



"To Remember... and to Teach"

Fall 2014 ■ Number 43

# Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

KEENE STATE COLLEGE ■ 229 MAIN STREET ■ KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE ■ WWW.KEENE.EDU/CCHS

## Coming to Terms with a Place Called After

Memory is a complex phenomenon. Memory can wound just as easily as memory can build strong bonds between generations. What we remember and how we remember matter. Just as important, when we remember matters too. We need distance to look back. Lot's wife in the story of Sodom reminds us all that looking back can be a dangerous activity. One can be too close to look back.

Still, looking back is important and essential to being whole and responsible. But, how we remember, what we do with memory, and when and where we remember all matter significantly. Looking back can be an occasion for remembering ourselves – reconstituting our relational selves in a wounded world we inhabit marked by its wounding.

We know that we cannot be whole without remembering even the most difficult moments of our lives. Deep wounding often steals important parts of our lives and remembering allows us to reclaim the parts of our lives that have been stolen from us by the wounding – if we find ways to remember that allow us to rebuild the violated trust that was shattered with such wounding.

This is no easy task, nor is the work of recounting our wounds always a healing affair. The wounding often defies assimilation. Respect means letting the wound be what it is – in some cases, a compound trauma that is beyond normal knowing. In those times, often the best we can manage is acknowledgment of its inassimilable character. We learn to address it even as we recognize that what we are coming to terms with is beyond the terms we have available to us. Yet we make the relational wager after all.

Recently, the Cohen Center was pleased to host two guests who have been coming to terms with *after* in their work and in their personal lives. As special guests for this

summer's New England Colloquy, they offered their experience to us as a venture of trust, in both written and oral forms. Their offerings were distinguished by the integrity of open and honest encounters with life-altering trauma and the disciplined rebuilding of shattered worlds of meaning, purpose, and relationship that make all the difference in the aftermath.



Photo by C. Paul Vincent

Susan Brison, in *Aftermath*,<sup>1</sup> took us through the difficult journey of reconstructing life after a life-threatening trauma. Thomas Trezise, in *Witnessing Witnessing*,<sup>2</sup> helped us think about the gift of respect and regard that witnesses to witnessing survivors can offer in their acts of reception. Together, they demonstrated the relational character of living with the wounding, its aftermath, and the subsequent responses that make rebuilding life in the aftermath possible, even when coming to terms with *after* remains an unfinished activity.

Eva Hoffman took up the theme of *after* in the Cohen Center's 2014 Holocaust Memorial Lecture, "Across Generations and Cultures: Reflections on the Long Aftermath." Hoffman, an accomplished memoirist and critic, is the author of *After Such Knowledge*, an important text for students in my seminar, Rethinking the Holocaust, as well as for the Fellows Seminars during our Summer Institutes.

Hoffman writes with reckoning wisdom about the burdens and responsibilities of being a second generation witness, having grown up in a world profoundly marked by the Shoah. Her parents and their generation have bequeathed to her, and her generation, a world shaped by the realities of what happened during the Holocaust. She refers to this wounded knowing as both a burden

and a trust for which her generation takes on a special stewardship – what she calls a guardianship of the "long aftermath of atrocity."<sup>3</sup> "What," she asks, "do we do after such knowledge? And how does that responsibility shape our lives, our relationships with others, our relationships with the world within and around us?" Ms. Hoffman explored these matters in our 17th annual Holocaust Memorial Lecture on September 15.

We ask our many friends to join us in reflecting on what it means to come to terms with *after*, to face and to address the often overwhelming testimony of the wounding that leads someone like Charlotte Delbo to write, "I know the difference between before and after."<sup>4</sup> Tom Trezise reminded us that this "place" called *after* is a "situation of address." We invite you to join us there, to address the wounded reality that calls out for our careful and compassionate attention.

Hank Knight, Director

<sup>1</sup>Susan Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Trezise, *Witnessing Witnessing* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 2, 5, 7, passim.

<sup>3</sup>Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), xv.

<sup>4</sup>Charlotte Delbo, trans. Rosette C. Lamont, "Mado" in *Auschwitz and After* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 258f.

## After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust (New York: Public Affairs, 2004)

### Excerpts:

The Event that preceded us ["the second generation"] was fundamental enough to constitute an overwhelming given and a life task. The reference points through which we communicate and recognize each other have to do with our location in the dark topography of the Shoah and with the stages of a long and difficult reckoning – with our parents' past and its deep impact on us; with our obligations to that past and the conclusions we can derive from it for the present. (28f)

The past works its way through the self in powerful and unexpected ways. Although cross-cultural observations of second generations are even less available than those of survivors, it may be that the concept of "transmission of trauma," like that of trauma itself, is our contemporary culture's way of accounting for the continued underground life of the past and the disappeared. (71-72)

Stand too close to horror, and you get fixation, paralysis, engulfment; stand too far, and you get voyeurism or forgetting. Distance matters. (177)

## From Memory to History: An Oral History Project

Molly Palmer, Holocaust and genocide studies major, KSC 2014, conducted an oral history project of Holocaust survivor Kathy Preston as an internship guided by Hank Knight, director of the Cohen Center and professor in HGS. Molly's paper, submitted to the Hildebrandt Awards, highlighted her journey that was a mixture of excitement, trepidation, joy, worry, and personal growth as she embarked upon what she describes as "an opportunity of a lifetime." Her extensive preparation and research into how to conduct an interview with a survivor, along with guidance from the Cohen Center staff, allowed Molly to shape her own personal style as an interviewer and face the challenges of her internship.

Molly contacted Kathy Preston and began to develop a relationship before the formal interview took place. Kathy, on her part, encouraged Molly and reassured her that she "was on the right track ... and praised [Molly's] efforts of making sure [she] was doing everything correctly."

When the interview finally took place, Molly had already decided that it was more important for Kathy to tell her story than to answer a series of extensive questions. As the conversation took place, Molly listened and Kathy told her history. Kathy was born in 1939 in a small town in Transylvania. Her father was Jewish and her mother was

Catholic. Her father's parents were from a small Jewish village in Russia and had been murdered by Cossacks in a pogrom. Her mother was a successful dressmaker and seamstress. At five years old, Kathy escaped the Nazi roundup of Jews in Hungary when a neighbor hid her under the hay in the attic of her barn. Her father was forced into a ghetto and was arrested by the Hungarian police when he snuck out to try to see his daughter. He would perish in Auschwitz along with 27 other members of his family. Kathy and her mother survived.

Molly is still in touch with Kathy. Molly reflects that "history is nothing if there is no consideration for those who lived through it." Even though Molly had seen various survivors before (at lectures, in schools) and those were "momentous occasions" for her, "none of them hold the quality of sitting down face-to-face and working with one."

Kathy is on a mission to tell her history and to help shape the future. She testified in support of HB 1444 to make April Genocide Awareness month in New Hampshire and speaks in a variety of settings. Pam Moskal of Hopkinton Middle School coordinates an extensive Holocaust curriculum. This past spring, the Cohen Center was able to help Pam host two Hungarians (Kathy Preston and Tom Weisshaus) who both survived as hidden children. This was the first time these



*Molly Palmer, KSC 2014, and Holocaust survivor Kathy Preston at Kathy's home in Barnstead, NH.*

two survivors had met. Both gave their testimonies and then sat with the astonished students during lunch.

Kathy struggled with hate and has now come to a point of letting that go. According to Pam Moskal, the students at Hopkinton Middle School "especially liked the idea that love and just surviving can be revenge enough and a way of defeating their enemies for the survivors... . The students ... could not believe that they [Tom and Kathy] would eat lunch with them and just talk."

# Awards Night

On April 27, 2014, the Cohen Center hosted a special awards evening and presented both the Hildebrandt and the Herman Awards. The Keene State College student recipient of the Susan J. Herman Award for Leadership in Holocaust and Genocide Awareness for 2014 was senior Chloe Nixon. Chloe was honored for her work with the Holocaust and Genocide Studies honor society, Zeta Chi Rho, as well as her project on bystanders. Our community recipient was founder and Executive Director of Voices of Rwanda Taylor Krauss. Taylor was unable to join us as he was in the hospital being treated for malaria. But he was able to send a brief video of a Rwandan survivor, Josephine Murebwayire, who told her story to Voices of Rwanda. Taylor created Voices of Rwanda in 2006 to record and preserve the testimonies of Rwandans and to ensure that their stories inform the world about genocide.

That same evening we presented the Charles A. Hildebrandt Award for Excellence in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The award had undergone a name change and now includes submissions in genocide studies. The first award was presented to the students of Jacqui Goodman's sixth-grade class at Buckland-Shelburne, MA Elementary School for their project "Remember ...". Students



*From Left to Right: Erin McNulty, Sarina Kauffman, Abbie Brown and Alex Davis.*

created a poem and designed artwork on the pages of the book *The Devil's Arithmetic*. The high school student award went to Conant High School student Shannon Weideman for her artwork "Bounded." Keene State senior Sarina Kauffman was awarded an Honorable Mention for her dance "A Place for Quiet Screaming (A Place for Lucid Dreaming)," which she performed that evening. The first-prize award was shared by two Keene State College seniors, Johanna DeBari and Alexander Davis. Johanna was

honored for her research paper, "Rape as a Tool of Genocide: Impact of Prosecutor v. Akayesu (1998)," which sums up the research Johanna did on the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda case against Jean-Paul Akayesu, who ultimately was found guilty of aiding and abetting in crimes of rape during genocide. The final award of the evening was presented to Alexander Davis for his choreography of a dance entitled "Disassembled," performed by Abbie Brown, Katie Longchamp, and Erin McNulty. "Disassembled," explores the themes of group mentality, duality, and emotional compartmentalization within the context of Nazi soldiers during the Final Solution of the Holocaust.

## Brundibar in Meredith, NH

Bryan Halprin, director of the Winnepesaukee Playhouse, brought the Brundibar Project to NH in May with the support of the NH Humanities Council and the Jewish Federation of NH. Originally performed by children at the Terezin concentration camp, *Brundibar* is a children's opera by Jewish Czech composer Hans Krása that celebrates the triumph of the helpless over tyranny and the transformative power of art. Brundibar was adapted by Pulitzer Prize winner Tony Kushner – adding his companion piece, *But the Giraffe!*

The Cohen Center was pleased to organize facilitators to participate in post-show discussion sessions with the audience and cast. Facilitators included Tom White; KSC HGS Professor Nona Fienberg; and Cohen Fellows Christina Duffy, Deb Barry, and Susan Peters.

"I felt so honored to be a facilitator! Some of the actors did reflect on what the show meant to them, and the older cast asked the younger cast about how they will carry the messages with them. I really, really enjoyed the experience."

–Cohen Fellow Christina Duffy



*The cast of Brundibar, courtesy of the Winnepesaukee Playhouse, Meredith, NH.*



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## From the Center Out

In July, my son, who will be entering high school this fall, joined Hank Knight and other guests who were privileged to attend the awarding of France's highest honor, the National Order of the Legion of Honor, to Holocaust survivor, US Army "Ritchie Boy," liberator, and longtime friend Stephan Lewy. The event took place at the New Hampshire State House in Concord. Governor Hassan began the ceremony with appreciation for our veterans by noting that our countries are safer and our freedom is stronger due to their sacrifice. It was with deep gratitude that the French Consul General Fabien Faschi decorated Stephan as a distinguished veteran whose bravery and service to others helped to liberate France and Europe and whose postwar work in illuminating the threats of hatred and discrimination has helped to assure the survival of our humanity. The governor recognized that future generations are stronger because of Stephan's willingness to share his experience to raise awareness of the Holocaust and genocide while continuing to work to fight intolerance and hatred. I again felt the responsibility and hope that our work can impart on the next generation and was honored to share Stephan's legacy.

In September, Governor Hassan signed HB1444, making April Genocide Awareness Month in New Hampshire. New Hampshire becomes the fourth state to pass such legislation, revealing the growing impact of our work in promoting an informed citizenry attuned to the needs of civic and social responsibility in our own and in the global community. The diverse range of New Hampshire contributors promoting this bill, including state officials, Holocaust and genocide survivors, teachers, students, and Keene State Holocaust and genocide studies majors, reveals the importance of education in raising awareness and promoting appropriate responses to honor those who were isolated and targeted by the crime of genocide. This is the legacy we impart to our children.

– Hank Knight, Director



Connor White, Stephan Lewy, and Cohen Center director, Hank Knight.



Stephan Lewy poses with NH Governor Maggie Hassan, Fabien Fieschi, Consul General of France, and Adèle Boufford Baker, honorary Consul of France for New Hampshire.

## My Heart in a Suitcase

On May 20, 2014, the Cohen Center teamed up with our partners at the Colonial Theatre in Keene, who sponsored "My Heart In A Suitcase," a powerful play based upon the true story of Anne Lehmann, a kindertransport survivor from Berlin. Tom White introduced the play and facilitated a post-play discussion with the audience and the actors. Five area schools and 500 people were in attendance.



Cast member of "My Heart in a Suitcase". Photo courtesy of Colonial Theatre.

## Delivered and Received!

Cohen Fellow Dee Angwin serves as docent for the Grubman Family Teaching Trunk. The trunk traveled to Hopkinton Middle School in Contoocook, NH; Amherst (NH) Middle School; Barnard School in Hampton, NH; and Jaffrey-Rindge (NH) Middle School.

Accompanying the trunk on its journeys, Dee reflected that each delivery brought new suggestions for different teaching styles and strategies and that each and every teacher was so grateful and excited to have all this information at his or her fingertips. As a fellow, Dee feels passionately that it is important to give back after all the workshops and seminars at KSC. "We are truly blessed to have been given this opportunity of resources to enrich our students." Dee looks forward to another year of meeting people at more new schools that receive the trunk and honor its legacy.



Grubman Family Teaching Trunk.



## Genocide Awareness Lecture

On March 3, 2014, while Keene managed to avoid yet another winter storm, states south of us were not so fortunate. Washington, DC, was no exception and closed schools, businesses, and the federal government when it had snow totals of over 10 inches. Unfortunately, this was also the day of the Cohen Center's Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Lecture. Our guest, Ambassador Mathilde Mukantabana, was snowed in and was not able to travel to Keene to give her lecture, "Remember, Unite, Renew: Retracing Milestones in Country Building after the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda." Instead of a lecture from the Rwandan ambassador to the United States, the audience was treated to a very personal conversation between Ambassador Mukantabana and her friend Dr. James Waller, Cohen Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Keene State College, over Skype.

In 1994, over a period of 100 days, nearly one million people died in Rwanda, a country the size of Vermont. It is said that every existing Tutsi family lost at least one family member in that genocide. One scholar estimates that 97 percent of children who survived the genocide were witnesses to the killing and death. And as Rwanda commemorates this tragic part of history, it is also doing amazing work in restorative justice and forgiveness.

The ambassador shared her own story of loss, talking about the 70 members of her own family who were killed during the genocide against the Tutsi. She spoke about the challenges that all Rwandans face as the country as a whole tries to move forward, about moving from the more complicated "us and them" to promote the whole and the fact that they are all Rwandans. She spoke about the challenges of having many children who

are products of rape. "Imagine," the ambassador said, "you have a constant reminder of the person who perpetrated the crime and that is your child."

Dr. Waller and Ambassador Mukantabana went on to discuss the question of forgiveness – is it even possible? The ambassador said she believed it's important for the past to be the past. "Even if you don't like somebody, you can do that, but you both agree to move forward." She said that Rwandans want "to forgive ourselves. That we are willing to see 'the other' and that will help them move forward." The incredible work the country has done with transitional justice is clearly demonstrated with the Gacaca courts.

It was clear that Ambassador Mukantabana is proud to be part of a country's parliament where over 64 percent of the parliamentarians are women – the highest proportion of any parliament in the world. She was leaving Washington, DC, the next day for a retreat called by Rwandan President Paul Kagame. While the lecture wasn't what the Center originally envisioned, the time spent with Ambassador Mukantabana will not be forgotten easily.



*Dr. James Waller, Cohen Chair of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, chats with Ambassador Mathilde Mukantabana via Skype.*

## 2015 Summer Institute

This intensive one-week residential institute brings educators together from around the United States and Europe. Graduates become Cohen Center Fellows and join a corps of educators who serve as leaders in Holocaust and genocide education in their schools, communities, and professional organizations, and assist the Center in applying its mission.



Participants of the 2013 Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide. Photo by Levi Gershkowitz.

## Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

### SAVE THE DATE

#### October 22

**Professional Development/Public Workshop:  
Echoes and Reflections, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
With Jacqueline Hanlon, Somersworth High School,  
and Shani Lourie, Yad Vashem**

A multimedia program that provides US secondary educators with professional development and resources to teach about the Holocaust in today's classrooms.

*A \$75 registration fee includes materials and lunch.*

#### November 6

**Professional Development/Public Workshop:  
Elie Wiesel: From Night to Now, 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
With Alan Rosen**

This workshop will explore how reading works from different stages of this blessed career can help us better read *Night* in this spirit. *A \$75 registration fee includes materials and lunch.*

#### November 9

**Kristallnacht Commemoration  
Colonial Theatre, Keene, 7 p.m.**

Join us as a community committed to the welfare of all its citizens as we remember the events of November 9, 1938, also called "The Night of Broken Glass."



*Phil Suter, Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce, lights a candle at Kristallnacht.  
Photo by Michael Moore*

*For more information, check [keene.edu](http://keene.edu) or call the Cohen Center at 603-358-2490.*