

## GEOP Workshops 2019

### Building Culture and Community: Jewish Architecture and Urbanism in Poland, May 2019

#### **Organizers:**

- Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
- Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- University of Michigan
- University of Wrocław

The workshop explored the role of the built landscape in creating, reflecting, and problematizing Polish-Jewish identity. Among the key questions the organizers addressed were: what building types and patterns of settlement did Jews create in the lands that were controlled by Poland at different points in history? How did they seek to assert their presence through architecture, and what can architecture tell us about the interactions of Jews and non-Jews? How is the Jewish character of a space represented in various texts and how have museum and memorial practices sought to reflect the rupture of the Holocaust? Employing various disciplinary lenses (including history, literature, art history, and anthropology) and scales (ranging from the individual structure to the neighborhood, shtetl, and city), the workshop's participants considered how and by whom Jewish architecture was produced, used, represented, and remembered. [PROGRAM HERE \[PDF\] >>](#)

### The Jewish Inn: From Architecture to Phantasm, June 2019

#### **Organizers:**

- University of Chicago
- Institute of Polish Culture, Warsaw University

The workshop focused on the cultural 'institution' of the Jewish tavern and its past as well as present. The critical evaluation covered such themes as the typology and materiality of the inn as a specimen of vernacular architecture; the inn's image in literature and other arts; the inn as a site of social interactions and the meeting ground for diverse social, ethnic and religious groups; the site of political and / or illegal activities; the conduit for introducing Jewish cuisine and music to the wider society. What was the role of music and food in this

culturally coded revival? The workshop's participants also attempted to ascertain how the phantasmatic postwar absence of the Jewish inn has been changing in the recent years into a revived presence. Hence, the participants also inquired why the *karczma* became the living proof of Jewish culture's viability. [PROGRAM HERE \[PDF\] >>](#)

## The Activities of 'the Joint' in Poland and Neighboring Countries 1945-1989: Reality and Perceptions, August 2019

### Organizers:

- JDC Archives
- JDC Poland
- Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University
- Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies at Columbia University

The Workshop was dedicated to the work of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in East Central Europe during Socialism. It had been the most important foreign social welfare organization supporting Jewish Life in various countries of the region. During Stalinism communist propaganda blatantly distorted JDC's activity and depicted it as a spy organization, which was consequently banned from socialist states. Later on it was invited to return. The organization funded a variety of Jewish communal, youth and cultural institutions. In periods of political upheaval such as in Hungary in 1956 and in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Joint also assisted those who chose to leave the countries behind the Iron Curtain.

In the course of this Workshop a group of international scholars took a closer look at the activity of the JDC in East Central Europe. They analyzed the role and contribution of the organization to the continuity of Jewish life in the region and investigated how JDC was able to navigate the political constraints in the region in order to provide assistance to Jewish communities. The scholars also addressed the question how the attacks against the Joint in Communist propaganda had to be understood. [PROGRAM HERE \[PDF\] >>](#)