



# **BIOGRAPHIES AND POLITICS**

**THE INVOLVEMENT  
OF JEWS  
AND ACTIVISTS  
OF JEWISH ORIGIN  
IN LEFTIST  
MOVEMENTS  
IN 19TH AND 20TH  
CENTURY POLAND**

**POLIN MUSEUM OF  
THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS  
1-2.12.2019**

## DAY I, DECEMBER 1

9:00-9:30 Conference registration

9:30 Welcome

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10:00-12:00

### SESSION 1: How Jewish are Leftist Ideas? How Leftist is Jewishness

**Jakob Stürmann**, Free University of Berlin  
*Pavel Axelrod – Eastern European Socialist and “Role Model” for Jewish Socialists during the Inter-War Period?*

**Alexandra Kemmerer**, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public and International Law, Heidelberg/Berlin  
*Poland’s Forgotten Eagle: Rosa Luxemburg – Martyr, Icon, Marginalized Theorist of Revolution*

**Katarzyna Chmielewska**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw  
*The Family Communist Rhizome*

Chair: **Fançois Guesnet**, UCL

10:00-12:00

### SESSION 2: Internationalist Politics, Transnational Biographies, Local Activism

**Zoé Grumberg**, Sciences Po, Paris  
*Yiddish-Speaking Jewish Communists from Poland in Paris: Social and Political Trajectories from the 1920s to the 1960s*

**Ebony Nilsson**, University of Sydney  
*A ‘Pied Piper of Discontent’ Among Workers and a ‘Broken-Hearted Communist’: The Transnational Lives and Politics of Polish-Born Jewish Left-Wing Activists in Australia*

**Daniel Walkowitz**, New York University  
*The Bund Milieu: The Polish-Jewish Left-Wing Diaspora, From Łódź and Białystok to Paterson, New Jersey*

Chair: **Dobrochna Kałwa**, University of Warsaw

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12:00-12:30 Coffee break

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12:30-14:30

### SESSION 3: Social and Cultural Activism

**Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska**, University of Warsaw  
*Being a Jewish Birth Controller in Interwar and State-Socialist Poland: The Story of Herman Rubinraut (Henryk Babiniak)*

**Andrea Feldman**, University of Zagreb  
*Circle of Vera Erlich Stein: Jewish Activists in the Interwar Yugoslavia*

**Vassili Schedrin**, Kingston University  
*Solomon Mikhoels: Unwritten Autobiography*

Chair: **Artur Markowski**, POLIN Museum

12:30-14:30

### SESSION 4: Antifascism Facing the Holocaust

**Stefan Gąsiorowski**, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
*Saved by Socialism? PPS Threads in the Life of Michał Borwicz (1911–1987)*

**Michał Trębacz**, POLIN Museum  
*Szmul Zygielbojm. Bundist in Polish London, 1942–1943*

**Maria Ferenc**, University of Warsaw / Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw  
*Shmuel Breslaw: Unacknowledged Intellectual Leader of Hashomer Hatzair in the Warsaw Ghetto*

Chair: **Stephan Stach**, POLIN Museum

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14:30-15:30 Lunch

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15:30-17:30

### SESSION 5: Exclusion and Inclusion in Leftist Jewish Biographies

**Dariusz Zalega**, Independent Scholar  
*Zygmunt Glücksman: Activist of the Jewish Left, Leader of the German Socialists in Upper Silesia*

**Wojciech Goslar**, Foundation of Social History, Cracow  
*Jew, Worker, Anarchist: The Experience of Exclusion in Late Nineteenth-Century Austrian Galicia on an Example of Maurycy Jeger’s Biography*

**Anna Ładowska**, University of Wrocław  
*Dina Blond as a Second-Generation Activist in Bund*

Chair: **Urszula Chowaniec**, UCL

15:30-17:30

### SESSION 6: After the Holocaust Towards a Brighter Future?

**Magdalena Semczyszyn**, Institute of National Remembrance, Szczecin  
*Aba Kowner and Icchak Cukierman: Two Views on the Future of Zionists in Communist Poland in 1944*

**Anna Nedlin-Lehrer**, University of Freiburg  
*The Founders of the Dror Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot (Ghetto Fighters Kibbutz) and the Formation of Their Group Identity*

Chair: **Zofia Wóycicka**, German Historical Institute, Warsaw

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17:30-18:00 Coffee break

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### 18:00-20:00 KEYNOTE LECTURE

**Karen Auerbach**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
*Jewish Biographies, Leftist Politics, and the History of Emotions*

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## DAY II, DECEMBER 2

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9:00-11:00

### SESSION 7: Negotiating Religion and Socialism

**Gershon Bacon**, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan  
*Orthodox Jews, Ambivalent Leftists: The Case of Poalei Agudat Yisrael in Interwar Poland*

**Yitzchak Schwartz**, New York University  
*Pious Radicals? Biographical Sketches of Lived Religion Between Poland, Ukraine and New Jersey in the Am Olam Agricultural Colonies, 1881-1924*

**Ada Gebel**, Shaanan College, Haifa  
*Rabbi Dr. Yitzhak Breuer, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Orlean, and Karl Marx: Did All Three Follow the Same Path?*

Chair: **Yvonne Kleinmann**, Aleksander Brückner Center for Polish Studies, Halle

9:00-11:00

### SESSION 8: Jewish Perspectives on the History of the Left – Marxist Approaches on Jewish History

**Piotr Laskowski**, University of Warsaw  
*The Monument of Failed Dreams: Mojżesz Kaufman as a Revolutionary and a Historian*

**Tom Navon**, University of Haifa and Yad Ya'ari  
*Raphael Mahler: The History of Polish Jewry from a Marxist-Zionist Perspective*

**Tomasz Siewierski**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw  
*In the Merging World of History and Politics: Feliks Tych (1929-2015): Scholar and Participant*

Chair: **Katarzyna Person**, Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw

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11:00-11:30 Coffee break

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11:30-13:30

### SESSION 9: Responsibility

**Stanisław Krajewski**, University of Warsaw  
*How Jewish Were My Communist Ancestors? Revisiting the Question of Jewish Responsibility*

**Katarzyna Rembacka**, Institute of National Remembrance, Szczecin  
*Leonard Borkowicz's Ideological Choices and His Autobiographical Settlement with Communism*

**Katarzyna Kwiatkowska-Moskalewicz**,  
**Marcin Moskalewicz**, Agora Publishing House, Poznan  
University of Medical Sciences  
*Helena Wolińska and Włodzimierz Brus: A Political Biography*

Chair: **Dariusz Stola**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

11:30-13:30

### SESSION 10: Emancipatory Empowerment and Leftist Politics

**Emma Zohar**, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin  
*Communism, Gender and Emotions in the Autobiographies of Bina Garncarska-Kadari and Ester Rosenthal-Schneiderman*

**Jan Rybak**, University of York  
*A Revolutionary Woman's Self-Emancipation: Malke Schorr's Childhood and Youth in Lwów*

**Magdalena Grabowska**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw  
*Edwarda Orłowska: Activist, Politician, a Feminist?*

Chair: **Agnieszka Mrozik**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

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13:30-14:30 Lunch

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14:30-15:50

### SESSION 11: Different Generations? Different Biographies?

**Jaff Schatz**, Independent Scholar, Lund  
*Determinants, Contingencies, Chances: The Paths to the Interwar Communist Movement*

**Łukasz Bertram**, University of Warsaw  
*Youth, Underground and Power: Polish Communists of Jewish Origin and the Tensions of the Revolutionary Habitus*

Chair: **Krzysztof Persak**, POLIN Museum

14:30-15:50

### SESSION 12: Making sense of Leftist Biographies

**Elena Hoffenberg**, University of Haifa  
*Who Were the Bundists? An Analysis of the Movement as Presented in Jacob Sholem Hertz's „Doyres Bundistn” (1956)*

**Eryk Krasucki**, University of Szczecin  
*References to the „World of the Past” in Biographical Sources Concerning the Elite of the KPP Leadership with Jewish Roots*

Chair: **Felix Ackermann**, German Historical Institute, Warsaw

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15:50-16:30 Coffee break

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### 16:30-18:00 Round Table: Jewish Leftwing Activism and Family History

Participants: **Alex Sobel** (Leeds, UK) & **Leopold Sobel** (Lund, Sweden), **Ewa Herbst** (Edgewater NJ, USA), **David Slucki** (Charleston, USA)

Chair: **Antony Polonsky**, POLIN Museum

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**18:30-20:30 FILM SCREENING** of “Tonia and her Children” by Marcel Łoziński with introductory remarks by Przemysław Kaniecki (POLIN Museum): *Tonia Lechtman's personal archive in the collections of the POLIN Museum*

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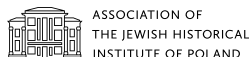
Conference organizers



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Illustration on the front cover: Rally of the General Union of Jewish Workers 'the Bund'.  
Photo: National Digital Archive