

Obituary - Dr. Walter Zander

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Walter Zander, lawyer and scholar, died in South Croydon on April 7 aged 94. He was born in Erfurt, Germany, on June 8, 1898.

WHEN, in 1948, Walter Zander published his pamphlet *Is This the Way?*, questioning the right of Jews to displace the indigenous Arabic population in the newly-formed Israel, it was barely noticed by the Palestinians whom he was trying to protect, and failed to move the politicians. But to his friends and fellow intellectuals (among them Gandhi and Albert Hourani) he was one of the most important Zionist thinkers of the century.

Zander was reading classics at Jena University when the first world war broke out. He fought on both the Eastern and the Western Fronts, winning the Iron Cross for gallantry. After the war he followed his father into the law, and started a practice in Berlin, later taking time off to study at the London School of Economics. In the early 1930s he wrote several articles on monetary policy.

In 1930 he married Gretl Magnus, daughter of the eminent physiologist Rudolf Magnus. By 1937 he and his family were forced to leave the increasingly hostile atmosphere of Berlin and emigrated to England. Showing a certain talent for improvisation, he set up a printing business in Slough and settled with his family in the village of Gerrards Cross. With the outbreak of war, however, he and his family were interned in the Isle of Wight (their rations were supplemented by food parcels

from their former English neighbours). Meanwhile his mother, a gifted amateur painter and sculptor, had died in the Holocaust.

Zander was made Secretary of the British Friends of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1944. He held this post for 27 years and used it to air his considerable worries regarding proper arrangements, including compensation, for the Palestinians. *Is This the Way?* so impressed Gandhi that Zander was invited, as the only Jew, to a conference on world conflict situations in India.

One of the few Arabs to recognise Zander's talents was his friend for more than fifty years, the late Albert Hourani. When, in 1972, Zander retired from the Friends, to devote himself to study it was principally through Hourani's influence that he was made Senior Associate Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford, attached to the Middle East Centre.

In 1971 Zander published *Israel and the Holy Places of Christendom*. He wrote about the Christian church with an understanding rarely found in non-Christians. It reflected the obvious uneasiness he felt about the "judaizing" of Jerusalem, although he held out a forlorn hope for the future in the shape of a probable ArabIsraeli agreement.

His last important publication, in the *Israel Law Review* in 1982, concerned a historic dispute between the Coptic and the Ethiopian Churches.

Music had always been important to him. As a boy he had studied at the Conservatory in Erfurt and he was almost certainly the last person alive to have played under Arthur Nikisch, the legendary conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and friend of Brahms.

His wife died in 1968, and he is survived by his four children, one of whom is Michael Zander, Professor of Law at the London School of Economics.