

CALL FOR PAPERS

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Jewish Country Houses and the Holocaust In History and Memory

Brno, Czech Republic

May 10th - 12th, 2023

Convened by Dr Jaclyn Granick (Cardiff), Professor Cyril Grange (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), Professor Abigail Green (Oxford), Petr Svoboda (National Heritage Institute, CZ)

In the UK and continental Europe, the country house has become a powerful symbol of national identity, evoking the glamorous world of the landowning aristocracy. The history of these properties is centrally connected to the history of antisemitism and the Holocaust because the families who built, shaped and lived in them formed a group for whom the myths about Jewish wealth, solidarity and power that fed antisemitic conspiracy theories had a particular salience. This did not hinder the numerous acquisitions of such properties by Jewish economic elites, testifying to the prevalence of the model of the aristocratic landlord among a population in search of integration. The Jewish Country Houses Project has held several international conferences to explore various facets of this subject, including the Jewish Bourgeoisie in the Countryside, Jewish Dealers and the European Art Market, Jewish Collectors and Patterns of Taste, and Jewish Business Dynasties.

This Brno conference will investigate the fate in the Holocaust of Jewish country houses and the people who inhabited them. It will explore memory cultures that emerged afterwards and the Cold War context that shaped them. The conference will address and support curatorial, artistic, and narrative practices telling the difficult stories of genocide linked to these properties. As it does so, it will bring together academic historians, heritage professionals, and artists over three days at [the Methodological Centre of Modern Architecture at the Villa Stiassni](#) in Brno, Czech Republic, on May 10-12 (Wednesday-Friday), 2023. The built heritage of the Villa Stiassni, visits to the nearby villas Tugendhat and Löw-Beer, and an exploration of the experiences and memories of the Czech Jewish industrialist families who inhabited and fled from them will be an integral part of the conference.

We are now inviting abstracts for 20-minute individual research papers to be presented within panels. Panels will explore themes of plunder, refuge, memory, art, heritage, and Cold War afterlives, all in relation to the Jewish Country House. Gender perspectives are welcome within any panel, as are comparative and transnational angles, and mention of the Stiassni, Tugendhat, Löw-Beer, and other elite Jewish Moravian families and their transnational links.

In a panel on spoliation and plunder we hope to address different processes of dispossession, requisition of houses, and the question of restitution. We are looking for papers that look at these issues transnationally or in places in Europe other than France. A panel on houses of refuge will look at the transformation of the Jewish country house from home of elite Jews to sites of refugeedom, refuge, ingathering, and rehabilitation of persecuted Jews in the Holocaust. Another panel will feature artists, broadly defined, speaking about their work engaging memory through art; we are looking for authors, filmmakers, musicians, or visual artists who would like to present their art in this context. We will also hear from a panel of heritage professionals and public historians who work at former Jewish country houses from across Europe with Holocaust and Cold War histories. A final panel will focus on ruptures created by the Holocaust and the afterlives of Jewish country houses and their families as they played out differently on both sides of the Iron Curtain and since the end of the Cold War.

Confirmed speakers include the organisers, Rebecca Clifford, Daria Martin, Michal Frankl, Luisa Levi D'Ancona Modena, Ruth Ur, and Lucy Wasensteiner. We are interested in hearing from researchers, curators/heritage professionals, and artists in a variety of career stages and with different kinds of affiliations and home locations. We will contribute substantially to travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs, but expect participants to seek additional and alternative funding wherever possible.

Researchers, please submit your proposal with title, panel(s) of interest, abstract of no more than 300 words, and a short bio/CV in one pdf or doc to jewishcountryhouses@history.ox.ac.uk by **20 October, 2022**. Heritage professionals, curators, and artists—if you are interested in participating please send a brief statement of interest to jewishcountryhouses@history.ox.ac.uk by **20 October, 2022**.

This is an event of the Jewish Country Houses project, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, with assistance from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, and in partnership with the National Heritage Institute, Czech Republic.

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