A myth persists that Jews did not talk about the Holocaust for years following the event. That is not true at all, and the book that we are receiving today, The Extermination of the Polish Jews Album of Pictures, is evidence that Jews were never silent about the fate of Eastern European Jewry. In fact, all along, in the camps, in the ghettos, in the woods, and elsewhere, people were documenting what was happening around them and to them. They believed that even if they did not survive, at least their writings might. And after the war ended, those documentation activities magnified. This picture album should be seen in light of that context. The book is by Philip Friedman and Gershon Taffet and was published in Lodz by the Central Committee of Jews in Poland. The goal of the Central Jewish Historical Commission was to gather documents, testimonies, photographs, and other evidence about the life and death of Polish Jews under the German occupation that was to be used in the prosecution of war criminals and eventually as sources for a history of Polish Jews during the war. The Extermination of the Polish Jews Album of Pictures chronicles the atrocities of the ghettos and death camps and contains over 200 photographs captioned in English, Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Polish, and French. The introduction, written by Gershon Taffet, notes that “This album is meant to be an illustration of the history, the pictures documenting the atrocities came from those who perpetrated the atrocities.”

Copies of the book are rare and valuable. For example, Baumann Rare Books sold a volume for $2,200. Antiquarian Booksellers and Amazon are listing the work for $950. We, ourselves, can’t really affix a price to the book because of its historical significance and what it represents to the world. We are honored to accept this gift from the family and will display it in the Ed Grad Reading Lounge of the Belk library in memory of all those who were killed during the Hitler era.

Rosemary Horowitz

Summer Study Abroad Program

The Center continues to endorse Dr. Brantz’s summer study abroad program on the Holocaust. In 2012, ten Appalachian State students traveled to France, Germany, and Austria to study the Holocaust in Dachau, Nuremberg, and other places where it took place. Funded by student fees, the traveling seminar began in an 18th-century chateau in Strasbourg, France with careful study of the Holocaust. Students then traveled to Paris, Munich, Salzburg, Berchtesgaden, Garmisch, Nuremberg, and Heidelberg, visiting sites connected to the Holocaust and to European culture. In Paris, for example, the group visited the Louvre and the newly opened Shoah museum. In Nuremberg, we visited the former Nazi rally grounds and the home of 16th-century artist Albrecht Duerer. The goals of this program are to better understand the Holocaust while experiencing Europe today. Students earned six hours of academic credit. Program evaluations were very positive. Over the last 14 years, 178 students have participated in this program. Next summer’s trip will run from May 11 to June 6, 2013.

Rennie Brantz

Minor in Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies

The Center encourages students at Appalachian to include a minor in Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies in their program of study. Recommended courses offered fall semester 2012 include Dr. Alan Horster’s classes in “The Old Testament” and “Biblical Hebrew.” Dr. Rennie Brantz is offering two fully enrolled courses on the Holocaust, one in the History Department (His. 3154: “The Nazi Holocaust”) and one in the First Year Seminar program (ECO-1200: “Jews and the Holocaust”). Adjunct professor Amy Hudnall is teaching a course on peace studies (GLS/IDS 2350: “Introduction to Peace Studies”). These and other courses listed on a check sheet may be used to meet the requirements for this minor. We currently have 15 students pursuing the minor.

Rennie Brantz

All About Hillel

Hillel has been extremely active this Fall. For the holiday, Rosha HaShana, the students in Hillel went apple picking. (Image below) For Sukkot, the Hillel club built a Sukkah and held its annual “Israeh Dancing in the Sukkah” as well as many other activities. Since the Temple of the High Country was built, there have been many more Jewish students participating in Hillel.

Near the end of the semester, Hillel will be participating in Find Yosel a Holiday Home, a program that matches Jewish students participating in Hillel.

Bynum Elozory ’14
Student assistant for the Center and Hillel member

Hillel Students picking apples for Rosha HaShana

Faculty Achievements

Rennie Brantz will have the chapter “New Historical Accounts of the Holocaust in France and Italy” in The Holocaust and World War II: In History and In Memory, to be published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing Company.

He attended the Lessons and Legacies Conference at Northwestern University in November 1-4.

Rosemary Horowitz will have a chapter “Authenticating Polish-Jewish Relations during the Holocaust in the Historical Fiction of Uri Orlev” in The Holocaust and World War II: In History and In Memory, to be published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing Company.

She will present a paper entitled “The Function of Art in the Tshenstokhover yidn Yizker Book” at the Association for Jewish Studies Conference in Chicago on December 16-19.

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September 2012- August 2013

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A Word from Our Director

I am happy to report that we are busy in all three areas of the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies. In July, we showed Arissa Kemper’s film, Yoo-Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg. This is the story of television pioneer Gertrude Berg, who was the creator, principal writer, and star of The Goldbergs, a popular radio show that ran for 17 years. The show became television’s very first character-driven domestic sitcom in 1949. The TV series combined comedy and social commentary with Jewish characters. Berg received the first Best Actress Emmy in history and paved the way for women in the entertainment industry.

Later that month, we held the 11th annual Martin and Doris Rosen Summer Symposium on “Remembering the Holocaust.” The teachers in attendance had forty hours of instruction with internationally known scholars, such as Michael Berenbaum and Ann Millin. Building on our international focus, we welcomed two teachers from Slovakia. Our award winning Holocaust educator from North Carolina, Lee Holder, was the resident teacher again. We were especially honored to have Morris Glass as a guest speaker. Only eleven years old when the Nazis invaded Poland, he talked about how his childhood originally filled with school, sports, and movies was spent in the ghettos and camps.

In September, we celebrated the International Day of Peace with the local Mountain Peacekeepers. Along with other town-wide activities, we screened the film The Day After Peace, which documents the efforts of Jeremy Gilley to establish a world-wide ceasefire one day a year. As a result of his efforts, the United Nations General Assembly set aside September 21st as that day. A lively discussion followed the film. We welcomed Ralph and Vivian Jacobson back to campus for two days in October. He gave a lecture on his childhood in Germany and on the following day, she spoke about Marc Chagall in Israel. We also accepted a special donation of a rare Holocaust book and have placed the volume in the display case of the Ed Grad Reading Lounge.

The search for the Leon Levine Distinguished Professor of Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies is underway. Advertising has begun and a committee of five faculty members has been formed. From time to time, I will let you know about the search.

All in all, we have lots going on here at the Center. We look forward to the upcoming year and hope to have another exciting array of lectures, films, concerts, and other activities for our community.

Warm regards,
Rosemary Horowitz
Interim Leon Levine Distinguished Professor of Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies

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