

## Holocaust Memorial Day 2022



Hella Pick

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2022 was 'One Day.' The Centre's event took place on Wednesday 2 February. Once again it was held online owing to the continuing pandemic.

The event featured the distinguished journalist and one of the founding members of the Advisory Board of the Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies, Hella Pick CBE, and the young German filmmaker Arkadij Khaet, discussing: issues of identity; the consequences of trauma caused by enforced displacement; and the knock-on effects of migration on younger generations' attempts to adapt to new circumstances.

Hella Pick focused on identity. For her, identity is tied up with security; there are 'Invisible Walls' (the title of her most recent memoir published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson) which represent identity issues which most refugees face, but which cannot easily be explained or analysed.

Both in her pre-recorded online talk and subsequent conversation with Ivor Gaber, Professor of Political Journalism at the University of Sussex and Senior Fellow of the Weidenfeld Institute, she spoke about her inability to resolve her lifelong feeling of insecurity caused by being uprooted from her Viennese home at the age of

ten and how these feelings continued after travelling on a Kindertransport to London in 1938. Despite receiving an English education and taking British nationality in 1946 and despite regarding herself as British during her successful career, lasting over 40 years firstly as foreign correspondent for the Guardian and afterwards as Arts & Culture Programme Director at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (an independent think-tank based in London), her sense of identity has been broken by Brexit and its sundering of ties with Europe, leaving her unsure of who she is and where she belongs: Austrian, English, Jewish or cosmopolitan?

The second speaker, Moldovan born German resident Arcadij Khaet, spoke to Judy Ironside MBE, founding director of the Jewish Film Festival, about the problems faced by young Jews in present-day Germany. He felt that their identity was being determined by events of the past, as curated by non-Jews, and that the



Arcadij Khaet

new generation of Jewish Germans wished to move away from the shadow cast by the Holocaust and the legacy of antisemitism to create their own identity. He did not wish to disown the events of the past but explained that there were new challenges for German Jews, the majority of whom, like him are second generation immigrants from the former Soviet Union. 'Masel Tov Cocktail', the film which was shown after the discussion was jointly directed by Arkadij Khaet and Mickey Paatzsch during their film study at the Media Academy in Cologne. The film has been presented at more than 150 film festivals all over the world and has won numerous awards, among them the German Human Rights Award in 2016, which honours work that deals with human rights in an extraordinary way. The film examines how young German Jews deal with their Jewish identity and how Germans react to the presence of a new generation of Jews in Germany. The film is both captivating and humorous, despite dealing with a difficult subject.

Holocaust Memorial Day thus offered a different insight into the difficulties encountered by refugees in dealing with displacement and into the emotions of a new generation in finding its own place in the world. Who could have predicted that just a couple of weeks later, these insights would become immediately relevant when dealing with a new wave of refugees uprooted by war in Europe?

## Looking for an Enemy: A fresh take on an ancient hatred in an age of reason

### London Jewish Book Week, March 2022

What drives those who hate Jews? Seventy-five years after the Shoah, conspiracy theories about Jews are back in the mainstream, from the left and from the right; from the Pittsburgh gunman who murdered eleven people in a synagogue, to accusations against philanthropist George Soros of supporting 'white genocide', to Labour Party members who have claimed that Israel is behind ISIS, this ancient hatred shows no sign of abating. This was the topic of a forum discussion that took place as part of London Jewish Book Week in March 2022. Leading Jewish writers, Jo Glanville, Natasha Lehrer, Gideon Reuveni and Daniel Trilling focussed on Europe, Israel and America to offer a fresh take on how an irrational belief can still flourish in a supposedly rational age. Inspiration for the discussion were two recently published books. *Looking for the Enemy: 8 Essays on Antisemitism* (Short Books, 2021) edited by Jo Glanville, and *The Future of The German-Jewish Past: Memory and the Question of Antisemitism* (Purdue University press, 2020) edited by Diana Franklin and Gideon Reuveni.

A recording of the discussion can be viewed free of charge at the London Jewish Book Week Vimeo archive:

<https://vimeo.com/686325469>

# A Global Perspective on Antisemitism and the Left

## Podcast series of the Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies

Antisemitic incidents in 2021 in the UK reached an all-time high, according to figures compiled by the Community Security Trust, the charity that seeks to protect the Jewish community and which monitors antisemitism.

The majority of these antisemitic incidents appear to be linked to events in the Middle East but some stem from the activities of far right and neo-Nazi homegrown organisations.

However home-grown antisemitism is not confined to the far right. A series of webcasts and podcasts just launched by the Institute examines the phenomenon of left antisemitism in the UK, Germany and the United States.

Commenting on the series Professor Gideon Reuveni, Institute Director said: 'Since the Second World War, antisemitism has mainly been associated with the far right but antisemitism on the left has been a growing trend, and not just in the UK – as these discussions so vividly illustrate. There are no instant solutions but understanding the problem is the first step towards combatting it.'

The discussants in all three programmes are members of the Institute. They are Gideon Reuveni, Ivor Gaber, Professor of Political Journalism at the University of Sussex and Dr David Juenger an Institute Fellow from the University of Rostock in Germany. In the first episode Dr Dave Rich, Head of Policy at the Community Security Trust in London discusses the issue within the UK with Dr Matt Bolton, who is currently based at the Centre for Antisemitism Research at the Technical University of Berlin.

The episode focusing on the UK explores the issue of left antisemitism which came to prominence in 2015 with the election of Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership of the Labour Party, the main opposition party. The ensuing intense debate which took place within the Labour Party was seen by many to have played a role in their defeat in the 2019 general election.

The second episode focuses on Germany and brings together Dr Christine Achinger from the University of Warwick and Dr Sebastian Voigt of the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich. Germany has seen similar concerns, with the antisemitic themes being used by some sections of the German left dating back to the Palestinian activism of the Red Army Faction – the Baader-Meinhof Group – in the 1970s.

The final episode looks at the situation in the United States with Dr Sina Arnold of the Centre for Research on Antisemitism at the Technical University of Berlin and Dr Blair Taylor of the Institute for Social Ecology based in Vermont.

In the United States, as left-wing political activism has grown, particularly within the Democratic Party, similar trends have become apparent.

Each discussion lasts approximately 45 minutes and episodes are available to listen to on Soundcloud, or to watch on YouTube:

<https://soundcloud.com/sussexuni/sets/a-global-perspective-on>

## Kim Wünschmann appointed Director of the Institute for the History of the German Jews in Hamburg



Kim Wünschmann served as DAAD Lecturer at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies from 2015 to 2017. After four years at LMU Munich she has taken up a new position as Director of the Institute for the History of the German Jews in Hamburg (IGdJ). With fond memories of her time at Sussex she sends warm regards and a short report:

'To head a research institution that, when established in 1966, was the first in the Federal Republic to dedicate itself entirely to German-Jewish history, fills me with great joy and deep respect. During my own studies, I got to know the Institute as a place of inspiring scholarship

and valuable opportunities for young researchers. Like the Weidenfeld Centre at Sussex, the IGdJ sees its mission in reaching out to wider audiences beyond the 'ivory tower' of academia. Through public events, the development of digital resources like our podcast *Jüdische Geschichte kompakt*, the *Geschichtomat* school project, or the support of civil society initiatives such as the *Stolpersteine* memorial stones, we aim to multiply the interest in Jewish life – past and present. I am impressed by the work at the Institute and wish to strengthen its profile with my own expertise. In renewing the focus on the history and memory of the Holocaust we can connect local history with broader trends of researching migration, exile and the social history of anti-Jewish discrimination. The specificity of Hamburg as Germany's greatest harbour through which many Jewish refugees escaped can only be studied in dialogue with other places. In intensifying our cooperation with partners abroad, I hope for a



Institute for the history of German Jews in Hamburg, Germany

particularly fruitful exchange with scholars and institutions in the UK, many of whom have shaped my own ways of researching and teaching Jewish history. In post-Brexit times, these contacts are of even greater importance.'

## New Publication: 'Blut und Metall' Katrin Steffen, Wallstein Verlag

In March 2022, Katrin participated in an online discussion of her new publication with the Polish Academy of Science in Kraków. 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 Hirsfeld (1884-1954) and the metallurgist Jan Czochoński (1885-1953) – both internationally recognised researchers, made significant contributions in their fields and entered new grounds of research.

There is now interest in a Polish translation.



## Congratulations to Stephen Nicholls, long-standing supporter of the Centre

The Centre for German-Jewish Studies/Weidenfeld Institute warmly congratulates Stephen Nicholls on the occasion of his eightieth birthday on 14 June 2022 and thanks him for his immense support of the Centre over the years.

When the Centre for German-Jewish Studies was founded by Edward Timms in 1995, Edward and colleagues promoted the Centre's objectives to the wider community outside the University of Sussex. This attracted people from both Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds to participate in events organised by the Centre on the university campus and in London.

Stephen wrote his PhD entitled: 'Jews and Christians in Pomerania 1815-1914 – The mobilisation of anti-Semitic prejudice in rural communities' (1997-2001) under the supervision of Edward Timms and they

subsequently became close friends. Stephen was extremely supportive to Edward when he was suffering with multiple sclerosis towards the end of his life.

Stephen has great interest in his Galician background and found the Centre a sympathetic place in which to continue his scholarship. He has been a generous contributor to the work of the Centre and has written many short publications which he donates to the Centre and sells externally in aid of the centre's work. He has also contributed to memorials in Brtnice/Pirnitz, Moravia, and to the Johannes Oesterreicher plaque in Mesto Libava/Stadt Libau, also in Moravia. He sponsors the 'Edward Timms history essay prize' at the University of Sussex which will be awarded annually to the best essay written by an undergraduate.

## Space and Place in the German-Jewish Experience of the 1930s Workshop at University of Rostock, 12-13 May 2022

Organized by Weidenfeld Institute Fellow and former University of Sussex lecturer David Jünger, (University of Rostock, Historical Institute), Ofer Ashkenazi (The Richard Koebner Minerva Center for German History, Hebrew University, Jerusalem), Björn Siegel (Institute for the History of the German Jews, Hamburg) and in cooperation with the Sussex Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies, a workshop on the topic of 'Space and Place in the German-Jewish Experience of the 1930s' will take place at the University of Rostock from 12-13 May 2022.

The workshop will explore spatial aspects of the experiences of German Jews in the 1930s, both in Germany itself and in transit. By highlighting the multi-layered relationships between place and identity – and the significant influence of these relationships on the history of feelings, ideas and culture – the workshop will engage with the spaces that shaped German-Jewish self-perceptions in the face of National Socialism. While discussing specific places on the one hand, the workshop will also explore the concepts of space and place in a more general way as an analytical tool in which to broaden the historical understanding of Jewish life under Nazi rule and Jewish responses to Nazi persecution.

The workshop will seek to review and complement recent trends in the study of German-Jewish history.

In considering these and other current approaches, the workshop aims to bring together a wide range of scholars to develop a new framework for the study of the German-Jewish experience in the 1930s and beyond. The discussions will thus contribute to a spatial expansion in Jewish Studies and Holocaust Studies. The Keynote Lecture will be given by Professor Marion Kaplan, a renowned researcher of modern German-Jewish history and one of the first to address questions of space and place in the experience of German Jews during the Nazi era. DAAD Professor of European and Jewish History and Culture, Katrin Steffen (Sussex) will contribute a talk on 'East German-Jewish Spaces in Berlin. Jewish Heritage Societies (Heimatvereine) and their diasporic milieu in the 1930s.'

The detailed program of the workshop can be found here:

<https://www.geschichte.uni-rostock.de/aktuelles/newssystem/aktuelles-des-hi/detailansicht-der-news/n/workshop-space-and-place-in-the-german-jewish-experience-of-the-1930s/>

## Digital Holocaust Memory – Project Update Victoria Walden

The work of the Digital Holocaust Memory Project this year has comprised two strands:

1. Interdisciplinary, cross-sector participatory workshops focused on designing guidelines for digital Holocaust memory. In partnership with the University of Bern, we ran a successful series on Machine Learning and AI and another on Digitising Material Evidence with iRights.Lab Think Tank in Germany. Both series led to the production of draft guidelines which are now being prepared for publication. Participants came from a broad range of sectors and disciplines, from Holocaust organisations, the wider heritage sector, computer sciences, media studies, memory studies and other humanities and social sciences disciplines. There are four more series planned for the next academic year.
2. The development of critical interview-walkthroughs with designers, curators and educators at Holocaust memorial sites, museums and archives across Europe. Dr Walden will record walkthroughs at the following sites this summer:
  - a) Falstad Concentration Camp Memorial, Norway;
  - b) Westerbork, and the Anne Frank House and the Jewish Cultural Quarter, Amsterdam, the Netherlands;
  - c) Sajmiste, Belgrade, followed by a contribution to the European City of Culture programme on antisemitism in Novi Sad, Serbia;
  - d) Dachau, Nurnberg, Arolsen Archives, Bergen-Belsen and Neuengamme, Germany;
  - e) The Auschwitz Jewish Centre and POLIN, Poland.

Dr Victoria Grace Walden was invited to contribute to two publications this winter:

1. The inaugural issue of the new journal of the Babyn Yar Memorial Center: *Eastern European Holocaust Studies*. Dr Walden offers an expert response to the question: 'is digitization a blessing or a curse for Holocaust memorialization?'
2. The new Swiss technology journal *Vigia*. Dr Walden, with Steffi de Jong and Christian Günter, was interviewed by Jonas Wenger. The article was entitled: 'Holocaust Erinnerung in virtuellen Realität. Ein Gespräch.' It is hoped that both of these articles will be published this year.

She also edited and contributed to a special edition entitled: 'Digital Holocaust and Memory Before and After Covid-19' for *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*.

Public engagement continues to be an important part of the project. Four notable contributions to knowledge enhancement beyond academia include:

- The education app for the new Holocaust and World War II galleries for which Dr Victoria Grace Walden was on the advisory board launched in autumn 2021.
- Dr Victoria Grace Walden has been appointed a member of the Professional Advisory Committee for the Claims Conference, Israel. The committee is concerned with funding the development of social media Holocaust memory projects.
- She has been appointed as a judge for the inaugural international XR History Awards, celebrating virtual, augmented and otherwise mixed reality productions about the past.
- She was invited to contribute to the UN Civil Briefing 'The Future of Memory: Holocaust Remembrance, History and New Media' in February 2022.

# The Politics of Redress: The German-Jewish Settlement Revisited

## Gideon Reuveni

On September 10, 1952, the Federal Republic of Germany, the State of Israel and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany signed an historical agreement in Luxembourg, according to which Germany was to pay Israel the costs for 'the heavy burden of resettling so great a number of uprooted and destitute Jewish refugees from Germany and from territories formerly under German rule.' The settlement also included a supplement in which West Germany acknowledged the right of Holocaust survivors to claim personal compensation for deprivation of liberty, losses of livelihood and property resulting from Nazi persecution. The Luxembourg agreement comprised a turning point in the relationship between Germans and Jews. It turned former perpetrators and past victims into partners in negotiations, melding antagonistic narratives into a core of shared history from which both sides could benefit. Gideon Reuveni's new research project seeks to re-evaluate the deep meanings and significance of this agreement. It asks how, just less than seven years after the Holocaust, representatives of the newly founded Jewish state and other Jewish organisations found themselves negotiating a reparation settlement with Germans. The second question with which the project

deals is about the memory of this historical event. Reuveni asks why the history of the German-Jewish settlement was marginalised from our collective memory of the Holocaust?

This project represents a significant new departure from a fragmented and partial corpus of work on the history of German reparation payments to Israel and to victims of National Socialism. The project consolidates and builds on the existing body of work on the history of reparation. It is, however, one of the first to focus on the myriad unheard voices of the claimants, alongside the mediators of the process and the compensating society. Such a comprehensive and cohesive analysis is long overdue. The history of the 1952 German-Jewish settlement has global dimensions and Reuveni's study



"Speedy Payment Required," from: *The American Jewish Outlook* Vol. 35 No. 24 (4.4.1952)

seeks to shed light on this agreement as an evolving transnational and multidimensional process; and ultimately to provide new perspectives that will open future lines of enquiry on how the Holocaust shaped post-war societies.

## Meet the Weidenfeld Institute Fellows



The two faces of Ivor Gaber

### Ivor Gaber

I always describe myself not as an academic (though I am) but as a 'recovering journalist.' The journalist's urge to find out as much as one can about a situation, a place or a person – and then to do something (usually constructive) with the information – never really leaves you. That's why, when for a brief period in my life I was a spin doctor, I wasn't that good at it – I like giving out information, not bottling it up.

I was appointed as Sussex University's first ever Professor of Journalism (now Political Journalism) in 2014, having previously held chairs at Goldsmiths, Bedfordshire and City universities.

Before I entered the groves of academe I was a political journalist based at Westminster where, over the years, I worked for all the major broadcasters – sometimes as a reporter but more often as a producer or programme editor. I have also –

and this is where the spin doctor bit comes into it – advised politicians (here and abroad) on how they should, or should not, conduct their media relations; and relations between politics and the media has been my main area of academic research.

My involvement with the Institute came about as a result of writing a number of articles about the Labour Party and antisemitism, which in turn led to the production of a series of webinars with fellow members of the Institute about the left and antisemitism in the UK, Germany and the United States. I'm now thinking of embarking on a new project – writing a history of the relationship between the Labour Party and the Jewish Community.

One final thought: I've had two different careers but they're not as different as they might first appear; they are both about finding things out about the world and then telling people; it's just that academics get more time to research their subjects and then more space to write it all up – apart from that they're both the same. Now there's a thought that might equally displease both my academic and journalistic colleagues!

### David Tal

#### Update

Middle East Study Centre (MESOC Books) Celebration: David Tal, *The Making of an Alliance: The Origins and Development of the US-Israel Relationship*, University of Hull, April 27, 2022.

'The Judeo-Christian Tradition and the US-Israel Relations,' British Association for American Studies Annual Conference, University of Hull, April 23, 2022.

The US-Israeli Special Relationship – a Roundtable Discussion. Book launch of David Tal's *The Making of an Alliance: The Origins and Development of the US-Israel Relationship* (CUP, 2022), University of Sussex, March 17, 2022.

'The Making of an Alliance: The Origins and Development of the U.S.-Israel Relationship,' in Reconsidering the "Special Relationship" New Directions in Understanding U.S.-Israel Relations, Virtual Symposium, Tel Aviv University, Israel, January 6, 2022 (online-invited).

'Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Israel – Between Idealism and Pragmatism,' European Association of Israel Studies (EAIS), Bucharest, Romania, October 12, 2021 (online).

"The sleeping giant of Christian Zionism has awakened": The Israeli Right and the Evangelicals," Centre for the Study of the United States, Tel Aviv University, June 17 2021.

### Gideon Reuveni

#### Recent talks

'From Mendelssohn to Mendelssohn: German Reparations and the Jewish Marketplace,' online workshop, Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem, 14 March 2022.

'Who was not invited to Wassenaar? Victims of National Socialism and the Luxembourg Agreement,' Royal Netherlands Academy for Arts and Sciences (KNAW), 21 March 2022.

### Victoria Grace Walden

#### Recent publications

With Mykola Makhortykh, University of Bern '#Hashtag Memory: Commemoration during Covid-19 Lockdowns,' Connected Histories Conference, Vienna, May 2022

With Mykola Makhortykh, University of Bern and Eva Pfanzelter, University of Innsbruck: interdisciplinary panel on 'Methods for Research Digital Holocaust Memory,' Lessons and Legacies, Ottawa, November 2022.

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

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