



The European Project EHRI

European Holocaust Research Infrastructure

From Disparate Sources to An Integrated European Research Infrastructure

Workshop at the Shoah Mémorial in Paris
Monday, 2 June, 2014

Report

On June 2, the **Shoah Memorial of Paris (Mémorial de la shoah)** successfully hosted one of the EHRI Regional Workshops under the title “The European Project EHRI European Holocaust Research Infrastructure. From Disparate Sources to An Integrated European Research Infrastructure”.

The main purpose for this workshop was to present in France the EHRI project whose principal aims are to support the Holocaust research community by providing (online) access to dispersed sources relating to the persecution of the European Jews under Nazi rule and by encouraging new research through the development of methodological tools and on an online portal.

The Shoah Memorial of Paris is one of the twenty organizations from thirteen countries – research institutions, libraries, archives, museums and memorial sites – that are working together since 2011 to build this infrastructure.

The workshop was opened by the director of the French Shoah Memorial, Mr. **Jacques Fredj**, who remembered the pioneering experience of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (Contemporary Jewish Documentation Centre), established in 1943 in Grenoble during the war and while the persecution and deportation of French Jews were in full swing. The CDJC gradually enlarged its scope of activities which ranged from the collection of documents, to historic research, from victims remembrance to the teaching of the immense tragedy of the Holocaust. The Mémorial de la Shoah, which is not only a key reference entity at European level, but it is also the oldest one in the world devoted to the remembrance of the Jews’ genocide in Europe – continued Mr. J. Fredj – could not help joining an International project like EHRI. In this respect the great commitment and satisfaction of the Mémorial de la Shoah was mainly due to the excellent work carried out with great competence and care, by the coordinator, Ms.

Laura Fontana, who did lead many important activities for EHRI, among which the organization of the first seminar school for researchers who brought to Paris 26 leading Holocaust historians and specialists.

Therefore, the Director expressed the wish to keep on strengthening the cooperation network with the several partner institutions of EHRI that took up the challenge to work together for a commonly shared demanding goal: facilitating the access to archives and roll out new research work on the Holocaust.

Conny Kristel, from the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies and director of the EHRI project, reported on the state of advancement of the work that the different teams from the various partner institutions are carrying out. In particular, she insisted on the innovative importance of the portal which will be the virtual gateway through which potential users across Europe and beyond will be able to access the Holocaust relevant materials belonging to archives and document collections. The EHRI portal will be launched in Berlin in March 2015.

In her key-note speech “Rescue of the Jews and the Resistance in France: from history to historiography” the French historian **Renée Poznanski**, Professor of Holocaust Studies at the Department of Politics and Government at Ben Gurion University in Israel, highlighted and analyzed the obstacles that prevented the incorporation of the rescue of Jews in France into the Resistance movement. Moreover, Prof. Poznanski showed how the history of the rescue of the Jews, in order not to fall into the trap of memory stakes, should be included in an integrated perspective leading to see the Resistance as a whole, organized and unorganized, Jewish and non-Jewish

The workshop also focused on the presentations by some EHRI colleagues who are in charge of specific activities, like for example **Michal Frankl** from the Jewish Museum in Prague (*Research guides: an attempt to overcome the fragmentation of Holocaust collections*), **Veerle Vanden Daelen** from CEGES-SOMA, Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society in Brussels, (*Identification and Investigation in European Holocaust Research Infrastructure*), **Reto Speck**, King’s College London and NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (*Building infrastructures for archives in a digital world*), **Andrea Löw** from the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute of Contemporary History of Munich (*“Training” in European Holocaust Research Infrastructure*) and **Karen Taïeb**, Head of the Archives of the Shoah Memorial (*The Jewish Contemporary Documentation Centre CDJC in Paris*).

The workshop participants – a quite heterogeneous group made of PhD students in History, namely archivists and historians, had the chance to get a better understanding of the new approach to research on Holocaust history which is being developed by EHRI. Among the questions asked by the audience, special attention was paid to language issues relating not specifically to the translation of documents, but mostly to the need to share commonly agreed historic and methodological definitions.

This issue, which was shared also by the EHRI team, seems to remain an open or ever-changing one, because of the too high level of diversity of experiences and approaches in this field. The day was very intense and rich in ideas, so that it appeared even more important to bring people together in order to increase the exchange of experiences and opinions. No scientific progress can be made without the continuous support of people who can share it.

Laura Fontana, EHRI Coordinator for the Mémorial de la shoah of Paris

Programme

Coordinator **Laura Fontana**, Ehri coordinator for the Shoah Memorial of Paris

9.45-10 Opening and Welcome speech

The Shoah Memorial in EHRI

Jacques Fredj, director of the Shoah Memorial

10-10.30

**Presentation of the work undertaken and the results set by EHRI
(about what has been achieved and also a presentation of resources and
opportunities for researchers and scholars of the Holocaust)**

Conny Kristel, NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies Amsterdam
Senior researcher and Project Director EHRI

10.30-11

Building infrastructures for archives in a digital world

Reto Speck, Researcher at the NIOD Amsterdam
and Research Fellow at the King's College London (Centre for e-Research),
EHRI Work Package Leader *Publicity and Dissemination* and *Portal and Virtual
Research Environment*

11-11.15

Discussion

11.15-11.30

Break

11.30-12.15

Rescue of the Jews and the Resistance in France: From History to historiography

Lecture by Prof. **Renée Poznanski**
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

12.15-12.30

Discussion

12.30-14.00

Lunch

14.15-16.15 **The Past and the Future of Holocaust Research: From Disparate Sources to An Integrated European Research Infrastructure**

Panel Discussion

Veerle Vanden Daelen, CEGESOMA Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society, Bruxelles, EHRI Work Package Leader *Identification and Investigation*, **Michal Frankl**, Jewish Museum Prague and EHRI Work Package Leader *Trans-Institutional Research Guides*, **Andrea Löw**, Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute of Contemporary History, Munich, EHRI Work Package Leader *Training*, **Karen Taïeb**, Head of the Archives Shoah Memorial of Paris and EHRI Coordinator for *Transnational Access*

Moderators, **Laura Fontana**, **Reto Speck**

16.30-17.30 Visit of the Mémorial de la shoah
Pedagogical Department of the Shoah Memorial.

Admission: is free but booking is essential as space is limited

Location: Shoah Memorial, 17 rue Geoffroy-l'Asnier – 75004 Paris (France)

www.memorialdelashoah.org