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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Debate is a hallmark of scholarship, and of democracy. It is perhaps not a surprise, although discouraging, to see debate, democracy, and scholarship under attack—on college campuses, by governments, and in the public sphere. Holocaust historiography has seen its share of debates: comparability vs. uniqueness; center vs. periphery; functionalism vs. intentionalism; women as perpetrators vs. as victims. We enter these debates with our own complex histories and perspectives. We do not always see eye to eye. Holocaust Studies deals with weighty topics: mass violence, antisemitism, human rights, and the destruction of democracy. As difficult as these debates may be, our dialogue allows for a better understanding of the past, ourselves, and each other.

Last fall, after Hamas’s terrorist attack on Israel and Israel’s war on Gaza, HEFNU launched a series of scholarly conversations titled, “Holocaust Studies, Terror, and War.” In the past several months, we hosted two conversations in the series with over 100 registrants for each. Our February 11th event, “The Fraught Use of the Term Genocide Since 1945,” saw a roundtable discussion featuring Anika Walke (Washington University in St. Louis) as moderator, Natalia Aleksiun (University of Florida), Dirk Moses (CCNY), and Devin Pendas (Boston College). We followed on April 3rd with a conversation among Laura Hilton (Muskingum University), Amy McDonald (Alabama Holocaust Education Center), and Alexandra Zapruder (The Defiant Requiem Foundation) about Holocaust education, antisemitism, and pedagogical shifts since 10/7, moderated by Avinoam Patt (New York University). You can find resources and watch recordings on the HEFNU website: https://hef.northwestern.edu/events/featured-past-events.html.

This past spring, HEFNU also launched a series of workshops by and for emerging scholars. In the first workshop in March on “Digital Humanities in Holocaust Studies: A Roadmap,” Olga Kartashova (NYU) and Emily Klein (USHMM) introduced participants to resources and pathways within Digital Humanities for scholars in Holocaust Studies. We followed in April with advice and strategies for “Navigating Grant and Fellowship Applications in Holocaust Studies.” HEFNU’s Assistant Director Vanda Rajcan moderated a discussion among Lilia Tomchuk (Goethe University Frankfurt), Lovro Kralj (Center for Holocaust and Genocide Research in Southeast Europe in Rijeka), and Christin Zühlke (Washington University in St. Louis).

HEFNU hosted two Regional Institutes. The first, “Borders/Borderlands and the Holocaust,” took place February 18-19 in Austin in cooperation with the University of Texas and Texas A&M. For the second, “Witness: Mediating Holocaust Testimony in the Arts,” we returned to work with our inaugural Regional Institute partners at Western Washington University’s Ray Wolpow Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes against Humanity. The Institute took place April 17-19 with support from the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Victoria. For more information, please see articles below.

HEFNU is proud to support Holocaust scholarship. This year, we awarded six Sharon Abramson Research Grants and seven Teaching Grants. More information about the awards and the recipients may be found here: https://hef.northwestern.edu/grants/.
On May 7, HEFNU hosted the Theodore Zev Weiss Annual Spring lecture in Holocaust Studies. This year’s lecture featured NU’s very own Ştefan Christian Ionescu, the Theodore Zev and Alice R. Weiss-Holocaust Educational Foundation Visiting Associate Professor in Holocaust Studies. He spoke about “Justice and Restitution: Reversing the Aryanization/Romanianization of Jewish Property in Post-Nazi Romania, 1944-1950.”

During the second half of June, HEFNU will host the 28th annual Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization. We will welcome 23 Summer Institute Fellows and feature 11 faculty from around the world and from a variety of disciplines on the Northwestern campus.

Final preparations for Lessons & Legacies XVII: Languages of the Holocaust, which will take place November 14-17, 2024, at Claremont-McKenna College and University of Southern California, are in full swing. We are also pleased to announce the publication of the conference volume, Lessons & Legacies XV, edited by Erin McGlothlin and Avinoam Patt was released in May. You may order copies here: https://nupress.northwestern.edu/9780810147058/lessons-and-legacies-xv/.

We look forward to hosting our inaugural Lessons & Legacies Emerging Scholars Conference, which we will hold in cooperation with the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. Find more information at this link.

HEFNU continues its work to advance Holocaust research and education. We thank each of you for bringing your full selves to this work. May we continue to learn from each other in the months ahead.

Sarah M. Cushman PhD, Director
And the HEFNU Team
Alice Weinreb is Associate Professor of History at Loyola University Chicago where she teaches the Holocaust within the broader framework of post-WWII European history, politics, and medicine. Weinreb also focuses on Cultural and Gender Studies. From 2009 to 2012, she served as visiting Assistant Professor of History at Northwestern University, teaching among other things a course on race and racism in modern Germany. In 2023, Weinreb received the HEFNU Sharon Abramson Research Grant for her project “Anorexia Nervosa and the Weight of the Holocaust,” an interdisciplinary study of the relation between hunger and trauma, and the cultural and social impact of the “Holocaust body” on post-WWII American society. Tracing the history of a Holocaust metaphor in juxtaposition to the medical and cultural phenomenon of Anorexia Nervosa, specifically describing anorexic girls as concentration camp inmates, Weinreb offers an innovative way of exploring “postwar narratives of the growth of industrial capitalism, the meaning of whiteness, and the place of hunger in the modern world.”

Weinreb became increasingly engaged with Holocaust history and representation as she moved along the “unpredicted trajectories” of her career path, which brought her from the field of early modern women’s history and sexuality to the study of gender and the body in the 20th and the 21st centuries. Approaching the body and its representations from an interdisciplinary standpoint, Weinreb places human experience in the center of historical, political, and cultural processes. Focusing on the particularities and subjectivities of personal experience allows Weinreb to challenge general historical narratives, to highlight internal conflicts within these narratives, and to explore the gaps between them.

In the late 1990s, Weinreb arrived in Berlin in order to pursue her MA at Humboldt University. Conducting her research on the politics of the food economies in Nazi and divided Germany, she was struck by the radically divergent Western and Eastern German memory narratives concerning German victimhood, specifically German hunger, during and after WWII, a difference that shaped political and scientific engagement with the history of the Holocaust in both Cold War states. Unsettled by the neutral, even sometimes explicitly positive mainstream West German interpretation of Nazi food rationing and nutritional policies, Weinreb decided to explore the ways in which Holocaust memory impacted postwar German narratives through the prism of hunger and its political and ideological weaponization.

In her current project, Weinreb’s interest in studying the Holocaust through the history of hunger and body image explores broader patterns through which Holocaust images and metaphors transcend their specific Jewish-ness, become re-racialized, whitened, and thus suitable for wider usage. Weinreb analyzes the reasons for the shift which allowed postwar society, specifically postwar American society, to equate female white, upper class anorexic bodies with the male emaciated bodies of Jewish camp inmates. By doing so, she explains the limitations of internalizing the trauma of the Other and transferring a visual symbol of a particular time and place into a context where it does not belong.

Weinreb challenges established intellectual, ethical, and historical patterns in topics she explores. “We should always ask—ourselves as well—the most uncomfortable questions, as researchers and as teachers,” she says. “What does it mean to teach a Holocaust class today, when the history of the Holocaust is in so many ways predetermined? Everyone seems to know Primo Levi and his Survival in Auschwitz; everyone reads it and refers to it. But what do students really get from it, if anything?”
The seeming familiarity with and the superficial knowledge of the Holocaust put many students at risk of misperceiving, simplifying, and misinterpreting historical events of paramount importance. A Holocaust educator thus faces a double challenge: how to introduce students to basic Holocaust narratives and how to keep these narratives constantly defamiliarized. Weinreb claims that one of the major challenges in Holocaust education lies in preserving students’ intellectually and ethically unsettling perception of the Holocaust. “Students should never walk out of a Holocaust class thinking ‘Thank God this would never happen again,’” Weinreb argues. Rather, they should see and understand more clearly, why this can happen again, where and when the Holocaust could happen again in some way or form, and what we could do to prevent such events from happening.

Throughout her work, Weinreb focuses on intergenerational traumas and the limits of the accessibility and transferability of survivors’ experiences. She notes that the somatic aspect of living through extreme circumstances has a long-lasting impact on survivors’ lives and on the lives of their children and grandchildren. At the same time, the unique, personal, if not intimate nature of a survivor’s experience makes it extremely difficult to convey it to the next generation. Thus, such popular educative tools as role playing appear to be an ambivalent, if not a dangerous way of teaching or learning about mass violence, war, and genocide. “We often use images and visual documents in order to encourage an empathic connection with the victims and reimage their experience as our own. […] Yet we need to be extremely careful so as not to abuse empathy,” Weinreb notes while reflecting upon Holocaust education in classrooms, museums, and memorial sites.

Weinreb’s hopes for the future of Holocaust studies as a growing field stem from an unsettling question: How will the young generation of Holocaust scholars respond to the growing need to rethink the purpose and function of Holocaust studies? For decades, historians, archaeologists, journalists, psychologists, writers, and artists had to “assemble the story that did not yet exist.” Now, when scholarship on the topic has become so extensive, diverse, and firmly established, what should the role of a Holocaust scholar be, as a researcher and teacher broadly conceived?

For Weinreb, the answer lies both in challenging established scholarly and educational narratives within the field, and in seeking new ways of making the Holocaust relevant today. For example, Weinreb considers it crucial to re-inscribe the Holocaust into modern-day conceptualizations of race and racial discourse, particularly in the US. She notes that the current dominating perception of race within black-and-white dichotomy erases the racial nature of anti-Jewish hatred throughout Jewish history, and subsequently marginalizes and excludes the Holocaust from discussions of race and racism.

HEFNU’s educational initiatives, particularly those oriented towards Holocaust educators, public historians, and young professionals are pivotal in preventing such dangerous developments. Teaching how to teach—and how not to teach—one of the most difficult and complex topics in human history is perhaps the only way to ensure that the Holocaust remains permanently unsettling, that it never becomes an event of the distant past, but rather serves a continuous warning that genocides can and do happen again and again, even as we research and teach about the Holocaust. Weinreb highlights HEFNU’s support of scholars like herself, who work within broader research areas yet seek to incorporate the Holocaust in what they research and teach. This strategy helps to make the field of Holocaust studies part of a larger struggle to battle racial hatred and xenophobia, both in and beyond academia.

Profile by Anastasiia Simferovska

Anastasiia Simferovska is a doctoral candidate in Slavic Studies at Northwestern. Her research centers on Holocaust literature and memory in Eastern Europe. She currently serves as Graduate Assistant for the Holocaust Educational Foundation.
Profile: Ștefan Cristian Ionescu

The Theodore Zev and Alice R. Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Visiting Professor in Holocaust Studies at Northwestern University, Ștefan Cristian Ionescu has been actively involved with HEFNU’s numerous scholarly and educational activities throughout his professional career. From 2019 to 2024, he taught several Holocaust related courses for Northwestern undergraduate and graduate students firmly inscribing the study of Holocaust history and its legacy into the university curriculum. Ionescu has consistently utilized his multidisciplinary and multicultural experience as a student, researcher, and teacher acquired both in Europe and in the US, balancing out not only the advantages and challenges of the educational systems, but also specific European and American approaches to history, memory, and their presence in public discourse.

Originally from Bucharest, Romania, Ionescu spent his formative years amid a rapidly changing atmosphere of a post-communist Eastern European state which was transforming itself into a democratic country. Ionescu started his undergraduate studies as a student in law at a time when conversations about Nazi crimes, local collaboration, and the Holocaust entered public discourse in Romania. “Romanians slowly started to debunk the myths of the fascist-military dictatorship of General Ion Antonescu. […] I discovered Raoul Hilberg’s *Destruction of the European Jews*, one of the first critical books on the history of the Holocaust to have been published in the Romanian language,” Ionescu recalls. Instead of preparing for his exams in law, Ionescu immersed himself in reading any available sources about the Holocaust. Soon, he enrolled in the newly established program of the Gordon Goldstein Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Bucharest and joined a small group of young Romanian scholars determined to study Jewish history. This shift prompted Ionescu to reconceptualize his background in legal studies and to move toward a bigger purpose: he decided to focus on World War II and postwar Jewish-gentile relations, transitional justice, and the rights of Jewish, Roma, and other ethnic and religious minorities in the region.

For Ionescu, engaging with the history of European Jewry in the 20th century prompted not only the discovery of previously neglected subject matter, but also a whole new approach to studying and teaching history. International educational programs at the University of Bucharest and especially at the Central European University in Budapest exposed Ionescu to the basic teaching and research principles of Western academia. “Particularly in the US, education is much more interactive, it is focused on students’ intellectual and emotional engagement with the subject of their study,” Ionescu reflects. On the contrary, in Eastern Europe many college professors had “to overcome the largely outdated paradigm of lecturing and requiring students to memorize and reproduce information.” Learning “how to ask questions and how to confront and organize the primary sources into a coherent argument that would make a contribution to the existing theories and historiography as opposed to blindly following them” was an intellectual discovery which inspired Ionescu to pursue an academic career in the US, where he earned his PhD in European History and Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

In teaching the Holocaust, Ionescu considers students’ active involvement in class discussions a key to their success. He believes that “students’ personal response to the material matters greatly, and in a Holocaust class it is absolutely crucial.” Ionescu uses different types of educational materials and approaches and tries to vary his teaching modes, particularly when it comes to courses with challenging content, such as his Northwestern-based...
courses, “History of the Holocaust,” “Comparative genocide,” and “Mass violence.” Transferring some of his key research strategies into the classroom, Ionescu introduces his students to “interdisciplinary and diverse sources which often represent opposite perspectives—ego documents, legal proceedings, the press, personal letters, and denunciations.” By recreating the multiplicity of voices and perspectives, Ionescu keeps his students intellectually alert and helps them reconstruct contextual frameworks of historical events and develop a more nuanced understanding of the subject. Such pedagogy helps Ionescu “to make a Holocaust history class equally relevant for students of different backgrounds, many of whom barely know anything about Europe or the Jews.”

How to engage STEM, business, and economics students in thinking and discussing history, minorities in Eastern Europe, and Jewish history? Ionescu finds ways to solve this intellectual riddle most rewarding, because the diverse backgrounds of students prompt instructors to think out-of-the-box, beyond the boundaries of their professional field. Ionescu believes that by promoting an inter-disciplinary educational system, Western academia subsequently facilitates a wider social awareness of the Holocaust not only within, but also far beyond academia. In Eastern European countries, on the other hand, such as Romania or Ukraine, Holocaust Studies remain a subfield for a narrow group of professionals. Ionescu explains this phenomenon as the long-lasting effect of censoring the Holocaust and marginalizing it within main historiographic narratives. The largely unresolved legacy of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, particularly its legal aspects of retributive and restorative justice, also slows down Holocaust awareness and formal education.

Expressing his hopes for the future of Holocaust studies in the region where he started as a Holocaust scholar, Ionescu reflects: “The situation is changing in Romania and Eastern Europe. Young generations of local scholars are more exposed to international training and recent scholarship, they gain more opportunities to boost their research and teaching skills.” In this regard, HEFNU’s educational collaboration with European institutions, such as organizing regular Lessons and Legacies Europe conferences is crucial in providing a shared international platform for Holocaust scholars.

Ionescu sees HEFNU’s mission manifesting in its efforts to establish and strengthen transatlantic dialogs among educational, research, memorial, and museum institutions working with Holocaust history and legacy. Although in the West, Holocaust Studies have been “a diverse field with generations of scholars and a sophisticated historiography,” several areas within the field remain understudied. “More has to be done on the Holocaust in the Balkans and in Southeastern Europe,” notes Ionescu. These regions with distinct dynamics of Jewish history do not precisely fit the established narratives applicable to other parts of the Europe and therefore require more scholarly attention. Expanding the geography of Holocaust studies will enrich the field with new scholarship and will grant scholars across the disciplines with an opportunity to establish new professional connections and facilitate social engagement with Jewish and Holocaust related topics more broadly. Ultimately, closer cooperation will help both American and European scholars to address and confront antisemitism and Holocaust denial and contribute to making more just and peaceful societies.

Profile by Anastasiia Simferovska

Anastasiia Simferovska is a doctoral candidate in Slavic Studies at Northwestern. Her research centers on Holocaust literature and memory in Eastern Europe. She currently serves as Graduate Assistant for the Holocaust Educational Foundation.
The HEFNU Sharon Abramson Research Grant supported the final research stage of my book, tentatively titled *I Will Not Abandon You: Queer Women in Nazi Germany*, which is under contract with University of Toronto Press. In 2015, I first came across documents related to the experiences of queer women in Berlin during the Third Reich. This initial encounter startled me, both because relatively little had been published on the topic at the time (something that has now thankfully changed) and because those four files concerned women denounced as lesbians to the criminal police, despite the fact that female homosexuality was never criminalized in Nazi Germany. This find led me to publish my first article on the subject, “The Duplicity of Tolerance,” which interrogated the imbrications of persecution, harassment, and tolerance that queer women experienced under fascism. That article – and the engagement I received from it – in turn led me to search for more case studies, leading to further publications. Today, there is a huge public appetite for queer histories of the Holocaust, exemplified by the remarkable HEFNU-sponsored panel “Queering/Transing the Holocaust” at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference in December 2023. In a packed ballroom, four colleagues and I discussed and debated how we have brought queer and trans topics into our research and teaching, and what the significance of this work is in today’s political climate. But I had never particularly conceived of this project as a book, until a couple years ago, when I realized that I had enough to say to fill a volume.

Based on these microhistories, the book makes three fundamental arguments. First, it seeks to lay to rest once and for all vexed debates about whether lesbians were persecuted in Nazi Germany. Drawing on dozens of case studies, the book argues that queer women did face what I have called a “heterogeneous” form of persecution that stemmed not from a particular law or policy, but rather from the miasma of fascist prejudice and juridical practice. Second, the book argues that despite persecution, queer women demonstrated a surprising degree of agency, which I term *queer ingenuity*, that allowed them both to conform to and collaborate with the regime, and at the same time to resist it. Finally, I suggest that this queer ingenuity might offer a new way of thinking about queer politics today beyond the stultifying confines of identity.
politics. In so doing, I hope not only to share these women’s stories, but also to think about their ongoing salience for our twenty-first century.

**Samuel Clowes Huneke** is assistant professor of history at George Mason University. A historian of modern Germany, his research focuses on the history of gender and sexuality, legal history, and the history of democracy and dictatorship. He is the author of the award-winning *States of Liberation: Gay Men between Dictatorship and Democracy in Cold War Germany* (University of Toronto Press, 2022) and *A Queer Theory of the State* (Floating Opera Press, 2023), and he is the co-editor of *Reimagining Citizenship in Postwar Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2025).

HEFNU has been instrumental in facilitating my expertise in Holocaust Studies and expanding my professional network and throughout my career. Since my early days as a female identifying PhD student from Germany pursuing a degree in Holocaust Studies until today as an early-career scholar working at the intersection of Jewish Cultural Studies, Holocaust Literature, and Jewish Literature. HEFNU’s programs and initiatives have broadened my horizons.

In my dissertation on the Yiddish testimonies of the Sonderkommando at Auschwitz-Birkenau, I offered for the first time a close reading of hitherto neglected witness accounts. I focused on the two key features of these texts: the role of religion in Jewish victims’ experiences and the gendered experience of Jewish men as described in the witness accounts. A current post-doctoral research fellow at Washington University in St. Louis I am expanding my PhD project through a comparative analysis of Jewish masculinities in Elie Wiesel’s works. I show how Wiesel experienced the Shoah as an observant male Jew, and how trauma shaped his representation of Jewish men in both his fiction and non-fiction. Taking Wiesel’s Yiddish memoir *un di velt hot geshvign* as a focal point, I show how Jewish men navigate challenges, responses, roles, and power dynamics.

I crossed paths with HEFNU for the first time at the 2021 Summer Institute. Although we met on Zoom, participants and teachers connected as a scholarly cohort through in-depth discussions of various topics in Holocaust studies. That was a unique opportunity to learn from well-known researchers in the field,
such as my current supervisor, Erin McGlothlin, and Natalia Aleksiun, whom I look to for inspiration. The HEFNU Summer Institute helped me understand different institutional and international approaches to Holocaust education, particularly in the United States. Having previously taught in Germany and Israel, I was now able to lay a firm pedagogical foundation for my teaching at Washington University in St. Louis.

HEFNU played a crucial role in helping me expand my professional network. In November 2021, I met my colleague Samantha Hinckley at the Lessons & Legacies Regional Interim Meeting at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Our collaboration, inspired by Dan Magilow’s presentation, resulted in a co-authored article “More than Meets the Eye – The Intricate Relationship between Selfies at Holocaust Memorial Sites and Their Subsequent Shaming,” which was published in *Eastern European Holocaust Studies* in 2022. Participating in the 2023 Regional Institute at Washington University in St. Louis facilitated my professional dialogue with Helen Turner, the Director of Education of the St. Louis Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum. In the Fall 2024, I invited Helen to be a guest speaker in my Museum Studies class “Representation and Memory in St. Louis Museums.”

The Lessons & Legacies 2022 Conference in Ottawa, Canada allowed me and my colleague Björn Krondorfer to identify potential contributors for our *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* special issue/section “Agency and Absence – Zooming in on Men as Gendered Beings during the Holocaust.” It also inspired us to co-organize the seminar “Implicated and Complicit: Re-Reading Male Agency during the Holocaust Years” for the upcoming 2024 Lessons & Legacies Conference in South California.

All this would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, without HEFNU’s initiatives and support. HEFNU is a unique platform for scholarly exchange, particularly due to its efforts to invite early career scholars like myself into the broader academic community. Therefore, I very much look forward to HEFNU’s 2025 conference for emerging Holocaust scholars. Providing the young generation with tools and space to conduct and share their research, HEFNU paves the way for novel approaches to the Shoah which would inspire academics in their future groundbreaking work.

**Christin Zühlke** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Washington University in St. Louis. She received her PhD from the Center for Research on Antisemitism at the Technical University of Berlin, Germany. Zühlke co-edits both the *Elie Wiesel Research Series* and the annotated 24-volume complete edition of *Elie Wiesel Werke* (*Works of Elie Wiesel*), as well as *New Approaches to Teaching Holocaust Literature*. Zühlke will serve as an Assistant Editor for the *Cambridge History of Holocaust Literature* (with Erin McGlothlin and her University of Leeds colleagues Stuart Taberner, Diane Otosacka, and McKenna Marko). She will co-edit with Björn Krondorfer “Agency and Absence – Zooming in on Men as Gendered Beings During the Holocaust” for *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, and “In the Void – (Non-)Representations of the Gas Chambers” for *Holocaust Studies* with Dominic Williams. Zühlke collaborated with Frédéric Bonnesoeur and Hannah Wilson on *New Microhistorical Approaches to an Integrated History of the Holocaust* (de Gruyter) in 2023.
“Borders/Borderlands and the Holocaust”
Austin, TX February 17-19, 2024

“An inspiring weekend,” was the common refrain from Regional Institute participants and workshop leaders as our two-day program wrapped up on a sunny Monday afternoon. Co-organized by Edward Westermann, Texas A&M University, San Antonio, and Tatjana Lichtenstein, University of Texas at Austin, the HEFNU Regional Institute made its Texas debut this past President Day’s weekend on the Forty Acres/UT Campus. The institute included twenty-eight participants from eleven states and one scholar from Kharkiv, Ukraine with fellows representing liberal arts and community colleges as well as large public research universities. While most participants were historians, we had a wide range of disciplines represented such as art history, performance studies, literature, and religious studies.

David Crew (UT Austin) kicked off the program with “Photographing the Holocaust,” discussing strategies for using photographs in the classroom. His examples from Nazi Germany sparked an especially lively debate, putting into practice a didactic approach aimed at promoting students’ engagement with images. The second session, “Blurred Boundaries: Sex, Sexual Barter, and Sexual Violence during the Holocaust,” was led by Pascale Bos (UT Austin), who discussed the development of the field and strategies for how to use this difficult material in the classroom. After lunch, Jason Johnson (Trinity University) and Adam Seipp (Texas A&M, College Station) enthusiastically demonstrated how one might encourage students to think deeply about the significance of shifting borders and displacement before, during, and after WWII in their session, “Borders, Border Changes, and Survivor Experiences.” The afternoon concluded with a keynote by Dr. William “Billy” Kiser (Texas A&M, San Antonio), titled “The Business of Killing Indians: Sculp Warfare, Conquest, and Genocide across North America.” Kiser explored nineteenth-century US-Mexico borderlands, where state-sponsored colonial conquest relied on private contractors—attracted by a bounty system paying cash rewards for Indian slaves and body parts—using extreme violence against the Southern Apache and Comanche tribes. In his keynote, Dr. Kiser highlighted the ways in which violence and mutilation were normalized in the Southwest Borderlands, for example, through church-sponsored rituals celebrating the raids. Dr. Kiser’s public keynote was sponsored by Humanities Texas.

On the second morning of the Institute, Vicki Aarons’s (Trinity University) session “Borders and Spaces of Memory in Holocaust Graphic Narratives,” took us on a fascinating journey through works created by artists, who are children and grandchildren of survivors, as well as self-reflective collaborations between survivors and illustrators. In “Blurred Borders: ‘Racial Mixing’ and the Holocaust,” Tatjana Lichtenstein (UT Austin) provided an example of the ways in which humanizing Holocaust history provides us with a sense of individual and familial loss. She explored the strategies intermarried families used to mitigate anti-Jewish persecution, suggesting that their stories can serve to
write the Holocaust into non-Jews’ wartime experience as well as the intermarried into the history of the Holocaust. Our last session, co-organized with UT’s Institute for Historical Studies, was led by Anne Kelly Knowles (University of Maine) and Levi Westerveld (Norwegian Coastal Authority & Arctic Permafrost Atlas). “Mapping Trauma: A Workshop on Space and Memory” explored testimonies through a spatial lens. We discussed how topographical maps deepen our understanding of events recounted in the sources and practiced how one might integrate mapping in the classroom.

While our two days were “packed,” the Regional Institute was a great opportunity to interact with colleagues from across the region—half of the participants were from Texas, and many were meeting each other for the first time—and to equip our pedagogical toolkits with a wealth of new materials and approaches as well as concrete ideas for how to share what we have learned with our students. A special thanks to Vanda Rajcan from HEFNU; Deborah Pardo-Kaplan; and Emily Pietrowski of the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies for bringing their expertise to our first Regional Institute. We are grateful to our local sponsors for their enthusiasm and generosity which allowed us to host the event in Austin. They are: Humanities Texas; University of Texas at Austin’s Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, Institute for Historical Studies, Center for European Studies, and the Department of Germanic Studies; and the Department of History, Philosophy, and Geography, Texas A&M, San Antonio.

Report by Tatjana Lichtenstein, The University of Texas at Austin, and Edward Westermann, Texas A&M University, San Antonio

“Witness: Mediating Holocaust Testimony in the Arts”
Bellingham, WA April 17-19, 2024

In April, HEFNU partnered with the Ray Wolpow Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity at Western Washington University for their second regional institute in the Pacific Northwest. This time around, colleagues from the University of Victoria (British Columbia) participated in the planning process, making it HEFNU’s first cross-border regional institute.

Fellows from across the United States and Canada arrived in Bellingham on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, to partake in two days of intensive learning and conversation. The official program started the same evening with a cruise on the Salish Sea. The outing allowed participants to get to know each other informally and to familiarize themselves with the area. Rather than drizzle and grey skies, sunshine greeted the guests, and the weather held beautifully until the end of the institute, prompting colleagues to speculate if the myth of bad weather in the Pacific Northwest was an invention after all!

On Thursday morning, Prof. Charlotte Schallié (University of Victoria) engaged faculty in a lively conversation in the first session of the day on “Visual
Storytelling and Holocaust Witnessing in But I Live: Three Stories of Child Survivors of the Holocaust.” She introduced her arts-based participatory research project, narrowing in on how sites of traumatic history and memory can be transformed into the visual storytelling medium. Miriam Libicki, one of the artists contributing to But I Live, discussed the strengths and challenges of using comics to depict the Holocaust and subjective memory in the absence of photographic documentation in her session “Using Drawing and Sequential Art to Create Memory, Narrative, and Knowledge.” A hands-on exercise allowed participants to experience drawing first-hand as an act of memory, of observation, of communication, and creation. In the afternoon, Dr. Kathryn Agnes Huether (Vanderbilt University) turned the fellows’ attention to sonic mediation, exploring the myriad ways that sound and music mediate testimony. Faculty learned how to assess aesthetic layers of testimony with specific emphasis on soundscapes and sound icons, reflecting on the ways in which sound can dramatically alter meaning and subsequent understanding in the reception of Holocaust testimony. The day ended with a well-attended public keynote address in Western Libraries’ Special Collections Research Room by Dr. Tabea Linhard (Washington University in St. Louis). Her talk “Testimonies of Flight, Afterlives of Refuge” introduced the audience to the German writer Anna Seghers and her lesser-known story “Journey to the Eleventh Realm” (1939). Using Seghers’ piece as a starting point, Linhard discussed depictions and geographies of flight and border crossing in various forms of cultural production and from several locations.

Despite the long day, fellows eagerly continued their conversations over and after dinner at the hotel. The next morning, Dr. Sandra Alfers (Western Washington University) examined the role of witnessing atrocity in her interactive session “Invisible: Witnessing the Everyday through Poetry.” Rather than approaching texts as examples of spiritual resistance, Alfers discussed German-language poetry from Terezín/Theresienstadt from a contemporaneous perspective of sustained, personal, psychological, and cultural engagement with the site as a multi-lingual and multi-national space of confinement. Dr. Helga Thorson (University of Victoria) and Dr. Kristin Semmens (University of Victoria) co-led the final session of the Regional Institute “Visualizing the Holocaust in the Classroom” with an emphasis on teaching the Holocaust through the digital humanities and photography from the period. They focused on online exhibits and memorial projects (Thorson) and reflected on the benefits and dangers of using Holocaust photography as teaching tools in History classes (Semmens).

Not only the weather made this Regional Institute a resounding success; the fellows connected with each other and the topics in myriad and meaningful ways, taking full advantage of the time dedicated to discussion and conversation. They parted ways grateful for another amazing learning opportunity provided by HEFNU organized by Assistant Director, Dr. Vanda Rajcan.

Report by Sandra Alfers, The Ray Wolpow Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity, Western Washington University
Sandra Alfers is the Founding and Executive Director of the Ray Wolpow Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity at Western Washington University. While Washington state’s Holocaust and Genocide Education mandate failed in the senate earlier this year, the state awarded the Ray Wolpow Institute $100,000 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to collaborate with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction on curriculum development and teacher training.

Tammy Bar-Joseph established the Research Center for Human-Dog Relations in Israel and the Holocaust in 2024. The Center aims to advance interdisciplinary studies on human-dog relationships in modern Israel and in Europe during the Holocaust, while promoting canine culture in Judaism and Israel. It aims to promote innovative research and serve as a hub for academic and cultural initiatives. Key areas of research include the historical bond between Jews and dogs, canine dynamics in the Third Reich, dogs’ role in saving Jews during the Holocaust, and trauma from Nazi dogs.

Henry Hank Greenspan, Lecturer Emeritus at the University of Michigan, will have his most recent play, “Death / Play, or the Mad Jester of the Warsaw Ghetto,” staged at Penn State University in September 2024.

Phyllis Lassner, Professor Emerita at the Crown Center for Jewish Studies, Northwestern University, on behalf of the JAHLit Symposium organizing committee, announces its annual symposium for October 27-29, 2024, at the Betsy Hotel, Miami Beach. The committee welcomes individual and panel proposals that address the subjects of Jewish-American, transnational Jewish and Holocaust literature and culture, including Jewish literature, film, and other genres and media. Deadline for one-page Proposals is July 31, 2024. Please send queries and proposals to: Adam Goldwyn (adam.goldwyn@ndsu.edu).

Sari J. Siegel is the Founding Director of the Center for Medicine, Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, which will be hosting an international symposium, “The Lancet Commission on Medicine, Nazism, and the Holocaust–One Year Later: Taking Stock and Educating Inside and Beyond the Health Professions Classroom,” on November 18-19, 2024, in Los Angeles. The timing is to encourage those attending the Lessons & Legacies Conference to extend their visits and attend this event. See the Center’s website for further event info.
**Personal and Professional News**

**Eileen M. Angelini** is a 2024 Faculty Fellow to Holocaust Museum Houston’s Warren Fellowship for Future Teachers. The Warren Fellowship for Future Teachers is a week-long program that introduces university students preparing for a career in teaching to the history and to the lessons of the Holocaust and other genocides. Dr. Angelini is honored to work with these twenty-five pre-service teacher educators and graduate students.

**Tammy Bar-Joseph**, the founder of the Research Center for Human-Dog Relations in Israel and the Holocaust, completed her thesis “Dogs, Jews, and the Holocaust: Stories of Jewish Children Rescued by Dogs,” at the Open University in Israel. Using qualitative-interpretive methods, she explored the critical bond between thirty-seven Jewish children and dogs during the Holocaust, shedding light on their survival. Through narrative analysis of survivors’ testimonies and diverse archival sources, the study highlights the profound role of dogs in safeguarding children physically, emotionally, and socially.

**Lawrence Baron**, Professor Emeritus at San Diego State University, presented a paper on “Bawaal: Bollywood Does the Holocaust” at the Western Jewish Studies Association Conference at Arizona State University in Tempe, May 6, 2024.

**Waitman Wade Beorn**, Assistant Professor of History at Northumbria University, received a major grant from the Arts and Sciences Research Council in the UK for his project of building a digital reconstruction of the Janowska camp and a virtual learning platform. He has also launched The Holocaust History Podcast.

**Wayne H. Bowen**, Associate Dean of the College of Undergraduate Studies and Professor of History at the College of Arts and Humanities at University of Central Florida, has been named Associate Dean for the College of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Central Florida, effective February 2024.

**Michael Geheran**, Deputy Director at the Resnick Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies at the United States Military Academy, was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of History at the United States Military Academy (West Point) in Fall 2023.

**Henry Hank Greenspan**, Lecturer Emeritus at the University of Michigan, presented the opening webinar in the Art in Testimony Series, “Listening, Telling, Showing (and Back): The Practice of a Holocaust Scholar-Teacher-Playwright-Actor,” via the University of British Columbia program in Public Humanities, January 25, 2024. [LINK](#)

**Steve Hochstadt** is Professor Emeritus of History at Illinois College. Excerpts from his edited collection of interviews with former Jewish Shanghai refugees, *Exodus to Shanghai: Stories of Escape from the Third Reich* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) have been used to create a stage play and a podcast by the British writer Kate McAll. The play, “Exodus: The Shanghai Jews,” was performed at LA Theatre Works on June 23-25, 2023. The podcast, “Exodus to Shanghai,” was broadcast on the BBC, January 30, 2024.
Emmanuel Kahan, Professor in the History Department at National University of La Plata (Argentina) and Daniela Gleizer from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, co-taught a seminar, “Transnational, Regional and Local Dimensions of the Holocaust. New Approaches from Latin America,” in March and April 2024.

Brett Ashley Kaplan was Nannerl O. Keohane Distinguished Visiting Professor at Duke and UNC for the 2023-24 academic year. She presented three talks based on her novel, Vandervelde Downs, which uses a multivocal, braided structure to explore what happens when multiple strands of refugeeism and migration interfuse with art looted during the Nazi genocide.

Stuart Liebman, Professor Emeritus of Art History, Film Studies, and Theatre at the CUNY Graduate Center, New York, spoke on a panel devoted to Richard Glazer’s film “The Zone of Interest” at a conference at Princeton University sponsored by FASPE (Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics) on March 1, 2024.

Tomasz Łysak, Associate Professor of cultural studies, University of Warsaw, has published his photographic project “Rephotographing Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah” at https://shoah.art/. Lanzmann visited Poland with his crew in 1978 and 1979, shooting for “Shoah” (1985). There are two corresponding sets of images in Łysak’s 2023 project: photographs emulating the 16mm aesthetics of the original shots and panoramas analyzing the interaction of the crew with the sites. Photographs were taken in Chelmno and Nerem, Treblinka, Sobibór, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and Warsaw.

Ariane Santerre, researcher at the Canada Research Chair in Music and Politics at the University of Montreal, in collaboration with Pierre Anctil, gave a virtual presentation “Les Juifs de Montréal, histoire et littératures,” for the Conference series “Polylogue canadien,” Institute of Romance Studies, University of Warsaw and Szczecin University, Poland, on May 15, 2024.

Dr. Melanie Carina Schmoll, research fellow at The Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, launched her new website and blog in March 2024: melaniecarinaschmoll.com and LINK

Sari J. Siegel, Assistant Professor in the Program in the History of Medicine at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, founded the Center for Medicine, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in August 2021. Since then, Professor Siegel has continued to extend the reach of the Center’s monthly Zoom-based programming that includes lectures and interdisciplinary roundtables. On November 18-19, 2024, she will organize a symposium to mark one year since the publication of the report of the Lancet Commission on Medicine, Nazism, and the Holocaust (The Lancet 402 [Nov. 2023]: 1867-1940), of which she was a member.
Kevin Simpson, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at John Brown University, received the Fulbright Specialist Grant in support of his collaboration with the Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava, Slovakia. The Grant will support public lectures and research necessary for the creation of an exhibit on football during the Slovak fascist era (year 2 of 2). Professor Simpson also received a research fellowship at the Alan Cornell US Campus Faculty Seminar 2024 at Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies, and the travel grant for the seminar on modern antisemitism and innovative practices in teaching the Shoah in US universities (Jerusalem, June 17-27, 2024).

Dr. Victoria Grace Walden, Senior Lecturer in Media, and Dr. Kate Marrison of the Sussex Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex, have been awarded 4,100,000 Euros to launch the “Landecker Digital Memory Lab: Connective Holocaust Commemoration” at the University of Sussex, UK. Funded by the Alfred Landecker Foundation, the Lab will be dedicated to enhancing the sustainability of digital Holocaust memory at a global scale.

Anika Walke, the Georgie W. Lewis Career Development Professor and Associate Professor of History at Washington University in St. Louis, has been appointed as the inaugural Askwith Family Associate Professor of Holocaust Studies at Carnegie Mellon University, effective August 2025.

Lucas F. W. Wilson, the Justice, Equity, and Transformation Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of History at University of Calgary, received the Association for Jewish Studies 2024 Jordan Schnitzer First Book Publication Award for his forthcoming monograph, titled At Home with the Holocaust: Postmemory, Domestic Space, and Second-Generation Holocaust Narratives (Rutgers University Press).
Sandra Alfers, Professor of German and founding director of the Ray Wolpow Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity at Western Washington University, published her book *Traces of Memory: The Life and Work of Else Dormitzer (1877-1958)* in Michael Berenbaum’s special series “The Holocaust: History and Literature, Ethics and Philosophy” (Academic Studies Press, 2024). The book includes Dormitzer’s original poetry collection from the Theresienstadt ghetto and three testimonial accounts, all translated into English by Cornelius Partsch. As one reviewer notes, the book is a “must-use text in Holocaust Studies - for teachers and students alike.”

Waitman Wade Beorn, Assistant Professor of History at Northumbria University, published his monograph *Between the Wires: The Janowska Camp and the Holocaust in Lviv* (Nebraska University Press, 2024).

James Bernauer, Kraft Family Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Boston College, edited *Auschwitz and Absolution: The Case of the Commandant and the Confessor* (Orbis Books, 2023). Few people know that in the face of his execution, Rudolf Höss, the Commandant of Auschwitz, met with a Polish priest for confession, and from him he received sacramental absolution. The volume includes introduction, excerpts from memoirs of Höss and the Polish priest, and analytical reactions to the absolution from seventeen Jewish and Christian scholars.


Michael Geheran, Deputy Director at the Resnick Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies at the United States Military Academy, together with Mark Gagnon co-authored the article “Not So Quiet on the Western Front: German Reactions to Netflix’s 2022 Remake,” *Central European History* 56, no. 4 (2023): 603-608.

John-Paul Himka, Professor Emeritus in the Department of History, Classics, and Religion at the University of Alberta, participated with other Holocaust scholars in a forum titled “The Holocaust in Ukraine: How the History of a Crime Is (Not) Written.” The forum was published in the journal *Ukraina Moderna* 34 (2023): 17-75. The other participants were Omer Bartov, Martin Dean, Maksym Hon, Oleksandr Lysenko, Jared McBride, Anatoliy Podolskyi, Dieter Pohl, Ihor Shchupak, and Kai Struve.

Brett Ashley Kaplan, Director of the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies and Professor of Comparative and World Literatures at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign edited the anthology *Critical Memory Studies* (Bloomsbury: 2023). Bringing together a diverse array of new and established scholars and creative writers in the rapidly expanding field of memory studies, the collection creatively delves into the multiple aspects of this wide-ranging field. LINK

Alexis Lerner, Assistant Professor at the United States Naval Academy, together with Professor Andrew Gelman from Columbia University, published an article on how to teach statistics and data science to students in Jewish Studies, using datasets and archives of interest. See: Alexis Lerner and Andrew Gelman, “In Pursuit of Campus-Wide Data Literacy: A Guide to Developing a Statistics Course for Students in Nonquantitative Fields,” *Journal of Statistics and Data Science Education*, DOI: 10.1080/26939169.2023.2276844.

Tatjana Lichtenstein, Associate Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin published an article related to her larger project on intermarried families: “Contested Paternity: Seeking Reprieve from Anti-Jewish Persecution in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia,” *Judaica Bohemiae* vol. 58 (2023) (Special Issue: “Jews and Non-Jews in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia: Attitudes, Strategies, Policies, and Practices”): 115-140.

Judith Lin, an independent scholar, was recently awarded the AJS Jordan Schnitzer First Book Award for *Belonging to Exile: Sephardic Homelands through Poetry* which is forthcoming with Wayne State University Press.

Andrea Löw, Deputy Head of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, and HEFNU’s partner for the European Lessons & Legacies Conferences, published her book on experiences of German-speaking Jews during and after their deportation to “the East,” titled *Deportiert. 'Immer mit einem Fuß im Grab' - Erfahrungen deutscher Juden*. LINK
Tomasz Łysak, Associate Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Warsaw, published an article “Dead Rescuers: The Commemoration of Poles Who Lost Their Lives Saving Jews During the Second World War,” *Porównania* 2(34), 2023: 123-38, https://doi.org/10.14746/por.2023.2.9. The article touches upon recent commemoration of Poles who were killed for rescuing Jews under the Law and Justice government.


Melanie Carina Schmoll, PhD, research fellow the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, publishes teaching resources and material on a rolling basis. As external chief editor for history for Duden/Brockhaus, she publishes on various historical topics. Her new forthcoming books “Introduction to Political Science and the Political System of Germany” and “Gesamtband Mensch & Politik, Westermann Bildungsmedien,” focus on diversity and antisemitism.


Kerry Wallach, Associate Professor of German Studies at Gettysburg College (PA), published her book *Traces of a Jewish Artist: The Lost Life and Work of Rahel Szalit* (PSU Press, 2024). This is the first book on Rahel Szalit (1888–1942), a Jewish artist active in Weimar Berlin and 1930s Paris. Szalit was a sought-after illustrator and painter who was murdered in the Holocaust and whose story was all but lost to history. This biography recovers Szalit’s life and presents a stunning collection of her art.

Annika Wienert, research coordinator at the Max Weber Foundation (Bonn, Germany), together with Janine Fubel and Alexandra Klei, co-edited and published the book *Space in Holocaust Research: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Spatial Thinking* (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2024). The book demonstrates the transdisciplinary potential of space-related approaches to the Holocaust. Editors suggest that “spatial thinking” can foster a new dialogue between the history and memory of the Holocaust that transcends disciplinary boundaries. [LINK](#)
TEACHING RESOURCES

TEACHING GRANTS
Teaching Grants help faculty at two- or four-year colleges and universities launch or improve resources for Holocaust related courses, particularly at institutions with few or no such courses.

VIRTUAL SPEAKERS BUREAU
Professors can use the Speakers Bureau to connect with over 70 distinguished Holocaust scholars from an array of disciplines, who will prepare a tailor-made virtual lecture or classroom session in their area of expertise.

REGIONAL INSTITUTES
HEFNU partners with regional host institutions to connect experts on Holocaust-related topics with professors who want to teach or improve a Holocaust course and to develop regional networks of university-level Holocaust educators.

SUMMER INSTITUTE ON THE HOLOCAUST AND JEWISH CIVILIZATION
This intensive two-week seminar in Holocaust Studies, taught by experts in the field, supports college faculty, advanced graduate students, and museum staff to broaden their interdisciplinary perspective and develop and refine Holocaust courses.

RESOURCES FOR SCHOLARS

LESSONS & LEGACIES CONFERENCE
The premier intellectual gathering in the field of Holocaust Studies. Lessons & Legacies is held biennially in North America and every four years in Europe.

SHARON ABRAMSON RESEARCH GRANTS
Grants of $4,000 support research related to the Holocaust. Doctoral candidates nearing completion of their dissertations and faculty from all disciplines are eligible.

VIRTUAL MENTORS PROGRAM
Early career scholars can network and meet with distinguished scholars in the field of Holocaust Studies for “one-off” online meetings. Topics include career opportunities and development, research topics and sources, and work-life balance.
The mission of the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University (HEFNU) is to advance Holocaust education at institutions of higher learning around the world. To achieve this mission, HEFNU aims to develop professors qualified to teach Holocaust courses, grow the number of colleges and universities that offer Holocaust courses, and thereby increase the number of students who study the Holocaust.

If you wish to support our mission, there are two ways to make a tax-deductible contribution:
1. To make an online contribution, click here.
2. To contribute via mail, please send a check or money order payable to “Northwestern University” Memo: Holocaust Educational Foundation, to: ARD; 1201 Davis Street; Evanston, IL 60208; Attn: Jill Smith. Please let us know a check is on the way via email at hef@northwestern.edu.