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HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTER PRESENTS VIRTUAL PROGRAM “TRAUMA AND ADVENTURE IN TRANSIT: JEWISH REFUGEES IN INDIA AND IRAN” ON JUNE 27

Professor Atina Grossmann Shares Experiences of Jews who escaped to India and Iran after 1933

Farmington Hills, Mich., June 15, 2021 – The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus presents “Trauma and Adventure in Transit: Jewish Refugees in Iran and India,” featuring Atina Grossmann, Professor of History at the Cooper Union in New York City. The program will take place online as a live Zoom webinar on Sun., June 27 at 7:00 pm. To register, visit www.holocaustcenter.org/june. Registrants will receive a link to the virtual program.

The virtual event will provide insight on the Jews who escaped to India and Iran after 1933. On the margins of the Holocaust and anxious about their families’ fates, they were homeless and stateless, but also oddly privileged as adventurous Europeans in non-western societies.

“This fascinating program will show how the plight of these Jews were shadowed by the emerging European catastrophe, and how they navigated complex and unfamiliar terrain in India and Iran. They lost their livelihoods and professions, and had an anxious sense of their families’ fate or what their future held,” said Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, CEO, Holocaust Memorial Center. “Drawing upon the experiences of her parents and other sources, Professor Grossmann will detail the challenges these Jews faced of living in a precarious forced transit that also offered experiences of adventurous travel.”

The program probes refugees’ understanding of their own unstable position, the changing geopolitical situation, and their efforts to come to terms with emerging revelations about the destruction of European Jewry. Grossmann used archival sources, memoirs and letters, fiction, as well as second and third generation reflections. She also reviewed an extensive collection of family correspondence and memorabilia from both Iran and India between 1935 and 1947, including an almost daily exchange of letters between her mother in Tehran and her father in various British internment camps in India and postwar in Bombay. Grossmann pays particular attention to the significance of gender and age and to the challenges of writing a “hybrid” history that aims to narrate a family story folded into a larger historical “remapping” of war, Holocaust, empire, and displacement with Iran and India as key sites.

Atina Grossmann is Professor of History at the Cooper Union in New York City. Her published works include *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*; *Wege in der Fremde: Deutsch-jüdische Begegnungsgeschichte zwischen New York, Berlin, und Teheran* (2012); and co-editor, *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* (with M.Edele and S. Fitzpatrick 2017), *The JDC at 100: A Century of Humanitarianism* (with A.Patt, L.Levi, M. Mandel, 2019), and *Our Courage/Unser Mut: Jews in Europe after 1945* (with K. Bohus 2020). She has held fellowships from the Davis Center at Princeton University, Mandel Center of USHMM, American Academy in Berlin, German Marshall Fund, ACLS, and NEH as well as guest professorships at Jena, Humboldt University Berlin, and University of Haifa. Her current research focuses on “Trauma, Privilege, and Adventure: Jewish Refugees in the ‘Orient,’” as well as the entanglements of family memoir and historical scholarship.

Community partners for this event are the India League of America – Michigan and the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

Program supporters are Jackie & Jeff Bean, Robin & Leo Eisenberg, Renee & David Silbert and Shelley & Joel Tauber.

About the Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus

The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus is a 55,000 square foot museum and Library Archive in Farmington Hills that teaches about the senseless murder of millions and why each of us must respect and stand up for the rights of others if we are to prevent future genocide and hate crimes.

The lessons of history are used to create a call to action, teaching visitors through the examples of those who risked their lives to save others, and asking our guests to react to contemporary challenges such as racism and prejudice. Exhibits include artifacts such as an authentic WWII-era boxcar, video testimonies, films, paintings, and a sapling from the tree located outside Anne Frank’s hiding place window that is described in her diary. Located on the second floor above the museum, the Library Archive is an important resource for academics, the media and families researching their heritage. A national leader in innovative genocide education, the HMC serves over 100,000 Michiganders each year.

Hours: Sunday through Thursday 9:30 am to 4:00 pm and Friday 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. The last admission is one hour before closing. Face masks are required. Wheelchair accessible. Free parking. For additional information, visit www.holocaustcenter.org or call 248-553-2400.

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