

## Original PenOwl play inspires audience about Holocaust's enduring influences

By Robert Martin 11 April 2018



*Arthur Dixon played by David Payne sits with Robert Washburne who portrayed Emil Loewenstein a Jewish professor in the play "Mr. Dr. Lehrer Friend during the Army War College's Holocaust Remembrance Day observance, April 11.*

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“We as humans need medicine for our souls in order to remain humane, said Sylvester Brown about this quote: ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not us,’ quoting from *1 John 1:8*. “I believe this play can be medicine for our souls,” said the Distance Education Department’s academic executive officer, who coordinated presentation of a play at the Army War College.

The Army War College observed Yom HaShoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, through the play by Dorothy King entitled “Mr. Dr. Lehrer Friend,” April 11 in Bliss Hall.

The play offers a fictionalized account of a lifelong friendship between an African-American college student and his mentor, a Jewish professor who

found refuge from Germany. As the Nazi reign of terror began in 1930s, Jewish professors dismissed from German universities fled to America. Some of the refugee scholars accepted positions at Historically Black Colleges where they found common ground with their black students.

“Seventy years after the state of Israel was formed, we still have anti-Semitism, and we still have cause for Black Lives Matter,” said Luisa Narins, in a post-play discussion with the audience. “The phrases Yom HaShoah, used throughout the play, means the day of remembering the genocide that happened. It is something we keep as memory and as a vow to never let this happen again,” she said.

“This play was an interesting reminder about not only Nazi Germany but how the Jewish scholars who fled contributed to the culture wherever they landed, and it became a positive story,” said Col. Gregg Thompson, Chief of Staff of the Army War College.

“The fact that this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s assassination is not lost ... we can see the similarities,” he said. “It’s important to remember, the fundamental premise of the American experiment is that all men and women are created equal.

“We still have a lot of work to do. Thank you for reminding us to continue this important conversation,” he said to the seven cast members.