

George A. Smathers Libraries New Online Exhibition Presents Documents of Jewish Life in the period immediately before the Second World War

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – The George A. Smathers Libraries have released a new online only exhibition entitled *The Gathering Storm: Jewish Life in Germany and Eastern Europe in the 1930s*. The exhibition features rarely seen items produced by European Jewry before the advent of the Second World War. While the subject of Jewish experience during the war has been widely explored, life for Jewish people in the period immediately before the war is less well known (partly due to the scarcity of available material).

The exhibition showcases 20 items held in the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica, relating to the idea of a “Gathering Storm” for European Jewry. These publications originate from some of the major centers of Jewish life before the Second World War, such as Berlin, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Hungary, Poland and Romania. Rare German and Yiddish newspapers and periodicals, as well as ephemeral publications such as calendars, yearbooks and other communally inspired commemorative works illustrate the deteriorating conditions for Eastern European Jews before the war.

Included in *The Gathering Storm* is a rare and interesting document which bears witness to its survival of the Nazi destruction of Jewish books. *Aus Vergilbten Akten* (of yellowed documents) was written in 1931. The Library’s copy of this work features a stamp on the front cover which reads “Offenbach Archival Depot.” At the end of the war, millions of looted books were uncovered by the Allies. The books were carefully sorted at the Offenbach Archival Depot by the U.S. book restitution task force and returned to their country of origin. The remaining items that could not be identified were found a home in centers of Judaism and Jewish learning throughout the United States and Israel. The Price Library’s copy of *Aus Vergilbten Akten* was among these, and today it is one of just three copies known to be held in libraries around the world.

The selected materials form part of a much larger collection of un-cataloged items held in the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica. This larger collection comprising scarce publications from the 20th century consists of approximately 500 pieces.

Curated by Rebecca Jefferson and designed by Lourdes Santamaría-Wheeler, *The Gathering Storm* is a prelude to the upcoming exhibition *Testimony* (April 2 - June 14, 2013 in the Smathers Library Gallery) featuring primary sources relating to the Holocaust.

Exhibition available online at <http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/gatheringstorm>

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