

Professor Wolf Elston writes hilariously about a deeply embarrassed and inhibited lady who had come to give a talk to the boys about sex. She couldn't quite bring herself to spell it out. 'Above all', she admonishes, 'don't play.' But it is he too who describes being reunited with his parents after the war; a strange sound came from his father – something between laughing and sobbing.

The title of the book (not the author's choice, one gathers) is something of a misnomer. However, the publishers have done an excellent job of the production and the book is a pleasure to handle as well as read. Dr Lion, the headmistress, wanted the children to grow up in a peaceful atmosphere. Perhaps the book should by rights have been called *War and Peace*.

Gerda Mayer

## EXHIBITION

### Childhood triangle

#### DAS DREIECK MEINER KINDHEIT

Vienna, November-December 2008

To a certain extent this exhibition came about as the result of a coincidence. At the beginning of the century, Herklotzgasse 21, a street in Rudolfsheim-Fünfhaus, Vienna's 15th District, was the address of a communications company founded by Michel Kofler. Also employed there were Judith Pühringer, head of the Association for Social Enterprises, and Georg Traska, a historian. A book which appeared in 2004 made them aware that their workplace had been a Jewish centre before Hitler. Moshe Jahoda of the Vienna Claims Conference told them that the synagogue in the nearby Turnergasse, the Storchengasse Talmud Schul, and the kindergarten at Herklotzgasse 21 had been the 'Jewish triangle' of his childhood.

Soon after the trio's meeting with Jahoda, another former member of the kindergarten knocked on the door of Herklotzgasse 21: en route from the USA to Israel, Zwi Preminger was keen to show the place to his wife. Preminger indicated to the three further links with the past. They realised that the entire district must have housed an active Jewish community whose existence had been forgotten. They embarked on in-depth research.

Moshe Jahoda's triangle had been mine too during the first 12 years of my life, except that I had attended weekly Zionist meetings and Maccabi gym classes at the Herklotzgasse. The synagogue had been destroyed during Kristallnacht and the Talmud Schul no longer existed. In May, Georg Traska had interviewed me about my recollections; the interview was filmed by Ursula Henzl. The next day the team travelled to Israel to meet other contacts. They interviewed 20 people, devoting 18 months to their research.

Last October my wife and I visited Vienna to view the results of their work in the exhibition 'Das Dreieck meiner Kindheit' at Herklotzgasse 21.

The exhibition was an impressive, touching experience. One room contained DVDs of each interview with pictures of the interviewed. Another room concentrated on historical facts with photographs and statistics. There were large numbers of research photographs and reports as well as source material and literature. The organisation, in the hands of Alexandra Zabransky, was excellent. I celebrated a couple of reunions and met visitors from Israel and the USA.

The exhibition, which offered daily programmes of meetings, talks and shows designed to be of interest to all age groups, attracted over 2,000 visitors by 28 November, the planned date of its closure. At the time of writing, its success has led not only to an extension until Christmas but also to new goals: the furthering of a memorial on the site of the destroyed synagogue; making the exhibition material available to schools; arranging, with Radio Orange, ten listening stations which can be called on mobile phones; a film producing further biographies of refugees who settled in Palestine/Israel; and turning the exhibition into a travelling one.

I am sure this exhibition will occupy a major position in the large number of projects and publications which in recent years have contributed to the dissemination of the truth about the fate of the Jews in Austria following the Anschluss.

Eric Sanders

### A jewel of historical research NOVEMBERPOGROM 1938 IN DÜSSELDORF

Bastian Fleermann and  
Angela Genger (eds.)

Essen: Klartext, 2008, 448 pp.,  
22.95 euros

What more fitting way for a German city to commemorate one of the darkest events in its (pre-war) Nazi history than to publish a 'comprehensive account' of that event? And this promises to be more enduring than the many 70th anniversary commemorative events of Kristallnacht which took place throughout Germany, and indeed elsewhere.

Seven historians, most of them associated in some way with Düsseldorf's Mahn- und Gedenkstätte, have constructed a jigsaw previously seen only in its individual pieces. The result is overwhelming and moving. Much of the material has never before been published and sees the light of day thanks to rigorous research. A large amount of the source material consists of personal correspondence and diaries of those who witnessed,

or were victims of, the violence unleashed on the Jews on the night of 9-10 November 1938. Invaluable material has also been found in the Wiedergutmachung files and local police records and belies the hundreds of hours each contributor must have spent extracting the material which makes this book such compulsive reading.

Framed by the introductory historical context – clear and informative but concise – and an account of the postwar trials in Düsseldorf, we are conducted through the events of that night as through a prism. It is impossible to do justice to the detail in a review of this nature but, if I have to shine a spotlight on one chapter, it must be Dr Barbara Suchy's 'Überfallen in Düsseldorf' in which, street by street, house by house, using the many records at her disposal, she constructs a picture of brutality against individual families. (Through her research, for example, I learned for the first time what happened to my maternal grandparents that night.)

By now, the attentive reader may have noticed the discrepancy between the title of the book and my use of the term Kristallnacht. Suffice it to say that the use of the more familiar latter term is currently not favoured in Germany, whilst this reviewer regards the use of the Russian terminology, with all its implications, as questionable!

Despite its title, this is no parochial account. What was perpetrated against Düsseldorf's Jews surely represents a microcosm of the whole of Nazi Germany. I hope someone can be persuaded to provide an English – and indeed other – translation of this jewel of historical research. It doesn't deserve to be restricted to the German-speaking world.

Marion Koebner

*The Blue Salon and Other Follies* by Vernon Katz, reviewed in our January issue, is also available at Amazon uk, usa and de.

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