

ORDINARY PEOPLE EXTRAORDINARY STORIES

OXFORD HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL EVENTS SERIES

DEDICATED TO BARBARA WINTON



KINDLY FUNDED BY THE MAGDALEN COLLEGE
TRUST

#OXHMD23

Welcome to **Ordinary People, Extraordinary Stories**, a series of events at the University of Oxford for Holocaust Memorial Day 2023. Each year, on Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January), we come together to remember the six million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust and the millions who suffered under Nazi persecution and in the subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. The theme for HMD 2023 is 'Ordinary People', highlighting the ordinary people who let genocide happen, the ordinary people who actively perpetrated genocide, and the ordinary people who were persecuted.

This year's theme also prompts us to consider how ordinary people, such as ourselves, can play a bigger part than we might imagine in challenging prejudice today. Our series at Oxford is dedicated to one such person, the late Barbara Winton. Barbara was a passionate campaigner for the history and memory of the Holocaust and a constant reminder of our duty to learn from the past for a better future. In her honour, we will hear from survivors of the Holocaust and Genocide, leading figures in the fight against antisemitism, public campaigners, and expert academics in a series that brings together high-profile personalities from across the UK in discussion and reflection.

Genocide strikes at the very heart of a civilization, causing untold pain and agony for years to come. It destroys families, cultures, and homes, cutting short what should have been long and happy lives. By contrast, seeing the triumphs and successes of those who survived genocide and those who stood up against persecution stands as a testament to its ultimate failure. As we reflect on the Holocaust, 78 years after its end, this series encourages us to think about the ordinary people at its core. It is from them that we can draw our inspiration and determination to make the world a better place; as Barbara once said, 'once there's a live human being involved in any story, the story stops being a history textbook and becomes a life. And once it becomes a life, everything changes.'

Barnabas Balint
Magdalen College, Oxford

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HOLOCAUST IN FILM

20TH JAN | 4PM | TORCH SEMINAR ROOM

As the Holocaust recedes in living memory, its representation in television and film only increases. From courtroom dramas like Denial (2016) and action films such as Defiance (2008) and Operation Finale (2018), to comedies like JoJo Rabbit (2019) and more serious treatments such as Schindler's List (1993) and Son of Saul (2015), films about the Holocaust continue to capture the public imagination. This panel will discuss Holocaust cinema as the canon continues to diversify in genre-bending, post-memorial ways.

CAILEE DAVIES



ROSALIND HULSE



SURVIVOR TESTIMONY: MALA TRIBICH MBE

26TH JAN | 5-7PM | MAGDALEN COLLEGE

For Holocaust Memorial Day 2023, Magdalen College will host an event led by the College President, Dinah Rose KC, to reflect on the history, memory, and contemporary relevance of the Holocaust. We will welcome Holocaust survivor Mala Tribich MBE, who will share her testimony of the Holocaust and her life in the UK after the war. Following this, the President and a College Fellow will offer some brief reflections. .

MALA TRIBICH MBE



DINAH ROSE KC



BOSNAIN GENOCIDE SURVIVOR TESTIMONY

27TH JAN | 4PM | THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE

At this event, survivor of the genocide in Bosnia Smajo Bešo OBE, will share his experiences of persecution and of building a life in the UK. Smajo was born in Bosnia in 1985. His father, and several male relatives, were tortured by Serbian nationalist forces in concentration camps as Bosnian Muslims became targets of genocide. Smajo's close family relatives were murdered. In 1994, Smajo and his family arrived in Newcastle as refugees. Today, he regularly shares his experiences and has played a vital role in organising Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations in the North East. Smajo has been recognised with an OBE for services to genocide education and commemoration in the New Year's Honours 2023.

SMAJO BESO OBE



EVA BAILEY



SPEAKING ACROSS THE DIVIDE

31ST JAN | 4-6PM | WORCESTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM

Dr Noemie Lopian, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, has teamed up with Derek Niemann, the grandson of an SS officer. In a highly unusual and indeed possibly unique partnership, Noemie and Derek are sharing their stories as a warning of the perils of extremism and to inspire greater understanding. Their ongoing speaking tour began in 2019. They have talked at schools, universities, and synagogues, as well as being keynote speakers at a range of public events.

DEREK NIEMANN



NOEMIE LOPIAN



HOLOCAUST STUDIES READING GROUP HMD WORKSHOP: TEENAGE VICTIMS OF NAZI PERSECUTION 6TH FEB | 2PM | CLARENDON INSTITUTE, WALTON STREET

This workshop tells the individual stories of 12 teenage victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution. It has been designed for mature teenagers and young adults and seeks to encourage discussion and empathy with young people's experiences of the Holocaust. Developed by Eli Sassoon and Barnabas Balint as part of the Youth Forum for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, it presents a series of primary source excerpts and poses discussion questions for participants. At this session of the Holocaust Studies Reading Group, we will be one of the first groups to use the resource and reflect on its effectiveness.



ANTISEMITISM AND THE UK: A DISCUSSION ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE JEWISH IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY BRITAIN

TBC

This event, in partnership with the Oxford Forum for Questioning Extremism (OFQE) will allow you to learn and discuss the manifestations of antisemitism in Britain today. We invite you to be in conversation with leading public figures in this field, including Danny Stone MBE (Director, Antisemitism Policy Trust). This event purports to explore the uniqueness of being Jewish in the United Kingdom and the ways in which to identify and quash antisemitism.



CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY STORIES

Barnabas Balint (Magdalen College, University of Oxford)

Barnabas Balint is a doctoral candidate in History at Magdalen College, University of Oxford, with a specific interest in the history of the Holocaust and its impact on society. His research combines the history of childhood, gender and identity to explore Jewish youth responses to persecution in the interwar period and the Second World War. He is currently focusing on the experiences of Jewish youth during the Holocaust in Hungary under the supervision of Dr Zoe Waxman. Outside of academia, Barnabas has been a Communications Officer for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and a Regional Ambassador for the Holocaust Educational Trust. In support of Holocaust education and commemoration in the UK, he has organised conferences, led ceremonies, written blog posts, conducted training sessions and spoken to UK national leaders including the Chief Rabbi, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, and Prime Minister.

Eva Bailey (The Queen's College, University of Oxford)

Eva Bailey is a second year English and French student at The Queen's College. She completed the Lessons From Auschwitz Project with the Holocaust Educational Trust in 2020 and has since been an Ambassador for the Trust. In 2021, she became a member of the Ambassador Interview Team, and has been fortunate enough to interview Holocaust survivors Selma van de Perre and Annick Lever, as well as renowned historian Martin Winstone. She is also the current Vice President of the JCR at Queen's and works as a Student Ambassador for the college, fuelled by her passion for access and outreach. When she is not doing my degree, she loves taking part in all things drama and music, both in her roles as secretary of the Eglesfield Players and webmaster of the Eglesfield Music Society at Queen's, and in wider university musical productions.

Smajo Beso OBE

At the outbreak of the Bosnian war in 1992 Smajo was growing up in the ethnically mixed village of Barane, above the town of Stolac, eastern Herzegovina. He experienced the occupation of his village by Serbs who, briefly, took control of Stolac. Local Bosniaks (Muslims) and Bosnian-Croats under the Croatian led HVO led to their expulsion, but the situation deteriorated when in April 1993 the HVO, under political direction, imprisoned the Bosniak (Muslim) contingent of its own army, forcibly expelling Bosniaks and Serb civilians under its control.

Smajo witnessed the destruction by Croat forces of the historic Ottoman core of Stolac as well as extensive damage to Mostar, including its historic 'Old Bridge' (Stari Most), where the family were in internal exile. This systematic destruction of cultural identity and architectural heritage is a subject he is further exploring through his teaching and research at Newcastle University.

The family rejected feelings of hate and the temptations of revenge and eventually found refuge in the UK. He grew up in Newcastle and studied architecture at Newcastle University. He worked in private practice for several years before commencing teaching at the university. He has been working to aid cross-cultural and inter-faith understanding rather than fuelling revenge and divergence through the teaching and learning of the Bosnian Genocide for several years. He is on the Remembering Srebrenica Survivor Advisory board as well as the chair of the North East Board. He is also part of the University of Sanctuary Working Group for Newcastle University.

Cailee Davies (St Anne's College, University of Oxford)

Cailee Davis is pursuing her doctoral studies at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford, examining the shifting modalities of transnational Holocaust representation across mixed media, including film, television, art, digital media, and literature. She is especially interested in the phenomenon of metareferentially, the act of self-reflexively drawing attention to the artifice of the work and/or the medium, within these works. She has also worked as a volunteer and blogger for both the Wiener Library, London, and the US National World War II Museum, New Orleans.

Ailish Gaughan

Ailish is a second year undergraduate at the Queens College studying History. She is the JCR Equalities Rep and President of Queen's History Society. Passionate about women's experiences in the past and present, ashe has acted as a youth advocate for the UN NGO IBVM, which works to promote equality and education for girls internationally.

Rosalind Hulse (Royal Holloway, University of London)

Rosalind is a PhD candidate at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research engages with Holocaust memory and education in American secondary schools since the 1960s. During her time at Royal Holloway, Rosalind has worked as a Postgraduate Academic Representative on a number of committees, coordinating with students and staff over emerging and long-term issues since the pandemic. She has also worked as a voluntary researcher for the Antisemitism Policy Trust and a Parliamentary Monitor for the National Secular Society, in addition to full-time internships and long-term media roles.

Martha Kashti (Linacre College, University of Oxford)

Martha is currently studying for an MSt in Jewish Studies, with an interest in Modern Jewish History. Her thesis is exploring the British Jewish response to the trial of SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem (1961). Martha has volunteered for Generation 2 Generation, a charity which provides speakers to tell their family Holocaust stories, since 2020. As Secretary for the Oxford Forum for Questioning Extremism, Martha's passion lies in combating racism, especially antisemitism, of which she is hopeful for a career in.

Noemie Lopian

Noemie Lopian is the founder of HolocaustMatters.org. She is the daughter of Holocaust survivors Dr Ernst Israel Bornstein and Renee Bornstein. Noemie lived in Germany until the age of 13 before moving to Manchester, England. She qualified as a GP and for the last few years has dedicated her time to educating and commemorating the Holocaust, continuing the legacy of her parents. Noemie has spent the last 5 years translating her father Ernst's memoirs into a book called *The Long Night*. *The Long Night* has been featured in the BBC, ITV, Daily Mail and The Express and includes a foreword by Rt Hon David Cameron and Lord Finkelstein.

"Too many young people today are unaware of the atrocities carried out during WWII and I have a passion about educating and restoring humanity in our culture and society."

Derek Niemann

Derek Niemann is a freelance writer and editor specialising in natural history. In 2012, he interrupted a career writing about bees and butterflies to begin researching and writing a family history story that became *A Nazi in the Family* (Short Books, 2015), based on the SS grandfather he never knew. His other non-fiction books were *Birds in a Cage* (Short Books, 2011), telling the story of four Prisoner of War birdwatchers in World War II and *A Tale of Trees: The battle to save Britain's ancient woodland* (Short Books, 2016). Derek is a country diary writer for the Guardian with more than 300 columns to his name, is a regular magazine feature writer, and edits a magazine for small woodland owners. Formerly he was children's magazines editor for the RSPB (1998-2014) and during that time wrote a number of wildlife books for both adults and children.

Eli Sassoon

Eli is a human rights campaigner, passionate about educating and combatting genocide. Formerly the Deputy Director of a school student-led activist organisation *Burst the Bubble UK (BTB)*, he now consults for a range of charities in Communications and Youth Engagement and Development, such as *René Cassin (the Jewish Human Rights Charity)*. He is also on the Youth Forum for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and strives to help connect teenagers and young adults to the victims of the Holocaust. Eli is currently studying Medicine at the University of Nottingham.

Danny Stone MBE

Danny is the Chief Executive Officer of the Antisemitism Policy Trust, a role he has held for a decade. During this time, the APT has helped deliver a number of cross-party initiatives recognised by government and civil society organisations as crucial to the fight against antisemitism and other forms of racism. Before taking up his role Danny was a senior lobbyist for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, an advisor to a Member of the British Parliament and a Student Union Campaigns Organiser. Danny has an undergraduate degree from the University of Nottingham, a Masters degree in Government, Politics and Public Policy from Birkbeck, University of London and is an MCIPR with a Diploma in Public Relations. Danny has extensive youth leadership experience and is a trustee of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. He was awarded an MBE in the 2017 New Year's Honours list for services to Combating Hate Crime.

Mala Tribich MBE (Holocaust Survivor)

Mala was born Mala Helfgott in 1930 in Piotrów Trybunalski, Poland. During the Second World War, Mala and her family were forced into a ghetto, where they lived in overcrowded, unhygienic conditions. Mala briefly went into hiding in Częstochowa, pretending to be a Christian child from Warsaw, but returned to be with her parents in the ghetto. There, Mala's mother and eight-year-old sister were taken in round ups and murdered in the local forest.

When the ghetto was liquidated, Mala became a slave labourer until November 1944, when the remaining Jews were deported. Mala was separated from her father and brother and together with her younger cousin Ann Helfgott was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. After about 10 weeks they were transported in cattle trucks to Bergen-Belsen where conditions were appalling, and Mala contracted typhus. When the British army liberated Bergen-Belsen, Mala was very ill and was transferred to a hospital and children's home where it took her many weeks to recover. Three months later Mala was sent with a large group of children to Sweden where she spent nearly two years. While there, she was surprised to receive a letter from her brother Ben in England, the only other member of her close family to have survived the Holocaust.

In March 1947, Mala came to England and was reunited with Ben. She learnt English and within a year was working in an office. In 1949, she met Maurice, whom she married in 1950. While her children were growing up, Mala gained a degree in Sociology from the University of London. Today, Mala has two children and three grandchildren. She continues to travel the country sharing her testimony in schools, colleges and communities.