

# Wiener Library News

August 2000

Number 35

## Getting Britain Giving

**M**ANY OF OUR READERS will be aware of changes in the legislation governing charitable giving. It is hoped that these will introduce a quiet revolution into support for charities in Britain – encouraging more people to give and to give more.

From 6 April, regulations changed to make life easier for donors and to allow charities to reap greater benefits. Among the most important changes is the abolition of the £250 minimum limit for Gift Aid donations. The scheme now applies to any donation. Tax relief for payments made under a Deed of Covenant has been simplified. Shares can now be gifted without exposing the donor to capital gains tax.

The changes mean that a gift of £100 gives the Library £128; £500 yields £640 and £1,000 yields £1,280.

To make the most of the new rules the Wiener Library has set up a new Standing Order Scheme for supporters who would like to make a regular donation. This will gradually replace the old Covenant Scheme, although existing Covenants are unaffected.

The changes introduced under the Getting Britain Giving scheme are of enormous importance to charities like the Wiener Library. Our supporters, like those of other good causes, can now pledge their gifts knowing that even modest donations will bring the maximum amount of benefit.

If you have any questions about how these changes affect your gifts or would like a Standing Order form, please contact Christine Patel on 020 7636 7247.



*From the archives: Jews deported from Germany in 1938 seek shelter in no man's land.*

## Holocaust Exhibition opens at War Museum

**O**n 6 June the Imperial War Museum's permanent Holocaust Exhibition was formally opened in the presence of HM the Queen. The exhibition, the creation of which is a truly remarkable achievement, is set to make a major impact on Holocaust education in Britain.

Throughout the planning stages the Museum's staff drew heavily on the resources and expertise of the Wiener Library. The importance of the Library's contribution was demonstrated by the fact that no less than five representatives were invited to the official opening. The exhibition contains objects from the Library's collection and items from the private collections of some of our volunteers.

Many people associated with the Library have visited the exhibition. In particular our volunteers – many of whom came to Britain as refugees or on the Kindertransport – have made informed and generally favourable comments. Peter Ross and Charles Danson remarked that they found touring the exhibits 'a terribly harrowing experience but a very necessary one'. They praised the exhibition for enabling the public to understand the long history of antisemitism which forms the background to the Holocaust. They were also very impressed that the facts were presented without any obvious political slant or polemical intention.

*(Continued on next page)*

# Holocaust Exhibition opens

(CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

Both Peter and Charles felt that 'the exhibition has not been mounted for people like us', but for the British public and most especially young people. Yet they had some reservations about the exhibition's power to reach out to the young. They felt that youngsters might not understand the importance of the Holocaust for present day society if they did not receive some additional guidance from teachers and other experts.

Having spent one and a half and two hours there respectively Peter and Charles were clear that the exhibition could be visited several times without exhausting what it has to offer. Charles felt that a great strength is that one could focus on particular topics or locations and come away having learned a great deal.

Echoing the feelings of everyone at the Library Peter and Charles expressed the hope that the exhibition will establish itself as a major contributor to Holocaust education and will prove a great success.

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# Anne Beale retires

On 30 April Anne Beale, who had served as Administrative Secretary of the Wiener Library since 1993, retired. When she announced her intention her colleagues were startled – since no-one could believe she had reached anything like retirement age. Her energy, vigour and taste for taking on an exhausting variety of challenges have always been her hallmark.

Anne's planned schedule for the next few years is very full and includes studying, doing voluntary work and travelling. The Library held a special lunch-time party for her on 16 May at which colleagues, volunteers and friends gathered to celebrate Anne's achievements and wish her well for the future. The happy atmosphere, superb home-made food and demonstrations of affection and friendship combined to make a very memorable occasion. Anne was presented with a five-year membership of the Friends of the Royal Academy of Arts.

The occasion was crowned for Anne and many of her friends by Joan Stiebel's attendance.



Anne enjoys sharing a joke with Charles Danson at the party.

# Volunteers

Anyone who visits the Library regularly will have been struck by the number of volunteer workers who are busily helping with the modernisation programme and other activities. The selfless dedication of these individuals cannot be praised too highly. Some are here for comparatively short periods, and among these Thomas Gruesing, a trainee teacher from Germany, undertook a six-week placement. He assisted the Lottery-funded archivist in elucidating the provenance of a section of our document holdings. Thomas Fühapter, serving out his *Gedekdienst* in lieu of military service joined us in June for 14 months. Jane Bickerton, who has completed a degree in History and English and is taking a year out before embarking on studies for an MA, is devoting two days a week to the Library. Jane works one day in the Library, assisting with the ongoing reorganisation of the pamphlet collection and compiling bibliographies and one day with the Education Officer, assisting in the preparation of the *Journal of Holocaust Education*.

Michael Cohen has recently joined the team of volunteers working on conservation. He will help to hold the number of conservation volunteers steady since, sadly, Corrine Hall, a founder member of our NADFAS team, is leaving to take up other work.

All our volunteers, the recent additions, the temporaries and – of course – the long-standing, make enormously valuable contributions. Their generosity and warmheartedness are an inspiration to the staff and, not infrequently, to the users of the Library.

# Progress report on improvements



*Rosemarie Nief and Patrick Ressler test-drive the Photo Archive's new hard- and software.*

**T**he Library's Lottery-funded programme of improvements continues to progress well. In March Joanna Taplin joined our team. Joanna is a conservator who will carry out a detailed survey of all our collections and set conservation priorities for the coming years. In addition she will supervise our wonderful team of NADFAS conservation volunteers and will help Library, Archive and Educational staff to improve their working practices to ensure that preserving the collections for future generations of users is the first consideration.

Conservation measures, jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Hyam Wingate Foundation, the Rayne Foundation, the Kobler Trust and other grants, have been implemented in the Photo Archive. All the photographs and negatives have been rehoused in archival sound wallets and boxes. This mammoth task has been carried out by Patrick Ressler, a student from Humboldt University in Berlin, whose wonderful contribution means that in future photographs can be viewed and copied with the minimum of direct handling. This will help to preserve the

photographs while also making them more accessible.

The creation of a catalogue, using hardware and software purchased with a grant from the Wolfson Foundation, has commenced. This medium- to long-term project will for the first time make the photographic collection fully accessible to users of the Library's services.

In the meantime, the task of converting the card catalogue into electronic form is continuing, with Katharina Hübschmann and Ann McDermott demonstrating exemplary professionalism and dedication to what is – it cannot be denied – a long and arduous undertaking.



*Joanna Taplin at work.*

## News report

### Library welcomes Washington guests

In June the Library received a visit from Sara Bloomfield and Mark Ziomak, who are respectively the Director and Librarian of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC.

The visit followed Ben Barkow's visit to the Museum in April, when he met a large number of departmental heads and learned at first-hand about the Museum's achievements and its projects.

Mark spent three days at the Library, and had extensive and detailed discussions with Colin Clarke, the Senior Librarian, David Irwin, the Cataloguer and a number of other members of the Library's team.

He said that he was profoundly impressed by the size and depth of the collection – far greater than the Museum's – as well as by the expertise and skill of the librarians.

Sara spent a day with us, touring the collections and engaging in a series of talks with Alan Montefiore, President of the Library, Ernst Fraenkel, Chairman of the Executive Committee, David Cesarani, the Director and Ben Barkow, the Deputy Director.

It is hoped that these visits will strengthen the already excellent relations between the two institutions and lead to greater co-operation between them, and possibly to joint projects in the future.

## Recent donations

We are very grateful to the following people for donations of books, papers and other material: Mr. Frank Bright, Mrs. M. Collins, Dr. E. Corfan, Mr. J. Curtis, the law firm Davenport Lyons, Mr. Martin Goldenberg, Mrs. Sheila Grossnass, Dr. Donald Kenrick, Prof. Robert Knight, Mr. Francis Treuherz, Mr. Steven Tyas and Mr. Johannes Wrobel of the Geschichtsarchiv der Zeugen Jehovas. Several readers kindly offered copies of the Reunion of Kindertransport newsletter following our appeal.

## Can you help?

The Library is keen to acquire copies of the following books. If any reader is able to help please contact Julie Woodland, our Acquisitions Librarian.

**Adler, S.:** *In the Warsaw Ghetto: memoirs of Stanislaw Adler.* Jerusalem, 1982.

**Ball-Kaduri, J.:** *Das Leben der Juden in Deutschland im Jahre 1933: ein Zeitbericht.* Frankfurt, 1963.

**Bewly, C.:** *Hermann Goering and the Third Reich: a biography based on family and official reports.* Toronto, 1962.

**Briquet, G.:** *The Buchenwald case.* Dachau, 1947.

**Cargas, H.J.:** *A Christian response to the Holocaust.* Denver, 1981.

**Dagan, A. (Ed.):** *The Jews of Czechoslovakia.* Philadelphia, 1984.

**Datner, S.:** *The fight and annihilation of the Bialystok Ghetto.* Lodz, 1946.

**Ganger, J.G.:** *The origins of anti-semitism.* NY, 1985.

**Griffith, W.E.:** *The denazification in the United States zone of Germany.* Cambridge, Mass., 1966.

**Harf, B.:** *Genocide and human rights: international legal and political issues.* Denver, 1984.

**Napora, P.:** *Death at Belsen.* San Antonio, Tex., 1967.

## Photo feature

# Images from the Archive

Continuing our series to publicise the rich holdings of the Wiener Library's photo archive, these harrowing yet striking images were taken by a professional photographer, Hugo Schmidt in the aftermath of the allied bombing of Hamburg in July and August 1943. The so-called Battle of Hamburg saw around 50,000 killed and caused a million people to flee the city. The photographs were donated to the Library by the photographer.



# Power in the performance

**T**HIS COLLECTION of essays, documents and memoirs focuses on Central European Jewish culture through a study of the artistic creations of concentration camp and ghetto inmates. It examines the importance of retaining this culture inside the camps: the relevance and necessity of the Zionist holiday commemorations in the Kovno Ghetto, the Yiddish songs sung by the Jews of Riga and the extensive programme produced by the *Freizeitgestaltung* in Theresienstadt, 'the cultural ghetto par excellence.'

By concentrating on the memoirs of the performers rather than on producing a critical artistic analysis, Rovit and Goldfarb explore ideas of forbidden culture as creative resistance and notions of transcendence – how through the act of performing the inmates were able to gain an element of control over their lives and experience a psychological distance from their immediate surroundings and circumstances. Through the testimony of the Czech actress, Zdenka Ehrlich-Fantlová, who was imprisoned in Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, the reader is shown the significance of theatre and music in the camps. Fantlová explains how the performances and their effect on the audiences, 'rose so high that it can't be compared to any entertainment in normal life.'

The final section of this volume concentrates exclusively on Theresienstadt and shows how the music of Viktor Ullmann and Hans Krasa and the performances of works by Smetana, Verdi and Bizet conducted by Rafael Schächter and Gideon Klein created an element of choice in lives dominated by the constant fear of transportations east. These artistic events also created a vital link between the old life in the Czech Republic, Germany or Austria and the new life within the walls of Theresienstadt.

This volume should be seen as an important and welcome addition to the growing body of cultural and oral histories of the Holocaust as it dismisses previous claims that artistic and cultural expressions should not be examined alongside more traditional historical sources. In doing this it adds to the existing scholarship carried out by cultural historians such as James Young and Lawrence Langer and stresses the importance of this once marginalised area of academic study.

## ***Theatrical performances during the Holocaust: texts, documents, memoirs.***

Edited by Rebecca Rovit and Alvin Goldfarb, Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Reviewed by Sarah Kavanaugh



*'Souvenir of lovely Faust evenings at Theresienstadt, June 1944 ...' – a contemporary drawing from the Philipp Manes Collection, which is reproduced in Rovit and Goldfarb's volume.*

## Review

Hugo Gryn was born in 1930 in the Carpathian town of Berehovo, in what was then Czechoslovakia. It was there he embarked upon his remarkable life as is documented in his autobiography, *Chasing shadows*. Throughout what has been described as the 'prosaic and familiar' text, Gryn nostalgically remembers the large Jewish community of his prosperous home town. He recalls the active role played by his own family in Berehovo and the religious and cultural milieu in which he grew up. He clearly recounts the Hungarian annexation of Czechoslovakia in 1938 when 'Berehovo's life... came to an end...' and remembers feeling 'depressed' as the Czech flag had been the only thing he could 'draw properly'.

In 1944 Gryn, together with his family, was forced into the ghetto in Berehovo before being transported to Auschwitz. Gryn recalls his arrival in the camp and the painful separation from his mother and brother after which he and his father were forced to work as slave labourers. The narrative goes on to recall the two death marches that Gryn and his father miraculously survived. Perhaps the most poignant part of the book describes Gryn's return to Berehovo after liberation where he is reunited with his mother but finds, much to his dismay, that the pre-war Jewish community has been almost completely destroyed.

Although Gryn's recollections of this 'vanished world' verge at times on the sentimental, his accounts are nevertheless heartrending, and serve as a constant reminder of his indomitable spirit. The editor concedes that there are some inconsistencies. However, it remains a compelling representation of the remarkable life of one of Britain's most popular spiritual figures.

*Chasing shadows*. Hugo Gryn with Naomi Gryn, London: Viking, 2000.

Reviewed by Jane Bickerton

## Holocaust memorial day

Britain's first national Holocaust Memorial Day will be 27 January 2001. This Government initiative, co-ordinated by the Home Office and the Department for Education and Employment will be marked annually and aimed at the widest possible audience.

David Cesarani and Jo Reilly, representing the Library, have been appointed to the Steering Committee and the Education Committee respectively, and are involved in planning for the day.

Commemoration, education and the assertion of a continuing commitment to oppose racism, antisemitism and victimisation will be at the heart of the day's activities. The day aims to:

- raise awareness and understanding of the Holocaust as a continuing issue for all humanity;
- highlight the values of a tolerant and diverse society based on the notions of universal dignity and equal rights;
- provide a national mark of respect for victims of Nazi persecution and its repercussions;
- encourage reflection on recent atrocities that raise similar issues.

A national ceremony will be held in Central Hall, Westminster, involving political and religious leaders as well as victims of genocide in the 20th century. It is planned that this will set the tone for associated activities to be co-ordinated by local authorities, schools and youth groups around the country.

A teacher's pack highlighting the relevant issues, and containing model assemblies and suggested classroom activities, will be available to all schools in due course and the same information will be posted on the Internet. As the first Holocaust Memorial Day will fall on a Saturday, schools will be encouraged to organise activities in the week running up to the day itself.

If you are a teacher or interested in co-ordinating an event in your local community and you would like to discuss ideas, please contact Jo Reilly at the Wiener Library.

## Education

# Events round-up

The past six months have seen a wide range of interesting and successful events at the Library, including a number of collaborative ventures which have attracted capacity audiences.

### Film screenings

Two documentary films were shown as British premières under the auspices of the Wiener Library. Dr. Gail Malmgreen (New York University) presented her film *They were not silent: the United States Jewish Labor Movement and the Holocaust* on 7 May detailing the response of the American Left to the refugee crisis, the aid provided to Underground fighters of the ghettos in Eastern Europe and the assistance provided to Holocaust survivors after the war. The event was hosted by the Jewish Museum and held in association with the Jewish Socialist Group. On 28 May, Julian Hendy (Yorkshire Television) introduced his film *SS in Britain* at Birkbeck College in an event



*From the archives: Heinrich Himmler socialising with the elite of the SS. Some members of the Waffen SS found their way to Britain, as revealed in Julian Hendy's film, SS in Britain.*

held in association with the Holocaust Educational Trust. In 1947 the British Government brought an entire division of the Nazi Waffen SS to Britain – 8,000 Ukrainians of the 14th SS Division 'Galizien', 1,500 of whom live in Britain today. The documentary, drawing on Eastern European archives, chilling archive footage and eyewitness testimony challenged the Government's claim that these men could not be linked to war crimes in Poland and Slovenia. A lively discussion followed the film, with the audience calling for the documentary to be screened on national television and for an inquiry into why no charges had ever been brought. The film can be viewed privately in the Wiener Library, by appointment.

### Academic research seminar

On Sunday 26 March, in association with the Universities of Sheffield and Southampton, the Library organised a stimulating seminar addressed to a university-based audience on the Wilkomirski Affair. Chaired by Professor Bryan Cheyette

(Southampton), the event featured papers by Sue Vice (Sheffield), Norman Geras (Manchester), Anne Karpf (London) and Petra Newman (Southampton). The seminar examined the reception of Wilkomirski's 'testimony', *Fragments*, now exposed as a work of fiction, and the role that the book will continue to play in teaching representations of the Holocaust if and when it is reissued by Picador. The proceedings will be published in the *Journal of Holocaust Education*.

### Supporting scholarship

A number of the events in the spring season were linked to the launch of newly published works closely relating to the collections of the Library. In February we hosted the launch of *The Holocaust in the text* (Macmillan, 2000) by George Paizis and Andy Leak based on a conference jointly organised by the Wiener Library and the Institute of Romance Studies (University of London). Michael Berkowitz (University College London) gave a lively lecture on 9 March exploring the iconography surrounding Jewish political figures featured in his latest work *The Jewish self-image in the West* (London, 2000). Irene Lawford, in a lecture on the C.F. Peters publishing house and its fate during the Holocaust, wove the story of her family and its influence on the social, musical and intellectual life of 19th century Leipzig with her own quest to document it. In April Curt Germundson (Iowa) gave an illustrated talk on the political and artistic debates that have surrounded the Holocaust memorial project in Berlin.

### Contemporary politics

Heightened interest in the political situation in Austria meant that two capacity audiences were attracted on 16 and 20 February to hear Karl Pfeiffer's response, as a Holocaust survivor living in Vienna, to Haider's electoral success. This issue was revisited in an afternoon seminar on 11 June, 'Another country? Austria from past to present'. Collaboration with the Second Generation Trust and generous support from the Association of Jewish Refugees and the Austrian Cultural Institute enabled us to bring a distinguished panel before a packed house at the Wiener Library. Papers by Robert Knight (Loughborough), Felix de Mendelssohn (Vienna) and Glyn Ford, MEP examined Austria's post-war past and contemporary society in a European context. A panel comprising Austrian politicians Bruno Aigner (President's Office) and Terezija Stoisits (Green Party), Silvio Lehmann (Republican Club) and Richard Luther (Keele) debated the popularity of Haider's Freedom Party in the context of the Austrian democratic tradition, giving differing views on whether EU sanctions against Austria should stand.



From left to right: Panel members Silvio Lehman, Bruno Aigner, Richard Luther, Terezija Stoisits, and Lord Alf Dubs engaged in discussion during 'Another country?'. On the far right of the picture is Karl Klinger, a long-standing Wiener Library volunteer.

## International outlook

### Visitors to the Library

We are very pleased to welcome two visitors to the Library working on very different projects which are linked by explorations of memory.

Genevieve Lester is a graduate student at the Johns Hopkins University Bologna Center for Advanced International Studies. She is spending the summer in Britain having won a scholarship for Bologna students to work at the Wiener Library. Her project is to explore Britain's role in trials of war crimes and crimes against humanity, beginning with the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg and continuing to the 1991 War Crimes Act. Genevieve's goal is to 'demonstrate how British trials of war criminals are linked to British identity and memory'.

2000 is the Year of the Artist and the Arts Council of England is sponsor of a prestigious competition which set out to fund '1,000 projects in 1,000 places'. One of these places is the Wiener Library. Uriel Orlow, originally from Switzerland but based in London, is the Wiener Library's first ever Artist in Residence. His audio-visual project, *Housed memory*, will be an artistic response to the Wiener Library as a whole, its building and collections and the activities of the people who work with the material.

'Today', writes Uriel, 'where, with fewer and fewer living witnesses to the Second World War and the atrocities of the Holocaust, memory is delegated to second-order witnessing and enabled by, or enacted through films, museums, multimedia, or public memorials, the function of the archive has become the overseeing or underpinning of these "agencies", of these diverse means of memory and representation.'

Uriel will work alongside the Library staff and volunteers. In the autumn his work will be exhibited on site.

## Visitors' views from Austria and Germany



**T**hree of the young people presently undertaking placements at the Library write of their impressions. Pictured from left to right above, Thomas Fürhapter (28) and Benedikt Kronberger (19), both from Austria, are undertaking a 14-month *Gedenkdienst* as an alternative to military service, while Hans Selger (22) from Germany is nearing completion of a six-week placement.

### Thomas

Before I started working at the Wiener Library five weeks ago, one of my main reasons for deciding to do my *Zivildienst* here was that the Library deals with subjects so very important for the identity of the country I come from. It is paradoxical that an organisation like the Wiener Library collects material about right-wing extremism in order to prevent the present from repeating the past, while the same extremism now forms part of Austria's government – for which I have to do *Zivildienst*.

Perhaps I will be among the last to do *Zivildienst* abroad instead of military service. Some in the new Austrian government don't like the idea of *Zivildienst* in general and find the option of doing *Gedenkdienst* abroad superfluous. The general financial cuts in the field of *Zivildienst* also endanger the entire *Gedenkdienst* project. As one MP from the Freedom Party put it, people should stay at home rather than put up memorial signs for Jews abroad. If *Gedenkdienst* is not completely halted, those doing it will

certainly get less money, even though it is not sufficient even now. Consequently, there will be a massive social selection, and only people from wealthy backgrounds will be able to do *Gedenkdienst*.

Despite this rather unfriendly outlook one of the most impressive things I have experienced in the first weeks has been the document collection of the Library, where I did some work in cataloguing. I am looking forward to the rest of my time here very much.

### Benedikt

It all began when I was 17. This was when I first heard about the possibility of going abroad to do an alternative service to the military. There are three different types of service: peace work, social work or – the one I am doing – commemorative service.

To be able to go abroad I had to visit various seminars. It was there that I realized that I wanted to do commemorative service. It is what I was most interested in. I think it is utterly important not to forget about the Holocaust. It is only 50 years ago,

but in spite of that I can imagine it happening again if the world ever forgets. And that frightens me. It made me want to help people gain the knowledge of this dark chapter of the 20th century.

Now, 11 months after I started my service, I can say that it was the right decision to do a *Gedenkdienst*. Maybe not all the work I have done was particularly interesting. However, uninteresting jobs also have to be done and by doing them I am helping the work of the Library. I hope thus I could contribute at least a little bit to the Wiener Library and to its important task.

### Hans

As a student of contemporary history, one cannot ignore the unique challenge that the extant wealth of source material for that period poses. Consequently, I chose to do a work placement in Britain's most renowned Holocaust archive, the Wiener Library.

I expected to gain insights into the professional handling and the organisation of such an institution in order to understand this side of historical research better. A further attraction was the education and outreach programme which I trusted would prevent the Wiener Library from typical archival isolation and a possibly narrow-minded outlook.

In short, all these expectations were fulfilled. It is an immense task to sort and organise the great number of documents and books, prevent them from crumbling and falling apart and, at the same time, make and keep them accessible to the public. However, I soon began to realise that the Library is more than a merely academic institution. As a meeting point for the British *émigré* and survivor community, it serves a commemorative purpose in a much less abstract sense. I have come to realise that, for the study of any historical subject, it is crucial not to overlook this aspect.