

Before Testimony Had its Fame: Personal Accounts in 'Le Monde juif' (1945-1975)

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Created during the war (April 1943) by I. Schneersohn in Grenoble (Italian-occupied zone), the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine (CDJC) aimed at documenting and writing « the big book of the martyrology of French Judaism ». It soon became after the war a research center, which published historical monographs, collections of documents and a « bulletin » titled *Le Monde Juif* from 1946. Our presentation will analyze the various types of individual accounts, reports and narratives published in *Le Monde Juif* from the mid-1940's until the mid-1970's, when le « témoignage de la Shoah » became a quasi-editorial and even literary genre. In the three first postwar decades, *Le Monde Juif* mobilized its national and international networks in order to publish a great range of personal writings: they evoked badly documented aspects of the war, illustrated historical research, commemorated specific events. Some of them had an explicit literary identity, some resembled judicial statements, others had a more undefined narrative and documentary form. Some of their authors were professional writers, some of these texts became books, but in several cases those personal narratives are the only traces we keep of these furtive witnesses. We aim try to understand how the editors of *Le Monde Juif* gathered those personal accounts, and how they envisioned their cognitive value and their uses without having a clear conception of what a « testimony » should be.