



All of them with me..., 2019 (Mirta Kupferminc)

Representing Absence: Refugees, Forced Migration, and Aftermath

Strassler Center for Holocaust
and Genocide Studies at
Clark University

07-08 April 2022

CLARK
UNIVERSITY



STRASSLER CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST
AND GENOCIDE STUDIES

WELCOME

Absence is a core, but often overlooked, component of the experience of forced displacement. Unlike the memories of the atrocities that drive people from their homes, absence does not wax or wane. Rather, it can become a foundational aspect of both refugee experience and the societies they flee.

How do displaced peoples think about—and sometimes reinvent—the homes they left behind in art, music, theater, and everyday practice? How do the populations who remain confront the absence of displaced populations and what cultural and political landscapes do they form around their negative relief? Finally, what methodologies have scholars, artists, and writers developed to confront archives riddled with the holes and elisions produced by displacement and erasure? This workshop will address these questions and raise others.

The scholars participating in this workshop will discuss the innovative methods they employ to pursue this rather elusive topic. The starting point for our discussions will be an examination of refugees from Nazi Europe and the long-term consequences of their forced migration during the 1930s and 1940s. We will think about the ways in which forced migration has shaped family histories, Jewish culture and identity, and postwar Europe, including possibilities for and perceptions of refugees and migrants in contemporary Europe. We will likewise examine the entangled history of absence and absencing in Israel/Palestine. This geographic and temporal focus notwithstanding, our goal is to think beyond this case-study to consider how to elaborate absence as a category for scholarly investigation. In other words, we will consider the connections and narratives that become visible if we take absence as our object of study.

We are grateful to the family and friends of Dr. Michael Hirsh who have chosen to honor his mother Lisl Hirsh through their support of the keynote lecture. The Asher Family Fund, an endowment of the Strassler Center, has supported the workshop. We also thank the staff at the Strassler Center, our program manager Robyn Conroy, administrative assistant Alissa Duke, and budget coordinator Kim Vance, without whom such events would not be possible. We recognize the care they have put into realizing this workshop and their meticulous attention to organizational detail.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the participants for accepting the invitation to join together in discussion of this topic.

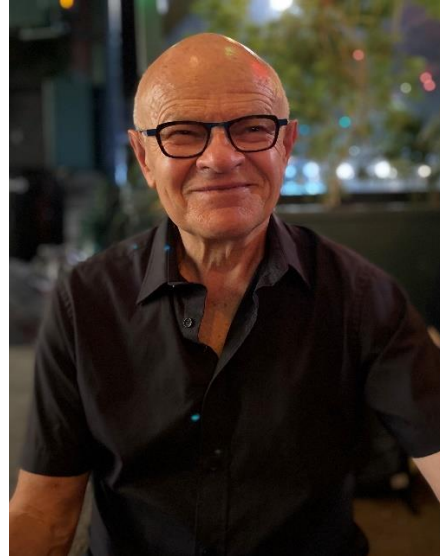
Frances Tanzer, PhD

Rose Professor of Holocaust Studies and Modern Jewish History and Culture

Assistant Professor of History

Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Marianne Hirsch (*Professor of Comparative Literature and Gender Studies, Columbia University*) writes about the transmission of memories of violence across generations, combining feminist theory with memory studies in global perspective. Her recent books include *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (2012), *School Photos in Liquid Time: Reframing Difference* (2020), co-authored with Leo Spitzer; and the co-edited volume *Women Mobilizing Memory* (2019). With a group of artists, activists and scholars, she is currently working on the "Zip Code Memory Project: Practices of Justice and Repair," a community based Covid project in Upper New York City. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Leo Spitzer (*K. T. Vernon Professor Emeritus, Dartmouth College*) is a cultural and comparative historian in the interdisciplinary field of memory studies. Employing personal and familial oral history, photography, and testimonial materials, he writes about responses to colonialism and domination as well as postmemories of subordination and genocide. He is the author of *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism* (1998/2021); *Lives in Between: The Experience of Marginality in a Century of Emancipation* (2000); and co-editor of *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (1998). He and Marianne Hirsch co-authored *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (2010). Currently, he is writing a series of stories, *The Americanization of Poldi*, some autobiographical, about Jewish refugee children emigrating from Latin America to the United States in the decade of the 1950s.

Hirsch and Spitzer have co-authored two books: *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (2010) and *School Photos in Liquid Time: Reframing Difference* (2020). They have also curated the current exhibit "School Photos and their Afterlives" (Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College).

PROGRAM

THURSDAY 07 APRIL

- 4:00 p.m. **OPENING RECEPTION**
Higgins Lounge/Dana Commons
- 5:00 p.m. **KEYNOTE**
Higgins Lounge/Dana Commons
- Animating Absence: Photographs in Liquid Time*
Marianne Hirsch, Columbia University and **Leo Spitzer**, Dartmouth College
- Sponsored in memory of Lisl Hirsh with gratitude to the friends and colleagues of Dr. Michael Hirsh*
- 6:30 p.m. **DINNER**
Rose Library/Strassler Center

FRIDAY 08 APRIL

- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
Higgins Lounge/Dana Commons
- Frances Tanzer**, Clark University
- CONVERSATION I**
- 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. **A CONVERSATION BETWEEN BARTOV AND DEKEL**
Higgins Lounge/Dana Commons
- PANELISTS:
- Tales from the Borderlands: Making and Unmaking the Galician Past*
Omer Bartov, Brown University
- In the East: How my Father and a Quarter Million Jews Survived the Holocaust*
Mikhal Dekel, City College of New York (CUNY)
- MODERATOR:
- Frances Tanzer**, Clark University
- 11:00 – 11:15 a.m. **COFFEE BREAK**

CONVERSATION II

11:15 – 12:15 p.m.

CONFRONTING ABSENCE IN ‘PERPETRATOR SOCIETIES’

Higgins Lounge/Dana Commons

PANELISTS:

“Jewish Absence in Postwar Austria: Billy Wilder’s “The Emperor Waltz” (1948)”

Lisa Silverman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee—will join virtually

"Between Phantom Limb Pain and Mirror Therapy: On the Figure of the Jew in post-1989 Germany"

Hannah Tzuberi, Humboldt

MODERATOR:

Thomas Kühne, Clark University

12:15 – 2:00 p.m.

LUNCH

Strassler Center

CONVERSATION III

2:00 - 3:15 p.m.

PERFORMANCE AND ARTISTIC PRACTICE ON THE RUN IN TRANSIT

Higgins Lounge/Dana Commons

PANELISTS:

"At the Movies with H. A. and Margret Rey, 1937-1940"

Yuliya Komska, Dartmouth

“Habsburg Melodies on the Move: Jewish Popular Performers and their Repertoires from pre-Nazi Central Europe to Postwar Austria”

Frances Tanzer, Clark University

"The Haunting of Tel Aviv and Jaffa"

Noa Shaindlinger, Holy Cross

MODERATOR:

Robert Tobin, Clark University

3:15 - 3:30 p.m.

COFFEE BREAK

CONVERSATION IV

3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

WRITING PRACTICES AND ASSERTING PRESENCE

Higgins Lounge/Dana Commons

PANELISTS:

“Absent in the Archive, Present in Memory: Turkish writers and the figure of the Auslander in Germany 1960-1990”

Sultan Doughan, Clark University

“Love is Our Method for Liberation: Kinship, Care and Abolition in Palestinian Feminist Praxis”

Sarah Ihmoud, College of the Holy Cross

MODERATOR:

Johanna Vollhardt, Clark University

4:30 – 5:00 p.m.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

Higgins Lounge/Dana Commons

Elizabeth Imber, Clark University

Anita Fabós, Clark University

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

DINNER

Lock50

Sponsored by the Asher Family Fund

BIOGRAPHIES



Omer Bartov (John P. Birkelund Distinguished Professor of European History, Brown University) is the author of nine books. His recent publications include *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine* (2007), and *Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz* (2018), awarded the National Jewish Book Award and the Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research. *Tales from the Borderlands: Making and Unmaking the Galician Past* is forthcoming (2022). His edited volumes include *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (2013), *Voices on War and Genocide: Three Accounts of the World Wars in a Galician Town* (2020), and *Israel-Palestine: Lands and Peoples* (2021). He recently published his first English-language novel, *The Butterfly and the Axe*.



Mikhal Dekel (Distinguished Professor of English and Stuart Z. Katz Professor of Humanities, CCNY) teaches English and Comparative Literature at the City College and the CUNY Graduate Center. She also directs the Rifkind Center for the Humanities and Arts and serves as core faculty at the Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity. She is the author of *In the East: How My Father and a Quarter Million Polish Jews Survived the Holocaust*, (2021, formerly published as *Tehran Children: A Holocaust Refugee Odyssey*), which was a finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize, the Chautauqua Prize and the National Jewish Book Awards. Her other books are *The Universal Jew: Modernity, Masculinity and the Zionist Moment* (2011); and the Hebrew monograph *Oedipus in Kishinev* (2014).



Sultan Doughan (Dr. Thomas Zand Visiting Assistant Professor in Holocaust Pedagogy and Antisemitism Studies, Clark University) is a political anthropologist with a research focus on contemporary Holocaust education, antisemitism, racism and racialization, Middle Eastern migration and diaspora, gendered religious difference, Muslims and Jews, secularism and nationalism in Western European liberal democracies. Her primary research sites have been civic education projects in immigrant neighborhoods, schools and neighborhood organizations across Berlin, Germany. More broadly, she is interested in how pedagogical practices intervene in state-citizen relations by affectively reshaping a relation to the Holocaust past, the figure of the Jew and forms of comporting,

expressing and experiencing oneself consistent with the ideal of citizenship.



Anita Fábos (Professor of International Development and Social Change, Clark University) is an anthropologist who has worked and conducted research together with Muslim Arab Sudanese refugees in the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Throughout her career, Fábos has integrated teaching, research, and participatory programs that have incorporated refugee and forced migrant perspectives into collaborative work with scholars, practitioners, refugee organizations, policy makers, and international organizations. At Clark University, her students have carried out community-based projects that have investigated refugee

participation in community development initiatives, refugee access to higher education, refugee livelihoods in Worcester, and experiences of belonging and home for people from refugee and non-refugee backgrounds.



Sarah Ihmoud (Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology and Peace and Conflict Studies, College of the Holy Cross) is a sociocultural anthropologist whose work takes Palestine and Palestinian diaspora as sites from which to explore questions of race and ethnicity, gender violence, colonialism, Indigenous politics and borders/borderlands in comparative and transnational

perspectives. A member of the Palestinian Feminist Collective, her ethnographic research in Jerusalem focuses on militarization, state violence and Palestinian feminist politics. She is currently working on her first book, *"Almaqdasiiyya": Palestinian Feminism and the Decolonial Imaginary*.



Elizabeth Imber (Michael and Lisa Leffell Professor of Modern Jewish History, Clark University) is a modern Jewish historian, with a particular interest in the cultural and political dimensions and intersections of Jewish history and European imperial history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her research focuses on the history of Zionism and Jewish nationalism; investigating and theorizing non-Zionism; Mandate Palestine; Jewish and Zionist conceptions of the “state”; and the relationship between socialism and imperialism. More broadly,

she is interested in how everyday practices, personal and affective ties, and spaces of private and convivial interaction shape political experience. Her current book project is titled *Empire of Uncertainty: Jews, Zionism, and British Imperialism in the Age of Nationalism, 1917-1948*.



Yuliya Komska (Associate Professor of German Studies, Dartmouth College) is writing a biography of Margret and H. A. Rey and their creation, *Curious George*, which brings together histories of the forced displacement of humans and animals. Her monograph *The Icon Curtain: The Cold War's Quiet Border* (2015) is the first book-length cultural history of the Iron Curtain. She co-wrote a short polemical book *Linguistic Disobedience: Restoring Power to Civic Language* (2018) that places language at the forefront of civic awareness and provides a theoretical and practical resource for speaking up and inhabiting language in an age of manipulation, uncertainty, and outright lies. With Irene Kacandes, she co-edited, a collection of essays *Eastern Europe Unmapped* (2017).



Thomas Kühne (Strassler Center Director and Strassler Colin Flug Professor of Holocaust History, Clark University) researches war, genocide, and society, long-term traditions of political culture and political emotions in Europe, and the problem of locating the Holocaust and Nazi Germany in the continuities and discontinuities of the 20th century. He has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, the Center for Contemporary History in Germany, and the German Research Foundation. His recent books include *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918 – 1945* (2010) and *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship: Hitler's Soldiers, Male Bonding and Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century* (2017). Kühne's current research examines the constructive side of mass violence in a broader historical and comparative perspective as well as with the relation between historiography and collective memories of genocides.



Noa Shandler (Visiting Assistant Professor at the Department of History at the College of the Holy Cross) earned her PhD from the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto. Her most recent article, “Wishful Landscapes: Protesting and Spatial Reclamation in Jaffa,” appeared in the journal *Comparative Studies of Africa, South Asia and the Middle East*. She is currently revising her dissertation into a monograph tentatively titled *Remembering Past(s), Imagining Futures: How Palestinians Negotiate Physical and Symbolic Erasures*.



Lisa Silverman (Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) specializes in modern German and Austrian Jewish cultural history, with a focus on visual culture, gender, and antisemitism. She is author of *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (2012) and co-author with Daniel H. Magilow of two editions of *Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction* (2015; 2019). She is currently serving as the Michael Hauck Visiting Professor for Interdisciplinary Holocaust Research at the Fritz Bauer Institute for the History and Impact of the Holocaust at the Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The manuscript for her next book, *The Postwar Antisemite: Culture and Complicity after the Holocaust*, is nearing completion.



Frances Tanzer (Rose Professor of Holocaust Studies and Modern Jewish History and Culture, Clark University) writes histories of modern Europe that focus on the paradoxical but crucial roles of refugees and minorities in shaping the continent's identities and cultures. She is currently completing a book entitled, *Vanishing Vienna: Jewish Absence in Postwar Central Europe*, which analyzes the fraught attempts

to restore the cultural dynamism of pre-Nazi Vienna as Austrians and Jews reimagined themselves and Central European culture after the Holocaust. This book focuses on how Jews and non-Jews experienced, confronted, and represented Jewish absence as they pursued projects of cultural reconstruction from the Anschluss in 1938 to the present-day. Her second book project, *Klezmer Dynasty: An Intimate History of Modern Jewish Culture, 1880 – 2019*, examines her own family, the Brandwein klezmer musicians of Habsburg Galicia.



Robert Tobin (Henry J. Leir Professor of Language, Literature and Culture, Clark University) has expertise in the areas of gay and lesbian studies, queer theory, gender studies, human rights, and German and European cultural studies. He has written extensively on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Thomas Mann, and Sigmund Freud, as well as the Eurovision Song Contest. His most recent book, *Peripheral Desires: The German Discovery of Sex* (2015), situates the emergence of discourses of modern sexuality in nineteenth and early twentieth-century German-speaking central Europe. He has received support for

his research from the German Academic Exchange Service and the National Endowment for the Humanities. His next project will focus on human rights and literature.



Hannah Tzuberi (Post-doctoral Researcher, Freie Universität Berlin) is currently engaged in a collaborative research project, "Beyond Social Cohesion. Global Repertoires of Living Together" (RePLITO). RePLITO takes marginalized and neglected repertoires of living together as its starting point to rethink social cohesion from a transregional perspective. Tzuberi is the co-editor of "Jewish Friends: Contemporary Figures of the Jew" (2020) and is working on a book-project titled *Reviving Judaism, Reviving the Nation: Post-Holocaust Imaginaries of the (German) Nation-State*. Her research interests include contemporary European Jewry, nation-building, collective memory, religion and secularism.



Johanna Vollhardt (Associate Professor of Psychology, Clark University) researches the psychological impact of collective victimization, focusing on questions such as: how do people make sense of oppression and violence against their group? How do different beliefs about collective victimization relate to intergroup attitudes and social and political views? What explains different resistance strategies in violent and repressive contexts? How is group-based power understood in the context of oppression? Vollhardt and her collaborators conduct this research using multiple methods (e.g., experiments, field experiments, surveys, content analysis, archival research, interviews, focus groups, Q-methodology studies) and work in different contexts with various ethnic, racial, religious, and national groups. She also co-edits the *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*.

In Memory of Lisl Hirsh

The keynote lecture is dedicated to the memory of Lisl Hirsh (1 May 1925–7 November 2021). The daughter of Helene and Carl Zuckerbaker, owner of a leather goods store and Vice Chairman of the Viennese branch of the Social Democrat Party, Lisl enjoyed an idyllic Viennese childhood until the Anschluss of Austria to Nazi Germany. Facing Austria's Nuremberg Laws, Lisl's parents made the difficult decision to send her and her sister Trudy to Holland on the Kindertransport.

After a series of schools, foster parents and detention camps, Lisl arrived at Westerbork, a transit camp in the Netherlands, in 1942. There she trained as a nurse and met Warner Hirsh who came from Berlin. In April 1945, she joined her Canadian liberators as a field hospital nurse liberating camps throughout Germany. Discharged as a major, she reunited with her parents in Brooklyn, NY and immediately got licensed as an LPN. She rekindled her friendship with Warner after he immigrated to the US and they married on New Year's Eve 1950.

Lisl and Warner embarked upon their married life in the Inwood section of Manhattan. Their son Michael followed his mother in a medical career although he always conceded that Lisl, who practiced as a nurse for 45 years, was the better clinician. When Michael and his wife Julianne became parents to Scott and Estelle, Lisl and Warner became devoted to them as Oma and Opa. Her crowning achievement was to attend her granddaughter's wedding in the midst of the pandemic on 24 September 2021, the anniversary of Warner's 1949 proposal to her.

Lisl maintained a Viennese sensibility until her death at the age of 96. The challenges she faced as a result of her forced migration and displacement resonate with the themes explored by the participants in this workshop.



