

# The Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies presents: Himel Family Conference in Jewish Studies

## Holocaust Studies in Poland Today

This conference is made possible by the co-sponsorship of Renée Levcovitch, Centre for European Russian and Eurasian Studies, the Department of History, Konstanty Reynert Chair of Polish History, Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Chair of Holocaust Studies, and Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship, Ottawa

### Participants:

Jan T. Gross  
*Professor Emeritus, Princeton University*

Jan Grabowski  
*Professor, University of Ottawa*

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir  
*Professor, Polish Academy of Sciences*



### Moderator:

Piotr Wróbel  
*Professor, Konstanty Reynert Chair of Polish History, University of Toronto*

**Date:** Monday, Oct. 3, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm (keynote lecture to follow at 4:00 pm)

**Location:** In-person – Room 100, Jackman Humanities Building (170 St. George Street)

**Online:** to attend via Zoom, [CLICK HERE](#)

All lectures are free and open to the public. Seating is on a first come first served basis. ATCJS requests that all in-person attendees **wear a mask** to protect our vulnerable community members.



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### KEYNOTE PANEL: "Holocaust Studies in Poland: Crucial Issues"

#### Featuring:

Jan T. Gross  
Professor Emeritus, Princeton University

Jan Grabowski  
Professor, University of Ottawa

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir  
Professor, Polish Academy of Sciences

Piotr Wróbel  
Professor, Konstanty Reynert Chair of Polish  
History, University of Toronto

#### Moderator:

Doris Bergen  
Professor, Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Chair of  
Holocaust Studies, University of Toronto



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9:00 – 9:15

Welcome

Anna Shternshis

*Al and Malka Green Professor of Yiddish Studies and Director of the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies*

9:15 – 10:15

"Twenty Years after 'The Neighbours'"

Jan T. Gross

*Professor Emeritus, Princeton University*

10:15 – 10:30

Coffee Break

10:30– 11:30

"Holocaust Distortion is the New Holocaust Denial: The 'History Policy' of the Polish State"

Jan Grabowski

*Professor, University of Ottawa*

11:30– 11:45

Coffee Break

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11:45 – 12:45

"The Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Poland 1945 – 1946: Beyond Lachrymose Story"

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir

*Professor, Polish Academy of Sciences*

16:00 – 18:00

**Keynote Panel: "Holocaust Studies in Poland: Crucial Issues"**

**Featuring:**

Jan T. Gross

*Professor Emeritus, Princeton University*

Jan Grabowski

*Professor, University of Ottawa*

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir

*Professor, Polish Academy of Sciences*

Piotr Wróbel

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## **Abstract:**

The Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine have distracted the scholarly world from many important subjects discussed previously. The goal of this symposium is to refresh academic interests in the Holocaust studies in Poland. Three outstanding scholars of world-renown will discuss issues crucial to contemporary Polish debates surrounding the Holocaust, in both public and academic realms. Professor Jan T. Gross from Princeton University will discuss the repercussions of his pathbreaking book *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*. Professor Jan Grabowski from the University of Ottawa will talk about the activities of the present Polish government against the scholars whose work does not align with the official "historical policy." Finally, Professor Joanna Tokarska-Bakir from the Polish Academy of Sciences will report on her research on the anti-Jewish pogroms in Poland at the end of and after the Second World War. After three morning lectures, the audience will have an opportunity to participate in a discussion with the three presenters during the afternoon panel session. The organizers hope that the symposium will ignite a series of similar events on the Polish-Jewish history.



# Professor Jan T. Gross

Jan T. Gross, born in Poland, is professor emeritus of history at Princeton University and the author of several books on the history of Poland during the Second World War. He taught at various universities in Europe and the United States during his academic career. His writings were translated into numerous languages.

## Abstract:

### Twenty Years after "The Neighbours"

In my lecture I try to place the writing of "Neighbors" in the context of Holocaust historiography. I also shed light on the discussion generated by the book in Poland, and subsequent development of historical writings about Polish-Jewish relations during the war.

# Professor Jan Grabowski

Jan Grabowski is a Professor of History at the University of Ottawa and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Last year he has been appointed the 2021-2022 Cleveringa Chair at Leiden University in the Netherlands. His interests focus on the Holocaust in Poland and, more specifically, on the relations between Jews and Poles during the war. Professor Grabowski's book: *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* has been awarded the Yad Vashem International Book Prize for 2014. In 2018 he co-edited and co-authored "Dalej jest noc" [Night Without End] (a two-volume study of the fate of the Jews in selected counties of occupied Poland). *Night Without End* has been published in 2022 in English by Indiana University Press. Grabowski's most recent book "On Duty. The Role of the Polish "Blue" Police in the Holocaust" ("Na Posterunku. Udział Polskiej Policji Granatowej i kryminalnej w Zagładzie Żydów", Czarne Publishing House), has been published in Poland, in March 2020.

## **Abstract:**

### **Holocaust Distortion is the New Holocaust Denial: The 'History Policy' of the Polish State**

In today's Poland, Holocaust-distortion has become a quasi-official policy of the ruling nationalists. People and institutions engaged in Holocaust distortion do not deny the factuality of the event (as did Holocaust deniers of yesteryear) but they minimize the participation of their own national or ethnic group in the German genocidal project. The state-approved and state-enforced historical narratives are a clear threat to the memory and to the commemoration of the Holocaust not only in Poland but also in several other countries of Eastern Europe.

# Professor Joanna Tokarska-Bakir

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, PhD, born 1958, cultural and historical anthropologist, religious studies scholar, professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences at Warsaw, associate member of the General Assembly of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland. She specialises in the anthropology of violence and is the author of, among other publications, a monograph on blood libel *Légendes du sang. Une anthropologie du préjugé antisémite en Europe* (Albin Michel, Paris 2015), *Pogrom Cries. Essays on Polish-Jewish History, 1939-1946*, Peter Lang 2017, 2019, 2nd ed.), and the two vols. monograph, *The Kielce Pogrom. A Social Portrait* (Czarna Owca, Warszawa 2018) for which she was awarded the Yad Vashem International Book Prize (2019); *Jewish Fugitives in the Polish Countryside. Beyond the German Holocaust Project* (2021).

## Abstract:

### **The Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Poland 1945 - 1946: Beyond Lachrymose Story**

In my lecture, I am taking stock of archival sources collected while working on my two monographs about the postwar Polish pogroms - the Kielce pogrom on July 4, 1946 (Book titled "Cursed", English translation forthcoming by Cornell University Press, 2023) and the Cracow pogrom on August 11, 1945, (Book titled "Sea Snake", a work in progress). I will focus on the thread of Jewish self-defence confining the number of casualties, and other twin threads recurring in both pogroms.