More than Just a Moment—Unlocking the Value of the LBI Photograph Collection
Archivist Walter Schlect discusses the tools and techniques being used to restore and illuminate the LBI photo collection on p. 5.

Projects—YOUNG GERMAN JEWS DISCUSS JEWISH IDENTITY AT LBI

People—HERMANN TEIFER ON JEWISH STUDENT POLITICS IN 1970S VIENNA

Collections—LIEBE KÄTHE—SENSATIONAL FIND STOKES WWI DEBATE

Programs—THE CULTURAL IMPACT OF GERMAN-JEWISH REFUGEES
Leo Baeck Institute Turns 60

William H. Weitzer, Executive Director

In 1955, a group of émigré intellectuals including Ernst Simon, Robert Weltsch, Martin Buber, and Gershom Scholem met in Jerusalem to found an institute to preserve German-Jewish history. As we celebrate the 60th birthday of the Leo Baeck Institute, we can be certain that these distinguished individuals could not have imagined what LBI would look like today. In New York, LBI has built a world-class research collection with art, books, and papers that represent the most important repository of source material on the history of German-speaking Jews.

Our celebration of this momentous occasion begins with the annual Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture on Sunday afternoon, November 8, when Dr. Michael Meyer will speak on German Jews: The History and the Heritage, Celebrating Sixty Years of the Leo Baeck Institute. On Tuesday, November 17, a little more than a week later, we will be holding our Annual Award Dinner and honoring Dr. Eric R. Kandel, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist whose writings about his research on memory extend to the history and culture of Vienna, the city of his birth.

Both of these events at the Center for Jewish History will be complemented by a new exhibition scheduled to open in the Goldsmith Gallery at the Center on November 1 entitled Crisis and Opportunity: The Cultural Impact of German-Jewish Refugees. The exhibit is designed to highlight the historical and cultural influences that affected refugees before they left their home countries in the early 20th century and the opportunities and challenges that they found when they came to the U.S.

Programs like these demonstrate how far the Leo Baeck Institute has come. Yet there is still more work to be done. Sixty years after its founding, LBI is still collecting historic materials and forging bonds with new generations. Donations of materials from the refugees, their children, and their grandchildren must be catalogued, digitized and preserved. Our work to make all of our holdings accessible to scholars and the public also must continue. And, we are promoting German-Jewish history through events around the country, exhibitions, and publications like this LBI News.

Those who founded the Leo Baeck Institute fulfilled our mission for many years. We are now at a critical juncture where new generations of supporters must help us continue our important work. Please support us in whatever way you can—with materials, through membership, by attending our events, with contributions, and by including the Leo Baeck Institute in your will. Each option and any amount will help us continue to achieve a mission that was established 60 years ago and is still relevant today. Please contact me with your questions or comments: wweitzer@lbi.cjh.org or 212-744-6400. Thank you.
Austrian writer Josef Roth carried dozens of snapshots of his estranged wife, Friederike (Friedl), among his few possessions until he died in a Paris hospital for the indigent in 1939. In the mid-1920s, Friedl began to manifest symptoms of schizophrenia, and she was eventually institutionalized, plunging Josef into an alcoholic crisis of his own. Josef paid for her stays in a series of private sanatoria until he was no longer able, and Friedl was murdered by the Nazi euthanasia program at Schloss Hartheim in Austria in 1940. The snapshots in Roth’s archival collection show an outwardly happy couple traveling around Europe during the period when Josef was a star correspondent for the Frankfurter Zeitung.
Exile in the Spotlight: How Kurt Hirschfeld made Zurich into the World Stage for German Theater

After the Second World War, the theater designer Teo Otto—one of the most prolific men in his profession in the 20th century—reminisced about his first conversation with Kurt Hirschfeld, the German-Jewish theater director who made Zurich the home of uncensored German theater during the Nazi years:

“In 1933, as millions packed their bags, I hoped to find new footing in the uncertainty of foreign countries. I chose Zurich. I tied up my bundle and, like a miracle, [...] two phone lines crossed: his from Zurich and mine from Remscheid—right at the exact same second. I picked up the receiver, and he was there; he picked up the receiver, and I was there. The thread that tugged on destiny was named Kurt Hirschfeld.

With his savvy way of working and his exceptional human understanding he seems to be deployed by fate as a high-ranking fisherman, who at any rate had landed Hartung, Lindtberg, Horwitz, Kaiser, Steckel, Ginsberg, and Therese Giehse from the rolling political sea. The positive way in which he spoke of his colleagues—his friends—[...] inspired me to stay and to unpack my bundle.”

—Teo Otto

Otto’s words were among the letters and documents brought to life by German actors Stefan Kurt (Berliner Ensemble) and Friederike Wagner (Schauspielhaus Zurich) during the first international conference on the legacy of Kurt Hirschfeld, which LBI presented at the Schauspielhaus Zurich on March 8–9, 2015. On December 6, 2015, German-American actors and theater scholars will again explore Hirschfeld’s legacy at the Center for Jewish History.

The ensemble of refugee Jews and Marxists that Hirschfeld assembled in Zurich—from the expressionist theater pioneer Gustav Hartung to the distinguished actress and original “Mother Courage” Therese Giehse—would keep the best traditions of German theater alive during the Nazi years. Almost immediately after the Nazis rose to power, Hirschfeld’s company sounded a direct protest with incendiary pieces like Ferdinand Bruckner’s antifascist drama The Races.

After 1938, Hirschfeld shifted the focus to classical works, especially those of the Enlightenment dramatist Schiller. “Pieces like Wilhelm Tell or Don Carlos (with its much-quoted plea for “freedom of thought”) now had an educational function—they were meant to convey the idea of freedom,” said Ursula Amrein, a professor of German at the University of Zurich who presented a paper at the LBI conference in Zurich. The return to classics, though perhaps less risky than unambiguous provocations like The Races, was still a rebuke to fascism. Once lauded by Goebbels as an ideal Führer-Drama, even Wilhelm Tell was banned in German theaters and schools in 1941, in part for its tendency to elicit applause at what the Nazis considered the wrong moments.

In her talk at the Zurich Conference, Wendy Arons, Professor of Drama at Carnegie Mellon University, also pointed to Hirschfeld’s extraordinary influence on the introduction of international works into the German-language repertoire. “Many of these plays—for example, Tennessee Williams’ The Glass Menagerie and Thornton Wilder’s The Skin of Our Teeth—opened in Zurich only a few years after premiering in English, an indication of just how much the leadership of the Schauspielhaus had its finger on the pulse of the international theater scene.” Arons will deliver the keynote presentation at the December 6 event in New York.

Program
Lecture, Dramatic Reading, and Panel Discussion
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 6, 2015 2:30 PM
Forchheimer Auditorium, Center for Jewish History
Exile in the Spotlight: Kurt Hirschfeld and German-language Theater at the Schauspielhaus Zurich
www.lbi.org/hirschfeld-nyc

A Conversation on Jewish Identity
With Future Leaders of German Jewry
William H. Weitzer

A group of 14 Jewish students from Germany will spend two days at the Leo Baeck Institute in late October. The college and graduate level students are supported by the Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Studienwerk (ELES), a scholarship program funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research. Each year, ELES selects 80 students from throughout Germany and provides them with scholarships and academic support. ELES runs seminars throughout the year in Germany and during trips to Israel and the US.
ELES students are the future leaders of German Jewry. As such, they represent a cross-section of the current German Jewish student population. A great majority of the students were born in the former Soviet Union or have parents who were born there. The remainder is split evenly between Israelis who currently live in Germany and the small post-war Jewish community. The undergraduate students are studying for a wide variety of professions. ELES also serves graduate students in the field of Jewish Studies who may or may not be Jewish.

The goal of the 10-day seminar in the US is to introduce the students to new concepts about Jewish identity based on the extraordinary diversity of Jewish life in the US. When the students come to the Leo Baeck Institute for two days, they will also get an opportunity to learn about Jewish life in Germany before 1933. We look forward to discussing the parallels and differences between Jewish life in Germany a century ago and today, focusing on issues of migration, prejudice, assimilation, and religious practice. Given the Eastern European background of many ELES students, YIVO will also participate in some of the sessions.

In addition to presentations and discussion at LBI, the ELES students will get hands on experience with DigiBaeck, LBI’s digital archive. Small groups of students will be given a research assignment to complete using LBI’s digital collections. At the end of the session, they will report their findings to the larger group. The intent is to familiarize the students with DigiBaeck so that they can use it for professional or personal research in the future.

LBI and ELES are exploring other ways to work together in the coming year. The two days at LBI will be evaluated and the results will be used to develop curricular modules for use with ELES students during the seminars held throughout the year in Germany. Teaching German-Jewish history to tomorrow’s German-Jewish leaders is clearly one way to fulfill the LBI mission to preserve and promote a precious history that was nearly lost.

More than Just a Moment—Unlocking the Value of the LBI Photo Collection

Walter Schlect

The Leo Baeck Institute’s photo collection contains tens of thousands of photographs of individuals, organizations, synagogues, and important historical events. In recent years, digitization has radically expanded access to this unique collection, but LBI recently launched an initiative to improve access to historic photographs in order to keep pace with evolving standards. Archivist Walter Schlect explains LBI’s work to bring these photographs to light.

Most photographs in LBI collections came with donations of family papers to the archives. In the past, they were separated from the archival collections and filed by subject (portraits of men, portraits of woman, synagogues, Jewish schools, etc). In recent years, most of these images were digitized, which has made it possible for researchers to locate and view photographs—from the iconic image of Albert Einstein riding a bicycle to anonymous snapshots of family vacations in the 1930s.

However, not all photographs have been digitized, and many were not digitized at high resolutions for various reasons. Furthermore, the metadata that would answer key questions about the photograph—Who is depicted? Who took the photograph? Was it ever published? Where and when was it taken?—is often inadequate to take advantage of the rich possibilities for browsing and discovery in modern digital catalogs.

For example, the above photograph of a synagogue in Bleicherode (in Thuringia, Germany) could only be accessed by searching for “synagogue” and “bleicherode” in DigiBaeck. A researcher looking for synagogues built by the prominent German-Jewish architect Edwin Oppler would not have found it, because Oppler’s name was not included in the metadata, nor was the name of the photography studio, nor the type of photograph (an albumen print) nor its format (landscape). Some of this information was on the photograph, but it was unfortunately cropped out.

(continued on page 6)
I rescanned this image in color at a higher resolution. The new image provides a truer sense of the original, and I also added historical and biographical information to the catalog entry that will help users understand the context of this photo. Sharing this information expands the audience for our collection.

In spring I participated in a four-day workshop on care and identification of photographs sponsored by the New York Metropolitan Library Council and the New York chapter of the Art Library Society of North America. Taught by photo conservator Gawain Weaver, this workshop taught the fundamentals of identifying photographic processes from the daguerreotype to modern-day digital prints. Why is this important? Understanding the materials used to create a photograph helps us to approximately date photographs.

The fact that the Bleicherode synagogue photograph is an albumen print (a photograph that uses an egg white solution to bind the photographic chemicals to the paper) and that it is pasted to a cabinet card, tells us that this was probably made between 1882 (when the synagogue was dedicated) and 1890, when the process had fallen into disuse and was replaced by more efficient methods. Identifying photographic processes requires a combination of observations about the surface and degradation of the photograph (the yellowing appearance is a clue that it is albumen) as well as its appearance under magnification.

Going forward, the Leo Baeck Institute plans to re-digitize and enhance metadata for many of our photos, which will be integrated into the forthcoming Edythe Griffinger Art Catalogue, an online repository of visual materials from LBI collections. We are starting with photographs made with early 19TH century processes that are quite rare today, including daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, and tintypes. Early photography shows a fascinating transition from oil and pastel portraits of German Jews of the early 19TH century to photographs with German-Jewish sitters in staged settings that were later touched up with paint or pastel. They also depict people, places and events that would otherwise be lost to history.

Projects

The rescanned photograph includes information about the photographer and subject of the photograph. LBI Photograph Collection, F 3344.

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The oldest photographs in LBI collections are typically portraits like the ones in this locket.

Magnification can reveal information about the process used to print a photograph, which helps to determine approximate dates.

Originally from Yakima, Washington, Walter Schlect studied German at Washington State University and spent two years teaching English in Austria on a Fulbright Fellowship. He is currently writing a thesis on the Czech-Jewish printmaker Emil Orlik for a dual Master’s Degree in Library Science and Art History at Pratt Institute and managing the Edythe Griffinger Art Catalogue project at LBI.
I stumbled into these discussions and, since I was what they call a Geschäftshuber—a big talker, a busybody, a meddler—I was voted Chairman of the Jewish Student Union. My fellow students, who weren’t leftists for the most part, soon regretted it. When you walked into my Jewish Student Union, what you saw was an enormous poster of Karl Marx and above that a portrait of Theodor Herzl. Some members of the Jewish Student Union didn’t appreciate it, and relations with non-Jewish students, even and especially the leftist groups, weren’t much easier.

In the early 1970s came the exodus of Russian Jews from the Soviet Union. We erected a stand in front of the University and demanded that the Soviets allow the Jews to leave. A few right-wing students, easy to recognize from their dueling scars, and a group of elegantly dressed students who turned out to be Syrians came and tried to take away our flyers and destroy them. That was the casual Austrian style of antisemitism I remember.

The non-Jewish leftists, meanwhile, discovered their profound solidarity with the Palestinians, and we saw it as our role to present another perspective. At a rally for the Palestinians in one of the University’s large auditoriums, I introduced myself as a representative of the Union of Jewish Students only to be shouted down with a chant of “PLO! PLO!” In fact, we were the only ones arguing for a two-state solution at that time! The leftists didn’t want to hear it, and neither did many Jews in the Student Union, frankly. What can I say? In Vienna in those days, it was difficult to be a Jew. Especially one who dreamed of a socialist world.


Well, that was exactly what I wanted to do, so after I graduated I went to Israel. When I failed to build Socialism there, I totally gave up and immigrated to America instead.
Walter Nathan—Leaving a Legacy at Leo Baeck Institute

History and family go hand in hand for Walter Nathan.

In 2006, the Chicago businessman visited his father’s native town of Gau Algesheim (near Mainz) and found the Jewish Cemetery there in dilapidated condition after years of neglect and wanton vandalism. Nathan took action and contacted the Mayor. They agreed to construct a monument with a memorial plaque for all those whose eternal rest—since the 17th century—was disturbed, mostly by Nazis.

In 2008, on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, Nathan gathered his extended family of about 60 relatives from all over the world who, together with the town’s elders and many local citizens, helped unveil a memorial to honor the Jews buried there, including generations of the Nathan family.

“I invited even my youngest grandchildren because they should all know and see where their family originated and how their ancestors labored under difficult circumstances, but had the stamina and guts to overcome them,” says Nathan. Those ancestors were the forefathers of what is now a large global family, mostly in the US.

Nathan’s strong convictions about the importance of history also led him to include Leo Baeck Institute in his estate planning. His gift will help ensure that the institute’s collections, focused on the history of families like his, will be available long into the future.

LBI collections will someday also be enriched by the documents, photographs, and books dating from the 19th century through the 2nd World War that Nathan plans to entrust to the LBI Archives. Among other things, they tell the complete history of the shoe manufacturing company “Ada-Ada,” which was started by Nathan’s father and uncle in the year 1900. By the time it was “aryanized” in 1937, it produced 1 million pairs of shoes per year and employed more than 1000 workers in the Frankfurt suburb of Hoechst. It was a great success story for a Jewish family originating in Gau Algesheim who moved to Frankfurt at the end of the 19th century.

“Future researchers will be able to use these records to help explain what made this period of German history such fertile ground for extraordinary achievements in politics, business, art, science, and culture,” says Nathan.

Although family papers like those in the LBI Archives are priceless, the costs of cataloguing them, preserving them, and making them available to researchers online for the long term add up quickly. Financial gifts like the one Walter Nathan has planned will help strengthen Leo Baeck Institute’s ability to serve as guardian of these materials for generations to come.

Family Matters—Fourth Generation of Bambergers Introduced to LBI

When LBI Vice President Michael Bamberger brought the youngest generation of his extended family to the Leo Baeck Institute on a mid-summer morning in 2015, he was continuing a long tradition of family involvement with the Institute. His own father, the Frankfurt-born scholar and magazine editor Fritz Bamberger, was also a Vice President of LBI for over a quarter century and delivered the first Leo Baeck Memorial...
lecture in 1956. Michael's sister, Gabrielle Bamberger, was the editor of this publication, *LBI News*, from 1974 until the mid-1990s, and she also joined the Bamberger clan at LBI.

Michael and his wife Phylis arranged the visit at the request of their son Kenneth, a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley who brought his wife Sarah and four of their five children, Max, Isaiah, Niva and Ezra, to the Institute. Michael's daughter-in-law Kristin, whose husband Richard was unable to attend, came with her children, Madeleine, Quinn, and Ella.

“It was wonderful to see my grandchildren's interest develop in the history of our family and of German Jews generally,” said Michael. Among the archival items that captured their attention: a letter that Albert Einstein wrote to Fritz Bamberger in the 1930s.

Austrian Parliamentary President Praises Young Volunteers behind LBI’s Austrian Heritage Collection

Doris Bures, the President of the National Council of Austria (the upper house of Austria’s parliament) visited LBI in New York on August 27, 2015 to learn about the Institute and meet two young volunteers who are working to document stories of Austrian refugees in lieu of their mandatory military service in Austria.

Jan Dreer (19) and Simeon Gazivoda (18) both from Vienna, opted to spend the year after their graduation from Gymnasium recording the stories of former refugees from their homeland and helping expand and maintain the Institute's Austrian Heritage Collection of nearly 400 recorded oral history interviews.

“Gedenkdiensst makes an important statement: that we must never forget,” said Bures, referring to the German name for the program of voluntary service with Holocaust memorial organizations. “These young people are making an invaluable contribution to our coming to terms with the darkest chapter of our recent history,” she continued.

“It is a personal enrichment for me to meet people all over New Jersey, Connecticut and New York to record their remarkable life stories,” said Dreer. “It allows me to see Austria and its past through different eyes.”

Gazivoda linked Gedenkdiensst to his concern about contemporary social issues. “I see documenting this history as a way to fight xenophobia in today’s world as well” he said.

Bures also offered a statement in support of draft legislation that would open the possibility of recognized civil service to young Austrian women. “This is a long overdue step, since women have always played an important role in the fight against every form of racism, violence, and discrimination, not just in today’s civil society,” said Bures.

Over 40 Gedenkdiensst volunteers from Austria have spent a year at LBI New York since 1995.
When Günther Roth found himself sifting through the contents of a Baltimore attic in 2009, he did not expect to find key documents from one of the most disputed episodes in 20th-century history. A more prosaic task had brought the now 84-year-old Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Columbia to the home of Christopher Jeffrey; the editors of Max Weber’s collected works had dispatched him to verify some vital details for the index of persons in Weber’s Gesamtausgabe. Jeffrey’s grandparents, Edgar Jaffé (1866 – 1921) and Else von Richthofen (1874 – 1973), both maintained close personal and professional ties with Max Weber, one of the founders of modern social science.

And yet, among the Jaffé-Richthofen family correspondence—more than a thousand of these letters are now in the LBI Archive—were intimate letters dashed off almost daily by a keen-eyed observer who describes in incisive detail how German statesmen and generals conducted the First World War. In this case, they were also passionate love letters, from Kurt Riezler, a 32-year-old Bavarian Catholic diplomat (and distant relation of the Jaffé-Richthofen clan), to Käthe Liebermann, the daughter of the German-Jewish impressionist painter Max Liebermann. At 29, the beautiful daughter of one of the grandest of Grand Bourgeois Jewish families in Berlin had already turned down proposals from men of more illustrious pedigree, but Kurt Riezler was no ordinary suitor, and the impending war accelerated their courtship.

In the letters, it is clear that Riezler is infatuated with the raven-haired Jewish socialite he called his “schwarze Katze” (black cat), telling her how he longs to stroke her “black crown” with his “bear’s paw.” It was not just his way with words that won Käthe’s heart, however. Riezler’s gifted pen had also earned him a place in the corridors of power that surely set him apart from other eligible men as well.

Riezler had enjoyed a meteoric rise from Foreign Office press officer to become the closest confidant and advisor to Imperial Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg. As the July Crisis unfolded after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, Riezler observed the impending catastrophe from the estate of the secluded Chancellor. But the one hundred letters to Käthe Liebermann begin only after he accompanied the Chancellor to military headquarters on August 17, 1914; they cover the crucial months through early 1915 and record his candid comments almost daily.

“What the letters show is the mood in the Großes Hauptquartier, the certainty of victory in the first month, followed by increasing doubts about the course of the war, and the eventual realization that war could be lost,” says Roth. Still in expectation of a quick victory, Riezler drafted on the Chancellor’s behalf the first plans for the German domination of the European continent, the so-called “September Program.”
Contested Archival Legacy

Riezler and his archival estate were already at the center of one of the longest and most acrimonious historical debates of the 20th century, says historian John Röhl, an Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Sussex who is working with Roth to publish a “diplomatic edition” of the letters, that is, an accurate transcription with an extensive commentary. Röhl believes the letters support the position of scholars like him who argue that Germany bears the greatest responsibility for unleashing war in 1914.

The question of war guilt had been the subject of vehement debate since the first shots were fired, and the thesis of German guilt was at the root of the punitive Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Germany’s responsibility for the war, however, “was called into question by a tremendous effort on the part of conservative German historians and the German state in the interwar period,” says Röhl. “After the Treaty of Versailles and an initial flood of damning revelations, the German response was to deny responsibility while destroying and suppressing evidence that would undermine their claim that the war had been defensive.”

Eventually, something resembling a consensus emerged that the nations of Europe had “slithered over the brink into the boiling cauldron of war,” in the words of Britain’s wartime prime minister, David Lloyd George. In that view, the war had been a terrible accident.

The German historian Fritz Fischer challenged this notion in 1961 with the publication of Griff nach der Weltmacht (published in English as Germany’s Aims in the First World War although the more provocative original title literally means “Grab for World Power”). The war had not simply descended on Europe like an unusually destructive weather-system, argued Fischer. Instead, Germany had deliberately provoked a war in order to support an annexationist foreign policy that was virtually identical to that pursued by Hitler just two decades later.

Fischer marshaled mountains of documentary evidence in support of his thesis, but key documents were still missing as a result of selective censorship by the Foreign Office of Weimar Germany, destruction of archives during WWII, and the division of Germany during the Cold War. Bethmann Hollweg’s personal papers were among the missing documents that might have delivered conclusive evidence but were irretrievably lost.

As the debate between Fischer’s followers and his conservative opponents led by Gerhard Ritter spilled over onto the Feuilletons of German papers, Kurt Riezler’s diaries were discovered in the possession of his brother Walter in Germany. Both sides hoped that the observations of the Chancellor’s closest aid would supply new ammunition for their own arguments, but instead a new debate erupted about the authenticity of the diaries. Fischer charged that the editor of the diaries, Karl Dietrich Erdmann, had selectively edited them to show Germany in a positive light. When the war-time diaries became public, it emerged that the pre-war volumes had been destroyed by Walter after Kurt’s death in the 1950s, and key entries for the July Crisis had likely been rewritten by Riezler himself after the fact.

Centennial Revisions

Nevertheless, says Röhl, Fischer’s core thesis that Germany had incited war in pursuit of an expansionist foreign policy became the basis of a new consensus after about 1965.

“They suddenly, in 2014, we got a whole slew of books that seemed to return to the argument that the war had been some kind of accident,” says Röhl, whose three-volume biography of Kaiser Wilhelm II established him as an expert on the Wilhelmine period and the run-up to war.

The first and most influential of the centennial challenges to the Fischer thesis was the Cambridge historian Christopher Clark’s book on the origins of the First World War, The Sleepwalkers (2012). Clark eschews the “blame game,” and in his telling, the statesmen of Europe may lumber rather than slither but remain, though far from blameless, at least jointly culpable for the catastrophe.

Röhl remains firmly in the Fischer camp and points out that that the scales in this century old debate have always been tipped by the weight of contemporary political realities. “My good friend Christopher Clark felt he was on to a very good thing by challenging the accepted view, but his book also came at a time when the world was ready for a revision,” Röhl says. “Germany had been a peaceful democracy for decades, and it was no longer fashionable to believe that Germany bore responsibility for the war.”

“The Sleepwalkers was a huge success, especially in Germany,” Roth points out. “Now the Germans think they can relax since they are no longer mainly responsible for the First World War—that’s what really gets John’s hackles up.”

Evidence is Still Evidence

Evidence is still evidence,” insists Röhl, a statement that echoes Fritz Fischer’s extremely methodical document-based approach. In his view, the evidence that Germany’s military and political leadership planned the war to achieve dominion over the continent is so overwhelming that the recent attempts to broaden the view to include the impact of smaller actors like Serbia or to relativize Germany’s war aims by comparing them to those of Britain or Russia amount to a willful neglect of the long-established record.

A century after the war began, however, the argument over the scope and authenticity of the sources was mostly settled. “We had been operating on the basis nothing new would be found,” says Röhl, “which is why the discovery of the Riezler letters is so wonderful.”

Röhl thinks that the letters fill some of the gaps left by the missing diaries. Although the first letters were written after the war had begun, Riezler does refer to Bethmann Hollweg’s thinking during the July Crisis on several occasions. “The Chancellor has a very good mind,” Riezler wrote Käthe in late...
August or early September 1914. “At least people must concede that he ‘staged’ it [the war] very well. Besides, the war, though not actually willed, was precisely calculated and broke out at the most favorable moment.”

As early as October 27, 1914, Riezler abandoned hope of a swift and decisive victory. “The dream of winning on all three sides is over; the effort to make Germany Number One has also failed,” he confessed to Käthe. “Don’t be sad, the good German people must have amor fati; it does not have to perish if it does not receive the Greeks’ gift of world dominion.”

In fact, it sometimes seems that the only thing Riezler fears more than German defeat is German victory. “After this war, we will have a reputation as the worst barbarians, and we won’t be able to show our faces anywhere abroad,” he tells Käthe in a letter on August 29, 1914 that refers to the complete destruction of the famous library in Leuven, Belgium at the hands of German soldiers.

A Remarkable Union
Despite his unique position as the Chancellor’s right hand, Riezler was an outsider among the Prussian aristocracy that led the military and diplomatic apparatus. Bavarian, Catholic, highly educated, and engaged to a wealthy Jewess, he was a cultural foil for the Prussian Junkers. He depicts a military leadership class bubbling over with antisemitic bile and arguing for even more brutal subjugation of Germany’s neighbors than Bethmann Hollweg would consider.

Riezler’s cultural affinities were closer to the wealthy Jewish milieu of Käthe Liebermann, and Roth, as a sociologist, says he values the letters for the depiction of this lost world. His interest is in the elite Jewish families that the Liebermanns associated with—the Reichenheims, Oppenheimers, Rathenaus, Mendelssohns, Cassirers—who largely defined commercial and cultural life in the German capital.

“They were the ones, for instance, who bought modern art, not the Prussian establishment,” says Roth, noting that Kurt and Käthe extensively discussed the wartime experiences of collectors like Paul von Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Paul Cassirer.

In his commentaries that will accompany the published letters, Roth discusses the fates of these families during World War I and under the Nazi regime as well. In 1938 Riezler emigrated to New York to save his wife, who remained Jewish under Nazi definitions, and their daughter Maria, a “half-Jew.” Max Liebermann’s widow stayed behind only to take her own life in 1943 before her imminent deportation.

“It’s not just about the question of who was responsible for the First World War,” says Roth. “Of course the Germans were responsible. I’ve never doubted that. But the letters also bespeak a remarkable union of these two people from different worlds, Kurt and Käthe.”

From the Pen of Kurt Riezler
On intermarriage and conversion
DECEMBER 24, 1914
“The others have just left for the Imperial church service, I as a heretic [Catholic] can stay behind. As regards the interesting question of baptism, we should stick to our understanding, church wedding unnecessary, baptism much to be preferred. […] Not to be baptized would be a demonstration that would not be understood and give the evil-minded people an opportunity.” […] “I am glad that on the religious matter your father follows the ostrich policy which is easy and advantageous for all sides concerned.”

On the specter of German victory
OCTOBER 10, 1914
“I really believe that if we win the war it will be the beginning of the end of Germany. Germany’s best quality is quite non-political—it’s incompatible with world domination. As Nietzsche said, the founding of the Empire was already a decline. On that score I am quite old-fashioned.”

On antisemitism among the leadership
LATE SEPTEMBER, 1914
“Now there is great jubilation over a newspaper report that in Tapiau [German impressionist Lovis Corinth’s hometown in East Prussia] a large Lovis Corinth was burned. The State Secretary (Foreign Secretary Gottlieb von Jagow) is reading it aloud. He probably doesn’t know a single painting by Lovis Corinth. Rather he suspects in “Lovis” a “Levi.” It is terribly funny.”

ONLINE
The Kurt Riezler Collection in DigiBaeck
www.lbi.org/riezler
On September 30, 2015, historian Christoph Kreutzmueller presented the new English translation of his study on the destruction of Jewish commercial life in Berlin and formally donated a remarkable database of Jewish businesses to Leo Baeck Institute.

Since 2005, I have been studying how the National Socialist regime systematically destroyed and looted businesses owned by Jews in Berlin, as well as the ways that Jews responded to this persecution. Despite the enormous concentration of “Jewish businesses” in Berlin, no comprehensive study on the topic existed before my team and I published our study in 2012. In particular, the small- and medium-sized companies that formed the backbone of Jewish commercial life had been neglected in the research.

Perhaps one reason for this is the sheer magnitude of Jewish commercial activity in Berlin—tens of thousands of Jews in Berlin ran businesses of various types, and no handbook of Jewish businesses like those for Frankfurt and Breslau was ever created for Berlin by the Nazis. The sources for our research were widely scattered (some are said to rest as far away as Tbilisi, Georgia) and challenging to interpret. One potential source, restitution files, was off limits, since many cases are still ongoing in the former East Berlin. There are also structural reasons for the lack of sources; small and mid-sized businesses rarely retained records any longer than required for tax purposes.

In order to get a handle on the available source material, we decided to combine information from disparate sources into a database that would allow us to compare a few key data points about Jewish-owned businesses in Berlin. Detailed information about most Jewish businesses might have been lost forever, but identifying the names, industries, and dates of establishment, transfer, or liquidation for a significant number of businesses would allow us to draw important conclusions.

Our approach was based on the premise that all Jewish businesses underwent considerable changes as a result of persecution after 1933. Sooner or later they changed name, legal form, owners, shareholders, or managers, or they went into liquidation. If the companies were listed in the city’s Commercial Register, these changes were relatively well-documented in one of the German state gazettes, the Deutscher Reichsanzeiger and Preußischer Staatsanzeiger. This first step of collecting all businesses that had changes in the commercial register resulted in a large list that included all the Jewish businesses, but some non-Jewish businesses as well.

The next step was to identify those businesses that were persecuted as Jewish using other sources, such as lists created by the Nazi Gauwirtschaftsberater (party functionaries who were putatively economic “advisors” but played a major role in the expropriation of Jewish business owners), the commercial tax offices, and the Dresdner Bank, all deeply involved in the transfer of Jewish business assets into “Aryan” ownership. Nazi newspapers—Der Angriff and especially Der Stürmer—were also full of details about which businesses were subject to persecution. After Der Stürmer opened a Berlin office in the summer of 1935, it compiled lists of Jewish businesses and regularly disparaged them. Jewish organizations and publications were also an important resource. We examined the membership lists of the Association of Self-Employed Craftsmen of the Jewish Faith, the Reich Association of Medium-Sized Jewish Businesses, and the Directory of the Independent Order of B’nai B’rith, which listed the members’ professions and gave detailed information about the companies of businesspersons. We also gleaned information from advertisements in Jewish newspapers, which became increasingly numerous after 1933. In ambiguous cases, the Jewish Directory for Greater Berlin proved to be a great help.

Apart from contemporary historical sources, some more recent scholarship, such as studies on Jewish life in Berlin’s various districts, provided valuable information. Uwe Westphal’s study of dressmaking in Berlin led to the identification of 1,422 Jewish businesses, while Henning Medert’s research on Jewish participants in the Berlin Stock Exchange led to 826 hits. Berlin’s Memorial Book of Jewish Victims of National Socialism was also a useful aid for learning the fates of Jewish business owners.
Today the database includes more than 8,000 Jewish businesses, 3,604 of which were identified on the strength of more than one source. In some cases identification was verified by up to nine separate sources. My cautious estimate is that the database now includes two-thirds of the businesses listed in the commercial register and persecuted as Jewish after 1933.

The database helped us put together the exhibition *Final Sale. The End of Jewish-owned Businesses in Nazi Berlin*, which was shown in the Leo Baeck Institute in 2010 and will be presented in Stockton College, New Jersey, in November 2015. Moreover, analysis of the identified companies forms the backbone of my 2012 study, which was published this year in English translation as *Final Sale in Berlin: The Destruction of Jewish Commercial Activity, 1930–1945* by Berghahn Books.

The goal of my research is not just to analyze a period of history, but also to document it. With few exceptions, the Jewish businesses that once existed in Berlin are forgotten, and all traces of them have vanished from the cityscape. The families involved have a right, and German society has a responsibility, to know exactly where they were and what happened to them. This is why the database was made available to the archive of the New Synagogue Berlin—Centrum Judaicum Foundation, the Berlin State Archive, Yad Vashem, and now the Leo Baeck Institute, New York, where researchers will be able to access it in the reading room of the Center for Jewish History.

**ONLINE**

An excerpt of the database with reduced information is available at www2.hu-berlin.de/djgb

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**FILM**

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2015, 6:30 PM**

*The Blum Affair*

*Forchheimer Auditorium, Center for Jewish History*

*The Blum Affair* (1948) directed by Erich Engel for the East German Film production studio DEFA, tells the story of a 1926 court case in Magdeburg: Dr. Blum, a Jewish manufacturer, is falsely accused of murder.

Co-presented with the Center for Jewish History

**SYMPOSIUM**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2015, 10:00 AM**

*Roman Vishniac Rediscovered*

*Forchheimer Auditorium, Center for Jewish History*

The recent discovery of more than 10,000 unknown negatives by renowned photographer Roman Vishniac has revealed a far more versatile, innovative and creative artist than previously thought. Join us for a day-long symposium as scholars, photography curators, and cultural critics reappraise Vishniac’s radically diverse body of work that spans the 1920s through the 1970s.

Presented by Center for Jewish History in partnership with the International Center of Photography; Co-sponsored by American Jewish Historical Society and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

**BOOK PRESENTATION**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2015, 7:30 PM**

*Stef Wertheimer and The Habit of Labor*

*Kovno Room, Center for Jewish History*

Forced to flee Nazi Germany with his family at age 10, Stef Wertheimer came to British Palestine in the late 1930s. He promptly dropped out of school, learned a trade through apprenticeship, and played a meaningful role in Israel’s War of Independence. He also started a company—ISCAR—that began in a shed and ultimately made him one of the world’s great self-made industrialists.

In *The Habit of Labor*, Wertheimer shares the lessons he learned from a life of strife and struggle in one of the world’s newest industrial powers. Wertheimer will discuss this remarkable new memoir with Jane Eisner, editor-in-chief of the *Forward*.

RSVP at www.lbi.org/stef-wertheimer

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Joanne Intrator is a practicing psychiatrist in New York who is currently writing a book about her 9-year battle for restitution of a building owned by her grandfathers, Jakob Intrator, at Wallstrasse 16 in Berlin. Jakob was a merchant from Galicia whose business interests included a successful egg wholesaling enterprise. After a forced sale, the building at Wallstrasse 16 was used by the Nazis to produce the yellow badges Jews were forced to wear.

“Christoph Kreutzmüller’s sleuthing for his book *Final Sale in Berlin* fills a gap in the record that so frustrated me while I was seeking restitution for my family’s businesses in Berlin.

Almost incredibly, whereas the history of Jewish businesses under the Nazis was known in some detail for many much smaller German cities, for Berlin, for various reasons, there was a black hole in our knowledge that sucked in many a restitution seeker.

Kreutzmüller weaves his findings into a compelling narrative about Jewish Berliner businesspeople’s doomed struggle under the Nazis. The depth of detail is sensational, and Kreutzmüller’s contribution not just to the community of scholars, but also to the memory of those lost to the Holocaust is incalculable.”
THE 58TH LEO BAECK MEMORIAL LECTURE
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2015, 2:30 PM
German Jews: The History and the Heritage, Celebrating Sixty Years of the Leo Baeck Institute
Forchheimer Auditorium, Center for Jewish History
Michael Meyer, Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History Emeritus at Hebrew Union College, will survey the history of German-speaking Jews and the Leo Baeck Institute’s efforts to document it in celebration of LBI’s 60TH year.
RSVP at www.lbi.org/memorial-lecture-58

DRAMATIC READING AND PANEL DISCUSSION
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2015, 2:30 PM
Exile in the Spotlight: Kurt Hirschfeld and German-language Theater at the Schauspielhaus Zurich
Forchheimer Auditorium, Center for Jewish History
Kurt Hirschfeld built Zurich into the last bastion of free German theater in the 30s, premiered Brecht’s Mother Courage during WWII, and introduced audiences to Swiss literary giants Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Theater scholar Wendy Arons (Carnegie Mellon) will present her research on Hirschfeld and actors will read from his correspondence. With Anne Cattaneo, Chief Dramaturg at Lincoln Center Theater, and Frank Hentschker, Director of the Martin Segal Theater at CUNY.
RSVP at www.lbi.org/hirschfeld-nyc

EXHIBITION
ZIONISMUS: The German Roots of Zionism
Washington Hebrew Congregation
3935 Macomb Street NW, Washington, DC
Zionism began as the dream of a refuge from anti-Semitism, freedom from the arbitrary dictates of despots, and a place for Jewish religion and culture to flourish. Yet some of the most potent and enduring expressions of the Zionist idea arose among assimilated Jews in cities like Vienna and Berlin, where Jews enjoyed unprecedented rights and prosperity in the late 19TH century. The organizational and financial capacity of the early Zionist movement was rooted in German lands, and German was the lingua franca for a global conversation about the future of the Jewish people.

This new exhibit created for Washington Hebrew Congregation and funded by the German Information Center, USA shows how the diverse and contested dreams of a Jewish homeland took shape in German-speaking Jewish communities, whose allegiance to Kaiser and fatherland was often as strong as their attachment to Judaism.
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 6:00 PM
Shabbat Service in Celebration of the Exhibition
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 10:30 AM
Lecture with Professor Gerd Merke
www.whctemple.org

EXHIBITION
Crisis and Opportunity: The Cultural Impact of German-Jewish Refugees
Katherine and Clifford Goldsmith Gallery
In a new exhibit opening in early November 2015, LBI will profile the experiences, struggles, and intellectual achievements of Nazi-era émigrés who came to the US.

Drawing on the rich resources of the LBI archives, supplemented with material from the collections of the New School for Social Research and private collections, the exhibit will explore the contributions of the refugees in the arts, in government, to social and communal causes, and to the sciences and humanities in the academy and public life. The exhibition will offer profiles of individuals whose experiences and archival records provide insights into the émigré experiences in 20TH-century America.

How did German-speaking culture and the so-called German-Jewish symbiosis shape these individuals’ lives, and how did their escape reconfigure their priorities and goals? How were the German and Austrian educational systems formative for academics and intellectuals who were forced to forge a new path in a new country? How did their language, culture, and identity impact and influence post-war American society?

Diverse original documents, photographs, posters, drawings, paintings, and artifacts will convey the life experiences and intellectual impact of the close to 130,000 German-speaking Jews who moved to American between 1933 and 1945.

CRISIS & Opportunity
The Cultural Impact of German-Jewish Refugees

Fall 2015
Join us in honoring Dr. Eric R. Kandel, who will accept the Leo Baeck Medal during a special evening at the Center for Jewish History in New York. Dr. Kandel is a neuroscientist whose work on the molecular biology of memory opened new methods of inquiry into the study of brain and mind. In 2000, he won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for demonstrating how memories are formed and stored at the molecular level. He is currently a University Professor, Kavli Professor in Brain Science, and a Co-Director for the Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute at Columbia University.

In addition to his ground-breaking work as a brain scientist, Dr. Kandel is a keen observer of the history of ideas who has consistently placed his work on mind in the context of a larger cultural history. His 2012 book *The Age of Insight* locates the roots of his own quest to understand mind in the cultural ferment of early-20th-century Vienna—the city of his birth—where artists and scientists began a revolution that expanded our conception of mind to include both conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions. His 2006 memoir *In Search of Memory* recounts his journey from a childhood in Nazi-occupied Vienna to the forefront of a 21st-century revolution in the science of mind.

Reserve your place to help us honor this remarkable scientist and thinker at lbi.org/kandel.