

Dr. Violeta Barbu

Section II Report of the Moderator

Resistance to totalitarianism:

The Righteous among Nation and The Righteous in the Communist totalitarian experience?

Speakers

Missis Anna Maria Samuelli

Miss Marta Pietrzykowska

Mister Ion Constantin

In the Second Section of the Workshop, the debate was organized around two topics: the definition of the Righteous and the Righteous as a didactical tool.

The genuine definition of the Righteous was presented by Missis **Anna Maria Samuelli** as a man who saved the Jews during the Nazi persecution, definition inspired by a religious fundament, reflecting the Yad Vashem Memorial's position. According to Ms. Samuelli's approach, the Righteous gained different meanings in the different genocidal contexts, Armenian genocide, for instance.

Anyway, this interpretation limits the concept and leaves no way to connect it to the moral resistance to communism as a form of refuse to participate or to disseminate the evil. Both positions are concerned with the processes by which we can recognize a personal commitment to perform a good action "without any hope in the future", in different totalitarian contexts.

The debate point out that whether a so-called dual-system solution is proffered (one that posits the separate but interacting realms of Nazism and communism) or an analysis based more firmly on their similarities is developed, "the Righteous" seems to offer an important theoretical formulation both historically and didactically productive.

Miss Marta Pietrzykowska's paper focused on a methodological frame to analyze and describe a typology of the Righteous and a morphology of their actions. The topics of investigation were: Who are those people? What were their reasons for the help they have given? What did their relations with the hidden look like? The subjects of the

investigation have been Polish men and women officially recognized as Righteous, according of some distinctive criteria: the relationship to the victim, the way in which the victim was saved, the duration of the assistance etc.

The debate focused on the necessity to reach a large consensus in a scholar field and in public opinion on the value and relevance of the criteria for understanding the very process by which some few people saved other people, in spite of the common indifference. Some have rejected her stance completely, others defended it enthusiastically.

Using the comparative approach, **Mister Ion Constantin** made a parallel between Romania and Poland's recent history. His paper pointed, in a very detailed survey, not only to some key similarities and differences, but also to the connections between the two people. Every country found his own way to endure the war and the totalitarian regimes. However, whether it is possible to detect two very similar patterns of historical evolution, such as antisemitism and Russophobia, the resistance to totalitarianism in Romania remained a very open question.

Antonia Grasselli insisted on the distinction between real and nominal "Righteous" in the didactical process. Despite the defiant tone found in some positions, it should be obvious that the Righteous-category was not built upon political or ideological bases, but on a sincere belief and spiritual hope. The positive remembrance of the good, through the Righteous testimony, could be a critical and truly polyvalent tool in the educational and formative process. In order to understand the moral reasons embedded in human behavior, the direct impact of a testimony made his greatest contribution. Study and personal or team research are two other modalities to involve actively the students.