

Voices from the  
Visual History Archive  
ROMAN KENT

## The Killer Within

*What The Act of Killing brings  
to our understanding of violence*

TED BRAUN AND  
JOSHUA OPPENHEIMER

## Big Data & Humanity

*How scholars can harness big data  
to learn, teach, and heal*

STEVE KAY

# PastForward

Spring 2014

Special 20th Anniversary Issue



## Changing the World through Testimony

Twenty years after the first testimonies were taken,  
the Visual History Archive is reaching even more people

#### **Board of Councilors**

Steven Spielberg  
*Honorary Chair*

Edgar M. Bronfman  
*Honorary Co-chair  
in Memoriam*

Renée Crown  
*Honorary Co-chair*

Lew Wasserman  
*Honorary Co-chair  
in Memoriam*

Robert J. Katz  
*Chair*

Susan Crown  
*Vice Chair*

Harry L. Robinson  
*Vice Chair*

Wallis Annenberg  
Russel S. Bernard  
Gerald Breslauer\*  
Joel Citron

Jerome Coben\*  
Stephen Cozen  
David Eisman  
Phyllis Epstein  
Anita Friedman

Emanuel Gerard\*  
Eric Greenberg  
Marcy B. Gringlas  
Yossie Hollander  
William Lauder  
Lee Liberman

Bruce Ramer  
Michael Rutman\*  
Mickey Shapiro  
Erna Viterbi

*\* Emeritus member*

#### **Next Generation Council**

Susan Crown  
*National Chair*

Dan Adler  
*Vice Chair*

Marcy B. Gringlas  
*Vice Chair*

Andy Intrater  
*Vice Chair*

Edward Sassower  
*Vice Chair*

Wendy Sassower  
*Vice Chair*

David Adelman  
Carole Blum  
Cecilia Chan  
Ulrika Citron  
Marsha Dworkin  
Lori Fife

Mark Gordon  
Harry Krakowski  
Joshua Nash  
Lindy Snider  
Michael Wunderman

#### **Founding Executive Directors**

June Beallor  
James Moll

#### **Founding Advisory Committee**

Karen Kushell  
Branko Lustig  
Gerald R. Molen

#### **Executive Staff**

Stephen D. Smith  
*Executive Director*

Kim Simon  
*Managing Director*

Sam Gustman  
*Chief Technology Officer*

Karen Jungblut  
*Director of Research and  
Documentation*

Anita Pace  
*Director of Technology*

Anne Marie Stein  
*Director of  
Communications*

Kori Street  
*Director of Education*

Ari Zev  
*Director of  
Administration*

“Twenty years after the start of the Shoah Foundation we are doing more than I could have ever imagined with that simple notion of documentation, that concept of examining the historical record for the purposes of remembering it and reflecting upon it so that with a camera and a clear mission of genocide prevention, we are both teaching tolerance and inspiring the otherwise indifferent.”

—Steven Spielberg, page 3

**Managing Editor**  
Krystal Szabo

**Editorial Team**  
Stephen D. Smith  
Kim Simon  
Anne Marie Stein

**Writers**  
Josh Grossberg  
Robin Migdol

**Design**  
Rick Simner Design

**Cover Photo**  
David Strick

**Printing**  
ColorGraphics, Inc.



24

## Features

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY FEATURE

### 19 Twenty Years Later

The legacy of *Schindler's List* and the USC Shoah Foundation

REAL-TIME TESTIMONY

### 22 Resisting the Path to Genocide

Collecting testimony in real time as events are unfolding

By Mukesh Kapila

BIG DATA AND HUMANITY

### 24 Using Stories as Data and Data to Tell Stories

How scholars can harness big data to learn, teach, and heal

By Steve Kay

GENOCIDE IN FILM

### 26 The Killer Within

What *The Act of Killing* brings to our understanding of violence

By Ted Braun and Joshua Oppenheimer





*Roman Kent, page 8*

36

## Essays

- 10 THE LEGACY OF TESTIMONY  
The Next Generation  
*By Esther Toporek Finder*
- 11 TESTIMONY AROUND THE WORLD  
Teaching the Holocaust in China  
*By Xu Xin*  
  
Connecting with China  
*By Zhu Chengshan*
- 13 THE POETRY OF TESTIMONY  
Voice in the Darkness  
*Stephen D. Smith interviews*  
*Edouard Bamporiki*
- 14 CONNECTING WITH TESTIMONY  
The Ethics of the Algorithm  
*By Todd Presner*
- 16 CHARTING THE WORLD WITH TESTIMONY  
A New Methodology  
*By Tim Cole, Alberto Giordano,*  
*Anne Kelly Knowles, and Paul B. Jaskot*  
  
A Map to Prevention  
*By Samuel Gustman*
- 18 UNDERSTANDING TESTIMONY  
Emotion, Storytelling, and the Human Universals  
*By Antonio Damasio*

- 29 SHARING ART THROUGH TESTIMONY  
An Artist's Perspective  
*By Stacie Chaiken*
- 30 TESTIMONY IN ACTION  
Anti-Semitism in Hungary  
*By Péter Krekó*
- 32 REFINDING THE PAST  
The Last of the Unjust  
*Stephen D. Smith interviews*  
*Claude Lanzmann*
- 33 UNDERSTANDING TESTIMONY  
Beyond Evil  
*By Ervin Staub*
- 35 TESTIMONY ON LOCATION  
It Happened Here, Right Here  
*By Kim Simon, Martin Šmok,*  
*and Andrea Szőnyi*
- 36 TESTIMONY AROUND THE WORLD  
Building Dams and Bridges  
*By Anne-Marie Revcolevschi*

## Departments

- 3 FOUNDER'S LETTER  
Camera-Ready  
*By Steven Spielberg*
- 4 Contributors
- 7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER  
Expanding the Vision  
*By Stephen D. Smith*
- 8 Voices from the Visual History Archive  
*Roman Kent*
- 38 News & Events
- 40 Ambassadors for Humanity



# Camera-Ready

By Steven Spielberg

Twenty years later: The legacy of *Schindler's List* and the USC Shoah Foundation

*Documentary filmmaking* is a mirror-image art form. More than most other art forms, it asks us to examine reality, to evaluate our own behavior relative to the subject matter, and to consider what the particular historical account means to our life today, what it has perhaps meant to our ancestors, and what, in these examinations, it might mean in years to come.

I am a big believer in storyboarding. I think it is important to have a blueprint for the camera work and for the particular story I want to tell. But 20 years ago, with *Schindler's List*, I tossed out the window my penchant for planning, to employ what I call a “news camera” approach. To effectively show the atrocities of the Holocaust and the difference that Oskar Schindler made in the lives of many survivors, I felt that I needed the camera to be embedded in the environment we were in—handheld at times, uncompromising in its presence, and omniscient in its impact. I needed it to be indistinguishable, unpredictable, and imperceptible to all of us on the set. To the best of my ability, I wanted to feel that all of us were there documenting the horrors of the Holocaust, not re-creating them.

Yes, this was the narrative of a single man and his efforts to ensure the safety of Jews, but it was a philosophical account—one of death, of life, of intolerance and bigotry, and of the dishonorable part of the human condition that has, for centuries, condoned and ignored crimes of genocide. While the story of Oskar Schindler and the people he rescued may serve as a microcosm for the events surrounding the mass murder of 6 million Jews, it was important to me, as a filmmaker and a Jew, that we do our best to properly recall the ultimate consequences of the Holocaust and the role of the war itself in these considerable crimes against humanity. That is something that could not be done in its entirety during the making of *Schindler's List*. In fact, it required me to take my “news camera” approach and apply it to the creation of the Shoah Foundation.

In 1945, when General Dwight D. Eisenhower rightly predicted Holocaust deniers, he ordered the photographing and documentation of the Nazi brutality in order to make known the horrors of the Holocaust and to leave no room for revisionists or propaganda. By empowering the wartime photographers, he implored Western civilization to acknowledge the unparalleled atrocities. While on the set of *Schindler's List*, I heard the haunting and horrific accounts of survivors, and I knew that no matter how exact the movie would be, I could never fully understand what they endured. But I thought maybe, just maybe, after hearing some of their stories, that I could do something to use that same documentarian approach to help empower them as well. So what started out as a camera technique, as a commitment to accuracy, to authenticity, to acknowledgment and deference to the vast scope of genocide we were considering during the making of the film quickly progressed—to cameras, photography, videography, and documentary filmmaking in what would be-

come a steadfast and global commitment to genocide prevention.

I read an article in *The New York Times* a few years back about the private pain, psychological toll, and ethical dilemmas that wartime photographers have faced over the years. Bill Keller said something particularly appropriate in the piece, and it resonates very much with my thoughts about these last 20 years. He said that wartime photographers “cannot avert their eyes; they have to let the images in, no matter how searing or disturbing.” He explained that covering conflict requires a kind of resignation to vulnerability.



I'd like to think the same is true of the women and men who came forward to give testimony and the interviewers, videographers, and staffers themselves—that we are making ourselves vulnerable to one another in the name of tolerance education. The survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust did not avert their eyes because they knew that one day they could show us the importance of bearing witness. Here we are—20 years after the start of the Shoah Foundation—doing more than I could have ever imagined with that simple notion of documentation, that concept of examining the historical record for the purposes of remembering it and reflecting upon it so that with a camera and a clear mission of genocide prevention, we are both teaching tolerance and inspiring the otherwise indifferent. ■



**page 16** *Charting the World Through Testimony*  
(left to right) Alberto Giordano, Anne Kelly Knowles,  
Tim Cole, and Paul B. Jaskot

*PastForward* brings together many voices around issues related to the educational and scholarly use of genocide eyewitness testimony. Whether survivors or their descendants, teachers or students, scholars, historians, or filmmakers, the variety of their experiences and opinions is a sample of the lively milieu of critical thought and discourse emerging around the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive.

**Edouard Bamporiki** is an award-winning filmmaker, actor, and poet. As a young Rwandan artist, he has received international attention for his stories of hope, unity, and reconciliation. His feature debut in Lee Isaac Chung's *Munyurangabo* screened at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2008, he wrote, directed, starred in, and produced *Long Coat*, which won first prize in African film at the Focus Future Film Festival in New York. He is a founder of Art for Peace Rwanda. Bamporiki is a member of Parliament in the chamber of deputies.



Writer-director **Ted Braun's** feature debut, *Darfur Now*, won the NAACP Image Award for Best Documentary of 2007, and was chosen one of 2007's top five documentaries by the National Board of Review. It also earned the International Documentary Association's Emerging Filmmaker of the Year award. In 2008, *Movie Maker Magazine*

named him, along with Errol Morris, Oliver Stone, and Robert Redford, one of 25 filmmakers whose work has changed the world. Braun is an associate professor of screenwriting at USC's School of Cinematic Arts.



**Stacie Chaiken** is founder of Witness and Responsibility and has created performances involving conflict, the Middle East, and the Holocaust. This year, she is serving as international creative director of Kwibuka20, the 20th-anniversary commemoration of the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda.

**Tim Cole** teaches history at the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom. His research interests are in Holocaust studies and the social, cultural, and environmental histories of landscape. He is the author of *Images of the Holocaust/Selling the Holocaust* (1999), *Holocaust City* (2003), and *Traces of the Holocaust* (2011). He is coeditor of *Militarized Landscapes* (2010).



**Antonio Damasio** is University Professor, David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience, and Director of the Brain and Creativity Institute at USC; he is also an adjunct professor at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, Calif. Damasio has made seminal contributions to the understanding of brain

processes underlying emotions, feelings, decision-making, and consciousness. Damasio is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.

**Esther Toporek Finder** has taught psychology at Montgomery College in Maryland for more than 20 years. She is the founder and president of Generations of the Shoah—Nevada; former president of The Generation After in Washington, D.C.; and a member of the Coordinating Council of Generations of the Shoah International. She was appointed by



the governor of Nevada to the Advisory Council on Education Relating to the Holocaust and is on the board of the Holocaust Survivors Group of Southern Nevada. Finder was on the task force to create a Holocaust, Genocide Studies, Human Rights and Tolerance Center in Maryland.

**Alberto Giordano** is a geographer, cartographer, and geographic information scientist at Texas State University. His current research interests are in the application of the methods and tools of geographic information science to history and historical geography, historical cartography, genocide, and the Holocaust. He has worked on the policy aspect of geographic information, especially on standardization issues and the evaluation of employment policies, and has written on technological hazards and environmental justice.



# Contributors

Spring 2014

**Samuel Gustman** is the Institute's chief technology officer. He is responsible for the operations, preservation, and cataloging of the Institute's Visual History Archive. Gustman provides technical leadership for the integration of the Institute's digital archives into USC's collection of electronic resources, ensuring its accessibility for academic and research communities at USC and around the world. His office provides technical support for universities and organizations that subscribe to the Institute's Visual History Archive. He is also an associate dean at USC Libraries and founder of the USC Digital Repository.

**Paul B. Jaskot** is a professor of art history at DePaul University. He is the author of *The Architecture of Oppression: The SS, Forced*

*Labor and the Nazi Monumental Building Economy*, as well as numerous essays on the relationship between Nazi politics and cultural production. He is currently the director of the Holocaust Education Foundation Summer Institute.

**Mukesh Kapila**, CBE, is professor of Global Health and Humanitarian Affairs at the University of Manchester. He is also special representative of the Aegis Trust



for the prevention of crimes against humanity, and chair of Minority Rights Group International. Previously he was under secretary general at the International Federation of Red Cross. He has served the United Nations as special adviser to the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva; special adviser at the UN Mission in Afghanistan; and

resident and humanitarian coordinator for the Sudan. He then became a director at the World Health Organization. He is the author of *Against A Tide of Evil*, a memoir of the Darfur genocide.



As dean of the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, **Steve Kay** oversees the university's largest and oldest school. He also holds faculty appointments in molecular and computational biology, as well as in neurology, physiology, and biophysics at Keck School of Medicine of USC. One of the world's top experts on genes and circadian rhythms, Kay has published more than 200 papers and has been cited in *Science* magazine's "Breakthroughs of the Year" three times. He is also an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



**Péter Krekó** is director of Political Capital, a policy research and consulting institute in Hungary. His main research interest is the social demand for radical-right movements and the social psychology of conspiracy theories. As an assistant professor at Eötvös Loránd University, Krekó delivers lectures on social and political psychology. He is the author of numerous studies and articles on the radical

right. He is co-chair of the Preventing Violent Extremism working group of the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network.

**Anne Kelly Knowles** is a historical geographer at Middlebury College. She is the author of *Calvinists Incorporated: Welsh Immigrants on Ohio's Industrial Frontier* (1997) and *Mastering Iron: The Struggle to Modernize an American Industry*. She edited *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History* (2002) and *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship* (2008).

French journalist and filmmaker **Claude Lanzmann** is best known for his groundbreaking 1985 film *Shoah*. The nine-hour documentary about the Holocaust relies solely on contemporary interviews he conducted throughout Europe. Lanzmann returned to the subject in 2013 with *The Last of the Unjust*, a documentary about the controversial Benjamin Murmelstein, a rabbi who was appointed by the Nazis to the Jewish council that oversaw life in the Theresienstadt ghetto. He is chief editor of the journal *Les Temps Modernes* and is a lecturer at the European Graduate School in Switzerland.

**Joshua Oppenheimer** has documented militias, death squads, and their victims for over a decade to explore the relationship between political violence and the public imagination. Educated at Harvard and Central St Martins, London, his award-winning films include *The Globalization Tapes* (2003, co-directed with Christine Cynn), *The Entire History of the Louisiana Purchase* (1998, Gold Hugo, Chicago Film Festival), *These Places We've Learned to Call Home* (1996, Gold Spire, San Francisco Film Festival), and numerous shorts. Oppenheimer is Senior Researcher on the U.K. Arts and Humanities Research Council's Genocide and Genre project.

Joshua Oppenheimer, page 26

# Contributors



page 35 Andrea Szőnyi, Martin Šmok



Foundation for the Memory of the Shoah, the largest organization of its kind in Europe. She launched the Aladdin Project in March 2009. Today, this international NGO is a leader in raising awareness of the Holocaust and combating racism, anti-Semitism, and denial in the Muslim world through extensive educational and cultural programs.



**Todd Presner** is professor of Germanic Languages and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the Sady and Ludwig Kahn Director of the UCLA Center for Jewish Studies and is also the chair of the Digital Humanities Program. His most recent books are: *Digital Humanities* (MIT Press, 2012), co-authored with Anne Burdick, Johanna Drucker, Peter Lunenfeld, and Jeffrey Schnapp; and *HyperCities: Thick Mapping in the Digital Humanities* (Harvard University Press, 2014), co-authored with David Shepard and Yoh Kawano.

**Anne-Marie Revcolevschi** graduated from the Sorbonne. After a career in higher education, including serving as director of international cooperation at the French Ministry of Education, Research and Technology, she became director general of the

With responsibility for oversight of the Institute's day-to-day operations, **Kim Simon** directs the development and implementation of all core mission activities, including the education program, research agenda, documentation activity, public outreach, and administration. Simon acts as the Institute's program and project manager, leading senior staff in setting strategic priorities and goals, analyzing program outcomes, developing implementa-



tion plans, and ensuring alignment with larger university and college strategies. Simon joined the Institute in 1994 to help coordinate efforts to collect interviews with Holocaust survivors and witnesses around the world. She subsequently established the Institute's Office of Global Partnerships to create its international program agenda, and oversaw its work in Europe, Australia, South Africa, and in North and South America.

**Martin Šmok** is the senior international program consultant for the Institute, where he has worked since 1995. He has also worked on documentaries, including *Among Blind Fools*, a trilogy about the Working Group of Bratislava, a forgotten Jewish resistance cell led by Gisi Flesichmann and Rabbi Michael Weissmandl; and *Between a Star and a Crescent*, a trilogy chronicling the involvement of Communist Czechoslovakia in the Middle East. He has curated exhibitions about Communist propaganda and post-WWII Jewish life in Czechoslovakia, as well as authored several articles about the anti-Zionist show trials in what was once the Soviet Bloc.



**Ervin Staub** is a Hungarian child survivor of the Holocaust. He is professor emeritus and grounding director of the doctoral program in the psychology of peace and violence at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, past president of the International Society for Political Psychology, and of the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence. His latest book is *Overcoming Evil: Genocide, Violent Conflict and Terrorism*. His projects range from working with teachers and parents to promote altruism in children, to the training of active bystanders in schools, to seminars/trainings and educational radio projects in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Congo.

**Andrea Szőnyi** is senior international training consultant and regional representative in Hungary for the USC Shoah Foundation. She is also the director of Zachor Foundation for Social Remem-

brance, a nonprofit educational institution working in Holocaust and human rights education in Hungary. Szőnyi graduated from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, with degrees in English and Russian languages and literature. She also received a degree in cultural management. Szőnyi worked for years as a high school teacher. She is a Holocaust Education Fellow of the Imperial War Museum in London.

**Xu Xin**, professor and dean of the Glazer Institute for Jewish and Israel Studies in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Nanjing University, is also editor-in-chief and a major contributor of the Chinese edition of Encyclopedia Judaica. He teaches Jewish history, Jewish culture, and Holocaust studies, and has created graduate-level programs on Jewish culture. He is author of *Anti-Semitism: How and Why*; *The Jews of Kaifeng, China: History, Culture, and Religion*; and *A History of Jewish Culture*. In 2003, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Bar-Ilan University in recognition of the important work he has done on research of the Jewish people in China.

**Zhu Chengshan** is director of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall and a scholar of Chinese history, museum studies, and peace building. Zhu has held leadership positions at many research institutions, including the Nanjing International Peace Research Institute, the Chinese Association of Museums, the Historical Society of the Nanjing Massacre, Chinese Writers Association, and the Historical Society of the Chinese People's War Against Japanese Invasion. He is a master advisor at Nanjing Normal University and the chief editor of *Japanese Invasion of China History Research*.



# Expanding the Vision

By Stephen D. Smith

As the Institute turns 20, the Visual History Archive is reaching even more people.

*It has been 20 years* since the first testimonies in the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive were taken. All that was known then was the need to collect, because time was running short to preserve the story of the witnesses to the Holocaust. But even then, there was a sense of a long-term educational purpose. On Oscar night 1994, Steven Spielberg urged the world to “not allow the Holocaust to remain a footnote in history. Please teach this in your schools. There are 350,000 experts who just want to be useful with the remainder of their lives. Please listen to the words, the echoes, and the ghosts, and please teach this in your schools.”



Twenty years on, that vision is at the heart of the mission of the USC Shoah Foundation. The Visual History Archive is at a place of learning at the University of Southern California, shared with other institutions of learning around the world, and available to every classroom with a connection to the Internet.

In this edition of *PastForward*, we hear from users of the Visual History Archive spanning the globe, from high school teachers to professors, historians to neuroscientists, filmmakers to politicians. As the Institute passes the landmark of its first generation, we look to the future eagerly, knowing that we have undertaken a millennial task to ensure that the meaning of the Visual History Archive is slowly and carefully shared for many generations to come. Buried deep in its tens of thousands of hours of testimony are still unforeseen places of knowledge and understanding we are yet to understand.

We live in a time of rapidly advancing technology, which provides power to our efforts. Testimonies in the digital classroom using our IWitness platform reach vast numbers of younger learners whose whole style of learning is far from textbook rote. Today, inquiry-led, project-based, competency-centered learning is driven increasingly by digital platforms. We cannot expect the next generation to come to us. We have to find them wherever they are in their digital world.

So too in higher education, the technological landscape has completely changed in 20 years. Harnessing the power of technology to bring together digital humanities with social sciences and hard sciences also provides a place of interdisciplinary connection through the big data. At a recent seminar at the USC Shoah Foundation, geographer Tim Cole (see page 16) stated, “We thought we were going to use the index to help illustrate what we know about places—it changes what we know.” To get at that new knowledge will take geographers, mathematicians, social scientists, and historians working together.

In the coming years, as testimony from the Nanjing massacre, the Armenian genocide, and the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda are made available through the Institute’s Visual History Archive, we will not only enrich our knowledge but also enhance our research and educational outreach.

To mark our 20th year we are particularly pleased to announce the launch of the USC Shoah Foundation’s Center for Advanced Genocide Research. This interdisciplinary center, directed by professor Wolf Gruner, will provide a place for scholarship and deep research in which testimony will provide a vital research resource for scholars at USC and around the world.

As the name of this digest implies, we are rooted in the past, but are also looking to the future. Here are some of the ways the Institute is moving forward:

- The next 20 years will bring many more testimonies of the Holocaust to the Visual History Archive, as well as many testimonies from those who have suffered genocide and violent societies around the world.
- As we expand our reach, there is a community of people growing around the Visual History Archive, who will be able to interact with one another.
- Every computer and mobile device connected to the Internet will become a window of learning to the Visual History Archive.
- Families will discover roots, and researchers will share their findings.
- Students in Africa, Asia, and in the Muslim countries of the Middle East will watch testimony and be able to learn and share.
- We will ask those who are experiencing violent conflict to trust us with their voice as the conflicts are happening.
- Policymakers, lawmakers, and advocates for humanity will use the testimonies for good in our world.

Little by little, we are changing the world through testimony. One voice at a time.

The leadership and staff of USC Shoah Foundation would like to thank everyone who has given testimony and those of you who have given time to volunteer or teach from the Visual History Archive. This Institute only exists because many thousands of people have been prepared to share a part of themselves for the benefit of the wider community. For that we—and future generations to come—are truly grateful. ■

## Voices from the Visual History Archive

Nearly 52,000 survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides, from 58 countries and in 34 languages, have given their testimonies to the Institute. The Visual History Archive is filled with more than 107,000 hours of unique life stories. It would take more than 12 years to watch every person's testimony, and it would be impossible to share all their stories in *PastForward*. Here is a glimpse from the Visual History Archive into the life of Holocaust survivor Roman Kent.

# Roman Kent

*Born April 18, 1929, Łódź, Poland*

*Interviewed April 29, 1996, New York, N.Y.*

*Roman Kent's testimony can be viewed  
online at: [vhaonline.usc.edu](http://vhaonline.usc.edu)*

**R**oman Kent is a highly sought-after and influential member of the survivor community. He has for years served on the board of the Claims Conference, is a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, is chairman of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors & Their Descendants, and holds many other distinguished positions.

One might wonder, then, why, with such sophisticated insights into the complexity of the Holocaust and its consequences, that he chooses in his testimony in the Visual History Archive to focus on one of the simplest of all relationships: his pet. It is because of his dog, Lala, that Kent sometimes wishes people were more like animals.

He and his family, from Łódź, Poland, were hunted and homeless during World War II. They worked at forced labor, were plagued by illness and tormented by hunger, and were abandoned by neighbors. Only Lala seemed to show them complete loyalty, and reminded the young boy that there was still love in a world that had gone mad. It is a message that Kent

carried with him after the war.

Although her presence in Kent's life was brief, Lala has become a way to connect with young people learning about the Holocaust. Because it is easier for a child to relate to losing a dog than to being separated from his or her family or living in a concentration camp, an activity that focused on Kent and Lala has been the most popular on the Institute's IWitness website for secondary-school students. Kent also wrote a book, *My Dog Lala*, in 2008 as a way to reach even more young people.

Before the war broke out, Kent (born Roman Kniker) lived a typical, carefree life in Łódź. The Knikers were fairly rich, Kent said in the Visual History Archive testimony he gave in 1996. His father, Emanuel, often treated the boys to horseback riding. Aunts, uncles, and cousins would come to the Kniker house to celebrate Passover, Hanukkah, and other Jewish holidays, when Kent and his siblings would sing the traditional songs they had learned in school.

The field behind his father's textile factory hosted endless games of soccer, basketball, and volleyball, which Kent played with his younger

brother, Leon, and his friends from the Jewish school he attended dutifully six days a week. His mother, Sonia, stayed home and took care of him, Leon, and their older sisters, Dasza and Renia.

Into this happy world came the perfect addition: a small dog named for the Polish word for doll. Lala quickly became part of the family, and the children doted upon her.

"She was a beautiful dog," Kent says.

The family was at their summer villa in the Polish countryside when war broke out.

It was exciting at first. Since schools had been closed, the Knikers stayed at the villa. When a neighbor alerted them that the Germans were close by, they returned to their apartment in Łódź.

The Knikers were forced to leave so quickly that they decided that Lala would stay with the superintendent of the villa. But while the family was at the train station, Lala appeared. The children were happy, and they took her back to Łódź with them.

Life in their hometown had changed so quickly. Restrictions against Jews were in full effect. The family had to wear Stars of David on





*(Clockwise from left) Kent with Liv Ullmann, narrator of the documentary Children of the Holocaust; Kent shortly after arrival to the U.S., 1946; Prewar family portrait, Kent (second from left); "The Happy Boys" orchestra in Cham, Germany, Kent (second from left).*



their clothes. They were not allowed out at night. Emanuel lost his job as head of the factory.

One day, they found that their apartment had been closed up and taken over by a local German. The Knikers moved into an empty room in their factory. They had nothing, but they still had one another and their dog with them.

But by the end of 1939, all the Jews in the city had been ordered to move into the Łódź ghetto. The Knikers again had to say goodbye to Lala, who had just given birth to a litter. Kent and his siblings were too young to understand what was happening, but they worried about Lala.

Their first night in their new home—one room and a kitchen for the six of them—the Knikers were awakened by scratching at the door.

It was Lala.

"How she found us, God only knows," Kent says. "Her golden hair was covered with mud, sleet, and snow. She was tired, but the moment she saw us, she started licking our hands, our faces, her tail was wiggling, and of course we were happy."

In the morning, Lala left—to return to her puppies at the factory. But each night, she

would arrive at the Knikers' apartment, and each morning she would go back to the factory.

After the puppies were old enough, Lala stayed with family in the ghetto, but shortly thereafter, the Germans gave an order that all dogs must be turned over to them.

"Since all 'Jewish' dogs in the ghetto were registered, there was no way for us to avoid this because noncompliance meant death to the owner," Kent says.

The family was forced to hand over the dog to the authorities. She knew something strange was happening because she trembled and whined, but there was no choice. They never saw their beloved pet again.

Her disappearance serves to highlight for younger students just how bleak life was in the ghetto.

"Slowly the screw tightened," Kent says. "It went from bad to worse. From day to day you could see the starvation. You could see the dead and dying in the streets. There weren't enough people to bury the dead."

But the young Kent remained defiant. Forced to sew military garments for German

soldiers, he and others refused to work quickly. It was, he says, an act of resistance that was a more effective weapon than brandishing a gun.

His father died in 1943 of malnutrition and ulcers. A year later, when the ghetto was liquidated, Kent, his mother, and siblings were taken by cattle car to Auschwitz. The first thing he remembered upon his arrival were the deafening sounds of crying and screaming. Once off the train, he witnessed savage murders being committed with chilling nonchalance. Soon, he and his brother were separated from their mother and sisters and sent to a different part of the camp. It was far worse than anything he had seen in the ghetto.

"It was the first time I encountered the vicious brutality," he says.

Kent explains that it is impossible for those who were not there to begin to imagine the unbelievable, horrific scene.

"If Shakespeare were alive, he wouldn't be able to describe a day at Auschwitz," he says. "I don't think anyone—regardless of how many degrees he has, how many books he studied—can understand the torment of even one hour at Auschwitz."

Only after their liberation, which came during a forced march from the Flossenbürg concentration camp to Dachau in 1945, were the brothers able to reunite with their sisters, Dasza and Renia.

Renia told them that their mother had been sick and been sent to a hospital. Soon thereafter the Germans murdered all of the patients. Dasza was very ill and died in Sweden a few months after liberation.

Kent immigrated to the United States, attended college, and became a successful businessman and the leader of many Holocaust-remembrance organizations. He married, had two children, and built a new life. He prospered.

Instead of making him bitter, Kent's past became a reminder to be kind and helpful to others. He continues to teach children about the beautiful golden-haired dog.

"No barbed wire, no guns stopped this little dog from loving us, coming to us, and then going back to her own children," he says. "Love is stronger than hate!"

Kent strongly advocates the importance of education, teaching young students the lessons to be learned from the Holocaust. He believes that future generations must be made aware of what transpired during this horrendous occurrence in our history, to help ensure that such an unspeakable event will never happen again. Education is also a valuable tool to accentuate the meaning of tolerance. ■



# The Next Generation

By *Esther Toporek Finder*

Second- and third-generation survivors embrace the message of education and remembrance



Family portrait (left to right) mother Faye, Esther, brother Jack, father Harry, Chicago, 1953.

*Esther Toporek Finder has taught psychology at Montgomery College in Maryland for more than 20 years. For a full biography, see page 4.*

THE USC SHOAH FOUNDATION'S Visual History Archive is a resource of tremendous depth and scope, wherein the firsthand accounts of the survivors and witnesses allow us to gaze into the bottomless evil that was the Holocaust. Conversely, we can also appreciate, through their testimonies, the strength of the human spirit. Generations to come will be able not only to hear the authentic voices of those who were there but also to see the emotions in the facial expressions of these remarkable people, and meet their families.

As the daughter of two Auschwitz-Birkenau survivors, the value of first-person narratives is close to me. My mother died in 1970 at the age of 47. At that time, families did not have the technology to save oral histories that we have today. I was young and could not have realized that the window of opportunity to preserve her story was so limited. All I have of my mother's history are some anecdotal pieces. I do not even

have her voice recorded. One of the reasons I volunteered and worked so diligently to interview as many people as I could with the Shoah Foundation was so that other families could preserve not only the story but also the voice of their beloved parents.

My father's testimony is recorded, and for our family this is a gift. Prisoner 145183 will be known to future generations by his name, Harry Toporek, not by the number on his arm. We have a permanent record captured when he was in sound health. He is no longer capable of doing an interview, so I truly appreciate that Steven Spielberg made it possible to preserve his precious legacy in a timely way.

As well as being a child of survivors, I am an educator, and I know you cannot reach students if they do not see the relevance of the subject. That is why it is crucial that lessons of the Shoah resonate with students today and in the future. This is not just history, nor is it about our generation only. Its implications reach into how we live now and will for generations to come. For this to be effective, the Holocaust can and should be taught in multiple disciplines. The Visual History Archive can help students see what happens under a repressive dictatorship when there is no balance of power and no freedom of the press or personal expression. There are reasons why free countries have separate exec-

utive, legislative, and judiciary branches of government. What better way to teach students about the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of living in a democracy than to contrast democratic values with those of the Nazis?

The Holocaust has profound and particular power for those of us who grew up in its shadow, but that is where its particularity ends. As much as it affects us as Jews, it is not a Jewish story; it is a human experience. When I teach psychology classes, concepts like prejudice and discrimination are intricately linked. I also use the Shoah to demonstrate the power of the situation, conformity, obedience, group think, diffusion of responsibility, de-individuation, and more. That was true of people in the 1940s and will be true for us in 2040 and beyond. What may improve is how we understand and deal with our human frailties.

As part of a technologically connected second-generation community, we appreciate the advances made by the USC Shoah Foundation, which have made it possible for students around the world to have a dynamic and personal relationship with the survivors. I was particularly delighted to see Estelle Laughlin, one of the individuals I interviewed, featured in the award-winning student film *Beanstar*. This short film, a true story of a young woman who, as a Mexican, personally experienced stereotyping and discrimination, is a perfect example of how survivor testimony can resonate with students today.

I conducted more than 100 interviews in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C., area for the Visual History Archive, which afforded me a unique opportunity to meet an unusual cross section of witnesses. To be sure I spoke with survivors, refugees, and partisans. I also spoke with people who worked the Nuremberg trials, and even one of the U.S. government's most successful spies. The wonder of the Visual History Archive is in the breadth of experiences that, when permanently documented, will help us understand the scope and complexity of the Shoah.

At times, life is more dramatic than fiction or any Hollywood script. During his training, the refugee-turned-spy I interviewed was specifically told not to impersonate a German soldier, so he did not: He impersonated a German officer. He collected intelligence on transports of men and matériel through the Brenner Pass. Because he relayed that information to the Allied command, they were able to destroy dozens of military trains, thus shortening the war in Europe. How many more people—prisoners, soldiers on both sides, and civilians—would have died without one man's intervention?

Therein lies the secret of the Visual History

Archive. Each story is individual and carries its own weight and complexity. I was moved when a child survivor told me of his education during World War II. The very thought of educating children in his ghetto, which was an offense that carried a death sentence, was an act of resistance and bravery as well as an act of hope. Hearing this made me appreciate our thirst for knowledge and the tenacity of the human spirit. It is that which drives me to teach and to tell this story, as there is much to learn from those who gave their testimony. I was privileged to interview a Polish survivor who hid with her infant son in a residence run by Catholics. While there, she was asked to provide breast milk for an orphaned baby girl—a Jewish woman hiding in a monastery saving the life of a Christian child.

Children and grandchildren of survivors have started to use their loved one's testimony in their own public presentations in schools. That multi-generational perspective on the Holocaust and its lasting legacy provides momentum and relevance as never before. These testimonies will live beyond us and touch the future.

Twenty years after the Institute's founding, my heartfelt thanks to Steven Spielberg, who made it possible for my father to tell his story, and for me to be touched by so many lives, and proud, as a part of the second generation, to be a part of something that will be there for many generations to come. ■

To watch the film *Beanstar* by Mariana Aguilar, that features a testimony conducted by Esther Toporek Finder, visit: <http://sfi.usc.edu/beanstar>

## Teaching the Holocaust in China

By Xu Xin

Chinese scholars link Judaic studies and Holocaust studies over 20 years

*Xu Xin is professor and dean of the Glazer Institute for Jewish and Israel Studies in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Nanjing University. For a full biography, see page 6.*

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IS UNIQUELY situated in China, a country without an anti-Semitic tradition, and thousands of miles from where the Holocaust happened. The paucity of direct contact with Jews throughout Chinese history has impeded early awareness of the Holocaust, but the last 20 years have seen great progress with

Holocaust education programs there. But how and why?

Holocaust education in China is closely linked to Judaic studies. With the advancement of Judaic studies, many scholars realized that the Holocaust is an issue directly linked with the Jewish people since World War II. Judaic studies led to the study of anti-Semitism. The study of anti-Semitism led to Holocaust studies. With the deepening of Judaic studies, Holocaust education deepened, too.

A marked change occurred in the 1980s with the open-door policy and economic reform in China. Jewish studies, which started in the late 1980s and early 1990s in China, accelerated after diplomatic relations were established between

China and Israel in 1992. Jewish studies became popular. In addition to conferences, exhibitions, and courses, many books and articles on various Jewish and Israeli subjects appeared in Chinese. Holocaust studies also appeared in Chinese academic circles. Holocaust education appears in Chinese college education with the deepening awareness that "the Holocaust fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization, and the unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning," as stated in the Stockholm declaration of 2000.

Under the leadership of the Glazer Institute for Jewish and Israel Studies at Nanjing University, a project on "learning Jewish culture" was launched in 1990 to promote the study of Jewish subjects among Chinese college students. At the outset, the Holocaust was only a small part of the regular courses on Jewish



*Xu Xin teaches Judaic studies and Holocaust studies in China.*

culture, but students' interest in learning more about the Holocaust grew. In 2000, the Institute started to offer its students an entire course on the Holocaust, titled *The Holocaust through Videos*.

In order to introduce Holocaust education throughout China, a teacher's training seminar was held at Nanjing University in 2005, co-sponsored by the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, now known as International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance; Fondation pour la Memoire de la Shoah; London Jewish Cultural Centre; and the Glazer Institute. As Chinese scholars learned about the Holocaust and how to teach it, they also shared with the non-Chinese participants their expertise on the Nanjing massacre. Parallels were drawn between the two atrocities. The seminar elicited great attention from the Chinese side and promoted education, remembrance, and research about the Holocaust in colleges throughout China. Participants learned at the seminar not only the facts but also the skills necessary to disseminate their knowledge at their universities. To run a seminar on the Holocaust with the background of the Nan-

jing massacre proved to be effective and useful to present reliable, unprejudiced, and accurate knowledge of the Holocaust to Chinese scholars who are either teaching courses on world history or Western civilization at Chinese universities and colleges, or doing research. Moreover, it provides a rare and unique opportunity for Chinese scholars to learn about the Holocaust and sufferings of the Jewish people during World War II in a systematic way without going abroad, and to teach Holocaust-related courses in China.

It is not accurate to say that interest in Holocaust studies in China stems from the Chinese' own attempt to highlight their own sufferings. However, Holocaust studies certainly helps the Chinese to be more aware of their own sufferings and to learn different ways to look into and remember the Nanjing massacre, in particular, and persecutions of the Chinese during World War II, in general. The recent coopera-

tion between the USC Shoah Foundation and the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall in collecting testimonies of survivors and witnesses of the Nanjing massacre is but a good example.

Historically speaking, written records play an important role in the development of civilization. Nevertheless, with the development of modern technology, written records seem not enough to contain history. Audio-visual records become a new, powerful means for recording history, as they keep both sound and images. For instance, audio-visual testimonies of the Holocaust and other genocides give a voice to the survivors and other witnesses, allowing them to speak directly about their personal experiences. The majority of Chinese have almost no chance to meet in person the survivors or witnesses of the Holocaust. The Visual History Archive at USC Shoah Foundation, when available, will create a chance for the Chinese population to "see" those people

**"Holocaust studies also highlights human rights issues in China. What Hitler did is considered a crime against humanity. It raises a number of questions concerning humanity: How could a group of human beings commit these crimes against another group of human beings?"**

## Connecting with China

By Zhu Chengshan, director of Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall

*On Dec. 13, 1937, the Japanese army captured what was then China's capital city, Nanjing, where they killed as many as 300,000 civilians and numerous unarmed Chinese soldiers over the course of two months.*

For a long time, the domestic and international study of the Nanjing massacre mainly focused on the study of literature; however, the study of the oral history of the Nanjing massacre needs to be further improved. We have come to realize that through our international collaboration with the USC Shoah Foundation, not only will the horizon of Nanjing massacre research be broadened, thus making the study more diverse and multidimensional, but it will also complement the macrostudy through case studies aimed at revealing the historic fact from the microlevel. By doing so, we could gain a concrete, vivid, and rich historical cognition to reveal and restore history objectively and truthfully.

"In the meantime, we have been paying attention to related historical cases in other parts of the world. For instance, the 'Exhibition of Holocaust in Auschwitz Concentration Camp,' currently taking place at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, will promote the historical

education about the Holocaust in China. In recent years, we have also visited memorial and research institutes in places like Rwanda and South Africa. We believe we could have additional conversations in these fields in the future as well. We hope that we can together contribute to the cause of peace of mankind. ■

*Guixiang Chen, a survivor of the Nanjing massacre of 1937, with Ana Lee, a USC doctoral student who assisted during the interview filming.*

*To view testimonies from the Nanjing Massacre collection visit: [vhaonline.usc.edu](http://vhaonline.usc.edu)*



and listen to their experiences directly.

Holocaust studies also highlights human rights issues in China. What Hitler did is considered a crime against humanity. It raises a number of questions concerning humanity: How could a group of human beings commit these crimes against another group of human beings? Why did the rest of the world stand by in silence when the Holocaust took place? What is human nature? And how did the preservation of human rights disappear during World War II? Those questions were raised and discussed in the Holocaust courses. The study of the Holocaust obviously helps to encourage more human rights discussions among Chinese.

Holocaust studies also provides useful lessons for Chinese to combat the denial of the Nanjing massacre. As with Holocaust denial in the West, some Japanese historians attack the authenticity and objectivity of evidence and testimony regarding the historic events. It is also hoped that examination of an outside perspective can help those nations directly affected by the Holocaust learn to better understand their own history.

The Glazer Institute, as a partner of this testimony program, is pleased to have the opportunity to work with both the USC Shoah Foundation and the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall. Twenty years after the creation of the Shoah Foundation, the partnership to share eyewitness testimony is a significant contribution to knowledge and education. ■



# Voice in the Darkness

*Excerpted from an interview conducted by Stephen D. Smith*

Edouard Bamporiki uses poetry to promote art for peace

*Let me come crow the story of Rwanda.*

*I witnessed bad times,*

*I traveled to many countries,*

*And in each I asked*

*Where the tragedy that decimates*

*The Rwandese came from.*

– “A Cock Crows in Rwanda” by Edouard Bamporiki

AS A FILMMAKER, WRITER, POET, and member of the Rwandan Parliament, Edouard Bamporiki knows the importance of communication.

But when it came time for him to talk about his experience as a Hutu child watching the genocide unfold in his own town, Bamporiki was unable to speak. He is part of a generation that saw what happened, was persuaded by the ideology of hatred, and now must find the courage to overcome the devastating legacy of genocide for all Rwandans.

It was at the commemoration ceremony in 2006 in Kigali that Bamporiki found his voice in public. He had been invited to recite some of his poetry, but the man who preceded him to the microphone spoke so powerfully of his experience as a Tutsi survivor of the genocide that Bamporiki felt a poem was no longer adequate. He needed to do more.

“I was there thinking about the testimony and how that guy was wounded; they called me to give the poetry, and for sure I wasn’t ready,” Bamporiki recalls. “I stayed in front of the microphone, and then I said, ‘I am not ready to give a poem, but I am ready to give testimony because I also have a testimony.’ They said to me that I should go ahead: ‘Tell us your story.’ ”

*Then those that destroy my nation*

*Will be forgotten in Rwanda*

*Unless I crow about them,*

*So that we can remember their mistakes,*

*So that future generations will not poke me with their fingers.*

Now 30, he was only 11 during the genocide that tore through his country, and the violence he saw confused him. He didn’t understand why his friends and teachers were being brutally murdered.

“In April 1994, I was in the hospital,” he says. “I was sick. I saw people killing others. ... I could see everything. I asked my mum, ‘Why are these people killing others?’ It’s not easy to see people killing people in front of you. It was a bad image. And my mum kept silent for two, three, four days.”

Bamporiki does not consider himself a survivor of the genocide, as he is a Hutu, the ethnic group that perpetrated genocide against the Tutsi. But

he does consider himself a witness able to offer a unique and honest perspective on what happened during the 100 days of killing.

“Tutsi were not [involved] in the preparation of genocide,” he says. “... [When the genocide] started, they were in the panic zone. The Hutu—including me—were in the free zone. ... When you’re in a panic zone, it’s not easy for you to figure out what is going to happen. After the genocide, those survivors were missing people, [and] having trauma.”

He believes that although the Hutu live with shame, it is all the more important to speak, because shame will not bring healing to either side. That, he believes, only happens when the truth is told by everyone.

Even so, Bamporiki didn’t know if he had the right to tell his story during the 2006 genocide commemoration.

“To be honest, before 2006, I did not believe a Hutu could stand up during the genocide commemoration and give testimony,” he says. “I was happy when my message was accepted, and I was comforted, which gave me courage to go on. Fellow youth started coming, saying the truth I was promoting across the ethnic divide was crucial.”



Let us remember all of us  
Our history.  
You people, you quarreled.  
Most of you, you fled the country.  
Some of you, you stayed in Rwanda,  
And you did not like what you found.  
I crow to wake you up,  
But you stay in your beds,  
And I wonder what keeps you from me,  
And I feel sorrowful.

As a young politician, Bamporiki says his goal is to use the platform he has been given to spread messages of peace. Recently, he spoke in the village where he grew up—where, not too long ago, leaders in his position used their power to encourage hatred and division among the people.

“It’s the same microphone, but what we are saying is different,” Bamporiki says. “I am using the same microphone as a politician to tell you to love your neighbors.”

Even more powerful than a politician, however, is an artist, he says. Art can gain people’s trust and promote peace and tolerance indirectly when audiences are hesitant or skeptical. Arts “move hate,” Bamporiki says.

“I believe as artists, it is our task to give the good message of peace as a way of teaching our society,” he says. “Art is a good way to attract people.”

No matter what, survivors of genocide need to speak out about their experiences, he says. Their testimony will create a permanent record of what happened so that the genocide is remembered accurately years from now. Preserving testimonies will help younger generations learn from the mistakes of their elders and not become perpetrators themselves.

“If there is no testimony, it’s like someone who is old but who doesn’t know where he comes from,” Bamporiki says. “If you want to prevent the genocide, you have to tell people what happened.”

A nation clothed in forest,  
You put yourself together.  
You prayed asking God  
Why you must stay abroad  
Even though you had Rwanda  
As your home.

To view Edouard Bamporiki’s testimony visit: <http://www.youtube.com/user/USCShoahFoundation>

Edouard Bamporiki is an award-winning filmmaker, actor, and poet. As a young Rwandan artist, he has received international attention for his stories of hope, unity, and reconciliation. For a full biography, see page 4.

# The Ethics of the Algorithm

By *Todd Presner*

Close and distant readings of the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive

*Todd Presner is professor of Germanic Languages, Comparative Literature, and Jewish Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. For a full biography, see page 6.*

**MOST OF THE TIME WHEN** we speak of the ethical dimensions of video testimony of the Holocaust, we refer to the viewer’s “duty to listen and to restore a dialogue.”<sup>1</sup> By this, it is understood that genocide victims who give testimony have been denied their humanity, and that isolation contin-

ues when their story is not heard. Video testimonies bind the testifier to the viewer in an ethical relationship that demands the viewer listen and understand what the survivor has shared. This is the ethical responsibility of the listener, who, in turn, becomes a secondary witness to the survivor’s story, and who is obliged to carry the message forward into the world.

Our research team wondered whether in the face of the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive, which contains nearly 52,000 testimonies, an ethical relationship could be formed between an individual and the archive as a whole. To answer such a question, we had to investigate the technologies that made the Visual History Archive possible in the first place. In other words, how can an information system or a database be “ethical”? That’s the question—at once seemingly simple and deeply fraught—that my research team in the Digital Humanities program at UCLA has been struggling to answer during the past two years. Our research team brings together the methodological insights of computer science, particularly data analysis and data visualization, with the history of the Holocaust, eyewitness testimony, and the ethical imperatives of listening.

In fact, how does one watch 52,000 videos and more than 100,000 hours of witness testimony? The Visual History Archive’s scope—its sheer scale measured in terms of hours of testimony—is not readily comprehensible. To make the testimonies accessible to users, the Visual History Archive requires a database and an information-management system to organize, categorize, and enable searches of the testimonies based on a series of parameters. This, in turn, allows individuals to engage with discrete pieces of the Visual History Archive rather than with its entirety. Our project seeks an ethical approach to looking at the Visual History Archive as a whole. We believe that by investigating the data and the systems that structure user interactions with the testimonies, we will be able to build ethical modes of computation in terms of digital interfaces, databases, metadata, and information systems.

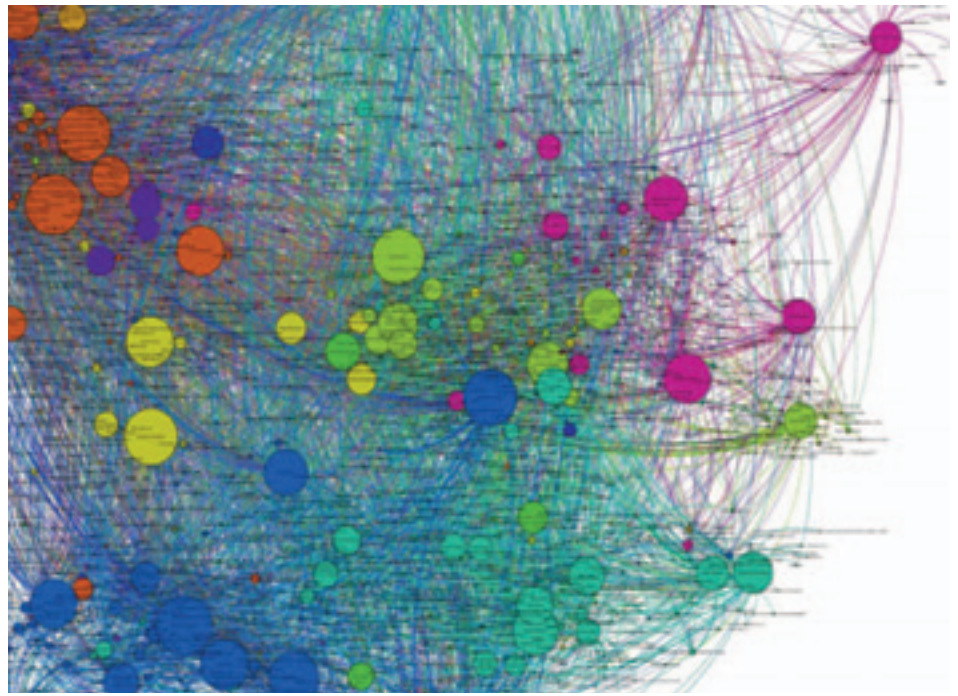
While the media specificity of the first generation of Holocaust testimony has been discussed at great length—ranging from David Boder’s wire recordings in DP camps and cassette tape to audio-visual documentation—there is no literature on the digitization of the Holocaust archive and its transformation into an information system. With regard to the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History

Archive, this is particularly noteworthy because the underlying information architecture makes the testimonies searchable and therefore accessible in a way that would be impossible without it. This architecture consists of several components. First, there is the interface itself, which runs in a Web browser, allowing a user to type in keywords, names, and other search terms; behind that is a relational and structured query language database (SQL database, for short) in which metadata are organized into tables, records, and fields. All of these data were inputted after the videos themselves were indexed with keywords based on standards and protocols developed for the construction, formatting, and management of a monolingual, controlled vocabulary (the thesaurus) to achieve consistency in the description of the content. Beyond this, we have the hardware, such as the archive servers and storage servers, where the videos are stored in digital formats for streaming in a video player. In fact, from 1996 to 2002, 11 patents were filed by inventor Samuel Gustman and the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, the assignee, for the Visual History Archive information architecture, which includes the system for cataloguing multimedia data and the development of the digital library system itself.

To support our research, the USC Shoah Foundation graciously provided our research team with a copy of the entire database of metadata related to the testimonies—a database of more than 6 million tables, primarily the indexing terms associated with one-minute segments of testimony. With regard to the thesaurus of indexing terms, we are interested in how the main relationships (inheritance, whole/part, and associative) represent the experiences described in the testimonies, and whether there are limits to its effectiveness.

To that end, our research team is also developing ways to deepen the indexing system beyond manifest content (what concretely is said in the testimonies in terms of events, people, and places), to include ways to find more subjective experiences and memories that may be connected to the performative, memorial, and figural dimensions of testimony. Among other things, this means recognizing the importance of tone and voice, of questioning and doubt, of the expressiveness of the face, silences, emotional realities, and larger narrative structures, tropes, and communities of experience.

Yet, perhaps paradoxically, the goal of information architecture is to be objective, to disambiguate the testimonial narratives and to render them operational within the logic of computational processing, to produce an indexing system that is complete and a digital



**Making connections** Partial network diagram of the Visual History Archive database showing survivor interconnections based on keywords and communities.

library system that is modular and extensible (to accommodate any kind of testimony or experience). As exciting as this is from an information studies perspective, as well as from a comparative genocide studies perspective, I wonder how we might, in the process, rethink the very genre of the database as a representational form vis-à-vis the specific experiences of bearing witness, testifying, surviving, and narrating. How might the database reflect the fragility of life, the uncertainty, ambiguity, and figuration of narrative? How might it preserve the “hauntedness” that informs so much of the testimony? In other words, how might a database be open to the haunt of the past, the trace of the unknown, the spectral quality of the indeterminate, and, simultaneously, be oriented to the uncertainty of the future, and the possibility of the unknown.<sup>2</sup>

To do so, we are imagining how fluid or differential data ontologies might work by allowing multiple thesauruses, which recognize a range of knowledge models and standards. For example, what if verbs and adjectives that connected action and agent, experience and context were given more weight than hierarchies of nouns primarily in associative relationships? How can we help listeners find and contemplate silences, gaps, stuttering, and emotional realities at the heart of the testimonies? And what if a more participatory architecture allowed for other lis-

teners to create tags that could responsibly proliferate indexing categories and keywords associated with the segments of testimonies?

Such a structure of saying and unsaying the database would constantly reinterpret and reinscribe the survivors’ stories in ways that not only place the listener into an active relationship of responsibility but also unleash the potential of meaning in every act of indexing. Narratives would be heard in their polyphony, with some listeners hearing some things and others hearing different things. We would never be done listening, watching, and processing the testimonies because there is always “more”—a surplus of meaning—that is never absolutely captured in data or databases. In essence, the “ethics of the algorithm” is an attempt—through ever thicker relationships between data and narrative, telling, and retelling—to bring together computation and information architecture with the ethical obligation of listening. In other words, it is a way to constantly transform the immensity of the archive and the “big data” in the database back into individual stories encountered through an ethic of active listening and participation. ■

To learn more about Presner’s research with the Visual History Archive, visit: [www.toddpresner.com](http://www.toddpresner.com)

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Hartman, *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996), 133.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 36.



# A New Methodology

*By Tim Cole, Alberto Giordano, Anne Kelly Knowles, and Paul B. Jaskot*

Testimonies as narratives of place, time, and social relationships can lead to new understanding of the Holocaust

*The authors are members of a multi-institutional research group that uses mapping and geography to examine spaces and places of the Holocaust. For biographies, see pages 4 through 5.*

IN JANUARY 2014, four scholars from the Holocaust Geographies Collaborative—an international, interdisciplinary group of researchers—spent a week at USC to work intensively in the Institute’s Visual History Archive. Their charge was to evaluate the link between personal testi-

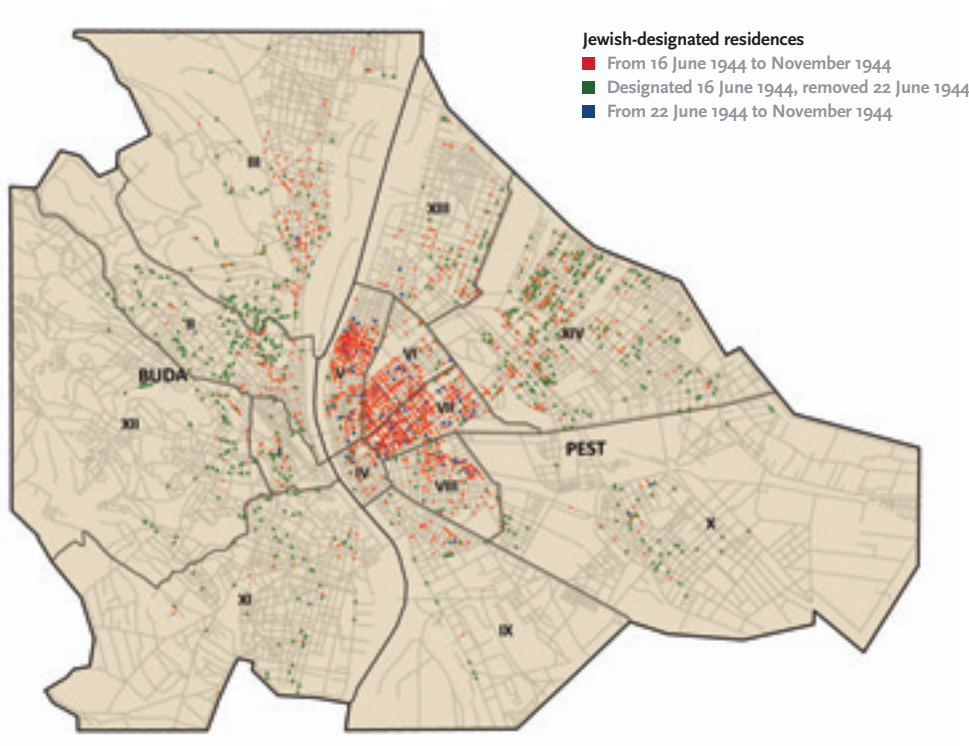
mony, the index of the archive, and geography.

The Holocaust Geographies Collaborative has its origins in a 2007 summer research workshop sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where a team of nine researchers met to experiment with geographical concepts and methods that the researchers thought could lead to new understanding of the Holocaust as an event that occurred in both space and time. In

the years that followed, we worked with testimonial evidence to varying degrees, most notably in a study of the evacuations—or “death marches”—out of Auschwitz in January 1945 and another of Wehrmacht atrocities in Belarus, but our projects have primarily focused on building digital infrastructure to establish the structural geographies of Holocaust locations and events. For the next phase of our collaborative research we have decided to systematically explore the potential of testimonies as a source for geographical analysis. Testimonies provide a profound source with which to reconstruct the social circumstances of the victims. For example, testimonies could help us study how social networks (e.g., families) move through space and time.

We are convinced that the Visual History Archive’s index of nearly 52,000 interviews will enable us to expand the next stages of our work by mapping thousands of survivor trajectories through the Holocaust. In the course of our exploration of the archive, it quickly became clear that while the index contains a great amount of geographical information—places of birth, residence, incarceration—there was far richer material within the testimonies themselves. For example, working with the testimony of Gilberto Salmoni, an Italian survivor, we came to see that while the index allowed us to map the Salmoni family’s movements through Italy and into the camp system, only listening carefully to his testimony revealed the fine grains of experience we now seek to understand. The index might provide a city’s name where an individual spent time during the war, but only the interview offers the micro-geographies of frequent movement within a city, and will help us reconstruct the spatial trajectory of the victim through a series of Italian detention camps before final deportation to camps outside Italy. And only at that level could we glean the significance of both movement and places to Holocaust survivors. In his testimony, Salmoni describes places, people, and events that unfold at a continental scale.

Judith Aguilar’s story, on the other hand, takes place entirely in Budapest, as she crisscrossed the river Danube from Pest to Buda, then back to Pest, and over to Buda again. But when Aguilar’s story is mapped conceptually, it is clear that she moved through a series of distinct places, each with particular meaning. Forced to leave her family home when ghet-



**Mapping experiences:** Geographers use information—like the data on this map showing the evolution of Jewish ghettoization in Budapest during the Holocaust—to reconstruct the social circumstances of victims.

toization was implemented in June 1944, Aguilar moved with her father, mother, and aunt into one room of a crowded two-room apartment. From here she—along with thousands of other women and men of working age—during an armed raid by *Nyilas* (the Hungarian fascist party) in the fall of 1944 was taken to a brick factory in Obuda, where she huddled with five women from the ghetto apartment building to keep warm. Although most of these prisoners were marched westward, Aguilar was released and returned to her home district, where she lived and worked in a Red Cross children's home in the so-called "International Ghetto" area. She escaped another *Nyilas* armed raid by fleeing to a nearby convent. She finally found a hiding place in a Buda timber yard owned by a communist sympathizer, then the home of a non-Jewish acquaintance, and the apartment of her non-Jewish uncle. It was he who placed her with a caretaker of a four-story apartment building in Buda. Aguilar remembers the woman as being "cruel." She was sheltered there until liberation in early 1945.

As Salmoni's and Aguilar's testimonies unfolded, it was clear that rather than comparing the spatial trajectories of thousands of survivors like Aguilar, studying the particularities of one individual's movements would enable a deeper explanation of what kinds of places were seen to offer safety or opportunities for resistance, how these places were experienced by various survivors, and how interpersonal networks played a role in survival and resistance. A new methodology of Holocaust geography was right before our eyes, talking to us.

Listening to testimonies of other survivors who worked at many sites of forced labor, we further realized that remembered details of work places and relationships with fellow prisoners and perpetrators are vital for understanding how labor could both save and kill. Having mapped the general patterns of specific kinds of forced labor in the SS camps system, we now saw a vast new terrain of evidence to explore. The testimony reveals how prisoners experienced forced labor from place to place, and how the characteristics of those places and the people who inhabited them created fleeting moments of opportunity or luck or comradeship—chances to counter the extreme force of Nazi brutality. Furthermore, labor is described not so much in terms of specific spaces but in terms of spatial relationships of proximity and distance in space and in time. For us, this topological understanding of space suggests that survivors perceived the places of forced labor, and not as the physical locations that the SS so carefully planned but as

places formed through experience.

Two overlapping ideas became increasingly important to us. Firstly, and perhaps most significantly, we became aware of the importance of *place* in survivors' Holocaust experiences. Geographers tend to distinguish between "space" and "place," seeing the former as a more abstract notion and the latter as imbued with meaning. Previously, much of our work has focused on space, for example, the growth and demise of the SS camp system across Europe, the building of Auschwitz, or the shifting shape of ghettoization in Budapest. Such work is critical for placing survivor testimonies within the broader geographies of ghettos and camps, but it says little about how those places were experienced, understood, reworked into sites of resistance or hiding, and later retold in postwar interviews. After watching multiple testimonies, we came to see them as central to any understanding of the Holocaust as an event experienced as a series of places lived and recollected by the victims as relationships, not only with the physical world of the ghetto, the camp, or the train but with other people. And

that's how place is often described: as geographies of relations, and quite particular relations at that. In fact, one of the aspects that struck us most while listening to testimonies was the survivors' tendency to detail their relationships with other individuals or bystanders, even when these relationships incorporate feelings of fear and danger, while largely avoiding descriptions of perpetrators. Alongside this, a second theme emerged from our analysis: that the spatial is social and the social is spatial. As people, like Salmoni and Aguilar, moved through a series of places, social networks played a critical role in the meaning of those places and the

**"Working with the testimony of Gilberto Salmoni, an Italian survivor, we came to see that while the index allowed us to map the Salmoni family's movements through Italy and into the camp system, only listening carefully to his testimony revealed the fine grains of experience we now seek to understand."**



## A Map to Prevention

*By Samuel Gustman, the Institute's chief technology officer*

Human Geography is a subfield of geography that studies everything about people in terms of spaces and places. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are computer systems that model real-world phenomena by combining geographic data sets with almost any other kind of data set and provides tools that allow analysis and visualization

of the results, using maps. The USC Shoah Foundation strives to enable human geographers to combine the data and information in the Visual History Archive with geographic data sets, enabling visual explanations of what happened, new insights into the events that occurred, and eventually build predictive models that can be compared to modern events in order to give early warning signs of future genocides.

Often, GIS models are built from networks. Networks are the connections between pieces of data and information, which follow certain models of behavior. The spatial network model most people are familiar with in GIS are the directions they get from traffic navigation systems, which perform a network analysis of street, traffic, and other data to give someone a path from point A to point B.

To enable human geographers to create network models using the testimonies, the Shoah Foundation utilizes structures created between keywords, images, people, and locations attached to one-minute segments of testimony. These structures allow human geographers to create spatial network models, using testimony.

Currently, the Shoah Foundation exposes the underlying geographic data attached to the survivor stories through a mapping interface in the Visual History Archive. Researchers can use maps to explore any location and what testimonies and topics are mentioned in those locations, jumping directly into the testimony to hear about those locations.

It is our hope that by using current and new cataloguing data, the intersection of genocide studies and human geography will be further enabled, providing insight into what happened and still is happening. ■

role they played in survival. For Salmoni, a remark by an acquaintance at the Milan train station prevented the entire family from being immediately deported to Auschwitz. Factory workers and political prisoners in Milan offered Salmoni's pregnant sister Dora extra food and protection, although her ultimate fate was to be murdered in Auschwitz with her mother and father. For Aguilar, her aunt joining them in the ghetto house was critically important because she had worked in a bakery before the war and so she could get hold of bread. Aguilar's journey to Buda at the end of the war was a journey not just to a place but also to a person—the non-Jewish uncle who ultimately found a hiding place for her.

Testimonies are not only a narrative of places, times, and events but, perhaps more profoundly, a narrative of social relations, which are continuously broken apart and recreated through space and time. Our week exploring the Visual History Archive and working together sharpened our interest in understanding how places and social relationships might help explain survival, and has provided a basis for developing a larger research project in connection with the USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research. This project will be centered on

**“Studying the particularities of one individual’s movements would enable a deeper explanation of what kinds of places were seen to offer safety or opportunities for resistance, how these places were experienced by various survivors, and how interpersonal networks played a role in survival and resistance. A new methodology of Holocaust geography was right before our eyes.”**

a synergistic approach to narratives, in which we will study survival as the product of relationships between geography, history, and the victim's social status and social networks, with the ultimate objective to develop an explanatory framework for survival for Holocaust and genocide researchers. We hope our research will also result in new and improved methods of indexing testimonies, which will allow teachers, students, and the general public to develop personal paths of exploration of the Visual History Archive and other similar archives. ■

To learn more visit: <http://www.ushmm.org/learn/mapping-initiatives/geographies-of-the-holocaust>

# Emotion, Storytelling, and the Human Universals

By *Antonio Damasio*

How personal stories can evoke deep empathy for human tragedy

*Antonio Damasio is USC University Professor of Psychology and Neurology. For a full biography, see page 4.*

**THE MERITS OF** personal storytelling are unquestionable, and they simply cannot be exaggerated. As an adolescent growing up in Europe, I thought I knew about the Holocaust, and I certainly knew many of the related historical facts. But the sheer

cruelty of the events and the depth of the human tragedy only overwhelmed me when I visited Anne Frank's attic in Amsterdam and when I read her diary. The events became connected to one individual, and the pain was thus personalized.

The mechanism behind such a strong connection was first discovered by Aristotle, who detected our ability to identify with the characters of a play and assume the characters' emotions vicariously. Freud concurred, more than two millennia later, and so does modern neuroscience as it describes the nerve cells and the neural systems that allow each of our brains to assume the role of another person, embody the emotions of that person, and feel a version of their feelings.

So, if one wishes to tell a story to which others can deeply respond and not forget, one should tell a personal story and give it the power to evoke strong emotions and subsequent feelings. There is no dearth of such stories related to the Holocaust, and there is no need to modify them to fit some model of storytelling effectiveness. The entire period of the Holocaust is made up of such personal stories, and the fact that they are available in video version renders them even more effective humanly.

I remember the first time I visited the USC Shoah Foundation and saw and heard the testimonies of survivors. I found the experience no less devastating than that of my long-ago visit in Amsterdam.

Are there downsides and risks to the personalization of human drama and its inevitable emotional punch? Indeed there are, and they are not small. One well-identified risk concerns the kind of memory that such experiences generate. Emotional power cuts in dual ways. On the one hand it helps produce indelible memory traces, but on the other, beyond a certain level, emotional power blurs details and promotes the memory of generalities, most of all generalities of pain, suffering, and pity, separated from the specific facts that belong to the episode.

A related risk concerns the over-personalization of narratives and the effacement of the universal aspects of the situation—moral and political, for example—in favor of incidents. Well-written novels, plays, and films work best when they are personal, no doubt, for all the reasons I gave earlier. But what if the personalized emotion obfuscates deeper realities of historical fact? What if the memories that result from such effective stories favor the panglossian gloss?

I have been impressed by how well the USC Shoah Foundation has navigated these storytelling waters. May it continue to do so, especially as it moves its sights to more recent human horrors whose final consequences are still the same as the Holocaust's—suffering and destruction of dignity and life—but whose historical and political contexts are not as transparent as those of World War II. ■



# Twenty Years Later

## *The Legacy of Schindler's List and the USC Shoah Foundation*

Holocaust survivor Poldek Pfefferberg shares his photo album and his memories with Spielberg and other members of the *Schindler's List* cast and crew. The testimony of Pfefferberg, also known as Leopold Page, can be viewed at: [vhaonline.usc.edu](http://vhaonline.usc.edu)



**OSKAR SCHINDLER** never could have imagined how his acts of human decency would spread and grow as new people learned of his story. He was living for the moment, not the history books.

But the lesson of his life—that one person can make the world a better place—has been handed from person to person, and from generation to generation.

The chain from past to present started with Schindler survivor Poldek Pfefferberg, who brought the incredible story to writer Thomas Keneally, whose book inspired Steven Spielberg to make his landmark film *Schindler's List* and establish the USC Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education.

The USC Shoah Foundation carries this message from the past forward.

In 1994, the focus of the Institute was on capturing 50,000 testimonies from survivors and witnesses. In 2014 the focus is on teaching with testimonies.

The recently announced Center for Advanced Genocide Research will advance the next significant chapter for the Institute,

leading research and scholarship on the Holocaust and other genocides to better understand how and why genocides occur, and how to intervene in the cycle that leads to genocide.

As USC Shoah Foundation expands its global reach, even more students, researchers, and scholars who use Visual History Archive to connect with survivor and witness testimony, will have the opportunity to learn how they too can make the world a better place. ■



USC SHOAH FOUNDATION

1994

*Preserving the Legacy*

Steven Spielberg joined with Holocaust survivors who gave testimony to USC Shoah Foundation. (bottom, left to right) Sonia Papper, Janet Rosmarin, Steven Spielberg, Dora Pinto, Jack Pinto. (top, left to right) John Helman, Selma Stoff, Frieda Tamboryn, Henry Rosmarin, Garry Tumin, Olga Bitterman, Edward Koslowski, Daisy Miller.





USC SHOAH FOUNDATION

2014

### *Transformed by Testimony*

Twenty years later, students who have been transformed by testimonies in the Visual History Archive gather around Steven Spielberg. (bottom, left to right) Mingyi Wang, Tara Adarkar, Steven Spielberg, Corah Forrester, Graham Finch. (center, left to right) Ashlen Weddington, Victor Ewubor, Turner Thompson, Alex Biniaz-Harris. (top, left to right) Cassidy Stein, Jordan Lustman, Fiona Captan, Jocelyn Cash.



# Resisting *the* Path to Genocide

Collecting testimony in real time as events are unfolding

By Mukesh Kapila

**T**he key to resisting the path to genocide is early intervention, but before one can intervene, one must have in hand detailed information and evidence. Collecting testimony after the brutality subsides has been an immensely powerful tool in changing the way people look at genocide and how to prevent it in the future. But to date, it has been of little help in real time, while crimes against humanity are actively occurring.

It is important when we are assessing what is happening on the ground to hear the voices of real people and what they are experiencing. With advances in technology, it is now possible to interview victims and share their stories across the world instantly and while there is still time to help them. The faster we hear from them directly, the more it can help in reaching our ultimate goal of early intervention.

This sounds good in principle, but collecting testimony in real time raises moral, ethical, and legal questions, that must be addressed.

For example, what obligation does an interviewer have to help someone who is facing imminent danger? Are we just asking them to recount their suffering without offering practical assistance? The people we need to hear from most are likely to be in the greatest danger and have the least access to basic necessities such as food, health care, water, and sanitation.

If we need to enter a war zone to relay information, how does that make us different from journalists? Where is the line between objective reporting and advocacy? We must always be alert to the fact that people will try to promote their own side of a story, which may not always comport with reality.

The work of Tomo Križnar, a Slovenian journalist, documentarian, and human rights activist who has been actively lobbying for peace in Sudan for over 16 years, is instructive. He, with the help of H.O.P.E. Humanitarian Foundation, a Slovenian nonprofit, handed out cam-

eras in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. Ordinary people were thus able to videotape the destruction around them, and these reports were then made accessible on the Internet. This is one form of real-time testimony, and a great start. But to have the greatest impact and to reach as many people as possible, such documentation also needs infrastructure and the kind of expertise that the USC Shoah Foundation can bring. The power and global reach of the Visual History Archive, coupled with organizations and partners on the ground, could create the means for many more people to be heard.

Testimony may not be limited to victims but can be taken from other involved people, whose insights could generate responsible action. As the head of the United Nations mission in Sudan in 2003–2004, I experienced vividly the genocidal violence unfolding on a daily basis in Darfur, which my United Nations colleagues back in the head office could not see. Reporting daily is comparable to an air-



**Real-time testimony** Mukesh Kapila speaking with women who are at the frontline of continued ethnically directed violence in Sudan.

plane's black box, which records what the pilot is doing. If the plane crashes, you can analyze what the pilot was doing at the time of the crash. I could imagine the head of a United Nations organization or other responsible authority reporting in real time what they are witnessing. Like a personal video diary, it would provide an important record of what they knew, whom they spoke to, and the dilemmas and choices they faced on a daily basis.

However, we must be careful with what people in vulnerable situations entrust in us. There are those who could use the information we gather in the wrong way. But that's no different from the use or misuse of information at other times. It is important to follow proper rules and ensure that the person being interviewed has given his or her informed consent. While some social and technical questions must be addressed, the ability to gather real-time testimony and do it consistently would, in principle, be an enormous contribution to the area of mass-atrocity prevention.

*"I was struck by someone's testimony, which I listened to in Blue Nile state—a long-suffering part of Sudan that is even more forgotten than the Nuba or Darfur. I asked her what I could do for her, and she laughed and said, 'What can you do for me? You're a good man. Thanks for coming. I'm born here, and I will die here, and I worry that no one will ever know I existed or what suffering I went through. Please, can you tell the world what I am telling you? That's enough for me.'"*

What I know for certain, from working in the field, is that most affected people are only too ready to share their stories, because they believe that if we hear from them directly, we will take on some of their burden of suffering and do something to help them.

Just being heard may bring solace to victims. And it is remarkable how often people in intensely difficult situations are willing to tell of their experiences despite the risks to which they may expose themselves in so doing. For example, I was struck by someone's testimony, which I listened to in Blue Nile state—a long-suffering part of Sudan

that is even more forgotten than the Nuba or Darfur. I asked her what I could do for her, and she laughed and said, "What can you do for me? You're a good man. Thanks for coming. I'm born here, and I will die here, and I worry that no one will ever know I existed or what suffering I went through. Please, can you tell the world what I am telling you? That's enough for me." ■

*Mukesh Kapila, CBE, is Professor of Global Health and Humanitarian Affairs at the University of Manchester. For a full biography, see page 5.*

# Using Stories *as Data and Data* to Tell Stories

A look at how scholars can harness  
big data to learn, teach, and heal

By Steve Kay

**W**E OPEN NEWSPAPERS every day and read about atrocities being committed all over the world. We see graphic images, read the stories—and, for many of us, go back to our busy lives. But it doesn't have to be that way.

How humans can so brutally terrorize other humans is, thankfully, unfathomable to most people. Yet it happens. It has always happened, and—without sweeping societal changes—it will continue to happen.

But imagine if we could anticipate where the next major genocide was going to occur and stop it before even one person died? What tools would we need to be so predictive and, quite frankly, clairvoyant?

I firmly believe that the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive holds many keys to unlocking the enigmatic conditions that have led to genocides throughout history. Here at USC, we have a database of people's experiences and emotions under the worst possible circum-

stances throughout the last 100 years.

While the field of digital humanities is often overlooked in discussions of big data, the Visual History Archive is a beautiful example of how we can use an extremely large database to learn, teach, and heal.

With nearly 52,000 testimonies from survivors and witnesses—ranging from the Holocaust and World War II Europe to the Nanjing Massacre and the Rwandan Tutsi genocide—the Visual History Archive shows how digital technology can meld with humanitarian inquiry to address some of society's most complicated issues. The Visual History Archive is both user-friendly—all 1.2 million names are easily searchable—and societally relevant. It is a stellar model of how big data can serve both fifth graders—who have the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust by hearing firsthand accounts—and neuroscientists, who can use it as a database to help unlock enigmatic brain function.

For me, one of the most profoundly inspira-

tional uses of the Visual History Archive is that of Glenn Fox. As a doctoral student, Fox forged a partnership between USC Dornsife's Brain and Creativity Institute and the USC Shoah Foundation to conduct the first study on gratitude by using both functional brain imaging and recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors.

After watching hours of footage, Fox and his team collected a number of scenarios that would elicit feelings of gratitude, and read them to subjects who were connected to brain scanners. Using these findings, Fox is making breakthroughs in our understanding of human behavior and emotion—a concept that spans almost every field and aspect of human experience.

Going forward, I believe that all researchers will need to be similarly well rounded. I envision the availability of large databases pushing scholars to think creatively about how they both gather and use data—and that includes students studying English, philosophy, history, physics, and all other concentrations. Nobody is exempt







from learning to collect and harness data if he or she wants to make lasting societal changes.

In 2013, the University of Southern California launched a 10-year Initiative in Informatics and Digital Knowledge—with USC Dornsife at the forefront of the effort—that emphasizes such areas of inquiry as the quantitative social sciences. In 2014, USC Dornsife has taken center stage in organizing a five-year Digital Humanities Program supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The program will focus on training graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in digital technology, expanding publicly available digital archives, and implementing public programs designed to explore aspects of art and literature in the digital humanities.

When I reflect upon the importance of this work, the USC Shoah Foundation is always the first example that comes to mind. Why? Because I can describe powerful images of young students learning about the Holocaust by hearing firsthand accounts. I can recount the bril-

liant discussions I've heard taking place among these students—hearing dialogues that could never be sparked simply by reading facts in a textbook or viewing figures on a blackboard. I use the Visual History Archive as a springboard into conversations of how nontraditional databases can be used to transcend fields and specific areas of inquiry in order to serve an international community of scholars, educators, and students—and even individuals searching their own genealogical histories.

I like to share the story of high school teacher Peter Cook, who was so excited about the idea of using the Visual History Archive in his classroom that he hand-delivered his application for the Institute's Master Teacher program. Cook, an economics and history teacher at Camino Nuevo Charter Academy in Los Angeles, said he was floored by the work his students were able to produce, using the Visual History Archive. He recalled that one student had embarked on a research project focusing on Hitler's strate-

gies, but—after spending time searching through the Visual History Archive, he changed his study and began investigating Nazi propaganda, truly delving into the political intricacies.

Cook mentioned another student who used the Visual History Archive's incredible search capabilities to study the history of Jehovah's Witnesses during the Holocaust—a creative and novel concept. I was particularly moved by the story of a student who became interested in using the Visual History Archive to learn more about deportation, because it resonated with her own life and her mother's personal experience.

It is in this way that I believe humanities-based databases have an incredible capacity to teach and heal. For our students, the USC Shoah Foundation's testimonies are a powerful tool for understanding history, politics, psychology—everything that encompasses the human condition.

The Visual History Archive and the mission of USC Dornsife are perfectly aligned. As a scientist, my personal goal—and my goal as dean—is to tackle some of society's most difficult humanitarian challenges by employing an interdisciplinary approach that blends informatics, science, technology, and the humanities.

My ultimate mission is to support translational research and translational education. What does that mean? By providing access for middle- and high school teachers to the Visual History Archive, we are making it possible for students—during their most impressionable stages—to experience an invaluable opportunity to learn compassion and to be inspired to make changes.

Then, once at the undergraduate level at USC, our students can learn to search the Visual History Archive independently in order to refine their ideas on what exactly are the challenges that they want to solve. Finally, at the graduate and postdoctoral levels, they can begin truly to mine the data for trends and patterns.

I honestly believe that, as it continues to grow, the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive can emerge as a leading tool for scholars worldwide as they seek resolution to problems we had previously considered unsolvable. Its unprecedented size and search capacities can become an international playground for creative thinkers—who will find ways to identify the patterns—and unravel them. ■

*Steve Kay is dean of the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. For a full biography, see page 5.*

# The Killer Within

What *The Act of Killing* brings to our understanding of violence

By Ted Braun

JOSHUA OPPENHEIMER'S LANDMARK new documentary, *The Act of Killing*, accomplishes something few films have been able to do: bring viewers inside the lives of real mass murderers. "Imagine," Oppenheimer told an audience during a conversation we had following a recent screening of the film, "that you were in Germany 40 years after the Second World War, but the Nazis had won and were still in power." You would, he added, be in a place much like contemporary Indonesia, the setting of *The Act of Killing*. And you would find, as he did, people in power, who—far from being ashamed of the crimes they had committed—celebrate their killings.

Taking advantage of this openness and the impunity that the killers still enjoy, Oppenheimer was given an expansive look at how mass murders were carried out and how the perpetrators remain in power. Starting in 2004 and continuing over the next several years, he interviewed hundreds of people responsible for

the 1965 genocide that helped sweep General Suharto into power. Among the many things the film accomplishes is to expose the societal fabric of state-sponsored violence—the web of relationships between state officials, media, paramilitaries, international governmental and corporate partners, people responsible for the actual slayings, citizens terrorized into acceptance of a ruling regime, and an expanding number of globalized consumers who might best be described, as Richard Nixon did about different citizens in a different time, as a great, silent majority. Viewed as a guided tour through the state apparatus of mass murder, the film is a triumph of clarity and breadth, and reveals, like nothing I've seen, the social network necessary to commit enormous crimes. If nothing else, *The Act of Killing* puts to an end any notion that violence on a massive scale is solely the work of individual madmen.

Oppenheimer accomplishes this by taking us on an extraordinary journey with the film's

main character, Anwar Congo, a gangster turned death squad leader turned celebrated paramilitary officer. The film presents Congo's struggle to re-enact for Oppenheimer's cameras—an enterprise that includes casting victims and restaging massacres—the murders he orchestrated nearly 50 years ago. The dramatic question, like some nightmarish, hallucinatory "let's-put-on-a-show" musical, centers on whether Anwar can produce and star in scenes of killing that will compose, to use his words, a "beautiful family movie" about his "glorious past." The film's inner drama, however, deliberately probes Congo's seemingly untroubled conscience and asks whether he'll wake to the horror and human consequence of his actions. We hope that he, like a character in Greek tragedy, is moving inexorably toward recognition and the imaginative transformation that accompanies it. We are not disappointed.

In this way *The Act of Killing* is a film about imagination, both individual and collective; the



**Understanding violence** Perpetrators of the 1965–1966 Indonesian killings glorify their actions in a musical reenactment scene from the documentary *The Act of Killing*.

failure of imagination that seems a prerequisite for mass violence; the strange ways imagination can be blinded, distorted, and abused to maintain power; and the importance of imagination in reckoning with and repairing the damage of horrific crimes.

Anyone who looks even briefly into the history of genocide and state-sponsored violence quickly becomes aware that the rhetorical and conceptual dehumanization of a targeted group are determinative steps down the path toward mass murder: Tutsis become cockroaches; Jews vermin; Native Americans dogs. But in the wake of these horrors, what happens when the time comes to deal with those responsible for the killing? If victims, other survivors, and their supporters turn around and dismiss the murderers as inhuman monsters—demonize them as something other than people—surely we run the risk of perpetuating an endless cycle of violence. One of the great and challenging aspects of *The Act of*

*Killing* is its staunch refusal to dehumanize the killers who are its subject. Oppenheimer presents Congo and his collaborators as human beings whom we can understand and with whom we can even empathize. He does this without losing a moral posture, which condemns their actions unequivocally. But the insight we gain by inhabiting the lives of Congo and his fellow executioners, however briefly, is extraordinary. We return to our own lives with perspective—on others and on ourselves. And this may be an even greater contribution to our understanding of violence.”

*Killing* is its staunch refusal to dehumanize the killers who are its subject. Oppenheimer presents Congo and his collaborators as human beings whom we can understand and with whom we can even empathize. He does this without losing a moral posture, which condemns their actions unequivocally. But the insight we gain by inhabiting the lives of Congo and his fellow executioners, however briefly, is extraordinary. We return to our own lives with perspective—on others and on ourselves. And this may be an even greater contribution to our understanding of violence than his brilliant taxonomy of the state apparatus of genocide.

At one point in the film, Oppenheimer asks Adi Zulkadry, one of Congo’s fellow death squad leaders, whether he considers his ac-

tions in 1965 to be war crimes. Zulkadry is unrepentant: “‘War crimes’ are defined by the winners. I’m a winner. So I can make my own definitions. ... Americans killed the Indians. Has anybody been punished for that?”

By allowing us to understand Congo and Zulkadry instead of dismissing them as inhuman monsters, we are invited, troubling though it may be, to see in their celebration of murder—and its almost surreal use of American cinematic genres—something of our own society and its storytelling, and to wonder about some of the most

Writer-director Ted Braun is associate professor of screenwriting at USC’s School of Cinematic Arts. For a full biography, see page 4



treasured parts of our national narrative. In the aftermath of Oppenheimer's film, the games of cowboys and Indians of many a childhood, and the ritualized drama of countless Westerns, seem not so much play-acting or good, old-fashioned entertainment but a re-enactment of genocide. For provoking this profound reconsideration we owe Oppenheimer a great debt. In dancing with Congo and watching him celebrate his murders, it only seems as if we are doing something shockingly new. *The Act of Killing* reminds us that, in fact, we've been here many times before: as settlers claimed land on the plains and fought back "savages," and as the cavalry crested the hill and charged to the rescue. This brilliant documentary invites us to reflect that from its beginnings, American film has celebrated our own acts of killing and offered them up to the world as cinematic pleasure. By prompting this startling recognition of the societal state-sponsored killer within, Joshua Oppenheimer has lit a path for Americans to imagine a way forward out of the blindness and illusions of the past. ■

Joshua Oppenheimer is senior researcher on the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council's Genocide and Genre project and has published widely on these themes. For a full biography, see page 5.



*This year The Act of Killing was nominated for an Academy Award in the feature documentary category. The film was of particular interest to those who work in the field of testimony as Oppenheimer interviewed many perpetrators of killings in Indonesia in the 1960s. Below is an excerpt from Oppenheimer's talk, describing his own journey of discovery as he encountered perpetrators willing to talk, even boast about their acts of killing.*

## The Making of *The Act of Killing*

By Joshua Oppenheimer

I first went to Indonesia in 2001 to help a group of palm-oil plantation workers make a film documenting their struggle to organize a union in the aftermath of the Suharto dictatorship, when unions were illegal. I didn't know anything about the Indonesian genocide. I didn't know it had occurred.

Right after we made that film, these people whom I knew and understood were survivors of the genocide asked me to come back to make another film about an even darker chapter in their history. They wanted me to document what it's like to live every day when the perpetrators of violence are still in power.

"Try to film the perpetrators," they asked. "Try to film the aging death-squad leaders who live all around us. Start with your next-door neighbor. They can tell you if they have killed our relatives."

I then spent two years filming every perpetrator I could find across Malaysia or Sumatra. To my horror, not only were they open about what they had done, they even boasted about it.

They would tell these awful stories with smiles on their faces and in front of their grandchildren, even.

Listening to them, I had the sense that I was getting something closer to performance than to the sober testimony to which we're accustomed as filmmakers.

This raised many questions for me. For whom were they performing? Is this how they want others to see them? And how do they see themselves, and why?

I felt if I could answer these questions, the whole façade that the genocide was something heroic would somehow come crumbling down.

I met Anwar Congo in 2005. He was the 41st perpetrator I filmed in that period, and I did something that I didn't do with the previous 40.

The first day I met him, I could see that he felt some kind of trauma, and I wondered if he would recognize the meaning of what he had done, the meaning of what he was talking about.

And so I screened the footage back to him. There is a moment in the beginning of the film when you see him watching himself on the roof. It's clear that he is disturbed about something, and it's easy to assume he's thinking "Oh no, this is awful." Or "What I have I done?" Or "This is going to make me look bad."

But he doesn't dare, because to say any of those things would be to admit that his actions were wrong. Instead, fueled by his vanity, I suppose, he says what's wrong is his clothing, and his hair, and his acting. And he proposes an improvement, as though if he could make the scene right, he could make what he did right.

So began this five-year process, which was essentially the same method again and again. I would agree to shoot each new scene that he would propose because it was always shedding new light on either what they did, or on the regime that is still in place today.

Victims can tell you about it. They can tell you about what they've lost, about the experience of living with terrible loss, but they can't tell you about what made the people do it. And so we have to talk to perpetrators, including perpetrators who are still flourishing with impunity.

The editor of *Tempo Magazine*, the largest news publication in Indonesia, phoned me after he saw a longer cut of the film. He said, "Josh, there was a time before *The Act of Killing*, now there will be a time after *The Act of Killing*. I've been censoring stories about this genocide for as long as I've been in this job. And I won't do it anymore. Because your film shows me, above all, that I don't want to grow old as a perpetrator." ■

# An Artist's Perspective

By *Stacie Chaiken*

Art engages broader audiences and raises awareness of genocide in Rwanda

*Stacie Chaiken is founder of Witness and Responsibility and has created performances involving conflict, the Middle East, and the Holocaust. For a full biography, see page 4.*

**RWANDA IS** *Mille Collines*, The Land of a Thousand Hills; it is gorgeous, lush, and green. Local folklore says that God wanders the world during the day and comes home to Rwanda to sleep at night.

Yet I study photos of bodies piled up at roadblocks on Kigali streets taken during the 1994 genocide. Just 20 years ago one million Tutsi were murdered in Rwanda, often by their own neighbors or friends. Hutu who did not comply were targeted and murdered, as well. Driving through downtown, we pass a large brick church, Saint Famille—so clean, so modern—where thousands of people, believing they had found sanctuary, were betrayed. Driving out of town, we cross the bridge over Nyabarongo River, which was, 20 years ago, clotted with corpses; the water ran red with blood.

I am a theater artist. I am here in Rwanda, at the moment of the 20th commemoration, confronting the genocide, as a witness and translator of what I

see, hear, and feel.

In their daily lives it's difficult for most people to engage with narrative related to catastrophe or mass atrocity. The experiences survivors describe are complex, deeply disturbing, on so many levels. Artists, however, by virtue of what they are trained to do, stand in witness with the intention of bringing forth expression with which a broad audience can engage. This is useful: Engagement is the first step toward prevention.

Loss is something that most of us, on some level, have experienced. Loss is the obvious entry point here. Yet the hundreds of memorial sites where people perished during the genocide in Rwanda represent loss beyond our comprehension. At a single site, tens of thousands may have lost their lives. Some of the victims are buried in coffins, as one would expect, but in some cases the remains of 50 or more share a single box. Many of the dead have never been buried; skulls intact, sliced open by machete, smashed by club, riddled by bullets, are arranged on shelves, row after tidy row of skulls. I study them, take in the elegance of the human head, so many, so beautiful. Most of the remains are anonymous, but some of the skulls are known, and despite the universal imperative for "burial with dignity," there are families that choose not to bury their dead. They prefer to have them above-ground as evidence and a silent form of testimony. Survivors want visitors to be confronted by the proof that genocide happened here in this place, and it happened to them. The unburied are all strangers to me. In their presence, I am touched by the intimacy of my connection with them, naked as they are.

In everyday life, Rwandan traditions surrounding death and loss have a grace and fluidity, much like the Jewish tradition in which I was raised. Like shiva, in which the community gathers around a family in the immediate days after a death, so neighbors and friends here will sit around a bonfire at the back of the deceased's family home and remember good times. They sing songs, tell stories and jokes, and present poems in honor of the person who has died. If it's the head of family who has gone, there is a ceremony whereby the mantle of responsibility is passed on to their heir.

Genocide smashes through the native intelligence that lived in this culture with regard to mourning—moving from life to death to life—just as the Holocaust smashed through all the dignified traditions of the Jewish community. Everything Rwandans knew about negotiating their way through the inevitability of loss, fold-



Young children proudly show off school supplies in Bumgogo, Rwanda

ing in grief, doesn't serve survivors here. What happened is too awful; it's inhuman, unbearable. We cannot breathe, and therefore we cannot move beyond that never-ending moment of trauma.

That is why testimony is so essential: It allows survivors to breathe, to give voice to what happened. Bones may be eloquent, but they are silent. Testimony allows an individual the opportunity to say out loud, "This really happened; it happened here; it happened to us."

For Rwanda, 20 years after the genocide, "This really happened" remains a vital story to tell. There are those who deny there was a genocide. There are perpetrators who live abroad with impunity; some are quiet, some not so quiet. Some are armed.

I am a visitor. I have come here to look, listen, and learn. I observe—alongside the profound imperative for remembrance, testimony, and dialogue about the genocide—there is an intentional reach to identify with Rwandan culture and traditions. I am moved by this reach to the spirit of dignity (agaciro) that has always been, as a reach for the strength to be humane in a landscape that was not so long ago bereft of all humanity, and to move forward as a unified people.

**"Artists, however, by virtue of what they are trained to do, stand in witness with the intention of bringing forth expression with which a broad audience can engage. This is useful: Engagement is the first step toward prevention."**

With the genocide, Rwanda is changed forever, and when we engage with the history of Rwanda and the Rwandan people, we too are changed. I am in awe of the courage I see here, the courage to love with all one's heart what has been so brutally lost; to float on a stream of unspeakable grief, to ride it, breathe into it, speak it, find safety in one another, and weave that grief into the fabric of a new, changed life.

None of this is easy, of course. There is no strength without obstacle, no courage without fear. Rwandans are the last to presume to be role models, yet, as they move into the future, there is so much to be learned. ■

*Kwibuka means "remember" in Kinyarwanda, Rwanda's language. It is used to describe the annual commemoration of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. To learn more about Kwibuka20, the 20th anniversary commemoration, visit: <http://www.kwibuka.rw/>*

## Anti-Semitism in Hungary

By Péter Krekó

Education is necessary to combat Hungary's troubling rise in anti-Semitism

*Péter Krekó is director of Political Capital, a policy research and consulting institute in Hungary. For a full biography, see page 5.*

IN RECENT YEARS, domestic and international public discourse regarding anti-Semitism in Hungary has been characterized by banal understatements and exaggerated overstatements at the same time. Headlines such as "Hungary:

The Cancer in the Middle of Europe?"; "Fast jeder zweite ungarische Jude überlegte Auswanderung" ("Almost every second Hungarian Jew has considered emigration"); and "Hungary is anti-Semitic and vile to the Roma. Don't dare lecture us, Mr Commissioner" are often seen in the international press. As a response, the Hungarian government resorts to "double standards," emphasizing its commitment against anti-Semitism but refusing to confront justified claims about anti-Semitism and the far right in Hungary. We should base our decisions on established knowledge, while always being aware of complexities, as well as seek to find meaningful ways to reduce anti-Semitism. Using testimonies in formal education might be one of these strategies.

Anti-Semitism has obviously increased in the past decade. Research shows that from 1993 to 2006, 10 percent to 14 percent of respondents found Jews to be repulsive. By 2008, that figure had jumped to 28 percent, while in 2013 it was lower but still high at 21 percent. Although economic crises have a major role in the fluctuation of anti-Semitism, their effect is not a given. It depends upon the political context, and mainly upon whether there is a political force that blames Jewish people for the economic and political crisis. In Hungary the Jobbik party does this systematically.

Anti-Semitism in Hungary is a divisive issue. Unlike anti-Romaism, which is practically consensual (and even more deeply concerning, as two-thirds of Hungarians think that criminality is in the genes of Gypsies), the attitudes toward the Jews are much more polarized. According to our research at Political Capital, we find a high number of anti-Semites, as well as "philosemites" in Hungary at the same time. A survey of the Hungarian Internet community conducted in July 2013 found that 28 percent of the respondents do not like Jews, while 34 percent do. However, antipathy toward Jews is higher among the younger respondents, which means that politics built upon anti-Semitism has serious strategic reserves in Hungary. Jobbik's main constituency is not the poor, angry old people but the middle-class, relatively well-off, well-educated young adults. It clearly points to the failures of the Hungarian education



system in raising more democratically committed young people, active participants of civil society, who build their value system on the respect of human rights. It definitely calls for new approaches in education.

Anti-Semitism is not a one-dimensional phenomenon. While political and journalistic discourse often simplifies the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, making it seem like a one-dimensional attitude, there is no other prejudice that would be as layered and complex, considering its psychology, its influence, and multiple ways of expression, than anti-Semitism. The softer, more indirect, and subtle the forms of anti-Semitism are, the more widespread they become and the more difficult it is to eliminate them. In our studies, we found a much higher ratio of the more cognitive form of anti-Semitism, the “conspiracy anti-Semitism” stereotype against the Jews that sees “invisible” manipulations by the Jews acting in secret, than archaic, open, and emotional, “visceral” repudiation. In public discourse we find a wide range of anti-Semitic statements, from the most blatant forms of Holocaust denial, and blood libels, to the more subtle forms of biased Israel-criticism, the opinion that the Jews deal too much with their past, and Jews take advantage of having been victims during the Nazi era. This latter opinion is shared by 68 percent of Hungarian society, according to a survey for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation’s Project on Combating Right-wing Extremism (Forum Berlin), conducted by Andreas Zick and his colleagues.<sup>2</sup>

The most important threat of anti-Semitism in Hungary is not violence. Anti-Semitism, despite the growing number of violent atrocities, is not a problem that is articulated in everyday, personal relations—unlike the anti-Roma attitudes that threaten ethnic violence. Anti-Semitism is an ideological function, which means that for now, the physical and financial security of the Jews is, in most cases, not at risk. The goal of contemporary anti-Semitism is primarily the creation of a biased and self-justifying ideological position. Contemporary, conspiracy-based anti-Semitism gives an explanation to national domestic problems of the citizens and of the country, national historical traumas and losses, domestic conflicts, ethnic tensions, or the economic crises. Anti-Semitism is the opium of the nation, which refuses to face every problem and failure, and blames them on a global Jewish conspiracy. This makes the national community more closed, more arrogant, and more paranoid, and prevents it from learning from the political and historical mistakes of the past. And it unfortunately captures



*An independent Hungarian member of parliament and former member of the far-right Jobbik party, left, burns an Israeli flag during a 2012 anti-Zionism demonstration in Budapest, Hungary.*

the social and political mainstream as well. Anti-Semitism, therefore, poses at least as great a danger on the majority of the society than on the Jews themselves.

The stubbornness of anti-Semitism makes it difficult to eliminate. If someone is an addict, it is the one who takes it away who will be the most hated. Indoctrination will not work, although education might. My experience is that facing the problem directly in classroom is a helpful method—refuting and ridiculing the most widespread conspiracy theories in the classrooms via informed and open debate. It is important not to be afraid of encountering anti-Semitic arguments and instead encourage debates with students, even those with anti-Semitic views. But teachers need training, good arguments, and tools to be able to maintain confidentiality in the classroom in order to allow for an authentic dialogue, even against the most blatant statements. Resources such as the testimonies of the USC Shoah Foundation provide knowledge, insight, and understanding into the Hungarian classroom, to support teachers in such classroom debate.

It is not self-evident that remembrance as such will always have a beneficial effect. Across Europe, the more visceral forms of anti-Semitism are declining (Hungary is among the few

**“The role of carefully structured education programming is crucial. Change will happen when we remember the past, and teach about it in the present, for the future.”**

counter-examples), giving way to new forms of anti-Semitism such as anti-Semitism-denial and negative reactions to Holocaust remembrance. In Hungary, a country where more than two-thirds of the population thinks that Jews try to take advantage of having been victims of the Holocaust (even if we think this opinion is outrageous), putting more emphasis on historical remembrance of the Holocaust may be a double-edged sword. If applied wisely and cautiously, it can bring beneficial effect. If it is used to strengthen the recipients’ guilt, the result may be even more widespread, stubborn anti-Semitism. The role of carefully structured education programming is crucial. Change will happen when we remember the past, and teach about it in the present, for the future. ■

<sup>1</sup> *The Roots of Radicalism and Anti-Roma Attitudes on the Far Right* [http://www.tarki.hu/en/news/2013/items/20130305\\_bernat\\_juhasz\\_kr\\_eko\\_molnar.pdf](http://www.tarki.hu/en/news/2013/items/20130305_bernat_juhasz_kr_eko_molnar.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report* <http://library.jes.de/pdf/files/do/07908-20110311.pdf>

# The Last of the Unjust

*Excerpted from an interview conducted by Stephen D. Smith*

Claude Lanzmann visits USC Shoah Foundation  
for the first time and screens his new film

*Claude Lanzmann is a French journalist and filmmaker who directed the landmark documentary Shoah in 1985. For a biography, see page 5.*

**FRENCH FILM DIRECTOR** and documentarian Claude Lanzmann visited USC Shoah Foundation for the first time in December, bringing with him his latest film and a simple request for the future.

Lanzmann's day, scheduled during the Los Angeles press tour for his new film, *The Last of the Unjust*, included a meeting with Executive Director Stephen D. Smith and a public screening of the film followed by a discussion with the filmmaker at the USC School of Cinematic Arts.

Born in 1925 in Paris, Lanzmann became politically active at a young age, participating in the French Resistance movement at Blaise Pascal High School in 1943. He became friends with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir at the University of Berlin in the 1950s and began contributing to *Les Temps Modernes*, Sartre's literary magazine. Today, Lanzmann is the magazine's editor in chief.

Lanzmann, a staunch pro-Israel advocate, wrote and reported on various conflicts in Israel and the Middle East. He published a special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* dedicated to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and was indicted for his denunciation of repression in Algeria.

In 1970, Lanzmann switched to documentary filmmaking full-time. He worked on *Shoah* from 1974 to 1985. The nine-hour epic documentary changed forever the way in which the eyewitness would appear in film. *Shoah* continues to be hailed as one of the most significant documentary films ever made about the Holocaust.

Lanzmann's later films continued themes close to his heart. *Israel, Why* (1973) examines the state of Israel just before the Yom Kippur War, and *Tsahal* (1994) is about the Israel Defense Forces. *Sobibor, October 14, 1943, 4 p.m.* (2001) is about a young man's escape from the Sobibor death camp, and *A Visitor from the Living* (1999), is about the falsified International Red Cross report on Theresienstadt.

*The Last of the Unjust* reveals and builds upon a week of interviews Lanzmann conducted with Rabbi Benjamin Murmelstein in Rome in 1975. Murmelstein was the last surviving head of the Jewish Council of the Theresienstadt ghetto, who battled Adolf Eichmann to prevent the liquidation of the ghetto and procure visas so thousands of Jews could escape. Because of his role as a leader of the ghetto and his close connections to Eichmann and other top Nazis, he remains a controversial figure, hated by many, who feel he betrayed his fellow Jews.

Michael Renov, vice dean of academic affairs at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, led the discussion after the screening and asked Lanzmann to describe his impressions of Murmelstein.

Speaking to the audience at the School of Cinematic Arts, Lanzmann replied, "I was extremely aware of his magnificent intelligence, acute spirit, and readiness to answer my questions, even if they were not easy to answer, because I was not friendly with him on many occasions. I began to understand the fundamental problem of the councils, who were required to collaborate with Germans. They had no choice—no choice at all. The role of 'collaborator' is completely false to describe them and define their attitude."

As the week of interviews with Murmelstein evolved, Lanzmann said he was more and more convinced that

*The Institute's Executive Director Stephen D. Smith interviews filmmaker Claude Lanzmann.*



Murmelstein had been “unjustly accused by his Jewish brothers.”

When Renov asked whether the film is a “rehabilitation” of Murmelstein’s image, Lanzmann pointed out that Murmelstein is honest about all facets of his work with the Nazis—the good and the bad.

“[Murmelstein] gives all the weapons to condemn him, and he shows [everything to] help to understand him,” Lanzmann said.

In discussion with Smith, Lanzmann underscored his impression that Murmelstein had stood in the breach between the Nazis and the Jews. “He’s the only one who was courageous enough and intelligent enough to survive, to save the ghetto of Theresienstadt. Before this he succeeded to allow 23,000 Jews, Austrian Jews, to escape Austria [before the war]. It was a very difficult task. He had to negotiate with a monster like Eichmann.”

*The Last of the Unjust* has attracted controversy over whether Lanzmann intends to act as an apologist for Murmelstein. In a *New York Times* review of the film, Stephen D. Smith praised the film for being willing to tackle a deep and disconcerting matter. “This was Lanzmann giving [Murmelstein] a chance to clear his name, but one must not understate the complexity,” he said. “He’s good at discerning and getting to the bottom of the complexity of the Holocaust. It may not be desirable to everyone’s view, but I think it’s one we need to see and to grapple with. Not everything Murmelstein says is true, but it’s true to him.”

When Claude Lanzmann reviewed the Visual History Archive and the USC Shoah Foundation’s current work, he said, “It is perfect work...very important work. Many people and places in the world are viewing this, and there [will] be no end.”

Lanzmann had previously expressed skepticism about the Shoah Foundation. In 2010, *The New York Times* quoted him as saying of the Shoah Foundation’s 52,000 testimonies of Holocaust survivors and witnesses, “Who will see this?”

Reflecting on the relationship between the vast Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation and the detailed nature of *The Last of the Unjust*, Lanzmann said, “Sometimes there is a tendency to oversimplification. I don’t think of this as a critique; this means you have to dig more and more.” ■

*Wolf Murmelstein, the son of Benjamin Murmelstein, gave testimony to USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive in 1998. To locate a Visual History Archive access site near you visit: <http://sfi.usc.edu/locator>*

## Beyond Evil

By *Ervin Staub*

Helping survivors heal and navigate avenues to prevention and reconciliation



*Rwandan survivors who participated in a training session conducted by Ervin Staub and Laurie Anne Pearlman.*

**SURVIVORS OF GENOCIDE** are deeply affected. Research has shown that people who are victimized, even to a much lesser degree than those who are targeted in genocide, tend to perceive the world as hostile and dangerous. Individuals and groups that have been greatly harmed typically perceive the behavior of other people or whole groups as a threat to them. They may attempt to defend themselves by force, even when this is not necessary, becoming harm-doers. Or, deeply affected by the cruelty and injustice of the world, and feeling diminished, they may withdraw, distancing themselves from other people. But people can also become caring and helpful as a result of their own suffering, especially when they have certain ameliorating experiences.

An example of how having been targeted for killing can affect perception comes from Rwanda, where there was a genocide against Tutsi in 1994. In 1999 I interviewed survivors who were rescued. One of them described how men came to her house and took away her husband and brother. She had known these men before the genocide, and one of them sent another man to her house in order to protect her. This Hutu man arrived with a Bible under his arm, stayed in a room away from her, but when men repeatedly came to the house to take her away, he confronted them and managed to get them to leave.

When the genocide in Rwanda was stopped by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the rescuer, apparently afraid because he was a Hutu, left Rwanda for Zaire (now the Congo) together with about one and a half million Hutu. Not long before I interviewed this survivor, he returned and came to see the woman. She said to me: “Why did he come? What did he want? Now that the situation has changed, I can have the government protect me.”

This rescuer never behaved inappropriately toward her, saved her life in fact, but presumably because she was so deeply wounded and because he was a Hutu, she felt she needed protection from him.\*

This survivor was part of the first of many training sessions my associate Laurie Anne Pearlman and I conducted in Rwanda between 1999 and 2007 with Rwandan survivors. These sessions covered the origins and effects of genocide, and avenues to prevention and reconciliation. We have also developed on-



going educational radio programs, in collaboration with a Dutch NGO, La Benevolencija. The interview I described, in which the survivor spoke of her experience during the genocide, appeared to be healing for her. In the training she was quiet and withdrawn, looking downcast in photos. A year later, we reassembled the group to find out what use they had made of the training. Now she was much more active, out front in describing the benefits of the training and the way she used it. A year had passed with intervening experiences, but this change in her is consistent with the potential benefits of testimony. As part of our training, we also had participants gather in small groups in which they could talk about their experiences during the genocide. Evaluations of our training revealed many benefits, including a decrease in trauma symptoms, not only in the people we trained but also in people some of them later trained. But the change in this woman stood out.

One avenue to healing is people describing

**“Testimony can also make ‘knowing but not knowing’ less likely. Children and others in a family sometimes know that terrible things have happened to their parents or family members, but with survivors remaining silent, they don’t know much more. This adversely affects them. Having given testimony, people are more likely to talk about what has happened, and do it in a balanced manner appropriate for children, grandchildren, and other family members.”**

painful experiences. Even writing about such experiences for a short time has significant beneficial effects. Talking about intensely painful events to empathic listeners is especially healing. Since a usual aspect of victimization and trauma is that the person who has been harmed had no control over what was done to him or her, it is important that the person talking about such experiences has control over pace and content. This can be the case in testimony.

While earlier research has focused on the deleterious effects of having been victimized, many people who have been greatly harmed either help others who have been harmed or work to prevent harm. I have called this altruism born of suffering. Some people, having suffered, don’t want others to suffer.

There are numerous examples. Many Holocaust survivors have worked to prevent genocide at other places, or create more just societies, or work in social service professions. A woman who came from a terrible background of deprivation, abandonment, and rape started an orphanage in Vietnam for the abandoned and often despised children of American soldiers. With one of my students, Johanna Vollhardt, now a professor, we found in re-

search that studied other matters, including the effect of the Holocaust on survivors, evidence about altruism born of suffering. In a study we conducted, somewhat to my surprise, we found that students who reported that they have suffered because of their group membership or harm done to them in their families were *on the average more caring and helpful* than those who said they had not suffered. So altruism born of suffering does not seem a rare phenomenon.

What might contribute to this? Healing from psychological wounds is important. Since engagement with one’s experience under supportive conditions is essential to healing, testimony can be both healing and a starting point for a journey toward further healing experiences. Testimony can be given to a listener or interviewer, or in front of a supportive group, as in the case of groups of Holocaust survivors meeting all over the United States, or survivors meeting in a group and giving testimony at Solace ministries in Rwanda.

In a country like Rwanda, where everyone is wounded to some degree, people empathically listening to one another—something we advocate through the examples of the behavior of characters in our radio drama in Rwanda, *Musekeweya* (“New Dawn”)—is an important avenue to community healing. Evaluations have shown that this ongoing and highly popular radio drama, which started to be broadcast in 2004, has had a variety of benefits, such as increased empathy and people saying more what they believe. Commemorations can also be valuable for healing, especially when, in addition to remembering the painful past, they point to a hopeful future.

Testimony can also make “knowing but not knowing” less likely. Children and others in a family sometimes know that terrible things have happened to their parents or family members, but with survivors remaining silent, they don’t know much more. This adversely affects them. Having given testimony, people are more likely to talk about what has happened, and do it in a balanced manner appropriate for children, grandchildren, and other family members.

Having received help at the time of suffering seems to contribute to later altruism. Having

been rescued, or even given limited help like food, can say to a person that there is kindness in the world and that the world does not have to be as the perpetrators made it to be. Having been able to act in one’s own or in others’ behalf—which intended victims of genocide often do not have a possibility to do—can also contribute by empowering a person. In one study Holocaust survivors in Israel who reported that they were both helped, and were able to act in their own or their family’s behalf, were more likely to engage in activities aimed at making peace with Palestinians.

Receiving support, care, and affection after one has suffered matters a great deal. Some specialists in psychological trauma say that trauma is, in part the experience of harmful events, in part what happens afterward. Finally, love and care before traumatic events can make a person more resilient. Perhaps the resilience of many Jewish survivors of the Holocaust is the result of loving families. Both can contribute to altruism born of suffering.

Such altruism is of great importance. Since we have a world that inflicts suffering on many people, without experiences that transform suffering into caring, people can be increasingly alienated from or hostile toward others. It is important both to help people who have suffered, and for people to join together to work to create societies that do not harm their members.

There is commonality in the influences that lead to genocide. There is also commonality in how people are affected by extreme violence. By showing this, testimony can demonstrate our common humanity. Through that, it can, in turn, advance empathy and caring for all human beings.

\*I described the essential elements of this story as I was told but changed some details for the sake of confidentiality. ■

*Aegis Trust Rwanda with USC Shoah Foundation, Radio La Benevolencija, and The Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace launched the Rwanda Peace Education Program in December 2013. The program, supported by the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency in Rwanda for three years, intends to develop Peace Education in Rwanda through activities including radio programs, artistic exhibitions, archive building, and education workshops. To learn more please visit: <http://sfi.usc.edu/ourwork/rwanda>.*

*Ervin Staub is professor emeritus and founding director of the doctoral program in the psychology of peace and violence at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. For a full biography, see page 6.*

# It Happened Here, Right Here

By Kim Simon, Martin Šmok, and Andrea Szőnyi

Returning to the places where events occur can add levels of context to testimony



*Educators participating in the Institute's Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century program during a visit to the main deportation center for Jews in the Czech Republic.*

THERE ARE TWO REMAINING synagogues in the city of Piotrków Tribunalski which together now serve as the city's public library. Piotrków was the city where the Nazis established the first modern ghetto one month after the fall of Poland in October 1939. The synagogues were desecrated, used

as stables and assembly points before mass shootings. The last inhabitants of the ghetto not sent for forced labor were murdered in the temples.

In the smaller of the two synagogues, patrons or visitors can still see, behind the metal stacks of children's books, remains of the original Aron Kodesh painting and decoration riddled with bullet marks. In the great synagogue, next door, the library also provides computers and Internet access. It is on these computers that members of the public may be given a chance to view and listen to testimonies from the Institute's Visual History Archive about what happened in that very place—and to whom it happened—and through the connection between the individual stories and the place itself, there is opportunity to fill at least a fraction of the void visible throughout the city.

In the first five years of its existence, the Shoah Foundation engaged in a large-scale effort to collect testimonies in, at its height, 30 countries simultaneously. This simultaneity clarified for all involved, the innate and continual cycle of local-to-global practice. The collecting of testimonies in cities such as Los Angeles, Caracas, Miami, Paris, Vilnius, Kyiv, Johannesburg, and Sydney in 24-hour daily and weekly succession allowed the Institute not only to build the Visual History Archive but also to glimpse and appreciate the specificity of the places, communities, context, and individuals who had the courage to share their life stories.

The genocide of European Jewry—and those labeled as Jews by the racist laws—created a void that is still felt on many levels. Entire communities were wiped out, Jewish quarters abandoned and often leveled, synagogues desecrated. Paradoxically, the former existence of these communities remains almost touchable: buildings designed, city districts built, factories and theaters set up and operated, sports clubs founded by the people whose very existence is now forgotten. Additionally, the sites of several stages of the eradication of these people are still there: local ghettos, various places where Jews were concentrated before deportations, train stations, hiding places, and in many cases even killing sites.

Using testimony and working with local partners serve to deconstruct the notion of a separate, "Jewish" narrative being externally forced and applied, by working to reveal together, the history of local Jewish populations, which is an integral part of national history, in particular locations. By bringing local personal stories back to the local sites through the use of the testimonies at those sites, it is possible to disrupt the awkward silence that lives on in these spaces. While unable to fill the void, it at least begins to address a gap in social historical memory.

The Visual History Archive, with its capacity to search, retrieve, and view testimonies, provides an endless opportunity to explore the depth and breadth of when something occurred and where it occurred. With such a vast trove of individual memories, this periscope vision orients the viewer—the learner—to a base line of context from which the rest of a testimony "reading" can follow.

The level at which a testimony piece can be localized may include a city, a village, a street, or a school where life trajectories are explored. Dr. Monika Mezei, a history teacher at Berzsenyi High School in Budapest, is able to choose a clip of testimony from a former pupil, Tom Lantos, who went on to become a U.S. cit-

izen and congressman from California. She is able to choose a particular clip of Rep. Lantos (who passed away in 2008), who describes with humor and great detail his experience in his Latin class in 1943, learning specific skills and tricks to memorize a particular aspect of the lesson. The students in her Latin class today can view and study this clip together with other clips, either by itself or within a larger lesson.

This clip, just an example of so many, in multiple languages, provides a small glimpse into the immediacy and specificity of connection to history and memory in a particular context. The students are drawn in by the connection to their current space and experience, the relevance sparking further interest and questions, along with an opportunity for further knowledge. They are invited to dig deeper and to consider whether or how the history and experience of that individual are relevant. The outcomes of the lesson are larger, surrounding the analysis of primary sources, the knowledge of specific events of the Holocaust in Hungary, and the understanding of various individuals within a particular time and place, but Mezei's path to these educational outcomes is covered by the specific and localized touch points geared toward her group of students.

**“Through the connection between the individual stories and the place itself, there is opportunity to fill at least a fraction of the void.”**

Because of the indelibility of the testimony, there is a chance that the knowledge, the historical information, the critical thinking, and social emotional learning gained will remain with students long after the class is over. This local approach provides educators and students today, and for the future, an opportunity to go beyond the surface, to participate and contribute actively in their own learning. The relevance and particularity are partially established through connection of place, and the distance of time collapses because of the story's universality.

By providing educators and students with local personal accounts, technology to access them, and educational scaffolding to make them relevant and meaningful, there is an opportunity to facilitate the understanding of history—and future—as a sum of individual human lives being lived, to contribute to a generational shift, not only a commitment today or the next five years but a commitment for the long term. ■

*For biographies of Kim Simon, Martin Šmok, and Andrea Szőnyi, see page 6.*

## Building Dams and Bridges

*By Anne-Marie Revcolevschi*

How The Aladdin Project uses the power of words to create bonds between Jewish and Muslim worlds

*Anne-Marie Revcolevschi is the president of the Aladdin Project. For a full biography, see page 6.*

*The Aladdin Project, which was founded in 2008, aims to dam the spread of Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism, and racism in the Muslim world, and simultaneously erect bridges to renew relations between Jews and Muslims. Founder Anne-Marie Revcolevschi reflects on her journey to turn the symbol of Aladdin's lamp as a tool of magic into a symbol of knowledge, stemming ignorance, obfuscation, and extremism.*

IT ALL BEGAN WITH THE VIRULENTLY anti-Semitic and revisionist statements by Iran's then-president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his hate speech against Israel, which dramatically worsened the already tense relations between Jews and Muslims, not only in the Middle East and North Africa, but also in Europe and North America. It was then that I discovered, to my utter dismay, that none of the classic texts on the Holocaust had been translated either into Arabic or Persian. Time was of the essence, as the tide of hatred grew, and so together with an esteemed group of colleagues, including Simone Veil and David de Rothschild, we tackled the problem head-on and began to translate and distribute translations. Essential to this effort was building an international network of intellectuals and political figures, the majority of them hailing from Muslim cultures, on the basis of shared values and common objectives.

The response to our initial activities vindicated the underlying assumption of our endeavor: that sharing knowledge and education can transcend differences and reconcile people. Today the Aladdin Project's multilingual website is in five languages and has received hundreds of thousands of visitors; more than 80,000 copies of our 18 books in Arabic and Persian, including *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *If This Is a Man* by Primo Levi, and *The Destruction of the European Jews* by Raul Hilberg, have been downloaded from Aladdin Online Library, showing that readers, users, and especially the younger generations are willing to learn when given the opportunity.

Encouraged by these results and supported by a large number of European and international personalities, in 2010 we decided to move closer to Muslim public opinion and organized an unprecedented series of conferences about the Holocaust in 10 cities: Cairo, Casablanca, Rabat, Baghdad, Erbil, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Tunis, and Amman. Several thousands of people attended these meetings, listening to an array of speakers that included historian and Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld, filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, peace activist Ali El Samman, veteran diplomat Jacques Andréani, and the king of Morocco's adviser André Azoulay, among others. Reading Primo Levi in these places changes the landscape of learning and dialogue in the Middle East.



Books, however powerful as a medium, don't tell the whole story; we also wanted to convene opinionmakers. In 2011 we took 200 political, civic, and religious leaders, mostly from the Middle East and Africa but also from Asia, the United States, and Europe, to Auschwitz-Birkenau. On the ruins of the gas chambers, the Grand Mufti of Bosnia sent this solemn message to deniers in the Muslim world: "Not in our name!" It was a powerful moment when against all expectations of a few years earlier, ecumenical prayers in Hebrew by Chief Rabbi Meir Lau of Israel, in French by the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, and in Arabic by the Grand Mufti Mustafa Ceric, echoed on the silent, snow-covered plain, while former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder called the world to peace.

The rise of political Islam and its associated racism, and the outbreak of domestic and international crises complicated our task. Yet this is precisely the time to act: Young people and those yearning for freedom in the countries of the so-called "Arab Spring" want to learn about the world around them and be able to share the values of freedom and respect for others.

It was then that we turned to add film to our growing catalogue of content. We began by translating Lanzmann's masterpiece documentary, *Shoah*, into Turkish and Persian, and telecast the film for the first time in Turkey and Iran. More than 10 million viewers watched the movie, which was broadcast by Turkey's national television channel, TRT, and the Los Angeles-based, Persian-language Pars TV. Many viewers in Iran contacted Pars TV to express their surprise and incomprehension: How could this reality be denied by their leaders?

Reaching deeper into higher education is part of a strategy to maintain high-level learning and dialogue. Under the leadership of Executive Director Abe Radkin, who organized Aladdin's first summer university at the University of Basheşehir in Istanbul in partnership with 16 prestigious universities in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the United States, 56 American, African, Arab, European, Israeli, Iranian, and Turkish students worked together on the history of mass violence in 20th-century Europe and the challenges facing European societies today. They attended conferences with lecturers from around the world, which offered a unique opportunity for bright young people from different countries and cultures to focus on the causes of the Holocaust, the consequences of hatred, and rejection of the "other," the transition of a Europe torn apart by two world wars to peace and reconciliation. The graduates of the summer university were appointed "Youth Ambassadors for Peace

and Intercultural Dialogue" and in April 2013, the best groups were recognized for their research by the Aladdin Award at the European Parliament. The next Aladdin university will be held this summer in Berlin.

To sustain this drive for education in the Muslim world, the training of teachers is a priority. In November 2013, in cooperation with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Aladdin organized the first international training seminar on the Holocaust for teachers and scholars of the Muslim world.

In the Muslim world, where people face the realities of violence and extremism, it requires strength and determination to work toward our objectives. In truth, my trust is based on the knowledge that I was born in Paris in 1943 and only survived thanks to the courage of a French family that hid me and my mother. Those small points of light never stopped flickering

during the dark days of the Nazi period. Now the light of knowledge, the source of Aladdin's lamp, guides our way, as we put up dams and build bridges in dark times all over again. The testimonies of the USC Shoah Foundation are a part of that same light of knowledge, which we hope to share in the languages of the Muslim world together, inspired by the same desire for truth among peoples of different cultures and religions. ■

*USC Shoah Foundation's Executive Director Stephen D. Smith was keynote speaker at Aladdin's teacher's seminar in Istanbul. A joint project with Aladdin to transcribe and translate USC Shoah Foundation's audio-visual testimony into several languages of the Middle East is now under way, including testimony about Auschwitz, which was used during this year's International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27.*



**The Aladdin Project** (Left to right) Professor Mohamed Dajani from Al Quds University, president of Watasia Organisation; Dr. Mustafa Ceric, (Grand Mufti of Bosnia); and Sheik Khamis Abda, president of the Palestinian Imams (Palestinian territories), walking under a gates at Auschwitz-Birkenau



*Clockwise from top left: Holocaust scholars Xu Xin (left) and Yehuda Bauer (center) join Institute Executive Director Stephen D. Smith during a visit to USC; Institute senior international consultant and regional representative in Hungary Andrea Szönyi; during a visit to the Institute by the president of Rwanda are (from left) Permanent Representative to the United Nations Eugène Gasana, Aegis Trust staff members Aude Kamanzi and Medy Kimenyi, Institute Executive Director Stephen D. Smith, Rwanda President Paul Kagame, Institute consultant Edith Umugiraneza, Rwandan Ambassador to the United States Mathilde Mukantabana, Institute staff member Consolée Uwamariya, and Aegis Trust staff member Paul Rukesha; Institute founder Steven Spielberg.*

## **In Conversation with Xu Xin and Yehuda Bauer**

Two of the world's leading Holocaust scholars—one based in China, the other in Israel—met for the first time in a conversation at the USC Shoah Foundation; it was moderated by Executive Director Stephen D. Smith. Xu Xin described the relatively recent introduction of Holocaust studies to China and said that the Holocaust could be used to broaden China's study of its own history, which includes the 1937 Nanjing massacre. Yehuda Bauer said he believes Holocaust studies must include both "text" and "context"—to understand the facts as well as the conditions that lead to genocide. Xu and Bauer agreed that there is still much work to be done in Holocaust studies.

*To view the conversation, visit <http://sfi.usc.edu/presentations>. Read Xu's article about Holocaust studies in China on page 11 of this issue.*

## **Smith Named UNESCO Chair on Genocide Education**

Stephen D. Smith has been named the inaugural UNESCO Chair on Genocide Education. USC and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) worked together to establish the chair. Smith will collaborate with genocide researchers and educators around the world to develop educator training and multidisciplinary programs that foster learning about the causes and effects of mass violence. In conjunction with the Institute, he will also organize international conferences, teach, and contribute to the continued study of genocide and genocide education in order to promote international dialogue and collaboration.



## Steven Spielberg Speaks at U.N.

Institute founder Steven Spielberg delivered the keynote speech at the United Nations' International Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony on Jan. 27. Spielberg said of using testimony to prevent genocide, "When testimony and witness form the basis of policy; when truth, rather than narrow national or local interests, forms the foundation for action, there is great cause to hope for resolution of what appear to be unsolvable problems."

This year's ceremony, held at U.N. headquarters in New York City, also featured remarks by United States Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power and Holocaust survivor Rena Finder, musical performances by the 92nd Street Y Woodwind Quintet, and prayers recited by Cantor Shmuel Barzilai. The ceremony is an annual commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust, that coincides with the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

To view the speech, visit <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/2014/webcast.shtml>

## Peace Over Violence Award

The Los Angeles-based nonprofit Peace Over Violence honored the USC Shoah Foundation with the Media Award at its 42nd Annual Humanitarian Awards at the Beverly Hills Hotel on October 25, 2013. Peace Over Violence is dedicated to intervention, prevention, education, and advocacy for victims of abuse and violence. It chose to honor the USC Shoah Foundation for its work researching and highlighting sexual violence in genocide, and called the Institute "a beacon in the quest to preserve history through remembrance and storytelling."

## Institute Work Flourishes in Rwanda

President Paul Kagame of Rwanda visited the USC Shoah Foundation to learn more about the Institute's work linking testimony, technology, and education in Rwanda. The Institute hosted three staff members from Aegis Trust Rwanda this spring for training on indexing methodology and archive building to preserve testimonies of Rwandan Tutsi genocide survivors. Through a joint project, in partnership with Aegis Trust Rwanda, IWitness in Rwanda launched six classroom pilots in and around Kigali, led by educators trained on the Institute's multimedia educational website.

In addition, University of Southern California undergraduates will travel to Rwanda again this summer to learn about post-genocide reconstruction as part of the Problems Without Passports course.

To see more about the Institute's work in Rwanda, visit <http://sfi.usc.edu/ourwork/rwanda>

## Restoring Testimonies with New Software

USC Shoah Foundation's technology staff has developed new software to restore Visual History Archive tapes that were previously thought to be unfixable. Due to faulty recording equipment, these 20-year-old tapes had serious audio and visual problems that could not be corrected efficiently with existing restoration methods. The Institute developed new image-recognition software, inspired by Google's Picasa tool, that restores the videos using almost no manual labor. They hope to go into production with the system this year.

To learn more, visit <http://sfi.usc.edu/videorestitution>

## Teaching with Testimony in Europe

USC Shoah Foundation's flagship professional development program, Teaching with Testimony in the 21st Century, has now been held in Hungary, Poland, France, Ukraine, and Czech Republic. Secondary-school educators apply to be part of the yearlong program, which prepares teachers to use testimony from the Visual History Archive as a basis for classroom lessons and activities that build multiple literacies, strengthen critical thinking skills, and promote responsible participation in civil society. Participants have created lessons that utilize testimony—especially of survivors and witnesses from their local region—to teach about literature, racism, government, and more.

To find out more about the most recent Teaching with Testimony program in Poland, visit <http://sfi.usc.edu/2014-polish-workshop>

## Testimony Exhibit in Paris and Online

The World UNESCO headquarters in Paris displayed a five-part exhibit of testimony from the Visual History Archive, *Journeys Through the Holocaust*, to commemorate International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust in January and February. The exhibit featured video screens playing testimony clips (in English and French) that cover five aspects of journeys, both literal and figurative, through the Holocaust: flight, deportation, liberation, immigration, and aftermath.

To view the exhibit, visit <http://sfi.usc.edu/journeys-through-holocaust> ■



# George Clooney

## *An Ambassador for Humanity*

The multifaceted filmmaker and human rights activist receives the Institute's highest honor.

*When George Clooney* accepted the 2013 USC Shoah Foundation's Ambassador for Humanity Award in October, he joined the ranks of other ambassadors who have supported the Institute's efforts to promote tolerance and respect through the use of testimonies in its Visual History Archive in the 20 years since it was founded. Institute founder Steven Spielberg presented Clooney with the award—the Institute's highest honor—at a gala in New York. TNT was the presenting sponsor. Comedian Jon Stewart hosted with special guest Sandra Bullock. Norah Jones was the musical performer for the evening.

"He is an unparalleled example of action over apathy—someone who, like what we do here, documents the bad with good intentions—someone who truly knows that without action, our humanitarian efforts would be nothing more than words," Spielberg said.

Spielberg noted that Clooney helped found Not on Our Watch, which seeks to prevent future atrocities. Clooney also established the Satellite Sentinel Project, which monitors violence and human-rights abuses in Sudan and South Sudan.

Clooney's humanitarian efforts reach into other areas as well: He has also helped organize aid to victims of the 2010 Haitian earthquake and has been named a United Nations Messenger of Peace.

Spielberg said that Clooney isn't looking for publicity when he joins the fight to helping others. "He said something that is at the core of the USC Shoah Foundation," Spielberg recalled. "He said, 'Wouldn't it be great if even without the spotlight, we were steadfast to help those in need?' George is the best kind of humanitarian. He is a humble humanitarian."

In accepting the award, Clooney said the Institute is doing an important job in keeping global atrocities in the news. But he also maintained that the world would be a better place if such organizations didn't need to exist.



"It's really hard for bad things to happen in bright light. We have to continue to fight this fight, and the best way to do it, we find, is by shining a light on atrocities," Clooney said.

USC Shoah Foundation Executive Director Stephen D. Smith talked about the growth of the Institute since Spielberg established it in 1994 after making the Academy Award-winning film, *Schindler's List*.

"Through the USC Shoah Foundation, the legacy of your film, Steven, you gave the chance for many lights to shine in full color," Smith said. "It's your vision. We're changing the world through testimony—through the power of the human story."

Bob Katz, the gala co-chairman and chairman of the Institute's Board of Councilors, told the audience that the gala was the most suc-



*(Clockwise from top left) George Clooney; Sandra Bullock; Norah Jones; George Clooney, Steven Spielberg, and Jon Stewart; the Milstein Family Hall of Ocean Life at the American Museum of Natural History in New York; USC President C. L. Max Nikias (left), event co-chair and Chairman of the Institute's Board of Councilors Robert Katz, Niki C. Nikias, and George Clooney; USC Shoah Foundation Executive Director Stephen D. Smith; Steven Spielberg (left), George Clooney, Rwandan genocide survivor Freddy Mutanguha, USC Shoah Foundation Chief Technology Officer Samuel Gustman, Stephen D. Smith.*

successful yet, bringing in nearly \$3.7 million. While thanking everybody involved in making the event a success, including Benefit Committee chair members Ulrika and Joel Citron, Leesa Willett, and Leon Wagner, along with the vice chair members, including Initiative Chairman Steve Cozen and his wife, Sandy, Katz held special praise for Spielberg.

"I want to thank him for inspiring everyone who has been drawn to the vibrant promise of the Shoah Foundation during our 20 years of existence, and for the vision and creative energy to imagine, motivate and actuate this

unique endeavor in the first place so we could even be drawn to it," Katz said.

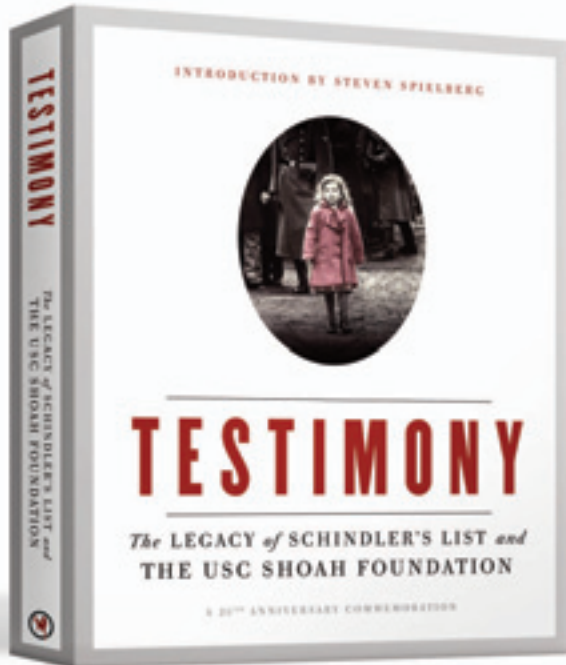
Previous recipients of the Ambassadors for Humanity Award are Robert A. Iger, chairman and CEO, The Walt Disney Co., 2012; Brian L. Roberts, chairman and CEO, Comcast Corp., 2011; Jeffrey Katzenberg, chairman and CEO, DreamWorks Animation, 2010; Kirk Douglas, actor and humanitarian, 2008; Wallis Annenberg, chairwoman, Annenberg Foundation, 2007; Bill Clinton, former United States President, 2005; Richard Lovett, president, Creative Artists Agency, 2004; Jerry Breslauer, Bruce

Ramer and Mickey Rutman, USC Shoah Foundation founding board members, 2002; Eric H. Greenberg, president and CEO, Beautiful, Inc., 2001; Rena Rowan, founder, Jones Apparel Group, and Severin Wunderman, chairman, Corum Swiss Time Pieces, 2001; and Howard Marks, artist, philanthropist, chairman and cofounder of Oaktree Capital Management, and his wife, Nancy, 2000. ■

*To view photographs and videos from previous Ambassadors for Humanity events visit: [sfi.usc.edu/afh](http://sfi.usc.edu/afh)*

# *The Untold Story Behind the Institute*

---



USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education has dedicated 20 years to collecting and sharing the testimonies of those who survived and witnessed the Holocaust and other genocides. But the story behind the Institute has mostly gone untold.

Released to commemorate the Institute's 20th anniversary, ***Testimony: The Legacy of Schindler's List and the USC Shoah Foundation*** tells that story and more.

Part I of the book chronicles the making of the Academy Award-winning *Schindler's List* and how Steven Spielberg arrived at the decision to collect testimonies from Holocaust survivors.

Part II details the race against time, as the team Spielberg assembled worked to collect more than 50,000 testimonies around the world, how the Institute quickly grew to become the largest resource of its kind, and how it uses its collection in innovative ways to teach the lessons of tolerance and respect.

*Testimony* is available online and in stores now. Proceeds will benefit the USC Shoah Foundation.



*USC Shoah Foundation is dedicated  
to making audio-visual testimonies with  
survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust  
and other genocides a compelling voice  
for education and action.*

## How you can make a difference

One person really can make a difference. If you would like to support the USC Shoah Foundation, here are some of the ways you can help.

**Planned Gifts:** Planned gifts include wills, charitable remainder trusts, charitable lead trusts, and annuities, and may help you reduce or avoid income, gift, and inheritance taxes.

**Cash Donations:** Gifts may be made by cash, check, or credit card.

**Pledges:** Make a gift that is paid over several years, on a payment schedule that is most convenient for you.

**Memorial or Tribute Gifts:** Honor special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, or births; memorialize a friend or family member; send a tribute card from the Institute announcing the gift.

**In-Kind Gifts:** Donate goods or services that fulfill programmatic needs.

*For more information, contact:*

Nicole Watkins, Director of Donor Relations  
USC Shoah Foundation  
The Institute for Visual History and Education  
University of Southern California  
650 W. 35th Street, Suite 114  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-2571  
Phone: (213) 740-6001  
E-mail: [vhi-web@usc.edu](mailto:vhi-web@usc.edu)

*To donate online visit:*  
<https://sfi.usc.edu/support>

University of Southern California  
Office of Advancement  
444 South Flower Street, Suite 4100  
Los Angeles, CA 90071-2942

*Change Service Requested*

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
University of  
Southern  
California

## PastForward Spring 2014



*USC Shoah Foundation is dedicated to making audio-visual testimonies with survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides a compelling voice for education and action.*

### Stay in Touch

Begin receiving periodic updates and information alerting you to special events in your community, new programs, and the latest Institute news. Send an email to **[vhi-news@dornsife.usc.edu](mailto:vhi-news@dornsife.usc.edu)** with “pastforward” in the subject line and your name and address in the body.

**Follow us online**  
<http://sfi.usc.edu>



**USC Dornsife**

Dana and David Dornsife  
College of Letters, Arts and Sciences