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REPORT ON  
 THE  
 HOLOCAUST  
 AND LEGACIES  
 OF RACE  
 IN THE  
 POSTCOLONIAL  
 WORLD,  
 1945 TO THE  
 PRESENT



University of Sydney's Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies Conference:

THE HOLOCAUST AND LEGACIES OF RACE IN THE  
 POSTCOLONIAL WORLD, 1945 TO THE PRESENT

Report by Dr Avril Alba, Dept of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, University of Sydney

Held at Mandelbaum House from 10-12 April 2012, the recent international conference, *The Holocaust and Legacies of Race in the Postcolonial World, 1945 to the Present* was the latest research initiative in an international collaboration between the University of Sydney's Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town and the Parkes Institute for Jewish/ non-Jewish relations at the University of Southampton.

Beginning in 2000, the research collaboration has included a series of conferences and publications (sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK) focused on the 'Port Jew' project, an interdisciplinary study of Jews in ports across time and place. This initial research led to a formal memorandum of understanding between the Parkes Institute and the Kaplan Cen-

tre and resulted in further conferences and publications on the theme of 'place', 'the journey' and 'the archive and migration'. More recently, the partnership expanded to include the University of Sydney's Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. The publication of the edited collection *The Memory of the Holocaust in Australia* (James Jordan, Tom Lawson, eds.) marked the beginning of this collaboration, which continued with the staging of this conference (supported by the World Universities Network and the International Program Development Fund) and plans are now in place for a tripartite memorandum of understanding and a further conference in Cape Town to take place in January 2013.



Prof. Konrad Kwiet

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*The Holocaust and Legacies of Race* was formally opened by Associate Professor Jennifer Barrett in her capacity as Pro Dean and a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formalizing the three way collaboration was signed by Associate Professor Barrett and Professor Rutland representing the University of Sydney with Professor Tony Kushner signing on behalf of the University of Southampton and Professor Milton Shain for the University of Cape Town. The MoU establishes a formal basis through which the three universities can now participate in staff and student exchanges and continued research projects across the spectrum of Jewish and Holocaust Studies. The diverse research interests of the faculty at all three centres in conjunction with the rich repository of archival sources held at each institution will provide a strong foundation for future collaborations.

*The Holocaust and Legacies of Race* was attended by scholars from across the globe as well as local participants. The conference aimed to set an international agenda for continued research into the Jewish migration experience and its impact on the societies in which Jews found

themselves post '45. Through a focus on the complex category of 'race', the conference sought to shed new light on how the experience of those who survived Nazi racial persecution intersected with the already racialised societies to which they had migrated. Twenty seven presenters explored in a comparative and multi-disciplinary framework how societies, cultures and political systems defined by legacies and ongoing issues of 'race', racism and anti-racism responded to the Holocaust after the Second World War, expanding and deepening our understanding of both migration history and Holocaust memory.

Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies (HBJS) faculty presented with Professor Suzanne Rutland speaking on 'Racial Criteria of Australia's Post-War Migration Program, 1945-1952' and Dr Avril Alba presenting a paper entitled, 'A Question of Relevance? Redeveloping the Sydney Jewish Museum'. HBJS research students were also encouraged to participate in the conference with Honours student Leon Pearlman giving a challenging paper on post war Polish film and issues of race in post WW2 Poland. International presenters shared their re-



L-R. Naomi Winton, Prof Milton Shein, As Prof Jennifer Barrett, Dr Avril Alba, Prof Tony Kushner, Dr Shirli Gilbert, Dr James Jordan, Prof Suzanne Rutland (OAM)

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search on topics as diverse as Troy University's Dr Dan Puckett's paper 'The Holocaust and Jim Crow: Legacies of Racism' and the University of Southampton's Dr James Jordan's presentation 'Echoes of a Colonial Past in British Television's Image of the Holocaust'. Given the diversity and breadth of papers presented, plans are already underway for the publication of two volumes of research papers developed as a result of the conference.

The conference also included a celebration of the career of Professor Konrad Kwiet, Pratt Professor in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies and leading Australian scholar of the Holocaust for the past forty years. The celebration was held at the Sydney Jewish

Museum where Professor Kwiet has served as Resident Historian for the past 20 years with over 150 people in attendance. Professor Kwiet gave a moving address that spanned the entirety of his career in Holocaust studies aptly titled, 'Once upon a Time in Australia: Aborigines, Racists and Jews'.

Both the conference and its resulting research initiatives reflect the significant work currently being undertaken in teaching and research across the areas of Jewish and Holocaust Studies in the Australian and international arenas. The now formalised collaboration between three leading educational institutions in these areas of research will ensure that such work will continue into the future.

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## AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF JEWISH STUDIES

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AUSTRALIAN  
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OF  
JEWISH  
STUDIES

The Journal and the annual conference are the two major activities of the Association. Unfortunately, the 2011 Journal, marking the 25th anniversary of the Association and the 25th edition of the Journal has been delayed but should be available within the next couple of weeks. My apologies for anyone who has been inconvenienced by the delay. The Journal you will be receiving will be a "bumper edition", with a large number of articles on a wide range of topics and several book reviews.

I welcome contributions for the next edition, which should come out between December and February, from scholars and postgraduate students in Australia or any other country. The Journal is pleased to publish on any aspect of Jewish studies, be it related to the Bible or Rabbinical matters, ancient, medi-

aeval, or modern history, linguistic studies, contemporary issues or politics, in Australia or anywhere else in the world.

If you are interested in submitting an article for consideration, please email me at [samra01@tpg.com.au](mailto:samra01@tpg.com.au) and I will forward a copy of the Journal's style guide. Please note that articles submitted for consideration will be subjected to peer review before they can be accepted for publication.

### **Back Copies of the Journal:**

Back Copies of the Australian Journal of Jewish Studies are available for \$12 each, which includes postage and handling. Please refer to the website <http://www.aajs.org.au> for details of contents of each Journal.

**Myer Samra (Editor)**

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## SUZANNE RUTLAND'S EUROPEAN PROGRAM

Prof. Suzanne Rutland

### SUZANNE RUTLAND'S EUROPEAN PROGRAMME



### PROF. SUZANNE RUTLAND

From 30 May to 1 June, Professor Suzanne Rutland attended a conference at the University of Bonn on Jews in the Asia/Pacific Region, entitled 'BETWEEN MUMBAI AND MANILA: Judaism in Asia since the foundation of the state of Israel'. Convened by Professor Manfred Hutter of the Department of Comparative Religion, the conference theme attracted participants from Asia, the United States, Israel and Europe. Professor Rutland's paper was on 'The Asia-Pacific region and Australian Jewry', and dovetailed with Professor Hutter's presentation on 'Focusing on minorities in religious studies: the neglect of Jews in the study of religions in South-east Asia'. Professor Rutland dealt with the involvement of Australian Jewry in South East Asia and the Pacific region for a quarter of a century from 1969 to 1994, whilst Professor Hutter discussed developments since the mid-1990s.

Other papers dealt with specific countries, including Singapore, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia and a number on India. There was an evening seminar on the Thursday night with a joint presentation from Professors Jonathan Goldstein and Dean Kotlowski on efforts made in the Philippines to rescue Jews during the Holocaust.

The last day of the conference was devoted to China, with two Chinese scholars presenting: Dr Ping Zhang of Tel Aviv University and Professor Liang Pingan from Shanghai, with other

presenters, including Dr Avrum Ehrlich.

Subsequently, Professor Rutland visited Berlin, meeting Dr Ulrich Baumann at the Holocaust Memorial, Professor Wolfgang Benz at the Wannsee Villa, a key historical site in the evolution of the Shoah, and Dr Beate Kosmala, who is in charge of Berlin's newest Holocaust Museum to the 'Silent Heroes', established in 2007. She was struck by the fact that the establishment of Holocaust Museums in Berlin is a comparatively new phenomenon, only developing since the 1990s.

She then went on to Prague, where she met with Dr Michal Frankl, who is in charge of the Holocaust section at the Jewish Museum, and Dr Katerina Capkova, a young scholar who is doing groundbreaking research on the Czech Jewish community during the interwar years and Communist era. She also visited the Ghetto Terezin. These visits will help to strengthen the department's Holocaust Studies program.





## GERMAN DOCTORS' APOLOGIES FOR PAST CRIMES

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A recent declaration issued by the German Medical Association (so meaningfully from Nuremberg), acknowledges the crimes perpetrated by their predecessors during WWII.

Parts thereof are quoted below:

*"The resolution, unanimously adopted by the delegates of the Physicians' Congress said, that contrary to the belief, doctors were not forced by politicians to kill and experiments on prisoners, but became enthusiastic Nazi supporters.*

Reading the original text, it seems that a full apology is issued to *"the victims of sterilisation, euthanasia of 200.000 psychiatric and disabled people, non-consented human experiments, as well as 360.000 forced sterilisations"*.

This resolution however is a half measure only. There is no mention of some of the victims! No mention of the thousands of German children, diagnosed by physicians with treatable physical deformities, who were euthanized in six children's "hospitals"; no mention of the thousands of Roma /Sinti victims of studies on facial gangrene (noma) and then gassed; of the thousands of Polish, Russian, and British prisoners exposed to crimes against humanity. Finally, there was no mention of any crime against the Jewish people!!

This present dissociation from the Nazi physicians by the medical community, belated as it is, is nonetheless commendable. The resolution stated that Nazi doctors were *"guilty, contrary to their mission to*



*The Heilbrunn twins: Stephanie Heller (left) and Annetta Able*

*heal, of scores of human rights violations and we ask for forgiveness of their victims, living or deceased and of their descendants"*.

It is for the twin sisters living in Melbourne, aged 87, experimented on by Dr. Mengele in Auschwitz, whose "scientific" work was interrupted by the approaching Red Army, to offer any forgiveness.

Myself, I have double entitlement to reply, as a son of a survivor and as a medical practitioner: the present Medical generation is guiltless, but in no circumstances should any forgiveness be accorded to their forbearers. The shame cannot be erased, and should last till 2933.

**George M. Weisz, MD, FRACS, BA, MA., Senior lecturer, School of Humanities**

**Program in History of Medicine. University of New South Wales Sydney Australia**

GERMAN  
DOCTORS'  
APOLOGIES  
FOR PAST  
CRIMES



DR. GEORGE  
M. WEISZ



עמנואל

**emanuel synagogue**

creating community • celebrating diversity

## Tisha B'Av Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Emanuel Synagogue 7 Ocean Street, Woollahra

6:15pm Erev Tisha B'Av Service

**8:00pm Presentation by Dr Anna Hueneke**

TRANSFORMATION  
OF TRAUMA

TISHA B'AV  
PRESENTATION

At Tisha B'Av we read from The Eicha or Book of Lamentations. The text is a deeply emotive and evocative response to profound loss. The writers of old had great wisdom in laying down a text such as this as it provides a model for the expression and hence transformation of trauma. Following the reading of the Eicha on Tisha B'Av, Dr Anna Hueneke will speak about this process of the transformation of trauma through symbolic and poetic expression with reference to her own and other Jewish artists and writers work.



DR. ANNA  
HUENEKE



*Bird from the Sea* by Anna Hueneke 2002

Dr Anna Hueneke was awarded a PhD (Psychology) from the University of Western Sydney in 2009. Her thesis demonstrated that it is in the realm of the poetic - imagination, symbolic expression and narrative - where the integration of trauma occurs. Before her recent move to Sydney Anna maintained a private psychotherapy practice in Canberra for twelve years. She also lectured in counselling and psychotherapy at the University of Canberra. Earlier in her career she was a visual artist, exhibiting and performing nationally and internationally. She is currently Vice President of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies and Co-Convenor of their 2013 conference.

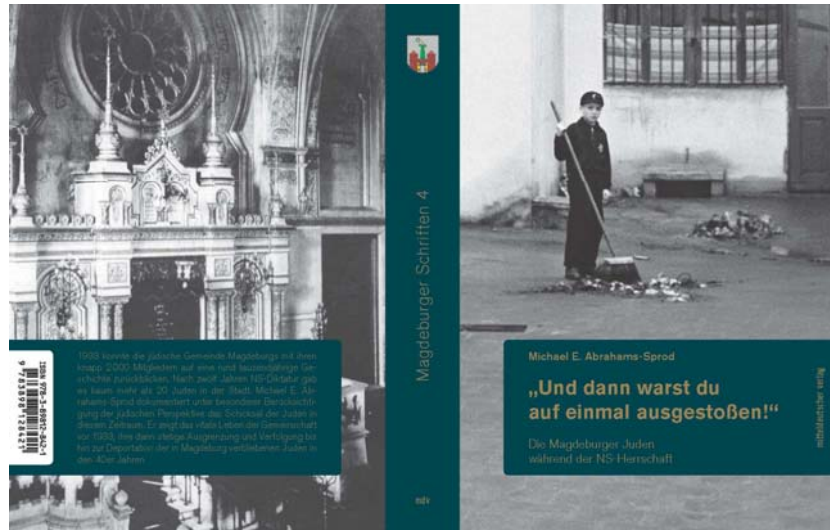
# MY HOLOCAUST ODYSSEY: A JOURNEY FROM SYDNEY VIA THE WORLD TO MAGDEBURG

Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod

MY  
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A JOURNEY  
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DR MICHAEL  
ABRAHAMS-  
SPROD



Historians tend not to think of their craft as encompassing a journey, but as this historian discovered, a project which commenced as a PhD, took on a life of its own and led to many places, many experiences and the coming together of many people.

My personal journey, a “Holocaust” odyssey which began as a PhD, has now metamorphosed into a highly-acclaimed book in German, with preparations already underway for the English edition. This story charts the history of the nearly 1,000 year old Jewish community of Magdeburg on the River Elbe in central Germany during the Nazi period – but with a difference – and it is this very poignant difference which is driving the success of the book in Germany. The PhD and the book, which, in fact, is a revised and updated version of the dissertation, uniquely for its time combines both oral history interviews personally conducted by the author and archival material. The result is a rich, personal and very dramatic history of everyday life of Magdeburg Jewry under Nazism from

“below” and from an essentially Jewish perspective. Of equal importance is the fact that this is the first academic study of this community, a community which is one of the oldest in Germany, and, indeed, in Europe.

This project commenced in 1996 with the author commencing his interviews of Australian Jewish survivors of the *Shoah* from Magdeburg, including one of the driving forces of the project and esteemed former Board Member of the Sydney Jewish Museum, Gerry Levy AM.

Simultaneously, a worldwide search for archival material was conducted and between 1996 and 2005 countless visits to archives across the globe were undertaken to access, assess and reproduce archival material and then to subsequently ship the precious cargo back to Sydney. The bulk of the material was located in Germany, Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom, with modest amounts of material being located in both Australia and South Africa.



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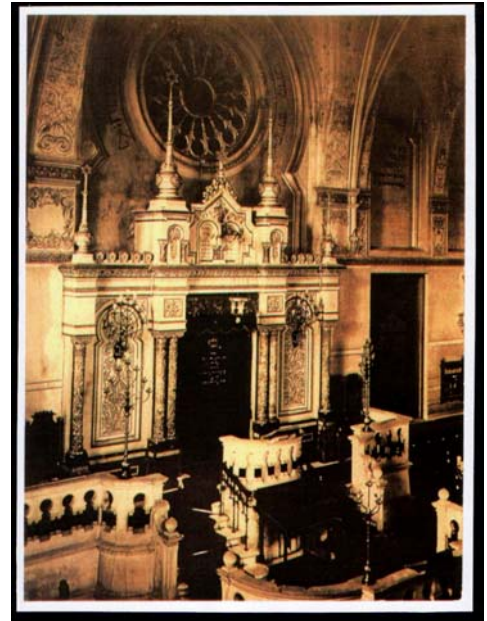


DR MICHAEL  
ABRAHAMS-  
SPROD

With the PhD (*Life under Siege: The Jews of Magdeburg under Nazi Rule*) completed, submitted in 2006 and awarded in 2007, my former co-supervisor, and now colleague and friend, Professor Konrad Kwiet, encouraged me to have the dissertation translated into German and to secure its publication in Magdeburg, if possible. Owing to the enormous generosity of former Jewish Magdeburger and the Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies this became a reality and the City of Magdeburg eagerly awaited the translation for publication in Germany.

This culmination occurred in November 2011 with the launch in Magdeburg of the German edition entitled: “*Und dann warst du auf einmal ausgestoßen!*” *Die Magdeburger Juden während der NS-Herrschaft*. The book is volume 4 of the series *Magdeburger Schriften* published by Mitteldeutscher Verlag in Halle (Saale). The series is an initiative by the City of Magdeburg.

As can be well imagined, I was both relieved and excited to see the book in print, but was quite overwhelmed at my reception and the reception of the book in November. During this period of the launch, I spent three weeks in Magdeburg. As a frequent visitor to Magdeburg over many years, I was well known and during each visit gave innumerable addresses, presentations and workshops. However, on this occasion, with the book now a reality – the media attention was constant. Television and radio interviews were conducted and put to air and the print and internet media gave both the book and myself much attention. The constant and very powerful and gratifying theme was that I had given the city a most important gift – the story of what it was like



*Interior of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg 1938*

for the city’s approximate 2,000 Jews under Nazism.

It was during my time in Magdeburg in November when e-mailing my former co-supervisor, and now colleague and friend, Professor Suzanne Rutland OAM, that she remarked to me, that the book was one thing, but that the journey along the way was also its own unique entity. Ironically, perhaps naively, I had assumed that with the publication of the book, that I would achieve closure and this would end this phase of my life. However, I had not considered that for this entire journey of close to fifteen years it had involved special people giving of themselves and of my own important role of acting as the fulcrum for connecting people separated by these catastrophic events.

With the release of the book, this role has exploded – and the book is now serving as an even greater link to many people. Owing to this fact and the problem that the majority of the children of the Jewish Magdeburger no longer speak German, the decision has been made to publish the book in English and it is hoped



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SPROD

that the edited and updated manuscript will be ready by the end of 2012.

On a personal level, I have always known that when dealing with the subject matter of the *Shoah*, that one moves beyond the academic

and the intellectual and enters a very personal and private sphere. For this reason alone, I am both proud and happy to have undertaken and completed this project – it has meant so much to so many people and will continue to do so.



*Members of the Herrmann, Manneberg and Wandrow families Magdeburg 15 June 1935*

*Destroyed interior of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg after the pogrom of November 1938*



*Pupils of the Judenschule in Magdeburg in the summer of 1939*

## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



### DR MICHAEL ABRAHAMS- SPROD



Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod, BA (UNSW), Grad Dip Ed (UNSW), Cert T (NSW DSE), MA (UNSW), PhD (Sydney) is an historian, linguist, author and an educator at the secondary, tertiary and adult education levels. He currently occupies an executive position at a Sydney high school and is qualified to teach French, German, Russian and History.

Michael also holds part-time teaching positions in Jewish History and Holocaust Studies with the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at The University of Sydney and with the School of Humanities at The University of New South Wales. Michael is also a regular teacher and lecturer at The Shalom Institute and North Shore Temple Emanuel, Chatswood and has taught the Melton program and its graduate program "Mosaic" since 2001; is Head of Education in B'nai B'rith's "Courage to Care" program; President of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies; and worked as a volunteer in numerous educational capacities at the Sydney Jewish Museum for fifteen years.

In June 2007 Michael was awarded the title of Honorary Associate in the Faculty of Arts at The University of Sydney.

The recipient of numerous local and international awards and scholarships, Michael has also published widely on German-Jewish history and has presented papers, conducted research, lectured and taught both locally and internationally.

His most recent work – the German translation of his PhD thesis (*Life under Siege: The Jews of Magdeburg under Nazi Rule* [2006]) – was launched in November 2011 to much public acclaim by the prestigious German publisher, Mitteldeutscher Verlag, under the title: „Und dann warst du auf einmal ausgestoßen!“ *Die Magdeburger Juden während der NS-Herrschaft*.

Owing to the overwhelming success of the German edition, Michael has now secured a publisher for the English edition, which is currently under preparation. Michael's particular areas of expertise are German-speaking Jewry under Nazism; German-Jewish history; The Holocaust; the history of European Jewry; and the history of Zionism.



# THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH STUDIES

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

**Please print this form, complete it and send it to:**

The Honorary Treasurer  
Australian Association of Jewish Studies  
c/- Arhive of Australian Judaica  
Rare books, Fisher Library  
The University of Sydney, NSW, 2006  
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**Please tick the box by the relevant membership option**

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- Overseas AU\$80

**Payment may be made by cheque, VISA or MasterCard.** Please tick the box by the payment option you will use:

- Cheque in Australian dollars. Please enclose your cheque with this form.
- VISA or MasterCard. Please note that a small surcharge will be added when your credit card payment is processed (2.25%- Standard VISA, MasterCard; 3.25%- Premium VISA, MasterCard)

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Signature of cardholder. \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you!*