Dancing in Berlin and Fighting on the Western Front: from the German-Jewish Archives at The Keep

Since its foundation in 1994, the Centre for German-Jewish Studies has been proud to research the former refugee community and to play an active role in its work of commemoration. Over the years, a number of families who came to the UK in the 1930s have donated archival collections to the University of Sussex so that they could be used in research and teaching for generations to come. Now the collections are stored at The Keep, a newly built archival repository close to the University campus, where they are looked after using professional standards and technology which will preserve them for future generations.

Just as every refugee life-story is unique, so are the collections donated to the archives. In their entirety, the collections document and illustrate the history of German-Jewish relations from the early 19th century up until the early 2000s.

The collection
Particular highlights of the collection are documents that reflect the German-Jewish relationship before the Holocaust, exemplified by the famous letter (now in the Elton Collection) written in 1918 by the Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, defining how German and Jewish identities can co-exist.

Many German Jews in the early 20th century, determined to demonstrate their loyalty to Germany, volunteered for the army at the outbreak of the First World War. They kept mementos from the war, such as photos, diaries and medals. Now Sussex students are able to study these items, which give them insight into the personal experiences of war on the German side, such as those of Max Sondheimer, who served on the Western Front. Military historians, on the other hand, can find a large number of photos showing the technology that was used and how it compares with British equipment.

With the rise of antisemitism leading to the Nazi seizure of power, Jewish families found themselves under pressure to contemplate emigration, particularly after the November pogroms in 1938. They became increasingly desperate to leave or at least send their children to safety. For example, Hannah Weinberger, as the oldest child of a family from Bavaria, was sent on a Kindertransport at the age of 11 to stay with a family friend in Bristol. This was supposed to be a temporary arrangement until the rest of the family succeeded in obtaining a visa to the US. Tragically, the visa never arrived and Hannah was the only survivor of the Weinberger family.

Digitisation
These examples provide a small snapshot of the documentation that can be found in the German-Jewish collections at Sussex. To make them available to a wider audience, the University’s Special Collections team and the Centre have received funding from the Rothschild Foundation for a systematic cataloguing and digitisation project. Selected digital images will be published in a series of thematic packages to support Holocaust education. The project is being carried out in close collaboration with a number of organisations in the field, including the Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Holocaust Education Centre at University College London.

For more information on how to search the catalogue and consult the collections, please see The Keep website: [www.thekeep.info](http://www.thekeep.info)
or E: samira.teuteberg@sussex.ac.uk

Brighton and Hove Jewish Community 250th Anniversary

To celebrate 250 years since the first record of Jewish residents in Brighton (Israel Samuel and his wife Susannah), a well-attended workshop was held on 23 June 2016 at The Keep, the East Sussex historical archive that holds the University of Sussex Special Collections. This event, introduced by Gideon Reuveni, opened with a spirited account of highlights from local history by Godfrey Gould of the Jewish Historical Society. He particularly stressed the achievements of Jewish luminaries from the Victorian period including Henry Solomon, Brighton’s first Chief Constable, and David Mocotta, architect of the London and Brighton Railway.
There followed an illustrated lecture about the Holocaust survivor Arnold Daghani, presented by art historian Deborah Schultz, a former Research Fellow at the German-Jewish Centre. After Daghani’s death in 1985, his artworks were donated to the University of Sussex and now form part of Special Collections at The Keep. They include uniquely valuable watercolours created in the early 1940s when he and his wife Nanino were imprisoned in a Nazi slave labour camp in the Ukraine. Dr Schultz highlighted the imaginative qualities of the word-and-image artworks that are so characteristic of Daghani’s mode of creativity. The Holocaust commemorative folio he completed during his retirement in Hove was among the archival treasures featured in a display of artefacts, arranged by archivist Samira Teuteberg and other colleagues.

A third presentation by Edward Timms recalled the remarkable career of Julius Carlebach, whose papers are also preserved at The Keep. There followed an illustrated lecture about the Holocaust survivor Arnold Daghani, presented by art historian Deborah Schultz, a former Research Fellow at the German-Jewish Centre. After Daghani’s death in 1985, his artworks were donated to the University of Sussex and now form part of Special Collections at The Keep. They include uniquely valuable watercolours created in the early 1940s when he and his wife Nanino were imprisoned in a Nazi slave labour camp in the Ukraine. Dr Schultz highlighted the imaginative qualities of the word-and-image artworks that are so characteristic of Daghani’s mode of creativity. The Holocaust commemorative folio he completed during his retirement in Hove was among the archival treasures featured in a display of artefacts, arranged by archivist Samira Teuteberg and other colleagues.

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No fish and chips: A tribute to Gabriel Josipovici

A convivial gathering addressed by distinguished speakers was held on 10 September at the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts to mark the 75th birthday of critic and novelist Gabriel Josipovici. The event was co-sponsored by the German-Jewish Centre. As Josipovici’s finest work one speaker singled out the biography of his mother, the poet Sacha Rabinovitz, with its moving account of how she and Gabriel, born in Nice in 1940, survived the Nazi occupation by finding refuge in a remote French village.

Josipovici’s most significant publication was identified by other speakers as The World and the Book with its challenge to the ‘fish and chips’ approach to literary representation and its stress on artistic self-reflection. We were also reminded of the connection between his sensitive aesthetics and his outspoken critique of the insularity underlying the Brexit vote.

His most notable achievements challenge the philistinism of mainstream British culture through experimental forms of writing such as his novel Contre-Jour, a reflection on the painter Pierre Bonnard. Using visual images, the art historian Timothy Hyman argued that for Josipovici, as for Bonnard, experience becomes translucent when ‘viewed from the edge’.

The values of marginality were linked by other speakers to Josipovici’s preoccupation with Jewish themes, especially in The Book of God. This reading of the Hebrew bible was the focus of a tribute by Rabbi Howard Cooper, who highlighted a wealth of learning lightly worn. By contrast The Singer on the Shore, with its essays on Appelfeld and Kafka, was praised by David Herman for its multi-layered explorations of existential solitude.

Sitting modestly at the back of the audience, Gabriel must have been gratified by the tributes paid to his teaching by several former Sussex students. Succulent refreshments were served at intervals during this event, which concluded with an interview between Gabriel and his French translator Bernard Hoepfner, recorded for the University’s sound archive.

Revenge, Retribution, Reconciliation

What happens after harm is done and injustice has to be endured? Is revenge really sweet? Should the injured claim an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth? Is it at all possible for perpetrator and victim to settle their scores and ‘make good’ again? Or are there things that can never be undone? These questions lie at the heart of a cross-disciplinary anthology entitled Revenge, Retribution, Reconciliation: Justice and Emotions between Conflict and Mediation edited by Kim Wünschmann with Laura Jockusch and Andreas Kraft. Approaching the topic from many different angles, contributors employ their expertise in the fields of psychology, biology, political science, sociology, law, philosophy, literature and history to explore how individuals, groups and societies in a variety of cultural contexts, political settings and time periods responded to the perpetration of wrongdoing.

Evolutionary biologist David P. Barash and psychiatrist Judith Eve Lipton, for example, tell us that far from being an archaic concept held in check by seemingly progressive achievements of modern societies, revenge is an ubiquitous phenomenon that continues to trouble our world.

Legal scholar Alon Harel criticizes the privatisation of government functions with regard to retribution and discusses the question of who has the right to mete out punishment and inflict criminal sanctions. Looking at the Holocaust, historian Mark Roseman raises the question of why more surviving Jews did not commit acts of revenge against Germans in the wake of the Second World War. Jewish honour courts founded in post-war Germany are the subject of Laura Jockusch’s chapter that investigates the case of a community of victims who are not willing to bestow trust upon any given court of law when prosecuting individuals from their own ranks who had allegedly collaborated with the Germans. Valerie Hébert, a scholar of transitional justice, critically investigates whether ongoing reference to an agonizing past is really productive in processes of political healing or whether it might be dangerous to the fragile peace of the present.

Readers of this newsletter can purchase a copy for a specially reduced price of $26.50 (rrp $33.00) / £16.00 (rrp £20.00). To order: E: sales@magnespress.co.il and quote ‘Centre for German-Jewish Studies Discount’.

New research at the Centre

The ‘Volkskartei’: Compiling Personal Data in Nazi Germany

Stefan Boberg’s PhD project at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, funded by an Alfred Bader scholarship, analyses the impact of the ‘Volkskartei’ (People’s Card Index) on German society. This unified registration system was established in 1938 to fulfil the fundamental Nazi Socialism aim of creating a racially homogeneous People’s Community – the ‘Volksgemeinschaft’. This could only be achieved by the conceptual and practical exclusion of ‘non-Aryans’. To achieve this double aim of mobilizing the People’s Community and segregating those regarded as racially or socially undesirable required the registration of the entire population. This replaced the fragmented system of registration that had operated under the federal constitution of the Weimar Republic before the Nazis took over.

In addition to identifying those entitled to enrol in party affiliated organisations such as the Hitler Youth (HJ), the League of German Girls (BDM) and the Wehrmacht, the ‘Volkskartei’ was designed to inform the authorities on the whereabouts of those targeted by racial policy. But complications arose about the data on those labelled ‘Judenmischlinge’ (Jewish mixed race) by the Nuremberg Laws. Data on Jewish ancestry was specifically recorded in the German census of 1939 by means of a supplementary index (‘Ergänzungskarte’). Whether this was crucial for the compilation of lists of Jewish deportees is a disputed question. Boberg’s thesis is that it was not the census data alone, but rather their integration in the comprehensive database provided by the ‘Volkskartei’ that facilitated the identification and localization of individuals as a precondition for the Holocaust.
The anti-Nazi diarist Anna Haag at her writing-desk in Stuttgart in the 1930s

ordinary Germans who defied the regime by listening to the BBC; the complicity of ‘white collar’ murderers like the judges who imposed death sentences for trivial offences; and the struggle to survive of Jews in supposedly ‘privileged’ mixed marriages.

Where Anne Frank’s observations were necessarily restricted by what she could see from her window in the Secret Annex, the diaries of Anna Haag offer a compelling panorama of the catastrophe of National Socialism. Having survived the war, she was also able to play a leading role in post-war democratic reconstruction. To register for this event: https://event.bookitme.com/e/veqev or T: 020 8346 8560

Paul Moore’s lecture on ‘Bild’
The Centre for German-Jewish Studies looks forward to hosting Paul Moore at Sussex. Dr Moore is Lecturer in Modern European History and Deputy Director of the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Leicester. His research focuses on popular opinion, propaganda and the media in modern Germany. His book The View from Outside: The Nazi Concentration Camps and the German Public, 1933–1945 is forthcoming from Oxford University Press. In this talk Dr Moore will discuss a new project examining Germany’s mass-market, populist Bild newspaper as a political factor in and an important historical source for post-war German history. The lecture is open to the public and will take place at 4pm on 8 December 2016 in Arts A, room 108 at the University of Sussex. No registration necessary.

Contesting Jewish Loyalties: The First World War and Beyond

An international conference organized by The Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex in cooperation with The Institute for the History of German Jews, Hamburg, the Wissenschaftliche Arbeitgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts in Deutschland, TU Berlin and The Jewish Museum in Berlin.

The diary of Anne Frank is rightly recognized as a classic. In this lecture it is contrasted with diaries secretly written during the Second World War by the German democratic feminist Anna Haag. Although an outspoken pacifist, she was never arrested by the Gestapo, so she was able to record incisive impressions of everyday life in the Third Reich: reactions to the imposition of the Yellow Star followed by the Jewish deportations; critical responses to the killing of the disabled at secret ‘medical centres’; the execution of ‘radio criminals’.

Just decades after intense persecution and the struggle for recognition that marked the second half of the 19th century, Jewish leaders and ordinary Jews found themselves at an unprecedented social and political crossroads. The frenzied military, social, and cultural mobilisation of European societies from 1914, along with the outbreak of revolution in Russia and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, had profound impacts on Jewish communities all over Europe and worldwide. One of the most compelling findings to emerge from viewing the Great War as a ‘Jewish event’ is the question of Jewish loyalties. The nature of Jewish allegiance was not only questioned from the outside, but was an omnipresent problem for Jewish individuals, families, and communities that struggled to reconcile what appeared to be divided loyalties.

The aim of this conference is to explore the multifaceted aspects of the question of Jewish loyalties. In bringing together junior and more established scholars from a range of different disciplines, the conference seeks to provide the setting for in-depth discussion on the place and multifaceted meanings of a crucial question in Jewish history that will significantly improve our understanding of the Jewish experience in modern times.

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

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