EDITORIAL

It is a sad duty to record in this issue the death of three people who in very different ways contributed to contemporary Jewish life in Europe.

Ruth Weyl z'l was a dedicated worker for the cause of interfaith dialogue, initially through her activity with the UK Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ) and later for the international body (ICCJ). She always regarded her work in this area as that of an amateur, but beyond the tremendous administrative support she gave to the interfaith movement, she brought wisdom, pragmatism, common sense and caring that influenced all who came in contact with her. Thanks to Rabbi Andrew Goldstein we are fortunate to be able to publish an autobiographical memoir that she gave a few years ago to an adult education class at Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue, her spiritual home in the UK. Her background in an assimilated German Jewish family, her experience in Palestine during the Mandate period and her subsequent work in the interfaith world are delightfully portrayed.

Leon Yudkin z'l had offered the journal the article 'Eruption of Creative Genius in Central Europe' a few months before his untimely death. It reflects the direction of his ongoing research and intellectual curiosity that had begun with important studies of modern Hebrew literature and then expanded into the field of central European Jewish writers and the culture that sustained them. His last published book, *In and Out: The Prague Circle and Czech Jewry* (L. Marek, Brno 2011), is based on seminars held at the Charles University of Prague under the auspices of the Hussite Theological Faculty. As a regular participant over a number of years, together with his wife, Mickey, in the Annual International Jewish-Christian Bible Week, in its original home at the Hedwig Dransfeld Haus, Bendorf and its decade-long life at Haus Ohrbeck, Osnabrück, he also shared with Ruth Weyl a fascination with the enriching encounters that are possible in an interfaith context. Both of them are sorely missed, not only by family and friends, but by all who value the exploration of European culture and the Jewish contribution, both past and present.

The third person, Dr Elisabeth Maxwell z'l, requires no detailed obituary here as her life is well documented in the many published articles about her in the press, both as the wife and widow of the publisher Robert Maxwell, and because of her own remarkable commitment to the study of the Holocaust. Her relationship with this journal grew out of the beginning of that work, and in particular through her collaboration with the late artist and concentration camp survivor Roman Halter. From its inception this journal was sponsored by the Dutch publisher and philanthropist Johan Polak through his publishing house Polak and van Gennep. When that arrangement was coming to an

end, Roman suggested to the present editor that Dr Maxwell might be in a position to offer support to Leo Baeck College. It occurred to me that the best option would be to ask for help with this journal, and from autumn 1988, thanks to her intervention, it was published by Pergamon Press, beginning with articles focusing on the theme of 'Remembering for the Future', the pioneering set of conferences on the Shoah organized by Dr Maxwell. When it became increasingly clear that the journal no longer fitted into the more science-based programme of Pergamon we were fortunate to find our present home at Berghahn Books. But for Elisabeth Maxwell's support at the time, the journal would probably not be with us today. Her personal help and friendship and her extraordinary commitment to the task of documenting and studying the Shoah leave the memory of a great woman and a great friend of the Jewish people.

Michael Parsons introduces the first section of this issue by providing the background to the Trialogue Conference whose papers we are publishing. The term 'trialogue', to the best of the editor's knowledge, was coined by our founding editor, Ignaz Maybaum, for the title of his 1973 book *Triologue between Jew, Christian and Muslim* (The Littman Library of Civilization, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London). Though the term is regularly criticised as offering a false etymology (the *dia* of *dialogue* does not mean *two* (*di*) but *across*), nevertheless it has taken on a life of its own. Here, *tri* refers to the three perspectives of literature, psychotherapy and religion that are brought to bear on a particular text. The biennial conference, established in 1997, was dedicated this year to André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just*, under the general title 'The Survival of Humanity'. Michael Parsons' article introduces various elements and features of the novel. Lyndsey Stonebridge provides the background to Schwarz-Bart and discusses the reception of the novel from a literary perspective. Josh Cohen approaches the novel not only as a professor of modern literary theory but also as a psychoanalyst in private practice, while Howard Cooper writes as an ordained rabbi but also as a psychotherapist. Since this is a multidisciplinary approach there is much interaction across the three 'territories'.

Our second section is loosely linked under the title 'European Jewish History and Today'. Jeffrey Newman, as well as being a congregational rabbi for many years, has long been engaged in broader political issues concerning the environment and has done pioneering work in promoting the Earth Charter for sustainable development. Faced with catastrophic changes in the environment and their consequent impact on human society, he turns to Hannah Arendt to help us think about 'action' and 'hope'.

Victor Seidler follows his earlier article 'Obligations to the Dead: Historical Justice and Cultural Memory' (*European Judaism* 46, no. 2, 2013, 12–31) by exploring the different ethical issues that arise from the ways in

which the Holocaust is remembered and experienced by the second and third generations of the victims and perpetrators.

The Editor must offer a small apology for his multiple presences in the third section of this issue. As one of the team of organizers of the Annual International Jewish–Christian Bible Week I have acquired the task of offering a brief introduction to the particular book under study during the week and have, ever since the first annual event, produced a sermon for the Shabbat morning service at the end of the week. By chance this summer I had to step in and provide in addition the ‘Jewish’ lecture during the conference on the Book of Esther. The other two speakers, Veronika Bachmann (on the Septuagint version of Esther) and Alinda Damsma (on the Targums), agreed to our publishing their excellent introductions to these important perspectives on the Hebrew text. Fortuitously David Zucker had offered his own take on Esther some time ago and it seemed a good opportunity to offer all the papers together.

As usual, the issue is rounded out with book reviews and poems.

Jonathan Magonet