A Task As Pressing As Ever: Confronting Anti-Semitism and Racism at ASU and in the High Country

At the beginning of the fall semester, ASU students returning to campus were greeted by a large banner with racist messaging prominently displayed by white supremacists on the skywalk over Rivers Street. Again timed with the High Holidays, anti-Semitic stickers appeared in front of campus buildings. Carvings on wooden campus benches called on “Jews” to “leave.”

In light of the neo-Nazi violence in Charlottesville, many hate groups design these racist acts to provoke, get attention, and so many anti-Semitic and racist acts in the United States, none of this is surprising. It should also not be forgotten that many hate groups design these acts to provoke, get attention, and recruit—also among ASU students, the Center and its partners will soon shed light on the array of responses to these challenges, bringing, among others, a human rights historian to analyze the Antifa movement. The Center is also working with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., to bring new resources to the task of countering the many threats.

To grasp the rise of racial hatred more fully, the Center also focused on the global dimensions of this hatred.

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On Tyranny. Continuing with insights about American democracy and with ideological sympathies to their causes.

The Center organized traveling exhibitions on “Jewish Life in German Today” and “Jewish Life in Germany Today” to challenge the narrative of anti-Semitism in the United States, and to “put a face” on the reality of anti-Semitism.

A Center-organized traveling exhibition on “Jewish Life in German Today” was on display at a central location in Plemmons Student Union until early October and provided the many people who passed by the panels with insights about the struggles and adjustment of Jews living in the country of the hangman. The accompanying program included a talk by German diplomat Klaus Becker, who maintained that German democracy was not threatened by the recent parliamentary elections and return of a far-right party to the Bundestag, the first time since 1961. In addition, Prof. Till van Rahden (Université de Montréal) explained in an insightful lecture why post-war Germany became an important center for the study of Jewish history.

A panel discussion with Julia Schmidt, a former member of the Jewish community in Bonn, set a different tone. Having recently left after years of ever rising anti-Semitism, she concluded that Jews could no longer feel safe in the Berlin Republic and should leave for Israel.

The ASU administration, represented by Provost Dr. D. Krueger, once more supported the work of the Center, which will only step up its activities in the coming months and years.
Greetings from Jerusalem,

Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, Director of the Center for Judaic, Holocaust and Peace Studies


I n collaboration with the USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research and The Center for Academic Excellence, the Center offered the first in a series of special workshops to provide the campus community with information on how to utilize the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive. Attendees focused on teaching, research and learning endeavors. Facilitated by Dr. Jared McBride (UCLA/ USC Shoah Foundation), workshop participants aimed to search the more than 54,000 video testimonies of survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust and other twentieth-century genocides that is now fully accessible at ASU. In 2018, the Center plans to offer more workshops for members of the ASU community as well as teachers in the High Country.


In late October, the Center hosted the highest-ranking official from Yad Vashem ever to visit ASU. Professor Dan Michman, the head of Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research and the incumbent of the John Najmann Chair of Holocaust Studies, gave a talk on the state of the academic and research institutions, also about gun control. To provide more ASU faculty and students with opportunities to do so in a solid next step. And then the light rail stops at Mount Hebron and it is not to get off and start another day at Yad Vashem.

Autumn Min’er 18 [JHP minor] was invited to submit an article on her research on cultural resistance by French first-year laborers at the Volkswagen factory in the City of the KeK Car Brand with the United States (Shoah, Museum and the German Historical Institute), Dow College, and the University of Virginia. Furthermore, he received the honor of being added to the annual John Najmann lecture at Yad Vashem and to present his research at the Richard Kochavi Minerva Center for German History at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Furthermore, he published “History and Theory: Writing Holocaust Literature after the Linguistic Turn” in a new volume on Modern Germany in Transatlantic Perspective and had an edited volume on PAST AND PRESENT REFUGEE CRISES brought internationally and nationally acclaimed scholars, authors and educators to ASU, including Professor Michael Berenbaum (American Jewish University), Dr. Ralph J. Preiss (USC Shoah Foundation), and Sheryl Ochayon (Yad Vashem). He also co-authored the notes on the biblical book of Ecclesiastes with Brenman Breid on the partial New Oxford Annotated Bible from Oxford University Press. Professor Prof. Hankins had an article accepted in the in Simkha Bunim Shayevitch’s Israel, in early November. In addition to his work at Yad Vashem, Michman holds the chair of the Arnold and Leona Fiedler Institute of Holocaust Research and is the incumbent of the Abdi and Elna Siqseth Family Chair of Holocaust Research at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. He has written 1 books, including Pour une Historiographie de la Shoah: Conceptualisations, terminologies, définitions, problèmes fondamentaux (2001), The Emergence of Jewish Ghettos during the Holocaust (2011), and “Angst vor der Oszillation”, Die Entstehung der Ghettos während des Holocaust (2011). In recent research project is an examination of the social functions of yaw books, for which she is getting ready to apply for a YIVO fellowship.