



International Conference

**ORAL HISTORY IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE:  
CURRENT RESEARCH AREAS,  
CHALLENGES AND SPECIFICITY**



**17<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

***Organisers:***

*Department of Sociology of Culture, University of Lodz  
Polish Oral History Association*

*Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences  
European Network Remembrance and Solidarity*

***Partners:***

*Ukrainian Oral History Association  
Czech Oral History Association  
The Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Łódź*

***Conference venue:***

*Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Lodz, Poland,  
90-214 Lodz, 41/43 Rewolucji 1905 r. Street, Building:  
Centre of Informatics and Econometrics (Centrum Informatyczno-Ekonometryczne)  
Rooms: E 319, E 305, E 306, E 324, 3rd Floor*

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **ORAL HISTORY IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE: CURRENT RESEARCH AREAS, CHALLENGES AND SPECIFICITY**

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In the past several years, oral history has become increasingly popular in Central and Eastern Europe, both in academia and beyond. It is impossible to overstate the importance of various local initiatives aimed at recording history and propagating knowledge about a region's past. At the same time, oral history is becoming more institutionalised: in several countries, archives and scholarly associations are being created, and international cooperation in the field intensifies.

While the popularity of oral history is a very positive phenomenon, it does raise multiple questions and issues. In contrast to Western Europe and North America, where oral history has been present for a long time, scholars from Central and Eastern Europe are still developing ethical, methodological and legal standards for their field. These standards are necessary for the recording, storing and editing of interviews, as well as their publication.

Thus, our conference seeks to pose questions regarding the specificity of oral history in our region. Does it exist and what does it look like? We are interested in the aforementioned ethical and legal challenges, but we also want to inquire about whether oral history in Central and Eastern Europe requires a particular and unique methodology and sensibility in comparison to its Western equivalent. In the West, oral history was a response to the need of recording the fates of groups heretofore disenfranchised by traditional historiography – ethnic minorities, women, workers, etc. So far, the obvious trend for oral history in Central and Eastern Europe has been to record the accounts of groups that had previously been marginalised by the undemocratic regimes of the Soviet bloc, and whose histories had remained outside of the officially approved historiography – the victims of repressions and deportation, the political opposition, members of the postwar anti-communist underground, Holocaust survivors, etc. The preeminence of these themes has left a clear mark on the oral history of the region. Faced with a change of generations, we should ask questions about the themes and types of interviewees that will shape the future of oral history in our region.

We would like to focus on oral history in countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Germany, Ukraine and Belarus. We invite both academics and non-academics who deal with oral history professionally to send us proposals for presentations. Topics include:

- the specific methodology of oral history in Central and Eastern Europe;
- ethical and legal problems regarding the recording, gathering and publishing of biographical accounts;
- archives and archiving interviews;
- the institutionalisation, financial framework and relations between various research groups;
- the important themes of today and the themes of the future – a discussion about the future of oral history in the region.

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#### **Organizing Committee:**

**Kaja Kaźmierka, Anna Wylegała, Karolina Źłobecka, Hanna Gospodarczyk, Agata Zysiak,  
Piotr Filipkowski, Marcin Jarzabek, Katarzyna Łuczak, Katarzyna Waniek**

## BOOK LAUNCH:

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- BORCHERS Roland i Katarzyna Madoń-Mitzner, *Wojna na Kaszubach. Pamięć polskich i niemieckich świadków. Pamięć polskich i niemieckich świadków*, Gdańsk 2014.
- CHORAŻKI Marcin, *Relacje wojenne ziemian – perspektywa dwóch pokoleń*, IPN, 2013
- FILIPKOWSKI Piotr, *Historia mówiona i wojna. Doświadczenie obozu koncentracyjnego w perspektywie narracji biograficznych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2010  
*Historia mówiona w świetle nauk humanistycznych i społecznych (collective monograph)*, UMCS, 2014
- KRATKA Lenka, *A History of the Czechoslovak Ocean Shipping Company, 1948-1989 (How a Small, Landlocked Country Ran Maritime Business During the Cold War)*, ibidem-Verlag, 2014
- KRAWCZYK Maria (ed.), *Pogranicza. Stara Kiszewa, Ośrodek KARTA*, 2013
- KUDELA-ŚWIĄTEK Wiktoria, *Odpamiętane. O historii mówionej na przykładzie narracji kazachstańskich Polaków o represjach na tle narodowościowym i religijnym*, Universitas, 2013
- KURKOWSKA-BUDZAN Marta, *Antykomunistyczne podziemie zbrojne na Białostocczyźnie. Analiza współczesnej symbolizacji przeszłości*, Historia Jagellonica, 2009
- MADOŃ-MITZNER Katarzyna (ed.), *Ocaleni z Mauthausen*, Ośrodek KARTA i Dom Spotkań z Historią, 2010
- MARCINIAK Marta, *Transnational Punk Communities in Poland: From Nihilism to Nothing Outside Punk*, Lexington Books, 2015
- NIEBRZEGOWSKA-BARTMINSKA Stanisława, Sebastian Wasiuta (eds.), *Historia mówiona w świetle etnolingwistyki*, Poligymnia, 2008
- PODBER Jacob, *The Electronic Front Porch: An Oral History of the Arrival of Modern Media in Rural Appalachia and the Melungeon Community*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2007
- URBANEK Joanna, *Everyday life in the shadow of terror. German occupation in Poland 1939-1945*, Muzeum II Wojny Światowej, 2015
- WYLEGAŁA Anna, *Przesiedlenia a pamięć. Studium (nie)pamięci społecznej na przykładzie ukraińskiej Galicji i polskich „ziem odzyskanych”*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Mikołaja Kopernika, 2014
- VYNNYTSKA Iroida, *Nezvychaini istorii zvychainykh zhinok. Usna istoria dvadtsiatogo stolittia*, Vydavnytstvo Lvivs'koi Politekhniki, 2013
- VANĚK, Miroslav – KRÁTKÁ, Lenka (eds.). *Příběhy (ne)obyčejných profesí. Česká společnost v období tzv. normalizace a transformace. (Stories (un) common professions. Czech society in the period of. Normalization and transformation)* Praha, Karolinum 2014
- VANĚK Miroslav, *Around the Globe. Rethinking Oral History with Its Protagonists*. Praha, Karolinum 20013
- VANĚK Miroslav - MÜCKE, Pavel. *Třetí strana trojúhelníku. Teorie a praxe orální historie. (The third side of the triangle. Theory and practice of oral history Praha)*, Karolinum, Praha 213.

VANĚK Miroslav, Those Who Prevailed And Those Were Replaced: Interviewing On Both Sides of A Conflict. In: Donald A. Richtie (ed.), The Oxford Handbook Of Oral History. Oxford University Press 2011, s. 37–50.

VANĚK Miroslav, Byl to jenom rock'n'roll? Hudební alternativa v komunistickém Československu (It was only rock'n'roll...? Music Alternative in Communist Czechoslovakia 1956–1989) 1956–1989. Praha, Academia 2010.

VANĚK Miroslav (ed.), Obyčejní lidé..?! Pohled do života tzv. mlčící většiny. Životopisná vyprávění příslušníků dělnických profesí a inteligence. (The ordinary people...?! An insight into the lives of silent majority". Life-stories of manual workers and intelligentsia) Praha, Academia 2009. 3 svazky, 1306 s.

VANĚK Miroslav, O orální historii s jejími zakladateli a protagonisty. Around Oral History with its founders and protagonist). Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny 2008.

VANĚK M., URBÁŠEK P. Vítězové? Poražení? Politické elity a disent v období tzv. normalizace. Životopisná interview. (Victors? Vanquished? Political Elites and Dissidents in the period of „normalization“ in Czechoslovakia), Prostor, Praha 2005.

#### **JOURNALS:**

„European Review of History”

„Karta”

“Usna istoriia Stepovoi Ukrainy”

„Youth Research Yearbook” (Samara – Moscow – Togliatti: NTC, 2010. Vol. 5./ „Nauchnyi molodyozhnyi yezhegodnik” (Vyp. 5. Samara – Moskva – Tolyatti: NTTs, 2010)

„Wrocławski Rocznik Historii Mówionej”

**PERFORMANCE:** “The Tin Ring” by Jane Arnfield.

**CONFERENCE VENUE:** Institute of Sociology, Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Lodz, Rewolucji 1905 Roku 37/39, Poland.

**See the website:** <http://eksoc.uni.lodz.pl/eng/>

#### **HOTELS: THE NEAREST HOTELS ARE:**

- 1) Hotel Polonia: <http://polonia.nocuj.com.pl/> ((5 min on foot but nothing special)
- 2) Hotel Savoy: <http://www.rezerwuje.pl/hotel/Lodz/Savoy> (10-15 min. on foot close to the city main street)
- 3) Grand Hotel: [www.grandhotel.com.pl](http://www.grandhotel.com.pl) (the eldest hotel in Lodz situated on the main street 15 min. on foot)
- 4) Boutique Hotel's II <http://www.booking.com/hotel/pl/boutique-s-lodz-rewolucji.pl.html> (the same street - cheaper option)
- 5) Hotel Villa Masoneria [www.villamasoneria.pl](http://www.villamasoneria.pl) (15-20 min. on foot)
- 6) Hotel Campanile: <http://www.booking.com/hotel/pl/campanilelodz.pl> (available by bus about 10 min. And 10 min walk)
- 7) Ibis Hotel: <http://www.ibishotel.com/pl/hotel-3096-ibis-lodz-centrum/index.shtml> (available by bus about 10 min. And 10 min walk)
- 8) Andel's Hotel: [www.andelslodz.com](http://www.andelslodz.com) (luxury option but worth recommending about 20 min walk)

9) Hotel Reymont: <http://www.booking.com/hotel/pl/reymontlodz.html>

**And there is also one nice hostel close to the University:**

1) Music hostel: <http://www.music-hostel.pl/en>

Contact persons:

- Professor Kaja Kaźmierska, [kajakaz@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:kajakaz@uni.lodz.pl), mobile phone: (48) 604-126-847
- Katarzyna Łuczak, conference secretary: [oral.history.lodz@gmail.com](mailto:oral.history.lodz@gmail.com)

# Conference Program

17th SEPTEMBER 2015

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**9.00-9.30 OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE**

**9.30- 10.30 Keynote by prof. Alexander von Plato**

Institute for History and Biography, University of Hagen

*Europe after 1945 and 1990 – a Rag Rug of Remembrance Cultures*

**Chair:** Piotr Filipkowski

**10.30-11.00 COFFEE BREAK**

**11.00-13.15 PARALLEL SESSIONS:**

**PARARALLEL SESSION I.**

**ORAL HISTORY – WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE**

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**Room E 319**

**Chair:**

**Agnieszka  
Golczyńska-  
Grondas**

1. **Iana Stepankowska**, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
Sex and sexual relations in autobiographical memories of the last soviet generation
2. **Grażyna Kubica-Heller**, Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
Oral history projects as emancipatory activity
3. **Magdalena Grabowska**, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw  
Oral histories of socialist and post-socialist women's movements: some challenges from the perspective of feminist methodology
4. **Dobrochna Kałwa**, Institute of History, University of Warsaw  
Oral history in Poland – historical politics from below
5. **Irina Savchenko**, Zaporizhzhya National University  
Oral sources in the study of women's urban daily life in south-eastern Ukraine in 50-60th years the twentieth century

**PARARALLEL SESSION II.**

**REGIONAL, LOCAL AND COMMUNITY-ORIENTED ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS**

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**Room E 306**

**Chair:**

**Marcin  
Jarzabek**

1. **Natalia Otrishchenko**, Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Lviv  
Bridging Academic and Public: U Stories as Oral History Archive for Research and Community Development
2. **Tomasz Zygmunt**, Forest Research Institute, Warsaw  
Archive of Forest Oral History
3. **Tetiana Storozhko & Natalia Zinevych**, M. Hrushevsky Institute of Ukrainian Archeography and Source Studies, Kiev  
Maidan Oral History projects (from methods to institutionalization)

### PARALLEL SESSION III.

#### ORAL HISTORY IN RESEARCH OF ART (THEATRE, CINEMA, VISUAL ARTS)

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**Room E 324**  
**Chair:**  
**Tomasz Ferenc**

1. **Agata Stolarz**, Institute of East-Central Europe, Warsaw  
The social impact of oral history. Art Oral History Projects in Central and Eastern Europe and their specificity
2. **Natalia Yakubova**, State Institute of Art Studies, Moscow/Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding  
On the Usage of the Oral History in the Contemporary Theatre
3. **Yuliya Golodnikova**, Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv  
Ukrainian documentary drama: screenwriting work style with oral histories in the age of televisioned "representation of reality.
4. **Jane Arnfield**, Northumbria University  
Theatre of the Real, Performance and Biography

**13.15-14.15**            **LUNCH**

**14.00-16.00**            **PARALLEL SESSIONS:**

### PARALLEL SESSION IV.

#### ORAL HISTORY IN LOCAL HISTORY AND MICRO-SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

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**Room E 319**  
**Chair:**  
**Anna Wylegała**

1. **Katarzyna Bock-Matuszyk, Ewa Sowińska**, The „Remembrance and Future” Center, Wrocław  
Oral history of northern and western lands of Poland after 1945 in the „Remembrance and Future” Center’s projects.
2. **Iryna Ramanava**, European Humanities University, Minsk  
Local and global in the oral history projects: the story of a settlement told by its inhabitants
3. **Karolina Panz**, Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw  
Victims' Voices in Reconstructing the Microhistory and the Memory of the Holocaust

### PARALLEL SESSION V.

#### METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL PROBLEMS IN ORAL HISTORY

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**Room E 306**  
**Chair:**  
**Dobrochna**  
**Kałwa**

1. **Piotr Filipkowski**, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw  
Beyond „giving voice to the voiceless”. Some theoretical questions to our oral history practice
2. **Izabela Skórzyńska**, Faculty of History, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań,  
**Anna Wachowiak**, School of Higher Education in Humanities, Szczecin, Poland



**Bernadette Jonda**, Institute of Archeology and Ethnology Polish Science Academy, Institute of Sociology in Martin-Luther - Universität Halle – Wittenberg, Germany

Witnesses of our lives? The relationship between researcher and speaker sharing the same experience about the past on the example of women's narration of their lives under communism

3. **Martin-Oleksandr Kisly**, National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy"  
Deportation of Crimean Tatars: ethical and legal problems of gathering biographical accounts according to current situation in Crimea
4. **Mykola Borovyk**, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
Oral autobiographical recollections as source for studying of collective memory: methodological problems

## PARARALLEL SESSION VI.

### COMMUNISM AND COMMUNISM BREAK-UP. PART I: DIFFERENT EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELDWORK

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**Room E 306**  
**Agata Zysiak**

1. **Amieke Bouma**, Faculty of Humanities, VU University Amsterdam,  
Interviewing Fallen Elites: Practical and Ethical Problems
2. **Michal Louc**, Institute of Historical Sciences of Faculty of Arts, University of Pardubice  
Czechoslovak Political Prisoners – the problem of recording narrators cooperating with the Communist state secret police
3. **Eduard Andriuschchenko**, Zaporizhzhya National Technical University  
Oral history as a method of studying Ukrainian nationalist organizations of the 1990.
4. **Jiří Hlaváček**, Faculty of humanities, Charles University in Prague  
Frustrated Hopes? Practical and ethical aspects of oral history research with Czech intellectual elites

**16.00– 16.15**      **COFFEE BREAK**

**16.15- 18.15**      **PARALLEL SESSIONS:**

## PARARALLEL SESSION VII.

### ORAL HISTORY IN FAMILY HISTORY PERSPECTIVE

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**Room E 319**  
**Chair:**  
**Kaja**  
**Kaźmierska**

1. **Radka Svarickova Slabakova**, Department of History, Palacký University Olomouc  
Family memory as a current research area for oral historians
2. **Barbara Kurowska**, Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation, Berlin  
"Heimat", Once Removed. Family Memories of Second-Generation German Expellees
3. **Stanislav Repinetskiy**, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan  
Ukraine and Ukrainians in Modern Russian Family Tales
4. **Uku Lember**, Taras Shevchenko University, Kiev

Beyond “East” and “West” marriages: inter-cultural family negotiations in Ukraine

### PARALLEL SESSION VIII.

#### ORAL HISTORY AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

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**Room E 324**  
**Chair:**  
**Katarzyna**  
**Waniek**

1. **Ondřej Haváč**, Masaryk University, Brno  
Oral history and national identity
2. **Oksana Khomiak**, Museum of history of Kyiv  
Narrative, Memory and History: The Case of Volunteer Mobilization to the Ukrainian Waffen SS Division.
3. **Sergii Paliienko**, Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky Hryhoriy Skovoroda State Pedagogical University.  
One topic, four countries: An experience of oral history of the Soviet theoretical archaeology
4. **Lenka Kratka**, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague  
Is teambuilding a substitution for the past compulsory May Day parades?

### PARALLEL SESSION IX.

#### ORAL HISTORY VERSUS OTHER ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

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**Room E 324**  
**Wiktor**  
**Kudela-Świątek**

1. **Joanna Urbanek**, Institute of History, University of Warsaw / Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk  
Oral history in psychology – possibilities of application on the example of Polish former forced labourers life stories
2. **Damian Gocół**, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin  
Linguist towards oral history texts
3. **Megan Lewis**, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC  
Family, Oral History and Memory

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### 19.00 PERFORMANCE BY JANE ARNFIELD:

**The Tin Ring** - performed real life history of Zdenka Fantlová

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### 20.00 CONFERENCE DINNER

Venue: The Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Łódź, Wojska Polskiego 83 Street

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## 18th SEPTEMBER 2015

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9.00- 10.00

**Keynote by prof. Miroslav Vaněk,**

Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences,  
Prague

*Looking for paths: parallels and intersections of oral history in Central and Eastern  
Europe*

**Chair:** Anna Wylegała

10.00-10.15

**COFFEE BREAK**

10.15-12.30

**PARALLEL SESSIONS:**

**PARALLEL SESSION X.**

**ORAL HISTORY IN METHODOLOGY OF THE HOLOCAUST RESEARCH**

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**Room E 319**

**Chair:**

**Marta**

**Kurkowska-**

**Budzan**

1. **Agnieszka Ilwicka**, National Yiddish Book Center, Amherst  
Challenges in the interviews of the Eastern European Jewish communities after the Shoah.
2. **Maria Ferenc-Piotrowska**, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw  
Elements of oral history in the works of Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archive
3. **Jacob J. Podber**, Southern Illinois University  
Vishneva, Belarus Soviet Union Poland, An Oral History
4. **Monica Vrzgulowa**, Institute of Ethnology Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava  
Politics of Holocaust Remembrance and Memories of Bystanders. Case Slovakia.
5. **Irina Rebrova**, ZfA TU Berlin  
Oral testimonies of Children – Jewish survivors in the Holocaust as a special type of personal documents

**PARALLEL SESSION XI.**

**ORAL HISTORY IN RESEARCH ON EDUCATION, SPORT AND LEISURE**

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**Room E 305**

**Chair:**

**Jacek Burski**

1. **Michal Šimáně & Jiří Zounek & Dana Knotova**, Masaryk University, Brno  
Oral history in researching socialist education in the Czech Republic
2. **Jakub Gałęziowski**, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw,  
Foreigners behind the Iron Curtain. New research area for oral history projects in the Central-Eastern Europe
3. **Pavel Mücke**, Institute for Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague  
Czech Dream or Towards See, Tourism and Shopping. History of Abroad Traveling after 1989 via Perspective of Oral History.

4. **Piotr Sitarski**, School of Media and Audiovisual Culture University of Lodz  
New media: revolution or coup d'etat? The Polish perspective

## PARALLEL SESSION XII A & B.

### A. CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES OF THE DIGITAL TECHNICS IN ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH

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**Room E 306**  
**Chair:**  
**Hanna**  
**Gospodarczyk**

1. **Wiktoria Kudela-Świątek**, Independent Researcher, Poland  
The Future of Oral History in Digital Humanities Times
2. **Marie Barešová**, National Film Archive in Prague  
Oral History as an Object of Collection: National Film Archive and Society For Queer Memory
3. **Marta Marciniak**, Independent Researcher, Poland  
The challenges of processing and exhibiting digital oral collections

### B. ORAL HISTORY OF THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

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1. **Irina Makhouskaya**, Belorussian State University  
Perestroika and Economic Crisis in Narratives of Belarusian Provinces
2. **Jacek Burski & Joanna Wygnańska**, Institute of Sociology, University of Lodz  
Experience of the Process of Transformation in Poland. Sociological Comparative Analysis based on Biographical Perspective
3. **Agata Zysiak**, Institute of Sociology, University of Lodz  
Ethos, Decline and Nostalgia – the "Good" and the "Bad" Worker in Declining Industrial Cities. Case of Detroit (USA)

**12.30 – 13.30**      **LUNCH**

**13.30-15.15**      **DISCUSSION PANEL: ORAL HISTORY IN POLAND**

**Chair:**                      Kaja Kaźmierska

**Participants:**            Marta Kurkowska-Budzan, Institute of History, Jagiellonian University, Cracow; Joanna Wawrzyniak, Social Memory Laboratory, University of Warsaw, Anna Wylegała, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw; Piotr Filipkowski, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw; Marcin Jarząbek, Institute of History, Jagiellonian University, Cracow.

**15.15 – 15.30**      **COFFEE BREAK**

15.30- 17.30

**PARALLEL SESSIONS:**

**PARALLEL SESSION XIV.**

**COMMUNISM AND COMMUNISM BREAK-UP. PART II: ORAL HISTORY VS POLITICAL HISTORY**

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**Room E 319**

**Chair:**

**Joanna**

**Wygnańska**

1. **Ioana Zoia Sandu**, Faculty of History and Philosophy, "Babeş-Bolyai" University Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
Documenting Anti-communist Resistance and Communist Repression in Romania through Oral History
2. **Cosmin Budeanca**, The Institute for the Investigation of the Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile, Bucharest  
Oral History and the History of Romanian Communism. Themes and Institutionalized Development after 1990
3. **Agnes Arp**, Friedrich-Schiller-University, Jena  
Memories of the GDR 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall: Oral History vs. Policy of history at anniversary year 2009
4. **Katarzyna Korzeniewska**, University of Białystok, Poland  
Oral history as a political history. Studying underground activities in late Soviet Lithuania

**PARALLEL SESSION XV.**

**ORAL HISTORY IN MUSEUMS AND STATE ARCHIVES**

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**Room E 306**

**Chair:**

**Joanna**

**Wawrzyniak**

1. **Magdalena Wiśniewska**, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń  
Oral History in Poland: The Archival Perspective
2. **Aneta Popławska**, National Museum in Szczecin  
Oral history as a reciprocity and the ritual of memory in Polish museums narrative
3. **Michał Studniarek**, Institute of History, Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw  
Interviews conducted by the Oral History Archive of the Warsaw Rising Museum
4. **Anna Alekseenko**, The Central State Scientific and Technical Archives of Ukraine  
Oral history of science and technology in the archives: Design of the Central State Scientific and Technical Archives of Ukraine

17.30-18.00

**CLOSING DISCUSSION**

**Room E 319**

## BIOGRAPHIES OF KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

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**PROF. ALEXANDER VON PLATO** is one of Germany's best-known public historians. He is known for his oral history approach to research, which involves extensive interviews with both eyewitnesses and key players of a specific period. He is the founder and long-time director of the Oral History Centre at the Open University Hagen, and the German oral history journal BIOS. He is also a founder and former secretary and vice president of the International Oral History Association. Dr. von Plato taught at the universities of Essen, Hagen, and Vienna. From 2006 to 2010, he served as a member of the Historical Commission of Dresden which evaluated historical documents about the bombing of Dresden in February 1945. His book, *The Unification of Germany – A World Political Power Game; Bush, Kohn, Gorbachev and the Internal Moscow Protocols* is in its third printing and is standard reading for journalists, educators and students. It draws on minutes from Gorbachev talks with high-ranking politicians, and interviews with politicians such as George H. Bush, James Baker, and Condoleezza Rice. Similarly, his book *Hitler's Slaves* (2010) is an important study of forced labor during the Second World War.



**PROF. MIROSLAV VANĚK** is a director of the Oral History Center and a senior researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, and a director of the Department of Contemporary History – Oral History, at Faculty of Humanities at the Charles University in Prague. President of International Oral History Association (2010–2012); President of the Czech National Committee for Oral History (2008 - 2012). He specializes in modern Czech history, primarily the period of Czechoslovak socialism, with special attention to the young generation under socialism, including student and ecological movements, dissidents, political communist elites, workers, as well as the oral history method. He is an author of many books on Czechoslovak pre-November society and the issue of oral history.



**JANE ARNFIELD** a Reader in Arts, and Director of Fine & Visual Arts Programmes at Northumbria University UK. Jane has been a theatre practitioner for the past twenty-seven years, having graduated from Dartington College of Arts in 1988 with a BA (Hons) in Theatre. She has been a member of three ensemble companies: Mike Alfreds Method & Madness, The David Glass Ensemble incorporating work with the Lost Child Project in South East Asia, South America and Europe and the Northern Stage Ensemble. Jane has worked with a range of international theatre directors including Richard Gregory from Quarantine on a number of site-specific projects, Mike Alfreds at Hampstead Theatre, The Young Vic and Shakespeare's Globe - London and New York where Jane played Imogen in *Cymbeline* with Mark Rylance. Jane is an Associate Artist with the Cambodian Documentation Centre (DC-Cam) in Phnom Penh, and a recently appointed (2013) member of the museum team for The Sleuk Rith Institute which is committed to building a permanent documentation centre in Phnom Penh managed by DC-Cam Director Youk Chhang. The Tin Ring her current, third solo work will be discusses the Holocaust through the life and lens of Zdenka Fantlova and Zdenka is one of a handful of people to have survived the entire Nazi extermination process. Arnfield specialises in sourcing first hand witness testimony and the transformation of this data into a theatrical landscape. She has specific research interests in abandonment and survival, resilience and risk taking, with a particular focus on genocide. Arnfield is extending her research of Theatre of the Real into new areas, investigating the impact performed host testimony imparts to both performer and spectator as surrogates, recipients of the original testimony. <http://www.thetinring.com/>

## ABSTRACT BY NAME

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**Alekseenko Anna**    [alekseenkoa1@gmail.com](mailto:alekseenkoa1@gmail.com)

### **Oral history of science and technology in the archives: Design of the Central State Scientific and Technical Archives of Ukraine**

The Central State Scientific and Technical Archives of Ukraine (CSSTA of Ukraine) is the specialized archival institution for centralized storage and use of scientific and technical documentation (STD). It is the scientific and methodological center for working with documents on the history of science and technology in Ukraine, including the archival oral history materials on this topic. The archival documents in history of science and technology provide a retrospective review of all major sectors of the economy: construction, energy, metallurgy, coal, gas, chemical industry, transport, agricultural, heavy and medium machine-building, etc.

Offers from researchers to adopt state storage they collected oral history sources of individual branches of science and technology come to the archives recently. For example, a graduate student of National technical university 'KhPI' streamlined collection of interesting materials on the history of rocket and space branch. There are interview with designers of PJSC 'HARTRON'. But Ukrainian archives have no experience of reception of the deposit of such documents. Putting into archives collection documents from the oral history is an innovative line of archival whose importance cannot be overemphasized. It will provide an opportunity to save for posterity eyewitness and participants create projects of their implementation and testing or commissioning; will fix the gendering of scientific discoveries and ideas embodied in the reports on scientific research. All this greatly enliven and enrich the content informative scientific and technical documents. CSSTA of Ukraine conducts research in the field of archiving of oral history materials in history of science and technology; analyzes international experience; developing appropriate methodologies; defines the criteria by which to carry out their assignment to appraise of the National Archival Fund of Ukraine, as well as to clarify the issue of stock status.

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### **Oral history as a method of studying Ukrainian nationalist organizations of the 1990s**

The paper is based on the author's experience in interviewing activists of the Ukrainian radical nationalist movement of the 1990s. Memories of movement members constitute one of the main groups of sources in this topic. The author characterizes main advantages and disadvantages of this method. Main features of interviewing political activists are identified, typical mistakes are described. The author's results may be used when researching peculiarities of other radical organizations.

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### **Memories of the GDR 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall: Oral History vs. Policy of history at anniversary year 2009.**

I would like to present one project which I conduct during one year in Jena in my lecture about Oral History with master students. It began with a closed collaboration with the Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, agency for civic education, in Thuringia and ended with an irreversible controversial with this political institution of the memory because his president wanted to censure all the interviews of the people we had met. I would to explain and analyze this process of making political history against or without the voices of the people. It shows the power of the research with the method of Oral History.



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### **Oral History as an Object of Collection: National Film Archive and Society For Queer Memory**

Oral history does not produce data only to be used as a source for a research, paper, or a book, they can also become a ground for museum or archive collections. That is the case of both National Film Archive and Society For Queer Memory. Although these institutions deal with different subjects, they both have a department focusing on performing interviews using an oral history methodology. Recordings therefore have to be treated as objects with specific needs. Goal of this paper is thus to address particular problems that curators or archivists deal with on everyday basis when taking care of audio(visual) files and materials associated with them. Concrete examples gained from experience two institutions mentioned above will show daily practice including difficulties and obstacles, legal and technical obstructions, or moral and ethical barriers. Audio(visual) materials as products of oral history not only have their own specific metadata and system of classification, they also require strict rules implied for the sensitivity of life story interview content.

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**Sowińska Ewa**      [kasiabock@gmail.com](mailto:kasiabock@gmail.com)

### **Oral history of northern and western lands of Poland after 1945 in the „Remembrance and Future” Center’s projects**

This paper provides an overview of oral history research initiated and/or supported by the Remembrance and Future” Center (Wrocław, Poland) since 2007. Until now the Center has already led and supervised several dozen of oral history projects. All of them - in accordance with its statutory mission - are related to post second world war history of the territories included to Poland after the Potsdam Conference, in particular of Wrocław and Lower Silesia region. Those projects concern among others: migration from eastern and central Poland to so-called „Regained Lands” and its reconstruction from the devastation of war, everyday life, culture and religion under the communist regime, national and ethnic minorities, building of local identity, science and academic life, anti-communist opposition and the apparatus of power, important dates in history (1956, 1968, 1980, 1989 etc.). Those projects are carried out under Center’s own research programs and under grants awarded every year to few young researchers. The aim of this paper is to present the undertaken research problems and how the results of those projects are used in practice to popularize the unique post war history of those territories (in education, publications, exhibitions and other).

**Borovyk Mykola**      [mkborovyk@gmail.com](mailto:mkborovyk@gmail.com)

### **Oral autobiographical recollections as source for studying of collective memory: methodological problems**

In my presentation I would like to share some reflections in regard to possibilities and limitations of using the oral sources in studying of historical memory. The topics of historical memory, public representations and social role of history occupy a central position in the historiographical discourse of the past two decades. The discussions on the historical memory have traditionally focused on the activity of the elites, including historians, public intellectuals, media and politicians; whereas the non-elite groups’ memory has been generally neglected. The use of oral autobiographical memories can significantly correct this disproportion. At the same time its’ use requires careful methodological and methodical reflection. The content of the autobiographical memories are influenced by many factors. Usually all these factors are evaluated as obstacles, as shifting factors to be considered when assessing the reliability of oral sources. But they can also be seen as opportunities, as traces that some tools left. Studying that traces we can draw conclusions about the instruments themselves, about susceptibility or resistance of the material, the possible ways of processing as well as the role which thus formed "memory artifact" plays for its bearer in his relationship with the world and with itself.



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### **Interviewing Fallen Elites: Practical and Ethical Problems**

In this paper, I propose to present my research on the Ostdeutsches Kuratorium von Verbänden, an organization of various associations that represent the financial interests and public status of former GDR officials, esp. from the state security organs. This research is largely based on interviews. In contradiction to the 'traditional practice' of oral history to interview groups previously marginalized under the socialist regimes, I look at a group that represented the GDR authorities. My research is not an attempt at reconstructing their GDR activities, but rather to understand their activities and strategies, as well as their view on historical events since 1989. On the one hand, this group comprises mainly of former Stasi members – people who clearly identified with the GDR, and who worked for its most repressive institution. Yet this does not automatically mean that 'their history' is well-known. In fact, the public discourse on the GDR past in Germany is dominated by 'official documents', written for specific political and bureaucratic purposes; these can easily obscure the human motives and ideologies behind life choices of "perpetrators"/agents of the state. Their previous occupations in the GDR have made former Stasi members a particularly disliked group in contemporary Germany. How they are treated can therefore also tell us much about the way in which Germany deals with the legacy of the GDR – in terms of legal and democratic procedures, and in the institutionalization of 'official history'. At the same time, the focus on a group of former GDR officials and functionaries also poses certain difficulties for the researcher. These include practical difficulties common to oral history (what do people [claim to] remember? What is being left out, or overemphasized, and why?) as well as more specific difficulties relating to the past of the interviewees. How to deal with unverifiable information? How to communicate with the interviewees as a scholar, considering the tension between, on the one hand, the necessity to gain their trust, and on the other, one's own opposition to, or at least critical distance to, their positions and narratives? And what to do with illuminating but very sensitive personal stories?

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### **Oral History and the History of Romanian Communism. Themes and Institutionalized Development after 1990**

After the fall of the Communist regimes, historians were forced to come with answers regarding some of the questions raised about recent history. They couldn't have succeeded in doing so without the oral testimony of the participants and witnesses of some events. In Romania, oral history was accepted with relative difficulty, because the traditionalist historians were constantly reticent about this. They rejected the oral sources, accused of a lack of reliability, because of the limit of the memory and the subjectivity of the witnesses. Nevertheless, in the 25 years since the fall of Communism, there have been many approaches towards the recovery of the memory of Communism. Our presentation focuses on the main themes addressed by oral history and on the institutions interested in this endeavor, but also on issues that historians have encountered in their attempt to implement those methods.

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### **Experience of the Process of Transformation in Poland. Sociological Comparative Analysis based on Biographical Perspective**

Conference speech will focus on presentation of research project being realized at Department of Sociology of Culture (University of Lodz) from March 2014 till February 2017. The main aim of the project is to analyze the experience of transformation of the Polish political and social system in an individual biographical perspective. The transformation is define here as a process of social changes, for which the year 1989 has been symbolically set and accepted in the public discourse as the turning point for the political, social,

economic transition. Research is focused on the biographical perspective of ordinary people experiencing social reality before and after 1989. Researchers plan to collect 90 biographical, narrative interviews with three social worlds and arenas of discourse of 3 generations/ cohorts (i.e. people born between (1) 1960-70, (2) 1970-80 and (3) 1980-89. The only presumption made here is that due to different ideological constellation of the socialization processes and educational careers (that shape adolescent individuals, form particular worldview, influence biographical orientations and create some shared communication code) of the above mentioned cohorts, they are differently embroiled in the transformation process and their definitions of the experiences before (the People's Republic of Poland) and after 1989 may differ to a large extent. In the collected narratives researchers are especially interested in getting answers to the question of what informants incorporate into their biographical experiences and in what way they speak about them, how they interpret them (Helling 1990). In conference speech we will present main aims of the project, the categories of analysis generated after one and half year of research process and we will show the link between the perspective of the past conventionally/historically understood as the period before the transition of 1989 with the contemporary perspective, i.e. the time of transformation.

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### **Elements of oral history in the works of Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archive**

It had been observed that enterprise of Oneg Shabbat group (historian Emanuel Ringelblum and collaborators), who were gathering documents and personal accounts on different aspects of life in the Warsaw ghetto and Nazi atrocities on Jews in Poland, is going beyond the boundaries of traditional historiography (Kassow 2007). In my presentation I would like to bring this argument further and show how Ringelblum's methodology is rooted in interwar interest in lives of 'ordinary people' that manifested itself in contests for autobiographies or memoirs, that were organized for example by Instytut Gospodarstwa Społecznego and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, and from which to some extent 'oral history' evolved. Many testimonies that were preserved in the Archive were written down during interviews conducted by Oneg Shabbat members. The instructions were not clear on that aspect, but some of Ringelblum's collaborators were making effort to preserve the traces of orality of testimonies that could not have been recorded but in writing. It was not a coincidence that Rachel Auerbach, one of important Oneg Shabbat members, was one of the first researchers to suggest using tape recorders during interview process already in 1954 (Cohen 2008). I would like to focus on particularly difficult testimonies – ones of orphaned children (published in Sakowska 2000). On one hand, expression of traumatic experiences was tamed by the very structure of questionnaire, but on the other, the researcher conducting the interview made effort to record children's own words and reactions. Another example that I would like to discuss is pointing even more strongly to difficulty of recording details of spoken testimony in writing. These are the notes that were taken by Oneg Shabbat members during the interviews – in the beginning they are accurate, but later they become chaotic and focused on factual aspect of testimony.

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### **Beyond "giving voice to the voiceless". Some theoretical questions to our oral history practice.**

There is no doubt, that in the last ten years or so, oral history has become very popular in Poland (and East-Central Europe). Many, I believe, the majority of documentation and research projects conducted under its label since then, were based on the assumption – usually openly declared – that what we primarily did, when we did oral history was "giving voice to the voiceless" and/or fulfilling historical (or better: historiographical) gaps. This gave us, oral historians, very strong legitimization. I would claim twofold: not only we have been producing new historical sources and sometimes new historical interpretations on their basis, but we could also have a feeling of a kind of added moral value, so to say. Especially in these common cases when we conducted interviews with people 'on the proper historical site' – victims of the war or communist 'regimes', powerless people or dissidents and oppositionist to the 'system' (even, or maybe

particularly, those unknown, “forgotten”, marginalized in mainstream historical and collective memory discourses). This kind of oral historical research was often driven – next to scientific questions – by ethical impulse: a conviction that we, as community, should ‘remember’ about experiences of our interviewees, should include them into our historiography and collective memory. Doing that we found inspirations in ‘western’ oral history, which for many years was driven by the same impulse. Probably there is still much to do in oral history in our region on this basic, documentary level. But I think, we have already did much enough, to go beyond “giving voice to the voiceless” paradigm in our work. In my presentation I would like to encourage myself and other *oral historians*, to start theorizing more about our work, to define its peculiarities and differences – especially in academic field. There also good external reasons to take up such theoretical task. Let me mention just two, very relevant for Poland: strong and influential tradition of biographical sociology (‘old’ and ‘new’) on one hand, and rapidly developing – if not expanding and conquering other research fields – *memory studies*. Both these neighbors (and there are more) of oral history are much more advanced in theorizing its own research practice. I believe *oral history* we do could start formulating its own theoretical voice. Or at least get stronger methodological and theoretical awareness – and not pretending to be the voice of “authentic” past experience. In my presentation I will try to sketch a couple of basic questions that might help us start such theorizing. The most important among them relates historical subject. Not only *what?* (happened) and *how?* (it is remembered / narrated), but also – and maybe in the first place – *Who?* Who is speaking to us? And who are we? – interviewers, analyzers, interpreters?

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### **Foreigners behind the Iron Curtain. New research area for oral history projects in the Central-Eastern Europe.**

My paper presents the subject, which is a part of my doctoral research. It goes beyond the assumption that in Central-Eastern Europe oral history is related to persecutions and repressions on the one hand and anti-communist opposition on the other. This is connected with a phenomenon unexplored and almost absent from academic discourse, that of foreigners’ presence in our region during the communist era. From the early 1950s, as a result of international agreements, thousands of foreigners started to come to study at Universities in the Communist Block. The important element of such policy was the support of developing countries, which had a great impact on the local societies, forced to deal with the Other with a completely different cultural background. Only in Poland, between 1952 and 1989, more than 16 thousands of foreigners were studying, more than half of whom were from the Middle East and North Africa. For the strangers it was also a cultural clash, each had to confront their ideas (also their socialist views) with the grey everyday life behind the Iron Curtain. In my research, apart from the historian’s traditional set of tools, I use the methodology of oral history based on biographical narratives in order to shed new light on the subject. In this paper I present, focusing on the example of Poland, the potential of this research area in the field of oral history, memory and biographic studies. I also propose potential directions of the research. Conducting interviews with foreigners generates completely new challenges for a researcher (such as cultural clash, language, translation). It also opens many possibilities to extend the research to other countries of the region where this issue can be taken up for comparison. In the longer term it appears highly interesting to make a juxtaposition of our experience with the immigrants’ reality in the West.

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### **Linguist towards oral history texts**

The oral history is interdisciplinary research movement, which focuses on an analysis of the oral relations about history. Similar studies were conducting long ago in various fields related to linguistics – for example ethnolinguistics, dialectology and folklore studies. That disciplines use research methods, which can useful tool in the studies of oral narratives. Categories introduced by the Lublin ethnolinguistics (point of view, the prospect of economic, profile etc.) allow for multidimensional analysis of oral texts. This allows us to take a

closer look, among other things, shaping of speaker's subjectivity, inner group relationships, stereotypes, etc.

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### **Ukrainian documentary drama: screenwriting work style with oral histories in the age of televised "representation of reality.**

Oral histories are one of the key elements of modern Ukrainian drama that actively appeal to the subjective experience of different generations of the country and rewrite its history. A new wave of playwrights and actors tend to create collective statements using documentary techniques that, according to Irit Rogoff, reflect the "symptom of commonly ubiquitous need for participation". In every theatre project, oral histories have different functions: collecting information about the characters and events, self-presenting the hero, dramatizing the stage action, provoking spectators to have public dialogue and so on. The social mission of Ukrainian theater activism is aimed at proclamation of docudrama as a universal language, asserting the equality of different generations in the face of death, war, totalitarianism, which frees the opportunity to discuss the problem of historical justice, as it is relevant to the present moment, the losses that are measured globally, the right of memory and personal biography as approval of existential choice in the existence of a man of the XXI century. In western countries docudrama never stopped a dialogue with the aesthetics of performativity but in Ukraine its innovation is associated with the inspection of theater as a social institution, opening of the possibility of experimentation and allegories of the national project. Modern Ukrainian drama includes "Twenty-years old" (based on oral histories of the members of Ukrainian Insurgent Army), "Pork liver" (based on personal correspondence between Afghan soldier and his mother), "Diploma" (based on the students' stories about why they decide to pursue higher education), "Diary of Maidan" (oral histories of people who participated in revolution of dignity, recorded at the Independence Square in Kyiv), "Romeo and Juliet" (Facebook posts and oral stories of the participants of the conflict in South-Eastern Ukraine), and projects work in progress - articulate the values of generations living in different "technological" eras. Despite this, the oral stories are the ones that provide people with the ability to find a common language to replace a Soviet ideological doctrine and the corresponding rules of social behavior. As noted by Mark Lipovetskyi, experimental drama involves "performative design of communicative violence" that "enables understanding of the multiple functions that violence and discourses have acquired in post-Soviet culture." Ukrainian documentary cinematography also focuses on screenwriting work style with oral histories and centers on the problems of treating the concept of "authenticity as a representation" which is proven with 2014 films (Babylon13, Contact, Maidan's Black diary). They caused a wave of public debate and strengthened the attention to the processes of transition in contemporary culture. However, there is still an open question on whether the playwrights, documentary filmmakers, journalists and cameramen understand the wideness of ideological manipulations that can take place while trying to represent the authenticity of documents and evidence in the era of "media suspicion" (B.Groys)? What role does a witness play in a show called "the truth"?

**Grabowska Magdalena** [magdagrabowska@yahoo.com](mailto:magdagrabowska@yahoo.com)

### **Oral histories of socialist and post-socialist women's movements: some challenges from the perspective of feminist methodology**

Drawing on the experiences of conducting several oral history studies on women's movements in Eastern Europe and Caucasus, including studies in Poland, Czech Republic and Georgia, this paper interrogates the possibility of incorporating elements of the feminist oral history into research on post-socialism. Contemporary interest in women's oral accounts of the past, particularly the communist past, can be considered an example of an effort to provide alternative histories of the time period, seen from the perspective of groups that were previously marginalized and excluded from the mainstream historical narratives. However the specificity of the region's past requires the "adjustment" of some of the western methodological tools: including using "gender" as a category of analysis, into the specific context of post-

socialism. This paper focuses on challenges faced by feminist oral histories in the region. It examines issues related to accountability, "truth" and "historical politics" crucial to the oral history studies on women in Eastern Europe and Caucuses. In particular it explores how, in women's accounts of the past the grand historical narratives intersect with different layers of personal memories, and current approaches to state socialism to shape one's account of "what happened". It further argues that the analysis of the ways in which various versions of the past are mediated through existing and available discourses and narratives: the discourse on transformation and post 1989 feminism are among the most powerful of them, should be a crucial focus of feminist oral history of post-socialism.

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### **Oral history and national identity**

My presentation is going to bring in the oral history as a method used for researching national identity. It is based on data gathered during my 3 field researches among Czech immigrants living in Switzerland and Austria who fled their country after the Soviet invasion in 1968. These researches were conducted to get archive materials and record interviews as a base of my dissertation thesis. It deals with integration of Czechoslovak immigrants into Swiss and Austrian society as well as with a change of national identity of Czech (and Slovak) refugees who lived abroad for many years. I am going to deal in my presentation with a question whether and to which extent the data gathered by the method of oral history are able to give relevant answer concerning a process of integration and a change of national identity. Is this method really able to capture social and psychological processes these people had to undergo in emigration? Is it able to bring any relevant output?

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### **Frustrated Hopes? Practical and ethical aspects of oral history research with Czech intellectual elites**

The paper is focused on the practical and ethical aspects of oral-historical research with representatives of the intellectual elites (ie. scientists, academics, artists, medical doctors, politicians and others.). On a few concrete examples of research, already carried out in the Czech context, I will try to point out specific problems that must be solved flexibly by researcher during the actual fieldwork, which is oriented towards the relatively closed community of social elites. Main attention will be paid to the issues of contacting narrators, their expectations from project, personal sympathy and antipathy (relationship between interviewer and narrator), authorization and publication of interviews.

**Ilwicka Agnieszka**      [agailwicka@interia.pl](mailto:agailwicka@interia.pl)

### **Challenges in the interviews of the Eastern European Jewish communities after the Shoah.**

As an oral historian I took part in several projects which aim was to interview Jews from the Eastern European communities both in Diaspora and in the Israel. Since 2008 I was involved in the AHEYM project (Indiana University), David Katz Project of recording Holocaust survivors in the Baltic countries (Lithuania) and the Yiddish Book Centre in the cooperation with the Jewish Women's Archive Currently (USA). Also in the past. I organized field trip to Lithuania for interviews of the Holocaust survivors for the Museum of the Polish Jews in Warsaw. Currently I am a former member of the Wexler's Oral History Project and a Fellow in the "Osrodek Pamiec i Przyszlosc" we Wroclawiu. In my paper I would like to discuss challenges of the oral history projects as well as limitations and possibilities. I conduct the interviews in Yiddish, Polish and English and my main goal is to discuss how language shapes the interview. What people share and what they don't talk about when they do the interview in the language which is for them a mother tongue and what they present in the second language. Is the language the only barrier for the Eastern European speakers? I argue that the oral historians in the Eastern Europe need an extra skill which is not only getting the knowledge of the spoken language but also very deep understanding of the complexity of the local



community and individual narration. Also, is the place of the interview playing an important role in the story telling? In my short presentation I would like to present a few excerpts from my videos to show the possibilities and challenges in the interviews.

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### **Oral history in Poland – historical politics from below**

The main aim of the papers is to analyse Polish oral herstory, the term used to name feminist activity devoted to construct feminist (or women-oriented) collective memory. There are two fields crucial for the herstory movement in Poland – historical research on history of Polish women in the last two centuries, and documentation of women’s subjectivity and their experiences of the past. In the latter case oral history with its methodology and the idea of „history from below” became a crucial element of feminist memorial projects. Polish oral herstory has two juxtaposed inspirations, namely western feminism and Polish historical policy. The first with its long tradition of oral history projects devoted to women offers both feminist methodology, and ideological background, the latter organize institutional and cultural frames for oral history initiatives, including school education, museums, political actions, and artistic projects. What is Polish oral herstory operating within these frames? Who are feminist oral herstorians and their narrators? What kind of interactions take place among herstory, history, and feminism? These are the key questions to answered in my paper.

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### **Narrative, Memory and History: The Case of Volunteer Mobilization to the Ukrainian Waffen SS Division**

Former Division soldiers united worldwide into the Brotherhood of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Division of the Ukrainian National Army since 1950s (in Ukraine – the Galician Brotherhood since 1991) are claimed as “collaborators”, “traitors,” “war criminals” by Soviet and Western historiography whereas they proposed their wartime activities as of “fighters for Ukrainian independence” and, therefore, represent specific “culture of memory” among the war veterans. In my presentation, I would like to address the issue of a “volunteer” mobilization (it became the core of the Brotherhood narrative) into the 14th Waffen SS Galicia Division during 1943-45 in three dimensions: as it is expressed by the veterans themselves, by the official narrative of the Brotherhood and through thorough analysis of the mobilization campaign under German occupation in district “Galicia” (1943-1944) and then throughout the Third Reich. Deriving from individual contradictions with the collective memory of the Brotherhood, it is shown that patriotic feelings and desire of fight for the “freedom of Ukraine” where not always the main reason to join Division for a big portion of its soldiers. Studying individual behaviours, my argument is that joining the Division had become one of the most important strategies of survival during the war for the youth aged 16-25 years and older. Research is based on my 38 conducted oral history interviews with the Division veterans in Western Ukraine and Canada, memoirs, interrogation materials and criminal records of the KGB archives, state archives in Kyiv, Lviv and Ternopil (Ukraine).

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### **Deportation of Crimean Tatars: ethical and legal problems of gathering biographical accounts according to current situation in Crimea**

The deportation of Crimean Tatars is state-organized and forcible eviction of Crimean Tatars people that was ordered by Joseph Stalin as a form of collective punishment in 1944. Official reason for this was an ostensible collaboration of Crimean Tatars with German and Romanian forces, when they occupied Crimea for three years during World War II. Soviet authorities did not investigate who was guilty of the charges, but

deported all the people, including women, children, and the elderly, despite the fact that they mostly had no connection to the German regime. As a result of state-sponsored violence Crimean Tatars became the nation in exile (Sürgünlik in Crimean Tatar language). The steppes of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and other regions of Soviet Union were the final destination for them. The lack of accommodation and food, the failure to adapt to new climatic conditions, and the rapid spread of diseases had a heavy demographic impact during the first years of exile. Uzbeks, who are also Muslims, met Tatars unfriendly and with hostility. Thus Crimean Tatars became needless people for Soviet regime as well as unwanted neighbors for local population. We have the lack in biographical accounts about deportation and everyday life in exile. So we should not stop gathering biographical accounts. Thus question is: what problems a researcher can face according to new Crimean realities? We clearly understand that the local population, especially the Crimean Tatars, is under pressure from new authorities. Moreover, Crimean Tatars become closed type communities. Besides this, we must be ready to changes in official historical memory and how it can affect remembering. The first time I faced the problem of not wanting to talk a couple of years ago, while dealing with research concerning childhood of Crimean Tatars in exile. People were afraid to talk about the past. And now, going to make another research based on oral interviews, the following question is arising: as this fear has increased after the occupation?

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### **Oral history in researching socialist education in the Czech Republic**

Oral history in researching socialist education in the Czech Republic The study of history of education and schooling in the Czech Republic is a research area with a relatively long and rich tradition, but, paradoxically, 1989 ushered an attenuation of interest in historical topics (contemporary history of education and socialist education are not researched at all) and methodology of research in history of education is not being developed at all. The paper thus focuses on one of the new methodological areas, namely the use of oral history in researching socialist education in the Czech Republic. The authors will present the potential uses of oral history and will discuss links to other methods and approaches (life story, visual history). Methodological issues are among the key topics of the research project called Everyday life of basic schools in the normalization period as seen by teachers. Applying oral history of research in history of contemporary education (no. 1405926S, supported by the Czech Science Foundation) being undertaken by the authors of this paper. The authors of this paper also work with archival resources. The paper will, for this reason, put special emphasis on availability of resources relevant to socialist education – in which the archives abound, a fact of key importance for research in this topic. The authors have established by research that archival resources covering the recent period have not been processed yet and are, in consequence, not available in practice. Oral history then provides one of the few opportunities to explore socialist schooling. This is why it is not only necessary to develop the method as such (considering specifics of education research) but also to employ knowledge obtained through qualitative education research. The authors will present some methodological inspirations.

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### **Oral history as a political history. Studying underground activities in late Soviet Lithuania**

Currently, I am studying the phenomenon of Lithuanian *samizdat* periodicals during 1970s and 1980s. Considering my own experience as well as studies recently produced in Lithuania, I will try to discuss methodological question about uses (and – maybe- misuses?) of oral history. In Lithuania, there is a sort of a canon on late Soviet opposition and dissent history, being repeated in academic and popular textbooks, and based to considerable extent on publicly pronounced memories of eminent active participants in opposition activities of that period. Interestingly enough, during the interviews now (that I and other scholars have taken for scholarly purposes, not for publication) those activists retell stories and facts that

challenge the “canonic” narratives based on their own written memories. That particular issue, although not very uncommon in oral history method experience, seems to have considerable importance for studies in such areas as Soviet societies. It indicates that oral material can be significant not only in studying cases where written sources were not produced or the category of the society under the study was in any way “silent” (for example discriminated against). The former Lithuanian anti-communist activists whom I have interviewed recently, although persecuted, have been recognizable and not “silent” from the mid-1970s at latest. Still, the written sources that they have produced through that period do not seem sufficient for reconstruction of political and social developments in Soviet Lithuania during its last decades. It particularly concerns opposition and dissent activities. This Lithuanian case (probably not exclusively) leads to the question to what measure and under what circumstances oral history data can be useful (maybe indispensable) for so called “political history”(history of power) studies, not only for research in groups and communities having no political aspirations and deprived of any political influence.

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### **Is teambuilding a substitution for the past compulsory May Day parades? Development of the Corporate Culture in the Czech Republic after 1989**

The author will present the main outputs of the preliminary phase of her oral history project dedicated to the corporate culture development in the Czech environment. After a gradual introduction of the corporate culture in the post-November 1989 period, today private companies put more and more stress on implementation of the effective corporate culture. They act in this way with the main objective to improve the company’s competitiveness, increase its business productivity and bring profit for the owners. The project brings a shift from this mainstream view of the corporate culture concept: the author focuses on verifying the hypothesis about a possible negative impact of the corporate culture on individuals. The research attention focuses mainly on potential occurrence of excessive control and manipulation of employees by the company via the corporate culture. The author also asks whether this control can ultimately lead to the suppression of individual’s rights and freedoms. In addition, she looks for some parallels with the power control executed by the communist regime. In addition, some methodological issues related to the project will be discussed in the paper: 1) uncovering of personal and sensitive data when people talk about their past and especially the current job; i.e. when they talk about the employers they are dependent on; 2) possibilities and methods of data transformation into anonymous information in these cases; 3) issue of the mutual trust between the researcher and the narrator in this type of projects.

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### **Oral history projects as emancipatory activity**

I would like to present some oral history projects which took place in Ukraine and Poland, and which resulted in documentary films. They were organized by Polish, German, Czech and Ukrainian NGOs which were involved in women's emancipation. Interviews were carried out with women and by women. Our task was not only to get historical record about important events (like post-IIWW forced migrations, everyday life in the region cut in half) which are not widely known but also to empower old women who were our interlocutors, and younger ones who were interviewers. The women's voice could be heard this way, and the women got some importance.

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### **The Future of Oral History in Digital Humanities Times**

The main aim of my presentation is to discuss the perspectives for oral history in the times dominated by the so-called digital humanities. In the first part, the digital turn in humanities will be presented in more detail. The following part discusses new opportunities for oral history which arise from introducing new



methods, tools, and procedures, allowing for the efficient use of digital data and visualizations. The second part of the presentation discusses pioneering websites aimed at practitioners of oral history who would like to employ digital media in their work. The websites publish rich sets of case studies and multimedia materials, which provide a new perspective on the methods of oral history. An important part of the presentation is the discussion on the concepts related to the new methodology in oral history. The concluding part, outlines future perspectives for oral history, with special focus on the new field in the humanities, especially in the context of presenting field data and distribution of knowledge on the given topic.

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### **“Heimat“, Once Removed. Family Memories of Second-Generation German Expellees**

Since the beginning of 2013, the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation has been collecting oral testimonies of German expellees and refugees who lost their homes in the aftermath of World War II. The aim of the project is to create an oral history archive on forced migrations in Europe and beyond, which will in the future be part of the Foundation’s documentation center in Berlin. Most recently, the Foundation has begun interviewing the children of expellees as well. The interviews concentrate on themes such as family history, “Heimat” and belonging, parental guilt and victimhood, narratives and silences between parents and children. The aim of the proposed paper is to present the first results of these interviews with the second generation, outlining recurring themes and analyzing particular examples. Furthermore, the paper looks into the methodology of interviewing the second generation, reflecting on its usefulness and possible applications at a time when there are fewer and fewer eyewitnesses to the events of World War II and its immediate aftermath.

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### **Beyond “East” and “West” marriages: inter-cultural family negotiations in Ukraine**

I discuss first results from my research of memory conflicts and reconciliation in inter-cultural families that comprise of both “Eastern” and “Western” heritage and migratory backgrounds in the broadly conceived (symbolic, spatial, familial) context of Ukraine. I will build on my PhD research for which I studied “Russian newcomer” and “Estonian local” inter-ethnic families in Estonia through oral history. My 6-month fieldwork in Kiev is to start in July-August 2015. I will conduct semi-structured life-story interviews with various family members. I intend to look at contingencies, continuities and ruptures in family histories, touch upon the knowledge of family ancestry, controversies, absences, migrations, and personal attachments to “great” historical events. I expect to find a rather plural landscape of identifications with the conflict in Kiev and in family networks stemming out of the capital city. The contemporary radicalized reality will serve as another layer of identifications. I intend to insert shades and paradoxes to the seemingly dominant and finite discursive clash that is portrayed as a struggle between the incommensurable, even civilizational agendas. In short, first, I will present the comparative framework for the study of Ukrainian “intermarriages” with reference to my former research on “Estonian local” and “Russian newcomer” marriages. Second, I will discuss my preliminary research results after having been 1-2 months in the field.

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### **Family, Oral History and Memory**

Genealogy has moved beyond the mere collection of names and dates. Family historians now build fuller pictures of their ancestors’ lives - occupations, participation in their communities, religious lives and persecution. Oral histories are a vital source of information about people and communities. However, Jewish genealogists with families affected by the Holocaust often do not have many relatives to interview personally, and therefore turn to the testimonies of others. My research looks at genealogists’ use of Holocaust survivor testimonies to reconstruct their ancestors’ lives before and during the Holocaust. It

examines the frequency with which genealogists use testimonies, what information they extract, barriers and obstacles they face in working with survivors' testimonies and the way they incorporate information into their research. How genealogists identify and access oral histories, as well as how they deal with issues such as language barriers are issues to be explored, especially as online access expands. Anecdotal evidence suggests that genealogists are looking at oral histories of non-Jewish witnesses for information about prewar life and the destruction of communities. Jewish genealogy has always had a strong memorial component. One prominent Jewish genealogist wrote, "When the Nazis rounded up our relatives, they took away their names and gave them numbers. What we genealogists are doing is taking away the numbers and giving them back their names." Many genealogists view their role as crucial to preserving family memories for future generations (Yakel 2004). Family historians sharing ancestral towns collaborate to create town histories that document and commemorate the community, such as the KehilaLinks project on [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org). Participants in these projects share research, photographs and other materials. Collaborative town projects expand the personal memorialization to the town level, put individual lives into the wider context and expose the Jewish community's history to new audiences.

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### **Czechoslovak Political Prisoners – the problem of recording narrators cooperating with the Communist state secret police**

The aim of this paper based on my PhD. research is to discuss the specifics of oral history research with former political prisoners focusing on the era of the Czechoslovak communist dictatorship (1948–1989). Growing interest in oral history in the Czech Republic recently led to a number of specific oral history projects and memory recording initiatives focused on the still sensitive topic of the anti-communist resistance and the victims of political repressions. Oral history allows these formerly marginalized groups of Czechoslovak society to share their stories with the public and present their view of the past. On the other hand, being relatively recently established, Czech oral history faces challenges similar to earlier projects carried out in this field abroad. This includes for example the tension between a scientific approach and political activism, the necessity of an open-minded and reflexive approach to research or the understanding of the construction of memory and identity of witnesses, the influence of ideology and the various approaches to recollection of memories

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### **Perestroika and Economic Crisis in Narratives of Belarusian Provinces**

In this topic, we examine the Belarusians' memories of the sweeping reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s. We focus on the experiences of the "breakdown" that required people to abandon their old patterns of behaviour and find ways to adapt and to a rapidly changing society. Our research targeted people born in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. It was this age group (people aged thirty to fifty in the late 1980s, when the most radical reforms were introduced) that was most adversely affected by the social reorganization brought about by *perestroika*. They were well established in society and had acquired social and material "capital"; it was they, then, who would have to respond most strongly to the changes in order to gain a place for themselves in the new order of things. Unlike the generation that would follow them, they had a great deal to lose; at the same time, it was too early in their lives for them to retire and "rest on their oars." Our research covered only the small provincial towns and villages of Belarus, on the premise that residents of large cities would have had better access to resources for adapting to a new society.

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### **The challenges of processing and exhibiting digital oral collections**

In my paper, I would like to explore two dimensions of my oral history work until now, both of which concern not so much the subject matter of my research, but the technologies that can be used in archiving and exhibiting oral history projects, with a focus on increasing access and processing large amounts of data in a collection. In this section, I will draw on the experience I gained while working at Randforce, an oral history company based in Buffalo, New York, founded and managed by Michael Frisch, Professor Emeritus of History and American Studies at the University at Buffalo. At Randforce, I had the opportunity to work primarily on three projects that involved the processing of large collections of audio and video interviews, two of which were bilingual projects. I would like to discuss the advantages offered by using certain types of software that are used at Randforce in order to make oral histories come alive and to bring them closer to both the communities whose oral histories are being studied and to all the possible end-users, including academics, institutions, or private persons wishing to more efficiently record and preserve family or community histories. Secondly, I will address the challenges of the publishing process and of archiving oral histories, based on my experience with publishing my own oral history project (a history of the punk subculture in two regions of Poland) in the United States. I will discuss the requirements imposed by the publishing business concerning what type of research can and cannot be published, in what format, and what kinds of permissions are necessary in order to go forward with the publication process. I will also comment on my experience in building an oral history collection on the World Wide Web and on the role of supervisory bodies that oversee all human research in the United States. I believe that by introducing these themes to the discussion on the future of oral history practice could be advantageous since it could bring a different perspective on its essential components as well as on the relations between researchers and supervisory institutions in Central Europe.

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### **Czech Dream or Towards See, Tourism and Shopping. History of Abroad Traveling after 1989 via Perspective of Oral History**

Proposed paper tries to give short introduction to study of Post-Cold War history of traveling from Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia). This attempt is based mainly on using oral history interviews and other sources

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### **Bridging Academic and Public: U Stories as Oral History Archive for Research and Community Development**

*UStories* is an oral history archive bringing together results of various projects conducted over last six years at the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe in Lviv. As a result it demonstrates wide heterogeneity of topics and focuses. It is possible to divide these projects into two larger groups: one with the focus on different urban spaces and place attachment and another on different institutions and personal careers. As examples of first group, there is collection of interviews on Pidzamche, a 19-th century industrial area to the north, a site of ghetto in World War Two, and an area currently facing gentrification in Lviv. The second group could be illustrated with collection of interviews with people working within cultural institutions such as cinemas and theaters in post-1945 Lviv. Currently there are six different collections of in-depth interviews and oral histories conducted by the staff of the Center and related researchers and a few interviews outside collections. However *UStories* archival project is not only about working with already collected interviews, but also about creating a possibility to accommodate new ones and thus facilitate further growth. It also aims at bringing new topics and approaches in researching cities and urban topics and bridging research and public outreach. So, *UStories* is our attempt to create a resource which can be used both for academic research but also for educational and public history purposes. The paper outlines

the specifics and challenges in archiving process and discusses few examples of using these collections in educational programs, exhibitions, and public history projects.

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### **One topic, four countries: An experience of oral history of the Soviet theoretical archaeology**

I am collecting oral testimonies of archaeologists about the development of the Soviet theoretical archaeology. Theoretical archaeology is a field of archaeology that studies different aspects of archaeological cognition. In the USSR scholars began work in this field at the beginning of the 1970s and gradually three scientific centers were established in Leningrad, Kiev and Moscow. I have interviewed more than 40 respondents who came from Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Czech Republic and were dealing with the Soviet theoretical archaeology during the 1970s – early 1990s. Based on these interviews in my paper is focusing on the distinctive features of interviewing scholars from different countries and peculiarities of their descriptions of the past events. In addition, I am comparing respondents' attitude toward interviewing in different cities. I will show how functioning of the academic community in the USSR is represented in the narratives of the people from different academic centers. The oral history of the Soviet theoretical archaeology gives a possibility to study disintegration of the Soviet academic environment and emergence of the national centers in the post-Soviet countries. The results of my research will be useful for researches dealing with history of science and multicultural studies.

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### **Victims' Voices in Reconstructing the Microhistory and the Memory of the Holocaust**

The objective of my research is a reconstruction of stories of particular Jewish families from Nowy Targ and a description of the local Holocaust through their stories. This particular kind of research, which is microhistory, is intended to extract what is individual and specific. The basic question around which my project revolves is the role played by various types of sources in the process of reconstructing microhistory, their mutual interaction and the possibility of bringing together different research perspectives. Ultimately, my analysis will allow at an exhaustive description of the complex local past. Early in my research, I focused on accessing pertinent official documents. Their analysis allowed me to reconstruct the chronology and specific circumstances behind the events which affected the entire Jewish population of Nowy Targ and create an outline of the background. In the course of my research, while reading personal documents and listening to oral testimonies, I set out to look for the facts which I had previously found in records preserved by various institutions. Soon, I realised that proceeding in such a way creates a risk of letting the perpetrators' voices dominate the scene. Hence, I have decided that the underlying purpose of my study will be to 'give a voice' to the direct victims and witnesses of the Holocaust and then search other available documents for possible trace of the events described in order to verify and 'validate' the oral history and personal accounts. On that basis, an accurate reconstruction of particular stories of Nowy Targ Jewish families can be made. In my talk, I wish to focus on the significance of oral history in the process of reconstructing the microhistory of the Holocaust, as well as on the specific challenges associated with its verification against other available sources.

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### **Vishneva, Belarus Soviet Union Poland, An Oral History**

My presentation is based on a 3-minute oral history documentary I recently completed. "*Vishneva, Belarus Soviet Union Poland, An Oral History*," is grounded in the oral history testimony of a Holocaust survivor and has been deconstructed by the interviewee's son. Unlike most oral histories that focus on the words of the interviewee, "*Vishneva*" uses silent images from the interview superimposed with typed memories that

describe the unspoken pain borne by father and son through more than half a century. My presentation will examine how *"Vishneva"* purposefully violates some oral history methodological conventions by directing attention more towards the interviewer's interpretation than the interviewee's spoken words. I feel it is essential to "deconstruct" the interview in this fashion given the painful nature of the subject. This process seems critical in coming to terms with the "reality" of the oral history testimony. In addition, I will assess how the use of no sound, other than a brief voice clip of the interviewee followed by the simple clicking of a typewriter, forces the audience to witness the visual anguish in the subject's face. The visual approach to this difficult topic stresses the visual over the audial. Finally, my presentation will examine how oral histories can combine the emotional, intellectual, and personal all at the same time, merging questions of "process" and historiography, while striving to maintain a personal and humane approach.

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### **Oral history as a reciprocity and the ritual of memory in Polish museums narrative**

Historia mówiona w polskich muzeach narracyjnych ukazujących historię XX wieku, stanowi ważny element wystaw historycznych. Jest ona często archiwum wspomnień o wydarzeniach, na temat których zdjęcia czy dokumenty milczą, z drugiej strony pokazuje wydarzenia od innej strony niż są ujęte m.in. w publikacjach naukowych. Jest więc magazynem pamięci narodowej, lokalnej i danej grupy. Z drugiej strony jest ona swoistym rytuałem charakterystycznych dla danych grup wypowiedzi i ich znaczeń, ale też łączy się z sacrum i tabu. Wreszcie wypowiedzi świadków historii to pokaz emocjonalnego obrazu dla odbiorcy, dodatkowo poparty słowem, który w sposób bezpośredni może wpłynąć na zwiedzającego w taki sposób, że zapamięta historie jednostkowe. Historia mówiona w tego typu muzeach to projekty naukowe i edukacyjne. Celem mojego referatu będzie pokazanie jak ważnym elementem w tego typu muzeach jest historia mówiona, co daje zbierającym relacje, samym świadkom oraz odbiorcom. Oral history in Polish narrative museums depicting the history of the narrative of the twentieth century, is an important element of historical exhibitions. It is often an archive of memories of the events about which pictures or documents are silent, on the other hand shows the events from a different party than are included, among others, in scientific publications. It is therefore the national memory storage, local and the group. On the other hand, it is a sort of rite of characteristic expression of the groups and their meanings, but also connects with the sacred and taboo. Finally, eyewitness statements that show the emotional video for the recipient, additionally supported by a word, which can directly affect the visitor in a way that will remember the stories of the unit. Oral history museums in this type of research projects and educational programs. The purpose of my paper is to show how important element in this type of museum is oral history, which gives compiling reports, the witnesses and the audience.

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### **Local and global in the oral history projects: the story of a settlement told by its inhabitants**

One of the important directions in the oral history research in Belarus is the study of small and big towns through the perception of their inhabitants. Nevertheless, a diverse research focus of such projects is situated in the same field, i.e. all these investigations are carried out based on the study of global things with the help of some local ones and some general tendencies with the help of private practices. Among the number of such projects, the authors participated personally in two of them. The first one was dedicated to the study of memories of everyday life in one Western Belorussian town in 'Polish times' (territory of Poland till 1939). Several oral history expeditions were carried out in some towns of Western Belarus (Mir , Puzhany, Turets). These settlements under investigation can be characterized by several common features: a significant percent of Jewish population, trade, crafts, and agriculture, which were the main activities of locals. At the same time, each of them has its own specific features like a castle and a ducal mansion in Mir, and a castle as the center of industry in Ruzhany. The accent was made on the study of everyday life in polyethnic society in terms of a small town, the specifics of perception by different ethnic and confessional groups, which were widely presented in the research. The second project is the "Jewish Bobruisk after war".

The target group comprised Bobruisk citizens, i.e. ethnic Jews born in 1920-1930. The main research areas were the traditional religious practice translation mechanisms in terms of secularized society, Holocaust traumatic experience and the adaptation mechanisms which helped to return to normal life, mechanisms that helped to support the 'Jewish aspect' of Bobruisk in the urban narrative, etc.

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### **Oral testimonies of Children – Jewish survivors in the Holocaust as a special type of personal documents**

Although subjective, partial, and frequently fragmentary, memory of “children of war” is an excellent historical resource for social history and anthropology, shedding light on everyday life, and permitting psychological and gendered readings of the history of The Second World War. Even many years later, those who survived the Holocaust as children or teenagers can talk about aspects of wartime life, psychological climate in their families, and even about the suffering of permanent hiding that cannot be found in archival official documents. According to the German sociologist Harald Welzer, the wartime stories of children are more emotional in their descriptions of what the storyteller saw or experienced than are those of adults. Furthermore, neurological studies have shown that the old men have a more stable and clear memory of their distant past than of recent events in their life. The memory of the distant past is more static; it is beyond change or reflection. My study is based on the oral testimonies about the Holocaust in the South of Russia. This area was occupied by the troops of the Third Reich by the autumn 1942. The fact that the occupied territories were close to the front line, later start of the occupation, its relatively short duration and dependence of the occupiers on inciting ethnic hatreds affected the nature of the interaction between occupiers and the local population. This region is not typical for the Holocaust history, but it is very important as a region of mass concentration of Jewish population, including famous persons in 1942, very few of whom would survive during the Second World War. I would like to study personal documents, primary oral testimonies with Holocaust survivors, who survive the Second World War in their childhood as a special type of personal sources. There are two main groups of interviews about the Holocaust in the region that I want to analyse. First group is the collection of video interviews with the Holocaust survivors in Shoah Visual History Archive. Second group are the interviews that I have conducted in the study region in 2013. My collection so far includes 26 interviews recorded in the cities of Krasnodar, Maikop, Taganrog, Rostov-on-Don, and three interviews recorded in Moscow. These documents can help to reconstruct the everyday practices of relationship between the occupation authorities and the civilian population during the wartime. They can also allow tracing the channels of formation the individual memory of the Holocaust and how it is related (or not) to the collective and social memories of the Russian society about the Second World War in general, to highlight the gender features of the narrations in particular.

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### **Ukraine and Ukrainians in Modern Russian Family Tales**

A terrible conflict is now taking place within Ukrainian society and between Ukraine and Russia. To better understand its roots and to find a solution, the mass mind and public opinion of both sides should be examined. Between 2006 and 2012, I was president of an NGO called the Union of Young Researchers, which had sponsored “A History of My Family,” an annual conference for youth making presentations based on family stories and interviews with their grandparents. From 2008-12, about 40 percent of the laureates had Ukrainian roots. The students, aged 13 to 16, expressed the perception of Ukraine and Ukrainians that is commonly held by their generation. They freely described any Soviet repression and anti-Soviet activities in their family histories, but considered Ukraine as a part of the Russian civilization and never recognized Russia or Ukraine as the enemy for each other. The Ukrainians in their families studied in Russian universities, participating in Russian parties and campaigns, joined the Soviet army, etc. One family, originally from Holland, was divided finally migrated to Russia, Canada and Germany. The students gave interesting explanations for their ancestors' behavior. The students' image of of the enemy was connected



with neither Russians nor Ukrainians, but only with foreign armies from Poland or Germany. However, some students' grandparents collaborated with them, including producing goods or providing service, not necessarily in military affairs, and they were grateful for any help they gave their ancestors. Some other aspects of their presentations also provide a picture of transnational and trans-cultural interaction in Ukraine and the concept of Ukraine in the modern Russian youth's mind. Finally, it is possible to conclude that Russians do not consider the Ukrainians as external enemies, but traitors within Russian civilization, who should be returned and perhaps punished.

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### **Documenting Anti-communist**

After the fall of the communist regime, much attention was given to former political prisoners in an effort to gain knowledge onto their experience within the Romanian Gulag. In particular, the Oral History school from Cluj-Napoca University has led many field trips and interview sessions with members of anti-communist resistance across the country, deportees and former political prisoners; this collective effort belonging to the Oral History Institute in Cluj-Napoca opened new research directions and persuaded students and researchers of the recent past to appeal to oral history and its instruments of research. Referring to a large archive of interviews, the paper will attempt to focus on two categories of interviewees: former members of anti-communist resistance and former political prisoners (although the categories often intertwine), and highlight not only the achievements but also challenges put forward by these interviews: individual memory, collective memory, conflicting memories, the ability to reconstruct the past through oral history and last, but not least, the highly-debated comparison between oral history interviews and the archives of communism as historical sources.

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### **Oral sources in the study of women's urban daily life in south-eastern Ukraine in 50-60th years the twentieth century**

Nowadays the role of oral history is increasing in Ukrainian historical science. This process is connected with the development of such research directions as micro-history, daily and gender history. Oral sources have an important role in studying of the Soviet women's everyday life in the XX century. These sources provide the additional features versus written. Oral sources give considerable opportunities to disclose both typical and specific practices. In addition, the interviews reveal not only data of everyday life, but also the emotional space, which is created in the everyday environment. The aim of my research is to reveal the woman's daily life in the territory of the south-eastern Ukraine during the 50-60s on the materials oral sources. For this research there were conducted interviews women living in various cities of the region, which were born at the end of 20-40 years of the twentieth century. Women of this age range started, developed their professional activity and formed family relations in 50-60 years. According to the records collected by the author, women's urban daily life of south-eastern Ukraine in general was typical for the Soviet space and at the same time has its own features. These features are determined rapid urbanization in the region. During this period there was the inclusion of a large number of women which recently lived in the villages in urban life. They moved to the city because there were more opportunities for self-realization. Previously rural women had to accept new for them everyday practices and adapt to them. At the same time, the collected oral sources show typical Soviet-era scenarios gender roles and family relationships.

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### **New media: revolution or coup d'etat? The Polish perspective**

The paper analyses a number of oral history interviews concerning new media in Poland in the 1980s. It uses the model of a revolution to describe the changes in Polish media and juxtaposes it against a model of a coup d'etat, more relevant to Western Europe and the USA. The term "new media" describes a number of interactive media (most prominently video recorders and early personal computers) that appeared in the late 1970s and the 1980s and gave their users a sphere of control over both the content and the conditions of use (the dispositif). The paper argues that in the Polish context new media functioned outside of the legal, political, and economic systems. The diffusion of new media was a spontaneous, bottom-up process, contributing heavily to the emergence of the civil society and the market economy in the 1990s. Because of their alternative use, new media in Poland in the 1980s left relatively few traces in written sources. Most of new media early activities, such as production, distribution, and rental of VHS tapes, took place informally and can be researched only through the methods of oral history. The interviews used in this research come from a collection of oral history relations concerning history of new media in Poland that is being created at the School of Media and Audiovisual Culture, University of Łódź ([mediapr.uni.lodz.pl](http://mediapr.uni.lodz.pl)).

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### ***Witnesses of our lives? The relationship between researcher and speaker sharing the same experience about the past on the example of women's narration of their lives under communism***

What happens when a researcher faces a witness of the past, with whom he shares the same space experience? If and under what conditions in the history of life does he find his own life story and/or an alternative history which was "played" in the same historical, social, cultural scene of the recent past? Is the researcher able to come back to the story of his own life before that research being equipped with purpose, process and the results of the examination? Is such a return possible? If and what way is the research enriching for the researcher in identifying and cognitive way? How the own experiences of researcher influence her/his openness towards the respondent and his narrative? If and to what extent projection of the researcher's own experience can affect the way of storytelling and reading the history of life of respondent? On that statement, the complex matter of relationship between researcher and his speaker, we would like to answer coming back to the experience and examples from the carried out research about history of women during the communism Poland and the former GDR.

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### **Sex and sexual relations in autobiographical memories of the last soviet generation**

In Soviet Union everything connected with public discussion of the privacy and sexuality was under a strict ban. That's why these topics are problematic for mass discourse for expression. People who brought up in Soviet Union were not prone to public discussion of sex and this approach for soviet generation is still persist. This is particularly noticeable during the analysis interviews recorded for project "Soviet everyday culture of the 1970s - early 1980s: the formation of the Soviet way of life". One of it's topical units was devoted to family life, sexual relationship and to the issue of morality. The reluctance to give open answers to the questions from this topic is clearly seen: they are short and looks like previously memorized stock phrase. Women are usually more private respondents, which are often nostalgic about former women's



asexual status in society. Mens' answers are opposite to womens' ones. Men directly assert the preference of sexual relations out of a wedlock. Nevertheless, oral sources are still the only ones available for observation sex and sexual relations in the Soviet Union. The valid of the information given by the respondents, characteristic of their interviews and methodological problems, which are relevant for the researchers of sex and sexuality in Soviet Union, will be analyzed in the speech.

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### **The social impact of oral history. Art Oral History Projects in Central and Eastern Europe and their specificity**

In the past few years it can be observed the growing number of art oral history project (in its broad sense) in Central and Eastern Europe. The most obvious examples of this are: the famous performance "80064" by Artur Żmijewski, or recent the "Balloon event", *highlight of the festivities surrounding the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall*, or less well known the "Wandering Buoy", *a mobile sculpture for marking places of historic or personal interest*, to name a few. The vast majority of art oral history projects functions in the public space, and thus enters into a number of interactions with the audience (including via the Internet), whereby its members have become both their recipients and contributors (for example by giving an interview about their experiences). In Central and Eastern Europe topics of such projects are closely related to the traumatic or difficult events or periods of history of the region as Second World War, Shoah or soviet domination. On the contrary, art oral history projects in Western Europe and USA are often associated with current social problems, such as the cultural integration (France) or social exclusion (USA). The aim of the paper is to present the art oral history projects in Central and Eastern Europe, and to describe their specific regional characteristic, subsequently to demonstrate and analyze their impact on the audience and its collective memory. I will also consider their influence (or possible influence) on the oral history of an academia.

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### **Maidan Oral History projects (from methods to institutionalization)**

Maidan had millions of faces. Involvement of oral history techniques to the creation of audiovisual archives of winter 2013-2014 revolutionary events allows capture memories, emotions, experiences of people from different environments, ages, professions, regions of Ukraine, who talk about their participation in the Maidan and key events of winter 2013/2014. During 2014 several action groups formed in Kiev and Lviv launched a series of oral history projects. Recording first interviews conducted from inside the process, fresh injuries and wounds, joy and euphoria. Successful journalistic projects ("There are people," by H. Berdyskyh, Series of interview by B. Jasinski) popularized evidence of maydanivtsi and "prepared" society for dialogue and creation interview in audiovisual memorats format. Discussion of methods and ethics of anthropologist from informants during protests took place at the seminar "Euromaidan as a cultural phenomenon protest movement: sources, methods, research prospects" (17/03/2014). Under the project "Maidan physicians' Oral History" Dutch historian Robert Van Warren organized training for volunteers interviewers (04.05.2014). On the 7-11.10.2014 the seminar "Introduction to biographical-narrative interviews" was held (at Oral History Centre of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kiev). N. Radenbah (Germany) outlined the problems of research Revolution in Ukraine by narrative-biographical interviews. We trace the process of recording and archiving of personal stories, experiences and memories in the form of oral history evidence within a number of projects, including: "Maidan: Oral History," "Maidan physicians' Oral History", "Women of Maidan", "Revolutionary events of 2013 - 2014 in Ukraine: mechanisms of mass mobilization", international project "Memory of Maidan". Ethical, methodological and legal norms in the studied projects affect the topics and types of respondents. Sociologists, limited by questionnaires, concluded that short answers are one-dimensional. Under the Lviv project they focus on the memories of participants of the Orange Revolution and Dignity Revolution as experience of actionism in large forms of

protest. The report examines the institutionalization process and project participants communication, considered methodological approaches, made initial comparative analysis. We'll talk about disciplinary/polidisciplinary focus of existing projects, the impact of methodological approaches on created video testimonies collections and multimedia archives of Maidan in Ukraine and abroad.

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### **Interviews conducted by the Oral History Archive of the Warsaw Rising Museum**

The main aim of the speech is to discuss the way that the Oral History Archive conducts its interviews with people who witnessed the Warsaw Rising, as well as their specific features. I am going to present the goals of account collection (commemorating the exceptional event of the rising; stressing the fact that it was at the same time a mass event but on the other hand every account is unique; as well as the need to record the account because this generation is slowly going away). Then I am going to discuss the way an interview is organized: how the Oral History Archive contacts the witness, the place of an interview, the crew, the equipment. I am going to present an interview as an attempt to capture the event in its complexity, through appropriate selection and wording of questions, an overview of questions, the issues that are raised. The interviews comprise material that can be, among others, processed further by researchers and the number of accounts collected and their detailed character are aimed to help them find as much information as possible. One can say that it is also an attempt to guess what questions might future researchers ask and providing them with relevant material. Furthermore, I am going to present the experience of a person conducting an interview, as well as their role of a moderator who reacts on the go to ensure that each topic is properly ended and delicately guides the speaker from a digression back to the main subject. I am also going to present the advantages of interviews being conducted by volunteers. I am going to discuss the way the interviews are worked on and archived and how they are used in practice: on the Internet, on exhibitions, in publications and art projects. At the end I am going to present a description of the recipient - that is, who uses the interviews from the Oral History Archive in numbers.

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### **Family memory as a current research area for oral historians**

While historians have been largely dismissive of the exploration of family memory, sociologists (M. Halbwachs) and psychologists (E. Erikson) have considered family stories and memories as essential for the development of human social identity. Recently, the works of German constructionist researchers (H. Welzer et al.) as well as other works on family memory in Britain and USA (A. Green, E. Stone) have confirmed the crucial role of family memories for the creation of contemporary social identities. However, the conclusions of such (and still minor) research sometimes sharply differ. While H. Welzer's studies of German intergenerational family memory described a process of cumulative heroization in younger generations when talking about their ancestors, other studies did not sustain the idea of passing on of only positive moral messages. Thus, Central-Eastern European oral historians can contribute to the current research debate and bring valuable insights into the formation of family memory in their parts of Europe. The paper will also reflect discrepancies found between Western and South-Eastern European research on intergenerational memories in relation to national narratives and argue for extensive examination of this research area by oral historians.

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### **Oral history in psychology – possibilities of application on the example of Polish former forced labourers life stories**

The human being is able to develop interpretation over his or her own existence. This process can be defined as the creation of one's own life experience. According to Victor E. Frankl the search for meaning is one of the powerful motive force and it has its great role in building of the quality of life of the individual. McAdams in his theory of narrative identity claims that people shape their identity by integrating their life experiences into a story, which provides them with sense of unity. That is why the life story is an extremely interesting source not only for historians, sociologists, but also psychologists. The subject of my research which I am going to present is forced labour during WWII from the psychological perspective. I analyzed seven oral history stories by men and women who were interviewed for the "Zwangsarbeit 1939-1945" international project between 2005 and 2006. The process they went through (being sent to Third Reich, away from their family background, completely new and oppressive environment, and, consequently, sudden change of their social role) needed to be fit into their self-image by forming a coherent life stories. Most of the ex-forced labourers returned to Poland after the war, one the questions is, whether they depicted WWII as a finished period or how they employed that experience in their post-war activities. I will also try to answer, how – according to their declarations – their general view on the world and people changed, because of what they lived through during the world conflict. To understand their personal experience I used the procedure of the hermeneutic circle by Paul Ricoeur and semantic field analysis by Saint-Cloud Political Lexicography Center. My source of inspiration were psychological studies by Bogna Bartosz and Anna Cierpka and sociological works on narrations about WWII by Alicja Rokuszewska-Pawełek and Piotr Filipkowski.

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### **Politics of Holocaust Remembrance and Memories of Bystanders. Case Slovakia.**

My paper focuses on the way witnesses of historical events communicate their past experiences – how and what they choose to recall – on example of oral history researches on Holocaust in Slovakia. It recognises that subjectivity is present on the micro-level of every society and thus influences how witnesses remember historical events. Narratives analysed within this paper also suggest the diversity of memory and recollection – a factor which needs to be appreciated in further research of life under totalitarian regimes. It is this diversity that allows us to go beyond stereotypical interpretations of the past and the role of actors – be it victims, perpetrators or bystanders – in historical processes.

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### **Oral History in Poland: The Archival Perspective**

Oral history is a recognized, frequently used method of gathering historical data, with its specialists and achievements. But still, archivists in Poland have not paid proper attention to this field. Polish academic literature concerning the archival science contains almost any studies on OH. Talks on scientific conferences are given by practitioners or methodologists – not by curators of OH interviews. A similar situation happened in the US during the second half of the 20th century. But Polish archivists cannot further ignore the fact, that OH is a specific kind of archival material. Thus I believe, that archivists should become interested in OH and consider curating OH as worth specified, scientific analysis, from the archival perspective. In Poland, OH interviews are stored chiefly in community archives (documentation centers), museums, libraries, university archives. In one case a state archive engaged in an OH project (State Archive in Kalisz). Also the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej) records, stores and popularizes OH interviews, also by organizing conferences on the topic. But what is the place of the Polish

state archival service in the OH movement? To what extent can state archives engage in it? In theory, collections created by community archives might (and shall) someday be parts of state archives' holdings. Is that a reason for them to have a specific methodology of curating such sources? Also other questions arise, more specific to our country. Is it possible for the Polish state archival service to actively participate in the OH movement, to record, describe, store and popularize interviews? Are archivists, as a profession, qualified and willing to do that? Or maybe, according to the situation of our archives, they should just observe practitioners and, eventually, advise them? This conference talk tries to answer these questions, but simultaneously – puts another ones.

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### **On the Usage of the Oral History in the Contemporary Theatre**

A number of recent theatre performances over Central and Eastern Europe puts the question to what extent theatre can be a field where the principles of oral history can be used and results of oral history research disseminated. The paper will analyse the methods with which the life stories told to the artists-researchers were collected and elaborated into such performances as *Grandchildren* by Michail Kaluzhsky (Sakharov Center, Moscow) and *Blue Bird* by Boris Jukhananov (Electroteatr, Moscow), *Ghetto Sherif* by Janos Mohacsi (Jurányi Hous, Budapest), *Transfer!* By Jan Klata (Teatr Wspolczesny, Wroclaw) and especially *Hideout* by Paweł Passini (neTTheatre; Lublin) – a performance connected with the biography of the actress Irena Solska whom my own recent research project has been dedicated. The way the life stories are used in the performances often raise epistemological questions which sometimes the artists are not aware about. The comparison with other ways in which the results of oral history research are disseminated in the countries in question will also be useful.

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### **Archive of Forest Oral History**

Fifty five biographical-narrative video interviews with elderly people whose professional and personal life, connected with Białowieża Forest, has been recently held by Tomasz Zygmont (Forest Research Institute). These interviews – edited, transcribed and archived – create a unique collection of audiovisual sources. Small part of these archive is published on the web site [www.lasy-i-ludzie.pl](http://www.lasy-i-ludzie.pl). The eldest talker was born in 1923. He as well as many others still remember rough times of Second World War. It was “special experience” (in a bad meaning) for inhabitants of Middle-Eastern Europe - land that has been serially invaded and occupied by Russians and Germans. Ones can hear relations describing displacement of Poles to the far east-north Siberia conducted by Soviets, as well as resettlements of all villages of Białowieża Forest executed by Germans. Ones can also come across the stories about post war period: such as division of the Forest by the line and limitation of visiting this close to border region. Another distinctive point of the Archive narrations is significant presence of the natural world, where the interviewed people have lived and which they are reverting to. The world of biological realism and mysterious symbolism. Talkers indicate the relations between human beings and nature in various ways – such as wilderness areas, protection of natural and cultural heritage, along with science experiments conducted in this huge living laboratory. Nowadays, when majority of people tend to choose living in towns and most of their attention is focused on urban and technological themes, it is prodigious to participate in inception of the Archive of Forest Oral History, that collects narrations from people so strongly connected with rural world – particularly with forests, nature, hunting, etc. It is the very first type of such archive in Poland, and probably trend-setting one in this part of Europe.

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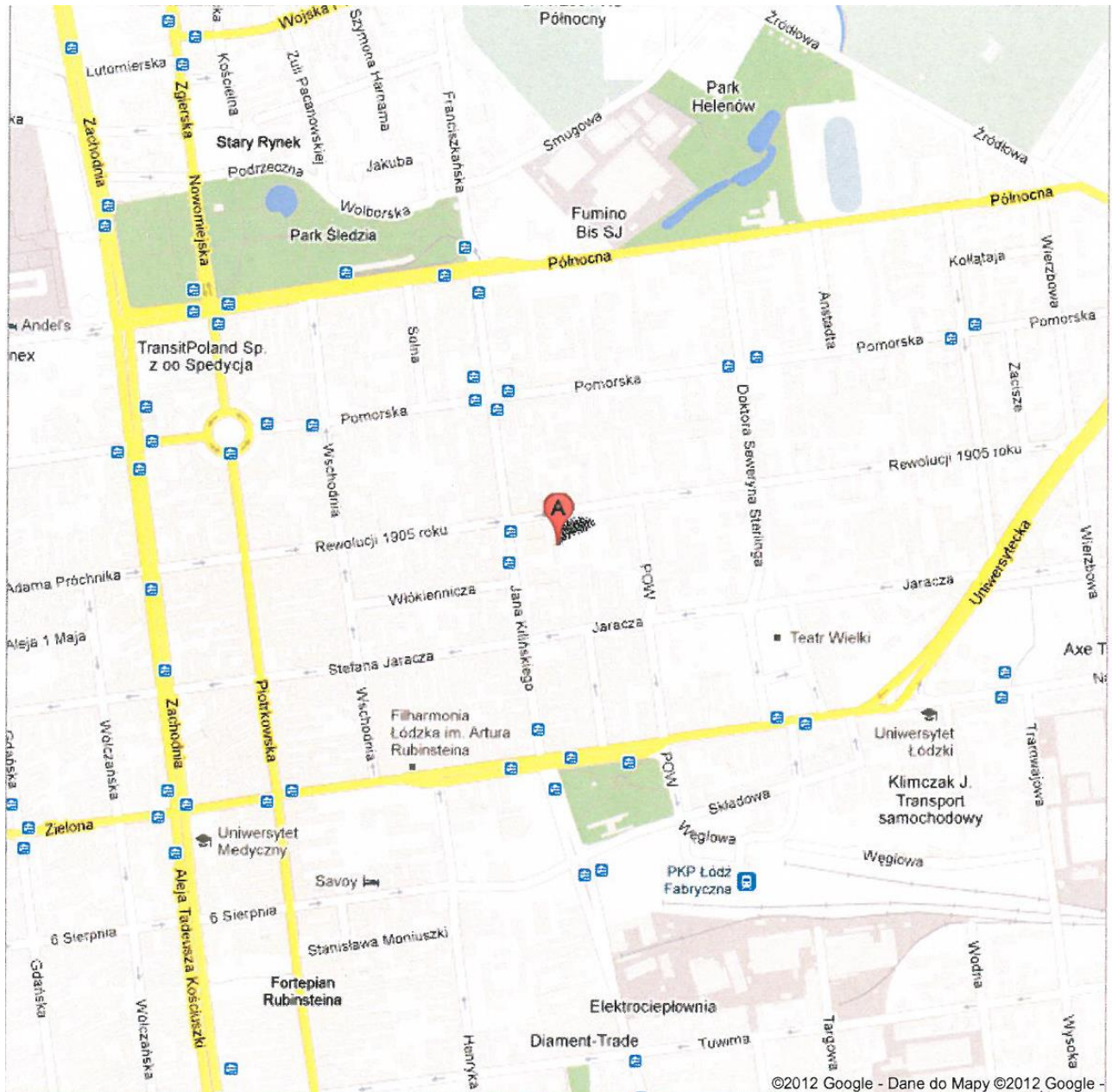
### **Ethos, Decline and Nostalgia – the "Good" and the "Bad" Worker in Declining Industrial Cities. Case of Detroit (USA).**

Lodz and Detroit, although developed in different economical and political circumstances have many in common. Both cities underwent rapid modernization and intensive growth, experienced serious social and economical problems and conflicts, and spectacularly collapsed during the last few decades. Changes of production structures and locations, the inflexibility of mono-industrial giants, and a general shift to what-is-called late capitalism occurred in both cases, and class conflicts were common for both cities. The important features of this comparison are not only similarities, but also differences, especially on macro level, that is the political and economical parallels of socialism and capitalism. Macro-scale processes certainly shaped biographies - citizens reacting to and comprehending change, struggling in order to be not only the objects but the subjects of change as well. How did common people deal with the collapsing of industrial giants on which they were totally dependent (economically, socially, but also symbolically by building a local identity and frame of experiencing the outer world)? How did they manage with a spectacular experiment of late capitalism, implemented on both sides of the former Iron Curtain and bringing an ominous, yet somehow surprising, convergence? My interest lies not on the level of "objective" data, but on individual level, that is the subjective perception of change, self-identity building strategies and language describing the trajectories of the two cities in workers' biographical narrations. Were workers' stories about failure or struggle? How were their experiences reorienting sometimes their entire existence dealt with, reconstructed, and worked-through in objectified narratives?



## MAP OF CONFERENCE VENUE

**A – CONFERENCE VENUE:** The Faculty Of Economics And Sociology, University of Lodz, 90-255 Lodz, **41/43 Rewolucji 1905 r. Street., 3th floor**, foyer, rooms: E305, E306, E319, E324 (Wydział Ekonomiczno-Socjologiczny, Uniwersytet Łódzki, ul. Rewolucji 1905 r. 41/43, 90-255 Łódź; 3 piętro, foyer oraz sale: E305, E306, E319, E324)



**CONFERENCE VENUE:** the entry through the Centre of Informatics and Econometrics (Centrum Informatyczno-Ekonometryczne) at The Faculty Of Economics And Sociology.



**CONFERENCE NOTES**

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