

Looking back through my diary of 1994, I cannot find any extraordinary event, no overseas visits to America or Australia, just a few to Germany and Paris, living quietly at 12 Hall Road, in London, driving my Volvo in London to scientific meetings during the day, once a week to my secretary, Mrs Ethel Lyons, dictating letters, to be signed the next week, to Heyden for the essential posting of correspondence, other office facilities and in the evening to a party or to see friends.

I was sharing a 'garden' flat, with Stefanie Maison my *Lebensgefährtin*. There is no appropriate word in English to describe this intimate relationship, neither 'Partner' (too commercial) nor 'Companion' (too vague) is adequate, while the German word, meaning 'travelling together through life' conveys best the happy co-existence without the formality of marriage.

In February I went to the Max-Delbrück Centre for Molecular Medicine in Berlin-Buch, one of Germany's National Laboratories. It is situated to the East of the city and has an interesting history. After the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, the German Military High Command decided that, during the next war with Russia, the expected enemy, a very high rate of casualties was to be expected and for them appropriate hospital reception facilities had to be provided on the Eastern side of Berlin. Therefore about 1900, 25 large four-story hospital buildings were erected at Buch to serve for this purpose, but they were never used as intended. During the next War, 1914 to 1918, Germany was highly successful, and all casualties were easily treated in existing hospitals. During the following War, 1939 to 1945, when Buch could have really come into its own, German war casualties on the Eastern Front were enormous during the winter battles, but no transport facilities existed to evacuate them westwards over the more than 1000 km to Buch.

During the inter-war periods, the Buch brick buildings were used to house mental patients, and a Kaiser-Wilhelm Gesellschaft Research Institute was added to carry out research on mental diseases. During my first visit I was unable to confirm a rumour that in the Nazi period, from 1933 to 1945, brains from concentration camp victims were used for experiments at Buch. Understandably, no-one in 1994 was prepared to talk about that period.

In February 1994 I visited the Institute, now called after Max-Delbrück, and talked with its Director, Professor Detlev Ganten. I wanted to publish a special Issue of ISR devoted to the work of the Institute in particular, and to molecular biology in general. However, for financial reasons, my proposal was not acceptable, although during my discussion with a number of scientists at the Institute I had received agreements from them to contribute.

I returned to the Delbrück Center on 14 October 2000, when in its grounds a *Mahnmal* (Cenotaph) for the child-victims of Nazi medical crimes was dedicated. It was a moving ceremony attended by the Presidents of Germany's leading scientific organisations who had created this longoverdue memorial.

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