

## **Aiding and rescuing Jews in occupied Poland - new approaches**

The question of Polish aid to Jews during the Holocaust seems to be the best researched topic in Polish historiography, especially of the last two decades. However, research to date brought rudimentary knowledge, very often subordinated to the goals of establishing the numbers of those helping and receiving aid and showing the suffering of Poles who, despite the restrictions of the occupying forces and disregarding possible consequences, rescued Jews. Thus, despite the enormous scale of research (and not only) interest in the subject of Poles helping Jews during the Nazi occupation, but there is also still a lack of publications showing this problem in the broad context of the war conditions, taking into account the specificity and quality of help, social networks, threats or logistical issues, as well as the very everyday life and dynamics of the relationship between helpers and help-receivers.

The aim of this project is to take a new, critical, diverse and thematic look at the question of Poles' aid to Jews during the German occupation of the General Government. Instead of focusing solely on the numbers, scale of aid to Jews and the scale of German repression, it is necessary to look at aid not only historically, but above all sociologically and psychologically, in order to grasp the widest possible variety of aid phenomena and problems and to describe their essence: from incidental, individual cases of disinterested aid, through the issue of short-term or long-term free and paid aid, to aid organized within social networks or underground organizations. We will compare the help provided by different social groups, both in urban and rural areas, focusing on motivations, the logistics of helping (including finances), interactions within social networks and perceptions of help. In other words, the aim of the project is to describe - considering the historical, social, cultural and spatial context of the occupation - the different patterns and mechanisms involved in helping.

The project will result in a volume of studies, with articles that are analyses - made based on archival material - of selected themes and others that will emerge during the research. Treating aid as a special, extreme situation and a dynamic relationship between people will allow universal humanistic questions to be raised about how humans function in extreme situations, and the inclusion of methodological perspectives from fields such as sociology and psychology will allow new approaches to the topic of rescuing Jews. We believe that with such an accumulation of mythologized historiographical narratives, instrumentally used in public discourse for nation-bond propaganda and political purposes, it is high time for a new look at the issue of Poles rescuing Jews and an attempt at synthesis. The project may also constitute in the future a new Polish contribution to the subject of helping Jews during the Holocaust in occupied Europe, and especially to the reflection on the problems of agency/passivity/survival strategies present in Holocaust studies in other countries.