

## Lecture at British Academy

I would first like briefly to place the Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship, whose fiftieth anniversary we are celebrating today, in its historical context. The relationship between the British Academy and the Jewish academic refugees from Hitler, which reached a high point with the Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship, did not emerge from a vacuum in the 1960s. For a significant relationship had already developed between the refugee academics and British institutions like the Academy in the 1930s. I would argue that this helped to create the framework within which the relationship between the Jewish refugees in Britain, represented by the Association of Jewish Refugees, and the Academy, culminating in the creation of the Fellowship in November 1965, were to develop.

Refugee academics from the Third Reich seeking positions in Britain were fortunate in that an organization had been established early on to assist those of them who had been deprived of their posts at German universities or of their prospects of being appointed to such posts. This was the Academic Assistance Council, founded in 1933 on the initiative of William Beveridge and the Hungarian-born scientist Leo Szilard, which reconstituted itself in 1936 as the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL) and helped many hundreds of refugee scholars to find employment in British or American academic institutions. Today, its successor organisation is known as CARA, the Council for At-Risk Academics. Though the SPSL was based in London, it proved impossible to place anything like all the refugee scholars in British posts; many went on to the USA. Nevertheless, the SPSL was almost unique as an organisation dedicated to placing refugee academics in new posts; its long-serving secretary, Esther 'Tess' Simpson, was regarded for decades, until her death in 1996, with the greatest affection by the many hundreds of academics who had benefited from her tireless efforts on their behalf. The SPSL had an office at Burlington House, seat of the Royal Society, but Esther Simpson was also a well-known figure at the British Academy. The institutional network connecting the SPSL and the British Academy emerges, for example, in that William Beveridge, founder of the SPSL, was a Fellow of the Academy.

I will pass on to a brief consideration of the reception afforded to the refugee academics by British universities in the 1930s. Though there were few outright Mosleyites or rabid anti-Semites in the university community, the refugees encountered a fair amount of xenophobia, both anti-Jewish and anti-German. They were also seen as providing unwelcome competition for scarce positions held to be the preserve of British scholars. On the other hand, there was a tradition of liberality and open-mindedness in British universities; many academics were aware of the scholarly credentials of those fleeing Nazi Germany and eager to secure the benefit of their expertise. But there was a deep cultural divide between the British tradition, especially marked at Oxford and Cambridge, of the

college don focused on tutorial teaching and the faculty-based German university system, where established professors concentrated on their research and had little contact with undergraduates, largely restricting their teaching to a select group of postgraduate students.

It is possible to observe these conflicting factors at work on the eve of the arrival of the refugees from Nazism, in the case of the Oxford experience of the most famous of all academic refugees, Albert Einstein. Though Einstein was plainly exceptional in his celebrity and distinction, one can nevertheless infer a good deal about attitudes towards refugee academics from the reception he received in Oxford. Einstein first came to Oxford in 1931, through the initiative of Frederick Lindemann, who was Professor of Physics and would later act as Churchill's wartime scientific adviser. Einstein stayed in Oxford for three short periods between May 1931 and June 1933, spanning Hitler's assumption of power. He was accommodated at Christ Church.

The correspondence in Einstein's file at Christ Church shows that relations between the scientist and the college were cordially warm. In June 1931, the Dean, H.J. White, wrote to Einstein, offering him a research studentship at an annual salary of £400, 'for something like a month during term time in the course of the year'. Einstein replied the following month, expressing his pleasure at the prospect of spending time in such unfamiliar but congenial surroundings. On 23 October 1931, the Dean was able to inform Einstein that the Governing Body had elected him to a studentship (fellowship) and to convey 'our earnest hope that we may often have the pleasure and honour of seeing you in our society'.

But on 24 October 1931, the Dean received a letter from Professor J.G.C. Anderson, a classicist, protesting vehemently against Einstein's appointment; those who had framed the relevant statutes had never intended emoluments to go to people of non-British nationality, Anderson argued, adding that it was wrong to 'send money out of the country' in the dire economic situation of the Depression, especially as the university was receiving a large grant from public funds. The Dean retorted that the academic benefit to the college far outweighed narrowly nationalistic considerations: 'I think that in electing Einstein we are securing for our Society perhaps the greatest authority in the world on physical science; his attainments and reputation are so high that they transcend national boundaries, and any university in the world ought to be proud of having him.'

Einstein, unaware that he was under fire from Little Englanders reluctant to burden the British taxpayer with foreign scientists, accepted the appointment on 29 October. But on 2 November, Anderson dispatched a further letter, over three tightly packed sides long. The Dean circulated this missive to his colleagues, asking for comments. Only one response appears on file,

evidently from the one 'outsider', a lecturer in chemistry, mentioned by Anderson as having been appointed to a studentship. This simply reads: 'Is the Professor quite accurate in describing me as an English-speaking member?', signed 'A.S.R.' The writer can be identified as Alexander Stuart Russell, who had been appointed Dr Lee's Reader in Chemistry in 1919 and a Student of Christ Church in 1920. He had studied at Glasgow, and presumably spoke with a Scots accent to match. His witheringly laconic put-down ended the objections to Einstein.

The events of 1933 in Germany made it impossible for Einstein to return to Christ Church. He proposed that his stipend be used to fund posts for Jewish academics dismissed from German universities by the Nazis, and in May 1934 Dean A. Williams was able to inform him that Christ Church intended to give a sorely needed £200 to the distinguished classical philologist Eduard Fraenkel, formerly of Freiburg University and now in Oxford. The relationship between Einstein and Christ Church was predominantly harmonious. But it is significant that the offer of a fellowship even to a scientist of Einstein's enormous distinction encountered objections, if not downright hostility, at Christ Church, and this at a time before the Jewish refugee academics from Germany had begun to arrive in Oxford in numbers. Christ Church subsequently gave posts to two distinguished refugee academics, Paul Jacobsthal and Felix Jacoby, both classicists. The college also admitted a number of undergraduates who had arrived in Britain as refugees, like the distinguished poet and translator Michael Hamburger and Walter Eberstadt, who as an officer in the British Army at the end of the war played a key role in establishing Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk in Hamburg, the model for German public service broadcasting.

Against that background, I now turn to the establishment of what was originally called the 'Thank-You Britain' Fund. This evolved from a proposal in 1963 that the Jewish refugees from central Europe should make a public gesture of thanks to Britain, their adopted homeland, to be paid for by their donations. The idea originated with Victor Ross (Rosenfeld), a former refugee from Vienna who was a senior executive with *Reader's Digest*. The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) joined forces with Ross and took on the administration of the fund-raising; Ross became co-chairman of the Fund's organising committee, alongside Werner M. Behr, AJR vice-chairman. The first mention of what was to become the Fund occurs in a report in *AJR Information*, the AJR's monthly journal, on a meeting of the Board of the AJR held on 27 January 1963: 'it was suggested that an appropriate scheme should be launched by which the former refugees should express their gratitude to the British nation for having admitted them to this country twenty-five years ago.'

This was amplified by a statement that autumn, recalling the pogroms of November 1938: 'In November, twenty-five years will have elapsed since the mass exodus of the Jews from Central

Europe started. During the few months between the pogroms and the outbreak of war, this small island, then in an economic crisis, rescued more Jewish persecutees than any other single country. The Executive [of the AJR] is considering ways of visibly expressing the gratitude of the former refugees to the British people, and it is hoped that details of an appropriate scheme will be announced shortly.' Three months later, a boxed announcement appeared in the journal, headed 'Former Refugees' Thanks to Britain: Collective Gesture of Gratitude Planned'. Readers were informed that Victor Ross had published a letter in several national papers proposing such a gesture of collective gratitude and that the response to this letter had been most encouraging. The AJR and Ross were therefore considering several proposed schemes, and, once one was chosen, intended to launch an appeal 'on the widest possible basis'.

The scheme adopted became known as the 'Thank-You Britain' Fund, the proceeds of which were to be used for the awarding of Research Fellowships and the holding of lectures, both under the auspices of the British Academy. Ross approached the Academy, as the minutes of the meeting of its Council on 27 May 1964 recorded: 'A proposal had been received from Mr. Victor Ross, on behalf of refugees from Nazi oppression who had settled happily in Great Britain, that a Fund should be established to commemorate their welcome into Britain. The suggestion was that the Fund should be named "The Thank-offering to Britain" Fund, and that this Fund should be used for the establishment of a Lecture and Research Fellowship under the auspices of the Academy.' The Academy, adding gravitas, used the title 'Thank-Offering to Britain' Fund.

The subject of both the lecture and the fellowship was to 'relate to "Human Studies", widely interpreted in their bearing upon the welfare of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom'. The 'Thank-Offering to Britain' Fund Lecture was to be given every two years, for a fee of not less than £100; in the event, the lectures were given annually from 1966 till 1974, and thereafter mostly biennially until 2004. The 'Thank-Offering to Britain' Fund Research Award was to enable a Fellow selected by the Council to work for a period not exceeding three years at a university approved by the Council. With the cooperation of the British Academy secured, the AJR proceeded to publicise the scheme to its members and to raise funds. In a front-page article in *AJR Information* of September 1964, entitled 'A Quarter of a Century: Days of Remembrances', the AJR's long-serving General Secretary, Werner Rosenstock, introduced the 'Thank-You Britain' Fund to his readers; it was he who was principally responsible for the administration of the Fund. He explained that the proceeds of the Fund were to be used for the awarding of research fellowships and the holding of lectures under the auspices of the British Academy, 'as a perpetual memorial of our gratitude'.

The Fund's patrons could scarcely have been more eminent. They were the distinguished economist Lord Lionel Robbins, President of the British Academy and author of the Robbins Report

of 1963 on higher education; Sir Isaiah Berlin, a member of the Academy's Council (later President) and one of the great intellectual figures of his day; Professor (later Sir) Ernest B. Chain and Sir Hans Krebs, the two refugees from Nazism in Britain who had won Nobel Prizes by 1964; and a third refugee, Professor (later Sir) Ludwig Guttmann, Director of the Stoke Mandeville Spinal Injuries Centre. The nineteen members of the Fund's committee included leading figures in the AJR and other refugee organisations. The organising committee of the Fund sent out to all AJR members a letter, signed by its two co-chairmen, inviting them to contribute to the Fund.

The reaction to the appeal was gratifying. Already in October 1964, *AJR Information* reported that the response had been very encouraging. The appeal evidently struck a chord in the refugee community, as a letter sent by a contributor who was now deputy head of a college in Jamaica showed: 'I read in the *Manchester Guardian* about the "Thank-You Britain" Fund. I was one of those who after the Kristallnacht was sent to Oranienburg [concentration camp] but managed to come to Britain in time before the outbreak of war. I will never be able to repay all the kindness and understanding that was shown to me from simple Lancashire cotton workers to Quaker refugee workers and Jewish manufacturers. I am now a British subject and could not wish for anything better. I am trying to repay part of my debt by teaching as a British subject in Jamaica. What I can send is totally inadequate, but I try to say 'Thank you' every day by my work.' A letter attached to a contribution received from New Jersey, USA, read: 'I was only eight years old when we came to Britain from Germany. The ways in which we were accepted in those difficult times can never be repaid financially, but the heartfelt gratitude that so many of us felt for many years needed a form of expression. I am delighted to be able to contribute to your fitting memorial.'

The British Academy also became aware of the unusual enthusiasm with which refugees reacted to the 'Thank-You Britain' Fund. On 21 July 1964, Miss D.W. Pearson, Assistant Secretary at the Academy, wrote to Victor Ross, enclosing a specimen form for a deed of covenant, a tax-efficient way for contributors to increase the amount of their donations at no extra cost to themselves. Evidently, the printers (Oxford University Press) moved too slowly to keep pace with the eagerness of potential donors: before they had returned the proof of the form to the Academy, a handwritten note to Doris Pearson from another member of staff informed her that Ross had phoned to ask for the forms as quickly as possible, to send to contributors impatient to use them. Isaiah Berlin sent his donation to Rosenstock, as Treasurer of the Fund, in October 1964, through N.M. Rothschild & Sons, but this attracted the attention of H.M. Inspector of Taxes, who demanded a copy of the rules of the Fund, as evidence of the charitable purposes for which it would be used.

In July 1966, Werner M. Behr wrote to Pearson, enclosing a cheque for \$50 from Fred Lang of Illinois, USA. A note of admiration for the response aroused by the Fund crept into Doris Pearson's

customary businesslike style: 'The way in which new donors are still coming forward from time to time to add their contribution to the Fund is really rather impressive', she wrote in her reply to Behr. She would probably also have been impressed by a letter she received in August 1965 from the eminent Classical scholar Günther Zuntz, Professor of Hellenistic Greek at the University of Manchester, saying somewhat sharply that he had learnt about the Fund only from Lord Robbins's presidential address and asking to be put in touch with the Fund's Treasurer: 'For I want to do my modest bit.' Donations were also received in the form of bequests. It was a source of pride to the AJR that shortly before his death in London in 1965, the internationally known economist, political scientist and government adviser Moritz J. Bonn had stipulated in a codicil to his will that a substantial legacy should go to the Fund; Bonn had been one of the first German scholars to be appointed to a university position in Britain after 1933.

In an article in *AJR Information* of April 1965, Rosenstock responded at some length to critics of the Fund who argued that the refugees had already amply repaid any debt that they might owe Britain, through their contribution to the war effort and subsequently to British society generally, and that the Fund was excessive as an expression of gratitude; some felt that the refugees owed no debt to Britain at all, in the light of British policy before 1945 on immigration into both Palestine and the UK. The arguments presented on both sides here gave every appearance of emanating from entrenched positions based on strongly held views. On the one hand stood those who felt a sense of gratitude to Britain, who had settled by and large happily and integrated by and large smoothly into British society and who felt at ease with their part-British identity, and on the other hand stood those who felt that Britain had admitted them grudgingly and in insufficient numbers, that British society had hardly gone out of its way to make them feel welcome – most obviously in the mass internment of refugees as 'enemy aliens' in summer 1940 - and who preserved a sense of alienation and marginality in their daily life in Britain. Volume 3 of Isaiah Berlin's collected letters contains two letters in reply to letters he had received from Ernest Rose (Rosenheim), a refugee critical of the Fund; Berlin was unusually blunt in his rebuttal of Rose's charges against Britain, denying that British pre-war immigration policy had been ungenerous and comparing the internment of refugees in 1940 favourably with the record of other nations that had detained Jews.

Overall, however, one cannot help being impressed by the sheer number of refugees who contributed to the Fund, and the amount they gave, which in the end came to over £96,000, or about £1 million in today's money; that was a remarkable sum for a community of some 50,000 people who had mostly arrived as impoverished refugees in the later 1930s and had had barely twenty years of peacetime conditions to build up a degree of prosperity. The April 1965 issue of *AJR Information* carried as an appendix a list of donors to the Fund. This ran to five solid pages of names,

with six columns per page, totalling some 3,000 contributors. It did not include those who wished to remain anonymous and those whose contributions came in later, who together would have increased the final total substantially; in early 1966 that reached 4,500. Famous names included Anna and Ernst Freud; scholars like Francis Carsten, Eduard Fraenkel, Ernst Gombrich, Otto Kahn-Freund and Claus Moser; scientists like Hans Kornberg, Nicholas Kurti, Heinz London and Max Perutz; Mosco Carner, Peter Gellhorn, Franz Reizenstein and Peter Stadlen from the musical world; and the cartoonist Vicky (Victor Weisz), the industrialist Mac Goldsmith, the actor Martin Miller and the rabbis Ignaz Maybaum and Jakob Kokotek. But most significant were the serried ranks of ordinary refugees who formed the vast majority of the contributors; as many of them represented entire families, the number of donors came to form a substantial proportion of the refugee community. The most common surnames in the list were the classic German-Jewish names Stern, Rosenthal and Goldschmidt (if one includes its anglicized version, Goldsmith).

The money raised by the Fund was formally handed over to the British Academy at a ceremony on 8 November 1965, in the appropriately grand setting of Saddlers' Hall, just off Cheapside in the heart of the City. The date was doubtless chosen to be as close as possible to the anniversary of the pogroms of 9/10 November 1938. Pearson sent Rosenstock the names of members of the Academy to be invited to the ceremony. The number of highly distinguished members was so large that she sent two lists, one of which, the priority list, consisted of the officers and council of the Academy and other eminent personalities, including members of the committee appointed by the Academy to administer the Fund.

The dignitaries on this list included Lord Robbins, Professor Roy Allen of the London School of Economics (Treasurer of the British Academy), the archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler (its Secretary), Sir Isaiah Berlin, the art historian (and spy) Sir Anthony Blunt, Sir Maurice Bowra, Master of Wadham College, Oxford, the historian Sir Denis Brogan, the economist Alec Cairncross, Professor Henry Chadwick, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, the senior judge Lord Devlin, the historian Sir Goronwy Edwards, Professor Helen Gardner of St Hilda's College, Oxford, H.L.A. Hart, Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford, the economist Sir John Hicks of All Souls College, Oxford, Dr Kathleen Kenyon of St. Hugh's College, Oxford, the ancient historian Professor Arnaldo Momigliano, himself a former refugee from fascist Italy, John Pope-Hennessy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Sir Ian Richmond of All Souls College, Oxford, and Dr Lucy Sutherland of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Relegated to the reserve list were such famous names as Sir Roy Harrod, the biographer of Keynes, Nicholas Kaldor, Prime Minister Harold Wilson's economic adviser, Sir Karl Popper and Professor

Friedrich Hayek, the leading proponent of monetarism and the inspiration behind the free-market doctrines later associated with Thatcherism.

At the ceremony, Sir Hans Krebs formally handed over the cheque in the name of the refugees to Lord Robbins, who accepted it on behalf of the British Academy. Victor Ross and Werner M. Behr, co-chairmen of the 'Thank-You Britain' Fund Committee, signed the document giving the proceeds of the Fund to the Academy 'to be used for the award of research fellowships in the field of the humanities and the holding of an annual lecture.' Twenty-three 'Thank-Offering to Britain' lectures have been held, starting in 1966, when Lord Robbins spoke on the subject 'Of Academic Freedom'. Among the lecturers were such outstanding public figures as Roy Jenkins, Ralf Dahrendorf, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Arnold Goodman, William Armstrong, Robert Blake and Stuart Hampshire, as well as three refugees, Arthur Koestler, Otto Kahn-Freund and, in 2004, Claus Moser. The first Research Fellowship was awarded in 1967; it has become one of the most prestigious awards in the arts and social sciences and has been awarded to numerous leading scholars in their fields. Recipients over recent years include Patricia Clavin, for work on the League of Nations, Alexander Lingas, for research into Byzantine chant, building on the work of the refugee musicologist Egon Wellesz, and Eugene Rogan, for his study of the Middle Eastern and North African theatres of war, 1914-20.

I do not, however, intend to end on such a purely celebratory note, given that we are meeting on the anniversary of the pogroms of November 1938, often seen as the prelude to the so-called 'Final Solution'. The Holocaust too forms part of the background to the events that we are commemorating here today. It is beyond me to encompass the whole range of the Jewish victims of Nazism, so I will do no more than take one example of those all too often anonymous and forgotten victims, a vanished branch of my family that I was recently researching. My family came from Vienna. But the first husband of my aunt, Edith Grünfeld, the elder sister of my father Arthur Grünfeld, was Otto Gross [Photo 1], born on 17 April 1889 in Přívoz, a suburb of what is now the Czech town of Moravská Ostrava, known under the Austro-Hungarian Empire by its German-speaking – i.e. mostly Jewish – inhabitants as Mährisch-Ostrau. He died in Finchley, in north London, on 14 April 1944; that was before I was born, so I know him only from a few photographs and scattered, inanimate objects, like his address book (detailing friends and relatives dispersed across the world) or the diary that he kept in internment on the Isle of Man in 1940/41. Whereas the family history from Vienna has been preserved, that from Moravská Ostrava has effectively been removed from the historical record; the memory of its members has been erased almost as thoroughly as their physical being was extinguished by the Nazis.

Otto Gross was the son of Jakob Gross [Photo 2] and his wife Irme Gross, née Zeiger; he had a younger brother, Fritz, born in 1893, and a sister, Liesl, born in 1903. The family documents relating to births, marriages and deaths, like the death certificate issued for Jakob Gross following his death on 18 August 1913, are evidence of a well-established Jewish community living in settled and secure conditions and free to follow their own practices and religious rituals. That was not to last. For by the time that Jakob Gross's widow Irme died in 1940, both her sons had fled abroad, while the family was shortly to be exposed to the full savagery of Nazi persecution. Otto Gross in London was the only member of the closer family to escape to safety. The rest, like the Jewish community of Moravská Ostrava, disappeared without trace. One might say that the memory of the Gross family was consigned to oblivion by a threefold process of extinction. First, the Nazis destroyed the Jewish community of their native town, in whose public memory it barely lives on today. Then, after 1945, the Czech government expelled the German population, thus removing the social and cultural habitat in which the assimilated, German-speaking Jewish community, with its adherence to German culture and language, had flourished. Finally, after 1948 the Communist government systematically suppressed both the German and the Jewish elements of the Czech past, expunging them in large measure from contemporary memory.

Like many ambitious young men from the regions of the Habsburg Empire, Otto Gross was drawn to Vienna. He secured a position in a Viennese bank in 1910 and made a career at the Allgemeine Depositen-Bank. He saw service as an officer in World War I, in which he was both decorated and wounded in action. In 1920, he married Edith Grünfeld, the daughter of Bernhard Grünfeld, a wealthy businessman who had taken over from his father-in-law the family firm Adolf Lichtblau & Co. They had two children, my cousins Willy and Alice. But conditions in post-1918 Vienna were no longer conducive to Jewish success stories. Otto Gross lost his job in one of the banking crises of the 1920s and, after unsuccessful attempts to earn a living independently, was taken on by his father-in-law's firm. The family's situation deteriorated radically in March 1938, with the Anschluss. Adolf Lichtblau & Co. was 'aryanised', its Jewish employees were dismissed, and the younger members of the family prepared to flee. Edith Gross found a position as a domestic servant in Britain, which secured her a visa and admission to Britain. The children were taken in by British families.

The bureaucratic complexities involved in the process of emigration and the chicanery inflicted on Jewish would-be emigrants by the Nazi authorities marked an important stage in the reduction of people like Otto Gross to mere objects of Nazi officialdom. First, his possessions were listed and valued, as this document shows [Photo 3], a valuation of his typewriter (a 'Schätzungs-

Protokoll' in the dehumanised jargon of the time), drawn up in December 1938. The erasure of a Jewish emigrant's individuality from historical memory continued with the meticulously accurate listing of his luggage; the life of a human being was reduced to a baldly anonymous list [Photo 4] of personal possessions, items such as clothes and washing and shaving utensils, stamped with the words 'Devisen geprüft' ('currency checked').

In the bureaucracy of emigration, the personal dimension was almost lost: only a Czech visa in Otto Gross's passport – by now a German passport with the obligatory 'J' for 'Jude' [Photo 5] – shows that he made one last visit to his native country in February 1939. That was presumably the last time that he saw his mother, his brother and his sister and her family. Otto Gross arrived at Croydon Airport in Britain on 11 February 1939, a penniless refugee, and it is almost entirely as an anonymous unit in the immigration statistics that people like him have passed into cultural memory. Gross and his family settled in a rented house in Finchley Central together with his brother- and sister-in-law, my parents. But in July 1940 he again fell victim to a bureaucratic process, when, classed as an 'enemy alien', he was detained and interned for nine months. Once again, a human being was reduced by authority of officialdom to a mere function of his national or racial status. A sick man, Gross was released from the Isle of Man in April 1941 and died three years later.

During the early part of his emigration, Otto Gross was able to maintain tenuous contact with his family, by means of Red Cross messages, 25 words long, that could be sent from Britain via the Red Cross to German-occupied areas. Contact with his brother, in particular, hung by a thread, for Fritz Gross's position was precarious in the extreme. He had apparently been arrested at his home in Moravská Ostrava on 17 October 1939 and sent to a labour camp in Poland, but had been released and had made his way to the eastern part of Poland, occupied by the Soviet Union. He had an address in Lvov, then in Kolomea, where his brother sent a last letter from Britain on 1 June 1941. After that, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, he disappeared without trace. For that reason, the few surviving letters between the brothers carry a powerful emotional charge. When Otto Gross learnt of the death of his mother in spring 1941, he wrote to his brother, to share the pain and the grief: 'I know that, just as I cannot grasp and believe it, so it will be for you. Fate has decreed that we two sons could render no service to the best of mothers in her last hour and were unable to accompany her on her final journey. We must come to terms with that fact, and so I embrace and kiss you, dearest and most beloved brother, and press your hand.'

Only one letter from Fritz Gross has been preserved, and one postcard, written in red pencil and dated 13 January 1940, which reached London from Lvov via Moscow. Those last two words can be seen at the top left of the postcard [Photo 6] written in Cyrillic script, as is the name of the British

capital, an indication of the distance and the well-nigh insuperable barriers that were shortly to separate the brothers forever. In the letter, dated 20 February 1940, Fritz Gross expresses his great joy at having received a letter from his brother and reassures him about his own situation in Lvov: 'If it were not for this dreadful fear and the longing for our loved ones!' After this last sign of life, Fritz Gross, of whom nothing further is known to this day, disappeared into oblivion.

The remaining family members in Moravská Ostrava fell victim to the Holocaust, seemingly leaving nothing by which their memory might be preserved. Liesl Gross, the sister of Otto and Fritz, married Hermann Adler; they had two daughters, Gerda, born in 1931, and Eva, born in 1935. Hermann Adler was deported to Auschwitz and gassed on 29 September 1944, his wife and daughters on 4 October 1944. When I came to examine the meagre documents relating to the Adler family, I came across two photos, or more correctly fragments of photos, of people unknown to me. Gradually I realised that they were Liesl Adler's two young daughters, who now appear only in these fragmentary images. [Photo 7] In the photo, below right, there also appears part of the figure of an older woman, the mother. The broken, fragmentary nature of these images reflects two lives extinguished almost before they had time to be lived. For us, who live in what one might call the post-Holocaust, these rather ordinary family photos take on a quite different emotional quality, for we know of the family's later fate. Inevitably present in these images of everyday family life is, for us, also the violence and horror of their death: they vanished almost without trace in the vast, dehumanised process of mass murder.

I do not have the words to commemorate such people and such events. I will turn instead to a poem by Friedrich Schiller, one of the greatest literary exponents of that Classical humanism to whose values and ideals the German-speaking Jews of Central Europe were so strongly attached. The poem takes its title, 'Nänie', from the Greek word for a funeral elegy. It is a poem only 14 lines long, written in the strict Classical form called elegiac couplets, pairs of lines alternating hexameters (metrical lines of six feet) with pentameters (lines of five feet). 'Nänie' is a profoundly moving lament for the inevitable mortality of all things human. It begins with the arresting formulation 'Auch das Schöne muss sterben' ('Even that which is beautiful must die'), and goes on to illustrate this with examples of the qualities that constitute the glory of humankind: the beauty of the youth Adonis, the warrior exploits of the hero Achilles, the love that bound together Orpheus and Eurydice.

The poem culminates in a universal lament for human mortality, for the inevitable passing of all that is noble and beautiful: 'Siehe! Da weinen die Götter, es weinen die Göttinnen alle,' ('See! The gods weep, the goddesses, they all weep,') 'Dass das Schöne vergeht, dass das Vollkommene stirbt.' ('That what is beautiful must pass away, that what is perfect must die.') Yet 'Nänie' concludes on a

note of reconciliation, for in mourning those who embodied the best and noblest in humankind, the gods and the poem (and we here today) are commemorating them. 'Auch ein Klaglied zu sein im Munde der Geliebten ist herrlich;' ('Just to be a song of lament on the lips of the beloved ones is glorious'). By the act of commemoration, we perpetuate their memory, whether it be high scholarly and scientific achievements like those we heard about earlier, or whether it be the promise of young lives that was cut short before it could be fulfilled. Their lives, their qualities and their achievements are remembered. The poem confirms that in its conclusion: 'Denn das Gemeine geht klanglos zum Orkus hinab' ('For only what is base goes down to the underworld unsung').