

## Autonomous Histories and Studies of the Holocaust - Abstracts

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## Monday – 4.11

### Panel 1 – Parallel Narratives – The Persecutors and the Persecuted

#### David Engel – "Jewish history under Nazi impact": The past and the potential of a historical object

Abstract: The phrase "Jewish history under Nazi impact" was the designation for a field of research promoted by YIVO and Yad Vashem during the 1950s. From the 1960s on, in part, though by no means exclusively, under the impact of historical controversies that emerged from the trial of Adolf Eichmann, it disappeared from common usage, replaced eventually by the phrase "Holocaust history." A rationale often advanced for the change was that one could not properly separate the history of the victims of murderous German actions from the history of the perpetrators of those actions. In other words, defining "the Holocaust" as a distinct object of historical study was meant initially to promote what Saul Friedländer would later term an "integrated history" of the encounter between the Third Reich and the Jews.

The premise of the conference, expressed in its call for papers, is that such integration has not been achieved. This paper will, it is hoped, contribute to understanding an aspect of that failure and to thinking about how it might be rectified (if rectification is indeed a goal). It turns out that, ironically, the abandonment of "Jewish history under Nazi impact" as an object of research, far from encouraging convergence of the "German" and "Jewish" aspects of the encounter between the two groups, has actually fostered divergence. It has done so by divorcing the experience of Jews at Nazi hands from the longer sweep of Jewish history, thereby impeding exploration of how Jews acquired and deployed the material and psychological resources that they were able to bring to bear upon their encounter with Nazi Germany. Without such exploration it is impossible to determine how the German murder program achieved the precise results that it did.

The paper will offer an example of how thinking about "Jewish history under Nazi impact" can potentially throw light on this central question in Holocaust research.

#### Andrea Löw – Where the two trends come together: A new document collection as a basis for future research

Abstract: German historiography on the Holocaust for several decades has had a strong focus on perpetrators. During the last years, however, there has been a change, several historians especially those of a younger generation, start asking for Jewish perspectives and their reactions to persecution. In great detail Jewish reactions in the ghettos in occupied Eastern Europe have been researched as well as everyday life – both on the victim's and on the perpetrator's side.

The document collection "The Persecution and Extermination of the European Jews by Nazi Germany 1933–1945 (VEJ)" seeks to bring together these perspectives. The edition in German

language will comprise sixteen volumes which are divided up by territory and chronology. The selection presents documents from the perpetrators as well as those written by the victims and third parties not directly involved. By presenting these documents in a chronological order the perspective constantly changes: from one perpetrators' institution to another one, from the individual Jew who writes about his worries about the living conditions in a ghetto to a the description of a witness of a brutal attack on the Jews under Nazi rule, from a member of a Jewish Council explaining his policy to a high-ranking German ordering the Jews to gather for deportation.

The document collection and also the common work on this project – that can be said after having published six of the 16 volumes - raises many questions and topics for future research, bringing together “the two trends” as well as a transnational perspective, for example a comparison of the Jewish Communities and the Jewish Councils all over Europe or how the exchange of experience among the perpetrators all over Europe worked. One could compare the deportations in different regions, including the various perspectives. Another important topic would be question of interactions between Germans, Jews and the respective societies in occupied or annexed territories as well as the impact of war.

I will shortly present the editorial project, but the main focus should be the question, how projects like this one can create a basis for future research that brings the two trends (and even more perspectives) together.

I would like to discuss with the other participants which other important topics for future projects could be developed on such a basis (with the document collection only as a starting point, of course). The new Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich wants to become a place where innovative and international scholarship will be conducted and discussed, so I would also like to introduce this new Center very briefly.

### **Moshe Zimmermann – Where does Shoah study belong to – a German dilemma**

Abstract: The latest controversies in the German guild of historians about the role of the Wehrmacht, the Foreign Ministry and other state institutions of the Third Reich made possible a new kind of relativization of the history of the persecution of the Jews and the Shoa. I intend to focus on this intention and its mechanisms as expressed in the research and presentation of the role of the German Foreign ministry in the Third Reich and in the Federal republic. On the one hand criticism is directed at an alleged "over-accentuation" of the Holocaust and on the other hand much attention is paid not only to "other crimes" but also to the limited possibilities for opposition in the dictatorial system of the Third Reich. This shift of focus is not accidental.

## Panel 2 – The Policy of Destruction in the East

### Zvi Gitelman – Bringing the Jews Back In: A By-Product of the New Belarusian National Myth

Abstract: Independent Belarus and Ukraine seek justifications for their states' existence. This was much less of a problem for Ukrainians, who had a national movement and had declared a short-lived state in 1918, than for Belarussians whose national consciousness, political aspirations, and linguistic loyalties were weak. But Ukrainians are much more challenged by how to fit the experience of WWII into a national narrative that would legitimate the kind of statehood acceptable to the European Union. Significant numbers of Ukrainians collaborated with the Germans during the war, though even more fought with the Soviets. Since collaboration with the Germans was most often rationalized as promoting Ukrainian independence, does that mean that the post-1991 Ukrainian state was born in original sin? Among Belarussians, organized nationalist collaboration was far less significant. Since there was much anti-Nazi partisan warfare in Soviet Belorussia, where one of four inhabitants died during the war, Belarussians can call their state "the partisan republic," and claim the legitimacy of their state. Attempts launched in the early 1990s to legitimate the Belarussian nation and state on the basis of Francysk Skoryna's (15-16<sup>th</sup> centuries) creation of a Belarusian language had failed.

Jews pose a problem for Ukrainians because the murder of Jews by Ukrainian nationalists disturbs the moral justification of Ukrainian statehood. In Belarus, where Jews were excluded from the *Soviet* Belorussian partisan narrative, they are now welcomed as part of the state-legitimizing narrative. The memoirs and oral histories of Jews—ghetto survivors, Soviet soldiers and partisans—do not reflect any generalized animosity toward Belarussians, but articulate resentment of Ukrainians as collaborators. This allows Belarussians to incorporate Jews into their "autonomous history," while the "Jewish issue" in Ukrainian history is still being negotiated.

### David Silberklang – The Lublin District in the "Final Solution": German, Jewish, and Integrated Perspectives

Abstract: In January 1942, according to Nazi estimates, there were nearly 2,300,000 Jews in the German Generalgouvernement in Poland. A year later, the Germans estimated that fewer than 298,000 remained. Nearly 2,000,000 Jews had been murdered in less than a year. This was "Operation Reinhard," arguably the largest murder operation of the "Final Solution," and it was based in Lublin.

The Lublin District was central to Nazi anti-Jewish policy from early in the war. Nearly 1,000,000 Jews were murdered in this district; two death camps – Bełżec and Sobibór – were situated here, as well as the Majdanek camp; and the first Jews murdered in this operation were from here as well.

This paper will look at the place of the Lublin District in the development and implementation of the "Final Solution." The murder operation run out of Lublin was perhaps the biggest in the

entire war. It also reflected a certain compartmentalization of the murder, in that the operation's commander, Odilo Globocnik, and his men, cooperated with other leading implementers of the "Final Solution" only to a limited degree, as they answered directly to Heinrich Himmler.

The paper will examine the district from both German and Jewish perspectives and will integrate these perspectives, which not only might provide mutual corroboration, but will also help tell a fuller story and reflect on each other through each other's eyes.

This was a district of contradictions. There were few ghettos, and conditions of daily life were generally much better than in other districts; it was a center for forced labor, which led to Jews' deaths in many cases and contributed to survival in others; and unpredictable German behavior – "decent" SS men and civilian officials murdered without a thought, while vicious SS men could show "kindness" on occasion. The sources that provide insight into these different aspects of the events will be discussed.

The Jews also faced a measure of continuity in German anti-Jewish policies – they faced both upheaval and forced relocation, as well as forced labor from the very beginning of the occupation. Their memories of round-ups, expulsions, and forced labor in 1939-1941 were sufficient for many to seek all ways to avoid being included among the deportees. The extreme brutality and mass murder in the streets that accompanied the 1942 deportations probably convinced even more Jews to hide or flee. But initially what they tried to evade was what they saw as an extreme version of a now familiar phenomenon, and not the "Final Solution." In a sense, they hid or fled for the wrong reasons, based on a misunderstanding, and this is what saved some of them.

There was quite a lot of communication among Jews in this district, and between them and Jews outside the district and even outside Poland. Through both "legal" and clandestine communication, Jewish people shared information about events. Yet, having information had little connection to saving communities. Whereas an individual's actions could affect that individual's fate, there was nothing that the Jews in this area could do as a collective that would have significantly affected their fate. For nearly all the Jews in the Lublin District, the only thing of which they could be certain was that death sought them everywhere.

### **Kiril Feferman – Omissions, distortions and contradictions: Jewish testimonies vs. perpetrators' reports in analyzing the Holocaust in the Soviet Union**

Abstract: The theme of the Holocaust in the occupied Soviet territories has occasioned a wealth of historiography. The last decade alone has seen books in Russian, Hebrew, English, and German. This literature draws on two basic sets of sources. The first one frequently used in Israeli and post-Soviet scholarship is based on Soviet records, which in turn makes use of Jewish testimonies or testimonies submitted by Jews to Soviet authorities mainly during the war. The second one, employed largely in German scholarship, relies upon German records such as official wartime German documentation and postwar legal proceedings conducted in West Germany against those accused in committing crimes in the USSR.

These two sets of sources present different pictures of what transpired with Jews under German rule in the occupied Soviet territories. The victims' perspective is reflected in Jewish testimonies. They are emotional and personal. They enlarge upon their own suffering, as well those of their families and friends. Less attention was paid to the fate of communities, if at all. In addition, as a rule, Jews were unaware of what occurred to their brethren even in adjacent communities, let alone in more remote areas. Furthermore, since these testimonies were offered to suspecting Soviet agencies the accounts were occasionally distorted to prove that the witnesses did not collaborate with the occupying authorities in order to save their lives. There are hundreds of localities where no Jew survived and consequently, we do not have any Jewish testimony on them.

The perpetrators' perspective is reflected in the German documents. By virtue of being official records, they are dry, impersonal and non-emotional. The perpetrators mentioned areas and cities and rarely refer to smaller localities. They speak about numbers or mention that the area became "Jew-free". Although postwar records somewhat complement our knowledge the defendants and witnesses did not provide the information implicating themselves in the murder of Jews and hence, their perpetrators' perspective is distorted. Overall, these sources provide only general and concluding parameters of the Holocaust while skipping over hundreds of localities and providing deliberately distorted picture of internal Jewish life, if at all.

As a result, these two sets of sources, when juxtaposed with each other on the same localities, paint a contradictory, abrupt and incomplete picture of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. But for many hundreds of smaller localities the lack of "second opinion" makes it actually impossible to comprehend in details the course of the Holocaust there.

## Panel 3 – Jurisprudence, Literature and History

### **Leora Bilsky – The Eichmann Trial: Toward a Jurisprudence of Eyewitness Testimonies of Atrocity?**

Abstract: The Eichmann judgment was overshadowed for many years by the Nuremberg proceedings that were considered the more important precedent for international criminal law. In this paper I question this understanding by positing the Eichmann trial at the head of the chain of international criminal trials we have become more familiar with in the past two decades.

An essential part of the paper will turn to the role of witnesses under the framework of 'atrocity jurisprudence'. It departs from previous literature that sharply distinguishes the legal from the historical or didactic role of testimony. In contrast, in adopting the framework of collective crimes the paper investigates the changing role of the victim as witness, which is to throw light on the new crime that is characterized not only by mass murders, but also by the separation of perpetrator from his victims. The court does so by juxtaposing the dry Nazi documents discussing best methods and numbers, with the most horrifying stories conveyed by victims and survivors. The Eichmann judgment offers an early instance of "integrated history" of perpetrator and victim, as developed decades later by historian Saul Friedländer.

### **Laura Jockusch – “Traitors to the Jewish Nation”? Nazi Collaborators Trials in Jewish Courts in Postwar Germany**

Abstract: When the Second World War drew to a close, nationals of most countries formerly under German occupation used raw violence, public shaming and court cases to chastise compatriots who allegedly had collaborated with the Nazis. The quest to oust those who had insulted the nation's honor by acting in collusion with the enemy generated myths of collective resistance, forged national cohesion and provided new postwar governments with political legitimacy and popular following.

Similar impulses to punish alleged collaborators also occurred among the remnant of European Jews. Not only did survivors take revenge on German perpetrators but their anger mainly targeted those Jews who supposedly had harmed other Jews. In the eyes of many survivors, these Jews had committed an even graver moral offense than the Nazi perpetrators themselves, for they had undermined communal solidarity and gravely violated the ethical standards of Jewish society. In the first years after the war, the reemerging Jewish communities across Europe therefore held hundreds of court cases against putative Jewish collaborators with the Nazis: former members of the Jewish councils and ghetto police, kapos and other prisoner functionaries in the German camp system and Gestapo informers whom their fellow-survivors accused of having assisted the Nazis in their genocide.

This lecture focuses on a number of collaborator trials at Jewish courts in Allied-occupied Germany in the years 1945-1949. It analyzes the genesis and functioning of the courts and explores the significance of the trials in the lives of the survivors. It argues that while these courts were largely improvised and had no legal relevance outside of the Jewish community,



they nevertheless had a crucial educational agenda and “civilizing” effect. At time when survivors increasingly exasperated over the fact that as a non-state entity and transnational victim group Jews were excluded from the realm of international criminal law which brought Nazi perpetrators to justice at Nuremberg, creating an autonomous Jewish legal sphere where justice was done “in the name of the Jewish people” was a significant component of survivors’ moral rehabilitation.

### **Uri Cohen – On the Musselman: Primo Levi, Kazetnik and Jean Amery**

Abstract: The paper will employ a comparative perspective in order to further our understanding of the Musselman as the core of Auschwitz and a figure of its novelty. To do so I will address the first writings of Primo Levi and Ka-Tzetnik (Salmander and *Se questo è un Uomo* (If This is a Man) that appeared in close proximity in 1946 and 1947), as well as Primo Levi’s belated and desperate Dialogue with Jean Amery.

In the discussion I will try to define the figure of the Musselman and its significance as conceived by the two authors. Examining the Musselman allows us a direct view of the nonlinear divisions between these conceptualizations of Auschwitz’s core, telling us much about the way the Lager experience is framed. A figure of the lacuna at the heart of representation, the Musselman offers insight into Jewish politics and the wider significance of Auschwitz to humanity facing the “firstness” of this horror.

## Panel 4 – Persecution Policy – an Integrated History

### Steven Katz – Some Thoughts on Method

Abstract: This paper will critically examine several major interpretive efforts to integrate the two sides of the Holocaust, i.e., the Nationalist Socialist and the Jewish. It will concentrate mainly, though not exclusively, on economic and related issues as these have been discussed over the past decade by three well-known and influential German historians: Gotz Aly, Susan Heim and Christian Gerlach. In each case I will set out their views and attempt to evaluate where their work points in valuable and illuminative directions and where their studies are misleading and misdirected. Of each author I would ask the following question: Has their methodology, that is, the way they have arranged the pieces of the historical and phenomenological puzzle, really “explained” the matter at hand? Or, alternatively, do we need to rethink the way we organize the essential features of the deconstruction of the history of the *Shoah* so as to give more prominence to features that these writers would subordinate, especially those related to ideological presuppositions and anti-Semitism.

### Susanne Heim – Deportations of Jews from Germany: three perspectives, one history

Abstract: Perpetrators meticulously organized the deportations in a machine-like, unemotional way – from the distribution of the deportation order and the arrangement of public rooms for gathering the Jews up to the food rations of the policemen attending the trains. In this schedule Jews are mentioned as mere anonymous subjects, while non-Jewish Germans, such as mayors, innkeepers, craftsmen, carriers, doctors and nurses, although not perpetrators in the strict sense of the term, are integral part of the schedule. While preparing for deportation, the Jews went through days of extreme tension, trying to come to terms with rumors and personal expectations of what was awaiting them, writing letters to their beloved ones abroad or taking final arrangements for hiding or suicide. In Jewish letters or diaries the perpetrators are hardly mentioned either. Again non-Jewish Germans are part of the picture when addressed by Jews on the eve of deportation, for harboring their property or messages for relatives not yet deported. Taking the three perspectives into consideration the paper will discuss the potential of an integrated history of the Holocaust focusing on one of its crucial moments.

### Amos Goldberg – The Jewish Badge: The Semiotics of Persecution

Abstract: The Nazis were undoubtedly obsessed with symbols, flags, parades, ceremonies and rituals. However within this context it seems as though they were mostly obsessed with marking their enemies and most of all the Jews. Indeed marking the Jews in so many ways (their shops, passports, names, bodies etc.) was part of Nazi official and unofficial policy from the very beginning of the Nazi regime. The most consistent and comprehensive implementation of this obsession was through the badge that Jews were forced to wear on their clothes (almost) all over occupied Europe.

Why was this practice so central to Jewish persecution and execution all over the Third Reich and what was its ultimate meaning beyond its formal Nazi reasoning?

The issue of officially marking the Jews was raised already in the thirties and blocked by Hitler himself. As is well known there was no central order from Berlin to mark the Jews during the war but nonetheless in one way or another almost all Jews in the Nazi Empire (and its satellites) were marked. Very broadly, one can basically speak of two major phases in marking the Jews. In east Europe the Jews were marked very soon after the Nazi occupation and in west Europe (including Germany) they were marked toward their deportation and the beginning of the implementation of the "final solution".

The Jews on their part experienced the decree of the badge as one of the harshest and most humiliating decrees that befell them and related to it very extensively in their writings. Generally speaking this is true of Jews of various cultural, political and religious identities and all over Europe – east and west alike. Hence for example the convert Victor Klemperer of Dresden declared the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, the day in which the "Jewish star" was introduced in Germany, as the worse day in his twelve years period under the Nazi dictatorship. At the same time Eliyahu Grodzinski, member of the Zionist Hashomer Hatzair and of the ZOB underground in Warsaw, expresses very similar feelings towards the "badge".

Not much scholarship addressed this central issue although there is a vast amount of Jewish sources on this topic and also very many German ones. On the one hand there are various Nazi discussions and formal decrees in various locations, and on the other, there are very illuminating explicit and implicit contemplations of Nazi officials (as Goebbels) as well as ordinary soldiers and administrators witnessing the Jews wearing the badge (e.g. in personal letters). A third party which is extremely important in this regard is the local population -their reactions to the badge and the ways they were interpreted by the Jews and the Nazis.

In my talk I will suggest a comprehensive approach that will take into consideration all the various sources and perspectives in order to apprehend the meaning and the centrality of this practice (beyond its formal reasoning) in the History of the Holocaust. I will also claim that the Jewish badge is a key issue in understanding Nazi assault on the Jews. I will pursue this topic within broad historical context of marking Jews and other "others" in European continental and colonial history while showing elements of continuity and discontinuity within this history. My approach is semiotic which focuses on the function and the structural nature of marking the Jews within Nazi culture.

### **Christoph Dieckmann - Researching and Writing an Integrated History of the Shoah in Lithuania: Challenges and Experiences**

Abstract: I would like to relate to the conceptual and methodological questions, which are addressed in the call for papers. If we think about an integrated history of the Shoah, we need – I believe – to integrate more than the mentioned two trends of perpetrator history and victims experiences, which reappear as an alleged opposition of document-based history versus testimonies.

Which terms do we use and which questions do we pose? It seems to me that we are still thinking too much as judges, using judicial terms, posing questions which are coined by a court context. Examples would be among others: perpetrator, collaborator, victim, intention, circumstantial. I am suggesting to use instead terms like context, processes, responsibility, experiences and expectations, plans and failures, power and power relations, choice, range of options. Our questions should not be questions of judges trying to establish individual or collective guilt. But should try and explain – as much as possible – the relevant processes and effects. Especially the concept of choice allows to integrate ethical questions into our analysis, which not only researches some powerful individuals or anonymous structures, but power relations between acting groups within and at times also outside dynamic institutions and bureaucracies.

Researching the Shoah in Lithuania not only taught me the limited explanatory value of the judicial terms mentioned above, but also raised the question: What needs to be integrated?

It is obvious that the mindset of those responsible for the mass crimes and the Shoah needs to be properly understood from a contemporary point of view. I used the terms experiences and expectations to analyse their basic mental framework. This led to the insight that their (mostly German) decisions concerning the persecution and murder of Jews were embedded in their perception of the state of war and occupation policy. The Shoah and the other mass crimes should therefore be linked to the war and occupation.

The many debates among the responsible Germans were not discussions between pragmatics/utilitarianists on the one side, and antisemitic fanatical ideologists on the other side. Almost all of those involved into the discussions were antisemites and the quarrels were linked to different priorities: security issues, labour issues, food issues, health issues – in the context of warfare and occupation. In those considerations the major victim groups were often commonly discussed: the Jews, the Soviet prisoners of war, others potentially or actually opposing German policy, forced evacuees from other Soviet regions (1943-1944). The empirical links between the fates of the different major victim groups need to be integrated into this history.

Since 97 percent of the Jewish victims were non-German Jews and were murdered outside Germany, the non-German societies, where the murder actually took place, need to be studied much more closely. They were massively involved into the Shoah. German policy depended to a high degree on their readiness to cooperate. This needs to be integrated into the picture, too. How was their mindset, what did they want, what were their experiences and expectations? Lithuanian – and more general Eastern and Southeastern European - history needs to be included into this history. These societies were not just „objects“ or „puppets“ of German policy.

And, of course, the full spectrum of Jewish experiences and expectations needs to be integrated into the picture. For the study of the Shoah in Lithuania we do have for some important periods and places a whole lot of documents and do not only rely on postwar testimonies. This means we are not dealing with „objective“ documents on the one side and „subjective“ testimonies on the other side.

For the German and the Lithuanian side too we are dealing with both: postwar testimonies, memoirs and apologies. Therefore: No matter who and where the sources (all kinds, contemporary and postwar) were generated we need to analyse them with the same critical historical tools.

Which analytical tools do we use to analyse the Jewish experiences? And how do we present our findings? Too often we limit our representation of the Jewish side to emphasise the emotional aspects of being the main victim of German policy. I am suggesting to use Lawrence Langer's paradoxical term "choiceless choices" to inform our analysis.

Last remark for this proposal: The issue of languages is crucial. I don't see how a proper integrated history of the Shoah in Lithuania would be possible without being able to understand German, Lithuanian, Yiddish and Hebrew.

## Tuesday – 5.11

### Panel 5 – Memory and Commemoration

#### **Dana Arieli-Horowitz – *The Nazi Phantom: A Journey following the relics of the Third Reich***

Abstract: For decades after the Second World War Nazi Architecture and remains stood untouched like a phantom in the midst of urban spaces. *'The Nazi Phantom: A journey after the relics of the Third Reich'* seeks to explore the various solutions adopted by German cities in order to deal with the Nazi architecture and with every-day-life objects that remained intact after the Nazi dictatorship until today.

Through a series of in-depth interviews I held in Germany with curators, researchers, conservators and museum directors, who actually shape the current German memory-culture, I tried to decode the strategies adopted in Germany to confront the remains of Nazism. For decades after the war the common solutions were negligence, ignorance and repression. After the unification of Germany, a gradual change in the status of the remains occurred. In an attempt to address history, efforts were made to conserve the Nazi Architecture and the buildings were repositioned or repopulaized.

German cultural policy regarding the remains is not uniformed but heterogeneous; influenced, in part, by different sociological and political mechanisms. Significant differences, for instance, appear between the 'State' of Berlin and the rest of Germany with regard to the Nazi past and the Holocaust *'The Nazi Phantom: A journey after the relics of the Third Reich'* describes a journey of an Israeli researcher and photographer following the traces of time. The book seeks to offer a mixture between empirical academic approach, based on a series of in-depth interviews, and a catalog of photos [50!! from about 10,000 taken between 2009-2013] and personal travelogue.

Due to the fact that the study was based on images I found it fit to reflect this in the structure of the book. The manuscript includes a catalog of documentary photographs and diary extracts written before I left Israel and during my journeys to Germany in the last decade. From the body of interviews that I have conducted, I have chosen those which I found to be most valuable regarding the various strategies adopted in Germany. The interviews included in the book are presented with images that can shed light on the objects and buildings of the Nazi era. I believe that this combination incite discussion regarding this emotionally charged and exciting issue, as of the ways Germany seeks to cope with its past. This discussion is of great necessity in an era in which the direct witnesses of the war are gradually disappearing, a state which urgently requires an alternative cultural memory designed for the twenty-first century.

## **Orna Keren-Carmel – The Rescue of Danish Jews (October 1943) in the Israeli Culture of Memory: Survivors' Testimonies vs. Popular Representations**

Abstract: The rescue of almost 8,000 Danish Jews in October 1943 has evolved over the years into a famous myth which represented to the rest of the world the Danish way of resisting Nazi Germany. The fact that ordinary Danes not only saved over 99% of the Jewish Community, but also guarded their property until their return at the end of the war, is an exceptionally human and courageous reaction to the dreads of Nazi rule. Nevertheless, over the last two decades, with the opening of archives and renewed interest in the Holocaust, new research findings have been published which have demythologized the Danish rescue story and offered a much more realistic and contextualized explanation of what happened. Interestingly, none of these more recent findings have had significant influence on the ideological representation of the rescue story in Israeli culture of memory and historiography.

In my lecture, the Danish rescue operation is explored from two different points of view. First, the point of view of contemporary historical research based on (Danish and German) documents and second, the point of view of survivors from the rescue operation who later immigrated to Israel. Although these two points of view are often regarded as contrasting, the analysis of the testimonies reveals an astonishing similarity between them. This is not the case, however, when looking at the representation of the rescue operation in the Israeli culture of memory. There is a wide gap separating the documents and testimonies from the image of the rescue that has evolved in Israel over the years. Confronting these two diverse representations of the rescue, the latter has always had the upper hand in Israeli collective memory.

All in all, the lecture will hopefully unravel different components in Israeli Holocaust discourse from the end of World War II and until the present.

## **Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Robert Szuchta – The Gap between New Historiography and Education about the Holocaust in Poland and Elsewhere**

Abstract - The paper attempts to show that there is a growing discrepancy between new studies and education. The most recent historiographical research in Poland and elsewhere tackles the issue of individual collaboration. The topic of collaboration, challenging collective national identities, is not present in the majority of new textbooks. The real context of rescuing Jews in a climate of fear of one's own neighbors is omitted.

These conflicts should be discussed as a reflection of educational gaps in the Polish and other educational systems. A general lack of bad memories should be also challenged. The lack of sustained institutional effort to incorporate shameful facts concerning the murder of Jewish co-citizens into curricula and textbooks distorts national identities. Comparison with other similar studies in Europe and beyond would allow one to reveal affinities and divergences in patterns of behavior in various states in relation to their historical past, social identity and collective memory.

Besides the analysis of the content of textbooks, the paper will look at the consciousness of young people, in terms of their attitudes towards Jews, the Holocaust and memory of the Holocaust.

Very unfortunately for the process of integration leading to deep democratization, the history of the Holocaust remains incompletely incorporated into the collective memory and identity

of ethnic Poles as “their”, not “our”, history, despite the fact that it happened in the occupied homeland, in front of “our” own ancestors eyes.

### **Daniel Feldman – The View from Nowhere: Multiperspectival Memory in Shoah Literature.**

Abstract: Holocaust literature recognizes no survivor’s perspective as central but every witness’s voice as irreplaceable. The various genres that make up the imaginative literature of the Shoah privilege each victim’s life as unique, even as they concede that no single life is at the center of the genocide’s massive destruction. How then can literature, an artistic form mediated through a single creative consciousness, account for the perspectival complexity of portraying the Shoah? Many authors of Holocaust fiction develop a literary strategy of multiperspectival narration. This technique affords survivor-authors of fiction about the Shoah a mode of writing that is at once personal and impersonal, subjective and objective, individual and collective. It creates a double vision that situates the objectified self within subjective accounts of historic, traumatic reality. And it creates a new way of viewing the violence of Shoah, a vantage point parallel to what epistemological theorist Thomas Nagel calls the View from Nowhere.

This lecture uses Nagel’s concept to examine the specific challenges of finding a narrative form appropriate to the privileged and vexed position of the individual Holocaust survivor. The paper first outlines the narrative challenge of Holocaust fiction as one problem among many of accurately documenting Jewish life in the Shoah; second, it describes the importance of multiperspectival memory as a means of establishing literary autonomous histories about the event; and third, it uses a pair of texts by Ida Fink, “A Scrap of Time” and *A Journey*, as case studies exemplifying how one survivor-author deploys this technique.



## Panel 6 – Collaborator and Victim Narratives

### Rafi Vago – The Holocaust as a Hungarian Tragedy – Autonomous or converging discourses since 1989?

Abstract: The paper discusses the on-going debates in Hungarian historiography and public discourse on the shaping of collective memory of the Holocaust, a debate which has intensified with the approach of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Holocaust to be commemorated in 2014. In fact the very "beginning" of the Holocaust in Hungary is part of the debate.

The paper focuses on the main forms of the discourses – on the one hand the narrative that emphasizes the role of Nazi Germany in the destruction of Hungarian Jewry in the context of the Final Solution, and intends to minimize Hungary's active role, on the other hand the emergence of narratives which present the Holocaust in Hungary also as a Hungarian tragedy, in which the Hungarians destroyed their own fellow Hungarians, a narrative which is not accepted, or only partially accepted by those who emphasize the Hungarian role in destroying its Jewry because they were the "other".

The paper will also point to several serious sub-narratives as the arguments on the role of Horthy and his regime before March 1944, the active part played by the gendarmerie and "bystanders" in handing over Hungary's Jewry to the Nazis, robbing of them property before robbing them of their lives, and the role parts of Hungarian society played in the destruction as well as in the rescue of Hungarian Jews.

### Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe – Survivor Testimonies and the Explanation of the Holocaust in Volynia and eastern Galicia

Abstract: The explanation of the Holocaust in Volynia and eastern Galicia has changed quite radically, after historians had rediscovered the testimonies of survivors from this region of Ukraine and began using them as documents to study the Second World War and the Holocaust in western Ukraine. The testimonies changed the understanding of the role, which the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), the Ukrainian police, Ukrainian civilians and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) played in the Holocaust. The testimonies were collected by the Jewish Historical Commission between 1944 and 1948 and have been preserved by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Until recently, professional historians did not consider for various reasons these testimonies and also memoirs to be sources to study the Second World War and Holocaust in western Ukraine. Historians believed that survivor testimonies and memoirs are "subjective" and "non-reliable," in contrast to "objective" and "reliable" documents of the German or Ukrainian perpetrators. Only very few scholars such as Philip Friedman, who himself was a survivor, did not mistrust this kind of documents and used them in their research. Professional historians, who studied the Second World War in western Ukraine, such as John Armstrong—the author of the first monograph about the Ukrainian nationalists during the Second World War, *Ukrainian nationalism*, first-published in 1955—preferred to work with German documents and interviews, which he made with the veterans of the OUN, who lived after the Second World War in the Western Block. Both kinds of documents did not contain much or any information about the Ukrainian involvement in the

Holocaust. Germans did not keep records of the atrocities committed by the Ukrainian nationalists or peasants, and the veterans of the OUN and UPA, who stayed in the West, had no interest at all to recall their involvement in the Holocaust and incriminate themselves. Since late 1943 the UPA even destroyed documents, which related them to the Holocaust and after the war veterans of the OUN published fictitious biographies of Jews who survived in the UPA. In addition they also depicted the OUN-UPA as a liberation movement, which fought against Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union for an independent Ukrainian state. The Holocaust was presented in their publications as an exclusively German matter. It was believed that only a few Ukrainians, who are not representative for the whole society, participated in the Holocaust. Such a narrative appeared essentially in Armstrong's and other publications about the Holocaust and the Second World War in Volhynia and eastern Galicia and remained until the rediscovery of the survivor testimonies.

### **Adrian Cioflanca – The Micropolitics of Violence. Ordinary Perpetrators and Victims of the 1941 Massacres in Romania and the Romanian-Occupied Territories**

Abstract: In 1945, three mass graves were unearthed in northeastern Romania, at Stâncea-Roznovanu, a small village near Iași. According to military documents, 40 male Jews were killed there on June 26, 1941, three days before the Iași Pogrom. The massacre was rationalized in the military reports as retaliation against „spies” and „saboteurs” serving the Soviet Union. But when the three mass graves were uncovered the forensic experts discovered 311 corpses, of Jewish children, women, elderlies and only several mature men. A postwar trial was organized and the perpetrators of the massacre, officers of the Romanian Army, were convicted. From the files of the trial one can find out that entire families were killed by soldiers exposed to anti-Semitic propaganda, out of the military context.

In 2010, I coordinated a team of historians and archaeologists in a project of oral history and contemporary archaeology which concluded with the discovery of a mass grave in the Vulturi forest, three kilometers far from the other three mass graves. Remains of 36 victims were revealed by archaeological research. Testimonies of oral history provided by locals were instrumental in the identification of the pit and in reconstituting the facts. This massacre was not even mentioned in the military documents. From the corroboration of testimonies, archaeological research and circumstantial evidence collected from archival sources it came out that the massacre was perpetrated by the same military unit which was involved in the Stâncea Roznovanu massacre and at the same time.

Romania took part in the so-called „Holocaust by bullets”. Soldiers, policemen, civilians started to kill Jews immediately after the onset on the Barbarossa Operation. They had massacred entire families even before the German Einsatzgruppen began to do so. The killings in Stâncea Roznovanu, in the Vulturi forest and the Iași Pogrom were the first in a long series, which left up to 60,000 Jewish victims in Romania, Bessarabia and Bukovina. The history of these massacres is not well known and it is not fully integrated in the metanarrative of the Holocaust or in the Romanian historical discourse. The usual research endeavor of reading state documents is not enough, because most of the Romanian archives were purged during the communist period and sensitive documents were taken out. In

addition, the documents are elusive like in the above-mentioned cases and need to be corroborated with new sources and methods of research.

The scientific treatment of the recent history is often marred by too general approaches. The historiography on Romania's participation in the Holocaust usually goes like that: the political regime at that time was a dictatorship, Ion Antonescu's dictatorship, in alliance with a genocidal power, Nazi Germany, and everything that happened resulted from this. The attention is focused on decisions made by Ion Antonescu and the Army General Staff, which is legitimate up to a point. Obviously, Antonescu bears responsibility for strategic decisions which led to crimes and abuses against the Jewish minority between 1940-1944 and, in many cases, he micro-managed situations where crimes were committed (the Odessa massacre is best known). But he was not and could not be behind every single murderous decision, behind every line of command. That was not the way things were done under fascist leadership during the World War II. The Romanian state was more *polycratic* than previously assumed. In the quest to solve the so-called „Jewish Question”, many offices were in competition and, in the field, different kinds of units (military, police, gendarmerie, secret services etc) acted autonomously against Jews.

At the same time, the classic top-down *model of decision-making* should be reviewed. Antonescu encouraged the controlled escalation of violence, urging for initiative from below, zealotry, harshness, impunity and the suspension of „traditional” ethics when about Jews. The deliberate ambiguity of Antonescu's political and military language and his leadership style based on politics of „laissez faire” anti-Semitism opened the door for genocidal measures, conducted either as a result of direct orders of his subordinates or as an effect of local initiative taken in the coordinates of what was perceived as legitimate, expected or tacitly approved by government at that time.

*The paper moves attention from central decision-makers to perpetrators from the field, whether actual killers or local decision makers.* Almost nothing is known about the identity and the profile of those who killed Jews in Romania and the occupied territories. In the last years, *new types of documents* – especially penal and individual files – were disclosed in archives and they give access to biographical details about perpetrators and make possible the analysis of behavior predictors. Methodologically, the paper borrows Charles King's perspective, which advocated the necessity to analyze, besides macro-processes, the micropolitics of violence. Each genocidal situation may differ and needs special attention.

## Panel 7 – Ideology and Utilitarian Considerations

### **Idit Gil – German Enslavers and Jewish Slave Laborers – The 'Radom Transport' as a Case Study of Nazi Jewish Labor Policy**

Abstract: Jewish labor during World War II has mainly been studied in two distinct ways, which have corresponded to the two "traditional" trends developed in Holocaust studies: 1. Studies on Nazi Jewish labor policy in the context of economic needs versus ideological views, and as a derivative of rivalries between the various Nazi institutions and personalities, responsible for labor (military, SS, civil labor departments). These studies have often discussed Nazi policies through time or in a large geographical area and have relied on Nazi documents. 2. Studies on social aspects of Jewish labor, focusing on daily life, and emphasizing relations among the Jews. These studies have examined specific working places, looking at survivors' testimonies.

My study of a group of Jewish forced laborers throughout the War, based on Nazi documents and testimonies (many from the recently opened ITS archive), serves as a case study for assessing the trajectory of development of Nazi Jewish labor policy during the War and the ways in which Jews confronted this policy and its changes. It is based on a transport list of laborers, who arrived to Vaihingen (Germany) in August 1944 from Radom (Poland) via Auschwitz.\* Focusing on a group of laborers and not on one working place enables a meeting point between the "autonomous histories" of the Nazi enslavers and the slave Jews. The paper will present three examples examined in my study in order to discuss the ways the utilization of both perpetrators' documents and Jewish testimonies provide new data and additional perspective to view Nazi Jewish labor policy: The operation of OSTI workshops in Radom workghetto (1942-1943); The utilization of prisoners-physicians in KZ Hesselental, Bisingen and Dautmergen (1944-1945); The treatment of the prisoners' clogs in KZ Hesselental and Kochendorf (1944-1945).

### **Yaron Pasher – "Two Fronts and One More": The Influence of the "Final Solution" on Germany's War Effort, 1941-1944**

Abstract: This paper examines in a systematic manner the relationship between the German war effort and the "Final Solution" at the strategic and tactical level of warfare during World War II. The Question of the systematic killing of Jews on Germany's war effort has been debated considerably over the last sixty years. Some have argued that so few trains were utilized on any one day that this made very little difference. Others have argued to the contrary that during critical moments in the conflict the ideological priorities of the regime had a substantial effect on combat effectiveness.

The "Final Solution", as we know it was assisted by logistics that were no less ambitious than those used by entire armies. Infrastructure and resources for operational and military needs that were in short supply were exploited in support of the successful perpetration of the

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"Final Solution". Given that such logistics did not help Germany's war effort and were a burden on it, the key question is to what extent, if any, implementation of the "Final Solution" affected the operational capabilities and function of the German army during the various campaigns of World War II. The central claim of this paper is that Germany's defeat was an operational and organizational failure rather than simply a military misfortune or lack of capability, and that the effort and resources invested in the "Final Solution" were detrimental to the army's combat effort.

### **Daniel Uziel – Holocaust Survivor Testimonies and the Story of Slave Labor in the German Aviation Industry**

Abstract: The German aviation industry was the largest branch of the German industry in WWII. Up to March 1944 the Reich's Aviation Ministry (RLM) was responsible aviation production in Germany.

In late 1941 the state secretary of the RLM, Field Marshall Erhard Milch approached Himmler and asked his help in solving the acute manpower shortage affecting the aviation industry. Consequently, initial allocation of concentration camp inmates to several chosen factories began in summer 1942. Leading the introduction of slave labor within the aviation industry was the Heinkel firm, which opened, among others, new factories in the General Government with the aim of using cheap Jewish forced labor. The successful early employment of inmates in by Heinkel encouraged more firms to use slave labor. The SS now fully recognized the business potential of this branch and converted its low-tech economic enterprises in the camps to aviation production. Several firms outsourced production to camps in their vicinity.

This process reached its climax after in spring 1944 American air attacks heavily damaged the aviation industry. In order to deal with the resulting crisis Hitler ordered the SS to allocate the aviation industry some 100,000 Jewish inmates. This move turned the German aviation industry into the largest employer of forced labor within Germany's war industry. It also brought thousands of Jews back into the Reich after it was declared "free of Jews" in the previous year.

The massive influx of Jews and other inmates was instrumental to the so-called "production miracle" of 1944. Paradoxically, while the aviation industry became an important part of the Nazi persecution system, allocation to a work detachment in the aviation industry meant survival for many Jewish inmates in 1944. This paper is based, among others, on the research of around 300 survivor testimonies. These testimonies proved to be not only important for telling the unique story of Jewish slave labor, but also as an important source for the general research of the German aviation industry in the last year of WWII. Testimonies are a crucial primary source, especially when dealing with daily life in the factories and their associated labor camps, relations and encounters between slave workers and German workers, and the general working conditions in Germany's war industry.

## **Panel 8 – Closing Panel – The Future of Holocaust Studies**

Shulamit Volkov

Dan Michman

Susanne Heim

David Engel