

# THE ACKERMAN CHRONICLE

## SPOTLIGHT

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Einspruch Lecture Series featuring Dr. Peter Hayes - October 28-29th, 2018

## UNDERSTANDING AND MISUNDERSTANDING

Professor Jadwiga Biskupska's timely and engaging lecture "Understanding and Misunderstanding: Poland's Holocaust Laws" discussed the controversial 2018 Polish legislation that allowed the Polish government to penalize individuals who attributed Holocaust-related crimes to Poland. Dr. Biskupska pointed out the factors surrounding the implementation of the laws and the reactions of the international community. She related that the laws came about in response to the perception of Poland as a perpetrating nation of the Holocaust without recognizing the Polish victims, many of whom perished at Auschwitz. Members of the international community expressed outrage at what they felt was Poland's attempt to censor its culpability in the Holocaust and the possible ramifications of such legislation. Dr. Biskupska argued that although Poland pushed to control access to research material on the

Holocaust, their aim was to establish a post-war Polish identity that Soviet censorship had prevented during the communist occupation.

The passing of the "Holocaust Laws" saw a virulent resurgence of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial in Poland. The resounding backlash from prominent leaders prompted Poland to retract portions of the law in June of 2018, primarily those regarding prosecution, fines and imprisonment. Polish politicians were concerned that the controversy would damage international relationships, undermine the Polish reputation in the U.S. and threaten their economic stability.

Dr. Jadwiga Biskupska is an Assistant Professor of History at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. She earned her PhD in Eastern European history from Yale University and specializes in the history of war and violence in modern central Europe.



*Dr. Jadwiga Biskupska joined us from Sam Houston State University to discuss Poland's "Holocaust Laws"*