

Holocaust Memorial Day



Anita Lasker-Wallfisch

'Unbelievable!' said one of the students at the end of the Centre's Holocaust Memorial Day programme on the theme 'Stand Up To Hatred'. He had just been listening to Anita Lasker-Wallfisch describing her experiences sixty-five years ago as a member of the Auschwitz Women's Orchestra. It was

her gifts as a cellist that saved her life, enabling her to bear witness for later generations. The university's largest lecture theatre was filled to capacity to hear her moving personal narrative, supplemented by a screening of the documentary films 'Auschwitz, the Business of Death' and 'Playing to Survive'.

Earlier in the afternoon those events had been put into a wider context by two compelling lectures to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations Genocide Convention. Professor Philip Spencer of Kingston University focused on genocides that have occurred since the Holocaust, analysing the factors that cause these horrendous crimes and make them so difficult to prevent. He demonstrated that the perpetrators of recent atrocities in the Balkans and Africa have planned their campaigns in full knowledge of the crimes of the early twentieth century – the Armenian massacres and the Shoah. Past failures to bring war criminals to justice led them to assume that they too would escape unpunished.

A further riveting lecture was delivered by Dr Stephen Smith of the Aegis Trust, the UK-based organization to combat genocide. Speaking as an 'activist', he described the measures that can be taken to forestall ethnic conflict, to alleviate the accompanying suffering – and to punish those responsible. This richly informative programme, coordinated by Diana Franklin and Christian Wiese, was supported by the Association of Jewish Refugees. It left us feeling especially inspired by Anita Lasker-Wallfisch's efforts to overcome hatred and contribute to the creation of a better world.

Centre for German-Jewish Studies expands its international cooperation

The success of a research centre such as the CGJS depends both on cooperation within the University and on international links to other institutions involved in the teaching and research of Jewish Studies. Now that the Centre has become a firmly established and successful part of the History Department at the University of Sussex, Christian Wiese has started to establish a network of international relations that promises unique opportunities. Cooperation with the Jewish Museum in Berlin starts in May 2009 with the first of a series of 'Sussex-Berlin Dialogues on Jewish History and Contemporary Issues' in London and Berlin, devoted to a critical discussion of controversial topics currently debated within Jewish historiography.

The first joint international conference with the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Centre in March 2009 in Jerusalem (see following report) marks the opening event in a programme of cooperation with Israeli institutions. Plans for collaboration with American universities are also well underway, with a series of junior scholars' conferences on Jewish refugee intellectuals, co-organised with Brandeis University and the University of California, Los Angeles, as well as planned research cooperation with Duke University on the Central-European Jewish Intelligentsia from the 18th to the 20th century. Close cooperation with the University of Virginia and the Central European University in Budapest will commence shortly. In May 2009 Christian Wiese will lecture at universities in Shanghai, Nanjing and Beijing and explore the possibility of cooperation with Chinese institutions such as the Centre for Jewish Studies at Nanjing University. Such collaboration would enable the CGJS to start a major project on the legacy of German-speaking Jews after 1933, with research on the history and experience of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria in China in the 1930s and 1940s.

Arnold Paucker

An important source of inspiration for the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, which has now been in existence for fifteen years, has been the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI), and for this reason we are delighted to record a second, far more remarkable anniversary. Fifty years ago the Institute appointed as its London director a Berlin-born historian named Arnold Paucker, who subsequently succeeded Robert Weltsch, long-time chairman of the Board of Directors, as editor of the LBI Yearbook. After his retirement as director and editor, Arnold became the Institute's honorary treasurer. With these influential roles he helped to establish German-Jewish studies as a highly regarded field of research in the English-speaking world. At a dinner in London on 26 January 2009 marking his retirement, numerous tributes were paid to all that Arnold has achieved, with the support of his wife Pauline. 'In creating the field of German-Jewish history,' his successor Raphael Gross observed, 'he added his own personal perspective'. Arnold Paucker's publications include a definitive account of Jewish resistance to National Socialism, showing that resistance activities in Nazi Germany were far more significant than is generally assumed.

Conference reports

Sociological Perspectives on Jewish Migrants from the former Soviet Union

In December 2008, an international conference brought together a panel of historians and sociologists and over forty visitors - mainly members of Jewish congregations in Germany, to discuss the impact of Jewish migration from the former Soviet Union since the early 1990s on communities in Germany, the USA and Israel. Lively debates were triggered on questions such as how the integration of Russian-speaking Jews might change the character of the German-Jewish community, with the majority now being influenced by Russian culture - a strongly secular identity with memories differing from those of the established community. Other topics discussed were the political and social changes engendered by the influence of Russian-speaking Jews in Israel and the phenomenon of a Russian-Jewish transnational Diaspora that tends to maintain links to an increasingly visible Jewish life and culture in contemporary Russia.

'Kristallnacht and its International Aftermath'

On 8 December a well-attended workshop devoted to international responses to the 'Kristallnacht' events of November 1938 in Germany took place at the British Academy in London. Topics included the perspective of German eyewitness testimonies (Raphael Gross), the reactions of the Austrian public (Peter Pulzer), the problematic response of Americans and American Jews to the persecution of European Jewry (Gulie Ne'eman Arad), the encounter between refugees and rescuers in Britain (Edward Timms), the impact of 'Kristallnacht' on the Jews in Palestine (Moshe Zimmermann), and the confrontation of Zionist intellectuals with the demonic face of nationalism in Europe (Christian Wiese).

Doris Bergen analysed the trends within Protestantism that led to silent acceptance or active support for Nazi politics, and Susannah Heschel devoted her remarks to the intellectual complicity of parts of German Protestantism with the racial ideology of radical antisemitism. Based on her new book, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton University Press, 2008), she reminded the audience of a trend within the Protestant Church that, motivated by racism, redefined Christianity as a religion at war with Judaism. In 1939, these theologians established the 'Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish influence on German Religious Life' in Jena, which exerted widespread influence and produced a 'nazified' Christianity that placed antisemitism at its centre. Heschel's path-breaking book investigates the most sensitive areas of Nazi Germany's treatment of the Jews. By revealing how German theologians sought to de-judaize the Church, she has made, as Saul Friedländer judges, 'a highly original and important contribution to our understanding of the Third Reich'.

Jerusalem Conference on a 'dissenting Zionist'



Hans Kohn 1959
By courtesy of the Leo Baeck Institute, New York

An international conference on the 'Legacy of Hans Kohn', took place on 11/12 March 2009 at the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Centre at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. It was co-organised by Prof. Christian Wiese, Prof. Steven Aschheim and Prof. Yfaat Weiss and devoted to the

Prague-born Zionist and historian of nationalism, Hans Kohn (1891-1971). Kohn was affiliated with the *Brith Shalom* movement that aimed to promote peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. From the late 1920s, in the wake of the increasingly violent conflicts between the Jewish and Arab population, Kohn famously dissociated himself from Zionism, even from Buber's version of a non-chauvinist 'Hebrew humanism' and emigrated to the United States.

The conference explored Kohn's intriguing intellectual and political development. Strongly influenced by the ideas of Ahad Ha'am and Martin Buber (who gave his famous 'three speeches on Judaism' in Prague before World War I), Kohn started to reflect upon an ethical and cosmopolitan version of Jewish nationalism that might both counter the destructive forces of European nationalism and establish a new, more profound Jewish existence in Europe. Rather than to a territorial homeland, Kohn's Jewish nationalism was connected to the Jewish messianic vision of a time in which all national conflicts would be resolved and the world would be unified. After a period as a prisoner of war in Russia, Kohn moved to Palestine, where he served as an executive director of the World Zionist Organization and became an important public intellectual. In a letter to Buber in 1929, Kohn exclaimed: 'Either Zionism will be peaceful or else it will be without me. Zionism is not Judaism.' With that statement of disgust aimed at the Zionist leadership's response to the Arab riots of 1929, Kohn left his Arab-style stone house in Jerusalem, and, after a few years of travelling through Europe, emigrated with his wife and young son to America to take a position as professor of history at Smith College. In America, Kohn quickly reinvented himself as a leading American scholar of nationalism and went on to publish important works on the history of nationalism and the nature of American nationalism.

The fact that a group of eight international specialists, amongst them Romy Langeheine, a Sussex DPhil student at the CGJS, and Christian Wiese, who gave the keynote address, explored different facets of Kohn's career and political thinking, indicates the astonishing renaissance his thinking has experienced in recent years. This could be interpreted as a sign of an intensified historical interest in those 'Others' within the Zionist movement who harboured the dream of a form of Jewish nationalism that attempted to counter the experience of chauvinism, war and genocide in Europe with a 'moral' concept of nationalism. Representatives of a 'melancholic counter-narrative' within Zionism (Jacqueline Rose), including intellectuals like Kohn, find their successors in those advocating a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis. The conference, part of a Centre project devoted to the 'Prague Circle' of German-speaking Zionists, was, however, not a hagiographic event; it included a series of critical debates on the illusory character of Kohn's radicalism as well as on the conservative turn of his later political thinking.

Events

Lecture-Concert at Austrian Ambassador`s Residence in aid of Centre for German-Jewish Studies

On 17 February 2009, the Austrian Ambassador, Dr Gabriele Matzner-Holzer, graciously opened her residence for a lecture-concert in aid of the Centre. The performers were Liora Grodnikaite, mezzo soprano, born in Vilnius and former 'Young Artist' at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; and Ido Ariel, an Israeli pianist and conductor currently teaching at the Jerusalem Music Academy and writing a doctoral thesis on Arnold Schoenberg at the Royal College of Music in London.

The programme comprised a broad range of lieder by Schubert, Schumann, Mahler and Schoenberg. Before each group of lieder, Ido Ariel described the context of the works and gave musical illustrations at the piano, demonstrating that whereas Schubert`s music closely matches Goethe`s poetry, Schumann writes primarily for a solo pianist with words flowing alongside. However, with Mahler and Schoenberg, the relationship between words and music becomes more arbitrary. Although the work of art is still to be experienced as a whole, with music running parallel to the words, the music does not appear to illustrate the meaning of the poetry.

Following the recital, Professor Peter Pulzer, Chairman of the Academic Advisory Board of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, noted the progression from the music of two non-Jewish to two Jewish composers, providing a fine example of the innovation that characterised the Jewish-German symbiosis during the Weimar Republic. This experimentation, associated with liberal democracy, contributed to restoring the image of Germany and Austria in the eyes of neighbours after the Great War.

Some of this music was destroyed during the Nazi book-burnings of 1933, and leading composers were forced to flee abroad. But Weimar Jewish culture continued to thrive in exile in the coffee houses of New York, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv, Sydney, Buenos Aires and London. This diffusion of culture is a central topic for teaching and research at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. And we are most grateful to the Austrian Ambassador and to the Austrian Cultural Forum for their generosity in hosting and co-ordinating this event.

Publications and conference papers

Romy Langeheine

'Considering Ethics, we would have to abandon Zionism: Hans Kohn and Ethical Zionism', paper given at international conference on 'The Legacy of Hans Kohn' at the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Centre at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 12 March 2009

Nitzan Lebovic

'The Jerusalem School: The Theo-Political Hour', in *New German Critique* 103 (2008), pp. 97– 120

'Hugo Bergmann: A Radical Political Philosophy in Palestine', in *The Jewish-Muslim Conflict in Palestine and the First Peacenik Movement* [Hebrew] (Tel- Aviv: Carmel, 2008)

'Political Theology in Israel: Friedman`s Court', paper at conference on 'Political Theology' at the University of Tel Aviv, 10 November 2008 (organised by Nitzan Lebovic)

'War and Education: Political Education in Israel and Germany after World War II', seminar paper at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, 17 November 2008

Deborah Schultz

Arnold Daghani`s Memories of Mikhailowka: `The Illustrated Diary of a Slave Labour Camp Survivor` (London: Vallentine Mitchell), co-edited with Edward Timms, January 2009

'Chrystal Lebas: The Wait: Culture and nature: The immensity and imagination of the forest', Portfolio, November 2008, pp. 34-41

Edward Timms

'Joseph Goebbels and the Spectrum of Nazi Propaganda', seminar paper at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, 3 November 2008

'Refugees and Rescuers – A British Perspective', contribution to the British Academy workshop on 'Kristallnacht and its International Aftermath', 8 December 2008

'On translating Karl Kraus', presentation at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, 16-17 February 2009

Christian Wiese

The Legacy of Hans Jonas: Judaism and the Phenomenon of Life, edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Christian Wiese (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2008)

'Resisting the Demonic Forces of Nationalism: Robert Weltsch`s Response to Nazism and Kristallnacht', in *Jewish Quarterly*, Winter 121, No. 212, pp. 50-53

'Von Dessau nach Philadelphia: Samuel Hirsch als Philosoph, Apologet und radikaler Reformier', in *Jüdische Bildung und Kultur in Sachsen-Anhalt von der Aufklärung bis zum Nationalsozialismus*, edited by Giuseppe Veltri and Christian Wiese (Berlin: Metropol, 2009), pp. 363-410

'Das Judentum als Menschheitsreligion: Samuel Hirsch (1815-1889) als Philosoph, Apologet und radikaler Reformier', lecture at the University of Frankfurt am Main, 20 October 2008

Keynote lecture on 'Zur Kontinuität und Diskontinuität antisemitischer Weltbilder' at conference on 'Antisemitism and Xenophobia' in Weimar, 27 October 2008

'Gnosis, Paganism and Political Theology: Jewish Dimensions of Hans Jonas`s Response to Martin Heidegger', lecture at conference on 'Political Theology' at the University of Tel Aviv, 10 November 2008

'Politics of Memory and the Temptations of Antisemitism: The Martin Walser-Debates in Germany Revisited', lecture at international conference on Jews in German Literature after 1945 at the Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem, 11 November 2008

'Robert Weltsch, 1938-39: A Dissenting Zionist`s Voice between Berlin and Jerusalem', lecture at conference on 'Kristallnacht' at Mishkenot Shaananim Cultural Centre, Jerusalem, 12 November 2008

'Hans Jonas and Hannah Arendt: Jewish Identities and Philosophical Ethics', lecture at the University of Southampton, 18 November 2008

'Revolte wider die Weltflucht: Hans Jonas` Auseinandersetzung mit Martin Heidegger und dem modernen Existentialismus', lecture at the University of Heidelberg, 19 November 2008

'Resisting the Demonic Forces of Nationalism: Robert Weltsch`s Response to Nazism and Kristallnacht', paper given at the workshop on 'Kristallnacht and its International Aftermath' at the British Academy in London, 8 December 2008

Participant in Roundtable Discussion on 'Hans Jonas and Judaism' at the Association for Jewish Studies Conference in Washington, D.C., 21 December 2008

'God`s Passion for Humankind and Human Responsibility for God: Abraham J. Heschel and Hans Jonas on Ethics in a Post-Holocaust World', lecture at New North London Synagogue, 30 January 2009

'Jewish Interpretations of Martin Luther from the Enlightenment to the Holocaust: A Tragic Love', lecture at the University of Manchester, 19 February 2009

'No Love for the Jewish People? Hans Jonas`s Controversy with Hannah Arendt over "Eichmann in Jerusalem" Revisited', paper at workshop on 'Hannah Arendt and the Life of the Mind', University of Southampton, 4 March 2009

'But this is Buber-Zionism: Robert Weltsch`s and Hans Kohn`s Diverging Interpretation of Jewish Nationalism', paper at international conference on 'The Legacy of Hans Kohn' at the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Centre at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 11 March 2009

Forthcoming lectures and events

Lectures

20 April 2009

Prof. Michael L. Miller (Central European University, Budapest), 'Beauty Queens, Irredentism and the Jewish Question in Interwar Hungary'

4.30 pm, University of Sussex, Arts D730 (tea at 4 pm in B127)

Open to all who are interested – booking not required

14 May 2009

Prof. Atina Grossmann (Cooper Union, New York), 'Close Encounters: Jews, Germans, and Allies in Occupied Germany'

7 pm, Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street, London W1W 5BH

Places must be reserved in advance by contacting the Leo Baeck Institute London:

T +44 (0)20 7580 3493

E info@leobaec.co.uk

27-28 May 2009

Sussex-Berlin Dialogues on Jewish History and Contemporary Issues

Theme for 2009: 'The Question of Redemption: Messianism and the End of Days'

Prof. Sigrid Weigel (Director, Centre for Literary and Cultural Research, Berlin) and Prof. Pierre Bouretz (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris) will discuss 'The End of Secular Utopias'.

The event on 27 May 2009 will take place in London (venue to be confirmed)

The event in Berlin will take place at 7 pm on 28 May 2009 at the Berlin Jewish Museum (Konzertsaal). Both evenings will be moderated by Prof. Christian Wiese, Centre for German-Jewish Studies.

4 June 2009

Prof. Niall Ferguson (Harvard University), 'Siegmund Warburg: An Anglo German-Jewish Life' 7 pm, Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire Street, London W1W 5BH

Places must be reserved in advance by contacting the Leo Baeck Institute London:

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23 June 2009

Dr Arnold Paucker, 'Robert Weltsch, the Enigmatic Zionist: His Personality and his Position in Jewish Politics' 4.30 pm, Centre for German-Jewish Studies Meeting Room B127 (Tea at 4 pm)

16 June 2009

Everything Speaks: People, Places, Objects as sites of Memory, History and Biography (in cooperation with the Centre for Life History and Life Writing Research)

Venue to be confirmed

Shivaun Woolfson: 'A Journey into the Heart of Jewish Lithuania'

In September 2008, Shivaun Woolfson travelled to Vilnius to conduct a series of life history

interviews with elderly Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. The resulting documentary and accompanying photo exhibition follow her research journey. Shivaun Woolfson is a DPhil student in History at the University of Sussex.

Marlene Creates: 'Places of Presence – Newfoundland Kin and Ancestral Land'

For over thirty years the work of artist Marlene Creates has been an exploration of the relationship between experience, memory, language and the land, and the impact they have on each other. In this talk she will present work based on a set of hand-drawn 'memory maps' and spoken texts in which the artist's relatives in Newfoundland express memories of the land on which they were born. Marlene Creates is a visual artist and poet who lives and works in Newfoundland, Canada.

Workshops

30 April 2009

'Aesthetic Theories of Catastrophe in the Fin-de-Siècle'

Workshop from 10 am to 5 pm at the University of London, Goldsmiths (room RHB 306), Lewisham Way, New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Admission is free, but registration is required:

T +44 (0)1273 678771

E l.a.petersen@sussex.ac.uk

The period from the outbreak of the First World War to the end of World War II is commonly regarded as the 'Age of Catastrophe'. It is also the age of German and German-Jewish theorization of crisis and disaster, most apparent with the productive turn Friedrich Nietzsche and Walter Benjamin, among others, gave to images of 'destruction'. The workshop will explore the impact of these and closely related concepts, including the idea of exception in political theology, crisis in political theory, extremism in political theory, apocalypse and its effect on Messianism, as well as utopianism in the context of theory, literature and film. Dr. Leena Petersen and Dr. Nitzan Lebovic, CGJS, will organise the workshop in cooperation with Prof. Howard Caygill, History Department, Goldsmiths College, London, who will give the keynote address.

20-23 July 2009

The Max and Hilde Kochmann Summer School for PhD students in European-Jewish History and Culture at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (Yarnton Manor). The purpose of the workshop is to create an interdisciplinary network of younger scholars engaged in European Jewish history and culture from the early modern to modern periods. Participants will come from the UK, the USA, Germany, Israel, Italy, Poland, Austria and Hungary and Romania. Participating faculty in 2009 will be Prof. Christian Wiese (University of Sussex), Dr David Rechter (University of Oxford), Prof. Mitchell B. Hart (University of Florida) and Dr Joanna Weinberg (University of Oxford).

The workshop is not open to the public.

Arnold Daghani centenary

Spring 2009 is the centenary of the birth of Arnold Daghani and it will be marked by two

book publications, together with an exhibition and a workshop organized by the CGJS at the Austrian Cultural Forum in London. Born on 22 February 1909 in Suczava on the eastern frontier of the Habsburg Empire (now Suceava in Romania), Daghani is best known for works relating to the Nazi slave labour camps in the Ukraine. Daghani made a secret record of his suffering by means of striking watercolours and a cryptic diary including a graphic account of his daring escape. These paintings and writings, now in Special Collections at Sussex, provide the main focus for the Daghani season.

31 March 2009

Conflict, Document and Representation: From the Habsburg Empire to the Holocaust

Workshop from 10 am to 5.30 pm at the Austrian Cultural Forum, 28 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PQ. This will be followed at 6 pm by the formal opening of the exhibition (see below) and by a book presentation: Arnold Daghani's *Memories of Mikhailowka: The Illustrated Diary of a Slave Labour Camp Survivor*, ed. Deborah Schultz and Edward Timms with a contribution by Petru Weber, published with 35 colour illustrations by Valentine Mitchell.

Registration:

T +44 (0)20 7225 7300

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Word, Image, Memory: The Artistic Testimony of Arnold Daghani

Exhibition at the Austrian Cultural Forum, 28 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PQ.

This exhibition of original works from the Arnold Daghani Collection at the University of Sussex, curated by Dr Deborah Schultz to mark the centenary of the artist's birth, is open to the public on week-days between 1 April and 15 May 2009

23 April

Book Presentation, 6.30 pm at the Austrian Cultural Forum: Pictorial Narrative in the Nazi Period: Felix Nussbaum, Charlotte Salomon and Arnold Daghani by Deborah Schultz and Edward Timms, published with numerous half-tone illustrations by Routledge.

Registration:

T +44 (0)20 7225 7300

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Discounts on publications associated with the Centre

Publications by researchers at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies may be purchased at a discount by readers of this Newsletter

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