



Graffiti in the center of Warsaw, 2017

Thu 9th May, 6 pm

Poland Talks

History and memory of the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust - a meeting with Anna Bikont and Mark Roseman

At the end of 2017 **Anna Bikont** published a fascinating book on Irena Sendler, a collaborator of Żegota (the Polish Council to Aid Jews), who dedicated herself to rescuing Jewish children during the Holocaust. Without putting Sendler's heroism into question, the book, entitled *Sendlerowa. W ukryciu* (Sendler. In Hiding) dismantles the myths surrounding the figure. Bikont also tells how this story has been, and still is being remembered and instrumentalized. In a broader sense, she also questions established narratives on the rescue of Jews in Poland.

Almost two decades earlier, in 2000 **Mark Roseman** published an equally interesting book on Marianne Strauss, a young Jewish woman from Essen, who managed to survive the Second World War hiding in various places in Germany while the rest of her family perished in the Holocaust. The book entitled *A Past in Hiding*, in a very impressive way, describes what it meant to be a Jew in Nazi Germany. At the same time it also reflects on how the story has been repeatedly told and retold by Marianne thereafter. Roseman's upcoming book *Lives Reclaimed: A Story of Rescue and Resistance in Nazi Germany* (August 2019) can be seen as a sequel to it.

ANNA BIKONT is a well-known Polish writer and journalist, columnist of the biggest Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. She published a number of books on contemporary Polish history: *Lawina i kamienie. Pisarze wobec komunizmu* (together with Joanna Szczęsna, 2006), *Sendlerowa. W ukryciu* (2017) and *Jacek* (a biography of Jacek Kuroń, together with Helena Łuczywo, 2018). Her book *My z Jedwabnego* (2004) won the European Book Prize in 2011. It was published in English in 2015 under the title *The Crime and the Silence: Confronting the Massacre of Jews in Wartime Jedwabne*.

MARK ROSEMAN is a British-American historian and Holocaust expert. He is professor of Jewish Studies at Indiana University (Bloomington). He authored a number of books on the Holocaust and modern German history: *Recasting the Ruhr 1945-1959: Manpower, Economic Recovery and Labour Relations* (1992), *Generations in conflict. Youth rebellion and generation formation in modern Germany 1770-1968* (1995), *The Villa, The Lake, The Meeting: Wannsee and the Final Solution* (2002), *A Past in Hiding* (2002; winner of the Mark Lynton History Prize & the Geschwister-Scholl-Preis, 2003). His upcoming book *Lives Reclaimed* also deals with the question of the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust in Nazi Germany.

Though Bikont's book is set in occupied Poland, while the book by Roseman focuses on Nazi Germany there are many similarities between them. Firstly, both works deal with Jews trying to survive the Holocaust and people assisting them. Secondly, the phrase "in hiding" in both titles can be understood twofold, as a reference to the actual World War Two experience, but also as a description of the later process of coming to terms with these narratives, of how they have been dealt with, silenced, (mis)represented and repeatedly reinterpreted after 1945.

In the meeting with Anna Bikont and Mark Roseman we will discuss the conditions and circumstances of Jewish survival during World War Two in occupied Poland and Nazi Germany. We will also discuss how the memory of the rescue has been shaped after the war. Finally, we will attempt to enhance a universal reflection on how to tell such stories in an appropriate way.

The discussion will be moderated by Zofia Wóycicka.

When: Thursday the 9th May, 6 pm

Where: Zentrum für Historische Forschung Berlin
der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
Majakowskiring 47, 13156 Berlin

The discussion will be held in English.

More information at: www.cbh.pan.pl

ZOFIA WÓYCICKA is a historian and exhibition curator, and researcher at the Center for Historical Research Berlin of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Her main research interests lie in Memory and Museum Studies with a special focus on World War II. She authored amongst others: *Arrested Mourning. Memory of the Nazi Camps in Poland, 1944-1950* (2013). Currently she is researching on contemporary European museums dedicated to people who rescued Jews during the Holocaust.



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