

Particularly in the last two decades, reports and testimonies by living witnesses have received increasing attention in the academic discourse, and have evoked great public interest. Now the time is approaching when witnesses will no longer be available for the purposes of academic discourse and communicative memory as “Leibeszeugen” (Jean Améry).

One of the questions that thus arises is: How can the memory of the Holocaust be preserved and permanently fixed in the cultural memory when personal encounters with living witnesses will no longer be possible?

Another question is: Which new concepts can and should Shoah research develop after living witnesses have passed away? One of the assumptions concerning the question of how the memory of the Shoah can be preserved permanently in cultural memory is that this process can only be achieved by the means of interdisciplinary approaches and certain forms of media. As far as the future of Shoah research is concerned, there is a danger of a strict separation between history and memory. A possible result of this divide might be that witness reports which were recorded but do not yet form part of the canon of testimonies will only receive attention after a few decades. But is it possible that Shoah research will move in other directions and will focus on entirely different sources?

The Joachim-Lelewel-Debates of the German Historical Institute Warsaw are a forum in which the contentious issues surrounding Polish history are discussed in their European context. Each time, these Debates bring representatives of Polish history, East and West European history, and international history together into a panel discussion where the audience actively participates.

The intention behind these debates is not only to allow various (often contradictory) academic positions and intellectual views to confront one another, but also to encourage various academic groups to join the discourse. This way of handling debate enables continued development of the issue at hand, and clears the path for diverse methodical approaches.

The Joachim-Lelewel-Debates 2014/1



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The development of Shoah research 'after the living witnesses'

Experts

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Ingo Loose

Moderator
Ruth Leiserowitz

27 February 2014, 17:30

Conference room 3 rd floor
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Edyta Gawron is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Jewish Studies, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, and the head of the new Centre for the Study of the History and Culture of Krakow Jews (Jagiellonian University). She is the president of the Board of Directors of Galicia Jewish Heritage Institute Foundation and the academic advisor for Galicia Jewish Museum in Kraków. Currently she coordinates research projects on the history of Krakow Jews in the 20th century.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is a scholar of Performance and Jewish Studies and a museum professional. Professor of Performance Studies at New York University since 1981 (and distinguished University Professor since 2002), she is best known for her interdisciplinary contributions to Jewish studies and to the theory and history of museums, tourism, and heritage. She is currently Program Director of the Core Exhibition for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

Ingo Loose is a historian at the Institute of Contemporary History Munich-Berlin (Institut für Zeitgeschichte). He is currently working on an edition of collected documents entitled "The Persecution and Extermination of the European Jews by Nazi Germany 1933–1945" administered by The Federal Archives, the Institute of Contemporary History Munich-Berlin and others. He is the author of numerous publications dealing with the history of NS-Persecution and with Polish and Jewish history in the 20th century.

Ruth Leiserowitz is a Deputy Director at the German Historical Institute Warsaw. Her research focuses on Jewish history in the Eastern European context.

The discussion will be simultaneously
translated into English and Polish.