

# THE FUTURE OF JEWISH HERITAGE IN EUROPE: AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC, 24-27 APRIL 2004

## PROGRAMME

**Sunday 25 April 2004**

09.00 – 10.45: *Plenary Session I*

### JEWISH HERITAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN HERITAGE

**MODERATOR:** Antony Lerman, Chief Executive, Hanadiv Charitable Foundation – UK

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS:** [Jewish Heritage within the European Heritage](#)

György Konrád, Writer – Hungary

#### **SPEAKERS:**

“Return of lost tribes: recovery of the Jewish heritage as a part of the re-unification of Europe”  
Jerzy Halbersztadt, Project Director, Museum of the History of Polish Jews – Poland

[Jewish Heritage in the Wider European Context](#)

Dr Diana Pinto, Historian and Author – France

This session explores definitions of cultural identity, and in particular the place of Jewish heritage in a broader cultural context. It will take a closer look at the types of cultural sites and resources that make up the European Jewish legacy and ask how they are being maintained and presented today. The European Jewish legacy must be defined. Under discussion will be Jewish quarters, individual buildings, cemeteries, Judaica, etc. Who, in fact, is responsible for maintaining all of these? To what extent should the needs be regarded as the responsibility of local Jewish communities, and under what circumstances is it legitimate to expect, or even require, outside assistance?

What is Jewish heritage and what does it mean in today's Europe? The material culture of the Jewish past is not an exclusively Jewish possession, since there are now so many state-sponsored or state-supported Jewish cultural institutions including museums, archives and historical sites. Does the absorption of Jewish heritage into mainstream culture accurately portray the past? How does it shape modern perceptions of what it is to be Jewish? How much of this effort is cultural, and how much political? Does the history of the Holocaust impose particular obligations on non-Jews to consider, learn and even absorb Jewish culture? Are other minority cultures given the same treatment? What is the place of Jewish communities in the wider European societies?

11.15 – 13.00: *Plenary Session II*

### JEWISH HERITAGE AND JEWISH FUTURE: RECLAIMING CULTURE, ENRICHING COMMUNITIES

**MODERATOR:** Mario Izcovich, Director of Pan European Programs,  
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee – Spain

#### **SPEAKERS:**

**Update on Restitution of Jewish Property in Central and Eastern Europe**

Herbert Block, Assistant Executive Vice President,  
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee – USA

[‘...The Road to the Sky Will Wait for Us Here in This Synagogue...’](#)

Becca Lazarova, Vice-President, Shalom Organization of Jews in Bulgaria – Bulgaria

**Professor Jonathan Webber**, UNESCO Chair in Jewish and Interfaith Studies,  
University of Birmingham – UK

This session will look at the protection and preservation of Jewish cultural heritage from a more focused, Jewish perspective and from that angle will examine initiatives to protect and preserve Jewish material culture including continuous efforts for the restitution of Jewish cultural and historic sites and Judaica collections. Ways in which cultural heritage can serve communities today through education, community involvement, tourism, political outreach and financial development will be discussed.

Is there a consensus among Jews about what aspects of material culture are worthy of protection so that they can be passed down to future generations? Even more importantly, what role can cultural heritage sites and activities play in shaping modern Jewish communities? Is protecting the past an obligation to memorialize, or is it an essential thread of Jewish continuity, critical in shaping the identities of today's Jews? Can the various denominations within Judaism share in the modern, secular view of Jewish culture? What happens when property restitution or historic recognition becomes a burden on resources and a barrier to achieving community goals?

14.00 – 15.30: *Plenary Session III*

## **THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF SYNAGOGUES AND JEWISH HISTORIC SITES**

**MODERATOR: Dr Samuel D. Gruber**, Director,  
Jewish Heritage Research Center, Syracuse – USA

### **SPEAKERS:**

Conservation and Restoration of Synagogues. Case of the FSU

**Dr Michael Beizer**, Historian, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee  
and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem – Israel

### **The Future of Synagogues in Poland: For Whom, For What, How Many and Other Questions**

**Dr Eleonora Bergman**, Deputy Director, Jewish Historical Institute – Poland

### **The Restoration of the Synagogue in Mad, Hungary**

**Dr András Román**, Honorary Member and former Vice-President of ICOMOS – Hungary

### **Considerations in Conserving Historic Religious Buildings & Sites**

**John Stubbs**, Vice-President Field Programs, World Monuments Fund – USA

This session addresses various approaches to the restoration and use of historic synagogues and other Jewish sites, as exemplified in the nearly two hundred requests for assistance received by the Jewish Heritage Grant Program of the World Monuments Fund since 2000, and in the grants awarded. What problems predominate? What solutions are preferred? This is an opportunity to draw some general conclusions on best practice in the realm of Jewish heritage preservation.

16.00 – 17.45: *Plenary Session IV*

#### **CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS: PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION**

**MODERATOR:** **Dr Samuel D. Gruber**, Director,  
Jewish Heritage Research Center, Syracuse – USA

**SPEAKERS:**

**Max Polonovski**, Chief Curator in Charge of the Protection of Jewish Heritage,  
Ministry of Culture – France

**Rabbi Michael Schudrich**, Rabbi of Warsaw and Lodz – Poland

**Meylakh Sheykhet**, Union of Councils for the Jews in the Former Soviet Union – Ukraine

This session deals specifically with the preservation of Jewish cemeteries and, to a lesser extent, Holocaust-related sites. How extensive are the problems and what solutions have worked? What are the legal, moral and religious obligations of Jewish communities? When recognized as sacred sites, can they be maintained through public funds? How can public access to sites be managed to their benefit?

**Monday 26 April 2004**

09.00 – 10.45: *Plenary Session V*

#### **JEWISH MUSEUMS: THEIR ROLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

**MODERATOR:** **Lena Stanley-Clamp**, Director,  
European Association for Jewish Culture – UK

**SPEAKERS:**

**Dr Laurence Sigal**, Director, Museum of Jewish Art and History – France

Jewish Museums: Their Role in the 21st Century

**Edward van Voolen**, Curator, Jewish Historical Museum – The Netherlands

[Preserving and Shaping Jewish Culture at the Jewish Museum in Prague](#)

**Dr Leo Pavlát**, Director, Jewish Museum – Czech Republic

[The Future of Jewish Museums in Germany](#)

**Bernhard Purin**, Secretary General,  
Association of European Jewish Museums – Germany

This session looks at the mission of Jewish museums and public museums that hold Judaica collections, and the challenges facing these institutions in the age of multicultural societies. It will deal with the changing role of museums in public life and the related issues of representation and interpretation, the demands posed by the diversification of audiences and collections and the introduction of new technologies, and other questions debated in the wider museum world.

The discussion will focus on proposals for better collaboration between museums, the sharing of expertise and good practice, and best ways of integrating museums into broader areas of education and cultural programming.

11.15 – 13.00: *Plenary Session VI*

## THE ECONOMICS OF JEWISH HERITAGE AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

**MODERATOR:** **Bonnie Burnham**, President, World Monuments Fund – USA

### **SPEAKERS:**

**Sylvie Wittmann**, Director, Wittmann Tours – Czech Republic

#### **The Value of Cultural Heritage**

**Professor Arjo Klamer**, Chair of Economics of Art and Culture,  
Erasmus University Rotterdam – The Netherlands

Sustainable Heritage Conservation Through Economic Revitalisation:  
the Case of Central Izmir Synagogues

**Jacques H. B. Sigura**, Economist and member of the Jewish Community of Izmir – Turkey

This session explores the economic impact of Jewish heritage sites and the potential for expanding this role through the development of new audiences, programs and new partnerships between public funders and private investors.

Experts may know how much individual projects cost, but at best know only anecdotally what cost benefits such projects bring. How much is spent annually by institutions, communities and individuals on Jewish heritage work? How many people are employed in the field, and what are the repercussions, especially in smaller localities? How many visitors come to Jewish heritage sites, and are these their primary destinations or just occasional stops? What means are taken to integrate Jewish heritage into the much larger economy of cultural heritage and tourism?

How is Jewish heritage promoted? The development of new audiences for Jewish heritage sites is an important need. Where do people want to go and what do they want to experience? How does this compare with what professionals, religious and community leaders, etc. believe people ought to want? Can Jewish heritage sites be better integrated into the consumption of general heritage, and to what effect? What do larger audiences mean? More resources? Better general understanding of the Jewish past? Audiences can be demanding. Without proper planning more people can actually mean more work, more budget problems, and more wear and tear on fragile sites. Are a million visitors a year good for the Jewish community and sites of Prague, or are they simply a reality that needs to be dealt with? Can the European Day of Jewish Culture be expanded and adapted to include more countries, sites and activities?

14.00 – 15.30: *Parallel Sessions: Workshop I*

## TECHNOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF JEWISH HERITAGE

**MODERATOR:** **Moshe Caine**, Senior Lecturer,  
Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design – Israel

### **SPEAKERS:**

#### **Digital Archiving of Oral History**

**Professor Dovid Katz**, Director, Yiddish Studies Institute,  
Vilnius University – Lithuania

#### **Jewish Museums and the Web**

**Jonathan G. Sierra**, IT Coordinator, U. Nahon Museum of Italian Jewish Art – Israel

#### **Developing a Concerted Digitisation Policy for Jewish Cultural Heritage**

**Dov Winer**, The Jewish Agency Initiative for Developing Jewish Networking  
Infrastructures – Israel

Many of the most popular initiatives regarding the protection and presentation of Jewish heritage involve the use of new technologies. While conservation efforts still rely primarily on traditional skills and techniques, museums and archives are adapting quickly to the digital age. This workshop will address many contemporary uses of technology for documentation, cataloguing, film, interactive exhibitions, virtual imaging and more. The issues in question include the validity of these approaches as well as their cost effectiveness.

When is the facsimile or the representation of a cultural artefact preferable to the use of the real object? Does the initial cost of investing in hi-tech equipment and keeping it up to date compromise other programmes, or does technology expand overall opportunities for use and preservation, and thus increase audience and funding resources? Lastly, the session will address what is already developing as an apparent technology-gap between richer and poorer institutions. In what ways can technology itself serve to close the gap and to better share information and expertise?

### *Parallel Sessions: Workshop II*

#### **ADVOCACY AND FUNDING**

**MODERATOR: Professor Barry Kosmin**, Executive Director,  
Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) – UK

#### **SPEAKERS:**

**Bonnie Burnham**, President, World Monuments Fund – USA

**Dr Assumpció Hosta Rebés**, Red de Juderías de España,  
Caminos de Sefarad – Spain

#### [Secrets of Schnorring, Lesson 101](#)

**Edward Serotta**, Director, Central European Center for Research and Documentation  
(Centropa) – Austria

#### [Advocacy and Funding: identifying Some Effective Tools of the Trade](#)

**Neil A. Silberman**, Coordinator of International Programs,  
Ename Center for Public Archaeology and Heritage Presentation – Belgium

Good sites need to be publicized and this can lead to better funding, better legal status, and better use. The workshop will deal with getting the word out, using specific projects as models. Existing funding sources and mechanisms will be outlined. Is Jewish cultural heritage mainly about education or entertainment and is there a proper balance between the two? Girona in Spain, the Jewish Cultural Center in Krakow, and the Jewish Family Research Center in Warsaw are a few of the many instances where careful planning has attracted wider audiences and better funding.

Tuesday 27 April 2004

09.00 – 10.45: *Parallel Sessions: Workshop III*

## DOCUMENTING HERITAGE: PRESENT AND FUTURE APPLICATIONS

**MODERATOR:** Dr Sharman Kadish, Project Director,  
Survey of the Jewish Built Heritage in the UK and Ireland – UK

### SPEAKERS:

[Synagoga Slovaca: Documentation project of Slovak Synagogues Architecture](#)

Maroš Borský, Slovak National Museum, Museum of Jewish Culture – Slovakia

[Jewish Visual Heritage: The importance of Documentation](#)

Dr. Aliza Cohen-Mushlin, Director, Center for Jewish Art – Israel

[Documenting Heritage: Important Collections in the Frankfurt University Library, Judaica Division on the Internet](#)

Dr Rachel Heuberger, Head of Judaica Division,  
Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt – Germany

Documentation serves many needs: scholarship, education, planning, promotion, and not least insurance and other practical concerns. How are sites documented and by whom? What methodologies produce the best results? Under what conditions is documentation sufficient and is it effective only when accessible to users, or, as in the case of historic sites, when combined with regular monitoring? How is digitization affecting documentation efforts? How can documentation be put to better use?

## *Parallel Sessions: Workshop IV*

## THE STATE OF JEWISH ARCHIVES: TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION

**MODERATOR:** Jean-Claude Kuperminc, Director,  
Alliance Israélite Universelle Library – France

### SPEAKERS:

Jewish Archives and the State: A French Exception

Jean-Claude Kuperminc, Director, Alliance Israélite Universelle Library – France

Yale J. Reisner, Director, Ronald S. Lauder Foundation Genealogy Project,  
Jewish Historical Institute – Poland

[Archival Judaica in post-Soviet Countries: The Problem of its Preservation and Use](#)

Dr Iryna Serheyeva, Head, Department of Judaica Collection,  
National V.I. Vernadsky Library of Ukraine – Ukraine

This workshop deals specifically with the needs of Jewish archives and examines issues such as standardization, digitization, conservation, networking on a regional and international level, sharing of information and best practices, and other areas of collaboration.

Much of the history of the Jews of Europe is preserved in the millions of documents that are now kept in hundreds of archive collections throughout the world. Substantial holdings of material dating from the Middle Ages can be found in governmental, institutional, communal and private archives and collections in every European country. Many of these collections deal almost exclusively with Jewish history and heritage. Others hold materials pertinent to the history and cultures of a particular place or institution, in which Jews may have played a part. Almost all archives, no matter what their size, tend to be under-funded. Their collections are for the most part little known or not known at all, and the materials are difficult to access by the public and scholars.

11.15 – 13.00: *Plenary Session VII*

**JUDAICA WITHOUT JEWS:  
PRESENTING JEWISH HERITAGE IN A NON-JEWISH SETTING**

**MODERATOR:** Ruth Ellen Gruber, Author, Journalist, Photographer – Italy/Hungary

**SPEAKERS:**

Krzysztof Czyzewski, President, Borderland Foundation – Poland

[The Italy Affair](#)

Annie Sacerdoti, Editor, Bollettino della Comunità Ebraica di Milano – Italy

[Etz Hayyim Synagogue, Hania, Crete: the Search for a Renewed Identity](#)

Dr Nicholas Stavroulakis, Director, Etz Hayyim Synagogue Resource Centre – Greece

In this session the experiences of museums, former synagogues and Jewish quarters in countries where there is little or no Jewish presence today will be considered, to see what role Jewish sites and collections can play in places where there are few or no Jews. What role do non-Jewish individuals and institutions play when interpreting Jewish culture? When catering to a non-Jewish and/or tourist audience, what approaches and facilities are needed and what responsibilities do individual Jews, Jewish communities and institutions have to assist in or monitor these efforts? How can the question of “Who owns Jewish culture” be addressed adequately?

14.00 – 15.45: *Concluding Session*

**SETTING PRIORITIES: COOPERATION AND COORDINATION**

**MODERATOR:** Antony Lerman, Chief Executive, Hanadiv Charitable Foundation – UK

**SPEAKERS:**

**Professor Jonathan Webber**, UNESCO Chair in Jewish and Interfaith Studies, University of Birmingham – UK

**Lena Stanley-Clamp**, Director, European Association for Jewish Culture – UK

**Dr Samuel D. Gruber**, Director, Jewish Heritage Research Center, Syracuse – USA

**Jean-Claude Kuperminc**, Director, Alliance Israélite Universelle Library – France

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