

„WE LEFT OUR HOME AND HAD NO IDEA HOW LONG WE WOULD BE GONE“

Berliner pupils research flight and
escape in historical perspective



GEDENK- UND
BILDUNGSSTÄTTE
HAUS DER
WANNSEE-KONFERENZ

A project of the House of the Wannsee
Conference and the Schiller-Gymnasium

2021/22

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Working group "Flight and Migration" of pupils from the Schiller-Gymnasium
in Cooperation with the Memorial and Educational Site House of the Wannsee Conference.

Illustrations and graphic design: Itamar Makover

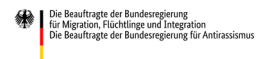
ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project **“Flight and Migration in Historical Perspective – Teenagers Discuss Structural and Contextual Continuity”** was developed by the House of the Wannsee Conference – Memorial and Educational Site in cooperation with the Schiller-Gymnasium Berlin-Charlottenburg.

The project is part of the [Migration Lab Germany](#) network of the Centre for Educational Integration - Diversity and Democracy in Migration Societies at the Foundation University of Hildesheim. It was funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration and the Federal Government Commissioner for Anti-Racism as well by the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb) and the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation (EVZ).

The Flight and Migration working group was established at the Schiller-Gymnasium in Berlin-Charlottenburg in August 2021 and was overseen by history teacher Mr. Ben Kempler. It focused on stories of migration and flight that had a connection to Berlin. It addressed situations from the past (German and Austrian Jews) as well as from the present (topics chosen by the participants). The work with the youngsters was documented with the aim of developing a guideline that would enable other educators create similar projects in the future.

This Project was funded and supported by:



HOUSE OF THE WANNSEE CONFERENCE

Memorial and Educational Site



WHO ARE WE?

On 20 January 1942, high-ranking representatives of the Nazi regime met at the historical site of today's House of the Wannsee Conference – Memorial and Educational Site to discuss and plan the deportation and systematic murder of the European Jews.

Our permanent exhibition presents an overview of the persecution and murder of Jewish men, women and children with a focus on the role of bureaucracy. Building on these themes, our garden exhibitions explore the current relevance of this history for today by addressing issues such as emotionality at memorials and Antisemitism after the Shoah. Since the memorial opened in 1992, our educational work has used the meeting that took place on 20 January 1942 and the involvement of various ministries and German authorities in the state-sponsored genocide as a way to focus on specific occupational groups (employees of the federal ministries, police officers, soldiers, judges etc.). Long-term cooperation with schools is also part of our profile.

MEMORIAL MEETS SCHOOL

The Memorial and Educational Site House of the Wannsee Conference has been cooperating with the Schiller-Gymnasium in Berlin-Charlottenburg for several years now. By collaborating with schools in long-term projects, we are able to discuss the history of National Socialism and the Shoah with young people and focus on the issues that are important to them. We learn what questions they have and in what ways they want to influence how remembrance takes place in this country. The cooperation also allows us to test new methods and materials and ensure that we offer diverse and comprehensive ways of accessing history that do not exclude any members of today's German society.

WHY THE TOPIC OF FLIGHT AND MIGRATION?

We have integrated the topic of flight and migration even more strongly into our narrative at the Memorial and Educational Site House of the Wannsee Conference in response to what has come to be known generally as the European refugee crisis – a term referring to the significant increase in the number of refugees entering the European Union around 2015. As part of this effort, we also looked at already existing educational materials through the prism of flight and migration and with a new line of questioning.

Opportunities to emigrate and flee were central to the experience of Austrian and German Jews under the Nazi regime. Even more central was the fundamental question of whether to “stay or go?” Such questions allow us to recognise structural analogies (such as prejudice, exclusion, language, political interests) and to build a bridge between the past and present without equating the different historical events and contexts with each other.

In 2016/2017, the Memorial and Educational Site House of the Wannsee Conference participated in an educator exchange with the Israeli partner Massuah Institute for Holocaust Studies, funded by the EVZ. As part of the project, a website was created with educational materials in English, German and Hebrew on topics such as the Evian Conference, the Kindertransports and the voyage on the St. Louis – with the explicit aim of linking past and present and reflecting on analogies, parallels and continuities. We tested and further developed a few of the material modules for the Flight and Migration working group, which led to the creation of a new exercise on anti-Jewish laws, See page 12. The digital materials can be found [here](#).

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

The project pursued two goals. First, we wanted to enable the participants to find their own way of approaching the topic of flight and migration, but also of addressing the history of National Socialism and the Shoah.

This approach serves to bridge the temporal and biographical distance to the historical events and make clear why this history is still relevant for us today.

In the first phase of the project, we addressed the topic of flight and migration through the history of German Jews. We began by taking a guided tour through the former Scheunenviertel in Berlin-Mitte, which focused on Jewish migration to Berlin and ways of escaping from Berlin (and Germany) during the Nazi era. This tour, which served as a good thematic base for the project, can easily be used in other German (or European) cities. In a subsequent workshop at school, we used the anti-Jewish laws to explore whether people can understand that they need to prepare to emigrate or flee and if so, at what point. This method has proven to be very effective, as it took a relatively familiar topic (the anti-Jewish laws) but framed it with a completely different concern and leading question.

In the second part of this workshop, we looked at research opportunities at our own school and biographical research in general in archives and online databases. This workshop was conducted with the Berlin historian Marcus Gryglewski.

I remember one time during geography class when my teacher asked why people who live in dangerous areas on the earth don't just move to less dangerous areas. Now I understand that it is not always that easy, for one because it is often hard to immigrate when, from the perspective of the other country, you don't bring any advantages with you, and also because people are often attached to their homeland. Many people have to leave anyway and often aren't able to bring much with them. The people, if they are even allowed in to begin with, have a hard time settling into the new place. I think it is very important to give these people a voice and to learn about their stories, which is why I was very glad to be able to participate in this project.

This statement written by Aviva S. from the 10th grade of Schiller-Gymnasium (see p. 27) shows that these kinds of long-term projects, in which students have the opportunity to participate actively and become engaged, impact the students differently than regular history class. They provide time and space to deal with topics that for various reason cannot be handled during the regular school day.

In the second phase of the project, the students independently researched and documented past and present stories of migration and flight. They were free to choose whether they wanted to focus on historical or contemporary stories and, after participating in a workshop on "How to conduct interviews" and creating a list of questions, they lead their own interviews.

We have documented all work steps to make them comprehensible for multipliers.

In this handout, you will find a summary of our work findings, the researched biographies and interviews, as well as a detailed description of the workshops and the materials and methods that were used.

We knew from the start that to ensure the anonymity of our interview partners, we would need an illustrator to accompany the project visually. It was also important to us that this person have a personal connection to the topic of flight during the Nazi era and have experience with migration. We were able to interest Itamar Makover, an Israeli illustrator and graphic designer living in Sweden, for the project. One of his grandparents was a German speaking Jew who fled Danzig to Palestine in the 1930s. His other grandparents immigrated to Israel after surviving the Holocaust.

CHALLENGES & CHANCES

One of the things that characterize non-formal education is flexibility and the ability to modify plans according to participants' needs. Starting in the summer of 2021, the project was implemented during the Corona pandemic, which affected our planned schedule, but which also, understandably, caused many of the students to feel discouraged. In response, we reduced the frequency of meetings and tried to adapt the content and form of the project to the new needs of the participants.

On 24 February 2022, during the second phase of the project, Russia invaded Ukraine. On one hand, this made the topic of flight even more relevant. At the same time, however, the students became involved in protest and relief actions, which caused delays in the completion of the interviews and publication of this brochure.

PROJECT PROGRAM

April 2021

Presentation of the project at the Schiller-Gymnasium history conference

August 2021

Establishment of the "Working Group on Flight and Migration" at Schiller-Gymnasium in Berlin

September 2021

First meeting at the school. Motivation to deal with the topic, mind map

Early October 2021

Guided tour through the Scheunenviertel in Berlin-Mitte, which addressed Jewish migration to Berlin and ways of escaping from Berlin (and Germany) during the Nazi era

Late October 2021

Workshop on "Language and Migration"

Early December 2021

Workshop with a Berlin historian on the anti-Jewish laws and "How to Research Biographies of Former Students"

January/February 2022

Reflecting on and searching for interview partners; delays due to the pandemic and war in Ukraine

March 2022

Workshop on "How to Conduct Interviews"

May/June 2022

Completion of biographies and interviews

HOW DID WE WORK?

ESTABLISHING A “FLIGHT AND MIGRATION WORKING GROUP” AND THE FIRST MEETING AT THE SCHOOL

As with many of our long-term projects, it was always proven beneficial to have the students send us a letter explaining why they wanted to participate in the working group. However, it became clear to us in the summer of 2021 that because of the Corona pandemic, many students were feeling overwhelmed and were therefore reluctant to take on additional school work or commitments. We therefore decided to lower the threshold for participation to a minimum – advertising the working group to the student body via posters hung at the school. We would, however, recommend the use of application letters, as they enable a first reflection on a topic and the question: “what does this have to do with me?”. Twelve students participated in the project, eight of whom conducted and handed over interviews.

At the first meeting, we introduced the project and asked the youngsters what their motivation was for participating in the project and what expectations they had. It was striking and fascinating that only one participant mentioned having a family connection to the topic of flight and migration. During the course of the project, however, it became evident that most of the students had a family connection to the topic, but had either not wanted to mention it in the beginning, or did not perceive themselves as having such a connection.



At this first meeting, the participants also created a mind map with terms that they associated with flight and migration.

GUIDED TOUR THROUGH THE SCHEUNENVIERTEL IN BERLIN-MITTE

Using local history as a reference point was another important aspect of the project. During a guided tour through the Scheunenviertel in Berlin-Mitte we had the opportunity to speak with Dr Carlos Meissner about Jewish migration to Berlin and ways of escaping from Berlin (and Germany) during the Nazi era. Other issues that came up were the feeling of belonging and to what extent a majority society lets members of a minority feel that they are a part of that society. Two places played a central role in these discussions: the New Synagogue at Oranienburger Strasse 9 and the five stumbling stones for the Kozower family that are imbedded in the pavement at the corner of Oranienburger Strasse and Grosse Hamburger Strasse.

The New Synagogue in Berlin opened in 1866 during a ceremony attended by Otto von Bismarck, the Prussian Prime Minister who would later become German Chancellor. It is a large, impressive building that was (and still is) a strong presence in the urban space and which through its architecture makes reference to a community that was not afraid to raise its head and be visible in public space.



It was once the largest synagogue in Germany with a capacity to seat 3200 guests.



Stumbling stones for Philipp, Gisela, Alice, Eva Rita and Uri Aron Kozower © Koordinierungsstelle Stolpersteine Berlin.

The stumbling stones for the Kozower family on Oranienburger Strasse at the corner of Grosse Hamburger Strasse tell a different story.

Philipp Kozower worked as a lawyer and notary in Berlin. From 1929-1943 he was a member of the board of Berlin's Jewish community. His wife, Gisela Kozower (née Herzberg), gave birth to three children: Eva Rita (1932), Alice (1934) and Uri Ahron (1942). Philipp and Gisela, born in 1894 and 1901, who did not have Jewish names themselves, chose to give their first two children German names – a clear sign of their German identity. However, by the time their third son was born in 1942, they named him Uri Aharon.

The family was deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto on 28 January 1943 and deported from there to Auschwitz on 12 October 1944. None of them survived.

Using local stories make history seem closer, more tangible and relevant.

WORKSHOP ON "LANGUAGE AND MIGRATION"

The aim of the third workshop was to address the focus put by the media on refugee children in contrast to the attention given to adults in the same situation. The media in this case only mirrors a general view in society regarding the chances and challenges of aiding refugees but also the fear of real or imagined consequences.

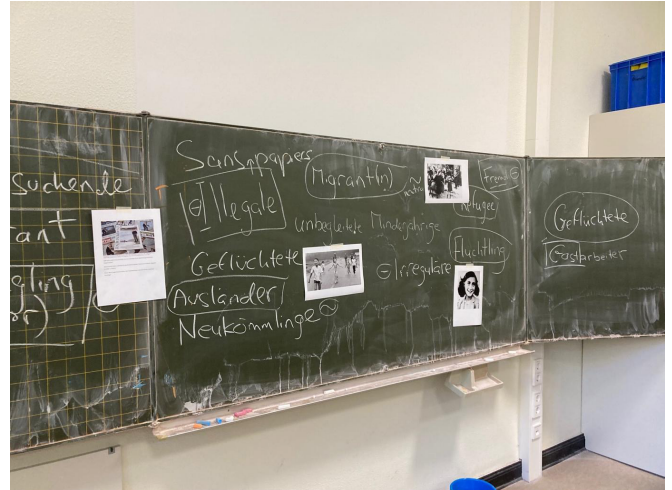
In the Nazi era, Jewish children fled to England on Kindertransports without their parents; today young refugees who arrive without their parents are referred to as "unaccompanied minors." We began by collecting and reflecting on the various terms used to refer to "refugees." Since all our participants came from the European section of the Schiller-Gymnasium, we were able to collect both German and English terms. We labelled them "positive," "negative" or "neutral" and discussed how they influence our view of refugees.

In the next phase, we focused more intensely on the term "unaccompanied minors" and discussed the following questions:

Why do children become a symbol for societal events?

Why is it easier to evoke empathy for children?

Why might it be easier to speak about refugee children than about adult refugees?



The workshop program and content can be found at ["Nowhere to Go. Jewish Refugees, 1938-39"](#) – a Project of the House of the Wannsee Conference – Memorial and Educational Site and the Massuah Institute for Holocaust Studies in Israel.

THIRD WORKSHOP, PART 1: WHEN AND HOW DOES ONE DECIDE TO EMIGRATE OR TO FLEE?

It is difficult for both adults and young people to grasp the Shoah in all its complexity, its enormous geographical scope and vast numbers of victims. In the limited time reserved for history class, it is also difficult to distinguish the different “stages of extermination” (exclusion, definition, stigmatisation and, finally, murder).

In this workshop we used the anti-Jewish laws to visualize the gradual process in which German Jews were excluded from society and persecuted. In addition, we explored the question of whether people are able to understand that they need to prepare to emigrate or flee and if so, at what point.

I learned a lot about flight and migration and the difficulties of Jews who wanted to escape during the Nazi era. I used to think that it wasn't that difficult to escape from Germany and I wondered why so few Jews left the country when the Nazis came to power. Now I know that it wasn't as foreseeable as I had thought. Laws that separated the Jews from other people were introduced gradually. By the time it was clear that things weren't right, it was too late. Living in a different country can be difficult because one doesn't always feel comfortable, even when the living standard is theoretically better.

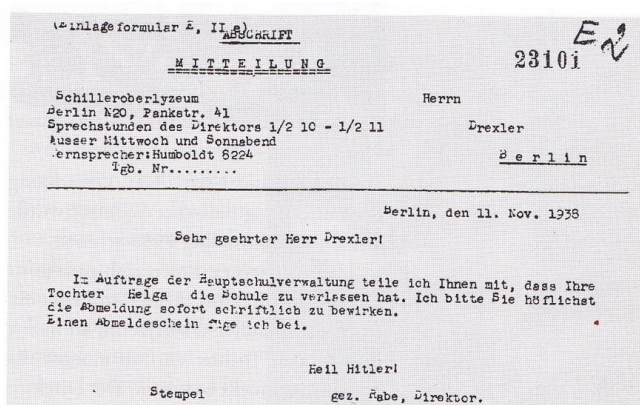
- Deborah P., 10th grade



THIRD WORKSHOP, PART 2: HOW TO RESEARCH THE BIOGRAPHIES OF FORMER STUDENTS AND OTHERS WHO WERE PERSECUTED BY THE NAZI REGIME

To begin we handed the participants a copy of a source: a letter from the director of the Schiller-Oberlyzeum (upper school for girls) to the Drexler Family, 11 November 1938, which stated:

On behalf of the school administration, I am informing you that your daughter Helga must leave the school. I kindly ask you to cancel her enrollment in writing immediately. I have enclosed a deregistration form.



On 11 November 1938, Jewish students were expelled from all schools in Berlin by order of the mayor of Berlin, Julius Lippert. One of them was Helga Drexler.

Four days later, on 15 November 1938, the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and National Education expelled all Jewish children from public schools. The order stated that "Jews are not allowed to attend German schools. They may only attend Jewish schools. Insofar as this has not yet been done,

all Jewish pupils currently attending a German school are to be expelled immediately."

After discussing the letter's content and context with the participants, they were given QR codes leading to different databases including the [Federal Archives Memorial Book](#), the [Arolsen Archives Online Archive](#), the [Statistics of the Holocaust](#) website and the [Stumbling Stones in Berlin](#) search site. We tried to find Helga Drexler and her father Bruno Drexler and attempted to reconstruct their story.

1 Ergebnis

ALS CSV EXPORTIEREN NACH GEBURTSDATUM SORTIERT ABSTEIGEND

Drexler, Bruno Jonathan
(* 28.12.1892 in Pirmasens)

Ihre Sucheinstellungen

Drexler, Bruno Jonathan
geboren am 28. Dezember 1892 in Pirmasens/Bayern (Pfalz)
wohnhaft in Pirmasens und in Berlin (Wedding)
DEPORTATION ab Frankfurt a. Main - Berlin 24. September 1942, Raasku (b. Reval), Tötungsstätte
TODESDATUM 00.00.1943
TODESORT Tartu (Estland), Arbeits- und Konzentrationslager für tot erklärt

Arolsen Archives Suchen Archiv erkunden

Archival tree units -

Personen 11 Datensätze gefunden Filter

Nachn.	Vorname	Geburt	Geburt	Geburt	Primo
DRECHSLER	HELGA		Berlin	05/30/1925	
DREXLER	HELGA		Berlin	05/30/1925	78742
DREXLER	HELGA			06/30/1925	
DREXLER	HELGA		Berlin	05/30/1925	
DREXLER	Helga			05/30/1925	

Alle Ergebnisse anzeigen

Herzlich willkommen im Online-Archiv!

Die Arolsen Archives sind ein internationales Zentrum über NS-Verfolgung mit dem weltweit umfassendsten Archiv zu den Opfern und Überlebenden des Nationalsozialismus. Die Sammlung mit Hinweisen zu rund 17,5 Millionen Menschen beinhaltet Dokumente zu den verschiedenen Opfergruppen des NS-Regimes und ist eine wichtige Wissensquelle für die heutige Gesellschaft.

Ein großer Teil der rund 30 Millionen Dokumente ist inzwischen im Online-Archiv der Arolsen Archives verfügbar. Die Zahl der suchbaren Namen und Stichwörter wächst kontinuierlich.

Unser Online-Archiv ist 2020 mit dem European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award 2020 ausgezeichnet worden: Europas wichtigste

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Collectionen wurden entwickelt in

DFP

We invited the Berlin historian Marcus Gryglewski to join us in this workshop. In 2013, he and the information scientist Martina Knoll had researched the biographies of several former students of the Schiller school.

The Schiller-Gymnasium is located at Schillerstrasse 125-127 in the Berlin district of Charlottenburg. The Schiller-Realgymnasium, renamed Clausewitz-Oberschule in 1938, used to be located on the same street.

At the end of the war, after their school building was destroyed, its students moved from Schillerstrasse 25/26 to Schillerstrasse 125-127. Although the Schiller-Realgymnasium does not share any physical similarities with the building that houses the current Schiller-Oberschule today, the school's handwritten "departures book" to which an handwritten "admissions book" was later added, was compiled as part of the research for the 100th anniversary of the Schiller-Oberschule in 2013.

On the basis of research carried out by the former school teacher, Mr Hans-Jürgen Müller, and with funding from the Remembrance, Responsibility, Future Foundation (EVZ), the Memorial and Educational Site House of the Wannsee Conference, was able to conduct a research project on the biographies of former pupils of the Schiller Realgymnasium who were persecuted by the Nazis and later publish its results.

We offered the participants a further research on former pupils of the school. Zarina K. chose to look at the biography of Joachim "Schuschu" Simon (see p. 16).

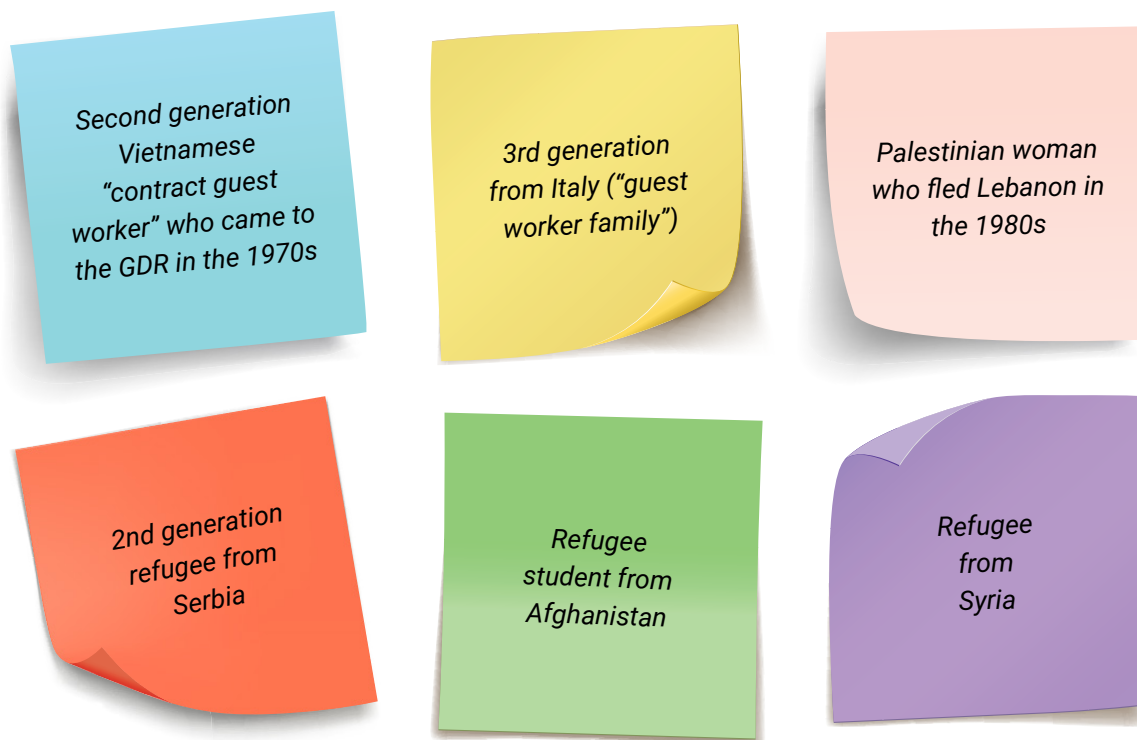
1938.

Laufende No.	Vatersname	Vorname	Konf.	Geburtsort	Geburtsdag	Stand des Vaters
21	Lieck	Spring Otto	ev.	Lennestadt	21.7.24.	Landwirtsch. Ingenieur
22	Schaller	Spring Fritz	ev.	Berlin	21.7.26.	Ing. Arch.
23	Trankhäcker	Heinrich	ev.	Stettin	22.6.25.	Arzt St. med.
24	Holländer	Heinrich	ev.	"	15.1.24.	Landwirtsch. Ing.
25	Wagner	Heinrich Peter	ev.	"	22.9.23.	Landwirtsch.
26	Freund	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	22.1.24.	Landwirtsch.
27	Linn	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	14.3.27.	"
28	Lazar	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	21.7.26.	Arzt St. med.
29	Schmittke	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	21.10.24.	Landwirtsch.
30	Wegler					
31	Lassalle	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	18.11.26.	Landwirtsch.
32	Kohl	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	15.5.24.	Landwirtsch.
33	Bothe	Heinrich	ev.	Hamburg	18.4.22.	Landwirtsch.
34	Schillermeit	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	16.9.23.	Landwirtsch.
35	Schulze	Heinrich	ev.	Stettin	3.2.28.	Landwirtsch.
36	Wegler	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	18.11.23.	Landwirtsch.
37	Heisenberg	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	6.11.26.	Landwirtsch.
38	Priefer	Heinrich	ev.	Marburg	2.9.27.	Landwirtsch.
39	"	Heinrich	ev.	Frankfurt	24.7.26.	Landwirtsch.
40	Steller	Heinrich	ev.	Berlin	21.5.24.	Landwirtsch.

The "departures book" of Schiller-Realgymnasium. It documents which students were forced to leave the school in November 1938.

WORKSHOP ON HOW TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

During the last workshop we focused on how to conduct interviews and what topics to address during an interview. The participants were divided into smaller groups and given a list of imaginary interview partners. They discussed what questions might be relevant to ask this person and which questions had no relevance at all.



Aya Zarfati, research associate at the House of the Wannsee Conference

JOACHIM SIMON

Zarina K.



Joachim "Schuschu" Simon was born in Berlin Charlottenburg in 1919. His father was a lawyer; his mother died a year after he was born.

He began attending a small Jewish school in Berlin in 1926 and entered secondary school in 1932. It was during this time that he joined a Zionist youth group.

He spent a lot of time with his aunt in Frankfurt and moved there to live with his grandparents in 1933, after his father left Berlin with his new wife. He attended the Friedrichs Gymnasium (high school) in Frankfurt. After his father died in 1935, Joachim returned to Berlin and went to the Jewish high school. He completed his *Abitur* degree in 1937 and began his *Hakhshara* in Ellguth (where Jewish men and women prepared to make *Aliyah*, which means immigrating to Palestine).

He became part of the *Hechaluz* movement (a Zionist organization that organized *Hakhshara* and *Aliyah*) and was eventually accepted into the leadership. He married his wife, Adina, at this time. After the German occupation in 1940, Joachim tried to immigrate to England, but his efforts were blocked. This is when the transports from Germany to the East began.

Joachim joined forces with a Dutch teacher named Joop Westerweel and organized a network that helped young Jewish men and women escape from Holland. Their route went through Belgium, France and Switzerland to Spain. Joachim wanted to travel to France in January 1943 when he was arrested by Nazis in the south of Holland. He took his own life while in captivity.

"SIMON WAS TRAVELING TO FRANCE IN JANUARY 1943 WHEN HE WAS ARRESTED BY NAZIS IN THE SOUTH OF HOLLAND. HE TOOK HIS OWN LIFE WHILE IN CAPTIVITY."

The *Hakhshara* camp in Ellguth was closed down by Nazis during the Pogrom Night of 1938. Joachim was arrested and imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp, but his non-Jewish stepmother, who had Nazi relatives, was able to secure his release after a few weeks. Shortly thereafter, he immigrated to Holland, where he continued the *Hakhshara* with a farmer.



The Westerweel group continued its work after Joachim Simon's death and also after Joop Westerweel died in 1944. They succeeded in getting 200 Jews out of Holland.

JOACHIM SIMON



ZARINA K.
Age 15, 9th grade

My name is Zarina and I am 15 years old. I was born in Berlin, but both of my parents moved here from different countries, so the topic of flight and migration has always been a part of my life. Luckily, both had the freedom of leaving their country because they wanted to do so. I wouldn't say that my view of the topic changed. However, in working on this project, I definitely gained a greater understanding of it, specifically in the context of Nazi Germany. After researching and writing about Joachim Simon, who not only had to deal with the dangers he faced personally as a Jew at that time, but also helped others escape this danger, I have even more respect for those who are forced to leave their country today.

FLEEING FROM SILESIA

Julian H.



After World War II, the Soviet Union took control of a large part of the counties that it had liberated from the Nazis, including the eastern section of Poland. The people who lived there were forced to move westward. Poland was provided a part of Germany which was where the expelled citizens from eastern Poland were supposed to relocate to. Silesia was a part of the new Poland. This is where Christa lived until she was six years old.

How old are you?

C: I am 83 years old and was born on January 10, 1939.

Where are you from?

C: I come from Qualkau in Silesia in what is today Poland.

Why did you leave your hometown?

C: I first fled from the Red Army and then I was forced to leave Qualkau because we were not a part of Poland.

When did you decide to flee?

C: We never really made the decision. We were first evacuated by train to Pisek.

What was your role in fleeing?

C: I was only six, so my job was just to stay with my mother and watch after my luggage.

Were the other people in your family happy about the decision to flee?

C: We left our home and had no idea how long we would be gone so we were all pretty sad and scared.

Where did you flee to and how long did it take for you to get there?

C: We fled to Pisek, Czechoslovakia. It took a week because the train was very slow. And because many of the tracks had been damaged in the war.

How did you pay for the move?

C: We begged and my mother earned money from sewing.

What happened to the people who didn't have enough money to flee?

C: They received a little food from the German government until the end of the war.

Did anyone help you during your flight?

C: A friend of my mother's whom I call Aunt Ellie fled with us and helped us with food.

Do you know anyone else whom you met while you were fleeing?

C: Everyone who survived the evacuation that I knew is now dead. The only thing I still have from that time is my old doll.

Did you have much time to pack before you fled?

C: We didn't have much time but my mother packed well. We left a lot behind but we took everything with us that we could carry.

Did you help other people during the trip?

C: No, since I was only six it was more me who needed help than me helping others.

**"I WAS ONLY SIX,
SO MY JOB WAS JUST
TO STAY WITH MY
MOTHER AND WATCH
AFTER MY LUGGAGE."**

What was the most difficult thing for you to leave behind?

C: My homeland itself because that was everything to me and it is very hard to leave your birthplace.

What do you miss the most?

C: I miss the great dollhouse that my sister gave me for Christmas and furnished herself.

How did it feel to not have a home anymore?

C: It was terrible because we couldn't meet all our basic needs, like washing or going to the toilet.

How do you think your life would have been different had you stayed in your homeland?

C: We still would have spent most of the time in Berlin, but we would have still had Silesia in the summer as a holiday spot. I probably would have met totally different people and I'm sure my life would have been very different.

Can you imagine returning to your hometown?

C: No, because I am too old for that now and don't speak Polish.

**"WE LEFT OUR HOME
AND HAD NO IDEA HOW
LONG WE WOULD BE
GONE SO WE WERE
ALL PRETTY SAD AND
SCARED."**

Do you sometimes dream of your homeland?

C: No, I don't dream of it. But I am still traumatized by the expulsion. During the journey, I saw lots of women get raped by Russian soldiers. That has stayed with me until today and will probably never go away. That is why I sometimes still get a bad feeling when I hear Russian.

The journey ended in 1946. The family arrived at a resettlement camp in Taucha near Leipzig. Silesia is now a part of Poland.

FLEEING FROM SILESIA

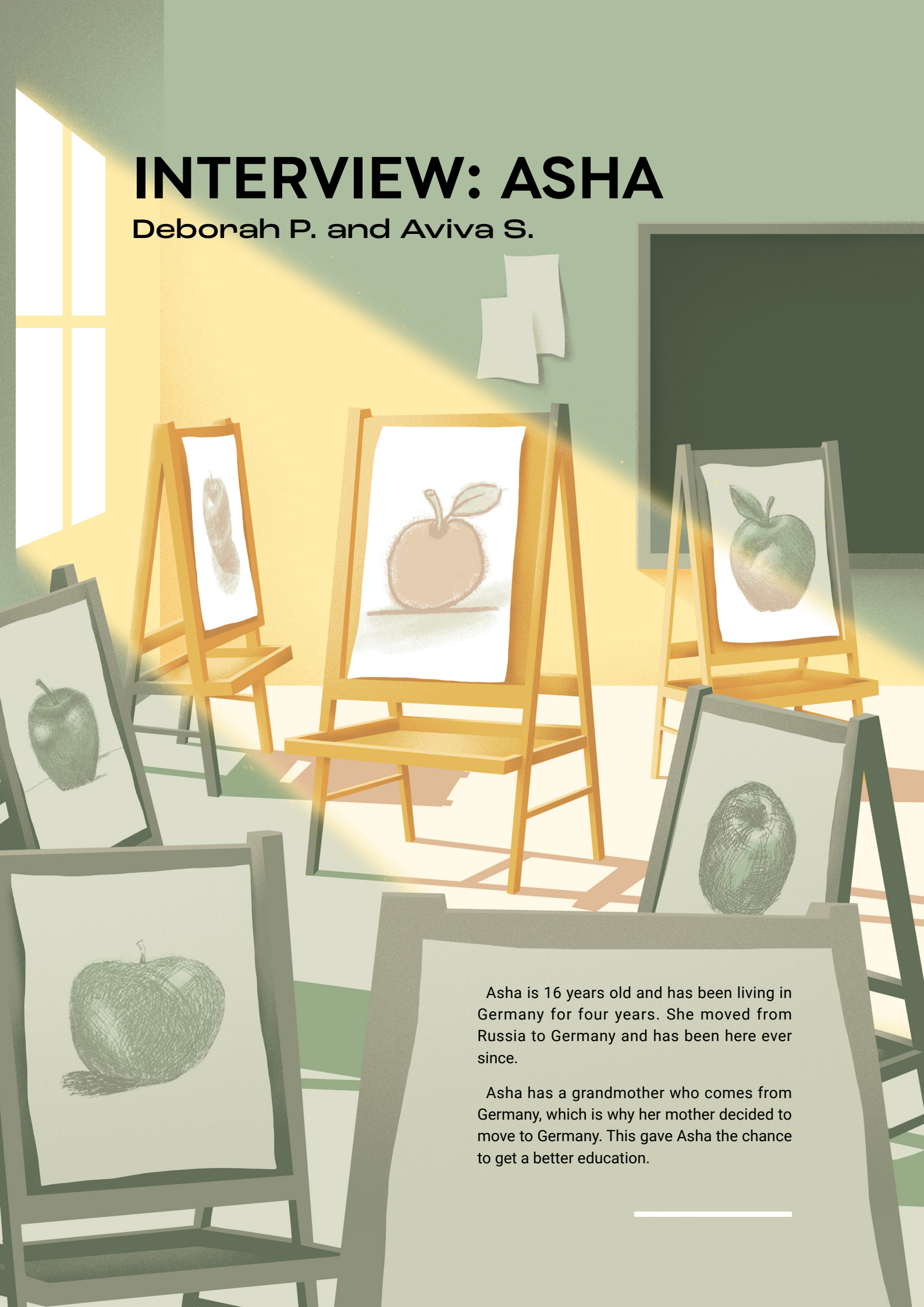


JULIAN H.
Age 15, 9th grade

To me, flight means that the world is still not a nice place for everyone because there are still reasons for people to leave their homes and start a new life. This became even more clear to me during this project and showed me even more that we absolutely must help the people who are coming from Ukraine so that they don't feel totally lost.

INTERVIEW: ASHA

Deborah P. and Aviva S.



Asha is 16 years old and has been living in Germany for four years. She moved from Russia to Germany and has been here ever since.

Asha has a grandmother who comes from Germany, which is why her mother decided to move to Germany. This gave Asha the chance to get a better education.

When Asha learned that she was moving, she was pretty depressed. She didn't want to move, but she didn't have any say in the matter. She had to leave behind her grandparents and her cats. Her parents also owned a house in Moscow, where they lived and they had no idea what to do with it. The first thing that she wanted to bring with her was her coloring pens.

Her family traveled to Germany by airplane and she expected German to be a hard and gruff language, but that wasn't the case. She also thought that the schools in Germany would be the same as in Russia. That is one thing that she prefers to Russia. But that doesn't mean that her first visit to Germany went smoothly.

She didn't feel welcome when she arrived. Although she was accepted into a "welcome class," she was teased by the other students and called dumb. She had a hard time making friends because she was bullied by many people. She regretted the move and still often thinks about whether it was the right choice.

It wasn't until she got to her third school that she began to make friends. It turned out that school, finding friends and learning German were the things she struggled with the most when she came to Germany.

She is still in contact with her friends but because they have been separated for such a long time they don't speak very often.

Although she thought that the German schools would be the same as the ones in Russia, she was pleasantly surprised to find that she preferred the German schools because they took more time with their subjects and taught more.

The art and music classes are much different too. Asha says that the schools in Russia don't

take subjects like art and music as seriously as they do in Germany. They would just draw an apple in class and then they were done. The Russian schools also didn't have events like Project Week or problems with bullying. If you don't like your teacher and this causes problems, you don't have any way of opposing them, you just have to live with it.

"ASHA HAS A GRANDMOTHER WHO COMES FROM GERMANY, WHICH IS WHY HER MOTHER DECIDED TO MOVE TO GERMANY. THIS GAVE ASHA THE CHANCE TO GET A BETTER EDUCATION."

Culture and food are things that she appreciated more in Russia. She also thinks she enjoys the Russian holidays more although Asha still likes German holidays like Halloween. Asha found it hard to get used to the country since the Russians only spoke with her in Russian and the others didn't speak to her at all.

Asha says that the people in Russia and Germany are different because the Germans are more open. In response to the question of whether she sees herself as German, she replied, "not really."

Although she misses her homeland, she thinks life in Russia is hard because of money and the high prices, and that she won't go back until she is older and successful. Success for Asha means finding a job that you like a lot and can keep working in and when you have achieved everything in life that you wanted and have time to spend on other things, like hobbies.

happening in Ukraine is good and although Asha and her parents were able to convince them that it not true, her grandparents could be arrested if they tried to tell this to others. Asha says that it is difficult being Russian because the people are not allowed to express themselves in their country, but they are blamed by others. It is like they are being attacked from both sides.

"ASHA SAYS THAT THE SCHOOLS IN RUSSIA DON'T TAKE SUBJECTS LIKE ART AND MUSIC AS SERIOUSLY AS THEY DO IN GERMANY. THEY WOULD JUST DRAW AN APPLE IN CLASS AND THEN THEY WERE DONE."

When the war broke out in Ukraine, Asha worried that she would be blamed for it. But people were supportive and considerate. She even managed to make friends with a few Ukrainians. But she has lost contact with her family in Ukraine because they blame Asha and her family for the war. Asha understands these feelings and respects them, but they still make her a little sad. Her grandparents in Moscow watch the news and are influenced by the propaganda. They think that what is

INTERVIEW ASHA



DEBORAH P.
Age 16, 10th grade

My name is Deborah Petzke, my mother comes from Nigeria and came to Germany to study. I am always interested when my mother speaks about her experiences when she came to Germany. I joined the Flight and Migration Workshop to learn more about the lives of Jewish people during the Nazi era.

I learned a lot about flight and migration and the difficulties of Jews who wanted to escape during the Nazi era. I used to think that it wasn't that difficult to escape from Germany and I wondered why so few Jews left the country when the Nazis came to power. Now I know that it wasn't as foreseeable as I had thought. Laws that separated the Jews from other people were introduced gradually. By the time it was clear that things weren't right, it was too late. Living in a different country can be difficult because one doesn't always feel comfortable, even when the living standard is theoretically better.



AVIVA S.

Age 14, 10th grade

My name is Aviva. I, personally, was lucky to be born in Berlin, a very open city at a time when equal rights in many areas have been achieved more than ever before.

My father, for example, is one of many people who did not have this good fortune. He grew up in an Ethiopia that I, personally, can hardly imagine, even from everything he has told me, and during a time when many things were not as advanced as they are today.

I joined the Flight and Migration working group because I wanted to learn more about Jews and other groups that were targeted by the Nazis and that suffered a lot during the Shoah.

Thanks to this project, I learned about that but I also became aware of other things.

I remember one time during geography class when my teacher asked why people who live in dangerous areas on the earth don't just move to less dangerous areas. Now I understand that it is not always that easy, for one because it is often hard to immigrate when, from the perspective of the other country, you don't

bring any advantages with you, and also because people are often attached to their homeland. Many people have to leave anyway and often aren't able to bring much with them. The people, if they are even allowed in to begin with, have a hard time settling into the new place.

I think it is very important to give these people a voice and to learn about their stories, which is why I was very glad to be able to participate in this project.

INTERVIEW WITH A REFUGEE FROM SYRIA

Salma A.



Many people fled to Germany in 2014 because the situation in Syria was getting worse. I interviewed a woman with a migration background who wanted to remain anonymous.

She didn't know anything about Germany and never thought about moving there. She has been living here now for seven years.

Before she moved to Germany, she lived in a city called Homs and worked for the state. But she had to stop working a year before she moved because all the streets were blocked.

Her husband and her child eventually sought asylum in Germany and had to undergo a very hard journey to get there. Then they were able to bring her – the wife – to Germany without her having to seek refuge on her own.

Her daughter, who is older than 18, had to come over alone as a refugee. Without any way of communicating with her, she worried a lot about her daughter until she arrived safely.

Now the entire immediate family, except for her mother, the grandmother, lives in Germany. She came directly with her family to Berlin and has been living here ever since. For her, Berlin, with its diverse population, was the best option. Except for a few unpleasant moments, she was generally treated positively.

She said it was hard to leave her mother and this was the most difficult decision when they were considering leaving Syria. When I asked her whether she could imagine ever returning to Syria, she said she would only return to visit her mother, but could otherwise never imagine going back. She told me that she has established a good life with her family here and even has grandchildren now whom she doesn't want to leave. And she also has a job here and enjoys the safe surroundings in Germany.

I asked her what was the most difficult thing she had to deal with since she arrived here. She said it was learning the language. Although she attended classes, she couldn't motivate to complete the B2 course because she thought it was senseless at the time. She realized that she needed to speak to other people to improve her language skills. Then she took a few courses through the

organization *Stadtteilmütter* where she works.

Although she doesn't think her German is fluent yet, she sees that she is still making progress and is able to have conversations without difficulty.

**"SHE SAID IT WAS
HARD TO LEAVE HER
MOTHER AND THIS WAS
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DECISION WHEN THEY
WERE CONSIDERING
LEAVING SYRIA."**

I could tell from the way she spoke about Germany that she is really happy to be here now and she told me that she can't imagine what it would be like if she had gone to a different country. She has established a new life in Germany, and now has an even bigger family than before she arrived. Her youngest child is even doing his Abitur degree this year.

I am happy that I had the opportunity to meet her and to see how other Syrians have established themselves here in Germany. The huge change may have been difficult, but fortunately, she has a pleasant life here.

INTERVIEW WITH REFUGEE FROM SYRIA



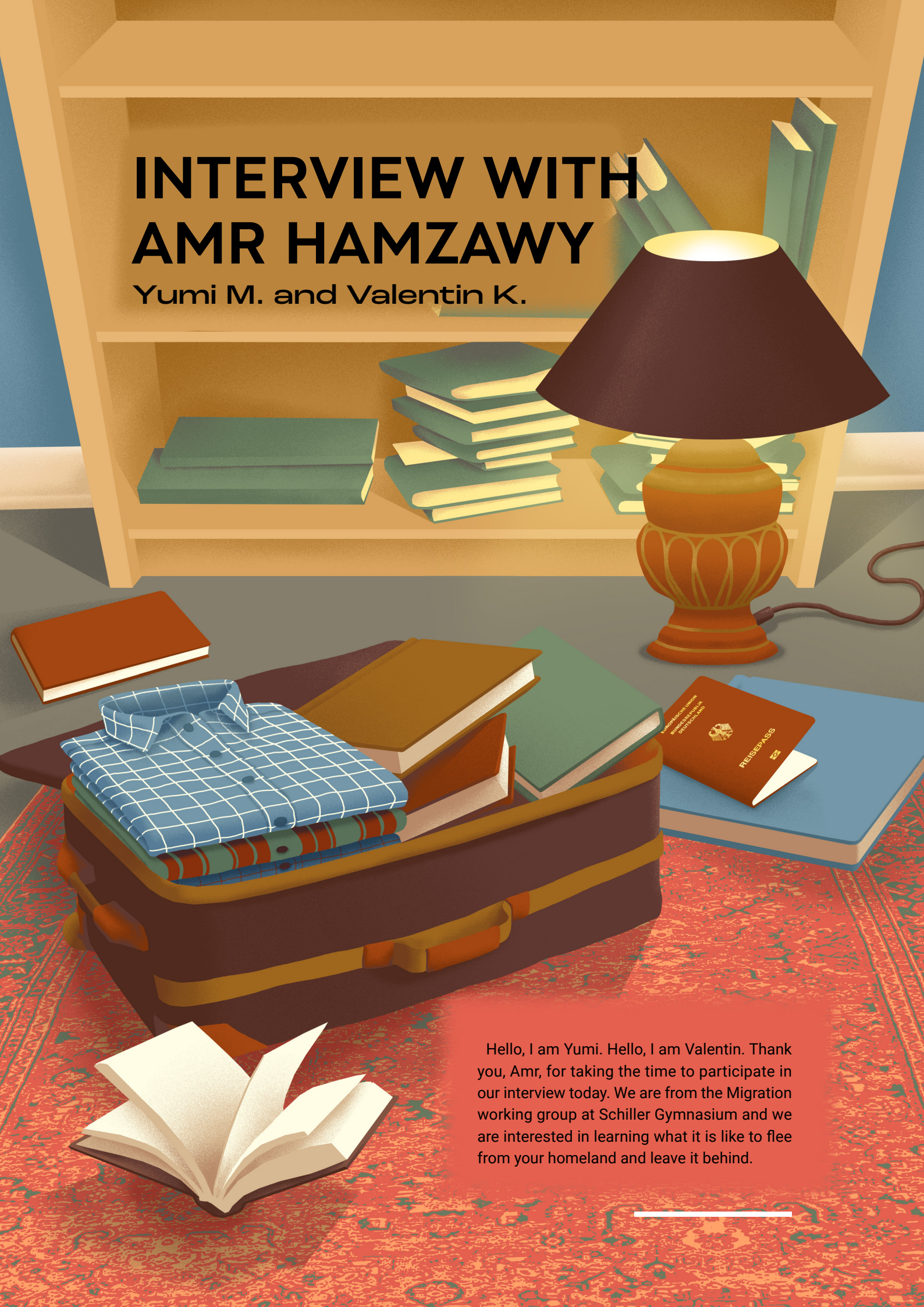
SALMA A.

Age 14, 9th grade

My name is Salma. I am 14 years old and attend the 9th grade at Schiller Gymnasium. I come from Syria and have been living in Germany for only five years. Both my parents come from Syria. When I heard about the working group, I immediately wanted to take part. Since I have my own migration background, it was a topic that appealed to me. It was good to learn about other people's relationship to migration and about the migration experiences of other people. Today, because of the situation in Ukraine, this topic is discussed a lot. Many people have to leave their homeland now and move to a foreign place, similar to many situations in the past. I hope that these people stay safe during their journey and are welcome in other countries without being labeled foreign. People have to learn from past mistakes and improve over time.

INTERVIEW WITH AMR HAMZAWY

Yumi M. and Valentin K.



Hello, I am Yumi. Hello, I am Valentin. Thank you, Amr, for taking the time to participate in our interview today. We are from the Migration working group at Schiller Gymnasium and we are interested in learning what it is like to flee from your homeland and leave it behind.

Could you first briefly introduce yourself?

"Gladly. I come from Cairo, Egypt. My name is Amr and my last name is Hamzawy. I was born in 1967 and lived in Cairo until I completed my first university degree, so until 1991. I attended school and university in Cairo. I began studying political science in Cairo and received my first degree, my bachelor, in Cairo. Then I began writing my master's thesis in Amsterdam and my dissertation in Berlin. I lived in Berlin continuously for ten years, from 1994 to 2004, and received my doctorate in political science from the Free University of Berlin. After that I spent several years in the US, from 2005 to 2010. Then I returned to Cairo to work at Cairo University in the political science department and was involved there in the revolution that took place in Egypt in 2011. I was subsequently elected to the Egyptian parliament. I had always had a difficult time as a liberal politician in a country that is primarily governed by the army or religious forces. In 2013 the military government wanted to punish me and issued a ban that prevented me from leaving the country. I was not allowed to leave Egypt for two years. The ban was lifted in 2015 and then I left the country. Since then I have been living in exile in both Berlin and America, which is where I am currently."

What did your daily life look like in Egypt when you were there?

"My daily life in Egypt, and I am referring now mostly to the years right before I left and went into exile, so the years between 2011 and 2015, were dominated mostly by my political activities. In 2011 and 2012 I was deeply involved in politics and that characterized my daily life. I was busy around the clock with parliament meetings, political consulting and media interviews. I was able to find a little time for my family, mostly on holidays and during school breaks. At the time my two sons were living in Berlin. I always visited them. I was

basically able to spend a week with them in Berlin every three or four weeks, or they came to Cairo. That also influenced my daily life, so my political commitments and involvement with my children in Berlin or in Egypt. When you work in politics, in a country that is in the midst of trying to achieve democratic change (it was right after the revolution in 2011), these are very turbulent times. So my everyday life was also quite turbulent."

"I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE EGYPT AT ALL AND I BASICALLY DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO STAY IN EGYPT. THE TRAVEL BAN WAS A DRAMATIC EXPERIENCE."

Did you want to leave the country before you were sent into exile?

"No, no, I didn't want to leave Egypt at all and I basically did everything possible to stay in Egypt. The travel ban was a dramatic experience. It was not only the travel ban, but also the military government. Because I didn't want to participate: I couldn't approve of a military takeover of government affairs. I criticized them. I continued to write and speak out against them. They not only issued a ban on my leaving the country, but also banned me from teaching. I was not allowed to teach at

Cairo University, nor at the American University in Cairo where I had a professorship.

Professionally, I had been driven into a corner. My freedom was very restricted in regard to my mobility and my ability to reach my children in Berlin. But in spite of all that, I still wanted to stay in Egypt.

However, when the travel ban was lifted, I was informed, not officially, but unofficially informed by the government that it would be better if I left the country now if I didn't want to experience something terrible. That was an unmistakable threat that if I didn't leave the country, the next step would be my imprisonment. And in my view, in the view of my family, which was dispersed between Egypt and Germany, that was not acceptable. That is why I decided to leave the country involuntarily and go into exile."

Was it easy for you to get a residency permit then?

"Well, I had already acquired German citizenship before 2011. I was both an Egyptian and German citizen before 2011. When I decided to run for a seat in parliament in 2011, I had to give up my German citizenship. But after I gave it up, I had an unrestricted residency permit and that made it relatively easy for me to leave Egypt and flee to Berlin. Later, in July 2015, I went to America, to California, because I had an offer to teach at Stanford University which was also connected to a residency permit. The first step to leaving Egypt in a certain direction was set by the fact that I had a residency permit for Germany."

Did anyone help you leave Egypt?

"No, I didn't need any help. But I had to do it very quickly. Although the government or the state apparatus in Egypt had recommended that I leave the country, I didn't want to take any risks and tried to leave the country very

quickly. I had no idea what awaited me. That is a bad situation to be in when you are structurally on the weaker side. The government basically controls everything. Despite all the agreements, it can demand that you be arrested or issue another ban on your leaving the country. So I was already in a structurally weak situation and I had learned from previous years that when you want to do something in this kind of undemocratic setting or authoritarian environment, it is better to do it quickly. And so I decided to leave Egypt quickly. From one day to the next and to just bring one small suitcase with me, a carry-on, so as not to send an alarm signal and again be confronted by a government reaction without knowing what might come next. No one helped me but I had to leave Egypt very fast, in a helter-skelter action overnight."

"I DECIDED TO LEAVE EGYPT QUICKLY. FROM ONE DAY TO THE NEXT AND TO JUST BRING ONE SMALL SUITCASE WITH ME [...] NO ONE HELPED ME BUT I HAD TO LEAVE EGYPT VERY FAST, IN A HELTER-SKELTER ACTION OVERNIGHT."

How did your exile affect your relationship with your family?

"Part of my family was in Berlin; my sons were there. I also had family in Cairo. My daughter was there. When I left Cairo in 2015, I went first to my sons. Later my daughter came there too. But I had to travel to California in 2015 alone (that was my new job with which I could earn a bit of money to help my family). I have basically been living in the US since then. My children live in Berlin and in Cairo. This year I am in a very unusual and nice situation because my children are with me. But otherwise, the exile did affect my relationship with my family. I have tried and continue to try to be close to them by having set times when I am in Berlin. I am not allowed to go to Cairo or Egypt. I am not allowed to travel there without risking an act of revenge from the government and I don't know how far they would go or what they would do exactly. So I am not allowed and cannot go to Egypt and

**"I MISS THE PLACES
OF MY CHILDHOOD
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PLACES WHERE I
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IN MY CHILDHOOD
AND IN THE FIRST
YEARS OF MY LIFE."**

that is why Berlin and America have become the places where we meet as a family. But the exile has no doubt affected this."

Do you feel safe in California and Berlin or do you fear the Egyptian government?

"I feel safe in the sense that be it in Germany or the US, in Berlin or California, I live in countries in which the rule of law means a lot. Also, I have no worries there, I do not fear the Egyptian government there. What concerns me, and what hurts, is that I am unable to return to my homeland. I am of course quite pleased with my work in California. Despite the difficulties that the exile caused for my relationship with my children, we managed to stay close to one another in recent years and we have a great relationship. But what hurts is the restrictions on my freedom, in the sense that I am not allowed to or cannot return to my homeland."

What do you miss the most about Egypt?

"My places. I grew up in Cairo. And in Upper Egypt, in the southern part of the country. I miss the places of my childhood memories. The places where I spent a lot of time in my childhood and in the first years of my life. I miss the people, not just my extended family, but also the people in general. Egypt is a beautiful country. I love, I always loved living in Egypt. Just as I loved living in Berlin and now also in California. But home remains the place where you feel the most comfortable. I miss that. I also miss simply having my freedom. It is an experience of injustice. Here is a military government that does not want to have any adversaries and which uses unconstitutional means. This experience of injustice is painful. And that is why I also miss my freedom, my mobility. What they did to me and what they continue to do is basically unfair."

You were active in the parliament in Egypt. Do you still have influence over the population? Or are they prevented from seeing what you publish?

"That is a very good question, one basically never knows. I am currently writing a weekly article for an Arab-language newspaper that is also read in Egypt.

If it influences the views of a few people and if so, from how many, is a question that I cannot answer. If I were to wager a guess, I would say that my influence is pretty minimal for the mere reason that the current military government controls and monopolizes public debate in the sense that only the government's view is heard and everything else is cast in doubt. I think that my influence is pretty minimal, and can't be compared with the influence that I had between 2011 and 2015. But that's what comes with an authoritarian government. You just have to look at Russia to see that only one view is heard there: the view of the president. That's how it is in Egypt too. The people may have doubts, and may wish to hear critical voices. You never know how big or small the influence on the population is."

Do you think it will ever be possible for you to return to Egypt, and if so, would you go?

"The answer to the second question is definitely yes, I would like to do that. Is there hope? Yes. When the democratic uprising took place in Egypt in 2011, no one expected it. In the years of the democratic experiment between 2011 and 2013, no one expected that back then. That means that Egypt, like basically every country, is always able to surprise us. It is my hope that the current government will temper its relations towards independent critical intellectuals, like me, or that a positive political change will take place when Egypt opens itself up again to democracy or democratization. The first hope

that the government tempers its actions is modest. The second hope is not modest. That is the dream of a democratic Egypt of which many say the dream is over and has been since 2013, and that we should stop expecting it. But I still have hope on some level or another and I probably won't ever give that up. Even when you've been living in exile for decades, it is difficult to give up the hope of returning to your homeland."

"EVEN WHEN YOU'VE BEEN LIVING IN EXILE FOR DECADES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO GIVE UP THE HOPE OF RETURNING TO YOUR HOMELAND."

If we look back to the time when you left Cairo to study: Was it difficult for you to leave Egypt and did you know exactly what you wanted?

"That is also a good question. Leaving my mother was difficult in the beginning. I left the country when I was 21, after getting my first university degree in Cairo and after I had done my military service. I grew up in a family that was very close. I could have counted on one hand the number of nights I slept away from my parent's flat – my father died in 1987. Then to suddenly fly from Cairo to Amsterdam and to be away from my family, living apart from

my mother, was very, very hard. I remember that I spent the first weeks crying and wanted nothing more than to return to Cairo. My professors in Cairo at the time prevented me from doing that and with time things got better. Later I realized what I was searching for and exactly what it was I wanted. I wanted to get my doctorate in a certain discipline which is why by the time I left Amsterdam and returned to Cairo and then went to Berlin, it was clear what I wanted. That is why I was able to enjoy my time in Berlin much more than my time in Amsterdam. I felt very comfortable and became a part of my surroundings. I became a doctoral candidate in Berlin and lived in this community. Ten years that I spent in Berlin without interruption."

What did you think of Berlin or Germany before you arrived here and what did you expect?

"I had come to Berlin for academic reasons. I had written my master's thesis in Amsterdam with a focus on political theory. That is a field within political science. I wanted to go to Berlin to write my dissertation under two professors who were working on a certain topic within the political theory department. That's why, when you ask me what I knew about Berlin or Germany, I knew basically the academic side. That was the interest that brought me to Berlin. Over time this changed, over time my view broadened and I learned to greatly appreciate society, life in Berlin, the cultural landscape, the art scene, the music scene."

What led you to leave Berlin and return to Cairo?

"There were two situations in which I returned to Cairo. The first one was in 2004. I returned that time to teach at Cairo University. There was no political involvement. I taught in Berlin and then I moved to Cairo University to do the same job. The motivation was that I missed Egypt and I very much wanted my eldest son

who was one year old at the time to spend some time in Egypt, so that he would not only know Germany but also his second homeland, Egypt. The second time I returned was when I went from America to Cairo in 2010 and that is when I got involved in politics. That move was motivated by the fact that I missed Egypt. My mother had asked me to return for a few years because she missed me a lot. We had always had a very close relationship and I followed her advice, her request, her demand."

Did you feel accepted in Germany immediately?

"Yes, I still feel like a bi-national uni-person, who is part-Egyptian and part-German. I never felt unaccepted, and that was my good fortune, and that was true for the whole time I spent in Berlin, from the uninterrupted ten years and then later the more recent years up to now. During the academic year 2018/2019, I worked at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin for one academic year. No, I never felt uncomfortable. I always felt accepted. I didn't have any bad encounters because of my Arab name. I never had encounters where I felt unaccepted."

What language do you think and dream in?

"That is another great question. I continue to dream in German still today. The only explanation I have for this is that I learned the German language differently than my native language Arabic or even English, which I learned at school in Egypt. Learning German was a very intense process. I came to Berlin in 1994 to write my dissertation and didn't speak a word of German. I learned the language in a six-month intensive course which basically changed my life. After these intensive six months, I was not only able to read and speak, but I could also write well. Since then I have been dreaming in German. The more time I spend in Berlin, the more it becomes my main

language, the one in which I dream and think. When I write in English or Arabic, the mental structures that I have in my mind are more strongly influenced by German than by Arabic or English."

Did the move to Berlin or to California influence your political interests?

"Definitely. In my opinion, it is terrible to live in a country and not try to understand the conditions and changes taking place in that country. After I moved to Berlin and still today, I am very interested in German politics, culture and art, which is why Berlin also became my home. Unlike Cairo and Berlin, I would not call California my home. When I moved to California, my interest in American politics grew as well as my interest in the uniqueness of California, which is totally different from other states in the US. California is a liberal state with a lot of innovation and with a lot of 'cutting-edge technologies,' to use an English phrase. It was quite worthwhile to understand that and to get a feeling for it."

**"I HAD VERY LITTLE
TIME TO PREPARE
SO I TOOK A SMALL
SUITCASE WITH
PERSONAL THINGS
AND A FEW BOOKS."**

You mentioned earlier that you had to leave Egypt very quickly and could only take a small suitcase with you. How did you decide what to take with you and what to leave behind?

"I had very little time to prepare so I took a small suitcase with personal things and a few books. I thought at the time that I would be in exile for a year perhaps and that the situation in Egypt would improve and make it possible for me to return. It didn't turn out like that which is why when my relatives came to Germany or America from Egypt, I asked them to bring a few of my things with them, especially my books, which I needed for my work. This process is still not over even today. Seven years later."

So you are still moving?

"Yes, I am still moving. A lot of my books are still in Cairo."

How would you describe your daily life now?

"Another very good question. So when I described my daily life in Egypt I said it was turbulent. My daily life in California is focused on the university and academically calm, so with regular hours. My daily life has changed strongly since August 2021 because my three children now live with me. First my oldest son, then the two others. As a single father, daily life is different when you have children living with you. Their schooling, interests, and sports activities also influence my everyday life. But I would still describe my daily life as calm, organized, and very well structured. I still try to follow the events in Egypt and that brings an additional element into my daily life, namely the time difference. Living on the American west coast means that the time difference to Egypt is nine or ten hours, which is a lot and that also affects my daily life as I try to keep in touch with my family and friends in Egypt. That is a part of my daily life that I always have to consider."

You stressed earlier that it was important to you that your oldest son experience something of your home country. Was it important to you that your children grow up internationally and see a lot of the world?

“Well, that was definitely my goal from the start. When I look back, I am very grateful that my children were able to experience so much, not only as a result of all the travel between Germany, America and Egypt. Although I am not allowed to travel to Egypt, the children are. My two sons were in Egypt a year and a half ago. My daughter was there until August 2021. This constant movement between the three cultural areas was very good. We always tried to do even more. For one, we traveled together as a family to different countries and tried to see the beauty of these countries and become acquainted with the local culture. In addition, I decided with their mothers that the children should have an international education and attend bilingual schools and that is how it was for my sons in Berlin and my daughter in Cairo. And now that they are in America, the boys are bilingual, German and English, and my daughter is trilingual, German, English and Arabic. My oldest son speaks Arabic well, my younger son is getting better. Learning languages was a central part of their education.”

Thank you for this interview. Is there anything you would like to add before we conclude?

“First of all, thank you for the interview. Your questions were great. I am very impressed by how well you prepared everything and how you presented your questions. That was really great. I don’t have anything to add.”

In conclusion, do you perhaps have any words of advice for people who are fleeing and venturing to start a new life in a new country?

“Yes, that is a difficult question. Every person has to decide for themselves what to do in that

situation when they have to leave their country and venture into a new country. My advice is that it is absolutely crucial not to only live in the past but to also be accepting of the new country so that this country can become a new second home. I am not saying that one should forget their ‘first home.’ Sometimes you leave your home country with bitterness but that shouldn’t lead to hate or a mental block. One should always try to be accepting of the new country that took them in until it becomes a new home.

My second piece of advice is that it is very important to always look forward.

experiences such as losing or being forced from your homeland or having to flee because you are unsafe, these are dramatic experiences in life. One needs help in order to look forward. One needs guidance. It is very important that people who go through these kinds of experiences get professional therapeutic counseling. Unfortunately, therapeutic counseling is strongly stigmatized in the Middle East and in the Arab-Muslim world and I hope that this decreases over time and that people who come to Germany from Syria, Iraq, Libya, Egypt and other countries are open to getting counseling. Otherwise, it will be difficult to find closure with everything that happened in their life. And then they won’t be open to what the future brings or to the country that took them in.”

Thank you for this statement and also thanks for taking the time for this interview.

“My pleasure, I enjoyed it. Excellent work. Good luck to you.”

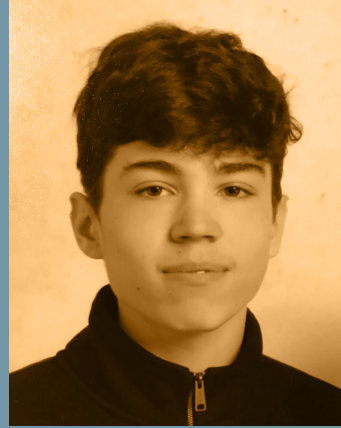


YUMI M.

Age 15, 10th grade

Hallo, my name is Yumi. I am 15 years old and in the 10th grade at Schiller Gymnasium in Berlin.

I have a personal connection to the topic of flight and migration because my mother immigrated from Korea to Germany to study and I am both Korean and German. My view of flight and migration has changed as a result of the war in Ukraine because I have more contact, in school for example, to people who fled. I am also confronted with many pictures of war in the news, newspapers and on the internet. In school we raised money and collected donations for Ukrainians. I think it is important to help the Ukrainians since everyone has a right to safety, freedom and peace.



VALENTIN K.

Age 16, 10th grade

I am Valentin and I decided to participate in the migration working group because I am interested in history and politics. My main motivation, however, was to learn more about people who fled during the Nazi era. As a German, I feel guilty about what happened. I would like to know more about what happened to former Jewish students who attended Schiller Gymnasium during this time.