



**Document Collections and their Place in the
Historiography of the Shoah
From Past to Present**

Fondation
pour la
Mémoire
de la
Shoah

Workshop of the Research Group “Histoire & Historiography of the Shoah” (Center for Historical Research, EHESS-CNRS, Paris)

Organized by Judith Lyon-Caen, Florent Brayard, Barbara Lambauer, Judith Lindenberg

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EHESS

190 avenue de France, 75013 Paris

Salle Jean-Pierre Vernant

M° Bibliothèque François Mitterrand/Quai de la Gare

The editing and publishing of “materials” and “documents” take up an important place in the first historiographical works on the Shoah, which were dominated by the activity of documentation centres and historical commissions created after the war. Whereas these institutions and the career of the “survivor historians” are beginning to be well-known, their historiographical conceptions being subject of a careful rereading, the concrete historiographical operation remains hardly examined – the way of how to produce “documentation” in order to write history, to combine “documents” and commentary, to set out traces in the writing and to make them evident.

The question is not simply an internal or technical matter for historiography: the “documents” represented a fundamental source, and resource, for these historians. Several among them had biographical links to the documentation they used and published (because they have helped to save, to collect, to preserve it). And it is evident to what extent the mastery of the documentation was at stake in main institutional and political matters after the war. Moreover, these “documents” are not stable writings: like for individuals, we can reconstruct their itinerary, beginning with the context of their production up to the time of their publication, both corresponding frequently to various times. In *these itineraries of writings* the questions regarding “auctoriality” (who is the author of the text which became a document?), and the limit between “document”, produced during the war, and “testimony”, that came immediately afterwards, often turned out considerably complexified.

The purpose of the conference is to report on this complexity, which often lead historians of the following generations to keep a certain distance to these corpus of “document collections”, so much did the latter not comply with their historiographical expectations and seemed to be assembled in a curious manner, without sufficient references, too “literary” in their style, responding to historiographical questions which appeared problematic or wrong, overdetermined by political struggles of the Cold War, or by logics of vengeance or of pity.

The “document’s” disappearance from the intellectual agenda of Holocaust historians is also part of the questions that are to be raised on this occasion. In fact, we have never ceased publishing documents, but we do it differently, eclipsing these first collections, or reworking them without mentioning. Whereas the first period of historiography sparks currently renewed interest, how are “document collections” published nowadays, and how are they connected to documentary undertakings directly after the war? In order to answer these questions, the first session of the conference will be dedicated to the long term project “Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933-1945”, a very topical venture of this special way of history writing, which is the publication of document collections. Its 12th volume (on Western and Northern Europe, 1942-1945) has been published at the beginning of this year; it will be discussed in the presence of two of its editors.

Program

Thursday 20th October, 14:00-16:30

The VEJ Project, from a multi-volume document collection to a written monument?

14:00-15:15

Chair: Florent BRAYARD (CRH/EHESS, Paris)

Florent BRAYARD/Judith LYON-CAEN/Barbara LAMBAUER: Introduction

Susanne HEIM (IfZ Munich-Berlin): The VEJ Project and the Holocaust Research: Beginnings, Issues and Scholarly Significance.

Nicolas BERG (Fritz Bauer Institute, Frankfurt/M.) (discussant): "In German for the Germans" - The Holocaust documentation by Joseph Wulf and Léon Poliakov in the 1950's.

Coffee break

15:30-16:30

Barbara LAMBAUER (IfZ Munich-Berlin): Documenting Persecution and Deportation in former Western Democracies. Specificities – common patterns – different outcomes.

Dan MICHMAN (Yad Vashem, Jerusalem) (discussant): The Genre of Document Collections, the Historiography of the Shoah, and the VEJ: Some Historiographical Remarks.

Wednesday 21st October, 9:00 – 17:00

Historiography and "documents" in the aftermath of the war

9:00-12:30

Chair: Catherine COQUIO (Paris VII)

9:00-11:00

Judith LYON-CAEN: Introduction

Aurélia KALISKY (ZfL, Berlin)/Judith LINDENBERG (EHESS): Nonclassifiable knowledges? Status and uses of document in some works of the postwar period (1945-1965)

Dan MICHMAN: Hans Guenther Adler's Study and the Documentation of Theresienstadt (1955, 1958): Working Through Personal Experiences With the Help of Hard-Core Documentation.

Coffee break

11:15-12:45

Katrin STOLL (GHI Warsaw): Szymon Datner's practical and professional Holocaust historiography: different attitudes to sources on part of a survivor historian in post-war Poland

Judith LINDENBERG/Judith LYON-CAEN (EHESS, Paris): "Documents for History". Editorial practices and politics of the Krakow's Jewish Historical Commission, 1946-1947.

Lunch

13:45-15:30

Chair: Barbara LAMBAUER

Ingo LOOSE (IfZ Munich-Berlin): Jakub Poznański's Diary from the Lodz Ghetto.

Laurent JOLY (CRH/CNRS): Les recueils de documents du Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine.

Loïc MARCOU: Premiers documents sur l'Holocauste en Grèce.

Coffee break

16:00-17:00

Final discussion