

<b>Institution:</b> University of Southampton
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 30 History
<b>Title of case study:</b> 30-04 Engaging with the Holocaust Today: The Parkes Institute
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Academic work carried out at the University of Southampton's Parkes Institute has greatly raised public awareness and understanding of the Holocaust. The research has challenged audiences to reflect on the individual consequences of discrimination and urges them to recognise and respond to the continuing contemporary dangers of genocide. Through various projects, the research has impacted upon international audiences: with a website averaging 24,000 hits per month; with museum exhibitions, for close to three million visitors; and with research-based study-days for school and adult learners. Throughout, the work emphasises the devastation wrought by the Holocaust on 'ordinary' people, and reflects upon the 'ordinariness' of genocide in the twentieth century.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Based at the University of Southampton, the Parkes Institute is the world's oldest centre for the study of Jewish/non-Jewish relations and is at the forefront of international Holocaust studies. Its academic research informs a well-developed global programme of educational initiatives, exhibitions and electronic resources. The following three research projects demonstrate this wider initiative.</p> <p>Dr Shirli Gilbert has held the post of Senior Lecturer in Jewish/Non-Jewish Relations since 2007. Her most recent research focuses on the role of music in remembering the Holocaust [3.1]. Findings have demonstrated the extent to which music opens a window onto the internal world of prisoner communities in the ghettos and the camps, showing the diverse ways in which they understood, interpreted, and responded to their experiences. The project was underpinned by Gilbert's earlier work, published in a pioneering monograph and refereed articles, which focused on songs created by Jewish, Polish, German, and Czech prisoners in ghettos and concentration camps. The monograph has recently been translated into Spanish and Japanese [3.2].</p> <p>Tony Kushner has been Professor of Jewish/Non-Jewish Relations since 1999 and Director of the Parkes Institute since 1986. His research since 1996, featuring in a monograph [3.3] and a collection of essays [3.4], has analysed the experiences of young Holocaust survivors who were brought to Britain after the war. It focuses on the identity of these children and how they related to their places of origin, persecution and refuge, as well as the journeys they endured between them. The largest initial camp at Windermere was the most important: there the main refugee agencies working with children were located and the greatest contact with the surrounding population occurred. Detailed research has revealed how difficult it was for the children to adjust to freedom, and for British citizens to understand the horrors these survivors had recently endured. The project demonstrates that even these young victims had agency and that, through them, many people in the western democracies began to confront the real horror of the 'Final Solution'.</p> <p>Dr Mark Levene has been Reader in Comparative History at the University of Southampton since 2000. His research places the Holocaust in a broader context, relating it to the destruction or near-destruction of innumerable other minority peoples. He has achieved this through a series of books and articles, most notably <i>Genocide in the Age of the Nation State</i> [3.5], an ongoing multi-volume series which attempts to chart and interpret the entire sequence of genocide from the early modern period to the present day. His research findings conclude that genocide developed out of modernity and a striving for the nation-state, and demonstrates the devastating consequences of genocide for peoples such as the Armenians and the East European Jews.</p> <p>The three projects encompass diverse responses to the history of genocide. They are united by their desire to demystify the events and to show that genocide, including the Holocaust, happened</p>

in the everyday world and secured a range of responses, from empathy with the victims through to collaboration in mass murder. Moreover, the humanity of those persecuted has to be at the forefront of our understanding of these frequent moments in the recent past.

### 3. References to the research

- 3.1 Shirli Gilbert, *La música en el holocausto. Una manera de confrontar la vida en los ghettos y en los campos nazis*, tr. María Julia de Rusch (Buenos Aires, 2010); Japanese translation (2012). English edition submitted to RAE 2008.
- 3.2 'Buried Monuments: Yiddish Songs and Holocaust Memory' in *History Workshop Journal*, 66 (2008), pp.107-128. (refereed journal)
- 3.3. Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (London, 1999).
- 3.4 Tony Kushner, 'Wandering Lonely Jews in the English Countryside', in Tony Kushner and Hannah Ewence (eds), *Whatever Happened to British Jewish Studies?* (London, 2012), pp.231-258.
- 3.5 Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State. Vol. 1: The Meaning of Genocide* (London, 2005); *Vol. 2: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London, 2005). Submitted to RAE 2008.
- 3.6 Mark Levene, 'Connecting Threads: Rwanda, the Holocaust and the Pattern of Contemporary Genocide', in Roger W. Smith ed., *Genocide: Essays Toward Understanding, Early Warning and Prevention* (Williamsburg, VA., 1999), pp. 27-64.

#### Grants

1. Dr Gilbert's website project has raised over £200,000 from the Lord Ashdown Charitable Settlement, the Claims Conference, the Samuel Sebba Charitable Trust, the Ruth Berkowitz Charitable Trust, and the Maurice Marks Charitable Trust (2006-present). This includes covering research leave for Dr Gilbert in 2011-12 (£18,000).
2. Professor Kushner was PI of an AHRC Parkes Research Centre (2000-2006) at the University of Southampton under the 'Holocaust and its Legacy' theme (£850,000).
3. Dr Levene was awarded a 9-month Leverhulme Research Fellowship for 'Total War and Genocide, 1914-1945' in 2004-5 (£20,995).

### 4. Details of the impact

All three pieces of Holocaust research reflect on individual experiences in the Holocaust and, in their impact, focus individuals on their responsibilities in the contemporary world.

Dr Gilbert's research into 'Music and the Holocaust' has had a sustained and widespread impact through digital media. The website [holocaustmusic.ort.uk](http://holocaustmusic.ort.uk), produced in association with World ORT, makes her research accessible and beneficial to a broad general audience. As one of the world's largest non-governmental educational organisations, World ORT promotes learning and training for a global Jewish community. ORT website developer Sadler Johnson has described the site as "the most substantive, comprehensive website on this subject currently available." [5.1]

It is used by a diverse audience, with one key group of beneficiaries being secondary school teachers and students aged 14-18 [5.2]. Since February 2010, it has been Google's top-ranking site for the search terms 'music' and 'Holocaust', receiving an average of 14,000 unique hits per month. Visitors come from the USA, UK, Russia, Germany, Canada, Spain, Ukraine, Israel, and France. Broadening access further, the site has been translated into Spanish and Russian (completed December 2013); and German and French translations are pending. Dr Gilbert is regularly contacted via the site by musicians, filmmakers, radio producers, and events organisers

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seeking advice and providing their feedback. Most recently this has led to her advising BBC Radio 3 producer Mark Burman on the music for a series of documentaries on Jewish life in Poland, broadcast in July 2013. [5.3]

Extensive feedback confirms the website has been successful in its aim of stimulating audiences to consider music as a key medium for understanding the responses of genocide victims, as well as inspiring teachers to incorporate music into lessons on History, Social Studies, Language Arts, and Citizenship. User Bret Werb, musicologist at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., observed that “the new World ORT website Music and the Holocaust completely supersedes our website and any other websites on the subject.” Typical of the feedback received was one German filmmaker who remarked: “It’s great to see there are other creative and motivated people who share their interest in the special part music played during the Third Reich and especially the Holocaust.” [5.4]

Professor Kushner’s research has been widely disseminated through museum exhibitions, online media and talks. The most significant outlet has been the Ambleside-based heritage project ‘Another Space’, for which Kushner helped to produce an exhibition, *From Ambleside to Auschwitz*, as well as a website. [5.5] The exhibition was hugely successful in attracting visitors, with numbers rising from 16,000 to 41,000 per annum since it opened in 2010; as a result it has become a permanent museum housed at the former Windermere Library [5.6]. The website has enjoyed similar popularity, with 7,000-10,000 hits per month.

In 2012 the research was also the focus of a temporary exhibition, *Windermere Boys*, hosted at the Manchester Jewish Museum and visited by more than 5,800 people [5.7]. As major tourist destinations in northern England, the sites at Ambleside and Manchester have taken the project to a global audience (with visitors from across the UK, Europe, north America, and the far east especially) as well as to regional school and adult education audiences. Kushner continues to advise the project team and has delivered public talks to adult learners in Britain, Australia and South Africa, stimulating new audiences to re-think the idea of Holocaust survivors as passive victims. Typical comments from schoolteachers include: “I have invited Holocaust survivors to talk to my students – this has helped me appreciate their stories even more.” [5.8] The venture was runner-up in the 2010 Lottery Good Causes competition, with the director of the Lake District Holocaust Project, Trevor Avery, confirming that Kushner’s research input has been “tremendous.” [5.6]

Dr Levene used his research to create a 30-minute film on genocides throughout the twentieth century. The film was the centrepiece of the Imperial War Museum’s *Crimes Against Humanity* exhibition, which ran from 2001 to 2012 as a complement to the museum’s Holocaust exhibition. The film drew upon Levene’s ‘Connecting Threads’ article as well as his broader work on genocide over the past two decades, asking audience to reflect on their relationship with twentieth century violence. Hundreds of comments in the IWM visitors’ books attest to the fact that visitors were stimulated and challenged. One commented: “This moving and thought-provoking film should be on the National Curriculum, to show all children the need for tolerance and world understanding.” Another described it as “a brilliant, thought-provoking climax [which] brings all under this roof into focus, and lends everything resonance.” The exhibition attracted close to three million visitors. According to the IWM’s Head of Research, the exhibition significantly extended the museum’s reach beyond its historic display on the Holocaust and confronted the ongoing problem of genocide. She commented: “Mark Levene’s very valuable input as one of two historical consultants creating the exhibition has had a lasting impact.” [5.9]

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

[5.1] <http://www.ort.org/news-and-reports/world-ort-news/article/groundbreaking-new-holocaust-website/>

[5.2] Teachers’ resources can be accessed at <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/resources->

## Impact case study (REF3b)

[references/teacher-resources/](#)

[5.3] BBC 3. *Jewish Life in Poland*. Producer Mark Burman. Broadcast July 2013.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b036j072>

[5.4] Shirli Gilbert website feedback collection.

[5.5] <http://www.anotherspace.org.uk/a2a/>

[5.6] Trevor Avery, director of the Lake District Holocaust Project and director of 'Another Space'.

[5.7] Alexandra Grime, Curator, Manchester Jewish Museum.

[5.8] Feedback secured after a public talk given on 11 March 2012

[5.9] Suzanne Bardgett, Head of Research at the Imperial War Museum.