

## **DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

Holocaust happened on Polish soil and in the presence of Poles. The dominant narrative in the Polish historiography suggests that indifference was the most frequent attitude of the “bystanders” to the Holocaust. This issue requires, however, further thought and study. The traditional division: victims-perpetrators- bystanders does not reflect the complex realities of occupied Poland and, consequently, makes it more difficult to seize the dynamics and relationships not only between Poles and Jews but inside these groups too.

The goal of the project is to present the previous state of knowledge and to look at the entire question of Polish attitudes toward the Holocaust and to give a new account of the Polish experience of being witness to the Holocaust.

We shall investigate the key questions, such as the issue of indifference (it’s character, was it possible at all?) and silence in the face of the direct experience of the Shoah. We shall dwell into the issue of various kinds of interpretations – moral, political, economic and others - developed by the “bystanders”. One of the goals of the project will be to further redefine the meaning of the expression “bystander” which can, at the same time, denote an eye-witness, an observer or a passive or active participant in the ongoing events. The project will strive to overcome the existing stereotypes which deal with the issue of “bystanding” and it will fuse the Polish and Jewish perspectives through the presentation of broader context of relations which linked the two communities.

The proposed project will become a part of a broader historical debate which sheds light of the attitudes of European societies during the Holocaust. The grant will result in publications which will enable comparative thinking and, most of all, which will reveal the nature of the Polish specificity of “bystanding”.