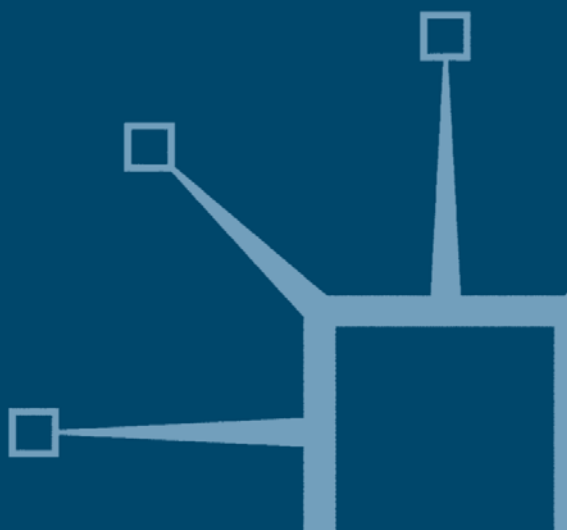


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The Refuge and the Fortress

Britain and the Flight from Tyranny

Jeremy Seabrook



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Foreword

Jon Snow

One of the most critical elements that has made the United Kingdom the totemic multi-cultural society that it has become in the twentieth and twenty first centuries is the vast pool of intellectual capacity brought to this country by academics in flight from war and repression elsewhere in the world. From Austria to Zimbabwe they have come in their thousands. Sometimes singly, sometimes in their hundreds – as in the flight from Nazi Germany – these refugees have often had to struggle both to enter and remain in Britain. Our arms have not always been enthusiastically open. The ameliorating force combating this inconsistency of welcome and support for these academics for three quarters of a century has been CARA, the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics.

I first came across CARA when working as a reporter on the long Eritrean war of independence from Ethiopia. My best and most constant informants were refugees from assorted universities from Newcastle to London. When it came to wars in Central America in the early 1980s it was again people from the refugee academic community such as Dr Salvador Muncada at London University who led me to the critical contacts that informed my work on the ground in the region. Since then wherever I have travelled to universities, schools and colleges I have met academics who have continued to play the same role. As I write amid the media shut down in Zimbabwe the intellectuals who have fled to Britain are again at the forefront of the struggle to inform the world of what is happening ‘back home’.

Of course I write as a journalist, but as a member of wider British society I am more than aware of the huge role played by refugee academics in fields from economics to medical research, and much in between. This book celebrates the diversity of contribution that the many thousands of refugee academics have played over the past three quarters of a century. It is largely thanks to CARA that we have so detailed an account of the scale and reach of that contribution. In leafing through CARA’s history one is obviously struck by the sadness that the need for such an organization should still be so urgent so many years after its founding.

It’s remarkable to note that of the more than ten thousand refugee academics CARA has helped since 1933, eighteen have gone on to win Nobel Laureates; sixteen received Knighthoods and over a hundred have become fellows of the Royal Society and the British Academy. For the most part it has been CARA that has enabled these men and women to re-connect with their studies from their

countries of origin and continue them in British institutions and their home countries, when the time is right to return.

CARA deserves particular recognition for its 'Campaign for Iraqi Academics', a programme launched in 2006 to support a group which is the target of a systematic campaign of kidnap, torture and assassination. In continuing Sir William Beveridge's work, this initiative also carries forward key elements of Albert Einstein's 1933 vision of a university in exile for those fleeing Nazi Germany. Through the CARA-Scholars at Risk Universities Network and other core partners, CARA is endeavouring to sustain Iraq's academic capital in the region and build bridges back in support of an increasingly young and inexperienced teaching cohort on whom the future of Iraq's higher education sector depends.

But this book is also a tribute to Britain and those who made these refugees welcome, providing support and inspiration to enable so many to put repression and war behind them, and lead fulfilling lives during which they were able to put so much back. I am genuinely honoured to be allowed to be part of the celebration of CARA's work, and of people they have served.

Jon Snow
Newscaster, Channel 4 News

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This book is the result of the co-operative work of scores of people, to whom I would like to express my warmest thanks, particularly to the staff of CARA and especially to Laura Wintour and John Akker. (Contact details for CARA are given in the bibliography.) I am indebted to many of the descendants and relatives of scholars who came to Britain in the 1930s, particularly Professor Lewis Elton, Ben Elton, Professor Gustav Born, Dr Ralph Kohn, Vivien Perutz, Lord Krebs, Professor Richard Gombrich and Marcia Saunders. I am grateful to Lore Segal, William Lanouette, Ania O'Brien and Barry Davis, who have all written or spoken of exile. I would like to thank all the refugees I have met, past and present, who received help from CARA, and who have repaid it a thousandfold to the country that offered them sanctuary. I have learned much from some remarkable individuals who exemplify the endurance and resilience of human beings in the face of injustice, oppression and torture. I am grateful for the research of Dr Amanda Bergen, Ruth Boreham, and to all the members of the council of CARA, in particular Professor Shula Marks, Professor Sir Robert Boyd, Professor Paul Broda, Professor Paul Weindling, Professor Michael Yudkin, Dr Peter Warren and Anne Lonsdale. Thanks, too, to Courtney Stern, Liz Fraser, Alan Angell, Alan Phillips, Benny Pollack, Adrian Sington and John Murray. I am especially indebted to my editor, Andrew Maxwell-Hyslop, himself a descendant of Huguenot refugees, and his particular understanding of the issues.

I owe a special debt to several publications dealing with some of the issues raised in this book. I am grateful to Louise London for her remarkable and myth-dispelling study, *Whitehall and the Jews 1933–1948*; to Bernard Wasserstein for his melancholy *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939–1945*; to Daniel Snowman for his inspirational *The Hitler Emigres* and to the editors of the extraordinarily wide-ranging *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*. I owe much to the insights of David Zimmerman, the author of a forthcoming book on the Academic Assistance Council.

I would also like to thank the following for permission to reproduce material in the text: PEN International for Soleiman Adel Guémar's poem; Jack Mapanje for the 'The New Platform Dances'; Marta Zabaleta; and the Association of Jewish Refugees.

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Jeremy Seabrook
April 2008

A Note on the Text

The names of a substantial number of individuals in this book have been changed to protect their identity and shield them and their families from possible harm in their country of origin. In certain cases, in the interests of anonymity, the details surrounding their arrest, imprisonment and subsequent treatment have also been slightly altered. Their stories are, for the most part, told in their own words and the record they give is sometimes a little confusing, since they have suffered greatly, and they do not always tell a story that can be broken down into clear sequences. Many of their accounts are not, and cannot be expected to be, impartial, since they articulate experiences which, to a majority of people in Britain, are horrible beyond belief. Their story of home is as they experienced it; and they have spoken with an admirable candour and openness, although some of what they say may not always chime with official or 'objective' versions of events they describe.

In the section on the 1930s, the individuals discussed are only a few examples of the vast pool of talent that came here from central Europe, with or without the help of the Academic Assistance Council or the Society for the Protection of Learning and Science. They are not intended to be a representative sample, but suggest something of the scope and depth of our indebtedness to those who came to Britain as refugees.

Academic refugees are predominantly male. This was especially true of the 1930s although I have tried, whenever possible, to use the testimony of the women on whom they depended. Even today, most academic refugees are still men, since this reflects the personnel in the universities of the countries they have fled; but, of course, gender balance is scarcely a priority in the minds of torturers and oppressors in their assault upon the human person.

Jeremy Seabrook

Introduction

One of the most puzzling questions of recent times is why the asylum seeker and the refugee have become objects of widespread scorn and suspicion in Britain. It is not simply that the popular press has claimed that people have singled Britain out as a 'soft touch' or an 'easy ride'; there are clearly dynamic forces at work, which have transformed 'asylum seeker' (with its suggestions of persecution and exile) from an expression arousing not compassion, but abuse. It has also attracted the disparaging qualifier 'bogus', which delegitimizes in advance claims upon our scarce sympathy.

In cases where the authorities have refused asylum, another equally negative word has been coined, namely the 'failed' asylum-seeker, as though asylum were an arduous examination which people must pass. The aggregate of 'bogus' and 'failed' suggests that the opportunists and chancers of the earth are finding passage to Britain, to take advantage of our legendary kindness, tolerance and softness of heart. This, in turn, nourishes one of our most persistent myths – that we are too easy, that we 'bend over backwards' to accommodate the mistreated and abused, who are secretly laughing at our gullibility – 'taking the piss' in the popular expression.

Governments proclaim the rising numbers of 'deportations' a measure of success. This, too, has a long and ugly history. An elderly Jewish woman in north London said, 'Whenever I hear governments utter the word "deportation", it sends a shiver down my spine. For me it will always be associated with the "deportations to the East" of the Hitler regime, with all that implied. I wonder how many of these "successes" will be subject to arbitrary arrest, imprisonment and torture? They have become, in the word of the Hungarian Nobel literature laureate, Imre Kertesz, "fateless".'

British refugee organizations regularly publish denials of the myths surrounding refugees and asylum-seekers. The latter are not given priority over people on accommodation waiting lists, for they are usually housed in hard-to-let and rundown property. They do not take our jobs, are not offered mobile phones, televisions or cars and are unlikely to commit crimes. They do not come here because of rumours of our generosity – indeed they know nothing of the welfare system – and cannot work until they have waited more than a year for a decision

on their case. The income they receive is a mere 70 per cent of income support, hardly extravagant living.

The Refugee Council says that 1,000 medically qualified refugees are recorded on the British Medical Association database. Retraining a refugee doctor is about one-twentieth of the cost of training a British doctor from scratch. Many refugees have academic qualifications. There are more than 1,500 refugee teachers in England. It is estimated that 30,000 jobs have been created in one city, Leicester, since Ugandan Asian refugees arrived in 1972.

This suggests that refugees represent a particular stratum of people: they are often educated, socially committed, economically active and politically involved in their country of origin. Indeed, this is often why they suffer, singled out by dictatorial or ideologically-driven regimes as 'threats' to stability and order. Such people's fate is this book's concern, its primary focus being the contribution over the past 75 years of academic refugees to the social, intellectual, economic and cultural life of Britain. This is the work of CARA (the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics), whose origins go back to 1933 when it was founded as the Academic Assistance Council to assist Jewish academics dismissed by the Nazis from German universities. The organization was originally seen as a temporary arrangement. That the need it sought to meet persists three generations later suggests that Hitler's Germany was no isolated aberration, while CARA'S work, both past and present, has encountered considerable resistance, official and popular.

A particular contemporary problem, although not entirely new, is the result of the degradation of the very idea of refugee or asylum seeker. A reluctance to admit persecuted people into this country was also evident earlier in our history, notably during the Tsarist pogroms at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in the rise of Nazism in the 1930s. Indeed, that unhappy period provides an important insight into the psychology of indifference. At a time of great stress and distress, governments of the free world – itself a smaller realm then than now, bounded by the grim ideological boundaries of Nazism and Communism – sought places far from sight to locate Europe's unwanted. In the 1930s and well into the Second World War, Britain and the United States undertook a doomed search among what Bernard Wasserstein called 'the waste places of the world' for suitable destinations for Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. These included Angola, Madagascar, Mauritius (a few actually wound up there), the Dominican Republic (an agrarian settlement financed by the USA was started, but fizzled out for want of support), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Mindanao in the Philippines, all outside the territories of Britain, its white dominions or the USA.

Britain, at that time of extreme urgency, extended a modest and selective help to a minority of Jews. Those admitted were absorbed effortlessly; their special talents and abilities acknowledged, they and their families recognized for their unique contribution. But a majority of European Jewry were destined to take

the most malignant journey undertaken by the persecuted of the earth across the unpoliced frontier between life and death. Before this, they were banished to another moral universe from that of the majority, built from the calloused feelings and exhausted sympathies, the flint in the heart and iron in the spirit of other human beings.

Nazi Germany targeted a distinctive population with ferocious energy and industrial efficiency. Today, refugees come from far and wide, the great majority from countries torn by conflict, civil strife, war or ethnic cleansing – Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka. These people are, in their way, refugees of globalization. Where will such asylum-seekers beg refuge?

This, perhaps, offers a clue to why antagonisms remain, notwithstanding the efforts of agencies, charities and voluntary bodies. Despite their fact-sheets with myth-busting arguments and truths about refugees, the opposing view – we are being exploited, refugees steal our labour and come as ‘benefit-shoppers’ or ‘health-tourists’ – will not go away. At its most benign, the argument that there is simply ‘no room in this overcrowded island’ is usually offered as the last word.

Integrating (to a varying extent) virtually every country’s economy into a global system has had profound repercussions. It isn’t just a question of the great movements of humanity from rural to urban areas, involuntary migrations away from traditional patterns of living and loss of livelihood through development projects; it is also about reactions to this process, the search for identity in a return to traditional religious, ethnic or linguistic groups, and the defensive shelter these may offer people disoriented by globalization. A whole world has been set in movement, certainly not initiated by the victimized and persecuted. Yet these become scapegoats, doubly blamed for events beyond their control.

The reluctance of countries whose people have seen an access of modest privilege to open their doors to those who have suffered (partly to further the good fortune of people in the ‘developed’ world) helps explain a general hostility to, and rejection of, refugees. The rich Western countries, in any case, absorb only a small fraction of them; Britain takes less than one in 2,000. The vast majority shelter in neighbouring countries, often in miserable conditions. Over a million Iraqis are in Syria, and half a million in Jordan. Burmese refugees spill over into Thailand. People fleeing the Sudanese militias are trapped in the wastes of Chad. Civilians caught up in the wars of the Democratic Republic of Congo look for a refuge in Rwanda and Uganda, while those fleeing the catastrophe of Zimbabwe enter South Africa. Poor countries, not rich ones, bear the burden of assisting refugees. But it makes no difference. People’s ability to believe what they want to believe has long been known; the triumph of unreason has its own function, as many of those whose stories figure in this book testify.

The formulation of a more joyful, liberating narrative than the narrow fables of a sullen exclusion is the only way to fight myths presented as self-evident truths.

The story is not about exploiters and opportunists, but rather the immeasurable riches, diversity and practical contribution which refugees have made to this country. While there is no guarantee that such a humane story will gain ground against its more malignant competitor, that is scarcely an excuse for remaining silent. CARA exemplifies this story of our better selves.

1

Academic Refugees

Why it matters

Is the idea of the 'scholar' an archaism today? The word evokes someone (almost invariably male) secluded, preoccupied with esoteric knowledge and not quite of this world.

The academic, a later offspring of this stereotype, bridges to some degree the gap between the caricatured scholar and the contemporary world while remaining slightly out of touch, inhabiting the ivory tower rather than the airless, musty study.

However, in the popular imagination the academic is now being superseded by the expert; the practical, no-nonsense provider of statistics, comment or facts required by our 'need to know' – not in a way that necessarily requires energetic effort, but in order to remain 'informed' on the issues of the hour. The expert is a functionary, whose place of study is dominated by the flickering screen, shadowless white light, and plants which have no habitat outside the desiccated atmosphere of offices that produce more data than wisdom.

Although exaggerated, this captures something of changing social attitudes towards the academy. On the one hand, it furnishes ideas and knowledge which generate open and democratic debate. While safeguarding research, innovation and inquiry, it must also defend places of higher learning against government direction and ideological intrusion. Academics appear daily in the media, for they have become interpreters of events whose significance would otherwise escape us. In a growing division of labour, theirs is a language of translation. They also have a high responsibility, as they are entrusted with the intellectual formation of a new generation that will take its place in the expected evolution of the economy and society.

These multiple functions often engender friction. Societies change, but also resist it. Those working at the frontiers of knowledge pose a danger to Authority: if their discoveries challenge received wisdom, they may become dissidents, subversives, even enemies of the state. There is no settled relationship between

those dedicated to learning and the society which is the beneficiary – or otherwise – of the knowledge that results from their studies.

Much of the debate in the democratic Western world hinges upon the degree to which institutional independence and academic freedom are compatible with the demands of growing global integration: are we ‘producing’ enough scientists, technicians and innovators to face the challenge, not merely from the rest of Europe and the developed countries, but from China, India and other emerging powers? The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake may be at odds with the need to ‘turn out’ a given number of young people equipped to confront technological change. Which has primacy? Are they compatible? If so, what kind of institutional arrangements can best create this best of all possible worlds?

Academics are, in general, no different from other social actors, representing the diversity of opinion to be found in any other group of people, although perhaps more adept at arguing their case. They should not be considered a class apart as regards values and beliefs; although in terms of erudition, they usually are.

Most intellectuals, like most of us, desire a ‘quiet life’, in order to focus on personal priorities – human relationships, bringing up children – while performing a useful social function that provides them with livelihood and security. They do not want the disruption of war, violence, crime, political upheaval or ideological interference, but wish to exist in what Albie Sachs calls ‘the beautiful mundane’.

He should know. Imprisoned and tortured by South Africa’s apartheid regime, he was later the victim of a bomb planted by the South African Intelligence Services in 1988 in Maputo, Mozambique, when he sustained multiple injuries. He is glad now that the moment of struggle is over. Such intense emotion, the dread and the hope, cannot be maintained for long. He speaks of a shift ‘from the epic to the everyday’ as a deliverance.

The epic, however, rarely leaves human societies alone. Our values and the practices of daily life are fashioned according to forms of belief and social organization in a state of perpetual flux, and sometimes, violent change. And although conflict, the fight for power and ideological dominance may remain in abeyance for decades, they reappear usually as ideology, or those conformities of religion, language or ethnicity which define others as barbarians, outsiders, evildoers – or even ‘expendables’. The world changes far less than we think, whereas our perceptions of it are constantly changing. ‘It was Hitler who taught me I was a Jew,’ said many of the assimilated of Germany in the 1930s. Refugees from the Soviet Union were defined by others as ‘bourgeois’, ‘class traitors’ or ‘undesirable elements’; while ‘the military junta defined me as an enemy of the state’ is the testimony of people escaping dictatorship from Argentina to Pakistan, from Indonesia to Chile.

Certain categories of people are more likely than others to be entangled in these momentous shifts: artists, writers, journalists, political activists and academics. All whose work involves sensitivity to change, whose understanding or knowledge disturbs authority, usually figure in any wave of imprisonment, persecution, torture or killing. Situated at the point where sudden shifts in ideology and its underpinning power-structure meet daily life, they are disproportionately represented among those fleeing oppressive regimes – victims of ‘new brooms’, dictators or the application of ideologies of revelation, both secular and transcendent.

Even when catastrophe approaches, it can strike with unpredictable force, as Luis Munoz says when describing the 1973 coup in Chile. ‘The world so far had been one with values, morals and principles that seemed to have been in place for ever, not only in the fibre of our society, but in the whole of human kind. “Things” were taught without words – tenderness, respect, fraternity, solidarity, tolerance, love were things that emanated purely from the act of living.’

At such moments, resistance becomes inevitable, for who will silently permit themselves to be cast as the spoiler of the people’s wellbeing or an agent of social destruction? When Hitler declared the Jews to be polluters of Aryan purity, Stalin stigmatized kulaks as class enemies, Pinochet called Leftists enemies of the nation, South Africa classified people according to their skin colour; when the Kinshasa mob hunts child witches and the dictators of Cameroon or the Congo Republic abuse minority ethnic or linguistic groups as a threat to stability, when Islam and terror become identified in the minds of the confused, getting on with life as if nothing was happening ceases to be possible. Events compel opposition and refusal.

‘Private life’ is in part an illusion, an undefended country always at risk of invasion. Yet how easy to leave the protection of this fragile territory to those more powerful, perhaps more wise, than we are! How tempting to retreat into a daily routine untainted by external concerns.

This book focuses on academic refugees. These, however, form only a part – highly conspicuous, very articulate and often distinguished – of a wider population forced to escape violence or persecution of one kind or another. Academics should not be artificially detached from the wider flow of injured humanity driven from home by tyrannies or intolerant regimes, and compelled to seek a life of dignified freedom elsewhere; and the presence of this broader population, its abilities and its gifts to our society, is part of the same story of involuntary migration and banishment.

Academics, involved as they are with independent inquiry and research, are among the most sensitive monitors of shifts in the ideological wind in any society. This does not mean that the same academic disciplines always run against prevailing orthodoxies. These vary according to the regime in place. All whose stories differ from the dominant narrative are susceptible to being silenced.

Theocratic states threaten secular ideologies. The Central and South American dictatorships hated social scientists for highlighting inequalities which their power sought to maintain. In 1971, on the eve of an independent Bangladesh, the Pakistani army shot hundreds of intellectuals – writers, poets, university teachers and activists – devoted to Bengali language and culture. The Soviet Union and its satellites set their face against a ubiquitous but vague enemy that spread ‘bourgeois’ ideas or values. In the contemporary world, academics may fall foul of the idiosyncratic world-view of authoritarian or military leaders, as in Burma, North Korea or the dictatorships of Paul Biye in Cameroon or Gaddafi in Libya.

This book examines the waves of refugees who have sought shelter in Britain over the past 75 years. It is concerned with the complex interplay of attitudes between the British government (and its degree of hostility towards the ideology of the sending regimes), public opinion (an amorphous, sometimes ‘manufactured’, but potent concept), and the voluntary organizations which were sympathetic and welcoming to the persecuted and displaced. In particular, this means the Academic Assistance Council (AAC) – founded in 1933 soon after the National Socialists took power in Germany – which subsequently became the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL) in 1936, and from 1998 CARA (the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics).

Threats to independence

There are, broadly, three major threats to independence of thought: people may be punished for who they are, for what they believe (and say) or what they do. These categories are highly permeable, and many persecuted academics cross the divide between them.

National Socialism was a supreme example of the first. People were evicted unceremoniously from German universities simply because they were Jewish, a definition determined by the Nazis, even when it contradicted people’s own perception of their identity. It is ironic that the modern idea of academic freedom arose with the growth of the independent research-based university in nineteenth-century Germany, a development the Nazis abjured as speedily as they did so many other attributes of a decent society.

Today’s worldwide repression against ethnic groups – and especially national minorities – shades into discrimination against individuals because of what they believe. This is – sometimes mistakenly – considered less damaging than the assault on people for what and who they irreducibly are. But it is an uneasy distinction. Many consider faith as an equally indivisible part of the self as ethnicity; and some of the most violent attacks on whole populations are based upon ‘alien’ ways of worship or belief.

The work of discovery undertaken by individuals – particularly if original, creative and critical (overtly or implicitly) of mainstream values – is the most pervasive perceived threat to established power in society, prompting, perhaps, the most common efforts by governments or majorities to stifle voices that bring disturbing news from distant intellectual frontiers. This has particular resonance in a world in which ‘knowledge-based industries’ have a higher salience than ever before.

Some ideologies will target a particular group of ‘enemies’: historians, when falsification of the past is required; economists querying official accounts of wellbeing and progress; lawyers and judges, when governments wish to demonstrate their power over all state institutions; social scientists, who know about mechanisms of dominance; physicists, who suggest the laws by which we have conventionally measured nature are more variable than we imagined. And always in the frame are writers, artists and musicians, who speak a deeper wisdom than the revelations of scripture, theological or secular.

Past, present and future

The Soviet Union valued its scientists highly, particularly those involved in the competitive military and economic race with the United States. Academics falling foul of ‘socialist’ orthodoxies were different from those evicted by Nazism. The Party’s tortuously shifting edicts, the increasingly mystical exegesis of the writings of Marx and Lenin, provoked resistance from writers and activists, since Communism, with its theoretical notions of internationalism, did not single out those stigmatized by Hitler’s racial obsessions; and their fate – ‘liquidation’ – in the labour camps of the gulag, or in exile, is well known. ‘Socialist’ science, which would dethrone its outworn capitalist predecessor, also claimed its victims. For four decades from the late 1920s, Trofim Denisovich Lysenko’s biological and agricultural theories in pursuit of an agricultural revolution were enthusiastically embraced by the Soviet authorities. Rejecting Mendel’s work, Lysenko insisted that plants could be modified to grow according to the needs of the state, with new characteristics being bred into them. In his way a theorist of future genetic modification, he was devoid of the practical ability to realize it.

The widespread application of his theories led to incalculable suffering, hunger and environmental ruin. Critics of Lysenko’s pseudo-science were silenced; academics were dismissed, removed to labour camps or shot.

The Cold War sent refugees out of Europe after the Hungarian uprising of 1956, the Prague Spring of 1968 and a recurrence of anti-Semitism in Poland in 1969–70. At the same time, military regimes and dictatorships in central and Latin America, in Asia and Africa, often with Western support as a ‘bulwark’ against Communism, displaced thousands of university teachers and students to seek sanctuary in Western Europe and North America. One particularly significant

group of expellees was from South Africa, marking a return to the politics of race. In the apartheid regime everyone was graded according to skin colour. There had been, of course, no dearth of 'scientific' justifications adduced by white supremacists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the echoes of Nazism so soon after the Holocaust were offensive and repellent. The bureaucratic contortions required by the classification process now appear archaic and absurd; yet such 'principles' were applied with sufficient energy to drive thousands of scholars out of their homeland. An Office for Race Classification 'refined' the broad categories into which people were divided – white, mixed race, Indian and Bantu (black). Officials devised pseudo-scientific tests to determine race, by examining an individual's eyelids, gums, nostrils and fingernails. The outcome determined whether people could vote or not, where they might live, work, eat, spend their leisure, and whom they could love, marry or have a sexual relationship with. 'A white person', stated the Population Registration Act, 'is one who is in appearance obviously white – and not generally accepted as Coloured – or who is generally accepted as White and is not obviously non-White, provided that a person shall not be classified as a White person if one of his natural parents has been classified as a Coloured Person or a Bantu.'

This drove tens of thousands into exile, and led to imprisonment, torture and execution of those who defied the race laws, finally repealed in 1990–91. As Nelson Mandela wrote in *A Short Walk to Freedom*, 'where one was allowed to live and work could rest on such absurd distinctions as the curl of one's hair or the size of one's lips'.¹ Yet he was not embittered by the years of incarceration on Robben Island. A characteristic of apartheid's opponents, both those who remained within the system or who found refuge abroad, was a uniquely humane legacy, suggested by Albie Sachs' memorable phrase, the 'soft vengeance' of the freedom fighter. Each wave of academic (and other) refugees to Britain left a unique residue in the country that received them. If the Jews of central Europe brought scientific innovation and intellectual passion, the Latin Americans opened us up to an exultant internationalism.

After the demise both of apartheid and the totalitarian regimes in Russia and Eastern Europe, it is relatively easy to enumerate those countries where freedom to study and to learn are compromised. The model of the university in colonial territories, for instance, was usually taken from the metropolitan power, and often devised to serve its interests. Following the wave of colonial independence in the mid-twentieth century, not only the university, but also the government apparatus – and not infrequently a considerable amount of law – was 'inherited' from the former colonial powers and subsequently employed to sustain those who took over the governing function from earlier elites.

That so many highly qualified and competent people chased from a livelihood in learning remain in need of refuge suggests that the world is not as stable as

the fall of totalitarian ideologies has led us to believe. The Western democracies are certainly the preferred destination of displaced and professional personnel, although most ousted scholars remain, like the overwhelming majority of refugees, academic and others, in countries neighbouring those from which they have fled.

In most Western countries, it seems, academic freedom is assured; and although never absolute and unconditional, threats to it appear contained and manageable, for example constraints on spending, the neglect of research for which there is no 'market', or a hostility to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, to name a few. Even the threatened boycott of places of higher learning in Israel, initiated by the enemies of the international free circulation of knowledge does not seriously erode the basic principles of academic freedom.²

The essence of the free exchange of learning and instruction is that it is mutable and fluid. Yet the moment freedom is considered 'secure', it may be in danger of being undermined, the menace sometimes coming from an unexpected source. Even in the relative security of the liberal democracies, which permits a majority to disengage politically and pursue their own individual concerns, new sources of dispute and uncertainty are clearly discernible. The epic has not deserted the world, but is merely biding its time, stirring on the margins of awareness. The war on terror, for instance, and the 'with-us-or-against-us' mentality it generated, certainly frightened many people into silence, or at least gloomy acquiescence. The power to harness that amorphous, but powerful creature, public opinion, to stifle criticism and proscribe the 'unthinkable' is always in the armoury of power, ready to be wielded against the questioner and the dissenter.

We can, perhaps, predict from where future long-term threats to academic – and wider – freedoms will come, even though we cannot foretell what forms restriction on thought, research or knowledge might take. What, for instance, will be the consequences of the end of oil, the loss of biodiversity, desertification and the depletion of water or other resources indispensable to sustain life against a background of global warming? What of the spread of nuclear weaponry, perhaps among 'non-state actors'? What is lurking in the deep shadows cast by the perpetual artificial sunshine of the technosphere? What political formations will these potential sources of future conflicts throw up, and what might they take from cherished freedoms?

When the epic irrupts once more into our lives, it will demand that we alter once more what we thought, briefly, was reality. And the most sensitive auditors of these changes, the insights of the artists and the attentiveness of the academy, are no doubt already busy forewarning the world. Upon our response to the news they bring much depends. Will they be heeded as messengers of truth, or will they be silenced as emissaries of what we do not wish to hear?

The outspoken and the silent

Academics persecuted by tyrannical regimes for their independence of thought are, rightly, valued for their courage. But there is no dictatorship, no repressive regime, no ideology of intolerance which fails to call forth hundreds of competent and intelligent supporters, ready to avow that this or that ruling elite embodies the only possible ordering of human affairs. Scepticism, an important attribute of scholars, does not exempt them from the suspension of disbelief which affects a majority of people in the world. German universities continued to function under the Nazis. Some scholars who remained truly believed they could – and indeed, did – mitigate some of the cruelties of the regime. Soviet scientists took seriously the rivalry with the United States, created nuclear weapons and rocketry, and pushed the frontiers of space exploration. Graduates continued to be produced under the military dictatorships of the 1960s and 70s; and although students have always been monitored by authoritarian regimes as a potential source of unrest, most obtained their degrees and were absorbed into structures of injustice of totalitarian regimes of one kind or another. There is no aberrant ideology, no monstrous system of belief that cannot find clever adherents and apologists. Laurence Rees reminds us that the Wannsee Conference of January 1942 which elaborated the ‘final solution’ was attended by fifteen people, eight of whom held academic doctorates.³

Perhaps penitence is more common among the more thoughtful and reflective of the population, and scholars regret in later life their commitment to this or that malignant ideology – gods that failed, faith disconfirmed by events. But we should not think that those who say nothing are impartial, nor that silence implies acquiescence.

In his 1983 book, *The Death of Utopia Reconsidered*, Leszek Kolakowski, a philosopher removed from his post in the University of Warsaw, offers a good definition of academic freedom when he writes of the cultural role of the philosopher which ‘is not to deliver the truth but to build the spirit of truth, and this means never to let the inquisitive energy of mind go to sleep, never to stop questioning what appears to be obvious and definitive, always to defy the seemingly intact resources of common sense, always to suspect that there might be “another side” to what is taken for granted, and never to allow us to forget that there are questions beyond the legitimate horizons of science that are nonetheless crucial to the survival of humanity as we know it.’⁴

2 Then

‘My first thought when I arrived in Britain was “Now I’m safe.” I could sleep through the night, I could walk through the streets without anyone following me with intent to do me harm. I could make phone calls. Of course I was disoriented. Nothing was familiar. It was December, cold and dark. But I had had a burden lifted. I was grateful. I still am, and it’s been more than thirty years.’

Woman refugee from Chile

Leo Szilard

Among those who found refuge in Britain in the early 1930s, the figure of Leo Szilard is emblematic of the restless brilliance of a generation of intellectuals banished from central Europe by the graveyard ideology of Nazism.¹

Born in Hungary in 1898, after the First World War he fled the fascist Horthy regime to study engineering in Berlin – a fateful destination for a refugee from Fascism. Soon he was caught up at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics in a group that included Erwin Schrödinger, who developed wave mechanics, Max Born, who published his paper on probability and causality, and Werner Heisenberg, originator of the uncertainty principle. His PhD was on thermodynamics, a problem he had resolved on his own. This would be a characteristic of Szilard – he did not belong. Dynamic and inventive, this classic outsider was always ahead of his contemporaries, enthusiastically embracing and then abandoning an idea when overtaken by another. Einstein was impressed by Szilard, with whom he eventually filed a patent for a refrigerator pump they jointly designed, inspired by hearing of a whole family asphyxiated by gas from a domestic refrigerator.

In 1931, Szilard foresaw Hitler’s rise to power and two years later left for Vienna, where, according to one account, he met William Beveridge because they were staying at the same hotel. The latter convinced Szilard that his projected ‘university in exile’ was less practical than the placement of exiled academics in existing universities. In his work with the Academic Assistance Council in

1933–34, Szilard characteristically operated outside Beveridge's organization, often finding places for ousted German scholars on his own initiative. He appeared and disappeared in European capitals, a kind of Scarlet Pimpernel of the intellectual aristocracy.

Szilard moved to the United States in 1938, living mainly in hotels – the archetypal refugee with the constantly packed suitcase. Towards the end of his life, at the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 and the stand-off between the USA and the USSR, he shocked friends by leaving the USA for Switzerland, convinced that the world was about to witness the nuclear apocalypse he had both helped to render possible, and fought so hard subsequently to prevent.

Szilard was a major player in displaced European Jewry in the 1930s. His mind worked at amazing speed; he foresaw answers to questions that took others years of thought. It was he who first conceived the 'chain reaction' that could release the enormous destructive force of the atomic bomb, an idea that came to him in London while watching the traffic lights in Southampton Row turn from red to green.

Szilard was instrumental in conveying Einstein's letter to President Roosevelt in 1939, urging the US government to expedite research on the atomic bomb, to prevent Germany – whose scientists he feared were already far advanced in the research – perhaps getting there first. In a less publicized second letter in 1945, he urged President Truman to demonstrate to the Japanese the annihilating power of the A-bomb rather than drop it on innocent civilians and sought in vain to prevent its use.

Rebuffed by politicians, he helped in June 1945 to draw up the Franck Report which repeated the arguments of his second Truman letter. This was ignored, so Szilard organized a petition to Truman with 155 signatories of Manhattan Project scientists, urging the President to consider his moral responsibilities. It was rejected.

Afterwards, Szilard tried to undo the damage he believed he had helped bring about, by campaigning tirelessly for disarmament. Szilard had, with Enrico Fermi, built the first nuclear reactor; he also conceived the 'fast breeder' reactor, which created more fuel than it used. He became bitterly remorseful about this, and when the experiment with Fermi succeeded, announced that it was 'a black day for humanity'.

After the A-bomb was dropped, Szilard and other scientists lobbied Congress for civilian control of the atom, advocating talks between US and Soviet scientists to prevent an arms race. In 1946, he, Einstein and others formed an Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists, to warn of the dangers of atomic weapons and in 1962 he established the Council for a Liveable World to raise money for Senate candidates in favour of arms-control treaties. Szilard never lost faith in what he called the 'slim margin of hope' for humanity.

Characteristically Szilard cured himself of bladder cancer in 1961. He later turned to biology, and Monod, Jacob and Lwow, whose work on DNA won them a Nobel prize in 1965, publicly expressed their debt to Szilard in their speech. His biographer William Lanouette believes his most lasting influence may lie in his doctoral thesis, which provided the basis for information theory.

Szilard never deserted his liberal, humanitarian views, while some of his compatriots – notably Edward Teller – went on to work on the H-bomb, and advise President Reagan on his ‘Star Wars’ initiative. Szilard and his fellow-scientists directly bequeathed to the world the phrases ‘critical mass’, ‘chain reaction’, and ‘fallout’, their origin in weaponry of destruction which Szilard first encouraged and then sought to control.

‘Racial pollution’ and the search for saviours

The world watched disbelieving as Hitler persuaded a significant proportion of the German people that the Jews were not only at the root of economic collapse, but also a source of ‘racial pollution’. With a Jewish population of a mere 1 per cent, 25 per cent of Germany’s Nobel prizes between 1900 and 1932 had gone to those of Jewish descent. This only fed the paranoia of Hitler, in thrall to the seductive idea that reason was a dangerous diversion from the supremacy of instinct.

Many in Europe and the wider world were swift to perceive the damage to Germany caused by the dismissal of Jewish academics soon after Hitler’s takeover of power in January 1933, namely that this would irreparably harm the foundations of Germany’s industrial and commercial power. A policy that exalted irrationality over reason was bound to reduce scientific criticism to impotence: into the void the Nazis poured the corrosive vitriol of manifest untruth. Their proposition that ‘Jewish science’ was subversive and inaccurate showed that no aspect of life was immune from ideological penetration. The physicist Professor Philipp Lenard of Heidelberg University scorned claims that ‘German Physics’ was international. ‘In reality, science, like every other human product, is racial and conditioned by blood.’ Professor Rudolph Tomaschek, Director of the Institute of Physics in Dresden, said: ‘Modern physics is an instrument of Jewry for the destruction of Nordic science ... In fact, all European science is the fruit of Aryan, or better, German thought.’ Jewish intellectuals in Germany were more rooted in society than Jews anywhere else in Europe, regarding the humanistic values of the country of Beethoven and Goethe as an earnest that Germany was indeed the supreme site of civilized values. Many had forsworn, been converted from, or allowed their Jewish heritage to lapse. Amos Oz, writing much later from Israel, captures the sensibility of his family, whose psyche had been shaped by Europe. ‘So there they were, these over-enthusiastic Europhiles, who could speak so many of Europe’s languages, recite its poetry, who believed in its moral superiority ... who had loved it unconditionally and uninhibitedly for decades, since the

beginning of the Jewish Enlightenment, and had done everything humanly possible to please it, to contribute to it in every way and in every domain, to become part of it ...¹²

This Jewish sense of security and belonging was decisive in the vibrant environment of scientific innovation and research, a flowering unparalleled elsewhere. The list of those removed from their posts comprises a reservoir of talent and ability which in situ would certainly have altered the course, and possibly the outcome, of the Second World War.

The presence in Germany of this concentration of ability was, in part, a result of the liberation in the second half of the nineteenth century from disabilities imposed by the state and from the straitjacket of religion. This released the energies of Jews who swiftly became part of the intellectual middle class. Jewish scholars were liberated from the rabbinical tradition of minute exegesis of Jewish texts, although the disciplines could be applied to new and secular areas of academic and scholarly concern.

The assimilated Jews engendered both admiration and resentment in Germany. That the latter prevailed in the 1930s was certainly a consequence of the humiliation felt by Germans at the terms of the post-First World War settlement, and of the economic catastrophe after the 1929 Wall Street Crash. This affected Germany with particular violence. In addition, as J.D. Bernal notes in a faintly superior tone, 'There had always been a strong undercurrent of mystical irrationality in German thought ... From the German mystics to the philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the tendency to confuse the obscure with the profound had never disappeared ... This mode of thinking, or rather refusing to think, was seized on by the Nazis and turned in the direction of glorifying the twin ideas of race and war.'¹³ Bernal was not wrong, but wrote animated by a belief in 'scientific socialism', that other twentieth-century dogma of salvation, which would also strew the world with corpses.

Many refugees offered sanctuary in Britain had long ceased to be religiously observant. It was a common observation that their Jewish identity was bestowed as a kind of malign gift by Hitler. Gustav Born was typical. 'I had been christened. We saw ourselves as Lutherans.' Nikolaus Pevsner converted at the age of 19 to Evangelical Lutheranism. Ernst Gombrich's parents were also Lutheran converts. 'They were deists,' according to Richard Gombrich. 'My father's mother believed in God in a vague sort of way. Neither of my parents was brought up to be Jewish. My father said that whether or not he was Jewish was a preoccupation for the Gestapo, suggesting that it was not his concern.' Sir Hans Krebs said: 'I was not a Jew until Hitler made me one.' Otto Frisch said that his father 'had a strong feeling for right and wrong. He was not religious in the conventional sense, but with his profound respect for life he might have been called a Buddhist and indeed took a great interest in Buddhist writings.'¹⁴ The last practising Jew in Engelbert

Broda's family was his grandmother, who left the community in 1879, when she married someone who had already converted to Catholicism.

At the same time, an afterglow of faith remained, although projected onto secular activities. People said, 'music was my religion'; 'the university was our church'; 'Goethe was god in our house'; 'learning was sacred'; 'science was our guide'. Scars, as it were, of religious belief.

The causes of the rise of Nazism have been exhaustively analysed and argued over, including the political and economic failures following the First World War, the punitive visitations of the Allies upon Germany and the Great Depression. Bernard Wasserstein writing of the 'endemic grip of anti-Semitism on the popular mentality', says it may be understood as 'a relic of the ancient hatred of the different; as a mutation of Christian beliefs in a post-Christian society; as part of the debris of romantic nationalism; as a product of the social and intellectual upheaval resulting from rapid and uneven industrialization; as a collective psychopathy in which the Jew is identified with the devil; or as a modern version of the witch craze.'⁵ But even this cannot explain a phenomenon which haunts the world like few others, emanating as it did from the heart of what has been thought of as civilization itself.

The victorious First World War powers – like all who triumph – had little insight into the likely consequences of their actions. Perhaps they treated Germany in the way they had dealt with the peoples they had subdued in the previous several hundred years. Imperial powers rarely show any great concern for the social and moral arrangements they disrupt in their progress through the world; for example, the conquistadores in the Americas or the East India Company's merchant-warriors took for granted the inferiority of the inhabitants in the trackless worlds they had 'discovered'. Their incursions ought, perhaps, to have alerted them that cultures do not submit meekly to alien values, even when presented as liberators, or bringers of truth or freedom.

In extreme circumstances – like those in Germany after the First World War – peoples *in extremis* turn to myth and magic. The history of vanquished cultures shows a desperate reliance on supernatural rescuers and the appearance of messiahs is often accompanied by upheavals and cataclysms. But if it was believed that Europeans were proof against appeals to such 'primitive' unreason, Nazism would tell another, chastening story, not of imaginary wish-fulfilment, but grimly material, industrial and military efficiency.

The British response

Britain's response to the plight of Jews of central Europe from 1933 onwards was complex, and must be detached from myths that have subsequently crystallized around the events of the time.

There are at least four groups of refugees from central Europe in the 1930s that had a lasting impact upon Britain and indeed, the wider world. First, the significant academic figures to whom the British government extended a welcome. Others, less celebrated, were aided by voluntary organizations, both religious and secular, Jewish and Christian; they entered Britain through the pressure of individuals, often despite government obstruction, sometimes through the pulling of strings and private influence.

Secondly, those who came for reasons of their possible economic usefulness to this country. The Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, opposing a more open policy towards Jews, said in a Cabinet minute of 1938, that we were 'going as far at present as public opinion would allow ...' He thought, however that we might agree to admit a number of young Jews for the purpose of agricultural training, with a view to their ultimate settlement elsewhere. He was also in favour of admitting a number of Jewish maidservants. These were areas of employment to which the people of Britain were showing increasing aversion in the 1930s, despite high unemployment.

Thirdly, the children who came – in one of the spectacular acts of generosity by the British government – on the Kindertransport of 1938.⁶ Many of these proved invaluable to the wellbeing of Britain in subsequent decades, intellectually, artistically, politically and morally.

Finally, there is another group, more difficult to quantify: those who came or remained illegally. These, too, deserve to be rescued from the shadows, since many of their children and descendants, absorbed silently and without fanfare into Britain, have also served the country well.

British reaction to the 70,000⁷ or so Jews who were granted refuge in the country between 1933 and the outbreak of war, was equivocal and disturbs all settled convictions about what 'we' did in the great human emergency with which National Socialism confronted the world in 1933. A distinction must be made between official government attitudes and those administering restrictive refugee policies with discretion and sensitivity. Similarly, there was also a gulf between the attitude of voluntary organizations dedicated to the rescue and placement of refugees, and that of a wider public.

While government remained hostile to what was referred to, even then, as an 'influx', or 'wave' of Jewish immigrants, bureaucratic flexibility combined with the kindness of influential individuals permitted the evasion of the tightest regulations. The feeling of the British people was also not clear-cut. While a minority, understanding the nature of the threat to European Jewry, worked for a more generous admissions policy, a negative 'public opinion', frequently invoked by politicians, certainly existed. Xenophobia, hostility to strangers and a minority of organized Fascists unsettled the authorities.

Most academic refugees, who found a place in British universities, met with a warm welcome and some understanding of what they and their families had

suffered. Others found themselves in a chill and unfamiliar environment, to which it was difficult to adapt, the more so since many had been granted temporary residence, en route to a more permanent destination, usually the USA. Those arriving as domestic servants or as children fared more unpredictably – some found friendship, protection and love, while others met duty, incomprehension and a cool impatience of people with little imaginative understanding of the trauma they had been through.

The work of the Academic Assistance Council was not conducted in an atmosphere of tolerance, since the fate of the distinguished individuals who readily avow their debt to Britain, can only be fully appreciated in the context of British immigration policy of the times. This was itself inflected by the experience of Jewish immigration at the turn of the century, although the earlier newcomers were a markedly different social group from those seeking refuge in the 1930s. The victims of Tsarist pogroms had been generally poorer, people of the shtetl, far from the urbane (and more urban) population of Europe's most sophisticated cities. And although British Jewish organizations pledged that no Jewish refugee would become a charge upon the state, there was an element of misgiving among British Jews that German and Austrian refugees were of a higher social class, and consequently that their rather superior presence and high expectations of life might engender an anti-Semitic backlash. Harmonious absorption required a limit on numbers.

This same argument was, of course, used by the British government to justify its restrictive immigration policies, and has been reiterated ever since. In our time, in the interest of good race relations, as few Caribbeans, South Asians or foreigners as possible should be allowed to settle here. Such restrictive general policies also have serious implications for today's academic refugees and asylum-seekers.

There is also widespread anxiety, cast in terms of what Britishness or Englishness is, since there remains considerable nostalgia when a 'nation' meant an ethnically and culturally homogeneous population. This, however, ignores the considerable, often violent fault-lines in the past that divided class from social class, separations scarcely less acerbic than ethnic and religious divisions conspicuous in our time.

Contemporary anxieties also echo those of the 1930s, when government was concerned to stem the 'flow' of would-be refugees. This had historical roots, repeating the response to Jews who had fled the pogroms of Tsarist Russia. Then, the British government had passed the Aliens Act in 1905 – a highly symbolic precedent and the first legislation designed to prevent a 'flood' of migrants into a Britain then emphatically not a country of immigration.

The Aliens Act was introduced by an embattled Conservative administration, destined to fall the following year in the great Liberal landslide which laid the foundations for the welfare state. The government had responded to popular

panic which anticipated both the anxiety of the 1930s and more scares over 'asylum seekers' in our time.

Until 1905, a foreigner might spend a lifetime in Britain without official permission and without having to register with the authorities. In this lies one source of the British 'myth' of our tolerance and hospitality; 'myth', not in the sense of untruth, but of an informing belief about ourselves and who we are. Certainly Britain had been open to political refugees throughout the nineteenth century; people fleeing Tsarist oppression, nationalist or anti-Socialist sentiment in Europe had found sanctuary here; and the lengthy presence of Karl Marx in the British Museum Reading Room is a dramatic emblem of the relative serenity and stability of Britain during its high imperial moment, undisturbed by ragged continental intellectuals living on the margins of a city open to the world.

The arguments provoked by the arrival of at most 100,000 Jews from Eastern Europe in the 1880s-90s have a contemporary ring. Foreigners, supported by the Poor Law at public expense were dubbed 'invaders' who brought 'crime and disease'. A Royal Commission on Aliens, reporting in 1903, found that a mere 1 per cent of the population received Poor Law assistance. They 'send their children regularly to school, and are rewarded by the quickness with which the children acquire knowledge and the number of prizes gained by them'. Notwithstanding this, the Commission advised immigration controls, the government interpretation of popular sentiment prevailing over a painstaking investigation of the facts.

The 1905 Act gave officers the power to turn away 'undesirable' immigrants, and those without visible means of support. It applied only to 'steerage' passengers, and exempted those fleeing political or religious persecution. There was also a right to appeal. It remained fairly liberal and humane.

The inter-war years and government dilemmas

By comparison with what was to come, this legislation was benign. During the First World War, the internment of 'enemy aliens' was both symptom and consequence of popular anger, although not all those of German origin were interned. Mobs attacked businesses and homes belonging to German nationals; newspaper accounts of suicides by foreigners and injuries to aliens were widespread. The sinking of the liner *Lusitania* by a German U-boat in 1915 raised Germanophobia to a new intensity.

The Aliens Restriction Act of August 1914 removed the right of appeal and passports were introduced in 1915. The Act, extended at the end of the war, was consolidated in the Aliens Order 1920. Further limitations followed. Anti-German popular feeling continued well into the 1920s, partly due to disillusionment with the peace and the elusive 'land fit for heroes' promised to the survivors; while the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was also associated with the

work of specifically German Jews. In the 1920s, the dramatic publication of the fraudulent *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* furthered belief in an international Jewish conspiracy. The presence of 'aliens' in the country exercised both people and parliament in the 1920s, particularly in the light of continuing economic turbulence. Thus Stanley Baldwin in October 1924: 'I want to examine the laws and regulations as to the entry of aliens into this country, for in these days no alien should be substituted for one of our own people when we have not enough work at home to go round.'

In 1925, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, the Home Secretary, expressed the view that would prevail for the following 15 years, when he said 'The dominating factor ... is the well-being of my country, and not the well-being of aliens who desire to come into it from other quarters.' In the same year, William Greene, MP for Worcester, said in a debate on aliens that it was essential 'to preserve the purity of our race and to prevent contamination with the riff-raff of Eastern Europe, the stiff (sic) of the Mediterranean and the dead-beats of the world'. No new legislation was enacted against refugees in the 1930s, but existing laws were interpreted more restrictively.

Yet the desire to relieve suffering of the persecuted also expressed itself in an outpouring of sympathy from voluntary organizations, Gentile and Jewish, religious and secular. The coexistence of parochialism with humanitarianism suggests a continuous battle, in which the latter, although often eclipsed was never defeated. Britain provided a haven to many uprooted people in spite of itself rather than as a consequence of determined policy. It was in this atmosphere of low-level but pervasive anti-Semitism that the events of January 1933 occurred together with the demands refugees were to make upon the compassion of the people. This is also the context in which the achievements of the AAC/SPSL should be understood.

Perhaps it was Britain's insularity that prevented part of the majority from comprehending the experience of abused and persecuted others. Maybe people here just felt too safe. Many refugees who did settle were astonished at British complacency, the 'it-couldn't-happen-here' mentality, which desensitized many ordinary citizens to the events on 'the continent', that remotely incomprehensible elsewhere.

On the other hand, as well as the liberal intelligentsia, religious groups – Quakers in particular – Socialists and Communists quickly understood the peril in which German Jews stood; and alongside a stony indifference arose a wave of fellow-feeling, manifested in spontaneous organizations formed to help those seeking shelter here. The history of Britain is again a tale of two countries. This was not new, as Disraeli's *Sybil, or the Two Nations*, written in 1845, shows; and it remains the case today.

British attitudes are neither this nor that. We are not cruelly deaf to the cry of strangers, nor do we enthusiastically welcome the afflicted. We are not uniquely

tolerant, nor are we coldly disdainful of foreigners. We can be insular in our prejudices while displaying great individual kindness; indeed these qualities readily exist together within the same individual. The relationship is complex: a generous action after a tepid welcome, a superficial hostility and live-and-let-live acceptance.

In a 1936 lecture the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, expressed 'gratitude for all the services that the Jewish intellect has rendered to humanity'. He saw no reason why, in admitting refugees, 'the world of thought should differ from the world of industry', but stressed that very careful selection 'was necessary in order to harvest the capital in the form of skills, knowledge and foreign technical processes' that emigrants could supply. The government was in a bind: it could not repudiate the British reputation for tolerance and liberal hospitality to political refugees; conversely it would not permit the indiscriminate passage into Britain of all who sought protection here.

Indeed, these precedents also had fateful consequences for European Jews. The British preference was for 'political' refugees, since it was hospitality offered to victims of political persecution that underpinned the British belief in our generous openness to ideas. Discrimination on grounds of people's espousal of a cause seemed to present more urgent grounds for offering asylum than what were, even in the 1930s, described as 'racial or economic migrants' – a significant conflation, intended to downgrade their claims on public sympathy. In our time, the distinctions have been further elaborated; and efforts made to invalidate the claims of refugees by referring to them as '*bogus* asylum-seekers'.

These ambiguities are still far from being settled; and echoes of 1930s arguments are being re-articulated with even sharper insistence. The desire of Joynson-Hicks to 'put the country first' has been heard again in debates on government immigration policies from the 1960s to the present day: labour shortages relaxed controls; hostility and demonstrations, riots and racism retightened them. Restricting the numbers of incomers in the interests of communal harmony is the characteristic compromise in these later debates: whether the economy is enriched or the social fabric stretched by migrant admissions remains a constant source of dispute.

Growing pressures: foreign arrivals, British reactions

Louise London places the ambiguities of the 1930s in context.⁸ Following the break-up of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires after the First World War, the consolidation of European nation-states brought about significant movements of population. The nation-state thereby became more homogeneous in population, language and culture, a culmination of the nineteenth-century European independence movements; diverse, multi-ethnic populations were seen

as remnants of dissolving empires. This contributed to the growing intolerance of minorities within national boundaries, an attitude shared by a Britain so convinced that it was not a 'country of immigration', that it became obsessed with the temporary nature of the stay of refugees it admitted, seeking anxious assurances that their onward migration would follow – to the United States, South America, or the 'dominions'. A plan to settle European refugees in British Guiana lapsed, largely because the cost of preparing the north coast of South America for this was too daunting.

There are other reasons for the British government's determination not to mount any significant rescue attempt of Jews from Nazi control. The recurring fear of 'floods' or 'waves' likened migration to unstoppable forces of nature, which it would be folly to resist. Recourse to this imagery has not ceased in more recent times: Mrs Thatcher referred, in the curious semaphore of the half-uttered of which British politicians are such accomplished practitioners, to the popular fear of being 'swamped' by strangers. Governments also suggested that Nazi spies might infiltrate refugee populations, with disastrous consequences for sabotage, the establishment of a 'fifth column', or later, the betrayal of secrets that might damage the war effort – an anxiety not entirely without foundation, as the experience of Klaus Fuchs shows.

It is easy with hindsight to see how short-sighted many of these misgivings were. Clearly, the removal of the physicists, chemists and mathematicians, and the other Jewish and Gentile opponents of Nazism in the universities, deprived Germany of crucial brainpower of which the Allies were beneficiaries. Research that led to the creation of the atomic bomb was carried out by Germany's rejected academics. This has often been described as Hitler's gift to his enemies; and their presence on British, and later, American soil, certainly robbed Germany of the pre-eminence it had enjoyed in scientific discovery in the pre-Nazi era.

There were three moments when pressure intensified on foreign governments to receive German academics: first, in the immediate aftermath of the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, after the 'Nuremberg laws' in 1935, and following the annexation of Austria in March 1938 and Kristallnacht in November of the same year.⁹ Britain accepted a proportionately greater number of displaced scientists than the USA, particularly early on, when American universities were still suffering under the impact of the Depression. Links between the Academic Assistance Council and government (two MPs were particularly active – A.V. Hill, member for the University of Cambridge 1940–45, and Eleanor Rathbone) ensured that the issue stayed before the public. Indeed, in the more restricted world of government, press, the civil service and industrial and academic life, an idea of *noblesse oblige* had not yet quite faded; much could be achieved by a word in the appropriate ear. What is now scorned as elitism was certainly important in the recognition of what the displaced scientists were doing, its potential advantage to Britain being well understood. Lord Rutherford, first President of

the AAC, stated the organization's fundamental outlook when he spoke of 'the conviction that the Universities form a kingdom of their own whose intellectual autonomy must be preserved'.

The government was sympathetic to dismissed academics; although it had little time for less prominent victims of persecution. Immigration rules were restrictive: a mere 10,000 refugees from Germany were admitted between 1933 and 1938, and only after the events of 1938 were rules relaxed. In that year, more than 40,000 were admitted, and 10,000 children came with the Kindertransport. The fiction was maintained throughout that most refugees were in Britain temporarily and would move on as soon as possible – as indeed, many did. But by September 1939, it was clear that the majority would remain in Britain, at least for the war's duration. The Academic Assistance Council itself encouraged onward migration and provided grants for travel to the United States, where the academics might find employment in universities. Many took advantage of this scheme, and were rewarded with academic posts.

Throughout the 1930s and the first 18 months of the war, the Nazis' primary objective was to get rid of the Jews through emigration. The 'final solution' was not immediately articulated; and, although not permitted to take property or wealth with them, Jews were free to leave until 1941. But there was simply nowhere for them to go, particularly with Britain's low limits for admissions to Palestine, then under the British mandate. 'Migration' did not have the connotations which later 'deportations to the East' were to assume. Courtney Stern, a young researcher from the United States working voluntarily at CARA in 2007–08, tells how her grandfather, who had migrated to the USA and was studying at Penn State University, had been able to get his parents into the USA, even though his father was in Buchenwald. Bruno, her great-grandfather was detained in 1938. His wife sent a telegram to their children in the US to tell them that their father was 'away from home' – code for imprisoned. His son got the president of Penn State University to draft a letter, stating that Bruno would be welcome at the university. The letter was taken to Germany in a diplomatic pouch. Bruno was released, and he and his wife Frieda, were allowed to go, first to Britain, and then to the USA. 'He was broken by it. He had a tattoo from the camp. He had been decorated in the First War, and didn't leave because he considered himself a German first, a Jew second. He knew no English. She had been to finishing school, and knew how to cook. She started a bakery, and Bruno delivered the items. She died of breast cancer and Bruno died 3 months later in 1957, deaths most likely hastened by the Nazi trauma.'

Otto Frisch's father was seized by the SS and sent to a concentration camp in November 1938. 'The next two months are a confused nightmare in my memory ... My father's boss, Dr Bermann, had managed to escape to Sweden before Kristallnacht and restart his business; he offered his father his old job

back if he could come. On the strength of that offer a high Swedish official, Justizierad Alexandersson, promised that my father would get a labour permit, should he reach Sweden.' Non-political prisoners in concentration camps were often released if they had somewhere to emigrate to; after the war, Otto Frisch's parents joined him in Cambridge.

Such stories were exceptional. For most, the way out was barred. This is no surprise. It is not easy to recapture the sense of siege which affected the British psyche early in the war, particularly with the westward sweep of the Nazis. All the wartime iconography – standing alone, this small island, Britain can take it, pluck in the Blitz and potential invasion – grew from the deepest anxieties about survival. The fear of being overwhelmed by Germany was intensified by older invasion scares – the Napoleonic Wars, even the Spanish Armada. Understandably the government saw in Hitler's defeat the best hope for European Jewry; and who knows how far a subconscious fear of refugees – particularly from enemy territory – combined with all the accumulated determination to resist foreign invasion of any kind, and hardened the resolve to bar entry into the beleaguered citadel?

Another factor, more deeply buried and vehemently denied, is the relationship between anti-Semitism – always present in Britain, although never, of course, approaching the levels of malignancy seen in Germany – and racism, the dominant ideology of the ruling classes in imperial governance. The anti-Semitism of many MPs and even members of the government in Britain is well known. Chamberlain himself said: 'No doubt Jews aren't a lovable people; I don't care about them myself; but that is not sufficient to explain the pogrom.'¹⁰

The official British view of its colonial possessions remained firmly supremacist – all the values so spectacularly forsworn subsequently were still at their florid imperial noon. Yet when a version of that grisly ideology burst forth in the heart of Europe, (significantly, in a country without the extensive imperial hinterland of Britain or France), Britain's leaders were appalled. Did they recognize a distant kinship between it and their own practice elsewhere? Were they unable to assess accurately the temper of the people they governed here, and did they fear these might also be tempted, if not by the powerful exaltations which had seized the imagination of many in Germany, then by other destructive ideologies of liberation articulated by the leaders (if not the population) of Russia?

Coexisting with these dark fears and possibilities, however, there has always been a zealous, reforming, even radical, Britain – the conscience of a significant liberal minority whose influence exceeded their numbers, since they espoused the cause of oppressed majorities, both among the poor and excluded of early industrialism, and the oppressed and humiliated of colonial possessions. A heartening aspect of British life is that no oppression, atrocity or injustice happens in the world which does not call forth some group, however small, dedicated to righting the wrong. This has remained undiminished with time;

for what is often ridiculed at first later becomes a matter of common decency. The issues range from the slave trade and the excesses of the first industrial era – hours of labour, the employment of children, living conditions in city slums and so on – down to the iniquities of imperialism, racism, apartheid, dictatorship and human rights abuses, mass hunger and human trafficking. Such campaigns have often been initially reviled: our competitors and rivals will steal a march upon us should we yield. Yet over time, the views of radicals and dissenters have become tomorrow's humanitarian axioms. The coexistence of apparently incompatible values is one of Britain's least noticed virtues, lying nearer the heart of a reputation for tolerance than more strident myths about our unique sympathy for the underdog and innate sense of fairness. These worlds rarely intersect, but when they do, they are in dialogue, occasionally acrimonious, but rarely erupting in violence.

Refugees, now as then, is such an issue. Pleading the sanctity of national borders and invoking 'this crowded island' appears to make the admission of the persecuted an impossible prospect ('much as we might like to ...'). Yet the disruptions of a globalism of which Britain and all the rich countries are both the principal initiators and the main beneficiaries impose other imperatives: who supports tyrannies or aids regimes that abuse their people, and what suspensions of morality does this involve? The answers may one day appear as self-evident as doing away with slavery or the folly of believing one ethnic group of human beings superior to another; yet such was the conventional wisdom of only the day before yesterday.

There is a link between the tumultuous, conflicting forces at work in the 1930s and 40s and those of the present day. It is not surprising that racism, even when officially repudiated by Authority, has shown a tenacious afterlife in the popular psyche. The population's more conservative elements – notably the poorest – are slower to adapt to a changing world than their rulers. Publicly we are opposed to racism, although its subterranean yet pervasive odour of nostalgia still permeates official attitudes to strangers and foreigners, despite overt abhorrence of such sentiments distasteful to contemporary sensibilities. Anti-Semitism – although it made a brief and ugly re-appearance in Britain just after the war (as a result of attacks on British forces in Palestine) – has faded in recent decades. The focus of prejudice shifted, first to blacks, and then Muslims. However anti-Semitism was merely sleeping; it stirs from time to time, most recently in a Left unholy/holy alliance with radical Muslims, Israel's policies towards Palestinians having become the screen on which anti-Semitism can project its re-awakened nightmares.

The spectre of public opinion

A word of explanation about 'public opinion'. This amorphous concept was – and is – widely used by the Authorities as a useful alibi for doing nothing, when

something clearly should be done. 'Our hands are tied' is a bondage politicians relish when invoking those vigilant majorities always ready to hold them to account for irresponsible humanitarianism.

The animosity expressed to those requesting assistance here is common; people often articulate an ideology of uncompromising exclusion. Yet when encountering genuine need, they show a remarkable capacity for fellow-feeling, sympathy and goodwill. Prejudice and intolerance flourish behind the invisible walls of separation. Remedies for this may be simpler than apologists for the status quo sometimes maintain, although they certainly are not 'dispersal policies' which send refugees to crumbling tower-blocks or short-life housing in decaying urban areas.

Three years into the Second World War, Louise London says that 'decrypts' of enemy wireless telegraph messages made the British government and senior officials 'aware that the German regime was carrying out a programme of wholesale killing of European Jews. About half the estimated total of 5.1 million murders of Jews by the Nazis were committed in the year 1942.'¹¹ The 'public opinion' which government had used to show its powerlessness, mobilized on behalf of spontaneous pity and compassion through meetings, demonstrations, organization and an avalanche of letters to government ministers. Early in 1943, a group of MPs, writers and intellectuals pressed the government to offer at least temporary refuge to those Jews who still might be able to escape. They commissioned a survey, which showed that 78 per cent of people supported admission of Jews from occupied Europe. But the British government continued to insist that only those who could make some demonstrable contribution to 'the war effort' would be admitted. Action on humanitarian grounds was ruled out. 'Public opinion' which today also paralyses governments and inhibits acts of commiseration and sympathy, is clearly not an immovable monolith. Through direct contact, hostility is eroded; that a challenge to the shrill assertions of the popular press is absent is an aspect of failed leadership, not of the cruelty of the British people.

Anne Lonsdale spent much of her early childhood in the care of refugees, Karl and Lena Weissenberg, whose warmth and tenderness were a substitute for parents busy with war work. The Weissenbergs arrived at her parents' house in Southampton – often the arrival point of refugees, before war began. She spent time with them later in their flat in Manchester with their two old Yiddish-speaking aunts. She says: 'My childhood would have been miserable without the Weissenbergs. They brought a humanizing quality. However eminent they were, refugees were also people loved as teachers and scholars.' The successful insertion of a majority of academic refugees into British life shows how a common purpose, a shared social and intellectual function, can easily overcome perceived differences.

This prefigures debates heard in Britain today. Nothing said now has not been spoken before, as loudly and eloquently enunciated as any vituperative

declaration made by the *Daily Mail* or *The Sun* in the present time. The fate of refugees in the 1930s reminds us of both continuity and change in British social and moral attitudes over three-quarters of a century.

A very British rescue mission

The distinction could not be clearer between official reaction and the swift, spontaneous response of the academic community to Hitler's baleful view of the world. When Sir William Beveridge decided to do something about those removed from the universities of Nazi Germany in 1933, he could utilize a network of highly-placed luminaries prepared to devote themselves to the rescue of dispossessed intellectuals.¹² Beveridge tells how in a Viennese cafe in March 1933, only a few weeks after the Nazis had taken power, he read a newspaper report that German-Jewish professors had been ousted from universities all over Germany. In his version, told in *A Defence of Free Learning*, he makes no mention of Leo Szilard who played such a major part.¹³ Later, in a sermon at Carrs Lane Church in Birmingham in 1935, Beveridge expressed the puzzlement of liberal progressives, when he said: 'There are things today all over Germany as lovely as music, youth and human affection can ever be, but there are also things so ugly and savage that we thought mankind had put away 300 years ago. We can only ask "What has gone wrong with this great and gifted people?"' Not content with rhetoric however, characteristically he urged his listeners not simply to ask questions, but to deeds against 'the challenge to the two great civilizing principles of science and religion'.

Beveridge and his colleague Lionel Robbins decided to create a scheme to aid the dismissed teachers immediately.¹⁴ Within weeks the Academic Assistance Council (AAC) came into existence under the Presidency of Lord Rutherford, the Cambridge physicist. It would support refugee academics chased from their jobs and homeland by interference in their work, the withdrawal of their means of livelihood, and threats of violence and death.

This may now be seen as a matter of common sense, but in the turbulent early thirties, a significant proportion of informed opinion in both Britain and Europe believed either that the Nazi regime would be short-lived, or that it was a bulwark against Communism. Together with a background murmur of anti-Semitism, economic disruption and high unemployment in Britain, this could have offered a persuasive justification for inaction.

Beveridge and his colleagues accepted no delay. The initial declaration of the Council, in May 1933, was signed by over 40 of the most prominent academics in Britain. Beveridge used his own personal contacts to enlist their support, including the President of the Royal Society, Sir William Bragg, Cambridge economist John Maynard Keynes, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, Gilbert Murray, former Governor of Bengal, the Second Earl of Lytton, physiologist and future MP, A.V. Hill, and the Director of the British Museum, Sir Frederic Kenyon.

The influence a few individuals were capable of exercising shows how clearly it was a different world from that of today. For one thing, the sphere of scholarship and learning was far more restricted, both numerically and socially. Those who lent their support to the AAC all knew each other. Many had attended the same schools and universities. A word in the right place, the lifting of a telephone, a friendly note could galvanize like-minded others into action. Their friendships, family relationships and a common experience ensured they would be heard. It was, no doubt, patrician and elitist; but it was effective. One can admire their energy and commitment, without necessarily approving of the hierarchies of privilege, to which, in part, they owed their capacity to get things done.

The establishment of a relief fund was given impetus by the coming together of three refugee organizations at a meeting at the Albert Hall in October 1933 when Albert Einstein addressed 10,000 people. Einstein had become a Swiss citizen in 1901. He based himself in Germany in 1913, when he joined the Prussian Academy of Sciences, and accepted a post at the University of Berlin. In the USA in January 1933 when the Nazis gained power, he resolved never to set foot in Germany for the duration of their regime. Visiting Oxford in October 1933, he was eager to address the gathering. The meeting created an atmosphere of intense expectation, but also of anxiety, because of rumours that there was a plot to assassinate Einstein. An extremist group was reported to have offered £1,000 to kill him: in 1933, he had renounced his German citizenship and resigned from the Prussian Academy of Sciences. In Britain, the host of Einstein the pacifist was Commander Locker-Lampson, barrister, MP and belligerent imperialist, who also spoke at the meeting. He said: 'The task of the League of Nations is so enormous that some people think it cannot help Jews in their distress. Ladies and gentlemen, if that League of Nations cannot help the Jews, there is another, greater league of nations, the British Empire, that shall and will.'

In a memorable contribution to the occasion, Dr Maude Royden, suffragist, preacher and social reformer, in a request for funds, said: 'The scientists have put us in command of a wealth of which the world of a generation ago never even dreamed. I do not therefore ask you *in forma pauperis* (as a pauper), and I do not ask for your charity. I ask you to discharge a debt which the world owes to these distinguished scientists, who are represented by the greatest of them all tonight, Professor Einstein.'

Einstein's speech, on 'Science and Civilisation', was electrifying and prescient. He expressed his gratitude to the work of the AAC 'as a man, as a good European and as a Jew ... You have shown that you and the British people have remained faithful to the traditions of tolerance and justice which for centuries you have upheld with pride. It is in times of economic distress such as we experience everywhere today, one sees very clearly the strength of the moral forces that live in a people. Let us hope that a historian delivering judgment in some future period when Europe is politically and economically united, will be able to say that

in our days the liberty and honour of this Continent was saved by its Western nations, which stood fast in hard times against the temptations of hatred and oppression; and that Western Europe defended successfully the liberty of the individual which has brought us every advance of knowledge and invention – liberty without which life to a self-respecting man is not worth living ...

‘We are concerned not merely with the technical problem of securing and maintaining peace, but also with the important task of education and enlightenment. If we want to resist the powers which threaten to suppress intellectual and individual freedom we must keep clearly before us what is at stake, and what we owe to that freedom which our ancestors have won for us after hard struggles.

‘Without such freedom there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Newton, no Faraday, no Pasteur and no Lister. There would be no comfortable houses for the mass of the people, no railways, no wireless, no protection against epidemics, no cheap books, no culture and no enjoyment of art for all. There would be no machines to relieve the people from the arduous labour needed for the production of the essential necessities of life. Most people would lead a dull life of slavery just as under the ancient despotisms of Asia. It is only men who are free, who create the inventions and intellectual works which to us moderns make life worth while ...’

Einstein’s address to the audience in the Albert Hall was followed by a singing of ‘God Save the King’, and a spontaneous rendering of ‘For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow’. Four days later, Einstein left for the U.S.A. This was his last visit to Europe.¹⁵

Einstein’s commitment generated great enthusiasm. A special fund was set up at the London School of Economics, and the staff donated between 1 and 3 per cent of their annual salary to persecuted German colleagues.

The AAC assumed two main tasks: firstly, to provide a register of possible employment opportunities for temporary or permanent posts at British universities; and secondly, to provide modest maintenance grants – £250 for a married couple and £182 for a single person. Each refugee completed a questionnaire, detailing possible alternatives to an academic career, and a list of countries to which they were prepared to go.

By 1938, it is estimated that one-third of the teaching staff at German universities had been dismissed. Of these, about 2,000 had emigrated. More than half came to Britain, for many simply a halting-place on a longer journey. In the first two years of its existence, the AAC helped about 60 German lecturers procure a permanent post, while 148 others were placed in temporary research or teaching positions. The organization’s effectiveness tells us much about the temper of the times. If the academic world was smaller then than now, it was paradoxically also more spacious, in the sense that both the commitment and

the resources could be found from within to assist persecuted colleagues abroad. There was then, perhaps, a more ample sense of time for reflection before action, a luxury now forfeited. And the sense of duty should not be underestimated among university staff of the period, who were, in general, from a privileged background and more likely than most to grasp the significance of the ideologies sweeping Europe at a time of mass unemployment, economic depression and dramatic social change.

Although the British government applied immigration laws stringently, it delegated substantive responsibilities to voluntary bodies. The Jewish Refugees' Committee, set up by Anglo-Jewish leaders as soon as the refugee crisis first appeared in 1933, underwrote the costs of settling refugees. This absolved the government from any accusation that the public purse might be called upon for this, thereby giving the Committee considerable control over who was admitted. Similarly, the AAC approved displaced scholars and undertook to place those it rescued and provide basic sustenance for them during an adaptation period.

The AAC's work has to be understood in this context: it sought to rescue individuals of considerable attainment, of considerable promise, and sometimes of international renown. The government certainly would accept any credit it might receive for its cost-free generosity in extending hospitality to people of outstanding ability. A Cabinet minute of April 1933 reflects government thinking. It stated that British policy was 'to try to secure for this country prominent Jews who were being expelled from Germany, and who had achieved distinction ... in pure science, applied science such as medicine and technical industry, music or art. This would not only obtain for this country the advantage of their knowledge and experience, but would also create a very favourable impression in the world, particularly if our hospitality were offered with some warmth.' This frank exposition is sobering, not least the calculating chill in its final phrase, and reveals the government's mixture of opportunism and generosity as regards the potentially most 'valuable' refugees; it was far less welcoming when it came to the humble and lesser-known.

The flight from Nazism

It is easy to imagine the apprehension that swept through Jewish communities when Hitler entered into a coalition with Von Papen after the election of November 1932, after which the more far-sighted Jews quickly made arrangements to leave Germany.

The informal arrangements between the British government and voluntary organizations allowed for flexibility in decisions about who might be admitted into the country. Richard Gombrich, son of the art historian Ernst Gombrich, says his parents were indebted to his grandmother, a celebrated piano teacher. 'Many of her pupils were daughters of the British aristocracy. She taught the

Asquith girls and other children of Liberal Party celebrities. They helped pull strings to get them to Britain. Lady Violet Bonham Carter had two daughters and two sons, and the elder daughter was my mother's closest friend. We knew them well. I am sure my father's family would not have been saved without these connections.'

The flight from Germany, and later Austria and Czechoslovakia, can still just be remembered by those young at the time. Professor Lewis Elton, son of Victor Ehrenburg, was a boy of 15 in 1939, when with his parents he left Prague. Although German, Professor Ehrenburg had been at Prague University for ten years. His family had a history of involvement in education reform – an augury, perhaps of Lewis Elton's activities in the same field in Britain.

Lewis recalls the urgency of the time. Like his father 70 years earlier, he remembers the anxiety and foresight of his family, especially his mother. 'Luckily, we were always one step ahead. After the Hitler–Chamberlain agreement of 1938 in Munich, my father was at a conference in Zurich. He made contacts there in case things became so bad we would have to get out. Apart from Chamberlain, everyone suspected Hitler's intention.

'At school we had to learn a foreign language. My father being a professor of Greek History, it was natural my brother and I should opt for Greek. Under our mother's influence, however, we presciently changed to the English class.

'We were not refugees, although none of us believed we would ever come back. My father had applied to a number of places, including the SPSL, and the latter awarded him a research scholarship for £250, which would have been enough for him and his wife, but not for his children.'

Without English friends, the boys could not have accompanied their parents to England. A chain of circumstantial friendships, starting with a former English teacher in Germany who had become acquainted with Eva Ehrenburg, led to the wife of the chaplain at Rydal School, through whom places were offered to both boys in 1939. 'The letter from Rydal School arrived in mid-January. We left Prague in mid-February and four weeks later, Hitler marched in.'

The Ehrenburgs' journey was more hazardous than it might have been, and for the most poignant of personal reasons. They took a last chance to see Victor's mother in Kassel and Eva's sisters in Frankfurt. Czechoslovakia was still – just – a free country. Because Hitler intended to invade without arousing suspicion, no one challenged them on their travels.

'We spent three days in Germany. There was a certain risk involved, the more so since the day we were in Kassel, Himmler chose the same day to pay a visit. We spent a day with my grandmother. She died two years later in her bed, in January 1941; and the way this happened was significant. I had a cousin who was adopted; a pure Aryan boy. When his father left Germany in 1934, this boy had the choice of staying or going with him. He was 15 years old and at agricultural school. He decided to stay. At the beginning of the war he joined the Mountain

Troops. In January 1941, he marched into the Gestapo HQ in Kassel and said to them, apropos of his adoptive grandmother, "Let the old Jewess die in her bed." They did. She died before the deportation. Her goods went to those who were looking after her, an Aryan family.

'After the war, my father was visiting Tübingen, and as he entered the house where he was to stay, he exclaimed "*Mein Gott!*" He found himself facing a painting which he recognized from his mother's house, a quite opulent painting of children, members of the family. The people he was staying with gave it to him. It now hangs in my house in Guildford.

'In Frankfurt, we tried to persuade my mother's sister to come with us. She said, "No, if they want to kill us they will." In 1941, she was taking a transport of Jewish orphans from Munich to Riga which, although they didn't know it, was the first step to extermination. In Riga, they were all shot.

'We travelled from Frankfurt to England via Belgium. At the Belgian frontier, there was no problem, because we had Czech passports. All those travelling with German passports were held back; I have no idea what happened to them.

'We crossed the channel in brilliant sunshine and saw the cliffs of Dover. We were met at Victoria by the family of an acquaintance of my father, who was a professor of classics. We stayed at their house and became firm friends.'

Many refugees had dramatic escapes. The biochemist Hans Krebs was forced to leave the University of Freiburg without being allowed to collect his possessions on 19 April 1933. His colleagues packed 20 crates with his scientific apparatus, and he left on the night train from Freiburg. He was welcomed, almost penniless, at Victoria station by Hermann Blaschko, but within a few weeks was working at the laboratory of Gowland Hopkins, which, he later recalled, 'sheltered six refugees from central Europe: Friedman, Lemberg, Chain, Malherbe, Bach and myself ... for the acceptance of one-time strangers into the family of biochemists I shall always be grateful'.

Ernst Boris Chain, a pioneer in the purification of penicillin, graduated in chemistry and physiology in Berlin and took a doctorate at the Institute of Pathology. His career was interrupted when, as he said, Europe 'was temporarily plunged into a darkness in which the darkest Middle Ages now appear as a blaze of light'. He left Berlin and arrived at Harwich in April 1933 with £10 in his pocket. Later he worked at Oxford with Sir Howard Florey on penicillin. Always overshadowed by Sir Alexander Fleming (who was presented as a hero: at school we heard nothing of Florey and Chain), he acknowledged his gratitude to Britain, and became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1949, four years after he, Florey and Chain had jointly received the Nobel Prize.

Dr Gustav Born tells how his father was advised by Einstein in 1933 to leave Germany at once. Max Born, a pacifist, was not dismissed from his post at Göttingen, but was sent on indefinite leave on salary. The family decided to get out. Gustav was ten. 'I remember the date; it was 10 May 1933. They took

a train to Munich, and from there to the South Tyrol, where they had rented a summer holiday flat. We crossed the border into Italy, where it was safer, because although Mussolini was in power, Italy had not yet passed race laws. I remember the journey well – it was a great adventure for a boy. In Bavaria, the train passed through a town where books were being burned. My father was wild with fury, and had to be restrained from leaving the train to intervene in this festival of destruction. We had a long summer holiday that year, and stayed until it was time for me to start school in Cambridge, where my father had been offered a job. I had no strong sense of menace at the time, although my parents had explained to me the circumstances we were in.'

Otto Frisch called himself 'apolitical'. Absorbed in his work, he scarcely noticed the coming to power of the Nazis. When he realized the danger, a friend, who was actually a Nazi, arranged for him to travel on a small freighter going to London.

'On that cockleshell on a windy day in October 1933, I left Germany with all my belongings in several trunks which kept sliding forth and back in my cabin as the ship rolled and pitched across the North Sea. Once we had entered the Thames the ship quietened, and I could sit on deck and watch the flat landscape and then the dockland and the City of London until we finally tied up somewhere near Greenwich. I had to wait until the immigration officer came on board.

'When I showed him my passport, he asked me, "Have you got a work permit? You must have one if you want to take a job in England."

"I have no job," I replied. "I have a grant." (This was the AAC grant of £250 a year, which Otto Frisch judged "quite adequate".)

"A grant is a high-class name for a job; you must have a work permit."

"But how do I get one?" I asked him.

"You give the steward half a crown and send him ashore to phone your professor; see what he can do."

'It worked like a charm; within two hours, the immigration officer was back with his stamp, ready to let me in.'¹⁶

Others had an even more dramatic escape. Some came on the last boat out of Holland in May 1940, when the Nazis were at the door of Amsterdam. According to a passenger: 'The British didn't know what to do with the ship. We were diverted and spent two days lying offshore from where we could see the coastline. We finally arrived at Liverpool, seven days after we set out.'

Entering, adapting, achieving, giving

For the family of Max Born, who knew where they were going, the transition was planned, almost leisurely, despite the drastic upheaval in their lives. A shock awaited many other émigrés, although few complained since their escape had often been by the skin of their teeth. Britain often appeared unwelcoming, and

the chill greyness of the climate reflected the cool politeness of the people. The energy and exuberance of many exiles found little echo in the damp, depressed 1930s. 'London was grim, a dirty, smelly city,' said Ernst Gombrich, who arrived in the winter of 1935 and found lodgings in Pimlico. 'It was freezing cold. My landlady lit a tiny fire which was so weak that it didn't warm the room at all. I had very little money – a grant of £250 a year – which was very little, and usually ate in those Lyons or Express Dairy cafes which seemed very dirty and smelled of old fat.'¹⁷

Their reminiscences recall sooty air and mist-shrouded streets, trees with their buds of silver raindrops, the winter that required artificial light all day long; the busy preoccupation of people with their own worries of insecure employment, poor relief or, in higher social strata, whether the maid might have to be sacrificed in economically straitened times.

Their rented rooms were small and dusty, the windows uncleaned, while the wind whistled around the chimney-pots and sent clouds of smoke from the inferior coal back into the room; hot water, when available, gushed into the bath rust-coloured from ancient pipes; gas-fires fed with sixpences dried the air and made the eyes smart; and landladies in headscarves muttered anxiously about noisy foreigners talking into the night and disturbing the other tenants. A particular bane for many was the drab, puritanical Sundays – the absence of life from the streets and the curious languor which made the 'day of rest' even more oppressive than workdays. All this affronted the sensibilities of urbane and intelligent people, who came to realize that these unwelcoming circumstances represented home for a perhaps indefinite future.

Those who went immediately into a more receptive academic environment fared better. They discovered another Britain; the concerned liberal middle-class, often in rambling houses, where cat-hairs had to be removed from cracked Spode cups before tea could be poured, and vanilla slices remained on the table from yesterday or the day before, covered in dust. These were small inconveniences to set against the kindness and understanding of individuals, befrienders of the unhappy and the exiled who knew only too well what Hitler portended and the inevitability of war.

Molecular biologist Max Perutz arrived in Cambridge as a student of J.D. Bernal in 1936. His parents intended him for the family textile business, and had him tutored in English. His father had been trained in England and sent him to Cambridge 'kitted out with the accoutrements of an English gentleman: a bowler hat, white tie and tails for formal dinners, smart grey suit for work and tweed plus-fours for recreation'.¹⁸ Although he had difficulty in finding a college to which he could affiliate, within the first week he decided he liked Cambridge. 'Like every visitor, he was bowled over by the beauty of the buildings, and impressed that they were still used for the purpose for which they were built. He was also struck that even though he was a lowly student, everyone treated him

with great kindness and courtesy, from his academic superiors ... to the laboratory technicians and college servants.'¹⁹ London, however, he found dirty and ugly. His daughter, Vivien, says, 'Britain was backward in some ways – my parents had grown up with central heating, so they found the cold uninsulated houses, where the pipes froze in winter, distinctly chilling. However, they were delighted with their first proper home, a tiny attic flat, and considered themselves lucky – they thought they had all modern conveniences, since it boasted electricity and an indoor loo.'

It was often the wives or children who recorded their mixed feelings about their new home. Hedwig Born, in an article praising Britain and its democratic system, describes how the sense of strangeness and longing were little by little transformed into affection and gratitude. She says: 'Homesickness averted my heart and eyes from everything new. However, the good and valuable that I didn't want to see has made itself forcefully noticed and I ultimately loved it. On first arriving in England I thought I was transplanted into a strange part of the world. Everything was different from the Continent – not only the door handles, light bulbs, bread and hedges along the road (instead of trees) – but the very atmosphere.'

An initial awkwardness was widespread. Some felt unwanted, but most saw the country as 'a foster-mother' in the words of Eva Ehrenburg, wife of Victor Ehrenburg, a classical scholar helped by the SPSL in 1938. Her touching tribute to Britain is an eloquent reminder of the thankfulness of those who found a refuge and whose skills were recognized and rewarded. Hindsight softened the asperities which had jarred on many when they first arrived. In her memoir, *Sehnsucht – mein geliebtes Kind*, published in Germany in 1963, she wrote: 'Our mother had only one name, she was called Germany. We, her children, were called after her: Germans. We were not only so called. Because we loved her devotedly, we believed that she loved us too. Though we might have known better, that is, worse. Germany never really loved us, but we could be happy there.'²⁰

'I wanted to die in freedom', Sigmund Freud wrote from exile, 'but one had so dearly loved the prison.'

Other factors influenced people's ability to adapt, not the least the way they had been assimilated in Germany; this itself depended to a considerable degree, on temperament. Lord Krebs, remembering Sir Hans, his father, says: 'He was very dispassionate, not emotional. His character was formed in Germany by a Prussian-style discipline. His father's family was a little like one in Victorian England. They were rather formal. They lived with material austerity and intellectual elegance.' Such people clearly found it easier to adapt to the sometimes tepid, controlled sensibility of Britain than those who expressed feelings as easily as they articulated their ideas and opinions. Anne Lonsdale, speaking of her dearly loved Karli Weissenberg, found the opposite to be true: Karli, warm and affectionate,

adapted well, but his wife, 'more Prussian, cool and controlled', always remained ill at ease.

For many refugees – and this is true everywhere – a certain loss of status accompanied the journey. When the physicist Max Born arrived in Cambridge in 1933, he dropped from full professor and head of department to a research student with one room, although within two years he was appointed to the Chair of Physics in Edinburgh. He did not feel this as demotion: relief at feeling safe overrode all other considerations.

Such was the impression of many scholars who found sanctuary in a university, a community of learning that, despite the persistence of patronage and connections of Oxbridge, was nevertheless open to people of original thinking. There was a considerable difference in the way Britain was perceived between those enthusiastically welcomed in academic society and people who had to depend, initially, on their own resources.

Eric Hobsbawm, came to Britain as an orphan to live with his aunt and uncle in a guest-house in Folkestone which, he said, 'could have stood for any of so many temporary staging-posts on the endless migrations of the twentieth century uprooted'.²¹

He saw London as a 'come-down' after the excitements of Berlin. 'Nothing in London had the emotional charge of those days, except – in a very different form – the music to which my viola-studying cousin Denis introduced me, and which we played on a hand-wound gramophone in the attic room of his mother's house in Sydenham, where the family first found shelter in London, and discussed with the intensity of teenage passion over tins of heavily sugared condensed milk ("Unfit for Babies") and cups of tea: hot jazz ...'

Hobsbawm encountered an England which those who went into an academic environment mostly avoided. 'Britain in 1933 was still a self-contained island where life was lived by unwritten but compelling rules, rituals and invented traditions: mostly class rules or gender rules, but also virtually universal ones, usually linked to royalty. The national anthem was played at the end of every performance in theatres and cinemas and people stood before it before they went home.'

The diversity of the contribution to Britain of expelled Jewish scholars is an inspiring episode in our recent history. The AAC was not instrumental in the rescue of all the eminent academics, but the particular atmosphere and moral tone it created became widely influential. It commanded the enthusiastic allegiance of many who came to Britain under their own auspices or with the help of other organizations. A number of those who found university posts here through their work in Germany or Austria, also helped the AAC in recommendations in making grants to younger, unknown colleagues.

Of those associated with the AAC – or its later incarnations – there have been 16 knighthoods, 18 Nobel laureates, 71 Fellows (or Foreign Members) of the Royal Society, and 50 fellows of the British Academy. Their contribution has been exhaustively documented elsewhere (Medawar and Pyke, Snowman et al.).²² They and their descendants have left touching testimonies of their indebtedness to Britain, a relationship which has been reciprocal. Vivien Perutz says of her father Max, ‘He was very happy to return to England after internment because it felt like home; even if it had been possible, which it was not, he was not keen to take up the offers he had received of jobs in the US. He had a great admiration for Britain and rather idealized it; he never felt English but was proud to be British.’²³ Richard Gombrich says his father ‘was never nostalgic for Austria, apart from the mountains. He became very pro-British. He was grateful.’ Of Sir Hans Krebs his son states: ‘He adapted very well to Britain. When he came here, he was immediately integrated into the scientific community of Cambridge. He admired the fact that in Britain people could argue and disagree with each other without bearing grudges. That seemed very British and highly admirable.’ Gustav Born, praising the AAC, says ‘the British are marvellous people, and these were the best of them. I owe my life to two people – my father and Winston Churchill. Between them, they saved us.’

Some refugees sought to re-make themselves in the image of the host country; others, embittered by the rejection they had suffered, had no intention of being twice rejected. Many felt they remained here only provisionally, waiting for the war’s end, the passage to the United States, the return home. But during and after the war years a majority saw the possibilities of making a life here; and set about this with diligence. Key to their sense of belonging to a land of tepid enthusiasms, cool tea and studied stoicism was a sense of *security*. All refugee testimonies, however unhappy, say that this silences all criticisms and smothers all other dissatisfactions. ‘You cannot even begin to think of daily life, domestic habits, your professional future or the education of your children if you are thinking constantly about the knock at the door, the arbitrary arrest, the order to leave.’ Even those uncomfortably aware of their alien status or who were greeted sympathetically by people who never doubted their own identity or their right to be where they were, acknowledge that they felt the violence in central Europe would not happen here – not it *could not* happen, only that it was far less likely.

Surprises, some very agreeable, awaited the central European academics. Sir Hans Krebs remembered in 1961, that ‘it was in [Gowland] Hopkins’ laboratory [in Cambridge] where I saw for the first time at close quarters some of the characteristics referred to as “the British way of life”. The Cambridge laboratory included people of many dispositions, convictions and abilities. I saw them argue without quarrelling, quarrel without suspecting, suspect without abusing, criticize without vilifying or ridiculing, and praise without flattering ... What

struck me, in particular contrast with the German scene, was the strong "social conscience" of Hopkins and his school, their deep concern for affairs of the world at large ...'

None espoused the values and sensibility of Britain more enthusiastically than Sir Geoffrey Elton. Geoffrey, younger son of Victor Ehrenburg, energetically embraced the qualities he perceived in the country in which he settled, achieving considerable distinction through his study of its historic virtues. Of his arrival in England as an adolescent, he wrote many years later: 'Within a few months it dawned upon me that I had arrived in the country in which I ought to have been born.' Having narrowly failed to get a history scholarship to Oxford, he worked for three years to get an external London BA, which was awarded with first-class honours in 1943. Seven years later, he was in Cambridge.

He became an authority on late medieval English history, 'bound', as he said sternly, 'by the authority of our sources (and by no other authority, human or divine)'. He hated historical theorists who generalized and propounded fashionable ideas taken from other disciplines like social or political science; nothing superseded the arduous labour of assembling primary evidence in an empirical whole. As Regius Professor of Modern History in Cambridge, he made the Tudor era central to English historical studies. According to an editorial in *The Times* of 7 December 1995, his work was 'a useful example of patriotic writing based upon meticulous scholarship'. His interest lay in administrative, political and constitutional history. His most famous contention was that in the 1530s, the government of England ceased to be 'medieval', dependent upon the will of the king, and changed into a modern, bureaucratic system rooted in the rule of law. His admiration for (and some exaggeration of) the role of Thomas Cromwell has been contested as an over-simplification, but his has remained the defining voice of the period. David Starkey has acknowledged his own debt to Sir Geoffrey Elton, admiring his 'slashing attacks on other historians, his caustic wit and passionate belief that history could be known with certainty and argued with clarity'.

Over time, after a spectacular career, public acknowledgment of their achievements and children growing up in Britain, most who remained became very attached to their adopted country. At a symposium in 1965, Sir Hans Krebs powerfully expressed the feeling of the émigrés who had prospered in Britain. In 1965, some of these successful people made donations to a Thank You Britain Fund, for which £90,000 was collected. When Sir Hans Krebs passed the cheque to the President of the British Academy, he said: 'What this country of our adoption gave us was not just a new home and livelihood. What we also found was a new and better way of life, a society whose attitudes to life were in many ways very different from what we had been accustomed to, and, I dare say, not only under the Nazi rule. Coming from an atmosphere of political oppression

and persecution, of hate and violence, of lawlessness, blackmail and of intrigue, we found here a spirit of friendliness, humanity, tolerance and fairness ...

'If proof were needed that these attitudes which I have mentioned are prevalent traits of the British way of life, I would say: which other language uses in its everyday life phrases equivalent to "fair play", "gentleman's agreement", "benefit of the doubt", "give him a chance", "understatement", phrases indicative of a sense of justice, of a sense of perspective, of tolerance, of humility and above all, respect for humanity?'

They became 'naturalized'; a significant word, used both in Britain and the USA when individuals take on citizenship of the adoptive country. It carries a host of associations, not least, as Hungarian refugee George Mikes pointed out in 1966, a sense both of a previously irregular status and an earlier, scarcely legitimate identity, together with something even more telling.²⁴ For once the obstacles to becoming a citizen had been overcome, they received all the protection and privileges of this belonging. Many were honoured by Britain and by the wider world. They were secure in the land that had opened its doors to them; and it is only natural that Britain should have basked in their thankfulness.

Commitment to the country remains strong in the third generation. Ben Elton, grandson of Victor Ehrenburg, is explicit about his love of Britain, although he can also be critical.

'An Irish TV presenter once said to me, "You're no friend of Britain, are you?" I reacted very strongly to that. "I'm very fond of Britain." Of course as with any country some aspects of it are more worthy of celebration than others. When I was young and criticized the Thatcher government, I spoke out from a position of commitment to and affection for my country. In any case, Britain has long harboured a good-natured ability to take a long hard look at itself – ranting Lefties, speakers' corner. That is all part of a long tradition. My politics were pretty mild and welfare state social-democratic. I was well aware of the wickedness of the Soviet Union before a lot of students on the Left were.

'When Richard Curtis and I wrote *Blackadder Goes Forth*, my uncle Geoffrey wrote me a furious letter, saying I had ruined a good series through being so disrespectful to the British army. He said that Lewis, my father, owed his life to the British army. I wrote back saying I understood the sacrifices Britain had made and was respectful towards the army. It was sorted out. Actually we had appreciative letters from veterans of both world wars.'

The greatest fear of most refugees early in the war was that Hitler might invade. This contributed to their commitment to the war effort, and they found it all the more puzzling when they were interned as 'enemy aliens', since their only enemy was Hitler and the supremacist doctrines from which they had fled. Most were not embittered by the experience, and later admitted they understood the

fear that swept through the country in early 1941, a feeling swiftly regretted, since the internment policy was soon reversed.

Gratitude was a two-way process. The most dramatic achievement of central European refugees was undoubtedly their work towards the creation of the atomic bomb, with which the war ended in 1945. But there were many other fields in which émigrés excelled, such as the arts and humanities, medicine and economics. The range of abilities of scholars and the enduring impression they have made suggests that apprehension about the stranger, voiced so stridently today, is rarely justified, since the vast majority of refugees seek absorption into the comfortable anonymity of belonging. Most swiftly adapt to the country that offers them shelter, and within a generation, all reservations about their presence here are dissipated. The example of Jewish intellectuals from central Europe should alert us today to the potential ability and talent of asylum-seekers, who ask nothing more than to follow illustrious predecessors by making the most of their talents and not be left in a limbo of unresolved cases, detention, or stateless impotence.

Max Perutz

Although Max Perutz had no need of direct help from SPSL, he was a lifelong supporter of its work, and advised it on the suitability of candidates for grants. His connection was strengthened through meeting his wife, Gisela, in the SPSL office where she worked. The SPSL helped create spaces in the 1930s in which exiled scientists could operate, sheltered from Europe's political storms. The beneficiaries of its modest grants were not the only ones who took advantage of the haven it represented against European extremism and British parochialism: a whole generation came under its benign influence on British intellectual life.

The son of a Vienna textile manufacturer, Perutz prevailed against his parents' ambition for him in the legal profession and enrolled at the University of Vienna. In 1936, familiar with the progress in biochemistry at Gowland Hopkins' laboratory in Cambridge, he was accepted by J.D. Bernal at the Cavendish Laboratory. Bernal encouraged him to pursue X-ray crystallography, which directed him towards the discovery of the structure and function of haemoglobin. Prompted by Bernal to understand the structure of proteins by the X-ray diffraction method, he began a lifelong study of proteins, beginning with haemoglobin: since all physiological reactions depend on enzymes, and all enzymes are proteins, the analysis of a protein molecule promised a significant breakthrough in the emerging discipline of molecular biology.

Perutz's work at the Cavendish led in 1962 to the setting up of the Institute of Molecular Biology. Many young researchers realized that the future for physics and chemistry lay in this field; Francis Crick arrived in 1949 and James Watson in 1951, both interested in the structure of genes, which were not proteins but

deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). In 1953, their celebrated model of the double helix, constructed of brass rods, aluminium plates and retort clamps, won them the Nobel Prize. Perutz's investigation of haemoglobin, a long and arduous process, earned him the Nobel Prize in 1962: not until 1959 had the first three-dimensional pictures of the haemoglobin molecule emerged from the Cambridge University computer. 'It was an overwhelming experience,' he wrote, 'to see a vital part of ourselves that is a thousand times smaller than anything visible under a light microscope, revealed in detail for the first time, like the first glimpses of a new continent after a long and hazardous voyage.'²⁵

Perutz's research has led to a greater understanding of such diseases as sickle-cell anaemia and the transmission of inherited disorders such as Huntingdon's chorea. The value of the displaced scientists, not merely to this country, but to humanity in general, is incalculable. Most had an equally fateful impact upon the course of the twentieth century, that age of bones and ashes, but also a time of the most extraordinarily beneficial discoveries in the understanding and healing of disease.

Not that Max Perutz won his subsequent acclaim without struggle. Interned during the invasion scare of 1940, he was temporarily deported to Canada. His most extraordinary contribution to the war effort was in 1942 in a project code-named Habbakuk, an attempt to create landing platforms from an ice-fibre composite called pykrete for aircraft crossing the Atlantic. It was unsuccessful, and became unnecessary when aircraft could fly longer distances without refuelling.

His expertise spanned chemistry, physics and biology; this ability to create a new synthesis out of existing disciplines was characteristic of many exiled scientists, and something their host country was not always quick to recognize. It was only in 1947 that the Medical Research Council set up its research unit on the Molecular Structure of Biological Systems, and Perutz was appointed its head.

This humane, committed, and much appreciated man remained something of an outsider, particularly in his early years. Whether the innovative field in which he worked or discrimination caused the relative lateness of his recognition is difficult to say. The Unit's future location became uncertain; but ten years after its foundation it was re-named the Molecular Biology Research Unit – the first time an academic institution had officially been so designated. By observing similarities in the myoglobin of a whale with the haemoglobin of a horse, Perutz and his colleague Kendrew posited a common gene, from which they launched the idea of 'molecular evolution', which traces the unity of life through the family relationships of protein molecules.²⁶

Perutz's role in an interlocking system of research enabled others to build on what he had done. Although often ill, and prevented from sharing his colleagues' social life, he was professionally generous over discoveries which he might have

made in other circumstances. He vigorously defended the unity of purpose which drew scientists together in a common bond – ‘to discover nature’s secrets and put them to use for human benefit’. He said: ‘My view of religion and ethics is simple: even if we do not believe in God, we should try to live as though we did.’

Max Born

Max Born was a major player in the development of ‘quantum mechanics’ that revolutionized the assumptions of Newtonian mechanics, accepted as given since the seventeenth century. In his Nobel lecture of December 1954, Max Born stated: ‘Newtonian mechanics is deterministic in the following sense: if the initial state (positions and velocities of all particles) of a system is accurately given, then the state at any other time (earlier or later) can be calculated from the laws of mechanics. All the other branches of classical physics have been built up according to this model ... I asked myself whether this was really justified. Can absolute predictions really be made for all time on the basis of the classical equations of motion?’

Fifty years after Max Born received the Nobel Prize, his son, Dr Gustav Born, wrote in *Max Born – A Celebration*: ‘He describes how he arrived at the necessity to abandon classical physics and the naïve conception of reality, which is to think of the particles of atomic physics as if they were exceedingly small grains of sand, with at each instance a definite position and velocity. For an electron this is not the case: [and] through investigations involving collision theory he reached the point of saying “One gets no answer to the question” “what is the state after the collision?” but only to the question “how probable is a specific outcome of the collision?” He proposed that electron waves were not continuous clouds of electricity as Schrödinger interpreted them, but instead represented the probability of finding a particle in a certain place after a collision. Born concluded that the motion of particles follows probability rules, but that the probability itself conforms to causality.’²⁷

Since it was impossible to determine simultaneously both the position and velocity of electrons, only probabilities can be stated; concepts which correspond to no conceivable observation should be eliminated from physics. Einstein, whose friendship with Born lasted until Einstein died in 1955, tried unsuccessfully to measure both position and motion accurately at the same time; nevertheless he disagreed with Max Born, believing in the fundamental harmony of nature’s laws.

Born said: ‘I should like to say only this: the determinism of classical physics turns out to be an illusion, created by overrating mathematico-logical concepts. It is an idol, not an ideal in scientific research, and cannot, therefore, be used

as an objection to the essentially indeterministic statistical interpretations of quantum mechanics.'

Max Born was the son of a professor of embryology at Breslau University. His mother died when he was four, and he suffered from poor health for most of his life. At university he ranged over mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, logic, philosophy and zoology. In 1902 he went to the University of Heidelberg, and the following year to Zurich, increasingly drawn to mathematics. His PhD was from Göttingen in 1907. A brief period of military service – curtailed because of his health – led to revulsion against the army and militarism. In 1919 he was at Frankfurt and then back at Göttingen as Professor of Physics. He researched into crystal lattices – how atoms in solids hold together and vibrate.

Max Born left Germany in 1933. After 12 years at Göttingen his contribution to physics was well-known: he had reformulated the first law of thermodynamics (on the conservation of energy), had been identified with the quantum theory and Schrödinger's wave equation. He was offered a place in Cambridge. The altered circumstances of his life, the change of culture and of language, served as stimuli, and after two years he was appointed to the Chair of Physics at Edinburgh. He helped the SPSL with assessments of other refugee scientists, vouching for their ability and recommending them for assistance.

In 1936, he spent 6 months in Bangalore in southern India, where an English professor said that a second-rank foreigner driven from his own country was not good enough for them. Max Born confessed that he was so shaken that when he returned home, he simply cried.

He refused to work on the atomic bomb. Although, like Einstein, he abjured his earlier pacifist views in the light of the Nazi threat, and was a founding member of the Pugwash movement (the post-war initiative to halt the spread of nuclear weapons). Unlike Einstein, he returned to Germany in 1953, settling in Bad Pyrmont close to Göttingen, from where he continued to research, teach and write, and helped rebuild liberal democracy in Germany, although he maintained his British citizenship.

His son, Gustav, a biologist, speaks of his father's strong sense of moral responsibility, which Max absorbed from his own father. 'In my last year at school, my father advised me to study medicine because as a doctor I would not have to kill people in the War.'

Gustav Born believes his father expressed his most important intellectual legacy as follows: 'I believe that ideas such as absolute certitude, absolute exactness, final truth etc are figments of the imagination which should not be admissible in any field of science. On the other hand, any assertion of probability is either right or wrong from the standpoint of the theory on which it is based. This loosening of thinking (*Lockerung des Denkens*) seems to me the greatest blessing which modern

science has given to us. For the belief in a single truth and in being the possessor thereof is the root cause of all evil in the world.'

There is a convergence in the thought of many of the great intellectuals of the first half of the twentieth century, among them Einstein, Heisenberg, Popper and Born. Impelled by a position which compelled them to exchange one society for another, they often came to a common view on the relativity both of the laws of physics, and of the values, beliefs and social organizations, which they considered as perishable as the certainties of mechanics, which, it had been assumed, had been established definitively and for all time.

Max Born expressed a characteristic humility towards his own achievement. 'The work for which I have had the honour to be awarded the Nobel prize for 1954, contains no discovery of a fresh natural phenomenon, but rather the basis for a new mode of thought in regard to natural phenomena.'

Hans Krebs

Hans Krebs was born in Hildesheim in 1900, the son of an ear, nose and throat specialist. The family were assimilated and the children sent to Protestant scripture classes. His biographer, Frederic L. Holmes, describes the household as 'secure and well-ordered'.²⁸ His son, Lord Krebs, principal of Jesus College Oxford, and first head of the Food Standards Agency, says his father's grandfather 'had a classic central European experience. They had a shop selling what would now be called soft furnishings in Gliwice in Poland, and his son, my grandfather, migrated from Silesia to Hildesheim. So the scientific tradition in the family started only with my grandfather.'

Hans Krebs enrolled as a medical student in Göttingen and Freiburg. He did his PhD at Hamburg, and in 1926 was taken on as research assistant to Otto Warburg at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Biology in Berlin. In 1930 he was engaged on research at the university hospital of Altona, and in 1931 went to Freiburg, where he made the first of his discoveries, the synthesis of urea in the mammalian liver.

Holmes observes: 'For nearly 50 years he had stood at or near the forefront of the large subfield of biochemistry known as intermediary metabolism. His two most prominent discoveries – the ornithine cycle of urea synthesis and the citric acid or TCA cycle were viewed as foundations on which the modern science of intermediary metabolism has been erected. Thousands of other people who were not biochemists, but had taken at least an elementary course in biology had encountered the "Krebs cycle". The chemical reactions called the Krebs cycle elucidated a major source of energy in living organisms.'

When his post at Freiburg was cancelled by the Nazi government in April 1933 his growing international reputation generated an offer to work in Cambridge from Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins. Krebs had already visited Britain on

vacation, and with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, who would support him for three decades, he arrived in Cambridge in June 1933.

In keeping with its role in facilitating the dispersal of academic refugees, in March 1934, the AAC alerted Hans Krebs to the possibility of employment in Portugal through the Comité Internationale pour le Placement des Intellectuels Réfugiés in Geneva. He made enquiries, but was informed the post was already filled.

The delicacy of the employment situation in the academies of Britain in the early thirties was demonstrated by the controversy in some quarters over his Cambridge appointment. Even though he did not require financial help from the AAC, Lord Rutherford wrote to the general secretary in May 1934, saying that he had heard about 'a good deal of irritation among the younger men with reference to his appointment, and this may have some effect on future subscriptions' [towards the Council].

Gowland Hopkins, anxious to keep Krebs in Cambridge when the Rockefeller grant ran out, negotiated his appointment as Demonstrator in Biochemistry. The belief that Krebs had been preferred to an equally qualified British academic caused resentment among the staff. His occupancy of the post was justified on the grounds that the appointment was made on purely scientific grounds, and the general secretary observed: 'It is far better that first-class Germans should be appointed rather than second-class English scientists.'

These awkwardnesses, later seen as minor frictions, were at the time a matter of heated controversy. After three years, Krebs moved to Sheffield as Professor of Pharmacology, where the work on the Krebs cycle was completed. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1947, received the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1953 and was knighted in 1958. In 1947 he wrote to the SPSL: 'The work of your Society has no doubt been a very important instrument in paving the way for us refugees in this country. I think that apart from helping individuals directly by grants the Society considerably influenced public opinion and I for one shall always remember with gratefulness the moral backing we had through the Society.'

Sir Hans Krebs is recognized, as Dr Ralph Kohn, who knew him well, says, as 'a giant in his discovery of the oxidation cycle in the cell. He was one of the greatest biochemists in the world.' The biochemist Michael Yudkin also pays tribute to Hans Krebs, who was professor of the department in which he got his first academic post. 'In 1967, Krebs published, in the journal *Nature*, an article, in which he traces the professional genealogies of talented scientists, demonstrating the influence of eminent teachers upon their pupils through time; a kind of intellectual family tree, which shows the extent to which scientists of distinction have depended upon the pedagogic pedigree, as it were, or their scientific ancestry in their mentors and guides in their respective fields.'²⁹

In the article Krebs places himself at the end of eight generations of inspiring teachers, whose power and ability was transmitted to their pupils, a 'lineage' going back to the early nineteenth century. He believed that the key to these fruitful lines of intellectual kinship involves 'close, prolonged association between teacher and pupil into the mature stage of the latter'. It is a question of attitudes of the distinguished teacher as much as knowledge – the virtues of humility, self-criticism, the ability to ask the right questions. He spoke of the importance of the aggregate skills of a team, and the importance of time to reflect and think. He believed that the universities were losing ground in Nobel awards, because of the growing pressure of work and lack of time. Even then, 40 years ago, he complained of 'too much equality, too little excellence'.

Lord Krebs says the key to the adaptability of the German scientists was the universality of their subject. 'My father was assimilated in Germany as medical doctor and researcher [and] he had highly portable skills which meant he could enter any academic community. So when he came to Britain, he was immediately integrated into the scientific community of Cambridge, and its welcoming nature made it easier for him than it must have been for many people.'

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner

One of the great boons of the exiles was the freshness of their vision, which helped us to look at ourselves in a different way. They enabled us to see our own virtues and the beauty of our land anew, thereby appreciating what had previously been taken for granted.

Nikolaus Pevsner was born in 1902 in Leipzig, son of a Jewish merchant. At 19, he converted to Evangelical Lutheranism. He studied in Munich, Berlin and Frankfurt. He was Assistant Keeper at the Dresden Gallery from 1924 to 1928, and was appointed lecturer at Göttingen University in the history of art and architecture. He visited England in 1930, and became interested in English art, scarcely anticipating how this would later influence his life.

In 1933, the Nazis removed him from his post in Göttingen. Like many assimilated Jews, he had been drawn to some of the values of German nationalism: he is reported as having told a refugee worker he met in Birmingham in 1933 that there was much that was 'Puritan and moral' in the Nazi movement. Germany, he said, had been humiliated by outside powers. He found it unsurprising that Hitler should appeal to the youth of the country; if they were united, Germany would no longer be the pariah of the world.³⁰

His PhD thesis had been on the Italian Baroque. Once in England, he was helped by the AAC and became a research assistant in Birmingham into attitudes towards industrial design in British industry. Over time Pevsner was transformed from the immigrant who had entertained sympathetic attitudes to National Socialism into an enthusiastic Englishman. He was naturalized in 1946.

In his *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (later republished as *Pioneers of Modern Design*) which appeared in 1936, he traced the development of modern architecture from William Morris to Walter Gropius.³¹ Drawn to Modernism for its industrial efficiency and clear lines, his view of the Arts and Crafts Movement as a precursor, via Art Nouveau and Victorian engineering and architecture, of the Bauhaus in Weimar, suggests a synthesis of his original German sympathies and the sensibility of his adoptive country, these diverse influences in the production of Modernism being connected by the 'spirit of the age'. Architecture he held to be the most important of all the arts. Even when the new towns and tower blocks had fallen out of favour, he continued to admire the style of Gropius, which embodied the 'creative energy of this world in which we live and work and which we want to master, a world of science and technology, of speed and danger, of hard struggle and no personal security ...'

Pevsner was interned in 1940, and on his release undertook labouring work to make a living. Then, through a chance encounter, he was offered a part-time teaching post at London University's Birkbeck College, where he would later become a professor.

His greatest achievement was his monumental *Buildings of England*, a compilation of over 30,000 buildings most of which he visited personally between 1951 and 1974.³² His clear, precise English helped a generation of British people look closely at their architectural heritage and a 'Pevsner' became a generic term for an architectural guide to the villages, towns and cities of Britain. His radio talks from 1945 graphically evoked the buildings he was describing. In 1955, invited to give the Reith lectures, he spoke on 'The Englishness of English Art'. He was drawn to the manifestation of 'national character' in art, in which he saw 'polarities' – the tendency of the British to be reflected in the 'practical, down-to-earth, detached, utilitarian and narrative tradition that responded to life as observed' (e.g. the Perpendicular style, the Elizabethan house, the paintings of Constable, the Crystal Palace) as opposed to the sinuous, the misty, the dreamy and visionary (the Decorated style, the paintings of Fuseli, Blake and the later Turner).³³

Pevsner was, like Ernst Gombrich, a propagator of the history of art, a subject scarcely existing as an academic discipline in Britain before the arrival of the German-Jewish art historians. The first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge from 1949 until 1955, in 1959 he became Professor in the History of Art at Birkbeck College. A great speaker, he made his subject accessible to a wider public than ever before, opening British eyes to the importance of the built environment and the relationship between architecture, design and daily life. Pevsner helped Britain to look at itself, which he did with diligence, energy and great affection.

Karl Popper

The contribution of émigrés extended into every area of public life, including politics and governance. Karl Popper was one of the most influential philosophers of science of the twentieth century. An opponent of totalitarianism, and an advocate of the 'Open Society', he bridged the gulf between the highly specialized work of scientists and that of philosophers, moulded as he had been by the suffering and impoverishment that accompanied the breakdown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which 'destroyed the world in which I had grown up'.

Born in Vienna in 1902, his father was a lawyer with a keen interest in social and political ideas, while his mother's passion for music almost led him to a musical career. Briefly a Marxist at the University of Vienna, he was soon disillusioned by its ideological rigidity. He was also drawn to the theories of Freud and Adler, but it was Einstein's critical spirit which made him reject theories which could not be disconfirmed: Einstein's theory was testable in ways that could have shown it to be false.

Popper was a schoolteacher, but his interest in philosophy drew him into the Wiener Kreis (Vienna Circle);³⁴ although he criticized the main tenets of logical positivism, which alienated him from the group. He published *Logik der Forschung* (The Logic of Research) in 1935, which he later said undermined the basis of logical positivism; as a result of this, which became widely known, he was invited to lecture in England in 1935.³⁵

Popper rejected the 'induction' method of scientific thought. Scientists, it was believed, should observe all available data and then build up a hypothesis which would remain valid until disproved by subsequent evidence. Popper said that, as abstractions, theories can be tested only by their implications. Scientific theory is conjectural, and is built up in response to specific problems that arise in particular context. No matter how many times experimental testings confirm the theory, if its implications can be falsified by a single example, the theory from which these derive must be false.

In 1936, Popper applied for an SPSL grant, although still working as a teacher in Vienna. His relationship with the SPSL offers insights into the organization and the imperfections in the discreet triage practised by those who held his destiny in their hands. Of course, it is easy in retrospect to appreciate the misplaced caution his application received; but the volume of correspondence it engendered, the doubts on his stature as an academic, the anxiety over the category into which he fell, now strike us as at odds with the urgency surrounding the fate of Jews in Vienna in 1936.

Even a reference from Niels Bohr, who knew Popper, did not allay uncertainties: '... his unusual power of tackling general scientific problems with his thorough knowledge of the modern development of the fundamental concepts of physics, justifies the greatest expectations as regards his future scientific and pedagogic

activity in this field.³⁶ A letter to the Secretary of the AAC on a meeting of the Mind Association and Aristotelian Society about the future of Karl Popper tells how ‘... about half a dozen people said they would be prepared to contribute to a special fund for one year if he were forced to leave Austria and were destitute: whether they would regard mere destitution as constituting compulsion to leave Austria I do not know ...’

Popper wrote to Professor Duncan Jones, who had invited him to Birmingham. ‘Practising my post [as schoolteacher] I am unable to do scientific work at the same time. Besides this, anti-Semitism and Nazism are very common under Nazi schoolteachers and unfortunately especially under those of the school I am working at; and I don’t feel myself able any longer to listen day by day to allusions and affronts concerning my Jewish origin equally made by nearly all of my colleagues and – under their influence – even by some pupils. ... Such more or less subjective difficulties must certainly not be compared with the brutal sufferings of Jewish people in Germany or of some of the German refugees (with whom I never wished to get into anything like a competition for support!).’

The SPSP was also preoccupied with its inability to give support to scholars who retained their positions in their own country, and could only help Popper if he resigned. This he did, and a grant at the rate of £150 per annum was made should he leave Austria. He was invited to Cambridge, but went instead to Canterbury University in New Zealand as lecturer in the Faculty of Education and Philosophy. At the end of the war, he returned to England to teach at the London School of Economics and became Professor of Logic and Scientific Method at the University of London in 1949.

Popper’s early Marxism, and the Left’s inability to halt Nazism (since the Left believed Nazism to be a necessary step in the self-destruction of capitalism and a precursor of the Communist utopia) led directly to his abhorrence of all totalitarian theories. The capacity of theories to explain everything was the source of their greatest weakness, since they defy falsification through empirical investigation. This was the problem with psychoanalysis, while Marxism had been subject to so many amendments to make it fit observable reality that it was not empirically falsifiable.

Such theories could not be called scientific. A theory is scientific only if it can be refuted by some exception. Nothing can be conclusively verifiable, but remains in a state of provisional acceptance until it can be shown to be false.

As with science, so with society: just as scientific theories are abandoned when falsified, so social science should be subject to similar scrutiny. The open society depends upon citizens judging critically the outcome of government actions, which should be modified in the light of such an examination. By elevating the right of individuals to criticize policies, just as falsified scientific theories are discounted, so damaging or harmful policies would be abandoned through critical discussion rather than force. Whatever the failings of such an objective, it avoids

'historicist' assumptions and predictions about social and political development which lead to totalitarianism.

Popper's views favoured liberal democracy, especially when the ruin of Nazism was replaced by the edifice of Soviet Communism; and his work encouraged those – including economists – who valued the aggregate of individual decisions and judgments over predictive systems of planning. He was a friend of his fellow-Austrian Friedrich Hayek, to whom he said he owed more than to any other living person, except Alfred Tarski. Hayek's work had a significant influence upon the economy and politics of the USA and Britain in the 1980s and beyond.

Klaus Fuchs

In the late summer of 1935 a young German woman arrived at Swarthmore College in the United States. She had been sent by her father, a Lutheran pastor in Russelheim, Germany, both to avoid the political disorder that threatened the country and because of a profound psychological instability in the family. Her mother had killed herself by drinking hydrochloric acid, and her sister had thrown herself under a train. Within two years, this young woman had married a young Jewish fellow-student. By 1944 they had three children.

The marriage was disastrously unhappy. Soon after, she had a breakdown and spent eight years in a psychiatric hospital diagnosed as a schizophrenic. Her daughter, now living in London, recalls a childhood in which she failed to bond with her mother. The parents were subsequently divorced. Some years later, this woman, released from hospital, re-married and became a well-known peace activist.

Her life was enlivened by the visits of her brother, who spent holidays with the children in New England. This brother was Klaus Fuchs, then working on the Los Alamos project on the atomic bomb.

The Nazis targeted Klaus Fuchs as a prominent Communist. He was not Jewish. An outstanding physicist and mathematician, the AAC helped him complete his PhD at Bristol in 1937. He then went to Edinburgh University and worked with Max Born. During the 1941 invasion scare, he was interned and sent to Canada with, among others, Max Perutz, who remembered him well. Internees used their time acquiring new skills from each other. 'Theoretical physics was taught to us lucidly by Klaus Fuchs, the tall, austere, aloof son of a German Protestant pastor who had been persecuted by Hitler for being a Social Democrat ... Having no inkling of the tortuous mind that later made Fuchs betray the countries and friends that had given him shelter, I simply benefited from his excellent teaching.'³⁷

Following the intervention of the AAC and Max Born, Fuchs returned to Edinburgh, where he was approached by Rudolph Peierls (also a recipient of an AAC grant) to work at Birmingham University on the 'Tube Alloys' venture – the code name for the British-initiated atomic bomb project. He was granted

British citizenship in 1942, a time when he was first known to have had contact with the Soviet authorities. Fuchs and Peierls went to work on the Manhattan Project. From the summer of 1944, Fuchs was employed in the Theoretical Physics Division at Los Alamos under Hans Bethe, focussing on imploding the fissionable core of the plutonium bomb.

Between 1947 and 1949, Fuchs gave the Soviets the *theoretical* outline of the hydrogen bomb, together with information which enabled the USSR to assess how many atomic bombs the US possessed. In 1946, Fuchs returned to England as head of the Theoretical Physics Division of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell. In 1949, he was challenged by intelligence officers, who had broken Soviet cyphers. In 1950 he confessed. Sentenced to 14 years imprisonment – the maximum for passing secrets to a friendly nation – he maintained in his defence that as a wartime ally, the USSR should not be excluded from secrets which had led to the allied victory. The value of the information which Fuchs gave the Russians remains unresolved.

Klaus Fuchs' niece is a neighbour of mine in north London. Her father studied at Harvard, and it was with them that Fuchs spent the summer holidays in New England. 'I remember him as a kindly uncle. He used to give us children presents like chemistry sets, which were wonderful, although perhaps in retrospect, a little provocative. The house was always full of people.

'My mother, Klaus's sister was diagnosed as schizophrenic. She was in and out of hospital. He wanted to help her, but at the same time, his involvement with us took advantage of her illness. They were a strange family. There was also something distinctly schizoid about his double life.

'I think he confessed to save himself from being deported to the US, where he risked the death penalty. He caused great problems for our family. My father could not find work. He had three children and a sick wife. It was devastating.

'I also remember at the time wondering how the Nazis, who had been our enemies, were suddenly replaced by the Communists. My uncle considered the Soviets our allies, which of course they were. I think he justified his actions on this basis. His motivations were entirely sincere.

'His years of imprisonment were served in Wormwood Scrubs. After ten years, he was released and went to East Germany. There he was able to work, and he died in Dresden in 1988. Of course, his case was followed by that of the Rosenbergs, who were executed, and the subsequent McCarthyite witch-hunts. This political atmosphere eliminated a whole generation of intellectuals like my father.

'In retrospect, this may be one of the reasons why I left the US and settled permanently in Britain. My mother is still alive. She is in a nursing home and is seriously infirm now.' Klaus Fuchs' niece says that whatever the public view of her uncle, he left her with an abiding feeling of affection and kindness.

Otto Frisch also wrote generously about Fuchs. 'I still believe that Fuchs acted entirely out of sincere motives. He was the son of a German clergyman and brought up to act according to his conscience. He felt that Communism was the nearest approach to Christianity to be found in today's world ...'³⁸

The current panic over the loyalties of Islamic extremists in Britain has antecedents in the commitment of Communists to the former Soviet Union, the only difference being that Moscow was at least an identifiable place on earth. Lives articulated to eternity are even more difficult to control than those manipulated from the capital of the USSR.

The Warburg Institute and Ernst Gombrich

Not only individuals were rescued at the prompting of AAC; whole institutions were transferred when Nazism imperilled their existence. The Warburg Institute was founded by Aby Warburg, of the banking family, who was prepared to renounce all claims to the family business in favour of his younger brother, provided he could buy all the books he wanted. Preoccupied with the influence of antiquity upon the present, he built up his personal library based upon '*das Nachleben der Antike*' (the abiding influence of the classical tradition). The library, not limited to art history, covered philosophical, religious, cultural, administrative and literary aspects of antiquity, in an innovative, cross-disciplinary approach.³⁹ Aided by his colleague Fritz Saxl, the collection was established in a scholarly institute the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg, affiliated to the University of Hamburg.

The Warburg Institute's 'escape' from the Nazis depended upon the ingenuity and foresight of Saxl, when in 1933 it ceased to function as a department of Hamburg University, and the staff were prevented from teaching. The staff agreed that both collection and personnel should be shifted to a place of safety, where research and learning might continue. The Nazi book-burnings provided an incentive to would-be rescuers. Interest from the USA, Netherlands and Italy was not followed through; but in July 1933, alerted by the AAC, a committee was formed in London. Support for its establishment in the capital was promised by Samuel Courtauld and the Warburg family. To prevent obstruction by the Nazis, this was presented as a temporary loan of the Institute's resources.

Astonishingly, the Nazis, appeased by a gift of some 2,000 volumes relating to the First World War, permitted the move, provided there was no publicity. In December 1933, two steamers were loaded with over 500 boxes containing 60,000 books, slides, photographs and furniture.

Samuel Courtauld extended support for a further seven years, and the collection was housed by Imperial College in South Kensington before being formally handed over to London University in 1944. The contribution this resource has made to the development of the study of art history in Britain

cannot be overstated, particularly under the directorship of Sir Ernst Gombrich from 1959 to 1976. His vision altered the way art was perceived here, where he found, according to Daniel Snowman, ‘too much preoccupation with detail ... [and] the provenance and value of paintings. His approach was to ask broader philosophical questions, to encourage a wider discourse than can possibly be available to mere connoisseurship.’⁴⁰

Ernst Gombrich was born in Vienna, the son of a lawyer and an accomplished pianist. Although his parents were Jewish, religion was not central to the family’s life. He studied art and archaeology at the University of Vienna from 1928 to 1935, where he also joined the Wiener Kreis.

Gombrich married Ilse Heller, one of his mother’s pupils and settled in England in 1936. His son, Richard, born in England, remembers his parents’ complex relationship, both with the past and with this country.

‘My father spent some time in England in 1935. He returned to Austria to marry my mother, and they came back to London in 1936. My father was unpolitical, in the narrow sense, but he was under no illusion about the Nazis coming to power. Neither of my parents was brought up to be Jewish.

‘He was a mixture of the innovative and inventive professionally, but conservative in personal habits and tastes. He insisted on wearing a waistcoat till late in life, and he wore a tie every day until he became incapable of tying it properly.

‘They did find London depressing in the beginning. They had digs in Edgware Road. My mother told me the first time they went to Kenwood in Hampstead, what bliss it was to see that London had such beautiful places. She always said London smelled of mutton-fat.

‘He was research assistant at the Warburg from 1936, assembling the papers of its founder, Aby Warburg. The director, Fritz Saxl, was to have written the biography, but he died and my father assumed the task.

‘He used to tell how there was a crisis over where the books of the Warburg should go. The chief official of the Treasury would decide whether the funds could be found to accommodate them. This man was interested in neo-Latin poetry, so my father wrote him a poem in neo-Latin, requesting that he help find a place for them. It worked.

‘He was employed between 1939 and 1945 at the BBC Monitoring Service. He was the first person in Britain to know Hitler was dead. He was monitoring the German broadcasts, and guessed that something dramatic was about to happen. He wrote down three or four probabilities, including that Hitler had died or surrendered. “Just watch,” he said. Then the German radio played a movement from a symphony by Bruckner, which had been composed on the death of Richard Wagner, so he knew this presaged an announcement that Hitler was dead: “In the mighty struggle against Bolshevism, our great leader has fallen.”

My father pointed with his pencil to "Hitler dead". The news was immediately relayed to Churchill.

'After the War, he went back to London. He thought war work important, but for him, academic and intellectual work was its own reward. His father was a lawyer, his uncle a doctor and he chose learning. In [such] households, Goethe was God, Lessing and Schiller were revered; the confluence of middle-class Jews and the Enlightenment marked the period of their highest attainment.

'He was a traditionalist, and of course the Warburg Institute was set up for the study of the classical tradition on our culture, including art. He was untroubled by the avant-garde in art. He kept to tradition in art as in music. That was his other abiding passion.

'He was interested in particular in the way artists learned from their predecessors, and his interest in the psychology of perception made his work uniquely innovative. He read enormously on the subject. There was J.J. Gibson, at Cornell, who said visual perception did not require inference or information processing, and Richard Gregory, Emeritus Professor of Neuropsychology at Bristol, who stated that perception is a predictive hypothesis based on knowledge stored from the past.

'When he came here, people in Britain had little interest in the history of painting or sculpture. They had more familiarity with the history of architecture. Some British experts were good at attributions, but he was not interested in that, let alone valuations. When he died, people expected him to have left a fine collection of paintings. They were disappointed. He always said it was better that paintings should be in public places where everyone could see them. He had no desire to own them. The pictures in his drawing-room were mostly only copies.

'He was an extremely close friend of Karl Popper. My father was not (politically) a Conservative and Popper was. We often went to their home. Popper was interested only in intellectual matters. He liked to talk, and he listened also, but he was unworldly. My parents were much more in tune with British society, partly through me, because of my school and growing up here. Popper never had that attachment to British society. Of course, he knew about all the important issues in world politics, but he felt he didn't require to know anything about day-to-day matters.

'It is easy to describe my father. He was a strong egalitarian, yet he measured people by their intelligence. He despised stupidity, but if the charlady said something intelligent, he would praise her and seek out her company. He also appreciated kindness. He had absolutely no interest in money whatsoever.

'My father's values were not political, but he was a liberal humanist. They never voted Conservative, although they were great admirers of Churchill as politician and leader. He was not ambitious, but some of his achievements delighted him.

He was made an honorary citizen of Mantua, since his dissertation had been on the architecture of the sixteenth-century artist, Giulio Romano. The mayor of Mantua came to the meeting held to commemorate him.'

Other institutions

The Warburg Institute was not the only institution that was transferred to Britain to evade the Nazis. The Wiener Library, set up by George Wiener in 1933 to inform the world of the persecution of the Jews, subsequently became one of the world's leading research institutions into the Holocaust and its aftermath. If publicity surrounding this collection was limited, this is because it was accurately monitoring the situation of European Jewry when it seemed 'floods' of refugees would be provoked by official recognition of their plight. Furthermore, the British government distrusted accounts of Jewish suffering published by Jews. The Wiener Library transferred to London in 1939 and has more recently become a major centre for the study of racism.

Another establishment was the progressive school of Anna Essinger, which she removed from Ulm to Britain with the help of the Quakers in 1933, 'when the Nazis had insisted that she should fly their flag from the building', according to Leslie Brent, a pupil at the school from 1939 to 1942. He arrived on the Kindertransport from Berlin in December 1938, and went to Dovercourt Camp near Harwich. 'The educational side of the camp was in the hands of Anna Essinger, whose school in Ulm was a co-educational progressive establishment with many Jewish pupils. Teachers saw themselves as friends and companions of the pupils.'

Many of the pupils and the staff came with her to Bunce Court in Kent, a beautiful, originally sixteenth-century building. Although initially the authorities were unimpressed by its untidy organization, she achieved in Britain what she had intended to do in Germany – to establish a school with 'advanced' values for those wanting neither state education nor the expensive conservatism of private provision. A Schools Inspectors Report in 1935 gave the school a glowing testimonial.

'Anna Essinger took 50 or 60 children from Dovercourt Camp, doubling the size of the school. I was befriended by one of the boys who had come to Dovercourt to help her manage the education of the refugee children.

'One day, I ran into this corpulent lady in the doorway. She said, "Who are you?"

'I told her, "Lothar Baruch" – a name that self-evidently expressed the mixture of Germanness and Jewishness of the family I came from.

'She said, "Would you like to come to my school?"

'It was deepest winter when we arrived at the North Downs. I was happy there as I could have been anywhere under the circumstances. Some children were not. I had already been through separation from my parents, when they took me out of school in the small town of Koslin in Pomerania because I was being beaten and tormented as the only Jew in the school, and placed in an orphanage in Berlin. Bunce Court seemed like heaven. It gave a good education, although there was little science, no chemistry and physics. There were biology, maths and English. It is surprising how many pupils later went into medicine or science. Before I was there from December 1938 until 1942, and it was a major formative influence.'

During the invasion scare the school moved to Shropshire, but returned in 1945. It closed in 1948, but its purpose had been fulfilled.

The industrialists

According to Austin Stevens, one-third of male refugees from Austria and Germany in the 1930s had been manufacturers, a category welcomed as early as 1935.⁴¹ The government hoped they could address the intractably high levels of unemployment by investing their capital in depressed areas, particularly in the North East, West Cumberland, South West Scotland and South Wales. Assuming they could get their financial assets out of Germany, they would certainly fulfil the criterion, laid down in 1933, that no refugee should become a burden on the public purse.

Although the government lacked the powers of compulsion, after May 1937 applicants were given to understand that their application would be processed faster if they set up business in one of the Special Areas of extremely high unemployment. The main obstacle was the Reich itself: the Nazi authorities actively prevented the movement of significant funds, taking draconian measures against those who sought to evade the prohibition. Of those who set up manufacturing companies in Britain, many depended upon capital from friends or relatives, within Britain or elsewhere.

The government subsidized factories for light industry in the decaying cotton or mining areas. Of the 300 manufacturing companies established by refugees by February 1939, two-thirds were in depressed areas. The range of products was innovative, far from the declining industrial staples; it included boilers and radiators, adhesives, brushes, car accessories, chemicals, electronic controls, plastics goods, pumps, scientific instruments, spectacle frames, sports wear and toys. In 1974, Herbert Loebl estimates that surviving refugee firms employed more than 10,000 people in the North East and over 6,000 in Cumbria.⁴²

The advantage to Britain of such companies suggests that the fears expressed that refugees might 'take away' jobs from people here were unfounded. Refugees could be net providers of labour.

The economists and Adolphe Lowe

Not all the well-known academic refugees came to Britain with the help of the AAC/SPSL, although the organization's existence alerted the country, and especially the educated classes, to the usefulness of admitting refugees, which was also the right thing to do. The AAC's tone was high-minded and virtuous, and the good relations it maintained with government made its influence greater than if it had opposed official policy.

Those who brought knowledge that transcended national or cultural borders had a distinct advantage over those who specialized in culture-specific disciplines. It was not easy to place lawyers, likewise historians expert in the history of central Europe.

Economic benefit to Britain is one thing, economists another. Of the 300 economists who left Germany and Austria, two-thirds finally reached the United States; but more than 50 remained in Britain. Others stayed long enough to exercise a significant influence on the issues arising from their studies.

Adolphe Lowe was already 40 when the Nazis came to power. Born in Stuttgart, he had studied in Berlin and Tübingen. He was a senior official in the Labour Ministry of the Weimar Republic, and subsequently Head of the International Division of the German Federal Statistical Bureau. In 1926, he became director of research at the University of Kiel's Institute of World Economics. His particular field was international trade cycles and international statistical economics.

In 1933, Lowe fled to Switzerland and thence to Britain, where, helped by the AAC, he researched at Manchester, and taught at LSE. He also advised the AAC on eminent German economists. Naturalized at the outbreak of war, he thereby avoided internment. In *Economics and Sociology* (1935) he argued for an interdisciplinary study of economic and social analysis, seeking to embed the former in the wider context of the social sciences and away from the realm of 'pure' economic theory, rejecting the existence of 'universal' economic laws.⁴³ Questioning whether economic man represented an adequate depiction of a universal human nature, he stressed the importance of socioeconomic and technological factors in shaping and determining expectations at any particular time and place. He distinguishes between early market society, dominated by small independent producers, and modern capitalism, whose capital-intensive methods and changing technologies lead to social and institutional transformations. His arguments in favour of interdisciplinary social science prefigure much later developments, including disciplines such as ecological economics and cultural studies.⁴⁴

He was also preoccupied with the conflict between freedom and order, and in his 1937 pamphlet, *The Price of Liberty*, reflected on the British model of social conformity, which allied political freedom to personal self-restraint, as against

Germany, where individual self-realization depended on the external constraint of political autocracy.⁴⁵

Adolphe Lowe left Britain in 1940 to become Director of the Institute of World Affairs at the New School for Social Research in New York. This 'University in Exile', much as conceived by Leo Szilard, was a graduate division of the NSSR, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Although its name was changed at the end of the war, its work continues to be liberal and internationalist. Among its teachers and students are political philosophers, Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss, anthropologists Claude Levi-Strauss and Ruth Benedict, economist Thorstein Veblen, and Lewis Mumford, author of the *The City in History*.

Victims of prejudice – the medical refugees

Individuals varied in the degree to which they identified with Britain. Some never recovered fully from the cultural shock of rejection by Germany; but a majority, clearly focussed on their academic projects, and supported by the consolations of private and family life, were protected against some of the acerbities of British social life – class distinctions, snobbery or indeed, anti-Semitism.

Perhaps the most significant group of professional people denied the fullest expression of their powers were medical academics, researchers and teachers. Paul Weindling has documented the histories of around 5,200 people displaced from their countries of origin between 1930 and 1945, and charted professional resistance in Britain to the employment of medically qualified personnel. He says it is important to recognize that many lost their way, underwent hardship and poverty, fell sick or even, in some cases, committed suicide, although the overall balance is positive.

Home Office policy was permissive towards German-Jewish immigrants, provided they did not need work and had independent means. Since refugees had to leave everything behind, their portable skills and accomplishments were their only resource. The College of Physicians was particularly resistant to offering them work. Lord Dawson urged the Home Secretary in 1933 to limit the numbers, declaring, with a typically imperial parochialism, that 'The number [of foreign medical scientists] who could teach us anything could be counted on the fingers of one hand.'

Thus the true voice of British insularity: we have 'the best of everything', foreigners could teach us nothing – even against evidence to the contrary. The General Medical Council attitude was highly restrictive: Jewish practitioners with relatives in Britain might 'settle down in a practice in a Jewish district', or perhaps seek a career in the Colonies or Dominions or even Japan.⁴⁶ Home Office policy, not for the first time, was to reject the majority of doctors and dentists, while extending sympathetic consideration to 'leading persons' in the field.

Many went to medical research centres considered marginal by the British medical establishment, while a number of Jewish medical scientists moved into 'new' fields of expertise – psychoanalysis, and research in areas where biochemistry, physiology and pharmacology meet. In disciplines such as paediatrics and dentistry, Britain lagged behind its German and Austrian counterparts. Yet the professional medical elite opposed refugees, just as they opposed women practitioners in the 1920s and resisted the introduction of the National Health Service in 1948.

As in many other areas, the story tells of missed opportunities; for instance, in public and occupational health, research into industrial hazards and other ills that later needed attention in Britain. Paul Weindling notes that certain anti-Semitic GPs in the Medical Practitioners Union opposed the socialization of medicine as a Jewish conspiracy! A number with public health expertise moved on to the USA.

Many permitted to remain did so on the understanding that their sojourn here would be temporary. They assumed that they would soon re-emigrate, which some did. This led to Britain being regarded as a sort of superior employment exchange for emigrants en route to a more spacious – both professionally and physically – elsewhere. That meant mainly the United States; but others went to South America, Australia and Canada, not always voluntarily, as the events of spring 1940 showed.

The ability of the British authorities to single out those likely to achieve greatness in medicine – or who had already achieved it – was vindicated in the Nobel Prizes in medicine awarded to Ernst Chain in 1945, Hans Krebs in 1953 and Bernhard Katz in 1970. William Beveridge, surveying the impact of the SPSL in 1958, found that of 61 doctors who had sought to settle in Britain, 11 had gone on to posts abroad, 31 successfully followed their career in Britain and 19, unable to research, occupied a post more marginal than that they had previously enjoyed. A further 41 had been assisted to move overseas.⁴⁷

Even though medical refugees had a more difficult time than their peers in other disciplines, the contribution of medical exiles to British health care is remarkable, including that made in less prominent fields such as psychogeriatrics, internal medicine and the modernization of medical education. Paul Weindling's assessment is that the refugees gave medicine a dynamism that changed its course, despite the setbacks of internment and a conservative medical establishment. There had been many radical providers of health care in health centres and polyclinics in Germany in the 1920s. In Vienna also, Professor Julius Tandler had been a pioneer in social medicine, running the Department of Social Welfare in Vienna, with birth control clinics and housing schemes associated with 'Red Vienna'. But when the Nazis turned on the Jews, 'German Jewish physicians were reduced from treaters of the sick to the treatment solely of Jews. Then university degrees were cancelled, on an individual basis, a process

normally reserved for criminals. There was a terrible vindictiveness in this – if the Nazis couldn't strip people of their nationality because they had already left, they could rob them of their professional identity.' Degrees cancelled by the Nazis were revalidated in Britain. Interestingly, after the war, the degrees were never re-instated by Germany.

Paul Weindling had good reason to take an interest in the work of academic rescue and of medical history. His mother was on the Kindertransport, and was taken into the home of the physiologist A.V. Hill. 'It was January 1939, and she was at the upper limit of the age for the Kindertransport. She went to A.V. Hill, who, with Meyerhof, had won the Nobel Prize in 1922 for work on muscle physiology. A.V. Hill was a prime mover in the SPSL. My mother had already been in prison. She tried to escape to Rumania where she was detained, because the Rumanians no longer admitted their Jewish citizens from abroad. The family were of Rumanian background, and they spoke French at home. A.V. Hill's wife, Margaret, was the sister of John Maynard Keynes, and so my mother was thrust into a high-octane academic environment, quite unlike anything she had ever experienced. Her father was a commercial property investor, not at all academic. [Hill] was shocked when she told him how Jews had been made to get on their hands and knees and scrub the city pavements. He took her with him to Royal Society *conversazioni*, and he took her to meet Keynes.

'She had been thrown out of school in Vienna, so had to make a new start here. She went to Regent Street Polytechnic where she matriculated. Hill told her she could use his library. The family offered her genuine warmth and hospitality. She was expected to help around the house – nothing very arduous, make tea in the morning and so on. Mrs Hill tried to involve my mother in her schemes. She wanted her to go into children's nursing. She took her to child welfare clinics, where she was astonished to find children who had newspaper stuffed down their trousers because they couldn't afford underwear.'

She did not enter the nursing profession, although many women refugees did, since the biggest single category of migrants to Britain in the 1930s was women who came as domestic servants (see below). One of the most proficient figures in nursing was Annie Altschul, whose father died in a railway accident when she was five. She studied mathematics in Vienna, but fled Austria in 1938, and was admitted to Britain under the quota for domestic servants, working as a nanny with a well-to-do London family. According to her obituarist she 'was not struck by the hospitality of the British people'.⁴⁸ When the war started, she trained as a nurse and midwife, imagining that her exile would be brief. She gained experience of psychiatric nursing at Mill Hill Hospital, to where Maudsley Hospital had been evacuated. She stayed at the Maudsley until 1964, when she joined the Department of Nursing Studies in Edinburgh, becoming Professor of Nursing in 1976.

Annie Altschul was a pioneer of psychiatric nursing, both theoretical and practical. She brought innovative and irreverent practice to a profession which was highly conservative and regimented, valuing training above insight and understanding. She believed that people in emotional and mental distress needed more direct help than treatment according to theorists, and sought to comprehend rather than explain psychiatric illness. She later acknowledged her own kinship with the marginal and excluded, not only because of her exiled status but also because of her own experience of depression in the early 1980s, as a result of which she told her story in *Wounded Healers*, acknowledging the existence of the injured healer before this became as acceptable as it would later be.⁴⁹ She was an advocate of euthanasia, and her forceful and combative encounters with psychiatric nursing were profound and transforming.

Given the hostility of the British medical establishment towards their refugee colleagues, it is surprising that so many had such an impact on medicine here; or perhaps it is *because of* the sometimes abrasive environment in which they worked that they excelled. In any case, doctors are no different from any other social group, and where émigrés actually worked, they did so with British colleagues in a spirit of amity and cooperation. There is nothing like professional and personal contact for dispelling prejudice, as the achievements of Ludwig Guttman show.

Ludwig Guttman

Ludwig Guttman is best known as director of Stoke Mandeville Hospital, which dramatically improved the treatment of paraplegics. Guttman trained as a doctor in Breslau, where he specialized in neuro-surgery. When the Nazis came to power, Guttman, like other Jewish doctors, was forbidden to treat 'Aryans', so he moved to the city's Jewish hospital, ultimately becoming medical director.

Guttman worked on through the early years of Nazism, but with Kristallnacht in November 1938, the limit was reached. He insisted that all injured persons should be admitted. When the SS came to the hospital, and asked him to explain the medical condition of the 64 patients he had taken into the hospital that night, he persuaded the Nazi officers that all were suffering from conditions that pre-dated it. Four gave themselves away, but Guttman saved the other sixty.

Jewish hospitals were permitted to continue working; and some Jewish doctors were even allowed to return from internment camps. Guttman's passport had been impounded, but he went abroad twice to perform operations, the second time at the request of Dr Salazar, the Portuguese dictator. From there, he came to Britain, contacted the SPSL and secured a grant to work in Oxford. He then returned to Breslau to collect his wife and children.

For some time, Guttman worked on nerve injuries, but was forbidden to practise neuro-surgery. His opportunity came when he was appointed Director

of the Spinal Injury Unit in Stoke Mandeville, where he could deploy his skills without interference. Paraplegic numbers had increased as a consequence of war injuries. Guttmann overturned the conventional view that paraplegics were beyond help; and within two years had laid down the basic principles for the management of paraplegia, principles still observed today. He believed in immediate intervention, since most paraplegics died as a result of pressure sores or urinary infections and insisted on turning patients frequently to prevent the onset of sores.

He was also a passionate advocate of team work in the treatment of paraplegics – doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. He initiated programmes of disciplined activity, to create a sense of both mobility and usefulness in his patients, and organized sports, and ‘wheelchair polo’. The international paraplegic games, which he started in 1952, became the Paralympics for the first time at the Olympic Games in Rome in 1960.

Guttmann, dynamic, inventive and energetic, *inspired* people to recover; and his work has been influential internationally. Medawar and Pyke quote examples of some of his successes: paraplegics who could work and study. ‘Woodwork and instrument-making in the hospital workshop were just the beginning. Some patients worked in a factory in Aylesbury, showing that it was possible to do a full day’s labour. This led to the creation of government industrial rehabilitation centres. One army officer passed his law exam within a year of arriving at Stoke Mandeville. A jockey, who on arrival refused all treatment and simply wanted to die, took a correspondence course and qualified as an accountant.’⁵⁰

Britain as a clearing-house

Although willing to take credit for humanitarian gestures towards some already eminent Jews, the British authorities made little effort to retain many capable people, most of whom went to the USA. The reasons were complex. The loosened criteria in the two years immediately preceding the war had depended upon the perceived temporary nature of the refugees’ sojourn – Britain as clearing-house rather than destination, possibly a political concession to xenophobia, Germanophobia and anti-Semitism. Secondly, there was a degree of ignorance in officialdom about the intellectual treasures offered by people from abroad. Passing on the embarrassment at the presence of foreigners seemed logical and prudent in a country which was, in spite of earlier waves of Jewish migrants, overwhelmingly monocultural, even though its rigid class stratification astonished visitors.

Perhaps the most significant scientific departure westwards was of the researchers involved in the atomic bomb. Rudolph Peierls, offered a Rockefeller scholarship in 1932, went first to Rome to work with Enrico Fermi, who created the first chain reaction in 1942. Peierls subsequently moved to Britain, where he received help and advice from the SPSL. He later expressed thanks for the

assistance he had received as an 'out-patient.' He also enlisted the support of Esther Simpson in bringing his father to Britain in 1938. He emphasized the urgency of this, 'particularly since the conditions for emigration seem to become harder and harder as time goes on'.

In 1936, he became Professor of Physics in Birmingham. There, he met with Otto Frisch in March 1940. Frisch had recently visited his aunt, the physicist Lise Meitner, in Sweden. They had discussed the work at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in 1938 of two physicists who had bombarded uranium with neutrons, which had split and produced further neutrons. Frisch informed Niels Bohr in Copenhagen of this discovery of atomic fission. It was assumed that the volume of material required to create a chain reaction for a bomb would be excessive.

Peierls and Frisch judged that the quantity of the uranium isotope 235 required to be separated from a mass of U238 would be only about 1 pound. They immediately foresaw the possibility of the bomb. Later, Otto Frisch admitted later they were 'frightened' by the realization. Peierls contacted the British government's chief scientific adviser, Frederick Lindemann, who spoke to Churchill. Churchill gave permission to start the project in August 1940, although the decision to construct an actual bomb was taken a year later. A plant to separate uranium was to be built in Mold, North Wales, but by that time the resources available in Britain and the need for secrecy and remoteness suggested that the large-scale development of the project should proceed in the USA. In 1943 Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to establish full cooperation in the USA-based enterprise, and the British efforts were subsumed in the Manhattan Project.

Although a considerable number of scientists from Nazi-occupied Europe remained in Britain, Medawar and Pyke say that in general, 'Britain rescued the refugee scientists and the United States received them'.⁵¹ Otto Loewi, the Austrian physiologist, spent time in London and Oxford (as well as Brussels, until the Nazis invaded Belgium) before going to the USA; Hans Bethe, later awarded the Nobel Prize for his work on the sources of energy in the sun and the stars, spent an academic year in both Manchester and Bristol before leaving for Cornell; Edward Teller, to whom was ascribed the paternity of the H-bomb, was at University College, London, before Princeton. Sir Francis Simon also collaborated with Peierls and Frisch. He had been professor of Physical Chemistry in Breslau until 1933. When officials demanded he and his wife hand over their passports, he also returned the Iron Cross the Kaiser had awarded him after the First World War. Later, he would work at the Clarendon Laboratory in Oxford. Ironically, wartime prevented him and Peierls from working on the most top-secret research project – radar. Instead they applied their energies to the potential development of an atomic bomb.

This was the time that Leo Szilard and Edward Teller persuaded Einstein to write his famous letter to Roosevelt urging that work on an atomic bomb be urgently undertaken, for fear that Germany might do so first. Ever since 1939, when the

possibility of atomic fission had become known to physicists worldwide, the refugee scientists foresaw the danger that the Nazis might create the weapon that would become decisive in determining the outcome of the war.

The transfer of atom bomb research to the USA is a metaphor for Britain's role in the pre-war refugee crisis: an enabling agent for the departure of the cream of German intellectuals to other shores. How should we interpret the eagerness of the British government to ensure that as many as possible of those seeking refuge should move on? Did a desire for freedom from foreign encumbrances override the consideration that the most extraordinary people of their generation might be slipping through the fingers of a myopic authority? Or was it that Britain lacked the resources and intellectual amplitude to accommodate the often restless psyche of those who in the first instance wound up here? Like so much else in the story, the answers are elusive.

It was a historic irony that Gustav Born, son of Max Born, who refused to work on the bomb, went to Hiroshima as one of two British pathologists in 1945. 'I was in Bombay, when the bomb was dropped on August 6th. The war ended about a week later. As a Royal Medical Corps captain, I was getting ready to take part in the invasion. After the bomb was dropped, it became an army of occupation under General Slim.

'We arrived late in the year. I don't quite know where we landed, because all the ports were destroyed. We convoyed to a place called Hiro, up the coast of the inland sea, about 5 miles from Hiroshima. All the Japanese towns had been destroyed, mostly wooden buildings. The hospital was intact, and that became the base for the British army. We started a laboratory with equipment we had brought for the diagnosis of malaria, syphilis, blood counts and so on. The army imposed strict conditions on fraternization and leave. The area, about 2 miles from the site of the explosion, was heavily contaminated.

'In the rubble people stood at the roadside, desperate, thin and starving, and very quiet. Thousands were still dying from the effects of radiation. This sight was one of the seminal influences that led to my later work on blood platelets. There was nothing we could do, because the cells in the bone marrow that form platelets had been destroyed. It was a vision you could never forget ... I remember the inland sea as a beautiful stretch of water. On the other shore at Mayajama is a famous Shinto peace shrine, the gates to which stand in the water. I was struck by the contrast between Hiroshima and this shrine – the thousands of people dying three or four months after the bomb, with no food and no medicine.

'I have to say, the British army was at its best. They shared their rations with the Japanese people. They came to the hospital and we did what we could. To the best of my knowledge, there was no epidemic at this time.

'I thought of my father's colleagues. They all admired him for his character as well as his intellect. They understood why he would not work on the bomb.

In Hiroshima, I was kept very busy as a clinical pathologist. I remember being tired all the time. What happened was on my mind constantly, and the shadow of it has not lifted to this day.'

National insecurities reflected in the AAC

Even the organization set up to help the threatened scholars was not exempt from the prejudices of the age. The same economic forces which had devastated Germany also created more poverty and unemployment in Britain. An anonymous AAC spokesman recognized the limits of what was possible in appealing for help for refugees. In an interview with the *Manchester Guardian* he stated that 'constructive relief ... is not an isolated refugee problem – it is intimately linked with the problem of the existing unemployed and with that of the ever-expanding intellectual proletariat. The task calls for the greatest constructive statesmanship; it demands national response and international initiative. It can be attempted only in a spirit removed from bitterness or political hostility; it need pass no judgment on the events from which the refugee problem originated ...'⁵² This was very early in the Nazi regime; but ignoring the historical origins of Nazism and their implications soon became a moral and practical impossibility.

At that moment British universities were subject to funding pressures, with some departments facing the need to reduce numbers. Planning amidst instability and declining income led to a growing sense of insecurity. When the AAC asked universities to consider accommodating displaced scholars, some refused point-blank; others even implied an absence of sympathy with dispossessed German academics. Sheffield University pleaded poverty, and hinted at its own anti-Semitism. 'The opinion has ... been strongly expressed that, as there are many rich men of the Jewish religion whose individual incomes are larger than the whole income of the University, it would be appropriate that they be asked to support the teachers in the first instance.' They did, of course; as did the great majority of universities. Even those which offered no money freely provided facilities for the dismissed scholars.

David Zimmerman believes that historians have overlooked the role of the SPSL in politicizing the British scientific community.⁵³ Early on in Hitler's regime, AAC members were careful not to inflame the Berlin authorities. In the AAC's original appeal in May 1933, the authors said their 'action implies no unfriendly feelings to the people of any country; it implies no judgement on forms of government or any political issue between countries'.⁵⁴ Beveridge was at pains to state that the crisis was not solely a Jewish issue, since many academics hostile to the Nazi cause had resigned in sympathy with their Jewish colleagues as soon as the first dismissals took place. To win over the Royal Society, Beveridge said the AAC was 'overwhelmingly non-Jewish', and that it should be possible to nominate Professor Charles Singer – a medical historian – to the executive.

The Royal Society thought otherwise; and its support was won only when it was agreed to drop the idea. Whether this was because the AAC had received a number of hate letters in response to its first appeal for funds remains unclear. The Charter of the Royal Society specifically stated that its members should abstain from participating in politics. The AAC's remit was to assist those unjustly dismissed, not to take a political stand against the injustice itself.

The idea that science should be above politics influenced the early years – a position which became increasingly untenable over time. It was, perhaps, still expected that Nazism was a passing *coup de folie*. But when this was clearly not the case, the AAC/SPSL tone changed detectably.

The agency's non-political basis certainly helped recruit support from all political quarters. Frederick Lindemann (later Lord Cherwell), head of Oxford's Clarendon Laboratory, expressed anti-Jewish views, but nevertheless recruited Jewish scholars from Germany. Not for the first time, humane actions proved stronger than professed ideology. People are not the sum of their views; much more may be learned from what they do. A 'low profile' does not always indicate pusillanimity; it may achieve more than those who profess their ideals too loudly.

By the beginning of August 1933, the AAC had raised almost £10,000, much of it from British academics. Exactly who gave is significant: the City for example proved reluctant to open its tightly-drawn purse-strings. The chairman of Barclays Bank declared it could not devote its funds to this cause. The Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations offered support, but ICI was the only large-scale corporate donor. This facilitated Lindemann's search for talent he could entice to the Clarendon.

By 1935, with the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws (far more stringent in their prohibitions on Jews), political restraint on the rhetoric was relaxed. The government had agreed that the AAC should find places for refugee academics who could be deployed in British universities, provided this involved no charge to the taxpayer. (A refrain that echoes down the years: on almost no other issue is such tenderness shown over 'taxpayers' money' as the assistance given foreigners, migrants or other 'non-patrials'.)

That October, Beveridge adopted a different tone, speaking of the Nazis as 'a relentless persecution for which it would be hard to find parallel. Shadows of brutality and ignorance [are] returning from the past. The shadow lies not on Germany alone, but across the world. But the shadow looks deepest in Germany today, because in Germany before there was most light. The German people have been one of the great civilizing forces in the world – liberators of the spirit of humanity, liberators from ignorance and fear.'

The SPSL in 1935 expressed a feeling that has run through the decades until today: namely, how to reach out to a wider public than the liberal middle class and the politically active, already aware of the significance of what was happening

in Germany. The question was – and remains – how to reach (to use a fateful term bequeathed to the language by the fugitive scientists themselves) a ‘critical mass’ of people, thereby raising both the profile and the issue to the status of a major campaign.

Zimmerman concludes that the AAC/SPSL was a major force in unifying British scholars in defence of academic freedom in general and of their threatened German colleagues in particular; and as such, deserves recognition for both its leadership and commitment.

In 1936, Lord Rutherford sent out a request for funds to the press and prominent individuals. He said the Academic Assistance Council had hoped its work might be required ‘only for a temporary period, but is now convinced that there is a need for a permanent body to assist scholars who are victims of political and religious persecutions. The devastation of the German Universities still continues; not only University teachers of Jewish descent but many others who are regarded as “politically unreliable” are being prevented from making their contribution to the common cause of scholarship.

‘The Council has decided to establish as its permanent successor a Society for the protection of Science and learning which will continue the Council’s various forms of assistance to scholars of any country who on grounds of religion, race or opinion are unable to carry on the scientific work for which they are qualified.’

This generated significant donations, but also kindled the anger of those not in sympathy with the AAC’s aims. ‘Dear Lord Rutherford,’ wrote one, ‘I received a communication from you enclosing an appeal signed by various leading men (who ought to have known better) appealing to augment the £28,000 already being spent on finding jobs for exiles who seem to have been unworthy of their own country in the academic world of this country.

‘I could have contemplated with equanimity the spending of £28,000 to keep them out, but I conceive it an act of treachery to spend a penny to bring them to deprive our countrymen of posts in an over-crowded profession.

‘I must add that for members of the House of Lords, who should act as protectors of the people and guardians of tradition, to support this appeal for international iconoclasts in the name of science is debasing the peerage.’

Another said: ‘May I ask you and those responsible what the feelings must be of the men burdened with the grave risk of ruling the new Germany (sic), when they see the direct insult embodied in such a phrase as “who find themselves in exile through no fault of their own?” Herr Hitler ... considers that in the interests of the security of the country he has been called upon to govern, those persons who you call “exiled scholars” are undesirable citizens of that country ... What right have we to publicly insult not alone the leader of the German people, but the people themselves, by appealing for funds for the purposes of assisting those

who in these circumstances have been found by their own countrymen to be undesirable and unworthy of citizenship.¹⁵⁵

The pain of exile

Much is known of the high attainments of successful refugees of the 1930s. It may well be that the decline of anti-Semitism in Britain in recent decades owes a great deal to the benefits they have brought – in medicine, scientific and industrial innovation, the arts, humanities and psychology.

Their work has, at times, taken on an almost redemptive quality. The energy of their intellectual effort may have served to dull the pain of exile. This is rarely dwelt on in the heroic rescue stories. The emotional costs sometimes remain unspoken. On the other hand, the joyful absorption of scientists in their work is clear from the accounts they have left – Otto Frisch's delight in physics which emerges from his enthusiastic memoir must have proved a powerful distraction from separation and loss.

Occasionally we glimpse something of the disturbance that went with the famous 'portable' skills of those who arrived with their inner resources intact, but their feelings bruised by rejection by what they had regarded as home.

In some cases, hurt is covered by the most rigorous silence. The clean break, a refusal to look back, represents a kind of emotional self-cauterization, as if the disciplines of professional life were sometimes a self-anaesthetizing balm for psychic wounds. Otto Frisch, writing of his father's release from a concentration camp before he emigrated to Sweden, says: 'When he arrived in Sweden with my mother he seemed little changed, only a bit thinner. For a fortnight or so he was busy with the typewriter, and I saw some of what he wrote about his experiences; pretty gruesome reading in places. When he had finished he told me it was all in that envelope (which he sealed) and that he would never talk about the concentration camp again. And he never did.'¹⁵⁶

Lord Krebs, says his father's autobiography tells what happens, but not how it felt. Many refugees would not talk about their life before exile, unless it related to their work. This served as an emotional bridge to what they had left behind. Ben Elton, speaking of his grandparents, Victor and Eva Ehrenburg, said that they were always a warm presence in his life, but they felt 'rather foreign to me as a child. They lived in Hampstead. They were rather stiff, with German accents. I was born in Catford: they lived in what seemed to me a dusty flat with pictures and books, and they talked of *Kaffee* and *Kuchen* (cake).' After Hitler entered Austria, Max Perutz's parents joined him in England. In order to bring in a little money and assist with the war effort, Max's father re-trained as a lathe operator. That position and later a job with Max's wife's uncle entitled his parents to a state pension, a godsend since they had come with little more than some jewellery.

Richard Gombrich says that when his parents arrived 'they knew English, but did not speak it well, although they soon acquired it. My father was rather shy, but my mother was warm and outgoing. They spoke English to me but German to each other.

'The wound inflicted by Nazism upon Europe exercised my father, who would talk about it in a general rather than a personal way. He was passionately opposed to totalitarianism, both Nazism and Communism.

'My father's immediate family survived – only one uncle remained in Austria, and he shot himself before they got him. A second uncle had died in time. My father could bring to Britain with the help [of the Bonham Carters] mentioned, his parents, two sisters, an aunt and her husband. My mother was less fortunate. Many of her relatives died. Her father was dead before the *Anschluss*, and her mother went to Palestine. The rest disappeared. They never spoke of her family. Only after my father died, my mother began to talk about it. It upset her a great deal. It was very sad and moving. She had always dreaded losing her mind. When she went into a nursing home, she suffered from a terrible paranoia that the Gestapo were in the next room. She would say, "*Was ist aus der Tante Marthe geworden?*" (What happened to Aunt Martha?) She was 96 when she died.'

I asked the 90-year-old widow of a university teacher in the North of England about her husband. 'He was an attractive figure, clever, with dark eyes and a charismatic manner; which he used to impress his students. Underneath, he suffered from a deep melancholy. Before I knew what had happened to me, I fell into the role of submissive wife. He said he would not bring children into such a cruel world; and in the aftermath of the war, the ruins of Europe, the camps and the displacement of people, I agreed with him, although I think I would have preferred to opt for life and hope. He was very demanding, and as he grew older, quite bitter. I was always a little afraid of him, his temper, his ability to find fault, especially with me. He enjoyed the company of men. He was a misogynist. I resented this because I am an intelligent woman. He died of a heart attack in 1970 in his early fifties. After that, I began to find myself. I became a teacher and I played music. I married again in 1977 and had twenty years of joyful companionship. I wonder how many more women paid the price for the dislocations of exile, how many men of achievement were helped by the ministrations of women? I merely wonder. Survival is the essential; perhaps these are small sacrifices when one looks at the heavy toll of Nazism, Communism and war in Europe. I never complained.'

Many such stories may be too painful to tell. Eva Hoffman, exiled as a young adolescent from Communist Poland following widespread anti-Semitism in the late 1950s (she went with her family to the USA), writes with great empathy and understanding of exile: 'In that first interval of uprooting and transplantation, I only knew that just as there is a different poetry of language, so I was now surrounded by a different music of selfhood, and that I was not attuned

to it, could not sense its patterns and harmonies. I am not sure that the gaps between the two languages, and the two grammars of selfhood, can ever be completely closed.'

Insight into these awkward transitions among the distinguished refugees from the Nazis is oblique and often symbolic. What disturbance lay beneath the assertion of some exiles that they would not have children, since the world into which they would be born was too cruel and uncertain? The life of Leo Szilard, with his disavowal of emotional attachments, his compulsive mobility and emotional elusiveness (notwithstanding his later happy marriage) suggests something more than the protean movements of a quicksilver mind. Many spoke of 'cutting off', as though it had been an amputation. 'He never spoke of the past,' was a common reaction. A few – especially from the USA, returned to positions in West Germany after the war, Theodor Adorno and Ernst Fraenkel among them. More visited relatives, survivors of the Holocaust, but some, like Einstein, never returned to Germany again.

I asked Gustav Born about the silence of refugees on the traumas they had suffered. Was it because they were stoical or because the experience had been too terrible to speak of?

'It was almost certainly the latter. The Jews were not more stoical than anyone else. Indeed, they had been accustomed to expressing their feelings quite powerfully. If they remained silent, it was because they could not give voice to the unspeakable. They also came into the reticence and restraint of "don-land". The culture of the academy was not one that favoured the expression of emotion. It would have been considered bad form to make strong statements of feeling. Add to this the fact that many scientists invested their area of scholarship with profound emotional significance. The joys of discovery and learning showed the capacity of the intellect to generate powerful feeling. My father's autobiography exhibited little emotion, and Hans Krebs' likewise. They were biographies of intellect.'

Ernst Chain

Ernst Chain was a gifted musician; in his early life he might have become a concert pianist or a scientist. His father had come to Berlin from Russia to study chemistry, and established a chemical manufacturing business. When Ernst Chain left Germany in 1933 for the laboratory of Gowland Hopkins in Cambridge, convinced that Nazism would quickly burn itself out, his mother and sister stayed behind. They were last heard of in Theresienstadt. His friend and colleague, Dr Ralph Kohn, said he could never ask Ernst Chain about his family's fate as he never spoke about it and never appeared to want to discuss it.

Perhaps it was only natural that the well-known refugees were known for what they did rather than what they felt. After all, as Dr Kohn says of Sir Ernst Chain, he was an immensely practical man. Not only did he isolate and purify penicillin, he also took an active interest in its testing. In addition he advocated cooperation between the academy and industry when this was not fashionable. In general, a stoical silence cloaks the unspoken emotions of most refugees from the 1930s.

A powerful identification with Britain combined with immense gratitude for the security it extended is a very strong feeling. Secondly, absorption in work of great and concentrated seriousness can also anaesthetize. One senses little emotional space among the political urgencies of the time and the imminent war to look back on the trauma which many people had undoubtedly undergone. In any case, intellectual pursuits and academic quarrels often involved intense emotions: and passionate enmities arising from some abstract or theoretical dispute could become deeply personal.

This contrasts sharply with the highly personal and more emotional tone of refugee stories of our time. If this reflects the altered psyche of the age, Eva Hoffman exemplifies the transition.

Eva Hoffman had greater leisure to reflect and come to terms with her exile. She wrote of the difficulties she experienced: 'I ... do not disavow the acute sense of loss I felt at first, for I think it bespoke the strength of my attachments to my first language and home. And it is those attachments which, if you can successfully transport them from one place to another, are the source of later attachments which enable you to come to love new worlds, and to love the world in new ways.' Given that psychoanalysis had developed in central Europe, and that a number of psychiatrist refugees reached Britain, it is perhaps surprising that few scientists – who were, for the most part, also great humanists – found it difficult to look too closely at the personal pain. Perhaps music, a passion for many refugees, as Esther Simpson (long-term secretary of the SPSL) records, served also to assuage inexpressible loss and grief.

Sometimes, those close to exiles, children, husbands or wives, give a glimpse of the depth of sadness and disorientation of exile. I spoke with the daughter of a later refugee, also a Jew, who left Poland in 1969 in the wave of anti-Semitism unleashed by the Communists, keen to bolster their failing support at the time. Although this was not commensurate with the violence of the Nazis, Samuel Fiszman was in many ways characteristic of completely assimilated Jews, having become enamoured of Polish culture and poetry, and an eminent critic of the national poet, Adam Mickiewicz. Dismissed from the University of Warsaw for having signed a petition in favour of academic freedom, he declined a university post in Britain in favour of Bloomington, Indiana, where he remained for the rest of his life.

'His father and sister died in the camps. He spent most of the war in Russia in a refugee camp. There, he became a kind of unofficial doctor. After the war, he changed from science to literature. Polish and Russian literature became his life. He loved everything connected with Poland. Whenever he read in US newspapers about Polish concentration camps, he always said, "No, these were German camps on Polish soil." He acknowledged anti-Semitism in Poland, but many Poles saved Jews. It was his wish to be buried in Poland. It took him six years to get permanent residency in the US. And when he did return to Poland, his family remember him sitting in the apartment and weeping; and he didn't cry often.

'My father made friends and a career in the US, but his heart was in Poland. When he left, he never knew if he would return ...'

Ania O'Brien suggests that nostalgia can be inherited. 'I have the same love of Poland. I brought my daughter up bilingually, but she sometimes says to me, "I can't talk to you because you are from Europe." My father was committed heart and soul to the Poland he loved. Leaving it was the tragedy of his life.'

The fame surrounding those successful in Britain should not obscure another story – that of the unacknowledged multitude who were rejected. Their fate, officially 'unknown' at the time, has been subsequently memorialized by the fathomless guilt of those who might have done more to help them.

Intellectual bequests

What is clear is that the presence of intellectuals from another cultural tradition in Britain produced a creative synergy between different sensibilities.

Many refugee scholars acknowledged, in retrospect at least, the stimulus provided by the new environment of their forced exile. The pharmacologist H.K.E. Blaschko said, 'I am certain that for Science and Learning my translation from Germany to England has been beneficial. Personally, the change of environment has brought me a definite line of research, which I have followed ever since I began, as a grantee of the AAC, to follow it in 1935. What little merit there is in my work, it has profited by the change and the coming together of my experience as a learner in Germany and the problems taken up here.'⁵⁷

Paul K. Hoch, in an important article in 1986 wrote of three principal channels for the diffusion of information across international boundaries – the 'brain drain', the movement of informed people, and the temporary movement of scientists or technologists from one country to another.⁵⁸ He examines how émigrés with expert knowledge combined with the scientific skills of the host culture to produce spectacular advances. He compares the theoretical know-how of atomic scientists, Enrico Fermi and Eugene Wigner among others, with the technological know-how available in America in the development of the nuclear reactor. He refers particularly to the evolution of solid-state physics – 'a field

which grew at the junction of chemistry, physics, crystallography and metallurgy only in the last half-century. In terms of its impact on solid-state electronics, luminescent lighting, magnetism, nuclear reactors and materials technology, it is far away the most technologically important part of physics.' The same is true in the growth of molecular biology.

The role of theoretical physics in the development of nuclear weapons is well-known, and applied mathematics was crucial to the development of aerodynamics; applied mechanics also intersects creatively with solid-state physics and metallurgy, especially in creating a sound scientific basis for mechanical and structural engineering. Pharmaceuticals and biomedical sciences were enhanced by Michael Polanyi and Fritz Paneth and others brought into Britain by scholarships offered by ICI. Hans Krebs and Ernst Chain were key biochemical émigrés. Hoch sees the pressure on central European refugees to synthesize the approaches of their original and adoptive cultures as a source of great creative inventiveness – 'the synthesis of "German" theory with "Anglo-American empiricism"'. The third factor was that in British or American universities, incoming scholars slid into the interstices between established disciplines to avoid displacing an indigenous applicant for work, their very marginality enabling them to cross what might have been regarded as disciplinary – as well as social and cultural – boundaries. 'Thus, the physicist turned physical chemist (e.g. James Franck) or applied mathematician (e.g. Peierls) or the chemistry student turned crystallographer (e.g. Max Perutz).' Hoch says the 'newly emerging interdisciplinary specialities in the natural sciences was thus in part the result of attempts by Central European émigrés to carve out niches for themselves by demonstrating the mathematical basis of physics, the physical basis of chemistry and the physical and chemical basis of life.' These laid the foundations for molecular biology, biotechnology and genetic engineering.

Much that we take for granted in our lives – from health care to travel, from household conveniences to home entertainment, from communications to the daily comforts of existence – owes an incalculable debt to émigrés and their interaction with the countries that gave them refuge. Yet society easily loses sight of the sometimes painful intellectual and material effort that went into their advances. Those forced into exile left a legacy too little appreciated by those who now repudiate the refugee and the asylum-seeker. Who knows what power and ability to transform our lives again may be sleeping in the spurned intellect and disdained qualities of those rejected as intruders at the gates of Europe and America? Self-interest, as well as common humanity, should prompt a more searching scrutiny of people who make their somewhat slender claims upon our sparing hospitality.

In *The Hitler Emigres*, Daniel Snowman traces the enduring effects upon Britain, intellectually, culturally and socially of the émigrés from central Europe throughout

the whole post-war period in the media, academia, politics and society. After the war, 'most of the exiles would soon return whence they had come ... But most of the German-speaking refugees stayed; the world in which they had been raised had been utterly obliterated. ... Virtually every one of the Hitler emigres learned sooner or (more often) later, of friends and relatives lost in the anonymous barbarity of the death camps. How could they return to live in a country in which a genuinely popular government had wished to murder them?'⁵⁹

'When the emigres arrived, Britain, whatever its fissures and faults, was a nation "at one with itself". After the war this sense of national communality was, if anything, enhanced by the achievement of victory. The British had a clear sense of who they were and what they stood for. Their standing in the world was high. They were a people, a nation and a culture with whom anyone originating from elsewhere might be proud to identify.'

This is certainly reflected in what the surviving relatives and descendants have done, and how they regard the opportunities Britain gave them.

The impact of the refugees on society is manifold, particularly of those whose discoveries changed the way we view our lives. Secondly, those who specialized in the study of social and economic systems, and who pondered the economic collapse from which Nazism had emerged, bequeathed recommendations and policies for avoiding a repeat of the disaster. In addition, they also set in train a long process of change, in which some of the virtues of central European social life enriched the closed and inward-looking class divisions in Britain.

What Britain gained cannot be calculated solely in intellectual or economic terms, however significant these might be. Max and Hedwig Born, Victor and Eva Ehrenburg, Max and Gisela Perutz, Ernst Gombrich, for instance, gave the country a different pool of talent: children and grandchildren, whose commitment has enriched us in ways that escape academic, or even economic, calculus. The immediate descendants of those who remained have their own story to tell.

Professor Gustav Born, now in his mid-eighties, is a distinguished pharmacologist, whose family had a long history of contribution to European civilization before it was disrupted by Nazism. His great-grandfather had been an innovative physician in Górlitz in Silesia working on the control of epidemics, while his grandfather was a well-known and original embryologist in Breslau (now Wrocław).

'You must go back to the mid-nineteenth century to find practising Jews in the family, a heritage not significant until defined by a malignant ideology.' Gustav, who arrived in England aged 11, says, 'I didn't know what Jews were.' The family were Lutheran, and indeed, his mother, although three-quarters Jewish, traced the other part of her descent to Martin Luther.

Gustav Born's contribution to medical science has been remarkable. He graduated during the war in Edinburgh, did a PhD at Oxford, where he became

Demonstrator in Pharmacology, served in the British army and was one of only two British pathologists with the occupation force in Japan after the dropping of the A-bomb on Hiroshima. There he observed the effects of radiation on the circulatory system: many months afterwards, people were still dying of haemorrhages. He was for 12 years at the Royal College of Surgeons and then Professor of Pharmacology in Cambridge from 1973 until 1979. 'My main field has been in the circulatory system, especially thrombosis, haemostasis and atherosclerosis. My contribution has been work on the platelets in blood cells which are specifically important for stopping bleeding. This is, of course, connected to the causes of heart attacks and strokes. We discovered that aspirin stops the platelets from aggregating; this gave aspirin a second life as an anti-clotting agent. My generation who worked in biological science were very lucky: we bridged the generation that led to the development of molecular biology.'

Gustav Born has five children, three from his first marriage and two from his second to Faith, a retired GP. His daughter, Georgina, holds a Chair in Social Science in Cambridge; one son Sebastian is an Associate Director of the National Theatre, while another son became a journalist, and now runs a TV company founded by his partner that generates ideas for documentaries. Gustav Born is also the uncle of the singer Olivia Newton-John and a cousin of Lewis Elton.

There are no physicists or physicians in the present generation. The change in the family's direction illustrates how it has adapted to the changing temper of British life; as sensibilities shift, people direct their talents to where they may be best expressed. Gustav Born's family demonstrates the folly of making social predictions. The only constant is the principled moral purpose of his father, Max Born, and his forbears, a continuing commitment to liberal values and a critical openness to a changing world.

More humble émigrés

Was it the more egalitarian post-war outlook that made severe official judgments on categories of refugees that might be advantageous to Britain appear too narrow and elitist? Or were the achievements equally astonishing of those who had come into the country, as it were, at random – the arbitrary selections of the Kindertransport or those who had convinced potential employers that they would make excellent servants?

Whatever the cause, it was tacitly acknowledged that to view Britain as a beneficiary of the talents of only the most eminent refugees was mistaken. Divisions between the illustrious, the mediocre and the humble, although doubtless made in good faith at the time, now appear arbitrary and excluding. In truth most refugees from Nazism left a positive legacy, academically, socially and culturally. Some achieved academic distinction, others became writers and artists; almost all were great humanists.

Many were not welcomed with the fanfare extended to scientists already at the peak of their career before the Nazi era. The lesser known were often ill at ease with the British character, particularly if they were outside a place of learning. Non-academics were more exposed to the ambivalences of British attitudes to foreigners. Some found the British 'cold, undemonstrative, shy or so polite it was impossible to determine what they really felt and thought', (according to a former refugee, now living in New York).

Drawing the line between scholars whose merit 'qualified' them for SPSL assistance and those whose lower professional standing excluded them was always difficult; the Bodleian Library records hint at the heart-searching that took place beneath the polite official communications.

On the borderline were the crowds of refugees with nothing to convince the government that their presence in Britain would benefit the country. The same issue faces us today, in an even more aggravated form, given the diversity of forces expelling people from their homeland and driving them far from their roots.

One under-publicized aspect of refugees in the 1930s was that the largest single category at the outbreak of war comprised women admitted as domestic servants. In fact the overall number of women exceeded men. The servant problem, which had exercised the middle classes in the 1930s, was eased by issuing of permits to German-Jewish women provided they entered domestic service. This became a major source of escape, not so much for women who had been accustomed to domestic labour, as for middle-class women who, until the 1930s, had been mistresses rather than servants. Employment agencies in Berlin and later Vienna recruited women deemed suitable for this occupation.

Many were shocked by their duties when they arrived at their workplace. Lore Segal poignantly recalls her mother being shown round the house she was to clean. "'Ah," my mother exclaimed, "a piano! It is a Bechstein, no?" And she told Mrs Willoughby about her Blüthner which the Nazis had taken, and that she had studied music at the Vienna Academy. "Oh really," said Mrs Willoughby. "In that case, you must come in and play sometime when everyone is out."'"⁶⁰

Work was also available to male domestics, especially butlers and gardeners. Louise London tells the story of a British Passport Control Officer in Paris, who cited the example of a doctor, who offered to work as a butler.⁶¹ "This is absurd," he wrote, "as butlering required a lifelong experience."

Although many women were humiliated by the role reversals they underwent, many agreed they were fortunate to have survived. Their sense of dignity was scarcely enhanced when, in the invasion scare, Sir Neville Bland, British Minister at The Hague, said, 'the paltriest kitchen maid not only can be, but generally is, a menace to the safety of the country'. In the first weeks of May 1940, more than 8,000 women were dismissed – for many a blessing rather than a curse, since

this led to more satisfactory employment in nursing, or what were later called the 'caring professions'. The mother of Louise London was taken on as a cook. One of the first things her employers in Bedford asked her to do was 'to make a summer pudding'. She had not the faintest idea what this meant.

Peggy Fink, now in her mid-nineties, daughter of a family of linen exporters in Belfast, was active on a committee set up to welcome refugees to Northern Ireland. She recalls one woman who went to London to collect two teenaged refugees. 'Our committee had taken them from a Jewish orphanage. When she got these two girls back to Belfast, she said, "You must call me Madam." One was to be cook, the other a house parlour-maid. She treated them badly. She never gave them enough to eat, and they often went hungry. She gave them five shillings a week, and they slipped the gardener sixpence to buy them a loaf of bread. One day, Madam's sister reminded the girls it was her sister's birthday, and the girls said, "Please buy her a bunch of flowers from us." She did; and their employer stopped their wages for a week. Our committee heard of the case. We took the children away and sent them to England to do nursery nurse training. The younger girl married a soldier. She now has two grandchildren – one just got a double first from Cambridge, the other is just starting at Oxford.'⁶²

Peggy Fink's life crossed that of a number of refugees we have already met. Her future husband was working on the Warburg estate, which had been given to the Americans as a refuge for Jewish orphans released from the concentration camps. Her daughter, Michelle, studied molecular genetics, and worked in the laboratory of Max Perutz. When Peggy and her husband returned to Vienna after the war, Erwin Schrödinger was a neighbour.

Peter Pelz's father came, aged 16, to live in as a farm servant in Yorkshire. Despite high unemployment, Britons were deserting both agriculture and domestic service in the 1930s. The promise of work in Britain's depleted farms and fields was an exit route from Germany or Austria and allowed canny employers to get cheap – even free – labour. 'It was abusive. He was with another Jewish boy. They were overworked and underfed. They went on strike, because of inadequate food. He went from there to become a gardener in an Oxford college. That was where he met my mother. He fell in with some people from a Tolstoyan community of Leftish clergymen, including Paul Oesterreicher. They inspired him to go to Lincoln Theological College. He was ordained and served in Bolton in Lancashire, where he also wrote his books and articles.

'My father had been the repository of all the hopes of his parents. His father had cultural ambitions. He owned cinemas in Berlin. He raised his son to be what he would like to have been. Becoming a farm labourer was certainly a let-down, but he took it in his stride. He was glad to be alive.

'My mother's experience was traumatic. She came from a family of intellectuals, cultured and respected members of society. Her mother married the illiterate son

of a poor peasant from Slovakia. She found the stresses of her marriage intolerable and committed suicide. Her daughter, my mother, then a ten-year-old, found the body slumped in front of the gas oven ...

'My mother and step-grandmother were got out by the Quakers, who were a shining light for refugees at that time. They organized invitations to get people into Britain, and this meant offers of work. When my mother was interned on the Isle of Man, she always said this rescued her from a worse situation as domestic servant.

'My grandmother was a qualified pharmacist, but she accepted a job as housemaid in a middle-class household, where the husband and wife, who had been officials in the Indian empire, believed in keeping up appearances. It amused my grandmother that they would dress up for the most insignificant meals, such as a light supper of cheese sticks and tomato soup. She coped with the humiliation, but one fine day, her new employers wanted to show her off to guests at supper, her fine Viennese cooking legendary in the district. They asked her to wear a dirndl for the occasion. Their fine manners clearly did not include sensitivity. Never a person to cross, my grandmother took pride in stoutly refusing and left.'

Peter Pelz's parents left a powerful mark on Britain. His father, the Reverend Werner Pelz, was a founder of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. A man of radical views and great courage, he never went for the easy option. He wrote a book called *I Am Adolf Hitler*, which tried to imagine the subjective world-view of Hitler.⁶³ Unfortunately, it was misunderstood; *The Times* reviewer treated it as an apologia for Nazism.

'My father was at least 30 years before his time. He was ordained as a priest, but had little time for the church, which, he said had nothing to do with Christianity. This was the time of the 1960s God-is-dead controversy. He was interviewed for the position as vicar of a church in Hampstead. They asked him, a little apprehensively, "You do believe in God?" He said, "Of course not." He left the church. It was then he told me he went back to his Jewish roots and the poetry of the Old Testament. If it was the New Testament that made him go into the church, the Old Testament reminded him of his origins.'⁶⁴

Peter Pelz is himself an artist and writer. The legacy of writers, scholars and thinkers who were either children themselves at the time, or were children of people who occupied menial positions in Britain at the time of their exile, has been scarcely less enduring than that of their more celebrated contemporaries.

The Kindertransport

One of the most poignant events was the Kindertransport, organized in the months leading up to the war, whereby Britain accepted some 10,000 unaccompanied children below the age of 17. Many – like Paul Weindling's mother – made a

success of their life here. It is surprising, not that so many children adjusted with great difficulty to a new culture, and to their soon-to-be orphaned status, but that they proved so resilient and resourceful.

The wrenching of children from the security and love of a suddenly abridged childhood created the mixture of tragedy and hope of those who were saved. Survivors tell of tearful faces – adults themselves broke down as they saw the last of their children – in a blur of smoke, waved handkerchiefs and desperate valedictory kisses. (The film *Into the Arms of Strangers* about the Kindertransport, must be one of the most moving documents ever produced on separation and loss.) The epic nature of the journey cannot be overestimated; it must have seemed like a voyage to the other side of the world. The contrast, too, between the matter-of-fact reception by dutiful Britishers and the painful farewells from home, struck many of the children as a chilling presentiment of what lay in store for them. No-nonsense women who rejected the embrace even of little girls because this was ‘cissy’ or ‘not done’, was the first contact some had with dutiful hosts. Others became very attached to their charges, which resulted in many tender friendships. But often, as Lore Segal remembers, the children remained truculent and unforgiving to those who had opened their house, and sometimes, their hearts, to them. Although some had been placed in advance with families who received them at Harwich or Liverpool Street, others were dispatched to holiday camps and other institutions, where there would be a regular cull by prospective foster-families, a system later described as a ‘cattle-market’. Some were even exchanged for others more tractable or obedient. One child, selected as she thought to be part of a family, discovered that she was expected to be a maidservant.

The request desperate parents made to departing children to try and arrange for them or their siblings to reach safety was a terrifying ordeal. A few children actually managed it, asking naively in well-to-do suburbs about work for a maid and a gardener. Occasionally the answer was positive. In this sense, some children became the guardians, as it were, of their parents, who found their status reversed when they arrived: their child knew so much more than they did, spoke the language and was more familiar with British ways. Lore Segal, in *Other People's Houses*, wrote of the eve of her departure from Vienna. ‘I stood in the center of my circle of relatives, nodding solemnly. I said I would write letters to everybody and would tell the *Engländer* about everything that was happening and would get sponsors for my parents and grandparents and for everybody.’ She was ten. It seems extraordinary to tell a child in such circumstances that it was her duty to rescue her parents. Lore Segal says, ‘I took it very seriously. I thought it would be my fault if my parents were sent to a concentration camp.’⁶⁵

Remarkably, she succeeded. An unhappy little refugee in Dovercourt Camp near Harwich, she sat in the freezing December cold. ‘And then I saw something ... in the middle of a semi-circle of snow that must in summer have been a flower

bed in a grass plot behind the cottage, there grew a tall meager rosebush with a single bright-red rosebud wearing a clump of freshly fallen snow, like a cap askew. This struck me profoundly ... I would write it in a letter to Onkel (Uncle) Hans and Tante (Aunt) Trude in London, saying that the Jews in Austria were like roses left over in the winter of Nazi occupation. I would write that they were dying of the cold. How beautifully it all fell into place. How true and sad! They would say "And she is only ten years old!" I ran around the cottage and up the veranda steps ... I wanted to be writing. I was going to say "If good people like you don't pluck the roses quickly, the Nazis will come and cut them down." Her aunt and uncle were duly impressed and showed the letter to members of various refugee committees. This, in turn, moved a family to sponsor Lore's parents for a married-couple visa, as maid and butler.

Although Lore Segal was the recipient of an unexcitable charity, her judgment on the ten years she spent in England is far from negative. She says that basic decency means a great deal, and is amazed that so many people accepted into their home a troubled and sometimes refractory child.⁶⁶

She also recognizes the poignancy of middle-class Viennese, who had kept servants in their households, entering domestic service. While her mother became extremely competent, her ailing father was broken by the experience. 'It is difficult for people now to understand how improbable domestic life was for a middle-class man in the Austria of the 1930s. My father scarcely even knew there was a kitchen in the house. Food arrived and was cleared away by my mother and the maid. For him to have to start again in another country and in another profession was simply too much ...' As well as celebrating success, Lore Segal commemorates those who found in exile only lasting misery and unhappiness.

For many children, the provisional stay in Britain became routine, and at length accepted. The memory of parents remained, but the presence became distant. Postcards came telling that they were travelling to the East or were going away; children were exhorted not to worry if they didn't hear anything for a long time. For many, a laconic card or a terse telegram was the last they ever heard until the end of the war, when it was the fate of the majority to learn the worst.

Even those whose parents had survived or escaped found the reunion difficult: each remembered the other as they had been, but children had grown up and parents had aged, particularly those who had survived the camps. Sometimes, the common language was lost. It required time and effort for feelings, long hidden under the veil of English reserve, to be restored.

It was not the problems of reunion that preoccupied most people, but inconsolable, irretrievable loss. Some, unreconciled to British reticence, moved on after the war, usually to the USA. Palestine was too risky for people who had so narrowly escaped with their lives, and in any case there were strict quotas. A majority stayed here; their experience tells of cultural and linguistic adaptation

and efforts to succeed, often to show absent parents that they had obeyed instructions to be good and grateful. They started families, made a career in medicine, law or business. Photographs of their children show them smiling in school uniform or the regalia of their degree ceremony. The reception by Britain of the thousands of children, amputated from their families, remains one of the most creditable and altruistic actions in the world at a dark time.

Leslie Brent arrived in Britain thanks to the Kindertransport. It remains a constant source of wonder to him that a child refugee should have become part of Peter Medawar's team researching skin grafts and tissue rejection which led to a Nobel prize in 1960. Leslie Brent's whole family died, except an uncle and a cousin, who were out of Germany at the time. His cousin, now 94, lives in the USA. 'My parents, sister, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces, all died. We were from a small town in Pomerania on the Baltic coast called Koslin, now in Poland and renamed Koszalin.

'I lived there until I was eleven, when persecution at school became severe in the winter of 1936. The Headmaster also wanted me to leave, although I was the only Jewish boy in the school. I went into school one morning and written on the board was "All Christians are Liars and Cheats". I was punished, although of course I had nothing to do with it. There was stone-throwing and abuse from the other children. My parents didn't know what to do. I was taken in by a Jewish Boys' Orphanage in Pankow in Berlin. That was my salvation, because from there I was selected for the Kindertransport.

'My parents stayed in Koslin. My father lost his job. In 1938, they came to Berlin because it was easier to "disappear" there. They were deported in October 1942. I thought they had gone to Theresienstadt, and from there to Auschwitz. Once, when visiting Poland as a lecturer, I visited Auschwitz. I broke down. There was no grave or date, and I had never grieved for them properly.

'It turned out they were never there at all. They were sent to Riga in Latvia, where, three days afterwards, they were taken to the woods and shot. My sister was with them. She was a trainee nurse in the Jewish hospital in Berlin, which remained open throughout the war. Part of it served as a collection point for deportations. She insisted on going with her parents, and they died together.

'It has been a burden. I have always suffered from survivors' guilt. The orphanage is still there. It became the Cuban embassy after the war, and then was derelict. It is now restored, a fine building, used as library and nursery school.

'I felt safe there [the orphanage]. I was a peaceful youngster, able to accept more or less whatever came my way. Arrival at the orphanage was, of course, a shock after family life. But I never felt abandoned by my parents. I knew it was in my best interests.

'The director was from Koslin and knew my father. He was a very humane man, and ran a liberal educational institution. I was there two years. Parents nominated their children to go on the Kindertransport, and the director chose

me. He nominated nine out of 100 boys. The ninth child could not get on the train because it had been overbooked. Another friend in the orphanage stayed in Berlin in the war, living underground. He survived, as a significant minority did, passing as Aryan or protected by friends.

'When we came to England, we had no idea it would be permanent. Most parents said, "We will see you soon." I kept up a correspondence with mine till just before they were deported. We were allowed to send messages through the Red Cross. They had to be anodyne, limited words. My last message from them told me they were going on a journey. I had no idea what it meant, but it must have been a week or two before they were deported. It was handwritten by my father – usually he typed the message – and his writing was rather wild. They understood their fate by then. I had had several letters about other members of the family, saying my aunt or uncle "*sind verreist*" (had gone on a journey). A euphemism for deportation ...

'My parents were very German. They loved German culture, music and literature. Their tragedy was that of hundreds of thousands of people. When Hitler came, they thought, "It can't last." They made no attempt to get out until it was too late.'

Leslie has a photograph – an iconic picture of a group of about ten children crowded in a railway carriage. Some are smiling, some look uneasy. Leslie appears apprehensive, his overriding feeling at the time.

His father was an Anglophile, and he learned English at the *Mittelschule* (secondary school), which proved very useful when he ended up in Dovercourt Camp near Harwich and, as already described, met Anna Essinger and went to her experimental school at Bunce Court.

'It was boarding and co-educational. I used to go back afterwards, whenever I was on leave from the army. I left after my School Certificate at fifteen. I had no one to pay for me to stay on. Anna Essinger arranged with a friend in Birmingham, a branch secretary of the Jewish Central Fund, and I was interviewed for a job in the Central Technical College as laboratory assistant. I also continued to study for Higher School Certificate, and took the exams in December 1943.

'Then I joined the army. For the next four years I was a soldier in the British army, although I remained a German enemy alien until naturalized in 1947. Until 1943, aliens were only allowed into the Pioneer Corps, but after 1943, it was possible to join the army even as an enemy alien.

'Internment came in 1940. Some were traumatized by it, but many were very forgiving. Having just escaped Germany, it was for most a very disagreeable experience. My friend Hans Meyer, critic and writer, was sent to Australia on the *Dunera*. He saw it as the panic measure it was, and was not embittered by it. Some of those sent to Canada and Australia shared quarters with Nazis. The internment camps saw a great flowering of culture – the Amadeus Quartet was founded, there were lectures, talks and courses.

'After training in Glasgow I went before the selection board. My father had been a stretcher-bearer in the First World War, and was awarded the Iron Cross, Third Class. I said I wanted to join the Royal Ambulance Corps, but they thought I was too intelligent. I was sent to a camp for officers in Kent, and I finished as Captain – a title I was told I could keep for life. After a spell in Northern Ireland, I was commissioned into the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. I joined the Fifth Division in Italy, just as the war was ending. I was part of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs. We were sent to Trieste to keep the peace between Italians and Yugoslavs at Pola. From there I went with the British Army on the Rhine to Luneborg Heath. Our job was to keep the Russians at bay over the Oder. My brigade was involved in Operation Woodpecker – cutting timber for British reconstruction. I had no compunction extracting resources from Germany.

'A friend of mine had a grant from the Ministry of Education for further study, since his studies had been interrupted by the war. It never occurred to me. But I applied and got a four-year grant to do a degree, graduating in Zoology 1951. My Head of Department was Peter Medawar, who offered me a place in his research team. In 1951, he moved to University College London, to the Jodrell Chair of Zoology. Although originally zoologists, we became immunologists.

'Medawar received the Nobel Prize in 1960 for his work on immunological tolerance.⁶⁷ He changed my life. For 30 years we worked together and became good friends. I was eventually invited to St Mary's Hospital [Paddington] Medical School; I stayed 20 years.

'I feel totally British. Germany is not my *Heimat* (home), nor Koslin either, although I enjoy going there. The army was very important to my experience – you had to become British pretty damn quickly. I first went to Mary Hill barracks in Glasgow, which they called Merry Hell. We were told we could go out only in pairs at night, because Glasgow was supposed to be very rough. I found Glasgow very friendly.

'The army led to my change of name. Going on leave during the war, the company commander said before I became an officer I should come back with an English name – for my own protection, because if caught by the enemy, with a name like that, I risked being persecuted as a Jew or shot as a traitor. I thought of Leslie because of Leslie Howard. I found Brent by flicking through the telephone directory.

'After the war I became naturalized. I decided not to go back to my original name, partly because it was unpronounceable and because I wanted to be assimilated. Some years ago, I did resume Baruch as a middle name.

'I have three children from my first marriage. My son is a forester in Devon. My older daughter is an aerialist, and has worked with the Cirque du Soleil and Archaos. My second daughter is an actor. She studied Drama at Hull University, and worked with some very creative theatrical companies.

'I regard myself as completely integrated into Britain – language, literature, music, politics. I never joined any political party until 1969, when I joined the

Labour Party. I was chair of a working party on social services in Haringey, and the recommendations we made then are only now being put into practice. Later, I became a founder member of the SDP. In fact, I became so committed, it was to the detriment of my career and family life.

'I am proud to have worked on immunological tolerance with Medawar and Billingham. It was a wonderful part of my life. The burns of war casualties led Medawar to investigate why skin grafts from donors were rejected. The immunological system of each individual is unique and the period for which a graft is accepted depends on how closely related the donor and recipient are. Grafting was possible between fraternal as well as identical twins. It was shown in animals that tissues are exchanged between twin foetuses. This suggests that the immunological system is acquired over time, not at conception.'

The team extracted from cells the antigens capable of calling forth transplantation immunity, setting the stage for the success of organ transplants. 'We showed that if you inject an animal with antigens from a potential donor before birth, the cells carry those antigens. It was believed that the resistance to genetically-different skin or organs created so profound a resistance that the barrier was insurmountable.

'The holy grail of immunology is to induce tolerance. We had to induce animals to be specifically tolerant to donor's tissues without crippling the immune-system. We found that our own immune-system doesn't destroy us because it is tolerant of our antigens.

'Understanding how rejection both by the recipient and the donor tissue works was the achievement, even though it still has not been totally overcome. The work we did then is coming to fruition now.

'After I retired I wrote a history of transplantation immunology, which was published in 1996. It is still a bible for transplant surgeons.⁶⁸

'I went back to Berlin in 1946. It was a ruined city. It was the place from which my parents had been sent to their death. I hated it. It has changed now, and full of memorials to the events that took place.'

The image of the anxious child on the Kindertransport seems a million miles away from the warm, comfortable interior in north London; but he is still there, eloquent witness and tenacious survivor. The photograph suggests no sign of the achievements that would unfold, the benefits that this boy, plucked by chance from the ranks of doomed children, would offer to those who sheltered him.⁶⁹ In a moment of reflection in the cosy interior, with an indigo November gloom pressing against the window-pane, it was impossible to ignore the annihilated energies and aborted talents of the perished, and what the world might have become had they been allowed to express them. All the stories of survival and hope are shadowed by the absence of those in unvisited tombs in the charnel house that was Europe.

Those who failed

The story of those who lived to tell the tale is often heart-wrenching, but their voices were heard. Louise London estimates that of those who applied for refuge in Britain before the outbreak of war, about one in ten was successful. The British government saw the problem of Jews as essentially an issue of mass migration. They could not, perhaps, have foreseen the 'final solution' which Nazi Germany would later devise, although a more critical consciousness of their own imperial history and a closer reading of Hitler's intentions might have alerted them earlier; and a kind of willed unknowing greeted the stories that began to emerge from the camps in 1942. Louise London states that by August 1939, the population of confessional Jews in the Austrian provinces outside of Vienna had fallen from about 15,000 to 370. 'The Jewish death-rate – one-eighth due to suicide – was four times what it had been in 1937.'⁷⁰ Anne Lonsdale remembers the story of Karl Weissenberg's mother, who jumped out of the window and killed herself as the Germans marched down her Vienna street. These tragedies, which suggested how Jews left behind judged their probable fate, were overtaken in Britain by the urgencies of war.

Survivors' stories are bound to give an incomplete account of the world. When Peggy Fink arrived at Belsen in 1945, it had become a Jewish displaced persons' centre, with survivors arriving constantly. She found boxes full of unopened letters from all parts of the world, mostly search enquiries for missing relatives and friends; their undisclosed contents suggests a world of suffering lost in flames and forgetting. Although success in reuniting some families brought moments of joy, most were lost in the ashes of ideology. 'Sometimes a woman who had believed her husband to be dead had remarried. On such occasions, the rabbi would advise the woman to divorce both men and then choose one. Or occasionally we thought we had found a child for a mother, only to discover that, although the name was correct, just one day's difference in the birth date meant that it was not in fact the missing child.'⁷¹ That so many testimonies of tenacity and endurance emerged serves as admonition to a humanity incapable of learning from what it routinely invokes as 'lessons of history', which has proved so melancholy and incompetent an instructor.

Only later did the psychic wounds of survivors begin to be understood. Many, haunted by the longings of exile, created, especially in those corners of London where they lived, the central European atmosphere of the inter-war years: the West Hampstead coffee-houses, the *Gemütlichkeit* (sociability) and openness, games of chess, conversations and arguments, attendance at lectures on science or art, philosophizing over the patisserie – strange customs to an austere 1940s and 1950s London. Some live on, now in their eighties and nineties – a warm afternoon in Golders Hill Park, West Hampstead, sees the very elderly, supported by their children, themselves no longer young, listening to the band and admiring

the flowers in the late sunshine; reflecting upon journeys on which they carried the precious cultural paraphernalia of an urbane *Mitteleuropa*. They still carry the poignant aura of the elsewhere, unvisitable now as it is long vanished, although constantly revisited down the lengthening corridors of memory.

The stories of another group of Jews are suppressed or forgotten – the illegal refugees, the ‘failed asylum-seekers’ of their age, whose presence in Britain escaped Authority’s stony vigilance. How many evaded the rigorous controls sustained even in the period of systematic extermination is unknown, but the story of Danny Marks’ father was not an isolated example.

Danny has been my close friend for more than 30 years. ‘My father was born into the unfriendly world of the Jews of the Russian Empire. Poverty was ever-present and violence periodically broke out. No wonder the German invaders of the First World War seemed a better option. He got on well enough with them to have learnt their songs, which he taught me. Germans were recruiting manpower among Poles, and of course, to ease labour shortages in Germany. Ludendorff, the German Commander, issued a proclamation in Yiddish – “*An mayne libe Yidn*” (to my dear Jews).

‘My father, a baker, heeded the appeal, and went to work in Berlin. In 1918 he experienced revolution and economic disaster. When he visited his family in Poland, he could not stay there because he lacked Polish citizenship: all born in the territory which became Poland and who had not been there in 1918 were denied citizenship. My father, formerly a subject of the Tsar, became stateless.

‘He went to Paris with his older brother, who, as a Russian soldier, had been a prisoner of war of the Germans. France, because of a low birth-rate and losses suffered in the war, was still fairly welcoming to migrants from Eastern Europe. Britain was less so. The brothers had three sisters living in Britain. Two had come before the First War, and the other had managed to join them as a widow after the war. The sisters were tough characters, and set up hairdressing businesses, one in the very un-Jewish area of Bermondsey, off the Jamaica Road.

‘The brothers reached London, but as aliens their position was insecure, especially at a time of fear of Bolshevism, since Russian Jews were its supposed agents. They soon found out, however, that there were those in the metropolitan police who were, for a consideration, prepared to offer assistance. They obtained the appropriate papers, but lived in continuous fear of being “exposed”. My father lied about his age, subtracting 15 years, so he could claim he had come to the country as a young child before the war. He did not swear allegiance to His Majesty King George VI until 1946, after the birth of his five children; but he never felt completely safe.

‘He worked as a baker in the East End. He was a member of the London Jewish Bakers’ Union, which was affiliated to the Arbiter Ring, (Workers’ Circle) a Jewish friendly society and socialist cultural organization. I remember that going to make

payments was an opportunity for warm social exchange (in Yiddish) in Leman Street, Aldgate, and the Sylvester Path, next to the Hackney Empire.

'My father could not retire with a pension because he was "too young", but he was overtaken by bad health and could no longer work.'

Danny's father would now be regarded as an 'illegal immigrant.' Nevertheless, Britain has been the beneficiary of his children, among whom are writers, an accountant and a historian; although two subsequently went to the United States. I have a particular interest in the fate of this family and its irregular status, since without them, I would never have known one of the most deep and enduring friendships of my life.

The journey between departure and the arrival may seem interminable to the traveller; but it is only a step from refugee to belonging. Is popular anxiety over refugees a result of their perceived 'difference', or because of the ease with which people are absorbed once they are accepted? Generosity towards refugees is usually repaid a thousandfold, since all they want is to offer their intelligence, labour and goodwill to the country that welcomes them. Have the cold North Atlantic winds chilled our compassion? Has a misty insularity convinced us that those unfavoured by being born here have come to take something from us?

Michael Yudkin was Honorary Secretary of SPSL/CARA from 1992 until 2003. His mother was a refugee from Germany in the thirties, and his father was the third child, and the first born in England, of grandparents who fled Tsarist Russia. Michael Yudkin speaks eloquently of the transition from petitioner to pride in achievement. 'My grandfather joined his cousin, who was already here, probably on the run from the Tsarist police. He [his grandfather] imported furs from Russia and they lived in Dalston. His cousin was a cabinet-maker. They were of the industrious artisan class. My father went to Hackney Downs school, got a scholarship to Chelsea College and a scholarship to Cambridge. He had a chair at London University before he was forty. He certainly would not have achieved that in St Petersburg. His next youngest brother became a consultant paediatrician. I worked in Sir Hans Krebs's Department and finished my working life as Professor of Biochemistry at Oxford.' Michael Yudkin's grandfather was an intellectual, although not in terms that were of immediate use to secular society. That, although Michael Yudkin does not say so, has been left to his descendants.

Internment

At the outbreak of war in September 1939, the government organized a review of the total of about 80,000 refugees in Britain who were, in theory, 'enemy aliens'. Those found by tribunals to have been victims of persecution in Germany were left at liberty. All academic refugees fell into this category, and continued with their work until May 1940. With the Nazi move westwards, invasion fears

reached a peak, partly fuelled by newspaper scares of a 'fifth column', and the suggestion that spies might be smuggled into Britain disguised as refugees. An 'intern-the-lot' mood, reminiscent of 1914, seized the country, and Churchill decided to imprison all 'enemy aliens', including those who had fled for their life and previously designated as 'friendly aliens'.

Internment camps established on the Isle of Man included requisitioned hotels and boarding houses surrounded by barbed wire, turning part of Douglas into an ad hoc detention facility. Internee resourcefulness is legendary – the establishment of an informal university, where music was made, languages taught, physics and maths courses initiated and discussions on current events took place. Less happy was the fate of internees, 'transported' (a word with historic resonance) to Australia and Canada, notably those who died when the *Arandora Star*, crammed with Italians who were being deported overseas together with interned Austrian and German refugees, was sunk on its way to Canada in July 1940. Out of a total complement of 1,500, over 800 perished.

More than 27,000 'aliens' were interned in 1940, including many scientists and academics who had been helped by the AAC, or SPSL. The SPSL quickly mobilized to rescue its protégés from the country which had offered them refuge. Liberal opinion urged the government to reconsider its ill-advised action, since the great majority of the interned clearly presented no danger to Britain. The SPSL was prominent in advocating the release of people whose employment was unequivocally for the war effort. Following an initiative by A.V. Hill, a Vice-President of the SPSL and then MP for the University of Cambridge, a government White Paper defined categories of those who should be freed because of the national importance of their work.

By the end of the year, a Council of Aliens had been formed to deal with those eligible to be set at liberty. The latter included scientists, researchers and persons of academic distinction for whom work of importance in their special fields was available, as well as outstanding contributors to art, science or letters. In cooperation with the SPSL, tribunals were set up by the vice-chancellors of universities, the Royal Society, the British Academy and the Royal Society of Medicine to consider applications for release. The Royal Academy of Arts, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the PEN club and the musicians associations also set up committees to deal with applications from those professions. The SPSL prepared the applications for more than 550 individuals and many others who had been 'transported' to Canada and Australia in the autumn of 1940.

This was when Esther Simpson (see next section), then deputy secretary of SPSL, was at her energetic and proactive best. The government was clearly embarrassed that they had reacted too hastily to urgencies, real enough no doubt, but heightened by popular newspaper campaigns. The Home Secretary announced that anyone 'who is helping the pursuit of learning and science' would be eligible. It was Esther Simpson who drew up the list of over 550 candidates.

Some refugees have left vivid accounts of internment, none more so than Paul Jacobsthal, a scholar who specialized in Greek vase painting and Celtic art. He had left Germany in 1937, and was appointed lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford. In 1944 he would publish his *Early Celtic Art*, which examined the impact of Greek ornament on Celtic decorative arts.⁷² He captured the irony and incongruity of the occasion, when he wrote: 'On Friday July 5 1940 in the morning when I was peacefully writing on Celtic Geometric Ornament a knock came at my door in Christ Church and a plain clothes police officer entered producing a warrant of arrest. Being an optimist by nature and wrongly believing in English "individualism" I was surprised; there had been a good many other scholars, loosely connected with the University, interned during the last weeks. But I had felt safe: had not the Public Orator in 1937 at the Encaenia mentioned me as "*huius Universitatis non inquilinum, sed insitivum*"?'⁷³ And had not Judge Dale, presiding at the Tribunal, sifting Aliens, in 1939 addressed me "... it is an honour to have you here"? I saw the Dean who tried in vain to obtain from the Chief Constable a respite of six hours which would have enabled me to shelter my manuscripts and photos properly. I was driven home in the Black Maria, took my leave of my wife and fetched my case. On our way back to the police station we took my neighbour Dr Kosterlitz with his violin, a sympathetic, modest psychotherapist. In the police station my luggage was searched, my razor "temporarily impounded" – they were apparently afraid of suicide or murder (in other places they took more interest in boot-laces).'⁷⁴

'I found the following gentlemen already assembled: Dr Berkenau, neurologist, working in the Warneford Hospital, Oxford; Dr Brink, collaborator of the Oxford Latin Dictionary published by the Clarendon Press; Dr Forchheimer, Head of Department in the Austrian Ministry of Labour, attached to University College; Professor Gruenhut, formerly Professor of Criminal law in the University of Bonn, attached to All Souls; Professor Jellinek, Professor of Medicine in the University of Vienna, connected with Queens College; Dr Meinhardt, formerly Keeper at the Ethnographical Museum, Berlin, Deputy Keeper at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford ...' (There were many more.)

'We had our last normal lunch, served by friendly police officers; in the later afternoon we were driven in a hired Midlands bus to Cowley barracks. There was a detention room, locked up during the night, we were twelve people, bedded close together on the floor. We had a plain supper in a hall to which we were led by sentries with fixed bayonets. After supper we could walk in a cemented yard 25 by 35 feet and look into the country through barbed wire ... Some of us were silent and depressed, others excited and talkative. Professor Jellinek lectured on his experiments on the influence of lightning on metal, illustrated by photos: he maintained that the Greeks as their representation of thunderbolts prove must have been acquainted with these phenomena, he told us that in his institute in Vienna he had pictures enlarged from a plate in some monograph

“The representation of the thunderbolt in antiquity” and he was delighted to meet the author.’

They were taken to Devon, where they received a prisoner number and were examined medically to see if they were suffering from venereal diseases. After two days, they went north. ‘At 6 p.m. we arrived at an ugly town which we learned afterwards was Bury. We marched down a long road, Manchester Road, a clue to the part of England where we were – people stared at us with rather hostile looks. After 20 minutes we halted in front of a colossal disgustingly ugly factory showing all the symptoms of decay. Behind the wire fences old customers, reduced to looking like low-class refugees, grimaced and shouted at us newcomers – the whole thing a nightmare.

‘We were taken upstairs to a huge hall, about 150 by 250 foot, the ceiling supported by cast-iron columns with Corinthian capitals, along it the remnants of cotton-spinning machinery, transmissions and crankshafts, partly dismounted, heavy pieces dangerously dangling. We had to line up, perspiring, penned together with our luggage: some people fainted. In a corner through the small windows some light still shone in, an officer and some sergeants were busy making lists and searching men and luggage till nightfall stopped them. They finished their job next morning, five captains, assisted by privates who had the manners and techniques of customs officers, were at work; they confiscated books, chocolate, cigarettes, writing paper, drugs: insulin was taken away from a diabetic, doctors had to give up their instruments; I personally managed to keep my *Odyssey* when I showed the Captain a certificate with the seal of the university. We stumbled through dark staircases and narrow catacomb-like corridors to a hall on the ground floor converted into a kitchen and had porridge and tea in tin vessels. Then we fetched palliasses and blankets and lay down on the floor in the hall upstairs well guarded by sentries with fixed bayonets.

‘Next morning we learned the name of the Camp which now became our home for about a week: Warth Mill – or as some half-educated internee pronounced it Wrath Mill, which would have been a far more appropriate name.’

Paul Jacobsthal was transferred to Hutchinson Camp on the Isle of Man, maintaining a wry detachment and a highly graphic impression of his experiences, which he wrote with the same cool acuity. He was, perhaps lucky.

One former Professor of Chemistry, an international authority in dyestuffs and a former concentration camp inmate, escaped to England just before the war and was researching the use of sisal waste in submarines. As soon as the Release Orders were enacted, his employers applied for his exemption from internment. No answer came from the Home Office when the police arrived at his house. He begged them to wait until the Home Office replied. They wouldn’t. Unable to face internment, he took poison.⁷⁵

Max Perutz also wrote of his experience, not only of internment, but of deportation to Canada.⁷⁶ He was picked up in Cambridge in May 1940 and locked up with more than a hundred others in a school at Bury St Edmunds. From there, they were taken to a Liverpool housing estate and then Victorian boarding houses on the Isle of Man. 'A few days later, tight-lipped Army doctors came to vaccinate all the men under thirty – an ominous event, whose sinister purpose we soon learned. On July 3, we were taken back to Liverpool, and ... embarked on the large troopship *Ettrick* for an unknown destination. About twelve hundred of us were herded together, tier upon tier, in its airless holds. Locked up in another hold were German prisoners of war, whom we envied for their army rations. On our second day out, we learned about the *Arandora Star* ... After that we were issued life belts.'

When they arrived at Quebec ten days later, their status changed from internee to civilian prisoners of war, entitling them to army rations. Most assumed that internment would last for the duration of the war, which seemed an open sentence. Fear remained that if Britain lost the war, they would be sent back to Germany. 'To have been arrested, interned and deported as an enemy alien by the English, whom I had regarded as my friends, made me more bitter than to have lost freedom itself. Having first been rejected as a Jew by my native Austria, which I loved, I now found myself rejected as a German by my adopted country. Since we were kept incommunicado at first, I could not know that most of my English friends and scientific colleagues were campaigning to get the anti-Nazi refugees, and especially the many scholars among them, released. I had come to Cambridge from Vienna as a graduate student in 1936 and had begun my life's research work on the structure of proteins. In March of 1940, a few weeks before my arrest, I had proudly won my PhD with a thesis on the crystal structure of haemoglobin – the protein of the red blood cells. My parents had joined me in Cambridge shortly before the outbreak of war; I wondered when I would see them again. But, most of all, I and the more enterprising among my comrades felt frustrated at having to idle away our time instead of helping in the war against Hitler.'

Max Perutz entertained fantasies of escape to the USA, to join his brother and sister. More practically, he organized the camp university, along with mathematician Hermann Bondi, who later became chief scientist at the Ministry of Defence, and originated the steady-state theory of the universe. Klaus Fuchs also taught at this improvised institution.

When the camp commander told Max Perutz that the Home Office had ordered his release and that he had also been offered a professorship by the New School of Social Research in New York, he chose to return to England, where his research and his parents were. He learned that his father had also been interned on the Isle of Man. In New Brunswick, awaiting an escort back to Britain, 'we were met by one of Britain's prison commissioners – the shrewd and humane Alexander

Paterson sent out by the Home Office to interview any of the internees who wanted to return to Britain.' By the time a convoy had assembled to make the dangerous Atlantic crossing, it was already January. 'One gray winter morning, the entire convoy anchored safely in Liverpool Harbor. On landing, I was formally released from internment and handed a railway ticket to Cambridge, and I was told to register with the police there as an enemy alien ... Next morning, at the Cambridge station, our faithful lab mechanic greeted me, not as an enemy alien but as a long-lost friend; he brought me the good news that my father had been released from the Isle of Man a few weeks earlier and that both he and my mother were safe in Cambridge. That was January 1941.' His ordeal had lasted eight months.

In the journal of the Association of Jewish Refugees in September 2007, in response to two articles by Anthony Grenville, a number of correspondents wrote letters to the editor recalling their own and their relatives' experience of internment.⁷⁷ These show both the bitterness and tragedy of some lives; the comic absurdity of others. Max Sulzbacher, referring to his late father Martin Sulzbacher, said, 'In February 1940 he was hauled before a tribunal on trumped-up charges, laced in category A (that is those believed to pose the greatest "threat" to the security of Britain), and sent to a camp in Seton, Devon in that cold winter. In June he was sent to Liverpool on the *Arandora Star* bound for Canada ... Fortunately, my father was a strong swimmer and he found a raft from which he was eventually rescued by a Canadian destroyer. All this is beautifully described in two books: *Collar the Lot* and *A Bespattered Page* (by the late Ronald Stent).⁷⁸ The destroyer landed them in Greenock, Scotland, but a week later he was sent on the *Dunera* bound for Australia. There he was put into a camp in Tatura.

To quote from Ronald Stent's book, "On erev Yom Kippur", he received a telegram that his house in north London had been bombed: his aged parents, his sister, his brother and sister-in-law had all been killed. Fortunately, my mother and my siblings had all been saved as they were interned on the Isle of Man.

'In November 1941 my father was allowed to return to England, but was sent to the Isle of Man before being released. His humorous remark was: "*Fur eine Nachkur*" (for an after-treatment).

'After these experiences he did not take up British nationality and it was left to me and my siblings to become naturalized individually when we came of age.'

Mrs Maria Blackburn wrote: 'My mother and I escaped from Vienna in March 1939 on her (non-Jewish) passport. My Jewish father had to acquire a forged passport in order to join us in England just before the war started.

'At the time I was eight years old and I remember very clearly how Father was taken away to the Isle of Man soon after his arrival. The next time I saw him he was dressed in the uniform of the British army – the Pioneer Corps actually. He served in Britain and France until the end of the war.

'Father never complained about internment but told us amusing stories about how the multinational internees chatted in 'Emigranto', a mixture of English, Yiddish and German. He was taught English and appreciated his intelligent, well-educated company.

'However, Father missed his family, so when he was told that he had two choices – to stay on the Isle of Man for the rest of the war or to join up – he quickly chose the latter ...

'Father's choice meant that Mother was given a work permit. So at last she was able to earn ten pence an hour, cleaning for some comfortably-off ladies living in our area of Yorkshire ... I never heard my father complain about his army service. He was very grateful to Britain for giving us shelter and saving our lives. So he was proud to serve and luckily came back to us without a scratch, living to a grand old age.'

Beveridge, in *A Defence of Free Learning*, also includes some testimonies of interned academics, including that of economist, Dr Leo Lipmann, who spoke of arrival in Douglas, Isle of Man, walking through 'streets lined by sullen crowds'.⁷⁹ The sociologist, Heinz Arndt, said internees were 'shoved across the Atlantic like cattle'. There were 450 Nazi prisoners of war on board the Motor Ship, *Estrick*. He kept a diary addressed to his fiancée, in which he says he spent much time trying to explain to the captain-interpreter the difference between Nazis and those oppressed by them. The internees were also expected to share huts with Nazis; they organized themselves in such a way as to avoid contact with their enemies. When they were at last given writing paper, it was stamped 'Prisoner-of-War mail', which they refused to use.

Most internees were released within a year. The events of 1940 came to be seen as a consequence of panic, a wasteful error, a detail in the monstrous mistakes of that violent and troubled era.

Helping hands

The well-known names who supported the Academic Assistance Council should not conceal the many less prominent people who gave professional and voluntary support, serving as counsellors, befrienders and initiators of sometimes bewildered strangers into the mysterious ways of the British. No one exemplifies this altruism and dedication better than Esther Simpson, employed by the AAC and SPSL for 45 years. Attentive to both the personal and professional wellbeing of all who passed through the organization, her tact and delicacy are still remembered, not only by those who received SPSL grants, but equally, by Council members or those acting as advisers and referees for exiled academics.

She was a significant figure, a rather enigmatic example of the Anglicized Jewish immigrant. She became a Quaker, and religious commitment combined with the wider horizons of the daughter of immigrants led to an early interest in

international affairs (she read French and German at Leeds). She learned the violin from the age of six, and her relationships with émigrés were strengthened by a common and passionate interest in making music. Experience as a schoolteacher was followed by a spell as a governess in Germany, after which she became a secretary to a British aristocrat in Paris. She worked for the International Fellowship for Reconciliation, set up after the First World War and dedicated to understanding between former belligerents. In the background were the qualities of that particularly British view of 'good works' associated with pacifists, idealists, socialists and Quakers: earnestness, high-mindedness and a spirit of internationalism. She maintained regular contact with many rescued scholars and remembered birthdays and anniversaries. She often referred to them as her 'family'; and as she grew older, they frequently invited her to their home, club or hotel, where they looked after her as she had looked after them. In 1940 she admitted in a very British form of understatement, 'I faced one or two anxious moments last week. One naturally has something to worry about when one has a family of six hundred.'

Esther Simpson embodied altruism and duty, a combination far from joyless, since her kindness and patience have not been forgotten, any more than her formidable efficiency. She was the kind of woman of whose passing it was said that her like would not be seen again. This is true. But it does not mean that generosity and fellow-feeling have vanished. Today, these take a different form, no less dedicated, but perhaps more professional. Esther Simpson, born in 1903, was of that generation of women shaped by the slaughter of the First World War. Their devotion to the welfare of the injured and disabled, as to those less favoured than themselves, was in part the response of a bereaved generation and its sense of loss; the tenderness they bestowed was rooted, not only in culture and conscience, but also in the experience of a society amputated of so much youthful energy.

Esther Simpson became an idealized figure. But like many of those she aided, her inner life remains in shadow. She did, however, make something of a confidant of Engelbert Broda, the Austrian chemist who came to Britain in 1938. His son, Paul Broda, has a considerable correspondence between his father and Esther Simpson, in which she is less guarded than in the formal interviews she gave. From it a more idiosyncratic – and rounded – woman emerges, with a strong feeling of Englishness, although as she says in one letter (18 December 1950), her own parents were never really assimilated. 'England is full of faults, and these hurt me because I feel part of England in spite of my parents' origin.' She felt she had the advantage, as a child of refugees, of a more critical eye.

Her letters indicate that many of her standards were conventionally those of the upwardly mobile. In one, she reports that she had attended an excellent lecture, but that of course, she didn't understand it. If her admiration for her protégés would now be considered 'elitist', at the time this would scarcely

have been thought worthy of comment. She would probably have agreed with E.M. Forster, who said if he had to choose between his friends and his country, he would choose the former. She wrote (18 December 1950): 'to me human relationships are the most important, because the most constructively creative factors operating in this world of woe. The human individual is what matters to me, not "humanity", and certainly not any Moloch of a "state" which purports to speak for "humanity".'

Tess Simpson and Engelbert Broda had an enduring friendship, despite political differences. In her letters, Esther appears to argue with his Communist allegiance without actually broaching the issue directly – another example of her tact. It does suggest a considerable degree of frankness between them. She wrote: 'What I cannot do is to let my idealism for this country – by which I mean my desire that it should be perfect and my consequent suffering that it is not – blind me to the beam in the other fellow's eye; I can't fall for another system simply because mine is not perfect, because I am only too conscious of elements in other systems which make for the destruction of the values which I believe in and without which no decent human intercourse is possible. Don't mistake me; when I say I feel part of England, it isn't out of any chauvinism – it's a mixture of the consciousness of privileges enjoyed during my childhood that my parents never had, the real affection I bear for what is best in the English character and institutions – but I believe that I have to belong to the world too; I do feel a citizen of the world. England so far allows me to be that – far too many countries would not.'

She was not above offering advice to her friends in personal matters. This emotional involvement in the lives of rescued scholars had its limitations. SPSL was, after all, as Paul Broda says, 'set up for European Jews who won Nobel prizes'. Engelbert Broda felt that the great and good of SPSL could never really understand people who had been imprisoned in central Europe and for whom escape was a matter of life and death.

At the end of *A Defence of Free Learning*, Beveridge says that by 1945, although Hitler was dead, intolerance was not. Of the 2,541 scholars on the register of the SPSL in 1945, 624 were in the USA, 612 in Britain, 80 in Central and South America, 74 in The Dominions and 66 in Palestine. He says that the SPSL was on the verge of closing down in 1956, when events in Hungary demonstrated that the need for such an organization was as urgent as ever.⁸⁰

After the war, the great majority of scholars in Britain remained here. Nikolaus Pevsner, then Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge, wrote to Beveridge 'Thanks to the generosity and the open-mindedness of this country, there was ... only a removal to more sympathetic surroundings. I have had two or three enquiries from Germany in the last few years, whether I would go back and occupy a chair, but our family is here, and our life and my job are here. We have after all lived in London longer than in any other single town.'

Max Born, then 75, did return to Germany. But he wrote: 'Through the generosity of the SPSL and the British Universities, in particular Cambridge and Edinburgh, I have found a second home in Great Britain and was able to give my children a good education. All my ten grandchildren have been born in Great Britain and have English as their mother tongue. I am deeply grateful for all this. After my reaching the age limit I have retired to my home country, partly for economical, partly for sentimental reasons. But I have retained my British nationality.'

The aftermath

Those who escaped – and the survivors of – the Holocaust appeared to herald a chastened society, which would be more just and learn to value people not only for their intellectual distinction, but because there are other forms of knowing, without which a civilized society is impossible: the informed spirit and the acuity of the heart, the insights of compassion and the far-sightedness of wisdom and watchfulness – not rhetorical abstractions, but the bonding of a common humanity, fragile and always threatened by the superior 'knowledge' of revelation, divine or of this world.

Esther Simpson became virtually the lone custodian of the SPSL's work, although, perhaps inevitably, satisfaction with work accomplished was overtaken by new urgencies. The mission of rescue would never be the same again as in the 1930s. It was not that racism and discrimination would disappear – far from it; human societies are rarely animated by reason, although are sometimes governed by it. Before long, other ideologies would send waves of dissenters to seek shelter in the shrinking sites of tolerance as much of the world succumbed either to Marxist or military dictatorships in the post-war era. By that time, other movements had emerged, which took over some responsibilities which the SPSL had made its own in the heroic years of the 1930s and 40s.

After the extraordinary talents of the 1930s generation, it is tempting to see a decline in the intellectual ability of subsequent refugees. But each fresh wave brings different qualities, and if we expect that early experience to be repeated, we are almost certainly looking in the wrong place. There is another shift in the contemporary world which Paul Broda points out. 'One element of that generation from the thirties that distinguished them from those who came later was that they really believed that they, personally, could change the world; and in many ways they did. I don't think any of us believes that now.'



Plate 1 Sketch of Albert Einstein
by Ilse Eton

With kind permission of Mrs Ilse Eton
(Assistant Secretary SPSTL, 1944–45 and
Secretary, April 1946–51)



Plate 2 Lord Beveridge enjoying a glass
of wine

LSE Archives



Plate 3 Lord Rutherford

Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge



Plate 4 Esther Simpson

CARA Archive, London



Plate 5 Leo Szilard
Egon Weiss Collection



Plate 6 Max Perutz with his
haemoglobin model
MRC (Medical Research Council) – Laboratory
of Molecular Biology



Plate 7 Max Born
With kind permission of Gustav Born



Plate 8 Sir Hans Krebs and his students
in the laboratory at Sheffield
University of Sheffield



Plate 9 Sir Nikolaus Pevsner

Photo that was published by the *Evening Standard* in 1954. Copyright © Getty Images



Plate 10 Sir Karl Popper

Copyright © Lucinda Douglas-Menzies/National Portrait Gallery, London



Plate 11 Sir Ernst Gombrich
With kind permission of Leonie Gombrich



Plate 12 Sir Ludwig Guttmann
With kind permission of the International
Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS)



Plate 13 Sir Ernst Chain at work in the
Sir William Dunn School of Pathology,
Oxford, 1939
John Wiley & Sons Ltd



Plate 14 Klaus Fuchs
National Archives



Plate 15 Kindertransport children in 1938
Wiener Library, London



Plate 16 Jewish refugees in Germany boarding a boat for England
Wiener Library, London

3

Until

Refugees, and not only the clever and celebrated, are a source of perpetual renewal and innovation in the societies that receive them; not only because they must re-invent themselves, but in so doing, they also creatively re-appraise the values of the host culture. This fundamental concept should not need to be fought for. While preparing this book, a number of people in the USA told me that such a simple truth should not even require enunciation. It does, of course, again, even in the USA, where the presence of an estimated 12–15 million ‘undocumented’, mainly Latino, newcomers, has also revived a debate still never quite settled in Europe.

Eva Hoffman observed of the late 1950s, ‘I came to America at a moment when that country was on the cusp of enormous change. But at the time it still had a confident unified sense of itself and the conviction that it was not only a great power but that it represented progress, goodness and the desirable human norm. The ideology of emigration was still unequivocally assimilationist. The reigning metaphor was of the melting pot, and of course it was premised on the belief that new arrivals would be only too happy to do the melting, to leave their pasts behind and accept all that America had to offer gladly and gratefully. The imagination of difference, in other words, was neither nurtured nor strongly developed. [Thus] assimilation carried with it strong connotations of colonization, of having my first self, so to speak, undervalued and stifled by a very powerful force.’¹ Globalization is destabilizing fixed identities, even in the most exuberant and self-confident places. These uncertainties are reinforced by refugees who reach Europe and America, with stories of other forms of social organization and ways of living which, until now, had been only rumours on the outskirts of civilization.

EASTERN EUROPE

Hungary and Czechoslovakia

After the enormity of the Second World War and the realization of what had actually befallen Europe, it was understandable that the continent should focus

on reconstruction. A work of ferocious expiatory economic repair took place which led within two decades to the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the German economic miracle. Because economic collapse had led directly to the social and moral catastrophe of National Socialism, it followed that economic growth would be the surest guarantor that the vow, 'Never Again', would be fulfilled.

The impulse to economic rehabilitation was also nourished by the competitive struggle with a Socialism which seemed, by force in Europe, and voluntarily by the independence struggles of former imperial territories, destined to dominate the future. But although the world had changed far less than was thought, and one form of totalitarian ideology in central and Eastern Europe had been exchanged for another, the persecution of academics in the Communist countries did not immediately seem to be of the same degree as under National Socialist regimes. For one thing, there was no crude repudiation of 'Jewish' science or physics and no expulsion of people on racial grounds. Communist ideological conformity demanded a different kind of tribute. In any case, the Soviet Union cherished its scientists, particularly those engaged in the rivalry with the USA for military and nuclear supremacy. Different categories of people were the primary targets of Communist orthodoxy – political dissidents, writers and artists, and all those who refused to accept the basic premise of a historically predestined proletarian future.

Refugees from Hungary after the 1956 uprising, and Czechoslovakia, following the crushing of the 'Prague Spring' in 1968, scholars who were victims of the junta in Greece and of the Liberation War in Bangladesh, all these would make fresh demands on the SPSL. When Jewish and anti-Communist refugees came from Poland, first in the late fifties and again a decade later, and the persecuted of South Africa brought their echoes of discrimination and hatred less than a generation after the end of the war, these were perceived as disturbing after-shocks of the convulsive events of the century, rather than evidence that other persecutions were on the march, dressed in new plumes and regalia, no doubt, but similarly devastating for their victims.

No one who heard the voice of Imre Nagy in 1956 as Soviet tanks entered Budapest could have doubted that the world had been changed by the convulsions of the war; and the Cold War represented a long coda of the unfinished business of totalitarianism in Europe. The violent reaction to the revolt in East Germany in 1953 and the Hungarian uprising in 1956 sent a different population in search of asylum.

The Jewish mathematician Imre Lakatos (born Imre Lipschitz) was caught up in these epic ideological conflicts. When in 1944, the year of his graduation, the Hungarian government collaborated with Hitler (thereby sending almost two-thirds of Hungary's Jews to their death) Lakatos changed his name to Imre Molnar. Both his mother and grandmother were to perish in concentration

camps. He became a convinced Communist, and changed his name back to Lakatos, allegedly to avoid replacing the initials on his clothing. He worked in the Ministry of Education, involved with university reform. He came to believe that the Party should be governed by Science, and not science by the party, that censorship was unnecessary and that dissent and argument should be promoted. Arrested in 1950 for challenging the Russian authorities, he spent more than three years in jail and said he was partly saved by his faith in Communism. After his release he made a living translating mathematics books into Hungarian. When Hungary announced its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, Russia intervened and set up a compliant government. Many academics were among the 200,000 who escaped to the West. Lakatos went to Vienna, from where he was admitted to England and studied at Cambridge, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. In 1960 he went to LSE, where he taught for 14 years until his sudden death in 1972. He revolutionized the philosophy and history of mathematics and science, seeing mathematics not as an accumulation of revealed truths but as evolutionary and concrete, permanently evolving new concepts and crystallizing old ones.

A number of academics were helped after the 'Prague Spring', when under Alexander Dubcek a modest reform of the Communist system was inaugurated, including freedom of the press, tolerance of new political parties and a concentration on the production of consumer goods. Brezhnev negotiated with Dubcek, but by August Warsaw Pact tanks had entered Prague. Many academics fled, among them G.J. Frankl, referred to the SPSL by the Jewish Refugee Committee. He wrote to the SPSL, telling his epic story in a few laconic, but heartbreaking words. 'I was born on 26th April 1921 at Hradec Kralove in Czechoslovakia. After my basic education I attended the Grammar School at Hradec Kralove (1932–1940). The Germans, who occupied Czechoslovakia in 1938 and 1939, closed all the schools of higher education in 1940. So I took a short intensive course for teachers and secretly taught Jewish children excluded from general school attendance. Soon afterwards, in 1941, I was put to forced labour, and in 1942 all my family – both my parents, my two sisters, their three children and both my brothers-in-law and I myself – were imprisoned by the Germans and sent to concentration camps. In Auschwitz in 1944 they were all executed. I alone left Auschwitz in July 1944 and was sent to other concentration camps. I spent most of the time in Schwarzheide-Ruhland and in Oranienburg in Germany. Later I took part in the so-called 'march of death' and was rescued in May 1945. I was fully exhausted – at the age of 24 I looked as if I were over 60 years old. It took nearly two months before I was able to be transported back to my country.'²

In 1962, Frankl was appointed a senior lecturer at the Prague School of Economics, where he remained until September 1968. He left because of the Russian occupation. His wife, daughter and son-in-law met him a week later in Vienna. They went on to London and rejoined their son Tom, who was studying

at Holland Park school. Frankl secured a temporary teaching position at Starcross Comprehensive School in Islington.

SPSL in transition

SPSL's support of displaced academics was modest during the upheavals associated with the last part of the Cold War; and with dictatorships, military juntas and authoritarian regimes in much of central and South America, Africa and Asia, its resources could not possibly answer the demand.

SPSL's material assistance was limited by remit to post-doctoral students. As needs changed, the council provided academics not only with maintenance grants, but also allowances for travel, books and other forms of assistance. Its means were slender, even though an afterglow of the heroic age remained.

Esther Simpson's flat became the SPSL office until she was 75, when she officially retired. In 1978, her replacement, Liz Fraser was based in the office of the World University Service (WUS), where she had been working and continued to do so, since her SPSL appointment was one day a week. WUS had taken over many of SPSL's functions; it had more ample funding, a younger staff, and helped students and junior academics.³ The energy had deserted the SPSL. Liz Fraser was also aware of the changing nature of refuge, which reverted to what, in the early days of Hitler, it was believed to be – a temporary sojourn, with academics expected to return home once the regime in question had been toppled, using the benefits gained from Britain to help rebuild their countries. At the same time, British influence would live on in the goodwill of people whose education had been completed here, and who would carry weight in the restored democracy at home. As time went by, younger students from different cultures and little-known education systems arrived, speaking unfamiliar languages; assessing their achievements and potential required a different yardstick from the stern standards of the pre-war academy.

Changes in academic life here also made a difference, especially the extension of higher education from the 1960s onwards. New social groups entered the universities, bringing an often truculent mixture of radicalism, pop culture and a refusal of deference, even, at times, to the idea of learning, while university staff brought a less exclusive openness to the world. Liz Fraser observes: 'When I started out as a university teacher in the late 60's, it was more or less expected that we would be involved in outside activities. These could be to do with, say, specific local issues, or more general academic campaigns.' This was not to last. Over the past two or three decades, governments have narrowed the duties of pedagogy to results, targets and access. Liz Fraser says, 'By the time I retired from CARA in 2000, the climate had changed drastically and the pressure and range of

work demanded of lecturers made it much more difficult for them to give time to activities in the wider community.'

The World University Service took over something of the role of the SPSL. Representing a new time and culture, it was a product of a hopeful internationalism that had grown out of the ruins of destructive nationalisms in Europe.

SOUTH AMERICA

The role of the World University Service

Florid nationalisms appeared to have migrated. The military coup in Chile in 1973 created new needs and opportunities, as another generation of academics fled for their lives. Other organizations, new and existing, responded quickly to the imprisonment, torture and disappearances of prominent people who opposed the ousting of the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende.

The event had a profound international effect. It seemed – not for the last time – that democracy was conditional upon the right people being elected. Although Britain initially recognized the Pinochet regime, among the many voluntary movements of solidarity was Academics for Chile. Academics for Chile approached the World University Service to assist in finding places for those who could be released from the prison that Chile had become. WUS raised funds, and became a clearing-house and assembly point for university students and teachers, who began arriving in significant numbers, particularly when the government changed in Britain in February 1974.

The mobilization on Chile's behalf was one of the great successes of voluntary action to assist refugees in the era after the Second World War. Together with the apartheid regime in South Africa, people in Britain saw Chile as one of the most potent symbols of injustice, its attempt to construct a radical socialist regime by democratic means facing the opposition of the USA. Both countries had a particular relationship with Britain. Before Pinochet, Chile was held to be a model of South American democracy, the brutal coup arousing massive sympathy in Britain and indeed worldwide, according to Alan Angell, who founded Academics for Chile. South Africa had been expelled from the Commonwealth in 1953, as a result of an ideology unacceptable to the multiracial make-up of the international body; and London was the preferred destination of many academics, artists and activists, who found the administration of institutionalized racism objectionable.

With the help of Christian Aid, and a generous grant from the then Overseas Development Ministry for Chilean Scholars, in 1974 almost 100 scholars were helped, mainly young postgraduates, whose further study was widely expected to be of use to their country when democracy was restored. The number increased

to 260 the following year. The largest single category helped were economists, followed by sociologists.

The demands of efficiency led to a certain professionalizing of the work, which became centrally organized and funded. The Chairman of WUS remarked in 1976 that this weakened contact between campus student activity on behalf of Chilean scholars and the London secretariat. This large-scale assistance also diminished the role of the SPSL, although it continued to assist prominent individuals. Its income could not match that of the more conspicuous – and politically more glamorous – WUS.

Chile's authoritarian militaristic nationalism, reinforced by the inspiration the Chilean army derived from the discipline and even the uniform of Bismarck's Germany, echoed the Fascism of the 1930s. The considerable migration of Germans, especially into the south of the country, added impetus to this.

Lucia Munoz, a Chilean refugee, worked for six years at WUS. Her brother, Luis, has produced a compelling account of the violence of the Pinochet years. He describes the torture and abuse practised by many military regimes in the 1970s and 80s – a bleak portrait of the fate of dissenters under authoritarian regimes, never short of highly-placed apologists during the last convulsions of the Cold War. His story – and touchingly, that of his sister's obsessive search for him and her role in securing his release – speak of the courage of thousands of young academics.

Luis Munoz, Chile

Luis was a student, and his sister was doing a Master's in Development Studies in 1973. Both belonged to a small left-wing party, and while they supported the socialist government, they were impatient with the pace of change. They were romantic idealists; and they paid a severe price for it.

When the coup was announced on Chilean TV on that other fateful 11 September, in 1973, Pinochet said, 'The glorious Chilean Armed Forces, in an attempt to save the country from chaos, have today taken control of the country. Salvador Allende refused to surrender, put up resistance in the presidential palace and died. Citizens should show restraint and go back to their homes to await further communiqués. Workers of essential services and utilities should remain in their posts until further notice. Anyone found to be committing acts of sabotage or resisting the armed forces will be executed.'

Luis Munoz describes the agitation following the coup. An insomniac energy seized those resisting the regime, as gunfire was heard all over Santiago, streets were occupied by patrol vehicles and armoured personnel carriers. Helicopters whirled overhead. The only hope lay in finding safe hiding-places, houses where

opponents of the regime could lie low indefinitely. The junta broadcast the names of prominent people required to present themselves to the Ministry of Defence: public figures in the Allende government, union leaders, academics, journalists. Many people did indeed give themselves up.

‘There were bodies lying in the streets. There were open municipal lorries collecting the corpses and piling them up on the back of the trucks for everyone to see. It was unbelievable. It was macabre. A few days before, everything had looked so normal. There were children playing in the streets, but they were now deserted apart from the personnel carriers, the municipal trucks and a few furtive pedestrians. And it felt cold, very cold.’⁴

Luis Munoz survived for about a year. Then he was picked up on the street in daylight, in full view of his fellow-citizens. He was taken to Villa Grimaldi, one of the most notorious interrogation centres of the Direccion de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA, the secret police). It contained ‘all the sickening apparatus needed for extracting information. I would remain blindfolded, handcuffed, with my legs chained together the entire time I was there.’

After the men came to tie him up, naked, to the metal bed known as the *parrilla* (grill), they attached electrodes to the body’s most sensitive parts. ‘They do not miss any part: the toes, the penis, the anus, the nipples, the mouth and the ears. Then they proceed to apply high wattage electrical current, but they do not ask questions. The questions are shouted, rather than asked, by the most senior members of the team. In my case the man in charge was the infamous Captain Miguel Krassnoff. The others just shouted and screamed as if in a frenzy and made obscene remarks. The pain is unbearable; anyone who has not experienced this kind of torture is unable to imagine anything close to this amount of pain. Furthermore, the body suffers violent convulsions, which in turn help to cut open the flesh at the wrists and the ankles tied with wire to the metal bed, and sometimes even dislocate them.’⁵

Munoz later returned to Chile to give evidence at the trial of Miguel Krassnoff, his principal torturer, and his testimony helped secure his conviction. Luis Munoz was rescued by the British government, although it was never his choice to come here. ‘They closed the camp where I was. Some prisoners were released, others expelled from the country. The rescue was done through an ecumenical church organization – the Council for European Migration. I was sponsored by Amnesty in Norway, and they asked the British to issue me a visa.’⁶

‘I didn’t want to go to England. I pleaded, send me anywhere but England. They said, “You’re going to England.” I refused. Two days later an official from European Migration told me that some released detainees were being shot “at random”, so it looked like a street crime; or the army announced they were killing “terrorists”. He said, “We cannot protect you.” I was taken to the Red Cross to get my passport. “You have to go, your visa and ticket are ready.”’

He arrived in Britain in December 1976. 'It was cold, with snow on the ground. I was sent to a Home Office house in Shepherd's Bush, a former bed-and-breakfast hotel. We cooked for ourselves. I thought I would die of cold that first winter. I had left Chile in summer. I don't know what I expected. I gave away my winter clothing before leaving Chile.

'Because I had been expelled I couldn't get a grant to study. I got £17 a week, social security. The shock and the cold defeated me. I didn't want to go out. There were free English lessons, and for a short time, free transport. I got medical treatment, but not the psychological help I needed. I was told I was going to be sent to Birmingham, part of a policy of dispersal. I had already been dispersed. I spoke no English. I was in touch with friends in Paris, members of the Chilean Leftist Party to which I belonged. I said, "Get me out of here, I can't live here." [But] the Home Office had taken my passport. I had a travel card and could not leave the country for six months.'

For the first few years in Britain, Luis could not study. Only cleaning and restaurant jobs were available in the beginning. 'The cleaner may have a university degree but can find no other job because he or she is a foreigner. Let the refugee do the dirty work when the offices are empty in secret, without showing himself.

'I was involved in frenzied activity – meetings, SWP [Socialist Workers Party], Amnesty International, Vanessa Redgrave, Tony Benn, the miners, the unions. Later, another friend working for Amnesty got access to my file. She read it and found out I didn't qualify for Amnesty's grant towards medical help because I was not considered a prisoner of conscience, but a combatant. I had had a gun in Chile, yes; but from where did Amnesty get this information? It was a mystery. Later, at the time of the Malvinas [the Falklands War, 1982], I saw an interview with David Owen. He was talking about exiles from Latin America. Had British Intelligence vetted them? No. Where did their intelligence profile come from? Owen said, "Friendly agencies gave the information." Did that mean the CIA? Yes. It was a great irony – the CIA which had been instrumental in bringing about the coup in Chile had also been involved in our rescue.

'In 1977, relatives of the disappeared went on hunger strike in Chile and we did the same in sympathy. It lasted 16 days, the church of St Aloysius in Euston. I was weak, I lost weight, I must have been close to death. Sympathizers came, Cardinal Hume, Denis Healey. Helen Bamber, who started the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture, met me on the bus. She was from a Jewish family in Poland. She said, "How are you?" I said I was OK. She had told Amnesty she would see torture victims for free. Amnesty said that is not our job. She left and started the Foundation in an old hospital. I was partly the inspiration for this.

'In 1984, I was working part-time for the British Refugee Council. I had a heart problem, and Helen Bamber took me to a specialist. He wanted to give me an electric cardiogram. He placed the elements on me. I freaked out. He said, "It's all right, we are taking electrical impulses from your body, not giving you

shocks." I just broke down, I wept and wept. That was eight years after I'd come to Britain, ten years since the trauma began.'

Luis left the Party. He was living with his partner in a privately rented flat in Muswell Hill. His daughter's birth began his recovery. He began to study psychology, and read about therapy, *Children Under Stress* by Sulammith Wolff, and practised what he was learning with his daughter.⁷ His partner already had a daughter. 'I became completely immersed in the children. I actually became a mother to them. I loved looking after them.

'My partner went back to Chile in 1984. The World University Service paid her fare and financed a one-year project. I thought it would kill me, because these two girls had given meaning to my life. I actually went to court to keep my daughter. There was terrible acrimony between us. I was getting deeper into a terrible psychological state. It was wrong for my partner to stay here. She never learned English very well. She was from a well-to-do family in Chile, and life in a north London council flat was miserable for her.

'Because my partner forbade it, I didn't see my daughter again until she was eight. I was living in a Haringey Council house in Crouch End, and my step-daughter came to stay with me. She told me she had wanted to stay with me. It turned out her history teacher at school had been one of my torturers in the military. She had not been happy in Chile.

'I eventually got therapy through an English friend, with the help of the Amnesty £600 fund. I had primal therapy in Brighton. It worked for me. It pushed me to the limit, but I was able to reach back to the person I had been, or would have been, but for the torture. I am also open to other schools of thought. Some methods work better for certain people. I also did a Psychology degree at Birkbeck. I am now working as an immigration lawyer.

'But my real reconciliation with England started when I met my present wife. That was in 1993, about 16 years after I came. I learned through her to see a different England. She took me to the Isle of Skye. It was so beautiful and life was relaxed and gentle. Then we went to Wales. She loved walking and we wandered in the hills. If I'd seen this Britain, I'd have loved it from the beginning. Her family showed me affection and warmth. We have two children, boys, ten and six. They are everything to me.

'Healing took far longer than it did to inflict the wounds.'

Luis now has an MSc in Sociology, Psychology and Counselling, and is a registered Immigration representative. He is, he says, 'no longer a victim'. When he returned to Chile, he says, 'my body and senses belong there. It is at this precise point that a sort of dislocation inside begins to occur: the reality of life in exile starts to be questioned. The powerful bonds that were formed during my years in Chile since my birth have not been, and will never be, replicated in England. No matter that I

have encountered love and have founded a new family with children born in the UK. No matter how much I admire the culture, the openness, the determination of its people, and countless other things I have assimilated and incorporated in twenty years. That life can disappear in a few days, or maybe even hours.⁸

Lucia Munoz, Chile

A few days later, I met Lucia, Luis' sister. She says they believed in a society that would be more humane and equal, a socialist society.

'We knew the coup was coming. It wasn't a question of if, but when. We had been analysing the situation and the noises coming out of Washington. It started with a truck drivers' strike. There was nothing subtle about it. It had been coordinated by the CIA. They well knew that the creation of artificial shortages was the way to frighten the people. Supplies of fresh food stopped. Then miraculously, after the coup, everything was back in the shops.

'We underestimated the brutality of the Right. We were young, idealistic and had no experience. Chile appeared a stable democracy. Even under Right-wing governments, democratic conventions were honoured. We didn't realize how far the US would go to wipe out any threat it perceived in the region. We should have seen what had happened in Guatemala, in Brazil. Brazilian refugees in Chile told us they felt "safe".

'At the time of the coup, I was preparing for a Master's in the development of Latin America. At the same time I was working for the Jesuit Institute, which was sympathetic to the Left. At that time the theology of liberation had spread across the whole continent.'

Lucia grieves that the chance for a more humane society was lost. 'My sadness is for what might have been. Allende was not perfect, but things were changing. The ferocity of the repression still hurts. We were identified as the enemy, although we posed no threat to order. Brutality was part of their strategy.'

Lucia continued to study until her brother went missing, after being picked up in September 1974. Until then he had hidden in safe houses. She undertook a frantic search; by making as much noise as possible, she hoped to prevent them from 'disappearing' him. She guessed he was in a torture centre, but didn't know where. The Church helped her: its Committee for Peace provided legal assistance to relatives looking for the disappeared. 'That became my whole basis of life until I left Chile. There was incredible solidarity among relatives and lawyers who helped those who could be helped.

'The DINA, secret services, followed me. Twice I thought they would get me. I was saved once by the British ambassador and once by the Norwegian. I met a representative of the International Migration Committee, who put me in touch with the Red Cross and the embassies of Norway and Sweden. They were so helpful. They tried to visit Luis in the Santiago camps. I knew he was hurt. They

didn't know if they [the Authorities] would let him be seen. If he was among those who could have visitors, that meant he was a recognized prisoner. I went to the military. Where is my brother? Show me a list of the detainees. My success was to get him included in the list of people they admitted holding.

'Later, in the concentration camp in Valparaíso he moved in and out among the appeared and the disappeared. I felt fear and anguish that he would vanish.

'I went everywhere to register his name. At the British embassy they told me the DINA were outside, I couldn't leave. They took me out in a diplomatic car. On another occasion, I had an appointment to meet the Norwegian ambassador. As I arrived, the secret police were waiting, pointing their guns at me. I rang the bell, but they seized me. The wife of the ambassador rushed to the gate. She cried, "My dear, come in, we were just waiting for you." She grabbed me and pulled me inside. My shoe came off. They also took me out in a diplomatic car. I never stayed at home, but moved from house to house. I only felt safe, because if anything happened to me, the ambassadors would make a fuss.

'We were lucky that the government changed in Britain in February 1974. We cannot be grateful enough to them. We already had refugee status when we arrived at Heathrow. They provided us with language classes, social security, translators and doctors.

'We wanted to go to France, because our grandfather was French. But when the camps closed down, they gave us 48 hours to leave the country. The first visas came from the British. The UNHCR put us on a Swissair flight to London.

'The people who helped us when we arrived were mostly middle class, educated, politically aware. We thought how nice their lives were, so planned and steady. They were kind, although they could not really appreciate what we had gone through.

'It destroyed our family. Three of us went into exile. My older brother went to the US. But the others were all traumatized by our loss. One brother is still in Chile. He was at the university and was not taken. He is a conservationist in the Atacama Desert. There he found the bodies of some of his students and colleagues – preserved because of the extremely dry and salty conditions. They had been disappeared for many years. He had panic attacks for a long time afterwards. Torture does not only affect the individual, but the whole family.

'I worked with the British Refugee Council on a Latin American community project. Later I worked at the World University Service, helping asylum seekers in the UK to find schools, further education they needed. There were two aspects to the WUS programme – helping asylum seekers [and] working internationally for academics whose studies had been interrupted by persecution. We concentrated on three areas – Latin America, South Africa and Namibia, and Eritrea and Ethiopia.

'I became finally reconciled to England through Johnny [an immunologist, the brother of Albie Sachs, whom she met in 1981] who had been here many years. He introduced me to another life. I lived in New Cross, where I had wonderful neighbours. They were kind, middle-class professional people who invited me for Christmas. That was my first contact with British life.

'I feel this is my country. I have little connection with Chile. I resent that they still have not properly recognized what happened or initiated any process of reconciliation. Many abusers and torturers occupy government positions. The overwhelming feeling here is of being safe. That gratitude is still there.

'I have just left my job, fundraising for another Latin American NGO. I liked the work and the people. Then a new manager came, and I was bullied. She wanted her own people in.

'When you are mistreated, it opens up the locked storage room where you have left your pain; and it comes flooding back. It was the same when Johnny died in 2003, after 20 happy years.

'As a refugee, you lose status. I had been involved in so many university projects in Chile, schemes for international development. I had published papers and articles. I loved research. When I came here, I worked in restaurants, and some of my fellow workers washing up had PhDs. The only time I lost dignity was when I had to claim benefit.

'We were thinking people, and they wanted to kill us. Of course they can now destroy political consciousness in other ways. They have more subtle means and don't need concentration camps.'

Marta Zabaleta, Argentina and Chile

Marta has the unusual distinction of having been expelled from two countries – her own and that of her husband. They were thrown out of Chile after the 1973 coup, and from Argentina in 1976. An ardent feminist, she was born in the Argentinian countryside in the province of Santa Fe in 1937. It was a rich province, but under the dictatorship, people were poor. It was cattle country: lots of cows, few people.

Marta tells epic stories of her life in brief sentences. 'When I was a child we lived in a hotel for a while, in Bouguet, because my mother had been previously removed from her job as a primary school teacher in Bustinza. She wanted to give me milk as a baby, and they didn't allow her to do it during her hours of work. My father and I went to live with his older sister in Villa Cañas. This had a powerful influence on my life. I thought my mother didn't love me. I didn't see her for months, and missed her terribly.

'The woman where my mother was staying one day said we could also live there. It was a farmhouse. When we got there, I didn't recognize my mother. This woman, Mrs Carola, taught me I could be happy if I was in touch with

nature. I planted a tree and fetched eggs from the hens every day. They were the kind of people to whom I dedicated my thesis, the women of Argentina. Many of my primary teachers were feminists without articulating it. They have just elected a woman as President of Argentina, Christine Kirchner. When I was seven, I wanted to be the first woman president of Argentina. By that time, the family has settled down, we have a big house in the countryside, and both of my parents were at work.

'Even as a child I was at odds with the church. [The priest] told me I was evil. It was terrible for me, because my mother wanted me to be a Catholic. My father didn't. My mother tried to get me baptized, but my father forbade it.

'My father was the son and grandson of Basques. They were also displaced people, economic exiles. My grandfather had been a lawyer. But [in] my father's family, no one thought of going to university. Girls were meant for marriage. My mother came from an Italian family, and I knew little about their ancestors.

'I was pulled in different directions by my parents. If I displeased my father, he would be silent for weeks. He sulked. I was an only child. I desperately wanted to go to school when I was four. When I did go, I was five and assigned to my mother's class. There were 55 children, many of them without shoes, children of poor country people. Some lived in horrible conditions. It broke my heart to see how they lived.

'Argentina had been one of the ten richest countries in the world. The export of grain and meat to Europe brought wealth to Argentina. Colonel Perón was imprisoned by the military in 1945, but there was such a huge popular mobilization, he was released on 17 October, and won the election of 1946. It was the first redistributive government in the country. Peronism was at that moment an alliance of industrialists, trade unions and the urban working class.

'My mother claimed she was one of the first Peronistas in Argentina, although most teachers – middle class and white – were against Peronism. She was very active and somehow managed to introduce me to Eva Perón. The Eva Perón Foundation built many hospitals. My thesis at the University of Sussex was on the formation of the social consciousness of the Peronista women then; through it I came to respect Eva. My mother had a picture of Eva Perón, which she hung in the kitchen. She used to say to the cook, "Those who don't respect her cannot eat in this house."

'I hated Eva Perón then. Not now. She died at 33 and became a cult. For men, she symbolized sex in the Argentinean context. For my father she was a prostitute, for my mother a saint; in this way, she managed to combine all the clichés about women in Argentina in a single person.

'When I was 17, I was arrested by the Peronistas. At school the domestic science teacher was anti-Peronist. There were two groups of students, those who supported [Perón] and those who didn't. Some girls mocked Eva; I was arrested because they wanted me to denounce the teacher and the girls who were against

Perón. I was interrogated in the school by the police three times. I was told that if I didn't join the party when I reached 18, they would put me in prison. Ever since then I have had a problem with memory: you see, I learned how to lie. They said to my father, "We'll come back when she is 18. If she has not joined the party, she will go to prison." The government fell before then; in the 1955 coup, it was replaced by the military.

'The influence of my father made me a feminist and his opposition a rebel. He said women were superior. He told me not to marry or have children. My mother wanted me to be a teacher, which I qualified for at the end of my secondary education. She'd have liked me to marry someone rich and powerful.

'My father was executive of a power station in San Nicolas city, and we lived close to where Eichmann was captured. Many former Nazis sheltered there. One of them wanted to marry me. Fortunately, my father did not like him, and neither did my mother. Argentina after the war took many Europeans, Germans in particular, but in all, as many Jews and Nazis.

'I would have been a criminologist but my father would not allow it. He wouldn't let me live (and sleep!) outside the house. The only thing I could do without living away from home was to be a Chartered Accountant – that's how I became an economist. I was among the first three or four of 350 students who graduated in 1960. That year my mother suddenly died. A terrible loss.

'I became a socialist, because towards the end of my education I had come under the influence of a socialist teacher, Professor Luchini, a widower. I felt pity for him because of that. In my last year I studied Labour Law. My teacher advised me to put my name down as consultant to judges in a labour court, the courts set up by Perón. It was very frustrating, because it was difficult to win a single case – who is going to succeed against US companies and oil interests? After three years, I quit.

'Conventional economics taught us very little. My best fellow students were all men. I had inherited some money from my mother, so instead of going to Paris to become a writer like Simone de Beauvoir as I planned, they said, "Let's go to Chile." We were excited that the UN approach to economics had changed. The US had taken power in Guatemala in 1954; and the army was in power in Argentina in 1955. But in 1958, democracy was restored, and by 1962, even Che Guevara talked about Latin American development.

'I went to Chile in 1963, to study development and stayed ten years till I was expelled after the coup. By 1968, I became a professor of Political Economy, working on agrarian reform, women and social class in the south of Chile [and] I worked with the UN. I made many friends in Concepción [southern Chile], where I arrived in 1968. But I was mistrusted by many people, and even hated by several of my peers at the School of Economics, just because I was very independent, strong minded, Argentinean and a woman, 31 – old for an unmarried woman. I got married in Chile in 1969. His family was very educated and nice, but they

were considered right wing (here, they would be liberals), and it took a long time before some of them accepted me.

'I had two or three good friends among my teachers, some of whom later became presidents of Chile and Brazil. Among my own students and friends are government ministers, including [Chile's] Minister of Defence. I am very proud of all my students. Lots of them keep in touch. I think that is why I am still alive – every time they wanted to kill me I was helped, both in Argentina and Britain. David Owen and Judith Hart finally obtained the British visa for my husband and little girl and myself – in November 1976, when my husband was imprisoned in Argentina.

'I was in the Revolutionary Left, a party inspired mostly by Che Guevara. I belonged to the Party for 12 years, but I was critical, because they had such backward views on women and gays. But we really helped things to change in Chile. I do not regret anything!

'The day of the coup, 11 September 1973, I was thrown out of the university, later on arrested and briefly detained. The Pinochet regime said I could go out of detention camp to see my family, as I was going to be deported to Argentina in 48 hours. Cámpora was President of Argentina then, but he was a Peronista, and it is said that Perón himself negotiated our release with Pinochet. [Those to be deported were] all ex professors at the University of Concepción. We were designated prisoners of war, and it was to be an army-to-army exchange. We were taken in a bus to the border in the south of Chile. The Argentine army was waiting for us in the Andes. We were frozen and starving. The officer in charge, a colonel, had been told to kill us (the *guerrilleros*) on arrival. When he put the light on, he shouted, "How on earth can I kill these babies? You are not even armed. Two women and two babies."

'I said to him, "Do you have children?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Why don't you take a picture of my baby and give it to your daughter, and tell her 'I saved this baby today.'"

'We were interrogated day and night for about 76 hours or so, in the barracks. Then they told us we were free. None was killed.

'For three years, I had no job. In the SIDE (Intelligence Service) they thought I might be a CIA agent. Eventually I worked in the civil service at the top of the civil service wages scale, but when the army coup came in 1976 I was unemployed again. If I had been working, it might have been different. I was a nobody then, just a housewife.

'One week after the coup of 24 March 1976, my husband [Alberto] disappeared. I concentrated all my energy on finding him first and trying to obtain his freedom, using the experience I had gained in Chile. The system in Argentina was much more sophisticated and cruel. They had taken him to the HQ of the Federal Police in Buenos Aires. He was tortured. He was told I was also being held. They

blindfolded him and made him listen to the screams of a child. They told him that was our daughter.

'We were finally expelled. It took four months to get the visa. In the meantime, they continued to interrogate me in Government Palace the Casa Rosada. I made such a nuisance of myself looking for my husband, I was interrogated every fortnight by the head of secret police of the Presidency in Argentina. He was in civilian clothes.

'He said, "It is a pity you love your daughter so much, doctor, because I don't think she deserves to die." Later he said, "Why should I not kill you? We know you are always against us."

'Afterwards, when they were going to release us, he said, "Go and never talk about this. This never happened."

'I said to him, "You can do what you want, but don't ask me not to talk about it. Don't ask me to lie, because I will report this conversation as often as I can, every day of my life. Kill me if you want, but I won't be terrorized for as long as I live."

'You don't know if they will kill you. I spent eight months looking for my husband. He managed to get a letter to his office, saying he was in a high security prison. I was told I couldn't see him, because we were not married. I had to get proof of our marriage from Chile. I told them I was a lawyer and would see him in that capacity. It was a nightmare, because you didn't know what would happen. At some point they put him in a cell with gangsters and football hooligans, this sort of people. But he was punished because he organized lessons of economics and society for ordinary prisoners. In the end, they transferred him to where atomic scientists were kept. He won't speak of it even today. He is Senior Lecturer at the Metropolitan University in London [and] teaches European Union Economic and Latin American Studies. I am proud of that. He is a man of principles and ideals.

'Our marriage never really worked after the repression. We separated 15 years ago. I feel the guilt of survivors, because I am still alive, and so many of our friends are dead. You want to survive. And we were among the victims in Argentina during a dictatorship when about 30,000 people disappeared. All relationships break as a result of such experiences. The pain is vast and immitigable. When I came here I felt safe, but I asked "Who am I?" You are nobody here, no one. You know where you are, but not who.'

Marta Zabaleta describes her experience of exile as 'being caught between the *ser* and *estar* of Spanish, both inadequately translated as the English "to be"'. She had always been articulate, but when she arrived here, she would be seen simply as the wife of a quasi-hero, then as illiterate, deaf and mute, and even as a 'poor-but-good' mother: in other words, the proud owner of a dead language. In the UK, her husband was 'the victim', the 'refugee', and attention

was showered on him. She was shocked by this attitude of people working in solidarity organizations, because most were administered almost exclusively by women, many of them feminists.

Nothing can replace for her the Pampas, 'that expanse of land without limits, that immensely rich natural soil, that gaucho culture that I still find irreplaceable and cannot recreate because nobody, nobody here understands my language. They removed my tongue. One can speak, yes, ten to the dozen. One can attend presentations of one's books, can give conferences, can even give lessons in English universities and everywhere else in the world, but still one no longer has a language compatible with one's tongue.

'Ever since the coup d'état in Chile, I felt that persistent non-localized feeling of terror, an agitated beating of the heart, a need to run away fast. I felt guilty of a crime I knew I had not committed. In those days I did not need to sleep to have nightmares: life was a nightmare.'

When she had tried to find a country to go to with her husband, the Argentinian Home Office restricted the choice to three: France, Germany and England. They finally opted for England.

'When I saw my husband arrive [at the airport], his gaze lowered, now with grey hair, escorted right to the seat on the airplane by the Argentinian Federal Police, I felt shame at being Argentinian. But I also felt profoundly responsible, leaving behind a society that permitted one of the worst dictatorships in the history of Latin America to glide in without a hitch. They compare us to the Germans; but we are also like the English in terms of complacency.

'When we reached the hotel in Holland Park which the World University Service (who had given Alberto a small grant for three years) was providing for ten days, I was surprised at how clean it was and how beautiful London looked with its grey flapping leaves and sleepy pigeons. We had landed in a place with a toy sun: it rose late with its head bowed, and it didn't take off its Basque beret for most of the day.

'We were received at the University of Glasgow. People in Scotland had a great deal of sympathy for the Chilean socialists, but we had to start the Argentina campaign ourselves.' She began to take Mogadon and Valium until eventually she became paralysed. Then after her father died she managed to get herself referred to the Tavistock Clinic, and was listened to by a marvellous woman psychiatrist, Victoria Hamilton. 'Talking with her, I remembered when I was a child, and people asked me how I was, I always said I was a little sad. Perhaps I had some inkling of my future.'

Glasgow in November 1976 looked as though it had not recovered from the Blitz. They were taken to Drumchapel, an area known as one of the most deprived in Europe. They stayed with two other Chilean refugees in a council flat. The house was damp and freezing, and warmth depended on coins in a slot. Without

change, the electricity also went off. It snowed. Marta held her child close and asked her what she had done so wrong in life to deserve such a destiny. They were expected to live on her husband's grant – a little over £200 a month.

They remade their lives. A new baby, Tomás, was born in 1977. Her husband became a part-time lecturer in Spanish in 1984, as did Marta in 1989, the year in which she also did a DPhil at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University. They separated in 1992. Marta retired in 2002, and has been Honorary Visiting Senior Lecturer of Latin American Cultural and Development Studies at the School of Arts and Education of Middlesex University, London, ever since. She lives in a small house – originally built for a Polish refugee woman doctor and her two children at the end of the war – in Essex. Here, she says, she feels 'safe'; but still full of anxiety, memory and an inexpressible pain. Her daughter studied pure maths and manages the department of anthropology at LSE. Marta speaks of life now, aged 70, unwell. 'It rains, you don't go out. It is Sunday and you are alone, you don't go out. The food runs out: you use the Internet to buy more: you don't go out. The house becomes the last, impregnable refuge, the return to the mother's womb where you dive into the water of dreams. It is there that my little paper boats sail. Not made from gold paper like those in the detention camp which were made from the paper in the cigarette packages that the doctor from the Red Cross used to give to me.'

Marta Zabaleta expresses the guilt of the survivor and the grief of loss in a poem she wrote to commemorate Muriel Dockendorff Navarrete, her student and friend, who disappeared in Chile in 1974.

*En llagas
el tiempo del pasado
se esconde
en manos de nubes
y me remonta.
Vuelo
aferrada al deseo
de crear un lugar
adonde podemos ser
de nuevo,
y volver a ver lo que vimos.
Lloro
por la inquietud
perdida en la distancia,
con el cuadro a mi lado
de Muriel dormida en la esperanza
y con sus versos
digo*

*'Tierra mia
Puñado de tierra amiga
Hoy me llamas, pero es tarde
No hay regresos ni mañana
Y si hubiera: No lo se'.*

*La voz cercena la garganta,
dilata la sangre las pupilas,
mientras
una madre somalií le da
su mano al criío.*

*Bajo esto mismoe techo
en que hoy dormitan
los ositis de mi hija,
la manta prisionera,
mi hijo que entrelaza
música africana
con su chal escocés
cargado del perfume
de su cuerpo y el miío.*

*Una guitarra mira,
un tambor bosteza
y el silenzio celebra con notas de lluvia
un atardecer de fiesta.
Sellado en un museo.*

*Con coros de Bosnia
envuelta en la tenura
de mis hojos y amigos.
Con la vida, intacta
aquí, en Londres
pareciera que existo todavía.'*

*In shards
past time hides
in the hands of clouds
and soaring
I fly*

clinging to the desire
 to create a place
 where we can be
 once more,
 to see again
 what we had seen
 I cry
 for the restlessness
 lost in the distance
 with Muriel's painting
 beside me
 dormant in hope
 and with her verses
 I say

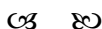
'My land
 Handful of warm earth
 Today you call me, but it is too late
 There's no returning not even tomorrow and if there were:
 I do not know.'
 The voice pierces the throat
 blood dilates the pupils
 a Somali mother holds
 her infant's hands

Beneath this same roof
 where today doze
 my daughter's soft toys
 the captive mantle,
 my son who entwines
 African music
 with his Glaswegian shawl
 impregnated with the odour
 of his body and mine.

A guitar stares
 a drum yawns,
 and silence celebrates
 the festive afternoon
 with chords of rain

Bosnian choirs
 wrapped in tenderness
 of my children and friends.
 and with life, intact
 here, in London
 I exist, after all.

(Translated into English by Peter Kozak)



Despite feeling safe in Britain, many exiles know that those who detained or tortured them, live on; some of them now occupy senior government posts. Some exiles still fear they will be tracked down and ‘unmasked’, half believing in their own culpability in exile. There must, it sometimes seems, have been some reason. There is something so brutal about being expelled by your own country, the familiar town and streets, the sights and sounds of every day, the street-sellers singing their wares, the sound of traffic, the morning light through the bedroom curtains, the known music of the household stirring, the taken-for-granted language, the easy intimacy, the taste of fresh bread, wild flowers and spring blossoms – who can bear the loss of these psychic supports, as well as the network of family and friends, disrupted by regimes that see kin and companions as networks of subversion?

And yet the most precious thing is security. Humiliations are acceptable, if they mean not having to be wary of the stranger on the stair, the second glance in the street, the anonymous silent phone call, the nameless warning. This alone makes bearable the terrible losses, the diminished circle of friends, the foreignness and the inability of people here to comprehend what they have been through: the glazed look and the changed topic of conversation as soon as they try to communicate how it has been for them.

The influence of the Chileans on Britain

Although a majority of refugees returned to Chile after democracy was restored, they left a lasting influence upon Britain. Alan Angell, of the Academics for Chile campaign, says Chile particularly captured the imagination of the young, following the great expansion of higher education here, and coming not long after the student unrest of the late sixties, and while the US was still in Vietnam. Pinochet symbolized a US-supported dictatorship, while Allende represented a democratic socialism distinct from the USSR, China or indeed Cuba. ‘This was also in some ways the first coup to receive TV coverage. People saw British-made Hunter jets bombing the presidential palace with the death of Allende,

the burning of books, the sinister photographs of Pinochet and his junta, the scenes of street brutality. All these images reinforced sympathy for the plight of the Chilean refugees.

'The Chileans were very cosmopolitan and fitted in well. They were both exotic, yet they brought the familiarity of Europe. Comparisons were made with Republican Spain. Universities had vastly expanded in Britain, new students full of energy were coming in. Students at that time wanted to be activists, not merchant bankers.

'I spent 90 per cent of my time working on Chilean affairs. In Oxford, there was plenty of time. I kept on teaching, of course, and what I was teaching was also related to Chile. Time commitments today are more demanding. Darfur, surely, calls for mobilization on an equal scale, but it simply isn't there.

'About a thousand academics came to Britain. Many went back. Here, they had received a good education. Reparations by the Chilean government were also generous. Chilean refugees gave heart to the Left here. They also helped establish Latin American studies. Some of the university departments have been sustained – London and Oxford, but elsewhere, Latin America has been taken over by more urgent priorities.'

Alan Phillips was the General Secretary of WUS at the time of the Chile coup. There was complete cooperation with the SPSL. 'Esther Simpson was delightful and supportive during the twilight of her career. She kept the SPSL going, but was it was limited in what it could do.

'We were in constant dialogue with the Home Office, since we invited many prestigious academics and students to the UK. This was also convenient for the Chilean authorities, who were glad to let them go. Some were in hiding, some in prison. One man, left for dead by a firing squad but not killed, managed to creep away and hide. The Home Office admitted people if they were funded through the WUS scholarship programme. There had to be clearance from the Foreign Office and the Home Office, as they wanted to be sure they were coming to study and that they did not present a security risk. We awarded more than 900 scholarships over eight years; we helped save a generation of Chilean academics and students, many of whom later returned, once the Military Junta was no longer in power. Some developed their academic careers in Chile, while others held senior government posts.'

The World University Service had a new office in Compton Terrace, Islington, and Liz Fraser from SPSL was allocated a desk. Later, WUS ceased being involved in scholarships to the UK. When she died, Esther Simpson bequeathed her flat in Swiss Cottage to the SPSL, which transformed the fortunes of what was to become CARA.

Benny Pollack was working for the Allende government in 1973. When the coup came, he was in Poland on a diplomatic passport, and did not return to Chile. He went to Spain and later, to Britain, where he claimed refugee status. He

was admitted readily, since he had started his PhD at Essex, and interrupted his studies after Allende's election. He speaks now with elegiac regret of the idealism which animated his generation. 'We thought it was a unique experiment in Chile. We didn't want to follow development laid down for us from elsewhere. We may have been naïve; perhaps we were also a little arrogant. Refugees from Chile were of a particular type. They were not business people. They were socially and politically conscious. Those who stayed worked in public service, education, social work. Britain was the beneficiary of our devotion to social justice, which had no place in Pinochet's Chile.

'Harold Wilson's government was particularly generous and supportive of Chilean refugees. We all keep fond memories of what it did, particularly Judith Hart (then Minister for Overseas Development), and Wilson himself, who made sure that his government would make our lives as secure and comfortable as possible. Dispossessed of everything as we were, it is difficult to imagine how important this was for us.

'WUS was flexible and generous – they gave help to people without formal education, modest people, who were able to go to university here and become professionals. We owed a great deal to Britain, and those who stayed have shown their commitment to this country.'

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Albie Sachs, South Africa

While WUS organized the reception of hundreds of academics from Chile, South Africa and Ethiopia, the SPSL assisted a number of individual scholars, writers and artists from southern Africa.

The apartheid state was based on racial superiority – in practice, the bureaucratic grading of people according to skin colour. There was no dearth of pseudo-scientific 'justifications' of white supremacy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many invoked to support imperial rule in Africa and Asia. This racial classification so soon after the Holocaust suggests that errors have to be committed afresh in order to be regretted in due season, after so much pain.

The Population Registration Act of 1950, aimed against the majority and not a beleaguered minority, made apartheid a mirror-image of Nazi persecution. An Office for Race Classification 'refined' the broad categories into which people were divided: white, mixed race, Bantu (black) and Indian. Officials solemnly examined an individual's eyelids, gums, nostrils and fingernails for indisputable evidence of belonging to this or that category. The outcome determined whether or not people could vote, where they could live and work, where they would be permitted to eat and spend their leisure and whom they might love or marry.

It is difficult to believe that such procedures were enunciated and implemented with such painstaking thoroughness. Few things are more tragic in human affairs than the debris of demolished ideologies which, deserted by faith, crumble into ruin.

The apartheid regime imprisoned thousands and sent many more into exile. The elaboration of its racial legislation resembled the follies of Nazi Germany. A majority of Jews in South Africa – perhaps as many as three quarters – were of Baltic descent, mainly from Lithuania, including such luminaries as Helen Suzman, the sole anti-apartheid MP in parliament for many years, Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Nadine Gordimer and Dan Jacobson. South African Jews were generally liberal, and played a significant role in resistance to the regime.

The legacy of refugees who joined the anti-apartheid movement in Britain was different from that of the German intellectuals and Latin American exiles. The South Africans were distinguished by their remarkable absence of rancour and bitterness. Their humanity and generosity are recorded in their literary work: Jack Mapanje from Malawi, imprisoned during the years of the Hastings Banda dictatorship, identified a literature of incarceration as a separate sphere of study in some English departments. Mbulelo Mzamane wrote passionately of the young people of Soweto. Albie Sachs published his *Jail Diary*, which was turned into an influential piece of theatre in London; and when he was seriously injured by a South African Defence Forces bomb in Maputo, Mozambique, he created his *Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter*.⁹ During a long convalescence he also worked on the Constitution for the new South Africa, the most socially liberal in the world.

Albie Sachs twice sought asylum in Britain. Each time, he was picked up by the SPSL. His experience of Britain was of both mental and physical healing.

‘The first time I was a psychological wreck, the second time a physical wreck. On both occasions, the condition in which I arrived was severe; and the positive reception from friends makes my feelings for Britain deep and complex. The first time, I had been detained without trial, had suffered from torture and sleep deprivation. The leadership of the ANC were all in prison. I was stateless when I arrived, and recuperation was slow. I had to re-start my whole life.

‘It was August 1966. I received two things from the SPSL – not just material support to do my PhD, but the immense moral and emotional comfort, which made me feel one in a long tradition of émigrés, who had also been treated with dignity and honour when they came here.

‘You feel crushed. You lose self-esteem, and although the political will remains strong, you suffer. You have been in a harsh society where everything is against you. Your loved ones cannot always express their concern, you feel isolated. You need a natural kindness to re-balance you – not an eager goodness, but

calm, practical sympathy. I received just the right touch of warmth of heart and cool practicality.

'Black asylum seekers were not as welcome as I was, although many had also been well received. Until 1965, they could come as of right. I came from an extremely ugly and negative society which was defending itself with ugliness. Here I was greeted with friendship. Of course, the historic British connection was with conquest and segregation, and independence was accorded to a white supremacist state. But I met Canon Collins, David Steel, the trade union leadership, politicians, it was very heartening. It was another Britain, quite different from that of empire.' Although Albie Sachs was familiar with the aftermath of imperialism in his country, he discovered a different sensibility at the heart of empire itself.

'My second arrival in 1988 was on a stretcher. I was comatose. My body was seeking asylum, my brain barely functioning. I was whisked away secretly to the London Hospital. The hospital kept my presence secret. It was very dramatic. They feared there might be another attempt by the South African Defence Forces.

'I had to re-start my life. The SPSL was there for me again. I had lost an arm, my job, my home, my income. It was in many ways a marvellous experience, because I could re-invent myself. I was reborn. It was a second chance to develop, and little swaddling was required. I was again flat on a bed, having to learn to stand and walk all over again. The support and back-up I got was very meaningful and much appreciated. The organized love of nurses, doctors and physiotherapists was one thing; the help of the SPSL was the emotional equivalent.

'Everything around me was routine, very objective and neutral, appropriate when you don't want emotion. You just want your needs attended to without fuss.'

Albie Sachs wrote: 'I see England through the prism of the nurses' fingers. My friends expect me to say that in the ten years of my absence, this country has become harder and less caring and completely driven by the quest for money. But I cannot say that, even though from what I hear I believe it to be true. My own experience now is of infinite care and support, I am full of love for the English people because of those fingers that bathe me and clean me and bind my wounds each day, that is the reality of my experience. I have always felt I would rather be sick in England than anywhere else (and rather die in any other country, English funerals being, if I might put it that way, so dead). I am receiving no antibiotics, no creams, no pills or injections to help deal with the wounds, just loving treatment from the nurses to encourage my body to heal itself.¹⁰

'Perhaps part of my pleasure at being in this hospital room is that I am fairly sure it is not bugged. Sometimes I used to imagine my phone in Maputo being listened in to by at least three different secret services. How can you have an argument, express physical passion, write an intimate letter if you know that others might be listening in or looking on? My biography is there, little details

and big events that I have long forgotten, recorded in the files of at least five countries, probably nearer twenty.

'As I recovered, I wanted to write. I set up the South Africa Constitutional Study Centre at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, with the encouragement of Shula Marks, its then director. There was a grant from the Ford Foundation. Before the attempt on my life, I had been writing about the Mozambican legal system, and I gave a few lectures, so that this could somehow be brought into the remit of SPSL.

'I have something that comes to few people, a chance to reconstruct my life right from scratch. Having lost everything becomes an advantage, it opens me up to inspiration and encourages my heart to soar. No need for me to sail to Polynesia or take off on a motorbike on an anarchic journey. The bomb shattered my scheme of things and now I am free. The only crime I can commit, against myself, against my movement, against my people, is to settle for a banal and mediocre life, to accept that the big events of my existence are already over, to become a semi-retired veteran musing over the past. The biggest, most spectacular event of all, our return to a free South Africa, lies ahead. Perhaps it will not be quite as free as we dreamed of, and maybe our return will not be in conditions of total triumph as we always imagined, but basically we will have succeeded, and what a day it will be, when the ex-prisoners and detainees and exiles, the banished and the banned, are re-united in our freed homeland once more.'¹¹

When Albie Sachs discovered his would-be assassin's identity, he wanted to meet him because 'it was just an immense curiosity to see him and confront him with my presence and procure some kind of human response from him. I did not feel any anger at all, just a wish to let him see me and to personalize my relationship, take away the terrible feeling that to him I was just an object to be eliminated as scientifically and coldly as possible.'

Finally, Sachs did meet the man who organized the Maputo car bomb – Henry van der Westhuizen. *The Guardian* takes up the story. 'He said he was going to the Truth Commission. We spoke for a long time; it was very intense.' Sachs was not ready to shake his hand, but told him to go to the Truth Commission and 'do something for South Africa'. When they met again at a party after the would-be killer had sought and been granted amnesty in 2001, he said he had told the Commission everything. 'I said, "I've only got your face to say you're telling me the truth," but I shook his hand. He went away elated – I almost fainted.'¹²

'We fought with such an intensity of passion, a delirium almost, so that people could live in a more boring society. By that I don't mean a boring society is good; it is simply that the intense emotion, the dread and the dreams that went with the passion, the betrayals and the hopes – it is impossible to sustain at that level of intensity. But you cannot live at that heightened level of anxiety, hope and passion.

'The idea of soft vengeance came out of experience. After the attempt on my life, someone wrote and said "We will avenge you comrade." I said "Are you going to chop off an arm and blind people in retaliation? What for?" Afterwards, when I heard someone had been captured, I thought, "If he is acquitted, OK, in a country where the rule of law operates, that would be a triumph." I was always the guy who broke up fights, rather than the one who did the bullying or was the one bullied.'

Albie Sachs paid tribute to the issue that moved him with an intensity as great as that which racism inspired in him. He wrote *Sexism and the Law*.¹³ Fascinated by the struggle of the suffragettes, he recognized they had only their bodies – no army, no weapons, just courage and conviction to stand up to state power. He saw the possibility of softness as strength, rather than military power and storming the ramparts. He observes that it was moderates – the Fawcett Society – who survived. Little remained of the radicals. He read Sylvia Pankhurst's autobiography: she recalled the day when in the House of Lords in 1926 it was conceded that women were 'persons'.¹⁴ Until that time they had not been so defined. That, he says, is soft vengeance.

'My former wife said I was a waste of a good Christian. I don't have a religious faith, but I'm respectful of belief and the conscience from which it arises. Prison didn't break me. I just made it; if they had pushed harder and longer I might have yielded. I didn't give any information. The only book I had for a long time was the Bible. I read it slowly so that I wouldn't use up all the text. It was in columns; and when I got access to other books, I found it hard at first to read across the page.

'I was born into a Jewish family, but was not indoctrinated by my parents, who were political and socially conscious. They were from Lithuania. When I read the Old Testament, I thought a lot of it horrific. But it also contains the Song of Songs and the prophecies. And the New Testament has the Sermon on the Mount.'

Albie Sachs says that the greatest crime of the apartheid regime was to compel so many good, courageous and creative people, the most idealistic and hopeful, to become adept in the art of war.

The Constitution of South Africa enshrines generosity and tolerance. It is a wonder that this generation of people responded to apartheid with such magnanimity. The society was brutal, the dogmas ugly, but those who fought were not corroded by rancour, despite the violence they suffered. This should be looked at as the equivalent of other great historical concentrations of human qualities: the flowering of science in the Germany of the 1920s and 30s, the artists of the Renaissance, fourteenth-century Florence, fifteenth-century Sienna, the *ahimsa* (non-violence) of the Gandhian movement. Such moments shine in the gloom and pass; but the inspiration remains, a steady light, suggestions of a better world, fleetingly glimpsed, however impossible of attainment.

Mbulelo Mzamane, South Africa

Mbulelo Mzamane, also a South African exile, first in Swaziland, and then in Lesotho, Botswana, and subsequently Britain, was helped by SPSL to fund his studies. He is a scholar and writer, who upon his return to South Africa became the first post-apartheid Vice-Chancellor of Fort Hare University in South Africa until 1999. Subsequently, he has held a number of visiting professorships in literature and is currently Director of the Centre for African Literary Studies at Kwa-Zulu University, Natal.

As he was starting school, the notorious Bantu Education Act of 1953 was introduced; education, as he says, for underdevelopment and servitude. The government believed teaching African children mathematics was pointless, since all that was needed was to make them better servants.

His father was an Anglican priest in the Diocese of Johannesburg, and his mother a nursing sister, one of the first at the Far East Rand Hospital. Far-sighted middle-class parents, they knew what they had to do, and sent him when he was 11 to High School in Swaziland – like Botswana and Lesotho, a British protectorate. This would be a colonial education, but preferable to a Bantu one. Many other children of people in the liberation struggle followed the same path, and his schoolmates were the children of Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu.

The school, St Christopher's, was Anglican, and represented a defiant gesture against apartheid. It benefited considerably from the largesse of the international community. Donors gave scholarships and it thrived. 'The apartheid regime woke up to the fact of this escape route, whereby black children were creatively acquiring education. They did two things. They introduced stringent border controls, and they derecognized high school qualifications from universities in neighbouring countries for admission to South African universities. This closed loopholes for liberal activists, and followed closely upon South Africa's expulsion from the Commonwealth in 1963.

'Parents had to make quick decisions – let the kids leave [Swaziland] or go to South Africa. I stayed in Swaziland; and became an educational exile or defector. The question was, after high school, where to go? We were able to obtain travel documents from Swaziland to travel as Swazis to Lesotho as students. As people became better educated, they drifted further from home. I studied and taught in Lesotho, and there married my college sweetheart. We started a family in the late 1960s. She went abroad to the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, and I was left with two children, teaching and continuing my Master's programme.

'This was disturbed in 1975, when a clash between factions in the governments led to the break-up of the university. I moved to Botswana. I had no passport, so I had to go underground. I worked with the University of Botswana that had joined with Swaziland. They were later to separate.

'The mid-seventies was a time of great student agitation. The uprising in Soweto occurred. A new generation of exiles emerged, some barely out of High School. There were children as young as eight. We had to set up collective structures to cater for the material needs of students. I was chosen as leader of the South African Students' Relief Council. At that time, the UN had no institutional provision for children. As dean of the students, I was thrown into the fray all the time I was in Botswana. I could use university facilities and residence when new students came or others had to be hidden.

'Botswana is a small country. South Africa knew what was happening. By 1979 the pressure was intense [and] fellow-students had warned me that South Africa was becoming impatient that Botswana was harbouring individuals inimical to its interests. Botswana was forbidden to allow them to attack any "neighbouring state", and ordered to deport such people. I began to prepare for departure.

'With help from the government of Botswana I left in 1979. My wife had gone two years before on a Lesotho passport. I and the three children travelled on documents issued by the United Nations convention. I had no passport till 1990. [He had previously applied unsuccessfully for a South African passport.] The documents were issued by the host government and it alone had the power to renew them. I came to Britain with a letter from Botswana saying I was *persona non grata* – a fiction purely for South African consumption.

'I was lucky. I had generous support in childhood by the Anglican Church and Norwegian government. At university I benefited from the Steytler Memorial Fund, administered by the South African Council of Churches, led by Desmond Tutu. This helped me to leave Botswana.'

In Britain, he became chair of the Southern African Campus Scholarships, administered by the World University Service, working for the welfare and educational enhancement of exile students. He also obtained his doctorate at Sheffield University. His wife finished her doctorate and joined him in Sheffield.

'I also resolved to tell the story of the *Children of Soweto* in a way newspapers could not. I wanted to publicize their plight from their own perspective. I also wrote for the Index on Censorship.'

Children of Soweto is saturated with the angry, half-rural, bitter urbanization, the tragedy and repression of the 1970s. Describing Hlubi, the 'most dreaded' (black) policeman in Soweto, Mzamane writes, 'His name spelt blind terror. He was rumoured to be fearless and ruthless to the point of recklessness and sadism. Stories about him were legend. One story had it that enemy bullets turned to water before him and gun barrels puffed harmless smoke. Some said he could also turn into a black cat and stalk unwary criminals like a cat after mice. And once in their midst he would again assume human form. They said that during his annual leave he always went home to Soshangane to be

strengthened by the most powerful doctors of that land of illustrious *inyangas* [traditional healers].'¹⁵

In 1982 Mbulelo and his wife began to consider longer-term jobs. She was offered a research fellowship at the National Animal Reproduction Research Institute in Northern Nigeria at Ahmadu Bello University, and he was appointed senior lecturer in English. They remained for four years, although the situation in Nigeria was also deteriorating and the repression of the military governments of the nineties was beginning. Ahmadu Bello was a centre of radicalism, where staff and students started Youth Solidarity on South Africa.

Mbulelo was visiting Britain in 1992 at the time of a violent demonstration in Nigeria, in which several students were killed, for the relaunch of *Children of Soweto* ten years on. This was also when a British government representative, Linda Chalker, officially met a representative of the South African liberation movement, Oliver Tambo, for the first time; presumably, the government could see the way things were going. Mbulelo, in the spotlight as author of the *Children of Soweto*, pointed out on the BBC that he had relocated to Nigeria, which was now doing something similar to its own students. He said fascism is fascism wherever it is, which upset the Nigerian government. They packed their bags and left, along with colleagues from the anti-apartheid movement in Nigeria, also under threat from the government.

He went with his family to Yale, where he was offered a research fellowship on a new South Africa Research Programme. He also gave testimonies and papers to the State Department and US organizations. Then, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act was passed under the Reagan administration to boycott South African goods.

'I was in the English Department at Yale, but there was nothing for my wife as an agronomist and ecologist. She was invited to the University of Georgia, where we both went in 1987–88. We were also offered joint appointments at the University of Vermont in their African Studies Department.

'Mandela was released. I did a lot of interviews on TV explaining the significance of the event. I said this was the beginning, not the end. We were wary of de Klerk's intentions. My colleagues in South Africa thought I should come back to the University of Fort Hare, where I was offered the vice-chancellorship.

'I had no passport. I was told we might get one on condition that we applied for an amnesty. I said over my dead body. I had done nothing wrong. We were delayed until 1993, when Mandela intervened to have our citizenship restored. So by the time I went back in 1993, I already had a grandchild. My wife came a year later, but my children were studying in American universities.

'What did I receive from Britain? Education is always a difficult process to quantify. I came to the UK for education and I received it. Outside that it is difficult to judge. The UK gave me distance and space to reflect and to write. Exile can offer certain strength. I'd never before had the opportunity to look at

the wider context. I am a South African kid who had been told from birth about my innate inferiority. Unless I'm closely watched as a factory hand, I will break the machines.

'In Sheffield I was teaching an MA programme in African Literature – almost unique in Britain – and also lecturing undergraduates. One day the Head of Department walked in and sat in on my lecture. Midway through the class he walked out. I thought, "Oh my God, I've blown it! How? What did I do?" I spoke of Aristotle's *Poetics*, then of writers like Charles Dickens etc., what I imagined was the staple diet of literature students here. Later, my Head of Department told me why he had walked out. It was out of embarrassment. He said, "They didn't know any of the authors you quoted."

'I was not a retard, but a colonial child who was better informed than the British. Exposure to the colonial power restored my confidence. In Sheffield I was immersed in educational affairs. Extramurally, I taught some children of Caribbean immigrants, school dropouts. It was scandalous, the jingoism that passed for education offered to British West Indian children. Observing struggles of that kind was a rehearsal for what I would subsequently do here, experiences essential for educational reconciliation in South Africa.'

Mbulelo believes that the generosity of spirit of anti-apartheid activists comes from the deep springs of our unfolding culture of liberation. 'I was always proud – not in the sense of arrogant – of being the product of a highly resilient culture [which] contains the African ethos of *ubuntu*, which is an accommodating, inclusive concept. Desmond Tutu defines it as a sensibility not threatened by others, open and secure of itself, because it knows that it is part of a greater whole, which is diminished when others are humiliated or oppressed.' It is life-giving, a polar opposite of apartheid, which is unaccommodating and life-denying.

'I'm married to an agronomist and ecologist who taught me that species that inbreed incestuously weaken and die unless there is cross-pollination. The realization that I come from a transplantable culture and one that would give me a future was sustaining when I was outside of my country.

'When I was in Sheffield, the Callaghan government decided on a two-tier fee structure for universities, one for British students and another for non-UK students. We were to pay "economic" fees, which meant a huge increase. This had the effect of channelling more students to the USA. It has repercussions for Britain. When post-graduate students go back to their countries, they leave a legacy, the presence of their culture and its difference. They become officials and entrepreneurs, and then are in a position to order goods, machines and services. They naturally turn to the countries where they were educated. It is debilitating for British society if they encourage only the children of the rich who can afford the fees to come here.'

Jack Mapanje, Malawi

Jack Mapanje – linguist, editor and human rights activist – is one of Malawi's leading poets. When he was head of the English Department at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, he was arrested for his dissenting views and imprisoned without trial or charge for 3 years, 7 months, 16 days and over 12 hours in Malawi's notorious Mikuyu Prison, after the banning of his first book of poems, *Of Chameleons and Gods*.¹⁶

Global campaigns for his release began after his arrest on 25 September 1987 until he was freed on 10 May 1991. After his release *The Chattering of Wagtails of Mikuyu Prison* was published by Heinemann in 1993.¹⁷ Other books of poetry followed, most recently *Beasts of Nalunga*.¹⁸ In the introduction to *The Last of Sweet Bananas* Jack Mapanje declares: 'My life has tended to be a constant struggle against the despotic structures that keep ordinary people silent and make them invisible.'¹⁹

Jack Mapanje has also co-edited *The African Writers' Handbook* and three anthologies on African writing.²⁰ He lives in York, teaches Creative Writing in the School of English at Newcastle University and is currently completing his prison memoir.

Jack Mapanje says that in the fight against colonialism all over Africa, nationalists buried their political desires, ambitions and ethnicities in the struggle against a common European enemy. Most countries focussed their attention on one heroic individual who led them. It did not matter what ethnic group he came from. He made most decisions without much argument or protest from his executive committees. The test came with independence. Would the leader allow the people to speak and his ministers to take responsibility for government departments, would he share the power conferred on him during the struggle for independence with his colleagues? The answer was mostly no, with a few exceptions – Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, and to some extent, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia.

In the struggle against colonialism, people believed in their leaders, but increasingly, the leaders took advantage of them. They turned themselves into despots. Banda, formerly imprisoned in Southern Rhodesia with other nationalists, took power during the self-rule introduced into Nyasaland Protectorate in 1963. Following independence in 1964 Nyasaland Protectorate was named Malawi.

Soon after, Banda sacked six members of his cabinet. Unwilling to share power democratically: he was afraid they might contest his position. He imprisoned the supporters of the sacked ministers, and eliminated his rivals – just as Tom Mboya was killed by Kenyatta in Kenya.

In 1971, Banda declared himself Life President. Anyone who protested was sent into prison. Many Malawians fled to neighbouring countries. There were

four main prisons in Malawi for political dissenters, Chichiri, Zomba Central Prison, Dzeleka and Mikuyu, where Jack Mapanje was imprisoned. These and other prisons around the country were always full, conditions were bad and inmates often died.

Western governments knew about the despotic nature of Banda's regime, but did not care. They needed African leaders to support them against Communism. When he was arrested and imprisoned without trial and without charge, there were global protests against Banda's regime; these were based at the University of York, where Jack's friend, Landeg White, worked. Because of protests over Jack's continued incarceration, Banda and his ministers were embarrassed wherever they travelled internationally until the authorities were forced to release him.

'When I was released, I found a politically transformed world. Nelson Mandela had come out of prison, the South African system of apartheid, which had sustained Banda's regime, had officially come to an end. The West began a new line on Africa. The British started demanding "good governance" of the African countries they helped financially; the Americans were keen on "human rights." The Berlin Wall had crumbled, with it Communism. African dictators could no longer play off Western countries against Communist countries in their game of power. Banda's time was up.

'I belong to what some critics call the third generation of African writers. These were university-educated and steeped in Western classical and European culture – *Beowulf*, Shakespeare, the Romantics, the moderns etc. Our university education included the study of the new written African literature, with Chinua Achebe, Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, Agustino Neto, Leopold Senghor and others as the core. Classical and Western epics such as *The Odyssey*, *Iliad*, *Paradise Lost*, *War and Peace* etc. were studied comparatively with African epics such as *Mwindo*, *Sundiata*, *Shaka* and others.

'Our generation was also the first to study African oral literature (orature) as a subject in its own right. Most writers of our generation started their craft when the English department was being Africanized, when African, Caribbean, African American, South American writing were being included on the literature syllabi. The African university itself and its various departments and faculties were being encouraged to introduce a local element into its syllabus as part of a nationalist programme. Where there were no writers, African scholars began directing research programmes in oral literature.

'Mupa Shumba and I directed the Malawi oral literature research in the university from the department of English. Local staff and students at Chancellor College went into the rural areas, recorded traditional stories, proverbs, riddles, grain-pounding songs, wedding songs, beer-drinking songs, tales of the earth. These were brought into college, translated, studied and analysed and published

in *Kalulu: Malawian Bulletin of Oral Literature*, which I originated and edited with a colleague Enoch Timpunza. As people exploited the oral traditional song to glorify Banda, and Banda himself bastardized the oral song in his favour, young writers at the university exploited these traditional materials in their writings to provide alternative multiple identities for Malawi. Perhaps my real crime was to have become a director of the orature research programmes in the university and a prominent member of the writers group that provided identities, which did not seem to glorify Banda. Perhaps poets and politicians will always be in conflict because both like to exploit tradition in the search for their separate truths; while the politician was looking for truth for self glory, the poet was looking for truth about humanity in general.'

All this is brought to bear in the writing of Jack Mapanje as exemplified by one of his poems from *Of Chameleons and Gods*:

'The New Platform Dances'

Haven't I danced the big dance
 Compelled the rains so dust could
 Soar high above like when animals
 Stampede? Haven't I in animal
 Skins wriggled with amulet
 Rattled with anklets
 Scattered nervous women
 With snakes around my neck
 With spears in these hands
 Then enticed them back
 With fly whisk's magic?
 Haven't I moved with all
 Concentric in the arena
 To the mystic drums
 Dancing the half-nude
 Lomwe dance
 Haven't I?

Haven't my wives at mortars sang
 Me songs of praise, of glory,
 How I quaked the earth
 How my skin trembled
 How my neck peaked
 Above all dancers
 How my voice throbbed
 Like the father-drum

I danced to
Haven't they?

Now, when I see my daughters writhe
Under cheating abstract
Voices of slack drums, ululate
To babble-idea-men-masks
Without amulets or anklets,
Why don't I stand up
To show them how we danced
Chopa, how IT was born?
Why do I sit still
Why does my speech choke
Like I have not danced
Before? Haven't I
Danced the bigger dance?
Haven't I?

'Why was I arrested? The truth is I do not know as I was neither tried nor charged. Perhaps because I came from Mangochi, which was considered by Banda and his inner circle to be a "rebel district". One of the leaders of the rebellion against Banda, Henry Chipembere, came from Mangochi. Almost everyone from this district was suspect and expected by the authorities to be a rebel. Secondly, when I returned home after my PhD I began a regional academic organization, LASU (the Linguistic Association for SADCC – Southern African Development Coordination Conference – Universities), and became its first chairman. The authorities might have feared that my allegiance would be regional, rather than national. They probably feared that I might wield some power in the region. As chairman of LASU I was able to get funding from Scandinavian countries and elsewhere to run conferences for our organization. Thirdly, I was being invited to literature festivals and conferences, particularly after *Of Chameleons and Gods* was published.

'Why did I leave Malawi? A Malawian journalist Mkwapatira Mhango, who lived in exile in Zambia, a country which shares borders with my country, was killed, along with his family. His house was bombed, and all the nine people staying there at the time perished because he wrote articles which exposed the leadership ambitions of Banda's permanent mistress, Cecilia Kadzamira, as well as the human rights abuses of Malawi. Although the Malawi authorities denied it, it was obvious that they used their outside intelligence to do the job for them in Lusaka. When I was released from Mikuyu Prison, I was warned that my family was going to meet Mhango's fate. We left at the earliest opportunity as our lives

were in danger. We were lucky. The Poetry Society and the Irina Trust both in London bought my family and I, five altogether, one-way air tickets.'

Landeg White, a friend of Jack's and Director of the Centre for Southern African Studies at the University of York, had contacted the SPSL when Jack was still in prison. He told Jack that if he were released, he would be able to stay at the University of York as a Visiting Scholar for two years, and SPSL (now CARA) would pay for living expenses during that period.

'We are all grateful for the assistance we received. Like many other refugees and exiles, we did not feel alone and dejected in a foreign land. We felt we belonged to a world that cared for our lives and the lives of our families. This was, and remains, something to celebrate.'

WEST AND NORTH AFRICA

Gideon Kempunga, Ghana

Ghana gained independence from Britain in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, one of the most charismatic of African freedom fighters. His intention was to industrialize Ghana, freeing it from dependency upon basic export commodities – cocoa, gold and timber. He was influenced by the leaders of black struggle in the USA, where he studied – Marcus Garvey, W.E. Dubois and C.L.R. James in Trinidad. He built the Asokombo Dam, which still provides most of Ghana's power. But he became increasingly remote, proclaimed himself President for Life, and was toppled in a CIA-backed coup in 1966.

For the next 13 years, military juntas alternated with brief periods of civilian rule. In 1979, a low-ranking officer, Jerry Rawlings, seized power in what became known as the June 4th Uprising.

Nkrumah embodied the degradation of ideals on which the freedom of many African states was founded. When the desired outcomes of independence failed to appear, many African leaders assumed it was the fault, not of a belief in socialism, but of the people. These had to be governed with greater force, often 'for their own good'; and leaders became increasingly authoritarian, dictatorial and even messianic. Many had suffered under colonial regimes, spending periods in jail. They had made sacrifices. It was only a small step to seeing themselves as saviours of their country.

Gideon Kempunga is from a poor rural family, and his story, too, is woven into the history of colonialism. His father, a lay-preacher in the Catholic church, was sent to do evangelical work in the villages in the north. He was there 40 years and when he became too old to work, his bishop – from whom he had never asked for a pension – refused to build him a small house in his village, only finally

giving him enough money to buy tin roofing sheets. Ironically, this same bishop died in similar circumstances, abandoned by the church.

Gideon has one brother. Originally there were eight children, of whom he was the youngest. Five died in childhood. His mother told the same story of each one. 'They were playing all right, then at night they had a temperature, so I put them to bed and covered them up. They never woke up again.'

Gideon Kempunga was a founding member of the June 4th Uprising. He studied Sociology and then for a Master's in Rural Development. His involvement in the political upheaval interrupted his studies. The movement was an attempt to renew the idealism of the freedom struggle of a generation earlier by redeeming lost hopes and battered dreams – an exercise in nostalgia driven by passionate commitment that was unlikely to succeed, even though it didn't seem so at the time.

'I helped to shape the movement. I saw it as part of the fight for social justice. It gave me energy, and informed my whole life. It also defined who I am beyond my individuality. Rawlings came to power in June 1979 on a wave of euphoria. He handed over power to Dr Hilla Limann – a Nkrumahist and pan-African politician, confirmed in office in a free election. In December 1981, Rawlings again seized power.

'Rawlings claimed he was performing a "house-cleaning exercise". He wanted to "root out" corruption. In the process, no fewer than eight former Heads of State were executed. If this was house-cleaning, it was a very brutal. [But] most people in Ghana were so tired of poverty and insecurity, they turned a blind eye to the excesses of June 4.

'The shock therapy didn't cure anything. After the hand-over to Limann, I resumed work in the student movement. I decided to work in civil society – before that I had been in the Youth Organization under the umbrella of the state.

'When the elected government was thrown out by Rawlings in 1981, he still had a lot of support. My role was educational work with the instruments of repression, the military police. I was supposed to raise awareness and humanize them. I was passionate about it. Nothing changed. The police are part of the state structure and reflect the dominant ethos. "The fish rots from the head". They used their venom against civilians when ordered to do so. My dream was to change that, since I had been on the receiving end of it.

'That was my function in the new administration. We had disagreements with Rawlings, but as students, we had been the bedrock of his support. His administration was incoherent, with no programme, no transparency. At one stage, he withdrew all high denominations of currency. Why? Where had the decision come from? There was no answer. The policy simply dispossessed a lot of people.

'He asked us to produce a document, which he wanted to be a mixture of Gaddafi's *Green Book* and an ABC of socialism, but I don't think he ever read

it. He was a populist, interested mainly in the power-game. We owed him nothing and criticized him in our newspaper. He could not take it. We were also in touch with the Popular Defence Committees, trade unions and other grassroots movements.

'I was picked up by him personally, in a helicopter raid early one morning. He put me in prison for a year without the courtesy of telling me why. I coped with it, because I understood what motivated him. Some soldiers attempted a coup. I was not involved in it, but he came down hard on everyone who criticized him. We represented the intellectual force of the country, and he was afraid of that.

'He announced on the radio that the coup had been put down. I was at the house of my friend, the Minister for Youth and Sports. I walked inside while the helicopter hovered overhead. It landed and soldiers surrounded the house. Jerry Rawlings came down from the craft with a bandolier of bullets, holding a gun. I knew many of the officers on board.

'He ordered us to kneel down. He told the soldiers to bring me and the editor of our newspaper to the Castle guardroom. We went by road, the helicopter above us. "What do we do with these?" the escort asked. "Lock them up," he said. That was the last time I spoke to him.

'I spent three weeks in the Castle guardroom. Castles were the old slave-trading posts. Then I spent five months in a police cell, from where I went to Kpando prison, which dated from when Germany had a colonial position on the Gold Coast.

'I wasn't personally ill-treated, but the conditions in which we lived were horrible. People died. They took me there in the middle of the night. I had no idea where I was. The rules of the prison were that the last to arrive should sleep nearest to the pisspot. This was leaking, so by the next morning I woke soaked and stinking. That was the least of my worries.

'I developed coping hypotheses. I guessed it was a punitive exercise. He was not going to try us, he just wanted us out of the way. I expected it would last five years, so I mentally prepared myself. I was released after a year.

'My only reading matter was the Bible. I read it slowly to save something to read. When I came out I found it hard to deal with freedom. I was disoriented and angry at my interrupted life. But prison no longer frightened me. The way you take your punishment depends upon your mindset, how you understand yourself and your situation. I was full of fight, but had no one to fight with. I felt a great loneliness.

'I wanted to study. I had no intention of leaving the country. Neither my family nor my parents knew where I was. I had few visitors – some friends from Accra. My family were in the north, 12–14 hours drive away. Eventually my brother came looking for me, but he never found me.

'After prison, my mother encouraged me to leave. Friends arranged for me to leave the country secretly. I went by road to Nigeria. There were two of us, my

companion a soldier from my home area, once second-in-command to Rawlings. I wasn't sure what would happen, but I thought the government would be glad to be rid of us. We went through Togo and Benin to Nigeria. We reached Saki, a town near the Benin border, from where a friend took us to Lagos. We waited a month or so for a ticket. I had a passport, but my companion had only a newspaper with a photograph of himself when he was a prominent member of the government and army. It was April 1984.

'We flew to London. Immigration were puzzled by his lack of documentation. They held us for five days. They interrogated me harshly. At one point, I almost said Send me back to Ghana. I was telling the truth. They didn't believe it. I became very worked up, and almost spoiled it all. They were shouting and bullying. I see now they were racist, but at the time I didn't understand. When Afro-Americans came to the university and complained of racism, we thought they were paranoid. I understand now very well. I have encountered a lot of racism here. Open abuse I can cope with. You can confront it; worse is the cold calculation of those who are polite to your face, but stab you in the back.

'All I wanted to do was study. My academic career had been aborted. I wanted to make up ground. I went to the Africa Educational Trust, World University Service, and I applied to universities, but I had no financial support. I went to the University of Leeds, but with no sponsor I studied part-time on the dole. [Then] I got a scholarship from the Student Union Welfare Office at Leeds, intended for South African refugees. I was told repeatedly it was a pity I was not from South Africa. I said I would ask my father why I had been born in West Africa and not the South. Anyway, discretion was used and I got support. My Master's programme was assured, the fees and accommodation costs were found. I wanted to do a PhD after that. The department was happy for me to do so, but again, there was no money.

'In the meantime, we had set up a Ghana Refugees' Welfare Group. We were a younger generation, soldiers who had run away, students, not like the older tradition of political activists. We had no ties here, we knew nobody, no family, no money. The older politicians were more well-to-do, they had connections. We were poor, from the border regions or the poor areas of Ghana. We met other refugee groups. I helped set up the Refugee Arrivals Project.

'This was how I came to contact the SPSL. I wanted to do fieldwork in Burkina Faso. Traditionally the SPSL supported academics and their families – they didn't support fieldwork. They said maybe they could help me with a grant for my family. I was married, but my wife was in Ghana. My son was born just before I went to prison. He was seven when he came here. He got a first-class honours degree in Economics at Leeds. He did his Master's in Cambridge, and is now a merchant banker. With the SPSL grant, I could get my life together, pay for my fieldwork and support my family. How I actually spent it was not their business, as long as I finished the work.

‘After my education I worked for Oxfam, Panos Institute, Accord. I worked for DfID [Department for International Development] in Nigeria from 1997 to 2003. I have been a consultant to DfID ever since; now I am working to strengthen transparency and accountability in the Niger Delta.

‘I am very aware of the drastic change that has occurred in my life, my situation; I also know I am still driven by the things I want to achieve. Social justice will take longer than I had dreamed. There are no short cuts.

‘There are many positive developments in Ghana. There has been no civil conflict. Things still work. There is a certain amount of economic stability, but the system is not able to absorb the teeming youth. On balance, it is democratic. You can talk openly there now. But I wish it were better. Corruption is rife. We are still essentially an export economy. The state is still a milking cow, fed by donors who still play ball. Young people find no work, education and health care are deficient. These things cause me pain.

‘The African experience has been a scramble of the elite for the spoils of state; the second scramble for Africa, as it were. The state was a colonial construct. The administration was there to serve the colonial interests – the cocoa, the gold, the timber. A triangle of railways led to the ports. The structures of governance served the extractive economy and were not rooted in internal production. As a result, state institutions never connected with the people. The view is that what belongs to the state belongs to no one. There is no feeling of commitment to the state. The elite just milk it.²¹

‘As well as my son, I have two other children. My older daughter is doing A-level in applied science, and wants to do medicine. My youngest is eight. My wife has taken a post-graduate course in mental health; she will work in social care. She went to vocational school in Ghana and became a teacher.

‘I am also the backbone of the family back home. I am responsible for the children of my late brother, the brothers and sisters of my wife. I spend some of my time here and some in Accra. I have a house on the outskirts of the city, where I keep goats and hens. I want my children to get their education here, because they will have a better start. When they are older, they can make their choices.

‘I wonder why people here are not open to learning anything about the wider world. I feel sadness, not anger, at the narrowness of mind of people in rich countries. They don’t need to know anything because they have so much.’

Kuyok Abol Kuyok, Sudan

Many African refugees bring memories of a rural background that stir distant echoes of our own agricultural past; stories of upheavals and migration that not so long ago also tore up people in Britain by the roots and sent them on a long, transforming journey into industrial society.

The African independence movements enabled a number of poor country people – mainly young men – to attend (somewhat) sparse higher education institutions in urban areas. Many became teachers, researchers and university lecturers. Some fell into dispute with authoritarian governments, others belonged to the wrong ethnic, religious or linguistic group. Those forced to leave their home country arrive in Britain with epic stories of opportunity, dislocation, and piercing losses to the heart and spirit.

Kuyok's family is Dinka, Sudan's largest tribal group. The Dinkas, like the Nuers and Shilluks, their fellow Nilotic people, are nomadic pastoralists. 'My father and mother never went to school. My father was a traditional chief, and my mother his youngest wife. None of their children was destined to go to school. My father died in 1969.

'My mother's brother was a government official, working in the North. He requested his sister to send one of her sons to him to be educated. She chose me. I stayed with him, then when he was transferred back to the South, I remained with him and continued my schooling. He brought me up and influenced me a great deal. Dinka is my first language. My early schooling was in Arabic and my secondary schooling in English.'

Kuyok's home near Rumbek in central Sudan changed hands twice during the civil war between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). He went to Juba University in 1983, the year the war started. This was the only university in the South Sudan, but as a national university it admitted students from all over the country. Northerners, including the Vice-Chancellor, ran it. By 1984, returning home was impossible; students had to be airlifted to Khartoum for the vacations. The government, protective of students and teachers from the North, evacuated the whole university to Khartoum in 1989 as the campus had been cut off from the outside world. At that time, almost two-thirds of students were from the North.

Kuyok had graduated in 1988. He worked in a government secondary school in Khartoum. Four million South Sudanese had been displaced by war, and the government set up schools for the displaced children. Kuyok started post-graduate work in International Relations and got a job at Juba University as a teaching assistant in the College of Education.

The coup in 1989 was led by Omar al-Bashir. The primary objective of this military takeover, led by the National Islamic Front (NIF), was to further his project of Islamizing the state; political parties were banned and the press closed down.

'It [the coup plotters] was an extreme ideological group. At the beginning, people thought they would not last long. But the whole education system was restructured – 25 universities were created in one day, with no idea as to how they would be run, with no infrastructure. All academics who did not agree with the coup were purged.

'At Juba University, now relocated in Khartoum, the Arabization of university education caused more trouble. The system in the South had been based on the English language. The policy after 1989 was that all instruction should be in Arabic, unless it was teaching the English language. Lecturers who weren't fluent in Arabic had to learn it. Objectors were imprisoned, tortured, dismissed. The government is the sole employer of academics, so when they are dismissed they also lose their university houses.

'The NIF-led government appointed their own party people. Nothing was left to chance. Those who could went into exile to East Africa, Kenya or Uganda. There, many joined the Sudan People's Liberation Army. The SPLA wanted a united Sudan on a new basis and if that wasn't possible, a separate state in the South.

'Security forces had their spies in the university. Your views would become known. One colleague lost his life. The man who tortured him in prison had been his colleague at the university. This colleague was a member of the Communist party and distributed its literature.

'In 1992 I was researching the effect of the Arabization process. The government had got rid of English-medium schools that were catering for the war-displaced Southern Sudanese children in Khartoum. We said there was a need for such schools. We were looking at the impact of language on the results of exams. There were two papers, one in English and one in Arabic. Those who sat the English paper were doing better. We drew up a questionnaire and submitted it to two schools for the students to complete. The police got hold of it. We were taken in for questioning. They kept us for two days. We said, "This is research." On the third day, they released us with a warning. We had to report to them every week at Security HQ. There are now eight security agencies in Sudan.

'It was dangerous to stay. I got a scholarship in 1993 to Hull to do a Master's. It was difficult to communicate with home. Letters had to be smuggled out. My first child was born while I was away in 1994. I heard how bad things were – mass arrests, many leaving for Eritrea on foot, Kenya and Uganda. Colleagues urged me not to come back. In June 1994 my wife got to Egypt. It seemed logical for me to ask for asylum in Britain. It was a bad experience.

'In Sudan I had been contributing since 1987 to the English-language papers, *Sudan Times* and the *Guiding Star*. I heard a professor in Oxford had copies of all these papers. He allowed me to photocopy the material. I gave it to my lawyer, to support my asylum claim.

'In 1994, I was told to await an interview. I had taken part in a BBC debate with the Sudanese ambassador. The SPLM [Sudanese People's Liberation Movement] representative sent a copy of the programme to the Home Office in support of my asylum claim. On the strength of that I got refugee status.

'It took four years before I was granted asylum, but I was allowed to work after six months. I did voluntary work at the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement in London. I also had to support my family in Cairo. I got a job as a security

guard, for a company in Islington. I hated it. I couldn't study, because I would have had to pay the Overseas Student rate, which I couldn't possibly afford.

'In 1998, I worked with the Refugee Council, teaching ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). My family was allowed to join me in 1999. I had no papers. I could not go to Cairo. At one point, I asked to withdraw my application for asylum, because if I had gone to Cairo I would have forfeited my claim.

'In 1999, my family came. That also took a year. We had been separated for more than four years. The adjustment is very difficult – our lives had been so different. It is not easy to pick up the threads of living together. I had never seen my child, who by then was four.

'In 2001 I taught English to the Congolese Community in Finsbury Park. In 2003 I thought I'd like to do a PhD at the Institute of Education. I was advised to do an MRes [Master of Research] first – a pre-PhD, to study your area of research and refine your proposal. I was self-funding. But when it came to my PhD itself in 2005 there was no money. I learned from Camden Voluntary Service of an organization that helped refugee scholars. I contacted CARA. They asked what I was studying and what I hoped to do. The university contributed to the fees for my PhD but CARA paid the bulk of it. That was for four years, up to 2009. I was very happy. CARA have been a real lifeline to me, because my career had been badly disrupted. I cannot say how grateful I am.

'Last year I also got a job with [London] Metropolitan University's Institute of Policy Studies on Education. I have achieved what I wanted to. But I know you have to be strong and committed to do so. Many people cannot sustain their energies; some take to drink, others drop out, settle for any job.

'When I finish I shall go home. A peace agreement between the central government and the SPLM was signed in January 2005. There is much work to be done now. Next year I'll go, but it will be hard for my oldest child who is 14. I would prefer him to go to university here. My wife will perhaps stay with him.

'At home, the University of Juba is relocating to the South. I can also work in the Education Ministry, since the peace agreement involves representatives from the South in government. The agreement is shaky – there are still important parts not yet implemented. The oil is in the South. The North annexed the oil areas and we want those areas back. We want transparency in oil revenue and a share of it. Northern troops remain in the South.

'War in the West was created to coincide with peace in the South. This is a fight over resources. One-third of the population are Arab. The people of Darfur are African, but there are pockets of nomadic Arab tribes in Darfur. The issue is over grazing land and water.

'My PhD is on parental involvement in education. I have worked since 1998 with parents from a background similar to my own, Somalis, Sudanese, Ethiopians and Eritreans. They asked for help with education. When my son came in 1999 I got more interested in schools here. I began to read the literature about black

and ethnic minority children. The study explores involvement of Horn of Africa parents in their children's education. I researched three primary schools, and I'm now writing up my findings.

'For [African parents in the UK] there is a separation between education at school and education at home. At home, it has traditionally been the responsibility of the whole community to raise a child: extended family and neighbourhood give them morals and values. The school is responsible only for academic education, to enable them to become a doctor or civil servant. They had a high regard for English education, but they find their children changed, and they think this education is not fit for them. They get private teachers for them, and if they have money send them back to Africa. There is a mis-match between what schools are expected to do and what they actually deliver, while at the same time, the moral and spiritual teachings get neglected.

Many African countries achieved independence in a violent struggle, often supported with a liberationist rhetoric that owed much to anti-colonial Marxist theorists. The new governments usually tried to implement some form of state socialism, often with promptings, aid and advice from Moscow. It was a transplant which, it is easy to see now, was bound to fail. Only it didn't seem so at the time. The newly liberated countries, along with the socialist bloc, seemed to believe that History was on their side; and even the West, at least for a time in the 1950s and 60s, could not be sure that this might not be so. The ensuing ideological struggle had profound implications for the fate of learning in Africa.

Abdissalam Issa-Salwe, Somalia

Somalia, in the Horn of Africa, an arid, sparsely populated region of herders and nomads, is governed by shifting alliances of clans and warlords. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it witnessed imperial rivalries between Britain, Italy and France. It is, unlike much of Africa, quite homogeneous in language and ethnicity, but its inhabitants owe a primary allegiance to clans, which make 'nation-building' problematic.

The British first used the Somali coastal area to provide meat for its garrison in Aden, established in 1839. The French followed in 1862 in Djibouti and the Italians in 1869 at Aseb. Italy invaded Ethiopia through Eritrea, and was defeated at the battle of Adwa in 1896 – the first victory in Africa of non-whites against a European power.

After a series of territorial manoeuvres in the first half of the twentieth century, 1960 brought independence to the British and Italian colonies, which merged as the Somali Republic. Somalia looked to the Soviet Union for aid, and in 1969, Siad Barre seized power, and ran the country as a dictatorship. Since 1960, Somalia has had 9 years of independence, 22 years of Marxist dictatorship, and 18 years of anarchy.

Barre maintained power until 1991, although the Soviet Union transferred its local support to Ethiopia after the revolution that installed Mengistu in 1974, seeing it as

a strategically more significant client state. The US then propped up Barre's regime against Mengistu.

By 1988 Somalia had fallen into civil war, which led to chaos, ruined crops and 300,000 deaths from famine. In 1992, UN military observers supervised an unsuccessful relief operation and ceasefire; in 1993, after UN Pakistani troops were killed, US troops attacked Mogadishu, the capital, in an attempt to capture Md Farah Aideed, leader of one of the clans. Later that year, in a battle at a Mogadishu hotel, 18 US soldiers were killed and 84 wounded. Dead US soldiers were dragged through the streets of the capital; all US and UN troops were withdrawn.

A provisional government was formed in Nairobi in 2004, supported by the USA, the EU, the UN and African Union. This met inside Somalia in 2006 in the city of Baidoa. Its president is Abdullah Yusuf Ahmed, warlord and former opponent of Siad Barre. At the same time, the Islamic Courts, operating since the mid-1990s, were providing a semblance of order in the areas where they operated. By June 2006 they controlled Mogadishu, and seemed to be strengthening their hold over the whole country, appealing to a mixed Islamic and Somali nationalism, reinforced by anti-Ethiopian rhetoric.

Late in 2006, Ethiopia invaded Somalia, sweeping the Islamic Courts from power. The United States supported the occupation, since the leaders of the Courts were suspected of involvement in the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. By early 2007, the Islamists were in retreat. Parts of Mogadishu were depopulated as people fled. Somali refugees say that the occupation of the country by their traditional enemy is as foolish an undertaking as the US in Iraq. Not only is it inflaming nationalist feeling and uniting previously warring clans, it fans the flames of fundamentalism.

Abdissalam Issa-Salwe left Somalia in 1977, his studies interrupted by the Marxist dictatorship of Siad Barre. His route to Britain, where he arrived in 1990, was long and tortuous. In his lifetime, the politics of his country turned full circle. 'I was prevented from finishing my university degree – I was studying law – and went to Ethiopia, where the opposition to Siad Barre was gathered. We lived around Diri Dawa, not far from Djibouti. For five years I could not study. I worked as an opposition activist, under Yusuf Abdullah, who was secretary-general of the opposition in exile. He now leads the transitional Government in Somalia. I am from the same clan as Yusuf Abdullah.

'A conflict between two factions of the Opposition left me on the wrong side. I was arrested and imprisoned, since the Opposition was in alliance with the then Ethiopian government. I was under lock and key for six months. When I say "opposition", this means armed struggle. When two factions fight, it is serious. On my release in 1983, I was exiled a second time, now to Kenya. From there, I went to India, to Hyderabad to study Sociology and Public Administration at Osmania University.

'In Hyderabad I got a BA and also studied basic IT. Then I returned to Nairobi. I was intending to go to Ethiopia, but Yusuf Abdullah had been arrested there,

because an agreement had been reached between the Ethiopian and Somali governments. I couldn't go to either country. The Soviet Union which had backed Siad Barre, transferred its affections to Ethiopia after the fall of Haile Selassie. The US supported the Barre administration.'

In Britain Abdissalam worked for 12 years in the Refugee Council's training and employment section, as an IT lecturer, providing refugees and the unemployed with skills to help their absorption into Britain. Refugees are often educated and usually get work, although at a lower level than that they are qualified for. Most accept personal security is the most important thing – without it, you cannot live. Livelihood becomes secondary.

'Among my students at the Refugee Council, I was surprised one day to see my old mathematics teacher from Somalia. The wheel had turned full circle. There I was teaching my teacher.

'Our courses in Hyderabad were in English. Many Somalis learn English from the movies. In our country, the main languages are English, Italian and Arabic. The business of the Law Courts is all conducted in a foreign language. The North was colonized by Britain and the South by Italy.

'I had some relatives in Uganda, uncles and aunts who lived there, so I went and claimed to be a Ugandan national through my maternal relatives to get a passport. They got a birth certificate to say that I had been born in Uganda. I had spent some time there as a child. When it is a question of survival, you use whatever means you can. I went first to Italy. I didn't stay although I speak Italian.

'I came to England and claimed refugee status. The Home Office sent [my documents] to Uganda to see if they were genuine, so I could be accepted as a Ugandan refugee. Culturally in Uganda a man can adopt his brother's son. I was not accepted as a genuine refugee, but was given leave to remain. That was renewed annually for ten years, and I then became a citizen of Britain. I studied for my MA in Political Studies in Greenwich in 1995, and an MSc in Computing and Information Systems in 1999. I finished my PhD in information management in 2006.

'CARA – I learned about them from a friend – paid tuition fees, money for travel and for books. They gave me a foothold here. In 2003 I became a lecturer in Information Technology at Thames Valley University. I also do freelance work, monitoring and evaluating information systems. I have published two books. I have been well treated in Britain and I am grateful. I always wanted to write, and this country gave me the capacity to develop and to achieve what I wanted. In school I dreamed of being educated and becoming a lecturer. I was clever and used to read everything. I loved scientific ideas and philosophy.

'We were a middle-class family. My father became mayor of Marka, our municipality. I have one brother and three sisters. My brother is in Seattle, my sisters in Holland. My father was killed in the civil war of 1991. At that time all elders were eliminated.

'It seems there is no end to the suffering of Somalia. The Islamic Courts are not an option, because they are trying to use religion for political ends. This is not traditional Islam, but a new destabilizing violent Islam. Wahhabism from Saudi is not our Islam. Somalis will support them [the Courts] because they promise order in a chaotic time. The imposition of a government from outside and the occupation of the country by Ethiopia, supported by Washington is a mistake.'

Abdissalam met his wife in Kenya. She also studied in India and then went to Italy. Both still identify with Somalia, and feel the hurt personally. Abdissalam says: 'My origin is in Puntland in the north-east of the country. Although my family went to the Banadir region, including Mogadishu, five generations before, the origin remains. When the Somali state collapsed I felt the loss of my identity, not for myself, but for all the people. You consider yourself Somali, even though you may have a new identity officially, you are British. The pain stays with you. I was lost when I came here. When the country collapses, people retreat to the clan for an identity. This is why clans have greater power now than 15 years ago. I can't say I am from a particular clan, because I have an education, a vision and a brain. I am from the Horn of Africa, but not this or that clan. But Somalis do not accept this. Everyone is expected to identify with his/her group. In this confusion, "who am I?" is the question I ask myself.

'The clans are intertwined. There are no secrets in Somalia. Everyone knows one another. If President Abdullah is going to nominate a Prime Minister, the whole country will know before the nomination. Everyone knows what is happening [and] about to happen. We have one language and one religion, only 8–10 million people, all related in one way or another.

'Why did Somalia collapse? Sudan, Chad, other countries have had civil wars but the central administration has not collapsed. In Somalia it is a family war. People fight because they are all kin to each other. This is why it is endless. An uncle may kill a nephew because he is of a different clan; and a nephew will kill an uncle for the same reason.

'I have seven children, four here and three in the USA, the oldest 21. They are pursuing their education. I found myself here. I had the chance to develop my capacities. The kids ask me if they can go to Somalia, but of course now it isn't possible. For myself, I can't go back ...'

There are an estimated 300,000 Somalis in Britain. Most are now settled, working as bus drivers, cleaners, schoolteachers. Abdissalam says many will return if the country becomes stable. He will not, because he has been away a very long time.

There have been three main exoduses: those politically unsafe under Siad Barre, especially between 1974 and 1980, when life was very oppressive; then between 1980 and 1990, inhabitants of the northern region, many of whom

came here because of the links with Britain; and finally from 1991 when people from all clans fled during the anarchy, although a majority are from the central Somali clan.

'A new lost generation has now grown up, with no experience of government or stability. Some who grew up with that are now refugees here. I never worked in Somalia, I was not a leader, I never lost my livelihood. Some of my friends are not doing well here. They had a good position there but as refugees lost status. I started life here from scratch. I have been lucky. My children are settled here, have their schooling. I am grateful to this country.'

Towards the present

The Britain which faces today's refugees and asylum-seekers is also another country from the more or less ethnically homogeneous society of the 1930s which was also riven by class divisions perhaps no less bitter than current ethnic and religious cleavages. Daniel Snowman's *The Hitler Emigres* articulates the unmistakable continuities between the way refugees are received now, and the sometimes frigid welcome extended to them in the thirties.

Having reviewed the contribution of Jewish refugees to Britain since the 1930s, Snowman writes of the settled society into which they arrived. 'Half a century later such certainties had eroded. In Britain, as elsewhere, it had become fashionable for people to emphasise what differentiated them. Region, religion, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation or age bracket, often in the past subordinated to the interests of communality, were now asserted, with accompanying demands for appropriate respect and cultural provision. The old consensus of yesteryear broke down to be replaced by a fissiparous, fluid post-modern culture of diversity. Such was the emphasis on cultural diversity, indeed, that to speak of pyramids of "excellence", as William Haley had once done, of one art or artist having greater merit than another, was to invite opprobrium.

'In such a climate it was much harder for people – especially, perhaps, new arrivals – to have a clear image of "Britain" or "the British" against which to assess and identify themselves. There were as many Britains as there were Britons, and people frequently chose to identify themselves not with the nation or society as a whole but with one or other of its many subcultures. Millions purported to think of themselves as black or Asian, Welsh or Scottish, Northerners or Southerners, gay or lesbian. Novelists writing in English were as likely to be called Rushdie, Naipaul, Ondaatje, Ishiguro or Kureishi (or Zadie Smith) as Bainbridge, Drabble or Amis. Many who in the past might have felt themselves held back from pursuing artistic interests were now actively involved.

'This was no longer the world in which Hitler emigres had sought refuge and to which they had contributed so mightily. History had moved on. The story I have been recounting was largely over.'²²



Plate 17 Albie Sachs
With kind permission of Albie Sachs

Plate 18 The Lalzad family, after
being reunited in the UK with
the help of CARA
With kind permission of Sarah Lee
(*Guardian* photographer)





Plate 19 Outside Harmondsworth Detention Centre, 2006



Plate 20 UNHCR registration queue, Damascus, Syria, 2006
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

4

Now

‘The World has Changed’

Globalization has disturbed frontiers, uprooted people and relativized cultures; the consequence has been a reaffirmation, sometimes violent, of older identities, ethnicities, faiths and traditional forms of belonging. The academic world has not been immune; fugitive scholars – like the increasing numbers of refugees – are escaping regimes caught up in the globalizing impulse, or reacting against it by embracing fundamentalist ideologies or the assertion of ethnic, religious or cultural majorities.

The clever and the capable are readily consigned at the gates of refuge to categories which deny both their suffering and intellectual attainments. They can find themselves labelled opportunists, economic migrants or ‘bogus’ asylum seekers, to be returned as quickly as possible to the countries they have fled. Those escaping this fate must find their way as best they can, along with the rest.

Some of SPSL’s internal debates now look archaic. Esther Simpson said in an interview not long before she died, ‘When it came to helping individual academic refugees it was no good giving a research grant to someone who was not likely to be absorbed. What we did was find out about the scholar’s situation from colleagues: we got his German referees, of course, and the opinions of British colleagues to confirm that he was likely to become absorbed, not necessarily in this country, in academic work.’ That this now sounds exclusive and snobbish tells us much about the changed atmosphere of the age.

Today it is also far more complicated. ‘The world has changed’ is the common wisdom, although probably less than our perception of it. The same social and economic restrictions that, until Britain’s recent past, limited opportunities for able poor and working-class young people to take advantage of higher education, now apply internationally. Moreover, societies from which people escape are implementing ideologies chillingly reminiscent of those that have haunted European history – racial supremacy, wars of religion and cultural conflict.

How to recognize the ‘deserving’ in such a situation? Applying a common yardstick to the diffuse and heterogeneous claims of people from zones of conflict,

persecution and civil strife, whose culture, language and academic credentials may not always be accessible, has become infinitely more problematic. Judging their abilities and potential requires new kinds of alertness and sensitivity than in the 1930s, when standards of universal excellence could be applied to scholars with established careers, who had demonstrated something of their potential and the breadth of their abilities.

Although this complicates CARA's work, the dedication of its people to assisting displaced lecturers and scholars has not changed. Shula Marks, one of the council's longest serving members, helped transform the SPSL into CARA. Until the 1980s, many council members were former grantees or their children. This became something of an obstacle to assisting current refugees. As Shula Marks says: 'They must have a basic minimum academic appointment in the country they come from, but it is no use asking what they have published and what is their record; some have not published in English and others not at all. It may be that the gifts of today's refugees are not in the same league as they were in the thirties, but they are being squandered when talented people are unable to find work that will benefit this country. The dilemma now is that we can help only a small privileged minority among those in dire need.'

But CARA has been transformed. Shula Marks says that towards the end of the 1980s, the idea of a Society for the Protection of Science and Learning didn't convey much to a new generation. 'When we came to change the name, our then president said we should include neither the word "academic" nor "refugee". We used both, because the acronym is a very happy one, with its connotations of endearment and cherishing. We also widened membership of the council. When I first came, most were scientists and academics. We always had important connections to the Royal Society and the British Academy, but we saw the areas new academic refugees were coming from are very different.

'The scientific community who had fled central Europe was formed by that society. The culture of science is different in other countries, and the question arose: how can we reflect that diversity and range of qualifications? We had to recognize potential talent rather than portable skills.

'We can only fully help academic medical people, but we did campaign to get the government to re-think its strategy on refugee doctors. Our current chair, Sir Robert Boyd, was part of the St George's programme for refugee medical personnel, which was very successful.

'We have also discovered how difficult it is for younger academics to devote time to CARA. They have so many commitments – the workload, pursuit of their career, the need to publish. In the 1930s, academics at LSE and UCL gave between 1 and 3 per cent of their salary to the society. A similar scheme for academic staff today would be impossible. Last year, we had a campaign to rescue Iraqi refugees. There are large numbers of secular academics in Syria, Jordan and Egypt. We raised only £20,000.

'The history of the organization, AAC/SPSL/CARA, reflects the history of society. I believe the biggest threat to academic freedom today comes from the Manichean vision of the war on terror and the rise of radical Islam, the "with-us or against-us" mentality. The majority of our grantees come from Islamic countries, where independent questioning places them at risk. The war on terror has also stifled debate in the West. Then research funded by the commercial world can also constrain scientific work – the medical field is increasingly tied to drug companies. In addition, the political spectrum has shifted and become more narrow. This also undermines independence of thought.'

Many active in CARA are not there for purely academic reasons. Shula Marks says being Jewish and South African makes it impossible to ignore dissidents. Brought up in an intensely Zionist household in South Africa, she thought she was en route to Israel when she came to London. 'I scarcely knew you could be Jewish and non-Zionist. By 1959 both my husband and I wanted to leave South Africa. This was just before Sharpeville. I did my PhD in London, and then the job my husband was to have taken in Israel didn't materialize. Then by 1967 came the Six-Day War, and I didn't want to go from one colonial situation into another. When I did my PhD the history of Africa was being transformed. With the decolonization movement, the story of Africa could be told by other than imperial historians. It was a very exciting time.'

The spectre of elitism

The world of learning has also been transformed. The aim of bringing higher education to 30 or 40 per cent of a generation has vastly expanded university provision. While some deplore a dilution of standards, others insist that any reluctance to extend learning is a result of 'elitism', whereby an amorphous educational 'establishment' aims to limit the privileges of higher education. Anti-elitism may well be a projection of wider (and apparently irremediable) social and economic inequalities onto the highly educated and distinguished, seen as custodians of esoteric knowledge, who impede 'access' by a majority. If there is any truth in this, it conceals an even greater falsehood.

Looking back with the understanding of these late, wise times, the AAC/SPSL's work may appear exclusive and 'elitist' – a scarecrow word, often used to silence those who argue for the recognition of outstanding achievement.

Such achievement was largely confined in Britain well into the twentieth century to a minority both from the traditionally advantaged and the recently enriched, and an intellectual middle class who valued education highly. The latter included the majority of Jewish intellectuals rescued from the menace of Nazism. If bringing out so much talent and ability from the shadows over Europe in the 1930s is elitist, then surely this is something to be encouraged. How has 'elitist' become (like 'asylum seeker' in another context) a term of abuse?

There is a distinction between the elitism of high intellectual achievement or unique competence, and the elitism of traditional castes or classes who maintain their own monopoly on knowledge, including the mysterious ability that enables ruling classes to maintain their hold on power. The first kind is surely desirable: who would want to place their life in the hands of medical specialists for reasons other than professional ability? The application of any other criteria is unthinkable – as absurd as expecting airline pilots to land in a thunderstorm because they had been through some equal opportunity programme.

Preserving groups who will perpetuate their own dominance is one thing; acknowledging the need for excellence quite another. Much anti-elitist rhetoric produces a ‘best-of-both-worlds’ formula, which is the absurdity of ‘universal excellence’. Ensuring that access for all who can benefit from the highest learning will not reduce achievement levels is a delicate balance; an aspiration frequently enunciated, but extremely difficult to sustain.

One positive outcome of these discussions at least has been the recognition that large numbers of people can acquire accomplishments traditionally reserved for those who purchased education like any other commodity. The openness and eclecticism of CARA demonstrates that many of its beneficiaries over the past 20 years have come from modest backgrounds – rural communities in Africa and Asia, traders and small officials in the Middle East and Asia – as well as former members of elites fallen out of favour with ‘revolutionaries’, the military or idiosyncratic dictators.

Why academics flee

Academic freedom worldwide is under increasing pressure from the re-emergence of totalitarian ideologies, often other-worldly. The temptation and the menace of such beliefs is a disease that never goes away. Like the plague bacillus in Albert Camus’ novel (itself a metaphor for Nazism), ‘it never dies or disappears completely and the day may well come once more, when for the misfortune and instruction of humanity, the plague will rouse up its rats and send them to die on the streets of an unsuspecting city.’¹

The manifestations of contemporary intolerance are still far from being reduced. With the eclipse of secular ideologies of human salvation like Communism, there has been a reversion to earlier, all-embracing religious dogmas, re-awakened now in the exaltations of fundamentalisms, nationalisms, and ethnic and cultural chauvinisms. The working out of such beliefs exacts a high price from those unable to subscribe to faith, politicized and applied with varying degrees of rigour, to the complex, wayward and irreducible tangle of human societies.

How do academics antagonize regimes they have fled? How does their work fall foul of political, religious or pedagogic Authority? Here, refugee academics tell

how and why they were forced into exile, and how their integrity was questioned or undermined, often by those who should have protected it. All are current or recent recipients of assistance from CARA.

THE ARAB WORLD

Mukhtar, Iraq

Mukhtar is a psychiatrist, who sees the culling of Iraqi professionals and academics as an ideologically driven assault upon the secular intelligentsia. This was a consequence of the short-sightedness of those who invaded the country in 2003, who thought they had to dissolve every system in Iraq – the army, police, intelligence services, the security and media systems. ‘Saddam had done wrong, but to dismantle all functioning institutions was punitive. As to what the US expected when they came, that is a difficult question. On the ground, it is clear they encouraged division. What is their long-term plan? Is it to let the Islamists come to power, demonstrate their failure, and then replace them with secularists of their choosing?’

Mukhtar was involved in the modernization of Iraqi society, and specialized in child mental health. He studied in Britain in 2005 and returned to Baghdad to lecture in a post-graduate teaching department. ‘Most paediatricians had no idea of the psychological afflictions of children. Mental health in any case had been generally neglected. I worked as part of a team, with a medical doctor, social worker, teacher, and nurses, to discuss each case, an issue that became crucially significant after the invasion and the trauma undergone by so many children.’

Mukhtar says British tolerance has been severely tested in its response to those fleeing violence and disorder in Iraq and sees Hitlerian echoes in today’s Shia militias. Just as Hitler sought to remove ‘Jewish’ aberrations from ‘Aryan’ science, so Iraq’s Shia militias have tried to destroy secular intellectuals in places of learning. Of course there is an important difference: the militias are not – officially – in power. But the pattern is clear. Over 200 academics were murdered between 2003 and 2007, while hundreds more fled. Most are in neighbouring countries – more than a million Iraqis are in Syria, at least half a million in Jordan.

‘We cannot describe our grief and anger when our suffering is denied by those who have, in part at least, generated it. They have pushed us back to the Dark Ages, with the breakdown of society, murder in broad daylight, the destruction of electricity, water, health services and education.

‘After I had studied here in 2005, I wanted to do something for the people of Iraq. It didn’t occur to me I’d have to leave the country. Colleagues and friends said: “Take care, these people do not discriminate, whether you are a politician or a doctor.” Every day I was hearing of colleagues kidnapped or killed. No one was immune.

'In April 2006, I received a threatening telephone call. I took my family to my mother-in-law. I asked colleagues in Britain if it was possible to find work here. My children finished their exams, and went to Amman. I got a visa to Britain. [In] Edinburgh, I discussed my position with a colleague. He arranged for me to meet his local MP, who advised me to go to the Home Office and apply for asylum. But I didn't do it.'

Through a friend, he contacted an immigration lawyer, who said, 'Your case is very strong. You will probably have little problem getting asylum status; it should be settled within six weeks.'

I met Mukhtar a year later. Nothing had happened. He could not work. After two months his money was exhausted. His application for help was refused, because at the time he was living with well-off friends. He says, 'In Iraq, I feel they cut off my legs. Here, they have paralyzed me.' He is prevented from using his skills to contribute to society: however much they might be required in Iraq, it is not as though the children of Britain have no need of psychiatric help.

'I didn't flee Iraq because of Saddam, but because of the mistakes made, among others, by the government of this country. When I sought protection I didn't find it.'

Mukhtar's wife and family returned from Amman to Baghdad. Soon after, they witnessed the murder of two people in a neighbouring house. An anonymous call told them to leave within 24 hours. They got a visa to go to Cairo where they are safe, although his daughter has lost a year in medical school. His 12-year-old son was traumatized by the killings he saw in Baghdad. His wife needs surgery, but they have no money to pay for it in Cairo.

Mukhtar feels imprisoned here. 'The whole of the UK is a prison. I asked the Home Office for my passport, but if I take the passport they will close my case. I am free to go to Cairo, but once I go, that is it.'

The British government is reluctant to admit that in 2007 Iraq is unsafe for academics. Since bringing order and democracy to Iraq has been a key coalition objective, the government are disinclined to shelter those with a different story, even though this is an open secret. The Home Office is also anxious to show the numbers of asylum-seekers is falling. One way to achieve this is simply by leaving applications pending, sometimes for years. In 2007, some 450,000 were set aside, with the promise that all would all be dealt with 'within 4 to 5 years'. Thus people's lives are frozen. In the end, frustrated, some withdraw their application and the figures control themselves. The misery this administrative sleight of hand induces is of no concern.

It should be; people goaded to the limit, become volatile, desperate. A government committed to reducing terror should not play with the emotions of people, particularly those already terrorized, tortured and betrayed in their own country. There is a large dose of hypocrisy here. Reducing the numbers is

the principal objective; that the disaffection and resentment of those injured in the process may create greater problems is off the immediate agenda.

Sabreen, Iraq; the unintentional dissident

Those who escaped Iraq before Saddam's overthrow in 2003 have their own stories of terror and violence.

Sabreen is in her fifties and living in Birmingham, a refugee and teacher of dentistry marked by tragedy and loss, much of it directly attributable to the Saddam regime. One of four children born to a family from Basra, her father was a pilot, her mother a teacher. They moved to Baghdad, where life was smooth until Saddam assumed power.

'We were non-political; we just led our lives. I went to university [when] the Ba'ath Party was active in the universities, especially recruiting women. I was selected because I was active and quite prominent. When I told my father, he was furious. He said he wanted nothing to do with politics and I was not to join the party. I went back to university and said my parents didn't agree with my joining.

'From that moment, there was a question mark over me. They didn't allow me to work properly, they harassed me all the time. When I was studying dentistry they stole my instruments. I had been pressured to join: if it had been an error to say yes, it was an even greater mistake to say no afterwards.'

Arbitrary power is vindictive and unforgiving, with a capacity for extreme pettiness. Many of Sabreen's fellow-students, now in Dubai or elsewhere in the Middle East, used the privileges bestowed on them by Saddam to escape. They took his money, and abandoned the Ba'ath Party and Iraq, leaving people like Sabreen to suffer.

'My father was a principled man. The Ba'ath Party was rubbish, a bunch of criminals. Saddam was moody, but his moods were law – one day he said one thing, the next day something else. Three quarters of the population belonged to the Party, but in name only; otherwise they knew they would be punished.

'Saddam relied on other people who gave him a false impression of the world. They took the lead in killing and torturing. His henchmen did the dirty work, and he promoted himself as God.' This statement suggests much about the nature of contemporary tyrannies – in the absence of secular ideologies, the destiny of the 'strong man' becomes paramount, and is often elevated into a source of absolute wisdom. '[Saddam] knew how to frighten people. If anyone from your family committed a crime, the whole family would vanish. Saddam turned Iraq into a big prison. We didn't know what was going on in the world – everything was rigorously censored.'

Sabreen studied dentistry, and came first among the students of her year. 'I danced with joy. Next day they changed the results. "There has been an error.

You have come second.” Whoever came first was entitled to a scholarship, but because I was not in the Party, I could not come first. I was not allowed to join the staff of the School of Dentistry [but] was sent to work in the Ministry of Health [in] a remote village on the boundary between the Kurds and what became known as the Sunni Triangle.²

Sabreen was there for three years. In 1978, she decided to do her Master’s in Britain. Her parents paid.

‘I did my course in Birmingham and the Royal College exam, but after two years I went home because my father was ill. I returned to Baghdad in 1980, and stayed with him until he died. For the first six months I was happy to be with my family. My father was proud of me.’

The war with Iran began. Sabreen’s oldest brother was a major in the army. ‘Within six months my brother was killed. They said it was a sniper, a single bullet to the head. Then we heard another story. All his ammunition had run out and he asked his commander for more. He was told he was a coward. They brought his coffin to our house, and left it in the driveway. For three months my mother cried continuously. She couldn’t accept she had lost her boy.’

Sabreen still puzzles over this war. It had nothing to do with Sunni/Shia conflict, but with old Persian/Arab enmities. She says Iran’s proxies are now running Iraq. ‘I feel there is a hidden agenda. Iran distributed its agents in the South through the holy city of Najaf. They want to destroy the Iraqi identity. The regional conflict comes from visions of past glory, Ottomans and Persians. How can the Americans and British not know this?’

‘Since the 1920s the British were trying to build up the nation – schools, universities, health facilities. Saddam was a devil, but he also established schools and universities. He gave scholarships for people to go abroad.

‘There are 5,000 Iraqi doctors of all specialisms now in Syria. They were trained for six years. What a waste! The country has been depleted of its best brains, and is now ruled by thugs. Iraq had a strong army, police force, a vigorous academic life. Now there is nothing. People go for days without power and water, and you can forget about sewerage.

‘At the funeral of my brother, my sister was crazy with grief. She went temporarily out of her mind and spoke words she should not have done. The house was full of security men. She said, “Why is this war being fought? It is all being fought because of Saddam.” That was her big mistake.

‘A few months later, she was killed in a car crash. It was a strange incident, the circumstances obscure. She criticized Saddam. She spoke in grief. A phone call. “Your sister has been involved in an accident. She is in hospital.” When we reached the hospital, we were told we should go and identify her in the morgue. My father wept and wept. He became ill. He lost his sight.

‘The family was broken. I tried to hold them together. My father was in and out of hospital. My mother used to lament: “If only my son or daughter were here.” After that, I couldn’t stand the Ba’athists.

'In 1982 I started work again, but stress brought on a form of paralysis. I simply collapsed from time to time. My mother thought I was going to die also. They decided to send me to England, where we had relatives. We contacted them. "Sabreen is ill. She needs a neurological specialist." They thought it might have been depression. I went to the Hospital for Neurological Diseases.

'The consultant said it was a rare disease, whereby the nerves fail to send the right impulse to the muscles; this leads to sudden paralysis. I was given medicine which stabilized my condition. I went home, but had to return to London, where a scan found a tumour behind my chest. I needed an urgent operation. This was successful, but lowered my immune system. I shall have to be on medication for the rest of my life.

'After the operation, I went home. It was two years before I regained strength and worked in the Medical Research Centre. I loved teaching. I stayed till the mid nineties. I realized this was what I most wanted to do. My father was very happy. He died in 1993.

'One day, I was with a colleague, waiting to go to the Dental School on the fifth [floor]. Some men were in the garden below, digging a hole, putting barrels in the ground. My colleague said, "Now we know where the chemical weapons are." I smiled. Within a week, she was dead.

'The Security Office called me. "You talked about chemical weapons. Get out as soon as possible. Get out, or you're next." I got a fake passport and fled to Jordan.'

A casual conversation became a fateful event. This, Sabreen says, is tyranny – arbitrary, pitiless. 'With ideologically driven governments, you know what you can say and what you can't. When there is only the naked power of a dictator, anybody can upset him without being aware of it. That is terror.'

Layla Almariya, Libya

The intolerance of the idiosyncratic beliefs formulated by military leaders or dictators can strike with great violence against those concerned with one or another aspect of truth. The imposition upon the Libyans of the thoughts in Gaddafi's Green Book echo the revelations of an even more destructive predecessor, Mao, and his little red book, which led to the death of millions in China in the 1960s. When Gaddafi overthrew the monarchy in 1969, he promised that 'revolutionary committees' would empower the people in a unique form of 'direct democracy'. This was the 'jamahiryya', or people's republic. Inspired by a mixture of nationalism and Islam, it would avoid all foreign influence, capitalism and Marxism alike. This soon degenerated into dictatorship, and the system allowed Gaddafi to retain total control.

Layla Almariya was arrested for criticizing the thoughts of Gaddafi as set out in the first three chapters of the Green Book. 'I was arrested in my office at the university.

I had no chance to talk to my family or the head of faculty. The phone line to my office was cut. They fabricated everything. For six months I was imprisoned and tortured. I was raped and told I was going to be executed on 7 April.'

On this day a gruesome secular festival in Libya takes place. It commemorates the killing of political opponents in 1976, after a student demonstration against Gaddafi. 'More than a hundred were publicly executed. It was the saddest day in our history. He listens to no one. For almost four decades, he has ruled by personal whim. Speak out and you'll find yourself in prison. You will be handcuffed and held for years, and a message will be sent to your family that you are dead.

'It is impossible to take seriously the contents of the Green Book. The first chapter explains why there is no parliament, just a president. Chapter Two is about economics and equality. Three is about society and the freedom of women. He says women must enjoy the same freedom as men. His bodyguards are female, but the purpose of this is so he can sleep with them.'

Layla's family was related to the wife of King Idris, deposed by Gaddafi in his 1969 coup. Her father had been in the king's administration. He died after having been arrested, imprisoned and tortured.

'We are from El Beida. But when Gaddafi came, his hatred of everything connected with the king was so great that he punished us and our area. Education, hospitals – cities in the East got the worst treatment. Other cities have become richer. Many people who prospered under the royal government have perished. When we were at university, public executions used to take place before our eyes as a warning.

'I was seven when my father died. We call Fatima, widow of Idris, auntie. She is still alive in Egypt. Other family members were arrested and released, but their names remain on a black list. They are not allowed to have a passport. We may have money and a big house, but we cannot spend anything because the government will question us. Gaddafi nationalized all businesses when he came to power. He had grand ideas for a pan-Arab federation of Syria, Egypt and Libya, but nothing came of it.

'I grew up seeing how people suffered under the regime. Gaddafi banned satellite TV and the Internet; then he restored them, but blocks some channels. You can't have the Internet at home. You have to go to an Internet cafe, and give your e-mail address and passport number. Gaddafi thinks he is immortal, and that his power will last for ever.'

Layla was a lecturer in international law and human rights at one of the Libyan universities. She was expected to teach within the framework of the Green Book. 'In other words, lies. I was forced to teach it, even though many students were not from Libya. The students asked embarrassing questions. I took their questions to the management committee of the university, because they are experienced professionals. I was a newly qualified teacher. I was swimming against the tide. I spoke out.

'I was still finishing the dissertation for my Master's, but couldn't finish it because of what happened. I was the youngest teacher in the university. I didn't stop to think. If you are aware of the outside world, you know the Green Book is damaging to society. TV satellite dish had showed us other countries. I had watched debates from the House of Commons on cable, and seen the practice of freedom. One student – I don't know who it was – reported me, and gave a copy of what I had written to the Security Services. In our classes, we never knew who was a spy and who was a student. I was arrested and my survival is a miracle.'

Latefa Guémar, Algeria

Algeria became an 'Arab-Islamic socialist' country in 1962 after its bitter war of independence from France that cost over a million lives as France tried to hold a colony it had occupied since 1834, where 10 per cent of the population were of French origin. In July 1962, Ahmed Ben Bella, head of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) became the first president. He was ousted in a bloodless coup by Houari Boumédiène in 1965, and the army displaced the FLN as the main source of political power. Boumédiène died in 1978, and in the succeeding years the army retained control, and the FLN was the only permitted party. Following the oil-price fall in the mid-eighties and Islamic reaction against a militarily enforced secularism, rioting broke out in 1985, and 1988. A new constitution in 1998 allowed other political parties to participate. This led to the rise of the Front de Salut Islamique (FIS – Islamic Salvation Front), which won the municipal elections in 1990, and was poised to win the national elections in 1991. But the army stepped in before the second round, and has ruled the country ever since. Anti-Islamist repression was resisted fiercely, and atrocities on both sides have led to more than 100,000 deaths. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who assumed power as president in 1999, established an uneasy calm. While some have admired the 'Algerian model' of the control of extremists, the price paid, both in Algeria, and in external Islamist activities, suggests Algeria remains the site of unfinished business. Bouteflika was re-elected in 2005, with the continuing support of the army.

Latefa Guémar was a scientist in Algeria, researching the durability of industrial materials in the nuclear and aviation industries.

'In the late eighties the Islamists became powerful in the universities. For me as a woman it was worse, since women were their first target.

'In 1991 everyone knew [the FIS] would win the legislative elections. I was against the [army] coup, because we were sure there would be violence. We had to ask ourselves searching questions as feminists – we could not be against elections, the system encouraged the poor and the uneducated, and they had been told that a vote for FIS was a vote for God. Their [the FIS] first project would be to put women out of work; 74 per cent of teachers were women and 58 per cent of doctors. Their slogan was to put women in the home.

'After the first round we were apprehensive. A lot of the fundamentalists at the university had studied in the UK or USA. When I told them there was a mistake in my wage slip, they said, "Burn it, in a few weeks there will be no wage-slip."

'The Islamists were also divided, but it was all the same for women. After the coup most of my friends said, "*Vive l'armée*."

'The elections saw the emergence of the uneducated. My mother, like many older people, voted for FIS, because it seemed a vote for God. For many it was a vote against the FLN, not for the FIS. In the process, the third tendency – secular, social democratic – was squeezed. The democratic tendency was represented by the FFS, the Socialist Front.

'Islamist politics was created by the regime. The democratic socialist tendency was destroyed partly by the Arabization of the university in Algeria. Historians were censored and couldn't write, sociologists were overtaken by the rise of Islamists. My generation was not familiar with the democratic tradition. When a people is prevented from learning its own history, there is bound to be a pathological reaction. Algeria banned books, it even banned French pop singers – you had no right to listen to Enrico Macias and Frank Adamo because they were Jews.

'At the time of the municipal elections in 1990, many families left. By the end of the first round of the legislatives, all our friends were in Paris. They invited me to work there, but FFS was still a force, especially in Algiers. The military was not scared of the Islamists but they were afraid of the FFS. The regime had introduced religious education, but there was no civic education at all.

'Democratic legitimacy does not exist in Algeria. Victims of the regime were human rights defenders, journalists and democratic politicians. The middle class was destroyed. It left the stark confrontation between the rich and the poor. The [remaining] professional middle class earn very little. My father is a surgeon, my brother a cardiologist. They earn about 800 to 900 euros a month. Of the students I supervised, most wanted to go abroad. Engineers went to Canada, journalists and doctors to France. Many young Algerians die in the Mediterranean trying to cross in unsafe boats. These are the *haraga* (illegal migrants). Mostly they are educated young people.

'I worked for the Commissariat, the National Research Institute, [on] a project awarded a prize for innovation. We created a densitometer which measured the density of X-ray film. A patent was required for it. My supervisor left, and a government official was now in charge of the innovatory process. I was supposed to have received an award; but after six months I was told they were sorry but all the papers had been burned. After a couple of years, a French company sold us the very same densitometer. They took the idea and because it had not been patented, they could copy it. It still hurts me, even though it was 20 years ago.'

Latefa Guémar's husband, Soleiman Adel Guémar, is a journalist and poet, forced to leave Algeria when he wrote an article about another journalist arrested after

investigating links between the mafia and certain sectors of the state which had financed Islamic extremists. This journalist, arrested and imprisoned, committed suicide. The article was written in homage to this man.

Soleiman managed his own publishing house in Algeria. He visited Britain in 2001, negotiating with publishers here. His UK visa was valid, and he used it to travel here, and asked for asylum.

Latefa followed six months later. 'A few months before, in June 2002, we had been attacked. I came home early from work at about two o'clock in the afternoon. I saw the front door had been broken down. Nothing had been stolen; only our room had been turned upside down. A week earlier, a TV journalist had experienced the same thing, only the intruders were still there when he came home, and they killed him. Our unwelcome visitors had gone. The computer was there, but all the information on it had been taken. We are middle-class people, we had a DVD and a television, but nothing else had been touched. I panicked and called the local police.

'We had been there for about a year, just outside of Algiers. The police came, looked at the damage and asked, "What is your occupation?" I said I was a researcher at the Ministry of Higher Education, and my husband a journalist and publisher. Then they said, "That explains it." They refused to take fingerprints.

"Why?"

"We don't have the equipment."

'After 12 years of dirty war, it was inconceivable they didn't have the equipment to deal with terrorists. We could see how the police were working. We went to the local court, which registered a complaint against persons unknown. My husband's partner in the publishing house had been assassinated three weeks before they turned over our house.

'My daughter was one year old. I stayed with her for the summer vacation in my parents' house in Oran. In September I had to resume work. I went to a conference in Damascus, and when I came back, I stayed in my brother's house in Algiers. My husband returned to the flat to check our mail. But we never returned there to live.'

Soleiman's poetry is powerful and uncompromising.

'Illusions'

and we thought we were back together again
in a land of asylum
while others
lurking in the shadows
of all the frontiers
were already waxing

their nearly new boots
but you didn't know it yet

you were dreaming of a city where birds make their
nests by every window
you were dreaming while others
were already marching
eager to trample over
the flowers of the garden
watered with your blood
but you didn't know it yet

you were getting ready to join
the jubilant crowd
while whole columns of others
were pouring through the city gates
and when you thought you heard
their nearly new boots
resounding
on the smoking tarmac
it was already too late.

'I'm involved in two projects here [Swansea]. One is in the Adult Education Department, looking at parenting in a multicultural European city. The second is in the Geography department, as assistant researcher at the Centre for Migration Policy Research. We are working with the Swansea Learning Partnership, and have developed a website to see how far new arrivals in Swansea can access e-learning to practise English. The Centre for Migration Policy Research is evaluating this e-learning project – how effective it is, how migrants use it, what kind of education may be available to migrants through e-learning. Are they using it to further degree studies? During the long wait for asylum, the one thing people can do is learn, improve their qualifications.'

AFRICA

Joseph Ndalou, Cameroon

Cameroon, on the West African Guinea Coast, has seen land invasions from the east, Portuguese slave-trading and British control of the palm oil and ivory trade. In 1884, it became part of Germany's limited overseas territories. After the First World War Britain and France divided it under a League of Nations Mandate, each half eventually becoming a UN Trust territory. French Cameroon became independent in 1960. The

British territory was split: the northern area became part of Nigeria following a 1961 referendum, while the southern portion was absorbed into Cameroon.

Old imperial rivalries between Francophone and Anglophone Africa have a malignant afterlife in Cameroon, so that the former French territory discriminates against the smaller, sometime British provinces. This colonial culture still influences the country's social and political life, almost half a century after independence. Formal decolonization did nothing to stop the internalization, at least among the elite, of the values of their former masters.

The North, where a majority of Muslims live, is poorer than the South, in which Christians dominate. The first president was Ahmadou Ahidjo, whose repressive regime lasted from 1961 until 1982, when Paul Biya, his designated successor and former Prime Minister, assumed power, despite being from the Christian South. Biya studied law at the Sorbonne. He subsequently accused Ahidjo of plotting a coup against him, and exiled him. Biya 'won' a presidential election as the sole candidate in 1984. He has held power for a quarter of a century. Elections have been boycotted by the Opposition.

Joseph Ndalou, studying for an MSc in Public Health and Health Promotion, lives with his wife and three children in Cardiff. He fled Cameroon because he was working for the South Cameroon Council (SCC), which challenges the ruling party, the CPDM (Cameroon People's Democratic Movement).

'I started as president of the youth wing of the ruling party in Bambili. I was a school prefect. All prefects are Youth presidents, and expected to campaign for the CPDM.

'When I left school, I enrolled in the University of Yaoundé, the only state university that gives a generalized education. Anglophone and Francophone young people studied together. Late in 1990, an uprising on the campus was provoked by conditions faced by English-speaking students. Ninety per cent of lectures were in French. I was in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, where 2,000 students were crammed into an amphitheatre in the open air. It was rough for English speakers, who had fewer chances in the labour market.

'This led to a bloody confrontation between students and the Gendarmerie. Two students were killed. The university was closed down.

'During the break I went to my home in Barminda province. I felt alienated from the ruling party. My father, a civil servant, decided that I should go to Nigeria. I went to Calabar University, close to the border with Cameroon. I took a course in Medical Laboratory Sciences. We had a union of Cameroon students there, most of whom had come because of the language problem. I became secretary of the Calabar branch of Cameroon students. During my four years in Nigeria, I went home only once.

'In 1992, there was another confrontation. Presidential elections had been rigged. We occupied the Cameroon consulate for a week. We entered into negotiations with the Cameroon authorities. In the end, things got worse. News

from home was that there was an uprising in all the Anglophone areas. When we left the consulate, we had gained nothing.

'I then went home and worked as a lab technician. I couldn't get work in government hospitals or research institutes because of my linguistic disability. French speakers got the jobs.

'I moved out and lived alone. During that time, the leadership of the Opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF) became very autocratic. There was a power struggle, and people lost faith in them. Things looked dark. There was in effect no opposition.

'I joined the South Cameroon Council, a pressure group. It raised concerns of English-speaking people [and] did advocacy work with the United Nations and international organizations, trying to get mediation in the country between the two polarized groups. I saw it as more committed to development than to gaining political posts. It was a campaign to educate the people and create unity.

'The natural resources of Cameroon are in the English-speaking areas, and these have many cash-crops – tea, rubber, cocoa, coffee and palm products. The littoral area was also sympathetic to the Opposition, although not English-speaking.

'In 1999–2000, I came to prominence in the movement. I addressed meetings and became a founder member of a non-government organization in my home province called Health Impact. Its aim was to bring students and young people together to fight HIV/AIDS.

'The government accepts there is an HIV/AIDS issue. But the health care system also discriminates against English speakers. This became part of our discussion. We were helping people ignorant about the disease. We tried to get funding for affected individuals and their families.

'While campaigning, I was arrested and interrogated by the security forces at the Gendarmerie HQ, and told my activities were "raising dust". I was warned: if you are doing HIV, don't mix it with politics.

'I continued, and was arrested a second time. The SCC was celebrating its anniversary. The security forces made random arrests. For three days I was tortured. For the first day, there was no food, only water. Then I was interrogated under physical pressure, beaten with batons. On the second and third day, they made me watch the sun rise – if you closed your eyes, they beat you on the back. That burns the retina. Local leaders signed our bail. We were released when they promised to discipline us and oversee our activities.

'We did not stop. In March 2004 we were at a town hall in North-West province. It was market day. We were holding an HIV-sensitization programme. There was a big crowd. A security officer in plain clothes came to investigate. They wanted to know who had raised the issue in that community. I was arrested and locked up. The torture was unbearable. I had the scars for a long time. I was in detention a week.

'The ruling party said the SCC was sponsoring a military uprising, recruiting local and foreign fighters [and] acquiring weapons to use against the government. They claimed to be "clamping down on militants", and wanted information on arms and future plans of the movement. There had been a case in Barminda, an incident orchestrated by the government. A mobile police intervention unit was attacked by a group of masked individuals. The police were taken hostage, locked in a room with no windows. By morning, all the 'masked men' had disappeared. The SCC would gain nothing by attacking a single police unit. But that gave them an excuse to crack down on SCC militants.'

Matthew Douara, Cameroon

Matthew Douara is a teacher of educational psychology. His experience confirms what Joseph Ndalou said, but his conflict with the authorities came about quite differently. 'When English speakers voted to join la République du Cameroun, as French Cameroon was called in 1961, it was understood there would be a federal system. The values of each would be maintained, and the English-speaking areas protected.

'In 1986, four years after he came to power, Paul Biya declared a single Republic of Cameroon and the policy become assimilationist. The law, education, the whole system was articulated to the French model. This gave rise to secessionist groups, who wanted to keep the British system. One of such groups fighting today is SCNC (Southern Cameroons National Conference).

'Biya only asserted what was already happening. Cameroon had become increasingly homogeneous, and French values dominated. He was mimicking the colonial power, which said we are all French, only he was saying we are all Cameroonians. His policy reflected that of French colonialism – direct rule.

'Francophone Africa is characterized by wars, civil wars, coups d'état. Cameroon had its own war in 1984, after the coup of Paul Biya against Ahmadou Ahidjo, the first president. The military tried to overthrow Biya after he had plotted and stolen power from Ahidjo. French troops still operate in Cameroon. They never really left their colonies. The British instituted indirect rule. They put in place Africans they could trust to act on their behalf. If the British can get what they want from your country – resources and wealth – they leave you alone. The French want to get what they want and they want you as well.

'Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya – they have problems, but they are *their* problems. Most French colonies, post-independence, had their president approved by France. There is no economic independence. Cameroon is a rich country, but its top jobs in mining interests, agricultural interests, security industry are occupied by French people. Their physical presence remains.

'In Cameroon, democracy is shackled by diverse colonial legacies. We still have customs officers at internal borders between British and French sectors.

Language, culture, law, education – everything is different. Higher education is all in French, except for the single English university at Buea. Even there, its top people are French, and it has more Anglophone students than Francophones. But major faculties like Medicine have been confiscated by the Francophones. Two years ago, when the first entrance into the Faculty of Medicine was launched, the authorities published the list of successful candidates – mostly English speakers. But the presidency cancelled the list and sent names including French students who did not even sit for the exam. Students in Buea went on strike and six were killed, many imprisoned and dismissed and the rector of the university was sacked. Anglophone Cameroon now wants independence.'

'My father was a poor farmer. He had three wives and eighteen children. I struggled to go to school. Primary schools exist in the rural areas, but for secondary education, I had to go to the town, Wum, 27 kilometres away. There were always places available in school because most could not afford to go.' Matthew walked there and rented a room for 90 pence a month, but had to work to pay his fees – carrying water for 20 pence a day, cutting grass, looking after cattle, carrying head-loads for construction during the dry season, unloading goods from lorries and delivering them.

'For the first few weeks, my parents thought I'd gone off hunting. Children often went to kill squirrels and rabbits in the forest. Things have changed. More people send their children to school now primary education is free and NGOs also provide schools.

'My parents were very proud. At the beginning they didn't support children going to school. Education was the preserve of the rich. My father wanted his children to attend primary school and then go to work.

'I stood out at school. I vowed early on I would go to college. I got the idea from my teachers, because I was inquisitive and asked questions. They liked me.' He got his A-levels and went to university, 600 kilometres away from home. 'I had to pay fees for studying and rent. I offered tuitions and coaching. Everyone knows that to succeed you have to get an education. Then I trained as a teacher, still giving private lessons.

'It's a long way from there to here. In our school, they would beat us if we did wrong. Our former colonial masters give us aid, but it all goes into the pockets of the leaders. The Japanese government were wise – they constructed schools. They sent technicians and builders. They knew money would end up in Swiss bank accounts. Government, officials, bureaucrats save up millions for when they will lose their privileges. Transparency International found Cameroon the most corrupt country in the world three times. The President twice hosted African Union meetings, one for English-speaking, the other for Francophone Africa where billions were spent while three quarters of the people do not eat properly.'

In March 2007, there was a widespread one-week strike in protest against high inflation, large-scale poverty and unemployment, and increasingly high prices. 'Yet Mr Biya, who has been in power since 1982, wanted to change the constitution to give him two more terms of 14 years. The whole country was paralysed and about 36 people were shot dead. [There were] massive arrests and people sentenced to two years in prison without trial.

'The government has a divide-and-rule policy, an old colonial trick. There are 360 ethnic groups and over 300 languages in our country. I understand about 40 of them. Trade unions do not exist.

'What was my crime against these powerful people? We were involved in creating the first civil service trade union in 1993 out of a suggestion that we should form a group to express our grievances. We went for two months without salary. You went to the bank. No wages had been paid in. Civil service salaries had been slashed but we saw the police and army had not had their salaries cut – only doctors, nurses and teachers and civilian employees had 70 per cent of their income stopped. A friend said, "Let's see what we can do." When our salaries restarted, having been on about £240 a month, this was cut to £39.

'My friend, a senior teacher, went with a delegation to the Minister and asked for a 10 per cent restoration of what had been cut. Thus began the Cameroon Teachers' Trade Union. We had meetings. The news went out. Our salaries were suspended completely. There was little we could do. The police were monitoring discontent. We joined the Social Democratic Front, the opposition to the ruling CPDM.

'I became information secretary for the North-West province. My role was devising party slogans, galvanizing support – a high profile job. In the 1997 election – which Biya won again by means known only to himself and his cronies – I participated in a radio debate, with senior ministers. I asked direct questions.

'As punishment, I was transferred to a remote village – no road, radio, TV or computer. Nothing. It was a waste of resources. I returned to Yaoundé and said to the Minister, "Please send me where I can be used." I waited for his decision. Two weeks later, I went to the bank. No money had been paid into my account. Why? They would investigate.

'I had been sacked for "subversive behaviour". This only radicalized me more. I started a column in an independent newspaper investigating government officials who had killed, embezzled or committed other crimes. Only English-language papers were critical of the government. At the same time, I worked for the British Council. I thought this would offer me some protection. I asked people to boycott the celebration [on 20 May, National Day] since there was no shared nationality. What people needed was food, health care, education.

'I was working for the British Council in Douala when I was arrested. Fabricated charges were laid. They tell you why they want to kill you, not what you have

done. I was told a link had been made between me and arms-smugglers from Nigeria, arms for use against the regime in Cameroon. You cannot prove them wrong. In an armed raid on my home my sister was tortured. They did terrible things to her, she still cannot talk about it. One activist died in the cell where I was locked up.

'After six months of mistreatment in jail, I was [told] I would be released if I would denounce the Opposition on the radio, call the chairman a dictator. They gave me a change of clothing and took me to the radio station. I did it. More problems. Now the SDF were also looking for me. I was a fugitive, with no job, no salary, no prospects.

'I stayed in Douala, where there was less chance of being identified. By 2003, I had had enough. I went to a newspaper and told them everything that had happened in jail. I was arrested again, and was soon awaiting trial on other charges. They said they had searched the house and found weapons. They accused me of conspiracy. The detention centre I was in was the worst, like Guantanamo. I thought I was doomed.'

Laurent Mpinde, Republic of Congo

The Republic of Congo is a small country with barely 3 million people. The French established control in 1880 and in 1910, together with Gabon, it became known as French Equatorial Africa. Its Bakongo kingdoms had traded with Europeans from the end of the fifteenth century and the littoral became a significant site of the slave trade. The kingdoms lost their power in the nineteenth century with the ending of the trade.

It declared independence from France in 1960 and after a brief military uprising in 1963, Alphonse Massamba-Débat was elected president for five years following publication of a Constitution in 1963. He declared a Marxist state, and was assassinated and replaced in a coup by Mariam Nguembi in 1977. He in turn was ousted by Denis Sassou-Nguesso in 1979. In 1981 Sassou-Nguesso signed a 20-year friendship pact with Leonid Brezhnev, but with the Soviet Union's disintegration, he renounced Marxism and opened up the country to foreign oil companies.

In 1992 elections took place and a return to democracy seemed possible under Pascal Lissouba. But in June 1997 civil war broke out which devastated large parts of Brazzaville and later that year Sassou-Nguesso regained power.

The Republic of Congo is unusual in Africa in that more than 80 per cent of its population is now urban. The country is effectively a dictatorship, but with oil and timber is courted by the oil companies. After his election as President of France, one of the first heads of state Nikolas Sarkozy welcomed was Denis Sassou-Nguesso.

Higher education has reflected the government's shifting ideological position. From the late seventies until 1990, this was Marxist; from 1990, private colleges have

supplemented the single main state university. But education has stagnated, the number of students enrolled has fallen, and government maintains a vigilant watch on critical or independent thought.

Laurent Mpinde is in his mid-forties. He was studying sports science in Brazzaville. In Congo, individual sports – athletics and gymnastics – were well represented, but coaching for volleyball (Laurent's speciality) and other team sports were not integrated into the education system. He was teaching team-sports instructors in schools and colleges – work requiring knowledge of physiology, psychology, biometry and biology. His PhD was cut short by political violence.

'Congo is rich. But the administration polices people hard with an elaborate system of surveillance and control. There is no justice. The two main companies which extract oil are Elf, which is French and Agip, which is Italian. Our country is the private hunting-ground of France.

'Ethnic fighting broke out after the 1992 elections. The southern-based president, Pascal Lissouba, was in power from 1992 to 1997. Sassou's base is in the north of the country. France had begun to lose influence, and [supplied] arms to both belligerents. It seems almost every family lost a relative. People fled into the forests.

'I belonged to Lissouba's Union Pan Africaine pour la Démocratie Sociale. When we lost power, everyone fled. Elections were held in 2002. I set up a meeting at the university. We declined to participate, because we knew the outcome was a foregone conclusion. The president of our party was in England. He had been judged and condemned in his absence. The elections were a masquerade, although Europe saw fit to say it was fair. Whoever wins 90 per cent of the vote in a democracy? Democracy was confiscated.

'We were arrested at the university. We were beaten unconscious. When I woke up, I was in prison, where I remained for seven months. We often had to drink our own urine. I was physically violated. The country was in a state of war.'

Immanuel Samere, Eritrea

Immanuel Samere was born in 1978, in Asmara, capital of Eritrea, at that time still part of Ethiopia. His father was involved with the Eritrea People's Liberation Front, which subsequently became the government of independent Eritrea following a referendum in 1993. Eritrea, a former Italian protectorate, had been in a federation with Ethiopia before it was annexed in 1962 by Haile Selassie. This initiated the 30-year struggle for Eritrean independence. Haile Selassie was overthrown by Mengistu in 1977, who installed a brutal Marxist regime, which executed many officials of the imperial court.

Had the work of Immanuel's father for the Eritrean liberation movement become known, he would have been killed. He went with his wife to Sudan, and left Immanuel,

an only child, behind with his grandmother because they travelled on foot. It was a two-week journey to Khartoum. Immanuel was three years old.

'Four years later, my grandmother took me to Khartoum to join the family. We couldn't find them. We heard they had gone to Europe. My grandmother and I stayed in Khartoum. She was elderly, and life was hard for her. She worked as a cleaner and domestic worker in a private house. I spent five years at school in Sudan. When Eritrea gained independence, we went back. I was 13.

'My grandmother was a mother to me. She loved and cared for me through a hard time. When we returned to Eritrea, she was sad, because we had lost hope of tracing the family. I studied in Asmara, till my grandmother died in 1994 [aged] 78. I have no feeling for my mother. I loved my grandmother dearly.

'Life became worse after she died. The only good thing [was] I had the little house in Asmara, but it was economically difficult. I was 15. I had some help from an uncle, a cousin of my father's. Otherwise, I would have been like the street-boys of Asmara, running wild. I had always been good at my studies, thanks to my grandmother's support. I won prizes in class. I studied in the morning, and worked in a shop in the afternoon.

'After ninth grade, I went to technical school. I studied surveying, and finished in 2000. I did well in the university exam. More than 10,000 apply each year for 900 places in the University of Asmara – the only one in Eritrea. It was very competitive. If you fell below 50 per cent in any exam, you were dismissed and had to go into the army.

'Eritrea became free in 1993. A Constitution, published in 1997, has yet to be implemented. A border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia lasted from 1998 to 2000. Tens of thousands were killed. I had to go for military training, because of the urgent need for fighters.

'Fortunately the war quietened down, so students could return to university. Many had been killed – three friends died early in 2000.

'On my return to university, I was elected student representative for my intake group. This meant by the end of my course, I would be president of the students' union. I was relieved and happy to be back.

'The problem began in 2001. The government ordered university students to go to villages affected by the border war and assess the damage in the region – two or three students to each village. We had to make our own way there, [but this] was not possible, because the border area was full of landmines. There was no transport. It was very remote. There was nowhere to stay, nowhere to eat. The government was offering a negligible sum of money, not enough to buy one meal, even if there had been anywhere to buy it. The villages were deserted.

'We called a meeting to discuss the situation. No one was happy. These were city students, unfamiliar with these distant areas. The government would not listen. They just gave the date we had to leave. We refused to go to the departure

place. After a week, the students' union president was arrested. There were then two issues: unless he was released and our questions answered, we simply would not go.

'We were told to attend a court hearing on the student leader's arrest. The courtroom was soon surrounded by police. They forced us onto lorries and took us to a big stadium. We were kept in an open stadium for 48 hours without food or drink. It was raining. Relatives came to look for students, but were not allowed inside. There were 400 of us. We were accused of being against government policy.

'They brought trucks. Where are we going to? Why? We won't go. The students asked questions and were beaten into a huddle. Army personnel stood by, pointing guns, so that if we hit back, they could shoot.

'We were taken to Wia on the southern Red Sea coast, the hottest place in Eritrea. The temperature was 45 degrees. Two students died in the first two days. Everyone was sick. They sent tankers with water. We had no vessels to catch it, so we drank from our hands. We had to make a little shade against the sun by tying our clothes together on sticks.

'From there we were taken to Gelealo on the same coast. There were big hangars; it had been a military detention centre. They punished us, making us walk for one hour on foot to collect stones to build in a pile 6 feet high. It took hours, it was exhausting and pointless. Then we had to walk back to the detention centre. We were given lentils and flour to cook.

'They gathered the student representatives. Without us, they said, the students would have obeyed. We had to be punished. We were placed in separate cells, unable to communicate. These were underground, with a guard at the gate. They beat us every morning. We had to crawl on the sharp rocks.' Immanuel shows scars on his knees and arms. A deep cut from jagged rock left a cavity in his forearm. 'It just missed the artery. I asked for medical treatment. They said, "You're here to die, not to be treated." The pain and the swelling were terrible. It took months to heal. I still have scars on my back from the beatings.

'This went on continuously for three months. The others signed false documents, saying it was our fault for refusing to obey. They were allowed back to Asmara. I had to sign. I had no choice. You cannot win against the army.

'I went home. If I did anything against the government, there would be terrible punishment. I might be killed. I was not to give interviews.

'For the next couple of years. I was careful, and completed my degree in Geology in 2004. To earn money, I taught the son of my neighbours. I learned to live frugally. I did nothing but study. In the house I had no relaxation, no radio, only books. For relaxation I went to the library. More books.

'I did so well I was offered an assistant lectureship in the Geology Department. I had an income. It was very positive for me. I ran the laboratories for

undergraduates, gave tutorials, led them in field work, helped analyse their field studies. I loved it.

'I was relaxed. I worked hard, and later, did research with an international team. We collected samples of petroleum minerals [from] the Danakil Depression in the East African Rift Valley, close to the Ethiopian border. The Depression, at 371 feet, is the lowest part of the landmass of the earth. We compared our results with those from Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia. Our findings were published in papers in Uppsala and Florence.

'Everything was fine till 2005. There was a meeting between the university and the army to assess the situation in the country. A government official explained the political issues, economic and social questions, and asked what we could contribute. He said they wanted a democratic debate.

'I asked when the Constitution of 1997 was going to be implemented. This was provocative. Some former ministers, members of the G-15, were under arrest. I asked when they would come to court. No one knew if they were dead or alive.

'They said these were good questions. We will implement the Constitution as quickly as possible. The members of G-15 will be brought to justice soon. He answered very nicely. I thought that would be the end of it.

'Next day, five o'clock in the morning, a knock at the door. Who's that? Army police. I was in my pyjamas. Get in the police car. Why? Get in. Let me dress. No, come now. I was taken to the police station, then to a military training centre 400 kilometres away. Still in my pyjamas, I was thrown into military detention.

'My mistake was believing them when they said our opinion was important. After three days, an officer came. "You have not learned although you were warned. You raised questions in public. We will give you a lesson you will never forget."

'They beat me. They put me in the "helicopter" position – arms and legs tied together and thrown face down in the burning sun for hours. They also beat the soles of my feet. This happened every day for a month. They make sure you don't die. After such treatment, you cannot stand up. There were other detainees. Some had been there for three, four years. An indefinite sentence.

'I thought, "This is my fate. I'll end here." After four weeks of making you suffer, you do forced labour. There is agricultural work or stone-breaking for construction [and] a cotton plantation. All this is done in the heat, with inadequate food, a shower once a week. For the toilet, a guard accompanies you to a field.

'That continued two more months. I was taken to the cotton plantation by truck with other prisoners. I wondered how I might escape.

'One day, going to the plantation, a public bus collided with our truck. There were about 60 passengers. Some were injured, as were many guards in the truck.

'It was chaos. There was blood everywhere, crying and confusion. This was my chance to get away. Behind the road was a riverbed. I jumped down so I was

below the level of the road. The river has no water for most of the year. I knew that to the West was Sudan. I followed the river for hours.

'Another prisoner had done the same thing. I thought he might be a guard. I hid myself. When he approached I saw he was also a detainee. He knew the area. We walked the whole day. We met some nomads. He spoke to them in their language, and they gave us milk and bread.'

Tirfe Etana, Ethiopia

Ethiopia witnessed the first defeat of colonial forces on the African continent by an indigenous army when Emperor Menelik II beat the Italians at the Battle of Adowa in 1896. To avenge this, Mussolini invaded Abyssinia in 1935. The Italian occupation was brief but violent: mustard gas was used against the people, public executions became commonplace, and following the attempted assassination of General Graziani in 1937, thousands of civilians were massacred.

The Emperor Haile Selassie ruled from 1930 to 1974, although he spent the war years in Britain. Promoting himself as progressive, he became a deity for Rastafarians. He was overthrown in 1974, partly as a consequence of a famine in 1973 in northern Ethiopia. Jonathan Dimbleby filmed this for TV; and the juxtaposition of images of starvation with the sybaritic indifference of the royal household is widely credited with preparing the ground for his fall in 1974, when an army junta under Colonel Mengistu deposed him.

Ryszard Kapuscinski interviewed surviving members of the Emperor's entourage immediately after the revolution.³ One courtier recalled: 'It is true that some excesses were committed. For instance, a great palace was constructed in the heart of the Ogaden desert and maintained for years, fully staffed with servants and its pantry kept full, and His Indefatigable Majesty spent only one day there. But what if His Distinguished Majesty at some point had to spend a night in the heart of the desert? Wouldn't the Palace then prove itself indispensable? Unfortunately, our unenlightened people will never understand the Higher Reason that governs the actions of monarchs.'

At Mengistu's accession, Tirfe Etana, aged 14, was studying in a town 120 kilometres north of Addis Ababa. His life was determined by events which took place then; although he could not anticipate being caught up in conflicts, originating in Marxist ideology, but inflected by local ethnic and regional rivalries. Like many refugee academics, his personal fate is entangled with Ethiopia's destiny. 'Private lives' are rarely detached from social and political events, which permanently mark – or scar – individual experience.

'There was an ideological difference among the [revolutionary] forces. There was the army, which said it wanted to establish a peaceful democratic country. It wanted change "in which no drop of blood will be shed". That became a sad joke. How could you dispossess feudal landlords peacefully?

'The educated elements told the army it is all right to kill and destroy to bring about a better day – a day inspired by the USSR, which didn't have a very good record of better tomorrows. The educated class were well-read and well organized. They expressed anger at the landlords who controlled large tracts of the country. The Emperor had been slow to address the landholding issue.

'The army didn't have a clear vision but the intelligentsia wanted change. A hot-headed generation of students saw themselves like the Palestinian *fedayin*.

'I was 14, as radical as anyone else. We should have been learning, but we were fired up to kill and to die. It was a crazy time. Mature people who should have known better remained silent. Those who protested this was wrong were easily silenced.

'There were two main groups. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (A-ESM). The latter wanted to work with the military to bring about gradual change, land reform. The EPRP wanted no compromise; they advocated a popular uprising to overthrow the army.

'In 1974 the army executed 60 officials of the Haile Selassie regime. The Emperor's regime was exhausted. He was 82. He died in mysterious circumstances, almost certainly killed by the army.

'The EPRP started a guerrilla movement. They began to kill members of the armed forces; a low-level civil war began.'

The great scholar, rights worker and humanist, Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, wrote: 'When eventually that traditional regime fell, it was hoped that Ethiopia would open new vistas for progress and development. But because [that] regime had concentrated power in one man and had, consequently, not allowed people to assemble and freely express their ideas and to organize, the regime as well as the people were outmanoeuvred by street-smart officers. As a result, the country fell under the rule of a regime worse than [the one] it replaced, so ruthless as to have not an iota of respect for human life whatsoever. Consequently, going into exile became the culture of Ethiopia. The quality of education degenerated under the pressure of a superficial belief in Marxist-Leninism.'⁴

'My father was a businessman. We were also landowners. On the morning when the decree on land reform was promulgated, I was jumping up and down on my bed in celebration. My father came to the door. He said, "What are you so happy about?"

'I said, "Don't you know? Land reform!" He said, "You are silly. This is your property. You are my only child. This is your land." My father was sad. He loved me. I was idealistic, thinking only of the kids I had seen without shoes. I didn't relate it to myself at all.

'Life changed. The army claimed that it wanted the students involved in developmental activities. In 1977, some 60,000 teachers and university students

were sent into the rural areas. Some refused, saying it was a trick to get students out of the way, so the army could consolidate its power.

'The students did achieve something. They taught people the significance of the new land reforms. They helped with sanitation and literacy, planted trees and set up self-help groups [and] came back with greater support for the EPRP. It transformed many country people into activists, hostile to the military regime.

'In the south especially, the old feudal power had been very oppressive. The rural labourer had to give one-third of his produce to the landlord, and work on the landlord's [property]. They could be evicted at any moment, their children were forced into domestic service in the household of the landowners.

'Mengistu projected himself as a romantic revolutionary hero, like Che or Ho Chi Minh. He was kept in power by the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement, but the EPRP intensified the guerrilla movement. At the same time, Mengistu was surrounded by other enemies – the Eritrean independence movement, the Oromo Liberation Front, the Tigrian Liberation Movement, Somalia – as well as the dispossessed landlords and their allies. The regime went on the "offensive" and eliminated thousands of people. This was the time of "Red terror" against the A-ESM. The two factions had been held together only by hatred of the Emperor: once he was gone, they fell upon each other.

'I joined the military academy, which saved my life. I did well and went to university. I studied Political Science and International Relations. I got a distinction in my studies and was offered a teaching job in the university politics department. The university was an island of relative freedom, but as soon as you stepped out of the campus, you risked arrest and imprisonment.

'Most lecturers discussed things freely. Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, who founded the Human Rights Council of Ethiopia, was in the same faculty with me. He wrote an article on the military regime, for which another academic had written a propaganda paper. Professor Mesfin poured scorn on the academic who could put his name to such nonsense. He said the army was fascistic and brutal. He expected to be arrested. Nothing happened. The army knew the university was not organized and posed no threat. Ironically, it was only under the present regime that Professor Mesfin was arrested and tried. He was released because he is known in the international peace movement.

'Perhaps the regime was wrong to neglect the university. A new generation formed by the university continued to ask questions on freedom, equality and justice.

'The famine of 1984, which had such an influence in the West, was downplayed in Ethiopia. Publicity about the famine of 1974 contributed to the Emperor's downfall; the Dergue was not going to let that happen to them.⁵ Food was being exported to the West as the people starved. They imported 500,000 bottles of Scotch rather than wheat for the starving.

'The government brought bright people together to advise them, academics prominent among them. The academy is like any other cross-section of society. Mengistu set up a new organization called the Institute for Nationalities. There are more than 80 such groups in Ethiopia. He wanted to learn about them to devise policies for unity. In principle, the formation of the institute was a good idea – not everything the Dergue did was bad. Mengistu invited 25 intellectuals from the universities. He talked to them individually, asking them to join the Institute. Only Professor Mesfin refused. He told Mengistu to give back to the people their rights as citizens [so that] the country would be a better place. Again, he was not punished.

'I was a junior lecturer and expressed my views. My problem occurred later, after I had left for Moscow for my research and studies programme. I was at a conference on Ethiopia in Canada, and only then I began to understand how little we had learned from the events of the 1970s. As one of the speakers had said, the replacement of one army group by another would not improve anything. A civil administration was the only answer to the madness. I was attacked from all sides.

'We set up a group to talk of peace and reconciliation in 1987–89, intellectuals from Europe, Ethiopia, the USA. This coalesced into a movement. The US and USSR would come together to work for a resolution of frozen Cold War conflicts. In 1990, we had meetings with top US and Soviet officials. A communiqué was issued as a result of our efforts. When Gorbachev and Bush met in 1990, the Horn of Africa was to be included in the regional strategy to resolve outstanding problems amicably.

'We came under fire from all parties in Ethiopia – military and opposition. Mengistu said you are with the rebels, the rebels said you are bidding for power in the vacuum after the fall of the Dergue.

'Within a year, the rebels had overthrown Mengistu [in 1991]. They had power. They said we were trying to save him. The Eritreans and Tigreans came to Addis. We said, "Why dismantle the state? Why not federate?" The new regime sacked 43 university professors, five from the politics department. I could not survive in that atmosphere.'

Victor Abano, Sudan

Sudan, Africa's largest country, and tenth largest in the world, has significant fault-lines separating the Arab Muslim north from the Christian/animist south and the African/Muslim west.

Following Egypt's conquest of Sudan early in the nineteenth century, the British occupied Sudan from 1882 with a brief interregnum at the time of the Mahdi's revolt until the defeat of the Mahdists at Omdurman in 1899.

In 1942, the British divided Sudan into North and South, with movement restrictions between them to keep potential religious conflict at bay. After the British withdrawal from Egypt in 1936 (apart from the Canal Zone), Sudan remained under British control. In 1954 the British government signed an agreement with the Egyptians whereby Sudan would become independent in 1956.

From 1955 there was civil war between north and south until 1972, when the Addis Ababa Agreement allowed for considerable autonomy in the south. This was abrogated by Nimeiri in 1983; he wanted a federated state, and introduced sharia law. In response the Sudan's People's Liberation Army was formed in the non-Muslim area. In the ensuing 20-year civil war over 2 million people have died. Nimeiri was ousted in 1985, but after a short democratic interregnum, Omar al-Bashir's National Islamic Front seized power in 1989.

In 2005, following the Nairobi Peace Agreement, a joint North–South administration was established; a referendum is to be held by 2012 on independence for the south.

Meanwhile in Darfur there was a revolt by pastoralists against settled agriculturalists on the fragile eco-system of West Sudan and its border with Chad. The janjaweed, militias promoted by central government, killed and raped indiscriminately. Despite UN, Western and African Union pressure, the violence continues in Darfur and Chad. The conflict has killed 300,000–400,000 people and displaced more than 2.5 million.

Victor Abano grew up in Uganda, and then southern Sudan. 'I was at the University of Juba in the South, when the war became very intense in the late 1980s. My home village is 10 miles from the Ugandan border. My siblings and mother remained in the countryside. The rebel forces surrounded the town, and supplies of food had to be flown in. We shared our food with people in the hospital and the jail; otherwise they would have starved.

'It was difficult to keep the students in Juba, so the whole university was displaced to Khartoum. At that time, the government was becoming more fundamentalist. Islamic values were implemented very drastically. We had sharia law before – Nimeiri imposed it in 1983, but when he was out of the country in 1985, he was told not to return. A brief interval of democracy was overthrown by a coup, when Omar al-Bashir intensified sharia: alcohol poured into rivers, hands of criminals cut off. The National Islamic Front was behind Nimeiri, and supported al-Bashir. Life became difficult for people from the South.

'Emergency courts with military judges terrorized the population. Economic survival became difficult. Many women in the South distilled and sold alcohol. They risked 30 lashes as well as a jail term.

'I did well in my studies. I became a teaching assistant. I decided to visit Juba to see my family. When I returned, I visited friends at the university dormitory, with a message for someone whose relative had died. I was to take the information to a certain house. I took two friends with me. We stayed at the house till about eleven at night. On our way back to the dormitory we were stopped at gunpoint

by men wearing Islamic *djellabas*.⁶ We were jailed in the nearest police station – about 15 or 20 people in one small cell. There were criminals and drug addicts. It was a difficult night. Next day, ten of us were ordered into a truck at gunpoint, and driven to a military barracks in Khartoum.

‘Close to the barracks was a school and a check-post, where they stopped vehicles to see if anyone had taken alcohol. Part of the school had been turned into a court. The army judge came at ten o’clock. People were accused of making alcohol, being drunk or violating the curfew. This was the charge against us. We came before the judge. “Did you violate the curfew?” We had to answer yes or no as a group. Officials told us that if we said “no”, we’d be jailed until we said “yes”. So we said “Yes.” It was very humiliating. The curfew started at midnight. We had been picked up at 11.30.

‘We were sentenced to 30 lashes. It is a horsewhip. They strike you twice each time, a forward and a backward stroke; in fact it is 60 lashes. You stand against a wall with your hands up. They administer the blows across your body, from top to bottom. It is extremely painful. Women are normally lashed in a tent, because women are thought to be weak, and it preserves their modesty. You can hear their screams.

‘Then we were allowed home. The pain, although intense, was less than the psychological damage and humiliation. We couldn’t tell anyone out of shame. I went to Uganda later and ran into my old friend in Adjumani, northern Uganda, by accident. I went with him to visit my mother, who was a refugee there. He said, “Oh, you are here. We are free. No one beats you here because of alcohol or because you walk at night.” He fetched a crate of alcohol to drink in the street, to prove it. Of course, freedom is relative. In Uganda you don’t get lashes for drinking or walking at night; but it has its own oppression.

‘In 1991, I was to take up my responsibilities at the university, which was under Islamic administration. If they had known I had been beaten, I would have lost my job. I was embarrassed. It is difficult for people from the South. Luckily, I got a scholarship from the Ford Foundation, available for five Sudanese students, at the American University in Cairo. I was doing my MA there. We southerners had to get clearance from Sudanese security before a visa to Egypt was issued since we were regarded as rebel sympathizers. It was very difficult to get the clearance.

‘I went to Cairo. In two years I completed my Master’s in Public Administration. I decided to go back to my university in Khartoum. It was hard: the authorities thought I was connected with the rebels in exile, many of whom are in Egypt.

‘When the fundamentalists came the second time, they wanted to do away with English, remove independent thinkers and put their people in place. They wanted to Islamize the system. We were pressured to learn Arabic. The Vice-Chancellor indicated that I could return provided I learn Arabic at an Islamic University. I thought, “OK, no problem, Arabic is a useful language.”

'When I went to the course at the Islamic University of Khartoum, it was Arabic, but it was also indoctrination. It was about the Prophet, Islamic prayers. It was propaganda.

'I was frustrated and disappointed. The university is no longer a place of thinking, learning, contributing to knowledge. I could not live under these conditions.'

THE CAUCASUS, IRAN, CENTRAL ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

Ruslan Isaev, Chechnya

Chechnya, a Muslim area of about one million people, had a tragic history, especially under Soviet rule. In 1944 Stalin deported the entire population of around 600,000 – Chechens, Ingush, Kumyks and Bulkars – along with other 'unreliable elements', to Siberia because he thought them sympathetic to Hitler and Fascism. Almost half of them died. In exchange, many Russians from Siberia were resettled in Chechnya. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Chechens – who had returned in 1958 – remained victims of Russian nationalism, and Chechnya's bid for independence in the chaos following its declaration of the same in 1991 was brutally crushed. The Islamist fighters coming to Chechnya from Afghanistan and Pakistan brought a sensibility quite alien to that of the Chechens, who paid dearly for their unsought allies. The Russians invaded and occupied Chechnya, reducing much of Grozny, the capital, to ruins. They are still regarded by a majority of Chechens as an illegitimate occupying force.

'My name is Ruslan Isaev. I was born in 1971 in a small town of about 40,000 people called Urus-Martan not far from Grozny. Chechnya is a beautiful piece of land in Caucasian mountains in the South of Russia. The total population of the country is approximately one million.

'My father was chief accountant within a state organization. He was well-read and a man of culture. My grandfather, although not officially an imam, advised people on religious and spiritual matters. My parents instilled an atmosphere of learning and culture in our home, and we were respected in the neighbourhood.

'In 1944 my parents were involved in the deportations to Siberia; my father was 14 years old, and my mother was only a child. It happened in January, when without warning, thousands of Russian soldiers came to the towns and were billeted with families. The official explanation was that this was only a temporary arrangement. But one morning in February, all male Chechens were ordered to assemble in the main square of our town Urus-Martan. The deportations began. The families were not allowed to take any belongings. My father later told me

that the whole evacuation took one or two days. That is how long it took to wipe out a Chechen community which had flourished for hundreds of years.

'My mother's father was away at the time, and was probably caught up in the deportation system of the town in which he was staying. It was winter, and many people died of exposure and deprivation during the long journey to Siberia. Although they had been instructed that they must not leave their allocated areas in Siberia, my mother's mother decided to go and look for her husband. She and my aunt set off through the forests. They rarely saw any other human beings, the only life around them was a pack of wolves. Part of their journey was made by holding on to ice-floes which floated downriver. Eventually they found help, but too late for my grandmother; she died of pneumonia. My aunt survived, but never found her father. I knew nothing of this until I was 14 years old.

'In Siberia, my mother was brought up by her eldest brother. There was no help from the state. The exile lasted 13 years. Local people did not like them; they were told that these people were barbarians and enemies. It was during the time in Siberia that my parents met and married.

'Most Russians think themselves superior to Chechens. Chechens are open, generous and sociable. It was generally known that we Chechens could not really accept Communism. My grandfather had a good relationship with Russian aristocrats, who had dignity and civilized values, but times had changed.

'When they returned to Urus-Martan, they found that my father's old house, which was large, had been turned into a shop, apartments, and a sports club, and was occupied by Russian families. Like all other Chechens, they had to pay the Russians to get back their own houses – that is those who were able to raise the money.

'I grew up in a peaceful atmosphere. There were no killings, no crime. I saw no death except for old age. My grandfather died when I was seven and my great uncle when I was eleven. Our relatives who lived in Grozny had a harder time, because there were many Russian migrants who discriminated against Chechens. They were not even allowed to speak their own language. The schools which I attended were good, our teachers, mostly Chechens, were charismatic, but all teaching was done in Russian. We were given a wide general knowledge, far outside the standard curriculum. Teachers were encouraged to take extra classes, Saturdays from 3 to 7 p.m., sometimes later. These were very popular, although the teachers were not paid for extra work. I played basketball and volleyball. It was my dream to be in the Soviet Union basketball team. I had other dreams too; I wanted to be strong and outspoken, which is a characteristic of the Chechen people. I wanted to change society, only without revolution or violence. I admired the Communist ideal of equality, although I did not admire the regime. I would read in the Communist newspapers of the misery in capitalist countries but at the same time I enjoyed rock music and Western literature. I read in a magazine

about an actor who performed on the streets of Paris, and slept on the banks of the river Seine. The idea attracted me.'

'From around seven or eight, I knew that I had no religious beliefs. My family were religious, but I could not find that type of faith within myself. It speaks volumes of the intelligence and liberality of my family that they allowed me to be comfortable with my free-thinking and scepticism. I felt secure and happy. We lived among intellectuals – teachers, artists, doctors, accountants, lawyers. My elder brother and sister, who were born ten years before me, discussed ideas and theories and they inspired me. But as I grew older I was disappointed to find that my own contemporaries seemed, by comparison, docile and conservative.

'But the Soviet Union was corrupt at every level. The children of high officials in the Party went to schools and universities to learn how to take their parents' place. They did not go on their own merit, nor get their positions honestly.

'I graduated from school with a silver medal, which is equivalent to good passes at A-levels in Britain [and] in 1988 I went to university in Rostov. My older brother is a lawyer, my sister studied literature in Moscow, another sister studied language and the other is a pharmacologist. My parents wanted me to become a doctor. I felt sad at their suffering during deportation, and didn't want to disappoint them. I wanted to be a scientist, but I accepted my parents' wishes.

'I loved every single day at university. I had independence. I always cherished freedom. I grew up in a fairly mono-ethnic area, but at Rostov there were Latin American, African and Asian students, Armenians, Georgians, Uzbeks, Jews, Tartars. I had many friends. After the collapse [in Chechnya] in 1992–93, there was no food. We suffered privations. Yet I remained optimistic. I was unhappy not to fulfil my ambition to become a scientist, but I wanted to give something to the country, and I was disgusted with corruption. My father, a traditional Chechen with a high sense of morality, wanted me to become successful by honest means.

'The government was very corrupt, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The republics sought independence. Chechens were determined to have autonomy. There was chaos in Russia. People were not paid their salaries. Everyone was looking for someone to blame. Our leader, Dudayev, tried hard to settle things diplomatically, but failed. The conflict started and initially the Russians were repelled, but they then attacked Grozny with force and images were seen worldwide on television of the destruction of the city. The mufti also declared jihad against Russia, and soon after this, the extremists began to arrive in Chechnya. The local people supported them simply because they helped them to resist the Russians.

'I found that Chechens were being increasingly discriminated against. I remember once in Grozny with my older sister, a Russian woman shouted at her, "You should have been killed in 1944." Then my teacher at university gave

me the lowest mark for what was obviously good work. I protested. He wanted money. I also did very well in Latin, which was part of my medical course. The teacher said I must have cheated, the implication being that stupid Chechens could not possibly succeed without cheating. With incidents like this as part of my daily atmosphere, it was not long before I started to support efforts for Chechen independence.

'The extremists in Chechnya made life hell. My father went to Moscow when he was threatened by militants. He was wise to do this – two of his friends were killed. I couldn't go back to Chechnya – it was a war zone. I went to Moscow, which seemed the only civilized place. I never thought of actual migration.

'I was very lucky to meet a brilliant professor of dermatology and venereology at one of the Scientific Research Clinical Institutes. I admired her, and she had a profound influence on me.

'She treated all patients, giving no preference to rich over poor. I told her I would like to do a scientific project with her. She offered me research into microsocial and clinical aspects of sexual abuse and sexually transmitted diseases. There had been no research into this in the Soviet period. In the medical academic circles many older professors resisted [her], but she was progressive, and wanted to expand our knowledge of the sociological aspects of venereology.

'It was harrowing. I met victims of abuse, both women and children. I was shocked and learned things I would prefer not to know. As part of the work I published several manuals to assist doctors in the techniques of examining victims. It was disturbing. I knew that in a stable society, you can change things, you can promote reforms. In the chaos of that time, we could do nothing. Criminals were in power.

'My professor asked if I would like to work in the institution. I was amazed. She said, "Don't you want to?" I replied, "Yes, of course I do! But can it be possible for me, a Chechen, to be offered a place at a central research establishment?" In fact I dreamt of working in this Institute which was full of prominent Russian dermatologists and venereologists. I accepted and the professor was wonderfully supportive. I worked from 1996 to 1999, doing further research and treating patients.

'In 1999, I finished my dissertation, and was awarded my PhD. Then, later that same year, the Russians invaded Chechnya. I was appalled at what I saw in the news media – they were inhumane, uncivilized. I wanted to go home.'

'I had a friend in Médecins Sans Frontières. I started to work with a Dutch charity organizing help for Chechen refugees in Ingushetia. I was a medical coordinator. It made me feel that I was really helping people in a direct tangible way. Eighty per cent of the people of Ingushetia were Sufis, devout, kindly people. My sister was also a refugee there. I was invited to stay with a family, who insisted that I

should not live alone. I saw the sadness and suffering of the people of Chechnya. They lived in misery at that time, but they were my people.

'My mother died in Ingushetia in 2000 at five o'clock in the morning. I took her body to Chechnya where she wanted to be buried. We couldn't leave without an official letter. That took more than four hours. My youngest sister came with me. We had to cross 11 border controls to get home. They searched us and the body, to see if we were carrying drugs or weapons. They wanted money at each crossing point. We had to pay. My mother was such a lovely warm woman, it was disgusting to see the way she was treated in death. There was no word of condolence, only money.

'When we finally got to Chechnya, we did not have permission to bring in the body. We had to wait and could not bury her that day, in accordance with Muslim tradition. It was hot. My mother's body had started to decay. The next day we buried her. Many friends and relatives came. At the same time, Russian helicopters were flying overhead. They sometimes bombarded funerals.

'Five days later I went back. My older sister came with me. That saved my life. All the male passengers had their passports taken and checked, and were allowed to cross. I had to wait three hours. They took me to a room, and forced me to undress. They were looking for scars, which would indicate I was a fighter. It was disgusting. My sister wouldn't go without me. She became hysterical and started crying and shouting. They said, "Her tears show you are a rebel." I felt angry, but kept cool. They took money from her and let me go. After this experience, I decided I could not live like this.

'I got a flight from Ingushetia to Moscow. I stayed with a friend there and went to the airport. I still had a visa, because I had done an English course in Oxford. It was April 2003, and I felt a new life opening in front of me.'

Darius Zemani, Iran

Iran in the twentieth century has been the object of continuous external interference. If its desire to use nuclear power – whether for civilian or military purposes – is denounced as a threat to Middle Eastern stability, the abhorrence with which it is viewed is disingenuous. Its nuclear programme is not new. During the regime of the former Shah, Iran, with the USA's help, planned to produce 23,000MW of nuclear power by 2000.

Recent events in Iran are reported as though without antecedents. During the Second World War, Russian and British armies occupied the country which, although officially neutral, had shown Nazi sympathies. The Shah, Reza Pahlavi, abdicated in 1941 in favour of his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and in 1951 Dr Mohammad Mossadegh was elected to end external control of Iran's oil and terminate a foreign presence on its soil. In 1953, the CIA helped bring down Mossadegh which led to civil strife between monarchist and nationalist forces and the Shah's temporary exile from Iran. After his

return, the Shah introduced a government favourable to the West. In the 1970s, Siemens began constructing nuclear reactors at Bushehr.

With rapid modernization and a growing divide between rich and poor, Leftists and nationalists were targeted by a repressive, authoritarian regime. The 1979 revolution disrupted the nuclear programme, because Khomeini – at least in the beginning – opposed nuclear technology. In any case, most nuclear scientists had left the country. In 1987 and 1990, however, Iran signed nuclear cooperation agreements, first with Pakistan and then with China.

Darius Zemani says that although the West supported the Shah, the US always considered him vulnerable to militant nationalist or Communist forces, preferring militant Islam as an opposition to nationalists or the Left. At the height of the Cold War, Islam appeared a solution to the Communist threat rather than a source of new problems.

Darius Zemani was a lecturer in the Engineering Faculty of Tehran University. 'Khomeini was in France until 1979. He was surrounded by Western-educated people, who thought they could control any Islamic administration. How wrong they were. The revolution executed about 200,000 people.'

'When I was teaching, young people asked me about the revolution or the war deaths, why the government had killed so many people. They asked me if it was wrong. How can you remain silent faced with such questions?

'I was called before the university authorities. I said I was only answering questions. They repeatedly told me this was not my job. The Ministry of Information has a branch in every university, to find out who is for and who against the government.

'I could not lie to students. I said there had been no gain in the war, since over a million people died [and] it left so many children without fathers. There are no state benefits for children: widows received a small pension, not enough to live on, and most had little education, no qualification to earn a living. The government insisted we won the war. Actually, no one won. Not Iran. Not Saddam because they wanted him to defeat the Islamic revolution. Not the West, because they strengthened the regime in Baghdad.

'War psychosis continues in Iran. A new generation is being prepared for war. In secondary schools, they study war, indoctrinated with the idea of an imminent American attack; and people see the destructive power the US has unleashed in Iraq.

'The media also teach that the US is controlled by Jews. People are frightened when the media say that behind the US government, rich Jewish people are manipulating the world. They even say bin Laden doesn't exist, but was an invention of the Jews. They will wipe out your family and children. How can you counter these distortions?

'Seventy million people are ready for war. Of these, perhaps five million seriously practise Islam. Some people say hatred is a result of extremism. I think hatred brings extremism. In the Koran, there are thousands of words of love. Nowhere is it said that people should kill themselves or others. Most people simply do not know enough about Islam. They pick up a few words from the Koran – the Prophet said wage war until the enemy is no longer in your land. It means support your country against invaders, not take war outside your country.

'The second mistake is to mix religion with politics. Religion is for eternity. Politics is of this world.'

'I grew up in Tehran. My two brothers are also civil engineers. My father was a senior official during the Shah's era. After the revolution, he lost everything. He finished up selling carpets to the West. He refused to leave. He said, "This is my land." He was upset that the West gave support to Khomeini. My father said the US would find out they were wrong to have allowed this to happen. He died ten years ago.

'If ignorance about Islam is fairly general in Iran, you can imagine how much worse it is here [the UK]. Some think Islam is violent. All religions teach peace and humanity, but all have been violent. Christianity has a very violent history. I believe we should leave religion in the mosque, church or temple. We need values to help us coexist. All religions speak of peace, but clerics, institutions, hierarchies abuse religion.

'In the faculty, people said repeatedly, "Why are you destroying your life? Why don't you stick to your job?" I said, "I don't know how to lie." I was eight years in post. Every six months I was questioned by Ministry of Information officials.

'In 1997–98, there was a movement of students for reform. I supported them, but it put me in a dangerous situation. In 1999 I was prevented from teaching. Students continued to ask questions. I couldn't refuse to answer.

'Other lecturers were in a similar situation. Some disappeared – you know, were eliminated. I finally decided my life was untenable. They said I was against God and against religion. In 2000, they took our house. I had no income and had to depend on other family members. They thought they had me in their power.'

Darius could have continued an untroubled career, had he accepted limits on his expression of opinions. There are doubtless many who, accepting the compromise offered by certain regimes, live without conflict. Those who cannot remain silent on political, and more importantly, moral, issues run foul of authority – a different experience from those fired or silenced because of ethnicity or some other unalterable aspect of their being. It requires from academics a particular courage, for when they do so, they are exposed to risks which people in more obscure walks of life can more easily avoid.

Behzad Mehrzad, Tajikistan

Tajikistan is a mountainous country in central Asia whose language is similar to Farsi. Part of the Persian Empire until conquered by Arabs in the eighth century, it was subsequently ruled by Tamurids, Uzbeks and then the Russians as an 'autonomous' Soviet Republic. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, the ensuing civil war between Islamists and the former Communist party cost more than 60,000 lives. The population of about seven million is around 80 per cent Tajik, and 15 per cent Uzbek. The autocratic President Rahmanov took power in 1992; two years later the Supreme Soviet metamorphosed into the Supreme Assembly. Rahmanov remains in charge, although elections have been unfair and fraudulent. There has also been a recurrence of anti-Semitism since the last Jewish synagogue, which served the small Bukharan Jewish community, was demolished in 2006. Tajikistan hosts a number of Russian bases, and is authoritarian and socially conservative. Standing on the narcotics trade route from Afghanistan, it remains, despite recent improvements, corrupt and, in places, lawless.

Behzad Mehrzad is from Khudjand (known in the Soviet era as Leninabad), founded in the fourth century BC by Alexander the Great as a Greek settlement close to the Silk Road. Behzad grew up in a village near the city, where his father was an engineer and his mother a doctor. His father died of cancer in 1998, and his mother no longer works. His sisters and brother live in Moscow – one sister is a biochemist, the other owns a cafe. Behzad's brother is a civil engineer.

'I went to university in Dushanbe. After graduating, I wanted to enter the diplomatic service. I did post-graduate study in international law. I was assigned to research and analyse the language and style of international treaties. After Soviet rule, international documents had to be drawn up in Tajik, not Russian. I had to look for terms in English or other languages that could be transliterated into Tajik.

'I did three years research. In my last year, I contended for a scholarship, which was open to any young researcher. I won the award, a high honour. My mother still has the official notification of my academic achievement. She is very proud of me.

'Parallel to my success there lurked a skeleton in the closet. I'm a gay man, and in Tajikistan it is very tough to be gay morally, culturally and legally. The country is heavily influenced by Islam, and the criminal code still states that sodomy is punishable with three years imprisonment. Sexuality in general was denied in the Soviet Union, and gay sex even more so.

'Muslims believe it the duty of every man to marry and have a family. If you delay marriage beyond the age of 25, people ask questions. It gets very insistent; Tajikistan is a small country, both in population and in what people know about one another.

'I am the youngest in my family. All the others are married. My father, critically ill in 1998, wanted to see his youngest son married before he died. I married in 1998 and tried to cope with living with my wife. At the same time, I had a boyfriend, also secretly gay. After I married, we split up, because he couldn't bear my being with someone else, a woman at that.

'I left my family in Khudjand to pursue further studies in Diplomacy in Dushanbe. I left my wife and baby daughter at home, under pretext of studying.

'After a year in Dushanbe, I had a new boyfriend. We shared a flat, living as students to the outside world. My career took off. I was supervised in my PhD by a professor in the law department of the national university.

'While studying I also got a part-time lectureship in social law. I published two or three books under my own name and co-authored others. After my PhD it was suggested that I might enter the diplomatic service.

'My ex-boyfriend was jealous, both of my success and my new partner. He was also jealous that I was married. He thought I should not be allowed to get away with it. We had a conversation. I didn't know he was taping me.

'Something else happened. In 2001, the students were due to take end-of-term exams. One demanded that I pass him, even though he was not up to standard and had not attended lectures. I refused him. He threatened me and we had an argument. Half an hour later the phone rang. It was the National Security Forces, the new incarnation of the old KGB.

'I was summoned to the office and accused of accepting bribes from students. I was told I'd wind up behind bars if I didn't obey the Security Forces. They place people in each class as their ears. The student who had demanded I pass him felt confident, because he assumed I'd understand. I had trodden on their toes without knowing it.

'With these two events – a brush with the security forces and my boyfriend having taped me – life became complicated. The part-time lectureship, renewed each year, was stalled. My publications were stopped and it was hard to get a viva to complete my thesis. I was due to finish it in this year; it was already June.

'By September my contract was totally blocked by the bureaucracy. The university also cancelled the last months of my scholarship. My supervisor did nothing. As he admitted, he was powerless.

'I called a friend of mine studying in London. He said, "Come over, and see how it goes." I applied for a language study course, which was also an introduction to UK, living with a family. The authorities thought I was going for a vacation. I got a visa.

'I prolonged the visa to do an advanced language course. I thought I'd wait till things cooled down. After a few months, I missed my boyfriend and wanted him to join me. The solicitor said, "I can help you apply for asylum, but I cannot help anyone outside the country."

'I said "OK" and took the first flight home. I met my boyfriend in Dushanbe. We got a flat together. I told [my family] things had changed, I was moving to Dushanbe and wanted a divorce. One summer evening, the doorbell rang and there was my wife. She asked why I never came home and didn't spend time with her, and why I was living here with this man.

'I said, "I'm gay. This is my partner. Please leave." She started yelling. The neighbours came, and it threatened a scandal. I forced her out. We locked up the flat and disappeared into town, so if she called the police they wouldn't find us.

'We asked friends to accommodate us for a few days. We said we had locked ourselves out and our landlady was away. Eventually we went back. I phoned my mother. She said my wife had created a big scandal, so the whole town knew. I called a colleague at the university who said, "She has been here, don't come. Don't show up." I lost my job, my friends, my flat. If the story got out, the security services would know and put me behind bars.'

Abdul Lalzad, Afghanistan

'I was born in Badakhshan in the far north-east of Afghanistan, where my father was a farmer. The land was mountainous but we produced barley, wheat and rice. It is remote, 400 kilometres from Kabul. I went to primary school there, but for secondary education I went to Kabul. It was a US-sponsored technological school. It was established in the 1960s and the instruction was in English.

'After that there was a competitive system to go to university. I was admitted to the Faculty of Engineering in Kabul University. There were 15 faculties. Engineering and Agriculture were funded by the US, Pharmacy and Medicine by France, Economics by Germany, and there was a Soviet-backed polytechnic. Each was influenced by the country that sponsored them.

'On graduation and having high marks you are accepted as assistant professor, and then you would expect to go to the US for a Master's and PhD, returning to become a Professor. In December 1977, I became assistant professor, but in April 1978, the Communist coup occurred and relations with the US collapsed. I could not go, since the official relationship was now with USSR. In 1982, I went to Russia for a Master's at Kharkov in Ukraine, where I studied thermal engineering. I returned to Afghanistan in 1984, and taught at the University of Kabul. After the collapse of the Russian occupation, the mujahidin were fighting in Kabul, and our conditions of work became very difficult.

'In 1996, the Taliban took control of Kabul, and they closed all educational establishments. Women were not allowed to work or study – at the university 60 per cent of the students and 40 per cent of the teachers were women.

Professor Lalzad has written extensively on Afghanistan, and is exasperated with NATO's short-sighted approach to the country. Two years ago, he highlighted two

issues – one external, the other internal – which, if not addressed, would prevent peace in Afghanistan.

'The first is with Pakistan. Why is Pakistan interfering in our affairs? Because the government of Afghanistan does not recognize the border with Pakistan. The border agreement was signed by the King of Afghanistan and British India in 1893. Pakistan was established in 1947. Afghanistan did not recognize the North West Frontier Provinces and Baluchistan as part of Pakistan. There are more Pashtuns in Pakistan than in Afghanistan – 15 million compared to 5 million. There is no such problem with the northern and north-eastern borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

'Pakistan wants to prevent the emergence of a greater Afghanistan that would claim two provinces of Pakistan to be part of Afghanistan. The border, known as the Durand line (after the Foreign Minister of British India in 1893), is uncontrolled, and stretches for more than 2,600 kilometres. It needs to be determined by Afghanistan, Pakistan and the international community. Afghanistan is dependent on Pakistan for most daily necessities. If the border is closed, there will be no food; the country will starve.

Afghanistan is a tribal society. Each group has its tribal pride. But what good is that if Pakistan is laughing at us? All we produce is opium. The Taliban was a mutation of tribalism. Tribalism is exclusive and totalitarian. It is fascistic.

'That is the external problem. Internally, after the collapse of Communism, there was civil war supported by Pakistan, and based on the dominant ethnicities – Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara. Each group constitutes a minority. When one rules, its thinking is purely tribal: Pashtun kill Hazaras who kill Uzbeks who kill Tajiks. If the international community were not present there would be ethnic fighting, as there was between 1992 and 1996. That is why people said the Taliban was better than anarchy, because they did impose order. "A prison is better than slaughter." Anarchy is the worst dictatorship. Only the Western presence prevents descent into tribal lawlessness.

'My proposals were that the Afghan government recognize the Durand line and internally, that each province elect its own administration. Each ethnic group should elect its own governor at the local level. Hamid Karzai [a Pashtun] sends governors from Kabul, which brings a culture repugnant to local groups and ethnicities. Afghanistan is seen as being dominated by Pashtuns. Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras will not accept this. The main internal problem is minorities [and] the rights of minorities, because all groups in Afghanistan are minorities.'

'After the Taliban closed the universities, I was employed by the International Committee of the Red Cross as relief coordinator. We were responsible for delivering food and non-food aid to widows and the disabled, victims of the Soviet occupation – about 40,000 people in Kabul.

'During the civil war, between 1992 and 1996 I worked in Pakistan for a German NGO, GTZ, an organization that gave technical support to projects. Then I worked with a UN project in Kabul. In the last 30 years I have seen the manipulation of Afghanistan by outside forces.

'There had been two factions in the Afghan Communist party, the Parcham (mostly non-Pashtuns) and Khalq (mostly Pashtuns). They were simply tribally driven. It is impossible to export democracy after the fashion of the US or Europe to such a context. After the Soviets left in 1989, for three years Najibullah remained in power. He defended the regime against the mujahidin, which were also divided into many factions – Iranian, Pakistani, as well as ethnic divisions. The Khalq faction joined Hekmatyar (a Pashtun), and the Parcham joined Massoud who led the Tajiks, the Northern Alliance.

'For 250 years the Pashtuns had been in control of Afghanistan. They had never been a majority [and] have convinced the world using the wrong data that they are a majority.

'Massoud was Minister of Defence from 1992 to 1996, and then the leader of the resistance to the Taliban. The Pakistanis invested in Hekmatyar. When the ISI, the Pakistan Security Forces, saw that Hekmatyar was finished because Massoud was established in Kabul, they sponsored the Taliban [who were Pashtun]. They trained and armed the students who, starting in Kandahar, worked their way through the country, taking Kabul in 1996. They never conquered the Northern provinces.

'Massoud was killed two days before 9/11. Two terrorists had filled a videocamera with explosives. They said they wanted to interview Massoud, and exploded the videocamera. Massoud was the last resistance.

'I was on the scene in the region until 1998. My salary stopped when the Taliban came. I had six children. What was I to do? They said I was not a Muslim, because if I were, I would depend on God for my salary. That was when I joined the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross]. The Taliban undertook ethnic cleansing – getting rid of all non-Pashtun elements in the government. Because I was from Badakhshan, they thought I was an agent of Massoud. One day I was driving in the Red Cross car, and we were stopped on the road by Taliban brandishing Kalashnikovs. I was taken to prison. I was lucky, because I had radio contact, a communication system that linked up with the Red Cross. I told HQ. The Taliban denied they had taken me, but the ICRC knew exactly where the car had been stopped. They said if I was not released immediately they would cease all operations in Afghanistan. I was set free the next day. The Head of ICRC said, "So far we have supported you. This is your last chance. They will certainly kill you. You must decide what to do." I said "Thank you," and decided to leave the country.'

Hua Chan, China

The economic liberalization, which has transformed China in the past two decades into the world's manufacturing hub has not been accompanied by democratization. The Communist Party retains the monopoly of power. After 1978, Deng Xiaoping's

economic reforms introduced a market economy, accompanied by an associated loosening of the rigidities left by Mao. The reformist Hu Yaobang (the Party's general secretary) resigned in 1987 following Party pressure. His death in 1989 provoked the students, who believed he was their protector, to mount large-scale demonstrations in Beijing. The main protagonists were students and intellectuals, who wanted political as well as economic reforms, and urban workers, who saw economic changes threatening their security and livelihood. The demonstrations gained momentum, despite official exhortations to abandon them. On 20 May, martial law was declared, and on 4 June the army opened fire in Tiananmen Square. The official death toll was two or three hundred, but student organizations estimate the casualties at ten times that number at least. The event had global repercussions; in China thousands were arrested, and sympathizers in the Party were purged.

At that time Hua Chan was a university lecturer in Wuhan City. His subject was originally History, but he also taught Economics and Politics. Having expressed sympathy with the Beijing demonstrators in 1989, he was passed over for promotion. At a demonstration in Wuhan, he was secretly filmed, which he discovered many years later, in 1996, when the same thing happened. 'My only crime was to say what everyone knew – that the government was corrupt. There was no freedom of the press; no private publishing house, TV, broadcast or newspaper can exist. You had to be a Party member to make progress in any institution – from factory to university. Bribery is general in China since Mao's death, especially to get a promotion.

'In 1989, my flat was searched by police and security forces. They also stole money. They wanted to find a video of the Tiananmen Square demonstration and tapes of speeches students had made. I was forced to live in the basement of the building. It was full of water. I went to a hotel [until] the water had been pumped out.

'I was invited abroad – Germany, France Holland. I applied for a passport but the authorities didn't give me a form.

'I was dismissed from the university in 1993, and not allowed to go abroad. My phone calls were monitored. I was followed. I felt unsafe.

'I wanted to come to the UK for a conference. In the end they gave me a passport, because they wanted to get rid of me as I am a troublemaker.

'I worked on reforming the Chinese alphabet using the Latin alphabet. I wanted to follow Western culture, its political and legal system. I dreamed of a single world language, like Zamenhof [who invented Esperanto]. I also wrote about the environment, the effects of pollution, before the authorities recognized any such problem.

'China does not want people to have freedom. The government worries that [they] would lose control.' He points out that economic growth and human rights do not run in parallel in China. Rapid industrialization brings social injustice

and environmental disaster. Economic growth alone does not improve the lives of the people; even less does it further the wellbeing of humanity.

‘Chinese leaders such as Hu Jintao (the Party’s general secretary) and Wen Jiabao (prime minister) might want a little reform, but they are restricted by conservative influence from the Party and the military.’

THE JOURNEY TO SAFETY

Escape routes

This section tells how the threatened academics escaped. A few had a valid visa for admission to Britain, but a majority depended on the informal trajectories organized by those stigmatized as people-smugglers.

The theory and practice of asylum diverge sharply. The detained and tortured cannot go through official channels to request protection from democratic countries. The story of how they came to Britain opens a small window onto the clandestine movements of millions of people worldwide. People in despair ignore the formalities. They use any means to escape the fate of many of their colleagues and compatriots. This involves using ties of kinship, consanguinity, ethnic or religious affiliation, bribing corrupt officials, and people-smugglers.

Most academic refugees are not among the poorest in their country of origin, although since colonial independence, a significant number of the children of poor and rural families have reached university. These soon question structures of injustice in their country. Some refugees, associated with older colonial, monarchic or former privileged castes ejected from power often have savings to facilitate getting out of prison or crossing a border. Because most tyrannical regimes are corrupt, an exit can often be found from the labyrinths of state power by suborning officials, jailers and the police.

It is one thing to recommend rooting out corruption, but God forbid that the tyrannies from which people escape barely with their lives should be made more efficient in the dark arts of oppression. It is a mercy that pathways exist to evade the secret police and summary trial, trumped-up charges, arbitrary execution, the disappearance and the forced confession.

There is a distinction between human traffickers and people-smugglers: the former exploit the credulous and vulnerable, press them into bonded labour or prostitution; the second, although rarely animated by humanitarianism, often save lives. Many academics in this book owe their lives to people-smugglers. Trapped as a dissident in a Cameroon jail, tortured and abused, Joseph Ndalou was released with the complicity of a prison guard who shared the same tribal origin and language. Loyalty to the most repressive regimes is overridden by personal links; and undertaking the long journey into exile sometimes depends upon acts of personal kindness or solidarity.

'We were lucky. One of the prison guards knew us. He promised to make up a story that the prison had been broken into, so we could find a way out. And that's what happened. We were able to escape into the dark.

'We had to get as far away from the camp as possible. I was with another prisoner from a village close to mine. We walked avoiding all roads, and arrived home at four o'clock the following day. I couldn't stay with my family. I took refuge with a distant relative in a neighbouring village.

'In detention I heard of a guy who does trafficking. I had some money. Late at night I took a taxi to the city and contacted this man. It isn't hard to trace such people – everyone knows somebody who has gone that way. The whole plan took about a week.

'I had to empty my account to pay him. He did me a favour – I didn't have enough money to go to London, but he agreed to take me.'

Photographs were taken, passport and travel documents produced. Joseph never saw them: they were for recycling identities. 'We left Cameroon on 14 April 2004 and arrived in Paris at 6.30 a.m. from Douala. I just showed my documents to check in, but I bypassed both immigration and the police. My contact had squared the officials.

'I travelled with this man and two others to Paris. They checked the passport but waved me through. I was taken to a house. I had no idea where. The following day, the smuggler came with one other man in a car. It was a seven-seater, filled with groceries and bottles of wine, as though we had been in France for a day's shopping. We started at 8.30, drove onto the ferry. No questions were asked. The smuggler drove us to Victoria, and then released us with no papers. I was not scared. I had been through enough at home not to be frightened. He said, "Don't panic. Go to the nearest police station." I had the number of a school-friend in Leicester. He was shocked. I said I did not know where I was. He said, "Tell me what you see. Go inside, sit down and wait."

'After a few hours, he came. He didn't recognize me at first. I had lost weight and was looking stressed. We drove to Leicester. He was afraid, because I had no documents. He didn't know what to do with me.'



Layla Almariya was in Benghazi prison for six months. She heard people crying and screaming, but saw no one. 'I was underground. When Amnesty International came to Libya, the security services showed them the well-known prisons, but not this one. They deny that any such place exists, and I doubt whether Amnesty knows of it.

'I didn't despair. They sentenced me to death with no trial, no court. Before my execution, I requested I might see my mother. The bodyguard was with us all the time. My mother hugged me, and I whispered to her, "I am going to be

executed soon." They warned me I should say nothing to her about the death sentence. If I did [not], I might be released.

'I thought, "This is my last game with them." Within days my mother had paid a small fortune – \$70,000. She was allowed to visit me again at the end of Ramadan. She whispered that she had found someone to help me get out of the country. I needed to find someone in the prison willing to assist.

'I had a friendly relationship with one guard, an elderly man. His daughter had died of cancer; he had been unable to take her to Tunisia for an operation. He depended on this job to provide his family with food. When my mother visited the second time, I pointed out this guard. She went to his home. She offered money. There were many guards, so no one would know who was involved. This man brought me food from his home. Sometimes he let me go to the toilet more than once, which was against the rules.

'The cell I was in was tiny. Sometimes the guard would let me walk outside for exercise. He told me about his daughter. He was tearful when he spoke of her. I told him who my father was, and he remembered his reputation. I benefited from that, long after my father was dead. People do not forget.

'He said, "Be ready on the second day of Eid and you'll go out with the visitors." He brought a plastic bag, with a *jellabiya*, so I could walk out like a visitor.⁷ If I was caught at the main gate, I knew I'd be shot dead, but it was worth the risk. If I stayed I'd be executed anyway. The guard told me the number of the car and where it would pick me up. Later, in Britain, I was to do some training at the Foreign Office: I explained how people-traffickers saved lives. Some of them accepted it.

'I walked out unchallenged. I just got in the car and sat down beside someone I had never seen before. He took me to a small farm near the airport, where I met my mother and two sisters. They brought clothes for me. The trafficker gave me a wig to match the photo in the fake passport. He had paid money to people at the airport. I boarded the plane by the delivery door.

'It was a Libyan Airlines flight. There were 15 passengers going from Benghazi. He must have paid the pilot, because when he counted passengers, he missed me out. You can buy anything in Libya. Even freedom. I came from a wealthy family. If we had been poor, I'd have been executed.

'The flight was 3 hours 45 minutes. I felt wretched, because I might never see my family again. I thought, "I'm going nowhere." There were three flights that day – to France, Italy and England. The trafficker had tickets for each one.

'My mother said, "Don't argue, just follow."

'I asked, "Where are you taking me?"

"London,"

"Why?"

"Do you want to go back to prison?" he said. I couldn't speak a word of English.'



Darius Zemani felt trapped in Tehran. Without work or livelihood, he was desperate to leave. 'In November 1998 or 1999, I met someone who could arrange my escape. I paid £5,000. I was taken from Iran through Turkey to Croatia. Then I walked for days. Finally a people-smuggler brought me to Slovenia. The police caught me, and I spent a few days in prison. Then on to Italy and Switzerland. I flew to Heathrow, and asked for asylum. A professor I had known in Tehran had been in Cambridge [and] said if I could prove my situation, and they believed me, they would help.'



When Immanuel Samere fled the scene of the accident in Eritrea, in which the truck taking him from the prison to work in the cotton fields collided with a bus, he and his companion walked to a village not far from the Sudanese border. 'My fellow-prisoner had an uncle there. We stayed one night, creeping into the village at 10 p.m. He promised to show us the way to Sudan. It was a two-day walk. There were guards on the border. We travelled over the mountains by night. If the Eritreans caught us, there would be serious consequences.

'We crossed successfully, and came to Kasala in Sudan, midway between Port Said and Khartoum. A truck driver agreed to take us. In Khartoum I had an uncle. The driver took us to where exiled Eritreans meet. Someone took me to my cousin's house. I stayed there some time. Even in Khartoum there is trouble. You cannot work or travel without official permission. If Eritrean Intelligence find you, they will kidnap you and take you back.

'When I was in Asmara, I had a friend who went to the USA to work as a nurse. I contacted her by e-mail. She told us she would help us leave Sudan. There are illegal ways if you have the money. She agreed to pay. I wanted to join her in the USA, but that was too difficult.

'I met an agent who could arrange a trip to the UK. He just said "Europe." I said, "OK, anywhere I can live in peace." The one condition was to ask no questions. My friend in America sent the \$6,000 to pay the agent.

'They ask for your photo, but you don't see the passport. They just tell you your false name. You can't even ask where you are going. We went to the airport and took a flight, which landed in an Arab country. I don't know which one.

'My photo was inserted into a UK passport. The agent gives you the passport to hand to the immigration officer, then confiscates it as soon as you come through. We arrived in Manchester. I spent one night in a house – I have no idea where. Next day, the agent took me to the National Express coach station, and we went by bus to Liverpool. He showed me the Home Office building. "Go and ask for

asylum." Sometimes they play a trick on you. The guy said, "I'll be back in a few minutes." I waited. One hour. Two hours. I realized I was on my own.



Abdul Lazard went to Pakistan in December 1998. His family were staying in Peshawar, because after 1992 Afghanistan had become very unsafe and there was no schooling in Kabul.

'I couldn't stay in Afghanistan, because I knew they [the Taliban] would find me. They went to my house in Kabul and asked where I was. While I was with the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross], I had a certain immunity, but when they could no longer guarantee that I knew I had to go. In fact, if the Taliban had taken me from home, I'd have been killed, but because I was taken from an ICRC car, the outside world knew. The ICRC was running a big operation of relief in Afghanistan. We used to take NGO employees between the Massoud- and the Taliban-controlled areas.

'I had to use people-smugglers in Pakistan. They all operate travel agencies. Who are you, how much can you pay, where do you want to go? It is a bazaar. By direct flight it costs this much, indirect, that much. Netherlands, Germany, Russia, Dubai? They look after all the contacts – police, army, immigration officials. This system has now transferred itself to Kabul. They will almost itemize the cost of this corrupt official, that bureaucrat. If they trust you, they'll tell you exactly how it works.

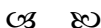
'In Karachi they told me, "Tomorrow you'll fly with a Pakistani passport." They gave me an ID card which said that I was employed by the British Petroleum company. In Karachi airport, they spoke Urdu, which I don't understand. It was clear I wasn't a Pakistani, and I was going illegally. They took me to the Head of Police. Name? Abdul Lazard. He looked down his list. My name was there. Take him. Obviously those who had paid their dues could go through.

'In transit at Dubai they have their own people. If they are in charge, no problem. If not, and something goes wrong, they'll deport you, but don't worry – we'll take you back. They had given me a different name on my photo. The passport had been falsely stamped to make it seem I had been in London several times. It was a British Airways flight. Someone from the agency came with me, a young man. He said, "Don't worry, be confident." As we are going through the passport check, the airline official, a British woman said, "Are you going to spend the New Year in London?" It was the end of December. I was told by the agent not to speak English. In fact, I shouldn't speak at all. On the flight he said he was going to the toilet, and after that he didn't come back.

'He had told me not to speak English at Heathrow. The official asked me where I came from. "Afghanistan, Afghanistan." I wanted asylum. He asked me to write my name, which I did. He said, "You think we are stupid? Where are you

from?" I told him I was a professor from Afghanistan. "No, you are a Pakistani. If you don't tell us you are a Pakistani, we'll send you back." They thought no one from Afghanistan could be a professor or speak English.

'They searched my luggage, and found my ICRC card. That saved my life. They called the ICRC in Geneva, and they confirmed I was relief coordinator in Afghanistan. The police apologized. I had been following the instructions of the agents; and my failure to do so was my salvation.'

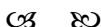


Matthew Douara, detained in Douala jail, believed he would never escape. He recognized an officer from his home area who befriended him. 'He gave me food daily, prepared by his wife.

'Eighteen of us were to be transferred to Yaoundé. My friend overheard jail officials making the arrangements. He said, "You will not survive if they take you there." He would make sure the guard on the gate was a friend. He gave me 5,000 francs. I escaped quite simply walking past a friendly guard.

'I walked three days, buying bananas in the bush. When I reached Edea, I asked for the local opposition representatives. They kept me nine days in hiding.

'They arranged for me to leave the country. I was dressed in a burka and given a woman's passport. This was June 2003. The flight was from Douala to Brussels, where I was detained for two days. They soon found out I was not a woman, but my passport did not say I was Cameroonian. I said I lived in France. They just let me go. I took a train to France, and from there to UK. I used a woman's passport, and was allowed into London without being stopped.'



Laurent Mpinde, after seven months in a Brazzaville jail, was woken early one morning. 'I was taken with other prisoners [in] a military truck to the southern region of Congo, where rebels had their headquarters. The intention was to shoot us, and then say rebels had killed us.

'Our life was saved by an officer. He said, "You are too young to die." He released us. He said we should run. Sometimes, he said, soldiers fire in the air, sometimes they miss deliberately. These regimes do not command the loyalty even of the people they privilege – police and army. They see the arbitrariness, the injustice of it, and do their bit to subvert the regime.

'We were free. We came to deserted villages emptied by government decree. The only people left were old and sick. It was not my home area. If anyone [rebels or government troops] had caught us, we would have been killed.

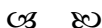
'I don't know why the officer saved us. As a teacher, many thousands of children pass through our hands. Our students often become soldiers. Maybe someone

recognized us. What moves people to compassion? Later I met a former pupil of mine in Manchester. He lived in France, and was in Britain, visiting his family. You can meet [former] students anywhere – why not in the Congolese army?

'I took a pirogue across the Congo River, the boundary between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Congo Republic. I understood some of the language of the *piroguiers* – the people who ply the canoes. They took me to the DRC. I started walking. I came to a village with a big church, a place of large-scale pilgrimage. I was sick. In prison I had been violated and beaten. I bled a lot. At the church, I met someone on a pilgrimage from Brazzaville. I asked her to contact my cousin-sister at home, who would help me.

'My cousin-sister contacted people-smugglers. I was taken to Kinshasa by truck. There, photographs and travel documents were prepared. I embarked with the smuggler and a woman on an Ethiopian Airlines flight from Kinshasa to Addis Ababa. He held my passport. We flew on to London, passing through customs and immigration without any problem.

'Once in London he left the woman with me, and gave me instructions [about] how to ask for asylum. I went to Lunar House. There was such a throng. "Come back tomorrow." I went back the next day and requested asylum.'



Asylum seekers have to endure many humiliations. They share lodgings with arbitrary companions, and have nothing in common – sometimes not even a language – other than flight from persecution. The highly qualified and the political dissident coexist with the peasant and the petty criminal. Some wish to study and prepare for a career in Britain, while others only drink and watch game shows. Overcrowding, shared beds, the distinctive male odour of cramped humanity, a pinched, undernourished existence. Yet as one man said, 'At least we are not dead – unlike friends tortured with electricity, raped with metal rods or made to line up in the grey dawn to be shot over the shallow grave they had been forced to dig in advance.'

Should people-smugglers, those venal rescuers, be punished for taking advantage of despair, or lauded for their humanitarian function? Clearly, both responses provide a quandary to those adhering to easy morality and clear distinctions between right and wrong.

Refugees are people who risk arrest, prison and death. With the stolen identities, aliases, forged papers and counterfeit documents that are their lifeline some people say they scarcely know any longer who they are. The expenditure of life-savings to save a life: who can blame either desperate people who have simply challenged a tyranny, or those making a risky but lucrative livelihood out of their plight? It may be deplored that mercy and rescue are dependent upon a very

private enterprise of smugglers of people; but who can say which lives ought to be sacrificed to rid the world of their unsavoury practices?

The encounter with Britain – snapshots

Not all threatened academics reach Britain by these illegal routes; although many make clandestine payments. Some come assisted by other academics and university departments; others arrive for medical purposes, to meet relatives, as tourists or on business. But their relief at being in a secure place can easily be subverted by their first encounters with bureaucracy.

Most say they encounter suspicion from employees of the Border and Immigration Services. Those telling the truth find themselves greeted with scepticism, and the assumption that they are lying. To those falsely accused, beaten and imprisoned, this aggravates from the outset the sense of rejection, which can be reinforced by the often interminable wait for recognition that they are here as involuntary visitors, refugees, in need of the kind of solace and support that too often remain elusive.

Not until they have overcome these obstacles will they learn about another Britain of kindness and fellow-feeling, an acceptance that doesn't question the memories of horror and loss, an enfolding assurance that they are indeed at last safe.

At Heathrow, the officials barely glanced at Layla's passport, which was French.

'We came by Piccadilly Line to Leicester Square. I was shocked to see people kissing in the street. I couldn't tell whether people were male or female. I went with the people-smuggler to Burger King for a meal. Then he took me to a night club to shelter from the cold and the rain. I was frightened by the drunkenness, the noise and lights. He gave me £20, directions to the Home Office and a ticket to Croydon from Victoria. I spent the night in a phone box.

'I arrived at Lunar House at 4.20 in the morning. There was a long queue. It was December, I was cold and hungry. I was seen at 4 p.m. I told the truth. They took the £20 from me. Why? Did they think I was lying? I was met with discrimination, contempt, disbelief. I was sick, but the interpreter said I was acting. I shouted, and she complained to the officer. I needed a doctor and asked her to translate. I had had no sleep for two days. It was a nightmare.

'At 1 a.m. a coach took me and other asylum-seekers to Dover. They gave me food. At a tribunal, I was twice refused asylum. The first time, the interpreter provided by the solicitor told a story that was not true.

'When I went to the Refugee Council, there was an endless queue. I met a Somali family from Kilburn, who took me home with them. I returned in the early hours of the morning. Still a long line. That happened three days in succession.

The security man hit me as I tried to enter the building. Someone said, "She's been here three days." He said, "I don't care if she's been here a year." I told him, "When I've learned the language I'll come back and talk to you."

'I was homeless for eight months. I slept rough, spent nights in churches and mosques. I was so tired I couldn't walk. The mosque in Willesden Green looked after me, as well as the Somali family. I was bleeding because I had a miscarriage. When I was raped in the jail in Libya I was a virgin, and didn't know I was pregnant. The National Asylum Support Service put me in contact with the Medical Foundation, where a doctor saw me. They were wonderful. They finally got me accommodation at last, in August 2003. I had been in the country since December 2002.'



Matthew Douara from Cameroon found himself alone in London, abandoned by the people-smuggler. 'I was frightened. I spent two days just walking about. Then I saw a law firm advertised on an office building. I went in. They didn't specialize in Immigration Law, but they called a lawyer who did. He picked me up and paid for a hotel room for me. The next day I went to Croydon. I told them, "If you cannot keep me in this country, send me anywhere else, but not Cameroon."

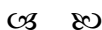
'I was taken to a detention centre in Cambridge for ten days. I had a comfortable bed. Three days later I got a letter saying they found my claim for asylum unjustified. They would send me back to Cameroon.

'I asked the lawyer to appeal. I gave him the number of the British Council in Cameroon, because I had been doing consultancy work. The hearing was in Stoke on Trent. When I got there, I was surprised to see he [my lawyer] had a letter from the British Council testifying that I had indeed worked there. They acknowledged I had had trouble with the authorities. The lawyer had newspaper articles I had written, a letter from the chairman of the SDF (Social Democratic Front) and one from the Teachers' Trade Union. The lawyer said, "Do you know these names?" I gave the name of the director of the British Council. The lawyer also had video evidence from the SDF. He told me the solicitor had communicated with Cameroon, and everything I said had been confirmed.

'I went to Peterborough with other asylum seekers under the National Asylum Support System. Three months later, I got a letter saying I had indefinite leave to remain. Within 14 days, I went to the Job Centre for a Jobseeker's Allowance, and [was sharing] a flat in Peterborough. I learned that my brother died during that time. My parents had also been hassled by the police who wanted to know my whereabouts.

'My wife came with the children in 2004. Her passport did not show she was my wife. I couldn't work, because I did not have my certificates [professional

qualifications]. I did some interpreting. It was irregular, but I hated benefit – getting money without working. I trained with the Public Services Interpreting Service. Then I went to a recruiting agency, who found me work in a food factory in Spalding.'



Hua Chan came to Britain for a conference in 1999 and asked for asylum. It was a long process. He was placed in accommodation in east London while the asylum application was considered. Like many in his position, he was shocked by the place in which he was expected to live. He found people noisy, inconsiderate and hostile. His period of waiting was marked by disputes with the local authority over noise. As a result of his insistence, he was taken to a psychiatric hospital, where it was said he had 'visual and audial hallucinations'. On appeal, he was released, but says he has had nothing but grief since coming to Britain. He was granted indefinite leave to remain and two years later became a British citizen.

Hua Chan is 'disillusioned' with the country of his exile. Communication is difficult, since his spoken English is not clear. People readily attribute stupidity or craziness to those they cannot understand, and this may have caused some of the persecution he says he has also suffered here. He finds it difficult to find work, particularly in an academic setting, where the ability to teach and express oneself clearly is a basic necessity. Hua Chan has taken a number of English language courses, but this has not really helped his linguistic competence. He was helped by CARA, and bought a computer with the grant he received.

He has initiated a long and extensive process of litigation without a solicitor with officials of authorities which, he feels, have infringed his human rights. He has lodged a number of cases with the European Court of Human Rights. He believes that although Europeans constantly advocate democracy, they do not know what it really is.

Hua Chan feels isolated and stranded – socially, culturally and emotionally. Yet he has no intention of going back to China. He studies each day, in pursuit of his objective of getting back into education.

The first time I met Hua Chan, his nephew from China was staying with him, a PhD student in Britain for three months to improve his English. I met him a number of times; both he and his uncle were grateful for my interest. The young man's English is very good.

The last time I met Hua Chan, his nephew had returned home, and he was missing him. He prepared a meal – carp and spring rolls – and we joked that he ought to set up a Chinese restaurant. His life is restricted – he has a small flat and apart from Housing Benefit, receives a little over £200 a month. This has not extinguished his hopes. He is planning to publish a book in Germany which, he is convinced, will earn him good money; and is still hoping to make

a relationship, preferably with an English woman, that will also help him speak the language better. In spite of his experiences, his optimism and hopefulness are undiminished.

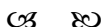


Darius Zemani spent five years awaiting the outcome of his asylum application. 'I spent 20 days in a hostel before going to Newcastle under a dispersal policy for asylum seekers. I was in a house in a poor part of the city with five other people. Some were Kurds, some Iranians. It was difficult because you are living with people you never chose and who never chose you. I tried to study every day, but it was very difficult. Some of them would bring teenage girls into the house. I said to one man, "You should not do that." He threatened me with a knife. I kept quiet.

'It is a terrible feeling to have no status. I telephoned my family. They said "Are you enjoying life?" What could I say? Five of what should have been the best years of my life spent in miserable conditions far from home, when I could have been a university lecturer. What was worse, my children blamed me. My daughter is now 18, my son 17. They understand now, but at the time, they just saw that I was not there.

'For five years, I saw myself as a useless person. I lost confidence in my power to do things which I knew I could do very well. On the other hand, it taught me to be brave.

'It was also difficult for my children. They arrived here with my wife two years ago. They have been clever enough to adapt. When they came, they didn't speak English. Both now have university entrance. The children tell me I did the right thing in speaking out, although while we were in Tehran, they wanted me to keep quiet.'



When Latefa Guémar arrived in Britain, she joined her husband in a Heathrow hotel.

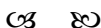
'It was a horrible place. I was ill and pregnant. The doctor said, "This woman cannot stay here." Two weeks before I gave birth to my second daughter, we were moved to another hotel in Hounslow with two bedrooms. We were waiting for our asylum request to be processed. I asked them to disperse us before my older daughter started school. They sent us to Swansea.

'When we signed the dispersal agreement, they asked my preference. I had never been to Britain, so I had no idea. All I knew was that the weather is terrible, and Churchill won the war. I said I would be happy near the sea.

'My husband claimed asylum at his first interview at the airport. He was interviewed by someone very knowledgeable about Algeria. His second interview was in Liverpool. They said asylum will be granted within two or three weeks.

'It took 15 months. We were approached by BBC4, looking for families to follow over a two-year period for a film on integration. After some hesitation, we agreed. They filmed once a week over two years. It was a good piece of work.' The family suffered continuous low-level harassment – eggs thrown at the windows, car tyres slashed, insults. The police installed an emergency alarm connected to the police station.

'After the film was shown in January 2006, we received hostility from the neighbourhood and the British National Party. It was a problematic neighbourhood, but our friends were not living there. We only used it as a place to sleep and at weekends. A Plaid Cymru councillor helped us to move to the Gower, outside Swansea.'



Immanuel Samere from Eritrea was not believed when he told the Home Office his story and was placed in a hostel in Old Trafford. 'On my first day the guys there gave me £35 and sent me shopping at the Asda supermarket in Old Trafford. I had no idea what to do. I managed. You feel frightened of everybody. In the early days I often went days without speaking to one person.

'I was very unhappy the first three or four months. You cannot explain to anyone what has happened. If you look confused, people just turn away. It was December, very cold. It felt strange and hostile. One day I tried to speak to a stranger. A black guy. I thought he might be sympathetic. He must have been Jamaican. He told me to fuck off.

'A letter came, refusing asylum. I had a solicitor who found the reasons flawed. A court hearing was set. The solicitor sent a letter outlining our case against refusal. Even before the hearing, I heard from the Home Office giving me leave to remain indefinitely.'



Abdul Lalzad from Afghanistan was sent to a west London hostel. 'I met an Afghani there. They were going to disperse us. He told me, "If you know anyone in London, tell them and they'll let you stay in London."

'Then he said, "Tell me the name of Afghans you know, someone famous." He asked me the names of some engineers I knew. "Oh, I know him," he said [to one name]. He gave me his number and I called him.

"This is Lalzad from Afghanistan."

“‘What are you doing here?’” He took me to his home – he was working as an interpreter for the asylum service.

‘Then I was taken to the office to get Income Support. I was not allowed to work. I got permission to stay while my case was processed. I was given a room and £50 a week in a private house. With Income Support, I started my new life.

‘I couldn’t sit at home and lose all my experience and knowledge. I did an IT course for two months. Then I went to North London University to do an accredited course to validate [my] qualifications, because I had no certificates, no degrees – asylum seekers are often without documents. This way I could prepare a portfolio of my education – it proves proficiency in English and competence in one’s field. I told them I had designed these systems and had taught at Kabul University, with which I’d been associated for over 20 years. I wanted to continue to study, even though I could not work officially.

‘Of course I felt humiliated. I had so much skill and experience to offer. I couldn’t understand why this society had no ability to distinguish between skilled and unskilled. There are so many engineers, doctors driving minicabs or washing up in kitchens. There is a language barrier for some, but that is easily resolved. What a waste.’



Laurent Mpinde from Congo was left by the people-smuggler who gave him instructions on asking for asylum. A woman took him to a flat, where he spent the night. ‘It was a weekend. On the Monday, I went to Lunar House in Croydon. There were so many people, I had to go back the next day.

‘I stayed in the flat three or four months. Little by little, you link up with people. I needed a lawyer and doctor because my health was bad. When I left the flat, the Home Office placed me in a hotel, and then sent me to Stoke on Trent.

‘My efforts to obtain asylum have been degrading. At my first interview, the request was refused. I wonder if the people who run the place have any idea of the political situation in our country? Do they know what the army and police do to their opponents?

‘At the appeal tribunal I complained of the superficiality of the first interview. I didn’t know the system. I had an interpreter, and spoke only to him. I never even saw my lawyer. My English was poor. If you cannot speak the language, people think you are stupid. My lawyer abandoned me.

‘I got a good lawyer from the Refugee Legal Centre, but Stoke on Trent was too far away, so I was advised to find another. Then my file was lost. I had to make copies of such papers as I had, but because I had not signed my first declaration when I asked for refugee status, it was invalid. I had to go before the appeal tribunal, although I did not understand what was said. My appeal was refused.

'I found a fourth lawyer, who urged me to make a fresh claim. I had nowhere to live, no support. I was taken in by some people out of kindness. My health deteriorated. I used to play football; and at the field, I met a man who said he could help me get work. I started in a warehouse, packing goods. At last I was doing something, I was earning some money. I could pay for my lodging. That went on for some months. I was still waiting for a reply to my new claim from the Home Office. One day, police and immigration authorities arrived and arrested me. "We have been looking for you."

"Why?"

"Your case is over."

'I had been studying English at Crewe. I went with my teacher to another lawyer. I would have to pay £135 an hour. I had saved some money. I was taken to a detention centre near Oxford. They said I was to be deported. I was ill on the bus. I couldn't walk. They took me to Harmondsworth. "Cooperate," they said, "and tell us everything." I told them I had made a new claim. They had no knowledge of it.

'Ten days later, a letter came, saying my claim had been refused. I was issued with a removal order. I was handcuffed and then taken back to detention. I contacted CARA, who had helped me with money for travel and studying and basic necessities. CARA found my sixth lawyer. At the next tribunal, Immigration said I had fought with their officers. They said the deportation would take place on a given date. I was to go via Paris. But there was no flight to Brazzaville that day.

'Immigration – or the company subcontracted to them – said the escort would have to be strengthened. I was taken onto the aircraft in handcuffs. They sat me in the plane. I made such a disturbance, the pilot said he would not fly. I was taken out, insulted and sworn at.'

Laurent later discovered that the Secretary of CARA, Professor John Akker, had contacted the Chief Removals Officer, and asked him whether his remit included sending people to their death, threatening to use his political contacts to publicize the case. Laurent was taken to Colnbrook Detention Centre. A fresh removal order was made. A lawyer CARA had engaged from the Refugee Legal Centre took out an injunction. A judicial review was ordered.

'It was November 2005. I went before a judge. Immigration lied. They said I had no right of appeal. They said I was violent. The judge told them, "You are immigration. You have no right to prevent an appeal." The judge saw no reason why I should be kept in detention.

'It was such a relief. I could not accept being detained again. I have never seen such a concentration of misery, sadness and hatred as I saw there. I was in Harmondsworth when the July bombings took place in London in 2005. When they heard the news, there was jubilation among some detainees. Although shocked – I can't see anything to rejoice over in such barbaric acts – I could

understand the alienation they felt. Whenever there was sport on TV, and British teams were playing, detainees always supported their opponents.

‘This country has destroyed me. I thought I would be protected; instead, I have been subjected to violent abuse, rejection and have been called a liar.

‘Whenever the authorities have interviewed me, they said, “You have no ties here.” It is as though they are pushing us to make relationships here and father children to support our claim. [But] I have a wife and two daughters at home. All I want is to be with them. I told my psychiatrist the only thing that has kept me from suicide has been my children. I think the stories deportees take away with them will do terrible long-term damage to your country and its interests.’



Only when Ruslan Isaev arrived at Gatwick did he realize the implications of what he had done. ‘I had to say no to the past and yes to whatever would happen here. It was very traumatic. I sat for two hours after coming through Immigration – I was waved through because my visa was valid. I had contacts here; but I was not happy.

‘I still knew little English – I saw two policemen. After a long time, I said to one of them, “I am a refugee from Russia.” He was friendly. He took me to a room and gave me a pamphlet, explaining that I should go to Lunar House. I went to a hotel and next day, to Croydon.

‘I was taken to a hostel in Dover, where I stayed two weeks. I was given a solicitor. After a health check I was sent to Rochdale in Lancashire. I thought, “One day, I’ll be a doctor again.”

‘The hostel in Rochdale was home to Turks, Iranians, people with whom I had nothing in common. It was very lonely. I went to English-language classes, but progress was slow. I was shocked by the differences between people in Britain. After three months, I was befriended by a middle-class English couple, who helped me a lot.’



Joseph Ndalou had arrived at a friend’s house in Leicester without papers. He was sick, his wounds still infected from the beatings in Cameroon. ‘My friend gave me painkillers, and said it couldn’t go on. He told me to go to a legal adviser in Leicester. He told me I could not stay here without going through the asylum system. He advised me to go to the Home Office in Liverpool.

‘The only identification I had was my political affiliation card. They took it, and told me to come back a few days later for an interview. They took fingerprints and gave me an ID card. I returned to Leicester. I saw a solicitor who couldn’t tell me anything.

'In my first interview I was told I should have claimed asylum within 72 hours of arrival. I had left it too long, therefore there was no accommodation [or] financial help. The interviewer said she would fast-track my case. I was directed to Oakington, a detention centre in Cambridge. In the meantime, I was placed in a police cell until travel could be arranged.

'In Liverpool I was handcuffed. I left the office with my hands tied. I stayed three days at the police station, but couldn't leave the cell. There was no window, just a grille. There was a plastic bed. I couldn't use the toilet. I pleaded for fresh air. Nothing. Just morning tea and breakfast. I wasn't physically beaten, but it was a psychological beating. One the third day, I collapsed. They put me on a bed. Then they said, "Your transport is ready." I was put in a van with 10 or 15 others, some of them children. It was late at night when we reached Cambridge, 2 or 3 a.m.

'My asylum case was heard two weeks later. It was refused. I was released to my friend's address in Leicester and told to report every week to the police. After two weeks, the police said I could stop coming.

'Things became complicated. My marital life had not been smooth. My wife was living with the children at her parents' home. I sent word to her uncle. I said, I know you are not sympathetic to me, but my wife is at risk. Please help her. She followed the route I had taken.

'She paid less. Her uncle helped her. She was with her aunt and our twins. At Heathrow, they did not believe she was the mother. She was taken to Cardiff and dropped at the office of the Refugee Council. She claimed asylum at once and told them she was single. Her case went through quickly. I took DNA tests to confirm I am the father of the twins and she is the mother. That was May 2005.

'We have been together here in Cardiff now for two years, and we have another child, a baby girl. The solicitor said I should make a new application to the Home Office. It is ironic, they believed her story, but not mine, although I was the one telling the truth. She apologized and now has indefinite leave to remain. I am still waiting. The children never really knew me in Cameroon because I had been separated from them.'



Behzad Mehrzad claimed asylum on his second visit to London [and] tried to get a visa for his boyfriend in Dushanbe. 'Naturally, I was rejected at first.

'My first job was washing dishes in a restaurant. I had a PhD in International Law, I could speak many languages, and here I was, working in an Indian restaurant in Bayswater. I felt humiliated. Because I was an asylum seeker and not supposed to work, I was off the books. I got £3 an hour and worked 20 hours some days.

'It can break a person, destroy the personality. My boyfriend was denied a visa at first. To make another application he changed his identity. That was why I

worked 20 hours a day – I had to pay bribes to the security people, buy his ticket and save money for him to study when he arrived. It took 18 months.

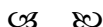
'I lived in with other Tajiks in London – I still felt vulnerable. You cannot imagine how homophobic they are. It made me attempt suicide a few times. You cannot tell family and friends. When my brother knew I was gay, he stopped talking to me. I have no male member of the family who is close.

'I appealed. My boyfriend was eventually given a visa, because he was a witness at the hearing into my case. I was granted refugee status, and tried to sort out my life.

'In September 2004, I was offered work as a part-time office assistant by the lawyers who had won my case. I am still working there. I made one good friend who helped me rebuild my life. When I enrolled in college [a private law college] and was applying for funds, he helped me with the first instalment of my fees.

'Going through the asylum process was difficult. Our relationship [he and his boyfriend] suffered. I don't approve of being gay as an identity. It is an important part of my life, but it does not make me who I am.

'I doubt I'll ever go back [but] my past is part of me, even though I have made this country my home. I have changed my name and taken on British identity. I am comfortable with that. I still work hard. As well as the job and study, I work nights and weekends as a freelance porter in a block of flats.'



That many refugees suffer a lowering of status is well understood. Frequently there is friction between the refugees (many of middle-class origin) and the residents in the places to which they are 'dispersed'. Their destination is often poor estates or shabby inner city areas, and they are confronted with social – or cultural – dissonances which add to the sense of disorientation.



Joseph Ndalou was reunited with his wife and children in Cardiff. 'My wife was given a council house with three bedrooms. Along the strip where we live, 80 per cent of people do not work. Some children do not go to school. There is a lot of antisocial behaviour. Children climb on cars, ride their bikes at midnight, shout and play loud music. I don't want my children to grow up in that atmosphere. It unsettles your emotions and personal relationships.'



Matthew Douara's sense of loss was even greater. 'I had qualified at home but coming here, I became unqualified or disqualified, so they could say, "Go and get

trained.” I said, “This is my CV. I have been to these conferences. I was training the British Council in Cameroon. Why must I get qualified all over again?”

‘You are poor. With refugee status and £40 a week, a family with two children, you have to do low-skilled jobs. A letter comes. It tells you to do this. You are on Benefit to Work one minute, then it’s Jobseeker’s Allowance. You are bewildered by the administration of your simple needs. You are placed in accommodation where you don’t want to be, with neighbours you never chose.

‘To opt out of Jobseeker’s Allowance you take work. You get in a van that drives you two hours to a work site, do a day’s work, then a two-hour drive back. You don’t see your children. They lack playmates. People look at them with hostility. The school is unlike anything they have experienced. You are doing multiple jobs, so you have no time to give them.

‘You think you have something to offer to the society that has given you refuge, but because you’re not UK-trained you have to prove [competence] in your own profession and expertise. Then, for post-graduate studies you can’t get loans. You take a “career-development” loan from a bank, which means high interest repayments. If you have escaped from your country in challenging circumstances, it is difficult to get references and institutional certificates. I’ve sat in classrooms and seminars where I knew more than the teachers. You ask yourself, “Is it worth it?” It is difficult, as a refugee, even to get enrolled.

‘My wife is not happy here. She is alone with the children, and feels excluded from society. Kids pick up the culture here but my wife is uncomfortable. If there is a regime-change in Cameroon – if Biya dies – she would go back. He is over eighty. It is always better to be at home. Our future is temporary.

‘Of course we know about hostility to refugees here. We had our share of problems. Two days after we moved into the house, the company removed the meter, so we had no light or heat for two weeks in midwinter. They did not repair the broken window. A neighbour came in through it. She and her boyfriend stole everything from my house – computer, food, even dresses. Someone called the police. She was sentenced to two years probation. Is this justice? Somebody turns your life – already a disaster – upside down and nothing happens. There was a leak in the roof. The council did nothing. The ceiling simply fell down and damaged everything. And no compensation or help to replace the damaged items.

‘We would prefer to be in Cameroon. I have a house there, land, a farm. My cousin is living in the property. Here, we have protection, [but] you always wonder. There is an article in the paper, a TV programme which is anti-asylum-seekers. You look at people, wondering if they read the article, saw the programme. My wife and I will not complain. This country saved our life.

‘But that doesn’t mean we should say nothing. Our children are victims of racism. We’ve changed their school twice.

‘You are protected, but you don’t have a life. I will send them [the children] to secondary school in Cameroon. Then they can choose. They can come and go.

I can't. At home, we have neighbours, cousins, friends. Here, everyone is locked into their private worlds. At home, we share everything. Everything – grief, joy – is a public event. Here, if the doorbell goes I know it is the police or some other trouble.'



Sabreen's journey from Iraq to Britain was complicated. When she was warned to leave Baghdad, she had a false passport made, stating her occupation as 'housewife', and went to Jordan.

'When you cross the border and look back at your country, you think, "I wonder if I'll ever go back." I hope so. I keep thinking of my mother. She died last year. Because I never saw her, I cannot mourn her. She died in a bad accident. She was going to see my nephew, the boy of my brother who was killed. This boy was in hospital with leukaemia. She was passing the university on the day of a major bomb explosion and was injured. She was already ill with angina and a bad heart and she died. I would like to be able to visit her grave.

'When I went to Jordan I thought I might find work there, but it was impossible. Some Libyans came to Jordan, recruiting Iraqis, so I went to Tripoli from 1994 till 1997. The people there were, well, backward compared to Iraqis – patriarchal and xenophobic. They rejected us as foreigners, although we share a language and religion. We were paid more than the Libyans and in dollars. People became bitter against us. The authorities said they would rely on their own people. But they went to recruit in Asia, because they can pay them less.

'I returned to London in 1997. I was ill again [with a suspected tumour]. I called my doctor, and he wrote to the Home Office, saying I had a life-threatening illness. I had to go to the British embassy in Tunisia – no visa was issued from Libya at that time. We stood in line from midnight until office hours started. It took me about a week. A medical visa was issued. I came to London. I was in and out of hospital. The doctor informed the Home Office I could not go back to Iraq, and the visa was extended. Iraq was collapsing. I asked for asylum, and the medical condition helped. I was given leave to remain on medical grounds.

'I heard nothing for two years. My application was always "being processed". Then in 2006 I got indefinite leave to remain. My experience here has been difficult. After two years, I tried to resume my career. I had to take an English exam. I took it every three months for almost two years before I passed.

'I went to the Dental School in Birmingham. I was allowed to take courses free of charge. Without being registered with the General Dental Council, there is no chance of work. I had to do an exam to re-qualify; even though I had graduated in 1974. But I succeeded. I was finally on the list! Only I still can't work because the time since practising has been too long.

'I have something to offer this country. I love teaching. I find myself in teaching. My examiners know less than I do.

'I feel sad. I am paralysed here. I cannot visit my nephew in Jordan who has leukaemia. Leukaemia has become as common as flu in Iraq because of the depleted uranium and radioactive material. We are hearing now of the death of babies and malformations previously unheard-of. Seventy per cent of the people in the hospitals of Jordan are Iraqis. Death is now our countryman.'

Sabreen is grateful to Britain, but angry she cannot do the work she loves. Unwanted, isolated, she is 'detached from reality. When we were studying Anatomy they used to say of an artery or nerve that couldn't be identified that it was "innominate". That is exactly how I feel here. "Innominate".

'When I came to Birmingham, nobody knocked on my door for six months. I achieved nothing and lost confidence in myself. I wonder if the person who earned the qualifications is really me. I see people going to work, driving, catching their bus. They don't know what a privilege it is until they lose it. I cannot understand why I have been thwarted using my skills here. You cannot live without hope.'



Muktar, the Iraqi psychiatrist, unable to work in Britain while waiting for his refugee status, tried to get an Egyptian visa, but the embassy would not provide one until the Home Office gave him leave to remain. He had to become acceptable to Britain before he could go to Egypt.



Muktar and Sabreen are victims of the export of freedom and democracy – perhaps early refugees of globalization. On what mythical shores will they seek refuge? In this context freedom itself becomes, as it were, academic. Apart from the waste of people's abilities and powers – which Britain, like the rest of the world, needs – it is clear that, far from providing a solution to the vast uprootings and migrations in the contemporary world, Britain has contributed to the creation of refugees for whose plight it then disavows responsibility.

Refugees and the other Britain

The academics we have spoken to are self-selecting, in that all successfully approached CARA. Although many were rebuffed in various ways by officialdom, they are, perhaps, more tenacious than most refugees in their search for security and a socially useful purpose. On their way they have also encountered kindness

and practical assistance, not only from agencies for refugee welfare, but also from British people, neighbours, chance acquaintances and friendships forged in adversity – perhaps, who knows, those very people in whose name the popular press wants to slam the country's doors shut.

Personal encounters are almost always positive and enhancing. Mukhtar was welcomed into the family of his colleague dying of cancer. When I met him, he was living in a rented room in Camberwell paid for by CARA. He was doing voluntary work for CARA and with the Migrant Refugees Medical Forum. He came into the office in search of useful activity; but it was hard to endure the prolonged triple exile from country, family and profession.

Eventually he obtained a job with the Libyan government and joyfully sent us photographs of his family reunion at Tripoli airport. His name was duly deleted from the records of asylum seekers in Britain. A success for the authorities.

Not quite. The work in Libya was not what it seemed. It was difficult for his children to find schools. His wife could not settle. The family returned to Cairo. Mukhtar was given a grant from Scholars at Risk in the United States.



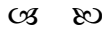
For Sabreen, CARA has been the most important factor in reconciling her to life in Britain. While trying to pass her English exam and requalify in dentistry, she had borrowed money from a friend which she was unable to repay. CARA released her from this debt, but she cannot tell her friend that she is unable to work. 'CARA saved my life,' she says.



Matthew Douara spent his spare time in Peterborough Public Library. 'I saw an advert for a short story competition. I won it and got £200. The guy who presented the award wanted to know if what I had written was based on my experience. I told him I was in a food factory. He said if the system wouldn't accept me, I should force my way in. I said I had no money for my Master's course. He gave me a list of charities. I applied for funding. The Prisoner of Conscience charity paid part of my fees. When I finished, I published research articles in journals about refugee arrivals and the problem of documenting them. I wanted to do a PhD, and Prisoner of Conscience directed me to CARA in 2006.

'They were very helpful. The application date for a CARA grant had passed. Prisoner of Conscience people called CARA, who said, "Send it at once and we'll consider it." I got an allowance with which I am researching education in Britain of the children of ethnic minorities and refugees; this is in the wider context of the problems children and parents face establishing themselves in the country.

The main issue is safety. This is so overwhelming that all other considerations are secondary.'



Layla Almariya, befriended by a chance meeting with Somali refugees, was sheltered by churches and mosques in north London. 'I was finally referred to the Medical Foundation, because I was suffering from severe depression – because of what happened to me here. It had been a nightmare at home, but I had escaped. Here, there was nowhere to escape to. The first GP I went to refused to deal with me. My first solicitor was a Muslim. I am not religious. I told him I believe in tolerance and that I have no problem with people who are gay or lesbian. I lost my case, because I had expressed liberal ideas to him. He didn't represent me properly.

'The Refugee Legal Centre took over my case. The solicitor there was wonderful. The Medical Foundation and Amnesty together saved me.

'I learned English at an education centre in Westminster. Language was my greatest barrier. I knew the meaning of the Geneva Convention, but this doesn't help if you cannot express yourself. As soon as I felt better, I decided to do voluntary work. I worked for Health Care Consultants in Mental Health Strategies in the UK, [which] trains GPs and health-care professionals to treat ethnic minority patients with psychiatric problems.

'When I was granted refugee status in May 2005, I found a job within two weeks. I was personal assistant to a manager in a company in Hammersmith. Then I moved on to work as a support worker in the mental health service of Camden and Islington.

'I have been living in Streatham. I have to leave that accommodation. The other night someone was shot dead in the street. I have a strong belief in myself. I have spoken up for refugees when English classes for asylum-seekers were stopped by the Home Office. I have claimed no [state] benefit. I would like to be a role-model for others in the same situation as myself.

'I am now hoping for a grant from CARA to help me qualify as a mental health professional. I want to use my experience constructively, to help others.'



In August 1999, Abdul Lalzad struck lucky. 'I found a place at South Bank University. I had sent out my CV, asking please help me. I was looking for a job. I was brushed off so many times. I told them I had written textbooks and academic papers and taught at Kabul University. Then the Head of Research at South Bank called me. He was also a refugee – from Cyprus, Professor Kariyannes.

He is now at Brunel. He told me to bring my documents and tell the honest truth. I said, "Just let me do one lecture and you'll see."

'I got a Visiting Fellow post, although still an asylum seeker. I was introduced to CARA through a friend, and explained that I had an incomplete PhD. Getting a lectureship is difficult without a PhD. I asked if CARA would support me. I was fortunate; I had two good references [as] the Vice-Chancellor and Assistant Vice-Chancellor of Kabul University were both in London. I had to decide on a PhD topic. I chose the development of novel small-scale solar desalination plants. With my knowledge of thermal engineering, I was able to look at ways of providing safe drinking water for remote villages in the developing world. I reviewed the literature for one year, started my PhD in 2001 and finished it in 2006.

'I have some part-time teaching. I waited two years for refugee status. From 2000 I was in close touch with CARA, especially John Akker. I went to Paris in June 2001 to present a paper to UNESCO on the tragedy of education in Afghanistan. It was published in a number of journals.

'After 9/11 many people came to me to ask for explanations, because in my writing I had warned of what would happen. I became something of an expert. I had written an article when I got refugee status in 2001, in which I had criticized the ISI, the Pakistan secret services. After that I applied to get my family reunited. They were still in Pakistan. My application was refused. Then the British High Commission in Pakistan demanded that I [and the children] take a DNA test, to prove the children were mine. Whether or not this was because of the influence of the ISI on the British I don't know. The samples were sent to and fro. It took over a year. I thought this was a result of my exposure of the ISI. They were holding my family hostage.

'John Akker took the matter to parliament. He contacted Jack Straw, and asked him if the High Commission in Islamabad was under the influence of the ISI. If they have found any anomaly in the DNA, they should say so, or they should provide my family with a visa. My family were able to leave Pakistan just a week before the US invaded Afghanistan. John bought the tickets and sent them to Pakistan; but a bribe [was required] to get them accepted. In the airport, the Pakistani police said, "Your son doesn't look fifteen. It isn't his photo. The passport isn't valid." That was also their way of asking for money. They had to be given \$100, then it was OK.

'It was not difficult for the children, because they adapt easily. It was harder for my wife. She is still suffering from the trauma of having been stranded in Pakistan for two years with six children. The children learn English. The two oldest girls have finished university; one is a biomedic, the other a pharmacist. The third is working part-time and continuing her education. One boy is doing A-levels, the other his GCSE and the youngest is ten. They criticize my English, they say, "You talk with a Kabul accent." They belong. In such a short time.

'But I know doctors, engineers, nurses who cannot cross the cultural barrier and enter the system. I myself have applied for hundreds of posts but no permanent post is available. Two years ago I was short-listed here at South Bank. They all knew me. Someone else was appointed. "Sorry, we had promised him before ..." Knowing someone is still more important. They know in advance who they are going to appoint.

'Of course there is no perfect system anywhere. Compared to Afghanistan or Pakistan this is a paradise. But compared to the ideal in our mind, it falls far short. You must expect to lose status as a refugee. You have to adapt and remain positive. It is all relative.'

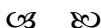


The experience of Latefa Guémar and her family was positive once they had been 'dispersed' to Swansea. The city's university, with a reputation for internationalism, has a vigorous asylum-seekers' support organization. Latefa helped organize a women's group. 'We have a drop-in centre, but many single mothers cannot drop in. Some are very isolated. A barrister gives free advice twice a week. We support people going through the asylum process, writing letters, counselling, [giving] advice on health. The Department of Continuing Education supports six projects with asylum-seekers and refugees.

'I came across CARA through web research. They helped me with a laptop and child care for my daughter who is three. They also helped me reach Level One Immigration Accreditation, which means I am qualified to help immigrants with advice, though not legal advice. When I met Dr Crawley at the Centre for Migration Policy Research, I decided I wanted to do a PhD with them, hopefully with the help of CARA.⁸

'I was diverted from my original subject, because of my experience with asylum-seekers. I miss my scientific work. But you have to do what must be done. I am part of a community of refugees. I join them against deportations – when I see families and children being removed, I feel guilty, because I can imagine myself in that situation. I am doing my degree to learn more about the system, and to acquire good academic English. I will focus on race and ethnicity, and want to write about racism.

'Swansea is good. Dylan Thomas refers to Swansea as "my ugly-pretty Swansea". When we first went there, it reminded me a little of Algiers. I loved it from the moment we arrived. I would far rather live here than London.'



Ruslan Isaev was granted asylum in February 2004. 'I could find my own accommodation. I went to Salford, to a centre for re-training refugee doctors.

Salford was poor – people on drugs, alcoholics, unpredictable teenagers. I had to re-take my exams. There, I found out about CARA. I fulfilled all the criteria – I was a refugee, was studying part-time and working. I asked for support of £800 and they gave me £1,200. I bought books, a computer and an Internet connection. It gave me moral as well as material support.

‘I hear people say immigrants are destroying our culture. How are we destroying it? We only want to help to belong. I have a second chance to begin my medical career. I’m working in the NHS – at a hospital in Cumbria. The NHS is very different from Russia. I’ve been out of medicine a long time and it moves fast. After two years, I will apply for specialist training.

‘I can’t go back to Chechnya for five years after being granted asylum. I have an International Travel Document, so I can travel anywhere, but not to Russia. I love the job I am doing. I have always been a positive person, and I intend to do as well here as I would have at home, if events had not prevented it.’



Joseph Ndalou told his story to a worker with the Refugee Council of Wales. ‘They said, “What do you want to do with your life?” I said I would love to get qualifications and then work. I said I had worked at an HIV laboratory in Cameroon and wanted to work in public health. They called CARA, who agreed to help. I enrolled on a course in Swansea and forwarded the admission letter to CARA. CARA agreed to pay fees and enough for necessities – transport, materials and books. My wife is also studying. When our studies coincide, we have a grant to pay for child care. She was a schoolteacher [and] now wants to work in health and social care.

‘I have to submit my MSc this year. I have a neighbour, an Irishman who has lived on the estate for 30 years. He has brought up four girls there to be good citizens. He says conditions are deplorable, but you have to maintain dignity and hope for a better future.

‘Before I knew about CARA, I felt trapped. I intend now to work with refugees, and others who need help – minority groups, black ethnic groups. I am a volunteer with a Black and Ethnic Minority Group called AWETU, a Swahili word for solidarity. It deals with people who have mental health problems. I can’t find praise high enough for CARA. It has been my saviour.’



Behzad Mehrzad has just graduated from a course to convert an overseas law degree to a BA after a year’s full-time study. ‘Now I have the support of CARA to study specialized practice after general legal studies. I hope to do corporate and finance law. This is part-time over two years; then I hope to become a qualified

corporate lawyer. I feel when I can earn good money, I should pay back CARA so they can use [these funds] for other needy people. I could not have studied without CARA. Having tuition fees assured gives peace of mind.

'My mother has been to London twice. I brought her to CARA. She is a doctor. It was wonderful when I met her at the airport. Life is much easier now. I have a circle of friends and also gay friends. People acknowledge sexuality freely – there is not shame and guilt as at home. This has transformed my life.'



Darius Zemani's overwhelming relief that he and his family are secure remains. 'You have to do something positive. CARA is paying my tuition fees while I do a part-time PhD in Structural Engineering. I am working on the technologies used in bridge-building. If through research I can save one person's life, I'll have done my job. I know I did nothing wrong or shameful. It was my duty, the minimum I could do. I know that if I do wrong, it will come back to destroy me. I could have kept my mouth shut like some of my colleagues, and would now be Minister of Education.

'In Newcastle I used to go to the university. It was my church. I couldn't study, but I made friends and met colleagues there. CARA was a great help. Although they are paying for part-time study, my supervisor says I can study full-time.

'I want to prove the government decision to grant me asylum was right. This is my society now. I am not unhappy not to be in Iran. I see the whole world as one society. It doesn't matter where you are, as long as you do what is right and help humanity.'



Victor Abano, although a refugee in Cairo, heard of CARA from the Refugee Study Centre. 'I thought I might as well ask [for assistance]. I was also connected with Prisoners of Conscience, who supported me. I was in southern Sudan at the time, and it was difficult to access the Internet. I wrote to CARA, telling them of my difficulty in applying. I needed funding for one year. I was doing a Master's programme on forced migration – this is an issue which affects all countries. CARA specifies that it supports refugees studying in the UK, so I was not sure. But they were flexible and very sympathetic.

'I am aware of the image of refugees begging for assistance. This does not tell the whole story. Refugees bring skills that can be developed to benefit the country of refuge. In northern Uganda, some of the top achievers in exams are Sudanese refugees, which invited complaints from the local people; likewise some Ugandan refugees in Sudan performed better than Sudanese. This is because refugees have a difficult time and limited opportunities. This inspires them to achieve

[even though] they know the odds are against them. I have found nothing but understanding and goodwill in Oxford.'



Tirfe Etana, whose efforts at reconciliation in Ethiopia were regarded as hostile by both government and rebels, was offered a post-doctoral research opportunity at the London School of Economics. Through Professor Halliday he secured help from CARA to advance his research and teaching ambitions in the UK.⁹ 'I expected to go home. But I got involved in LSE, and never felt for a moment that I was in a strange land.

'This was helped by the fact I studied in English, although my mother-tongue is Amharic. I fell in love with Britain when I was at school. I was offered a visa to the US and Canada, but it was here I wanted to come. The idea I have of Britain now is different from my romantic view as a child. But I have been lucky here.

'I know something is missing in my life. I have all [the money] I need. My wife is an accountant, and we have two children, a boy and a girl. Both are studying. My heart is perhaps missing Ethiopia. I don't want to go back there to live, but I'd like to give something back. Life is not only politics. Education is the only route for children and young people to change their lives and the destiny of the country. Maybe I will set up some scheme to help them.

'I work in the post-16 educational programme. In Britain I have worked in the voluntary sector, higher education, local authority, a college of further education and as a volunteer with a refugee organization. I was vice chair of the British Refugee Council and also chaired two major refugee agencies for more than two years. I owe this country a lot.

'As a senior education adviser and head of a policy team in a government institution, I have a high degree of responsibility and enjoy what I do. I would like children everywhere enabled to make an informed decision about the education they need. Just as we should not dictate to other countries, so we should not prescribe educational programmes for all children.

'My heart remains in the academic world, although my experience here has been wide [but] deep down I feel a sense of exile, both from Ethiopia and from academic life.'



Immanuel Samere's first social contact in Britain was in one of Manchester's churches. 'I met the priest who became a friend. Eventually the Church helped me furnish my flat. I am an Orthodox Christian. I speak Tigrinya, Amharic, Arabic, English and some Italian.

'A man in the hostel showed me where to register for college. I went to study computer-aided design. The teacher was very kind – I still know him as a friend. I met students and made contacts with other Eritreans. I did voluntary English-language teaching, and later, advocacy work for Manchester Refugee Support Network.

'I applied to university to do an MSc in Petroleum Geology. It was very expensive. They agreed to waive the fees. Refugee Action gave me a list of charities including CARA. CARA called me to London. They pay my travel costs, books, stationery, a laptop, Internet connection. That still left maintenance. The course is very intensive – I must finish it in one year. CARA agreed to pay maintenance until December 2007.

I'm writing to charities to fund me up to next June. My work is on petroleum geology. I want to do a PhD on some specific aspect – seismic interpretations of reservoir modelling. I can do a PhD and work at the same time.

'As soon as I got leave to remain I took a flat in Old Trafford close to the hostel. I have asked the Red Cross to help trace my parents, but they have little information to go on. I think they might be dead, because it is unlikely that a mother would simply abandon her child. I like Manchester. People have been friendly. I have had no experience of racism, nor even of unkindness.'



The relationship of new refugees with Britain is always evolving. From an outsider to belonging is a small step, as the children of refugees testify. There is, above all, nothing to fear from refugees. Quite the contrary. In return for citizenship, they share their generous, and sometimes startling, gifts with us.

This is the principle on which CARA has operated since it was first conceived three generations ago in another age that nonetheless prefigures this one, since the world still echoes with the cries of the persecuted. CARA has not stood still and is now part of a movement which seeks to signal to the world that Britain is no longer a sealed island or fortress set in a silver sea. Just as the British expect to travel freely wherever they wish, so we are also open to receive those whose governments are foolish and prodigal enough to discard some of their most accomplished and able citizens.

Support networks for refugees cannot meet all the demands placed on them; but their work is supplemented by countless examples of quiet and uncelebrated small acts of mercy and compassion. Few hearts remain hardened against the stories of expulsion and banishment, although people in Britain may find it difficult to comprehend the psychic dislocations caused by involuntary departure from everything familiar. It should also be remembered that more than 10 per cent of Britons now live as gilded migrants in countries other than their own. Does this mobility make people more responsive to accounts of persecution

and cruelty? Visible need calls forth the best in us; and campaigns to paint asylum-seekers as scroungers or opportunists lose their power when confronted by humanity in want of basic succour. As well as horror-stories of a stabbing on a Glasgow estate, the youths who terrorize a Kurdish family in the rundown house, the foreigner killed for looking at someone the wrong way, there are far more – although unpublicized – tales of people who spontaneously offer hospitality, money, food, advice, or the less tangible solidarities of sympathy, friendship and fellow-feeling. The pity is that these encounters are made harder by a rhetoric that turns the stranger at the gate into a threat, not only to stability, jobs and housing, but even to ‘our values’, or ‘all that we hold most dear’ – as though there were principles higher than a recognition of a common humanity.

Conduits for the goodness of people often resemble unused canals clogged by an accumulation of waste and garbage. To open up these blocked pathways is a real but not insuperable challenge. A world that asks so little of people constantly urged to get and to have is an unbalanced one. There are few things more satisfying in life than learning that to give is more fulfilling than to get.

Government could provide leadership here, rather than bowing before a largely contrived public opinion that believes the worst of people. Common wisdom is often mistaken, and the obvious should never be taken at face value, especially in societies devoted to the cult of images, appearances and the play of glittering surfaces. Resistance to received ideas is as important for our society as for the people in this book, who took a more fateful stand against the mendacity of ideologies of salvation or the knowing of dominant castes and sets of values.



The people whose experiences are recorded here have shown courage and tenacity in the pursuit of knowledge, and have paid dearly for the precarious – and always menaced – freedom to continue to do so. A majority, however, no longer pursue their original academic subject. This reflects both the lowering of expectations associated with refugee status, and the fact that opportunities are reduced. But there is an even more significant reason for their change of direction: the imprisonment, torture and injustice they experienced at home, together with the incomprehension, disbelief and sometimes indifference they encountered, has alerted them to the needs of refugees, especially their physical and mental health. Confronted by this emergency, some have suspended their studies to gain qualifications to help them serve the persecuted, the asylum-seeker, the minority. In this, they are unlike most refugees in the thirties, who continued in Britain studies interrupted only briefly at home. This is, perhaps,

because these refugee-supporting refugees no longer see themselves as victims of local oppressions, but feel that they are expellees of more potent, global forces. This becomes the most urgent focus of their concern; for by understanding the processes that have evicted them and extending what they now know, they can help prevent or alleviate the suffering of others.

Conclusion

Globalization has not diminished the threat to academic freedom. Open borders and free markets do not always lead to open minds and freedom of inquiry. People whose work involves intellectual independence and scepticism easily disturb the mental rigidity of governments, authoritarians and ideologues. While cherished insofar as they create wealth and assist the security of the state, for example defence and armaments research, when their work crosses prevailing orthodoxies they will be among the first to be targeted. They cannot always rely on their own institutions for support, since these are usually government-controlled or -financed, while the authorities are often wary of the influence of academics on a new generation, in case younger minds absorb dangerous and subversive ideas.

Academics, who often live detached from the social and economic movements which agitate people, can rarely look to the wider community when under threat. Their work is often utilized by others, and they find it difficult to communicate to a wider public the importance of what they do. This is aggravated by the anti-intellectualism of our culture, for it obscures the relationship between the advantages and comforts of modern life and the often lonely work of those who labour in pursuit of knowledge of which we are all beneficiaries. Academics also tend to be individualistic; sometimes disputatious and protective of their unique insights, they generally show no great ability to organize when threatened by power, from wherever this may come.

CARA has worked for 75 years, often in the face of popular indifference, towards those persecuted for what they know, say or believe – in fact, for being who they are. CARA is not alone in this endeavour. Over the past two decades it has become part of a growing and worldwide network addressing the issue of refugees and the involuntary migrations of globalism. Forty-three British universities are now committed to the assistance of threatened scholars worldwide. In the USA, Scholars at Risk was formed in 2001, while the far older Scholars Rescue Fund at the Institute of Education in New York has its roots in the 1930s. The movement, sustained by a relatively small number of people, operates as a 'rescue mission' from the developed world to offer succour to the victims of tyranny in the global South.

CARA has evolved over time. Initially, the Academic Assistance Council limited its concern only to scholars of great distinction. Now broader definitions of what constitutes 'a threatened academic' have permitted a far greater range of people to seek CARA's protection and support.

The pressures of globalization have complicated the issue. The great majority of refugees, including those removed from higher education posts, have not sought asylum in the West but live, often in miserable conditions, in countries adjacent to their own. To work effectively in this changing context, organizations committed to academic freedom will have to guard their independence and organize themselves, while calling upon freely-given voluntary support. To sustain such activity requires both resources and ingenuity.

Worldwide, universities are welcoming new cohorts of students. This represents an opportunity for widening the basis of support for the protection of academic – and wider – freedoms. If the intensification of academic labour in the universities has impaired the altruism and idealism of staff and students, the desire to contribute to wider goals has not been extinguished by the burden of work. The global academic community is mobilizing around this issue – and with good reason: unless academics themselves assist beleaguered colleagues, the chance of enlisting public enthusiasm for the cause remains remote.

That those offered refuge in this country have contributed significantly to the wellbeing of Britain has been amply demonstrated over the years. It is not only about restoring careers interrupted by tyrannical ideologies; it is also a story of the continuous enrichment of British society by the flow of new insights and competences borne by people from other societies and cultures.

Two contradictory forces are at work: one, the strengthening of frontiers against refugees and asylum-seekers, and the other, a growing awareness of the obligation of the fortunate of the earth to those who, through no fault of their own, have been evicted from their livelihood. These conflicting movements are not new, as the work of the AAC and SPSL in the 1930s shows: Britain was then, as now, simultaneously hospitable and implacable. As we have seen, it is easy to mobilize 'public opinion' to restrict generosity and openness, even when a majority are on the side of the victims.

However, dramatic exceptions suggest public opinion is more ambiguous than generally believed. A spectacular example occurred recently, when Al Bangura, a footballer threatened with deportation to Sierra Leone, was assisted by the fans of his club, Watford, who demonstrated vociferously – and successfully – for his right to remain. On the other hand, in a decision described as 'atrocious barbarism' by *The Lancet* and criticized by the Archbishop of Canterbury, a terminally ill Ama Sumani was removed from a Cardiff hospital in January 2008 and deported to Ghana, where she died two months later. In the meantime, money had been raised in Britain to pay for her treatment not available in Accra.

Combating hostility and xenophobia in general, and indifference towards academic refugees in particular, has become both more urgent and more difficult, given the campaigns against asylum-seekers and refugees. CARA's role in this movement is critical: the issue is the degree to which Britain can be said to be a civilized or humane society. Nowhere is it written that the forces of humanity and tolerance will triumph; but that is scarcely a reason to cease the struggle, even less so to ally ourselves with those who stand against them.



Knowledge, more fragile and more mutable than is generally acknowledged, is always susceptible to being abused or misrepresented. Whose knowledge is going to be required next by power and authority, and how will it be used? Whose truths will be suppressed or interpretation of the world denied? There will always be forms of knowing that are marginalized, ridiculed, or simply passed over in silence. The stories told here of freedoms curtailed, voices stilled, sensibilities stifled, urge us to be alert, ready to question common wisdom, retain our curiosity in the presence of the obvious and self-evident, and interrogate the promises of those who would deliver us from the suffering, darkness or ignorance in which we dwell. This has particular relevance today as the global media engages the most subtle and talented people as 'opinion-formers', to dispense approved versions of the world, its direction and future. The people whose histories are recorded in this book have shown courage and tenacity in the pursuit of their diverse knowledges. They have paid dearly for the precarious – and always menaced – freedom to continue to do so.

Jeremy Seabrook
April 2008

Notes

1 Academic Refugees

1. Nelson Mandela, *A Long Walk to Freedom*, London, 1995.
2. Those in favour of ostracizing Israel's academic community contend that a majority in higher education in Israel have identified themselves wholeheartedly with the military and political authorities in their resistance to the creation of a Palestinian state. Opponents claim that such a boycott not only hardens the sentiment of those who feel themselves under siege, but also contributes to the silencing of other voices which, nevertheless, continue to be heard.
3. However, Professor Shula Marks suggests that the academic boycott of South Africa may indeed have led some more liberal-minded academics and professionals to ponder the injustices of apartheid as a result of being ostracized.
4. Laurence Rees, *Auschwitz*, London, 2005.
5. Rory Carnegie and Nikki van der Gaag, *How The World Came to Oxford*, Oxford, 2007.

2 Then

1. William Lanouette, *Man in The Shadows*, Chicago, 1994.
2. Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, London, 2005.
3. J.D. Bernal, *The Social Function of Science*, London, 1939.
4. Otto Frisch, *What Little I Remember*, Cambridge, 1979.
5. Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939–1945*, Oxford, 1979.
6. Literally 'children transport', the name given to the evacuation of around 10,000 Jewish children up to the age of 17 from Germany to Britain between December 1938 and September 1939 following the anti-Jewish excesses of Kristallnacht in November 1938. Between 20 and 25 per cent eventually made their way to North America.
7. The assessment by Anthony Grenville (Continental Britons, Jewish Refugees from Nazi Europe, Exhibition at the Jewish Museum of London 2007) that 70,000 Jews were granted refuge in Britain between 1933 and 1939, includes both those who came on the Kindertransport and women offered visas as domestic workers. Other sources provide different figures – British authorities of the time gave a lower figure of about 40,000 to 50,000. There is a discrepancy between the number of visas issued by the British and the number actually taken up. Some who were offered transit visas may have stayed on, either by choice or necessity at the outbreak of war. The numbers registered by Jewish charities do not tally with official government figures. Visas issued to those coming from Germany did not distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish refugees – for instance, Communists and other opponents of the Nazis. It remains difficult, despite this exhaustively researched issue, to reach an accurate figure.
8. Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, Cambridge, 2000.
9. Kristallnacht ('Crystalnight' a.k.a. 'The Night of Broken Glass') was a coordinated pogrom on the night of 9–10 November throughout Germany. Over a thousand synagogues were destroyed and more than 30,000 Jews detained and taken to concentration camps.

10. London, 2000.
11. Ibid.
12. Sir William Beveridge (1879–1963, knighted 1919) was an economist, social reformer and Director of the London School of Economics (LSE) from 1919 to 1937. His reports to the government – on social policy in 1942, (the Beveridge Report), and employment policy in 1944 – laid the foundations for the Welfare State.
13. William Beveridge, *A Defence of Free Learning*, London, 1959.
14. Lionel Robbins, later Lord Robbins, (1898–1984) was an economist, and a professor at LSE from 1929 to 1961. In the 1960s he played a key role in the expansion of higher education in Britain.
15. Ray Cooper, *Retrospective Sympathetic Affection*, Leeds, 1996.
16. Frisch, 1979.
17. Daniel Snowman, *The Hitler Emigres*, London, 2002.
18. Georgina Ferry, *Max Perutz and the Secret of Life*, London, 2007.
19. Ferry, *ibid*.
20. Eva Ehrenburg, *Sehnsucht – mein geliebtes Kind*, Frankfurt am Main, 1963.
21. Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, London, 2002.
22. Jean Medawar and Richard Pyke, *Hitler's Gift; scientists who fled Nazi Germany*, London, 2000; Snowman, 2002.
23. He could only be released in England: hence, had he taken a US job, he would have had to reach it via England.
24. George Mikes, *How to Be an Alien*, London, 1978 (first pub. 1954).
25. Ferry, 2007.
26. Ibid.
27. *Max Born – A Celebration*, Berlin, 2004.
28. Frederic L. Holmes, *Hans Krebs: The foundation of a Scientific Life*, Vol. 1, New York, 1991.
29. Hans Krebs, 'The Making of a Scientist', *Nature* 215, 30 September, 1967.
30. See Christopher Long's review in the Harvard Design Magazine no. 21, Fall 2004–Winter 2005 of *Pevsner on Art and Architecture*, Introduction by Stephen Games, London, 2002.
31. Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, London, 1936.
32. *The Buildings of England* (46 volumes), London, 1951–74.
33. Snowman, 2002.
34. A group of philosophers led by Moritz Schlick that was collectively empiricist and positivist, believing that experience is the sole source of knowledge, which avoids metaphysics and proceeds by logical analysis.
35. Karl Popper, *Logik der Forschung* (The Logic of Research), 7th ed., Tübingen, 1982.
36. SPSL Archive, Bodleian Library.
37. Max Perutz, 'Enemy Alien', *New Yorker*, 12 August 1985.
38. Frisch, 1979.
39. *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, coordinating editor Werner E. Mosse, Tübingen, 1991.
40. Snowman, 2002.
41. *Second Chance*, 1991.
42. Ibid.
43. Adolph Lowe, *Economics and Sociology*, London, 1935.
44. See Matthew Forstater, University of Missouri-Kansas City, www.gsm.uci.edu/econsci/Forstater.html
45. Adolph Lowe, *The Price of Liberty*, London, 1948.

46. *Second Chance*, 1991.
47. Ibid.
48. Laurence Dopson, *The Independent*, 2 January 2002.
49. Vicky Rippiere and Ruth Williams, *Wounded Healers: Mental Health Workers' Experience of Depression*, Chichester, 1973.
50. Medawar and Pyke, 2000.
51. Ibid.
52. 28 September 1933.
53. David Zimmerman, 'The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning and the Politicization of British Science in the 1930s', *Minerva*, 2006.
54. SPSL Archive, Bodleian Library, cited *Second Chance*, 1991.
55. SPSL Archive, Bodleian Library.
56. Frisch, 1979.
57. Beveridge, 1959.
58. Paul K. Hoch, 'Emigrés in science and technology transfer', *Physics in Technology*, September 1986.
59. Snowman, 2002.
60. Lore Segal, *Other People's Houses*, New York, 1995.
61. London, 2000.
62. Peggy Fink was in Belsen after the British army liberated it in 1945. She worked with refugees from Nazi tyranny, and assisted the sad remnants of the camp in which a kind of social life was restored – schools were set up, religious ceremonies conducted by a rabbi who survived, a tent theatre put on plays in Yiddish. She recalls in particular '... a young woman who worked in my office, who was a survivor from the camp. I went away on leave, and when I returned I asked, "Where's Magda?" She had committed suicide. I thought how particularly dreadful it was to have survived that torment only to take your own life.'
63. Werner Pelz, *I Am Adolf Hitler*, London, 1969.
64. Personal communication to the author and extracts from an unpublished memoir, *From Auschwitz to Chartres*.
65. Segal, 1995.
66. Personal communication to the author.
67. Together with Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet.
68. Leslie Brent, *A History of Transplantation Immunology*, San Diego and London, 1996.
69. Leslie Brent, *Sunday's Child: A Memoir*, New Romney, 2008.
70. London, 2000.
71. *Memories*, 2005 (unpublished) and personal communication to the author.
72. Paul Jacobsthal, *Early Celtic Art* (2 volumes), Oxford, 1944.
73. Literally: 'to this university no intruder, but ennoblement', probably meaning that Paul Jacobsthal was not thought of as an intruder, but that his contributions ennobled the university.
74. Ray Cooper, *Refugee Scholars*, Leeds, 1992.
75. Norman Bentwich, *The Rescue and Achievement of Refugee Scholars*, The Hague, 1953.
76. Perutz, 1985.
77. The articles 'Remembering Internment' and 'Internment – the Sequel' appeared in the July and August issues respectively.
78. Peter Gillman and Leni Gillman, *Collar the lot!* London, 1980; Ronald Stent, *A Bespattered Page*, London, 1980.
79. Beveridge, 1959.
80. Ibid.

3 Until

1. *Lost Childhood and the Language of Exile*, ed. Judit Szekacs-Weisz and Ivan Ward, London, 2004.
2. SPSL Archive, Bodleian Library.
3. The World University Service had its origins in the 1920s, and grew out of the World Student Christian Fellowship. As European Student Relief, it helped people displaced by the First World War gain access to education. By 1939, then known as the International Student Service, it assisted those who had suffered under the Nazis, but soon expanded beyond Europe, as committees were established in Asia, Africa and later, Latin America. In 1950, it became known as World University Service. A scholarship programme for exiled students in the UK supported thousands from Chile, Argentina and South Africa. Always responsive to the changing circumstances of refugees, the Refugee Education Training and Advisory Service was established in the early 1990s. Now known as Education Action, it works within Western countries and globally, wherever refugees are forced to leave sites of conflict.
4. Luis Munoz, *Being Luis*, Exeter, 2006.
5. Ibid.
6. Munoz says the Chilean government was forced to close down the concentration camps in 1976, because the International Monetary Fund would not give a loan while they remained open; he was therefore indirectly indebted (not financially) to the IMF for his release.
7. Sulammith Wolff, *Children Under Stress*, London, 1969.
8. Munoz, 2006.
9. Albie Sachs, *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs*, London, 1966; *Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter*, London, 1990.
10. *Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter*, 1990.
11. Ibid.
12. Maya Jaggi, 'Justice of the peace', *The Guardian*, 26 August 2006.
13. Albie Sachs, *Sexism and the Law: A Study of Male Beliefs and Judicial Bias in Britain and America*, Oxford, 1978.
14. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, London, 1931.
15. Mbulelo Mzamane, *Children of Soweto*, Harlow, 1982.
16. Jack Mapanje, *Of Chameleons and Gods*, London, 1981.
17. Jack Mapanje, *The Chattering of Wagtails of Mikuyu Prison*, Oxford, 1993.
18. Jack Mapanje, *Beasts of Nalunga*, Tarnet, Northumberland, 2007. This book was short-listed for the Forward Poetry Prize for best collection in the same year.
19. Jack Mapanje, *The Last of Sweet Bananas*, Tarnet, Northumberland, 2004.
20. *The African Writers' Handbook*, ed. James Gibbs and Jack Mapanje, Oxford, 1999.
21. Imperialism's aftermath left African countries stranded between tradition and modernity, with social and welfare demands that treasuries could not satisfy. Post-colonial regimes too often became vehicles for personal advancement and corruption, and increasingly authoritarian. The reliance of many countries on primary products made them economically vulnerable, depressing prices and reducing government revenues. Later indebtedness led to conditions, such as privatization, liberalization, currency depreciation and significantly reduced welfare provision imposed on their economies by international institutions like the IMF and the World Bank.
22. Snowman, 2002.

4 Now

1. Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. by Stuart Gilbert, London, 1948.
2. A densely populated area between Baghdad and Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's birthplace, to the north.
3. Ryszard Kapuscinski and Neal Ascherson, *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*, London, 1983.
4. Mesfin Woldemariam, 'Whither Ethiopia', Ethiopian Economic Association: Vision 2020, November 2003.
5. The Dergue was the military junta headed by Mengistu.
6. A full length, loose outer garment with a hood.
7. The female version of the *djellaba*.
8. Dr Heaven Crawley is the Centre's Director.
9. Fred Halliday is Professor of International Relations at LSE.

Bibliography

The Bodleian Archive

The archive of the Academic Assistance Council and the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, contains personal files; correspondence with other refugee organizations and funding sources; and negotiations with universities and government departments relating to the support of academics fleeing the Fascist and Communist regimes in Europe between 1933 and 1987. The archive post 1956 (Hungarian Revolution) is not catalogued, although the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA) has produced a useful box list which is available through the CARA office (details below).

The catalogue for 1933–56 is available through the following link: www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/online.htm or by contacting CARA. The archive from 1987 is held in CARA's office.

Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA)

London South Bank University

Technopark

90 London Road

London SE1 6LN

tel: 020 7021 0880

fax: 0207 021 0881

e-mail: info.cara@lsbu.ac.uk

website: www.academic-refugees.org

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Website

For Adolphe Lowe, see also: Matthew Forstater, University of Missouri – Kansas City, www.gsm.uci.edu/econsci/Forstater.html

Appendices

Academic Assistance Council letter, 22 May 1933

List of displaced teachers, 4 April to 15 May 1933

Academic Assistance Council letter, 16 June 1933

Letter of criticism from W. Brown & Son, 6 April 1936

English translation of Professor Einstein's speech

(Originals of the above documents are in the Special Collections and Western Mss section of the Bodleian Library.)

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(Nature Publishing Group)

Appeal: The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning Limited, 1987

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE COUNCIL

ROOMS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY

BURLINGTON HOUSE

LONDON W. 1

May 22, 1933.

Telephone :
REGENCY 1468.

Many eminent scholars and men of science and University teachers of all grades and in all faculties are being obliged to relinquish their posts in the Universities of Germany.

The Universities of our own and other countries will, we hope, take whatever action they can to offer employment to these men and women, as teachers and investigators. But the financial resources of Universities are limited and are subject to claims for their normal development which cannot be ignored. If the information before us is correct, effective help from outside for more than a small fraction of the teachers now likely to be condemned to want and idleness will depend on the existence of large funds specifically devoted to this purpose. It seems clear also that some organization will be needed to act as a centre of information and put the teachers concerned into touch with the institutions that can best help them.

We have formed ourselves accordingly into a provisional Council for these two purposes. We shall seek to raise a fund, to be used primarily, though not exclusively, in providing maintenance for displaced teachers and investigators, and finding them the chance of work in Universities and scientific institutions.

We shall place ourselves in communication both with Universities in this country and with organizations which are being formed for similar purposes in other countries, and we shall seek to provide a clearing house and centre of information for those who can take any kind of action directed to the same end. We welcome offers of co-operation from all quarters. We appeal for generous help from all who are concerned for academic freedom and the security of learning. We ask for means to prevent the waste of exceptional abilities exceptionally trained.

The issue raised at the moment is not a Jewish one alone; many who have suffered or are threatened have no Jewish connection. The issue, though raised acutely at the moment in Germany, is not confined to that country. We should like to regard any funds entrusted to us as available for University teachers and investigators of whatever country who, on grounds of religion, political opinion, or race are unable to carry on their work in their own country.

The Royal Society have placed office accommodation at the disposal of the Council. Sir William Beveridge and Professor C. S. Gibson, F.R.S., are acting as Hon. Secretaries of the Council, and communications should be sent to them at the Royal Society, Burlington House, W. 1. An Executive

Committee is being formed and the names of Trustees for the Fund will shortly be announced. In the meantime cheques can be sent to either of the Hon. Secretaries.

Our action implies no unfriendly feelings to the people of any country; it implies no judgment on forms of government or on any political issue between countries. Our only aims are the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE	A. D. LINDSAY
S. ALEXANDER	LITTON
W. H. BEVERIDGE	J. W. MACKAIL
W. H. BRAGG	ALLEN MAWER
BUCKMASTER	GILBERT MURRAY
CHIL	BUSTACE PERCY
CRAWFORD AND BALCARRES	W. J. POPE
WINIFRED C. CULLIS	ROBERT S. RAY
H. A. L. FISHER	RAYLEIGH
MARGERY FRY	CHARLES GRANT ROBERTSON
C. S. GIBSON	ROBERT ROBINSON
M. GREENWOOD	RUTHERFORD
J. S. HALDANE	MICHAEL R. SADLER
A. V. HILL	ARTHUR SCHUSTER
GEORGE F. HILL	C. S. SHERRINGTON
W. S. HOLDSWORTH	GEORGE ADAM SMITH
F. GOWLAND HOPKINS	G. ELLIOT SMITH
A. E. HOUSMAN	J. C. STAMP
J. C. IRVINE	J. J. THOMSON
F. G. KENTON	G. M. TREVELLYAN
J. M. KEYNES	

DISPLACED TEACHERS

The teachers in the list below have all been named in German newspapers as having been given leave of absence, or dismissed, or as having resigned in protest against other dismissals or action of students, between April 4th and May 15th, 1933. The list has been confined to institutions of a University character; it includes full professors, extraordinary professors and *privat dozenten*, but not assistants engaged in research work. The great bulk of the persons named are actual professors. The list is known from other information to be incomplete, but it has appeared best to rely only on statements that have already become public in Germany, and so far as is known have not been contradicted.

BERLIN UNIVERSITY:

Name.	Subject or Position.	Name.	Subject or Position.
✓ Baade, Fritz - - -	Economics	✓ Sinzheimer, Hugo - - -	Law
✓ Birnbaum, Karl - - -	Psychopathology	✓ Sommerfeld, Martin - - -	German Philology
✓ Blumenthal, Franz - - -	Dentistry	✓ Strupp, Karl - - -	International Law
✓ Byk, Alfred - - -	Physics	✓ Tillich, Paul - - -	Philosophy and Sociology
✓ Cohn, Konrad - - -	Dentistry	✓ Weil, Gutthold - - -	Oriental Philology
✓ Fischel, Oskar - - -	Art	✓ Wertheimer, Ludwig - - -	Law
✓ Friedenthal, Hans - - -	Physiology	✓ Wertheimer, Max - - -	Psychology
✓ Friedmann, Fried. Franz - - -	Tubercular Research		
✓ Goldschmidt, - - -	Penal Law	GIESSEN UNIVERSITY:	
✓ Grossmann, Hermann - - -	Chemistry	✓ Aster, Ernst von - - -	Philosophy
✓ Haber, Fritz - - -	Chemistry	✓ Lenz, Friedrich - - -	Social Science
✓ Haentzschel, Kurt - - -	Law	✓ Meiser, August - - -	Philosophy
✓ Jollos, Victor - - -	Zoology	✓ Mayer, Georg - - -	Social Science
✓ Lederer, Emil - - -	Economics		
✓ Lipmann, Otto - - -	Applied Psychology	GOETTINGEN UNIVERSITY:	
✓ Maues, Alfred - - -	Insurance	✓ Bernstein, Felix - - -	Mathematics
✓ Mittwoch, Eugen - - -	Hebrew Philology	✓ Born, Max - - -	Physics
✓ Norden, Walter - - -	Municipal Government	✓ Courant, Richard - - -	Mathematics
✓ Pokorný, Julius - - -	Celtic Philology	✓ Franck, James - - -	Physics
✓ Pringheim, Hans - - -	Chemistry	✓ Heilig, Richard - - -	Law
✓ Richter, Julius - - -	Theology	✓ Noether, Emmy - - -	Mathematics
✓ Rona, Peter - - -	Physiology		
✓ Schur, Isai - - -	Mathematics	GREIFSWALD UNIVERSITY:	
✓ Spranger, Eduard - - -	Philosophy <i>unrelo</i>	✓ Klingmueller, Fritz - - -	Law
✓ Wolff-Eisner, Alfred - - -	Medicine	✓ Ziegler, Konrad - - -	Classical Philology

BONN UNIVERSITY:

✓ Kantorowicz, Alfred - - -	Dentistry
✓ Loewenstein, Otto - - -	Psychopathology

BRESLAU UNIVERSITY:

✓ Cohn, Ernst - - -	Law
✓ Marck, S. - - -	Philosophy

FRANKFURT UNIVERSITY:

✓ Altschul, Eugen - - -	Economics
✓ Braun, Hugo - - -	Bacteriology
✓ Fraenkel, Walter - - -	Metallurgy
✓ Heller, Hermann - - -	Law
✓ Horkheimer, Max - - -	Philosophy and Social Science
✓ Kahn, Ernst - - -	Economics
✓ Koch, Richard - - -	Medical History
✓ Loewe, Adolf - - -	Economics
✓ Mannheim, Karl - - -	Sociology
✓ Mayer, Fritz - - -	Chemistry
✓ Mennicke, Carl - - -	Pedagogy
✓ Neumark, Fritz - - -	Public Finance
✓ Plessner, Martin - - -	Hebrew Philology
✓ Pribram, Karl - - -	Economics
✓ Riezler, Kurt - - -	Classical Philology
✓ Salomon, Gottfried - - -	Sociology

HALLE UNIVERSITY:

✓ Aubin, Gustav - - -	Economics
✓ Baer, Reinhold - - -	Pure Mathematics
✓ Dehn, G. - - -	Theology
✓ Frankl, Paul - - -	History of Art
✓ Hertz, Friedrich - - -	Economics and Sociology
✓ Kirsch, Guido - - -	Law
✓ Kitzinger, Friedrich - - -	Law
✓ Utitz, Emil - - -	Philosophy

HAMBURG UNIVERSITY:

✓ Berendsohn, Walter A. - - -	German Philology
✓ Cassirer, Ernst - - -	Philosophy
✓ Heimann, Eduard - - -	Economics
✓ Panofsky, Erwin - - -	History of Art
✓ Plant, Th. - - -	Economics
✓ Salomon, Richard - - -	East European Hist.
✓ Stern, William - - -	Psychology

HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY:

✓ Anschuetz, Gerhard - - -	Law
✓ Eckardt, Hans von - - -	Economic History
✓ Radbruch, Gustav - - -	Penal Law
✓ Weber, Alfred - - -	Economics

JENA UNIVERSITY :

Name.	Subject or Position.
✓ Bräuer, Leo - - -	Botany
✓ Josephy, Berthold - - -	Economics
✓ Klein, Emil - - -	Medicine
✓ Meyer-Steinberg, Theodor -	Medicine
✓ Peters, Wilhelm - - -	Psychology
✓ Schaxel, Julius - - -	Zoology
✓ Simmel, Hans - - -	Medicine
✓ Voering, Mathilde - - -	Philosophy

KIEL UNIVERSITY :

✓ Cohn, Gerhard - - -	Economics
✓ Fraenkel, Adolf - - -	Mathematics
✓ Huserl, Gerh. - - -	Law
✓ Kantorowicz, Hermann - - -	Penal Law
✓ Loebe, Wolfgang - - -	Phiology
✓ Neisser, Hans - - -	Economics
✓ Opet, Otto - - -	Law
✓ Stenzel, Julius - - -	Philosophy

KÖLN (COLOGNE) UNIVERSITY :

✓ Beyer, Richard - - -	Economics
✓ Cohn-Vossen, Stefan - - -	Mathematics
✓ Esch, Ernst - - -	Economics
✓ Honigsheim, Paul - - -	Philosophy and Sociology
✓ Kelsen, Hans - - -	Law
✓ Laps, Julius - - -	Sociology
✓ Schmalenbach, Eugen - - -	Economics
✓ Schmittmann, Benedikt - - -	Social Science

KÖNIGSBERG UNIVERSITY :

✓ Hensel, Albert - - -	Law
✓ Paneth, Fritz - - -	Chemistry
✓ Reidenmeister, Kurt - - -	Mathematics

LEIPZIG UNIVERSITY :

✓ Apelt, Willibald - - -	Law
✓ Becker, Hans - - -	Geology
✓ Everth, Erich - - -	Journalism
✓ Goetz, Walter - - -	History
✓ Hellmann, Siegm. - - -	Medieval History
✓ Witkowski, Georg - - -	Literary History

MARBURG UNIVERSITY :

✓ Jacobsen, Hermann - - -	Sanskrit
✓ Roepke, Wilhelm - - -	Economics

MÜNSTER UNIVERSITY :

✓ Bruck, Werner, F. - - -	Economics
✓ Freud - - -	
✓ Hellborn - - -	Botany
✓ Woldt, Richard - - -	Social Science

TÜBINGEN UNIVERSITY :

✓ Hegler, August - - -	Law (Chancellor)
✓ Weiss, Georg - - -	History of Art

BERLIN TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL :

✓ Chajes - - -	Indust. Hygiene
✓ Frank, Fritz - - -	Mineral Oil Techn.
✓ Heide - - -	Chemistry
✓ Igel - - -	Railway Engineering
✓ Kelen - - -	Constructional Engineering

Name

Subject or Position.

✓ Korn, Arthur - - -	Phototelegraphy
✓ Kurren, Mare - - -	Mechan. Engineering
✓ Lehmann, Erich - - -	Photog. Chemistry
✓ Levy, - - -	Economics
✓ Salinger, - - -	Elect. Engineering
✓ Schlesinger - - -	Mechan. Engineering
✓ Schwerin - - -	Constructional Engineering
✓ Traube, Wilhelm ① - - -	Chemistry

BERLIN COMMERCIAL HIGH SCHOOL :

✓ Bonn, M. J. - - -	Economics
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BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE :

✓ Jaekh - - -	President
✓ Simons Hans O - - -	

BERLIN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR CANCER

RESEARCH :

✓ Blumenthal, Ferd. - - -	Medicine (Director)
---------------------------	---------------------

BERLIN VETERINARY HIGH SCHOOL :

✓ Noeller, Wilhelm - - -	Parasites and Tropical Diseases
--------------------------	---------------------------------

BERLIN AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL :

✓ Brandt, Karl - - -	
----------------------	--

AACHEN TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL :

✓ Hopf, Ludwig - - -	Mathematics
✓ Levy, Paul - - -	Chemistry
✓ Lautner, Karl - - -	Civil Engineering
✓ Meusel, Alfred - - -	Sociology
✓ Strauss, Ludwig - - -	Literature

BRAUNSCHWEIG TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL :

✓ Gassner, Gustav - - -	Botany (Rector)
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DRESDEN TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL :

✓ Holidack, Felix - - -	Law
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HANNOVER TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL :

✓ Lessing, Theodor - - -	Philosophy
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✓ Haensler - - -	
✓ Kuebs - - -	
✓ Rogowsky - - -	Economics

MANNHEIM COMMERCIAL HIGH SCHOOL :

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✓ Eppstein, Paul - - -	Economics
✓ Gutkind, Curt Sigmar - - -	Languages
✓ Koburger, J. - - -	Insurance
✓ Mann, Ludwig - - -	Medicine
✓ Moses, Julius - - -	Philosophy
✓ Seitz, Otto - - -	Psychology (Rector)
✓ Strauss, Sigmond - - -	Law

Telephone:
REGent 1468.

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE COUNCIL,

President:
The Lord Rutherford of Nelson,
O.M., F.R.S.

Rooms of the ROYAL SOCIETY,
Burlington House,

Hon. Secretaries:
Sir Wm. H. Beveridge, K.C.B.
Professor J.S. Gibson, F.R.S.

London, W.1.

16th June, 1938.

Dear Vice-Chancellor,

As you may already be aware, steps have been taken to form in this country an Academic Assistance Council to help University teachers, who on grounds of religion, political opinion, or race, are unable to carry on, at least for the time being, their work in their own country. In case you have not already seen it we enclose a copy of the first statement as to the formation of this Council, which appeared in the papers on the 24th May.

The Council held its first meeting on June 1st and appointed an executive committee and, at the request of the committee, we now write to let you know about the work and plans of the Council, so far as they are formed.

It is contemplated that the main, though not the only, form of expenditure to be incurred by the Council should be in the provision of a part or the whole of the maintenance for displaced scholars and scientists for whom a chance of continuing their work is open in institutions of learning in this country. With this in view we are forming as complete and detailed a register as possible of those who are likely to be displaced and in need of immediate assistance of this kind.

We should be glad to hear from you if your University is in a position to find openings for any of these recommended men or women (who will be finally selected by you) and if so, on what terms, i.e. whether you can contribute the whole or any part of the maintenance from funds already under your control or to be raised by you, or whether it will be necessary for the Academic Assistance Council to find the whole. You will realise that, although the Council has funds in prospect, these are not likely to be adequate unless they can be augmented.

We are aware that some Universities and Colleges have already taken action, with the help of local support to raise special

-8-

funds or to find places for displaced teachers. We cordially welcome such independent action but hope that you will be good enough to let us know of any such procedure in relation to your University so that in due course we may have a complete record of all that is done in this country.

We should add that, apart from the question of providing facilities for the displaced scholars and scientists, we are concerned in obtaining funds for their maintenance, among other sources by appealing to individual members of the staffs of Universities and Colleges. Steps to organise such appeals by groups of teachers have already been taken in certain University institutions and we hope that this example may be followed. Although this is probably not a matter in which you, as Vice-Chancellor, can act officially, we should very much appreciate it if you are able to indicate to us any active and prominent member of the staff of your University who, in your view, might be prepared to assist in this matter.

We shall be happy to give you any further information you may desire about the work of the Council or to send you the fullest particulars that we have of individuals who are already displaced or threatened for the future.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) W. H. Beveridge.

C. S. Gibson.

Hon. Secretaries.

6 April 1936 W BROWN & SON, MET 6087
52. FORE STREET, LONDON, E.C.2

Dear My Lord.

You may not think it but it is really impudence to write asking donations from this part of the world. Opposite me and I have been here 20 years every one of the buildings has had a Jew fire, and there is one of Harris's friends there still.

Ones does not believe in physical illtreatment, but these pests deserve what they get. What country will tolerate them. Why. Firstly who wants their Abrahams who was willing to murder his own son. Their disgusting Samuels Noahs and so on.

These people are firstly and above all a Commercial race. Their answer is to be found in Stubbs gazette. In Womens wear last week of the twelve Bankrupts. ALL OF THEM WERE JEWS. Stalin a jew Litvinoff Jews and the same here. Who do they change their names.

Your Council may be clever people but they have had no commercial experience. Or they would not belong to such a thing.

The best way to deal with Jews is to have nothing to do with them and an Englishman can always beat a Jew by being honest which they cannot be for love or money.

The jew question will be a serious one here very shortly. Hitler is quite right in getting rid of them. They have lowered the business morality of the greatest city in the world namely The City of London. Why do not the Insurance Companies want them! Why do the Banks have to keep double eyes on the jew accounts!

A cold blooded heartless race. You come round Fore St if you want the jew question and we can show you the Bankrupts gents and those who will be going later on.

You talk of Universities. Get your Economists to work out how much the Jews have robbed England of and especially round this quarter. What about our own towns with 75% unemployed.

(W.D.S Brown)

Science and Civilization.

I am glad that you have given me the opportunity of expressing to you here my deep sense of gratitude as a man, as a good European, and as a Jew. Through your well-organised work of relief you have done a great service not only to innocent scholars who have been persecuted, but also to humanity and science. You have shown that you and the British people have remained faithful to the traditions of tolerance and justice which for centuries you have upheld with pride. It is in times of economic distress such as we experience everywhere to-day, one sees very clearly the strength of the moral forces that live in a people. Let us hope that a historian delivering judgment in some future period when Europe is politically and economically united, will be able to say that in our days the liberty and honour of this Continent was saved by its Western nations, which stood fast in hard times against the temptations of hatred and oppression; and that Western Europe defended successfully the liberty of the individual which has brought us every advance of knowledge and invention—liberty without which life to a self-respecting man is not worth living.

It cannot be my task to-day to act as judge of the conduct of a nation which for many years has considered me as her own; perhaps it is an idle task to judge in times when action counts.

To-day, the questions which concern us are: how can we save mankind and its spiritual acquisitions of which we are the heirs? How can one save Europe from a new disaster?

It cannot be doubted that the world crisis and the suffering and privations of the people resulting from the crisis are in some measure responsible for the dangerous upheavals of which we are the witness. In such periods discontent breeds hatred, and hatred leads to acts of violence and revolution, and often even to war. Thus distress and evil produce new distress and new evil. Again the leading statesmen are burdened with tremendous responsibilities just the same as twenty years ago. May they succeed through timely agreement to establish a condition of unity and clarity of international obligations in Europe so that for every State a war-like adventure must appear as utterly hopeless. But the work of statesmen can succeed only if they are backed by the serious and determined will of the people.

We are concerned not merely with the technical problem of securing and maintaining peace, but also with the important task of education and enlightenment. If we want to resist the powers which threaten to suppress intellectual and individual freedom we must keep clearly before us what is at stake, and what we owe to that freedom which our ancestors have won for us after hard struggles.

Without such freedom there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Newton, no Faraday, no Pasteur and no Lister. There would be no comfortable houses for the mass of the people, no railway, no wireless, no protection against epidemics, no cheap books, no culture and no enjoyment of art for all. There would be no machines to relieve the people from the arduous labour needed for the production of the essential necessities of life. Most people would lead a dull life of slavery just as under the ancient despotisms of Asia. It is only men who are free, who create the inventions and intellectual works which to us moderns make life worth while.

Without doubt the present economic difficulties will eventually bring us to the point where the balance between supply of labour and demand of labour, between production and consumption, will be enforced by law. But even this problem we shall solve as free men and we shall not allow ourselves for its sake to be driven into a slavery, which ultimately would bring with it stagnation of every healthy development.

In this connection I should like to give expression to an idea which has occurred to me recently. I lived in solitude in the country and noticed how the monotony of a quiet life stimulates the creative mind. There are certain callings in our modern organisation which entail such an isolated life without making a great claim on bodily and intellectual effort. I think of such occupations as the service in lighthouses and lightships. Would it not be possible to fill such places with young people who wish to think out scientific problems, especially of a mathematical or philosophical nature? Very few of such people have the opportunity during the most productive period of their lives to devote themselves undisturbed for any length of time to scientific problems. Even if a young person is lucky enough to obtain a scholarship for a short period he must endeavour to arrive as quickly as possible at definite conclusions. That cannot be of advantage in the pursuit of pure science. The young scientist who carries on an ordinary practical profession which maintains him in a much better position—assuming of course that this profession leaves him with sufficient spare time and energy. In this way perhaps a greater number of creative individuals could be given an opportunity for mental development than is possible at present. In these times of economic depression and political upheaval such considerations seem to be worth attention.

Shall we worry over the fact that we are living in a time of danger and want? I think not. Man like every other animal is by nature indolent. If nothing spurs him on, then he will hardly think, and will behave from habit like an automaton. I am no longer young and can, therefore, say, that as a child and as a young man I experienced that phase—when a young man thinks only about the trivialities of personal existence, and talks like his fellows and behaves like them. Only with difficulty can one see what is really behind such a conventional mask. For owing to habit and speech his real personality is, as it were, wrapped in cotton wool.

How different it is to-day! In the lightning flashes of our tempestuous times one sees human beings and things in their nakedness. Every action and every human being reveal clearly their aims, powers and weaknesses, and also their passions. Routine becomes of no avail under the swift change of conditions; conventions fall away like dry husks.

Men in their distress begin to think about the failure of economic practice and about the necessity of political combinations which are supernational. Only through perils and upheavals can Nations be brought to further developments. May the present upheavals lead to a better world.

Above and beyond this valuation of our time we have this further duty, the care for what is eternal and highest amongst our possessions, that which gives to life its import and which we wish to hand on to our children purer and richer than we received it from our forebears. Towards these purposes you have affectionately contributed with your blessed services.

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Science and Learning in Distress

IN the early summer of 1933, the Academic Assistance Council was founded, under the presidency of Lord Rutherford and with the active support of many distinguished men of science and other scholars, to find places in the fabric of world science and world scholarship for men and women driven from their countries and their work for racial, religious or political reasons. Such persecution was not new, even in the very recent past: it had happened again and again in Russia and was still happening: but the scale of its application in Germany and the distinction of its victims demanded immediate help. The Academic Assistance Council had no partisan, political or national bias. Indiscriminate relief was to be no part of its work. Its purpose was to act as a link between the scientific workers and other scholars displaced and the universities and research institutions of the world, so that their exceptional abilities exceptionally trained—to quote the noble declaration of the Council's founders—should not be lost.

It was hoped that the emergency would pass, but as the years went on, intolerance and persecution grew; no end was in sight. The Academic Assistance Council took permanent shape therefore as the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning: its wider purpose was now to act as a clearing house of information and advice to exiled scholars, and to persons, institutions and departments desiring to help them; its narrower purpose—within the limits of its resources—to offer temporary maintenance grants and other aids to re-establishment. The spread of 'racial' doctrine in Italy, the consequences in Austria and Czechoslovakia of the political events of 1938 and

their reactions in neighbouring countries, the continuation of civil war in Spain, the extreme xenophobia of the U.S.S.R., and recent events in Germany, all these have added to the need, for information and advice on one hand, for direct assistance on the other. When a ship is in distress no sailor, and few landmen, will not want to go to its help.

The Society has just issued its annual report, from which it appears that a widespread appeal is shortly to be issued: for funds on one hand; for interest and sympathy, through membership, on the other. The problem has been complicated and enlarged by the events of 1938, but the Society has not turned aside from its original purpose and principles. It exists, not to advertise a particular point of view, but to do an honest job of work in seeing that ability and experience in science and scholarship are not wasted. It does not, it cannot, disregard human values; but its charity is devoted to those who can contribute to the common stock of learning. It stands for the brotherhood of scientific endeavour, regardless of race and creed and politics: and it stands for it, not by passing pious resolutions or by putting out disguised political propaganda, but by trying to help colleagues in their need. Foreign scientific workers are found work which restores their self-respect and makes others realize their value in their common task; so that, not seldom, they become self-supporting. From the start, however, the Society has done its best to avoid any unfair competition of exiled scientific workers and other scholars with those in the countries where they are seeking refuge, and has realized, and urged, that in the long run such competition is as little in

the interest of the exiles as in that of scientific workers as a whole.

The Society must maintain its authority and integrity in the face of its increasing task. In Germany alone, fourteen hundred university teachers and research workers have been displaced, many of them among the most distinguished in the world; not merely debarred from teaching and research, they are not allowed to make a living at all. More than four hundred Austrian men of science and other students have been displaced, and of these only about a hundred have been able to leave the country. The full effects of the 'racial' policy in Italy and of the partition of Czechoslovakia have yet to be felt; Spain, from which scholars of both parties have been helped, is still no place for tolerant, sensitive academic people; and the U.S.S.R. has disappointed our hopes by turning out those who originally found work and refuge there.

Caution in the circumstances must often seem intolerable to humane men, but the Society's stringent caution in accepting responsibility bears fruit. Work has been found permanently for about 550 scholars in thirty-eight different countries,

from Australia to Venezuela; for about 330 temporarily in twenty-five countries. Turkey, which is building a new civilization, has welcomed numbers of the displaced university men.

In November 1937, the Society called an informal conference at Oxford of representatives of European universities, and the ideal of an international exchange for information and employment came nearer to realization. The Society's register of exiled scholars is now unique, authoritative and international. Any academic or research institution can have the benefit of its records of those "exceptional abilities exceptionally trained", lost to their own countries, but not, if the Society can prevent it, to the service of knowledge anywhere else in the world.

Funds and interest are, however, an imperative need; first, for the work of administration, information and advice; secondly, for direct help in human emergency. It is to be hoped that the wider educated public, particularly in the English-speaking countries, will respond generously to the appeal for support which the Society is making, and come to the help of science and learning in distress.

News and Views

Society for the Protection of Science and Learning

PERHAPS there is no finer testimony to the work undertaken by the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, the report for 1938 of which was referred to in *NATURE* of December 17 (p. 1061) than the extent to which it has received the active support during the whole of its five years existence of the university staffs in Great Britain. Not only have individuals and committees in the majority of academic centres lent ready assistance to their exiled colleagues from abroad in the way of advice and vigilance for new openings for them, but also they have contributed financially more than £10,000 towards the funds of the organization which seeks to aid academic refugees. The Society itself has arranged a week of meetings early next term to take place in the great majority of British academic centres, with the view of spreading information concerning the plight and prospects of academic refugees. Among those who have agreed to take part in these meetings are included: the Home Secretary, the Archbishop of York, Viscount Samuel, the Marquess of Reading, Sir William Bragg, Sir Henry Dale, Sir Richard Gregory, Sir John Hope Simpson, Sir Norman Angell, Sir Allen Mawer, Sir Bernard Parsons, the Hon. Harold Nicolson, Mr. Philip Goodall, Mr. Walter Adams, Prof. Gilbert Murray, Prof. Winifred Ellis, Prof. John Macmurray, Prof. P. M. S. Blackett, Prof. Lancelot Hogben, Prof. F. A. E. Crew, Miss Rebecca West and the Hon. V. Sackville-West. The Royal Society is giving a special reception to the academic exiles and those who have been working in their interests, in collaboration with the British Academy, on February 7; and on February 10 the evening discourse at the Royal Institution is to be given by Prof. Max Born, one of the most distinguished of the refugee men of science.

The Chemical Society

At a meeting of the Chemical Society held at the Royal Institution on December 16, it was stated that Prof. Robert Robinson, Waynflete professor of chemistry in the University of Oxford, has accepted nomination to the office of president for the period 1939-41, which includes the centenary celebrations of the Society to be held in April 1941. The Longstaff Medal for 1939 has been awarded to Prof. I. M. Heilbron, for his outstanding contributions to the science of chemistry in the field of natural products, especially vitamin A and related natural pigments, the anti-rachitic vitamin D and its precursors, and the constituents of the fish liver oils and of natural resins of the triterpene group. Prof. Heilbron was lecturer in organic chemistry in the Royal Technical College, Glasgow, from 1909 until 1914, and in 1919 became professor of organic chemistry there. In 1920, he proceeded to the University of Liverpool as professor of organic chemistry; in 1933 he held the chair of organic chemistry in the University of Manchester. In 1938, he was appointed professor of organic chemistry at Imperial College, London.

At the meeting of the Harrison Memorial Prize Selection Committee, consisting of the presidents of the Chemical Society, the Institute of Chemistry, the Society of Chemical Industry, and the Pharmaceutical Society, held on December 14, it was decided that the Harrison Memorial Prize for 1938 should be awarded to Mr. Alexander King. Mr. King received his chemical training at the Imperial College, South Kensington. From 1930 until 1931, he worked in the Physical Chemistry Institute of the University of Munich under Prof. K. Fajana, and from 1931 to the present date has held the post of assistant

APPEAL

The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning Limited (formerly the Academic Assistance Council)

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1987

ORIGINS AND AIMS

The object of the Society is to help academic refugees.

The Academic Assistance Council, as the Society was originally named, was started in May 1933 in response to the dismissals of academic personnel which took place in Germany after Hitler came to power. The AAC assisted first those academics who were dismissed in Germany, and then, as fascist ideology spread, in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Austria. After the outbreak of war many academic refugees who came to Britain from Allied countries occupied by the Germans sought help from the AAC, and by the end of the War assistance had been given to some 2,600 displaced university teachers, and advice and help to more than two thousand other scholars.

Many of the scholars so helped have become leading figures in the international academic community. Of the refugee scholars registered with the Society, 16 have received knighthoods; 16 have become Nobel Laureates; 71 Fellows or Foreign Members of the Royal Society; and 50, Fellows or Corresponding Fellows of the British Academy. These figures include offspring of early refugee scholars, now themselves distinguished academics.

In 1937 the AAC changed its name to the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL). After the War, when other refugee organizations felt no need to continue their work, the SPSL foresaw the possibility of future threats to academic freedom. The McCarthy era in the United States did not create the large numbers of academic exiles that been feared, but the uprising in Hungary in 1956 did result in the expulsion of many university teachers, and with these the Society was closely concerned. Because of these events, the Council decided to put itself on a permanent basis, and in 1959 it became incorporated as a charitable organization.

Since the War we have helped displaced and persecuted scholars from many countries, including South Africa and the USSR, and more recently academics who have suffered as a result of political changes in Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, Brazil, Biafra, Bangladesh, Chile, Argentina, Zambia, the former Rhodesia, Uruguay, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq and Turkey.

Many large groups of refugees have been brought to this country with government help (Ugandans, Chileans, Vietnamese). The numbers of displaced academics within these groups has varied considerably, but there have always been some. Most have come from Latin America, where military coups have been accompanied by savage military intervention in the universities. In Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and El Salvador, whole faculties and departments were closed down and hundreds of distinguished academics dismissed, imprisoned without charge, or sent into exile. The situation in Argentina and Uruguay has now changed for the better and exiles have been able to return. But unfortunately what the SPSL anticipated at the end of the War has certainly come about, and there are few signs that the general situation will be permanently improved in the foreseeable future.

PRESENT NEEDS

The Society's funds do not allow it to help more than a small number of displaced academics at any one time. These are the few who manage to arrive in this country, often with the help of British colleagues, or those who suddenly become refugees while working or studying here, as a result of changes at home. While there are today many other bodies concerned with human rights and refugees, with which the Society co-operates (Amnesty International, Writers and Scholars International, World University Service, and the British Refugee Council), the SPSL remains the only one concerned specifically with refugee scholars. In consequence cases are frequently referred to us by the other bodies. We cannot now meet the demand.

What the Society urgently requires are free funds which can meet the needs of refugee scholars from the moment they have been offered facilities at universities or research institutes here. When refugees arrive they need help immediately, not after months of waiting, nor at the start of the next academic year. Scholars who have suffered total disruption of their lives, as well as of their careers and academic pursuits, through dismissal, imprisonment, and in some cases torture, need help as quickly as possible to re-establish themselves. The SPSL is an organization which can act speedily, and this has always been its strength. Now we know of more people than we can help. More particularly cut-backs in higher education mean that we have to support people for longer periods than formerly while they look for permanent employment, which may have to be sought in some other country. In addition, fees for doctoral studies are now much higher than they were.

Covenant forms may be obtained from, or donations sent to the Secretary of the Society.

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Compiled by Douglas Matthews

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