In Touch

The Newsletter of the American Friends of the
Jewish Museum Hohenems, Inc.

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Letter from the President

CLAUDE A. ROLLIN, ESQ.

Dear Friends and Supporters of AFJMH:

As spring unfolds around us, bringing renewal and hope, I write to you during a time of deep complexity and seemingly endless challenges both here and abroad.

The ongoing conflict in Israel continues to weigh heavily on our hearts. The October 7, 2023 attacks, and the subsequent war, have brought immense suffering to Israelis and Palestinians alike. As an organization dedicated to preserving the Jewish history and heritage of Hohenems, we recognize the profound impact these events have had on Jewish and other communities globally, while acknowledging the humanitarian crisis affecting all those caught in the conflict. History has taught us that in times of war, it is often civilians who bear the heaviest burden.

Here in the United States, we find ourselves in a period of transition following the recent presidential election and inauguration. Our nation remains deeply divided, with individuals and communities across the political spectrum experiencing considerable uncertainty about the future. As an organization with members from diverse political viewpoints and backgrounds, we remain committed to the museum's mission of education, preservation, and building bridges of understanding—values that transcend political differences.

In this newsletter, museum Director Hanno Loewy reflects on the museum's role during challenging political times, including rising polarization, xenophobia, and nationalism worldwide. Despite these challenges, the museum serves as a beacon for democratic values and diversity appreciation, experiencing record visitor numbers from various demographics seeking understanding of complex social issues.

The museum's current exhibition on Arab-Jewish history has attracted diverse international audiences. The museum is also collaborating with Swiss partners on building a new educational center commemorating refugees who escaped Nazi Germany into Switzerland between 1933-1945, which will draw more visitors to the region.

Due to increased popularity, the museum now faces facility constraints and is discussing a building expansion to accommodate growing demand for exhibitions, events, and educational programs. In February, over 50 experts and stakeholders gathered to discuss the museum's future, with a new mission statement in development. While expansion will require significant funding and sponsorship, Director Loewy expresses confidence in their preparation for these challenges and appreciation for the museum's supportive community.

The Jewish Museum Hohenems stands as a testament to resilience and continuity in the face of historical challenges. Located in the Austrian town where Jewish families once built vibrant lives despite obstacles, the museum reminds us how communities can persevere and contribute meaningfully to society even during difficult times. The diaspora experience chronicled in our museum resonates powerfully in today's climate of polarization and uncertainty.

Your continued support for the museum, through the AFJMH, enables our work to preserve crucial historical narratives and create space for thoughtful dialogue. In these challenging times, we remain grateful for your commitment to our shared mission.

With hope for healing and peace,

Sincerely,
Claude Rollin
President

A Museum Report: Reflections and Future Plans

DR. HANNO LOEWY

Dear Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems,

Writing to the dearest friends in the world is always a moment to consider who we are and where we are. Again and again this is also a moment to reflect upon a world of challenges. While our museum is a symbol of open discourse, the polarization of political camps and the threat of ethnic exclusivism and religious bigotry has been increasing for years. While we succeed in offering programs, shows, events and publications that open up minds and spirits, things happening in the world are rather depressing for long – since xenophobia, nationalism and egotism seem to take over parts of our societies, endanger the basics of our democracies, international law and the kind of stability we were used to at least in greater parts of the so called "western world".

All this now seems to be at stake. I never would have thought of a world in which we Europeans would start to feel anxiety for our friends in the US. Rather the other way around, given the success of rightwing extremists in the political arena of Europe. Now every morning we listen to news from over the Atlantic that is hard to believe, and every day we think of what is going to happen next. And it seems nothing is impossible.

The only thing we can do is stay firm in our beliefs, that human rights, and the respect for the human will prevail, and that our museum can offer a substantial contribution to this. We are hoping that any crisis can also produce something worth fighting for.

At the same time the museum has become a real lighthouse for an ever growing audience that shares our will to revive democratic values and the appreciation of diversity. We have more visitors than ever: more school and youth groups coming every day, university students coming for extended excursions, and adult groups. Each is searching for orientation with respect to the mess in the middle east, and the challenges of immigration and antisemitism and racism in our own society.

Our current exhibition on the Arab-Jewish story – both the long history of coexistence and hybrid identities in the Arab world, and the conflicted memory in the Mizrachi communities in Israel as well as the large Arab-Jewish communities in France and in other parts of Europe and Canada – turned out to be a magnet for diverse and international audiences. Seemingly having the right answer to the political challenges of today.

And at the same time we are tirelessly collaborating with our Swiss friends on the implementation of the Educational Center on the border that will be part of the Swiss memorial for the victims of National Socialism, remembering the escape of thousands of Jewish and other refugees from Nazi Germany (and Austria in particular) into Switzerland between 1933 and 1945. This upcoming transnationally developed institution will attract more and more individual visitors and groups from Switzerland to Hohenems and the neighboring Swiss community of Diepoldsau, which once hosted the biggest Jewish refugee camp in St. Gallen. Our research of the families and biographies of these refugees also helps us to improve our educational work and also to extend our audio trail on the bike route along the border significantly this summer. You will find more stories at: **https://crossing-the-border.info**.

One of the effects of all this is a simple but most delicate one: our facilities have become insufficient to host the crowds and they have to be further developed. Together with our board we are now seriously discussing an extension of the building, in order to be able to host exhibitions, events, workshops and educational programs. Everything good comes with a risk – we have to be cautious to preserve the magic atmosphere of our museum. The museum has become such an integral part of the Jewish quarter that is developing into a vivid hub of cultural activities. Just a few blocks away the old Villa of Franziska and Iwan Rosenthal is now restored and opened its gates as the new House of Literature of Vorarlberg. See more about that in this issue of In Touch.

Expanding our facilities will require substantial support from all sides. In February the City, the State and the museum invited more than 50 experts – from museums, cultural institutions, universities, educators, politicians, and also active members of the Verein, descendants and other stakeholders of the museum, representing the diversity of our society – for an intensive conference discussing the future of the museum. A day of team building followed, involving an open forum of ideas for the development of our institution.

A new mission statement is on its way that will prepare us for the challenges of developing our museum for the future. Our board will hire experts to do a feasibility study on the possible extension. And then the serious questions of finance and sponsorship will knock on our doors too. We are well prepared for all this.

Sitting in my office while the next school class is passing by, enjoying the playful introduction into our "Yalla" exhibition, I think of all the friends this museum was able to make – and I know why we are doing what we do.

Hanno Loewy
Director

Funeral Service of Uri Taenzer

With great sadness, we need to inform you that **Uri Taenzer** passed away on April 20th.

Uri was instrumental along with Stefan Rollin and Susan Rosenthal Shimer in founding the AFJMH in 1998. Since the beginning, he has served as Secretary/Treasurer and helped the AFJMH and the Museum in multiple ways. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends as well as all the members of the AFJMH.

We will have more about him and his legacy in our fall issue of In *Touch*.

Share Memories of Uri Taenzer

In Memoriam: Luisa Jaffé

Luisa Jaffé - JMH_Reunion 2008
Photo: Christian_Gass

Luisa Jaffé left us on February 25, 2025.

In 2008, together with her and the Committee of Descendants, we organized the second Hohenems Reunion. The third followed in 2017. In doing so, she followed in the footsteps of her father Felix, who organized the first worldwide reunion of the descendants of Jewish families from Hohenems with the Jewish Museum in 1998. But with her own much different temperament.

Luisa moved us all deeply, her seriousness, her quiet humor and her resilience carried us all through the adventure of a cosmopolitan community of world citizens at these reunions.

Born in 1964 in Kenya, where her father worked as a geologist, she grew up in Geneva and eventually lived in Belgium, from where she organized congresses and communication for an international association of academics. In other words, she did what she gave to us, the Jewish Museum and the community of descendants: living out her talent for bringing people together without putting herself in the foreground. She needed resilience, because her father Felix was a strong personality who successfully passed on his Hohenems family heritage and demanded commitment, but did not necessarily appreciate dissent when opinions differed on what priorities should be set.

Her presence lives on in the Jewish Museum; in a video interview with Arno Gisinger, she describes, her many different passports in hand, what it means to be at home in many nations and cultures - and how the small town on the border could become something of a hinge between her various ties, as the child of a German-Austrian-Jewish father and a Christian-American mother. And she quoted Eva Grabherr: “Hohenems has become a place of generations.”

“I like this sentence because it encompasses everything. ... So we already know a thousand descendants. They are now scattered all over the world and I would like to find a way for these people to continue to meet, learn things together and perhaps even begin to reflect together. Or maybe, but this is a bit selfish on my part, to be able to ask my personal questions: Who am I? What am I doing? Questions that basically everyone asks themselves. To turn Hohenems into a kind of mirror that might one day give me an answer, even if that is utopian. That's what I want for the future.”

On February 25, Luisa's brother Philip wrote to us: “Today, February 25, 2025, my young sister Luisa, barely 60 years old, decided to go, with clarity, in peace, courageous in the course of her illness.”

We are infinitely sad. Luisa was always present in our personal and museum life and will remain so. We will miss her when, hopefully in a few years' time, we are once again able to welcome people from all over the world for whom Hohenems has become an anchor for their diverse identities and life issues. In doing so, we will always remember Luisa.

Großer Ratschlag

The Großer Ratschlag on the Future of the Museum: Dialogue in the Salomon Sulzer Auditorium

Franziska Völlner (project lead of “ohneangstverschiedensein”) and Ulrike Kinz (head of the association “Vorarlberger in Wien”)

Sibylle Cazajus-Reichenbach, Dinah Ehrenfreund, Anita Niegelhell and Lisabel Semia Roth

Felicitas Heimann-Rosenthal (spokesperson of academic board) and Claudia Roth (Head of Cultural office, Land Vorarlberg)

Erik Petry (Professor Jewish Studies, University of Basel)

Group discussion with Hanno Loewy and Cilly Kugelmann Ex-program director, Jewish Museum Berlin)

Plenary discussion

Sibylle Cazajus-Reichenbach, Hatice Demirkir, Susanne Fink, Bernie Weber

Group discussion with Mayor Dieter Egger (left side)

All photos: Dietmar Poschko

INAUGURATION OF THE SALOMON SULZER SQUARE IN VIENNA

a young Salomon Sulzer, when he started his career in Vienna. (Wikipedia Common)

On March 18, Salomon Sulzer's 221st birthday, the city of Vienna finally inaugurated a square dedicated to Salomon Sulzer. Only a few meters away from the "Stadttempel", the Central Synagogue that opened its gates one year after Sulzer moved from Hohenems to Vienna, the most influential composer of liturgical Jewish music in the 19th century is now commemorated in the heart of the city where he lived and inspired generations of cantors for almost 65 years.

Sulzer, who was born in Hohenems on March 18, 1804, was appointed as a cantor in his hometown at the age of 13 in 1817. But he had to study music and *chazzanut* for three years before he was allowed to serve his community in the synagogue. Five years later his Baritone already had become a legend and he was hired for the soon to be erected Stadttempel in Vienna and introduced a moderate version of reform Judaism in Vienna together with Rabbi Isaak Noah Mannheimer. For more than 50 years he served the rapidly growing Viennese community, and as the head of the Cantorial Association in the Hapsburg empire he influenced the development of Synagogue music all over Europe. He broke with the tradition of improvised *chazzanut*, and introduced written scores for professional choirs into the liturgy. Sulzer died in 1890. His dream to be buried in the Hohenems cemetery was a proud monument on Vienna's "Zentralfriedhof".

The initiative of Magnus Davidson, the exiled president of the former "Allgemeiner Deutscher Kantorenverband" in 1951, to devote the former Hohenems synagogue to the memory of Salomon Sulzer, and create a memorial museum immediately after the war, failed to prevent the sale of the building by the Jewish Community of Innsbruck to the municipality of Hohenems. The synagogue in which Sulzer started his career became a fire brigade building. Sulzer was modestly memorialized by the naming of a small street in Hohenems in the 1970s and by the installation of a memorial plaque on the house where he was born, next to the former synagogue, that still served as a fire house.

In the 1990s, with the advent of the Jewish Museum, Sulzer was honored by partly restoring the Synagogue and renaming it as the Salomon Sulzer auditorium in 2004, followed in 2016 by naming the square in the heart of the Jewish quarter as the "Salomon Sulzer Square".

In 2007 already the Chief cantor of Vienna, Shmuel Barzilai, came up with the idea of renaming a small street in the center of Vienna as "Salomon Sulzer Street". The initiative drowned in the abyss of bureaucracy. Only to emerge again in 2024, with more success, now taken seriously by the Jewish community and the first district of Vienna.

We were glad to help with contacts to the descendants of Sulzer – and Julie Reisler and her son Ami made it from Washington to participate in the modest ceremony on March 18. They visited Vienna and the traces of her great-great-great grandfather, being members of a family in which the tradition of music persevered for many generations, formed an impressive continuity.

Markus Figl *(Head of the 1. District of Vienna),* ***Hanno Loewy*** *(Jewish Museum Hohenems),* ***Julie Reisler*** *(descendant of Salomon Sulzer),* ***Shmuel Barzilai*** *(Chief Cantor of Vienna),* ***Oskar Deutsch*** *(head of the Jewish Community of Vienna),* ***Andreas Mailath-Pokorny*** *(Viennese Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems and former City Councilor for Culture in Vienna).* ***Photo: Alba Losert***

Julie Reisler *speaking on the occasion of the inauguration of the Salomon Sulzer Square.* ***Photo: Hanno Loewy***

VILLA FRANZISKA AND IWAN ROSENTHAL RESURRECTED: THE NEW HOUSE OF LITERATURE

The restored Villa Franziska and Iwan Rosenthal — **Photo: Frauke Kühn**

For many years the old Villa of Franziska and Iwan Rosenthal left a rather sad impression on everybody entering the center of Hohenems. Many people considered it to be a kind of haunted mansion.

Now new life will start to live in the impressive structure. On April 5th the mansion opened its gates as the newly founded House of Literature of Vorarlberg. A joint initiative of the cultural administration of the state, the municipality and private investors made it possible to restore the dilapidated building to its old glory, with a lot of sensitivity by architect Ernst Waibel and under supervision of the Federal Monuments Office.

The villa now is the heart of a new ensemble, including the impressive new city hall of Hohenems which was built on the site of the Bernheimer House, which was demolished 30 years ago. You can also find a number of offices, shops and residence buildings that were developed throughout the last five years, now marking the northern entrance of the town's center.

The House of Literature, directed by Frauke Kühn, offers a wide spectrum of activities popularizing literature in a most interactive way, with special programs for youth and also for aficionados of graphic literature, while at the same time bringing together authors and readers in the magic atmosphere of the Villa.

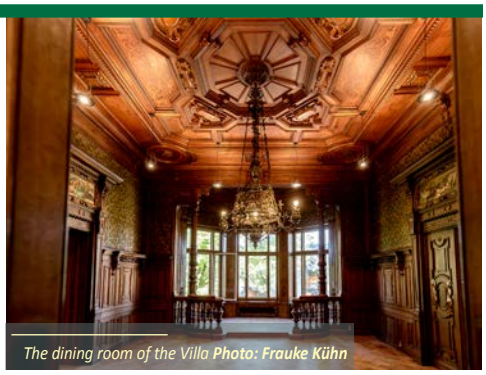
Iwan Rosenthal and Franziska, born Brettauer, tried to boast in Hohenems with Viennese grandeur, after already having lived through the tragedy of losing their only child as a stillborn. For the extension and neo Palladian decoration of a townhouse owned by the family since the 1820s, they hired architects Chiodera and Tschudy

Photo: Hanno Loewy

The stained glass window in the Villa Franziska and Iwan Rosenthal

from Zurich, who also built the theatre in Zurich, the Palace Hotel in St. Moritz, and the synagogues of Zurich and St. Gallen. The ensemble included a bowling alley, a carriage house and a beautiful park.

But the two spent much of their time in Vienna and in Switzerland, as long as Iwan was active as an industrialist. Iwan died in 1929, Franziska in 1931. And it was Franziska's sister Regina Brettauer, who probably was the last family member to live in the mansion. Her Swiss husband Jakob Hess had already died in 1899.



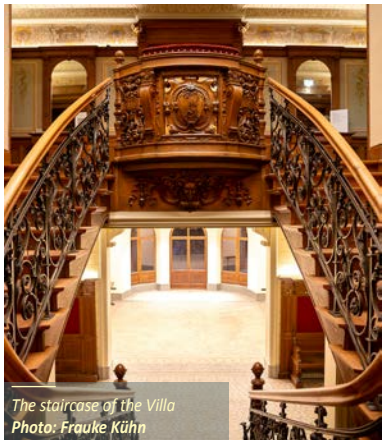
The dining room of the Villa **Photo: Frauke Kühn**

Her daughter, Amelie Hess, never married and served as a secretary and assistant of a physician in Munich, and enjoyed hiking in the mountains as an active member of the Austrian Alpenverein (Alpine Club).

Around 1938 she had to move from her home in Munich and, being a Swiss national through her father, went to Zurich to live there together with her mother. And it was she, who finally sold the Villa in May 1938 to a Hohenems gentile family, the Schebestas. She had no alternative to selling the mansion below its value, after the Nazis had come to power in Austria.

For more than twenty years the mansion has been waiting for better times to come, in a state of limbo, and endangered by deterioration. Including the mansion as part of a new urban ensemble offers the chance to mobilize the necessary public and private funds for its revitalization. The initiative to install a House of Literature for Vorarlberg for years Frauke Kühn was successful in networking and encouraging regional initiatives and institutions programing literary events to engage in joint activities. For us, the Jewish Museum too, it offers a chance of meaningful collaborations.

The festive opening on April 5 brought together young authors and the enthusiastic audience, architects and craftsmen responsible for the restoration and representatives of various cultural institutions of the region in a mood of curious expectations for the activities to come. In June the opening of the new town hall will follow – that will also will include facilities for our collections and archives, installed together with the municipal archive. We will keep you posted.



The staircase of the Villa
Photo: Frauke Kühn

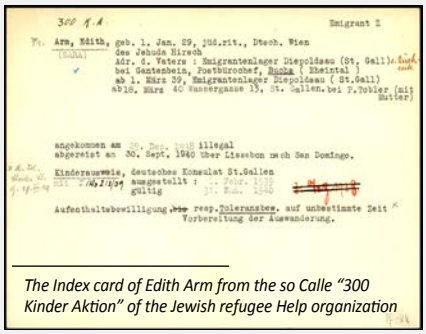
Photo: Hanno Loewy

Working on the restoration
Photo: Frauke Kühn

Villa Franziska and Iwan Rosenthal
Photo: Hanno Loewy

"THERE CAN'T BE NO GOD..."
EDITH ARM'S JOURNEY INTO THE CARIBBEAN

Vienna – Diepoldsau – Santo Domingo, December 29, 1938



Emigrant I

Arm, Edith, geb. 1. Jan. 29, 10b.Pit., Dtsch. Wien
des Jehuda Hirsch
Adr. d. Vaters : Emigrantenlager Diepoldsau (St. Gall)
bei Gantenbein, Fortbruchef, Rheintal)
ab 1. März 39, Emigrantenlager Diepoldsau (St.Gall)
ab16. März 40 Wassergasse 13, St. Gallen. bei F.Tobler (mit Mutter)

angekommen am illegal
abgereist am 30. Sept. 1940 über Lissabon nach San Domingo.

Kinderausweis, deutsches Konsulat St.Gallen
ausgestellt : gültig

Aufenthaltsbewilligung resp.Toleranzbew. auf unbestimmte Zeit
Vorbereitung der Auswanderung.

The Index card of Edith Arm from the so Calle "300 Kinder Aktion" of the Jewish refugee Help organization

"My father was picked up by the Gestapo during the Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. I screamed with terror: The leather coats of the men frightened me. He was taken to a gym hall, along with others, and there they were beaten half-dead. But one of the guards knew him and let him jump out of a toilet window. He came home and immediately departed with a suitcase. After that shock I said to myself: There can be no God. A few days later, together with his brother, he escaped to Switzerland, crossing the frontier near Hohenems. My mother and I had a letter from him that 'a girl with yellow hair' in Hohenems would tell us everything else. We actually found her and she explained everything to us. We went to the German customs office and they examined us incredibly thoroughly because they probably thought we wanted to smuggle gold or whatever out of the country. They examined every opening of our bodies, my mother's and mine, and for that we had to strip naked. They didn't remark on the fact that we were wearing two or three layers of clothes; they knew we were leaving the country and this was nothing special. (…) Then we were told: 'We're letting you go, but don't ever come back. If you come back, that'll be the end of you' – these were their exact words. And on the Swiss side father was waiting for us." [1]

Her father Josef Arm and his brother Fritz fled to Diepoldsau on November 27, 1938. It is not known where they managed to cross the border. From the refugee camp, however, they were able to prepare the escape of Edith and her mother Elsa. On December 29, three days before Edith's tenth birthday, they also arrived at the Diepoldsau refugee camp.

"There we were for 15 months; it was cold and there wasn't always enough food. Not that we went hungry. Even if it was only potatoes and cheese, there was always something to eat. It was not a pleasant place to be, and to me it was rather terrible. But the worst had nothing to do with food or cold."

Soon after their arrival, the authorities decide to separate Edith from her family and place her with Swiss foster parents. The family of a postmaster in Buchs was supposed to look after her. But Edith ran away to be with her own parents, only to be sent back to Buchs again. Her parents had to fight for her. Eventually they were all reunited in Diepoldsau.

"Of course, while I was at Diepoldsau I missed my schooling. I had to be taught somehow. I knew the whole of Goethe's Faust by heart. We staged a play: we sang songs. I received instruction in all possible and impossible subjects. There was no schoolmaster among us, but they all became teachers. (…) Then there was a composer. Somewhere an old piano was discovered and they made up a song for me."

The Diepoldsau Camp soccer team about 1939. Edith Arm second from left in front. ***(Jüdisches Museum der Schweiz, Basel)***

A soccer team was also formed. Fritz and Josef Arm were excellent kickers.

"After a year or so someone came from America, a certain Mr. Throne. He represented an organization called the Dominican Republic Settlement Association, DORSA in short. They collected money in the States and had arranged with the Dominican Republic that the country would allow Jewish refugees in. The figure envisioned was 100.000 – but this was never achieved. We were at most 450 people. Why? The Dominican president then had a very bad reputation, allegedly rightly so. So someone suggested to him that it would help his image if he authorized such a humanitarian project. Besides, this didn't cost him anything; it was land that had belonged to the United Fruit Company, which he'd thrown out of the country, and it was lying fallow. It was hoped that Europeans would bring culture and know-how with them, and that this wouldn't be a bad thing."

In fact, Dictator Trujillo had reason to be concerned about his reputation. Having come to power in a coup in 1930 with US help, he was obsessed with the idea of whitening his population. He himself, of Haitian descent, tried to do so with powder and white make-up and splendid uniforms. In 1937, he had at least 18,000 Haitians killed in a massacre, mainly workers on the sugar cane plantations.

When in July 1938, at the Evian Conference on Lake Geneva, an effort was made to find host countries for the threatened Jews from the German Reich, he offered to take in 100,000 of them. But in fact, only a few hundred came to the country and founded a Jewish colony near the city of Sosúa on the land made available to them.

Arrival of Jewish refugees in the Dominican Republic, December 3, 1940. Edith Arm with her Family in the front center. Scene from the film "La Vida de los refugiados audios en Sosua"

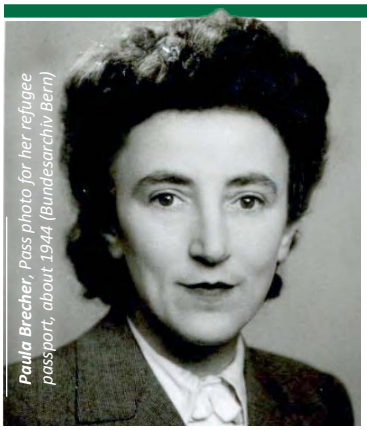
Edith and her parents Josef and Elsa also set off for the Dominican Republic at the end of September 1940 with a whole group of refugees from the Diepoldsau camp. On December 3, they reached "Ciudad Trujillo", as the capital Santo Domingo was called at the time, on the steamer S.S. Coamo from Puerto Rico. Shortly afterwards Sosúa and Edith's uncle Fritz arrived too. Edith's aunts managed to flee to England, her uncle Sucher, known as Putzi, to Palestine. Like so many of those who fled from Vienna to Switzerland, their family came from Eastern Europe, impoverished people who had landed in Vienna's Leopoldstadt district around the time of the First World War. In 1938, they had long since formed the majority of Viennese Jewry. Small traders and workers, tailors and upholsterers, butchers and taxi drivers, like Josef Arm. People with no chance of obtaining an expensive visa to the USA.

In 1942, Edith's grandmother Netty, born in Novoselitsa near Chernivtsi, widowed for ten years and now all alone, was taken from her apartment in Vienna's Herminengasse and deported to Izbica in Poland. Whether she reached this place of extermination or died on the transport is unknown.

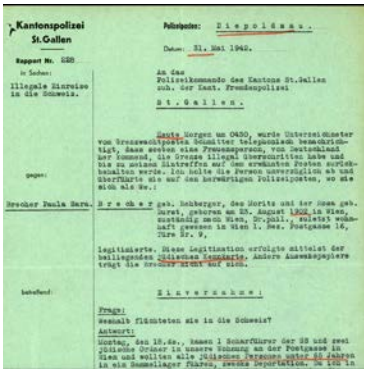
In any case, she never met her grandchildren, who were born in the Caribbean.

[1] Edith Gersten née Arm recollections in: Adi Wimmer (Ed.), Strangers at Home and Abroad: Recollections of Austrian Jews Who Escaped Hitler. Jefferson, NC, 2000, p. 82ff.

"THE PROBLEM OF FEAR."
PAULA BRECHER CROSSES THE BARBED WIRE



Paula Brecher, Pass photo for her refugee passport, about 1944 (Bundesarchiv Bern)



Kantonspolizei St.Gallen

Polizeiposten: Diepoldsau.

Datum: 31. Mai 1942.

Rapport Nr. 828

In Sachen:

Illegale Einreise in die Schweiz.

An das Polizeikommando des Kantons St.Gallen zuh. der Kant. Fremdenpolizei

St.Gallen.

Heute Morgen um 0430, wurde Unterzeichneter von Grenzwachtposten Schmitter telephonisch benachrichtigt, dass soeben eine Frauensperson, von Deutschland her kommend, die Grenze illegal überschritten habe und bis zu seinem Eintreffen auf dem erwähnten Posten zurückbehalten werde. Ich holte die Person sogenglich ab und überhörte sie auf den notwendigen Polizeiposten, wo sie sich als We.!

gegen:

Brecher Paula Sara. Brecher geb. Rehberger, des Moritz und der Rosa geb. Israel, geboren am 20. August 1902 in Wien, zuständig auch Wien, Dr.phil., zuletzt wohnhaft gewesen in Wien 1. Bez. Postgasse 16, Tür Nr. 9,

legitimierte. Diese Legitimation erfolgte mittelst der heiligenden [illegible] temporär. Andere Ausweispapiere trägt die Brecher nicht auf sich.

betreffend: Einvernahme:

Frage:
Weshalb flüchteten sie in die Schweiz?

Antwort:
Montag, den 18.ds., kamen 1 Scharführer der SS und zwei [illegible] Ordner in unsere Wohnung an der Postgasse in Wien und wollten alle jüdischen Personen unter 65 Jahren in ein Sammellager führen, sowas Deportation. Um [illegible]

Verhaftung 1942 Her interrogation by the Swiss police on May 31, 1942 (Bundesarchiv Bern)

Hohenems/Diepoldsau, May 31, 1942

At 4.30 in the morning, the police station in Diepoldsau were informed by the border guards at the Schmitter crossing "that a woman coming from Germany has just crossed the border illegally". Police officer Schneider was sent to the border to take the woman to the police station and interrogate her.

His report to the cantonal police was recorded as follows:

Why did you escape to Switzerland?

"On Monday, the 18th (of this month), 1 SS leader and two Jewish officials came to our apartment on Postgasse in Vienna and wanted to take all Jewish people under the age of 65 to a collection camp for deportation. As I suspected that this deportation would mean my death, or at least the most terrible torment, I fled from the apartment and hid with Aryan friends in Vienna. There I prepared my long-planned escape to Switzerland."

Paula Brecher believes that her parents are still safe from deportation due to their advanced age. Born as Paula Rehberger in 1902, she had already suffered several strokes of fate. During World War I, when her father was serving as a soldier, she had to drop out of school to help support the family. She does office work. But she also takes acting lessons. In 1920, she makes her debut at the Klagenfurt Theater and attracts attention with her own recital evening programs.

In 1922 she marries, but soon afterwards her husband falls ill and a radical change of climate is advised. In 1926, they set off for Algeria. But only three months later her husband dies and Paula Brecher returns to Vienna as a widow. She keeps her head above water with recital evenings and a small widow's pension, writes prose and tries unsuccessfully to make a new start in Berlin. In 1933, she returns to Vienna to complete her A-levels and begins to study psychology.

In October 1938, she is the last Jewish woman to receive her doctorate in Vienna, with a thesis on *"A psychological investigation into the problem of fear."* At the same time, she is banned from her profession. Her attempts to emigrate to the US prove unsuccessful, even though she receives an affidavit from a colleague in San Francisco. But by the time the visa is finally granted, it is already too late to travel through Italy. She needs financial support from her husband's aunt, who lives in Zurich, to make the journey via Japan. But when the money eventually arrives from Switzerland, the visa has expired. So she stays with her parents and witnesses the first deportations from Vienna, which now take place in quick succession, to Opole and Lodz, Kovno, Riga, Izbica, Minsk and There-sienstadt. Some of their relatives now also vanish without a trace.

The transport for which she is to be picked up on May 18 will depart two days later for Maly Trostinec near Minsk. Almost all of its passengers were no longer alive a few days later. But Paula Brecher is on her way to Bregenz instead. She describes her escape at the Diepoldsau police station on May 31:

How did you organize this escape?

"On my honeymoon in 1922, I was in Bregenz, where I was told, as a curiosity, that a lot of smuggling took place from there and that there was also an exchange of female workers between Switzerland and what was then Austria. I hoped that one of these opportunities would save me. (...) On Wednesday the 27th (of this month) I went to Bregenz where I visited a brother of a friend of my deceased husband. He dashed my hopes of crossing the border in Bregenz or Lustenau. The only possibility he saw was Hohenems, if I could find a guide there."

Paula Brecher goes to Hohenems to see Dr. Neudörfer, the head physician at the hospital, who has repeatedly helped refugees—even though he himself is at risk due to his Jewish ancestry. But in Hohenems she is passed around like a hot potato. Just three weeks ago, five women from Berlin failed in their attempt to escape at the border. One of them took her own life in Hohenems and died in Neudörfer's clinic. The Hohenems escape helpers were interrogated, the Diepoldsau escape helpers arrested in Switzerland. No one wants to accompany Paula Brecher to the border, only good advice is given as to which route she should take.

She does not find the recommended route. But in the middle of the night, at 2.30 a.m., she manages to get past the barbed wire fence in front of the Diepoldsau swimming pool. She sneaks along the wire fence of the swimming pool, crosses a shallow body of water north of the pool and is soon stopped by a Swiss border guard.

She has made it to Switzerland. However, her ordeal is not over yet. She is initially held in the St. Gallen police prison until June 19. She is then transferred to a Jewish girls' home in Basel, which now serves as refugee accommodation.

Just one day later, her parents are forced to leave Vienna. They are deported to Theresienstadt on June 20 on "Transport IV/1". Moritz Rehberger, who was 44 years old when he went to fight for Austria in the First World War, perishes there on April 6, 1943. Paula's mother Rosalie Rehberger survives in Theresienstadt until May 15, 1944. Then, at the age of 72, she is deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered in the gas chambers. Paula Brecher would only learn of all this years later.

However, she too is now physically and mentally ailing. In July 1942, she is hospitalized with a recurrence of a stomach ulcer. Soon afterwards, her Zurich benefactor dies and with her the hope for an easier right to stay. Paula Brecher now lives off the Jewish Refugee Aid organization. At least she is allowed to move into private accommodation in 1943.

And she finds access to the Basel circle around the psychologist Heinrich Meng, who provides psychotherapeutic treatment. Meng also tries to get her translation jobs that are not subject to the strict ban on work that she is otherwise obliged to observe.

Hundreds of pages of correspondence from the immigration police in Bern, the Jewish Refugee Aid and the cantonal authorities document her struggle for survival in the following years, begging letters for medically necessary treatment and to obtain residence and work permits, and finally to secure permanent asylum. She still regularly receives official demands to apply for a visa for further emigration. She is still only occasionally allowed to do small paid jobs, a few language lessons here, a few translation jobs there. In 1949, the canton of Basel still refuses to grant her permanent asylum due to her poor health and states of anxiety. Paula Brecher has to fill in the International Refugee Organization's questionnaire twice more, explaining why she neither wants to return to Austria nor is able to emigrate to the USA.

Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung
DER CHEF DER POLIZEIABTEILUNG
i.A.
sig. Angst

Stamp of Miss Dr. Angst on a letter of the Swiss Alien Police of October 24, 1947 (Bundesarchiv Bern)

Hurrliing!
DAUERASYL
15 Feb. 1949

Stamp on a Swiss document, finally granting her permanent Asylum in 1949 (Bundesarchiv Bern)

Even the federal immigration police in Bern are now more friendly than the cantonal police. The letters from Bern are usually signed with a rubber-stamped name, on behalf of the authority, the "Chief of the Police Department". Since 1948, the stamped letters from Bern bear the evocative name "Angst".

It is "Fräulein Dr. Angst" who has since taken over the Brecher file. With her support, the time had actually come in February 1950. Paula Brecher receives the redemptive decision to be allowed to stay.

1974 she died in Basel and is buried in the Jewish cemetery

FELIX GRANICHSTAEDTEN, WILHELM HUBER, RUBIN MARKOWITZ: VIENNA, DIEPOLDSAU, FRANCE AND THEN?

Felix Granichstaedten *in the Diepoldsau Refugee Camp. Front row, third from right, about 1939 (Jüdisches Museum der Schweiz, Basel)*

Hohenems/Diepoldsau, August 17, 1938

In Bern, Heinrich Rothmund, head of the immigration police, summoned the cantonal police directors. On the same day, August 17, 1938, at least 37 refugees arrived in Diepoldsau from Vienna. In total, over 200 people fled to Switzerland via Hohenems and the old Rhine in that week alone. The main concern there was how to get rid of them again.

One of the refugees crossing the border that day was Felix Hans Granichstaedten, the son of a well-known Viennese composer of operettas. The young man, a baptized Catholic like his father, had already experienced a few adventures. Born in Prague in 1919, he caused his parents quite a few headaches. In 1933, at the age of fourteen, he ran away from home, hung around with some ruffians and was picked up a few days later in Pressbaum. The Viennese tabloids gleefully exploited the scandal. An apprenticeship as a mechanic was supposed to put him on the right track, but then he worked in a department store and attempted suicide.

In 1938, however, he had every reason to run away. The Granichstaedtens were now nothing but Jews in the eyes of the National Socialist authorities. In that same year his father, Bruno Granichstaedten, who had already spent some time in Hollywood in 1932, managed to escape – now married to his second wife – via Luxembourg to the US.

Felix Granichstaedten, however, found himself before the People's Court of the German Reich in Berlin on March 10, 1942. Charged with treason. How he got there from Diepoldsau is meticulously explained in the verdict for seven years in prison. It is a verdict that sounds almost sympathetic given the circumstances of National Socialism, but it did not help him.

"After the annexation of the Ostmark to the Reich [...] the accused decided to emigrate because he did not want to remain in Germany as a Jew. On August 17, 1938, he traveled from Vienna to Vorarlberg and crossed the green border to Switzerland. Here he lived for about nine months in an emigrant camp in Diepoldsau. Then, as a Catholic, he was supported by the Caritas association and accommodated with a Catholic family near St. Gallen. From October 1939 he was taken in by the family of a lower post office official out of compassion, although there were already 9 children in the house. The accused, who did not have a work permit, tried to earn a small income by repairing radio sets. He was therefore summoned by the police, cautioned for working without a permit and referred to the Austrian and Foreign Legions in France."

But it was precisely this 'clue' that proved to be Granichstaedten's undoing. Apparently, even the judges who decided his fate still felt sorry for the young man. The story continues:

"The defendant, who had no prospect of getting a work permit and work in Switzerland, but who on the other hand no longer wanted to be a burden on the family that had taken him in, decided to go to France and join the Foreign Legion."

He was given a ticket by Swiss Caritas. Having crossed the border in February 1940, he was met by the French Guard. He received his training in Sidi bel Abbès in Algeria. And after the capitulation of France in June, he finally enlisted in a work company in the fall, also in Algeria, becoming an electrician in the machine center of a coal mine.

But in July 1941, he decided to return to Germany and tried to hide his Jewish origins. On his return, he was arrested immediately for what was called 'treasonable assistance in arms'. It did not help him that, when he joined the Foreign Legion, he had been assured that he would not be deployed against the German Reich.

The verdict in 1942 came to the conclusion that he had served an enemy military force. Seven years in prison meant a concentration camp. The SS special camp Hinzert was his destination for the time being.

Granichstaedten was not the only fugitive in Diepoldsau who gave in to pressure from the Swiss authorities and was pushed out to France.

Wilhelm Huber in 1939, Photo for a Refugee Passport (Bundesarchiv Bern)

Willi Huber as well crossed the border to Switzerland in Hohenems on August 17, 1938.

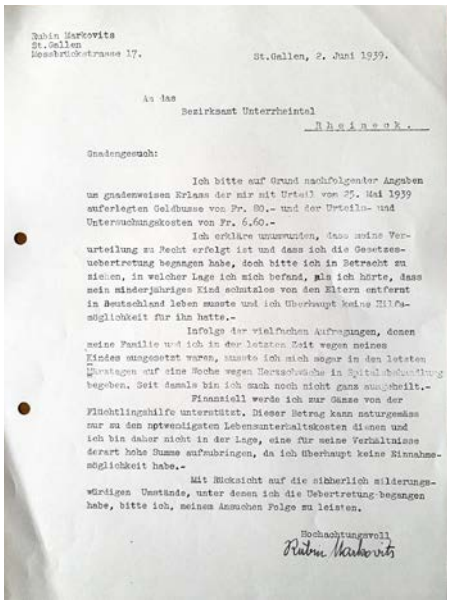
Most of the Jews seeking refuge here at this time came from rather poor backgrounds, their families having moved to Vienna from Eastern Europe between 1900 and 1920, fleeing poverty, war and persecution. Willi Huber had attended a mechanical engineering school in Vienna and worked as a lathe operator. He also ended up in the refugee camp in Diepoldsau and tried to find a way to travel on from there to another safe country. The Swiss authorities regularly remind him that he would only be tolerated for a limited period. In July 1939, he was moved from Diepoldsau to Degersheim, where numerous refugees were also housed. And in August he set off for France. Initially there were no major obstacles on the way. But for many, this journey became a trap.

But Willi Huber was lucky. He joined the French army. And he was lucky once again, because when the army surrendered after a very short time in June 1940, he managed to escape to Marseille in the unoccupied zone of France. Luck stayed with him as he found the love of his life there: the Viennese Gusti Auerbach, who also fled to Brussels in August 1938 and finally to Marseille in May 1940. They were married and decided to escape to Switzerland once again, this time from the west.

In the Alps south of Lake Geneva, they successfully crossed the border, from Chamonix to Valais with their two-month-old baby on September 24, 1942. They survived the war in various refugee homes in Lausanne and Montreux. And in August 1945, they made their way back to France—and were initially stuck in the Charmilles refugee camp in Geneva. Their identity papers, which they had to return in the meantime, had apparently ended up with the wrong office.

But even this last Swiss chapter of the now family of four passed. They were finally able to settle in Lyon, France.

For other refugees from Diepoldsau, the route to France proved to be nothing more than a detour to their death sentence. Shoemaker Rubin Markowitz and his wife Jetti, for example, came from Eastern Europe, from Iași în România, like so many of the Viennese refugees. They too had arrived in Diepoldsau on August 16, 1938. After Kristallnacht, their son Heinrich was arrested in Vienna along with 6,500 other Jews and deported to Dachau on November 12. Released again—on condition that he left the Reich as quickly as possible—he also tried to escape to Switzerland via Vorarlberg. Rubin Markowitz hired escape helpers, the upholsterer Oskar Müller and the driving instructor Alexander Helg, who took Heinrich Markowitz from Altach across the Old Rhine. But the helpers got arrested on the Swiss side. All of them—including the desperate father—were sentenced to heavy fines. Rubin Markowitz, who has no means at all, applied to the district office for clemency.



Rubin Markowits
St.Gallen
Rosenbergstrasse 17.

St.Gallen, 2. Juni 1939.

An das
Bezirksamt Unterrheintal
Thal

Gnadengesuch:

Ich bitte auf Grund nachfolgender Angaben um gnadenweisen Erlass der mir mit Urteil vom 25. Mai 1939 auferlegten Geldbusse von Fr. 80.- und der Urteils- und Untersuchungskosten von Fr. 6.60.-

Ich erkläre unumwunden, dass meine Verurteilung zu Recht erfolgt ist und dass ich die Gesetzesübertretung begangen habe, doch bitte ich in Betracht zu ziehen, in welcher Lage ich mich befand, als ich hörte, dass mein minderjähriges Kind schutzlos von den Eltern entfernt in Deutschland leben musste und ich überhaupt keine Hilfsmöglichkeit für ihn hatte.-

Infolge der vielfachen Aufregungen, denen meine Familie und ich in der letzten Zeit wegen meines Kindes ausgesetzt waren, musste ich mich sogar in den letzten Tagen auf eine Woche wegen Herzschwäche in Spitalbehandlung begeben. Seit damals bin ich auch noch nicht ganz ausgeheilt.-

Finanziell werde ich zur Gänze von der Flüchtlingshilfe unterstützt. Dieser Betrag kann naturgemäss nur zu den notwendigsten Lebensunterhaltskosten dienen und ich bin daher nicht in der Lage, eine für meine Verhältnisse derart hohe Summe aufzubringen, da ich überhaupt keine Einnahmemöglichkeit habe.-

Mit Rücksicht auf die sicherlich milderungswürdigen Umstände, unter denen ich die Uebertretung begangen habe, bitte ich, meinem Ansuchen Folge zu leisten.

Hochachtungsvoll
Rubin Markowits

Petition of Rubin Markowitz, June 2, 1939 (Bundesarchiv Bern)

"I openly declare that my conviction was justified and that I committed the offense, but I ask you to consider the situation in which I found myself when I heard that my underage child had to live in Germany without protection away from his parents and that I had no means of helping him at all. (...) I am supported financially in full by the refugee aid organization. Naturally, this amount can only be used for the most necessary living expenses and I am therefore not in a position to raise such a high amount considering my circumstances, as I have no means of income at all."

However, the request for clemency was not granted and he was threatened with a prison sentence instead. On July 1, 1939, Rubin and Jetti left for France together with their son Erich. It is not known whether they set off themselves or were deported by the authorities.

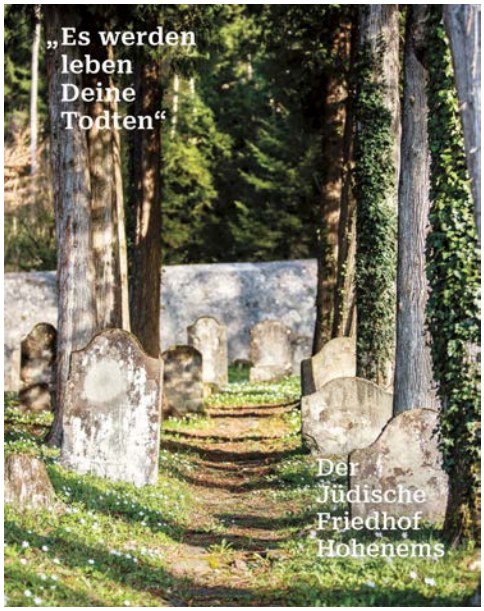
Two years later in any case, they were among the 4232 Jews arrested in France on August 20, 1941, in 'retaliation' for attacks by the Resistance on the German occupying forces. They were locked up in the Drancy transit camp near Paris. On July 19, 1942, they were forced to board the 7th transport to Auschwitz, together with 998 other Jewish men and women, crammed into freight cars. Two days later, after an odyssey via Châlons-sur-Marne, Saarbrücken, Frankfurt, Dresden and Katowice, the transport reached the Auschwitz extermination camp. The younger deportees, who were still classified as fit for work, were sent to the new Birkenau camp. The others were taken directly to the gas chamber and murdered. Only 16 people from this transport lived to see liberation in 1945. No one from the Markowitz family was among them. Neither was Erich Markowitz, who was deported from Phitivier to Auschwitz on July 17 and murdered there in September. What became of Heinrich Markowitz is unknown.

And the story of the young runaway Felix Granichstaedten? It also ends in Auschwitz. It is not known when he was deported there from Hinzert or another camp. But the date of his death in Auschwitz is documented. He died on June 26, 1943 at the age of twenty-four, cause of death unknown.

The conviction of Rubin Markowitz had a late repercussion in Switzerland. On November 30, 2005, the Rehabilitation Commission of the Federal Assembly declared that the conviction pronounced against Ruben Markowitz by the Unter Rheintal District Office on May 25, 1939 had been annulled with effect on January 1, 2004 by the Federal Act of June 20, 2003 on the Annulment of Criminal Convictions against Refugee Helpers during the National Socialist Era.

No procedural costs were charged.

TRANSLATED ARTICLES FROM THE CEMETERY BOOK: "ES WERDEN LEBEN DEINE TODTEN"



Following the presentation of the book on the Hohenems Jewish cemetery published in 2024 and the first memories of three descendants, this edition presents the translated essay by museum director Hanno Loewy. In the upcoming issues, more texts from the publication by the Association for the Maintenance of the Jewish Cemetery in Hohenems and the Jewish Museum Hohenems will be made available.

—Raphael Einetter

The Jewish cemetery in Hohenems. A place that is constantly reinventing itself

—Hanno Loewy

In 2017, the descendants of the Jews of Hohenems came together in the town for the third time to celebrate their common origins from this stubborn place - and their own cosmopolitan diversity: their Hohenems diaspora. The mostly quiet cemetery was filled with 180 euphoric people looking for the graves of their ancestors, grouping around the old mossy stones with their children and grandchildren in order to locate themselves where part of their family history has long since become a symbolic place, a cipher for belonging in their consciousness. A fantasized presence that meets the real presence of long-gone generations here in the cemetery. A presence that has spread through the vegetation of the site, invisible and omnipresent at the same time.

Many were already present at the first reunion. They have come here from all over the world, brought their families with them, experienced five intense days between global family gossip between Australia, New York and Trieste, looked at the museum, which they have entrusted with the preservation of their memories and their material traces, encountered the present and its people in the village, immersed themselves in narrated history. And they are delighted to have become something of a tribe of their own, transcending all geographical, religious, national and cultural boundaries.

But here, between the weathered stones, surrounded by the movement of their own emotional excitement, time stands still for a moment - only to begin again.

A cemetery is a place of silence. And a place of life. A place of permanence and - at least in Hohenems - also a place of improvisation. A place that changes and is constantly reinvented.

The sloping ground, which the imperial Count of Hohenems once made available to the new Jewish community more than four hundred years ago, was to have its pitfalls. The gravestones sank into the damp earth. Many are hidden underground today. Conservation work is slowing down this incessant process, but it can only delay the change and cannot completely prevent nature's grip on the signs that people have left in them. This is ensured by the porous stone from which so many of the gravestones were made and which literally attracts the traces of the greenery that takes over everything. This cemetery, too, lives as a place of remembrance only as long as we keep it in our consciousness and continue to build a new relationship with it.

And this is exactly what actually happened. As long as the community grew, so did the cemetery, expanding its borders on all sides, protecting itself with new walls. And at some point, the Jewish community of Hohenems also began to grow geographically, transforming itself into a transnational family network, characterized by strict conditions of existence under different rulers and by partly forced, partly voluntary marriage migration. For a long time in the 19th century, the eldest sons remained the head of the family in the small town in the Rhine Valley, while their relatives dispersed to southern Germany or the Swiss Jewish villages, or discovered the metropolises of Europe and their Jewish family dynasties for themselves, from London to Paris, from Frankfurt to Vienna and Trieste.

The cemetery remained the quiet center of this Hohenems diaspora. And in Rabbi Aron Tänzer, the community, its cemetery and its families found their historian and genealogist. Together with Moritz Federmann and Heinrich Löwengard, Tänzer created a contemporary, portable monument - a book - to the community, its cemetery and its families, who had long since been scattered all over the world by migration. Now the families had their names and family trees and the cemetery had its travel guide to the present of the past. To this day, the cemetery is the place where they are still there, silent but made to speak by their descendants. In the meantime, the Jewish community in the town itself had melted away, from once more than 500 people to 90 souls, soon reduced to two dozen, through emigration to places where education, spouses and career advancement, sometimes just anonymity and the hope of a life marked less by the resentment that was growing everywhere, were waiting.

After the last Jews had been expelled or deported to their deaths, the National Socialist mayor wanted to eradicate every trace of the memory of three hundred years of Jewish life in Hohenems. But he did not succeed. The thousand years, which lasted seven years in Austria, were too short for that. And to raze the cemetery, as the eager mayor wanted, was a task that apparently only a few high-spirited but not very efficient members of the "Hitlerjugend" dared to tackle - while the Nazi authorities in the country were still hesitant and soon had other priorities.

So most of the stones were still standing when the French - or more precisely their Moroccan mountain troops, most of them Muslims and a few Jews among them - liberated Vorarlberg. And soon Jewish survivors from the camps followed, who wanted to find their way back to life in Hohenems. Not to eternal life, but to that of their newly founded families, their children. The old cemetery in the south of the town, with its strange gravestones that looked so different from those in their lost Eastern European homelands, was not at the top of their list of priorities. Even though a few of them stayed here.

The fact that the newly founded Jewish community in Tyrol wanted to keep its few resources and its few members in Innsbruck together - and not burden itself with neglected properties in the Rhine Valley - was no secret and did not go unnoticed by the Hohenems Jewish families who had emigrated. After all, many of them still lived nearby in the canton of St. Gallen, both in the town and in the Rhine Valley.

The founding of the Association for the Maintenance of the Jewish Cemetery was perhaps not entirely unique, but it was an extremely unusual event. It gave the forcibly dissolved community, whose formal legal successor - the Jewish Community for Tyrol and Vorarlberg - saw no real continuity with it, a more than just virtual continuation.

Willi Burgauer and Kurt Bollag devoted a great deal of their passion and energy to the cemetery. Two people who could hardly be more different. Willi Burgauer, with his career as a successful textile industrialist in St. Gallen almost behind him, now ran the association like his company, punctually, accurately and reliably. As president, he was responsible for communication, just as he was busy raising money. And this meant writing to descendants all over the world and reconnecting them with Hohenems, with their responsibility for the afterlife of their dead. Kurt Bollag, on the other hand, who - living in Heerbrugg - was closer to home and took care of all practical matters on site, was a talent for improvisation, warm and not at all shy when it came to communicating with the people of Hohenems, at a time when the Nazi crimes were just ten years away and people wanted and needed to know exactly who they were dealing with, or perhaps better not.

You needed a big heart for that. Answering on time was sometimes less his style, much to the frustration of Willi Burgauer, who repeatedly threatened to quit when his partner missed deadlines. Or simply didn't write back because he was still in the middle of his job - and that meant on business trips. Willi Burgauer died in 1960 and Werner Burgauer was to succeed his father.

The municipality initially showed no interest in looking after its Jewish heritage. With the helpless consent of the Innsbruck religious community, the synagogue was converted into a fire station. Embarrassingly, even after the war, the young boys in the village could not stop trying to overturn stones in the cemetery. Testing out their Good Friday ratchets or searching for hidden "Jewish riches" in the sarcophagi. This occasionally led to correspondence and investigations by the authorities. And the memorial plaques smashed by the Nazis at the entrance to the burial hall did not make a good impression either. However, the post-war mayor Hanni Amann waited a long time before the municipality was finally prepared to spend money on rebuilding the marble plaques. Much to the annoyance of Harry Weil, the last cantor of the community, who had been in lively contact with his old friends in Hohenems and Switzerland since the end of the war.

After the war, Harry Weil considered returning from exile in America. But it never came to pass. On his temporary return to the country, he was received with too much hostility by some, including the mayor, who had once been one of his friends. In the end, he stayed in Chicago and took over the American representation of Rupp-Käsle (a cheesemaker from Vorarlberg) - and remained loyal to his homeland.

He also had the Hohenems community newspaper sent to the USA. And, of course, he closely followed the development work of the cemetery association. In the end, he reconciled with his old friend, who didn't want to remember anything after the war. In 1965, Harry Weil was delighted that Hanni Amann had assured him that he, Harry, would always remain an "Emser". Harry Weil also had a pretty big heart.

Kurt Bollag was supposed to be on another business trip in 1970 when a telegram arrived at his office informing him of the death of Harry Weil and that arrangements had to be made for his funeral.

According to family legend, when Bollag returned to the company, Harry Weil was already standing on his desk in an urn, a space-saving solution that defied all ritual laws. But Harry Weil, the founder of the Hohenems workers' choral society "Nibelungenhort" and passionate Schrammel musician (a style of Viennese folk music), the preacher and cantor, chess player and actor in Hohenems clubs in the interwar period, was buried with full honors in the Jewish cemetery, accompanied by many old friends.

His Catholic wife is also noted on his gravestone. We only tell tolerant guests in the museum how Angelina finally found her final resting place with her beloved Harry.

In 1970, it was not long before the first mention of a possible Jewish Museum was made in Hohenems - 1973 - in a newspaper article by Kurt Greussing, who allowed himself to quote a utopia by Arnulf Häfele.

When this utopia became reality, the Hohenems diaspora gained its second heart alongside the cemetery. A center that not only looked into the present of the past, but also into the present of the future. Into the whole diversity of Jewish existence, into the present life and into the future dreams of the descendants scattered all over the world - but communicating with each other in a highly animated way. In 1998, more than 160 of them met in the city for the first time. Pictures showing them at the cemetery are among the most touching documents of this self-confident reinvention of a community as a community of world citizens who come together every ten years to look at the old stones and the trees that are still standing and in which their ancestors have remained alive.

At some point, the Jewish cemetery in Hohenems will also grow again. A plot of land is already secured for the people who have moved to Vorarlberg in the last 30 years, either because of love or because of their job. People who will one day give the cemetery a new lease of life. Because nothing is eternal, except that something new always happens, even where the old stones stand.

Hanno Loewy at the Weil family gravestone, 2021.
Photo: Dietmar Walser, Hohenems

Brunner descendants at the Jewish cemetery in Hohenems, August 1998.
Photo: Arno Gisinger and Robert Fessler; *Collection of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, f-nac-179.*

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