LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As much as the global community after 1945 promised that “never again” will end discrimination, exclusion, atrocities, and genocides, we are looking at a world today where such promises increasingly sound hollow.

I believe we have an ethical and moral duty to shape public discourse that promotes different values; in the case of the Martin-Springer Institute, these are empathy, moral courage, justice, tolerance, and working toward reconciliation—through continuous educational and dialogical engagement.

Our multi-faceted programs aim at better understanding the dangers posed by hateful ideologies and rising antisemitism, as well as other forms of prejudice and the disregard of core democratic principles. In 2017-2018, we offered over 50 different programs and events, attended by nearly 5,000 people. Given our modest budget, we worked hard to make this possible.

Our programs address issues of social injustice and complicity while also celebrating the strength of resilience and the ethics of caring relations. Continuously, we build bridges across religious, ethnic, and national differences. Please consider supporting us in these endeavors. We depend on your generous contributions.

Enjoy the newsletter; and we hope to see you at many of our events in the coming year.

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

SELECT HIGHLIGHTS 2017-2018

- Father Patrick Desbois: Unearthing Holocaust Memories, Documenting the Yazidi Genocide
- Exhibit at the Coconino Center for the Arts: Echoes of Loss: Artistic Responses to Trauma
- Symposium on Refugees: Strangers or Neighbors? Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Perspectives on Refugees
- Holocaust Survivor Testimony: Jacob Eisenbach, in cooperation with Chabad of Flagstaff
- A Public Dialogue: A Palestinian Peace Activist and an Orthodox Jewish Settler Talk Peace
- Exhibit in Riverdale, NY: Through the Eyes of Youth: Life and Death in the Bedzin Ghetto
- Elisa von Joeden-Forgey: Yazidi Genocide and Sexual Violence

MSI AND CHABAD CO-HOSTED HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

“I feel genuinely honored to have seen Dr. Jacob Eisenbach speak at NAU last fall. It is individual accounts of survivors that stick with us, and to hear them first-hand is transformative. His warmth and message of hope through education felt cathartic in this current climate of political division and uncertainty, when it is easy to feel hopeless. Thank you MSI for bringing Dr. Eisenbach to our community.”

Amber Meyer,
Flagstaff, AZ
“I wanted to join the Advisory Council of the Martin-Springer Institute because I believe that education and dialogue are particularly important at this time given what is happening in the world. In my retirement, I am seeking to affiliate with programs and their boards that reach into the community to develop empathy and understanding locally, nationally and internationally. The Martin-Springer Institute is doing outstanding work in this regard and I want to do everything I can to facilitate its mission.”

Ron Borkan,  
Martin-Springer Institute Advisory Council Member  
Flagstaff, AZ

“The array of topics, perspectives and insights provided by presenters and professionals engaged in teaching about the Holocaust helps me to move from simply having a toolbelt of content knowledge and strategies for the classroom to having a toolbox and hopefully a toolshed to create rich, meaningful and authentic experiences for a range of student and adult learners.

We are learning from and with individuals who are visibly impassioned about such vital work at the local, national, and global levels, especially when it is evident that history is truly repeating itself in many pockets throughout the world.

I am encouraged to know that there are other educators dedicated to this particular work and to know that I am not alone in combatting such injustice. I know that I am, and I will be, supported with respect to my own endeavors where Holocaust education is concerned.”

Duane Yazzie,  
Teacher-Librarian  
Tséhootsooi Díné Bi’Ólta’  
Fort Defiance, AZ

“New Advisory Council Member, on MSI’s Annual Holocaust Education Conference

Survivor of hatred and horror during the Shoah, Gerda has inspired thousands in her public talks for over fifty years and by her writings. Her memoir All But My Life is read around the world, and the 1995 film based on her book received both the Oscar and Emmy for documentary short subject. Recipient of numerous honorary degrees, Gerda served on the governing board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and founded “Citizenship Counts” (a nonprofit that seeks to advance responsibilities of citizenship). In 2011, Gerda received the highest honor bestowed by our country on a civilian, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

David Kader,  
Chair, MSI Advisory Council

Additional Honorary Council members include:

Susan Neiman, Director of the Einstein Forum, Germany. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, she studied at Harvard and the Freie Universität Berlin and taught at Yale and Tel Aviv universities.

John K. Roth, Edward J. Sexton Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Claremont McKenna College, was founding director of the Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights.

Shifra Sagy, Professor Emerita of Psychology at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, is currently the director of the Martin-Springer Center for Conflict Studies.
**Our Year in Review**

**UNEARTHING HOLOCAUST MEMORIES, DOCUMENTING THE YAZIDI GENOCIDE**

In his book *Holocaust by Bullets* Father Desbois writes: “In my experience, the most difficult part of discovering and gaining personal knowledge of genocide is accepting the truth about what happened.” We invited Father Desbois, who lives in Paris, to talk to our community on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. He spoke about his work on identifying sites in Eastern Europe where Nazi mobile killing squads exterminated Jews, on rising antisemitism in France, and on documenting the Yazidi genocide in Iraq today.

Björn Krondorfer

“As the child of Holocaust survivors, the work of Father Desbois is extremely personal. He and his organization, Yahad-In Unum, have brought world attention to the deaths of millions murdered by Nazi death squads during World War II, including my grandfather and great grandparents. I was honored to have been invited to tell my family’s story at NAU prior to his powerful presentation. Father Desbois talked about the discovery of thousands of gravesites of Jews including the site in Ukraine where my relatives were exterminated. Sincere thanks to the Martin-Springer Institute for bringing Father Desbois to speak at NAU.”

Sheryl Bronkesh, Chair, Generations After - Descendants of Holocaust Survivors in Greater Phoenix Vice President, The Phoenix Holocaust Survivors’ Association

A delegation of Generations After members traveled from Phoenix to hear Father Desbois

**STRANGERS OR NEIGHBORS**

In October 2017, MSI held a three-day roundtable symposium at NAU on *Strangers or Neighbors? Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Perspectives on Refugees*. Jointly organized with the National Catholic Center of Holocaust Education (Seton Hill University, PA), a group of 16 scholars from across the nation discussed the volatile situation of refugees. In roundtable conversations, we explored how the religious traditions provide resources for turning strangers to neighbors. The symposium’s goal was not to arrive at a mutually agreed-upon political platform but to explore various Muslim, Jewish, and Christian perspectives on refugees. The results of the conference will be available in a special issue of the journal *CrossCurrents* (Fall 2018).

**YAZIDI WOMEN AND GENOCIDE**

In February 2018, MSI invited Elisa von Joeden-Forgey to bring to our students’ attention the harrowing reality of sexualized violence against Yazidi women in Iraq. Professor Joeden-Forgey had traveled to Iraq to learn first-hand about the genocidal violence against the Yazidi religious minority. In her talk, she also pointed to the ongoing plight of Yazidi women as Western organizations stepped in to offer assistance—at times with unintended adverse effects.
In any given year, the Martin-Springer Institute is involved in dozens of large and small events that address topics relevant to our overall mission. We invite speakers, create opportunities for semester-long student-faculty research teams, offer seminars on the Holocaust and anti-bias training for Arizona educators, travel to various communities for talks and workshops, and collaborate with other NAU units, individual students, teachers, and community leaders. We also network with organizations across the U.S. and internationally. Conversations on sensitive and volatile topics are necessary, though they might be discomforting; thus, we aim at creating spaces for respectful listening even when disagreeing. The aphorism, “We do not care how much you know, unless we know you care” describes well one of our guiding principles.

**BELOW IS A SAMPLING OF SOME OF OUR PROGRAMS IN 2017-2018:**

**What did Jewish-Christian dialogue become so important after the Holocaust?**

*Tuesday, October 17, 3:30-5:00 p.m.*

7:00 p.m.

Room 120, Liberal Arts Building

NAU’s Liberal Arts Building

**Wednesday, November 29, 2017, 7:00 p.m.**

Free and open to the public

**Searching for Refuge in a World on the Move**

*Sunday, October 15, 2017, 7:30 p.m.*

Cline Assembly Hall, NAU

**Children in Crisis:**

*Sunday, December 13, 2017, 7:00 p.m.*

Free and open to the public

**Dr. Jacob Eisenbach: Perseverance and Survival during the Holocaust**

*Wednesday, November 1, 2017, 7:30 p.m.*

Room 120, Liberal Arts Building

**What Christians always wanted to know about Judaism and Islam:**

*A Muslim-Jewish Conversation*

*Tuesday, October 24, 2017, 7:00 p.m.*

Room 120, Liberal Arts Building

**The Mandaeans: A Search for Religious Freedom and Survival**

*A Conversation with Shahram Ebadfarzadeh*

*Tuesday, March 27, 2018, 7:30 p.m.*

The Church of the Red Rocks, Sedona

**A Palestinian Peace Activist and an Orthodox Jewish Settler Talk Peace**

*Tuesday, October 24, 2017, 7:00 p.m.*

Room 120, Liberal Arts Building

**What are Dalit and Minjung theologies in the Asian context?**

*Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 7:30 p.m.*

Cline Assembly Hall, NAU

**What can we learn from each other when faith dialog, particularly between Asian religions?**

*Tuesday, October 17, 3:30-5:00 p.m.*

7:00 p.m.

Room 120, Liberal Arts Building

NAU’s Liberal Arts Building

**Interreligious Dialogue in a Changing World: A Conversation with Hans Udoke (Sweden) and NAU Religious Studies Program Faculty**

*Wednesday, November 29, 2017, 7:00 p.m.*

Free and open to the public
Our Year in Review

ART EXHIBIT: ECHOES OF LOSS

The exhibit Echoes of Loss: Artistic Responses to Trauma opened at the Coconino Center for the Arts on April 7th and closed on June 9th, 2018. Three years in the making, the exhibit presented in visual language the impact of trauma on people, communities, and the environment. The invited artists engaged multiple perspectives through various media, informed by their places of birth (Israel, Czechoslovakia, Iran, Canada, Germany, Uzbekistan) and communal identifications (Native American, Latino, African American, Jewish American), each of them struggling with personally experienced, inherited, or cultural traumata.

Additional programming included two artist talks (Bullets and Fire; Feathers and Fabric) and three staged community readings on “Chernobyl Voices” in front of photographs of Chernobyl’s nuclear disaster.

The exhibit was curated by Björn Krondorfer and NAU art historian Tara Kohn; they also produced the catalogue. An NAU student team assisted in all aspects of the exhibit: research, design, installation, and as docents. Thanks go to the Coconino Art Center, Flagstaff Arts Council, Flagstaff Community Fund, GeoFund, and Tom and Nancy Brehm.

NAU STUDENT INTERNS

“Working on this exhibit taught us to look at trauma with a critical eye and gave us skills to attend to difficult emotions. We learned how to look at uncomfortable, painful situations and to develop empathy. Working on the catalogue, we had the opportunity to speak directly to the artists. The internship has opened our eyes to the challenges and realities of creating an exhibit. And we have come to understand what trauma means for ourselves, for others, and for the world.”

Holly Filsinger
Hana Lipke
Savannah Penick
Terra Smith

READERS OF “CHERNOBYL VOICES” REFLECT:

“Art should be interesting, thought provoking, profound, and sometimes shift your world. The ‘Chernobyl Voices’ reading at Coconino Center for the Arts here in Flagstaff was all of that. And more.”

Rosemary Lamberson, Flagstaff, AZ

“The raw voices of Chernobyl victims — deep sorrow, anguished cry, perpetual anxiety, unfocused rage, and a sense of loss — have a strong message for us. Their lament shows us the gravity and dangers of nuclear disasters and the enormous damage to people’s lives.”

Reiko Akiyama, Northern Arizona University

“The art exhibit Echoes of Loss showed us the universality of our human experiences of pain and empathy. Participating in the first-person readings of ‘Chernobyl Voices’ about losses experienced in Chernobyl’s radioactive zone was heart-warming and heart-rending at the same time – a treasured reminder that when we acknowledge our similarities, we have a chance to heal.”

Karren Kinne-Herman, Flagstaff, AZ
NAU STUDENT AT THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM (USHMM)

Through generous funding by *MicMar Demolition, Wood & Tile Contractors* (Phoenix) MSI is able to support students. In the summer of 2018, MSI sent Chris Harrison to the USHMM in Washington to conduct research in the archives. With this award, *MicMar Demolition* 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.

“I experienced world-class cooperation at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum during my two-week stay in Washington, supported by the Martin-Springer Institute. Accessing the archives for my doctoral work on military conscription and genocide, I learned how conscription policies empowered Holocaust perpetrators.

*I thank MSI for this opportunity."

Chris Harrison,  
NAU PhD candidate  
Political Science, International Relations, Comparative Genocide Studies

RESILIENCE PROJECT

In fall 2018, together with Flagstaff’s *Pioneer Museum*, MSI is embarking on a year-long, applied research project with a student-faculty team to create an exhibit on *Resilience: Flagstaff Communities Overcoming Adversity*. The aim is to document how people and communities in Flagstaff face and overcome adversity in the past and present. Designed to show the strength of the human spirit, the exhibit will present the resourcefulness of communal wisdom. Under the mentorship of Dr. Bill Peterson (Director, Pioneer Museum) and Dr. Krondorfer, a group of NAU students from different disciplines will conduct historical research and interviews, and help with writing and design.

“*I am thrilled to be working with such a remarkable institution that is keeping issues such as moral courage, tolerance and justice relevant. It is through the investment of friends of MSI that these programs are possible. Thank you for your support!*"

Maraka Oltrogge,  
Development Director  
College of Arts and Letters  
Northern Arizona University

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

MSI is in the early stages of planning two substantial projects:

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM: Post-Gulag & Post-Auschwitz Legacies** focuses on theologies and interfaith/religious relations. Together with the Institute for the Academic Study of Eastern Christianity at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, MSI will organize the symposium at NAU. Scholars from Russia, Poland, Ukraine, and select other European countries, together with U.S. colleagues of Jewish and Slavic studies, will search for Jewish and Christian responses to traumatic histories.

**LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: Environmental Sustainability, Collective Narratives, and Justice** is a two-week program for graduate students, early career scholars, and community leaders at NAU and Ben Gurion University (Israel). The group will travel together to southern Israel and northern Arizona to study environmental justice issues, with a focus on Bedouin and Native American cultures.

To view MSI resources, please visit:

- facebook.com/MSIatNAU  
- nau.edu/martin-springer/  
- bedzinexhibit.org  
- librarything.com/catalog/martin-springer  
- azmemory.azlibrary.gov
MORAL COURAGE AND MORAL INJURY IN WAR
DAVID WOOD, PULITZER PRIZE WINNING JOURNALIST

Monday, November 5, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
Cline Assembly Hall on the campus of NAU
David Wood is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who has covered war and conflict. His book, What have We Done: the Moral Injury of our Longest Wars (2016) is based on his deep reporting in Iraq and Afghanistan and on veterans after they return.

Cosponsored with NAU’s Veteran and Military Services.
Free and open to the public.

PLUNDERED SKULLS AND STOLEN SPIRITS:
WHY REPATRIATION MATTERS

Wednesday, November 7, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
Room 120, Liberal Arts Building on the campus of NAU
Colwell’s presentation is part of the Speakers Series Plundering – Exhibiting – Repatriating: Museum Practices and Native American Traditions. This series, which is organized together with the Museum of Northern Arizona, will continue in Spring 2019.

Free and open to the public.

ITALY AND THE HOLOCAUST

Wednesday, October 3, 2018
7:00 p.m. Liberal Arts Building 120
Valerio Ferme
(Dean, NAU’s College of Arts and Letters),
Italiani Brava Gente: Italy’s Dirty Little World War II Secret

Alexis Herr
(San Francisco Holocaust Center),
Perpetrators on the Periphery: Italian Police during the Holocaust

Exhibit: ECHOES OF LOSS

September 10 – November 9, 2018
Art exhibit, NAU Riles Building, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 13, 2018
4:30-5:30 p.m.
Opening Reception

Exhibit: THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUTH:
LIFE AND DEATH IN THE BEDZIN Ghetto
travels to Poland

January - March, 2019
Sosnowieckie Centrum Sztuki – Zamek Sielecki, Poland
Thank You to Our Donors

INSTITUTIONS, UNITS & GRANTS:
- Arizona Humanities
- Flagstaff Community Foundation
- Flagstaff Arts Council
- GeoFund, Flagstaff, AZ
- The Hebrew Institute of Riverdale - The Bayt, NY
- McMar Demolition, LLC, Phoenix, AZ
- National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education, PA
- NAU Center for International Education
- NAU Student Activities Council
- Performance Staffing, Flagstaff, AZ
- Pinnacle Presbyterian Church, Scottsdale, AZ
- Salanter Akiba Riverdale Academy, NY
- Temple Solel, Paradise Valley, AZ
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, DC

INDIVIDUALS:
- Alex Alvarez
- Susie Anderson
- Joan Bird
- Harold Borkan
- Ronald & Linda Borkan
- Tom & Nancy Brehm
- Bob & Michelle Casselman
- Melissa Cohen
- Jeanette Garretty & Eli Reinhard
- Karen & Ronald Getto
- Liz Grobsmith
- Josef Guttman
- Dorlee & Tom Henderson
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- Alice Kamin
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- Donna Weistrop & Dave Shaffer

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- Rhoda & Merrill Abeshaus
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- Ralph & Doris Martin
- Steven Smith
- Donna Weistrop & Dave Shaffer

For a tax deductible donation, make checks payable to:
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MSI hosts international women leadership group, a donor supported event

Please Help Make Our Programs Happen

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