

Editorial

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Introduction

<https://doi.org/10.1515/eehs-2024-0023>

“Keep writing!” wrote Aleksei Navalny (1976–2024) in his letter to Mr. Krasilshchik, the media entrepreneur.¹ Navalny, the leader of the Russian opposition, died in prison under unknown circumstances while we were finishing editing this issue. Thinking, writing, and engaging in critical discussions are forms of resistance and often the only available means for survival. Nobody knew this better than Holocaust survivors, who, following the demand for remembrance, shared their experiences in testimonies. Lajos Erdélyi, a Hungarian Auschwitz survivor, photographer, and author, finished the second revised version of his autobiography with an appeal: “Do talk about our memories!”² He established a direct connection between discussing the horrors of the Shoah and the demand for *zachor*, a term referring to the obligation to remember events that are not necessarily pleasant.

Today, massive amounts of digitally recorded testimonies about the Shoah are available in print and on the internet, with or without some restrictions, for teaching and research. Technological advancements have changed accessibility and storage, as well as the way in which oral histories are recorded, taught, and analyzed. Anette Wieworka labeled the availability of Holocaust survivors’ testimonies online as a “historiographical revolution,”³ posing particular challenges not only to researchers but also to educators who wish to utilize this collection in teaching.⁴

This edition of the EEHS focuses on the necessity of writing, collecting, and narrating the Holocaust. It includes an interview with Zsuzsa Toronyi, Director of the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, offering a rare insight into the history of

1 Troianovski, Anton, Inside Navalny’s final months in his own Words. *New York Times*, February 19, 2024. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/19/world/europe/navalny-letters-russia.html>.

2 Erdélyi, L. *Túlélés. Egy fotográfus visszaemlékezése* [Survival. Memory of a Photographer] (Zahor Alapítvány, Zachor Könyvek, Budapest, 2012), 212.

3 Wieworka, A. *The Era of the Witness* (Cornell, 2006), 116.

4 See more on this in A. Pető, “How to Use the Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive for Teaching at the Graduate Level: A Methodological and Theoretical Reflection” in *Jewish Studies at the CEU VII. 2009–2011*. eds. A. Kovacs, M. Miller (Budapest 2013), 205–211.

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Europe's most comprehensive preserved Jewish community archive and the people behind it, along with the challenges of working in an illiberal state. The dossier on oral history, edited by Malin Thor Tureby and Yurii Kaparulin, discusses methodological, ethical, and theoretical problems of oral history as a source, particularly due to a new form of availability. In their introduction, they contextualize the testimonies and oral histories, pointing out similarities and differences.

Thor Tureby and Kaparulin also list the present oral history project documenting current war crimes in Ukraine and also those committed during the October 7 attack of Hamas on Israel. Five prominent Holocaust researchers, Natalia Aleksion, Monika Vrzgulová, Albert Wenher, Petro Dolhanov, and Roman Mykhalchuk reflect on challenges, such as the moral and ethical questions faced by scholars and collectors of testimonies when interviewing and working with witnesses of the ongoing war.

The complexities of ethics and additional questions are illustrated by primary sources edited by Tomasz Frydel and Andrew Kloes. The documents were selected for their relevance to ongoing debates and research questions evoked by the "third phase" of the Holocaust, set in the multi-ethnic context of District Galicia. Depicting the intricacies of the question of ethics, a collection of documents provides evidence to the prosecution of Poles for giving refuge to Jews from September 1943 to June 1944, in Lemberg.

The first research articles are also linked to the concept of remembrance. Liat Steir-Livny discusses how the role of Jewish functionaries during the Holocaust, which has fueled heated debates internationally since the 1940s, is represented in Israeli cinema. Marie Moutier-Bitan writes about the religious dimension of violence against Jews in Eastern Galicia at the beginning of Operation Barbarossa in June–July 1941, claiming that the burning of synagogues, the desecration of religious objects, as well as the public and ostensible attack on the Jews of pious appearance, were symbols of humiliation mixed with strategic communication.

The article by Gintarė Malinauskaitė in the historiography section is edited by Jan Lanicek. Malinauskaitė's paper not only presents the micro-historical studies that historians have conducted on selected court cases in recent years but also explores how the relationship between the Holocaust and the Soviet war crimes trials, as well as the visual representation and mediation of these trials, have been investigated.

The articles in this issue, which critically examine the spaces of remembrance, heed Erdélyi's call: "Do talk about our memories!".