

Università degli Studi Roma Tre

XXXI Convegno Internazionale di Studi Cinematografici

40 + 40 = 80 Years of Images about the Shoah (1945-1985-2025)

a cura di Ivelise Perniola e Francesco Pitassio

17 - 18 novembre 2025

Dipartimento di Filosofia, Comunicazione e Spettacolo

Via Ostiense, 139

Museo Fondazione Shoah

Via del Portico d'Ottavia, 29

Prima e dopo *Shoah* di Claude Lanzmann

Martedì 18 novembre ore 16:00 – 17:45

Testimony, Trauma, and Tourism: Shoah, Package Tour, and the Cinematic Pilgrimage to Holocaust Sites.

Lóránt Bódi (Fondation Mémorial de la Shoah)

Daniel Schuch (Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena)

1985 marked both the premiere of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* in Paris and the release of Gyula Gazdag's *Társasutazás (Package Tour)* in Budapest: two films that—despite radically different cinematic languages—share an investment in the survivor's return to Holocaust sites during the last phase of the Cold War. Lanzmann created an epic yet fragmented present-tense encounter between witnesses, landscape, and viewer, built entirely on interviews. While Gazdag, “the forerunner of situational documentary filmmaking in Hungary” (Lóránt Stóhr), in his film shows an interview of a Holocaust survivor talking about her deportation and current anti-Semitism. He juxtaposes this intense personal testimony with the bustling yet dramatic scenes of a socialist-era “package tour” of survivors to the Auschwitz memorial—40 years after the deportation of Hungarian Jewry. In *Package Tour*, grotesque dissonance between testimony, commemoration and group tourism collide with the depictions of individual grief and collective pilgrimage. Based on the understanding of such journeys as memorial rituals and modern forms of pilgrimage (Jackie Feldman, Victor Turner & Edith Turner), this paper compares the testimonial spaces created in *Shoah* and *Package Tour*. Earlier documentaries on “survivor's return visits” (Tim Cole) from different countries in East and West such as Donald Brittain and John Spotton's *Memorandum* (1965), Marianne Szemes's *Pilgrimage 65* (1965), or Peter Morley's *Kitty: Return to Auschwitz* (1979), offer a comparative field for examining how filmmakers have mediated the survivor's returns to former camps. They reveal shifting strategies in documentary form, from testimony to observational travelogue. By analysing *Shoah* and *Package Tour* within the genealogy of survivor-pilgrimage documentaries, this paper situates the “1985 moment” as a crucial juncture in the cinematic mediation of Holocaust memory. It asks how these films have shaped the legacy of survivors' returns, and what remains—forty years later—of the images, voices, and memorial practices they sought to preserve.

Dr. Daniel Schuch is a historian and curator based at the Historical Institute at Jena University, Germany. Since 2024 he works on a post-doc research project on “Concentration Camp Memorials as Arenas of Block Confrontation. Antifascist Entanglements during the Cold War”, funded by the

German Research Foundation (DFG). His research interests focus on the cultural history and afterlife of National Socialism, Holocaust testimony, and audio-visual representations of history. In his award-winning first book *Transformationen der Zeugenschaft* (Wallstein: Göttingen 2021) he analyzed the transformations of Holocaust testimony based on a comparative study of multiple audio and video interviews with the same survivors over a period of over 50 years. He curated several exhibitions and published on the shifting interpretations of Holocaust testimony, concentration camp memorials, and survivors' associations during the Cold War.

Dr. Lóránt Bódi is a cultural historian and editor. He is an honorary Research Associate at the University of Jewish Studies in Budapest and currently a Research Fellow at Fondation de la Mémoire de la Shoah. He is a former Research Fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies and worked as Assistant Research Fellow at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in international research projects. He also taught as a visiting lecturer at various universities in Budapest. He received his PhD from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) with a dissertation on the early memory of the Holocaust in Hungary. Since 2023, he has been working on a postdoctoral project exploring the social and cultural functions of the so-called "Holocaust soap myth." His first book, *Sebre tett kézzel: Újrakezdés, emlékezet és populáris képzelet a vészidőszak után* [With Wounded Hands: Renewal, Memory, and Popular Imagination after the Holocaust] will be published next year in Hungarian by Park Kiadó.