

Institute of National Remembrance

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Message from the President of the Institute of National Remembrance, Dr. Janusz Kurtyka, concerning the statement of Mr. Jean Khan, the Head of the Jewish Association in France, published in a daily Rzeczpospolita on 27th April, 2006.

The Institute of National Remembrance resolutely protests against another attempt to extend co-responsibility for German Holocaust crimes to the Polish state.

Poland, invaded in September 1939 by Germany and Soviet Union, was then subject to cruel occupation and slavery for the next 50 years.

It was a real tragedy for the Polish state that, deprived of independence, was unable during the World War II to protect its citizens of various faiths and nationalities. The Polish government in exile and couriers of the underground state alarmed the world about invaders' crimes, but it would not produce any reaction expected.

In contrast with other European countries no institution of the Polish state cooperated with Hitler in his criminal plans. German occupation in Poland was incomparably more atrocious than in Western Europe w

causing a direct danger to a physical existence of the Jewish people and the Poles as well. Those who were involved in helping the oppressed were in deadly danger, together with their families. Both occupation regimes – the German and the Soviet – would encourage the people of invaded territories to collaborate with their rules and to surrender those who were wanted by the invaders – administrations. Through encouragements the totalitarian regimes would create an area of activity for criminals, who are indeed present in every nation.

Against the legal, though acting in exile and underground, institutions of the Polish state, Polish citizens of various nationalities – Polish as well as Jewish – collaborated with occupation regimes, taking part in murders and crimes committed against their fellow-citizens. But the scale of this phenomenon was never general and all individual cases of collaboration were prosecuted by organized in all regions of Poland structures of the Polish underground state. The conspiracy civilian and military courts martial would sentence and instantly execute thousands of people regardless of their gender or nationality.

Since Poland gained independence all individuals who had committed war crimes and crimes against humanity have been prosecuted according to the Polish law and have been taken to courts of Republic of Poland. The Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation at the Institute of National Remembrance still launches investigations against the uncovered living persons who had committed crimes against Poles, Jews and other nationals during both totalitarian regimes.

Only on a basis of the truth about a history of countries, nations and individuals the Memory can be built, that will not allow relativism of

crimes and responsibility of genocide.

Janusz Kurtyka
President of the Institute
of National Remembrance

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