

Dear Dr. Cramsey,

I hope you are having a good week. My name is Julia. I am currently doing my MA in History, the PCNI specialization. I am new to Leiden University, so I am not very familiar with staff; I got your name from Dr. Storm when I discussed thesis subjects with him.

I did my BA in European Studies and I did my thesis on the influence of the Polish Catholic Church on Polish identity during the cold war, specifically I looked at sermons given by Wyszyński (during the early communist rule) and then John Paul II, from 1978 and 1981. When doing my research I found that Poland has a very conflicted memory regarding the Holocaust, for example the incident of crosses at Auschwitz (Finn 1988). Some literature I found discussing Polish memory and the Holocaust were Kaprański (2022), Kończal (2017) and Zimmerman (2003).

I found that specifically Polish people have constructed a narrative around heroism (Kończal 2022, 252). It seems that the Polish people center the Holocaust around the Polish people, and not Jewish people. In surveying from 2015 conducted by CBOS Polish people indicated that they viewed the Holocaust as mainly the suffering of Polish nation (45%) instead of the Jews (33%) (CBOS 2020, 5).

I want to examine this narrative further. In addition, given that the specialization of PCNI emphasizes comparative history I was thinking examining the German narrative that places the Jewish narrative at its center. However if possible I would like to discuss this further with you. As for sources regarding national narratives I was thinking of looking at museums.

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