

## *Preface*

Francis Mann came from Germany and became one of the most distinguished practitioners and writers in English law of his generation, and an international lawyer of world-wide reputation. He combined a flourishing practice with a prodigious output of teaching and writing. That is to say he was a jurist, which is rare in the legal profession in England. It is rarer still to find one who had had a legal training in Germany as well as a life in the law in England. Francis' knowledge of both the English and continental legal systems enriched all his work.

When in 1958 he joined the partnership of Herbert Smith & Co., of which I was then a junior member, I realised little of all this and did not have more than an inkling of how fortunate we all were going to be. Within days of his arrival I was plunged into a heavy case that he was conducting, with the trial only weeks away. One of the senior silks he had briefed for the trial told me that I was in for an exciting time. No prediction could have been more to the point. After more than thirty years of working closely with him, during which time he became my mentor and friend as well as my partner, my abiding impression is that he carried the life force within him every day until his death in 1991. What is the news? he would demand almost daily. If you had none you would feel that somehow you were failing. But if you had a new case, he would transform it. You had only to sketch the outline facts for him to seize on its essential features and imbue it with energy and infectious excitement.

This short book is not a study of his contribution to, and influence upon English legal thinking and practice. That has been admirably done by Lawrence Collins who, as a jurist too, is Francis Mann's heir. I gratefully acknowledge my debt to his writings. This memoir is a personal recollection of a remarkable man and lawyer. There are however parts of his life that I did not or could not know: his early life in Germany until it was destroyed by Hitler, his first difficult years in London and his crucial visit to Berlin in 1946. For these I have been able to draw on a variety of sources: his own writings and his letters to his wife, Lore, and the memories of their three children, David, Jessica and Nicola, and of his many friends and colleagues in England and Germany. To all those who have helped me I am more than grateful. I could not have written this book without them. I am also indebted to Claudia von der Brüggen for her generously-given help with the German aspects of Francis Mann's life and with some translations from the German. I am grateful to Anne Kriken Mann, David Mann's widow, for permission to quote from Francis' own writings and letters. Finally I thank Richard Hart for his support and confidence in bringing the book to the public.