

The Holocaust as history in the raw

'Concentration Camps Then and Now' was the theme of the lecture delivered by Prof Dan Stone (University of London) to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. The examples he cited ranged from the Boer War to Guantanamo Bay, while the victims included Armenians under the Ottoman Empire, Kenyans resisting British rule and Algerians fighting French colonization. By thus contextualizing the horrors of Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen, Prof Stone argued that the twentieth century can be seen as the 'century of the camps'. The common factor, he concluded, is that such camps are created to isolate and eliminate unwanted people when the modern nation state feels itself under threat. For some members of the audience, which included sixth formers from local schools, this approach seemed to blur the difference between 'ordinary' concentration camps, labour camps, and Nazi death camps.

In the talk that followed, 'Survival, Memory and Trauma', Joanna Millan recalled the horrors of Theresienstadt, which she survived as a child. The powerful impression made by this talk, together with the film that followed, is reflected in a report written by a student from the University of Brighton, the gist of which is reproduced below:

Joanna told us about the Nuremberg Laws and how hard it was for Jews to live in Berlin even before she was sent with her mother to Theresienstadt. It housed seven times what the complex was built to hold, so the living conditions were extremely poor. They were served watery soup twice a day + 200grms unpeeled potatoes + 750grms bread every three days. When the Red Cross visited the camp, the Nazis printed money, built cafes, a swimming pool and a playground and even went as far to bring new healthier Jews in to cover up the dying ones. Joanna's mother died of TB leaving her to fend for herself (her father had already been murdered). She was then put with orphan children, who somehow survived without any parents. Joanna Millan was three when she was rescued and taken to England. There she was adopted by



Dan Stone speaking at Holocaust Memorial Day

a couple who changed her name (originally it was Bella Rosenthal). They didn't want to believe that she had had a life before.

Straight after this talk, the film 'Night Will Fall' was shown, containing footage that has only recently been released by the British Government as the contents are so shocking. The footage used was extracts from the material produced by the British troops after they liberated the camps. It was extremely tough to watch as the viewer saw everything. It may sound morbid, but I have always had the desire to see what the concentration camps were like, and this was definitely achieved in this film! The troops forced the Nazis to bury the bodies of their victims, even though this was done in the most heart-wrenching way. They also brought in German civilians to see what they had been supporting.

There were several interviews with the troops that shot the footage. These were extremely raw and moving, every single person said that they wished that they could forget what they saw, but never will. Many cried and were unable to finish what they were talking about. Half way through this hour-and-a-half event, everything about people's unwillingness to talk about the Holocaust made sense. After watching the film, I didn't want to talk about it with anyone, even though the film is of course nowhere near as terrible as the actual event.

Bee Hobbs, the student who has kindly allowed us to reproduce this report, found the whole event so compelling that she is now planning to write a dissertation about the Holocaust, drawing on family history.

German-Jewish Archives at Sussex: A Rothschild grant

The Centre has been fortunate in securing a generous grant from the Rothschild Foundation towards our archive. The Sussex German-Jewish Archive project is designed to enable us to support academic research and the development of public education and outreach opportunities.

The German-Jewish collections contain diaries, letters, photographs, oral testimony, survival narratives and other biographical sources recording the history of over thirty-five Jewish families stretching from the Enlightenment to the late twentieth century. Britain was one of the most important countries to grant asylum to refugees from Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied countries. The papers capture the development of a group of family histories that exemplify both the attempted synthesis of Jewish and German cultures in German-speaking countries, and the acculturation of German-Jewish refugees in Britain. Taken together the German-Jewish archival collections reflect the history of a defining human experience in Europe and around the world. The archive also holds material relating to the Kindertransport (1938-1939) and the works of the artist Arnold Daghani (1909-1985), a prominent Holocaust survivor who lived in Brighton.

The grant enables us to appoint an archivist who will undertake a wholesale cataloguing project creating finding aids for those collections yet to be inventoried, and address inconsistencies in catalogues that have already been created. As the cataloguing project progresses, items for digitization will be identified in consultation with academic advisors who will establish guidelines and criteria for selection. The aim is to develop a digital resource comprising selected digital images from the collections that will be used for research, and curated 'anthologies' relating to specific themes for use in teaching and outreach.

'Germany and Israel': The Second Peter Straus Memorial Lecture

The second Peter Straus Memorial Lecture took place before a packed house at the Sternberg Centre in north-west London on 8 December 2015. The audience included members of Peter's family, many of his good friends and members of the congregation of the New North London Synagogue. Delivered by Prof Moshe Zimmermann of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, this year's lecture was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the official diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel.



Moshe Zimmermann delivering
the Peter Straus Memorial Lecture

Zimmermann, an eminent authority on the topic, began his talk with a somewhat unexpected question: Why, he asked, did it take over 15 years for Germany and Israel to establish official diplomatic relations? His answer was no less surprising. Established after the Second World War, the two states came to represent almost antithetical past entities – the German Reich on the one hand and the Jewish people on the other hand; the heirs of the perpetrators vis-à-vis the heirs of the victims. Interestingly enough, Zimmermann noted, Israel seemed keen to establish full diplomatic relations long before 1965 and it was mainly Germany – despite the reparation agreement between the two countries that was signed in the early 1950s—that was reluctant to make this relationship official. The main reason for this was the so-called Hallstein doctrine that prescribed that the Federal Republic of Germany would not establish or maintain diplomatic relations with any state that recognized the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) as an independent state. Although Israel had no links with East Germany, another conflict now seemed to determine the nature of the relationship between the Jewish and the West German states. So long as Arab countries did not officially recognize East Germany, it was more important for West Germany to maintain good relations with Arab states who had their own policy of banning any country that recognized Israel's right to exist. This changed in 1965 after the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser invited Walter Ulbricht, President of East Germany, for a week-long visit to Cairo.

The relations between Germany and Israel are often depicted as 'special'. In a speech to the Israeli Parliament, for example, Angela Merkel declared that Israel's security is part of the German *raison d'état*. She used the concept of 'historical responsibility', which has always played a large role in Israeli politics towards Germany. But according to Zimmermann, what characterizes the relations between Germany and Israel is a manifold asymmetry. Perhaps the most surprising of which is the different 'lessons' each society took home from its history: on the one hand a society that learned to hate soldiers and wars, and on the other hand a society that worships its soldiers and sees military might as a necessary prerequisite for its existence as an independent state. Reflecting on recent developments in which the Israeli community in Germany is rapidly growing, Zimmermann concluded that today Israelis have come to like the Germans more and more whereas the Germans show less and less understanding and sympathy for Israel. The possible consequence of this development for the two countries was one of the topics that were considered in the lively discussion that followed Zimmermann's thought-provoking lecture.

The Last Days of Mankind



Fred Bridgham (left), Ritchie Robertson
(centre) and Edward Timms at the
Austrian Ambassador's Residence

The dramatic potential of *The Last Days of Mankind*, the documentary drama of the First World War published by Karl Kraus in 1922, was demonstrated by two young actors at the London preview, staged at the Austrian Ambassador's Residence on 26 January 2016 to launch the complete translation published by Yale University Press. 'At last, at last!' declares a diplomat in August 1914 at the Vienna Foreign Ministry in an exultant speech about the ultimatum to Serbia, recited by Christopher Staines. But the hope that 'the World War can be confined to Serbia' proves illusory, and later we hear the same voice lamenting: 'Another fine mess we've got ourselves into!'

It is the paradoxical topicality of Kraus's period piece that makes the play so exciting. 'Some of these scenes could have been written yesterday!' exclaimed a member of the audience. The villains of Kraus's play are the journalists who collude with the military authorities in sustaining the terrible conflict. Here the key figure is Alice Schalek, the solitary woman war correspondent authorised by the Habsburg government. A scene recited by Liza Weber in the role of Schalek shows this intrepid figure braving the hazards of the battlefield to produce first-hand reports idealizing the common soldier.

The original Alice Schalek was star reporter for the ultra-patriotic *Neue Freie Presse*, and these reports derive from articles she actually published during the war. Like Kraus, she came from an assimilated Jewish family, but their responses to the war were diametrically opposed. Schalek followed the lead of her editor Moriz Benedikt, compensating for the outsider status of German-speaking Jews by carrying patriotic war reporting to ludicrous extremes. 'Call it patriotism, hatred of the enemy, sport, adventure or the thrill of power', she declares (in a speech declaimed by Liza Weber), 'I call it liberated humanity'.

In Kraus's apocalyptic epilogue, *The Final Night*, the dehumanizing impact of war is exemplified by women wearing gas masks, as chemical warfare marks the culminating stage of what he sees as 'Judeo-Christian world-destruction'. Once again we encounter Schalek, roaming the battlefields in quest of the common soldier. Like the myriad of other militarists targeted by Kraus's satire, she has completely failed to learn the lessons of the war.

At the end of this London preview, the translators Fred Bridgham and Edward Timms shared their ideas with the audience in a discussion introduced by Ambassador Martin Eichtinger and chaired by Ritchie Robertson. The power of Kraus's panorama of the First World War, they concluded, derives from its portrayal of a European landscape irredeemably mired in militaristic and xenophobic attitudes. Hence the play's apocalyptic finale – with a Voice from Above announcing the impending bombardment of Planet Earth.

George Weidenfeld (1919-2016) and Claus Moser (1922-2015)



George Weidenfeld

The Centre for German-Jewish Studies owes much of its success to encouragement received from refugees who settled in the UK after escaping from Nazi-occupied Europe. Among early visitors to Sussex was Sir Claus Moser, later Lord Moser, a statistician who had promoted the founding of a new wave of universities in the 1960s. He was evidently impressed by the Centre's aims, for he agreed to join Lord Weidenfeld in the Open Conversation which we staged at the Spiro Institute in London in September 1997.

Introducing these distinguished speakers, Edward Timms emphasised that one of the Centre's principal aims was to ensure that the experiences of German-Jewish

refugees were systematically researched and their contributions to public life fully acknowledged. Both Moser, recalling early memories of Berlin, and Weidenfeld, describing Vienna before the Anschluss, emphasised the enduring value of their formative years. Family traditions that prioritized cultural pursuits provided a continuing inspiration for their careers in Britain. It might be difficult to avoid a residual sense of being a refugee, but being an 'outsider' encouraged forms of innovation that would not occur to settled members of British society. Discussing changing attitudes towards Israel, both speakers agreed that support for Israeli institutions was all the more important during periods of political difficulty.

Both Moser and Weidenfeld continued to take an active interest in our work. On 7 June 2001 the Centre for German-Jewish Studies co-organized with the Association of Jewish Refugees a symposium entitled 'Sixty Years of AJR Information: The Journal as a Resource for Research', staged in London at 29 Russell Square. The principal speaker was Claus Moser, who provided a dazzling review of refugee achievements and paid tribute to what AJR Information had meant to his family over the years. In a second paper Anthony Grenville, later to become consultant editor of the renamed *AJR Journal*, argued for the creation of a comprehensive index, now realized through the archiving of the journal online: <http://www.ajr.org.uk/pdfjournals>

Lord Moser's interest in our work led him in March 2004 to co-host (with Lord Attenborough) a dinner at the House of Lords for supporters of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. In a letter to the founding director, Edward Timms, he paid tribute to the creation of the Centre as a 'brilliant idea' that had produced a flow of new scholarship, enriching our knowledge of German-Jewish history.

The encouragement provided by Lord Weidenfeld took different forms. He graciously agreed to become Life President of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, and researchers from the Centre were invited to publication parties at his home overlooking the Thames, where they were introduced to distinguished authors such as Amos Oz and Marcel Reich-Ranicki. Weidenfeld kept himself informed about our work through the mediation of the Anglo-Austrian journalist and author Hella Pick, who became a member of the Centre's Support Group.

Lord Weidenfeld's deep-rooted commitment to Israel set him on a quest to establish Chairs on Israel Studies in leading British Universities. At the prompting of the Support Group, he was persuaded to seek financial backing for an endowed Chair of Modern Israel Studies at Sussex University, and went on to secure the enthusiastic support of the Vice-Chancellor, Michael Farthing. With the appointment of Prof David Tal, the new Chair has become an integral part of the university's mission to develop a comprehensive programme of teaching and research about developments in the Middle East.

Shortly before his death, recalling the welcome Jewish refugees received in Britain in the 1930s, Lord Weidenfeld set up the Safe Havens Fund to assist Christian refugees from Syria. Further details about his lifelong commitment to international reconciliation and other charitable causes can be found in the obituary by Hella Pick, published in the *Guardian* on 20 January 2016: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/20/lord-weidenfeld>

The Alfred Bader PhD Scholarships Programme

The Centre for German-Jewish Studies is delighted to announce the 'Alfred Bader scholarship' for an outstanding doctoral candidate wishing to pursue a research project in the field of history and culture of German-speaking Jewry. Alfred Bader has been a most generous donor to the Centre. The most recent project he supported was Rose Holmes's doctoral project on the 'Quakers as Jewish saviours' which she completed in 2014.

Thanks to a generous gift from Bader Philanthropy and matching funding from the University of Sussex, the Bader PhD scholarship programme will offer two full scholarships to highly motivated current and prospective graduates with an outstanding academic record and a strong interest in the relevant topics. While diverse fields of investigation are currently open, we encourage projects that look at German-Jews and the sciences, and German-Jewish refugee experiences.

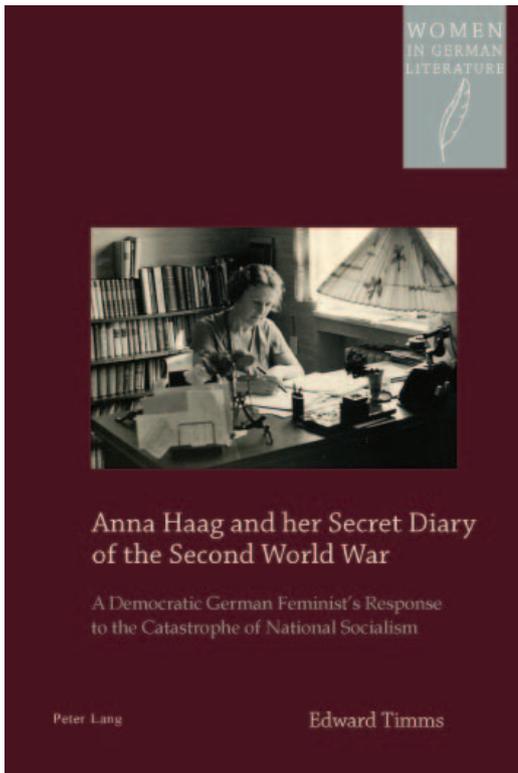
This studentship covers three years of UK/EU tuition fees, as well as a Doctoral Stipend matching UK Research Council National Minimum (£14,057 p.a. for 2015/16, updated each year). Overseas (non EU) students will need to fund the difference between the Home/EU fees and the Overseas fees which are £14,800 for 2016-7.

The successful candidates will be expected to participate in the manifold research activities of the Centre, which include lectures, international conferences and other events on the campus and elsewhere.

The Holocaust and the Struggle for Civil Rights

America's condemnation of Nazi racism and the country's fight for liberty in the Second World War served as powerful rhetorical weapons in the political struggle of civil rights activists. Already in the 1930s, they denounced the state-sponsored discrimination of African-Americans 'at home' and demanded equal rights and an end to segregation arguing that 'separate' can never be 'equal'. The hitherto largely unexplored connections between the Holocaust and the struggle for civil rights were the topic of an international symposium held on 14 and 15 April 2016 at the University of Sussex. The event was organized by the Centre for German-Jewish Studies in cooperation with the Sussex Centre for American Studies and the Department of Art History. Thirteen scholars from Britain, the US, Germany and Israel approached the multifaceted links between the history, memory and representation of the Nazi genocide and the development of the civil right movements from different angles. Michael Mayer (Tutzing), for example, investigated how the memory of the Holocaust triggered the formation of the gay rights movement in post-Second World War USA. Eric Muller (Chapel Hill) analysed the contested role of language in the struggle of Asian American civil rights activists and in particular their use of the term 'concentration camp' to describe the incarceration of Japanese Americans during the Second World War. Anne-Marie Angelo (Sussex) studied the protest rhetoric of the Israeli black panthers, which referred to Nazi vocabulary to condemn the discrimination of Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the context of Nina Fischer's (Edinburgh) analysis of the connections between Holocaust memory and Nakba memory. Roni Mikel Arieli (Jerusalem) examined the American reception of the Broadway adaptations of Anne Frank's diary and Alan Paton's 'Cry, the Beloved Country' in the light of the early civil rights struggle. Overall, the symposium provided a valuable opportunity not only to engage with how the Holocaust prompted ideas of civil rights and social justice, but also with the ways in which civil rights movements helped to make the Holocaust into a model for global collective memory of civil resistance.

Anna Haag and her anti-Nazi diary



Anna Haag and her Secret Diary of the Second World War (Peter Lang Verlag)

How was it possible for a well-educated nation to support a regime that made it a crime to think for yourself? This was the key question for the Stuttgart-based author Anna Haag (1888-1982), the democratic German feminist whose writings are analysed in the new book by Edward Timms, *Anna Haag and her Secret Diary of the Second World War* (Peter Lang Verlag). Like Victor Klemperer, she deconstructed German political propaganda day by day, giving her critique a gendered focus by challenging the ethos of masculinity that sustained the Nazi regime. This pioneering study interprets her diaries, secretly written in twenty notebooks now preserved at the Stuttgart City Archive, as a fascinating source for the study of everyday life in the Third Reich.

The opening sections sketch the paradigms that shaped Anna's creativity, analysing the impact of the First World War and the feminist and pacifist commitments that shaped her literary and journalistic writings. Chapters on Hitler's 'Seizure of Power' and the 'People's War' place her work within a comparative perspective. Copious quotations from the diaries are cited (in English translation, with the original German footnoted) to illustrate her responses to the cataclysms that followed, from the military conquests and Jewish deportations through the debacle of Stalingrad to the impact of strategic bombing. The book concludes with a chapter on the 'Diarist's Political Vision', tracing the links between Anna's critique of military tyranny and her contribution to post-war reconstruction.

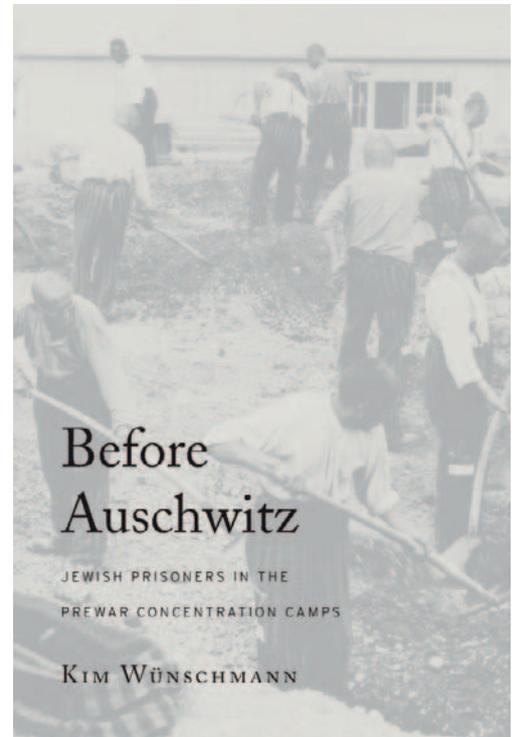
In return for a suggested donation of £30 the Centre is willing to send a copy of *Anna Haag and her Secret Diary of the Second World War* to Friends of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies (Postage/Packing included).

Book Talk

Before the Holocaust: New Histories of the Concentration Camps

The history of the Nazi concentration camps has long been dominated by the legacies of the Holocaust, the wartime genocide of the Jews of Europe. New research carried out in the framework of an ARHC-research project at Birkbeck, University of London has re-evaluated this history and studied in particular the camps of the 1930s. On the occasion of the publications of these new histories, the Centre for German-Jewish Studies and the Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide co-hosted a book talk event on 25 April 2016. Nikolaus Wachsmann, director of the AHRC research project and author of the *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*, discussed the significance of this new research with his colleagues Christopher Dillon (King's College London) and Kim Wünschmann (University of Sussex). Dillon's book *Dachau and the SS: A Schooling in Violence* combines extensive research into the pre-war history of Dachau with insights from interdisciplinary scholarship on perpetrator violence. The book analyses the socialization of thousands of often very young males into the values of concentration camp service. It appraises the contributions of ideology, careerism, institutional dynamics and ideals of masculinity to this process and explores the legacies of the Dachau School for the wartime criminality of the Third Reich. Wünschmann's study *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps* explores the instrumental role of the camps in the development of the regime's anti-Jewish policies. Investigating more than a dozen camps, from Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen to less familiar sites, the study uncovers a process of terror meant to identify and isolate Jews from German society. The book analyses the function of terror in this process of turning 'Germans' into 'Jews' and forcing them into emigration. It also investigates Jewish responses and resistance to this most brutal form of exclusion.

Dr Kim Wünschmann is DAAD Lecturer in Modern European History and Acting Deputy Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex, specialising in German and German-Jewish history in modern times.



Kim Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps*, (Harvard University Press, 2015)

Friends of the Centre can purchase a copy for a specially reduced price of £27.00 (rrp £33.95). To order please email cs-books@wiley.com

Discounts on publications associated with the Centre

Publications by researchers at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies may be purchased at a discount by Friends of the Centre.

For further information about the Centre for German-Jewish Studies and joining the Friends, please contact:

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