Facts matter to us all

How we collect, preserve and share Holocaust and genocide history
Dear Friends,

2016 was an extraordinary year – in the wider world as well as at the Wiener Library. Regardless of one’s views of Brexit, the rise of nationalism, populism and authoritarianism that marked the year must be of concern to many. The apparent erosion of the consensus achieved by liberal democracies after World War II – that narrow nationalism coupled with religious and ethnic prejudice is a destructive force that led the world to catastrophe – threatens to destabilise the world. The darker side of the internet and social media – appearing to create an epoch of ‘post truth’ and a will to deny facts and reality – at times makes ours seem a world turned upside down.

Dr Alfred Wiener didn’t know the internet or Twitter, but he would recognise many of the tensions and political forces at work today. He understood the power of rhetoric based on hatred and anger and he committed his life to challenging it with verifiable facts and truth, which are the only antidote to the poison of lies.

Dr Wiener’s legacy lives on today in the institution he bequeathed to us – a vast collection ready to serve the cause of truth and justice. The challenge facing those of us to whom this precious legacy has been entrusted is how to take our message to the world. The answer, perhaps ironically, is the very same technology through which the challenge to truth is coming – the internet and digitisation.

To reach our goal will be neither easy nor cheap. But it is plain that our society is at a crossroads. History does not repeat itself but it rhymes. The genocidal killings of Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur carry inescapable echoes of the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide. We need to face facts: antisemitism is real, racism is real. People who feel at sea in modern life hanker for certainties and strong leadership. Politicians of authoritarian inclination are ready to offer simplistic solutions that blame problems on outsiders. We have seen this pattern in history and we know where it can lead. We need to stand up for truth, invest in truth and send its message around the world.

As this Annual Review was being prepared we learned of the death of Mirjam Finkelstein, Dr Wiener’s youngest and last surviving child. Mirjam was a great supporter of the Library. She was generous, humane, witty, warm and wise. Her wry observations often brought a touch of humour to matters of utmost seriousness. She was treasured by all who knew her and will be much missed.

In this review we tell the story of how our team works with our community to enrich the institution, and why we need to expand our activities to meet the growing challenges posed by an increasingly dangerous world.

In friendship,

Ben Barkow, Director
We actively rescue evidence of the Holocaust and other genocides for future generations.

Peter Briess came to the Library one day with a shopping trolley full of documents, asking if they’d be of interest to us. The documents included letters, Red Cross telegrams and photographs that had survived the Nazi onslaught on the Czech lands – thanks to the resourcefulness of his family’s former housekeeper in Olomouc, who had hidden them until after the war.

The collection is stunning. Peter, who arrived in Britain with his parents in 1939, had done research on his family’s fate. He created a vast family archive of rich material that spans the early decades of the twentieth century. Peter has helpfully described the poignant photographs and documents in his family’s collection. Some of Peter’s collection can be seen on the Library’s Digital Wall of Honour (wienerlibrary.co.uk/Digital-Wall-of-Honour), which complements plaques outside our Reading Room.

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“Peter has helpfully described the poignant photographs and documents in his family’s collection.”

Peter Briess, a German Jewish refugee, helps archivist Howard Falksohn organise his family’s document collection.
As Britain’s national archive on the Holocaust, the Wiener Library collects material regarding the Holocaust and other genocides. We hold documents, photographs, audio-visual recordings, art works and small objects, and we actively develop our collections to serve scholars, educators, professional researchers, the media and the public.

As Holocaust survivors and refugees age and their legacy shifts to the next generation, we are keenly aware that the time to collect first-hand evidence about the Holocaust is quickly passing. We are eager to accept donations of family papers while it is still possible to capture information about the origins of the material. We also seek donations of printed materials to fill gaps in our collections. Exile and refugee newsletters from around the world as well as circulars published in internment and Displaced Persons camps are of particular interest to us.

The Leo Baeck Lodge in London was founded by Jewish refugees in 1943. The Library’s founder, Alfred Wiener, was himself an early member. In addition to organising social gatherings, the Lodge was instrumental in providing relief and social care for former refugees and survivors, especially the elderly.

The Lodge was named after rabbi and theologian Leo Baeck, who arrived in London in 1945 after surviving incarceration in Theresienstadt. He became the honorary Life President of the Lodge.

In 2016 the Leo Baeck Lodge in London closed its premises on Fitzjohn’s Avenue. Betty Trompeter, Life President, felt that the Wiener Library was a natural home for its archive.

In summer 2016, twenty large cardboard boxes full of correspondence and organisation files describing the activities of the LBL arrived at the Library. I’ve prioritised cataloguing and making available the LBL archive, as it is a testament to the resilience of Jewish refugees in Britain.

Howard Falksohn, Archivist
Kat Hübschmann, Head of Collections, surveys a small portion of the Library’s vibrant poster collection.

The Library has a terrific collection of posters, which are not easy to research or display due to their fragility and size. The collection is diverse: it includes posters that were hung in Nazi-run ghettos, examples of Nazi propaganda, as well as items from the post-war period that provide a glimpse of fledgling Holocaust commemoration, such as exhibition posters.

I’ve supervised the posters being repackaged in sturdy archival-standard boxes and portfolios. The most fragile items are protected by chemically inert, transparent pockets to minimise damage from handling.

The posters range in size from A3 to A0, with some even larger than this, making the packaging expensive. The posters will then be digitised and stored at our offsite storage facility near Bicester.

Kat Hübschmann, Head of Collections

Our challenge to preserve and protect

We safeguard fragile materials that have survived the Holocaust.

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Kat Hübschmann, Head of Collections

Why we preserve

The challenge for the Wiener Library is to preserve original materials in perpetuity while providing wide access to the content of the originals. Paper quality in the middle of the 20th century was at its lowest owing to the high acidity of the paper, which was amplified by wartime shortages. The paper becomes increasingly brittle, making conservation of the original difficult.

Digitisation allows us to enable access to researchers and store the originals off site in climate-controlled facilities. In an age of ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts’, the importance of retaining original material – despite the challenges – is increasingly important.

Our challenge for the future is to preserve the digital files. The Library will continue to ensure that our digital holdings remain accessible even through rapid technological changes.

Kat Hübschmann, Head of Collections, surveys a small portion of the Library’s vibrant poster collection.

Why we preserve
Reaching beyond our walls

We make our collections accessible to all through vibrant exhibitions, public events and our growing digital resources.

The late Bernard Simon’s collection was donated by his partner, Joseph Brand (left, with Deputy Director and Head of Research, Dr Christine Schmidt), a German Jewish refugee in Britain. Simon kept a diary aboard the HMT Dunera, a ship that carried him to internment in Australia. The diary was displayed for the first time in the Library’s exhibition, *A Bitter Road: Britain and the Refugee Crisis of the 1930s and 1940s*. 

"My story is only a small part of what actually happened. But it is the truth." — Bernard Simon, 1945
Our exhibitions, lectures, film screenings and workshops showcase our remarkable collections and make recent scholarship more accessible to our diverse audiences. Our visitor numbers have steadily climbed, with about 4,000 visitors to exhibitions and events in 2016.

In 2016, we hosted three temporary exhibitions, including one on Britain and the Holocaust, in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust, new archaeological research on Treblinka and British responses to the refugee crisis — then and now. We hosted more than sixty popular events throughout the year.

The Library’s digital collections are already large and growing fast. Digital technology offers opportunities for sharing precious and unique materials in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago. Items that belong together but are physically separated by thousands of miles can be reunited online; a photograph too fragile to be handled can be scanned and viewed simultaneously by hundreds of people across the globe.

In 2016 we began to implement an ambitious plan to remodel the Library’s online presence to serve as a dynamic platform for sharing our entire digital collection, beginning with our uniquely powerful collection of eyewitness testimonies from Holocaust survivors.

Dr Toby Simpson, Head of Digital

"Our digital future is already here, opening a window onto the past."

Dr Toby Simpson leads the Library’s digital strategy
We need your support…

…to fulfil our vision for the future – to collect, preserve and share our archive with the world.

Please donate now to help us in our work:

Collect

We seek to:

– Acquire ten major digital archives, including the 50,000 Shoah Foundation Holocaust Testimonies, testimonies from the persecuted Yazidi communities, and others. We also seek smaller archives on paper, which will be digitised.

– Expand book holdings from 80,000 to 150,000 volumes and make the catalogue records available online.

– Double our photo archive holdings and digitise them to ensure their longevity and usefulness.

– Expand our holdings of Nazi material targeting children and youth.

Preserve

We aim to:

– Adapt our in-house storage to continue to meet British Standard 5454, but use passive and energy-efficient measures.

– Create a sustainable preservation and conservation budget.

– Create digital surrogates of all early twentieth century holdings produced on low-grade acidic paper to preserve originals.

Share

We will strive to:

– Create a digital repository, matching physical holdings in scale, breadth and authority.

– Create secure and direct online access to our digitised archive.

– Produce online educational resources for audiences at all stages of learning about the Holocaust, especially school children and the general public.

– Establish fellowship programmes for cutting-edge scholarship.
## Financial Summary 2016

### Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations and grants from individuals and charitable organisations</td>
<td>215,666</td>
<td>235,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacies (including £50,000 for the Fraenkel Prize fund*)</td>
<td>72,720</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant from The Wiener Library Endowment Trust</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>190,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant from Association of Jewish Refugees</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and outreach, grants from Toni Schaff Memorial Fund (&quot;TSMF&quot;)*</td>
<td>22,290</td>
<td>187,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitisation project, grants from Department for Communities &amp; Local Government and TSMF*</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant from the German Foreign Office</td>
<td>77,938</td>
<td>76,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund*</td>
<td>48,263</td>
<td>76,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants from European Holocaust Research Infrastructure Fund*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Tracing Service (ITS) Grants*</td>
<td>34,332</td>
<td>40,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other grants*</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>69,521</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>45,409</td>
<td>45,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>953,618</td>
<td>1,265,768</td>
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</tbody>
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**Notes:**
- *This income is restricted and only available for purposes specified by the respective donors. It is not available for use in the general operations of the charity.*

### Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running of the Library</td>
<td>443,643</td>
<td>425,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and outreach programmes</td>
<td>190,608</td>
<td>219,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitisation</td>
<td>118,394</td>
<td>20,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications, publicity, fundraising</td>
<td>112,044</td>
<td>66,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Tracing Service (ITS) archive</td>
<td>82,089</td>
<td>97,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>947,258</td>
<td>829,437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
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### Income less expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net restricted income</td>
<td>49,463</td>
<td>373,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net unrestricted income</td>
<td>55,022</td>
<td>63,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>6,360</td>
<td>436,331</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The income and expenditure figures were extracted from the full audited and unqualified accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016. Copies of this, and the Report of the Trustees, are available on our website: wienerlibrary.co.uk/accounts or can be obtained from: The Wiener Library, 29 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DP Tel. 020 7636 7247

UCL postgraduate student Amy Wannemacher emphasises that the wealth of materials housed at the Library has had a profound impact on her research and studies. “Without it, I would be lost." The Library is truly one of London’s best kept treasures.
THANK YOU

PATRONS
- The Andor Charitable Trust
- The Catherine Lewis Foundation
- Sir Mick and Lady Davis
- Ernst Hacht Charitable Foundation
- The Daworton Trust
- The Foyles Foundation
- The Frenkel Charitable Trust
- Paula & Martin Frenkel
- Myrna & Isaac Kaye
- Joanna Millan
- The National Cataloguing Grants Programme for Archives and its co-founders
- Sue Oxelf
- Poam Foundation
- Rachel Charitable Trust
- David Rauch
- Roberta & Robert Pfaffman
- The Roden Family
- The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund
- Solomon Oppenheimer Philanthropic Foundation
- Ellen & Richard Schmidt
- The Sibell Foundation
- Helen & Anthony Sporo
- The Sibell Foundation
- The Watson Foundation
- The Weldon UK Charitable Trust
- Rosie & Andreas Wesemann

BENEFACTORS
- The Aspect Trust
- Dr James Byock
- Colin & Sue Roswell
- Boscow Research Charitable Trust
- Manna Dicks
- The Barbara & Stanley Perl Foundation
- The Bek Family
- Hanna Nyman
- The Watson Foundation

SUPPORTERS
- The ‘45 Aid Society
- Sir Trevor & Lady Chinn
- Graham Davin
- Lord Finkelstein OBE
- Olivia & Neil Goldman
- Camilla & Jimmy Strauss
- The Tolkien Trust

LEGACIES
- Dr Lilian Furst
- Jean Harff
- Dr Harold Jarvo
- Gunter Lubowski
- Charles Reznik
- Helen Reinbank
- Gerry Sigler

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the following:
- Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR)
- Auswärtiges Amt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
- The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe
- Tuixen Foundation
- Wiener Library Endowment Trust

We would also like to extend our thanks to the many other individuals, volunteers and organisations who support our work and those who wish to remain anonymous.

“It is necessary to amass reliable evidence to cause the whole impact of these facts to be felt by future researchers.”

Dr Eva Reichmann, former Director of Research, AJR Journal, 1957

Researcher Noah Silver explores the International Tracing Service archive, one of the largest digital collections on the Holocaust, only accessible in Britain at the Library