial six months of her research on refugee nurses. Two of our members had personal experience relevant to the topic and were interviewed by Tashia for her PhD thesis. *Hazel Rank-Broadley*

An engrossing day out

Seven of us from Ilford joined members of other London groups for a Regional Get-together at Alyth Gardens Synagogue, where we heard Jonathan Margolis air his views on Judaism, followed by a delicious lunch and an opportunity to find colleagues from our Continental cities. Before tea, three groups met to discuss topical themes, the outcome of which was relayed back for the benefit of the entire gathering. A most enjoyable and engrossing day out. *Meta Roseneil*

ALSO MEETING THIS MONTH

Welwyn 7 Sept. Social at Monica's Temple Fortune 16 Sept. Outing to Foundling Museum

Edgware 21 Sept. Judy Kelner, 'Desert Island Discs'



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Going shopping the Israeli way

When I first moved to Israel, some 40 years ago, there was one supermarket in Jerusalem, and perhaps a few more in Tel Aviv. My housekeeping requirements as a student were not very great and I seem to remember my forays to the supermarket as rare occasions, requiring little more to be purchased than bread, milk and eggs. I lived on black coffee and chocolate biscuits, and ate proper meals only at the weekends, when kind relatives invited me for Friday night supper or Shabbat lunch.

After I got married and set up a household of my own, things became more complicated. The corner grocery was the source of most of our purchases and the procedure of going shopping was an arduous task. My limited Hebrew and the elderly shop-keeper's non-existent English meant that I had to have a dictionary at hand or point to the items on the shelves, then watch with bated breath as he perched on a rickety step-ladder to get the items down for me. Then he would add up the cost, using pencil and paper,

and before paying him I would do the same, or pretend to do so.

Much to my surprise, my husband insisted on buying all our fruit and vegetables, as well as basic foodstuffs such as rice, in Jerusalem's Mahaneh Yehuda market. My surprise was doubtless confounded by the contrast with my father, whose only foray into shops was to buy flowers for my mother every Friday on his way home from the office. The idea of a man going shopping, and doing so in an open-air market to boot, was totally alien to me. My husband enjoyed this event, which evidently represented something of a weekly hunting expedition for him. I suspect that he would also indulge in a portion of falafel or a plate of humus at one or another of the well-known local eateries.

My ignorance of male behavioural norms in the Middle East was understandable, considering my background. How could a girl brought up in London and born to parents originating from Germany be expected to know that in this part of the world women were traditionally

expected to remain at home, while the outside world was a male preserve? And that the open-air market was a male club, as it were, with cafés and restaurants where men would meet and exchange information, mainly about football and politics. To this day, incidentally, most of Jerusalem's money-changers are to be found in or near the Mahaneh Yehuda market, although it is no longer largely a male preserve.

While women are no longer confined to the home, many men still choose to do the household shopping in the market. I have even been informed by an authoritative source that women don't know how to choose good fruit and vegetables. It is true that in order to choose a watermelon one should pick it up, place it on one's shoulder and knock it to test for the right resonance, and that is something for which strong biceps are required. It seems, however, that choosing tomatoes or cucumbers that are just right for a salad is also considered a masculine skill.

Be that as it may, the corner grocery stores have almost all disappeared, and these days a plethora of air-conditioned supermarkets and shopping malls vie for the patronage of shoppers, be they male or female. Even the open-air markets have been spruced up. Shopping in Israel is a very different experience today.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

apocryphal story of the warm-hearted U-boat commander who had time to salvage some internee's luggage from the *Dunera* dumped overboard by the guards and, after reading some letters in German, decided not to attack the ship. This is completely contrary to the facts.

It is on record that the German U-boat U-56, under the command of Oberlieutenant Harms, fired two torpedoes at a range of about 1,500 metres. This occurred on the morning of 12 July off the north coast of Ireland. It appears that both torpedoes glanced off the ship's hull or bottom without exploding, apparently due to the ship's zig-zagging at the time. I well remember the frightening 'thumps' from 70 years ago.

Sir – Further to Martin Stern's letter, the recollection my uncle, Erich Kernek, from

Linz, Austria, passed on to me was that personal belongings of both the refugees and Nazi prisoners on board were thrown into the ocean not as ill-treatment but deliberately to fool U-boat commanders into believing the *Dunera* had been sunk.

David Kernek, Bath

'THE MOUND'

Sir – Re the letter from Ernst G. Aris in your July issue, I live just a few hundred yards from Lord Williams's School and help with their Holocaust studies, which is very well taught in the school. I have copied Mr Aris's letter to the head teacher of Lord Williams's School, Mr David Wybron.

John Fieldsend, Thame, Oxon

IN SEARCH OF A LEARNED LEGAL MIND

Sir – I am attempting to find a German-language definition beyond doubt of the words 'einmalige Zahlung'. For me,

it equates with 'einzige Zahlen für eine volle Leistung, keine Anzahlung'. Could a learned legal mind please help me out?

Peter C. Rickenback, London NW3

Arts & Events Diary September

Thur 2 Roger Moorhouse, 'In the Eye of the Storm: Jews Underground in Hitler's Berlin'. Wiener Library, 7.00 pm. To reserve a place tel 020 7636 7247

Tues 14 European Day of Jewish Culture and Heritage 2010: A Talk and Tour at the Wiener Library A special talk on the history of the Library and its work by its Archivist, Howard Falksohn, followed by a tour of the Library's collections. Wiener Library, 10.30 am. To reserve a place tel 020 7636 7247

Mon 20 Roy Clements 'A Look at W. B. Yeats' Club 43 (first lecture of season)

Mon 27 Dr Fred Rosner, 'Max Reinhardt and his Circle' Club 43

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