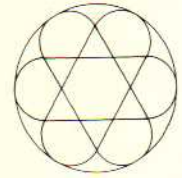




Centre for German-Jewish Studies

NEWSLETTER

University of Sussex



No 12, December 2000

Editor: Nina Brink

ISSN 1265-4837

The Lewis Elton Family Papers

The Centre is extremely fortunate in having received from Professor Lewis Elton the generous gift of an important collection of family papers for its archive. The Eltons are descended from the influential Ehrenberg family. Samuel Meyer Ehrenberg (1773-1853) was the founder of the famous 'Samson'sche Freischule' in Wolfenbüttel (1807), which he transformed from a traditional Talmud school into a progressive institution. His activities occupy an important place in the Jewish Haskalah and educational reform in Germany. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, matrimonial alliances joined the Ehrenbergs with other notable families. The brothers Lewis and Geoffrey Elton came to Britain as schoolboy refugees and went on to have distinguished academic careers, while the most recent family scion is Lewis Elton's son, the author and comedian Ben Elton.

The historical events covered by the Elton Papers stretch from the Enlightenment to the end of the Weimar Republic in Germany, from Prague to Cambridge. The Papers fill some 20 archive boxes and offer a wealth of primary sources for social or intellectual historical research. Of particular interest are the detailed papers of Victor Ehrenberg. His works on ancient history, such as *From Solon to Socrates*, exerted an influence beyond the confines of the academy, and his impact on classical studies in England includes his role as co-founder and guiding spirit of the London Classical Society.

Eva Ehrenberg would be an equally rewarding subject of study. Her father was Siegfried Sommer, a personal school friend of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who became the first Jewish 'Oberlandesgerichtsrat' in Prussia. In addition to extensive correspondence, her papers contain numerous original works of fiction and translation, including her version of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Nearly all her writings remain unpublished, a noteworthy exception being her poetic memoirs, *Sehnsucht - mein geliebtes Kind* (1963).



Self-portrait by Helene Sommer (1900) from the Elton collection

Other items that merit individual attention (according to a preliminary survey by Dr David Groiser) include letters from Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) to Helene Sommer, mother of Eva Ehrenberg, in which this leading thinker and educator of Weimar Jewry sets out his vision of a dynamic symbiosis of 'Deutschtum and Judentum'; original drawings by Helene Sommer, née Edinger (1862-1932); certificates, documents, awards and medals; photographs of the immediate family of Victor and Eva Ehrenberg; memorabilia including inscribed books and a tie pin, gifts from the then Crown Prince Wilhelm to Siegfried Sommer, as well as a number of Bar Mitzvah gifts and books from Prague; Victor Ehrenberg's unpublished Personal Memoirs (written in 1971); and correspondence with Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem and E.M. Forster.

Conference Reports

'Playback': Arnold Daghani Exhibition at Keble College

An exhibition of works by Arnold Daghani formed an important part of the international conference at Oxford in July 2000, *Remembering for the Future 2000. The Holocaust in an Age of Genocides*, which was attended by over 600 academics and survivors. Curated by Dr Deborah Schultz, cataloguer-researcher of the Arnold Daghani Collection, the exhibition was held in the ARCO building at Keble College, Oxford. Fourteen works were shown, ranging from watercolours painted in the Mikhailowka slave labour camp, to later ink drawings and calligraphic works relating to Daghani's memories of the camp and his fellow inmates. Bronze works by contemporary Irish artist David Dunne provided an interesting juxtaposition, developing the discussion on visual responses to the Holocaust. Three of the exhibits by Daghani will be reproduced in the conference proceedings alongside Edward Timms's paper on *Memories of Mikhailowka*.

Conference director Dr Elisabeth Maxwell formally opened the exhibition, which was also attended by Daghani's sister-in-law, Professor Carola Grindea. The exhibition was visited by many delegates and was very well received. Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director of the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, commented on the helpful way in which the works were contextualised by means of informative texts relating to each work, together with excerpts from Daghani's diary. The Centre hopes to collaborate with Yad Vashem in the future in researching the works of Daghani held in their collection. The exhibition also opened up useful dialogues with Dr Lya Benjamin, who is involved with the Jewish museum in Bucharest, and Glenn Sujo, curator of *Legacies of Silence*, an exhibition to be held at the Imperial War Museum next year, in which Daghani's work will be shown.

The Centre is most interested in collecting further contextual information on German-speaking Jews who were deported to Transnistria and the Ukraine and welcomes all contributions. The Daghani Collection provides significant material with which we hope to develop research in this neglected area.

Academic Advisory Board

The fifth annual meeting of the Board, held at Sussex on Monday 25 September, was attended by Anita Bunyan, Julius Carlebach, Ralph Emanuel, Diana Franklin, Arthur Oppenheimer, Peter Pulzer (Chairman), Richard Murphy and Edward Timms. A warm welcome was extended to two invited participants, Pfarrer Christoph Knoch (representing the ANNE FRANK-Fonds, Basel) and Dr Michael Zimmermann (Director of the Austrian Cultural Institute in London). Three new members were elected to the Board: Cathy Gelbin, who is leaving Sussex to take up a Lectureship in German at Manchester; David Groiser, who is taking up a Lectureship in German at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, on the completion of his term as Righteous Persons Foundation Fellow at the Centre; and Peter Galliner, a member of the International Advisory Board of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

Commenting on the Annual Report, Professor Pulzer commended the Centre for achieving so much with its modest resources. The gifts of the Elton and the Ursell Family Papers, together with further works by Arnold Daghani, were warmly welcomed, and several speakers emphasized the importance of having a clearly defined archival policy. Professor Timms explained that the Centre offers a home for the family papers of former German-Jewish refugees who would prefer their collections to remain in Britain. A generous three-year grant from the Association of Jewish Refugees will make it possible to appoint a part-time Research Assistant with special responsibility for Archives and Publications.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of the 'Living with Difference' project for the promotion of multi-cultural education, which is supported by the ANNE FRANK-Fonds.

Intellectual Migration and Cultural Transformation

This international conference, held at Sussex on 25-28 September 2000, focused on the movement of ideas from German-speaking Europe to the Anglo-Saxon World. The aim was to extend the range of research on the enforced migration from Nazi-occupied Europe by analysing the impact of the refugees on divergent intellectual traditions and cultural environments. Papers by twenty-six speakers dealt with a wide range of disciplines, including social history, psychoanalysis, cultural and literary studies, architecture and art history, pottery and design, and the success of this programme was reflected in the liveliness of the ensuing debates among the sixty participants.

The need for methodological rigour was emphasized in keynote papers by Jennifer Platt (Sussex), Mitchell Ash and Friedrich Stadler (Vienna). This was complemented by a paper on 'The Need for a Feminist Approach to Exile Studies' by Andrea Hammel, the Centre's Research Administrator. The majority of the papers dealt with migrants who settled in Britain, including Ludwig Wittgenstein, Fritz Saxl, Karl Polanyi, Sebastian Haffner and Anna Freud. A dazzling slide presentation by Martin Brady showed how the landscape of London has been transformed by the work of émigré architects like Gropius, Goldfinger and Lubetkin. The participation of a significant group of American scholars opened up important international perspectives, and Lawrence Friedman (Indiana) performed a tango in order to demonstrate why psychoanalysis is so successful in Argentina. Further comparisons were developed by papers on 'Erich Auerbach and his Istanbul Circle' (Martin Vialon, Marburg), the 'Migration of French Social Scientists' (Laurent Jeanpierre, Paris), and 'German-speaking Exile Theatre in Australia' (Birgit Lang, Vienna).

The conference, jointly organized with the Vienna Circle Institute, was supported by grants from the British Academy and the Austrian Cultural Institute.

A Jewish Childhood in Hamburg
Excerpts from an Interview with Professor Julius Carlebach
conducted by Bea Lewkowicz in June 2000

Perhaps we could start this interview with a very general question. Could you please tell me something about your family background?

My father Rabbi Joseph Carlebach was the director of the Talmud Thora Realschule in Hamburg. It was a very successful orthodox school. There were about 1000 boys and the most important event I remember is when the Nazis ordered in 1935 or 1936 that Jews had to get out of German schools and Jewish teachers could not teach any more in German schools. This meant that a) we got a lot of extra children into the school and b) some of the very best teachers available in Germany became teachers in the Talmud Thora. There was a similar process after 1938 when people began to emigrate, including teachers, youth leaders and educationalists. Many of them went to Palestine and became *madrichim*, youth leaders and housefathers. They moved into the villages and day schools and created a new education system.

How orthodox was your home?

Very orthodox indeed. Everything rotated around Jewish festivals. We used to eat together as a family only on Shabbat. I find it difficult to recall it because I am still very emotional. The thing I remember most is the singing; we used to make a wonderful choir singing Sabbath songs. The whole family participated except very often one, which was me, or my brother, or one of my sisters, when we were *beleidigt* (offended). It was a family tradition, a family joke, if you objected to something, you were *beleidigt* and then you left the table and went into the kitchen.

What was the singing like?

Excellent - we harmonised and everybody participated, including my parents. In many homes it is only the children who sing. Apart from the singing I remember the laughter. It was a fun family although my father was terribly strict, especially on religious things. I feared my mother more than my father, which according to the Bible is the right way around. She could have a very sharp tongue although she was the only person I could go to if I was in trouble. But at the table we laughed. The Carlebachs were famous for the way they laughed. First of all they laughed very frequently, secondly it was a total personality laughter and thirdly they had usually forgotten the joke.

What other memories do you have of growing up in Hamburg?

We really lived in Altona. There is a long straight street with green bits in the middle and traffic on either side, Palmaille, that was what it was called and it was a very dangerous place because many of the communist-fascist battles took place on this green. We had a house right on

the Palmaille and we witnessed frequent gatherings of Nazis. On one occasion the Hitler Youth had a big parade. One of them fainted and they brought him to our house and my mother gave him a drink. When they left my mother said to the youth leader: 'Is this really the right house for you?' He said: 'Madam, this is the only house where I was sure of a friendly reception'. This soon became a treasured story in the family. Another episode was not so nice. This time the SA had a big demonstration. We children decided to make some tea, in case they needed refreshments and we put together about twenty cups. We were in the basement, looking out of the curved basement window, and my sisters went off to make the tea. The Nazis started up a new song. I still remember the words '*die Juden, die Juden, die schmeisst raus*' (throw the Jews out!), so we did not serve the tea.

The battles between the communists and the fascists were much more serious. Once, I was on my bicycle and the police had roped off a large area in the centre of the city and I got caught in it. I remember a fireman lifting me and my bicycle bodily out of this enclosure. On another occasion I was late for the afternoon service in the synagogue. So I jumped on my bike and started to ride, while with my hands I put my collar in order so as not to look too untidy. One of the Nazi special policemen stepped into the road and asked me if I realised I was not allowed to ride free-handed on a bicycle and he took me to the police station. That was interesting because it was like walking back into the 19th century, I almost expected a pike on the top of the policeman's helmet. He was very old fashioned and very correct. As a punishment he said I would have to leave my bike at the police station for a week. This was the week of Passover so it was no problem, I would not have used the bike anyway. There was nothing in these encounters to suggest to me that times had changed.



Julius Carlebach as a child, photographed at the family home in the Biberstrasse, c. 1924

Julius Carlebach, formerly Rektor of the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg, is Emeritus Professor of German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex.

