PJS CHRONICLES
DOI: 10.48261/pjs200122

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THE NATIONS OF OCCUPIED EUROPE FACING THE HOLOCAUST WARSAW, 6–8 DECEMBER 2017 CONFERENCE REPORT

One of the important aspects of the work of *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* (the Institute of National Remembrance, hereafter IPN), apart from academic research, publishing and education, is to present and popularise the results of research. International academic conferences are held to present the current state of research on a regular basis. These symposia are often co-organised with other leading research centres both in Poland and abroad focusing on the history of the 20th century.

In 2017, the Institute of National Remembrance organised an international academic conference entitled *Nations of Occupied Europe Facing the Holocaust*. The concept and plan of the conference were elaborated by Aleksandra Namysło, PhD (IPN Branch in Katowice), Martyna Grądzka-Rejak, PhD (IPN) and Adam Sitarek, PhD (IPN Branch in Łódź). The proceedings were held on 6–8 December 2017 at the IPN's Janusz Kurtyka Educational Centre in Warsaw. The organisers' intent was to invite outstanding researchers in the field and authors of academic publications whose importance is based on extensive source research. The organisers assumed

that the perspective of individual countries should be discussed by their local historians. The conference speakers presented the latest research on the attitudes towards Jews of the governments and societies of the countries occupied by the Third Reich during World War II. Another matter raised during the conference was the reaction of the peoples of the countries collaborating with the Third Reich towards the anti-Jewish policy of their governments, as well as the position of neutral countries on the fate of the Jewish community and refugees. In their presentations, speakers from European, American and Israeli research centres discussed various conditions (legal, economic, social and historical) that influenced the attitudes towards the outlawed and doomed Jewish community. The speakers outlined a wide range of attitudes, from passivity, through rendering aid to the victims, spontaneous or inspired pogroms, to systematic cooperation with the occupier's anti-Jewish policy. The conference programme was divided into eight thematic sessions. On the first and second days, these sessions were preceded by two introductory keynotes. After the speeches, there were discussions supplementing and broadening the topics discussed in the lectures.

The first day of the conference focused on the occupied territories of Poland. The conference was opened by a lecture from Andrzej Żbikowski (of the Jewish Historical Institute and University of Warsaw), entitled '"Żegota" Rada Pomocy Żydom przy Delegaturze Rządu RP na Kraj' (the Council for Aid to Jews at the Government Delegation for Poland). The lecture begun with a brief introduction to the situation of the Polish and Jewish population after the outbreak of World War II. Żbikowski indicated the factors that could have impacted the contemporary mutual relationship of these two nations. He highlighted the year 1942 as being crucial for these relationships, and expanded upon the Holocaust as one of the challenges for the Polish community. Żbikowski referred to Teresa Prekerowa's research published in her paper entitled 'Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945' ('The Underground Council for Aid to Jews in Warsaw 1942–1945'). However, he extended the questions asked in Prekerowa's paper, adding more queries concerning the reasons why 'Żegota' was created, and the socio-national roots of the people involved in its activities. Żbikowski also referred to Dariusz Libionka's critical analysis published in his article 'Polskie piśmiennictwo na temat zorganizowanej i indywidualnej pomocy Żydom (1945–2008)' ('Polish Literature on Organised and

Individual Aid to the Jews (1945–2008)', *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 4, 2008). In his lecture, he described the structure and activities of the Council to Aid Jews, as well as how it was financed. A large part of his lecture involved an analysis of the activity of Zofia Kossak-Szczucka; Żbikowski cited some of her articles (e.g. 'Nie naśladujmy Niemców' – 'Let us not imitate the Germans') on the negative attitudes of Poles towards Jews. One of the key questions that Żbikowski tried to answer was: against whom was 'Żegota' protecting the hiding Jewish population? solely the Germans, or perhaps against Polish blackmailers (*szmalcownicy*) as well? He discussed the contemporary appeals of intellectuals and representatives of the Polish Underground State regarding the blackmailing of the Jews.

The next speaker, Grzegorz Berendt, Deputy Director of the Museum of World War II and a researcher at the University of Gdańsk, discussed Polish-Jewish relations under the German occupation, referring to the analysis of Polish historiography. He pointed out the activities of three centres that have been conducting research in the field in an academic and systematic way: *Żydowski Instytut Historyczny* (the Jewish Historical Institute) in Warsaw, *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* (the Institute of National Remembrance), and *Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów* (the Centre for Holocaust Research) at *Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk*, (the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, IFiS PAN) in Warsaw. He emphasised the historical continuity of the Jewish Historical Institute with the *Żydowskie Komisje Historyczne* (Jewish Historical Commissions[1]) established during World War II, and that of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) with the activity of *Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich* (the

[1] *Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna* (the Central Jewish Historical Commission, CŻKH) was established at *Tymczasowy Centralny Komitet Żydów Polskich* (the Provisional Central Committee of Polish Jews; later it operated at the *Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce*, the Central Committee of Jews in Poland), first as the *Żydowska Komisja Historyczna* (the Jewish Historical Commission) (since August 1944); the name CŻKH was in use since December 1944. The CŻKH was an institution for research and documentation whose purpose was to collect and keeps reports on German crimes committed against Jews during World War II. The first headquarters of the CŻKH was in Lublin, and it was moved to Łódź in March 1945. One of the aims of this institution was the preparation of the collected reports for publication. In larger cities, *Wojewódzkie Żydowskie Komisje Historyczne* (the Voivodship Jewish Historical Commissions, WŻKH) were organised, and they functioned until 1950. In May 1947, the CŻKH was transformed into the Jewish Historical Institute (R. Żebrowski, 'Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna' in *Polski słownik judaistyczny. Dzieje, kultura, religia, ludzie*, ed. Z. Borzymińska, R. Żebrowski, Warsaw 2003, vol. 1, p. 259).

Chief Commission for the Prosecution of Hitlerite Crimes[2]), which operated under the Communist dictatorship. However, particular attention was paid to the latter. The speaker emphasised the importance of the periodical *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* published by the Centre for Holocaust Research: 'This is currently one of the most important sources of knowledge about the present state of research on Holocaust in Europe, including in the occupied Polish territories.' Berendt also mentioned that, since 1989, many Polish university researchers have been studying the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relationships, and their publications have made a significant contribution to historiography. He also listed the important research fields which are currently being explored, such as the activities of *Polskie Państwo Podziemne* (the Polish Underground State, PPP), the Polish government-in-exile and institutions subordinated to it, as well as diplomatic establishments regarding the genocide of the Jews. He stressed the great value of the publications of Dariusz Libionka, Dariusz Stola and Adam Puławski in the field. Another question analysed by Berendt was the activity of the Polish blackmailers. He asked several questions, for instance, regarding when the PPP punished such activities and to what extent they did so. Referring to Libionka's research, he stated that there was little public perception of the PPP's appeals, and there few sentences for blackmail were handed down. Berendt also discussed the question of individual aid to Jews and the current state of research. He emphasised that almost every person who remained alive in hiding until the end of the German occupation survived thanks to the help of Poles. However, he noted that the people in hiding were victims of blackmail or threats of denunciation made by other Poles or even those who were helping them. Berendt's conclusions were based on hundreds of accounts kept in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, Yad Vashem, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, and the Archives of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education in California. Berendt stressed that

[2] *Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce* (the Chief Commission for the Investigation of the German Crimes in Poland) and its regional branches were established in 1945. Since 1949, it operated under the name *Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich* (the Chief Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerite Crimes). Its task was to document crimes committed under the occupation, and to prepare and act as a prosecution office during trials (for details, see R. Kotarba, 'Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Krakowie w latach 1945–1953', *Krzysztofory* 1990, no. 17, pp. 66–74).

the study of Polish-Jewish relations under the occupation should include both examples of active help and passivity, as well as the phenomena of blackmailers, blackmail, and of Poles murdering Jews.

The third lecture in this part of the conference delivered by Marcin Urynowicz (from the Institute of National Remembrance) concerned Polish-Jewish relations in the General Governorate. He outlined the broader context, describing the pre-war situation of the Jewish population and its relations with the Poles, and the changes that occurred after the outbreak of war. He analysed the settlement, numbers, language and professional criteria of the Jewish community in the Second Polish Republic. In his opinion, these factors were significant for Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation. He referred to German legislation restricting the Jews' daily lives, and also discussed the creation of Jewish districts [ghettoes]. The broad background as unfolded in the lecture enhanced an understanding of the conditions in which both nations lived side by side.

The last lecture on the first day of the conference, delivered by Adam Sitarek (of the University of Łódź), concerned Polish-Jewish relations in the territories annexed by the Third Reich. The lecture began with an overview of the situation of the Jewish population after the German invasion, and included important information on the resettlement of the Jews, the legislation concerning them and the repression against them. Sitarek also mentioned the Germans' attempts to antagonise the Polish and Jewish communities. He highlighted the actions which intensified either the positive or negative behaviours of Poles towards the Jews. Part of the lecture concerned the first German death camp operating on occupied Polish territory, Kulmhof and the reporting by Poles on what was happening there. Another topic raised in this speech was the activity of the Polish Underground in the annexed territories, including the ambivalent attitude of its members to the fate of the Jewish population.

The second day of the conference began with a lecture delivered by Antony Polonsky (of Brandeis University) analysing the attitudes of selected nations of occupied Europe towards the Holocaust. The speaker discussed in detail the examples of Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, and explained how the post-1945 systems in these countries influenced the research and how those nations came to terms with the wartime past. Due to the location of the conference, the speaker

devoted much attention to historiography and research related to the occupation of Poland. One important element of his speech was the reflections on the 'competition' in suffering and numbers of victims that could be seen in the public debate in the abovementioned Central and Eastern European countries. During his lecture, Polonsky compared the politics of history and academic research in France, the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. He also proposed new directions for research concerning the occupied European nations' attitude towards the genocide of the Jews. He highlighted the need for deeper research on the negative attitudes of societies, mainly in Central and Eastern European countries, towards Jews during the Holocaust; the question of collaboration with Germany; and the policies of individual European countries towards the Holocaust.

Two of the morning sessions on the second day of the conference concerned the Third Reich and its satellites' view of the Holocaust. The first to speak was Robert Parzer (of Giessen University and the *Tiergartenstrasse 4* Association), presenting research on German society's reaction to *Aktion T4* and the Holocaust. Parzer cited recent research to emphasise that both the Third Reich's citizens and representatives of German institutions, including the Protestant Church, were aware of the fate of the physically and mentally disabled persons deported to *Aktion T4* centres, and they were also aware of what happened later to the deported Jews. Paradoxically, even though awareness of the deportation of the Jews was greater, there were more protests, including official ones, against the euthanasia of disabled persons.

Michele Sarfatti (of the Foundation Jewish Contemporary Documentation Centre in Milan) delivered a lecture on the persecution of Jews in Italy during Fascism and Nazism. The first part of his speech discussed the situation in Italy during the rule of Benito Mussolini. He mentioned the anti-Jewish legislation passed at the time, but stressed that – despite these regulations –Italy was a relatively safe place for both local Jews and refugees from other countries until the end of Mussolini's leadership. In the second part of the speech, he focused on the events after the German takeover of power in September 1943, when the arrests and systematic deportations of Italian Jews to concentration and death camps began. A majority of those deported died in Auschwitz. Sarfatti also presented factors of great significance for Italian-Jewish relations that influenced the type of aid given to the Jews.

The next speaker, László Karsai (of the University of Szeged, Hungary) presented the lives of Hungarian Jews during the German occupation in 1944–1945. However, he emphasised the passing of the anti-Jewish laws eliminating Jews from economic life and limiting their freedoms, which had been introduced earlier in Hungary under the rule of Miklós Horthy. In 1941, approximately 860,000 Jews living in Hungary (including the annexed territories) became the object of discriminatory policy pursued by the government. Despite the various measures taken against them, Jews were relatively safe there at that time, and Hungary also temporarily offered asylum for Jewish refugees from other countries. This situation changed in March 1944, after Hungary was occupied by the Germans and Döme Sztójay became prime minister and legalised the Fascist, anti-Semitic Arrow Cross Party. Jews outside Budapest were imprisoned in ghettos, and deportations to Auschwitz began in April 1944 as ordered by Adolf Eichmann. The majority of the 400,000 Jews deported there died in gas chambers. Jews were helped by diplomats, ordinary people (also associated with the regime), and representatives of the churches. However, Karsai did not refer in detail to the attitudes of Hungarian civilians towards the Holocaust.

The second part of section concerning the Axis powers began with a lecture by Adrian Cioflâncă (of the National Council for the Study of the *Securitate*'s Archives, *Consiliul Național Pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității*, CNSAS) from Romania. The speaker discussed the influence of the cooperation between the Romanian government and its citizens and the Germans on the process and consequences of the extermination of the Romanian Jewish community. In his speech he analysed the post-war trials and the comparison of information with other sources, e.g. the accounts of survivors and eyewitnesses. Cioflâncă also compared the Romanian historiography of various post-war periods with the historical research of other Eastern Bloc countries. One of the significant elements of his speech emphasised that the first mass beatings and pogroms of Romanian Jews were initiated by the local population in the summer of 1940, i.e. nearly one year before the launch of Operation Barbarossa. The pretext was the accusation that the Jews were collaborating with Soviets. Cioflâncă broadly discussed the Iași pogrom in north-eastern Romania, where approximately 13,000 Jews including women and children were murdered on 27–29 June 1941 by Romanian police

and soldiers as well as civilians. He also referred to the crimes committed by officers of *Einsatzgruppe D*. Cioflâncă stressed the necessity and importance of the exhumation of mass graves of victims of pogroms and executions in order to conduct research. In reference to his own activities, he also highlighted the need to mark the execution sites and graves from World War II.

Barbora Jakobyová (of the Slovak Academy of Sciences) delivered a speech entitled 'The Jewish Community in Dolný Kubín: A Study on the Attitudes of the Slovak Government and the Majority of the Population Towards Jews at a Local Level.' She began her lecture by shedding some light on the history of the community that lived in Dolný Kubín before World War II. She outlined the functioning of the Slovak state and government at the beginning of the war, and described the subsequent legal measures which that government took against Jews. Researching the situation in Dolný Kubín, she showed the consequences these regulations had in practice. A large part of her speech concerned the deportation of the Jews from Slovakia to the German concentration and death camps. She also stressed the involvement of local Slovak People's Party members and mentioned the aid provided by Slovaks to Jews.

Jan Láníček (of the University of New South Wales, Australia) presented the attitudes of Czech society towards the Holocaust. At the very beginning of his speech he emphasised that, in his opinion, the situation of the Jewish community in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was comparable to conditions in Western Europe and the Third Reich, contrary to the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. He also stressed that Czech historiography in the field is not extensive; in fact, the research on Czech attitudes towards the Holocaust is only at an initial state. He compared this state of research to the achievements in neighbouring countries such as Poland, Slovakia and Romania. Láníček also noted the lack of a comprehensive monography on the Genocide of Czech Jews. He named examples of the Protectorate government's involvement in passing anti-Jewish legislation. In his opinion, during the first two years of German occupation, most of Czech society were supportive of the persecuted Jews or were neutral. Apart from some events that occurred at the beginning of the occupation, for example when members of radical groups set fire to synagogues, there were no open acts of violence. When Jews were marked with the Star of David patches, some Czechs protested and,

in some examples, pinned yellow flowers to their clothes. And when the deportations began, some people bade farewell to their neighbours and departing transports. However, these public reactions did not mean that greater numbers of people were involved in saving Jews. Láníček pointed out that after the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, active assistance for Jews in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was treated as a form of resistance and could be punished by death, as regulated in the local law.

The next session concerned the Baltic countries under German occupation. Arūnas Bubnys, the representative of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Gyventojų Genocido Ir Rezistencijos Tyrimo Centras*), opened the session with a lecture on the question of inter-ethnic relations in Vilnius during the German occupation of 1941–1944. He outlined the administrative division of Lithuania and the situation of its society under the German occupation. He also referred to contemporary censuses. Special attention was paid to the life of the Jewish community in Vilnius. He discussed German anti-Jewish policy and its impact on the lives of Jews, and he described the creation of the ghetto in Vilnius and the living conditions there. Bubnys also discussed the mass murders of the Jewish population in Ponary. However, in his speech he scarcely referred to the attitudes of the civilian population towards the Holocaust.

Anton Weis-Wendt (of the Centre for the Study of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities in Oslo, *Senter For Studier Av Holocaust Og Livssynsminoriteter*) delivered a lecture entitled 'Murder Without Hatred: Explaining Estonian Collaboration in the Holocaust.' He began discussing the condition of the Jewish community just before the war; he pointed out that the population was of a different size compared to neighbouring countries, as only approximately 4500 Jews lived there. According to Weis-Wendt, the Soviet occupation of Estonia increased the public's aversion to Jews; that aversion was mainly caused by Jews coming from the Soviet Union being appointed to middle and senior administrative positions. Further, the speaker emphasised that the majority of Estonian Jews feared the Bolsheviks as much as the Germans. After the Germans captured Estonia on 22 August 1941, the anti-Jewish laws were introduced there, and subsequently the genocide of Jews started. There were neither pogroms nor ghettoes in Estonia. One of the *Einsatzgruppe A* reports even stated that in Estonia there were no demonstrations of spontaneous

anti-Semitism, despite German incitement. Every detainee was quasi-investigated by police; the criminal charge was being a Jew. According to Weis-Wendt, the German Security Police and the Estonian political police played an important role in the genocide of local Jews.

The last lecture in this part was delivered by Antero Holmila (of the University of Jyväskylä) entitled 'Between Occupation and Collaboration: Finland on the Margins of the Holocaust.' He pointed out that the genocide of Finnish Jews was in a way unique because of the size of this community (fewer than 2000 Jews lived there at the beginning of the war). In the Protocol of the Wannsee Conference, it was estimated that this community numbered 2300 people, but some of them were migrants. Another specific feature of Finland's history was the absence of anti-Semitic violence. Holmila focused on the attitude of Finnish society towards the Jews, both before and after the outbreak of World War II. A large part of his lecture concerned the cooperation of the Finnish authorities with Germany during the so-called Continuation War, which lasted from June 1941 to September 1944. Holmila emphasised the service of Jews in the Finnish army, fighting side by side with the Wehrmacht against the Soviets.

The last session of the second day of the conference concerned Western European countries under German occupation. The first lecture was delivered by Sofie Lene Bak (of the University of Copenhagen) on the conditions and circumstances under which Danish Jews were saved. She focused on the events of October 1943, when the Jews were shipped to Sweden. She depicted the myths that had accumulated over the years concerning the authorities' attitude and the assistance given to Jews, and attempted to answer the question of whether the Danish people's attitude was motivated by humanitarian reasons or rather by profit. Both members of the resistance movement and non-engaged Danes helped Jewish citizens get to Sweden. From the end of September to mid-October 1943, 7200 Jews and 700 non-Jews were transported. However, the Jews paid for their departure out of their own funds or with money obtained by Underground members, and the transport fees in October were several times higher than in other months. Bak also discussed the question of care for the property left behind by the Danish Jews. A special social organisation was set up in Copenhagen to take care of the houses, flats and furnishings left behind, to pay rent etc. Many

Danish Jews returned to their homes after the war, although some of them had to wait in special centres for a considerable time.

Pim Griffioen (of the University of Konstanz) analysed the German persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands and the attitude of the Dutch people towards them. In his opinion, the policy of repression against the Jews initially met with social resistance. For example, when the Germans deported several hundred Dutch Jews to concentration camps in February 1941, a general strike broke out in the Netherlands, unique in occupied Europe. This failed and contributed to the aggravation of the occupier's policy towards the civilians. After May 1942 Germans made Jews wear the yellow Star of David; to protest, many Dutch pinned yellow flowers to their clothes, and posters appeared in Rotterdam calling for public solidarity with the Jews. The first transports to the death camps left the Netherlands in mid-June 1942. Representatives of the Catholic and Protestant Churches protested against these deportations. Over 12,000 Dutch Jews survived thanks to individual and organised help led by the Dutch resistance movement. However, in comparison with the neighbouring countries, a relatively high numbers of Jews were murdered. This might have resulted from, for example, the ruthlessness of the Germans in tracking down Jews and the collaboration of the Dutch administration and police. The Jews themselves, after two years of German occupation, lost their contacts with non-Jewish society. They also became poorer, which made it difficult or even impossible to avoid deportation and survive in hiding.

Nico Wouters, representing the Centre for War and Society of the Belgian State Archives (*Studie- en Documentatiecentrum Oorlog en Hedendaagse Maatschappij*) in Brussels delivered a lecture entitled 'Docile Belgium? Critical Reflections on the Belgian Case'. The main aim of the lecture was not a comprehensive presentation of the situation of Jews under the German occupation of Belgium, but rather to draw attention to some selected aspects. At the beginning he emphasised that over 90 percent of Jews living in Belgium during World War II were refugees from other countries, and that was the reason why the government did not feel fully responsible for them. The Belgian authorities perceived the German occupier in the light of the experiences of World War I, and they pursued their policy on the basis of that experience. Anti-Jewish regulations in Belgium were introduced by the Germans, but the key factor for further steps was the acceptance of this

legislation by the Belgians. The majority of Jews lived in two cities, Antwerp and Brussels. Anti-Jewish policy was met with various reactions from the local communities. In Antwerp, the society and administration were more likely to accept anti-Jewish ordinances; however in Brussels, people protested against the marking of the Jews with the Star of David, their forced labour and arrests. Wouters also mentioned the institutions involved in the deportations of the Jews from Belgium and drew attention to the help they received from civilians.

The debate on the second day concluded with a speech delivered by Limore Yagil (of the Sorbonne) regarding the legislation and the saving of Jews in France under German occupation. After being defeated in June 1940, the country was divided into two zones: the northern one, occupied by the Germans, and the southern one, under the rule of the collaborationist Vichy government. The anti-Jewish ordinances issued in both zones in September 1940 concerned economic matters, the limitation of employment and the social activity of Jews, and also introduced racial segregation. The Vichy government independently initiated anti-Jewish legislation; for example, in October 1940 and June 1941 it issued two *Statuts des Juifs* applicable in both zones, as well as in the French overseas territories. In 1942 the deportations of Jews from France to German concentration and death camps started. The biggest action was the *Vel' d'Hiv* roundup on 16 and 17 July 1942 in Paris. More than 13,000 people, including women and children, were arrested with the participation of the French police. Yagil broadly discussed the question of the individual assistance given to Jews by people from various social strata, professions and religions, and drew attention to the Catholic Church's involvement in this matter. She also mentioned organised actions, such as the help provided by entire communities such as Chambon-sur-Lignon. The cases of civil servants involved in the deportations of Jews, but who gave help to Jews in individual cases, was of particular interest.

The third day of the conference began with a session concerning Eastern European countries under German occupation. The first speaker of the day was Leon Rein (from the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem), who delivered a lecture entitled 'Between Collaboration and Rescue: Belarusian Society Facing the Holocaust.' At the beginning of his lecture he described the pre-war ethnic mosaic in Belarus. He also discussed the stereotypes of these minorities, which were

an important factor in their mutual relations during the occupation. He discussed in detail the collaboration between the local administration and civilians with the Germans, and how this influenced the genocide of the Jews. In his opinion, the conditions imposed by the occupier had a significant influence on the scale of collaboration. Rein also mentioned the geographical conditions of Belarus, which enabled some Jews to hide in partisan units in the forests.

Bogdan Musiał (of the Institute of National Remembrance) supplemented the preceding lecture with his address, regarding the Soviet partisans in Belarus and their attitudes towards the Holocaust. He presented the overall situation in Belarus after the start of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941. He emphasised that approximately 150,000 Jews, mainly from the Eastern territories [of Belarus], had been deported deep into the USSR before the Wehrmacht entered. Musiał noticed that it was difficult to estimate how many Jews tried to hide with the partisans, and how many actually survived. He also referred to anti-Semitism among the Belarusians and Soviet partisans; Jewish people were not always welcome, especially if they were accompanied by whole families, including women, children and the elderly, as they were perceived as a burden to the units. Another reason was distrust towards the Jews. The decision to accept them into a particular unit often depended on the approach of its commander. A large group of Jews received help, but partisan units also murdered many refugees from the ghettos. Musiał illustrated the attitude of Soviet partisans with many examples, including the Bielski brothers' partisan camp.

Igor Shchupak (of the Ukrainian Institute for Holocaust Studies) delivered a lecture entitled 'Who Rescued the Jews During the Holocaust and Why: Defining the Problem.' He discussed the situation of the Jews in Ukraine after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war. He described the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*, with particular emphasis on the massacre in Babi Yar, perpetrated from 29 to 30 September 1941, when 33,771 people were killed. Shchupak emphasised that German propaganda sought to antagonise the local community and set them against the Jews. They did so by portraying Jews as subhuman, but also by imposing a narrative that Jews were disposed to support the Soviets. In addition, he emphasised that all attempts to help Jews were punishable, including the death penalty. Shchupak noted that today's Ukraine grants three awards for helping Jews,

in addition to the title of Righteous Among the Nations: those who did not meet all the criteria to receive a medal from Yad Vashem are awarded the title of Righteous of Ukraine and Righteous of Babi Yar. He mentioned Metropolitan Andrzej Szeptycki as an example of a person who actively helped Jews but did not receive an Israeli decoration. Many Ukrainians received decorations from Yad Vashem after 1991, i.e. after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. Shchupak also discussed the main categories of people supporting Jews, and gave as an example the Vinnytsia region, where the majority of people decorated for saving Jews came from.

The last speaker in this session was Natalia Sineaeva-Pankowska (of the Never Again Association in Poland, *Stowarzyszenie Nigdy Więcej*). She discussed selected aspects of the narrative about the Holocaust in the context of developing the Moldovan identity. She analysed to what extent denial of the Holocaust is present among Moldova's public and its academic discourse, and how important this question is for building a contemporary Moldovan identity. Sineaeva briefly described the fate of the Moldovan lands in the twentieth century until they gained independence in 1991, and described the situation of the local Jewish community. She also noted the fact that Moldovan history schoolbooks contain little information about this minority and its genocide during World War II. She focused on various models for shaping contemporary Moldovan national identity, and also stressed that Moldova is not yet interested in the history and culture of the Jewish community living there, nor is it ready to look critically at the past. She pointed out the persistent lack of commemoration of the places where Jews lived or the places of crimes committed against Jews during World War II.

The next session of the third day of conference concerned the Balkan countries. The first speaker was Naida Mihal Brandl (of the University of Zagreb) presenting the attitudes of Croatian state institutions and society towards Jews. On 6 April 1941, Nazi Germany and the Axis powers attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Part of the country's territory was divided between the Third Reich, Hungary, Italy and Bulgaria. On the remaining territories, puppet states fully subordinate to the Axis powers were created: Serbia, and the Independent Croatian State (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH), the latter ruled by Ante Pavelić. The NDH was ruled by Croatian fascists, the *Ustaša*. From April to June 1941, many legal acts were issued against minorities, primarily Jews, in the NDH. On 30 April 1941, the following

decrees were issued: on racial affiliation, on the protection of Aryan blood and the honour of the Croatian nation, and on citizenship. Jews, as in the Third Reich, were defined in racial terms. At the beginning of June 1941, concentration camps were established in the NDH, and Communists, political prisoners, Roma and Jews were detained there. However, the largest group of victims of the NDH regime were Serbs. By the end of 1941, more than half of the Jews had been sent to camps in the NDH. In the following months, deportations of Jews to German concentration and death camps started. Ordinary Croats also participated in the crimes, which were mainly initiated by the *Ustaša*. Some people tried to help Jews as much as was possible, e.g. by offering them shelter. According to Brandl, this question requires further thorough source research.

The next speaker, Oto Luthar (of the Institute for Culture and Memory Studies, RC SAZU – *Inštitut Za Kulturne In Spominske Študije* in Ljubljana) discussed the matter of anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and negationism in Slovenia. He described the broad context of the Slovenian Jewish community's history prior to the outbreak of World War II. The local Jewish community was not large. Jews from the northern and eastern parts of the country, annexed by the Third Reich, were deported to German concentration camps at the end of 1941. Few survived. Jews from the Italian-occupied parts of Slovenia – Ljubljana and Lower Carniola – were relatively safe until 1943. At the end of that year, when Germans occupied these lands, the majority of Jews were deported to German concentration and death camps. In turn, those from Prekmurje, where most Slovenian Jews lived, shared the fate of the Hungarian Jews. In mid-1944 they were deported to KL Auschwitz. Luthar also referred to contemporary Holocaust historiography and research in Slovenia.

Paul Isaac Hagouel (of the University of California, Berkeley, and a member of the Greek delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, IHRA) concluded this part of the conference with his lecture on how Jews, both Greek and of other nationalities, residing in occupied Greece lived. In Hagouel's portrayal, the overwhelming majority of Jews resident in Greece during World War II were Greek Jews (he interchangeably referred to them as Jewish Greeks or Greeks of Jewish origin). A small percentage were also Jews from Italy and Spain, and some of them had passports from Latin American countries (e.g. Argentina) and Portugal. Hagouel referred to selected places: Thessaloniki,

Athens, Corfu, Xanthi and the island of Zakynthos. Greece was attacked by Fascist Italy in October 1940, and the Third Reich captured its territories in April 1941. The country was divided into three occupation zones: German, Italian and Bulgarian. Jews living in the Italian-occupied part were relatively safe until autumn 1943. When the Germans occupied the area, they shared the fate of Jews from other occupied countries. Those living in the part occupied by the Third Reich, Jews from Thessaloniki included, were sent to ghettos. From March to August 1943, over 40,000 people were deported from this area to KL Auschwitz, and the majority of them were murdered there. Some Jews living in the Bulgarian occupation zone were deported to German death camps in the occupied Polish territories, e.g. to Treblinka. Hagouel discussed the attitudes of the people towards the Jews. He emphasised that the majority of the non-Jewish population sympathised with them, and the Greek Catholic Church also supported them. Many Jews survived thanks to the help of individuals and by joining the resistance movement.

The panellists' speeches ended with two lectures about neutral countries. The lecture of Bernd Rother (of the Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt Foundation, *Bundeskanzler-Willy-Brandt-Stiftung*, in Berlin) was entitled 'The Reluctant Saviour Spain – Typical for All Neutral Countries?' He started by pointing out the difficulties of calculating how many Jews emigrated through Spain in 1940–1942. Part of his speech concerned the fates of Spanish Jews outside Spain. In summary, he compared Spain to other neutral countries: Switzerland, Sweden and Portugal. The next speaker, Cláudia Ninhos (of the New University of Lisbon) delivered a lecture entitled 'Portugal, an "Open" Country to All Belligerent Nations? Salazar, the World War II and the "Final Solution"'. In the first part, she discussed the evolution of official Portuguese policy towards refugees, especially Jews, from the early 1930s. She emphasised that Portugal's increasingly restrictive immigration policy towards Jewish refugees should be explained not by anti-Semitic ideology, but by social and political motives. In the following part of her lecture, she described at what point in time the Portuguese government and Portuguese society became aware of the Holocaust. Then, she analysed the impact of this awareness on the government's position towards Jewish refugees. In her speech, she also referred to German sources on the role of the Portuguese state in the Holocaust. In her opinion,

it remains unclear what attempts were made by Nazi Germany to include neutral countries, including Portugal, in the so-called Final Solution of the Jewish question.

The conference's conclusion was a panel discussion with Professors Grzegorz Berendt, Antony Polonsky, Andrzej Żbikowski, and Bogdan Musiał, who tried to explain some of the important issues which have arisen in recent public debates. These concerned the attitudes of European nations towards the fate of their Jewish fellow citizens, and in particular whether it is possible to indicate a certain model or typical attitudes, or show clear differences between particular nations. The reactions of non-occupied countries (e.g. the United Kingdom, United States, Switzerland) towards the Holocaust were also discussed. The issue of the negative attitudes of some societies towards the Holocaust and to what extent this has been already reworked in modern Europe was raised. The inclusion of social attitudes towards the Holocaust in the politics of history of European countries was also discussed. Research perspectives on the social attitudes in occupied Europe were also indicated.