

**THE OLGA LENGYEL INSTITUTE FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES
AND HUMAN RIGHTS (TOLI)**

2021

Annual Review of Programs

THE OLGA LENGYEL INSTITUTE FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS (TOLI)

2021 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROGRAMS

PROMOTING EDUCATION AND BUILDING COMMUNITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

2021 brought unexpected challenges as well as new opportunities to educators and to TOLI. Teachers across the United States and Europe continued to discover innovative ways to engage their students and to move quickly between virtual and in-person environments. Working to support the needs of teachers, TOLI also practiced flexibility and innovation in our programs.

TOLI's Board of Directors and faculty are proud of the efforts of our leaders to adjust to local, state, and national restrictions while bringing fresh content and pedagogical approaches to our participating teachers. We are pleased to share our work with you here.

"[The summer seminar. . .] is causing me to think about how to express to students the urgent, critical importance of thinking for oneself, of examining prejudices, honoring the dignity and humanity of all people.

-A participant in the 2021 virtual TOLI seminar in New York City

TOLI is honored to receive support for its programs from the John & Sandra Carlisle Trust, the Libitzky Family Foundation, and the Charles Grunfeld Foundation.

On the cover: participants in the virtual NYC seminar show off challah they made, synchronously, in their own kitchens across the United States, June 2021.

TOLI PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS IN THE UNITED STATES

Throughout the pandemic, we at TOLI have done our utmost to respond by supporting teachers as they seek innovative ways to teach about the Holocaust and to further their own professional development while facing unprecedented challenges. To do this, in 2021 TOLI U.S. leaders Sondra Perl, Jennifer Lemberg, and Wendy Warren continued to create and support programs that offered opportunities for learning and community-building, whether in-person or virtual. Throughout a year that brought many changes, we worked closely with the leaders of our satellite seminars to offer guidance and insight as they developed and adapted their seminars. Below are highlights of our activities.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS OFFERED TO TOLI'S NATIONAL NETWORK

To strengthen our network and to ensure that TOLI continued to be a source of inspiration and sustenance to the teachers in our seminars, we continued our series of online programs offered to the entire TOLI network of teachers. These events drew strong attendance from members of every cohort that has been to NYC along with many teachers from the satellite seminars and, when scheduling allowed, teachers from Europe. Presentations by Holocaust survivors and experts in Holocaust studies offered opportunities for teachers to gather and learn together, while a memorial for survivor Irving Roth offered the chance to honor his legacy and his impact on so many teachers' classrooms. Overall, these events contributed to a continuing sense of cohesion and connection even as all of us faced continuing uncertainty. National virtual programs for teachers in 2021 included:

- Event with Holocaust survivor Gita Cycowicz, February 21
- Event with the Jewish Partisans Educational Foundations with Sheri Rosenblum, March 18
- An afternoon with Holocaust survivor Assia Raberman in honor of Yom HaShoah, April 11
- TOLI Remembers Holocaust survivor Irving Roth, z"l, May 2



Virtual programs offered to our national network included a memorial for Holocaust survivor Irving Roth, z”l, pictured here with Stacy Schiller, a participant in TOLI’s first seminar in NYC in 2006. Many teachers in the network sent photos that were shared in a slideshow during the event.

CONTINUING WORK WITH OUR ADVISORY TEAM

In 2021, TOLI faculty Sondra Perl, Jennifer Lemberg, and Wendy Warren continued to draw from the expertise of teachers on TOLI’s advisory team, comprised of seven experienced leaders in our network who are all facilitators of a TOLI satellite seminar, to help us create innovative and effective programming that will support the work of teachers.

THE NEW YORK CITY SEMINAR: ONGOING VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

A Two-Year Virtual Journey

In order to continue the work of the seminar in NYC, Sondra Perl and Jennifer Lemberg sustained their work with participants accepted into the program in 2020.

Continuing our Monthly Meetings throughout the Year

Our monthly meetings, begun in the fall of 2020, concluded a full year later in the fall of 2021. In the spring, we finished a series of curriculum sessions where participating teachers offered thoughtful, interactive presentations based on lessons they use in their classrooms or on new lessons they wished to try out with the group. In the fall, we invited guest speakers from the organizations Voice of Witness and Retro Report to follow up on their work with the teachers during the summer seminar (see below).

Three-day Virtual Seminar in June

From June 18-21 we held a three-day virtual seminar during which we set out to offer an intensive and in-depth opportunity to learn more deeply about Holocaust content and pedagogy; to explore related issues of human rights and social justice through innovative content; to engage with Jewish history and practice; and to foster writing practice through regular opportunities to write and share within small groups. Invited speakers included Andrea Pitzer, author of *One Long Night: A Global History of Concentration Camps*; Micha Franke on the concentration camp system; representatives from the organizations Retro Report and Voice of Witness; and Rabbi Tom Weiner of Congregation Kol Ami in White Plains, New York, who spoke to the group before we attended virtual services there that evening.

Other highlights included responding to our advance reading of Bettina Love's *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, and successfully baking challah together synchronously in our own kitchens. While all of us wished we could have been together in person, several participants shared that their virtual experience had been deeply meaningful:

“It’s difficult to put into words just how transformative our time together was. Thank you for making the experience authentic despite the digital platform. It felt like I was right there with you all.”

“Thank you so much for this opportunity. Like so many others said, I was not sure how 3 days of Zoom was going to be and was apprehensive about it. In the end, though, we did create a community and we were able to share our humanity. That was only possible because of the intentional creation of the . . . agenda and because of your thoughtful and sensitive leadership.”

In-person seminar in NYC planned for July 2022

The seminar in NYC will resume in person in July of 2022. This intensive, 11-day program will focus on the theme of “Teaching in Troubled Times,” and will once again offer an interdisciplinary, interactive experience for teachers. Guest speakers will include Holocaust survivor and author Dr. Irene Butter along with a number of scholars and experts. Participants will also be asked to present about their classroom work.

SATELLITE SEMINARS: IN-PERSON, VIRTUAL, AND HYBRID OFFERINGS

In 2021, TOLI supported 11 satellite seminars across the United States. In-person seminars were held in Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Oregon. Due to the pandemic, seminars planned for Arizona, California, Virginia, and Wisconsin were held virtually or used a hybrid model. The flexibility and variety demonstrated by the work of the satellite seminars during the pandemic showcases some of TOLI’s best attributes: recognizing the needs of teachers, collaborating well with other institutions, and developing new approaches appropriate to the current demands of teaching a difficult subject. Below are some highlights from these programs.

The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights (TOLI)

Arizona: In its inaugural year, a small group of participants met virtually over the course of eight days in June. The seminar explored storytelling as an act of resistance during the Holocaust and beyond, including the example of the Oyneg Shabbos Archive in the Warsaw Ghetto.

California: Leaders Pam Bodnar and Gail Desler held their second online seminar in 2021. Participants met on Zoom over a three-week period in July to explore the history of the Holocaust and human rights issues ranging including state-sanctioned forced removal and genocide, especially considering those who were upstanders. Several out-of-state participants added to the range of perspectives in shared conversations.

Maryland: Meeting in late July, participants explored the power of reflective writing as a means of grappling with the emotional content of American slavery and Holocaust extermination camps. The Maryland seminar focused on helping participating teachers examine reasons for teaching the Holocaust and human rights in their professional settings and modeling activities that can engage students with this important but challenging content.

Minnesota: Participants who attended Minnesota's week-long seminar focused on the resilience of people who have experienced trauma. These included Jewish and Dakota communities, as well as other marginalized groups. A discussion among the participants made it evident that the seminar's focus on resiliency equally applies to teachers, who are themselves experiencing trauma as they continue to address inequities in educational settings, often without administrative support.



Faculty and participants at the seminar in Montana.

Montana: Now in its 10th year, this seminar convened for one week in July to discuss the parallels between the Holocaust and the history of colonization and governmental policies towards Indigenous peoples in the United States.

Highlights featured two field experiences which brought the classroom learning to life. Participants spent an afternoon at Congregation Beth Aaron in Billings and a full day on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation with guest speaker Walter Runs Above. *Supported by a grant from Humanities Montana.*

New Mexico: For five days in July, participants gathered to examine the following question: In what



ways can we as educators build a curriculum that incorporates major historical themes, develops student agency, ensures divergence within a cultural script, empowers students to take pride in their

identity, and advances student critical thinking when considering historic context to mend, heal, and transform? Participants engaged in four intensive classroom days filled with speakers and activities and spent a full day at Temple Albert.

Supported by a grant from the Jewish Federation of New Mexico.

North Carolina: Educators participating in the North Carolina seminar were able to build a strong community in a short amount of time. Each participant engaged in an inquiry project, and experienced seminar leaders Tonya Wertz-Orbaugh and Donna Tarney were impressed at how participants wrestled with seemingly impossible questions with more intensity than they had seen before. Topics for the projects were designed to focus on a social justice issue important to participating teachers' school or community.

Supported by grants from North Carolina Humanities and the Blumenthal Foundation.

Writing reflections at the seminar in North Carolina.



Writing reflections at the seminar in North Carolina.

The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights (TOLI)

Oklahoma: The seminar in Oklahoma met for the first time in 2021, gathering participants for a five-day program. Lessons about the Holocaust and the Tulsa Race Massacre were woven into writing activities, discussions, and interactive experiences throughout the week. Field experiences included trips to the Sherwin Miller Jewish Museum of Art and a walking tour through what remains of the Greenwood neighborhood, where participants were asked to imagine what once existed there. *Supported by a grant from Oklahoma Humanities.*



Faculty and participants with Holocaust survivor and guest speaker Eva Unterman at the seminar in Oklahoma.

Oregon: For five days in August, participants met to discuss, write about, and reflect on human rights violations such as the Holocaust and Japanese Internment. The seminar also included information about antisemitism, the history of Judaism, and how best to teach the Holocaust.

Virginia: In this hybrid version of the Virginia seminar, participants met for five days in June. Some of the participants had met virtually once a month during the previous school year. They were joined by a few others for the summer seminar, held virtually but with in-person visits to the National Museum of African American History and Culture and a day in Leesburg, Virginia, where presenters helped participants untangle a complex history of racism in Virginia. These experiences were aligned with in-depth study of the Holocaust.

Wisconsin: Most of Wisconsin's participants had studied three books together over seven months in the school year before the 2021 summer seminar. While the five-day program was held mostly virtually, participants had the option to visit the Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie, Illinois. The trip provided the opportunity for those who participated to discuss their shared experiences in-person for the first time.

Supported by grants from Bader Philanthropies and the Harri Hoffmann Family Foundation.

Satellites Scheduled for 2022

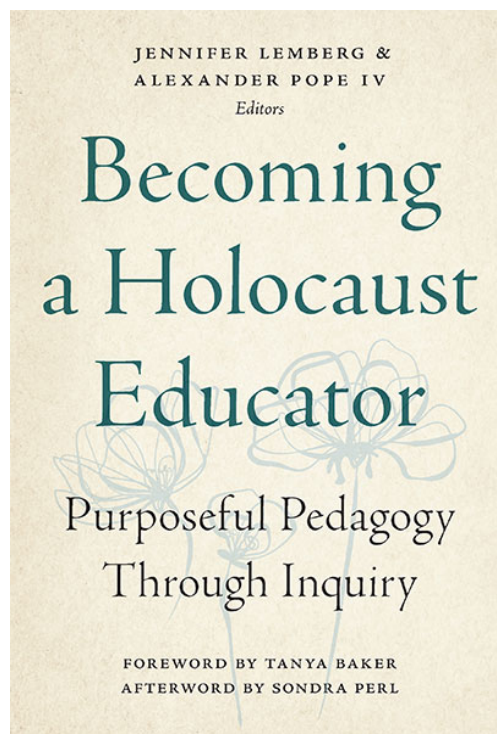
Currently we have eleven satellite seminars scheduled for the summer of 2022. At this time, all of them are planning for in-person meetings. For more information about these programs, visit

https://www.toli.us/sponsored-programs/satellite-programs-3/?fwp_session_type=in-person

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS BY TOLI US FACULTY

Publications

- This year, TOLI was especially proud to announce the release of *Becoming a Holocaust Educator: Purposeful Pedagogy Through Inquiry*, co-edited by Jennifer Lemberg and Alexander (Sandy) Pope, a co-leader of TOLI’s satellite seminar in Maryland. The book features essays on teaching about the Holocaust and social justice by teachers in TOLI’s network. The volume was co-published by Teachers College Press and the National Writing Project.
- Jennifer Lemberg published “Olga Lengyel: A Continuing Legacy” in *Holocaust Remembered: Women of the Holocaust*, a special supplement published by the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission of South Carolina. The issue was distributed in newspapers to nearly two million households throughout the state of South Carolina, and can be found online [here](#).



National and regional conference presentations

- Sondra Perl gave a Kristallnacht Lecture sponsored by Temple Beth-El, South Bend, Indiana on November 7, 2021, joined by Indiana satellite seminar leaders Ashley Libben and Sarah Wilson. (Recording available on TOLI’s website [here](#))

- Jennifer Lemberg organized a panel for Congregation Kol Ami in White Plains, NY: “Combating Antisemitism, Confronting Intolerance: Holocaust Education in Today’s Classrooms,” featuring Cara Crandall, Corey Harbaugh, and Wendy Warren, December 3, 2021.
- Jennifer Lemberg participated in a panel, “From the Classroom to the Professional Community: Addressing Antisemitism in English Educational Spaces,” sponsored by the Jewish Caucus at the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) convention, November 21, 2021.
- TOLI held a public book launch event for *Becoming a Holocaust Educator: Purposeful Pedagogy Through Inquiry* in October, featuring co-editors Jennifer Lemberg and Sandy Pope with teachers Corey Harbaugh, Brenda Johnston, Michelle Sadrena Pledger, and Wendy Warren, October 26, 2021. (Recording available on TOLI’s website [here](#))

U.S. MINI GRANTS

Mini-grant projects in the U.S. continue to be largely on hold due to the pandemic, which has limited or prevented entirely the types of programs for which U.S. teachers typically seek funding. Several projects did go forward, including the purchase of a class set of *Night* and a well-timed field trip to see the traveling exhibition of *Auschwitz: Not Long Ago. Not Far Away*. We continue to encourage teachers to think creatively about how to use grant funds while facing the current challenges in their schools and classrooms.

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ART EXHIBIT

Established in 2020, the online art exhibit is open to students of teachers who have participated in TOLI's U.S. and international seminars. In its second year the exhibit brought in 224 submissions from six countries, in a variety of mediums including painting, drawing, and sculpture. Projects from 2021 showed students responding to learning about the history of Japanese American internment in the U.S., the complexities of Auschwitz, and the experiences of children during times of historical conflict.

TOLI's Annual International Student Art Exhibit is supported by a grant from the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation.

PUBLIC WEBINARS

In 2021 TOLI expanded its array of virtual offerings open to the general public, with a range of programs intended to raise public awareness about the Holocaust and related human rights issues.

Featuring survivors, scholars, and experts in the field, these webinars drew hundreds of attendees and contributed to the public conversation about timely topics. Several of these were conducted in

partnership with the [Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, located in lower Manhattan](#). The webinars consisted of the following events; videos of all programs can be found on TOLI's website [at https://www.toli.us/virtual-events/](https://www.toli.us/virtual-events/):

- Extremism 2021: The Surge of Hate Online and in the Community, February 17
With Harry Wall, Andrew Marantz, and Deborah Lauter
- “The Nazi’s Granddaughter,” March 10
With Arthur Berger and author Silvia Foti
- Justice Denied: How Nazi War Criminals Escaped Punishment, April 28
With Rachel Donadio, Phillipe Sands, and David Marwell

- Confronting the Surge of Anti-Semitism in Europe and the US, June 24
With Cnaan Liphshiz, Dr. Felix Klein, Kenneth Jacobson, Noemie Halioua, Oana Nestian-Sandu, and Melissa Sonnino
- Nevertheless, They Resisted: The Women Who Defied Nazi Rule During the Holocaust, September 30
With Donna Tarney, Sheryl Silver Ochayon, and Sheri Rosenblum
- Professor Timothy Snyder: The Holocaust and Lessons for Today, October 6
With Arthur Berger and Timothy Snyder
- Book Launch: *Becoming a Holocaust Educator*, October 26
With Jennifer Lemberg, Alexander “Sandy” Pope, Corey Harbaugh, Brenda Johnston, Michelle Sadrena Pledger, and Wendy Zagray Warren
- Holocaust Restitution: The Struggle Continues, November 4
With Andrew Silow-Carroll, Gideon Taylor, and Menachem Kaiser

Webinars held in conjunction with the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust:

- Remembering Olga Lengyel and *Five Chimneys*, April 6
In conjunction with the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust
With Dr. Sara R. Horowitz, David A. Field, Nancy Fisher, and Robert Jan van Pelt
- American Political Leaders and Their Responses to the Holocaust, May 13
With Adam Hochschild, Arthur Berger, Dr. Rebecca Erbelding, and Dr. Blanche Wiesen Cook
- The Holocaust, Tikkun Olam, and Three Generations of Humanitarian Women, November 18
With Cynthia McFadden, Caryl Stern, and Manuela Stern

TOLI PROGRAMS IN EUROPE

SEMINARS

Bulgaria: This program, organized in partnership with the American University in Bulgaria and co-funded by the European Commission's Europe for Citizens Program, took place in Blagoevgrad on July 12-16. Teachers from across the country had the opportunity to participate in the seminar, to learn from internationally renowned lecturers, to listen to survivor testimonies and to think creatively and collaboratively about how to teach the Holocaust and social justice.

Italy: The seminar was organized by TOLI in partnership with Fondazione CDEC - the Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center Foundation and was co-funded by the European Commission's Europe for Citizens Program. Offering programming on the study of the antisemitic, fascist segregation (persecution, discrimination) and the causes and effects of today's hate speech in Italy, this seminar provided educators with suitable tools for working with students. In teaching these topics, the program demonstrated how to integrate national and international approaches and to grasp the current relevance of this crucial page of Italian and European twentieth century history. The seminar took place in Padua from August 29 – September 2, 2021.

Lithuania: This seminar was organized in partnership with The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania and the Lithuanian Jewish Community. The seminar was co-funded by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. The seminar was designed to contribute to increasing the quality of education regarding the Holocaust and social justice in Lithuania and to build understanding of the contemporary relevance of this important part of modern history. The seminar was held in Vilnius from October 24-28, 2021.



At the TOLI seminar in Lithuania.

Poland: This seminar was organized in partnership with POLIN – Museum of the History of Polish Jews. It took place in Warsaw, Oświęcim, and Krakow on August 17-21, 2021. The seminar was made possible by a generous donation from the Mostysser family and by a grant from the European Commission’s Europe for Citizens Program for a project coordinated by the Intercultural Institute Timisoara (Romania), in partnership with Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (Italy), Amalipe Center (Bulgaria) and Big Picture Association (Poland).

Romania: The 10th annual Steven & Anne Ausnit Romania Seminar was organized in partnership with the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania and with the Intercultural Institute Timisoara, on July 20-24, 2021. The seminar was co-funded by the European Commission’s Europe for Citizens Program, the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund, and the family of Steven and Anne Ausnit, and intended to support Holocaust and social justice education in Romania.

The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights (TOLI)

Serbia: This was the first seminar for teachers organized in partnership with Terraforming in Serbia and co-funded by the European Commission's Europe for Citizens Program. It took place in Novi Sad on August 22-26, 2021.

Participants in the seminar in Serbia.



Ukraine: This seminar was organized in partnership with the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies and co-funded by the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund. The seminar was held in Kyiv from October 28 – November 1, 2021.

A session during the seminar in Ukraine.

Seminars and Events Planned for 2022

In 2022, seminars are planned for Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, and Ukraine. TOLI also conducted two international conferences in Poland and Romania.

MINI GRANTS

In 2021, TOLI awarded 95 mini grants to teachers in Europe. Teachers continued to do an amazing job adapting their projects to the current environment and finding ways to keep their students interested in this subject despite the many challenges.