Prominent Polish-Jewish Intellectual Named First Center Fellow

Last year, the Center for Judaic, Holocaust and Peace Studies introduced a new program that brings established scholars and intellectuals to the High Country alone, educating thousands in person. The Center is pleased to announce that Prof. Kostek Gebert (Warsaw, Poland) has accepted our offer. Prof. Gebert is nothing short of a legend. He combines, as one of his recommenders from Italy described, the “role of a public intellectual of the highest class” with numerous scholarly and non-scholarly undertakings including that of one of the leading journalists in Poland and Europe.

Gebert has taught psychology at the Medical Academy, Warsaw, “under Communist rule, but soon came into conflict with the regime. He co-founded the famed “unofficial,” Jewish Flying University in the 1970s. In 1989, he joined the newly-founded Gesher Wolnoszczasy, now a leading Polish daily, and continues to contribute to many international media outlets, including the BBC. Gebert established the Melesza magazine, which remains Poland’s most influential Jewish publication. He is the author of sixteen books and is one of the most prominent voices in the rebirth of the Jewish community in Poland. Despite the paused visa programs, he hopes to be able to welcome him on campus soon!

A Word From Our Director: Facing the COVID-19 Crisis

Expanded Cooperation with AppTV.

This past academic year, the Center has again expanded its partnership with AppTV, Appalachian State University’s student-staffed television channel that operates out of Boone. In late November, the station broadcasted a presentation of “Testimony.” This broadcast is entitled “Versus One-Time Holocaus.”

In March, AppTV aired “The Road Not Taken with Holocaust Survivors: Deepening Conversation versus One-Time Testimony.” An acclaimed oral historian, psychologist and playwright, Goldberg is also a fellow at the Research Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. The collaborations will continue on its platform, including our international March of the Living program.

For donations, please contact/send to thomaspegelowkaplan@appstate.edu.

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Center and Partners Organized Program Against Police Brutality in NC

The Rev. Dr. Bradford Lilley speaking at Belk Library

Weeks before the killing of George Floyd, the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies welcomed the Rev. Dr. Bradford Lilley to campus for conversations with students, faculty and staff as well as an evening presentation on “The High Priest Poor’ and Struggle Against Racism and Police Brutality in 1970s NC.” The visit was the Center’s contribution to the Black History Month events on campus and continued its successful past co-operations with Intercollegiate Student Affairs, the Black Student Union, the Black Faculty and Staff Association and Appalachian State University’s Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Willie C. Fleming. The timeliness of the event – even before the national and global protests – was underscored by an overflowing lecture hall that had audience members standing in the hallway to listen to the speaker. The Rev. Dr. Bradford Lilley serves as Senior Pastor at Shiloh’s Glory Church International. He has been in the pastoral ministry in NC for thirty years. In the early 1970s, he was a member of the Winston-Salem chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP), the BPP’s only chapter in the South. Baudrillard in Cours Pour la Conquete de l’Amérique, with Hype P. Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California, the Black Panther Party, for Self-Defense was an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist party organization that began with initiatives to protect African American neighborhoods and prevent acts of police brutality. Lilley spoke at length about the work of the BPP, including the launch of the Fire Braksilip Programs in several NC cities and the stop-police violence in the state that the party sought to end. During the Q&A participants discussed the collaboration and conflicts of the Panthers with the Jewish community and police brutality in the US today.

To make a donation in support of the Center’s work, please contact the CAS Director of Development Carey Fissel at (828) 262-7622 or fisselcm@appstate.edu.

Research by the Center Affiliated Faculty


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Yon HaShoah Commemorations 2020/5780 on ZOOM

Like everywhere across the United States and even in Israel, the COVID-19 crisis profoundly reshaped the ways in which communities and organizations marked the yearly Yom HaShoah. Instead of large public gatherings, open-air readings of the names of the victims, and in-person processions by the last survivors, the commemorative practices went on-line. Together with the Temple of the Holy Country and Appalachian State University’s Hill, Student Supporting Israel, and AEPi chapters, the Center held a commemoration in the form of a ZOOM meeting on the evening of April 29. Some two-dozen members of the campus and Jewish communities in and beyond North Carolina signed in. Participants read names of European Jews murdered by the Germans during the Shoah, recited the Mourner’s Kaddish, and beyond North Carolina signed in. Participants read names of European Jews murdered by the Germans during the Shoah, recited the Mourner’s Kaddish, and

Center Participates in German Initiative to Fight Antisemitism and Strengthen Democracy

Late last fall, Center director Dr. Pegelow Kaplan traveled to Germany to participate in an international conference on the role of the media in countering the anti-Semitism as well as one of the many initiatives to counter the rise in antisemitism in the Berlin Republic. As part of its broader goals of strengthening democracy and supporting civil society, the German Federal Agency for Civic Education interviewed international experts in Holocaust and perpetrator studies on a range of key issues from the legal prosecution of perpetrators to the role of language in Nazi rhetoric. Participants included Prof. emeritus Christoph B. R. Bonsens, “Ernstwa, WA,” Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Fried, director of Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Studies (Jerusalem), senior public prosecutor Andreas Berndel-Dautzem, and Center director Prof. Thomas Pegelow Kaplan (Boone, NC). Excerpts of these interviews were recently made available. See https://www.bphle-mediaktiv/304399/article-der-details-im-nationalsozialismus.

Training the Next Generation of Holocaust Scholars and Educators in Washington, DC

Dr. Jürgen Matthaeus gives students a preview of their work at the Mandel Center

In February before the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, right after a trip to Munich, Dr. Jürgen Matthaeus, the Mandel Center’s Director of Applied Research, and sixty opportunity students to present their research to Mandel Center staff and guests. The program also included a meeting with Zarah born Holocaust child survivor Theodore Klyman, but time was spent most on intensive research at the USHMM’s massive archive. The students worked on innovative projects that stretched from Jewish religious practices as a form of resistance in the Nazi occupation to a regional study of Jewish collaboration in Lyon in Vichy France. They also learned about future research and internship opportunities at the Mandel Center and had the chance to consult other holdings at the Library of Congress and the National Archives.

After a year break with the campus already on lockdown, the students presented their findings to a broader public in a series of Zoom-organized ZOOM meetings. They received comments from prominent experts on their topics such as Dr. Patricia Heberer-Raske, the senior historian of the Mandel Center, Prof. emeritus Geoffrey G. Gillette, University of Florida-Gainesville, and Dr. Suzanne Bosow-Fleming, the director of international academic programs of the Mandel Center. A huge thank to the Rosenblatt Family Foundation which generously funded the excursion.

Yoram Ninio (right) at the Center’s offices

Hildegard Kaplan, Theodora Klayman’s daughter (left) at the Center’s offices

Holocaust child survivor Theodore Klyman speaks about her family’s largely unsuccessful struggles for survival in fascist Croatia

Ongoing Hildegard Kaplan Ancestry Webinars (2020-21) “Everyone Has a Name” during the ceremony.

Yoram Ninio (right) at the Center’s offices

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