

# carra

**DEFENDING  
ACADEMIC FREEDOM  
SINCE 1933**

*“Without  
such freedom  
there would  
have been  
no Shakespeare  
no Goethe  
no Newton  
no Faraday  
no Pasteur  
and no Lister.”*

**Albert Einstein**

Royal Albert Hall fundraiser  
5th October 1933

**80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

# 1933–2013

## AAC (1933-1936)

Academic Assistance Council

## SPSL (1936-1999)

Incorporated as the  
*Society for the Protection of  
Science and Learning*

## CARA (1999)

Renamed *Council for Assisting  
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### CARA Objectives

To assist academics, who have been, or are, or are at risk of being, subject to discrimination, persecution, suffering or violence on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, to relieve needs among them and their dependants and ensure that their specialist knowledge and abilities can continue to be used for the benefit of the public.

To advance education by supporting academics and their educational institutions in countries where their continuing work is at risk or compromised, to ensure that such academics and institutions can continue to fulfil their critical role as educators for the public benefit.

# Why CARA Matters

SINCE MAY 1933, when Hitler closed the universities of Germany to Jews, the demands on CARA have never stopped. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 precipitated attacks on the universities and the professions in that unfortunate country which continue to this day; the restrictions under the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe threaten the work of universities and the lives of their scholars; now there are problems for Syrian scholars both in Britain and abroad. The need goes on.

CARA will always have work to do in the UK for scholars forced to seek asylum or a period of sanctuary when it has become impossible for them to remain free and continue their work at home. Increasingly we have begun collaborating with partners abroad to help threatened scholars to stay in their own homes or close to their own countries to improve the chances for them to continue their teaching and research and keep their institutions open. Every scholar lost to a university means the loss of more than his or her own research; it means groups of students deprived of teaching year on year. It is a personal tragedy, but also a tragedy for the future of that society.

CARA was created by British universities with a common aim, and we continue to depend on our strong partnerships through the CARA Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network. From the beginning our universities understood the importance of support: 'We ask for means to prevent the waste of exceptional abilities exceptionally trained', as Sir William Beveridge and others wrote in the Founding Document of 22 May 1933. They continue to be moved by the deadly dangers and the suffering which their colleagues and families may have endured when pursuing the

same daily tasks of teaching and research. They can understand the internal debate when a Lecturer realises that self-censorship has become a necessity, now that a secret policeman is a regular part of the audience. Is it better to give your students at least the 'safe' half of the lecture and keep your job? Or risk everything and continue to speak out? Or to leave? In both the latter cases, your students lose and a generation grows up with a faulty and inadequate understanding.

And what about the rest of us? In a 'globalised' world we cannot afford to be ignorant of any part or region or to base our analyses on false 'facts'. If self-censorship and fear take over a whole university system, the rest of us will have less and less on which to rely for our understanding. If the work of universities is corrupted or silenced, where will the truth come from? And how will it be preserved and communicated to the future? Our common intellectual house will be built on sand.

The fate of academics and researchers threatened by dangerous or tyrannical regimes is a personal tragedy and a matter of deep concern to all of us in universities. But it is also a profound threat to society as a whole. That is why CARA's work matters today and why we continue to need your support.



**ANNE LONSDALE CBE**  
CARA Chair

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**CARA's life changing work owes everything to those who have supported it over the years – individuals, foundations, agencies and institutions.**

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### CARA Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network

AIM To facilitate cooperation and collaboration between UK higher education institutions in support of refugee and threatened academics and in defence and promotion of academic and university freedoms worldwide.

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**CARA remains indebted to the Network Universities and their individual faculty members for the extraordinary and generous resource they provide in support of CARA's work.**

### CARA Publications

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### Archives

The AAC/SPSL/CARA history is well documented, with catalogued records (1933-1956) held in our archives at the Bodleian Library in Oxford: <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/online/modern/spsl/spsl.htm>. These include the personal files of, and correspondence with, those helped over that period, as well as correspondence with other relevant organisations and government bodies. Post 1956 documents are yet to be catalogued, although a box list is available. A number of files, digitised by the Holocaust Memorial Museum, are also available on request on CD. Please contact [info.cara@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:info.cara@lsbu.ac.uk) or 00 44 (0) 20 7021 0880 for further information.

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**Address:** CARA, London South Bank Technopark,  
90 London Road, London SE1 6LN  
**Telephone:** +44 (0)20 7021 0880  
**Fax:** +44 (0)20 7021 0881  
**Website:** [www.academic-refugees.org/](http://www.academic-refugees.org/)  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/CARA1933](https://www.facebook.com/CARA1933)  
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*CARA is extremely grateful for the support of the family of Albert Neuberger*

**Editors:** Kate Robertson, Annabel Stafford  
**Designer:** Lizzie Ballantyne, [www.lizziebdesign.com](http://www.lizziebdesign.com)  
**President:** Professor Malcolm Grant CBE  
**Chair:** Anne Lonsdale CBE  
**Executive Director:** Stephen Wordsworth CMG IVO



# Origins

**PROFESSOR SHULA MARKS OBE FBA**  
Chair 1993–2004, Council Member 1983–2012

THE HISTORY OF CARA dates back to 1933, when it was set up in urgent response to the rising number of academics fleeing Nazi oppression in Central Europe. During a visit to Vienna early that year, William Beveridge, then director of the London School of Economics, was horrified to learn of the dismissal of Jewish teachers from German universities. Vienna offered a refuge for many escaping Nazi pursuit, but neither Austria nor the rest of Central Europe would be safe for long.

Back in the UK, Beveridge rallied academics to support persecuted academics, lobbied government to permit their entry to the UK, and formed the Academic Assistance Council (AAC) to raise funds for academic refugees and persuade institutions to offer them employment or provide support for their continued research. In its early days, the exiled physicist, Leo Szilard, better known later as ‘the man behind the [atomic] bomb’, lent urgency to discussions, and travelled far and wide to meet academic refugees, coordinate various rescue groups in Britain and Europe, and publicise the Association’s objectives. As importantly, he brought the redoubtable Esther (Tess) Simpson to the organisation. For hundreds if not thousands of refugee scholars, she was the Society.

The AAC was founded in the context of economic depression, social and political turmoil, and pervasive hostility to Jews in Britain. However, its image was greatly enhanced in October 1933 when Albert Einstein singled out the great significance of its work at a crowded public meeting at the Royal Albert Hall, which it had helped organise.

Perhaps even more important in gaining acceptance for the AAC was the support it had from the Royal Society. Here, A V Hill’s vision and tactical skill, as well as his central position in the British scientific community, were crucial. He understood that it was not only individual scholars and scientists who were threatened, but also the very existence of western civilisation and learning.

It was through Hill’s endeavours that the AAC changed its name to the Society for the Protection of

Science and Learning (SPSL) in 1936, transforming it into ‘a permanent organisation for the defence of core academic values’, making possible its longer-term survival. By 1939 the AAC/SPSL had raised £100,000 from individual donors and universities, the rough equivalent of £4 million today.

As a group, the first beneficiaries were remarkable. Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire had been at the forefront of scholarship in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. Their cosmopolitan cities were centres of European art and music. The refugees from Nazi Europe thus brought with them a rich intellectual and cultural legacy. Indeed, over a hundred of the academic refugees assisted by the SPSL were subsequently elected Fellows of The British Academy and The Royal Society. Some eighteen were awarded Nobel Prizes and, as many, knighthoods.

During this fraught period, other organisations in Britain and the USA were also raising funds to help persecuted academics, but the SPSL stood out on account of its profoundly humanitarian sentiment. The potential benefit to American universities of renowned European academics was not a detail that went unnoticed to many committees and sponsors in the USA; many placed limits on age and only considered applications from distinguished scholars. For the SPSL, self-interest and personal gain were not driving factors. It actively sought positions for refugee scholars, and put faith in young academics who had not yet shown their true talent.

It was often the case that only after several years in exile would the brilliance of a beneficiary be revealed. One applicant was famously described as ‘a third-class chemist, but a first-class violinist!’ It was Ernst Chain, who later shared the Nobel Prize for work on penicillin.

As well as practical assistance, the SPSL provided vital emotional support. The remarkable Tess, who worked for nearly forty years as Assistant Secretary and then Secretary, offered this to thousands of refugee scholars. In Lord Ashby’s words, she offered ‘immediate and evident empathy toward each individual refugee’.

By the end of WWII, over 2,600 scholars from the heartlands of Europe had been assisted. However, the Society’s battle for academic freedom and assistance to refugee scholars did not end in May 1945. Contrary to expectation, a new era of oppression dawned during the Cold War. Civil war in Greece, the expansion of Soviet control in Eastern Europe and the Russian

invasion of Hungary in 1956, all sparked fresh waves of those forced into exile.

In the 1960s, academic refugees from beyond the bounds of Europe came to the UK in increasing numbers. Many young, anti-apartheid activists escaping persecution in South Africa did not have the same academic experience as their European predecessors, nor did many of those fleeing Chile after the military coup of 1973 or later arrivals from repression in the Soviet bloc. All had a contribution to make to British culture, politics and learning, and the SPSL adapted to the new circumstances, redefining its role to assist a new generation of exiled scholars and scientists.

Having escaped unimaginable evils in their homelands, academic refugees often faced hardship and discrimination in exile. Side by side with the glittering stories of discovery and world renown are painful accounts of persecution and social dislocation. They often found themselves marginalised in their new country. Anti-Semitism and racism existed in Britain, and many British academics felt threatened by the competition the new arrivals might pose. Woman refugee academics faced even greater difficulties. Vivid and moving testimonies, from the success stories to those who were less fortunate, recount the double-edged sword of exile to Britain. The SPSL never wavered in compassion.

Despite their often daunting experiences in the UK, these academic refugees, like their predecessors, strove to keep the spirit of learning alive, often in the hope of one day returning home and contributing their new skills to post-conflict restoration. Assistance from the AAC and SPSL played no minor role, but the achievements of the refugees stemmed from their own talent, courage, and determination. In the 21st century, CARA continues the mission, by providing fellowships, grants, solidarity and sanctuary to academics threatened in climates of oppression for their pursuit of intellectual liberty. It has also embraced a new and vital role, helping committed academics in often corrupt, collapsing, highly politicised and violent environments to remain in country to maintain their critical role as educators of the next generation. New technologies have enabled new strategies to honour its founders’ determination to defend not only refugee academics, but also the very foundations of science and learning.

*Based on the ‘Introduction’ to In Defence of Learning, 2011, OUP (British Academy), abridged with the help of Stephanie Stafford.*

Compiled by Joseph Buckley

**Rear:** Auguste Piccard, Émile Henriot, Paul Ehrenfest, Edouard Herzen, Théophile de Donder, Erwin Schrodinger, Jules-Emile Vershaffelt, Wolfgang Pauli, Werner Heisenberg, Ralph Howard Fowler, Leon Brillouin.  
**Middle:** Peter Debye, Martin Knudson, W Lawrence Bragg, Hans Kramer, Paul Dirac, Arthur Compton, Louis de Broglie, Max Born, Niels Bohr  
**Front:** Irving Langmuir, Max Planck, Marie Curie, Hendrik Lorentz, Albert Einstein, Pierre Langevin, Charles Eugene Guye, C T R Wilson, Owen W Richardson

**SIR WILLIAM LAWRENCE BRAGG**, the Australian-born British physicist, and his father William Henry Bragg are the only father and son to have shared a Nobel Physics Prize (1915). William Henry Bragg became an AAC founding signatory.



# Memories of Tess Simpson

Assistant Secretary: AAC 1933–1936, SPSL 1936–1944

SPSL Secretary: 1951–1978 (in voluntary capacity 1951–1966)

**PROFESSOR PAUL BRODA**  
Council Member since 1981

THERE WAS NOTHING INEVITABLE in the fact that in Britain in 1933 a body arose that did so much for generations of academic refugees. The contributions to the origins of the AAC and then SPSL of ‘great men’ including Beveridge, Szilard, Rutherford, A V Hill and Walter Adams are described elsewhere. Equally important was the initially unsung role of Esther (Tess) Simpson, who devoted most of her long life to the cause, who made the organisation function, and who, for the grantees, was their trusted human contact. No-one is indispensable, it is said, but she came close. And yet, because of her self-effacing style, not much about Tess was known until late in her life, when a book of conversations with her was published by Ray Cooper, and she received an OBE and then Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Leeds and London.

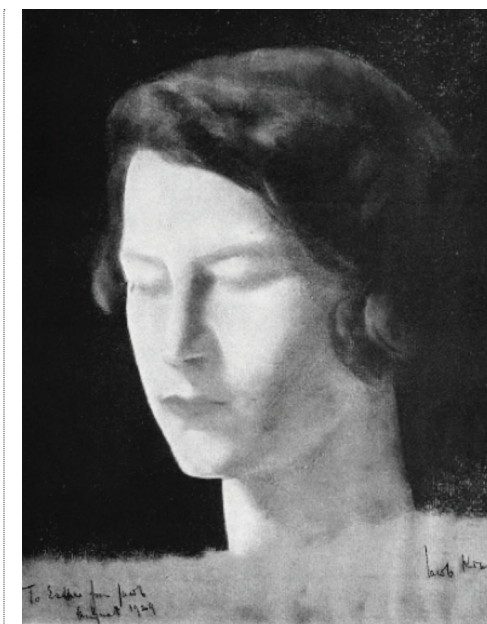
Tess was born in 1903 into an immigrant Jewish family in Leeds, where she graduated in French and German in 1924. From 1925 to 1927 she worked successively in Breslau and Paris, and then for The Fellowship of Reconciliation in London (1927-28) and Vienna (1928-33). Having just started work with the YWCA in Geneva, she returned to London in July 1933 to help establish AAC, typically accepting a drop in wage. Wherever she went she took her violin. Playing chamber music was a vital emotional outlet and a means of making contacts that led to many friendships: ‘The people who were losing their jobs were the same sort as those I had played chamber music with in Vienna’.

Her background informed her attitudes to Britain and to immigrants, especially refugees. In 1950 she wrote: ‘The human individual is what matters to me, not “humanity” and certainly not any state which purports to speak for “humanity”’. My parents were immigrants to this country, and they never assimilated. I was born here. By virtue of my background I was able to have a more objective view of the country than others, and

this was strengthened by my living in other countries. England is full of faults, and these hurt me because I feel part of England, in spite of my parents’ origin. At first I accepted my environment by imitation as all children do, but later I accepted it consciously as the milieu which of all those I had experienced best served my faith, viz. the establishment of decent, friendly relations between man and man, the respect of each individual, the tolerance of the unfamiliar. ... When I say I feel part of England, it isn’t out of any feeling of 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.’

The AAC and SPSL archives, held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, show the scale and pressure of the work involved in assisting the stream of refugees from Germany and then Austria and Czechoslovakia. Tess and colleagues dealt with Government and Universities on a case by case basis. The mood in Britain was one of only qualified tolerance and sympathy, in part because it was felt that jobs would be taken. Hundreds were helped, but in some ways her finest hour came with the internments of ‘enemy aliens’ in 1939 and again in 1940. She wrote: ‘I faced one or two anxious moments last week. One naturally has something to worry about when one has a family of six hundred.’

So what was it that made Tess so very special for so many? At an event for her in 1992, Max Perutz said: ‘If Tess had not taken the job, would someone else have done it as well? She or he might have done it as conscientiously, but I cannot think of anyone else with the same combination of warm affection for the individual scholars and iron toughness in the face of officialdom.’ At the same event, Ernst Gombrich, another refugee, drew on her musical interests: ‘In chamber music you cannot and need not always play the first fiddle. Any instrument will sustain the



Portrait of Tess by Jacob Kramer, Leeds 1929

structure the composer wished the players to realise. Who knows? Maybe it was indeed in playing chamber music that Esther acquired that supreme skill of switching so effortlessly from playing a subordinate accompaniment to taking the lead, only to submerge herself again in the progressive modulations of the score.’

Her ‘family’ extended to future generations, including me. When I went through her unsorted personal papers, held by Leeds University, I found that her Quaker beliefs had led her to support numerous other causes from her meagre salary.

1939 to 1944 were spent in Cambridge. Although Tess returned to London to work as Secretary of the Society for Visiting Scientists, a government-sponsored body wound up in 1966, she maintained her SPSL role pro bono throughout. In 1956 events in Hungary triggered another influx of refugees to which Tess responded. In 1966, members of her ‘family’ ran an appeal that was sufficiently successful for her to make a down-payment on a flat, for the first time, from where she ran SPSL until 1978. Poignantly, when she died in 1996, she left the flat and other assets to SPSL; this has been of enormous value to the continuation of SPSL and its successor CARA.

**PROFESSOR HENDRIK LORENTZ**, the Dutch physicist awarded the 1902 Nobel Physics Prize with Pieter Zeeman, received a graveside oration in 1928 from Sir Ernest Rutherford, President of the Royal Society, who became the first AAC President (1933–1937).

**PROFESSOR ERWIN SCHRÖDINGER**, the Austrian physicist, shared the 1933 Nobel Physics Prize with Paul Dirac. Appalled at the treatment of Jews, he was enticed to Oxford by Frederick Lindemann, founder of the Clarendon Laboratory. Working closely with the AAC, Lindemann was instrumental in securing funding and opportunities for Jewish scientists.

**PROFESSOR ALBERT EINSTEIN**, the German-born theoretical physicist, left Germany in 1932. He gave the address at the AAC inaugural public meeting at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on 5th October 1933.

He worked closely with Leo Szilard (Hungarian-born physicist and another key figure in the setting up of the AAC). Einstein advised several colleagues, including his good friend Max Born, to leave Germany in 1933.

**PROFESSOR MAX BORN**, the German physicist and mathematician, fled in 1933 to Britain following removal from post, where he became a staunch SPSL supporter. He was awarded the 1954 Nobel Physics Prize for his pioneering work in quantum mechanics.

**PROFESSOR NIELS BOHR**, the Danish physicist awarded the 1922 Nobel Physics Prize, was elected SPSL corresponding member in Denmark in 1938. He sheltered numerous physicists at his Institute for Theoretical Physics in Copenhagen, including Otto Frisch. Bohr described Rutherford, with whom he worked in Manchester in 1912, as ‘a second father’.

**PROFESSOR WERNER HEISENBERG**, the German theoretical physicist awarded the 1932 Nobel Physics Prize, studied under Max Born and became his assistant in 1923. The following year he joined Bohr in Copenhagen, lecturing in Theoretical Physics before returning to Germany. Although he spoke out against the treatment of Jewish colleagues, he remained in Germany, along with fellow physicist Max Planck.

**PROFESSOR MAX PLANCK**, the German theoretical physicist awarded the 1918 Nobel Physics Prize, also remained in Germany. As the Kaiser Wilhelm Society President, he was able to protect Jewish staff and reportedly told Hitler during a private meeting that he was ‘doing enormous damage to the German universities by expelling our Jewish colleagues.’

*Institut International de Physique Solvay, Leopold Park.*

# Legacy: Music, Art History, Medicine

## SPSL Rescue of Musicians from Nazi Europe

**PROFESSOR DAVID JOSEPHSON**  
Professor of Music, Brown University

WALTER ADAMS, General Secretary of the SPSL, recalled a conversation with a colleague and the young Bonn music scholar Leo Schrade: 'Neither of us could then see any action which could be immediately taken to help him because his specialty was so limited and there is so little interest in Musicology in this country or the British dominions that we could not believe a post could be found for him even if he were temporarily subsidized here while learning English.' It illustrates the dilemma the SPSL faced in trying to assist the forty-odd musicians from Nazi and Fascist Europe who had sought its help. Only a few were found positions in Britain, and the heroic efforts of the SPSL to place others across the seas were all too often compromised by constrained financial resources, British immigration policy, or the limitations of registrants.

Those who were settled in Britain did much to enrich the nation's cultural life. Max Rostal left an indelible mark during his fifteen years at the Guildhall School. A violin teacher whose influence earned him the CBE, he counted among his students members of the Amadeus Quartet; his one amateur student was Esther Simpson, the tireless SPSL Assistant Secretary. The extraordinary scholar and composer Egon Wellesz settled in Oxford as a Fellow of Lincoln College, becoming a Fellow of the British Academy and CBE. The avant-garde Catalan composer Roberto Gerhard settled in Cambridge, also earning a CBE, while the conservative Austrian composer Hans Gál, who lectured at Edinburgh University, earned an honorary degree and OBE. Ernst Hermann Meyer struggled to find occasional work as a composer and conductor during his fifteen years in Britain, surviving in good part thanks to the SPSL. He returned to East Germany, where as a committed communist

he directed the Humboldt University musicology institute, and presided over the musical life of that grim society; the sole residue of his time in Britain was a book on early English chamber music. The eminent ethnomusicologist Klaus Wachsmann studied at SOAS. He spent two decades as curator of the Uganda Museum, returning to work at the Wellcome Foundation before fifteen years teaching in America, and finally retiring to Wiltshire. The prodigious private scholar Otto Deutsch spent the summer of 1939 in Cambridge waiting for an American visa to allow him

*Those who were settled in Britain did much to enrich the nation's cultural life.*

to take a position at the New York Public Library that never arrived; his sojourn extended to thirteen years during which he produced invaluable documentary biographies of Schubert, Handel, and Mozart and the standard thematic catalogue of Schubert's music. After returning to Vienna he maintained an undying affection for Britain, dedicating the Schubert catalogue to the SPSL 'as a token of gratitude' and the Handel biography 'to England, his second Fatherland,' even translating 'The Mikado' into German. The SPSL had been unstinting in its support, helping him with visas, working for his release from internment on the Isle of Man, finding him jobs, and providing him with £1152, a breathtaking sum at the time.

Of those who went to the United States, the renowned scholar Alfred Einstein received an SPSL grant for the first of his six years in London before taking a position at Smith College in Massachusetts. The SPSL assisted Schrade by gathering testimonials on his behalf and paying for his passage to America for an interview at Yale, where he would teach for two decades. It aided another rising scholar en route to America, Manfred Bukofzer, supporting his wife with funds and lodgings while she waited for a US visa to allow her to join him.

For others the SPSL could do nothing. A proposed triple appointment at the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, and the Victoria and Albert Museum for the distinguished ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs led nowhere. Sachs went instead to the Ethnological Museum in Paris, and then on to New York and a triple appointment at New York University, Columbia, and the New York Public Library. The SPSL attempted in vain to help the young conductor and pianist Fritz Jahoda make a career in Britain before he crossed the Atlantic and taught at the City College of New York. It also tried to help the composer Robert Hemried sell his manuscripts, market his music, even tried to find him students, all for naught; he eventually found a position at Detroit University. The struggles of so many of these musicians can be heard in the words of the pianist Henry Jolles, who, expelled from Germany, spent the rest of his life in Brazil: "Often I think that I died in 1933, at the latest in 1939, and I am surviving myself."

## AAC and Art History

**PROFESSOR CHARLES HOPE**  
Former Director of the Warburg Institute

ALTHOUGH THE MAIN PURPOSE of the Academic Assistance Council was to help individual German academics find new posts, soon after its foundation document was published in May 1933, it received an appeal from an institution in Hamburg known in English as the Warburg Institute. This had developed out of the remarkable private library of the art historian Aby Warburg, a member of a wealthy banking family, and had become closely associated with Hamburg University. But its activity had come to a halt in April 1933, when all Jewish employees, including academics, were deprived of their government jobs, and university students were told not to use the Institute. Even more threatening was the wave of book burning which occurred across Germany on 10 May.

By mid-June a member of the Institute's staff, Edgar Wind, had made contact with the AAC, and in the following month its Honorary Secretary, Professor C S Gibson, travelled to Hamburg with William Constable, the Director of the recently-founded Courtauld Institute of Art. In October they were followed by Sir Denison Ross, Director of the School of Oriental and African Studies, and towards the end of that month Lord Lee of Fareham was able to write to the Director of the Warburg Institute, Fritz Saxl, inviting him to bring the library to Britain for three years. The idea of a loan had been devised as a means of placating the Nazi authorities, who agreed to the proposal on the condition there was no adverse publicity. Two weeks after permission was granted, the matter would have been handled by Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda, and would certainly have been refused. But thanks to the quick action of the AAC, the library and six members of staff were transferred to London.

Until 1936, when the German authorities agreed to the extension of the loan, the Institute was housed rent-free in Thames House. Soon afterwards it moved to premises belonging to the University of London, and survived largely thanks to support from Samuel Courtauld and the American branch of the Warburg family. Because of the prestige of the Institute and its staff, Courtauld and Lord Lee saw it as a valuable complement to the Courtauld Institute, the first place in Britain to offer degrees in art history. The family, by contrast, hoped in time to transfer the Institute to America, but this proved impossible as long as Max Warburg and his family remained in Hamburg, because it would have involved breaking the loan agreement made with the German authorities. During the War private funding was exhausted, but R A Butler, who was Courtauld's son-in-law, made funds available to the University Grants Committee to pay for the Institute's incorporation in London University.

Although the Institute was always chronically short of funds in the 1930s, it served as a focus for a number of German and Austrian art historians who were able to survive on grants, in some cases from the AAC, on the generosity of private individuals and on limited freelance work. Saxl, together with two Warburg Institute research fellows, Otto Kurz and Ernst Gombrich, taught for the Courtauld Institute, while Edgar Wind was partly employed by University

medicine and music, as well as humanitarian work. The Royal Academy of Music Bach Cantata Series and the Wigmore Hall International Song Competition are just two Foundation-supported initiatives. Sir Ralph is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music.

### Professor Gustav Born FRS

A remarkably musical family, the Born sitting room in Göttingen housed two grand pianos. Gustav's father, the physicist Max Born, was a pianist of concert standard, and his assistant Werner Heisenberg yet another talented pianist. Heisenberg, an adopted member of the household, visited almost daily for meals and music, as well as for work. Gustav's very first memory, aged two, is of lying on his back under the pianos whilst Max and Werner played Bach and Schubert, which he describes as a "heavenly feast from above". By the late 1920s Jewish academics were suffering under growing Nazi influence. Gustav notes that one of the last 'normal' events at Göttingen University was



Karl Popper (AAC grantee, 1935) and Ernest Gombrich

College with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. Kurz was also supported by Denis Mahon, who shared his interest in Bolognese painting. Other scholars associated with the Institute who received AAC grants included Hugo Buchthal, Alphons Barb, Gertrud Bing, Adelheid Heimann, Rudolf Wittkower and Raymond Klibansky, as well as Erwin Panofsky, who, like many other art historians, later found more secure employment in the USA.

Other refugee art historians helped by the AAC were not closely associated with the Warburg Institute, either for personal reasons or because of very different interests. The best known were Nikolaus Pevsner, who subsisted on various short-term jobs in publishing and

*Thanks to the quick action of the AAC, the library and six members of staff were transferred to London.*

education until well into the war, Johannes Wilde, later an influential member of staff of the Courtauld Institute, who was initially supported by a wealthy former pupil, and Friedrich Antal, who was able to obtain some teaching at the Courtauld thanks to Anthony Blunt, who was sympathetic to his Marxist approach.

Almost all the art historians active in Britain before the 1930s were self-taught and employed either in museums or in the art trade. The new arrivals brought new approaches to the subject, a new kind of scholarly rigour and a wide range of expertise that was to be decisive for the development of art history here after the Second World War. A very similar development occurred, for much the same reasons, in the United States. But in Britain, the contribution of

the AAC, although modest in financial terms, seems to have been decisive in persuading many scholars to remain, rather than crossing the Atlantic.

## Medical Refugees

**PROFESSOR PAUL WEINDLING**  
Wellcome Trust Professor in the History of Medicine

IT WAS AROUND 1990 that an eminent émigré pharmacologist Hermann (Hugh) Blaschko thrust into my hands a collection of letters on refugee doctors and medical scientists. Hugh explained that during WWII he had taught Cambridge medical students the advanced techniques in biochemistry of his former German mentor Otto Warburg, as well as volunteering for the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL), then evacuated to Cambridge. There, prompted and informed by Blaschko, the MP for Cambridge University, physiologist A V Hill, raised in Parliament the interment of refugee scientists and the nonsense that refugee doctors were unable to work at a time of national emergency. In fact, Hill had been involved in refugee assistance since 1933, and was a stalwart of the AAC/SPSL. He had been awarded the 1922 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with the German Jewish physiologist Otto Meyerhof, and his hospitality to German researchers had evolved into efforts to provide refuge – so nurturing a flock of future FRSS, and a couple of Nobel Prize-winners (and incidentally, in a humanitarian gesture, taking in my mother as young Kindertransportee from Vienna). Yet Hill had a wider vision: along with other medical reformers, he saw medical refugees as a way of modernising British medicine, placing medical education and practice on a properly scientific basis. He also saw how refugee practitioners could provide Britain with well trained clinical specialists.

The AAC was initially perplexed by applications from refugee doctors. Unlike their British colleagues, German and Austrian physicians often combined clinical practice with fundamental research work. Some like Hans Krebs were relieved to be liberated from doing routine clinical analyses to be able to carry out research on fundamental metabolic problems. Others like the neurologist Ludwig Guttmann found

## SCIENTIST AND MUSICIAN

Annabel Stafford in conversation with:

### Sir Ralph Kohn FRS

An eminent scientist with a distinguished business career, Sir Ralph Kohn has also found the time to develop a remarkable music career. Originally from Leipzig, his father moved the family to Amsterdam



Sir Ralph accompanied by Ernst Chain on the piano

in 1933 following the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor. It was there that Ralph began to study the violin, influenced by the young Yehudi Menuhin: "In Germany and Austria, playing chamber music was part of everyday life." This peaceful childhood period came to an abrupt end at lunchtime on 14 May 1940 when the family fled their home, boarding the last boat before Holland capitulated. The Germans entered Amsterdam six hours later.

Ralph was twelve when the Kohns arrived in Liverpool, destitute refugees. They settled in Salford where his passion for music continued to develop, although no longer playing an instrument. It was not until fourteen years later, in 1954, when a Charter Travelling Fellowship allowed him to join Daniel Bovet at the Istituto Superiore di Sanità in Rome that he started singing lessons with Maestro Manlio Marcantoni.

Sir Ralph's lifelong friendship with Ernst Chain also began at the Istituto. He recounts an early career dilemma faced by Chain and the advice proffered by

Sir Hans Krebs "Ernst, you're an even better musician than scientist, so why don't you leave science alone." Ironically, Chain was awarded the 1945 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, eight years before Krebs received his.

Sir Ralph also recalls enlisting the support of Marcantoni to meet with his great idol Gigli. The meeting was in Gigli's magnificent villa, ostensibly for a medical consultation, but Gigli asked to hear him sing. Ralph chose the aria from *Don Pasquale* 'Bella siccome un angelo' receiving high praise before Gigli sang it back to him, noting points for consideration. Ralph still considers his voice to be one of the purest he has ever heard.

Over the years, Ernst Chain and Ralph gave numerous recitals. "Music has been integral to my life, although it has had to fit around my work." Sir Ralph has recorded 16 CDs accompanied by leading pianists, including the acclaimed Graham Johnson. In 1991 he set up the Kohn Foundation to support science,

a guest lecture by Ernest Rutherford in 1932.

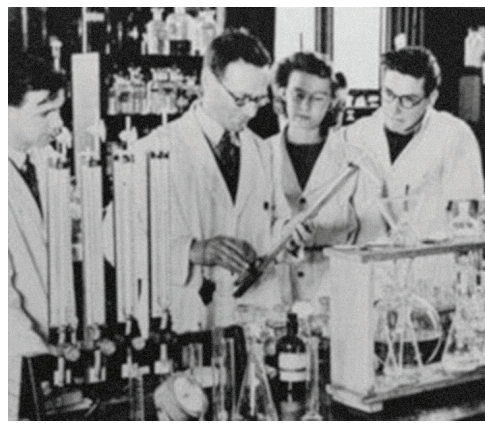
In 1879, Gustav's grandfather, Professor of Embryology at the University of Breslau, and Head of the Orchestral Society, induced Breslau University to award Brahms an honorary doctorate. In appreciation, Brahms composed *The Academic Festival Overture*. Visiting musicians would stay with them and artists such as Brahms, Liszt, Bruch, Joachim and Richter inscribed dedicated musical notations to his grandmother in their guest book.

Full of wonderful anecdotes, Gustav recounts how Albert Einstein, a good violinist, played with the great pianist Artur Schnabel during an Atlantic crossing. Einstein's failure to keep up led the frustrated Schnabel to cry out 'Come on, come on! Can't you count!' Gustav is another in this extraordinary group of scientists come musicians. A flautist of concert standard, as a PhD student he toured France in a quintet with Kenneth Leighton. Leighton composed and dedicated his *Serenade in C* to him.

### Eva Loeffler OBE (née Guttmann)

The daughter of the neurologist Ludwig Guttmann, Eva was six when in 1939 her family fled Germany with the help of the SPSL. They were forbidden to leave with money or valuables, only their furniture, huge pieces – wholly ill-suited to their tiny new semi-detached home in Oxford – but which included an upright piano. Their Oxford home became a centre for academics in exile, including Ernst Chain. He epitomised a group of émigré scientists who were also accomplished musicians. Eva remembers how on visits he always headed straight for their piano. Abandoning homework and rushing downstairs to hear him, she would sit with others squeezed around the huge dining table that occupied most of the room. Despite her young age, Chain's playing stands firmly in her memory.

*Music remained central to Chain's life. Whilst at Imperial College where he lived at the recently renamed Sir Ernst Chain Building, his musical soirées earned him the nickname of 'fiddler on the roof'.*



Sir Hans Krebs with students at the University of Sheffield

pure lab work constraining. But opposition by the BMA meant that with few exceptions (an Italian, or fortuitously held British degree) the refugees could not practise. The SPSL assisted an elite like the venerable pharmacologist Otto Loewi, or indeed Sigmund Freud who was elected in 1939 to The Royal Society. As the refugee emergency deepened, the AAC widened its remit to support clinicians. Hill exercised much ingenuity – the Berlin pharmacologist Herxheimer was appointed Highgate School doctor, where Hill was governor, so his son could be educated. The SPSL was represented in quota schemes to allow Austrian doctors and medically qualified dental surgeons, and Czechoslovak doctors to travel to England. Hill contributed to securing recognition of all foreign medical degrees from January 1941, a far-sighted move that enabled so-called ‘friendly alien doctors’ to contribute to the war effort, and eventually to settle in the UK. Ironically, as German universities were cancelling the degrees of refugees, these were being recognised in the UK.

The SPSL supported leading specialists like the psychiatrist Willy Mayer-Gross. The modernisers associated with the Medical Research Council and university research laboratories, saw the scientifically

## LUDWIG GUTTMANN: FATHER OF THE PARALYMPICS

Jeremy Seabrook, Author and Journalist

The story of German neurologist, Ludwig Guttman, captures the wider legacy of all those helped. In the 1940s, as head of the now world famous Stoke



Sir Ludwig Guttman FRS with 1948 competitors

Mandeville National Spinal Injuries Centre, he revolutionised the treatment of spinal injuries. With his energy, compassion and commitment, he overthrew the regime of fatalism and introduced a regime of exercise and discipline, which permitted a degree of activity never before contemplated for those previously written off by society. In 1948, Ludwig arranged an archery competition for injured servicemen to coincide with the last London Olympics. Over the years, his Stoke Mandeville games attracted competitors with spinal injuries from across the globe and were finally adopted by the International Olympic Games Committee in 1984 as the Paralympic Games. Knighted in 1966, last year his triumph reached its height when as part of London’s 2012 Olympics he was honoured as the ‘Father of the Paralympic Games’.

His daughter Eva, who volunteered in his first 1948 Stoke Mandeville wheelchair games, was appointed Mayor of the London 2012 Paralympic Village and awarded an OBE for her services to disability sport.

trained refugees as an opportunity to confront the British medical profession with its deficiencies. Britain also gained some 42 biochemists, illustrious figures such as Hans Krebs, Max Perutz and Albert Neuberger. Clinically relevant disciplines like pharmacology also saw an upswing in the quality of research. Blaschko exemplified this with his fundamental work on the role of sympathetic nerves in stress reactions.

During the 1930s, medical refugees encountered a hardening of professional restrictions at a time when the British medical profession was under pressure to reform the science, funding and practice of medicine. The SPSL had a strong medical lobby, as its Treasurer was the medical statistician Major Greenwood, and Samson Wright of the Middlesex Hospital was a staunch supporter. The historian of medicine Charles Singer worked tirelessly behind the scenes, and the whole scheme of refugee assistance was very much his brain child. Overall, I have identified 5391 physicians, dental surgeons, nurses, psychotherapists and others involved in health care or research to date in a project covering 1930 to the immediate post-war aftermath.

## Britain gained illustrious figures such as Hans Krebs, Max Perutz and Albert Neuberger – who were all AAC beneficiaries

In a landmark address to the Royal Society in 2008, Sir Ralph Kohn spoke of ‘Britain’s gift’ in terms of its support of refugees. The correspondence between him and Blaschko explains the dynamic. British medical provision was in the throes of a major restructuring which defied the traditionalists and conservatives among the ‘medical establishment’.

AV Hill’s vision of the wholesale modernisation of British medical provision was ultimately to be fulfilled. Hugh Blaschko’s letters give insight into the humanity and kindness of Hill and the SPSL in assisting medical refugees in the modernisation of British medicine.

# Academic Dynasties

**MATTHEW REISZ**

*Times Higher Education Reporter and Features Writer  
Son of film director Karel Reisz, another ‘Hitler émigré’*

**NOW 91, GUSTAV BORN**, Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology at King’s College London, spent his early years in Göttingen, within a remarkable academic dynasty and community. His father was the legendary quantum physicist and Nobel laureate Max Born (1882-1970), one of the most distinguished of all the intellectual émigrés who found refuge in Britain after the Nazis came to power. Gustav’s paternal grandfather, another Gustav (1850-1900), did pioneering work on the function of the *corpus luteum* in ovulation – research which led to the discovery of the hormone progesterone and eventually the contraceptive pill. His mother’s grandfather, father and brother were professors of law, jurisprudence and theoretical biology.

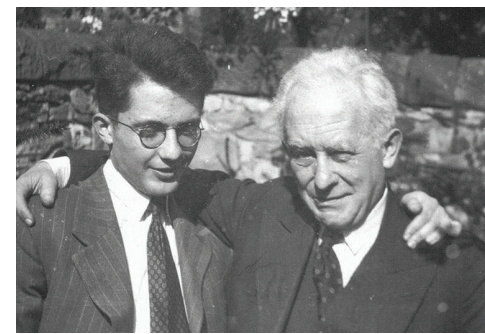
Equally remarkable was the stellar talent which surrounded Gustav when he was growing up in Germany. In a family memoir, he recalls an occasion in 1926 when his parents came back from a trip with an electric train set. But when they invited Max’s students and colleagues round for a party, the train did not work. World-class physicists such as Werner Heisenberg, Wolfgang Pauli and Enrico Fermi got out their notebooks and started calculating how to put things right, until Gustav’s unscientific mother Hedwig fell back on trial-and-error methods and made it work.

Max Born was already a renowned scientist when Hitler took power in January 1933 and the rector of his university put him on indefinite leave of absence. He followed the advice of his friend Albert Einstein to get out of Germany as soon as possible; so by May of that year father, mother and 11-year-old Gustav had gone to Italy. Just the previous month, William Beveridge had established CARA’s predecessor, the Academic Assistance Council (AAC), precisely in order to provide refuge for German academics who had lost their jobs. The great physicist Ernest Rutherford was soon appointed AAC president.

Rutherford intervened directly in this particular case by offering Max a lectureship at Cambridge. Since he had already spent two terms there after his PhD, he decided to accept. ‘The Born family owes everything to Britain,’ wrote Gustav, noting that ‘we can never be thankful enough that [Max] did not accept offers from Paris and Brussels, or even Belgrade about which a knowledgeable colleague warned him that he would find “nothing of what you were promised, but if you were prepared to sit every night in a restaurant drinking wine with the Minister of Education or the Minister of Finance, and if you have a gift for telling funny stories and keeping them amused, you might in due course get money, buildings, books and whatever else you want”...’

So Max went to Cambridge, where Hedwig had gone ahead to find a house. Father and son arrived after a night train through France in October 1933.

Though his eminence had smoothed his transition into British life, Max was very aware of friends and colleagues left behind and under threat in



Gustav and Max Born in Edinburgh c.1942

Nazi-controlled Central Europe and so, Gustav says, “fully supported the work of the AAC”. In 1936, Max became Tait Professor of Natural Philosophy, actually theoretical physics, at the University of Edinburgh. He and his family were naturalised British subjects in 1938. The turbulent times they had lived through gave Gustav a passionate interest in contemporary history. His father foresaw the coming war and said: “Why don’t you study medicine? That way, you won’t have to kill people and you’re less likely to get killed yourself.” Gustav followed his father’s advice, and after almost four years’ war service in the RAMC, he began his life’s work in biomedical research.

Gustav has written of his father’s ‘enormous influence on my outlook on the world: his hatred of arrogance, rigidity and mental and physical tyrannies, and the objectivity and generosity with which he approached uncertainties in life as well as in science’. Like many of the great generation of ‘Hitler’s émigrés’, Max spent the remainder of his career in this country, made a vast contribution to British intellectual life and headed a family notable for academic and other achievement. Both his daughters married academics. The older one Irene married Brinley Newton-John, who became a professor of German literature in Australia (and was father of the singer Olivia Newton-John). The younger daughter Margaret (Gritli) married Max’s pupil Maurice Pryce who became Wills Professor of Physics at Bristol University.

The academic line has also continued in the person of Gustav’s daughter Georgina. When she was growing up, she remembers “ambivalent feelings about the scientific life”, and a sense that she was “unable to imagine attaining anything like the eminence of my grandfather”. Although she trained as a cellist at the Royal College of Music, she eventually dropped out, played in a series of bands and spent a year at art school. It was at the age of 23 that she began a degree in anthropology at University College London. This led, via major fieldwork projects at the BBC and Pierre Boulez’s Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique in Paris and a comparative research programme on music and digitisation in the developing and developed world, to her Professorship of Music and Anthropology at the University of Oxford. While grateful to be “the lucky recipient of some good genes”, she also believes she had to “create a distance between what I did and what my grandfather and father do” in order to become “my own person intellectually”.

For the first academics whom the AAC, now CARA, helped to make new lives in Britain, many of them Jewish or otherwise subject to Nazi persecution, a return to Germany was for many years unthinkable. Today, academics still form close-knit dynasties and communities, and still suffer persecution which

leads them to flee their countries. Yet there are also significant differences in circumstances and attitudes, and in the ways that CARA now responds.

Dr Omar Ali (not his real name) comes from a family of academics, with brothers, uncles and cousins teaching subjects ranging from physics to financial management, physiology to fine art, in both Iraq and Iran. He also possesses a good deal of the status that accrues in Iraq to the grandson of a celebrated imam and lecturer in Islamic law.

At the start of his career, Omar was able to follow in their footsteps. He lectured in community health at the universities of Baghdad and Mosul, and served as Director of Public Health in the Governorate of Karbala. Yet when his brother was executed in 1995 for libelling Saddam Hussein - by telling disparaging jokes - he as a sibling was banned from working in the public sector. He set up an anti-corruption NGO and, after the 2003 invasion, became part of the 1,000-strong electoral college for selecting MPs. He later resigned in protest at “the indignity of Iraqi members having to go through an American checkpoint, with dogs sniffing at them, every time they wanted to enter their own parliament building”.

Yet the real turning point came in 2007 when Omar published a book revealing the corruption and smuggling in the UN Oil for Food Programme and thereby alienated many powerful people. The publishing house was attacked and burnt down within days. Gunmen burst into his office, killed a colleague and left him for dead. Friends, suspecting he was in danger even in hospital, smuggled him out to a safe house where he was looked after for a month and then flown to Amman. A few weeks later, the family home in Baghdad was taken over by an Islamic militia and later ransacked and bombed, forcing his wife and daughters to seek shelter with friends before moving to apparent safety in Karbala. Even there, within a few months, neighbours warned that strangers had been seen watching the house, so they fled yet again. (The people who moved in next were killed shortly afterwards, most likely in a case of mistaken identity.)

Omar reached Jordan in July 2007 and came to the attention of CARA through Transparency International. CARA put his name forward to the University of York’s Centre for Applied Human Rights, which has a 6-month fellowship programme for ‘human rights defenders’ who can bring the reality of their lived experience to the Masters courses. He moved to England in August 2008 and, still at risk in Iraq, had little option but to claim asylum when the York post ended.

CARA was able to provide further help as a part of a wider initiative. By early 2009, UN teams that had been evacuated to Jordan and elsewhere were preparing to return to Iraq and expected to commission



Georgina Born, 2012

research from Iraqi academics and consultants whose professional skills had been eroded by war and isolation due to over ten years of sanctions. The CARA Iraq Programme brought together Iraqi academics, both inside and outside Iraq, with senior UK-based academics in research collaborations. While the Iraqis could undertake fieldwork drawing on their understanding of the situation on the ground, their UK-based counterparts were able to introduce them to the latest developments in their disciplines and more current methodologies, guiding research design to ensure rigorous high-quality outputs. This had an important impact on capacity-building within Iraq. It also meant that the many academics in exile who shared Omar’s “deep desire to continue contributing to the reconstruction of our native land” could find a constructive way to do so, often with a view to eventual return.

He contributed through a UNICEF-funded project which surveyed 6,000 households to establish the prevalence of disabilities among children in Iraq. Omar was instrumental in helping CARA to set up the study, partnering Iraqi academics with academics from four British universities, assembling six fieldwork teams and presenting the study to key stakeholders at the national, governorate and local level. The aim was to ensure that the new 5-year Strategic Plan for Education in Iraq encompassed inclusive education for children with disability. Despite suffering a major stroke in 2009, Omar continued to orchestrate and support the study.

Yet this is also a story of more than one generation. Omar’s daughter ‘Zahra’ was an assistant lecturer who had just started her own academic career at Al Mustansiriya University in Baghdad, when her application to do a Masters in highway and transportation engineering was refused in November 2011. She appealed to the dean, but was told emphatically not to pursue her request. “I was too frightened to return to my university post,” she adds, “when I received a death threat with a bullet and drops of blood which referred to my refusal to wear a headscarf”.

CARA took up her cause. With their help, she arrived in the UK in August 2012, despite visa delays and a flight missed due to interrogation by Iraqi airport security. She embarked on a 3-month English language course (with all fees waived) at the School of Oriental and African Studies to improve her English before finally starting a Masters at London South Bank University (with a major fee waiver), roughly a year on from the death threat.

Zahra hopes to go on to do a PhD, a qualification that will allow her to pursue an academic career in another Iraqi university, rather than being forced to return to Al Mustansiriya. As Omar says, “Iraq’s universities paid a high price after the invasion, with libraries, equipment and laboratories looted and destroyed. Ten years on, I still dream of an Iraq that is not corrupt and where academics are free to research and publish without fear of political interference”.

The persecution of academics remains tragically common. Yet the precise form this takes has changed a great deal since the 1930s, and persecuted academics and their families may now have very different needs and long-term plans. By adapting to changed circumstances, CARA continues to play a major role in getting them out of danger, relieving their suffering, helping them find new work and reanimating stalled careers, often to the great benefit of both Britain and the countries they hail from.

# Attacks on Academic Freedom 1956–2013

## The World Turned Around in 80 Days:

### From the Uprising to Merton College, Oxford



**SIR GEORGE RADDA, CBE FRs**  
Chairman, Biomedical Research Council, A\*Star, Singapore

I WAS IN MY SECOND year at Eotvos University in Budapest studying chemistry when, on

October 23rd 1956, our world was turned upside down. Following political changes in Poland, Hungarian students started a peaceful demonstration in support of independence. Within two days the Government was overthrown and a new Government formed under Imre Nagy. There was much excitement at our newly found freedom. Jubilant students marched and drove around in trucks waving Hungarian flags. The whole

*“Would you like to be on a plane to London tomorrow evening?” Without hesitation, I said “Yes”.*

nation was getting ready for a new life. And then, on 1st November, came the dreadful news over the radio that Russian forces led by hundreds of tanks and heavy artillery had entered Hungary. They reached Budapest on 4th November. We heard heavy gunfire. The radio urged people to take cover in cellars and Imre Nagy made his now famous impassioned radio appeal to the ‘Nation and the World’. We hoped the West would come to our aid, but it was absorbed in the ‘Suez Crisis’. The Hungarian army was overwhelmed. In a futile gesture, revolutionaries threw ‘Molotov Cocktails’ at the tanks. The slaughter of students on Parliament square a day later hit us all.

By 10th November the revolution was crushed, thousands of Hungarians were dead and Nagy executed. The Communist Government was reinstated and hundreds of thousands began to flee the country. I saw no future in Hungary and my father encouraged me to leave on condition that I took my sister and little brother. After a three-day storybook escape we reached Vienna, three children in exile with me *in loco parentis*.

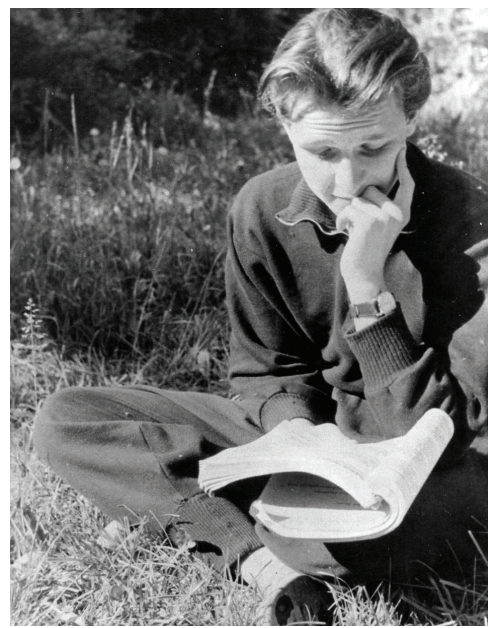
Vienna was full of organisations and individuals trying to help Hungarian refugees. A businessman with a factory near Innsbruck offered to take in my little brother as part of his family and see him through school. He was the first to leave Vienna. Then my sister bumped into old family friends with Belgium connections and left with them the next day. With my ‘parental’ duties discharged, I was free to consider my own future. I spoke Italian and was offered a scholarship to Padova and, although grateful, I knew that learning

English would be essential to my scientific ambitions and hoped for a university placement in Canada or England. Reporters were everywhere, hungry for refugee stories. One, when hearing of my ambition, wrote down an address saying, “Two Oxford professors are interviewing potential students”. I remember climbing a narrow winding staircase to a small room where two white haired gentlemen were seated (as I learned later, Robert Seton-Watson and the Dean of Oriol). They waved me to a chair, questioned me in German and an hour later asked, “Would you like to be on a plane to London tomorrow evening?” Without hesitation I said, “Yes”.

Twenty-four hours later, on 27th November 1956, I landed with other Hungarian students at RAF Blackbushe. Fifty years on I learned that in just two months these British Red Cross flights flew out 7000 Hungarians. After a night in a London hotel, we were bussed to a Youth Hostel in Jack Straws Lane, Oxford. I was among the fortunate selected for Oxford following a memorable interview at Merton College. The Chemistry Tutor spoke only English so the Periodic Table became our common language. Somehow I convinced Courtenay Phillips that my knowledge of chemistry was sufficient for me to join the second term of year one, provided I learned English before the start on 15th January 1957. Eighty days after the Revolution I resumed my studies entirely in English.

Merton students and fellows were very kind, raising funds to support me and another Hungarian refugee scholar. During my vacations I lodged in Holywell Street where the other occupants, senior visitors and fellows, covered my room and board. Despite the odds, I achieved a first class honours degree. A successful research year and my first scientific publication led to a DPhil studentship in physical organic chemistry. I completed it in three years, and received a prestigious Junior Research Fellowship at Merton, with the option of a year abroad.

As Roger Lewin noted in his 1971 *New Scientist*



George Radda as a student

article *Choosing the right problem*, ‘Fourteen years after he reached Britain with just a few words of English, a young Hungarian delivered the Colworth Medal Lecture to the Biochemical Society.’ More importantly, as observed by Robin McKie, Observer Science and Technology Editor, ‘My path from a penniless Hungarian refugee to Chief Executive of the Medical Research Council and my very full scientific life have been unusual, and could not have happened without the moral, financial and friendly support I received from the time I arrived in England with only a few words of English.’

## Apartheid South Africa: Justice Albie Sachs

STEPHANIE STAFFORD

JUSTICE ALBERT (ALBIE) LOUIS SACHS, legal scholar, anti-apartheid campaigner and one of the major architects of South Africa’s post-apartheid constitution, also bears a very different accolade as the only person to have twice received SPSL help.

He was born in South Africa in 1935 to parents of Lithuanian Jewish origin who had fled growing anti-Semitism at the turn of the 20th century. They were union activists and named Albie after the freedom fighter Albert Nzula, an honour of which he has proven himself more than worthy. As a 17 year-old student of law he took part in the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. As a young advocate of the Cape Town Bar he defended those charged under the apartheid regime racial statutes and security laws, some at risk of execution. He paid for this work with prolonged periods of detention without trial, solitary confinement and sleep deprivation and, in 1966, Albie fled to statelessness in England where he describes himself arriving as “a psychological wreck.”

It was in England that he first tasted freedom. He remembers lying on Hampstead Heath, breathing in the fresh air and watching kites soaring in the sky above him. Yet, this sense of elation was overshadowed by his baggage as a refugee and “my ambivalence about the British Empire having established white supremacy in southern Africa”. It was a complex mixture of emotions: “Superficially I was okay, but inside me there was a sense of trauma, of disturbance, of disconnect, of unreality.” This was a “dislocation” from homeland and the cause.

That year, the SPSL provided Albie with a grant and arranged for him to do a PhD at Sussex University. The rules were bent to accommodate him, as he was not yet an academic, but he went on to lecture at University of Southampton and to make an important contribution to law teaching and to social and judicial reform. His 1979 book *Sexism in the Law* was the first to highlight and challenge gender bias in the UK and US law.

He recalls “the joy of recovering some of my courage, of being active, of making intellectual contribution, of writing and broadcasting and of seeing my children grow.” and how “the SPSL made



Albie giving CARA 75th Anniversary talk

it possible for me to re-establish myself as a human being.” But in 1977, he was drawn back to Africa to help with the reconstruction of the newly independent Mozambique. He lectured and did research there for eleven years, until in 1988 apartheid security agents caught up with him. Severely injured by their car bomb, to which he lost an arm and the sight of an eye, Albie was flown back to England, this time arriving as a “physical wreck.”

*It was in England that he first tasted freedom ... “the SPSL made it possible for me to re-establish myself as a human being”*

After recovering in a London hospital with the aid of the “healing hands” of the nurses, Professor Shula Marks, then SPSL Chair, visited him. She pushed him to be clear about what he really wanted to do next, to which he eventually answered: “to start preparing for a new constitution for South Africa.” As he says, “there are just moments when you can tell someone exactly what you would like to do and it can be done, and it was done.” Shula Marks arranged with the Institute of Commonwealth Studies to have a bathroom converted into an office and Albie set to work. “I used the resources of the university to prepare for the day when South Africa did not expel its citizens, the day it respected human rights as a constitutional democracy. This meant that in 1990 when Nelson Mandela was finally released, we were ahead of the game because of this concatenation of circumstances.”

In 1994 the first Constitutional Court of South Africa was established, to which Albie was appointed by Nelson Mandela.

Albie often speaks on the subject of refugees and the benefits that accrue not just to those forced to flee, but also to receiving countries. Beyond the moral commitment, there exists an intellectual obligation to rescue people persecuted because of their ideas, as he puts it “this is internationalism at its highest”. It is about respecting culture and intellect, about understanding knowledge and the impact that one individual can have.

At a UCL talk Albie gave in 2012 to herald CARA’s forthcoming 80th anniversary, he explained that the SPSL had meant so much more to him than the grant: “Above all it gave me respect, a sense of dignity, a feeling that I mattered, that my ideas were valuable, a feeling that I was a human being with notions and passion and commitment.”

## Latin American Junta: Argentina and Chile

DR MARTA ZABALETA  
SPSL Beneficiary 1979–1981

■ **Buenos Aires, 22 November 1976** I am expelled by the Argentinean military junta, ordered to be at the airport with my Chilean daughter to board the plane on which my Chilean husband, still in detention, will be flown to the UK, due to distant British ancestry.

■ **Heathrow, 23 November 1976** I have survived detention and torture in Chile. In Chile and Argentina I am a highly qualified economist, but I land at Heathrow as the invisible ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ of political refugees.

■ **Glasgow, 1976-1978** The Latin American Council of Social Sciences has arranged a Glasgow University research fellowship for my husband. For two years, four of us share two rooms. I am not even allowed to use the library. World University Service (WUS) awards my Chilean husband a grant, but does not support Argentineans, despite my protests of discrimination. Several people make contributions to help us survive.

■ **Essex, 1978-1979** With a week’s notice to leave our Glasgow ‘home’, we move to a small house in Essex, helped by Amnesty International (AI). I volunteer for AI on Wednesdays, where two of us record some 8,500 cases of disappearances in Videla’s Argentina. I apply to read for a doctorate.

■ **London, 1979** Pauline, my husband’s WUS caseworker, arranges an interview with Liz Fraser (SPSL Secretary 1978 - 2002). She doesn’t speak Spanish. I don’t speak English. She questions and I answer, moving my head, my eyes, my feet. She takes notes. The climax of the interview: “Do you intend to settle in this country?” The word ‘settle’ is a total mystery to me. There are two options, I think: to be positive and say yes, or... I answer, “Yes!” Liz’s face lights up. She gives the table a little slap and says goodbye. An SPSL form follows. It asks: Have you ever felt persecuted for any of the following reasons? a) political, b) racial, c) religious. I add, ‘d) for being a woman’ and a tick. I receive small grants from SPSL and others on which we live during my studies. The SPSL grant covers childminding and travel costs for weekly visits to Sussex University. I don’t want to uproot my children again.

■ **Museum of London, 2005** A meeting with the curator of ‘Belonging’, an oral history project dedicated to refugee contributions to London culture and society. There are three CARA grantees, in addition to myself, Liz and the interviewer. It is the first time I have seen Liz since 1979. I tell her I completed my



Marta by her daughter, Yanina Hinrichsen

PhD in Development Studies in 1989; she explains how difficult it was to fund childcare and travel, rather than fees and books. How times have changed.

■ **Essex, 27 March 2013** I am still a mother, but I haven’t been a wife for 20 years. Forty years on, I still live in exile, but less invisible, and proud to have been supported by the SPSL during one of the most bitter and significant periods of my life.

*Dr Zabaleta D.Phil. IDS, Sussex University. Argentinian-British Social Scientist, writer and poet, first jailed in Argentina in 1954 aged 17 for defending female secondary school students. Marta is widely published and translated. Mother and best friend to Yanina and Tomas Hinrichsen, she has been an active human rights campaigner for 55 years, with particular interest in international women’s rights.*

## Gender and Academia: Algerian Patriarchy



LATEFA GUEMAR  
CARA beneficiary  
2006–present

ALTHOUGH the precise timing of the birth of the Algerian feminist movement is disputed, Peter Knauss, political scientist and Africa expert, asserts

that it coincided with the emergence of a highly skilled Algerian middle class in the first half of the 20th century – doctors, lawyers and pharmacists – mainly drawn from the ‘petite bourgeoisie’ that benefited from a French colonial education. This new middle class was concentrated in the cities. It spawned an elite intellectual movement from which the feminist movement emerged, whilst the rest of the country remained conservative, bound by Islamic rules and an indigenous patriarchal culture, overlain by the French colonial system.

It encouraged women to further their studies, remove their veils and participate fully in the Algerian liberation struggle. Franz Fanon, the Caribbean philosopher and revolutionary who joined the Algerian Revolution, declared Algerian women to be the pioneers of third world feminism. And yet, by the latter part of the century, the introduction of the Sharia Law-based 1984 Family Code saw hard won rights lost. It sanctioned polygamy and the subjugation of women. A woman could not leave her conjugal home, let alone the country, without her husband’s permission. The negative impact on female academics, for whom meetings and conferences outside the workplace and the country were crucial to careers, was immense.

February 2005 brought new hope with the revision of the Family Code. Articles denying women their rights were amended or revoked. Was this not a historic moment? Was the patriarchal status quo not being challenged, or even overturned? The harder truth was that it did not deliver gender equality. Algeria’s patriarchal society persisted, as did gender barriers for women, and Algeria’s higher education institutions did not escape the resurgence of patriarchal gender relations within Algerian society. Eight years on, Algerian women are still fighting to abolish the Family Code and for the introduction of a civil code that offers

genuine equality, in keeping with Article 29 of the Algerian constitution.

The 2005 revisions may have obviated the legal obligation on Algerian women to obtain the permission of husbands to travel, but the cultural norms remain and even highly educated women are expected to travel with a male member of their household for the sake of propriety. These practices continue to restrict the number of female academics who attain senior positions relative to male colleagues.

In Algerian universities, female academics are still pushed towards teaching rather than research and publication. Unequal divisions of labour within the home erode time that might be dedicated to careers. Teaching and caring are seen as comparable social roles, so that the domestic division of labour is extended into the workplace. Female academics are expected to ‘care’ for their departments and faculties, rather than focus their energies on their own academic endeavours.

Delaying marriage is a ploy of limited value. An unmarried female academic can be seen as problematic: ‘she hasn’t found herself a man, so there must be something wrong with her.’ She can be isolated by colleagues who exclude her from meetings etc., introducing new barriers to career progression.

Collectively, these realities cast female academics into a subordinated role, and discrimination, stereotyping and sexual harassment continue to be part of the daily experience of female academics in Algerian universities. Alaoui (2011) claims a 16 per cent increase in the emigration of Algerian women since 1982, the result of the rise in violence against women during the State fundamentalist conflict of the 1990s, followed by poor post-conflict governance in the 2000s. Most are highly educated female academics migrating to France or Canada (Labdaloui Hocine, 2012).

If Algerians succeed in introducing a civil code truly enshrining gender equality, it will not necessarily expunge the underlying patriarchal influence or cultural or societal norms. It would, however, set Algerian women on an equal constitutional footing with Algerian men, providing recourse to legal remedy – vital in challenging the norms that hamper equality and progress.

Given that gendered prescription of women’s roles and behaviour is, to a great extent, reflected across the world, I wonder how far such factors will shape my own journey through British academia? I learn that despite explicit equality and diversity policies the higher you look up the British academic hierarchy, the more male and white it becomes. This is not encouraging. Patriarchal barriers need to be

overcome through both social and legislative reform. In Algeria, this means the introduction of a civil code and a concomitant shift in social attitudes and behaviour.

*Latefa Guemar was an established Lecturer/Researcher in Electronic Engineering in Algiers, where she lived with her journalist husband and their two young children. Despite the end of the Algerian Civil War in 2000, the government continued to pursue insurgents, targeting journalists and human rights activists. In 2002, the family was attacked in their flat. Her husband fled immediately, and 6 months later, Latefa (pregnant) and the children also fled. Reunited in the UK, the family was granted refugee status and dispersed to Swansea. With the help of CARA, amongst others, Latefa has rebuilt her life, with her academic choices heavily influenced by her experience. She learned English, completed a BA and then a Masters on Migration with distinction. She is now doing a PhD on ‘Algerian Women in the Diaspora’ at Swansea University and is a Visitor Fellow at LSE. She was influential in the setting up of the Swansea Centre for Migration Policy Research and is a co-founder of the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism. Latefa continues to advocate on behalf of women refugees and asylum seekers.*

## A University Standing Up for Academic Freedom: Belarus

**JURGA MECINSKIENE**  
EHU Communications Manager

**THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION** in the early 1990s, followed by a brief period of democracy, inspired optimism amongst Belarusians who believed they might finally be in a position to determine their own fate. In those heady days of independence, a group of Belarusian academics, amongst whom the philosopher Anatoli Mikhailov, founded the European Humanities University (EHU) in Minsk, in a bid to revive the humanities and social sciences as rigorous areas of research, to introduce liberal principles, and reengage with the outside world after decades of Sovietisation.

EHU soon gained a reputation as one of the best universities in Belarus, offering an alternative to the still prevalent Soviet-style ideology driven education. It established strong international ties and recruited international faculty members who introduced new texts and concepts into the classroom, fostering a culture of

creativity, personal responsibility and critical thinking. A decade later, it was this higher education ‘revolution’ that provided the pretext for an assault on the university and its autonomy: an attack on its academic freedom.

Under the increasingly authoritarian regime of President Lukashenko, pressure was applied to the Rector Dr Mikhailov to resign, faculty members were harassed and instructed to introduce state ideology into their programmes, and forbidden from expressing ‘unsanctioned’ views. In an environment where university rectors were state appointees and student activities closely monitored by security forces, EHU resisted, only to be forcibly closed in mid-2004 following the withdrawal of its state-owned facilities. This assault on academic freedom was met with a wellspring of international outrage and support. Invitations to relocate were received from Poland and the government of neighbouring Lithuania, where in 2005 EHU established a new campus in Vilnius, becoming Europe’s only university in exile.

Nine years on, EHU has approximately 250 faculty members and over 1,600 students. It remains Belarus’ only autonomous university, albeit in exile and formally registered in Lithuania. Courses are taught in a number of languages, including Belarusian, English, German, French, Lithuanian, and Russian, by a core team of international and Belarusian academics committed to EHU principles. Students benefit from European exchange programmes, civic engagement programmes and projects promoting intercultural dialogue.

EHU continues to offer Belarusians an independent academic haven, free from the ideological constraints that still pervade their higher education institutions. In Belarus, academics and researchers are still subject to state censorship, harassment and dismissal for conducting research on topics deemed to be ‘taboo’. However, for those who choose to associate with EHU there is a price, particularly for the politically active. Harassment by Belarusian border guards is commonplace for those crossing between the two countries and there have been a number of detentions. Spouses who remain in Belarus receive warnings about the ‘reckless’ actions of their partners. EHU graduates have been blacklisted from jobs within the state-controlled economy, although independent businesses show a positive interest in them.

It is to be hoped that in the not too distant future Belarus will shed its designation as ‘Europe’s last dictatorship’. Until then, for those who seek to maintain their right to academic freedom within a Belarusian university, EHU remains their only destination.

he was gay. In Britain, he took on an English name, in an effort to make a new start. Most recently he has worked as a legal translator on high-profile Russian cases in the British courts, but still hopes to qualify as a corporate lawyer.

■ Muktar was a consultant child psychiatrist in Baghdad. He says the systematic killing of academics and medical personnel that occurred soon after the invasion was because the existence of a professional elite threatened the religious zealots whose ambition it was to become the rulers of **IRAQ**. Unable to practise his profession in Britain, he was reunited with his family in Cairo, and from there went to the USA, where he teaches in a Community College in New Jersey. He is still unable to practise or teach his speciality.

*Real names have not been used.*

# Simple Acts of Solidarity

## Sir David Attenborough FRS: My father

**ANNABEL STAFFORD**

**SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH’S** father, Frederick Attenborough, was Principal of University College Leicester between 1932 and 1951. Now the University of Leicester, in the 1930s it was a small college with just a few hundred undergraduates, supported by private benefaction and the City of Leicester. Sir David describes his parents as having “tender social consciences”. In the mid-thirties, aware of increasing Nazi persecutions of academics, his father began to offer junior jobs, such as that of lab assistant, to often very distinguished academics, this enabling them to obtain permits to enter Britain. Several came to England in this way, where they stayed if more permanent and appropriate university posts could be developed, or went further afield, such as to the USA or Canada.

Sir David believes it was probably also through AAC/SPSL that Dr Bejach, a senior medical administrator in Berlin, was put in touch with his parents. A widower with three daughters, Dr Bejach had managed to send the eldest to New York to join his émigré brother, and now planned to send the younger two, Helga and Irene, aged 10 and 12, to England on the Kindertransport. Sir David’s parents were asked to care for them until they too could sail to New York, but within weeks of their arrival in England, a ship crossing the Atlantic carrying many refugee children was torpedoed and sunk and sailings were thereafter cancelled.

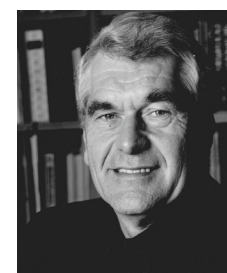
Sir David remembers his parents telling him and his brothers that Helga and Irene would now be staying with them until the end of the war and that they now had two sisters. They lived with the Attenboroughs for seven years before joining their family in New York. They remained in touch for the rest of their lives. Their father perished in a concentration camp.

Another connection Sir David believes might have been through AAC/SPSL was that between his father and Nikolaus Pevsner, who fled to England in late 1933. His father, a great photographer with a passion for ecclesiastical architecture, took the photographs

for Pevsner’s 1945 book, *The Leaves of Southwell*. Sir David was his father’s assistant on these photographic expeditions, undertaken in the days of plate cameras. He remembers sitting for hours, an eternity for a boy of about 12, while his father, relying solely on natural light, waited for a shaft of light to illuminate his subject. The University of Leicester, where his father had a dark room, now houses his photographs.

Touching on the erosion of academic freedom in the UK in recent times, Sir David notes his deep concern about the debased status of pure academic endeavour in the UK. “My father studied Anglo-Saxon – you could hardly call that a job spinner.” He refers to academic life as almost his ideal. “As a child, the household gods were professors. They were the people for whom you had respect.” He retains that high regard for scholarship and fears academic life is being crushed and pushed into a corner. Sir David is a founder member of the independent campaigning body *The Council for the Defence of British Universities* established in late 2012.

## The Making of a CARA Supporter



**SIR JOHN ASHWORTH**  
CARA President  
2002–2012

**WHY DO PEOPLE GIVE** to charities? How do they decide which charities to support? What makes people empathise with a

particular cause? A sense of solidarity? Fundraisers would dearly love to know. Oxford University in 1956 offers an insight into a rare period of spontaneous collective solidarity and action, when Oxford students, united by a common sense of injustice, were galvanised to reach out and help fellow students forced to flee Hungary.

The autumn I went up to Exeter College, Oxford, to study chemistry was particularly busy. In October, the Soviet Union had responded to the revolution

aiming funds to Eastern Europe during the period following the break-up of the Soviet Union.

In early 2011, SGM received an approach for financial support from Professor Alan McCarthy – a long-standing SGM member and of the CARA Council of Management. After due consideration, SGM Council were delighted to offer £5,000 per year for a trial period of two years, to support the training needs of microbiologists with refugee status in the UK. Although this type of funding was different to other SGM schemes, Council felt that sponsoring CARA fell within the spirit of SGM grants policy – to support professional development needs of microbiologists.

The trial period has now ended and SGM is delighted to have sponsored three refugee microbiologists. The first recipient, Banaz, completed

in Hungary by invading with overwhelming force. The revolution had started with a student demo in Budapest, so that the Soviet invasion and the crushing of the revolution were a cause for great excitement in Oxford: debates, appeals for help and our own student demos. My chemistry studies were placed firmly on the back burner.

Also in October, and again with overwhelming force, the UK, France and Israel invaded Egypt in a delayed response to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company by the Egyptian government that July. Along with many others, I was incensed at how this latest action had diverted attention from the suppression of Hungarian freedom fighters. At a demo organised to protest against the invasion of Egypt, I carried a banner that proclaimed, ‘The Blood of Hungary is on Eden’s Hands’. It had a substantial pole that the police claimed I had used as a weapon during the inevitable fracas that ensued as demonstrators met a police cordon. Rather ignominiously, I was taken into custody for an hour or so before being escorted back to my college without further charge.

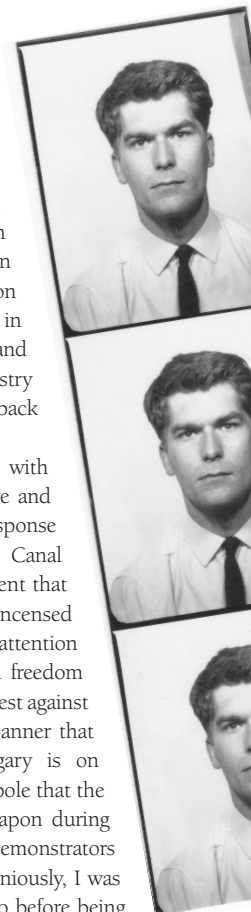
My feelings of anger over Hungary were then channelled into a more constructive endeavour, helping to raise funds to support a number of Hungarian students who had managed to cross the border into Austria and reach Oxford to continue their studies. Every Oxford college tried to raise enough money to support at least one such student. I seem to remember that ‘ours’ was a lawyer, though the only one I came to know personally was George Radda, who was in my year in the chemistry department.

My involvement in raising funds to help the Hungarian refugees was a much more productive response to the failures of the Eden government. There is also little doubt that the success of appeals to help Hungarians and, in my case, those involved in academic pursuits, owed much to the widespread feelings of shame and disgust at the behaviour of our government.

It left me with an abiding distrust of politicians – both the French and British governments lied outrageously about their collusion with the Israelis in the invasion – and an equally abiding sympathy for students and, more generally, academic refugees. I was therefore delighted and honoured when asked to be CARA President in 2002, a role I undertook for ten years.

an MSc in Molecular Biology of Infectious Disease at the London School of Tropical Medicine whilst looking after her two young children. Gaining a UK qualification has put Banaz in a much stronger position to continue her career as a clinical scientist in the UK. She commented, ‘whatever I say is not enough to thank you both CARA and the SGM for your support which helped me to know excellent people that I am working with at LSHTM and expand my knowledge in field of Microbiology specially the molecular field.’

SGM also supported Hamdin as he started an MPhil at Bristol University in 2012. He hopes that his research will lead to a UK academic career. He expressed his ‘deepest thanks and appreciation to CARA and SGM for their great help and financial support.’ SGM Council is pleased to extend funding to CARA in 2013.



## RECENT BENEFICIARIES

**Jeremy Seabrook, Author and Journalist**

■ Peter was trapped as a dissident in a **CAMEROON** jail. His ‘crime’ was to be an articulate English-language intellectual activist in a country where the official language is French. Old colonial rivalries, long amicably settled between the original antagonists, have a malignant after-life in Africa, where minorities are discriminated against and, if they persist, simply silenced. Tortured and abused, he was released with the complicity of a prison guard who shared his tribal origin. Loyalty to the most repressive regimes is readily overridden by bonds of kinship. Released, he crossed the country on foot, avoiding military road-blocks, and took shelter in the home of a distant relative.

# A 21st Century Role

## Internationalising Solidarity

**PROF KEVIN MCDONALD, DR TIM CORCORAN, PROF ROGER SLEE**  
Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

THE CARA Iraq Research Fellowship Programme (IRFP) has opened up critical new directions for solidarity between academics and between universities in the 21st century.

The war that began in 2003 devastated Iraqi universities, already weakened by sanctions and isolation from international scholarly networks. As part of a fractured Iraqi state, universities became a terrain of conflict. Militias and parties competed to gain control over campus life and administration, publicly visible scholars became targets for execution and intimidation, while engagement with international academic networks increasingly meant exposing oneself to risk.

*Forced to leave the country, these scholars refuse to define themselves only by need and displacement and consider themselves still responsible for the fate of their country.*

Iraqi scholars have responded in different ways. Although many have been forced to seek shelter in other countries, this displacement has not been experienced as abandoning Iraq to its fate and many are actively looking at ways to continue to contribute to Iraq from outside the country. The IRFP has responded by building research teams linking scholars forced to leave the country with those who have been able to remain, connecting them to experienced researchers. The latter, well versed in research design and development, data analysis, research ethics, and publishing, have helped to fill knowledge gaps on practices and standards governing academic endeavour within the wider international community – developments from which Iraq's academics have been excluded.

The research teams are working on a wide range of subjects including tuberculosis, the impact of depleted uranium soil contamination on the food chain, and the use of mobile communication technologies to enhance self-management of diabetes. Professional development is central to the programme, from university governance to the linking of research and teaching.

The research has also been a catalyst for wider inter-university initiatives, as well as having other 'multiplier' effects. The allied CARA-supported Regional Round Tables have drawn in researchers from the wider Middle East region, to support and inform work on challenges facing higher education in Iraq, including reconstructing the social sciences, gender equity in higher education, and introducing women's studies as an academic discipline. These have also connected Iraqi scholars to civil society organisations and advocacy networks, to

business and international agencies such as the World Health Organisation and UNESCO.

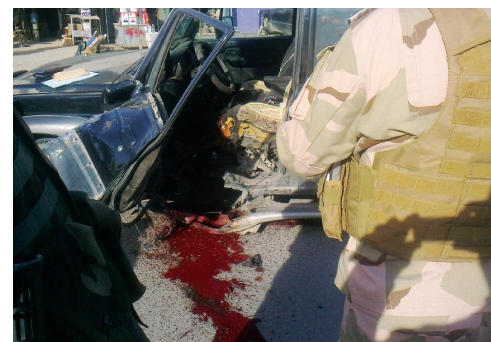
The IRFP has also provided invaluable opportunities for members of the Iraqi academic diaspora, an important resource, to re-engage with higher education in Iraq. Amongst the academics facilitating and guiding these research collaborations, particularly laudable are those who are not Iraq specialists, but who give their time *pro bono*. The hosting of IRFP Fellows at UK universities has in turn led to formal institutional links – Leicester and Karbala Universities, Liverpool and the University of Technology in Baghdad – to benefit future generations of Iraqi students. This support has expanded beyond the United Kingdom, to Canada and Australia.

But this is only half of the story. What defines the IRFP is the impact of the research undertaken under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Among the projects supported from Australia has been a review of Iraq's post-war school curriculum as a key factor in inter-communal tensions. It has set in motion a significant process of reform, which CARA continues to support. Another project supported from Australia has been a review of Iraq's curriculum for paediatric medicine, exploring its relevance to children's experiences of war-related trauma. This study is likely to have significant impact on the training of paediatricians in a country with no child mental health services.

The IRFP is an attempt to respond to the realities of violence and displacement today. It means that CARA resources are not uniquely devoted to activities in the UK, but are also directed to supporting those who remain in country. This reflects a redirection in contemporary humanitarian work as the traditional *emergency* paradigm expands to support what the European Commission and UN term *resilience*.

The Iraqi scholars involved in the IRFP rarely assume a 'refugee' identity. Whether forced to leave the country or able to remain, at considerable risk, these scholars refuse to define themselves or others only by need and displacement. They consider themselves still responsible for the fate of their country. They share a commitment to rebuilding Iraq's universities, whether developing systems of governance, reshaping teaching, or undertaking research responding to the urgent challenges facing Iraq.

CARA's academic mandate and independence leave it free of the compromises that all too often affect governmental organisations. The scholars in the Iraq Research Fellowship Programme come from the



January 2013 Assassination attempt of Baghdad academic

diverse communities, regions and religious traditions that make up Iraq. At a time when bombs are still blasting street markets and academics are still being killed in their homes, these scholars are using the IRFP to construct another vision of their country's future. This practical international solidarity, led and facilitated by CARA, demonstrates to them that they are not alone.

*The authors have provided pro bono support to the Iraq Research Fellowship Programme in solidarity with their fellow Iraqi academics.*

## CARA Zimbabwe Programme

**LAURA BROADHURST**  
Programme Manager

2008 MARKED AN EVIDENT INCREASE in the number of Zimbabwean academics approaching CARA for help, a consequence of the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, and the devastating impact on higher education, including the outflow and loss of Zimbabwean academics.

CARA initiated a series of consultation workshops to open up a dialogue between Zimbabweans in Zimbabwe and those in the diaspora. These highlighted the urgent need for diaspora re-engagement and the role of distance-learning technologies in addressing at least some of the immediate challenges. They also prioritised need within the natural, health and veterinary sciences.

In early 2011, CARA launched a Faculty Grant and Re-Engagement Fellowship Scheme, disbursing Fellowships to academics in the diaspora and a dozen grants to Zimbabwean universities for equipment and materials. Despite the small sums involved (\$3,000-\$5,000), results were dramatic. In the words of one Zimbabwean Dean: 'The CARA grant substantially remedied the situation and the quality of teaching has already improved remarkably, along with an increase in [student] applications; something I never thought would happen!'

*CARA's academic mandate and independence leave it free of the compromises that all too often affect governmental organisations.*

With the generous support of a South African telecommunications company, CARA also facilitated the set-up of a virtual lecture hall (VLH) at the University of Zimbabwe, with interactive video conferencing equipment and a dedicated line bandwidth. Vital lectures, no longer provided due to the loss of qualified staff, could now be streamed to the VLH by universities and academics within the diaspora enlisted by CARA in the UK, Europe, the USA, Southern Africa and beyond. Over 500 students and staff, from the College of Health Science and the Faculties of Science and Veterinary Science, now benefit from these lectures, training sessions and PhD supervision. The demand is such that a mobile video conferencing unit will be supplied by CARA in 2013.

# Reflections on 80 Years

**JEREMY SEABROOK**  
Author and Journalist

EACH AGE CREATES REFUGEES, and if each has its own particularities, the one thing all share is that the social function of those fleeing tyranny will have come into conflict with the dominant ideology of their country: this means writers, intellectuals, artists, political activists, journalists and academics. In the 1930s, Jewish scholars, evicted from their posts within weeks of Hitler coming to power, were often well established, their contribution to learning already acknowledged. Even so, they did not always have an easy passage into Britain, despite the efforts of the AAC and the SPSL, although their value to British intellectual, social and creative life has subsequently been recognised as unique.

The reception given to academic refugees is, of course, inflected by the particular hands at which they have suffered. Those who came to Britain from Eastern Europe during the Soviet era, although fewer, were often feted as hostile to an ideology to which Britain was also inimical. Escapees from apartheid South Africa had a more ambiguous welcome to a Britain still coming to terms with its colonial legacy. Those exiled from military dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s were dependent on attitudes that reflected ideological shifts with changes of government. The Labour government of 1970 – 75 was particularly welcoming to activists and intellectuals from Pinochet's Chile and other South American military juntas. This contrasts dramatically with the British government response thirty years later to those fleeing Iraq after 2003, when it had a vested interest in demonstrating, not the disorder, but the stability the Coalition claimed it had brought to the country.

The sometimes tepid response of the British government often shelters behind 'public opinion'. In the 1930s, it declared itself hostage to public opinion, even when, in 1943, surveys showed an overwhelming popular readiness to welcome the persecuted from Nazism. Today, press campaigns against asylum seekers are prejudicial to the reception of people who have undergone horrors of which few in Britain can conceive. Many, often individuals of outstanding achievement, are 'dispersed' to provincial centres, facing discrimination and sometimes overt violence.

In a globalised world, CARA has recognised that patterns of forced migration are no longer as distinctive as they were, and that the moral pathways by which people find their way to sites of sanctuary are more tortuous. The only constant amongst those who find refuge in Britain, sometimes after a long and contested battle over their right to do so, is their eagerness to offer the best of themselves to their adoptive country.

While we celebrate the hospitality this country has historically extended to scholars in need, it is important to recognise that they represent only a fraction of those in flight. The vast majority seek refuge in countries neighbouring their own. No one knows how many die in silence before they can reach safety. It is also necessary to acknowledge that many lives are

saved in the most unheroic way: people-smugglers, the payment of ransoms and bribes to security personnel and border guards may be distasteful in theory, but without such transactions, many who now grace our universities and add to our knowledge by their multiple competences would be dead.

When people fled Nazism or the Soviet Union, the reason for their departure was clear and explicable. Academic and other asylum seekers today are sometimes escaping more diffuse and unfamiliar forms of repression. The shape of forced migration is changing.

Surveying the global landscape in the early 21st century, it is clear that the tradition of rescue and insertion into British or other universities is simply not possible on the scale required. Although this remains an important part of CARA's work, new paradigms are required.

Faced with the mass killings of academics and medical personnel in post-invasion Iraq and the flight of so many to Syria (at the time stable), Jordan and elsewhere, and observing the destabilisation of Zimbabwe by the mass exodus of teachers and university lecturers, it was obvious that the displacement of highly qualified people was susceptible to only limited mitigation by any British agency. CARA instinctively returned to its roots, using imagination and improvisation (much as had happened in the 1930s) to evolve new ways of helping the exiled and uprooted.

If the academics could not be accommodated in Britain, at least assistance could be brought to them, whether in their beleaguered country or in the diaspora. Initiatives developed on behalf of Iraqis and Zimbabweans were led by energetic and committed CARA staff members, who managed to achieve innovative and original ways of working, drawing in part on new technologies.

Although the work on the ground was painstaking and laborious, and mistakes were made, the instinct for extemporising and inventiveness, part of the CARA tradition, enabled new ways of working between exiles and their colleagues at home, members of the refugee community and the international academy. These have served as a lifeline to many, suggesting creative future directions for CARA, as a complement to its traditional work.

The virtual lecture hall, established by CARA at the University of Zimbabwe to ensure the continued teaching of Veterinary and Health Sciences, has drawn on the expertise of members of the Zimbabwe academic diaspora and of universities across the globe, who now stream in lectures to Zimbabwean students and faculty members to fill current expertise and knowledge gaps. Both the Iraq and Zimbabwe programmes have demonstrated the possibility of taking a 'virtual university' to the displaced and persecuted, wherever they may be, in parallel with UK universities maintaining open doors. Whatever the shape of the future work of CARA, the need for its existence is unlikely to be superseded by the establishment of peace and global amity in the foreseeable future.

*"One of the greatest privileges in preparing the second edition of a book about academic refugees is that following the fate of individuals five years later gives a quite different perspective, allowing a glimpse of what happened to them subsequently. To be able to portray people at a given moment is one thing, but to see how they fared afterwards offers a wider context in which to understand their journey." Jeremy Seabrook is author of 'The Refuge and the Fortress' a history of CARA, whose second edition will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in May 2013.*

## CARA FELLOWSHIPS A LIFELINE

**LAYLA** is from Libya. Arrested, imprisoned for criticising Gaddafi's 'Green Book', she was sentenced to death and raped by prison guards. An officer whose daughter had died for want of medical care took pity on her. Layla's mother persuaded him to help Layla escape. Visiting shortly before her daughter's execution day, her mother brought a *jallabiyeh*, to allow Layla to leave disguised as a visitor.

Taken to the airport, she was smuggled on to a plane bound for Heathrow. Dumped by her escort in a night club in Leicester Square, she lived on the streets until she discovered the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture that led her to CARA.

*"CARA allowed me to become the person I always wanted to be."*

In the 21st century, CARA continues to defend core academic values, providing solidarity and sanctuary to academics threatened in climates of oppression for their pursuit of intellectual liberty.



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**Alastair Lyon, Partner**

Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP  
Aquis House  
49-51 Blagrove Street  
Reading, RG1 1PL, UK

[alastair.lyon@crowecw.co.uk](mailto:alastair.lyon@crowecw.co.uk)

0118 959 7222