

Bulletin

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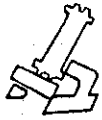
Arnold and Leona Finkler

Institute of Holocaust Research



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המכון לחקר השואה ע"ש ארנולד וליאונה פינקלר
The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research
הפקולטה למדעי היהדות
FACULTY OF JEWISH STUDIES

The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research is honored to present the first issue of The Bulletin - a newsletter covering current developments at the Institute.

Since the appearance of Keshev 1, the Institute's periodical, in December 1985, we have received numerous requests from Israel and abroad for information about our staff and projects. The present newsletter, to be published regularly, is in response to these requests.

The Institute welcomes an exchange of information and publications with scholars and Institutions. Comments and requests for additional information should be addressed to Dr. Judith Tydor Baumel, Editor, The Bulletin, The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.

Message From The Institute's Co-ordinator Dr. Dan Michman

The appearance of Keshev 1 (December 1985) marked the beginning of a new surge of activity at the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research. Most noteworthy was our conference on Religious Life and Religious Thought During and After the Holocaust which took place at Bar-Ilan University in June 1986. During the four day gathering papers were delivered by thirty eight scholars from Israel, the United States and Europe. The topics included various aspects of religious life, religious response and rabbinical activity during the Holocaust and religious thought after the Holocaust. The conference proceedings are now being edited for publication.

The topic chosen as the subject of the conference serves to accentuate the uniqueness of the Institute. In addition to furthering general Holocaust-related scholarship, the Institute places special emphasis on the examination and study of topics relating to religious life and thought during that era. The historical topics chosen so far as Institute projects reflect this goal. Although budgetary limitations of the past years have curtailed the number of Institute sponsored publications, we are continuing our research projects and hope that their results will be published in the future.

Activities During the Academic Year 1987-8

After a summer of administrative reorganization following the Institute's transfer to its new offices in the building of Judaic studies, we have once again taken up our projects and public activities.

Two symposia were held since the beginning of the academic year. On December 27, 1987 the annual Tenth of Tevet afternoon symposium was held by the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, in conjunction with the Department of Jewish History and the Teacher's Training Section of the Department of Education at Bar-Ilan University. The symposium was devoted to the topic of Oriental Jewry During the Holocaust and the question of whether the establishment of the State of Israel is an outcome of the Holocaust. Participants included Prof. D. Sperber, Dean of the Faculty of Judaic Studies, Dr. D. Michman, Prof. M. Abitbul, Dr. N. Lorch, Mr. N. Yosha, Dr. C. Yaoz and Mr. S. Rafael.

The annual symposium in memory of David Asael, a leader of Bnei-Akiva in Hungary during and after the Holocaust, was held on February 23, 1988. The symposium was opened by Prof. M. Eliav, Chairman of the Institute for the Study of Religious Zionism. Participants included Dr. Z. Moshkowitz, who delivered a lecture on the re-organization of B'nai Akiva in Hungary after the Second

World War and Mr. S.Schmidt, who spoke about the rehabilitation of B'nai Akiva in Czechoslovakia during that period.

The Interdepartmental Seminar of the Institute held three meetings this year. On January 6, 1988, Dr. M. Paldiel of Yad Vashem spoke on "The Rescue of Jews by Gentiles in Occupied Europe During the Holocaust". On January 28, 1988, Dr. Andrezj Bryk of the Jagelonian University of Cracow delivered a lecture in English on "The Memory of the Holocaust in Poland Today". On March 8, 1988, Dr. Y. Zur of the Institute for Research of Religious Zionism spoke about "New Holocaust Scholarship in East Germany Today". Dr. Zur's lecture was based upon his experiences during a trip to that country earlier this year.

The Institute is continuing its tradition of cooperation with Holocaust-study bodies in Israel and abroad. The annual number of queries to and offers of co-operation with the Institute have doubled since the inception of our Information Center in late 1986. In late 1987 the Emunah Women's Technological College in Jerusalem approached the Institute for academic assistance in creating a Holocaust study program for its students. Through the assistance of Dr. Michman, Dr. Yaoz and Dr. Baumel, an interdisciplinary program of Holocaust study was created to be carried out within the framework of the Jossi Berger Holocaust Study Center at the Emunah Technological College. As of the 1988-9 academic year this program will be directed by Dr. Baumel.

In early 1988 research trips to Great Britain and the United States were undertaken by Prof. Katzburg and by Dr. Baumel. In

addition to delivering a lecture at Florida International University's Holocaust Memorial Center, Dr. Baumel met with Mr. and Mrs. Finkler and conveyed to them the latest developments at the Institute.

The Institute's technological highlight of the year was the acquisition of our computer. In late 1987, funds from the Abraham Spiegel Chair were allocated for purchasing a computer for the Institute. The computer was delivered in late January 1988 at which time Mrs. Berman was instructed in the use of its bi-lingual software. This Bulletin is the first major Institute project to be carried out utilizing our new computer.

Staff and Projects

The staff of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, working in conjunction with the staff of the Institute for the Study of Modern Jewish History, is presently engaged in over a dozen historical projects on Holocaust related subjects. We wish to introduce our readers to the research and administrative staff of the two Institutes and to provide a short description of the projects now in progress.

The Institute is directed by an administrative Board consisting of the Institutes Chairman, Co-ordinator, the University's Chancellor, President and Rector, the Deans of the Faculties of Judaic Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences and the chairpersons of the Departments of Jewish History and General History.

Prof. Nathaniel Katzburg of the Department of Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University has served as Chairman of the two Institutes since 1981 and continues to act in that capacity without compensation. A specialist in the history of Hungarian Jewry and of the political history of Palestine, Prof. Katzburg is the author of Hungary and the Jews 1920-1943 (Ramat Gan, Bar-Ilan U.P. ,1981).

Dr. Dan Michman of the Department of Jewish History at Bar-Ilan

University is the co-ordinator of the two Institutes. Dr. Michman is a co-author of Yad Vashem's Pinkas Ha-Kehilot Holland (Heb., Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, 1985) - an encyclopedia of the Jewish Communities in the Netherlands, and author of Het Liberale Jodendom in Nederland 1929 - 1943, (Amsterdam, van Gennep, 1988) - on the history of Liberal Judaism in the Netherlands. His fields of specialization include, Dutch and Belgian Jewry, refugees from Nazi Germany, and religious life and leadership during the Holocaust.

The research staff of the Institutes, all part-time workers, are presently engaged in the following projects:

Dr. Judith Tydor Baumel is co-editor of both the Institute's periodical, Keshev and the The Bulletin. Dr. Baumel is engaged in several research projects: The Beth Jacob girls school network during and after the Holocaust; Hachshara kibbutzim organized by liberated concentration camp inmates in Post War Germany; Kehilat Morya - a Belgian refugee congregation in New York 1943-1986; Jewish refugee children in Britain and the United States during the Holocaust. Her book A Voice of Lament: Prayer and the Holocaust (Heb.) is to be published by Bar-Ilan University.

Dr. Yehuda Ben Avner is a member of the joint Israel-German History Schoolbook Commission, Dr. Ben-Avner maintains extensive contact with German historians, religious figures and educators, some of whom have been visitors at our two Institutes. Dr. Ben-Avner specializes in the history of Orthodox Jewry in Germany

between the two World Wars and is the author of Vom Orthodoxen Judentum in Deutschland Zwischen Zwei Weltkriegen, (Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1987).

Mrs. Chava Eshkoli is the newest member of the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, having joined the staff in early 1988. Her project on the religious political parties in Palestine and their relationship to the Holocaust is an outgrowth of her M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation, which has been completed in the Department of Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University. Both Mrs. Eshkoli's thesis and dissertation deal with the Jewish political leadership in Palestine during the Holocaust and its attitude towards the rescue of European Jewry. Among her publications is an article on the Transnistria plan which appeared in the "Goldberg Report" (Seymour M. Finger (ed.) American Jewry and the Holocaust, (New York, 1981).

A former educator, Dr. Joseph Karniel is engaged in a study of Orthodox Jewry in Austria between the two World Wars. He is the author of Die Toleranz-politik Kaiser Josephs II, (Gerlingen-Stuttgart, Heinz Bleicher, 1985/1986).

Mrs. Rivka Knoller is now in the final stages of preparing an M.A. thesis on "Hitler's Perception of the United States: 1933-1945". Mrs. Knoller has completed the subject index of the Institute's Oral History collection (the Dworzecki collection). Her projects at the Institute include a study of Zionist religious youth movements

during and after the Holocaust, and a survey of literature concerning the denial of the Holocaust, (see "Project Spotlight").

Mrs Penina Meislich, who has submitted her doctoral dissertation on Rabbi Itzhak Nissenbaum and Itzhak Leibush Peretz, specializes in Eastern European Jewry and has done research on Jewish life in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust. Her projects include a survey of topics concerning religious life during the Holocaust as they appear in "Yizkor" books and a study of the religious Zionist movements in Poland during and after the Holocaust.

In addition to researchers, the Institutes maintain a part-time joint administrative staff.

Mrs. Ruth Berkley is the chief librarian of the joint library of the two Institutes. Mrs. Berkley, who is proficient in several languages, has had many years of experience as a senior librarian.

Mrs. Zippi Berman is the secretary of both the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research and the Institute of Modern Jewish History. Mrs. Berman co-ordinates the office activity and is responsible for the Institute's computer.

Mrs. Esther Drenger assists Mrs. Berkley in the library and Mrs. Berman in the office. Together with Mrs. Berkley, Mrs. Drenger has been instrumental in compiling a subject index in our library.

Apart from projects carried out by Institute staff members, the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research carries inter-departmental status and maintains contact and co-operative research projects with members of other departments. Among those who maintain an especially cooperative relationship with the Institute is Prof. Zvi Bacharach of the Department of General History at Bar-Ilan University who is also a member of the Institute's board. Prof. Bacharach specializes in modern German history and is the author of Racism-the Tool of Politics. From Monism towards Nazism, (Heb.) (Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1985). Another lecturer in close contact with the Institute is Dr. Mordechai Mantel of the Department of Jewish Philosophy at Bar-Ilan University. Dr. Mantel was a participant at the conference on Religious Jewry and Religious Thought During and After the Holocaust.

Dr. Chana Yaoz of the Department of Education has long been involved in teaching the literature of the Holocaust. Dr. Yaoz has established a unit for strengthening Holocaust awareness in Education and Educational Research under the auspices of the Department of Education at Bar-Ilan University and in cooperation with the Institute. Dr. Yaoz and Dr. Zecharia Dor-Shav, also of the Department of Education have studied The Influence of Teaching

Holocaust Literature on the Empathy of Pupils towards Holocaust survival and Jewish suffering. Dr. Yaoz is the author of several studies including: The Holocaust in Hebrew Literature - as Historical and Trans-historical Fiction, (Heb., Tel Aviv, Eked Publishers, 1980).

Dr. Netta Dor-Shav of the Department of Psychology at Bar-Ilan University has studied various aspects of the second and third generation of Holocaust survivors, a project for which she has received assistance from the Institute.

The Institute also maintains contact with Prof. Haim Dasberg, of the Department of Social Work at Bar-Ilan University. Prof. Dasberg is the administrator of Ezrath Nashim hospital in Jerusalem and holds the Elie Wiesel Chair for the Study of the Psycho-Social Trauma of the Holocaust at Bar-Ilan University.

The Institute for the Study of Religious Zionism, in co-operation with the Institute is engaged in a wide ranging research project on the rehabilitation of the religious zionist movement in postwar Europe, 1945-1949. This project is headed by Prof. Mordechai Eliav, Director of the Institute for the Study of Religious Zionism. Among its participants are Mr. Isaac Wilner, presently completing his M.A thesis on the Displaced Persons camp of Foehrenwald (Germany), and Mr. Baruch Goldfinger (specializing in the Displaced Persons camps in Germany), Mrs. Penina Meislich

(Poland), Dr. Y.Z. Moshkowitz (Hungary, Transylvania), Mr. Shlomo Leibowitz (Rumania), Mr. Shlomo Schmidt (Czechoslovakia), Mr. Moshe Ishon, editor of the daily newspaper "Hazofeh" (Austria).

Dr. Yaakov Zur is yet another historian maintaining a close relationship with the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research. Dr. Zur is a research fellow at the Institute for the Study of Religious Zionism and specializes in the history of Orthodox Jewry German in prior to the Second World War. His current project involves a study of Religious Zionism in Germany under Nazi rule.

Project Spotlight: Literature concerning the Denial
of the Holocaust

The growing interest in Holocaust studies during the past two decades has given rise to many historical and literary trends. While most have received a positive response from both historians and interested lay readers, there is one trend which is both disturbing and dangerous: the revisionist movement in Holocaust history known popularly as "the denial of the Holocaust". Mrs. Rivka Knoller of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research is now engaged in surveying this literature and the historical and political responses to its appearance and claims.

Q. Mrs, Knoller, how did the Holocaust revisionist movement begin?

A. The first publications of this sort which received international acclaim began to appear over twenty years ago, between 1966 and 1968 although first publications on the subject appeared already in 1957/8. At that time, most of the serious historians tended to ignore them, claiming that the material didn't even deserve attention. They felt that if they answered the claims stated therein, it would put Holocaust revisionist literature on par with historical works deserving serious consideration.

Q. When did this attitude change?

A. In 1966 when the Holocaust revisionist Paul Rassinier's first book' appeared, serious historians took little notice. At first Rassinier did not attempt to deny the Holocaust outright. He began by claiming that its Jewish victims numbered far less than six million. Only in his second book, Debunking the Genocide Myth, did he state outright that the Holocaust as we know it did not take place. Rassinier was followed by others who reiterated similar claims. The best known among them was Arthur Butz, a professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University, author of The Hoax of the Twentieth Century. Other well known Holocaust revisionist historians are Austin J. App and Harry E. Barnes. Only Barnes was a historian, yet all have attempted to revise history.

Q. What are the major trends in Holocaust revisionism today?

A. I would divide those denying the Holocaust into two distinct groups. The first outrightly deny the existence and purpose of the gas chambers, the process known as the "Final Solution" and the number of its victims. The second group does not deny that people were murdered but refers to them as "Polish citizens", "Soviet citizens" thus denying the ethnic and religious affiliation of the victims. This trend is prevalent primarily among countries of Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. Furthermore, this last group claims that there was a

Zionist-Nazi conspiracy or coalition during the Holocaust and thus the Holocaust victims were actually victims of a Zionist plot.

Q. Have there been any attempts to confront and respond to revisionist claims?

A. Yes, historians such as Professors Yehuda Bauer and Yisrael Guttman have written about the subject in depth. In 1978 the French Jewish activist Serge Klarsfeld published *The Holocaust and the Neo-Nazi Mythomania* which refuted revisionist claims. Actually, this is easier than it sounds. When one reads the revisionist material, most of which is presented within a complete academic facade, one finds almost no originality. The current revisionists quote revisionist of the early 1980's. Those are actually quoting Butz who is himself quoting Rassinier. There is no originality, only a mountain of ponderous footnotes most of which eventually can be traced back to one source, Rassinier. There is an entire institute in California (The Institute of Historical Review) devoted to Holocaust revisionism. They even publish a journal and hold conferences every year. But they all end up making the same claims.

Q. What do you see as the greatest danger of the Holocaust revisionist movement?

A. I fear that one day some of their claims may be accepted as legitimate historical revision, especially those coming from the Eastern Bloc, which claim a Zionist conspiracy and deny the victims their Jewish identity. In a sense, this is the newest phase of anti-semitism and our project aims to deal with all aspects of this threat. Along with continuing to collect up to date material on the subject, the Institute intends to publish a research summary report which will be available to scholars and other interested readers.

Focus on the Library

What distinguishes a Holocaust library from Judaica or history libraries? How would you visualize the ideal library of a university-based Holocaust research institute in Israel? These are just two of the questions which we posed to Mrs. Ruth Berkley, chief librarian of the Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research.

Q. Mrs. Berkley, in what state did you find the library when you came to the Institute in April 1987?

A. When I began work the Institute had been without a librarian for over a year and a half. Piles of material had accumulated which required cataloging. In June of that year the Institute, and with it the library, moved to the Judaic Studies Building which gave us an opportunity to reorganize our collection.

Q. What type of collection does the library maintain?

A. My experience had been in a totally different field of library science. This was my first in-depth involvement with Holocaust literature. However, as I began to get more involved with the work, I realized that we have quite a treasure in our little library.(10,000 volumes). Unfortunately, though, I feel that we

are missing much material in Hebrew which could be helpful to students. I fear that in a few years all the interesting material which we have in German will lay untouched.

Q. In terms of its collection, what do you find to be the library's greatest shortcoming?

A. As I stated previously, there is a lot of material missing in Hebrew. For the students, material in their mother tongue is an invaluable study aid. If we had the budget to do so, I would order every publication on the Holocaust authority which appeared in Hebrew. Similarly, It would be important for us to have a collection of all the M.A. theses and doctoral dissertations written in Israel on the subject. We should also have a full collection of "Yizkor" books and not only the 80-100 volumes which we presently hold. Although the University's main library holds an additional 200 the total number of such books now in existence must be over a thousand. Finally, I am planning to contact the German local authorities which are publishing material on their former Jewish communities in order to receive this material from them.

Q. Tell us about your reorganization of the library?

A. At first we catalogued the material which had accumulated. Many books already on the shelves had no catalogue cards. Mrs. Drenger and I began to catalogue the material and type catalogue cards for all the books in the library. At first I was surprised that the library did not use the Dewey cataloging system, as does the University's main library. However, I soon understood why the previous librarian had decided to assign a topical and not a decimal system of cataloging. Our needs as a Holocaust research library are different than those of other libraries. This fact led to our next project, the compilation of a subject index of books in the library. Separate indexes have been compiled in English and in Hebrew. As of now the index includes 18 topics in Hebrew and 28 topics in English.

Another project which I instituted was the compiling of special bibliography files for the courses on the Holocaust which are being taught this year. At the beginning of the academic year I received a list of required bibliography. I had the material photocopied and put into folders which the students may borrow to photocopy. Thus, not only is it easier for the students to find the material, but it also saves on the wear and tear of the book on the list. In former years the students would borrow the book itself for photocopying and when that goes on 50 or 100 times a year the book begins to lose its shape, pages disappear etc.

When I began work at the library, its state of disarray presented a challenge. With the help of Mrs. Drenger and the staff of the Institute, I hope that we will live up to that challenge.

Publications

The Arnold & Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research is offering readers of the Bulletin an opportunity to purchase Institute publications at a significant discount. Prices quoted include postage and handling. The following publications are now available:

1) Yehuda Ben-Avner, Vom Orthodoxen Judentum in Deutschland Zwischen Zwei Weltkriegen, (Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1987) (100p.) \$15.00/20 shekel

2) Meir Edelstein and Penina Meizlish (eds.), Religious Jewry During the Holocaust 1939-1945: Guide to the Archives of Religious Institutes and Organizations in Israel, (Heb.), (Ramat Gan, The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, 1986) (140p.) \$9.20/12 shekel

3) David Farkas (ed. and comp.), Guide for Manuscripts and Printed Matter from the Legacy of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: the Saenger Collection Vol. I: letters and Hebrew manuscripts, (Heb.), (Ramat Gan, Institute for Research of

9) Chana Yaoz, Teaching the Holocaust - [Israeli] poetry, prose and plays,(Heb.) (Ramat Gan, The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, n.d.) (75p.)
\$3.80/5 shekel

10) Chana Yaoz, Young Literature-chapters in [Israeli] Poetry and Prose on the Holocaust,(Heb.) (Ramat Gan, Department of Education, Bar-Ilan University, n.d.). (70p.)
\$3.80/5 shekel