

## A “Grey Savior”: Kenneth Clark and the Rescue of Hamburg’s Warburg Institute

With the National Socialist rise to power in 1933 in Germany, academics who were assumed to be Jews or otherwise vilified by the Third Reich beseeched colleagues in Britain, Western Europe, and the United States for appointments or any opportunity to continue their vocation and find sanctuary.<sup>1</sup> Even if renowned scholars were not initially targeted, German universities were bastions of harassment and ran ahead of antisemitic legislation.<sup>2</sup> Individuals usually appealed for their own relocation. Professional contacts, if they responded at all, treated them on a case-by-case basis. Britain, especially due to the exalted reputations of Oxford and Cambridge, was a beacon and a prime destination.<sup>3</sup>

The exuberance with which Cambridge University, for one, now boasts of its openness to beleaguered Jews from 1933 to 1939, is suspect.<sup>4</sup> The autobiography by historian George L. Mosse, “Confronting History: A Memoir,” exudes gratitude to Downing College, Cambridge, for accepting him.<sup>5</sup> Mosse was the son of the publisher of the *Berliner Tageblatt*. As a teenager he and his family had the good fortune to slip out of Germany soon after the Nazis were installed. His education began in 1934 at a Quaker boarding school in Yorkshire, Bootham. Gerhard/George was not, by his own estimation, a stellar student. In response to the Spanish Civil War, at Cambridge Mosse became an ardent anti-fascist. “It was there,” he writes, “that my true political awakening took place.” But the refugees among scholars were few and far between. Reflecting on his fellow exiles, he recalled that their Jewishness “disappeared’ at Cambridge. Perhaps most tellingly, while Mosse felt little direct antisemitism, he concluded his two years at the elite university with few lasting friendships or meaningful relationships with professors.<sup>6</sup>

In sum, the attempted resettlement of German Jewish scholars to the western democracies was a fragmented, partial migration that has been examined largely in light of its successes by H. Stuart

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*In honor and memory of Sharon Gillerman (z"l).*

<sup>1</sup> See *I Shall Bear Witness: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer*, trans. Martin Chalmers (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and universities in the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> The archive of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning at the Radcliffe Library, Oxford University (SPSL) is an essential source for this and related projects. The finding aid of nearly 400 pages gives some sense of the numbers of those who attempted to gain entry to Britain.

<sup>4</sup> For recent conference on Cambridge and refugees from Nazism see: <http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/28656> [accessed 1 July 2021].

<sup>5</sup> After becoming a distinguished scholar, Mosse had a wonderful experience decades later as a visiting professor at the college. He was happy to find the “snobbery” at Cambridge to have substantially diminished; George L. Mosse, *Confronting History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 93.

<sup>6</sup> Mosse, *Confronting History*, 74-92.

Hughes, Werner Mosse, Martin Jay, Marion Berghahn, Daniel Snowman, and others.<sup>7</sup> Little effort has been spent, however, on tracing those thousands who were murdered. In the 1930s there were few universities in the west that could rival Oxbridge in terms of the affluence of their colleges and vast resources at their disposal.

This article addresses the rescue of Hamburg's *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg*, or Warburg Institute, which has not been well-integrated in the sequestered history of the institute,<sup>8</sup> and has been almost totally bypassed in broader treatments of assistance rendered to Jews in Hitler's orbit. To the extent that attention has been paid to the Warburg Institute in London, the subject has been its impact on art history and visual culture in Britain, which was indeed serious, yet still undervalued in wider circles.<sup>9</sup> No doubt attention also has been given to the Warburg Institute as a result of the "material turn" in art history, and more generally, in the social sciences and humanities.<sup>10</sup> If the story of the Warburg Institute is an outstanding example of Jewish rescue in the face of Nazism, why does it occupy such a minor place in the historiography of rescue? Why is there no plaque outside the current building recognizing its importance in this context, especially since it would shed a strong, positive light on Britain in providing safe harbor for refugees?

It is important at the outset, to complicate this story even further. In the context of historical interpretations of the Holocaust and rescue, the period concerned precedes the Holocaust *per se* – falling close to the Nazi takeover in January 1933. No one could know then what would befall the

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<sup>7</sup> H. Stuart Hughes, *The sea change: the migration of social thought* (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1975); Werner Mosse, coordinating editor, eds. Julius Carlebach et al, *Second chance: two centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1991); Martin Jay, *The dialectical imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007); Daniel Snowman, *The Hitler emigres revisited* (London: Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London School of Advanced Study, 2013); Daniel Snowman, *The Hitler emigres: the cultural impact on Britain of refugees from Nazism* (London: Vintage Digital, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Uwe Fleckner and Peter Mack, eds., in *The Afterlife of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg: The Emigration and Early Years of the Warburg Institute in London* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019); Dieter Wuttke, "Die Emigration der Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg und die Anfänge des Universitätsfaches Kunstgeschichte in Großbritannien," in *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 5, No. 10 (1984): 133-146; M Seller, "Das Exil der Wiener Schjule der Kunstgeschichte und das Warburg-Institut in London," in *Vertriebene Vernunft: Emigration und Exil österreichischer Wissenschaft, 1930-1940*, ed. Friedrich Städler (Münster: Lit, 2004); Dorothea McEwan, "Exhibitions as Morale Boosters: The Exhibition Programme of the Warburg Institute, 1938-1945," in Shulamith Behr and Maian Malet, eds., *Arts in Exile in Britain, 1933-1945: Politics and Cultural Identity* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 267-300.

<sup>9</sup> The Warburg Institute is well-integrated in the thoughtful *Insiders/Outsiders* project of Monica Bohm-Duchen; see Hans Christian Hönes, "A very specialized subject: Art History in Britain," and Michael Berkowitz, "Émigré Photographers," in *Insiders/Outsiders: Refugees from Nazi Europe and their Contribution to British Visual Culture*, ed. Monica Bohm-Duchen (London: Lund Humphries, 2019), 97-104, 63-76.

<sup>10</sup> Among those recognized as significant markers in the "material turn" and "agency" see Dror Wahrman, "Media, History, and Art: Some Methodological Reflections," in *Media History*, 24: 1 (2018): 154-8, and Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); see also Iris Clever and Willemijn Ruberg, "Beyond Cultural History? The Material Turn, Praxiography, and Body History," in *Humanities*, 3 (2014): 546-66; Alma-Elisa Kittner, "Objects of Migration: On Archives and Collections, Archivists and Collectors," in *Visual Anthropology*, 34: 4 (2021): 385-404 [https://doi.org/10.1080/08949468.2021.1944777]; Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce, eds., *Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn* (London: Routledge, 2010).

women and men of the Warburg Institute. But there was little doubt about what could be expected for a library such as the Warburg Institute's. It was founded by the son of a prominent Jewish family, and its members were, in large part, of Jewish origin.

Since their coalescence following World War I and the revolutionary upheavals in its aftermath, the Nazis became famous for burning books by Jewish authors and books that had anything to do with Jews, if they were not expressly antisemitic. These public performances were featured in American newsreels, and not always criticized. Budd Schulberg, in viewing film collected for the Nuremberg trials, wrote that one newsreel included "a racy, happy-go-lucky narration by Lowell Thomas that begins, 'Well, looks like these young Heidelberg students are having a hot time for themselves tonight . . .'" and continues in this tone, a simple Simon describing a world tragedy in the jocular terms of an apple-ducking contest."<sup>11</sup> British and French movie audiences witnessed similar newsreels.

The Warburg Institute was perceived as a "Jewish" institution, which was an inaccurate characterization. The Warburg was never expressly devoted to *Judentum*: neither to Judaism, nor to the history of the Jewish people, nor to Jewish themes. By no means did it deliberately cater to a Jewish public. But topics that later would be recognized as "Jewish Studies" were included in its remit of excavating "mythologies." There was, in fact, nothing like the eclecticism of the Warburg library, as Emily Levine illuminates in her brilliant study.<sup>12</sup> The last decade has witnessed a series of conferences and studies dedicated to the institute's history, which also may be a consequence of the aforementioned "material turn" and deliberate engagement with "transnational" phenomena.<sup>13</sup> Yet significant dimensions of its move to London remain unaddressed.

Analyses of less-recognized aspects of the assistance rendered to Jews in the Holocaust have emerged in recent years, largely arising from wartime Poland. They are relevant here. Historian Timothy Snyder, building on the work on Anna Podolska and others, reveals that Catholic Poles who sheltered Jews included a number who were known to espouse antisemitic attitudes. Snyder refers to such people as "the grey saviors," a term that I have adapted to this article's title. There were two primary reasons why some Polish Catholics, in Snyder's telling, overcame their antisemitism to rescue Jews. First, personal relationships displaced unkind thoughts about Jews or

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<sup>11</sup> Budd Schulberg, "The Celluloid Noose" (1946), 3, typescript photocopy; published in *The Screen Writer: A publication of the Screen Writers Guild, Inc.* (August 1946), 1; Folder 39, WWII: "The Celluloid Noose," Budd Schulberg Collection, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.

<sup>12</sup> Emily J. Levine, *Dreamland of Humanists: Warburg, Cassirer, Panofsky, and the Hamburg School* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013). See also Aby Warburg., *Images from the region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*; translated with an interpretive essay by Michael P. Steinberg (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995); see Charlotte Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg and Anti-Semitism*, trans. Samuel Pakucs Willcocks (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> See Jay Howard Geller and Leslie Morris, eds., *Three-Way Street: Jews, Germans, and the Transnational* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 1-22.

the supposed supremacy of one's own faith. Childhood friends and former lovers were taken in at great risk – regardless of their Jewish taint. Secondly, some hatreds are more powerful than others – in other words, many Poles loathed the Nazis much more than they despised Jews.<sup>14</sup>

Why bother to raise these points in reference to Britain and the Warburg Institute? It situates irony and ambivalence within the subject of “rescue.” The key figure explored here is Kenneth Clark (1903-1983), who held and acted on antisemitic ideas. There is no suggestion of this motivation in the secondary literature. Clark was, however, prominent in undermining the persistent efforts of Helmut Gernsheim, a German-Jewish refugee, to establish a photography museum and research institute in Britain, partly due to antisemitism. Gernsheim was oblivious to this, taking Clark at his word that he was supportive. Clark revealed, in private correspondence, that he regarded Gernsheim as the world's greatest expert on photography – but pushy and “unattractive.”<sup>15</sup> Clark also was duplicitous in having Stefan Lorant (1901-1997) removed as the editor of *Picture Post* magazine and compelled to leave Britain. Lorant, like Gernsheim, had no inkling that Clark's antisemitism influenced his devastating denial of naturalization.<sup>16</sup>

Yet Kenneth Clark was extraordinary as a champion of the Warburg Institute, especially in strengthening the efforts of Aby Warburg's successors, Fritz Saxl (1890-1948) and Gertrud Bing (1892-1964).<sup>17</sup> This microhistory introduces even more layers of contradiction and irony, because Clark's deft negotiation of the rescue of the Warburg Institute rested on his own understanding of how subtle and unarticulated antisemitism functioned in Britain. It was almost as if he had a secret map. Clark knew the avenues that would have led to difficult obstacles, those individuals to whom the institute could appeal and get a hearing, and he advised Saxl not to approach those persons and institutions to avoid wasting time and energy.

Although we will dwell on an episode in 1929, what happened in early 1933 is crucial. Two entities within German universities, while not Jewish by self-definition, were threatened immediately and tried to extricate themselves to America or Britain. One is the subject of copious academic discourse: the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research.<sup>18</sup> The Frankfurt School, which had a quiet, wealthy benefactor, partially reconstituted itself in New York and elsewhere. After 1945 several of its scholars returned to Germany. The second is less noted and not often included in discussions of flight, rescue, or even Jewish history: the Warburg Institute,

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<sup>14</sup> Timothy Snyder, *Black earth: the Holocaust as history and warning* (London: Vintage Digital, 2015), 250-271.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography in Britain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 223.

<sup>16</sup> Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography*, 108-110.

<sup>17</sup> This is absent from the biographies of Clark, which are generally commendable; see especially Meryle Secrest, *Kenneth Clark: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984).

<sup>18</sup> Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996), 29-36; Jack Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish lives, and antisemitism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Peter E. Gordon, Espen Hammer, and Axel Honneth, eds., *The Routledge companion to the Frankfurt School* (London: Routledge, 2018).

originally of the University of Hamburg, which eventually became a part of the University of London.<sup>19</sup> The Warburg Institute's transition to the United Kingdom was far from a foregone conclusion, and its transplantation was tenuous, at best, well into its second decade detached from Hamburg.<sup>20</sup> Now into the third decade of the 21st century, the Warburg Institute aspires to attain firmer security in London, as it has faced ongoing financial crises and threats to send it packing, again, to the United States or back to continental Europe.

The removal of the Warburg Institute to London was part of a matrix of decision-making colored by conventions, prejudices, and practical challenges – and shifting academic tastes – including notions of decency, usefulness, and prestige. Antisemitism and perceptions about Jews are impossible to disentangle from these factors. The institute, besides being relocated in one fell swoop, made ongoing attempts to receive and accommodate refugees and to permanently install itself in both academic and public life in Britain. In a society that supposedly values its history, why has the story of the Warburg Institute, until recently, been so rarely told – even by the institution itself? The successor institute, which became part of the University of London in 1944, is only beginning to be recognized by scholars as historically significant and particularly in light of its character as a Ship of State for refugees.

The Warburg Institute was not “Jewish” in its focus or objectives, yet it was menaced by Nazism due to its ostensibly Jewish character. The abrupt dismissals, pressure on Jewish academics, and looming decimation of scholarly entities in Germany forced universities and public bodies such as museums and libraries in the western democratic nations to confront their willingness to put universal and liberal ideals into practice. The fate of the Warburg Institute was partly determined by the question of who should (or should not) pay for its continuation. Here I will focus on the relationship between the practical viability of the institution and its transfer abroad, with more than the typical regard for its monetary support. Kenneth Clark played a crucial part in all of this.

The Warburg Institute was (and remains) a world-renowned library and research center focused on the classics and the study of Western and Eastern civilizations, especially the history of art, from antiquity to the Renaissance.<sup>21</sup> It was founded by Aby M. Warburg, a member of the formidable Hamburg-based, Jewish banking family. Instead of pursuing a career in finance, Aby Warburg

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<sup>19</sup> One of the most recent historical surveys of refugee reception in Britain does not mention the Warburg Institute; see Becky Taylor, *Refugees in Twentieth Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). In this work there also is no mention of Cambridge University.

<sup>20</sup> See Hans Christian Hönes, "A very specialized subject," and Berkowitz, "Émigré Photographers," in *Insiders/Outsiders*, 97-104, 63-76.

<sup>21</sup> For the Warburg Institute in the context of comparable libraries, see Hans-Michael Schäfer, *Die Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg: Geschichte und Persönlichkeiten der Bibliothek Warburg mit Berücksichtigung der Bibliotheksstandschaft und der Stadtsituation der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Logos, 2003). For a recent survey of the Warburg Institute “method”, see Sabine Marienberg and Jürgen Trabant, eds., *Bildakt at the Warburg Institute* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014).

nurtured a library by drawing on his family's wealth and cultivating a scholarly outlook. He made his collection of books, manuscripts, and artifacts (such as globes and astrolabes) accessible to others and developed it as a research forum. Inspiring and collaborating with philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945) and art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968), Warburg pioneered the investigation of myths and symbols without favoring a particular language, religion, cultural or national tradition. It is taken for granted that the Warburg Institute utterly rejected "race" as a category of analysis.

Aby Warburg (1866-1929) was ill for much of his last decade and his powers were greatly diminished. Yet one of his late bursts of energy – a lecture delivered in Rome, January 19, 1929 at the *Biblioteca Hertziana* – was immensely consequential for his brainchild. Britain's Kenneth Clark happened to be visiting Rome and made a point of attending the talk, which turned out to be a fantastic stroke of luck for the Warburg Institute. Clark sat in the front row, and Warburg looked right at him throughout the lecture.<sup>22</sup>

Clark, also an art historian, was a patrician public intellectual in Britain who is widely hailed for being a steadfast leader of Britain's National Gallery during the Second World War. He is acclaimed, as well, for bridging the realms of scholarship and popular culture through his BBC 2 television series (and accompanying book), *Civilisation*, beginning in 1969. Before Clark's meeting with Aby Warburg, he was a devotee of the art connoisseur Bernard Berenson (1856-1959). Berenson, at mid-century one of the biggest names in art, was an American Jew, later Episcopalian, then Catholic, who dispensed advice to art dealers and collectors from his luxurious Italian villa, *I Tatti*. The extent to which Clark remained beholden to Berenson after the session with Warburg is open to question.<sup>23</sup> Certainly the bond between Clark and Berenson "loosened" after 1929.<sup>24</sup> Despite Berenson's embrace of Christianity, his origin as a Jew from the hinterlands of Eastern Europe – rural Lithuania – was no secret.<sup>25</sup> Warburg, however, has had a deeper and more lasting influence on the field of art history than Berenson.

Kenneth Clark was conservative but not rigid, while his son, Alan (1928-1999), veered sharply to

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<sup>22</sup> See James Stourton, *Kenneth Clark: Life, Art and Civilisation* (London: William Collins, 2016), 73, 262. Although there is only brief mention of the relationship between Clark and Warburg in this recent book, it does convey the significance of Aby Warburg's contribution to a dramatic change, and further development, of Clark's perspective on art history. Stourton draws attention, as well, to Clark's role in the Warburg Institute staying in London during the war years, but he seems unaware of the critical role Clark paid in its rescue; 208. Warburg's impact on Clark is disparaged in a collection of letters between Clark and Bernard Berenson; see *My dear BB: The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark, 1925-1959*, ed. Robert Cumming (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 128. See also Dieter Wuttke, *Kosmopolis der Wissenschaft. E. R. Curtius und das Warburg Institute. Briefe 1928 bis 1953 and andere Dokumente* (Baden-Baden: Verlag Valentin, 1989), 13.

<sup>23</sup> Compare to Nicky Mariano, *Forty Years with Berenson, with an introduction by Sir Kenneth Clark* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1966).

<sup>24</sup> Meryle Secrest, *Kenneth Clark*, 80. Here Warburg is misidentified as "Felix," one of the bankers in the family.

<sup>25</sup> Rachel Cohen, *Bernard Berenson: A Life in the Picture Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). This book appears in the "Jewish Lives" series.

the right as a quirky, Tory grandee, including postures that were seen as insulting to Jews and other minorities. Even if he did not learn antisemitism in the family home, young Alan might have imbibed it as being sometimes unobjectionable. Part of Kenneth Clark's sense of himself as worldly, and connected to common people, through his father's buying and selling of paintings, and having Jews among his associates – both foreign-born and British. Kenneth Clark probably would have recoiled at being labeled an antisemite. He saw himself as an intimate, even a genial patron of many Jews. But he held a number of stereotypes and anti-Jewish prejudices that were common among his elite, largely Anglican peers. Clark's description of Bernard Berenson as an "exquisite little conjuror" was the kind of jibe he reserved for Jews.<sup>26</sup> In the context of his history with the Warburg Institute, however, it was important that Clark felt comfortable, and in-the-know, concerning "the Jewish question" at home and abroad, and with Jews themselves as art world colleagues.

What happened on that evening in 1929? Clark said that the encounter "changed his life." To him, Aby Warburg "was without doubt the most original thinker on art history of our time, and entirely changed the course of art-historical studies. His point of view could be described as a reaction against the formalist or stylistic approach of Morelli and Berenson."<sup>27</sup> The reputation of Giovanni Morelli (1816-1891) barely registers a pulse since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> Morelli believed that artists could be characterized and analyzed through details in their work. This view has been largely discredited by the recognition of stylistic schools that self-consciously imitated themes and techniques. Morelli was, however, a direct precursor to Berenson. From the outset of his career, Clark had been a protégé of Bernard Berenson.<sup>29</sup>

An anecdote from Clark's *Other-Half* autobiography, from 1945, is unusually instructive concerning his perspective on Berenson as well as his views about supposed Jewish traits. Portraying himself as irreverent scamp, Clark describes his caustic review of a book on Donatello, which had appeared with the Phaidon Press.<sup>30</sup> Phaidon was a London visual-studies publishing company founded by a Jewish refugee from Germany, whom Clark identified as "Dr Horowitz" (or Horovitz). Dr Horowitz "was a born diplomat and, instead of upbraiding me for my review, he simply said 'You must write a book in the same series to show how it should be done.'"<sup>31</sup> Clark proposed to write on the 15<sup>th</sup>-century artist Piero della Francesca.<sup>32</sup> Horowitz helped arrange for the

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<sup>26</sup> Rachel Cohen, *Berenson*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part of the Wood* (Hodder and Stoughton: Coronet, 1976), 168.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Jaynie Anderson, *The Life of Giovanni Morelli in Risorgimento Italy* (Milan: Officina Libraria, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> On Berenson, see also Ernest Samuels, with Jayne Newcomer Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Legend* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> See Anna Nyburg, *Emigres: the transformation of art publishing in Britain* (London: Phaidon Press, 2014); Daniel Snowman, "Introduction," in *Insiders/Outsiders*, 9-19.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth Clark, *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), 84.

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Piero della Francesca, etc.* (London: Phaidon Press, 1951).

frescoes of Francesca to be viewed and photographed in Arezzo, Italy, and accompanied Clark to the site. “On the way back,” Clark writes, Horowitz “offered to take me to my hotel. I said I was staying at *I Tatti* with Mr Berenson. He said ‘Who is Mr Berenson?’ (No one will believe this story but I swear that it is true.)” Clark went on to describe Berenson’s impressive “standing in the world of art history. I told him that Mr Berenson’s best works were his four prefaces to his lists of authentic pictures. Dr Horowitz listened attentively.”<sup>33</sup>

Clark was very pleased with himself because this conversation led Horowitz to make “a business proposition” to Berenson that reaped significant gains. “Within half an hour,” Clark reports, Horowitz received Berenson’s “consent to buy the rights of the four prefaces from The Oxford University Press, and print them with illustrations as an introduction to Italian art. The Oxford University Press, which had published the prefaces in a very dismal style, had sold only seven copies in the last few years.” Dr Horowitz’s illustrated edition, Clark proudly recalls, “within a few weeks of appearance, sold 60,000. This is an example of flair which Duveen himself could not have surpassed – in fact the two men were not dissimilar.”<sup>34</sup>

Joseph Duveen (1869-1939), a Dutch Sephardic Jew who hailed from a family of art and antique traders, is considered one of the most important art dealers of all time. Not all of his activity, though, was above board. Duveen, too, had had a close relationship with Berenson, who is now seen as being somewhat selective, even deceptive, with information concerning art purchases.<sup>35</sup> “That Dr Horowitz,” Clark concluded, “with all his enthusiasm and geniality, should have died in middle age was a disaster for writers on books on art.”<sup>36</sup> Although Kenneth Clark writes with more candor than many of his ilk, he leaves a ripe thought hanging: that Jews, in his mind, have a special talent for presenting fine art in the popular realm. This certainly figured into his sense of how the Warburg Institute might operate, were it to be located in London. It could serve as a more effective conduit to a wider public and “the people” than had, say, scholars engaged in art history at Oxford and Cambridge.

Aby Warburg’s thinking about art “moved in an entirely different way” from that of Morelli and Berenson, Clark wrote: As opposed to “thinking of works of art as life-enhancing representations,” Warburg comprehended them “as symbols, and he believed that the art historian should concern himself with the origin, meaning and transmission of symbolic images.” Clark considered the Renaissance to be Warburg’s main field of investigation, “partly because renaissance art contained a large number of such symbolic images; and partly because he had the true German love of

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<sup>33</sup> Clark, *The Other Half*, 85.

<sup>34</sup> Clark, *The Other Half*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Colin Simpson, *The Artful Partners: The Secret Association of Bernard Berenson and Joseph Duveen* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987).

<sup>36</sup> Clark, *The Other Half*, 85.

Italy.”<sup>37</sup> Clark found Warburg’s “love of Italy” fascinating and exemplary. He recognized that all members of Warburg’s Institute shared this sentiment. Although proud Germans, they saw no conflict in “loving” other nations and cultures, and this affection for Italy would be manifested especially in a successful Warburg Institute photographic exhibition and publication, *Britain and the Mediterranean* (1941).

But for all his admiration, Clark also damned Warburg with faint praise, saying he “accumulated vast learning, but his writings are all fragments. He should not have been an art historian, but a poet . . . He himself said that if he had been five inches taller (he was even shorter than Berenson) he would have become an actor, and I can believe it, for he had, to an uncanny degree, the gift of mimesis. He could ‘get inside’ a character” through highly-stylized tonal inflections.<sup>38</sup> To Clark, Warburg was a great performer, and he had founded an unprecedented intellectual movement but did not have the capability or wherewithal, as did Clark himself, to write coherent books.

Speculating on the cause of Aby Warburg’s disabilities, which apparently were both physical and mental, Clark offered that “Symbols are a dangerous branch of study as they easily lead to magic; and magic leads to the loss of reason.”<sup>39</sup> Here Clark was out of his depth and revealed the limitations of his empathy for what Warburg had experienced in World War I and the tumult of the Weimar Republic. It was not the *study* of magic that so troubled Warburg, but the state of Germany and the wider world. Aby Warburg also gathered horrifying contemporary pamphlets and books on antisemitism and kept these in his library, too.<sup>40</sup>

Clark believed that “Warburg went out of his mind in 1918, but by 1927, under the nun-like care of Dr [Gertrud] Bing, he was sufficiently recovered to visit Rome and give a lecture.”<sup>41</sup> Most likely Clark likened Bing to Nicky Mariano, who for 40 years was Berenson’s “helper, companion and guardian, organizing his work, saving his energies, reassuring his friends, mollifying his enemies and shielding him, as far as possible, from the rough usage of ordinary life.”<sup>42</sup> In part due to his less-than fluent German, at the Rome lecture Clark was seated “in the front row, and Warburg, who preferred to talk to an individual, directed the whole lecture at me. It lasted over two hours and I understood about two-thirds. But it was enough.”<sup>43</sup> His conversion to Warburg’s perspective meant an abrupt step back from Berenson. “Thenceforward my interest in ‘connoisseurship’ became no more than a kind of habit, and my mind was occupied in trying answer the kind of questions that had occupied Warburg.”<sup>44</sup> He also felt a personal connection to Warburg, who encouraged Clark to

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<sup>37</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 168-9.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 168-9.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 168-9.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Berkowitz, "Introduction" to Alfred Wiener, *The Fatherland and the Jews* (London: Granta, 2021), 18-19.

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 168-9.

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth Clark, "Introduction," in Nicky Mariano, *Forty Years with Berenson* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1966), ix.

<sup>43</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 168-9.

<sup>44</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 169.

protect his institute and save his beloved books from destruction.

Unlike most “idle rich” in England,<sup>45</sup> Clark found the company of (invariably) short Jewish men congenial. In fact, Clark was remarkably forthcoming about what he believed to be the differences between the Christian and Jewish art collectors he met in London. “In our youth,” he recalls in the first volume of his autobiography, “it was customary for Christian collectors to boast of how little they had paid for their prizes. ‘Picked it up for a few coppers’, was the usual phrase.” Merely by broaching this subject, money, and how one deals with one’s money, Clark was venturing into dark corners. Wealthy Britons, as a rule, do not talk about money at all. “Jewish collectors, on the other hand,” he offered, “were proud to tell one what sacrifices they had made to obtain their treasures.”<sup>46</sup> Jews were distinct from Gentiles in how they conducted themselves in the art trade – and according to Clark, that was a positive characteristic.

Clark named names that would have had resonated with art collectors: “Henry Oppenheimer, one of the most lovable of the old-style collectors, used to say, ‘Ven I tell old Lippmann vat I pay for it, he says “Mein Gott, Oppenheimer, you are crazy.”’ There can be no doubt which of these standpoints denotes the greater love of art; and it is also probable that *the Jewish approach* leads to more material advantage. Anyone who followed Herr Oppenheimer’s advice ‘py de pest’ [buy the best] would have had a far greater return on his money than the bargain-hunter” (emphasis added).<sup>47</sup> “The Jewish approach,” in his mind, also was different – and better – when it came to art history. Clark’s attempt to mimic the crude accent, while typical, was an attempt to show his insider knowledge but also indicates his prejudice.

Kenneth Clark expressed immense pride in his a role in helping rescue the Warburg, as a library as well as an institute whose members' livelihoods were at stake. That their very lives were endangered would not have been foreseen prior to 1938. Clark details in his autobiography (volume one) that in early 1933 he “received an urgent telephone call from Fritz Saxl, director of the Warburg Institute in Hamburg, whom I had never met, but who had presumably heard from Dr Bing that I had been present at Warburg’s last lecture.” The call came at dinnertime, not during working hours, and at his home. Saxl conveyed, “in guarded terms, that the time had come for The institute to leave Germany, and wondered if there was any chance of it being established in Oxford. I knew enough about University politics to realise that this could not be done without several years of lobbying, during which time the Library would have been seized by the Nazis and the Library staff sent to concentration camps. But I said I would do what I could.”<sup>48</sup> Clark was aware that Oxford would not be enthusiastic to welcome a group of Jews into its midst, and that Warburg’s

<sup>45</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 172.

<sup>47</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 172.

<sup>48</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 184.

approach to art history had not yet penetrated “the dreaming spires.”

That evening there was a second fortuitous spin of the wheel for the Warburg Institute. At the very moment when Saxl rang, the Clarks were sitting down to dinner with the Lees as their guests: Arthur Lee – 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Lee of Fareham (1868-1947) – and his wife, Ruth Moore (1869-1966). Arthur Lee was a solid Anglican and military man, but through his wife, the daughter of a New York banker, John Godfrey Moore, he came into money. When Clark explained the matter to Lee, the latter exclaimed “This could be something for the Courtauld” (he had persuaded Sam Courtauld to found an institute for art history bearing his name).<sup>49</sup> Samuel Courtauld, a textile manufacturer of French Huguenot background, possessed vast wealth, but he also “considered himself a bit of a maverick and an outsider.” He was not, in many respects, like others of his class. A relative “recalled how shocked his friends were when he started buying Impressionist paintings and hanging them in his elegant 18th-century townhouse. However, his outsider status is also evident in the way that he viewed his role in the Courtaulds company. Unusually amongst industrialists at the time, he wanted workers to have large shares in the company so they could reap the profits of their labor. He also promoted education, childcare, sick leave and pension benefits among his employees, and lobbied the government to extend them to other businesses.”<sup>50</sup>

The University of London was, at that precise moment, moving toward affirmatively embracing modern art. To Clark, it would be amenable to modern approaches to art history, as well. In addition to the Courtauld Institute, which recently had been established at the University of London, there was no equivalent in either Cambridge or Oxford to the Slade School of Art of University College London, the original and largest component of London’s federated university. In these discussions no thought was given to Kings College London, which was self-styled as conservative and High-Church Anglican.

The fact that Arthur Lee is regarded as a co-founder of Courtauld Institute is no doubt due to his own family putting up funds. “When I described the marvels of the Warburg Library (which I had never visited) and the devotion of the staff,” Clark continued, “Arthur was convinced and moved into action. First of all he had to persuade the University of London to accept the Library, but, as time was running short, Arthur somehow bullied the Hamburg authorities into sending over the whole Library as a personal loan to himself.”<sup>51</sup> This was an especially creative tactic that only could have been accomplished by a non-Jew. “He then took a floor of Thames House, which was entirely empty, and had the Library arranged there.” That there was a large, unused space in the building

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<sup>49</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 184.

<sup>50</sup> “5 interesting things about . . . Samuel Courtauld,” “Stories,” a satellite website of the The Courtauld, Courtauld National Partners,” at <https://sites.courtauld.ac.uk/nationalpartners/2020/05/07/5-interesting-things-about-samuel-courtauld/> [accessed 2 July 2021].

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 184.

probably was due to the worldwide depression, beginning in 1929. “Only someone with his will and obstinacy could have done all this, and it showed that men of action are sometimes useful in the world of scholarship.”<sup>52</sup> Clark, too, was a “man of action” – a force to be reckoned with.

Arrangements for the Warburg collection, however, entailed gaining official permits and no small amount of money changing hands, for which Lee and Courtauld were better equipped.

Fritz Saxl was Warburg’s dear friend and closest colleague. Along with Gertrud Bing, Saxl was a successor of Warburg who facilitated The institute’s transition to London.<sup>53</sup> Saxl entertained a few options for moving the Warburg Institute out of Hamburg, after the Nazis seized power on 30 January 1933. His first choice, the United States – specifically New York – was greeted unenthusiastically by the (New York-based) Warburg family, which had agreed to pay for its shipment. (Clark suggests that Lee cover the cost for the move to London.) When New York was off the table, Saxl approached Kenneth Clark with great urgency, seeking access to Britain, specifically Oxford.

A recent, internal reflection on the history of the Warburg’s transplantation to Britain asserts that “[T]he almost miraculous story of the preservation of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg as a German-Jewish research institute was made possible, as Eric Warburg observed in his twentieth anniversary account of the migration, by astonishing perseverance on the part of the Academic Assistance Council, the Warburg family, Fritz Saxl and Gertrud Bing, and by the generosity of Lord Lee Fareham and Sir Samuel Courtauld.”<sup>54</sup> While all of this is true in a narrow sense, the pithy summary obscures and bypasses some of the more realistic, if not (retrospectively) contradictory aspects of the history of the Warburg Institute’s rescue. The account belongs to the history of antisemitism, the history of the fierce German and subdued British types, and the history of resistance to antisemitism.

Kenneth Clark was at the front and center of the rescue of the Warburg Institute. Kenneth Clark was a complicated man: cosmopolitan but also conservative and nationalistic. He was not a consistent, vehement antisemite. But there is evidence that his prejudice, by no means unusual for someone of his background, resulted in Jews being treated poorly. He liked to appear fair, tolerant, and open-minded. Most important here, he sincerely wanted to save the Warburg Library from wanton destruction, and if it were to be preserved, he wanted it housed in Britain. Clark knew that saving the Warburg Institute would be at worst a modest feather in the nation’s cap, and at best a new jewel in its crown as seen by scholars and fine arts professionals. Surely he was aware that the

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<sup>52</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Another Part*, 184.

<sup>53</sup> Mick Finch, Johannes von Mueller, and Joanne Anderson, *Image Journeys: The Warburg Institute and a British Art History* (Passau: Dietmar Klinger Verlag, 2019).

<sup>54</sup> Uwe Fleckner and Peter Mack, eds., in *The Afterlife of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg: The Emigration and Early Years of the Warburg Institute in London* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 10.

Warburg collection was immensely valuable from both monetary and intellectual/cultural perspectives.

Clark impacted the rescue of the Warburg Institute in weighty and diverse ways: First, he warned Saxl, generally, that there would be obstructionism. Second, Clark advised him not to expend time or energy pursuing a relocation to Oxford or Cambridge. Third, he advised him that the best, and perhaps only option in Britain would be the University of London – but it did not possess its own resources to fully assimilate or provide a setting for the Warburg. Fourth, he advised Saxl that this should be attempted as a complement to the recently founded Courtauld Institute. Although he did not say so clearly, the Courtauld was an especially important partner because its chief benefactors were non-Jews, who Clark thought might be forthcoming in helping the Warburg.

In a rather indirect manner, these prescriptions stem from Clark's mild, quiet, inconsistent antisemitism. To some extent he was attuned to his own sentiments, which were widely shared in Britain. Clark was, in my opinion, moved more by the thought of saving the *collection* of the Warburg Institute – its books, and manuscripts, and objects – than by concern for the people, the Jews, who comprised the institution's human assets. Also due to his low-key reservations about Jews, he did not think that the Warburg Institute belonged in Oxford, or that it had a realistic chance of transplanting itself to Oxford or Cambridge before the Nazis razed it. The more appropriate home for the Warburg Institute, Clark himself suggested and shared with Saxl, would be the University of London. Why is this so significant?

Different components of the London university had varying degrees of receptivity to Jews.<sup>55</sup> Kenneth Clark certainly knew, however, that University College, the original and largest segment of the university, was uniquely *secular* in the landscape of British universities, and that it was the first university in Britain to welcome Jews as unequivocal degree candidates. Given Clark's (accurate) knowledge of the Warburg Institute as a body that conducted its analyses with a stress on symbolism, and as a critic of all religious thinking, this would not be a good fit for Oxford and Cambridge. Neither august university was terribly progressive in its approach to art history, cultural history, or even history in general.

That Saxl set his sights on London – as opposed to Oxford or Cambridge – from the outset, owing to Clark, meant that his time was not squandered. After the Warburg Institute was removed to London, Clark helped to assure its perseverance by advocating that it ingratiate itself through demonstrating its expertise through both modest and large-scale photographic exhibitions – which also had a Jewish connotation. Here too, Clark helps account for the seemingly “miraculous” success of the Warburg's installation in London. He initially supported the work of the most

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<sup>55</sup> Felicity Jane Griffiths, *The Making and Evolution of the University of London: Expanding Social and Religious Horizons* (London: PhD dissertation, University College London, 2019).

talented photographer in The institute's circle, Helmut Gernsheim. But because Clark came to dislike Gernsheim – describing him as a pushy, unattractive, obnoxious Jew, and a know-it-all about photography – Gernsheim was written out of the history of the institute. Gernsheim had indeed played a signal role in the Warburg Institute's efforts for the National Buildings' Records project, and its most formidable public exhibition, *Britain the Mediterranean*, both of which contributed mightily to the Warburg Institute's sustenance and its reputation among the scholarly and general British public. Clark was akin a godfather to Helmut Gernsheim while the latter was a part of Warburg Institute. But Clark disparaged Gernsheim behind his back and made Gernsheim's self-styled career as an advocate for photography all the more difficult.

Until recently, there has been little discussion of the secularized Jewishness of the Warburg Institute, even though it was at least as “Jewish” an institution as the Frankfurt School. In 1939, in making the case for the release of Fritz Saxl from internment, the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning stated that “The Warburg Institute constitutes one of the finest libraries and research centres in the history of art, and the history of science, and the history of culture in general. *As a Jewish foundation, and with a predominantly Jewish staff*, The institute was in actual physical danger in 1933. It was moved to London in 1933, ostensibly loaned by the German Government for the first three years, but is now secured as an integral part of London University, and is recognized as one of the most valuable additions to learning which has resulted from the political developments in Germany” [emphasis added].<sup>56</sup>

It is well known that Warburg Institute originated from the largesse of the Warburg banking family, which permitted the bookish Aby Warburg to turn his spectacular personal library into a research institute in 1921.<sup>57</sup> In retrospect both the Frankfurt School and the Warburg Institute owed their existence as coherent units to their “financial good fortune,”<sup>58</sup> yet it often seems odd or mysterious that the Warburg family was not eager to continue Aby's project. The New York branch of the Warburgs (supposedly) paid for the transfer of the Warburg Institute to London – insisting on London over New York – but did not endow it with a general fund or provide for annual operating expenses. Saxl's aim, therefore, became the incorporation of the Warburg Institute into an existing institution, so its essential functions and salaries would be permanently supported. For a number of reasons a university was the most appropriate setting for the institute, consistent with its pre-Nazi history in Hamburg. It stands to reason that the first British university coming to mind was Oxford. Kenneth Clark is probably truthful in his autobiography when he says he advised Saxl that pursuing

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<sup>56</sup> SAXL, Professor Fritz (1890-1948), File 1933-48, MS. S.P.S.L. 546, 1, document allowing for his release from internment, datged 4.11.39, stamp dated 8 Nov 1939, undated page labelled "S.P.S.L. Remarks," in SPSL.

<sup>57</sup> "Aby Warburg 1866-1929," in Warburg Institute website, at:

<<http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/home/aboutthewarburginstitute/history/>>.

<sup>58</sup> Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, p. 31.

Oxford would take too long – but he actually knew, from the beginning, that it would be an ultimately fruitless undertaking.

The funding for the Warburg Institute after its arrival in London came from a variety of groups such as the Jewish Refugees Committee, the Professional Committee for German Jewish Refugees, the Jewish Board of Guardians, and the Academic Assistance Council, the latter being the precursor to the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. The institute worked assiduously to cultivate and sustain relationships with these bodies. None of these, however, commanded truly significant financial resources. Otto Schiff, the nephew of Jacob H. Schiff of New York and a key figure in organizing and backing refugee relief work in London, sometimes gave anonymously. All of this was necessary because even though the Warburg banking enterprise was lucrative and international, its main operation was in Hamburg, and the bank existed in something of a netherworld until selling out its German core in 1936. Dorothea Hauser has shown how it became, after January 1933, largely, a bank of emigration.<sup>59</sup>

The Warburg Institute depended on outside support for even the bare existence of its members – some of whom were strikingly impoverished upon their flight, “starving to death.”<sup>60</sup> This situation, no doubt, led the institute to develop programs and a general orientation toward making itself useful to the wider world, and to provide superlative services to a universal community of scholars. Part of the institute’s development was of a much more improvisational nature than is typically noticed. It made a strenuous effort to find employment for as many refugees as possible, to turn the Warburg into something akin to an intellectual factory. This also helps explain why the Warburg Institute’s relationship to Britain and Britishness was always paramount. This too was enabled, in large measure, by Kenneth Clark.

Although there were other “foreigners” in London of the 1930s and 40s, the men and women of the Warburg were different – not only in their religious association. As opposed to, say, non-Jewish Poles or Greeks, who also comprised communities of affinity in exile, the Warburg “foreigners” did not envision a return to their homeland.<sup>61</sup> By no means does this mean that they predicted or anticipated the Holocaust. But the members of the Warburg Institute, from the moment they landed in London, were not animated by a possibility of a return to Germany, given that the shift in attitudes revealed and supported by National Socialism could not possibly be overturned in the foreseeable future. The institute’s people had lost their homes and homeland. Their stay in Britain

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<sup>59</sup> Dorothea Hauser, “Banking on Emigration: Reconsidering the Warburg Bank’s Late Surrender, Schacht’s Protective Hand, and Other Myths about Jewish Banks in the “Third Reich,” in *Dispossession: Plundering German Jewry, 1933-1953*, eds. Christophe Kreutzmüller and Jonathan R. Zatzlin (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020), 146-168.

<sup>60</sup> Berkowitz, *Jews and Photography*, 185-6.

<sup>61</sup> See entry for Pacht, Otto, in *Biographisches Handbuch deutschsprachiger Kunsthistoriker im Exil. Leben und Werk der unter dem Nationalsozialismus verfolgten und vertriebenen Wissenschaftler*, Teil 2, L-Z, ed. Ulrike Wendland (München: K.G. Saur, 1999), p.

would have to be permanent. Although it was rarely articulated directly, the common understanding was that the Warburg Institute, although it included a number of non-Jews, was a supremely Jewish-friendly and Jewish-oriented institution. In the context of its time, particularly in contrast to the German scene from which it was excluded, the Warburg Institute was remarkable in its rejection of all forms of racist thinking. Certainly in terms of religious identification and observance, the connection to Judaism was at best tenuous to most members of the Warburg Institute. There were, among them, “half-Jews,” converts from Judaism, and a few Gentiles. But the inescapable fact was that a “Jewish-refugee identity” was imposed on them, which also would have consequences in Britain.

The goal was not simply to make it possible for the Warburg members to do their own work, or to do it better, but to open the institute to the rest of the scholarly world. Dorothea McEwan argues that the prime motive for the photographic exhibitions of the Warburg Institute, the primary vehicle by which they introduced themselves to the public, was to boost the sullen war-time spirits of the surrounding population and thereby improve and spread its reputation.<sup>62</sup> While this was indeed part of the story, Helmut Gernsheim more accurately emphasizes that the Warburg’s engagement with photography in the war years was a way to make itself relevant and useful to the British government and to a community that reached beyond the confines of academe.<sup>63</sup>

In all of the Warburg publications and addresses, acknowledgment of and praise for Kenneth Clark, Lord Lee, and Samuel Courtauld was effusive, and cooperative ventures were always matters of special pride. In retrospective treatments of the Warburg, and also the Courtauld, the fact that the work under their auspices (and this is true, as well, of Kenneth Clark) was free of racism, stereotypes, and even British national chauvinism, is barely noticed and therefore underappreciated. Establishments that cooperated with the Warburg could never entertain the notion that Jews constituted a separate race. This was not the case in other quarters of British society, such as the political realm, where the notion of a Jewish race often arose in discussions of immigration and policy in Palestine,<sup>64</sup> and in medicine – especially eugenics and hereditary diseases, such as diabetes.<sup>65</sup>

In a quiet and understated way – and all the more effective because of this – the wartime Warburg Institute exhibition on “Portrait and Character” directed by Kenneth Clark in 1943 was a repudiation of a racist approach to civilization, its progress, and its prospects. But no one seemed to have noticed. This, it might be said, is one of the subtle ways that the institute’s Jewishness was

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<sup>62</sup> McEwan, “Exhibitions,” 470.

<sup>63</sup> British Library, Oral History of Photography, Interview of Helmut Gernsheim with Val Williams, 1995, tapes 2 and 3.

<sup>64</sup> See James Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance, 1914-1918* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>65</sup> See Sander Gilman, *Fat: A Cultural History of Obesity* (London: Polity, 2008), pp. 102-4.

manifested. Here Jews and modern art were inextricably part and parcel of the classical inheritance.<sup>66</sup>

Clark had set a challenging agenda for the Warburg Institute. In an undated statement regarding the purpose of the 1943 exhibition, Saxl wrote that “Portraiture being nowadays unpopular, Sir Kenneth Clark suggested we should make it the subject of an Exhibition to help the public to become more portrait-minded.” Clark intended, it seems, to further embed the Warburg in the general culture. “The problem ‘how can the artist achieve the expression of a character’ lies within the traditional field of our research – the study of symbols,” Saxl wrote. “The mind behind the sitter’s face can be read by means of certain signs, by an interplay of curves, by symmetrical or asymmetrical forms, by light and shade. In this sense the exhibition is on the lines of the old physiognomists, and of Charles Darwin’s ‘Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animal’”<sup>67</sup>

To Saxl and the Warburg Institute, the equation of “old” with “physiognomists” was crucial. Physiognomy, as prized and practiced by the Nazis, was abhorrent. “The man in the street who strays into the exhibition,” Saxl imagined, “may find amusement in the variety of faces and of fashions but the more serious-minded interested in this line of thought may derive some more lasting enjoyment. He may, as we did in preparing the exhibition, learn to observe more closely the human face in life, in transient moods, the movement of the hands, the expression of the eyes. He may thus be led to consider how can be expressed in the language of forms what lies hidden in nature, in other words portraiture as one of the most immediate of symbolic expressions in art.”<sup>68</sup>

The last of the major Warburg exhibitions (June 15-26, 1948), a memorial to Fritz Saxl, occurred after the end of the war, when the institute was already fairly well-ensconced as a constituent element of the University of London. Gertrud Bing remarked that the Warburg’s photographic work in the service of the National Buildings Record project had revealed “an exacting training and strict adherence to evidence, *while at the same time it opened another range of historically significant facts and more imaginative approach to the arts than that which [the Warburg Institute] had been familiar*”<sup>69</sup> [emphasis added]. This could not have been achieved without Kenneth Clark. Clark was fundamentally receptive to the institute’s aims. It has been argued that a string of fortunate coincidences, along with keen awareness of prejudices akin to those held by Clark himself, helped turn the plea for the Warburg’s sanctuary into reality. The genteel antisemitism of Kenneth Clark, ironically, steered the passage of the Warburg Institute into the calmer waters of British academe, and particularly, to an underappreciated safe harbor of London’s university.

<sup>66</sup> Warburg Institute Archives, London (W.I.A.), 26.2, 'Portrait and Character . . . ' Small printed exhibition guide with introductions to various sections', p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> W.I.A., 26.5, Undated statement regarding the purpose of the exhibition, cyclostyled TS.

<sup>68</sup> W.I.A., 26.5.

<sup>69</sup> *Fritz Saxl (1890-1948), A Biographical Memoir* by Gertrud Bing. Reprinted on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. The Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study, University of London, London, 1998, p. 24.