

# Martin-Springer Institute

## Global Engagement Through Holocaust Awareness

### 2019: YEAR IN REVIEW

#### LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

With each year, we are moving further away from the calamities of dictatorships, war, and genocide that struck Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. When accompanied by personal losses, the memories of those years intensify the grief we feel.



[Our website bedzinexhibit.org](http://www.bedzinexhibit.org)

With them, we are burying the pains and plight of a whole generation.

If only those years of political adversity and hatreds were memories of the past! Sadly, this is not the case. Beleaguered by reports on rising intolerance, antisemitism, xenophobia, and violence, we witness the dismantling of democratic structures at home and around the globe.

This makes our work at the Martin-Springer Institute all the more relevant and urgent. Please consider supporting us in the coming year — by attending our events, engaging with the topics and programs we offer, and contributing financially.

We hope to see you at our events in the coming year.

Björn Krondorfer,  
Director, Martin-Springer Institute  
& Endowed Professor of Religious Studies



#### SELECT HIGHLIGHTS 2018-2019

- Masha Gessen: *The Future is History* (International Holocaust Remembrance Day)
- Our Exhibit on the Będzin Ghetto opens in Sosnowiec, Poland
- Holocaust Survivor Marthe Cohn: *Behind Enemy Lines* (with Chabad of Flagstaff)
- Chip Colwell: *Plundered Skulls & Stolen Spirits* (with Museum of Northern Arizona)
- David Wood: *Moral Courage and Moral Injury in War* (with NAU's Veteran & Military Services)
- Alexis Herr: *Italy and the Holocaust*
- Expert Panel: *Sexual Enslavement & Minorities in Syria* (with United Christian Ministry)
- Jaclyn Roessel: *Decolonizing Museums* (with Museum of Northern Arizona)
- Educators' Workshop: *Teaching the Arab-Israeli Conflict & Peace Process*

In 2018-19, our programs reached 4,900 people

# People

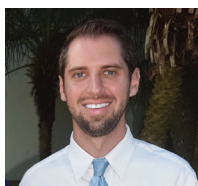
## ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWS

In May of 2019, David Kader stepped down as chair of the Martin-Springer Institute Advisory Council, and Laura Nicol became the new chair. Thank you David, thank you Laura for your efforts on behalf of MSI.

*"I have been on the council since 2016. As a wife, mother, educator and community volunteer who is a practicing Catholic, I strongly support the mission of the institute. A visit to Israel and Palestine in 2016 got me interested in conflict resolution and reconciliation among people of different faiths. The institute, with its outstanding programs on dialogue, is a gem at Northern Arizona University and in the community. As chair, it is my privilege to work with council members who bring positive energy, humanity, and commitment to their task of helping the institute grow. The fact that the institute is part of international conversations is something that I see both as an opportunity and a challenge."*

Laura Nicol, MSI-AC Chair

## INAUGURAL POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP



Thanks to generous support from **Jeanette Garretty Reinhard** and **Eli Reinhard**, the Martin-Springer Institute will host **Thomas Just**, our first post-doctoral fellow in the 2019-20 Auschwitz year.

Thomas focuses on policy measures regarding antisemitism in contemporary Poland and Germany and is planning research on Armenian-Turkish relations. He received his Ph.D. in international relations from Florida International University in 2017. Thomas served as a congressional aide in Washington D.C. and an intern within Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through his research, he hopes to develop solutions to counter the influence of violent and hateful ideologies.

*"I look forward to contributing to the Martin-Springer Institute's mission of countering ideologies of hatred and expanding Holocaust education. While in residence, I will be working with the institute to publish works on contemporary antisemitism as well as teaching a course on the Holocaust. I also hope to engage with community leaders around Arizona to develop better intercultural understanding and dialogue."*

Thomas Just, Post-Doctoral Fellow

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR DONORS

*"Eli and I have long been impressed with the contribution of the Martin-Springer Institute to student and civic life in northern Arizona. We felt that now, with MSI's rapidly expanding national and global leadership advancing the Holocaust lessons of moral courage, tolerance and justice, the time had come to help the program take a critical next step. Post-doc fellowships serve to raise the quality of on-campus research and instruction, while at the same time promoting the success of the program in academic circles. We could not be more thrilled at the opportunity to make this possible at NAU."*

Jeanette Garretty Reinhard, Post-Doctoral Fellowship Donor

## HONORARY COUNCIL MEMBER OF MARTIN-SPRINGER INSTITUTE

Last year, **Teresa Wontor-Cichy** joined our institute's International Honorary Council. Teresa is a historian at the research center of the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim, Poland.



As the author of several books on the experiences of different prisoner groups in the Auschwitz camps, she developed online lectures on the Roma, the clergy, medical crime, and on religious life in Auschwitz. Teresa served as historical consultant for documentary films about Auschwitz and she was a guest lecturer for the internationally traveling art exhibition "Forbidden Art," which displays artifacts made by Auschwitz prisoners.

*"I went to see the exhibit Woznach młodych: Życie i śmierć w będzimskim getcie (Through the Eyes of Youth: Life and Death in the Będzin Ghetto) in Sosnowiec this spring. The subject is close to me because a few years ago I worked with a team on the book Before They Perished, about photographs that Jews from Będzin and Sosnowiec took with them on their way to Auschwitz."*



Teresa Wontor-Cichy

# Our Year in Review

## MASHA GESSEN: *THE FUTURE IS HISTORY*

In honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, MSI hosted **Masha Gessen** on January 27, 2019 for the talk, *The Future is History*. Gessen was born in Russia, worked in Moscow as a journalist, and later moved to the United States. With family ties to Polish and Russian Jewry during the Holocaust and Stalin's reign, Gessen addressed the burdens of history and the dangers of totalitarian regimes. An article in the *Phoenix Jewish News* (January 2019) quotes MSI director Krondorfer: "It is a rare opportunity for students at NAU to be exposed to such an active, intellectual mind [and] fearless journalist. My hope is that people, especially students, walk away from the event understanding that democracies cannot be taken for granted."



Book signing with Masha Gessen

*"I want to tell you how much I enjoyed Masha Gessen's talk. Masha had very thoughtful points about being taken 'mass hostage' in the current political environment."*

Donna Weistrop, MSI Council Member

## BEDZIN GHETTO EXHIBIT OPENS IN SOSNOWIEC, POLAND



For six weeks (Spring 2019), our traveling exhibit *Through the Eyes of Youth: Life and Death in the Będzin Ghetto* was displayed in Sosnowiec, a city near Będzin. It was recreated with Polish translations. 120 school students and 230 visitors came to see it at the "Sosnowieckie Centrum Sztuki—Zamek Sielecki."

Monika Kempara, the Polish curator, told us about the many visitors that discussed it. It offered her a chance to speak about the Jewish community of Sosnowiec.

*"People from different towns and different countries came to see it. This exhibition is very important, and maybe it will be shown in Będzin later. In September 2019, we will show it in Sosnowiec at a different place because people ask about it."*

Monika Kempara,  
Curator, Sosnowieckie Centrum Sztuki

## DAVID WOOD ON MORAL INJURY



In November 2018, we hosted Pulitzer Prize winning journalist **David Wood** for his talk, "Moral Courage and Moral Injury in War" at Cline Library Auditorium. During his two-day visit, Wood also met with student groups, including veteran students, reaching more than 200 students, faculty/staff, and community members. Wood has covered combat as a war correspondent and an embed with U.S. troops, most recently in Afghanistan and Iraq, and is author of *What Have We Done: The Moral Injury of Our Longest Wars*. This event was organized together with NAU's office of Veteran and Military Services.

*"David Wood raised awareness of the hidden cost of war. Several first-year students in my Humanities in Action class attended his talk. Our country has been at war their entire lives and yet they only know of the hero narrative. They never considered what happens when a soldier comes home. Only when we acknowledge the internal dissonance caused by moral injury can we truly serve veterans as they reconcile their experiences of who they were, who they are now, and who they want to become."*

Becky Pratt Sturges, military spouse & NAU faculty,  
Public Humanities

# Our Year in Review



## BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Chabad of Flagstaff and the Martin-Springer Institute hosted **Marthe Cohn**, who survived the Holocaust. She worked as a Jewish spy inside Nazi Germany. Marthe recounted how, as a young woman, she used courage and cunning to smuggle information to the French resistance. She was able to tell her story to a crowd of 650 people attending the event, half of whom were students from NAU and Flagstaff schools.

*"Thank you for the Marthe Cohn event. My German 101 students couldn't stop talking about it!"*

Marilya Veteto Reese, Professor of German, Northern Arizona University

## MUSEUMS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



At the initiation of the Martin-Springer Institute, MSI teamed up with the Museum of Northern Arizona to bring to Flagstaff two experts on the representation of indigenous communities in museums.

**Chip Colwell**, senior curator at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, presented his talk, "Plundered Skulls, Stolen Spirits: Why Repatriation Matters" at NAU to over 160 students and faculty (November 2018).

**Jaclyn Roessel**, recent director of Decolonizing Initiatives at the San Diego Museum of Man, talked to a riveted audience of over 100 people at the Museum of Northern Arizona, "Decolonizing Museums: Pathways of Cultural Justice for Indigenous Communities" (February 2019).



## ITALY AND THE HOLOCAUST



At first, the dictatorships in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany collaborated, but later Italy decided to fight alongside the Americans against Nazi Germany. How did this affect Jews in Italy? **Alexis Herr**, associate director of San Francisco's Holocaust Center, and **Valerio Ferme**, former dean of NAU's College of Arts & Letters, addressed aspects of this question in their talks, "Perpetrators on the Periphery: Italian Police during the Holocaust" (Herr) and "Italiani Brava Gente: Italy's Dirty Little World War II Secret" (Ferme).

## PANEL: SEXUAL ENSLAVEMENT

In the fall of 2018, the United Christian Ministry and the Martin-Springer Institute organized a panel at the Cline Library auditorium to inform NAU's community on the enslavement of Yazidi and Assyrian Christian women. The panel, "What Can be Done? Sexual Enslavement and Minority Communities in Syria" addressed the plight of women and religious minorities. Moderated by Rev. **Kathleen Day** and Björn Krondorfer, speakers included Dr. **Mirza Dinnayi**, director of the Yazidi community in Germany and head of Air Bridge Iraq (which helps child victims of war and violence in Iraq and Syria) and also an **anonymous representative** from the Assyrian Christian Church in Syria involved in rescue efforts for girls and women kidnapped by ISIS. The event was part of the annual Kayla Mueller Legacy Conversations.

*"For as long as I live I refuse to allow this suffering to be normal, something we just accept."*  
Kayla Mueller, NAU alumna (2009), hostage of ISIS and reportedly killed February 2015

# Our Year in Review

## ARMENIA: PREVENTING GENOCIDE

At the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, director Björn Krondorfer participated in the “Third Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide,” held in Yerevan in December 2018. The three-day forum gathered dozens of experts from around the world to present and exchange insights of how to prevent genocide in specific contexts. Krondorfer presented on the vital role of empathy when working with groups in conflict.



## TEACHING THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT & PEACE PROCESS

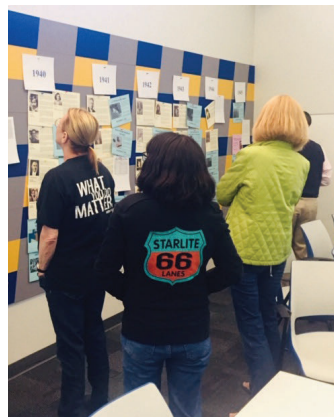


**Karla Suomala** facilitated a workshop at NAU for Arizona educators on how to teach the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace process. She also gave talks at Sedona’s Church of the Red Rocks and Flagstaff’s Kehilah Jewish community, reaching over 100 people. We invited Suomala to help educators teach these complex issues from an informed

perspective. Suomala holds a doctoral degree from Hebrew Union College and oversees the professional development programming at San Francisco’s Institute for Curriculum Resources.

## 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Another year of success: For our annual two-day Holocaust teaching seminars we gathered educators from school districts across Arizona. They came from the greater Phoenix area, Kingman, Yuma, Prescott, Payson, Window Rock, Tucson, Page, Lake Havasu City, and Flagstaff. **Sally Levine**, executive director of Georgia’s Commission on the Holocaust, led the first day on best teaching practices; **Richard Steigmann-Gall**, professor of history at Kent State University, facilitated the second day on lessons from the Weimar Republic and the danger of dismantling democracy.



## STUDENT SUPPORT

### GUATEMALA: CULTURAL LEARNING

MSI provided support for a group of students from Flagstaff’s Arts and Leadership Academy to travel to Guatemala. In February 2019, the group spent ten days in Guatemala. The trip was packed with service projects, intercultural experiences, and art workshops. They learned about the rich Tz’ujil culture and created art with children of low-income families. The students also visited memorials to massacre sites of indigenous people.

### GREECE: EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS

With the financial support of the Martin-Springer Institute, two NAU students were able to participate in a study tour in Greece to learn about the European refugee crisis. The 2019 summer study was led by NAU professors **Erika Hess** and **Bob Neustadt**. We supported **Ben Dykes**, a veteran (Air Force), who plans to attend graduate school to study conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and **Shawnacee Kahi’ilani Gali-Lucero** who identifies with her Hawaiian and Filipino family roots and studies nursing at NAU.



NAU students viewing discarded life jackets, Lesbos, Greece

# Works in Progress

## RESILIENCE: WOMEN IN FLAGSTAFF'S PAST AND PRESENT




Resilience exhibit opening at Flagstaff's City Hall

In the fall of 2018, together with Flagstaff's Pioneer Museum, the Martin-Springer Institute embarked on a year-long, applied research project on "resilience," with a team of NAU students and mentors from our institute and the Arizona Historical Society. The work evolved into the

traveling exhibit, *Resilience: Women in Flagstaff's Past and Present*. It tells the powerful stories of women who faced extraordinary challenges and overcame hardships, painful legacies, and adverse environments. NAU students from a variety of disciplines actively participated in this project.

The exhibit opened on August 23, 2019 at Flagstaff City Hall with 300 people in attendance. It recognizes women who have lived through adversity and shaped Flagstaff as activists, educators, caretakers, and leaders. Women employed entrepreneurial skills when Flagstaff was still a railroad town, made it their home after arriving from as far away as China, navigated the economic crisis of the 1930s, helped to integrate the town in the 1960s, embraced diversity, and created opportunities for the less fortunate.



**RESILIENCE:**  
WOMEN IN FLAGSTAFF'S  
PAST AND PRESENT

**Resilience Exhibit Available to the Community**

After its opening at Flagstaff City Hall, the traveling exhibit was shown at Murdoch Community Center and Northern Arizona University. It is available for other venues such as public libraries, community centers, and schools. If interested, please contact the Martin-Springer Institute.

## WORLD WAR II PHOTOGRAPHS: RESEARCHING, PRESERVING, DISPLAYING

A few years ago, a California resident donated a private collection of photographs from World War II and the Holocaust to our institute. The photos had been taken by an American GI stationed in Germany and Austria. The collection came to us in a box with the photos and other materials thrown together, and a few documents about the GI's military units. With a team of students, we hope to protect and preserve this collection, research its context and prepare for its display.



## MSI SPONSORED STUDENT RESEARCHES PHOTOS AT THE U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

MicMar Demolition, Wood & Tile Contractors again awarded the Martin-Springer Institute with a generous fund to support students engaging with aspects of our mission.

In August 2019 we were able to send **Abbey Buckham** to the USHMM in



Washington, D.C. Abbey focused on Holocaust photography, with the task of learning about preservation and display of a collection of World War II photos our institute received a few years ago. The collection from a former GI includes photos from the liberation of a Nazi labor camp for Soviet prisoners in southern Germany.

*"My research at the USHMM greatly expanded my public history knowledge. The museum staff guided me in photo archiving, and the exhibits inspired me to think critically about using photographs to engage the public. I am looking forward to continuing this work with the Martin-Springer Institute in fall 2019."*

Abbey Buckham, NAU student, Masters in Public History

The MicMar Demolition award honors the work of Janice Friebaum, past president of "Generations After—Descendants of Holocaust Survivors in Greater Phoenix" and former member of MSI's Advisory Council.

# Upcoming 2019-2020

## BOGDAN'S JOURNEY: POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS TODAY

On November 12-15, 2019, Polish-Catholic memory activist **Bogdan Bialek** will speak at NAU and in Phoenix about his efforts to create a memorial for the victims of the 1946 pogrom in Kielce, Poland. After the liberation from Nazi camps, Jews who had returned to Kielce were attacked by a mob that killed 42 people and wounded dozens more. The documentary *Bogdan's Journey* will be screened at NAU and at the Arizona Jewish Historical Society in Phoenix. Mr. Bialek will be present for conversation, and Professor **Dorota Glowacka** (Canada) will provide context on Jewish-Polish relations today.



## 2020: INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON POST-AUSCHWITZ & POST-GULAG LEGACIES

In October 2020, the Martin-Springer Institute will be hosting the symposium, "Post-Auschwitz and Post-Gulag Legacies: Building Blocks for an Ethics and Theology of Responsibility" at NAU. Organized together with the Institute for the Academic Study of Eastern Christianity at the Vrije Universiteit (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), the symposium is partially funded by a generous donation from a member of our Advisory Council.

International scholars of religion, theology, ethics, and other disciplines will address the responsibility of working through traumatic memories. In the East, the Gulag remains highly contested and is subject to memory wars after the initial thawing of memory politics following the break-up of the Soviet Union. In the West, nationalist sentiments and populism have recently emerged in the center of liberal democracies, threatening anew a broad consensus regarding the value of Holocaust remembrance. Given this situation, the symposium brings the post-Auschwitz and post-Gulag legacies into conversation.

## BEDZIN EXHIBIT TO OPEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Holocaust & Genocide Center in Johannesburg is planning to bring MSI's exhibit "Through the Eyes of Youth: Life and Death in the Będzin Ghetto" to South Africa in the spring of 2020. Jewish-Polish survivors and their descendants from the Będzin region are part of the fabric of the Jewish community in Johannesburg.

Check our Facebook page for details on all upcoming events: [facebook.com/MSIatNAU](https://facebook.com/MSIatNAU)

## SURVIVING SREBRENICA



Srebrenica Memorial Centre in Potočari

Our institute is currently working with other groups in Phoenix to get **Hasan Hasanović** to speak at NAU in April 2020. Hasan survived the massacre at Srebrenica.

During the Bosnian war in the 1990s, the area around Srebrenica was a United Nations "safe area" until Bosnian Serb forces surrounded and attacked it. In July 1995, they singled out Bosnian Muslim men, with the acquiescence of the UN troops stationed there to protect them. Hasan was 19 years old

when Srebrenica fell; he survived the massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys. Hasan's father and brother were later found in mass graves and are now buried at the Srebrenica Memorial Centre. After the war, Hasan earned a degree in criminal sciences and returned to live in Srebrenica in 2009.

## INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

JANUARY 27, 2020

David Treuer will speak on "The Burden of Blood: Writing the Holocaust in the New World." He is an award-winning author of fiction and non-fiction works, most recently the acclaimed *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* (2019). His mother is Ojibwe and his father an Austrian Jewish survivor of the Holocaust. He will be speaking at NAU's Prochnow Auditorium.



## Thank You to Our Donors

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