

Speaker : Dieter Pohl

The Nazi policies in occupied Poland, Lithuania and Europe. Differences and similarities

Nazi occupation policies in Poland and Lithuania were quite different, but had almost the same effects. While Western and Northern Poland were annexed to the Third Reich, the so called General Government (central and southern/southeastern occupied Poland) served as a more colonial space like the Generalbezirk Litauen (General District Lithuania). Both societies were considered by the Nazis as "inferior", but still ranging above the Russians. Both occupied countries were fully exploited, esp. the agriculture, but also workforce. Economic activities were limited, and the living conditions were bad, but not as catastrophic as in the famine regions further East. The German war of extermination started already in 1939 in Poland, but on a limited scale, it reached its full dimensions in Lithuania during summer and autumn 1941, and after that in Poland. The Jewish communities in both countries were exterminated in 1941/43, in Poland more in extermination camps, in Lithuania more in mass executions. But also other groups were affected, Soviet POWs, Roma, mentally ill persons, and alleged resisters. Regions of both countries were subject to major resettlement schemes ("General Plan East"), but major deportations were restricted to Poland. In both countries, conflicting resistance movements developed, and the communist movement prevailed due to the new Soviet occupation in 1944/45.