



POLSKI UNIWERSYTET NA OBCZYŹNIE
THE POLISH UNIVERSITY ABROAD
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Twentieth Century Polish History Seminar

Convenors: Prof. Michael Fleming and Dr Wojciech Rappak

The seminar series on twentieth century Polish history was initiated at PUNO in 2013. It provides a forum for scholars and the wider public to engage with new historical scholarship. Scholars from a range of British and Polish universities have presented research in progress and discussed their recent publications. Details of previous seminars can be found at <https://puno.edu.pl/xx-polish-history-seminar/>

The seminar is open to the public and is especially useful for students reading MA or PhD degrees in history or cognate disciplines. The seminar is conducted in English. This academic year, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the seminar will take place online. Those wishing to participate should contact the convenor prior to each seminar: fleming_m11@hotmail.com

Programme for the 2021/2022 academic year

8 December 2021 Dr Joanna Beata Michlic (UCL)
Book launch: *Piętno Zagłady Wojenna i powojenna historia oraz pamięć żydowskich dzieci ocalałych w Polsce*

In *Piętno Zagłady Wojenna i powojenna historia oraz pamięć żydowskich dzieci ocalałych w Polsce*, the author Joanna Beata Michlic explores how Polish Jewish children adapted to and remembered wartime traumas, how they dealt with the loss of childhood and with the destruction of their families, their peer groups, and their entire pre-war worlds. She draws a map of wide range interactions between the children and adults not only during the war, but also in the immediate post-war period - the turbulent, short era during which the children's future had been shaped. The immediate aftermath did not bring out necessarily a sense of joy and freedom amongst the Jewish child survivors, but, instead, was marked by major complexities and contrasts between the hopes expressed and the actual opportunities open to the child survivors. The children's lives at that time were filled with a multitude of uncertainties, fears and anxieties, as they were confronted with fundamental existential questions of "Who Am I?", "Who are my family?" "Where do I come from?" "What should I do next?" and "Who should I trust?"

Michlic presents and discusses her book on child Holocaust survivors with Dariusz Stola.

Joanna Beata Michlic is a social and cultural historian, and founder and first Director of HBI (Hadassah-Brandeis Institute) Project on Families, Children, and the Holocaust at Brandeis University. She is an Honorary Senior Research Associate at the UCL Centre for the Study of Collective Violence, the Holocaust and Genocide, UCL Institute for Advances Studies, and Research Fellow at Weiss-Livnat International Centre for Holocaust Research and Education, University of Haifa, June 2019 - May 2022. She is a co-Editor in Chief of *Genealogy* Journal. Among her major publications are *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, (translated into Polish in 2015 and nominated for the Best History Book of Kazimierz Moczarski Award 2016 in Poland; Hebrew translation, with new epilogue, by

Yad Vashem Institute in preparation, 2021), *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, co-edited with John-Paul Himka (Lincoln, NUP, 2012), and singled co-edited *Jewish Family 1939 –Present: History, Representation, and Memory*, Brandeis University Press/NEUP, January 2017). The latter made the Ethical Inquiry list of the best books published in 2017 at Brandeis University: <http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/ethicalinquiry/2017/December.html>

Piętno Zagłady Wojenna i powojenna historia oraz pamięć żydowskich dzieci ocalałych w Polsce was published by ZIH in December 2020. She is currently working on a book project on the history and memory of rescue of Jews in Poland, *More Than The Milk Of Human Kindness: Jewish Survivors and Their Polish Rescuers Recount Their Tales, 1944-1949*.

Dariusz Stola is a historian, professor at the Institute for Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences. He has researched the political and social history of Poland in the twentieth century, in particular Polish-Jewish relations, international migrations and communist regime, as well as the memory of these pasts. He has authored more than hundred articles and six books, including: *Kraj bez wyjścia? Migracje z Polski, 1949-1989* [*Migrations from Poland 1949-1989*]; *Kampania antyżydowska w Polsce 1967-1968*, [*The anti-Zionist campaign in Poland 1967-1968*]; and *Nadzieja i zagłada* [*Hope and the Holocaust*]. In 2014-2019 he was the director of the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

12 January 2022

Dr Mikołaj Kunicki (Institute of Journalism and Social Communication, University of Wrocław)

Lustration and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland

This paper surveys and analyses the attempted lustration of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland after 1989. It is important to remember that religious institutions were not included among the targets of the 1997 and 2006 lustration laws. The exemption of the clergy from formal vetting processes should not come as a surprise, given the dominant narrative of post-communism and, to some extent, of former democratic opposition, which portrayed Polish Catholicism and anti-communist opposition as synonymous. After the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005 and the 2006 amendment of the lustration law by the Jarosław Kaczyński government, representing the Law and Justice party (PiS), the Polish public was galvanized by press revelations about the infiltration of the Catholic Church by the communist security police.

Tied to the attempted lustration of the Polish clergy are the cases of three well-known clergymen accused of being former police informers: Reverend Michał Czajkowski, Archbishop Stanisław Wielgus, and Reverend Henryk Jankowski. While the affairs of Czajkowski and Wielgus concerned leading personalities of rival currents in contemporary Polish Catholicism and revealed a nuanced picture of church-state relations in present-day Poland, the story of Jankowski adds context to the paedophile scandals affecting the Roman Catholic Church. This paper argues that child sexual abuse by priests, nuns, and members of religious orders has obliterated the lustration of the church as an important issue in Poland.

Mikołaj Kunicki is an Adjunct Professor at the Institute of Journalism and Social Communication, University of Wrocław. Before coming to Wrocław, he taught history at the University of Oxford, University of Notre Dame and University of California at Berkeley. From 2013 to 2016 he was the director of Programme on Modern Poland in St Antony's

College. Kunicki received his PhD in History from Stanford University in 2004. His research concentrates on communism, nationalism, authoritarianism, Catholicism, and their relationships with popular cultures of cinema and performing arts. He is the author of *Between the Brown and the Red: Nationalism, Catholicism and Communism in Twentieth Century Poland* (Ohio University Press, 2012) as well as articles and book chapters on 20th-century Polish and European history, cinema, nationalism and contemporary politics. See <https://www.ohioswallow.com/book/Between+the+Brown+and+the+Red>

9 February 2022

Dr Olena Palko (Birkbeck, University of London)

Between Moscow, Warsaw, and the Holy See: The Fate of the Polish Catholic Priests amidst the Early Soviet Anti-Catholic Campaign

This paper offers a micro-history of Soviet anti-religious actions during the mid-1920s through a reconstruction of the investigation case of Father Andrzej Fedukowicz and his forced collaboration with the Soviet secret services. In November 1924 Fedukowicz was forced to sign a letter to Pope Pius XI and a year later committed suicide to avoid humiliation caused by his actions. This investigation reveals how elaborate the Soviet secret services' techniques for dealing with uncontrolled religious allegiances had become during a more tolerant 'religious NEP', the period which came to replace the overly repressive measures of the civil war period. The article aims to challenge the conventional impression of powerful and effective Soviet secret services. Detailed analysis of the process of fabrication used by the secret services shows how often rudimentary methods of the secret police could easily threaten the success of the entire operation. In this regard, the limited results the secret services had achieved by relying on individual assets led to toughening of mass repression and a more aggressive anti-religious campaign after 1929.

Olena Palko is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London. She is the author of *'Making Ukraine Soviet: Literature and Culture under Lenin and Stalin'* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2020) and co-editor (with Constantin Ardeleanu) of the edited volume *Making Ukraine: Negotiating, Contesting, and Drawing Borders in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (McGill Queen's University Press, forthcoming).

23 March 2022

Dr Piotr Puchalski (Pedagogical University of Kraków)

Poland and the Colonies: Rethinking the Inter-war Period

In his talk, Puchalski will present selected findings from his book *Poland in a Colonial World Order: Adjustments and Aspirations, 1918-1939*. Contextualising inter-war Poland in a changing world of empires, nation-states, dominions, protectorates, mandates and colonies, the author charts how, in partnership with other European powers and international institutions such as the League of Nations, Polish leaders made attempts to channel emigration to South America, to establish direct trade with Africa, to expedite national minorities to far-away places, and to tap into colonial resources around the globe. He thus demonstrates the intersection between national policies, systemic problems in Eastern Europe and larger processes taking place at the time, including the internationalist turn of colonialism and the global fascination with technocratic solutions.

Piotr Puchalski is Assistant Professor of Modern History at the Pedagogical University of Kraków (Poland), where he offers courses in the history of Poland, colonial empires, international relations, and contemporary tourism. He has previously published in the *Historical Journal* and the *Journal of Modern European History*. His first book is *Poland in a Colonial World Order: Adjustments and Aspirations, 1918-1939* (Routledge, 2022), and he has also contributed to the edited volume *The World Beyond the West: Perspectives from Eastern Europe* (Berghahn Books, 2022). His next project deals with Poland's post-1939 colonial entanglements.

20 April 2022 Professor Robert Hampson (Institute of English Studies, University of London).
Joseph Conrad, Colonialism and Africa.

In this talk, Professor Hampson will consider Conrad's engagement with colonialism in his African fiction. Although Conrad is associated in the popular mind with Africa, his early fiction drew on his experiences in the Malay Archipelago, and the Malay archipelago plays a much bigger part in his fiction than Africa. Early reviewers described him as 'annexing' the archipelago for English literature, but, as Hampson will show, his depiction of Dutch and Spanish colonialism (and British interventions as well) is more sympathetic to the indigenous peoples than this would suggest. This provides the context for Conrad's fictional engagement with Africa on which the talk will focus. When 'Heart of Darkness' was published, contemporary reviewers recognised its critique of King Leopold of Belgium's takeover of the Congo. Hampson will discuss Leopold's role in the Congo, but will also show how 'Heart of Darkness' (and Conrad's other African story, 'An Outpost of Progress') extend their critique from the particular case of the Congo to the rhetoric of the 'civilising mission' that also underwrote other colonialisms.

Robert Hampson is a Research Fellow at the Institute for English Studies and Professor Emeritus at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of three monographs: *Joseph Conrad: Betrayal and Identity*; *Cross-Cultural Encounters in Conrad's Malay Fiction*; and *Conrad's Secrets*, which won the Adam Gillon Award from the Joseph Conrad Society of America. He co-edited *Conrad and Theory* with Andrew Gibson and *Conrad and Language* with Katherine Isabel Baxter, and has recently published a critical biography, *Joseph Conrad*, with Reaktion Books. He is Chair of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) and recipient of the Ian P. Watt Award for Excellence from the Joseph Conrad Society of America.

22 June 2022 Dr hab. Pawel Duber (Nottingham Trent University)
Tytus Komarnicki – Diplomat and Savant (1896-1967)

In this seminar, Dr Duber will talk about his forthcoming book: a biography of Tytus Komarnicki, a Polish diplomat, lawyer, and historian. Although nowadays his name is remembered mainly for his achievements as a historian after 1945, Komarnicki was a talented co-creator of Polish foreign policy conducted at the League of Nations. He was also a minister plenipotentiary in Switzerland and the representative of the Polish government in France during the Second World War. Duber will explain the origins of this publication, based on many previously unknown documents, its conception, and the main findings.

Pawel Duber is the author of numerous publications (including two monographs) on Polish authoritarianism of the interwar period, the government in exile during the Second World War, the history of diplomacy, and the politics of memory. He is currently finishing a biography of Tytus Komarnicki, historian and diplomat, a long-term Polish representative at the League of Nations. He has worked in many cultural and academic institutions, including the University of Warsaw, and the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. He is currently working as a postdoctoral researcher at Nottingham Trent University.