2013 was a year of change and development for René Cassin.

In January of 2013, following two years of leading growth at René Cassin Simone Abel announced that she would be stepping down as our Director. We will miss her and extend our thanks to her for her many contributions during her tenure.

Her successor, Shauna Leven has continued to drive positive change at René Cassin. Shortly after taking over the role, Shauna led a strategic review which has resulted in some exciting new work, and will help us to achieve our goal of being the Jewish voice for human rights.

A Jewish voice for human rights is needed now, more than ever. Although 2013 saw some positive developments in tackling human rights violations, such as the Modern Slavery Bill, it also saw devastating cuts to legal aid, escalating and potentially genocidal violence in sub-Saharan Africa, and continued media persecution of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma.

René Cassin provided this voice, using a Jewish angle to bring Jewish people and organisations together with the wider community in protest of human rights violations both at home and abroad. We would like to express our appreciation for your on-going support of our work, without which we could not continue to be the Jewish voice for human rights.

- The René Cassin Trustee Board

SNAPSHOT/2013

In 2013, René Cassin:

Defended human rights at 2 UN sessions

Took 30 young professionals to Israel as part of the René Cassin Fellowship Programme

Communicated with 75 MPs and other politicians

Held events on 4 pertinent human rights issues

Travelled to 2 international conferences to advocate for our positions

Worked with hundreds of supporters, partner organisations and volunteers to do our meaningful work
Our Vision is of a world where everyone fully enjoys all their human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and members of the Jewish community are actively engaged in promoting and protecting these rights.

Our Mission is to promote and protect the universal rights of all people, drawing on Jewish experiences and values. We achieve this by campaigning for change in defined human rights areas through a combination of advocacy, policy analysis, public campaigning and education and building the capacity of activists and lawyers to promote and protect human rights.

“Never will Jews in particular obtain real equality until the totality of human rights are respected for everyone.” – René Cassin, Jerusalem 1968
RENÉ CASSIN was one of the principal drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He also served as Chair/President of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, the Court of Arbitration at The Hague, and founder of the Consultative Council of Jewish Organisations (CCJO), the parent body of René Cassin.
We strive to maintain Cassin’s legacy by using Jewish experience and values to campaign and educate in our four major policy areas: discrimination, genocide, slavery, and asylum.

In Schools
We speak in schools around London and the UK, including with the UJIA Jewish and Mainstream Schools Programme, to bring human rights education to schools. In 2013 we spoke on modern slavery, refugee issues and the UK Human Rights Act to schools around London.

In Synagogues and the Jewish Community
We travel to Synagogues and community events to speak on issues of concern to the Jewish community, such as extremism, modern slavery, refugee issues and religious pluralism.

Over the past year, René Cassin:
...created and distributed human rights resources for festivals, such as Pesach, Shavuot and Chanukah
...worked to develop supplements for Jewish schools
...spoke to youth movements about human rights issues and what they can do to help
...hosted multiple events including a panel discussion on extremism and its impact on Europe’s minorities with the Board of Deputies and Human Rights Watch

In the Broader Community
Over the past year, René Cassin stayed active in the London community. In 2013, we...
...Presented events and panel discussions at law firms and other City venues on topics such as extremism, the Human Rights Act, Asylum and Detention and Modern Slavery.
...Participated in protest activities aimed at the cuts to legal aid, genocide in Sudan, treatment of detainees and poverty in the UK.

We continue to deepen our connections with London’s Jewish community as we pursue our and Cassin’s vision of a world where everyone fully enjoys all their human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
Guilty Until Proven Innocent: Different Treatment for Asylum Seekers

The Jewish people have been refugees from persecution throughout much of history. Today, many countries around the world fail to treat those fleeing persecution with dignity and humanity, often leading to automatic detention of even the most vulnerable individuals. This kind of treatment violates international human rights standards and the inherent dignity of the individual.

“We have never seen such an overwhelming and coordinated response from the Jewish community. Well done René Cassin”.

Legal aid

In 2013 René Cassin, a member of the Justice Alliance, turned our attention to focus on combatting proposed cuts to legal aid. We briefed the Jewish community on the drastic effects the cuts, if passed, would have on vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers and refugees, trafficking victims and more. We mobilised Jewish groups and individuals to take action to protest the cuts, and provided them a means by which to do so through the Justice Alliance.
“Crystal’s Vardo brought the richness of Gypsy and Traveller culture to light. I also realised just how much persecution played a role in their travelling lifestyle, which is very reminiscent of Jewish history”.

The Chronically Excluded

Gypsies and Travellers share a history of persecution with the Jewish community; the most recent but not the only example of shared experience is the Holocaust.

Today, Gypsies and Travellers are still some of the most persecuted ethnic minorities in Europe with outcomes in health, education and literacy well below the population average.

René Cassin worked with Friends Families and Travellers to educate the Jewish community about our shared historical experience and this ongoing discrimination through theatre with showings of Crystal’s Vardo, a play about a young Gypsy girl who is being bullied at school at various London venues.
E D U C A T I O N

René Cassin Fellowship Program

“The RCFP has demonstrated to me that it is incumbent upon each and every individual who believes in the values of Judaism and its mandate to create a better world for all mankind.”

- 2013 Israel Fellow

This year saw the launch of the René Cassin Fellowship Programme. The RCFP explores Jewish visions for a just society and provides young Jewish professionals with the knowledge, skills and contacts needed to enhance their activism in the areas of social justice, international human rights or related fields.

The experience, connections, and opportunities provided by the René Cassin Fellowship Programme will strengthen the Jewish voice for human rights at international forums including the UN, build relationships between politically and socially active young professionals from Europe and develop a future generation dedicated to human rights.
The RCFP runs for one year, and includes 10 Fellows each from hubs in New York, London and Jerusalem. Over the course of the year Fellows will gather for monthly study sessions that explore human rights through the lens of Jewish values and the Jewish historical experience, meet virtually with their counterparts from the other hubs to discuss current human rights issues and take on internships with human rights organisations. The flagship of the programme is a 9-day study tour to Israel to explore human rights issues on the ground.

“The trip was a call to action for me. I now know that even as I pursue a career in the field of human rights I do so with a strong commitment to my Jewish identity.”

- 2013 UK Fellow
FINANCE

Revenue and Support 2013

- Foundations and Trusts: 73,450
- Individual donations: 10,784
- Corporate donations: 2,000
- Education and events: 6,973

Total Revenue and Support: 93,207

Expenditure 2013

- Wages and salaries: 53,272
- Operations: 6,488
- Events: 3,022

Total Expenditure: 62,742

WITH THANKS TO

SIGRID RAUSING TRUST

Bluston Charitable Trust

Mishcon de Reya
Dear Supporters,

As you know, recent years have brought financial hardships on many charitable organisations and René Cassin was no exception. However, I am pleased to report that 2012/13 was the second year in a row in which saw René Cassin found itself in a more positive position than in the previous year. During 2013, thanks in part to your generous support, we have increased our income to ensure greater security in the future.

Our supporters recognise the importance of having a vehicle through which Jewish people exercise their voice in the international human rights debate, and when the organisation came under threat financially, many mobilised to ensure that we could continue to fill this role. Although we are always grateful to our institutional donors, we owe special thanks this year to our Patrons, Corporate Sponsors and regular givers who began making regular contributions to our work because they feel strongly about our mission. Our funding base is broader than it has ever been as a result.

Our increased financial security has allowed us to be even better at bringing human rights to the Jewish community, and the Jewish community to human rights. For more information about our campaigns, educational offerings and all of our work please visit us online at www.renecassin.org.

While we are in a stronger position, we will continue exploring varied sources of funding to continue supporting our advocacy efforts and educational programmes, and ensure a strong future. Thank you again for your continued support,

Andrew Simon

ACCOUNTANT