



Curriculum vitae

Ben Barkow

BEN BARKOW HAS run the Wiener Library in London—the world's largest library of primary and secondary sources related to the Holocaust and Nazi era—for 20 years, but says he still finds the subject matter challenging. "It's almost the case that the more you know about it, the harder it is to believe that it happened. You retain a sense of awe and horror about it, which can at times be close to overwhelming," he says.

The library has more than 60,000 books on the subject, as well as newspaper cuttings, a photographic library, and thousands of diaries and journals. Barkow says one of the highlights of his tenure was receiving a set of manuscripts that had been written in the Czech ghetto of Terazin in 1944.

He explains: "It was a 1,000-page, hand-written manuscript by a 69-year old man who had been deported from Berlin. In this ghetto, he organised cultural events at the rate of one every evening until the Nazi's slowly emptied it. After that, he started writing an account of what he did there. His daughter, who's in her 90s now, passed it to us. It's an astonishing thing and is very rare."

Barkow hopes that the public will be able to access this sort of material in new, purpose-built premises in 2009. But first, he and

Company *The Wiener Library*

Aim *The library is dedicated to verifiable truth and tolerance of ethnic and religious differences*

Icon *I have the greatest respect for the late Cesar Aronsfeld, a little known researcher who worked here in the 1940s. He was incredibly sharp and I cherish his memory*

his small team have to raise £3.5m to fund the move. Barkow says the financial challenges of running the library are already "enormous". So how does he intend to raise the required sum?

"We've already raised £1m," he says. "The rest we hope will come from a mixture of grant-givers (we're approaching the Heritage Lottery Fund), private donors, and corporates, particularly German businesses based in London."

It's a tall order for a team comprising "mostly librarians"—Barkow and one other do the administration and fundraising—but their passion is such that they'll prove hard to resist.

As Barkow says, the best part about working at the Wiener Library is helping people. "You can help them understand their history a bit better, or bring them a bit closer to their own family. When that happens you think, 'that's why I do this'."

Speakers' corner

"We need to avoid a witch hunt. The UK's financial system is the best in the world."

The Northern Rock farce leads British Bankers' Association chief Angela Knight to jump to the defence of her sector

"How many fat cats have died premature deaths... risking their lives down coal mines?"

An irate Observer reader disagrees with Michael Snyder's justification for executive pay



"If you wanted to have Botox administered on a park bench you could do it these days."

Douglas McGeorge laments poor regulation in the cosmetic surgery industry

"In my neighbourhood I noticed that the people who had the biggest cars were in business."

Symantec's chief John Thompson's epiphany

"Sometimes we'd take them outside and see who could fly them farthest."

A former Concorde designer explains how they tested ideas, using their punchcards as models

"I know my column drives people crazy because they insult me on the website."

The Telegraph's Jeff Randall likes open debate

"It's bad enough without having to beg for your jobs with a 200-word essay."

A BBC "source" on the mooted job cutback tactics

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