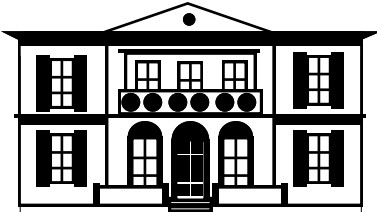


IN TOUCH

JULY 2013

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

FRANCESCA BRUNNER-KENNEDY

Dear Friends,

Last month I had the pleasure of attending the Brunner Family Reunion in Florence, which you'll read about in this issue. During each reunion we ask for volunteers who are willing to plan the next reunion in their hometowns, and then we vote on the locations. I proposed that we combine with the Descendants Reunion in Hohenems in 2017 instead of continuing the current plan of having a reunion somewhere else in 2016. We had three different locations to choose from, and the voting was close, but Hohenems did not win.

After the vote, I heard people who had never been to Hohenems explaining that they didn't vote for it because it was "in the middle of nowhere" and there was "nothing to do" there. I realized that I should have given a description of my experiences at the 1998 reunion. Perhaps that would have swayed them. So I do that here for you in the hopes that it will encourage you to make the pilgrimage to Hohenems in 2017.

1998 was the first reunion of the descendants. My husband, 11-year old daughter, and I went because my father was going and wanted us to be there. None of us knew what to expect. But what we found was a delight: a diverse collection of fascinating, international people. Most were Europeans, but some had travelled from as far as Australia. I knew some relatives already, but met many new ones, and made new friends. There were Jews and Gentiles, college professors and bankers, people who spoke four languages and people who spoke one. I got to know as many of them as I could over a long weekend because I genuinely enjoyed their company.

The program that the museum prepared for us was varied and interesting. There were concerts, lectures, and tours of the museum. When I think of our trip to the old Jewish cemetery, I can still see it in my mind. Pairs and small groups hunted for an ancestor's headstone, and took rubbings. One distant relative explained to an-

other in a language he only spoke a little that this headstone represented their common link. It was a slice of history, but more personal. Some participated in a hike up the Schlossberg mountain. Count Waldburg-Zeil invited us for a lovely reception in the Hohenems Palace. There was a day trip to St. Gallen, Switzerland and a visit to a synagogue there. It was a schedule brimming with choices, but there was also time to simply gather a few new friends and go to a local café for lunch.

That reunion changed my relationship with my family, and my interest in my family history. That's where the Brunner Reunions were hatched, and why I am now President of the AFJMH. But it was also just a lovely vacation, both stimulating and relaxing. I hope I've piqued your interest, and I hope to see you there in 2017.

Francesca
Brunner-Kennedy
President, American
Friends of the Jewish
Museum Hohenems ❖

*In Touch*Editor: Nicole Angiel
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articles tonewsletter@afjmh.org

THANK YOU, SUE SHIMER

The officers and trustees of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems (AFJMH) would like to thank The Honorable Susan Shimer (Sue) for her dedication and hard work. Sue has decided to step down from her position as editor of our *In Touch*

newsletter after more than 12 years of service.

Since the AFJMH was founded in 1999, Sue has written articles, entreated others to write, edited, and created a beautifully laid out newsletter that we all enjoy. Sue and Monica Wollner

published the very first issue of the AFJMH newsletter in March 2000. These issues continued approximately twice a year until January 2004, when Sue published the first issue of *In Touch*, designed by Sheila Piccone.

While we have every confidence in Nicole Angiel, who will be taking over as editor, we will miss Sue's initiative and creative force. We wish her luck in all her future endeavors, and hope that she will continue to be a voice in the AFJMH newsletter. ❖

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

DR. HANNO LOEWY

The Jewish Museum Hohenems is once more extending its outreach and receiving a growing audience. 17,400 visitors in the year 2012 saw our exhibitions in Hohenems, took part in guided tours and attended our events, more than ever in the history of the museum. For our small staff and our limited venues this does not only mean encouraging feedback and success of our work, but also a great challenge. The support we enjoy by our growing association in Hohenems and by you, the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, is more meaningful for us than ever. It's rewarding to see how our activities are appreciated both locally and overseas. Stay tuned!

New exhibition:
Family Affair. Israeli Portraits
Photographs and Interviews
by Reli Avrahami and Avner Avrahami

The Jewish museum is glad to be the first European museum to host this exhibition, curated by Galia Gur Zeev. First shown at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv it's now ready to travel throughout Europe from Hohenems. For ten years Reli Avrahami and Avner Avrahami have wandered throughout Israel, photographing random families and questioning them about their daily lives, about their dreams and beliefs, their origins and their relations. She takes photographs; he writes. She navigates; he drives. She's a wife; he's a husband.

They visited hundreds of families in their private homes – and others who live under one roof. Since 2002 their portraits have appeared regularly in the weekend supplements of Israel's oldest daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* (and later of *Ma'ariv*, the mainstream Hebrew language Israeli newspaper), week by week, becoming a



From left to right: author Avner Avrahami, photographer Reli Avrahami, and curator Galia Gur Zeev ©Dietmar Walser

routine for Israeli readers. Encounters with a variety of people, born in the country or immigrated, Jews, Arabs, Muslims, and Christians, coming from Europe, Africa, and Asia.

The format was always the same: a colorful photograph and a very personal text. The traces of tensions in the Israeli society, national and religious, social, political or ethnic, are visible in the am-

bience of everyday life, in the environment of living rooms and family stories.

"Family Affair is a sort of journey," writes Galia Gur Zeev, the curator of the show, "aimed at discovering the many facets of Israeli society. (...) Using this uniform format, *Family Affair* underlines the differences between people and highlights the disparity within

(Continued on page 3)

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM



The Katotovsky-Vubeh Family
©Reli Avrahami

(Continued from page 2)

the uniformity – despite the randomness of the meetings, which take place without any prior research and without any guarantee of producing an exciting story.”

The personal stories and the colorful photographs raise questions about the private and collective identities in Israeli society, which suffers from national, religious, economic and ethnic rifts. They stir thoughts about the essence of the family and home today; provide a look at the architecture that has developed in Israel over the years in the center of the country and in the periphery, in cities and in rural communities; touch upon issues of Israeli design and fashion; and chart a graph of the Israeli sense of

happiness, as reported in the section “Happiness (on a scale of 1 to 10)” at the end of each article.”

And that’s how Avner Avrahami, who was responsible for the interviews, recounts with charming un-

derstatement how it all began in 2002: “We started out on June 18, 2002. A bus exploded in Jerusalem, Israelis were avidly following the World Cup in South Korea, the country was bleeding, and we set out to ask people how they were doing. That day, after receiving two tickets (one for speeding in the Jezreel Valley, the other for a parking violation in Tiberias), and after visits to three homes (in Kfar Hitim, Moshav Mitzpe and Kibbutz Lavi) we reached two conclusions that colored our work in years to come: 1) Everyone has a story to tell; 2) Interviewing three families in the same day is not a great idea.”



Visitors hear the story of the Korbashi family
©Dietmar Walser

Travelling the intimate reality of such different Israelis as Russian-Jewish immigrants, Arab-Israeli natives, American-Jewish orthodox, black Bedouins, Chinese “guest-workers,” Holocaust-survivors, Kibbutz veterans and Muslim-Israeli students, portraying all with the same decency and public recognition, the exhibition poses a utopian question: what do all these people have in common that could enable them to form one society, even one nation. Of the hundreds of families and their stories, about 80 were selected for this exhibition. Each family stands alone, but together they create a sort of group portrait of Israel in the first decade of the 21st century. Avraham Burg, former Speaker of the Knesset, addressed both – the intriguing portrait of the Israeli society given to us by the Avrahamis and the need to find alternatives to the roadmap of partition in his thought-provoking opening speech in Hohenems, that you can read in this issue of *In touch* on page seven.

The exhibition will be accompanied by various events, some of them in English. For information please visit our website www.jm-hohenems.at.

Exhibition cooperation and travelling

The Jewish Museum is continuously cooperating with other museums, in order to make exhibition projects more efficient and to produce lasting effect.

Step right in! Step right out! Why People Change their Religion

The successful exhibition about conversion, produced in cooperation with the Jewish museums in Frankfurt and Munich is now being shown by the Jewish Museum Frankfurt, in their premises at the Museum Judengasse in Frankfurt am Main, Kurt-Schumacher-Straße 10. In October the exhibition will travel to Munich and will be shown in the Jewish Museum on Jakobsplatz.

Please find information on: http://juedischesmuseum.de/aktuelle_ausstellungen.html?&L=1

The whole truth. Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Jews.

The successful exhibition of the Jewish Museum Hohenems “Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Jews” became the model of a successful show at the Jewish Museum Berlin, considered the greatest Jewish museum in Europe. Inspired by our radical and ironic concept that was based on interaction with audience expectations and questions about “what is Jewish?,” the Berlin exhibit asked similar questions and invited thousands of visitors to turn on themselves and their fantasies. In fact, the past show in Hohenems and the current one in Berlin could have been named: “everything you always wanted to know about yourself, but were afraid to ask.”

(Continued on page 4)

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

(Continued from page 3)

Please find information on:
<http://www.jmberlin.de/mail/EN/01-Exhibitions/02-Special-Exhibitions/2013/whole-truth.php>

Thanks to the help of many descendants and various research projects of students in Innsbruck and elsewhere, as well as the constant research undertaken by our own collection department, the files are

Israeli Portraits" are available (12€ plus shipping).

A lovely little book about Salomon Sulzer appeared in Edition Hentrich, a publishing house in Berlin.

Salomon Sulzer (Hohenems 1804 - Vienna 1890) was the first chazzan in modern Europe to captivate audiences with his extraordinary musical, intellectual, and charismatic attributes. He was an authority in his community and a center of attraction in the general musical life of his time. The influences of his musical and social contributions are still being felt in today's Jewish music world.

As Obercantor at Vienna's City Temple, he developed a moderate reform of the liturgy and synagogue music, balancing the traditional and the modern in compliance with Jewish law. As part of his reforms, Sulzer began to produce a significant repertoire of Jewish liturgical music that is still heard today in many liberal and conservative synagogues. Sulzer also newly defined the position for the chazzan, drawing attention to vocal technique. Blessed with an excellent voice, Sulzer also made a name for himself as an interpreter and composer of secular music.

Sulzer embodies the renewal of Judaism in the 19th century. Already in 1866 the Jewish congregations in New York sent ovations to Vienna, when Sulzer celebrated his 40 years jubilee as the cantor of Vienna's City Temple.



Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Jews exhibit ©Dietmar Walser

Hohenems Genealogy Database

The Hohenems genealogy database is now accessible without registration. After three years of safe functioning of our database, we now facilitate easy access to the integrated genealogy database of Hohenems, Vorarlberg, Tyrol and Liechtenstein. Naturally, data about living persons remains classified for privacy reasons. If you are looking for information about living relatives, please contact us directly and we will try our best to help you to get in touch.

Since its first presentation on the web in 2010, the number of personal files on the Hohenems genealogy grew from 7,000 to more than 15,000. We have entered the rich heritage of Jewish families and personalities, biographies, genealogies, photographs, and documents into the database.

ment, the files are rapidly growing, not only in numbers but also in quality and narrative density. Part of the project is finding more living descendants all over the world, with an eye to the upcoming next reunion in 2017.

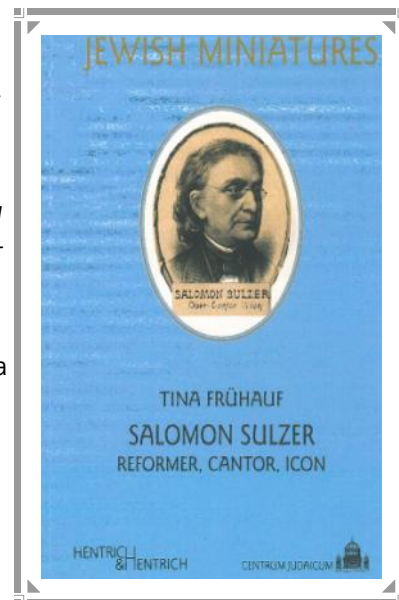
With funds from the Liechtenstein Cultural Foundation, we are now able to incorporate the genealogy and biographies of Jews in Liechtenstein into the scope of our documentation. The ongoing project with funds from the government of Tyrol, focusing on the Jews from Tyrol, enables us to get in touch with descendants from Tyrol, as well.

Please see:
www.hohenemsgenealogy.at

New publications

Hohenems exhibition texts in English available

Exhibition texts in English from our last shows "Everything You always wanted to know about Jews", "Step right in! Step right out! Why People Change their Religion" and "Family Affair.



Tina Fruehauf: *Salomon Sulzer. Reformer, Cantor, Icon* (English edition, 82 pages, 11 images ISBN: 978-3-942271-87-5), 8,90 € (plus shipping)

Shipping either through the publisher (<http://www.hentrichhentic.de/buch-salomon-sulzer-1.html>) or through the Jewish Museum.

News from the staff

In August 2013, Angelika Purin joined our staff part-time in the education department. She studied History and has longstanding experience in school and museum education. Together with Tanja Fuchs, she is now organizing the guided tours, workshops, educational programs and materials of the Museum. Working on the genealogy of the Jews in Liechtenstein, Nicolaus Hagen has joined the collection department for one year. ❖

HOW TO TELL THE STORY OF POLISH JEWS

NAWOJKA CIEŚLIŃSKA-LOBKOWICZ

TRANSLATED BY ELEONORE BERGMAN

The following article was originally published in the Polish newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza on November 8, 2012. It is reprinted here with permission.

A modern exhibition counts on a visitor who is eager to reflect. It does not give ready interpretations.

A regular microphone is provided with instructions:

Relax. It won't be difficult. Say this word to the microphone.

After two seconds you will hear it.

Be sure if you are happy with the results. Did it sound as you had wished?

This word is Jew, Jude.

At the exhibition entitled "Everything you would like to know about Jews but you are afraid to ask," many similar questions are being asked. Do Jews have big noses? What is the circumcision for? Are Jews extremely influential in the world business? Where is a Jewish joke from? Why it is so difficult to talk about Israel with Jews and non-Jews? Where do Jews feel at home? Can one make jokes about the Holocaust? Why do Jews not accept Jesus as a Messiah?

The exhibition is organized in a small Jewish Museum in a small Austrian town, Hohenems, near Bregenz. It contains works, often video, authored by eight

young artists, most of them from Israel, and only of whom Zbigniew Libera is non-Jewish. It is not an art exhibition. It's a kind of visual essay, partly serious, partly ironic, partly irritating, which breaks many taboos present in common thinking about Jews and Judaism/Jewry.

Hanno Loewy, one of the two authors of this exhibition, is the director of the museum in Hohenems, housed in a Neo-Classical villa built in the 19th century by Jewish patricians. The permanent exhibition opened there in 2007 and is devoted to the local scarce Jewish community. Loewy has organized the exhibition mainly around questions. They are asked

in the first person, singular and plural.

Why are we here? – in the other words, 400 years of settlement. Who are we? – or, between tradition and enlightenment.

What is our world? – or, between diaspora and migration.

Who am I – or individual identity.

Are we from here? – or, between integration and exclusion.

These questions are interrupted at the moment of the Anschluss of Austria in 1938, they are replaced by the third person factographic report concerning the period of national socialism, escape, expulsion, and annihilation. Then it is about Jewish displaced persons who stopped in Hohenems after liberation from concentration camps, and before later wandering. The exhibition closes with a rhetorical question: Memory / Forgetting?

Loewy belongs to group of curators creating a new formula of Jewish museums and exhibitions in Europe. The precursor of this formula is Felicitas Heimann-Jellinek, until recently a curator of the Vienna museum, and the third pillar is Bernhard Purin, who in the 1990s created the exhibition and directed the museum in



A visitor tries out the microphone in the exhibit
©Dietmar Walser

(Continued on page 6)

THE STORY OF POLISH JEWS

(Continued from page 5)

Fürth by Nürnberg, and who is now a director of the München museum, opened in 2007. It was built close to the new synagogue, and welcomes its visitors, to their great astonishment, with the Bavarian "Grüss Gott" ("May God greet you") written in big characters on the glass façade.

These innovators reject not only traditional Jewish museums with their focus on Judaica and Jewish customs along with linear story of a given Jewish community. In the same strong way they question the concept of historical narrative museums, patterned after the Holocaust Museum in Washington, today already twenty years old. They deny "experiencing history" which is proposed there with the help of impressive means and multimedia, including the impression of continuity. They do not agree with taking a visitor on some artificial journey in the past, and imposing its image on him/her.

They underline that an exhibition is a conceptual space, which does not illustrate the so-called historical process, and should not offer any ready interpretations. They consciously point to lack of continuity, cracks, and the impossibility of making the narrative non-fragmentary. They show traces of individual lives, pieces of some old

event, and original objects as testimonies to presence in the past. In this context Judaica are for them all objects once belonging to Jewish owners, not just objects referring to religion and customs of Orthodox Jews.

While designing these exhibitions, their authors are

inspired by minimalism, conceptualism, and installation art. They are cautious to use images that today as never before are subject to inflation and manipulation. They refrain from comments and judgmental statements, not to mention evaluation. They are not so eager to use multimedia, in order to avoid their dictate which leads to simplified [literally: child-like] reception.



Hanno Loewy and New York based artist Harley Swedler at the *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Jews* exhibit
©Dietmar Walser

They present on purpose from the present perspective the forgotten or hidden aspects of life of the Jews and their community surrounded by non-Jewish ma-

event, and original objects as testimonies to presence in the past. In this context Judaica are for them all objects once belonging to Jewish owners, not just objects referring to religion and customs of Orthodox Jews.

It means that for them Jewish issues are not museum items, but subjects of contemporary reflexion: anthropological, historical, sociological or political. The Holocaust is present at their exhibitions, however, as an unavoidable reference point. It is treated carefully and not as a filter for other issues.

trends or political expectations. They are highly renowned and are an integral part of Jewish studies. The two other biggest German Jewish museums, in Frankfurt/Main and in Berlin, are now more and more often inclined to present this kind of exhibition.

Next year the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will open in Warsaw opposite the Heroes of the Ghetto monument. The main part of the museum will be a permanent multimedia exhibition of 4200 square meters, devoted to the thousand-year presence of the Jews on Polish land. This narrative museum was inspired in 1996 by the late Yeshayahu Weinberg, founder of the Museum of Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv, and the Washington museum. It took many years to create, and will certainly attract crowds of visitors.

Museums in Hohenems, München, Fürth and Vienna are tiny compared to the Warsaw museum. Their role, and historical and contemporary context are also different. Nevertheless, I hope that the Warsaw museum, at least in temporary exhibitions, will use inspiration and experience from these laboratories of new museology in Europe. ❖

AVRAHAM BURG: FAMILY AFFAIR

OPENING SPEECH TO THE EXHIBIT IN HOHENEMS
APRIL 21, 2013

Avraham Burg, chairman of the World Zionist Organization from 1995 to 1999 and speaker of the Knesset from 1999 to 2003, lives in Jerusalem

Herr Bürgermeister, Vizebürgermeister, Frau Landesrätin, lieber Hanno, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Avrahamis and the rest of the entourage,

I take it that many of you have been to the permanent exhibition at the museum, right? Those of you who did not, please buy a ticket and go, we shall wait for you. And there, at the second floor to the other side, there is a peep show. And you look into it and you see Herzl standing on the Rhine at the Trois Rois Hotel in Basel, the visionary of the State of the Jews and he looks somehow down the Rhine, or maybe he looks up the Rhine, or maybe he looks towards here, and whenever I see this picture I ask myself: When he looked like a prophet out there in Basel – it is a picture from 1897, First Zionist Congress – what did he see? And eventually today I asked myself when Herzl looked into the future: Did he see this exhibition? Actually, here at the Rhine did he see this kind of Israeli mosaic? Maybe. It is very difficult with Herzl because he was a Viennese Austrian (though originally maybe from Bohemia). In my career before I was Speaker of the House, I was the Chairman of the World Zionist Organization, a position originally founded by Herzl.

And I always thought by myself: What could have happened or would have happened if Dr. Herzl in Vienna would have crossed the street and knocked on the door of another Jewish doctor, Dr. Freud, and said to him: “Doctor, I have a dream.” ... “Will you please lie down on the sofa? Okay?” Only if this would have happened a 100 and some years ago in Vienna, maybe we would not have come here today to Hohenems to see the pictures of the vision of Herzl on the Rhine.

So this is the framing. Now here I am, not as the former Speaker of the House, I am just an Israeli reader.

Since the only Israeli paper I read is Haaretz, so I was a kind of captive audience for this section of the paper, that formed the basis of the exhibition we are going to open today. Now I take it that each and every one of you, whatever paper you read, you have a favorite section, which you open first and then you go to the rest of it. Let’s say “Sports.” I mean, you say it is “Arts” but you go for the “Sports.” Or you say it is “Politics,” but you go for the “Restaurants.” I know how it works.

In our family on Friday, *Mazav Mishpahti* (in the English edition: Family Affair) was the second one, I admit. The first one was Doron Rosenblum, which is a kind of very subtle critique of the Israeli situation, and then we went into this, the double page of

Reli and Avner Avrahami. And many of our friends were like this because all during the week people asked themselves: Did you see? Do you know them?

I mean, who knows people in those distant places? Usually Reli and Avner went so far away from Tel Aviv, to find their families to portray and interview. Do I identify myself with something that is coming out of the picture? Yes, actually in each and every portrait of a family, I find something of myself. Oy, the dog is on the carpet. Not only in our place the dog is on the carpet, okay? Oy, oy, they forgot to unplug the electricity from the wall and all of a sudden it looks like a kind of a mess. Oy, I am not the only one. So many little details that eventually make it a like- myself-scenario. And then eventually you ask yourself: Can I learn something from it? And parts of the introduction today will be: What can we learn from it collectively?

But the first question is: what is in common for all of these people? Is there a common denominator? Actually, when you come here to the western part of Austria and you look into this kaleidoscope, can you characterize Israel, can you understand Israel through this pictures? You have a win-



Avraham Burg giving the opening speech to Family Affair ©Dietmar Walser

dow open into someone else’s reality, can you look into it and say now I understand Israel?

First, they are all human beings. Not human beings in the sense that they stand on two legs and walk and work. They have personalities; good ones, bad ones, sad ones, happy ones. They are there. They are human.

Second, there is a lot of accidental meeting ground. I have no idea how they came here, but all of a sudden they are here. He was born in Ethiopia, he is a Congolese, she is an Austrian, the dog is a German shepherd, everybody coming from a different place. So how did they come here? There is an accidental air. But when you look at the people, in the collective portrait, many of the people in the Israeli reality do not necessarily have too many other options. I mean, I take it that from here you can cross the river and be in St. Gallen and you can go some other place and maybe end up in Germany.

We in Israel don’t have many borders to cross.

(Continued on page 13)

THE 2013 BRUNNER FAMILY REUNION

AMANDA KENNEDY

Three years after the 2010 San Francisco reunion, the Brunner family gathered once again in Italy. This time the Brunners met in Florence: a city not only blessed with famous Renaissance sights, but also with Brunner historical sites. Marina and Aimone Montezemelo graciously hosted the group with help from Elena and Rafaello Torricelli and Clio Cueto.

On May 2, 2013 approximately 80 Brunner family members met at the Hotel Palazzo Ricasoli in the morning. After many hellos and introductions, the family took a tour of a local

Synagogue guided by Architect Zoppi, Dean of the Florence Faculty of Architecture. After the tour, the family returned to the Ricasoli Hotel for a speech and some lunch. Aimone remembered his mother Regina Brunner and their time in Italy during the Second World War. (His speech can be found on page 10.)

After lunch, relatives of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities caught up with each other. Many had not seen each other since 2010, so conversation and laughter permeated the air. Following lunch was a bus tour of the Florentine hills

including a visit to the Vogel villa, which used to be owned by Brunners. Gita Vogel was present, who was born at the villa and lived there for many years. The reunion group then moved to the Villa Capponi, which belonged to a family friend.



Reunion attendees wander through the gardens at Villa Capponi ©Amanda Kennedy

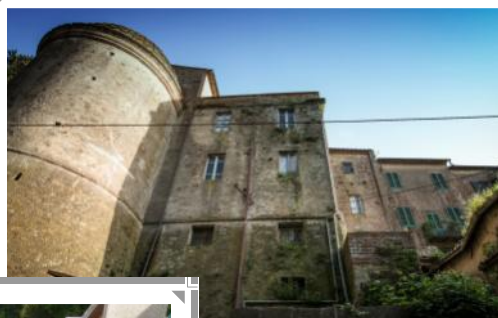


All the Brunners in attendance gathered for the group portrait at Villa Capponi ©Lorenzo Montezemelo

BRUNNER REUNION

(Continued from page 8)

Tea and cakes were served while the Brunners enjoyed gorgeous views of the city of Florence on one side and the Tuscan hills on the other. Here they took a family photo surrounded by the picturesque villa. The day



Rudolfo Brunner's Forcoli villa
©Lorenzo Montezemolo



Brunners visiting the grave of
Rodolfo Brunner
©Dennis Kennedy

concluded with dinner at the Aurora hotel in Fiesole. Guests were met on a patio with champagne. Conversation abounded and lasted well into the night before everyone was bused back to the Ricasoli.

May 3rd included an excursion to Pisa to visit the famous Piazza del Miracoli and the leaning tower. Some people visited the various other buildings such as the cathedral and the baptistery. Others chose to climb the 290 or so steps to

the top of the tower. The stairs weren't the only obstacle; one had to lean into one wall while climbing and then the opposite wall, and then forward in order to reach the views at the top. Lunch was provided in Pisa, and then a guided tour of the city.

On the way back from Pisa, the group stopped in the village of Forcoli to visit the grave site and villa of Rodolfo Brunner. Rodolfo was a favorite relative of many of the attendees. He had a large villa and vineyard, which was remembered fondly. Unfortunately, the villa is no longer in the family, and therefore was not open to the Brunners.

Some brave souls found a way into the grounds anyway, but then couldn't get out without recruiting some helpers to lift them back over a wall. Ironically, someone else found one of the owners of the estate, who knew the Brunner name

and granted the group entrance to the grounds. The family wandered the grounds of Rodolfo's villa and took another group photo to document the historic moment. The day ended back at the Ricasoli. After a dinner provided by the hotel, it was time to examine the family tree and vote on the location of the next reunion.

The Winters, who are the keepers of the family tree, unfurled the latest version. Everyone crowded around two copies of the ten foot long scroll to find themselves, and ultimately to make corrections and addenda. Dorothy Winter took those changes back to Australia with her.

Three locations for the next reunion were proposed: Tel Aviv, Israel was offered by the Cabetto Brunner family; New York, U.S.A. was offered by Peter and Allison Cheston; and a combination family and descendants' reunion in Hohenems in 2017 was proposed by Francesca Brunner-Kennedy. The vote was extremely close, but Tel Aviv won with New York as the runner-up. However, the Tel



Reunion attendees wait outside the
Uffizi Gallery in Florence for a tour
© Francesca Brunner-Kennedy

Aviv group found out they would not have as much help as they thought, so they stepped down for the next reunion. Thus, New York took up the mantle for 2016.

What's a visit to Florence without a trip to the Uffizi Gallery? May 4th began with tours of the museum that was once the private art collection of the Medici family, who ruled Florence during the Renaissance. After guided tours in English and Italian, the afternoon was left up to the discretion of each party, for all would convene one last time that night for the final dinner.

Dinner was provided by the hotel again on the last night. Part of the group enjoyed a classical concert of Claudio Abbado at the Nuovo Teatro Comunale before joining the rest for dinner. Dinner included many farewells, but also plans to see each other more often or to meet up sooner rather than later. Most, however, will congregate once more in New York in 2016. ❖



A group of Brunners peruse the family tree
©Stephen Winter

REGINA CORDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO

AIMONE MONTEZEMOLO

Regina, my mother, was one of the remarkable women that have characterized the feminine part of the Brunner family. The other one that comes immediately to my mind is my great grandmother Gina, the wife of Rodolfo, from whom my mother took the name. They both had the trust of the whole family for being the person to whom all the people in the family, but also outside, turned to for advice when in trouble.

My mother was very determined and had a strong sense of duty. Very few people know that, until she was over 80, she ran a small surgery (she was a qualified nurse) for people in need at the local parish. She married my father, who was a Navy officer, against the will of her mother Ada, daughter of Rodolfo, a very bad tempered woman, who told her with scorn, that she would come back begging for financial help. Obviously she never did, not even in 1946 when we were in severe trouble because my father had resigned from the Navy. He considered himself bound by the oath to the King, who had been ousted, and could not therefore take a new oath to the Republic. Eventually he found employment with a large firm in Florence as a temporary warehouseman. He progressed quickly in the firm, and was promoted in a few years to Sales Manager in Rome.

But the best of my mother came out during the war. After the bombing of Livorno

in the summer of 1943, which we could see from the Brunner villa in Forcoli, we were sent by my father to Mondovì, a small town in Piedmont, to stay with his parents, believing we would be safer. But on September 8, 1943, Italy signed an Armistice with the Allied Nations and the Germans quickly invaded Italy and arrived after a few days in Mondovì, where the only military installation was the Alpine Troops Training Center. Most of the troops had fled the town with their weapons and formed the first Partisan groups.

The Germans in Mondovì felt sieged because they could not leave the town unless they formed a convoy, with lorries and tanks. Even for food, they had to travel to Cuneo, the chief town, 30 km away, being invariably attacked by the Partisans who, when reinforcements arrived, quickly retreated into the alpine valleys of the region, where the Germans did not dare to follow them. (A situation very similar to Afghanistan today.) The population was, with very few exceptions, represented by the local fascists united against them, so reprisals repeated very often. Mondovì is placed near the Alps and its territory borders France. The old town, named Piazza, lies on top of a hill, while the new part, Breo, is down in the plain on the river Ellero. The German tanks were hidden under the sheds of the Breo market and were the cause of continuous air raids by the Allied planes.

I remember one day in my school, located at mid hill between Piazza and Breo, when some fighter bombers came to destroy the tanks. I still have vividly before my eyes the scene of the monsters, which with a terrible engine noise dived at a few meters from the class windows with flaming guns, and then the thunder of the exploding bombs! My teacher was an intrepid spinster who, as we were crowding at the windows, immediately told us with firm voice to go to our place, stand and sing. We started doing so, when the headmaster countermanded that all the pupils should hide under the bench and keep quiet.

My young brother Gianni, born in 1941, was a lovely child. He used to go to the kindergarten and then come to my school at half past noon, ask for permission to sit in my bench and shake hands with the teacher at the end of the lessons as all pupils did. He was terribly afraid of bombings and a few days before dying in 2005, he reminded me that I had tried to reassure him by saying that, given the slope of our roof, bombs would be deflected and explode far from the house. During bombings we used to descend into the shelter, which was the wine cellar of the house, a stone built 17th century palace. The only protection was a single wooden pole reinforcing the ceiling, a very weak protection against bombs!

In the fall of '44 the war became more ferocious.



Aimone Montezemolo spoke about his mother, Regina, at the Brunner reunion
©Vea VanKessell

I remember the killing of the wife of a school professor; they lived across our narrow street and had their windows at the same height as ours, so we chatted often across the street. During the blackout time she had forgotten a window slightly open and the patrol started shouting from the street. She put her head out of the window and was shot dead by one soldier. We heard all of it.

One day I remember seeing the parents of a schoolmate coming out from the cable railway, which was the only transportation means between Piazza and Breo, with their clothes full of blood and a desperate face. Their only child had been shot dead during an air strike.

Among the horrible things we went through, I also remember the shooting of two boys aged 12, both pupils of my school, on the central square of the town. They had been caught while bringing

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IN MEMORY OF TOM BRUNNER

AMANDA KENNEDY AND NICOLE ANGIEL

Thomas ("Tom") Brunner passed away on 2 January 2013 at his home in New York. He had begun writing an informal autobiography of his early years in Europe, which has been summarized and excerpted below.

Tom Brunner was born April 22, 1914 to Harry Brunner and Irene Munk. Tom's paternal grandfather was Lucian Brunner, and his maternal grandfather was Leopold Munk. The two families grew more closely entwined when Harry's sister, Rega Brunner, married Irene's brother, Hans Munk. Harry and Irene lived in a house in Vienna. Tom describes the property in his autobiography as quite grand. It included a carriageway with servants' quarters, a kitchen, the laundry, and storage facilities, as well as the main staircase to the second floor, which housed the family quarters. The property had a courtyard with a small building for carriages, and later cars, and another two-story building where Otto Brunner (brother of Harry) and Madame Wilk (Tom and his sister's teacher) lived. Tom remembered his time there fondly in his autobiography: "I remember one instance, when apparently grandfather Leopold had stayed with us and we were having breakfast. He was color blind, and I had inherited that trait from him, but I was allowed to help him select a tie to go with his suit. This then became a standing joke, being told over and over again, that the two color blind members of the family collaborated in the selection of a tie."

Tom became very interested in his father's inventions during his teenage years. He specifically describes an automobile transmission that would allow a gradual number of transmission ratios without the use of a clutch. While this seems way ahead of its time, it was hard to sell to manufacturers. Tom's fond memories of his house and life in Vienna are, unfortunately, marred by the fact that the house suffered a direct hit from a bomb in World War II.

As a young man, Tom was accepted as a trainee by the Inwald Glass Company. They transferred him to several different factories, finally concluding with a transfer to Paris. Tom described his job for Inwald there as "altogether not difficult or uplifting," but he greatly enjoyed the city, especially its architecture, museums, and people. He worked for the glass company for two years in Paris before searching for a new and more demanding job. He started work with a company called Unilever. They had him move to Southern France where he worked to re-energize a bankrupt operation that Unilever had recently acquired. One of Tom's fondest memories from that time was a special purchase: "After a few months, with a good salary and no place or time to spend any of it, I was able to acquire a second-hand Peugeot convertible, and then I fully enjoyed the wonderful climate and the freedom to get around."

Finally, Tom described his move to the United States, and the reasons behind it:

"Gradually, the political situation in Europe became more and more uncertain. My Austrian Passport was not really valid anywhere and my new friends encouraged me to apply for French citizenship, which after considering how nice life in the area was, I decided to do.

Then, after I was there for probably two years, I one day saw in a newsreel the picture of Mr. Chamberlain debarking with his black umbrella in hand from a plane after visiting Hitler in Berchtesgaden and assuring everyone that he had talked to the Führer and we were going to have peace in our time – or some words to that effect. No one believed him and a while later France mobilized its army. That was a complete disaster; no one knew where he was to report. There were no uniforms, no transportation, and no arms except for the famous Maginot Line.

I realized that if my French citizenship were going to be approved, my first assignment would be to serve in its army – and be slaughtered by the Germans. I withdrew, under some pretext, my birth certificate from the French authorities, which stopped the citizenship application until further notice. I went to the U.S. consulate and applied for a visa.



I should also say that during my stay, I met and befriended some American engineers who were working for the M. W. Kellogg Company and were starting up an oil refinery expansion in France. That was the most fortuitous, as their recommendation gave me a job with that company after my arrival in New York."

Thus, the next chapter of Tom Brunner's life began in the United States. Tom's sister-in-law, Jean Bergson, recounted her memories of Tom and the life he made with his wife, Maria, to Nicole Angiel, *In Touch* Editor.

Tom reconnected with Tony Bergson, Jean's husband and Tom's friend from elementary school, who was also living in New York. In 1940, Tony's sister Maria came to New York via Norway. Maria had left Vienna and had been working as an au pair in Oslo. She waited for her uncle to be released from Dachau concentration camp and then made her way to New York. Tony had a

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THE NEW CONSTITUTION IN THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE FROM 1847 AND ITS EFFECT UPON JEWISH COMMUNITY LIFE, INCLUDING HOHENEMS

GERHARD SALINGER

In April 2012 the Austrian Nationalrat (National Council) adopted the new "Israelitengesetz" (law concerning Jews) with the necessary two third majority. Due to concerns of the new liberal "Or Chadash" congregation it was stipulated that all existing Jewish traditions should be respected.

The statutes from 1890 as revised in 1984 have now completely been changed. Instead of 36 paragraphs, only 25 have been left. Of importance, however, is that Austria's Jewish community received new autonomy.

Since 90% of Austria's 7,600 Jews live in Vienna and are part of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG) – the remainder is affiliated with the Jewish communities of Linz, Graz, Salzburg and Innsbruck – this law is of special importance to the Vienna Jewish community. The IKG can now determine what and where Jewish schools should be built or closed. The Austrian Jewish communities will now receive annually from the State 308,000 Euros and the State also pays 23 community officials. But considering that the IKG has a budget of 12 million Euros, of which two thirds come from rental properties, the State subvention is certainly of help. Other provisions are that the Austrian Jewish community has the right to

provide kosher products, such as wine, meat and other food products as required by Jewish law.

A rabbi now need no longer be an Austrian citizen as under the old laws, nor is a state confirmation required. Also, the requirement that a community has to have a minimum of "30 family heads" has been dropped. Finally, the Jewish community is now incorporated ("Koerperschaft des Oeffentlichen Rechts"). But this is the year 2012!

Looking back some 200 years ago, we find a totally different picture. There was no uniformity in applicable laws and regulations in every place.

Until 1624, Jews were not permitted to live in Vienna. Those who later settled there were expelled in 1670 under the rule of Emperor Leopold I. After the Turkish wars, some Jews were allowed to reside in Vienna again after 1683 because of the demand for money. After the final peace settlement with the Ottoman Empire in 1718, a number of Sephardic Jews settled in Vienna. In 1736, they were allowed to form their own community.

With special permission, a number of Ashkenasic Jews were also allowed to live in Vienna. They had to be

wealthy enough or were needed in certain professions. The Edict of Tolerance in 1782 by Emperor Joseph II lifted many restrictions for Jews. In 1812 Emperor Franz I permitted establishment of a Jewish School and a House of Prayer. In 1825, the Stadttempel was consecrated in Seitenstettengasse, but even at that time the Jewish community in Vienna (Kultusgemeinde) was not officially recognized. Only after the revolution in 1848 was permission granted (in 1852) to establish an official Israelitische Kultusgemeinde.

Totally different was the development of the Hohenems Jewish Community situated not far from the Swiss border in Vorarlberg. While Jews in Vienna are already mentioned since the 12th century, the Jewish settlement in Hohenems goes back to 1617 when the landowner gave permission. While the Jews in Vienna were subject to persecutions and expelled several times, this happened in Hohenems –before 1938– only once between 1676 and 1688. Here the landowner tolerated them, while in Vienna permission was required from the governing authorities.

The number of Jews in Vienna in 1826 was around 1250. At the same time, the number of Jews in

Hohenems amounted to about 500, which equaled about 40% of the total population, a considerable number for this small town compared to Vienna. While the Schutzzjuden (protected Jews) in Vienna were mostly financially well off at the time, in comparison most of the Jews in Hohenems were "Kleinhaendler" either itinerant traders, dealers in dry goods, cattle or other products. With only eight years under Bavarian rule (1806 – 1814), Vorarlberg was part of Austria.

While Vienna's Jewish population was at that time restricted in size, the Jewish population in Hohenems reached its peak in 1840 with 541 persons. In Vienna at that time Jews were a small minority; in Hohenems they represented 40 percent of the total population. Between 1850 and 1878 there existed in Hohenems a political Israelitengemeinde with its own mayors. Those were Philipp Rosenthal (1850-1859), Samuel Menz (1859-1869), Dr. Simon Steinach (1869-1870) and Anton Rosenthal (1870-1878).

Dr. Taenzer mentioned the Staatsgrundgesetz of December 21, 1867 only briefly, although it is one of the most important laws for Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Under the new constitution all religious

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THE NEW CONSTITUTION

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denominations were now to be treated equally, with no more travel restrictions and the right for everyone to live where he desires.

With this guarantee the consequences were tremendous and began to change the Jewish landscape. Through migration from the provinces and the smaller Jewish communities, the Vienna Jewish community eventually reached 206,000 in the early 1930's, of which more than 180,000 were members of the Kultusgemeinde.

The new law had the opposite effect for the smaller Jewish communities. In Hohenems, the Jewish community had 455 members in

1866, but by 1868 it had only 271 members, a decrease of about 40 percent in only two years. Many of the people moved to St Gallen in Switzerland where in 1866 a new Jewish community was founded. During the following years, the Hohenems Jewish community lost more of its members. After 1878 the number shrank to 165 members, around 1900 to less than 100; in the early 1920's to 20 - 25 persons and after 1930 to 15. In 1938 the last Jews had to move to Vienna.

But equal rights laws for Jews in Europe at that time were not unique. In Switzerland this was the case in 1866, in Prussia in 1869

and in the German Reich under Bismarck equal rights were instituted in 1871. In Switzerland the oldest Jewish communities in the Aargau villages, Endingen and Lengnau, lost their members who had been permitted to live there since the 17th century. In Germany, mainly due to economic circumstances, the eastern provinces - East and West Prussia, as well as Pomerania and Posen - lost about half of the Jewish population between 1870 and 1920. Similarly, as in Vienna, the Jewish population in Berlin grew to about 175,000 in the 1920's. In Hungary and elsewhere in Europe by 1900 many villages had no Jews left.

While many Jewish families improved their economic situation through migration to larger cities, the smaller, still existing Jewish communities had to struggle to survive financially. This should also not be overlooked. ❖

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Never mind whether it's my tribal boundaries or my state's boundaries or my political boundaries, there are not many options there. So we are stuck together, and not only we are stuck together, we have a kind of animosity around us, a very defining animosity. Is it the situation of war, the state of war that actually does not let us mingle into the region? Isn't it the high walls as well between the various sections of our society?

I know it is an oxymoron to have "positive journalism." I know it's an oxymoron here in Austria and all over the world, but *this* is positive journalism. I don't think here is ever something bad about

something, not even a reflection of a bad notion. But the Israeli identity in many cases is a negatively defined identity. You ask somebody who are you? I am not an Ethiopian. I am not an ultra-Orthodox. I am not an Arab. I am not an Orthodox. I am not a Jew. Many times my definition of the self is defined by the negation of the other.

This is something, which does not appear here. Here you have a glimpse into the way people positively define themselves, not necessarily being defined by others or defining themselves in a relative attitude to the others. And, therefore, the happiness barometer that Avner asked everybody for at the

end of the interviews rises to 8.25 (out of ten). That is so astounding.

And I tell you something amazing. A year and a half ago there was an international survey done about the level of happiness of nations. The Israeli collective was ranked 14th in the world - in the measure of happiness. I don't know how it happens, I don't know how it works, but it is there. And maybe a key to it lies in the answer my mom gave when I asked her: "Mom, are you an optimist or pessimist?" "Me? Moi? Of course, I am an optimist. Today is much better than tomorrow."

I might have a different concept of optimism. But for

many people today is a good day. Is it a good day compared to our individual or collective past, or is it a good day compared to what God forbid might happen. I don't know, but today you knocked on my door on a good day.

Can I offer through these images and interviews, though these profiles and beyond, a profile of the Israeli society? In the past up until a couple of years ago when you used to come to Israel and somebody made an introduction to Israel for you, he would have given you an idea of something like four or five basic splits of the society, basic cracks, basic challenges. By the

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way, you have them in each and every society we are living in...

The first would have been the tension between Jews and Arabs, be it the Jewish segment in the Middle East vis-à-vis the Arab environment, or Palestinians within Israel and Jews within Israel. There is a tension there, there is a political struggle.

The second would have been between observant religious and non-observant secular people, which is, let's call it generally speaking, "Europeanly" speaking, the church and state tension, or more specifically the tension between the sovereign and the rabbis.

Then there was the kind of ethnic tension between Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Ashkenazim are the Jews coming from the Christian hemisphere origin, and the Sephardim are coming from the Muslim hemisphere. And the tension is there.

And last but not least, there is the tension between the newcomers, the immigrants, and the veteran Israelis.

So, this was the picture, caught in tensions between religions and ethnics, political orientations, center and periphery, veterans and newcomers. You have it everywhere. You have newcomers, and phobias, you have religious states, sociological schisms, you have it all over. But sometimes the problem in Israel is, that these conflicts intensify because all of them are overlapping each other.

A couple of years ago, I was in Sweden and I had a meeting with the then Swedish Prime Minister Persson, and he told me that "by December of the coming year we are going to separate church and state." I said, "Wow, why is that? I didn't even know that you are religious, so now you are going to separate it?" So he said, "Listen we came to a level of seven or eight percent of citizens who are not official members of the Swedish national church, so we thought it's about time to be sensitive and to separate church and state."

But in Israel when it comes to church and state, it looks different. You want to give up the territories. (I can tell you, if it really comes to it, very few want to give up the territories.) But nonetheless, you want to give it up, so it is a political decision. Okay, there was an invasion, now you go out.

There is a political arrangement, you are going to fulfill it. It's a little bit of a diplomatic real estate arrangement. My piece of land, your piece of land. But the minute you walk into that subject, 20,000 rabbis jump on you and tell you no, no, no, you cannot go to this political real estate arrangement because religiously it is forbidden.

So something which seems to be a political matter of right and left becomes a church and state issue. And I can give you twenty other examples like this of how the

ethnic, economic, religious and political schisms are overlapping each other and, therefore, it is so difficult to dismantle them.

This was the classical introduction to Israel up until Reli and Avner Avrahami started their project. But the minute they started this project, this construct, this image started to collapse. Not necessarily because of them, and not literally by breaking down.

But today there is another layer on top of the previous classical cracks of the Israeli

fundamentalists, but this is just an external description. Internally, when we go to the individual – some of them are being documented on the walls of the exhibition – these are people that by the end of the day have a naïve faith and they take their inspiration and, therefore, their commandments from the divine source of authority.

The second group in the region is the territorial group, they might be Israelis, they might be Palestinians.



Avraham Burg speaking to the first visitors to the Family Affair exhibit ©Dietmar Walser

utopia, apropos utopia, another layer of questions. And Israel today is divided between four conceptual maybe not groups, but four conceptual schools of thought.

The first group is the group of God. They might be Jews, or Christians or Muslims, but these are people who answer directly to the ultimate divine source of authority and do not compromise. You might call them religious

These are people who - regardless of what are the political circumstances - are fully devoted to the land. I will use a very strong word vis-à-vis the family situation we have here. There are groups of people, there are individuals in Israel who are married to the land. It's an issue of love, it's an issue of affair, it's an issue of emotion and sensual relations. They might be Israelis, they might be Palestinians, they

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might be Jews, they might be Christians, they might be Muslims, but the territory is their prime organizing idea.

The third group is the state group. These are the people for whom the state is not just a framework or a tool to organize education, economy, sewage, and exhibitions, but it is something else. It's a concept. It is almost a religious concept. My father, my late father, used to believe that the State of Israel is the dawn of our redemption. It has something to do with eschatology, with the end of the day, with redemption. It has an overload, an over-baggage, which is not just instrumental in the hands of the individual. It's not like the glass that I use to drink of, or the mike through which I use to talk to you. It's something with substance.

And the last group which is, as for now a shrinking group, is the group of the human. The group, in which the human being, the individual, his or her rights and his or her constitutional needs and freedoms and liberties are the organizing ideas, and the conversation between the God's group, the territorial group, the state's group and the human group is not yet a good conversation. Maybe we do not yet have the vocabulary for this conversation.

So when you go to an exhibition like this, part of what you see are people who belong to the old world order, the world of the cracks we got used to, and some of the

people, they belong to the new division as well.

Now, this is an exhibition about Israelis, but is it about us only? Actually, can we not ask the same questions of identity and humanity in each and every society of ours? I take it that we can make the same exhibition or actually the same argument even about the sixteen thousand people of this commu-

Western world, as much as the world is the macrocosm of Israel. If you want to understand the world, come to us. We shall give you a *Blitzkurs*, in five minutes you will understand yourself, okay? Sometimes when we want to understand or have a perception, a deeper or wider perception of ourselves, we can travel abroad in order to discover something very near to us.

not like himself. I am an "Ost"—somebody to somebody. An exhibition like this helps me to defuse one thing, to turn the mirror, to see the other through his own positive exposé. I even respect you, I appreciate the way you live, I love the pride you have in your life, sometimes I even envy your happiness, and when I see all of this together, it's very difficult to hate you and to be afraid of you, because I like you.

So actually an exposure like this is one of the immune systems we should have through art and through journalism and through observation of the other against the phobias of our life; xenophobia, Islamophobia, and Judeophobia and all other phobias we have, because we are all human beings and for somebody else we're strangers.

Having said that, I would like to conclude actually with two elements: I loved Avner's phrase, "We decided to document everybody who lives under the same roof and, therefore, we documented a homeless on a bench in the boulevard. What was the roof actually out there? Well, I think about a different kind of roofing. So is it possible that heaven itself or the sky itself is the roof of your argument, which is shared by all? The answer is: Yes, of course. And when I look into it under this general fantastic new roof under which all of us are living, different but equal, equal but different, all of a sudden you realize that the previous world

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Abu Hamad family from the *Family Affair* exhibit ©Reli Avrahami

nity, and actually come with an almost similar profile of people with different approaches, different feelings and different motivations and different commitments and different everything. So actually as much as it is a very Israeli exhibition, it's a very universal one.

I for one believe that Israel, in a sense, is the microcosm of the world, or at least the

You learn something about the stranger, the other, the one who is different from me. But there is a saying which goes: Actually I'm the one who is a stranger and the other and different from somebody else. My great-grandfather was an *Ostjude* in Dresden, and my father used to say that every Jew has an *Ostjude*. So every individual has an "Ost"—individual, somebody who is

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order, in which many of us were born to, is not there anymore.

The family is not the same family anymore. When I was a little boy, most of the Sephardic kids coming from the Muslim hemisphere had grandparents, parents, and themselves. We the Ashkenazi who usually came from the European hemisphere did not have grandparents, only parents and ourselves and that's it. Nowadays when I go to the meetings of parents at my children's school if a child does not have five grandmothers, two fathers and an aunt adopted by the cat, he or she is not normative. The new family is something that actually indicates to us the erosion of the old borders and boundaries and partitions between communities and individuals and actually ideas and concepts.

There is a feeling that here in Europe there is a struggle: Where is the nation-state? Is the nation the same nation it used to be when the state was established? Does the state have the same notions and criteria and mechanisms that it used to have 100 or 200 years ago? There is erosion of the state, there is erosion of the nation, there is erosion of the family and this is not necessarily bad because it makes room for a birth of new concepts, new paradigms, and new definitions of belongings, be it the individual, the family, the collective, the communal one.

And I believe that this exploration of eroded boundaries

and, therefore, the newborn boundaries, was beautifully touched by Galia Gur Zeev in her opening speech. Speaking about the alternative memorial ceremony on Israel's Memorial day, two weeks ago. I know why we didn't meet each other there. It was because there were so many people.

Imagine Israel, the nationalistic entity you read about in the papers, the military so central to its identity that the victims of the wars are actually the new saints of the society, and all of a sudden 2500 or 3000 people, which is a lot, are coming to the same room in Tel Aviv, Israelis and Palestinians alike, respecting the fallen of the other because we understand that war is not a natural objective thing, it is something that was done together by two "partners." So if we want to overcome the prices of war, we cannot overcome it alone by sanctifying our prices only, but we have to do it with the other as well. So it is respect(ing), it is part of the same erosion of old boundaries and finding new connections and new common denominators. And 3000 people in the midst of the Memorial Day in Tel Aviv are a very strong statement that ten years ago when you started your journey toward this new Israeli soul, I am not at all sure you would ever see a picture like this out there.

And again this is *Mazav Mishpahti*, this is a family situation. And last but not least these values, permit myself to have one political statement, only because the way it was introduced so

beautifully by Galia, and Avner, and Hanno.

Hanno Loewy and myself are regularly sitting in Vienna in a very interesting forum, which is a forum of intellectuals who try in a very abstract way to explore what's going on with Europe. We have Gertraud Auer of the Bruno Kreisky Forum here today, who in Vienna is our host.

Thinking about challenges that we are having around Europe, challenging notions of the "other" and boundaries and the state of humanity, we have other forums which are an offspring of this intellectual wide pregnancies to new ideas. One of them is a group of Israelis and Palestinians who are sitting together in the last two years exploring painfully a seemingly abstract topic: Can there be an alternative to the notion of partition?

Everything we have in the Middle East is about partitions. I am here, you are there, this is mine, this is yours, this is my family, this is not my family, this is my land, this is not your land. Everything is about partition. Can we offer the public, can we offer the collectives, can we offer the individual an approach to life, in which there are alternatives to the logic of partition? Alternatives to a logic that did not bring us any step further, even destroyed communalities we still shared.

We develop a notion like this and actually tomorrow some of us are going, Israelis and Palestinians and some Austrians, to Brussels to the

European Parliament to introduce this notion of actually a new family situation in the Middle East. The family of Israelis and the family of Palestinians maybe would like to have a different portrait than the portrait we all know, the portrait of conflict and the portrait of animosity and the portrait of not trusting each other, the portrait of "my trauma is bigger than your trauma." No, we would like to offer a different, positive, and very sensitive alternative portrait for the Middle East, for us and for the world to consider. The profile of this portrait is exactly what Avner and Reli did in the last ten years. It is: Pay attention to what people tell you, don't necessarily pay attention to what people tell you they are telling you.

You were great. Thank you very much! ❖

REGINA CORDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO

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messages for the Partisans. The population had to stand there with their eyes open. I must say that despite my boasted courage of a 7 year old, who lived the war as a great adventure, on this occasion I put a column between the scene and myself and I did not look.

Life for my mother was very hard. We lived in a flat belonging to my grandfather who was very mean and did not exempt her from paying the rent. She had only a small income from the Red Cross who paid a grant on the ground that my father was missing in action, while he was really escorting Allied convoys in the Mediterranean sea. But we had no news of him for almost two years.

Regina had to support many people besides her 3 children. Our nanny, nicknamed Nena, was Austrian and was supposed to have reported herself to the local German Headquarters to be repatriated, but she hated the Germans and remained with us for the whole war time. Checca, the maid of my grandmother Ada, who had been surprised by the Armistice while on a visit to us. My grandmother had left immediately, trying to get back to Trieste, but did not want Checca to share the dangers of such a trip with the Germans swarming over Italy.

Baba, the nurse of Gianni, my younger brother, took care of cooking. Feeding seven people when food was not available because of the siege of the Partisans, was

not an easy task. My mother did therefore devise a business by manufacturing "babbucce friulane," a special sort of slippers made of an embroidered wool sock attached to a felt sole. She bought the entire stock of the Alpine troupe's felt hats that had been put on sale, to supply the material for the soles. Then she bought all the discarded sweaters to have the wool for the socks, and all the house was transformed into a factory. The business was quite profitable due to the cold winter of 1944-45 and to the lack of shoes on the market. (I remember being sent to school in a meter deep snow with some old Dutch wooden clogs.)

Food was scarce and we all had ration cards but very often shops were quickly emptied and people queuing had to go home with only their hunger. We each had a cloth bag with our name embroidered on it for the ration of bread of the day, but we children were always hungry. We always had finished our bread by noon, and we ate the bread from my mother's bag. After lunch I was usually given a small rucksack, and I went searching for food. I was good in finding nettle sprouts, which boiled are as good as spinach, and potatoes leftover after harvesting. I had to be quick and stealthy because the Piedmont farmers are mean, and I remember once being caught with some leftover chestnuts and obliged to empty the whole rucksack.

One day we were out of town, Eleonora and I, accompanied by Nena, searching

for rocket, a sort of salad that grows wild, when a British plane dived and machine-gunned us. Nena was terrified and I remember we threw her in a ditch to get cover. I often wonder what can induce a pilot to machinegun a woman with two children. An other thing that comes to my mind is the terrible stench that hovered around the house when we made soap by boiling old bones for hours to treat the resulting fat with sodium carbonate and produce a putty and stinky soap.

But there were also comic episodes. Checca used to go every afternoon to pasture our animals, which consisted of 3 chickens and one rabbit won by my sister Eleonora at a raffle in the Parish. Eleonora is known to always win everything. She once bought a magazine she does not usually read, and replying to an ad, she won a two week trip to China for two people.

Anyway, what happened one afternoon was that there was an air strike and we all went to the cellar, but when my mother counted the heads, Checca was found missing. When the strike ended, announced by the usual siren, we all ran to Piazza d'Armi, where as always, she had gone to feed the animals and knit the socks for the slippers. We found the rabbit and the chickens grazing, tied with a string to the small foldable seat she used to sit on, the wool and the knitting needles, but Checca was nowhere to be seen. While we were there, baffled and shouting her name, somebody heard a faint moaning

coming from a public urinal on the far side of the piazza. Checca had run into it, as it was the only shelter she could find, but when the strike ended she could not find the way out, and she was there banging her head against the concrete wall and invoking all the Saints of Paradise.

My best friends were Geppi Grignolo and some other schoolmates. Geppi was the son of a Cavalry Colonel who had fought the war in north Africa. His elder brother, Nanni, who was twelve years old in 1944, but quite sturdy, was caught in a mopping up by the Fascist Militia. He was suspected of stealing some weapons from the Alpine troops armoury, and brought to Cuneo. From there he was, with several other people, due to be sent to a concentration camp in Germany, but during the transfer, he ran away and came back to Mondovì, where his father locked him in his room. But during the night, with the help of some knotted sheets, he let himself down, and pretending to be fourteen, joined the Partisans. Geppi and I were very envious, and could not wait to be twelve to do the same.

My mother encouraged me to have friends of every social class so my other friends were Virgilio, son of a street sweeper. He and his 5 brothers lived with their parents in a single room in an old house close to ours. With them I started dismantling hand grenades, and tested the explosives to see which one burned quicker. Seen today it seems incredibly

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REGINA CORDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO

(Continued from page 17)

stupid and dangerous, but at the time it was quite common and a lot of children died or became crippled. My mother never knew of such practices, but once she found a lot of gunpowder in the pocket of my nightgown and I was severely reprimanded.

My other friends were Matun (which in Piedmontese means brick), the son of the mason, and Turco, the son of the plumber, with whom we made big fires in Piazza d'Armi. We put in all the empty cans we could find in the garbage to recover the tin (at the time the cans were sealed with tin), which was then used by Turco's father for plumbing. Also with them, we had a hidden hole, where we kept hand grenades and a lot of ammunition.

One day Colonel Grignolo was arrested and taken to Ceva, some 35 km from Mondovì, and held as a hostage. He had refused to join the "Repubblica Sociale Fascista" of Mussolini. Two

other Italian army officers had been shot in public for the same reason just in front of the Grignolo house, and my mother was forced at gunpoint to look 'with the eyes open' at the execution. To be a hostage meant to be summarily shot if the Partisans killed a German soldier.

Mariolina wanted to go to Ceva and my mother accompanied her. Mariolina had the documentation that her husband had been decorated with the German Iron Cross for bravery in North Africa and mentioned in dispatch by Field Marshal Rommel. They were lucky because the German officer, seeing Rommel's signature released Geppi's father. But the adventure was not finished. While coming back by train, Colonel Grignolo was warned that the fascist Militia were waiting for him in Mondovì station, therefore he hid himself under the carriage and carried on to Torino, where he joined the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale (CLN). We saw him only after the end of the war.

Also, Nanni came back at the end of the war with a big gun, and Geppi and I were so envious that we regretted that the war had finished, without giving us the opportunity of real participation.

But the biggest worry of my mother, was my father, of whom since August 1943 we had no news. I remember walking an entire day with my mother to meet with a Partisan Commander who had with him some British liaison officers. The aim was officially to bring some food, but what we could find in a sieged Mondovì, some cheese called Roma which looked and tasted like soap, and some bread and apples I had in my backpack, meant little to them who looked better fed than we were. The real purpose was to give them some letters for my father, hoping they could forward them to the south where the Allied troops were advancing.

It was difficult to raise children in such troubled times, but Mom, as we called her, was always very close to me,

helping me with my homework even later when I was in high school. On the other hand she felt we needed, in the absence of my father, a strong hand and when she felt we were going out of control, she did not hesitate to use against our legs the small cat o' nine tails she was given by her grandmother Gina. She gave me the taste for reading, starting when I was only 6, and also, later, for reading in foreign languages like French and English. I felt, as I said, very close to her until she died, but I am sure my sisters can also say the same. Cristina, Giorgio, Lorenzo, Susanna, Raffaello, and Elena can speak for the grandchildren.

Many other episodes of war time and later come to my mind now, but I believe this is enough for today.

A hug for each one of you ,
Aimone. ❖

Save the Date:

Hohenems Descendants Reunion
July 2017

at the Jewish Museum Hohenems

TOM BRUNNER

(Continued from page 11)

big party to welcome Maria and invited Tom. Jean recalls that Tom fell in love at first sight and proposed to Maria that same night. Maria and Tom were wed on New Year's Day of 1941 at an Army base in the south. Tom had enlisted and was leaving shortly to fight in the war. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and saw a lot of action in Europe before returning safely at the war's end.

Tom was very proud to be an American and spoke English extremely well, with almost no accent. After working with the Kellogg Company, he moved on to hold a number of jobs with a prestigious advertising agency in New York. He later became Vice President of St. Regis Paper Company, and served on the Grand Jury for many years. He received an engineering degree with honors from Yale University on the GI bill. For nearly a decade, Tom tutored Hunter College students in Math and German language in his spare time. He was also elected board president of his co-op apartment building and held this position for about twenty years, greatly adding value to the building by welcoming nice retail stores to the ground floor.

Jean remembers Tom as a hard worker, tenacious, and ahead of his time. He hired young black women as secretaries, and believed everyone deserved a fair chance. Tom saved up for a long-overdue vacation to Bermuda and arrived to find the hotel his travel agent had

booked was a "flea bag," but he quickly moved them to a nicer hotel. There they befriended the Henderson's of New England. Mr. Henderson was the CEO of Reader's Digest, and he and his wife adopted Tom and Maria like family. Later, when Tom and Maria were seeking a country home in Connecticut, the Hendersons sold them a piece of their own property in the town of Kent. This home was later sold by the Brunners to Henry Kissinger.

Tom's parents lived in France for a number of years before moving to America. His mother split her time between New York and Bel Air, California. Tom's younger sister Susie, eight years his junior, remained in France with her Swiss husband. Maria and Tom lived in New York City in their apartment on E 72nd St for the remainder of their days. Maria died in March 2009. They had no children, but were close with extended family and had many good friends.

On a personal note, Jean recalls Tom's good, quiet sense of humor, and his warm hospitality. He golfed well, loved gardening and enjoyed archaic Austrian words. Tom loved a good glass of bourbon; "Rebel Yell" was his favorite. ❖



Tom Brunner enlisted in the US Army and fought in WW2



Tom with his wife, Maria

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

IN TOUCH

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Please visit us on the web -

Jewish Museum
of Hohenems

<http://www.jm-hohenems.at>

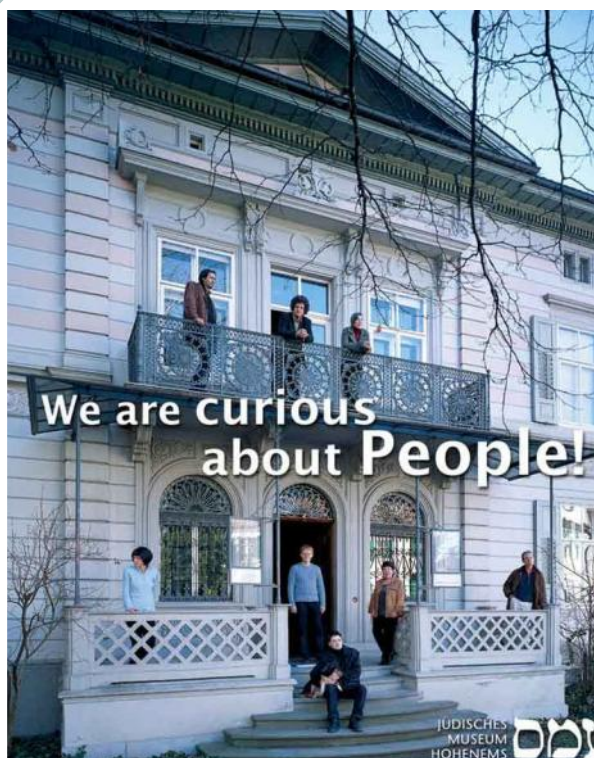
American Friends of the
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<http://www.afjmh.org>

The Jewish Museum of Hohenems, as a regional museum, remembers the rural Jewish community of Hohenems and its various contributions to the development of Vorarlberg and the surrounding regions. It confronts contemporary questions of Jewish life and culture in

Europe, the diaspora and Israel - questions of the future of Europe between migration and tradition. The museum also deals with the end of the community of Hohenems, the regional Nazi history, the expulsion or deportation of the last members of the community, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Along with these fragmented lines of regional and global history, it is also devoted to the people and their histories and maintains a relationship to the descendants of Jewish families in Hohenems around the world.

The permanent exhibition in the Heimann-Rosenthal Villa, which was built in 1864, documents the history of the Jewish community in Hohenems which existed for over three centuries until its destruction during the era of the Nazi regime. The museum offers annually changing exhibitions and an extensive program of events. ❖



JOIN US . . .

BECOME A MEMBER AND LET'S KEEP *IN TOUCH*!



During the first meeting of the descendants of Jewish families from Hohenems in 1998, the idea to found the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, Inc. emerged. The association unites the numerous descendants living in America and supports the Jewish Museum

of Hohenems in various ways. Annual dues are \$25. We hope to count on you to join today. Dues can be sent to:

**PO Box 237
Moorestown, NJ 08057-0237**

Any additional contribution you could make would be very

much appreciated and thus enable the American Friends to continue to make important contributions to the Museum at Hohenems as well as to other endeavors designed to contribute to knowledge of the Hohenems Jewish Community as it was when our ancestors lived there. ❖