



TWA DIGITISATION GRANT 2023

WIENER HOLOCAUST LIBRARY

Organisation Information

Name of applicant organisation/institution: Wiener Holocaust Library

Club Website: wienerholocaustlibrary.org

Project title: Anglo-Jewish Humanitarianism and the Holocaust: Picturing the Jewish Relief Unit

Project summary

Please provide a brief overview of:

- *Your project and its goals/aims*
- *How you plan to use the funding if successful*
- *Whether the project will include publishing the digitised collection(s) online, transcribing of metadata, or metadata capture via optical character recognition (OCR).*

This project will digitise the Wiener Holocaust Library's collection of photographs relating to the Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad (JCRA) and its operational arm, the Jewish Relief Unit (JRU). These little-known photographs offer a unique glimpse into Anglo-Jewish humanitarianism both during and after the Holocaust and the Second World War, illustrating the impact of these events on Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons (DPs) and the various ways in which the JCRA offered aid to these groups.

We will use funding to digitise part of this collection. Restrictions permitting, this material will then be published on our Digital Library. Currently dispersed over multiple locations in our basement stores, this project will enable users to browse and access this unique collection for the first time.

Collection Information

The photographs of the JCRA and JRU consist of 17 archival albums (718 pages in total) and 1,984 separate loose photographs. Most of the loose photographs have inscriptions and identifying details on the reverse. The largest albums measure 320mm x 23mm.

The photographs primarily depict the JRU's missions and activities with Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons in Morocco, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Holland, Austria, Belgium and Germany between 1944 and 1950. The collection also contains a number of important institutional photographs showing; the JCRA's headquarters at 7 Endsleigh Place, London, training activities for relief officers prior to their deployment, preparation for deployment, staff meetings and conferences. The majority of the photographs were donated by Lady Rose Henriques, the Head of the Germany department of the JCRA, a prominent charity worker in London's East End and artist who was awarded the British Hero of the Holocaust award in 2019.

Heritage need

Please outline the heritage value, uniqueness, and importance of the collection(s) you plan to digitise.

Is the collection at risk? If so, how/why?

This collection is unique: deposited with the Library in the early 1950s, it is the only photograph collection relating solely to the JCRA and JRU, constituting the primary visual resource relating to the organisation. As the most prominent Anglo-Jewish organisation to work with survivors of the Holocaust and DPs in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, as well as being one of the first aid agencies to be deployed into North Africa in 1944, these photographs are extremely historically valuable. They offer a rare lens into British humanitarianism in a tumultuous, important period. Many of the photographs have never been published before and directly evidence the aftermath of the Holocaust, a particularly important element given rising levels of Holocaust denial. They show the physical condition of survivors, and the range of aid and activities offered by the JCRA to rehabilitate those targeted by the Nazis, as well as broader efforts to reconstruct Jewish life after the war. The range of rehabilitative activities pictured, along with the collection's geographic scope fundamentally challenges existing views of what postwar British humanitarianism looked like.

The condition of the material is good, although one album (129 pages) is in a fragile condition and requires conservation work.