ISAIAH BERLIN

LETTERS

1928–1946

Edited by Henry Hardy

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> The compleat explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast.
>
> Samuel Johnson [*see page xlviii below*]

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For Jenifer Hart

παντα αγαν Isaiah Berlin, aged 16[1]

Nimiety – that's your weakness! John Sparrow[2]

Surtout, Messieurs, point de zèle.
Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand[3]

1 'Panta agan' ('Everything to excess') – a parody of the Greek proverb '*μηδὲν ἄγαν*' ('mēden agan', 'Nothing to excess') – written by IB in this unaccented form in the front of his 1925 St Paul's School diary. (For 'IB' and all other abbreviations see pp. xlv–xlviii below.)

2 Commenting on a draft typescript of IB's 'Richard Pares', an obituary published in the *Balliol College Record* 1958, and reprinted in PI. 'Nimiety' means (alleged) 'excess', i.e., in this context, over-enthusiasm in his judgements – for instance, describing Pares as 'the best and most admirable man I have ever known' (PI2 124).

3 'Above all, gentlemen, no zeal whatsoever.' For bibliographical details relevant to this maxim, a version of which IB often identified as his personal motto, see L 92, note 2.

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A CALL FOR LETTERS

THIS IS an earnest entreaty, addressed to any reader who possesses, or knows of, any correspondence with Isaiah Berlin that I may not have already seen, to tell me of it.

I have been collecting Isaiah Berlin's letters, with this edition in mind, since late 1990, when I left my post at Oxford University Press to begin full-time work on editing his unpublished writings. Although I have pursued a great many leads, sometimes with an obsessive persistence that must have irritated those exposed to it, there are bound to be letters that I have not tracked down, of whose existence, indeed, I am unaware. Berlin's correspondents were so numerous that I must be ignorant of a large proportion of them; those who have died may have passed their papers to members of their families or to institutions without leaving clues that I have been able to find; letters may have ended up in unpredictable hands, or may still lurk unseen wherever they were first put aside.

My hope is that the publication of this volume will stir memories, so that future volumes can be more representative, and so that further letters which fall into the time-span of this volume can be added to its future impressions, or prefixed to the next volume. Hence this request for letters and information. Berlin did not keep copies of his handwritten letters, and his secretaries did not always keep copies of those in typescript; even when they did, there were often additions to and corrections of the top copy that were not recorded on the duplicate. So I am dependent on the generosity of owners for the chance to select from the widest possible range of letters, and to use their final texts (when these survive).

I undertake to treat whatever I am shown with due discretion; and I should naturally respect any wish on the part of correspondents that particular letters or passages should not be quoted or published at all, or not within a particular time-limit. I should be glad to receive (and cover the cost of) photocopies of letters if their owners prefer not to lend originals. Any originals sent on loan can be copied and returned quickly.

A second motive for this request is to accumulate as complete a collection of Berlin's correspondence as possible, now, before it is too late; and to deposit additional items (with suitable embargoes if necessary) alongside the archive of his papers now housed at – and owned by – the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Already, with the passage of time and the death of some of his correspondents, many of his letters have been lost or destroyed.

I take this opportunity of saying that I should also be grateful for other

archival material – for example, photographs, and (tape recordings or transcripts of) interviews or lectures not listed in the catalogues of such items in *The Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library*,[1] and anecdotal information about Berlin that may supplement what is already known to me.

My postal address is Wolfson College, OXFORD, OX2 6UD, UK; my email address *henry.hardy@wolfson.ox.ac.uk*.

H.H.

[1] The official website of the Isaiah Berlin Literary Trust – *http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/* – hereafter 'IBVL'.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Contemporary maps

Photographs between pages 170 and 171

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Central Moscow: scan of detail from 'Mil.-Geo.-Plan von Moskau II (Stadtkern)', in *Militärgeographische Angaben über das Europäische Rußland*, Map H: *Moskau* (Berlin, 1941: Generalstab des Heeres, Abteilung fur Kriegskarten und Vermessungswesen [IV. Mil.-Geo.]) by Oxford University Libraries Imaging Service, © Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, from their C40 e. 1/H*

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36 From 'The British Embassy – I Washington', *Country Life*, 14 January 1939, 38–42, at p. 39; new print supplied by *Country Life* from original negative

PREFACE

Drinks before dinner

> I am always disappointed when a book lacks a preface: it is like arriving at someone's house for dinner, and being conducted straight into the dining-room. A preface is personal, the body of the book impersonal: the preface tells you the author's feelings about his book, or some of them. A reader who wishes to remain aloof can skip the preface without loss; but one who wants to be personally introduced has, I feel, the right to be.
>
> Michael Dummett[1]

I FIRST BROACHED the publication of his letters with Isaiah Berlin after lunching with him in All Souls in the late 1980s. Over coffee, we were discussing my possible departure from Oxford University Press to work on his papers, and when the question of his letters came up I said that publication would have to be selective. I had in mind the large quantity of material, the likely views of publishers about what the market would stand, and the fact that some letters were less interesting than, or repetitive of, others, and so did not merit inclusion, at any rate in an edition intended for a general readership. His response, which came without any noticeable pause for reflection, surprised me, since it was so unlike his reliably self-deprecating reaction to suggestions about publishing his academic writing. He brushed aside my instinct for selectivity and said that, if the job was to be done, it should be done thoroughly. The edition should be 'full-bottomed', free of half measures.

Broadly speaking, I have since been guided by that clearly stated preference, though it would have been unwise to follow it too literal-mindedly. All the reasons for selectivity just cited do indeed apply, even if they can be followed with a lighter or a heavier hand. A heavier hand would have fashioned the one-volume selection that some publishers argued for, but that outcome would have been unfaithful not only to Berlin's wishes, but also to the quality of the material. Even the present degree of selection has required strong doses of self-denial.

1 Preface to *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (London, 1973), opening paragraph. Though Dummett writes as an author rather than an editor, the same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the present enterprise.

The present, provisional, plan is that there should eventually be three volumes. The foundation of Wolfson College in 1966, or perhaps Berlin's retirement as President in 1975, is likely to provide the break between the second and third volumes. But all options remain open until the time comes. Indeed, this first volume was originally to have ended when Berlin left England for the USA for the first time in July 1940, but the preference of all publishers for fewer volumes than I at first envisaged, together with the more rounded impression of Berlin that emerges if his wartime output is included with his pre-war letters, led me to extend its coverage.

CORRESPONDENCE AND CORRESPONDENTS

> [Berlin] was internationally significant not only for his own achievements as philosopher, intellectual, teacher, writer and public figure, but also because he moved in so many different circles, corresponded with so many of the leading figures of his day, participated in so many momentous political and cultural events, was a beloved friend and mentor to so many others.[1]

Berlin, it hardly needs saying, was one of the most notable intellectual figures of the twentieth century. A leading liberal thinker of his time, indeed one of the most renowned English thinkers of the post-war era, he continues to be the focus of widespread interest and discussion, and the subject of conferences, books and other publications in many languages – not only because of his important ideas and the distinctive essays in which he recorded them, but because of the manner of man that he was. This is not the place to retell the story of his life – a biographical sketch giving the main details appears below,[2] and Michael Ignatieff's perceptive authorised biography[3] has already done the job splendidly – but something should be said about the correspondence.

Berlin was a prolific as well as an incomparable letter-writer throughout his life, and a very large number of his letters survive, which makes possible the publication of a selection fully representative of his multiple epistolary topics and personae. The first extant letter known to me was written in March 1928, by an eighteen-year-old St Paul's schoolboy, to G. K. Chesterton, asking him to contribute to a new school magazine, and the last at the end of October 1997 to Anatoly Naiman, Anna Akhmatova's friend and

1 Unnamed evaluator of the application by the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for funding to catalogue the Berlin Papers.

2 'A Personal Impression of Isaiah Berlin' (pp. xxxvii–xliv below), a slightly revised version of my obituary of Berlin, published in the *Independent* newspaper in London on 7 November 1997.

3 Michael Ignatieff, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life* (London and New York, 1998).

(latterly) secretary, less than a week before Berlin's death.[1] Spread through the almost three score years and ten between, there are thousands of other letters, covering all aspects and stages of Berlin's long, active and productive life: his time in Oxford as undergraduate, researcher, teacher, lecturer, professor and founding President of Wolfson College; his many visits to North America, Europe, Palestine/Israel and beyond; his work during the Second World War in New York, Washington and Moscow; his activities as administrator, author, critic and broadcaster. Running through the correspondence are several recurrent themes: these include his relationship with his parents, especially his mother, until their deaths, and from the 1950s with his wife Aline; his enormous and diverse network of friends and acquaintances; his love of gossip and anecdote; and his increasingly numerous interchanges with students and critics of his work. The correspondence spreads far beyond Oxford and academe into many other worlds, especially those of the arts and politics, in many countries.

The list of his correspondents includes a roll-call of men and women prominent not only in academia, but in politics, journalism, society, literature, music and art: Joseph Alsop, Noel Annan, A. J. Ayer, Lauren Bacall, Cecil Beaton, Max Beloff, Violet Bonham Carter, Elizabeth Bowen, Maurice Bowra, Alfred Brendel, E. H. Carr, Noam Chomsky, Winston Churchill, Sibyl Colefax, Emerald Cunard, Abba Eban, T. S. Eliot, Margot Fonteyn, Felix and Marion Frankfurter, Stuart Hampshire, Jacqueline Kennedy, Teddy Kollek, Harold Macmillan, Yehudi Menuhin, Nicolas Nabokov, L. B. Namier, Karl Popper, Anthony Powell, Bertrand Russell, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, John Sparrow, Stephen Spender, Igor Stravinsky, A. J. P. Taylor, The Prince of Wales, Ava Waverley, Chaim Weizmann, Bernard Williams, Edmund Wilson and many more. But often it is the most unremarkable correspondents who receive the most remarkable letters: Berlin was scrupulous and generous in answering letters, no matter what their source; and of course he relished, above all, writing to his closest friends.

The vein of social comedy that runs through the letters and (hundreds of) postcards truthfully displays Berlin's ebulliently positive temperament: he was good company, a virtuoso in conversation, an essentially happy person, a lover of life in many of its various manifestations. Nor is he a stranger to self-mockery: 'I have always been prone to coloured descriptions of unimportant phenomena.'[2] What he writes is rarely drily academic: there

1 The letter is dated 31 October 1997; Berlin died on 5 November. Poignantly, he signed this last letter in Russian, with the diminutive version of his given name that his family and friends used in his early life: 'Шая' ('Shaya').

2 To Marion Frankfurter, 3 June 1936. More quotations appear in the IBVL under 'Quotations from Berlin'.

is, if anything, more about people – his supreme interest – than about ideas and events, especially in this first volume. Above all, he gossips: 'life is not worth living unless one can be indiscreet to intimate friends',[1] he once wrote; 'destroy this letter', he often directed, but, fortunately for us, the injunction was usually ignored.

During this initial period Berlin moved from St Paul's School, then in the London borough of Hammersmith, to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he took firsts in Greats in 1931 and in PPE in 1932.[2] He took up a post as Lecturer in Philosophy at New College in October 1932, and soon afterwards won a Fellowship by Examination (or 'Prize Fellowship') at All Souls – he was the first Jew to be elected to the College. In 1938, after completing the biography of Marx that primarily occupied him at All Souls, he became a Fellow of New College. In early July 1940 he left for America with Guy Burgess, intending to proceed to Moscow, but stayed in the US, apart from visits home and his famous trip in 1945–6 to the Soviet Union, until early April 1946, at which point this volume closes.

The pre-war letters are handwritten, but in America he learns to use a secretary. The secretaries had to learn to work for him, too, as these extracts from letters written in 1952 by one of them, Lelia Brodersen,[3] to a friend testify:

> He has an Oxford accent, a lisp, an inability to say r,[4] & the most inconceivably rapid "delivery" that I have ever heard outside of a patter song [. . .] On Tuesday, typewriter in hand & despair in heart, I arrived at the Deanery, where he is staying. [. . .]. I took his letters directly on the typewriter, which forced him to make pauses, since the noise of the machine forced itself upon him; he is happy to have things struck over, x'ed out, etc., & will sign literally anything; his letters are charming & occasionally pathetic; & he is movingly shy, polite, helpless, & apologetic. And – on Thursday, when I went again, & he was shortly called to the telephone, I started to read a reprint which

1 To Morton White, 7 May 1970.

2 'Greats' is the colloquial name for Lit. Hum. (Literae Humaniores, now called simply Classics), or more specifically, at this time, for the study of ancient history and philosophy, which occupied the last seven terms of the degree course. The full first part of the course, Honour Mods (i.e. Moderations), covering Greek and Latin language and literature, lasted for five terms; but because of his comparative weakness as a classical linguist, Berlin opted instead for Pass Mods, which he took at the end of his first term, sitting the final examination after three years (as against four for the full course). PPE is Philosophy, Politics and Economics, normally a three-year course, but completed by Berlin in a single year.

3 Lelia Brodersen, later chief psychologist at Bryn Mawr's child guidance clinic, worked briefly as Berlin's secretary when he was lecturing at the College. She was doing graduate work there at the time, was therefore short of money, and was picking up earnings wherever she could. These letters to Sheema Z. Buehne are postmarked 2 and 17 March 1952. For the full texts see 'Letters on Berlin' in the IBVL.

4 The latter two deficiencies were later overcome.

> he had lying on his desk "Lev Tolstoy's Historical Scepticism."[1] I was at once caught up into it; & when he came back I asked him if he could spare it for a few days. "Oh, take it, take it," he said, fumbling madly among his papers. "I have them to send to people – take it – keep it." So I did, & when I had finished it I settled once & for all into the impression that here was a near-great, if not a really great man. [. . .]
>
> I have grown curiously fond of him. I won't be sorry to conclude the secretarial part of it, but I will be sorry to see him go. There is a peculiar sweetness & charm there which grows upon one half-imperceptibly. It has really been quite an experience altogether.

THE BUILDER AND THE BUTLER

> I can't get used to your servant's manner [. . .] he behaves as if he's on equal terms, he makes *conversation* . . .[2]
>
> It is utterly impossible to persuade an Editor that he is nobody.
> William Hazlitt[3]

Hazlitt had a point. Nevertheless, there is sometimes a constructive role for this irritating parasite, so long as he remembers his station. What this station is varies considerably. Indeed, the notion of an editor is so capacious that one sometimes wonders how useful it is. What does the Editor of *The Times* who thunders on world issues have in common with the editor who establishes the text of Aeschylus, or the publisher's editor who tinkers with commas? Fortunately, context usually determines roughly which part of the wide editorial terrain is in question, though further particulars of the specific brief in operation are usually helpful.

Two rather different metaphors tend to come to my mind when I reflect on the peculiar editorial role that has fallen to me personally; between them they seem to me to capture many of the most important features of what I do, at any rate as I see it. The first metaphor is that of the stonemason slowly assembling a great building, perhaps a cathedral, from blocks of stone that are provided for him, some cut to size, some needing adjustment to fit into place. The other is that of the butler silently lurking behind the green baize door, his vision narrowed by its confinement within the household he serves, but also sharpened by its concentration on his restricted domain.

The mason is not (at any rate today) the architect of the cathedral; yet

1 *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 2 (1951), 17–54; reprinted with additions as *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* (London and New York, 1953), and included in RT and PSM.

2 Words given to Alexander Herzen's mother, Luiza Haag, on p. 28 of Tom Stoppard's *Shipwreck* (London, 2002), part 2 of his trilogy of plays *The Coast of Utopia*.

3 From 'On Editors' (1830): vol. 17, p. 361, in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe (London and Toronto, 1930–4).

the architect's vision is realised through the sympathetic work of the builder's hands on the materials he is given. The blocks may be prepared in advance, but they have to be exactly placed, and sometimes adjusted when unforeseen problems occur; the mortar for the joints between them must be well mixed in the right proportions, and the blocks must be carefully pointed, with no gaps. When the mason is done, the finished structure stands, if he has done his work well, as a monument not only to the artistic conception that made it a possibility, but to the workmanship which gave that conception physical form. Another builder could have done the job as well or better; but the building that stands for all to see was made by this one.

The butler operates from below stairs, which gives him a privileged but distorted view. He sees or hears of most of what goes on in his master's house, except for the most private episodes, but he is so myopically focused on the details of his microcosm that he finds it difficult or impossible to relate it, at any rate in a balanced or informed way, to the wider world. He knows every nuance of procedure at the social functions at which he officiates, but is tempted to believe that this is what all such functions are like, since he does not witness those in any other establishment. He is an unrivalled source of information about the minutiae of his employer's doings, but sees them out of context and out of proportion, and can therefore be naïve and unperceptive about their implications, resonances and overtones. Once again, too, he is replaceable in a way in which his employer is not; but it is at his hands that the household's infrastructure is kept in some kind of working order.

The editor, then – this editor, at any rate – is essentially a lieutenant, a number two to the author whose work is under his care. When on duty, he does not wish to put himself forward too stridently; for this is not the purpose of the exercise. That purpose is to construct an edifice that realises the implicit vision of its designer, even if some of his plans were left in a fragmentary and ambiguous state at his death. It is to manage a social occasion that best displays the host's personality, not to distract the guests by obtrusively self-advertising antics. The glasses must seem to fill themselves. Who welcomes a waiter who interrupts his customers' conversation, still worse seeks to contribute to it, except in the most tangential and unargumentative fashion? Who asks a builder for a lecture on architecture, or invites a butler to run a course on domestic management?

This is the rationale – sheer incompetence apart – for the absence of a strong directing critical hand in this edition. Some might seek, for example, by way of introduction, a scintillating vignette of Oxford life in the 1930s, or a résumé of the sociology of wartime America. Even if such aids were

desirable, I am not the one to provide them, not being a social historian, or indeed a historian of any kind.[1] Besides, Berlin himself has well described the background of his wartime work in two pieces that I reproduce here as appendices, and the letters themselves clearly bespeak the worlds from which they emerge, as they do the personality of their author. In any event, I should not wish to interpose a particular set of spectacles between the text and its readers, as if I could tell them how to read Berlin's words. My aim, as explained in a little more detail below, has been to free readers (in Berlin's own terms, and in his spirit) negatively, not positively, to make what they pluralistically will of what he writes, by providing them with the minimum of factual information that they need in order to understand what is being said, and then to react to it as they see fit.[2] What is offered here is raw material, not a pre-processed critical package.

THE ELECTRONIC REVOLUTION

> There are, in my view, two factors that, above all others, have shaped human history in the twentieth century. One is the development of the natural sciences and technology, certainly the greatest success story of our time.
>
> Isaiah Berlin[3]

Thus begins Berlin's testamentary lecture on 'The Pursuit of the Ideal', delivered in 1988. One of the technological developments that has evolved and expanded out of all recognition even since then is the voracious invention of the Internet and email. This has already had a radical effect on the way in which we communicate with one another, on our selection of correspondents, and on the manner in which many kinds of research are most efficiently undertaken. Personal letter-writing is now in serious decline (not only under the influence of computers, of course, but also because of the increasing pressures of modern life), and hours spent in research libraries have been replaced by seconds spent with a computer search-engine.

Berlin's letter-writing, and the preparation of his letters for publication,

1 The latter disclaimer was sometimes proffered with markedly less plausibility by Berlin himself.

2 Inevitably, I have not followed this self-denying ordinance at every turn. Hence, for example, the epigraphs on p. vi. These too can be read in more than one way, but it may help to say that I had in mind principally (*a*) Berlin's idiosyncratic and attractive combination of exuberance of style and conception with a horror of imposing visions of life on those who do not share them; (*b*) the process of development whereby the sometimes self-conscious and purple prose of the adolescent and young undergraduate matures into the more measured and stately (but no less engaging) periods of our man in Washington.

3 PSM 1. The other factor, he wrote, 'consists in the great ideological storms that have altered the lives of virtually all mankind'.

fall on either side of this anthropological watershed in a providentially timely way. Berlin was one of the last, best exponents of the epistolary art before it was exposed to the mutating influence of this e-change; and the editing of the correspondence is one of the first generation of projects to benefit radically from the transforming potential of electronic research and communication. I am fortunate on both counts: the qualities of my material depend not only on its author's exceptional gifts but also on its having come into being before the e-revolution; and its preparation for publication would certainly have been far slower and even more deficient than it actually has been if that revolution had not gathered momentum while the work was in progress.[1]

A CRITICS' CRIB

> I pinned up before my desk a notice with the words: ACCURACY / RELEVANCE / CONCISION / INTEREST; and these were my objectives. Anne Olivier Bell[2]

> One difficulty with his correspondence is that the flickering allusiveness would be lost on the general reader unless ponderously annotated. John Hilton[3]

The preparation of an edition of the letters of a prolific and wide-ranging correspondent, especially one whose letters have not already been sought out and gathered together, is not to be recommended to those of a perfectionist or impatient disposition. The task is long and slow, and bristles with permanently open-ended quests and questions likely to induce despair or even nervous collapse in those whose temperament inclines them to pursue the cut-and-dried and to put every detail in its place. How far should the search for letters be pressed? How much information, and about which people, places and events mentioned in the letters, should be provided? To what extent, if at all, should this factual support be laced with comment or gossip? What should be done about passages that might wound those referred to in unflattering terms, or their surviving relatives and friends?

These are only the principal conundrums among the many that have to be faced and settled. My own decisions have been pragmatic as much as principled, and will not satisfy all (or any?) of my critics. For their benefit, and by way of introduction to the remarks that follow about editorial procedure,

1 For some related thoughts expressed nearer the beginning of this revolution see my 'Viewpoint' column in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 26 December 1980, 1464.
2 Anne Olivier Bell, *Editing Virginia Woolf's Diary* (London, 1990), p. 22.
3 Letter to the editor, 1 November 1991.

here is a paragraph from an imaginary hostile review that they are welcome to plagiarise:

> The editorial support that the readers of these letters are given is defective in various significant ways. The information supplied in footnotes is for the most part relentlessly dry and factual, making the notes cumulatively thin and etiolated; the same is true of the occasional contextual or introductory passages that appear sporadically here and there, according to no clearly discernible principle. The prosopographical detail is monochrome and dead, the narrative links bland and flat, written in the style of an official report rather than with the hand of a biographer. In place of a Boswell we encounter a disjointed prose McGonagall, as if newspaper were used as a table-cloth on which to serve the dishes of a master-chef. What glimpses of a human response we are permitted are somehow pervaded by a cloying aura of uncritical sycophancy towards this often overestimated and overpraised writer. Even within its own terms the apparatus is inconsistent: dates are given for most individuals, but not for all; the amount of data provided about people of the same degree of importance in the correspondence varies considerably; odd currants of speculation and anecdote are randomly and unaccountably lodged in the factual dough. There are numerous errors, too, which undermine one's confidence in the general reliability of the editorial matter provided. [Here insert two or three sample mistakes, preferably embarrassingly laughable ones.][1] Well, half a loaf is better than none, but what an opportunity missed to do the job properly! Whenever a compilator is let loose on imaginative material, some degree of bathos is inevitable; but there are degrees even of bathos.

It should be clear by now that the understated interpretative presence whose drawbacks are here (I hope) somewhat overstated is quite deliberate, 'to be accepted or refuted by the critical reader', to use Berlin's own words.[2] It remains only to give chapter and verse for the main editorial rules of thumb and explanatory conventions that I have adopted.

Selection

The selection in this first volume is fuller than it can be hereafter, for three reasons. First, fewer letters survive from this early period; second, the quality of those that do survive is, not unexpectedly, more uniformly striking than in later years, when (although excellent letters continue in profusion and gain in maturity) survival is more indiscriminate; third, the sheer number of later letters will require a more ruthless selection if the size of the volumes is not

1 In an enterprise of this kind errors are inevitable. For every topic there is someone who knows more than I do, often at first hand, and could write a better note. Sources vary in reliability. Slips of transcription occur. I shall record in the IBVL any mistakes that are notified to me, and I encourage readers who find errors to put me right.

2 At the end of the author's preface to *The Magus of the North*: TCE 252.

to get out of hand. So not very many letters have been omitted or cut this time. When they have been, the reasons have to do either with my judgement of the intrinsic interest of the items or passages in question, or very occasionally with the need to protect the sensitivities of the living, but not, of course, with any reservations about the likely effect of the omitted material on the overall impression of Berlin given by the volume. Berlin is allowed to present himself just as he was, feet of clay and all.

One major exception to the inclusive policy of this volume should be mentioned. There is a plentiful supply of ostensible 'business' letters from Berlin's time at the British Embassy in Washington,[1] and these, apart from one or two representative samples, I have not included, in the belief that they would more naturally be published, if at all, as a separate volume, aimed at specialists in Anglo-American relations of that period. They would then complement H. G. Nicholas's edition[2] of the official dispatches drafted by Berlin for the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax. Though they are often diverting as well as perceptive – Berlin only rarely excluded the personal dimension from his professional correspondence – the general reader would probably find them too often opaque and esoteric, studded as they are with references to minor figures and events of the time that mean little to most of us today without the aid of a disproportionately vast apparatus of annotation. As Berlin himself wrote of his 'bootleg' correspondence with H. G. Nicholas during this period, his professional letters 'presuppose a somewhat more intimate knowledge of the American political scene than the majority of [. . .] readers could be expected to possess'.[3]

Arrangement

The letters are arranged in a single chronological sequence, so far as I have been able to establish one.[4] I have often been asked if I planned to group them by topic, or at least divide them into personal and academic. But not much reflection is needed before rejecting this approach, largely because of the uncompartmentalised nature of Berlin's epistolary personality. In addition, continuities and cross-references that are visible in a chronological

1 Many of IB's personal letters at this time were also dictated to his office secretaries, and survive only as the carbons they kept. In these cases there are often errors and confusions in the carbons that would have been put right in the top copies. I have corrected these where it is obvious what is wrong, but not otherwise; such letters are flagged '[*carbon*]' after the date as a warning that they may not correspond exactly to what was sent, especially given IB's practice of making (often prolific) handwritten additions to dictated letters.

2 H. G. Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941–1945: Weekly Political Reports from the British Embassy* (London and Chicago, 1981).

3 See p. 660 below.

4 The letters are often undated, and various clues as to their date have to be resorted to, when available. Sometimes only an approximate guess is possible. Any information enabling me to date them more precisely will be welcome.

sequence begin to disappear if other arrangements are adopted, and an extra layer of signposting would then be required to compensate for this. If any reader has a distaste for a particular subject-matter or correspondent, it should not be difficult to identify and skip the relevant items and move on to more appealing fare.

Editorial matter

From time to time I have inserted passages of what Berlin referred to as 'connective tissue', to provide context for the letters that immediately follow. I have not followed a hard and fast rule as to when to supply information in this way, and when to do so in footnotes, but my instinct has been to opt for notes, other things being equal, so that readers who prefer to encounter the primary texts without the distraction of commentary can more easily do so. However, there are times when it is more economical, and I trust more helpful, to resort to a headnote, or to introduce a series of letters with a paragraph or two about their common hinterland. Sometimes I have provided these paragraphs myself, sometimes I have taken them from, or inserted into them material from, other sources – for example, the family memoir that Mendel Berlin wrote in 1946 and subsequent years, the autobiographical document dictated by Marie Berlin in 1971–2, or the wonderfully rich recorded interviews with Berlin conducted by Michael Ignatieff. I have also felt free to refer readers to Ignatieff's biography[1] when additional contextual information is available there in a form that it seemed pointless to debase by paraphrase. Indeed, any reader who wishes to get the most out of the letters should most certainly have read this biography, or at least its relevant chapters, before embarking on the present volume.

The best connective tissue, where it is available, is naturally that provided by Berlin himself. There exists a good deal of this in one form or another – enough, perhaps, to constitute one day a patchwork autobiography of sorts – but it is somewhat scattered, and far from homogeneous in style. The largest concentration is to be found in the pages of his *Personal Impressions*, together with some other pieces of the same genre not included there, and excerpts from that collection will no doubt find a place in the later volumes of this edition. The reminiscences published by Berlin that are most useful for this first volume are his introduction to H. G. Nicholas's selection of the dispatches Berlin drafted in Washington (referred to above), and his 1972 Jacob Herzog Memorial Lecture, 'Zionist Politics in Wartime Washington'. Because these pieces are so intimately connected with the later letters included here, and because they will not be readily available to all those who

1 By page, thus: MI 279. Interviews are referred to by archival reference number, thus: MI Tape 7.

would like to read them in connection with the letters they illuminate, I have printed them both as appendices.

Annotation

As for the notes themselves, I quoted from Anne Olivier Bell at the head of this section more in hope than in expectation, more in admiration than in emulation – especially as regards 'interest'.[1] I have in general aimed to give only the minimum information necessary to identify, date and barely characterise the individual or other note-worthy item in question, at times adding something known to me that is relevant to the particular context. I have not sought to stand for long between readers and their encyclopaedias (in the case of those persons and topics that may be expected to appear in their pages): space and time would in any case have ruled this out; nor is it to my taste to rehearse or compress information – the selection of which would often be invidious – available in any modest reference library. If enough is said to enable readers to look up this kind of information quickly for themselves, I am content.[2]

My default format for notes on people is this: name (preferably in full), dates where discoverable without ludicrously disproportionate research,[3] occupation at the time of the letter, and before if relevant. Developments that took place after this volume closes, being unknown to Berlin and his correspondents in the period it covers, have on the whole been excluded, except where they seemed important for purposes of identification. I have not refrained from adding extra anecdotal material here and there, when it is to hand, even though this may make the notes somewhat heterogeneous – as Berlin would have liked. The same guidelines apply to the entries in the biographical glossary (on which see further below), which are not usually pen-portraits but simply collections of basic data, gathered together for ease of reference, on a selection of central and/or ubiquitous figures.

Letterheads

The format of the names, addresses and dates in the letter-headings has been

1 Her edition of Virginia Woolf's diaries, and the edition of Virginia Woolf's letters prepared by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann, have indeed been my models on many levels.

2 A handful of well-known people are left unannotated.

3 Is it worth delaying publication substantially by conducting extensive genealogical enquiries to discover the dates of those who do not appear in publicly available sources, and pass briefly across the stage in a role to which precise dates are irrelevant? This is not, I hope, a counsel of idleness, rather one of avoiding complete slavery to obsession. Where necessary (and on occasion otherwise) I have set in train, sometimes with satisfying results, baroque investigations that would appal a professional time-manager.

standardised, and the most common addresses[1] abbreviated according to the following list:

Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi College, Oxford
New College	New College, Oxford
All Souls	All Souls College, Oxford
Hollycroft Avenue	49 Hollycroft Avenue, London NW3 (Berlin's family home from 1928)
British Information Services	The British Press Service, British Information Services, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City
British Embassy, Washington, DC	British Embassy, 3100 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, DC

The location of, and reference for, the original is given at the end of the text of letters held in archives. Otherwise it may be assumed that letters, or photocopies or carbons, either are in the Berlin Papers in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, or have been provided by their original recipients or their heirs.

Ancillary matter

People and other subjects that receive a gloss are in general footnoted on first occurrence only. The index will quickly locate this introductory note if it is needed in connection with a later reference to the subject in question. As already mentioned, figures of special importance to Berlin, and some who simply crop up with particular frequency, are also dealt with, usually at somewhat greater length, in a biographical glossary at the end of the text: an asterisk in front of a surname in a footnote or in the index signals the existence of an entry in this glossary.

The family trees that conclude the preliminary pages were compiled with astonishing investigative flair by the genealogist Jennifer Holmes; these make it easier to place Berlin's relatives, and the chronology that follows the appendices, compiled by Serena Moore and Jennifer Holmes, will usually pinpoint his whereabouts and occupation when he wrote a particular letter.

Editorial procedure

The originals of the items in the sections entitled 'London', 'Oxford' and 'New York' are in manuscript unless otherwise stated. Those in the later sections are typed unless said to be in manuscript. Manuscript items are in

1 It should not necessarily be assumed that a letter was written where its letterhead suggests: IB frequently used printed stationary purloined from elsewhere.

general transcribed exactly,[1] typescript letters lightly edited to eliminate the distracting and in any case irrelevant contributions of typists with differing styles, mannerisms and deficiencies. Paragraphing[2] in the texts of manuscript letters errs on the side of generosity: Berlin often wrote on narrow sheets that made it natural for him to indicate breaks by means of a wider interlinear space, or the turn of a page or a line, instead of an indent, and such indicators would disappear if the layout of the original were followed too literal-mindedly. Berlin's punctuation too – which is in any case moderately random, idiosyncratic and (sometimes) confusing[3] – tends to disappear at the ends of lines of manuscript; on the whole, however, I have not attempted to supply the desiderated points, whose presence is usually clearly enough implied by the context. But where it seemed positively unhelpful to stay my hand, I have silently introduced extra punctuation, and occasionally deleted or altered punctuation that struck me as especially misleading.

Abbreviations and other conventions

Berlin is referred to throughout the editorial matter as IB, and recipients of letters are referred to by their initials in notes to letters received by them. Undergraduates are not described as such in the notes, to avoid frequent repetition of the long word 'undergraduate': but undergraduate status may be inferred from the format 'Balliol classics 1929–33'. Also for reasons of space, the often cumbersome (and, to many, opaque) full titles of dons are not usually given: I have taken the view that readers will primarily wish to know a don's subject and College, and whether (s)he is a Fellow (and, if so, Tutor); other refinements, such as whether (s)he also holds a University Lectureship or other post, are omitted, though Professorships are given their official title. My format is 'Fellow and philosophy Tutor', the subject being attached to the Tutorship since Fellowships are not technically restricted to a particular subject; this post would be officially entitled 'Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy', a format I have eschewed as ambiguous and a fraction longer.

Angle brackets, ⟨ ⟩, enclose manuscript insertions, marginalia or postscripts in typescript letters, unless they are simply short corrections or afterthoughts that it would be excessively pedantic to distinguish in this way. The omission of part of a text, for whatever reason, is flagged by an ellipsis in brackets, thus: [. . .]. Unbracketed ellipses are authorial.

These and other abbreviations are listed on pages xlv–xlviii below,

1 Underlining is indicated by italic type.
2 A device Berlin always used too sparingly.
3 For instance, he often pairs a single inverted comma with double inverted commas.

together with a guide to short forms of names that are regularly used by Berlin and not glossed on each occurrence.

Where no note is provided, it may be assumed either that it has not proved possible to identify the person or other subject in question, or that it did not seem worth the labour of doing so in the context. I should welcome rescue from my ignorance and failure in such cases.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

> I know that it is customary in works of this kind to end with some formula whereby the person whose name appears on the title page reveals that the book was in reality written by half a dozen other people, his own role being confined to distortion, plagiarism and the insertion of a few false references.
>
> R. D. Dawe[1]

> I am much indebted to conversations I have had with others over the years [. . .] I will not indulge in the conventional fatuity of remarking that they are not responsible for the errors this book may contain. Obviously, only I can be *held* responsible for these: but, if I could recognise the errors, I should have removed them, and, since I cannot, I am not in a position to know whether any of them can be traced back to the opinions of those who have influenced me.
>
> Michael Dummett[2]

> This matter appears so trivial that I am afraid we cannot assist this time.
>
> Secretary of the Churchill Society[3]

More than most of the other fourteen volumes of Isaiah Berlin's work that I have so far edited or co-edited, this one has been a truly co-operative venture, for all that I have been the main conduit for the wide-ranging expertise incorporated herein. Not only have the resources of the Internet, especially the miraculous Google search-engine, together with the electronic resources of Oxford University's integrated library system – in particular OLIS (its electronic catalogue) and online versions of *Who's Who* and *The Dictionary of National Biography* – transformed my task, as intimated earlier; but I have also depended heavily on the special knowledge of a number of scholars, and of friends of Berlin, who have given out from their stores of accumulated knowledge and wisdom with great generosity. A full history

1 R. D. Dawe, *The Collation and Investigation of Manuscripts of Aeschylus* (Cambridge, 1964), Preface, p. viii.
2 op. cit. (xv/1), p. xii, quoted here with the same proviso there invoked.
3 Email of 6 March 2003 to Kate Payne, responding to a request to identify a passage from one of Churchill's speeches.

of this beneficence would be a long essay in itself. But a few words must be said about my principal personal debts of gratitude, invidious as it is to single out particular individuals.

I begin with the recipients of the letters and their heirs and assigns, without whom there would have been little to edit. On almost all hands I have found them helpful and forthcoming, not only with letters but with background information, and in other ways. Their crucial contribution has only been thrown into sharper relief by the handful of cases in which I have been met by silence or refusal. Not that I begrudge those who prefer not to make their letters available: but I am glad that they are in a tiny minority.

Next, Berlin's Literary Trustees.[1] Lady Berlin has been consistently kind, generous and patient, even on the rare occasions when our judgements have not initially coincided. She has also helpfully commented on a draft text of my selection of letters. Peter Halban has always been unreservedly available for help, support and advice. Lady Berlin's generosity has also enabled me to retain the services of my brilliant Assistant Serena Moore, who, disguised as Sally Denholm-Young, was Berlin's secretary at Wolfson in 1972. In addition to contributing directly to several aspects of the work on the letters, Serena has run my office with saintly tenacity and tact since she joined me in late 1998, and her conception of her role is imaginatively large. This has left me gloriously free to concentrate on my main editorial work. I am daily aware of my dependence on her loyal support.

The other name that belongs in this company is that of Pat Utechin, Berlin's private secretary for as long as I knew him. For all those years she was the vital link with Berlin and his authorial activities, as recorded in my acknowledgements in earlier volumes. She also became one of my closest personal friends. I could not begin to summarise what she has done for me, in all sorts of ways. It is certain that my larger project has been fundamentally rooted in her expertise and enthusiasm. This is a permanent state of affairs, even though, with Berlin's death and the transfer of his papers to the Bodleian Library, her day-to-day involvement has inevitably diminished. But her input has continued, and she has nobly read the typescript and made numerous helpful comments and suggestions.

Four long-standing friends of Berlin's in particular have been irreplaceable sources of personal knowledge, especially about this early period, for which help of this kind is increasingly hard to find, and therefore of exceptional value. Mary Bennett, née Fisher, knew Berlin well from the early 1930s, as did Jenifer Hart, née Williams; Stuart Hampshire became a friend in

1 IB appointed Lady Berlin, Peter Halban and myself as his Literary Trustees in 1996. In 2002 Lady Berlin appointed a fourth Trustee in the person of Alan Ryan, who has readily put his wide knowledge at my disposal.

1935; Jean Floud came to know Berlin later, but is also knowledgeable about the years in question. They have all explained allusions and answered myriad questions with a will. Jenifer Hart has gone further and spent very many hours looking up the material for footnotes, and writing it down for me. Because of my gratitude to her for this heroic assistance I was specially glad when Aline Berlin suggested that this volume should be – most appropriately – dedicated to her.

Another unrivalled source of first-hand contemporary knowledge has been Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, whom Berlin met in Washington in the winter of 1943–4. Despite his many other commitments he has read the wartime letters and enabled me to annotate many of the names that appear in them, always saving me time and often telling me what I should not otherwise have discovered. Similarly generous expert readings have been provided by Susan Brewer (author of *To Win the Peace: British Propaganda in the United States during World War II*) and Nicholas Cull (author of *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign against American 'Neutrality' in World War II*), both of whom have supplied explanations of many allusions that would otherwise have been hard and time-consuming to unravel.

In late 2000 the Berlinian expert Joshua Cherniss, then an undergraduate at Yale in his final year, introduced himself by email, having visited the Literary Trust's website. He has become a good friend, an indefatigable correspondent and a helper of great understanding and effectiveness, and has now happily come to Oxford to do graduate work, which means that I can take advantage of him even more mercilessly than before, if this were possible.

Michael Hughes, Archivist of the Berlin Papers at the Bodleian Library, most ably assisted by Matthew Neeley, has cheerfully entered into the spirit of the enterprise, and has patiently responded to requests for information and for copies of documents now in his care. As he catalogues he discovers items (some very important) which I had overlooked or forgotten and alerts me to their significance, much to the benefit of this book.

Michael Ignatieff, Berlin's biographer, has donated to the Literary Trust in my care, for eventual onward transmission to the Bodleian Library, his recordings and transcripts of his interviews with Berlin, and all his working papers. I am very grateful to him for his exemplary open attitude to my use of the material he worked so long and hard to accumulate.

Betty Colquhoun has now been typing Berlin's (and others') difficult manuscript, and his secretaries' typescripts, for me for some thirteen years, and has become an unrivalled interpreter of Berlin's squiggles and hieroglyphics. The great majority of the keystrokes that have generated this book

are hers, and I pay tribute to her skill, endurance and unfailing willingness and courtesy.

For the last thirteen years my work has been supported by generous benefactors who do not seek public recognition. This remains the case, and I am as grateful to and dependent on them as ever; the same applies to my debt to the late Lord Bullock, who arranged my funding at the outset and kept an eye on it thereafter. Most recently the Ford Foundation, at the instigation of Kenneth B. Wilson, has enabled me to seek help with some of the time-consuming ancillary tasks that were hanging over me, and also to improve my electronic resources: I thank Ken and the Foundation most warmly for this timely act of rescue, whose principal fruits are described in the next paragraph.

The life both of the project and its editor has been saved over recent months by two tireless, meticulous, imaginative and self-effacing scholarly researchers, Jennifer Holmes and Kate Payne. Kate has completed the explorations in the Public Record Office at Kew that I had hardly begun, and has there discovered several documents of the greatest interest that were previously unknown to me. She has also most productively and patiently double-checked my annotation, kept me relentlessly up to the mark in my endlessly postponed attempts to plug the gaps therein, drafted many of the missing notes, and performed numerous other thankless tasks from which the book has greatly benefited. What is more, she and Jennifer have tracked down numerous individuals who had eluded all previous sleuthing by myself and others; the tale of some of their explorations has to be heard to be believed. Jennifer, furthermore, in addition to acting as genealogist to the project, and supplying missing annotation, has stepped into some of the other breaches left gaping too long while my attention has been diverted elsewhere: in particular she has drafted much of the editorial connective tissue, as well as checking the dating and sequencing of the letters, which had previously been seriously awry. Indeed, in the last stages of the preparation of the volume the help I received from experts of various kinds, and from these two supremely competent researchers in particular, became the principal input into the editorial apparatus, especially for the war years.

For Russian matters I have turned again in the main to Helen Rappaport, who has already helped with other volumes of Berlin's work, and have relied as usual (as have Jennifer Holmes and Kate Payne) on her wide-ranging expertise and exemplary efficiency. For Hebrew/Jewish questions I have called principally on Daniel Frank, and on the eponymous wisdom of Norman Solomon, and for Yiddish I have applied to Gennady Estraikh.

Much as I should like to continue specifying who has contributed what, and how, the time has now come to resort to a list. Many of those whose