



Mural in Comalapa, Guatemala

**USC Shoah
Foundation**

Center for Advanced Genocide Research

May/June 2016

As the Spring semester was wrapping up, the Center for Advanced Genocide Research continued its efforts to reach out to the international community of Holocaust and genocide scholars in order to bring together scholars from a wide range of disciplines to cultivate innovative research.

Outreach

Center staff visits first VHA Full Access site in Paris

Center Director Wolf Gruner and Academic Relations and Outreach Officer Emilie Garrigou-Kempton visited the newly established George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention at the American University of Paris (AUP). Founded earlier this year, the Schaeffer Center recently became the first USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive site in Paris, thereby providing AUP faculty and the broader French community of scholars access to the invaluable resource of 53,000 video testimonies of the Holocaust and other genocides.



Hosted by Schaeffer Center director Brian Schiff, Gruner and Garrigou-Kempton conducted two workshops on how to use the Visual History Archive for research. On the first day, Gruner led a workshop in English for AUP faculty and researchers. His workshop was immediately followed by his lecture presenting his current research about individual acts of Jewish resistance to Nazi persecution. Throughout his lecture, he illustrated how he was able to make

unique discoveries using the video testimonies of the USC Shoah Foundation.



On the second day, Garrigou-Kempton conducted a workshop in French for the local community of Holocaust and genocide scholars. Well-attended by academics from a variety of French research institutions and universities, this workshop illuminated the benefits of having full access to the Visual History Archive in Paris as it highlighted, through a number of case studies, the incredible value of having all 52,000 testimonies available in 39

languages. Previously, only the 1,800 testimonies in French had been available in Paris. Beyond the Holocaust there was an immediate interest among the participants in the testimonies on the Rwandan and Armenian genocides.

This first visit to Paris inaugurated the partnership between AUP and the USC Shoah Foundation in general and more specifically between the Center for Advanced Genocide Research and the George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention. More workshops and events are already scheduled for the Fall, so that AUP faculty and French scholars can continue to learn how to best integrate VHA testimonies in their research and in their teaching.

[Read more about our visit here.](#)

Research

Nisha Kale, DEFY Undergraduate Summer Research Fellow



Summer is also fellowship time here at the Center and Nisha Kale, a USC undergraduate student who is double majoring in Neuroscience and Law, History, and Culture inaugurated the 2016 season. For her three weeks of research at the Center for Advanced Genocide Research, she chose to examine genocide survivors' reactions to stress – not after the genocide, as most similar research had focused on, but actually while the genocide was ongoing. To do so, she watched testimonies from the Holocaust, Rwandan and

Armenian collections in the Visual History Archive, looking for interviewees' descriptions of particularly stressful events such as killings, beatings, forced marches and mass executions and how the survivors described reacting to these events as they were happening.

[Read more about her project here.](#)

Erin Mizrahi, USC Graduate Research Fellow

Graduate Summer Research Fellow Erin Mizrahi is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Studies in Literature

and Culture at USC. During her month-long residency, she researched moments of silence in testimony – in a survivor’s retelling of unspeakable horrors, a bystander’s or perpetrator’s response to the atrocities. After watching testimonies, she has developed five different categories of silence she has seen in testimony: moments of silence, omissions, reluctance to speak, impossibility of telling, and silence as survival and she believes that her findings will definitely alter how she writes about the Shoah in her dissertation.

[Read more about her research here.](#)



Visitors

Former political prisoners from Burma visit the Center

In June, Center Research Program Officer Martha Stroud hosted Phyo Phyo Aung and Lin Htet Naing (or James), two student activists and former political prisoners from Burma and gave them a tour of the USC Shoah Foundation. During their visit, the two activists, who are former Bush Institute Fellows, shared stories about the conflict in Burma and detailed their own experiences and the persecutions they suffered.



Both were imprisoned for three and a half years following the Saffron Revolution in 2007, and were subsequently arrested and sent to prison again last year following their arrests for protesting a law restricting academic freedom. They were freed in April after more than a year of imprisonment.

They were accompanied by Seinenu Thein-Lemelson, a postdoctoral researcher at UC Berkeley's Institute of Personality and Social Research (IPSR) whose research centers on the atrocities committed in Burma in 1988, 2007, and the experiences of political prisoners in Burma during the 25+ year struggle for democracy.

Their visit was an opportunity for them to learn about the work of the Shoah Foundation in collecting testimonies, especially for conflicts as recent as Rwanda and Guatemala, and provided Center staff with an opportunity to discuss the role of memorialization, reconciliation and education in a country still transitioning from a time of ongoing conflict and oppression.

Wolf Gruner

Director, USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research
Professor of History and Shapell-Guerin Chair in Jewish Studies

Conference

Getting ready for the Guatemala Genocide Conference

This summer, efforts are also in full swing as the Center is getting ready to host our international conference on the Guatemalan genocide. Entitled “A Conflict? Genocide and Resistance in Guatemala,” this groundbreaking interdisciplinary conference will bring 23 international scholars together from disciplines ranging from International Relations, Anthropology, History to Latin American and Women's Studies. The conference events will have simultaneous translation and will be accompanied by a number of community events.

[Find out more about the conference here.](#)

Spotlight on USC Resources

Part Two: The Armenian Genocide Insurance Settlement Papers

As part of our series on USC Genocide Studies resources, we would like to bring the spotlight to the Armenian Genocide Insurance Settlement Papers. These 40 boxes of documents were donated by Vartkes Yeghiayan in 2015 and constitute the Center for Advanced Genocide Research's first primary source acquisition. These settlement papers pertain to a historic agreement reached with the New York Life insurance company in 2004 over withheld insurance payments for policies issued to Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before 1915 as the company had never paid the families of the genocide victims that owned these policies. The settlement resolved more than 2,000 insurance claims. The materials include mostly personal documents from the insurance claimants covered by the class-action lawsuit – birth and death certificates, policy papers, family trees, and photographs – as well as court papers.

[Read more about this acquisition here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 11-14 2016:

[A Conflict? Genocide and Resistance in Guatemala, An International Conference at USC](#)

September 25, 2016

Symposium to honor the memory of the inaugural Sara and Asa Shapiro Annual Holocaust Testimony Scholar David Cesarani

October 11, 2016

[Benjamin Madley's lecture: “An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873”](#)

November 7, 2016

Martin Dean's (USHMM) lecture on forced labor camps during the Holocaust.

Opportunities

Call for Applications

Teaching Fellowship Academic Year 2016-2017

EXTENDED DEADLINE: AUGUST 31, 2016

The USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research invites proposals for its 2016-2017 Teaching Fellowship that will provide summer support for **faculty at universities and colleges that are USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive (VHA) access sites** in order to integrate VHA testimonies into new or existing courses.

For more details, [click here](#)

Donate to Special Collections

Please consider donating private papers, documents, photographs or films regarding the Holocaust and other genocides.

The Center works with USC Libraries Special Collections to preserve private collections and make them accessible for academic research and student investigation.

To find out more about donating materials, please visit our website at cagr.usc.edu or call 213-740-6001.

For more information about the USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research and its work, please visit our website at: cagr.usc.edu

To subscribe to the Center's mailing list, [click here](#).

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