The Center was also able to organize its next academic conference that will bring 10 scholars from Armenia, the United States, and Europe to campus.

Challenges remain. The Center continues to work against an ever-rising tide of white supremacist, racist and anti-Semitic activities. In 2020, 2021, and 2022, the Center had 17 public readings of thousands of names of Jews murdered by the Germans and their allies during the Holocaust. Some 40 community members, including President Dr. Kraeger, Rev. Chris Horne with the Reformed University Fellowship, Provost Dr. Kruger, Rev. Chris Horne with the Reformed University Fellowship, Provost Dr. Kruger, Rev. Chris Horne with the Reformed University Fellowship, and the Interfaith Alliance, have visited the Center to learn about its programs and to provide a platform for the survivors.

We are working with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to address rising anti-Semitic acts and to prevent future acts of violence. The Center is also working with the Jewish Agency for Israel to organize its next academic conference, which will bring 10 scholars from Armenia, the United States, and Europe to campus.

The Center has also started to organize its next academic conference that will bring 100 scholars from Armenia, the United States, and Europe to campus.
The Center Back in Israel

In March 2019, the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies held its first academic conference in Israel. The Center cooperated with the Los Angeles-based USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research, the Foundation’s 2014-founded academic arm that is playing an important role in advancing interdisciplinary scholarship on the Holocaust and other genocides, and the Holocaust Studies Program at Western Galilee College, Israel. From March 11 until March 13, close to 50 scholars from Mexico City to Warsaw, Poland, and from Edinburgh, Scotland, to Jerusalem, gave in-person, participated in panels, and did so in open forums for the “Future of Holocaust Testimonies in Akko, Israel. The conference took place on the campus of Western Galilee College (WGC), in Akko, a historic port city first settled in the Early Bronze Age (Established in 2009, WGC is a vocational college that currently educates some 3,000 students. The student body is a mosaic of cultures and religions. More than ninety percent are non-Orthodox. About seventy percent of the students are female. WGC is home to a vibrant Holocaust Studies Program with some 100 majors chaired by Prof. Zion Gohren. Together with his colleagues, Prof. Miriam Office and Cohen, Cohen was the Center’s main conference partner in Western Galilee. Some of the conference discussions were held at nearby Bet Eliahuzi Haghetron, the Ghetto Fighters House Museum (GFHM). Established in 1959 by survivors of the 1943 Witwe Ghetto Uprising, including Yisrael Zajdeiner, Rebiya Fedorin’s first Holocaust museum. Dr. Michal Sados, the director of Yisrael Fedorin, the GFHM’s children’s memorial, led a special tour of the site for the conference participants.

Polish Scholars and Diplomats revisited the Nazi Genocide of Jews in Poland at the Akko Conference

The conference discussions turned even more controversial when the invited Polish ambassador to Israel, Prof. Magdalenka, demanded that it was “not only the role of historians, but also and perhaps especially the role of diplomats to explain the Holocaust.” Magdalenka raised many questions when he addressed Holocaust scholars throughout the conference, to adhering to the “facts.” In his keynote lecture entitled “The Holocaust: 75 Years After It Ended,” Dr. Gerhard Weinberg, the William Rand Kenan, Jr., Emeritus Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, discussed and analyzed the testimonies and roles of Polish historians and Jewish activists “Agitators Reinhartz” in Yom Yehudah. He indicated a conference of many insights and memorable presentations such as LVA Professor Gabi Roth’s on-staging of testimony of Shmuel Rosenthal, a professor of history at Bar Ilan University, who survived the Holocaust as a boy in Nazi-occupied Poland but who survived the Polish resistance. In fact, to reach a wider audience, the Center has made some of the presentations available on its website (https://holocaust.appstate.edu/center/conference/future-holocaust-testimonies-in-akko/)

The conference in Akko also was the opportunity of a lifetime for me and I felt that it will have a great effect on my future career,” said Weinberg. After their return, the young scholars were invited to present their findings at the Greenhorns, Jewish Resistance at an event co-revived for the Center’s Sister. Some also discussed their work at the new Center space in Boone. The two topics ranged from the preservation of Holocaust memory at Yad Vashem and Brit Lomdei Hadassah, the Holocaust, and Peace Studies’ new competitive student travel grants for Israel. The students participated in the proceedings, discussed research questions with the invited scholars to attend, and made valuable connections for their work. With the support of the Center, Sarah Roth, 20, Elizabeth Knowlton, 20, and Sarah Potomski, 19, Halley Roth, 20, and Annette Waters, 20, conducted research at Appalachian State University, the Central Zionist Archive, the Ghetto Fighters’ House Museum and Amherst, and Hebrew University. In addition, some involved peace activism from organizations such as “Women Wage Peace” and “Women in Black” and observed their peaceful protests in Jerusalem. "By sitting in Israel in Holocaust Memorial Day, I thought about my research taught me not only knowledge and skills that will last me a lifetime. The process of constructing my research taught me not only how to be a productive researcher in a new environment, but also how to do important research on peace activism.”

Thank you!

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