

Political decisions as a barrier to soothing the trauma of “comfort women” | Alicja Bartuś

Here is the recording of Alicja Bartuś’s lecture “Political decisions as a barrier to soothing the trauma of «comfort women»” which was presented at the webinar “Around the Trauma of the Holocaust” on November 19, 2022.

Dr. **Alicja Bartuś** is a politologist who specializes in human rights, totalitarian regimes, crimes against humanity and modern world terrorism. As a journalist, she has published numerous articles about historical education and memory of the Auschwitz death camp. Mrs. Bartuś is also the author of educational projects for young people and a member of the Opinion Group on Holocaust Teaching at the Ministry of Education. She has been working with the International Youth Meeting Center in Oświęcim for many years.

In her lecture, Alicja Bartuś presents the history of women who were sexually by the emperor Hirohito’s army soldiers during the wars in Asia and in the Pacific. In the West, they are commonly referred to by the euphemism “*comfort women*”. In Japan the term “*jugun ianfu*”, meaning ‘comfort women following the army voluntarily’, is used. The latter term strongly misinterprets the truth about the harm experienced by women in the countries occupied by Japan. These women themselves prefer the term “survivors”.

The webinar „Around the Trauma of the Holocaust” was organized by the Warsaw Ghetto Museum and the **Institute of the Social Sciences of SWPS University**. Speakers from Denmark, Israel, Burundi, Ukraine and Poland discussed trauma in the context of their own

research and the experience of work with people experiencing trauma. We had a possibility to listen to psychologists, pedagogues and historians working with this topic professionally, as well as to find similarities between the consequences of war trauma, regardless of where and when it occurred.

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