

The peace to end all wars

Thought for the Day

Ephraim Borowski (Director, Scottish Council of Jewish Communities)

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I don't know what moved me more when we marked the end of the First World War this week, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month – lamenting that monstrous loss of life, or anger that the so-called "war to end all wars" was no such thing.

World War 2 helped create the world we know today - but at the cost of millions more lives, this time not mainly in battle, but in the killing fields – and factories – of the Holocaust.

The beginning of that horror was also marked this week, when synagogues throughout Europe left their lights on all night on the 70th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, when Jewish homes throughout Germany were looted, families were rounded up and sent to the first camps, and synagogues were burned to the ground – and we all know how much worse it was to become, not just for Jews, but for other minorities as well.

That's why the symbolism of these brightly lit synagogues is so powerful – they blaze with light and positive energy, when once they blazed with fire and destruction, sending the message that we are proud to be who we are; they declare the amazing resilience of the human spirit, the capacity to overcome physical near-annihilation and create a better future.

So for those reasons, perhaps the most moving event I attended this week was the launch of the first UK branch of OneVoice, a joint Palestinian and Israeli grass-roots movement promoting coexistence and a two-state solution. I am proud to have been there to support Israeli and Palestinian speakers who acknowledge that the time has long-since come to stop the squabbling and to build a coalition for peace.

As one speaker said, finger-pointing and yelling "You started it", "No, you did", is for the kindergarten. It's the future that matters, and mature people – and mature nations – must understand that even though not everyone with whom they share the world loves them or deserves love, they will not go away. Coexistence and co-operation are the only rational way ahead.

Perhaps then we can build the *peace* that will end all wars.

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