

<b>Institution:</b> University of Southampton		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28 History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> 28-02 Shaping Holocaust Museum Practice for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2003 – 2017		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor Shirli Gilbert	Professor of Modern History	October 2007 – August 2019
Professor Neil Gregor	Professor of Modern European History	September 1994 – present
Professor Tony Kushner	Marcus Sieff Professor of the study of Jewish/non-Jewish relations	October 1986 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> October 2015 – July 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Collaborations with major museums of National Socialism, Jewish History and the Holocaust in Great Britain, Europe and South Africa have placed <b>Shirli Gilbert, Neil Gregor, and Tony Kushner</b> at the forefront of national and international public history work. On the basis of their internationally recognised scholarship on diverse aspects of Holocaust memory in perpetrator, victim and ‘bystander’ communities they have been invited to work with curators as well as heritage and community engagement officers on the design of installations, exhibitions and activities at key sites of Holocaust education and commemoration. These include the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds, the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre, Manchester Jewish Museum and the Imperial War Museum, London. Since 2015 their input has led museums which, collectively, attract in excess of a million visitors a year, to reconsider simplistic master narratives of perpetrators and liberators, integrating victim and survivor perspectives firmly into their accounts, and placing the Holocaust within wider narratives of German, Jewish, European and global history.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research underpinning this impact case study has been conducted under the remit of the University of Southampton’s Parkes Institute for Jewish/non-Jewish Relations, which provides a collaborative intellectual space supported by seminars, symposia and shared projects.</p> <p>Within this context, <b>Shirli Gilbert</b> has researched and published extensively on Jewish experiences of the Holocaust. Most recently she has worked on a unique cache of letters written across four decades to and from Rudolph Schwab, a German-Jewish refugee who arrived in Cape Town in 1936. These have allowed her to explore the diverse ways in which Jews interpreted and responded to shared experiences of the catastrophe and represent a pioneering move in the ongoing work of restoring Jewish voices and perspectives on the Holocaust. This research on Holocaust memory in South Africa examines Jewish responses to anti-black racism since 1945; specifically, the extent to which German-Jewish immigrants to South Africa made connections between antisemitism and local racist practices. The impact is underpinned by articles and book chapters, published 2010-2018 [3.1].</p> <p><b>Neil Gregor</b> has written extensively on the history and legacy of National Socialist rule in Nuremberg, Germany. Working with funding from the DAAD, Humboldt Foundation, British Academy and Leverhulme Trust, he was the first to produce a comprehensive monograph on the city’s attempts, in the post-war era, to deal with the city’s painful associations with the Nazi past (the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds, the Nuremberg Laws, the Nuremberg Trials). The book elucidated the social and cultural logics underpinning the production of public narratives that still dominate today and has been instrumental in making local curators aware of the lacunae in their</p>		

current museums. The book won the Fraenkel Prize for Contemporary History in 2008 [3.2]. Other publications in both leading scholarly fora and public history projects on aspects of post-war memory in the city have cemented his reputation in this field [3.3].

**Tony Kushner's** ongoing research on the history of British responses to the Holocaust addresses both Establishment and public reactions since 1945, exploring the ways in which the British have come to script themselves as heroic liberators in self-serving, triumphalist accounts. He has published an extensive body of work that includes books, articles and chapters on British government responses to the Holocaust [3.4]; Britain and the liberation of Belsen, representations of Anne Frank in Britain, representations of the Holocaust in museums, refugee flows in the 1930s/40s, and the intersections of the Holocaust and other histories of racism [3.5, 3.6]. These have challenged, from a wide range of perspectives, the view either that Britain had no connection to the Holocaust or that its role was only as rescuer and liberator.

More than the sum of its parts, their work has argued for a greater contextualisation of Holocaust history, and informed new museum practice which:

- links Holocaust history to wider narratives of German and European history
- connects histories of perpetrators to histories of victims and bystanders
- relates histories of the Holocaust to histories of colonialism and genocide
- challenges profound "othering" tendencies present in popular understandings of the Holocaust
- encourages members of the public to see the Holocaust as part of their own history.

### 3. References to the research

**3.1** Shirli Gilbert, *From Things Lost: Forgotten Letters and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (Wayne State University Press, 2017). Listed in REF2.

**3.2** Neil Gregor, *Haunted City. Nuremberg and the Nazi Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Available on request.

**3.3** Neil Gregor, "The Illusion of Remembrance": the Karl Diehl Affair and the Memory of National Socialism in Nuremberg, 1945-1999', *Journal of Modern History*, 75.3:(2003): 590-633. <https://doi.org/10.1086/380239>

**3.4** Tony Kushner, 'The Holocaust in the British Imagination: the official mind and beyond, 1945 to the present', *Holocaust Studies* 23.3 (2017): 364-84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2017.1296084>

**3.5** Tony Kushner, *Journeys from the Abyss: the Holocaust and forced migration from the 1880s to the present* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017). Listed in REF2.

**3.6** Tony Kushner, 'Situating Racism between the Post-Colonial and the Holocaust in Britain: Anne Frank and Stephen Lawrence' in Jacob Eder, Philipp Gassert and Alan Steinweis (eds), *Holocaust Memory in a Globalising World* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016), pp. 77-94. Available on request.

### Grants and Awards

#### Shirli Gilbert:

- Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Cape Town (2010): £9k to catalogue Schwab letters
- Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture (2011): £4k research grant
- Kaplan Kushlick Foundation (2017): £20k for exhibition and short film based on *From Things Lost*.

#### Neil Gregor:

- Humboldt Stiftung Scholarship (2000): 9 months at University of Bochum, as the guest of Professor Norbert Frei
- DAAD 3-month Research Fellowship (2002): 3 months' research in Nuremberg
- British Academy Senior Research Fellowship (2004-5)

- Fraenkel Prize for Contemporary History (2008).

**Tony Kushner:**

- British Academy Postdoctoral Award (2015-8): £219k for research into Kindertransport.

**4. Details of the impact**

These scholars' work has burnished the Parkes Institute's well-established, international reputation for rigorous historical research into the Holocaust and its legacy, as well as its commitment to promote toleration and respect by engaging non-academic audiences in memory work. This expertise led institutions from across the UK, Germany and the wider world to invite them to advise on new displays, interpretation and pedagogical activities. The resulting collaborations are challenging cultural tendencies towards the quarantining of the past and the embrace of triumphalist positions, drawing out new connections between the Holocaust and contemporary narratives of migration and racism. Unfamiliar perspectives are facilitating engagement by new audiences (including children and recent migrants to Europe) who might otherwise view the Holocaust as alien to their own experience.

**Integrating Holocaust, Migration and Apartheid Narratives in South Africa**

**Gilbert:** Gilbert's expertise on Holocaust memory in South Africa led the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre to invite her to co-curate their new permanent exhibition. Her role was to ensure that the narrative reflected the most recent research on the 'Final Solution'. The exhibition includes a display box based on her 2017 book on the letters of Rudolf Schwab. The box briefly outlines the subject's story and how his experiences under Nazism impacted his life and identity as a white South African, making the larger history outlined in the exhibition more accessible for South African visitors. She has also curated a touring exhibition entitled 'Letters of Loss and Refuge', whose 55 display panels were based entirely on Gilbert's research. According to Rudolph Schwab's granddaughter (who spoke at the opening) it offers 'a glimpse into so many family stories that could or could not be told because of the silence of the topic' [5.1]. The opening of the Johannesburg iteration attracted the attention of at least 20 local, regional and national media outlets. From 2017 to 2019 the exhibition visited institutions in South Africa (Cape Town; Durban; Johannesburg), Germany (Hanau) and Israel (Jerusalem). At Hanau (Schwab's hometown) the mayor used the occasion of the exhibition's opening "to call on politicians and society to stand decisively against Far-Right tendencies." [5.2] Visitor book comments [5.3] attest to the international draw of the exhibition: comments are recorded not only from South Africa but from Europe, the United States, Canada, South America and Australia. They also register its deep resonance. A Brazilian visitor wrote that 'the texts are written in an easy way that helps us to understand the history'. Another wrote that 'from a multiracial Jewish family this was an incredibly informative exhibit and museum.' The large number of schoolchildren's essays in response to the 'Letters of Loss' exhibition document the exhibition's innovative engagement practice: 11-year-old students from three schools in the Cape wrote creative responses to an artefact on display entitled 'If This Trunk Could Talk'. Through this exercise they built and reflected on what they had learned in the exhibition to construct their own narratives of migration [5.4]. A selection of the best was published in the *Cape Jewish Chronicle* (1 December 2017) [5.5]. In November 2020, the Landesschule in Hanau hosted a second display to mark the anniversary of Kristallnacht: in addition to translating the exhibition panels into German the students produced a podcast about what happened in Hanau in November 1938, quoting a letter from the exhibition and referring to the destruction of the city's synagogue and Jewish cemetery [5.6].

**Integrating the Nuremberg Rally Grounds into European Narratives**

**Gregor:** In 2015 Nuremberg City Council, the Bavarian state government and German federal government embarked upon an EUR100m conservation project to preserve the crumbling archaeological remains of two iconic components of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds: the Zeppelin Tribune and the Zeppelin Field. Gregor was invited on the basis of his 2009 monograph to address an international public symposium of around 300 stakeholders on the theme 'Conserve! But Why?' As a result of his contributions to this symposium he was invited in 2017 by Nuremberg City Council to act as historical consultant to the city's Culture Office as it prepares its new public history offer for the Zeppelin Tribune and Zeppelin Field, scheduled to open in

2025 [5.7]. For the City Council Gregor's 'international reputation' provided reassurance that their collaborative endeavours 'would engage with broader European cultures of memory.' [5.8] His voice is thus leading conversations about one of the most important and sensitive historical museums in the whole of Europe. He has encouraged the local team to update existing exhibition displays to reflect contemporary historical knowledge: as a result, a full 're-write' of the installation is underway for 2025, into which he will have ongoing input. He has also encouraged the curators to place local histories of violence in their wider European and global historical contexts, to think about the demographic changes in the publics they seek to address (including, crucially, histories of migration to Germany) and to rethink the displays accordingly. This advice has been formalised in a 34-page summary document which was submitted in November 2018 and presented at a public discussion attended by around 200 local citizens in March 2019 [5.9]. The positive reception of his advice led to his invitation in July 2019 to join the newly-formed Academic Advisory Committee of the Documentation Centre Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds, the creation of which he had himself proposed. The City Council affirmed that 'your document was an important step for us in creating a preliminary pedagogical concept which will now be refined further with the Academic Advisory Board'. [5.10] Meanwhile, his advocacy for the 'Europeanisation' of the argument of the museum led to his invitation to address an audience at the Bavarian Mission to Brussels in March 2019 to discuss the city's application to be European City of Culture in 2025, alongside the mayor of Nuremberg and the Bavarian Minister of Education and Culture [5.11].

### **Moving British Narratives of the Holocaust Beyond Triumphalism/Exceptionalism**

**Kushner** In 2015 Kushner was appointed to the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Galleries Advisory Board to advise on the replacement of the long-standing Holocaust displays. The IWM's Content Leader for the Holocaust Galleries sought out Kushner for his 'peerless work on the subject of the Holocaust, and specifically questions of both the ethics of representation and Britain's relationship to the history.' As a member of the Group, he noted, Kushner made 'a critical contribution to the formation of the narrative that forms the basis of the project to create new galleries', which are expected to welcome up to a million visitors a year from July 2021. In addition to helping with the sensitive presentation of filmed testimony of survivors and 'atrocious imagery' Kushner inspired curators to address how questions of time and space shaped experiences of the Holocaust. Crucially, he has helped them to understand the need to avoid 'misleadingly celebratory implications' in its account of Great Britain's role in rescue activity [5.12] Having previously worked as historian of Manchester Jewish Museum (MJM), Kushner's relationship with the MJM is just as deeply-rooted. In 2016 the MJM invited Kushner to join the Historian Advisory Group tasked with advising on a £5m project entitled 'New Audiences, New Experiences', intended to create a new visitor experience to open in the museum's historical Sephardi Synagogue in 2021. The MJM's curator sought Kushner out as 'a critical friend in discussions of sensitive subject matter': partly 'to avoid a "celebratory" tone', and partly to use his expertise to 'present a variety of stories rather than a single neat narrative': stories embracing women and children, economic migrants, prostitutes and criminals [5.13]. The MJM attracts approximately 15,000 visitors a year and projects a trebling of annual attendance once the new galleries are opened [5.14]. In October 2020 Kushner and fellow Holocaust scholars wrote a joint letter to the public enquiry considering plans to erect a Holocaust Memorial in Victoria Park Gardens, a scheme which had gathered widespread political support since its announcement by then Prime Minister David Cameron in 2015. The signatories opposed the plan, noting that the choice of site (adjoining the Houses of Parliament) and inclusion of a 'British Values Learning Centre' fed a narrowly 'celebratory narrative'. Their statement was widely reported in the national press. Writing in the *New Statesman* historian Richard J. Evans saluted this protest against 'the political instrumentalization of the Holocaust.' The implication that 'Holocaust-related learning and research in the UK are inadequate' was, Evans noted, 'a grave disservice' to the 'excellent' work of Kushner and the Parkes Centre. [5.15]

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact****Gilbert**

**5.1** 'An evocative glimpse of letters of loss and refuge' *Cape Jewish Chronicle*, 1 September 2017.

**5.2** Mayor Claus Kaminsky cited in <https://www.op-online.de/region/hanau/schicksal-millionen-steht-10540986.html>

**5.3** Visitor Book excerpts 2017-2018.

**5.4** Children's essays, SAJC Museum.

**5.5** *Cape Jewish Chronicle*, 1 December 2017.

**5.6** School exhibition in Hanau, <https://hola-gymnasium.de/from-things-lost-eine-besondere-ausstellung-an-der-hola/> For podcast, see <https://hola-gymnasium.de/hola-funk/>

**Gregor**

**5.7** Contract, City of Nuremberg / Neil Gregor (December 2017).

**5.8** City of Nuremberg, internal correspondence giving rationale for collaborating with Neil Gregor.

**5.9** Neil Gregor, 'Renewal of Pedagogical Activities at the Nuremberg Party Rally Grounds, in particular at the Zeppelinfeld/Zeppelintribüne' (unpublished paper, November 2018), p.34.

**5.10** Letter from Nuremberg Culture Office to Neil Gregor.

**5.11** Neil Gregor, video of speech at Bavarian Legation, Brussels, March 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sT69aDCjQk> [at 50' 23"]

**Kushner**

**5.12** Letter from Imperial War Museum to Tony Kushner.

**5.13** Letter from Manchester Jewish Museum to Tony Kushner.

**5.14** On MJM visitor figures (including projections) see <https://www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Brief-Exhibition-Design-Team.pdf> and <https://www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/New-Board-Members-Wanted.pdf>

**5.15** Richard J. Evans, 'How should we remember the Holocaust?', *New Statesman*.