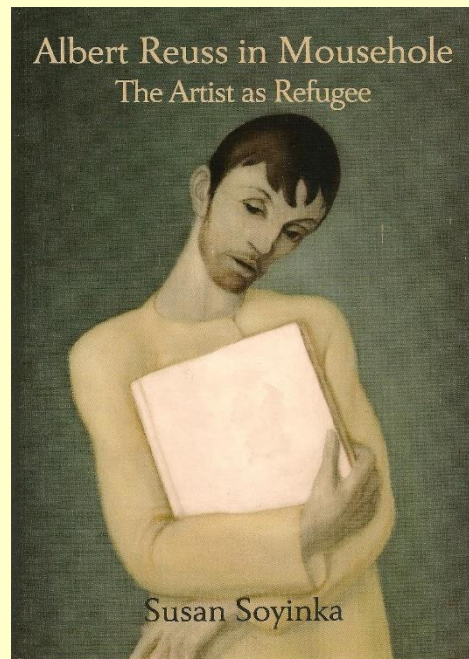


**Albert Reuss in Mousehole –
The Artist as Refugee
Susan Soyinka**

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In 1927 the Third Congress of European Minorities considered a report by Sir Willoughby Dickinson, which called for a thorough League of Nations Inquiry into all aspects of 'the minority problem'.

In 1929, one year after the first revived Gorsedh, John Sturge Stephens, a Cornish Quaker who was Professor of International History at Birmingham University, delivered a lecture, which was later published by the Hogarth Press, entitled '*Danger Zones of Europe – A Study of National Minorities*'. The League of Nations was trying to develop a 'covenant' which would assist minorities isolated by lines drawn at the Treaty of Versailles (and indeed throughout history, including by Athelstan and Hywel in the C10th!).



Stephens was later to assist Albert and Rosa Reuss to escape from Vienna as Nazism swept the city, persecuting Jews. The rush into exile, and the quickly adopted mindset of a refugee, affected both Albert's artistic (he was a painter and sculptor) and his art. Author, Susan Soyinka dubs Stephens 'the Cornish Schindler', in her new book, 'Albert Reuss in Mousehole – The Artist as Refugee'.

With Stephens' help the Reusses ended up in Mousehole, where they lived out their lives. Albert continued to paint and to explore the depth and intensity of his experiences through paintings which are compelling and beautiful. Rosa battled to develop Albert's reputation and market. He remained almost anonymous in Cornwall, and only slightly known elsewhere, but he painted constantly. In later life, after Rosa's death, John Halkes, then directing the Newlyn Art Gallery, successfully mounted a show of Albert's work.

Susan Soyinka wrote 'From East End to Land's End' about the evacuation of Jewish people to Cornwall during the War. It was a carefully researched, well written book which opened a door of understanding about the emotional and spiritual effects of evacuation, and of the impacts and persecution, and the thoughtful kindnesses which the evacuees found in Cornwall.

During her research the author discovered the story of Albert and Rosa Reuss, and she has returned to it in a book of great interest, again opening doors of insight, exploring the creativity of loneliness, and hopefully launching an effort to bring the works of Albert Reuss to a wider audience at a time when the themes and expressions of his art are all-the-more relevant and acute.

Newlyn Gallery owns a substantial collection of Reuss's work and mounted a small exhibition to celebrate publication of this book. It is the best Cornish biography since 'That Bloody Woman' by John Hall rekindled interest in Emily Hobhouse. The book not only tells a profound and real story clearly and with the assurance of a good writer, but also includes a significant section of illustrations which are, as Sanson is the publisher, very well reproduced.

It is to be hoped that Susan Soyinka's book is widely read, that Albert's posthumous reputation flourishes and that somebody takes-up the most interesting tale of John Sturge Stephens.

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