



Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University

FOUNDED BY THEODORE ZEV AND ALICE R. WEISS

WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER

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Director's Letter

DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

A new year brings opportunity to reflect on recent months and envision those ahead. I take this opportunity to do the same for the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University, which remains proud to support those who research and teach about the Holocaust.



During Summer 2024, HEFNU hosted the 28th annual Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization. We welcomed 19 Fellows to the Northwestern University campus for two weeks of intense learning. The Summer Institute supports university-level instructors in teaching their students about the rich history of Jews before the Holocaust and enriching participants' understanding of new directions in the field of Holocaust Studies, including broadening explorations of gender, the global impact of the Holocaust, and global memory cultures. This coming summer, we will also include discussion of musical representations and Romani memory practices. We include methods and perspectives from all Holocaust Studies disciplines and welcome applications from advanced doctoral students in the field and from all who may teach a college-level/adult-learning Holocaust course. You will find application information here:

<https://hef.northwestern.edu/institutes/northwestern/application-information.html>

The deadline for applications is **Sunday, March 2**.

In early October, we welcomed Wolf Gruner to campus. He gave HEFNU's annual fall lecture, co-sponsored with NU's Chabraja Center for Historical Studies. Gruner spoke about Jewish resisters in Nazi Germany, the topic of his most recent book, *Resisters: How Ordinary Jews Fought Persecution in Hitler's Germany*. There was terrific turnout for his lecture, which inspired lively discussion among students, faculty, and members of the Evanston public.

Also in October, we were delighted to launch the 15th volume of *Lessons & Legacies*, a publication that emanates from the *Lessons & Legacies Conference*. *The Holocaust: Global Perspectives, National Narratives, Local Contexts* is available from [Northwestern University Press](#). Edited by Erin McGlothlin and Avinoam Patt, this volume focuses on the global impact of the Holocaust. The launch featured presentations by Jonathan Druker, Anna Duensing, and Natalie Eppelsheimer.

We hosted the 17th biennial *Lessons & Legacies Conference* from November 14-17. Titled "Languages of the Holocaust," the conference took place in Southern California in cooperation with Claremont McKenna College and the University of Southern California. HEFNU appreciates the excellent program created by the conference committee, co-chairs Jennifer Geddes and Sven-Erik Rose, co-hosts Wolf Gruner and Wendy Lower, and seminar and workshop coordinator Anna Veprinska. We are also indebted to Eva Seligman, Martha Stroud, and Kirsti Zitar, without whom the conference could not have happened.

Lessons & Legacies brought together 220 scholars from an array of disciplines, whose intellectual engagement made this one of the best conferences to date. HEFNU appreciated two excellent keynote lectures from Sara Horowitz and Christopher Browning and was delighted to recognize Debórah Dwork, Barbara Engelking, Henry Hank Greenspan, and Berel Lang with the Distinguished Achievement Award.

We are excited to announce that *Lessons & Legacies 2026*, marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Holocaust Educational Foundation, will be hosted by Northwestern University and will take place in Chicago. The conference committee co-chairs will be Benjamin Frommer and Sandra Alfers. The co-hosts are Brad

Director's Letter

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Prager and Alice Weinreb. Laurie Marhoefer will serve as seminar and workshop coordinator. We will issue the call for papers in the coming year. In November 2025, we also look forward to hosting the inaugural Emerging Scholars Conference at Clark University, in cooperation with the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

In the months ahead, HEFNU will sponsor two Regional Institutes. The first, "Holocaust Memory in the 21st Century," will take place from February 26-28 in Atlanta in cooperation with Alicja Podbielska at Emory University. Mark Celinscak and the University of Nebraska, Omaha will host the second, "Global Approaches to the Holocaust," from April 3-5.

February will also bring us HEFNU's second annual Winter lecture. This year's lecture features Edward P. Westermann, who will visit the NU campus on February 20 to speak about "The Intoxication of Killing: Alcohol, Masculinity, and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany." Please join us if you are in the Chicago area.

This spring, our Theodore Zev Weiss Annual Lecture in Holocaust Studies will feature Jennifer Evans. We will publish information about date, time, location, and lecture title in the coming weeks.

HEFNU is proud to support Holocaust scholarship and teaching. We recently closed applications for teaching grants. Next year's competition will open in October 2025. We are currently accepting applications for Sharon Abramson Research Grants. We award six \$4,000 grants to support Holocaust-related research projects. You can find more information here:

<https://hef.northwestern.edu/grants/sharon-abramason-research-grant/>.

The deadline for proposals is **Tuesday, February 4**.

HEFNU continues its work to advance Holocaust research and education. We welcome your support of our work and ask you to consider a start-of-year [financial contribution](#). We thank each of you for your ongoing work and interest in the field. And we look forward to learning with and from you in the year ahead.

SARAH M. CUSHMAN PHD, DIRECTOR
AND THE HEFNU TEAM

Profile: Yael Siman



Yael Siman is Associate Professor of Social and Political Sciences at Iberoamericana University in Mexico City. Her research focuses on Jewish refuge in Latin America and Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Mexico. The experiences and perspectives of victims and survivors play an important role in her research and teaching. Siman has participated in numerous HEFNU programs,

including teaching sessions on the global south and Latin America at the Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization in 2023 and 2024.

Siman's interest in the Holocaust dates to her early life. In high school, she decided to do a project on Holocaust survivors in Mexico for a Jewish studies class. She met with Holocaust survivors in their homes. As a Political Science PhD student at the University of Chicago, Siman wrote a qualifying paper on the 1990s debate between Daniel Goldhagen and Christopher Browning and published a review of their books in the academic journal *Historia y Grafía*. During graduate school, she attended the Summer Institute for the first time. In 2014, with the help of then HEFNU Director Benjamin Frommer, she listened to USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive testimonies of Holocaust survivors who had found a new home in Mexico. This opportunity was especially significant for Siman because the testimonies were not accessible in Mexico. "I was so grateful I could sit there and listen for the first time, and I think I was one of the first ones to listen to this collection of testimonies of survivors who came to Mexico."

The testimonies drew Siman to the study of Jewish refugees who escaped Nazi Europe and migrated to Mexico as well as Holocaust survivors who came

to the country after the war. Her research interests include "not only flight, departure, and arrival but also what happened in that so-called liminal space of journeying from one continent to another." When she started her research, most scholarship focused on the immigration policies of the Mexican government. Research had shown that Mexico was willing to accept only a relatively small number of refugees and survivors compared to other Latin American countries given its capacity to receive them. "The survivors or refugees were not studied directly as the subject of their own lives." Siman wanted to focus on the survivors themselves and why they decided to migrate to a country they did not know or had not heard of before. She found that refugees came to Mexico because they belonged to left-wing political networks or had relatives living there. An article based on this research written with Daniela Gleizer appeared in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* in 2024. In 2025, Siman, Gleizer, and Emmanuel Kahan will publish an edited volume titled *The Holocaust and Latin America: Migration, Resettlement and Memory*, which Siman described as "a very meaningful product of our connection with both the Holocaust Educational Foundation and the Center for Advanced Genocide Research at the University of Southern California."

Siman brings a similar focus on survivor experiences to her teaching. In Mexico, where the Holocaust is not part of the official curriculum, she has connected pieces of Holocaust history to histories of other mass atrocities in her courses. She introduces her students to multiple perspectives, including victims' narratives and testimonies. While teaching undergraduate and graduate students specializing in international relations or the social sciences, Siman takes an interdisciplinary approach and emphasizes the importance of incorporating methods from different disciplines, including history, to understand complex phenomena.

Yael Siman

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HEFNU's programs have been a source of inspiration for Siman's teaching. In addition to participating in the Summer Institute twice as a student, she has consistently attended Lesson & Legacies since she first heard about it in 2014. "I think I haven't missed one." In Ottawa, she led a seminar with Natalie Eppelsheimer and Rachel Halverson on how to teach the Holocaust in languages other than English. Siman and the other participants learned about new sources to use in their courses. "People not only bring them in as a resource but also share with you how they use it in the classroom," she elaborated. The seminar, which took place over three days, allowed participants to get to know one another. Siman credited the seminar with creating new circuits and friendships that allow seminar participants to continue to share ideas and suggestions about teaching.

At the Summer Institute in 2023 and 2024, Siman taught two sessions: one on Holocaust refugees in the so-called global south and one on Latin America. She believes it is important to include the global south in the history of the Holocaust because most work on refugees from Nazism was initially about the US, UK, and Israel. At the same time, she problematizes the categories of the global south and the global north: because economic development defines these regions, it is possible to find "north" and "south" regions within the same country. Additionally, she added that refugees moved between the global north and south, carrying with them experiences from both regions. Finally, Siman noted that these categories can obscure similarities of refugees' experiences. "All of them encountered difficulties learning a language, finding a job, finding a school, being accepted, talking about their trauma." She will also teach at the Omaha Regional Institute on "Global Approaches to the Holocaust" in 2025.

Siman sees an opportunity for future work in Holocaust studies to continue to problematize the global south as a category as well as move beyond national histories to develop comparative research. After a recent trip to

South America, she "can see with greater precision and depth the different ways of memorializing the Holocaust in the so-called global south context." Understanding these differences would require considering the actors involved in specific memorials, political discourses, and cultural memory making processes in diverse local contexts. Another possible project would be a "more integrated history of the region that focuses on the micro level of refugees in multiple localities," which could reveal both singularities and commonalities across national contexts in Latin America.

She also recently published the book, *Victim Activists in Mexico: Social and Political Mobilization amid Extreme Violence in Mexico* (2024) about violence in Mexico and the social and political mobilization of families of the disappeared. Siman explained that she started the project after asking herself, "if I'm studying the Holocaust, how can I not look at the contemporary reality of extreme violence in my own space?" She added that the book contains connections to the Holocaust, including some victims who use the Holocaust as a metaphor to describe their experiences. "It's resonating for people. It's like the Holocaust is a reference to explain, to name, to talk about connections between different phenomena."

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: Peter Hayes



Peter Hayes is Professor of History and German and Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Professor of Holocaust Studies Emeritus at Northwestern University. Hayes taught at Northwestern for 36 years from 1980 to 2016, where he specialized in the histories of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. He also played a pivotal role in establishing the Holocaust

Educational Foundation as an influential organization in higher education.

Hayes grew up with Jewish friends and neighbors and was perplexed as he became aware of hostility toward Jews. “That was the beginning of the puzzle,” Hayes recalled. After his sister married a man who had been born in Nazi Germany, Hayes visited his new German family and became fascinated with how similarly nice people could have committed the atrocities of the Holocaust. Hayes sees “how was this possible?” as his driving question. The Holocaust “is a complicated problem to explain, but it is no more or less explicable than any other ghastly thing in human history.”

When it came time to choose a dissertation topic, Hayes decided to focus on the IG Farben Corporation, asking how the corporate world became involved and the degree to which it was complicit in the Holocaust. IG Farben built a factory near Auschwitz and employed slave labor. While there had been little work on corporations during the Holocaust, Hayes drew on sources that became available as a result of the postwar trial of members of the firm’s board of directors. He has continued to engage with such questions in his newest book, [*Profits and Persecution: German Big Business in the Nazi Economy and the Holocaust*](#) (2025), which he described as a “summary of 50 years of trying to figure this all out.”

Hayes taught Northwestern’s first course on the history of the Holocaust, which was so well-received that he taught it 25 times with enrollment sometimes reaching 325. His approach to teaching about the Holocaust reflects his approach to history: “I like questions, and I like answering them.” Faced with the challenge of teaching the history of the Holocaust in eight and a half weeks on Northwestern’s quarter system, he struggled to make the subject matter “fit” before deciding to organize the material around the questions his students most frequently posed in discussion sections. Hayes set out to answer those questions with what he described as “analytical storytelling.” “I believe people remember things best in the form of stories,” he explained. While telling stories, he modeled for students how to ground their thinking in facts and differentiate between good and bad evidence. Hayes’s teaching practices have resulted in two important teaching texts in the field: [*Why? Explaining the Holocaust*](#) (2018) and [*How Was It Possible?: A Holocaust Reader*](#) (2015). In the classroom, he also aimed to “impress upon them the seriousness of politics, the decisions they make as citizens.”

In addition to his prize-winning research and award-winning teaching, Hayes collaborated with Holocaust Educational Foundation founder Theodore Zev Weiss to establish Holocaust courses at colleges and universities around the country and develop HEF programs, including the Lessons and Legacies conferences, the Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization at Northwestern, and research fellowships. One day in the summer of 1987, Hayes remembered, Weiss “basically came to visit me in my office and said ‘why aren’t you teaching about the Holocaust?’” Hayes explained to Weiss that he would be happy to teach a course on the Holocaust but had been hired to teach other courses, including a three-quarter sequence on German history, and that someone else would have to teach one of those courses if he taught one about

Peter Hayes

Continued

the Holocaust. Weiss made a donation to the History Department, so they could hire someone to teach one of Hayes' courses, enabling Hayes to teach his Holocaust course for the first time in 1988. Weiss then approached Bob Wegs and Roger Brooks in the history and religion departments, respectively, at Notre Dame, resulting in them co-teaching a course on the Holocaust. After that, Weiss saw the possibility of spreading Holocaust courses to other schools, and Hayes smoothed the way for Weiss by introducing him to people who could help.

Weiss next came to Hayes with the idea for a conference, which would become the Lessons & Legacies series. Hayes suggested a small first conference at Northwestern. Northwestern's administration was supportive, especially Donald P. Jacobs, dean of Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, who allowed the use of the Allen Center at low cost. The first conference in 1989 included 13 or 14 scholars and an audience of local people who had previously recorded Holocaust testimonies with or donated to the Holocaust Educational Foundation. The next conference, which also took place at Northwestern, featured a large public lecture by Saul Friedländer. By the time of the second conference, interest in it had grown; there had previously been only one conference series on the Holocaust in the U.S. Hayes and Weiss planned for Lesson & Legacies to take place every two years with a different university hosting it each time.

Hayes and Weiss, aware that most people teaching the Holocaust were German historians, saw the Summer Institute as an opportunity for participants to learn about interdisciplinary topics with which they might be less familiar, such as Judaism as a religion, the history of Jews beyond the Holocaust, and Holocaust literature and film. They consulted Wegs and Brooks, and also brought Christopher Browning and Geoffrey Giles into the mix. The Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization, a two-week, intensive, residential seminar, has taken place every summer since 1996 – except for 2020. Hayes also helped develop short-term

research fellowships for graduate students and faculty. Hayes collectively described these programs—a conference where scholars present research, an institute which introduces participants to new topics, and fellowships for the next generation—as the essentials for developing a field. Noting the collaboration between Zev Weiss and Holocaust scholars, Hayes said: “Zev had the vision, but we knew how to realize it, and that’s what worked together.”

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: Danijel Matijevic



Having recently earned my PhD, I am currently transforming my dissertation into a book tentatively titled “Ustašism as Ideology, Practice, and Legacy: Mass Violence, Entwined Genocide, and Postwar Retribution in Vukovar District, Croatia, 1939-1948.” The study represents the first comprehensive attempt at

dissecting Ustaša ideology, including methods of ideological dissemination, local implementation, genocidal policy, as well as ideological dynamics of retributive violence in the postwar years. The city of Vukovar serves as a microhistorical case-study. Focusing on non-German perpetrators, in this case members of the Ustaša movement, whose racial-ethnonational ideology yielded simultaneous genocidal campaigns against three ethno-confessional groups in Ustaša Croatia—Jews, Roma, and Serbs—my dissertation proposed two concepts that cast new light on the Holocaust and its Croatian chapter. These concepts are “polycentricity of the Holocaust”—addressing the broader European character of the Holocaust, involving multiple non-German perpetrator groups such as Croatian Ustaša and Romanian Iron Guard—and the phenomenon of “entwined genocides”—implementation of multiple simultaneous genocidal campaigns that inform and affect each other.

Currently, I am preparing publications on Jewish religious conversion as an attempt at survival in Ustaša Croatia and the 1944 Ustaša mass killing action of 106 Jewish, Serb, and Roma patients of Vrapče psychiatric clinic in Zagreb. Alongside colleagues Lovro Kralj and Emil Kjerte, I am working on the project “Mapping the Holocaust in the Independent State of Croatia,” an online research and educational resource funded by the Claims Conference and Stiftung Zeitlehren. As a postdoctoral researcher with Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE), I spearheaded the initiative to

diversify the memorial infrastructure in Vukovar, where the municipal far-right government has systematically silenced references to any non-Croat victims of mass violence, most blatantly by excluding existing memorials to the Ustaša destruction of Vukovar’s vibrant Jewish community from all local memorial guides and signposts. Relatedly, during dissertation research, I located two Holocaust artifacts—siddurs hidden in the former house of Vukovar’s rabbis—and am currently in the process of composing a memory-studies piece discussing why I feel uncomfortable donating these artifacts to the City Museum of Vukovar.

It was a winding path that led me to Holocaust Studies, involving my own experience of war and ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, as well as the historical experience of my community—Croatian Serbs. The destruction of Croatian Serbs at the hands of the Nazi-allied Ustaša regime during World War II was entwined with the Ustaša destruction of Croatia’s Jews and Roma. Beside scholarly interest, therefore, my academic path has been paved with personal trauma and my community’s collective memory of the Ustaša genocide. Alongside several extended family members, my great-grandfather, Milovan Matijević, was killed in Jasenovac death camp, where the majority of Croatia’s Jews also met their end at Ustaša hands.

My connection with HEFNU began in 2019, when I presented some of my work at the Special Lessons and Legacies conference in Munich. I was also fortunate to receive generous support for my studies in the form of HEFNU’s Sharon Abramson Research Grant, which helped me access key archival resources in the process of completing my dissertation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recently, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the 2024 Summer Institute, where I was exposed to a broad spectrum of exceptional work that my colleagues brought to the table. I left the Institute inspired and with fortified connections to the HEFNU community.

Danijel Matijevic Continued

In conclusion, I want to highlight an unexpected issue I felt obliged to address at this year's Summer Institute: the Croatian government's recent systematic efforts to distort Holocaust history, particularly its silencing of the autonomy of Ustaša genocidal policies and the role of local ideological agendas in the murder of Croatia's Jews, and its outright denial of the Ustaša genocide against Serbs. The Ustaša genocide against Roma is ignored in this revisionist narrative, reflecting widespread anti-Roma bias and the marginality of Croatia's Roma community. The catalyst that brought the government's revisionism into public eye was the May 2024 resignation of Ivo Pejaković, former Director of the Jasenovac death camp Memorial Museum. Pejaković's departure was largely driven by revisionist directives regarding the museum's exhibit, starkly exemplified by the plaques placed on the site in 2023, which, perversely, were installed as part of Croatia's 2023 presidency over the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. These plaques presented a 'sanitized' version of the camp's history, omitting terms like "Holocaust," "genocide," "death camp," and "Ustaša." My time at the Institute thus became an opportunity to raise awareness about this crisis and ongoing initiatives to counter the government's actions.

Danijel Matijevic holds a doctorate in History and Jewish Studies from the University of Toronto, where he studied with Drs. Doris Bergen and Piotr Wróbel. Currently, he is Vice-Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Research in Southeast Europe at the University of Rijeka and YUFE4-MSCA postdoctoral researcher at the University of Rijeka and Maastricht University.

Featured Report: Sharon Zelnick



The Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University has helped me develop as a scholar in significant ways over the last few years. Participating in the HEFNU 2022 Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization was truly enriching. Learning from the renowned scholars at the institute such as Sarah

Cushman, Barry Trachtenberg, and Sara Horowitz left a great impact on me. Beyond the faculty, my peers at the Institute taught me a great deal about navigating the field and it was fascinating to learn about their cutting-edge research. Our cohort has been very supportive and engaged with each other over the years through our WhatsApp group and several small in-person meetings.

Holocaust remembrance lies at the heart of my dissertation, "Shoah Shadows: Israeli Migrant Literature and Media in Germany." My dissertation focuses on the photography collections, films, performances, installations, and literature of Israeli migrants in Germany whose work centers on memorializing the Shoah and sometimes also the Nakba. Some of the media projects that my dissertation explores include photography by Benyamin Reich, installations by Itamar Gov and Yael Bartana, films by Shirel Peleg, Dani Gal, and Yael Bartana, and illustrations by Shahak Shapira. Additionally, I analyze theater performances by Yael Ronen and literary works in German, English, and Hebrew, including poetry by Zahava Khalfa, Maya Kuperman and Mati Shemoelof, and prose by Hila Amit-Abas and Hila Peleg. These authors and artists are among the approximately 30,000 Israelis who migrated to Germany over the last twenty years for economic and/or political reasons, many arriving in Germany in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. Notably, the artists and authors whose work I examine belong to what has been described as the third generation—the people

Sharon Zelnick

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who are either grandchildren of Holocaust survivors or victims, as well as people who do not have direct ancestral ties but who grew up in the shadows of the Shoah.

HEFNU supported my dissertation research with a 2024 Sharon Abramson Research Grant. The funding from this grant helped me conduct research and visit archives and exhibitions essential to my dissertation in Frankfurt, Hannover, Bremen, and Venice. In Berlin and Hannover, I visited exhibitions featuring Itamar Gov's new work. I spent time at Zilberman gallery, where his work *Casper David Freidrich, Degenerated* was on display from May through July. In June, I also travelled to Venice, Italy to spend time at the Biennale since Yael Bartana was one of the artists representing Germany. Bartana's newest art project, "Light to the Nations," has been on display there since May and will be until November. In August, I visited Bartana's solo exhibition "Utopia Now," which is on display at the Weserburg Museum of Modern Art in Bremen.

The central questions that my dissertation explores are: which memory dynamics emerge when Israelis move to the country that tried to eradicate the Jewish people? In turn, how does Israeli migrant literature and art memorialize the Holocaust and how do these aesthetic projects challenge and change German, and broader European and Israeli, memory cultures and political environments? My project approaches the art, performance, and literature of these migrants as a window into understanding the impact that the shadows of the Shoah have had on them in Germany and in Israel as well as their impulse to bring these shadows into relation with the memory of other twentieth-century traumas.

My dissertation contributes to several specialized studies, including Jewish migration to Germany, Holocaust memory, and Migrant Aesthetics. It unpacks the mnemonic, ethical, political, and aesthetic significance of this migration for understanding Germany and Jewish migrant cultures today. Furthermore, it enhances

understanding of the potential for media and literature to prompt perceiving political situations anew. Beyond this study of Israeli migrants' art and literature in Germany, my project sheds novel light on the relationship between ethics, memory, and migration, and the particularities of third generation transmissions of trauma and hope.

Sharon Zelnick is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature at UCLA. She works in the fields of Holocaust studies, Jewish literature, cultural memory studies, migration literature, and visual culture. Sharon has taught seminars on these subjects at UCLA and Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. She is currently based in Berlin. Her research has been published in the *European Journal of Media Studies* and the *Journal for Literary and Intermedial Crossings*.

Lessons & Legacies 2024

The 17th biennial Lessons & Legacies Conference took place in Claremont and Los Angeles, California, from November 14-17, 2024. Organized in conjunction with the University of Southern California, this marked the conference's third occurrence at Claremont McKenna, preceded by those in 2006 and 2016.

Themed “Languages of the Holocaust,” the conference featured over 200 participants who contributed to thirty-one panels, eight workshops, and seven seminars and included scholars from universities, archives, museums, memorials, and non-profit organizations from 24 countries. Participants presented on specific languages in which people have spoken and written—during and about—the Holocaust, as well as the ways in which the Holocaust has been represented in a wide range of discourses.

The conference began with rigor; day one included warm words of welcome, followed by the Emerging Scholars Panel—showcasing the developing research of three junior scholars. Their presentations highlighted cutting-edge research on the graphic and written languages through which Holocaust survivors have documented their experiences, as well as the how the articulation of reparations has generated collaborative potential for claims-making across histories of Black and Jewish oppression.

The second day of the conference prompted participants to interrogate the role of Holocaust Studies in today's world from a multiplicity of perspectives. The day began with a special session by professor emeritus John Roth, titled “Contemporary Controversies in Holocaust Language: How Shall I teach the Holocaust *This* Time?” The Holocaust, Roth argued, cannot be divorced from contemporary debates about Palestine. Chaired by the director of the Holocaust Educational Foundation, Sarah Cushman, the midday roundtable, “Holocaust Studies in the Present Moment,” probed the state of the field.

The day concluded with a keynote from Professor Sara Horowitz from York University. Titled “The Intimate Grammar of Holocaust Memory,” Horowitz's keynote proposes that intimacy, rather than dehumanization and the inhumane, be the language by which personal encounters with violence are revisited.



Sara Horowitz

On the third day, the conference moved to USC, where one highlight was a second keynote from Professor Emeritus Christopher Browning of University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill. With “Perpetrator History: A Fifty-Five Year Personal Perspective,” Browning reflected on the development of the field and his own place within it. Because Browning was unable to attend, Waitman Beorn read his paper. Doris Bergen, Laura Brade, and Thomas Pegelow Kaplan offered critical responses to Browning's thought-provoking argument. The evening concluded with the Awards Ceremony honoring scholars in the field. The Distinguished Achievement Award was bestowed on Debórah Dwork,

Lessons & Legacies 2024 Continued

Barbara Engelking, Henry Hank Greenspan, and Berel Lang; the Retirement Award celebrated Therkel Strade and Edward Westermann; and those honored in memoriam included Yehuda Bauer, Michael Brown, Alon Confino, Jeffrey Diefendorf, Larry Langer, Uta Larkey, and Nechama Tec.

The final day began with the Junior Scholar Spotlight, in which two early career scholars and one graduate student presented diverse research thematizing antisemitic imagery in wartime Poland, the Buchenwald Kibbutz, and women survivors in the natural and medical sciences. The closing plenary prompted participants to reflect on the trajectory of the conference and imagine the future of the field.

The conference was a collaborative effort, co-sponsored by the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University, the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (die Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung), the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights, The Gould Center for Humanistic Studies, and Claremont McKenna College; the USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research Studies and USC Shoah Foundation; the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies at Northwestern University.

Tiarra Maznick, PhD is HEFNU Assistant Director/Weinberg Postdoctoral Associate. Maznick earned her PhD from UMass Amherst for her dissertation, “Jewish Women’s Wombs: the Holocaust and Postwar Pronatalism.” As a scholar of reproduction under Nazism, Maznick researches sterilization, eugenics, reproductive politics, and pronatalism, during and after the Holocaust. Maznick’s current project focuses on abortions in Displaced Persons camps, sterilizations in Ravensbrück concentration camp, and sensory-based experiences of Nazi persecution.

Announcements

The **AHRC-funded project**, *Rethinking Holocaust Literature: Contexts, Canons, Circulations*, will be launching its 2025 online public engagement program in cooperation with HEFNU, USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research, and the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Center. HEFNU roundtables include “Gendered Translations of the Holocaust” on February 13 at 12pm EST and “Postmemorial Constellations in (post)socialist Holocaust Literature” on April 3 at 12pm EST.

Patrick Henry and his wife, **Mary Anne O’Neil**, both retired Professors of French at Whitman College, have translated the memoirs of André Trocmé. They will appear in the fall of 2025 with the title: *The Memoirs of André Trocmé: The Man Who Couldn’t Help Saving Jews*. Henry was also academic advisor for the film *Resistance. They Fought Back*, which is now available for free classroom viewing.

Personal and Professional News

Victoria Aarons, Distinguished Professor of Literature in the Department of English at Trinity University, received the 2024 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award in “Jews and the Arts: Music, Performance, Visual” for her monograph *Memory Spaces: Visualizing Identity in Jewish Women’s Graphic Narratives*.

Sarah Phillips Casteel, Professor of English at Carleton University, was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Phyllis Lassner, Professor Emerita in The Crown Center for Jewish Studies, Gender Studies, and the Writing Program at Northwestern University, delivered the inaugural Winter Lecture of the Holocaust Educational Foundation in January 2024 and the keynote address at JAHLIT (Jewish American and Holocaust Literature) in October 2024.

Erin McGlothlin has been named the Gloria M. Goldstein Professor of Holocaust Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, effective August 1, 2024.

Goldie Morgentaler, Professor Emerita at the University of Lethbridge, has won a 2024 Canadian Jewish Literary Award for her translation from Yiddish to English of Chava Rosenfarb’s collection of short stories, *In the Land of the Postscript: The Complete Short Stories of Chava Rosenfarb* (White Goat Press, 2023). The stories in this collection deal with the afterlives of Holocaust survivors living in Canada. Chava Rosenfarb is best known for her epic trilogy of the Lodz Ghetto, *The Tree of Life*.

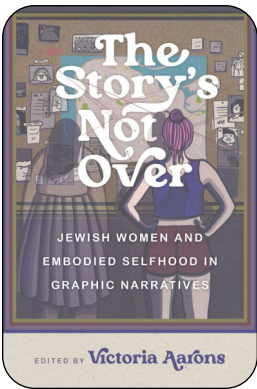
Paul Morrow, formerly of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center, took up a role as a visiting research fellow in the School of Philosophy at University College Dublin in June 2024.

Avraham Rosen was invited to join the staff of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity as the Director of Publications and Coordinator of Archives. He also led a Zoom seminar on the topic “Elie Wiesel: Life and Writings” (1st of 3 scheduled sessions) for the staff of the Florida Holocaust Museum with Prof. Carolyn Johnston in September 2024.

Melanie Carina Schmoll, editor, author, advisor, lecturer, speaker, and Research Fellow at the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research at Bar Ilan University in Israel, is external chief editor for history at the leading German publishing houses for school textbooks, and various online learning platforms and encyclopedias.

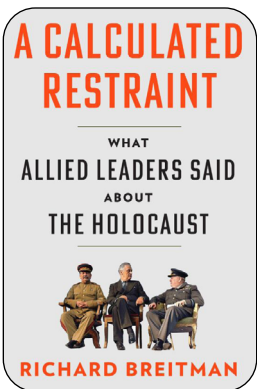
Kevin Simpson, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at John Brown University in Arkansas, received a research fellowship at the Alan Cornell US Campus Faculty Seminar 2024 at the Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies from June 17-27, 2024 in Jerusalem, Israel. He also co-created with Michal Vaněk, Director of the Museum of Jewish Culture, Bratislava, an exhibit titled “Football under the Swastika - The Story of Leopold ‘Jim’ Šťastný,” which was on display at the United Nations—Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland from October 3-11, 2024.

Annika Wienert, Research Fellow at the German Historical Institute Warsaw, has joined an interdisciplinary research team investigating Holocaust mass graves in present-day southeastern Poland. The project aims at broadening our knowledge about the “dispersed” Holocaust in the General Government, namely mass shootings conducted during Aktion Reinhardt and about local memory practices since the end of the war. For more information, see [Holocaust Mass Graves/ Masowe groby ofiar Zagłady \(YouTube\)](#)



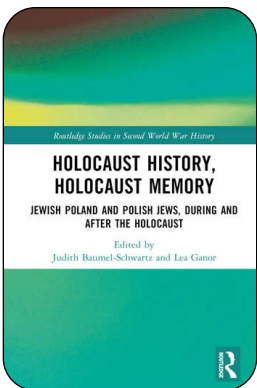
Victoria Aarons, Distinguished Professor of Literature in the Department of English at Trinity University, published “Landscapes of Memory: Visualizing Holocaust Testimony in *But I Live: Three Stories of Child Survivors of the Holocaust*.” *Jewish Film and New Media*, 11.1 (Spring 2023): 67-89. *The Story's Not Over: Jewish Women and Embodied Selfhood in Graphic Narratives* is forthcoming in 2025 with Wayne State UP. She also edited, with Holli Levitsky and Hilene Flanzbaum, *Hyam Plutzik and the Mosaic of Time*, forthcoming in 2025 with Academic Studies Press.

Lawrence Baron, Professor Emeritus in the Department of History at San Diego State University, authored “Making Holocaust Films: Michael Berenbaum’s Cinematic Career,” in *Building Bridges Among Abraham’s Children A Celebration of Michael Berenbaum*, edited by Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Marcia Sachs Littell, and Michael Bazyler (Academic Studies Press, 2024).



Richard Breitman, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at American University, will publish *A Calculated Restraint: What Allied Leaders Said About the Holocaust* (Harvard University Press) in May 2025. It sheds new light on the relationship between World War II and the Holocaust. Allied leaders’ responses cannot be reduced to a matter of character. What they said—and chose not to say—about the Holocaust reflected the political and military exigencies that drove their decision-making.

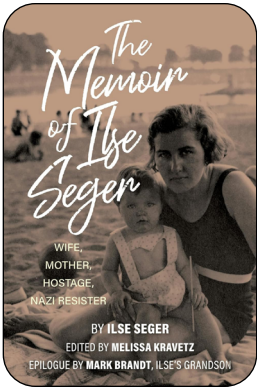
Boris Czerny, Professor at the University of Caen-France, and **Claire Le Foll**, Professor at the University of Southampton, have co-edited a collection of articles on the Holocaust in Belarus. The title of the collection is *The Shoah in Belarus: Historical Framework and Methodological Innovations*. To our knowledge, this is the first book in French devoted to the Holocaust in Belarus. The publisher is Honoré Champion. The publication is scheduled for February 2025.



Suzanne Brown-Fleming, Senior Project Director at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at USHMM, published “The Vatican Secretary of State and German War Criminals,” in *War and Genocide, Reconstruction and Change: The Global Pontificate of Pius XII, 1939-1958*, Chapter 7, Nina Valbousquet and Simon Unger-Alvi, editors (Berghahn, 2024), pp.146-170.

The Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research at Bar-Ilan University is proud to announce a new publication of its Poland Forum: Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwartz and Lea Ganor (eds.), *Holocaust History, Holocaust Memory: Jewish Poland and Polish Jews During and After the Holocaust*, London: Routledge, 2024. [LINK](#)

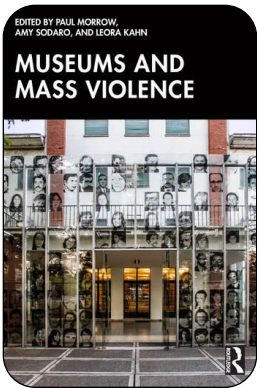
Publications



Sara L. Kimble, Associate Professor in the School of Continuing and Professional Studies at DePaul University, published new work bridging women’s history and the history of the genocide convention: “The Genocide Convention is ‘Our Cause’: International Women’s Advocacy for the Criminalization of Genocide, 1945–1952,” in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (October 2024). [LINK](#)

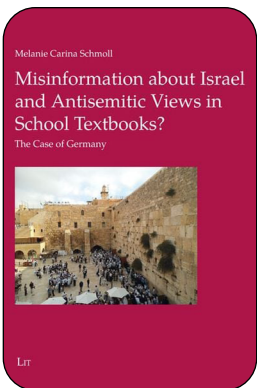
Melissa Kravetz, Assistant Professor and Co-Director of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Longwood University, has published *The Memoir of Ilse Seger: Wife, Mother, Hostage, Nazi Resister* with Indiana University Press. *The Memoir of Ilse Seger* is an ordinary woman’s story of imprisonment and political resistance to authoritarianism. [LINK](#)

Phyllis Lassner, Professor Emerita in The Crown Center for Jewish Studies, Gender Studies, and the Writing Program at Northwestern University, published the essay “Families in a Time of Catastrophe: Anna Gmeyer’s Manja” in *Mid-Century Women’s Writing* (Manchester University Press, 2024) and “Mythic History and Memory: The Making of an Assassin” in *(Re)Writing War in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (Routledge, 2024). She was also the co-editor of the *Jewish Film and New Media* special issue “New Approaches to Visual Representation of the Holocaust and Its Memory” (2024).



Paul Morrow, Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Philosophy at University College Dublin, published an edited volume titled *Museums and Mass Violence* in Routledge’s “Rethinking Memory, Representation and Human Rights” book series. Co-editors Amy Sodaro and Leora Kahn helped assemble this book’s twelve chapters, which highlight efforts by museums in Argentina, Sweden, Canada, Rwanda, and the United States to curate “difficult knowledge” about mass violence.

Michele Sarfatti published “Le notizie sulla Shoah arrivate in Vaticano nel 1942” [on the knowledge of the Holocaust], in *Contemporanea*, Jan.-Mar. 2024, pp. 123-136. Sarfatti also published “La retata degli ebrei di Roma del 16 ottobre 1943: contesto e nuovi approfondimenti” [on the roundup of Rome’s Jews], in Yael Calò, Lia Toaff, Luciano Zani (eds.), «Il nemico numero uno». La retata antiebraica del 16 ottobre 1943 e la sua memoria nell’Italia repubblicana, (Rome: Viella, 2024, pp. 23-38).



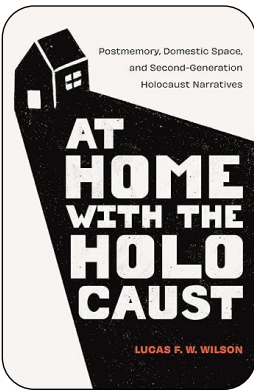
Melanie Carina Schmoll, Research Fellow at the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, published her new monograph: *Misinformation about Israel and Antisemitic Views in School Textbooks? The Case of Germany*, ISBN 978-3-643-91682-2, 2024.



Sara Ann Sewell, Professor of History at Virginia Wesleyan University, published “Acoustic Assaults on the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concourse,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3 (Winter 2024), 340-59 and “Echoes of Disembarkation at Auschwitz-Birkenau: The Sonic Memories of Survivors,” in *Transizioni di memoria: Narrazioni della violenza nel XX e nel XXI secolo*, ed. Matteo Cassani Siminetti and Roberta Mira, Rome: I Libbre die Viella, 2024, 175-88.

Kevin Simpson contributed a paper titled, “Remembering the Architecture of Death: The Psychology of the Holocaust” to the Tatranská Galéria in Poprad, Slovak Republic for a collection of essays and artwork for an annual commemoration of the Holocaust in Poprad as part of the “Art and Holocaust” symposium.

Annika Wienert, Research Fellow at the German Historical Institute Warsaw, has co-edited the anthology *Space in Holocaust Research: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Spatial Thinking* (with Janine Fubel and Alexandra Klei). In the first part of the book, renowned scholars introduce readers to the relevance of space for key aspects of Holocaust Studies. In the second part, nine original case studies demonstrate how and to what ends spatial thinking in Holocaust research can be put into practice.



Lucas F. W. Wilson, SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Toronto Mississauga, published *At Home with the Holocaust: Postmemory, Domestic Space, and Second-Generation Holocaust Narratives* (Rutgers UP, 2025). Based on analyses of literature and oral histories of children of survivors, *At Home with the Holocaust* reveals how the material conditions of survivor-family homes, along with household practices and belongings, rendered these homes archives of trauma that in turn traumatized the children of Holocaust survivors.

Christin Zühlke, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Holocaust Literature at Washington University in St. Louis, published the article “‘Shultsloze Ferpeynikte Neshomes’ – ‘Vulnerable, Tormented Souls’: Gendered Wounds, Sexualized Violence, and Jewish Masculinity in the Yiddish Testimonies of the Sonderkommando in Auschwitz-Birkenau” in *The Journal of Holocaust Research* (28 Aug 2024, DOI: 10.1080/25785648.2024.2376438).



Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University

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