

Holocaust education and remembrance



Fernand Léger, *Untitled*, 1955
From *La Déportation*

'Remembrance means action,' observed Dan Glass, President of the University of Sussex Student Union. This set the tone for our Holocaust Memorial Day programme on Wednesday 31 January 2007, which was opened by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith and the Centre's newly appointed Director, Dr Christian Wiese. The event was sponsored by the Association of Jewish Refugees, represented by Ronald Channing.

A packed auditorium listened enthralled as **Janina Fischler Martinho** recalled the deportations from Krakau in 1942 which claimed thousands of Jewish lives, including those of her parents. She went on to recall her terror, as a nine year old, in witnessing the brutality of the

elegantly dressed SS guards, and recalled her brother's account of the gruesome conditions in the cattle trucks on their way to the extermination camps. Her own survival was largely due to the courage of her elder brother.

This session was chaired by John Jacobs, the colleague who initiated teaching of the Holocaust at Sussex. Questions from the audience showed how moved they were by Janina's narrative. Although those events occurred sixty-five years ago, they struck a chord with a new generation of students. A young woman from Rwanda made the connection with recent events in

her own country, while a South African Student, recalling the example of Nelson Mandela, asked: 'Can you forgive?' For Janina, the depth of evil experienced during the Holocaust leaves little scope for forgiveness.

A similar buzz of appreciation greeted the second main speaker, **Helen Bamber**, founder of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. After recalling her experiences as a nurse at Bergen-Belsen in 1945-47, she linked them with her more recent work for Amnesty International and for the Medical Foundation. Learning to listen to survivors and bear witness to their sufferings became the basis for her conviction that 'something can be done', even for victims of that most terrible evil, torture. There was spontaneous applause when she condemned the so-called 'rendition' of political suspects by the US and the harshness with which the British Home Office handles appeals for political asylum. The continuities between Belsen in 1945 and Iraq in 2007 were clear. Patterns of repression may change, Helen Bamber concluded, but the need for compassionate action is as urgent as ever.

The programme concluded with a screening of *KZ*, the prize-winning documentary film about the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, directed by **Rex Bloomstein**. This session was chaired by Joanna Newman, a member of the Centre's Support Group, and the question-and-answer session that followed was enlivened by the presence of the director.

Refugee Archives: Theory and Practice, 11-13 April 2007

An international conference on Refugee Archives, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, is to be held at the Centre for German-Jewish Studies on 11-13 April 2007. In addition to providing a forum for lectures and discussions, this conference will launch of the Online Database of British Archival Resources Relating to German-speaking Refugees, 1933-1950 (BARGE). This database, which presents systematic information about a wide range of public and private collections, will provide a vital resource for researchers in the increasingly important fields of multiculturalism and migration studies.

The conference aims to promote dialogue between archivists and researchers as well as those working with databases. Contributions will cover a wide range of topics, including investigations of specific libraries and archives in Britain, from those of the Refugee Committee of the British Federation of University Women, on which Susan Cohen of the University of

Wiener Library in London, presented by Howard Falksohn, archivist at the Library.

There will also be discussions on German-language collections in Europe, including the Deutsches Exilarchiv in Frankfurt and the Österreichische Exilbibliothek in Vienna. The leading American authority in this field, Professor John Spalek of the University of New York at Albany, will speak on 'The Exile Collections in Albany in the Context of Émigré Archives in the US'.

There will be panels on the use of Life Histories and on audio-visual media in archives and research, papers on refugees' private correspondence, on the archives of wartime hostels in Britain. Selected papers from the conference will be published by the Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies as Volume 9 of their Yearbook. This volume, edited by Anthony Grenville and Andrea Hammel, will be published by Rodopi at the end of 2007.

Conference organisers are Edward Timms, Andrea Hammel, Samira Teuteberg and Sharon Krummel. For further information on the programme and the BARGE project, please see www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/cgjs/barg or contact Sharon Krummel Email s.a.krummel@sussex.ac.uk

New directions in German-Jewish Studies



Dr Christian Wiese

On taking up his appointment in January 2007 as the new Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, **Dr Christian Wiese** set himself the aim of creating new research projects, focusing on German-Jewish political, social, literary and intellectual history within the European context. These projects will be enriched by Dr Wiese's training as a theologian with qualifications in both Christian religious studies at Tübingen and Jewish history, thought and culture in Jerusalem. His best-known book, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, examines the critiques of Lutheran representations of biblical and modern Judaism developed by Jewish philosophers and theologians. This approach represents a challenge to conventional assumptions about Protestant attitudes towards Jewish integration into German society.

Growing up in a German diplomatic family, Christian Wiese attended schools in South America before completing his education in Germany. This gives him an international perspective on processes of intellectual migration. A key objective of the Centre under his leadership will be to continue research on the achievements of German-Jewish refugees and their families in the United Kingdom. But he plans to place the forced emigration from Nazi-occupied Europe in a broader context, promoting an appreciation of the German-Jewish legacy worldwide.

Dr Wiese's special interest in the early history of Zionism has led him to make important archival discoveries in both Israel and the United States, including the memoirs and correspondence of influential Jewish thinkers such as Hans Jonas, Robert Weltsch and Hans Kohn. It was, among other things, a lecture delivered by Hans Jonas at the University of Tübingen in 1984 on 'The Concept of God after Auschwitz' that inspired him to commit himself to Jewish Studies.

Although his teaching experience includes appointments at Duisburg and Erfurt in Germany, Trinity College Dublin, McGill University in Montreal and Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, this new job will give Christian, his wife Angela and their younger son Tobias their first taste of English life. At Sussex he will combine teaching in the History Department with his duties as Director of the Centre. He looks forward to building up the MA programme in European Jewish History and developing close contacts with cognate institutions in Britain both academically (with the Leo Baeck Institute) and at a more personal level (with Friends of the Centre and members of its Support Group). The aim is to ensure that Sussex remains a centre of excellence in this field.

Open seminars: Artists and Writers in Exile

The Centre's open seminars, organized by Chana Moshenska as Director of Educational Programmes, continue to attract enthusiastic audiences. Highlights of our recent programme include presentations on the creative achievements of three refugees remarkable for their long and productive lives.

The 80th birthday of Jakov Lind was marked on 12 February 2007 by a lecture by Edward Timms. Lind's memories of his Viennese childhood, followed by his escape to the Netherlands in December 1938 on a Kindertransport, inspired him to write a remarkable autobiography entitled *Counting My Steps*. Going 'underground' and acquiring false papers, he survived the war disguised as a Dutch deckhand on a barge, sailing up the Rhine and witnessing at first hand the destruction of German cities. In 1945 he escaped to Palestine, where he participated in the Arab-Israeli war, the theme of his first publication, *The Diary of Hanan Malinek*. This stark narrative provides an antidote to facile conceptions of military heroism.

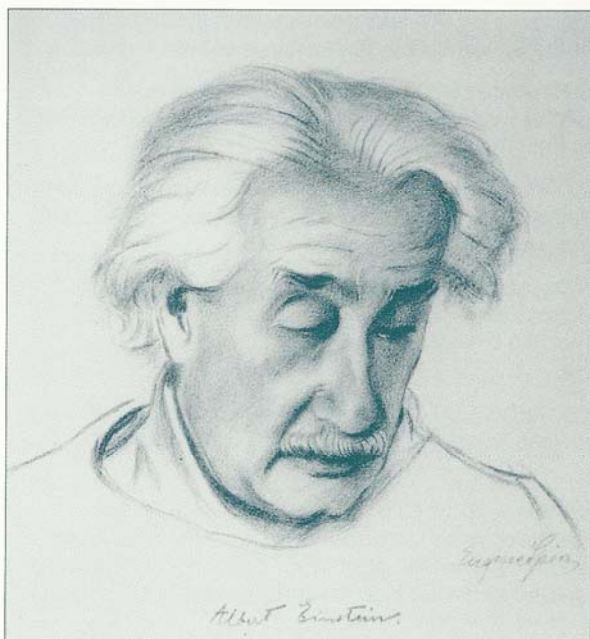
Further autobiographical writings recall Lind's experiences as an aspiring author in Vienna, Amsterdam and London. After settling in Hampstead in 1954, he produced his finest work, exploring the nightmare of life in Germany and Austria during the Nazi period. His collection of short stories, *Seele aus Holz (Soul of Wood)*, should be compulsory reading for anyone interested in the sources of political sadism. Almost equally powerful is *Landschaft in Beton (Landscape in Concrete)*, his novel about a monstrous German soldier, which demolishes the myth that it is possible to commit mass murder and remain – in your own mind – a moral person.

While the dark past of Nazi Germany had been his inspiration, the books Lind published in English during the 1980s are less compelling. English

social life failed to grip his imagination, and his late works, *Travels to the Enu* and *The Inventor*, are fanciful satires set in remote regions. It is for his stories about National Socialism that he will be remembered, together with an autobiography that charts the progress of one of the most idiosyncratic authors of the twentieth century.

On 16 February 2007, six days after his eightieth birthday, Jakov Lind died in London. The celebration of his achievements at the Sussex seminar, which was attended by members of his family, thus acquired an additional poignancy.

The career of Eugen Spiro (1874-1972) was the subject of a presentation in October 2006 by his son Peter Spiro, himself an amateur painter. A dazzling sequence of colour slides guided the audience through the artist's long and productive career, taking us from his birthplace in Breslau via Berlin and Paris to his exile in New York. He reached the height of his fame during the Weimar Republic, when his work was greatly in demand and he was President of the Berlin Secession. His gift for landscapes in an impressionist style was illustrated by sunlit Mediterranean skies rendered with a brilliant palette. But Eugen Spiro is equally noted for his sensitive portraits, which include members of the cultural elite like Gerhart Hauptmann and Thomas Mann.



Albert Einstein, 1941
Lithograph by Eugen Spiro

After the Nazi seizure of power, it became almost impossible for Jewish-born artists to show their work in Germany. An exhibition at the Berlin Jewish Museum in April 1934 displayed paintings by Eugen Spiro alongside the work of **Ludwig Meidner**, another gifted artist from Breslau. Meidner's career formed the subject of a further presentation in our 'Artists and Writers' series by Dr Malgorzata Stolarska, a visiting scholar from Poland who is currently at the Centre, researching the artistic work of German-Jewish exiles.

Leaving Germany in 1935 to resume residence in Paris, he had to flee to New York when France collapsed in 1940. His exceptional gifts as a teacher enabled him to augment his income under the adverse conditions of exile, and he was soon in demand as a portraitist of leading figures in the exile community and in American cultural life. A lithograph of Albert Einstein (*above*), dated 1941 and counter-signed by the scientist, illustrates the expressive power of Spiro's portraits.

Exhibitions at the Gallery St Etienne in New York, including one in 1964 to mark the artist's 90th birthday, ensured that the work of Eugen Spiro remained in the public eye. His achievements have also been honoured in Breslau (now Wroclaw), the city of his birth, which in autumn 2002 staged an exhibition of his early work, together with paintings by his son Peter Spiro and his granddaughter Elizabeth Spiro. They have continued the family tradition with expressive landscape paintings of their own.

The poetry of Lotte Kramer was the subject of a talk by Sybil Oldfield on 15 January 2007. Lotte, who was born in 1924, escaped from Germany through the good offices of her teacher Sophie Cahn,

Kindertransport that left Mainz in July 1939. Her homesickness at the loss of family, friends, school has haunted her ever since – *Heimweh ein Leben lang*, she called it. For in an emotional and literary sense, part of her has remained a German exile. It was only Hitler and his true believers who denied her the possibility of being German. Why should she obey *him*? Her forced transplantation to England was nevertheless comparatively benign. She found herself in an extraordinarily welcoming and stimulating household. A day's hard work in house and garden would be followed at night by readings and recitals, including Dickens and Schubert Lieder.

It was only several years after her marriage in 1942 to a fellow Jewish refugee that Lotte Kramer at last faced the meaning of the disappearance of both her parents in Poland. She never discovered just how or where they perished. She withdrew mentally from what was unbearable to imagine, concentrating on home-making and bringing up a child to be safely English. It would take forty years after her *Kindertransport* experience before she could bring that buried part of herself back to the surface – and begin to write.

Lotte Kramer's poetry wastes almost no words on the Nazis. Instead, her task is to bring her own humane dead back to life – her parents, her teachers and her rescuers, but also her German significant others. For it was the boundless, risk-taking loyalty of her own and her family's German friends that saved her from a corrosive, blinding hate. As Janet Montefiore observed in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 19 June, 1998: 'She elegizes the broken lives of the Holocaust with a most moving quietness and clarity'. The poem 'Exodus' (*inset top right*), chosen as a poem for the London Underground, exemplifies her understated art.

The Centre plans to bring out a limited edition of Lotte Kramer's poems under the title *Kindertransport, Before and After*. Readers are invited to subscribe for their copy, sending a cheque for £12.50, made out to the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, to cover production and postage. The contact address can be found

Exodus

For all mothers in anguish
Pushing out their babies
In a small basket

To let the river cradle them
And kind hands find
And nurture them

Providing safety
In a hostile world:
Our constant gratitude.

As in this last century
The crowded trains
Taking us away from home

Became our baby baskets
Rattling to foreign parts
Our exodus from death.

News in brief

At the Annual Meeting of the Academic Advisory Board, chaired by Professor Peter Pulzer and held at the Wiener Library on 9 January 2007, the Centre's Annual Report for 2005-2006 was accepted and the policies of the new Director, Dr Christian Wiese, were approved.

The Centre's Support Group, chaired by Marion Godfrey (in succession to Peter Straus), continues to meet regularly at Belsize Square Synagogue and to provide the Director with guidance and support.

A luncheon to mark the election of Edward Timms as a Fellow of the British Academy was held at the Athenaeum in London on 21 February 2007, hosted by Clemens Nathan, Honorary Vice-President of the Support Group.

After her viva at the University of Sussex in January 2007, the dissertation by Iris Guske on 'The Kindertransport Experience: A Socio-Psychological Study of Attachment, Trauma and Acculturation' was approved for the award of a DPhil.

Events in January 2007 to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, staged by Brighton & Hove City Council, included a workshop organized by Chana Moshenska to mark the end of the 'Welcome to Britain?' project, funded by the ANNE FRANK-Fonds in Basle. Over fifty teachers from local schools and universities attended an event that focused on the positive experience of welcoming newcomers and the negative

Recent publications

Andrea Hammel, 'Online Database of British Archival Resources Relating to German-Speaking Refugees, 1933-1950 (BARGE). Ein Projektbericht' in *Kinder und Jugendliche im Exil. Exilforschung. Ein Internationales Jahrbuch*, ed. Inge Hansen-Schaberg, Vol. 24, 2006 (Munich: edition text+kritik)

Andrea Hammel, 'Jack Pritchard, Refugees from Nazism and Isokon Design' in *Exile and Patronage. Cultural transfer at the Time of the Third Reich*, ed. Andrew Chandler and others, Mittel- und Osteuropastudien, 2006 (Münster: LIT Verlag)

Andrea Hammel, 'Imagining the Future through the Past: Austrian Women Exile Writers and the Historical Novel' in *Austria in Exile. Yearbook of the Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, ed. Charmian Brinson and Richard Dove (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006)

Malgorzata Stolarska has submitted an article about the Jewish Museum in Breslau to the Polish periodical *Rocznik Wroclawski (Breslauer Yearbook)* to be published in June 2007.

Edward Timms, 'Remembering Refugees Lost at Sea: The Struma, the Wilhelm Gustloff and the Cap Anamur' in *For the Sake of Humanity: Essays Presented to Clemens N. Nathan*, ed. Alan Stephens and Raphael Walden (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2006), pp. 325-49

Edward Timms, 'School for Socialism: Karl Seitz and the Cultural Politics of Vienna' in *Culture and Politics in 'Red Vienna'*, ed. Judith Beniston and Robert Vilain, *Austrian Studies*, 14 (2006), pp. 39-61

Edward Timms, 'Souvenirs of Vienna 1924: The Legacy of David Josef Bach', co-authored with Jared Armstrong, in *Austrian Studies*, 14 (2006), pp. 63-100

Edward Timms, 'Abenteuer in den Archiven: Erfahrungen eines englischen Kraus-Forschers' in *Das Gedächtnis der Stadt: 150 Jahre Wienbibliothek* (Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006), pp. 227-43

Re-Defining Judaism in an Age of Emancipation: Comparative Perspectives on Samuel Holdheim, edited by **Christian Wiese** (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2007), 423 pages

Janusfiguren 'Jüdische Heimstätte'. Exil und Nation im deutschen Zionismus, co-edited by Andrea Schatz and **Christian Wiese** (Berlin: Metropol-Verlag, 2006), 378 pages

Christian Wiese, 'The Janus Face of Nationalism. Zionist Identity in the Correspondence between Robert Weltsch and Hans Kohn', in: *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 51* (2006), pp. 103-130

Gerhard Wolf's article on the refugee engineer Dr Mac Goldsmith, based on the Goldsmith Collection at the University of Sussex has also appeared in the *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook: 'A Jewish Career in the German Automobile Industry (1925-1936)'. Part 1 in: LBIYB 51* (2006) pp. 153-189

Recent lectures

Deborah Schultz gave a paper on 'Migration, Memory and Analysis of the Holocaust' at a workshop on Migrant Art, Artefacts and Emotional Agency, at Queens University Belfast, 8-10 February.

Edward Timms, 14 February 2007: illustrated lecture at the Leo Baeck (London) Lodge entitled 'Jewish motifs in the Paintings of Felix Nussbaum'.

Christian Wiese, 18 November 2006, Annual Meeting of American Academy of Religion: 'Wissenschaft des Judentums and Rabbinic Literature in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.'

Christian Wiese, 7-9 December 2006: Evangelische Akademie Arnoldshain, Jüdischer Fundamentalismus: 'Religiös-ideologische Wurzeln und politische Dimension eines komplexen Phänomens'.

Christian Wiese, 19 December 2006: Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference in San Diego: 'Sanctity of Life in a Secular World: Theological Speculation and Ethical Reflection in Hans Jonas's Post-Holocaust Philosophy.'

Christian Wiese, 23 February 2007: University of Sussex: 'Exile in a Jewish Homeland: The Ambivalent Zionist Identities of Hans Kohn and Robert Weltsch.'

Christian Wiese, 6-8 March 2007: International Conference on Two Homiletical Traditions: Preaching in Christianity and Judaism in Bamberg (organized by the Abraham Geiger Kolleg Potsdam, University of Bamberg, University of Nürnberg-Erlangen), Paper on 'Jewish Sermons in 19th-Century Germany and USA.'

Forthcoming lectures and seminars

26 April 2007: **Prof. Shmuel Feiner** (Bar Ilan University), 'Haskalah, Secularization and the Emergence of the Jewish New World in the 18th Century' (in co-operation with the Centre for Intellectual History and the History Department), 16.00 Arts A155

Forthcoming Lectures at Sussex on 'Hannah Arendt, Jewish Identity and the Discourse on Evil'

23 April 2007: **Dr Thomas Sparr** (Suhrkamp-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main), 'Hannah Arendt and Gershom Scholem: An Unknown Chapter in a Complex Relationship', 16.30 Arts C110 (tea at 16.00 in Arts B127)

22 May 2007: **Prof. Steven Aschheim** (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), 'Locating Nazi Evil: The Contrasting Visions of Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt and Victor Klemperer' 17.00 Arts C110 (tea at 16.30 Arts B127)

4 June 2007: **Prof. Liliane Weissberg** (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia), 'Hannah Arendt at the Movies: Charlie Chaplin and the Hidden Tradition of Jewish Culture' 16.30 Arts C110 (tea at 16.00 Arts B127)

Herbert Straus Memorial Lecture

21 May 2007: **Prof. Steven Aschheim** (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), 'Icons Beyond the Border: Why do we Love (Hate) Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, Franz Rosenzweig, Gershom Scholem and Leo Strauss', University College London 18.45 Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, preceded by a reception at 18.15 Haldane Room (main entrance in Gower Street London WC1)

Connecting the Past with the Future

Friends of the Centre should recently have received our latest publicity leaflet, 'Connecting the Past with Future', including a note about the importance of legacies.

For further information about the Centre, please contact:

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