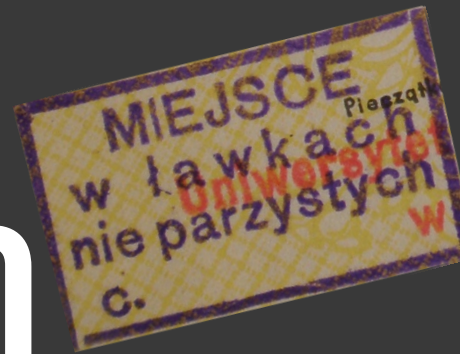




UNIVERSITY
OF WARSAW



Faculty of History
University of Warsaw



THE GHETTO BENCHES

Structures of Exclusion
at Universities of Interwar Poland
in the Context of Central Europe

22-23 November 2022

The Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw
The Columned Hall

PROGRAMME

The conference is organised
under the patronage of the Rector
of the University of Warsaw

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Institute of Slavic Studies,
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PROGRAMME

The Ghetto Benches. Structures of Exclusion at Universities of Interwar Poland in the Context of Central Europe

22 NOVEMBER 2022, TUESDAY

- 10:30–11:00 **Registration**
- 11:00–11:30 **Welcome & Opening remarks:** Prof. Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spano (Faculty of History, University of Warsaw)
- 11:30–12:30 **KEYNOTE LECTURE**
In the Shadow of the University. The Jewish Community in the Face of Academic Antisemitism in the Second Polish Republic
Prof. Natalia Aleksion (University of Florida)
- 12:30–13:00 **Coffee break**
- 13:00–15:00 **SESSION 1. Nationalism and Universities – Context**
- Chair:**
Prof. Piotr M. Majewski (University of Warsaw)
- Papers:**
Prof. Maciej Górny (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences) *Cuius regio eius religio. Nationalism, the State and Scholars in Interwar Poland*
Prof. Ferenc Laczó (Maastricht University) *The “Positive Discrimination” of an Ethno-Religiously Defined Majority – and its Consequences. On Antisemitism and Exclusion at Hungarian Universities in Their International Contexts*
Prof. Jurgita Verbickienė (Vilniaus Universitetas) *Dealing with the past: Case of Vilnius University initiative “Grįžtanti atmintis - Recovering memory”*
- 15:00–16:00 **Lunch**
- 16:00–16:30 **A Duty of Remembrance. The Case of the University of Poznań**
Lecture: Rector Prof. Bogumiła Kaniewska (Adam Mickiewicz University)
- 16:30–18:00 **SESSION 2 .Antisemitism – Central European Networks, Institutions and Practices**
- Chair:**
Dr Łukasz Krzyżanowski (University of Warsaw)
- Papers:**
Dr Mariusz Kałczewiak (University of Warsaw) *Jewish Student Fraternities, Masculinity and Antisemitism, 1890s–1930s*
Dr Raul Cârstocea (University of Leicester) *The Numbers Game: From Demographic Anxieties to Calls for Numerus Clausus in Interwar Romanian Universities*
Dr Ágnes Kelemen (Akademie věd České republiky) *Peregrination: Escape or Resistance?*

23 NOVEMBER 2022, WEDNESDAY

10:30–12:30 **WALKING TOUR of the university campus in the footsteps of violence**
Dr Izabela Mrzygłód (Polish Academy of Sciences)

12:30–13:00 **Coffee break**

13:00–15:00 **SESSION 3. The Ghetto Benches and Structures of Exclusion in the Interwar Poland**

Chair:

Prof. Natalia Aleksion (University of Florida)

Papers:

Prof. Maciej Michalski (Adam Mickiewicz University) *Ethnic and Religious Parcellation of Space at the University of Poznan in the Second Half of the 1930s*

Dr Izabela Mrzygłód (Polish Academy of Sciences) *Fraternal Violence. Networks and Transfers of Antisemitism between Academic Centres in the Second Polish Republic*

Dr Natalia Judzińska (Polish Academy of Sciences) *“Nit gejn in geta”. First-person Protest against the Ghetto Benches at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius*

Dr Ewa Bukowska-Marczak (Polish Academy of Sciences; National Museum in Lublin) *The Excluded. Jewish students in Lviv in November 1937*

15:00–16:30 **Lunch**

16:30–18:00 **DEBATE**
Ways of Remembering: Ghetto Benches in Polish Universities

Moderation:

Prof. Joanna Wawrzyniak (University of Warsaw)

Discussants:

Prof. Maciej Michalski (Adam Mickiewicz University)

Prof. Roma Sendyka (Jagiellonian University)

Prof. Dariusz Stola (Polish Academy of Sciences)

Dr Karolina Szymaniak (University of Wrocław, Jewish Historical Institute)

Sebastian Słowiński (Student Antifascist Committee)

This October marked 85 years since the rectors of Warsaw's universities, with the support of the academic senates, introduced the „seating order ordinance”, or ghetto benches, targeting Jewish youth.

The ghetto benches were a system of ethnic and religious seating segregation in lecture halls. Depending on the university, Jewish students were assigned specific seats that they were allowed to occupy during classes. In the case of the University of Warsaw, Jewish students were expected to occupy odd-numbered seats. Thus, the academic year 1937/1938 was the first one accompanied by official, systemic and top-down antisemitism in the universities of interwar Poland.

A long-running campaign by far-right organisations such as the All-Polish Youth, the Camp of Great Poland and the National-Radical Camp had prepared fertile ground for this discriminatory legislation. The antisemitic demand for ghetto benches was one of many, along with numerus clausus, the 'Aryan paragraph' or numerus nullus. Its approval by the academic authorities did not eradicate the violence of nationalistic students against their Jewish colleagues, but only strengthened it. Polish universities were no exception in this respect. In fact, radical nationalism, antisemitism, and exclusion were part of the everyday life of higher education institutions in interwar Europe.

On this occasion, the Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw is organizing this conference to present the latest research on antisemitism at interwar universities in Poland and Central Europe. We treat it as a good opportunity to combine the debate on the difficult past with commemoration of the ghetto benches' victims. The process of building a self-reflexive memory culture at the University of Warsaw is closely linked to the scientific and educational mission of the university and should be an important part of the academic curriculum. Therefore, the proposed initiative encompasses both activities in the field of academic research and activities to popularise historical knowledge for students.

Conference is funded by: Rector of the University of Warsaw, Excellence Initiative Research University, Faculty of History

The conference is organised by the Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw in scientific cooperation with the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences

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Cooperation (alphabetically): Grzegorz Bryl MA, Anna Darewska, Zofia Gałązka, Irena Gostkiewicz, Agata Ignatowicz-Bocian MA, Dr Mariusz Kałczewiak, Prof. Dobrochna Kałwa, Dr Nataliya Khomenko, Hubert Korzeniowski MA, Marta Kops, Monika Lewicka-Kielczyk MA, Amel Mana MA, Rut Panek, Marta Pawlińska MA, Katarzyna Szarla MA, Paweł Szczepura MA, Jakub Szewczyk, Dr Agata Tumiłowicz-Mazur, Marianna Zakrzewska.