

Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies

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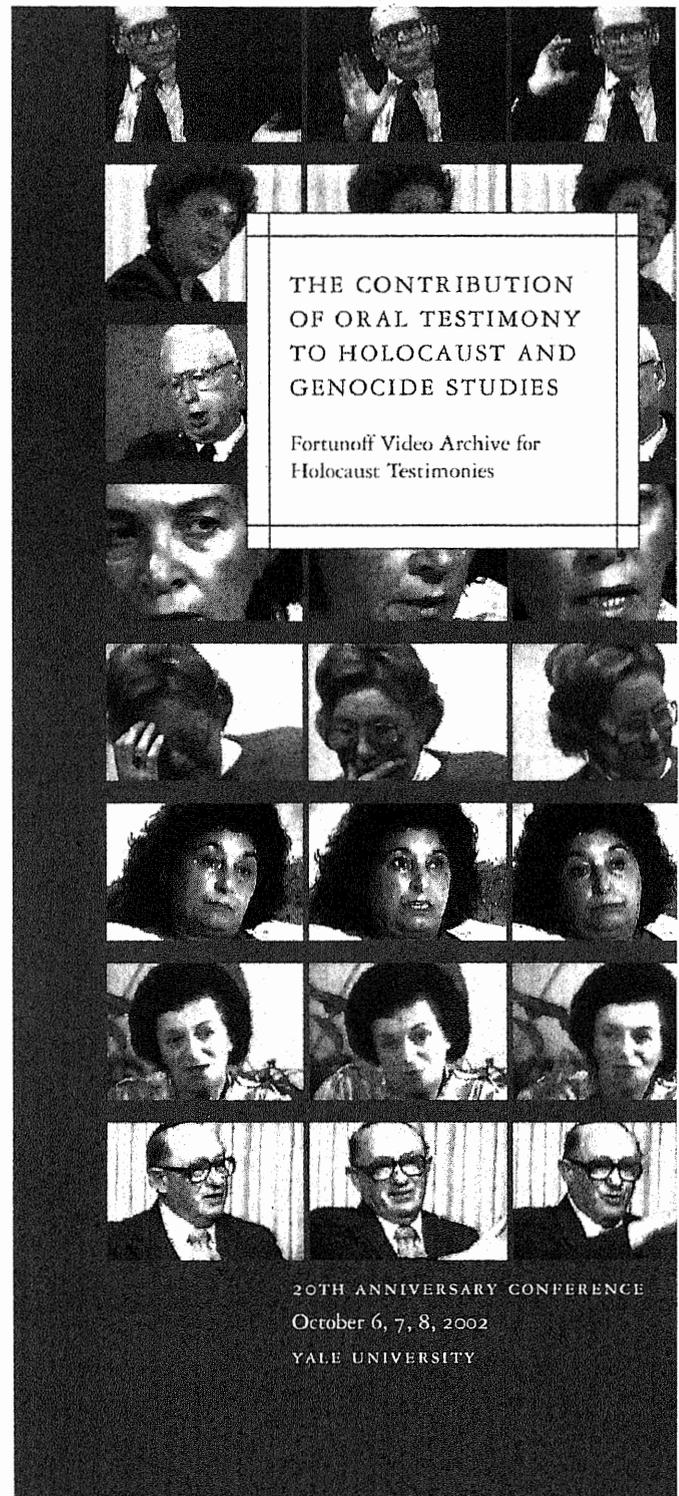
Report of the Advisor

On October 6 through October 8th of 2002 the Fortunoff Video Archive observed its twentieth anniversary. Forty-one scholars and writers, many from abroad, gathered to deliver talks on "The Contribution of Oral Testimony to Holocaust and Genocide Studies," or to read from their own fiction and poetry. Hadassah Lieberman opened the conference, and Elie Wiesel, introduced by President Richard Levin, gave the keynote, "The Imperative of Testimony: Speaking of Unspeakable Evil," to a packed audience in Yale's Battell Chapel. A ceremonial dinner welcomed long-time supporters of the Fortunoff Archive, and guest speakers included Eli Evans, President of the Charles H. Revson Foundation, Martin Bútorá, Slovakia's Ambassador to the United States, and Anthony Kronman, Dean of the Yale Law School. The Conference was co-sponsored by the Yale Library, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscripts Library, the Judaic Studies Department, as well as other Yale departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences. We owe special thanks to Darrell Ross (Yale '69), the Charles H. Revson Foundation, the Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Memorial Fund, Patricia and Robert Weis (Yale, '41) and James and Jacqueline Gordon (Yale '98).

It was an occasion that allowed us to review the past and recommit ourselves to the future. An exhibit (<http://www.library.yale.edu/NotaBene/exhibits.htm#online>) in Sterling Memorial Library assembled by archivist Joanne Rudof illustrated the Archive's history, from the time it was launched by a local group of survivors and concerned New Haveners who came together in 1979 under the leadership of Laurel Vlock, Dori Laub and William Rosenberg to organize the "Holocaust Survivors Film Project." After the HSFP deposited some 200 survivor testimonies in December 1981, the Yale Video Archive opened its doors in Sterling Library in October 1982, supported by a start-up grant from the Revson Foundation. In 1987 the Archive received an endowment from the late Alan Fortunoff, and it was named in memory of his parents, Max and Clara Fortunoff.

The conference was dedicated to the memory of four people without whose help the Fortunoff Archive could not have succeeded. Alan Fortunoff had continued to take an active interest in the Archive and supported it year by year till his death in July, 2000. Laurel Vlock's initial vision sparked the entire enterprise. Without her indefatigable labors, the HSFP would not have come into being, and she continued to support its successor, the Yale Video Archive. Willy Rosenberg, head of the Farband, supported Laurel Vlock's initiative enthusiastically. Willy was a true guardian: he came to the Archive regularly and always "rallied the troops" when there was financial need.

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Conference program cover.

Dr. Sigi Ziering, a survivor from Los Angeles whose testimony was recorded at Yale and a member of our Honorary Board of Advisors, funded videotaping in Israel for many years.

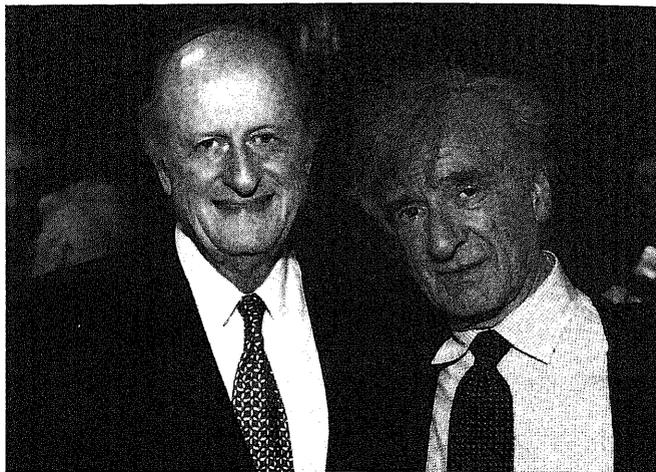
The conference enabled us to review the quite dramatic growth of interest in oral history since 1979 and the pioneering effort to record as many witnesses as possible on videotape. At present there is significantly greater understanding of the many dimensions of videotaped oral documentation. The scholars assembled at Yale came, as I have mentioned, from many fields and many countries, and emphasized the interdisciplinary and educational, as well as memorial, historical and sociological value of the testimonies. Here it is only possible to offer a suggestive sampling of some titles of the talks: "Listening," "Teaching," "Trauma," "Historical Yield," "Pathways to Intellectual Access," "Genres Of Testimony," "Sociological and Cultural Perspectives," and "Field Work."

In our last Newsletter I spoke about having entered the "second phase" of the Archive's mission. The recording of witnesses has not stopped but it is no longer the main preoccupation. Providing access to the testimonies through careful online summaries and preserving the tapes physically (both costly undertakings) have moved to the forefront of our attention, and we have made considerable progress in these areas. Our archivist, Joanne Rudof, will report the specifics.

Equally important in this second phase is educational outreach. From the beginning we took steps to assure that these witness accounts would not only have extended material durability but would be actively consulted. We have just concluded an exchange and cooperation agreement with the Bergen-Belsen Memorial and Museum, which commits the two institutions to joint videotaping in the next year and sharing testimonies previously recorded. Negotiations are ongoing with the University of Southampton in the U.K. to make it a depository of an important number of our testimonies, enhancing that institution's research and teaching mission. It is our aim to seek out further depositories with curatorial integrity in Europe. Our long-standing collaboration with the *Fondation Auschwitz* in Brussels also continues: in addition to further taping projects, we hope to join it in several research opportunities over the next three years. Finally, Richard Szary, head of Manuscripts and Archives, describes later in this Newsletter a venture, sponsored by the Mellon Foundation, that joins Yale, the "Visual History of the Shoah" organization, Rice University, and the University of Southern California.

The challenges still confronting us are not minor ones. While Yale's new state-of-the art, temperature and humidity controlled shelving facility has significantly improved our capability to preserve the testimonies, there are two looming issues: the danger of play-back equipment becoming obsolete and the eventual necessity of digitizing the videotapes, once that method is approved as a preservation as well as an access medium. We are grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington which awarded us a significant grant for the preservation effort. But preservation will continue to require close to \$100,000 each year for at least the next ten years.

Moreover, in order to facilitate intellectual access for stu-



Eli N. Evans, President, Charles H. Revson Foundation (left); Elie Wiesel (right).

dents and researchers, at Yale and globally, we should complete as soon as possible the on-line summarizing of our more than 10,000 hours of video footage. This footage comes from many European countries and Israel, as well as from the U.S. Because of steady and devoted work by our staff, we have reached the two-thirds mark toward completing the task. Our aim is to find additional funding so that we can finish within the next three years.

Since my last report in 2000, our cooperative Roma testimony project with the Milan Šimečka Foundation in Bratislava has been completed. We have also undertaken a modest effort to videotape teachers and scholars who were among the first to be active in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Among these are Tony Kushner (Southampton University, England), Annette Wiewiorka (CNRS, France), Henri Rouso (CNRS, France), and Aleida Assmann (University of Konstanz, Germany). In the past, we have recorded the testimonies of Phillip P. Hallie, Saul Friedlander (Tel Aviv University and U.C.L.A.), Yitshak Arad (Yad Vashem), and the late Terrence des Pres.

Finally, our long-range tasks include fuller integration of the testimonies into the educational programs of schools and universities, and creating a limited number of instructional videos to that end. Moreover, now that oral history is being recognized as an important information and communication resource, it is incumbent on a university like Yale to examine what can be learned about the workings of memory from testimonies that began to be recorded (in the case of the Yale Archive) some thirty-five years after the persecutions.

I thank all of you who have helped us in the past, and enabled our progress from the position of pioneers to an institution that, twenty years later, can transmit its expertise and encourage at every level—high school, college, university, museum, community center—the memorial, scholarly, and interdisciplinary use of the testimonies we hold in trust.

Geoffrey Hartman

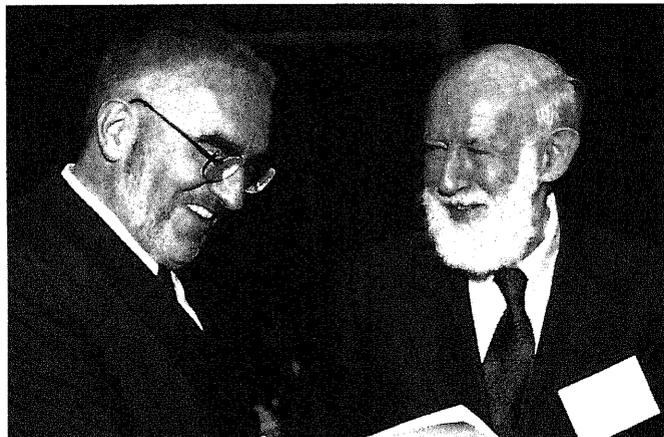
*Sterling Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature,
Senior Research Scholar*

Activities

Affiliate Projects

Belgium – *Fondation Auschwitz* continues to record testimonies in conjunction with the Video Archive. The international journal published by *Fondation Auschwitz*, entitled *Études sur le témoignage audiovisuel des victimes des crimes et génocides nazis* (Studies on the Audio-Visual Testimony of Victims of the Nazi Crimes and Genocides), has developed into an important intellectual forum for Holocaust scholars.

Slovakia – On September 12, 2001, the Slovak Embassy in Washington, D.C. observed Jewish Heritage Day to commemorate the Holocaust and discuss the history of Jewish life in Slovakia. Ambassador Martin Bútora spoke about the collaboration between the Video Archive and the Milan Šimečka Foundation in Bratislava, and he showed some of the testimonies that were recorded by the Slovak team. Peter Salner, a Slovak ethnographer, discussed the situation of Jews in post-World War II Slovakia, and Dr. Zora Bútorová spoke about current Slovak attitudes towards Jews and the Holocaust. Alexander Bachnar, representing the Novaky group of Jewish resistance fighters in Slovakia, also addressed the audience.



Martin Bútora, Slovak Ambassador to the United States (left); Geoffrey Hartman (right).

Israel – Under the stewardship of Nathan Beyrak, the Tel Aviv-based “Words and Images: The Jerusalem Literary Project” has conducted in-depth videotaped interviews with a number of prominent Jewish writers and thinkers. Testimonies of those who are survivors or write about the Holocaust are sent to the Fortunoff Video Archive. They include Aharon Appelfeld, Ida Fink, Haim Gouri, Ivan Klima, Gyorgy Konrad, Norman Manea, Albert Memmi, Julian Strykowski, and Hungarian writer Imre Kertész, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2002.

France – A documentary entitled “*14 Récits d’Auschwitz*,” was conceived by Annette Wieviorka in association with Henri Borlant and the cooperation of the *Fondation pour la mémoire de la Shoah*. It was nationally broadcast in July 2002 in a series of films to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the round-up of Paris Jews in the Vel’d’Hiv and received excellent reviews in

several newspapers and magazines, including *Le Monde*. The documentary is comprised of testimony excerpts recorded by *Témoignages pour Mémoire*, our affiliate project in Paris. *Auschwitz*, “*symbole des camps d’extermination dans la mémoire collective*” (symbol of the extermination camps in the collective memory), is the common experience of the fourteen survivors.

United States – Atlantic County of New Jersey, the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Ramapo College of New Jersey, and the Holocaust Center of the North Shore Jewish Federation in Peabody, Massachusetts continue to record witness accounts.

New York – We completed a preservation project in cooperation with the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in 2001. 599 testimonies (1495 cassettes) that the Museum recorded in affiliation with the Archive were preserved, and the Museum and the Video Archive each received a copy of every testimony.

Scholarly Activities

Many researchers delivered papers at conferences based on their work at the Video Archive. Between 2000 and 2002, principals of the Video Archive gave presentations at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Barnard College, the Jewish Materials Claims Conference in Jerusalem, the Literaturzentrum in Berlin, Oxford University, Cornell, the University of Southampton (UK), the University of Heidelberg, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Institute of Advanced Studies, the University of Miami, UCLA, Ohio State University, CUNY-Queens College, the Association of Moving Image Archivists, and Ashland College.

Interlibrary loans have been made to Emory, the University of Iowa, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago, Barnard, Georgetown, St. Cloud State University, and Marquette to support the study and use of testimonies. The Video Archive website (www.library.yale.edu/testimonies) has won several awards and continues to evolve. Our most recent addition to the site is a section that honors the Archive’s four founders. Visitors to the “Founders” section will find a brief summary of each founder’s contributions to the Archive, accompanied by a video clip.

Essays by principals of the Video Archive were published in the *Yale Journal of Criticism* (Volume 14, 2001), the *AMIA Compendium of Moving Image Cataloging Practice*, *Partisan Review* (Volume 64, 2002), *Tikkun* (May/June 2001), *Psyche* (June 2001), and the *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* (January 2002).

Dr. Dori Laub has received a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. for the videotaping of Holocaust survivors who are psychiatrically hospitalized in either Beer Yaakov or Lev Hasharon Mental Health Centers in Israel. He is working with medical staff at both facilities and under the auspices of the Israeli government.

Activities

Research publications

Papers

Schiffirin, Deborah. *Narrative Inquiry, Language in Society*.

Stier, Oren. *Remembering for the Future 2000: Conference Proceedings, Oxford, July 2000*.

Books

Almuli, Jasa. *The Alive and the Dead: Conversation with Jews*.

Baer, Ulrich. *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Browning, Christopher. *Nazi Policy, Jewish Labor, German Killers*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

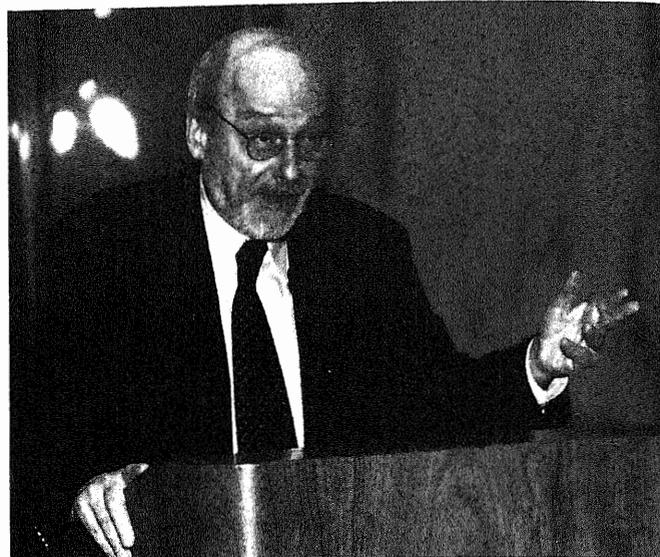
Richman, Sophia. *A Wolf in the Attic: The Legacy of a Hidden Child of the Holocaust*. New York: Haworth Press, 2002.

Stier, Oren. *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003.

Robert N. Kraft's book, *Memory Perceived: Recalling the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002) was published in November 2002. Professor Kraft finds common threads in disparate testimonies, and using the words of the survivors themselves, provides new and revelatory insights into the way survivors remember. The book presents years of careful viewing and skillful analysis. Kraft's book is not only of importance to teachers and scholars interested in the Holocaust but to all who participate in the growing field of memory studies. It is scrupulously scientific yet humane examination of survivor video testimonies that shows the extraordinary persistence of core memories despite trauma. Very little escapes Kraft's richly detailed descriptions of the style as well as content of these moving personal stories. There has not been a treatment as expert as this since Lawrence Langer's pioneering study.

Holocaust Education/Prejudice Reduction Program

This year marked the 15th anniversary of the program, founded by Marvin Lender, Murray Lender, and Geoffrey Hartman in 1988. Under the chairmanship of Barbara Segaloff and Gordon Geballe, it continues to serve greater New Haven area private and public schools. A generous donor has underwritten bringing the Facing History and Ourselves five day summer institute to New Haven in 2001, 2002 and this coming summer as well. The teacher base has expended greatly because we have provided this course locally. Teacher visits to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York included a pre-trip orientation in New Haven. A series of seminars taught by leading scholars in their fields is offered every year. The program also sponsored dramatic performances by Long Wharf Theatre in several area schools. *My Red Hand: My Black Hand* by Dael Orlandersmith tells the story of a young girl's search for belonging in the two cultures of her heritage: African-American and Native American. Study guides and materials were provided to teachers in advance. The production was seen by hundreds of high school students.



E.L. Doctorow, Beinecke Library Symposium, October 8, 2002

Witness: Voices from the Holocaust

Betty Lou Blumberg, Penny Merriam, and Joanne Rudof have written a teachers' guide for *Witness: Voices from the Holocaust*. The award winning documentary, presented by PBS for Yom Hashoah in May 2000, has been divided into three parts for classroom use. United Learning, a major international educational distributor in Evanston, Illinois, will make it available in cassette format and streaming video. The three part series provides history that students can understand on their own level and from which they can draw lessons for current events and their own lives. Ms. Blumberg and Ms. Merriam are lead teachers in the program and they piloted the documentary with their students. Additional information about *Witness* is available at www.witnessvoices.org. Information about the forthcoming educational units will be available at www.unitedlearning.com.

Bergen-Belsen Memorial and Museum

The Fortunoff Video Archive and the Bergen-Belsen Memorial and Museum have signed an agreement to exchange previously recorded video testimonies and to cooperatively record Bergen-Belsen concentration camp survivors and volunteers, administrators, and residents of the Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons camp. The permanent exhibit at the memorial site was opened in 1990. The Yale interviewers have completed a series of readings dealing with the displaced persons camps and have held a training session prior to the commencement of taping. The testimonies will be available at Yale and Bergen-Belsen for researchers and will be used by the Museum staff for inclusion in the planned expansion of their permanent exhibit. Additional information about Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen is available at www.bergenbelsen.de.

Conference

The 20th anniversary conference brought scholars, survivors, and supporters of the Archive together for a series of events that honored the Archive's history and envisioned its future. Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel delivered the keynote address and scholars presented papers during a two-day series of panels that focused on a variety of topics. *Witness: Voices from the Holocaust*, the award-winning film produced by Joshua Greene and Shiva Kumar, was screened; Joanne Rudof, the associate producer, introduced the film. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library co-sponsored a symposium entitled "Holocaust Literature: Freedoms and Responsibilities." The panelists were Aharon Appelfeld, author and professor of Hebrew literature at Ben-Gurion University; E.L. Doctorow, author; Irving Feldman, poet and professor of English at SUNY Buffalo; and Thane Rosenbaum, author and professor of law and literature at Fordham Law School.

An exhibit in the Sterling Memorial Library Memorabilia Room included a history of the Video Archive and materials from many collections in the Yale University Library. The materials, which included yizkor books, photographs, music scores, rare books, maps and posters, were paired with relevant excerpts from Fortunoff Video Archive testimonies. The exhibit can now be viewed online at the Yale University Library website under "Exhibits."



The 20th anniversary conference, October 2002.

Conference Opening Remarks, Geoffrey Hartman

Twenty years, considering that we have only just finished celebrating Yale's Tercentenary, may not seem like a formidable span of time. Yet time, as you well know, is not homogeneous, and for us the road traveled seems as miraculous as any growth to maturity when you look back. Many of the distinguished presenters who agreed to come here today have mentioned how little focus there was twenty years ago on the value of oral documentation, and the audiovisual medium we have used for that purpose.

I will not try to summarize what has been accomplished by the Archive. But we do want you to know that we exist, and that the collection of over 4200 witness accounts, with summaries online that can be called up anywhere in the world, is available for research, teaching, and humanistic inquiry. We have a small but wonderful staff, headed by our archivist Joanne Rudof; and Sterling Library, under the direction of Alice Prochaska— who has supported this conference in every way— is ready to assist students, teachers, scholars, and community groups, whether from New Haven or any other locality.

The topic for this conference is intentionally broad and includes other genocides in addition to the Holocaust. For the Holocaust has not turned out to be the genocide to end all genocides.

Previous genocides, however, were less extensively recorded than the Shoah. Because of the arrogant documenta-

tion of the perpetrators, but mainly because of the courageous "schreib un verschreib" (write it all down) of the victims, we know this tragic event in massive detail. Writing that was done in the very eye of the storm, and later testimony— both of eyewitnesses and others still in touch with eyewitness accounts— may have a chance of preventing forgetfulness and prompting measures against a recurrence that has struck again and again, even in recent years.

One question central to all the panels concerns the value of oral testimony in the context of our steadily increasing knowledge. From the panel headings you can surmise that this value is multidimensional, and not confined to the historical yield alone. Another way of stating the matter is that oral testimony broadens the field of historical awareness. This broadening was already noted by Maurice Halbwachs in his pathbreaking book on the collective memory, published five years after he died in Buchenwald.

Characterizing the collective memory as a "living link" between generations, he pointed to a knowledge neglected (in his time) by professional historians, yet circulating from the grandparent generation to at least that of the grandchildren. This knowledge came in the form of family narratives, of life-stories, of issues and events that existed on the margins of mainstream historical accounts, or were transmitted in a highly poetic way.

Since 1945, the history of everyday life, joining with oral documentation to capture an often neglected memory-buzz, has provoked the much discussed split between "history" and "memory." The methodical hygiene, vast detail, and truth-claim of modern scientific historiography seem averse to a communal memory's inventive, even myth-making side, its healing or revanchist stories. But this imaginative turn, surely, is also worth examining, even should it fall more into the domain of literature, narratology, and memory studies. I am sure the tension between history and memory will surface in our discussions, as will the related issue of the cultural imprint on oral testimony, especially when witness accounts are recorded belatedly, at different times, and in different countries and tongues.

We hope by this conference to rededicate ourselves to a task we have pursued these last twenty years. Oral testimony, at this juncture, does not seek to turn the survivor into a historian. It enables a witness to speak who fears the passing of witness. What matters, then, in addition to the strict factual yield, is the one-by-one-by-one distinctive identity of those who have given their testimony. For in the genocidal mentality there is a sinister denial of the victims' individuality and humanity, but the memory recovered in freedom is a plural memory. It is essential to integrate the witness accounts gathered in the US and abroad (with the help of thirty-seven affiliates) into Holocaust and Genocide Studies and to make them available for education, for schools in this country and internationally.

The following is an excerpt from Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel's keynote address at the Archive's 20th anniversary conference:

Having read, having written, having listened, better and better, more and more, this is what I believe. I belong to a generation that felt abandoned by God, and betrayed by humankind...we have seen that human beings are capable of ultimate inhumanity. Are we to give up on humanity? The choice always remains in our hands. Between the grotesque cruelty of warfare and the right of innocent children to grow up in peace. Between the ugliness of hatred and the nobility of those who oppose it. Between helping children and tormenting them. I believe that even in the midst of darkness it is possible to offer light and warmth to one another. On the edge of the abyss, it is possible to dream dreams of redemption...I still believe in human beings, in spite of them. I still believe in their future, in spite of what humanity has done to itself. I still believe in language, though it has often been usurped and corrupted and poisoned by the enemy. I still believe in words. It depends on us whether they become carriers of hate or vehicles of compassion, whether they curse or heal, whether they offer pain or comfort. It depends on us whether they become spears or balm, whether they arouse disdain or tolerance, whether they move us to despair or to hope. How did Paul Celan put it? "Sometimes a handshake is worth a poem." I believe therefore in poems, and handshakes. For I belong to a generation that has learned that whatever the question, despair is surely not the answer.

Risa Sodi is a Senior Lecturer and Language Program Director in the Department of Italian Language and Literature at Yale University. She has written extensively on the Holocaust in Italian literature and is the author of A Dante of Our Time: Primo Levi and Auschwitz. Her current project is entitled Narrative and Imperative: The First Fifty Years of Italian Holocaust Writing, 1946-1996.

Studies of Jewish Italy were something of a rarity when I began exploring the topic in the 1980's. For Italianists, Jewish authors were located outside the literary canon, and the history of the Italian Jews was viewed as a minor field; for many Judaists, Eastern Europe, Germany, France and the United States were more accepted areas of study than Italy. Neither group particularly embraced the study of Italian Jewry as its own. At the same time, non-scholars often expressed amazement that an Italian Jewish community existed at all. Though only .08% of the total population, today's 40,000 Italian Jews are the heirs to a 2,000-year-old history.

Much has changed since the eighties. Interest in Jewish Italy has blossomed, partly due to a post-Soviet realignment of Italian political interests, partly due to immigration to Italy (and the subsequent focus on "indigenous" minority groups), and partly as a corollary effect of Primo Levi's international fame and his widely-discussed death in 1987. A wealth of Jewish-related novels, cookbooks, and guidebooks have been published. Yet, an equivalent discussion of the Shoah in Italy has not materialized. The social perception of the Holocaust, in

particular, has received scant attention from politicians, historians, literary critics, sociologists, or from the public at large, and this despite the growing numbers of Holocaust memoirs and testimonies published (or republished) by specialized presses and publicized by survivor organizations. Again, politics plays a role, since anti-Israel bombast often supplants composed discussion.

In light of the transitional state of scholarship on the Italian Holocaust, the Italy-related testimonies contained in the Fortunoff Video Archive are precious indeed. Due to the farsightedness of the Archive's founders and leaders, today they contain a relatively robust number of testimonies from this often overlooked corner of the *univers concentrationnaire*.

I began work in the Archive in 1990 as a Ph.D. candidate in Italian literature. The Italian testimonies served to contextualize, corroborate, and refine the interview material I had collected *viva voce* from Italian Holocaust survivors and authors like Primo Levi, Liana Millu and Giuliana Tedeschi, and from Bruno Piazza's circle. This source material immeasurably enriched my dissertation on Italian Holocaust literature, as did input from Geoffrey Hartman, who read and reviewed my drafts.

Today, as a member of the Yale Italian Department, I am bound to the Archive through a web of strong personal and scholarly connections. My course on "Jewish Italy in Literature and Film" takes a multimedia approach to the topic, integrating a 400-image database of historical sites, art works and photographs, films, and documentaries alongside literary texts. I am indebted to Joanne Rudof for first introducing me to Nicola Caracciolo's exceptional documentary, "*Il coraggio e la pietà*" [The Courage and The Pity], which I include each semester. The capstone of the course is a multi-part presentation of two of the Archive's Italian video testimonies. Each one is screened in class, discussed (especially in the context of written testimonies, memoirs, documentaries and fictional accounts), and analyzed in short reaction papers.

Italo S. and Giorgina V., the two remarkable Italians whom I have come to know as friends over the years, then visit the classroom to address the students and respond to their questions. Their stories of peripatetic wanderings in Nazi-occupied Italy, escape from Axis troops, hiding, privations, and assistance from good Samaritans are emblematic of those told by many of the 85% of Italian Jews who eluded deportation to Nazi death camps. Between them, in an effort to stay safe, these two Italians criss-crossed the country, from the far northwestern Piedmontese Alps, to the flatlands outside Milan, to the Adriatic port city of Ancona, to the ghetto in Rome. It was not until they met for the first time in New Haven that they realized that they had attended the same Jewish high school at the same time, in Milan, during the Fascist years (when Italian Jews were banned from public schools).

Since Giorgina and I both reside in the greater New Haven area, it is not uncommon for us to meet; I once found her enrolled in my Jewish Italy adult education course, causing me to wonder who was the teacher and who the student. My friendship with Italo goes back nearly twenty years; we share

a common interest in Italian research on the Holocaust and a deep affection for his ancestral hometown, Pitigliano. Informed of the Archive when I began my association with Yale, he immediately gave his testimony.

I expect that more Italian testimonies will find their way to the Archive, and I hope that they, in turn, will find their way back to the public, through research and teaching. Much work still needs to be done (at the local level) in analyzing the Italian videotaped materials in the Archive and, generally, in pursuing scholarship related to the "Shoà."

Laura Ellen Finkelstein is a student at Yale University, class of 2004. A psychology major, she has worked at the Video Archive since 2000.

Growing up in the New York area, I heard a different Holocaust survivor speak in my school at least once a year. During the class discussions that followed, it inevitably came out that my paternal grandparents were Holocaust survivors. My fellow students would ask me to talk about my grandparents' experiences, to tell them my family's "story." I had absolutely nothing to share, except that my grandparents were from somewhere in Poland.

My father's mother, for whom I am named, died before I was born. My grandfather, Papa Izzy, suffered from Alzheimer's disease for several years until he died when I was nine years old. I knew that they were "survivors" and therefore must have gone through terrible times, but I never heard a single word about it. Growing up in a climate where survivor testimony is so valued was both a blessing and a curse. I knew that there was something extraordinary about my grandparents' experiences, something worth telling and retelling. At the same time, I felt a void because I knew practically nothing about those experiences. I had no story to hold on to or share.

This void led to my fascination with Holocaust "stories." I eagerly absorbed every book about the subject, from *Number the Stars* and *The Devil's Arithmetic* to *Night* and *Mila 18*. I knew that the stories I read were not all true, but I felt satisfied that surely some elements of them must have mirrored my grandparents' wartime experiences. During my senior year of high school, I had the opportunity to participate in the March of the Living. As I walked through Majdanek and Birkenau, I had no idea if these were places my grandparents had also walked. But again, I had a sense that if I took in these surroundings, maybe the pieces would come together and I would be one step closer to understanding what my grandparents had endured.

It is this need to come to terms with my identity as the story-less granddaughter of survivors that has characterized my work at the Fortunoff Archive. As a student at Yale, I hoped to get a better intellectual understanding of the Holocaust by taking every course in that subject area. I also thought that exposure to testimonies, primary documents, would be valuable. What keeps me coming back to work at the Archive each semester is more than just academic. There's something so special about sitting down for two or three hours at a time and watching survivors retell their experiences. As I make my

way through each testimony, I feel as though I really get to know each survivor – their tragedies, joys, values, personalities. They give me a glimpse into life in Nazi Europe, a place very different from the Poland I visited in the year 2000. I can relate to their religious traditions as I hear about how they observed and still observe Jewish festivals. I also have the privilege of "meeting" their loved ones, friends and family members from the past as well as their children and grandchildren who bring them joy in the present.

It used to upset me that I would never have such a personal interaction with my grandparents. I will never sit down with them face-to-face or even see them on a screen, since they chose not to give testimony. I had a hard time understanding why anyone wouldn't give testimony about such historically significant experiences. Last year, I came across a tape that changed my mind. The survivor seemed fairly collected as he calmly talked about his life, from childhood through his liberation. For about two hours, it seemed as if retelling these events came easily to him. However, at the very end of the tape, after the interviewers thanked him for his testimony and before the camera was turned off, he told them he would be having nightmares that night. He said that he always has nightmares when he thinks back, so he tries to recall those times of his life as infrequently as possible.

I began to notice that there's much more to a testimony than just a set of stories with beginnings, middles, and ends. The very idea of a story defies the nature of the Holocaust. A story usually involves cause and effect, conflict and resolution. People's life events over that time period were not logically connected, and they had little or no control over their fate. Conflicts remained unresolved, causes were obscured or nonexistent, and the effects were a matter of life and death. Occasionally interviewers ask witnesses why something occurred or what the implications were in an attempt to form logical connections between events. However, there often are no such connections.

The testimonies, words and images, are more complex than a simple narrative. They are witness attempts to describe their lives. I can hear and see the survivors' emotions as they speak, whether they openly discuss their feelings or merely hesitate before saying the name of a person or place. Each word seems carefully chosen and it is clear to me when the survivors are unsatisfied with the limitations of words to express what they mean. I can differentiate between the parts of the testimony that flow freely from those that are more difficult to remember and explain. Even at the end of a six-hour testimony, it is obvious that there are events and emotions that the survivor did not describe. To put one's whole life into words and onto video is not possible. The most talkative survivors leave much unsaid.

My grandparents left almost everything about the Holocaust unsaid. But because they chose not to put their experiences into story form does not mean that they didn't express what they went through. As survivors giving testimony discuss how living through such extremes affected them as people, so the Holocaust undoubtedly shaped my grandparents as people.

It shaped the way they raised my father, and it shaped the way he has raised me. My grandparents may not have left me a neatly packaged story of their experiences to retell or a video testimony to watch. By having lived their lives as they did, they profoundly shaped how I live mine.

Oren Baruch Stier is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Florida International University and Associate Director of its Judaic Studies program. A chapter of his forthcoming book, Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust, discusses the genre of video testimony, incorporating research done at the Fortunoff Video Archive.

When I began my research into video testimonies of the Holocaust, I didn't know what to ask of the material. I watched, as many do, in numbed silence. Slowly, during my time at Yale and afterwards, I became interested in devising a typology for viewing those testimonies, based on a series of frames of reference and remembrance created in and by the act of video-recording. These frames reveal much about the nature of video testimony and its context, exposing structures that in turn impact how viewers of these testimonies respond to and understand them.

Technological frames, for example, such as the audio-visual recording medium and the television transmission medium, convey the immediacy of testimonial address, despite the gap in time and space separating survivor from viewer. At the same time, formal narrative frames, such as beginnings, endings, and twists and turns in storytelling, reveal conscious and unconscious choices about the direction and content of testimony. Finally, institutional frames of remembrance – the places where these testimonies are produced or viewed – play no small role in determining how, where, and when people have access to these harrowing interviews. Attention to these and other frames of reference helps us perceive the nature and value of these testimonies as media of memory – conduits linking then and now, there and here, the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Attending the Archive's recent 20th anniversary conference encouraged me to think beyond the framework I've been so concerned with over the past few years. As the number of recorded video testimonies continues to grow, and as their role as cultural and academic resources becomes more firmly established, it might be useful to think about the nature and status of their position as testimonies. What is a testimony, and how does it mark the event to which it refers? One might consider its function, usually juridical, against that of the testament, a term that shares with testimony its etymological roots but connotes something more symbolic and, dare I say, religious. Testimonies offer evidence, proclaim facts; testaments affirm beliefs, declare covenantal bonds, lean away from the act of bearing witness towards establishing a record of that witnessing. As videotaped records stand in more and more frequently for the individuals who, bearing witness, made them, are we perhaps moving from the age of Holocaust testimony into the age of Holocaust testament?

And how does this impact the status and image of the wit-

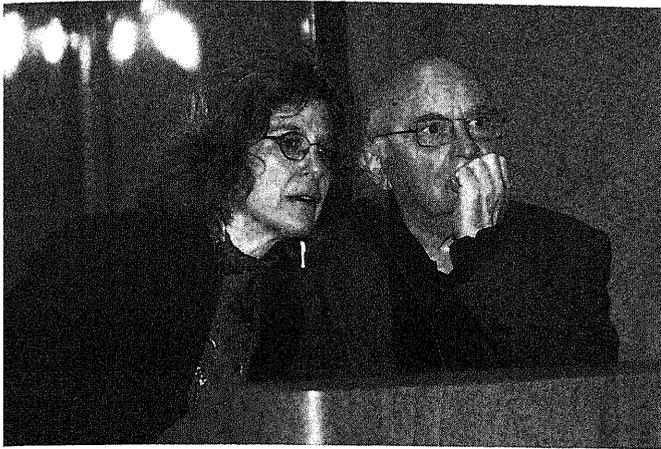
ness? We usually refer to him or her generically as the "survivor," augmenting the classic Holocaust trinity of perpetrator, victim, and bystander. In this sense, the survivor is a heroic figure, celebrated in contemporary culture and accorded high respect for his or her unenviable experiences, even though this image is hardly supported by the video testimonies themselves. This same role may also invite an unbalanced triumphalism, a kind of forgetfulness; the society that celebrates the one who survived the Holocaust might forget those greater numbers of people who didn't, even as the person giving testimony can never forget them. Close attention to the video testimonies at Yale counteracts this tendency, and so does a closer look at the names we give to those who give testimony: survivor, witness, victim, interviewee. Each of these titles connotes a different social and memorial role. "Witness" places emphasis on seeing and on legal recounting. Witnesses fulfill an evidentiary function and, for many, claim and retain their hold on the testimonial act, but they also can be dispensed with quickly by those who imagine their cases to be closed. "Victim" veers toward the experience of suffering and places the individual in the most powerless position, as one who was subjected to violence. "Interviewee," awkward though it is, suggests a partner in the testimonial process – the interactive subject who engages in dialogue beyond the frames of testimony, generating, perhaps, a more dramatic and performative version of memory's unfolding.

On the stage of video testimony, survivors, witnesses, victims, and interviewees embody Holocaust memory at its most personal point of origin. The subtle differences that arise in the ways viewer-auditors think of the speakers highlight not only their subject-positions but also reflect the teleology of testimony itself – its multiple goals and purposes. Nonetheless, taken as a whole, the body of these video testimonies anchors the legacy of remembrance in ways that will only increase in importance as time goes by.

Vivian Liska is a Professor of German literature and Director of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Antwerp in Belgium. She has written extensively on Jewish literature, literary theory, and modernism.

The Yale conference organized on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Fortunoff Video Archive revealed the complexities of the Archive's double status as scholarly tool as well as a memorial of a traumatic past. The conference increased the awareness of the possibilities inherent in both dimensions of the Archive and brought to light the potential tensions and benefits arising out of their interaction.

On the one hand, the conference demonstrated the multiple ways in which the Archive functions as a tool for scholarly investigations. The collection of survivor testimonies plays a major corrective and complementary role in the context of historical research into specific events and provides an important case study for theoretical reflections on the possibilities and limitations of oral history in general. In a different area of research, the Archive's collected testimonies invite compara-



Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Hebrew University (left), Aharon Appelfeld (right) at the conference.

tive examinations of the content and mode of these witness accounts that are invaluable for sociological and cultural analyses of different groups of survivors and witnesses. The Archive also provides precious material for psychological investigations into the long-term workings and effects of trauma.

On the other hand, as the conference has shown, the Archive can also be regarded as a powerful Holocaust memorial. The sheer quantity of collected testimonies goes beyond what can be processed in scholarly research and what, given their relative similarity, can be justified in terms of additional knowledge that can be gained from them. Yet it does not follow that 'enough has been collected', precisely because the Archive's function goes beyond its informational value. Its very existence matters even for those who never come into direct contact with it and know only that it exists. Like a memorial, it may, seen in its entirety, be considered as the marker of an event. Turned into a *lieu de mémoire*, the Archive becomes a place of recollection and homage marking a place in a topography of commemoration, a locus where the experience of an encounter has a priority over knowledge, investigation or research. And like the presence of all memorials and monuments, its very existence creates an obstacle to the flow of everyday scholarly life because a space and time that would normally belong to quotidian affairs is set aside and dedicated to the memory of a specific collective event.

Undoubtedly, the scholarly and the commemorative dimension of the Archive can at times seem incompatible; academic research requires a certain measure of distance and detachment, and scholarly skepticism is hardly appropriate for acts of remembrance. Yet, focusing merely on one of the Archive's two dimensions limits an understanding of its exceptional value, which stems precisely from the simultaneity of its cognitive and performative aspect. Two opposing criticisms of the Archive's effort to collect and archive survivor testimonies illustrate what is missed when one of these dimensions is neglected. According to one view, these testimonies ought to be protected from use as instruments of study and should be valued only in and for themselves. Making them available for various kinds of academic analyses is seen as a lack of respect

for the bereavement and suffering captured in the witness accounts. A second view rejects this approach as sanctimonious and maintains that survivor testimonies ought to be filtered and judged according to their credibility as factual evidence and their value for scientific research. From this perspective, warnings have been voiced that a misleading aura of authority may be bestowed on witness accounts which, most often recorded decades after the actual events, are often inaccurate and cannot be verified with certainty. Both of these opposed positions implicitly call for a dissociation of the performative and the cognitive way of relating to the past. The dangers of such a dissociation are obvious: in the first case, it lies in a tendency to mystify the survivor and turn the Holocaust itself into an awesome tremendum, an ethically embellished instance of the sublime. In the second case, an approach exclusively dictated by the demands and criteria of intellectual research fails to do justice to the exceptionality of the event and its aftermath.

In its symbolic significance – and, as the conference has shown, in some ways even concretely – the Archive potentially embodies a corrective of both positions. Its dual status as tool and memorial – the simultaneity of its scholarly and commemorative potential – disturbs the purity and homogeneity of both discourses. In its function as cognitive tool and reservoir of information, of facts and stories, the Archive is in itself devoid of a pre-established meaning and remains open to multiple uses and arguments. At the same time, its status as memorial marks the specific event and prevents it from dissolving into historical footnotes or vague, generalizable insights. Even those scholars who go to the Archive merely for the sake of a minor detail needed for their research cannot entirely shield themselves from being touched in a more than purely intellectual way by the dimensions and intensity of the human experience embodied in those shelves. On the other hand, the Archive's embeddedness in an academic environment reminds those who want to surround the past with an auratic fence that memory can stay alive only if it remains open to continuous inquiries and investigations. Additionally, scholarly research can carry the commemorated experiences beyond their own immediate theoretical, intellectual and political contexts, thereby ensuring their continued relevance.

One of the Archive's essential achievements lies in its creation of a locus where commemoration and research, experience and argument, can continue to coexist without merging. The tensions arising from this coexistence contribute to its importance and will not cease to accompany the Archive's endeavor into the future.

Andrea Sophia Goldberg received her BA in History from Yale University in 2002. She is currently studying the History of Medicine at Oxford University as a Henry Fellow and will enter medical school at the University of Pennsylvania this fall.

September of my sophomore year was the first time I made the soon-familiar trek through the halls of Sterling Memorial Library's third floor to the Fortunoff Video Archive. I was researching Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust by

“passing” as Christians, my paper topic for Paula Hyman’s introductory Holocaust studies course. My interest in this topic arose from my grandmother’s revelation, five years earlier, that she was not a Ukrainian Catholic as we had always believed, but a Polish Jew and a Holocaust survivor. I remember meeting Joanne Rudof, for the first time that day, and feeling compelled to tell her about my grandmother. After getting to know her better, I realized how busy her days are, but on that day in September she made me, a complete stranger, feel as though she had all the time in the world to listen to my grandmother’s story. In recounting what I knew of my grandmother’s experiences, I was also sharing parts of my own story, and questions I had about what my grandmother’s revelation meant for my own identity. In fact, it was Joanne who suggested examining the ties between passing and identity – over the next three years, she repeatedly demonstrated her ability to zero in on the heart of a topic immediately. Her incisiveness was matched only by her ability to remember individuals by name and recall the content of their testimonies. I have never before, or since, met an archivist so intimately familiar with every aspect of her collection. It is clear to anyone that has ever worked closely with Joanne that she is deeply invested in people, both in the faces and voices that make up the incredible collection of testimonies, and in the people who come into the Fortunoff Video Archive on their own personal quests for answers.

Over the years at Yale, my relationship with Joanne evolved from a friendly research relationship to a close personal bond. My very private grandmother’s openness with her reveals a great deal about the kind of person Joanne is, and the unique insight into the experience of survivors that she has. Two years ago, I urged my grandmother to have her testimony recorded at Yale. After spending hours on the phone with Joanne, sharing details about her background and wartime experiences (extraordinary, given her reluctance to share her stories even with our family), my grandmother decided that she could not go through with the videotaping. I felt frustrated, and did not understand; I was sure that it would be cathartic for my grandmother to share her experiences and come to terms with her past in a concrete way. Joanne understood my grandmother perfectly, even when I could not. She explained to me that for many survivors, talking about their experiences was traumatic without being cathartic, and that I needed to be sensitive to what my grandmother wanted to do, rather than what I thought would be helpful for her.

I credit Joanne, and the extensive and well-catalogued content of the archives themselves, for making my undergraduate time at Yale more special than it could have been at any other university. In viewing the testimonies of more than one hundred survivors, I was able to see that my grandmother was not alone in her crisis of identity. I learned that it is nearly impossible to paint any group’s experience in broad strokes; despite parallels and similarities that can be drawn across the experiences of a group of survivors, each survivor’s case is distinct in so many ways from any other experience. I learned to be comfortable with uncertainty, and that studying the Holocaust usually raises more questions than it answers. I discovered a special

reverence for older men and women, who are often not accorded the respect due to them in the United States. From the horrific experiences of these men and women, I learned that I could never comprehend the average Jew’s experience in the Holocaust; these unimaginable experiences were those of the minority, the few who survived.

When I reflect upon my time at Yale, Joanne is one of the first people I think of, and the quiet Manuscripts and Archives reading room, where I spent so many hours reading finding aids for testimonies, remains one of the most peaceful spots on campus for me. I am not sure what I gave to the Fortunoff Video Archive, but from the Archive I gained a friend and a mentor in Joanne, access to the perspectives of hundreds of the most impressive human beings I have never met, and knowledge about the experience of other Jewish men and women who lived in my grandmother’s small Polish town before and during World War II. Researching and writing my senior essay, “The Politics of Collaboration and the Antipolitics of Rescue: Lvov, Poland as a Case Study for Polish-Jewish-Ukrainian Interaction During the Second World War,” allowed me reconstruct my family’s identity, and to talk to my grandmother with new knowledge and understanding. Perhaps the most important thing I have learned from watching the testimonies was captured by Jan Gross in his book *Neighbors*: “The Holocaust... stands at a point of departure rather than a point of arrival in humankind’s ceaseless effort to draw lessons from its own experience.”

Martin Bútorá is the Slovak Ambassador to the United States. He initiated and coordinated our videotaping project in Slovakia through the Milan Šimečka Foundation, a human rights organization which he directed. The following are excerpts from his remarks at the Fortunoff Video Archive’s 20th anniversary conference.

We are fortunate to be a part of a project that is known for its uniqueness, for highest professional standards, and for its powerful impact. Let me thank you from the bottom of my heart and also in the name of Slovak government that Slovakia was included as a partner for the Fortunoff Archive.

The project has had a special meaning for countries which have come through two dictatorships and which are struggling to cope with their past in an honest and comprehensive way. The inhabitants of Slovakia are the heirs of Slovakia’s wartime regime that was an ally of Hitler, as well as the heirs of the 1944 anti-Nazi resistance which is commemorated as a national holiday. Partly because of this legacy, after the fall of communism we have experienced our own modification of a “battle of historians.” Some historians denigrated the magnitude of horrors, belittled the responsibility of the wartime cabinet, and distributed texts with false facts and mystifications on the tragedy of Slovakia’s Jewry. Thus the Holocaust witnesses themselves became personal guarantors of the historical truth.

The project has also strengthened the self-confidence of our local Jewish community and in a way, it has indirectly helped the Slovak Jewish leaders in their negotiations with the authorities on compensation for the confiscated property.

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The 20th anniversary conference and related events in October were marked by intellectual stimulation, reunions of old friends from near and far, and first time meetings of others who have participated in and supported our mission. The full conference schedule is available on our website and we anticipate publishing many of the conference papers. What cannot be conveyed in words or on websites is the excitement and the joy that were integral to all of the conference events and the symbiosis that resulted from this unique gathering. I am often asked why I do this work, and I have not yet developed a pat answer. However, I do know that I have received a great gift from this work: the collegiality and friendship of many people from all over the world. This conference brought so many of them together – survivors, scholars, interviewers, students, writers, teachers, journalists, archivists, researchers – to share a common intellectual and sometimes personal quest. The varied gatherings at meals, coffee breaks, walks between buildings, and chance meetings resulted in new ideas for research, new teaching tools, new ways of thinking, and many new partnerships and friendships. The results are intangible, but I am confident that many journal articles, books, conference papers, and lesson plans will reflect ideas and connections from the conference.

In these twenty years, much has changed. The first testimony I accessioned into the collection in September 1984 was number 295; we now hold 4,242. This number represents the stories of Jewish and non-Jewish concentration camp survivors, Jewish and non-Jewish resistance fighters, hidden children and adults, rescuers, bystanders, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), Allied soldiers who entered concentration camps, and participants in war crime trials. This number also represents the dedicated volunteer work of hundreds of people in Europe, Israel, North and South America who helped establish affiliate projects, raised the funds to support them, and listened to the testimonies as they were recorded. To all of those who have shared their life stories, and to those who have facilitated this work, we owe a great debt.

Since the opening of the Video Archive, we have fundamentally changed the way we work primarily due to automation. In 1983 we were part of the founding of an international database that provided automated access to the bibliographic records of our testimonies through the Research Libraries Information Network. However, availability was limited to member libraries and searches could only be done by trained reference librarians. This was helpful to scholars and researchers throughout the world and resulted in many important papers, articles, and books. Since that time the ubiquity of computers and the use of the internet have completely changed the way we work at the Video Archive and the access others have to what we do. Automation has also resulted in increased efficiency. We have cataloged 3,035 of our testimonies. 1,669 were cataloged in the first thirteen years and 1,366 in the last seven, almost double the rate. We are now converting our earlier handwritten finding aids to an electronic format for improved searchability, and we are initiating a pilot project investigating the use of EAD (Encoded Archival Description) and/or XML for additional intellectual access. The continuing addition of bibliographic records to the online public access catalog has



Geoffrey Hartman, Joanne Weiner Rudof and Hadassah Lieberman (left to right).

resulted in an increased number of researchers. One of my greatest pleasures has been reading the resulting papers and publications, some of which have added important theories, analyses, and knowledge in their respective fields.

Another change resulting from technology has been our means of communication. Our website has won numerous awards and the most recent check showed that 803 websites have links to ours. Almost all of our reference inquiries come to us via email.

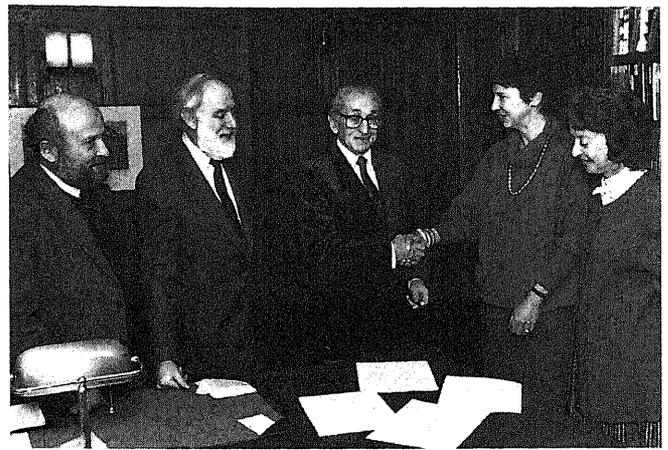
Yet technology has been our enemy as well as our friend. The professional video format on which our tapes were recorded during the earlier years has become obsolete. Unfortunately, the newer formats are becoming obsolete even more quickly. We are staying informed about digital formats and know well that digitization will be the way of the future, once standards have been established. Since 1997 we have had 2,842 cassettes cleaned and migrated to a current format by professional facilities with the necessary equipment and technical skills to handle the complexities of obsolete formats. We are grateful to Joshua Greene and Alan Fortunoff for raising the funds for this preservation. In the next two years we anticipate continuing this work through a National Endowment for the Humanities grant which was made possible through matching funds from the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation. With assistance from the Mellon Foundation grant described in another section of the Newsletter, we will initiate a pilot project digitizing the next group of testimonies to be preserved.

Digitizing is not a goal in and of itself, but a means to an end; it will provide a way for generations of the future to hear the words of survivors and witnesses, and it is the personal aspect of this experience that digitizing makes possible. Cataloging is only a tool which provides humans with the means to find the testimonies which contain the information they need. It is the technical work of preservation that will keep faces and words alive long after we are gone. As I mentioned earlier, it is the friendships, the personal meetings, the human dimensions of this work that keep me endlessly interested and committed. While technology has been vital to so much of our progress, it is people who have provided the vision and been our focus.

*Joanne Weiner Rudof
April, 2003*



Deposit of Holocaust Survivors Film Project testimonies at Yale, December 17, 1981. Dori Laub, William Rosenberg, Geoffrey Hartman, and Laurel Vlock (front row, left to right)



Ceremony to mark the signing of Holocaust Survivors Film Project deed of gift, Sterling Memorial Library, 1986. Dori Laub, Geoffrey Hartman, William Rosenberg, Millicent Abell (University Librarian), and Laurel Vlock (left to right)

Reflections *continued from page 10*

Obviously, we had a lot of concerns at the beginning of the project. Will the witnesses speak out? Will they want to face camera recording their painful recollections? Will they agree to go public with at least part of their testimonies? Fortunately enough, our concerns have not been confirmed, and though for some of our witnesses it was the first time in their life that they spoke about their existential experiences, they have done it with understanding and even enthusiasm; they considered it as a necessity and obligation, especially towards the young generation.

And they were right. Today, the project is like a tree. Two books based on the testimonies were published already, the third one is in print. The testimonies have appeared in documentary movies. They are used in educational programs. Some of the witnesses have published their own books of memoirs. The testimonies and their reflections in form of books, articles, films, and discussion have been incorporated into the public debate on Holocaust and coping with the past. A documentation center focused on Holocaust has been established. Our civic education teachers are trained in Yad Vashem and other institutions, including the American ones, to be better prepared to communicate with the students on all dimensions of the tragic past. Ingrid Antalová, the executive director of Šimečka Foundation who has taken over the coordination of the project, decided to continue with testimonies on Roma (Gypsies) Holocaust. Ethnologist and author Peter Salner, the

key protagonist of the project and at the same time the head of the Jewish community in Bratislava, has been instrumental in another act of tribute to memory and to Jewish legacy. He stood behind the restoration of the gravesite of Chatam Sofer (Moshe Schreiber), the supreme Rabbi of Bratislava (Pressburg) at the beginning of 19th century, a great scholar and founder of famous Yeshiva whose grave has appeared in the underground during World War II. Today, dignity has replaced humiliation and the newly built mausoleum of this legendary Rabbi attracts thousands of orthodox Jews from all over the world.

In October 2000, the Slovak Parliament passed a law establishing a new national holiday – the Memorial Day of the Victims of Holocaust and Racial Violence. And in September 2001, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum awarded the Nováky group of Jewish resistance fighters the Medal of Resistance.

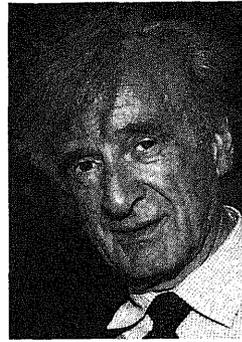
My participation in the project was a blessing: I had an opportunity to encourage the witnesses not only to bring to light new facts, but also, and maybe more importantly, to help future generations of Slovak citizens to face the history of Holocaust in their own way. As Lawrence Langer put it, future generations will have to be educated anew, and the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies has equipped them with invaluable treasury of the human condition.



"This tide will inevitably recede, and if there are no survivors to tell the story, who will encourage their successors to remember and help them understand? Surely it is our educational institutions that must shoulder this burden...the Fortunoff Video Archive at Yale

serves this important purpose, to collect and preserve the materials that enable us to learn from the past, and to support the scholars who explore and illuminate one of the darkest episodes in human history. To confront future generations with the memory of the Holocaust is to change forever their conception of humanity, and to urge them to understand it is to ask their commitment to prevent its recurrence."

– Richard C. Levin, President of Yale University



"I too remember the conference that began 20 years ago...I remember that because the creation of the Video Archive was an extraordinary project. I had some hesitations, because I believe in words more than images...then, I felt that the audio, the voice would be

so strong that we would not need the face. I was wrong. The face is an added element to the understanding, the comprehension of things that cannot be understood otherwise...for there are certain expressions, certain ways of gazing and seeing between the words, that turn into words."

– Elie Wiesel

Those interested in learning more about the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies can visit our website at www.library.yale.edu/testimonies or contact us at fortunoff.archive@yale.edu, or P.O. Box 208240, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-8240 (Tel. 203-432-1879). Gifts or pledges payable to Yale University are tax deductible and may be sent to the Fortunoff Video Archive.

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