

# The Jews of Kraków

## A Two-Day Symposium of the Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies

in association with the Polish Cultural Institute  
and the London Jewish Cultural Centre

### DAY ONE

Sunday 12 December 2010, 10.00 am to 5.30 pm  
at the London Jewish Cultural Centre  
Ivy House, 94–96 North End Road, London NW11 7SX

### DAY TWO

Monday 13 December 2010, 9.00 am to 5.45 pm  
at the Polish Embassy, 47 Portland Place, London W1B 1JH

Few cities in Poland have evoked more affection from their Jewish inhabitants than Kraków. This international symposium, taking place over two days, explores why this was true in the past and considers also the present and the future state of the relationship between Kraków and the Jews. The theme for **Day One**, taking place at the London Jewish Cultural Centre in NW11 on Sunday 12 December, is *From the Holocaust to the Present*. **Day Two**, taking place at the Polish Embassy in W1 on Monday 13 December, is entitled *The Jewish Love-Affair with Kraków over the Centuries*. This two-day symposium offers a rare opportunity to learn why Kraków has a special place in Jewish hearts and will continue to be remembered as one of the great centres of Jewish culture in east-central Europe.

*The symposium marks the launch of*

POLIN VOLUME 23

*Jews in Kraków*

Edited by MICHAŁ GALAS and ANTONY POLONSKY

Published by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization

#### Reservations essential

Registration for each of the two days must be done separately, using the form attached to the programme for that day.

Please note that the programme may be subject to change.

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Conference convenors:

Prof. Antony Polonsky and

Prof. Jonathan Webber



This two-day symposium, organized by the Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies, has been sponsored by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland and the Polish Cultural Institute, London. Additional financial support from the American Association for Polish–Jewish Studies, as well as from Mr Marcel Manson of Jewish Heritage Tours (JHTee), which organizes tours to Poland and elsewhere ([www.jewishheritage-tours.co.uk](http://www.jewishheritage-tours.co.uk)), is gratefully acknowledged.

The Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies is a company limited by guarantee  
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# A Two-Day Symposium of the Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies on ‘The Jews of Kraków’

## DAY TWO

at the Polish Embassy, 47 Portland Place, London W1B 1JH

Monday 13 December 2010

# The Jewish Love-Affair with Kraków over the Centuries

## Programme

### Welcome and Opening

Chair: Prof. Jonathan Webber, Vice-Chairman of the Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies

**9.00 a.m.** Registration and Coffee

**9.30 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

### Morning Session I

#### Jewish Life in Kraków before the First World War

Chair: Prof. Antony Polonsky (Brandeis University)

**9.45 a.m.** Keynote: Jewish Acculturation to Polish Culture in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Kraków

Dr Michał Galas (Jagiellonian University, Kraków)

**The Beginnings of the Modernization of Jewish Society: The Association of Progressive Jews in Kraków, 1864–1874**

Dr Hanna Kozińska-Witt (University of Halle, Germany)

**Kraków Jews and their Kehillah at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: Social Life and Political Activities**

Dr Andrzej Żbikowski (Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw)

**11.20 a.m.** Coffee Break

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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:

**Prof. Antony Polonsky and**

**Prof. Jonathan Webber**



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## Morning Session II

### Jewish Life in Kraków before the Second World War

Chair: Dr Michał Galas

**11.40a.m. Jewish Life in Pre-War Kraków**

Prof. Aleksander Skotnicki (Jagiellonian University, Kraków)

**The Ideology and Politics of Creating Religious Schools for Jewish Girls in Pre-War Kraków**

Agnieszka Oleszak (University College London)

**At Home in Jewish Kraków, 1918–1939**

Dr Sean Martin (Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio)

**1.15 p.m.**

**Buffet lunch** (by courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland and the Polish Cultural Institute in London)

## Afternoon Session I

### Jewish Life in Kraków since the Second World War

Chair: Prof. Jonathan Webber

**2.15 p.m. Facing Challenges: Jews in Kraków since the Holocaust**

Dr Edyta Gawron (Jagiellonian University, Kraków)

**The Jews of Kraków Seen from the Ground: New Ways of Imagining and Belonging**

Dr Erica Lehrer (Concordia University, Montreal)

**Kraków in Jewish Literature since 1945**

Dr Katarzyna Zechenter (School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London)

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

## Afternoon Session II: Film Screening

**4.30 p.m. Spark among the Ashes: A Bar Mitzvah in Poland**

Director: Oren Rudavsky, USA, 1986. 56 minutes

Language: English

We can just imagine the excitement in Kraków in the mid-1980s when, forty-odd years after the end of the Holocaust, an American Jewish boy decided to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah there, among the small community of Holocaust survivors, instead of at his local Connecticut synagogue. This was something so rare that the *New York Times* wrote about it on the first page under the headline, 'Jews of Cracow Await Bar Mitzvah Boy'. Oren Rudavsky's film of the events is a documentary that brims with honesty, compassion, and warmth. It mesmerizes because while the few Jews of Kraków were eager and apprehensive as they were to watch the first Bar Mitzvah since the war, they were not expecting the family to come with a woman rabbi to conduct the ceremony. The controversy over tradition and modernity served to make the members of the Holocaust-devastated Jewish community reflect on its past, present, and future, while also highlighting the challenges that the post-Holocaust Jewish community faced in Poland.

Set against the backdrop of the rich heritage of Polish Jewry in Kraków, *Spark Among the Ashes* is a landmark film for audiences concerned with the Holocaust, cultural survival, and the conflict between tradition and modernity in the Jewish world.

**5.45 p.m. Close**

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## Notes on Speakers

**Michał Galas** is Associate Professor at the Department of Jewish Studies of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, and the secretary of the Commission on the History and Culture of the Jews at the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU). He is the author and editor of many studies relating to the religious history of Jews in Poland and modern Judaism and has contributed articles to volumes 15 and 23 of *Polin*. His last book, published in Polish in 2007, focused on Rabbi Marcus Jastrow and his vision for the reform of Judaism, and he continues to engage in research on the influence of Progressive Judaism in Poland before the Holocaust.

**Edyta Gawron** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Jewish Studies of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, and the head of its new Centre for the Study of the History and Culture of Kraków Jews. As a specialist in the twentieth-century history of Polish Jews, Holocaust studies, and the post-Holocaust Jewish diaspora, she co-operates with a range of academic institutions and museums in Poland and abroad, and is also the president of the Board of Directors of the Galicia Jewish Heritage Institute Foundation.

**Hanna Kosińska-Witt** is a historian specialized in the history of eastern Europe, currently a tenured researcher at the University of Halle, Germany. The titles of her books, all published in German, translate as *The Kraków Jewish Reform Community, 1864–1874* (1999); *Kraków in the Long Shadow of Warsaw: Municipal Competitions in Polish Urban Landscape 1900–1939* (2008), and *Living in the Metropolitan City: A Comparison of Housing Situation and Modernisation in Europe* (edited with Alena Janatková, 2006).

**Erica Lehrer** is Assistant Professor in History and Anthropology-Sociology at Concordia University, Montreal, where she also holds the Canada Research Chair in Post-Conflict Studies. She has published and curated on the subject of Jewish heritage, memory, and identity in relation to contemporary Poland. Her ethnography, *Jewish? Heritage? In Poland?*, describing the new interest in Jewish culture in Kraków, will be published next year.

**Sean Martin** is Associate Curator for Jewish History at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio. His research focuses on modern Jewish history in Poland, especially the twentieth-century history of Jewish child welfare. He is the author of *Jewish Life in Cracow: 1918–1939* (London, 2004).

**Agnieszka Oleszak** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London. She received an MA in applied linguistics from the University of Poznań, a Masters Degree in Cultural Studies from Viadrina University in Frankfurt an der Oder, Germany, and an M.St. in Jewish studies from the University of Oxford. Her PhD research examines the history of Beit Ya'akov, a network of religious schools for girls in pre-war Poland.

**Aleksander Skotnicki** is head of the Haematological and Bone Marrow Transplantation Department of the Jagiellonian University, Kraków. His passion, however, is his historical and social research on Jewish life in pre-war Kraków, and particularly the role of the Jewish intellectual elite in the cultural, political, and industrial development of the city. His major contributions to the field, through research and publication, were given prominent public recognition in 2009 when the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York honoured him with their prestigious Jan Karski and Pola Nirenska award.

**Andrzej Żbikowski** has worked at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw since 1985. He is a specialist on the history of the Jews of Kraków from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the First World War, the subject of his doctoral thesis at the University of Warsaw which was published in 1994. His latest book, on the history of the Jews of north-eastern Poland from 1939 to 1941, was published in 2006.

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**Katarzyna Zechenter** teaches Polish literature and culture at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at University College London, and is the author of a book on the prominent Polish writer Tadeusz Konwicki. Her recent work focuses on contemporary Polish Jewish writers including Jadwiga Maurer and Michał Głowiński, and the role of space in understanding identity. Her most recent work focuses on Kazimierz, the old Jewish quarter of Kraków, in the context of the concept of identity and preserving memory, and she is currently writing a book on the changing attitudes of Poles towards Jews and their role in Polish history.

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# The Jews of Kraków: An International Symposium

Organized by the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies

in association with the London Jewish Cultural Centre and the Polish Cultural Institute

## DAY TWO

# The Jewish Love-Affair with Kraków

The Polish Embassy, 47 Portland Place, London W1B 1JH

Monday 13 December 2010 9.00 a.m. to 5.45 p.m.

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## RESERVATION FORM

*Please note:* This symposium is open to all interested persons, but reservations are essential. An early reservation is recommended, since the number of seats is limited. Your reservation will guarantee a place for the whole day, and you can then come and go as you wish; it is regretted that we cannot offer a discount for people who wish to come for only part of the day. The Embassy's security staff will give admittance only to those who have made reservations and so are on the list of confirmed attendees. All enquiries should be directed to the Conference Secretary: **Dr Michael Fleming, 66 Esmond Road, London W4 1JF. E: fleming\_m11@hotmail.com T: 07799 875 901.**

### To book a place for Day Two conference please:

1. Print out and fill in this form
2. Enclose a cheque for thirty-five pounds (£35) per attendee payable to **The Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies**. (The concessionary fee of twenty-five pounds (£25) is available to senior citizens (OAPs) and full-time students.) The conference fee includes buffet lunch (fish and vegetarian, supplied by a Beth Din kosher caterer) and refreshments during the day.
3. Send to Dr Michael Fleming, 66 Esmond Road, London W4 1JF to reach him **by Monday 6 December 2010**. Please note that no tickets will be sent out.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional affiliation (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

I will be bringing \_\_\_\_ guest(s), whose name(s) is/are: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee enclosed:

Regular fee: \_\_\_\_ person(s) @ £35 per person (£ \_\_\_\_\_)

Concessionary fee: \_\_\_\_ person(s) @ £25 per person (£ \_\_\_\_\_)

**Total amount enclosed for conference registration fees: £ \_\_\_\_\_**

The Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies is a registered charity. The price of admission to this event just covers our costs—principally in bringing over speakers from abroad. If you would like to make a donation to help the continued activity of the Institute, please consider using this opportunity to do so.

I/we enclose a donation to the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies (optional) (£ \_\_\_\_\_)

**Grand total amount enclosed for conference registration fees and donation: £ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Registration for Day One of the symposium ('From the Holocaust to the Present'), on Sunday 12 December 2010 at the London Jewish Cultural Centre, requires a separate registration directly with the LJCC. Please refer to the separate programme for details and a reservation form; alternatively, bookings can be made directly on their website [www.ljcc.org.uk](http://www.ljcc.org.uk), or by phoning them on 020 8457 5000.**



# DAY TWO