

he served as the Vice-President of the Forum for Dialogue and since 2020 he has been chairing the Scholarly Advisory Board of this NGO focusing on raising awareness about Jewish history in Poland and inspiring new connections between contemporary Poland and the Jewish people. In 2021 he received the Nevitt Sanford Award for Outstanding Professional Contributions to Political Psychology. His research interests include psychological foundations of genocide, post-genocide reconciliation, dehumanization, anti-semitism, and collective moral emotions. His works on lay explanations of the Holocaust appeared in *Political Psychology*, *Memory Studies*, *Psychological Inquiry* and *Teksty Drugie*.

Łukasz Krzyżanowski

is a Research Fellow at the German Historical Institute Warsaw, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of History at the University of Warsaw (Claims Conference University Partnership in Holocaust Studies Lecturer), and Adjunct Professor in the Department of History, University of Ottawa. Trained at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, University of Exeter, and the University of Warsaw. He has held scholarships from the University of Oxford, Yad Vashem, and the Claims Conference. His monograph *Ghost Citizens: Jewish Return to a Postwar City*, tr. Madeline G. Levine, was published by Harvard University Press in 2020 (Sybil Halpern Milton Memorial Book Prize). His research is situated in the field social history of 20th c. Central and Eastern Europe, primarily German occupation, the Holocaust and its immediate aftermath in Poland.



The Joachim-Lelewel-Talks of the German Historical Institute Warsaw are a forum, in which the contentious issues surrounding the Polish history are discussed in their European context. Each time they bring together representatives of Polish, East and West European or international history respectively to a panel discussion, where the audience actively participates.

The intention of these discussions is not only a confrontation of not infrequently opposed assumptions and views but also an immersion of various research milieus in an intensive exchange of ideas. This procedure enables continued development of the discussed issue as well as facilitates opening for diverse methodical aspects.

Panelists

Christopher R. Browning, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Mark Roseman, Indiana University Bloomington

Roma Sendyka, Jagiellonian University, Krakow

Michał Bilewicz, University of Warsaw

Chair

Łukasz Krzyżanowski, German Historical Institute Warsaw

Venue

Trybunał Koronny

ul. Rynek 1

Lublin

10 czerwca 2022

17:30

Tłumaczenie symultaniczne na język polski

**Max Weber
Stiftung**

Deutsche
Geisteswissenschaftliche
Institute im Ausland

XXII

Debata

Lelewelowska

**30 Years after
Ordinary Men
Groundbreaking
and New Perspectives
in Holocaust Research**

10 czerwca 2022

Deutsches
Historisches Institut
Warschau

Niemiecki
Instytut Historyczny
w Warszawie

30 Years after *Ordinary Men*

Groundbreaking and New Perspectives in Holocaust Research

Friday, 10 June 2022 | 5.30 pm

Few books have impacted the field of Holocaust research in a way *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* by Christopher R. Browning has. The book was translated into over a dozen of languages and entered the canon of Holocaust historiography. Hardly any other book on the Holocaust is more frequently cited and discussed in Holocaust-related courses – not only in history departments – taught at universities around the globe. The year 2022 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the first publication of *Ordinary Men*.

By choosing a powerful lens of microhistory, Browning sheds new light on the course of the Holocaust. By following closely the mass atrocities committed by Reserve Police Battalion 101 in German-occupied eastern Poland, Browning's book "asks large questions in small places." It not only examines what happened, but first and foremost, *how* it happened. The people who are the focus of this important book were neither particularly avid Nazis nor pathological killers. They were ordinary men who shot nearly forty thousand Jews and assisted in brutal deportations of even more victims to death camps over a course of just sixteen months during *Aktion Reinhardt*. Browning explores the choices these killers had; why and how they made them. Well before the word "interdisciplinary" became mandatory in all research proposals, Browning wrote a book that combines a meticulous, source-driven study of history with interpretations and explanations offered by the social sciences, primarily social psychology. Questioning

ideology as the sole factor responsible for the transformation of ordinary husbands and fathers into ruthless killers, Browning's book proposes a multicausal explanation; argues that peer pressure and social conformity can prove crucial for understanding social dynamics within killing units and the deadly outcome of their actions.

The publication of *Ordinary Men* marked the birth of perpetrator studies – an approach that shaped Holocaust research and still remains one of the important streams of scholarly examination of the Nazi genocide. *Ordinary Men*, much like the works of psychologists Stanley Milgram, and Philip Zimbardo, whose findings Browning discusses and applies to the historical context, prove that there is nothing mystical in extreme violence and genocide; that social and psychological factors and processes play an important role in how genocidal plans, formed by ideology, can be implemented. Ultimately, Browning's work leaves us with a haunting question of the potential of everyone to fill the ranks of the perpetrators. For the social mechanisms that Browning investigates did not disappear with the fall of the Third Reich. Dreadful remainders of that fact can easily be found around the world; in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and today in Ukraine – to name just a few.

With this Lelewel Debate, we celebrate three decades of *Ordinary Men* serving as an inspiration for generations of scholars studying the Holocaust who – to paraphrase the idiom – stood on the shoulders of Chris Browning. By bringing together eminent scholars with expertise in history, memory studies, and social psychology, this event inquires into the scholarly impact of *Ordinary Men*, major breakthroughs in Holocaust studies since its publication, and new approaches that are likely to advance our understanding of the Nazi genocide in the coming years.

The panelists

Christopher R. Browning

is an American historian, known best for his works on the Holocaust. Browning received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1975. He taught at Pacific Lutheran University from 1974 to 1999, eventually becoming a Distinguished Professor. In 1999, he moved to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to accept an appointment as Frank Porter Graham Professor of History. Browning retired from teaching in Spring 2014. His research focuses on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. He has written extensively about three issues: first, Nazi decision- and policy-making in regard to the origins of the Final Solution; second, the behavior and motives of various middle- and lower-echelon personnel involved in implementing Nazi Jewish policy; and thirdly, the use of survivor testimony to explore Jewish responses and survival strategies. Some of his most notable publications include *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (HarperCollins, 1992), *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (University of Nebraska Press, 2004), and *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave Labor Camp* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2010).

Mark Roseman

is Distinguished Professor in History and Pat M Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies, at Indiana University. Trained at the Universities of Cambridge and Warwick in the UK, he is the author or editor of eleven books on the Holocaust and modern European history, many of which have been translated into international editions. His books include *Über-Leben im Dritten Reich. Handlungsspielräume von Juden*

und ihren Helfern (2021); *Lives Reclaimed. A Story of Rescue and Resistance in Nazi Germany* (2019); *Jewish Responses to Persecution, 1933–1946: Volume I, 1933–1938* (with Jürgen Matthäus) (2010); *The Villa, the Lake, the Meeting. The Wannsee Conference and the 'Final Solution'* (2002); and *The Past in Hiding: Memory and Survival in Nazi Germany* (2000). He is general editor of the four volume Cambridge History of the Holocaust (in preparation).

Roma Sendyka

is Associate Professor and founding director of the Research Center for Memory Cultures. She teaches at the Anthropology of Literature and Cultural Studies Department at the Faculty of Polish Studies, Jagiellonian University in Krakow. She specializes in memory studies, criticism and theory, as well as visual culture. Sendyka focuses on relations between images, sites and memory, and is currently working on a project on non-sites of memory in Central and Eastern Europe and bystanders' memory. She has participated in a number of international research projects and co-curated various exhibitions, most notably *Terribly Close. Polish Vernacular Artists Face the Holocaust* (2018–2019, w/Erica Lehrer, Wojciech Wilczyk, Magdalena Zych, Ethnographic Museum, Krakow). Her most recent publication is *Poza obozem. Nie-miejsca pamięci. Próba rozpoznania [Beyond Camps. Non-sites of Memory]* (2021).

Michał Bilewicz

is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Warsaw, where he chairs the Center for Research on Prejudice. Previously, he was a Fulbright scholar at the New School for Social Research (USA) and DAAD post-doctoral fellow at the University of Jena (Germany). In 2005–2019