



STATEMENT

It is with great concern that we have observed, once again, representatives of the Polish government and other public officials make statements about academic findings that result from years of research and thorough examination, this time commenting on Prof. Barbara Engelking's interview with Monika Olejnik on the programme "*Kropka nad I*" on 19 April 2023.

The interview in question focused on the fate of Jewish civilians during and after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, as presented in the exhibition *Around Us, a Sea of Fire*, held at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and conceptually designed by Prof. Engelking. The exhibition shows the tragedy and heroism of the silent resistance of those Jewish civilians, who recorded their experiences in hiding places and bunkers, their words often being the only traces left of them. The surviving journals, accounts, and diaries disclose a whole range of what Jews trying to survive in hiding in occupied Warsaw had to face up to: fear and hope, a sense of loneliness and attempts to form groups offering mutual support, inactivity and agency. These primary sources also mention dislike, lack of help, blackmail, betrayal, and death at the hands of the Germans, as well as help, friendship, and rescue provided by other Jews and Poles. It is all these aspects of the Jewish fate during WWII, examined by Holocaust scholars for years, that Prof. Engelking spoke about in the interview.

Government representatives, including Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and Education Minister Przemysław Czarnek, attacked Prof. Engelking for allegedly presenting "ungrounded opinions" and "pseudo-historical theses" that lack corroboration from facts. The allegations made by these officials focused on the extent of Polish aid offered to the Jews, as well as the extent of such phenomena as antisemitism, blackmail and denunciations. The research findings presented by Prof. Engelking were referred to as "blurring the truth", "lies", an "anti-Polish narrative" and "insults to Poles". Prof. Engelking was also accused of having made remarks that were "racist in nature" in her previous statements. In the wake of these comments, Prof. Engelking was also condemned by the pro-government media, including the public media, where she was described as a "Pole-eater", while the interview she had given as "anti-Polish hate-mongering."



**Centrum Badań
nad Zagładą Żydów**
Polish Center for
Holocaust Research

We strongly condemn any political and ideological attempts to question all research findings. The claim that saving Jews was a common attitude among Poles is the very obfuscation of the truth the above-mentioned government officials have accused others of – an opinion, and not a fact based on historical knowledge resulting from many years of interdisciplinary research projects (including those conducted by the Institute of National Remembrance). Also, such a claim belittles the heroism of the Righteous, especially those who paid the ultimate price for their bravery and lost their lives at the hands of the Nazis. We would also like to remind you that, when combined with incitement to hatred, the politicization of history, and thus attempts to falsify it, is the very danger that Marian Turski rightly warned against in his speech at the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

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