

selma leydesdorff

University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

Sasha Pechersky leader of the uprising of Sobibor (1943) traumatized by the holocaust and by communism

Sasha Pechersky leader of the uprising of Sobibor (1943) traumatized by the holocaust and by communism.

Selma Leydesdorff, University of Amsterdam.

My presentation will be based on my work on trauma and on my latest book *Sasha Pechersky, Holocaust Hero, Sobibor Resistance Leader and Hostage of History* (Routledge 2017). In that volume I describe the official silence about the fate of Jews in the Eastern Bloc about his role in the uprising. He was allowed to talk as an army veteran, but he could not mention that it were Jews who were killed there. I interviewed his friends and family, and discuss the mechanisms of memory and assess the collisions of memory in the East and in the West, especially discussing the ideological refusal of many societies to acknowledge the suffering of Jews in Sobibor. At the same time I stress Jews were not passive in the face of German violence and I explore the history of those who fell victim to Stalinism after having survived Nazism.

I'll also explore the question of how we can work with audio-visual testimonies that have been made over decades and are stored in collections and and I'll compare them with written testimonials using the material around the research on Pechersky.

According to me, till now no oral historian has managed show the temporality of sources that are stored often without context. While archives are filled with audio and audio-visual files they are mostly used for fact finding, but according to me we should find ways to analyze changes within the sources or testimonies of the same person.

Melissa Sloan, Stephen Sloan

Institute for Oral History/Baylor University, USA

Two Conversations: An Oral Historian and a Psychologist Reflect on a Oral History Project with Survivors of Genocide

This paper, co-presented by an oral historian and a psychologist, examines their experience working together on an oral history project documenting the stories of survivors of genocide who immigrated to the United States. The narrators, who experienced violence in Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda/Burundi, and Darfur, recounted their experience in fourteen video oral histories completed from May 2015 to October 2016. The oral historian for this presentation served as the lead interviewer and the psychologist sat in on the interviews to provide mental health support if needed and consulted with the participants in advance of and as follow up to the interviews conducted for that project. This paper, using the interviews from this project as a case study, will look at oral history from a psychologist's point of view and offer fresh insights into the dynamics of conducting oral histories with narrators who have experienced trauma.

Albert Lichtblau

Salzburg University, Austria

Interviews mit Traumatisierten: Challenges and Limits

Whenever we meet interviewees, we don't know if she or he was traumatized once. Like in therapy we as Oral Historians are responsible that each interviewee is not retraumatized if traumatic memories burst out. We should know how to respond and take care for both sides. Experienced interviewers should share their knowledge to those who are newcomers in Oral History. Although we are not therapists as our intentions differ as well as the time we spend with interviewees. We can learn from therapeutically methods a deeper understanding when trauma comes up during interviews, especially that there are certain triggers to reanimate traumatic experiences (like the memory of smells, sounds, certain images like the one of dogs or boots if someone was persecuted by police or army). Although we try to avoid that interviewees immerse into their traumatic memories in a way which would be exaggerating, sometimes we cannot stop the process and should know how to guide the interviewee out of this burdensome recollections. Sometimes we as interviewers are also overstressed and should know how to take care for ourselves.

The presentation is based on written accounts as well as on dozens of interviews with survivors of genocides (Jews, Romany, Rwandese) and refugees.

Taina H. Tangaere McGregor

Alexander Turnbull Library, New Zealand

You've Got to Have A Body

Personal and shared narratives about dealing with death from the perspectives of wives of 28th Maori Battalion soldiers killed in action in the deserts of Libya, Greece, Crete and Italy during World War 11. Shocked and bewildered do not aptly describe how the women felt when they received the news of their husband's demise. Maori custom traditionally place the deceased's casket on the forecourt of the tribe's ancestral houses to be mourned and celebrated by their kin, community and tribal affiliates. The wives battled mixed emotions and disbelief until they entered the sacred grounds of ceremony.

A Video with clips from their interviews will be presented.

Karolina Baraniak

University of Wrocław, Poland

Looking for truth and justice- the narratives of the victims of gen. Augusto Pinochet's junta.

On September 11th 2017 there will be 44 years after the coup d'etat, carried out by the junta, represented by the army (gen. Augusto Pinochet), the navy (gen. Jose Toribio Merino Castro), the aviation (gen. Gustavo Leigh Guzman) and the Carabineros (gen. Cesar Mendoza Duran), in Chile. This incident has spawned seventeen-year military rule in the Chilean state. The rulers, wishing to create a modern society in Chile, to develop the domestic economy and to introduce strong government in the country, gradually reduced civil liberties and repressed oppositional, social, movements, groups and individuals, members of political parties, representatives of indigenous peoples, supporters of president Salvador Allende, journalists or artists. These persecution costed the health of over 30 000 Chileans, compulsory emigration from 8 000 to 10 000 Chilean citizens and forced disappearances of 1200 people. The enormity of suffering and painful experiences, but also the desire to know the truth about the fate of missing or murdered relatives and friends, the struggle for the just punishment of military perpetrators and the care of the memory of the victims of the regime of general Augusto Pinochet- these are just some of the threads, that appear in the narratives of the persons, injured by Chilean junta.