



Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University

FOUNDED BY THEODORE ZEV AND ALICE R. WEISS

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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Alice Weiss, Ed Westermann,
and Sarah Cushman



Winter Lecture featuring
Tiarra Maznick

Director's Letter

DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

As we approach the Holocaust Educational Foundation's 50th anniversary, which we will commemorate at this November's Lessons & Legacies Conference in Chicago, we have cause not only to look back in reflection on the development and growth of the field of Holocaust Studies and the Foundation, but also to look forward, thinking critically about our future.



Some recent discussions echo previous debates in the field. What are the purposes of Holocaust teaching and learning? How are we responsible to our students? How does Holocaust Studies connect (or not) to scholarship on other genocides and mass atrocities? Can the Holocaust inform our understanding of more recent or current events? Other discussions point in new directions. How do we navigate what some see as the failures and challenges of our field, particularly regarding the prevention of antisemitism, genocide, and authoritarianism in the US and abroad?

These are questions we will explore at Lessons & Legacies Chicago as well as Lessons & Legacies Bucharest, which will take place November 1-5, 2027. The call for papers is forthcoming. We have explored these questions also in recent programs, offering opportunities to reflect on the state of the field.

HEFNU's series on "**Holocaust Studies and Contemporary Issues**" followed two emerging developments. In January, we highlighted new research on Treblinka, which featured Jacob Flaws, Chad Gibbs, and Caroline Sturdy Colls. They will broaden their discussion to all the Operation Reinhard Camps in our next **Regional Institute**, which will take place at the College of Charleston (South Carolina), February 27-March 1, 2027. The deadline for [applications](#) is November 1, 2026. The second HSCI roundtable took place in April. Moderated by Shirli Gilbert, the

discussion about "'Race', Whiteness, and Holocaust Refugees in the Colonial World" featured Rosa de Jong, Pragma Kaul Guido, and Jochen Lingelbach.

The first half of 2026 saw several other on-campus and virtual programs. Our **Winter Lecture** by HEFNU Assistant Director/Postdoctoral Fellow Tiarra Maznick focused on an early transport of Romani women to Ravensbrück. Edward Westermann, Texas A&M professor emeritus and Theodore "Zev" and Alice Weiss Chair in Holocaust Studies at NU, gave the **Theodore Zev Weiss Annual Lecture in Holocaust Studies** titled, "*Thirst is worse than Hunger*": Dehydration, Despair, and Death in the Holocaust."

HEFNU hosted two **Virtual Speakers Bureau Highlight Events**. A March event engaged comparative approaches to Holocaust representation with conversation among Hilary Earl, Kathryn Huether, and Samantha Mitschke. A May discussion with Victoria Aarons, Jonathan Druker, Ariane Santerre, and Sue Vice explored approaches to Holocaust Literature. Tiarra Maznick moderated both discussions.

We look forward to hosting the 30th annual **Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization** in June. It brings together on Northwestern's Evanston campus 22 Fellows and 12 Faculty experts. The two-week residential seminar supports development of university-level Holocaust courses by underscoring new directions, perspectives, methodologies, and pedagogies in the field of Holocaust Studies.

Thank you for your research and teaching. We look forward to learning with and from you in the year ahead.

SARAH M. CUSHMAN PHD, DIRECTOR
AND THE HEFNU TEAM

Profile: Kerry Wallach



Kerry Wallach is Professor and Chair of German Studies and an affiliate of the Jewish Studies program at Gettysburg College. Her research centers on German-Jewish culture in the early twentieth century, investigating antisemitism and the Holocaust by positioning these subjects in an expansive linguistic, literary, and historical context. She has published two

books: *Passing Illusions* (2017), which concerns German-Jewish visibility during the Weimar Republic, and *Traces of a Jewish Artist* (2024), a biography of the illustrator and Holocaust victim Rahel Szalit. HEFNU supported the latter project via the Sharon and Earl Abramson Research Grant, which enabled Wallach to complete vital archival research.

Wallach first encountered the Holocaust as a child, reading books such as Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars* and Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic*, and taking a class in Hebrew school with Shoah survivor, Roman Frayman, recalling that "working with a survivor at such a young age had a profound impact on me." In high school, Wallach reckoned further with the genocide while an exchange student in Goslar, Germany. She realized that she was the only Jewish person in the town, though there were several plaques remembering Goslar's former Jewish population. This experience "led to a whole line of questioning about how this situation came to be." Already proficient in German, Wallach studied Hebrew in Jerusalem as an undergraduate at Wesleyan University, and her experience with both languages inspired research on the poet and German-Jewish exile Else Lasker-Schüler. Wallach developed this project under the

mentorship of Noah Isenberg, whom she credits as a "model of what it meant to be a scholar who could bring together German and Jewish perspectives."

As a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, Wallach drew further inspiration from her advisor Liliane Weissberg, with whom she studied texts by authors ranging from Hannah Arendt to Gertrud Kolmar, Walter Benjamin, and Lion Feuchtwanger. Studying these and other individuals who found success in Weimar Germany spurred a question that has animated Wallach's subsequent work: "How did Germany go from a democratic society to murdering a relatively integrated subset of its population? My intervention is driving Holocaust Studies backwards, before 1933." As Wallach readily observes, this is an expansive view of the genocide, "but it helps us understand the role of antisemitism in motivating the Holocaust and shifts our attention to the lives of Europe's Jews rather than just their deaths." To answer this question, Wallach expanded her language skills by studying Yiddish at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, providing access to literature that continues to inform her scholarship. She also cites the influence of scholars such as Ben Nathans, with whom she studied Jewish history, and Alan Rosen and Stephan Braese, who mentored her during their time as fellows at Penn's Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.

Wallach's graduate research became the basis of her first book, *Passing Illusions*, which explores how Jews concealed and revealed their identity in the Weimar Republic. Theoretically, Wallach draws upon the concept of "passing" from Black Studies and LGBTQ+ Studies to explore how individual Jews navigated an environment of increasing social liberties and rising antisemitism,

Kerry Wallach

Continued

doing so across both traditional historical sources and examples from literature and film. For Wallach, passing “opens up productive lines of thought within Jewish Studies” by drawing on a broader disciplinary framework to conceptualize Jews who embraced or eschewed their identity. Conversely, Wallach sees this theoretical link as a two-way street, observing that her work brings Jewish perspectives to those who study passing in other contexts.

In her second book, *Traces of a Jewish Artist*, Wallach tells the story of Rahel Szalit, a successful Jewish illustrator and painter in the Weimar Republic and interwar France who was murdered at Auschwitz in 1942. Wallach continues her work on Jewish identity and antisemitism in this book while embracing an immense archival challenge: “Because Szalit was murdered in the Holocaust, most of the material I wanted to work with simply did not exist.” With support from HEFNU’s Abramson Research Grant, Wallach dedicated herself to the project during the 2020–21 academic year, adapting her plans amid the COVID-19 pandemic by hiring remote research assistants who could visit European and Israeli archives. Many archives also generously shared material by email during this time. “There was much to be found once I started digging,” Wallach observes, but some archival gaps also proved unavoidable. To address these, she inserted marked-off sections of narrative fiction into the book—distilling generalized research to imagine Szalit’s personal experiences. For Wallach, this innovative methodology was essential to bring the story of a lesser-known Holocaust victim to life: “In this book, fiction was my way of telling the story of those who do not leave behind materials.” Since its appearance in 2024, *Traces of a Jewish Artist* has set off a new wave

of interest in Szalit, and Wallach continues to receive inquiries regarding rediscovered works.

Wallach has regularly taught the Holocaust, offering courses such as “The Holocaust through Film,” and positioning the genocide in a broader context in her class “European Jews: History, Holocaust, Future.” Of this latter course, Wallach observes that classes dedicated to the Holocaust often fill quickly, but students are less likely to take coursework focused on European Jewish culture. In contrast, this course brings her research to the classroom by sharing both the lives and deaths of Europe’s Jews with students. Wallach has also supported the field by serving on the Academic Advisory Board of the Leo Baeck Institute New York, and she is currently on the editorial board of the German Jewish Cultures book series, published by Indiana University Press and supported by the Leo Baeck Institute London. When looking to the future of the field, Wallach points to the archival lacunae she encountered around Szalit’s life, a challenge shared by many scholars of the Holocaust. For her, methodological innovation—such as fictional scenes in *Traces of a Jewish Artist*—is one solution: “Challenging the boundaries of genre is an important path forward. To answer questions that we have not been able to answer, we have to think outside the box.”

Andrew Barrett is HEFNU Graduate Assistant for the 2025–26 academic year. He will receive his PhD in musicology at Northwestern in June 2026. His research investigates Cold War Modernism via cultural diplomacy exchanges between the United States and Spain.

Profile: James Waller



James Waller is the Christopher J. Dodd Chair in Human Rights Practice and Acting Director of the Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute at the University of Connecticut. His research investigates mass atrocity through the lens of social psychology, focusing on how ordinary people come to perpetrate extreme violence. Committed to genocide education inside

and outside of the academy, Waller has developed university coursework and programs on the Holocaust and shaped public policy on genocide prevention through outreach to elected officials and civil servants. He was a fellow at HEFNU's inaugural Summer Institute in 1996, an experience he identifies as a "transformative" moment in his development as a scholar and teacher of the Holocaust.

Although Waller has distinguished himself as a prominent voice in Holocaust and genocide studies, he began his career outside the field, publishing two books in the 1990s on race relations in America and contributing to public educational programs on the issue. Waller centered his early scholarship on "intergroup misrelations," and during a year abroad teaching in Germany from 1989–90, he uncovered new applications of this concept. After the Berlin Wall fell, he taught many students from the former Communist Bloc who began to question their education on the Holocaust. Their inquiries led Waller to study the genocide by visiting museums and memorials, prompting a realization that the Holocaust was "an extreme form of the human misrelations I studied." In turn, Waller recounts that "I recognized that one of the places I could contribute was by studying perpetrator behavior, which was

in my wheelhouse as a social psychologist. I was equipped to answer questions such as 'How do ordinary people come to commit extraordinary evil?' and 'How do perpetrators obey authority to such an extent?'"

Waller first pursued these questions as a teacher, returning home to Whitworth University and developing a course titled "The Social Psychology of the Holocaust." He also sought out conferences on the genocide, which soon brought him into contact with HEF and its founder Zev Weiss. At Lessons and Legacies III in 1994, Weiss offered Waller "whatever you need" to support his new course. "A lot of times people say that and don't follow through," remembers Waller, "but Zev was different. He called me a few weeks later to ask what he could do to help." In time, the Foundation provided funds and resources. Two years later, Waller joined HEF's first Summer Institute, recalling that he took "copious notes" as he furthered his knowledge of the Holocaust. "What I appreciated about the Institute is that the organizers did a great job of making it multidisciplinary," says Waller, noting that this approach supplied vital historical and literary perspectives that informed his research in social psychology.

These experiences paved the way for Waller's first book on genocide, *Becoming Evil* (2002; expanded second edition in 2007), which explored the mindsets and experiences of perpetrators of the Holocaust and other genocides. Waller drew on social psychology to highlight processes that create killers, avoiding clichéd explanations of extreme violence by instead emphasizing evolutionary factors in human nature and the psychological constructions perpetrators develop of their victims. He followed this with *Confronting Evil* (2016), a project born of a talk in Sarajevo where an audience member asked what his research

James Waller

Continued

meant for the prevention of genocide. “This was a clarifying moment for me as a professional. I realized that my academic work needed to have preventive implications in the present moment.” Waller expanded his focus on process in *Confronting Evil* by considering examples of genocide in comparative perspective and providing prevention strategies targeted at three stages of mass atrocity: upstream, midstream, and downstream. Through this approach, Waller envisioned the book as not merely an academic work but a resource that “policymakers, lawyers, activists, and others on the frontlines can utilize.”

To further this goal, Waller has led trainings on genocide prevention with organizations ranging from the Federal Bureau of Investigation to the United Nations Office on Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect. As in his research, Waller emphasizes the process of genocide when teaching in these contexts: “We cannot understand any genocide from its end state. At concentration camps, it’s hard to get your mind around how this could have stopped, but if you go back to early Nazi legislation, you recognize that there were a lot of warning signs, and, if we had the will to do so, we could have pushed this in another direction. Process opens up our understanding for what prevention really looks like.” Likewise, Waller has made significant contributions to university coursework on the Holocaust, helping establish the nation’s first major in Holocaust and Genocide Studies during his

time at Keene State College from 2010 to 2023. In his current position at the University of Connecticut, Waller directs the annual Scheidt Family Seminar on Genocide Studies and Prevention, and he is currently developing programming around the center’s extensive archival records from Nuremberg prosecutor Thomas J. Dodd.

Waller observes that the field of Holocaust and genocide studies faces fundamental questions, particularly in the relationship of the Holocaust to other cases of genocide. Still, he sees progress in efforts to add greater historical depth to the Holocaust by “understanding it in the context of other genocides that came before and after.” Waller is hopeful that new technologies and phenomena such as open-source intelligence will help prevent genocide by raising awareness—stopping the very processes he has dedicated his career to studying: “In today’s world we can no longer hide behind the notion of ‘I just didn’t know it was happening.’”

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Featured Report: Émilien Tortel



My journey as a scholar of the Holocaust took on another dimension in 2022, when I began working as a research assistant for Professor Yolande Cohen, a specialist in Moroccan Jewish migration. Through her guidance, I discovered the rich and captivating French archives on the emigration of Moroccan Jews after the Holocaust. Shortly

thereafter, I decided to leave Switzerland to pursue a PhD under her supervision at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). Under her mentorship, I became part of a broader scholarly community by teaching, publishing, and presenting my research.

My dissertation, which I plan to defend next fall, is titled “*We Are Leaving for Palestine*”: *Moroccan Jewish Lives in Transit across French Colonial and Metropolitan Spaces (1947–1956)*. It examines the transit experiences of Moroccan Jews moving through French colonial and metropolitan territories in the aftermath of the Holocaust and before reaching Palestine/Israel. My work expands the spatial and temporal boundaries of Holocaust studies by examining the genocide’s long-term consequences within imperial contexts to address a larger question: What connections can be traced between the Holocaust and the departure of nearly the entire Moroccan Jewish community only a few years later?

Over the past three years, HEFNU has been a major source of support for my research in terms of conferences, fellowship training, and research funding. My first major engagement with HEFNU was the 2023 Lessons & Legacies Conference in Prague, where I co-presented with Yolande Cohen, “A Post-Holocaust Story: From Morocco to Israel, the Transit of Moroccan

Jews in France.” For a full week, I exchanged ideas with leading historians and emerging scholars in Holocaust studies. As this was my first international conference in the field, I arrived without an established network and initially felt intimidated. Yet the intellectual and personal generosity of the community profoundly strengthened my confidence.

A second pivotal experience was participating in the HEFNU Summer Institute on Holocaust and Jewish Civilization in Evanston in 2024. Those two weeks of seminars were deeply meaningful. Engaging with intellectually and emotionally challenging subjects alongside fellow doctoral students fostered a strong sense of solidarity and belonging. The Institute enriched my pedagogical approach, and I incorporated many of the materials and methodological insights into my teaching on modern French history. Finally, HEFNU’s Sharon and Earl Abramson Research Grant played a decisive role in the completion of my dissertation. The funding enabled me to conduct additional archival research in Paris, allowing me to finalize my corpus for the crucial years 1955–1956. HEFNU has not only supported my research financially and intellectually, but it has also provided me with a scholarly home.

Émilien Tortel is a PhD candidate in history at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and an FRQSC fellow. He is also a lecturer in contemporary French history. His research interests focus on modern French colonial history in relation to migration and the Holocaust. He has published three peer-reviewed articles: one on European refugees fleeing to Morocco during the Holocaust, one on Marseille as a transit hub during the Second World War, and one co-authored with Yolande Cohen on the departure of Moroccan Jews in the early 1950s. His work has been supported by HEFNU, the USHMM, the CASIP-COJASOR Foundation, and SSHRC.

Featured Report: Madeline Vadkerty



I received my doctorate in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from Gratz College in January 2025. My dissertation focused on petitions from “ordinary people” – Jews and gentiles – to Slovak president Jozef Tiso between 1939 and 1944 about the “Jewish question.” The dissertation examined the petitions as real time testimony to the prevailing

ideologies, propaganda, and legislation that doomed Slovakia’s Jewish population, culminating in the deportation of nearly 58,000 Jews from Slovakia in 1942. Jewish petition files are fascinating because they combine Jewish and non-Jewish voices thanks to the way that the government processed them and solicited input from the majority society. Most of my research was conducted in the Slovak National Archive and regional repositories.

When my dissertation was complete, I accepted requests to teach university courses in Slovakia, and received two HEFNU grants: a teaching grant for my course at the Bratislava International School of the Liberal Arts, and a Sharon and Earl Abramson Research Grant to study the role of religion in the Slovak state in the Holocaust. This subject is of special interest in Slovakia because Tiso was a Roman Catholic priest. Many priests held government offices, and the regime claimed that its antisemitic persecution was aligned with Christian teachings. The Abramson Research Grant funded travel to state and religious archives in Nitra and Prešov, where I located previously unstudied source documents evidencing how Jewish organizations petitioned local governments for leniency from persecution, and how Lutheran and Greek Catholic bishops guided priests and pastors on official religious stances about Jewish matters.

Having both grants enabled me to bring the research directly into the classroom. Perhaps the most surprising elements of using this material was that students initially tended to view Jews as a group that passively went to their deaths. In contrast, the documentation I shared demonstrates that Jews resisted their persecution. In addition, my teaching deconstructed the propensity to equate Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Greek Catholic denominations. The documents we examined demonstrate that these bodies differed in their approaches to Jewish matters. I am gratified that my students have gained an appreciation for the complexity of religious issues in the Holocaust.

In 2024, I had the opportunity to address the Lessons and Legacies Conference in Los Angeles, where I discussed the petitions to Jozef Tiso. The conference enabled me to inform participants about the value of studying entreaties, as well as network with others studying petitioning practices. I also contributed to the chapter on Slovakia in Volume III of the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945: Camps and Ghettos under European Regimes Aligned with Nazi Germany* and have written numerous articles about the Holocaust in Slovakia.

Madeline Vadkerty is from the United States and lives in Bratislava, Slovakia. She received her PhD from Gratz College in its Holocaust and Genocide Studies program. Purdue University Press will publish her upcoming book, *Writing for their Lives: Petitions to Slovak President Jozef Tiso during the Holocaust*, in February 2027. She is also the author of *Your Honor Mr. President, Letters to Jozef Tiso*, published in Slovak in 2020. The book received awards from the Independent Slovak Writers Association and the Panta Rhei Literary Academy. Her other research interests include religion and the Holocaust in Slovakia and the post-deportation auctions of Jewish household items.

Regional Institute: Los Angeles

HEFNU Regional Institute: Los Angeles, co-organized with Loyola Marymount University, took place February 28-March 2, 2026. Themed “Acts of Translation: Personal Stories in a Post-Survivor World,” this 3-day seminar explored the translation and mediation of Holocaust memory in our current age, when first-hand witnesses are decreasing in number.

The Regional Institute began with a performance from Harriet Bennish, titled “Tears, Joy and Hope: Yiddish Songs Written in the Jewish Ghetto.”



Session I, featuring Victoria Aarons and Aomar Boum, presented fellows with ways to engage with graphic narratives as a medium to represent history, memory, and trauma.

Session II platformed the insights of Michael Berenbaum and Roy Finch on the film, *Zone of Interest* (2023). Berenbaum challenged Hannah Arendt’s concept of “banality of evil,” while Finch provided a behind-the-scenes glimpse of how sound designer, Johnnie Burn, created and deployed the film’s multi-layered soundscape.

Pairing history with theater, **Session III** included a filmed adaptation of Anna Hájková and Erika Hughes’s play, “The Amazing Life of Margot Heuman.” Followed by a discussion with Sofya Levitsky-Weitz

and Tiarra Maznick, the session underscored the need to represent the experiences of openly lesbian Holocaust survivors as well as explore the expansive possibilities that theater offers.



Doris Bergen delivered the **keynote**, “I am not a museum exhibition’: Survivors, Scholars, and Our Changing Relations.” Tracing the changing relationship between survivors and historians reveals the shifting positionality of survivor-scholars, who were recognized by historians as one or the other, but rarely both, depending on gender and period.

Kathryn Huether, Todd Presner, and Svetlana Ushakova led **Sessions IV-V**, titled “Digital Futures and the Holocaust.” Centering ethics and digital technologies, the presenters focused on “big data” in audiovisual Holocaust testimonies, sonic sound in Holocaust films, and the USC Shoah Foundation’s Dimensions in Testimony

Tiarra Maznick, PhD is HEFNU Assistant Director and Postdoctoral Fellow. Maznick earned her PhD from UMass Amherst. Her current projects focus on the first Romani prisoners in Ravensbrück concentration camp, gynecological experiments, and postwar pronatalism.

HEFNU Spring Programming

HEFNU WINTER LECTURE

On February 26, 2026, Tiarra Maznick, HEFNU Assistant Director and Postdoctoral Fellow, delivered HEFNU's Annual Winter Lecture on "The Nazi Transport of 440 Romani Women and Girls from Austria's Burgenland in June 1939: A Microhistory."

Serving as the capstone for Maznick's postdoctoral research project, this lecture presented the fates, trajectories, and experiences of women in the first deportation of women in Nazi Germany. Tracing various phases of persecution, Maznick narrated the women's arrival in Ravensbrück, camp releases, lightning transfer to satellite camps, ghettoization, as well as deaths in "euthanasia" facilities, camps, and gas chambers.

From block books to exchanged identities, Maznick underscored women's agency and livingness throughout. She also demonstrated that the number of survivors from this transport is nearly triple that of previous estimates.

BOOK TALK

Presenting research from his recent book, *I Will Not Abandon You: Queer Women in Nazi Germany*, Samuel Clowes Huneke surfaced case studies of women who were punished by the Nazi Regime for engaging in homosexuality. Some women, Huneke shared during his April 22 lecture, were explicitly denounced for lesbianism, resulting in—among other measures—lengthy sentences in prisons and/or concentration camps.

Scholarly research on Nazi persecution of those engaged in homosexual behavior, while historically focused on gay men, has increasingly turned to the ways in which same-sex activity between women was punished by the state.

The Nazi regime perceived male homosexuality as a social contagion that ensnared and seduced young men. However, it assumed that women, cut off from wider social worlds dominated by men, could serve as wives

and mothers regardless of same-sex proclivities. The absence of a legal statute which targeted female homosexuality notwithstanding, women denounced for lesbianism found themselves persecuted as 'asocial,' and prone to persecution at the intersection of multiple identities that cast them as public dangers.

THEODORE ZEV WEISS ANNUAL LECTURE IN HOLOCAUST STUDIES

On May 13, 2026, Professor Edward B. Westermann, the Theodore Zev and Alice R Weiss Visiting Professor in Holocaust Studies, delivered the Annual Theodore Zev Weiss Annual Lecture, titled "*Thirst is dreadful, worse than hunger*": Dehydration, Despair, and Death in the Holocaust."

Westermann demonstrated that clean water was inaccessible to most concentration camp prisoners. Available water was often contaminated. Thus, water consumption frequently catalyzed a host of ailments that further impacted prisoners' mental and physical health—contributing to high mortality rates. Westermann drew on survivor accounts to illustrate the lived experience of thirst, especially when paired with famine, and highlighted prisoners' efforts to locate water in puddles, showers, latrines, rain, and snow. Westermann concluded with a gesture towards the long-term effects of thirst on the physiological and psychological conditions of survivors.

VIRTUAL SERIES: HOLOCAUST STUDIES AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

HEFNU hosted two online events in its Holocaust Studies and Contemporary Issues Series. On January 27, 2026, the winter roundtable, "**New Research on Treblinka: Landscapes, Evidence, and Memory**", brought together three leading scholars of the Treblinka death camp, Caroline Sturdy Colls (University of Huddersfield), Chad Gibbs (College of Charleston), and Jacob Flaws (Kean University).

HEFNU Spring Programming Continued

Sturdy Colls analyzed Treblinka as a forensic crime scene that, despite perpetrator efforts to destroy all evidence, nevertheless left traces of genocide. Gibbs presented insights from his new book, *Survival at Treblinka*, about how the accessibility of oral history archives has allowed him to identify many more survivors than the 67 previously estimated by Alexander Donat. Flaws reflected on his book, *Spaces of Treblinka*, in which he analyzed witnesses' spatial and sensorial experiences of the death camp.

The spring roundtable took place on April 14, 2026. Shirli Gilbert moderated the discussion, titled “**Race, Whiteness, and Holocaust Refugees in the Colonial World**,” in which presenters analyzed how “whiteness” shaped Holocaust refugees’ experiences of privilege and marginalization in different colonial contexts.

Rosa de Jong compared the experiences of Holocaust refugees who traveled to colonial Dutch territories – Jamaica, Suriname, and Curaçao. In the first, refugees remained in family units with few restrictions on movement. In the latter, local authorities tried – unsuccessfully – to keep refugees out. Pragma Kaul Guido analyzed the East Africa Protectorate – now Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya – where local governors restricted settlement along racial lines. Using administrative procedures, they dispossessed indigenous inhabitants, reserving fertile farmland for Europeans (“whites”). Jochen Lingelbach focused on a group of 20,000 Polish refugees, primarily Catholics from Soviet forced labor camps sent to camps in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Uganda, and South Africa. While British colonial administrators denied entry to most Jewish refugees, they admitted Polish Catholics ostensibly for their ability to fight against the Germans.

VIRTUAL SPEAKERS BUREAU HIGHLIGHTS

HEFNU also hosted two Virtual Speakers Bureau (VSB) Highlight Events. The winter highlight, “**Representing the Holocaust: A Comparative Approach**,” took place on March 4. Showcasing three experts from our VSB – Kathryn Huether (UCLA), Samantha Mitschke

(Independent Scholar), and Hilary Earl (Nipissing University) – the event looked at Holocaust representation in sound, theater, and photography.

Huether demonstrated how she engages students with *sonic practices*—music, voice, noise, silence, and soundscapes—probing acoustic mediations of Holocaust memory. Turning to theater, Mitschke challenged “Holocaust etiquette,” pushing the boundaries of Holocaust representation in staged performances of Holocaust cabaret. Earl presented pedagogical approaches to Holocaust photography, embedding questions of consent, ethics, and motives, and their context-dependent nature.

The spring VSB highlight, “**Holocaust Literatures: A Comparative Approach**,” took place on May 11. Featuring Ariane Santerre (Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf/ Université de Montréal), Sue Vice (University of Sheffield), Victoria Aarons (Trinity University), and Jonathan Druker (Illinois State University), this event examined questions of representation and authorship.

Santerre analyzed intersections between a testimonial narrative account and an autofictional account surfacing different mechanisms of the “unspeakable.” Vice, drawing on popular Holocaust Fiction, demonstrated that literary and artistic views of the Holocaust can catalyze sudden moments of insight. Druker focused on Primo Levi’s discussion of discussion of ethics, using “Shame of the Just” to demonstrate that observing harm to others is burdensome and impels “the just” to witness and to act. Aarons explored the pedagogical opportunities inherent in graphic novels, which mediate and negotiate complexities through visual and textual tropes of witnessing, memory, and testimony.

THE VIRTUAL SPEAKERS BUREAU features Holocaust scholars from an array of disciplines and from around the globe. Speakers prepare tailor-made lectures or classroom sessions in their area of expertise.

Learn more about the Virtual Speakers Bureau here:
<https://hef.northwestern.edu/virtual-speakers-bureau/>

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Phyllis Lassner and Victoria Aarons will co-edit a special issue of the journal *Feminist Modernist Studies* on the subject of Women and Exile. For more information, please contact Phyllis Lassner (phyllisl@northwestern.edu) or Victoria Aarons (vaarons@trinity.edu).

The Research Centre on Antigypsyism at Heidelberg University has launched a nine-year (2026–2034) DFG-funded digital source edition on the Nazi genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe. The project is directed by Karola Fings and co-chaired with Tanja Penter, Frank Reuter, Katja Patzel-Mattern, and Brigitte Grote (FU Berlin). For more information, see: <https://www.fsa.uni-heidelberg.de/en/research/third-party-funded-projects/edition-on-the-nazi-genocide-of-the-sinti-and-roma-in-europe>.

Paula Oppermann will give an online presentation of her new book *Thunder Cross: Fascist Antisemitism in Twentieth-Century Latvia* (Wisconsin University Press, 2025) with the Herder Institute on June 9, 2026. For more information and zoom-link: <https://www.herder-institut.de/de/aktuelles/veranstaltungen/lunch-time-book-launch-mit-paula-oppermann>

The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center's Broadening Academia Initiative is pleased to offer conference travel grants for scholars who are untenured, contingent, or working outside of academia. Applications are due June 15, 2026. Please visit <https://www.ushmm.org/research/opportunities-for-academics/broadening-academia-initiative/conference-travel-grants> or contact bai@ushmm.org for more information.

The National WWII Museum invites applications for its Faculty Seminar in WWII History to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, on January 3–9, 2027. This seminar is intended to develop the knowledge and understanding of the American experience of World War II for college and university faculty who are actively teaching. Contact taylor.lindner@nationalww2museum.org or visit <https://www.national-ww2museum.org/war/jenny-craig-institute-study-war-and-democracy/faculty-seminar-wwii-history>

The University of Victoria in Canada is accepting applications to the interdisciplinary MA stream in Holocaust Studies— the only dedicated graduate program in Holocaust Studies in Canada. They offer a range of opportunities to study abroad, a field school on Holocaust memorialization in Europe, and practicum placements at Holocaust museums and memorial sites. Contact Helga Thorson (helgat@uvic.ca) for more information. Application deadline: January 15, 2027.

Personal and Professional News

Lawrence Baron delivered the Joel Barkan Memorial Lecture at the University of Iowa on “Black Is the New Jewish in Film and Television,” April 23, 2026.

Professor **Bob Boruchowitz** taught his seminar on Law and the Holocaust and the Abuse of Executive Power in the January 2026 intersession at Seattle University School of Law.

Dr. **Rebecca L. Casey**, N.C.T.M., Associate Professor of Music, Ohio Northern University, Ada, OH, presented her research at the Ohio Music Teachers Association Fall Conference, titled “Concert Pianist in a Nazi Ghetto: The Story of Professor Bernard Kaff.” Dr. Casey is in her 31st year of teaching piano, music theory, and aural skills at ONU and has been pursuing archival research on this Czech concert pianist and pedagogue who was imprisoned in Terezín and tragically murdered at Auschwitz.

Patrick Chura is developing a new undergraduate course, “Literature of the Holocaust,” for the Fall 2026 semester at the University of Akron. His syllabus will feature two rediscovered Auschwitz-themed works by Albert Maltz (1908–1985), an American novelist who was blacklisted during the Cold War. Maltz’s story, “The Farmer’s Dog,” and his novel, *A Tale of One January*, both based on survivor testimonies, were recently reissued by Calder Publications with Chura’s assistance.

Miléna DeGuere defended her thesis, titled “Commemoration and Communication: Holocaust Memory Norms and American Presidential Rhetoric,” in December and passed with distinction, completing her master’s in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from Uppsala University.

Hank Greenspan directed and discussed his drama, “Death/Play, or the Mad Jester of the Warsaw Ghetto,” at the Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium (JAHLIT) at Tulane University in February 2026. In April 2026, he was a panelist at the “What Is Testimony For?” conference at Yale University/Fortunoff Archives. He also did a full performance of his play, *REMNANTS*, at the conference.

Laure Guilbert is continuing her research into the global exile of Central European dancers in the 1930s and 1940s (a multifaceted project), as well as dance practices in the ghettos and camps of Nazi-ruled Europe (second book). She curated the exhibition ‘Paula Padani. Migrant dance: Hamburg, Tel Aviv, Paris’ at the Musée d’art et d’histoire du judaïsme in Paris, which ran from 14 November 2024 to 14 December 2025.

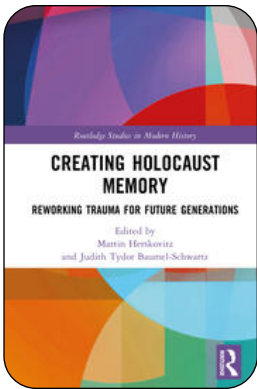
Personal and Professional News

Kathryn Agnes Huether has accepted a position as an academic researcher at UCLA's Large Language Lab, working under the direction of Dr. Todd Presner, starting in July 2026.

Paul Ribera presented "Between Inclusion and Exclusion: Memory, Migration, and Racial Discourses about the Jewish Presence in Bolivia, 1930-1965" at SECOLAS (Las Vegas, April 2026) and "Legislative and Bureaucratic Violence: Colonization, Whitening, and Belonging in Bolivia 1930-1960" at HEFNU's Lessons and Legacies of the Holocaust (Clark University, November 2025). Feedback reaffirmed his approach to accessible, interdisciplinary research and teaching.

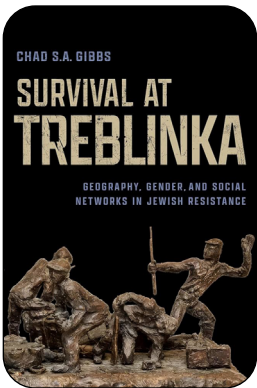
Dr. **Melanie Carina Schmoll** was appointed to the position of adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Calgary, effective January 1, 2026. Dr. Schmoll will give the following talks in 2026: January: IHRD, MacEwan University, "The Future of Holocaust Education"; May: German Studies Canada Annual Conference "Mandatory Holocaust Education: What Can Canada Learn from Germany?"; July: Lines That Cross, "The Memory of Flight: Holocaust Education and the Struggle over European Values," Gießen, Germany.

Joseph Kaplan Weinger accepted a position as an Academy Scholar (Postdoctoral Fellow) at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies at Harvard University, beginning Fall 2026.



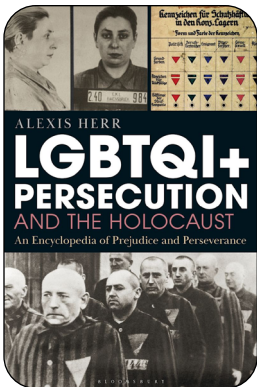
The Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research announces the publication of Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwartz and Martin Herskovitz (eds.), *Creating Holocaust Memory: Reworking Trauma for Future Generations* (London: Routledge, 2026). The first section of the book addresses how various disciplines and groups have dealt with the topic of the Holocaust over an 80-year period, and the second section describes the “Creating Holocaust Memory” initiative and its expression by various participating groups.

Survival at Treblinka: Geography, Gender, and Social Networks in Jewish Resistance by **Chad S.A. Gibbs** is now out in the George L. Mosse Series with the University of Wisconsin Press (2026). Gibbs reassesses the August 2, 1943, Treblinka revolt as well as wider Jewish resistance in Treblinka. Pivotal to the book’s analysis is an all-new assessment of the lives of women prisoners, their role in the revolt, and why we have long known so little about their lives and actions inside Treblinka.

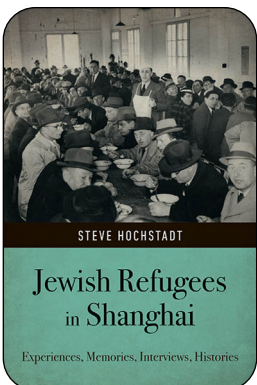


Laure Guilbert recently published the following: “Paula Padani, une danse sur le fil de la vie. Hamburg, Tel-Aviv, Paris,” in *Archives juives: Revue d’histoire des Juifs de France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2026); “Le monde selon Leni Riefenstahl: Olympia ou le trouble dans le regard,” in *Concourir!? Histoire et dynamique des concours de danse*, edited by Laetitia Basselier (Paris: Centre National de la Danse, 2025).

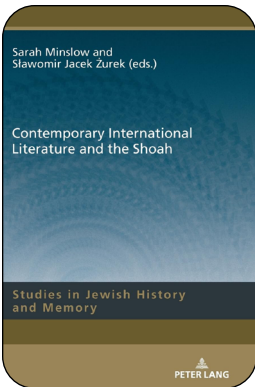
Alexis Herr, Director, Cambodian Genocide Resource Center, published *LGBTQI+ Persecution and the Holocaust: An Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Perseverance* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2025). The book chronicles LGBTQI+ experiences of the Holocaust as perpetrators, bystanders, collaborators, victims, resisters, and more. This work is a key resource for students looking to understand queer lives in Europe before, during, and after genocide.



Steve Hochstadt’s most recent book about refugees from the Nazis in Shanghai has been published by Berghahn Books: *Jewish Refugees in Shanghai: Experiences, Memories, Interviews, Histories*. Hochstadt studies the 20,000 refugees from the Nazis, powerless in multicultural Shanghai, struggling to preserve their own culture and endure Japanese occupation, his grandparents among them, before dispersing globally after 1945. He weaves dozens of interviews and hundreds of sources into studies of this history and its scholarly practices.



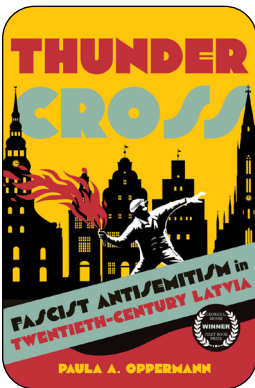
Kathryn Agnes Huether, postdoctoral research associate in antisemitism studies-UCLA Initiative to Study Hate and the Leve Center for Jewish Studies, published the article “Pre-Mediation and the Crisis of Experiential Memorialization: Listening to the Nova Exhibition” in *Yuval*, and guest edited a series on “Hate and Non-Human Listening” for *Sounding Out!*.



Phyllis Lassner recently published the following: “Elegy for a Mythic Warland: Hyam Plutzik’s wartime Poems and Letters from England,” in *Hyam Plutzik and the Mosaic of Time*, Aarons, Levitsky, and Flanzbaum, eds. (Academic Studies Press, 2025); “French Holocaust Film and Jewish Art Collectors,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Judaism and Film*, Olga Gershenson, ed.; “Creating Holocaust Memory as an Intergenerational Hybrid Literature,” in *Creating Holocaust Memory*, Martin Herskovitz and Judith Baumel Schwartz, eds. (Routledge, 2026).

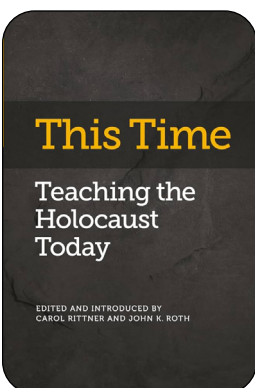
Johanna Lehr has published, in French, the first study on the risks faced by non-Jews who helped Jews in occupied France: *The Repression of Aid to Jews in Occupied France* (2025). In September 2026, she will publish the first study on Jewish women deported from France on Convoy 58 who were selected for Block 10 at Auschwitz to undergo pseudo-medical experiments: *Auschwitz: A Women’s History. With the 55 French Women of Block 10* (Gallimard, 2026)

Tiarra Maznick, Assistant Director and Postdoctoral Fellow at HEFNU, published “Revisiting the Sterilizations at Ravensbrück Concentration Camp: A Victim-Based History” with *Eastern European Holocaust Studies* (2025): 247-286.



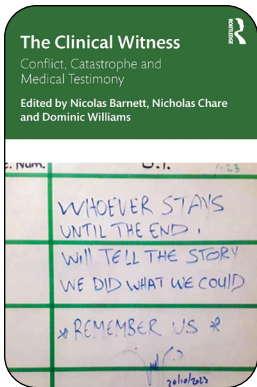
Sarah Minslow and **Sławomir Jacek Żurek** published *Contemporary International Literature and the Shoah*. This collection, stemming from a discipline-leading international project, explores the growth and change of Holocaust literature in Dutch, Polish, Russian, Hebrew, German, British, and American literatures and in a range of genres, for adults, young adults, and children.

Paula Oppermann, published *Thunder Cross: Fascist Antisemitism in Twentieth-Century Latvia* (Wisconsin University Press, 2025). *Thunder Cross* is the most comprehensive study to date in English of Latvia’s fascist movement, and the only work that investigates the often-neglected continuities of fascist antisemitism from the 1920s to after World War II. Formulated as an empirical case study, this book draws on international and interdisciplinary secondary literature and sources in seven languages.



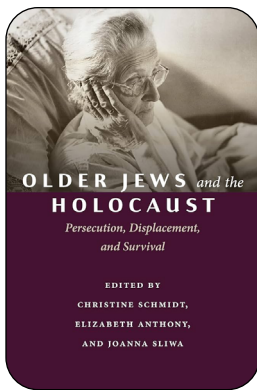
Suzan Meryem Rosita, Faculty of History (University of Oxford), has published a personal essay in *History Workshop Journal* exploring how historians might write about violence in non-violent ways. Titled “Genocide is a Verb,” the piece reflects on how violence unfolds in the present tense—through language, through silence, and through the textures of the ordinary. Read it here: <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/practice-history/genocide-is-a-verb/>.

John K. Roth, Edward J. Sexton Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College, published two books this spring. *This Time: Teaching the Holocaust Today* (edited with Carol Rittner and published by iPub Cloud International) features chapters by leading teacher-scholars, including Omer Bartov and Michael Berenbaum. *With the Holocaust in View, Saving the American Dream* (Cascade Books/Wipf and Stock) defends American democracy and the rule of law against Trump 2.0.



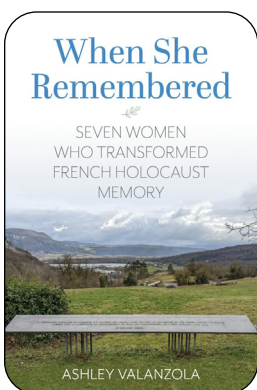
Barbara Rylko-Bauer, Adjunct Associate Professor, Michigan State University, published a book chapter: “Bearing Witness to Inhumanity: Testimonies of Women Prisoner-Doctors Who Survived Nazi Camps,” in *The Clinical Witness: Conflict, Catastrophe and Medical Testimony* (Routledge, 2026). The volume includes several other chapters concerning the Holocaust (by Nathalie Heinich, Dominic Williams, and Monika Rice) as well as an interview with Robert Jay Lifton.

Christine Schmidt, Elizabeth Anthony, and Joanna Sliwa edited the volume *Older Jews and the Holocaust: Persecution, Displacement, and Survival* (Wayne State University Press, 2026). Released in March 2026, this book includes 14 chapters (by 16 scholars) focused on the lives of older Jews before, during, and after the Holocaust. The book and its individual chapters are available open access at: <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/138586>.



Dr. Melanie Carina Schmoll, CMSS, published the following: “Between Frontlines and Memory” in *Contingent Magazine* <https://contingentmagazine.org/2026/03/26/a-post-card-from-canadas-military-museums/>; “Hitlerism and the Limits of Biography,” *Intersections*, No 8, Issue 3; “Zeitenwende in Germany—a new realistic world view and its implications,” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, University of Calgary, <https://jmss.org/article/view/82905>. She also published several teaching units, teachers’ information resources, and encyclopedia articles.

Sara Ann Sewell published “Emotional Dissimulation in the Holocaust: The Affective Lives of Jewish Adolescent Girls and Young Women” in *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History* (February 2026), available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17504902.2026.2628425>; and “Screams of Fear in Holocaust Soundscapes,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, special issue “Emotions and Holocaust Studies,” November 2025, available online: <https://academic.oup.com/hgs/advance-article/doi/10.1093/hgs/dcaf047/8346076>.



In June, **Ashley Valanzola**, Assistant Professor of History at Middle Tennessee State University, published her first book titled *When She Remembered: Seven Women Who Transformed French Holocaust Memory* (<https://iupress.org/9780253075826/when-she-remembered/>) with Indiana University Press. *When She Remembered* showcases an intertwined group of seven influential women, from well-known figures such as Simone Veil to memory activist Sabine Zlatin, who shaped the production of Holocaust memory in France from 1945 to the present.

Anika Walke published “Bodies in the Ground: Holocaust Mass Graves in Eastern Europe as Jewish Presence” in *POLIN* Vol. 38, special issue: “Gender and Body in East European Jewish History” (2026): 328-350.

Have you published a book, edited volume, article, or dissertation with the support of HEFNU’s Sharon and Earl Abramson Research Grant? Email us at hef@northwestern.edu to be featured on our [publication page](#)!



Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University

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Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University

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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.

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