

FROM TESTIMONY TO STORY

Video Interviews about Nazi Crimes. Perspectives and Experiences in Four Countries

edited by Dagi Knellessen and Ralf Possekkel



The stories of Holocaust survivors and others who were persecuted by the Nazis are an invaluable resource for understanding what effect persecution had on victims and how they dealt with this experience over time. In recent decades, researchers in many countries began videotaping contemporary witnesses as they told their stories, allowing their voices to be heard, when personal encounters are no longer possible. In the interviews, biographical narratives and personal memories are used to document the mass crimes committed by the Nazis and also to illuminate how survivors processed these memories in their lifetime.

This multi-faceted historical source poses special challenges to educational work. This volume reflects international developments, trends and debates about the videotaped contemporary witness interviews and their digital archives. Different interview collections and educational approaches from Israel, the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany are presented. These essays document the exchange that took place between education experts from these four countries as part of the series *Entdecken und Verstehen. Bildungsarbeit mit Zeugnissen von Opfern des Nationalsozialismus* (“Discovering and Understanding: Educational Work with Testimonials from Victims of National Socialism”) that was initiated and organized by the Foundation EVZ in 2010 and 2011.

Education with Testimonies, Vol. 2

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Video Interviews about Nazi Crimes
Perspectives and Experiences in Four Countries

edited by Dagi Knellessen and Ralf Possekel
on behalf of Stiftung „Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft“ (EVZ)

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OPENING REMARKS

One of the tasks of the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (*Stiftung „Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft“, EVZ*) is to keep alive the memory of National Socialist injustice for future generations. Our project funding is applied to our commitment to permanently embed the history of Nazi forced labor in the cultural memory of Germans and Europeans. As part of this effort, since 2009 the international traveling exhibition “Forced Labor: Germans, Forced Laborers and the War” (*Zwangsarbeit. Die Deutschen, die Zwangsarbeiter und der Krieg*) has been presented in Berlin, Moscow, Warsaw, Prague, Dortmund, Hamburg, and will continue on to Austria in 2016. This aim is also supported by the program “Forced Labor and Forgotten Victims: Remembering Nazi Injustice” (*Zwangsarbeit und vergessene Opfer. Erinnern an nationalsozialistisches Unrecht*). In addition, the Foundation has funded more than 580 living history audio and video interviews of survivors in 26 countries. Developed conceptually by the Freie Universität Berlin in cooperation with the German Historical Museum (*Deutsches Historisches Museum*), they are available worldwide online through the digital archive “Forced Labor 1939–1945” (*Zwangsarbeit 1939–1945*). Through current project funding in Germany, the Czech Republic and Russia, the Foundation is making this archive available internationally by developing educational materials aimed especially at young people. We have also supported a more comprehensive approach to the scientific and, importantly, educational interaction with personal accounts of Nazi victims.

Many victims of National Socialism recorded their own experiences during the Nazi era, after the war and also in recent decades. These testimonials constitute a huge collection of personal accounts which give expression to the strong desire of individuals to document these crimes and prevent them from being forgotten. They create a subjective legacy while often serving as a “warning” to future generations. Because of its legal mandate, the Foundation EVZ is especially committed to finding ways to make this vast and

valuable collection of very different sources of subjective memory useful to historical and political education. It is not, however, the Foundation's aim to promote an over-identification with former victims, nor to gloss over the crimes and their specific contexts. It strives instead to complement and broaden perspectives in the reappraisal of Nazi injustice. Because so many victims were denied attention and recognition for decades throughout the world – especially in Germany – the Foundation advocates preserving the victims' many different voices and their personal perspectives the Nazi era permanently in the current cultural memory of Germany and Europe.

It has been a special academic and pedagogical challenge to avoid having the victims' perspectives glorified and exaggerated: The survivors' reports cannot claim to offer a "better" explanation than can be provided by academic research based on other sources on National Socialism, nor to posit explanations or convey absolute truths. Their subjective authenticity (and often the biographical transformation of narratives over the decades) has to be expanded upon and contextualized through other perspectives. The personal testimonials can and should provide an impetus for further questions about social contexts, scopes of action, opportunities for resistance and individual responsibility. So many decades since the time of persecution, such personal testimonials also reflect how social conditions in each country affected the ways in which these events were remembered or repressed. They reveal whether society encouraged (or discouraged) bearing witness, and show, given the increasing age of the survivors, what subjective function was served by their decision to provide themselves and the public with their own "account" of events.

In the face of these challenges, since 2007 the Foundation has been promoting an exchange between experts of educational work with witnesses. The results of the first symposium, entitled "Forced Labor During National Socialism: Educational Work on the Transition from Contemporary History to History" (*Zwangsarbeit im Nationalsozialismus. Bildungsarbeit am Übergang von der Zeitgeschichte zur Geschichte*), were published by the Foundation in 2008 under the title "Witnesses: Educational Projects with Young

People about Nazi Forced Labor” (*Zeugen und Zeugnisse. Bildungsprojekte zur NS-Zwangsarbeit mit Jugendlichen*). This was followed from 2009 to 2011 by six nationwide seminars, each dedicated to different kinds of witnesses. Important conclusions from these seminars are documented in Volume 1 of the three-volume publication. In 2010–2011, educational experts in a German-Polish, German-Czech and German-Israeli seminar exchanged views about the educational work with video interviews. Volume 2 of this series contains selected findings from this seminar. Lastly, in 2012, the international academic conference “Preserving Survivors’ Memories” was held in Berlin in cooperation with the Freie Universität Berlin, the conclusions of which are summarized in Volume 3.

With this publication, the Foundation reaffirms its long-term commitment to promote educational work with survivors’ testimonies and to qualify and contribute to international exchanges between professional experts on related issues.

I would like to offer special thanks to all the authors who have contributed to this Foundation publication, including editors Dagi Knellessen and Ralf Possekel, as well as Verena Haug and Ulrike Rothe for their editorial work and project coordination. It is my hope that readers will find inspiration in reading the following material.

Günter Saathoff

Co-Director of the Foundation EVZ

Dagi Knellessen and Ralf Possekel

INTRODUCTION

Many diverse forms of testimonials have been bequeathed to us by Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi crimes, yet current international debates about the end of living testimonials and the future of memorialisation continue to focus on videotaped interviews. Professionals working in the field of education and memorial institutions are discussing what future significance and effect of video testimonials will be in a digital world without a living generation of contemporary witnesses.

This volume documents selected findings from three binational meetings, which educators and academics from Israel, the Czech Republic and Poland attended separately with their colleagues from Germany. The participants presented concepts and modules for an educational discourse about contemporary witness interviews and discussed the fundamental theoretical and ethical issues concerning how these sources are used. In the present volume, experts from four countries present educational programs from very diverse interview collections. The programs they work with have very different approaches and didactic orientations.

For decades, the audiovisual sources, which now provide researchers with an autonomous narrative genre, have been documenting worldwide, how victims of Nazi persecution experienced internment, exploitation and murder policies. Like no other testimonial form, this medium conveys both the personal presence and charisma of people who were persecuted by the Nazis as well as the emotional intensity of their stories. But because of their multiple dimensions, complexity and the length of the stories, contemporary interviews remain an unwieldy source material that needs to be extensively developed, processed and contextualised for educational and mediation purposes.

The testimonial genre is also distinguished by the fact that these sources were generated worldwide. The systematic collection of experiences began even before the end of the war when Nazi victims' were asked questions and interviewed. After 1945, interviews were recorded and archived in countries formerly occupied by Nazi Germany, in countries of exile, and in Israel and Germany. Today, the present interview collections cannot be ignored. They include surveys written by Holocaust survivors during the war, especially by Jewish committees and political resistance organizations in the occupied countries of Eastern Europe, as well as the well-known audio interviews conducted by psychologist David Boder in Western Europe in 1946. In the 1970s and 1980s, academic interview projects became a part of the classic field of oral history and other disciplines such as psychology and contemporary history, in addition to the collections created by both larger national memorial sites and smaller history initiatives.

The Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation, the largest and most prominent videotape archive of interviews of victims of the Nazis, was established in the 1990s. The Shoah Foundation collection currently contains more than 52,000 interviews accessible to more than 50 countries and user for research and education today. Its creation and dissemination is an indication of two trends that have significantly influenced and changed the reception of the source contemporary witness interviews: the internationalization of Holocaust commemoration and the technical modernisation in the digital age. Interest in the victims of Nazi crimes and their stories increased considerably as transnational Holocaust commemoration and remembrance cultures emerged worldwide in the 1990s. As opportunities for digitalisation grew in the last decades, the presentation, use and reception potential of audiovisual contemporary witness interviews has risen enormously, too.

But beyond the technical innovations and growing awareness of contemporary witnesses, the meanings and interpretations of contemporary witness interviews have also changed. The interviews were initially understood as

an academic documentation of the circumstances of the Nazi mass crimes, the Nazi perpetrators and the psychological suffering of the victims. Since the 1980s, however, the oral history interpretation of this source, which focuses on personal experience and processing personal history, has prevailed. In recent years, changing interpretations have re-emerged, especially in education and the media. On the one hand, the interviews with victims of the Nazis are set in the context of a universal human rights debate. On the other hand, there has been a tendency to use the interviewee as a key witness for legitimizing political memorialization messages. The statements in the interviews are often detached from the speaker's personal life experiences and presented in extremely shortened interview sequences. To what extent these interpretations increasingly de-contextualize the historical framework of narratives about the Nazi persecution experience, distorting the specific meaning of the Holocaust and other Nazi mass crimes until they are no longer recognizable, is one of the critical issues that are discussed in an international context.

The meaning and current pedagogical reception of the interviews were the subject of binational exchanges on educational approaches and programs in Israel, Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany. They are also presented in this publication. Conceptual differences, although not representative, are apparent, reflecting national trends. They show different parameters, developments and discussions of the memorialization of the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities in the respective countries. Transnational education approaches are, however, still rare. One exception is the educational concept of the Shoah Foundation at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles, which is used in many countries around the world and characterized by a didactic focus on currently relevant democracy, human rights and personal skills developments.

Nevertheless, there are hardly any recognizable similarities in the concrete educational practices of these four countries (and in the context of how they deal with source contemporary witness interviews) despite the often proclaimed universalized memory of Nazi crimes against humanity that is

detached from the specific national and regional histories. In the ideational awareness and recognition of these differences, the opportunity to adopt and adapt a variety of education-theoretical and practical stimuli continues to exist. Therefore a differentiating educational mediation that takes the respective international contexts into account, also with regard to the transnationally produced and archived videotaped contemporary witness interviews, remains essential.

Israeli education experts and historians at the Israeli-German experts' meeting expressed great reserve and even scepticism towards this educational work, with its textually complex and unwieldy contemporary witness interviews, whose subjects are visually reduced to "talking heads." Educational work in Israel, more often deploys cinematically *staged* documentations, so-called "video testimonials" or "testimonial films," terms that are used in Germany exclusively for videotaped recordings of experiential narratives of Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution. Even the national memorial site Yad Vashem, which has archived over 10,000 videotaped interviews with survivors and has access to the Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive interviews, provides, through its educational program (which is aimed specifically on historical learning), mostly educational films from the "Witnesses in Education" series. Each of these films documents the journey of a Holocaust survivor to biographically significant places before, during, and after the Shoah. These eleven cinematically staged life journeys include extensive accompanying materials and have been translated into 14 languages.

"Testimonial films" of Shoah survivors, directed by pedagogues, have also been produced in the currently relevant educational work of the Ghetto Fighters' House (Beit Lohamei Haghetat). "Michael's Dialogue," a film that shows a Shoah survivor having discussions with Jewish and Arab Israelis, is a key example of a multicultural oriented education concept. The references to the life experiences of young people, linked to the discussions about the historical and contemporary constructions of "others," are explicitly presented here.

The concepts of these two major Israeli educational institutions were presented and discussed in detail at the binational exchange between German and Israeli experts in 2010 in Berlin. We deeply regret that a contribution from these two institutions could not be included in the present publication. But we can, at least make reference to the interviews recorded during the experts' meeting with our Israeli colleagues, who played a leading role in the conception of the screenplays for the "testimonial films."¹

The academics at Bar-Ilan University developed a classic historical learning approach for discussing the early written testimonials of children who survived the Holocaust. One component of the multi-disciplinary approach for students to the written interviews and essays from 1946 is to analyze the children's narratives based on linguistic interpretation methods. In addition, the Massuah Institute's self-reflective and currently relevant education module is striking, in that it works with original sources from the Eichmann trial (1961) in Jerusalem, a trial that was meaningful for the Israeli historical perception of survivors.

Regardless of the didactic orientation of the educational programs, the reception of the interviews on the part of Israeli educational experts has shown that a direct encounter with survivors, a fundamental part of everyday educational work in Israel, is preferred over discussions of the "preserved" interviews.

At the meeting of German and Polish education professionals in Warsaw in the spring of 2010, virtually all Polish memorial sites were represented, along with numerous memorial initiatives and educators. In this publication, four Polish educational programs are presented that deal almost exclusively with Nazi era contemporary witness interviews. The discussion of experiences from the period of the People's Republic hardly played a role here, although interviews with dissidents from the communist era account for a significant proportion of Polish oral history archive collections (such as KARTA). Even today, various institutions and initiatives are still implementing educationally conceived oral history projects for young people.

Some of these were also presented at the meeting. In view of the historical themes or perspectives that were elaborated in the interviews, the concept of the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej) and the State Museum at Majdanek is aimed at communicating a specific national commemorative narrative that focuses on the suffering of the non-Jewish Polish population during the Second World War. The memorial site's module aims foremost to convey the persecution and detention experienced by Poles during the Nazi occupation. This is the focus of an interview with a non-Jewish woman, whose experiences under the communist regime are analysed and presented as a continuation of the "totalitarian oppression experience."

The planned regional-historical educational interview project for researching Polish-Jewish history in this publication takes a very different perspective, questioning Jewish and non-Jewish Poles about their experiences during the Nazi occupation. The concept is part of a historical-political movement in Poland, which was mainly initiated by dedicated teachers and history initiatives and which sees itself as part of a process of historical reappraisal and ideational awareness.

The concepts outlined here illustrate that due to the decades-long historical-political tradition of the People's Republic in Poland, whose commemoration focused on the heroes of the resistance against the Nazi occupiers, differing and disconnected views of history compete with one another. At the same time, local historical interview projects, through their discussions of Jews' and Poles' personal experiences, appear to challenge the metanarratives.

These nationally specific historical, memorial, and political aspects, which have particular importance in the different countries directly affected by Nazi expansion, persecution and murder politics, were ascribed no or only a minor role in the aforementioned concept of the US-based Shoah Foundation. The training program, designed for teachers, is indeed adapted to European conditions by including the countries' and regions' specific

historical experience. The central educational objectives of the USC Shoah Foundation, which pursues humanistic and human rights education and the strengthening of civic engagement, remain, however, unchanged. The article by the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw describes how advanced education for teachers is conducted in Poland.

In the Czech-German exchange, the discussion concerning the contemporary witness interviews focused more strongly on the connection between the Nazi occupation and the Communist regime, which immediately succeeded it. In addition, it was found that history, taught through contemporary witness interviews in the Czech Republic, is patently self-evident and commonplace, including the critical reflection of the source material. All of the institutions and projects involved in this binational exchange have contributed articles to this publication, conveying the complexity of educational programs in this country.

The educational programs at the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Muzeum romské kultury (Museum of Romani Culture) in Brno, the Prague organization Živá Pamiěť and the programs of the Shoah Foundation focus on Nazi history, the Holocaust and the Porajmos, and the mass murders of the European Roma committed by Nazi Germany. The two museums both presented the eventful history of the two ethnic groups that were marked by exclusion, isolation and stigmatisation, but which also differ in terms of minority recognition and social assimilation. Both institutions are working with contemporary witness interviews that have been recorded since the 1990s. The educational objectives are similar in that the dramatic historic event, the Nazi persecution and the Holocaust or the Porajmos, are not central, but rather part of an overall concept that conveys the respective cultural and identity history.

The Živá Pamiěť organisation's multimedia module for use by teachers in schools, does focus on the Nazi occupation and racial and political persecution. It deals with the fate of persecuted Jews and Roma, but also incorporates the history of politically persecuted non-Jewish Czechs and Sudeten

oppositionists. The contemporary witness interviews are part of the extensive source inventory they use.

The Czech Republic is also one of the twelve countries that have access to the Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation, which was set up in Prague for the Malach Centre for Visual History at Charles University and the Jewish Museum. In addition, partnerships to develop educational programmes, adapted to national conditions, were set up with different Czech institutions that also deal with stereotypical, conflict-ridden memory narratives. Like in Poland, the teacher training here is a central part of those program. In the Czech Republic alone, a thousand teachers participated in such training. The digital and multimedia learning module iWitness, which deals with video testimonials of Holocaust survivors and the Rwandan and Porajmos genocides, is also used.

The oral history archive Post Bellum (Memories of Nations), which sees itself as a post-communist society initiative with the goal of conveying the history of the 20th century to a wider general audience, has also compiled an extremely heterogeneous collection of contemporary witness interviews. Founded by journalists and historians, this NGO has received widespread recognition. Short journalistic interviews about the Nazi occupation as well the Communist era can be found on their web portal. It is noteworthy that interviews from thirteen other countries are also included in the web portal; this is an attempt by the NGO to document a “European experience history.”

The featured historical learning programs convey interviews and experiences from the Czech majority society as well as ethnic and religious minorities. During the Czech-German exchanges about the Post-Bellum project, it remained open to what extent remembrance and interpretation remain subjects of educational discussion. The source-critical reflection took up considerable space, in part because of the article by Jaroslav Pinkas from the Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů (Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes) in Prague. He presented an interview project about the memory of Czech families, which deals with the conflict-ridden processing of the

communist past. The critical evaluation of interviews, which children and their parents made about their experiences during the 1968 Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution in 1989, shows how a view of history is formed by the parents' generation, primarily nourished from the current interpretation needs of the post-communist family memory. Historical circumstances and events as well as personal experiences are selectively conveyed, but more often families pass down the silence and concealment; a phenomenon, which according to his thesis, requires critical reflection. Critical reflection is also necessary in regard to the problematic use of an interview inventory of the World War II Memorial in Hrabyně, which is part of the historical and cultural-historical Silesian Museum. The collection is made up of strongly ideological interviews that were recorded from the early 1960s until 1989. The historically interesting topics addressed in these interviews – from the economic crisis in the late 1920s to the partisan battles during the Nazi occupation, up to the military battles of the Red Army – are clearly influenced by the ideological discourse of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Suggestions on how to use this material source-critically were also presented and are documented in the corresponding contribution.

The internationally active People in Need Foundation, an Eastern European NGO, is active in humanitarian assistance as well as in human rights and democracy education. The program “Stories of Injustice,” developed for the Czech Republic, aims to bring young people closer to the era of the communist regime through regionally-based research and contemporary witness interviews. The didactic objective is to strengthen democratic values.

Three education programs were presented from Germany at the binational seminars that were developed for digital archives with interviews of Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution. The online archive “Forced Labor 1939–1945,” launched by the Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility, Future” (EVZ) with around 600 biographical interviews with former forced and slave laborers from 26 countries, is equipped with a

versatile learning environment and presentation. The belated recognition of Nazi forced labor as a mass crime in Germany, the specifics of these crimes, and even the concealment of this experience in Eastern European societies, are central topics of the educational program. As a result, the post-war period is the focal point in dealing with oral history interviews.

The second educational concept was developed for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe Foundation in Berlin. The interview archive consists of various collections of interviews with Holocaust survivors, including a partial inventory of the Yale University Fortunoff Archives and interviews that have been conducted recently by the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe Foundation. The educational program focuses on the examination of the individual Holocaust experience. It establishes a biographical access to the interviews that takes the form of a dialogue.

The school education program “Witnesses of the Shoah,” developed at the Freie Universität Berlin, works with interviews from the Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation. The access points to the interviews are structured thematically and further subjects of discussion include various aspects of the narrative as well as of the audiovisual medium.

All three programs concentrate exclusively on the Nazi experience and on processing this history, with a central focus on the historical contextualisation of oral history narratives. There are few references to the present-day. The three concepts reflect to some extent the latest academic and memorial-political standards of debate about how to deal with audiovisual sources of Nazi victims in education. The conditions specific to Germany that result from the diffuse definition of the term “contemporary witnesses” are not addressed here.

In addition to the digital archives presented here, which address solely Nazi victims as witnesses, there are also online archives in Germany that present the stories of German war victims, displaced persons and members of the Wehrmacht. The discussion of the indispensable task of contextualising these narratives has so far remained reserved. Even if addressing the experiences of German victims no longer functions as a pure defence mechanism

in response to the vast crimes inflicted on Nazi victims, societal and medial commemoration and subjective interpretation continues to take place.

The articles on the outlined concepts are arranged by country into four chapters. The essays aim to serve an education purpose, which is why the interview inventories, the educational contexts and the didactical-methodical procedures are described in concrete terms. In addition, the concepts' theoretical references are included, also reflecting some of the findings. Each chapter opens with academic-historical contributions. Hanna Yablonska from Ben Gurion University of the Negev (Beer Sheva) presents an overview of the different phases of reception of contemporary witnesses taking place in Israel. Oldřich Tůma from the Institute of Contemporary History (Prague) deals with the fundamental changes in the meaning and perspective of oral history after 1989 in the Czech Republic. Piotr Filipkowski of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw) goes through the spectrum of oral history in Poland from the oppositional roots during the People's Republic to the present. Alexander von Plato, formerly the director of the Institute for History and Biography at the University of Hagen, describes the rocky road to establishing oral history academically in Germany. The volume concludes with a commentary from Monique Eckmann from the Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit (Geneva) and Werner Dreier from *erinnern.at* (Bregenz), who investigate the concepts central to their educational core statements.

Special thanks from the editors to everyone who took part in the debates and helped prepare this publication.

1. <http://learning-from-history.de/Online-Lernen/Veranstaltung-LfH-Podcast/9171>
<http://learning-from-history.de/Online-Lernen/Veranstaltung-LfH-Podcast/9170>
<http://learning-from-history.de/Online-Lernen/Veranstaltung-LfH-Podcast/9172>
<http://learning-from-history.de/Online-Lernen/Veranstaltung-LfH-Podcast/9173>

■ ISRAEL

Hanna Yablonka

THE RECEPTION OF HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY IN ISRAEL

The uniqueness of the Holocaust as a historical event has been at the center of debate in Israel for years. Under this general heading many different views have been promoted. For Emil Fackenheim, for example, the Holocaust was an event that shaped an entire epoch. More recently, Yehuda Bauer, one of the leading figures in Israeli Holocaust studies, has called the Holocaust an “unprecedented event.” Without going into the difference between these positions, I would like to point to what they have in common: an awareness that the Holocaust is an event with significance for humanity in general, even if it happened to the Jews.

Central to this understanding is the idea that the annals of man will always bear a mark that distinguishes between pre and post-Holocaust history. It is no coincidence that, in the postwar period, international law added the category of “crimes against humanity” to the already existing categories of “war crimes” and “crimes against peace.” The new category made its first public appearance in the trials of the largest Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. It is also no coincidence that the term “genocide” was only coined by Raphael Lemkin, an émigré Jewish lawyer of European origin, in 1943.

Despite this, it took many years for the Holocaust to become a central topic in academic research and public discourse. This is true in historical research, in the public sphere, in ethics, in theology, in politics, in sociology and in art. There are several reasons for this delay, of which I will name a few: the experience of victory over Nazi Germany, which took hold in the public awareness; the will to leave the war behind, and focus all positive energy on rehabilitation; and the secrecy imposed by the Germans on the perpetration

of the “Final Solution.” The matter I would like to address concerns the well-known epistemological problem of a gap between information and consciousness. In fact, this is a twofold gap: first, between information about an event, and a society or an individual’s *knowledge* of this event. And, second, between the knowledge of an event, and the event’s becoming a subject of *consciousness*. Something, in other words, which can serve as a moral yardstick or an ethical compass by which a society or individuals may steer their course, appraising the avenues open to them in the present, and making critical choices about their future.

The farther a given event may be from the common lexicon or database of familiar human experience, the longer the transition from one stage to the next may be expected to take. This is the case with the Holocaust.

One of the problems, however, is that, as a historical event, the Holocaust is a term which encompasses the fates of millions of people. Moreover, it concerns their experience of dying – and complicating the matters even further is the fact that, as per the definition of the event we call the Holocaust, the experience of dying was itself elided, forever silenced. These problems can be seen clearly in contemporary reactions to the events, as, for example, in the phrasing used by the United States prosecutor, Robert H. Jackson, at the Nuremberg trials:

“Of the 9,600,000 Jews who lived in Nazi-dominated Europe, 60 percent are authoritatively estimated to have perished. Five million seven hundred thousand Jews **are missing** [emphasis added] from the countries in which they formerly lived, and over 4,500,000 cannot be accounted for by the normal death rate or by immigration, nor are they included among displaced persons.” (Yale University: Nuremberg Trials protocols, Nov. 21, 1945)

With the victims of the Holocaust missing, all personal testimonies of the event are the exclusive possession of *those who evaded* the core of the cataclysm and their own death. Although they were closest to this core, touching it, they were not swept up into it. In the following essay I will attempt to sketch the central junctions in testimony and its reception in Israel,

as well as confronting the place of testimony in the educational process connected with Holocaust education.

What Do We Mean by “Testimony”? The Hebrew Etymology

In Hebrew, those who survived the Holocaust are known as “*edim*,” and their testimony is known as “*edut*.” These words have long been a part of public discourse and their meaning is, therefore, not called into question. I would like to begin by ascertaining if what we are dealing with is indeed “testimony,” or actually a “story,” or a “recounting”? Or is it perhaps a “legacy”? I argue that the word “testimony” is actually the one least suited in this case. In its original sense, *edut* (testimony) can be either an oral deposition or a written document. Its context is the legal system and specifically the court of justice. Testimony is usually given under oath, and any non-truthful statement contained within such depositions may be the grounds for legal sanctions.

This is not the case we encounter with regard to Holocaust testimony, in which we are more concerned with the *story* of an experience or an event which the narrator lived through. There are other elements told in the story as well. The very act of telling and retelling the story expresses the narrator’s desire to bring his story to the attention of as many people as possible, often specifically the “younger generation.” In so doing, many survivors wish to make statements of a moral, humanistic or national character. The stories were also meant to meet the narrator’s need to remember: to mourn the dead and commemorate them, to document the crime, and to condemn the perpetrators. Whatever the purpose of testimony may be, the narrator assumes, as in every story, that he has an audience listening to him in good faith.

This kind of description of testimony is usually accompanied by dramatic statements about the silence/silencing of the survivors. In fact, this silence never existed.

The need to talk, and the urgency to do so, existed from the very zero point of the end of the Second World War. In fact, it existed while the war was still

going on. It would be untrue to say that survivors “wanted to talk about it” or that they “did not want to talk about it.” They usually wanted both things at the same time. “Having lived through this experience,” Elie Wiesel said in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in 2006, “one could not keep silent, no matter how difficult, if not impossible, it was to speak” (Night: 2005, p. 4). This ambivalence between silence and speech is the cornerstone in all the stories/testimonies/legacies/reports of survivors from the beginning of testimony about the Holocaust.

The Reception of Holocaust Testimony in Israel: a Periodization

As we have seen, Holocaust survivors were already speaking about the Holocaust – testifying, remembering and commemorating – in the earliest stages after the end of the World War and following their immigration to Israel. They thereby shaped to the Israeli Holocaust narrative, establishing its time, place, and contents, as will be clarified further on. Beyond their influence on the greater public discourse, survivors also created an alternative framework for the study and documentation of the Holocaust. They were the first to focus on the stories of the victims and not the perpetrators.

Nor was the influence of survivors limited to crafting a research agenda. Within the internal Jewish discourse and Israeli public discourse, survivors were the ones to frame a number of answers to central controversies which divided the public. First and foremost was the question of the complicity of the Jewish functionaries (the Judenrat, the Jewish Police, Kapos), and the way the Jews who “went like lambs to the slaughter” died.

The words of survivors and their spoken testimonies – their public testimonies and the stories they told in other circumstances – are central to understanding the Israeli Holocaust discourse. These verbal acts had a deep impact on Israeli society, and their long reaching effects, as well as their nature, are still coming to light when this paper was written.

Regarding the reception of Holocaust testimony in Israel, the following periodization can be suggested:

- The Era of Encryption: 1945–1949. The use of encrypted messages.
- The 1950s: The interpretation of encoded messages through Israeli identity (detached speech).
- The 1960s: The beginning of a true dialog and its incorporation into personal, historical and national interpretations.
- Epilogue, the 1970s and onwards: The assimilation of the message.

In what follows, we will briefly examine each of these periods, focusing on three dimensions: first, the manner in which the Holocaust was interpreted by Israelis, who “were not there”; second, the transformations through which Holocaust survivors became the most consensual Israeli social group; and, finally, the way in which the Holocaust became a chapter in Israeli history, as well as a prism through which to evaluate present-day realities.

The Era of Encryption: 1945-1949

Between 1945 and 1949 some 250,000 Holocaust survivors arrived in the state of Israel. This was a very sizeable group, both in terms of absolute numbers but even more so in terms of their relative weight in the then-Israeli society, which was circa 450,000 at the end of the Second World War.

The survivors were not only new emigrants, but also messengers, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the public. In their own eyes, many of them understood the meaning of their survival as connected with the role of a messenger: they were to pass on the story of what had happened to Jews in the Holocaust. Those who had perished, after all, could not do so themselves. In the eyes of the public, survivors were the only ones who could give information about the ultimate fate of the European communities from which, we must recall, most of the lay members in the Yishuv had originally hailed. The picture which gradually became clear was that entire Jewish communities had been totally decimated.

NARRATIVES IN A BUBBLE: TIME, SPACE AND SUBJECT MATTER

In the early stages, this news constituted a horror the depth of which could not be grasped and was therefore in need of often stereotypical encryption.

A number of elements in survivors' stories remained constant, in the Israeli perception, over time, particularly those regarding the boundaries of the Holocaust narrative in terms of time, space and subject matter.

Holocaust narratives, as elaborated and passed down by the survivors, are typically set within the following boundaries: as opposed to the historiography of the Second World War, the chronological delimitation was set to the years 1933–1945, i.e. beginning with Hitler's rise to power and not from the outbreak of the war in 1939. In other words, the construction of the Holocaust narrative by survivors was undertaken outside the framework of the Second World War.

In survivor stories, the Second World War retains a place of importance primarily with regard to two key dates. The first is the date at which the narrator's place of residence was occupied by the Germans (or fell within the sphere of German influence, by becoming a protectorate or a satellite state). The second date is the date of the cessation of fighting in the area in which the given narrator was at the time ("liberation"). However, regarding the "liberation," one must note that this date was often marked by survivors with reference to the Jewish, not secular, calendar and worldview. Yitzhak Zuckerman recounts, for example, that, "On a certain day in January of 1945 we were told 'there are Red Army tanks in the village market.'" And he continues, "I think the mourning was never greater than on this joyous day."

The separation between the Second World War and the Holocaust had long reaching effects on public consciousness. Those survivors who told their stories did so in the terms in which they had experienced the events – cut off and dissociated from greater global events. This mode of relating to the Holocaust transferred itself into public discourse and the educational system. The narrative of the Holocaust was told as though within a bubble, solely within the Jewish context and against the backdrop of a Jewish diasporic existence, influenced only by the longstanding hatred of Jews. Survivors passed on a Eurocentric understanding of the Holocaust narrative to their listeners, limiting the geographic boundaries to Europe alone.

SPEECH EVENTS AND EARLY SPEAKERS

In the years after the Second World War, the four most important speakers among survivors were Różka Korczak from Vilna, and her public address in Kibbutz Eilon, in January of 1945; Abba Kovner from Vilna, and the report he made to members of the Jewish Brigade in Tervisio, Italy,¹¹ Yitzhak Zuckerman from Warsaw, who spoke in London in August of 1945; and (Cywia) Zivia Lubetkin from Warsaw, who spoke in Kibbutz Yagur in June 1946, immediately after her immigration to Mandatory Palestine. Despite the fact that these four speakers were people with very different characters, the similarities in their stories were striking.

The message was comprised of five points: the totality of the murder; the widespread complicity of the European nations in the act and the tangible possibility of its recurrence; the heroism of armed struggle; the failure of Jewish leadership in the straits of war; and the reversal of the historical roles between the Jewish Diaspora and the Yishuv in the Land of Israel. Schematically, one can say that these early testimonial speeches were concerned with two types of critical re-examinations: an external dialog between the Jews and the European nations, and an internal one within and between the Jewish communities. The latter category itself contained two separate discussions: one limited only to Holocaust survivors, and one between Holocaust survivors as a group and Jews who were living in the “free world,” particularly the Land of Israel.

The 1950s: The Interpretation of Encoded Messages through Israeli Identity

More than at any other time, the 1950s saw very little dialog between Israeli society and the survivors. This does not mean that the subject of the Holocaust was dropped from the public agenda. It is more correct to say that, during these years, the discourse about the Holocaust and the struggle to preserve its memory were mostly part of an internal discourse among survivors. Israeli society at large, for its part, used previously established codes to refer to this subject within its wider public discourse.

Anyone who reviews the activities undertaken by survivors living in the state of Israel during the 1950s cannot but be struck by the great scope and number of such activities on the subject of Holocaust memory. This becomes all the more striking when we take into account that in the 1950s survivors were immigrants who had only just stepped off the boat. Not only were they dealing with everything which was connected to emigration, but they had suffered a severe trauma during the Second World War. They now faced the necessity of rebuilding their lives, establishing families and achieving economic stability – within the context of the newly established state of Israel. In the 1950s Israeli society was still recovering from the 1948 War of Independence, while at the same time engaged in the process of absorbing massive immigration, and suffering from the transition from a national community to statehood. Despite these circumstances, survivors were tremendously active in the field of Holocaust history and memory. The great quantity of their activities can be seen clearly in three fields: the creation of academic knowledge, commemoration, and the collection of documents and testimony for future generations. The influence of these fields would become more marked from the 1960s and onwards.

CREATION OF ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

The first steps taken in the early 1950s to document and study the Holocaust in Israel were taken by survivors, who also began collecting research material. The first project was started by former members of the ghetto undergrounds and partisan units, who laid the cornerstone for their testimony collection project in 1949, after founding their kibbutz, Lohamei HaGeta'ot. They thereby created the first Holocaust museum in the world, which was unique in two respects: in being intended from the outset for educational activities, and in being situated, as a statement, within a vibrant and active community. The archive at Lohamei HaGeta'ot was established a year later, followed shortly by the publication of the first academic journal in the world devoted to the Holocaust and its resistance fighters: “Dapim – Studies on the Holocaust and Jewish Resistance.”

Survivor historians such as Josef Kermisz, Nachman Blumenthal and Isaiah Trunk began their activities in Israel at Lohamei HaGeta'ot. This early form of research can also be seen as testimony. When Yad Vashem was established, these scholars relocated there.

COLLECTING DOCUMENTS AND TESTIMONIES

In all matters concerning the documentation and study of the Holocaust, it was survivors who had already been active during the war itself but even more so after its conclusion. The active figures were not scholars from the “ivory tower,” but a group of people motivated by an ethical and spiritual imperative, driven by a sense of fulfilling a historical mission. In this, they were not very different from the speakers mentioned in the first period above. They strongly felt that survivors – those who had experienced the period themselves, understood its significance, and could use these insights to document it – were the only qualified source for conducting historical research. In and through their choice of research subjects, survivors carried on the internal Jewish dialog, self-evaluation and coming to terms with it, as mentioned above.

An important expression for the mindset of the survivor historians can be found in Nathan Eck's 1951 article, where he notes that:

“Those who are concerned with the study of the Holocaust must, of course, begin by preparing research material for the next generations. They must care for collections of documents of whose existence and location perhaps only members of our own generation are aware. They must collect testimony from people who are, after all, only mortal, and whose death will be the death knell for their secrets. They must encourage, facilitate and perhaps also guide those survivors who would write memoirs. They must review testimonies and ascertain their truthfulness and exactness...” (Eck 1951)

The emphasis here is on the message for the future and on encouraging survivors to speak. The dominant feeling at the time was that everything of which survivors do not speak will be silenced forever. Such a silence would

amount to betraying those who had not been lucky enough to survive. In this sense, the creation of academic knowledge also contained an aspect of commemoration.

Thus, the research agenda at Yad Vashem was, in fact designed and established by survivors. However, this matter, much like other matters in the 1950s, remained part of the internal dialog between survivors. The same was true of the Rachel Auerbach testimony collection project at Yad Vashem, where close to 3,000 testimonies were collected within less than six years. The importance of this project, which continued its operation, would become evident during the Eichmann trial in the 1960s.

In this manner, a large corpus of information about the victims of the Holocaust was assembled by survivor historians, whose research was based both on the testimony of survivors as well as on material written and collected by the victims while they were still alive, in an attempt to bequeath them to future generations. Hence, the Jerusalem School of Holocaust Studies has its sources in the legacy of the survivors.

At the same time, Israeli research established a number of alternative answers to Hilberg and Arendt's interpretations as well as to a number of disputes that had already become part of the Israeli discourse. Aharon Weiss and Isaiah Trunk established a scholarly alternative to Hilberg and Arendt's interpretations concerning the Judenrat. They stressed the study of Jewish history, and the imperative of viewing the Jews through the eyes of the victims, whose viewpoint was used to incorporate the story of the Holocaust into the wider context of Jewish culture.

COMMEMORATION

As already mentioned, the activities pursued by survivors brought about an intermixing of academic knowledge, documentation and commemoration. Each one of these fields also contained elements of each other. *Yizkor* books, which were published in growing numbers from 1953, are just one example of this. Commemoration projects were also established for cities and towns

that had been completely wiped out in an attempt to preserve the memory of a vanished Jewish world.

Alongside both forms of activity noted above, survivors also wrote testimonial books as well as literary texts influenced by autobiographic elements. Some, penned by former members of the youth movements and political parties, were ideologically oriented and aimed at telling the story of their public during the days of its destruction.

The 1960s: The Beginning of a True Dialog

The Eichmann trial (1961–1962) was an event that was to have a powerful influence on Israeli society. It can be situated within the context of a period whose roots are to be found in the late 1950s.

The experience of listening to the witnesses during the Eichmann trial was very different from the previous Israeli experience with testimonial accounts in the public sphere. As opposed to the reports made in the late 1940s, testimony was now, for the first time, delivered in the first person singular. This time, the public did not merely hear the testimony, but actively *listened* to survivors – both to what was explicitly said and to what was implied. For the first time, Israelis were listening to the story of the Holocaust in the context of the ordinary reality of those who had lived through it, i.e. without the filter of the Israeli society, which explained survivor experience in terms of Israeli social norms and realities of everyday life.

Without a doubt, this mode of listening was furthered by the general atmosphere in Israel following the withdrawal from Sinai (1956–1957). These were years of unprecedented quiet: gone were the heady days of independence and the fervor of the late 1940s. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Israeli society was looking and listening inwards. At the time, many Israelis considered the Eichmann trial, from its very beginning, to be an event of historical significance. For them it was a concrete expression of having a sovereign Israeli state, which, for the first time, allowed Jews to pass judgment on those who had caused them harm, putting the details of the Jewish martyrdom on full public display.

THE EICHMANN TRIAL AS PART OF THE INTERNAL JEWISH DIALOG

Although speaking from the witness stand at *Beit Ha'am* in Jerusalem in the presence of the accused and the judges, survivors aimed their words at the public beyond the courthouse walls. Thus, in terms of the two dialogs noted above, the testimonies heard at the Eichmann trial should be considered primarily as part of the internal Jewish dialog between survivors and their relatives who had been absent from the events in Europe.

Telling their personal stories in the most public way possible, most of the witnesses at the trial were filled with a sense of carrying out a mission. Many of them prepared for their performance in advance, meticulously planning both their physical appearance and what they intended to say. They knew that they were not only representing themselves, but, more importantly, also their communities, their destroyed cities and villages. Many of them had been recommended to speak by their *Landsmannschaften* (organizations formed and named after the members birth place) and the speakers therefore felt undoubtedly obligated to do so. They agreed to testify because of the moral debt they owed to the victims, at times encouraged by the efforts of the prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, to this respect. They felt themselves to be both an integral part of a destroyed and vanished world, while also a living part of contemporary Israeli society.

In three senses their testimony transformed the story of the Holocaust, which had taken place in Europe, into an Israeli story. First, the testimonies created a widespread emotional identification of the public with the story of the Holocaust. As one person who was interviewed for the *Davar* newspaper put it: "The trial strengthened the Jewish element in me. I now began to understand what the unity of Jewish fate meant." (Keshev Shabta, 1961, p. 2) Second, the basic problems to which the testimonies drew attention were both specifically Israeli and universal. The trial testimonies went on to become the main source for the public Holocaust discourse in Israel. And third, the public transmission of testimony finally granted social legitimacy to *Sh'erit ha-Pletah* as being fully part of Israeli society.

This new mode of listening was no longer driven by anxiety, a fear of hearing or a rigid distinction between Israel and the Diaspora. It was based on a desire to “connect” – by means of the survivor and with his or her help – to families which had been murdered and to childhood landscapes and memories. Even if they had not been born in Europe, most Israelis in 1960 thought of the Continent as the birthplace of their father’s culture, and strongly identified it with traditional Judaism and a sense of family.

For these reasons, hearing the testimonies from the Eichmann trial brought about a sea change within Israeli society: emotional perspectives and perceptions concerning the Holocaust and its survivors were altered. The changes wrought at this time left a long and lasting imprint on the Israeli social body. More than at any time before or after, testimony was heard on an entirely personal basis.

TESTIMONIES IN THE ISRAELI COURTS: BETWEEN 1962 AND 1987

In light of the above, it might seem paradoxical that it was against the setting of a courthouse in Jerusalem, where, for the first time, the legal value of survivor's testimony was seriously called into question. Unprecedentedly, the judges chose to open their verdict with a passage which they named “the way of the court” – a lengthy statement on the court’s inability to evaluate, weigh and compile the testimonies as part of the verdict.

Two and a half decades after the beginning of the Eichmann trial, Jerusalem was the seat of the second largest Holocaust trial in Israel, that against John Ivan Demjanjuk. The result of this trial is also of interest concerning the matter of testimony. The testimony of the survivors – Eliahu Rosenberg, Josef Czarny and Pinchas Epstein – captivated most of the public attention and evoked intense feelings of identification and empathy. As opposed to the Eichmann trial, the verdict in this case placed extreme importance on testimony as a basis for a conviction.

But this was not the end of the story. Demjanjuk appealed to the Supreme Court, which ruled in his favor on the basis of reasonable doubt. The news of the acquittal hit survivors hard, producing great emotional agitation

in many of them. Josef Czarny, one survivor who was affected in this way, phrased the matter thus: “How is it possible for a document to be ‘authentic,’ while I myself am ‘not authentic’?” (Yedioth Aharonoth: 30.07.1993, p. 2) In other words, in the two most central and highly publicized Holocaust trials conducted in the state of Israel, Holocaust testimonies were found to be meaningless from a juridical point of view. Notwithstanding however, in terms of public discourse, only testimonies were seen as conveying meaning about the Holocaust.

The stories told by survivors were always about more than just testimony. Yet despite this, in the vernacular Israeli culture, *all parts* of a survivor’s story were now seen exclusively as testimony. Survivors were, and still are, called upon to submit “Pages of Testimony” (*dapi ed*) to Yad Vashem; The survivor who accompanied youth trips to Poland was a “Testimony Man” (*ish edut*); and even members of the military who take part in official trips to Poland, most of whom were born after 1945, are called, in military parlance, “Uniformed Witnesses” (*edim be’madim*). It would seem that the use of the root E.D.U.T, found at the basis of the Hebrew words for both witness and testimony, expresses the Israeli public’s need to grant survivors’ stories a seal of credibility and authenticity that is beyond all doubt: they are read in their entirety as realistic depictions of a past reality.

The 1970s and After

Following the Eichmann trial, the period beginning in the 1970s was a time in which, for many Israelis, the significance of the Holocaust as part of their national identity greatly increased. In fact, it often became its central pillar, overshadowing even the establishment of the state of Israel in this context. “The Holocaust,” wrote the Chief Military Officer for Education in the IDF, “influences and structures our shared national identity, and the way in which we understand ourselves and the world in which we live.” (Commander’s order for yom Hashoah 1976).

The voices of Holocaust survivors had never been more loudly or more clearly heard across the entire Israeli public space. At least in part, this was

thanks to the unprecedented legitimacy that testimony enjoyed in Israeli society. The unprecedented reception of survivors and their stories was certainly also helped by the fact that the financial situation of many of them had improved, and their retirement provided them with the necessary time to testify and tell their stories. It should also be noted that the entrance of a third generation into the family dynamics often had the effect of easing intergenerational communication.

These years were the high water mark for the penetration of Holocaust testimonies into Israeli public discourse, both with regard to the public's desire to hear them and in the willingness and readiness of survivors to talk. Testimony flourished in a variety of forms: in speech, in writing and through artistic expressions.

This "golden age" of testimony was not limited to Israel. The most famous non-Israeli examples are Steven Spielberg's testimony project (the USC Shoah Foundation) and the Yale Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. General guidelines for interviewers were developed with a view toward increasing the reliability of testimonies. This enabled cross referencing testimonies according to subject matter and the identification of overlapping elements in testimonies, which have enabled their use in the writing of history.

Yet despite this, the driving power of testimony is still to be found in the personal meeting between the listeners and the survivor. When told in the first person and accompanied by the rich expressions of a survivor's body language, the story expresses a human vitality and the meaning of a personal triumph. Stories told in this manner pass on morals.

Public Discourse around Survivors Today: Musings and Second Thoughts

The transition into the new millennium brought with it an overall change in the public's relation to survivors and their social role as witnesses. Most of the survivors still alive today are in their 80s and 90s. The Israeli public discourse that surrounds them comes to life in the days preceding Holocaust Remembrance Day, and focuses primarily on their old age, their enfeebled

human body and often on the financial straits in which they find themselves. The public image of survivors now depicts them as helpless human subjects, in need of pity and support. In no small part, this image is a pathetic one – it clashes, therefore, with Israelis ingrained political correctness, which demands that Holocaust survivors be treated with respect, in light of their painful past.

In comparison with the 1970s and 1980s this is a significant change indeed. At that time, survivors were seen as the moral backbone of Israeli society. They were its visionaries and shapers, and, as such, their words were avidly sought. In recent years, the previous awe and attentive listening that used to be directed toward Holocaust survivors have given way to respect. While this may sound benign, it is in fact completely estranged and at odds with real listening or interest, and is a mere automatic and almost mechanical response.

CLINGING TO SURVIVORS: IN FACE OF ANTI-SEMITISM AND ANTI-ISRAELI SENTIMENTS

Survivors are indeed suffering from problems of advanced age. More and more of them have difficulty recalling details such as exact dates, avoiding repetition in their testimony and speaking at a pace and in a manner to which young people can relate. It is more difficult for them to arouse the same amazement at human resilience and vitality that was so common in the 1970s and 1980s.

Despite this, Israeli society will not let go. Israel's deteriorating status on the international stage makes its recourse to the Holocaust all the more urgent in the present. After all, it is generally held that the world's writhing sensation of guilt for the murder of the Jews during the Holocaust, together with contemporary anti-Semitism and anti-Israeli sentiments in Europe and elsewhere, are perhaps the last remaining bastions of international support to which the state of Israel can lay claim.

USING TESTIMONY IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TODAY: FROM TESTIMONY TO STORY

Clinging to the survivors and their testimonies in this way commits a double disservice: not only does it put the survivors to shame; it creates in their younger listeners ambivalent feelings. Generally, students report coming away from their meetings with survivor testimony with only a partial belief in what is being told, together with a feeling of long-windedness and often downright boredom. This completely obviates the educational goal.

Practitioners of education have long been preparing for the day when the “last survivors will be gone.” Survivors were filmed on video, both in the comfort of their own homes and on educational journeys to their places of origin, concentrations camps and ghettos. These films are increasingly taking the place of the witness themselves. Or are they?

When speaking of testimonies as an educational device the word we use to describe them is critical. It is time to abandon the term “testimony” and to replace it with the word “story” or “narrative.” We should adopt an informed approach toward each story, bearing in mind two points.

The first point is that every narrative is the result of a selective process influenced by the choices of the survivor-narrator in light of the expectations of his interviewers and listeners. Listening to the narrative will clarify that we are presented only with that about which it is possible for the survivor to speak. Therefore, in the educational process we should stress also paying attention to what is *not* said, to what is difficult if not impossible to express using ordinary language. This certainly also includes the fear that survivors have, which is often so intense that it is almost impossible to describe psychologically, of re-experiencing the mentally unbearable conditions of the extreme event.

Exactly how, what or how much a given survivor can talk about is, of course, an extremely individual matter, which depends on a survivor’s personal sensitivities. These questions are influenced also by the severity of trauma and the degree of shame, humiliation and brutalization which a survivor-narrator endured as part of the process of dehumanization. Not only the event itself,

but also its memory limit what survivor-narrators may say, for they must contented with their memories of betrayal, abandonment and helplessness. The second point to bear in mind is this: When listening to survivors' narratives, we must be conscious of the fact that, perhaps above all else, these are works of mourning and infinite grief. This is the context common to all survivor-narrators in which their stories must always be read. Often these narratives also express feelings of guilt, which the survivor-narrator bears as the one who has survived where so many others were murdered, and an entire Jewish world was lost.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TESTIMONY AND STORY

As speaking witnesses can no longer be brought before an audience, we must now clarify what, if anything, recorded video testimonies have to do with (live) oral testimonies.

Video testimony has been edited: certain parts have been cut or deleted, and the witnesses have been made up, placed in front of a camera and are fully aware of its presence. The event of the recording itself is indeed a unique and singular event, but witnesses are aware that this single event will outlive them through the recording made of it. They know that their words will be replayed endlessly. At times testimony has been "aestheticized," for example through the addition of music. The recording was conducted and led by an interviewer, who set down the plot line. To a great extent this blocks all the information that a listener could absorb from watching the body language of the survivor who speaks alone in front of an audience.

The testimony of a survivor speaking in public is directed by the narrator's associations. This is the case even if, over time, most of the witnesses know their storyline and testimony by heart, and despite the fact that these narratives naturally become more structured. From an educational perspective, the ideal situation is one in which teachers have footage of testimony given publicly, alongside the testimony of the same person when seated in front of a camera that has been professionally produced and edited. Naturally, there are not many such cases.

Film and the visual media are the language of youth today. As the number of Holocaust survivors able to actively play the role of narrator is fast disappearing, it is natural that there should be a demand for recorded testimonies as the only device able to preserve the story closest to the Holocaust is one told by someone who experienced it. Despite this, in using video testimony we would be well advised to address the following points:

a. Clarity regarding the purpose of the use – Is the testimony to be used as an additional learning aid? Is it used to stimulate emotions and encourage crying? Is the purpose to evoke curiosity, which, in turn, develops into a motivation to further study the subject?

In this context it is important to decide whether the recorded testimony is used as a source in its own right, or whether it is used as the goal of the educational process. At times, there is a sense of urgency and panic associated with the growing disappearance of the survivors. Connected with these feelings is the idea that part of the story behind the video testimony has to do with the battle against Holocaust deniers. Stories collected many years after the events cannot and should not be used as pawns in an ideological or political war of any sort. In the process of testimony collection it is important to make this clear to the survivors. Some of them at times may identify a demand to spearhead a struggle of “Holocaust affirmation,” and will try to live up to this demand in their testimonies. In my experience, this can lead to invalidating the entire testimony.

b. The age of the listeners in the audience – The educational platform for Holocaust education in Israel has recently been extended to include kindergarten pupils. With this in mind, it is important to adjust the stories of the survivors to the age of the audience.

c. The editing – Should editing be left to one person? Are there standards by which we can guide and evaluate editing? Is it at all permissible to edit a testimony, a process which results in the suppression of some parts?

d. Information which should be addressed before the viewing – What is the context of the recording? Who paid for it? Who conducted it? Who did the

interviewing? What is the more general context: When and where was the story told? How old were the interviewees?

Perhaps, above all else, the use of audiovisual means in the educational process introduces an element of passivity. The viewer is relegated to the position of a spectator, someone of whom nearly nothing is required. I am unfamiliar with a serious educational process that does not have a strong *active* element, one that requires the learning subject to take action. Without introducing this kind of call to action into the viewing of testimonies, audiovisual recordings will become merely another film shown by teachers in classrooms: at times boring, at times annoying, often estranged. Certainly, they will be nothing that stimulates an inner process. For our intents and purposes, their use in this manner is devoid of any educational value.

For this reason it is my opinion that audiovisual recordings should never be used as the sole educational device when teaching about the Holocaust, but only as one tool among many.

Holocaust survivors deserve to always evoke among their listeners feelings of empathy and unbridled compassion, as they did during the highpoint of testimony. Even once their memories become only the recordings they left behind, their words should always help us reconstruct and understand historical processes. The morals which survivors pass on in their stories often have significance on a social as well as ethical level. They are impressive human documents and, no less significantly, they encourage the pursuit of knowledge and the continued excavation of one of the darkest chapters in human history.

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Aya Ben-Naftali

BETWEEN MEMORY AND COMMEMORATION Holocaust Survivors' Testimonies as an Educational Theme at the Eichmann Trial Exhibition

In recent years, Massuah Museum has been opening new permanent exhibitions that focus more on the meaning of Holocaust memory than on the commemoration of Holocaust victims. Massuah's principal mission is to introduce the Holocaust to young people, not only as a historical topic but also as a relevant issue that impacts their life and identity.

Construction of Knowledge in Active Exhibitions at Massuah Museum

The museum, part of the campus of the Massuah Institute for Holocaust Studies, addresses a population of teenagers and young people. In the course of rebuilding the museum – a process that began nearly a decade ago – we put together a concept for an interactive educational and historical museum that does not focus on presenting exhibits by means of a linear learning experience but, rather, strives to stimulate the visitor's thinking. The museum was built in the form of study centers within exhibit halls, allowing participants to construct their knowledge and endow memory with personal, cognitive, cultural, and intellectual meaning.

The need for these exhibitions has become apparent in recent years in view of the growing presence of the Holocaust in the Israeli public discourse. The changes that have occurred in Israeli society during the past two decades have led to a shift in the Israeli self-image, largely replacing the Israeli collective national narrative with innumerable personal narratives. In recent years, especially since 2000 when the second Intifada began, the memory of the Holocaust in Israeli society has become much "louder." The country's

existential anxiety has amplified the sense of identification with the Jewish victim; by the same token, however, the violent events have brought acute humanistic questions to the fore.

Our basic premise is that the Holocaust was both the greatest disaster that befell the Jewish people in the modern era and a significant crisis in modern civilization. Massuah's educational approach rests on the assumption that exposure to the Holocaust forces the post-Holocaust generations to tackle important questions about the essence of the individual, people, state, culture, and education – and that these lead to questions of personal and collective identity that are relevant to the world of contemporary young people. Our educational experience shows that although the memory of the Holocaust is fading over time and the number of survivors is dwindling, young people are taking a growing interest in the Holocaust and its significance for their lives.

Before developing the new permanent exhibitions at Massuah Museum, we asked the following questions:

- a. With what museum concepts and educational methods can we reach out to young people at the beginning of the twenty-first century so that they can understand Holocaust survivors' testimonies not only as a historical issue, but also as an issue that impacts on their lives?
- b. Is it the role of museums that deal with Holocaust memory to preserve the traditional paradigm and to impart the values of the hegemonic culture, or should a new paradigm be adopted that focuses on the creation of an infrastructure for a personal and relevant search for the meaning of the memory?

Application of Educational Constructivist Theory and Approach at Massuah Museum

Since Massuah Museum is part of a campus meant for groups of teenagers and young people from Israel and abroad, we chose to rebuild it in along the lines of an educational museum based, at least partly, on the application of the principles of Educational Constructivism. In this context, the term "Constructivism" refers to psychological theories that define learning as an

active process in which the learner not only contemplates each detail but also creates change in what is shown to him/her in order to attain insight. Following this approach, the creation of personal meaning is the main element of the learning process. Stressing the process of constructing knowledge and creating a personal interpretation is particularly suitable for active museums that cater to groups of young people.

When Educational Constructivist theory is applied at science or historical museums, it becomes necessary to develop interactive exhibitions that encourage groups of visitors to build their own meaning by providing a wide range of interpretations and new ways of establishing contexts.

Modern information technology, such as integrate computerization and high-tech environments, are especially well suited to the application of the Constructivist perspective. The prime advantage of the interactive system lies in the opportunities that it creates for the construction of a map of ideational relationships from which the individual may derive his or her meaning. Schematically, this approach is based on three phases:

1. Facilitation of the development of active thinking. Here the exhibition should begin with what is familiar and utilize existing knowledge in a way that corresponds to visitors' ability to generate new contexts.
2. To apply this approach, there is a need for interactive components – devices that will allow visitors to investigate, and create new insights – as integral parts of the exhibition.
3. Finally, the approach recognizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process. The learner creates the meaning in his/her mind but is also influenced by culture. By engaging in a process of reflection with other visitors, individuals test the validity of their interpretations and the affective meaning of the experiences that they have undergone for the questions that concern them.

Importantly, even though the large majority of visitors to museums arrive in groups, most exhibitions are still designed for the individual visitor. Thus, the great challenge in developing an interactive exhibition is not only how to support processes of interactive thinking and creation of personal

interpretations, but also to stimulate intellectual and social interaction among visitors at the exhibit.

Construction of Knowledge at the “Six Million Accusers – the State of Israel v. Adolf Eichmann” Exhibition

The role of education at a museum, as we understand it, is to build a bridge between history, memory, and identity. The relevant questions of teens change occasionally and are influenced by issues that lie at the core of the local and international public agenda. The “Six Million Accusers – the State of Israel v. Adolf Eichmann” exhibition, which opened at Massuah Museum in 2002, challenges visitors to probe the meaning of Holocaust survivors’ testimonies, transcend their familiar and established thinking patterns, and test the personal current relevance of discussing survivors’ testimonies. The exhibition focuses on the Holocaust as viewed through the prism of testimonies and evidence presented at the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961–1962. Apart from using these testimonies and evidence to present the web of historical events, the exhibition presents various aspects of the Holocaust, including moral and emotional aspects that force the early twenty-first century visitor to repeatedly confront the meaning of the Holocaust memory.

The visit unites two dimensions: the experiential dimension, experienced in an initial tour of the exhibition, and a cognitive dimension composed of personal or group research at the exhibition, using the multimedia system and the preparation of arguments for a “historical trial,” and, later on, a debate in the “courtroom.”

1. Creating Contexts on the Basis of Existing Knowledge – Initial Tour of the Exhibition

Historical contexts are created in the course of an initial tour of the exhibition, in which visitors view a three-screen presentation in the “courtroom” and, by touring the periphery of the exhibition, take in the climactic moments of the Eichmann trial.

The definitive concern of the presentation is the role of 110 Holocaust survivors' testimonies, which brought the intensity of the horror, terror, and helplessness of the survivors' ordeal into the courtroom.

The testimonies were given between April 21 and June 12, 1961. The prosecution's case largely followed the chronology of the Holocaust. Day after day, men and women took the witness stand and related, some for the first time in their lives, what had befallen them during the Holocaust. For the first time, the press, the radio, and cinema newsreels exposed the Israeli public to the personal narratives of Holocaust survivors. Here, for the first time, the personal stories of "ordinary" Jews were legitimized alongside the testimonies of leaders of resistance movements and uprisings, who until then had been considered the only heroes of the era.

From this standpoint, the Eichmann trial caused a tremendous change in the way Israeli society coped with the memory of the Holocaust. The trial and, particularly, the encounter with the survivors' testimonies, shaped the memory of the Holocaust for an entire generation of young Israelis. The experience fused the Holocaust with the Israeli national ethos and marked a watershed in attitudes toward the memory and to survivors of the Holocaust in the public discourse, as well as to the education system, and historiography.

Thus, the first part of the exhibition is devoted to the creation of historical contexts that relate both to the special nature of the trial and to its influence on the shaping of Holocaust memory.

2. Investigation, Change, and Creation of New Insights

The transition from the historical part of the exhibition to the active part occurs by means of an interactive multimedia system that transforms the exhibition visit from a passive viewing into an active experience.

The multimedia system exposes visitors to different ways of considering the events that find expression in the range of testimonies. Thus, visitors not only study the Holocaust but also confront questions and dilemmas related to it, e.g., the moral quandaries the victims had to tackle, the fate of the

family unit, relations among camp prisoners, and the image of the SS men. Users enter the system by selecting an area of interest from a list of thirty topical clusters, and selecting a personal testimony as a point of departure for their investigative journey. The system is based on more than 150 video-taped excerpts of testimony. Each topic is composed of five testimonies that present different perspectives. An example concerns testimonies that relate to the issue of receiving information about the exterminations and the difficulty in comprehending them. After viewing the selected excerpt of testimony, the visitor is provided with research media that give him or her access to thousands of photographs and documents and complementary sources of broader information that present different perspectives on the topic. Users move from topic to topic by means of “related topics.” Each additional cluster reveals another series of testimonies. The principle that guided us in developing the system was the realization that the tension between the perspectives presented by the witnesses will encourage the visitor to think. As the process draws to its conclusion, visitors are asked to prepare a presentation for submission to the “courtroom,” in which they define an argument or principled question that emerges from one or more of the testimonies, and which they consider relevant or meaningful to themselves.

In this case, the creation of meaning by the learners may constitute their own interpretation of the contents displayed at the exhibition (Hein) or their use of an experience in order to seek out meaning for themselves – their identity, their place in the world, the meaning of their lives – with no immediate relationship to the contents of the exhibition (Hooper-Greenhill 1999).

3. Social and Intellectual Interaction among Visitors

The presentations sent to the “courtroom” are used for a debate, modelled on a “metaphorical trial” within which visitors examine their interpretation of the survivors’ testimonies and its impact on their insights about the world and its values. In this manner, visitors present their insights at the exhibit hall and test the validity of these insights via social and intellectual interaction with other visitors. During the latest Intifada, for example, with

reference to the issue of “knowing and understanding,” young Israelis asked questions about the circumstances that affect changes in patterns of thinking and action in light of extreme and unprecedented changes that occur in their lives. The debate focused on the question of whether the validity of our basic values is shaken under such conditions.

Conclusion

The personal testimonies given at the Eichmann trial in 1961 transformed Israelis’ attitude toward the Holocaust. As the public consciousness assimilated the ghastliness of what had happened, the hard-and-fast dichotomy of Holocaust and heroism yielded a greater attentiveness to the personal memory. Today, more than fifty years later, the exhibition creates a museum experience that encourages self-contemplation and reflective thinking about relevant implications of the post-Holocaust public discourse for central issues in our lives and identity today.

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LINKS

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/IFI/resources/constructivistlearning.html>

Keren Goldfrad

VOICES OF CHILD SURVIVORS

A Multidisciplinary Approach to Children's Holocaust Testimonies

“Voices of Child Survivors” is a pedagogical project that was created by a group of researchers from Bar-Ilan University who sought to provide a multidisciplinary approach to analyzing testimonies. The purpose of this unique approach was to provide researchers and students with a step-by-step model that combines different fields of study when analyzing Holocaust testimonies in general, and children's Holocaust testimonies in particular. The project contains three teaching modules, which were designed principally for university and college students.

Pedagogical strategies are provided within each of these modules to help students explore the historical, literary and linguistic aspects of testimonies, and, through them, the experience of children in the Holocaust. The modules include a structured analysis of a child's testimony, which provides instructors and students with a model when conducting analyses of other children's Holocaust testimonies. This unique multidisciplinary approach in analyzing testimonies broadens and deepens our understanding when learning about the Holocaust.

The following researchers brought forth their area of expertise: Dr. Boaz Cohen concentrated on the historical viewpoint; Prof. Joel Walters focused on the linguistic dimension; Dr. Rita Horváth presented the literary approach; and Dr. Keren Goldfrad addressed the pedagogical perception. All of these perspectives were then combined to form integrated and coherent teaching modules. The project was prepared with the support of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. and the Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Education, Research and Documentation.

The Sources

In order to include a variety of testimonial experiences, each module focuses on a different Holocaust circumstance. The first module contains testimonies from Hungarian children that were collected in 1946 from the Aschau DP youth center. The Hungarian Holocaust experience is unique since Hungarian Jewry was systematically destroyed at a very late stage of the Second World War and in a relatively short period of time. The second module called “Children in the Midst of Mass Killing Actions (Aktzyas)” deals with testimonies of children from Jewish communities in Eastern Galicia – today western Ukraine. Between the summer of 1941 and the winter of 1943, Galician Jews were subjected to three massive waves of killings resulting in the murder of more than 500,000 Jews. The surviving children were witness to periodically reoccurring waves of killing and terror, i.e. “Aktzyas”; their testimonies, presented in the second module, center around this experience. The third module, “Children on the Run,” focuses on children’s experience of being relentlessly hunted. The testimonies included in this module focus on Jewish children who hid in forests or worked on farms while being continuously and mercilessly persecuted as adults.

Although each of the modules mentioned above revolves primarily around written testimonies, many of the techniques that are used when analyzing written testimonies can be applied to oral testimonies as well. In addition, within the modules we refer to oral testimonies for one of three reasons. First, a few of the testimonies which are analyzed in the modules were initially conducted as interviews by the Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Polish Jews. Secondly, interviews were used for research purposes to confirm information that was implied from the written testimonies, but was not mentioned explicitly. In the first module, for example, an interview which was conducted years later with the same witness was compared to the earlier written one in order to reaffirm our initial assumptions. Interviews were also used for teaching purposes as supplementary material that can complement information which is mentioned vaguely or very briefly in the written texts. Students were directed to those oral testimonies

in order to compare information and fill in the gaps located in the written testimonies.

The Multidisciplinary Approach

A multidisciplinary approach, which combines analyses from the fields of history, linguistics and literature, exposes information about the Holocaust that would have remained obscure. This unique multifaceted analysis, which is guided by pedagogical instruction, enables students to reveal encoded information which broadens and deepens their understanding of Holocaust testimonies. Cohen and Horváth explain that, “Historical research traditionally focuses on information conveyed forthrightly. When it is coupled with literary and linguistic research centering on encoded sub- and meta-texts, the result is a rich tapestry of meanings.” (Cohen/Horváth 2012: 103)

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: The use of testimonies for historical research constitutes a methodological problem. Eyewitness testimonies are considered subjective, anecdotal evidence, and as such are of questionable value. Children’s testimonies pose a special challenge because their perspective is viewed as extremely narrow and the children’s understanding of the events is considered more limited than that of adults (Suleiman 2002: 227–295). Despite these problems, testimonies enhance Holocaust documentation by humanizing and personalizing official sources. Analyzing testimonies constitutes an ethical and practical imperative, since they alone enable the individual character of the victims to emerge. This project aims at helping the least articulate voices – those of children – to be heard, and demonstrates how the distinctive voice in children’s testimonies sheds a unique light when analyzing the history of the Holocaust.

Each module includes a systematic historical analysis of one or two testimonies. Students are guided to find historical data, such as where and when the testimony was recorded; who or which organization collected the testimony; what is the nationality of the witness; and what type of Holocaust experience is related in the testimony. In addition, students critically

analyze the dates, places and events mentioned within the testimony and learn to differentiate between informative statements and evaluative or explanatory ones.

THE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE: After the first reading of early testimonies, most students report that the testimonies are laconic and devoid of feeling. This phenomenon is usually the result of the testifier's own efforts to prevent the testimony from becoming a re-traumatizing force. However, a linguistic analysis of these testimonies enables us to uncover hidden expressions of emotions. Testimonies and life stories are considered extremely valuable sources for linguistic research (Labov 2004: 31–43). Since the focus of the testifier is on conveying his crucial and defining experience, he does not pay conscious attention to the rendering of the story. This enables the researcher to identify linguistic structures and literary features that will pinpoint the emotional foci of the testimony. In turn, these emotional centers enable us to find and evaluate the historical and personal information embedded in the testimony.

The linguistic features that were analyzed related to three main categories: handwriting, language and grammar. Based on our review of several hundred testimonies, the following handwriting features should be noted as they indicate intense emotions: neatly written versus messier parts; places where the pen or pencil has been pressed hard on the paper; places where the writing continues even when the pen has run out of ink; changes in letter-formation; spaces left between words; and places that contain inkblots. In the second category we focused on the specific language that was used by the testifier. This category included aspects such as paying attention to the use of emotionally charged words, or the practice of using dark humor and cynicism. In addition, we paid close attention to places where the testifier displayed choppy language or repetitions. Special attention was also given to the practice of multilingual code switching and borrowing. Sometimes recognizing patterns of silence within a testimony is as important as paying attention to the direct statements that were made concerning a specific

event within the testimony. In the third category which focused on the grammatical issues, we paid attention to grammatical irregularities. In addition, it was interesting to note the use of singular versus plural pronouns coupled with the active versus the passive voice.

THE LITERARY PERSPECTIVE: Using literature as a teaching tool when analyzing testimonies may pose moral problems since students are asked to locate the borders between levels of truth. Nevertheless, we believe that in order to deepen our understanding of the Holocaust and engage future generations in preserving its memory, it is important to include literature which corroborates and illuminates written and oral testimonies.

In the first module, for example, it was fruitful to compare the child's testimony with Elie Wiesel's *Night* and Imre Kertész's *Fatelessness*. These literary works narrate in stages what happened to them in the Holocaust, and the students notice that their experiences are very similar in many respects to that of the child, especially since both writers experienced the Holocaust at around the same age as the child. In the third module, we compare a different child's testimony with Ida Fink's *A Scrap of Time*. We found it informative to analyze this child's testimony with Fink's story since they both come from the same region. In addition, Fink employs very similar literary devices to those employed by child survivors.

THE PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: In addition to transmitting knowledge to its readers, these teaching modules seek to engage students in an active process of examination by providing pedagogical activities that elicit students' predictions, opinions, comparisons, and conclusions. The pedagogical tools provided in these modules assist the instructor in maximizing the students' learning experience, so that the students will absorb the multifaceted meaning within children's Holocaust testimonies.

Students acquire knowledge and information in a variety of ways. Each individual may have certain characteristics which lend themselves to a specific learning style: "Some students are comfortable with theories and

abstractions; others feel much more at home with facts and observable phenomena; some prefer active learning and others lean toward introspection; some prefer visual presentation of information and others prefer verbal explanations.” (Felder, Brent 2005: 58)

In some cases there may be a disparity between the learning style of the student and the teaching style of his or her instructor. Although it is unrealistic to expect instructors to create individualized activities for each and every student in the class based on their learning styles, providing a variety of activities throughout the lesson enables a wider range of compatibility among learners.

In order to provide this variety and cater to as many learning styles, the modules contain suggested discussion points, analytical questions, and enrichment opportunities for further reflection. Graphic organizers were used wherever possible since they engage visual learners more significantly than a verbal explanation. Moreover, graphic organizers form a powerful visual picture of information and allow the mind to see undiscovered patterns and relationships. For example, in addition to the linear movement that is directly stated in the testimony which was presented in the first module, the following diagram also demonstrates the circular movements which were merely implied. The objective time is chronological; spatially it contains two returns to places of abuse: one is to Hungary, and the second is to the Muldorf Labor Camp. This opens up the possibility of experiencing time not objectively, but subjectively as circular (see figure, p. 61).

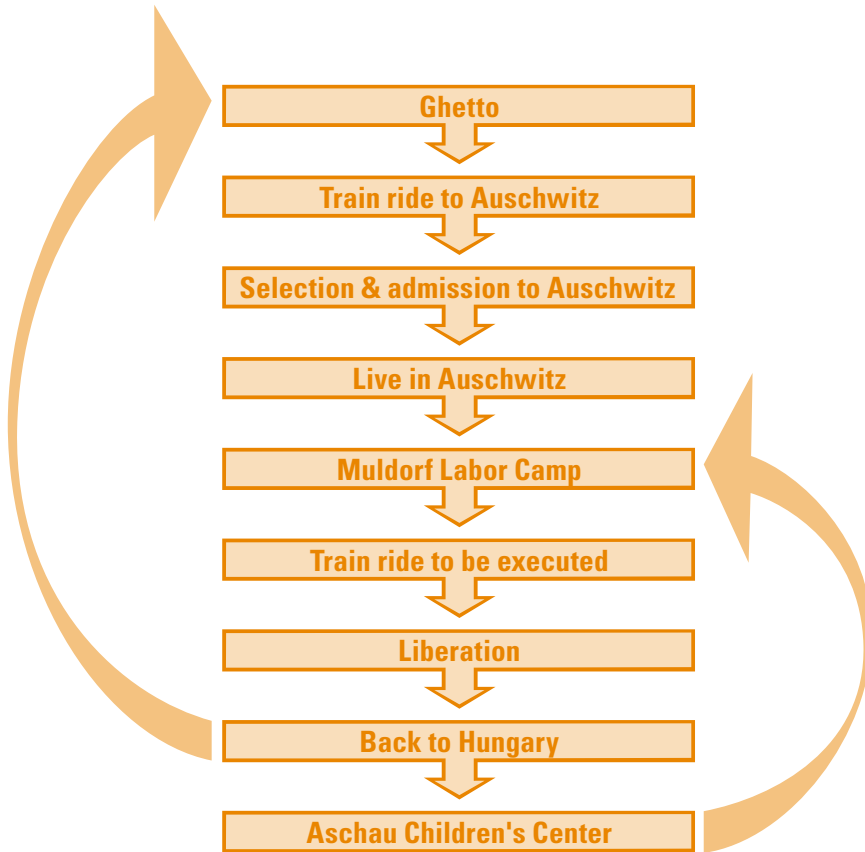
Similarly, collaborative learning activities can create dynamic working environments that cater to social learners. In one of the modules, for example, we suggest that the class be divided into groups and each group be given a task in analyzing the same testimony. The groups then take turns and report their findings to the rest of the class.

In addition to learning style awareness, instructors should be sensitive and responsive to the effect of trauma narratives on their students. Fisher reminds us that “an empathetic teacher, aware of painful historical content yet unaware of how individual students might respond to it, stays alert to

students' responses and provides alternative means for them to explore and express their reactions." (Fisher 2008: 5) Fisher suggests using written reflection, guided discussion, and open-ended questions as a viable means for assisting the individual student in the course of processing the information. We hope that the choices and varieties of activities presented in the modules will engage a wide audience of college and university students and will cater to different learning styles.

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■ POLAND

Piotr Filipkowski

ORAL HISTORY IN POLAND: HISTORIES, CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS, FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

This essay identifies current trends, possibilities, and restrictions of oral history as it is gathered and used today in Poland. This is not a comprehensive presentation of all Polish oral history initiatives, as their multitude and diversity exceed the limits of a text like this. The aim is to identify the most important methods of practicing oral history and to consider its role in both historiography and our collective memory.

It befits that we begin by defining what oral history is, both in general and in the Polish context. It is important to recognize its diversity and placement in a variety of practical contexts and theoretical frameworks. Below are a few examples.

One context is as memoirs (referred to in Polish as *pamiętniki*). Polish sociology boasts a pioneering and longstanding tradition of biographical research based on so-called memoirs that form a specific type of personal document, written by “ordinary people” at the request of researchers and then published in the form of competitions, usually held by the editorial teams of various periodicals or radio stations. The advantage of *pamiętniki* is that they are written recollections, i.e. retrospective texts based on memories of past events and experiences and their emphasis is on remembrance rather than an ongoing, systematic recording, which would make them akin to oral history interviews, most of which are based on recollecting things “years later.” The tradition of *pamiętniki* took root in Polish sociology in the inter-war period with a flourishing in the 1960s and 1970s, but is now almost in complete decline. Literature sometimes refers to *pamiętniki* as the precursor to oral history, but I see no direct relation between the *pamiętniki* once gathered in Poland and the recorded oral history interviews.

Journalistic interviews are another way oral history is gathered. I am not referring to interviews we come across daily in the mass media, even when they refer to biographical experiences or memoirs of the interlocutors. The character and context of such conversations and their objective and use are basically dissimilar. In his important essay on pre-1990 Polish oral history, Jerzy Holzer mentions a few journalistic books that were based on biographical interviews with important groups of interviewees that now represent an essential and influential voice in Polish discussions on the recent past and collective memory (cf. Holzer 1990). This voice is important for its grassroots and counter-systemic character. Teresa Torańska's book *Oni*, based on a series of interviews featuring some important exponents of Polish post-war Communist Party and state authorities, particularly of the Stalinist period, offers perhaps the most distinct example. If pre-1989 Polish oral history practices are viewed primarily in terms of their critical and counter-systemic character, i.e. as forming an objection or alternative proposition against the dominant historical/historiographic discourse and against the then-official memory/"non-memory" policy, then Torańska's book should be deemed pioneering for this tradition. The same would be true for other similar, though perhaps less spectacular, journalistic publications, despite any differences between them.

The question that persists is whether oral history – as it is now practiced in Poland – can still offer the critical potential that was characteristic for those pioneering initiatives and projects, and whether or not such critical potential is still possible.

Another example is the accounts collected by the memorials at former Nazi concentration camps. Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau were the first of the main Nazi concentration and extermination camps to be liberated. They were transformed into the first memorial sites and as the most significant Polish "martyrological" museums. These former-camp museums have collected accounts of former inmates, adding to their archives, which were begun at their establishment. The Auschwitz Museum has the largest number of such accounts, several thousand in all. Usually provided in oral form

and later written down and saved as text records, not all of these testimonies are perceived as part of Polish oral history resources. Today, representatives of the former-camp museums only sporadically join the initiatives pursued under the aegis of oral history. It would make sense to ask why these valuable resources of personal camp experiences and objective recounts about the history of the camps have not been included in the Polish oral history tradition.

The answer lies partly in the history of such memorial sites and the fact that they began gathering survivors' testimonies long before an oral history tradition appeared in Poland and before they were disseminated elsewhere. The primary nature of these practices is also significant: the accounts produced were often treated as the only sources of knowledge on various aspects of the camp's history – not because of methodological preferences but because of a lack of other sources. Their subject matter seemed too serious to leave room for unbridled methodological divagations, which are otherwise characteristic of many practices (and related theories) of oral history.

Michael Pollak, a French sociologist who writes about female concentration camp experiences based on his own interviews with former inmates, has given a somewhat different, but essentially similar, answer. His typology of concentration camp accounts discerns between oral history interviews from testimonies given before courts and historical committees. In spite of apparent similarities – the common point is to reliably realize and report on the individual's own experience and memory – these three testifying contexts are dissimilar.

These three examples do not directly belong to oral history, nor are they its direct predecessor or source of inspiration. But they do co-form its context, which is easier to grasp in a synthetic manner, as it is largely historical. Oral history as it is now pursued in Poland is a work in progress: not just a single work, but one spread over many construction sites, with varied degrees of advancement and intensity of works. In spite of the efforts in the past years to integrate these activities, it is difficult to predict whether they will eventually make up some common, or coherent, landscape. Instead of recounting

linear stories of these diverse projects and practices, I will try to assign them to a few main categories. These are not disjoint sets, and the borderlines between them are quite subtle. The categories include institutionalized and recognizable oral history archives as well as dispersed educational and popularizing projects.

The archives

The Oral History Archive of the KARTA Centre and the History Meeting House is certainly the largest such archive – and the most diverse with regards to the evidenced individual fates and vicissitudes, and the multitude of experiences and the diversity of documented historical themes. The institution's name reflects its situation between the two Warsaw-based institutions dealing with Polish and European recent history. The KARTA Centre is a non-governmental organization whose background lies in the anti-communist opposition milieu and whose (informal) origins date back to the period of martial law, i.e. the early 1980s. The underground activities that then began, although suspended or discontinued from time to time, soon became institutionalized and developed a historical and identity-related profile. This is how the consistent interest in individual, subjective, experience-based dimension of history can be described – an interest that has been sustained through today, albeit in a different context and using different measures. When a counter-systemic political stance is added to such a perspective – and within it, an opposition against the dominant memory (oblivion) policy – practicing oral history by the KARTA milieu before 1989 seems quite natural.

In 1987 KARTA initiated a countrywide project devised to demonstrate vicissitudes of the Poles subjected to repressive measures “in the East”, i.e. in the Soviet Union. Thanks to the spontaneous involvement of a number of independent documentarians, ca. 1,200 interviews were recorded throughout Poland featuring victims of deportations and former prisoners in Soviet labor camps. Although transcribed, these tape-recorded interviews were also archived as audio recordings and eventually became the

basis for the “Eastern Archive” developed by the KARTA Centre. It is quite telling and natural that this pioneering documentary undertaking was not referred to as “oral history” at that time. The same is true for another KARTA project, which recorded the stories of dissidents and their oppositional activities that formed the basis of the “Opposition Archive.” Today, both interview collections are part of the Oral History Archive.

The Archive would probably not have been created without an external impulse. The Mauthausen Survivors Documentation Project (MSDP), implemented in 2002–2003, resulted in the recording of more than 160 interviews in Poland with former inmates of the Mauthausen concentration camp. As part of the International Slave and Forced Laborers Documentation Project (ISFLDP) of 2004–2005, the KARTA Centre carried out seventy interviews with victims of the Third Reich’s slave labour programs. In 2006, the History Meeting House (DSH) was institutionally separated from KARTA, gaining the status of a cultural institution of Warsaw. Since then, the Oral History Archive, common to both institutions, has been active in collecting primarily audio (as well as video) interviews recorded as part of documentary research projects conducted by both institutions. Their thematic scope is broad, although the preference for recording individual autobiographical memories of members of the eldest living generation of “witnesses of history” makes wartime experiences particularly well represented. Complete interviews from all projects are available in the DSH multimedia reading room. The Web portal *audiohistoria.pl* is a guide to the entire collection. Since 2012, the Visual History Archive, the largest resource of oral history (of the Holocaust), has been available at the DSH. Another institution that has most recently (since 2014) offered access to this collection is the newly-opened Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

The ‘Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN’ Centre of Lublin is another important hub with a long oral history tradition which dates back to the 1990s. While the lineage of KARTA can be described as opposition-related and counter-systemic, the background of Brama Grodzka is artistic, alternative, and intercultural. Both these “counter” attitudes complement each other. Since

the beginning of its activity, Brama Grodzka has been oriented on reinstating the memory of former Jewish inhabitants of Lublin, who constituted as significant part of the town's population before the war – and had been completely forgotten since then. Today, Brama – a local-government cultural institution similar to DSH – possesses the most important oral history archive in the east of Poland. Now broader in scope, it focuses on local Lublin history; the archive has collected several thousands of interviews and proactively animates oral history practices through a variety of educational projects, workshops, meetings, etc.

Many new initiatives of recording, archiving, and sharing oral history interviews, often associated with newer museums and similar institutions that educate about recent history or the commemoration of the past have been established in recent years. An oral history archive has been part of the Warsaw Uprising Museum since its establishment in 2004. The interviews with insurgents and, more recently, with civilians from the period of the uprising are successively made available online. Today, the collection includes 3,000 recordings and continues to grow.

Videotaped records of witnesses of history, also called “notations,” have been prepared and collected in the last few years, with the aim of sharing them with a broad public through local branches of the Institute of National Remembrance. In spite of attempts recently made to coordinate and structure these records, the Institute presently has no uniform policy.

In Lower Silesia, oral history projects are conducted by the Wrocław-based Remembrance and Future Centre, a local-government cultural institution established a few years ago. Additionally, the *Wrocław Oral History Annual*, a reviewed scholarly periodical, publishes essays and articles written by Polish oral history practitioners and theoreticians; it has also translated foreign texts.

Lastly, the Forest Oral History Archive has been set up based on a collection of some fifty videotaped biographical interviews, lasting many hours, featuring foresters who are retired members of staff of the Białowieża Primeval Forest National Park Focused on a specified professional group and funded

by a public institution that has little to do with either history or remembrance, the project has quickly created a digital archive of very interesting video testimonies that are available online via a dedicated site.¹¹ It is hard to predict if this is a single positive case scenario or the beginning of a new way of doing and presenting oral history in Poland.

Popularizing, educational, and artistic projects

From the beginning, oral history in Poland has been primarily non-academic. The initiatives I have mentioned, those which have persisted and are now institutional, trace their origins to spontaneous documenting actions. The aim was for individual (hi)stories and pieces of human memory to be recorded in both written and audio form and made available to others. As is demonstrated in the case of KARTA, or Brama Grodzka, the point of (critical) reference for those actions was not the historiography but the collective memory. Although these oral history sources have been used in academic research, this was not the main reason for these recordings.

Today, it is harder to execute such actions; instead we encounter a variety of projects. A number of them are pending, while others are implemented by institutions that have previously not engaged in such activities. Others still are independent and dispersed. In 2008, on commission by the National Centre for Culture, a brief practical ABCs of oral history project was written by a team of experienced researchers (Drobik et al. 2008).

I will mention some of the initiatives which have occurred outside the mainstreamed oral history; institutionalized or under institutionalization, they form its numerous branches. This in no way diminishes their significance – rather, on the contrary.

Among its numerous activities is the Centre for Citizenship Education, a large and dynamic Warsaw-based NGO¹², which, for a few years now, has been implementing oral history projects in which junior and senior high school students carry out their own interviews with witnesses of history. The two major national projects of this type have recently included recordings featuring so-called righteous individuals – those who offered hideouts

to Jews during the war, as well as meetings and interviews with people who participated in anti-communist democratic opposition activities (the project “I Will Tell You about Free Poland”).

A completely different example of an educational project in the field of oral history is one completed in Szczekociny, a small town in central Poland. As part of this local initiative, instigated by Mirosław Skrzypczyk, a local teacher, a group of his students recorded aspects of the town’s oral history by videotaping interviews with its eldest inhabitants – those who could talk about the pre-war period and wartime occurrences, including the existence and later annihilation of their Jewish neighbors (see Skrzypczyk in this volume). It would be hard to find a better example of an oral history project that would meet the postulates – so emphatically expressed on the grounds of oral history, and so rarely accomplished – to empower the researched and the researchers, to seek local roots and to generate community links and bonds.

Yet another example of a committed and locally anchored oral history project is Krakow’s EfKA Foundation.¹³ The projects it pursues are feminist and critical: a group of female researchers from Poland, Germany and the Ukraine have video-recorded interviews with the eldest living women from a Lower-Silesian village that underwent a “population exchange” shortly after the war. The purpose was to record the female experience and female memory of the war, forced migrations and daily realities. One of the outcomes was a documentary made of compiled fragments of such video testimonies that emphasised the project’s feminist message. Backed with a similar scenario, the project was later successfully followed up in an Ukrainian village.

Oral history may be concluded with a documentary, as exemplified above, or can be punch-lined with a piece of literature. This does not have to be non-fiction in a strict sense of the term. The point is to extract, using artistic and literary measures, the power of the spoken word and the human being speaking. A Polish variant of this kind of literary oral history is evident in the books of Anka Grupińska and Joanna Wiszniewicz: in particular,

Grupińska's *Ciągle po kole*, a record of talks with Warsaw Ghetto soldiers, and Wiszniewicz's monumental *Życie przecięte*, a compilation of interviews with Polish Jews whose biographies were cloven by the year 1968.

Quite a lot has been going on in Polish oral history in the recent years, at multiple levels: the existing archives are developing, and new ones emerging; a considerable number of local documentation and educational projects are implemented; historical exhibitions or displays are held, using interviews with witnesses of history; research projects are carried out which bear fruit in the form of significant publications; student courses, seminars and workshops are carried out; conferences are organized; an association is active that makes efforts to integrate the milieu of Polish practitioners and theoreticians of the current.

Should anyone expect more than that? Well, you always can, wishing for more projects, investigations, publications in place; better visibility, recognition, and larger audience and public for all these undertakings and projects; and, more money to make them deliverable. As for my own preference, I would not place a bet on quantities – but instead, opt for things becoming clearer and more distinct, more powerful, using an autonomous voice of their own. For I should think that Polish oral history – like any other oral history – can be more than just yet another research method, or an easy way to fill in the “blank spots,” complement the “gaps” in the historical knowledge-as-it-stands or in its source material, document the localness and animate the local activities – and the like subsidiary activities.

This “more” or “otherwise” thing that comes to my mind at this point would be to use the potential behind oral history, which is considerable already, for a completely unbiased, open and pluralistic recognition of diversity of the local historical experience, multiplicity of patterns of the related local narrative(s), and, most importantly, multiple variants of Polish self-awareness.

An oral history of this sort could contribute to building our own, current and future, thoughtful self-awareness. And, perhaps – though this is an instance of wishful thinking, with no underlying evidence – it would further on be

helpful in building a more critical, and more open, community. Or, rather, to quit an illusion of any entirety: a multiplicity of various, be it “imagined,” communities.

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Mirosław Skrzypczyk

'WITH THESE REMINISCENCES, I WILL BE REMINISCED, TOO...': THE ORAL HISTORY OF SZCZEKOCINY. An Educational and Artistic Project

In 2007, as a representative of the “Prowincja” Teachers of Humanities Association, I participated in a conference on documenting local histories, held by the History Meeting House (DSH) in Warsaw. Oral history, a topic explored by the KARTA Center (DSH’s parent organization), was one of the issues discussed. Oral history projects seemed promising to me at the time, and inspiring as a form of research on the local histories of small towns. Szczekociny, where I work as a Polish teacher in the town’s school complex, is one such place.

The history of Szczekociny is rich; recordings have been made of its residents’ stories about the town’s pre-war and wartime vicissitudes, highlighting the many centuries of a local Jewish population. I decided to apply the method to my own educational activities and to create a local oral history project. I was aware that no such project had ever been conducted before in Szczekociny and knew this would be one of the last opportunities to record the stories of individuals who could remember pre-war Szczekociny, with its multicultural character, as well as the period during World War Two.

The project met with considerable interest from the local school complex’s students and with support from the teachers, who eventually participated in it. Before beginning the project, we held a workshop to clarify its goals and to teach students how to conduct biographical interviews. The workshop was carried out by members of the DSH/KARTA Center staff, who versed

students in the technical aspects of creating recordings and filming and photographing people and places.

Paul Thompson argues that oral history is, primarily, a history built around the people who recount their own experiences. Oral history allows ordinary people –, the heroes of everyday life (particularly elderly individuals) to speak –, helping them retain dignity and self-confidence (Thompson 2011: 293). Central to oral history, therefore, are the individuals, who tell us stories in their own words about the historical experiences in which they have participated. Therefore, in delivering our oral history project, we use the biographical method. Thus, rather than focusing on a single area or topic, we are interested in the entire history of an individual's life: "The point is for the interlocutor not to tell a story, or recount history, i.e. to talk about what things were like, but, rather, for them to discuss what happened to them and what they actually experienced. Oral history interviews are not about telling the so-called objectivized, textbook version of history, which is far removed from individual human experience: they are about the narrator's interpreting his or her own experiences through his or her narration." (Filipkowski 2006: 21)

Our ongoing project, entitled '*With these reminiscences, I will be reminisced too...?: The oral history of Szczekociny*', now includes twenty-one videotaped biographical interviews and several dozen thematic recordings. These accounts last one to five hours each; the interviewees are elderly, non-Jewish inhabitants of Szczekociny, as well as some Jews who survived the Holocaust. The interviews were usually conducted in Szczekociny, but some of them were recorded in the United States and Israel.

Every conversation with the witness of history is preceded by meticulous preparation, during which we research Szczekociny's past using the available publications. We subsequently meet to discuss the specific interview and think about the areas and topics of our interest. At least two students and one teacher participate in the making of each recording; at the meeting, they share the issues they intend to explore while speaking with the interlocutor. Meetings of this sort require long and thoughtful preparation

by the participating students, who should be skilled and objective listeners and able to listen attentively to stories of traumatic experiences. The participants' efforts, however, do not end with the completed recording. We request and receive the recorded individual's consent to use the interview for educational purposes and artistic projects. We, moreover, ask the interlocutor to share photographs, documents, and other materials which, once copied and archived, become a valuable supplement to the recording. The recording itself is inventoried and recorded on a modern carrier (i.e. a DVD) and reliably transcribed, as far as this is possible.

The accounts thus elaborated form a valuable body of material, which has been used in various educational activities and artistic projects. The Szczekociny oral history project not only focuses on the conversation and recording of a report by a witness of history, but also helps the stories come alive, as past events, people and places intervene in the present time, calling for commemoration. The various projects, for which the recorded narratives are the basis, evoke times past, depict their multidimensionality and vividness, and bring us closer to events that have been stigmatized with trauma. Before the war, Szczekociny was a typical *shtetl*, and its Jewish community accounted for half of the town's population. The year 1942, when local Jews were annihilated in Treblinka, marked the end of the town's multicultural history. Since then, stories about the presence of Jews and what happened to them during the war have remained untold in Szczekociny. The traumatic wartime occurrences, the experience of loss and want, have been deleted from public memory. There were, furthermore, no forms of commemoration in the public space: no monuments, plaques, or memorial events. The accounts gathered as part of our oral history project have shown, however, that individual residents of Szczekociny have preserved their Jewish neighbors in their memory. The actions taken in Szczekociny that make use of oral history are thus an attempt to verify this collective memory and deal with its traumas using the individual and singular reminiscences of such citizens. This has helped to restore the memory of the Szczekociny Jews who were exterminated during the Holocaust.

The narratives collected during the project have been used in the publication, *Żydzi szczekocińscy. Osoby, miejsca, pamięć* (“The Jews of Szczekociny. People, Places, and Memory,” 2008); Agnieszka Piśkiewicz’s interview with Izyk Mendel Bornstein, a survivor of the Holocaust who lived in the United States for a period, was the basis for a book describing his life. The recorded material has also become a research resource for students preparing for a national competition on the history and culture of Polish Jewry, organized by the Shalom Foundation. Together with young Israelis, the students of the Szczekociny school complex created Web blogs focusing on the surviving Jews of Szczekociny, based on the video recordings. The narratives have also been used in the compilation of the book *Szczekociny w opowieściach mieszkańców. Czasy przedwojenne i wojna* [“Szczekociny, As Narrated by Its Inhabitants: The Pre-War and War Time Period”], published in 2014, which depicts a multidimensional image of the small town as it is remembered by its Jewish and non-Jewish residents and their personal experiences in the face of their struggles with everyday realities and the “great history.” The recorded accounts have also been used in connection with an educational workshop on Szczekociny’s multiculturalism and for artistic actions at Jewish culture festivals.

In 2012, an artistic action took place in the local Jewish cemetery, which was part of a *Tożsamość miejsca* (“The Identity of a Site”) project by Barbara Kaczorowska, an artist associated with Nicolaus Copernicus University of Toruń and Łódź’s Museum of Art. The target audience was the school complex’s students who were trained for the event: They first learned about the history of the town’s Jewish population by listening to recorded narratives. They then walked through Szczekociny looking for places once associated with the town’s Jews. Their task was to take material (earth, sand, debris, dust, etc.) from these places and use them to make images. They were inspired by emotions, experiences, and associations resulting from what they had learned and seen. The works were eventually compiled to create a guidebook entitled *The Baedeker from Szczekociny*, the spine of which was made of pieces of the flagstone taken from the town’s street. The words and

associations collected by the students were translated into Hebrew and then pasted on large sheets of white cardboard. These words were then arranged in the cemetery area on the day of the event; the participants filled the Hebrew letters with the previously collected material, which was left over after the guidebook was made.

The book *Szczekociny w opowieściach ...* and the recorded accounts also formed the basis for another artistic action, which was performed in July 2014 during the seventh Szczekociny Festival of Jewish Culture. The starting point for the action, ironically called *Dialogi jednostronne* (“Unilateral Dialogues”), is an afterthought on one-way messaging – from the past to (the) future; the project seeks to transform it into a polyphonous response. The artistic action enabled the participants to be open to the personal histories of the others and for such individuals’ readiness to share their history. Oral history, a record of the authentic accounts of Szczekociny inhabitants, inspired the actions within the Jewish cemetery. The artistic audio-installation allowed visitors to enter into a “dialogue” with the voices, persons, and occurrences from the past. It was accompanied by a live performance action featuring the students of Szczekociny’s school complex, Łódź Art Museum educators, and the audience.

All of these recent developments in Szczekociny demonstrate that oral history offers a unique opportunity to connect the past with the present, as well as people with each other. I am convinced that *Przez te wspomnienia ...*, our local oral history project, has contributed to the preservation of the memory of the individuals, and serves the education of young people.

Monika Koszyńska

WITNESS ACCOUNTS USED IN TEACHING HISTORY IN POLAND WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM OF THE USC SHOAH FOUNDATION

For the last decade, Polish schools have increasingly been using oral history to arouse pupils' interest in history. Witnesses' stories are easily accessible to students, engaging them emotionally, thereby enabling a better and deeper understanding of historical mechanisms and the memorisation of important events. Numerous NGOs, foundations and associations have been instrumental in spreading such methods. Such NGOs have recently encouraged the search for testimonies and stories about the past in villages and small towns, stressing that recordings of local residents are a unique resource.

Based on my own experience using oral history in Polish education, I found that teachers are being encourage to create educational projects in which students find witnesses and record their individual (hi)stories, and then compile the testimonies/recordings themselves. A few methodological publications for teachers have been written that can help prepare students to properly collect testimonies. The approach under discussion has taken advantage of the students' natural interest in modern technology as a means of recording the accounts. This approach is important because, other than a few institutions that professionally help gather oral testimonies, until now, only Warsaw's Rising Museum has published professional educational packages offering videotaped material for use in schools. Similar materials are available on a number of websites, including those of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN of Lublin, Warsaw's History

Meeting House – KARTA Centre and the Institute for National Remembrance [IPN]. There are, however, still a number of teachers, particularly those with a traditional education background, who are opposed to using such witness testimonies when teaching history, as they may be unreliable. This attitude is still common in Polish university-track high schools even though it is ill founded. Hence, lecturers who regard oral history as a legitimate method of examining the past are still in the minority and their research is often called into question.

The USC Shoah Foundation's Institute for Visual History and Education maintains the world's largest collection of video-recorded accounts of Holocaust survivors and of those who helped the victims during World War Two, as well as those who participated in trials of Nazi officers after the war. This compilation fulfils the Institute's mission "to overcome prejudice, intolerance, and bigotry – and the suffering they cause – through the educational use of the Institute's visual history testimonies." As the institute's representative for Poland, my responsibility is to promote the Visual History Archive's resource in the Polish humanistic education system, which primarily includes the historical, civic, and anti-discrimination areas.

"Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century"

The USC Shoah Foundation has developed an in-service training method for secondary-school teachers of humanities "Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century." Although originally developed in the United States and modeled after a program for U.S. teachers, it has been tailored to the realities and education systems of the participating European countries.

The training program is based upon the belief that students learn from their engagement with stories told by witnesses. The teachers attending the week-long instruction course learn which projects and research materials use oral history; they are taught how to search the world's largest collection of testimonies, composed of about 52,000 accounts recorded in fifty-six countries and thirty-six languages, seeking therein specific pieces of information or testimonies of specified individuals.

The course aims to broaden participants' knowledge of the specificity of account/testimony as a historical source and to learn about the constructivist theory of teaching as a tool to incorporate testimony-based education into the classroom as well as to learn the strengths and weaknesses of testimony as a resource and how to avoid the pitfalls related to an account's content. Participants are also taught how to structure lessons so that the witness's testimony becomes contextual rather than illustrative and how to build empathy among the students by allowing them to meet individuals who personally experienced the severest tragedy of the twentieth century.

Since the USC Shoah Foundation has the highest respect for the human fates entrusted to it, an integral part of the teacher training course is a workshop devised to raise awareness of the ethical issues associated with using the Foundation's collection, and to instruct skillful editing – in line with the interviewee's intents – of the video testimonies for educational purposes. The program also conducts a discussion session on the psychological aspects of using emotion-laden testimonies, many of which are accounts about extremely drastic ordeals in the Holocaust; there is also a lecture on anti-Semitic propaganda.

After completing the two-week course, in which participants can select and tape educational testimonies of their interests, the educators draw up lessons or longer educational projects for the following year. A pilot version of these projects or lessons is then carried out in their own respective schools. When the pilot is over, necessary corrections or modifications are made and the work is presented locally, i.e. in teachers' meetings or at local student, teacher and parent assemblies, or in community meetings. A crucial aim of such projects is to develop educational materials that respond to the needs of local milieus and communities.

Twelve months after the course has been completed, participants reconvene for two days to reflect upon the outcomes of their efforts and to summarize and present these to their colleagues. Such meetings allow participants to learn from each other and improve their projects through peer critiques.

There is also an opportunity for exchanging observations concerning student response to the testimonies describing events of the 20th century.

To the present, two “Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century” workshops have been conducted, which were attended by twenty-four educators, who were selected through a national contest.

Since October 2013, access to the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive has been available through the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. There are already plans for the two subsequent workshops. Participant experience and additional teachers who have learned of the program indicate that a number of Polish pedagogues are interested in compiling educational materials using witness testimonies, which will help them increase awareness among young Polish students of the dangers of indulging in totalitarian ideologies .

Having used oral history in the classroom for more than a decade, I am convinced that the methodology of “Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century” is a superior approach. It allows pedagogues to use oral history to teach students about historical events through individual fates while fostering critical thinking, a sensitivity to injustices and wrongdoings so that – when the need arises – they will defend not only their own rights, but also those of people who are not in a position to defend theirs.

LINK

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Anna Wójtowicz

“I TALK TO ANYONE WHO IS WILLING TO LISTEN...”

A Practical Example of How to Use Videotaped Testimonies in Educational Work at the State Museum of Majdanek

For historical education to be contemporary and efficient, novel forms and approaches of rendering historical messages must be “attractive” to the younger generation. In this context, Lublin’s State Museum of Majdanek offering museum lessons based on videotaped accounts of former KL inmates have aroused considerable interest among teachers and students. The State Museum of Majdanek Archive contains more than 400 video recordings, including 190 accounts of former camp inmates: Jews from Poland and other European countries and Belarusian and Polish prisoners. Although most of these recordings were made in the 1980s and 1990s, the collection is still growing. Although not a replacement for personal encounters with witnesses to history, the videos are a very valuable resource in historical education at sites of memory. These recordings convey and consolidate the personal experiences of each interviewee. The recording provides individual segments of his/her life and forms a bridge between the past and the present (Kranz 1998: 7), which consists of documenting the past while offering an emotional encounter with it.

Wanda Ossowska, a Polish political prisoner who was brought to the camp one winter night in 1943 from the Pawiak prison in Warsaw, was an inmate who had been sentenced to death; she has left us one of the most moving accounts on the outbreak of World War Two, the Nazi prison of Pawiak in Warsaw and the occurrences related to her imprisonment in KL Majdanek.

“I was a Home Army soldier. Arrested by the Gestapo, I was subjected to a very tough and cruel investigation, and I was sent to Majdanek.” Thus begins her story of the most dramatic moments in her life, as reported in Jacek Sawicki’s film *Opowieść o życiu i śmierci* (A Story of Life and Death), produced by the Polish Educational TV Channel (TVP Edukacyjna) in cooperation with the State Museum of Majdanek. These recollections form an important document: Wanda’s words exhibit that we are facing a participant in and witness to history. Wanda’s life was typical of the post-war generation; her video thus became the basis for one-day educational class focused on issues related to the operation of the Majdanek concentration camp.

Wanda Ossowska’s video has been widely praised because it complements teachers’ aims and guides young visitors to the Majdanek Museum. Another unique aspect is Wanda’s refined yet animated language, which brings events alive for the viewers. She tells her story eloquently and zestfully (Siwek-Ciupak 2001: 421), argumentatively recounting her very tragic personal experiences. Her Jewish fellow inmates occupy an important place in Wanda’s recollections. She tells about the fate the Jewish children who were brought into the camp from the liquidated Warsaw Ghetto and who were temporarily placed at Majdanek’s “women’s field.” She reminisces about a mass execution of Jews she witnessed on 3rd November 1943.

As part of the action codenamed *Erntefest* (“Harvest Festival”), some 18,000 Jews from Majdanek and other Lublin labor camps were shot in the pits situated near the crematorium. Wanda moreover recollects a failed escape of a young female inmate which came to a tragic halt as the girl was hanged at a roll-call (ibid: 264). She also evokes the figure of Stefania Perzanowska, a physician who organized in the camp a hospital for female patients. “She was not just a doctor,” says Wanda, “she was a *human*. A human who could see someone close to her in everybody, ill or sound; someone to be helped – from a doctor’s position, if he or she was sick; or, from a human being’s position, if he or she was broken. There were so many of those broken and depressed; indeed, since everybody there has departed from someone very close to them, knowing that death would come to him or her sooner or later.

For to survive, given the conditions, was impossible, based on our discernment of the situation.”

The museum lesson entitled “*I talk to anyone who is willing to listen...*” is one practical example of educational work conducted at a site of memory which is based on audio-visual sources. The purpose of these activities designed for secondary and older students is to share the knowledge of the history of KL Majdanek, based on a former inmate’s account to develop learning skills, and to learn to think and discuss critically (Kranz 2000: 103).

The lesson consists of two parts. First, students get acquainted with the video recordings of Wanda Ossowska, the witness to history, made in the 1980s, as well as segments of Jacek Sawicki’s film *Opowieść o życiu i śmierci*. Students complete worksheets based on the films. The questions focus on the thoughts and emotions provoked in the students by the films. Crucial to this phase is both the students’ research and their creative processing of information, which lead to sound evaluations and unbiased conclusions (cf. Kranz 2009: 74). The presentation of the students’ efforts concludes the first stage of the lesson.

The second part consists of a guided tour around the former camp site and in the exhibitions in the State Museum of Majdanek, with a focus on specific issues; this also includes interactive contributions from the participants. The students tell their group which parts of the films they believe were significant for their understanding of Wanda Ossowska’s experiences. These activities last 4.5 to 5 hours and conclude with a discussion on the significance of video recordings in learning about history. Students also share their impressions and reflections on what they have learned.

The benefits of viewing “*I talk to anyone who is willing to listen...*” are evident in young pupils’ accounts of their reactions to the videotaped material, as evident in the following descriptions of two pupils from a Lublin grammar school who visited Majdanek in October 2010.

“Sadness, and bitterness. Nobody can really feel what Wanda Ossowska felt. I have never been through what she’s been through. Only an individual with a very strong character would survive such hell. Having seen the film,

many people will think about the true meaning of their lives, and the value of life.” (A female student, comprehensive high school (CHS), grade 1.) “This kind of activity is very advantageous for us the students, and very interesting, too. The confessions of those who have really experienced the inferno of a concentration camp are more convincing, and allow you to depict the life in Majdanek for yourself. In my opinion, the workshop was very interesting. I learned more about the prisoner’s life. I enjoyed the individual tasks based on the video, in which everyone could talk about earlier questions.” (A female student, CHS, grade 1)

Every visit to a site of memory helps form attitudes that are otherwise hard to achieve in the course of typical school activities (Unger 1988: 28). This is true primarily for developing an appropriate attitude toward authentic sites and relics (*ibid.*). In discussing the pedagogic and educational benefits of museum lessons, one cannot overlook one in particular: the habit of visiting museums for purposes other than simply acquiring information (*cf. ibid.*: 29). For many pupils, the museum lesson is the first and sometimes, the only encounter with such a museum. Learning to ask questions and find answers in such situations is a lifetime skill (*ibid.*: 29).

The words of one teacher best describe the benefits of audio-visual resources in educational work with youth at sites of memory: “The effects of my students’ work exceeded my expectations [...]. Videotaped accounts gain in importance as the generation of those who participated in these events become fewer. In the museum lesson, the videos add attractiveness to the traditional method of transferring knowledge and memory of the past to the present and future generations.” (A history teacher, CHS, Lublin.) In Jacek Sawicki’s film, Wanda Ossowska herself points out the purposefulness of biographical narrative of a witness to history, as such narratives become a living memory in which the generation of today can take an active part. “Why, after fifty years, am I talking about these events that were so significant for those who are now perishing, relaying them to both those who are becoming more tempered and those who are maturing, recognizing the value of life, recognizing the value of existence? I have been saying things for a number

of years now, saying to the young and the old; I will talk to anyone who is willing to listen, what I want to do is share the values that the people here, in Majdanek, have left, and acquired. [...]"

Wanda Ossowska died on 26th April 2001 in Warsaw. Pope John Paul II called her "a witness to the ultimate test," which she remained throughout her lifetime, engaging with young people and "anyone who was willing to listen" to her. The unrelenting laws of nature and the passing of time allow one to realize that videotaped accounts of witnesses to history become increasingly important in the education of memory and remembrance.

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Anna Klimowicz

HISTORICAL EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS FOR PUPILS: “THIS CANNOT BE FORGOTTEN. ENCOUNTERS WITH FORMER RAVENSBRÜCK INMATES”

The project “This cannot be forgotten ...” was launched in March 2011, when Hanna Nowakowska, chair of *Ja kobieta* [‘Me, a Woman’] Foundation and Elżbieta Sęczykowska, head of *Mecenat Sztuki* [‘Patronage of the Arts’] Foundation suggested a seminar involving encounters between pupils and former inmates of the Ravensbrück women’s concentration camp. The project description was created for extracurricular educational activities.

The project included several stages. Pupils learned about the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp in the first stage. A plan was created to introduce the historical context that also included students’ writing letters to former prisoners. This task helps pupils learn about the war period and helps them put themselves in another person’s position, thus creating empathy for the victims. The teams of pupils who wrote such letters were then invited to participate in a preparatory workshop for meeting with witnesses of history, e.g. Polish women. The workshop also taught pupils how to record witness testimonies as historical notations. The workshop (attended by student teams and their supervising teachers) was conducted by our institute’s staff and is best summarized in the following excerpt from an article written for a school magazine by a student, Paulina Adamiak, from Lublin:

“‘An extremely interesting project’ was the first thought that came to our minds. [...] Becoming acquainted with the rules-and-regulations, minutely. A vague fear. Can we manage

it? Finally our arrival in Warsaw. [Meeting] some new, interesting people our same age. [...] Talks, advice about how to interview witnesses of history. Learning how to discuss the subject. A banal thing, seemingly, but essential and very important. Being taught how to appropriately behave in unexpected situations. Preparing us for the tears, moment[s] of silence, outbursts [...]. An idea of such a meeting with [...] an unfamiliar person began to develop in our heads.”

The next stage consisted of a seminar for the pupils and teachers; it was attended by former Polish inmates of Ravensbrück. The seminar allowed young people to meet with these women and record their accounts in written form. Some of the women were interviewed several times. The last meeting in the pilot project took place on 17 June 2011 at the National Remembrance Institute’s Educational Centre *Przystanek Historia*. A total of eleven teams representing seven grammar schools, two from Warsaw and five from the vicinity of Warsaw, presented their results. The pilot was so successful that it was incorporated into the Public Education Office’s educational program for the school year 2011/2012.

All the contributors to and participants in the pilot project attended the 2012 celebration of the 67th anniversary of the liberation of Ravensbrück. They presented the outcome of their work; the group trip including teachers, students, and former camp prisoners was an important experience for all.

The following year we included eighth grade students as project addressees. A total of thirty-eight student teams from twenty-six schools throughout Poland participated in the project. Because of the number of participants, the teams were asked to select a five-minute fragment from their notations for their final presentation. At this stage, the project partly turned into a competition. A board of experts judged how interesting the interviews excerpts were, according to predefined criteria, e.g. clear visualization, good audibility, etc. The cooperation framework established beforehand with the educators of the Ravensbrück International Youth Meeting Centre offered the participating young Polish pupils an opportunity to once again share the results of their work with an international audience.

In order to win over more witnesses of history, the project was renamed as *“This cannot be forgotten. Encounters with women who survived the inferno of Nazi concentration camps and Soviet prison camps.”* Additional lesson scripts for teachers were compiled, along with a list of publications and films worth recommending to the young students. The project tasks were supplemented by a documented visit to a site of memory, worksheets, and the writing of an essay on *Why, in spite of the years that have passed, are the crimes of twentieth-century totalitarianism still discussed?*, or, *The social consequences of World War Two*. The preparatory workshops for meetings with witnesses to history were devised to develop the students’ and teachers’ skills, whilst two other seminar meetings intended to deepen their knowledge beyond the historical context. The final presentation, which was made available to the general public, included the presentation of the most interesting five-minute fragments by the teams, which remain a very important aspect of the project.

The objective of “This cannot be forgotten ...”

The general objective of the project is to inform students about two different types of totalitarian rule: the one that developed in Germany founded on nationalism and racism and the one that emerged in the Soviet Union based on communism and the notion of social class. Students are also taught how to gather written material that serves the reflection of the social and psychological consequences of the one or other totalitarian system.

The participating pupils and teachers are expected to broaden their knowledge of the international situation as well as of that in Europe and in Poland in the early twentieth century. They come to understand the origins and consequences of the two totalitarian states and the tragedy they caused humankind. They learn about the deportations of Polish people to Nazi concentration camps and forced labor sites, as well as about later deportations from the Polish Eastern Borderland into the depths of the USSR. Thus, they are eventually able to identify the circumstances that caused the different deportations and locate the displacement sites. Students learn about the

individual fates of former female prisoners of Nazi concentration camps and Soviet prison camps during the Second World War and about the living conditions in these camps.

More practically, the pupils learn how to prepare their meetings with witnesses of history, how to phrase their questions, how to give a talk, how to document the witness' account using the historical notation format, and about how to employ witnesses' autobiographical testimonies – as a way to move from the abstract level of textbook statistical data to an individual's fate and personal history and, thus, value oral history as a valuable source of historical information.

Finally, students are asked to develop a sense of empathy and respect for the individuals they meet and their experiences; students often recognize what values and attitudes enabled such individuals to survive in spite of the extreme conditions.

The concrete results of the project

Concrete project results include extensive notation material, often consisting of hours-long recordings: poignant, heartrending stories that inspire awe, anguish, and admiration for human endurance; stories that attest to the will to survive and efforts to maintain one's dignity despite unbearable conditions. A further use of this material is worth considering.

There is also a less apparent value to the project: Teachers who have encouraged young people to sign up for the project have noticed that such students are influenced by meetings with former concentration camp inmates and become mentally and psychically more learned and curious. They ask for additional reading material, inquire about their own family histories and become more open and cooperative with one another. Some of them have reassessed their own perception of their lives.

"This is the first time I am participating in the project. [...] Yesterday, we presented our edited footage to the whole school as part of a festival of science and a summary of other school activities. We were applauded by the students and teachers. [...] A long and, in

my opinion, rich discussion arose. The students, and not only those participating in the project, expressed their thoughts about the former female prisoners with considerable involvement and empathy. I am sure I will use this material in my lessons at school in the following years.”

(Agata Stankiewicz, comprehensive high school teacher, Krakow.)

“In my opinion, this is a fantastic undertaking, showing the young people a certain ‘abstract’ thing, as this is what concentration camps are for them. In the beginning, the participants from my school approached the project somewhat selfishly. In part, they sought an opportunity to skip school and instead go to a meeting at the IPN [National Remembrance Institute]. However, the encounters with witnesses of history have changed something in them. It is as if a curtain has fallen for them. I was astonished by their increased motivation to make the films. Besides, they stay in touch with those women, on the telephone, etc. I think this shows the project’s long-term effects, which will leave a trace and pay back in the future. My impression was that the ‘abstract’ idea of camps has become more real to them.”

(Marcin Gogolewski, teacher of history at the comprehensive high school in Komornica.)

The students who participated in the project later joined other projects and activities. I repeatedly receive phone calls from these witnesses of history, who recount with satisfaction their meetings with the young people, telling me that the students remember their name-days, send them their best wishes for Christmas or Easter and invite them to pay visits to their schools. The project has met its intended purpose – primarily, because it has been thought through in terms of methodology – and is not exclusively focused on providing historical knowledge but on activating emotion as well.

■ CZECH REPUBLIC

Oldřich Tůma

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND INFLUENCE OF ORAL HISTORY IN THE CONTEXT OF CZECH CONTEMPORARY HISTORIOGRAPHY

In the following short article, I will trace the evolution and establishment of the oral history discipline in the field of Czech historiography and attempt to characterize what I feel is its fundamental contribution to research on contemporary history and our understanding of the recent past. I do so mainly based on examples from projects carried out by the Institute of Contemporary History at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (ICH AS CR). Of course, this does not mean that other important oral history projects have not been implemented elsewhere. They most certainly have: a random selection might include *Živá paměť* and, with its attention to history and the legacy/heritage of gender studies, the *Paměť žen*/Women's Memory project run by the Jewish Museum; the Postbellum project (documentation on the victims of the resistance to the Nazi and Communist regimes; as well as projects run by the Institute for Studies of Totalitarian Regimes, etc.). The ICH AS CR's oral history projects can be viewed as a sort of *pars pro toto* and the story of Czech oral history can be shown through this example.

Contemporary history, not to mention oral history, did not exist in the true sense of the word in Czechoslovakia before 1989, i.e. prior to the fall of the Communist regime. The most recent history and its interpretation were, under the prior regime, subject to intense ideological and politically motivated monitoring and manipulation. In the official version it was limited to the history of the Communist Party or to workers' movements. Sensitive topics were rarely discussed, and, if they were, only through examples canonized by political decision. A unique example of this approach to history

is the Prague Spring and the Soviet Army's military occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The deciding power center in the country – the Communist Party's Central Committee – commissioned the drafting and approval of a binding text: the so-called Lessons from Crisis Development (Poučení z krizového vývoje), which, for the next twenty years, became the official and indubitable interpretation of what had happened in and around Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The only environment in which one could carry out free-thinking historical research was that of exile historiography, or, in the later years, the regime's existence in a dissent milieu. With few exceptions, this sort of production was, however, limited to historical essay-writing. This was understandable – there was no possibility to access archive documents. True oral history did not really exist. In more liberal times, i.e. during the 1960s, a broad project focusing on witnesses to the resistance during the World War II period conducted by the now defunct Czechoslovak committee for history of anti-fascist resistance was organized.

It was limited, however, to the collection of historic materials. Written statements were collected from witnesses, and stenographic records of interviews were made. It was rare that interviews were recorded on audio recording devices.

The fall of the Communist regime changed things fundamentally. Contemporary history quickly established itself as a viable discipline. It was no surprise that, after decades of ideological and political indoctrination, free-thinking research focused primarily on key events in political history: the occupation and resistance during World War II, the Communist regime's rise to power in 1948 and its crisis and the intervention of foreign armies at the end of the 1960s and resistance against the regime.

The first (academic) work that used interviews with the events' protagonists (once again bordering on "work with witnesses to history") fits into this context. The prehistory for oral history can be found in this period (actually on the premises of the post-revolution Historical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic – HI CAS) when interviews with the leading

forces of the Velvet Revolution, the Civic Forum, became the first outputs to map one of the chapters of our most recent history. Transcripts of these interviews, together with other written documents, were published in book form (Otáhal/Sládek 1990). Interviews with the protagonists of opposition initiatives also create a pendant to the volumes of documents: *Demokratická iniciativa*, *Hnutí za občanskou svobodu*, *Obroda*, *České děti*, etc.; they also served as supplementary material for more detailed studies. Researchers were motivated to work with witnesses often in attempts to obtain explanations or expand on facts, information or events that they (the researchers) already knew about from other sources. Witnesses from the ranks of historians claim retrospectively that the personal testimonies had, in their eyes, the gravity of a very valuable source that they later used in their work, even if the information was “subjective.”

People outside the group of researchers at the ICH also devoted time to recording interviews. They processed topics such as mapping the fates of the “Protectorate” generation, which had been impacted by World War II, protagonists from the Charter 77 group, etc. (i.e. Dana Musilová, Ilona Christl and/or Květa Jechová).

It was the *100 Student Revolutions* project that allowed for the true triumph of oral history. Its promised to capture the full scope of the life stories of actors from the November ‘89 events (from among the participating students) proved to be very productive. Despite a lot of “searches” and “fumbling,” this was the first time that the newest findings from foreign methodological literature (mainly of Anglo-Saxon and German provenance) were used extensively and the first time that local researchers worked with oral history based on international standards. It was also important that regional aspects were included in the research. The interpretation of the interviews was a significant part of the project.

The work met with great acclaim in the Czech Republic because, among other reasons, it was published on the 10th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. It opened a wide debate on oral history, and one that was not simply based on criticism or irony, but where positive assessments prevailed.

According to the views expressed in certain reviews, the book's value lies in part, in the fact that, on a general level, it relates to the history of the so-called Normalization Period and contributes to the issue (and the problem of viewing the issue) of people's lives in the "grey zone" of that period.

A project that built on similar ideas was *Cultural and Social Activities of the Young Generation and the Path to a Civil Society*. This project was developed based on analyses and interpretations of key topics from previous student testimonies – descriptions of extracurricular activities and how they spent their free time according to the narrators' own life stories. The research was based not only on oral history; however, the vast majority of partners recorded the interviews and continued to work with them.

At the start of the new millennium, a specialized work site, i.e. the Centre for Oral History led by Miroslav Vaněk, was set up as part of the ICH AS CR. Similar to the case of establishing (the discipline of) Czech contemporary history, support and cooperation coming from Germany also played a fundamental role. In the case of oral history, relationships and meetings with colleagues from the USA played a major role. Another important milestone was the establishment of a study program in oral history at the Faculty of Studies in Humanities at Charles University, as well as the creation of the Oral History Association, which organized the IOHA Congress in Prague in 2010, where the Czech pioneer in oral history, Miroslav Vaněk, was elected president of IOHA for the 2010–2012 term.

Via a project devoted to the elite of the Communist regime and people from the anti-regime opposition during the 1970s and 1980s ("Winners? Losers? Powerful Powerless?" / "Poražení? Mocní bezmocní?"), a significant shift took place in the focus on objects of oral history: a shift to regular people, people on the street. The project concentrated mainly on the personal fates of workers and members of the intelligentsia, once again during the so-called Normalization Period (a multi-volume publication called "Ordinary People"/"Obyčejní lidé"). Over the past decade, ICH has also realized a number of other projects using primarily oral history. Their topics are varied: the cottage-life phenomenon, rock music, the Communist regime's science

policy, German anti-fascists in Czechoslovakia and their post-war fates, etc. Despite occasional criticisms and even ironic grimaces (“oral history is a discipline in which the main concern is getting the microphone set up right,” claimed a top Czech historian not so long ago), in the Czech context, oral history is now viewed as a viable and important method for research on recent history. It contributes not only to discovering the past, but also represents a contribution to a specific transition and to a debate (one that is very limited in the Czech environment) on the most recent contemporary history.

Experience with life in non-democratic regimes – the Nazi regime and later the Communist regime – continues to be perceived in the Czech (and generally in the Central and East European) context as a fundamental and unique experience and as one that determines the perspective for understanding the history of the 20th century. Totalitarianism, the Cold War and the infringement on human rights are seen as key experiences of modern humanity. From this perspective it follows that the most important and definitive historical events of the 20th century took place in Central and Eastern Europe. A related phenomenon (i.e. of a sense of history perceived in this way) is then a feeling of complete discontinuity in a temporal and spatial sense. What came before the rise of, and after the fall of, the Communist dictatorship is a completely different history than that of the decades during that period. Other, more fortunate parts of Europe (and actually the world) experienced a completely different history. According to some people, it is the primary task of historians of contemporary history to uncover and explain the criminal essence of the Communist regime, to warn of its return, or – simply stated – to find and provide ammunition for the world of media and politicians in the never-ending fight against totalitarianism.

The Nazi and – due to the length of its duration – the actually more important Communist dictatorships undoubtedly represent an important segment in the history of Central and Eastern Europe. The Communist regime was truly a criminal one and had negative impacts on millions of lives. Even the life stories collected as part of oral history projects repeatedly draw attention to the watershed moments during the course of the regime, to

people's stances toward it and to the suffering and victims. Of course, the relativization of events or apologies for personal failures is also not lacking. However, oral history indicates that such understanding of modern history is excessively narrow. The subject of its interest is human life and the history of the individual that plays out through broader history according to it, next to it and even contrary to it. Human life demonstrates elements of continuity that overcome breakthroughs in greater history. Many topics, not just the struggle with power or the failure of power, are typical and important for it. It would be futile to name such a wide array of relevant topics – I have already spoken of them. These are often themes that are the common history lived through both in the East and the West of a once divided world, but also in the North and the South, just as the world seems to be divided today. This discontinuity of our own history in the temporal and spatial sense is by no means absolute. Oral history opens and accentuates the existence of other perspectives for understanding newer history; i.e. more than just the one dichotomy of a basic blueprint laid out by the unfortunate existence of totalitarian ideology and regimes of the European style during the 20th century.

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Pavla Hermina Neuner and Julie Jenšovská

THE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION OF THE JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE

Founded in 1906, the Jewish Museum in Prague is the largest museum of its kind in Europe and is consistently the most visited museum in the Czech Republic. Its primary focus is on modern Jewish history, in particular the history and fate of Jews in the 20th century. The Shoah History Department, Archives, Photo Archive and Department for Education and Culture deal mainly with this period.

Since 1990, the Shoah History Department has systematically collected interviews with survivors and witnesses. This collection is the largest and most frequently consulted collection of its kind in the Czech Republic. In 1990, not many people in Czech Republic were familiar with oral history and its methodology. The Oral History Collection was organically developed by two interviewers, Anna Lorencová and Anna Hydráková, both of whom were Holocaust survivors who understood the importance of preserving personal testimonies. After creating a list of questions, they began to interview their own friends and other survivors. Over the years they conducted more than a thousand interviews and collected pictures and other documents from family archives. It helped that the interviewers were also survivors as all parties had experienced similar things. However, this shared fate was also a disadvantage, because some situations and experiences were not discussed in detail because the interviewers did not require further explanation on certain issues.

Problematic was also that the interviews focused on the pre-war experience and the fates of interviewees during the Holocaust; the period after liberation was given only cursory coverage. Many Holocaust survivors had put

their hopes in the Communist regime, only to be disappointed by its totalitarian nature and by the manifestations of Communist “anti-Zionism.” This topic had not yet been satisfactorily documented and described in the historiography. So, in 2009, we decided to extend our collection of interviews. Our recent interviews focus on preserving the Jewish memory of the entire 20th century. We are not just interested in how people died, but also in how they have lived. Interviews on the Jewish experience in 20th century Czechoslovakia, especially under the two totalitarian regimes of Nazism and Communism, are important in order to establish Jewish memory as a part of the Czech collective memory and in order to transfer the Jewish experience across generations. The oral history project is part of a long-term effort by the Jewish Museum in Prague.

We usually conduct three interviews per month. The witness (interviewee) is visited at least twice. We gather not only oral testimonies, but also collect pictures and relevant documents from family archives.

We ask the interviewee to fill out an agreement and copyright form, wherein they state how we may use their material. We then transcribe the recorded interview and send it to the interviewee for authorization and approval. We then transform the transcribed and edited interview into a structured format (XML) and index it (i.e. based on keywords, places, people’s names). This allows us and other researchers to search the interview documents for specific information. The interviews and all materials (photos, documents, etc.) are listed in the digital catalogue. All sources are available at the Jewish Museum for all types of researchers; however, researchers must respect all restrictions on usage requested by the interviewees (witnesses). The Jewish Museum also strives to make the unique oral history collection better available to the public and schools, in order that Jewish voices “are heard” in the current upsurge in memory-related materials and media. Therefore, the project consists of two interconnected parts: the recording of interviews and related educational activities. The archive documents are also offered as educational material for Czech teachers and students dealing with the topics of the Shoah and Jewish life in Czechoslovakia before and after the

Second World War. The Department for Education and Culture organizes various programs for Czech schools and discussions with Shoah survivors.

Ours or Foreign? Jews in the Czech 20th Century (Naši nebo cizí? Židé v českém 20. století) project

This education project was realized from 2011 to 2014 in cooperation with the Terezín Institute Initiative. Project goals included improving the quality of teaching modern Jewish history, broaching new or lesser-known topics and making new documents and witness testimonies available for education. The project was co-financed by the European Social Fund and federal funds. We explored five topics for the project: Jewish Identity between Religion and Nation; Anti-Semitism in Modern Czech History; At Home on the Road, Migration and Refugees; Holocaust and Human Behavior and Memory. This enumeration does not fully represent the history of Jews in the Czech lands; we chose them because they complement the project's main objective and pervade the entire researched time period. They also help update the scholastic educational process.

As part of the project we held a number of several-day, interactive seminars and one-day, thematic conferences for teachers and workshop organizers. We also gave lectures for primary school and secondary school students.

We created 30 methodological materials that are meant to contribute to students' understanding of difficult phenomena, which have not yet been sufficiently examined in Czech textbooks or education (for example anti-Jewish riots after the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918; attitudes to refugees in Czechoslovakia in 1938; and the role of Czech gendarmes in the Terezín Ghetto). The methodologies sometimes focus on seemingly marginal topics. However, we believe that these topics can help show how Czech society has defined itself against groups considered to be other or foreign.

We also created a publication consisting of several complementary sections. The main volume with the subtitle, "Big and Little History," contains more than 400 texts and documents related to project themes. The other volume, "Recounted History," is devoted to oral history.

Within the project “Ours or Foreign?” we cooperated with the Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation at the University of Southern California. We prepared thirty audio-visual samples from interviews from the Shoah Foundation archive, taking into consideration the project’s thematic units. In these interviews we do not encounter passive “victims,” i.e. people who just submit to their fates, but rather those who engage actively. By emphasizing history and its use in schools, we hope to open doors to the plurality of various types of story-telling about history and to promote critical thinking about memory (remembrance) and its role in relationship to history. Teachers can use the interviews in their lessons. They can also use our sample lessons that include the audio-visual material.

Use of oral history sources in educational materials for the “Ours or Foreign?” project

We use the oral history sources as part of the project “Ours or Foreign?” in individual methodologies, as a compilation of independent excerpts from audio-visual interviews and in a collection of fully edited, transcribed interviews with witnesses in the volume, “Recounted History” (Vyprávěné dějiny). The education materials aim to enable teachers and students to better understand the complexity of historical events that may not be covered in textbooks: the history of everyday events; the attitudes and fates of “ordinary” people and those of minorities, whose views on events can differ from the rest of society. Furthermore, we wanted to present the story-tellers/witnesses as people who actively sought their own way during the difficult periods of the 20th century. A didactic goal was to present Jews as more than mere victims while also demonstrating that there is no single, correct view of history. On the contrary: We use the interviews to help overcome stereotypical perceptions of historical events and processes.

When selecting the interviews we tried to present the most diverse stories possible of Jews coming from or living in the Czech territories. We also wish to emphasize the diverse community, with its various languages, cultures, approaches to religion and social status. We wanted to demonstrate that

there is no such thing as a typical Jewish Holocaust survivor. The fates of those who fled abroad, went into hiding or joined the resistance are also presented. Thus, the selection includes more than “typical” fates of Jews in the Czech lands.

To simplify their use in schools, the stories published here have been significantly abridged to 15 to 20 pages without diminishing the interview’s character. The texts were edited but certain features of the spoken word and the linguistic specificities of individual story-tellers have been preserved. The interviews relate to Czech-Jewish histories. Working with the voices of eye-witnesses helps students better understand recent historical events. The volume’s first two texts are meant for teachers; they present an independent methodology for oral history and practical experiences using oral history in education. The third text is meant for students and contains basic rules for conducting interviews with witnesses. Many interview related terms are defined in the Dictionary of Terms.

The fifteen interviews can be read as life stories of interesting people. Teachers can use them to create assignments, as a means of comparing individual fates, as testimonies or to prepare for witnesses’ visits to schools or for recording their own interviews.

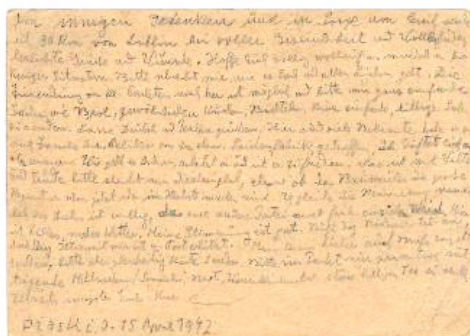
We use not only transcribed witness recollections/memories, but also those from the USC Shoah Foundation’s audio-visual archive. We realize that some teachers prefer prepared lessons. For them we have created several methodologies that use short videos edited specifically for such use. The method is always introduced with a set of key questions, some of which are general enough to be used to draw students into the problem, as they do not necessarily build on knowledge of historical context. The introductory text and educational materials follow. Students can use these to find general answers to key questions. The methodological section is devoted to more specific use of the material. The lessons can be used in various educational contexts. When working with witnesses’ testimonies, we try to complement the audio-visual material with other sources.

For teachers who prefer to use these for their specific needs, 30 thematic videos are available on the project's website and on our YouTube channel. We have also created a general methodology to demonstrate possible uses of such sources. In this, students address issues like learning about a person and history from the story-telling of individual people; about what might be missing in such cases and what we might find elsewhere; about how and what we remember of our experiences and what influences this; and about what we recount about what we remember. Students also question how our story-telling about the past is influenced by the present and by events that have taken about the relayed events; how the relayed stories influence the person listening to the story-telling and the one asking the questions; and questions about what information is important for understanding history and where such information can be found.

We believe that the educational materials related to the "Ours or Foreign?" project will help integrate the methodology of oral history and related benefits into educational practices.



417 - Ludvík Jeleník před deportací
Němčubitz



418 - Dopisnice Ludvíka Jeleníka z ghetta Piaškí, 15. dubna 1942

Ludvík Jeleník (1899-1942) přišel z ghetta Piaškí Hornamannu Jeleníkoví do Brna. Sděluje, že je možné posílat do gheta malé balíčky s docela obyčejnými a levnými věcmi: chleba, koláče, buchty.

Židovské muzeum v Praze

Není nebo je?
Žid v Sasku 20. století

„S vroucí vzpomínkou a starostí o Vás Vám v písmě tělesněm a duševněm zdraví posílám z místa ležícího 30 km od Lublinu co nejserdečnější pozdravy a přání. Doufám, že jste úplně zdraví a dosud veselé myslí. Napište mi prosím, jak se Vám a všem milým blízkým daří. Sem je možné posílat drob, balíčky a prosím, aby jste posílali úplně jednoduché věci jako chleba, obyčejné koláče, buchty, zkrátka jednoduché, levné věci. Podávavujte Deuloha a Penkku. Je tu hodně známých, setkal jsem se např. i s rodinou Feč. Felika z býv. továrny na hedvábí, možná si na něho vzpomenete. Jak se vede Oskarovi, pracuje a je spokojený, co je s Walterem a Trudou, napište mi o tom, prosím, a taky jestli udělá tu velkou opravu už teď, nebo na pozdím. Myslím, že zvlášť střechu je nutné rekonstruovat, protože dřív se další partaj nenastěhuje. Tady je chladně, sychravě počasi. Náladu mám dobrou. Zatelefonojte ing. Meißnerovi, že je tu se mnou ing. Iltis a prosí o poštu. Mohou se sem posílat vlastně i dopisy, a pošlete prosím současně i dopisnici. V balíčku prosím posílat jen primitivní vydatné pečivo/housky, chleba, jednoduchou buchtu, příp. nějaký laciný čaj.

Všechny vroucné zdraví a líbám,

Váš

Piaškí, 15. duben 1942*

Sample of the “Ours or Foreign” project publication Velké a malé dějiny (Big and Small History) Jewish Museum, Prague

Portrét

Nesnažte se pamětníka stylizovat do nějaké pózy. Ideální je vyfotografovat ho při povídání nebo při nějaké akci, například když vám ukazuje fotoalba, když vás provází po bytě/zahradě. Pokud pamětník s fotografováním nesohlasí, respektujte to.

Fotoalba

Požádejte pamětníka, aby vám ukázal fotoalba nebo třeba krabici, kde má snímky. Nejdříve si fotografie rozložte na stůl, ať máte přehled o tom, co všechno můžete použít.

Zkuste najít snímky k jednotlivým obdobím života, například:

- » Fotografie z dětství, s rodiči
- » V desetiletích na prázdninách
- » S kamarády, spolužáky
- » Na výletě
- » Svatební fotografie

Udržujte neustále hovor nad snímky. Ptejte se, co je na fotografiích, co se přihodilo, když byly pořízeny. Pamětník vám tak mimochodem sdělí věci, které jste se při rozhovoru ještě nedozvěděli. Ke každé fotografii dejte malý lísteček s číslem a vyfotejte jako celek.



Sample of the "Ours or Foreign" project publication *Vyprávěné dějiny* (Recounted History) Jewish Museum, Prague

Julie Svatoňová

USE OF INTERVIEWS WITH WITNESSES TO THE PORAJMOS, AT THE MUSEUM OF ROMA CULTURE

The Museum of Roma Culture is a unique institution in Europe. It is located in a socially excluded area, where a number of socially and economically disadvantaged Romani families live.

Since its founding in 1991, among the museum's main functions have been compilation, documentary and research activities focused on the preservation of documents related to the spiritual and material culture of Roma, both from a contemporary as well as a historical perspective. Today the museum manages 12 funds, one of which includes a library.

The museum currently houses an extensive and permanent exhibition, *Příběh Romů* (*The Story of the Roma*), which presents documents related to the history, traditions and culture of the Roma ethnicity.

A second important aspect of the Museum of Roma Culture's activities is education. This includes a number of interactive educational programs designed for children and students of all age groups. It also involves social-educational activities focused on Romani children from socially excluded areas near the museum. The children are offered information on topics such as Roma history, traditions and culture. As part of a number of the interactive programs and workshops we use both the memories and recollections of witnesses to history on the period of the genocide of the European Roma, in the Romani language called Porajmos, as well as memories from the more recent past and present. This allows issues to be examined from a perspective other than that of the majority of society. The educational programs are flexible and we can accommodate K-12 pupils, as well as children from kindergartens and university students. We use modern pedagogical methods, which include critical thinking techniques, dramatic training,

“silent discussions” or the use of primary sources. All of our programs are interactive and emphasize independent and guided activities.

One of the most important informational resources are testimonies of witnesses to history, both recorded as well as actual encounters with the witnesses to history who are actually present during the programs.

Since 2010 the museum has offered schools the option of “borrowing” – free of charge – the exhibition, *Genocide of the Roma during the Second World War*, together with a mobile animation based on students’ group work with replicas of period items and three personal stories. The testimonies of three witnesses to the Porajmos also play a role in the stories.

From the start, the museum staff has also emphasized capturing important cultural values and events in Roma history on audio and video recordings. There are currently several hundred such recordings available in our museum for both lay researchers and academic scholars. We have almost one hundred hours of testimonies focused exclusively on historical events, particularly relating to the Romani genocide during the Second World War. They were recorded between 1997 and 2005 by museum researchers and external specialists. The average duration of the interviews is between two and three hours. They feature Bohemian, Moravian and Slovakian Roma. The video-respondents experienced racial persecution and imprisonment in various types of camps and facilities, mainly in what the Protectorate called *Gypsy camps* and in Slovak were so-called *detainment camps for Gypsies* and in the concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau and others. This is not just about the depiction of historical events, but also about memories that contain information on the living conditions, housing, education, traditions, values and upbringing in traditional Romani families, which is invaluable for understanding the pre-war and wartime periods. Most of the museum’s recordings are in digital format.

The genocide of Roma during the Second World War has been one of the crucial topics of the museum’s research from the beginning. The topic of Porajmos was marginalized during the post-war, socialist period and this is still often the case. The Communist regime had no interest in broaching the

issue of the Roma genocide during the Second World War because it did not consider the Roma a nationality, but rather a social group. It was only after the fall of the Communist regime that both the general public and media began to take an interest in this topic.

The collection of memories and testimonies on the Porajmos proved to be very important; the museum started work on this activity during the mid-1990s. Using the oral history research method we acquired important information on the lives of Roma in pre-war Czechoslovakia, and mainly on their persecution and regulated liquidation between 1939 and 1945. The personal stories of Roma enable us to look at the events not only of the Second World War from a new perspective, but they also supplement areas where written sources do not exist or where they are not necessarily credible. The engaging story-telling of real people is also easier to process and often much more interesting for students in the classroom. The witnesses and survivors of wartime horrors will not be with us forever, and so the recording of their testimonies is immensely important for the future.

The importance of collecting the personal testimonies of Roma also helped in the compensation of Porajmos victims and their descendants, which took place during the late 1990s. The Museum of Roma Culture published two publications on this topic, based on the personal testimonies of Roma survivors: *Ma bisteren* (Do Not Forget) and *Z Brna do Auschwitz-Birkenau* (*From Brno to Auschwitz-Birkenau*). A number of authors, for example historian Ctibor Nečas in his book, *Holocaust českých Romů* (*The Holocaust of Czech Roma*), draw on original field audio and video recordings. The recordings of testimonies given by Roma witnesses to history were also used to prepare the documentary film by director, Monika Rychlíková, entitled *To jsou těžké vzpomínky* (*Those Are Difficult Memories*). The film was produced in 2002 in cooperation with the museum, the Film and Sociology Association and Czech Television. The documentary summarizes basic data on the Porajmos in an engaging manner by using authentic recordings of witnesses' testimonies. As part of an exhibition on the works and life story of Ceija Stojka, an important Austrian Roma writer and painter, the museum also created

a documentary film that captures her World War II memories in which she describes her fate and that of her family. The 35-minute film is also suitable for use as part of educational programs on the Holocaust.

Witness recollections are not only part of direct educational activities, but are also an integral part of the permanent exhibition, *Příběh Romů* (*The Story of the Roma*). Visitors read witnesses' memories of a given topic or period. Such memories lend the exhibition authenticity and help disprove established ideas on how Roma live, offering a view "from the other side." One disadvantage of these memories is their written format, which is often difficult to comprehend for children, who are not used to reading long texts.

Witnesses' memories are primarily used for lecture programs, which focus mainly on the Second World War period, i.e. the Nazi genocide of Roma in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. We currently work with witnesses who attend the programs.

In "Porajmos programs," memories are integrated into the program before pupils discuss (the content) directly with the witness. We move from general knowledge of historical events to methods using specific situations and stories that occurred during the Second World War. Pupils then decide how they think they would have acted in the situation about which they have just learned. A discussion of the various viewpoints follows. After this, real stories about the situation are told, in part through memories of the witnesses who experienced the situation. The programs also include a short film outlining the correlations of pre-war and wartime period shots with current ones. The video is accompanied by the story of a witness to the Jewish Holocaust. This video is important because students realize that, as distant as the Holocaust period might seem, the ideas that led to the Holocaust are still held by some people and this helps the students to see current events in their historical context. Lastly, the educational program on the Porajmos includes story-telling by a witness and a subsequent discussion. Despite all our work with memories and recollections, both in exhibitions and program, I find live storytelling is the most beneficial. Personal encounters with a real person and tangible evidence that the relayed events were actually experienced

by someone is an invaluable experience for children and no other type of transfer of memories can fully replace this.

A similar principle and program structure like the one described above is used in other programs that focus on the Second World War period. This includes the program *Shoah, Porajmos, Holocaust*, which is offered in cooperation with the Brno offices of the Department for Education and Culture of the Jewish Museum in Prague.

Currently, very little is taught about the Porajmos. We are the only institution in the Czech Republic that explores this topic in depth and offers schools educational programs and material.

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LINK

www.rommuz.cz

Pavel Voves and Petr Koura

NAZI PERSECUTION OF POPULATIONS IN THE CZECH LANDS

A Multimedia Teaching Aid with Testimonies

The project's main aim was to disseminate audio-visual recordings of historical witnesses to Nazi persecution for their use in the teaching of modern history in secondary schools in the Czech Republic. Živá paměť, o. p. s. produced these recordings as part of an international scientific documentary project entitled "Documentation of Life Stories of Victims of Slave and Forced Labor" and other projects focused on oral history (teaching) methods.

The project builds on a study guide (in book form) for secondary school teachers, "Nazi Persecution of Inhabitants of the Czech Lands, published by Živá paměť in 2006. The guide was distributed to all secondary schools in the Czech Republic. It described forms of Nazi persecution that occurred during World War II in what is now the Czech Republic. It also described Nazi persecution of individual nationalities and ethnic groups. It included mainly information about the persecution of Sudeten German opponents of Nazism or the genocide of the Czech Roma, or Porajmos. This book allowed secondary school teachers to familiarize themselves with the newest scientific research and use these findings for pedagogical work.

Multimedia aids for teachers (a DVD) were developed by Živá paměť project coordinators, Pavel Voves and Viola Jakschová, together with pedagogue, Martin Formánek, and were meant for the teaching of history and social studies in Czech high schools. In addition to historians, a high school teacher took part in developing the teaching aid. He shared his pedagogical experience

with the authors and helped format the new teaching material. Departing from a didactic-methodical perspective, we decided to use a combination of images (photographs), basic factographic data and video recordings from witnesses to history. We believe that this combination engages audiences and presents information to them in an attractive way. With the inclusion of video testimonies the project pursues the following didactic goals:

Provide interesting, inspiring information on historical events (so-called experience learning)

The DVD video materials provide students with examples of real-life stories from witnesses to history. The video content reinforces personal testimonies, particularly when an actual witness to the events related to World War II cannot be present in the classroom. Testimonies help evoke empathy among students and put them in the actual roles of the witnesses, thus increasing their interest in the historic period.

Increase usage of atypical learning tools

The DVD tool supports a significant amount of personal interaction on the part of teachers/educators, as well as students. The teachers review the videos, prepare questions for the students based on video content and then lead discussions in working groups. Teachers encourage students to focus on a specific topic, i.e. life in concentration camps, and then the groups present their views on the topic. Teachers benefit from the worksheets supplied with the videos that help them refer to different parts of the video footage and use it efficiently in the classroom.

DVD content as motivator and facilitator

Generally students' questions focus on specific facts that interest them from lectures. The DVD helps to motivate broader questions and allows students to understand the contextual evolution of historic events. A further example of the DVD's didactic significance is how it addresses the broader social and societal impacts of historical events: through specific examples, students

begin to think about what it means to live in a society without basic personal freedoms, in a country occupied by a foreign power, etc. They also consider how people behave and react in such abnormal situations.

The teaching aid is a DVD that contains a presentation created in MS Power Point and can be easily controlled and used by teachers. The teaching aid provides supporting materials for full preparation for one or more classroom lessons. The presentation contains an interpretation of issues for lectures in the form of concise points that audiences (students) can easily remember and record. These facts are supplemented by photographic materials, complete versions of archive documents and also testimonies from witnesses to history. The multimedia aids used also require commentary from the actual teacher, who elaborates on the brief points shown in the presentation. Each slide in the presentation contains space for teacher's (pedagogue's) notes, which do not appear once the presentation is launched. The teaching DVD includes historic video testimonies and other archive resources. It consists of six comprehensive chapters, five of which contain videos with witness testimonies that run for 5 to 8 minutes. The seventh chapter contains links to further informational sources and a list of abbreviations used.

The introductory chapter focuses on the ideology of National Socialism. It presents basic terms such as *Volksgemeinschaft* and the groups that the Nazis had excluded from the "national community." Thus, right at the start of the course, students gain an overview of which groups the Nazis persecuted and how the Nazis officially justified that persecution.

The second chapter presents the history of the so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The book outlines the basic circumstances surrounding the creation of the Protectorate along with the Nazis' repressive policies. We present basic facts on the blanket round-up (arrest) actions by the Gestapo (Operation Gitter, Operation Albrecht I) here; along with the most significant repressive acts committed during the first year of the Protectorate – i.e. Sonderaktion Prague, during which all Czech universities were closed and 1,200 students were deported to the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen. Photographs complement the lecture points on the slides.

They also include authentic documents, e.g. Nazi decrees announcing the closing of universities.

A video-interview with Ladislav Bém (born in 1918) then follows. He was a student at the time. He speaks about the events that preceded the repressive acts as well as the actual arrests carried out at student dorms. The presentation goes on to describe the growth in resistance activities inside the Protectorate after the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, as well as the appointment of Richard Heydrich as the head of the Reich Protectorate in September 1941. The subsequent section addresses the so-called Czech question; that is, the way that the Nazis had planned to deal with members of the Czech nation. The chapter lists the basic theses of Heydrich's speech to representatives of the occupational administration given on October 2, 1941. Further chapters focus on Heydrich's economic and social policy and the repressive acts that the Nazis launched following the assassination attempt on Heydrich. The text includes facts on the number of victims, photos from the burned down village of Lidice and a video testimony by Jaroslava Skleničková (born 1926). She not only recounts the tragic events in Lidice, but also speaks of her imprisonment in the Ravensbrück concentration camp.

The third chapter explores the persecution of Jewish populations in the Protectorate. It describes the loss of civil rights among members of the Jewish minority and their gradual isolation. The chapter includes an enumeration of discriminatory measures (e.g. the ban on entry into public spaces) that allows audiences (students) to put themselves in these peoples' situation. Period photographs of public spaces with anti-Semitic slogans and public decrees accompany explanatory texts. The next part of the chapter describes measures against Jews introduced in the Protectorate after Heydrich's rise to power and the establishment of the collection camp in Terezín and other ghettos. The chapter culminates with photographs from the concentration camp in Auschwitz, to which the majority of Terezín ghetto residents were later deported. In a further video testimony, Bedřich Blasko (born in 1918), a witness, recalls his internment in Terezín and deportation to Auschwitz. The chapter closes with information on so-called Jewish half-breeds.

The fourth chapter focuses on the persecution of Roma populations living in the Protectorate. The presentation offers basic facts, e.g. data on the establishment of internment camps for Roma in Hodonín u Kunštátu and Lety u Písku. The narrative is complemented by photos from both camps and also includes the numbers of Romani victims. The chapter closes with a recording of memories by Anna Kýrová (born in 1927) on her imprisonment at the Auschwitz concentration camp and the concentration camp in Ravensbrück. The fifth chapter on *Slave Labor by Prisoners in Concentration Camps, Ghettos and Other Prison Facilities* explains the exploitative work done by prisoners and the Nazi method of “destruction through labor.” It includes the recollections of Miloš Volf (born in 1924) on his work in Gestapo prisons and in the Flossenbürg concentration camp. The chapter also features a sample of correspondence from a concentration camp and a specially-created map of the subcamps located in Bohemia and Moravia.

The final chapter, *Forced Labor Internment of Protectorate Populations*, is also the most comprehensive chapter; Živá paměť, the publication organizer, has done extensive research on this topic. Research activities show that this form of Nazi persecution has diminished in both the collective memory of Czech society as well as in the teaching of the history of the Second World War. Here the book describes the evolution of forced labor during the Second World War; methods that ultimately led to the blanket internment of an entire generation in the Czech lands. A number of photographs of forced labor and personal documents accompany the explanatory text. In a video testimony, Marie Jeníková (born in 1924) recalls her deportation to work as a forced laborer. René Šírek (born in 1923) speaks about his internment in so-called para-military organizations. Authors also present the system of penal measures related to forced labor. Miroslav Doležal (born in 1920) recalls his imprisonment in such a facility. The chapter ends with data on forced labor and trench-digging at the end of the war.

The publishers of this teaching aid have received very positive reactions from secondary school teachers, who describe the DVD as “very useful” and who praise the video samples of witness’ testimonies. Due to its popularity,

Živá paměť continues to use the DVD teaching tool during its lectures on the Holocaust and Romani Holocaust in Czech basic and secondary schools (note: these are part of a school lecture series with witnesses to history supported by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport). This program will continue with ministerial support in coming years.

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Martin Šmok

52,000 INTERVIEWS: USE OF THE USC SHOAH FOUNDATION ARCHIVE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

The USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive (VHA) contains memories and perspectives of 51,444 eyewitnesses of genocide from 58 nations in 34 languages. Each interview is an entire life history of one human being, a unique source of insight and knowledge. Forty-nine museums and universities in twelve countries, including the Malach Center for Visual History at Charles University in Prague and the Library of the Jewish Museum in Prague, have full access to the Visual History Archive.

The discussion about the nature of Holocaust education and remembrance in schools and the suitability of using testimony in that environment at the EVZ-sponsored Czecho-German expert meeting held in Prague in 2011 was a part of an ongoing global conversation about the use of testimony in schools. However, the education community is faced with the loss of the living memory of the witnesses and the attendant questions about how to best address that loss. At the same time, teachers around the world are faced with competing and increasing demands on their time and focus. To respond to both these issues, USC Shoah Foundation uses innovative learning tools and teacher trainings that optimize the use of testimony in diverse educational settings worldwide.

The importance of knowledge about a historical topic cannot be underestimated, but it is only one part of responsible citizenship: the main goals of educational efforts of the USC Shoah Foundation: critical thought, respectful attitudes and thoughtful action, are other essential components. There needs to be a process that enables students to make cognitive links

to the challenges and implications of a specific historical event, such as the Holocaust. There is clearly a link between knowledge and empathy, critical thinking and responsible civil engagement, respect and inspiration.

Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century

During the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 school years, USC Shoah Foundation brought its flagship professional development initiative, Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century, to the Czech Republic. The two-year program focuses on developing the capacity among middle and secondary school educators to use testimony effectively and appropriately in their classrooms. Main learning objectives include: increasing the digital and media literacy skills, developing a nuanced conceptual framework for the ethical use of testimony in curriculum development, examining influences of regional and local contexts on understanding of historical and contemporary genocide, increasing the ability to educate towards responsible participation in civil society, and injecting critical thinking to understand the role of stereotypes and prejudice. Examining the role of propaganda in the creation of local social memory is an integral part of the context analysis. The general approach is based on a constructivist paradigm of learning. Working with VHA testimonies and analyzing their content from various angles, the participating educators gain knowledge beyond the iconic imagery and stereotypical interpretations. They receive the instructional scaffolding to conceive, develop and pilot their own testimony-based lessons.

The Institute's educational programs integrate practical, real world examples aimed at demonstrating to learners that they have choices that they can make for themselves and for their society, as human beings and responsible citizens, today and everyday. In its three years of operations, the U.S. Teaching with Testimony Program and related outreach projects reached between 900 and 1,000 teachers and over 130,000 students. And in the first year of the programs in Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine) they have reached approximately 1,800 teachers and more than 200,000 students (see Koszyńska in this volume).

Today's students are mobile and connected – to one another and to their technology. Even those who do not have regular access to digital media need the skills and resources to stay competitive. To reach them where they are and to have meaning in their world, the Institute develops teaching and learning applications that capitalize on their mobility, creativity, and connectedness.



Initial seminar of the Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century program, CVH Malach, 2013, USC Shoah Foundation

IWitness

The IWitness website provides access to nearly 1,300 testimonies of survivors and other witnesses to the Holocaust and other genocides for guided exploration. Students can watch testimonies and use them in individual or group multimedia projects; teachers can assign activities as classwork or homework, and can even custom-build their own activities. The IWitness video editor gives students the freedom to integrate testimony clips together with footage from other sources as well as photos and maps, voice-over audio, music, and text to produce their own video projects. In a way that transcends traditional print materials, the interactive, audio-visual form of IWitness integrates testimony-based education with the development of digital literacy and other 21st-century competencies. The activities on the site encourage critical thinking and self-reflection, and help students get a sense of their own place in history and of the profound impact their words and actions can have on the lives of others.

IWitness activities are pedagogically scaffolded around four main elements – Consider, Collect, Construct and Communicate – that form the foundation of all of the learning activities in IWitness. *Consider* is perhaps the most important element in framing responsible and contextual use and engagement; in order to move through the activity, students spend time working with and reflecting on the nature of the testimony and its historical and pedagogical context. Through the *Collect process*, they develop information literacy skills by searching IWitness, finding materials specific to their projects and evaluating the results of their search. Students are then required to *Construct* an output that meets the learning outcomes defined by the teacher. This can be a video essay or video-based activity or it can be a word picture. In both cases, students are building digital and media literacy and making critical judgments. Students are provided with scaffolding materials, such as an instructional video on ethical editing, to ensure that they work with the materials appropriately. Finally, they are asked to *Communicate* what they have learned.

The first IWitness activity in Czech language, Svědkovégenocidy, is currently being piloted with Czech IWitness users. The activity includes clips from testimonies of Czech survivors of the Holocaust, survivors of the Rwandan Tutsi genocide and a Roma genocide survivor, which provide users with first-hand accounts of the pre-genocide practices of divisionism and stereotyping.

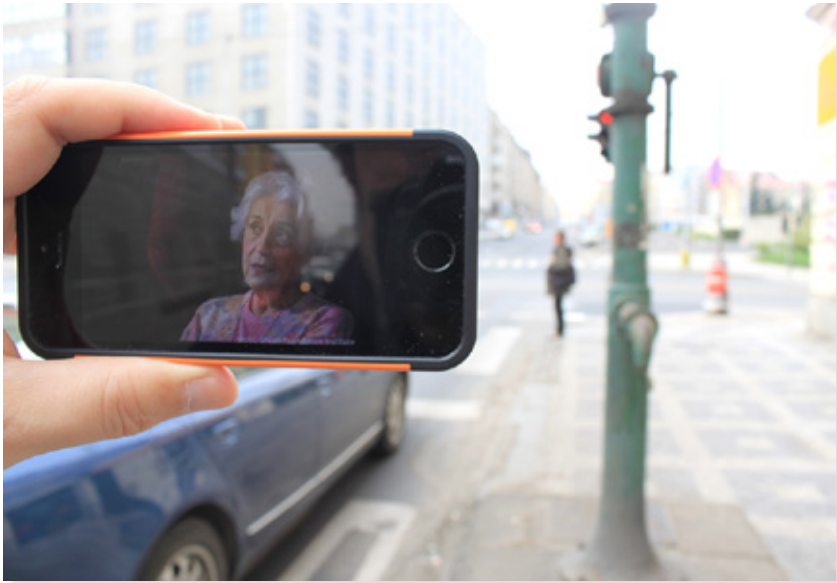
Global archive with local impact

In its global educational work, USC Shoah Foundation partners local organizations interested in providing access to testimony and producing educational materials. These partners have intimate knowledge of the local curricular needs and educational landscapes. The resulting teaching resources are not limited to the topic of the Holocaust: in the Czech Republic, a total of 35 testimony clips were integrated into the unique *Ours or Foreign? Jews in the Czech 20th Century* project spearheaded by the Jewish Museum of Prague (see Neuner/Jenšová in this volume). These clips address locally relevant issues of identity, refugee experience, prejudice, human behavior in extreme circumstances, and memory and commemoration, all within the larger context of the project, examining the often conflicting national narratives and stereotypes concerning events on the territory of the Czech Republic. Another Czech partner organization is the PANT civic initiative. *London Calling*, one of their VHA testimony based assets, which presents little-known facts about WWII Czech exiles in London and features leading figures of radio broadcasts into occupied homeland. Similarly, the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes utilized VHA testimony clips in its *Czechoslovaks in the Gulag* exhibition to provide important insights into a history that was to be kept secret. Providing truly local testimonies makes the educational efforts more relevant and thus more effective.

IWalks

IWalk is an interactive educational program that connects concrete physical locations with memories of historical events that took place on these

locations in several European countries. Testimonies from USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive are combined with other primary sources during visits to authentic locations to provide the often missing spatial, social and regional contexts as well as the personal aspect of historical events. The designed onsite educational activities support the development of the personal connection of students and members of the public to the past – enabling an impact of their actions on the present and the future. The first self-guided Czech IWalk was prepared in cooperation with the OpenEye civic initiative. It is dedicated to places connected with deportations from and through Prague. More IWalks in the Czech Republic are planned in 2014 for Královské Vinohrady, Mladá Boleslav and Brno.



Radioth IWalk

Evaluation

USC Shoah Foundation employs program designs that can be objectively and professionally evaluated, mapping the desired learning outcomes in educators and their pupils. The results of evaluations from IWitness pilots indicate that the program is effecting attitudinal change in every audience, particularly about how students, ages 13–26, feel about people who are different from themselves. The data from teacher evaluations indicate that a growing number of teachers in the United States, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Ukraine are now able to articulate and demonstrate the practice of ethical editing, understand constructivist theory and integrate testimony in an authentic way, beyond just a simple illustration. This evaluation process is ongoing.

READING LIST

USC SFI main page:

<http://sfi.usc.edu>

USC SFI Czech portal:

<http://sfi.usc.edu/international/czech>

Radiotrň IWalk:

<http://sfi.usc.edu/watch/education/iwalk>

Born in the city that became Auschwitz (Czech version of an asset available in more than 10 languages):

<http://sfi.usc.edu/watch/exhibits/narozeni-ve-městě-které-se-stalo-auschwitzem>

IWitness platform:

<http://iwatch.usc.edu>

Magdalena Benešová

MEMORY OF NATIONS IN SCHOOLS

Post Bellum's Educational Projects

Post Bellum was formed in 2001 as a community of journalists and historians joined by an interest in stories. They began to visit World War II veterans with a dictaphone in hand and to record their memories. Since that time, Post Bellum has covered a lot of ground. Roughly two-hundred co-workers gradually joined the small initial group of five people. They record the fates of many interesting personalities – Holocaust survivors, fighters against the Nazis and the Communists, former political prisoners, dissidents, as well as StB (Czechoslovak Communist secret police and intelligence services), prison guards, Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) functionaries and many others. Post Bellum's recording method was created based on their own experiences recording other interviews and inspiration from related projects. Recording the stories of witnesses of 20th century totalitarian regimes is Post Bellum's most important activity. People from this non-profit organization make all these recordings accessible on the Internet portal for the Memory of Nations.¹¹ The archive was created in cooperation with Czech Radio and the Institute for Studies of Totalitarian Regimes. No less important are Post Bellum projects that look for ways to continue telling the stories in an interesting manner. The public might encounter them on Czech Radio's airwaves during the weekly program, *Příběhy 20. Století* (Tales of the 20th Century), at various exhibitions, during the Memory of Nations awards ceremony, or in books.

Post Bellum has collected a large amount of unique, historic material and is able to disseminate its project outputs to a broad spectrum of recipients. Up to today (January 2015), there are over 4,600 witnesses' stories in the

database, of which 2,200 are published on the website. The interviews cover the whole life story of the witness, from childhood till the present day, so they tend to be quite long, usually 2–3 hours, but some interviews last more than 9 hours. Of course this is not recorded in one sitting; usually there are two or more. Before the second visit, the interviewer does some research about events mentioned in the story, goes to archives, etc., in order to be able to ask more informed questions. Any institution or project recording the witness' memories can become a part of the Memory of Nations. So far there are 38 projects from 13 countries, including the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Georgia, Chechnya and many more. The main target audience with which it communicates is the elderly. So how did it come up with the idea to focus on the younger generation?

According to research by *Člověk v tísni* / the People in Need Organization, the younger generation's awareness of our recent past is gradually improving; however, roughly half of all those surveyed consider it to be inadequate. Materials from the Institute for Studies of Totalitarian Regimes report that history teachers at primary and secondary (high) schools would like to use the testimonies (recollections) of witnesses, archive materials, documentary and radio programs in their courses. Difficulty in accessing these materials presents a problem for them.

It is thus clear that on the part of both students and teachers there is a demand for tools that would enable them to learn more about their country's past.

The Memory of Nations portal offers an abundance of materials that schools are calling for – complete, unedited audio recordings, short audio and video samples, long and short biographical texts, photographs, digitalized diaries, materials from the Security Forces Archives, the National Archive and many others. It might seem, for teachers, excessively difficult to find one's way through such an amount of material and to find suitable examples to supplement their classes. Therefore, we offer them documents organized into logical units in the online textbook, *Myjsme to nevzdali* (We Didn't Give Up).

Interactive Textbook – *My jsme to nevzdali* (We Didn't Give Up)

The textbook, *My jsme to nevzdali*, is available as a DVD and in an edited form online, where it is available to any interested party free-of-charge. ¹² It is a rich source database with an extensive amount of material for creative teachers, who can use this information in class both as illustrations for interpreting subject matter, as well as for opening a broader debate on topics dealing with life in the 20th century.

The textbook contains more than 50 hours of testimonies in short (approximately 1-3 minutes), easy-to-understand and classroom-suitable samples, hundreds of period photographs, dozens of radio documentaries from the *Příběhy 20. století* (Tales of the 20th Century) series, authentic recordings from Czechoslovak Radio and other materials. Given that students learn about the phenomena and events of modern history via the story of a specific person, with whom they can identify or with whom they can debate, they are naturally motivated to explore both small and gradually larger aspects of history.

Given the extensiveness of the material, we paid close attention to its being clearly organized. The material is divided into six chapters-historical periods: The End of Czechoslovakia and World War II, the Post-War Structuring of Czechoslovakia, The Rise of Communism and the 1950s, the Prague Spring and the Occupation, Normalization and Dissent, and the Velvet Revolution. Each of these chapters is further divided into sub-chapters, each of which focuses on an individual phenomenon typical for the given period, i.e. the Munich Agreement, Life in the Protectorate, Resistance at Home, Resistance Abroad, the Heydrich Years, the Holocaust, Czechoslovaks in the Gulag, etc.). Work with a source database makes it easier for teachers to apply the principles of multiperspectivity in their classrooms. We can define this as a path to assuming views and qualifications for tackling historic events, personalities, historical development, culture and society from different points of view (Stradling 2003: 10). At the same time, you must bear in mind that neither witness testimonies nor other sources provide one objective truth about any particular event. It is, rather, the interpretation of events influenced by

the author's socio-cultural background, the grounding of their opinions and their emotional involvement in the described phenomenon (event).

The database of materials in *Myjsme to nevzdali* is now enhanced with worksheets and methodology sheets. In addition to material from the database, these also employ short animated films and comic strips based on witness' stories. From practice we see that, despite the stories being a strong motivational tool, it is also important how they are told. The language in the comics and animated films, even when addressing an unusually serious topic, speaks clearly to the current generation. It delivers students not just the witnesses' stories, but also the historical context in which they took place; and it does so in a visually attractive and accessible format.

Comic book *Ještě jsme ve válce*

The "comics" worksheets draw from the book, *Ještě jsme ve válce* (We Are Still at War). The book contains 13 stories from 13 sketch artists based on motifs shared by witnesses in the Memory of Nations collection. The book can serve as a further teaching aide; however, the pages (worksheets) can be used independently. They include examples of the comics with which students will continue to work. Even the four seven-minute, animated films by director Jan Svěrák are, according to teachers, an effective teaching aide and an outstanding foundation for the worksheet.

The activities on the sheets focus not only on acquiring new knowledge, but also on obtaining new skills and creating and formulating opinions. The current period is unique in history in that it is the first time when we are training students to enter a world that we ourselves cannot even imagine given the current rapidity of technological advances. For several years now, educators around the world have been engaged in a debate on what skills will be critical in the 21st century. Different approaches vary in their details; however, there is an agreement on general principles: critical thinking and problem solving abilities, collaboration, effective written and verbal communication, the ability to find and analyze information, inquisitiveness and imagination. Besides developing skills, we also wish to use the potential of



"Very Bright Sun", comic story from the textbook *Ještě jsme ve válce*
Post Bellum, Prague

teaching history to develop civic attitudes, i.e. on human rights, plural democracy, living with minorities, etc.

The worksheets are designed to cover one to two classroom hours and include a number of complementary activities, which can be used as homework or as extra credit for talented or quick-paced students. Each worksheet is accompanied by a methodology sheet, which, in addition to work processes and correct answers, also contains comments by historians on themes related to the sheet's topic.

An example is the worksheet "Anna Magdalena Schwarzová." Students are first introduced to terms like "revolutionary guards, internment and Charter 77" based on Ms. Schwarzová's life story told in the form of a short animated film. They then begin work in groups using a text-interview with a witness, from which they are asked to find the most important ideas. Each group has the task of presenting its part of the interview to the class based on these ideas. Students use their generalization skills to formulate the principles by which Anna Magdalena Schwarzová lived her life. Then they ultimately internalize the information by creating their own principles. Students are guided in critical thinking, i.e. when working with the text, they hone their collaboration and conflict resolution skills when jointly formulating Anna's principles. When looking up information related to her life, they discover that searching for information on the Internet is much more complicated than just pasting the name of the first link they find into a search engine. They learn to properly evaluate obtained information and put it into context.

Our Neighbors' Stories

A further Post Bellum educational project is called *Příběhy našich sousedů* (Our Neighbors' Stories). Student teams meet directly with a witness and record and process that person's story. The project lasts several months. In addition to the meeting with the witness, documentary teams visit archives or museums and look for the historical circumstances and details related to the witness' story. Special emphasis is placed on the level of processing the



Anna Magdalena Schwarzová

pracovní list



1. Prohlédni si obrázky ze života Magdaleny Schwarzové. Dokážeš odhadnout, ke kterým z následujících otázek se obrázky váží?

A. Mohl se Žid přihlášením se ke katolické víře vyhnout transportu do koncentračního tábora? A vstupem do kláštera?

B. Co to byly Revoluční gardy? Kdy u nás operovaly?

C. Co to je internace?

D. Vysvětli pojem „podvracení republiky“. Najdi příklady lidí, kteří byli za tento čin odsouzeni. Co konkrétně udělali?

E. Co je to Charta 77 a VONS?

F. Kdo byl Jan Patočka?

2. Vyhledej na internetu odpovědi na uvedené otázky. Uveď vždy minimálně dva zdroje, ze kterých jsi čerpal.

3. Shlédni video o životě Niny Schwarzové a zkontroluj si odpovědi ze cvičení 1.

4. Na základě přečteného textu a shlédnutého videa zkuste ve skupině vymyslet motto, které by si podle vás pro svůj život zvolila Nina Schwarzová.

5. Pokus se formulovat motto, kterým by ses v životě chtěl řídit ty.

compiled materials. Teams take part in media workshops (i.e. a workshop at Czech Radio), where experienced journalists teach them how to create a news report or a documentary. At the end, they present the results of their work to the public and an expert judging panel. An important aspect of the project is the relationship of the recorded witnesses to the area around the school, whose students process the story. The product develops inter-subject relationships, contains elements of media education and has a social impact that cannot be overlooked.¹³

Through our teaching materials, we wish to contribute to story-telling about our contemporary history as a comprehensive and multi-layered story, where each further view represents a piece in an unfinished mosaic. Students are offered the option of self-identification with individual human fates and their protagonists. They can put themselves in these dilemmas and feel the atmosphere of the time period. Emotional involvement represents a strong motivational tool available for history teachers.

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1. www.pametnaroda.cz
2. www.myjsmetonevzdali.cz
3. More information about the project is available at www.pribehynasichsousedu.cz



Workshop at Czech Radio
Photo: Magdaléna Benešová



First meeting with the witness
Photo: Miroslava Preclíková

Jana Horáková and Kamila Poláková

INTERVIEWS FROM THE EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF THE SILESIAN MUSEUM IN THE EXHIBITION “THE TIME OF RUIN AND HOPE”

In 1980, the Museum of Revolutionary Struggles and Liberation in Ostrava (“MRBO” in Czech) was extended to include the “Operation Ostrava” memorial in Hrabyně. Since 1992, the memorial has been part of the Silesian Museum (*Slezské zemské museum*), and was renamed “The World War II Memorial” in 2000. The region was particularly affected by the dramatic events of World War II. The testimonies of those who experienced this period are essential for understanding this era and to the memorial’s concept.

Contemporary witness interviews as part of the Memory – Identity – Region project

The Silesian Museum has received funding from the Czech Ministry of Culture since 2011 for the project *Silesia: Memory – Identity – Region*. This project explores aspects and phenomena that have influenced and shaped the development of national and regional identities, memories and traditions in Silesia and Northern Moravia from the Middle Ages to the present. In this region, where Polish, Slovak, and German minorities still live, various social, economic and industrial developments have taken place since the 19th century. Here, in the wake of the industrial revolution, as well as the expulsion of the German population after 1945, the settlement of workers and their families affected their relationship to regional traditions and the region itself. In part, the project investigates the lives of the residents who were in the Silesian region before the German occupation from 1939 to 1945, i.e. in the so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and those who were part of

the Czech resistance abroad during the Nazi occupation. The study is based exclusively on audio-visual eyewitness interviews, which were conducted according to oral history methodology. Excerpts from the interviews will be presented to the public at the memorial in the two exhibitions, *Times of Ruin and of Hope* and *Restless Century*. The shows are meant to convey the fates of those who were actively involved in the events, and to go beyond personal fates by leading to new historical insights. The interviews will also be used in future teaching and teacher training programs.

Memories – an interview inventory from Czechoslovakia’s communist era

Another, much older collection of interviews in the archives of the World War II Memorial is represented by the inventory of 1,485 interviews on 20th century events. The collection was created between 1962 and 1989 in the former Museum of Revolutionary Struggles and Building of Socialism (MRB), the predecessor of MRBO. The museum was the first, in the early 1960s, to begin “working with eyewitnesses.” We decided to include the interviews in the program and make them available to scholars. The interview inventory *Memories* consists of numerous collections from communist organizations and sub-organizations of the Communist Party. In the former Northern Moravia district, the work developed with eyewitnesses in the 1960s at the *Research Center History of the Revolutionary Workers’ Movement, the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) and the National Resistance Movement against National Socialism*. However, the actual initiators were the Institute of History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, as well as some regional and district committees of the Communist Party. A documentation of memories was also compiled at the regional branches of the Czechoslovak Association of Antifascist Fighters (ČSPB). In addition, interviews were recorded and archived about the labor movement and socialist construction in the factory archives, for instance in the archives of the Klement Gottwald Ironworks and Machine Works, now named the Vitkovice Ironworks. Several regional museums, including the already mentioned MRB, were also involved in working with eyewitnesses.

Interviews with eyewitnesses were also recorded at various meetings in the early 1960s. A total of 80 recordings were made, for example, as part of a project during a seminar in May 1962 on the illegal work of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the years 1938–1945. In the same year, the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Opava organized a conference with witnesses, in which employees of the MRBO also participated, to document the statements. Further meetings of eyewitnesses took place in November 1964. Here, a “hearing” (quote from an interviewee, Fund IIIV, Id.Nr.173) of eyewitnesses about the economic crisis of 1929–1934 was conducted. The interviewees took part in conversations with pre-prepared statements that were recorded with a voice recorder, transcribed and then archived. The interview inventory *Memories* has been expanded through the purchase of private collections. For example, eyewitness memories that Emil Vávrovský had recorded in 1966 were added. His interviewees were relatives and acquaintances who had lived in villages in the Beskydy and who had supported partisans during the German occupation.

In 1978, interviews were added about the history of the labor movement and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia that had been archived in various institutions in the North Moravian region. Of the more than 1500 interviews that the MRBO had researched in all of the archives, a select number were included in the *Memories* collection. This drew attention to many prominent eyewitnesses in the 1980s. Under the title *Distinguished Personalities of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*, written memoirs were collected in the North Moravian district and interviews were conducted. About a hundred memoirs of the military struggle of the Red Army document, for example, the discussions of Václav Širc, a member of the 1st Armored Brigade, with his fellow fighters in the USSR; he too donated his notes to the museum. The resistance in the Moravian-Silesian region documented hundreds of written testimonies of the Czechoslovak Union of Antifascist Fighters (ČSPB).

The resulting comprehensive collection of eyewitness accounts represents a valuable resource to better understand 20th century events in the Northern Moravian and Silesian regions. Nevertheless, the contemporary historical

and political context of the 1960s to 1980s is problematic, which becomes evident when we use and present the memoirs today.

Previously, witness accounts had to be politically and ideologically suitable. For the period of German occupation, this meant that only participants in the home resistance or the Czech resistance in Poland and the Soviet Union were addressed. Another criterion was class affiliation. Thus, mostly members of the working class were interviewed, as their statements were meant to provide evidence of the class struggle of the Communist Party. In retrospect, much of the collection was built on a concrete political order, which meant the memoirs were not meant to be historical sources, but rather a means of ideological propaganda. The audio recordings and written records were primarily meant to document the life stories of activists of the revolutionary workers' movement and the focus was on their political orientation and resistance. The discussions were not conducted by the scientific staff of the museum, but by party functionaries, who often tried to manipulate what they heard to fit their own political ideas. Thus these distorted interpretations of statements became the basis of their scientific studies. Another, rather more technical problem, is that the predominantly handwritten memoirs are often very difficult to read; their decryption therefore requires a large amount of time.

The problems briefly outlined here may illustrate basic questions. To what extent were interviewees' replies influenced by the interviewers, were the interviewees under pressure or were their statements politically sensitive and even dangerous to others? This was the case when recorded conversations involved former Gestapo spies, who although recognized as such, were not prosecuted. Today the question persists about how credible the recorded memoirs are and whether they actually reflect individual experiences and if and how these complex and problematic documents can be used in education. The project allows us to interview eyewitnesses again, forty to fifty years later, who were interviewed in the 1960s. Through a critical analysis comparing the original and the recent interviews, we may be able to acquire some answers to these questions.

Jaroslav Pinkas

LARGE AND SMALL TALES OF MODERN HISTORY A Critical and Reflective Interview Project on the Reception of Family Remembrance

The current format of history teaching in Czech schools should be shaped by a curricular reform that includes both cognitive components (development of critical thinking) and affective ones (adoption of desired values and building identity). The framework of the educational program states: “Its main mission is the cultivation of the individual’s historical awareness and preservation of continuity in historical memory, mainly in the sense of the transfer of historical experiences.” The prescriptive document thus has a definite appeal to work with the historic memory, which is a methodological concept that, to some degree, is different from expert historiography. This should not, however, be in the sense of an opposite, as is sometimes claimed, but rather as a complement.

The term “historical memory” is, of course, too amorphous and indefinite. It is thus more effective to work with various versions of the term collective memory as a cultural memory and communicative memory instead of the indefinite term historical memory. Cultural memory is generally understood to be the summary of memory characters, thought stereotypes and stabilized models of the past, which are shared as part of variously defined communities. Generally, people work with the idea of a national community memory that is tied to the memory’s symbolic center (Munich 1938, August 1968, November 1989), but you can also consider the more minor communities of memory, which are defined by a common interest or a common experience (the memory of political prisoners, the memory of dissent, the memory of the “silent majority,” etc.). And, finally, there exist innumerable

amounts of communicative memories; namely family ones, which are influenced by “higher” forms of memory. However, family memory essentially forms alongside these. All these types of memory are, moreover, confronted by encounters with science and mainly with media, which continually interact with memory.

The phenomenon of memory appears in schools in three shapes or forms. The first memory form is commemorative memory – recollections. Further memory appears in school in the form of family traditions, which, as a rule, influence a student’s view of the past more than the school does. And finally, memory appears as a teaching method (oral history), where teachers use family traditions as a complementary source of information and a research tool.

Memory’s Commemorative Function

In contemporary Czech schools the commemorative memory (recollection) is prevalent. It was used in this sense in schools throughout the entire 20th century: During the so-called First Republic (1918–1938), legionnaires visited schools to reinforce the Republican myth; after the Second World War members of the Communist resistance did so to reinforce the legitimacy of the ruling regime. The school always fulfilled a certain service in the field of political education and this is still the case. Commemorative memory works in accordance with current political discourse and supports values that are part of it. The meaning or intent of this memory is not primarily an “objective” understanding of the past, but rather the presentation of desirable life views and behavioral patterns.

It is necessary to emphasize that this educational element is not implemented authoritatively. The current model for how Czech education functions is based on the principle of school autonomy; the schools (teachers) prepare their educational programs according to a general framework. It is up to the teachers whether they choose to invite witnesses to history into their classrooms or schools. Thus teachers bear joint responsibility for the “use” of memory.

Family Memory

When presenting contemporary history, specifically the most recent history, teachers touch mainly upon family memory, which shapes students' attitudes and opinions. Students bring to the classroom definite ideas that do not correspond to the official image of history as delivered in textbooks. In fact, in some cases their views are in direct contradiction to these. The divergence between family and official memory is currently a subject of great discussion.

Regardless of the reasons, this divergence truly exists and has to be addressed. If we emphasize tolerance as an important value, then it is impossible to react from an authoritative and repressive position to non-conformist views of the past. Through the variety of family memories, the desirable element of multiperspectivity enters teaching on contemporary history; i.e. perspectives should not be discredited, they should be confronted. Confrontation of family memories does not need to be played out in a normative mode, where family traditions relate to some "ideal," i.e. politically correct memory and its mutual comparison and hierarchization (in which one family tradition is presumed to be better than another). The assessment should not be positive or explicit, but rather related to context. Of course, the role of the teacher as a moderator of the delivered perspectives is critical. Here the teacher becomes an important actor in the process of forming identity; a regulator of a student's relationships to values.

Oral History

In addition to the programmed commemorative and unreflected latent encounters with memory, there exists in schools a further approach to this phenomenon: use of oral history methods with students. This type of work with memory is very popular due to its simplicity. The scope and quality of this type of work fluctuates; however, the majority of pedagogues at least once during the course of their lectures on contemporary history assign students the task of asking at home "how things really were." The quality of such projects thus oscillates across a wide range from a one-off question about a

specific event and the confrontation of answers in the classroom to complicated and sophisticated projects that also include careful documentation. However, the quality of such “student” projects is not measured by their degree of difficulty and the number of their outputs; rather their utility stems mainly from motivation and also from the illustration of history’s multiple perspectives. Children often view history as an impersonal process that took place somewhere far away; something that does not affect family tradition. Thematizing history through the “microscopic” level of family traditions leads to the “ownership” of history; to a sense of belonging to history and relationships between the past and present. This sounds banal, for this consciousness is an obvious part of the identity of the professional affected by the past, be it as a historian or as a teacher. Of course the consumer culture, formed mainly by the youth, leads to a completely different understanding of time. The past and the future are systematically weakened (mainly by advertisements) to the benefit of the present. Forming correlations thus becomes difficult. One must also not overlook the broader social context of such projects. Students make contact with their wider community and success is often merely the fact that they talk to their parents and grandparents.

Large and Small Tales from Modern History

Regarding the projects reflecting the use of memory in the school environment, I would like to mention a project that the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes has been conducting since 2008. The Institute, set up by a special law, “studies and impartially evaluates the time of non-freedom and the time of Communist totalitarian power”; “it examines the anti-democratic and criminal activity of state bodies, especially its security services, and the criminal activity of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), as well as other organizations based on its ideology.” The project is called *Velké a malé příběhy moderních dějin* (Large and Small Tales from Modern History). The first two year-long programs focused on two expressive memory centers that resonate in Czech society: the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution. Five schools took part the first year; twelve in the second, and

eleven in the third. In the following years, the number of cooperating schools has expanded to fifteen and, at the same time, the focus has shifted from individual reception of memory to other activities, mainly media activities. During the third year we diverged from concentration on nodal points and established the topic: *My Family during the Normalization Period*. During the three years of the project, students from primary and secondary schools carried out a total of 194 interviews. Over the past two years, we have built on the “Normalization” topic. The “Normalization” was an era in the rule of the Communist party in Czechoslovakia between 1969 and 1989. The regime, which was based on the Soviet invasion in August 1968, offered people basic welfare and social security, but it demanded the forfeit of one’s participation in politics and gestures of loyalty. Most people adapted to the new circumstances, only a small part (“dissent”) protested. The regime persecuted these people.

The collection of interviews created is freely accessible on the Institute’s website.¹¹ The collection does not reflect exactly the memory of Czech society, nor was that its intent. The narrators’ responses are characterized by succinctness and compact expression; in short, they are brief. In the majority of cases the narrator and the interviewer are bound by a family relationship and this is reflected in the testimony’s content and form. Thus, the testimonies do not represent reality, but are a dynamic interpretation with the aim of forming a basic image of one’s own past and one’s own life as well as family traditions. The recorded testimonies thus, to a marked degree, illustrate the process of remembering, which is the active reshaping of the past and its updating in accordance with the needs of the present.

The narrator’s attempts to influence the interviewer influenced the testimony’s format the most. From the narrator’s point of view, this was not just a standard interview, in which the person being interviewed followed a question and answer scenario and the cue of the questioner. Rather the interview was constructed as an educational tool, which, in addition to information, mainly shared attitudes, values and patterns based on which the past is meant to be approached. This need expressed itself through a high level of

evaluating the past that accompanied the standard description. The questioner was not meant to be left to struggle with facts, but rather, through evaluative adjectives and the selection of vocabulary and directly formulated theses, were influenced by the narrator. At the same time the thesis on the project's noticeable social impact strengthened inter-generational identity.

Despite our awareness of the incompleteness and partiality of the collection, several general observations and conclusions have now begun to form that correspond to theories on memory. Both Paul Ricoeur and David Gross emphasize the selectiveness of collective memory; the pushing out of unpleasant facts and experiences. Collective forgetting, as we might call it, already appeared during our project's first year, which we devoted to the Prague Spring. While witnesses to history spoke extensively and with enthusiasm about the "the reform process" development and the national revival process, overall they spoke reservedly and vaguely about the subsequent Normalization; in a number of cases they avoided the topic altogether. Similar tendencies appeared, although less frequently, during the second year, when the topic was the Velvet Revolution. Overall memories focused on the euphoric experience of the November protests, which were presented as the central event, against which people measured living standards both before and after. Memory does not equally cover the entire past, but focuses rather on its symbolic center.

As previously mentioned, the nature of the testimonies differed based on the relationship between the narrator and the interviewer. Where the relationship was stronger, often authoritative assessments appeared, and stances on the past were definite, most often negative. Frequently, memory characters taken from the official image of history appear: the famous lines for bananas, lack of toilet paper and other staid icons of late Normalization. Memories presented as such do not represent a real image of the past, but rather its edited version. We would like to build on this fact in the coming years and, instead of capturing the mundaneness of Normalization, in the future we would like to focus on how family memories are formulated, what

their relationship to the official image of history is, and what values narrators feel it necessary to emphasize.

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Tereza Vávrová

STORIES OF INJUSTICE

From the Place Where We Live

One World at School is a People in Need Foundation's educational program. Since 2001 it has contributed to educating responsible, informed, open, critical young people, who act to influence their surroundings.

We create learning materials that reflect social situations and challenges at home and abroad. By showing films, holding discussions and teaching projects we bring important topics and concrete stories into schools. We address human rights, modern Czech and Slovak history, media education and other topics. Teachers and students from more than 3,000 basic and high schools work with the *One World at School* materials. Each year several dozens schools take part in our team projects.

Stories of Injustice

Czech society has decades of dictatorships behind it; yet, people often take this freedom for granted. So we created the project, *Stories of Injustice*, in order to raise awareness among the generation of young people born after the fall of Communism. The project consists of numerous activities, such as team projects, showing films at schools and subsequent discussions with witnesses to history, literary competitions and the awarding of the *Stories of Injustice* prize for courageous stances taken during the Communist period. All of these activities present contemporary youth with the stories of specific people. Today's young people grow up in a free country where they have open access to information and where they can speak freely about anything they wish. It is sometimes difficult for them to understand that, just twenty years ago, life in the Czech Republic was completely different. The personal experiences of February 1948, nationalization, the political trials of the

1950s, the Prague Spring and August 1968 become more relevant to students and recent history is thus easier to understand. Moreover, personal meetings with witnesses to history are moving experiences for students.

“Before we met Mr. Trejbal, we didn’t have much interest in Communism. But this story took us back into the past and truly fascinated us. Given how old Mr. Trejbal is, he is terrific at sharing his memories. We got goose bumps from time to time from his stories. We are glad that that period is over and that we have the right to freedom.”

Team from the Business Academy in Tanvald.

From the Place Where We Live

Part of the project, “From the Place Where We Live,” builds on projects we organized in 2007. At that time, teams of students collected the stories of witnesses to history in their area and the exhibition, *Stories of Injustice – Student Projects*, developed from this work. The exhibition related the fates of people impacted by the Communist regime. More than two thousand people viewed the exhibit in Prague, mainly basic and high school students. Thousands more saw the students’ work in other towns in the Czech Republic.

Since 2011 groups of students have been researching the fates of witnesses to Communist injustices and have been recording their stories in writing. The teams’ task is to find witnesses to history in their area, to record an interview with them, to look for further materials and from those sources to put together the person’s complete life story. Students are often surprised by the personal fates of their neighbors and older people, some of whom they pass on the way to school.

“Each of us could carry out an interview; we could try to record the entire session on video, but mainly (and I think this is the most important aspect) we could listen to so much relevant information and stories from the lives of people, whom we might even know or of whom we’ve heard, but of whom we had no idea that they belonged to the very important personalities of the Velvet Revolution or how they got involved in it.”

Pavĺína Švábov, Team from the Litomyřl Basic School.

The project primarily focuses on the Communist period, for which it is easier to find direct witnesses. Some older witnesses sometimes mention the period before and during World War II, in an effort to describe the context of Communist uprising and explain their family backgrounds, which subsequently led them to rebel against Communist injustices.

The teams accompany the interviews with witnesses to history with period photos. They visit local archives and seek out authentic materials and newspaper clippings. Two joint meetings of all teams create the framework for the research. At the first meeting, two team representatives arrive with a teacher (pedagogue); the training's content focuses on the practical aspects of the research – how to prepare for the first meeting with the witness, what questions to ask to keep the interview flowing, how to assess the interview and where to eventually look for additional information. Students receive a manual that we created and that summarizes the project's oral history methods. At the closing meeting, presentations of all the teams' research are given. This is recorded on video and, in recent years, streamed online so that fellow students in participating teams can view them.

An output of the project's first two school classes was the creation of a multimedia presentation that contains texts, photographs, images and audio-visual materials. The presentation can be used, for example, in interactive tables (on drawing boards) and for other teaching activities. Outputs from the other two classes consist of exhibitions containing professionally graphically-designed stories of witnesses to history. The exhibitions are mobile and can thus be shown in different places.

Oral History and Its Place in School

Oral story-telling is without a doubt the oldest form of sharing knowledge of past events. Historians from the most ancient periods relied upon oral transfer when reconstructing the past. Such a means of uncovering and documenting history is currently very popular – it is sought after not only by historians, but also sociologists and anthropologists. Gradually oral history is establishing itself as an alternative historical source for teaching in

schools. In this way we boost the plurality of interpreting historical events, inter-generational dialogue and communication and analytical competencies. The greatest benefit is without a doubt the relevance of witnesses' fates for listeners (their audiences).

"I give the most positive marks to the fact that students became acquainted with a historical period that for most of them was, until that time, unknown. It was also difficult for them to "fathom" because of the topic's difficulty. The fact that we gave the period a regional flavor and used a local witness to history, whom most of the students know as the grandmother of two children who attend our school, made the issue more relevant for them."

Jitka Hudečková, teacher at the Mariánské náměstí Basic School in Uherský Brod.

The witnesses' stories also evoke questions and emotions among students; often very intense ones. The witnesses tell about matters that are important to them and which often changed their lives. Students sometimes become so close to "their" witnesses that they repeatedly visit them even after the project is over. Oral history methods thus clearly contribute to inter-generational dialogue. At the same time they support individual students' ability to reflect (on matters), for they place the witnesses' storytelling into a broader historical context and find out how and why the witness shares what he or she does.

"Together with a fellow student we sought information about the witness and processed it for about half a year. We did this in our free time, after school and on weekends. It is not easy to speak about an often sad past and not everyone was willing to speak to us about it. I think, however, that our interest pleased some witnesses and their relatives. These meetings were very beneficial to me and the stories we obtained based on the effort we made were definitely worth it. Thanks to the project we learned how to process information and how to present it. Our community appreciated the fact that we were interested in often controversial history and that we were expanding this interest among our peers."

Kateřina Skřivanová, Team from the Maleč Basic School.

Learning from the Place, Where We Live

The project's didactical aspect exceeds the standard knowledge-based history lesson and focuses primarily on development of students' skills and competencies. The team learns mutual respect and cooperation. They learn to think critically and to evaluate acquired information. Teaching history in this way enables students to take an imaginary step back and, thanks to this, obtain a more critical view of their own history.

"There was a very pleasant atmosphere among the students and witnesses. I believe that the project peaked students' interest in our country's recent history. It taught them to work independently and taught them responsibility. It also created a better relationship between them and the older generation."

Zdeňka Juklová, Teacher at the Business Academy in Tanvald.

Contemporary history works with living historical memory, with stories of living generations, and represents an excellent tool for orienting oneself in the present. Stories from witnesses to history inspire students to think about their own lives and deepen their empathy for situations, wherein citizens can act proactively and eventually, with the help of a properly chosen approach, defend the interests of the society in which they live.

"For me as a teacher, it is important that the students use their activities to influence their younger fellow students, who then express their own interest in similar work. The exercises motivate the students – both through the process and the results. I increasingly find out that it is not just the 'information' that students obtain that is important, but also meeting people who lived through this period, with people who themselves are living history."

Stanislav Švejcar, Teacher at Litomyšl Basic School.

■ GERMANY

Alexander von Plato

ORAL HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH AS “BEHAVIORAL AND EXPERIENTIAL HISTORY.”

A Sketch of the Development in Germany

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At a history conference in the mid-1980s, there was a lively discussion between Hans-Ulrich Wehler, who represented social history in Germany, and Lutz Niethammer, who represented *Alltagsgeschichte* (the “history of everyday life”) and oral history. At the time, Wehler called the research represented by Niethammer as the work of “granola freaks” and “barefoot historians.” This was a clear rejection of those who were demanding a change of perspective in the historical sciences and a greater focus on the subject and on personal experience, i.e. a greater consideration for subjective memory sources rather than the dominance of administrative documents predominantly classified as “official files,” as well as the demand to establish a democratic historiography.

When Wehler (1985) formulated his criticism of *Alltagsgeschichte* more seriously in an essay, many academics’ indignation towards Niethammer was great, as they were more closely associated with social history. However, this argument was not new: The major historical-philosophical debates of the last century and a half have concerned the relationship between “objective” conditions, on the one hand, and “subjective” factors, on the other hand, i.e. individual possibilities and historical conditions surrounding the “outer” and “inner” forces, whose contradictions have driven history (Droysen 1972).

At the beginning of the 20th century, various schools of history in Europe rejected the dominance of political historiography and its preferred processing of power structures and archival transmission in administrations. They demanded an “integrative cultural, social and mindsets history.” In Germany, this was primarily represented by Karl Lamprecht (cf. the “Lamprecht dispute”), who understood cultural history as “the history of the psyche in the changing of the generations of a given society.” He was one of the first historians to develop a systematic theory of psychological factors in the historical sciences. Associated with these approaches was the question of the influence of major historical personalities (Plechanow 1945), who were, either through their own volition or even more markedly through their historical conditions, in a position to make their mark on an entire epoch (Erikson 1958).

These fundamental debates in the field of history can also be seen in the context of a European development towards a broader societal participation in knowledge and the transmission of knowledge. Since the second half of the 19th century, historical accounts in Europe have been developed for more than just the academic elite. Major segments of the population became literate and called for popular presentations of history. They also expected that “folk culture,” “customs and traditions,” forms of housing and living, and working methods and their instruments be considered in the media, museums, exhibitions and beyond. The academic work of anthropology and folklore in colonial countries affected the countries of the colonizers. Historical images were created that allowed a wide, mostly national, reception and identification. At the same time, these mass audiences demanded presentations that met their needs, tastes and levels of education. World exhibitions since the mid-19th century, with their audiences of millions and the global meteoric rise of mass media since the 1920s, demonstrated the importance with which these populist presentations were received.

Above all, the element of historical development made another focus necessary with regard to the relationship between historiography and psychology: the growing articulation and capacity for action, not just of “important

people,” but of entire populations, mass movements, and parties. Mass phenomena, powerful social and political movements, the growing labor movement, and, finally, National Socialism developed forces that questioned a theoretical or empirical reduction based on objective conditions.

The establishment of new approaches and psychological, social-psychological, and biographical elements in the historical sciences soon followed in the early 20th century. In his writing Georg Simmel (1907 and 1998) tried to develop an “interpretive sociology.” Wilhelm Dilthey (1983) put significant emphasis on the further development of the theory of understanding as a general method in the humanities, separate from the natural sciences.

The relationships between historical science and psychology, as well as between society and the individual, were also addressed by early psychoanalysts like Freud. The Frankfurt School, which evolved in mid-1920s in Germany and was further developed by European emigrants to the United States, also pursued an approach of establishing individual psychology and social science theories and methods in the social and historical sciences. During the Nazi era, such approaches of German historiography were possible only in emigration, especially social science and mindset histories about the attraction of Nazism for large segments of the German population, the study of anti-Semitism (such as the structures of prejudice) and the so-called “master race” and the authoritarian leadership structure. Explanatory possibilities were offered in the early works of Erich Fromm, especially about employees and workers (1980, 1981, 1990) on the eve of the Third Reich, as well as Horkheimer’s study on prejudice (1963) and the investigation of the authoritarian personality structure by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick et al. (1950). Their tremendous impact in the Federal Republic of Germany, particularly within the student movement of the 1960s, is probably in part because the established historiographical explanations of the fundamental phenomena of National Socialism remained unsatisfactory.

Since the early 1950s, the dominant historiography in West Germany, on the other hand, concentrated on the development of the NSDAP as a party and on the political and governmental structures of the Nazi state. In the

GDR, the view was mainly reduced to the destructive forces of the market and capital, as well as the importance of the communist labor movement in the struggle against the Nazi state. This meant that in both German states, the history of mindsets, historical biographical research, and oral traditions were frowned upon as sources and dismissed as unscientific or subjective. Only in some areas were biographical approaches accepted: research on anti-fascism and its protagonists in the GDR, and research on members of the Nazi elite performed in the Federal Republic (cf. Zapf 1965).



It took about three decades until works on the history of mindsets based on archival and subjective memory sources once again found their way into universities in the Federal Republic. The historians Martin Broszat and Lutz Niethammer significantly advanced this development, together with their assistants and the folklorist Albrecht Lehmann. The academic work was accompanied by numerous living history sites and local initiatives, as well as trade union and church workgroups, which strove for a democratic understanding of history, an *Alltagsgeschichte* and a “history from below,” especially with regard to National Socialism. The first large-scale study, published between 1977 and 1983 by Martin Broszat et al., “Widerstand und Verfolgung in Bayern 1933–1945,” is based on regional history archival sources on the “moods” in various social groups. The focus was on “behavioral and experiential history,” and on a “history of the influence of the Nazi regime ‘from below,’” and thus represented a “fundamentally different perspective” than that of previous historiographies (Broszat et al. 1977).

This change of perspective was also undertaken by living history sites, some of which also tried to tap into behavioral history through interviews with former participants in the Nazi Regime. These initial interviews were not very sophisticated in their methodology, but it was already evident that the methodology of these surveys was an integral part of these research approaches. The first large-scale German oral history project (“Lebensgeschichte und Sozialkultur im Ruhrgebiet 1930 bis 1960”), begun in 1980,

was developed at the University of Essen by Lutz Niethammer. In addition to Niethammer, Anne-Katrin Einfeldt, Ulrich Herbert, Bernd Parisius, Alexander von Plato, Margot Schmidt, and Michael Zimmermann were involved in this pioneering project. The fascist era experiences and the postwar experiences of different generations of the working class and minor employees in the Ruhr Region were investigated in three volumes (Niethammer 1983a and 1983b; Niethammer/Plato 1985) over an established periodization (1933, 1939, 1945, 1949 etc.). This and the subsequent projects focused not only on behavior under National Socialism, but increasingly on the processing of these years in the following decades and their importance for German postwar society. These objectives demanded the exploration of subjective memory sources such as diaries, letters and photo albums, as well as the creation of new sources through oral testimony interviews (Plato 1992 and 2000).

These were followed by the works of two folklorists/social scientists, Albrecht Lehmann and Hans-Joachim Schröder, who established a narrative archive with testimonies of Hamburg workers and extended the previous pioneering studies to a further ethnological dimension, particularly with the classification and interpretation of (autobiographical) stories. Alf Lüdtke reinforced the approaches of living history sites and some university outsiders, especially with the theory of “rule as a social practice,” in view of the theory of sociologist Oskar Negt and filmmaker Alexander Kluge on the willfulness of population groups (Negt/Kluge 1981), despite all media or political attempts to influence them (Lüdtke 1991).

Biographical and personal data research was also rediscovered in the early 1980s in the qualitative-oriented social sciences, a research branch, which soon expanded to include quantitative studies of biographical research. Considerations on the didactic importance of subjective memory testimonies also developed in these years in the pedagogic field for teaching. It was believed that these sources were particularly well suited, via biographical profiles for youth and adult education, to mediate the impact of political developments and system failures. Educators from living history sites were also involved in the debate, which was reflected in relevant educational

museum concepts. Thus, contemporary and eyewitness accounts and work with witnesses soon belonged to the daily routine in memorials and respective museums.

In view of these parallel developments in different disciplines, within a few years an interdisciplinary exchange took place, e.g. in the *BIOS Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebensverlaufsforschung*. Since then, experiential history, biographical research and personal data research have established themselves in German universities, a development that was neither foreseen nor expected at the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s.



The importance of behavioral and experiential history for historiography has been proven, especially in investigations of major 20th century issues. The Nazi concentration camps, as well as the history of the various groups of victims of National Socialism, were first researchable through personal accounts. The first major works about the Holocaust or the system of concentration camps and their processing came from former concentration camp inmates like Eugen Kogon or Primo Levi. The first comprehensive collection of non-Jewish German refugees and displaced persons also contained a volume with witness testimonies (Schieder 1953–1961). It would hardly have been possible to work on other major topics such as German prisoners of war in the Soviet Union, prisoners in special camps of the Soviet Occupation Zone, or those persecuted under the SED (Socialist Unity Party) dictatorship without interviews with participants. First of all, there was hardly any other source material on this range of topics beyond the “official files” (Herrschafts-akten). Secondly, it was through the interviews that the independent dimension of subjectively experienced and processed historical experiences first became clear for further biographies and subsequent societies.

Some research approaches, in which this independent dimension of experience on the basis of memory testimonies also played an important role, are mentioned only briefly here: women’s and gender studies; the study of the development of social consensus and dissent; research on the development

of specific professional groups after the end of dictatorships; research on different socialization and education styles; and research on family histories and intra-family, including generational conflicts and (political) attitudes, and their transmission. Subjective memory sources, such as diaries, letters, photographs, films, oral reports, biographical interviews and group discussions, were essential here.

With this contentual and disciplinary expansion, important new issues also emerged in the historical sciences. Thus the previously mentioned comprehension tests and interpretations demanded individual psychological explanations as concerns intra-family transmissions and generational conflicts. The phenomenon in subjective reports of the displacement of earlier conceptions, attitudes and actions after changes in the political system belongs to the realm of experiential history, as well as the important question asked “early on” by Wehler (1971) about the cooperation of history and psychology (or psychoanalysis): the question of the effect of unconscious factors on history. Erich Fromm (1990) extended this problem in his hypothesis of a “social unconscious.” In all these fields of research, methods have been improved to address the problems of subjective memory sources, such as questions about the validity of memories of long past experiences, about the impact of trauma on memory or the reliability of memory in general, which are apparent and had already been worked out by Droysen as methodological problems in the second half of the 19th century. In corresponding research projects this led, among other things, to collaborations with psychotherapists and psychoanalysts (sometimes as project supervisors) or with medical neuroscientists to improve interview techniques.

In matters of interpretation, the difficulties of the generalization of subjective experience and the elaboration of behavioral, experiential, processing, interpretation and narrative patterns, as well as what constitutes “types” or “norms,” and the interdisciplinary collaboration and exchanges with the fields of psychology, social science and folklore were, in my opinion, particularly productive. But a misunderstanding in the historical sciences also surfaced, namely the assumption in the contemporary witness and

eyewitness interviews that the focus was on the reconstruction of facts and figures. The vast majority of oral history research is, however, concerned with the processing of history and the effect of previous experiences on current attitudes and actions. The true strengths of oral interviews and experiential history are to be found here. Nevertheless, one should not underestimate the strength of “real history” with regard to oral history, and no less in the procurement of photos, diaries, letters, and other sources and exhibits. Prior to a major international research project on forced labor during World War II, I assumed we would not discover very many new things about the “real history” of forced labor 60 years after the relevant experiences, but I was wrong: We learned a great deal, especially about previously unknown camps in Eastern Europe, and we have obtained a lot of personal material, such as letters and photos.

In all of the research with eyewitnesses and contemporary witnesses, a heuristic function of experiential history was also revealed: issues became apparent in the interviews and subsequent interpretations that had not been seen in the previous historiography.

IV

If one reviews the developments in Germany in oral history as an experiential and behavioral history over the last few decades, an establishment process becomes apparent, and one practiced by “barefoot historians” all the way to university professors, museum directors, and memorial directors of both genders. Students today are adept at using oral or other subjective memory sources. But if one looks at the last 150 years, one can observe oscillations as a result of deep methodological conflicts and political criticism. Those who emphasized the role of the subject and personal experience as an essential element of universal history had a tremendous struggle, particularly during authoritarian times. Their works diverged too greatly from official historical images and official memorial politics. And this is likely to remain the case in the future.

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Cord Pagenstecher

LEARNING WITH INTERVIEWS

The Online Archive “Forced Labor 1939–1945” in Classroom and Extracurricular Education

Only with the compensation debate around the turn of the century was the issue of Nazi forced labor introduced into historical education, especially in the form of local projects.¹ The online archive “Forced Labor 1939-1945. Memory and History” developed by Freie Universität Berlin in cooperation with the Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility, Future” (EVZ), serves in particular to preserve the memory of the approximately 20 million people who were made to perform forced labor for Nazi Germany. Based on an extensive collection of biographical audio and video interviews with former forced laborers, various kinds of digital educational material have been developed, available as DVDs, as apps, or online.²

The interview collection of the online archive “Forced Labor 1939–1945”

The archive contains 583 life-story interviews conducted in 26 countries under the guidance of the Institute of History and Biography at the Fern Universität Hagen. Most of the interviews took place in the Ukraine, Poland, and Russia. Approximately 40 percent of the interviewees were women, about a third “slave laborers” in concentration camps. The interviews, conducted in the mother tongue or current everyday language of the interviewees, lasted, on average, between three and four hours, and covered not only forced labor, but also pre- and postwar experiences.

Usage and search opportunities

Since January 2009, the interviews, digitized and edited by the Center for Digital Systems (CeDiS) in cooperation with the Institute for East-European

Studies at the Freie Universität, are available on a specially developed online platform, along with short biographies, transcripts and photographs (see several articles in Apostolopoulos/Pagenstecher 2013).

The online platform is available in English, German, and Russian. Multiple retrieval options allow a targeted search for victims' groups, areas of deployment, places, camps, companies and people. A map illustrates the origin and deployment locations of the interviewed forced laborers throughout Europe. Using full text search, you can jump directly to specific sequences within the interviews. Tables of contents, brief biographies and private photographs offer an orientation into the occasionally complex narrative structure and help clarify the biographical context. Editorial notes explain passages that are difficult to understand and refer to relevant literature or websites. In their own annotations, the archive users can add specific local or biographical information and thus continue the collaborative curation of this living archive.

The website, developed around the interview collection, provides interactive maps and timelines, topical interviews with experts, thematic short films, as well as information on further teaching materials. The users must register directly with the online archive before they can listen to the full interviews. Around 5,000 archive users – students, researchers, teachers, pupils and other interested parties – were granted access to the collection after registering.

Forced labor and video interviews. Didactic guidelines for pedagogical work

The topic of Nazi forced labor is particularly suitable for a problem and competence-oriented teaching of history (Pagenstecher 2013: 223ff). At that time, the forced laborers were often, in the same age group as the target group of the educational material. They were a “normal” part of daily life under the Nazis, working not only in industry, but also on farms, in workshops, and in private homes. Their barracks were often in the middle of residential areas. Students, therefore, can discover traces of forced labor

everywhere: in memorials and local history museums, but also in their own neighborhoods or family histories.

Because forced labor was so deeply embedded in the daily life of the Germans, the historical reappraisal opens up didactic approaches to a variety of topics: the economic and social policies of the Nazi state, the racial ideology, the scope of action of the Germans, or resistance among forced laborers. Forced migration as part of Nazi forced labor is an important topic, especially for multicultural learning groups. Similarities and differences to “guest workers” or refugees can be discussed on the basis of the experiences described in the interviews. The individual memoirs from different countries provide an international perspective on German and European history, but also on historical and political controversies such as the compensation debate.

Multimedia-supported testimonies carry in themselves a strong promise to mirror reality, rarely put into question by young people. The interviews are, however, texts that have emerged from a specific situation in conversation with another person. They are influenced by individual memory patterns and social memorial cultures. This is discussed in the German-language educational material “Video Testimonies for School Education. Video DVD – Learning Software – Teacher’s Book,” published by Freie Universität Berlin and Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung in 2010.

Video DVD and learning software. Testimonies for teaching

The double-DVD supports competence-oriented learning, a biographical approach and a critical assessment of historical sources in regular classrooms, on project days and in individual exam presentations. Together with the background texts and work proposals in the teacher’s guide, they introduce the remembrance of Nazi forced labor into history teaching, and at the same time encourage the use of oral history interviews in a school context.

Brief biographical films based on oral history interviews from the online archive take center stage. Five former forced laborers tell of their deportations, their experiences in camps and factories, the behavior of the Germans and how they were treated after returning home. In addition to these

25 minute short biographies, two 16 to 20 minute long background films furnish information about forced labor and compensation, as well as about the creation and usage possibilities of the interview collection (see Pagensteher 2013: 223ff.).

A comfortable learning environment presents the interview excerpts in an adequate way and supports an interactive discussion of these complex historical sources. It suggests activities using biographies, photos, documents and methodical guidelines and creating its own narratives directly in the editor of the learning software. About 170 encyclopedia texts facilitate understanding, and 130 entries in the interactive timeline help in historical contextualization. The different activities are tailored to the particular biography, but all follow a common didactic matrix consisting of biographical work, source criticism, historical context, reflections on the memorial cultures and facilitation of competence in questioning. They expose the problems of testimonies as historical source without discrediting the witnesses as untrustworthy. They emphasize the importance of the interviewer's role in conducting the interview as well as the cutting of several hours of talking into 25-minute biographical short films. These tasks, focused on media literacy, illustrate that history – whether in interviews or books – is always an interpretive construction of the past.

In order to not be limited to the individual screen-based work, all materials and work results can be exported or printed for presentations, portfolios and group work. Tips for further projects help in the preparation of exam presentations and workshops.

The educational materials are aimed at 14 to 18 year old pupils from different kinds of schools. For various learning scenarios there are three graded modules: “Basis” for the teacher-centered classroom, “Project” for interactive work in the computer lab, and “Presentation” for the individual exam preparation. In addition to history lessons, this material can also be implemented in the fields of politics, ethics, art or foreign language teaching. In multilingual learning groups, the Polish, Russian, French and Italian interviews can be heard in the original version. Students from immigrant

families can thus demonstrate their language skills, while bilingual schools can find linguistically linked teaching material for German history.

In view of the improved internet access in schools and the growing prevalence of mobile devices, future educational material is being conceived online. By 2015, an online learning environment for schools in the Czech Republic will have been developed.

Online access and apps. Testimonies for museums and memorials

More and more exhibitions present excerpts of biographical interviews in audio stations and video terminals. The requirements of an adequate and biographical interaction with the audiovisual material, however, often clash with the limited time available in the context of a museum tour. Therefore, memorials and museums are making increasing use of the interviews for the preparation of visits to memorial museums, which is especially important for student groups. For this reason, the interview archive “Forced Labor 1939-1945” promotes the preparation of memorial visits and on-site project days with new offerings. These online introductions adopt a biographical perspective. Their goal is not the transmission of factual knowledge, but rather to encourage questions that can be addressed, answered and discussed on site. Thus the virtual access to interview excerpts promotes the personal experience of the historic site.

In “Online Access Flossenbürg” students get to know, in one or two lessons, two people who survived the concentration camp. The survivors tell of their youth, the places of their persecution and their camp and everyday work experience in Flossenbürg and its sub-camps. The ca. eight-minute excerpts of the interviews with Helena Bohle-Szacki and Joseph Korzenik are supplemented with photographs, contextual information, short biographies, worksheets and an evaluation form (see Pagenstecher/Schikorra 2013). The “Online Access Ruhr Region” has similar offers for project days at schools about forced labor in North Rhine-Westphalia.¹³ Further proposals in cooperation with domestic and foreign memorial museums are planned.

Mobile devices also increasingly enable an integration of testimonies into city excursions or tours of memorials. For example, Berlin History Workshop has developed a testimony app for places of forced labor in Berlin, which also uses material from the online archive “Forced Labor 1939–1945”. In English and German, witnesses tell about factories and warehouses; photos and documents show the victims and the perpetrators.¹⁴

Summary

Interviews cannot substitute personal encounters with survivors, whose moral authority and authenticity can be experienced best in direct dialog. On the other hand, the interviews in archive and educational material permit an active study of historical sources, a critical analysis and individual attempts at interpretation. More than 70 years after the war, the in-school and extracurricular education about National Socialism has to rely increasingly on audio- or video-taped interviews. Because, as artist and Ravensbrück survivor Helena Bohle-Szacki said, “there are fewer and fewer survivors, and we need testimonies, traditions for different people, different generations.”¹⁵

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1. For an overview of mostly German material cf. www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/bildung/unterrichtsmaterialien and www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/buecher_medien.
2. www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/en.
3. cf. www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de/bildung/ruhrgebiet.
4. cf. <http://www.berliner-geschichtswerkstatt.de/forced-labor-app.html>.
5. cf. www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de, za253.

Verena Lucia Nägel and Dorothee Wein

WITNESSES OF THE SHOAH

The Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation in School Education

In 2006, Freie Universität Berlin was the first institution outside of the United States to conclude a license agreement with the “USC Shoah Foundation, The Institute for Visual History and Education” for a cross-disciplinary use of the Visual History Archive (VHA) in research and teaching. After repeated inquiries from schools, approaches and methods for educational work with the biographical video testimonies from this digital archive were developed and tested in over 50 project days at the Freie Universität. Since 2012, a DVD edition/educational software is also available, entitled “Witnesses of the Shoah,” as well as an eponymous online platform for secondary school education. Below is a description of the didactic considerations and methodological procedures using as an example the incorporation of the interview with Margot Segall-Blank into the DVD “To Escape.”

The “Witnesses of the Shoah” project.

Video testimonies in school education

The Witnesses of the Shoah project is based on the premise that historical learning with video testimonies must be thought of both in terms of the character of biographical interviews and in terms of the recipients. This has resulted in the following didactic-methodological considerations and requirements:

- Every testimony needs to include a person who listens and responds. When the memory is recounted, this is the interviewer. When watching the video testimonies, young people are in the position of the other person in the here and now.

- The testimonies are not judged by their educational, historiographical or judicial usability. A respectful treatment of the individual life stories and their complexity should be central to any form of their use.
- The video testimonies can and should be analyzed and interpreted with regard to the themes of their narratives and their content, but also in terms of their media-related aspects.
- The historical contextualization of the testimonies is essential when they are used in the classroom.
- Learners should step out of their role as listeners/viewers and place themselves in relation to the source.

Each DVD from the “Witnesses of the Shoah” edition consists of the two parts, “Remembrance” and “History.”

Central to the DVDs are twelve video testimonies, which are edited to half an hour films that follow a biographical arc. Accompanied by task assignments and contextual material, these films are placed on the layer “Remembrance.” On every DVD three video testimonials are classified according to the respective subject “To Resist,” “To Escape,” “To Survive”, or “To Live On.” On the second part, “History,” the interviews are contextualized in three ways:

- a) historically, with tasks relevant to the subject of the DVD;
- b) methodically, as oral history documents; and
- c) source-specific in the context of the collection of the USC Shoah Foundation.

Approaches and exercise formats for the interview with Margot Segall-Blank

The educational software is methodologically based on various forms of inquiry-based learning, where the students can work on different aspects of testimonies with survivors and witnesses of the Shoah: the content, the narrative forms, the implementation of the interview, everything that is expressed nonverbally (as well as the peculiarities of the medium) and, not least, their own behavior upon reception. The example presented here

is an interview conducted with Margot Segall-Blank (100 min.) in 1996 in Chestnut Hill, MA, USA. It can be found full-length on the online platform “Witnesses of the Shoah” and in abbreviated form (32 min.) on the DVD “To Escape” from the eponymous DVD edition.

Margot Segall-Blank was born in 1926, the daughter of a lawyer in Berlin, and grew up in a liberal Jewish family. Early in 1939 she was able to escape with her parents via Amsterdam and London to Australia, where she studied medicine. In 1955 she settled in Israel, where she worked in a military hospital. After her marriage, she moved to New York in 1960, where she worked as a doctor in various hospitals. She has two sons and has lived near Boston since 1973.

Content and narrative form: Inside Nazi Germany – Jewish identity in the face of anti-Semitic threats

A central topic of Margot Segall-Blank’s narrative is the transformation of her Jewish identity. She describes how her liberal Jewish origin and the Nazi persecution have shaped her awareness in various situations. Pupils are asked to reconstruct this process based on quotations of their own choosing. She tells, for example how she struggled after 1933 against the anti-Semitic attack of a classmate, and how training in the Jewish Maccabi sports club gave her a sense of reassurance and pride. Margot Segall-Blank referred to her experiences in November 1938 as “one of the most traumatic experiences in my life” as she stood holding the hands of two younger Jewish children across from the burning Fasanenstrasse Synagogue in Berlin-Charlottenburg. She describes the shock and how it felt to be left alone as a twelve year old facing these threats. She nonetheless relates, in her fear, to the Jewish nation, of which she understands herself to be a part. Retrospectively, the hope of a strong Jewish state in 1938 offered her support and an imaginary escape route from the traumatic experience.

An excerpt from the documentary “Inside Nazi Germany” from 1937, provided as additional material, describes how Jews strengthened the Jewish community and culture in the face of persecution. Margot Segall appears

here as an eleven year old girl, writing Hebrew letters on the board in the Goldschmidt School. By creating a narrative text to a silent documentary, the students can approach those aspects that appear most significant to them. Young people can learn about the different facets of what it means to be Jewish. The materials allow them to understand how the Nazi threat grew and how the interviewee tried to defend against these attacks by transforming her self-awareness.

“This is escape” – Witnesses of the escape

Contrary to the expectation of many students, the USC Shoah Foundation has documented more than the testimonies of concentration and extermination camp survivors. Margot Segall-Blank is one of the interviewees who escaped from Nazi Germany before the Holocaust. Her conception of herself as a survivor of the Shoah is a basic theme of her story.

Margot Segall-Blank sees the influence of the Shoah on her life retrospectively in the complete destruction of her self-image over the years: first, the growing fear in Berlin, then the escape and the trip to Australia, which tore her out of all her usual contexts of life. Her status as a survivor consists of having survived the many changes, she concludes. Thus her story describes not only her own experience, but those of many refugees in exile. Her memories are shaped by the knowledge that she was, as a Jew, designated by the Nazis for extermination, and would probably, without the Australian visa, have been murdered along with her entire family. She deliberately sees herself as a representative of the refugees. Her objective is to bear witness to the impacts of the threats, fear, and escape from the Nazis. Closely related to this is her need to express her gratitude to Australia for accepting her, emphasizing that she no longer has the sense of having a homeland or belonging.

With possible escape destinations and issues of emigration, adolescents can focus on the activity-oriented context level of “To Escape” on the DVD. To this end, a map showing the policies of potential host countries, as well as a map animating the course of World War II, are provided.

Young people as recipients – analysis and (self) reflection

Years of experience have shown that young people feel strongly addressed by biographical video interviews that testify about the experience of the Holocaust. The presence of survivors remembering and narrating has an engaging effect through their visual presence in their personal environment, their expressions and their gestures. In addition, the spoken language and the real time of the narrative are easily followed. Even moments of silence, empty spaces, and breaks attract the attention of young people.

Thus the form of the interviews, in which the narrative is structured by questions and is shaped by the dynamics between the interview partners, often plays an important role in classroom discussions. Young people generally observe closely and say what they would have done or asked differently, where they would have asked more questions, or kept silence, if they had conducted the interview. They enter into a mediated relationship with the interviewee.

On the basis of the different task assignments, not only can the effect of image, sound and transcript be investigated, but young people can also reflect on their own perspective when viewing the video testimony. In our example, the pupils first discuss to whom Margot Segall-Blank is directing her narrative, what messages she wants to convey and where young people themselves feel concerned. This requires their own interpretations. The extent to which students make connections between Margot Segall-Blank's story and their own experiences with the process of growing up, the transformation of their self-esteem, or migration experiences of their own families, and how they differentiate them on the basis of the historical context, is evidence of the substantial work results.

Conclusion

Not infrequently, the viewers of video testimonies have been referred to in academic literature as “secondary witnesses” (Laub), “witnesses of remembrance” (Messerschmidt), or “witnesses of witnesses” (Wiesel). Does this require of young people an obligation or a mandate? For the “Witnesses of

the Shoah” project, it was essential that young people confront the testimonies of survivors as “participating viewers.” The students’ contributions can then be interpreted as “answers” to the video testimonies. In these responses, students often make references to their own living reality, but also refer to the fundamental difference of a time in which they did not (have to) live, and to situations in which they do not find themselves.

From the students’ feedback after the project work, the dominant topos can be confirmed: Learning from video testimonials differed significantly from classroom learning as they know it. From the narration about the precarious survival of an individual, they could better understand the dimensions of the Holocaust. The video testimonies have, as sources, the potential to make the effects of the crime against humanity, based on the experience of these physical witnesses, accessible in differing facets. With the DVD edition and the online platform “Witnesses of the Shoah,” the technical possibilities are put in the service of a living reflection of the memories of the survivors.

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DVD AND ACCOMPANYING MATERIAL

Zeugen der Shoah. Fliehen – Überleben – Widerstehen – Weiterleben. Lernsoftware mit Video-Interviews. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung und Freie Universität. Berlin/Bonn 2012.

Schulisches Lernen mit Video-Interviews der USC Shoah Foundation. Zeugen der Shoah. Fliehen – Überleben – Widerstehen – Weiterleben. Begleitheft für Lehrende. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung und Freie Universität Berlin. Berlin/Bonn 2012.

available at: www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/141267/zeugen-der-shoah-fliehen-ueberleben-widerstehen-weiterleben.

LINKS

Project website und online platform for Schools: www.zeugendershoah.de/

Website of the Visual History Archive at Freie Universität Berlin: www.vha.fu-berlin.de

USC Shoah Foundation. The Institute for Visual History and Education: <https://sfi.usc.edu/>

Constanze Jaiser

MEMORY IN MOTION

A Pedagogical Approach to Working with Video Testimonies of Shoah Survivors

Holocaust narratives, not only in written form, but also as interviews, form a new genus: These are testimonies that are connected to painful, unforgettable memories. These testimonies construct, through their narrative strategies, delineations of the self and its formation, and they usually take place in dialog with a trusted counterpart.

One goal with such dialogs is to recognize the traumatic experiences as a conscious event and not only to verify them as an overwhelming shock. This can be done only through a common generation of knowledge via a linguistic realization process. This calls for a willingness on the part of the listener to encounter something radically alien and harrowing. Geoffrey Hartman speaks of a “space of social participation,” which should be already created in the implementation of the interviews, and of an “alliance for the witness” dedicated to public remembrance and memorialization. Ultimately, a complex communication and reception process also takes place while listening and watching a video interview. The testimony is created at the moment of speaking, and a community is needed: no testimony without someone remembering; no testimony without someone listening.

This insight influenced the development of the following pedagogical approach for working with interviews from the video archive project of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe Foundation. The main question was: How can an “encounter” take place if the person who has survived the Holocaust is not participating in the dialog with me in person? An approach was developed for a project day for students in the 9th grade. It is divided

into programs for the lower and upper secondary levels and consists of several modules that take about four and a half hours to complete. The didactic considerations and methods are outlined here.

Between encounters and historical learning in place of remembrance

Again and again, the “right approach” to interview sources is a cause for debate. In this respect, the material from the video archive project of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe Foundation is prepared in a special way: The interviews remain visible in their entirety and are broken down “from the inside” into their many facets, enabling diverse learning possibilities about the biographical narrative as well as the history of the events, to accommodate even young people with little historical knowledge.

The developed learning modules aim for a productive debate between encounter (with the witness) and historical learning (through the witness) at the memorial location. All those involved in the project day should participate as subjects. This means, first and foremost, that the young people should get closer to the person of the witness, not the medium, the narrative structures or the analysis of the video of the narrative. In addition, everyone should consider the following questions: How can an encounter be presented that is supported by mindfulness and respect? How can historical learning about the “stages of destruction” take place with a view to the European dimension of the genocide of the Jews?

The decision was made for a compressed history lesson that applies interactive methods. The witnesses themselves take on the central mediating role. Young people are encouraged to bring their own points of view to bear upon the person they encountered in the video interview. Interviews selected for the project day are used as an historical source to learn something about historical events, because the testimonies are always simultaneously documentation and remembrance. This results with a focus on three didactical objectives: first, to involve youth in the process of active memorial work, also in remembrance of all those who have not survived. Secondly, it should

be made clear that memorial work requires an encounter with the person who remembers. Thirdly, the basics of historical knowledge, which should be acquired in the course of the project day, are required for interacting together. This can happen through the interview and research opportunities offered by the database, through the photos that relate to the life of the interviewee, and through a timeline and a glossary.

It is the task of this project day's pedagogical guidance to balance out these objectives again and again, and to moderate the young people's discussions of the videos. The teacher assumes the role of an attentive companion of "interactive learning," in which all participants are active.

First module: Awareness of the topic and the source

In the dialogical process of realization of the testimony, the students take on an active role as listeners. They should, before dealing with the interviews, be made aware of the difficulties of bearing witness, which is why they start with an analysis of the biographies. The young people receive two worksheets and are first encouraged to create a small "fact sheet" about themselves and to present these to a small group. The second task, on the basis of these presentations, is to present a classmate to a larger group. This is a "remembrance exercise," in which interesting things about memory (and memory capabilities) can be learned. How, for example, do you deal with the question of a painful or embarrassing experience in your own past? What difference does it make if I personally entrust a small group with my story or if my classmates repeat it to the whole class? This exercise ultimately serves to help pupils reflect upon oral history sources and to realize how complicated and demanding dealing with (private) memory is in a public space. This entry is intended to help the young people be mindful and respectful in their encounter with the interviewees. It is intended to awaken an understanding of the difficulties of the narrative situation, and that to some extent, people report inaccurately or have linguistic idiosyncrasies. Overall, young people should be taught to view contemporary witnesses' remembrances with empathy and to receive them with knowledge of their historical background.

Sprechen trotz allem
Das Videoarchiv der Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas

Yehuda Bacon (*28.7.1929, Mährisch-Ostrau)

Metadaten des Interviews	
Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas, Berlin	
Ort und Datum der Aufnahme	Sprache
Inzwischen: 20. May 2012	Deutsch
Interviewer:	Digitar
Daniel Eisenwaks	011434343344
Teresa Schuler	Bearbeitung
Kamera, Licht und Ton	Teresa Schuler
Stapel Videos	Transkription
	Teresa Schuler

3. Die Hilfe in Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau

1. Die Übergang vom Ghettos ins Konzentrationslager: eine der schlimmsten Erlebnisse
▶ 01:25:18
2. Die ersten Begegnungen mit dem Dr. Auschitzer, Lemmer und Kohnemann
▶ 01:32:22
3. Auschwitz: eine andere Hilfe
▶ 01:35:18

und dann war noch eine sehr interessante Szene für mich, es war ein Flüchtling oder es
wäre ein Ausländer nicht viele ein Flüchtling ist aber die waren mehr von den Sachen die sie
mitgebracht haben auch eine Platte mit diesem Flüchtling, es haben diese Platte und diese
Hose und die sah ein SS-Mann und er fragte und sagt: was ist das und es sah es sehr
ausgezeichnet und es wurde schnell weggeführt und ich konnte nicht verstehen warum er es
nicht durchgesehen ist, es war nur durchgesehen, und er hat es mitgebracht es ging nicht zu dem aber
es wurde durchgesehen und das war auch sehr interessant, aber aber diese Platte
alle diese Sachen in einem Ort es war wirklich als würde sie sich es so wie alle, perlebene
Hilfslinge in einem Dach zu geben meine Sachen und es umzubringen, und dann diese
Geschichte mit dem Flüchtling, es ist er, und dann nach einer Sache und dann waren einige
alle deutsche Männer, und die die Deutschen die SS-Soldaten, sich ganz anders zu sein
waren sehr höflich und der einer ist: man hat ja nicht, dass man darf überhaupt zu einem
SS-Mann nicht reden das war sehr interessant, nachdem in Auschwitz das haben wir und später
genannt und es ging zu einem ein alterer Mann und sagte: ich weiß es und es ist
hat den den nicht helfen in seiner Charge irgendein Regel, aber Offizier aber ich habe
von ihm, ich habe Gedächtnisse können Sie lesen es sehr viele und mit ein Platte oder sie
bringen und die sagt er: vollkommen richtig mein Mann und er ging und brachte ihm ein Glas
Wasser und ein Apfelsaft also das, und das war sehr interessant in dieser in dieser Hilfe und
er geht in diesem alten Mann mit ihm zusammen mit diesen Flüchtling, was sie die in die in die
man sie die anderen diesen Regel diese eine Gruppe eine besondere Behandlung haben
ja dass man ihnen gibt etwas überhaupt es unterschrieben, es muss auch verstehen dass
die dann ganz anders behandelt wurden, und vor eine kleine Gruppe zusammen
waren und sind diese SS-Mann behandelt, dass alle Mann mit in die, die Flüchtling also
das war sehr interessant, ein anderer Platz

Extract from the "Sprechen trotz allem" ("Speak despite everything") video archive
Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin

Second module: Getting to know the witnesses

After raising awareness of the problem of remembering, the second step is to awaken a willingness to engage in the story of an unfamiliar elderly person. Pupils must have the possibility to choose with whom they want to enter into a relationship. A twelve-minute introductory film allows them to become acquainted with eight witnesses. Their affinity to one of the interviewees is intuitive and based on this first "encounter," not on information about individual historical aspects that will later – also via the interviewee's biography – be deepened.

With videos, the focus is intentionally on the individuals, and the topics of exclusion and persecution during the Nazi era are only introduced indirectly. The subjects of the one and a half minute interview excerpts serve as

links to the contemporary lives of young people by reporting, for example, on events from their school years or conflicts with their parents. If the interviewee Jacques S. introduces himself with the words, “Well, I was born [as] a Greek, my parents were Turkish, so my parents couldn’t speak Greek, but we children learned Greek as a first language. But still, our mother tongue was Judeo-Spanish, that is, Spanish with words of Hebrew and Turkish, and perhaps Greek,” then, although this is about a foreign biography and language, pupils with their own migration experience may feel a kind of “connection” with the interviewee.

Third module: Encounters via listening and researching the biographical and historical context

The project work should resemble a visit to an archive, in which there is much to discover. The opportunity to select and to slowly and tentatively approach the life stories, as well as the awareness of the witnesses’ courage, creates a motivating and respectful learning environment. It is expressly permitted for the pupils in this project to decide for themselves what and how much they want to experience. It is only mandatory that they listen to the selected eleven to 14 minute interview in its entirety and to answer some comprehension questions.

The “searching for traces” is delegated to the young people over the course of the project day. They can research the database about the interviewees and their living conditions in order to later inform their classmates about the fate of the person with whom they have engaged, but also perhaps to relate information about their murdered family members. Thus, survival as an exceptional experience becomes the focus of attention and therefore one of the main intentions of testifying too. At the same time, it is vital that the young people themselves relate with their thoughts, feelings and opinions to the person interviewed and to the historical events that had a massive impact on the lives of the interviewees.

Additional information to the interview and database is available for the group’s free research: A specifically created timeline connects biographical



Project day at "Ort der Information", Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin.
Photos: Marko Priske

information of the eight interviewees with event history data, which corresponds directly with the personal experiences. Included are still images with family photos from the interview and historical photos of places especially relevant to the biography of interviewee. The captions provide important contextual knowledge. In the attached glossary, foreign and technical words can be looked up in order to integrate important terms from the narrative and to better understand the story.

Fourth module: The presentation and mediation of the stories of the contemporary witnesses and their specific persecution situations

For the lower secondary level, a presentation of three to five photos and a map of Europe is provided, in which the students can enter a picture of “their witnesses” and the number of victims of the country from which they came. Using the photos, which are projected on the wall, the group can more easily formulate and discuss impressions and further questions. Through this dialog, young people participate actively in the process of memorial work, instead of just writing a classic biography and listing data about it without really having understood it. More importantly, they are in the position of being able to explain other contexts, such as what role the pictured tar tank car played in Mordecai W.’s life, what we should think about a “death march,” or what happened during such a death march to Rudolf R.’s brother.

The approach for the upper secondary level includes more complex research, analysis and presentation. Pupils are encouraged to write their own “memorial text.” Depending on their interests and abilities, a personal confrontation is created with what they heard and read about that could turn out to be historically oriented (e.g. developed using the timeline), or experimental and subjective, or primarily commemorative. In addition, it becomes possible to discussing various forms of memorialization during the presentation of the texts.

One of the texts written in 2008 as part of a project day at the Information Center beneath the Holocaust Memorial is quoted here at the end. It refers to an interview with Willi F. from Berlin-Spandau, who, as a young man

trying to escape to Switzerland, was taken by the Gestapo and deported to Auschwitz, where he had to perform forced labor in Monowitz Concentration Camp. The text gives an impression of the “encounter” between the author and the interviewee and shows how (newly acquired) historical knowledge can be integrated into an active memorial work, in which the learners are seen as participants in the dialog with the witness and the realization of the Holocaust.

Björn Uhlig: The nose

“Dry, it was mainly dry. And dusty. Cement but can be quite dusty, especially when it is dry. Yes.”

(Sniffs.)

“Cement smells a little bit like, well, after a while it no longer actually smells. Sometimes so much dust was inside me that it hurt, but later it became rather numb, as if I still feel the pain when I breathe in, but then it’s not so important. Yes, I think it was then when it started to hurt somewhere down in Willi’s legs. I was only the nose [...]”

“Well. Then it took a while until I could smell again. I almost didn’t know anymore, everything that Willi knew about smells, that became perhaps most clear in the factory. This hot air there always tickled so, and then this smell of hot metal that is so sharp later in the sinuses.”

“And then once, when it mattered, I still remember exactly, I still have the air in front of me, as it was there, at the border in Switzerland. That smelled like something, this fresh mountain air. That’s the smell of freedom, you might say, we noses are actually mountain noses, in the mountain air. Sure, in that climate, breathing there is refreshing and healthy. Well. But then, the dust in Monowitz, that was the worst for me, you know. Whoever invented cement, he had something against noses, that is as clear as the [...] everybody knows, no question about it. Yes.”

(Sniffs)

■ COMMENT

Monique Eckmann and Werner Dreier

CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES AS AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE: TRANSPARENCY, CONTROVERSY AND REFLEXIVITY

Introduction

The catalyst for the present publication project was unusual: We did not attend the seminars and expert-meetings, but, rather, were asked by the editors to comment – retrospectively – on papers. These papers relate to educational concepts for using interviews of contemporary witnesses from Israel, the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany. After a thorough reading and discussion of texts, we agreed to structure our comments about the individual articles thematically and to refrain from assessing the individual positions. Our goal was to discuss questions that arise in the use of testimonies given by contemporary witnesses. Some of the questions were clearly addressed in the articles, while some others reflect our own considerations.

The proposed educational concepts are based on collections of contemporary witness reports, which vary greatly, both in terms of the witnesses represented (victims of National Socialism and victims of communism in addition to local oral history projects), as well as in terms of recording or transmission (transcripts, video interviews, encounters with witnesses). The recipients, the didactic objectives and methods of working with the sources are quite diverse, whereby the USC Shoah Foundation Institute is represented several times with national adaptations of a transnational didactic-methodological approach.

1 What are the sources and what are the proposed intents of the described collections and projects?

The largest and most diverse interview inventory addressed in the papers is the collection of videotaped interviews of contemporary witnesses in the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. The oldest collection includes the written testimonies of children, which were collected by the Aschau DP Youth Center in 1946. The transnational collections include the collection of interviews in the archives of the Majdanek (concentration camp) State Museum, the Czech online archive “Memories of Nations” and the German online archive “Forced Labor 1939–1945.” The contemporary witness documents from the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem and the collections of the Jewish Museum in Prague, as well as the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, possess a strong national quality, but are nevertheless of transnational importance, while the national connection dominates in the collections of the Museum of Revolutionary Struggles and Liberation and the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (both in the Czech Republic).

These collections go back to political remembrance initiatives from diverse groups or institutions in various social situations as well (e.g. “victim societies,” party inventories, local / national / transnational collections). Accordingly, they serve very different political remembrance purposes and address different groups of recipients. They can also be used for the construction of affiliations and identities (such as victims of the communist or the National Socialist tyranny) as well as for the deconstruction of ideas of homogeneity, for example, to highlight the diversity of Jewish life against the anti-Semitic image of “the Jew”. The social framework, as well as the social function of the school system, are of significant relevance to the educational programs and should always be critically questioned: For what purposes will the interviews with contemporary witnesses be implemented?

2 Witnesses as an historical resource or as an educational tool

The use of biographical testimonies for the mediation of history and historical experience is generally regarded positively. But it is worthwhile to precisely examine critically the attractiveness and the effectiveness of narrated history. On the one hand, the use of interviews with witnesses raises the question of historical veracity, a question that poses a new challenge with every educational application and one that should be made transparent and discussed. This applies both to the choice of witnesses in a particular interview inventory and to the criteria of selection in the educational setting. The fundamental questions about the production process of oral history and its use in the educational context always provide a challenge that should be discussed and made transparent. In other words, on the basis of which intention was the respective collection created? Which historical events should the historical perspectives of the contemporary witnesses represent, and which witnesses are selected for the collection to convey this? And by what criteria were the contemporary witness interviews selected for the educational environment? By making the criteria for the placement and selection of testimonies transparent, the testimonies become recognizable as socially-determined constructs. Only against this background can further source-critical questions be addressed. In this regard, *Roma oral history* seems to present a particularly interesting configuration, both as a means of empowerment when the interviews are recorded and in their educational deployment in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

It is an open discussion, with regard to the selection for educational applications, which aspects constitute a “good” interview and whether only “good” interviews – for example those with consistent and understandable narratives – are useful. Several contributions insist that “failed” moments in interviews, for example, when the witnesses’ narrative does not flow, can also be very instructive. It seems to us particularly important to make the role and behavior of the interviewers, as well as the interview situation, apparent. The interviews’ pedagogical use can vary greatly: They serve as a point of access or a springboard to introduce and illustrate historical topics, or to

prepare a visit to a museum and memorial. However, they can become the main subject of the educational exploration as well — whether in the form of a biographical analysis or as a topic of remembrance. In this way, insights can be gained about the relationship between remembrance and history, the selectivity of memory and forgetting, the transformation of memory, and the creation of transparency and awareness for unpleasant experiences, as well as for that which is *not* mentioned.

3 Objectives and target groups: Which pedagogical purposes do the portrayed educational programs aim at

Although the objectives and target groups are not reported in all of the project descriptions, a few are easily recognizable. The preservation and meditation of the memory of what was done to people by the National Socialist regime, but also by the communist regime, is the essential, inherent goal of many projects; education and learning, thus, are usually closely connected. Interviews with witnesses are implemented for historical education with the intention of imparting factual knowledge, as well as the historical-political or civic education with the intention of stimulating critical thinking. In some projects, an educational intent becomes clear when empathic capabilities are formed or specific emotional goals are pursued. As previously stated, in the educational programs at the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno, the aspect of empowering a marginalized group by helping them deal with their equally marginalized history of persecution, is of particular importance.

Many projects emphasize the development of skills, such as methodology, media and communication skills, in that the learners are encouraged to conduct oral histories themselves, to make their own video interviews and to build a narration with interview segments. Others emphasize the biographical and social-psychological dimension of oral history interviews and see the interviews as relationships: The relationship of interviewee to interviewer during the recording, editor to interviewee in the processing, and recipient to interviewee in the viewing. A reflexive access is usually

common for these approaches as they stimulate the exploration of these processes and relationships.

Many of the educational concepts set their sights on schools and young people as the most important target groups, as well as art and media projects for a general public.

4 The portrayed pedagogical implementation of the material

The contributions in this volume describe the educational use of contemporary testimonies. We wish to emphasize the need for reflexivity and transparency as central educational principles. An essential, distinguishing feature is whether video or contemporary witness testimonies are only used to illustrate or confirm historical events, or whether they are also addressed reflexively and are critically questioned as a primary source.

Several articles stress the necessity of listening to interviews more than once in order to focus on different elements and levels, such as content, narrative type, role of the interviewer, linguistic elements or the narrative situation. This makes it possible to differentiate between informative, evaluative or explanatory aspects. Several articles use the example of written testimonies to illustrate the potential of multidisciplinary accessibility, such as historical, educational, literary, psychological and linguistic approaches. This raises the question as to whether such an analysis might also be applied to audio-visual testimonies in order to gain additional knowledge.

It is important to examine the specific settings in which the narrations emerged and were recorded, e.g. the differences between the interviews conducted during the Eichmann trial and the much later interviews conducted by the Shoah Foundation.

One aspect that seems important to us (and is rarely discussed) is the exploration of the different temporalities of a testimony: the time of the event itself, the moment of the first – often written – recording, the date of realization of an interview and the moment of the reception of the interview by an audience. These temporalities and the deconstruction of the interviews as historical sources indicate the complexity of the educational dealings with them.

In the portrayed materials, the clear concept of the USC Visual History Archive stands out through its constructivist approach; this approach is also relevant for the concept of the Massuah Institute regarding the statements from the Eichmann trial. Thus, testimonies of witnesses are not used for an illustrative purpose, but as the material per se for learning about history, with historical empathy defined as an important learning objective.

In some articles it is evident how the viewing of filmed testimonies can and should encourage a sense of affiliation, whether to national affiliations or to those of minorities. This is about connections with issues of migration and in making common stories and experiences visible. These “identity” aspects could help learners with diverse ethnic backgrounds find access to their own history and to the present day, as well as promoting the deconstruction of imagined homogeneity of groups (e.g. “the Jews”). Thus, the life stories and experiences of the interviewed people can often promote awareness of multiple perspectives and diversity among the viewers.

5 Role of the students

In educational programs, pupils sometimes play a more passive, receiving role and, at other times, a more active, appropriating and creative role. In this connection, pupils are sometimes expected to assume a position: on the one hand a rather passive “empathy” or even “identification,” and on the other a reflective historical empathy. The idea of listeners and viewers as “participating observers” synthesizes these two roles. A rather reflexive approach or an approach committed to constructivism points out which influences the narrative situation, the reception or learning situation, and the associated expectations have on the teaching results. Such approaches challenge the recipient of testimonies to a critical examination and to generate independent semantic interpretations. A critical deconstruction or an historical contextualization of the narrative of historical testimonies is easier to achieve and also seems more permissible using recorded testimonies rather than in the context of direct personal encounters. Not only do the historical images mediated by the contemporary witnesses require a reflexive

accessibility, but it is also critical to question the use of these historical testimonials with regard to the legitimacy of the public use or their potential for instrumentalisation.

Collections that are applied transnationally and contain a variety of divergent experiences, such as the online archive “Forced Labor 1939-1945” or the USC Visual History Archive, provide starting points for various recipient groups with different affiliations in the diverse, sometimes controversial societies of today.

The concepts developed in conjunction with the USC Shoah Foundation Institute are based on the four-stage model *consider – collect – construct – communicate* and emphasize the self-motivation of the learners as well as their communication and mediation skills.

Concluding remarks

The critical potential of oral history has been emphasized ever since the collecting started and the research began. Its goal is to give marginalized groups a voice that would otherwise go unheard in the hegemonic discourse. Oral history was thus conceived as a counter-history to the history of power, and personal testimonies as a counterpart to the documents of the powerful. Today, oral history and the work with, above all, audio-visual testimonies in education and/or public communication, whether this be in the context of school or extracurricular activities, have become important and seemingly indispensable components. How does that impact the production and use of testimonies? Will oral history now be used with all segments of the population? Should oral history take place with all of the groups? And how will educators deal with the specific inherent problems of this type of source; such as the trend addressed in the Czech article, a critical reflection of family memory that whitewashes the past – a phenomena seen not only among minorities, but also common among members of the majority?

The trend towards personalizing history through individual stories is to be understood not only as complementary to structural history or its relativisation. This trend is also more than a mere “educational” approach to history,

which puts the witness in the role of a “Cicerone,” whose narrative guides through this confusing past like through a foreign country. The concepts are also an expression of a trend towards the subjectification of history, which can be seen in connection with the “universalization” or “Americanization” of the Holocaust, whereby the genocide of the Jews is seen as an absolute counterpart to human rights or even American values, and is considered the absolute evil. This aspect is supposed to give the survivors’ stories additional legitimacy. How is it, however, when others, such as spectators, bystanders and even members of perpetrator groups, talk about their experiences during the Nazi era? The testimonies of the powerful and the perpetrator groups, as problematic as they may be in many respects, are nevertheless a necessary addition to the testimonies of the victims. However, in regard to education, they require even more context and a more reflexive approach. Testimonies do not replace structural history, but they significantly advance our understanding of how the different protagonists experienced their era, or, to refer to Koselleck, what their *space of experience* was and how their *horizon of expectations* appeared.

We want to come back to the potentials of different forms of testimonies: there are written, audio, and audio-visual testimonies, as well as direct encounters. Ultimately, it must be stressed repeatedly, direct encounters are stronger and have a stronger effect than even the best video testimonials. Without going into the question here as to how this “effect” can be understood and what it means for the learning process, we would like to point out that those testimonies that are transmitted in writing form, as audio or audio-visual recordings, provide opportunities for learning processes that we should critically assess.

On one hand, the deconstruction of these testimonies and the critical handling of controversial history is easier than in a direct encounter with the eye witness. The risk of the “sacralization of witnesses” is, in the direct encounter, greater. A critical discussion, contradiction, or questioning in the presence of contemporary witnesses is often very difficult, if not impossible.

In direct encounters it is also much more difficult to open a space for reflection, in which the listeners can speak about the narrative strategies chosen by the eye witnesses (what are they revealing and what are they keeping to themselves?), about their own emotional and intellectual reactions to the witnesses' testimonies, as well as the dynamics, which emerge during the encounters. All of this would help to prevent the listeners from being overwhelmed by these testimonies and allow an independent approach.

This challenges the role of teachers – another topic that is often neglected in the articles yet seems to us to be a central point: How do teachers establish their role as mediators, do they see themselves as the knowledgeable ones or as co-learners, as a source, as critics or as apologists? Do they understand themselves as facilitators of a largely open learning process or do they pursue defined educational and training goals? And if the latter is the case, are these goals deliberate and formulated or unconsciously adopted and implicit? Working with contemporary witnesses is an exciting and instructive challenge in each of the national and social-historical contexts mentioned above. At the same time, the role of teachers must be defined in their specific social-historical variants in each specific context. Because, depending upon the history and context, it is necessary to create space for the marginalized groups and for the hegemonic discourses, and yet, at the same time, to challenge and critically examine them in an adequate and respectful manner.

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