

September surrenders

The most momentous formal cessation of hostilities to take place in the month of September in modern times was that signed by Imperial Japan on 2 September 1945, after the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had demonstrated even to the obdurate Japanese military that they were defeated. The first, crucial move towards the German surrender in the First World War took place on 29 September 1918, when General Ludendorff, strong man of the German Army High Command and eminence grise behind Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, lost his nerve and prevailed on his nominal superior to advise Kaiser Wilhelm II that Germany must sue for peace.

Like the Japanese militarists, Ludendorff had gambled on securing peace through military victory on the battlefield, the 'Siegfrieden', spurning a peace by negotiation. Having knocked Russia out of the war, he concentrated his forces on the Western front, launching a massive offensive in March 1918. He aimed to divide the British and French forces and to drive the former back to the Channel, rather as Napoleon had hoped at Waterloo to prevent Wellington's forces linking up with Blücher's Prussians and, having defeated them separately, to drive them in opposite directions back towards their home bases.

Ludendorff went for broke, and Germany paid the price. Typically of the Prussian military, he despised politicians and had refused to countenance the alternative political strategy of conducting negotiations with the Allies. By the summer, his offensives had lost momentum, and the great British counteroffensive that began on 8 August 1918 - 'the black day of the German Army', as Ludendorff termed it - marked the start of a spectacular series of Allied victories that took the British through the allegedly impregnable Hindenburg Line and won the war. When the military balance turned against him, Ludendorff, lacking a Plan B, had no choice but to acknowledge the bankruptcy of his strategy and sue for peace.

Predictably, the Allies rejected the armistice terms that he offered on 29 September, as they were clearly intended to allow his armies to retreat to the German



General Ludendorff

frontier and regroup there in defensive positions. Equally importantly, the German Army High Command wished to maintain the political status quo in Germany, an imperial autocracy where power rested with the Prusso-German ruling elites, the military, the aristocracy, the governing bureaucracy and the controlling industrial-economic interests. It was to prevent the dual disasters of military defeat at the front and radical reform at home that Ludendorff sought to delay the inevitable, thereby inflicting fearful losses on his own men by weeks of unnecessary fighting.

No one who has read E. M. Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* will forget his evocation of the sufferings of the German soldiers in autumn 1918 in the face of overwhelmingly superior Allied forces: 'Shells, poison gas and squadrons of tanks - crushing, corroding, death. Dysentery, influenza, typhus - vomiting, burning, death. Trench, field hospital, mass grave - no other alternatives exist.' Nor did the Germans suffer alone.

The British poet Wilfred Owen was killed on 4 November 1918, seven days before the armistice. Though poems like *Anthem for Doomed Youth* have been taught to

generations of schoolchildren, *The Parable of the Old Man and the Young*, notable for Jews because its subject is the *Akedah*, is little known. Owen's poem follows the Biblical account of the story of Abraham and Isaac, until elements of First World War paraphernalia gradually infiltrate the verse: Abraham 'bound the youth with belts and straps' and 'buildd parapets and trenches' for the sacrifice - preparatory to the poem's devastating conclusion, when the Angel calls out to Abraham, who represents the generation of elders and leaders, to spare his son, the youth of Owen's own generation: 'But the old man would not so, but slew his son, - /And half the seed of Europe, one by one.'

One of the principal motives behind Ludendorff's precipitate offer of peace terms was his intention to offload responsibility for negotiating peace in defeat onto the civilian politicians of Germany's parliamentary political parties, who had been largely excluded from the wartime decision-making process, as a means of discrediting them. In this he succeeded all too well, burdening the democratic Weimar Republic that followed the collapsed Empire with the odium of defeat, revolution and the harsh terms dictated by the victors to Germany at Versailles, all of which were in reality the end results of the failed policies of Germany's wartime leadership.

Right-wingers like Ludendorff were able to allege that the German armies had been 'stabbed in the back' by hostile forces behind the front - socialists, left-wing radicals, parliamentarians, pacifists, Jews. The Weimar Republic was in a sense undermined even before it had come into being, giving agitators like Hitler a god-given opportunity to ride to power 15 years later on a wave of popular disillusionment with parliamentary democracy. Leaders from Ludendorff to Hitler and his Japanese allies staked their countries' fates unconditionally on victory, but ended by taking their peoples down to utter defeat, for want of an alternative strategy. All wartime leaders need a Plan B - especially if, as seems to be the case with the American occupation of Iraq, they have no Plan A either.

Anthony Grenville

The AJR and the Wiener Library

As our members will know, the Wiener Library is one of the leading archives, and certainly the oldest archive, recording the Holocaust and Nazi era. Its reputation extends far beyond our shores and the importance of its collection is as relevant today as when Dr Wiener began his work in Germany soon after the end of the First World War. It is unique in that, unlike other Holocaust archives, much of its collection was made at the time the events occurred. This gives it a powerful immediacy, which is both chilling and inspiring.

The Library has a collection of material consisting of 60,000 books, 2,000 periodicals (of which 200 are current), original documents, eyewitness testimonies, unpublished memoirs and a huge collection of press cuttings dating back to the 1930s. In addition, it has an important photographic archive approaching 15,000 images. The Library is also the proposed home of our *Refugee Voices* project once it is completed.

The Library today provides a resource to oppose antisemitism and other forms of intolerance. Many AJR members will have had first-hand experience of its work and maybe also attended one of its conferences or excellent lectures.

The Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library, to use its full name, moved to its present address, an Edwardian terraced house in London's Devonshire Street, in 1958. The lease comes to an end in mid-2009 so the search for a new home is gathering pace. Also, the needs of the collection for stable environmental conditions to promote the preservation of increasingly fragile and rare contemporary materials can no longer be met in the current building. The Library is focusing its search on central London, particularly the WC1 area, which is the academic centre of gravity of its user base.



Anthony Spiro, Chairman of the Wiener Library

The AJR has always recognised the significance of the Wiener Library. Many AJR members will have visited the Library or perhaps accessed its catalogue online at www.wienerlibrary.co.uk and will have realised for themselves that its continued work is of great importance.

Andrew Kaufman, Chairman of the AJR, commented: 'When we heard that the Library needed to raise £4 million for a new home, the Trustees of the AJR Charitable Trust felt that it was entirely right that the Trust should become involved. The Trustees see the Library as a principal partner for the future; both organisations have a common goal, to ensure that the memory of our loved ones, who perished or were forced to flee their homeland, should never be forgotten. The Trustees have decided to grant the Library £150,000 towards the cost of its new home. The Trustees will recommend renewing this grant annually in the same amount for four years.'

Anthony Spiro, Chairman of the Wiener Library, endorsed Andrew's comments and added: 'We are thrilled that the AJR has made this very generous gesture. It is most heartening that our two

organisations are moving even closer together to ensure that our vital work can continue to perpetuate the memory of a remarkable generation. The Wiener Library is far more than a collection of books and documents - it is a living symbol of Jewish survival.'

Ben Barkow, the Library's Director, added: 'As the Wiener Library moves forward into the new century, our growing links with the AJR help to connect us to our origins and to remind us why we are here. The AJR's decision to help us in this way means that all the Library's activities will be securely anchored in the memory of the sufferings and triumphs of the Jewish refugees.'

Kristallnacht service

Please join us at the AJR Centre, Cleve Road for a service to commemorate Kristallnacht on **Thursday 9 November at 12-30 pm.**

Following lunch, Rev Fine will address members and lead a short service, which will conclude with Kaddish.

To reserve a space for lunch (on a first-come-first-served basis) and/or the commemorative service, please ring the Centre on 020 7328 0208.

Daniel Finkelstein at the Imperial War Museum

Times columnist Daniel Finkelstein will be the guest speaker at an AJR national get-together at the Imperial War Museum on **Wednesday 8 November.**

The day-long gathering - **open to all members of the AJR** - is part of a three-day trip to London by members from Scotland and Northern England and includes an opportunity to meet members from around the country.

The visit also includes a tour of the Holocaust Exhibition and lunch at a price of £12.50.

If you would like to reserve one of the limited places for this visit and lunch, please contact Susan Lewis on 020 8385 3078 or at susan@ajr.org.uk

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Letter from Israel

Living in interesting times

The sense of déjà vu is almost unbearable. Again, at the time of writing, Israeli soldiers are fighting in Lebanon. Again, rockets are being fired at our northern towns and villages, with greater intensity than before. Israelis are forced to live in shelters or move elsewhere in the country. Both the Israeli and Lebanese populations are suffering. Israel's long war has erupted once again.

No Israeli is happy to see the destruction of Lebanese homes. Israel has endeavoured to ensure that the civilian population is not harmed, dropping leaflets to warn residents that an area is about to be bombed. Israel's intention is not to kill civilians but to strike at those who seek to harm it.

This time it is here in Jerusalem that life goes on pretty much as before. Luckily, it is the summer holiday - if the school year were in progress the disruption of daily life would be far worse. Families who have moved temporarily to the centre and south of the country are trying to regard this period as their summer break. Anyone from the north who has relatives in a safer part of the country is staying with them. Some Israelis have taken whole families of strangers into their homes. The shopping malls, parks and swimming pools are full of 'refugees' from the north. The museums are packed with visitors. Many shops and institutions are offering reduced prices, or even free entry, for people from the north, and in Eilat all the hotels are full.

A friend told me that both his son and his grandson are currently with the army in Lebanon. Twenty years ago both he and his son served in Lebanon simultaneously. For a family that immigrated originally from Manchester this can hardly be typical, but many Israeli soldiers are now experiencing what their fathers underwent.

Almost everyone in Israel feels that this time the military action is justified. Israel pulled out of the Gaza Strip almost a year ago. What drove Palestinians to attack an Israeli outpost within Israel's internationally

recognised border, killing two soldiers and kidnapping one? The IDF left Lebanon six years ago. Why should our soldiers be attacked and abducted when patrolling the border?

The only answer seems to be the punch line of the grim joke about the camel which takes a scorpion on his back across the Suez Canal and for his pains is stung so that they both drown. When the camel asks 'Why did you do it?', the scorpion replies 'Are you looking for logic in the Middle East?'

There are some encouraging signs, nevertheless. Some Arab countries have criticised the actions of Hamas and Hezbollah, while others have refrained from expressing support for them. Perhaps logic is beginning to penetrate into some parts of this region after all.

Israelis who sought to live in peace alongside Palestinians, within some kind of territorial arrangement, were convinced that most Palestinians had similar aims. This may still be the case, but there are forces at work which seem determined to prevent this happening. The events of the last few weeks raise some serious questions in many minds.

This may be the beginning of a paradigm shift, to borrow a phrase from the sociology of science. This occurs when a major discovery overthrows previously accepted theories, forcing scientists to rethink everything.

The question which many people are asking themselves is: What will happen if Israel leaves the West Bank? The idea of having Hamas or Hezbollah a couple of miles away from Israel's narrow 'waistline' near the Tel Aviv conurbation is intolerable. But earlier this year Palestinians voted in a Hamas government in democratic elections. If a more moderate government had been elected and an arrangement reached regarding the West Bank, what would have happened had a Hamas government been elected subsequently?

Life here is never boring. But sometimes we wish we weren't living out the Chinese curse 'May you live in interesting times.'

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

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The author of 'Stateless in
Schlaraffenland' in last month's
issue was Edith Argy.

Veterans hold reunion in Ilfracombe

Six men who began their army careers in the 'alien' Pioneer Corps in Ilfracombe returned to the town this summer. The occasion was the launch of my book;* BBC South-West filmed their return for a documentary to be shown in the autumn.

The veterans came to England from Germany and Austria as victims of Nazi persecution and were part of over 3,000 Jewish and political refugees who trained for the British Army's Pioneer Corps in Ilfracombe. They are:

Harry Rosney, a sign-writer by trade, spent nearly two years in Ilfracombe in the quartermaster's store. Originally from Koenigsberg, he was born Helmut Rosettenstein. In Ilfracombe, he was responsible for kitting out the over 3,000 refugees who had enlisted into the Pioneer Corps.

Geoffrey Perry (born Horst Pinschewer in Berlin) began his army training in Ilfracombe. Five years later, while posted with the British Army in Hamburg, he stumbled across Britain's notorious wartime traitor William Joyce in a forest outside Hamburg. When Joyce made as if to shoot, Perry shot him in the buttocks and arrested him.



Four of six veterans reunited in Ilfracombe after 67 years: (from left) Geoffrey Perry, Willy Field, Fritz Lustig, Harry Rosney

Willy Field (born Willy Hirschfeld in Bonn), survivor of six months in Dachau, came to England in 1939. He was taken to Australia on the troopship *Dunera* in appalling conditions and sent back to England in November 1941 to train for the Pioneer Corps. After two years in the army he volunteered for the Tank Corps and landed with the 8th Kings Royal Irish Hussars on D-Day plus 1.

Fritz Lustig, from Berlin, spent some 18 months in Ilfracombe as part of the entertainment section of the Pioneer Corps. He was a cellist in the continental orchestra under the

conductorship of Breslau-born refugee Sgt Max Strietzel. The entertainment section in Ilfracombe raised over £3,000 for local charities - a substantial amount even by today's standards.

Eric Smith's family were active in the Plymouth synagogue and were caught up in the blitz on the city. Eric, his parents and his brother moved to Exeter; bombed out of Exeter, they moved to Barnstaple, where Eric was educated at the Grammar School. In 1944 he celebrated his Barmitzvah in the temporary synagogue in Ilfracombe's Capstone Hotel.

Harold Warren, born in Britain, worked for five years in the Army Pay Corps, which was stationed in St Petrock's Hotel (now the Carlton Hotel) in Ilfracombe. He travelled from Norwich especially for the wartime reunion.

Helen Fry

** Further information can be found in Helen Fry's book Jews in North Devon during the Second World War, which was reviewed in the April 2006 edition of the AJR Journal.*

Holocaust conference in Kaifeng

This summer, I was privileged to attend a four-day conference on the Holocaust in the Chinese city of Kaifeng. The conference, hosted by Henan University, which has a large Jewish studies department, was the second of its kind, the first having taken place in Nanjing a year earlier. Attending the conference were 100 staff and students, mostly from Henan University, but also from many other centres including Nanjing, Beijing and Shanghai. China has a long tradition of tolerance to other peoples, races and religions. Indeed, Shanghai was one of the few places where European Jews could escape Hitler's Germany. Further, the Chinese identify with what they see as the Jewish qualities of inventiveness and industry.

I listened to an impressive list of speakers on a wide variety of subjects. By the end of the conference, the students had begun asking questions

and actively participating in the workshops. Given that they are not used to questioning their teachers, this was an unusual experience for them.

The following is an indication of the breadth of subjects and speakers at the conference: Jerold Gotel (London Jewish Cultural Centre, LJCC), 'The Historical Background of the Jews and the Holocaust'; Trudy Gold (LJCC), 'Antisemitism and Nazi Racial Policy'; Wolfgang Kaiser (Wannsee House, Berlin), 'An Outline of German History, 1918-39'; Tal Bruttman (Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah), 'The War against the Jews'; and Robert Rozett (Yad Vashem), 'Victims and Perpetrators'. I myself gave personal testimony - the first time a Holocaust survivor had taken part in such a conference in China.

A number of Chinese academic staff also gave excellent lectures on, among other topics, 'Holocaust Refugees in

Shanghai, 1938-45', 'Post-Holocaust Social and Psychological Influences', 'Jews and Chinese Society', and 'China and Israel'.

After the conference, participants were given a tour of Kaifeng. There are still descendants of the Jewish community in the city and we heard very interesting facts about the community.

Finally, I would like to make an appeal for much-needed books on Jewish subjects, including source books for research purposes. It is impossible for Henan University to obtain English-language books for its library, especially on Jewish/Holocaust topics. I would be prepared to collect any such books and would be grateful if you could telephone me on 020 7586 5509. The books can then be shipped out through the London Jewish Cultural Centre.

Joanna Millan

Return to Leipzig

My name is Naomi. I am European. I am British. I am Jewish. Components of an identity which is too often pigeon-holed. I prefer just stating that I am who I am. I am Naomi. People can discover the rest.

My grandparents were German-Jewish refugees. My grandfather fled Nazi Germany from Leipzig in 1937. He had just been released from prison, having broken the Nuremberg laws - he had a non-Jewish girlfriend. The competing dentist who informed on him did him a favour, as I see it. His imprisonment made him realise early enough that he had to get out. He departed from Leipzig train station on 1 August 1937. In July 2006, his granddaughter - me - arrived in the same train station in Leipzig.

I chose to learn German at the age of 12 because I thought it might help me to understand more of my family's history. I've never loved the language. It made sense to me though. I never tried particularly at school, but I could speak German fairly easily. A year after I started learning the language, I went on an exchange to Germany. It was emotionally unsettling - my first time in the country which had persecuted my family. I wanted to start afresh, but I had problems with my host family. Having read on my school information form that I was Jewish, they produced books containing pictures of orthodox Jews and insisted that I look at them. At best, the family was strange and misguided. At worst, and against my will, I suspect they were trying to make some kind of antisemitic point. It did not bode well.

A couple of years later I met a wonderful German girl with whom I have been in touch for five years now. It was her father who found an internship for me this year. Having worked in Paris during the first part of my 'gap year', in May 2006 I set off for Germany with all but forgotten GCSE German.

Now, I am nearly fluent. I worked in Mainz for a member of the local state parliament, a Christian Democratic Union politician. After replying that I was Jewish to the question as to whether I was

Evangelical or Catholic, and after getting used to the cross in the hallway, things went smoothly! It was strange thinking here I am working in politics, in the country that persecuted my family less than a century ago. Round the corner from where I lived was a memorial to a synagogue that was burnt down on Kristallnacht. I passed it every day. I went to synagogue. The service in German was rather surreally translated into Russian, for the vast majority of the congregation (I later learned the congregation is similar now in Leipzig).

'My name is Naomi. I am European. I am British. I am Jewish. Components of an identity which is too often pigeon-holed. I prefer just stating that I am who I am. I am Naomi. People can discover the rest.'

At the end of my stay in Mainz, I took a train to Leipzig, where I met my family on their first visit. There we met a dentist whom my mother had contacted 15 years earlier about my grandfather, Hans (following an ad in the *AJR Journal*). The dentist had been completing a thesis on the fate of Jewish dentists in Leipzig after

1933. He was able to take us to all the old Jewish landmarks around town: the Jewish school, hospital and synagogues. Our hotel, by chance, was next door to my grandfather's university. The dentist and his wife took us to where my grandfather had lived; the names of the roads had all changed, first under the Nazis and then the Communists and then after reunification. We would have seen little without our wonderful guide. We found the graves of my great-grandparents in the old graveyard. We saw a wide storm drain where male Jews were rounded up after Kristallnacht. Hundreds were made to stand in this tiny, exposed space for three days before being sent to the camps. Seeing this, and realising how early deportations began here, was extremely shocking for me. Of the Leipzig Jewish community, some 14,000 were killed by the Nazis. All around town there were traces of the Jewish life the Nazis had not been able to eradicate. In the tiling of the ceiling in one building there are Stars of David; in the brickwork of another there are more.

We went to the new Gewandhaus, or Concert Hall, to hear a wonderful Bach concert. My grandfather, my Opa, had had a season ticket to the old Gewandhaus. Sitting in cafés, we had iced coffee German style, just like my Omi used to make.

I will be studying modern history at Oxford this October and this trip gave me a chance to explore my personal history. It was strange going back to Leipzig, where there was so much family history, and it seemed very remote to me in many ways. It is part of my identity, and I will never forget what happened. Having lived in Germany before visiting Leipzig, however, made me realise how alien the two Germanys are. Today it is another land. With a friendly, outward, open-minded, fiercely liberal-minded, new generation. They are just the same as me and my friends back home. And they want to make a fresh start. ...



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

BACK TO VIENNA

Sir - The letters in your August issue, with their mixture of fixed views and prejudices, are leaving me perplexed. For a start, I cannot understand the concept of hating Vienna. Who or what does Harry Needham hate? The city, its houses and its streets? Its citizens? The large majority of those surely cannot be made responsible for the sins of previous generations. Mr Chapman makes the point that Vienna contains right-wing extremists - which is, of course, true. Nevertheless, in the council elections a few years ago, when Haider's propaganda attempted to win votes by appealing to antisemitic feelings, his party was soundly thrashed. Perhaps Harry Needham should also hate London, which now has a very large population with antisemitic views.

In 1946-47 I was stationed with the British occupation forces in Vienna and made a number of friends there, some of them social democrats who had survived the war and a goodly number of young students. Since then I have made friends with Austrians who have been, and still are, actively working to expose the evils committed by Austrian Nazis and to ensure that the younger generation is aware of them.

I also have to admit that I enjoyed the Vienna New Year's concert in January 1947. I doubt whether any of us who were refugees could ever escape from the cultural environment in which we grew up, nor do I see any reason why we should.

Equally, I am surprised at Rubin Katz's condemnation of Daniel Barenboim. He is not the only Israeli who attempts to build bridges between Palestinians and Israelis. For that he deserves praise.

Finally, I must respond to David Kemp's letter about the bombing of Dresden. I can only imagine that he is too young to have lived through the war. Surely those of us who have, will not share his views. Retribution is also a branch of justice but, quite apart from that, the citizens of Dresden were just as responsible for Hitler and the war as those in other parts of Germany. Not to condemn the

bombing is not equivalent to having no compassion for the individuals who were burned alive. However, I must accept that there are people who share his opinion that the bombing was a war crime. What I object to is his arrogance in branding those who do not condemn the bombing as being as morally deficient as those who deny the Holocaust.

*Eric Sanders
London W12*

Sir - In 1956 I was in Vienna with my mother. A non-Jewish friend who had remained in Vienna was urging her to return and live there again: 'Things are absolutely different now, dear lady!' After he left us, she spoke sceptically about his assurance. Nevertheless, she and my father spent a number of holidays in Austria. They never visited Germany, nor would they buy any German products. (My siblings and I have to a great extent followed their example, more out of habit than anything else.) Now, what makes this less than rational is that Austrian antisemitism was well known to be more enthusiastic than the German variety. One of Austria's postwar achievements was to impress on everyone that Hitler was German - and Austria an innocent victim of rape.

The lesson I draw from all this is - very much in line with Edith Argy's - that our response, rational or not, to the legacy of hatred and persecution is a personal matter for each individual. I repudiate in principle any duty to my fellow Jews or my murdered relatives and friends to boycott Austria and/or Germany.

*George Schlesinger
Durham*

Sir - *The Righteous of Austria: Heroes of the Holocaust*, reviewed by Peter Phillips in your July issue, has a forerunner. The Austrian historian Erika Weinzierl wrote *Zu wenig Gerechte* (Too Few Righteous), subtitled *Österreicher und Judenverfolgung 1938-1945* and published in 1985 in a second enlarged edition. In her foreword, she said the

book was long in the making and that the final spur for completing it came after her visit to Yad Vashem in December 1967 and her wish to acquaint Austrian youth with what she had learned there. Erika Weinzierl may be considered a successor to Irene Harand, the long-forgotten, courageous Austrian campaigner against the Nazis in the 1930s.

*Michael Hellman
London NW3*

CITY OF DREAMS

Sir - Pardon my correction, Mr Grenville (July issue). The reason why the Nazis were welcomed in Austria is not the decline in democracy (1934-38). The whole world was in the grip of an economic slump - particularly bad in Austria and Germany. When Hitler came into power in Germany, he did improve the economic state there. Motorways were built and the Volkswagen was introduced. Unemployment fell. Law and order were restored.

No wonder the Austrians fell for Hitler! He promised them work and better times. They also fell for his anti-Jewish policies. The Roman Catholic Church agreed with Hitler's takeover of Austria because they were afraid of communism and socialism. Tyrol, Styria and Salzburg were particularly Nazi-friendly. When I talked about the Anschluss to a Roman Catholic priest I knew, he said: 'That's what the people of Austria wanted.' That's why the entire Roman Catholic hierarchy told the Austrians to vote for Hitler in the plebiscite. I remember it clearly.

*(Mrs) A. Saville
London NW4*

Sir - Thank you for your rich evocation of both *The Third Man* and current Vienna. 'Harmless Hapsburgs and Sippy Sissi' had this household in stitches. As the BBC's Balkan expert Mischa Glenny puts it: 'Austria, and its slightly cloying social atmosphere'.

I would welcome your thoughts on a second post-war film set in Vienna, which you would probably recollect if you saw it. This was *Four Men in a Jeep*, about the American, British, French and Soviet soldiers who jointly patrolled Vienna. While it was not up to *Third Man* standard, I remember it as interesting. The only actor I can still name is Michael Medwin as the Englishman. The film reflected Cold War realities, but treated the Russian as a human being. Channel 4 was to show it a couple of years ago, but cancelled without explanation.

*Andrew Sheppard
Dublin*

BAHNHOF GRUNEWALD

Sir - Eric Kaufman (July) states that Bahnhof Hamburg was the transportation point for Berlin's Jews to the concentration camps. Not so. The Hamburger Bahnhof is a gallery displaying contemporary art. The shipping in cattle trucks of Berlin's Jews took place from platform 17 of Bahnhof Grunewald, the beautiful wooded suburb of west Berlin. When I visited this memorial - so aptly sited where something dreadful actually happened - some years ago, it struck me that the wrought-iron work all along the platform, listing numbers and destinations, contained an error frequently made. It referred to Jews. It should have referred to German Jews or, even better, Jewish Germans. I was not part of an ethnic minority when I grew up in Berlin. I was a German. I was a Berliner. Still am. Now a London-type Berliner. I don't allow a Hitler to define who I am.

*Peter Zander
London W1*

BOMBING OF DRESDEN A 'WAR CRIME'

Sir - David Kemp is obviously unaware that the last Jews remaining in Dresden were about to be deported to extermination camps when the raids by British and US Air Force bombers took place. The resulting chaos saved their lives. The 'good' burghers of Dresden no doubt supported the bombing of Warsaw, Rotterdam, Coventry and London - to name but a few - by the Luftwaffe, as well as the deportation of their fellow Jewish citizens.

War crime be damned! What did the populations of German cities expect? Care parcels from heaven? Mr Kemp will no doubt classify me as 'morally deficient' - especially when I tell him that I flew in a bomber at low level over West Germany in May 1945 and, on seeing the destruction of cities large and small, came to the conclusion that there was a god of justice in heaven after all.

*Ernest G. Kolman
Greenford, Middx*

A TRIBUTE TO THE QUAKERS

Sir - The response to my article, which you kindly published in your June issue, has in itself been a tribute to the Quakers. I have tried to respond to each letter, phone call and email. Greatly encouraged, I plead again to anyone who received help from the Quakers to contact me. You may have been met on a railway station on your way to the Kindertransport or, like myself, you or your parents may have had a guarantee from Quakers which enabled your parents to obtain a visa to get out of Nazi Europe

to England! Perhaps you had help which falls between these two categories. If you have not contacted me, please do so now. Should you not have had a response from me, please contact me again.

Let me remind you that in Yad Vashem, among the Righteous Gentiles, there is not a single British or American Quaker's name. This terrible omission we may be able to correct, with your help. I think the response I have received is the most wonderful tribute to the *AJR Journal* and those who work on it. It is proof that the *Journal* is serving a wonderful purpose and fulfilling a real need.

*Peter Kurer
7 Bruntwood Lane
Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1HS*

AJR NETWORK OF FRIENDS

Sir - Readers may be interested to know that since the formation of local AJR groups, we have had a network of friends around the UK. On a recent trip up north, I made contact with the AJR member in that town and was most cordially invited to tea in her home. The lady was a complete stranger to me but, as we both came from Germany, there was a bond and we had a wonderful afternoon together and parted as friends. So I would urge anyone travelling around the UK to contact any AJR member on your route and I am sure you will have a great time with a *Landsmann*.

*(Mrs) Meta Roseneil
Buckhurst Hill, Essex*

THANK YOU AJR

Sir - I have just returned home after a great week in St Annes, the success of which is entirely due to the care and organisation provided by Ruth Finestone and Susanne Green. As one who has organised things in the past, I can well appreciate the amount of work that has gone into the planning and preparation of the week and, above all, the seven sixteen-hour days you put in at St Annes. No form of thanks can be adequate. After a lifetime of organising things for others, I particularly enjoyed having things organised *for me* for once!

*Heinz Skyte
Leeds*

Sir - I spent one week in St Annes with the AJR and I would like to tell you how wonderful Ruth Finestone and Susanne Green were. They could not do enough for everybody.

*Helene Parnes
Harrow, Middx*

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler



Audrey Hepburn by Angus McBean, 1951

Art, society and surrealism take on the Hollywood gloss at the **National Portrait Gallery**, where **Angus McBean Portraits** looks at 1950s glamour, record sleeves and a touch of Salvador Dali.

Born in 1904, McBean showed an early passion for making masks and theatrical props, which caught the eye of Ivor Novello, who asked him to photograph the production of *The Happy Hypocrite*. The first American star to come to his Victoria studio was Lupe Velez, but his surrealist lens soon focused on the still unknown Audrey Hepburn, whom we see emerging from sand between high plinths, her expression innocent and knowing at the same time. In contrast, the art deco portrait of actress Rene Ray in clay curls and Spike Milligan's head under a glass dish give a nod and a wink to Monty Python.

McBean was bestriding two eras, never quite abandoning the mannered 30s style. Yet his best work owes less to surrealism and more to his studied lighting effects in monochrome, in which he captures the reflectiveness of Quentin Crisp and the translucent

beauty of Vivien Leigh. Over the next 40 years those he immortalised included Derek Jarman, Tilda Swinton, Marlene Dietrich and Katherine Hepburn.

McBean's playfulness is expressed in composite pictures of Hermione Gingold juxtaposed with Hermione Baddeley, a self-portrait as Neptune, or Beatrice Lillie with a lily phone. Like artists from the Renaissance onwards, he places strategic symbols, i.e. Agatha Christie, beside a bottle of arsenic and handcuffs.

In 1963 EMI recruited him for the first Beatles record sleeve, which features them looking down from the balcony at EMI House. Years later he took them back to the same balcony and captured their change in fortunes. But he never lost the spirit of a poseur, shown in the self-portrait Christmas cards he sent to friends, his puppetry, his papier maché masks of Garbo and Novello, and Greek god bust.

From thick impasto to a delicate wash - the use of paint is the subject of the **National Gallery's Passion for Paint**, in the Sunley Room until 17 September. Twenty-four paintings from the gallery's touring exhibitions feature **Rubens to Degas, Courbet to Francis Bacon**. There's a delightfully subtle *Sunset from the Bay at North Devon* by **David Bomberg**. Two examples of paint through the generations are **Anthony van Dyck's** rather austere *Lady Elizabeth Thimbleby and her Sister*, in which the former is about to get married against her family's wishes. Contrast this with **John Singer Sargent's** portrait of the two daughters of Asher and Mrs Wertheimer, 250 years later, in which the velvet and satin textures are as vivid as the differences in expression. **Sulin Wang's** *Liwu River Loops* uses quick-drying car paint with a porcupine quill to create a most beautiful and colourful floating design. Bacon's use of paint, however, is the most technically daring. His *Three Studies for a Portrait of Isabel Rawsthorne* captures the essence of movement and expression which is more the preserve of the camera than the portrait artist.

REVIEWS

A man of rare ability

ALBERT AND VICTORIA: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE HOUSE OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA

by Edgar Feuchtwanger

London and New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2006, 288pp.

Few areas of British life have been more enriched by the Jewish refugees from Central Europe than the academic discipline of history. Among those who had already established themselves professionally before fleeing from Hitler to Britain were Erich Eyck, author of standard studies of Bismarck, the Wilhelmine Empire and the Weimar Republic, Hans Liebeschütz and Wilhelm Levison. More numerous were younger refugee historians who did most or all of their academic training in Britain, including such major figures as Geoffrey Elton, Francis Carsten, Sidney Pollard, Peter Pulzer and John Grenville.

Among the latter is Edgar Feuchtwanger, scion of a distinguished Munich family, in whose list of publications books on British subjects like Disraeli sit alongside those on Germans like Bismarck. His latest volume, a study of the pre-eminent royal couple of the nineteenth century, very appropriately crowns a body of work that interweaves the history of the author's native country with that of his adopted homeland, for Albert, husband of the Queen of England, was himself of course an import from Germany.

This book gratifyingly surpasses the sum of its parts. It covers known ground, taken individually, in its depictions of Victoria and Albert; of the Queen's leading ministers (Melbourne, Peel, Palmerston, Disraeli, Gladstone, Salisbury); of her eldest daughter Vicky, her marriage to the heir to the German throne and

the bitter treatment they endured from Bismarck; of the diplomatic and dynastic issues with which the royal couple wrestled; of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra. It examines the failure of the interrelated clan of European royalty, most of them Victoria's or Albert's kin, to prevent Europe's descent into the First World War, in an era when competing national interests came to predominate over ties of dynastic solidarity. The book's strength lies in combining these varied facets of British, German and international history into a narrative that is at once entertaining and authoritative. Whether dealing with the political manoeuvrings of Bismarck's early years in power or with Anglo-Russo-German dynastic machinations, it remains throughout accessible in its style and perceptive in its analysis.

Feuchtwanger concentrates on traditional history - dynastic, diplomatic, political and constitutional - the sections on Albert and the Coburg connection meriting particular attention. Prince Albert was a man of exceptional intelligence and ability, a great rarity in the English ruling house, which had not seen anyone of any real quality near the throne since Elizabeth I (and has not again since). Feuchtwanger expertly demonstrates how Albert managed to combine his loyalties to his home Duchy of Coburg and its dynasty, to Germany more widely, to Britain and its imperial, economic-industrial and diplomatic interests, and to the monarchy into which he married. Feuchtwanger shows that in Albert England had effectively acquired a new king who, by sheer talent and industry, might have changed the direction of British constitutional development, had he not died in 1861, aged little over 40.

Of economic history there is less. We see rather little of Albert the moderniser, beyond an account of the Great Exhibition of 1851; otherwise, his contribution to British

trade, industry and commerce is not explored in detail. Admittedly, that would have required another book. Nevertheless, it was Britain's industrial, technological and economic primacy that was the foundation of its superpower status in the nineteenth century, and Albert pressed hard for measures aimed at maintaining Britain's lead.

After his death, complacency, dilettantism and poor management whittled away Britain's advantage and allowed nations like America and Germany to surpass her. It was then that the diehards' distaste for his modernising measures, and indeed for all the wealth-creating enterprises on which Britain's prosperity depended, initiated the melancholy process by which the country that once was the 'workshop of the world' had by the late twentieth century lost almost its entire manufacturing sector. Albert, thou shouldst be living now!

Anthony Grenville

Engaging picture of a twentieth-century German-Jewish family

OMA, MU AND ME

by Irene Gill

Salisbury: Fivepin, 2006, 281pp.

Part autobiography - and a three-fold one at that - part biography, this book both presents and reflects on the lives of representatives of three generations of the author's family. The text comprises an unusual - and very successful - blend of memoirs written by Irene Gill's mother and grandmother, family correspondence and the author's own recollections and comments. This exclusively female narrative, beginning with the birth of Gill's grandmother in Danzig in 1869, charts the vicissitudes of defeat, totalitarianism, antisemitism, exile and war before finishing up in present-day Britain, Gill's home since 1939, where her parents sought refuge from Nazi

persecution for themselves and their three young children.

Gill's grandmother, Olga Fajans, was one of the first women to study medicine in Germany. Intelligent and rational, she nevertheless underestimated the threat posed to her, as a Jew, by Nazism, choosing in 1935 to return to Germany from a visit to Teheran where her elder daughter and family were then living. By 1938, she had been dismissed from her post in a pharmaceutical company and was compelled to set off back to Teheran, where she spent the war years.

Gill's mother, Lorchen Hempel, the middle child of three, was born in Giessen in 1904. Her childhood, mirrored both in her own memoirs and in those of her mother, included idyllic periods spent in the countryside and with loving grandparents, and yet was generally not happy for she felt herself to be the least favoured of the children. Moreover, her parents' marriage was increasingly unharmonious (they separated in 1919). Repeating the family pattern, Lorchen entered into an ultimately unhappy marriage with the classicist Günther Zuntz. The couple, with their three young children - one of them Irene Gill (at that time still Gabi Zuntz) - left Germany initially for Denmark, then for England (Zuntz having obtained a library post in Oxford).

At this point, the narrative ceases to be primarily that of the two older women, as Gill's own life begins to take its place alongside the lives of her grandmother and mother; indeed, her childhood memories of refugee life in Oxford in wartime are among the most memorable in the book. Zuntz's fellow exile Paul Maas, for instance, was a frequent visitor and so, too, was the young Enoch Powell. Gill recalls how these brilliant men would converse in classical Greek in the family's crowded end-of-terrace house. At other times, visitors would sing Schubert *Lieder* around the piano which would result in

'elderly refugees mopping the tears from their eyes'. Gill's schooldays in Oxford, generally happy, were nevertheless marked by her overriding desire to conceal what she herself describes as 'my dark origins'.

If the final chapters of this book, charting Gill's mother's last years and Gill's own adult life in post-war Britain, fall flat in comparison, this is scarcely surprising (though there might have been a case for a little judicious editing here). But this is a minor quibble. Gill's triple-voiced work from the female perspective (her male characters, even the interesting Günther Zuntz, remain largely peripheral) offers the reader an out-of-the-ordinary, convincing and engaging picture of a German-Jewish family of the twentieth century.

Charmian Brinson

Accessible and entertaining

HITLER'S LIST: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO 'DEGENERATES' - JEWS, BOLSHEVISTS AND OTHER UNDESIRABLE GENIUSES

Illustrations and text by John Minnion

Liverpool: Checkmate Books (65 Dudlow Lane, Liverpool L18 2EY, tel 0151 722 8950), 2005, 138 pp., paperback, £13.99

As a Jew born after the war, I found this newly revised edition (first edition 2004) extremely interesting. I hadn't heard of many of the people featured and enjoyed reading about the ones I had. Many of those included here are no longer with us, but we are still fortunate enough to have George Weidenfeld, Roman Polanski and Eric Hobsbawm. Perhaps Melvyn Bragg would like to get them together on the *South Bank Show* sometime soon.

Each of the 90 potted biographies has a caricature of its subject drawn by John Minnion. John Minnion has been drawing in black and white for as long as he can remember 'when it

was fashionable'. Having spent 28 years as a freelance illustrator, he recently returned to book publishing. He has drawn over 4,000 commissioned pictures, many during his six years illustrating for *The Listener*.

The longest section is Art and Design with 18 entries. I particularly liked the caricature of Marc Chagall showing the painter with a palette in one hand and a violin tucked under his chin as he floats above a typically Chagallesque village. There is also a section on 'degenerate' sport. Unfortunately for sports fans, this section is one of the shortest, the other being jazz. Both sections contain only three entries, which suggests that we Jews have fallen rather short in those areas.

Each section has a quotation in large type. Vicky, probably Britain's greatest political cartoonist of the twentieth century, declared: 'If readers do not complain, you have not got a cartoonist! My job is to tread on people's toes' - which makes interesting reading in the light of the recent Danish cartoon furore.

Like other books in this series, *Hitler's List* is pithily annotated, accessible and entertaining.

Laraine Feldman

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Water, water everywhere

Once, when rivers were the arteries of commerce, the Thames was alive with boats and there were no container lorries, canals were a popular means of transporting goods. As for washing water, before it was piped into our homes, sparing use was the order of the day. Aristocratic families moved from castle to castle so that the one they had just occupied could be 'sweetened'. Good Queen Bess, we are told, had a bath every month, whether she needed it or not.

Until the inventive Mr Bazalgette built the first brick sewers to take waste from our houses, walking near the gutter must have been a nauseating experience. The Romans seem to have managed their hygiene better. Their baths were places of luxury and dalliance. In fact, the town of Bath, or Aqua Sulis, had facilities far in advance of anything that was available until many centuries later.

When I came to England, my foster parents' house didn't boast a bathroom. Once again kettles were heated for the tin tub and, being small, I could just sit in it. I wondered what the grown-ups did, apart from strip-washes. The mystery was solved when my foster mother (auntie) said on Friday night 'Uncle's gone to the baths.' Later I was introduced to this ritual. You entered a tall building and paid a fee at a counter. Then you were given a number and made your way to the corresponding cubicle. While you were undressing, the bath was filled with water at the right temperature. You could stay in it as long as you wished and, if it got cold, you called out 'More hot water for number x!'

In other places where we lived, there were bathrooms, but restrictions prevailed. For a start, you were only supposed to use five inches of hot water during the war. Any more was unpatriotic. Also, the system itself was cumbersome and expensive. On Friday night rusty geysers were pressed into service. This immersion was considered quite enough to last for the week.

Strangely enough, some years ago my brother-in-law was made a Companion of the Bath. To my disappointment, his duties did not include scrubbing the Royal back!

Martha Blend

PROFILE

Ronald Channing

Stephanie Steiner

**A private person who loves
the company of others**



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

Greeted regularly by longstanding West Hampstead neighbours and her many friends in the AJR and the refugee community, Steffi Steiner remains at 81 a warm-hearted, independent extrovert.

She was born Stephanie Sussmann in Berlin in 1924. Her father, Manfred, was a doctor of law, often working late into the night. An only child, Steffi admits that he spoiled her. Her mother, Hildegard Irene Franck, who came from Katowitz in Upper Silesia, was a rather distant figure who spent much of her time in court with her husband. By a stroke of good fortune, Hildegard held British nationality through her father.

The family's well-to-do lifestyle in the Charlottenburg district meant that Steffi was brought up by a governess and played alone in the apartment's garden, though her parents came every evening to recite a non-Jewish prayer with her. Sadly, apart from a visit to Katowitz in 1936 to see her cousins and maternal grandmother, she had little or no contact with her wider family and virtually no connection with other Jews or Judaism. Steffi began her education at the local school belatedly in 1931 at the age of seven. However, when Hitler became chancellor, her parents enrolled her in a Jewish school.

In 1934 the Gestapo tried to arrest her father, but he avoided imprisonment by telephoning his friend, the chief of police, whose protection he maintained until 1936. So that his wife could regain British status, they divorced. This enabled Steffi and her mother to leave for England in March 1937 on the liner *Bremen*, which docked in Southampton.

Steffi recalls being sent to a girls' boarding school in Gerrards Cross, returning a year later to Haverstock Central School in London's Chalk Farm district. She had learned English fairly quickly and was well treated by staff and children alike. Her mother had rented part of an eight-roomed house in Finchley Road and was able to make a living by letting rooms. Though her father came in 1938, her parents remained separated and, although they stayed on good terms, it was surely

distressing for a young refugee girl. With the outbreak of war, she was evacuated to live with an upper class family who had a large house in Luton, where her father made regular weekly visits. But on reaching the age of 17, Steffi felt compelled to gain her independence, leaving school with no formal qualifications - though she obtained her GCEs later at evening school.

A job with the JNF meant returning to live with her mother in London, moving on to work as a typist in Park Lane and then, in 1946, to the Board of Trade, where her father was a translator. In 1950 she began work at the Israel embassy as a telephonist and was promoted to the press department, often receiving invitations to the residence of Ambassador Eilat. For a couple of years she even joined the Territorial Army's WRAC and described it as 'the best time of my life'.

In 1961 Steffi embarked on the SS

Theodore Herzl at Marseilles for Haifa, staying with an aunt on Kibbutz Givat Hayim, but, being a town girl, went on to live in Beit Brodetsky in Ramat Aviv, where she worked for Express Tours travel agents. When Steffi became unwell in 1963, her mother brought her back to London for treatment where, from 1966 to 1969, she worked for Peltours travel agent.

Joining the AJR Club and other refugee organisations, she met Kurt Steiner, a widower who worked in a large London-based building company and had an only daughter, Henrietta (Henny). He too was Berlin-born and had been in a labour camp, but never talked about his experiences. They were married at Belsize Square Synagogue in 1966 and settled in a house on the North Circular Road in Neasden.

A devoted couple, they formed an especially close relationship after Kurt's retirement in 1977, outliving many of their small circle of friends. In 1987, following the death of her mother at the age of 90, they moved to her former West Hampstead apartment and Kurt expanded his voluntary work for the AJR. In 2002 he died suddenly aged 89, leaving a large void in Steffi's life.

The apartment remains much as it was when Kurt was alive, with mementos, cuttings and photographs adorning the walls. Steffi still reads two newspapers a day, mostly the *Telegraph* and the *Mail*, and maintains a strong interest in current affairs. She watches television very little, preferring Radio 4's more intelligent programmes, and still copes with paying bills and filing.

Henny visits her stepmother once a week and Steffi goes to Daleham Gardens lunch club and the AJR Centre in Cleve Road, meeting her friends Ken Saunders and Fred Dunston and enjoying the AJR's main events. She used to go on holidays with the AJR until they became rather too much for her. 'I like the British people and they seem to like me', she volunteers. 'They have a lovely sense of humour and I respect them in every way.'

INSIDE the AJR

Edgware members remember their youth

Some 55 of us enjoyed a most pleasant afternoon listening to jazz tapes prepared so nicely by Alf Keiles, who also gave us a brief introductory talk on the history of jazz. The tapes were based on American/Negro/Jewish themes and even some Israeli ones. How nice to remember one's youth! *Felix Winkler*

Regional get-together in Welwyn Garden City

This was by far the best get-together in recent years. Groups came from Cambridge, Hertfordshire, Ilford, North London and Oxford. Guest speaker Eve Pollard kept us amused, particularly when she spoke about her time as editor of the *Sunday Mirror* with the late Robert Maxwell as publisher. It does seem that the formation of ever more groups throughout the UK is fulfilling a need and, to that extent, more power to Myrna and her co-organisers.

Herbert Haberberg

Friendly fellowship interchange in Hull

Meeting at a member's house, we listened with interest to a recently joined lady telling us of a week's voluntary Israeli army support action during a brief holiday there. There was a happy first meeting between her and another member who had been unable to attend for several months. We agreed actively to support the planned Northern Groups visit to London on 7-9 November. Our usual friendly fellowship interchange was enjoyed by everyone over Susanne's cakes and biscuits. *Bob Rosner*

Next meeting: Sun 17 Sept

Ilford Fair Reporting Group talk

Jack de Metz told us that the Fair Reporting Group's website contained numerous instances of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel hostility which are rarely reported or investigated by the police, particularly in France and Eastern Europe. *Edith Poulsen*

Next meeting: Wed 6 Sept. Fred Rosner, 'German Philosemites, Jewish Antisemites'

West Midlands (Birmingham) summer luncheon

Brilliantly hot weather marked the day of our summer luncheon, held in the delightful home and garden of Eileen and Ernst Aris who, as well as hosting the event, generously provided the main course. With an attendance of over 35, the occasion was highly successful in its own right, as well as being a very welcome continuation of a summer luncheon. *Philip Lesser*

Next meeting: Tues 12 Sept. Fred Austin MBE, 'My Various Escapes'

North London: 'What Sort of Job is That?'

Our speaker, Jeffrey Segal, had over the years run the whole gamut of the acting profession: repertory with the Royal Shakespeare Company, West End and provincial stage, films, radio and TV. He spoke not as a leading man but as a jobbing actor - one of the many on whom hinges the success or failure of any production.

Herbert Haberberg

Thur 28 Sept. Outing to Hatfield House

Surrey revelry

Our annual garden party was hosted by the bubbly Janet with Anthony Portner, in their delightful Chertsey home and garden. Fortified by an excellent array of tasty buffet dishes, the revelry reached record levels, as did the mercury on that day, but we managed to keep cool with lots of drink on tap and shading below the Tall Trees, as this home is aptly named. *Rubin Katz*

Scotland and Newcastle get-together in Edinburgh

The highlight of the 4th Scotland and Newcastle AJR get-together was a presentation by cartoonist/author John Minnion of his book *Hitler's List*. John's skill in depicting the essential personal dynamics of his subjects was honed while he was a schoolboy observing and drawing his teachers. A second presentation, by Heartstone's Paula Kitching, was an appeal to AJR members to contribute to a Holocaust exhibition in Scotland. *Jonathan Kish*

Crime prevention in Brighton and Hove

Malcolm Carlisle, Crime Prevention Officer in Hove, outlined the work of the local police force, stressing the connection between drug dependency and burglary. He said that thanks to greater vigilance, preventive measures and the use of technology, crime in Brighton and Hove had decreased considerably. *Ceska Abrahams*

Next meeting: Mon 18 Sept, 1.45pm Vivien Harris, 'Jewish Genealogy'

Myrna chairs Essex discussion on topical issues

With Myrna Glass as chairperson, we had a lively discussion about such issues as whether the Queen should retire; whether immigrants should learn the British way of life; and whether the police should be given more powers. There were almost as many different opinions as there were members of the audience. *Julie Franks*

Next meeting: Tues 12 Sept. Katharina Hübschmann on the Wiener Library

HGS talk on genealogy

Our speaker Jeanette Rosenberg had done an enormous amount of research on the genealogy of her German-Jewish family. She presented the results on slides and we were fascinated by the wealth of material shown, not only regarding family trees but also photographs. *Max Sulzbacher*

Next meeting: Mon 11 Sept. Helen Fry, 'Refugees in Uniform'

'Any Questions' in South London

An 'Any Questions' session was organised by Walter Woyda, who also acted as question master. Among topics discussed were the monarchy, accountability in all walks of life, political correctness, and 'Then and now'. As always, refreshments were served and those present had the opportunity to socialise in pleasant company. *Myrna Glass*

Next meeting: Thur 14 Sept. Frank Miller, 'From Mecca to Vienna: The Story of the Bagel'

Second meeting of Hendon group

The second meeting of this group was, like the first, very well attended. The AJR's Hazel Beiny chaired a discussion on current affairs and our old friend Michael Newman gave us an interesting talk on the future of the AJR. *Annette Saville*

Pinner: 'Changes in the Jewish World since 1990'

Our speaker, Neville Nagler, former director of the Board of Deputies, discussed the general position of the UK community and its activities, especially the treatment of asylum-seekers (in comparison with 1939) and the current rise of antisemitism, which he ascribed to slow reactions by government agencies. He suggested that the treatment of the Jewish community was a litmus test for how minorities in general are treated. *Paul Samet*

Next meeting: Thur 7 Sept. Lawrence Landau, 'The Work of an Honorary Consul'; Thur 28 Sept. Outing to Hatfield House

Ilford trip to Waddesdon Manor

As a former resident of Frankfurt am Main, I regarded it as a special pleasure to join the Ilford group for a trip to Waddesdon Manor, one of the Rothschild family homes. Our trip began with a brief account of the Rothschild family, including slides of some of the treasures in the house. The house, with its panelled rooms, stupendous chandeliers, famous paintings and rare artefacts, takes one's breath away. But the lure of the wonderful gardens beckoning us from the windows did not permit us to linger too long in the house - it was a delight to wander around the numerous flower beds. A marvellous day out for the Ilford group.

Meta Roseneil

South West Midlands: Sunday lunch with the Neubauers

Nineteen of us enjoyed a delightful Sunday lunch at the home of Richard and Wendy Neubauer in the Royal Forest of Dean. A new member, Renate Beigel, from Vienna, had no idea that any other survivors were in the area. By chance, she met a friend of

Ruth Jackson, who brought the two together, and they found much in common.

Maggie Conu

Tunbridge Wells regional get-together

Allan Conway gave us a most interesting talk on graphology, following which we had a discussion on feeling British. The vast majority of us feel very much at home in this country and are truly grateful to be here. As always, thanks to Myrna Glass and other AJR staff for the hard work they put in to making this such a stimulating meeting.

Inge Ball

FUTURE MEETINGS

Cardiff Mon 4 Sept. Lunchtime Get-together
Wessex Tues 5 Sept. Lunchtime Get-together plus speaker from Wiener Library
Newcastle Sun 10 Sept. Kathleen McCreery, 'Ella Schliesser, Actor and Activist'
Oxford Tues 19 Sept. Susannah Alexander, 'An Overview of the Jews in England'
Edgware and Hendon Tues 26 Sept. Outing to Wimpole Estate in Cambridgeshire. Call Susan Lewis on 020 8385 3070

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Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

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AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 20 September 2006
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Peter Heimes

'The Life of a Private Investigator'

KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 4 September 2006
11.45 am for 12.15 pm

Joanna Millan

'My Experiences as a Magistrate'

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September Afternoon entertainment

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Tue 5	CLOSED
Wed 6	Douglas Poster
Thur 7	Jack Davidoff
Mon 11	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 12	CLOSED
Wed 13	Katinka Seiner
Thur 14	Jen Gould
Mon 18	Kards & games Klub
Tue 19	CLOSED
Wed 20	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur 21	Guyathrie Peiris & Bill Patrick
Mon 25	Kards & Games Klub
Tue 26	CLOSED
Wed 27	Sheila Games
Thur 28	Margaret Opdahl

DIARY DATES

August 23 Lunch at Day Centre, afternoon trip to Tiptree for Cream Tea

September 10 Annual Tea at the Watford Hilton

Oct 29-Nov 5 Bournemouth holiday

November 9 Kristallnacht service at AJR Centre

For further information about any of these events, please call us on 020 8385 3070

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasmir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thanks

Ludwig Spiro is grateful for the many good wishes he received at the time of his recent accident.

Birth

Congratulations to Caroline (née Treitel) and Jon - a son, Conrad Samuel, on 26 June 2006.

Deaths

Austin Freda. On 9 July 2006 aged 98 Freda Austin (née Kohn) died after a short illness. Beloved wife of Frederick Austin (previously Friedrich Aufrichtig), sister-in-law of Martha Aufrichtig Leibel and Robert Aufrichtig, all of whom predeceased her. She remains forever in the loving memories of her nephews Ronny and Charlie Roberts and her niece Eve Austin Yavers and family.

Lewinsohn Eric, 1919-2006. Holocaust survivor who lost his parents at Auschwitz, worked in manufacturing and later became an inspiring German teacher, translator and a popular member of the local community. Survived by his second wife Meriel and many descendants, including great-great-grandchildren.

Selo Louis. With a heavy heart I have to report the demise of my son Louis at the age of 55. The family are inconsolable, especially his wife Anna, three children Martin, Monica and Sebastian, and his brother David. Deep sorrow is felt by close relatives in the USA. Laura Selo.



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AJR TEA

SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2006
2.30 PM
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Obituary

Paul Cohn

Paul Moritz Cohn, one of this country's most distinguished mathematicians, was Professor Emeritus at University College London following his retirement in 1989 from the Astor Chair of Mathematics at University College.

Paul was born in Hamburg in 1924, the son of Jakob, a businessman, and Julia, a school teacher. When the Nazis came to power, his parents sent him to the 'Jüdische Schule in Hamburg' (Talmud-Tora-Schule), where he learned English well enough to have no problem communicating when he later arrived in England. Already his favourite subject was mathematics.

Emigration became essential following Kristallnacht, when Paul's father was imprisoned for nearly four months. Without an emigration permit there was nowhere to go except Shanghai, and sailings were fully booked. England was prepared to take children without guarantee and thus it was that Paul arrived alone on a Kindertransport. He never saw his parents again.

He was put to work on a chicken farm in the south of England, where he remained until 1941. Then, after briefly training as a precision engineer, he worked in a factory for nearly five years. In this period he studied by correspondence, passed the Cambridge Scholarship Examination, and was awarded a scholarship to study mathematics at Trinity College - a remarkable example of strength of character coupled with unusual ability.

Having graduated in 1948, Paul stayed in Cambridge to do research in abstract

algebra and obtained his PhD in 1951. There followed a year in Nancy in France, at that time a centre of modern mathematics, and ten years as a lecturer in Manchester. In 1962 he joined London University, first as Reader at Queen Mary College, then as Professor and Head of Department at Bedford College and finally at University College.

His highly original and important contributions to wide areas of algebra led to international recognition and multiple contacts with workers in America and Continental Europe. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1980. He was active in the London Mathematical Society (the premier professional body of mathematicians in Great Britain) and served as its president in 1982-84. His enthusiasm for mathematics never left him; indeed, Cambridge University Press announced a new edition of one of his most influential research monographs shortly after his death.

Paul wrote about his family history, going back about nine generations, in the *AJR Journal*. More recently, he was a regular contributor, sending in brief reports about meetings of the AJR's Hampstead Garden Suburb branch. He also maintained an interest in the German language and history. He was much amused when, on a visit to Germany, one of his hosts, not knowing his origins, complimented him on his German, noting with surprise that he spoke with a Hamburg accent.

We knew Paul for well over 50 years as a friend and colleague. We are all the poorer for his passing. He is survived by his wife Deirdre, their two daughters Juliet and Yael, and five grandchildren.

Karl Gruenberg and Paul Samet

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Slave labour deadline

According to German law, the last day on which compensation payments from the German Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future may be made to eligible Holocaust survivors or their heirs is **30 September 2006**.

Created in July 2000, the Foundation was endowed with DM 10 billion (approx. £3.3 billion) from the German government and industry to make reparation awards to former slave and forced labourers. These payments represent the first time the use of slave and forced labourers has been addressed by the Federal Republic of Germany.

To the end of July this year, approximately 136,000 former slave and forced labourers had received compensation from the Foundation. Around 24,000 heirs of survivors who died after February 1999 have also received reparation awards.

Hungarian deadline extended

At the end of July, the AJR received notification that the deadline to apply to the Hungarian government compensation programme had been extended until **31 December 2006**.

The scheme pays a one-time award of HUF 400,000 (approx. £1,000) to Hungarian Nazi victims and their heirs as compensation for a lost parent, spouse or child. Half of this amount is paid in respect of a murdered sibling. In cases where there are no such living relatives, a living sibling is entitled to half of the compensation amount.

Application forms (and guidelines) are available from this office. Face-to-face or telephone appointments to assist with completing application forms can be arranged by contacting this office.

Completed forms should be sent to: The Central Compensation Office, 1116 Budapest, Hauszmann Alajos utca 1, Hungary.

Written enquiries should be sent to: Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to mnewman@ajr.org.uk

Arts & Events Diary - September

To 12 November 'Identities 2006' Exhibition marking minority identities in Britain. Jewish Museum, Camden Town, tel 020 7284 1997

To 10 September 'Life is Red' Exhibition of miniatures, sculptures and textiles created by students from Prague, London and Nuremberg representing their responses to the Holocaust. Jewish Museum, Finchley, tel 020 8349 1143

Mon 11 Dr A. Rosner, *Jew Süß* and the *Josephus Trilogy*. Two of *Lion Feuchtwanger's Historical Novels*' Club 43

Mon 18 Geoffrey Ben-Nathan, 'Ethiopia and the Bible: The Queen of Sheba, the

Ark of the Covenant and God's 'Holy Presence' Club 43

Wed 20 'Islam and the Jews: Commonalities and Conflict' Lecture by Charles Landau. London Jewish Cultural Centre, 8 pm. Four sessions, including 27 September and 4 and 11 October. Tel 020 8457 5000

Mon 25 Ken Baldry, 'Franz Liszt: Pianist, Composer, Man' Club 43

Mon 2 October Club 43 No lecture (hall not available)

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Hans Seelig on 01442 254360



with Ronald Channing

Support for Israel under attack Board presidents speak out

Unprovoked cross-border attack, continual bombardment by missiles of civilians in Israeli villages, towns and cities from across the border with Lebanon, and the resulting damage, injury and loss of life, brought condemnation of these terrorist acts and unanimous support for Israel's right to self-defence from former presidents of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Meeting in the historic Bevis Marks Synagogue in the City of London on Sunday 23 July, a concerned audience focused its attention on contemporary threats to the security of the Israeli nation. Uniquely, it was an occasion on which all six living presidents of the Board participated in a question-and-answer panel organised by East London synagogues and the *Jewish Chronicle*.

As chairman of the panel, the current president of the Board, Henry Grunwald QC, sought the panel's views on Israel's response to the killing of eight members of an IDF patrol on Israeli soil, the capture of a further two soldiers and the raining down of missiles on to the civilian population of northern Israel. Lord Janner of Braunstone QC said that the situation was 'extremely worrying', especially for those with families in Israel, and that there was no indication of the reality of a peace process. He believed that Britain's Jewish community would support Israel in every way it could, but was concerned it would take time for the Israeli army to succeed in its moves against both Hezbollah and Hamas.

Judge Israel Finestein QC noted the 'scaring experience' which had made the government of Israel embark on this campaign. Former Prime Minister Sharon's policy had been to quit Gaza and complete withdrawals from the West Bank, yet it was the 'declared ambition' of the government of Iran to 'remove' the whole of Israel. A proxy army had been established answering to the Iranians. No one appeared to have anticipated these

attacks, but if military strategists concluded that this was the way to respond, unhappily innocent civilians would be caught up in the fighting. The world must see that 'Israel is defending itself' and should be regarded as 'having been forced to take action'.

Jo Wagerman OBE referred to a letter from her daughter who was living in Israel and whose graduate son had just entered pilot training school. They had marched on to the parade ground to the cheers of their families - which, she declared, said a great deal about Israel: 'We are prepared to place our nearest and dearest on the front line!' On the issue of casualties, Israel was a democracy that provided shelters against bombing for all its citizens - which contrasted with Lebanon, where aggressors had built bunkers for themselves and their combatants but not for the people.

Dr Lionel Kopelowitz took the view that Israel was fighting terrorism 'on behalf of the free nations of the world'. It was common knowledge that Hezbollah was backed by Syria and Iran and acted as a force independent of the Lebanese government in the area from the Litani River to the border with Israel.

Henry Grunwald was disturbed by the considerable publicity which Hezbollah had gained in the media. There was a limit to what the Board could do. Reluctantly he suggested that Israel did not always have articulate representatives to present its case. Jo Wagerman warned about receiving 'conflicting messages' from Israel, while Dr Kopelowitz added that in the UK, Israel had never taken its public relations seriously enough.

Asked if the Jewish community was its own worst enemy, Eldred Tabachnik QC felt it was important to strive for common ground within the community and to agree on broad principles. This involved expressing 'passionate sympathy' for the State of Israel, but not by expressing this in extraneous newspaper advertisements.

Newsround

France seeks closure in Dreyfus affair

President Chirac has led a ceremony marking the centenary of the rehabilitation of Alfred Dreyfus, who was convicted of treason on trumped-up charges. The President said his rehabilitation was a rejection of antisemitism and a victory for human rights. The ceremony was an attempt to end a controversy which has divided France for more than a century.

Auschwitz death camp renamed

Following pressure from the Polish government, the UN has agreed to rename Auschwitz Concentration Camp in order to emphasise that the Germans, not the Poles, were responsible for it. It is to be renamed the Former Nazi German Concentration Camp of Auschwitz.

Anger over show of works by Hitler's favourite sculptor

An art gallery in Schwerin has provoked outrage by staging the country's first post-war exhibition of Hitler's favourite sculptor, Arno Breker. Breker, who died in 1991 at the age of 91, has never been fully rehabilitated in the eyes of the German public. The organisers of the exhibition said they wanted to provoke a debate, not rehabilitate the artist.

Sir Sigmund receives German order

Sir Sigmund Sternberg has been awarded the Knight Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. The order was presented by His Excellency Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger in a special ceremony in London. The Ambassador said Sir Sigmund had 'made a special and invaluable contribution to reconciliation and understanding, first between Germans and Jews, and most recently in the field of Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations'.

Graf Zeppelin found

The wreck of the *Graf Zeppelin*, Nazi Germany's only aircraft carrier, has finally been located. Launched in 1938, the ship never saw service - a casualty of infighting within the Nazi elite and the changing tide of war. She was scuttled by fleeing German troops in April 1945 and found in shallow water near Szczecin in Poland.