

JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY
The Research Center on
Jewish History and Culture

by **Joachim S. Russek**
 Assistant Director



THE RESEARCH CENTER ON
JEWISH HISTORY AND CULTURE
 ul. Batory 12
 31-135 Kraków

Tel: 48/12/337-058
 Fax: 48/22/344-593

The Research Center on Jewish History and Culture was established on October 1, 1986, as an interfaculty and interdisciplinary unit of Jagiellonian University. For a number of years, there was both a growing awareness of the need to conduct research in this field and a growing interest in studying the Jewish past in Poland. Professor Józef Gierowski, a historian and rector (president, in U.S. terms) of the university, was one of the Center's strongest supporters. Eventually, he became its first director.

The Center is housed in a restored historic building in Kraków at 12 Batory Street. The Center has three basic goals: to conduct research on the history and culture of Jews in Poland and coordinate similar research at other Polish universities, with the participation of 70 researchers; on-going training of the academic staff; and to offer courses and disseminate knowledge on Jewish history and culture in Poland and on Polish-Jewish relations.

The development of the Center depends primarily on its contacts with foreign scholarly institutions and the ability to have access to relevant literature published abroad as well as technical assistance. The Center library currently has a collection of more than 1,000 books, many of which were donated by friends from abroad.

The Center has published inventories of Judaica and bibliographies of books and articles published in Poland during the years 1900–1939 and 1945–1985 as well as of the main collections of legal documents in Kraków.

The recently opened Center for Jewish Culture at Kazimierz, in the Jewish quarter of Kraków, culminates a lengthy project to provide a central gathering place for the increasing number of Jewish visitors to Kraków as well as the few remaining elderly Jews.

The Center offers a Yiddish-language course and a seminar entitled "Introduction to Jewish History and Culture in Poland." Once a month, the Center offers a lecture on Jewish topics which is open to the public. In addition, the Center organizes and participates in many international events.

The Center cooperates with numerous foreign institutions, including the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; the Institute on Polish-Jewish Relations at Oxford University; Oxford Center for Hebrew Studies; the University of Connecticut at Storrs; the Project Judaica Foundation in Washington, D.C.; and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

Several Center projects are ongoing, including the following:

Bibliographical Projects

- A guide to bibliographies, inventories and catalogues of Polish Judaica
- Bibliography of Polish-language Judaica published between 1944 and 1989
- Bibliography of all Judaica published in Poland between 1901 and 1939
- Current bibliography of Judaica published in Poland
- Catalogue of Judaica in the Jagiellonian Library
- Bibliography of Polish Judaica from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries
- Bibliography of the contents of the Polish-language press published in Poland

Archival Inventories

- Inventory of Judaica in the Grodzki and Ziemski court registers, which are the main collections of legal documents in Kraków
- Inventory of Jewish archival materials at the State Archives in Rzeszów
- Archival survey related to the Holocaust period for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Sociological Projects

- A sociological guide to Jewish landmarks in Galicia
- Attitude of Poles toward the Holocaust, based on research conducted in the town of Oświęcim (called "Auschwitz" by the Germans) and vicinity
- The State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau—its origin, present and future
- Psychiatric and psychosocial consequences of the persecutions experienced by Jews during World War II
- Stereotypes of Jews among Polish children and teenagers
- Oral history:
 - a. Life stories of Polish Jews
 - b. Life stories of those who saved Jews during the Holocaust and those awarded Righteous Among the Nations medal by Yad Vashem

Joachim S. Russek is president of the Center for Jewish Culture in Kraków and assistant director of The Research Center on Jewish History and Culture.