

Holocaust Memorial Day: How Can Life Go On?



Professor Mary Fulbrook speaking on 'The Legacies of Persecution'



David Tal with Freddie Knoller

Welcoming everyone to the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts on 8 February, the new Vice-Chancellor, Prof Adam Tickell, reminded a capacity audience that Sussex was the first British university to mark Holocaust Memorial Day with a public event. Dr Gideon Reuveni, Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, then recalled a conversation with his survivor parents in Israel. 'How can life go on?' he asked them. They replied: 'Through you!'

In the fascinating lecture that followed, 'After Nazism: Addressing the Legacies of Persecution', Prof Mary Fulbrook spoke first of the Perpetrators – at least 200,000 directly involved in the killings, while millions more supported the system. But after the war only 164 of the killers were convicted

by West German courts, less than 1% of those directly responsible. A conviction for murder was only possible if there was a proven personal intention to kill. There were far more convictions in the German Democratic Republic, where 'action' not 'intention' was the criterion.

Turning to the Survivors, she recalled how difficult it was to find an audience for their stories, disjointed chronicles of chaotic disruptions. Even at the Frankfurt war-crimes trials of the 1960s, judges were unsympathetic to survivors' testimony. But from the 1970s onwards the voices of Jewish survivors began to be heard more clearly, to a lesser extent also of Roma, while homosexuals persecuted by the Nazis still felt shamed into silence.

After commending the collection of survivor testimony by the Shoah Foundation, Prof Fulbrook turned to the significance of Memorial Sites, which can be very effective politically and emotionally, even though the perpetrators tend to be invisible. But why the one-sided preoccupation with Auschwitz? And why do people not visit Euthanasia centres in Germany? The legacy of the Holocaust, she concluded, is both mourning and learning – learning to be tolerant of diversity!

There followed a compelling presentation by Holocaust survivor Freddie Knoller of his exploits on the run from the Nazis. Using maps crisscrossing occupied Europe, he brought to life an odyssey that took him from his childhood home in Vienna through Belgium to Paris, where he worked

as a 'guide' for German soldiers exploring the night life. The section describing how he joined the French resistance was even more gripping, but he was captured and deported to Auschwitz, where he was robust enough to survive a death march. Further details, revealing how he coped with life after the war, emerged during an on-stage interview with Prof David Tal, holder of the Yossi Harel Chair for Modern Israel Studies.

The event concluded with a screening of 'The Children of the Holocaust', an animated documentary based on interviews with Holocaust survivors from Leeds. Afterwards, Kath Shackleton, producer of the multi-award winning film, responded to the audience's questions and comments.

Contesting Jewish Loyalties: The First World War and Beyond

From 15 to 17 December 2016, an international conference on the First World War in Jewish history brought together scholars from twelve countries and a large audience at the W. Michael Blumenthal Academy in Berlin. The Centre for German-Jewish Studies co-organised the event together with the Jewish Museum Berlin; the Institute for the

History of the German Jews, Hamburg; the Pears Institute for the study of Antisemitism at Birkbeck, University of London; and the Wissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Leo Baeck Instituts in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Contributors explored the impact of the Great War on Jewish

communities worldwide and investigated the multifaceted question of Jewish loyalties in military conflict. Papers included an investigation of multiple loyalties within the Scholem family (Mirjam Zadoff, Bloomington), the opposition to the war by German-Jewish anarchists Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam (Carsten Schapkow, Oklahoma),

the impact of the notorious 1916 *Judenzählung* (Jew census) on members of religious and ethnic minorities fighting in the Kaiser's army (Gavin J. Wiens, Toronto), and the friendship between Paul Nathan and Lucien Wolf, liberal Jews who regarded themselves as loyal patriots of Germany and

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Contesting Jewish Loyalties

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England respectively, yet also embraced an idea of European civilisation (Christoph Jahr, Berlin).

A conference report by Steven Schouten highlights the wide-ranging key note lecture by Professor Ulrich Wyrwa (Potsdam/Berlin), who compared 'spaces of experience' and 'horizons of expectation' on different sides of the front and in different countries. According to Wyrwa, the First World War decisively disrupted the unity of European Jewry and the balance of loyalties that existed before 1914. The war forced Jews to take sides, leading in part to the collapse of transnational bonds between friends, colleagues and families. But the impact of war experiences was by no means coherent and simultaneous, for they affected nations in different ways. For Wyrwa, it was the 'whole nexus of war, revolution and counter-revolution' that created a radically new situation, characterised by feelings of both hope and despair about Jewish emancipation and civil rights.

The conference report has been published on the academic network HSozKult and can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-7048>

Evi Wohl gemuth Memorial Lecture: 'Quo Vadis, Europe?'



Eva Nowotny

On 10 November 2016, in partnership with the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, the Austrian Cultural Forum in London presented this event in memory of our former support group member, Vienna-born Evi Wohl gemuth. This year's lecture was delivered by the former Austrian Ambassador in London, Dr Eva Nowotny. She discussed some of

the most pressing issues Europe faces as well as the transatlantic relationship, Europe's role in the world and the challenges of global governance. Ambassador Nowotny is President of the Austrian UNESCO Commission and Chair of the Board of the University of Vienna.

Dr Nowotny studied history and German philology and literature at the University of Vienna, and entered the Austrian Foreign Service in 1973. Following some time in Cairo and a position as Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN, she served as Austrian Ambassador in London, Paris and Washington. The Evi Wohl gemuth memorial lectures are now an annual highlight and we are extremely grateful to her friends whose generous donations have made the continuation of these lectures possible.

Remembering Arnold Paucker



Arnold Paucker

The launch of the German-Jewish Centre in spring 1994 coincided with a weekly Research Colloquium that attracted an impressive range of speakers: Judith Kerr on Writing about Being a Refugee; Jeremy Adler on the Theresienstadt survivor H. G. Adler; Peter Pulzer on World War I and the German Jews; and Paul Roazen on the Patients of Sigmund Freud.

The series culminated in a talk on Jewish Resistance to Nazi Germany by the Director of the London Leo Baeck Institute (LBI), Dr Arnold Paucker, who has died at the age of 95. Arno's visit was all the more memorable because he and his wife Pauline stayed in Brighton overnight, sharing personal memories underlying a life-long scholarly involvement with Jewish Studies. His commitment to research on Jewish Resistance to Fascism can be traced back to his boyhood in the Berlin of the 1930s, when he was active in underground Communist and Zionist youth groups. This was followed, after emigration to Palestine, by service with the British Army in Italy.

Arno combined political radicalism with meticulous scholarship, spiced by a mischievous sense of humour. It was inspirational to watch him in action, as Director of the LBI from 1959 until 2001, leading meetings of the Board at their premises in Devonshire Street, planning a forthcoming international conference or launching the next volume of the LBI Year Book, which he transformed into the leading publication in its field. Particularly memorable was the conference he organized at Clare College Cambridge in September 2001, which

coincided with the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. Those who recalled the burning of the Reichstag in Berlin in 1933 were left with an overwhelming sense of history repeating itself.

Arno continued to dazzle us with the lightness of touch that he brought to serious subjects, ranging from an unforgettable lecture on 'Speaking English with a German Accent' to a charming leaflet entitled 'The Elusive Number Sixty-Eight'. The No. 68 in question was a reprint of the celebrated German novella by Annette von Droste-Hülshoff entitled *The Jew's Beech*, published in Berlin in 1936 in a series produced by Schocken Verlag under Nazi censorship. Too late, the censors realized that the Hebrew moral inscribed on the tree conveyed a subversive message: that anyone who murders a Jew will ultimately perish at the scene of the crime.

A brief tribute can do no more than sketch Arno's mercurial gifts. A more comprehensive picture was provided on 30 March 2017 by a commemorative seminar at the German Historical Institute in London, where speakers included Peter Pulzer (Oxford) and Raphael Gross (soon to be President of the German Historical Museum in Berlin).

Authentic Diaries and Fake News

Speaking in December at the New North London Synagogue on the anti-Nazi diarists Anne Frank and Anna Haag, Edward Timms argued that Second World War diaries can form an invaluable historical source, providing the original manuscript has survived. This claim was elucidated by facsimiles of handwritten entries by Anna Haag, all the more compelling when they incorporated press cuttings from the Nazi newspapers that she despised, risking her life by mocking the adulation of the Führer.

The focus of a public lecture delivered in Vienna on 20 April was on the opposite extreme – Fake News. The examples Timms analysed under the title 'Karl Kraus, die Kritik der verfälschten Nachrichten und ihre Anwendung auf den postfaktischen Diskurs unserer Zeit' extended from forgeries concocted by the Austrian Foreign Ministry on the



Edward Timms with Jonathan Wittenberg at the New North London Synagogue

eve of the First World War as a fanfare for the attack on Serbia to the Dodgy Dossier compiled by Tony Blair to legitimize the invasion of Iraq.

The lecture also analysed the fraudulent promises made by Boris Johnson during the Brexit campaign about an extra £350,000 million per week for the NHS; and the 'alternative facts' that have been cited so ominously by spokespersons for the newly elected President of the United States.

Appointment of Lord Neuberger as Patron of the CGJS



David Neuberger

The Right Hon the Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, President of the Supreme Court, has graciously consented to become President of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. He is the eldest of four sons of Albert Neuberger, who was born in Bavaria. Having foreseen Hitler's persecution of the Jews, Albert fled to England in 1933, where he married the artist Lilian Dreyfus and became Professor of Chemical Pathology at the University of London.

David Neuberger was educated at Westminster School, and studied chemistry at Oxford University. Upon graduation, he worked at the merchant bank N M Rothschild & Sons, before joining the bar. With characteristic modesty, he has observed that he was 'even less good at finance than at science', so that the law was 'a case of third time lucky'.

A property law expert, he worked his way up as a QC and High Court judge to the position of Lord Justice of Appeal, where he was in charge of modernizing the civil justice system, before becoming the youngest Law Lord in 2007. His rise to the Court of Appeal and then to the House of Lords is one of the quickest in recent times. He has gained popularity among the legal profession for his approachable manner, off-beat speeches and fondness for quoting Kafka and Wittgenstein.

Lord Neuberger's extrajudicial activities include being chairman of the advisory committee on the spoliation of art (artworks looted during the Third Reich), chairman of the Schizophrenia Trust and a governor of the University of the Arts London.

Yad Vashem Prize for Holocaust Research

The 2016 Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research has been awarded to Dr Kim Wünschmann, Acting Deputy Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies and DAAD Lecturer in Modern European History, for her book *Before Auschwitz: Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps*. The Prize has been established in memory of survivor Abraham Schwartzbaum and his family members who were murdered in the Holocaust. The Yad Vashem International Institute for Holocaust Research bestows this award annually upon a scholar who has published groundbreaking research in Holocaust studies.

The ceremony, which took place in Jerusalem on 13 December 2016, was led by Prof. Dina Porat, Yad Vashem Chief Historian. The award was presented by Prof. Dan Michman, Head of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research and holder of the John Najmann Chair for Holocaust Studies. Quoting from the judges' report, Prof Michman offered the following assessment: 'In her superbly researched and



Yad Vashem Book Prize award ceremony showing (from left to right) Prof. Dina Porat; Director General of Yad Vashem, Dorit Novak; Dr Kim Wünschmann and Prof. Dan Michman

richly documented study, which systematically integrates perspectives and voices, Wünschmann has provided a broad description of the special treatment of Jewish inmates, offering detailed evidence for an understanding of the place of Jews in the pre-war camps, which, until now, was largely based on anecdotal evidence. This alone justifies a close reading of *Before Auschwitz*. What turns the book into a major contribution to Holocaust scholarship are the implications of this special treatment of Jews in the pre-war camps for our understanding of the quick acculturation of the German public to the idea that the Jewish neighbour was an enemy to be extirpated, first from civil society and ultimately from the world.'

My Dear Ones: Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg at Sussex



Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg speaking to students at Sussex University

The Centre was delighted to welcome Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg to Sussex on 5 April 2017. Over sixty students came to hear him speak about his most recent publication: *My Dear Ones: One Family and the Final Solution*, a story of tenacity, faith and the struggle to survive.

Growing up in the safety of Britain, Jonathan was deeply conscious of his heritage as the child of refugees, although there was so much he failed to ask while those who could have answered his questions were still alive. After burying his Aunt Steffi in the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives, Jonathan accompanied his cousin Michal as she cleared the flat in Jerusalem where other family members had lived since fleeing Germany. In an old suitcase on the balcony they discovered a linen bag containing a bundle of letters left untouched for decades.

Jonathan felt enthralled as he deciphered the faded writing on long-forgotten letters that set him on his quest to uncover the painful details of family history. The wartime correspondence of his great-grandmother Regina and his grandmother, aunts and uncles enabled him to weave together the story of a rabbinical family struggling to resist the repressive policies of the Nazi regime. This well-researched and vividly illustrated book commemorates a family whose lives were as fragile as the paper on which they wrote, but whose faith in God remained steadfast.

Many of the students who attended this talk are currently writing essays on topics related to the Holocaust, so they were fascinated by Jonathan's reflections on the methodological challenges of compiling a book from family letters. To place such sources within a historical framework, personal responses must be correlated with political events. The insights gained through this approach stimulated a lively discussion, linking the experiences of the 1930s with the refugee crisis of today.

Award of PhD scholarship: Florian Zabransky



Florian Zabransky

Florian Zabransky is congratulated upon being awarded the Clemens N. Nathan PhD scholarship. In his dissertation project, Zabransky investigates narratives of masculinities and sexualities of German Jews during the Holocaust. Although the extermination of European Jewry was the foremost intention of Nazi persecutors, they also attacked gendered identities through humiliation, dehumanization and sexual violence.

Gender is gradually becoming an important category of analysis in Holocaust studies, addressing pivotal questions on gender relations, the male Jewish body and male sexualities. Recent research focuses on changing gender roles, gendered solidarity, and the role of sport in projecting idealized masculine images before and during the Holocaust. Studies also highlight the importance of sexuality, sexual desire and sex that was also ever present, be it in hiding, the Ghettos, the concentration camps or the aftermath.

The critical source interpretation of testimonies, letters, diaries and biographies makes it possible to shed light of the aforementioned questions regarding masculinities and sexualities of German Jews during the Holocaust. Even with hardly any room for manoeuvre, masculine assertion against Nazi atrocities, gendered roles of acting and defensive strategies in reaction to persecution can be identified, adding unexpectedly original insights to the study of the Holocaust.

Florian Zabransky studied Sociology at Goethe-University Frankfurt and Hamburg University. Before coming to Sussex, he worked as a research associate in Frankfurt am Main. He also worked at institutions commemorating the Holocaust, such as the concentration camp memorial site Neuengamme near Hamburg and the Fritz Bauer Institute in Frankfurt.

Lectures and events

World Refugee Day event – Refugees Then and Now

Tuesday 20 June 2017 14:00-16:00
University of Sussex, Meeting House, BN1 9QF

The Centre for German-Jewish Studies will host an afternoon seminar to mark World Refugee Day in conjunction with the Chaplaincy. **Canon Dr Paul Oestreicher** will give the opening address, linking his childhood escape from Nazi Germany to the current refugee crisis. The second main speaker will be **Professor Nadje Al-Ali** from the London School of Oriental and African Studies, whose research has highlighted the experiences of refugees from Iraq.

The closing discussion will be followed by refreshments.

Attendance is free. **Booking essential** (please register your place/s by Wednesday 7 June)
E: J.S.Thorogood@sussex.ac.uk
T: +44 (0) 1273 678217

The Kurt Hellman Memorial Lecture at the Max and Hilde Kochmann Summer School

Monday 3 July 2017 16:00
Conference Centre, Gallery Room 1 (Level 3), Bramber House, University of Sussex, BN1 9QU

Opening Remarks – Professor Edward Timms:

Inspirational figures from the founding of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies: Max and Hilde Kochmann and their friend Kurt Hellman

Professor Marjorie Perloff:

The Vienna Paradox: Jewish Identity and Austrian High Culture from World War I to the Anschluss

Marjorie Perloff was born Gabriele Mintz into a secularized Jewish family in Vienna and fled abroad in 1938 when she was six-and-a-half. The family settled in the United States, where she has had a distinguished academic career, currently being Professor of English at the University of Southern California. Her numerous books include *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (1986), *Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary* (1996), and *Poetics in a New Key* (2014). Her most recent publication is *Edge of Irony: Modernism in the Shadow of the Habsburg Empire* (2016). This enlarges on the theme of her 2004 memoir *The Vienna Paradox*.

Attendance is free. **Booking essential.**
E: cgjs@sussex.ac.uk
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Wartime Britain through the Eyes of Strangers – German-Jewish Family Archives

Monday 11 September 14:30-16:30
The Keep, Woollards Way, Brighton, BN1 9BP

In the 1930s, many German-Jewish families fled to different parts of the world to escape from Nazi persecution. Some settled in the UK, while others found refuge in the US, often having left friends and relatives behind. Letters were the main medium for people to stay in touch and to express how they felt about world politics as well as the more mundane things in life.

As Britain entered the war, communication with relatives in Germany became almost impossible. At the same time, relationships amongst those who had escaped became tighter. In the German-Jewish family collections at The Keep, several examples of correspondence between refugees in the UK and the US survive. Most of the letters were written in English, because refugees were keen to practice their written English. These letters offer an immediate, personal and intimate insight into everyday life in Britain and the US during World War II.

At this event, participants will have an opportunity to read the original correspondence alongside photographs and other materials from the time. Together with archivist Samira Teuteberg, delegates will explore questions such as 'how much did people know about the atrocities being committed in Germany?' 'How did they cope with everyday life in the UK?'

Attendance is free. **Booking essential.**
E: Samira.Teuteberg@sussex.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)1273 482349

Writing German-Jewish Lives: Researching Family Archives

Tuesday, 12 September 10.00-16:00
The Keep, Woollards Way, Brighton, BN1 9BP

During this one day workshop, scholars who have researched family archives, such as the German-Jewish Archives at the University of Sussex, will present some of their findings. Speakers will include Emeritus Professor Edward Timms, Dr Andrea Hammel and Dr Deborah Schultz. This workshop will also be an opportunity to launch a newly created website showing digitised images of materials from the German-Jewish family archives. The site will highlight mostly visual materials, such as photographs, art works and documents, illustrating key developments in the history of the German-Jewish relationship.

If you are interested in the event and for further information contact:
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T: +44 (0)1273 482349

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

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