

Dubnow

L. Dubnow
Institute

Living in the Land of Death

**Jews in Poland
immediately after the
Holocaust**

**Research Colloquium
Winter Semester 2023/2024
Dubnow Institute/Stream**



Topic

Self-determination and violence, trauma and new beginnings, reconstruction and emigration – Jewish life in Poland immediately after the Holocaust was full of ambivalences and contradictory experiences. Places where there had been large Jewish communities before the war, were now marked by destruction, death, and emptiness. The ruined landscape of central Warsaw on the site of the former ghetto became emblematic of this destruction.

Nevertheless, Dzierżoniów and other formerly German towns in Lower Silesia witnessed the re-establishment of a notably self-determined Jewish existence for a few years after the Holocaust. Survivors and remigrants from the Soviet Union settled here, encouraged by the Polish government. At the same time, on 4 July 1946, forty Polish Jews were murdered in Kielce, around 300 km to the east, with another eighty severely injured. For fear of further violence, many Jews fled from Poland.

A photographic collection held at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw includes many sources that reflect this ambivalence. On 11 December 2023, the exhibition "The Determining Gaze" is opening at the Dubnow Institute in Leipzig. It will show a selection of these photographs and explore their origins, voids, and effects alongside the transmission of the photographs, as well as the question of how these images continue to shape our ideas of Jewish life in postwar Poland into the present day. The colloquium will offer an insight into the historical context.

Program

Time: 5.15 to 6.45 p.m.
Venue: Leipzig/digital

Thursday, 19.10.2023

Dubnow Institute/Stream

Kamil Kijek

Between a Teleology of Demise and Communist Optimism.

Jewish Life in Lower Silesia, 1945–1950

Thursday, 16.11.2023

Dubnow Institute/Stream

Stephan Stach

Ein jüdisches Gedächtnis.

Die Rolle des Jüdischen Historischen Instituts beim Wiederaufbau jüdischen Lebens in Polen

Monday, 11.12.2023

Dubnow Institute/Stream

Agnieszka Kajczyk

The Visual Heritage of Polish Jews.

The Complex History of the Collection of Postwar Photographs in the Jewish Historical Institute

Afterwards, from around 7 p.m.: **Exhibition Opening**

Thursday, 04.01.2024

Dubnow Institute/Stream

Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov

»There is No Jewish Question, There are Only Jewish Problems«.

Jewish Communists in Postwar Poland

Thursday, 25.01.2024

Stream

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir

What Did We not Know about the Kielce Pogrom until Now?

Notes on the Research for the New Monograph
Cursed: A Social Portrait of the Kielce Pogrom

Thursday, 01.02.2024

Stream

David Engel

The Flight of Poland's Jewish Survivors, 1945–1947

Speakers

Prof. Dr. David Engel, New York University, NY | **Dr. Agnieszka Kajczyk**, Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw | **Dr. Kamil Kijek**, University of Wrocław | **Prof. Dr. Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov**, Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw | **Dr. Stephan Stach**, Stiftung Friedliche Revolution, Leipzig | **Prof. Dr. Joanna Tokarska-Bakir**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

Concept and Organization

Dr. Monika Heinemann/Carolin Piorun/Dr. Julia Roos

Venue

The event will take place either in-person in the Dubnow Institute or digitally. The in-person events will also be streamed.

You will find the access link on the Dubnow Institute homepage a few days before the event.

Registration is not required.

Contact

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Exhibition

As part of the colloquium, on Monday, 11 December 2023, the exhibition »The Determining Gaze« will open, showing images of Jewish life in postwar Poland.

Photo

Julia Pirotte, *Children in Ruins*, Warsaw. Photograph from the collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute.