



Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University

FOUNDED BY THEODORE ZEV AND ALICE R. WEISS

SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER

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Director's Letter

DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

In my letter to you last summer, I noted that, “Debate is a hallmark of scholarship, and of democracy. It is...discouraging, to see debate, democracy, and scholarship under attack – on college campuses, by governments, and in the public sphere... 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.” I had hoped that a year later our contemporary context might have improved. Unfortunately, it has not. Nevertheless, I see our field as offering a critical lens through which we might try to understand current events and challenges.

With that in mind, HEFNU continues to offer special programs that ask whether and how Holocaust Studies might do so. Following last year's series of scholarly conversations, “Holocaust Studies, Terror, and War,” this year we are exploring “Holocaust Studies and Contemporary Issues.” On April 17, we opened the series with “Dynamics of Nazi Propaganda: Mass Media, Gender, and Individual Content Creation.” Moderator Dan Magilow (University of Tennessee, Knoxville), Maddie James (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Steven Luckert (US Holocaust Memorial Museum), and Ulrike Weckel (Justus Liebig University Gießen, Germany) engaged in a critical discussion of Nazi Propaganda and its reception.

On May 20, we asked “What is Nazism? What is Fascism?” Moderator Avinoam Patt (New York University), Doris Bergen (University of Toronto), Mary Fulbrook (University College London), and Paula Oppermann (Independent Scholar) analyzed



European Fascism and German Nazism. In the fall, we will resume these discussions with programs on “Refugees and Asylum,” “Deportation and Camps,” and “Higher Education and the Intelligentsia in Nazi Occupied Europe.”

HEFNU also restarted its workshops by and for emerging scholars. HEFNU Assistant Director and Postdoctoral Fellow, Tierra Maznick, and Olga Kartashova, a PhD candidate at NYU, organized “Alternatives to Academia (‘Alt-Ac’) in Holocaust Studies,” featuring Dr. Susan Perlman (USHMM) and Dr. Ian Rich (Wiener Holocaust Library), which took place on May 14.

HEFNU hosted two Regional Institutes. “Holocaust Memory in the Twenty-First Century” took place on February 26-28 at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Scholars explored the current state of Holocaust memory, focusing on its political uses, abuses, and distortions. The Institute featured Natalia Aleksion (University of Florida), Ari Joskowicz (Vanderbilt University), Nikolai Kopsov (Georgia Tech), Alicja Podbielska (Emory University), and Jelena Subotić (Georgia State University). HEFNU and the Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy at the University of Nebraska at Omaha hosted “Global Approaches to the Holocaust” on April 3-5 in Omaha, Nebraska. The Institute focused on recent research exploring the history, memory, and representation of the Holocaust in countries in Asia, Africa, North and South America, the Middle East, and Australia. The institute's teaching faculty included Mehnaz Afridi (Manhattan University), Rebecca Erbelding (Holocaust historian and author), Yael Siman (Iberoamericana University), and Ran Zwigenberg (Penn State). Edward Kissi (University of South Florida) delivered the keynote.

Director's Letter

Continued

HEFNU is proud to support Holocaust scholarship and instruction. This year, we awarded six Sharon Abramson Research Grants and five Teaching Grants. More information about the awards and the recipients may be found here:

<https://hef.northwestern.edu/grants/>.

We were delighted to host two outstanding lectures in recent months. Edward P. Westermann spoke about “The Intoxication of Killing,” bringing together an audience of faculty, students, and community for our annual Winter Lecture on February 20 to explore the role of alcohol in the perpetration of genocide. Jennifer V. Evans gave the Theodore Zev Weiss Annual Spring lecture in Holocaust Studies on May 6. She lectured on the fascinating topic of “Unlikely Allies: Jewish Middle-Aged Photographers and the Trans Camera,” which analyzed the parallel lives of Lisetta Carmi and Madalena Schwartz, Holocaust refugees to Italy and Brazil respectively, whose stories of kinship and solidarity ask us to consider the connections between the afterlives of the Holocaust and the Sexual Revolution.

We are looking forward to hosting the 29th annual Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish

Civilization. In late June and early July, we will welcome 24 Summer Institute Fellows to our Evanston campus. This year’s Summer Institute features twelve faculty who will explore religion, history, and representation among other important topics in the field of Holocaust Studies.

We are also excited to welcome thirty early career scholars to 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 this coming November. We further look forward to our next biennial North American Lessons & Legacies, which will take place in Chicago in November 2026. We will issue the call for papers in the coming weeks and hope to see many of you there.

Thank you for the important work you do. We look forward to learning from you and seeing you in the months ahead.

SARAH M. CUSHMAN PhD, DIRECTOR
AND THE HEFNU TEAM

Profile: Daniel Greene



Daniel Greene is Adjunct Professor of History at Northwestern University and a historian and curator at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). He curated the USHMM exhibition *Americans and the Holocaust*, which is currently on view in Washington, DC. A traveling version of the exhibition is visiting 100 public and university libraries across

the country. At Northwestern, Greene teaches courses on Holocaust memory and public history and has led sessions on similar topics at the HEFNU Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization since 2016.

As an undergraduate, Greene interned at the USHMM, sparking his interest in Holocaust studies. While an intern in 1994, just one year after the museum opened, he helped the USHMM record oral histories with Holocaust survivors, an experience Greene described as a privilege. To commemorate the museum's twenty-fifth anniversary in 2018, he curated the exhibition *Americans and the Holocaust*. Greene explained that the exhibit answers the questions "what Americans knew when, how they knew it, and how they responded." It "busts myths and misconceptions," including that Americans didn't know about the persecution and murder of Jews in Europe as it was happening.

The exhibit reframes the history by approaching American responses with a wide lens and situating them in their historical context. Synthesizing studies of how certain segments of American society responded to the Holocaust, it takes a broad view across American society, politics, and culture. The exhibit also communicates how domestic conditions in the United States—such as the Great

Depression, isolationism, antisemitism, racism, and xenophobia—influenced how Americans responded. Greene said that while scholars might be familiar with these conditions, "Holocaust history is often lifted out of American history rather than treated as closely connected."

Americans and the Holocaust raises questions about what the United States could have done to respond to the mass murder of Europe's Jews. While the United States could not have prevented the Holocaust, the exhibition shows, the publication of information about Nazi atrocities and the acceptance of more Jewish refugees could have saved lives. Greene served as an advisor to the 2022 PBS documentary *The U.S. and the Holocaust*, inspired by the exhibition and directed by Ken Burns, Lynn Novick, and Sarah Botstein.

Greene brings his expertise on the history of Americans and the Holocaust and on public history to his undergraduate and graduate courses at Northwestern. He has taught an undergraduate course on Holocaust memory that begins with American understandings of Nazism before the Nazis came to power and ends with Holocaust memory in the present. The course also explores how the Holocaust has shaped American culture. Greene's graduate course "Public History: Museums, Monuments, and Memory" puts Holocaust memory in conversation with other examples from public history, primarily in the United States. Greene finds it important to interrogate comparative memorialization around the world. He also encourages students to think about why history in public spaces often becomes intertwined with contemporary political debates.

Participants in the HEFNU Summer Institute have learned from Greene since he first joined the faculty in 2016. In 2025, he will teach sessions

on Holocaust education, museums, and American responses to the Holocaust. He especially appreciates that SI Fellows bring diverse experiences with memory and memorialization from around the world to the Summer Institute. While Greene shares his knowledge about Germany and the United States, participants with backgrounds in other locations add geographic breadth, which he said leads to engaging discussions.

For Greene, teaching and museum work inform one another, as both require him to consider the variety of ways people learn and the different levels of knowledge they bring. One strategy he turns to when addressing a broad audience is to ground the material in stories. For example, because the USHMM understands its primary audience to be students, whom Greene finds like to learn about people their own age, the museum features stories of teenagers to “remove one barrier of identification.”

Greene is now busy giving talks as part of a traveling exhibition co-sponsored by USHMM and the American Library Association on *Americans and the Holocaust*, which is on tour until 2026 to 100 libraries across the United States. He has also published *Americans and the Holocaust: A Reader* (2022) with Edward Phillips. Intended for classroom use, the book includes over 100 primary sources, ranging from newspaper and magazine articles to government records. Greene explained that the book allows students to read primary sources from the period in greater depth than they might be able to when viewing the exhibit.

Through his curatorial work at the USHMM and his teaching at Northwestern and the HEFNU Summer Institute, Greene has inspired scholars, students, and the public. By approaching American responses to the Holocaust collectively, *Americans and the Holocaust*, along with the related PBS documentary, traveling

exhibit, and source reader, contributes new perspectives to Holocaust studies and teaching. The exhibit has encouraged a broad audience to rethink their assumptions about what and when Americans knew about the Holocaust and to consider how domestic conditions shaped American responses. With his teaching, Greene has prepared another generation of scholars to continue to engage with Holocaust memory, especially in comparative perspective.

Elizabeth Howell is a doctoral candidate in history at Northwestern. Her research focuses on Muslim migration to Austria and Germany since 1945. She currently serves as the Graduate Assistant for the Holocaust Educational Foundation.

Profile: Monique Balbuena



Monique Balbuena is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Oregon. Her research examines Holocaust literature written by Sephardic Jews—roughly defined as those with origins in the Iberian Peninsula—in multiple languages across time and space. She also brings attention to linguistic and geographic diversity to her courses on Holocaust

literature and film. Balbuena received a HEFNU Teaching Grant in 2023-24 and has participated in the HEFNU Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization and several regional institutes, which she said have supported her research.

Balbuena first came to study the Holocaust through her research on contemporary Ladino poetry. “My little quip is I say, ‘the corpus made me do it.’” Balbuena initially became interested in contemporary Ladino poetry to show that Sephardic people continue to produce culture and literature, even though, as she explained, people generally think of them as belonging to the past. As she looked at the most important works of contemporary Ladino poetry, she found that the authors, who previously had written in other languages such as French or Hebrew, started writing in Ladino after the death of their parents, usually their mother. The poetry thematized not only their mother’s death, but also the death of a people and a language during the Holocaust. “The mother had represented, in a way, the last link to a people, the last link to the language that had been destroyed mostly with the Holocaust,” Balbuena elaborated. Though she was at first reticent to write about the Holocaust because she did not consider herself a Holocaust historian, she realized it was unavoidable because the Holocaust appeared frequently in the poetry.

Balbuena’s research asks how language contributes to the construction of identity. She is interested in linguistic and intra-Jewish diversity and emphasizes how diversity “reflects and brings a beautiful richness to Jewish life and Jewish culture.” Balbuena previously published the monograph *Homeless Tongues: Poetry and Languages of the Sephardic Diaspora* (2016), which was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award in the Sephardic Culture category. She is currently working on a book manuscript titled *Sephardic Literary Responses to the Holocaust*. The book examines poetry as well as a few plays written by Sephardic Jews in several languages during four main periods: the Holocaust, the immediate postwar period, the mid-1970s, and by the second and third generation. She includes authors from Latin America, the Balkans, Israel, and North Africa, and traces changes in individual authors’ reflections on the Holocaust over time and as they switch between languages.

Linguistic and geographic diversity are also important to Balbuena’s teaching. She teaches courses on literary responses to the Holocaust, on Holocaust films, and on literary works about the Holocaust that have been adapted to film. Her courses include different languages that typically do not appear in the literary canon of the Holocaust. When teaching literary representations of the Holocaust, Balbuena finds it necessary to start with historical background on the Holocaust. She expands her courses beyond Western and Eastern Europe to study the Holocaust in Latin America and North Africa. “That is something I am very concerned about when I am teaching, but clearly derives from my research,” she explained. Balbuena also reads and discusses the poetry she writes about in her scholarship with her students, often translating it herself for her students to read or sometimes translating it with graduate students.

Monique Balbuena

Continued

After attending HEFNU's Summer Institute in 2019, Balbuena applied for and received a HEFNU Teaching Grant in 2023-24. She has also participated in a few HEFNU regional institutes, including most recently the regional institute in Omaha on "Global Approaches to the Holocaust" in April 2025. She especially appreciates that the institutes have made it possible for her to learn from people working in a variety of fields and on topics very different from her own. These opportunities have served as a source of inspiration as she has pursued her own research. "The intensity, the company, and the exchange have all supported the way I delve into my own texts."

Balbuena expects that the field of Holocaust studies will continue to give attention to the transnational character of the Holocaust in the future. Her research, teaching, and participation in HEFNU programming are pushing the field in new directions. Balbuena's work on Holocaust literature by Sephardic Jews writing in multiple languages and from different regions is broadening the Holocaust literary canon. Through her teaching and involvement with HEFNU, she has shared insights from her study of intra-Jewish diversity with her students and the HEFNU community.

Elizabeth Howell is a doctoral candidate in history at Northwestern. Her research focuses on Muslim migration to Austria and Germany since 1945. She currently serves as the Graduate Assistant for the Holocaust Educational Foundation.

Featured Report: Maja Kruse



I am now entering the final stage of writing my dissertation, which explores the complex and dynamic survival strategies employed by Jewish fugitives during the Holocaust. My dissertation focuses on the act of hiding, which was a fluid and ever-changing experience shaped by factors such as landscapes, the urgency of threats, and the resource-

fulness of individuals. My research aims to better understand this complexity by developing a structured framework for analyzing hiding, one that distinguishes between the physical *places* where people hid, the *strategies* they employed to remain undetected, and the *conditions* that influenced their decisions and chances of survival.

Drawing on survivor testimonies from the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, memoirs, and key scholarly sources, my study brings together microhistorical insight and spatial analysis. I use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Tableau to visualize movement patterns and survival strategies of Holocaust survivors, mapping transitions between hiding places, interactions with helpers and perpetrators, and perceptions of danger and safety across time and space. I am particularly interested in the role of the natural environment in shaping experiences of hiding. Landscapes, weather, and seasonal changes had an enormous impact on fugitives' ability to stay concealed and survive.

The HEFNU Sharon Abramson Research Grant made it possible for me to visit Poland and trace some of the paths taken by survivors. Testimonial descriptions of walking and driving through forests, fields, and villages helped me grasp the distances people had to cover and the obstacles they faced. Being on the ground gave me a more visceral understanding of the importance of

topography, visibility, and familiarity with the landscape. Those who hid in areas they knew well – places they had walked as children or worked in before the war – had a distinct advantage over those navigating unfamiliar terrain.

Over the past years, I have had the opportunity to present my research at the *Lessons and Legacies* conferences in Ottawa, Prague, and California. These conferences were formative experiences, allowing me to connect with a network of junior and senior scholars whose insights have helped shape my work and refine my methodology.

Beyond my dissertation, I have also collaborated on public history projects related to mapping the Holocaust. In spring 2024, my advisor Anne Kelly Knowles and I created a map of camps and ghettos for the United Nations' permanent Holocaust exhibition in New York City. The map displays approximately 4,400 (10% of the total number) sites of incarceration and forced labor operated by the Nazis and their allies from 1933 to 1945, which are described in the first four volumes of USHMM's *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*. This project led to a second collaboration with the UN in the fall of 2024, where we designed a large wall display for a temporary exhibition marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. That exhibit included a modified version of our earlier map, a graph showing the duration of camps and ghettos, an animation of site openings and closures, and a detailed map of the Auschwitz complex that I originally designed for HEFNU Director Sarah Cushman's forthcoming book on women in Auschwitz.

I had the privilege of working closely with Professor Cushman, creating ten maps for her book that show where women were imprisoned and worked in the Auschwitz main camps and selected subcamps. This work reflects my broader interest in how spatial and visual storytelling can make the history of the Holocaust more accessible and meaningful.

Maja Kruse Continued

Through these various strands of research, teaching, and public engagement, I hope to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Holocaust survival – one that honors the lived experiences of those who endured it and preserves their stories for future generations.

Maja Kruse is an interdisciplinary PhD student at the University of Maine, where her research explores the geographic and environmental dimensions of hiding during the Holocaust, alongside data visualization. She holds a BA and MA in German Studies and Geography from the University of Southern Denmark and the University of Copenhagen. Her previous work has focused on the Danish resistance movement, the flight and deportation of Danish Jews, the SS Lebensborn program in Denmark, and the indexing of testimonies for the USC Shoah Foundation.

Featured Report: Alexandria N. Ruble



HEFNU has been an integral part of my development as a scholar of modern German history and Holocaust Studies. I was fortunate to participate in the HEFNU Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization in 2021 and receive a Teaching Grant in 2022, which expanded my understanding of the field considerably.

In 2007, as an undergraduate studying abroad and a relative newcomer to Holocaust history, I made my first visits to Terezin and Auschwitz. I walked away from these experiences consumed by one question: how did Europeans attempt to rebuild their lives after the destruction of the Nazis? This strong interest led me to graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to study modern European and German history with experts such as Dr. Karen Hagemann, Dr. Konrad H. Jarausch, and Dr. Christopher Browning. While my dissertation was primarily on the postwar era, I have always felt strongly about the need for more Holocaust education. I further deepened my interest in education outreach as a member of the Gulf Coast Center for Holocaust and Human Rights Education, a regional consortium based in Mobile, Alabama, from 2018-2023. I took these experiences with me to the University of Idaho, where I am currently based. As a teacher-scholar, I push students to deconstruct “master narratives” and construct their own arguments about history through critical analysis of primary documents and secondary sources. Furthermore, I challenge my students to become more engaged, empathetic, and knowledgeable about global issues, such as contemporary treatment of refugees and global discourses surrounding marginalized communities.

Alexandria N. Ruble

Continued

My first experience with HEFNU was through the 2021 Summer Institute. Originally planned for 2020, our institute was delayed until 2021 and held over Zoom because of COVID-19. While Zoom conferences can be challenging, HEFNU provided an outstanding experience. I participated in discussions led by experts such as Natalia Aleksiun, Roger Brooks, Daniel Greene, Erin McGlothlin, Elissa Mailaender, Barry Trachtenberg, and Michael Tymkiw, as well as Holocaust survivor Irene Butter. I incorporated much of the material and new insights I gained from the institute into my Fall 2021 course, “The History of the Holocaust.”

Knowing that HEFNU had significantly aided my teaching and research, I applied in 2022 for a Teaching Grant, with the goal of further transforming students’ lives by exposing them to Holocaust education. This grant has had a significant impact on my students at the University of Idaho. I have used the funds to purchase library books and invite guest speakers to speak about antisemitism and the resurgence of neo-Nazism. With a colleague, I am also organizing a workshop highlighting student research on the Holocaust and World War II. In addition, I am currently planning a day-long excursion to the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights (roughly 5 hours from Moscow, ID) to visit the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial, an international “Site of Conscience.” I chose this site because of its avowed mission to “promote respect for human dignity and diversity through education and to foster individual responsibility to work for peace and justice.” I believe students and other members of the community will benefit immensely from the memorial. None of these opportunities would have been possible without HEFNU.

HEFNU has supported the development of programming designed to target discrimination at my institution and in the wider Idaho community. My

courses appeal to audiences interested in understanding human rights violations, genocides, and wars. Furthermore, in the current moment, the resurgence of far-right movements around the globe has drawn new attention to continuing inequalities and prejudices, reinforced through laws and policies that uphold systemic sexism and racism. HEFNU has provided the crucial support I need to develop necessary programming and continue my career as a professional historian and public intellectual.

Alexandria N. Ruble is assistant professor of European history at the University of Idaho. She earned her PhD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2017. Her research focuses on twentieth-century Central Europe, Germany, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, the Cold War, women’s and gender history, and legal history.

Her first book, *Entangled Emancipation: Women’s Rights in Cold War Germany* (University of Toronto Press, 2023), explores how Germans reimaged and recreated family laws in East and West Germany after 1945, arguing that the Cold War alternately catalyzed and halted reforms in the 1950s and 1960s. Her second book project explores how political prisoners experienced persecution by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945, and how they reintegrated themselves into East and West German societies after 1945. Her work has been supported by the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University, the American Association of University Women, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Fulbright US Student Program, and the German Academic Exchange Service, among others.

Regional Institute Report

Atlanta

Regional Institute Atlanta

From February 26-28, 2025, HEFNU and Emory University hosted a Regional Institute in Atlanta, Georgia. Titled “**Holocaust Memory in the Twenty-First Century,**” the institute investigated the ways in which the Holocaust serves as a focal point in the present, exploring how individuals, communities, and governments instrumentalize, misuse, and/or distort Holocaust memory to their own ends.

In **Session I: The Jim Crow South and Nazi Racism**, Professor Dan Puckett highlighted the resonances of racial views between Nazi Germany and the U.S. South, focusing on how these perceptions were received in the latter. Contrasting perceptions as depicted in cartoons and periodicals, Puckett demonstrated that African American communities in Birmingham, Alabama questioned the spread of democracy abroad while it was selectively applied at home.

Shifting to Eastern Europe, in **Session II: Holocaust Remembrance and the Cult of WWII in Putin’s Russia**, Professor Nikolay Koposov detailed the conflict between competing memory narratives of World War II. Koposov demonstrated that “Cosmopolitan Memory,” which focuses on Jewish suffering, is incompatible with the “Cult of Victory,” which depicts Russia as having saved the world from Nazism.

Natalia Aleksun revisited postwar dynamics between “rescuers” and “the rescued” in **Session III: Elusive Relationships: Survivors and their Rescuers in the Aftermath of the Holocaust**. Parsing two specific case studies, Aleksun’s session illuminated the variability in relationships between the two groups, challenging narratives of mandated gratitude, and in cases of sexual abuse, presumed estrangement.

Led by Professor Alicja Podbielska, **Session IV: Holocaust Rescue and Politics of Memory in Poland**, presented longstanding, state-led initiatives to depict

Polish citizens as rescuers, rather than complicit or perpetrators. She invited fellows to take a hands-on approach, debating which monument, if any, could or should be dedicated to Polish rescuers in the prewar Jewish quarter of Warsaw.

In the institute keynote, **Israel and the Holocaust: Changing Landscapes of Memory**, Professor Avinoam Patt argued that the memory of the Shoah was reflected in the formation(s) of Israeli identity. The creation of the Jewish state has been understood as necessary not only as a place to receive Holocaust survivors, but also to protect Jews in the aftermath of genocide. Amid contemporary conflicts, Patt claimed, the ties between Israeli citizens and the Jewish state have been strengthened.

Homing in on Hungary, Lithuania, and the former Yugoslavia, **Session V: Holocaust Remembrance in Post-Communist Europe**, led by Jelena Subotić, challenged the centrality of Western Holocaust narratives. In Eastern European states, Subotić contended, insecurity about one’s identity in post-communist states has led to the equation of fascism with Communism.

Professor Ari Joskowicz led **Session VI: Knowing the Suffering of Others: Roma, Jews, and the Holocaust** to close out the Institute. While the memory of the Roma Holocaust has been filtered through frameworks designed by and for Jewish survivors, Joskowicz contended that the Roma Holocaust is experienced and remembered differently than that of the Jewish Holocaust.

Tiarra Maznick, PhD is HEFNU Assistant Director/Weinberg Postdoctoral Associate. Maznick earned her PhD from UMass Amherst. Her current project focuses on abortions in Displaced Persons camps, sterilizations in Ravensbrück concentration camp, and microhistories of Romani Holocaust victims.

Regional Institute Report

Omaha

Regional Institute Omaha

From April 3-5, 2025, HEFNU, the **University of Nebraska at Omaha**, and the **Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy**, hosted a Regional Institute in Omaha, Nebraska. Titled “**Global Approaches to the Holocaust**,” Regional Institute Omaha drew the scholar’s eye to the presumed periphery of the Holocaust.

The Regional Institute kicked off with Professor **Edward Kissi’s** (University of South Florida) keynote, **Africa and the Holocaust**. Introducing the role of the “distant observer,” Kissi demonstrated that the people of west and east African countries, once informed of cruelties against Jewish peoples at the hands of the Nazi regime, began to reassess Europe’s status as the “center of the universe... expos[ing] the contradictions of empire, Christianity, and coloniality.”

In **Session I: The Muslim World and the Holocaust**, Professor Mehnaz Afridi (Manhattan College) highlighted the rich Holocaust scholarship that exists about areas as geographically diverse as Tunisia, Morocco, Mandatory Palestine, Albania, and elsewhere. Afridi contextualized how the Holocaust became intertwined with colonial histories and thus involved other minority groups and located a need for Holocaust education in the Arab world.

Next, in **Session II: The Holocaust in East Asia: Tensions, Interactions, and Competitions**, Ran Zwigenberg (Pennsylvania State University) explored representation of the Holocaust in East Asia, especially in Japan and China. A translation of Anne Frank’s *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Zwigenberg explained, was widely read and paired with the story of Chiune Sugihara-- a Japanese diplomat who helped thousands of Jews flee Europe by issuing transit visas. Zwigenberg also detailed the practice of urn exchange, whereby Polish museums and Japanese officials signified solidarity by exchanging the ashes of victims of Nazi camps with artifacts from Hiroshima, allowing the Japanese

to avoid recognition of their own crimes and to frame themselves primarily as victims of the war.

Independent historian Dr. Rebecca Erbelding led **Session III: The Holocaust and the United States: Encouraging Nuance**, which addressed the frequently raised question: what could the United States have done? Revisiting domestic immigration policies, American military capabilities, foreign policy, and developments in foreign affairs, Erbelding complicated assumptions regarding America’s ability to end the Holocaust prior to 1945. While the United States certainly contained bastions of antisemitism, whose influence was reflected in immigration policy and quotas, the lack of US intervention resulted more from the country’s small standing army, which precluded immediate intervention.

Looking to Central America, **Session IV: Jewish Refugees in Mexico: Trajectories and Memories of Flight and Survival**, led by Professor Yael Siman (Iberoamericana University), illuminated the obstacles preventing immigration to Mexico as well as the narratives of those who were permitted refuge.

Tiarra Maznick, PhD is HEFNU Assistant Director/ Weinberg Postdoctoral Associate. Maznick earned her PhD from UMass Amherst. Her current project focuses on abortions in Displaced Persons camps, sterilizations in Ravensbrück concentration camp, and microhistories of Romani Holocaust victims.

Mark Celinscak, PhD is the Louis and Frances Blumkin Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies in the Department of History and the Executive Director of the Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He currently serves as co-chair of the Consortium of Higher Education Centers for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Studies. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of History*.

ANNUAL WINTER LECTURE

Ed Westermann delivered HEFNU's 2025 annual Winter Lecture, titled "**The Intoxication of Killing.**" The talk was well attended, attracting students, faculty, and staff from Northwestern, as well as guests from Evanston and the greater Chicago area.

Drawing on research for his book, *Drunk on Genocide* (2021), Westermann demonstrated that alcohol was ubiquitous in sites of Nazi violence. From camps to ghettos, from killing fields to transports, the SS (*Schutzstaffel*) and police consumed vast quantities of intoxicants to facilitate interpersonal violence.

While the consumption of alcohol disinhibited perpetrators, Westermann also demonstrated an interconnected panoply of purposes: social bonding, ritualization, affirmations of masculinity, incentivization, and coping. Divorcing causation and correlation, Westermann cautioned that while alcohol facilitated genocide, it was not solely to blame.

Presenting photographs, survivor accounts, and perpetrator statements, Westermann illuminated how alcohol became an inextricable aspect of social bonding and rituals that celebrated a militarized masculinity built on physical and sexual violence. The perpetrators were not, as one might assume, drowning their sorrows, rather they commemorated their violence, competing with one another and bonding over it.

Westermann reminded attendees that the genocidal murders conducted in Eastern Europe were often committed face-to-face—tasks facilitated by the disinhibition that alcohol provided.

ANNUAL THEODORE "ZEV" WEISS LECTURE

Jennifer V. Evans (Carleton University) delivered HEFNU's 2025 Annual Spring Theodore "Zev" Weiss Lecture in Holocaust Studies, titled "**Unlikely Allies: Jewish Middle-Aged Photographers and the Trans Camera,**" on May 6. The talk attracted an

interdisciplinary audience of Northwestern faculty, staff, students, and other community members.

The lecture examined the parallel lives and photographs of two photographers, Lisetta Carmi in Italy, and Madalena Schwartz in Brazil, refugees who fled the Nazis in the 1930s before later taking up photography. Carmi and Schwartz respectively photographed the Genoa and Sao Paulo trans scenes. Evans showed how the women built relationships of intimacy and trust with the trans sex workers and performers they photographed. She also encouraged the audience to contemplate how to approach photographs as a source.

Evans described Carmi and Schwartz's relationships to the trans people they photographed as a form of kinship and solidarity with people different from themselves during a time of neo fascism in Italy and dictatorship in Brazil. Connecting the photographers' work to their own persecution in Nazi Europe leads us to consider the connections between the afterlives of the Holocaust and the Sexual Revolution. Evans' scholarship contributes to the field of global Holocaust studies, which has shown how refugees from Nazism like Carmi and Schwartz shaped the places to which they moved and global Holocaust memory.

UNDERGRADUATE SYMPOSIUM

This March, the Holocaust Educational Foundation sponsored an **undergraduate symposium** featuring first-year-students enrolled in Prof. Ipek Yosmaoğlu's seminar "**What is Genocide?**" The symposium, organized by students under professorial guidance, consisted of four panels that investigated various genocides, including the Cambodian and Rohingya Genocides, as well as those committed in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Ethiopia. The panels showcased students' interests and covered a wide range of case studies, posing theoretical and critical questions that demonstrated sophisticated engagement with the topic. It was a remarkable scholarly achievement for students at the beginning of their academic careers.

The Wiener Holocaust Library is delighted to host a book talk and panel about *Auschwitz Survivor: Interdisciplinary Explorations* by Olga Lengyel on Monday, June 16, 2025 from 6:30 to 8 PM as part of its New Academic Books series. You can register to attend in person or online.

Please visit <https://wienerholocaustlibrary.org/whats-on/> for further information and booking details.

Personal and Professional News

Elizabeth Baer, Research Professor at Gustavus Adolphus College, presented a Zoom lecture to the Knitting History Forum (a British organization) on February 1, 2025. The talk was titled “Krystyna Chiger: The Girl in the Green Sweater” about a Jewish girl hidden from the Nazis in the Lvov sewers for fourteen months. Baer also gave a Zoom talk titled “German Genocide in Africa and the Third Reich: Imperialism, Race, and Sexual Violence” on April 16, 2025 for the Penn State, Harrisburg Center for Holocaust and Jewish Studies.

Laurie Baron, Professor Emeritus at San Diego State University, retired from the presidency of the Western Jewish Studies Association at its 30th annual conference held in San Diego this past March. Several of his colleagues honored him at a tribute banquet there.

Samantha Baskind, Distinguished Professor of Art History at Cleveland State University, has been elected as a fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research.

Christopher Browning’s keynote address, “Holocaust Perpetrator Studies: An Autobiographical Perspective,” for the Lessons and Legacies Conference in November 2024 was delivered on his behalf by Waitman Beorn.

Amy Carney, Associate Professor in the Department of History at Pennsylvania State University, the Behrend College, is currently finishing her time as Fulbright Senior Fellow at the International Research Center for Cultural Studies in Vienna. Her research is for her current project, “Departing Deutschland: A Profile of Two Jewish Families in Nazi Germany.”

Beverly Chalmers, Senior Advisory Board Member at the Women in the Holocaust International Study Centre (WHISC) in Israel, and Dana Solomon’s co-authored book, *Holocaust Heroines: Jewish Women Saving Jewish Children*, won a 2025 Independent Book Award - Distinguished Favorite and was a finalist for a 2025 Eric Hoffer Montaigne Medal for thought-provoking books.

Personal and Professional News

Emanuel Grec, currently a Fellow at the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah in Paris until August 2025, has been awarded an 8-month fellowship at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Mandel Center in Washington, DC. His research explores the Romanian postwar trials of perpetrators from the Odessa Massacre.

Henry Hank Greenspan, Emeritus at the University of Michigan, has been awarded an honorary doctorate in "Education and Society" at Malmö University in Sweden.

Laure Guilbert curated the exhibition "Paula Padani. Migrant dance: Hamburg, Tel Aviv, Paris" for the Musée d'art et d'histoire du judaïsme in Paris in 2024. From November 2024 to January 2025, Guilbert was a Conny Kristel Fellow (EHRI program). She carried out fieldwork in Amsterdam, Warsaw, and Prague. From May to July 2025, she will be a visiting researcher at the Chair of Eastern European History at the University of Konstanz.

Robin Judd has been promoted to the rank of Distinguished Professor to take effect in Summer 2025. In addition to presenting a paper on synagogue reconstruction in the aftermath of the Holocaust at a workshop in Athens on Jewish urban landscapes, she delivered three invited academic lectures and seven public talks concerning her book, *Between Two Worlds: Jewish War Brides After the Holocaust*.

Melissa Kravetz has been promoted to the rank of Professor of History at Longwood University (Farmville, Virginia) to take effect in the Fall semester of 2025.

Tabea Linhard will be the Joseph and Joanna Nazro Mullen Professor in Humanities at Rice University starting July 1, 2025.

Paul Morrow, Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Philosophy at University College Dublin, has received a NOMIS Fellowship from the eikones center (Center for the Theory and History of the Image) at the University of Basel, which he will begin in 2026.

Golan Moskowitz, Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at Tulane University, became the new director of the Jewish American and Holocaust Literature (JAHLit) symposium, which will meet next year in New Orleans, LA (CFP forthcoming this summer).

Alicja Podbielska has accepted the American University Jewish Studies Program's Holocaust Studies three-year postdoctoral fellowship, in association with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (2025-2028).

Alexis Pogorelskin gave a paper to the annual meeting of the Space Between Society, Culture and Society, 1914-1945, held at the Univ. of Kansas in May 2025, titled "Lindbergh and Oppenheimer: A Comparison."

Hannah Pollin-Galay, Associate Professor in the Department of Literature at Tel Aviv University, won the 2024 National Jewish Book Award in the category of Holocaust in memory of Ernest W. Michel for her book *Occupied Words: What the Holocaust Did to Yiddish*.

Personal and Professional News

Melanie Carina Schmoll was appointed Associate Fellow of the Centre for Military, Security, and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, Canada in April 2025. She works as external chief editor at leading German publishing houses for history school textbooks, online learning platforms, and encyclopedias. She spoke at “The resistance against the persecution of the Jews” conference, German Resistance Memorial Center Foundation in Berlin, Germany in March 2025.

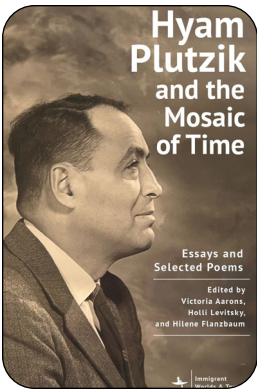
Anastasiia Simferovska, PhD candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Jewish Studies Cluster Program at Northwestern University, will be the Kurt and Thea Sonnenmark Memorial Fellow at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC starting June 1, 2025. During her two-month fellowship, Anastasiia will conduct research on her project titled, “Images Displaced and Disguised: The Holocaust Text in Eastern European Art.”

Olga Stefan will defend her doctoral thesis, “A Historical Sociological Perspective on Social Relations in Vapniarka and the Afterlives of Some Survivors,” in mid-October 2025 at University A.I. Cuza, Iași, Romania. She also presented the following at the Society for Romanian Studies International Conference in Cluj, Romania, in May 2025: Representations of the Rîbnita massacre in novel testimonies and narratives of the survivors of Rîbnita and Vapniarka; The Future of Memory transnational platform for Holocaust remembrance, www.thefutureofmemory.ro; Vapniarka: Camp of Death short video screening and discussion.

Edward B. Westermann, Regents Professor of History at Texas A&M University-San Antonio, received the Inaugural Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award in History at Texas A&M-San Antonio. He gave the USHMM 2025 Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Annual Lecture at Fort Hays State University, “Territorial Expansion in Nazi Europe and the United States,” and the HEF Annual Winter Lecture at Northwestern, “The Intoxication of Killing: Alcohol, Masculinity, and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany.” He also spoke at a USHMM panel “Racism and Religion on the Road to Extermination” at Jamestown University.

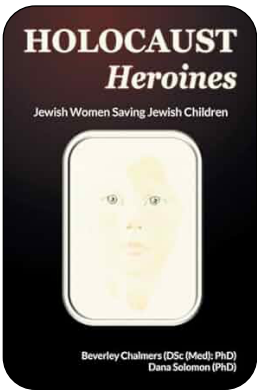
Lucas Wilson, SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Toronto Mississauga, won the Association for Jewish Studies’ Jordan Schnitzer First Book Publication Award for *At Home with the Holocaust: Postmemory, Domestic Space, and Second-Generation Holocaust Narratives*, (Rutgers University Press, 2025). Wilson and Alan L. Berger’s edited collection *Emerging Trends in Third-Generation Holocaust Literature* (Lexington) was named a 2024 CHOICE REVIEWS Outstanding Academic Title.

Lisa Fetheringill Zwicker, Professor in the History Department at Indiana University South Bend, is co-leading a study abroad program to Warsaw, Kraków, and Wrocław in May 2025 with Professor Susan Moore of Fine Arts. The interdisciplinary themes of the program are documentary photography (Moore) and Jewish history in Poland (Zwicker).



Victoria Aarons, Distinguished Professor of Literature at Trinity University, is the editor of *The Story's Not Over: Jewish Women and Embodied Selfhood in Graphic Narratives* (Wayne State University Press, May 2025). She is also co-editor of *Hyam Plutzik and the Mosaic of Time* (Academic Studies Press, June 2025).

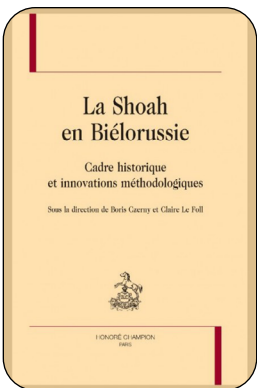
Batsheva Ben-Amos, Instructor in the Comparative Literature Department at the University of Pennsylvania and practicing clinical psychologist, published "Time and The Diary in Captivity, a Case Study: The Diary of Fela Szeps (1942-1944)," *The European Journal of Life Writing*, Volume XIV (2025) 1-24. As a literary genre, the diary chains subjective time in cages of objective time, and the two are in a constant state of collision. This article analyzes the vicissitudes in time perception and a personal modification of public spaces in a diary written by 24-year-old Fela Szeps. She kept a diary in the Grünberg forced-labor camp Silesia.



Suzanne Brown-Fleming, Senior Project Director at the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, USHMM, published "Der Kalte Krieg, das vatikanische Staatssekretariat und deutsche Kriegsverbrecher (The Cold War, the Vatican's Secretariat of State, and German War Criminals)," In *Katholismus am Eisernen Vorhang: Der Vatikan, Westdeutschland und der Kalte Krieg, 1945-1965* (*Catholicism at the Iron Curtain: The Vatican, West Germany and the Cold War, 1945-1965*), Simon Unger-Alvi, Ed. (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2025), pp. 47-76. See <https://www.aschendorff-buchverlag.de/digibib/?digidownload&tid=24979>.

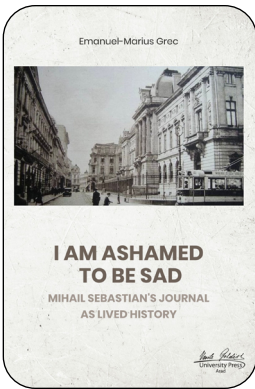
Christopher Browning, Frank Porter Graham Professor of History, Retired from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, published "Hitler's Enablers" in the *New York Review of Books* LXXI/17 (November 7, 2024), pp. 52-54, and "Trump, Antisemitism, and Academia," in the *New York Review of Books* LXXII/6 (April 16, 2025), p 42.

Beverley Chalmers, Senior Advisory Board Member at the Women in the Holocaust International Study Centre (WHISC) in Israel, and Dana Solomon co-authored *Holocaust Heroines: Jewish Women Saving Jewish Children* (Grosvenor House Publishers, 2024).

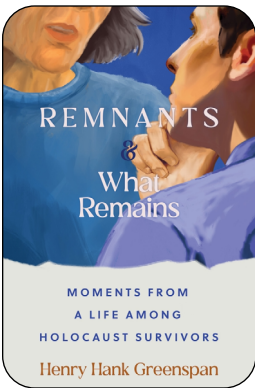


Boris Czerny, Professor at the University of Caen-France, and **Claire Le Foll**, Professor at the University of Southampton, co-edited *La Shoah en Biélorussie. Cadre historique et innovations méthodologiques* (Honoré Champion, 2025). While a few foundational studies in the West have shed new light on the extermination of populations in Belarus during the Second World War, the country has generally remained on the margins of the epistemological renewal in Holocaust studies. In Belarus, the official discourse grants very little space to non-Belarusian victims, and especially to the Jewish component of the population. The volume brings together texts by ten authors from England, Belarus, and France.

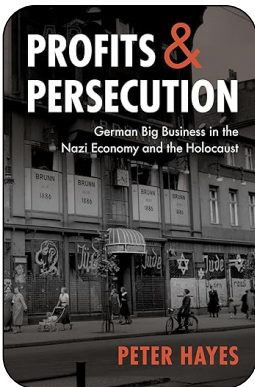
Publications



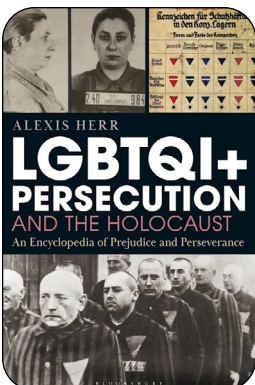
Emanuel Grec, PhD Candidate in the History Department at the University of Heidelberg and Research Fellow at the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, Paris launched his first book, *“I am Ashamed to be Sad”: Mihail Sebastian’s Journal as Lived History* (Vasile Goldis University Press, 2024), which centers on the Holocaust diary of Romanian-Jewish writer Mihail Sebastian. This work is based on Grec’s MA thesis that he defended at Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg in 2019. Northwestern University alumna Cristina Bejan contributed the volume’s preface.



Henry Hank Greenspan, Emeritus at the University of Michigan, published *REMNANTS and What Remains: Moments from a Life Among Holocaust Survivors* (Wayne State University Press, Made in Michigan Writers Series, 2025). The book includes the first publication of the full playscript of the play *REMNANTS* paired with a literary memoir (*What Remains*) about Greenspan’s fifty years of sustained collaborations with Holocaust Survivors.

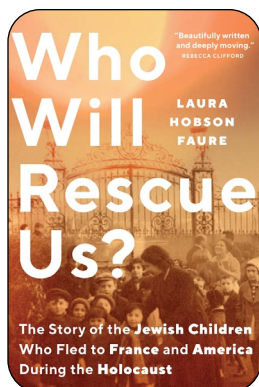


Peter Hayes, Professor of History and Holocaust Studies Emeritus at Northwestern University, published *Profits and Persecution: German Big Business in the Nazi Economy and the Holocaust* (Cambridge University Press, 2025).



Alexis Herr, Director of Education at the Cambodian Genocide Resource Center, published *LGBTQI+ Persecution during the Holocaust: An Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Perseverance*. Hitler and the Nazis’ reign of power had dire and long-lasting consequences for LGBTQI+ persons in Germany, Europe, and the world. This survey of key topics and themes within the greater landscape of Holocaust and genocide studies helps identify how deep-seated prejudices against LGBTQI+ evolved into eliminationist ideology.

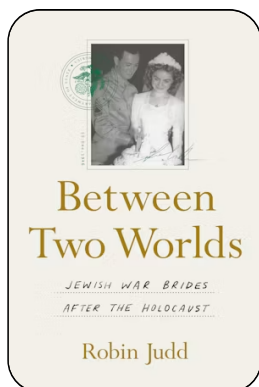
Laura Hilton, Professor and Schwartz Faculty Scholar at Muskingum University, published a chapter, “The Stateless Struggle to Belong in the Postwar Period,” in Rachel Chin and Samuel Clowes Huneke (eds.), *Reimagining Citizenship in Postwar Europe*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2025): 25-45.



Laura Hobson Faure, Professor of Modern History and Chair of Modern Jewish History at Université Paris 1-Panthéon-Sorbonne, published *Who Will Rescue Us? The Story of the Jewish Children who Fled to France and America during the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 2025) and “Jewish child refugees from Central Europe in France and the United States: transnational perspectives on their care, 1938–1945” Joanna Michlic, Yuliya von Saar, Anna Ullrich (eds.) *Childhood during War and Genocide*, European Holocaust Studies, Vol. 5, Göttingen, April 2024, p. 131-149.



Hannah Holtzschneider, Professor of Contemporary Jewish Cultural History at the University of Edinburgh, published with Peter Davies, Sheila E. Jelen, and Christoph Thonfeld *Olga Lengyel, Auschwitz Survivor: Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025). The book provides a condensed critical resource on Olga Lengyel’s testimonies, addressing matters of historical veracity, of trauma, of gender, of memory, and of genre in the transmission and reception of Holocaust testimonies over time and across cultures.



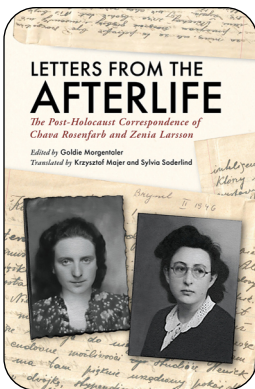
Mark Jantzen, Professor of History at Bethel College, North Newton, KS, published “Jewish Slave Labor from Stutthof Concentration Camp on Mennonite Farms in the Vistula Delta,” *Antisemitism Studies*, Volume 9, Number 1, Spring 2025, pp. 3-35, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2979/ast.00042>. This article documents Mennonite farmers’ involvement in the system of getting prisoner labor onto local farms and examines a number of examples, including two specific cases where both farmers and prisoners’ names are known.

Robin Judd, Professor in the Department of History and Director of the Hoffman Fellowship for Leaders and Leadership in History at The Ohio State University, published *Between Two Worlds: Jewish War Brides After the Holocaust* (UNC Press) as a paperback (new edition) and audiobook. *Between Two Worlds* concerns the history of Jewish Holocaust survivors who met and married Allied military personnel after the war. It received two National Jewish Book Awards.



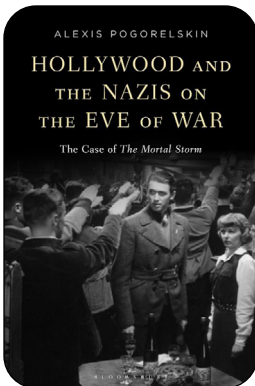
The Azrieli Foundation’s Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program launched *Between the Lines: The Diary of Margit Kassai* in March 2025 with a riveting conversation between historian Judith Szapor and literary scholar Julia Creet. Kassai’s unique voice—irreverent, sarcastic, solemn and self-deprecating—illuminates this text about a Jewish convert to Lutheranism who survives the occupation and siege of Budapest by working in children’s homes under a false identity. Introduction by scholar Gergely Kunt, who published the original 1945 Hungarian manuscript.

Harry Legg, PhD Student at the University of Edinburgh, published “‘I Hid for Days in the Basement’: Moments of ‘Jewish’ Discovery in Pre-Holocaust Germany and Austria” in the journal *Contemporary European History* (Cambridge University Press, online ahead of print: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777324000262>), November 2024. The article looks at how Germans and Austrians of Jewish descent reacted to discovering their ancestry on the eve of the Holocaust.



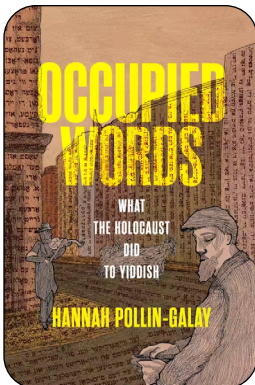
Goldie Morgentaler, Professor Emerita at the University of Lethbridge, announces the publication in early June 2025 of *Letters from the Afterlife: The Post-Holocaust Correspondence of Chava Rosenfarb and Zenia Larsson* (McGill-Queens UP). Morgentaler is the editor of these letters by two Holocaust survivors from Poland, who survived the war together only to part in Bergen-Belsen. Rosenfarb settled in Canada, Larsson in Sweden. Both became major Holocaust novelists after the war.

Alexis Pogorelskin, Retired/Independent Scholar, has published the monograph *Hollywood and the Nazis on the Eve of War: The Case of The Mortal Storm* in August 2024. It was the Oxford University Alumni Book of the Month for January 2025. Bloomsbury Press has nominated it for two Phi Beta Kappa book awards.



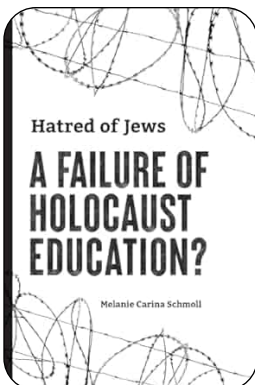
Hannah Pollin-Galay, Associate Professor in the Department of Literature at Tel Aviv University, published a new book, *Occupied Words: What the Holocaust Did to Yiddish* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2024).

Caroline M. Riley, Research Associate in the Art and Art History Department at the University of California, Davis, is the author of *Thérèse Bonney and the Power of Global Syndicated Photography* (in process, under contract with University of California Press, slated 2028). It is the first book to examine Bonney's entire career, including seven camps and four Nazi-looted art storage sites. She pioneered artistic techniques still used today to spread international modernism, especially in the decorative arts; to humanize marginalized populations; and to build political support for victims of war.



Melanie Carina Schmoll, Associate Fellow of the Centre for Military, Security and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, Canada and Research fellow at The Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, Bar Ilan University, Israel, published *Hatred of Jews. A Failure of Holocaust Education?* ISBN-13: 9783769338652. The book teaches academics and practitioners why and what to expect when teaching about the Holocaust. Content, outcome of Holocaust education, gaps in knowledge and the reasons for them are examined. The book bridges the gap between academic research and practical support.

Sara Ann Sewell, Professor of History at Virginia Wesleyan University, published "La memoria sensoriale," in *Musica per la Shoah: Concerti per il Giorno della Memoria al Conservatorio «G. Verdi di Torino»*, Erik Battaglia et al., Florence: Giuntina, 2025.



Olga Stefan, PhD Candidate at University A.I.Cuza, Iași, Romania, published "Performance and Social Organization as Antifascist Resistance in the Camp of Death," *Psihologia Sociala*, nr. 54 (II)/2024, pp. 77-87; and "Artistic Production as Resistance" in *Vapniarka, the Camp of Death, Exploring Visual Representations of the Holocaust*, eds. Ella Falldorf and Verena Krieger.



Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University

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