

WIENER LIBRARY NEWS

MARCH 2007

NUMBER 53

WRITER IN RESIDENCE

The Wiener Library has been awarded a Leverhulme Trust grant for a writer in residence. We are delighted that playwright Julia Pascal will take up the position.

Julia says: "I was inspired by the Wiener Library as my first visit there was instrumental in the production of my first Holocaust play, *Theresa*. Going into the reading room, I had no idea that, when I was presented with Serge Klarsfeld's list of Jews deported from the Channel Islands, through France, to Auschwitz, I would find the name of the woman at the centre of my play, Theresa Steiner. I have never forgotten the shock of seeing her date of arrival and date of death. It gave my fictionalised drama an urgent impulse and I felt a passionate desire to see this play widely staged so that Channel Island collaboration could be known by British people who knew nothing of this history. I wonder, even now, how many schoolchildren know that the Channel Island bailiffs and police betrayed Jews to the Feldkommandatur in Guernsey and Jersey and that banks, such as Barclays and Lloyds, gave details of Jewish bank accounts to the Nazis.

"This moment of discovery in the Wiener Library has stayed with me as a turning point in my writing. For this reason I feel I would like to come back, this time as a Writer in Residence, to absorb the atmosphere and meet the immense variety of people who are searching for something, as I was."

While at the Wiener, Julia will be available one day a month to
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FROM TIME TO TIME: THE PERIODICALS COLLECTION

One of the jewels of the Wiener Library is its collection of journals and magazines. Many of these are rare and of considerable importance to historians of our period.

Until recently the collection was poorly catalogued and hard for researchers to work with. Thanks to generous grants from the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany Inc, the Rayne Foundation and the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah in France, the Library has been able to improve this situation. The periodicals were catalogued, indexed and repackaged over a two-year period. The catalogue is now available online and therefore much more accessible.

Now, thanks largely to support from the Pilgrim Trust, we are beginning a two-year project to improve the preservation and conservation of the collection for the future. Using the data collected during the first phase, Project Librarian Andrea Zierer will evaluate each title and determine the appropriate method of preservation.

Items which are central to our collection, especially those published between 1930 and 1950, will be conserved in the original format wherever possible. Simple conservation work will be done in-house by our trained NADFAS¹ team under the guidance of a qualified paper conservator.

However, not everything can be conserved forever. In some cases the preservation of information may be more important than conserving the original



A rarity from the collection in need of preservation.

paper. For long-term preservation microfilm is appropriate because it is a long-established and proven technology. Our aim is to extend our already notable collection of periodicals on microfilm.

A further option is digitisation, which is convenient for readers, quick and easy to use, and allows readers to search much more effectively. But there are drawbacks, such as problematic long-term storage, high maintenance costs and the continuous changeability of equipment.

The Wiener Library gratefully acknowledges the Pilgrim Trust, which has made a generous grant towards the periodicals preservation project.

1. Volunteers recruited through the National Association of Design & Fine Arts Societies which specialises in the conservation of library, archive and museum collections.

RESIDENT WRITER

(continued from page 1)

meet researchers, volunteers and participants, and will be chronicling the last years of the Wiener Library in Devonshire Street.

Julia Pascal is a playwright and theatre director. Her first major drama, *Theresa*, was followed by *A Dead Woman on Holiday*, set at the Nuremberg Trials. Her *Dybbuk* is a modern vision of the Solomon Anski classic and takes place in a Polish ghetto. These three texts were produced in Britain, France and Germany and are published as *The Holocaust Trilogy*.

Other plays include *The Yiddish Queen Lear*, *Woman in the Moon* (which deals with Wernher von Braun's SS past), *The Golem* (for young people), *Year Zero* (set in Vichy France), *St Joan* (aka Joan Rabinovitch, a black Jew who dreams she is Joan of Arc), and *Crossing Jerusalem*, set during the 2002 intifada (commissioned and produced at the Tricycle Theatre).

Julia is director of Pascal Theatre Company for which she has just produced *Jewish Mother and Daughter*, a film archive based on 50 interviews with a wide range of Jewish women living in Britain. This is a major educational resource currently being distributed to museums, schools and archives on DVD.

Julia's residence began on 1 March.

WIENER LIBRARY NEWS

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KATHERINE KLINGER

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JOAN STIEBEL

Everyone close to the Wiener Library was saddened to learn of the death of Joan Stiebel, one of this institution's great and true friends. She had been a key figure in the effort to establish the Library's Endowment Fund, working as the right hand of Lewis Golden to secure the Library for posterity.

Joan was born in 1911, the daughter of Christian parents. She attended secretarial college and it was as a secretary that she was recruited by Otto Schiff to work in his office in London. When Schiff and others created the Central British Fund for German Jewry (CBF) Joan was increasingly drawn into working with Jewish refugees. In 1939 she was appointed to the CBF. She continued this work for the remainder of the war. Soon after the end of the war Joan was responsible for making the travel arrangements for 1,000 orphans under the age of 16 who had been liberated from the camps to come to the UK. This group came to be known as the 'Boys', although it included some 80 girls. Joan's involvement with this group

was lifelong, and her care and love were amply repaid by the grateful individuals she had helped so much.

Joan worked for the CBF for over 45 years, retiring in 1979. But she was not allowed to rest for long. Ben Helfgott and Alan Montefiore persuaded her to join the effort of the Wiener Library to create an Endowment Fund to secure its future. Joan worked without taking a salary and she and Lewis Golden became the vital heart of the campaign and its brilliant success.

With the Endowment set up and the Library's future looking brighter than it had for decades, Joan finally resumed her retirement in 1989, aged 78. Her interest in Library matters continued

(continued on page 4)



CHARLES STENHAM

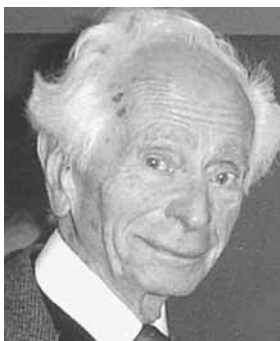
Charles Stenham was born in Leipzig in 1916 into a traditional Jewish family. In 1936 he emigrated to Palestine, where he joined the Railway Police. In 1940, he enlisted in the British Merchant Navy.

Discharged in Scotland, he trained as a precision toolmaker in London and undertook war work using this trade, as well as Home Guard duty. In early 1942 he met his wife-to-be Charlotte and they married on 24 December at Aylth Gardens Reform Synagogue. Charles later became the London Office and Representative of the

Team Valley Brush Company – an artists' brush producer. His main customers were Local Education Authorities.

After his retirement, Charles became a volunteer at the Wiener Library, maintaining the archive of book reviews. He thoroughly enjoyed this work. Ben Barkow, Director of the Wiener Library, commented, "Charles gave a great deal to the Library during his long years as a volunteer. His contribution was of real and lasting value".

He is survived by his wife, two sons and four grandchildren. Charles will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.



A DISCOVERY...

Ulrike Kleinert, the mother of Loana Junge, our current volunteer from Action for Reconciliation Service for Peace, writes about how she discovered the Star of David...

One day my fingers touched something hard under a bush in the garden near an old copper beech, the trunk of which was riddled with bullet holes. It was in the beginning of the 1960s and I was a little girl. I scraped the earth and dug up something, which holds a secret for me still. It was a stone slab showing two boys with childlike limbs, one holding a baton in his hand, the other wearing a helmet on his head. Below in the corner was a symbol, a six pointed Star of David.

Excitedly I asked my mother: "What is this? Where does it come from?" My mother shook her head. "I don't know, perhaps a slab from a fireplace?" My grandmother stayed silent and turned away. My father did not even want to look at it.

The object I had found caused inexplicable tension among the adults. I sensed that they kept their real thoughts hidden from me. The tension which my question sparked in the adults got under my skin.

The more the adults held back, the more eager I became to find out what had happened in our village and our family in the Nazis' time. As an active Social Democrat my paternal grandfather was himself exposed to persecution and threats, but he was now very ill and I could not make head or tail of what he said.

I also sensed that my grandmother on my mother's side had things on her mind. She did not speak about them to me or about the life of my grandfather. Today I know that he was an upright man, who wanted nothing to do with the Nazis, refused to join the Nazi farmers association and did not send my mother to the League of German Girls.

My mother was apt to go down memory lane without inhibitions, but my father became infuriated and hurt when I touched on the subject. The older I got and the more I learned about the Nazis and the Holocaust, the more critical I became of him. He had been called up a year before the capitulation and had to go to war. I wanted to know what he did and experienced.

The hidden emotions of coming to terms with the past erupted in fierce outbursts and stood between us. I left my parents' home very early to start training in social education. One of their comments still lingers in my ear: "Do you have to associate with anti-social elements?" It hurt me to hear such remarks, which went back to my father's education during the Nazi time. How much I would have liked to know what he later thought about that time and whether he felt any shame or regret.

Other people satisfied my curiosity: various anti-fascist victims of the Nazi regime told me openly what happened. Only men and women of the Jewish faith were not among them, and I missed them in these discussions. I asked myself what an individual man or woman can do to prevent a repeat of such events.

As an author I have turned some of my family experiences into published short stories, thereby opening the secret chamber of family suppression. I always tried to disguise the persons described, but my father saw himself reflected. Strangely, he was proud that my writings were published and he did not bear me a grudge. Just before his 70th birthday he finally told me the story of his life. It had taken decades for him

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FAREWELL

GERTA REGENSBURGER

The end of 2006 marked the passing of a Wiener Library era, when Gerta Regensburger retired. Gerta had joined the Library in 1990 – initially as the secretary of David Cesarani. She later supported the work of the Library's Appeal Committee. Gerta most particularly became associated with the Wiener Library's Friends Scheme, which she ran single-handedly and made into one of the pillars of the Library's life. Anyone who has enjoyed our Newsletter also has reason to be grateful to her, because she was a proof-reader of rare acuity. Gerta was also instrumental in the administration of numerous fundraising events.

Gerta's retirement was marked at the annual Chanukah/Christmas party – ensuring that almost all the Library's volunteers as well as staff had the opportunity to wish her well for the future. Director Ben Barkow said: "Gerta Regensburger has been a very typical Wiener Library person (and as far as I'm concerned, there is no higher praise!) – working out of sight of most of those who use the Library, working steadily and devotedly to ensure that things are done properly and well."

Ever eager to get to grips with the challenges and rewards of technology, Gerta suggested that she would enjoy having a lap-top computer and was duly presented with one, plus a printer, and a set of loudspeakers so that she could watch films on DVD on it. She was also presented with book tokens.



JOAN STIEBEL

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undiminished. Even when she was forced to give up her Weymouth Street home and take up residence in Cheverton Lodge in Archway, she regularly summoned the Director to brief her on the Library's progress and suggest ways of boosting the ongoing fundraising work.

In her private life Joan was a prize-winning flower arranger and a writer of romantic stories and novels. She was awarded the MBE for her services to the refugees.

Everyone who knew Joan will carry happy memories of her – she was a straightforward, open, honest and delightful woman and it seemed she had an unerring moral compass. Her uncomplicated goodness was accompanied by a twinkling eye.

A DISCOVERY...

(continued from page 3)

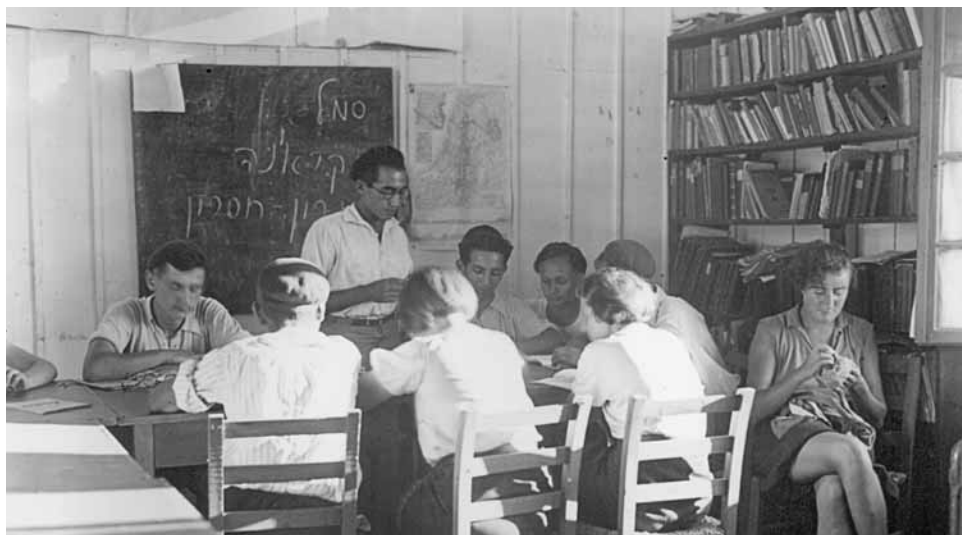
to feel able to relate a little of his terrible experiences as a 16-year-old messenger in the army. Today he is a very sick man, whom the ghosts of the past have never let go completely, although he has accomplished a lot in his life.

Why do I tell you all this? I want to explain why I was moved and delighted when my daughter decided to spend a voluntary service year with the Aktion Sühnezeichen. She works at the Wiener Library and makes an effort in her way as a young woman to ensure that the past is not forgotten and repressed. As her mother I would like to thank the Library and all those who make her effort possible. Who knows, perhaps the Star of David on the stone slab long ago was meant to give us a signal.

IMAGES FROM THE ARCHIVES

SETTLING THE LAND

From October 1933 a whole spectrum of activities were set on foot in Palestine by the Central Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews. The services rendered to the immigrants included reception and care on landing, the provision of temporary housing accommodation and the creation of training facilities. Special attention was paid to the settlement of the newcomers on the land. Existing agricultural settlements were enlarged and new ones established. Industrial development was assisted by long-term credits. Furthermore, provision was made for cultural requirements and social services. Under a youth immigration scheme some 1,600 youths were placed in agricultural settlements and educational institutions. These activities were financed by contributions from American Jewry, the Central British Fund for German Jewry, the Council for German Jewry, the Palestine Foundation Fund Keren Hayesod and the Jewish National Fund Keren Kayemeth Le-Israel. The number of German-Jewish immigrants to Palestine by February 1937, when these pictures were published, came to about 40,000. The funds spent by the Central Bureau amounted to £450,000.





Clockwise, from above:

- Vineyard at the girls' farm Talpioth near Jerusalem.
- Tree Nursery in Naaneh.
- Hasorea, Yokneam: Fencing.
- Givath Brenner. Immigrants' tents and newly built houses.
- Rodges: Hebrew lesson.
- The use of modern agricultural machinery at Givath Brenner.

These pictures are featured in an album produced by the Central Bureau in 1937 containing 51 photographs which is now held in the Photo Archive (WL Accession No 70879).



WE WELCOME

BOARD

The Library's Board has expanded with the addition of two new members: Emma Kane, Chief Executive of Redleaf Communications, and Professor Brian Brivati of Kingston University. Our two new Board members will strengthen the Library in the areas of public relations and Holocaust and genocide studies respectively.

We wish Ms Kane and Professor Brivati every success in their work on the Library's behalf.

PATRONS

The Library has completed its recruitment of a group of Patrons, bringing their strength to six. M.L. Davis, the CEO of Xstrata and Daniel Finkelstein OBE of *The Times* and the grandson of Dr Alfred Wiener have very kindly agreed to join The Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP and The Rt Hon Sir Bernard Rix. Most recently the Hon William Shawcross and Jonathan Caplan QC have also agreed to support the Library in this important way.

We are very grateful to our Patrons for lending the strength and power of their names to support and further the work of the Library.

INTERNS

Two new interns started their work placements in March and will stay with us until the end of August.

Susanne Kaden, 25, is a student of library and information science at Humboldt and at Freie Universität Berlin. She is from Rostock and took part in a one-year period of voluntary service for the Red Cross in Leipzig.

Nina-Marleen Scherfer, 22, runs the small library of the Forschungsstelle Georg Büchner as a student assistant. She is studying German and English literature at Marburg University.

THIRD

GENERATION

As part of our Third Generation project, Katherine Klinger, who runs the Wiener Library's Education and Outreach programme, has been working together with schools, who have welcomed using some of the unique resources of the Library. In particular, a number of Jewish schools have invited her to facilitate workshops and Holocaust Memorial Day sessions and work with students as they prepare to travel on field trips to Poland.

Immanuel College, a private co-educational Jewish school located just outside London, has an unusually large 6th form, and the College has shown great interest in the work and material the Library has to offer.

In January, Katherine presented a workshop on the history and importance of the Nuremberg Trials. Students were shown Lutz Becker's film about the Trial, and had the opportunity to work with source documents from the Library. They were asked to analyse and interpret evidence presented at the Trials.

For many young people, it was evident that looking at original documentation brought history alive and resonated in very different ways compared to watching a documentary or reading a text book. We intend to continue to develop links with interested schools, as well as the Jewish community and beyond.

Although it may sound rather surprising, we have noticed that all too often members of the Jewish community, although aware of our collection, have not necessarily visited the Library, or do not know about the wealth of material we have to offer. Part of our outreach work is to make the collection as known and accessible as possible. Many special interest groups visit the Library each year and we encourage individuals researching family history to visit the Library to help facilitate their studies.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY: PHILIP SPENCER

THE HOLOCAUST, DARFUR AND THE POLITICS OF INDIFFERENCE TODAY

Taking inspiration from this year's designated Holocaust Memorial Day theme 'The Dignity of Difference', the Wiener Library presented an afternoon seminar on 28 January entitled *The Indignity of Indifference*. In spite of undoubted advances in the area of human rights since 1945, the all too obvious reality of genocide and mass violence continues. Therefore, we considered it appropriate to examine some of the reasons why we appear so helpless and inactive, even though evidence of genocide taking place is rarely concealed and often much publicised. Ben Barkow opened the meeting and dedicated it to the memory of Joan Stiebel. Professor Brian Brivati then introduced his colleague Philip Spencer, Kingston University, who offered an analysis of the politics of indifference and numerous instances of failure to act: a shortened version of his paper is featured in this article.

The human rights activist Helen Bamber then spoke of personal experiences throughout her remarkable life of working with both victims and authorities, in particular citing the failure to listen as a recurring theme. Katherine Klinger presented an oral history interview project she is directing, focusing on the youngest, orphaned, female Holocaust camp survivors, demonstrating that the effects of genocide and mass violence haunt even those who were tiny children at the time and have little conscious memory. The Library is particularly pleased to be continuing to develop links and working together with Kingston University and the Helen Bamber Centre in the area of genocide studies and mass violence.

The Holocaust poses many challenges, perhaps none greater than the problem of indifference to the suffering of others. That this is the central moral and political challenge of our time was recognised by the fact that the most international agreement we have, the Convention on Genocide, was explicitly written to address this problem. Never again, it was proclaimed, would the rest of the world stand by and allow states to commit mass murder with impunity.

There are, of course, a number

of difficulties with the Convention. It excluded political groups from the definition of groups at risk; it may not have been sufficiently precise in talking of both partial and total destruction; it made intent a pivotal element when intent can be difficult to prove. But its general meaning was surely clear enough. The problem has not been with the wording but with the implementation.

For the stark facts are that genocide, so far from being brought to an end, has recurred repeatedly ever since:

in (amongst others) East Pakistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, and now in Darfur. The international community has failed not just once but on every single occasion to prevent genocide or to halt it.

A number of reasons have been put forward to account for this failure. It has been blamed on the Cold War, on the United States (as the only superpower), or on the failings of the United Nations as an organisation.

There is some justice in each of these arguments. But the problem is, surely, a deeper one. It is that the international community is just that: a community of sovereign nation states, all reluctant to justify intervention in the internal affairs of any of their number. Nowhere is this more obvious today than in the case of Darfur, where the indifference of the international community is once again so apparent.

More than 300,000 have been murdered here by government armies and their terror apparatus, the dreaded Janjaweed. The orders have been genocidal ("to change the demography of Darfur and empty it of African tribes"). The ideology is genocidal (with killers chanting "kill the blacks, kill the slaves" as they attack). The actions are genocidal. And, as always, there has been the attempt to deny the crime.

In this case, denial takes the form of claims that it is "only" a civil war; that war crimes are being committed equally by both sides; that the government is only trying to reassert its sovereign authority. And that calls for intervention are part of an imperialist plot by the "West" to reassert its control over an independent African state, a plot in which somehow "Zionist" influence can be detected.

These shameful arguments must be refuted. It is not a civil war but a one-sided assault by a state on its citizens. That state is committing mass murder. National sovereignty is being abused, as always in genocide. There is no threat from the West and of course Zionism has absolutely nothing to do with this.

Except perhaps in one indirect sense, which is not do with Israel but with the Holocaust, to which Zionism is, of course, one response. Because there is



Philip Spencer

Photo: R. Frensdorff

a connection between the Holocaust and what is going on in Darfur. But it is a connection which is today the exact opposite of some conventional wisdom. There was for a time an argument about the supposed uniqueness of the Holocaust. Some used to argue that any attempt to claim that the Holocaust was unique led to a denial that genocide could be occurring again. (Nothing could be as bad as the Holocaust). If this was ever the case, it has not been so for some time. Those who deny the recurrence of genocide today do not do so by stressing the uniqueness of the Holocaust. In fact, it is now very much the reverse. It is those who do take the Holocaust seriously, who remember the indifference which made it possible, who are the most vocal in invoking the Genocide Convention and calling for intervention today.

Why? Because the Genocide Convention was (for all its faults) a product of the Holocaust, a recognition that it was an event that changed the world in some profound way. Whatever the many, sometimes seemingly intractable, problems posed to our understanding by the Holocaust, there is some knowledge that we do now possess. We know now that modern nation states can plan to kill large numbers of their own people; that, in the international community as it is structured, nation states have the power, the resources and the authority to do so. And we know too that the only agency that can save those people is outside that nation state, and that the problem of indifference is not merely, not primarily, national, but global.

PAST STAFF INTERVIEWED

The Library is interviewing former staff and volunteers about their time here to get a better understanding of the day-to-day work involved in keeping the Library running. These interviews should not only give an insight into the daily routine of a unique institution, eventually they will also aid our archivist in cataloguing the Wiener Library archive.

The first person to be interviewed was Christa Wichmann who worked at the Library for 29 years, from the mid-1960s to 1994.

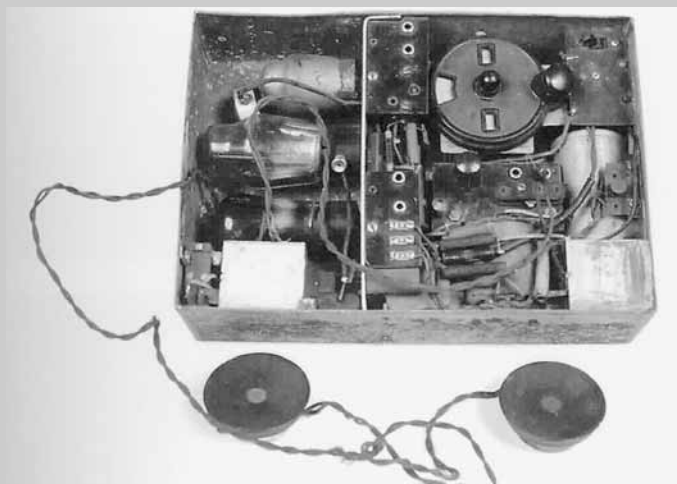
When Christa first started at the Wiener Library it was an enclave of elderly German Jews, with only one or two token English staff members. Christa was drawn into a rescue mission of press cuttings which had got damp. This involved removing all cuttings from an equally damp blue box, carefully unfolding and drying each cutting before refolding it to store in a new blue box. At the same time the press archives team created a general index of all cuttings.

In this age of the internet younger readers often do not appreciate the vital importance of newspapers for the dissemination of news. The Wiener Library Press Archive is unrivalled in its depth of coverage of Holocaust-related topics. Not only were the cuttings one of the most important sources of news, they also took up most space. Pre-microfilming, the press cuttings were threatening to take over the building. There were even shelves on either side of the entrance hall.

BORROWING LECTURES ON CD

There is now another good reason to become a Friend of the Library. If you missed one of the lectures or conferences organised by the Library you already had the opportunity to listen to recordings of the events, even without being a member. However, hitherto we used the original tapes for this and therefore could offer this service only on our premises. Now, as with our Eyewitness Accounts Collection and our photographs, digitisation has helped to smooth access to a key part of our holdings as well. Last September we started to record our events on our computer system. This enables us easily to put these recordings onto audio CDs which our Friends can then borrow and listen to at leisure using their CD player at home.

Already available are CDs of our successful fundraising event last September at the Inner Temple 'Nuremberg in History'; the four events in our joint lecture series with Birkbeck College on the theme of war crimes trials, memory and the camps, featuring Donald Bloxham, Linda Melvern, Tzvetan Todorov and Ulrich Herbert; as well as a recording of our HMD conference in January 'The Indignity of Indifference' with Philip Spencer and Helen Bamber.



Clandestine radio used in the Lodz Ghetto.

While thus conserving the fruits of our current activities we are also in the process of digitising taped recordings of past decades' events to make more and more of these treasures accessible in comfort as part of this service exclusively available to our Friends.

FORTHCOMING LECTURES

TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2007

The Wiener Library, 7pm

PROFESSOR ULRICH HERBERT

THE NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS:
FORMATION, DEVELOPMENT AND
CONCEPTUALISATION

Ulrich Herbert has been Professor of Contemporary German and European History at Freiburg University since 1995. Currently, he leads a research group whose aim is to re-examine the history of Germany from 1920 to 1970, with a view to establishing the extent of personnel, structural and ideological continuities in this period. In addition, he is leading research projects on 'the processes of integration and liberalisation in West Germany, 1950-1980' and 'immigrant workers and immigrant workers politics'. Professor Herbert was awarded the Leibniz Prize of the German Research Council in 1999, Germany's most prestigious award for scientists. Among his recent publications in English are *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich* (1990), *National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German Perspectives and*

Controversies (War and Genocide Vol 1, 2000 and Vol 2, 1999).

WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL 2007

**Room B33, Birkbeck, Malet St,
London WCI, 7pm**

PROFESSOR ORLANDO FIGES
THE GULAG IN MEMORY

Orlando Figes is Professor of History at Birkbeck, University of London. His research interests cover many different aspects of Russian, Soviet and East European history. His major publications are on the history of the Russian revolution and the cultural history of Russia since 1700, although he also has an interest in the Stalinist period and the communist regimes of Eastern Europe. He is currently working on a history of private life under the communist system. His book, *The People's Tragedy* (see below), won the Wolfson history prize, the NCR book award, the W.H. Smith literary award, the Longman/*History Today* book of the year and the *Los Angeles Times* book prize. Among his publications are *Peasant Russia, Civil War: the Volga Countryside in Revolution* (1989), *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924* (1996),

(joint author) *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: the Language and Symbols of 1917* (1999), and *Natasha's Dance: a cultural history of Russia* (2002).

TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2007

**Room B33, Birkbeck, Malet St,
London WCI, 7pm**

PROFESSOR DR VOLKHARD KNIGGE
COMPLEXITY AS OPPORTUNITY:

HISTORY AND MEMORY IN THE
BUCHENWALD MEMORIAL AFTER 1990
Volkhard Knigge studied history at the University of Oldenburg and later trained in Psychodrama and Psychoanalysis. After completing his doctorate on the problems of trivial historical awareness, he worked for several years as an academic assistant at the Zentrum für Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung and later, was assistant to Professor Dr Lutz Niethammer at the Historical Institute of the Friedrich Schiller University, Jena. He became Director of the Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora in 1994. He has written and published extensively on remembrance and historical didactics, and is a leading member of several academic advisory committees.