KEEPING TRUTH ALIVE.
Since moving to our premises in Russell Square we have worked hard to remove many of the barriers that keep people from engaging with and benefiting from our amazing collections. This has allowed us to reach out to new, more diverse and much larger audiences. As we strive to fulfil this mission, we face unprecedented challenges. The current economic climate causes the Library – in common with all charities – real difficulties in securing funding. This affects not only our exciting new programmes and initiatives, but also the vital core work of preserving and helping people to share the memory and lessons of the Holocaust.

It is perhaps an irony that precisely these tough economic times generate the sort of prejudice and hostility towards minorities that gave rise to the creation of the Library and the horrific events recorded in its collections. At the moment when we are needed most, we are struggling to sustain our work. It is impossible to ignore the parallels between what is contained in our archives and what is being experienced by religious and ethnic minority groups today. Using our collections to inform and educate people about the threat of antisemitism, racism and prejudice is an imperative as we take our mission forward.

I hope this Annual Review demonstrates our achievements as we work to transform the Library into the open, accessible and authoritative centre that Britain needs and deserves: our National Holocaust Archive. We hope you will join us on this journey.

Ben Barkow
Director
In 1939, the decision was made to move the Library’s collections to London. Throughout the war, British and Allied governments made extensive use of the collections. Then, after the war, the Library contributed significantly to the success of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, and later the Eichmann Trial, and was a key source of information for survivors and refugees attempting to trace their families and friends.

Today, the Library holds world-class collections including published and unpublished works, press cuttings, photographs and eyewitness testimonies and audiovisual collections, and these lie at the heart of our work. The Library aims to serve scholars, researchers, the media and the public as a library of record, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds in understanding the Holocaust and its historical context.

We reach out to audiences across the UK, encouraging students, the media, writers, policymakers, educators, legal professionals, refugees, survivors and their descendants to use our wealth of materials in their search for the truth.

The generation of Holocaust survivors and refugees – who have been a key source of living testimony for Holocaust education – is decreasing year on year. As these powerful voices fall silent, the burden of taking their mission forward will fall on institutions concerned with Holocaust education and commemoration. The Wiener Library, which is Britain’s National Holocaust Archive, offers by far the largest collection of materials for this work.

Established in Amsterdam in 1933, the year Hitler seized power in Germany, the Library was originally founded as an information service to expose the true nature of the Third Reich. Initially working from a hotel room, Alfred Wiener and his team gathered information on the situation of the Jews in Germany, and drew up carefully checked reports to be distributed to governments and Jewish organisations all over the world.

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Students, ranging from sixth-form pupils to postdoctoral researchers, make use of the collections for the purposes of study and research, both through the document collections and secondary literature. Individuals’ families with a personal connection to the Holocaust find that the Library offers a place for commemoration, reflection and memory, enabling them to gain knowledge through informal research, donating material and engaging socially with the Library as volunteers or at events. As a living memorial to the evils of the past, the Library is dedicated to verifiable truth, democratic accountability, openness and tolerance of ethnic and religious differences.
The Wiener Library has served researchers, academics and the general public as a Library of record for over seventy years. Today, our unique archival collections continue to grow at one of the fastest rates in the Library’s history – both securing archival collections from the aging generation of Holocaust survivors and refugees and their families, but also building one of the largest collections of published works on contemporary genocide and the issue of comparison in the UK. The photo archive, eyewitness testimonies and audiovisual collections are used extensively by the media, advocacy organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and educators who need such material to bring their messages to life.

We are committed to helping new and existing audiences engage fully with the Library’s collections by removing the physical, intellectual and linguistic barriers to access. We will continue to develop the Library’s online presence, increasing the ability for readers and visitors to browse the Library’s key collections through web based tools. And we aim to extend the Library’s Volunteer Translation Programme and make working translations of key documents and eyewitness accounts available to readers at the Library and, where appropriate, online.

This year we have added 65 new document collections and over 500 books to our holdings. We have helped 165 survivors and their families learn new information about the fate of their loved ones. As well as this, our volunteers have translated 35 eyewitness testimonies, delivered 38 public tours of the collections, repaired 120 pamphlets, and sorted 29,400 press cuttings, acquiring many new skills in the process.

The Wiener Library is Britain’s largest collection of material related to the Holocaust, its causes and legacies. The collections cover a very wide range of topics from the documentation of the Holocaust itself to the experiences of refugees and exiles in Great Britain and the international resistance against the persecution of the Jews.

The Library’s unrivalled archive continues to expand and develop and the Library now holds around 70,000 books, over 25% of which are to be found nowhere else in the UK, and 2,800 periodicals. Our archives contain around 150 million pages of documentation, including the vast collection of the International Tracing Service. Document collections can include personal diaries and correspondence, legal papers, court and company records, as well as records of forced labour and displacement during and after World War II. They are the unique, personal stories of the Holocaust and along with our eyewitness testimonies and unpublished memoirs they provide the future of Holocaust remembrance and education in this country.

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In 2013, our temporary exhibitions and events brought in well over 6,000 visitors, and these numbers continue to grow. This year the Library curated and displayed three temporary exhibitions:

- Wit's End: The Satirical Cartoons of Stephen Roth
- Child Refugees: Five Portraits from the Kindertransport
- The Wiener Library at 80: The Endurance of Truth

Each of the exhibitions was well-received and attracted several hundreds of visitors, with the exhibition on the Kindertransport in particular attracting wide press and publicity, as well as donations of original material to the Library's collections.

In addition two travelling exhibitions have been produced based on temporary exhibitions:

- Rescues of the Holocaust: Remembering Raoul Wallenberg and Lives Saved
- Child Refugees: Five Portraits from the Kindertransport

Travelling exhibitions have been displayed across the UK in schools, libraries and public buildings. On Holocaust Memorial Day 2014 'Child Refugees' was displayed to hundreds of travellers in the concourse of Kings Cross Station, an event which generated over 200 new followers of the Library on social media platforms.

The digital framework for online exhibitions and an interactive map showcasing some 500 of the Library's collections of family papers have also been completed, ready for uploading of content and launch in 2014.

In this area of heritage and history, perhaps more than in any other, the need for original, authorised sources is vitally important. With a growing culture of Holocaust denial and 'revisionist' opinions attempting to re-write history, the Library operates in a subject field where the accessibility, contextualisation and dissemination of its collections are crucial to the protection of historical truth.

By securing the widest possible access to the Library's resources, we hope to ensure the historical record can be shared and learned from in the future.

Educating and engaging with a wider audience

The Holocaust, and the study of the Holocaust, is internationally recognised as important. The study of the persecutions of the Nazi Holocaust is a central element in human rights education, serving as the exemplar of modern genocide and directly relating the Library's heritage to any community directly or indirectly affected by genocide.

In Britain, the Library's collections speak to anyone themselves connected to refugee movements resulting from genocide, as well as to any citizen concerned to understand this scourge of modernity.

At a time when religious and ethnic hatred and intolerance are rising, and disillusion with conventional politics threatens to undermine the democratic tradition, these lessons are becoming increasingly important.

The Library has an active educational role, and this area of our work has grown rapidly in the past two years. The Library is now putting on over 100 public events a year including lectures, talks, book launches, seminars, conferences and skills workshops, and mounting regular temporary exhibitions. They cover an extensive range of subject areas relating to our collections and attract a wide variety of visitors, bringing together academic and public audiences in a way few other institutions can.

As part of a collaborative project with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum we have organised and participated in three workshops promoting scholarly research using our archives. In addition we have participated in an EU-funded project called the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, which is dedicated to bringing together digitally both large and small Holocaust archives, so that researchers and the public can more easily find research and learning materials about the Holocaust, regardless of geographical location.

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The family papers and photographs of Holocaust survivor and documentary maker Mira Hamermesh were one of 65 collections added to the Library’s collection in 2013. Mira was born in Lodz in 1923. She fled the Nazis with her brother via the Soviet Union.
In 2011, The Wiener Library was awarded a grant of £475,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards an ambitious project to open up the Library’s collections to larger and more diverse audiences. The project, called Keeping Truth Alive has been extremely successful, delivering greatly improved visitor numbers and engaging a more diverse audience. It has been a period of enormous positive change and upheaval, and the Library’s focus must now change to maintaining and building on the success achieved.

This funding ends in December 2015. However, the Wiener Library has successfully applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Catalyst: Endowment grant. Simply put, if the Library raises £1 million, they will match this with their own £1 million.

This resulting £2 million Endowment would ensure that the Library can commit long-term to a programme of activities and exhibitions designed to remove barriers to access and encourage greater interaction with new and existing audiences. It will maintain the Library’s exhibition programme, currently attracting over 5,000 visitors a year, which enables direct engagement with the collections and helps visitors learn about their own and others heritage. It will also support our activities programme which consists of a wide range of community, outreach and learning events that make varied use of the Library’s resources and attract new audiences to the Library.

A permanent, as opposed to project-funded, learning and engagement team will be better placed to build partnerships and programmes for the future, knowing that their positions are secure, and volunteer programmes can be sustained allowing for continuous recruitment and skills development.

By creating a new Endowment Fund, the Library will reduce the existing pressure on The Wiener Library Endowment Trust and make the organisation more financially resilient. Since our relocation to 29 Russell Square, and during a time of financial recession, our existing Endowment fund has had to deliver ever-increasing proportions of the Library’s core funding. The creation of a new Endowment Fund will enable our education and outreach work to be sustained.

In essence the fund will ring-fence future support for the element of the Library’s work that currently has the greatest impact on our wide range of communities and individuals. Whether through engaging volunteers, educating the public, assisting teachers, translating testimonies or putting on events and exhibitions, the Library is actively breaking down barriers to accessing our collections and helping audiences to interact with an area of UK heritage that is all too easily seen as ‘foreign’ or ‘removed’. The Library is Britain’s National Holocaust Archive and in the years to come, with your help, it will thrive as a living memorial and continue to be an essential resource for future generations.

Match a Million to Keep Truth Alive

Whether through engaging volunteers, educating the public, assisting teachers, translating testimonies or putting on events and exhibitions, the Library is actively breaking down barriers to accessing our collections.
The Library’s finances depend substantially upon grants and donations from governments, charitable foundations and individual supporters. We are enormously grateful to all our donors for their generous support.

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Surplus of income over expenditure: 61 (36) 25

Whilst the balance sheet summarised below shows total funds of £4.1m, restricted funds available for future specified activities were £620,000 and unrestricted funds represented by net current assets (including cash) were £113,000, the balance funding the lease at Russell Square. This reflects the tight financial position and the ongoing need to raise funds and strengthen the financial base of the Library.

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The Library’s audited accounts are available on our website www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/accounts