LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

We were off to a great year – and then COVID-19 hit us, forcing us to cancel some of the remaining programs in the spring. We also postponed our international program with Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel and the scholarly symposium on the legacies of the Gulag and Auschwitz with scholars from Russia, The Netherlands, Israel, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Germany, and the U.S.

“How could they have given thought to anything like plague, which rules out any future, cancels journeys, silences the exchange of views,” wrote Albert Camus in his 1947 novel The Plague. So “they resigned themselves to the current coin of language, of anecdote.” These words may stand in for the difficulty of saying anything original about the current pandemic, other than to say, I hope we all get through it.

If you want to learn more about The Plague, join us this fall for a series of public Zoom discussions organized by the College of Arts and Letters, with our institute offering a special interfaith conversation for religious communities in Flagstaff and Sedona.

The themes our institute addressed this year included: women’s resilience in Flagstaff from the 1880s to today; Polish-Jewish relations after the Holocaust; the situation of Arab-Israeli citizens; antisemitism in today’s Germany and Poland; Native American lives after Wounded Knee; a journalist’s view on the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq; the testimony of a Holocaust survivor of Auschwitz; and many more. You can read about some of these events in this annual review.

This fall, we will offer Zoom conversations on special topics. Stay tuned. We very much hope, though, to see you all in person again soon. Person-to-person interaction is at the heart of compassion and courage.

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

RACIAL JUSTICE AND HOLOCAUST MEMORY

Last year Susan Neiman, Honorary Council member of the Martin-Springer Institute, published the acclaimed book, Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil. Her superb narrative follows the path Germany took to address its Holocaust past and how the United States is coping with the legacies of slavery and continuous racism. My book, Neiman writes, is not about “comparative evil” but “comparative redemption.” A must read! In the opening sentence, Neiman describes herself as “a white girl [born] in the segregated South” who now lives “as a Jewish woman in Berlin.” She is trained as a philosopher and is the director of the Einstein Forum in Germany.

Our programs reached over 13,000 people from August 2019 to March 2020. This number includes our exhibit visitors. Another 1,200 people connected to the work of MSI in Zoom conversations between April and June, 2020.

Please support the Martin-Springer Institute in the coming year.
ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWS

Last year, we welcomed three new Advisory Council members, ready and willing to support the work and mission of our institute:

“It is an honor to support the mission of MSI by educating our communities about past tragedies, injustices, and discrimination fueled by hate, prejudice, and intolerance. It is important to prevent future collective traumas by creating a culture of dialog, understanding, and peacebuilding among people with different backgrounds.”
Ismail “Ike” Ozis, Head of School for Montessori School of Flagstaff

“I make each day the best I can for my community and myself, which is why I am drawn to the institute. It promotes empathy, tolerance, moral courage, reconciliation, and justice. I hope to live up to the organization’s values as a council member and in my personal life.”
Lela Montfort, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, NAU

I am involved with the Martin-Springer Institute because of its focus on using the Holocaust to help us understand and address the inhumanity we are confronted with today.
Elliott Greenberg, resident of Sedona

HONORARY COUNCIL MEMBER OF MARTIN-SPRINGER INSTITUTE

In 2019, Tali Nates from South Africa joined our International Honorary Council. She writes:

“It is my honor to be part of your institute. I am the founder and director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, dedicated to memory, education, and lessons for humanity. The Center explores the history of genocide in the 20th century with a focus on the Holocaust and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. It guides visitors to understand the consequences of prejudice and discrimination to prevent the recurrence of mass atrocities. In 2020, we partnered up with the Martin-Springer Institute to host the Bedzin exhibit in South Africa.

I was born to a family of Holocaust survivors – my father and uncle were saved by Oskar Schindler. As a historian and public speaker, I contribute to journals and books, among them God, Faith & Identity from the Ashes: Reflections of Children and Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors. Since 2019, I am also the chair of the South African Holocaust & Genocide Foundation.”
Tali Nates
Director, Johannesburg Genocide & Holocaust Centre

THE THIRD GENERATION

During the summer of the COVID-19 crisis, we were delightfully surprised to get in touch with a new generation of the extended family of Doris Martin: her grandnieces and -nephews. It was heartwarming to realize how appreciative they—as the third generation—are of the mission and work of our institute, from the Holocaust legacy to current issues.

“This summer, we had the pleasure of establishing a meaningful relationship with MSI. As grandnieces and -nephews of Doris and Ralph, and as grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, we are excited about partnering with MSI to extend Doris and Ralph’s mission of using lessons from the past to address current conflicts. Several of us have had the opportunity to visit Bedzin, concentration camps in Poland, and Israel, and we feel lucky that our family has taught us to engage in Holocaust education and social justice work. We are grateful to Björn and Melissa for welcoming us with open arms. We are looking forward to getting involved in our own special ways and to the impact MSI will have on our lives in years to come.”

Danielle, Alex, Erika, Aaron, and Ben Harvey, grandchildren of Rae Harvey, Doris Martin’s younger sister
Our Year in Review

DAVID TREUER: HOLOCAUST AND HISTORY IN EUROPE & THE NEW WORLD

On January 27, 2020, at the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, David Treuer spoke to students and the community in the packed Prochnow auditorium about the lives of Native Americans today. Referencing his father, an Austrian Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, and his Ojibwe mother, the award-winning author of fiction and non-fiction works called on acknowledging the diversity of active choices that Native Americans take today, defying a narrative of defeat that has dominated the perception of American Indians after Wounded Knee.

“Congratulations on a wonderful event. The turnout was impressive and David’s presentation was thought-provoking and engaging.”
Mary Kershaw, Executive Director, Museum of Northern Arizona

“Over breakfast, NAU students from the Department of Sociology had a chance to meet David Treuer in a small group following his speech at the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Having read excerpts from his book, The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee, they loved having the opportunity to engage with Treuer up close and personal."
Stefanie Kunze, lecturer, Department of Sociology, NAU

WOMEN’S RESILIENCE EXHIBIT DEBUTS IN FLAGSTAFF

On August 23, 2019, the new exhibit, Resilience: Women in Flagstaff’s Past and Present, opened with great fanfare at Flagstaff City Hall. The collaborative project by our institute, a team of NAU students, and the Arizona Historical Society tells the powerful stories of twenty-one women from 1880s to today who faced extraordinary challenges and overcame personal hardships and adverse environments.

After the grand opening at City Hall, the exhibit traveled to the Murdoch Community Center, Flagstaff High School, NAU’s Cline Library, Flagstaff Public Library, and Coconino Community College; it is also a long-term installation at Flagstaff’s Pioneer Museum. In addition, the Arizona Daily Sun ran a series of 11 articles covering each of the women’s stories in their Sunday editions.

“The exhibit is absolutely wonderful! I love the powerful narratives.”
Gioia Woods, Professor of Humanities and NAU Senate President

“At the Murdoch Center, we were honored to be a part of this amazing exhibit. It was an important opportunity to show the diversity of our community in Flagstaff.”
Deborah A. Harris, President, Southside Community Association

“Kudos to the students who performed the local research and conceptualized the exhibit. I enjoyed reviewing these examples of little-publicized resilience.”
Patricia Mongini, Sedona community member

“The exhibit displayed power in simplicity. Why? Because each story came from a seemingly powerless woman who made a difference.”
Steve Smith, Instructor, NAU
Our Year in Review

BEDZIN EXHIBIT IN JOHANNESBURG HOLOCAUST & GENOCIDE CENTRE, SOUTH AFRICA

Through the Eyes of Youth: Life and Death in the Bedzin Ghetto opened in March 2020 as a temporary exhibition in the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre [www.jhbholocaust.co.za/visit-us/exhibitions/](http://www.jhbholocaust.co.za/visit-us/exhibitions/).

Director Björn Krondorfer attended the opening in Johannesburg and presented a number of workshops and seminars at the Centre related to the exhibit on the lives of young people in Bedzin, Poland, including our founder Doris Martin.

POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS: BOGDAN BIALEK AND DOROTA GLOWACKA

Bogdan Bialek, a Polish-Catholic memory activist, visited Arizona at the invitation of the Martin-Springer Institute in conjunction with a screening of the documentary film, Bogdan’s Journey. The film chronicles his courageous, decade-long efforts to make the Polish resident of Kielce aware of the town’s 1946 pogrom against Jews. Mr. Bialek spoke at the Arizona Jewish Historical Society as well as the Phoenix Holocaust Association. At NAU, he was joined by Professor Dorota Glowacka (Canada) for a conversation about Jewish-Polish relations today, followed by a film screening the next evening.

“Bogdan is a wonderful man. I wish Jews and Poles could overcome our negative historical memories of each other and start to recognize our common connections.”
Lawrence Bell, Executive Director, Arizona Jewish Historical Society

“Bogdan is an astonishing combination of intelligence, wisdom, and deep compassion. Thanks for realizing what a great program this would make for our two organizations, and for your efforts in making it happen.”
Janice Friebaum, Vice President, Phoenix Holocaust Association

“Bogdan and Dorota were such special people. I was really touched by their journeys. They were truly inspiring. I am grateful you were able to get them to Flagstaff.”
Juliana Suby, Principal Lecturer of Spanish, NAU

BUILDING A SHARED SOCIETY FOR JEWISH AND ARAB CITIZENS IN ISRAEL

Mohammad Darashwe of the Center for Equality and Shared Society in Israel and a leading political analyst presented a talk on Jewish-Arab relations on November 5, 2019. The event was co-sponsored by NAU’s Office of the President. The following day, Temple Solel in Paradise Valley invited Darashwe to speak to the Jewish community, including a panel with Rabbi John Linder and Björn Krondorfer.

BEDZIN Ghetto Website Update

In the summer of 2020, we added new information on the website accompanying our exhibit on young people in Bedzin during the Holocaust. Since we created the exhibit in 2014, more research emerged about the resistance of young people in Bedzin. Check out the entries of two young women leaders in the underground, Chajka Klinger ([http://bedzinexhibit.org/chajka-klinger/](http://bedzinexhibit.org/chajka-klinger/)) and Miriam ‘Kasia’ Szancer ([http://bedzinexhibit.org/kasia-szancer/](http://bedzinexhibit.org/kasia-szancer/)).
RUKMINI CALLIMACHI: SPEAKING TO THE ENEMY

In November 2019, *New York Times* journalist Rukmini Callimachi offered an insightful view on the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq. As an expert on Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and ISIS, she was invited by United Christian Ministry and our institute at the occasion of the 6th annual Kayla Mueller Legacy Conversations. She delivered a riveting analysis of ISIS to a large audience at Cline Library Assembly Hall.

Kayla Mueller, an NAU graduate, was a humanitarian worker in the Middle East when she was abducted in Syria, enslaved by al-Baghdadi, and eventually murdered.

“We are deeply touched by your work. Rukmini was remarkable in her openness and teachable moments. In looking back, each Legacy Conversation has been special to us, and has brought us closer to people willing to continue the efforts to find Kayla and bring her home.”

Marsha Mueller, Kayla’s mother, Prescott

“Rukmini is a remarkable woman and her work is extraordinary. Given my time in Syria and my relationship with Kayla, the Legacy Conversations have been emotionally wrenching. As you will understand, the grief of it all is deep.”

Nancy Currey, International Education Consultancy

ANTISEMITISM AND THE NEW FAR RIGHT IN GERMANY AND POLAND

All seats were filled but students still pushed into the auditorium to hear the lecture on antisemitism by our institute’s first post-doctoral fellow, Thomas Just. Luckily, we were able to switch to a larger auditorium before Thomas’ shortly delayed, informative talk. In January 2020, Thomas accepted a full-time position at ASU’s Masters of Global Security program.

Regarding the inaugural lecture, the donors of the post-doctoral fellowship write: “This is wonderful news. Exactly what we would hope to see as a kick-off to the expansion of the program.”

Jeanette Garretty Reinhard

“To have to move the venue to a larger auditorium was a major testament; and then it filled, too!”

Linda Sargent Wood, Professor of History, NAU

“Congrats on bringing aboard such a great asset.”

Eric Mendelsohn, Sedona

OTHER EVENTS

On August 9, 2019, we hosted a group of 16 international religious leaders and scholars, representing each continent. Sergio Mazza from the *Philadelphia Dialogue Institute* brought the group to Arizona, and our institute engaged with them for a day of interfaith conversations.

In spring 2020, *Flagstaff High School* staged the *Diary of Anne Frank*; they consulted with Björn Krondorfer and installed our exhibit *Through the Eyes of Youth: Life and Death in the Bedzin Ghetto.*

On February 24, we co-sponsored the testimony of *Holocaust survivor Edith Eger* with Flagstaff Chabad at the Molly Blank Jewish Community Center.

Also in February, director Krondorfer organized an NAU student field trip to Burton Public Library in Phoenix to see the *Holocaust by Bullets* exhibit of Father Patrick Desbois’ organization Yahad-in-Unum.
FRESH OFF THE PRESS

Shortly before this newsletter went to print, The James P. Kuykendall World War II Photography Collection went live online. In 2016, a box of photographs and memorabilia were donated to our institute. The cluttered collection contained over 400 photographs and material items related to World War II in Europe. They belonged to U.S. Medical Corp. soldier James P. Kuykendall. MSI created, funded, and supervised a team of NAU students to research and archive the collection. Thank you to MicMar Demolition, Wood & Tile Contractors who provided the seed money for this project.

Students Abbey Buckham, Holly Filsinger, and Ryan Badertscher organized, identified, and preserved the collection of photographs and reconstructed parts of Kuykendall’s life and wartime experience.

Within the first week of the website being live 500 visitors from ten different countries saw the site, from as far away as Germany, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Poland, Puerto Rico, and India. Visit this exhibit at msi-worldwar2photos.org.

“Thank you for this remarkable project. What an astounding collection of photographs, from candid comradery among soldiers to horrifying scenes of death within the camps.”
Elisa Rapaport, Senior Fellow, U.S. Anne Frank Center

“This project is amazing. I am so impressed with the professionalism of the displays and writing. The number of hours spent on the project must have been tremendous to result in this outstanding website.”
Sheryl Bronkesh, President, Phoenix Holocaust Association

RESILIENCE: DEW YU WONG

MSI featured Dew Yu Wong (1892-1948) in our Resilience exhibit. She had moved from China to Flagstaff in 1915, where she and her family operated a laundry; they were the first Chinese family to reside in town. James Wong, her son, just published a book about his mother, Never Alone: The Bumpy Road From China to the American Dream; it includes our exhibit panel on Dew Yu.

COVID CHANGES

Our personal and professional lives have been disrupted, some more severely than others. Higher education is no exception. No in-person public programs have been permitted on NAU campus since March. In the spring, we cancelled the two remaining speakers in our survival & resilience series: Shigeko Sasamori (survivor of Hiroshima) and Hasan Hasanovich, who survived the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian-Muslim men in Srebrenica. We postponed the 2020 summer program on environmental sustainability and justice with Ben Gurion University in Israel as well as our international symposium at NAU on “Post-Auschwitz and Post-Gulag Legacies” (it is rescheduled for October 2021).

Director Krondorfer was invited this year to speak at several gatherings in Canada, Kosovo, England, South Africa, New York, and Los Angeles about topics related to MSI’s mission: COVID-19 stopped them all. In the fall of 2020, we could no longer pursue program ideas related to a film/speaker event on the Holocaust and the LGBTQ community, to Jewish justice perspectives on refugees, and to new student-mentor research teams on “Art and the Holocaust in Italy” and the “International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War.”

None of these opportunities are lost. It is just a matter of time when we can return to what we are best at: engaging with and learning from each other face to face in small and large groups.
Upcoming 2020-2021

IN 2021, THE MARTIN-SPRINGER INSTITUTE WILL CELEBRATE ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

We have been offering programs to students, educators, and the public for 20 years. An Anniversary Committee will work closely with the institute to offer a number of special events to celebrate this milestone. Under the motto “Looking Forward, Looking Back,” here are some of the planned events:

**Alexandra Zapruder:** The year will begin with Alexandra Zapruder, author of the acclaimed book, *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust.* At the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Zapruder will speak about the diaries of young writers who lived during the Holocaust, thus honoring the experiences of our founder Doris Martin who survived the Holocaust as a teenager. Zapruder’s book won the National Jewish Book Award.

**Summer Study Tour to Europe for Arizona Educators:** In June 2021, we are inviting Arizona educators to join us for an extraordinary, 18-day experience, *In the Footsteps of Survivors: Study Tour of Holocaust Memorial Sites in Poland and Germany.* This site-specific tour follows the footsteps of Doris Martin’s memoir *Kiss Every Step* and Edward Gastfriend’s *My Father’s Testament.* Starting in Krakow and ending in Berlin, the program offers an intimate portrait of the calamities that befell Jewish people in Nazi-occupied Europe. Arizona teachers will meet with European curators, educators, and memory activists. (This program still depends on our success to raise grant monies and private funds.)

**Polish Translation of *Kiss Every Step***: The staff of the memorial site of Gross-Rosen is currently translating Doris’ memoir. The former concentration camp of Gross-Rosen was the administrative center for dozens of slave labor camps, including the labor camp in which Doris survived the Holocaust. The book should be available in Poland in 2021.

**Celebration:** In early September 2021 we will celebrate the accomplishments of the Martin-Springer Institute’s first twenty years with a festive and formal event at the campus of NAU.

The Martin-Springer Institute is planning a number of Zoom conversations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those conversations will offer perspectives from different countries on themes relevant to the mission of our Institute. They may include a series on Racial Justice and Resilience; Holocaust Museums Around the World; and Perspectives on Survival and Resistance in Bedzin. Stay tuned.

RESILIENCE EXHIBIT AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY

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

This traveling exhibit is available for venues such as public libraries, community centers, and schools. If interested, please contact the Martin-Springer Institute. Visit nau.edu/martin-springer/exhibits/traveling-exhibits/ to learn more.

**RESILIENCE EXHIBIT AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY**

TO VIEW MSI RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT:

- nau.edu/martin-springer
- facebook.com/MSIatNAU • nau_msi on Instagram
- bedzinexhibit.org • msi-worldwar2photos.org
- librarything.com/catalog/martin-springer • azmemory.azlibrary.gov

Kudos to Jaimie Rivken for maintaining this account.
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