

Jews and their Neighbours in Eastern Europe

A History of Endless Conflict?

A One-Day Conference of the Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies

in association with the Polish Cultural Institute and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London

Thursday 15 December 2011, 9.30 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Hallam Conference Centre, 44 Hallam Street, London W1W 6JJ and the Polish Embassy, 47 Portland Place, London W1B 1JH

Relations between Jews and their neighbours in Eastern Europe have long been perceived as existing in a permanent state of conflict. Focusing on commonalities rather than differences enables contributors to this conference to counter that image and also to highlight moments and modes of reciprocal influence and exchange, making a valuable contribution to the discussion of inter-group relations as well as to Polish Jewish history.

The conference marks the launch of

POLIN VOLUME 24

Jews and Their Neighbours in Eastern Europe since 1750

Edited by ISRAEL BARTAL, ANTONY POLONSKY and SCOTT URY

Published by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization

Reservations essential. Registration fee £10, concessions £5.

Registration only on-line: line <http://www.ijs.eventbrite.com/>

For all inquiries please write to Sara Benisaac of the Institute of Jewish Studies, e-mail ijs@ucl.ac.uk

Please note that the programme may be subject to change.

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The Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies (established 1984)

is a non-profit, educational institution devoted to the history and culture of Polish Jewry. It is an associated institute of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

Conference convenors:

**Dr François Guesnet and
Prof. Antony Polonsky**



The Institute of Jewish Studies (IJS) is dedicated to the promotion of all aspects of Jewish scholarship and civilisation, and collaborates with all academic institutions within the University of London, and beyond.

Institute of Jewish Studies,
UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.
The IJS is a Registered Charity No. 213114.



This one-day conference, organized by the Institute of Polish–Jewish Studies and the Institute of Jewish Studies at UCL, has been sponsored by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland and the Polish Cultural Institute, London. Additional financial support from the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe, the American Association for Polish–Jewish Studies and the Instytut Książki/Book Institute, Kraków is gratefully acknowledged.

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Wednesday, 14 December 2011

Film Screening

8pm, New London Synagogue, 33 Abbey Road, NW8 0YA

Preceding evening event, in cooperation of the Polish Cultural Institute, London, and Spiro Ark:

Paul Schreyer from Drohobycz (Poland, 45 min, 2010)



A film by Marcin Giżycki and Małgorzata Sady documenting the reminiscences of Paul Schreyer, a musician born in 1922 and living in Drohobycz. Schreyer, a student of Bruno Schulz, the writer, painter and graphic artist, still performs, playing the violin and singing pre-war Polish and Jewish songs. His extraordinary life story told in a beautiful and moving way is accompanied by archival material and told in the context of his home town. Footage of live performances of Schreyer constitutes a significant element of the film.

The film will be introduced by Mr. Schreyer himself, who will give a concert at the conclusion of the conference, Thursday, 15 December, 2011, at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland.

The event is free of charge. For further details and registration, please contact the Spiro Ark.

The telephone number is: 020 7723 9991. Email: education@spiroark.org

Website: www.spiroark.org

Thursday 15 December 2011

**Hallam Conference Centre, Oxford Suite (4th floor),
44 Hallam Street, London W1W 6JJ**

Conference Programme

Welcome and Opening

Chair: Mr Ben Helfgott, Chairman of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies

9.30 a.m. Registration

10.00 a.m. Welcome

H.E. Ms Barbara Tuge-Erecińska
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

Opening Remarks

Sir Sigmund Sternberg
President of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies

Presentation of a copy of volume 24 of Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry to
Professor Jerzy Tomaszewski to whom the volume is dedicated

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Session I

Jews and their Neighbours in Eastern Europe

Chair: Dr François Guesnet (University College London)

- 10.15 a.m.** **Between Jews and Their Neighbors: Isolation, Confrontation and Influence in Eastern Europe.**
Professor Israel Bartal (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
- New Paradigms for Understanding the History of the Jews in Eastern Europe**
Dr. Scott Ury (Tel Aviv University)
- The Slow Return of Jewish Topics to Polish Historiography**
Professor Jerzy Tomaszewski (University of Warsaw)

11.50 a.m. **Coffee Break**

Session II

Writing the History of the Jews in Poland and Russia

Chair: Dr Eva Hoffman

- 12.10 p.m.** **A round table discussion of Antony Polonsky's *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, 3 volumes (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010, 2011)**
Professor Antony Polonsky (Brandeis University)
Professor Israel Bartal (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Dr François Guesnet (University College London)
Professor Piotr Wróbel (University of Toronto)

1.30 p.m. **Buffet Lunch** (by courtesy of the Polish Cultural Institute, London)

Session III

Jews and their Neighbours in Eastern Europe: New Perspectives

Chair: Professor Antony Polonsky (Brandeis University)

- 2.30 p.m.** **Reform and Exclusion: Concepts for the Reform of the Jewish Community During the Declining Years of the Polish Enlightenment**
Marcin Wodziński (University of Wrocław)
- Between Permeability and Isolation: Ezriel Natan Frenk as Historian of the Jews of Poland**
Dr François Guesnet (University College London)
- Failed Integration. Jews and the Beginning of the Communist Movement in Poland**
Professor Piotr Wróbel (University of Toronto)

4.30 p.m. **Tea/Coffee Break**

Concert

Polish Embassy, 47 Portland Place, London W1B 6JH

5.30 p.m. **Alfred Schreyer and Band**

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Notes on Speakers

Israel Bartal studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at Harvard University and received his Ph.D. from the Hebrew University. He has been a visiting Professor at Harvard, McGill, University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers, and Moscow State University (MGU). He served as the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University between 2006 and 2010 and is the chair of the Historical Society of Israel. Among his publications are *Poles and Jews: a Failed Brotherhood* (with Magdalena Opalski, Hanover, NH, 1992); co-editor (with Antony Polonsky) of *Polin, Volume 12* (1999), which focuses on the *Jews in Galicia, 1772–1914* and *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772–1881* (Philadelphia, 2005), which has also appeared in Hebrew, Russian and German.

François Guesnet is Sidney and Elizabeth Corob Reader in Modern Jewish History in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London. He specializes in the early modern and nineteenth century history of Polish Jews. His publications include *Polnische Juden im 19. Jahrhundert: Lebensbedingungen, Rechtsnormen und Organisation im Wandel* (Cologne, 1998) and numerous contributions and articles. Most recently, he edited an anthology of non-fictional Polish writings about the Jews of Poland, *Der Fremde als Nachbar. Polnische Positionen zur jüdischen Präsenz in Polen. Texte seit 1800* (Frankfurt am Main, 2009), and a collection of German language texts by a nineteenth century Jewish merchant from Włocławek, Louis Meyer: *Hinterlassene deutsche Schriften eines polnischen Juden* (Hildesheim, 2010).

Eva Hoffman is a writer and academic. She was born in Kraków after her Jewish parents survived the Holocaust by hiding in Ukraine. When she was an adolescent, her family immigrated to Canada in 1959. After graduating from high school she received a scholarship and studied at Rice University, Texas (English literature), the Yale School of Music, and Harvard University, where she received a Ph.D. in literature. In 2008, she was awarded an honorary DLitt by the University of Warwick. Among her books are *Lost in Translation: Life in a New Language* (1989); *Exit into History: A Journey Through the New Eastern Europe* (1993); *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (1997); *The Secret* (2002); *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (2004); *Time* (2009) and *Appassionata* (2011)

Antony Polonsky is Albert Abramson Professor of Holocaust Studies at Brandeis University and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Until 1991, he was Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is chair of the editorial board of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, author of *Politics in Independent Poland* (1972), *The Little Dictators* (1975), *The Great Powers and the Polish Question* (1976) co-author of *A History of Modern Poland* (1980) and *The Beginnings of Communist Rule in Poland* (1981) and co-editor of *Contemporary Jewish writing in Poland: an anthology* (2001) and *The neighbors respond: the controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland* (2004). His most recent work is *The Jews in Poland and Russia volume 1, 1350 to 1881; volume 2 1881 to 1914; volume 3 1914 to 2008* (Oxford, 2010, 2011).

Jerzy Tomaszewski is Professor emeritus at the University of Warsaw and a former head of the Mordecai Anieliewicz Center for the Study of the History and Culture of Polish Jews at the University of Warsaw. He is a member of the Council and Board of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Among his publications are *Z dziejów Polesia 1921–1939: Zarys stosunków społeczno-ekonomicznych* (Warsaw, 1963); *Rzeczpospolita wielu narodów* (Warsaw, 1985) and *Ojczyzna nie tylko Polaków: Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce w latach 1918–1939* (Warsaw, 1985).

Scott Ury is a Senior Lecturer in Tel Aviv University's Department of Jewish History where he also serves as acting director of the Stephen Roth Center for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism. His work has appeared in *Jewish Social Studies*, *Polin*, the *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* and other academic forums in English, French, German, Hebrew and Polish. In addition to the present volume, he has also co-edited a special edition of the *European Review of History on Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and the Jews of East Central Europe*. His monograph, *Red Banner, Blue Star: The Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry* is forthcoming with Stanford University Press.

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Marcin Wodziński is professor of Jewish history and literature at the University of Wrocław and director of the Department of Jewish Studies, of the University of Wrocław. His special fields of interest are the social history of the Jews in nineteenth-century Poland, the regional history of the Jews in Silesia, and Jewish sepulchral art. He is the author of several books, including *Hebrew Inscriptions in Silesia* (1996; in Polish); *Bibliography on the History of Silesian Jewry* (2004); *Haskalah and Hasidism in the Kingdom of Poland* (2005); *Hasidism and Politics* (forthcoming in 2012).

Piotr J. Wrobel holds the Konstanty Reynert Chair of Polish Studies at the University of Toronto. He received his MA and Ph.D from the University of Warsaw in 1977 and 1984, respectively. He specializes in history of Poland and ethnic minorities in East Central Europe. Most recently, he has co-edited *The Origins of Modern Polish Democracy* (2010), and published *The Revival of Poland and Paramilitary Violence, 1918–1920*, Rüdiger Bergien et al., *Spiesser, Patrioten, Revolutionäre. Militärische Mobilisierung und gesellschaftliche Ordnung in der Neuzeit* (2010).

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