

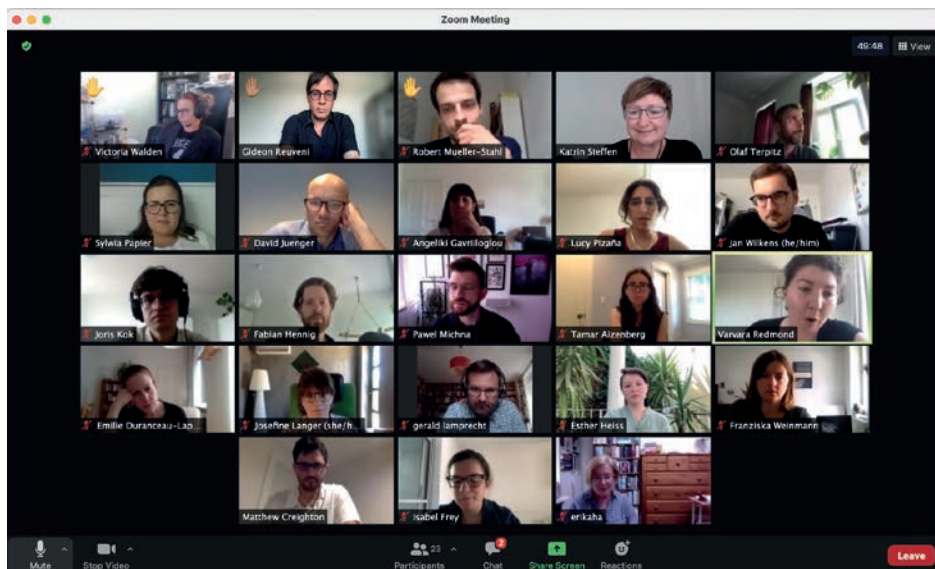


The Eighth Max and Hilde Kochmann Summer School

27-30 June, 2021

The Max and Hilde Kochmann Summer School for PhD Students in European-Jewish History and Culture was established in 2009. It offers junior scholars, some of whom work in universities without Jewish Studies programmes, the opportunity to present their research in an academic setting providing in-depth feedback from established and upcoming scholars in the field. Since its establishment, the Summer School has generated a growing network of historians, philosophers and literary scholars – a generation of talented scholars for whom the Summer School has offered a major boost to their academic careers.

This year the Summer School took place online. The event was organised in cooperation with the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz. Sixteen junior scholars from five countries were given the opportunity to present and discuss their research in an interdisciplinary setting. The wide range of topics spanning from Talmudic studies to contemporary film; the consistently high-level of presentations, together with the friendly and supportive atmosphere made the Summer School intellectually stimulating and inspiring. The online setting was challenging. Participants were asked to record and upload their presentations in advance, to watch their peers' presentations and to engage in extended Q&A sessions. They expressed their enthusiasm for the opportunity to participate and were delighted with the feedback. They also enjoyed the group experience and praised the organisers. To make up for the lack of personal interaction, social events were held on two evenings via the Wonder.me online platform. In two forum sessions, the senior faculty addressed issues around publishing strategies and network sessions and responded to queries and concerns regarding career planning of junior researchers in the field of Jewish Studies. The Summer School overall was deemed to have been a great success and the challenges of the online setting to have been successfully addressed. Nevertheless, both faculty and delegates voiced their desire to return to a face-to-face format as soon as possible.



Fatal Attraction: Germany, Poland and the Jews after the Holocaust

Online workshop, 9-10 June 2021

Recently, the anti-German resentment that characterised Jewish feelings towards Germany following the Holocaust appears to have dwindled. Berlin has become a magnet for young Jewish people who see it as a place where they can live a comfortable life away from the contemporary conflicts of the Jewish world. One of the biggest social protests in Israel in recent years, the so-called 'Milky Protest,' brought hundreds of thousands of Israelis out on the streets. This protest started from a Facebook post written by a 25 year-old Israeli who had immigrated to Berlin and published a receipt which demonstrated the low price of food products in Germany in comparison to those in Israel. Soon afterwards, a Facebook group was established under the name: *Olim Le Berlin* (going up to Berlin), supporting Israelis that wished to emigrate to Berlin. For young Jewish people Germany has become associated with positive emotions such as security, freedom and liberation, curiosity, relief and even love.

While the notion of 'another Germany' is accepted by many, strong [negative] feelings are directed towards Poland. Poles are still considered to be virulent antisemites and the fact that the Polish State did not exist during the Holocaust seems not to have been recognised, or forgotten by many Jews. Poland is seen as the 'land of the

Holocaust' and many young people get to know its landscape only through organised visits to death camps. To the visible disquiet of Polish authorities, such tours contribute to the negative feelings many Jews still feel towards the country and its people. That said, since Poland became a member of the EU, a growing number of Jews are seeking Polish citizenship. It is an irony of history that German and Polish citizenship can provide an 'exit' or 'back-up plan' for Jews living in countries that originally provided a safe haven from persecution in Europe.

To explore this intriguing triangular relationship, earlier this year, the Sussex Weidenfeld Institute organised an online workshop together with the Max Planck Institute for Human Development and the Chair for Modern Jewish History at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich. The aim of the workshop was to explore the emotional economy that informs these relationships, which are commonly accompanied by very strong emotions from Jews but also by their German and the Polish counterparts. The eleven papers presented in the workshop covered a broad spectrum of topics all seeking to explore the practices and feelings as well as the continuities and changes of emotional regime that are shaping the relationship between Germans, Poles and Jews in the long shadow of the Holocaust.

Katrin Steffen: Inaugural Lecture

30 September 2021

To inaugurate the DAAD Chair of European and Jewish History and Culture Prof. Katrin Steffen spoke on the topic of *Fatal Alliances: On the Entanglement of Antisemitic and Antifeminist Dynamics of Exclusion*. Following greetings from the Vice-Chancellor, Adam Tickell, the German Ambassador, Andreas Michaelis and the Head of the DAAD London Office, Ruth Krahe, Professor Steffen advocated for an analysis of the complex interdependencies of antisemitism and antifeminism both in history and in contemporary exclusionist discourse and violence.

She showed that both modern antisemitism and modern antifeminism emerged during the 19th century, as resentments specifically directed against the egalitarian promises of a liberal and pluralistic modernity. Steffen analysed similarities and differences in targeting Jews and women, arguing for a careful look at parallels and intersections of group resentments in order to be able to comprehend the historical specifics and the heterogeneity of antisemitism with more clarity.

Since the historical connections between exclusion, sexuality and violence from the 19th and 20th centuries are being re-interpreted and re-loaded in today's debates, the lecture considered current developments and examples of anti-gender ideology as a more modern version of antifeminism, conspiracy theories and right-wing populism in Europe, primarily in Germany and Poland pointing to the dangers such shared forms of group resentments pose to democracy. The lecture demonstrated that despite differences antisemitic and antifeminist thought serve similar functions both historically and in contemporary exclusionist narratives and politics of right-wing groups. The narratives are also currently seeping into the right-wing political mainstream. They aim at singling out the 'Other,' putting certain groups in a place outside constructed national communities that seem to them in need of being kept 'pure.' The threatening 'Other' is then conceptualised as an incorporation of modernity that threatens the clear-cut gender roles that are



Katrin Steffen

deemed necessary for a so-called morally healthy society. In those functions, antisemitism and antifeminism were and are entangled, and they reinforce each other when they appear simultaneously. To understand these complex interdependencies, Katrin Steffen suggested that historians of antisemitism should take in gender as a relational category in order to further theorise and deepen the analysis of antisemitism.

The lecture is available here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnhSvbCt038

Citizens as Diplomats

Workshop on the University of Sussex campus 14-16 December 2021

The workshop will discuss the extension of diplomacy, from being the exclusive purview of the state to a field of study and practice that involves non-state and non-governmental agents. The workshop will bring together scholars interested in the study and development of the citizen as a diplomat. The participants will introduce the changes that have taken place in the practice and study of diplomacy throughout the years and across disciplines, which have led to the emergence of the citizen-diplomat. Participants will examine the ways in which those changes undermined the status of diplomacy as the exclusive domain of the state and led to the rise of the citizen diplomat in various strata of society and within various disciplines, from (new) diplomatic history to international relations, through literature and music, to media and economics. Thus, for example, we will present citizens who acted as diplomats when they tried to broker peace; translators who fulfilled such a role, and the way tourists and pilgrims served, intentionally and unintentionally, as diplomats and ambassadors of good will. At the same time, the workshop will study and explore the ways in which the state uses and can utilise the citizen diplomat for the advancement of its interests.

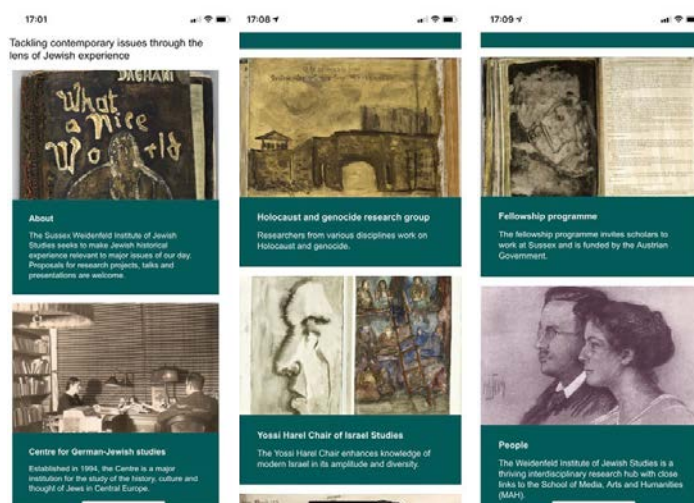
The keynote lecture entitled *'Pandora's Box? The Pros and Cons of Citizen Diplomacy'* will be delivered by Professor Giles Scott-Smith who is the holder of the Roosevelt Chair in New Diplomatic History at Leiden University in Holland.

Sussex Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies: A Post-Lockdown Relaunch

The Sussex Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies is named after the late Lord George Weidenfeld, a keen supporter of Sussex, who recognised the University's commitment to liberal academic endeavours.

The Weidenfeld Institute was officially launched at an event at the German Embassy in March 2019 where it was announced that the German government, through its German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), would fund a professorship for East European Jewish history at Sussex. The new professor, Katrin Steffen, was appointed in 2020.

The Sussex Weidenfeld Institute strives to become a distinctive interdisciplinary research hub that places the Jewish experience within a wider context and aims to have an impact beyond academia. The Institute is committed to public engagement and outreach on the local, national and international level. This year's pandemic-restricted virtual Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration engaged more than 1,300 viewers. Beyond lectures and events directed to the general public, we are developing



Homepage of new Weidenfeld Institute website

an educational programme based on our own archive of German-Jewish families. We hope to build this archive and turn it into a learning resource.

The Sussex Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies was founded on the principle that societies can be judged by the way they treat their Jewish citizens. In an environment where growing antisemitism,

intolerance and marginalisation of minorities has demonstrated how fragile civilisation can be, we hope to demonstrate that the scholarship we foster can contribute to the well-being of civil society and a secure Jewish future.

A new website describing our activities: www.sussex.ac.uk/research/centres/jewish-studies/

Awards

Victoria Grace Walden is to be congratulated for her award of a British Academy/Leverhulme Small Grant which will fund fieldwork across Europe, the US and Australia (2022-2023) for the project 'Digital Holocaust Memory: Hyperconnective Museums and Archives of the Future.'

Review of *Ridley Road*

Ivor Gaber



Credit: BBC/Red Productions

There was great interest, and even excitement, when the BBC announced it was planning to dramatise Jo Bloom's 2014 novel 'Ridley Road.' At a time when antisemitism in the UK has, unfortunately never been far from the headlines, having the BBC's prestigious Sunday evening drama slot focus on far-right antisemitism in London in the post-war years was important.

Having grown up not far from Ridley Road and having stood behind a market stall in Petticoat Lane, too close to comfort to the speechifying of antisemitic rabble rousers, I was very much looking forward to the series.

Alas, I was to be disappointed.

But to start with the positive. The series did remind, or tell, a contemporary mass audience that antisemitism wasn't just something to do with the Second World War and Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party. And that despite this country's proud record in fighting Nazism, in the years after the Second World War the far right here continued where Oswald Mosely and his black shirts had been forced to leave off, by bringing their antisemitic vitriol, threats and violence to the streets of London.

However, as a drama, I thought it poor. I have not read Bloom's novel so I have no idea how closely, or otherwise, Sarah Solemani's adaption was true to the book – some distance I understand. But there exists an unspoken 'contract' between the audience and the writer which is, that as long as the writer has a good tale to tell, the audience will offer its 'willing suspension of disbelief.' I found that contract under strain during the first episode and, as the subsequent episodes rolled on, the contract dissipated altogether.

There were problems almost from the start. The fictional Jewish

heroine – Vivien Epstein – moves to London from her cloying Jewish home in Manchester and encounters 'Soly' – as the credits names him (why not the more common Solly?) the fictional leader of the real anti-fascist 62 group; Soly is also a cab driver who appears never to carry a fare-paying passenger.

I was confused, and then amused, by the scene in which Vivien reconnects with a former boyfriend; the scene takes place in an abandoned train parked in a deserted railway siding. There seemed no obvious reason for it other than someone having said: 'I've found this great location.'

As the series progressed the plot became more and more unlikely, with Vivien sleeping with the real-life fascist leader Colin Jordan and then later, in a style that would have shamed James Bond, escaping from his murderous thugs over rooftop – in her high-heeled shoes!

A cameo role for the veteran Rita Tushingham looked promising until, in the sort of twist that Hollywood producers give to movies that might be a shade too dark for the audience, she turns from closet racist to anti-fascist activist in a way that strained belief. As did Vivienne's father metamorphosing from a harassed husband to an underground anti-fascist document forger.

To make matters worse, with the exception of Agnes O'Casey who played Vivien, and Rory Kinnear who played Jordan, the acting was wooden – but that might have as much to do with the rather leaden script.

So although *Ridley Road* made for exciting viewing, as a historical insight into the heroic Jewish-led struggles with Britain's neo-fascists, it was about as realistic as Bugs Bunny. A sadly missed opportunity.

PhD projects

The Moritz and Bessie Emanuel PhD scholarship in Modern Jewish History and Culture

We are pleased to offer a fully-funded three-year 'Moritz and Bessie Emanuel' PhD for a doctoral candidate wishing to pursue a research project in the field of Jewish studies. Highly motivated current and prospective graduates with an outstanding academic record and a strong interest in the relevant topics are encouraged to apply.

The successful PhD candidate will be joining a vibrant PhD

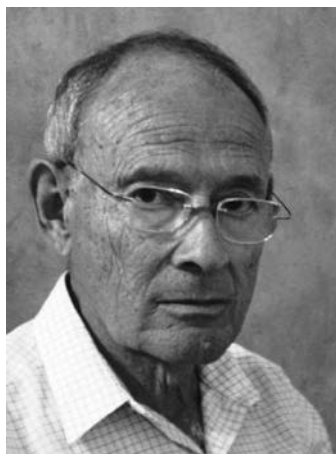
community at the Institute in the School of History, Art History and Philosophy at the University of Sussex. Graduate students are expected to participate in the research activities of the institute including lectures and international conferences.

For further information contact Gideon Reuveni

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Ladislav Löb: An Obituary

Alistair Davies and Nicolas Tredell



Laci Löb

Ladislav (Laci) Löb, one of the last Professors of German at Sussex, died in Zürich, Switzerland, in October 2021. A distinguished scholar of the literature of the German Enlightenment and an accomplished translator from Hungarian and German, Laci will also be remembered for his first-hand accounts of the Nazi extermination of Romanian and Hungarian Jewry and of the 'luck' of his own survival.

Laci's book *Dealing with Satan* (2008), draws on the testimony of other survivors as well as his own and provides a well-researched and balanced defence of Kasztner, who was later assassinated and

remains an incendiary figure in some quarters. Laci regularly spoke to Sussex students - telling them how he and his father became part of the so-called 'Kasztner group' of around 1,600 Jews who were given safe passage out of Hungary thanks to a deal between Nazi officials and the Zionist leader Rezső Kasztner, whose course of action after Budapest was occupied by the Nazis, still stirs much controversy. Throughout his life Laci was grateful to Kasztner for saving his life and he emphasized this time and again.

In 1963, after a brief career as a teacher and journalist in Switzerland, he came to England to teach German literature and language at the University of Sussex where he remained until his retirement. Talking with Laci, on and off campus, gave the liberating sense of moving between and across cultures and languages: 'having been born a Romanian and Hungarian citizen, I am now Swiss and British by naturalisation.'

After his retirement from Sussex, Laci kept close contact with the Centre. Laci's sense of humour always impressed those who encountered him, but he also knew how to use his wit as a powerful device to make young people think about the past. When talking to students he used to tell them about his final train journey from Bergen-Belsen to safety in Switzerland. He depicted this trip as a passage from darkness to light, remarking that this was meant not only metaphorically. In fear of air bombing, Laci used to explain, the German side of the border was dark while the Swiss illuminated their cities to signal to Allies bombers not to attack them. His was an extraordinary life and he was an extraordinary man.

Goodbye Sussex Dr David Jünger

In September 2017, I joined the University of Sussex as the DAAD Lecturer in Modern European History, and the Centre for German-Jewish Studies as its Deputy Director. After four years, I am leaving Sussex to take up a post as Lecturer in Contemporary History at the University of Rostock in Germany.

Many things have happened during these four years that have been challenging, overwhelming and at times, depressing.

First and foremost, the UK turning away from Europe was a huge blow to us all.

I experienced the passing of two outstanding personalities: the Centre's founder, Edward Timms in 2018 and the long-standing member of the Advisory Board and major supporter of the Centre, Ralph Emanuel in 2020.

I also had a wonderful time. We founded a Jewish Studies research group at the University. I participated in various political and academic panel discussions; I took students on a research trip to Austria; organised one conference and two Summer Schools for PhD students; taught 'German-Jewish History in Modern Times,' 'The Holocaust' as well as 'Fascism in Comparative Perspectives,' and entered the digital world by producing a podcast series.

While the University is a huge organism with limited social interaction, the Centre has always been a kind of home for me. People work on a variety of stimulating topics, organise countless events while simultaneously providing an atmosphere of proximity and familiarity. I will treasure memories of the Centre, particularly of its director, Professor Gideon Reuveni, its manager Diana Franklin and the members of the London based Advisory Board. I am most grateful to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for giving me this opportunity.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 2022

We are delighted that **Hella Pick CBE** has agreed to speak about her life and career at our next University of Sussex Holocaust Memorial Day event which will take place on campus on Wednesday 2 February 2022.

Hella was born in Vienna, Austria, into a middle-class Jewish family. Following Germany's annexation of Austria in 1938, and a visit from the Gestapo, Hella was put on a *Kindertransport* and arrived in Britain in March 1939. Her mother obtained a visa and joined her three months later. Hella will speak about her experiences and her encounters with British society.

The event will also be recorded and available to watch online.

Publications

Gideon Reuveni is currently working on a book-length project on the history of the German-Jewish reparations agreement that was signed in Luxembourg on 10 September 1952. His article entitled: 'Neither Insiders nor Outsiders: The German National Library and the Jews before 1933' has been accepted for publication by the *Journal of Jewish Studies* and is due to come out in summer 2022. In addition, together with **Emma Zohar**, he is preparing an autobiography written by a Polish-Jewish merchant by the name of Shmuel Flakowitz for publication. Written in Hebrew after Flakowitz left Poland for Palestine at the end of the 1930s, this autobiography provides remarkable insight into everyday Jewish life and economic practice in pre-war Poland. The manuscript was discovered by Emma and Gideon while doing research on another project. The book is due to be published by Bar Ilan University Press in 2022 under the title: 'The World According to Flakowitz: Memoirs of a Jewish Industrialist from the Turn of the Century to the Establishment of the State of Israel.'

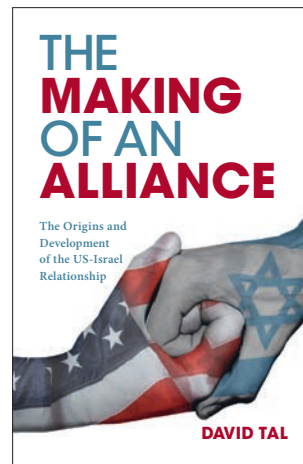
Katrin Steffen, Science, in: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Tamara Sztyma (Hg.), *Legacy of Polish Jews*, Warszawa 2021, pp. 139-153.

Early in 2021, a new Legacy Gallery exploring the lives and achievements of distinguished Polish Jews opened in the Polin Museum of the History of the Polish Jews in Warsaw. In an accompanying publication entitled: 'The Legacy of Polish Jews,' published in Polish and in English, fourteen scholars explore the participation of Polish Jews in a broad range of fields such as art, music, literature, theatre, cinema, science, politics, education and economics. In her contribution on science, Katrin examines the careers and lives of Helene Deutsch, a psychoanalyst who closely worked with Sigmund Freud, Ludwik Zamenhof, the inventor of the universal language 'Esperanto,' Józef Rozblat, the nuclear physicist and Nobel Prize winner, who called himself a Pole with a British passport and the serologist Ludwik Hirszfeld – all of whom lived mobile and transnational lives.

Katrin Steffen: 'Blut und Metall. Die transnationalen Wissensräume von Ludwik Hirszfeld und Jan Czochochalski' published by Wallstein Verlag in Göttingen, November 2021.

At the beginning of the 20th century, research into substances such as blood and metals was booming. In this double biography Katrin traces how the serologist Ludwik Hirszfeld (1884-1954) and the metallurgist Jan Czochochalski (1885-1953) – both internationally recognised researchers, made significant contributions in their fields and entered new grounds of research.

David Tal is to be congratulated on the publication of his new book entitled: 'The Making of an Alliance.'

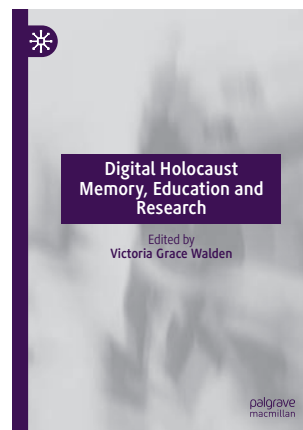


Published by Cambridge University Press

Ministers, state officials, and ordinary people from both countries, impacted one another. It was this constancy of religion, values, and history, serving as the bedrock of the relations between the two countries and peoples, over which the ephemeral was negotiated.

Digital Holocaust Memory, Education and Research

Edited by Victoria Grace Walden



This book explores the diverse range of practical and theoretical challenges and possibilities that digital technologies and platforms pose for Holocaust memory, education and research. From social media to virtual reality, 360-degree imaging to machine learning, there can be no doubt that digital media penetrate practice in these fields. As the Holocaust moves beyond living memory towards solely mediated memory, it is imperative that we pay critical attention to the way digital technologies are shaping public memory and education and research. Bringing together the voices of heritage and educational professionals, and academics from the arts and humanities and the social sciences, this interdisciplinary collection explores the practicalities of creating digital Holocaust projects, the educational value of such initiatives and considers the extent to which digital technologies change the way we remember, learn about and research the Holocaust. At its core, this volume interrogates the extent to which digital interventions mark an epochal shift in Holocaust memory, education and research, or whether they continue to be shaped by long-standing debates and guidelines developed in the broadcast era.

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

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Please see our website:

www.sussex.ac.uk/research/centres/jewish-studies/

Laying the foundation for an understanding of US-Israeli relations, this book provides critical background on the origins and development of the 'special' relationship between Israel and the United States. Questioning the usual neo-realist approach to understanding this relationship, David Tal instead suggests that the relations between the two nations were constructed on idealism, political culture, and strategic ties. 'The Making of an Alliance' discusses the development of relations built through sustained interplay of people and ideas, showing how presidents and Prime