

OXFORD CENTRE FOR POSTGRADUATE HEBREW STUDIES

Yarnton Manor
Yarnton
Oxford
OX5 1PY
☎ Kidlington (08675) 77946
Fax: Kidlington (08675) 5079

Please reply to:
45 St. Giles'
Oxford
OX1 3LP
☎ Oxford (0865) 511869
(0865) 310903

22 May 1991

Dear Dr Rodkies,

Symposium of Jewish Intellectuals on the Future of Auschwitz Kraków and Auschwitz, 26-29 August 1991

You may remember that just about a year ago I wrote to you with an invitation to attend a symposium of Jewish academics and intellectuals on the subject of the Future of Auschwitz. Unfortunately, you were unable to attend, but the symposium did go ahead, with 30-odd participants from nine countries. Discussion was intense and sustained, and included some consideration of the empirical issues, on which we benefited from the presence of the Polish Deputy Minister of Culture and the chairman of (as it then was) the Polish Prime Minister's Special Commission on Auschwitz. I think it is fair to say that the symposium achieved its objective of beginning the process of creating a new Jewish discourse on this extremely difficult subject, as well as agreeing a set of concrete suggestions to be implemented in the grounds of the former murder-camp. A copy of these suggestions, formulated as a press release ('The Yarnton Declaration') is enclosed; appended to it is a list of the participants at the meeting in Oxford last May.

The purpose of this letter is to enquire whether you would be interested in attending a follow-up symposium, this time in Poland. I first made this suggestion last year, and the Polish Deputy Minister was very encouraging. However, because of the change of government in Poland in the meantime, (including the appointment of a new Deputy Minister) it was taken somewhat longer to arrange than I had hoped. Nevertheless, arrangements are now in place for a three-day symposium to be held in Kraków and Auschwitz during the last week of August of this year. My apologies for this relatively short notice - but I do hope that you can let me know at an early date whether you would like to come.

As before, the symposium will not be open to the public. Attendance will be by personal invitation only, and limited to about 30 people, invited as individuals rather than as representatives of particular organisations.

/contd.

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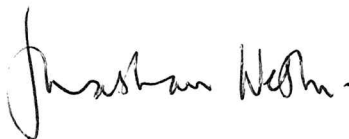
The 1991 Auschwitz Symposium will be hosted by the Jagiellonian University, Kraków: in particular, by its Interfaculty Research Centre on Jewish History and Culture in Poland. Its Director, Prof. Józef Gierowski, who was for many years a Rector of the University, will be writing to you directly with a formal letter of invitation; but since in practice I shall, as before, be handling the administrative arrangements, it would be best if you could reply to me even before you receive his letter.

All food and accommodation expenses in Poland will be covered by the Jagiellonian University, where (in its magnificent Renaissance building in the centre of Kraków) the opening session of the Symposium will take place. There will be visits over one-and-a-half days to Auschwitz itself, so as to ensure plenty of time for participants really to get to know the empirical issues in significant detail. Following the preferences expressed last year, our substantive discussions will, however, be held in Kraków.

I need hardly add that this occasion represents an excellent opportunity to carry forward a serious Jewish concern and involvement with the long-term problems. Shortly after our meeting last year, the Polish Ministry of Culture established an International Auschwitz Council, which has now met twice. Major questions have arisen; no perfect solutions have been found. But it is clear that liberally minded Polish intellectuals, especially those in new positions of political influence, are anxious to sustain contact with leading Western Jewish intellectuals; and the symposium in August will thus also provide for bilateral discussions. It would be helpful if you could let me have a note of the names (and preferably also the addresses) of anyone not on the list of last year's participants whom you would like to see invited to this year's meeting.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,



(Dr) JONATHAN WEBBER
Hebrew Centre Lecturer in
Social Anthropology
Oxford University

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274-682

Dr. David Roskies
Jewish Theological Seminary
3080 Broadway
New York
NY 10027
USA