

# CGES

## *In Review*

# Brandeis University Center for German and European Studies

## 2012-2013



## **Transatlantic Perspectives on Gay Marriage, The Court of Law, and The Court of Public Opinion**

This international conference aims to shed light on the past and present struggle for human rights and against discrimination that has become synonymous with the term gay marriage. Experts from Germany, Belgium, France, Canada, and the US placed the current debate surrounding civil partnership and gay marriage into the context of various rights struggles throughout the 20th century and will explained the European diffusion of same-sex union laws and the globalization of same-sex marriage claims as well as highlighted the stakes involved in bringing the institutional and legal history of marriage in the United States to bear on same-sex couples' marriage rights today.

*(Transatlantic Perspectives continued on p. 4)*

*Photo (from left to right): German Consul General Rolf Schütte, Sabine von Mering, Director, Brandeis University Center for German and European Studies, Anne Miller, former cultural attaché at the French Consulate, Detlef Gehricke Schönhagen, Director, Goethe Institut Boston*

## ***Think Transatlantic!***

The colorful invitation to *Think Transatlantic!* greeted people on posters and banners around the Brandeis campus last fall. At the kick-off event on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, CGES assistants handed out German cookies and information to invite students to the series. For the third consecutive year, the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. chose Brandeis for participation in their nation-wide campusweeks initiative. This year, we linked the campusweek theme to the 2012 election campaign by bringing German experts to join Brandeis faculty experts to discuss issues that were hotly contested in the election, highlighting the German perspective on healthcare, immigration, the economy, and national security. We added one more topic—the environment—because Germans were scratching their heads why climate change and environmental degradation did not feature much more prominently in the US election campaign. Students were invited to participate in a special essay competition: All students who submitted a 2-page essay via email after attending any event in the series were eligible to win a \$200 prize and compete for a larger prize at the culminating national conference. [\[Click here too see the winners!\]](#)

*(Think Transatlantic! events continued on p. 6)*



## Letter From The Director

As the Center for German and European Studies at Brandeis turns 15 and thus reaches its adolescent age, it is perhaps not surprising that we are well-prepared to illuminate the currently somewhat turbulent German-American relationship. While the Obama administration is struggling to mend diplomatic relations with Germany following the revelation of the NSA's wire-tapping of Chancellor Angela Merkel's cell phone, Germany is confronted with intense criticism from the US Congress and the IMF about its outsize export surplus. Into this hotbed of disagreements CGES is launching its new campusweek initiative "Germany in Europe 1913-2014: From Arrogant Bully to Dependable Team Player?" The event series, sponsored generously again by the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., will begin with a look into the past on December 3, 2013: "Germany in Europe 1913: The Portrayal of the Great War" with historians Thomas Weber, Philipp Stelzel, Chad Williams, and

Ian Hopper. The series will continue in Spring 2014 with a student panel "2014: Germany in Europe Today. Shaping the Present" that will highlight how young Europeans view Germany, and how young Germans view Germany's role in Europe. The third and final panel of the year will add in the transatlantic perspective: "Germany Shaping Your Future: Transatlantic Job Opportunities" will bring representatives from German businesses in the area to Brandeis to discuss differences and opportunities on both sides of the Atlantic. We will also hold a first-ever "Brandeis-Europacup" soccer tournament in the spring. Throughout the academic year, students will again be invited to participate in a campus-wide essay competition on the subject of "Germany's role in Europe past, present, and future".

I am happy to announce that the *Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst* (DAAD), too, has renewed its commitment to CGES with a generous program grant of \$134,539 for 2013 and 2014. The new grant provides matching funds towards a

number of new initiatives, programs, and workshops, including a multi-day conference on "The German Tragic" (March 13-15, 2013), organized by Professor Stephen Dowden, a series on "Germany's Immigrants and Emigrés", organized by Professor Kathrin Seidl (see our website for the upcoming workshop "Exile and Persecution: German Exiles in the Americas", November 13-20), and a series of events related to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall-- "Successful Reconciliation of a Divided Society"-- organized in cooperation with Eli Salzberger from our sister CGES at Haifa University in Israel, the Universität Hamburg and the Freie Universität Berlin in Germany, as well as Professor Alain Lempereur from Brandeis' Heller School for Social Policy and Management. The latter series was launched in September 2013 with a three-day workshop that brought students from Germany, Israel, and Brandeis (including Israelis, Palestinians, and students from as far as Ethiopia and Columbia) together on campus to discuss issues of reconciliation. We will also continue to pay attention to Germany's leadership role

on energy, the environment, and climate change, and will continue our discussion of WWI from this fall with film screenings and lectures throughout the centennial. A big *Thank You!* to Michael Thomanek at the DAAD in New York for his tireless efforts on our behalf. The thank you is shared with a grateful farewell to DAAD Director Sebastian Fohrbeck, who returned to Germany in the summer of 2013. We enjoyed working with you, Sebastian! We are very much looking forward to continuing that close cooperation with Nina Lemmens, who will take over as Director of DAAD New York in January of 2014. Welcome, Nina! We hope to see you at Brandeis very soon!

We are also extremely grateful for our strong relationship with the Max Kade Foundation in New York, which continues its generous support of many facets of our work, as well as the Fran and Otto Walter Foundation, whose support enabled us to have our first-ever Jewish-German Dialogue event at Brandeis House in New York in 2012. Fritz Weinschenk, our speaker at the event, unfortunately passed away

only three weeks later. Those who attended the screening of the documentary *About Face* that tells the story of his military service and who witnessed his remarkable poise and infectious sense of humor will always remember him.

Let me also mention here the tireless efforts of our CGES team, without whom none of the events enumerated in this newsletter would be possible. This includes our faculty executive committee (listed on our website), Heidi McAllister, our indefatigable administrator, and our many current and past student assistants who keep us young and up-to-date. Please take a look at our website to get to know them all, and learn about what our former assistants are currently up to. Congratulations to Jonathan Jecker '13 and Tim Neunzig, MA'10 for landing jobs in the competitive arena of San Francisco, California! Everyone else: Please stay in touch, and let us know about your newest achievements, so we can show off with you, too!

Finally, I would like to share a special invitation with you to come to our Jewish-

German Dialogue on Monday, November 11, 2013 at 6:30pm in Mandel 303 in commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Kristallnacht" pogrom of November 1938 with Ruth Gutmann's family. Ruth Gutmann describes her ordeal in Germany and in the concentration camp Auschwitz as a young twin girl in her powerful memoir, *A Final Reckoning: A Hannover Family's Life and Death in the Shoah*. The book was first published in German in 2002 and is about to come out in English with the University of Alabama Press in December 2013. I am deeply grateful to Ruth's family for their willingness to come to Brandeis to help us commemorate what for many German Jews marked the beginning of the Shoah, and I hope many of you will be able to join us.

For the last fifteen years CGES has supported not only events like the ones listed in this newsletter, but numerous undergraduate and graduate students, and student and faculty research travel to Germany, and we would love to be able to

continue this work for many years to come.

The new academic year is already in full swing, and much is happening at CGES. I hope to see many of you at our upcoming events, which are listed on the CGES website at

[brandeis.edu/cges](http://brandeis.edu/cges). As you take a moment to look back on our past events, please consider supporting CGES with a donation to help us meet our matching grant obligations. [[supporting CGES](#)]

Thank you,

Sabine von Mering



Sabine von Mering, CGES Director

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## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

## Do Deutsch Info Tables in Usdan and SCC

*Wednesday, April 4,  
2012*

In continuation of the successful 'do Deutsch' initiatives from the previous year, CGES continued its outreach efforts by sponsoring tables in Usdan and Shapiro Campus Center with German gummibears, Berliners, a quiz, and information about upcoming events.

## German Oktoberfest

*Monday, October  
15, 2012*

In cooperation with the newly-formed German Club, CGES sponsored an evening of German cuisine to attract more students to our programs. Over three-hundred students attended the event, which featured various info tables, German music, and the always popular Berliner

## The European Debt Crisis

*Thursday, January 26,  
2012*

Alexander Schindler, Executive Board Member, Union Asset Management Holding AG, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, joined a luncheon at the International Business School to discuss his insights into the European debt crisis and the Euro Outlook. He is in charge of institutional client business, legal and compliance division and international business activities at one of the largest German asset management firms. Prior to joining Union Investment he had served domestic and international

investors for more than 15 years in different executive functions. The Q&A focused on the question of the power and oversight of rating agencies, and the German role in strengthening the Eurozone. The luncheon was hosted in cooperation with the Perlmutter Institute for Global Business Leadership, and cosponsored by the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

## Grimm in the Digital Age

*Tuesday, March 13,  
2012*

The two-part symposium was divided into a morning session in

German and an afternoon panel discussion in English. The program began with the arrival of 60 German language and native German high school students and their teachers. After a tour of campus and German style breakfast, the students participated in



Students and their teachers from Grimm event

the symposium session, Grimm's Märchen auf Deutsch: Lesungen, Spiele, Hintergründe. They were joined by faculty, undergraduates, and graduate students to explore the meaning of the Grimm Brothers' collection through readings, performances, improvisations, and games. Speaking and reading only in German, the students experienced well-known tales in their original form and engaged in thought-provoking discussion. Renowned fairy tale scholars Maria Tatar of Harvard University, and Donald Haase of Wayne State University, and Brandeis Professor and poet, Olga Broumas formed the afternoon panel, *Queering the Grimms?* The Grimm Fairy Tale Collection in the Digital Age. This session examined the new adaptations and re-readings of the tales from the Grimm collection through a critical lens. The session was attended by approximately 120 students, faculty, and community members.



CGES students at "Do Deutsch" table



Maria Tatar, Donald Haase, & Olga Broumas at Grimm event

Olga Broumas opened the session with a dramatic reading of her original poetry that draws on the imagery of the Brothers Grimm's tales in which she challenged the theme of power as related to gender and sexuality. Professor Tatar entertained the audience with a survey of recent fairy tale films and the remarkable revival fairy tales have experienced in the digital age. Professor Haase presented a critical perspective on feminist re-readings of fairy tales, suggesting that ideological interests should not blind readers to the texts multifaceted depths. Our symposium was supported by an archival display of fairy tales from the Brandeis rare book collection. This exhibit included facsimiles of the 1812 Grimm tales collection, and was open to all library visitors. Students delighted in examining the old texts and placing the Grimms in

their literary and publishing context. We concluded the highly successful day with a Brandeis-sponsored dinner for symposium principals and colleagues. CGES gratefully

acknowledges the Max Kade Foundation for its generous donation.

### **Gesundheit:** Comparing the Healthcare Systems in Germany and the US

**Tuesday, October 16, 2012**



Stuart Altman, Sol C. Chaikin Professor of National Health Policy at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, is one of the architects not only of the Massachusetts healthcare law, but also of "Obamacare." Altman joined German healthcare expert Sophia Schlette from the Federal Ministry of Health, Berlin, Germany for a discussion about the differences in healthcare

services in Germany and the US. Schlette gave a detailed powerpoint presentation outlining the main features of the German system. Altman then engaged her in a dialogue about potential challenges and the question of how "transferrable" the German system would be to other national contexts. The event was attended by over 60 interested students and faculty.

### **Integration:** Immigrants in Germany and the US

**Wednesday, October 17, 2012**



Brandeis Politics Professor Jytte Klausen joined Turkish-German entrepreneur Ammar Alkassar for a discussion about immigrant minorities in Germany and the US. The students were particularly eager to know why Alkassar, who has since 2008 also served as speaker of the alumni of Konrad-Adenauer scholars from Saarland, a practicing Muslim, chose the Christian Democratic Union as his political home. Alkassar agreed that there are not many

Muslims in the CDU, but explained that he felt the CDU was the only political party serious about religion, and that it also aligned with his economic priorities.

### **NATO 2012: The Transatlantic Alliance and National Security in Times of Terrorism and Globalization**

**Monday, October 22, 2012**



German Ambassador to NATO, Martin Erdmann, who had also been the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy for several years. He was joined by Brandeis Professor of Politics Robert Art for a discussion of "NATO 2012". Professor Art spoke with great admiration for the German-American partnership and gladly "outed himself" as a "Transatlantiker". Nevertheless, he also pointed out the fact that the economic uncertainties in the US made continuing to fund over 70,000 American

soldiers stationed in peaceful Europe a questionable exercise. Mr. Erdmann pointed to the importance of the historical dimensions, and also highlighted the possibilities for the US and Germany to transfer what they have learned in their 60 years of transatlantic cooperation to the Pacific—where multilateral cooperation was still in its infancy, but clearly badly needed.

perspectives on and different solutions for the economic crisis in Europe. Both agreed that it was too early to tell whether the Euro could survive, but that there would be dramatic losses on all sides if it failed.



Prof. Cathy Mann and Armin Steinbach engage in dialogue at *Krise* event.

## ***Krise:*** National Debt, Unemployment, the Euro: The Economic Crisis in Germany, Europe, and the US



Thursday,  
October  
25, 2012

Professor Cathy L. Mann from IBS was joined by German economist Armin Steinbach, who was a visiting fellow at Harvard University's Center for European Studies at the time. Their conversation focused on the question of whether Germany and the US had different

## ***Umwelt:*** Energy & Climate Change. Environmental Challenges in Germany and the US



Friday,  
November  
2, 2012

Professor Charles Chester from Environmental Studies hosted Hermann Ott, Member of Parliament for the German Green Party in Berlin via Skype to discuss the

different approaches to climate change on both sides of the Atlantic. Students were eager to hear what the US could learn from German political successes. As one student put it, referring to the experience of hurricane Sandy just ten days earlier: "We have now seen Manhattan under water. What can we do to alert our politicians that they must act?" Ott pointed to the significant economic advantages of renewable energy initiatives, and the benefits to people's quality of life.

## **Transatlantic Perspectives on Gay Marriage: The Court of Law and the Court of Public Opinion**

Tuesday, April 9, 2013  
*(cont'd from cover)*

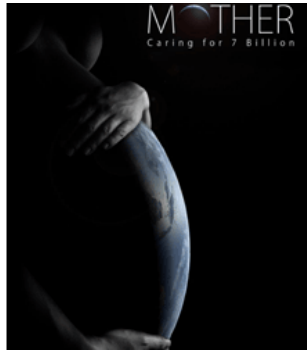
The conference drew attention to the wide spectrum of political and societal forces at work in the process of achieving

legal and actual equality, and the challenges that continue to exist in the form of prejudices, hate crimes, and gay bashing. Participants included Nancy Cott, History, Harvard University, Jennifer Evans, History, Carleton University, Canada, Bruno Perreau, French Studies, MIT, Axel Hochrein, Federal Association of Gays and Lesbians in Germany [Bundesverband des Lesben- und Schwulenverbandes in Deutschland (LSVD)], Florence Tamagne, History, University of Lille, France, David Paternotte, Political Science, Université Libre of Belgium. The conference continued with a 7pm Panel Discussion at the Goethe Institut Boston, followed by a Reception courtesy of the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Rolf Schütte.

## Screening of *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion*

Tuesday, February 14,  
2012

After screening the new documentary *Mother: Caring for 7 Billion* we asked Robert Walker, new President of the Population Institute (voice on Capitol Hill since 1969), and Purnima Mane, recently of the UNFPA and now President of Pathfinder International (providing reproductive health services in the developing world since 1957) to discuss the issue. Contrasting government initiatives to counter negative birthrates in Germany and Europe with the effects of the Chinese one-child policy, the film highlighted the larger context, and revealed that the US is the third-largest growing country in the world. The event was co-sponsored by the School of Science, Environmental Studies, Sustainable International Development, Women's and Gender Studies and the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life.



*Mother Caring for 7 Billion*

## Taking Responsibility: Europe's Role in Addressing Climate Change

Thursday, February 9,  
2012

As a part of *Deis Impact*, CGES hosted a video conference and panel discussion was held about the topic of climate change as an issue of social justice. It featured Dr. Bernd Sommer, research analyst to the German Advisory Council on Global Change, and Maximilian Muengersdorf, of the graduate colloquium "Challenges to Democracy through Climate Change" at the Institute for Culture (KWI) in Essen. Sommer and Muengersdorf reported on EU member states' progress in reaching the goal of increasing renewable energy by 20%

before 2020 (compared to 1990 rates). Interestingly, France and Germany differ sharply in their use of nuclear power to reduce reliance upon fossil fuels. France is dependent upon nuclear power for 70-80% of its power needs, while Germany only uses 20% nuclear, and is committed to closing all of its nuclear facilities by 2022 in the wake of the Japanese nuclear disaster.

## The Difficult Beginning of Israeli- German Scientific Cooperation

Friday, September 21,  
2012

Together with the  
Schusterman Center for

Israel Studies, CGES invited German-Israeli historian Ute Deichmann, Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at Ben Gurion University. Deichmann shed light on the German and Israeli scientists (especially a number of renowned chemists) who were involved in the very early beginnings of German-Israeli cooperation after WWII. She showed that while their motivations differed, the émigré scientists were often motivated by a desire to help their former mentors and colleagues, and to reconnect with science in their mother tongue, while some of the German scientists clearly had an interest in rebuilding connections with those who had been wronged. Still, the German scientists' involvement with Nazi authorities continued to overshadow



Ute Deichmann

the relationships, and it remained the task for the following generation of scientists to address the issue.

## Post-Holocaust Anti-Semitism and the Psychiatry of Trauma

*Wednesday, October 24, 2012*

In her lecture entitled, “‘They were Super-Freudians’: Survivor Trauma, Post-Nazi Anti-Semitism, and the Americanization of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” renowned historian Dagmar Herzog revisited the ideologically and emotionally charged conflicts among psychiatrists in West Germany and the US in the 1950s-1960s over reparations for survivors of Nazi persecution and of concentration and death camps. She interpreted these conflicts as constituting a crucial

moment in the production of the concepts of massive psychic trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, but also emphasized the complexities of the post-Nazi environment as a key factor that explains the particularities of the scientific and moral quandaries confronted by the doctors. The lecture especially attended to the ambivalent consequences of the eventual Americanization of the debate over Holocaust trauma, in the 1960s-1970s, for the understanding of women’s sufferings, as well as the selective and contradictory uses of Freud by ex-Nazis in interpreting the traumas of children in hiding and in the camps. Dagmar Herzog is Professor of History at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. She recently completed *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge University Press 2011). She is also the author of *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton 2005). Co-sponsored by the

Hadassah-Brandeis Institute.

## Etty Hillesum

*Thursday, November 15, 2012*

CGES was proud to sponsor the performance of the one-woman play, “Etty,” about the Dutch philosopher Etty Hillesum who was murdered in Auschwitz by actress Susan Stein [[ettyplay.org](http://ettyplay.org)]. The performance was followed by a panel discussion with professors Andreas Teuber (Philosophy), Palle Yourgrau (Philosophy), Dawn Skorszewski (English), and the actress Susan Stein. A feature article on the show can be found in BrandeisNOW: <http://www.brandeis.edu/now/2012/november/etty.html>. The event was co-sponsored by the Department of Philosophy.



Susan Stein performs *Etty* (cred. Ricardo Barros)

## The German Energiewende —Renewable Energy for the Economy of the Future

*Monday, April 29, 2013*

CGES was happy to sponsor a special luncheon with Dr. Hermann Ott, a Member of the German Federal Parliament (*Bundestag*) and the Green Party (*Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*) speaker on climate policy since





2009 and a member of the *Bundestag's* "Commission on Growth, Prosperity and Quality of Life." Before becoming a politician Ott had worked as a scientist, policy advisor, and author at one of Germany's leading think tanks, the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, where he was the Director of the Climate Program and later head of the institute's Berlin office. Emphasizing a crucial link between climate policy and energy transition, he argued that an *Energiewende* will only be successful and sustainable with the right compass at hand – with combating climate change as one of the main directing and decisive factors. Ott described the development of the environmental movement in Germany from its beginnings in the anti-nuclear reactor movement. Germany plans to switch off all nuclear reactors by the year 2022 (eight have already been turned off). Despite the fact that Germany is "the least likely candidate" for energy transformation, having relatively little

sunshine or wind, Germany today produces 25% of its energy from renewables, despite the fact that energy grid experts thought the grid couldn't take more than 4%. And the development finds support among people, because "decentralized power stations empower people" Ott explained. Developing renewables should be viewed as a stabilizing factor even in the short term, therefore investments into renewables should be prioritized over the short-sighted investments into the environmentally disastrous process of fracking, he urged. The event was made possible through the generous support of the Heinrich Boell Foundation in Washington, D.C.

## The EU as a Global Power: Assets and Liabilities

Thursday, April 11, 2013

Jolyon Howorth, the Jean Monnet Professor of European Politics at the University of Bath and Visiting Professor of Political Science at Yale University, spoke to faculty and students on the subject of "The EU as a Global Power: Assets and Liabilities," on 11 April 2013. Howorth's talk considered future possibilities for the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in light of the union's invisibility as a bloc during the crisis in Libya in 2011. While the CSDP was conceived to give the EU the capacity to act militarily without depending on the United States, Howorth noted, to date the EU has not managed to develop and deploy common military operations when they are needed most, as in Libya. With the CSDP now in danger of lapsing

into irrelevance, Howorth outlined two alternatives for reinvigorating it: partnership in a "global alliance" with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), itself facing troubles after the long and costly mission in Afghanistan, or a redoubling of efforts to make CSDP a viable alternative autonomous from NATO. Given the EU's various assets and liabilities, Howorth concluded that intensified CSDP-NATO partnership presented the most viable option. Presented in cooperation with the Department of Politics.

## Hitler's Jewish Soldiers

Monday, March 19, 2012

Invited speaker Bryan Marc Rigg enjoys a controversy. Rigg, who discovered his own Jewish heritage in the process of writing his book *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers*, was able to tell the unusual story of Jewish soldiers in the Wehrmacht with the help of dozens of personal interviews. The event was co-sponsored by the Newton Jewish-German Dialogue Group.

## Remembering 'Kristallnacht'

Thursday, November 8, 2012

Rolf Schuette, the new German Generalkonsul for New England who recounted experiences from his childhood as well as diplomatic posts in San Francisco and Tel Aviv, spoke about the differences in the relationships between Germany and Israel, and between Germany and the American Jewish community.

## About Face

Monday, March 5, 2012

During a time of national

fervor, these young men made an about face: Fritz Weinschenk and his fellow German-Jewish refugees turned Allies soldiers. At a screening of the documentary film *About Face*, CGES welcomed Brandeis alumni and friends to Brandeis House in New York for a fascinating conversation with then 92-year old Weinschenk who is featured in the film. For his humanitarian service the German government bestowed upon him the Bundesverdienstkreuz am Bande (Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit) and



About Face event

the Bundesverdienstkreuz erster Klasse (Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit). Sadly, Weinschenk passed away less than a month later, on April 1, 2012.

## Editing Victor Klemperer's Diaries

Tuesday, April 17, 2012

His true goal was to become a celebrated scholar of French literature. But Victor Klemperer (1881-1960) is known around the world today for the impassioned and insightful diary he wrote while incarcerated in a "Judenhaus" in Dresden throughout the period of Nazi rule, as well as the corresponding exploration of Nazi vocabulary, published under the title LTI [Lingua Tertii Imperii]. Both were made available thanks to Walter Nowojski,

Berlin, who completed the painstaking work of editing Klemperer's manuscripts (partly in cooperation with Klemperer's second wife). With his visit to Brandeis, Nowojski, who had been a student of Klemperer's in the GDR, and who even in his eighties was still working feverishly on digitizing the 10,000+ page manuscript, was able to realize a life-long dream. Sadly, he passed away in November 2012. The visit was co-sponsored with the Goethe-Institut Boston.

## Understanding the current state of historic synagogues in East Germany

Wednesday, October 10, 2012

Rachel Cylus came to talk to the Jewish-German Dialogue group about her experience as a German Chancellor Fellow for Prospective Leaders with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. She studied with Dr. Hermann Simon, director of the New Synagogue Berlin - Centrum Judaicum and the staff of the Centrum Judaicum to



Rolf Schuette at 'Kristallnacht' event.

interpret the historic synagogue for English and German speaking visitors to the Museum. She also worked alongside the curators at the Museum to prepare the exhibit “In Search of a Lost Collection: The Jewish Museum of Berlin 1933-1938”. As her independent project, Rachel had researched, visited, and analyzed extant historic synagogues in former East Germany to learn about their histories and uses since they ceased to have a religious function. She showed pictures of dozens of synagogues and talked about her interviews with the buildings’ caretakers, museum professionals, and staff to learn about how the synagogues were “rediscovered”, how they have been received by their local Jewish and non-Jewish communities, their process of re-purposing, and plans for the future. In doing so she uncovered

how a broad sense of Jewish life and history in Germany is being interpreted and taught through Jewish historic sites. Her research and work shed light on the experiences of working in local Jewish history projects in former East Germany today. Co-sponsored by the Newton Jewish-German Dialogue.

## **Gary Shteyngart**

*Monday, November 5, 2012*

Best-selling Jewish author Gary Shteyngart read from his novels *The Russian Debutante's Handbook* (2002); *Absurdistan* (2006), and *Super Sad True Love Story* (2010) at a special reading organized in cooperation with the Brandeis Genesis Institut for Russian Jewry, the Tauber Institute for the

Study of European Jewry, the Department of English, the Department of Creative Writing, the Department of German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature (GRALL), and the Russian Club. Dr. Kathy Lawrence, a scholar of English literature and the wife of Brandeis President Fred Lawrence, led the discussion. Shteyngart, whose work is extremely popular in Germany, is known especially for his satirical renditions of generational conflicts between young Jews today and their Yiddish-speaking elders.

## **My Oma, the Tank Driver, my Papa, the Survivor. WWII and the Holocaust in the Eyes of German Brandeis students**

*Monday, April 15, 2013*

What does it mean to grow up German today, having to come to grips with German history? What does it mean for

## **Jeanine Meerapfel**

*Monday, April 15, 2013*

Argentinian-German filmmaker Jeanine Meerapfel came to Brandeis to discuss her work, especially her most recent film *Der Deutsche Freund*, which was featured in the Jewishfilm2013 festival. Meerapfel talked about what it meant to return to Germany after WWII as a young Jew, and what Jewish life is like in Germany today. She spoke with students in the course on German Cinema about the multifaceted process of creating a film, and the added complications of doing so in different countries. Her visit, which was unfortunately overshadowed by the Boston marathon bombings, was made possible through cooperation with the Goethe Institut and the National Center for Jewish Film.



Gary Shteyngart with Kathy Lawrence

Jews, for non-Jews, and for those who have both Jewish and non-Jewish family? At this Jewish-German Dialogue meeting Jonathan Jecker '13, Sarah Klapisch '13, Nelly Schlaefereit '14, & Alexander Schmidt '14 talked about their upbringing, their schooling, and their mixed family background, with the help of moderators Elena Korn '13, and Abe Feldan '13. The panel discussion tackled questions of personal identity, family history, and 20th Century German history. After a series of questions brought forward by the two moderators, audience members (including students and members of the Jewish-German dialogue group from the broader Boston community) chimed in with questions of their own. Each member of the CGES team brought a unique cultural background to the discussion. Alexander Schmidt discussed how his Irish-German heritage colored his interactions with his grandmother—a tank driver in the Wehrmacht. Sarah Klapisch shared her experience of having roots in German, Swiss, French, and Israeli culture. Sarah also discussed the experiences of her father

who survived the Holocaust in France not knowing he was Jewish. Jonathan Jecker talked about feelings of responsibility and guilt with an Israeli father and a German mother. Jonathan also shared memories of growing up between Germany, Israel, and the United States. Nelly Schlaefereit, who grew up in Germany but went to school in Geneva, Switzerland, explored cultural perceptions of Germans that she has faced abroad and how she chooses to present both herself and her culture. The audience responded very positively, and many suggested that CGES organize more events of this kind.

## Remembering the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

*Sunday, April 21, 2013*

In commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Dr. Kathleen Lawrence and Dr. Susanne Klingenstein mounted an incredibly moving performance of Yiddish songs, letters, diaries, and excerpts from memoirs with music performed by Sophie Michaux (mezzo

soprano) Eugenia Gerstein (piano, choral conductor) and the Temple Emanuel Choir. The liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto was ordered in October 1942, but in January 1943 armed resistance to the deportations began forcing their suspension. On April 19, 1943, the Germans ordered Ukrainian auxiliaries to enter the ghetto to round up the remaining Jews. The Jews managed to resist the assault for three weeks. On May 8 the fighters were killed, the remaining Jews deported to killing centers, and the Warsaw ghetto with its 400,000 Jews was liquidated. We commemorated the courage and endurance of the Jews of Warsaw in an evening that featured Yiddish songs and diary entries composed in the ghetto as well as letters and accounts written outside the ghetto by distressed Polish and German witnesses to the destruction.

## A Letter to Wedgwood

*March 21, 2013*

Gabriella Hartstein was born in 1914 in Mukacevo, Czechoslovakia, a thriving and cosmopolitan Jewish city

where secular Hungarian Jews co-existed with Hasidim and Zionists. When British Colonel Josiah Wedgwood came to the city in 1922 to speak about Christian Zionist support for a plan to create the State of Israel, eight-year-old Gabriella was selected to greet the esteemed visitor. Gabriella became a respected teacher and ardent Zionist. In 1938, following the invasion of Czechoslovakia by German-backed Hungarian fascists, Gabriella wrote to Wedgwood for help. Astonishingly, Wedgwood (by then Lord Wedgwood) interceded, eventually bringing Gabriella and her brother to England. The 55 minute film is based on Ms. Labson's 2004 memoir, *My Righteous Gentile*. A conversation with the vibrant 99-year old (!) Gabriella Hartstein followed the screening, which was co-sponsored by the National Center for Jewish Film, the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry, Facing History and Ourselves, Harvard Hillel Worship and Study Minyan, and Harvard University's Center for European Studies.

## Troubling Futures: The Emotional Impact of Climate Change

*Thursday, March 22, 2012*

Alexa Weik from Fribourg University and the Rachel Carson Institut in Munich came to talk about climate change cinema. Weik, who studies the role of action vs. documentary films on the perception of climate change in Germany, demonstrated how action films often reach a wider audience and have a more lasting impact than carefully researched documentary films that are predominantly viewed by those who already agree with the filmmaker's views.

## Arguing about WWI

*Thursday, March 29, 2012*

Philipp Stelzel, who was at the time a visiting professor at Duke University and who is now a post-doctoral fellow at Boston College, talked about the arguments among historians in the 1960s following Fritz Fischer's publication of a voluminous study on the German Empire's war aims during World War I. By arguing that Germany had been primarily responsible for the war's outbreak, Fischer had caused an enormous controversy that preoccupied not only his West German colleagues but also a broader public, and ultimately even the Federal Republic's Parliament. American historians played a significant role in this debate, which today appears as the beginning of a critical West German perspective on the recent German past. Using the "Fischer Controversy" as a vantage point, Stelzel analyzed the transatlantic debate between the 1920s and the 1970s about the origins of World War I.



Sander Gilman speaking on infant male circumcision

## The Debate about Infant Male Circumcision

*Thursday, December 6, 2012*

After heated debates about infant male circumcision had dominated the German press in the wake of a recent court decision, CGES invited professor Sander Gilman, distinguished professor of the Liberal Arts and Sciences as well as Professor of Psychiatry at Emory University to shed light on the historical dimension of the controversy. Gilman gave a survey from biblical times to the present and explained how the debate had resurfaced repeatedly over the centuries whenever anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim sentiments

flared up. He also pointed out that the reason male circumcision became common in the US could be tracked back to military involvements in the Far East. According to Gilman the scientific community continues to be divided about the actual benefits of male circumcision, and recommendations by the association of pediatric medical professionals continue to evolve. But it was also true, he said, that Jewish rituals had evolved, hence there was good reason to favor a symbolic rather than an actual circumcision, as practiced in some communities that simply draw a drop of blood—a process equally applicable to male and female infants. The event was co-sponsored by the European Cultural Studies program.

## **Jewishfilm 2012**

April 18-April 26,  
2012

CGES was proud to again co-sponsor this year's Jewish film festival, Jewishfilm2012, which included the award-winning German film *Hotel Lux*, directed by Leander Haußmann [Germany 2011], *In Heaven, Underground*, directed by Britta Wauer [Germany 2011], among many other WWII- and Holocaust-related films [See [jewishfilm.org](http://jewishfilm.org)]

## **Filmgespräch** Friday, April 20, 2012

German Filmmakers Dörte Franke and Marc Bauder, from Berlin came to Brandeis to discuss their documentary, *After the Revolution* [Nach der Revolution, Germany, 2010], which chronicles the period immediately prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Co-sponsored by the Goethe-Institut Boston and the German Club.

## **The Music of Heinrich Schütz**

Saturday, February  
11, 2012

In cooperation with the Brandeis Music Department, CGES was happy to co-sponsor a rare concert of German early classical music and an accompanying day-long symposium on 17th century German composer Heinrich Schütz. The symposium included noted scholars, professional musicians, and the University Chorus and Chamber Choir. Professors James Olesen, Sarah Mead, and Eric Chafe gave a series of brief talks on the composer, his music, and the instruments, followed by a performance of concerted vocal music, featuring large and small student choruses, professional vocalists, student and professional viol-players, trombones, organ, and theorbo.

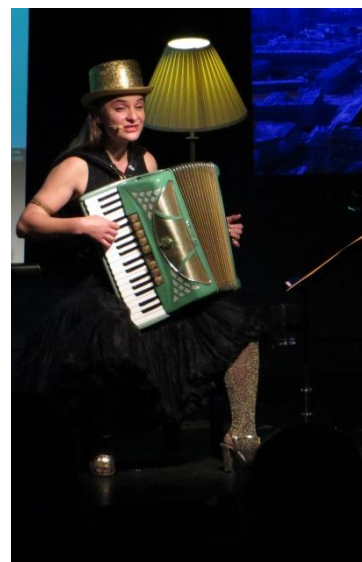
## **Berlin ist eine Frau**

Thursday, October 11,  
2012



Annika Krump

Armed solely with her accordion, German chansonniere and Kleinkünstlerin Annika Krump arrived at Brandeis to present her unique journey through one-hundred years of Berlin history, highlighting significant women performers from Claire Waldoff to Nina Hagen, and telling the story of women in Berlin through war, political upheaval,



Annika Krump performing.

division, and unification. The event attracted a mix of 40 students and off-campus visitors to the "cult" student pub in the Brandeis castle, called Cholmondeley's. It was co-sponsored by the Goethe-Institut Boston.

## **Voltaire and Frederick**

Monday, October 22  
2012

In celebration of the 300th birthday of Frederick the Great, CGES was proud to host the second performance after the World Premiere of *Voltaire and Frederick: A Life in Letters*, a new play commissioned by the Goethe-Institut Boston in partnership with the Consulat Général de France, featuring American Repertory Theater founding member Thomas Derrah and Actor's Shakespeare Project founding member John Kuntz. The play highlighted the 40-year correspondence between the two leaders, shedding light on their respective interests and ideas and their importance for the enlightenment and human rights and showing how Co-sponsored by the Goethe-Institut Boston.



(left to right) Thomas Derrah and John Kuntz, *Voltaire and Frederick*

## “Mein Deutsch”

February 27, 2013

Young German authors Nora Bossong und Sherko Fatah joined students of German to discuss (in German!) their work and their relationship to the German language. When asked by some of the students, who were in the process of studying Goethe’s *Faust*, whether they thought Goethe had influenced them at all, Bossong and Fatah surprised the students by saying that they had read the work numerous times. While Fatah was more enthralled with Goethe’s poetry, Bossong told students she liked to re-read Goethe’s *Faust* “every other year or so”. The authors were joined by Thorsten Dönges of the Literarisches Colloquium Berlin, who moderated the discussion.

## Clemency for

## Sodom and Gomorrha?

February 5, 2013

Composer James MacMillan joined Professor Jonathan P. Decter, Edmond J. Safra Professor of Sephardic Studies at Brandeis University, in a conversation exploring the story of Abraham and Sarah, their charged encounter with three mysterious travelers, and the exile of Hagar and the dying Ishmael. Together they explained to students how the story has played a prominent role in the histories of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and inspired BLO’s Opera Annex production of MacMillan’s opera *Clemency*. In cooperation with Boston Lyric Opera and the Department of Music.

## “Wir wollen freie

## Menschen sein”

Thursday, April 11, 2013

With the help of the Goethe Institut Boston German filmmaker and civil rights activist Freya Klier came to Brandeis to present her newest documentary “Wir wollen freie Menschen sein” at Brandeis University on April 11, 2013. The film commemorates the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the East German Workers Uprising in 1953, and presented a unique opportunity for our students to learn about this decisive historical event. The public film screening as well as Ms. Klier’s visit was incorporated into an advanced German course, structured around the overarching topic of representations of the Berlin Wall in literature and the arts. This allowed students to approach the topic through Ms. Klier’s work in a novel way. During an 80-minute long workshop, students inquired about the film as well as about Ms. Klier’s experience of persecution and life in the GDR, and she generously shared both her personal story as well as addressing questions about her film.

## Aysun Bademsoy’s Ehre

Sunday, December 2-Monday, December 3, 2012

Turkish-German Filmmaker Aysun Bademsoy joined students of German to discuss [in German] her award-winning documentary *Ehre [Honor]*, which follows young Turkish criminals and those who engage to help them reintegrate into a society they experience as hostile and confusing. Co-sponsored by the Department of German, Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature and the Goethe-Institut Boston.