

The opposite of collecting: the disposal 1975-2022 of the papers of Carl Brinitzer

By Catherine Hilliard

I.

Brinitzer was dead, to begin with, like Jacob Marley as dead as a doornail.

This émigré broadcaster, biographer, book reviewer and general cultural commentator [CB] died of heart failure in 1974 at his home in Lewes at the relatively early age of 67. His widow, Berthe Grossbard, [BG] who was herself an active broadcaster and journalist, was in poor health and died a year later in 1975. They were childless and so their papers devolved to their literary executor, Berthe's sister Dr Erna Grossbard [EG].

From 1975 until her own death in 2003, EG made spirited attempts to find a permanent home for the papers, which ultimately were unsuccessful. Shortly after CB's death she wrote to Johannes Mario Simmel, best-selling author and an old friend, asking for advice as to how to proceed. She was hoping that Simmel would offer to write CB's biography and/or purchase his library. Simmel declined both with prompt kindness, saying that he was committed to projects at least until 1980.

In 1977 she was in negotiation with the BBC and had clearly begun to despair. R.D. Hewlett, Head of Reference Services, on 3rd February 1977 writes "I am very glad that we were able to talk by telephone...it is re-assuring to know that you do not intend to throw them away...I look forward to hearing from you when you have had time to separate the personal correspondence from the broadcast papers". Elsewhere he uses the phrase "return them" indicating that he regarded them as the property of the BBC.

In 1978 she offered them to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, saying "I am prepared to donate [them] provided that I can retain ownership", noting that the BBC Written Archives had expressed interest in some of the material. There is a rather guarded reply from D. S. Porter, of the Department of Western Manuscripts, saying "As to the type of papers we should want, it is difficult to say without having seen them. I think the best course would be for us to take all that you are willing to deposit and then return to you any that we feel should not be retained here". Steven Tomlinson of the same Department records in 1988 in a handwritten unofficial letter to Giles Barber, the Taylor Librarian, "A batch was eventually collected from an attic in Ringmer in 1978...and more came in July 1986. The point is that what we've seen so far, we don't really want – files of cuttings, typescripts of published and unpublished books, articles and broadcast transcripts... The point is that she's a difficult person to deal with: she won't give, insists on deposit, won't allow us to do any weeding, talks about not wanting to offend B's family by doing anything, speaks of the BBC at Caversham and some institution in Hamburg as wanting parts of the collection but is vague on details ..Basically I'd like to extricate ourselves from the whole business by returning what we have and suggesting she find somewhere else. But I'm reluctant to do anything without finding out...who exactly Brinitzer is and how important might he be? Can you help in any way?" Tomlinson's

plaintive tone makes one wonder what he had expected: surely that is how many literary archives appear at first sight? Even Alan Bennett's?

In 1987 the BBC Written Archives Officer wrote that they would like to have the papers and were willing to collect them. Nothing seems to have come of this.

In 2024 Jeremy McIlwaine of the Bodleian archives reported:

“Crucially we have a letter from Erma [sic] Grossbard dated 8th April 1998 in which she asked to withdraw the Brinitzer papers which she had previously deposited. She specifically asked for the typescripts of Brinitzer's broadcasts to Germany during the War and later to East Germany. The letter was subsequently annotated: *Dr. Grossbard eventually collected all the Brinitzer papers on the afternoon of Tuesday, 19th January 1999. The collection has now been permanently withdrawn. 19/1/99.*

There is no information as to how many boxes of papers there were at this point, ... but it sounds as if at least some of what you have been looking through at the Taylorian consists of the papers which were previously deposited with the Bodleian in 1978 and 1986.... Specific material mentioned in the letters includes: Typescripts of books published; Literature surveys prepared for various book projects (including biographies) and articles; Research material for books not yet published; ‘thousands and thousands of private and professional letters’; Broadcasts to the Nord Deutscher Rundfunk.”

In 1989 EG wrote to the Chair of the German department in the University of Aberdeen, after reading in the Oxford University Gazette that a research fellowship was being funded there “to study the literary activities of German refugees during the war”, offering him CB's papers immediately as “I may have to dispose of these documents in the next few weeks”. In 1998 she wrote to Bonham's enquiring about the possibility of putting them up for auction, citing an earlier sale by them of “two old boxes of scripts from wartime radio news broadcasts”, saying she has similar material which she gave to the Bodleian but has retained the ownership and could retrieve it.

In 2003 EG's own executors contacted the Imperial War Museum after finding among her papers evidence of an approach to them in 1974, which seemed to have expressed cautious interest but which she had not followed up, or if she did there is no evidence. There are no papers which relate to the war years, and so the IWM would not have been interested. The executors eventually deposited the papers EG still had, which included those of her sister Berthe Grossbard Brinitzer, with CB's papers in the Taylor Institution Library in Oxford. If they were offered to the Taylor, there is no mention in the correspondence. They remained there in limbo and in the basement. Since there had been no interest in the material as a whole and since it was clear that some parts were of greater interest than others, it was decided to dispose of them thoughtfully as *disjecta membra*.

In 2017 the present writer [CH], who had been the German specialist at the Taylor Institution Library 1974-1984 and had had some correspondence with EG in 1974 about the purchase of some of CB's own library, together with Jill Hughes [MGH], who was her successor 1984- 2014 and had received the corpus in 2003, volunteered to spend their retirement sorting it. CH was personally interested in

following up the BBC references: she had childhood memories of some of the people appearing in the correspondence since her father Professor Leonard Forster of University College London had been a regular broadcaster from Bush House in the 1950s; she was surprised to find his home address in CB's address book. This project had barely got under way when lockdown in spring 2020 prevented any further actual handling of material for many months, though further research was possible via name searches on Google.

While following up possible mentions in the Bodleian and Taylorian archives, CH found in the papers of Giles Barber indications that he and his wife had in their retirement in the Ariège uncovered a cache of books and papers belonging to Anthony Cooper and Meroë Fleming, daughter of John Garstang (1876-1956), archaeologist, who had worked on the excavation of Meroë, Sudan, in the early 20th century. This they investigated and dispersed in a manner similar to this present project.

II

This paper describes their contents and the decisions which CH and MGH made for their disposal and dispersal. These have been informed by the criteria and procedures discussed by Jennifer Douglas in her article *Original order, added value: archival theory and the Douglas Coupland fonds* in Smith and Stead *The boundaries of the literary archive: reclamation and representation*, Ashgate 2013. This offered valuable guidance as to how these procedures could be operated in reverse order. The *Journal of the history of collections* has also been consulted as background reading.

The material has been described variously as an archive, a cache, a corpus, or a fonds, but the deposit in the basement is an accumulation and looks more like a dump. In one letter EG refers to material scattered in attics all over London; perhaps we will never know what those were, or if they were eventually retrieved and form part of this whole. A note of a conversation in the Bodleian archives following the 1986 deposit suggests that the amount then at the Bodleian amounted to approximately 10% of the whole collection.

This probably explains its patchy coverage. It contained drafts and typescripts of CB's projects throughout his working life, some in multiple copies for submitting to literary agents. There were no work-notes for either of his more notable publications: *Cassell's War and post-war German dictionary* or his history of the BBC German Service *Hier spricht London*. It contained several boxes of BG's papers, which had not been mentioned in any of the correspondence with institutions. Whether EG had tried to dispose of these separately is not known.

There were 14 boxes and a rudimentary box list. It was clear that at least two separate attempts had been made to organise the material but neither had been successfully completed. The contents had been packaged and repackaged during several moves. CB and BG material was intermingled. Realia and *paparasserie* ditto. These were separated and hand listed. There were hundreds rather than "thousands and thousands" of personal and business letters contained in several dampish lever-arch files, rather battered with rusting metalwork and unhelpful labels - "*unfiled letters 1965*", *Letters A-Z publishers*, (without dates), *Letters I-N*, (undated), *Business letters A-H, R-S 1964-8*; in

all of these the correspondents were listed alphabetically. These were removed from the files and kept in bundles, using the designation on the spine of the file. CB had moved with his wife out of London to Kingston near Lewes in Sussex, largely for her health, and had retired from the BBC in 1967, setting up as a freelance, so this change in managing his correspondence seems to reflect that. There was very little material earlier than 1965, and no material from the war years, though CB had preserved a large amount of Brinitzer family correspondence, some dating back to 1928.

Brinitzer seems to have been a not uncommon name in Hamburg. During the 1920s the firm of Hoffmann & Campe, later CB's own publishers, was owned by one Albert Brinitzer of Berlin, who seems not to have been a relation. Liselotte Brinitzer, whose Stolperstein (*Stumbling stone*) can be found at Haynstrasse 5, Hamburg-Eppendorf, and who was protected in wartime Holland by the Quaker school at Eerde and memorialised in *Castrum Peregrini*, Amsterdam 1945 is not mentioned in these papers.

CB was born in Riga in 1907 ["Der Geburtsort war Zufall", *the place was chance* he says in one of the letters) as the grandson of a rabbi and the eldest child of Eugen Brinitzer, dermatologist and general practitioner in Hamburg, and his wife Jenny, the first female doctor in Hamburg Altona. A second son Walter was born in 1910, and a daughter Trude in 1916. He was registered as Karl and adopted the spelling Carl in his student days.

In *The BBC German Service during the Second World War: broadcasting to the enemy*, Palgrave Macmillan 2021, V.M. Plock reports that "unbeknown to [Carl Brinitzer], his ancestors had opportunistically converted to the Jewish faith during the Thirty Years' War to avoid being drawn into an escalating battle between Protestants and Catholics." She gives no reference for this: perhaps there is a mention in CB's personal file in the BBC archives. This would have been a most unusual step to take then, and after 1933 the disadvantages were plain to see. In 1938 Trude moved to the US with her husband Ewald Kersten, where he established a successful shipping agency in New York. Eugen and Jenny, with their son Walter, emigrated to India and settled in Bangalore continuing as doctors. After India became independent in 1947, they all three emigrated to the US and continued to practice in Great Neck, N.Y., an affluent dormitory town, Walter specializing as a psychiatrist. CB studied Law in several universities, among them Geneva, and qualified as a lawyer in Kiel with a thesis on "Strafrechtliche Massnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Prostitution". *Judicial measures for the suppression of prostitution*. He juggled his legal studies with theatrical and journalistic ambitions, acting for several newspapers as special correspondent during the Calmette-BCG hearings in 1932.¹ In June 1933 he was dismissed from his legal post in Lübeck and went "mit einem weinenden und einem lachenden Auge" *with one eye weeping and the other laughing* to live in Rome. He was reasonably successful there, writing for *Il Popolo di Roma* a column "Kleiner Leitfaden zum Flirt", *little clue to gallantry* possibly in Italian, which seems to have been widely syndicated. But he threw it all up for love: "ich zog gegen meinen Willen und nach der Melodie *cherchez la femme* nach London." *I moved unwillingly to London according to the tune cherchez la femme* (seek the woman) He and Berthe Grossbard were married there in 1938: the marriage was happy but childless and

saddened in later years by her poor health. He was fortunate enough to escape internment because of his permanent post with the BBC.

It seems that CB before his sudden and unexpected death had re-read and re-arranged earlier correspondence including letters from his parents and brother before their move from India to the US. There was a suggestion that these letters might be published, but his brother and sister in America were firmly opposed. CH and MGH collected and sorted letters exchanged during the 1960s and 1970s, mainly to his brother and sister, which had been filed chronologically among those to other correspondents in the lever arch files. All family members wrote copious chatty letters in both German and English rehashing family matters in the usual way: “You were always the favourite”, Miriam now knows who her father is,” etc. Many are typewritten, which comes as a relief to the reader: CB’s handwriting in either language was execrable. In 1971 he apologises for sending Martin Esslin a typewritten letter of condolence “weil Sie meine Handschrift nicht hätten lesen können”, *because you wouldn’t have been able to read my writing*. There is a similar letter to the widow of Ernst von Salomon. One wonders what a graphologist would make of his heavily forward-slanting verticals and almost elided vowels, rather like a morse code printed sideways. His typing, on the other hand, was flawless, and he was fond of ingenious little typographical flourishes involving line breaks, and of inserting little paper flowers, with the instruction that the [usually female] recipient should sprinkle them with cologne. The address was typed out in full every time: he never used headed paper of his own, and sometimes he apologises for a worn typewriter ribbon. Berthe’s handwriting in her last years was equally bad: a friendly letter from Ingeborg Brandt, his editor at *Welt am Sonntag* after CB’s death asks “eine kleine Bitte: könnten Sie mir nicht mit Schreibmaschine schreiben, da ich Ihre Schrift nur mit grossen Schwierigkeiten entziffern kann?”, *A small request: could you use a typewriter when writing to me, as I have great difficulty in reading your handwriting?* while she herself writes sadly to another apologising for tardy reply saying she has had to wait for someone who could take dictation for her because of her arthritic hands.

A name search on Google revealed that Trude Kersten had donated a quantity of family papers to the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, which had made a handlist available on its website. The Institute was willing to take the family papers, and they were accordingly transferred there in June 2022 to join the Trude Kersten family collection AR 25403. The records of Erna Grossbard’s attempts to place them were also transferred there as Carl Brinitzer and Berthe Grossbard Collection, accession number 1511, AR 25980.

There was a bundle of documents between 1927 and 1934 which CB clearly had never been able to throw away, which comprised a wide variety of material and correspondents and may be the bundle he describes as “eine Art Tagebuch, a *sort of diary*”. In his student days he ran a left-leaning paper called *Der Igel*. He mentions in passing that in 1928 he was involved in a serious accident which left him bedridden for almost a year. So the collection of rejection slips and job applications represent amazing energy in continuing his efforts to gain a foothold in the literary world in Lübeck, Hamburg and Kiel, submitting his poems, dramatic adaptations, reviews and even his thesis on prostitution and the law, rejected as being “unheimlich lang” *disturbingly long*. During his early time in Rome, he seems to have tried to set up an agency to translate German-language detective novels

(“Krimis”) into Italian and also to have tried a business with an Italian friend representing various medical and pharmaceutical firms, using his legal qualifications and also the experience gained in covering the hearings in Lübeck of the Calmette BCG inquiry. He seems to have had only patchy success even before 1933. A slip from the *Hamburger 8 Uhr Abendblatt* in 1925 patronisingly compliments him on “die Fortschritte, die Sie in feuilletonistischer Beziehung gemacht haben”, *the progress you have made as regards writing for the feuilletons* but the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* in 1927 writes “Leider haben Sie es stofflich auch diesmal nicht getroffen. Von Reisefeuilletons sind wir überlastet...”, *unfortunately you have again missed the mark. We are overwhelmed with travel articles* and a collection of poems is rejected in 1927 by the *Altonaer Nachrichten* in the following terms “.....die Gedichte, denen jedes einzeln für sich genommen, [ist] eine gewisse Wirkung nicht abzusprechen, würden durch Aneinanderreihen sehr verlieren, da sie sich einander zu ähnlich sind”. *Taken individually, these poems have a certain undeniable effect but would not appear to advantage taken collectively, as they are too similar.* In 1934 he asks the advice of his school friend the actor Gustav Knuth about a post with the Basel director Max Semmler, whom he has his doubts about and which came to nothing.. In the same bundle are personal letters to the intendant Leopold Sachse, architect Godber Nissen, the director Eduard Peter, the writer Max Kolpenitzky, later better known under the name Max Colpet or Kolpe as a screenwriter, notably of *Casablanca*. These are all quite jaunty and cheerful, charting his left-leaning and theatrically aspiring activities and several flirtations. This bundle went to the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung at the University of Cologne, along with later correspondence from Claire Walldoff, Eduard Rothe, Lottie Huber, Eduard Wandrey, Inge Meysel and John Olden.² Letters to and from Ida Ehre joined her papers in the Leo Baeck Institute in New York.

CB continued his career as a lawyer in Lübeck and Kiel. In Kiel he made the acquaintance of Ernst von Solomon on his release from imprisonment, and during his time in Lübeck he was acquainted with the later resistance leader Julius Leber through SPD activities, and through his coverage of the BCG Calmette case. During his time covering the Nuremberg trials for several British newspapers including the Telegraph he seems to have worked with Leber’s widow Annedore and later he contributed “skizzierte Erinnerungen” *memory sketches* to Dorothea Beck’s biography of Leber. These went to the Gedenkstätte des deutschen Widerstands in Berlin. Letters to and from Susanne von Paczemsky and Gabriele Strecker went to the Archiv der deutschen Frauenbewegung.

There is a continuing link to Hamburg which shows itself in the choice of subject matter – Campe, Heine – and in the maintaining of contacts with the friends and colleagues of his youth – Godber Nissen, Hermann Hampe, Axel Springer, Hans Leip, Gustav Knuth, Ida Ehre of the Hamburger Kammerspiele, Karl Gröning, Erich Lüth, Gustav Cremer, Gerhard Kramer, Justin Steinfeld and Käthe Stark. He resumed contact with her after the war; it was she who had rescued the documentation of the prisoners’ activities in the camp at Theresienstadt. He wrote the history of the publishing house Hoffmann & Campe, his own publishers.

III

BG's life history is as *mouvementée* as CB's. She was born in Vienna in 1902 into a family related to Otto Haber, the Nobel prize winner, and Clara Immerwahr Haber, the scientist and pacifist. She was a trained actress and singer. Her first post was in Freiberg in Saxony, and she lived in the household of the theologian Paul Tillich in Dresden. Many years later Tillich, by then at Columbia University, supported an application to a New York care home for the aged and ailing Eugen Brinitzer. Later still, in 1974 CB advises Hannah Tillich about the wisdom of suing the *Spiegel* for libel for its the revelations about Tillich's sex life. (One is not entirely surprised that CB writes to a contact in the Springer-empire: "Ja, wir wussten damals daß er ein toller Schürzenjäger war. Warum auch nicht?...das ist alles fleischlicher Natur und da gibt es keine Moral und keine Moralin".) *Of course we knew what a skirt-chaser he was, but why not. This is all our carnal nature where there is no moral man and no moral woman.* After engagements in Münster and in Berlin, Berthe moved to Rome and began work in radio first as a singer, billed as "The girl with the golden voice", and later in radio journalism, recording an interview with Margareta Sarfatti in 1934. She described in a radio talk – there are drafts in both English and German – how "Ich heiratete einen Schriftsteller". *I married a writer.* They both lived a rather precarious existence on the fringes of radio and print journalism until CB found permanent employment with the BBC. She was employed by ABSIE – American Broadcasting Service in Europe – as an administrator and broadcaster during and after the war, rising to be the Director of the Foreign Events section - until ABSIE was absorbed into Voice of America. She was clearly a capable and valued administrator. CB mentions in a letter to his editor at *Welt am Sonntag* that Berthe had had a feud with Rebecca West.

There are letters settling business matters after CB's sudden death which make sad reading and show her painful financial and medical condition. There are several supportive letters from Johannes Mario Simmel, offering financial help. Otherwise, there are few personal letters among her papers except those to the BBC and those exchanged with CB during her time in the US in the 1950s and during cruises for her health

CH sorted BG's papers relating to her broadcasting career. Her scripts for the BBC – largely Woman's Hour – and some correspondence were forwarded to the BBC Written Archives. A larger collection of material from her work with American Broadcasting Service in Europe, later Voice of America, has been more difficult to place. It contains a file marked "Important Letters" which turned out to contain letters from important people, among them Leon Blum, mainly confirming mundane arrangements for broadcast talks. The National Archives and Records Administration Textual Record Division declined to offer them a home, so eventually they went to Senate House Library for the Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies along with her literary remains.

There were a number of scripts and drafts for programmes, mostly for Woman's Hour, which possibly for that reason are couched in the breathless sprightliness familiar to us now from the plays of Noel Coward. There is no indication that other desperate attempts to place scripts which are documented in her personal BBC files were successful. There is a certain amount of draft life-writing. In a file labelled *Persönliches und Memoiren* is a typescript of 140+ pages which is a novel and seems to be autobiographical. There are drafts of what seem to be memoirs, including an

‘Outline of suggested book of recollections’, and another MS dated 17th Feb 1940 ? diary “Gestern hatte Dienst für den Telegraph”. *Yesterday worked for the Telegraph*. Perhaps if she had not been plagued by arthritis and angina, she might have made something of them. These, along with the ABSIE material, went to Senate House Library for the Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies and could in themselves form a small research project.

IV

CB’s BBC material formed the largest single category. V.M. Plock published during lockdown *The BBC German Service during the Second World War: broadcasting to the enemy*, Palgrave Macmillan 2021, which could not have come at a more felicitous moment. CH was very grateful for the details of BBC internal politics that it has provided, which offer valuable background to the contents of some of the letters, and an interesting gloss on CB’s own history of the BBC German Service Hier spricht London, von einem der dabei war. *London calling, by one who was there* [1969] which has been described in Germersheimers Übersetzerlexikon as a “stellenweise stark autohagiographisches Erinnerungsbuch”. *A memoir with passages of serious autohagiography*

The bulk of it consisted of the typescripts of his regular broadcasts to both the GDR and the Federal Republic on topical cultural and social matters between 1947-74. He had been among many journalists covering the Nuremberg trials, appropriate as a qualified lawyer, but for the Telegraph among others, not for the BBC. Topics ranged from a history of Sotheby’s via the House of Lords to the trial of Stephen Ward. There were long runs of scripts of two series specifically directed at the GDR during the 1960s. *Der west-östliche Iwan* was a satire modelled on the wartime series *Kurt und Willi* and is described in Wilpert’s *Lexikon der Weltliteratur*’s entry on CB as conversations between “der ewig betrunkene Iwan und der kleine deutsche SED-Funktionär Kasperkopp.” *The permanently drunken Iwan and the minor SED-functionary Kasperkopp*. *Briefe ohne Unterschrift* was a current affairs magazine which used material sent by GDR listeners to an address in West Berlin. This material has been analysed by Dr Emily Oliver in her 2019 BBC4 documentary ‘*London Calling: Cold War Letters*’. Correspondence with the BBC on a variety of professional and administrative matters was scattered through the files and was retrieved and sorted.

A small number of scripts which CB had written for Nord-Deutscher Rundfunk were returned to the NDR Dokumentation und Archive in Hamburg, as was his correspondence with them.

In 1967 CB reached the BBC mandatory retirement age of 60 – “ein Alter der höheren Senilität”, *an age of advanced senility* he remarks caustically, and launched himself in all directions as freelance man of letters and general cultural commentator. Some histories and articles on post-war journalism and literature, largely in the *Yearbook of the Centre for Research in German and Austrian Exile Studies*, cite CB’s work, using references from the archives of his many publishers, most notably *Welt am Sonntag*, Rowohlt and Kindler. Since the letters were on headed paper, I assumed that the publishers would have their carbons and CB’s originals, and that the material in Oxford would simply be a duplicate set. Only in the nick of time did the Springer-Archiv let me know that

their holdings of correspondence between editors and contributors of *Welt am Sonntag* and *Die Welt* had serious lacunae. They also took the personal correspondence with Axel Springer and papers from the Kindler Verlag. The Rowohlt material, which included personal letters from Ernst Rowohlt, went to the Rowohlt archive, as did correspondence with the Ullstein Verlag.

CB wrote the history of Hoffmann & Campe as a publishing house; his own correspondence with them would fill a sizeable volume, and rather surprisingly the present management showed no desire to accept it. Many of the letters are chatty, especially where the commissioning editor was female. Since he wrote regularly and tirelessly with suggestions for translations, anthologies, biographies – literary works of all genres – some of these exchanges went on for years. Both Brinitzers were discursive and persistent correspondents – their style is confiding and button-holing – and they always replied by return of post. They used to their utmost the possibilities of the only social media then available to them: snailmail and the telephone, getting maximum mileage from every *bon mot*. (Perhaps this is unkind; after all none of his correspondents will have read as many of his letters as the present writer.) Occasionally one discerns the faintest trace of irritation on the part of the recipient when yet another bright idea is fielded as CB leaves no string unpulled, no card unplayed. “Ganz herzlichen Dank für Ihre Fülle von Vorschlägen” , *Thank you so much for this wealth of suggestions* writes an editor for *Die Welt*. There were several scrapbooks of press cuttings, mainly of his regular review column in *Welt am Sonntag*. Senate House Library accepted most of these, which included material from the following firms, showing how wide CB cast his net: *Zuhause*, Rainer Wunderlich Verlag, Tesloff Verlag, *snob für männer*, Verlag Günter Olzog, Fritz Molden Verlag, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Jahreszeiten Verlag/Für Sie, Florian Kupferberg, Gala, deutsche verlagsanstalt, Verlag Kurt Desch, Econ-Claassen, *Christ und Welt*, Bertelsmann. The Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach declined personal correspondence with Ingeborg Stahlberg and her several publishing houses, and so this material also went to Senate House Library, in addition to material from the Rheinischer Merkur, the Stuttgarter Merkur and from several smaller radio stations, including Sender Freies Berlin, Süddeutscher Rundfunk, Südwestfunk, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, and the Schweizerische Rundspruchgesellschaft.

There remained several bundles of private personal letters with a very wide variety of correspondents. Some represented exchanges over many years, some were one-offs. Several were from young women thanking him for his help during their time in London, among them one from the funambulist Hermine Demoriane, who had struck up a conversation with him while waiting for a taxi. There are letters from readers, some admiring and some critically raising points of detail and/or accuracy in the biographies, especially the Heine book. Some old acquaintances want him to find exchanges for their teenage children, some want advice about tutorial colleges near Brighton etc. Some fall into familiar categories, such as *Having-a-lovely-time-wish-you-were-here* or *Can't-do-Thursday-how-about-Friday*. There were several letters from/to Johannes Mario Simmel, who wrote to him after *Hier spricht London* had received a hostile review in *Die Zeit* from a former BBC colleague and who became a good friend, from Alice Eckert-Rotholz, Heike Doutiné, Gabriele Wohmann, Franziska Bilek, Gabriele Strecker, and from Axel Springer and Godber Nissen, both old school friends. Where it was possible to locate papers and *Nachlass* – and it is surprising how much can be tracked down via a name search on Google – the letters have been sent to join them. A lively

exchange lasting several years with Gerhard Ludwig, a colourful Cologne bookseller who arranged public debates in his shop in the Hauptbahnhof, most notably with Ernst von Salomon, went to the Cologne City Archives. CB, Ludwig and Salomon knew each other from holidays on Sylt. Where the correspondent could be located via a Google search, I did not read the letters thoroughly before forwarding them as appropriately as I could. Although all the writers are now dead, it is still possible that some facts and/or opinions aired in the letters might come as a surprise to the heirs. Where this has not been possible, these private letters have joined the papers in the Leo Baeck Institute, deposited as Carl Brinitzer and Berthe Grossbard Collection, accession number 1511, AR 25980

There were two unusual correspondents, both from Sierra Leone, an artist Olayinka Burney Nicol (1927 – 1996, and a film-maker Gaston Bart- Williams (1938-1990). They knew each other, but it is not clear how CB came to know them. In exchanges over several years, both describe their creative plans for films and exhibitions and their experiences of racism in England and Germany. A name search for Olayinka revealed a collection of slides of her work in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC, donated by Dr Simon Ottenberg of the University of Washington, WA, who had written on her in the 1970s: he was still alive and active and the letters were sent to him for his papers. He died in 2023 at the age of 100. These letters are very lively and emotional. CB seems to have something of a crush on Olayinka, and her replies to his emotional outbursts show an impressive elegance and sensitivity, so it is sad that she died in poverty in London. Gaston's letters to the man he regarded as his mentor show him as a gifted adolescent from a privileged family whose life is not working out as he feels it should, describing the hardships of being young gifted and black in 1960s Europe. A similar name search revealed the existence of a son, the rock musician Patrice Bart-Williams but no whereabouts: I had better luck with his daughter the activist Mallence Bart-Williams so the letters were sent to her, reaching her in Indonesia after very long delays.

CB preserved a letter signed "Ihr alte Kollege Hans-Dieter" *your old colleague Hans-Dieter* from a reader of one of his regular articles in *Westermanns Monatshefte* who thought he had identified a former colleague from the Verlagshaus für Volkskultur und Kunst and was expressing a desire to renew acquaintance and a hope he would write his memoirs. It was written from a care home in Stuttgart and on paper headed Dr Hans Diebow. The handwriting is almost illegible, and the writer explained that he has had a stroke. Hans Diebow is best known for his antisemitic writings *Die Juden in den USA* and *Der ewige Jude*. *Jews in the USA* and *The wandering Jew*. CB must have known who Diebow was. This is a pathetic vignette of an aged Nazi bed-bound but otherwise adrift in time and space; CB preserved it, perhaps with a wry smile. He meticulously filed letters and carbons of his replies, but there is no indication that he replied to this one. What was there to say?

V

What of CB's own literary remains? His published work is in the public domain and accessible in public or university libraries. It is a long list and before 1967 it was achieved while he was working full time at the BBC and writing early in the morning, and after 1967 while spending much physical and emotional energy as Berthe's carer.

The two bilingual dictionaries *Cassell's War and Postwar German dictionary* (1945) and *The last word in German* (1947) are probably for us today his most interesting works. Plock describes how the first caused serious trouble for him at the BBC, as he had not cleared copyright arrangements for the use of terms developed – partly by him - for use in BBC news bulletins. The development of their vocabulary and style was a major achievement and arose from his dissatisfaction with the then BBC policy on the reading and writing of news bulletins. As he describes it, his intention was ‘ die Nachrichten nicht mehr zu übersetzen. Sie mußten jetzt in der deutschen Fassung so formuliert sein, daß sie fast schon „visuell“ auf den Hörer wirkten. Jede Nachricht mußte eine feste und sichtbare architektonische Struktur besitzen. Ich bestand darauf, daß eine neue Rundfunksprache entwickelt wurde, die trotz aller Bemühungen der deutschen Störsender verständlich war. Sie mußte auch verständlich bleiben, wenn das Empfangsgerät [bei den deutschen „Schwarzhörern“] so leise wie möglich eingestellt war.’ (Hier spricht London 1969: 145) [I wanted] to do more than just translate the news. The German bulletin had to have an almost “visual” effect on the listener. Every bulletin should have a definite visible architectonic structure. I insisted on the development of a new radio language, which would be comprehensible through all efforts to jam it. It must be comprehensible even when the receiver of the illicit listeners was turned as low as possible.

The second describes itself as a bi-lingual cultural dictionary specific to the immediate post-war period, containing many terms in both languages which have not been lasting. In fact it contains many terms which cannot be so described, including an entry on the difference between “knight” and “baronet”, and one for vagina, which is the same word in both languages and not specific to the post-war period. It seems to have been pulled by Gollancz late on in the publishing process and is not mentioned in the history of the firm. The Taylorian holds an uncorrected proof copy.

A google search under *Brinitzer + Nuremberg* produced mention of a set of transcripts of his filings from Nuremberg being offered for sale by the London bookseller Laurence Fishburn in 2016. The citation read:

BRINITZER, CARL.- NUERNBERGER PROZESS - TYPESCRIPT OF JOURNALIST'S REPORTS ON THE NUREMBERG TRIALS 1946 Fullscap - 5 + 170 The typescript covers many of the major war criminals including Goering, Hess, Ribbentrop, Bormann and Rosenberg. Carl Brinitzer (d. 1974). German Jew, came to England c. 1937. Author; prolific journalist and broadcaster. Brinitzer is presumably the 'special correspondent', mainly of the Times, but also of the Daily Telegraph and the Manchester Guardian. He also worked at the BBC. [ref: 16862] £1500.

Mr Fishburn could not remember from whom he acquired it or to whom he sold it. He remembers that they were both private persons and not institutions.

In retirement, CB embarked on a career as freelance critic and man of letters, reviewing widely for a variety of German newspapers, mainly for *Welt am Sonntag*, whose main literary reviewer he was for the rest of his life, but also for the *Rheinischer Merkur*, *Stuttgarter Zeitung* and *Münchener Merkur*. He enjoyed this very much, though he may have over-estimated his position: “I find it quite amusing to influence German literature from a little village in Sussex”. There is no indication in the

correspondence that he had any clear cultural agenda of his own, any special interests in particular cultural currents or movements.

Even CB nods, and in 1965 there is an exchange with the *Rheinischer Merkur* about his review of a new translation of a Saul Bellow novel by one Walter Hasenclever, whom he mistakenly identified with Walter Hasenclever the playwright and poet, 1890-1940. This was mischievously reported as a news story by his rivals in *Die Zeit*.

In retirement, he had time to pursue several projects which had been incubating over the years. Compared to his work at the BBC and in Nuremberg, these are not front-line stuff. In his youth he had theatrical ambitions and he worked on some German medieval material for a production in 1928 for a small theatre in Hamburg/Altona. Abraham: Legendenspiel der Nonne Hrotsvit von Gandersheim, *Abraham: a mystery play by the nun Hrotsvit von Gandersheim*, starring his friend Gustav Knuth. Francois Villon's *Galgenlieder* was another project, possibly inspired by Bertolt Brecht's use of them in *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Some were more or less free translations and reworkings of Juvenal, Ovid and Propertius, in English and German. He made several attempts to place his translation of Juvenal's Sixth Satire, thinking that the permissive society had finally made the world ready for his warts-and-all version. In 1971 his editor at Hoffmann & Campe told him he was mistaken: that the success of *Love Story* showed that the permissive society was already over, since something called "Woman slip" and someone referred to as "die gute Germaine" had made misogyny of this kind unacceptable. In the teeth of the comment by his agent Ruth Leipmann "ich war tatsächlich ein bisschen gelangweilt", *I was indeed a little bored* he finally succeeded in placing it as "Heirate nie, O Postume" *Never marry, Postumus* with Econ Claassen. He did have to defend it to Franziska Bilek, his illustrator, who complained about the crude language of his version, that he has "den alten Juvenal von den Hexameter-Fesseln befreit, ... die alle nach Oberlehrer riechen und nicht nach Sex duften". *I have released the old Juvenal from the handcuffs of the hexameter, which smell of the Latin class and not of Sex*. One wonders why he chose to spend so much time on the kind of misogyny which has until recently passed itself off successfully as stylish and sophisticated. He fancied himself as something of a lady killer in an old-fashioned courtly style, though it is clear that his domestic life was above reproach; he thought there might be money in it and up to a point he was right. Berthe's medical expenses as her health progressively declined may also have been a factor, though we may remember here his youthful interest in prostitution and the law. Ullstein took *Liebeskunst ganz prosaisch: Variationen über ein Thema von Ovid* *The art of love in prose: variations on a theme of Ovid* in 1966 and *Liebeskunst ganz ritterlich* *The knightly art of love* – about Andreas Capellanus - in 1968. Rowohlt had turned this down, saying .."daß sich die höfische Liebeswelt des Mittelalters doch nicht für die Persiflage oder Karikatur eignet." *The courtly world of medieval love really is not suitable for treatment by parody or caricature*. Christopher Dilke, a former BBC colleague approached as a possible translator of *Liebeskunst ganz prosaisch*, wrote delicately 'I think it could be said that the book would not find its target in the English reader, whose limits of tolerance and hypocrisy are differently adjusted from the German'. Tom Maschler of Jonathan Cape rejected it with the trenchant comment to his agent "I am afraid it doesn't really work in English". He had no luck with *Der Flirt: sein Ursprung, seine Entwicklung, seine Zukunft....von Ars und Amandi*. Band i: *Kleine Leitfaden zum Flirt in alten Rom, Gallantry: its origin, development and future from Ars*

and Anandi. Vol 1 small clue to gallantry in ancient Rome ... which had been on the stocks since his time in Rome, nor with a project with a working title "When in Rome... love like the Romans". He told George Weidenfeld that he thought of reusing the earlier material and approaching as collaborator someone called Jill Cooper. He admits he hasn't yet met her – could he have been thinking of Jilly?

There are several other works more erotic than simply naughty. In 1972 Olympia Press responded to an unsolicited approach in the following terms:

„Lieber unbekannter Autor, Schönen Dank für den Blick in Ihre Schublade. Ich fürchte aber, daß wir auch von diesem Angebot keinen Gebrauch machen können. Schön waren die Zeiten als Sexverlage noch Zitate veröffentlichen konnten. Heute braucht man handfestes Zeug. Deutlich und drastisch. Dear unknown author, many thanks for this glimpse into your desk drawer. I am afraid that we cannot make use of this offer either. Those were good days when sex publishers could publish quotations. These days we need something more concrete, clear and forthright.

There is a 225-page undated typescript of a novel which could be thus described: in 1973 CB sent Olympia *Ich hab' mich durchgeschlagen: ein Leben mit der Peitsche von Wanda S., I made it through blow by blow: a life with whips by Wanda S.* which seems to reference Wanda von Sacher-Masoch, describing it as 'bewusst ganz primitiv geschrieben, man konnte sagen „handfest“'. *Consciously primitive in style, one might say concrete* A cursory skim (though I am not easily shocked, I am easily bored, and any interested reader can access it in Senate House Library) seems to indicate that it is the memoirs of the *Venus im Pelz* herself. Following Ovid in his *Heroides*, CB gives us the woman's view. The last words give the flavour of the whole:

Jochen grinste dankbar. "Ich werde Punkt zwölf zur Stelle sein". Er war's. Aber es war nicht Punkt zwölf. Es war Schlag zwölf. *Jochen smirked gratefully „I'll be there on the dot of midnight“. And he was. But not on the dot of twelve. On the stroke of twelve.*

and echo the Speaking Clock joke current around the time of the Christine Keeler scandal in 1963, which CB would certainly have known: "At the third stroke, it will be £3 precisely".

He offered it to the Gala Verlag in 1971 but it was thought "in ihrem Stil zu "nackt", zu rüde", *too naked, too rude in its style*; then Olympia Press turned it down with more detailed objections: "da sein Inhalt ganz eindeutig gegen das neue Strafgesetz verstößt. ... Sollten Sie uns einmal ein „reguläres“ Buch anzubieten haben, wurden wir natürlich gerne zugreifen, da wir Ihre Schreibweise sehr schätzen“. ... *the content clearly contravenes the new legislation....If you can offer us something more in the usual run, we would certainly be interested, since we value your style*". CB offered no apology for his ignorance of the laws of the Federal Republic and proceeded undaunted, although noting *en passant* that Olympia's rates are not what he is accustomed to, and in spite of Olympia's earlier comments about 'Zitate', to propose „Für eine Sexer Weisheit: oder was der geflügelte Herr Büchmann auf dem Herzen hatte...eine Art Liebes ABC mit Zitaten". *Towards a wisdom of Sex: or what the fabled Mr Buchmann had on his mind: a kind of ABC of love with quotations* This would possibly have reused material in *Das ABC der Liebe*, published 1969, further supplemented by passages from living (unnamed) authors. Nothing seems to have come of this. One

would like to know which authors he had in mind, and whether they would have been flattered at their inclusion. The Gala Verlag had already rejected it in 1971: “es ist für unsere Leser ein viel zu harmloses Buch...da die Olympia Press den Markt mit allerschärfsten Sachen verdorben hat...” *For our readership this is far too innocuous...now that Olympia Press has corrupted the market with highly spiced items.* We may note that the arguments for rejection contradict each other. This is now in Senate House Library.

CB made full use of his wide reading. He copied passages into notebooks as a schoolboy and as we have seen made use of the anthology/lorilegium/commonplace book genre, mostly for lightweight, book-making projects. When Rowohlt rejected the Andreas Capellanus manuscript, as described above, CB resourcefully reused the contract for the rejected book for his next off the production line: *Bacchus, Gambrinus & Co.* Of the similar compilation *Zwei Löffel Goethe, eine Prise Shaw*, he writes. “Es ist als Geschenkbuch gedacht”; *It is designed to be a gift book*; indeed one wonders what other use it could have, apart from providing quotations for after-dinner speeches. He scattered them to many of his correspondents like visiting cards, buying them up at reduced rates when they were remaindered. The anthologies compiled in collaboration with Berthe and published in several forms as *German versus Hun* and *In the German desert/German voices* show the potential of the genre for more serious political use.

The satirical work *Zulu* by one Usikota is present in several drafts both German and English, but only appeared in print in English, published by Gollancz in 1938. The review in *International Affairs* in 1939 noted “The letters of a Zulu reporter recording his travels in Nazi Germany. A satire modelled on Montesquieu’s *Lettres persanes*, but not well done”. Alfred Kerr reviewed it in the *Pariser Tageblatt* on 14th January 1939, also comparing it with *Lettres persanes*: “Ein gutes Mittel auch heute: Kennzeichnung zweier weit getrennte Länder durch den Unterschied. Vorausgesetzt, dass der Unterschied noch lange sichtbar bleibt”. *a gambit useful even today: the characterization of two widely separated countries through their differences: provided that these differences remain clear-cut.* In 1973 CB writes to his Swiss publisher at the *Sankt Galler Tageblatt* that the GDR publisher Buchverlag Der Morgen has shown interest in resurrecting it and using excerpts interspersed with Brecht’s satires, and he thinks he could improve this by adding “eine Einleitung vom jetzigen Chefredakteur der Zulu-Post ...über der ich mich über die derzeitige Hitlerwelle in Deutschland lustigmache”. *An introduction by the editor of the Zulu-Post where I can ridicule the Hitler wave of the present time.* He also played with a project of sending Usikota to report on the Frankfurter Buchmesse.

Senate House Library, University of London, accepted several of the typescripts for the Centre for Research in German and Austrian Exile Studies and has accepted correspondence with many of his German and English publishers, much of which deals with attempts to place them, including personal correspondence with Ingeborg Stahlberg and her several publishing houses, and a pile of correspondence 3 inches high in which Hoffmann & Campe showed no interest.

Wilpert describes him as a ‘Feuilletonist, plaudernder Biograph’. *A colour-supplement writer, chatty biographer* The biographies to which this refers were generally well-reviewed in the non-academic press. The TLS reviewer of *Die Geschichte des Daniel C* (the eighteenth-century engraver Daniel

Chodowiecki) mentions that it is clearly based on the comprehensive earlier biographies of Oettingen and Engelmann and written in “a fluid and often amusing style (some rather heavily grating jokes apart)”. CB would probably have been wounded by this comment on what he liked to think of as his “light touch”, though this is not the only time he had to defend himself: “Ich weiß, meine Schreibweise ist nicht Jedermanns Sache. Ironie ist in Deutschland wohl immer nur erträglich wenn man sie in Ausführungsstriche setzt”. *I know that my style is not to everyone’s taste. Irony is only acceptable in Germany within quotation marks.* The chatty biographies of Heine, of Chodowiecki and of the essayist Lichtenberg were not based on primary research but used printed sources; for the biography of Julius Campe he did however use the firm’s own archives. There is no sign of any close connection or engagement with serious academic scholarship, though in the case of the Heine book, CB consulted several neurologists after Dr Jenny Brinitzer diagnosed a brain tumour rather than syphilis as the cause of Heine’s paralysis. Edda Schuecker, a Munich doctoral student in 1966 working on Julius Campe, writes to ask for more details: “da aus Ihren Campe-Buch verständlicherweise nichts hervorgeht, wo welche der zitierten und verwendeten Akten aufbewahrt sind”. *Since your Campe biography understandably gives no details where the quoted and preserved material is to be found.* Clearly somewhat nettled but still polite, he replies: “Trotz fehlender Fußnoten handelt es sich um eine gründliche Arbeit”. *In spite of the absence of footnotes, this is a thorough piece of work,* (Perhaps this may be said of this article too.)

The subtitle of the Heine biography *Roman seines Lebens A novel of his life* caused several exchanges from correspondents who wished to ascertain how much was fiction. In 1961, Eckart von Naso, at work on his own book on Heine’s *Mouche*, was anxious enough to send a stamped addressed envelope with his enquiry about the historical sources CB might have used “über das Ende der *Mouche*, der ich aus meiner Intuition heraus einen anderen Lebensgang gegeben habe” *about Mouche’s later life , which I imaginatively described quite differently .* CB wrote to another reader : “Ihre Frage, ob ich auf Seite 147 an eine” indische Inkarnation” Heines dachte, ist schwer zu beantworten. *’It is hard to answer your question as to whether on page 147 I was thinking of an „Indian incarnation“ of Heine’s.* Well indeed. Robert Warnecke, who as an editor in the 1920s in Altona had turned down his poems, thirty-five years later as an editor at NDR expressed doubts about reviewing his Heine book “weil Sie weitgehend Anleihen gemacht haben, ohne diese als solche zu kennzeichnen”. *As you have used borrowings throughout without acknowledging them as such.* CB’s reply to Warnecke and to Naso is that the subtitle of his biography “Roman seines Lebens” alludes to the subtitle Heine gave his *Memoiren*, “Roman meines Lebens”. This is the book he describes in a letter to Ida Ehre as “im Gegensatz zu anderen Büchern dieser Art ist es zugleich ein Selbstporträt”. *Unlike other similar books, this one is also a self-portrait.* It is unlikely that he meant that the work is a portrait of the author as Heinrich Heine – though given their shared background as Jews in Hamburg and their satirical mindset it may well - but is an explanation of his decision not to use quotation marks when using Heine’s own words. When one reads his claim that “als ich meinen HEINE schrieb und als er zuerst in Deutschland erschien, war Heine so gut wie unbekannt”, *when I wrote my Heine book and it first came out in Germany, Heine was as good as unknown* one is tempted to ask, like Emil Staiger in a different context in 1966 “In welchen Kreisen verkehren Sie?” *What circles do you move in?*

He uses the same quasi-autobiographical format in *Hier spricht London*. In a letter to his editor at Hoffmann & Campe he explains how he has been competing with Asa Briggs's official history of the BBC, which has necessitated a daring foray on a Saturday afternoon to Bush House, where he and a former colleague simply removed the material he needed – with the intention certainly of returning it – thus bypassing the dreary bureaucracy. 'Nun habe ich schwarz auf weiß, was bisher noch niemand hatte, unsere Stellungnahme zu allen entscheidenden Phasen unserer Propaganda.' *I now have in black and white what nobody had before, namely out position on all the decisive developments of our propaganda*. But it will not be document-heavy, he promises, 'meine persönliche Schilderung wird nun einen faktischen Hintergrund erhalten'. *My own personal version will now have a factual background*. This is the work woundingly reviewed by his former BBC colleague Robert Lucas in *Die Zeit* as follows „Das ganze Buch ist in einem Ton narzißtischer Selbstglorifizierung geschrieben, und der nicht informierte Leser könnte leicht zu dem Schluß kommen, daß der Verfasser – neben Hugh Carleton Greene [...] – die wichtigste Persönlichkeit im deutschen Dienst der BBC war“. *The entire book is written with a self-aggrandizing narcissism, and the uninformed reader might come away with the idea that the writer – along with Hugh Carleton Green – was the most important figure in the BBC German Service*

There were also successful translations of Desmond Young's biography *Rommel: the desert fox*, of Rex Stout, where Berthe collaborated, a translation and dramatization for NDR-Rundfunk of Patrick Hamilton's *The Duke in darkness* and a translation of Simon Raven's dramatization for television *The Pallisers*. Biographies of Dr Johnson and Boswell, of Beau Brummell, of the bestselling novelist Hedwig Courths-Mahler and of his old friend the actor Gustav Knuth seem to have remained only projects, in the case of the last because Knuth had forgotten until the last moment that he had already sold the rights elsewhere. He worked for some years on a project on the song *Lili Marlene*, which generated a long chatty correspondence with Carmen-Litta Magnus, daughter of Lale Andersen the original singer.

VI

To return to the original question Who was CB?

At times this project has resembled that of A. J. A Symons as he pursued his *Quest for Corvo*. Symonds was fortunate in being able to interview people both friendly and ill-disposed, who had known Frederick Rolfe personally, whereas the present writer has had to read between the lines, including the lines of a sketch written by one of his youthful girlfriends, which though jokey is quite clear-sighted. Erich Lüth in a letter for his 65th birthday praises "Ihre[n] sudfranzösische[n] Charme, Ihre Altonaer Solidität, Ihre hanseatisch-angelsächsische Weltbürgerlichkeit und Ihre wahrhaft schöpferische Phantasie ". *Your mediterranean charm, your Hanseatic- Anglo-Saxon cosmopolitanism and your truly creative imagination*

CB was chatty, *charmant*, self-important certainly, hardworking, resourceful, resilient, an excellent cook (we do not have only his own word for this) and a loyal carer of his increasingly invalid wife. Even

while energetically putting himself about in all directions, the proverbial Hansdampf in allen Gassen, *Jack of all trades* he was willing to put in a good word or a recommendation for other people in passing. In 1966 he suggests to Hoffmann & Campe, pulling the Hamburg string, that they have another look at an autobiographical novel by Justin Steinfeld, an old friend from Hamburg days, now fallen on hard times in rural Hertfordshire. It seems that Hoffman & Campe was again not interested, and *Ein Mann liest Zeitung* had to wait until the Neuer Malik Verlag took it up in 1984, and with a later full publication in 2020 edited by Wilfried Weinke. He was generous in acknowledging support and encouragement from others. The exchange with Robert Warnecke about his Heine book begins by recalling how Warnecke in 1919 had read a submission by an ambitious twelve-year old and returned it with corrections “Sie haben mich als erster in meinem Leben gesiezt”. *You were the first person who addressed me as an adult* There is also a warm condolence letter to the widow of Dr Albert Wagner his old teacher at the gymnasium.

On the other hand, he was a practised performer on his own trumpet, or in his own words “Trommler in eigener Sache“, who could get quite stroppy if not taken at his own valuation. Justin Steinfeld in 1927 replies to his reproaches that his essay on Klaus Mann was printed in the *Allgemeine Künstler-Zeitung* in smaller type than *Amnestie*, a poem by his friend Max Kolpenitzky. His editor at the *Rheinischer Merkur* tells him in 1971 that printing his byline in the size he considers appropriate would mean the loss of ten lines of text. There are crisp exchanges with the German Embassy in London about guest lists, and with several medical practitioners and the Zurich Insurance Company. He was capable of long-running grievances: resentment at the hostile review of *Hier Spricht London* in *Die Zeit* by his former BBC colleague Robert Lucas surfaces in several different correspondences. On the other hand, it is clear that he was a good colleague and collaborator, a trouper who could rush off a review or paragraph of 500 words at sometimes very short notice or provide a witty and anodyne reply to a complaining reader. The letters and cards from work colleagues to “Bri” [usually women and usually his assistants] show genuine liking and esteem, those from male colleagues are rather more formal and distant – though that would have been the English style of the time.

He was a man who could rise to the occasion and show real physical courage, as in the celebrated evening in October 1940 when he continued to read the German news bulletin as bombs fell on Broadcasting House, knowing that an interruption in transmission would be a political and moral disaster. He focussed and refined the style of broadcast news bulletins to make them more effective at a time when they were of crucial political importance. His old Hamburg acquaintance Käthe Stark says a little wistfully “Beruflich haben Sie erreicht, was hier nur wenigen gelingt, über so lange Jahre dem gleichen Betrieb anzugehören und bis zu einer hohen leitenden Stellung aufzusteigen”. *Professionally you have achieved what very few manage: to belong to the same organisation for so many years and to rise within it to a high management position.* In an era when many of the early friends whose letters he preserved did not escape with their lives, he had indeed been very fortunate.

And how important was he?

There is a strong desire to believe that the amount of time and effort expended on a project should be commensurate with the subject’s intrinsic importance. But the short answer is: whatever his friends and admirers may have thought, and whatever his own estimate of his *oeuvre*, he was not

important enough for libraries and archives to be competing to receive his papers *en bloc* even as donations. Any auctioneer knows that an object is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it. Still, CB was a significant enough figure over several decades in Grub Street for his papers to be useful additions to the archives of the many organizations and literary figures with whom he was connected.

VII

This has been an instructive project. I am a librarian, not an archivist, so in terms of professional procedure I have learned much about archive theory, theory of historical memory and theory of collecting as I went along. Now that I have reached the end, I see several things I should have done differently. Most obviously, I should have noted the number of exchanges with individual writers/recipients as well as the dates of the letters I quote from. As a librarian, my priority has been to make accessible as much material as possible for scholars to come across through a name search on google or JISC. The basic data of this project – the list of correspondents and of institutions - will be mounted and made accessible on the Oxford Research Archive. A colleague to whom I sent it enquired anxiously whether the footnotes had been lost in transit: I had to reply that there are no footnotes. Or any catalogue references: I do not know how each recipient library/archive will arrange the material. I do not expect that accessioning it will be a priority for any of them; this is after all a small project. So I have had to content myself with giving a list of correspondents and the websites of the recipient institutions.

Professionally I have come up against several blank walls: there are major organizations whose websites appear comprehensive and user-friendly but which turn out to be impenetrable - Voice of America for one - and so I have had to work round that. I have had on the other hand a good deal of luck – fruitful hits on Google, felicitous references, favourable chances (Smith and Stead almost literally fell into my hands as I priced German books in the Oxford St Giles Oxfam bookshop) and serendipitous encounters with unknown colleagues on the JISC archives e-list who generously shared experiences and enthusiasms. Two funeral directors, one in Winnipeg and one in Hertford, kindly gave me contact details for the heirs of Carmen-Litta Magnus and Alice Ekert-Rotholz respectively. I am grateful to Dr Wilfried Weinke, whose email acquaintance I made through an enquiry to Schöffling & Co, publishers of Justin Steinfeld's *Ein Mann liest Zeitung*, who has given much helpful advice. I am grateful to Renate Evers of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, Els Boonen of the BBC Written Archives and Dr Andrea Meyer-Ludowisy of Senate House Library.

Only after I had completely wound up the project and disposed of the material did I happen upon the work of Helena Michie and Robyn Warhol on Sir George Scharf, as described in *Love among the archives: Writing the Lives of Sir George Scharf, Victorian Bachelor*, Edinburgh University Press, 2015. This very extensive and scholarly project does not reference *The Quest for Corvo*, but we all seem to address our subject and our subject matter similarly. I could see that I might have done several things differently had I read their work first.

Even later, I read *Rodinsky's Room*, by Rachel Liechtenstein and Iain Sinclair, Granta Books 1999. This begins with a dispersal – of the contents of a room in a synagogue in Princelet Street Spitalfields which has been completed after documentation - and continues as a psychoautobiography of one of the authors and a meditation on Spitalfields and the culture of the Jewish diaspora.

Compared to these projects, mine is a small dry professional report on procedure and outcomes, aiming to give local habitations and names to render material accessible for others to work on as they wish.

And I am most grateful to my husband Kevin Hilliard who painstakingly went through the letters with me and deciphered many illegible handwritings. I could not have done this without him.