

הארכיון המרכזי לתולדות העם היהודי (חל"צ)
THE CENTRAL ARCHIVES FOR THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE (PBC)

29.12.2020

י"ד בטבת תשפ"א

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my support for Peter Kovacs Rosenbluth's application to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

World War I was a turning point in world history. For many, it represented an abrupt end of a naïve era, dominated by the belief in progress of science and modernity. About half a million Jewish soldiers fought in the War, many of them in the uniforms of the Central Powers. The fact that they played an important part in the War, did not help them during the Nazi period. The first victims of the NS regime were Jewish veterans, who took their life once they were demanded to return their medals. Many other victims of the Holocaust were Jewish veterans and their families.

The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People holds numerous collections that attest to Jewish participation in the War in Germany and Austro-Hungary. One can find documentation in personal collections, community archives, as well as archives of Jewish veteran organizations. This important documentation was used for academic research, as well as in exhibitions in museums around the world, during the centenary of the War.

However, this multi-faceted documentation loses its glow in the modern era. The black and white nature of the photographs from the First World War produces a barrier between a 21st century audience and people from the past. We see them as an earlier phase in the development of homo sapiens, when the world was still colorless. Humanity pays a heavy price for our inability to grasp the past. In this context, it effects our ability to apprehend the WWI experience, and to learn its lessons.

The impressive technology implemented by Rosenbluth brings the past to life, and enables the viewer to connect to it, as proved in his previous work. We are more than happy to take part in this initiative, through granting the project's team full and free access to our holdings.

I hope that the Endowment will decide to support this important initiative that bridges the gap between past and present, for the sake of the future.

Respectfully,



Dr. Yochai Ben-Ghedalia

Director

Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People