



VISUAL HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST

Documenting Nazi Crimes through Film: Soviet Union, 1942–1945

A conference organized by the
Centre for Russian, Caucasian Studies and
Central European Studies (CERCEC/CNRS)
in cooperation with the
Mémorial de la Shoah in the course of the
“Visual History of the Holocaust” project
www.vhh-project.eu

Program

November 24 to 27, 2022
Paris



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This conference discusses the atrocity films recorded by Soviet cameramen during the liberation of Nazi-occupied territories in Eastern Europe. It addresses a large and diverse number of filmed atrocity sites identified by the CERCEC research team in the course of the Visual History of the Holocaust (VHH) project. This hitherto little-known corpus of Soviet film images will be contextualized and reflected in the light of other sources about the history of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe and in relation to other still and moving images of mass violence.

The conference will conclude two years of research seminars organized by the CERCEC team. It will consider recent research on the social and political contexts in which the filmmakers, journalists, and members of the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK) worked. The contributions aim for a multiplication of perspectives in the analysis of well-known sites of the Holocaust (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Babyn Yar) but will also present lesser-known sites (Donbass, Crimea, Soviet POWs camps in the Reich) through micro-historical approaches.

Finally, contributors will analyze and reflect the aesthetic techniques employed by the filmmakers, the instructions governing the filming, the circulation of the footage between different editions and territories of distribution, and the ethical challenges of sharing Holocaust images in the digital era.

Concept

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COVID-19 protective measures

For now, there are no Covid-related restrictions in France. However, wearing a mask is strongly recommended. FFP2 masks and antigen tests will be provided for free to conference participants.

Registration

Attendance is free of charge, but places are limited. For participation, please register by sending an email to marie.moutier@ehess.fr



**Venue: Auditorium Coubertin
1 rue Jean Calvin, 75005 Paris**

Thursday, November 24, 2022

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- 09:30 Welcome
- 10:00 **Roundtable: Contribution of Soviet footage to the archives on the Holocaust and Nazi crimes**
Chair: Christian Dürr (Mauthausen Memorial)
- Valérie Pozner (THALIM-CERCEC/CNRS)
Confronting the images of war crimes during the Russian invasion of Ukraine
 - Fabian Schmidt (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Digital History, Vienna) and Anna Högner (Austrian Film Museum, Vienna)
Depicting atrocities: Ethics of sharing Holocaust images
 - Michael Loebenstein (Austrian Film Museum, Vienna) and Ophir Levy (University Paris 8)
Challenges to creating access to Soviet footage
- 11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:15 **Panel 1: Making images: context, practices and authors**
Chair: Nadège Ragaru (Sciences Po Paris – Center for International Studies, CERI-CNRS) (Zoom)
- Valérie Pozner (THALIM-CERCEC/CNRS)
The constitution of the film records (kinoletopis') and their subsequent uses
 - Irina Tcherneva (Eur'ORBEM-CERCEC/CNRS)
Professional skills for filming crimes. Shedding light on the Soviet footage through textual archives
 - Vanessa Voisin (University of Bologna, DiSCI)
Filming the crimes of the enemy: the cameramen, Soviet front
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 **Panel 2: War correspondents: insights through text, photo and drawing**
Chair: Ania Szczepanska (University Paris 1)
- Laurel Leff (Northeastern University, Boston, MA)
American Press Coverage of Nazi Atrocities in Eastern Europe
 - Marilyn Campeau (Université de Moncton)
Through Evgenii Khaldei's Lens: War photography as a tool of revenge and Holocaust documentation
 - Anastasiia Simferovska (Northwestern University, Evanston, IL)
A witness on commission: Zinovii Tolkachev as a Holocaust artist (Zoom)
- 15:45 Coffee Break



16:00-17:25 **Panel 3: Visual tools for the investigation and forensic medicine**

Chair: Alexander Zöller (Film University Babelsberg, Potsdam)

- Alexander Kruglov (Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center, Kyiv)
Representation of the work of the Extraordinary State Commission in Soviet war newsreels and documentaries of Soviet military cameramen in 1943–1944
- Paula Chan (Georgetown University, Washington DC)
'For a Complete Record': Photography in Soviet investigations of Nazi crimes

**Venue: Mémorial de la Shoah
Auditorium Edmond J. Safra
17 Rue Geoffroy l'Asnier, 75004 Paris**

19:00-21:30 **Screening:** *A pas aveugles (From where they stood, France, 2021)* and discussion with the director Christophe Cognet
Moderation: Marie Moutier-Bitan (CERCEC/CNRS)

**Venue: Auditorium Coubertin
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Friday, November 25, 2022

- 09:30 **Panel 4: Connections and confrontations with other filmic corpuses**
Chair: Ingo Zechner (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Digital History, Vienna)
- Jeremy Hicks (Queen Mary University of London)
The influence of humanitarian film and the 1921–22 famine relief campaign on WWII Soviet films of atrocity
 - Fabian Schmidt (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Digital History, Vienna) and Alexander Zöller (Film University Babelsberg, Potsdam)
The Return of the cameras. Liberation footage as palimpsest and substitution of perpetrator imagery in Eastern Europe
- 10:55 Coffee Break
- 11:10 **Panel 5: Geographical and social environment in the camera's field of vision**
Chair: Irina Tcherneva (Eur'ORBEM-CERCEC/CNRS)
- Marie Moutier-Bitan (CERCEC/CNRS)
The geography of the Holocaust through Soviet cameras: research perspectives
 - Alicja Mroczkowska (Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw)
Postwar Exhumations in Poland – focus on documenting local Holocaust sites
 - Michal Chojak (Yahad-In Unum)
Soviet footage, witnesses and Yahad-In Unum's investigation on the Holocaust in Eastern territories
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30-16:30 **Panel 6: Historicizing the footage. Case studies of the image in the light of other types of archives: Ukraine**
Chair: Stuart Liebman (Queens College and CUNY Graduate Center, New York City)
- Tanja Penter (Heidelberg University)
Images of victims and survivors and gender roles in public mourning
 - Kirill Feferman (Ariel University)
Between Propaganda and Facts: Soviet wartime footage of Nazi atrocities in the Crimea and the North Caucasus
 - Karel Berkhoff (NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam)
What does Soviet footage from the 1940s tell us about the Holocaust in Kyiv and its Soviet aftermath?
- 19:00 Social dinner (for speakers and project team)



**Venue: Auditorium Coubertin
1 rue Jean Calvin, 75005 Paris**

Saturday, November 26, 2022

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- 09:30 **Panel 7: Historicizing the footage: Categories of victims**
Chair: Vanessa Voisin (University of Bologna, DiSCI)
- Irina Rebrova (ZfA TU Berlin)
People with disabilities as Nazi victims in the Soviet wartime documentaries and official reports: a close reading of the materials of the open trials in Krasnodar and Kharkiv
 - Babette Quinkert (Museum Berlin-Karlshorst)
The documentation of the liberated camps for Soviet prisoners of war using the example of Lamsdorf (Silesia)
- 11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:15 **Panel 8: Historicizing the footage: Auschwitz**
Chair: Valérie Pozner (THALIM-CERCEC/CNRS)
- Pavel Polian (Mandelstam Center in the Higher School of Economics, Moscow)
Auschwitz, between document and staging
 - Tal Bruttman (EHESS)
Auschwitz, the misunderstanding. Images of a KL
- 12:45 **Concluding remarks**

**Venue: Southern Marais
75004 Paris**

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- 15:00 **A Walk through îlot 16 in Southern Marais**
Visit guided and commented by Eric Le Bourhis (INALCO, historian of the Holocaust from the perspective of urban history)
- In occupied Paris, the persecution of Jews began in 1940 in ordinary urban spaces such as the Southern Marais. This neighborhood is unique in that it was the subject of a targeted expulsion and destruction operation carried out by the French authorities beginning in 1942 (as was the southern part of the Panier in Marseille a year later). Inspired by the ongoing work on the persecution of Jews in Paris and the work of Isabelle Backouche on this neighborhood, the walk invites us to reflect on the interactions between urban space and persecution, and on the role of ordinary administrations in the persecution.



**Venue: Mémorial de la Shoah
Auditorium Edmond J. Safra
17 Rue Geoffroy l'Asnier, 75004 Paris**

Sunday, November 27, 2022

14:30

Commented screening of Majdanek: unedited footage and released films (1944)

With participation of Stuart Liebman (Queens College & CUNY Graduate Center, New York City) and Fabian Schmidt (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Digital History, Vienna)

Moderation: Irina Tcherneva (Eur'ORBEM-CERCEC/CNRS)

