Constructing narratives: considerations in the letters of Theodor M. W. Hirschberg and his family

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ABSTRACT

Based on the letters of Theodor Hirschberg held in the special collections at the University of Southampton, this article will problematise our understanding of letters as a source for narrative construction. Theodor fled from Berlin to London in 1939 and wrote to various members of his family until 1941. In discussing the biographies of individuals encountered in the collection, the article will note the problems but also the opportunities and nuances of using the epistolary as a source. Centring around three core debates, narratives created from Theodor’s letters will speak to silences and epistemology, ethical practice, and pragmatic concerns.

[... ] I had a couple of stressful days when your mail was late. If it is possible, then please send me news once a week. I am overjoyed about long letters but if your time doesn't allow for that, then I am happy about a short 'sign of life' from you. But please, don’t leave me without mail – I beg of you strongly.¹

On 28 May 1939, Gertrud Lehmann, a secretary in the Jewish Community of Berlin, wrote to her boyfriend of the time Theodor Hirschberg, who had just arrived in Britain under the assumption he would soon be leaving for Cuba. Gertrud was not alone writing to Theodor, requesting details of his situation in Britain and for news of his safe arrival. Theodor’s maternal aunt Else Kunz for example wrote similarly, and requested ‘that you keep us updated about your life, facts, hopes and feelings’². Gertrud wrote longingly, expressing her concern and fear of being left without mail – the only sign of life she would receive from him as a result of the unpassable space between them. Evidently a letter, of whatever size and content, was of vital importance to Gertrud, representative of an absent individual in a time of immense upheaval. It is therefore not unreasonable for the historian over eighty years later, to view such a source with equal importance to Gertrud in 1939. It is however equally reasonable to challenge how and why such a source can or should be used, and to what extent this is accurate and ethical.

In recent years, the number of ‘refugee collections’/‘family papers’/‘family correspondences’ available in the public domain has grown astronomically as families relinquish ‘the last physical reminder of long-departed loved ones’, with many coming out of the
attic and into the archive.³ The family archive of the refugee from Nazism has been analogised to, and sometimes directly seen as, biography, reminding the historian that the archive is both a repository of history and subject to that same history.⁴ Judith Szapor elucidates on this point where she writes ‘the archive, embodying the legacy of individuals, families, and communities, became a refugee itself’. Archives in many ways reflect the narrative of the individuals they purport to tell – thus the existence of letters between separated parties becomes part of the biography.⁵ Once the difficult decision to donate materials has been taken the issue then becomes how to best index, categorise and label such items.⁶ The labelling of ‘family archives’ as a ‘collection’ suggests homogeneity and a certain organisation, creating images of disparate items gathered to create a supposedly more complete view of life. Collections of a particular person or family further create issues – letters are dialogical and thus we learn about relationships and processes rather than fixed individuals and narratives.⁷ Collections rarely if at all just mention the titular individual or group. In many cases, these collections are also one sided, containing only the letters received by a particular individual and thus very rarely does their voice contribute to the series beyond its influence on their recipient’s response. It is often only through the pronouns ‘you’ and ‘I’ or ‘we’ that others appear in letters.⁸ Individuals, collectives, environments and emotions are discussed relationally, and the letters of Theodor Hirschberg held at the University of Southampton Special Collections are no exception – is this truly his collection then? And thus if we attempt to view such a collection as a biography – whose biography is it? Although maybe distancing us from the personal nature of the collection, in an attempt to highlight both the role of the archive in selection and framing, and to reflect the multiple narratives emerging from one individual’s collection, this article will refer to the Papers of Theodor Hirschberg by its archival reference code MS314.

Through weaving in various narratives created from MS314, this article will seek to problematise our use and understanding of letters as a source for narrative construction. In discussing these biographies, the article will be self-reflective, noting the problems but also the opportunities and nuances of using the epistolary as a source. Centring around three core debates, multiple narratives created from MS314 will speak to issues of silence and epistemology, ethical practice, and pragmatic concerns. Whilst not attempting to answer the questions asked but instead reflect upon them, the article will highlight the considerations necessary for the scholar whilst also exposing the depth and usability of one such collection held at the University of Southampton. Firstly, the role of silences in narrative will be discussed centring around epistemological questions of how the historian can construct a biography based on traces of the past, reminding the researcher that letters must not be treated as gateways into a supposedly truer narrative. Secondly the ethics of using collections such as MS314 will be explored, focussing on both the private/public nature of letters as a source, alongside the issues of potentially warping an individual’s life towards the facts of their death. Finally the practical issues of mining letters for clues to the lives of individuals will be noted, focussing on the notion of a ‘shared world’ in which writer and recipient exist, excluding the historian from references only known to those inside.

MS314 can largely be categorised (almost exclusively) as an archive of letters, concerning those that fled Nazism in the 1930s and their families. The migrant letter – and within that those of refugees, forced migrants and asylum seekers – remains the single largest
source of documentation for the lives of ‘everyday people’, a source mass that whilst widely used, has seen growing analysis in recent years. The turn away from histories ‘devoid of people’, and the rise of the historical biography has thus seen a growing focus on ‘Ego Documents’ in Jewish studies amongst others. Central are those sources that propot to offer insight into the personal lives of the writers and recipients, sources previously dismissed as too partisan and too subjective to possess historical value.

Sources of correspondence such as MS314 remain a way of accessing wider topics and events through the lens of individuals, but are also increasingly being seen as having value independent of the historian. In the study of the Holocaust, edited collections of letters, especially those concerning refugees from Nazi oppression, have become a staple in the literature and, therefore, beg the question ‘can [...] letters speak for themselves?’. Following the cultural and linguistic turn, the ‘Neue Biographieforschung’ can be used more widely to explore social shifts and the impact of society on the individual (and vice versa). Within this, the use of extensive letter collections by historians such as Esther Saraga, Andrea Sinn, Joachim Schlör and Shirli Gilbert, has shown how correspondence can be the primary artifice in the creation of a narrative. Within these works the authors highlight opportunities surrounding the use of the letter. Gilbert for example, in her work From Things Lost, details the narrative surrounding a series of letters written between South Africa and Germany, and writes that these gave her ‘an opportunity to dip into unfamiliar lives and relationships, unknown places and times’.

The epistemological: narrative and silence in MS314

Theodor Moritz Wilhelm Hirschberg was born on the 18 November 1903 in Eberswalde, Brandenburg to Martin Hirschberg (1856–1935) the Amtsgerichtsrat of Eberswalde, and Margareta Dresdner (1868–1911) (see Figure 1 for Theodor’s simplified family tree). His elder brother Hans Walter Hirschberg (1893–1950) was born in Wittenberge and went on to become a well-respected lawyer in Berlin whilst two of Theodor’s elder brothers died in 1915 during the First World War. Theodor and his younger brother Rudolf ‘Rudi’ Rembrandt Hirschberg (1906–68) were only eight and five respectively when their mother...
Margareta passed away shortly followed by their father’s remarriage to Paula Frieda Cohn (1876–1942) in 1914. After leaving school aged nineteen, Theodor began a two year course in banking at the Eberswalde branch of Commerz und Privatbank where he continued to work until 1933. From May-July 1933, Theodor relocated to Britain attempting to find work in London, but by September was back in Berlin working as an accountant for various businesses in the city. Theodor and his two brothers had a wide ranging family with many Tanten and Onkel from his father (the Hirschbergs), biological mother Margareta (the Dresdners) and his step-mother Paula (the Cohns), acting as confidants and correspondents. Theodor refers to Paula as his mother numerous times in the letters and although we cannot say for certain how close they all were, Theodor evidently treated her with familial love. Else Kunz, the sister of Theodor’s biological mother Margareta, wrote to Theodor in the summer of 1939 shortly after his move to Britain:

‘It’s understood that you write to your mother every Sunday (as she told us). Everything she has done for you, you repaid with loyalty and love. Don’t forget those who are related to you by blood. I hope we see each other again soon.’

Else’s kind words about Paula’s aid to Theodor, followed by a warning to not forget those ‘related to you by blood’ can easily be interpreted as a terse reminder to Theodor that the Dresdners are his biological family, separate from the Cohns. Not much more can be said about this potential tension within the family dynamic as MS314 does not contain other references of this sort.

The familial context and early life of Theodor Hirschberg was created from piecemeal scraps of information from MS314, but predominantly from genealogical sources and Theodor’s naturalisation papers at The National Archives in Kew. The ‘activation’ of these external institutional archives, in the language of Jennifer Douglas and Allison Mills, highlights the importance of an all-encompassing archival approach to constructing narratives vis-à-vis silences. In many cases collections have already been subject to genealogical contextualisation prior to donation, in order to make sense of the interactions across spatial and generational divides. Theodor’s family is not straightforward however, and no such contextualisation existed within MS314, and thus the job to fill in the gaps in the family structure and narrative is a difficult one. Genealogical sources such as births, marriages and deaths, whilst useful in connecting names and locations are equally imbued with silence, often giving no indication as to the lives and occupations of the women in the family such as Theodor’s mother and step-mother.

MS314 – like many other collections – is inequitative. The silences, whether through accident or design, shape the narrative told and the level of reliance on institutional sources external to the personal collection. Silences manifest themselves in a variety of ways in historical narratives: through the creation of the sources themselves (those omissions from the correspondents), through the assembly of the archive (those letters Theodor kept and those he did not), and through the construction of the narrative (those parts of MS314 not included in the stories told about the Hirschbergs and their relatives). Letters between refugees and those left behind are often burdened with the ineffability of their situation and the context of their spatial separation, with the power of words resulting in the desire often not to write them. Indeed, in a September 1939 letter to his friend Hans Adolf Friedländer in Amsterdam, Theodor writes that ‘it is useless to discuss the great problems facing us, as we have no influence at all’. These silences in
the creation of the letters range from the reality of the persecution experienced in
Germany, to relatively banal familial silences in order not to worry family members or
provoking responses. For example, in a letter from Ursula Gottschalk to her cousin Theodor,
Ursula begs him to ‘for the time being to keep strictest silence and not tell your mother
and relatives’ about the loss of her job from Maltman’s Green School in
Buckinghamshire. In her work on her family archive of the late nineteenth century,
Nancy K. Miller laments the lack of ability to ‘reach into the silences that surrounded these
memory remnants’ in her case photographs and a small amount of official documents.
Miller describes these isolated objects, surrounded by silence ‘like signposts to a journey
I cannot completely describe’ but that these have formed the narrative structure to
‘[conjure] stories from my objects about the people to whom they once belonged’.

The conjuring of stories from isolated sources enriched by the supplementary institutional/genealogical historical record speaks to both a specific consideration for letters but
also wider debates surrounding the historical construction of narrative. The American
historian Hayden White’s claim that history and the historical record offers but one
narrative and that the sources of the historian do not lend themselves to one way of
narrativizing, thus supposes that narratives are necessarily plotted in a way that past lives
are not. Indeed, Dan Stone has written that ‘the historian is not a conduit but someone
who shapes what the past looks like in the present’. The disconnect argued by scholars
such as White, between the narrative and the sources used to construct said narrative,
does not however, mean that narratives are fictional and sources obsolete. The historical
record is all we have, and thus whilst it is important to recognise the creation of narratives
by the historian and be mindful of the fact that a singular narrative from any source base is
questionable, this does not mean said narratives are fictional. One does not find
narratives in the archive but creates them from the archive, indeed in some cases the
actors within the archive begin to create narrative before the historian or archivist even
sees the historical record.

Whilst the familial relations between the individuals mentioned in MS314 were perhaps
a relative silence in the archive, there are certain parts of the 1939–41 period discussed
numerous times by Theodor, such as his emigration to Britain. On 21 May 1939, Theodor
arrived in Britain and in a letter to his brother Rudi Hirschberg in South Africa, described the
process of leaving Germany, highlighting his initial plan to leave for Cuba:

‘My onwards travel to Cuba is impossible now, after they have introduced an entry ban for
Jews. […] I travelled via Bentheim/Harwich by train and had no problems at the border
control. Much better than other emigrants who had to suffer from awful harassment, in
particular in Bentheim. - If the clerk in Harwich had known about the entry ban in Cuba,
I would have been in a very unpleasant situation. Immediately after my arrival in London, the
fact became known. In Berlin there had been rumours since the 9th May. That day I wanted to
collect my ticket [to travel by ship] from Palestine & Orient Lloyd in Meinekestraße and was
told that they couldn’t give it to me as some difficulties had arisen. But I had the passage
order from the English shipping company which was considered as sufficient documentation
by the English consulate. So, now I have been here for three weeks and have applied for
a residence permit at the Home Office. The Society of Friends, Bloomsbury House, arranged
for an additional guarantee for all emigrations costs by Mr. Harold G. Cohen, Otto’s friend.’

Indeed, in an earlier letter to his cousin Ursula Gottschalk, Theodor noted how lucky he
had been to get his place on the ship:
'Yesterday I ran into an acquaintance\textsuperscript{29} from Berlin who was among the 287 passengers of the “St. Louis” who can stay in London for the time being. They have lived through dreadful days and floated aimlessly off the coasts off Cuba, Florida etc. They are overwhelmed by their reception here. This time the committee has acted in an exemplary manner in every way. – Unfortunately, the passengers of “The Orinoco” – a regular Hapag steamer to Cuba and Mexico – had to return to Germany and they are back in trouble. That almost happened to me.\textsuperscript{30}

The extracts above concerning Theodor’s emigration, whilst detailed in their content and verifiable in their nature, are necessarily stories – written to an individual in a particular point in time. In writing such letters, Theodor is both participant in, and creator of, narrative. Whilst there is obvious overlap, such extracts do not speak wholly to Theodor’s emigration as it happened or to the communication of this to a historian, but to Theodor’s conveyance of this specific past to a contemporary relative. The text is constructed for an intended reader to invoke two worlds: ‘the here and now of the writer and the here and now of the reader’.\textsuperscript{31}

The scholar must, therefore, ensure to view these sources as what they are: vestiges of the past, not the person they purport to represent, in the same way that historical biography is paradoxically tasked with interpreting a fragmentary life in supposedly complete form.\textsuperscript{32} Liz Stanley has noted that letters are ‘perspectival’ and ‘emergent’ and thus subject to change based on the reader, time, geography and social sphere, as well as filled with their own concerns and preoccupations beyond the historian. Stanley goes on to remind us that:

‘[Letters] do not contain evidence of ‘the real person’, but are rather traces of this person in a particular representational epistolary guise and as expressed at successive points in time and to a variety of people.\textsuperscript{33}

The historian would do well to remember that letters are not simply a gateway into the private lives and narrative of an individual and must be viewed within the context of the historical period, the social background, and the successive people to have discussed, read, and often contributed to the letter. The specific environment of writing and receiving letters, points to the migrant letter as a ‘time capsule’, one that is representative of both the everyday lives of the individuals writing and the inner emotional and psychological states underpinning the co-correspondents.\textsuperscript{34} Can we extrapolate a meaningful, truthful and coherent narrative from a series of sources preoccupied with concerns aside from the historians’, and ones that have begun to create their own narrative aside from the past itself? In the case of Theodor Hirschberg, the letters in MS314 are written either in the run up to, or under the spectre of war itself, they are therefore equally informative and performative and subject to wartime censorship and the like. Independent of this however, the existence of a letter paradoxically symbolises both separation and continuity, a binary created through enforced relocation. Often the letters in MS314 walk this binary, simultaneously noting separation but wishing to continue ‘normal’ pre-separation discussion, about school or about work:

‘I ask you to respond soon. Particularly in regards of my questions concerning your situation and the support offered by the committee, as I would like to do something. – I haven’t had any news about your life. Are the children in school and have you made friends?’\textsuperscript{35}
Narrative construction remains at the heart of all historical research, writing and practice, especially with the context of the letter. With the temptation being to assign the source greater value amongst the wider historical record, it is important to acknowledge the issues surrounding such complicated documents. Letters are not narrative independent of the historian, and must not be viewed without both relevant context and an eye to the historian and archivist’s role within this. In writing letters to his correspondents, Theodor begins to shape his own narrative contemporaneously and retell the past for the benefit of his addressees. Silences, whether those imposed by the fear of the censor or by the self, prompt discussions on the epistemological considerations of the epistolary but also the ethical.

The ethical: the final months of Dr Ernst Böhm’s life

A more personal debate for the historian to have with themselves, centres around the ethical questions and effects of using the letter as a source. The moral quandary on the scholar wishing to delve into the private lives of individuals whether those are alive or deceased, is one where the benefit must be compared to the impact of an attempted recreation. Jelena Subotić and Aliza Luft highlight the ethical issues of biographical accounts of ‘those who led private lives and did not anticipate becoming a focus of scholarship years later’ and note the impact on the individual discussed, their memory, and their descendants. MS314 was not donated to the University of Southampton but was bought at auction, presumably the result of a house clearance or spring clean on the part of Therese Hirschberg, Theodor’s wife who died intestate in 2006 in Finchley. Theodor had married Therese aged forty-eight in Camden, London when he was working in the British Railways Somers Town Goods Department, and she as a clerk in a cloth manufacture, although had earlier worked for Oxford University Press. Theodor and Therese had no children, and the facts of Theodor’s later life are limited to a report from the Metropolitan Police dated 1951. Within this we can be fairly certain that Theodor himself, the correspondents in the collection, and any surviving descendants (of which there are few) did not intend the letters to end up in the city of Southampton, where none of them lived at any point in time.

Such a discovery of a set of letters, especially by family members can prompt initial questions of ethics and appropriateness, especially around the ‘Janus-faced character’ public/private binary. In her work Berlin to London Esther Saraga retraces the lives of her parents Wolja and Lotte through an extensive archive she discovered in her parents’ house, in envelopes marked ‘Private letters’, ‘Personal letters’, and ‘Personal Letters Lotte to keep’.

‘Discovering these papers raised many questions for us. Did she want us to read them? These labels, and the names written on the back of a few photographs, suggest that she did think about a time when we would find them […] was she unable to dispose of them because it meant throwing away her past? […] Was she relying on us to finish the process for her? Was her distinction between ‘personal’ and ‘private’ a message to us; should we be throwing away the latter?’

The fact that MS314 exists at all, suggests that someone decided to keep it, from time of writing through to 2001 when it arrived at Southampton. Does this view to posterity provide the historian with carte-blanche to do whatever they please with the collection in terms of research? In short, the modern day existence of MS314 does not equate to ethical
consent to use it. There are a myriad of reasons as to why the documents could have been
kept aside from historical intrigue, ranging from memorialisation of those contained
within it, to restitution claim evidence after the war. How do we then ascertain which of
these letters, if any, were considered ‘private’ and which were considered ‘public’ by the
writer or collector, and which of those ‘private’ ones are ethical to use?
Within this private/public divide, it is then pertinent to discuss the goal of narrating
another refugee story, distinguished from the multitude of others. The German author
and playwright Carl Zuckmayer remarked that letters between refugees and those
remaining in Germany are ‘always concerned [with] the rescue of friends and colleagues
who had not yet escaped mortal danger’ and thus remain a staple in collections.40 The
structure, content, and style of such letters are therefore already established through their
aim, giving the historian the ability to learn about the letter writers’ networks, social
standing and connections, both personal and institutional.41 The German historian Levke
Harders has further suggested that within a history of migration, the biography must be
the natural progression due to its promise of interweaving the micro-level of the indivi-
dual, the meso-level of social networks, and the macro-level of migration.42 The
exchanges between Theodor and his paternal cousin Dr Ernst Böhm follow Zuckmayer
and Harders’s observations and are often concerned with plotting his and his family’s
escape from Antwerp. What do we gain by detailing this exchange? And does this
amplify the decision to revitalise a painful past for those descendants connected?
For some of those descendants, retelling narratives of those affected by the violence of
Nazism is resistance and survival, for others the highlighting of documentary sources
provides tangible evidence of their existence in a period categorised by deindividualisa-
tion. In many cases, repositories such as the Special Collections at Southampton, but also
those instances where collections remain in private hands ‘functions as a method of
survival’ where the archive is representative of Jewish historical continuity.43 The piece-
meal remnants of individuals often remain the only trace of them in the present day.
For the scholar, the question whether the story of Dr Ernst Böhm should be told, per-
haps centres around whether it is ethical to overwhelmingly bias his life towards the
years of his persecution, coupled with prosopographic concerns of representativeness. As
a banker and lawyer, heavily involved in the religious community of Brieg, Ernst’s life
amounts to much more than the years 1939–41, the years of his correspondence with
Theodor. Without further research I cannot yet provide substantial background to Ernst’s
time in Brieg, and beyond these letters I cannot say meaningfully how involved Ernst was
with his maternal cousins. And yet what I can do is highlight Ernst’s agency in his own
narrative: detailing his concerted efforts to emigrate, his diligent correspondence with
Theodor to facilitate potential migration to Britain, his engagement with other branches
of the family during this period, and his belief in the legal system to rectify wrongs against
him. By narrating Ernst’s life from 1938 onwards, not only can we learn more about the
specifics of the family’s efforts and the networks Ernst existed in, à la Zuckmayer, but also
more widely about the perseverance shown by Theodor’s cousin. Such agency has
become the touchstone of historical biographical research, but remains contentious
when one extrapolate Ernst’s narrative onto the wider experience.44
Ernst (see Figure 2) was born on 28 January 1899 in Brieg to Siegfried Böhm (1845–?)
and Rosalie Hirschberg (1859–1940) the sister of Theodor’s father Martin Hirschberg.
Ernst’s relationship with Theodor seemed to be one they both cherished; in a letter to
his maternal aunt Else Kunz, Theodor writes that he ‘feel[s] such strong affection for my cousin and his children that his fate is at least as important to me [as Hans Walter Hirschberg’s]’.\(^4^5\) Ernst’s fate from 1939 however had been one stricken with fraud and falsity. After the November pogroms of 1938, Ernst was imprisoned in Buchenwald where ‘[f]or weeks he couldn’t wash properly or shave and had to sleep on a wooden plank without a blanket and pillow’.\(^4^6\) When Ernst was eventually released on 5 January 1939 he was ordered by the Breslau Gestapo to leave Germany as soon as possible or risk being reimprisoned. Ernst’s wife Elise had insisted they all leave for Palestine in 1933 but Ernst disagreed arguing his mother Rosalie was too elderly for the trip and that his duty was to his community.

‘He was a man of exceptional qualities and even as a young man very successful; with great diligence he committed himself to charity work in particular as the head of his Jewish Community.’\(^4^7\)

In his effort to leave Germany, Ernst met with a representative from the Palästina-Treuhand-Stelle Dr Werner Freund who introduced him to Ernst Lieberman a supposed expert in emigration. Lieberman assured Ernst he would provide three visas for travel and entry to Chile via Palestine and Orient Lloyd (POL) shipping at the cost of RM 18,000 – one for him, his wife Elise and his two children (Siegfried and Ilse), one for his mother Rosalie, and one for his wife’s sister Edith Heppner. Various payments were made to Liebermann, Freund and POL, including ones to secure the financial assets of Ernst Böhm and his mother Rosalie, and the departure was organised from Le Havre for 2 July 1939. Under the
assumption Ernst and his family were safely leaving Brieg, Theodor wrote to his girlfriend Gertrud on 28 June 1939:

‘Today they are leaving Brieg definitely to go to Chile; they are telling me amidst the chaos. I hope they are luckier than the people who emigrated to Cuba and I hope they find a new home and livelihood [...] He really is a human being who achieved so much but always remained modest—unlike so many others.’

Unbeknownst to Theodor, problems were ensuing. Liebermann visited Ernst in Brieg at the end of June 1939 and stated that POL, specifically a representative of theirs, ‘Fischer’, had agreed that passage through Belgium would be faster than through France. On 29th June, the day after Theodor’s letter to Gertrud, Ernst and his extended family travelled to Berlin to collect the Belgian visas – here they were ‘staved off by Mr Liebermann until the 5th July’ when they were introduced to a ‘Mr Krieger’ at their guest house in Uhlandstraße. With the original passage to Belgium out of date, Krieger promised Ernst that he would organise travel and passage from Cologne through to Belgium. Once in Cologne at the Hotel Marienhof, Krieger stated the only way this would be possible was illegally and thus they would not be able to take any of their luggage with them, but assured them he would have the suitcases checked and sent on to Antwerp. This never occurred.

In a letter held in the Belgium State Archive from Ernst’s representative in Antwerp Robert van der Herrewege to the Public Security Department in Brussels Mr Beheerder, Herrewege explains the situation and why Ernst and his family must have their stay in Antwerp extended:

‘ [...] my client has also been the victim of a serious assault committed by an appointee of the Palestine and Orient Lloyd at Berlin. Indeed, after his release from [Buchenwald in] January 1939, my client had decided to move with his family to Chile and ordered the Palestine and Orient Lloyd at Berlin to provide visas for him and his family, as well as the travel tickets for the departure to Chile. For this my client paid to said Lloyd the sum of RM 18,000 [...] My client now learns that the sums deposited by him were embezzled by an appointee of the Palestine and Orient Lloyd. This appointee has meanwhile been detained, but the aforementioned Lloyd disputes his responsibility [...] While waiting for a favourable solution to intervene, my client asks to be allowed to stay here in Antwerp as it is not possible for him to go back to Germany with his wife and two children, and his old mother, as it seems unavoidable that the concentration camp is awaiting him.’

Ernst had brought a legal case in Cologne against Krieger and presumably Liebermann, although by October 1939 the proceedings were closed as ‘the offender could not be identified’. Ernst came to the conclusion that ‘Liebermann and the staff at Hotel Marienhof know Krieger [...] My family and I would be able to identify him on photo. He is tall, slim, has no beard and speaks the dialect of Cologne’. Ernst subsequently brought another case against Liebermann, who had been placed in pre-trial custody, and against POL, represented by their managing director. He applied for legal aid having no access to his and his family’s accumulated wealth after emigration. What became of this case however, we cannot yet say. Although a lawyer himself and evidently one with some faith left in the legal system, Ernst did not believe it would work; in a letter to Theodor on 11 November 1939 he wrote ‘the P.O.L. matter doesn’t look good ([Hans Walter Hirschberg] even thinks it is hopeless). It seems that the two crooks accuse each other’.
With no money in Belgium, Ernst had been borrowing large sums of money from Theodor, Ursula Gottschalk and probably others too – paying them back as and when money arrived from Germany.

‘Finally, I am able to pay my debts with you and Frau Ursel, as I have received the majority of the transfer today. […] It won’t be enough for (renewed) visa for Chile and passages – let alone to start a new existence. I hope the Jewish organisations will help us with emigration [from here onwards] which we now are dedicating our time to. We don’t have to fear anything from the local authorities until May 1940.’

Ernst and Theodor corresponded numerous times until May 1940 attempting to secure Ernst and his family passage to a multitude of places, as anywhere was ‘better than being in hell’. May 1940 was the date of their extension in Belgium presumably organised by Herrewege, but it was also the date of the Nazi invasion of the low countries. On 10 May 1940, Ernst alongside thousands of other ‘aliens’ in Belgium were taken from their homes and imprisoned, many in the Mediterranean camp of St Cyprien. Although there exists no letter concerning Ernst’s experience in St Cyprien beyond requests for base necessities, we can surmise the conditions of the camp from the memoir of Arno Motulsky, a fellow refugee in Antwerp and later professor of medical genetics at the University of Washington:

‘Our first impression of our future home was one of horror. A terrific sand storm was raging, whipping clouds of sand into our faces. We saw collapsing shacks and bunks, dirty, and derelict. The fury of that sandstorm that recurred every 3 or 4 weeks is tremendous. […] Sanitary conditions were horrific and never improved. […] Our ramshackle huts had no floor and we were not given beds, either. Lying on the few straw bits in the sand, we were plagued by myriads of fleas. Mice and rats devoured our food. Flies and mosquitoes bit us. We learnt to understand why Spaniards had named this camp: The hell of St. Cyprien.’

MS314 contains one letter written from St Cyprien by Ernst asking Theodor to send items such as a razor, soap and cutlery, although Theodor is forced to respond that ‘my endeavours to send you parcels and messages have so far failed’. Theodor tells Ernst that his family are well, but that is where MS314 ceases. From St Cyprien, Ernst was transported to Gurs Internment Camp in the south of France where he died in December 1940. In a letter written to Theodor by his uncle in the USA, Otto Dresdner, which arrived in early April 1941, he wrote:

‘I just had an air-mail-postcard from Hans Walter telling that Ernst Böhm died a few days after his mother from Kopfgrippe, after having lived for some time in [a] very bad state suffering from malnutrition, severe cold, and dilapidation.’

After Ernst’s daughter Ilse was given to the Vandeboght family in Vilvarde near Brussels, his wife Elise, his sister-in-law Edith and his son Siegfried were all imprisoned in Mechelen Transit Camp and were eventually deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on 10 October 1942 where they were all most likely gassed upon arrival. Does there exist more letters between Ernst and Theodor or Ernst and his family? Possibly. As research on MS314 progresses into 2023, a new connection with Ernst’s daughter who survived the war in hiding will hopefully provide some of the missing documentary details of Ernst’s life.

Narration created from the historical record has ethical consequences and ethical considerations on how we view certain actors within it and also its effect on those
descendants and family. From the sources available at the time of writing, and thus from the narrative constructed above, one would be forgiven for characterising Ernst Liebermann, ‘Mr Krieger’, Werner Freund and ‘Fischer’ as villains within the story.\textsuperscript{59} Certainly, we must be mindful that the documents found so far in MS314 and the State Archives of Belgium exclusively come from Ernst’s side of the case brought against the various individuals and may perhaps give us a clouded view of their existence. For the historian and the family, extended narration of Ernst’s final years gives us insight specifically into the epistolary characteristics of separated families, the jurisprudential efforts of individuals, and the connections held by Ernst and his family. The issue of focussing overtly on the years of persecution however does not easily resolve itself. Periods of life and periods of death both on a micro- and macro-historical level should be integrated as much as possible – and yet often practically this is not actionable.

**The practical: problems of the ‘shared world’**

‘You never write a lot about yourself, not even about your current occupation. This is your usual inferiority complex which we haven’t been able to fight successfully.’\textsuperscript{60}

This letter extract from Ernst to Theodor, expresses one such practical difficulty in mining letters for traces of the individual – namely the lack of details to mine. Ernst bemoans that Theodor never writes enough about himself, a gripe often shared by researchers of any collection. Beyond Theodor’s base narrative expressed earlier, we know little about his life in Britain during the early years of the war. For the historian wishing to extrapolate multiple narratives from the epistolary, their task is mining these fragmentary narratives for details and clues with the aim of building something larger – in this case a fuller biography of the handful of individuals represented and any analysis that comes from that.\textsuperscript{61}

There are some isolated details from MS314 we can gather, to begin to create a fuller biographical account of Theodor. Theodor certainly felt a keen affinity to Britain and a duty to help it, writing to his cousin in November 1939 of his wish to fully engage with the British war effort in whatever way he can. On arrival in England, Theodor began volunteering for the ARP filling sandbags in Regents Park, but after a while stopped due to bad weather conditions:

‘like many people here I caught a cold and of course I know that I must take care of my health; but I feel much better again […] I still hope to find employment in the “National Service”, as I am very anxious to help this country by all means in my power.’\textsuperscript{62}

From this letter we know Theodor’s address – the Caledonian Hotel, Harpur Street – we know his daily activities – working for the ARP in Regents Park – and we know his short term ambitions – finding employment in the national service. Other details, however, confuse the situation more, with Ernst writing that he hopes to ‘get the permission to use the world-famed library of the British Museum, in order to improve my theoretical knowledge of Sociology’ suggesting an interest in academia.\textsuperscript{63} In terms of Theodor’s life in Germany before the war there is but one allusion to a potential career when he writes about Ernst Böhm’s case, stating that ‘The POL employee Fischer you mentioned has been an old acquaintance of mine from the bank.’\textsuperscript{64} Without the contextual knowledge from
the 1951 Metropolitan Police Report that Theodor worked for Commerz und Privatbank in Eberswalde from 1924–33, it would perhaps be impossible to link Theodor to any existence prior to his emigration, namely as the archive of Commerzbank contains no employment records of that period. Jelena Subotić asks ‘what can one piece of paper tell us without a story around it?’ getting to the heart of the difficulty of appreciating the epistolary, in the absence of even superficial accompanying documentation.65

In many cases, the researcher unrelated from the family concerned is excluded from the epistolary dialogue and thus creates absences within the context. The sociologist Janet Altman speaks to this inability to fully comprehend the context of a letter’s details where she describes letters’ purpose as ‘map[ping] one’s coordinates – temporal, spatial, emotional, intellectual’ arguing that the references on that map ‘are particular to the shared world of the writer and the addressee’.66 As a third party reader to these letters, references are sometimes incomprehensible and would only be known to the intended recipient. In a letter to his girlfriend Gertrud, Theodor tells her ‘just a couple of minutes away from my flat, I met Dr. J’ but who Dr J is, is a mystery.67 Whilst it is often possible to work out family members’ names and relations through supplementary genealogical sources – friends and associates are much more difficult to research due to a lack of information of how, when and where Theodor may have known them. Friends or associates given familial sobriquets – mainly Onkel and Tante - confuse matters further. In a letter to his aunt Else before he left Germany, Theodor writes ‘Tante Bertl told us on the phone about the burning of the “Paris” which destroyed her’ giving no clue as to who Bertl is beyond her apparent connection to the SS Paris which burnt in Le Havre on 18th April 1939.68

One of the major practical considerations for the historian is the level of representativeness vis-à-vis the amount of letters sent and received as a whole. The unknown quantity of the letters which were lost, destroyed or forgotten, or indeed those that have been selected by the recipient, collector or donor to appear in a supposedly complete sequence, prompt issues when attempting to construct multiple narratives from collections such as MS314. Indeed, in her example of the South African writer and intellectual Olive Schriener, Liz Stanley notes that many letters were purposefully destroyed en masse by her, even requesting the return from the recipient of the copy.69 Within this, the scholar can no longer be sure of the scope, temporal range and spatial range of a correspondence and whether this series of letters was envisaged by the writers as such.70 In MS314 we can be certain that it does not contain all of the letters Theodor Hirschberg sent or received. On numerous occasions Theodor writes that he received letters from family members not present in the collection: ‘Today I received a long letter from Otto Dresdner from Rochester, N.Y’ but this letter is not to be seen in MS314.71 At points, Theodor even includes long extracts from letters not present, namely those from his Uncle Otto. Otto, the brother of Theodor’s biological mother Margareta, emigrated to the USA in April 1939, moving in with his friend Dr Curt Falkenheim; in 1940 he purchased a farm in Woodstock, Virginia where he bred Karakul, a breed of domestic sheep. In many cases Otto acted as a facilitator of communication between Theodor in Britain, and his mother and brother in Berlin, telling Theodor of news he has received – ‘I just had an air-mail-postcard from Hans Walter telling that Ernst Böhm died a few days after his mother’.72 Otto was not the only conduit of information for Theodor, writing on 10 April 1940 that he had ‘received via Iwanka
[Hirschberg] a long report from Mother and Hans Walter about the illness and passing of [Edna Gottschalk nee Cohn]. The contents of MS314 thus tell us at least some of the things perhaps missing from MS314 but not all. What these documents may add to our understanding and narratives created, is something we may never know. Otto died suddenly in 1943 from heart failure, and what happened to his correspondence is equally unknown.

In a related point, we also have to note that in many cases, sets of letters are one sided due to their dialogical nature. Letters can be collected by recipients but are as a by-product lost to the sender. Occasionally those letters sent into Nazi occupied Europe were saved through a variety of avenues, each as difficult and unlikely as the next, but the majority of the time these are lost, especially if the person involved was murdered during the Holocaust. The letters in MS314 however, do contain letters both sent and received by Theodor, some carbon copies, and some retyped out. In the case of documents surrounding Ernst Böhm’s court case, Theodor ‘considered it necessary to make copies of your important document before sending it back’ – the difference is that to the historian, every letter must be important. Whilst it is clear that the two sides of correspondence are not complete, we cannot be sure as to why this is. Certainly, MS314 doesn’t contain all the letters Theodor received let alone all those he sent. The incomplete or fragmentary epistolary, a term used by Liz Stanley to denote the ‘entirety of someone’s epistolary endeavour’, creates temporal and spatial lacunas, often impassable without the discovery of long lost correspondences separated by the effects of migration and the turbulence of the twentieth century.

The exclusion of the historian from the ‘shared world’ inhabited by correspondents summarises many of the pragmatic challenges of the epistolary as a source. The abbreviations and unfamiliar names scattered throughout add another layer of distance to the collection as we can no longer be sure of the individuals within Theodor’s circle in Germany and Britain. The unknown, or in this case known, absence of documents from the letter chain, mean that observations are necessarily and knowingly partial, and that unless other hidden archives are found, we must be content with fragmentary narratives masquerading as the whole.

**Conclusion**

The narratives constructed on Theodor Hirschberg, Dr Ernst Böhm and others, speak to both a personal family story as well as wider analyses on the German-Jewish experience during the immediate pre-war and early war years. Theodor’s life and his relationships with his friends and family were profoundly altered by the separation ensured by migration and the darkness which enveloped Europe in the 1930s/40s. Even if MS314 was complete, that being an entire record of Theodor’s epistolary output, would this bring us closer to piecing together his life in the truest sense? It would obviously give us innumerable more sources with which to plot more events, relationships, people and places, and thus create a fuller picture of his life, but there would never be a way of knowing when that epistolary is reached. Beyond this, one has to accept that letters are performative, and designed for the individual(s) reading them; very rarely do correspondents fill letters with a complete run down of events and activities that day. Perhaps the descendants of Theodor’s cousin Ernst Böhm, or those of his brothers Hans Walter and Rudi, possess
documents to add to MS314 to contextualise an already widely varying collection, that
has few traces outside of the special collections in Southampton.

MS314 is not a unique collection, but it does provide us with a rich interwoven tapestry
of connections and opportunities with which to narrativize the lives of those contained
within. Whilst this article discussed many questions and answered few, those asked of
epistemology, pragmatics and moral imperative have opened doors into the greater
consideration of the letter as a source for the historian, especially when for a number of
individuals referred to, this is perhaps their only documentary trace. We can never be privy
to those verbal conversations had between Theodor and Gertrud physically in 1938 Berlin,
discussing how best to leave the country, before they were separated for the last time. As
a result of migration, the letter moves these conversations from the voice to the paper,
from physical space to metaphysical space, and thus gives the historian a chance to better
trace the past. How best to do this in the face of competing and interlocking narratives of
multiple relationships within MS314 is a challenge. Collections like MS314 exist all over
the world, in the archive and in the attic, and present a complex web of historical records.
To organise these in such a way that proports to retell a smooth linear narrative is truthful
in some ways, in the sense it does not distort the record, but is necessarily incomplete.
This does not, however, equate to reason not to write, and to retell. A fuller narrativisation
of the family of Theodor Hirschberg is needed to better understand the complex lives of
refugees, their hopes, their feelings and their agency. Whilst narratives should evidently
seek to broaden their source basis and encompass a variety of research methods, in some
cases this is not possible and collections such as MS314 remain the vessel through which
we view the past.

Notes

1. Gertrud Lehmann to Theodor Hirschberg (TMWH), 28 May 1939, University of Southampton
   Special Collections [UoS] MS 314/1/6.
2. Else Kunz to TMWH, 10 August 1939, UoS MS 314/1/38.
3. Howard Falksohn, ‘The Wiener Library: A Repository of Schicksale’, in Refugee Archive: Theory
   and Practice, ed. by Andrea Hammel and Anthony Greville, Yearbook of the Research Centre
   for German and Austrian Exile Studies Vol.9 (Leiden/Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2007), pp.27-40 (p.28).
4. See various chapters in Archive Stories; Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History, ed. by
   Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2005).
5. Judith Szapor, ‘Private archives and public lives: the migrations of Alexander Weissberg and
   the Polanyi archives’, Jewish Culture and History, 15/1-2 (2014), 93-109 (p.93).
6. See Atina Grossman, ‘Versions of Home: German Jewish Refugee Papers out of the Closet and
   into the Archives’, New German Critique, 90 (2003), 95-122; Julius H. Schoeps, ‘Das Stigma der
   Heimatlosigkeit Vom Umgang mit dem deutsch-jüdischen Erbe’ in Das Kulturerbe deutsch-
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   Elke-Vera Kotowski (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2015), pp.489-99.
7. Liz Stanley, ‘The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences’, Auto/Biography,
   12/3 (2004), 201-35 (p.223). See also Irene Götz, Klara Löffler and Birgit Speckle, ‘Briefe als
   Alltagskommunikation: Eine Skizze zu ihrer kontextorientierten Auswertung’ in Schweizerisches
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8. David Barton and Nigel Hall, ‘Introduction’, in Letter Writing as a Social Practice Vol.9, ed. by
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   pp.1-14 (p.6).
9. David Gerber, *Authors of their lives: The personal correspondence of British immigrants to North America in the nineteenth century* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2006), p.5; Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke, ‘Introduction’ in *Letters across Borders. The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants*, ed. by Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke (Palgrave: New York, 2006), pp.1-25 (p.3).

10. For the rise of historical biographical study see Daniel R. Meister, ‘The biographical turn and the case for historical biography’, *Historical Compass*, 16/1 (2018), 1-10. Simone Lässig, ‘Introduction: Biography in modern history—Modern historiography in biography’, in *Biography between structure and agency: Central European lives in international historiography*, ed. by Volker Berghann and Simone Lässig (New York: Berghann Books, 2008), pp.1–26 (p.4).

11. Haim Sperber, Boaz Cohen and Daniela Ozacky-Stern organised two workshops on ‘The Usage of Ego-documents in Jewish Historical research’ in May 2019 and May 2021 at the Western Galilee College, Akko. A selection of contributions will be published in *Jewish Culture and History*, 24/2-3 (May 2023). See also Mary Fulbrook and Ulinka Rublack, ‘In Relation: The “Social Self” and Ego-Documents’, *German History*, 28/3 (2010), 263–72.

12. Marcelo J. Borges and Sonia Cancian, ‘Reconsidering the migrant letter: from the experience of migrants to the language of migrants’, *The History of the Family*, 21/3 (2016), 281-90 (p.284). For examples see *From the Edge of the World*, ed. by Anne Joseph (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003); *Letters from Prague 1939-1941*, comp. by Raya Czerner Schapiro and Helga Czerner Weinberg (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1991); Marie Bader, *Life and Love in Nazi Prague. Letters from an Occupied City*, ed. by Kate Ottevanger and Jan Lániček, trans. by Kate Ottevanger (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019). For the issues of such collections see William D. Jones, “Going into Print”: Published Immigrant Letters, Webbs of Personal Relations, and the Emergence of the Welsh Public Sphere’, in *Letters across Borders The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants*, ed. by Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke (Palgrave: New York, 2006), pp.175-99.

13. Brian Roberts, *Biographical Research* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002), p.5; Volker Depkat, ‘Biographieforschung im Kontext transnationaler und globaler Geschichtsschreibung’, *BIOS – Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen*, 28/1-2 (2015), 3-18; Phillip Strobl, ‘Migrant Biographies as a Prism for Explaining Transnational Knowledge Transfers’, *Migrant Knowledge Blog* (7 October 2019), Accessed via: https://migrantknowledge.org/2019/10/07/migrant-biographies-as-a-prism-for-explaining-transnational-knowledge-transfers/, Last accessed: 20 April 2022.

14. See Esther Saraga, *Berlin to London: An Emotional History of Two Refugees* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2019); Andrea Sinn, ‘Und ich lebe wieder an der Isar: Exil und Rückkehr des Münchner Juden Hans Lamm’ (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008); Joachim Schlör, *Escaping Nazi Germany: One Woman’s Emigration from Heilbronn to England* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020); Shirli Gilbert, *From Things Lost: Forgotten Letters and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017). Gilbert, *From Things Lost*, p.6.

15. Else Kunz to TMWH, 10 August 1939, UoS MS 314/1/38.

16. Theodor Hirschberg Naturalisation Papers, The National Archives, Kew (TNA) HO 405/21,263.

17. Jennifer Douglas and Allison Mills, ‘From the sidelines to the center: reconsidering the potential of the personal in archives’, *Archival Science*, 18 (2018), 257-77.

18. Frank Mecklenburg, ‘Family history and the Leo Baeck Institute’, in *Jewish Families and Kinship in the Early Modern and Modern Eras*, ed. by Mirjam Thulin, Markus Krah and Bianca Pick (Potsdam: Universitätverlag Potsdam, 2020), pp.51–57.

19. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), p.26.

20. Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich. Refugee Jews, 1933–1946* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2009), p.257.

21. TMWH to Hans Adolf Friedländer, 29 September 1939, MS/314/1/62.

22. Ursula Gottschalk to TMWH, 26 June 1939, UoS MS 314/1/17.
24. Nancy K. Miller, What They Saved. Pieces of a Jewish Past (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), p.5.
25. See Hayden White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Hayden White, The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).
26. Dan Stone, ‘Excommunicating the past? Narrativism and rational constructivism in the historiography of the Holocaust’, Rethinking History, 21/4 (2017), 549-66 (p.552).
27. Kalle Pihlainen, ‘Rereading narrative constructivism’, Rethinking History, 17/4 (2013), 509-527 (p.510).
28. TMWH to Rudolf Hirschberg, 8 July 1939, UoS MS 314/1/24.
29. The acquaintance was Theodor’s dentist Julius Bernstein (1893-1969) and his wife Selma Alexander (1895-1975). Julius and Selma were passengers on the St Louis which set sail for Havana, Cuba in May 1939 but was turned around. A portion of those passengers were allowed refuge in Britain including Julius and Selma – they eventually left Britain on 1 March 1940 from Liverpool on the Samaria bound for New York.
30. TMWH to Ursula Gottschalk, 25 June 1939, UoS MS 314/1/16. Ursula Gottschalk was born on 23 July 1914 in Kattenhornhein to Martin Gottschalk and Edna Cohn the sister of Theodor’s stepmother Paula. Ursula worked as a languages teacher at Maltman’s Green School and Ackworth School during the war before relocating to Australia where she taught at Methodist Ladies College in Hawthorn, Melbourne. Ursula died in 2007 at her home in Camberwell, New South Wales.
31. Barton and Hall, ‘Introduction’, p.6.
32. See Thomas Etzemüller, Biographien: Lesen – erforschen – erzählen (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2012).
33. Stanley, ‘The Epistolarium’, 223.
34. Sonia Cancian, Families, Lovers, and their Letters. Italian Postwar Migration to Canada (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010), p.10.
35. TMWH to Ernst Böhm, 6 October 1939, UoS MS 314/1/64.
36. Aliza Luft and Jelena Subotić, ‘Ethics and Archival Research on Violence’, Broadstreet (14 February 2022), Accessed via: https://broadstreet.blog/2022/02/14/ethics-and-archivalResearch-on-violence/, Last Accessed 19 May 2022.
37. One public family tree on an online genealogy website lists Theodor’s death as 29 August 1982 although records cannot yet verify this. Theodor Hirschberg’s naturalisation papers TNA HO 405/21,263.
38. Schlör, Escaping Nazi Germany, p.4.
39. Esther Saraga, “‘Personal Letters – to keep”: Managing the Emotions of Forced Migration’; Jewish Culture and History, 15/1-2 (2014), 27-42 (p.28).
40. Cited in Dwork and van Pelt, Flight from the Reich, p.254.
41. Szapor, ‘Private archives and public lives’, 94.
42. Levke Harders, ‘Migration und Biografie zusammendenken. Ein Plädoyer’, Migration and Belonging (2 February 2018), Accessed via: https://belonging.hypotheses.org/709, Last accessed: 12 October 2022.
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45. TMWH to Else Kunz, 21 April 1939, UoS MS 314/1/4.
46. TMWH to Rudolf Hirschberg, 8 July 1939, UoS MS 314/1/24.
47. TMWH to ‘Frau Doktor’, 16 March 1941, MS 314/1/120.
48. TMWH to Gertrud Lehmann, 28 June 1939, UoS MS 314/1/18.
49. Document by Ernst Böhm [undated], UoS MS 314/1/93.
50. Robert van der Herewege to Mr Beheerder, 12th September [1939], Kazerne Dossin Digital Archive KD00014/510/0841/000/7365519/35-37.
51. Document by Ernst Böhm, 7 January 1940, UoS MS 314/1/88.
52. Ernst Böhm and others to TMWH, 11 November 1939, UoS MS 314/1/77.
53. Ernst Böhm and Rosalie Böhm to TMWH, 20 November 1939, UoS MS 314/1/79.
54. TMWH to Ernst Böhm, 20 February 1940, UoS MS 314/1/92.
55. Arno Moyulsky, ‘A German-Jewish refugee in Vichy France 1939–1941. Arno Motulsky’s memoir of life in the internment camps at St. Cyprien and Gurs’, American Journal of Medical Genetics A, 176/6 (2018), 1289–95 (p.1292).
56. Ernst Böhm to TMWH, 23 June 1940, UoS MS 314/1/106. TMWH to Ernst Böhm, 16 November 1940, UoS MS 314/1/112.
57. Extract of letter from Otto Dresdner to TMWH quoted in Letter from TMWH to [Paul Stern], 10 April 1941, UoS MS 314/1/123.
58. David Parsons and Birte Scholz, ‘Reuven Bronzberg and Sarah Zamir. A Profile of two Holocaust Survivors’, International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, Accessed via: https://icej.org/news/special-reports/reuven-bronzberg-and-sarah-zamir, Last accessed: 2 August 2022; Ziv Buznach, 'שר יזר- פסחאלאיוה' online video recording, YouTube, 2 May 2019, Accessed via: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQzikKboc0E, Last accessed: 2 August 2022.
59. Ernst Liebermann (1901-1942) was imprisoned in Buchenwald at an unknown time and was shot attempting to escape on 2 July 1942. Werner Freund (1907-2000) emigrated from Antwerp to New York in February 1940 with his wife Edith Schlesinger – he died there in 2000 as William Fleming. ‘Krieger’ and ‘Fischer’ remain a mystery.
60. Ernst Böhm and others to TMWH, 2 May 1940, UoS MS 314/1/104.
61. Carlo Ginzburg’s essay ‘Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm’ most famously argues this. See Carlo Ginzburg, Trans. by John and Anne C. Tedeschi, Clues, Myths and the Historical Record (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp.96-125.
62. TMWH to Elise Böhm and Ernst Böhm, 3 November 1939, UoS MS 314/1/73.
63. Ibid.
64. TMWH to Ernst Böhm, 20 February 1940, UoS MS 314/1/92.
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68. TMWH to Else Kunz, 21 April 1939, UoS MS 314/1/4.
69. Stanley, ‘The Epistolarium’, 204.
70. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefer, ‘How Representative are Emigrant Letters? An Exploration of the German Case’, in Letters across Borders The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants, ed. by Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke (Palgrave: New York, 2006), pp. 29-55.
71. TMWH to Gertrud Lehmann, 9 June 1939, UoS MS 314/1/9.
72. TMWH [to Paul Stern], 10 April 1941, UoS MS 314/1/123.
73. TMWH to Ernst Böhm, 10 April 1940, UoS MS 314/1/102. Iwanka Hirschberg nee Ladislawowa was born in 1898 in Bulgaria and was the wife of Theodor’s brother Hans Walter Hirschberg. Edna Gottschalk nee Cohn was the sister of Theodor’s adoptive mother Paula Frieda and was born in August 1884 in Berlin, marrying Martin Gottschalk (1881-1939) in 1914. Edna died shortly after her husband in March 1940 after breaking her ankle and contracting sepsis.
74. TMWH to Ernst Böhm, 20 February 1940, UoS MS 314/1/92.
75. Stanley, ‘The Epistolarium’, p.204.
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