

## New approaches to French Holocaust Testimonies

French Holocaust testimonies have a curious position in the corpus of research on the Holocaust in France. They have never been considered as central to Holocaust studies, just mere illustrations of research in political and social history. At the same time, captions of testimonies have been glorified and have become iconic, through works such as 'Shoah' by Claude Lanzmann. When so many testimonies have been published in France, very often in isolation from proper academic research and when the voices of survivors – like in so many countries – have been made sacred, this panel intends to question the absence of a proper paradigm in the studies of Holocaust testimonies and also to propose some lines of thoughts to (re)build one.

The recent history of Holocaust denial shows the necessity of reconsidering with new tools the importance of testimonies, their historicity and the way they address social demands. Holocaust denial has emerged in France as early as the late 1940s and its 'conceptualisation' has been made by French deniers. In the late 1990s, the phenomenon drifted to the United States, Canada and Britain, but it has recently re-emerged as a massive, newly crafted, French phenomenon. Holocaust testimonies remain at the centre of this crucial opposition and fight. The historicisation of French Holocaust testimonies is more than ever necessary and this panel intends to contribute to this debate. It will at the same time partake to the debate on the 'Myth of the Great Silence', the idea that the Holocaust was not dealt with in the public sphere before the 1970s.