

**Charles Phelps Taft Research Center**  
**at the University of Cincinnati**  
**Summer Research Fellowship Application**

---

Each section (I-V) should be placed at the start of a new page. All required materials must be included in a single document, uploaded to the electronic submissions system, no later than 5PM on the published day of the deadline. This program requires a letter of support from the applicant's department head. Applicants should submit their application with enough time for the letter to be uploaded to the submissions system prior to the close of the deadline. Taft does not accept an obligation to review applications that have not received the required documents by the close of the deadline.

---

**I. General Information**

- a. Name: **XXX XX**
- b. M#: **XXXXXXXX**
- c. Department: **XX**
- d. Position: **XX XXX**
- e. Project title: **On the Spectrum: Jewish Refugees from Nazi Austria and the Politics of Disability in Britain and America**
- f. Probable Results of a Grant (such as external funding, publications, or presentations): **book contract**
- g. Other Funding Applied For or Received for This Project (list source and amounts requested and awarded):  
**NEH Summer Stipend: I have been nominated by UC and have submitted to NEH.**

## II. Budget

### a. Requested Research Supplement:

As the UK is expensive (especially London), I would like to request a supplement to help with the flight.

<b>Flight, Cincinnati -&gt; London -&gt; Aberdeen -&gt; Cincinnati</b>	5/9/2019- 5/24/2019	<b>\$1,500</b>
<b>Lodging, Meals, and Local Transportation, London</b>	5/10/2019- 5/17/2019	<b>\$1,750</b>
<b>Lodging, Meals, and Local Transportation, Aberdeen</b>	5/17/2019- 5/24/2019	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>International phone plan</b>	5/9/2019- 5/24/2019	<b>\$140</b>
<b>Total travel expenses</b>		<b>\$4,390</b>
<b>Total requested Taft supplement</b>		<b>\$1,500</b>

### III. Project Proposal

#### **On the Spectrum: Jewish Refugees from Nazi Austria and the Politics of Disability in Britain and America**

Our understanding of the autism spectrum and other intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is rapidly changing. Activists with Down syndrome and autism have become powerful voices for a movement that challenges us to view IDD as difference, argues for inclusion, and champions self-determination. The movement has been accompanied by much scholarly and popular interest, but the historical arc that led to it is only partially known. In fact, we have missed a story—of global scope and abiding interest—that is crucial to understanding where we are today.

That story begins in April of 1939, when nine-year-old Peter Bergel set out from Amsterdam for a small village in northern Scotland. Peter and his parents, who were Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany, had fled to Amsterdam in 1937 and applied for visas to the United States. Scotland was not their first choice. Although Peter's parents were granted US entry, restrictions against “defectives” scuttled Peter's application. He had contracted encephalitis as a three-year-old and was left with permanent brain damage. His Jewishness and his disability made him a double target in Nazi Germany. In 1933, eugenics legislation mandated forced sterilization of people with disabilities. Within five years, mass killing was sanctioned. Peter made it onto a Kindertransport to the UK because his parents had found a doctor in Scotland willing to care for him. In a small village outside Aberdeen, Dr. Karl König, himself a German Jewish refugee, had just secured permission to open Camphill Special School, an intentional community for the care of children with IDD. Peter was his first patient.

In an era when shame, blame, and institutionalization were the response to disability, Camphill was founded on the principle that disabled children could enrich communities and that doctors should abandon the search for cures. König's radical position was rooted in his unusual approach to medicine. He was a follower of the Austrian occult philosopher, Rudolf Steiner, whose ideas inspired alternative medical, educational, and agricultural movements.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, König was able to secure state support and a loan from the Scottish Council for Refugees. The funds allowed the school to expand and establish a network of sister locations.

As the movement grew across the UK, it also inspired and cross-pollinated with sister movements. In the 1960s and 1970s, hippies, activists, and conscientious objectors flocked to the villages and started new ones in North America, Southern Africa, and Central Europe. Camphill became a center of the counterculture, gaining advocates such as Pete Seeger and other cultural

---

<sup>1</sup> Steiner's philosophy is called anthroposophy. Anthroposophic medicine is essentially a branch of homeopathy, which is a Central European alternative medical tradition dating to the late 18th century. Today, anthroposophists dominate homeopathic Pharma and primary care. The anthroposophical pedagogical movement is Waldorf education and its agricultural movement is biodynamics.

leading lights. Today, the movement includes over 130 communities extending to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. It continues to attract support from prominent artists and public intellectuals, and it remains a highly influential model of inclusive community care among interested practitioners and parent advocacy groups. Its story lies at the intersection of some of the defining events and cultural currents of the last century, including mass migrations, the emergence of the counterculture, the rise of alternative medicine, and the growth of disability rights.

Yet because Camphill remains outside the mainstream, it is little known to scholars and the wider public. Camphillers (as community members call themselves) have assiduously documented their history, but they have been reluctant to trust outside researchers with their sources. Over the past two years, I have built the relationships necessary to conduct collaborative, participant-based research within this relatively closed community. I have assisted Camphill archivists in cataloguing, digitizing, and text recognizing their materials and have shared with them material on Camphill that I have collected in other archives. In doing so I have built trust, and have been welcomed into communities to do oral history interviews. I am thus in the unique position to share Camphill's story. I aim to do this through a book that traces the history of the movement, the Central European scientific, ideological, and mystical movements that influenced it, and its influence on broader discussions about disability, inclusion, and belonging in the US and Europe today.

### **Significance**

Karl König was part of a generation of Viennese physicians and psychologists working toward new understandings of child development. They include Hans Asperger, whose research led to the eponymous diagnosis, Leo Kanner, who introduced the Autism diagnosis, and Bruno Bettelheim, the psychoanalyst who popularized the “frigid mother” theory of autism. With the Nazi rise to power, all but Asperger fled or were killed. Asperger collaborated; those in exile transformed their fields in the English-speaking world. The literatures on the history of IDD in the US and UK acknowledge but assign no particular significance to the Central European origins of their protagonists. My book will situate the story of IDD amid work by scholars such as Deborah Coen on the interdisciplinary Austrian cultural and intellectual milieu that produced strikingly original and creative work in science and medicine.

This story is also part of a larger history of childhood in mid-century Europe. As Tara Zahra and others have shown, international organizations, nations, and families fought over displaced children in post-WWII Europe. But there was an important exception: nationalists who claimed children of mixed or uncertain ethnicity used eugenic criteria to filter out those with disabilities. The founders of Camphill were among the few who claimed these children. Nevertheless, German racial thinking structured what they described as their movement's guiding “Middle European impulse.” This might seem surprising, but it accords with recent work that challenges the tendency to see holistic movements as inherently linked to the political left. Mapping Camphill's ideological complexity will allow me to offer new insights on the politics of alternative medicine, the counterculture, and the ideals of wholeness and interdependence central to them.

## **Methodology and Sources**

I focus on the stories of Camphill's founders—both abled and disabled—and the growth of their movement, weaving in historical and disciplinary contexts. I concentrate on personal stories because I seek to reach a general as well as scholarly audience. My sources are a mixture of archival records and oral history interviews. I have done over 50 hours of interviews with dozens of Camphill community members (abled and disabled) and family members of people with disabilities living in Camphill communities in the UK, Canada, and US. My archival sources from collections in Austria, the UK, and the US document the flight of Camphill's first volunteers and disabled residents from Nazi Germany and Austria, their work in the UK, and the transatlantic growth of their movement.<sup>2</sup>

## **Project Status and Outcomes**

I completed most of my archival research during the academic year and summer of 2018-2019. In spring 2020, I will be a residential fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where I will devote the full semester to writing. I will then be in an ideal position to return to the UK for follow-up research in summer 2020. I plan to visit the Maudsley Hospital Autism and Child Psychosis Archive at King's College, London (it was inaccessible in summer 2019) and make a final visit to the Karl König Archive in Aberdeen. I have been approached by editors at several major university presses and aim to have a manuscript under contract in the 2020-2021 academic year.

---

<sup>2</sup> My main archival collections are from the Austrian State Archives and Municipal and Provincial Archives (Vienna, Austria); British National Archives, British Medical Association Archives, World Jewish Relief Archives, Bodleian Libraries SPSL Archives, Karl König and Camphill Archives (London, Oxford, and Aberdeen, UK); Camphill Archives (NY and PA, USA).

## **Appendix:**

### **Manuscript Table of Contents**

**1. Introduction**

*How the entwined history of German curative education and Anglo-American disability rights brings into focus the current tension between belonging and mainstreaming in disability activism.*

**2. The Origins and Growth of German Curative Education, 1890s-1930s**

*Views of disability among the rising technocratic medical elite and its critics in Central Europe; emergence of blended, holistic Heilpädagogik (Curative Education) in the 1920s.*

**3. Victorian Institutions and German Curative Education in Scotland, 1940s**

*The special status of “European” doctors in mid-century British medicine. Curative education and the legacy of British institutions for wealthy and elite children with disabilities.*

**4. Post-war Forgetting and the Return to Middle Europe, 1950s**

*Dissemination of Camphill to Germany; influx of Germans to UK Camphills. Tensions related collaboration with Nazi euthanasia program; ties to Hans Asperger.*

**5. The Growth of Parent Activism in the UK and US, 1950s and 60s**

*Birth of autism advocacy in the UK and US. Transatlantic dissemination of the Camphill movement driven by parent activism.*

**6. Camphill and American Disability Rights, 1968 and beyond**

*Tensions between inclusion (rights-based activism) and belonging (German curative approach) that persists today. Tensions between priorities of parents and disabled adults.*

**7. Confronting Mainstream Models in 21<sup>st</sup> century America, Britain, and Germany**

*Support in the US overlooks problematic elements of German legacy. State take-overs in UK expose those elements. Criticism in Germany begins to confront problematic legacy.*

**8. Conclusion**

*German curative education addresses needs that American rights-based disability activism ignores, but it comes with a complex legacy. The Camphill movement illustrates the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of both approaches.*

#### **IV. Taft Grant History:**

Please list your grant history with Taft for the last 5 years, in reverse chronological order. Please list project title, the name, date, and amount of award, as well as development of the project subsequent to the grant, e.g. publication.

1. Type and Dates: **Competitive Lectures, September 2019**

Amount: **\$6,000.00**

Project Title: **Dis/ability in Germany, Yesterday and Today**

Resulting publications and presentations: **planned edited volume based on conference papers**

2. Type and Dates: **Faculty Release Fellowship, Spring 2018**

Amount: **Semester salary**

Project Title: **Villagers: Countercultural Communes and the Origins of the Disability Rights Movement**

Resulting publications and presentations: **article and book manuscript**

3. Type and Dates: **Travel for Research, March 2018**

Amount: **\$1725.00**

Project Title: **Villagers: Countercultural Communes and the Origins of the Disability Rights Movement**

Resulting publications and presentations: **feedback on article and book manuscript**

3. Type and Dates: **Domestic Conference Grant, December 2017**

Amount: **\$386.91**

Project Title: **Jewish Refugees from Central Europe and the Politics of Special Education in the English-speaking World**

Resulting publications and presentations: **feedback on article and book manuscript**

4. Type and Dates: **International Conference Grant, July 2017**

Amount: **\$2700.00**

Project Title: **Jewish Refugees from Central Europe and the Politics of Homeopathy in the English-speaking World, 1938-1979**

Resulting publications and presentations: **feedback on current book project**

5. Type and Dates: **Domestic Conference Grant, July 2017**

Amount: **\$1170.91**

Project Title: **Nazis, Jews, and the Politics of Homeopathy in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Resulting publications and presentations: **feedback on current book project**

6. Type and Dates: **Publication Costs Grant, April 2016**

Amount: **\$940.29**

Project Title: *Cosmopolitan Outsiders: Imperial Inclusion, National Exclusion, and the Pan-European Idea, 1900-1930* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

Resulting publications and presentations: **Indexing above book**

7. Type and Dates: **Domestic Conference Grant, September 2014**

Amount: **\$661.94**

Project Title: **"The Diverse Political Uses of Eugenics."**

Resulting publications and Presentations: **above book**

8. Type and Dates: **Center Fellowship, 2013-2014**

Amount: **Annual Salary**

Project Title: **"The Evolution of Europe: social Darwinism and the ideal of integration in fin de siècle Austria."**

Resulting Publications and Presentations: **above book**

9. Type and Dates: **Domestic Conference Grant, February 2014**

Amount: **\$425.60**

Project Title: **"An Aristocracy of Spirit not Blood: Reimagining Habsburg Aristocracy after the First World War."**

Resulting publications and Presentations: **above book**



