

PRESS RELEASE

Conference

“Oral History Research and The Cyprus Oral History and Living Memory Project”

at Frederick University

Frederick Research Center organizes the **“Oral History Research and The Cyprus Oral History and Living Memory Project”** Conference on Friday October 7, 2011, 17:00-21:00, at Frederick University, (Nicosia Campus), Seminar Room 3, 1st floor, New Wing to present the results of “The Cyprus Oral History Project: Illuminating our Lives, Teaching the Conflict—Truth and Reconciliation through Oral History Research” (funded by the Research Promotion Foundation, ΠΡΟΣΕΛΚΥΣΗ/ΕΜΠΕΙΡΟΣ/0609/08).

Two leading figures in the fields of Education, Literature and Oral History will participate and speak at the conference. Keynote speaker Professor Alessandro Portelli, Professor of American Literature, University of Rome La Sapienza, Rome and Professor William Ayers, Distinguished Professor of Education and Senior University Scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Expert Researcher on the Project. Professors Portelli and Ayers will also participate on a panel discussion at the conference alongside persons who participated in the research project and have shared their personal stories with us.

Professor Alessandro Portelli is one of the most influential and exciting oral historians in the world; he is even better known as one of the world's leading oral historians. He is the author of numerous books and essays, such as *The Text and the Voice: speaking, writing and democracy in American literature*. His most recent book, translated into English, *The Order Has Been Carried Out: history, memory and meaning of a Nazi massacre in Rome* won Italy's prestigious Viareggio Book Prize and is a bestseller. He has also published two volumes of seminal oral-history essays covering topics as varied as the Italian Resistance, student movements since the 1960s and the Kentucky mining communities. He was recently Simon Visiting professor at the University of Manchester and is Honorary Research Professor in Oral History at the University of Aberdeen. He is much in demand as a guest speaker at conferences in Europe, Africa, Australia and Latin America. He is currently advisor to the mayor of Rome for the preservation and promotion of the city's historical memory.

Professor William Ayers, was a member of the 1960s militant antiwar group the “Weather Underground” against the Vietnam War promoting social justice. Because of his involvement in this group and his relationship with Barack Obama his name had been used extensively at the pre-election expedition of the elected

President Obama. As reported in Democracy Now!, “In the late stages of the presidential race, no other name was used more by the McCain-Palin campaign against Barack Obama than Bill Ayers.” Bill Ayers has written many books on Social Justice, Democracy and Education and his articles have appeared in many journals. His radical approaches about democracy and justice in education are powerful and inspiring. In one of his publications Ayers stated: “What makes education in a democracy distinct is a commitment to a particularly precious and fragile ideal, and that is a belief that the fullest development of all is the necessary condition for the full development of each; conversely, the fullest development of each is necessary for the full development of all.”

The purpose of this one-day conference is to bring together scholars from a wide range of fields including education, history, sociology, political sciences and anthropology, who study issues associated with oral history. During the conference, several theoretical perspectives on oral history research and methods will be discussed. Moreover, a presentation of the results of the Cyprus Oral History and Living Memory Project will be made. Targeting the wider public the aim is to also illuminate how people are co-creators and participants in history making and that their personal stories and living memories are important. The stories that each person carries for a significant historic period of Cyprus when revealed and examined may become lessons for all to learn.

The general purpose of the project was to record in notes and photographs and sketches, on audio and video, the voices and words of the people of Cyprus themselves, folks from every community, to capture their memories from the events of 1960-1974, before and after and understand their specific meaning as an approach to “teaching the conflict” and promoting reconciliation and peace education.

For more information about the project you may visit the Project’s website: www.frederick.ac.cy/research/oralhistory. Part of the website is also the Cyprus Oral History Archive where the stories, experiences and living memories of the people of Cyprus are being collected and preserved (you may find the Archive under the Anticipated Results).

You may also contact Dr Nikoletta Christodoulou, Principal Investigator and Project Coordinator, at n.christodoulou@frederick.ac.cy

Host Organization:



Partners:



Funding Agency:

