

## ***Poland: A Jewish Matter***

**A two-day symposium exploring contemporary Jewish life in Poland**

**Date: Sunday 30 May – Monday 31 May 2010**

**Location: Jewish Museum London**

**Raymond Burton House, 129–131 Albert Street, London NW1 7NB**

**Nearest Underground: Camden Town (3 minutes walk)**

**Organized by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Warsaw; the Galicia Jewish Museum, Kraków; the Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies, Oxford; and the Jewish Museum London**

**Marking the close of Jewish programming for **POLSKA! YEAR****

A unique opportunity to hear from leading speakers from Poland and the UK engaged at the highest level with contemporary Jewish life in Poland. Community leaders, cultural practitioners and academics will consider the significance of Poland for Jewish people today, as well as issues of religious life, cultural revival, the preservation of Jewish heritage and some challenging questions about Poland's Jewish past. The programme allows plenty of time for questions and discussion on one of the most provocative, complex subjects in today's Jewish world.

*Free entry. Pre-registration recommended but not required. For registration and enquiries contact (0044) (0)20 7284 7384 / [admin@jewishmuseum.org.uk](mailto:admin@jewishmuseum.org.uk)*

*Lunch available for purchase in the Jewish Museum café (kosher) or in nearby cafés.*

### **PROGRAMME**

#### **Day 1: Sunday 30 May**

**10:00–10:30 Registration, coffee**

**10:30–10:45 Welcomes**

Rickie Burman  
*Director, Jewish Museum London*

Ben Helfgott  
*Chairman, Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies*

Aneta Prasal-Wiśniewska  
*Co-ordinator, Polska! Year, Adam Mickiewicz Institute*

**10:45–11:15 Keynote address: Why Does Poland Matter to the Jews?**

Jonathan Webber  
*UNESCO Chair of Jewish and Interfaith Studies, University of Birmingham*

11:15–12:30 **SESSION 1: JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND TODAY**

Chair: Kate Craddy  
*Director, Galicia Jewish Museum*

Jewish identities in Poland today: Where have we come from and where are we going?

Konstanty Gebert  
*Founding editor of the Polish Jewish intellectual monthly magazine Midrasz*

The challenges of being chief rabbi in present-day Poland

Michael Schudrich  
*Chief Rabbi of Poland*

Being a Jewish student in present-day Poland

Piotr Goldstein  
*Former chair, Polish Union of Jewish Students*

12:30–14:00 **Lunch break**

14:00–15:15 **SESSION 2: WHAT DO POLES KNOW ABOUT JEWS?**

Chair: Connie Webber  
*Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies*

Holocaust education in Polish schools – and beyond

Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs  
*Director, Centre for Holocaust Studies at the Jagiellonian University*

The development of Jewish studies at Polish universities

Edyta Gawron  
*Head, Centre for the Study on the History and Culture of Kraków Jews, Jagiellonian University*

The portrayal of Jews in contemporary Polish literature

Katarzyna Zechenter  
*School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London*

**Close**

**Day 2: Monday 31 May**

9:30–10:00 **Registration, coffee**

10:00–11:15 **SESSION 3: THE PROFILE OF JEWISH CULTURE IN POLAND TODAY**

Chair: Connie Webber  
*Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies*

Twenty years of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków

Janusz Makuch  
*Director, Jewish Culture Festival*

Jewish café culture, books and music

Małgorzata Ornat  
*Director, Klezmer-Hois Hotel and Austeria Publishing*

Jewish museums  
Kate Craddy  
*Director, Galicia Jewish Museum*

11:15–11:45 **Coffee**

11:45–13:00 **SESSION 4: POLISH–JEWISH RELATIONS: THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS**

Chair: Jonathan Webber

*UNESCO Chair of Jewish and Interfaith Studies, University of Birmingham*

Poles discovering Jewish roots: Ethical and halakhic questions

Michael Schudrich

*Chief Rabbi of Poland*

Polish antisemitism: Past and present

Konstanty Gebert

*Founding editor of the Polish Jewish intellectual monthly magazine Midrasz*

What about restitution?

Monika Krawczyk

*CEO, Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland*

13:00–14:15 **Lunch break**

14:15–15:30 **SESSION 5: PRESERVING THE POLISH JEWISH HERITAGE**

Chair: Jonathan Webber

*UNESCO Chair of Jewish and Interfaith Studies, University of Birmingham*

Synagogues and cemeteries: What is being done and what needs to be done?

Monika Krawczyk

*CEO, Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland*

Conservation and preservation at Auschwitz: The challenge for our generation

Rafał Pióro

*Deputy Director, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum*

Preservation initiatives at the local level

Agnieszka Cahn

*Deputy head, Myślenice Community Association*

15:30–16:00 **Coffee**

16:00–17:15 **SESSION 6: JEWISH VISITORS TO POLAND TODAY**

Chair: Kate Craddy

*Director, Galicia Jewish Museum*

Poland as a destination for religious Jewish visitors

Aubrey Hersh

*Rabbi, educator, and leader of tours to Poland*

Israeli youth delegations to Poland: Hidden opportunities  
Alon Simhayoff  
*Cultural Attaché, Embassy of Israel in Warsaw*

Trips to Poland in the context of Polish–Jewish dialogue  
Andrzej Folwarczny  
*President and founder, Forum for Dialogue Among Nations*

Close

---

## NOTES ON SPEAKERS

**Dr Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs** is Director of the Centre for Holocaust Studies at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków. Her research focuses on antisemitism, prejudice, memory and education about the Holocaust, and her publications include *Me – Us – Them: Ethnic Prejudice and Alternative Methods of Education: The Case of Poland* (2003); *Tolerancja. Jak uczyć siebie i innych* [Tolerance: How to Teach Oneself and the Others] (2003, 2004); *Why Should we Teach about the Holocaust?* (edited with Leszek Hońdo) (2003, 2004, 2005); and *The Holocaust: Voices of Scholars* (ed.) (2009).

**Agnieszka Cahn** is Deputy Head of the Myślenice Community Association (since 2000). Having studied Polish literature and theatre studies at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, she worked as EU programmes co-ordinator for the Polish Foundation for Energy Efficiency and for the Małopolska Agency for Energy and Environment. She is currently studying Jewish–Christian relations at the University of Cambridge.

**Kate Craddy** is Director of the Galicia Jewish Museum, Kraków. Originally from the UK, she has lived in Poland since 2004, working initially for the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Auschwitz Jewish Centre. She is President of the Board of Directors of the Fundacja Galicia Jewish Heritage Institute, a member of the advisory council of the Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies, Oxford, and a founding council member of the Federation of International Human Rights Museums.

**Andrzej Folwarczny** is President of the Forum for Dialogue Among Nations, a non-profit Polish organization he founded to foster Polish–Jewish dialogue, eradicate antisemitism and teach tolerance through education. He was formerly a member of the Polish Parliament (Sejm), chairman of the Polish–Israeli Parliamentary Group, and vice-president (1999–2004) of the Israel–Poland Friendship Association (Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko–Izraelskiej). He is co-editor of the book *Difficult Questions in Polish–Jewish Dialogue* (2006).

**Dr Edyta Gawron** is Head of the Centre for the Study of the History and Culture of the Jews of Kraków, and Assistant Professor at the Department of Jewish Studies, both at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków. She specializes in twentieth-century Polish Jewish history, Holocaust studies, and the post-Holocaust Jewish diaspora., and in 2006/7 held a post-doctoral research scholarship at the Yad Vashem International Institute for Holocaust Research. She is a member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences – Commission on the History and the Culture of Jews and is on the board of the Fundacja Galicia Jewish Heritage Institute.

**Konstanty Gebert**, founder and first editor-in-chief of the Polish Jewish intellectual monthly *Midrasz*, is a columnist and international reporter for *Gazeta Wyborcza* and a frequent contributor to other Polish and international media, including the BBC. He was co-founder of the (unofficial) Jewish Flying University (1979); of a Warsaw trade union that quickly merged with *Solidarność* (1980); and of the Polish Council of

Christians and Jews (1990). His journalistic career started with underground publications in the 1980s under the pen-name of Dawid Warszawski, which he still uses. He has published eleven books, a collection of essays, and a photo album on contemporary Polish Jewry. His essays have appeared in collective works in Poland, Japan, US, UK, Italy, France and Belgium, and his articles in newspapers around the world.

**Piotr Goldstein** is former chair of the Polish Union of Jewish Students, and co-founder of the Jewish choir *Tsilil*. He holds an MA in philosophy from the University of Łódź and an MA in international peace studies from the University of Trieste, and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Manchester. When in Poland he guides Jewish tours in Łódź.

**Rabbi Aubrey Hersh** teaches Jewish philosophy, history, and law at the JLE (Jewish Learning Exchange) in London and leads study tours to Central and Eastern Europe. Born and raised in London, he spent eight years devoting himself to Jewish learning at yeshivas in the UK and Jerusalem. In 1991 he returned to London to work in media and advertising and since 1996 has been involved in education. He has written and lectured extensively on Jewish history both in the UK and abroad and was the co-editor of the *60 Days for 60 Years* series on the Holocaust and Israel.

**Monika Krawczyk** is Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland ([www.fodz.pl](http://www.fodz.pl)), an organization established by the World Jewish Restitution Organization and the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland to carry out the restitution process, manage returned properties and protect the Jewish historical heritage. She is a graduate of the departments of law at Warsaw University and the University of Toledo, Ohio. She is currently an attorney-at-law, a member of the Polish government's regulatory commission on Jewish property restitution (since 1999), and a consultant for various international Jewish organizations dealing with restitution (from 2001). In 2009 she was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of *Polonia Restituta* by the President of Poland.

**Janusz Makuch** is Director of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków (which he co-founded in 1988) and President of the Jewish Culture Festival Society. He graduated in Polish philology from the Jagiellonian University, Kraków. His awards include an certificate of honour from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in recognition of his services to the promotion of Poland abroad (2003); the highest Polish medal *Polonia Restituta* (2008); and the Irena Sendlerowa Memorial Award, founded by the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture (2009).

**Małgorzata Ornat** started the Klezmer-Hois café, restaurant and hotel in Kraków with her husband Wojciech in 1996, and in 2002 she started Austeria, a Jewish publishing house and bookshop in Kraków. She graduated in English philology from the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, and in 1996 was awarded a Tempus scholarship at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (1996). Her translations from English for publication in Polish include Warren Kozak, *The Rabbi of 84<sup>th</sup> Street*; Joseph Ansell, *Artur Szyk: Artist, Jew, Pole*; Jonathan Wilson, *A Palestine Affair*; and Antony Polonsky, *Polish-Jewish Relations since 1984: Reflections of a Participant*.

**Rafał Pióro** has been Deputy Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (from 2009), having previously headed its conservation section (2002-2006) and led the preservation department (2006-2009). He studied conservation and restoration of works of art and the protection of cultural property at the Institute for Monument Studies and Conservation of Mikołaj Kopernik University, Toruń. At the Auschwitz Museum he has been responsible for establishing conservation workshops and laboratories, recruiting the first professional conservationists, and professionalizing the museum's conservation practice. He is also vice-president of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation.

**Rabbi Michael Schudrich**, born in America, has been Chief Rabbi of Poland since 2004. He was previously Rabbi of Warsaw (2000-04). with the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation in Poland (1990-2000), and Rabbi of Tokyo (1983-89).

**Alon Simhayoff** has been Cultural Attaché at the Embassy of Israel in Warsaw since 2008. He is responsible for the promotion of cultural relations between Israel and Poland, educational programmes and commemoration projects. He joined the Israeli Foreign Ministry in 2006, working initially at the Bureau for Middle Eastern Economic Affairs and later as a Desk Officer for Europe at the Centre for Policy Research.

**Connie Webber**, Managing Editor of the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization and co-editor of the best-selling album *Auschwitz: A History in Photographs*, is on the executive of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies. She has had a home in Kraków since 1994 and has visited Poland over 100 times. In 1999 she was awarded the Silver Cross of the Polish Order of Merit for her services to Polish-Jewish relations.

**Prof. Jonathan Webber** is a social anthropologist specializing in the study of Jewish culture, particularly in Poland. He is co-author of *Traces of Memory*, the permanent exhibition at the Galicia Jewish Museum, Kraków, and author of the companion volume *Rediscovering Traces of Memory: The Jewish Heritage of Polish Galicia*. He holds the UNESCO Chair in Jewish and Interfaith Studies at the University of Birmingham and is the sole British member of the international council responsible for the Auschwitz site.

**Katarzyna Zechenter** teaches Polish literature and culture at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at UCL. She has written extensively on one of the most prominent Polish fiction writers, Tadeusz Konwicki, while her more recent work focuses on contemporary Polish Jewish writers including Jadwiga Maurer and Michal Glowinski, and the role of location in identity formation. Her latest work focuses on Kazimierz, the old Jewish quarter of Kraków, as well as the concept of identity and preserving memory.

---

## Conference organizers



Galicia Jewish Museum  
[www.galiciajewishmuseum.org](http://www.galiciajewishmuseum.org)



Institute for  
Polish-Jewish Studies  
[www.polishjewishstudies.pl](http://www.polishjewishstudies.pl)



Jewish Museum London  
[www.jewishmuseum.org.uk](http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk)

This event is part of **POLSKA! YEAR**



**POLSKA! YEAR** is a cultural programme coordinated by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Warsaw which presents the most interesting achievements of Polish culture to the British public in the fields of visual arts, theatre, music, film and literature. To find out more please visit [www.PolskaYear.pl](http://www.PolskaYear.pl).

Jewish programming during **POLSKA! YEAR** has been coordinated by the Galicia Jewish Museum, Kraków