

Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek
Deutscher Platz 1
04103 Leipzig



The Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek: *Lest We Forget*

"Our remembrance of all this must not end; it must admonish future generations to be vigilant."

(From the German President's proclamation on 3 January 1996 establishing the 27th day of January as a day of commemoration for the victims of National Socialism)

Confronting the questions of anti-Semitism, Nazi racial ideology and policy, the attempted extermination of the Jews of Europe, and – not least – trying to grasp just how profound a rupture the twelve years of Nazi rule in Germany represent for all of mankind is still one of the hardest and most painful processes in German society today.

One of the lessons history teaches us is that we are responsible not only for what we do, but also for what we allow to happen. Unification of the two German states in 1990 required the citizens of both to re-examine not only the four decades of their divided history, but also the different ways in which each approached its Nazi past.

If history is to remain known, historic facts and contexts need to be recorded and conveyed to the next generation. Committed to collecting, conserving and disseminating literature about the fate of the Jews during the Nazi dictatorship in Germany and a large part of Europe, the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek is the German National Library's most recent special collection. It records the literature published worldwide on the persecution and extermination of the Jews of Europe, and makes it available to interested users. Its collection also takes account of other groups of individuals persecuted by the Nazis for ethnic, political, religious, medical or other reasons. The Library now holds some 11,000 volumes, and each year receives around 500 new items. Moreover, a similar number of references to publications identified in bibliographies, or otherwise, is recorded in its database.

The Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek does not view itself as a memorial library, but rather as a practical tool with particular effect in the former East German states where it aims to appeal above all to school pupils, young people, the adults who run youth groups and organizations and leisure facilities, as well as the media and local libraries, etc. who in turn can disseminate information.

With its unique possibilities, this international specialist Library is keen to support scholars and researchers in particular.

The Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek aims to encourage study of an important chapter of German history while providing access to the sources required to do so. With its work, the Library has taken upon itself the task of ensuring the Shoah remains present in our minds.

"The name of Anne Frank and the message it conveys are recognized in East and West alike, so it seems appropriate in our view to associate such an institution with it", Dr. Vincent C. Frank-Steiner, President of the Anne-Frank-Fonds, wrote to Dr. Sabine Bergmann-Pohl, the then President of the Volkskammer, the East German Parliament.

The Hebrew word shoah means great destruction. Nowadays it signifies the murder by the Nazis of millions of European Jews. The term originates in an Old Testament passage that prophesies great devastation for the Jewish people: "And what will you do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?" (Isaiah, 10:3). The word shoah "thus stands in clear contrast to the usual word Holocaust, which – according to its Greek etymology (*holos* whole + *kaiein* to burn) – means a burnt sacrifice offered up to a deity. Yet towards which deity did the smoke from the crematoria rise?". (Segre, Dan Vittorio: *Yad VaShem: Mahnmal für die Opfer der Shoah*. In: Merian. Hamburg 1995, v. 12, p. 106; translated).

The Origins of the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek

On 13 June 1990, the President of the Anne-Frank-Fonds, Dr. Vincent C. Frank-Steiner, wrote to the then President of the Volkskammer to suggest the foundation of a "Shoah Library". He made the suggestion because his board of trustees took the view that the level of awareness about the Nazi past was comparatively low within the territory of the GDR. One of the reasons for this, it was felt, was "that of the wealth of literature – mainly from West Germany and the USA, as well as other countries – very little is available, publicly accessible or used in East Germany. Moreover, it must be pointed out that a large part of the literature published in the GDR on the subject of the National Socialist Holocaust is tendentious, biased, and as such is unfortunately only of limited use", he wrote. The idea of the Anne Frank-Fonds attracted the support of B'nai B'rith, a Jewish organisation – founded in New York in 1843 – which opposes anti-Semitism and promotes tolerance, humanity and education about Judaism. Further support came from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, among others. The Library's task would be to fill the gaps that existed both in knowledge and literature. With its extensive collection of German literature written in exile, the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek in Leipzig was considered to be a suitable location for the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek.

In October 1991, the German Federal Minister of the Interior, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble, signed an appeal to publishers' associations in Germany and abroad. The response to it was remarkable, as was impressively demonstrated by the deliveries of books that soon began to arrive. Publishers continue to support the venture to this day. Even among private individuals, societies and institutions that publish articles and books on the Shoah and related issues, his request met with much approval and support.

Acquisitions Policy

In the broadest sweep possible, the holdings of the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek aim to illustrate current international knowledge about the persecution and murder of the Jews, and other groups, by the Nazis. The topics covered range from general accounts of Judaism, Jewish history, religion and culture to more extensive descriptions of twentieth-century German history and the history of anti-Semitism.

In the sections dealing with the theoretical, political and practical preparations, the implementation of the persecution and extermination of the Jews, and their consequences, through to reappraisals of the past, all available publications are included, including documentary material. Special attention is paid to identifying and acquiring literature that is published beyond the usual book-trade channels, often in small numbers and is available only locally, and which in many cases is difficult to obtain. While it is an essential source for researchers, original National Socialist literature is not collected, however. As German-language literature, it falls within the collection mandate of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, and is available there almost in its entirety.

Besides printed literature, the collection includes all other formats and media that contain relevant information:

- audiovisual material: videos, sound recordings, microfiches and microfilms (bibliographies, collections of data, old editions of newspapers, for instance), slides, overhead transparencies for use in the classroom
- maps
- electronic publications

Given the expense of periodicals, only a selection of the most important foreign titles is held.

To identify relevant works, all sources that contain leads are systematically evaluated; these include bibliographies, inventories of related collections, reviews, mention of new books in the press, lists of suggested further reading, tips from personal contacts and library users, suggestions at events and meetings et cetera.

Use of the Reading Room's Resources

All the Library's resources are accessible on open shelves. Users thus have direct access to the available media. The classification scheme used in the reading room is the same as that found in the database. Material on a particular field of interest can thus be traced either through the database or on the shelves.

Equipment for viewing video films and listening to audio recordings is available, as are viewers for microfilms – both roll microfilm for microfilmed newspapers and journals – and microfiches.

The terms of use that apply at the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek are identical to those at the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek: those over the age of 18 able to demonstrate a legitimate professional or scholarly interest may apply for an annual reader's ticket, which will entitle them to access the Library's holdings, catalogues and other services. In an exemption from the Library's terms, a visitor's ticket can also be issued to users under the age of 18. The Library's resources are thus made available to young users for school project work. In such cases, visitors are requested to contact the Library in writing, by phone or by e-mail before their visit to discuss any special requirements.

Indexing

All data to be indexed are stored in an extensive database. Data on the Library's holdings are collected as well as references to thematically relevant works. Irrespective of existing holdings, works not published independently – such as essays in periodicals, newspapers and anthologies – are also included.

When the collated material came to be classified into subject areas, it was not possible to fall back on an existing system. Previously, classification had adopted concepts and systems from a number of the standard works of Holocaust literature. In the first few years after the Library opened, staff gained their own experience when working with the publications, and also incorporated suggestions made by users on how to index the holdings by subject. Their suggestions have gradually been adopted and contribute to ongoing improvements to subject indexing.

The following online access options are available:

- bibliographic search (analogous to alphabetic cataloguing)
- personal names, corporate names
- classification scheme
- keywords, subject headings
- places of publication, countries of publication, geographic references
- publisher, ISBN, ISSN

Community Outreach Work

Besides making its resources available on its premises, the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek also undertakes community outreach work. Media coverage of its opening and the formal presentation of the catalogue by the Leo Baeck Institute helped to project the Library and its work far beyond specialist circles.

The Library develops its own exhibitions, or develops them in conjunction with other institutions, and presents exhibitions developed elsewhere. Predating the foundation of the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek, a start was made with an exhibition called "Die jüdische Emigration aus Deutschland 1933 – 1941". Organised by the Deutsches Exilarchiv at the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek in Frankfurt am Main, the exhibition was shown in Leipzig in the summer of 1990. In October and November 1994, Reinhard Matz's photographs of Nazi concentration and extermination camps were shown in an exhibition called "Die unsichtbaren Lager. Das Verschwinden der Vergangenheit im Gedenken". The Library also participated in an exhibition of "Kinder- und Jugendliteratur im Exil 1933 – 1950".

On 25 May 2004, Mirjam Pressler opened an exhibition called "Kindern vom Faschismus erzählen: Kinder- und Jugendliteratur zu Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust" with a reading from her book "Die Zeit der schlafenden Hunde". The exhibition showcased around 200 titles – books, CDs, CD-ROMs and audio books – from the Library's own holdings. It was accompanied by a reading list containing an overview and recommendations of books and other media that can introduce children and young people to a difficult historic subject. Notes make it easier to choose a suitable title.

Readings, discussions and exhibitions held as part of Leipzig's "Nacht der Museen", for instance, also feature in the activities organised by the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek.

Interested parties, in particular school groups, can attend an introduction to the Library and its holdings; a short discussion with pupils is held as part of such an introduction.

Establishing closer links with individuals and institutions at home and abroad serves two purposes: on the one hand, it helps to improve the services the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek offers its users; on the other hand, it raises awareness of the Library, and so encourages a positive response to it. The Library has, for instance, established links with the Ephraim Carlebach Stiftung in Leipzig, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Jüdische Sammlungen in Deutschland, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Gedenkstättenbibliotheken (AGGB), the Gedenkstätte Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz and the Anne Frank Zentrum in Berlin as well as with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

In December 2007, the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek agreed to sponsor a brass plaque – part of the "Stolpersteine" (stumbling block) commemorative project – which has helped to prevent the name of Clara Caroline Schachne from slipping into oblivion. Having achieved fame as an author under the pseudonym of Clara Schott, she was deported to Theresienstadt in 1942.

Services

On the strength of its in-depth examination of Judaism and the Shoah as it develops and expands its specialist collection, the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek frequently answers relevant bibliographic and specialist enquiries. On request, bibliographies are compiled on specific subjects.

The information in the data base can be used to compile lists that present books and other media on specific topics in greater detail. Such lists can in turn encourage study of National Socialism and the Shoah; not least, they provide access to such literature.

"Kindern vom Faschismus erzählen: Kinder- und Jugendliteratur zu Holocaust und Nationalsozialismus" is a list of recommended reading that accompanied an exhibition of the same name in 2004. As part of an exhibition called "Kinder- und Jugendliteratur im Exil 1933 – 1950", Anne Frank's diary was used to examine which books were available to children and adolescents in hiding during the Nazi dictatorship. Good use was made of the resources of the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek for that particular exhibition. For the same exhibition, a list was compiled of about 150 works of literature published in Germany between 1933 and 1938 exclusively for Jewish children and adolescents. Often imaginatively designed, these Jewish books impressively reflect Jewish self-assertion, and thus represent the antithesis of Nazi children's literature.

The Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) was founded in Jerusalem in 1955 for the study of the history and culture of German-speaking Jewry. Its library, collection and archive in New York are among the most important and extensive of their kind. As the number of enquiries handled by the LBI grew steadily, so did the idea of forging electronic links with strategic partners in Germany. Dr. Fred Grubel, administrative director of the Jewish community in Leipzig until 1938, pressed ahead with the project following his visit to the city in November 1992. Not least thanks to the support of the Volkswagen Foundation, the formal presentation of the LBI catalogue took place in June 1994.

The choice of the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek in Leipzig as the first of these strategic partners was all the more significant considering that the LBI's decision to establish a presence in Germany was a momentous one. Its catalogue is now available on line.

Besides helping catalogue users and answering telephone and written enquiries, the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek also acts as an intermediary between interested parties in Germany and the LBI. Requests can be sent direct to New York from where users receive a copy of the material requested by them. Users can access LBI resources on inter-library loan in the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek.

Enquiries are answered using sources of electronic information and data bases worldwide. Services range from searching through the catalogues of large and small libraries, searching through historic databases with full text search, and providing detailed information about relevant institutions, for instance the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, Ben Gurion University in Haifa, or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. For users navigating electronic networks, the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek can offer specialist help in relation to Judaism, the persecution of the Jews and National Socialism.

The Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek is featured on the website of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek where information and news about projects and publications etc can be found. The catalogue of the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek can be accessed either via the home page of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek or at www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/alg-agg/detail.php.

Publications of the Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek and the Sammlung Exil-Literatur

Bestandsverzeichnis der Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek 1993. (as of 31 March 1993). – 1993. – 96 p.
First supplement. (as of 1 Oct. 1994). – 1995. –161 p. Out of print

Kinder- und Jugendliteratur im Exil: 1933 – 1950; an exhibition by the Sammlung Exil-Literatur der Deutschen Bücherei Leipzig, 1 June 1995 – 9 September 1995. Appendix: Jüdische Kinder- und Jugendliteratur in Deutschland 1933 – 1938. 1995. – 151 p.

Kindern vom Faschismus erzählen: Kinder- und Jugendliteratur zu Holocaust und Nationalsozialismus; a reading list; exhibition in the Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig from 26 May – 28 August 2004 / Die Deutsche Bibliothek. [ed. Anne-Frank-Shoah-Bibliothek. Concept and exhibition organiser: Karen Kleijn. Editing and picture selection: Barbara Trettner; Annett Koschnick]. – Leipzig; Frankfurt am Main; Berlin: Die Deutsche Bibliothek, 2004. – 94 p.: illustrated; 24 cm

Contact Us

Tel: +49 341 2271 410
Fax: +49 341 2271 512
E-mail: b.trettner@d-nb.de
www.d-nb.de

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 08.00 – 16.00

August 2008