



Chair in Modern Israel Studies



View of the damaged *Exodus* 1947 as it is towed into the port of Haifa, after its interception by the British navy (July 1947).

A Chair in Modern Israel Studies has been created at the University of Sussex with generous support from major philanthropists. With this new appointment, based in the School of History, Art History and Philosophy, the University will significantly extend its research in modern Middle Eastern History. This initiative has been welcomed by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Farthing. 'In this period of huge social and political change in the region,' he said, 'the development of our teaching and research is timely. At Sussex it is part of our tradition to engage with urgent and complex issues, and we are grateful to the donors who have made this possible.'

The University already has leading research in related areas within the School and its History department, including the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. The new Chair will contribute to the Middle East studies programme, and its remit will embrace all aspects of the politics, history and society of contemporary Israel. The Chair will also promote links between British and Israeli academics. Two further lecturer posts are proposed, dealing with the history and culture of the Middle East more broadly.

At the wish of one of the donors, the Chair will be named after Yossi Harel, a founding figure in the history of modern Israel. Harel, who died in 2008 at the age of ninety, commanded the 'Exodus', which in 1947 carried more than 4,500 displaced European Jews to Palestine (see illustration). The ship was prevented from landing by the British administration, which forced it to return to Europe, where the passengers, including many Holocaust survivors, were confined to camps in the British zone of occupied Germany. In the aftermath of this controversial episode, Yossi Harel became internationally famous as the character played by Paul Newman in the Otto Preminger film *Exodus*, itself based on Leon Uris's best-selling novel of the same name.

A vivid impression of Harel's personality can be gained from the more recent *Commander of the Exodus* by the prize-winning Israeli novelist Yoram Kaniuk. This book has been commended by Professor Christian Wiese for providing a 'differentiated account of a man who was not at all obsessed with conquering Palestine for the Jews or displacing the Palestinian people, but with rescuing the remnants of those traumatized human beings who had escaped from Nazism. The book portrays Harel as a man shaped by historical circumstances, driven by his passion for rescuing survivors, even if it meant rebelling against British policy.'

According to Professor Wiese 'the Chair will be embedded in a research and teaching environment characterized by serious, moderate, critical and constructive scholarship on both Israel and the broader Middle East and not let political ideology win over what should be a university's most important task: to promote thoughtful knowledge

and to provide students the intellectual tools that enable them to deal with potentially controversial historical and political matters.'

Professor Matthew Cragoe, Head of the School of History, Art History and Philosophy, has added: 'We are particularly pleased to welcome the support for this Chair from such a distinguished group, which includes leading benefactors of pro-peace charities in Israel and Palestine. Their involvement and support is a clear signal of the important role which we believe Sussex can play in this field.'

The new Professorship has been created with support from the following philanthropic individuals and trusts: Lord Weidenfeld, the R and S Cohen Foundation, the Blavatnik Family Foundation, the Atkin Foundation, the Pears Foundation and the Gerald Ronson Foundation. Lord Weidenfeld took the initiative for the establishment of the Chair, in consultation with Christian Wiese and members of the German-Jewish Centre's Support Group. The late Yossi Harel was the father of Lady (Sharon) Cohen, wife of Sir Ronald Cohen.

Workshop on the Wannsee Conference

On Friday February 3rd the Centre for German-Jewish Studies welcomed a large audience to a workshop entitled 'The Wannsee Conference – 70 Years After', coordinated by the Centre's Director, Dr Gideon Reuveni. The workshop was held to mark the seventieth anniversary of the notorious conference that took place in January 1942 at a lakeside villa in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee. That conference, which lasted for about ninety minutes, was called to inform administrative leaders of Departments responsible for various policies relating to Jews about new plans for what in Nazi language was called the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Problem'.

The significance of the Wannsee Conference for the history of the Holocaust has been subject to much historical debate. This multidisciplinary workshop offered an opportunity to review the political significance of the Conference and to reflect on how that event is remembered today, both in Germany and internationally. The first speaker was Professor Mark Roseman of Indiana University in Bloomington. In his paper Mark Roseman sought to set the Conference within its proper historical context, showing how the decisions taken in the comfort of that Wannsee villa not only marked a continuation of existing policies, but also accelerated the genocide. He was followed by Dr Gerhard Wolf of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, who placed the Wannsee Conference within the framework of Nazi population policies in Eastern Europe. He traced the close relationship between antisemitic policies and measures taken against other 'enemy peoples', most importantly the Slav population.

After a short break Professor Martin Shaw of the University of Sussex School of Global Studies gave a paper which broadened the discussion to consider other genocides which took place in the same period as the Holocaust. The workshop closed with a paper by Professor Stefanie Schüler-Springorum from the Centre for the Study of Antisemitism in Berlin. She analysed the memory of the Conference in Germany today, on a personal and national level.

The workshop, held in the recently renovated university Meeting House, was attended by a large number of students, both undergraduates and researchers. The audience responded to the thought-provoking presentations with a wide range of questions, generating a lively discussion after each of the papers.

Speak up – speak out: Holocaust Memorial Day



Prof Michael Farthing VC, Prof Christian Wiese, Dame Julia Neuberger and Dr Gideon Reuveni (photo by kind permission of Peter Phillips)

On Wednesday 25 January the Chouven Lecture Theatre was packed for the visit of Marion Blumenthal Lazan, a Jewish woman born in the northern German town of Hoya who endured Nazi persecution with other members of her family and survived to tell the tale. 'Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story', the book she co-authored with Lila Perl, records the impact that the Westerborg and Bergen-Belsen internment and concentration camps made on her as a vulnerable child. The family was spared the ultimate horror of the Holocaust by the fact that they were being held as exchange prisoners, with visas for the USA. But those childhood ordeals were compellingly brought back to life in the moving personal address that Marion delivered at Sussex, supplemented by a documentary film. Her undiminished idealism struck a particularly strong chord with younger members of the audience.

Equally impressive on a different plane was the address by Rabbi Julia Neuberger on 'Holocaust Remembrance and why it is important for Everyone'. Reviewing more recent examples of genocide, she asked: What is it in the human psyche that makes civilized people murder their neighbours? And why indeed does the British press demonize asylum seekers? The stories she shared with us suggested that even small gestures of human solidarity can make a difference, in Britain now as they did in Nazi Germany at the time when her parents fled into exile. We must still speak up – speak out! Political democracy also comes into the picture. After her talk Julia Neuberger caught the train back to London in order to vote in the House of Lords on amendments designed to protect the National Health Service.

The discussions were chaired by Christian Wiese and Gideon Reuveni, who thanked the Association of Jewish Refugees for supporting this event and Diana Franklin for coordinating it. A memorable afternoon was introduced by the Vice Chancellor, Michael Farthing, who described Jewish studies as an important growth area for Sussex.

Diana Franklin, the Centre's Manager, has made it her mission to extend the outreach of the events we organize, particularly through her contacts with schools. Several institutions responded to her initiative by inviting Marion Blumenthal Lazan to address their pupils. The feedback has been so remarkable that we would like to share with our readers some of the comments received.

Responses from schools and colleges

From Rochele Abraham, teacher at Hasmonean High School for Girls:

Dear Diana Franklin,
I just want to thank you so much for arranging for Marion Blumenthal Lazan to come to speak at Hasmonean. She was phenomenal – the girls were obsessed with her!! Everyone asked me how on earth I got hold of her and I explained how you facilitated it - and that she just 'fell into our laps'! We were so lucky and privileged to have her – I can't thank you enough for arranging it.

From Fleur Shorthouse, Varndean College:

Dear Marion Lazan,
Thank you so much for coming to college. The students were truly



Marion Blumenthal Lazan speaking to students at the Holocaust Memorial Day event at Sussex University (photo by kind permission of Peter Phillips)

enriched by your talk. They were incredibly inspired. I have had so many positive reports. One teacher told me they went back to their classroom with their students and they all had a little cry, then the students said they just wanted to do good works! How sweet is that!!!

From Benjamin Dabby, History Teacher, Highgate School:

Dear Mrs Lazan,
Thank you very much for talking to the pupils at Highgate School. I know they found your talk moving and important, and I am glad to say that some pupils who listened to you have now given talks to other pupils in the school, explaining why they were affected by your talk and what messages they took from listening to you.

From Olivia Camillo, Camden School:

Dear Marion,
Thank-you for the wonderful assembly you gave; students and staff were talking about it all day. It was really a moving and memorable talk, with a very important message about tolerance and respect for others, which I will reiterate in subsequent assemblies. And you are such a lovely, warm person, as is your husband Nathaniel.

From Tamar Tatz, Teacher of Jewish Studies, Hasmonean High School for Girls:

Dear Marion,
As a teacher at Hasmonean High School I want to personally thank you for the most inspirational talk you gave to our students last Friday. I know how much the girls appreciated your talk and what a great impact it had on every single one of them. The way you presented your story was perfectly pitched for the age and level of our girls; and I believe there was not one person in the room who could not relate personally to your story and find practical applications for themselves in their own lives. The messages you imparted to the girls were invaluable and so very powerful. As for myself, I felt it was a real privilege to be sitting in that room hearing you speak. Your tremendous positivity and wonderful sense of humour had a huge impact on both myself and my students, and I know they will stay with us forever.

From a pupil at Hasmonean High School:

Dear Mrs Lazan,
My name is Daniella Sperling and I attend Hasmonean High School. I was present when you spoke about your story of the Holocaust. Your story moved me deeply, and I wanted to tell you what an inspirational woman you are. From the moment you spoke with such emotion, I was touched. I'm sure it wasn't easy to retell your difficult story but I appreciated it so much. I don't know so much about the Holocaust, but I know that my grandpa was sent to another family from Belgium to France when he was seven years old and was put to work there continuously. They treated him worse than the animals they kept, but B'H he was spared the concentration camps. I wanted to know more about it, so listening to you really helped me get a better understanding.

Editor's Note: We are grateful to all concerned for allowing us to reproduce the above excerpts from letters and email messages.

Obituary: Peter Straus

Friends of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies will be saddened to hear of the death of Peter Straus, a loyal member of our London Support Group. Peter's parents were German-Jewish refugees who settled in Britain shortly before the Second World War. Pride in his heritage prompted him to become Chairman of the Support Group, in addition to his many other charitable activities. Working closely with colleagues at Sussex, he guided us through a challenging period and helped us obtain backing for innovative projects.

Peter was born on 22 April 1941 in Leicester. Since his parents wanted him to have 'an English gentleman's education', he was sent to Felsted, the independent school in Essex. As one of the few Jews at the school he had to endure some antisemitism, but Peter did well, excelling not only at academic subjects but also at sport, especially hockey, for which he showed exceptional talent.

In 1964, after graduating from university, Peter joined his father's chemical/pharmaceutical company, where his business acumen quickly became evident. In 1965 he married Susan Schiffer, and the couple first moved to Finchley, then to Friern Barnet. They were blessed with a daughter, Claire, and then a son, Daniel, who is now following in his father's footsteps in the chemical/pharmaceutical industry.

When Peter and his close colleague Bob Dalton launched their own company, S&D chemicals, the business prospered. Peter had a talent for customer relations and this side of the business took him all over the world, notably to the Soviet bloc, when hardly any other enterprise was operating there. He was helped by his gift for languages: he spoke fluent English, German and French, good Spanish and passable Russian. The company expanded until it was a global operation with 400 employees worldwide.

In his business dealings Peter was shaped by a profound ethical sense. In the private sphere he was never too busy to find time for friends and colleagues. Sadly, he lost his father at a young age, but he was a devoted son, visiting his mother most days when he was in London. Later, he became a doting hands-on grandfather.

While continuing to play hockey and cycle long distances, Peter was also an excellent skier. A severe accident in 2004 curtailed his sporting activities, but despite a gloomy medical prognosis he was soon walking, cycling and even skiing again. He was a resolute character who he never gave in to pain, and he surprised everyone by remaining with us for an unimaginable four years after the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. His death deprives us of a friend whose sage advice and consistent support will be sadly missed. He leaves a partner, a daughter and a son – and a proud legacy of business ethics and private philanthropy.

Appointment of Deputy Director

We are happy to announce the appointment of Dr Gerhard Wolf as Deputy Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. Gerhard Wolf was educated at the Universities of Berlin, Hamburg and Sussex and is now the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) lecturer for German History at Sussex. His main research interest is focused on Modern German history, in particular the history of National Socialism, the Holocaust, and German-Jewish history.

Gerhard Wolf's association with the Centre dates back to the early years of the Centre with his studies on the German-Jewish refugee Mac Goldsmith conducted under the supervision of Prof Edward Timms, the founder and first director of the Centre. This project led to two publications in the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book. His most recent publication is a book on National Socialist population policies in Poland, *Ideologie und Herrschaftsrationalität – Nationalsozialistische Germanisierungspolitik in Polen* (Hamburg 2012), examining the German attempts to turn the annexed Polish territories into German 'living space'. In focussing on the selection criteria the occupiers devised to separate the allegedly 'German' or 're-Germanisable' part of the population from the 'aliens', Gerhard Wolf shows how traditional Prussian notions about what constitutes Germanness survived under the Nazi regime. This led to a paradox: while the Germans radicalised their attacks on the Jewish population, leading to systematic mass murder, large parts of the non-Jewish population were subjected to an enforced assimilation policy. Eventually nearly three million Poles

were registered as 'Germans', destined to form the nucleus of the new 'Volksgemeinschaft' to be established in the occupied lands.



Reports on Events

Is there a Jewish Political Tradition? The Shtadlan as a Case Study

François Guesnet (Sidney and Elizabeth Corob Reader in Modern Jewish History at University College London) addressed this question on Monday 27 February at the Centre research seminar. In contrast to the widespread view that associates Jewish politics with the emergence of mass political movements in the late nineteenth century, notably Zionism and the Bund, Guesnet argued that Jewish activism has a much longer and more illustrious history. Going back to the late Middle Ages, he traced the origins and activities of the Jewish intercessor (Hebrew: Shtadlan). Working as a 'lobbyist' representing the interests of the local Jewish communities, and negotiating for the safety and benefit of Jews with the authorities holding power, the Shtadlan, according to Guesnet, exemplify forms of political agitation that have received scant attention from historians. Scrutinizing the life and work of such intercessors, from Menasseh ben Israel through Barukh ben David Yavan to Moses Montefiore, Guesnet provided a rich and illuminating narrative of European Jewish political history from the early to the late modern periods. The talk, attended mainly by faculty members and postgraduate students, provoked a lively discussion on the nature of Jewish politics both past and present.

Moses Hess between Socialism and Zionism

On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Moses Hess (1812-1875) and the 150th anniversary of his famous book *Rome and Jerusalem: The Last National Question* (1862), the first large international conference devoted to this

German-Jewish socialist thinker and early Zionist took place in Jerusalem from 18-20 March, 2012. Christian Wiese, who continues to serve as visiting research professor at Sussex, co-organized this event on behalf of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies and the Martin Buber Chair in Jewish Thought and Philosophy at the Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, in cooperation with the Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem, and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Israel.

Prominent speakers from Israel, Europe and the USA, including the foremost expert on Hess's biography and thought, Prof. Shlomo Avineri (Hebrew University), interpreted the multifaceted work of this intellectual who was raised in an Orthodox family and then turned to utopian socialism, becoming a close friend of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Eventually, challenged by the rising antisemitism in Germany in the 1860s, Hess became profoundly disillusioned with the concept of Jewish integration into European society. As a result, he published the first Zionist writing to put the question of Jewish nationalism in the context of European nationalism and secular as well as religious philosophy. Based on a theory of history rooted in Hegelian idealism, Jewish philosophy and nineteenth-century utopian mysticism, Hess's *Rome and Jerusalem*, with its vision of an ideal, socialist Jewish state in Palestine, did not exert much influence on his contemporaries, but was to become one of the seminal foundations of modern Zionism in the twentieth century. Even though the conference focused on an analysis of Hess's thought within its own time, it also provided the opportunity to emphasize the relevance of this thinker's utopian ideas for current debates on the nature of Jewish nationalism.

Individual Reports

Rose Holmes

Rose Holmes has been teaching on the first year undergraduate course 'The Making of the Modern World' and working on a project to integrate Chinese students into the History department. She has also been working on the second chapter of her PhD research project and will be presenting a paper entitled, 'Rebels with a Cause: The work of Quaker women with refugees from fascism 1933-39' at an upcoming conference in Huddersfield on gendering the history of charity.

Gideon Reuveni

Gideon Reuveni is presently engaged in research on a book-length study on the place of Jews in the rise of consumer culture in Europe. Provisionally entitled *Consumer Culture and the Making of Jewish Identity in Europe*, this study explores a neglected field of modern Jewish history. In studying the changing dynamics of consumer cultures and their interactions with Jewish communities, Gideon hopes to elucidate the multifaceted processes of identity formation. On the one hand minorities are able to affirm a separate identity through distinctive patterns of consumption. At the same time they gain a sense of being integrated within their host societies through participating in shared forms of consumerism. Seen in historical perspective, he argues, the emergence of modern consumer societies reshaped Jewish culture, providing new venues to imagine social belonging beyond the existing political and cultural differences.

Edward Timms

In addition to his research on Freud and the Aesthetic of the Dream, Professor Timms is writing a book in German about the cultural context from which the psychoanalytic movement emerged, to be entitled 'Dynamik der Kreise, Resonanz der Räume: Die schöpferischen Impulse der Wiener Moderne'. For his research in the fields of Austrian and Austrian-Jewish studies he has been awarded the Goldenes Ehrenzeichen der Stadt Wien. The ceremony is due to take place in Vienna in autumn 2012.

Lectures and conferences

City Hall, Vienna, 30 November 2011: illustrated lecture on 'Die Wiener Moderne' (also broadcast on Austrian television)

15 March 2012: 'Sussex Fifty Years On: The Lost Map of Learning', paper for the university History Department work-in-progress seminar

23 March, Prague: 'Karl Kraus, the Friedjung Affair and Propaganda for War', paper for the conference on Empire Interrupted, organized by New York University

17 April, 7 – 9 p.m., Austrian Cultural Forum, London: Introduction to the Private View of 'Traces', a photographic

exhibition about persecuted Jewish family members from inter-war Poland and Austria, curated by Julia Winckler

Christian Wiese

Conference papers and lectures

'Imago Dei and Human Responsibility: Theological Anthropology and Ethics in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought', paper given at the International Conference on 'Ethics of In-Visibility: *Imago Dei*, Memory, and the Prohibition of Images' at the University of Copenhagen, 25-26 October 2011

'No Love for the Jewish People? Hannah Arendt's 'Eichmann in Jerusalem' Revisited', paper given at the Central European University, Budapest, on 8 November 2011

'Das 'dämonische Antlitz des Nationalismus': Robert Weltschs Deutung des Zionismus angesichts von Nationalsozialismus und Shoah', paper given at the Jewish Museum Frankfurt am Main, 15 February 2012

'Moses Hess and Samuel Hirsch on Judaism and Christianity', paper given at the International Conference on 'Moses Hess: Between Socialism and Zionism' at the Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem, 18-20 March 2012

Publications

'Heros, Ikone, Gegenbild: Abraham Geiger aus der Perspektive der Reformbewegung in Amerika', in *Jüdische Existenz in der Moderne: Abraham Geiger und die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, ed. Christian Wiese, Walter Homolka and Thomas Brechenmacher (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012, forthcoming)

'No 'Love of the Jewish People'? Robert Weltsch's and Hans Jonas's Correspondence with Hannah Arendt on *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, in *German-Jewish Thought between Religion and Politics: Festschrift for Paul Mendes-Flohr in Honor of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Christian Wiese and Martina Urban (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 389-434

Forthcoming Events

12 April 2012

Gideon Reuveni

(University of Sussex)
Work in Progress Seminar,
'The Bridge, the Door, and the Cultural-Economy Approach to History'

Instead of viewing the economy as an ontological 'other' to culture, this paper will suggest that seeing the economy as a form of culture practice offers new ways to read [Jewish] history. The paper will be divided into two parts. It will start with a brief overview of some recent discussions of the relationship between culture and the economy, focusing on the work of the British school of cultural economy. The second section of the talk will seek to illustrate the potential of this so-called cultural economy approach to history by discussing some aspects of Gideon's current research on Jewish economic history

16:00 Arts A, A155
University of Sussex

23-26 July 2012

European Association for Jewish Studies Workshop on 'Jewish Studies in Europe: Comparative Perspectives' at Oxford, Yarnton Manor (co-organized with the Martin Buber Chair in Jewish Thought and Philosophy at the Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main)

'Buy Jewish': Hag Coffee and Antisemitism

In Germany, a special advertising campaign for HAG coffee was aimed at the Jewish public ahead of the Passover holiday, and it apparently derived from the company's competition with Korinthen, a rival decaffeinated coffee that, unlike HAG, was produced from

grains and was thus not kosher for Passover. According to the company's in-house newspaper, *HAG-Post*, HAG advertised its "Coffee for Passover" in special advertisements placed in a range of Jewish newspapers every year.

The attention devoted to the Jewish public by HAG Coffee's marketing array is particularly interesting in view of the much debated figure of Ludwig Roselius, the dynamic founder and manager of HAG Coffee. Roselius was renowned both as a smart businessman who transformed HAG into a worldwide brand and as an art-collector and philanthropist who was involved in promoting art and culture, particularly in Bremen. Recent research has discovered Roselius's close ties with the German right-wing of the time. Two people in particular influenced Roselius and his endeavours – the composer Richard Wagner, who Roselius greatly admired, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, one of the founding fathers of racial antisemitism in Germany, with whom Roselius corresponded regularly. With the Nazi rise to power, Roselius became an ardent supporter of the new regime and, on his death in 1943, was laid to rest in a state ceremony in his hometown of Bremen. How could a man so close to anti-Semitic right-wing circles in Germany market his company's flagship product with Hebrew lettering attesting to its kosher status?

Excerpt from *Ethnic Marketing and Consumer Ambivalence in Weimar Germany* by Gideon Reuveni (CGJS Research Paper No. 7)



Zum Pessach-Fest Kaffee Hag
coffeinfreier Bohnenkaffee von bestem
Geschmack und Aroma
unter streng ritueller Oberaufsicht Sr. Ehrw. des Herrn
Oberrabbiner Dr. Spitzer, Hamburg
Kaffee Hag, Bremen
Niederlage Hamburg

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

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