Question 1.  
Why is it still important to remember the Holocaust so long after the event?

Gillian Walnes (GW):  
Well, is it so long after the event? You know, we work very closely with Holocaust survivors that can not only remember what they saw, the sights of the Holocaust, the terrible things they saw but they can also even smell it, it’s so vivid to them, it’s so close to them. Children at school, it’s their grandparents’ generation, what happened in their grandparents’ generation. It is important, not just for the survivors to show that we still are remembering, but it’s more about the issues that we can bring out, talking about what happened in those times and there are so many issues when you talk about young people today, how they can relate themselves to certain issues.

Dr. Toby Haggith (TH):  
First of all it’s an unprecedented event in world history, I mean not just n its scale, but in its level of what you might describe as premeditated organisation. It is unprecedented and sadly it’s a precedent that has been followed actually. I mean, to a lesser extent, one could argue that the genocide in Uganda was very similar in many ways to the Holocaust that we know of from 1933 onwards. The other thing you might say is, well what would happen if we didn’t remember it? What are the consequences of not remembering it? Not just remembering it but all the things that remembering means; that means actually documenting this event, thinking about it, talking about it, openly discussing it, finding ways of responding to it in a creative and intellectual way. What if we’d just brushed it under the carpet? What if we’d pretended it never happened? All the moral and ethical implications of doing that I think are really too enormous to possibly countenance and I think well, what’s the response, do we not remember it? Do we pretend that this didn’t happen? Surely we can’t do that and then there’s the other thing that my colleague touched on, you know, that it may have some lessons for us, the lesson from the history which is the way it’s often talked about and the way I’d like to talk about that is, the thing that always strikes me as a historian, the lesson that I draw from the Holocaust is that this came out of a democratic society, it started in, at least initially, a democratic society and European countries who were occupied by the Nazis during the Third Reich and where the Holocaust took place, many of them actively collaborated with the occupying forces and these are societies where democracy and civilisation has really reached what we might regard as a peak. Now the lesson that has for me is that our grasp on democracy and civilisation is very very fragile bindings
of democracy. The things that prevent us rushing towards savagery are easily brushed away and I think that that is the lesson that I would take that we need to hold on to democracy so closely, and we need to guard it so closely to avoid things like this happening again. So I think it’s got particular lessons for us in that regard and then finally I would say, some have argued that the Holocaust is so historically specific to the treatment of the Jews and to that particular historical time that really it shouldn’t be used as a lesson for today, because it just doesn’t apply and I know a lot of historians would say actually it’s not right for us to teach the Holocaust as citizenship for example, or to compare it to Rwanda, or to what’s happening in Darfur. Now yes, historically speaking what’s happening in Darfur and Rwanda, what happened to Yugoslavia is not exactly the same to what happened in the Holocaust, but first of all there are important striking similarities. The fact you might argue the lack of the international organisations which were after all set up at the end of the second World War to avoid the savagery and breakdown of democracy that had led to the second World War, they’re in action in the face of overwhelming evidence is really surely a worry, a pointer that we shouldn’t forget. And then the other thing is I’ve met quite a number of Holocaust survivors and indeed I’ve been with Holocaust survivors when we’ve talked to young people about the Holocaust and its implications for us in society and I’ve not met one Holocaust survivor who has argued that this shouldn’t provide a lesson for history, so I think we owe it to Holocaust survivors who go around like the Ancient Mariner feeling compelled to pass on the lesson or not just the lesson, the experience.

GW:
As you know, we use Anne Frank as a great tool and in her diary she writes about only dreaming about being able to vote and democracy and having a voice and this is something that young people can take very much for granted. We know that young people sort of vote in their millions when it comes to things like Big Brother but when they actually get an opportunity, when they become eighteen to vote in a national, of not, a local election, where they do have a voice in their community, do they use that? Do they take advantage? Do they appreciate the freedoms and the level of democracy that they’ve actually got? And this is definitely one of the most important lessons that you can take out of the Holocaust and yes, some people may say Hitler was voted in, but it wasn’t a democratic election as we would know it and once he was actually voted in, he set about dismantling all forms of democracy by then it was far too late. So it’s just one of the themes that we touch on and we talk about, you know that whole conversation where we talk
about history versus citizenship. We feel very strongly that this is about active and responsible citizenship.

**TH:**
Can I add something? I think that’s really important. You need to stand up and be counted, you need to show defiance and strength of character and you know, moral certainty and these are things that do take courage and all the lessons that history teach us that democracy is something that is not without a struggle and so defending democracy is not one without a struggle. It’s something which is actually an admirable characteristic and that’s also something that we would want to pass on to young people.

**GW:**
We do it. Every year we have the Anne Frank awards for the young people that carry out the values and the spirit of Anne Frank so we award young people here with an Anne Frank award for someone who has really taken responsibility and made a difference to those around them.