

Holocaust Memorial Day Wednesday 4 February 2026 Bridging Generations



Professor Michael Luck welcoming the audience to Holocaust Memorial Day

Wednesday 4th February 2026 saw a full house gather for the 25th Holocaust Memorial Day event held on the University of Sussex campus. Professor Michael Luck, deputy Vice Chancellor, welcomed a record number of schools as well as University of Sussex students, faculty and members of the local community. Announcing the theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day – *Bridging Generations*, he noted that the responsibility of remembrance does not end with survivors but continues through their descendants and is a call to everyone to engage actively with the past in order to preserve memory and carry lessons from history into the future.

Two short film animations were shown, followed by a discussion between Judy Ironside MBE Founder and President of UK Jewish Film and Amanda Rubin, an independent filmmaker.

The first film, *Humo* (Smoke) by Mexican animator Rita Basulto, dealt with the evanescence of life experienced by Jews being transported by train to the camps, starkly depicted by images which appeared and then disappeared. The second film *Girl No 60427* by Israeli film school graduate Shulamit Lifshitz, concerned a new generation finding out about the hidden trauma of a survivor through the discovery of a diary. This film mixed animation with live action symbolising the connection of the present with the past.

The subsequent discussion centred around the importance of continuing to transmit information about the Holocaust by using innovative methods to connect with new generations who might not be as receptive to more traditional filmmaking. Among questions from the audience, concern was expressed about possible commercialisation of the Holocaust and whether using animation detached the viewer from the painful truth. It was subsequently agreed that finding different methods of reaching younger audiences is however essential.

Chief Inspector Dan Eagle, Jewish Faith Lead from Sussex Police, lit a candle designed by Anish Kapoor and called for remembrance to continue to keep alive 'the bridge between memory action, history and hope.'

Alex Maws, Head of Education and Heritage at the Association of Jewish Refugees introduced Holocaust Survivor, Malka Levine who proceeded to relate her life-story. She was two years old when the Nazi invaders forced her family into the Jewish ghetto in Volodymyr-Volynskiy, a small city in present-day Ukraine. Of the 25,000 Jews in the city in 1939, only thirty survived. Malka's father was shot in the first pogrom. Before he died, he begged her mother Rivka to save their children.

Rivka somehow managed to keep Malka and her two older brothers alive as the Nazis systematically murdered the inhabitants of the ghetto. Amid the inhumanity, a Wehrmacht officer saved them from being shot and a Polish dressmaker gave them sanctuary when the SS went hunting for victims.

After escaping from the ghetto, Rivka persuaded a Ukrainian farmer and his wife to hide her and the children. They dug a pit under their barn, and there Malka's family stayed through a freezing winter and into the summer until the Red Army came. At the end of the war, Rivka was forced to draw on her strength yet again as she set out to create a new life for herself and her children.

Malka was joined on stage for a question-and-answer session by Professor Gideon Reuveni. When asked how she felt about being one of the few survivors left, she commented that she had lived as normal a life as possible and she had decided not to burden her two children with her memories so that they, too, could live normal lives. She did not want people to pity her, but she had come to recognise that she needed to speak out to bear witness to the events of the Holocaust.

She concluded by urging the young people present to think for themselves, not to accept the majority view and not to hate.

The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) has generously supported the University of Sussex's Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration from its inception in 2001, and we are greatly indebted to them for their invaluable support.



Malka Levine with Gideon Reuveni.

Forthcoming Conference: Israel and Austria: Historical Links and Future Pathways

Vienna, 16-17 November 2026

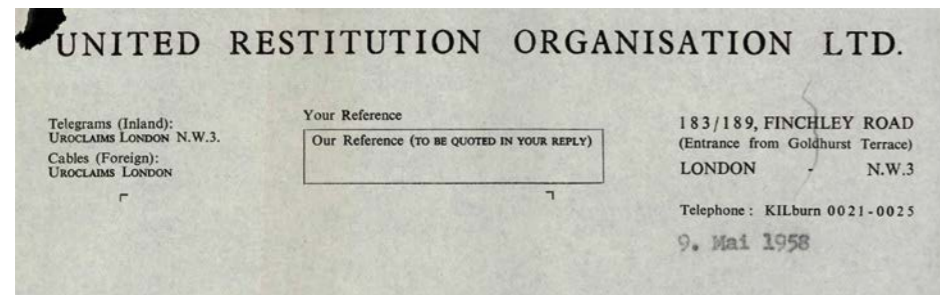
The Sussex Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies is pleased to announce an international conference on the complex historical, political, and cultural relations between Palestine/Israel and Austria, to be held in Vienna from 16–17 November 2026.

Organised in partnership with the Institute of Culture Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz, the conference will explore a relationship shaped by Zionism, migration, diplomacy, Holocaust memory, restitution debates, neutrality and cultural exchange.

A particular focus will be placed on the cultural dimensions of these ties, including the impact of Austrian émigrés on Israeli society and culture, and the reception of Israeli culture in Austria.

The conference aims to bring together scholars from different disciplines to reflect on a relationship marked both by historical tensions and by new forms of dialogue and cooperation.

Project Report: Advocates of the Victims: The United Restitution Organisation (URO), 1948–2009



URO London letterhead in 1958

The project, *Advocates of the Victims*, led by Gideon Reuveni and Daniel Siemens (University of Newcastle), has now entered its second year. During the period under review, the research team compiled a comprehensive bibliography on *Wiedergutmachung* and the history of the URO and developed a detailed outline for the planned monograph.

The team has continued its close collaboration with colleagues at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem (CAHJP), which holds substantial parts of the URO archive and is currently digitising this material. This partnership remains central to the project's progress.

In May 2025 the team hosted a workshop at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin on the challenges of reparations. An edited volume based on the papers presented and co-edited with Iris Nachum (Hebrew University Jerusalem), is currently in preparation and should be submitted to Cornell University Press later in 2026. Additional project-related workshops and presentations took place in Berlin, Potsdam and Sde Boker, where the first findings on the origins, founding, and wider historical significance of the URO were presented.

In May 2026 a workshop entitled: *Historiography, Archives and AI: Opportunities and Challenges* will take place in Berlin in cooperation with the German Ministry of Finance. This event will bring together project members and partner institutions to explore the use of AI in archival work and historical research.

The team remains on track to complete a full draft of the monograph by August 2027, with publication anticipated in 2028/29.

Leverhulme/BA research grant

David Tal, Holder of the Yossi Harel Chair in Israel Studies, was awarded a Leverhulme/BA small research grant for his project entitled: *Dual Loyalty: The American Jews Between Israel and the United States*. This study explores the enduring accusation of dual loyalty among American Jews, a charge that has resurfaced with renewed intensity following the October 7 2023 Hamas attack on Israel and the ensuing war. Drawing on archival research and discourse analysis, the project traces how this accusation has shaped American-Jewish identity, political behaviour and public perception from the late 19th century to the present. It examines how both Jewish and non-Jewish actors have constructed, challenged and responded to claims of conflicting allegiance over time. The study situates Jewish political advocacy within the broader context of American ethnic politics and debates over assimilation and pluralism. It argues that the dual loyalty charge is not only a recurring trope but also a powerful lens through which to understand American anxieties about ethnicity, power and belonging. The project contributes to broader conversations on identity, minority integration and national loyalty in democratic societies.

Landecker Digital Memory Lab – update

As part of the University of Sussex Holocaust Memorial commemorations coordinated by the Sussex Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies, the Landecker Digital Memory Lab launched its flagship Digital Memory Database online in February 2026. The platform maps international digital Holocaust memory practice since the 1990s and includes extensive multimedia materials such as video walkthroughs of projects using Mixed and Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, games and apps. It also features interviews with contemporary “memory makers,” data-visualisation tools, and spaces for users to curate tailored content, with the aim of enabling cross-sector and cross-border collaboration. Access is free for professionals in Holocaust heritage and education, academia, creative media and technology, funding bodies and policymaking.

The database responds to a “sustainability crisis” identified by the Lab: uneven infrastructure and expertise across the field, repeated duplication of work on local projects and the continued spread of disinformation

In January 2026, the Lab published the second Digital Memory Dialogues on AI, “In search of the ‘North Star’ for AI and Holocaust memory,” co-edited by Dr Mykola Makhortykh and Maryna Sydorova (University of Bern), with contributions from Film University Babelsberg, UCLA, Yad Vashem, and the University of Zurich. 2026 also marks the start of the Lab's design sprints: five-day, themed programmes to prototype solutions to challenges in digital Holocaust memory, with eight sprints planned through 2029. Upcoming sprints include Film University Babelsberg, Germany (31 Aug–4 Sept 2026) and the UK National Holocaust Museum (7–11 Sept 2026).



Simon Edwards

‘Coherent Pasts, Digital Futures: Looking Back to the Future of Holocaust Historiography’

“Although this title is likely to change as my writing progresses my postgraduate research project is currently entitled: ‘Coherent Pasts,

Digital Futures: Looking Back to the Future of Holocaust Historiography’. Within it, I am hoping to take a long view and reassess the development of Holocaust studies as an academic discipline, examining how concepts within it came to be entrenched, and how a *de facto* canon of key thinkers on the Holocaust became enshrined within the academe. One of the principle concepts in which I am interested is the idea of the study of the development of Holocaust as a ‘unique’ event. The Holocaust's uniqueness is foundational to much of contemporary Holocaust research, often drawing on the work of scholars such as Yehuda Bauer, who argued that

historically speaking the Holocaust is unique in that it is unprecedented: an event like it has never happened before, and may never happen again. This definition of uniqueness is not the only one that has been used across the development of the discipline. Based on my research to date, it appears uniqueness has been a fluid concept across Holocaust studies, often saturated in alternative meanings – an aberration, a mystified concept, outside of human experience entirely – that has been questioned, remoulded, or rejected entirely. My aim is to use these various definitions of a single term to reflect on how Holocaust studies has changed and shaped itself in response to various contemporary moments across the last eighty years, from the Cold War to the present moment, and how scholars have instrumentalised the Holocaust as activists, progressive scholars and self-perceived champions of memory.”

The Isaacsohn and André Families’ Fellow Talk



We are delighted to welcome Charlie Night as our new Isaacsohn and André Families Visiting Fellow. On 11 March 2026, he delivered a talk entitled *D/deaf* German-Jewish Experiences of Exile: Siegfried Rothschild and the ‘Deaf Kindertransport*.

The talk explored new research on the experiences of D/deaf Jewish refugees coming to the UK before the Second World War. It focused on two case studies. The first examined a remarkable set of letters exchanged between Siegfried Rothschild in Stuttgart and his daughter Annelore, documenting the former's efforts to escape to Britain. These letters offer rare insight into the lived experience of a deaf man attempting to flee Nazi Germany, while also revealing the additional practical and emotional challenges that deafness created in the context of exile. Charlie Night showed how Rothschild's deafness shaped not only the content of the letters but also the form of his writing and his understanding of flight itself.

The second part of the paper turned to the organised migration in July 1939 of nine children from the Israelitische Taubstummen-Anstalt (the Jewish School for the Deaf and Dumb) in Berlin-Weißensee to the school for the Jewish Deaf in London, accompanied by their headteacher, Dr Felix Reich (1885–1964). Drawing on the oral history testimony of Reich's daughter Eva, as well as archival records in Manchester and Southampton, the paper reconstructed the journey of what appears to have been the only ‘Deaf Kindertransport’ to leave Berlin successfully, while tracing the many obstacles it encountered along the way.

More information on the Deaf Kindertransport can be found on Charlie's EXILE blog <https://ilcs.sas.ac.uk/research-centre-german-austrian-exile-studies-exile/blogs/deaf-kindertransport-emerging-research-dr-felix-reich>

**D/deaf is a term used to describe two related but distinct ways of understanding deafness - one medical, one cultural*

New Book Publication:

The Great Repair: Emotions, Memory, and the German–Jewish Settlement After the Holocaust

by **Gideon Reuveni**

Cornell University Press



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In this major new study, Gideon Reuveni explores the extraordinary and deeply fraught transition from the horrors of the Holocaust to the negotiating table, where Germans and Jews confronted the question of reparations. The book sheds new light on the emotional, political, and moral dimensions of these negotiations which addressed compensation for collective and individual losses, the restitution of property, support for survivors and the formal acknowledgment of Nazi crimes.

In tracing this pivotal moment in postwar history, *The Great Repair* shows how the German-Jewish settlement became a landmark in the recognition of historical responsibility and the pursuit of redress. It established an important precedent in international politics: that genocide cannot go unaddressed and that moral debts demand reckoning.

Call for papers

The European Association of Israel Studies invites paper, panel, and roundtable proposals for its 14th Annual Conference, *Between Challenges and Resilience: Exploring Israel's Way Forward*, to be held at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, on 11–13 October 2026.

Since the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023, Israel has entered a period of profound turbulence, shaped by multi-front war, shifting international alignments, and intensified internal tensions, but also by notable forms of civic mobilization and resilience. The conference offers a scholarly forum to examine these developments, to assess the strategies devised to confront them, and to reflect on possible trajectories ahead.

Proposals are welcome from across Israel Studies and related fields. Contributions on Baltic–Israel relations, Holocaust memory in the Baltic states, Lithuanian Jewish heritage in Hebrew culture, Jews in Soviet-ruled Lithuania, and the impact of the war in Ukraine are also encouraged.

Online registration opened on 10 April 2026. Proposals should be submitted via the EAIS website. For enquiries: info@israelstudies.eu

Work in progress - Fabian Weber

In January, Fabian Weber presented his second book project, *Compassion Mobilized: Antisemitism, Racism and the Politics of Animal Protection in Germany, 1945–2002*. His study examines debates on shechita in Germany and in the United Kingdom from a comparative perspective, analysing legal regulations, scientific expertise and public controversies. By situating dietary practices within broader political and cultural struggles, Fabian demonstrates how food and slaughter techniques became markers of moral and civic belonging. Central to the work are the tensions between traditional Jewish practice and the animal welfare advocates' imperative of compulsory stunning.

According to Fabian, modern animal protection discourse constructed a normative ideal of “humane slaughter” centered on stunning, while framing unstunned ritual slaughter as “cruel” and “barbaric.” This discourse intersected with antisemitic traditions, as animal protection activists and political actors linked Jewish religious practice to broader narratives of secrecy, deception and moral threat. These continuities were shaped by the legacy of National Socialism, including the 1933 Reich Animal Protection Act, which effectively banned ritual slaughter and exerted a lasting influence on postwar regulatory and public debates.

Drawing on a broad corpus of legal records, administrative correspondence, veterinary and scientific reports and activist publications, Fabian reconstructed the constellation of actors, arguments, and regimes structuring these controversies. Emphasis is placed on the mobilization of emotion – especially compassion and disgust as a mechanism for legitimizing exclusionary positions towards religious minorities. Overall, the project elucidates how animal protection discourse functioned as a vehicle for the persistence and transformation of antisemitism in post-war Germany. Comparative perspectives, particularly within the UK, highlight alternative trajectories marked by compromise and cooperation.



Smashed window of a kosher butcher shop in Munich, Feb 1947

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