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Call for Papers

MARCH '68 - FIFTY YEARS LATER **International Academic Conference** **13-15 March 2018**

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews – University of Warsaw
Warsaw, Poland
(Deadline for submissions: 30 June 2017)

In March, 1968, Polish universities witnessed an outburst of protests against the policies of the communist authorities. Students and the intelligentsia opposed the restrictions of intellectual freedom and the withdrawal from the post-Stalinist liberalization of the system. The demonstrations, which began at the University of Warsaw campus, soon spread over the streets of cities and towns, turning into a mass youth rebellion. They marked the onset of one of the most complex socio-political crises in the post-war history of Poland.

The regime responded with brutal repressions and a widespread anti-Semitic propaganda campaign, launched under the pretext of the Jewish origin of some of the protests' participants. By appealing to the anti-Jewish sentiments in Polish society, the government aimed at vilifying its opponents in the public eye. In the background, a struggle for the leadership of the communist party was taking place. The purge within the state administration and party ranks, executed under the slogan of combating Zionism, was the perfect tool to get rid of political rivals and to create new elites (a prelude to the campaign took place one year earlier, after Israel won the Six-Day War). The anti-Semitic campaign affected the entire community of Polish Jews, and its institutions, forcing at least 13,000 people to leave the country. Suppression of intellectual activity and decline of organised Jewish life were the aftermath of March '68.

To mark the 50th anniversary of these events, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the Institute of History, and the Institute of Sociology at the University of Warsaw are organizing an international academic conference. During the conference, we wish to discuss the causes, course and aftermath of the events, possibly in comparison to the policies of other countries within the Communist Bloc. We are also interested in the context and parallels pertaining to the global extent of the events that took place in the year 1968.

We invite historians, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, cultural studies and literature scholars and other fields within the arts and humanities, and social sciences.

The papers may – albeit not necessarily – cover one or more of the following thematic fields. We are open to other proposals which might broaden the perspective of looking at the March '68 events.

The youth rebellion, contestation and conformism within the Eastern Bloc

(i.a. rebellion of young people in the East and in the West; March '68 in Poland vis-à-vis student movements in France, Germany, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria; the history of emotions within the communist societies; science, culture, intellectuals, students under the pressure of ideology and censorship; March '68 at the academic centres and in the provinces; victims and beneficiaries of the March '68 purges; xenophobia and reception of the anti-Semitic campaign within Polish society; long-term aftermath of the March '68 propaganda patterns)

Jewish experience of March '68

(i.a. the Jewish community and its institutions in post-war Poland; Jewish youth prior to March '68; aftermath of the Six-Day War on Jewish communities within the Soviet Bloc; being confronted with the anti-Semitic campaign and the purges in both national and provincial institutions; destruction of Jewish organisations and institutions; reactions of the environment – solidarity/aggression; the experience of expulsion; economic strategies connected with emigration; adopting to life in their new homelands; attitude of local communities towards the immigrants; March émigrés and Poland; evolution of self-identification and ethnic identities; reactions in the West)

The struggle for power, and legitimizing power, in the communist states

(i.a. mechanisms which drove the struggle for power and the creation of new elites; the role of political police; nationalism, egalitarianism, anti-elitism as arguments for legitimacy; authoritarian mobilisation of the masses; propaganda campaigns and purges; forced emigration from the Eastern Bloc; Israel, Jewish minorities and the official anti-Semitism in the politics of the communist states)

Aftermath of March '68

(i.a. the year 1968 as a breakthrough in the social history, the history of ideas, the culture of Eastern-European countries; the end of illusions of a possible rectification of socialism; memory and reflection of the March '68 experience in culture and historiography; the '68 generation in political and social life; the public silence on the subject of Jews in Poland post-1968 versus intergenerational communication; "invisible Jews" – existence of the Jewish community in the 1970s and 1980s and the individual experience of being a Jew; problems of rebuilding the Jewish community)

We kindly ask you to submit 200-300 word abstracts in ENGLISH (indicating the choice of language of presentation: English or Polish), as well as a short biographical note via electronic application form available at the Internet address: www.polin.pl/en/conf68 no later than **30 June 2017**.

We are particularly looking for papers presenting new, original research and reflection.

The organizers cover the costs of accommodation in Warsaw during the conference. The organizers reserve the right to publish the conference materials.

For any additional information, please contact us at: march68conference@polin.pl

Academic Committee

Helena Datner (Jewish Historical Institute)

Kamila Dąbrowska (POLIN Museum)

Jerzy Eisler (Polish Academy of Sciences)

Norbert Frei (Friedrich Schiller University Jena)

Irena Grudzińska-Gross (Princeton University and the Polish Academy of Sciences)

Jerzy Kochanowski (University of Warsaw)

Pavel Kolář (European University Institute, Florence)

Ireneusz Krzemiński (University of Warsaw)

Dragoș Petrescu (University of Bucharest)

Jaff Schatz (Independent scholar, Lund)

Dariusz Stola (POLIN Museum)

Conference Convener: Krzysztof Persak (POLIN Museum)

The conference is organised within the Global Education Outreach Program.



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