

## GRAND FORUM 2024

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June 2—6, 2024

POLIN Museum

Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute (JHI)

German Historical Institute Warsaw (GHI)



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### PROGRAM

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#### Monday, June 3, 2024 – POLIN Museum (Mordechaja Anielewicz 6, 00–157 Warszawa)

9:00–9:15 Welcome of the POLIN by *Jolanta Gumula*

9:15–10:00 **Vladimir Levin (Center for Jewish Art, Jerusalem) – Chair: Samuel Weigel**  
– **Keynote Lecture 1: " Communist Past, Ambiguous Future: Jewish Heritage in the USSR and post-Soviet States" – online**

Vladimir Levin is an Israeli historian specializing in east European Jewish history. Since 2011, he has been a director of the Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Levin has written on social and political aspects of modern Jewish history in Eastern Europe, synagogue architecture and ritual objects, Jewish religious Orthodoxy, Jewish-Muslim relations, Jews and Jewish politics in Lithuania, etc.

10:15–10:30 Questions and discussion

**10:30–11:00 Coffee break**

11:00–12:45 **Public Panel Discussion I: "Jewish Cultural Heritage in the Museum: Collections, Participation and Ethical Aspects"**

*Eleonora Bergman (JHI), Alina Gromova (Centrum Judaicum Berlin), Renata Piątkowska (POLIN Museum) – Moderation: Ulrich Knufinke (Bet Tfila)*

#### Abstract

The Jewish museums invited to the panel differ in the history of their establishment, their collections. In the panel we want to discuss the challenge for museums not only to collect Jewish heritage, but to care for it, popularize it and, most importantly, transmit the values contained in the collection. The questions, therefore, relate to building and expanding collections in historical and social contexts, genre (tangible and digital collections) and collection-related activities. Each institution participating in the museum grapples with different challenges, including the ethical biography of objects – the questions all institutions have to ask themselves are: why are particular objects in the collection, what rights do we have to use or share them? Museum collections are not neutral mirrors of society. Museums decide what to collect and what not to collect, whose heritage to include and whose to leave out. Therefore, museums themselves play an active role in doing heritage. So the overall question is: How can museums establish relevance between their collections and a society that has changed dramatically over the last forty years?

17:30–19:00 **Public Panel Discussion II: "Navigating Identities: Exploring Jewish World**

## ***Heritage through the Lens of Critical Heritage Studies"***

*Joanna Król-Komła*, POLIN – *Lara Lempertiene*, Judaica Research Center of the Lithuanian National Library – *David Maier*, ShUM Cities – *Maria Stürzebecher*, Jewish World Heritage Erfurt – *Barbara Traub*, Jewish Educational Center Swabia  
Moderation: *Jessica Roda*, Center for Jewish Civilization, Washington, D.C.

### **Abstract**

The meanings of Jewish heritage change as society changes. Therefore, one of the central questions at the heart of the panel discussion is what significance Jewish cultural heritage has for the present and what relevance can it have in the future. Based on recent initiatives around Jewish (world) heritage in Germany and elsewhere, the panel discussion will take a critical look at the representation and communication of the complexity of tangible and intangible Jewish heritage and its intertwining not only with the multiple dimensions of Jewish identities but also non-Jewish identities. What significance does Jewish heritage have for the cities that are home to it and for their tourist appeal? What role does it play in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of these cities, what role does it play for the local Jewish communities? The panelists will discuss how Jewish heritage is defined, preserved, communicated, and interpreted in today's society. The complexity of Jewish cultural heritage will be scrutinized against the backdrop of concepts such as authenticity, representation, and power dynamics, which are not only linked to measures for preserving Jewish heritage but also to narratives that arise around Jewish heritage. In particular, the embedding of Jewish heritage in the culture of Holocaust commemoration shapes today's understanding of Jewish cultural heritage. Thus, the discussion critically assesses how different stakeholders, including communities, institutions, and governments, negotiate the politics of heritage preservation and interpretation. Ultimately, this panel aims to promote a deeper understanding of the complexities of Jewish heritage and to chart new directions for scholarship, cultural policy, and dialog in the field of Critical Heritage Studies. By focusing on marginalized voices and challenging dominant narratives, the discussion aims to enrich our collective understanding of Jewish identity, Jewish/non-Jewish relations, and cultural heritage in a rapidly changing world.

**Tuesday, June 4, 2024 –GHI Warsaw (Al. Ujazdowskie 39, 00–540 Warsaw)**

**Public Evening Lecture (GHI)**

18:00 Welcome and Introduction by *Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska* (GHI)

18:05–18:55 **Yfaat Weiss (Dubnow Institute/Hebrew University) – Chair:**  
– **Keynote Lecture 2: "Tarbut im Derech Eretz. Jugend in Litauen"**  
(German with simultaneous translation into Polish)

Abstract

During the interwar period, Jews in Lithuania enjoyed cultural autonomy. In the years 1919-1926, before Lithuania underwent far-reaching political changes, the freedom for the development of Jewish culture and education was very extensive compared to other Eastern European countries. But even after that, Jewish life in Lithuania flourished until the beginning of the Second World War - albeit under difficult conditions. Building on the local Jewish tradition since the Haskalah, a comprehensive school system was established there: "Tarbut", the network of Jewish secular education run in Hebrew, developed into the determining factor in Lithuania. In absolute numbers, far more children and young people attended the Tarbut institutions in small Lithuania than in neighboring Poland, which was ten times larger. Based on the increasing number of Jews who had their children educated in general schools under economic pressure in the 1930s, the great Eastern European historian Ezra Mendelson wrote the following in his book *Jews in East Central Europe between the Wars*: „We may assume that had independent Lithuania existed for another twenty years a situation similar to that which prevailed in interwar Poland would have come to pass, with a minority of politically and culturally committed parents sending their offspring to Jewish national schools while most attended institutions of the majority culture. In this regard, Lithuania provides additional evidence that the ambitious programs of those who believed in extraterritorial autonomy for the Jewish nation in East Europe were built on sand.“ In contrast to the assessment of a Zionist telos, an attempt will be made to describe the phenomenon of Hebrew youth in Lithuania in the interwar period from its origin and not from its end - through oppressive communism and denigrating National Socialism - on the basis of a wealth of textual, material and visual materials, the localization of which is part of the lecture.

Since April 2017, Yfaat Weiss has been Director of the Dubnow Institute and Professor of Modern History, in particular Jewish History, at the University of Leipzig. She has been Professor of Jewish History at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem since 2008 and headed the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Centre for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History from 2010 to 2017.

**Wednesday, June 5, 2024 – POLIN Museum**

9:30–10:15 **Elisabeth Punzi & Jenny Högstöröm Berntson (CCHS, University of Gothenburg) – Chair:** Mirko Przystawik / Tabea Henn  
– **Keynote Lecture 3: "Heritage from below: Co-creating Jewish Narratives"**

10:15–10:30 *Jessica Roda* (Center for Jewish Civilization) – Response to Keynote Lecture 3

Abstract

In this talk we present our experiences of working in an interdisciplinary team within the Centre for Critical Heritage Studies at the University of Gothenburg

(CCHS), especially focusing work concerning Jewish cultural heritage in Sweden. CCHS wants to problematize what heritage is and how heritage and perceptions of heritage are experienced and used within various social arenas today. The purpose of the research is to present alternative and critical interpretations of cultural heritage and to investigate how the past can be used in the present to create the future. By focusing on how heritage can be studied and built from below, our approach to heritage aims to be inclusive and go beyond the “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith 2006). This include how we as academics can work together with museums, organizations, congregations, and those who are “carriers” of heritage to study and recognize material as well as immaterial forms of heritage. Societal outreach is an integral part of the center’s policy and goal, and the purpose is to contribute to a sustainable society in the future. This is done for example via different research communication projects like the podcast Inside the Box, and the podcast Matarvspod- den (Culinary Heritage Podcast). In 2024 we launch the new podcast Schmus! Jewish Cultural Heritage in Sweden. We will share our experiences of the possibilities and challenges with interdisciplinary work with critical heritage studies and provide some examples of our work which mostly concern displaced or neglected narratives. Examples will include projects such as the podcast Schmus! Jewish Cultural Heritage in Sweden, material and immaterial heritage from survivors of the Holocaust, and new music composed for Yiddish poems written by Anna Margolin which connects to Yiddish as cultural heritage in Sweden. We will introduce critical heritage studies and in relation to that also briefly present projects concerning the heritage of madness and psychiatry, and sites of conscience.

Elisabeth Punzi, clinical psychologist, and associate professor of psychology at the Department of Social Work and Centre for Critical Heritage Studies, University of Gothenburg. Jenny Högström Berntson, coordinator, Centre for Critical Heritage Studies and the Heritage Academy, University of Gothenburg.

11:00–12:00 **Sandra Anusiewicz-Baer (Berlin) – Chair: Frantz! Blessing**  
– **Keynote Lecture 4: "Jewish Education in the Past and its Relevance as Heritage for the Present"**

12:00–12:15 *Michael Daxner (Potsdam/Salzburg) – Response*

#### Abstract

In 1932, the Private Waldschule Kaliski, short PriWaKi opened its doors as a Reform school in the West of Berlin. Its founder, Charlotte Kaliski (1908–1995) was a visionary, a courageous man and at the same time a pragmatic realist. They school existed until 1939 when it was forced to close down by the Nazis.

Among the five Jewish schools in the well situated, rather secular and well-educated part of Berlin, PriWaKi was both: the normal school for the upper-middle class, and an exception. The very special role of the school and its founders, staff and students has two main aspects: the survival of the school during the Nazi period from 1933 until 1939, and the incredible survival of the majority of its students. 93% of the students survived, most of them could leave Germany. This makes the school exceptional among its Jewish institutional siblings. The other exceptional quality of the school was its extraordinary combination of Jewish aspects, of educational reform strategies, and of an early environmental and ecological concern.

The keynote will address the following questions: Can we distil a Jewish pedagogy from the legacy of PriWaKi that incorporates and conveys concepts such as

resilience and sustainability? How can we activate the school's specific heritage when eyewitnesses no longer exist? Where do Reform pedagogy, ecology/environmentalism and Jewish values intersect to enable us to make the heritage of the past relevant for the present?

Sandra Anusiewicz-Baer is a Berlin based Jewish educator. She holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in education, Jewish studies and Islamic studies. She served as head of the educational department and later as the head of the cultural department of the Jewish community in Berlin before she left to pursue her doctoral studies in education. Her dissertation about the alumni of the Jewish High School in Berlin (The Jewish Gymnasium in Berlin: Identity and Jewish Schooling since 1993) was awarded the Humboldt-Prize. Most recently she worked as the coordinator of the Zacharias Frankel College, a rabbinical seminary established in 2013 to train Masorti/conservative rabbis.





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