

An uncertain future: Jewish refugee artefacts in New Zealand and their ‘return’ to Germany

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ABSTRACT: The absence of artefacts in many Jewish museums today is due to the widescale destruction, plundering and displacement of people and their possessions during the 1941–45 Holocaust. While some European institutions actually hoarded large Judaica collections in this period, countless Jewish objects went into exile with refugee families. The main methods used by European Jewish museums to offset this deficiency (through narrative display, and by seeking object donations from these refugee families) raise critical museological questions regarding the representation and ‘repatriation’ of these exilic objects.

Not only are donated Jewish refugee objects (as opposed to artefacts appropriated illegally) largely absent from European museum collections; they also rarely inhabit cultural heritage collections in New Zealand. The material culture objects brought to New Zealand in the 1930s by Jewish refugees are today mainly held in the private homes of descendants. However, the significant lack of a dedicated, permanent collection space capable of accepting these privately held refugee materials constrains the options of the second generation regarding the future preservation of their heritage.

This paper explores the current position of New Zealand’s national heritage collecting institutions regarding the acquisition of Jewish refugee objects, their use of such artefacts, and the perspectives of refugee families and their descendants as potential donors.

KEYWORDS: Refugees, museum, New Zealand, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Germany, Holocaust, Jewish artefacts, exile, archives, heritage.

As exilic objects age and become increasingly fragile, the families of Holocaust refugee survivors are faced with a choice: to keep their objects within the family by passing them on to successive generations, or to entrust them to a public institution. The latter option presents further concerns. Should the chosen repository identify with the Jewish community or be a secular entity? Should it be a national government-funded institution or a small, community-directed organisation? And when families are presented with the opportunity to return the materials to their original homeland, is a German archive or museum an appropriate home for such transnational artefacts (Grossmann 2003)? Such questions have been interrogated at an international level (in Europe and the United States), but not within New Zealand, where the

children of Jewish refugees are developing their own views on the future home of their families’ objects, including the prospect of returning refugee artefacts and personal papers to Germany. Their varied and often emotionally charged responses to this concept, or to having been recently asked to donate items to the Jewish Museum Berlin (JMB), reveal another aspect to the complex legacy of Holocaust survival in exile, as second-generation descendants feel they must secure an appropriate destination for their survivor parents’ possessions.

This paper begins with an examination of the approaches taken by New Zealand’s national collecting institutions the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) and the Alexander Turnbull Library (Turnbull Library) to collecting and exhibiting Jewish refugee objects. Next, the

various perspectives and proactive actions of the second generation in New Zealand are explored, focusing on predominantly German-Jewish case studies. The paper concludes with the recent case study of the Stahl family archives, a collection of papers entrusted to the JMB in late 2014. The potential issues faced by New Zealand's refugee survivor community are exemplified in this case study, and the collection's return journey to Germany demonstrates the refugee artefact's unique position as part of a net of transnational displacements and entanglements caused by the Holocaust.

Institutional heritage perspectives and approach

Jewish refugee artefacts are rare and scattered across New Zealand national cultural heritage collections. The history of 'regular' migration to New Zealand is a dominant theme within the country's national collecting institutions, but refugee objects and experiences have only recently appeared in the public heritage discourse. Progression in this area aligns with international trends as heritage professionals are increasingly expected to ensure 'their collections more fully represent all in society, including those from the periphery and the margins and those with alternative or unorthodox opinions' (Flinn 2008: 110). However, while refugee objects are increasingly sought after by curators, New Zealand's heritage institutions have limited capacity to acquire large collections due to resourcing constraints. New Zealand's national documentary heritage collection, the Turnbull Library, and the national museum, Te Papa, both have collection mandates to reflect the diversity of past and present New Zealand society, and so must maximise their collections by acquiring artefacts that represent as many ethnic groups and immigrant groupings as possible.

Jewish refugee objects at Te Papa

The establishment of Te Papa in 1992 brought refugee objects into the spotlight, but also exposed some of the challenges inherent in housing and displaying such transnational artefacts. The museum currently presents two long-term exhibitions, *Passports* and *The Mixing Room*:

stories from young refugees in New Zealand, which examine migration and the refugee youth experience, respectively. The *Passports* exhibition was part of the so-called Day One exhibitions – those displayed when Te Papa first opened to the public. It tells the social history of migration to New Zealand by non-Māori from the early nineteenth century to the present day. Its main focus was 'the diverse experiences of various groups of migrants as they responded to and coped with social processes extending far beyond them' (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 1994: 5). The exhibition strategy for reflecting diverse migration experiences used criteria such as date of arrival, gender, class, country of origin, religion, age, motivation and type (e.g. chain, circular, refugee), (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 1994: 6).

The mainly textile objects belonging to Augusta Bohmer (1912–2009), a Jewish refugee from Moravia, part of the former Czechoslovakia, who arrived in New Zealand in 1939, were actively sought out and acquired by the curatorial team for the *Passports* exhibition in the mid-1990s. However, Bohmer's objects were rejected for display in favour of Jewish synagogue objects – a prayer curtain from Wellington's first synagogue on The Terrace (Fig. 1) and a Jewish presentation tray (salver), sourced by the local Jewish community (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 1994: 33, 38).

These nineteenth-century objects related to migrant culture (namely, Jewish faith) in New Zealand, rather than the decision to emigrate, or being a refugee and a migrant. Te Papa history curator Stephanie Gibson called it a 'really odd decision' but one that should be read in the context of a very 'fraught long [concept development] process with lots of debate ... so much was at stake'.¹ It is also possible that the Bohmer textiles were rejected because they were highly domestic objects, and therefore appeared ubiquitous and meaningless, in contrast to the strong symbolic statement made by explicitly religious artefacts. Usually domestic in nature, refugee objects do not tend to speak for themselves: 'If you didn't know their provenance, you probably wouldn't collect them,' Gibson explains, continuing, 'their survival is actually quite tenuous' (Gibson 2015).

The ability of refugee objects to speak to the migration experience of dislocation therefore depends greatly on how curators and archivists choose to record and use them. Such artefacts often come as part of complex acquisitions, and

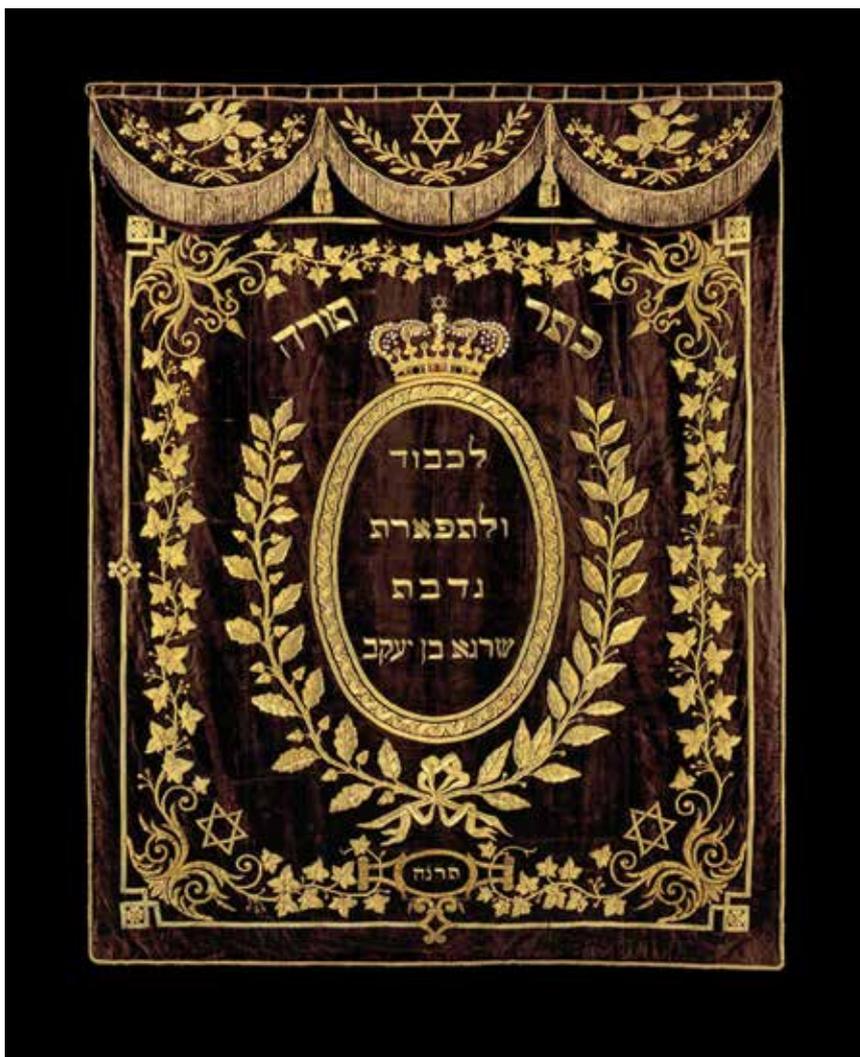


Fig. 1 Ark curtain, c. 1895, velvet, thread, glass. Maker unknown. Gift of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation, 1994 (CC BY-NC-ND licence; Te Papa PC004129).

if accessioned incompletely, could be misrepresented in the institutional record. This is especially problematic when dealing with collections consisting of objects both made in New Zealand and originating from an ancestral homeland, such as the textiles collection donated by the Hager family to Te Papa in 2007 (Hager 2015).² While the majority of this acquisition represented Kurt Hager's New Zealand clothing manufacturing business, it also included a drawstring purse of knitted beads from Vienna (Fig. 2). Dated between 1860 and 1880, the purse originally belonged to Kurt's mother, and was brought out to New Zealand when the family fled Austria in 1938 and 1939 (Hager 2015). Gibson explained that the collection was accepted as representative of the Hager family 'in terms of manufacturing, but also because

they had a migrant – a refugee migrant history. But that doesn't really surface in the cataloguing very well. So I've tried to improve that' (Gibson 2015).³

Regarding its potential display, there is a risk that the Hager purse may be displayed as a 'pretty purse'. As Gibson explains, an aesthetic object in particular 'might be used for a different purpose, and its refugee storyline will get suppressed ... so there is a danger around how we use objects' (Gibson 2015). To counter this risk, Te Papa ensures their collection objects are as 'useful' as possible; that they have multiple significances and can tell many stories. For instance, the minister's gown belonging to Helmut Herbert Hermann Rex (1913–67), brought out of Germany when Rex fled as a political refugee in 1939, was



Fig. 2 Purse, c. 1860–80, glass beads, cotton. Maker unknown. Gift of the Hager family, 2007 (CC BY-NC-ND licence; Te Papa GH015606).

displayed in an exhibition on uniformity, as an example of religious dress (Fig. 3). Even though the exhibition concept did not require it, the curators decided to include Rex's refugee story as part of the exhibition label accompanying the gown, 'because the story's so great and it's respectful, we did two jobs – we used it as a religious dress and as a refugee story' (Gibson 2015). This approach is, of course, effective only if all those historical significances are noted in the object record. Issues of representation – such as exhibition concept development, acquisition cataloguing and exhibition labels – have a direct impact on the 'refugee presence' in institutional memory.

Since the Bohmer acquisition, Te Papa has been offered relatively few artefacts from refugee donors.⁴ Contemporary refugees especially often arrive with very few objects, and these are so personally significant that they do not wish to part with them; it is usually later generations who then consider museums. So when developing *The Mixing Room*, which opened in 2010, Gibson and her team decided to take an artefact-free approach. The exhibit instead uses oral testimony, so the community shared their stories 'almost as if that's an object, and their images, and their creative works, which are all digital' (Gibson 2015).

The documentary record: Jewish refugee papers at the Alexander Turnbull Library

The objects most frequently entrusted by refugee families to public heritage institutions are more traditional archival objects: personal papers. Both cellist Marie Vandewart Blaschke (1911–2006) and Soni Mulheron, daughter of composer and architect Richard Fuchs (1887–1947), have donated papers to the Turnbull Library. Prior to her death in 2006, Blaschke bequeathed her extensive collection of concert and performance programmes, including concerts she had attended and those related to her musical career in pre-Second World War Germany, post-war England, and wartime and post-war New Zealand. In August 1999, Mulheron gifted her father's music scores and parts, sound recordings, news clippings, photographs and correspondence to the Turnbull. The library's refugee materials span a wide range of records types, including oral history interviews; both Marie Blaschke and Kurt Hager's oral history interviews are held in the Turnbull Library's national Oral History and Sound collection.

The Turnbull Library's selection policy dictates that



Fig. 3 Minister's gown, Berlin, c. 1938, wool, silk, metal. Otto Weber. Gift of the Reverend Denzil J. Brown, 2006 (CC BY-NC-ND licence; Te Papa GH015487).

its collection materials 'must support research into New Zealand and New Zealanders', be of 'national documentary significance' and be accessible to the public. Refugee materials are given high collection priority by the library, whose acquisitions policy is deeply conscious of the great movement of refugees and displaced people from Europe between the late 1930s and early 1950s. According to curatorial services leader John Sullivan (2015), the library considered the Jewish refugee movement a significant part of that phenomenon and 'have always been "on the lookout" ... for material that would sort of enhance that part of

our history'. Sullivan highlights the photography collection of Irene Koppel (1914–2004) as one such example of an important record depicting key people and events in New Zealand's history. Koppel was a Jewish refugee who left Germany in the late 1930s, first for England, then travelling on to New Zealand in 1939–40. She first worked with a Wellington photographer, and then launched her own successful photographic career. 'But [the collection] also documented something of the journey, which she had brought here and ... the artistic currents in Germany at the time' (Sullivan 2015). In addition, the collection is easy to digitise, a factor Sullivan notes is important when considering alternative approaches to physically repatriating private refugee collections to Europe.

As New Zealanders documenting the history of New Zealand, we should, believes Sullivan, 'be interested in collecting such material ourselves,' but he cautions that our public heritage institutions cannot collect everything. Such refugee objects have a shared heritage now, and we therefore require 'a more flexible solution for satisfying all those needs'. While Sullivan suggests that collaborative digitisation projects could offer a way forward for international collecting institutions, it is vital that the original artefacts are preserved and remain accessible; if necessary, they can then be safely sent out on temporary loan for exhibition. Moreover, original documents have their own emotional significance for people, and to have them accepted for preservation by a national institution gives refugee families a sense of validation, indicating 'that they actually matter ... that they're actually part of our history, and aren't being written out of it in any way'. Equally, donors are 'lifeblood' for the repository, part of 'a circular relationship between researchers, the institution, and donors', each strengthening the other (Sullivan 2015). This relationship is vital, as families have to make difficult choices between the private preservation of family memory, or dispersing collections into public archives, either voluntarily or by request.

Second-generation donor perspectives and approach

For the second generation of German-Jewish refugee families seeking a public home for their parents' artefacts in New Zealand, the option of a centralised collection space capable of accepting both material and documentary

objects does not exist. New Zealand's own Holocaust education and remembrance centre, the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand (HCNZ), is not currently a collecting museum (Sedley 2015). When it opened as the Wellington Holocaust Research and Education Centre in 2007, the self-contained permanent exhibition included a few selected objects, but as a small volunteer-managed and volunteer-operated community museum with limited funding, the HCNZ is not adequately resourced to collect and preserve artefacts.⁵ During Phillip Green's term as co-chair of the HCNZ board, a first-generation friend contacted him, wondering what to do with her family's artefacts. Green (2015) recalls, 'I pointed out to her that one of the objects of the centre was to receive and preserve objects from families brought in through the Holocaust, brought to New Zealand. And I also had to say the centre was in no fit position to receive them, yet. But if she could only wait, the day would come.'

Instances of object misplacement by New Zealand museums, where donated artefacts were 'lost in transit' before they could be accessioned, has resulted in their absence from the institutional record.⁶ Such an experience can act as a disincentive to the second generation choosing to entrust their objects to local collections. Having been so discouraged, Green's friend ultimately decided the best option was to send everything back to Germany with the JMB's chief archivist, Aubrey Pomerance, in 2014. 'She knew that I felt deeply saddened, indeed, very strongly about her doing that, but she felt she had no choice,' says Green (2015). The evident lack of a centralised, permanent home for Holocaust-era exilic artefacts in New Zealand, and the current opportunity to send objects to the JMB, has created tension and internal debate among the survivor community about where the objects should belong.

Pomerance's visit to New Zealand in December 2014 prompted many discussions among families, the HCNZ community and the second-generation group. Some in the community, like first-generation member Susi Williams, advocate strongly for the return of family artefacts to Germany, particularly to the JMB archives. Williams first met Pomerance in 2007, when he spoke to a group of visiting first-generation survivors at the JMB about 'the importance of Archives and the hope that some of us would entrust materials to the Jewish Museum'.⁷ Although she recognises that some inherited material should remain in families and some should stay in New Zealand 'if we ever find the right way of doing that', Williams firmly

believes that some items should go to the JMB, 'where [they] can be looked after, used to teach, understood (particularly some of the old scripts), and be a part of the history of Germany' (Williams 2015).

Some in the survivor community feel it is important that the objects have a permanent *Jewish* home. For first-generation member Soni Mulheron, the Jewish identity of Israel's Yad Vashem was important in her decision-making, and was the reason why she chose to send some objects to the international museum. Although she cannot remember what objects were entrusted to Yad Vashem, she stresses, 'Well I know it's a Jewish archive' (Mulheron 2015). Second-generation member Paul Blaschke, son of Marie, is yet to place any further objects into the public archive, but prefers a Jewish home for the family papers and photographs if he were to do so (Blaschke 2015).⁸ Having always hoped that, if his family papers went into a New Zealand collection, they would go to the HCNZ, Blaschke has had to look further afield for options. He now believes the JMB is the obvious candidate, having been approached by the museum about entrusting his mother's Berlin papers to the museum: 'Although, of course, now having found out that there are also family documents in the Stadt Archives of Berlin ... that I guess opens it up a little bit more' (Blaschke 2015).⁹ So while he prefers a Jewish repository for the papers, Blaschke is keeping his options open, deciding to research the papers further first before making a final decision on their institutional fate.

For Mulheron's son Danny, however, the Jewish identity of the custodian organisation is not as important as what it decides to *do* with the collection. When approached by Pomerance, second-generation Mulheron family members were concerned that the objects might never be displayed in the museum, or only occasionally. Danny was happy to have objects put on display at the JMB, or elsewhere in Germany, but did not want them to be stored away, out of sight. His wife, Sara Stretton, explains:

We kind of thought, well you know, the reality is that our objects that sort of mean something to us sentimentally will probably just be in some back room, and they might just come out sort of occasionally for an exhibition, if at all. They may never come out! They might just be archived and labelled and stored away ... and they would just join the millions and millions of other objects out there from Jewish families. (Mulheron & Stretton 2015)

The family's apprehension that their objects and stories would become ubiquitous in a German context, losing the significance they had acquired in representing a distinctive cultural experience in the New Zealand refugee setting, is underpinned by the perception that there are countless other Jewish families 'telling the same story as us' (Mulheron & Stretton 2015).

Ultimately, the Mulheron family decided to keep the objects in their own homes (divided between Soni, Danny and Danny's sister), under the auspices of the Richard Fuchs Archive Trust. A selection of Richard Fuchs objects is currently on temporary loan to the Wellington Museum (formerly the Wellington Museum of City and Sea) and displayed in *The Attic*, an exhibition exploring the multifaceted character of Wellington (Figs 4–6).

These include Fuchs' music scores (Fig. 5), scarf and hatbox (Fig. 6), hat, shaving kit, wax seals, pocket fob watch, architecture office sign in German ('Dr. Ing. Richard Fuchs Architekturbüro') and his wife Dora's German passport. Further objects from the collection of the Wellington Museum include Fuchs' 1914 Iron Cross 2nd Class and Honour Cross of the World War 1914/1918 (Hindenberg Cross) medals, and First World War works he produced in 1916–18 while working as a war artist (Wellington Museum 2015).¹⁰ *The Attic* also includes two interactive audio features, allowing the visitor to listen to Fuchs' musical compositions and to an excerpt from *The Third Richard* documentary film, directed by Danny and Sara.

According to Danny, the hatbox is especially significant in representing the family's refugee story visually. Along with a satchel filled with personal papers and music scores, it was the only item besides clothing that Fuchs carried on his person when he immigrated to New Zealand in 1939. 'The satchel was basically his life,' Danny explains, but it was an attachment born out of practical necessity, not sentimentality, as Fuchs had to carry the correct documentation in order to emigrate. In fact, the satchel was so important to him that 'he would hold onto it, sleep with it, everything. And it's – that's why that's important. 'Cause that was them surviving in another country, and escaping an old one.'¹¹ On the other hand, Danny feels the hatbox is interesting because it is such a personal item; the small hat even reveals the physicality of the individual himself: 'It gives you a real perspective of even how tall he was. There's something about putting on a hat ... You realise, gosh, this person was a little, small-boned individual



Fig. 4 Richard Fuchs display in *The Attic* exhibition at Wellington Museum, 2015 (photo: Louisa Hormann, reproduced with permission of Wellington Museum, D. Mulheron and S. Stretton; collection of Wellington Museum and the Richard Fuchs Archive).

who had all this life' (Mulheron & Stretton 2015).

Danny's strong desire to have the objects curated is rooted in the belief that the family's story is illustrative of a fundamental period in New Zealand's history:

The story of them [the Fuchs family and German-Jewish refugees in general] in New Zealand, and the way they were treated in here, which was not – it's benign but also ignorant, and slightly selfish and uncaring – is a really good story to tell. And so that aspect of things is something New Zealanders should face up to, in the same way Germany has faced up to its past. (Mulheron & Stretton 2015)

In contrast, Soni Mulheron's reasoning for keeping the objects in New Zealand is based on the fact that her whole family is in New Zealand. However, she also shares the view that the objects equally belong to German history, and so believes some refugee artefacts should be entrusted to European museums, arguing 'well they ought to be, I mean they were part of it weren't they' (Mulheron 2015).

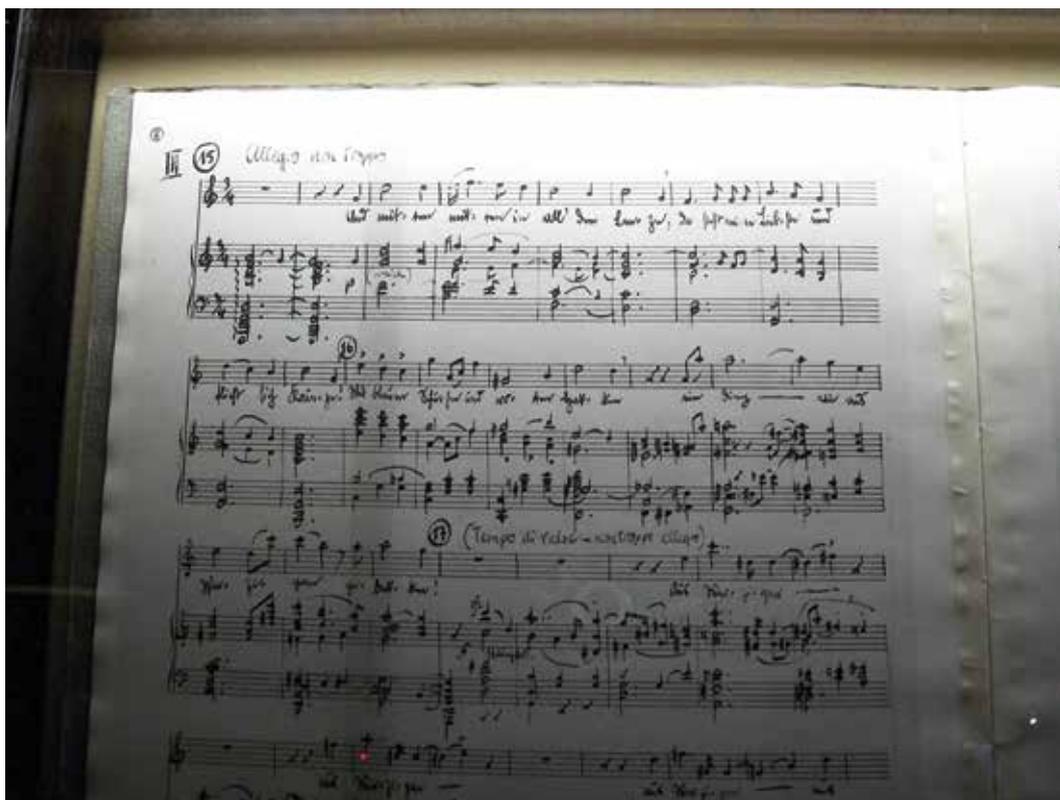


Fig. 5 Music sheets, compositions of Richard Fuchs, on display at Wellington Museum, 2015 (photo: Louisa Hormann, reproduced with permission of Wellington Museum, D. Mulheron and S. Stretton; collection of the Richard Fuchs Archive).

That refugee objects have a shared heritage, and a New Zealand identity, is a pivotal consideration of second-generation decisions to bequeath them to local or international repositories. Paul Blaschke was initially 'quite shocked' at Pomerance's proposition of housing German-Jewish refugee collections at the JMB: 'that would be unthinkable ... the one thing that my parents wanted was that they [the German artworks] stayed in New Zealand'.¹² Blaschke believes his parents' rationale for stipulating the artworks remain in New Zealand was that 'they had made their home here, and this was their home'. His father, Alfons, had been active on the gallery scene and a patron of the arts in New Zealand, and Blaschke explains: 'I think he probably did feel part of sort of fostering the growth of ... of visual arts in post-war New Zealand ... I suspect that's why they wanted it to stay in New Zealand; they could see no reason why it should go back to Germany, where there are – there will be – many more of these kinds of works' (Blaschke 2015). Blaschke's perception of his parents' stance suggests that their sense of themselves as New Zealanders played an important part in their

decision, and continues to bear influence on the second generation's actions.

Complete opposition to the notion of returning family objects to Germany is often an emotive reaction, a testimony characterised by a collective memory of trauma. Museum consultant Ken Gorbey describes the decision to send family materials back to Germany as 'a big emotional leap' that not all families can make. While some are able to accommodate going back to Germany, for others the memories represented by the perpetrator nation will always be negated: 'So some people are going to say, well it's never going to go back to Germany – it's an emotional statement' (Gorbey 2015).

This position appears to be strongest among families where the first generation completely denied their German heritage upon emigrating. Phillip Green's family considered New Zealand as their home, 'certainly Mutti, Erich and Oma completely disavowed Germany. Would have nothing to do with it, would not buy a single German product or have it in the house.' Green's perspective of



Fig. 6 Hatbox and silk scarf, c. 1939. Maker unknown. The box, along with a satchel, were the only items besides clothing that Fuchs carried on his person when he emigrated from Germany in 1939. Display at Wellington Museum, 2015 (photo: Louisa Hormann, reproduced with permission of Wellington Museum, D. Mulheron and S. Stretton; collection of the Richard Fuchs Archive).

the JMB collection strategy is resolute: 'frankly I see that as being raped and plundered all over again' (Green 2015). When asked if his perspective, shared also by his sister, is influenced by the way in which he and his sister understood their mother and family's own experience of the Holocaust, and held in honour of their explicit rejection of their German identity, Green replied:

It's deeper than that. It's because although we weren't told the detail of what happened (although I did learn directly from Oma some things in her later life), what we lived and breathed ... without recognising it at first, was the impact the Holocaust had on those people, on my grandmother, on her children, and the damage that it did to them. And also a recognition of how they treasured and cherished the memories that wrapped around the objects they'd brought out ... And so, to me it's an affront to those memories and those people that these items should go back to Germany. (Green 2015)

But aside from his personal connection, Green emphasises that the particular historical circumstances surrounding the parting of a cultural artefact from its native origins when it is brought to foreign lands need to be taken into account when considering the rightful home of the object. According to Green, there is a great difference between objects that have been stolen (such as the theft of indigenous artefacts during the colonial period by western museums and individuals), and when the owners of the objects themselves take them to another country (as in the German-Jewish refugee case). The colonial example and the Nazi plundering of Jewish properties, Green argues, are 'in sharp contrast with the situation where Jews, being forced out of their own country, took things which usually held important sentimental value to them'.¹⁵ Such considerations are essential to determining 'the appropriateness or otherwise of there being any right of return, including even a right to ask for the return of objects' (Green 2015). The case of Jewish refugees fleeing Europe and bringing their personal possessions with them to new lands in exile is thus distinctive from other examples of repatriated cultural artefacts. It is, nonetheless, crucial to recognise the undeniable 'double identity' (that of their place of origin and of their adopted land) these objects acquired over the course of their dramatic journeys to New Zealand, and in some cases, their return to Germany (Savoy 2015: 43).

The Stahl family papers and the Jewish Museum Berlin

The transfer of the Stahl family archives to the JMB in late 2014 exemplifies the practical and legal issues surrounding the export of cultural artefacts from New Zealand. However, as a point of difference from most exchanges, the donor was museum consultant Ken Gorbey, whose wife's aunt, Eleanor Stahl (née Foster), had inherited the family refugee papers when her husband died in 1987. When Eleanor moved into elderly care accommodation, Gorbey's wife Susan Foster inherited the materials. A New Zealand nurse during the Second World War, Eleanor married German-Jewish refugee Rudolph 'Rudi' Stahl in 1961. Rudi had been sent ahead of his family in 1939 and established himself in New Zealand. The rest of the family escaped Europe in 1940 by travelling through Russia, and were among

the last 8,000 Jews to leave Germany. Gorbey describes the archive as disjointed, the content beginning in 1938, when the family realised they needed to flee: 'Rudi was a young man, doing things like taking photographs of the apartment, taking photographs of [his] father's trade certificates ... and bringing them out with him' (Gorbey 2015). Upon receiving the collection, Gorbey began cataloguing the Stahl papers.

Through his work at the HCNZ, Gorbey was aware that some German-Jewish families were already shipping materials back to Berlin through Aubrey Pomerance:

They were just shipping stuff back, taking it back personally in some cases; many of them knew Aubrey, and knew him very well. And Aubrey was accepting this because this was the normal thing to do; our Antiquities Act is quite different from those that apply in Israel and the States and Canada, which puts [*sic*] personal papers to one side. Personal papers are different from other archives [in those countries]. (Gorbey 2015)

In contrast, the New Zealand Protected Objects Act 1975 (formerly known as the Antiquities Act) encompasses all personal papers, under the 'Documentary heritage objects' category in Schedule 4.¹⁴ An object is included in this category if it is not represented by at least two comparable examples permanently held in New Zealand public collections, *and* is more than 50 years old, or is a unique document (or collection of documents) more than 50 years old, or is a protected public record.¹⁵ So while in most other countries personal papers are not covered by any legislation, in New Zealand, personal papers of the kind sought by the JMB are in fact covered by the 1975 Act. Gorbey insisted on going through the full permissions process with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage owing to his professional position in the sector (Gorbey 2015). His application for permission to export the archive was made so as to assure the JMB's chief archivist that all processes had been completed and all official agreements were in place before Pomerance's arrival in New Zealand in December 2014, and with the express intention of using the Stahl application as a template for applications made by other families (Gorbey 2014).

Gorbey believes that 'the only place for these heavily German-oriented archives was an active German-speaking archive', namely the Leo Baeck Institute Archives at the JMB (Gorbey 2015). Pomerance himself used this same rationale at his public presentation to the Wellington Jewish

community during his visit to New Zealand (Pomerance 2014). In Germany, the language can be understood, interpreted and used; furthermore, the Berlin archive has the resources to digitise its collections. For countries of refuge, such as New Zealand, the language barrier to the archival use of documentary artefacts poses a problem, as both local staff and researchers often do not have the necessary expertise to work with such artefacts. This concern was also shared by most in the second-generation group.

Reflecting on the Stahl papers, Gorbey notes that an artefact's institutional fate is 'a tension that ... we are destined to discuss time and time and time again over each individual object or archive'. At a personal level, he always regards museums as 'a repository of last resort'; the ideal circumstance is that families should hold on to their objects, 'because it's got more life within a family. It resonates more with people, it causes the next generation perhaps to get interested' (Gorbey 2015). Gorbey's concern about institutional archives arises from the potential disconnect that occurs when objects start to move out of families and into the public archive, regardless of where that public collection might be.

The crucial step for both private and public parties is to ensure that the stories attached to the object or collection, including an object's own migration story, are recorded as part of the provenance of the artefact (Gorbey 2015; Sullivan 2015). As Gorbey explains, 'each time that object has made a shift ... its meaning is thickened up a bit. And the Stahl archives go back to Berlin, but what's not lost is the story', because Eleanor Stahl had recorded the written history of the exile of her husband's family (Gorbey 2015). Without the provenance of refugee artefacts, as Gibson (2015) has also argued, the full meaning and true historical significance of such objects is lost. The relationship between the object and its narrative is thus essential to conveying a comprehensive representation of refugee objects in public collections, especially if they have been returned to their country of origin.

Conclusion

The lack of dedicated, permanent collection spaces capable of accepting privately held refugee materials limits the options available to children of Jewish refugees regarding the future preservation of their families' collections. The proposition of the JMB to collect the artefacts of German-

Jewish refugee families in New Zealand has been met with a variety of responses: a wide range of viewpoints, emotions and all-encompassing uncertainty among the second generation. These shared but often conflicting perspectives are related to questions of identity for German-Jewish refugee families (Jewish, German, New Zealand), but also to the legacy of conflict – of trauma and tentative reconciliation. The connection between individual and collective memories (across time and between cultures) in relation to objects in the public archive, and especially the 'repatriation' of objects to Germany, is an intimate one. Second-generation testimony of this kind reveals a constant acknowledgement of the collective memory at stake when deciding the fate of such artefacts, which is all the more at risk when *both* refugee memory and the refugee archive itself represent a shared heritage.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go to all the interviewee participants of the Displaced People, Displaced Objects Project, upon which the research for this article is based. Thanks also to Dr Simone Gigliotti, who supervised the Master of Arts in History thesis developed from this research, my peer reviewers for their feedback, and for the funding support of the Victoria University of Wellington Jack Pearce Postgraduate Scholarship in New Zealand or English History 2015.

Notes

1. The Day One exhibitions were curated prior to Stephanie Gibson's employment at Te Papa.
2. After Nicky Hager's mother died, the family offered her clothing – mostly 1970s high fashion produced by her husband Kurt Hager's textile manufacturing business – to Te Papa's textiles collection. A selection of items was accepted.
3. Cataloguing is always a work in progress, and records can be amended to incorporate new layers of meaning as relevant information comes to light; since the completion of the Displaced People, Displaced Objects Project, Gibson has added the refugee association to the Hager purse object record. As a result, the object will now appear in collection search results for the term 'refugee'.
4. Acquisitions include the minister's gown (2006); the Hager purse (2007); Estonian objects donated by the Reissar family, who came to New Zealand as displaced post-war migrants (2008); the cheongsam garments of Mayme Chanwai, a Second World War refugee from Hong Kong (2011); and a collection of Somalian artefacts donated by Mohamed Abdulaziz Mohamed (2014). Note that the minister's gown, worn by Helmut Herbert Hermann Rex, was not donated by the family, but was instead a gift of Rex's friend, Reverend Denzil J. Brown, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.
5. Some members of New Zealand's Jewish community (mainly based in Auckland) have sought alternative digital options for preserving their heritage. Established in December 2011, the Jewish Online Museum (JOM), founded by David J. Ross, is a digital archive option for recording the stories and objects of New Zealand's Jewish community in general. According to its website, it is New Zealand's first Jewish museum and the first online Jewish museum in the world, 'one that seeks to preserve memory and fragile histories, and to attribute provenance and value to the objects, experiences and culture of the Jewish people'. A virtual venue was chosen as the most practical option to provide a 'locally based, globally informed cultural and educational resource', accessible to an international public audience (Jewish Online Museum 2016).
6. I have maintained the privacy of the individuals and institutions involved, as this was the wish of the interviewee.
7. Williams went to Berlin in 2007 as part of the Berlin Senate's invitation to first-generation survivors born in the city to make a return visit. This event included a visit to the JMB. Williams made two later visits to Berlin, fostering the JMB's interest in the New Zealand connection and the papers relating to refugee families' past history in Germany. This, Williams says, helped to encourage Pomerance's subsequent visit to New Zealand and Australia.
8. Blaschke (2015) has a different view when it comes to the material objects, and is considering New Zealand museums: 'It doesn't need to be anything Jewish, connected with Jewish history, but just sort of an immigrant family and their roots going back into, into European history.'
9. Prior to the Displaced People, Displaced Objects Project, Blaschke was contacted by two postgraduate students at the Humboldt University of Berlin who were conducting research at the Berlin State Archives into the Berliner Jewish victims of the Nazi regime. They had found the death records and official police certification recording the suicide of his grandparents, Anna and Eugen Vandewart, in late 1941. The papers included a kind of suicide note, a farewell note to the children.
10. Other Richard Fuchs objects in the Wellington Museum's collection were donated by Soni Mulheron in 2006 and 2008. These include his German army pay book (1902–17), his luggage tag from Dachau concentration camp (1 November 1938), his certificate for the award

of the Iron Cross (30 January 1935), and a black and white photograph of Fuchs on horseback, with barracks in the background (date unknown).

11. The satchel remains within the private collection of the family.
12. The German collection of more than 150 graphic artworks (lithographs, etchings, woodcuts) was originally started by Paul Blaschke's grandfather Eugen Vandewart, was added to by his son-in-law Alfons Blaschke, and is now in the care of a family trust. The collection covers the period of German expressionism, beginning just before the turn of the twentieth century and extending into its first 25 years, and includes artworks by Max Liebermann, Lovis Corinth and Käthe Kollwitz. It was brought out to New Zealand after the war in 1954, having been placed in the care of a family in America. During the lifetimes of Marie and Alfons Blaschke, the works were shown only privately to family and friends, but in 2014 a selection had their first public showing at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, in a First World War centenary exhibition called *Age of Turmoil*. This displayed German art produced in the first quarter of the twentieth century, as a social commentary on post-First World War and interwar German society. The trust has plans to make the collection available online.
13. Having represented Māori interests for many decades during his career as a lawyer, Green notes his familiarity with how some Māori feel about the plundering and repatriation of their cultural property: 'So I understand very much how hurtful that type of taking can be, and the strong desire to repatriate' (Green 2015). Green is also on the United Nations panel for conciliation and mediation over the repatriation of cultural objects taken by countries and held away from their native lands.
14. The Act regulates the export from New Zealand of 'protected New Zealand objects', and is administered by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. Schedule 4 was added by Section 32 of the New Zealand Protected Objects Amendment Act 2006.
15. Similar clauses also apply to the 'Social history objects' and 'Art objects including fine, decorative, and popular art' categories within Schedule 4. Interestingly, the Documentary heritage objects category excludes any document owned by its living creator who was born in or is related to New Zealand.

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