

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 18, 2004

Contact: Janet Keller
818/777-4999
janetk@vhf.org

COLLECTION OF SHOAH FOUNDATION TESTIMONIES OPENS AT JEWISH MUSEUM BERLIN

Holocaust Survivors and Other Witnesses Warn About the Dangers of Racial Hatred

Berlin, Germany; May 18, 2004 - The videotaped interviews of more than 1,000 Holocaust survivors and other witnesses were unveiled today at the Jewish Museum Berlin. The testimonies contained in the Shoah Foundation Visual History Collection at the Museum were either given in the German language or in Germany, and are available in DVD format on computers at the Museum. The collection was made possible with funding from the Allianz Group and Jewish Museum Berlin. A bilingual (English and German) searchable computerized tool containing biographical information about the interviewees accompanies the collection.

The Shoah Foundation's archive of nearly 52,000 eyewitness testimonies is the largest collection of videotaped Holocaust testimonies in the world. The varied experiences of survivors and other witnesses in this German collection represent the breadth of the Shoah Foundation archive. Jewish survivors, rescuers and aid providers, war crimes trials participants, homosexuals, and others offer vivid recollections of the racial hatred that gripped Germany in the 1930's and 1940's. Some of these witnesses returned to Germany in 1945, some fled to other countries, and others never left, living in hiding until the end of the war. Regardless of their personal experience, each of them offers warnings about the dangers of racial hatred and the need for tolerance and understanding.

"The opening of this collection is a significant milestone for the Shoah Foundation as it commemorates its 10th year," said Dr. Douglas Greenberg, Shoah Foundation president and CEO. "The collection at the Jewish Museum Berlin is especially meaningful, not only because it resides in the home of the perpetrators as well as of the victims, but also because it documents the history of Germany, before and after the Nazi's took power. Visitors to the museum will now have the opportunity to use this remarkable resource to enrich their understanding of German life and culture in the 20th century."

About the collection, Prof. W. Michael Blumenthal PhD, Director and CEO, Jewish Museum Berlin, said, "The recording of interviews with those who suffered at the hand of the Nazis is important work. The Jewish Museum Berlin has added the material provided by the Shoah Foundation to its archival holdings, where it will form a significant resource for those researching the Holocaust."

In a videotaped message played at a ceremony today to open the collection, Steven Spielberg, Founding Chairman of the Shoah Foundation, said, "We have always hoped to return the testimonies to the countries and communities where they were gathered. The opening of this national collection in Germany not only brings us closer to that goal but also hastens the creation of a world in which racism and intolerance are the exception and not the rule. The people of Germany appreciate, as no other society, the damage that genocide does not only to its victims but to all who witness it."

Individuals interested in supporting the Shoah Foundation are encouraged to call 818/777-4673 or write to PO Box 3168, Los Angeles, California, 90078-3168. For more information, visit the Foundation's homepage at www.vhf.org. # # #