

# **Remembering the Holocaust and the Jewish Past in Kraków, 1980-2013**

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# List of Contents

List of Contents .....	2
List of Abbreviations.....	4
List of Illustrations .....	6
Abstract .....	7
Declaration and Copyright Statement .....	8
Acknowledgements .....	9
Introduction .....	10
Research Objectives and Questions .....	12
Literature Review .....	14
Methodology .....	18
Contributions of the Study .....	26
Sources .....	27
Structure of the Thesis.....	28
Background to the Study .....	30
Part One.....	42
Defining Heritage Work .....	42
Chapter One: Ragged Houses and Candlelight: The Romance of the Jewish Past and Heritage Production under Communist Rule.....	46
Redefining Kazimierz.....	48
Heritage Work in Practice .....	66
The Critical Approach as a Basis for Cosmopolitan Memory Project .....	71
Conclusion.....	74
Chapter Two: Past for Sale? Revival in the ‘Jewish Disneyland’ .....	77
Jewish Space.....	78
Embodying the 'Shtetl-Romance ' .....	80

Other Spaces – Other Identities .....	93
Conclusion.....	104
Part Two.....	107
Defining the Museum .....	107
Chapter Three: The Shaping of Holocaust Memory Before the fall of Communism.....	115
Krakow’s Activists and the Struggle to Narrate Memories .....	116
First Exhibitions - History in a Glass Case .....	128
Conclusion.....	145
Chapter Four: Feeling (for) Kraków's Traumatic Past .....	147
The 1990s: Freezing of the Memory Work .....	149
Early 2000s: The ‘Restoring Memory’ Campaign .....	152
2010 and Beyond: the Memorial Trail .....	168
Conclusion.....	191
Conclusion .....	194
Jewish Spaces – Spaces of Shared History .....	196
Urbanising Memory Work .....	198
Cosmopolitan Memory Work: New Content and New Modes of Representation.....	199
The Importance of the 1989 Threshold .....	201
Bibliography.....	204

Word count: 79,288

# List of Abbreviations

GKBZH	Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce (Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerites' Crimes in Poland)
IPN	Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (Institute of National Remembrance)
JHP	Jewish Heritage Program
KIK (plural: KIKs)	Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej (Club of Catholic Intelligentsia)
MHK	Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa (Historical Museum of the City of Kraków)
MPW	Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego (Warsaw Rising Museum)
OKBZH	Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Krakowie (Regional Committee for Investigation of Hitlerites' Crimes)
PiS	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Order Party)
PKZ	Pracownie Konserwacji Zabytków (Conservation of Architectural Monuments)
PO	Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform)
PRL	Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (Polish People's Republic)
PZPR	Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Workers' Party)
SARP	Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich (Society of Polish Architects)
SKOZK	Spółeczny Komitet Odnowy Zabytków Krakowa (Citizens' Committee for the Renovation of Kraków's Monuments)

SLD	Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Democratic Left Alliance)
TPDP	Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzielnicy Podgórze (Society of Friends of Podgórze District)
WMF	World Monuments Fund
WUOZ	Wojewódzki Urząd Ochrony Zabytków (Regional Heritage Protection Office)
WW	Wydział do Spraw Wyznań (Department of Religious Affairs)
ZBOWiD	Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację, (Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy)
ZPAP	Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków (Association of Polish Artists and Designers)

# List of Illustrations

**Figure 1: Map of Kazimierz with most important Jewish relics, p. 48.**

Source: Janek Gryta. Based on Kpalion via Wikimedia Commons.

**Figure 2: Once Upon a Time in Kazimierz, p. 83.**

Source: Theofila via Wikimedia Commons.

**Figure 3: The Eagle Pharmacy, 1983, p. 132.**

Source: Eugeniusz Duda, in author's collection.

**Figure 6: The Ghetto Heroes Square, p. 159.**

Source: A&D via Wikimedia Commons.

**Figure 7: The Eagle Pharmacy, 2013, p. 179.**

Source: Piotr Drabik from Poland via Wikimedia Commons.

**Figure 8: The Oskar Schindler Factory, p. 181.**

Source: Jorge Láscar via Wikimedia Commons.

# Abstract

This thesis examines the ways in which the Holocaust and the Jewish past have been remembered in Kraków, investigates the impact local memory work has had on Polish collective memory, and problematises the importance of the 1989 threshold for that memory work. Looking at Kraków, an exceptional and exceptionally important case study, between 1980 and 2013, the thesis investigates heritage creations in Kazimierz, the old Jewish Town, and traces the genealogies of Holocaust exhibitions presented in Kraków. It also traces the emergence of urban critical narratives about the past, pertaining both to the city and to Poland as a whole. Created in opposition to the mainstream ethno-nationalist narrative, which was often supported by both the Communist and the democratic governments, the interpretation of the past laid out in Kraków gradually incorporated the Jewish past into the narrative on Polish history. The thesis demonstrates how, over the course of thirty years, Jews came to be presented as rightful members of the Polish national community, and the Holocaust as an integral part of Polish war history, albeit still distinct to other sufferings.

At the forefront of the process of excavating and presenting Kraków's Jewish past were local memory activists. In particular, this thesis highlights the pivotal role played by mid-ranking officials from municipal administration and by fictive kinships in the process of urbanisation of memory. These individuals and groups translated the ideas of critical engagement with the nation's history, propagated by some sections of the national elite, into a form that could be consumed by a mass audience.

In addition, the thesis demonstrates that memory work on a local level persisted almost uninterrupted through the transition to democracy. Activists responsible for the creation of inclusive narratives in the 1980s, and the Krakowian intelligentsia in general, carried those ideas forward through the collapse of Communism – no radical reformulation of representations of the Jewish past or the Holocaust took place in the early 1990s. The local narratives grew progressively more critical and increasingly more cosmopolitan from the 1980s onward, but this process only truly accelerated after 2010. The present thesis argues that this post-2010 intensification was only possible after local activists had embraced new forms of commemoration and new modes of authentication within museum exhibitions. In particular it points toward the espousal of 'complementary authenticities,' a mode of authentication of narratives strongly anchored in history that at the same time aimed to incite an emotional response. This incorporation of 'complementary authenticities' allowed for the creation of narratives that sensitised audiences to the suffering of Poles regardless of their ethnic background. Thus the thesis relates the developments of memory work in Kraków to broader changes in culture, rather than solely to changes in political life.

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I blame all of you. Writing this book has been an exercise in sustained suffering. The casual reader may, perhaps, exempt herself from excessive guilt, but for those of you who have played the larger role in prolonging my agonies with your encouragement and support, well...you know who you are, and you owe me.

Writes Brendan Pietsch from Nazarbayev University in the *Acknowledgements to his Dispensational Modernism*. If, on occasion, work on this thesis has indeed been ‘an exercise in sustained suffering,’ it was nevertheless worth it. I am extremely grateful for all the support and encouragement I received.

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# Introduction

The aim of the exhibition is to show the history of Kraków at a time when it was the capital of General Government. This history will be presented [...] through the stories of people – Poles, Jews, Germans: their daily life, attitudes, choices, tragedies.<sup>1</sup>

The above introduction to an early, and never realised, version of the scenario of the 2010 exhibition in Oskar Schindler's Factory offers a rare insight into the intricacies of Kraków's 'memory work;' that is to say, the continuous process of the reworking of collective memory.<sup>2</sup> In the early twenty-first century, local memory activists insisted on critical readings of the past, and tried to overcome a series of taboos around collective memory. By 2010, the most popular Polish representations of history still revolved around the one-dimensional images of blameless, heroic Poles, evil German perpetrators, and passive Jews. Furthermore, this ethno-nationalist narrative either pushed Jews to the background or forgot them; either way, they were always represented as members of an outside, and unimportant, group. Working against this strand of collective memory, activists from Kraków insisted on depicting the past as a story of people whose lives were altered and destroyed by the Second World War. Instead of reducing the historic Jews to helpless victims who, because of their own passivity and Otherness, were responsible for their own fate, they planned to look into individual stories and to show the circumstances of the destruction of this minority. Instead of conflating historic German perpetrators with present German society, they proposed to explain the sources of criminality of the Nazis. Instead of focusing on Polish heroes and martyrs, they intended to show daily life in the occupied city. In so doing, they aimed to violate the taboo of the helper-victim-perpetrator triad. Moreover, they espoused a sense of openness and tolerance not appreciated in post-War Poland.

This thesis analyses memory work on the Holocaust and the Jewish past in Kraków between 1980 and 2013. The investigation begins in 1980 in order to demonstrate that the oppositional counter-narrative outlined in 2010 was not wholly new, since it had its roots in narratives created in the 1980s. It finishes in 2013, since it was this year that witnessed

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<sup>1</sup> Kraków, AMHK, Wystawa stała „Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945” – (Scenariusz wystawy), 2008-09, Sig. 603/4, fol. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory. The Jew in Contemporar Poland* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1989), p. 104.

the completion of a large-scale memorial project, initiated by the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków (Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, MHK), that narrated Kraków's war history. The thesis thereby demonstrates that Kraków-based activists (along with other factions of the Polish intelligentsia) had been working on producing alternative interpretations that were critical toward the ethno-nationalist version of Poland's history long before the fall of Communism. Scholars commenting on the conflict between proponents of critical and ethno-nationalist interpretations of the past characterise these opposing discourses as constituting 'battlefields of memory' or a 'war.'<sup>3</sup> In this way, they draw attention to the importance of the reinterpretation of the Polish-Jewish past for contemporary Polish identities. There is a direct relationship between how Poles approached the taboos of their past and how they imagined the Polish nation. Joanna Michlic highlights the close connection between the 'questions [...] about the dark past and about what kind of national community Poland wants to be at present and in the future.'<sup>4</sup> In addition, she observes that exponents of the critical approach reimagine Poland as multicultural, constructing a 'civic and pluralistic society.'<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the ethno-nationalist version of identity is supported by 'black and white interpretations of history.'<sup>6</sup> She thus demonstrates that reaching an understanding of the nature of remembrance of the Holocaust and the Jewish past is crucial for a better understanding of Polish identity, both past and present.

Justifying his selection of case studies, Michael Meng, the author of an in-depth investigation of heritage work on Jewish relics in Poland and Germany, notes that he excluded Kraków 'because it is an exceptional case in Poland, and in Europe.'<sup>7</sup> Conversely, the present research focuses on Kraków precisely because of its exceptionality, recognised by both scholars and the public alike. Paweł Kubicki notes that the city 'has an exceptional position in Polish national culture that places it in the centre of the national discourse,'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sławomir Kaprański, 'Battlefields of Memory: Landscape and Identity in Polish-Jewish Relations', *History & Memory*, 13.2 (2001), p. 35, Geneviève Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of the Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Joanna B. Michlic, 'The Dark Past: Polish-Jewish Relations in the Shadow of the Holocaust', in *Imaginary Neighbors. Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations after the Holocaust*, ed. by Dorota Glowacka and Joanna Zylińska (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Meng, *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* (Cambridge, Massachusetts - London: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. xii.

<sup>8</sup> Paweł Kubicki, *Miasto w sieci znaczeń: Kraków i jego tożsamości* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2010), p. 7. See also Patrice M. Dabrowski, 'Commemorations and the National Revitalization of Kraków', *Ece-Urban. The Online Publication Series of the Centre for Urban History of East Central Europe*, 2008.

while Patrice Dabrowski and Anna Niedźwiedz demonstrate how Kraków come to occupy this special position.<sup>9</sup> The city is, then, a perfect point of entry into an investigation of Polish collective memory and identity. Moreover, as numerous recent studies demonstrate, major, non-capital urban centres are among the most important sites of memory work. They tend to offer narratives distinct to those coined in the capitals, and therefore allow for investigation of the full spectrum of approaches towards the past.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the exceptionality of Kraków lies in its plethora of Jewish sites and ruins. The relics of destroyed minorities do not necessarily prompt remembrance; however, in Kraków they did in fact work as an incentive for local activists.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, memory work is most often done in and with relation to places, and in Kraków there is an abundance of these places.<sup>12</sup> Since this thesis is concerned with the generation of new memories and meanings, rather than with the processes of collective oblivion, it looks only at those sites that have been actively commemorated.<sup>13</sup> The study therefore focuses on Kazimierz, Kraków's old Jewish town, with its synagogues, and on the sites of local, city-owned museums. Occasionally, it also refers to the site of the former *Konzentrationslager* Plaszow, which remained on the fringes of memory work for all three decades, and on the Ghetto Heroes Square, the central plaza of the Kraków Ghetto.

## Research Objectives and Questions

The main objective of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the re-shaping of the collective memory of the Polish-Jewish past in Poland, through an examination of the recovery of the Jewish past that was undertaken between 1980 and 2013 in Kraków. To that end, it analyses the heritage sites in Kazimierz, the old Jewish town, and Holocaust exhibitions in the local municipal museums. It also aims to historicise the emergence of

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<sup>9</sup> Anna Niedźwiedz, 'Mythical Vision of the City : Kraków as the "Pope's City"', *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 27.April 2005 (2009), Dabrowski 2008.

<sup>10</sup> John J. Czaplicka, 'Conclusion. Urban History after a Return to Local Self-Determination - Local History and Civic Identity', in *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, ed. by John J. Czaplicka and Blair A. Ruble (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), p. 372.

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, 'Local Memories under The Influence of Europeanization and Globalization', in *Whose Memory? Which Future?: Remembering Ethnic Cleansing and Lost Cultural Diversity in Easter, Ventral, and Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), p. 210.

<sup>12</sup> Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> On the importance of 'living' sites see for example: Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941–1995: Myths, Memories and Monuments* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 24–25, David Crowley and Susan Reid, 'Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc', in *Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by David Crowley and Susan Reid (Oxford - New York: Berg, 2002), p. 4.

values that informed commemorative narratives produced in Kraków. To achieve these aims, the thesis poses a series of questions, which the following paragraphs will clarify.

First, the present study investigates the role urban memory played in the process of recovering the Jewish past before and after the fall of Communism. Urban memory is created in and for the cities by local activists, often in opposition to national narratives.<sup>14</sup> In order to understand this process, the study analyses the content of narratives created in Kraków. How did they depict Jews and the Holocaust? What values were included in this memory work? Subsequently, the thesis investigates the memorial activists working in the city, asking who they were and what motivated them. It also enquires into the sources of local memory work, and investigates the relationship of those sources with exponents of the dominant, ethno-nationalist narrative (primarily the state) and with international activists (primarily diaspora and Israeli Jews).

Secondly, this research assesses whether the collapse of Communism in Poland is justifiably identified as the turning point in the process of re-examination of the Polish-Jewish past. The majority of scholars assume that under Communism it was impossible to face the challenges of the Polish-Jewish past in any meaningful way. As a result, they tend to focus on the post-1989 period in their investigations.<sup>15</sup> This thesis, on the other hand, explores the connections and continuities in urban memory work between the 1980s and 1990s. It determines whether new activists emerged after the fall of Communism, and identifies the content of narratives constructed locally before and after 1989, questioning the impact of Communism and democratic governments on urban memory work.

Finally, the present thesis investigates the nature of urban commemorative practices. It analyses the relationship between the form and content of memory work, and explores the connection between the forms of monuments and the effects they have on their viewers. It enquires into the modes of authentication of museum exhibitions, and their relationship with the types of knowledge produced by visiting the museums. In essence, then, it questions whether or not certain forms of expression limited certain memories, or supported the creation of others.

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<sup>14</sup> Czaplicka, 'Conclusion', p. 372.

<sup>15</sup> Renata Kobylarz, *Walka o Pamięć. Polityczne aspekty obchodów rocznicy powstania w Getcie Warszawskim 1944–1989* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2007), Michale C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead. Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997), p. 122, Irwin-Zarecka, Michlic, 'The Dark Past', p. 21.

## Literature Review

Through examining the importance of the events of 1989, analysing multiple memorials, dissecting conflicting understandings of Polish identity, and looking into the importance of the cosmopolitanisation of memory, this thesis enters an established but uneven field within memory studies. The most direct predecessors for this research are studies on Polish memory, and specifically local memory, of the Holocaust and the Jewish past.<sup>16</sup> Michael Steinlauf's *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*, published in 1997, offers a comprehensive, albeit general and already outdated, overview of memory under Communism and during the transition to democracy.<sup>17</sup> Renata Kobylarz's *The Fight for Memory: Political aspects of the commemorations of the anniversaries of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising 1944-1989* offers year-by-year coverage of commemorations of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising before 1989. A thoroughly researched study, her book describes the situation in Warsaw and the policies of the Communist government. Together with Zuzanna Bogumił's *The Sites of Memory versus Simulations of The Past – The Second World War in The Museum Exhibitions*, which analyses commemorations in the Warsaw Rising Museum (Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, MPW) and comments briefly on the 2010 exhibition in the Oskar Schindler Factory, Kobylarz's text helps to contextualise the commemorations in Kraków.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Monika Murzyn's *The Central European Experience of Urban Regeneration*, which comments on some technical aspects of the post-Communist revitalisation of Kazimierz, and Anna Ziębińska-Witek's *History in The Museum: Study of the Holocaust Exhibitions*,

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<sup>16</sup> Alina Cała, 'Kształtowanie się Polskiej i Żydowskiej wizji martyrologicznej po II Wojnie Światowej', *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, 2000, 1–13; Zvi Gitleman, 'Collective Memory and Contemporary Polish-Jewish Relations', in *Contested Memories. Poles and Jews during The Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, ed. by Joshua D. Zimmerman (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2010); *Imaginary Neighbors. Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations after the Holocaust*, ed. by Dorota Glowacka and Joanna Zylińska (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Joanna Beata Michlic, "'Remembering to Remember,'" "Remembering to Benefit," "Remembering to Forget": The Variety of Memories of Jews and the Holocaust in Postcommunist Poland', *Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs*, 2012; Ewa Ochman, 'Remembering the Polish-Jewish Past a Decade after the Collapse of Communism' (University of Salford, 2003); Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, 'New Threads on an Old Loom: National Memory and Social Identity in Postwar and Post-Communist Poland', in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. by R.N. Lebow, W. Kansteiner, and C. Fogu (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006); 'My Brother's Keeper?'. *Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*, ed. by Antony Polonsky (London: Routledge, 1990); *The Neighbors Respond. The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, ed. by Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004); Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, 'The Tale of Szydlowiec: Memory and Oblivion in a Former Shtetl in Poland', in *The Holocaust on Post-War Battlefields: Genocide as Historical Culture*, 2006, pp. 191–224.

<sup>17</sup> Steinlauf.

<sup>18</sup> Zuzanna Bogumił, 'Miejsce pamięci versus symulacja przeszłości - Druga Wojna Światowa na wystawach historycznych', *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, LV.4 (2011), 149–70, Kobylarz.

which mentions the 2010 Factory exhibition, constitute further important reference points for this thesis.<sup>19</sup>

If Steinlauf's and Kobyalrz's interventions provide background for the present thesis, the works of Michael Meng, Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, Geneviève Zubrzycki, and Erica Lehrer are the main sources of inspiration and points of dialogue. Michael Meng, in his highly inspiring book *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland*, analyses sixty years of heritage work in Warsaw, Wrocław, Berlin, Potsdam, and Essen. He looks into the role of local politicians in memory work, the context of their actions, and the ever-changing meanings they ascribed to Jewish relics. His claim is that municipal authorities in Poland and Germany were never interested in engaging with the Jewish past, nor did they challenge official narratives of national identities. Rather, they used the revitalisation of Jewish relics as proof of the nation's alleged multiculturalism, and as an excuse to avoid tackling contemporary problems of intolerance and exclusion.<sup>20</sup> Meng's conclusion echoes the argument of Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, whose groundbreaking 1989 study *Neutralizing Memory: The Jew in Contemporary Poland* suggests that in the 1980s, the Polish Church, the opposition, and to some extent the governing Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) worked toward the 'neutralisation' of memory. Irwin-Zarecka argues that the re-integration of the Jews into memory was a superficial process that did not engage with Polish anti-Semitism, and was only possible because there were no Jews left in Poland and thus no one to challenge the process.<sup>21</sup> The present study problematises Meng's and Irwin-Zarecka's findings, demonstrating that from at least the 1980s onwards there existed memory projects that aimed at genuine examination of the traumas of the Polish-Jewish past.

Pointing toward the validity of efforts at critical engagement with the Jewish past, the present thesis agrees with the analysis of Geneviève Zubrzycki, whose monograph *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland* explores the controversies around the symbolic meaning of the former concentration camp Auschwitz. An analysis of the War of the Crosses, an outbreak of 'interreligious' and 'intranational' hatred, led her to comment on 'narrative shock, the shock to their [Poles-JG] historical and

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<sup>19</sup> Monika A. Murzyn, Kazimierz. *The Central European Experience of Urban Regeneration* (Kraków: International Culture Centre, 2006), Ziębińska-Witek, Anna, *Historia w muzeach. Studium ekspozycji Holokaustu* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 250, more recently and only anecdotally, Meng listed projects initiated in past decade that have potential to cause real change in recognition of difference and multiculturalism, see Michael Meng, 'Muranów as a Ruin: Layered Memories in Postwar Warsaw', in *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, ed. by Erica Lehrer and Michael Meng (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), pp. 82-84.

<sup>21</sup> Irwin-Zarecka, pp. 175 and further.

social identities as victims, [that was] related to the threat posed by the Jewish and universal symbols of “Auschwitz” [...].<sup>22</sup> Her claim demonstrates that changes in Polish identity were, in fact, already taking place by the 1980s, and that they were one outcome of internal processes reinforced by external pressure. Moreover, Zubrzycki here draws attention to the ‘*intrareligious* and *intranational*’ conflict, thereby commenting on the existence of two competing camps supporting two competing interpretations of the Polish past. Drawing similar conclusions on the nature of Polish collective memory is Joanna Michlic, who explains that the ‘ethno-nationalist vision of the past [...] provides black and white interpretation of history’ and focuses on the martyrdom of ethnic Poles.<sup>23</sup> The civic or critical approach, on the other hand, is ‘based on nostalgia for the multiethnic past and driven by the need for creating a more civic and pluralistic society.’<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, it supports critical engagement with the sins of the nation’s past.<sup>25</sup>

Writing on the merits of this critical engagement with the past is Erica Lehrer, who in *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* offers an insightful study of Kazimierz at the turn of the millennium. She analyses the work of proponents of the critical approach, and suggests that their efforts make reconciliation between Poles and Jews in Kazimierz possible. She claims that ‘engagement with Jewish cultural heritage [...] represents political and moral concerns.’<sup>26</sup> Her understanding of Kazimierz as a site of ‘conciliatory heritage,’ a heritage that has the potential to facilitate meeting and reconciliation between Poles and Jews, places her in direct opposition to Meng and Irwin-Zarecka, who doubt the existence of such potential.<sup>27</sup> The present research aims at navigating between those two extremes, demonstrating how Kazimierz grew to have ‘conciliatory’ potential. Moreover, it shows that, compared with national interpretations, the local narratives constructed in Kazimierz were exceptional, in the way that they broke away from an instrumental approach to the Jewish past.

The special path of memory work in cities in Eastern Europe is the subject of a burgeoning field of research. Recent interventions by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Ewa Ochman provide inspiring and detailed analyses of developments in the municipalities in Poland and other countries of the region.<sup>28</sup> Their work builds on the explorations started by

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<sup>22</sup> Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>23</sup> Michlic, ‘The Dark Past’, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem., p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> On this division see also: Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 251.

<sup>26</sup> Erica Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), lo. 194.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem., lo. 4144.

<sup>28</sup> Ewa Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland - Contested Pasts and Future Identities* (London and New York: Routledge,



John Czaplicka and his collaborator, Blair Rubble, with whom he edited *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, and Nida Gelazis, with whom he collaborated on editing *Cities after the Fall of Communism*, along with Rubble.<sup>29</sup> Both volumes deal with municipal memory work, mainly in post-Communist cities, and map the trajectories of changes there. What Czaplicka terms ‘composing urban memory’ emerges as a specific direction taken by non-capital cities of the region, which, in contrast to the capitals’ tendency to cling to nationalist interpretations, instead excavated their multinational pasts.<sup>30</sup> By renovating heritage sites of local importance, they focused on multi-ethnic narratives that brought to the fore links with Europe, rather than with national or Red heroes popularised by the fallen regimes.<sup>31</sup> The diversity of the periods chosen as reference points by each city led Czaplicka and his collaborators to entitle the introduction to one of the volumes ‘What Time Is This Place?’, highlighting the multiplicity of temporal approaches made toward memory in the post-Communist decades.<sup>32</sup>

Czaplicka focuses on post-Communist developments, and envisages urbanisation as a process of the symbolic rebirth of previously constrained cities. Surprisingly, he downplays pre-1989-91 memory work, even though in his own study of Vilnius he demonstrates its importance for commemorations developed after the fall of Communism.<sup>33</sup> His conviction of the importance of the 1989 threshold is shared by a number of scholars commenting on Polish collective memory; it can be seen in the aforementioned works by Michlic and Zubrzycki.<sup>34</sup> In his multi-tier classification of developments in memory work, Andrzej Szpociński, one of the leading Polish scholars from the field, affirms 1989 as the most significant. In fact, in his text *The past as a subject of transmission* he writes of two main periods in Polish memory: one before and one after 1989.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Bartosz Korzeniewski, in *Transformation of memory: Re-evaluations of the memory of the past in relation to selected aspects of public discourse on the past in*

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2013), Törnquist-Plewa, ‘Local Memories’.

<sup>29</sup> *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, ed. by John J. Czaplicka and Blair A. Ruble (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), *Cities after the Fall of Communism*, ed. by John Czaplicka, Nida Gelazis, and Blair A. Ruble (Baltimore and Washington: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> John J. Czaplicka, Nida Gelazis and Blair A. Ruble, ‘Conclusion: Cities after the Fall’, in *Cities after the Fall of Communism*, ed. by John J. Czaplicka, Nida Gelazis, and Blair A. Ruble (Baltimore and Washington: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 337-340.

<sup>31</sup> Czaplicka, ‘Conclusion’, pp. 373-375.

<sup>32</sup> Gelazis, Czaplicka, Ruble 2008, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> John Czaplicka, ‘The Palace Ruins. Putting the Lithuanian Nation into Place. Historical Stagings in Vilnius’, in *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space*, ed. by Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa M. Knauer (Duke University Press, 2004), p. 171.

<sup>34</sup> Michlic, ‘The Dark Past’, p. 21, Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> Andrzej Szpociński, ‘Formy przeszłości a komunikacja społeczna’, in *Przeszłość jako przedmiot przekazu*, ed. by Andrzej Szpociński and Piotr Tadeusz Kwiatkowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2006) p. 37.

*Poland after 1989* follows Szpociński's periodisation, even though he himself notes that substantial changes took place before 1989.<sup>36</sup> This thesis, however, takes inspiration from the study of memory work provided by Brian Ladd, undertaken in Berlin, and the extensive research on Wrocław by Gregor Thum, presented in his book *Uprooted: How Breslau became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions*. Both authors elaborate on the importance of pre-1989 developments for the advancements in memory work that were realised after the fall of Communism.<sup>37</sup>

Another aspect downplayed by Czaplicka in his otherwise comprehensive texts is an appreciation of the workings of 'glocalisation'; that is to say, the interweaving of global influences with local needs. There is ample research demonstrating the importance of international connections and supranational organisation for memory work on both national and local levels.<sup>38</sup> In their recent, and highly provocative, intervention *The Holocaust and Memory in The Global Age*, Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider claim that in the process of glocalisation the Holocaust emerged as the global memory *par excellence* of the late twentieth century. They argue that it became a future-oriented memory, closely tied to the discourse of human rights, and a universal yardstick for good and evil, thus becoming a cosmopolitan memory.<sup>39</sup> While controversial and problematic, their theory nevertheless raises important questions, as it points toward one of the central themes of development in Holocaust memories: that universalised Holocaust representations focuses more on the values associated with human rights than on nuanced factual descriptions.

## Methodology

The present thesis is an investigation into the history of urban memory; its prime case study is the city of Kraków. Kraków was and is exceptional because of its unique location in Polish culture, and because of its numerous Jewish relics. It is, nevertheless, also a typical European city. It is, to quote Dobrochna Kałwa's definition of a city, 'a

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<sup>36</sup> Bartosz Korzeniewski, *Transformacja Pamięci. Przewartościowania W Pamięci Przeszłości a Wybrane Aspekty Dyskursu Publicznego O Przeszłości W Polsce Po 1989 Roku* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, 2010), pp. 107-115.

<sup>37</sup> Gregor Thum, *Obce Miasto. Wrocław 1945 i potem* (Wrocław: Via Nova, 2008), Brian Ladd, 'Local Responses in Berlin to Urban Decay and The Demise of The German Democratic Republic', in *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, ed. by John Czaplicka and Blair A. Ruble (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

<sup>38</sup> For example: Maria Mälksoo, *The Politics of Becoming European. A Study of Polish and Baltic Post-Cold War Security Imaginaries* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), Eva-Clarita Onken, 'The Baltic States and Moscow's 9 May Commemoration: Analysing Memory Politics in Europe', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 59.1 (2007), 23-46.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in The Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

cultural phenomenon combining space, time and social actors.’<sup>40</sup> In Kałwa’s view, these ever-changing cities are entities occupying particular places and consisting of particular sites, and at the same time are used by actors who recognise their status as cities. Matt Holbrook, in his highly inspiring investigation of the history of London, invokes similar ideas. He notes that cities are physical areas comprising ‘related but discontinuous sites,’ but that at the same time they are ‘imagined space[s] exercising a profound influence on the way that contemporaries [think].’<sup>41</sup> His last remark is of particular importance for this research, as it indicates the importance of cities for two systems of meanings: that of culture, and that of memory.

The subsequent section elaborates on the overarching methodology of this thesis. Having briefly defined the city, it goes on to delineate other key concepts informing its line of inquiry: collective memory, memory work, the relationship between memory and identity, and cosmopolitan memory. However, given the diversity of the selected case studies, each Part of the thesis expands in more detail upon the theoretical framework used to analyse the specific cases. Part I, then, focuses on heritage work, while Part II introduces museum theory.

## **Collective Memory**

The concept of collective memory – often associated primarily with Maurice Halbwachs – was first introduced to the social sciences in the first part of the twentieth century, but it grew to prominence in the 1980s with the groundbreaking work of Pierre Nora.<sup>42</sup> As Halbwachs observes, collective memory allows groups, regardless of size, to construct their identities and to differentiate themselves from one another. As such, memory is selective; only important and formative events find their place in collective representations. When a group’s needs and priorities change, collective memory follows; new heroes are brought back from oblivion, while old ones are forgotten.<sup>43</sup> Halbwachs also notes that groups tend to localise memories spatially. They tie memories to spaces, which on one hand can be seen as a social version of a mnemonic practice, but on the other attests

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<sup>40</sup> Dobrochna Kałwa, ‘Reading the City. Methodological Considerations on Urban History and Urban Studies’, *Frontiers and Identities: Cities in Region and Nations*, 162.10 (2008), p. 3, for other definition of the city see: Ulf Hannerz, *Odkrywanie Miasta. Antropologia Obszarów Miejskich* (Kraków, 2006), David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), Kirschenbaum .

<sup>41</sup> Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London. Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press, 2005), p. 8-9.

<sup>42</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper Row, 1980), Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, *Representations*, 1989, 7–24.

<sup>43</sup> Halbwachs, p. 69, 71.

to the importance of place-based authenticity. Memories connected to sites are simultaneously evoked by material evidence and corroborated by it.<sup>44</sup>

Collective memory, then, is a feature of a group, but it is also interconnected with individual memory. In fact, it consists of two parts: that which individual members of a group remember, and that which is stored in the group's culture.<sup>45</sup> Individual memory, although stored in one's mind, is collective in the sense that it is shaped in connection to a group and consists of memories common to that group. Individual members of a group learn and appropriate the images of the past socially, from their culture. From the earliest childhood years, people assimilate scripts, comprising narratives about themselves as well as templates for understanding and talking about the past.<sup>46</sup> Because learning is collective, it equips each member of the group with the same set of templates. People perceive, understand and remember the world according to these templates. Moreover, individual memories can be reinterpreted and interpolated so that when representations stored in culture change, individual memories adapt.<sup>47</sup> The fact that numerous individuals share ways of understanding and talking about the past is one way in which we can discuss the collectivity of memory; another way is in terms of culture.

Culture in general is a repository of knowledge and meanings from which each individual draws.<sup>48</sup> In the same sense, the cultural aspect of collective memory is a repository of meanings, narratives, templates, and representations from which the individual learns about the past. In the words of Jan Assmann, cultural memory is a 'construction' that functions through 'fixed objectifications' such as texts, paintings, rituals, and even landscapes.<sup>49</sup> Thus, as mentioned above, collective memory in fact consists of two parts: the individual and the cultural.

As first noted by Halbwachs, memory consists of reconstructions and representations of the past, rather than a full recall of history. Only aspects of the past important for the group enter into its memory. Furthermore, these aspects are transformed from detailed, factual images into one-dimensional symbols; events and characters become representations of ideas or values. Characters turn into icons of heroism or cowardice, events into synonyms of qualities such as courage or treachery. As such, they are grouped

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<sup>44</sup> See Assmann, *Cultural Memory*, p. 25.

<sup>45</sup> Barbara Szacka, *Czas przeszły, Pamięć, Mit* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2006), p. 95.

<sup>46</sup> Jay Winter and Emanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jay Winter and Emanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> Philip Smith and Jeffrey Alexander, 'The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology', 2009 <<http://research.yale.edu/ccs/about/strong-program>>, [accessed: 5 June 2013].

<sup>49</sup> Assmann, *Cultural Memory*, p. 37.

not according to chronology but according to value. One recalled event does not link to its chronologically closest ‘relative,’ but rather toward other representations with the same or similar values and qualities. In this way, representations in collective memory are suspended in a ‘mythical un-time,’ rather than the linear time characteristic of history – an academic discipline.<sup>50</sup>

As summarised by Barbara Szacka, this understating of collective memory assumes that it:

is a set of representations which members of the group have about group’s past: about characters and events that took place in that past. It also consists of commemorations and ways of passing on knowledge compulsory for members of the group. In other words, these are all conscious references to the past that one can trace in a current collective life.<sup>51</sup>

This definition is productive for the present thesis because it points toward the relationship between individual memories about the past, and representations and templates stored in culture. It focuses on *static* collective memories, but is at the same time open to the implementation of *active* memory work.

## Memory work

The present research investigates the history of creation of commemorations; for this reason, it calls for a methodology that allows for analysis of processes and changes in memory. Barbara Misztal, in her *Theories of Social Remembering*, calls this methodology the ‘dynamics of memory approach.’<sup>52</sup> Thus far, it has been best outlined by Timothy Ashplant and his collaborators, and by Iwona Irwin-Zarecka; indeed, the present study follows Irwin-Zarecka in its use of the term ‘memory work.’ Defining the concept, Irwin-Zarecka highlights that memories (‘bits of remembrance’) have to be first created, then edited, and eventually presented.<sup>53</sup> Memory work, then, is a process in which recollections of past events are excavated and transformed so that they fit into overarching narratives and networks of meanings. Moreover, Irwin-Zarecka mentions that just like ‘other areas of

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<sup>50</sup> Szacka, pp. 92-94.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, p 19, translation – JG.

<sup>52</sup> Misztal, p. 67.

<sup>53</sup> Irwin-Zarecka, p. 104.

cultural production, memory work consists of a set of different tasks, often performed by different people and different institutions.’<sup>54</sup> Here, her approach overlaps with the proposal of Ashplant and his collaborators. They note that the creation of memories is rife with controversies and conflicts, discussing the ‘contestation of meaning [...], and the (unequal) struggle to install particular memories at the centre of a cultural world, at the expense of others which are marginalized and forgotten.’<sup>55</sup> Both Irwin-Zarecka and Ashplant thus envisage memory work as a struggle and a contest. This research follows their shared line of reasoning, and goes further, to identify key actors of memorial contest.

In a long list of activists, one of the most powerful seems to be the nation-state, or, more accurately, the nation-state’s government. From the first moments of their existence, nation-states begin to work on visions of the past consistent with their needs. As Eric Hobsbawm argues, determination and a vast array of resources have enabled nation-states to go so far as to invent new traditions and place them firmly in collective memory. In fact, they have often succeeded in making citizens believe that their new inventions are ancient and timeless.<sup>56</sup> Governmental interventions are countered, often literally, by grass-roots organisations: by ‘individuals and groups who come together [...] because they have to speak out.’<sup>57</sup> If governments produce unified visions of the past, then grass-roots organisations try to add the private, albeit socially reworked, recollections of their members to the memory canon.<sup>58</sup> Nation-state governments and grass-roots organisations do not, however, make up the entire list of actors involved in memory work. Municipalities must be included too, since they are often placed between states and local groups. Additionally, in a globalising world, the interventions of other countries, international pressure groups and NGOs, and supranational organisations must also be considered.<sup>59</sup>

## Memory and Identity

Halbwachs was the first to demonstrate that the stakes of creation of collective memory are particularly high as they pertain to the creation of group identity, be it of inhabitants of a city, or of a nation. John Gills, in one of the foundational texts of memory

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<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, p. 104.

<sup>55</sup> Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2004): p. xi.

<sup>56</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’, in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-2.

<sup>57</sup> Winter and Sivan, ‘Setting the Framework’, pp. 9-10.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> Onken, p. 24.

studies, confirms Halbwachs's idea, and adds that 'the core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering.'<sup>60</sup> Since the earliest days of the memory boom, researchers have thus investigated the reciprocal impacts of memory and identity. In recent years, they have focused on a specific strand of this relationship that is particularly important for the present thesis: that which connects remembrance and sites of memories. Kapralski observes that 'the construction of a landscape and the construction of identity are inseparable parts of one process, as a result of which landscape becomes incorporated into the group's identity, being one of the symbolic representations of the latter.'<sup>61</sup> Czaplicka echoes this idea, affirming that 'a reciprocity exists between the way one identifies with a place and a physical character of a place itself, between the conceptualization of a civic identity along political, social, and cultural lines, and the material, structure, and spaces of the city itself.'<sup>62</sup> Both Kapralski and Czaplicka here draw attention to the importance of the 'vernacular urban landscape' and 'architecture as memory-space.'<sup>63</sup> It is therefore clear that analysing developments in the cityscape offers a unique entry point into the analysis of identity.

### **Cosmopolitan memory**

In the course of this research, it has become apparent that memory work in Kraków followed a clear pattern. Each of the new commemorations created after 1980 attempted to imbue urban memory with values such as openness and tolerance, and contributed to the redefinition of collective identity along the lines of inclusivity. Significantly, these are values that can only be identified when seen in historical context. Expressions of openness and tolerance are, in fact, relative, and dependent on the culture from which they emerge. For example, as this research demonstrates, a decision to discuss the Holocaust in 1983 was perceived as evidence of openness to the history of the Other. In 2010, on the other hand, the inclusion of the Holocaust in the exhibition on the history of Kraków went without saying, and the only area of doubt lay on the relative proportions and connections between the Polish and Jewish parts of the War story.

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<sup>60</sup> John R Gillis, 'Introduction', in *Commemorations. The Politics of National Identity*, ed. by John R Gillis (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Kapralski, *Battlefields of Memory*, p. 35.

<sup>62</sup> Czaplicka, 'Conclusion', p. 373.

<sup>63</sup> Paul Stangl, 'The Vernacular and the Monumental: Memory and Landscape in Post-War Berlin', *GeoJournal*, 73.3 (2008), p. 245 and Mark Crinson, 'Urban Memory - an Introduction', in *Urban Memory. History and Amnesia in the Modern City*, ed. by Mark Crinson (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. xviii-xix.

For scholars such as Montserrat Guibernau, Michael Meng, Ewa Ochman, and Sharon Macdonald, openness, tolerance, and inclusivity are manifestations of cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan memory work. Guibernau, in her in-depth analysis of various types of identities in the twentieth century, sees cosmopolitanism as ‘the adherence to a set of principles and values destined to attain global social justice.’<sup>64</sup> She refers to a new ‘attitude towards difference itself’ and to ‘find[ing] some universal standard concerning what ought to be regarded as inalienable rights and principles to be applied to all members of humanity.’<sup>65</sup> She concludes that ‘cosmopolitan values defend the equality and freedom of all human beings[...].’<sup>66</sup> Similarly, Michael Meng defines cosmopolitan memories as supporting ‘tolerance, multiethnicity, plurality, and cultural difference,’<sup>67</sup> while Sharon Macdonald frames them as a ‘celebration of difference.’<sup>68</sup> More recently, Ewa Ochman has shown that recognition and acceptance of national, regional, and ethnic difference lie at the heart of the process of cosmopolitanisation of memory.<sup>69</sup> In other words, cosmopolitan values assume *a priori* the inalienable rights of each and every human being. Cosmopolitanism, then, seeks to ensure the ‘recognition of difference’ and at the same time to prevent stigmatisation or alienation.

At the intersection of general processes of cosmopolitanisation and global memory work lie cosmopolitan memories of the Holocaust, whose emergence is often linked to the Americanisation of representations of the Holocaust and to the glocalisation of culture. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider were among the first to comment on the cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust. They argue that the memory of the Holocaust evolved over decades to emerge as a universal memory of mankind, and a measure of good and evil.<sup>70</sup> They note that the Holocaust became a future-oriented memory that supported, and continues to support, the regime of human rights;<sup>71</sup> indeed, their argument culminates in an analysis of the international intervention in Kosovo in 1999, which they see as motivated primarily by the ‘Never Again Holocaust’ lesson.<sup>72</sup> Levy and Sznaider outline this theory in their *The Holocaust and Memory in The Global Age*, a text whose title immediately

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<sup>64</sup> Guibernau, p. 159.

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, p. 160.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, p. 161.

<sup>67</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 250.

<sup>68</sup> Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), p. 191.

<sup>69</sup> Ewa Ochman, ‘Memory of War and Cosmopolitan Solidarity’, in *Whose Cosmopolitanism? Critical Perspectives, Relationalities and Discontents*, ed. by Nina Glick Schiller and Andrew Irving (New York - Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015), p. 224.

<sup>70</sup> Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust*, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, p. 23.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem, p. 165-179



suggests the direction of the authors' analysis. The writers are here principally concerned with demonstrating how, in the transition from 'First' to 'Second Modernity,' and with the 'cracking' of the 'container of the nation-state,' the Holocaust became commonly recognised as the memory that defined the twentieth century.<sup>73</sup> While commenting on the deterritorialisation of memories, they nevertheless acknowledge the importance of the 'local experience.' In fact, they choose to discuss glocalisation, a process in which 'global concerns [...] become part and parcel of everyday local experiences,' rather than the more one-sided system of globalisation.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, however, they focus mostly on the deterritorialised and often Americanised memories floating through networks of global connections.<sup>75</sup>

Numerous flaws in Levy and Sznajder's theory have been observed. Their insistence on the Holocaust as a global memory has been criticised, as has their emphasis on glocalisation-as-Americanisation.<sup>76</sup> Firstly, assigning too much importance to the global influence is debatable; as Andreas Huyssen points out, 'discourses of lived memory will remain tied primarily to specific communities and territories, even if the concern with memory itself has become a transnational phenomenon across the world.'<sup>77</sup> Secondly, in Levy and Sznajder's view, the cosmopolitan values attached to the memory of the Holocaust emerged as an effect of memory work in Germany, Israel, and the USA. In other words, these values resulted from confrontations between victims and perpetrators, with the role of diaspora Jews being particularly important; indeed, they state that 'the decontextualized memory of the Holocaust facilitates this [cosmopolitanisation of memory-JG]. In its «universalized» and «Americanized» form, it provides Europeans with a new sense of «common memory».'<sup>78</sup> In this way, they suggest that the emergence of cosmopolitan memories of the Holocaust was impossible outside of Germany, Israel, and the USA, and that it was a memory that was 'provided' to Europeans. This thesis seeks to supplement the framework proposed by Levy and Sznajder's theory by analysing a case

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<sup>73</sup> Ibidem, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Marta Smagacz-Poziemska, *The Revitalization of Urban Space: Social Changes in Krakow's Kazimierz and the Ticinese District in Milan, Higher Education* (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, Pisa University Press, 2008), p. 5. Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> See for example: Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad, 'Introduction', in *Memory in a Global Age. Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, ed. by Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), also Macdonald, *Memorylands*, p. 188.

<sup>77</sup> Andreas Huyssen, 'International Human Rights and the Politics of Memory: Limits and Challenges', *Criticism*, 53.4 (2011), p. 616.

<sup>78</sup> Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, 'Memory Unbound The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5.1 (2002), p. 100.

study from outside of the Germany-Israel-USA triad, as it investigates the emergence of a form of cosmopolitan memory in Kraków.

Levy and Sznajder not only introduced the idea of cosmopolitan memory to scholarly debates; they also demonstrated the connection between cosmopolitanisation and a set of processes they term ‘common patterning.’<sup>79</sup> Their concept is somewhat nebulous; they never fully define it. In her systematic overview of Levy and Sznajder’s theory, Ewa Ochman lists three processes that contribute to common patterning: the pluralisation of memorial narratives, the transition from narratives centred on nations’ heroes to ones focused on the victims of nations’ crimes, and the ‘proliferation of decontextualized and universalised historical narratives.’<sup>80</sup> This idea of common patterning overlaps with the observations of Bartosz Korzeniewski, who elaborates on similar processes taking place in the Polish collective memory.<sup>81</sup> All of the above authors argue that in the latter half of the twentieth century, collective memory was reoriented from grand narratives supporting national coherence toward stories that included the voices of previously marginalised groups. Furthermore, templates of new memories were produced on a global scale. This thesis focuses on various processes akin to common patterning, and suggests that it was due to the underlying cultural changes often manifested via common patterning that cosmopolitan values began to emerge in Kraków’s memory work.

## Contributions of the Study

This study offers the first book-length analysis of memory work around the Holocaust and the Jewish past in Kraków. It is the first study to systematically analyse the Holocaust exhibitions, including the forgotten presentations of the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, it offers new, systematic readings of the heritage work in Kazimierz on a scale never attempted before, and points toward interconnections between remembering even the earliest Jewish past in Kraków, and remembering the Genocide. Focusing on Kraków, a city exceptionally important for Polish culture and identity, it also represents an important intervention in the scholarship on Polish memory, and specifically on commemorations of the Jewish past. Firstly, it problematises the importance of the 1989 threshold, previously taken for granted by the majority of researchers. Secondly, it feeds into a burgeoning field

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<sup>79</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland*, p. 8.

<sup>81</sup> Korzeniewski, p. 8.

of research on Polish memory, offering a new and detailed analysis of critical approaches to the country's past. Furthermore, the present thesis contributes to discussion on developments in memory work in the municipalities of Eastern Europe. It offers an analysis of a case study with a status incomparable to the majority of other cities analysed recently by scholars, and in so doing it informs debates on the nature and mechanisms of urban memory.

## Sources

The present thesis is based on analysis of over 10,000 pages of primary documents, collected from fifteen different archives in Kraków, Wieliczka, and Warsaw. Materials varied from private and official correspondence, through reports and studies, to scenarios of exhibitions. Visual sources, namely photographs and maps, were also used. The archival sources are listed in their entirety in the Bibliography; this section discusses key collections and notes their importance for the present thesis.

The surprising discovery of the remnants of the collection of documents of the Department of Religious Affairs (Wydział do spraw Wyznań, WW) in the National Archives in Kraków proved to be invaluable. These unique materials, most of which have hitherto never been analysed, provide a detailed insight into the inner workings of the Communist administration, the relationship between the Jewish Congregation and city officials, and the evolution of the understanding of the Jewish relics among all the aforementioned activists.

Also of key significance were the scenarios of exhibitions and correspondence authored by the curators of the MHK, stored in the Museum's archive. These documents offer an insight into the processes of creation of the exhibitions, reveal the motivations of their authors, and expose the pressures placed on those individuals. In addition, this particular collection enables the reconstruction of historic exhibitions, since scenarios are often the only remaining trace of the presentations created in the 1980s.

Complementing these documents from the MHK are those from the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, IPN). While the IPN stores mostly documents pertaining to the Communist security services, it also hosts collections of importance to this research. The 'Legacy of Jan Brandys' proved to be

particularly useful, consisting of a plethora of documents related to the history of the creation of the National Memorial Museum Eagle Pharmacy.

Equally valuable to the present study were collections of documents and primary correspondence stored in the archives of the Regional Heritage Protection Office (Wojewódzki Urząd Ochrony Zabytków, WUOZ). They offer an invaluable insight into the circulation of ideas between various memory activists, and allow for reconstruction of the contests around heritage sites. The WUOZ archive also stores copies of studies, analysis, and projects prepared for Kazimierz and Plaszow. Close readings of those documents provide information on the reconceptualisation of heritage sites, and shed light on the sources of heritage work.

Archival documents, then, constituted the most important sources of this thesis; however, other types of materials were used in addition. A search in the database of the local branch of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the biggest Polish daily, sheds light on the conflicts around the revitalisation of the Synagogues in Kazimierz. The publications of the MHK, mostly consisting of guides to exhibitions, complemented archival research too.

## **Structure of the Thesis**

This study analyses the recovery of the Jewish past that has taken place over the last three decades in Kraków. Specifically, it explores heritage work in Kazimierz, Kraków's historical Jewish quarter, and investigates the work of museum curators concerned with Holocaust exhibitions. The thesis is organised into two parts, each consisting of two chapters.

Part One, begins with an Introduction to Part One that offers a brief overview of the methodology informing the study's analysis of heritage work. Chapter One of Part One is concerned with the reconceptualisation of Kazimierz that took place in the 1980s. It looks first at the exhibition on the Jewish past in a local museum, and analyses the image of the 'shtetl-romance,' a quaint, premodern Polish-Jewish town, crafted by the curators. It then proceeds to demonstrate how heritage preservationists translated this image into the practical language of urban planning, arguing that as part of this process Jewish relics were redefined as Polish heritage, which in turn cleared a path for their eventual revitalisation. Tracing rare cases of renovations through the 1980s, the chapter enquires into the limitations in place on heritage work during the last decade of Communist rule, and

explores the motivations of local activists. In so doing, it problematises Michael Meng's findings by proposing that mid-ranking local officials did, in fact, have a genuine interest in working through the problematic Polish-Jewish past.

Chapter Two of Part One investigates the creation of Jewish Spaces, defined by Diana Pinto as 'virtual space[s], present anywhere where Jews and non-Jews interact on Jewish themes or where a Jewish voice can make itself heard.'<sup>82</sup> It demonstrates how, following the transition to a free market economy, local entrepreneurs implemented ideas that had been generated a decade earlier by curators and preservationists. In effect, they turned Szeroka Street, one of the main avenues of Kazimierz, into a heritage theme park, full of restaurants, galleries, and bookshops utilising Jewish tropes. The chapter goes on to argue that the Jewish Space on Szeroka Street was complemented by two smaller memorial developments. Firstly, it discusses the process by which the Jewish Community reclaimed Kazimierz's Synagogues and designated them for the use of that minority. Secondly, it investigates how and why entrepreneurs from another Kazimierz site, the Nowy Square (a partying hub of the city), incorporated Jewish tropes into the décor of their pubs and cafés, and in the process offered a radically cosmopolitan definition of urban identity. The chapter argues that all three Jewish Spaces, often full of kitsch representations, contributed to the normalisation of Jewishness in Poland, and helped to dismantle the Otherness of the Jews.

Part Two builds on findings from Part One, and focuses on Holocaust museums. The Introduction to Part Two covers developments in museum theory, connects them to broader changes in cultural production, and demonstrates their importance for memory work. It highlights the importance of various modes of authentication of exhibitions, and explains how these modes impacted the creation of new memories. Chapter Three is concerned with the history of two Holocaust exhibitions, the first of which was unveiled in 1980 in the Old Synagogue in Kazimierz, and the second in 1983 in the Eagle Pharmacy in Podgórze, the site of the wartime Jewish ghetto. It investigates the activities of what Jay Winter calls 'fictive kinship,' a term used to characterise a group that shares (usually painful) memories and comes together to work through and express them.<sup>83</sup> The creators of the Eagle Pharmacy museum displayed a fictive kinship, and Chapter Three demonstrates how they skilfully manoeuvred around the institutions of the almost all-powerful state to

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<sup>82</sup> Diana Pinto, 'The Third Pillar? Toward a European Jewish Identity', *Jewish Studies Lecture Series* (Budapest: Central European University, 1999), p. 16.

<sup>83</sup> Jay Winter, 'Forms of Kinship and Remembrance in the Aftermath of the Great War', in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jay Winter and Emanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 40.

instil their own memories in Kraków. The result of their work was the creation of the first standalone Holocaust museum in Poland. The chapter then proceeds to demonstrate that members of fictive kinships, in efforts parallel to those of Western Jewish historians, defined the Holocaust as a unique crime. It investigates how activists isolated the narrative of the Jewish Genocide from the history of ethnic Polish Krakowians, but at the same time depicted the event as a vital part of the history of the city. Finally, the chapter shows that the exhibition in the Old Synagogue, albeit much smaller and more constrained, provided a similar narrative.

Chapter Four sheds light on post-Communist memory work in the Kraków museums. It interrogates the silence that prevailed during the 1990s, and elaborates on the sources of growing interest in memory after 2003. It then proceeds to analyse the ‘Restoring Memory’ campaign, which turned a section of Podgórze district into a multi-layered memorial consisting of a refurbished museum, a counter-monument, and a set of plaques. The chapter goes on to analyse the meanings of the 2010 exhibition held in the newly opened Schindler’s Factory Museum, and the 2013 exhibition from the yet-again-refurbished Eagle Pharmacy. It investigates the strategies taken by the curators to represent the stories of Polish and Jewish inhabitants of the city together, while at the same time maintaining the exceptionality of the Holocaust. It points toward the importance of new modes of authentication of museum production, and concludes by noting that the 2010 and 2013 exhibitions espoused cosmopolitan values to a higher degree than ever before, ceasing to depict Jews as the Other and insisting on presenting ethnic Poles and Jews as members of the same nation.

## **Background to the Study**

### **Setting the Symbolic Battlefield of Polish Memory**

In the Literature Review of the present study, I noted that numerous scholars identify 1989 as a breakthrough date for collective memory; Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, for example, describes the ‘break in the silence on World War II traumas and the subsequent emergence of globalised memory of those traumas.’<sup>84</sup> The fall of Communism did indeed bring about widespread political, economic, and social changes. State

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<sup>84</sup> Orla-Bukowska, ‘New Threads’, p. 195.

censorship was abolished, the publishing market released from the constraints enforced by the party-state, and redevelopment of the cities became dominated by independent companies guided by the invisible hand of the market.<sup>85</sup> The scale of change was such that Poles assumed the fall of the old system would affect equally all spheres of social life.<sup>86</sup> Seen from a distance of almost three decades, however, the changes associated with 1989 seem to constitute less a revolution than a transition. In the case of the Jewish past and the Holocaust, the changes brought about by 1989 were sparse; in fact, ideas developed before 1989 were carried into the new political reality. It was only toward the end of the 1990s that ‘things Jewish’ became popular and gained more importance. The thrust of developments that did take place directly after 1989 went in the direction of dealing with the Communist past, and filling the ‘White Spots’ – the topics banned under Party rule – on the map of historical knowledge. The names of streets across the country were changed, monuments were toppled, and statues commemorating forgotten heroes were erected.<sup>87</sup>

To understand Polish collective memory, we must first understand the ethno-nationalist interpretation of the past, being as it was far more widespread, favoured, and partially sponsored by both the PZPR and (albeit in a slightly altered version) the Church. Geneviève Zubrzycki, Lech Nijakowski, Joanna Michlic, and Brian Porter-Szücs<sup>88</sup> all comment extensively on the set of representations characteristic of this narrative and on the place of Jews within it, with Michlic noting that it ‘provides black and white interpretation of history.’<sup>89</sup> The traditional interpretation revolves primarily around the image of the Pole-martyr. It envisages Polish history as a continuous struggle against subjugation, in the Party version imposed by Germans and in the popular and Church interpretations by both Germans and Russians.<sup>90</sup> In this vision, Poles valiantly fought against barbaric hordes for centuries, and World War II is but a final entry in a lengthy log of such battles. Significantly, this ethno-nationalist interpretation is built on the assumption of Polish blamelessness; Poles never cooperated with the enemy, and were always faithful to the

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<sup>85</sup> On a phrase ‘party-state’ see Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, p. 61, see also: Anita Prażmowska, *Poland. A Modern History* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 228-231.

<sup>86</sup> Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, p. 24.

<sup>87</sup> For example: Orla-Bukowska, ‘New Threads’, p. 195-196, Ewa Ochman, ‘Soviet War Memorials and the Re-Construction of National and Local Identities in Post-Communist Poland’, *Nationalities Papers*, 38.4 (2010), p. 516, Lech M. Nijakowski, *Polska Polityka Pamięci. Esej Socjologiczny* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2008), pp. 123.

<sup>88</sup> Geneviève Zubrzycki, ‘„Oświęcim”/”Auschwitz”: Archaeology of a Mnemonic Battleground’, in *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, ed. by Erica Lehrer and Michael Meng (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, Nijakowski, Michlic, *Poland’s Threatening Other*, Brian Porter-Szücs, *Faith and Fatherland. Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>89</sup> Michlic, ‘The Dark Past’, p. 21.

<sup>90</sup> Orla-Bukowska, ‘New Threads’, pp. 181 and further, Nijakowski, pp. 114-115.

national cause.<sup>91</sup> Also significant is the way that this narrative revolves around the history of heroes, foregrounding important battles and the deeds of great men. It envisages history in a heavily binary fashion, wherein important figures could be either heroes or traitors, and other nations could be only hostile or sympathetic; there was no room for nuance in this clear-cut vision.<sup>92</sup> Translated to the Polish-Jewish relationship, this vision highlighted help and blamelessness. Ethnic Poles had done everything in their power to help Jews, seen as not-so-very-welcomed guests in the Polish home.<sup>93</sup> Aside from Polish help, the ethno-nationalist narrative tended to forget Polish Jews, and omitted other parts of their history.

Under PZPR rule, Polish textbooks did not mention the Jewish Genocide, the countryside was gradually purged of Jewish relics, and the former WWII death camps were turned into memorials for the heroic fights of Poles (and their Soviet brothers) against the Fascist.<sup>94</sup> Auschwitz, known in Polish as Oświęcim, became the ‘Polish Golgotha,’ one of the most important shrines of Polish martyrdom, with strong religious overtones. Both Zubrzycki and Huener comment extensively on this Polonisation and Christianisation of Auschwitz, with Huener demonstrating how the Jewish parts of the story had been eradicated from the Museum since its inception in 1947.<sup>95</sup> Among the few occasions that the Jewish Genocide was mentioned was during annual commemorations of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. However, as Renata Kobylarz demonstrates, these celebrations were thoroughly Polonised, and year after year the topic of choice was Polish help rather than Jewish suffering and military struggle.<sup>96</sup>

The reading of Polish history from the other end of the spectrum, the critical narrative, espoused a ‘nostalgia for the multiethnic past,’ and used it to ‘creat[e] a more civic and pluralistic society.’<sup>97</sup> The origins of this reading can be dated to as far back as the nineteenth century, but it grew in importance in the final decades of PZPR rule.<sup>98</sup> Throughout the early Communist period there was a degree of memorial conflict, and some

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<sup>91</sup> Orla-Bukowska, ‘New Threads’, p. 179.

<sup>92</sup> Korzeniewski, p. 8.

<sup>93</sup> Kobylarz, pp. 224-227.

<sup>94</sup> Robert Szuchta, ‘From Silence to Recognition. The Holocaust in Polish Education since 1989’, *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Making Holocaust Memory.*, 20 (2008), p. 305, Robert Kuwałek, ‘Obozy koncentracyjne i ośrodki zagłady jako miejsca pamięci’, in *Następstwa Zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944-2010*, ed. by Feliks Tych and Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2012), Janek Gryta, ‘Gedenkstätten in Den Nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungslagern in Den von Deutschland Besetzten Polnischen Gebieten. Die Geschichte Der Erinnerung Bis Zum Jahr 1968’, in *Gedenkstätten Für Die Opfer Des Nationalsozialismus in Polen Und Österreich: Bestandsaufnahme Und Entwicklungsperspektiven*, ed. by Irmgard Nöbauer and others (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2013).

<sup>95</sup> Zubrzycki, ‘„Oświęcim”/”Auschwitz”’, p. 21, Huener.

<sup>96</sup> Kobylarz

<sup>97</sup> Michlic, ‘The Dark Past’, p. 22.

<sup>98</sup> Nijakowski, p. 193.



intellectuals did offer interpretations different to those upheld by the State and the Church.<sup>99</sup> However, it was only in the 1970s and 1980s that this critical reflection erupted into the foreground, having been constructed by the anti-Communist intelligentsia and supported by some sections of the Church. These decades were characterised by a duality in cultural life; discredited Communist governments managed ‘official,’ highly censored cultural production, while the (often illegal) opposition and the Church developed their own modes of creation. A huge disparity existed between official and unofficial – whether oppositional or Church – discourses, which were nonetheless connected and mutually influential. Significantly, oppositional cultural life existed only in limited forms and via limited media, while the clandestine press, samizdat publications, and rare meetings in parish halls were addressed mostly to the intellectual elite of the country, the intelligentsia.<sup>100</sup>

Given the history of Poland, a re-examination of the Polish-Jewish past became a key item on the agenda of the exponents of the critical approach. Krystyna Kersten and Jerzy Szapiro, who examined the stance of the oppositional elite in the 1970s and 1980s, demonstrate that there ‘was the need for authentic – and not-illusory and alibi-creating – absolution for the sin of indifference towards anti-Jewish actions and for their silent concealment especially when they were undertaken by Poles.’<sup>101</sup> This short quotation simultaneously confirms that there was genuine interest in engagement with the Jewish past among some activists, and explains the limitations of that interest. Kersten, the co-author of this statement, was the one of the foremost Polish specialists on Polish-Jewish relations and published extensively on the subject.<sup>102</sup> Yet as late as 1990 she continued to focus on the ‘sin of indifference’ and only marginally mentioned some, limited Polish involvement in ‘anti-Jewish actions.’<sup>103</sup> Polish scholarship of the time thus did not reveal the extent of Polish crimes. It was assumed that Poles either extended help or were indifferent, and that only the socially marginal – the infamous *szmalcownicy* – may have committed occasional, rare crimes.<sup>104</sup> With time and new research, however, this understanding did evolve.

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<sup>99</sup> Korzeniewski, pp. 13-15, Orla-Bukowska, ‘New Threads’, pp. 181-191.

<sup>100</sup> Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, pp. 60 and further, Prażmowska, pp. 201-203.

<sup>101</sup> Krystyna Kersten and Jerzy Szapiro, ‘The Contexts of the So-Called Jewish Question in Poland after World War II’, *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Poles and Jews: Perceptions and Misperceptions*, 4 (1990), p. 265.

<sup>102</sup> Krystyna Kersten, *Polacy-Żydzi-Komunizm. Anatomia Półprawd 1939-1968* (Warszawa: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1992).

<sup>103</sup> Ibidem, p. 265.

<sup>104</sup> Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, *The Holocaust and Coming to Terms with the Past in Post Communist Poland*, Ina Levine Annual Lecture, USHMM, p. 3.

Unsurprisingly, new interpretations developed amid controversies and conflicts. Only after heated public debates or confrontations were new meanings and representations created and disseminated. Even the proponents of the critical interpretation of the Polish past needed time to reconcile with new information; as the subsequent pages demonstrate, even these individuals and groups often reacted with disbelief or hostility to these new details. In addition, even under Communism, with the Iron Curtain still in place, the critique of Polish memory was never solely a Polish affair. International influence in one form or another could be observed from, at the latest, the mid-1970s.

Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, in her groundbreaking study of memory of ‘things Jewish’ under the Communism, identified the 1968 anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist campaign as a starting point for the excavation of the multiethnic past. In a paradoxical turn of events, the largely forgotten Jewish past was brought to the fore by the government, which in a series of inter-Party, anti-Semitic purges reminded Poles of the existence of the Jews, and the Polish intelligentsia was thus forced to confront the Jewish past.<sup>105</sup> Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the progressive Catholic intelligentsia represented by the Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia (Kluby Inteligencji Katolickiej – KIKs) initiated debates and lectures, while at the same time ‘hidden’ Jews began to uncover their identities.<sup>106</sup> Both the Church and the clandestine press published extensively on Jewish topics,<sup>107</sup> and sweeping changes took place in academia. Scholars began to research topics other than Polish support for the Jews, which had been ubiquitous in previous years, and ties with Western universities were established. One outcome of this international cooperation was the inception in 1986 of *POLIN: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, now a prestigious title.<sup>108</sup>

The events of 1968 were first in the line of controversies that shook up Polish memory. The next series of changes came in the early 1980s, and once again were caused by a rather perplexing decision on the part of the PZPR and Wojciech Jaruzelski’s government. First, in 1983, the government agreed to organise a large-scale, international commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The decision was made two years after the imposition of martial law, a move heavily criticised by Western leaders, and the PZPR sought to appease their European and American partners and representatives of Jewish organisations, believing that Jewish bankers could be

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<sup>105</sup> Irwin-Zarecka, pp. 86-89.

<sup>106</sup> Ibidem, pp. 75, 90.

<sup>107</sup> Steinlauf, p. 99 and further.

<sup>108</sup> Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland*, p. 7, Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, ‘Gentiles Doing Jewish Stuff: The Contributions of Polish Non-Jews to Polish Jewish Life’, in *Rethinking Poles and Jews. Troubled Past, Brighter Future*, ed. by Robert Cherry and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2007), p. 199.

persuaded to help Poland out of its dire economic situation.<sup>109</sup> The 1983 commemoration was much bigger, much better publicised, and with a higher number of international guests than ever before. The event was meticulously planned, but there was barely any place for the involvement of Polish Jews, let alone of individuals associated with the opposition. Interestingly, the opposition organised a separate commemoration, which took place two days earlier than the official one. The official celebrations focused on Polish help; that of the opposition, meanwhile, was envisaged as a more sensitive commemoration of Jewish losses.<sup>110</sup>

The second occasion in which the Jaruzelski's government unwittingly forced society to confront the Holocaust was following the premiere of Claud Lanzmann's *Shoah* in France in 1985. The PZPR was, at this point, still trying to regain legitimacy after the martial law catastrophe. Combating a French 'slander' appeared to be the perfect opportunity to improve the Party's image.<sup>111</sup> While the regime's objectives behind the campaign were short-term and tactical, however, the consequences of the *Shoah* debate were long-lasting and far more profound. For the first time since the War, Poles were confronted with accusations of having been bystanders, who in some – albeit nebulous – way were entangled in Nazi crimes. Although the vast majority of discussants in the official, Church, and clandestine press alike advocated for the 'defence of Polish national honour and morality,' the debate was still a milestone.<sup>112</sup> It laid the groundwork for yet another debate, one often described as the first watershed in the Polish memory of the Holocaust.<sup>113</sup>

In 1987, two years after the *Shoah* controversy, the literary critic Jan Błoński wrote 'Poor Poles look at the Ghetto.'<sup>114</sup> Published in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, the magazine of the lay Catholic intelligentsia and one of the most influential periodicals of the 1980s, the article sparked a fierce debate. Błoński wrote of the guilt of bystanders, of people who did not do enough to help. Thus, once again, there was an attempt to shift the image from that of 'Poles-helpers' to that of 'Poles-bystanders.' In contrast to Lanzmann, however, Błoński

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<sup>109</sup> Kobylarz, p. 317.

<sup>110</sup> Steinlauf, p. 108.

<sup>111</sup> Ewa Ochman, 'The Search for Legitimacy in Post-Martial Law Poland: The Case of Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*', *Cold War History*, 6.4 (2006), p 520.

<sup>112</sup> Steinlauf, p. 112.

<sup>113</sup> Piotr Wróbel, 'Double Memory: Poles and Jews after the Holocaust', *East European Politics and Societies*, 1997, p. 4

<sup>114</sup> for Błoński's text and further debate see *My Brother's Keeper?'. Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*, ed. by Antony Polonsky (London: Routledge, 1990).

succeeded, at least to some extent, and the new trope was recognised by intellectual elites.<sup>115</sup>

The mid- and late 1980s were a time of yet more challenges to Polish official memory, brought about by the controversy caused by installation of a Carmelite convent in a building adjacent to the site of the Auschwitz Museum. Nuns were to pray for the camp's victims; however, Jewish organisations, mostly from the USA and Israel, protested that 'for Catholic prayers to be said at this massive Jewish graveyard would be to desecrate the memory of the dead.'<sup>116</sup> Only in 1993, and after the intervention of the Pope, did the Polish Catholic Church remove the convent. During the conflict, which straddled the Communist and post-Communist periods, the Polish public was for the first time confronted with the Western understanding of Auschwitz as the most important memorial of the Holocaust.

The transition to democracy had little impact on memory work on the Holocaust. One of the only changes it brought about directly was an amendment to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum. Before 1989, the Museum had stated that 4 million were killed in the gas chambers of Birkenau, and highlighted the mix of nationalities present among the victims. Jews were represented either under Ż, for Żydzi, meaning Jew, or under I for Israeli.<sup>117</sup> While changes were considered as early as the 1970s, it was only in the 1990s that museum employees were allowed to decrease the number of victims to a more accurate 1,100,000-1,500,000, and to inform visitors of the unique fate of Jews in the camp.<sup>118</sup>

A typical example of the relative lack of interest in the Holocaust in the aftermath of the fall of Communism can be found in the non-controversy of 1994, when Michał Cichy published an article in the newly established liberal daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* entitled 'Poles and Jews: Black Pages in the Annals of the Warsaw Uprising,' which accused the Home Army and National Armed Forces of killing Jews during the 1944 Uprising.<sup>119</sup> Leading Polish public historians confirmed his information, while numerous outraged commentators refuted it.<sup>120</sup> This very limited debate confirmed, once again, the existence

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<sup>115</sup> Ibidem, p. 1 and further.

<sup>116</sup> Irwin-Zarecka, p. 154.

<sup>117</sup> Huener, p. 132.

<sup>118</sup> Sławomir Kaprański, 'Od milczenia do "Trudnej Pamięci". Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau i jego Rola w dyskursie publicznym', in *Następstwa Zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944-2010*, ed. by Feliks Tych and Monika Adameczyk-Garbowska (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2012), p. 539, Franciszek Piper, *Ilu Ludzi Zginęło W KL Auschwitz* (Oświęcim: Wydawnictwo Państwowego Muzeum, 1992), p. 12.

<sup>119</sup> Michał Cichy, 'Polacy – Żydzi. Czarne Karty Powstania', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29 January 1994.

<sup>120</sup> Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia. Volume III, 1914-2008* (Oxford - Portland: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), p. 821.

of a rupture in Polish memory; however, it had almost no bearing on the popular understanding of the past.

Soon after Cichy's publication, the second act of the Auschwitz controversy played out. In 1998, the Polish government announced that a cross, a remnant of the already-relocated convent, would be moved. Instantly, protests erupted. Individuals from across the country began to descend on Oświęcim to erect more crosses, creating what the media termed the 'valley of the crosses.' As supporters of the ethno-nationalist interpretation of the Polish past, these individuals defended the Polishness of Oświęcim. At the same time, proponents of the critical narrative sought to renegotiate the meaning of Auschwitz. Meanwhile, international organisations, the Israeli government, and American congressmen pressured the Polish government to move the crosses, suggesting that the controversy could obstruct Poland's access to NATO.<sup>121</sup> The Polish government was thus obliged to negotiate pressure coming from various sections of the Polish population and from international organisations.<sup>122</sup> 'Global concerns' thus 'became part and parcel of everyday local experiences.'<sup>123</sup> Eventually, after lengthy debate, new legislation was passed and the crosses were removed; however, the Papal cross remained.<sup>124</sup> The intensity of the clash was such that the meaning of Auschwitz as a Jewish site was firmly instilled in the Polish memory. Nonetheless, this new knowledge was never fully accepted by some sections of the population.<sup>125</sup>

In the wake of the War of the Crosses, and while negotiating accession to the European Union, the Polish government officially yielded to pressure to accommodate the Holocaust in the state memorial canon. In 2000, Poland signed the Stockholm Declaration and joined the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, thereby formally acknowledging the Western Holocaust narrative. The Jewish Genocide was to be recognised as one of the key events and main tragedies of the Second World War.<sup>126</sup> James Mark observes that 'remembering the Holocaust was considered a vital part of "being European" by many western European political elites.'<sup>127</sup> In addition, he notes that both NATO and the EU insisted that Eastern European countries, including Poland, accommodate the Western modes of Holocaust

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<sup>121</sup> Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, pp. 8-13.

<sup>122</sup> Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland*, p. 3-37.

<sup>123</sup> Smagacz-Poziemska, p. 5. Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 3.

<sup>124</sup> Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, p. 13-14.

<sup>125</sup> Zubrzycki, '„Oświęcim”/”Auschwitz”', p. 34.

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/member-countries>, [accessed 29 July 2014].

<sup>127</sup> Mark, p. 95.

commemoration, observation most recently confirmed by Marek Kucia.<sup>128</sup> In the case of Poland, the EU pressure strengthened the critical approach that had advocated for the reintroduction of Jewish suffering to the canon of Polish memory.

A further controversy, and one that shaped Polish memory in an unprecedented manner, came in 2000 with the publication of Jan Tomasz Gross's *Neighbors*.<sup>129</sup> Michlic, who analysed the debate, goes so far as to coin the term 'Gross effect,' highlighting the significance of the debate.<sup>130</sup> Gross, a Polish-Jewish historian and sociologist working in the United States, describes Jedwabne, a small town in northern Poland where, during the Nazi occupation, Poles killed their Jewish neighbours. The debate that followed is incomparable to any other, in terms of both size and importance. Government and official institutions were forced to act. The minister of foreign affairs attempted to appease the international community, particularly high-ranking members of the Jewish diaspora. The IPN, the government agency in charge of memory work, initiated an official investigation. The president began to mediate between interest groups, and eventually organised a commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the killings, during which he apologised to the Jewish community.<sup>131</sup> Some sections of the population acknowledged Gross's findings; others were prepared to accept the grave truth only if it was confirmed by Polish scholars and the IPN; still others rejected what they believed were false accusations. Some went so far as to refute Gross's findings, accusing him of plotting against the nation and suggesting that by publishing the book he sought to force the Polish government to pay reparations for lost Jewish property. Most were upset with the president for apologising too early. This line of conflict divided every group in Polish society: the government, parliament and the president's administration, the scholarly community, the Church, the media.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, the debate added another important idiom to the Polish collective memory: that of 'Poles-perpetrators.' It was now possible to talk about Poles killing Jews.

In the early 1980s, then, it was believed that Poles commonly helped Jews. After the Błoński intervention, the idea of bystanders began to be accepted. In early 2000, the publication of *Neighbors* introduced the idea of Poles being co-responsible for the

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<sup>128</sup> Mark, p. 95, Marek Kucia, 'The Europeanization of Holocaust Memory and Eastern Europe', *East European Politics & Societies*, 30.1 (2016), p. 102 and further. See also Mälksoo, Onken.

<sup>129</sup> Jan Tomasz Gross, *Sąsiedzi: Historia Zagłady Żydowskiego miasteczka*, ed. by Pogranicze (Sejny, 2000), English edition 2001. For the discussion see *The Neighbors Respond. The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, ed. by Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>130</sup> Michlic, 'The Dark Past', p. 25.

<sup>131</sup> Ewa Wolentarska-Ochman, 'Collective Remembrance in Jedwabne: Unsettled Memory of World War II in Postcommunist Poland', *History & Memory*, 18.1 (2006), pp. 170-171.

<sup>132</sup> Michlic, 'The Dark Past', pp. 27-34.

Holocaust. The rhythm of Polish memory work had been set by controversies and debates. In the wake of the aforementioned conflicts, developments in other fields, such as education, followed. On one hand, from 1990 onward teachers gained a greater degree of flexibility in choosing textbooks and study materials, and some of the most popular books did indeed cover the Holocaust.<sup>133</sup> On the other, the curriculum only required coverage of Polish help during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.<sup>134</sup> Teachers were allowed to expand on these topics, but they were rarely able to, not least because many had been educated in the PRL and had little knowledge of the Holocaust. To support these teachers, a number of teacher training programmes were created.<sup>135</sup>

One of the few fields that underwent a genuine revolution just after the fall of Communism was the memory of the non-Holocaust Jewish past. Jewish literature, already popular in the final years of Communism, became widely read. In the 1980s, for example, only four of Isaac Bashevis Singer's books were published in Poland; by the end of the first half of the 1990s, twenty-one new publications had been added.<sup>136</sup> Festivals of Jewish culture became popular across the country. A grass-roots initiative from Kraków, the Festival of Jewish Culture, was initiated as early as 1989.<sup>137</sup> Warsaw, Łódź, and numerous smaller centres soon followed.<sup>138</sup> It is my claim that this interest in 'things Jewish,' and engagement with Jewish culture, foreshadowed Poland's coming to terms with the Holocaust. As Part One demonstrates, Kraków was at the forefront of those changes. Local activists broke ground for heritage work throughout the country. The Festival of Jewish Culture was but one example. The reconstruction of Kazimierz initiated a wave of renovation of Jewish sites, mainly synagogues, across the country, which eventually reached even the smallest towns.<sup>139</sup>

## **Kraków: Sources of Urban Memory**

Collective memories sometimes appear to balance on the verge of fiction; however, they always relate to history, at least to some extent. In the case of Kraków, the local past

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<sup>133</sup> Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, *So Many Questions*, p. 274.

<sup>134</sup> Szuchta, p. 307.

<sup>135</sup> Ibidem, p. 312.

<sup>136</sup> Steinlauf, p. 127.

<sup>137</sup> For detailed analysis of the Festival Chapter Two, pp. 96-98.

<sup>138</sup> Ruth Ellen Gruber, 'Beyond Virtually Jewish: New Authenticities and Real Imaginary Spaces in Europe', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 99.4 (2009), 487-504, p. 492-195.

<sup>139</sup> Marta Duch-Dyngosz, 'Rekolekcje narodowe', *ZNAK*, Kwiecień 2015.

was rich with stories about the Jews, who settled in the city around the time of its foundation. Writes Joanna Michlic in her thorough study of Jews as the Polish Other:

In premodern Poland, as everywhere in Western Christendom, the position of Jews had a dual character. On the hand, Jews had a recognized position guaranteed by charters and performed some occupations that were crucial to the functioning of premodern society, such as trading, banking, and money lending, and minting. At the same time they were a pariah group espousing a despised religion, tolerated only to demonstrate the truth of Christianity.<sup>140</sup>

This short passage encapsulates the history of Jews in Kraków. Kraków, along with Kazimierz, had been a focal point of the community's development since at least the thirteenth century, and grew to be recognised as the 'Galician Jerusalem' and 'one of the most important Jewish religious and cultural centres north of the Alps.'<sup>141</sup> The city hosted some of the best-known yeshivas, and rabbis renowned across the continent lived there. At the same time, however, this history was marred by constant conflict with the Christian majority, a conflict that occasionally erupted into violence. This story repeated itself in cycles, from the early Middle Ages, through the early modern period, and even up to the present day.

In more recent times, at the onset of the Second World War anti-Semitism in Kraków and in Poland was on the rise once again. In comparison to the rest of the country, however, in Kraków this prejudice was moderate, and Polonsky goes so far as to state that 'Kraków was probably the city with the most harmonious Polish-Jewish relations.'<sup>142</sup> The Second World War, and the Nazi invasion that engulfed Poland in 1939, ruptured the history of Kraków's Jewish minority forever. Kraków, the capital of General Government – a state-like entity fully dependent to the Reich – was designated to become *judenrein*, a Jew-free city. Initial stigmatisation, circumscription of freedoms, imposition of forced and often humiliating labour, and random acts of violence were succeeded by mass deportations and the creation of a Ghetto. In mid-1940, most Jews were forced to leave the city. The remaining few were moved to Podgórze, where in March 1941 the Ghetto was created. Subsequently, in the June and October *Aktionen* of 1942, most of them were sent

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<sup>140</sup> Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other*, p. 27-28.

<sup>141</sup> Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky, 'Introduction', in *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Jews in Krakow*, ed. by Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky (Oxford - Portland: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011), p. 6.

<sup>142</sup> Polonsky, *The Jews*, p. 140.



to Belżec. Before the final liquidation of the Ghetto, in mid-March 1943, Plaszow Camp, for both Jewish and Polish inmates, was created in southern Podgórze. To make way for the Camp, the Nazis levelled two Jewish cemeteries. The history of the Camp is associated with two names. The first is Amon Goeth, notorious for his cruelty; the longest-serving commander of the Camp. The second is Oskar Schindler, a Nazi entrepreneur, who employed Jews in his factory/sub-camp, and ultimately succeeded in saving some 1,300 inmates. Those he saved were amongst the very few that survived Plaszow; the rest were sent to Belżec and Auschwitz.<sup>143</sup> While still in the Ghetto, young Jews tried to organise a local branch of the Jewish Fighting Organisation. While it never became more than a group of friends, the branch was responsible for acts of sabotage, and a few direct attacks on Nazis.<sup>144</sup>

The end of the War did not spell the end of violence for the Jewish minority in Poland. Kraków, in fact, witnessed one of the first post-War pogroms, on August 11, 1945, when a mob attacked Jews in Kupa Synagogue, killing some of them.<sup>145</sup> The returnees that tried to rebuild Jewish life in Kazimierz had to face not only the anti-Semitism of the local population, but also that of the Communist government. The majority of these returnees were forced to leave, in three subsequent waves of emigration: in 1945-47, in 1956, and after the infamous 'anti-Zionist' campaign of 1968. Nevertheless, albeit impoverished and small, the Congregation of Mosaic Faith survived, and formed an uneasy relationship with the Party. Even in the early post-war years, the Congregation was not a large organisation, but as time passed it dwindled even further. By 1987, the Congregation had only 140 registered members.<sup>146</sup> Edyta Gawron, the author of a history of the organisation, notes that in the 1980s there were barely any Jews in Kraków with sufficiently thorough religious knowledge to be capable of leading prayers; moreover the Congregation consisted mostly of elderly members.<sup>147</sup> The lack of young and active Jews and Jews well versed in religious rules had a direct impact on the relics in Kazimierz and beyond. As the subsequent pages demonstrate, Krakowian Jews were able to contribute to memory work only in a limited manner.

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<sup>143</sup> Ryszard Kotarba, *Niemiecki obóz w Plaszowie 1942-1945* (Warszawa - Kraków, 2009), p. 23-24.

<sup>144</sup> Galas & Polosnky, p. 46.

<sup>145</sup> Ibidem, p. 46.

<sup>146</sup> Kraków, APK, 'UMK Wydział do spraw wyznań, Gmina Żydowska w Krakowie,' Sig. 29/1431/409, fol. 233.

<sup>147</sup> Edyta Gawron, 'Społeczność Żydowska W Krakowie W Latach 1945-1995' (Jagiellonian University, 2005), p. 115.

# Part One

## Defining Heritage Work

In 1971, the newly-appointed First Secretary of the PZPR decided to rebuild the Royal Castle in Warsaw, in order to gain legitimacy and support.<sup>1</sup> In 1976 an American Rabbi flew to Kraków to accuse the local authorities of profaning one of the city's synagogues.<sup>2</sup> In 1978 the Communist government sponsored the inclusion of Kraków, its Old Town, and Kazimierz on the first UNESCO World Heritage List.<sup>3</sup> All those seemingly unrelated events have one thing in common: they reveal the importance of heritage for memory work, identity creation, and even daily politics. Part One of this study charts and analyses heritage work in Kazimierz, Kraków, while the present section conceptualises and defines the term and locates it in relation to memory work.

Following Sharon Macdonald, who sees heritage work as an 'especially efficacious' aspect of memory work, this thesis also recognises that heritage work is itself a subcategory of memory work.<sup>4</sup> Not only can it reorganise cityscapes, but it also 'validates certain groups (and not others).'<sup>5</sup> Representation of a minority group in the cityscape 'validates' that group, elevating it to the rank of important constituent of the host group. In other words, spatial reconfigurations translate directly into reconfigurations of identities. Macdonald elaborates her point by adding that 'heritage turns past into something visitable [...],' suggesting therefore that researchers should analyse 'the ways in which heritage makes the past's presence felt.'<sup>6</sup> In her view, heritage creation constitutes a privileged way of understanding how the past is used to shape identity.

As the growth of heritage studies demonstrates, there is now consensus among researchers as to the importance of heritage. There is, however, no such agreement on how exactly to research and define it. Monika Murzyn-Kupisz,<sup>7</sup> whose research is an important point of reference for next two chapters, subscribes to what can be termed the conservative

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<sup>1</sup> Marcin Zaręba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nNacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy Komunistycznej w Polsce* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2005), p. 358

<sup>2</sup> APK, 'UMK Wydział,' Sig. 29/1431/409, fols. 217-19.

<sup>3</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/29bis.pdf>, p. 11, accessed 25/11/14.

<sup>4</sup> Macdonald, *Memorylands*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Murzyn, *Kazimierz*.

strand in research. This strand takes the existence of heritage for granted. Instead of looking at its creation, researchers focus on management, and practical issues of day-to-day maintenance, for example vis-à-vis global tourism.<sup>8</sup> This thesis, however, subscribes to a different critical approach.<sup>9</sup> Working in this alternative strand, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett defines heritage as ‘a new mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past.’<sup>10</sup> In this reading, ruins and relics have no *a priori* meaning or place in the cultures of societies. They are but a resource, and have to be discovered and turned into heritage.

Heritage work is, therefore, a variation of memory work. Defining memory work, I quoted Iwona Irwin-Zarecka who discusses ‘bits and pieces of remembrance’ and describes the ‘raw material’ of memory that has to be ‘edited’ and ‘presented.’<sup>11</sup> In heritage work, the ‘raw materials’ are ruins. They have to be discovered, defined, revitalised, and presented to the public, and in this process memory and identity are altered. Seen from this perspective, memory work and heritage creation become two sides of the same coin. Memory work focuses on memories and museum, while heritage looks exclusively at ruins. Memory work is concerned with commemoration, heritage with preservation.<sup>12</sup> Heritage work is thus a convenient lens through which to view Kazimierz, a district full of material relics with the potential for preservation. Memory work, meanwhile, allows for analysis of developments in museums and around memorials that were created from scratch to commemorate the past.

Existing analysis of heritage work focuses on two main problems. Firstly, it examines the motives of activists. As Steven Hoelscher poetically reminds us, ‘lurking just below the surface of the reclamation of a heritage are the needs, the interests, and affairs of a present generation.’<sup>13</sup> Only through looking at ‘the needs and the interests’ of actors can the full meanings of the products they deliver be discerned; in this way, we can understand what the actors were trying to say, and which aspects of the past they wanted to validate. Secondly, focusing on the process rather than on the ready product allows for the

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<sup>8</sup> Marc Askew, ‘The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States’, in *Heritage and Globalisation*, ed. by Sophia Labadi and Colin Long (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), Mary-Catherine E. Garden, ‘The Heritagescape: Looking at Landscapes of the Past’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 12.5 (2006), 394–411.

<sup>9</sup> On that distinction between conservative and critical see also Macdonald, *Memorylands*, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture. Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), p.149.

<sup>11</sup> Irwin-Zarecka, p. 104., see also Introduction, pp. 21–22.

<sup>12</sup> Macdonald, *Memorylands*, p.3.

<sup>13</sup> Steven Hoelscher, ‘Heritage’, in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Blackwell Reference Online, 2006), p 205.

identification of patterns and strategies of heritage work, in places where more conservative researchers see only failures in maintenance. Michael Meng highlights that ‘rather than arguing that tourism and nostalgia have simply produced kitschy, inauthentic spaces,’ it is far more productive to ‘unearth the deeper political and cultural meanings of restoring the Jewish past in the urban environment.’<sup>14</sup> He explains that categories such as kitsch, inauthenticity, and nostalgia can be used analytically, to better understand heritage creation. Macdonald echoes this statement and points out that nostalgia can be, and historically has been, used by minorities to create narratives oppositional to mainstream interpretations of history.<sup>15</sup>

This thesis argues that memory work in Kraków underwent urbanisation, and that it focused on local topics and offered interpretations oppositional to state-sponsored (under Communism) or simply more widespread (post-1989) narratives. Local activists espoused a critical understanding of the Polish past, and they used various strategies of heritage creation to strengthen their claims. Producing kitsch or inauthentic heritage sites often allowed actors to work ‘under the radar’ and instil their interpretations of the past in a field dominated by stronger players. In addition, from the point of view of the present analysis, the quality of heritage sites does not matter as long as they evoke memory.

The evocation of nostalgia thus comes to the fore in this study as one of the most important strategies used by heritage creators. Defining the term in her seminal *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym writes that it constitutes ‘an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world’<sup>16</sup> and adds that it can take the form of ‘attempts at transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home.’<sup>17</sup> For Krakowians, its allure lay precisely in those qualities. It offered a means of escaping from a bleak reality into an imagined world, where life made sense, communities endured unmoved, and home provided safety. Heritage preservationists motivated by nostalgic longing offered images of Kazimierz as a peaceful shtetl – a home for both Poles and Jews. This vision stood in stark contrast to the exclusionary and divisive narratives propagated by the Communist government and which, even after the fall of the party-state, remained popular in the ethno-nationalist interpretation of the past.

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<sup>14</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 12-13.

<sup>15</sup> Macdonald, *Memorylands*, p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. xiv.

<sup>17</sup> Boym, p. xviii.

A second strategy used in Kazimierz that became especially popular after 1989 was the production of heritage kitsch. Kitsch 'is mechanical and operates by formulas'<sup>18</sup> and offers 'the vividly recognizable, the miraculous, the sympathetic.'<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it 'pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money.'<sup>20</sup> For Clement Greenberg, author of this definition, those features were reason for critique. He dismissed easy and formulaic works, pointing to the mercantile motivations of their creators. While Greenberg was right to demand cultural production of higher quality, this thesis indicates the benefits of kitsch. Post-Communist Kazimierz was justifiably criticised for turning some of its Jewish sites into kitsch, tourist-oriented products. However, while offering kitsch, actors also grappled with contentious and complicated topics. They strived to normalise the role of the Jew in Polish culture, and attempted to work through a complicated Polish-Jewish history, providing narratives on problematic topics that were sufficiently easy to digest for a general public with absolutely no foreknowledge of Jewish topics. Kitsch and nostalgia thus both proved useful as part of a kind of heritage creation that aimed to offer narratives oppositional to the most widespread interpretations of the past.

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<sup>18</sup> Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

## **Chapter One: Ragged Houses and Candlelight: The Romance of the Jewish Past and Heritage Production under Communist Rule**

Jews have lived across Kraków, from the Old Town, to Podgórze, to Stradom, and in many other neighbourhoods. However, they were always associated first and foremost with Kazimierz, the biggest hub of Jewish sites in the city. Numerous synagogues and prayer houses, communal sites and schools gave the quarter a Jewish look and feel. After the extermination of the Jewish community at the hands of the Nazis, Kazimierz and its architecture continued to attest to a long and rich Jewish past. Overlooked and forgotten in the first post-war years, by the 1980s Jewish ruins were recognised as an important part of Kraków's heritage. In the space of ten years, the local mid-ranking Polish elite set out to redefine Kazimierz. New narratives reimagined the Jewish Quarter as a peaceful and quaint shtetl where cohabitation between Poles and Jews was possible. This story was first told in the local museum, and was later translated into the cityscape by heritage preservationists. In this way, the first attempts at symbolically bringing back the Jew, albeit still as the Other of the Polish nation, were made. A crucial aspect of the process of redefining Kazimierz was the reappropriation of Jewish ruins and their subsequent introduction into Polish heritage. Poles moved from the position of stewards to that of 'co-heirs' (Jewish *symbolic* ownership was never contested). This process opened the way for systematic heritage creation. The developments that took place in the 1980s were mostly conceptual; the country's persistent state of economic and political crisis did not allow for major revitalisation projects to be carried out. It was only in the 1990s that the ideas devised under Communist rule were enacted, and a set of Jewish Spaces was created in Kazimierz.

The redefinition of Kazimierz that took place in the 1980s was possible because of state-wide changes. In the mid-1970s, the central government began to change its attitude toward relics of the past and this included Jewish relics. Positive references to the history were validated as a part of new propaganda toolkit.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, by 1974 the government had ordered Kraków's authorities to prioritise the protection and renovation of

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<sup>1</sup> Zaręba, p. 358 – 365.

built heritage in Kraków.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it sponsored the inclusion of Kraków, its Old Town, and Kazimierz on the first UNESCO World Heritage List in 1978.<sup>3</sup> The successful listing by UNESCO – and on the first ever List – was a prestigious success that was followed by concrete actions on the ground, and in December 1978 the Citizens' Committee for the Renovation of Kraków's Monuments (Społeczny Komitet Odnowy Zabytków Krakowa, SKOZK), a well-funded organisation sponsoring revitalisation projects, was formed. The new approach of the central government incentivised local activists to focus on Kazimierz.

Analysis of the redefinition of Kazimierz, and of changes in the quarter's landscape, is conducted through the prism of the Synagogues. The architecture and style of the large part of Kazimierz was identical or similar to that of other central districts of Kraków. Synagogues were among the only buildings that stood out and allowed for the identification of part of Kazimierz as the Jewish town. Their importance was twofold: they were both the most visible signs of a Jewish past, *and* were recognised by activists as Jewish relics *per se*. As a result, analysing how the synagogues were treated is necessary to understand the preservationists' stance on the Jewish past. Only this perspective allows full understanding of activists' plans and visions of Kazimierz as a whole.

This chapter begins with an overview of Kazimierz and its Jewish sites in 1980. A look at Szeroka Street leads to an analysis of the archival scenario of the exhibition from the museum opened in the Old Synagogue in 1980.<sup>4</sup> After dissecting the multi-layered meanings of the exhibition, I turn to an analysis of writings on local preservation. Taking *pars pro toto* the 'Study' prepared by Bogusław Krasnowolski, I demonstrate how preservationists translated the abstract ideas sketched out by the MHK to the practical language of city planning.<sup>5</sup> This leads to an analysis of the correspondence and memos of the WUOZ and WW. Those documents shed light on the limited revitalisations of the Synagogues and allow for commentary on the role of the Jewish Congregation and city authorities in the 1980s. Here, I further analyse the problematic elements of the first steps toward the cosmopolitanisation of urban memory taken in the 1980s.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://bip.malopolska.pl/zrzzkrakow/Article/get/id\\_394266.html](http://bip.malopolska.pl/zrzzkrakow/Article/get/id_394266.html), accessed 24/11/14.

<sup>3</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/29bis.pdf>, p. 11, accessed 25/11/14.

<sup>4</sup> Kraków, AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała 'Z Dziejów i Kultury Żydów w Krakowie,' 1979-1981,' Syg. 157/3.

<sup>5</sup> Kraków, AWUOZ, 'Kraków. Kazimierz ze Stradomiem i dawną Łąką św. Sebastiana. Studium historyczno-urbanistyczne. Studium urbanistyczno-konserwatorskie,' Sig. 9897/85.

# Redefining Kazimierz

## Looking at the Old Jewish Quarter in 1980

In 1980, Kazimierz was one of the most neglected areas of Kraków. The post-War city authorities had no clear idea what to do with the largely owner-less district, filled with the remnants of a culture of the Other. As a result of the Krakowian populace's reverence for the remnants of the past,<sup>6</sup> a lack of funds, and lack of any real need, authorities never razed it to the ground. As both Michael Meng and Sławomir Kaprański demonstrate, the demolition of Jewish quarters was a common practice after the War in cities and towns across the country.<sup>7</sup> The fact that Kazimierz was preserved attests to the specificity of Kraków, and furthermore had a profound impact on memory work in later years.



Figure 1: Map of Kazimierz with most important Jewish relics

<sup>6</sup> Dabrowski, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 137-138. Sławomir Kaprański, '(Mis)representation of Jewish Past in Poland's Memoryscape: Nationalism, Religion, and Political Economies of Commemoration', in *Curating Difficult Knowledge Violent Pasts in Public Places*, ed. by Erica Lehrer, Cynthia Milton, and Monica Patterson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p 52.



Instead of pulling Kazimierz down, authorities banished the district to oblivion by settling people from the margins of society in the area. A predominately poor population soon filled the old tenements, and there was no one to take care for the district since the authorities saw no reason to invest there. Buildings, and ultimately entire streets, fell into disrepair. The worsening state of the tenements gave rise to a wave of demolitions; Kupa Street (one of the shortest in Kazimierz), for example, almost ceased to exist. However, the total number of buildings pulled down was never high, and so the area did not lose its style or overall ‘look.’ At the same time, however, the social makeup of the district changed for good. Sources from the 1980s emphasise Kazimierz’s ‘underclass’ as one of the reasons for the poor state of the area.<sup>8</sup> The situation became so severe that the Jewish Quarter was on the verge of becoming a ‘no-go’ zone. Monika Murzyn-Kupisz attributes this problem to a lack of investment, noting that even in the early 1990s Kazimierz’s infrastructure remained among the worst in the city, with numerous flats lacking basic amenities such as toilets and hot running water.<sup>9</sup>

In this dilapidated and half-forgotten district, there remained clear signs of Jewishness. In contrast to other central districts of the city, where street names were changed to reflect the canon of Communist heroes, the names of the majority of the streets in Kazimierz remained intact.<sup>10</sup> Estery, Joselewicza, and Warszawiera Streets, named after historical or legendary Jews, could still be found on a map. Furthermore, in this sea of ownerless, crumbling buildings, the synagogues stood out. While the majority of the tenements filling Kazimierz’s streets were undistinguishable from tenements from any other part of the city, the Synagogues continued to point toward Jewish culture. In addition, most of the Synagogues were in a relatively good state, since most had been renovated at some point after the War. This is not to say that they had been restored to their former glory; on the contrary, rich decorations and furnishings were often omitted since works focused on keeping the structure of the buildings intact. Thus, for example, the Old Synagogue, which lost its roof during the War, was rebuilt in the 1950s and given to the MHK. In this case, the Synagogue’s most important furnishings, such as the *bimah*, were kept. The Synagogue was located on Szeroka Street, one of the focal points of the old Jewish town.

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<sup>8</sup> AWUOZ, ‘Kraków’, Sig. 9897/85, fol. 35.

<sup>9</sup> Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>10</sup> Danielle Drozdowski, ‘Using History in the Streetscape to Affirm Geopolitics of Memory’, *Political Geography*, 42 (2014), pp. 74-76.

On the other side of the street stood the Remuh Synagogue and cemetery, both well-maintained by the Congregation, who had used them continuously since the War. The last major renovation of the cemetery, when some 700 tombstones were discovered and re-erected, took place in the mid-1950s.<sup>11</sup> The city-sponsored renovation of the Synagogue was carried out in the early 1970s,<sup>12</sup> and more minor works, both in the Synagogue and the cemetery, were undertaken almost every year.<sup>13</sup> Also located on Szeroka Street, albeit in the yard of one of the tenement houses and thus less visible, was Poppera Synagogue, renovated in the late 1960s, and used by the youth branch of the local community centre. The fate of the Na Górcie Synagogue, originally located next to the Old Synagogue, was less positive: it was ransacked by a Polish mob looking for alleged treasure, and then pulled down in the early post-War years. ‘A new building in the spirit of nineteenth-century historicism was erected’<sup>14</sup> on the site, and the impression of authenticity must have been convincing, since for years activists mistook the new building for the original one.<sup>15</sup> The Na Górcie Synagogue notwithstanding, then, Szeroka was characterised by a number of Jewish sites, all of which were in far better shape than the surrounding tenements.

Outside of Szeroka, there were four further Synagogues. Tempel, on Miodowa Street, was still used by a Congregation, albeit less and less often since the number of religious Jews had dwindled over time. It was in need of some investment, but at the time only the decoration was believed to be in need of renovation;<sup>16</sup> only some time later did preservationists become aware of the need for the foundation to be dried and strengthened too, due to a rise in the groundwater level.<sup>17</sup> The High Synagogue, located on Józefa Street, underwent renovation between 1968 and 1972, after which it was ceded to the Workshops for the Conservation of Architectural Monuments (Pracownice Konserwacji Zabytków, PKZ), a state-owned company charged with the renovation of Kraków.<sup>18</sup>

The two remaining Synagogues, Kupa and Izaaka, added to the Jewishness of the Quarter, though both were falling into ruin. Kupa Synagogue, on Warszawera Street, was occupied by the ‘«July Manifesto» Cooperative for the Disabled,’ a company that ran a slippers factory out of the building. It used heavy machinery and strong chemical

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<sup>11</sup> APK, ‘UMK Wydział,’ Sig. 29/1431/410, fol. 53

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, fol. 109.

<sup>13</sup> Kraków, AWUOZ, ‘Synagoga Remuh. Ogólnie’.

<sup>14</sup> Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> APK, ‘UMK Wydział,’ Sig. 29/1431/409, fol. 379.

<sup>16</sup> APK, ‘UMK Wydział,’ Sig. 29/1431/410, fol. 107.

<sup>17</sup> Kraków, AMKZ, ‘Dzieje i konserwacja Bożnicy Kupa i Synagogi Tempel’ Sig. 1212/04, fol. 7.

<sup>18</sup> APK, ‘UMK Wydział,’ Sig. 29/1431/410, fol. 109.

detergents to treat the leather, and made no effort to protect the building's unique interior.<sup>19</sup> In the 1970s, factory workers drilled through hitherto intact paintings in the sanctuary in order to fasten new shelves to them.<sup>20</sup> The Izaaka Synagogue, located on Kupa Street, was ceded to the Association of Polish Artists and Designers (Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków, ZPAP) who organised a sculptors' atelier there. Using the former temple for an atelier was seen as a positive move, since culture-related usage was preferred by both Jewish and Polish actors. In this particular case, however, it proved to be disastrous: ZPAP used the temple to work on large-scale concrete sculptures, and the Synagogue in the 1970s was more akin to a cement works than to a place of worship.<sup>21</sup>

The state of Kazimierz's seven Synagogues was thus varied. From well-maintained sites such as the Old Synagogue, to ruins like those of the Izaaka Synagogue, their respective circumstances covered the whole spectrum of possibilities. Only one, Na Górcie, was demolished after the War. Nevertheless, together with a few other remnants of the past such as street names, the Synagogues continued to attest to the Jewishness of Kazimierz. They also served to both prove and perpetuate the exceptionality of the district. They proved it, since unlike in many other cities in Poland, defunct Jewish relics were spared, and they perpetuated it by providing an incentive for the actors. By the very virtue of being there, Synagogues *demand*ed to be taken care of, to be turned into heritage. And indeed they were.

### **Bringing Back the Romance**

The Old Synagogue was the first to be transformed from a ruin into a heritage site. Rented out in 1959 by the Congregation to the MHK, it housed an exhibition on Jewish culture, adding to the visibility of the district's Jewishness, particularly on Szeroka Street. The Jewish branch of the MHK in the Old Synagogue opened in 1959, and only then did the museum start to build its collection of *judaica*. The first exhibitions were thus limited in scope;<sup>22</sup> Jacek Salwiński notes that they 'centred on the Jewish traditions and ritual' only.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, as the oldest Synagogue in Kraków, and indeed one of the most imposing buildings in the area, the Museum provided the only coherent narrative in

<sup>19</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Kupa. Ogólnie.'

<sup>20</sup> Ruth Elen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish. Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), p. 83.

<sup>21</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka. Ogólnie.'

<sup>22</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała, 1979-1981', Syg. 157/3.'

<sup>23</sup> Jacek Salwiński, 'The Memory and History of World War II in the Activity of The Historical Museum Of the City of Kraków', in *The Eagle Pharmacy. History and Memory* (Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2013), p. 138.

Kraków on Jewish culture, and was thus an important reference point for other actors involved in memory work on Kazimierz. At the same time, however, the Museum proved to be problematic. It was more than just a reminder of the Jewish past: it indicated the limits of the Jewish present. It was run by Poles and for Poles, since the impoverished Jewish Congregation was unable to organise such an institution on its own.

1980 saw the opening of a new exhibition, which survived – refurbished and slightly adjusted – for the next thirty years. At the time of its opening, the exhibition in the Old Synagogue was one of only two standalone presentations of *judaica* in Poland.<sup>24</sup> This made it unique, but it also complicated the task of its curators. Jewishness in the 1980s was all but absent from Polish collective memory, and the curators could refer only to a few, rarely positive, stereotypes.<sup>25</sup> According to the initial plan, the new permanent exhibition was intended to cover four main topics: the Synagogue and religion, holidays and rituals, the history of Jews in Kraków (including the Holocaust), and daily life in Kazimierz.<sup>26</sup> Due to limited space and the small number of artefacts in the Museum's collection, it was ultimately far more selective. In fact, the main body of the exhibition followed the so-called 'Jewish plan.' First introduced in 1887 during the Anglo-Jewish Exhibition in London, this plan provided the layout for an exhibition in which artefacts were grouped into three sections. Starting with the Synagogue, it proceeded to domestic life, and then ended with life-cycle events.<sup>27</sup> This idea had been transplanted to Kraków, with the main adjustment taking the form of a section on the history of the Kraków community.

The archival documents of the Museum provide detailed description of the exhibition. The ground floor of the building was chosen to exhibit artefacts related to religion, rituals, traditions, and celebrations. The Main Hall – the sanctuary – still hosted *Aron Ha-Kodesh*, the Ark, which in active Synagogues is used for storing Torah scrolls. Next to it was the *bimah*, the platform from which the Torah was read. In the case of the Old Synagogue the *bimah* was shaped like a tent or arbour. Around these objects, in glass cases, cult-related artefacts were displayed, with a number of prayer books and Talmuds placed next to menorahs and smaller candlesticks. Basic furniture was reconstructed to show how the Main Hall had once been arranged. The adjacent room, the so-called Singers Hall, hosted a far bigger collection. Whereas the sanctuary was designed to resemble its

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<sup>24</sup> Gruber, *Virtually Jewish*, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Alina Cała, *Wizerunek Żyda w polskiej kulturze ludowej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1992), p. 184.

<sup>26</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała „Z Dziejów”', Syg. 157/3.

<sup>27</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, p.86.

former appearance, the Singers Hall presented a simple exposition of artefacts. Glass cases positioned around the room displayed a variety of *tefillins*, *tallits*, *parokhets*, Torah crowns, and *yadim*, in addition to three paintings showing Jews at prayer by renowned Jewish painters from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>28</sup> The third room, the Women's Hall, hosted a collection of objects, graphics, and paintings related to rituals and life-cycle events. The cases held tableware, cutlery, Hanukkah lamps, and candlesticks, together with *mezuzot* and scrolls of the Book of Esther in cylinders.<sup>29</sup>

The original concept behind the 'Jewish plan' was to highlight interconnections between Jewish and secular European art, and thus between the two traditions. The creators of the 1887 exhibition, who were themselves Jewish, had wanted to show that even though Jewish life had its own particular rhythm, it was nevertheless part of Western civilisation.<sup>30</sup> The intention of the Kraków curators must have been similar. In the scenario they insisted on presenting Kraków's Jews as members of the in-group, of 'our' society.<sup>31</sup> The outcome, however, was the very opposite of what was intended: it reasserted the Jew as the Other, an unforeseen consequence of using the 'Jewish plan.' The London exhibition had been created by Jews at a time when England had a large and visible Jewish minority. It presented artefacts that were used at the time of the exhibition by a segment of contemporary society. The exhibition in Kraków, on the other hand, prepared by gentiles for gentiles, displayed instead the remnants of a bygone world: historical objects from the nineteenth century and earlier. Richly ornate *yadim* and *parokhets* were all that was left of a historical group; for the majority of visitors there was no obvious link between these ritual objects of Judaism and any sector of Polish society from the 1980s. If the London exhibition insisted on incorporating Jewish art into Western, mainstream culture, then the one in Kraków highlighted the differences between the two. The presentation of ritual artefacts, combined with the art exhibition organised in the upper floor of the Synagogue, depicted the Polish Jew as the Other of Polish culture; as someone who looked different, acted differently, and even used different tableware: that belonged, in effect, to a different time.

Joanna Michlic and numerous other authors assert that Otherness is created, rather than innate.<sup>32</sup> Writing in a similar vein, Sundar Sarukkai notes that the concept of the Other

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<sup>28</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała „Z Dziejów”', Syg. 157/3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, p.86.

<sup>31</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała „Z Dziejów”', Syg. 157/3.

<sup>32</sup> Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other*, pp. 18-19, Guibernau, *The Identity*, p. 30.

is ‘based on the notion of perceived difference and is a cognitive process involving observation, collection of data and theorising.’<sup>33</sup> It emerges through a process of depiction: in this case, presentation in the museum. The out-group is presented as contrasting with the in-group, and the difference between the two groups is what defines them. Otherness becomes a contrasting background against which members of the in-group can define and valorise themselves. Sarukkai examines the most common types of the Other, noting that it can be, but is not necessarily, depicted as threatening, as an enemy.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Michlic, whose analysis focuses on images of the Threatening Other, nevertheless admits that it is only in situations of crisis that the ‘Threatening’ part is created.<sup>35</sup>

Although they were working with a negatively coded stereotype, the curators at the MHK managed to overcome this aspect and did not present Jews as threatening. Magdalena Waligórska points out that the large part of contemporary representation of Jews in Polish popular culture did not focus on that aspect either. She explains that originally, in peasant culture, the image of the shtetl Jew in a *yarmulke*, a long black kaftan, and with side-locks, was shorthand for several anti-Semitic stereotypes, connoting everything from uncanny business skills to a proclivity toward ritual murder.<sup>36</sup> However, she claims that in the post-War years, when there were virtually no Jews left in Poland and thus Polish folk and popular cultures were cut off from the sources of that angst, these images evolved, ‘undergoing a reevaluation, in which they [were] transposed into more “sympathetic” ones.’<sup>37</sup> Her interpretation does seem overly optimistic; anti-Semitic stereotypes were present in Poland well into the twenty-first century.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, it is certain that these images were gradually declining, to be replaced by the newer, tamer pictures to which Waligórska refers. This process took place in the Old Synagogue. Using established tropes from folklore, literature, and art, curators recast the Jew as the ‘Sympathetic’ Other of the Polish nation. They also brought to the fore the image of a quaint, old-worldly, and peaceful shtetl. In their vision, the shtetl served as a space of (potential) cohabitation rather than conflict. Waligórska, elaborating on the image of Jews in Polish popular culture, has termed this kind of depiction ‘shtetl-romance.’<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Sundar Sarukkai, ‘The “Other” in Anthropology and Philosophy’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32.24 (1997), p. 1406.

<sup>34</sup> Sarukkai, p. 1406, see also: Cała, p. 185, Magdalena Waligórska, *Klezmer’s Afterlife. An Ethnography of the Jewish Music Revival in Poland and Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Michlic, *Poland’s Threatening Other*, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Waligórska, pp. 143-146.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 147.

<sup>38</sup> See for example: Michlic, *Poland’s Threatening Other*, pp. 230-260, Marta Duch-Dyngosz.

<sup>39</sup> Waligórska, p. 148.

The vision of the 'shtetl-romance' was presented in the so-called 'Iconography Hall,' one of the two additional expositions complementing the main exhibition. Whereas the first three rooms focused on religion and rituals, the two remaining ones were intended to present the history of Kraków's Jews. This intention soon proved to be impossible to fulfil, due mostly to a lack of artefacts. In the unveiled version, one of the exhibition rooms focused on the Holocaust, seen as the final chapter in the history of the local Jewish community, and the other was turned into a gallery of paintings. The section on the Holocaust will be analysed in Chapter Three of the present thesis; here, meanwhile, I focus on the 'Iconography Hall.' The curators aimed at presenting the history, or at least the daily life, of the community through a series of paintings.<sup>40</sup> They gave a face to the Other whose artefacts had been presented in the first three rooms.

A series of works from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by artists regarded by many as Poland's finest, the paintings focused either on Kazimierz or on its inhabitants. In the decades running up to the Second World War, Kazimierz was home to the poorer stratum of the Orthodox population, which was hardly representative of the whole of the city's Jewish minority.<sup>41</sup> The selected paintings followed the established pattern of depicting Jews. From Juliusz Kossak's 'Jewish Merchant Breaking in a Horse' to Ignacy Kriger's photographs of 'Jewish Types,' they all presented Orthodox Jews with strong, stereotypical features, usually clad in black, often in a poor, shtetl-like setting.<sup>42</sup> An official guidebook to the exhibition, describing the works of one artist, highlights that:

It was that [Orthodox – JG] world that has been painted on numerous occasions by Waław Koniuszko (1854-99), who was fascinated by the romantic colour of the Jewish district, for which he found the best depiction in the moody, nocturnal oil painting of old architecture of ragged [postrzępionych] houses with windows illuminated by a yellowish glow of candles.<sup>43</sup>

The curators thus created an image of a quaint and magical shtetl. Even if the majority of the visitors were not capable of identifying the references to works by Isaac Bashevis Singer or to the 'Fiddler on the Roof,' the image was nonetheless clear. The paintings and descriptions evoked an unambiguous picture: a space where among 'ragged'

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<sup>40</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała „Z Dziejów”', Syg. 157/3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>43</sup> Kraków, AMHK, 'Stara Synagoga Kazimierska,' Sig. I 17949, fol. 12.

houses and by candlelight, one might run into an Orthodox merchant. Significantly, this image did not focus on hostility; on the contrary, it still depicted both groups separately, but by constructing and displaying alluring, quaint spaces, the image of 'shtetl-romance' suggested the possibility of peaceful coexistence. Moreover, there was nothing sinister in this presentation of the Other. Neither the 'Iconography Hall' nor the exhibition on the Holocaust mentioned any conflict between Poles and Jews. In this way, the exhibition in the Old Synagogue both re-established the Jew as the Other and at the same time brought to life a mystical reality of the shtetl in which the coexistence of both nations was possible.

Commenting on the developments in Szeroka Street some years later, Monica Ruethers notes an important feature of the 'shtetl-romance' image. She observes that 'the decorative return to the period around 1900 in Kazimierz elegantly blended out the painful history of the twentieth century'<sup>44</sup> and explained that 'spatial relief was accompanied by temporal relief.'<sup>45</sup> The image of the 'shtetl-romance' created in the Synagogue certainly supports her idea. Looking back to a mythicised era of quaint, peaceful cohabitation allowed curators to bypass the tragedy of the Holocaust. The genocide was commemorated in the museum, but the overarching narrative was not one of suffering, or even of redemption, but of omission. It did not seek to explain – or explain away – the crimes of the Second World War. It did not forget. Rather, it brought to the fore the vision of a romanticised Golden Age of nineteenth-century Kraków to which heinous crimes simply did not belong.

The narrative in the museum provided a popular version of the discourse of the oppositional elite of the period. It stood in stark opposition to the ethno-nationalist interpretation officially supported by the party-state. Even if limited, it nevertheless served to remind the wider public about Kraków's Jewish past, and it thus made a first step toward recasting Kraków's history as multicultural. In so doing, it followed a path first forged by the Polish intelligentsia supporting critical engagement with the past, and combined tropes from elite discourse with popular representations. As noted above, initial debates about Jewish history and Polish-Jewish relations had begun as early as the mid-1970s.<sup>46</sup> The curators from the MHK borrowed their sympathetic outlook from those debates. They wanted to engage their audience with the Jewish past, not threaten them with the Jewish menace. To achieve this end they used tropes and representations well

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<sup>44</sup> Monica Ruethers, 'Jewish Spaces and Gypsy Spaces in the Cultural Topographies of a New Europe: Heritage Re-Enactment as Political Folklore', *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D'histoire*, 20.4 (2013), p. 674.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 674.

<sup>46</sup> See Introduction, p. 34.



established in Polish popular culture, but stripped them of any hostile aspect. Their example was later followed by heritage preservationists, city planners, and eventually entrepreneurs, who translated the vision of the 'shtetl-romance' into the space of the city, turning Szeroka Street into a Jewish-themed heritage park and popular tourist destination.

### **Production of Preservation**

The last, turbulent decade of Party rule proved particularly important for heritage work, since it was during this period that the ideas and visions that informed the creation of heritage after the collapse of Communism were pioneered. The previous section of this chapter analysed the vision of the past created by the MHK curators. This section carries those findings forward to examine the efforts of heritage preservationists who translated the 'shtetl-romance' into the practical terms of city planning. It argues that in this process, preservationists redefined Jewish ruins as Polish heritage, moving Poles from a position of stewardship to one of co-heirs. They recognised their responsibility towards all remnants of the past in Kazimierz, rather than solely the Polish ones. If the practical impact of this movement was limited in the 1980s, then it nonetheless proved crucial in inspiring the entrepreneurs and funding bodies responsible for heritage creation in the 1990s and 2000s.

Among the most important activists that contributed to this process were local heritage preservationists. Surprisingly, however, authors writing about memory work tend to overlook preservationists. Some focus on political actors;<sup>47</sup> some on fictive kinship, on groups that collectively endured an event and have the need to speak about it;<sup>48</sup> others look into the role of school teachers,<sup>49</sup> others yet analyse conflicts between those actors;<sup>50</sup> most, however, ignore preservationists. Even Michael Meng, whose work focuses on heritage creation, partially acknowledges the input of preservationists while still prioritising political actors.<sup>51</sup> It seems that most of these authors treat preservationists as technical experts responsible for implementing governmental policies. As a result, they see preservation plans as translations of political will to the cityscape, and judge them by their impact on the look and feel of historical districts. To overcome this position, I recall Frank Mort's research on city planners. Commenting on the position of planners and the importance of plans, Mort proposes turning away from assessment based on 'the

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<sup>47</sup> Onken, Hobsbawm.

<sup>48</sup> Winter, 'Forms of Kinship'.

<sup>49</sup> Törnquist-Plewa, 'The Tale of Szydłowiec', p. 197.

<sup>50</sup> Ashplant, Dawson, Roper.

effectiveness of implementation.’<sup>52</sup> Instead he suggests examining the ‘effects on social and political movements for urban change,’ or ‘shifts in professional and popular opinion.’<sup>53</sup> Practical decisions regarding changes in the cityscape are not based on scientific rationales laid down in plans and studies, but rather are the product of a ‘repertoire of intellectual meaning systems about city life.’<sup>54</sup> Mort suggests that plans should not be read simply as technical documents, but instead as persuasive images: visions of the city that are disseminated among city officials and broader public and backed by the authority of their creators. In this view, the success of the plan is not measured by its direct implementation, but rather by the impact its vision had on the decision makers.

Paradoxically, the fact that general society sees planners (or in this case preservationists) only as objective scientists is what lends them their power. Their authority is grounded in a common belief that they are impartial, and that the drawing of plans is a scientific, objective process. I argued above that heritage is constructed rather than organic; thus, the process of heritage preservation is a process of creation, and has little to do with any objective science. Ruins are chosen, imbued with new meanings, and inserted into heritage. Every stage of this process is subjective. Therefore, plans created by heritage preservationists are neither objective nor scientific; rather, they are narratives, offering images of the past created in relation to the ruins of that same past. They are interpretations, prioritising aspects important for their authors and omitting fragments that the authors find unimportant or problematic. They add to the ‘meaning system about city life.’<sup>55</sup> Yet at the same time they are perceived as objective documents.

This opinion was espoused by Kraków’s preservationists themselves. The WUOZ, one of the prime outlets for preservationists in Kraków, laid out plans, insisted on their implementation, and criticised the city government for failing to do so.<sup>56</sup> In reality, however, it had limited, mostly reactive powers, both before and after the fall of Communism.<sup>57</sup> It could approve and block plans for renovation of all the sites classified as protected heritage, and decided which sites qualified as protected; it could also order repairs. However, as noted by Andrzej Gaczoł, one of the key preservationists from Kraków and author of a history of the revitalisation of the city, the legal instruments at its

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<sup>52</sup> Frank Mort, ‘Fantasies of Metropolitan Life: Planning London in the 1940s’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 43.01 (2012), p. 122.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, p. 123.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, p. 123.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, p. 123.

<sup>56</sup> Andrzej Gaczoł, *Kraków. Ochrona Zabytkowego Miasta. Rzeczywistość Czy Fikcja*. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2009), pp. 162-164

<sup>57</sup> On details regarding legal regulations and structural changes in the RHPO see Gaczoł, *Kraków*.

disposal were flawed. In practice, WUOZ decisions were often ignored.<sup>58</sup> The office was therefore unable to initiate any major intervention into the cityscape. Even though the WUOZ employees (Gaczoł) recognised the limitations placed on them, they never reimagined the Office as, for example, a think-tank. They always insisted on the practical implementation of their ideas. These demands, however, were impossible to realise, not only due to the limited powers of the WUOZ; as this section demonstrates, the plans drawn by preservationists were also often impossible to implement in themselves, lacking coherence or suggesting impractical or impossible changes.

Communist authorities also saw preservationists as impartial technical experts. Ironically, their legal standing, combined with the prevalent idea of their subjugated role, contributed to their relative independence. Gaczoł notes that even during Stalinism, the darkest and most oppressive period of Polish post-War history, preservationists were allowed a certain level of independence and free speech. They could formulate their doctrines freely, and were even allowed to criticise members of the government who prioritised rapid industrialisation at the expense of the preservation of historical town centres.<sup>59</sup> Due to the relative freedom granted to them, Kraków's preservationists developed into a large and diverse community. Most worked for the WUOZ or the municipal heritage protection service following its creation in the 1990s, and a number of them held positions in academia, mostly in architecture and art history departments. Another important outlet of their activities was the Citizens' Committee for the Renovation of Kraków Monuments (Społeczny Komitet Ochrony Zabytków Krakowa – SKOZK).<sup>60</sup> It was in that very network of connections and relations that their power lay. Their visions were disseminated through the WUOZ plans, in university teaching, and through the SKOZK publications. Architects, officials, and journalists active in the 1990s and 2000s were connected to and often educated by this network of experts. Furthermore, it was the SKOZK that funded numerous renovations after the collapse of Communism.

The person who best exemplified the preservationists' approach, and who was in fact instrumental in shaping it, was Bogusław Krasnowolski, art historian and author of a number of key documents defining Kazimierz. One of his most important texts, in which he sketched out his vision of the district, was the rather oddly entitled 'Kraków. Kazimierz with Stradom and Former St Sebastian Meadow; Historic and Urbanistic Study.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, pp. 135-137.

<sup>60</sup> Bogusław Krasnowolski, *Ulica i place krakowskiego Kazimierza* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych 'Universitas', 1992), p. 1.

Preservation and Urbanistic Study' (here: 'Study') and was produced in the early 1980s, at a time when heritage protection and planning services were drawing up new plans of Kazimierz.<sup>61</sup> It was in the aftermath of decisions made in Warsaw in the 1970s that the government decided to prioritise the revitalisation of Kraków's historic districts. Along with Krasnowolski's 'Study,' numerous other documents were prepared, the most important of which was a master plan for Kazimierz grounded in the 'Study.'<sup>62</sup> Indeed, the author of the master plan had copied large sections of Krasnowolski's text, particularly those pertaining to the treatment of Jewish relics. Krasnowolski's influence can additionally be traced even further forward in time. His ideas are evident in various WUOZ documents: letters, plans, decisions, and memos, all linking back to his vision. He was furthermore responsible for drafting SKOZK plans,<sup>63</sup> and the few not authored by him replicated his stance nonetheless.<sup>64</sup> When SKOZK mastered the rules of modern PR in the 1990s and 2000s, Krasnowolski's plans were published and disseminated among a broader, non-professional public.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, he was a lecturer and a prolific author, which additionally contributed to the dissemination of his ideas.<sup>66</sup>

In this section, I examine Krasnowolski's 'Study' and analyse his vision of Kazimierz. Close reading of the document reveals his intention of transplanting ideas developed in the MHK into the cityscape. He advocated remaking Kazimierz, turning it into a version of its nineteenth-century self. He sought to blend out the painful twentieth century, and to offer in its place the vision of an early modern, quaint, and peaceful city that belonged to both Poles and Jews. Krasnowolski declared that his aim was to revitalise the district, to bring it back to life. He believed that if the buildings were restored and the poor inhabitants relocated, Kazimierz could become an attractive place in which to live, and an important part of the city centre.<sup>67</sup> It is clear that he aimed to keep the urban

<sup>61</sup> AWUOZ, 'Kraków', Sig. 9897/85.

<sup>62</sup> Kraków, ABPP. 'Kazimierz i Stradom. Miejscowy plan zag. przestrzennego zabytkowego zespołu staromiejskiego Kazimierza i Stradomia, Podstawowe założenia planu', Sig. 210.

<sup>63</sup> Krasnowolski, *Odnowa*.

<sup>64</sup> Gaczoł, *Program*.

<sup>65</sup> Krasnowolski, *Odnowa*, and Gaczoł, *Program*.

<sup>66</sup> <http://upjp2.edu.pl/edumod/pracownik/925/>, date of access 24/06/2016, for a list on public lectures given by Krasnowolski see: Wiesław Bieńkowski, *Strażnicy dziejów miasta narodowej Pamięci. Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa w latach 1896-1996* (Kraków: Biblioteka Krakowska, 1997), p. 331-332, examples of popular journal articles: Bogusław Krasnowolski, 'Układ przestrzenny krakowskiego Kazimierza w wieku XIV', *Rocznik Krakowski*, LIV (1988), Bogusław Krasnowolski, 'Problematyka konserwatorska krakowskiego Kazimierza', *Rocznik Krakowski*, LIV (1988), Bogusław Krasnowolski, 'Ochrona konserwatorska Krakowa w latach 1990-1995 w działalności Społecznego Komitetu Odnowy Zabytków Krakowa', *Rocznik Krakowski*, LXI (1995), for SKOZK plans see: Bogusław Krasnowolski, *Odnowa zabytków Krakowa: geneza, cele, osiągnięcia, zamierzenia* (Kraków: Agencja Informacyjno-Promocyjna 'Raport', 2004), Andrzej Gaczoł, 'Program ochrony i konserwacji zabytków Krakowa na lata 1999-2003', in *Odnowa Zabytków Krakowa. Materiały I Dokumenty* (Kraków, 2003).

<sup>67</sup> AWUOZ, 'Kraków', Sig. 9897/85, fol. 3 and fols 33-34.

functions of the central district intact. At the same time, however, he envisaged Kazimierz as an open-air museum, suggesting changes that would contribute to turning it into a heritage park. Importantly, the 'Study' covered the whole of Kazimierz. This section focuses on his approach to Jewish relics; however, he applied the same general ideas – exposition of monumental buildings, turning the area into a heritage theme park – to the Christian part of the district as well.

Krasnowolski's 'Study' began with a reminder that Kazimierz was exceptional, due to the 'historical climate of its streets.'<sup>68</sup> To preserve this climate he suggested protecting the street plan and skylines,<sup>69</sup> and insisted on reintroducing cobblestones, and lampposts with a design consistent with nineteenth-century gas lamps.<sup>70</sup> He advocated for the rebuilding of selected tenements pulled down after the War in such a way that they would resemble their originals.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, however, he made exceptions for certain areas. Demolished houses at Józefa Street would not be rebuilt, so as to improve the visibility of the Old Synagogue. He even went one step further in this regard, calling for the demolition of selected buildings around the Remuh Synagogue with the same goal in mind.<sup>72</sup> His reverence of iconic historical relics, combined with suggestions such as pulling down buildings that he did not deem interesting or worthy, tied in to the vision of a heritage park. Turning historic districts into open-air museums, quarters in which people could not live due to their museum and leisure functions, was recognised as a problem as early as the 1960s.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, the temptation to focus on tourist attractions proved to be too strong.

Jewish relics played a key role in this vision of the district. Krasnowolski elaborated on his understanding of the multicultural past of the quarter by stating that 'It has to be specially highlighted that the Jewish part of Kazimierz – is unique in the global scale document of Jewish culture, of which we know so little in our country today.'<sup>74</sup> Following this line, he proposed preserving all of Kazimierz's Jewish sites. His approach was holistic: he understood that relics taken over by random users were those most likely to fall into disrepair, and thus suggested first renovating the buildings, and then choosing proper users for them.<sup>75</sup> He envisaged two options for the Synagogues. Some, namely

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<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, fols 28-29.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, fol 4.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, fols 28-29.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, fol 57.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem, fols 54-56.

<sup>73</sup> Gaczoł, *Program*, p. 163.

<sup>74</sup> AWUOZ, 'Kraków', Sig. 9897/85, fol 38.

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem, fols 35-37.

Remuh and Tempel, were to retain religious functions; all others were to be turned into multi-site Jewish museums similar to the one in Prague.<sup>76</sup>

There are two aspects of Krasnowolski's proposal that merit highlighting. The first is his translation of the idea of the 'shtetl-romance' from museum narrative to the cityscape. Working in the vein of restorative nostalgia, he sought to transfer the city back to its imagined Golden Age. The second is his insistence on turning Jewish ruins into Polish heritage: a heritage that was multicultural, in that it represented different cultures, but one that was also developed for and by ethnic Poles, and according to a Polish understanding of the past. This 'appropriation' of the relics was not a sign of Krasnowolski's inherent anti-Semitism, but rather evidence of his conviction that such measures were the only way of protecting Jewish relics.

Krasnowolski's translation of the idea of the 'shtetl-romance' can be seen in his insistence on reinstalling cobblestones and lampposts resembling nineteenth-century gas lamps. The first was impractical, the second costly; both, however, had the power to return the cityscape to its imagined, pre-modern self. Curators from the MHK had referenced 'romantic colour,' 'ragged' architecture, and the 'glow of candles' in their presentation of Kazimierz.<sup>77</sup> Krasnowolski could not bring back the candles, but he could at least insist on the imitation gas lamps, and 'ragged' cobblestones in place of smooth asphalt. Moreover, one of the key features of his plan was a focus on iconic sites. He suggested renovating Synagogues and improving their visibility. Jewish heritage was something to be highlighted, a notion that ties back once again to the vision of the 'shtetl-romance.' Just as Orthodox Jews wearing black kaftans and side-locks filled the space of the imagined shtetl, the Synagogues – the architectural Others – filled Kazimierz. They were stylistically different from the surrounding buildings, and thus attested to the differences between Polish and Jewish cultures. At the same time, however, Krasnowolski tried to blend them seamlessly into the surrounding area, emphasising that they belonged to the district. The treatment of the Jewish relics attested to the fact that Krasnowolski regarded Jewishness as Other, but not as a Threatening Other. His ideas to renovate and expose the Synagogues, in tandem with his affirmative statements on the role of Jewish culture, suggested that there was no hostility in this vision; on the contrary, just like in the vision of the 'shtetl-romance,' the marking of difference and promise of cohabitation were both present.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, fol 38.

<sup>77</sup> AMHK, 'Stara Synagoga Kazimierska,' Sig, I 17949, fol. 12.

The reconstruction of a long-lost Golden Age ties into Svetlana Boym's concept of nostalgia, particularly of a restorative kind. Boym sees nostalgia – the yearning not only for places, but also for times – as one of the most important forces shaping cities across Europe in the late twentieth century. One of the variants of the affect she identifies is a restorative nostalgia which 'attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home.'<sup>78</sup> This nuance appears to be the key to understanding Krasnowolski's 'Study.' In proposing the recreation of the pseudo-nineteenth-century 'Golden Age' in the cityscape, he suggested (re)creating home – a place of safety. In Krasnowolski's vision this 'home' entailed a space where Poles and Jews could live together. The 'Study' treated Kazimierz as a whole, proposing the renovation of not only its Jewish but also its Christian parts, so that the heritage of both groups would coexist in one district. Boym also reminds us that activists creating a nostalgic vision of the past believe that they only excavate the truth. They see themselves as bringing back the objective and authentic values of certain sites, lost to the process of modernisation.<sup>79</sup> All these aspects can be found in Krasnowolski's works; they were what made his vision so compelling. However unrealistic the image he created in the 'Study' and later propagated in the SKOZK programs, it had the potential to satiate nostalgia. Moreover, the 'Study' was presented as an objective development, rather than the dream of an intellectual disillusioned with the twentieth century. His scientific language and references to scientific method gave his ideas the semblance of objectivity and truth, and masked the fact that he offered an interpretation of the past and a vision for the future. This was the basis of the paradoxical success of his vision.

In the years that followed the completion of the 'Study,' both Krasnowolski himself<sup>80</sup> and other authors, such as Gaczoł,<sup>81</sup> complained that the plan had never been acted upon. In reality, it simply could not be implemented in any direct way. Its attempt to combine the idea of a heritage park with that of a residential district lacked coherency. It was far too expensive, especially bearing in mind that the 1980s was a decade of continual economic crisis for Poland. Furthermore, his proposal that the entire district be remodelled in every way possible required political backing and the support of numerous state and local institutions. The importance of the 'Study,' and the source of its future success, thus lay not in its implementation, but rather in the way that it offered an impactful vision of a

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<sup>78</sup> Boym, p. xviii.

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, p. 41.

<sup>80</sup> Tomasz Szczypiński, 'Polityka Gminy Na Krakowskim Kazimierzu', in *Zeszyty KIN. Perspektywy Rozwoju Kazimierza. Co Dalej Z Rewitalizacją?* (Kraków: Fundacja Krakowski Instytut Nieruchomości, 2000), p.34.

<sup>81</sup> Gaczoł, *Kraków*, p. 163.

district. Ideas such as pulling down selected tenements or turning all remaining Synagogues into museums never came to fruition. Yet the overarching narrative became widespread. After the collapse of Communism, a version of 'shtetl-romance' – of a lost home from the Golden Age – was realised. SKOZK and local entrepreneurs turned Kazimierz into a heritage island of respite in the sea of grim post-socialist reality. They offered a version of spatial and temporal relief not only from the Holocaust, but also from the disappointing reality of the early 1990s.

The second important outcome of Krasnowolski's 'Study' was the fact that it helped to symbolically turn Jewish relics into Polish heritage. Krasnowolski's idea regarding the usage of Jewish sites was to turn the Synagogues into museums. In the years that followed, preservationists would also suggest organising theatres, libraries, or music halls in them. They believed that the managers of cultural institutions would recognise the importance of the sites, and would therefore guarantee their proper maintenance and a degree of reverence in their usage. The preservationists' stance also meant that Jewish relics were to be used by Polish cultural institutions. The MHK offers a useful example here. I see the MHK as a Polish institution not because it was closed to Jews, or did not hire any, but rather because it presented and operated under a Polish point of view and understanding of the past. Similarly, Krasnowolski and curators from the MHK treated Jewish relics with the highest level of reverence, but according to Polish norms.

The reappropriation of the ruins of the out-group was a process not limited to Kraków, but it was also not a state-approved practice. It could be observed in other large Polish cities (with the exception of Warsaw) in relation to both German and Jewish sites.<sup>82</sup> The process was connected to a coming to terms with post-war upheavals on the part of local citizens. The Second World War had revolutionised the situation in Poland; the country lost its minorities, and Polish borders were moved westward as a result of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. Impoverished Poles fleeing from what is today Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania were resettled in Wrocław, Gdańsk and Szczecin, and if they arrived in Kraków, they may have been sent to the old Jewish district. In the initial post-War years, state propaganda worked toward incorporating all new acquisitions into Polish heritage. It appears to have been the only way for new Polish citizens to build communities in their new cities.<sup>83</sup> German relics were either destroyed or presented as Polish, while Jewish ones were either demolished or forgotten. As Meng puts it, the heritage of other

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<sup>82</sup> See Thum, *Obce Miasto* Peter Oliver Loew, *Gdańsk. Między Mitami* (Olsztyn, 2006), Meng, *Shattered Spaces*.

<sup>83</sup> Ibidem, p. 47



ethnicities or nations was ‘discomforting’; it reminded local denizens of their turbulent, often bloody relations with both Jews and Germans.<sup>84</sup> It was only in the 1970s and 1980s that this situation slowly began to change, and the relics of both groups were rediscovered. In the case of the Western provinces, the post-War anxieties related to border instability were gradually assuaged as the Federal Republic of Germany officially recognised the border in 1970.<sup>85</sup> In the case of Kazimierz, it became clear that the Jewish minority was dwindling; at the same time, Jewish topics became more important among the Polish intellectual elite. Both Loew, commenting on Gdańsk,<sup>86</sup> and Thum, analysing the situation in Wrocław,<sup>87</sup> observe the same process taking place in both cities. Polish citizens began to rediscover German sites, or the Germanness of already-known sites. The connection to the German past began to be highlighted, and was incorporated into a heritage narrative. Heritage was defined as belonging to Poles, while at the same time being multicultural in essence.

A similar process took place in Kazimierz. Local preservationists decided that they had not only a duty to preserve ruins, but also a right to intervene in them, to use them, and to shape them into heritage. In Kraków, during the initial post-War decades, Poles approached Jewish relics warily, as stewards rather than owners. The majority of sites were saved from demolitions and subjected to basic renovations. All of the Synagogues were rebuilt and designated for new users. However, the ways in which they were used were often inappropriate, leading to new demolitions. In the 1980s, when Kazimierz was redefined and some Polish activists came to see themselves in the position of co-heirs, Jewish sites were recognised as part of Polish multicultural heritage. Initially, only a small group, mostly mid-ranking city officials, subscribed to this vision. Nevertheless it was this group, made up of preservationists and representatives of other city services, that could reshape Kazimierz. As the next section demonstrates the group indeed intensified its efforts to revitalise the Synagogues in the 1980s.

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<sup>84</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> Prażmowska, p. 198.

<sup>86</sup> Loew, p. 42.

<sup>87</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 48.

## Heritage Work in Practice

In light of the intervention of the International Commission for Jewish [sic] cemeteries justified by external pressure and also because of a high frequency of groups of international tourists visiting those places, the Department of Religious Affairs kindly asks Citizen [Obywatel] Director to take a stance in that matter as soon as possible.<sup>88</sup>

As the SED [Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands – The Socialist Unity Party of Germany – JG] and PZRP sought to improve their images abroad, Jewish sites attracted attention from tourists, Jewish leaders, and journalists. In response, both parties restored a few sites in their capitals and staged commemorations of the Holocaust.<sup>89</sup>

## Maintaining Appearances

Taken from a document written in 1985, the first passage quoted above is one example of many similar letters exchanged between the heads of the WW and the WUOZ. Throughout the 1980s, both officials frequently consulted with each other regarding the Jewish relics. Newspeak and style aside, their letters offer an interesting insight into the practical workings of the processes of urbanisation of memory. On the surface, they seem to confirm Michael Meng's interpretation of heritage work expressed in the second passage: that Polish officials treated renovations as a propaganda tool aimed at placating the 'all-powerful Western Jewish lobby.'

Meng demonstrates that the central Office of Religious Affairs, the paramount institution of the regional Department, insisted on maintaining 'appearances of a Jewish authenticity.'<sup>90</sup> Its head suggested exhibiting efforts to maintain Jewish sites, but at the same time did not provide any funding for actual projects. In fact, he proposed only that the Jewish cemeteries not be demolished further, and did not care about the revitalisation of either cemeteries or synagogues.<sup>91</sup> The only exception was the Nożyk Synagogue in Warsaw, 'an important showpiece' to use the phrasing of the head of the Office of

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<sup>88</sup> Kraków, UMK, 'Wydział do spraw wyznań, Gmina Żydowska w Krakowie,' Syg. 29/1431/408, fol. 505.

<sup>89</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 210.

<sup>90</sup> as quoted in Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 175.

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem, p. 175.

Religious Affairs,<sup>92</sup> which was renovated and opened in 1983.<sup>93</sup> Together with the highly controlled and politicised commemorations of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, those were the only state sponsored interventions into memory work.<sup>94</sup> Interpreting the actions of the government, Meng highlights the insincerity of officials. They were only interested in commemorating the Jewish past insofar as it helped to avert the ‘negative political consequences’ of the propaganda of Western, ‘aggressive representative from Jewish circles’ as the head of the Office of Religious Affairs put it.<sup>95</sup> Meng’s argument with regard to the insincerity of these Polish officials is further confirmed by the lack of development in Wrocław, one of the biggest regional centres in Poland. Local preservationists who ‘took pride in [Wrocław’s] extensive historic reconstruction program’ completely ignored the only remaining city Synagogue and allowed it to fall into ruin.<sup>96</sup> The examples of both Warsaw and Wrocław substantiate Meng’s interpretation. Polish officials either chose to forget Jewish relics (Wrocław), or carried out limited renovations on specific sites as a form of propaganda (Warsaw).

The approach of the Krakowian top-ranking city officials appears to further confirm Meng’s interpretation. Preservation, especially of Kazimierz, was never a priority for these officials. In the 1950s, 1960s, and even as late as the early-mid 1970s, decisions detrimental to the state of heritage buildings were commonly made. Gaczoł highlights as an example the mid-1970s City Master Plan, which prioritised industrialisation at the expense of protecting the historical centre.<sup>97</sup> An even more telling example can be found in the demolition of part of Józefa Street, the street adjacent to the Old Synagogue in Kazimierz, a segment of which was burned down in order to shoot a sufficiently realistic fire scene for a 1974 film.<sup>98</sup> During the 1970s, Poland did see changes in attitude toward the heritage of buildings. The Party and the central government first decided to renovate the Royal Castle in Warsaw, and later prioritised the preservation of historical sites in Kraków. At the same time, however, the government remained ambivalent in its approach toward Jewish relics, a duality in the treatment of relics that can also be seen in Kraków. Local Party leaders and top city officials allowed for plans to be created and small projects

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<sup>92</sup> as quoted in Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 177.

<sup>93</sup> Ibidem, p. 178

<sup>94</sup> On the commemorations of the Uprising see Introduction, p. 34.

<sup>95</sup> As quoted in Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 177-178.

<sup>96</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 183

<sup>97</sup> Gaczoł, *Kraków*, p. 152.

<sup>98</sup> Monika Murzyn-Kupisz, ‘Reclaiming Memory or Mass Consumption? Dilemmas in Rediscovering Jewish Heritage of Krakow’s Kazimierz’, in *Reclaiming Memory. Urban Regeneration in the Historic Jewish Quarters of Central European Cities*, ed. by Monika Murzyn-Kupisz and Jacek Purchla (Krakow: International Cultural Centre, 2009), p. 129.

to be conducted, but they rarely supported or initiated them. As shown above they intervened in Jewish relics only twice during the 1970s, and on both occasions Krakow Mayor's approach to the Jewish relics was purely political. He did not recognise the Jewish relics as the city's heritage.

While not seen as heritage, the Jewish relics nevertheless had some value for the Mayor, in terms of their potential as real estate. In 1980, a meeting was organised to choose a new user for the Izaaka Synagogue. The synergy needed to prompt the city authorities to work was achieved by three cultural institutions. The Workshops for PKZ, a local film studio, and the ZPAP, the previous tenant of the Izaaka Synagogue, were all simultaneously looking for new buildings. Since there was no open market, the decisions lay with the city government. The mayor met with top local Party leaders and heads of the companies in question, and decided to swap properties between them. In that shuffle, the PKZ was assigned the Synagogue.<sup>99</sup> Before the PKZ took over the building, a local theatre had been using it temporarily as a warehouse, which proved to be a disaster: decorations stored there caught fire, and the interior of the Synagogue was devastated even further.<sup>100</sup> Eventually, the PKZ moved in and slowly began to renovate the site. It appears that the company lacked funds, as it never managed to finish the works. Only when the Synagogue was returned to the Congregation after the fall of Communism did the renovations accelerate.<sup>101</sup> City officials only involved themselves with the Synagogue because they were under pressure from three different companies. The Mayor made a decision about the site but treated it purely as real estate; he did not recognise its status as a heritage site. By chance, the company chosen to take over the building was interested in its renovation; for the city government, however, it did not matter.

In their paradoxical approach toward heritage, Kraków authorities followed the Party line. They were not interested in renovating Jewish relics, but were ready to use them for short term political gain. Much like his Warsaw superiors, Kraków's Mayor insisted on assuming a façade of openness and tolerance when it suited Party interests. In early 1983 he asked the WUOZ to produce a brief description of Kazimierz and its relics, and Andrzej Gaczol authored the nine-page document, entitled 'Sketch on the history of KAZIMIERZ and of Jews tied to Kazimierz since the fifteenth century.'<sup>102</sup> The document was supposed to comment on the history and heritage of the whole district, but in reality eight out of nine

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<sup>99</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka. Ogólnie.'

<sup>100</sup> AWUOZ, 'Bożnica Izaaka,' Sig. 20.461/94, fol. 12

<sup>101</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka. Ogólnie.'

<sup>102</sup> AWUOZ, 'Kazimierz. Ogólnie.'

pages were devoted solely to the Jewish past and Jewish sites. It is clear that the Mayor was not interested in relics or in heritage as such; there was barely any information included on the state of churches or post-industrial relics. He asked for information specifically on Jewish heritage. It seems that he only needed the 'Sketch' to prepare for the upcoming Warsaw Ghetto Uprising anniversary. This infamous state-sponsored celebration brought numerous Western delegations to Poland, some of whom were to visit Kraków. It was thus necessary for the Mayor to be able to prove that the city authority cared about Jewish sites.

Intervention in the Izaaka Synagogue and ordering the 'Sketch' were the only initiatives enacted by the city authorities. The former demonstrated a complete lack of interest in Jewish heritage, while the latter attested to the fact that the Jewish past still had traction in short-term politics. Both actions align with Michael Meng's characterisation of the approach to Jewish relics as cynical and insincere.<sup>103</sup>

### **Revitalisation under the radar**

However, as this thesis demonstrates, the situation in Kraków was exceptional, and mid-ranking city officials did in fact work on the revitalisation of Jewish relics. Part of the city's exceptionality rested in the fact that, in contrast to the rest of the country, the Synagogues in Kraków were formally owned by the local Congregation. When, in 1955, the State attempted to nationalise Jewish relics, it succeeded everywhere but in Kraków. Michael Meng establishes that Maciej Jakubowicz, the head of the Congregation, protested this decision and sued the government, and surprisingly the local court ruled in his favour. Fourteen pieces of property were thus formally classified as belonging to the Congregation. The central Office of Religious Affairs opposed the ruling and sent the case of the Old Synagogue to the Supreme Court. The new ruling partially overthrew the original one: it was decided that the Old Synagogue could be nationalised, but at the same time the Congregation was allowed to manage it.<sup>104</sup> The status of the rest of the fourteen sites, meanwhile, remained contested. State and city authorities usually acknowledged that ownership lay with the Congregation, but at the same time acted as though the sites were owned by the state.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 210.

<sup>104</sup> Ibidem, pp. 55-56.

<sup>105</sup> See for example Kraków, AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka. Ogólnie, Kraków, AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Kupa. Ogólnie.'

More importantly, the exceptionality of Kraków was an outcome of actions by local, mid-ranking officials. Some of them creatively reinterpreted instructions coming from Warsaw – after all, ‘appearances of Jewish authenticity’ is a nebulous term – and began works on selected sites. Officials from the WUOZ and WW, together with members of the Congregation, created a system that allowed for renovations of the remaining cemeteries and the Temple and Remuh Synagogues. Both prayer houses were listed as protected heritage sites, and the Congregation, which owned the sites, was obliged to take care of them. However, the Congregation was impoverished, and thus unable to undertake even the smallest-scale works alone. Thus the WUOZ, executing its legal powers, would periodically inspect temples, and select works of art, decorations, or stained glass windows for renovation.<sup>106</sup> It would then write to the Congregation ordering it to renovate selected heritage objects, and the same letter would also be directed to the WW, the agency charged with control of the Congregation’s activities. The next step was for either the Congregation or the Department to inform the WUOZ that the Congregation lacked funds, but also that the works had to be conducted. Either the fact that the heritage site was in danger of destruction, or the force of international pressure, were used as excuses. Stepping in as an emergency funding body, the WUOZ would then use the funds at its disposal to cover the cost.<sup>107</sup> It is clear that the Congregation, surviving on Party concessions, could not initiate or lobby for any big-scale revitalisation. It had no funds and no political backing. However, by using this unofficial system, the WUOZ, the WW, and the Congregation managed to renovate numerous works of art in both Synagogues and to keep the temples and cemeteries in a usable condition. Since the system emerged under the radar of the Warsaw officials, no major works were ever possible.

The limitation of this arrangement can be seen in the case of the Kupa Synagogue. It was occupied by the ‘«July Manifesto» Cooperative for the Disabled,’ which ran a slippers factory and a warehouse out of the building. The company devastated the building, and openly admitted in letters to the WUOZ and the Congregation that it had no intention of stopping the devastation.<sup>108</sup> The WUOZ was the only local institution that attempted to improve the state of the site. It listed the building as a protected heritage site in 1983, and spent the rest of that decade looking for ways to renovate it. Preservationists petitioned the Cooperative, looked for alternative users, and tried to arrange a swap between the company

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<sup>106</sup> Temple Synagogue was renowned for its unique stained glasses.

<sup>107</sup> see for example: AWUOZ, ‘Synagoga Remuh. Ogólnie’, AWUOZ, ‘Synagoga Tempel. Ogólnie.’

<sup>108</sup> AWUOZ, ‘Synagoga Kupa. Ogólnie.’

and one of the local theatres. The Congregation supported these actions and advocated for the MHK to take over the site, but none of the initiatives came to fruition. Even when the Cooperative explicitly admitted to breaking the law and threatened to damage the Synagogue even further, no actions could be taken.<sup>109</sup>

The story of the Kupa Synagogue sheds light on the inner workings of Communism in Poland. In theory, the site belonged to the Jewish Congregation. There was a heritage protection law in place that gave the WUOZ the power to force the Cooperative to restore the building. However, none of this was enough in a situation in which there was no political will to back a renovation project.<sup>110</sup> It seems that the Cooperative had political backing; it is obvious, meanwhile, that the Congregation had none. Only the involvement of the Party leaders or the mayor, who was the WUOZ superior in the local government, could ensure the execution of the law.

Nevertheless, in-depth analysis reveals that following the recognition of their responsibility toward Jewish sites, local, mid-ranking officials devised a system that helped to fund small scale renovations. Out of their own volition, and often working around the instructions from their Warsaw-based superiors, they sponsored revitalisations of selected synagogues. Given the poor economic condition of the city and the state, they could not initiate any broad revitalisation program. They did not, moreover, manage to attract any support from senior city and Party officials. In fact, the rare involvement of the Mayor confirms Meng's findings with regard to the insincerity of Polish high-ranking officials.

## **The Critical Approach as a Basis for Cosmopolitan Memory Project**

One of the claims of this chapter is that the application of the critical approach to the nation's past developed into the first attempts at a cosmopolitanisation of memory that later permeated the narratives developed in Kazimierz. The actions of the representatives of the WUOZ and WW confirm this claim. As the above examples demonstrate, these groups were genuinely interested in revitalising Jewish sites – even if that meant working against the intention of their superiors from both Kraków and Warsaw. Furthermore, the use of strongly nostalgic tropes, with a focus on the idea of a 'lost home,' and the creation of the image of the 'shtetl-romance' indicate a move towards common patterning, the set

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<sup>109</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>110</sup> Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, p. 69-72.

of processes identified by Levy and Sznajder as underpinning the cosmopolitanisation of memory.<sup>111</sup> Firstly, the shtetl-romance narrative was an attempt at moving away from hero-centric memories. It did not focus on victims, as Levy and Sznajder would have it. It was reoriented instead toward ‘ordinary people’: toward the average inhabitants of Kazimierz. Secondly, images of daily life, of a peaceful home, of a quaint town, dismantled the stigma built into the image of the Jew. The still-prevalent imagining of the Jew was one of a Threatening Other. The MHK curators and preservationists managed to erase the ‘Threatening’ part of this image. It can be said, therefore, that Krasnowolski translated tolerance and openness into spatial terms.

Pointing toward these genuine attempts at a critical rethinking of Jewish heritage problematises Michael Meng’s understanding of heritage work in Poland and Germany. As mentioned above, Meng claims that the prevalent motivation behind renovation projects was to create a façade of tolerance and openness without actually engaging with problems of the past and present.<sup>112</sup> Writing about the 1980s, he attributes the interest in Jewish sites to two factors: the first, the power of the nostalgic allure of their ‘jagged edges and time-soaked stones’,<sup>113</sup> and the second, their importance in political games. He thus admits that some Poles approached Jewish relics for reasons other than politics, but nevertheless states that all actual revitalisation projects were conceived and effected in service of the creation of a façade of tolerance. The Communist government is thus characterised as feigning interest in Jewish sites to win over the imagined all-powerful Jewish lobby.<sup>114</sup>

In Kraków, however, the situation was different. The activists there were genuinely interested in Jewish ruins, and wanted to engage with the problems of the Polish-Jewish past as much as it was possible in the 1980s. Their motivation – and limitations – came both from national debates about the past and from international pressure. Levy and Sznajder tie the emergence of cosmopolitan memory to globalisation and democratisation.<sup>115</sup> Global public opinion, and the pressure coming from global, or at least European, institutions are seen as one of the main forces behind the cosmopolitanisation of memories in Eastern Europe.<sup>116</sup> In fact, Michael Meng writes openly about cosmopolitanism only in the context of entering global politics, and as proof of a post-1989

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<sup>111</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 250.

<sup>113</sup> Ibidem, p. 209.

<sup>114</sup> Ibidem, p. 220.

<sup>115</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>116</sup> Assmann and Conrad, ‘Introduction’, p. 2, see also: Mark, Onken.



transformation to democracy.<sup>117</sup> In this light, the emergence of cosmopolitan memory work under Communism seems counterintuitive. The PRL was the antithesis of democracy. International pressure to revitalise Jewish relics in the 1970s and the 1980s did exist, but can account for initial attempts at cosmopolitanisation only to a very limited extent. Western rabbis came to Poland, and to Kraków, to force local and national leaders to acknowledge the Jewish past. Eventually, in 1983, an International Commission for Jewish Cemeteries was created, which brought together Polish, American, Israeli and European Jewish leaders and Polish officials.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, Kobylarz argues that certain sections of the Polish elite functioned under the strong conviction that the Western Jewish lobby plotted against Poland and therefore concessions had to be made to appease this lobby.<sup>119</sup> Meng demonstrates how officials from Warsaw yielded to that somewhat imagined pressure too,<sup>120</sup> while Ochman reconstructs the process whereby Claude Lanzmann, a French filmmaker, dictated the topics for an internal Polish debate that played out in official media. The controversy that played out in 1985, arising from his film *Shoah*, was one of the first occasions in which the Polish public confronted accusations of being bystanders.<sup>121</sup>

External pressure, then, lay in the background of the emergence of the cosmopolitan memory project. I seek to establish that this cosmopolitanisation of memory evolved more locally and organically. Krakowian activists responsible for heritage creation worked in a cultural milieu that valued a critical approach to the past, and insisted on engaging with the Polish-Jewish past. As noted in the Introduction to this study, the oppositional elites had a ‘need for authentic – and not-illusory and alibi-creating – absolution for the sin of indifference towards anti-Jewish actions’ and saw the ‘condemnation of anti-semitism [as] part and parcel of this moral renewal of society.’<sup>122</sup> This approach had been in development since as early as the mid-1970s, and by the early 1980s had become widespread among the non-Communist intelligentsia. It was presented not just in samizdat publications or during clandestine opposition meetings, but also in magazines and newspapers such as *ZNAK* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*: semi-independent titles associated with progressive Catholic intellectuals, published in Kraków. It is virtually impossible, and beyond the scope of this research, to trace the circulation of ideas in the

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<sup>117</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 10.

<sup>118</sup> Kraków, APK, ‘UMK Wydział do spraw wyznań, Gmina Żydowska w Krakowie, Sig. 29/1431/408, fol. 461.

<sup>119</sup> Kobylarz, p. 317.

<sup>120</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 175.

<sup>121</sup> Ochman, *Remembering*, pp. 25-31.

<sup>122</sup> Kersten and Szapiro, p. 265-6.

semi-clandestine oppositional circles in Kraków and therefore to establish connections between employees of WUOZ and columnists of *Tygodnik Powszechny*. It is, however, clear that local activists, preservationists, and museum curators created their own milieu that mirrored the values espoused by the writers of *ZNAK* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*.

The national framework of critical memory both enabled and limited the local activists. On one hand, it served as a source of inspiration; on the other, however, it limited their actions. In the mid-1980s the exponents of the critical narrative assumed that the extent of 'Polish sins' reached only as far as indifference and a 'benign,' non-murderous version of anti-Semitism. It only ostracised the Jew from the Polish population, and therefore fuelled indifference during the war. This understanding was not limited to Polish elites; as mentioned above, it was also espoused by Claude Lanzmann, who in his *Shoah* presented Poles only as bystanders. Working before or during the Lanzmann debate and well before Błoński, a university professor from Krakow, published his seminal essay, local activists believed that 'critical engagement' with the Polish-Jewish past entailed addressing the problems of exclusion and of maintaining the image of the Jew as the Threatening Other. In their work they did in fact address those problems, and in so doing they helped to create a cosmopolitan memory project. Moreover, they laid the ground for future developments. A later step in the process – that of dismantling Otherness itself and normalising Jewishness – that took place in Kazimierz in the 1990s and 2000s was only possible because of these 1980s developments. However, in the 1980s, only the mid-ranking local elite were concerned with heritage work and the Jewish past. Kraków's mayor, top city officials and Party members followed the national line with their indifference.

## Conclusion

Commenting on heritage work in Kraków before 1989, Andrzej Gaczoł states that 'Through almost the whole analysed period, the majority of the heritage sites in Kraków grew dilapidated even though a huge number of declarations, statements, appeals and even resolutions was created.'<sup>123</sup> While his opinion is inherently pessimistic, it still points toward the most important feature of heritage work in the final decade of Communist rule: that local mid-ranking officials made efforts to rethink their approach to Kazimierz and its

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<sup>123</sup> Gaczoł, *Kraków*, p. 163.

plethora of Jewish relics. This Chapter demonstrated how the curators from the MHK and preservationists from the WUOZ developed an elaborate and coherent vision of the old Jewish quarter.

New narratives represented an attempt at the localisation and urbanisation of memory work. Just as in so many other cities across Eastern Europe, local memory activists utilised the urban past to create narratives that stood in stark opposition to the visions of history perpetuated by the Communist regimes.<sup>124</sup> In the particular case of Kraków, they offered a critical reading of the past in which there was a place for the history of non-ethnic Poles. This narrative paved the way for the first attempts at the cosmopolitanisation of memory. Curators and preservationists devised an image of ‘shtetl-romance,’ a mythicised version of the past in which Poles lived harmoniously with their Others: the Jews. In contrast to older representations, this one did not depict the Jews as a threat; on the contrary, it highlighted the possibilities of peaceful cohabitation. It also served as a starting point for the normalisation of Jewishness that took place in the 1990s and 2000s. Perhaps surprisingly, these first ‘cosmopolitan experiments’ were not only caused by external influence, as Levy and Sznajder would have it.<sup>125</sup> Pressure from the International Commission for Jewish Cemeteries was but a contributing factor to a process chiefly rooted in local developments. In fact, local activists translated for the general public the discourse of the oppositional elites that had been grappling with the Jewish-Polish past since the mid-1970s.<sup>126</sup>

Less surprising is the fact that this new narrative was espoused only by mid-ranking officials and the oppositional elite. The narrative they created in Kraków built on the local past, and was oppositional to the central, propaganda-oriented discourse on the national past. Furthermore, local memory actors helped to conceive the cosmopolitan memory project, opening the city up to difference, and symbolically bringing the Jew back to Kazimierz. Combined with limited but visible international pressure, it led curators and preservationists to define ‘shtetl-romance’ as a space of openness and tolerance where coexistence between Poles and Jews was possible. The understanding of heritage work I outlined here is markedly different to the interpretation offered by Michael Meng. Although his stance about the ‘redemptive’ and insincere engagement with the Jewish past was confirmed by the representatives of the city authority, the memory work on the ground

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<sup>124</sup> Czaplicka, Gelazis and Ruble, ‘Conclusion’, pp. 337-340.

<sup>125</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 3.

<sup>126</sup> See Introduction.

was far more complex and nuanced. With few practical interventions in the cityscape, the 1980s were crucial for heritage work in Kazimierz. The ‘huge number of declarations, statements, appeals and even resolutions’ bore fruit after 1989.

## Chapter Two: Past for Sale? Revival in the ‘Jewish Disneyland’

This romantic idealisation [of Kazimierz – JG] may take on a form reminiscent of Disney theme parks.<sup>1</sup>

Jewish Space [...] is a virtual space, present anywhere where Jews and non-Jews interact on Jewish themes or where a Jewish voice can make itself heard.<sup>2</sup>

Monika Murzyn-Kupisz and Diana Pinto, authors of the two passages presented above, offer two seemingly contradictory readings of post-1989 Kazimierz. While Murzyn-Kupisz admits that ‘Disneylandisation’ may be the price to pay for the revitalisation of Jewish relics, she nevertheless thoroughly criticises it. Pinto, on the other hand, focuses on the potential of what she terms ‘Jewish Spaces’: spaces of meeting, cooperation, and even reconciliation. This chapter seeks to expand on both ideas, demonstrating that the kitschness of heritage theme parks in fact contributed to the creation of Jewish Spaces. Furthermore, the chapter shows that the ‘Disney theme park’ model was not the only form that heritage work took after the fall of Communism. The varied heritage production of the post-1989 period followed ideas developed before 1989. The ‘shtetl-romance’ was finally created, and together with other instances of Jewish Spaces it served to normalise Jewishness and to fuelled the cosmopolitan memory project: the creation of a narrative that supported tolerance and openness, both toward the past and in the present.

To trace the creation of Jewish Spaces this chapter utilises the vast collection of documents held by WUOZ. The WUOZ served as the controlling body for heritage production, and as such it was compulsory to inform the Office of even the smallest changes in Kazimierz, a protected heritage site. As a result, its archive stores almost every piece of writing, from architectural plans to personal queries, regarding the Jewish relics. Analysis of those documents, complemented by information from secondary material, allows for a reconstruction of the creation of Jewish Spaces. In this chapter, then, I show how Jewish Space in Kazimierz emerged, and how it in fact embodied ideas developed in

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<sup>1</sup> Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> Pinto, *The Third Pillar?*, p. 16.

the 1980s. I analyse three different types of Spaces, and comment on their functions and the way they contributed toward the urbanisation and cosmopolitanisation of local memory.

## Jewish Space

The plethora of often-ephemeral activities that both constitute and exceed Jewishness can be difficult to track down and pinpoint, and hard to subsume under one conceptual heading. Here, the notion of Jewish Spaces, authored by Diana Pinto, is helpful. In her original framework, Pinto sought to apply the concept to cultural production in general, rather than memory work alone, but her theory is easily adaptable to this specificity, and shares ground with many of the overarching concepts informing this work.<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, then, I use the term to trace and analyse only heritage work, proposing that the Jewish Space can be read as a place wherein narratives are subject to urbanisation, de-heroisation, and universalisation. As a result, the emergence and development of these Spaces represents a step toward the cosmopolitanisation of memory.

Diana Pinto first developed the idea of Jewish Spaces in the early 1990s. She suggests re-examining the popularity of Jewish culture and heritage among (mostly non-Jewish) Europeans from an angle different to that of the majority of scholars. While there is a tendency to dismiss these interests as a type of kitsch, insignificant nostalgia, she offers an avenue for a more productive analysis. She terms these varied interests in the Jewish past and culture, in ‘things Jewish,’ a ‘Jewish Space,’ noting that such a space could be created by non-Jews with relatively little Jewish input. She validates non-Jewish input and adds that it can ‘transform or enrich’<sup>4</sup> Jewish narrative and ‘help to foster it.’<sup>5</sup> In so doing, she demonstrates that inside of the Jewish Space, Jewish and non-Jewish cultural production is equal, and that non-Jewish input into Jewish culture may be a positive phenomenon. In contrast to numerous scholars, Pinto focuses too on the functions of the existence of Jewish Space.<sup>6</sup> First, she observes that it is precisely inside of the Jewish Space that Jews lose the status of the ‘Other,’ becoming ‘human beings like everyone else.’<sup>7</sup> Second, she notes that ‘it is only here that Jews must confront historically charged

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<sup>3</sup> Pinto, *The Third Pillar?*, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> Diana Pinto, ‘Jewish Spaces and Their Future’, in *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, ed. by Erica Lehrer and Michael Meng (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), p. 282.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 282.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Eve Jochowitz, ‘Flavors of Memory: Jewish Food as Culinary Tourism in Poland.’, *Southern Folklore*, 55.3 (1998), p. 225 and Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, pp. 438 and further.

<sup>7</sup> Pinto, ‘Jewish Spaces’, p. 282.

‘others’, whose ancestors were very much present, if not always responsible, during the Holocaust and before that during the centuries of European anti-Semitism.’<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the existence of Jewish Spaces is beneficial for both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, as both groups can recognise themselves as partners and equals.

Elaborating on this concept, Pinto goes on to differentiate between several variants of Jewish Space according to who can be defined as their respective ‘masters.’ On one end of the continuum she places spaces of inner community life, organised and run by Jews but vis-à-vis the interests and influences of the non-Jewish population, terming them ‘Jewish-Jewish’ Spaces. On the other end, she posits public spaces in which Jewish themes were shaped by non-Jewish actors, and often by states; here, non-Jewish actors were the masters. However, the most widespread type of Jewish Space is located midway between these two polar types. In this ‘Jewish-friendly’ Space, Jews and non-Jews were partners (‘co-actors’<sup>9</sup>); here, they could influence each other and enter into dialogue.<sup>10</sup> Kazimierz offers the opportunity to trace the emergence of all three types of Space. While the ‘Jewish-friendly’ Space was the most widespread and visible, the two other types existed too, and their influence on Polish memory cannot be overestimated.

Pinto’s concept proves to be a productive starting-point, as it points toward cultural practices seemingly unrelated to memory work and demonstrates their importance to it. It provides an interesting framework for analysis of such varied activities as heritage creation, organisation of festivals, publishing of Jewish-themed fiction, and religious practices. Authors such as Erica Lehrer and Magdalena Waligórska utilise it successfully,<sup>11</sup> and Monica Ruethers goes as far as to transplant it, writing on the ‘Gypsy Space’ in France.<sup>12</sup> However, their applications of Pinto’s idea are somewhat constrained. While Pinto herself differentiates between various types of Jewish Space, the majority of researchers focus only on the ‘middle slot,’ the Jewish-friendly Space, since it is the most prominent and commonplace, and the easiest to identify.<sup>13</sup> These authors rarely mention Jewish-Jewish Space, and almost never examine spaces in which non-Jewish actors were the masters.

The significance of the notion of Jewish Space for this thesis does not, however, lie only in its usefulness for subsuming varied activities under one heading. More important here is the way that Jewish Space can be read as a product of the same processes that

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<sup>8</sup> Pinto, *The Third Pillar?*, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Pinto, ‘Jewish Spaces’, p. 282.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 282.

<sup>11</sup> Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, Waligórska.

<sup>12</sup> Ruethers.

<sup>13</sup> Pinto, ‘Jewish Spaces’, p. 282.

brought forward the urbanisation and cosmopolitanisation of memory. Jewish Spaces emerged across the European continent during the twilight of national, uniform grand narratives, as did urban and cosmopolitan narratives. The Spaces offered a story about a minority culture, and focused on the unheroic daily lives of ordinary citizens. It was often created by bottom-up actors interested in local, and most often urban, cultures and histories. In fact, creators often travelled across Europe and the United States disseminating similar, even identical, repetitions of Jewishness.<sup>14</sup> All these features suggest a close connection between the processes of urbanisation of memory, its cosmopolitanisation, and the creation of Jewish Spaces. The creation of Jewish Spaces could, and in Kazimierz did, lead to the emergence of cosmopolitan memory. This thesis thus uses Jewish Spaces to shed light on the urbanisation and cosmopolitanisation of memory. I demonstrate that what often began as a small-scale endeavour by local activists interested in a particular aspect of Jewish past or culture frequently contributed to a bigger picture that helped to build cosmopolitan memory in and around Kazimierz.

## **Embodying the 'Shtetl-Romance '**

### **Szeroka Street as Jewish Disneyland**

I suggested in the Introduction, and will further elaborate on the notion in subsequent chapters, that the 1989 threshold bore barely any importance for memory work around the Holocaust in Kraków. The case of heritage creation, however, was different in this regard. The 1980s were not conducive to any large-scale redevelopments, but the situation changed after 1989, with Poland's transition to democracy and the open market. As a result of the transition, Poles discovered a new economic freedom. They could, and did, open cafés, pubs, restaurants, galleries, theatres, bookshops, and travel agencies. In tandem with this process, the fall of the Iron Curtain and opening of Poland's borders brought with them an influx of Westerners willing to spend money in the new restaurants and galleries, and to interact with local heritage creators.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For examples see: Waligórska, Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, Meng, 'Muranów as a Ruin'.

<sup>15</sup> Zbigniew Kobyliński, 'Protection, Maintenance and Enhancement of Cultural Landscapes in Changing Social, Political and Economical Reality in Poland', in *Landscape under Pressure. Theory and Practice of Cultural Heritage Research and Preservation*, ed. by Ludomir Lozny (Springer US, 2006), p 227.



The first foreign Jewish visitors to Kraków, motivated by the need or desire to see Auschwitz and the ruins of Jewish life, did not like what they saw.<sup>16</sup> Charles Hoffmann affirms that for many of these visitors, the fact that Christians were involved in caring for Jewish ruins was ‘preposterous at best, and, at worst, in extremely bad taste.’<sup>17</sup> Erica Lehrer notes that some of her interviewees, Jews she met in Kazimierz during the 1990s echoed those sentiments, with some going so far as to dismiss everything they saw as displaying signs of a perverse Polish anti-Semitism,<sup>18</sup> and Jack Kugelmass and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska cite similar opinions.<sup>19</sup> It seems clear that for an average Jewish visitor in the 1990s, the idea that non-Jewish Poles had taken over Jewish ruins or were offering Jewish food or music in Kazimierz was absurd, even crass.

While this interpretation was primarily a popular one, some scholars echo it in their research. Both Monika Murzyn-Kupisz and Eve Jochnowitz criticise the developments in Kazimierz, with Jochnowitz commenting that ‘politicians and entrepreneurs have produced Szeroka Street as a Jewish theme park in a country where few Jews survive.’<sup>20</sup> She goes on to criticise the majority of restaurants and cafés that existed there in the mid-1990s. Her critique is based on the fact that it was Poles, and not Jews, who were responsible for the early ‘Jewish revival.’ She dismisses their work on the grounds of their membership of the *wrong* group. Branding Szeroka Street as a ‘theme park’ or as ‘Jewish Disneyland’ may reflect a popular sentiment, but it is not productive. There is an important strand of research, examining both Jewish/Holocaust sites and the sites of other groups and cultures, that validates the commodification of heritage. Analysing cases as diverse as the memorialisation of Gallipoli and heritage work in northern English industrial towns, Sharon Macdonald, Bruce Scates, and Michael Meng all demonstrate that looking into ‘Disneylandisation’ offers unique insights into memory and identity creation.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, however, disregarding critique of commodification is equally unproductive. It must be taken into consideration as a reminder that heritage work was, in fact, competitive in nature, and that accusations of commodification were employed by some activists to criticise others. The fact that non-Jewish Poles took over the old Jewish

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<sup>16</sup> Jack Kugelmass and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, “‘If You Build It They Will Come’: Recreating an Historic Jewish District in Post-Communist Krakow’, *City and Society Annual Review*, 10.1 (1998), p. 322.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Hoffman, *Gray Dawn: The Jews of Eastern Europe in the Post-Communist Era* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), p. 273.

<sup>18</sup> Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, lo. 349.

<sup>19</sup> Kugelmass and Orla-Bukowska, p. 340.

<sup>20</sup> Jochnowitz, p. 225, Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, p. 438 and further.

<sup>21</sup> Macdonald, *Memorylands*, p 93, Bruce C. Scates, ‘Manufacturing Memory at Gallipoli’, in *War Memory and Popular Culture*, ed. by Michael Keren and Holger H Herwig (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, 2009), p. 68. Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, pp. 12-13.

Quarter *was* seen as an unwarranted assault on Jewish culture, and did prompt diaspora Jews to protest. Furthermore, numerous establishments on Szeroka Street *were* perfect examples of kitsch, offering ‘easy’ and ‘undemanding’ images of the past based on recognisable clichés that evoked effortless sympathy.<sup>22</sup>

The negative impression many visitors had of Kazimierz was magnified by the contrast between the first restaurants that opened and their setting. As mentioned above, Kazimierz grew dilapidated under Communist rule. When the first café, gallery and pair of bookshops opened on Szeroka in 1993, the space did not yet resemble the trendy, gentrified quarter it grew to be in the 2000s, and it was still far from becoming one of the best-known ‘Jewish-friendly’ Spaces on the continent. In fact, it was closer to its ‘no-go zone’ state of the 1980s. When a proprietor mentioned that before he opened Ariel, the first restaurant and gallery on Szeroka Street, visitors to Kazimierz saw only death, he may have been speaking metaphorically – but this was, indeed, what they saw.<sup>23</sup> Ariel was one of the first signs of life in a dilapidated street full of crumbling buildings. 1993 proved to be a breakthrough year for Kazimierz: aside from Ariel, the Jarden Bookshop opened on Szeroka,<sup>24</sup> while the Centre for Jewish Culture initiated its activities on the nearby Nowy Square.<sup>25</sup> In addition, in the autumn of 1993 Steven Spielberg’s blockbuster *Schindler’s List* premiered, putting Kraków, including Kazimierz and Płaszów, firmly on the map of global tourism.<sup>26</sup>

The tourist industry reacted rapidly to Spielberg’s success, and when Jochnowitz conducted her research in the mid-1990s there were already five restaurants and two Jewish-themed cafés on Szeroka Street.<sup>27</sup> Alongside her sharp critique, Jochnowitz offers an overview of the area. Beginning her description with the northern part of the Street, she briefly mentions the small park with a monument, but fails to specify what the park was and what the monument commemorated (more on which later). Reading further, she lists Jarden Bookshop, occupying part of the tenement closing Szeroka to the north, then the old *mikveh*, taken over by Austeria restaurant. Next to Austeria, Jochnowitz lists Galleria

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<sup>22</sup> Greenberg, pp. 10-14.

<sup>23</sup> Erica Lehrer, ‘Can There Be a Conciliatory Heritage?’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16.4-5 (2010), p. 276.

<sup>24</sup> [www.jarden.pl](http://www.jarden.pl), [accessed: 18 May 2015].

<sup>25</sup> Ruth Elen Gruber, ‘Post-Trauma “Precious Legacies”: Jewish Museums in Eastern Europe after the Holocaust and before the Fall of Communism’, in *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History*, ed. by Richard I. Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Charlesworth, ‘A Corner of a Foreign Field That Is Forever Spielberg’s: Understanding the Moral Landscapes of the Site of the Former KL Płaszów, Kraków, Poland’, *Cultural Geographies*, 11.3 (2004), p. 296.

<sup>27</sup> Jochnowitz, p. 225.

Judaica, then further down the eastern side of the Street the two competing Ariel restaurants and Hotel Ester. The southern end of Szeroka was occupied by the Old Synagogue, and on the west side, just next to Remuh Synagogue, there was Restauracja Na Kazimierzu, the only kosher establishment on Szeroka Street at that time.<sup>28</sup> While tracing the changes in the restaurant-scape of Szeroka Street is not the principal concern of this chapter – and indeed, nor would such a task be feasible, given the ephemeral nature of some of the businesses – noting the main developments of the scene helps to better situate and understand the Jewish Space.

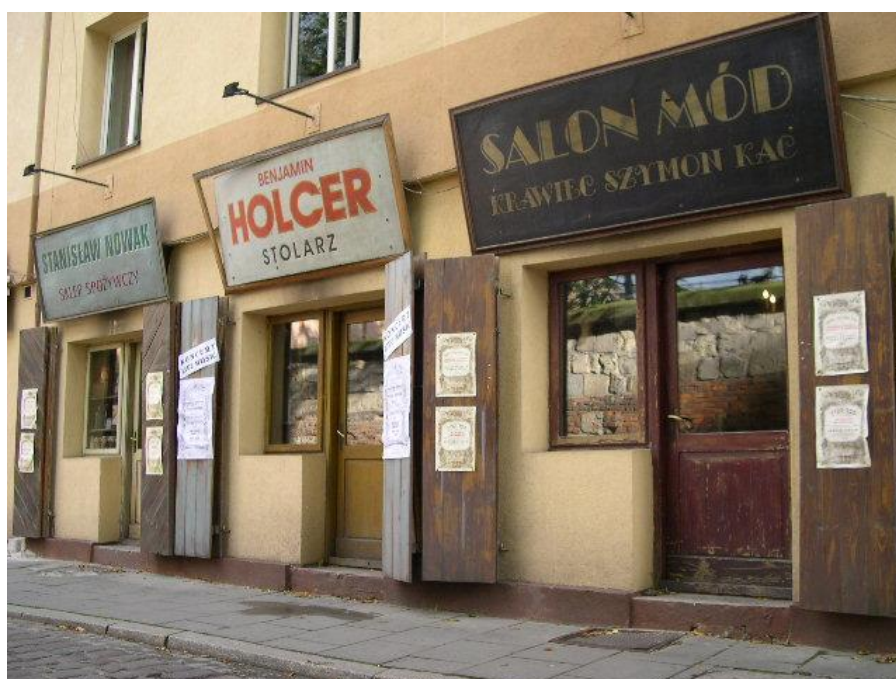


Figure 2: Once Upon a Time in Kazimierz.

After a lengthy legal dispute between the two Ariel restaurants, the original Ariel was closed down, but its place was taken over by Alef. The owners of the now-defunct Ariel moved their business up the street to focus on the aforementioned Austeria. Interestingly, *austeria* is an old Polish word for an inn, usually run by Jews. In this way, even the name led back to the well-established representation of Jewishness. Soon, the old *mikveh* became home to a restaurant (eventually renamed Klezmer Hois), a hotel, and a publishing house specialising in *judaica*. Klezmer Hois branded itself as ‘the best Jewish restaurant in Kazimierz’ and catered to guests who did not appreciate the ostentatiousness and tackiness characteristic of some of its competition, offering instead an interior stylised

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, pp. 225-226.

to recall the flat of an affluent bourgeois family from the interwar period. Characteristically, almost nothing about the décor suggested that it was a Jewish family, and the proprietors never decided to litter the place with randomly placed menorahs.<sup>29</sup> By contrast, the remaining Ariel restaurant gained more and more ‘Jewish’ symbols, becoming adorned with plaster Lions of Judah and a six-foot-high – and apparently electric – menorah.<sup>30</sup> Another important addition to the Jewish Space was Once Upon a Time in Kazimierz, opened in 2003. This restaurant took over most of the ground floor of the tenement that closed Szeroka Street to the north,<sup>31</sup> and both the interior and exterior were visually divided into small sections representing imagined local businesses from a bygone era. Carpenter Benjamin Holzer’s sign swung next to that of Stanisław Nowak, advertising his grocery store; visitors could sit in a tailor’s workshop next to an old Singer sewing machine or amidst carpenter’s tools. The restaurant also exhibited the portrait of Mordechai Gebirtig, a famous pre-war carpenter and musician, and, for reasons unknown, a set of old-fashioned wooden skis.<sup>32</sup>

Szeroka Street’s only kosher restaurant, the Restauracja Na Kazimierzu, closed down toward the end of the 1990s. While no kosher restaurants remained on Szeroka Street, there were others elsewhere in Kazimierz, which by 2013 amounted to three different establishments scattered across the Quarter. By the late 2000s, Szeroka Street was home to two businesses respectively entitled Hamsa and Babelstein, both of which referred to Jewishness through their names, décor, and their signs, which were written in Latin text stylised to resemble the Hebrew alphabet. The number of commercial fixtures of Jewish Space in Szeroka Street grew rapidly during the first two decades that followed the fall of Communism, and even the oldest establishments evolved and adjusted to the needs of tourists. The general appearance of the Street changed too, and with almost all of its buildings renovated by 2010, it gained a glory it had never seen before. The quality of its decorations grew to suggest affluence, but the narrative they offered of the Jewish past stayed almost the same for years.

As Jochnowitz notes, almost none of these establishments were run by Jews themselves. The only exceptions were the short-lived Restauracja Na Kazimierzu, and later Once Upon a Time.<sup>33</sup> However, especially during the mid-1990s, most of the restaurants

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.klezmer.pl/eng>, [accessed 19 May 2015].

<sup>30</sup> Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, lo 2786.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, lo. 1059.

<sup>32</sup> [www.dawnotemu.nakazimierz.pl](http://www.dawnotemu.nakazimierz.pl), [accessed 25 May 15].

<sup>33</sup> Lehrer *Jewish Poland Revisited*, lo. 1059.

suggested otherwise. Jochnowitz mentions that waiters in both Ariels wore white tieless shirts and black vests, a clear reference to the garb of Orthodox Jews.<sup>34</sup> In addition, both restaurants served similar menus, clearly inspired by popular Jewish dishes: gefilte fish, *czolent*, and various similar classics could be found there, along with dishes that had more to do with Polish fantasies about Jewish cuisine than with Jewish cuisine itself. For example, one of the Ariels offered “Jankiel, the Innkeeper from Berdyczow’s soup” while the other served “chicken livers à la Hertzfel Street.”<sup>35</sup> Both names were icons of Jewishness for Poles. The first is especially interesting, since it refers not to any real Jewish innkeeper, but rather to a creation of poet Adam Mickiewicz, who in his epic ‘Pan Tadeusz’ invented Jankiel and had him play Polish patriotic music.<sup>36</sup>

What Szeroka Street offered was a variation on a theme first presented in the Old Synagogue and then developed by heritage preservationists. The curators of the MHK created a narrative about the Jewish past in the form of an exhibition, heritage preservationists translated it to the language of city planning and architecture, and entrepreneurs on Szeroka Street brought those ideas to life. The Street embodied the image of a peaceful shtetl. Just like in a shtetl, Polish and Jewish sites existed next to each other, and Poles and (albeit in the 1990s still mostly virtual) Jews lived together. Places such as Once Upon a Time in Kazimierz were specifically designed to highlight the cohabitation allegedly typical for this nebulous Golden Age. Shopkeeper Stanisław Nowak ‘worked’ door to door with carpenter Benjamin Holzer, and in Austeria/Klezmer Hois visitors – both Polish and Jewish – could sit in a Jewish family’s living-room. This imagined shtetl may have never existed, but its (re)creation on Szeroka Street wove together key aspects of the common patterning described by Levy and Sznajder. It focused on the daily life of regular, rather than distinguished, citizens, and instead of bringing to the fore distinguished *tsaddikim* or rabbis, it presented ordinary artisans, thus breaking with the still-popular grand narrative of national heroes and their great deeds. It did so in a kitsch-y way, but as Sharon Macdonald reminds us, this kitschness – and nostalgia – were ‘means by which local people could [...] make claims of belonging through knowledge of local history.’<sup>37</sup> The MHK offered a more subtle narrative, but was also less popular. Restaurants and cafés, meanwhile, catered for a mass audience, allowing even the least sophisticated visitors to experience some form of narrative on the Jewish past.

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<sup>34</sup> Jochnowitz, p. 226.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 227.

<sup>36</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz, Czyli Ostatni Zjazd Na Litwie* (Warszawa: Fundacja Nowoczesna Polska), p. 64.

<sup>37</sup> Macdonald, *Memorylands*, p. 93.

Szeroka Street did eventually evolve, but during its emergence in the 1990s it closely followed the example set by the MHK: just like the curators of that institution, local entrepreneurs recast Jews as the Other. Initially, the majority of the establishments used stereotypical images of Jews, mostly of Hasidim. The black garb worn by waiters drew on that image, highlighting difference, and so did the menus offered within. In Szeroka Street, Jews looked different, ate different food, and listened to different music. At the same time, however, there was nothing framing them as a threat, or suggesting conflict. On the contrary, the symbols and icons invoked by heritage creators attested to the possibility of peaceful, gainful cohabitation. The trope of Jankiel the Innkeeper used in one of the Ariel restaurants best showcases this feature: in Mickiewicz's epic poem, Jankiel plays Polish tunes, and in doing so inspires Polish noblemen to fight. At the same time, however, he remains an outsider: helpful, important, but never part of the in-group.

Entrepreneurs from Kazimierz thus followed the path set by officials from the MHK and the WUOZ, in all but one detail: they changed the timeframe for their version of 'shtetl-romance.' While Krasnowolski advocated for a return to nineteenth-century Kraków (e.g., gas-lamps), the image presented by these new proprietors harked back to the interwar Republic. Klezmer Hois restaurant explicitly branded itself as 'pre-war';<sup>38</sup> Once Upon a Time displayed a portrait of Mordechai Gebirtig, which also anchored it in the 1930s. Building a definition of collective memory in the Introduction I quoted Barbara Szacka, who reminds us that within collective memory, information is ordered not chronologically, but rather according to the values it denominates.<sup>39</sup> After the fall of Communism, the interwar period became a new Golden Age, embodying as it did the last time that Poland had been an independent, relatively affluent, and multicultural country.<sup>40</sup> With this shift from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the fear of modernity was discarded, but that did not have a direct impact on the position of the Jew in the vision of the 'shtetl-romance.' Here, nineteenth-century Galicia and inter-war Poland both stand for the same thing: a time not yet tainted by the Holocaust.

This evocation of the 'shtetl-romance' allowed for a blending-out of the painful experience of World War II. As such, it was heavily criticised by Magdalena Waligórska, whose comments on the 'escapist function' state: 'Beautifying the prewar shtetl life by purging it of misery, conflict, and persecution, some [...] productions provide an anesthetic

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.klezmer.pl/eng>, [accessed: 19 May 2015].

<sup>39</sup> Szacka, p. 94, see also Introduction, pp. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Waligórska, p. 274.

for the Polish conscience and, at least indirectly, contribute to the self-serving mythology of innocence.<sup>41</sup> Offering an alternative reading and a positive appraisal of Szeroka Street, is Monica Ruethers. She reminds us that a number of tourists visited Kraków after seeing Auschwitz, and thus Szeroka Street allowed them to ‘heal.’ She states that ‘spatial relief was accompanied by temporal relief.’<sup>42</sup>

One of the overarching ideas behind this thesis is a conviction that changes in national memorial frameworks impact the local memoryscape. Both Waligórska’s and Ruethers’s claims must, therefore, be qualified against this premise. In the early 1990s, the average Polish visitor to Kazimierz had limited knowledge of the Holocaust, and may thus have understood Szeroka Street in a way more in line with Waligórska’s proposal. By 2013, however, understanding of the Jewish Genocide was much more widespread, and Kazimierz offered short-lived relief from this burden of permanent knowledge. Jewish visitors, on the other hand, had a similar level of understanding of the Holocaust both in 1993 and in 2013, and for this reason they were able to use Szeroka Street’s offer of ‘healing’ after visits to Auschwitz during both periods.

Moreover, the image created on Szeroka Street was never free of the memory of the Holocaust, and in consequence never offered solely ‘an anesthetic.’<sup>43</sup> This nuance was due to the intervention of the Nissenbaum Foundation, an organisation that had been concerned with Jewish heritage in Poland since the mid-1980s.<sup>44</sup> The Restauracja na Kazimierzu was one of their investments, but even years before it opened the Foundation had erected a small monument to commemorate Krakowian Jews killed in the Holocaust.<sup>45</sup> It was situated in the green square, itself a remnant of a medieval Jewish cemetery, on the northern side of the Street – the same square, in fact, that Jochnowitz omits from her description of Kazimierz. The old burial site was surrounded by a fence whose ironwork was adorned with menorahs. The memorial, placed in the middle of the Street, insisted that the site should be a: ‘Place of meditation upon the martyrdom / of 65 thousand Polish citizens of Jewish / nationality from Kraków and its environs / killed by the Nazis during World War II.’ The inscription was provided in three languages – along with Polish and English, the Foundation offered a Hebrew translation – and was thus made accessible for the majority of visitors. While this chapter does not focus on the memory of the Jewish

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p. 274.

<sup>42</sup> Ruethers, p. 674.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p. 674.

<sup>44</sup> For more information on the Nissenbaum Foundation see Chapter Two, section ‘Other Spaces - Other Identities’

<sup>45</sup> AWUOZ, ‘Synagoga Remuh. Ogólnie’.

Genocide, it is important that this plaque is brought to the fore, since it has for many years clearly marked and defined the Space of Szeroka Street as connected to the Holocaust. It also preceded any other development in the area, meaning that any restaurant, coffee shop, or gallery opened in a space already marked with the memory of the Holocaust.

The monument did not dominate, either physically or symbolically, the Jewish Space, but it did infuse it with additional meaning. It was visible from every part of the street, from every garden of every restaurant and café. In short, then, Szeroka Street's heritage products showcased various levels of kitsch, but at the same time they fulfilled an important function: they provided visitors with an opportunity for 'spatial and temporal relief,' and for immersion in the 'shtetl-romance.' At the same time, they never allowed for a full escape from the grim reality of the twentieth century. The Holocaust loomed large in the background, anchoring Szeroka Street in history.

### **Jewish Space as a Site of Conciliatory Heritage**

The reading of the 'Jewish-friendly' Space as a kitsch theme park with added references to the Holocaust is a compelling one, but it is far from comprehensive; Szeroka Street, and Kazimierz in general, had various other dimensions. Analysing heritage work in the Jewish Town, Erica Lehrer coins the term 'conciliatory heritage' to refer to a process, or rather the possibility of a process, in which groups and individuals can work through a problematic and contentious past via heritage creation. Members of these groups can listen and speak not in an official setting (e.g. a courtroom), but 'organically,' during real-life encounters.<sup>46</sup> Their meetings do not lead to an amalgamation of their visions of history, and they do not necessarily give rise to forgiveness (if that is needed). Rather, they promote openness and tolerance, demonstrating that the Other is not so different. While Michael Meng sees the reconstruction of Jewish ruins organised by governments as displaying 'redemptive cosmopolitanism,' an attempt at putting on a mask of openness and tolerance, Lehrer is far more optimistic.<sup>47</sup>

According to her reading, heritage work can contribute to reconciliation between Poles and Jews. Similarly, Ewa Ochman notes that a 'commitment to the idea that it is the very process of communication about distinct national/regional/ethnic pasts that binds people together might do much more for cosmopolitan practices than insistence on

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<sup>46</sup> Lehrer, *Can there be*, p. 272.

<sup>47</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 250.



consensus about common past.<sup>48</sup> Ochman's observation aligns with Lehrer's analysis in suggesting that openness to dialogue further contributes to the process of cosmopolitanisation. Furthermore, Ochman underlines that communication about difference is not equivalent to overcoming it.<sup>49</sup> Communication contributes to the dismantling of the status of the Other, and may contribute towards reconciliation, but it does not necessarily effect the merging of different groups. The section that follows explains how multiple dimensions of 'Jewish-friendly' Space, some of them built around the idea of dialogue, contributed towards the cosmopolitanisation of memory in Kraków.

One dimension of this process, namely the memorialisation of the Holocaust, is discussed above. Several others also call for analysis, including the creation of opportunities for direct meeting and dialogue; attempts at critical discussion of the Polish-Jewish past; occasions at studying the history and culture of the other group; and chances to experience that history first-hand. The activists involved in these developments insisted on presenting Jewishness not as Otherness, but rather as normality. Moreover, they strived to create a situation in which Jews felt themselves to be members of the in-group and not as outsiders.

The proprietors of the businesses on Szeroka Street established them primarily as sources of income, but some did build their companies around the idea of dialogue. What they offered fulfilled the definition of kitsch, but they still strived toward authenticity and insisted on improving their offerings according to the suggestions of Jewish clients. The owners of the original Ariel restaurant, and later of Austeria/Klezmer Hois, famously received their first batch of recipes for traditional Jewish dishes from one of the matrons of the local Jewish Congregation, and later continually modified their menu to accommodate the idea of 'Jewish grandmothers' visiting their restaurant.<sup>50</sup> They never failed to remind their patrons that Ariel had been the semi-official canteen of the *Schindler's List* crew,<sup>51</sup> and later, in Klezmer Hois, they basked in the fame of Leopold Kozłowski, one of the world's most renowned klezmers.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, restaurants were open to the local Jewish community, and respected Jewish sensibilities. Jochnowitz affirms that 'as soon as it opened, Ariel became the center of all non-ceremonial Jewish activity in Cracow.'<sup>53</sup> When it moved north to the old *mikveh*, the restaurant retained that function, and in the

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<sup>48</sup> Ewa Ochman, 'Memory of War', p. 224.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, p. 224.

<sup>50</sup> Lehrer, *Can there be*, p. 278.

<sup>51</sup> Jochnowitz, p. 226.

<sup>52</sup> Waligórska, p. 103.

<sup>53</sup> Jochnowitz, p. 226.

years before the opening of an official Jewish Community Centre that offered a variety of spaces for Jews in Kraków, Klezmer Hois was often seen as an unofficial one.<sup>54</sup>

Several other establishments on Szeroka Street also offered spaces for dialogue and meeting; others still provided opportunities to learn about the Jewish past. One of the first businesses to open on Szeroka Street was, in fact, a bookshop specialising in *judaica*: Jarden Bookshop, which opened in 1993 and was soon followed by Austeria Publishing House.<sup>55</sup> Both run by non-Jewish Poles, the two establishments became fixtures that elevated the Jewish Space to a different level. They established Szeroka Street as not only a space for leisure, but also one for learning and critical discussion; Austeria had in its catalogue some of the most cutting-edge research into Jewish history and Polish-Jewish relations,<sup>56</sup> while Jarden's owners claimed to offer every Polish-language publication on Jewish themes. Furthermore, Jarden was apparently often used as a starting point for research by students from the Jewish Department of the nearby Jagiellonian University.<sup>57</sup> It also helped diaspora and Israeli Jews engage with local Jewish Space by offering assistance with genealogical research.<sup>58</sup>

Further adding to the dimensions of Jewish Space built around critical dialogue was the Centre for Jewish Culture. The Centre was one of the oldest establishments within the 'Jewish-friendly' Space, preceding the creation of spaces like Ariel or Jarden. It was devised by a group of Polish scholars connected to the Jagiellonian University; in fact, it could be considered an outreach project by the Jewish Studies department.<sup>59</sup> The Centre opened in the old Beit Ha-midrash building at Nowy Square, after prolonged renovation sponsored by, among other entities, the United States Congress.<sup>60</sup> Gruber notes that in the first three years of the Centre's existence, 625 events were organised there, mostly lectures, seminars, and concerts.<sup>61</sup> Thanks to its strong links to the University, the Centre was able to offer an ambitious and demanding programme of events; lectures on Jewish philosophy were interspersed with presentations on Polish-Jewish history. In this context, meetings with Holocaust survivors constituted the 'popular' part of the programme.<sup>62</sup> Lehrer states

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<sup>54</sup> Erica Lehrer, 'Jewish Heritage, Pluralism, and Milieux de Mémoire: The Case of Kraków's Kazimierz', in *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, ed. by Erica Lehrer and Michael Meng (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), p. 187.

<sup>55</sup> [www.jarden.pl](http://www.jarden.pl) – [accessed 18 May 2015].

<sup>56</sup> [www.austeria.pl](http://www.austeria.pl) – [accessed 20 May 2015].

<sup>57</sup> Lehrer, *Can There Be*, p. 278.

<sup>58</sup> [www.jarden.pl](http://www.jarden.pl), [accessed 18 May 2015].

<sup>59</sup> Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, lo. 1059.

<sup>60</sup> Krzysztof Fijałek, 'Chcą Centrum,' *Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków*, 11 May 2005, str. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Gruber, 'Post-Trauma', p. 12.

<sup>62</sup> [www.judaica.pl](http://www.judaica.pl), [accessed 29 May 15].

that 'the Center's [impressive-JG] building long outshone its programming,'<sup>63</sup> a critique based on the Centre's failure to gain a popular following or recognition; but attracting this type of mass audience had never been its aim. Its role in the Jewish Space was different. While the establishments on Szeroka Street marked the Space as one of leisure and escape, the Centre added a more critical dimension.

Instead, Lehrer's attention and praise goes primarily to the Jewish Culture Festival, a popular celebration of Jewish Culture. Founded in 1988, initially as a small-scale film festival, it soon grew exponentially, and by the 2000s it lasted for a full nine days, ending with 'Szalom na Szerokiej', an open-air concert transmitted live on public television. In contrast to the Centre for Jewish Culture, the Festival's programme was popular in nature, and revolved around music and street art; in addition, however, it also included workshops on various aspects of Judaism and Jewish culture. Meetings with individuals recognised as Righteous Among the Nations were offered too.<sup>64</sup> The initial editions of the Festival were organised mostly by non-Jewish Poles, but this had changed by the early 1990s, when Jewish creators were invited into organisational roles, allowing the Festival to provide an insight into living Jewish culture.<sup>65</sup> The list of presenters was never solely Jewish; numerous Polish, non-Jewish klezmer bands performed, and establishments on Szeroka Street were often used as Festival venues.<sup>66</sup>

Even though the nine-day-long event was not a spatial fixture, I highlight the Festival here for two reasons: first, to demonstrate how multidimensional Jewish Space in Kazimierz was, and second – and more importantly – to show that it, too, had an effect on the spaces of Kazimierz. The Festival reintroduced Jewish culture to Kazimierz on a scale that none of the entrepreneurs in Szeroka could have achieved. It offered an insight into various types of music, folklore, and quotidian events. It did, in short, what the MHK had never managed to do. It showed different aspects of living, emphasising contemporary Jewish culture rather than only that of the nineteenth-century Orthodox community, thereby affirming that Jewishness was much more varied than the images of the 'shtetl-romance' had suggested. To be sure, some parts of its programme did feed into that image: Klezmer bands, for example, were always an important part of the Festival. However, by bringing together creators and consumers from every section of the worldwide Jewish

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<sup>63</sup> Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, lo. 1006.

<sup>64</sup> Anna Dodziuk, *Druga Dusza. O Dwudziestu Festiwalach Kultury Żydowskiej W Krakowie* (Warszawa: Czarna Owca, 2010), pp. 23-29.

<sup>65</sup> Ruth Elen Gruber, 'The Kraków Jewish Culture Festival', *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Focusing on Jewish Popular Culture in Poland and Its Afterlife*, 16 (2003), p. 365.

<sup>66</sup> Waligórska, pp. 53 and 116.

community, the Festival filled Kazimierz with Jewish life, and, in so doing, illustrated the richness and diversity of the same.

As a result, the Festival succeeded in influencing the spaces of Kazimierz in a permanent way. The Festival began in 1988, while Kazimierz was still a ‘no-go zone’; in fact, the first events did not take place in the old Jewish town. The popularity of the Festival, however, added to Kazimierz’s momentum and accelerated its revitalisation. Toward the end of the 1990s, it began to gradually move its events to the district, and by 2008 the majority of them took place there.<sup>67</sup> In 2008 itself, the Festival organisers opened the Cheder Café on Józef Street, making the presence of the Festival permanent. Furthermore, by attracting and bringing together Jews *en masse*, for over a week every July, the Festival marked Kazimierz as a site of living culture, rather than a museum. It ‘normalised’ Jewishness, showing non-Jewish Poles that being Jewish did not equate to being different or Other. Lehrer quotes a Jewish leader from Warsaw as stating that wearing a *yarmulke* in Kazimierz was normal; in fact, ‘it feels more proper to wear one than not.’<sup>68</sup>

The Festival was not, however, the only attempt made at ‘normalizing’ Jewishness on Szeroka Street. The aforementioned Restauracja Na Kazimierzu, however short-lived, promoted that sentiment too. Criticised for being ‘socialist-nouveau riche,’ for not being ‘Kraków’ enough,<sup>69</sup> and for its overtly elaborate ‘grand hotels and ocean liners’ style of cooking, it did not build a façade compliant with the image of ‘shtetl-romance’;<sup>70</sup> on the contrary, it was a contemporary eatery. It only differed in that it offered kosher food, something none of its ‘more Jewish’ competitors had ever managed. Restauracja Na Kazimierzu was the first establishment that aimed to do what the Festival eventually accomplished: it insisted that being Jewish was in fact normal.

In my reading of the developments in Kazimierz, I build on Lehrer’s work, highlighting the potential of the ‘Jewish-friendly’ Space for reconciliation and for the normalisation of the image of Jews. Local changes reflected trends in national memory and followed developments in critical readings of the Polish past. And, just like in those critical narratives, Jewish Spaces in Kazimierz were only one of the contributors, and not the most popular ones, to Polish memory and identity. Despite the efforts of local memory workers, anti-Semitism was never eradicated from Krakowian or Polish society. While the Jewish

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<sup>67</sup> Dodziuk, p. 30.

<sup>68</sup> Lehrer, *Can There Be*, p. 276.

<sup>69</sup> Kugelmass and Orla-Bukowska, p. 332.

<sup>70</sup> Jochnowitz, p. 229.

activist quoted by Lehrer stated that he felt comfortable wearing a *kippa* in Kazimierz, as recently as the summer of 2016 another asked scathingly on his blog ‘how many hours could a Jew in *kippa* [...] walk unmolested around the estates of Nowa Huta or Praga?’<sup>71</sup>

This overview of the Jewish Space in Kazimierz demonstrates how multi-layered that Space was. On one hand it was a ‘Jewish Disneyland,’ reaffirming the Jew as the Other and selling a commodified and simplified version of Jewish music, cuisine, and culture to local and international tourists. On the other hand, however, it offered an opportunity to meet, to learn, and to experience the riches of contemporary, living Jewish culture. Both these aspects intertwined to constitute the background for one of the most crucial functions of the ‘Jewish-friendly’ Space: that is to say, for the cosmopolitanisation of local memory. Kazimierz’s heritage supported the creation of an open and tolerant identity that could include Jews in the definition of Polishness.

## Other Spaces – Other Identities

### Synagogues

This chapter aims to demonstrate that in the course of the heritage work carried out during the 1990s and 2000s in Kazimierz, Jewishness underwent normalisation, and that part of this normalisation involved the diversification of the image of the Jew. ‘Jewish-friendly’ Space, discussed in the previous section, was one of the sites of this process. Another was what Pinto terms ‘Jewish-Jewish’ Space: an internal space of communal life that is developed and cultivated by Jews, but is at the same time accessible, at least to some extent, to non-Jews.<sup>72</sup> This section traces the emergences of this ‘Jewish-Jewish’ Space, and demonstrates its contribution to the overall image of Kazimierz, showing that, somewhat remarkably, the official Jewish Community was one of the key actors responsible for creation of this Space. Furthermore, it illustrates the importance of Community’s links with local Polish activists and diaspora organisations, affirming its central importance in shaping the Jewish revival.

The majority of authors commenting on Jewish communal life in Kraków differentiate between the official Jewish Community, and various organisations that

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<sup>71</sup> Jan Hartman, ‘Dziękuję Prezydentowi Dudzie i Premier Szydło,’ <http://hartman.blog.polityka.pl/2016/07/04/dziekuje-prezydentowi-dudzie-i-premier-szydlo/>, [accessed 6 July 2016], Nowa Huta and Praga are deemed to be the ‘rough’ districts of Kraków and Warsaw respectively.

<sup>72</sup> Pinto, *The Third Pillar?*, p. 16.

proliferated toward the end of the 1990s and were later often associated with the Jewish Community Centre. It is in the context of the emergence of these sometimes small, often ephemeral organisations that authors such as Lehrer or Murzyn-Kupisz locate their work on the ‘Jewish revival.’<sup>73</sup> These authors demonstrate that while in the 1980s and early 1990s the Jewish minority was on the brink of disappearance from Kraków, toward the turn of the millennium it began to grow once again. More and more ‘latent Jews’ that had hidden their identity under Communism returned to it; younger generations rediscovered their heritage; and Jewish organisations became more active.<sup>74</sup> The official Jewish Community is normally banished to the background of these analyses.

For this reason, it is only too easy to overlook the role of the official Community. Lehrer mentions that she ‘did not find a way to relate meaningfully’<sup>75</sup> to it; Murzyn-Kupisz, meanwhile, states that although the Community eventually regained ownership of all the Synagogues ‘it did not show any signs of revival; it consisted mainly of aged members and rather happily passed the issues of promotion and interpretation of Jewish heritage to other actors.’<sup>76</sup> It is, however, not surprising that Lehrer and Murzyn-Kupisz arrived at these conclusions; the Community was always secretive, and the reluctance of key members to grant access to the organisation’s archive may provide some insight into researchers’ inability to ‘relate meaningfully’ to it (indeed, the author of the present study encountered this obstacle too). Even Edyta Gawron, who devoted her doctoral dissertation to reconstructing the post-war history of the Congregation/Community (the name was changed in 1994), never managed to access the archive or to receive any meaningful help with collecting materials.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, as Murzyn-Kupisz rightly observes, its elderly members do not promote their activities, meaning that they frequently go unnoticed.<sup>78</sup>

Despite these barriers, however, it is my claim that the Congregation/Community had a key impact on the post-1989 reconstruction of Jewish ruins and the creation of Jewish heritage. In fact, it is due to their actions that five out of Kazimierz’s seven synagogues were reclaimed as Jewish, as opposed to Polish, heritage. Mobilised by

<sup>73</sup> Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, lo. 946. Monika Murzyn-Kupisz, ‘Cultural Quarters as a Means of Enhancing the Creative Capacity of Polish Cities? Some Evidence from Cracow’, *Quaestiones Geographicae*, 31.4 (2012), p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> Helena Datner, ‘Współczesna społeczność żydowska w Polsce a Zagłada’, in *Następstwa Zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944-2010*, ed. by Feliks Tych and Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2012), p. 663.

<sup>75</sup> Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, lo. 946.

<sup>76</sup> Monika Murzyn-Kupisz, ‘From “Atlantis” to ...? The Past and Present of Jewish Krakow in the Second Decade of the New Millennium Krakow in the Second Decade of the New Millennium’, 2012, MMXII <<http://www.jewish-heritage-europe.eu/focus/issues-2/from-atlantis-to-the-past-and-present-of-jewish-krakow-in-the-second-decade-of-the-new-millennium>> [accessed 21 May 2014].

<sup>77</sup> Gawron.

<sup>78</sup> Murzyn-Kupisz, *From “Atlantis”*.

diaspora activists, Congregation members were in turn able to muster support from Polish officials. The Congregation made use of both the new sense of duty felt by Polish experts and their expertise and funds to successfully achieve minority's collective goals as a group. In their heritage work, members of the Congregation insisted on depicting themselves as part of the Krakowian in-group, but at the same time they reaffirmed the boundary between Polish and Jewish cultures. In so doing, they created around the Synagogues a 'Jewish-Jewish' Space, which was utilised by numerous other organisations during the 'Jewish revival' identified by Lehrer and Waligórska.

Without access to the files of the Congregation, it is impossible to fully understand the motivations and views of its members. It is nonetheless clear that the organisation evolved significantly during the post-1989 transition to democracy, and that this evolution was partially caused by diaspora organisations. In the late Communist period there existed a status quo: for decades the Congregation had entertained privileges granted to it by local authorities, cooperating with them on the small-scale renovations of Remuh and Temple Synagogues discussed in Chapter One.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, it had to tolerate the gradual disintegration of the rest of its sites. Toward the end of the 1980s, however, the stance of the Community changed. The balance was first tipped when the Nissenbaum Foundation moved to Kraków.

Created by a Polish-Jewish émigré, Sigmund Nissenbaum, in the mid-1980s, the Foundation's mission was to revitalise Jewish relics and rejuvenate Jewish life in Poland. It initiated its operations in Warsaw, but toward the end of Communist rule expanded to Kraków.<sup>80</sup> Nissenbaum was primarily interested in Szeroka Street, with its plethora of Jewish sites. As stated above, he funded a monument in Szeroka Street to commemorate the Krakowian Jews killed in the Holocaust, and opened kosher restaurant Restauracja Na Kazimierzu. He planned to build a cultural centre and wanted to help renovate the Remuh Synagogue. Unfortunately, his death led to the slow withering of the Foundation, as his successors neglected to continue his projects.<sup>81</sup> By the end of the 1990s, empty plots around Szeroka were all that remained of his ambitions plans.

Before Nissenbaum's death put a stop to the Foundation's activities, however, he did almost manage to see through renovations on the Remuh Synagogue and Cemetery. The Foundation had offered to finance the works in 1989. After reaching an initial

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<sup>79</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 70.

<sup>80</sup> Hoffmann, p. 271

<sup>81</sup> Karolina Wiśniewska, 'Wykopy na Miodowej, ruina na Szerokiej,' *Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków*, 27 April 2002, p. 4.

agreement with the Congregation/Community, though, problems began, and the partnership failed to run smoothly. It took over five years to complete plans for the renovation and to collect all the necessary documents; then, just before the works could start, the Congregation/Community withdrew from the partnership entirely and blocked access to the site. The sources of the conflict were not clear. Charles Hoffman suggests that personal conflicts between the Jewish leaders might have got in the way; Nissenbaum had not offered financial support with no strings attached, and did also attempt to gain influence in the Community, which may have given rise to internal conflicts that in turn impacted the revitalisation.<sup>82</sup> Now without a major investor, the process took much longer than initially expected. In fact, small-scale works were undertaken for the next twenty years.<sup>83</sup> The Foundation's (accidental) success, then, lay not in the renovation, but in its reawakening of the Jewish Congregation/Community. The conflict with the Foundation, in which the Rabbi of Warsaw and local authorities became involved, demonstrated to the Congregation/Community that the circumstances had changed, forcing it to take a more active stance than in previous decades.

The intervention of Ronald Lauder, an American billionaire, philanthropist, and diplomat, had a similar, though much more long-lasting effect. While Nissenbaum's larger-than-life persona alienated some Jewish leaders, Lauder proved much more palatable to them. His interests in Kazimierz, its Jewish population, and Jewish relics can be traced back to at least 1988. Serving as the United States Ambassador in Vienna, he visited Kraków and met with members of the local Congregation. Immediately after his visit, he tried to fund renovation of the Temple Synagogue; however, the fall of Communism delayed his plans. In 1992, he returned to Kraków, now as chairman of the Jewish Heritage Program (JHP) sector of the World Monuments Fund (WMF), an American organisation sponsoring restoration works around the world.<sup>84</sup> The JHP only funded revitalisations if there was a 'responsible local [Jewish-JG] community' to take control of the refurbished sites.<sup>85</sup> For this reason, Lauder cooperated in Kraków with both the Congregation/Community and the WUOZ. The expertise of Polish preservationists was used to prepare and carry out the works, and they also provided additional funding. It was the Jewish minority, however, that was made responsible for maintaining the site. Eventually, after eight years of renovations, the Temple Synagogue was restored to its

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<sup>82</sup> Hoffman, p. 270.

<sup>83</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Remu. Ogólnie.'

<sup>84</sup> Samuel Gruber, *Preservation Priorities: Endangered Historic Jewish Sites*, 1996, p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Ibidem, p. 3.



former glory. It retained its religious function, and occasionally was rented out for cultural events.

The JHP empowered the Community, but this was not Lauder's only contribution. His private Foundation also financed the Jewish Youth Club, which took over the Izaaka Synagogue in 1995, to propagate Orthodox Judaism in Kraków. The Synagogue, devastated in the 1970s by the Association of Polish Artists and Designers, had been ceded in the 1980s to the Workshops for the PKZ. Planning and initial renovation on the building then lasted for most of that decade, but the PKZ could not afford any large-scale investment in the project. In 1990, the PKZ moved out, and the Congregation regained control of the building; as a result, works sped up. Just as in the case of other Jewish relics, Polish experts were responsible for the renovation, and it was funded by the SKOZK.<sup>86</sup> During these later works, the newly reinvigorated Community decided to organise a 'school of Jewish faith' there.<sup>87</sup> The idea evolved, and in 1995, as soon as the most essential works had been finished, the Jewish Youth Club run by the Lauder Foundation moved in.<sup>88</sup>

The Club, which formed officially in 1993, proved to be another nodal point in which the needs and interest of local Jews met and mixed with the needs and interests of diaspora activists.<sup>89</sup> Ronald Lauder and other Western Jewish activists (Steven Spielberg, who also financed the Club, among them) tried to resuscitate Orthodox life in Poland. The official goal of the Club was to help 'latent' Jews to rediscover their roots, and to introduce them to Orthodox Judaism. Polish Jews initially rejected the Orthodox stance, but did use the external funding and assistance to pursue their agendas.<sup>90</sup> Even though the Club ultimately folded in the early 2000s, its impact on Kazimierz was long-lasting, stimulating the Jewish revival and influencing spatial developments.

This influence came in the form of Dominik Dybek, the first director of the Club.<sup>91</sup> While in charge of the organisation, he endowed the Izaaka Synagogue with a dual role: it was primarily a site of Jewish communal life, but in 1997 Dybek also opened it to the public, initiating the so-called 'Project Izaak.' One of his best-known initiatives was placing life-size cut-outs of Jews from old pictures around the sanctuary, the main hall of

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<sup>86</sup> Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, p. 186.

<sup>87</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka. Ogólnie.'

<sup>88</sup> Agnieszka Majewska, 'Powrót do korzeni,' *Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków*, 6 March 1996.

<sup>89</sup> Jonathan Webber, 'The Jews of Kraków', *Jewish Renaissance*, 2014, p. 13.

<sup>90</sup> Lehrer, *Can there be*, p. 284.

<sup>91</sup> Majewska.

the Synagogue.<sup>92</sup> In so doing, he reaffirmed the Synagogue as a site of Jewish heritage. He allowed tourists into the 'Jewish-Jewish' Space, where he informed them on both the Jewish past (cut-outs) and future (existence of the Club). When the Club ceased to operate, Dybek moved his activities to Szeroka Street, where he opened the aforementioned Once Upon a Time in Kazimierz, a restaurant that contributed hugely to the normalisation of Jewishness in Kraków. Izaaka Synagogue, meanwhile, continued to exist in the 'Jewish-Jewish' Space. The Community rented it to another international organisation, an Orthodox branch of Judaism named Chabad Lubavitch. Aside from using it for religious needs, Chabad also ran a kosher shop and restaurant and a Jewish bookshop in the Synagogue complex. At the same time, the site remained open for tourists, allowing them to experience the Jewish presence in Kraków.<sup>93</sup>

The lines of influence and networks of connection here are clear. The intervention of the Nissenbaum Foundation, which coincided with the fall of Communism, mobilised the Congregation/Community and forced it take an active role. The work of Ronald Lauder, via both the JHP and his own Foundation, helped to revitalise the Temple Synagogue, and to initiate the slow process of rebuilding Jewish life in the city. In addition, a direct line can be drawn from Lauder to the Jewish Youth Club and to the Once Upon a Time restaurant. This demonstrates how various Jewish Spaces were connected, and how they impacted on each other. The input of local heritage preservationists was another example of this interconnection. All the Synagogues in the city were renovated according to their plans and visions, which, significantly, was only possible because in the 1980s they had redefined Jewish relics as part of Polish heritage. As a result of that discursive shift, the preservationists began to study the history and the architecture of the sites, and gained the expertise that was utilised by the Community in the 1990s.<sup>94</sup>

Due to the Community's efforts, in the space of thirty years the state of Kazimierz's Jewish sites changed almost completely. In 1980, Remuh and Temple Synagogues were used by the Jewish Congregation, but Temple needed major renovation. The Old Synagogue was used by the MHK, and Poppera Synagogue by a local youth community centre. There was a shoe factory in the Kupa Synagogue, and a temporary theatre magazine in the Izaaka Synagogue. High Synagogue had been taken over by a construction company and later subdivided and allocated to various owners. Most

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<sup>92</sup> AB, 'Rekomandacje,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Kraków, 28 May 1999, p. 8

<sup>93</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka. Ogólnie.'

<sup>94</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Remuh. Ogólnie', AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka. Ogólnie'.

buildings were in various states of disrepair. By 2013 the situation was radically different. After years of conflict with the 'Cooperative for the Disabled' the Congregation repossessed the Kupa Synagogue in 1992.<sup>95</sup> Polish experts drew plans, the SKOZK funded the works, and by 2002 the restoration was complete. The Community organised a shelter home and guesthouse for its elderly members, but the sanctuary itself was used only rarely.<sup>96</sup> The High Synagogue was still awaiting renovation. However, even this site was marked as a part of Jewish Space when a Jewish bookstore, albeit one run by Poles, was opened there.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, Remuh and Tempel Synagogues, both renovated, retained their cult functions and Izaaka Synagogue had joined that group. Only two Synagogues, Old and Poppera, were left under the charge of their previous tenants; that is, the MHK and the youth branch of a community centre, respectively. All of those changes were overseen by the official Jewish Community.

Mobilised by diaspora activists and utilising the expertise of local preservationists, the Congregation/Community thus managed to build a 'Jewish-Jewish' Space. This process, in turn, contributed to the Jewish revival. More importantly, from the point of view of the present thesis, the emergence of 'Jewish-Jewish' Spaces added to the momentum behind cosmopolitan memory. Jews, the managers of the 'Jewish-Jewish' Space, were finally able to speak for themselves, and to present themselves as a group fully integrated into mainstream Polish society. In other words, as a result of the cooperative process between diaspora activists, members of the local Community, and Polish preservationists, another Space that dismantled Otherness emerged.

## Nowy Square

In the previous section, I mentioned that it was only too easy to disregard the impact of the Jewish Community on Jewish Space in Kazimierz. It is equally easy to disregard the role of entrepreneurs from Nowy Square. Despite being home to some of the most visible Jewish ruins in the district, the Square was never connected to Jewish heritage or culture in the same, overt way as Szeroka Street was. Since as early as 1994, Nowy Square began to turn into one of Kraków's party centres, with some of the most famous and popular pubs located there. By the early 2000s, this position as a party destination had

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<sup>95</sup> For details of the conflict see Chapter One, p. 70.

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/pl/article/krakow/11.synagogi-domy-modlitwy-i-inne/3742.synagoga-kupa-ul-warszauera-8-/?action=viewtable&page=2>, [accessed 26 September 2015]

<sup>97</sup> Murzyn, *Kazimierz*, p. 194.

been cemented. For this reason, the majority of researchers saw only pubs and clubs there, ignoring its reminders of the Jewish past. Murzyn-Kupisz, for example, lists the Jewish-sounding names of the Square's pubs, but does not offer any interpretation of their importance.<sup>98</sup> Such researchers make an exception for the Center for Jewish Culture situated on the Square, but also subsume it under the heading of 'Jewish-friendly' Space. Nevertheless, during the two decades following the fall of Communism, the Square became imbued with clear and unmistakable symbols of the Jewish past and culture, and thus became an important addition to heritage work in Kazimierz. The Square used nostalgic references to the past not to create any coherent collective memories, but rather to offer a radically cosmopolitan and radically local understanding of identity.

In Diana Pinto's classifications, Jewish Spaces assume the form of a continuum. On one end stands the private, internal Space of Jewish communal life; on the other stands the very public Space in which Jewish themes are moulded, with almost no input from Jews themselves.<sup>99</sup> Nowy Square falls into the latter category, but its uniqueness and importance lies not in the fact that it represented an antithesis to the 'Jewish-Jewish' Space of the Synagogues, but rather in the way it offered an approach to the past distinct from the ones represented by the Synagogues and by Szeroka Street. Much like those other spaces, it contributed to the urbanisation and cosmopolitanisation of narratives. However, unlike on Szeroka Street and in the Synagogues, where the division between Jews and Poles was maintained, activists from Nowy Square insisted on collapsing that boundary.

While building their narrative, activists from Nowy Square utilised what Svetlana Boym terms 'reflective nostalgia.' In her definition, nostalgia connects to the 'longing for continuity in a fragmented world.'<sup>100</sup> It is a thoroughly modern condition, characteristic of European society of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In its restorative variant, nostalgia aims toward 'reconstruction of the lost home.'<sup>101</sup> As I demonstrated in Chapter One, the writings of preservationists working in the 1980s can be read in that light: such actors aimed to rebuild the 'Golden Age' of the romanticised pre-modern city in the space of Kazimierz. Actors from Nowy Square, on the other hand, used restorative nostalgia's more ironic sister, reflective nostalgia. This variant 'savour details and memorial signs,' and plays with themes from the past.<sup>102</sup> It does not seek to provide any

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<sup>98</sup> Ibidem, pp. 442-444.

<sup>99</sup> Pinto, 'Jewish Spaces', p. 282.

<sup>100</sup> Boym, p. xiv.

<sup>101</sup> Ibidem, p. xviii.

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem, p. 49.

coherent narrative about the past; rather, it enriches the present with tokens, signs, and symbols. If restorative nostalgia can be seen as an attempt at turning back time, at reversing modernity, then reflective nostalgia focuses on the *now*, in an attempt to enrich the present and future. Nowy Square, the most famous pub centre of Kraków and the most unlikely Jewish Space in Kazimierz, was full of these kinds of references: ones aimed toward adding to contemporary experience.

Nowy Square began to rapidly develop at the same time as Szeroka Street. The first establishments at Szeroka Street date back to 1993; the first pub on the Square, meanwhile, opened in 1994. That pub was Singer, one of the most famous in Kraków. Jarosław Knap, in his guidebook to the area, *Magical Kazimierz*, describes how, ‘from attics and basements, [the pub proprietors-JG] brought old tables, chairs, and unused sewing machines produced by the company Singer, which had been famous during the inter-war years. Singer [the pub-JG], with its constantly dimmed lights, has an aura of mystery around it.’<sup>103</sup> His description may edge toward fiction, but it is telling nonetheless. Whether or not chairs, tables, and sewing machines really were scavenged from attics and basements is irrelevant. Here, two other points are more significant. The first is that, in contrast to any establishment on Szeroka Street, Singer never presented any coherent image of the past. The interior was created using mismatched elements that never provided any overarching historical narrative. While some objects used in Singer harked back to the inter-war years, others anchored it firmly in the present. The image of ‘mysterious’ Singer drew on many tropes from the ‘shtetl-romance’: the air of mystery and dream of pre-modern bliss (represented by non-electrical sewing machines), for example. At the same time, however, it missed one crucial element of the ‘shtetl-romance,’ namely the Jew. The only reference to the Jewish past was in the name, extended through the sewing machines that bore it. In other words, its creators ‘savor[ed] details’ instead of offering any total immersion in an imagined Jewishness.<sup>104</sup>

The case of Alchemia pub, which opened in 1999 and can also be counted among the most stable and popular fixtures of the Kazimierz pub-scape, is similar. Like Singer, Alchemia also aimed to create a mysterious atmosphere by utilising old and mismatched tables, rickety chairs, and random pieces of old furniture. While in Singer the reference to the Jewish past came in the form of its sewing machines, in Alchemia the same role fell to symbols and images of the kabbalah. While more explicitly ‘Jewish,’ similarly to Singer,

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<sup>103</sup> Jarosław Knap, *Magiczny Kazimierz* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Krakowska Grupa Multimedialna, 2005), p. 33.

<sup>104</sup> Boym, p. 49

these symbols were not used to create a coherent experience of Jewishness; rather, they were just some among many symbols (another being the Hindu sign of Sri Yantra, to name one example) used to create a unique space, and a perfect pub.<sup>105</sup>

Nowy Square was synonymous with the party culture of Kraków, but it was also the focus of attention of citizens who contributed to the gentrification of Kazimierz. Pub owners, artists, and students were all typical of the first waves of gentrifiers that tried to reshape Nowy Square.<sup>106</sup> One of their initiatives was based around the Square's Polish-Jewish ruins. In 2008 they applied for the Square's market hall, the so-called Okrągłak, to be listed as a protected heritage site. Built in the wake of the nineteenth century, the hall could be read as a symbol of Polish-Jewish coexistence. A Jewish architect designed the hall, the Polish-Jewish municipal authority paid for it, and it was used by both Poles and Jews; it hosted, among other businesses, a kosher slaughterhouse.<sup>107</sup>

The society 'Friendly Kazimierz,' which represented the gentrifiers, sponsored the motion, and decided on a different reading of the past. One of the society's objectives was 'to maintain the character of the district and its local traditions, visible also in the style of the public space and its architecture.'<sup>108</sup> Their documents never specified what the local traditions in question were, or which character, exactly, had to be preserved. Certainly, there was no reference to Jewish history in their mission statement. Both in that statement and in the documents supporting the motion, they focused instead on the architectural merit of Okrągłak and its importance for the layout of the Square. The Jewish past of the building was mentioned only in passing, framed as of equal importance as any other information about its history. In the later stages of the listing process, activists from 'Friendly Kazimierz' decided to highlight more readily the connection of Okrągłak to the 'dramatic fate of Kazimierz.'<sup>109</sup> This shift, however, was a purely tactical move, as they sought the support of a Mayor who was well known for his interest in the commemoration of the War and in Polish-Jewish relations.<sup>110</sup>

For the members of the society, the hall's connection to Jewish history was far from its most important attribute. What mattered was that the hall, in their view, constituted an example of 'good' architecture. The building was well-integrated into the Square, and did not dominate the neighbourhood. The Square owed its 'friendly'

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<sup>105</sup> Knap, p. 34.

<sup>106</sup> Smagacz-Poziemska, p. 92.

<sup>107</sup> Kraków, AWUOZ 'Okrągłak'.

<sup>108</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>109</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>110</sup> See Chapter Four.

atmosphere to its lack of any monumental, overwhelming architecture; it was that unique atmosphere that 'Friendly Kazimierz' insisted on maintaining. Jewishness was only important insofar as it contributed to that atmosphere. At the same time, the society had no intention of obscuring the Jewish past; in their vision, it added to the history of the space, but did not dominate it.

The creation of Singer and Alchemia, and the listing of Okraślak, helped imbue Nowy Square with undeniable references to the Jewish past. At the same time, and in line with Boym's reading of reflective nostalgia, actors never aimed at any totalising narrative. Rather, they enriched the present with the signs of the past. The very particular way in which these signs of Jewishness were used merits highlighting. They were mixed and (mis)matched with other symbols, and intertwined with other themes. Singer mixed modern decor with old sewing machines; Alchemia juxtaposed kabbalah and Hindu symbols; and Okraślak was reimagined as an example of high quality architecture, while its connection to both Jewish and Polish history was pushed into the background.

It is my claim that activists from Nowy Square utilised this reflective nostalgia to collapse the boundaries between Polishness and Jewishness. Sharon Macdonald, commenting on the importance of cosmopolitan memory, differentiates between two cultural formations to which it might contribute. She explains that in most cases, cosmopolitan memories support the formation of multiculturalism: the state in which boundaries between distinct cultures are maintained but in which both cultures are recognised as equal. This framework can be seen at work in the case of the Spaces constructed around Szeroka Street and in the Synagogues. Other cosmopolitan projects, however, aim at collapsing and overcoming national and cultural boundaries,<sup>111</sup> and this is what is reflected by the case of Nowy Square. The first two Jewish Spaces were spaces of cooperation, where Poles contributed to the revival of Jewish culture, and re-emerging Jews contributed to existing Polish culture. It was only in Nowy Square, however, that *local* denizens contributed to *urban* culture. The identity they offered was urban and did not utilise a negative mode of identification; it was not constructed against something or someone. There was no Other there. Rather, the Space of Nowy Square was focused on the positive aspects of identity building; it was constructed around the sense of belonging to the locality. This offer of identity constituted a minority intervention into a critical reinterpretation of the Polish identity that was already a minority viewpoint. Nevertheless,

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<sup>111</sup> Macdonald, *Memorylands*, pp. 164-165.

in spite of this status, it informed developments in Kazimierz and was interconnected with the other Spaces.

## Conclusion

As this Chapter demonstrates, the transition to democracy that had limited impact on memory work on the Holocaust, did, however, affect heritage production in Kazimierz. It allowed local entrepreneurs, together with members of the Jewish Congregation/Community, to implement ideas developed mostly under Communist rule. Their work was inspired by images of the ‘shtetl-romance,’ and its effect came in the form of the creation of Jewish Spaces. Defined as virtual spaces of interaction of non-Jews and Jews built around Jewish heritage, they served as a platform for reworking Polish memory and identity.

The ‘Jewish-Friendly’ Space, created mostly around Szeroka Street, was a space of commodification of the Jewish past. It was often criticised for its explicit ‘Disneylandisation’ of ‘things Jewish.’ This thesis aims toward a productive analysis of commodification, but it also agrees with Erica Lehrer that these kitsch representations ‘grew tamer’ with time.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, it emphasises that the ‘Jewish-Friendly’ Space was also a space for meeting and learning. Jewish tourists and Polish Jews gradually rediscovering their identities could meet and engage with ethnic Poles in a safe atmosphere. The Centre for Jewish Culture, bookstores, and even some coffee shops supported these opportunities. However, it was mostly due to the annual Festival of Jewish Culture that Kazimierz overflowed with Jewish and Polish tourists, integrating at Festival events. As this chapter establishes, the existence of the ‘Jewish-Friendly’ Space contributed to the normalisation of the image of the Jew in Polish memory, and in turn Polish identity. In the first incarnations of the ‘shtetl-romance’ image in the 1980s, Jews were depicted as a sympathetic minority, but their status as the Other was maintained. In Szeroka Street, this image was more varied. Parts of the Space kept Jews in their traditional position, while other parts dismantled Otherness and depicted Jews as ordinary citizens.

Strengthening the trend of normalising Jewishness in Poland was the Jewish-Jewish Space, an internal space of community life that was partially open to visitors. It emerged around the remaining Synagogues of Kazimierz, which were repossessed by the local

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<sup>112</sup> Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited*, lo. 336.



Congregation/Community. Challenging traditional readings that relegate the Congregation/Community to the background, this thesis highlights its importance. Prompted to action by diaspora Jews, the Community used the expertise of Polish heritage preservationists to renovate most of the sites, and opened them up to various organisations and initiatives. This supported the Jewish revival in Kraków. In effect, Kazimierz gained numerous sites in which visitors could encounter ordinary Polish Jews and learn about their contemporary, everyday lives.

One of the final contributions of this Chapter is its discovery of the importance of the Nowy Square for memory work. The effect of memory work in this most unlikely Jewish Space in Kraków was distinctive. Both Jewishness and Polishness were pushed into the background. Local activists, most often ethnic Poles, used symbols and details from the Jewish and Polish past to create a Space where the feeling of belonging to the locality was the base for a local, urban identity. The creation of Others as means of identity-building was discarded.

Repeated encounters with other ‘others’ – aside from Jews – during my fieldwork in Kazimierz suggest that if Jewish space has been Poland’s first acceptable space for public expression of difference, it has drawn different kinds of difference into its orbit.<sup>113</sup>

Thus writes Erica Lehrer in the summary of her extensive analysis of life in Kazimierz in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Interestingly, as the ‘other «other»,’ she mentions gay men, Afro-Polish women, and a man of Vietnamese descent.<sup>114</sup> Her research confirms the interpretation offered in the present thesis: that Jewish Spaces, in all three of their incarnations, did contribute toward the cosmopolitanisation of Polish memory and identity. The identities offered in Kazimierz, and assumed by *some* Poles, supported openness, tolerance, and inclusivity. They did not exclude on the basis of ethnic background, but rather included, on the grounds of civic identification with Poland, or even, as in the case of Nowy Square, with locality. However, this is not to say that thanks to the creation of the Jewish Space the problem of intolerance or xenophobia in Polish society disappeared completely. On the contrary: the impact of Jewish Spaces on Polish identities was limited. Having observed the close affinity between Jewish and gay activists, both

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<sup>113</sup> Ibidem, lo. 4160. Is that ok?

<sup>114</sup> Ibidem, lo. 4163.

groups visible in the Jewish Spaces, Lehrer notes that something else that united them was ‘periodic neo-Nazi harassment.’<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ibidem, lo. 4163.

# Part Two

## Defining the Museum

In 2010, Oskar Schindler's Factory reopened in Kraków, this time as a museum, to great fanfare. It soon became one of the most popular tourist attractions in a city already boasting a plethora of historic sites, including Wawel Castle, the historic old town, and a museum located in the excavated tunnels under the biggest medieval market in Europe. In 2011, almost 200,000 visitors would cross the Vistula River, leaving behind all Kraków's main attractions, and search for the museum, located on a small side-street in a forgotten industrial district.<sup>1</sup> The subsequent two chapters lay out the genealogy of successes like that of the Factory museum, while this section provides a theoretical backdrop to these analyses by defining the institution of the museum and auratic sites.

As the myriad publications on the subject in museum studies demonstrates, museums can be defined in an almost countless number of ways.<sup>2</sup> Depending on their theoretical orientation and the questions they seek to ask, scholars highlight distinct aspects of the museum and approach it from a variety of perspectives. The present research is particularly concerned with the way the museum can shape identities through its presentation of the past; for this reason, what is needed is a definition that focuses on the museum as a space for representing history and representing the nation. Particularly useful here, then, is Martin Prösler's understanding of the museum as 'a space in which the *world is ordered* [emphasis in original], in which, with the assistance of material objects, the "world" is realized, understood and mediated.'<sup>3</sup> Writing in a similar vein, Sharon Macdonald notes that 'museums have acted not simply as the embodiment of theoretical ideas, but also as part of the visualizing technology through which such ideas were *formed*

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<sup>1</sup> Salwiński, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> For example: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'The Museum as Catalyst', *Museums 2000: Confirmation or Challenge*, 2000, 1–19; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture. Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); Sharon J Macdonald, 'Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities', *Museum and Society*, 1 (2003), 1–16; Robert Starn, 'A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies', *The American Historical Review*, 110 (2005), 68–98; Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford: Berg, 2007); Kevin Moore, *Museums and Popular Culture* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997); Gruber, 'Post-Trauma', Jay Winter, 'Museums and the Representation of War', *Museum and Society*, 10 (2012), 150–163.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Prösler, 'Museum and Globalisation', in *Theorizing Museum*, ed. by Sharon J Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 22.

[emphasis mine – JG].<sup>4</sup> Both scholars agree that the museum has the power to define the world, offering a set of narratives that describes, explains, and structures it. Among the most important of these narratives is that which concerns the nation. Levy and Sznajder note that ‘representations are the basis of that [nations’ – JG] authenticity,’ and that it is precisely in the museum that those representations are shaped and presented.<sup>5</sup>

Anna Ziębińska-Witek, one of the leading Polish scholars of the museum, translates this theoretical model into the more practical terms of memory research, defining museums as ‘institutions of cultural memory that select, validate, and interpret the past for their public.’<sup>6</sup> In her reading, the museum is not the site of presentation of an objective truth about the past; rather it selects, interprets, and presents an inherently biased narrative. As a result, both the narrative and the institution shaping it are worthwhile objects of analysis. Ziębińska-Witek’s reading overlaps significantly with the definition of memory work adopted in this research:<sup>7</sup> both frameworks highlight the volatile character of the narrative, the way it can be assembled and reassembled from pre-existing elements, and the way that the image changes depending on its creator.

Implicit in all of the aforementioned definitions, and particularly visible in Ziębińska-Witek’s writings, is an understanding of the museum as an institution of power: the museum ‘validate[s] [...] the past for [its] public.’<sup>8</sup> It is my contention that this power lies in the museum’s ability to conform to the expectations of visitors. The museum follows a set of scripts and recognisable rules; in a way, every museum is, or at least is expected to be, an incarnation of the same model. Susan Crane affirms that museum-goers have a set of expectations of what the museum offers; e.g., its ability to educate in an accessible way. She goes on to demonstrate that a number of recent controversies around museums had their roots precisely in the fact that curators broke away from those scripts and did not fulfil the expectations of the visitors.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, they deconstructed the aura of authenticity of the educational institution.

Authenticity is, indeed, a key concept regulating the museum’s operations, and one that functions on at least three different levels. The aura of authenticity of the museum-as-institution dovetails with the aura of authenticity of the exhibition; the authenticity of the

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<sup>4</sup> Sharon Macdonald, ‘Theorizing Museum: An Introduction’, in *Theorizing Museum*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Anna Ziębińska-Witek, *Historia w muzeach. Studium ekspozycji Holokaustu* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2011), p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> For definition of memory work see Introduction, pp. 19-21.

<sup>8</sup> Ziębińska-Witek, *Historia*, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Crane, ‘Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum’, *History and Theory*, 36.4 (1997), p. 45.

museum experience, meanwhile, is the third part of this triangle. The curators of a successful museum must be able to create and manipulate the impression of authenticity on all these levels in order to persuade the audience that the narrative they offer is valid. Writes Sara Jones in her recent, brilliant study of the museums commemorating the German Democratic Republic: ‘A central guiding question in this study is how the producers of memorial media – writers, editors, museum managers and directors – construct authenticity for mediated testimonies and what impact of this is on the audiences decoding the texts.’<sup>10</sup> While the central question of the present study is somewhat different, the subsequent two chapters nonetheless follow Jones’s suggestion closely, seeing the history of Kraków’s museums as a history of changes in approach to the problem of authenticity.

Authenticity, seen not as ‘an objective and value-free appraisal’ but rather as ‘a social construct with moral overtones,’<sup>11</sup> is a concept commonly used in tourist studies.<sup>12</sup> Recently, its importance has been increasingly recognised in memory studies too.<sup>13</sup> Jones, in her nuanced study, offers three definitions of the term, referring to ‘witness authenticity,’ ‘experiential authenticity,’ and ‘authenticity of affect.’<sup>14</sup> The first two categories are closely tied to modes of representation, while the third connects to the effect museum exhibitions have on their visitors. Witness authenticity uses objects to indexically refer the viewer to the past;<sup>15</sup> artefacts, testimonies, and sites are utilised as both proof and symbol of history. They at once attest to a particular event taking place, and symbolise that event. Experiential authenticity, on the other hand, aims to bridge the gap between present and past and to transport the viewer to the past, seeking to recreate the mood and atmosphere of an historic reality using recreated interiors, reconstructed objects, and re-enactments.<sup>16</sup> Both witness and experiential authenticities pertain to technologies of presentation. The museum can utilise one or the other, or combine both of them, to produce trust in the narrative presented. The third definition of authenticity cited by Jones is concerned with

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<sup>10</sup> Sara Jones, *The Media of Testimony. Remembering the East German Stasi in The Berlin Republic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> David Grazian, *Demystifying Authenticity in the Sociology of Culture*, 2010, pp. 191-192.

<sup>12</sup> see for example Tom Selwyn, ‘Introduction’, in *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism*, ed. by Tom Selwyn (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 1996), Ning Wang, ‘Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26.2 (1999), Sophia Labadi, ‘World Heritage, Authenticity and Post-Authenticity. International and National Perspectives’, in *Heritage and Globalisation*, ed. by Sophia Labadi and Colin Long (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> see Edward M. Bruner, ‘Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism’, *American Anthropologist*, 96.2 (1994).

<sup>14</sup> Jones, *The Media*, p. 41-42.

<sup>15</sup> Sara Jones, ‘Memory on Film: Testimony and Constructions of Authenticity in Documentaries about the German Democratic Republic’, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16.2 (2012), p. 196.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 196.

the reaction of the viewer. Authenticity of affect aims to evoke an emotional response in the museum-goer, seeking to change his or her attitude toward the past in the present.<sup>17</sup> If experiential authenticity allows visitors to feel how people in the past felt, then authenticity of affect creates a reaction to that feeling. It changes the objective of the visit in the museum: rather than offering simple education, and providing facts that can be learned, museums can use authenticity of affect to dictate how a visitor should feel about past events.

Historicising these theoretical observations entails the identification of two main stages of development of the museum, and two of its most popular and significant incarnations: the ‘modern museum,’ and what Ziębińska-Witek brands the ‘post-museum’ (here: ‘new museum’).<sup>18</sup> While the exact genealogy of the modern museum is still disputed, its rise is generally associated with the French Revolution. There is broad consensus too that the emergence of the modern museum is connected to the emergence of nations, and that this manifestation of the museum contributed to the creation of national identities.<sup>19</sup> In the final decades of the twentieth century and the first one of the twenty-first, the modern museum was complemented by the emergence of a new model, which was obliged to come to terms with the crisis of traditional forms of nation building. Ziębińska-Witek insists that the changes brought about by the emergence of the new museum do not only pertain to the relationship between the museum and the nation as an abstract concept, but also have an impact on the way that the museum perceives its role *vis-à-vis* its audience; she notes that, ‘while modern museums transferred information, the post-museum tries to engage with the emotions and imaginations of its visitors.’<sup>20</sup> This model overlaps, in addition, with changes in modes of authentication.

The modern museum grounded its authority in the artefacts it presented: in the indexical authenticity of the object. At the same time, though, it acknowledged that objects, however powerful, do not speak for themselves; for this reason, it was the role of the curator to offer ‘scientific description, classification, and explanation.’<sup>21</sup> The texts emblazoned on glass display cases filled with historic artefacts were thus seen not as interpretations, but rather as explanations of the history inherently coded in those objects. Curators believed that it was possible to teach a singular History, and in order to do so

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<sup>17</sup> Jones, *The Media*, p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> Ziębińska-Witek *Historia*, p. 39, translation JG

<sup>19</sup> Macdonald, *Museums*, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ziębińska-Witek *Historia*, p. 39, translation JG.

<sup>21</sup> Star, p. 72.

provided a ‘learning process [that was] carefully scripted.’<sup>22</sup> Objects were placed in their glass cases according to a scientific system; the glass cases, in turn, were arranged in a pattern repeated on each floor of the museum. As Sharon Macdonald observes, even the design of galleries ‘providing long, clear, well-oriented vistas [...] was crucial to modern Western notions of objectivity and reality.’<sup>23</sup> The modern museum, then, was neither a space for interpretation, nor one for interactive communication between visitor and curator, but rather a space in which the audience accepted facts. A visitor could expect to learn from his or her visit to the museum, and that the knowledge gained would be objective and authentic. Macdonald sheds light on the consequences of these arrangements, showing that via both narratives and technologies of representation, the modern museum presented the nation as an ordered and stable entity predicated on notions of racial and national difference.<sup>24</sup> Not surprisingly, this type of museum came under heavy criticism. The postmodern critique of history demonstrated that narratives about the past are hardly objective truths, but rather biased representations created and upheld by historians and curators.<sup>25</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet neatly summarises the challenges addressed by the museum when she refers to ‘new models of citizenship, changes in knowledge formations, and competing media environments.’<sup>26</sup>

The answer to these challenges came in the form of the so-called ‘New Museology.’<sup>27</sup> This framework revolved around new modes of presentation, and insisted on evoking emotional reaction rather than on teaching facts, utilising experiential authenticity. Objects were thus discarded, or at least moved to the background, and stories about the past were narrated through *mise-en-scène* and audio-visual technologies, only sparingly supplemented with artefacts.<sup>28</sup> Instead of teaching a singular History, adherents of New Museology advocated for providing opportunities for self-reflection, inviting visitors to interpret the past for themselves.<sup>29</sup> These changes did not pertain only to visual technologies and the arrangement of exhibitions, however. In Prösler’s words, they reordered the world and redefined the nation: instead of stability, order, and clear lines of exclusion, these new museums promoted fluidity and allowed for inclusion, aligning

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<sup>22</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, *The Museum as Catalys*, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> Macdonald, *Museums*, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> See for example Peter Burke, ‘We, the People: Popular Culture and Popular Identity in Modern Europe’, in *Modernity and Identity*, ed. by Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), p. 239. John H. Arnold, *History. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 117-118., Macdonald, *Museums*, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, *The Museum as Catalys*, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> See Starn.

<sup>28</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, *The Museum as Catalys*, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Ziębińska-Witek, *Historia*, p. 38.

themselves with the transcultural realities of twenty-first-century Europe.<sup>30</sup> Macdonald notes that, in this way, ‘singular identity constructions are being superseded by identities predicated on cultural mixing and crossover, on intercultural traffic rather than boundary demarcation,’ which in turn leads to the cosmopolitanisation of memory, identity, and culture.<sup>31</sup>

This pluralising effect was magnified by the new museum’s cultivation of an authenticity of affect. The modern museum informed its visitors of History, and depicted ‘objectively’ existent systems of social stratification; the existence of these divisions and hierarchies was taken as fact, implying that there was nothing that should, or indeed could, be done about them. The new museum, by contrast, provoked an emotional response that could serve as a basis for change. Events from the past were to be recognised as unjust: as problems that needed rectifying, or that could never be allowed to happen again. As such, the events provoked a reaction of anger or sadness, prompting the public to take a stance toward them. This emotional momentum could be – and, indeed, often was – used to address problems in the present and future, and to redefine the nation, recasting it in accordance with the curator’s vision.<sup>32</sup>

For the purpose of this study, then, I define a museum as an institution that orders the world via technologies of representation employed to construct historical exhibitions. The success of each museum rests on the curators’ capacity to manipulate an impression of authenticity on three distinct levels. First, they must suggest that their institution is an authentic museum endowed with the authority to narrate the past; secondly, they must prove that the exhibition they present offers an authentic narrative on that past; finally, they must persuade visitors that the knowledge and/or emotions they take away from the visit are authentic. Conforming to the widespread norms and scripts that define museums within popular knowledge is the key to success on the first level. Manipulating the witness and experiential authenticities of the exhibition allows for success regarding second and third levels. Supporting all three issues, meanwhile, is the aura of the museum site itself.

Aura, closely connected to the issue of authenticity, is also constructed rather than intrinsic. Auratic sites have the potential to evoke both witness and experiential authenticities, thus strengthening the museum’s claim to the truth. One of the first theorists

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<sup>30</sup> Prösler, ‘Museum and Globalisation’, p. 22, Macdonald, *Museums*, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Macdonald, *Museums*, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Jones, *The Media*, pp. 121-122 and further.



to define the notion of aura, as it pertained to works of art and landscapes, was Walter Benjamin, who puts into words the very particular feeling that an original work of art can arouse in its viewer. In his view, this feeling does not compare with the reaction provoked by a copy, reproduction, or photograph of the work in question.<sup>33</sup> While Benjamin contributed more to the creation of the notion of aura than to its analysis, he still successfully identified an issue that would later be reassessed by contemporary scholars. For the purposes of this study, I subscribe to Michael Meng's<sup>34</sup> and Sara Jones's<sup>35</sup> understandings of aura, seeing it as a creation: the outcome of work realised by specialists who mark an object, whether a painting, a site, or a landscape, and identify it as extraordinary, and therefore auratic. Meng describes how the architects tasked with rebuilding Warsaw after its wartime destruction carefully endowed the new Old Town with aura, 'the sense of distance in time and space that underlines claims to uniqueness, authenticity, and tradition.'<sup>36</sup> Despite being new, this rebuilt Warsaw Old Town evoked feelings of 'pastness.' Its design and execution suggested that it was extraordinary and endowed with a special connection to the past.

Seen from this perspective, the aura of a site combines both witness and experiential authenticities. On one hand, historic sites have the power to indexically inform the viewer of the past; they are, or are supposed to be, material proofs of bygone eras and events. On the other hand, however, these sites inform in an emotive manner. As Meng observes, aura is 'the *sense* [emphasis mine – JG] of distance in time and space.'<sup>37</sup> Along similar lines, Paul Williams notes that 'location affords not only the ability to picture the traumatic episode, but also to *reawaken the feeling* [emphasis mine – JG] of an event triggered by ambient textures of sound, light, and smell.'<sup>38</sup> Both authors underline here the ability of auratic sites to evoke an emotional connection to past times. Museum curators can thus use the aura of a site to support their claims to authority, and, on occasion, to strengthen the experiential authenticity produced by their exhibitions. In other words, the decision to locate a museum on an auratic site is made because the historic site serves as proof of the narrative, and sometimes because it heightens emotional experience. The

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<sup>33</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility', in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, 2008, p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 74.

<sup>35</sup> Jones, *The Media*, p. 111.

<sup>36</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 74.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, p. 74.

<sup>38</sup> Williams, p. 102.

experiential aspect of the aura can exist in the background, and does not necessarily have to be used.

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## Chapter Three: The Shaping of Holocaust Memory Before the fall of Communism

This chapter analyses the origins of the urban memory of the Holocaust in Kraków, identifying the creation of exhibitions in the early 1980s as a key moment of initiation for work on urban commemorations of the Jewish Genocide in the city. It notes the importance of the opening of the National Memorial Museum Eagle Pharmacy, the first stand-alone Holocaust museum in Poland, on both local and national levels. It then elaborates on the actions of members of a local ‘fictive kinship,’ a group of friends who experienced and remembered the War together, discussing their redefinition of the Holocaust as a unique and universally important event that constituted an important part of the history of Poland, but that was, however, not yet part of *Polish* history.<sup>1</sup> Through their actions, this group, together with their counterparts from the MHK, translated the discourse of the oppositional elite into a language accessible to the general public, thus upholding the emerging critical approach to the Polish past and Polish identity. Instead of reiterating the more widespread interpretation of the past, in which blameless Poles helped Jews to survive – a vulgarised version of which was espoused by the Communist government – the group depicted the Holocaust as a Jewish tragedy, informing the public of the fate of local Krakowian Jews.

The narratives from both the MHK and the Pharmacy merged new ideas with old tropes. On one hand, the curators introduced a topic that had hitherto remained absent from Polish memory: that of the Holocaust. On the other, however, they did so by employing the tools of the conventional ‘modern museum.’ They utilised language and means of presentation popular in both Poland and Europe, and generally used to represent ethno-centric histories. As a result, the curators divested the Genocide of some of its historical nuance and significance. Furthermore, since their interpretation of the past hinged on distinct ethnic categories, they depicted Jews as a separate group, with no connection to ethnic Poles. These representations, typifying a ‘top-down’ approach to the political history of the Holocaust, were partially an effect of the curators’ subscription to the paradigm of the modern museum, but they were also a consequence of strategic choices. The curators were attempting to create exhibitions that would be accessible to a Polish

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<sup>1</sup> Winter, ‘Forms of Kinship’, p. 40.

audience with little prior knowledge of the Holocaust; their strategy, therefore, was to discuss this unknown topic in familiar terms, using familiar language.

The present chapter examines two independent museums, the MHK's branch in the Old Synagogue, and the Eagle Pharmacy, and analyses the exhibitions therein, using the exhibition scenarios obtained from the archives of the IPN and the MHK.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent sections compare and contrast the exhibition created at the Old Synagogue in 1980 and at the Eagle Pharmacy in 1983. The first, a branch of the MHK specialising in Jewish history, is the same museum that featured prominently in the first chapter of the study as the space in which curators developed the image of the 'shtetl-romance.' The second museum included in the analysis is the National Memorial Museum Eagle Pharmacy in Kraków. The chapter first investigates the activists involved in the creation of both exhibitions, exploring their understandings of the Holocaust, their motivations, and the strategies they deployed in order to produce oppositional narratives in a state-controlled environment. It then proceeds to analyse the exhibitions themselves, examining the roles played by the curators' chosen means of presentation and strategies of authentication, and outlining the consequences, for these representations of the Holocaust, of following the modern museum paradigm. The chapter concludes with a detailed analysis of the narratives produced in both museums, dissecting the ultimate meanings of the chosen presentations and identifying problems that impacted those meanings.

## **Krakow's Activists and the Struggle to Narrate Memories**

### **Discovering 'Reserves of Ethical Values'<sup>3</sup>**

The curators of Kraków's museums created urban and critical narratives of the Holocaust that stood in stark opposition to the ethno-nationalist understanding of Polish history supported by the Communist government. Some of these activists belonged to the same milieu that was responsible for the reconceptualisation of Kazimierz discussed in Chapter One. They were mid-ranking local officials who used their expertise and position to commemorate the local past. Others, however, were members of what Jay Winter terms a 'fictive kinship': they were 'individuals and groups, mostly obscure, [that] c[a]me

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<sup>2</sup> Kraków, AIPN, 'Materiały dotyczące obchodów 40 rocznicy likwidacji getta krakowskiego', Sig. Kr 1/249, AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała „Z Dziejów”', Sig. 157/3.

<sup>3</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 61.

together to do the work of remembrance' due to their shared War past.<sup>4</sup> It is my contention that both groups recognised their moral duty to commemorate the Holocaust, and that it was this sense of duty that motivated them to act as they did.

These moral overtones were particularly clear in the case of the activists associated with the Eagle Pharmacy Museum. The Eagle Pharmacy, run by Tadeusz Pankiewicz was the only pharmacy in the Kraków Ghetto during the war. When the Jews were relocated to Podgórze, and Polish citizens were expelled to other parts of the city, Pankiewicz managed to persuade the Nazi administration that he and the Pharmacy would have to stay in the ghetto. He relieved the Jewish community as much as he could. When the enclosed district was liquidated, Pankiewicz witnessed the Nazi crimes to which he would later bear witness in his book 'The Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy.' Following the end of the War, the site continued to operate as a pharmacy until 1967, when it was turned into Bar Nadwiślański, apparently a particularly sordid establishment catering for local drunks. It was only in the 1980s that members of the local community recognised the potential for the space and initiated the creation of a museum.<sup>5</sup>

The museum was created by the 'Circle of Alumni of the Former Sixth Gymnasium, now Fourth Secondary School, in Kraków-Podgórze in Association with the Society of Friends of Podgórze District (Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzielnicy Podgórze, TPDP) in Kraków and the Committee for the Commemoration of the Ghetto and Reconstruction of the «Eagle Pharmacy»' [here: the Circle].<sup>6</sup> Some members of the Circle were friends of Tadeusz Pankiewicz, the proprietor of the original Pharmacy, having attended the same school as him prior to WWII; all of them had experienced the War as adults, and some were heavily marked by it. One of the most active members of the Circle, Professor Julian Aleksandrowicz, himself of Jewish origin, had fought in the Polish Army in September 1939. He was sent to the Kraków Ghetto, but escaped the incarceration along with his family, and joined the Home Army. After the War, he became one of Poland's leading haematologists and philosophers of medicine.<sup>7</sup>

The Circle members' direct and intimate connection to the War past is what made them a fictive kinship. In Winter's view, fictive kinships find outlets for their memory work by 'creating a space in which the story of their war, in its local, particular, parochial,

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<sup>4</sup> Winter, 'Forms of Kinship', p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Anna Pióro, *Apteka Tadeusza Pankiewicza w getcie krakowskim. Przedownik* (Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2013), p. 208.

<sup>6</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 58.

<sup>7</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek *Fabryka*, p. 27.

familial form, can be told and retold.’<sup>8</sup> Winter emphasises that the narrative offered by local, ‘obscure’ groups tells the story of their *members’* war, and not of war as seen by historians or politicians. Their narrative thus has the potential to escape the grand, all-encompassing idioms used by governments. One of the ways in which narratives produced by fictive kinships diverge from state-sponsored interpretations is that they tend to be ‘redemptive’ in tone; they focus on ‘hope spring[ing] from the tragedy.’<sup>9</sup> Winter also observes that memorials created by kinships are often appropriated by governments, differences in interpretations notwithstanding.<sup>10</sup> He bases his observations on Western European case studies, but, as this chapter demonstrates, they are equally valid for Kraków.

The members of the Circle formed a fictive kinship and worked through their memories of the War together, and eventually offered those memories to a wider audience via the Pharmacy. Their kinship however, was not the only source of their narrative. They were all members of the Kraków intelligentsia, and some worked in academia;<sup>11</sup> as a result, they remained within the sphere of influence of various organisations, such as the KIK, and magazines such as *Tygodnik Powszechny*, *ZNAK*, and *Więź*. As mentioned in Chapter One, it is virtually impossible today to trace the direct personal connections of semi-structured organisations from the 1980s. It is, however, possible to trace the circulation of ideas, and it is clear that the ideas expressed by the Circle indicate a close affinity with the groups that were the first in the country to publically discuss the Holocaust and Jewish past.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the Circle members’ internal need to come together and tell their War stories coincided with outside pressure to confront the problematic past.

Offering an insight into those processes is a speech written, but never delivered, by Professor Julian Aleksandrowicz.<sup>13</sup> As one of the most prominent members of the Circle, he was tasked with giving the welcoming address at the Pharmacy Museum’s opening in April 1983. The plan was blocked by a ‘coordinator’ of the event: either a censor, or, more probably, a member of the secret service.<sup>14</sup> Though the text was never publically given, it nonetheless allows for a more comprehensive understanding of Aleksandrowicz’s value system, and by extension the value system of his fictive kinship. The speech is a blend of old and new ideas, bringing together well-established interpretations of the Polish past and

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<sup>8</sup> Winter, ‘Forms of Kinship’, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Winter, *The Generation*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> AIPN, ‘Materiały,’ Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 56.

<sup>12</sup> See Introduction, p. 33-34.

<sup>13</sup> AIPN, ‘Materiały,’ Sig. Kr 1/249, fols. 61-62.

<sup>14</sup> Pióro *Apteka*, p. 212, see also AIPN, ‘Materiały,’ Sig. Kr 1/249, fols. 61.

combining them with a surprisingly innovative reading of the Jewish Genocide. Aleksandrowicz writes of the uniqueness of the Holocaust and its universal meaning, and at the same time embeds his narrative in the familiar story of Polish help and age-old hospitality. He reaffirms ethnic divisions between Poles and Jews, but also makes preliminary steps toward the inclusion of the latter in the definition of Polish identity.

He begins by reminding his (potential) listeners that the Jewish relics in Kraków were saved 'by people with good will and passionate hearts. People loving their country, and in so doing [protecting relics – JG] protecting its honour among the nations.'<sup>15</sup> For Aleksandrowicz, the care extended by Poles toward Jewish relics was a logical continuation of the age-old history of Poland as a safe haven for various dissidents. At one point, he evokes the myth of the sixteenth-century Polish Commonwealth as the 'land with no pyres,' a country that admitted Protestants from neighbouring states. Later in the speech, he also mentions the Polish Righteous.<sup>16</sup> The whole speech is built around evoking traditional interpretations of the Polish past, demonstrating how deeply socialised these narrative clichés were: they were an obvious point of reference, even for the Jewish-born Aleksandrowicz. He uses them despite his engagement in a project that urbanised memory; he worked against the government, and yet sections of his speech echo the narrative used by that very government at precisely the same time as he was writing.

The difference between Aleksandrowicz and government representatives, then, lay not in their choice of idioms to describe the Polish past, but rather in their distinct motivations. Renata Kobylarz demonstrates that during the organisation of the 1983 commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Polish officials sought to entice what they imagined as an all-powerful Jewish lobby to influence the United States government on their behalf<sup>17</sup> For them, 'Polish help' served as a valuable political bargaining chip. Aleksandrowicz, on the other hand, had no such ulterior motive in his evocation of the Jewish past; on the contrary, he believed that mentioning help was part of the same moral obligation that compelled him to talk about the past atrocities he had experienced. The moral edge of his attitude was clear: he sought to 'make it [life-JG] more just, based on social and biological egalitarianism,' and believed in the importance of the 'reserves of ethical values.'<sup>18</sup> This morally guided approach led him to state that

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<sup>15</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 61.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, fol. 62.

<sup>17</sup> Kobylarz, p. 317.

<sup>18</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 61.

[...] our friend Tadeusz Pankiewicz and his Pharmacy are not only a piece of history, nor only a matter for Podgórze, Kraków, Poland; they are a sign for all of humanity, which, to make sense of its history, that is to ensure [humanity's-JG] survival, must aim to create a new order, an order based on the solidarity of all peoples.<sup>19</sup>

It is clear that for Aleksandrowicz, discussing the Holocaust went hand-in-hand with discussing Polish help, since instances of Polish help could serve as a 'sign' and a lesson for the future. He was obliged to talk about the traumas of the past to ensure that they never occur again, and emphasising the 'traditional' Polish values of openness and protectiveness served exactly this goal. Like Pankiewicz, and like the Poles of old, the generations of the late twentieth century could also extend a helping hand to those in need.<sup>20</sup>

A further way in which Aleksandrowicz differed from his Communist counterparts was in his introduction of new interpretations of the War past. Writing on the Jewish Genocide, he refers to it as a 'cataclysm worse than the Black Death,' taking steps toward identifying the Holocaust as one of the greatest tragedies of mankind.<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, he never uses any specific name: not Holocaust, Shoah, nor Zagłada, the Polish equivalent, all of which were present in the Polish language by the mid-2000s, but were absent from discourse in the 1980s. The most explicit references to the Jewish fate during Aleksandrowicz's speech are his condemnations of the 'self-destruction of people by people, nations by nations, races by races.'<sup>22</sup> He dubs these events 'senseless,' suggesting that they were the 'outcome of a mental illness' that had struck humanity as a whole.<sup>23</sup>

Singling out the Holocaust in this manner, Aleksandrowicz did not point only to the singularity characteristic of any past event – he did not simply speak to the fact that this particular genocide happened in this particular moment of time to these particular people. Rather, by putting the Holocaust in the limelight as a catastrophe 'worse than the Black Death,' he elevated it above any other tragedy or even any other genocide; in short, he placed it outside of the rest of history. In 1983, the consequences of his action were not foreseeable. It is only in retrospect, and thanks to the research of such historians as A. Dirk

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<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, fol. 62.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, fol. 61.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, fol. 61.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, fol. 61.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, fol. 61.



Moses, Mark Levene, and Gavriel Rosenfeld, that we can now fully grasp the problems with constructing the Holocaust as unique.<sup>24</sup>

As Gavriel Rosenfeld affirms, the 1980s were, in fact, exactly when the uniqueness claim came to be constructed: historians such as Yehuda Bauer, Lucy Dawidowicz, and Saul Friedländer began to insist on the Holocaust's singularity and at precisely the time that Aleksandrowicz was drafting his speech.<sup>25</sup> According to Rosenfeld, this claim to uniqueness emerged due to a growing tendency to historicise and politicise the Genocide. In the eyes of Bauer, Dawidowicz, and Friedländer, this trend threatened to 'diminish the event,' leading some historians to assert its incomparability.<sup>26</sup> While there had been barely any attempts at historicising the Jewish War past in Poland, there certainly had been attempts to politicise it. Indeed, the opening of the Pharmacy Museum was scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1983 to coincide with the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (19<sup>th</sup> April 1943) and with the infamous government-sponsored commemorations of that event.<sup>27</sup> Despite attempts by members of the Circle to recast the opening as a local event, inviting guests to a 'Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Liquidation of the Kraków Ghetto,'<sup>28</sup> government officials succeeded in subsuming it under their state-wide celebrations.<sup>29</sup> This attempt to instrumentalise memory was obvious, and Aleksandrowicz was aware of it. When constructing the uniqueness of the Jewish Genocide Aleksandrowicz had a similar motivation to the Western intellectuals. He had a direct personal connection to the events, he recognised his moral duty to talk about them, and he was faced with governmental attempts to politicise them. Not surprisingly, he did not cease to assert the singularity of the Holocaust, and, as mentioned above, he also presented it as a universal lesson for mankind, addressing his speech to 'all of humanity.'<sup>30</sup>

This insistence on the Holocaust's uniqueness, however, created problems, pushing Aleksandrowicz into a conundrum that he neither foresaw nor was capable of resolving. Depicting the Holocaust as unique, even if it was accepted as universally important, made it virtually impossible to connect it to the history of suffering of ethnic Poles. The

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<sup>24</sup> Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, 'The Politics of Uniqueness: Reflections on the Recent Polemical Turn in Holocaust and Genocide Scholarship', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 13 (1999), a. Dirk Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the "Racial Century": Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 36.4 (2002), Mark Levene, 'Is the Holocaust Simply Another Example of Genocide?', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 28.2 (1994).

<sup>25</sup> Rosenfeld, p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 30.

<sup>27</sup> See Pióro *Apteka*, p. 212.

<sup>28</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 43.

<sup>29</sup> Kobylarz, p. 348.

<sup>30</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 62.

Holocaust stood apart from the rest of history, and could not be compared or even juxtaposed with any other event, since comparison carried the risk of historicisation and thus ‘diminish[ed] the event.’<sup>31</sup> Following this line, any presentation on the Holocaust had to be isolated from material on the Polish War; in the Pharmacy Museum, this separation was indeed realised. In some cases, this isolation was warranted by history; Jews were, after all, isolated themselves, in ghettos and camps. In others, it was a contemporary construction resulting from the uniqueness claim. The Pharmacy Museum exhibition did not mention any links between Jews and ethnic Poles, either before the War, or during the War but before ghettoization; in effect, Poles were mentioned only as helpers. This narrative placed Poles outside of the community of suffering, and added to the uniqueness of the Jewish fate.

Aleksandrowicz’s assertion of the uniqueness and isolation of the Genocide demonstrates the significance of cultural templates in memory work. His personal experience of the War points to interconnections between the Polish and Jewish experiences, rather than to disparities between them. His fate, though, was exceptional: Jews with strong connections to the Home Army who not only managed to survive on the ‘Aryan side’ but were also able to join the Polish underground resistance were few and far between. For this reason, it was easier for him to dismiss his own story, since it was incongruent with more common historical narratives. Moreover, he was a fully assimilated Jew: prior to the War he had attended Polish rather than Jewish school and fought in the Polish Army, and, as mentioned, he maintained solid connections with the clandestine Home Army. After the War, he withstood all the waves of state-sponsored anti-Semitic actions, and it seems that by the 1980s he fully subscribed to Polishness. The tendency to isolate Jews from Poles can thus be partially understood as reflecting his subscription to Polish values. In addition, the framework he used to interpret the past was the product of memory work happening within his fictive kinship, and emerged through the process of the group’s discussions and recollections, which often stood in opposition to mainstream interpretations

Throughout his speech, Aleksandrowicz continues to highlight this ethnic division, but he is not consistent in his terms. He writes of the tradition of Polish tolerance, affirming that Poles opened up *their* state and *their* homes to Jews and religious dissidents. However, at the same time he recalls his ‘fellow citizens of Jewish origin [that] were saved

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<sup>31</sup> Rosenfeld, p 30.

from destruction by people of good will and passionate hearts,<sup>32</sup> thus referring not to Poles and Jews – separate categories – but to fellow citizens of various backgrounds. For this reason, it is my contention that Aleksandrowicz was attempting in some way to include Jews in the definition of Polishness. At the same time, in terms of discourses available to him he had access only to narrative clichés, which isolated groups rather than uniting them; it seems he lacked the tools to overcome the problem of exclusion. He had been socialised in Poland and thus worked from within Polish interpretative frameworks. In 1983, those frameworks did not offer any solution to the conundrums of nationality and ethnicity.

In a way, however, Aleksandrowicz contributed to resolving the problem of representation of ethnic categories. As this thesis demonstrates, Kraków's activists worked within a critical approach to the Polish past, an approach that, as early as the 1980s, overlapped with the cosmopolitan memory project: narratives built in Kraków aimed toward openness, tolerance, and inclusivity. The activists creating these narratives grew more sensitive toward the problem of exclusion, and in the years following 1983 developed the tools and language required to overcome the obstacles present in the representation of Poles and Jews. Ulrich Beck notes that cosmopolitanisation is and was an 'interactive relationship of de-nationalization and re-nationalization, de-ethnicization and re-ethnicization, de-localization and re-localization',<sup>33</sup> in other words, it is a process in which actors take two steps forward and one step back. In the case of Aleksandrowicz, these steps are only too clear. In the same historical moment that saw the Communist government insist on using the Jewish past to political ends, and in which collective memory had no space for the Holocaust at all, Aleksandrowicz pressed forward in narrating this missing part of history. He sought to depict his country as open and tolerant, and highlighted the duty of ethnic Poles to commemorate their co-citizens. To accomplish this aim, he focused on the local past, contributing to the development of a narrative based on local, rather than national history. Aleksandrowicz maintained the ethnic division between Poles and Jews, and even strengthened it in some ways through his insistence on the uniqueness of the Jewish past. Simultaneously, however, he laid foundations on which his successors could build more inclusive narratives.

Aleksandrowicz's undelivered speech offers an in-depth insight into the value system of his fictive kinship, the group responsible for the creation of the Eagle Pharmacy

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<sup>32</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 61.

<sup>33</sup> Ulrich Beck, 'The Cosmopolitan Perspective: Sociology of the Second Age of Modernity', *British Journal of Sociology*, 51.1 (2000), p. 98.

memorial. There are insufficient sources available to allow similar comments to be made about the curators of the Old Synagogue; there is, however, ample evidence suggesting that their approach to the past was similar. While analysing the part of the Synagogue's 1980 exhibition focused on Jewish heritage in Chapter One I highlighted the ways in which it brought the Jews back to the narrative of Poland's past, adding that despite the curators reiterated references to 'we Krakowians' they nevertheless reaffirmed the Jews' position as the Other of the Polish nation, located outside of the in-group. This end result placed the Synagogue curators in a position similar to that of Aleksandrowicz and the Circle. In addition, as both the Introduction to Part One and Chapter One reveal, officials from the MHK were involved in the processes of redefinition and revitalization of Kazimierz throughout the 1980s, and even earlier. The head of the MHK took part in the meeting with Rabbi Isaac Levin in 1976,<sup>34</sup> and employees of the Museum lobbied throughout the 1980s to obtain more synagogues as Museum sites.<sup>35</sup> All this demonstrates that the people behind the 1980 exhibition in the Synagogue had genuine, and not cynical, interests in memorialising the Jewish Genocide. They wanted to talk about it because it constituted an important part of the city's history, and because it was right to do so. They had no short-term, political interest in commemorating the Holocaust.

### **Strategies of Survival, Strategies of Success**

The above assertion of the sincerity of the MHK curators and the creators of the Eagle Pharmacy Museum is further strengthened by the persistence with which both groups worked toward their goals. They made numerous decisions designed to manoeuvre around the almost omnipotent Party-State, which was necessary for a number of reasons. The Party had little interest in the Jewish past, which meant that organising even the simplest of exhibitions required the perseverance and patience to see through months of negotiating even basic issues with the relevant authorities. In addition, when the government did speak of the Jewish Genocide, it was to exploit the memory for political gain. Kraków's actors understood that the narratives they were developing stood in stark contrast to the Polonocentric and politically oriented message coming from the government; therefore, they had to make sure that their projects would not sound any alarm bells. They

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<sup>34</sup> APK, 'UMK Wydział,' Sig. 29/1431/409, fols. 217-19

<sup>35</sup> AWUOZ, 'Synagoga Izaaka,' 'Synagoga Kupa.'

were prepared to make some concessions, and they skilfully won the support of key state agencies.

When the members of the Circle first began to lay plans for the memorial in the Pharmacy, they took the decision to formally subjugate the museum to the district office, a local branch of the city government. In theory, Polish law did allow non-governmental organisations to own museums;<sup>36</sup> however, a ‘private initiative’ ran the risk of attracting unwanted attention and scrutiny. Furthermore, turning the Pharmacy into a state-owned institution – technically speaking – made it more stable, and helped to ensure funding for the project. Association with a more recognisable and well-established institution was a further strategic choice for the Circle. When the group was created, its members chose to align themselves with the TPDP, an organisation that for years served as a link between the authorities and Podgórze’s denizens.<sup>37</sup> In so doing, the Circle disassociated itself, in the eyes of the government, from newly emerging and politically suspicious organisations such as Solidarity, but at the same time retained their independence. There is, furthermore, no evidence of pressure in any particular direction having come from the TPDP.<sup>38</sup> Alliance with the official institution, then, shielded the Circle from unwanted attention, and allowed it to operate more freely. However, that is not to say that there was no external control at all exercised over the exhibition.

The Polish government of the time delegated memory work to a number of institutions. The Main Commission for the Investigation of Hitlerites’ Crimes in Poland (Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, GKBZH), with its regional Committees, was the most important, but the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację, ZBOWiD) and the Ministry of Culture had sway too. All three organisations had the ability to block the Circle’s plans. By the end of their very first meeting, the members of the Circle had already decided that they needed to pacify the ZBOWiD. To this end, they asked the head of the Society to formally chair their Pharmacy initiative, which *suggested* ideological affinity.<sup>39</sup> As in the case of the Circle’s alliance with the TDPD, there is no trace of intervention having come from the ZBOWiD.

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<sup>36</sup> *Dziennik Ustaw Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej*, ‘Ustawa o ochronie dóbr kultury i o muzeach’, 1962, nr 10, poz. 48. Rozdział VIII: Art. 48.

<sup>37</sup> AIPN, ‘Materiały,’ Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 52 and fol. 56.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, fol. 58.

At the same point, members of the Circle asked Ryszard Kotarba, of the Regional Committee for Investigation of Hitlerites' Crimes (Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Krakowie OKBZH), and Magdalena Kunicka-Wyrzykowska, of the national GKBZH, to draft the plan for the exhibition.<sup>40</sup> Kotarba was on the way to becoming a specialist in Holocaust history, and had a vested interest in Kraków's Holocaust relics.<sup>41</sup> Establishing links with both figures at an early stage helped the Circle to gain powerful allies, and promoted it as a transparent organisation fully prepared to cooperate with the authorities. In any case, the Circle was in need of professional assistance with its plans; some of its members were academics, but none were historians, and none had any experience in curating history exhibitions, meaning that Kotarba's and Kunicka-Wyrzykowska's help was invaluable. The fact that it was Ryszard Kotarba specifically that worked on the exhibition is worth highlighting here. He was one of many local activists who occupied an official position in a state agency or institution, and used his status to urbanise memory. This places him in the same group as local heritage preservationists, and the staff from the MHK, and allows for better understanding of why actors in Kraków were so successful in their projects: numerous local officials managed to use the independence their offices had, to support, or even initiate, local memory work. They did not challenge official orders or instructions coming from Warsaw, but rather reinterpreted or altered them, in the hope that their changes would go unnoticed.

The third institution with the ability to block the Circle's initiative was the Ministry of Culture, since it was responsible for all the museums in the country. To resolve that problem, a student from the Kraków University of Technology was drafted in to draw up plans for the future Museum. Professor Aleksandrowicz, acting in his capacity as a Ghetto survivor, consulted on the student's master's dissertation, which allowed him to work with, and influence, its main supervisor: Professor Wiktor Zin, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Zin was interested in Kraków's heritage of his own accord, and Aleksandrowicz proved to be a skilled lobbyist. During the viva, examiners praised the idea of the new museum and declared that the initiative would be 'an important sign for foreigners, attesting to the social-humanitarian actions of the Poles that provided substantial help to Jews in the Ghetto.'<sup>42</sup> This interpretation of history was acceptable to the Circle, and was eagerly supported by the government, thus ensuring that the Ministry

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<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, fol. 18.

<sup>41</sup> See for example Ryszard Kotarba, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie 1942-1945* (Warszawa - Kraków, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 60.

of Culture did not interfere with the Circle's project. Members of the Circle also managed to persuade the Head of the district office to support their plans. According to Anna Pióro, a long-term employee of the Pharmacy, it was he who suggested the name 'National Memorial Museum,' since it was not 'too striking' and did not directly reference the Holocaust.<sup>43</sup> Obscuring any references to Jewish history, and highlighting the national past instead, suggested that the museum fitted into Poland's dominant commemorative idiom.

Attesting to the effectiveness of the Circle was the initiative's survival of the period of Martial Law imposed between 1981 and 1983. Aleksandrowicz and his friends had begun to work on their plans at the end of 1980, when the Polish government had already yielded to mass protest movement Solidarity. The sixteen months between the Gdańsk Agreements, in which the government officially capitulated, and December 1981 when Martial Law was initiated, is often referred to as the Solidarity Carnival. It was a time when social initiatives flourished.<sup>44</sup> Most of these had died by December 1981, but the Pharmacy Museum initiative survived, and by late 1982 the works had been resumed. The measures to disassociate the Pharmacy from any oppositional initiatives, to find powerful allies, and to obscure any reference to Jewish history worked, and the government did not force the Circle to abandon the project like they had other organisations.

The work of the curators of the MHK was easier. The Old Synagogue was a long-established museum, and part of a recognised multi-branch institution. Moreover, the first exhibition of *judaica* in the Synagogue had been opened in 1959, so by the 1980s the activities of the curators did not stand out or cause any major official concerns. That is not to say that the Old Synagogue curators had absolute freedom in their actions: the MHK was state-owned, which meant that the Ministry of Culture had to be consulted on a number of occasions; indeed, while working on the 1980 exhibition, the Synagogue curators were required to negotiate with the Ministry to elicit additional funding and request approval for their proposed cooperation with the Jewish Museum in Prague. The Ministry showed no interest in the dealings of the MHK curators, and it took over eight months to approve the cooperation with Prague; no additional funding was granted.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, however, neither did the Ministry take any steps toward actively interfering with the MHK, which suggests that Warsaw officials were not concerned with activities in

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<sup>43</sup> Pióro *Apteka*, p. 210.

<sup>44</sup> Prażmowska, pp. 212-217.

<sup>45</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała „Z Dziejów”', Syg. 157/3.

Kraków. Curators could, then, work relatively freely, but could not count on any central support.

The findings outlined in this chapter so far resonate with the argument presented in Chapter One of Part One. In the 1980s, there were groups of local activists in Krakow that insisted on engaging with the problematic Jewish-Polish past. Some of them redefined Kazimierz, presented its Jewish ruins as Polish heritage, and began an initial wave of restorations. Some created the first exhibitions in Poland commemorating the Holocaust. In Michael Meng's in-depth and persuasive analysis of Warsaw and Wrocław, he concludes that the Holocaust commemorations orchestrated by the authorities were 'crass' and 'hypocritical' and that 'opposition members [...] could be at times just as politically motivated as Communist leaders.'<sup>46</sup> This chapter, however, demonstrates that in Kraków the situation was different. Activists working there had a genuine need to remember the Jewish past and the Holocaust, and had no political motives other than combating state-supported misinterpretations of history.

## **First Exhibitions - History in a Glass Case**

### **Authentic Creations**

Both the 1980 Old Synagogue and the 1983 Eagle Pharmacy exhibitions were products of curators who were attempting to commemorate the mass murder of Jews. They were created by individuals and groups working against the much more widespread interpretation of history, in which there was no place for Jewish suffering. It was obscured in Auschwitz and relegated to the background of state sponsored commemorations of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and there were no institutions dealing professionally with the Holocaust memory.<sup>47</sup> However, these Polish memory frameworks were not the only factor that shaped and limited the exhibitions. Of equal importance were the tools curators could utilise. They engaged with indexical authenticity to suggest the objectivity of the exhibitions they had created out of numerous objects and documents, presented in glass cases and on boards.<sup>48</sup> In so doing they subscribed to the paradigm of the modern museum that was dominant at that time.

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<sup>46</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 210.

<sup>47</sup> See Introduction, pp. 34-36.

<sup>48</sup> For details on 'modern museum' see *Defining Museum*, pp. 113-118.



Sharon Macdonald reminds us that ‘museums have acted not simply as the embodiment of theoretical ideas, but also as part of the visualizing technology through which such ideas were formed.’<sup>49</sup> As this section demonstrates, choosing to engage with the modern museum paradigm had its consequences. The modern museum supports the ethnocentric interpretation of past, providing information on ‘Objective History’ as seen from above. Narratives of minority suffering do not fit well into that paradigm, and Kraków’s curators struggled as a result. Depicting the relationship between Poles and Jews proved to be particularly problematic.

The local curators in 1980s Kraków could not experiment with new modes of representations, even though such experiments were undertaken in other countries: the first object-free museum, Beth Hatefutsoth, had opened in Israel in 1978.<sup>50</sup> Kraków’s curators, however, needed to meet the expectations of their audience. As Susan Crane demonstrates, museums that break with established modes of representation risk controversy, and even risk not being recognised as museums at all.<sup>51</sup> Kraków’s curators were offering a narrative on an unknown and controversial topic, and to reduce the risk of such controversy they were required to follow the paradigm of the modern museum as closely as possible. They had to suggest the authenticity of the museum-as-institution, and maintain the indexical authenticity of the exhibition, to ensure that the visitors accepted and absorbed their message.

Maintaining the authenticity of the museum-as-institution was fairly straightforward in the cases of both the Old Synagogue and the Pharmacy. The Old Synagogue was a branch of the MHK, a well-known and established institution owned by the city government; the Eagle Pharmacy, meanwhile, was initially not part of the MHK, but members of the Circle made sure it was associated with the district office, the local branch of the city government. As described above, the main reasons for deferring to the office were to secure a permanent source of funding, and to avoid attracting unwanted government attention by opening a private museum. However, this association also legitimised the institution in the eyes of visitors.

Creating the impression of authenticity around the exhibitions was a far more complex task that required multiple strategies. The curators chose to situate their respective museums on auratic sites, arranged the exhibitions in a way that reinforced a sense of

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<sup>49</sup> Macdonald, ‘Theorizing Museum’, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *The Museum as Catalyst*, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Crane, p. 45.

objectivity, and presented artefacts and documents in glass cases and on boards. As noted above, auratic sites have the potential to enhance both witness and experiential authenticities:<sup>52</sup> they can be seen as artefacts themselves, proofs of history, and they can help to transport the visitor back in time in order to facilitate his or her emotional response. Memory activists in the 1980s tapped into the aura of these sites, but utilised them solely as proofs of history; even regarding that aspect, they used the sites in a limited way. The Old Synagogue, the oldest such site in Kazimierz, validated the curators' narrative on the history of the Jewish minority, but its unique interior and design were barely incorporated into their presentations. In the section that depicted Jewish traditions, the curators used the existing *Aron Ha-kodesz* and *bimah*, and arranged the majority of the religious artefacts in the sanctuary to create a thematic connection between them. The Holocaust exhibition, meanwhile, occupied one of the upstairs rooms, and used the room simply as an exhibition space, without incorporating any of its original features.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, the war-time site of the Pharmacy was used solely due to its connection to the events of the Ghetto, and none of its features were incorporated into the exhibition there. Initially, memory activists did consider reopening a regular pharmacy on the site along with the memorial to accentuate the building's original function;<sup>54</sup> they ultimately decided against this experiment, but neither did they use the aura of the site in any other way. This situation arose, perhaps, from the fact that there was barely anything left that they could use. Between 1967 and 1980 the site was occupied by a particularly cheap bar, apparently catering for local drunks.<sup>55</sup> All of the original furniture was lost, and the interior remodelled. While adapting the building for the museum, the curators decided against reinstating its original division into five rooms, or reconstructing any of the equipment. Using historic sites without incorporating any of their features into the exhibition fitted well with the requirements of witness authenticity, allowing the building to serve as a proof of the narrative presented there and supporting the impression of objectivity. Both buildings 'remembered' past events, and organising exhibitions there brought their 'pastness' to the fore. At the same time, however, using the sites in this way fell short of

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<sup>52</sup> See *Defining Museum*, pp. 112-114.

<sup>53</sup> AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3.

<sup>54</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 60.

<sup>55</sup> Anna Pióro, 'The Eagle Pharmacy: Regained Memory. The History of the Pharmacy as an Instance of Manipulating Collective Memory', in *The Eagle Pharmacy. History and Memory* (Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2013), p. 208.

taking advantage of the buildings' potential to reinforce experiential authenticity, and thus limited their impact on the narratives of the exhibitions there.

Commenting on the features of the modern museum, Sharon Macdonald notes that the designs of galleries are routinely used to support notions of objectivity. Open galleries and clear, easy-to-follow exhibition plans suggest an objective system underlying the narrative. The demarcation of spaces for artefacts and for visitors, for example in the form of glass cases, further serves to strengthen the notion of objectivity by disjoining the visitor from the narrative, allowing for the maintenance of a 'professional' distance.<sup>56</sup> Most of these features were used in both the Synagogue and the Pharmacy. The presentation in the Synagogue occupied one room and was divided into sections, each presented on a different wall. The sections were arranged in order of gravity: from expulsion from society, via ghettoization, to mass killing.<sup>57</sup>

A similar structure was used in the Eagle Pharmacy. When the bar that had occupied the space was first created in the 1950s, the site had been remodelled, and the space that had once been the Dispensing Room (customer space) and the Prescription Room (first of the laboratories) was turned into one larger space which opened out to the Duty Room, Pankiewicz's office and wartime apartment.<sup>58</sup> Rather than reconstructing the original layout, the curators used this newer space, arranging the exhibition in what was effectively one large, open-plan gallery. The presentation contained more sections and covered more topics than the one in the Synagogue, but the design followed the same principles. Each part of the exhibition occupied a different part of the gallery, and visitors were invited to follow the story from section to section, though given the characteristics of the space there was no set path. In both museums, visitors viewed the exhibition from 'outside,' without connecting with it; they observed all of the exhibited artefacts from a central point in the room, and could perceive the system ruling the exhibition. The sections, each representing one stage of history, unravelled neatly in a sequence that emulated chronology.<sup>59</sup> In the Synagogue and the Pharmacy, even the design supported the impression of objectivity, by attesting to the logic underlying the exhibition.

Connected to the paradigm of the modern museum in both exhibitions were also the ways in which artefacts were presented. Due to limited space, the exhibition in the Synagogue was simple in design. Aside from the photographs and documents displayed on

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<sup>56</sup> Macdonald, *Museum*, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3.

<sup>58</sup> Pióro, *Apteka*, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 18-41.

the boards placed around the room, curators added only three more exhibits. These comprised a length of barbed wire from Auschwitz, presented alongside two works of art: a collage depicting an elderly Jew bowing to a young German officer, and a Star of David in a cage.<sup>60</sup> While the meanings of works of art are always multi-layered, it nevertheless seems that those presented in the Synagogue served to highlight and strengthen the first part of the presentation, revolving as they did around the theme of early persecutions, ghettoization and humiliation, rather than mass killings. The subsequent section shows that the exhibition failed to openly address the mass killings; it is clear that this shortfall was also embedded into the general design of the exhibition.



Figure 3: The Eagle Pharmacy, original design.

The design of the Pharmacy was much more elaborate, and addressed the key themes of the presentation much more openly. The main part of the exhibition consisted of boards featuring photographs and documents. The boards were shaped like *matzevot*, Jewish tombstones, both to replicate the shape of the Ghetto fence,<sup>61</sup> and because despite the *matzeva*'s specificity to Judaism, its shape is universally recognisable as that of a tombstone. As such, the use of this shape additionally served to highlight the main theme

<sup>60</sup> AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3.

<sup>61</sup> Salwiński, p. 142.

of the exhibitions: death. The function of a set of five stained-glass plates set into the windows was similar. Witold Chomicz, an artist, Professor of Kraków's Academy of Fine Arts, and a member of the Circle, designed the cycle, entitled 'Inferno'; it vividly depicted the killings, atrocities, and pain of the Genocide.<sup>62</sup> In this case, the set of symbols employed was more obviously Christian than Jewish, since representations of Hell and the damned are typical of Christian church art. For this reason, the stained glass pieces resonated more with Polish visitors to the site than with its Jewish guests. Nevertheless, the message was clear to everyone: what was told in the Pharmacy was the story of the true 'Hell on Earth.' In contrast to the display in the Synagogue, then, in the Pharmacy even the design pointed toward death and destruction. Other means of presentation were also employed in the Pharmacy, the most significant of which were the glass cases set around the rooms, which contained original documents and a *Torah* scroll hidden by Pankiewicz,<sup>63</sup> Together with the *matzevot*-shaped boards, these cases displayed the majority of the artefacts. In addition, a few items of furniture were added to the former Duty Room, Pankiewicz's office and flat. None of these were original pieces from the Pharmacy, and some had never belonged there; for example, a wooden cabinet for medicines exhibited in Pankiewicz's former office had only a resemblance to the one that had stood in the Dispensing Room during the War.<sup>64</sup>

Despite differences in design, then, both the Pharmacy Museum and the Old Synagogue followed a similar spatial system. Photographs and documents placed around the galleries constituted the key element of the exhibitions, while artefacts in glass cases (in the Pharmacy) or on the walls (Synagogue) complimented the design. In both cases, the visitors entering the gallery had an impression of distance: they were isolated from history. They could observe it, and learn about it, but could not become part of it.

Not surprisingly, the claim to authenticity of both exhibitions was grounded in the indexical features of the selected artefacts, the standard strategy used in modern museums, and successfully implemented in Kraków. According to the modern museum pattern, the artefacts on display were typically intended to be originals: objects that had been used daily in the past, presented in the museum out of their original contexts. This standard was in place in the heritage section of the exhibition in the Old Synagogue: the Hanukkah lamp from the museum, for example, was one used by a Jewish family in the past. In addition,

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<sup>62</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 44.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem, fol. 25.

<sup>64</sup> Salwiński, p. 143.

numerous menorahs or *yads* were used to validate the exhibition's narrative, both because of their status as original, and due to their number. Plenty signifies completeness, and in that sense this vast collection of menorahs suggested that they were truly typical, common objects, reinforcing the impression that the story they illustrated was true, too.

The situations at the Holocaust exhibitions, at both the Old Synagogue and Pharmacy, were more complicated, but the presentations still followed the same rules. Like in the other exhibitions, curators presented documents and objects; however, the status of these artefacts as authentic was problematic. The scenarios for all the early exhibitions listed numerous documents issued by the Nazi administration. Decrees introducing new laws, orders forcing Jews to relocate, lists of individuals sentenced to death; all were important for the designers.<sup>65</sup> On the rare occasion when perspectives other than that of the Nazis was introduced, documents were also used; for example, in the section on Polish help in the Eagle Pharmacy, the forged identity card and documents produced by the clandestine Home Army were presented to tell the story of Julian Aleksandrowicz's rescue from the Ghetto.<sup>66</sup> The exhibition organisers sought to present as many original documents as possible, but as the notes in the archival scenarios reveal, in some cases they had to use copies, since originals were hard to obtain from the archives.<sup>67</sup> These copies still depicted the original documents, and there is no evidence of interference with their content, but the copies were made to resemble the originals, having been printed in the original size, on paper that appeared old, using the original font.<sup>68</sup> The museum employees, then, were attempting to suggest that the copies were originals. Even if that strategy had failed, however, the documents presented would not have lost their power to authenticate the exhibition, since they indexically referred to the past by virtue of their content.

A similar argument can be made for the photographs displayed at both the Synagogue and Pharmacy. Barbie Zelizer analyses numerous issues that problematise the usage of photographs in memory work. A basic relationship between the photograph and the message is usually in place: photographs validate texts and are in turn validated by texts unless they have been altered in an obvious, visible way, or if their relationship with the depicted events is questioned.<sup>69</sup> The photographs presented at the exhibitions in the Pharmacy and Synagogue may have been copies of copies, they may have been retouched

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<sup>65</sup> AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3, AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 18-41

<sup>66</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 18-41, fol. 27

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3.

<sup>68</sup> Salwiński, p. 142-143.

<sup>69</sup> Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 5-7 and 200.

or cut, they may have been taken in a different context than the one they suggested, or they may have depicted different events from those specified; as long as they were not challenged or contested, however, they authorised the narrative they were used in. As long as they fell into the convention of documentary photography, they served their intended purpose.

Along with documents and photographs, the 1980s exhibitions made sparing use of witness testimonies. These testimonies had a twofold effect: they authenticated the narrative, but at the same time personalised it. The curators believed that by introducing personal testimonies, they risked diluting the objectivity of the narrative. Nevertheless, some examples could be found in the Eagle Pharmacy exhibition, in the form of letters from rescued Jews, offering gratitude to Tadeusz Pankiewicz.<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, these were used as a supplementary artefact pertaining to the post-War period, a period that was not the main focus of the exhibition. The main body of the presentation, the 'historical' part, was meanwhile anchored in the past solely via the use of witness authenticity.

The designs of both exhibitions, while different in terms of detail, rested on the same principals. The curators from both museums subscribed to the paradigm of the modern museum, and successfully engaged with indexical authenticity. The rising numbers of visitors to both institutions attest to the fact that while the museums presented controversial topics, they also succeeded in asserting their authority to do so.<sup>71</sup> Audience members accepted the impression that they were learning the Objective History of the Holocaust. In the section that follows, I analyse the exhibition narratives themselves.

### **Creating 'Objective History'**

In the 1980s, the Old Synagogue and the Eagle Pharmacy were two independent institutions with different teams of curators. Nevertheless, the exhibitions in both museums shared key themes, and approached them in similar manners; they were a product of the same culture, and attested to the changes taking place in that culture. One of the questions underlying this thesis challenges the importance of the 1989 threshold for memory work on the Holocaust and the Jewish past in Kraków, and consequently in Poland. As noted in the Introduction to the study, the changes that have taken place in memory work cannot be neatly charted against the political changes of the same period. It is my contention that

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<sup>70</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 35.

<sup>71</sup> Anna Suchodół, 'Możliwość Wprowadzenia Marketingu Do Instytucji Kultury Na Przykładzie Wybranych Muzeów I Instytucji Ochrony Zabytków' (Akademia Ekonomiczna w Krakowie, 1998), p. 63 and Pióro, *The Eagle*, p. 220.

memory work in Kraków was informed on one hand by developing frameworks of Polish national memory, and on the other by more general changes in global culture. At an indefinite point in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a profound cultural shift began. The belief in a utopic future, which could be reached through a process of carefully conceived progress and war-as-extension-of-politics, was discarded; as Svetlana Boym puts it, ‘optimistic belief in the future was discarded like an outmoded spaceship sometime in the 1960s.’<sup>72</sup> This crisis of modernity translated directly into history and memory. War began to be presented not just as a means of politics, a tool with which nations could achieve elevation, but also as a source of tragedy, suffering, and genocide.<sup>73</sup> Commenting on this development, Winter refers to ‘a change in discourse rendering war more difficult to justify.’<sup>74</sup> This ‘different kind of war remembrance’ was caused partially by a general change of mood – by the aforementioned discarding of an outmoded spaceship<sup>75</sup> – and partially, as Winter observes, by a parallel process: ‘a change in the practice of history itself. From the 1920s, military history was told from the top-down, and it was only in the 1960s that there occurred a shift first toward a history of societies at war, followed by a cultural history of war.’<sup>76</sup>

Alongside this focus on new topics in historical research came a critique of the old ‘Rankean’ paradigm of history. Peter Burke, commenting on this arrival of what he terms ‘New History,’ juxtaposes the new paradigm with the old, often associated with father of German historiography Leopold Ranke: ‘according to the traditional paradigm, History is objective,’ he notes, adding that it is ‘essentially concerned with politics,’ or more precisely, *national* politics. Moreover, it ‘offers a view from above,’ and ‘should be based on documents.’<sup>77</sup> The new paradigm, on the other hand, is built on a foundation of cultural relativism. It strives toward objectivity, but does not ultimately see it as attainable; it analyses ‘virtually every human activity,’ rather than simple politics; it offers a view from below; and, finally, it expands its list of primary sources, to allow for analysis of new topics.<sup>78</sup> As Ewelina Szpak notes, the shift towards new paradigms in Polish academia took place much later than in the West, only taking hold around the 1990s.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, the

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<sup>72</sup> Boym, p. xiv.

<sup>73</sup> Jay Winter, ‘Human Rights and European Remembrance’, in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 48-49, also Boym, p. xiv.

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem, p. 49

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem, p. 49.

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, pp. 49-50.

<sup>77</sup> Burke, pp. 3-5.

<sup>78</sup> AIPN, ‘Materiały,’ Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 18-41, pp. 3-6.

<sup>79</sup> Ewelina Szpak, ‘Polish Historians on the Road to the History of Mentality’, in *From Mentalities to Anthropological History*, ed. by Barbara Klich-Kluczevska and Dobrochna Kałwa (Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze ‘Historia



cultural changes in the approach to history that preceded and underlay developments in academia began at more or less the same time in Poland as they did in the West, albeit less intensely. The turn toward heritage, analysed in Part One of this thesis, attests to these changes, as, indeed, does the growing interest in the Jewish past. In the form it took in Kraków, interest in Jewish history was far from espousing a 'Rankean' approach. It did not look into politics and it did not focus on the nation-state; nor did it concern itself with the 'view from above.'

Winter's remarks that a 'different kind of war remembrance' is caused by a sea change in the approach to history, a renewed interest in the past, and a general crisis of modernity are confirmed by other researchers.<sup>80</sup> Levy and Sznajder touch upon this change when they elaborate on their notion of common patterning, specifically regarding the reorientation from hero-centric narrative to a victim-centric one and the inclusion of a discourse of human rights in memory work.<sup>81</sup> Writing specifically on Polish War memory, Andrzej Szpociński points towards another aspect of this transition. In his view, the 1980s were witness to a move away from what he terms 'monumental' memory and toward a 'historic' memory. Using these (somewhat misleading) terms, he describes the transition from the focus on the national history of great men, and history from above, to a new interest in local pasts, and stories about families and neighbourhoods.<sup>82</sup> This move toward victim-centric stories and local pasts relates to the developing critique of war referenced by Winter, and to the interest in new topics indicated by Burke, since it was only this focus on new topics and previously marginalised groups that allowed for the full effect of war and its atrocities to be observed. Unsurprisingly, this change never took hold throughout society as a whole. It is my proposal that in Poland, it primarily became popular among proponents of the critical narrative. Supporters of the ethno-nationalist interpretation were, and indeed still are, more susceptible to depicting war as 'galvanising people,' and to 'exposing its positive features.'<sup>83</sup>

As noted above, this cultural change had a direct impact on the institution of the museum. Its public, sensing the crisis of Objective History, demanded the presentation of new topics in new settings. Both popular and scholarly critique had an effect on the rise of

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Iagellonica', 2012), p. 34-35.

<sup>80</sup> Winter, 'Human Rights', p. 49.

<sup>81</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *Memory Unbound*, p 103.

<sup>82</sup> Andrzej Szpociński, 'Formy przeszłości', p. 36, see also Winter, *The Generation*, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Piotr Niwiński, as quoted in <http://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,20385620,odtajnione-recenzje-muzeum-ii-wojny-zgodnie-z-zamowieniem-pis.html?disableRedirects=true>, [accessed 27 July 16].

the new museum and gradual decline of the modern museum.<sup>84</sup> In 1980s Kraków, this transition was partial; curators were willing to discuss local history, but at the same time continued to use the templates characteristic of narratives on great men and national history, which had consequences for the narrative they ultimately espoused. They wanted to show ‘what really happened,’ and to do so it was necessary to present facts, dates, and numbers: and to present facts and numbers, ‘the objective truth about history,’ they had to choose Nazi documents as illustration, since these were the only sources providing that kind of information. As a result, they chose the perspective of those who ‘made history;’ in short, of the perpetrators.<sup>85</sup>

Examining archival scenarios allows for a detailed reconstruction of the 1980 exhibition at the Old Synagogue and the 1983 presentation at the Eagle Pharmacy.<sup>86</sup> The principal of presenting the *political*, the history from above, ruled the composition of both exhibitions. They were divided into clear-cut sections, a layout that followed on from the focus on Nazi documents; only when seen from the point of view of the perpetrators can the Holocaust be said to have evolved neatly from stage to stage. The presentation in the Synagogue began with the exclusion of Jews from society, featuring a decree ordering Jews to wear armbands, alongside one limiting their access to public transport. A section on the Ghetto followed, exhibiting orders to create the ‘enclosed quarter’ and the collection of passes; for some reason, this section also included a set of temporary banknotes used only in the Ghetto in Łódź, a city 300 km north of Kraków. From there, the exhibition followed straight to the section that ostensibly depicted the killings, thereby completely omitting the story of the Płaszów camp.<sup>87</sup>

A similar, though more elaborate, exhibition structure was adopted in the Eagle Pharmacy. The first section, ‘The initial persecutions of the Jews 1939-1941,’ consisted mostly of photograph and copies of decrees.<sup>88</sup> The second, ‘The Ghetto in Krakow 1941-1943,’ exhibited a Torah saved from the Ghetto by Pankiewicz, along with copies of fake identity documents issued to Julian Aleksandrowicz by the Home Army after his successful escape from the quarter. One of the boards narrated the story of the Jewish Fighting Organisation.<sup>89</sup> The third section, ‘Labour and concentration camp in Płaszów 1943-1945,’ featured – along with the photographs discussed above – a map of the camp,

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<sup>84</sup> See *Defining Museum*, p 113.

<sup>85</sup> AMKH, ‘Z Dziejów,’ Sig. 157/3, AIPN, ‘Materiały,’ Sig. Kr 1/249, fols.18 and further.

<sup>86</sup> AMKH, ‘Z Dziejów,’ Sig. 157/3, AIPN, ‘Materiały,’ Sig. Kr 1/249, fosl.1 – 41.

<sup>87</sup> AMKH, ‘Z Dziejów,’ Sig. 157/3.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*, fols 18 and 5-6

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*, fols 18 and 10.

official letters documenting its history and history of its staff, and a list of the Hungarian Jews that had stayed in the camp toward the end of the War.<sup>90</sup> The penultimate part, entitled 'Responsibility for the crimes against the Jews,' consisted of photographs, sometimes from the gallows, and documents from the court trials of Nazi criminals responsible for the Holocaust in Kraków.<sup>91</sup> The final section depicted 'The role of the Eagle Pharmacy and T. Pankiewicz and [...] the Polish help given to the Jews.' It described the wartime role of Pankiewicz, supplemented by information on other instances of Polish help, and – the biggest single addition – by the multitude of letters of gratitude sent to Pankiewicz from all over the world.<sup>92</sup> Though it included personal correspondence, even this last section mostly featured official documents. Pankiewicz's efforts to help the Ghetto inhabitants were illustrated by Nazi permission documents, with the input of the Council to Aid Jews highlighted with their quarterly report.<sup>93</sup> The personal documents of Pankiewicz and his book-testimony were the only artefacts included that diverged from the dominant view of history from above. Similarly, in the Synagogue, two works of art were displayed, but the rest of the exhibits adhered to the dominant mode of presentation.<sup>94</sup> Both exhibitions focused on political history, history from above, because in the eyes of the curators this was the only objective approach to the past.

A further similarity between these early exhibitions was their separation of Poles and Jews. Internal documents from both museums suggest that curators wanted to present Jews as members of the local community.<sup>95</sup> At the same time, however, both presentations clearly demarcated one group from another. The descriptions used at the exhibition in the Pharmacy referred to Poles and Jews as different categories;<sup>96</sup> at the Synagogue, meanwhile, curatorial commentary was reduced to a minimum, meaning that the text at this exhibition came mostly in the form of Nazi-authored primary sources in which Jews were always depicted as a (sub)category with no links to ethnically Polish Krakowians.<sup>97</sup> The references to Jews at both exhibitions come across as clumsy. The curators attempted to depict Jews as Krakowians, but at the same time used categories that, in Polish, were linguistically natural but not neutral, and had the unforeseen consequence of isolating both ethnicities. Moreover, both exhibitions isolated their presentations on the Holocaust from

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<sup>90</sup> Ibidem, fols 18 and 7-9.

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem, fols .18 and 16-17.

<sup>92</sup> Ibidem, fols. 18 and 35.

<sup>93</sup> Ibidem, fols.18-36.

<sup>94</sup> AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3.

<sup>95</sup> AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 18, AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3.

<sup>96</sup> For example AIPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fols 5 and 7.

<sup>97</sup> AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3.

any story of wartime Kraków more generally. The exhibitions contained no references to Kraków and its ethnic Polish community; in fact, there was no 'Polish' Kraków at the exhibitions at all.<sup>98</sup> Neither the sections on Jewish life nor those on the Holocaust showed any examples of the relationship between Poles and Jews, or of Polish reactions to the Genocide. The Eagle Pharmacy introduced the figure of Pankiewicz and mentioned Polish help, but did not depict any other connections between the two groups. It did not explain that, during the early War years, both Poles and Jews suffered: in different ways and to different extents, but in the same city. This separation was an outcome of the Polish tendency to interpret history along ethnic lines, but it also resulted from the curators' insistence on the uniqueness of the Jewish Genocide. If depicted as unique, it could not be compared or connected to any other crimes happening in the same time in the same place: it demanded separate narration.<sup>99</sup>

As this chapter has demonstrated thus far, the narratives produced in the Eagle Pharmacy and Old Synagogue exhibitions shared key features. However, there were also notable, and crucially important, differences between the two. Curators at the Synagogue decided against mentioning Polish help, while the Pharmacy was built around the story of Tadeusz Pankiewicz. The exhibition in the Pharmacy included information on the Płaszów camp and ended with a section on the post-war trials of Nazi criminals; none of these topics were covered in the Synagogue. In addition, the exhibition in the Synagogue was much more open-ended. In fact, it was hard to glean exactly how the story ended, since the curators struggled with talking about the mass killings that characterised the ultimate fate of Kraków's Jews.

The decision to tackle, or to leave out, information regarding Polish help must be understood in connection to the framework of Polish memory, and to the government propaganda of the time. As Renata Kobylarz reminds us, Polish help was a highly politicised topic, used and abused within Communist propaganda.<sup>100</sup> It was also one of very few references to the Holocaust active within Polish memory, since for decades no other topics had been mentioned; in fact, it often overshadowed the Jewish part of the story.<sup>101</sup> It seems that curators from the Synagogue were attempting to disjoint their exhibition from that trend. They wanted to present a narrative differentiated from the propagandistic exploits of the Communist government. They were highly successful in

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<sup>98</sup> AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3, Kraków, IPN, 'Materiały,' Sig. Kr 1/249, fol 18-41.

<sup>99</sup> See Rosenfeld.

<sup>100</sup> Kobylarz, p. 431

<sup>101</sup> Ibidem, p. 431.

erasing any mention of Polish help from their presentation: so successful that one of the first groups of visitors to the exhibition, calling themselves ‘Polish Veterans – Kraków tourist guides,’ launched a protest, requesting the inclusion of information on Polish help in order to counter the actions of ‘Zionist centres which slander our country in the World.’<sup>102</sup> The letter reflects the nature of Polish chauvinism by referencing, for example, Zionism: the Communist shorthand for a range of anti-Semitic stereotypes.<sup>103</sup> It also demonstrates that in 1983 it was difficult to fit the story of the Holocaust into the narrative of Polish history. The authors of the letter were incapable of imagining Poles in any position other than that of helpers. They could neither accept any suggestion of Polish guilt, reflected in their reference to ‘Zionist centres,’ nor agree to be left out of the story. Polish wartime heroism, including heroism toward Jews, was too strongly ingrained in collective memory for the veterans-tourist guides to believe that it could be omitted from any war-related exhibition in Kraków.

The overarching idea for the Pharmacy – to celebrate Tadeusz Pankiewicz’s deeds – led the creators of the exhibition there to take a different approach to the topic of Polish help. Commenting on it was unavoidable, so curators insisted on staying as close to historical record as possible. Their exhibition showed the role Pankiewicz played in the Ghetto, and added information about a few other projects to aid suffering Jews. In so doing, however, it demonstrated how inadequate these attempts to help Jews had actually been.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, the story of the Pharmacy was only one of five sections; thus, the inclusion of a heroic Pole connected the exhibition with the framework of Polish memory without compromising the idea behind the exhibition. The fate of Kraków’s Jews remained the most important part of the narrative.

Another section included only in the Pharmacy exhibition was one entitled ‘Responsibility for the crimes against the Jews,’ which covered the post-war prosecution of Nazi officials responsible for the Holocaust in Kraków.<sup>105</sup> It was added after the intervention of Magdalena Kunicka-Wyrzykowska from the GHBZH,<sup>106</sup> an institution that had been established in 1945 to prosecute war criminals and which by the 1980s fulfilled research and propaganda duties as well. For Kunicka-Wyrzykowska, the decision was

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<sup>102</sup> AMKH, ‘Z Dziejów,’ Sig. 157/3.

<sup>103</sup> Aleksandra Szczepan, ‘Postmemory, Post-Dependence, Post-Trauma: Negotiating Jewish Identity in Post-Communist Poland’, in *Beyond Transition? Memory and Identity Narratives in Eastern and Central Europe* (Lund: Lund University, 2015), p. 62.

<sup>104</sup> AIPN, ‘Materiały,’ Sig. Kr 1/249, fol. 2.

<sup>105</sup> Ibidem, fols. 37-39.

<sup>106</sup> Ibidem, fol. 51.

logical, since it connected to the *raison d'être* of the GHBZH, and for the other memory activists it made sense, too, since it followed a mode of storytelling typical of Polish and European historical representation. It turned the Holocaust into a tale of crime and punishment, and added a positive post-script to the narrative of death and destruction. In effect, it presented a story on an unfamiliar topic in a familiar form, and thus made it easier for the audience to absorb.

The organisers of the Pharmacy exhibition perceived history, any history, in a similar way: it had to develop according to a prescribed rhythm, and go through logical stages.<sup>107</sup> After a crime, there always comes a punishment, which leads to the restoration of order. Otherwise, the history not only does not make sense; it is also unbearable. It opens only into meaningless emptiness: into the realisation, in the case of the Holocaust, that the death of millions was completely senseless. To avoid this eventuality, and following the belief in the sense of History typical of the 'Rankean' approach, the curators decided to end the exhibition with a section that, if not positive exactly, was nonetheless meaningful.<sup>108</sup> Winter observes that fictive kinships have a tendency to talk about 'hope spring[ing] from the tragedy';<sup>109</sup> the curators from the Pharmacy indeed displayed this tendency.

It is also Winter who notes that 'it is unwise to try to encapsulate the Holocaust within any particular system of meaning.'<sup>110</sup> There is a strong tradition of critique of Holocaust representations, partially pertaining to the fact that they add sense and a fixed interpretation to an event that is, in essence, senseless.<sup>111</sup> Anna Ziębińska-Witek, for example, comments on the temptation of some curators to turn the Holocaust into nothing more than a simple pedagogical exercise.<sup>112</sup> This debate on the representation of the Holocaust poses a series of problems. On one hand, as John Arnold affirms, 'the past [...] in its entirety, it is as chaotic, uncoordinated, and complex as life.'<sup>113</sup> It is, then, the task of history to 'mak[e] sense of that mess.'<sup>114</sup> Without attempts to 'encapsulate the Holocaust within any particular system of meaning,' historians would be unable to research, represent,

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<sup>107</sup> Arnold, p. 13.

<sup>108</sup> Burke, p. 3-4

<sup>109</sup> Winter, *The Generation*, p. 3.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> For an overview of the debate see Ana Carden-Coyne, 'The Ethics of Representation in Holocaust Museums', in *Writing Holocaust*, ed. by Jean-Marc Dreyfus and Daniel Langton (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011)

<sup>112</sup> Anna Ziębińska-Witek, 'Kicz i Holocaust, czyli pedagogiczny wymiar ekspozycji muzealnych', *Zagłada Żydów. Pismo Centrum Badań Nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PANa*, 2010, p. 86.

<sup>113</sup> Arnold, p. 13.

<sup>114</sup> Arnold, p. 13.

and teach it at all.<sup>115</sup> There are, however, two problems with attempting to make sense of Holocaust history. For some, historicisation risks ‘diminish[ing] the event,’<sup>116</sup> a fear predicated entirely on the dogmatic belief in the uniqueness of the Holocaust, and a concern, for that reason, that this thesis dismisses: the Holocaust, however tragic and particular, is unfortunately only one of many other genocides.<sup>117</sup> A further problem with ‘making sense’ of the Jewish Genocide lies in the potential for it to turn this complex and multifaceted event into a simple lesson, presenting it in Manichean terms, and ridding it of historical nuance.<sup>118</sup> On this matter, Catherine Chatterley cites editions of ‘primary Holocaust texts used to teach the subject [that] both universalize and Christianize the experience of Jewish suffering in an attempt to make the subject matter accessible and meaningful to non-Jews.’<sup>119</sup> In a bid to make representations of the Holocaust more palpable and accessible, some memory activists rid those representations of nuance, context, and historical accuracy, which risks the distortion of events, and allows for the Genocide’s inclusion in political battles. Depicting the Holocaust according to a popular European template might, in short, risk turning it into an oversimplified lesson about good and evil.

However, none of these problems were obvious for actors in the early 1980s; the debate on representation of the Holocaust gained momentum only in the early 1990s,<sup>120</sup> and in fact the commemorations developed in Communist Poland were one of the factors that contributed to the beginning of the debate in Western academia. Sławomir Kaprański, commenting on the conflict arising from the Carmelite Convent’s move to the Auschwitz site, points out that this controversy can be seen as one of the very first clashes between two approaches to War representation. For Poles, a redemptive Christian narrative fitted Auschwitz perfectly; for Jews, meanwhile, such an understanding was unacceptable, since they saw Auschwitz as a space from which God was absent – and which, more importantly, was ultimately unrepresentable.<sup>121</sup> While it was the 1990s that brought with them full elaboration of the politics of Holocaust representation, then, the early 1980s can be seen as contributing to their initial formulation. By recasting the Holocaust as a meaningful tale of

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<sup>115</sup> Winter, *The Generation*, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> Rosenfeld, p. 30.

<sup>117</sup> On the problems with ‘dogmatic’ belief in Holocaust uniqueness see Moses and Levine, on examples of other genocides that took place in Eastern Europe see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Vintage Books, 2010).

<sup>118</sup> See Ziębińska-Witek, *Kicz*, p. 86, and Catherine Chatterley, ‘Western Culture, The Holocaust, and The Persistence of Antisemitism’, in *YIISA Seminar, Yale University, 5 March 2009*.

<sup>119</sup> Chatterley, p. 30.

<sup>120</sup> Carden-Coyne, p. 168.

<sup>121</sup> Kaprański, ‘Od milczenia’, p. 536.

crime and punishment, the curators from the Pharmacy strengthened the representative paradigm of the Genocide as an interpretable event with a redemptive ending.

If the exhibition from the Pharmacy added a meaningfulness to the Holocaust that it did not have, the one in the Synagogue struggled with the opposite problem: it did not say enough. The presentation consisted of clearly demarcated sections: first, it depicted exclusion from society, then it moved on to ghettoisation; logically speaking, the next section should detail the liquidation of the Ghetto, mass killings, and the transports to Belżec death camp. However, this information was never openly spelled out. Instead, the curators changed the mode of the exhibition, presenting more photographs and fewer textual sources. One of the only documents came in the form of a poster providing a list of people killed in Kraków in January 1944. Also featured was the text of one of the Jewish Fighting Organisation's oaths, and information about an anniversary celebration of the creation of the General Government. Additional commentary came only in the form of a length of barbed wire from Auschwitz.<sup>122</sup> None of these exhibits were comprehensible to the average viewer, since in the 1980s frameworks of Polish War memory did not encompass any meaningful information about the Jewish Genocide; there was thus no available key with which to interpret the photographs, documents, or barbed wire.

In addition, the poster listing executions and the barbed wire were misleading: posters of this type were a common sight in wartime Kraków, since they served the purpose of informing the public of people executed for 'crimes against German effort of rebuilding of General Government,' However, they had been printed starting from late 1943 and throughout 1944 with the intention of terrorising the ethnic Polish population, since at that stage Jews had been fully isolated or exterminated.<sup>123</sup> The length of barbed wire from Auschwitz added to the confusion. In 1980, Auschwitz was a shrine of Polish martyrdom, with no reference to the Holocaust whatsoever;<sup>124</sup> furthermore, the majority of Kraków's Jews were sent to Belżec camp and not to Auschwitz. An average visitor would have been extremely unlikely to pick up on this geographical mistake, but would nonetheless have been left puzzled by the presence of what was, for them, a symbol of Polish martyrdom in the middle of an exhibition on Jewish War history. The only part of the exhibition that openly attested to the killings were the photographs. However, much as with the barbed wire, the frameworks of Polish memory did not provide any interpretative

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<sup>122</sup> AMKH, 'Z Dziejów,' Sig. 157/3.

<sup>123</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek, p. 21.

<sup>124</sup> Zubrzycki, '„Oświęcim”/”Auschwitz”', pp. 20-21.



key for these. If it was easy enough to understand that Jews were killed on the streets of Kraków, it was much harder to grasp that they were destined for total annihilation on a 'racial' basis, and that their fate was different to that of non-Jews in the city. Initially, the exhibition failed to clearly communicate this most salient aspect. The killings were suggested, but never fully explained. It seems that the problem here, however, lay more in the design of the exhibition than in any intentional obfuscation of the narrative. For an individual with a strong knowledge of the Jewish past, all most of the artefacts – the barbed wire, the photographs – made perfect sense. After all, they made perfect sense to the curators – and, once Polish memory evolved to include some representations of the Holocaust over the late 1990s and early 2000s, they became more and more comprehensible for visitors, too.

## Conclusion

This thesis argues that memory work about the Holocaust in Kraków did not follow the rhythm of political changes, and that the 1989 threshold was thus of limited importance for local commemoration. Rather, local activists had already begun to translate the ideas developed by oppositional national elites into a language accessible to a mass audience by the early 1980s. In so doing, they strengthened the critical interpretation of the past in the city, which, in the long run, helped to strengthen that interpretation nationwide. As this chapter has argued, in Kraków, contrary to what Michael Meng affirms in relation to Warsaw and Wrocław, local activists responsible for the creation of these urban narratives felt a strong moral obligation to commemorate the Holocaust.<sup>125</sup> For some, their war experiences, partially shared with friends, were what guided them, and they formed a fictive kinship: a group that reminisced together, and together formed a public commemoration that reflected their war stories. For the other activists, governmental attempts to misrepresent War history were precisely what motivated them to work. Both groups, but particularly the members of the Circle responsible for the creation of the Eagle Pharmacy Museum, skilfully manoeuvred around the state institutions charged with official memory work. They lobbied individuals, won the support of key officials, and aligned themselves with recognised and well-established organisations. The members of

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<sup>125</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 250.

the Circle went as far as to obscure any reference to the Jewish past from the name of their museum, so as not to attract unwanted attention.

Moreover, as this chapter affirms, this morally guided approach not only gave local activists motivation to work in the adverse conditions of Communist Poland, but also had an impact on the narrative they created. In the exhibitions they developed in Kraków, the Holocaust was recast as a unique but universally important crime. Partially grounded in history, the claim to uniqueness nonetheless created problems that the curators were not equipped to solve. It elevated the Holocaust from the rest of history, and consequently isolated it from the story of the fate of ethnic Poles. The Holocaust thus remained not yet part of *Polish* history.

This presentation of the Jewish Genocide was partially an outcome of conscious decisions taken by the curators, and partially a consequence of the means of presentation available. In the early 1980s, museums both in Poland and on the Western side of the Iron Curtain were almost exclusively based on the paradigm of the modern museum. Such museums primarily utilised indexical authenticity, and insisted on presenting a top-down Objective History constructed along ethnic lines. Kraków's local curators had no means with which to overcome those limitations. In the Eagle Pharmacy, in an attempt to make an unknown history accessible to a local audience, they recast the Holocaust as a story of crime, after which comes punishment, which restores order. As a result, the Genocide was presented in terms that gave it a meaningfulness it did not have, and divested it of some of its historical nuance. In the Old Synagogue, meanwhile, the curators failed to openly communicate the essential basis of the Genocide: that Jews were sentenced to death as a 'race,' based on the arbitrary distinctions of the Nazis. The curators made references in their exhibition that required knowledge that the majority of visitors simply did not have, and used symbols and exhibits that would have been inaccessible to most members of the audience in the 1980s.

In this chapter, then, I have demonstrated that far more important than political changes for memory work in Kraków were broad, sometimes global cultural changes, and developments in historical knowledge on the part of both the nation and local elites. The 1980s exhibitions used as case studies were products of frameworks of Polish collective memory, the efforts of local activists, and trends in European culture. Party politics were but one of many factors that had an impact on local memory work.

## Chapter Four: Feeling (for) Kraków's Traumatic Past

The history of memory work in and around the MHK after the fall of Communism is the history of a shift in paradigms. On one hand, during the 1990s and 2000s, the MHK continued to develop the ideas formulated before 1989. It offered a local reading of the Polish-Jewish past, and strengthened the critical approach to Polish history. On the other hand, however, after 2010 the MHK's curators moved from the paradigm of the modern museum to that of the new museum, concepts explained in the Defining the Museum section of Part Two of the present study. They introduced 'complementary authenticities' to their practice: a matrix of indexical and experiential authenticities with the potential to evoke a lasting emotional response in the form of an authenticity of affect. The curators used this new mode of authentication to build exhibitions that espoused cosmopolitan values to a degree that had never before been seen in Kraków. These new narratives did find themselves caught between 'de-nationalization and re-nationalization, de-ethnicization and re-ethnicization, de-localization and re-localization' to use Ulrich Beck's understanding of cosmopolitanisation.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, however, they redefined Jews as Poles; in so doing, they recast Germans as a one-dimensional Threatening Other.

The memory work carried out in the early 2000s followed what Levy and Sznajder term 'common patterning':<sup>2</sup> it introduced the perspective of the victims, it pluralised the image of the past with testimonies, and it used universal, often Americanised clichés and images. Moreover, local activists recognised the Holocaust as an important part of Polish history, and thus merged it with narratives of the historical experience of ethnic Poles. They did not use it as a generic lesson about good and evil, but rather tried to tie it to the real, contemporary problems of xenophobia and intolerance prevalent in Polish society. Their efforts were constrained, however, by pressures coming from two directions. First, the ethno-nationalist vision of the Polish past, still a popular strand of Polish memory, limited their actions; second, the supranational activists<sup>3</sup> insisted on maintaining the position of Germans as the Threatening Other, even in otherwise inclusive exhibitions. The actions of supranational activists in Kraków shed new light on the process of glocalisation of memory, that is, on a process by which local needs were addressed in accordance with

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<sup>1</sup> Beck, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, pp. 23-26.

<sup>3</sup> In this study I use the term 'supranational activists' to refer to activists working across the borders of two or more nations.

global standards. In Kraków global pressure contributed to the cosmopolitanisation of memory, but it also, on occasion, supported the creation of narratives of exclusion.

This chapter begins with an investigation of the hiatus in memory work that took hold in Kraków for most of the 1990s, thus strengthening this study's argument on the lack of cohesion between the 1989 threshold and the developmental rhythm of memory work. It demonstrates that in the 1990s, local activists had limited possibilities for intervention into collective memory. When they were able to intervene, they focused on topics recognised as more pressing for Polish identity: the relationship with the Communist past, and the memory of Soviet crimes during WWII, for example. It was only after these 'more pressing' points of analysis had been resolved, after the Polish economy had improved, and after Jan Tomasz Gross had reminded Poles about their own implication in the killings of Jews, that Krakowians began to confront the Holocaust once again. Significantly, this renewed focus also took place after the creation of Jewish Spaces in Kazimierz had fully begun: 'things Jewish' were once again present in Kraków, steps had been taken to dismantle the Otherness of the Jews, and the city was gaining gradual recognition on the memorial map of Europe.

This chapter is based principally on analysis of primary sources produced by the MHK. Scrutinising the changes implemented between early versions of the drafts of these documents enabled me not only to trace the emergence of their ideas, but also to identify various pressures placed on the curators. Similarly, the correspondence stored in the MHK archive sheds light on the internal workings of the museum and its relationship with other activists. The guides and publications that accompanied the exhibitions proved to be important sources too, providing the official interpretations of the exhibitions, which in turn complements the chapter's analysis of the curators' intentions.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first focuses on analysing the reasons for the lack of meaningful developments in memory work in 1990s Kraków. The second dissects the 'Restoring Memory' campaign. This campaign, initiated by a local politician in the aftermath of the publication of Gross's controversial *Neighbors*, culminated in the creation of a provocative counter-monument on one of the city's plazas and the refurbishment of the Eagle Pharmacy exhibition. The third section analyses the post-2010 exhibition produced by the MHK, which opened a new branch in the Oskar Schindler Factory and connected it with the Eagle Pharmacy, refurbished for the second time in the space of ten years. Both branches narrated the War-time history of Krakowians, and incorporated ample information on the local Jewish population.

## The 1990s: Freezing of the Memory Work

The year 1989 and the collapse of Communism are often associated with substantial changes in the field of memory, with scholars such as Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, Bartosz Korzeniewski, and Andrzej Szpociński highlighting the importance of the fall of the Iron Curtain for the recovery of suppressed memories.<sup>4</sup> Szpociński, in his complicated, multi-tiered classification of the relative importance of changes in memory, assigns the highest rank to the 1989 breakthrough.<sup>5</sup> All three scholars are, in a way, correct in their assertions, insofar as they comment on a very general picture, or on changes at the level of governmental propaganda and policies. It is true, for example, that the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum gradually started to revise its exhibitions and that school curricula began – albeit very slowly – to feature the Holocaust.<sup>6</sup> However, seen from a bottom-up perspective, this picture is far more complicated, and 1989 loses its importance and some of its explanatory power. In Kraków, the 1990s saw a relatively straightforward continuation of trends initiated in the 1980s.

The only space that underwent any significant developments directly after 1989 was Kazimierz. As noted in Chapter Two, the introduction of the free market economy did, in fact, break new ground for local activists and entrepreneurs, and a plethora of Jewish-themed coffee shops, restaurants, and galleries opened on Szeroka Street and in its immediate vicinity. However, all of these projects stemmed from the redefinition of Kazimierz along the lines of the ‘shtetl-romance’ and its inclusion in Polish heritage, rather than resulting from any new ideas developed after 1989. Local entrepreneurs followed heritage preservationists and the MHK curators in their work. It was only toward the end of the 1990s, and particularly in the 2000s, with the creation of ‘Jewish-Jewish’ and ‘Jewish-Polish’ Spaces around the Synagogues and in Nowy Square, that Kazimierz began to engender new narratives – which, nevertheless, were still connected back to ideas from the 1980s.

While Jewish themes were becoming more and more visible in Kazimierz, other *lieux de mémoire* were falling into oblivion. In the early 1990s, the site of the former Plaszow camp underwent changes that altered it permanently, when part of the site was taken over by a housing estate that nullified its potential for memory. As early as the mid-1980s, the Department of Planning, Architecture and Constructions Supervision of Kraków

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<sup>4</sup> Orla-Bukowska, ‘New Threads’, p. 195, Korzeniewski, p. 8-10.

<sup>5</sup> Andrzej Szpociński, ‘Formy przeszłości’, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> See Introduction, p. 36.

City Authority had developed plans for the former camp and adjacent areas. In their vision, the western part of the camp was to be merged with the nearby nature sanctuary, and redeveloped into a 'Contemplation Park.' The eastern strip of the camp, which had previously contained warehouses and the staff barracks, was to be redeveloped into a housing estate.<sup>7</sup> After it was populated in the early 1990s, the estate permanently altered the Plaszow site, and a substantial part of the land was excluded from the *lieu de mémoire* for good. None of the subsequent commemoration projects considered including the estate,<sup>8</sup> and the history of this part of the site was soon forgotten. According to materials found in the WUOZ archives, only one planner complained – as early as 1995 – about the loss of the important section of the former camp;<sup>9</sup> all the other authors tacitly accepted the change.<sup>10</sup> Just like in Kazimierz, in Plaszow substantial changes that did take place in the early 1990s were the direct continuation of processes initiated in the 1980s.

Similarly, barely any changes took place at either of the Holocaust exhibitions discussed in Chapter Three. The Eagle Pharmacy in Podgórze continued to grow in popularity, especially among Israeli visitors; in fact, it was included in the Israeli Ministry of Education Holocaust education syllabus.<sup>11</sup> However, the only changes to the exhibition came in the form of the addition of one small room, the former Materials Room, which was used for temporary exhibitions and as an office. Changes to the Old Synagogue exhibition in Kazimierz were not much more extensive. In 1997-1999 the museum underwent some necessary renovations, and at the same time some alterations were made to the exhibition.<sup>12</sup> Much like the 1980 version, the 1999 exhibition depicted the 'subsequent stages of the policy of the «final solution to the Jewish question»,’ to quote the exhibition scenario.<sup>13</sup> This time, however, the section on the mass killings and deportations to the death camps was fleshed out in full, and some information on the post-War trial of Amon Goeth was added.<sup>14</sup> Additional changes came in the form of new objects. The 1980 version, as described in Chapter Three, exhibited a length of barbed wire from Auschwitz, a caged Star of David and Jonasz Sten's collage. The scenario of the 1998 version lists, in addition,

<sup>7</sup> APK, 'UMK Wydział,' Sig. 29/1431/410, fols 225 and. 265-271.

<sup>8</sup> AWUOZ, 'Studium konserwatorskie dla Plaszowa', Sig. 41.373/06 and AWUOZ, 'Zagospodarowanie terenu byłego obozu Plaszów w Krakowie – Pomnik Męczeństwa. Projekt Budowlany. 2008', Sig. 46.180/09.

<sup>9</sup> AWUOZ, 'Studium konserwatorskie dla Plaszowa', Sig. 41.373/06.

<sup>10</sup> AWUOZ, 'Zagospodarowanie terenu byłego obozu Plaszów', Sig. 46.180/09, AWUOZ, 'Plaszów. Obóz. Do 2008', Sig. 761A, AWUOZ, 'Plaszów. Obóz. Od 2009', Sig. 761B.

<sup>11</sup> Pióro, *The Eagle*, p. 220.

<sup>12</sup> AMHK, Wystawa stała „Z dziejów i kultury Żydów”, 1998-99, Sig. 287/2

<sup>13</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa stała 1998-99', Sig. 287/2.

<sup>14</sup> AMHK, 'Z dziejów i kultury Żydów. Przewodnik,' Sig. II.28726.

shards of tombstones, a Righteous Among the Nations medal, and a new sculpture, 'Pamięci Żydów Polskich' ('To the Memory of Polish Jews') by Danuta Łaskwaska.<sup>15</sup>

These minor alterations did not change the overall narrative of the Old Synagogue exhibition in any meaningful way. The story unfolded in clear-cut stages, displayed mostly the Nazi perspective, and consisted primarily of photographs and copies of official documents. Following the idea first developed in the Pharmacy Museum in 1983, it included a section on post-War retribution, thereby fully subscribing to the 'crime and punishment' narrative. It also incorporated some information on Polish help, which allowed it to present a much fuller picture than that displayed at the original 1980 exhibition. What did change to a far greater extent, however, was the ability of members of the public to read and comprehend the exhibition. Some of the information was spelled out more openly than before, but, in addition, the 1990s had seen changes to the frameworks of Polish collective memory; by 1997, there was more public awareness of the Holocaust. The effect of this change in Polish memory was twofold: the exhibition was easier to comprehend, but it also lost much of the novelty and importance it had held in the 1980s. Under Communism, it had been one of very few exhibitions on the Jewish Genocide, and had provided information that was almost inaccessible by other means to the majority of the general public. By 1997, however, it was but one of many museums commemorating the Holocaust, and, for that matter, one that offered a particularly short presentation.

The lack of new developments in memory work in Kraków during the 1990s can be attributed in part to economic downturn, local political issues, and institutional stagnation, but it ultimately comes down to the importance of the Holocaust and the Jewish past to the local community. One of the main aims of the present research is to demonstrate that the creation by Kraków's activists of an urban narrative along the lines of the critical approach to Poland's history contributed to the development of this approach nationwide. These activists helped to foreground the Holocaust as important element of Poland's national past. It is not, however, my claim that the local actors' proposals were accommodated swiftly or fully; on the contrary, the Jewish Genocide did gradually emerge as one of the more important parts of the narrative on the Polish past, but was never at any point seen as the most important one, and in fact, as this section demonstrates, it was often relegated to the background. In the early 1990s, as Ewa Ochman demonstrates, the main memory-related issue in Kraków was the dispute over the Red Army Memorial, still at that point located in

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<sup>15</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa stała 1998-99', Sig. 287/2.

the city centre. The municipality entered into a prolonged battle with the regional authorities over the relocation of the monument – and the Red Army soldiers’ remnants that went with it – from the central, and symbolically important, area of Barbican to the military cemetery, outside of the historic centre. Creating a ‘zone free of Soviet traces’ was, then, more important than initiating a new project relating to the Jewish past.<sup>16</sup>

## Early 2000s: The ‘Restoring Memory’ Campaign

### Acceleration of Memory Work

The change in priorities that led to the renewed focus on the Jewish past among Kraków’s activists was gradual, and was primarily the outcome of a series of new controversies that shook Polish collective memory. Among the most important conflicts that prompted Kraków’s activists to work were the War of the Crosses, which played out throughout the 1990s on the nearby site of the former Auschwitz camp, and the debates arising from the publication of Jan Tomasz Gross’s book *Neighbors*. As mentioned in the Introduction to this study, the War of the Crosses, a dispute between various Polish and American-Jewish groups, focused on the symbolic ownership of the Museum. Often seen as another incarnation of the competition in victimhood between Poles and Jews, and a manifestation of Polish anti-Semitism, it can be also seen as an internal affair between Poles. Geneviève Zubrzycki argues that ‘key axes of the conflict were actually *intrareligious* and *intranational*,’ highlighting that the locus of the debate pertained to the definition of the Polish nation, and its relationship to ethnic and religious minorities.<sup>17</sup> The ‘War’ came to a (forced) resolution only in 1999, when, having passed new legislation that allow them to do so, the Polish government could remove the Polish protestors and their crosses from the close vicinity of the Museum.<sup>18</sup> Zubrzycki notes that despite the only limited support among the general public for both the actions of the government and the gradual ‘Judaization’ of Auschwitz, collective awareness of the Jewish Genocide grew exponentially in the late 1990s.<sup>19</sup>

Only a few months after the War of the Crosses had ended, the debate about Jan Tomasz Gross’s *Neighbors* erupted in its place. The controversy around the book’s

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<sup>16</sup> Ochman, *Soviet War Memorials*, p. 516.

<sup>17</sup> Zubrzycki, *The Crosses*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Zubrzycki, *Religion*, pp. 34-35.



publication brought to public attention the Polish implication in the Holocaust: Gross was the first author to succeed in communicating to a mass audience that Poles did indeed kill Jews in acts of mass murder. The lasting effect of the debate was such that Joanna Michlic calls it the ‘Gross phenomenon.’<sup>20</sup> Like Zubrzycki, Michlic also focuses on the importance of the controversy for Polish national self-identification, affirming that the debates brought to the fore ‘questions both about the dark past and about what kind of national community Poland wants to be at present and in the future.’<sup>21</sup>

On one level, both controversies introduced new content into Polish collective memory; respectively, they recentred the Jewish Genocide, and established the new idiom of Poles-perpetrators. As a result, the critical interpretation gained popular recognition, and the conflict between the proponents of the critical and ethno-nationalist interpretations expanded in scope, turning from an elite debate to one that dominated Polish society as a whole. Some commentators, and vast swathes of the general public, chose to cling to the glorious, untarnished vision of Polish history that had prevailed before, in which there was no place for Jews, or for Polish guilt; others revaluated their understanding of the past to include information about Jewish history and about Polish sins.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, on another level, during both controversies Poles asked questions about what kind of nation they embodied: did they need the Jew to stand as a Threatening Other in order to validate themselves? Or were they an open and inclusive group, fully prepared to accept among themselves the presence of Poles of Jewish ethnicity?

Both debates demonstrated the importance of the Jewish past for Polish memory and for Polish identity. Their intensity prompted local memory activists to act – and act they could, since the *Neighbors* debate coincided with the recovery of the Polish economy. Ryszard Rapacki notes that after the disastrous decade of the 1980s, the 1990s were a time of ‘rapid catching-up’ to the West. By the early 2000s, this process was far from over, but the state of the economy was much improved, with Poland left closer in economic terms to the core countries of the European Union than most other post-Communist states.<sup>23</sup> The country’s accession to the EU gave a further boost to the economy. In Kraków, this economic uptick allowed the municipality to commit to projects related to culture and memory on a level that had never before been possible. As late as 2001, the Mayor had

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<sup>20</sup> Michlic, ‘The Dark Past’, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 252-3, Michlic, ‘The Dark Past’, p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> Ryszard Rapacki, ‘Poland’s Economic Development Level in Comparative Perspective, 1950-2005’, in *Reinventing Poland. Economic and Political Transformation and Evolving National Identity*, ed. by Martin Myant and Terry Cox (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 20.

complained in the press that the revitalisation of the Ghetto Heroes Square was impossible, due to lack of funds.<sup>24</sup> In 2003, the Square was renovated, and by 2005 the municipality could afford to buy the buildings that had once been home to Oskar Schindler's factory, in order to organise a museum there.<sup>25</sup>

Economic recovery, however, accounts only partially for the rapid change in memory work that took place in the early twenty-first century. The other major factor came in the form of changes within key municipal institutions, and the arrival on the scene of several new memory activists. One of these figures, really more a patron than an activist himself, was Mayor Jacek Majchrowski. First elected in 2002, he governed the city continuously for four terms, coming to office after the first direct mayoral elections that formed part of the aftermath of the second stage of decentralisation reforms, initiated in 1999. According to new laws, locally elected mayors managed cities far more independently than ever before, and were encouraged to initiate local policies.<sup>26</sup> This gave Majchrowski an incentive to more actively participate in memory work. Even prior to becoming Mayor, Majchrowski had demonstrated an interest in memory: while serving as Małopolska Voivod (Governor of the Kraków region), he had enabled the relocation of the Soviet soldiers' remains from the Barbican in the city centre to the military cemetery, helping to resolve the long-lived memorial crisis referenced above.<sup>27</sup>

Majchrowski was also a member of the post-Communist, left-wing Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, SLD). By early 2000, there was not much left of the 'Communist' element of his party, but there was still a huge level of animosity between it and one of the up-and-coming forces of the right, the Law and Order Party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS). In the years to come Majchrowski would compete on many levels with Lech Kaczyński, key PiS politician and Mayor of Warsaw, with memory work emerging as one of the most important. One of Kaczyński's most successful projects was the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, and the opening in 2005 of the Warsaw Rising Museum (MPW), which fully espoused the ethno-nationalist narrative.<sup>28</sup> For Majchrowski, the success of the MPW was an additional factor that spurred him on to realise his own programme of memory work.

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<sup>24</sup> Magdalena Kursa, 'Zróbmy to Razem,' *Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków* 29 June 2001, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Anthony Levitas, 'Local Government Reform as State Building: What the Polish Case Says About "Decentralization"', *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 2015, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Ochman, *Soviet War Memorials*, p. 516.

<sup>28</sup> Bogumił, p. 150.

Amongst the memory activists tasked with enacting Majchrowski's general vision was Michał Niezabitowski, who in 2004 replaced the late Andrzej Szczygieł as the head of the MHK, and proved to be a largely independent activist, with his own agenda. In his 'Strategy' for the Museum, he wrote about the need to 'catch up,' and to make the museum 'more attractive' to the public.<sup>29</sup> In practical terms, this meant that a number of branches were refurbished and that the museum curators were encouraged to work according to the paradigm of the new museum. In addition, Niezabitowski was keen to cooperate with the municipality in opening new branches of the MHK.

Another activist who contributed not only to the urbanisation, but also to the cosmopolitanisation of memory work was Bogusław Sonik. Sonik started his public career as a journalist and member of the anti-Communist opposition in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1983 he was forced to emigrate, and for the next thirteen years he lived in Paris, where he collaborated with various Western media outlets (e.g. Radio Free Europe), and worked to promote Polish culture. In the mid-1990s he was invited back to Kraków to serve as head of Kraków 2000, a special municipality entity that was first a temporary programme, and then a permanent institution, tasked with the organisation of cultural events and festivals and their international promotion.<sup>30</sup> Riding the wave of success of Kraków 2000, he initiated the 'Restoring Memory' campaign.<sup>31</sup> Supported by Majchrowski after his 2002 electoral success, the campaign involved the reorganisation of the MHK at the same time that Niezabitowski was preparing to assume its leadership.

'Restoring Memory,' as Sonik envisaged it, aimed to reintroduce the history of the Jewish Genocide into the Kraków cityscape on a scale that had never before been seen. As part of the campaign, a fragment of Podgórze district that had constituted the eastern fringe of the Ghetto during the War was turned into a memorial. Consisting of a counter-monument, a museum, and a set of tablets, it told a local story: a story of the citizens of Kraków. In 2010, the complex was extended even further when the Schindler's Factory Museum was opened nearby. While the original plan did not involve the Factory, Sonik's idea was still ambitious, calling too for the development a set of publications and newly designed educational resources. He outlined his plans in an article in the most influential local daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, explaining his motivations in the same text.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> 'Strategia Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa Na Lata 2006 – 2014' (Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2006, pp. 45 and 50.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.boguslawsonik.pl/o-mnie/o-mnie/zyciorys> [accessed 14 May 16].

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.boguslawsonik.pl/o-mnie/o-mnie/osiagniecia> [accessed 14 May 16].

<sup>32</sup> Bogusław Sonik, 'Pomyślmy o placu,' *Gazeta Wyborcza* Kraków, 28 June 2001, p. 7.

Analysing similar actions by local politicians from Warsaw, Wrocław, Berlin, Potsdam, and Essen, Michael Meng criticises these figures for espousing what he terms ‘redemptive cosmopolitanism.’ He comments on the superficiality of their revitalisation projects, affirming that ‘this cosmopolitan performance manages the anxiety of the Holocaust through remembrance and symbolic gestures of tolerance: celebrating the Jewish past smoothes over discomforting, anxious histories.’<sup>33</sup> In his reading, these projects reflect no sincere commitment to facing the past, or to challenging contemporary problems of intolerance or racial hatred. Applying Meng’s framework to Sonik’s actions is tempting, and also to some extent justifiable. Both Sonik, and Majchrowski who supported the campaign, were ambitious politicians with their own agendas; furthermore, they initiated ‘Restoring Memory’ in the run-up to Poland’s accession to the EU. Maria Mälksoo and Marek Kucia show how the EU pressured the elites of the ‘New Europe’ to include standardised representations of the Holocaust in local commemorations and school curricula.<sup>34</sup> Sonik, head of the office responsible for international promotion of Kraków, must have been keenly aware of this kind of pressure. In addition, he launched his campaign at the height of the *Neighbors* controversy. A year after Gross had demonstrated the level of Polish implication in the Genocide, Sonik was proposing a commemoration of Jewish suffering and Polish help. This can indeed be seen as an attempt to ‘manag[e] the anxiety of the Holocaust,’ and as a political gesture toward Western politicians.<sup>35</sup>

However, my claim is that Sonik’s actions were, in fact, sincere to a great extent, and that in contrast to the projects cited by Meng, they succeeded in helping Krakowians to work through their contentious past and to face their contemporary problems. From his early student days, Sonik had been involved with Beczka, a progressive Catholic university chaplaincy, with ZNAK (the magazine of the liberal, Catholic intelligentsia), and with Radio Free Europe.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, in the 1980s he was working at ZNAK at the time that the journal published its famous double issue on Judaism and Jews in Poland, and thus became one of the first publications to openly call for a discussion on Polish-Jewish relations.<sup>37</sup> He had also lived as an émigré in France.<sup>38</sup> This background conditioned him to openly question Poland’s difficult past, and to attempt to face questions of historical guilt and responsibility. His own words, inasmuch as we can rely on them, further demonstrate that

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<sup>33</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 252.

<sup>34</sup> Mälksoo, p. 85, Kucia, pp. 107 and further.

<sup>35</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 252.

<sup>36</sup> More on *Znak*, p. 78.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.boguslawsonik.pl/o-mnie/o-mnie> [accessed 14 May 16], on ZNAK double issue see: Steinlauf, p. 104.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.boguslawsonik.pl/o-mnie/o-mnie> [accessed 14 May 16].

he was motivated by a genuine commitment to the re-thinking of Polish-Jewish relations; in the article outlining 'Restoring Memory,' he explains the inspiration for the campaign:

A few months ago, on a Sunday afternoon in the market by the Market Hall, I accidentally found Tadeusz Pankiewicz's book 'Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy' (a first edition from 1947). I spent the whole night reading it. [...] It is time to restore the memory of this place [the Ghetto – JG].<sup>39</sup>

Pankiewicz's memoirs were shocking, but even more shocking for Sonik was the realisation that despite the lasting presence of bullet-holes on the walls around the Ghetto Heroes Square, reminders of the German *Aktionen*, none of the people working in nearby restaurants were aware of the site's tragic history. He commented that the 'Kraków Ghetto does not exist in our consciousness, in the consciousness of Krakowians. Almost everyone we ask will point to Kazimierz, and any taxi driver will drop us on Szeroka Street.'<sup>40</sup> Krakowians had forgotten that the Holocaust happened 'next to us,' and this was why Sonik wanted to act.<sup>41</sup> Taken in isolation, it is of course possible to read the article as a form of self-promotion, or as an exercise in redemptive cosmopolitanism at a time of increased public sensitivity due to the concurrent *Neighbors* controversy. That said, Sonik's background, and the positive effects of his actions, prove his genuine interest in working through Poland's problematic past, and in infusing memory with cosmopolitan values. Within this context, the 'Restoring Memory' campaign simply cannot be seen as merely another exercise in redemptive cosmopolitanism, another attempt to 'manag[e] the anxiety of the Holocaust.'<sup>42</sup>

A major obstacle to Sonik's successful implementation of his plans lay in the costliness of his ideas. His plan to refurbish the Square and the Eagle Pharmacy, to prepare a set of publications, and to commission newly designed educational materials for local schools was both ambitious and expensive, and required external funding and support, especially as the Mayor of the time, Majchrowski's predecessor, had no interest in investing the municipality's funds in memory work.<sup>43</sup> Instead, in early 2002, Sonik persuaded filmmaker Roman Polański, a survivor of the Kraków Ghetto, to donate to the project the substantial sum of 100,000 zlotys, originally given to Polański as an award for

<sup>39</sup> Bogusław Sonik, 'Pomyślmy o placu,' *Gazeta Wyborcza Kraków*, 28 June 2001, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 252.

<sup>43</sup> Magdalena Kursa, 'Zróbmy to Razem,' *Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków* 29 June 2001, p. 9.

his most recent film, *The Pianist*, itself on the subject of the Holocaust.<sup>44</sup> Following Polański's advice, Sonik contacted Steven Spielberg, and obtained another \$40,000 from his Righteous Persons Foundation.<sup>45</sup> Both donations were granted to enable specific projects, which forced the municipality to act quickly. Majchrowski, who in the meantime had become the Mayor, green-lit the project. In the second half of 2003 a competition was organised to decide on a plan for the renovation of the Ghetto Heroes Square; a project was chosen, and the winning design was implemented.

### **The Counter-monument on the Ghetto Heroes Square**

The majority of the designs submitted for the competition reflected simplistic, pedagogically didactic ideas. As revealed by a search in the archives of the Society of Polish Architects (Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich, SARP), the organisation responsible for running the competition, one team suggested rebuilding the entire Square on an angle and topping the higher edge with a gigantic menorah. The resulting 'slide' from Jewishness to death was not a particularly subtle idea, and the slanted surface would be far from practical;<sup>46</sup> practicality was fundamental, since the Square was a central city plaza. The winning team, comprising Piotr Lewicki and Kazimierz Łatak, managed to root their plans for a ground-breaking memorial in the Square's necessary practical functions, thereby ensuring their victory. Their design combined simple ideas with more complex ones. Having relegated the bus terminal that had previously occupied most of the available space to one side of the Square, they then used different types and colours of stones to mark the erstwhile boundaries of the Ghetto, and placed metal chairs of different sizes – some larger-than-life, some normal – all over the Square. Most of the chairs were placed on a line connecting Kazimierz with the former Plaszow camp, but some, including those on the bus stops, were placed at random.<sup>47</sup> It was this divergence from traditional monument art that made Lewicki and Łatak's design one of the first counter-monuments in Poland.

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<sup>44</sup> Kraków, ASARP, Konkurs. Plac Bohaterów Getta.

<sup>45</sup> AMHK, 'Korespondencja Dyrektora Naczelnego. Pisma przychodzące i wychodzące w miesiącach czerwiec-lipiec,' Sig. 407/10, AMHK, 'Korespondencja Dyrektora Naukowego. Pisma przychodzące i wychodzące w miesiącach listopad-grudzień,' Sig. 407/26.

<sup>46</sup> ASARP, Konkurs. Plac Bohaterów Getta.

<sup>47</sup> ASARP, Konkurs. Plac Bohaterów Getta.



Figure 6: The Ghetto Heroes Square.

In the words of Paul Williams, counter-monuments ‘challenge the ethics and aesthetics of the very notion of building an artifice to represent violent conflict – let alone annihilation. In the eyes of a new generation, the didactic logic of monuments – their rigidity and sense of historical closure – too closely resembles traits associated with fascism itself.’<sup>48</sup> This definition overlaps with the proposal of James Young, who was among the first critics to highlight the ‘antiredemptory aesthetics’ of counter-monuments, which he saw as ‘brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being.’<sup>49</sup> Both authors note that the first counter-monuments were created, in Germany, precisely because their authors were wary of offering closure or redemption to the nation of the perpetrators; instead, they wanted to challenge visitors to the site, to force them out of their comfort zones. Lewicki and Łatak were not necessarily espousing a framework by which classical monuments came to be ‘associated with fascism itself,’<sup>50</sup> but they were certainly attempting to create an anti-redemptory monument: one that provoked shock, creating the impression of breaking with tradition, safety, the known, the understood.

<sup>48</sup> Williams, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge. After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Williams, p. 7.

Williams notes that there are scripts according to which we visit monuments, and certain expectations to which monuments have to conform. We travel to monuments because there are important sites that need visiting; we go to them on certain prescribed dates, usually anniversaries; we approach clearly visible structures from a distance, and our visit ‘cumulate[s] in intimate contact.’<sup>51</sup> The Ghetto Heroes Square, however, broke with almost all of those expectations. It was visitable, but there were no immediately obvious dates that it should be visited, since relocation both to and from the Ghetto were processes rather than moments. There were no visible, vertical forms overshadowing the cityscape that could be approached with the suitable reverence; nor did the monument offer any sense of catharsis, any intimate contact. Lewicki and Łatak’s concept was based on the act of bringing familiarity to the fore and then creating a sense of rupture. Everyone owns a chair, everyone uses them; chairs are not menorahs, Torahs, or *yads*. In short, they are not Jewish, and the implication, therefore, is that one does not have to be Jewish to sit on a Ghetto Heroes Square chair. Anyone, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, gender, or skin colour could end up on the Square – a victim of the sudden transition from normality to death.

Rather than offering an uplifting commemoration of a selected moment from the past, then, the designers offered instead a counter-monument, forcing its visitors to confront and reflect on the problems of the Polish-Jewish past. It did not offer any ready-made interpretations, but rather tried to compel the visitor to engage with the past on their own. Moreover, since the monument provided no comment on perpetrators, it could be read as an accusation of Polish indifference, or indeed of Polish complicity. Lewicki and Łatak did not programme that accusation into their design, or at least do not mention it in the booklet accompanying the monument.<sup>52</sup> However, the nature of the counter-monument opened it up to constant redefinitions according to changes in Polish collective memory.

The counter-monument did not use traditional forms of expression; it did, however, reference existing representations. In the accompanying booklet, Lewicki and Łatak explain that their inspiration came from two sources. One was a photograph of a young girl carrying a chair, holding it upside down, with luggage placed between the chair legs. Their second came from a passage from Pankiewicz’s memoir, in which he writes of the furniture abandoned at the Square following the Ghetto’s liquidation.<sup>53</sup> The first vignette

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<sup>51</sup> Williams, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> ASARP, Konkurs. Plac Bohaterów Getta.

<sup>53</sup> ASARP, Konkurs. Plac Bohaterów Getta.



speaks to the Jews' relocation from Kazimierz to the Ghetto and the second reflects the Ghetto's destruction; in both, meanwhile, the Square stands for the transitory character of the enclosed district. The monument sought to highlight this transition from the normality of Kazimierz, through the Ghetto, to death in the Plaszow camp: as noted, most of the chairs were placed on the line connecting Kazimierz with the site of the camp. Lewicki and Łatak's sources of inspiration were far from obvious; both the photograph and the passage from Pankiewicz's book were known, but were hardly iconic representations of the Holocaust. It would have been near-impossible for an average visitor to make the connection between those two representations and the chairs. This lack of clarity, however, was precisely the idea behind the counter-monument. Its authors were inspired by scenes, from the past but left the monument open to any interpretation, and did not offer any 'sense of historical closure.'<sup>54</sup>

The monument did not highlight Jewishness and allowed each visitor to put themselves in the position of the persecuted. Every visitor could, for a moment, imagine themselves to be a persecuted person, carrying his or her chair to the Ghetto, or running, terrified, towards a concentration camp. This gave the design inherently cosmopolitan qualities; it sensitised its visitors to intolerance and xenophobia, and brought to the fore the artificiality of the categories and hierarchies delineated by the Nazis, showing that different, equally arbitrarily chosen groups could fall victim to similar persecution. While the Ghetto Heroes Square did not create memory that was easily harnessed for the purpose of political action, which Levy and Sznajder highlight as an obligation of cosmopolitan memory,<sup>55</sup> it nonetheless promoted the kind of open and inclusive identity that Montserrat Guibernau attests to when she states that 'cosmopolitan values defend the equality and freedom of all human beings.'<sup>56</sup>

### **The Eagle Pharmacy Museum**

The second key stage of the 'Restoring Memory' campaign entailed the reorganisation and refurbishment of the Eagle Pharmacy Museum. While the Pharmacy had functioned as a museum since the opening of the 1983 exhibition, its lack of affiliation with the MHK meant that it had no official status as such. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the building was, in official terms, a branch of the local community centre, meaning that it had

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<sup>54</sup> Williams, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 165.

<sup>56</sup> Guibernau, p. 161.

no dedicated research personnel, no access to specialist infrastructures, and a heavily limited budget. One of the conditions of Polański's donation, however, was that the Pharmacy be turned into an official museum; Sonik, in his 2001 article in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, was the first to publicly call for the Pharmacy to be given museum status, and chances are that Polański's idea was inspired by Sonik. To accommodate the request, the municipality merged the Pharmacy with the MHK in 2003,<sup>57</sup> and in early 2004, following this reorganisation, a new exhibition was unveiled there.

Analysis of the relevant archival scenario demonstrates that the exhibition consolidated urbanisation, and strengthened the critical interpretation of the Polish past,<sup>58</sup> thereby taking steps toward the cosmopolitanisation of memory work in Kraków. It reoriented historical perspectives, combining top-down and bottom-up approaches, thus reinforcing the trends of common patterning, and it further normalised the image of the Jew, moving closer to dismantling his or her status as the Other. This in turn contributed to opening up national identity, and redefining it as inclusive: a further condition of cosmopolitanisation.<sup>59</sup> The significance of those changes was even more pronounced when they were juxtaposed with the national developments of the period. While the unveiling of the 1983 exhibition had coincided with the state-sponsored, propaganda-oriented commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the 2004 exhibition preceded by a year the Lech Kaczyński-led opening of the Warsaw Uprising Museum, which presented an ethno-nationalist narrative that reintroduced old Communist clichés of Jews.<sup>60</sup>

Plotted against Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's map of museums, the new Pharmacy exhibition occupied a halfway point between the ideals of the modern and new museum.<sup>61</sup> The modern museum paradigm presents 'objective' information, uses objects, and frames them according to a system believed to reflect a singular 'History.' By teaching its visitors about what it deems the 'objective Truth' about their nation, it forces an ethnically defined national identity on them. The new museum, on the other hand, focuses on provoking an emotional response, based on stories told via *mise-en-scène*. It does not teach, but rather provides the visitor with an opportunity to reflect on their self-identification.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała „Apteka w getcie krakowskim”, 2004,' Sig. 612/1, fol. 241.

<sup>58</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała, 2004', Sig. 612/1.

<sup>59</sup> Guibernaup, p. 151.

<sup>60</sup> Bogumił, pp. 157-158.

<sup>61</sup> See Defining Museum pp. 107-114, see also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *The Museum as Catalyst*, p. 4-11.

<sup>62</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *The Museum as Catalyst*, p. 4.

Seen through Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's framework, the 2004 exhibition appears strikingly different to the 1983 version. In fact, though, it was only the design that had changed substantially: gone were the stained-glass plates and the tombstone-shaped boards. In the main room, an apothecary counter had been installed – although not an original, it did resemble the model used during the War – along with several items of furniture, though not quite enough of them to fully recreate the look of the original interior.<sup>63</sup> The rest of the exhibition consisted of boards with photographs and documents printed on them. The photographs and documents were scaled up, with brightly coloured arrows added to highlight the most important information. At three points between the boards and glass cases, monitors had been placed, playing short films on loops; other multimedia elements were incorporated too. Two computers were available, featuring more detailed information on the topics presented on the exhibition, for the purpose of self-study.<sup>64</sup>

The new exhibition's break with the indexical authenticity of objects was clear. In 1983, the photographs and (copies of) documents served as the objects that validated the exhibition, but by 2004, the boards themselves had become the objects. It was clear that none of the photographs or documents printed on the boards were originals; instead, the curators were relying on the authority of museum-as-institution to furnish their claim that the obviously reedited documents were still authentic, in terms of presenting authentic content. Brunner comments on the effectiveness of this strategy and there is no reason to doubt that the strategy worked in Kraków, especially since the Pharmacy had become a part of the MHK, a long-established, municipally owned, multi-branch museum. This partial abandonment of the indexical authenticity of objects was the first step taken to disassociate the Pharmacy from the paradigm of the modern museum. However, the second step – the introduction of *mise-en-scène*, and reconstructions that provoke emotional responses – had not yet taken place. The curators, then, had stopped midway through the transformation, which might to some extent explain why the 2004 exhibition saw itself replaced with a completely new one as early as 2013.

A further way in which the curators started to move from the modern to new museum paradigm related to the perspective of the presentation, and the types of primary sources incorporated into it. Much like the 1983 exhibition, the main perspective was that of the perpetrators; the exhibition utilised official policy documents, orders, passes, and

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<sup>63</sup> AMHK, 'Wystawa Stała, 2004', Sig. 612/1, fol. 5, see also: Anna Pióro, *Apteka Pod Orłem. Przedwonek* (Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2009), p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> Pióro, *Apteka Pod Orłem*, p. 30.

photographs made by the Nazis,<sup>65</sup> and even some of the short films were shot by the ‘cinematographers of the Third Reich.’<sup>66</sup> On the rare occasions that a perspective other than that of the perpetrators was introduced, the materials themselves were similar, meaning that there were barely any objects depicting social life under occupation; in the section on Plaszow camp, for example, testimonies were introduced, but even these had the aura of official documents, since all were witness testimonies from the post-War trials.<sup>67</sup> This need to present the official and the political still closely associated the Pharmacy with the modern museum. The curators still believed they could inform the audience of an ‘Objective Truth.’ At the same time, however, they did slowly begin to move toward presenting a social history, which eventually forced them to reconsider their approach, and to acknowledge that far from presenting The Truth, their exhibitions selected, edited, and told *some* truths: some versions of events as reflected in the limited number of sources to which they had access.<sup>68</sup>

On the level of narrative then, the changes were not overly substantial, but nevertheless consolidated the shift toward the urbanisation of memory, and contributed to its cosmopolitanisation. The scenario of the 2004 exhibition was authored by a mixed team of curators, with the Pharmacy staff joined by a group of specialists from the MHK.<sup>69</sup> This time, the team avoided the problems that had riddled the 1980s presentations in both the Pharmacy and the Old Synagogue. Unlike that of the Synagogue, the new exhibition openly addressed the killings and deportations of Jews.<sup>70</sup> Unlike in the 1983 Pharmacy, the curators had avoided the section on the post-War trials included by their predecessors, and instead extended the part on Pankiewicz, and incorporated information on the pre-War history of the Pharmacy.<sup>71</sup> New information about daily life was added, allowing visitors to learn how the Jewish minority lived and organised itself before the War, in the early years of the occupation, and in the Ghetto.<sup>72</sup> Still missing, however, was information about relations with non-Jewish Poles other than Pankiewicz.

The bottom-up historical perspective, although introduced in only a limited manner, nonetheless contributed further to the exhibition’s urbanisation of memory. The exhibitions from 1980 and 1983 had presented *local* examples of *universal* policies: they did tackle the

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<sup>65</sup> AMHK, ‘Wystawa Stała, 2004’, Sig. 612/1, fols. 7, 15, 17, 21, 23, 35, 37, 41-47.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, fol. 37.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, fol. 45.

<sup>68</sup> Burke, p. 6, Arnold, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> AMHK, ‘Wystawa Stała, 2004’, Sig. 612/1, fol. 47.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, fols. 33-35.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, fol. 5.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem, fols. 13, 27.

local past, but only in terms of political rather than social history, and only using a top-down perspective, in order to suggest the ‘universality’ of the message. The 2004 exhibition, on the other hand, gave *local* examples of *local* processes; in other words, it presented the unique story of Kraków. The Jewish community was depicted in some detail: visitors could learn that Kazimierz was the ‘Galician Jerusalem,’ and that, according to size and importance, Kraków’s Jewish community was ranked fourth in pre-War Poland.<sup>73</sup> This urban aspect was programmed into the exhibition from the start, but it became even more visible just a year after its unveiling, when, in 2005, the Warsaw Rising Museum was opened. As Zuzanna Bogumił notes, in the museum, the story of Warsaw’s Jewish minority – one-third of the city’s pre-War population – had been relegated to two short sections, both of which presented it from the perspective of ethnic Poles. For example, daily life in the Warsaw Ghetto was not mentioned at all, but Polish help was covered extensively.<sup>74</sup> The Warsaw museum, the biggest memorial project of its time and one organised in the capital, thus strengthened the ethno-nationalist interpretation of Polish history, which in turn heightened the contrast between the capital and Kraków. In their interpretation of memory work in Eastern Europe, Czaplicka, Gelazis, and Ruble observe that capitals tend toward renationalisation of historical narratives, while non-capital cities offered narratives that lean more toward multiculturalism, allying themselves with a United (and multicultural) Europe.<sup>75</sup> This finding is certainly reflected by the cases of Warsaw and Kraków, and the memorial relation between the two cities had significant consequences not only for local Krakowian memory, but for Polish collective memory and identity as a whole.

The urbanisation of the Pharmacy’s narrative was important in itself, but it had far wider consequences for Polish national identity, too, in its capacity to contribute to the cosmopolitanisation of memory. The exhibition’s new focus on the urban past reflected one aspect of the process of common patterning, by which a narrative focus shifts from perpetrators to victims. For the first time, visitors were allowed to glimpse the story of ordinary people’s suffering: before their very eyes – quite literally, since these sections incorporated films and photographs – were Jews in the park before the War; Jews struggling to survive in the Ghettos.<sup>76</sup> In turn, visitors were prompted to empathically connect to members of the minority. As mentioned above, the 2004 exhibition did not yet

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<sup>73</sup> Ibidem, fol. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Bogumił, p. 159.

<sup>75</sup> Czaplicka, Gelazis and Ruble, ‘Conclusion’, pp. 340 and 337.

<sup>76</sup> AMHK, ‘Wystawa Stała, 2004’, Sig. 612/1, fol. 247.

utilise experiential authenticity, but the first, small steps had been made. Visitors could empathise with the murdered Jews, and could therefore understand more fully the nature of the massive human rights violation that was the Holocaust.

A further new way in which the new exhibition presented the Jewish minority helped to divest them of their Otherness, albeit only to a limited extent. The 2004 version utilised far more photographs than that shown in 1983, and the representations themselves were much more diverse, featuring assimilated members of the Community in addition to the typical representations of Orthodox Jews. Nothing about these new photographs fed into an image of the Other: Jews did not wear black kaftans; they had no side locks. Indeed, most of them looked like any other citizen of Kraków during that period. However, the curators still struggled with the ways they represented Jews, and it seems clear that at least some of their representational choices were not conscious. In one section, for example, the scenario refers to 'Jewish citizens of Kraków,' equating ethnic Poles and Jews in status,<sup>77</sup> but in another it describes the 'separation of the Jews from Polish society' ['odseparowanie Żydów od społeczeństwa polskiego'], thus maintaining the difference and division between 'us' (Polish society) and 'them' (the Jews).<sup>78</sup> In Polish, capitalised *Żyd* (Jew) has a different meaning from *żyd* with a lowercase letter: the former denominates a member of a nation, while the latter refers to a follower of Judaism. The curators' use of the capitalised *Żydzi*, then, carries the implication that they did, in fact, intend to maintain the national division. Whether these decisions were fully conscious or not, the curators' modes of Jewish representation were nevertheless of crucial importance. The 2004 exhibition did begin to dismantle Jewish Otherness, and despite its undoubtedly significant limitations, it represented another step toward the redefinition of Polish national identity along the lines of openness and inclusivity – which, according to Guibernau, are essential components in the creation of cosmopolitan identity.<sup>79</sup>

Bogusław Sonik's intervention, then, resulted in the successful reorganisation of a site of memory. This success was partially predicated on the pre-existing narrative on the Ghetto Heroes Square offered by the Eagle Pharmacy complex. He initiated the construction of a site of Holocaust memory that was also complemented by information about Polish help, and references to heroism and martyrdom. As such, the site served to appease both camps, fitting into the critical narrative on Polish history and offering points

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<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, fol. 9.

<sup>78</sup> Ibidem, fol. 11.

<sup>79</sup> Guibernau, p. 151.

of reconciliation with ethno-nationalist interpretations. Sonik proved to be a determined activist who mobilised various resources in order to complete his campaign. The relative ease with which he conducted 'Restoring Memory,' however, should not be interpreted as suggesting that in the early 2000s commemoration of the Jewish past became uncontroversial; on the contrary, the proponents of the ethno-nationalist narrative continued to exercise a strong influence over collective memory both local and national. The lasting problems that plagued the memorialisation of the former Plaszow camp provide a succinct example of the ever-present pitfalls of memory work on Polish-Jewish topics.

The issue of memorialisation of Plaszow was a mainstay of local press headlines throughout the 1990s and 2000s, as various projects were initiated, but rarely finished. A number of small monuments were unveiled in the 2000s: one commemorated Hungarian Jewish women,<sup>80</sup> and another memorialised Sarah Schenirer, an educational pioneer buried in one of the pre-War cemeteries that were later levelled to make space for the camp.<sup>81</sup> None of these memorials reinserted the camp into Kraków's memory, however; nor did either one garner any public attention. More significant were the numerous projects brought into official consideration that proposed redevelopment of the site. The most recent of these, which in 2013<sup>82</sup> was officially still awaiting implementation, was selected in a competition organised by the municipality in 2006.<sup>83</sup> According to archival materials from the WUOZ, the winning project proposed quite literally adding another layer on top of the camp site. A footbridge, hovering over land deemed sacred, was intended to span the site in order to allow visitors to pass over its most important relics without actually touching the ground.<sup>84</sup>

What the design did not offer, however, was a means of reconciling the various, often mutually exclusive meanings of the camp. In 2000, a group of local former inmates of the camp had attempted to erect another plaque at the site, commemorating the alleged murder of the Polish wife of a Home Army soldier and their child. Having confirmed that the murder had, in reality, never happened, the local authorities struggled to overthrow the initiative, with those responsible for it protesting that Plaszow had been 'appropriated by

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<sup>80</sup> Kraków, (AOKZB), Akta Śledztwa w sprawie zamordowania nieznannej z nazwiska żony oficera AK i jej dziecka w KL „Plaszów” przez oficera Gestapo, S 26/02/Zn, fol. 14.

<sup>81</sup> AWUOZ, 'Plaszów. Obóz. Do 2008', Syg. 761A

<sup>82</sup> As of September 2016 the project still awaits implementation; however, the MHK has been recently selected as the organisation to spearhead the memorialisation of Plaszow.

<sup>83</sup> AWUOZ, Plaszów. Obóz. Do 2008, 761A.

<sup>84</sup> AWUOZ, 'Zagospodarowanie', Sig. 46.180/09.

the Jewish circles.’<sup>85</sup> This initiative demonstrated the lasting influence of the ethno-nationalist narrative, and reminded the municipality and other local activists of the complexity of the issues surrounding the memorialisation of Plaszow, showing that any attempt to reconcile the competing narratives on the Polish and Jewish past of the camp would meet with resistance from at least one of the numerous factions within memory work. Before 2013, none of the local or national activists had managed to develop and realise any memory project at Plaszow, and the former camp looked almost exactly as it had in the early 1990s: like the empty and overgrown meadow it was.

## 2010 and Beyond: the Memorial Trail

### Glocalisation of Memory Work

The MHK, consolidated under a new management in the final years of the first decade of the 2000s, stood in stark contrast to the entities responsible for the Plaszow project. It was an institution with a clear mission and vision, capable of negotiating its power *vis-à-vis* both the proponents of the ethno-nationalist narrative and other local, national, and supranational activists. As the following section demonstrates, the museum curators utilised the interest of the municipality, under Mayor Majchrowski, in memory work. With the support of local politicians and additional funding, new, large-scale projects were conceived and realised. One of these, the multi-site Memorial Trail, sought to narrate the history of War-time Kraków. As part of the project, the Oskar Schindler Factory was turned into a museum in 2010, and the Eagle Pharmacy was refurbished once again in 2013.

The plan to create a museum in the one remaining building of Oskar Schindler’s *Emaillierwerk* was instigated in the Mayor’s office, early in Majchrowski’s first term. Fresh from its success with reorganising the *lieu de mémoire* on the Ghetto Heroes Square, and feeling the pressure of the Warsaw authorities’ success with their Warsaw Rising Museum, the municipality took the decision to buy Schindler’s former Factory in 2005.<sup>86</sup> Following two years of somewhat fruitless deliberations in the City Council, it was decided

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<sup>85</sup> AOKZB, Akta Śledztwa, Sig.S 26/02/Zn, fols. 10-11.

<sup>86</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek, p. 7.



that the site would be divided in two,<sup>87</sup> with one part becoming a modern art gallery, and the other envisaged as ‘a museum of the place’ (though no-one determined what this latter term actually entailed).<sup>88</sup> The Factory was ceded to the MHK, which soon devised the basic idea of the Memory Trail as a means of bringing together the three branches of the Museum: the newly created Factory, the existing and refurbished again in 2013 Pharmacy, and the Pomorska Street branch, which focused on the suffering of Poles under Nazism and early Communism. The amalgamation was intended to provide a way of presenting ‘complementary stories about the war, the time that came after the war and the people who lived in these difficult times [sic].’<sup>89</sup> While the Factory and the Pharmacy, two components of the Trail, were technically two separate projects, here they will be analysed together, for a number of reasons. Both branches were envisaged as part of the same narrative and were created by almost the same team. In the cases of both museums, the curators insisted on exercising their agency, beginning with clear ideas of what they wanted to say, and how they wanted to say it. In both cases, but especially in the Factory, ideas presented initially were contested and amended by activists from Kraków, elsewhere in Poland, other states, and from supranational organisations. Finally, both cases constitute examples of the glocalisation of urban memory, as local memory work, stemming from local needs, was conducted according to global standards and with input from global actors.<sup>90</sup>

The first draft of the scenario of the Factory exhibitions suggested that Poles, Jews, and Germans should be depicted as ordinary people, with emphasis on ‘their daily lives, attitudes, choices, tragedies.’<sup>91</sup> This proposal echoes, on two different levels, two interventions into historiography. On one, more general level, the curators evoked the ideas developed by Christopher Browning in his ground-breaking *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, a text that attempts to understand people, rather than accusing a nation. Instead of assigning blame to the ‘Germans’ or even the ‘Nazis,’ Browning investigates the motivations and circumstances of individual men.<sup>92</sup> On a second and more specific level, the curators referred to a text by Andrzej Chwałba, a historian from the Jagiellonian University, entitled *Okupacyjny Kraków (Kraków under Occupation)*. Chwałba divides his narrative into four main sections, which comment

<sup>87</sup> Magdalena Kursa, Rafał Romanowski, ‘Schindler? Nie może dominować,’ *Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków* 17 June 2008, p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> AMHK, ‘Wystawa stała „Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945”, korespondencja, 2007’, Sig. 602/1, fol. 9.

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.mhk.pl/museum-trails>, [accessed 7 August 2016].

<sup>90</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 10.

<sup>91</sup> AMHK, ‘Wystawa stała „Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945” (Scenariusz wystawy), 2008-09,’ Sig. 603/4, fol. 7.

<sup>92</sup> Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

respectively on the Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, and German sides of Kraków. He describes how, during the War, Kraków underwent changes intended to make it the capital of Germandom in the East, and discusses the daily lives of the German officials and their families that settled in the city.<sup>93</sup> Following these ideas, the early drafts of the Factory exhibition scenario aimed to demonstrate how Nazi policies ‘provoked various responses among Poles, Jews, and Germans,’ and how the conflict turned some ordinary Germans into ruthless killers.<sup>94</sup> Nazi cruelty would not be presented as an inherently German value, but rather as the consequence of a historical process of radicalisation.

This idea was discarded following the protests of Lili Haber, Head of the Association of Cracowians in Israel. Haber was a member of the Programme Board for the Schindler Factory. International in composition, the Programme Boards were created by Mayor Majchrowski in a bid to increase the prestige of the Museum. Formally, there was no reason for them to exist; neither the Law on Museums, Law on Institutions of Culture, nor the Museum’s own charter required the existence of such bodies. Since these codes did not prohibit their existence either, however, the Mayor created a Programme Board for the Schindler Factory and an Honour Committee for the Pharmacy,<sup>95</sup> and invited well-known Polish and international figures to join them. Historians led the way, including Andrzej Chwalba, and Eleonora Bergman from the Jewish Historical Institute, closely followed by public figures such as Roman Polański; representatives of Yad Vashem such as Dr Haim Gertner (Head of the Archive) and Irena Steinfeld (Director of the Department of the Righteous); and representatives of the Krakowian Jewish diaspora, including Lili Haber.<sup>96</sup> Majchrowski initiated the creation of the Boards, but it was the MHK that drew up the lists of their members.<sup>97</sup> As analysis of correspondence from the Museum archive reveals, although invitations were only extended to activists who already generally supported the Museum line, the Boards nonetheless criticised the curators’ ideas, and in turn the curators ignored the majority of the Boards’ comments. There is no trace in the actual exhibition of a Board suggestion to include more information on the history of the Catholic Church in Schindler’s Factory, for example, nor of a request to prioritise national history over local

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<sup>93</sup> Chwalba, pp. 41-82.

<sup>94</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2007,’ Sig. 602/1, fol. 11.

<sup>95</sup> *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, ‘Ustawa o muzeach,’ 1997, nr. 5, poz. 24, *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, ‘Ustawa o organizowaniu i prowadzeniu działalności kulturalnej,’ 1991, nr. 114, poz. 493, AMHK, ‘Regulamin Organizacyjny Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa.’

<sup>96</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2007,’ Sig. 602/1, fols. 189-191, AMHK, ‘Apteka pod Orłem, Pisma, 2011-2013,’ Sig., AO-520.

<sup>97</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2007,’ Sig. 602/1, fols. 157 and 187.

past.<sup>98</sup> The design of the final section of the Eagle Pharmacy exhibition, meanwhile, was thoroughly criticised by the Committee at the scenario stage, but was nonetheless implemented without any major changes.<sup>99</sup>

Lili Haber was one of the few Board members who succeeded in reshaping the Schindler Factory exhibition. She insisted on highlighting the differences between the worlds of occupiers and victims. Interestingly, she often mentions the ‘Polish-Jewish world’ and ‘Poles of both Polish and Jewish ethnicity,’<sup>100</sup> thus combining an inclusive vision of the past, in which Poles and Jews were members of one nation, with an exclusive vision in which Germans were reduced to criminals. In her view, nowhere in the exhibition could Germans be presented as ordinary people. Haber’s ideas were promptly incorporated: in their comments for the contracted graphic designers, drafted almost a year after the first scenario, the Factory curators noted that using deep, warm colours to depict German-only spaces would ‘cause the visitors to feel at home – cosy and pleasant, and this is not our intention.’<sup>101</sup> The intention thus became to maintain the division between ‘us – the victims’ and ‘them – the perpetrators.’

While this division was enforced, however, the curators resisted using one-dimensional stereotypes. They provided some general information about the Germans’ daily lives, and openly described Nazi endeavours to improve the quality of life in the city; the Nazis constructed, for example, a new housing district that was originally designed for the use of German residents only, but that after the War became highly sought-after by Krakowians. This nuanced approach placed the MHK curators in direct opposition to the curatorial team at the Warsaw Rising Museum, which demonised the occupiers, portraying them exclusively ‘as inhumane and ruthless killing machines,’ to borrow Zuzanna Bogumił’s description.<sup>102</sup> As this thesis seeks to demonstrate, the selective representation of historical topics in memory work is not only a consequence of actual past events, but also of present interests and policies; moreover, it has a direct impact on present identities. Representations of historic Germans solely as killers thus exerts an influence on the image of contemporary Germans, contributing to their characterisation as the Threatening Other. The Factory exhibition differed from the Warsaw one as it refrained from implementing over-simplistic stereotypes.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibidem, fols. 141, and 143.

<sup>99</sup> AMHK, ‘Apteka, 2011-2013’, Sig., AO-520. For details see below.

<sup>100</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2008’, Sig. 603/2, fol. 109.

<sup>101</sup> Ibidem, fol. 655.

<sup>102</sup> Bogumił, p. 157.

In this way, the representatives of supranational organisations, whose impact can be seen as a direct outcome of globalisation, influenced the exhibition in Schindler's Factory. So too did a local exponent of the ethno-nationalist interpretation of the Polish past, which in turn reminded the Factory curators that their exhibition had to take into account both global and national memorial frameworks. The intervention came in the form of an official appeal to the Mayor submitted by Tomasz Bobrowski, one of the city councillors. He proposed that the Factory museum be turned into a memorial to the Righteous among the Nations, and that a Wall of the Righteous be erected there. He claimed to have contacted Yad Vashem to this end, and accounted for all architectural changes necessary for the Wall to be included in the exhibition in his plans.<sup>103</sup> His idea was clearly rooted in an ethno-nationalistic interpretation of history, representing a logical continuation of the idiom of blameless Poles-helpers that had been dominant under Communism. In the early 2000s, these ethno-nationalist ideas were still widespread, and had been given legitimacy in the discourse of the 'politics of memory' propagated by the PiS party.<sup>104</sup> That Bobrowski in fact represented the Civic Platform party (Platforma Obywatelska, PO), which was in opposition to the PiS, provided undeniable proof to the curators that attachment to the nationalist narrative remained commonplace in Polish society.<sup>105</sup> The idea to build the Wall of the Righteous was eventually overthrown, but traces of the councillor's intervention could still be seen in the final version of the exhibition. In the Factory, there were only limited references to the guilt of ethnic Poles – for example, to pre-War or War-time anti-Semitism – which was partially because Bobrowski's intervention forced the curators to confront the societal power of the ethno-nationalist interpretation.

Bobrowski's idea was overthrown only after protests from a member of the Programme Board. As the minutes from the Board meeting reveal, Dr Gertner, representing Yad Vashem, 'pointed out that that Hall of the Righteous, arranged only as a presentation of noble attitudes toward Jews during the War, may lose its educational value and on occasion and against the intention of the authors *may be seen as a provocation* [emphasis in original – JG].'<sup>106</sup> Instead, Dr Gertner suggested that the last section be redeveloped into what he called 'The Hall of Choices.'<sup>107</sup> The MHK curators used the support of Gertner, as the Yad Vashem representative, to overthrow an idea they had

<sup>103</sup> AMHK, 'Korespondencja, 2009', Sig. 603/3, fol. 109.

<sup>104</sup> Nijakowski, p. 190, see also Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland*.

<sup>105</sup> [https://www.bip.krakow.pl/?sub\\_dok\\_id=14985](https://www.bip.krakow.pl/?sub_dok_id=14985), [accessed 20 May 2016].

<sup>106</sup> AMHK, 'Korespondencja, 2008', Sig. 603/2, fol. 139.

<sup>107</sup> Ibidem, fol. 107.

opposed from the beginning, and to strengthen their agency in relation to other local activists. All three interventions – Haber’s, Bobrowski’s, and Gartner’s – attest to the notion of local memory work as the outcome of a glocal competition: a competition in which local activists clashed over a memorial narrative with inter- and supranational organisations. Aside from the three aforementioned activists, other actors participated in this competition; historians of national standing attempted to intervene, and so did the Israeli Embassy.<sup>108</sup> The curators visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on a research trip, which speaks additionally to the impact of American institutions.<sup>109</sup>

International impact on national commemorations of the Holocaust has been widely studied; Levy and Sznajder provide an engaging interpretation of this process,<sup>110</sup> while Eva-Clarita Onken, Maria Mälksoo, and Marek Kucia comment on the pressure exerted by European institutions on memory work in Eastern Europe. In particular, Onken and Kucia focus on the pressure to incorporate Western interpretations and standards of Holocaust memory into Eastern commemorations, a frequent phenomenon in the run-up to the accession of the Eastern European states to the EU.<sup>111</sup> All of these scholars, however, comment on national politics, and memory work on a national level; only rarely have researchers begun to look in the processes of Europeanisation or globalisation on a local level. Ewa Ochman analyses the impact of transnational organisations on the border cities of western Poland. However, in her case study, these organisations have a direct vested interest in local memory work, since they represent exiles from the cities in question.<sup>112</sup> The case of Kraków was different: only Lily Haber, born in Kraków, had a direct connection to the city. Other activists devoted their time and energy to the cause because Kraków acquired some importance in the globalised network of memorial connections spanning the world. Thanks to the success of the heritage activists who turned Kazimierz into one of the most important Jewish Spaces on the continent,<sup>113</sup> Kraków ceased to be simply an airport on the way to Auschwitz,<sup>114</sup> becoming an important site in itself. As a result, when work on the 2010s exhibitions began, Kraków had earned the interest and energy of representatives of various Polish, Israeli, American, and international groups and organisations.

<sup>108</sup> Ibidem, fols. 141-143, AMHK, ‘Apteka, 2011-2013’, Sig., AO-520.

<sup>109</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2008’, Sig. 603/2, fol. 549.

<sup>110</sup> Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, ‘The Institutionalization of Cosmopolitan Morality: The Holocaust and Human Rights’, *Journal of Human Rights*, 3.2 (2004).

<sup>111</sup> Onken, p. 24, Kucia, Mälksoo.

<sup>112</sup> Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland*, p. 117.

<sup>113</sup> Ruethers, p. 672.

<sup>114</sup> Rafał Romanowski, ‘Tak to jest z Bałką’ *Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków*, 29 December 2009, str. 1.

Another instance in which international input into urban memory work has been recognised by scholars is when it has manifested as pressure to adopt European values. Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, the editor of *Whose Memory? Which Future?*, a volume exploring urban memory, explains that ‘local elites [...] have been encouraged to emphasize the multicultural legacy of their cities, to show that they care about it and to display how they work towards reconciliation.’<sup>115</sup> In Kraków, reconciliation was not always within the scope of international interventions; on the contrary, Haber’s intervention at the Factory had the potential to stall any attempts at Polish-German reconciliation, since it preserved the stereotypical image of German-as-killer. Divesting the presentation of historical nuance in this way made combating the stereotype much more difficult. This strand of research reminds us that the urbanisation of memory work – that is, the creation of narratives opposed to ethno-centric interpretations – does not necessarily equate to the cosmopolitanisation of memory work. In fact, both globalisation and urbanisation may hinder, rather than strengthen, this process.

The possibility that glocalisation might give rise to exclusive and ethno-centric interpretations is not only illustrated by Lili Haber’s intervention; it is also evidenced by the multiple meanings that Schindler’s Factory was endowed with during the 1990s and early 2000s. The municipality chose to buy the site due to its presumed historic value, and to the aura surrounding the site. The aura of the Factory, that is, its ‘sense of distance in time and space that underlines claims to uniqueness, authenticity, and tradition,’ owed almost entirely to Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List*.<sup>116</sup> Before the film premiered in 1994, the site had been completely forgotten, and in fact was still serving its original purpose as a factory.<sup>117</sup> In the 1990s, local entrepreneurs from Kazimierz responded to popular demand and began to organise trips to Lipows Street, the site of the Factory; by 2005, the Municipality had recognised the newly created aura of the site, and decided to turn it into museum. Due to the intervention of Spielberg, a Jewish-American filmmaker, and the international success of his film, a forgotten factory building became a global icon of Holocaust memory. While the aura of the site was created by Spielberg, additional layers of meaning were ascribed to it by local activists. As evidenced by Bobrowski’s intervention, the Factory had a well-defined place and unique meaning in Polish ethno-nationalist discourse. In the intervention, the imperative to commemorate Polish help

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<sup>115</sup> Törnquist-Plewa, ‘Local Memories’, p. 218.

<sup>116</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 74.

<sup>117</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek, p. 7.

overlapped with the need to protest against whitewashing German crimes. The Factory thus stood as a reminder both of Polish virtues, and of the flaws of others.

All of the above examples reveal the full meaning of glocalisation as it pertains to urban memory work. Scholars recognise that such work generally attracts people and organisations with local connections, and that it supports cosmopolitan memory projects, broadly defined. The present thesis demonstrates that in the cases of exceptionally important cities, such as Kraków, even organisations with no actual connection to the city entered and intervened in memory work. Moreover, it reminds us that external impact could still lead to the creation of exclusive, non-cosmopolitan narratives.

### **Complementary Authenticities**

These new exhibitions seeking to present ‘the stories of people – Poles, Jews, Germans: their daily lives, attitudes, choices, tragedies,’ rather than a simple top-down perspective on history, required new design: in fact, they required a new approach, new thinking on what a museum is, what it does, and how it does it.<sup>118</sup> To summarise the categories expounded in the Introduction to Part Two, the modern museum supports ethnocentric narratives on history as seen from above. It utilises indexical authenticity to support the impression of objectivity around its representation of the past, and is arranged in a clearly stratified system. Neither history from below, nor presentations of the fates of individuals, can be accommodated by the modern museum, and thus require a switch to the paradigm of the new museum. Exhibitions featuring these new takes on history also require the deployment of experiential authenticity, which aims to evoke an emotional response in the viewer. The impact of work using a combination of indexical and experiential authenticities comes in the form of an authenticity of affect: a lasting, emotional reaction toward the problems of the past, including human rights violations, which can be utilised to effect change in the present. Sara Jones refers to the cluster of these three types of authenticities – indexical, experiential, and affective – as ‘complementary authenticities,’ which speaks to the way in which all three aspects reinforce one another.<sup>119</sup> This section demonstrates how the paradigm of the new museum was implemented in the MHK in the 2010s, while the subsequent section dissects the meanings of the new narratives themselves.

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<sup>118</sup> AMHK, ‘Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945,’ Sig. 603/4, fol. 7.

<sup>119</sup> Jones, *The Media*, pp. 41-43.

In comparison to the exhibitions produced in 1980, 1983, and even 2004, the changes made to the designs of the 2010s presentations were remarkable. Gone were the boards featuring documents and photographs, gone were the glass cases, gone were the notes carrying descriptions and curators' explanations. To accommodate their new ideas, the curators chose to reconstruct the interiors of their exhibition spaces, build mock-up streets and fake squares, and bring them to life with multimedia elements. Schindler's Factory, whose museum depicted life in the occupied city, offered its audiences the chance to take a walk through war-time Kraków. Visitors were transported through time, to the long-lost past; they walked through almost thirty sites, from a photographer's atelier, through a tenement hall, squares and plazas, streets, parks, flats, a barber shop, a train station, a bunker. At one point, the designers even constructed a replica tram car.<sup>120</sup> Throughout these spaces, the curators told stories, grouped into fourteen themes. They included information on life in Kraków, on life in the Ghetto, on War-time resistance and the clandestine Polish state. They talked about the Plaszow camp, and the German administration and its approach to Kraków's inhabitants. Some sections focused on Poles, some on Jews; others were mixed.<sup>121</sup> Some topics were depicted through one reconstructed space (life in the Ghetto), others were spread throughout the exhibitions (Nazi propaganda, resistance).<sup>122</sup> The story, for the most part, unravelled chronologically: the photographer's atelier depicted pre-War life; in the tenement hall visitors heard gossip about the start of the War; on the adjacent street they saw abandoned Polish military equipment; and the subsequent streets and squares covered events from 1940, 1941, and so on. The final sections focused on the arrival of the Red Army, with the implication that one occupier was supplanted by another.<sup>123</sup> There was only one exception to this chronological design: the story of Schindler himself, and the story of his famous list, were wedged between the sections depicting life in 1943 and 1944. The curators decided to break with chronology in this way because Schindler's genuine office had been discovered when works on the exhibition were already well under way. They did include the space, but lacked the wherewithal to rework the whole plan.<sup>124</sup>

The design of the 2013 Eagle Pharmacy exhibition was far less elaborate, since the museum was much smaller and was envisaged primarily as an extension to the Factory, a

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<sup>120</sup> AMHK, 'Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945,' Sig. 603/4, fols. 7 – 37.

<sup>121</sup> Ibidem, fol. 7.

<sup>122</sup> Ibidem, fols. 7 – 37.

<sup>123</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek 2011, pp 9-31.

<sup>124</sup> AMHK, 'Korespondencja, 2007,' Sig. 602/1, fol. 99.



complementary item on the Memory Trail. As such, it focused on Pankiewicz and life in the Ghetto.<sup>125</sup> To tell this story, the curators chose to restore the Pharmacy to its War-time appearance. They recreated the building's original division into five rooms, built furniture modelled on the set used in the early twentieth century, and brought in laboratory equipment.<sup>126</sup> They covered the windows with period photographs of the Square, to reinforce the impression of a journey back in time. Each of the five rooms focused on a different part of the story. The first, entitled 'The first table, the first chat,' provided information on the Pharmacy, and the role Pankiewicz played in the Ghetto. The second, 'Prescription for survival,' narrated the Ghetto inhabitants' survival strategies, self-help organisations, and of acts of resistance against the Nazis. Next was an exposition on 'The duty to bear witness' arranged in the so-called Duty Room, which told the story of Pankiewicz as witness to the Holocaust. It also featured information on the *Aktionen*, during which the Ghetto was gradually liquidated, and its population either killed or sent to the camps. The final section, 'The Laboratory of Help,' elaborated on the Ghetto's private networks of self-help. It showed the Pharmacy as a meeting site for the Ghetto elite, but also as a place where collaborators and confidantes met with one another. The main part of the exhibition concluded with a short but explicit narrative on the mass killing – the ultimate fate of Kraków's Jews.<sup>127</sup>

Both the Factory and Pharmacy exhibitions were comprised of reconstructions and *mise-en-scène*, and both ended with sections that broke with this convention. In a way, the final parts of both exhibitions served as links between a time long gone, and the contemporary reality that awaited the visitors outside. These final items also served the purpose of forcing viewers to reflect on what they saw, and how they felt about it; they were thus crucial in the exhibitions' shared creation of an authenticity of affect, an emotional response to the stories depicted in the exhibitions. In the Factory, the curators designed a Hall of Choices. In its first part, a chapel-like setting, short notes about the actions of Krakowians were exhibited; some described acts of bravery, some sins of omission. In the adjacent room, black-and-white books containing more complex stories about moral choices were presented.<sup>128</sup> In the Pharmacy, meanwhile, the MHK employees chose to discuss the difficulties of commemorations, which connected visitors back to the theme of witness-bearing that had been highlighted in the Duty Room. The last room,

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<sup>125</sup> AMHK, 'Apteka, Scenariusz.'

<sup>126</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>127</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>128</sup> AMHK, 'Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945,' Sig. 603/4, fol. 77-79.

which had originally served as the main laboratory, was turned into an artistic installation. During the War, there had been a fume hood there, and in the modern version the ‘fumes of memory’ were presented: photographs depicting memorials and plaques were hung around the room in the shape of a cloud. The vast majority of these images depicted commemorations from before 1989, which obscured the nature of the Holocaust by focusing on martyrdom and resistance. A selection of photographs then showed the ‘comeback’ of memory after the fall of Communism.<sup>129</sup>

The new designs of both exhibitions signalled a shift between different modes of authenticity: the curators moved from exhibitions predicated predominantly on the indexical authenticity of objects, to ones based primarily on the experiential authenticity of subjects. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, mapping the transition from the paradigm of modern to new museum, notes that the new museum, rather than presenting objects that teach history, instead tells stories in which ‘iconic’ objects serve as props. The focus lies on creating and recreating spaces that evoke an emotional response.<sup>130</sup> In the modern museum, only indexical authenticity had counted, and the objects therefore had to be real, and facts verifiable; the reaction of the visitor was not important. The new museum paradigm, however, reversed these perspectives. The reaction of the viewer – his or her genuine emotional response – was what counted; the *raison d'être* of the new museum was to inspire emotions. To achieve this result, the new museum offered a journey back in time, allowing its visitors to immerse themselves in a past reality: to see it, hear it, touch it, and often even smell it. That is not to say, however, that the new museum discarded indexical authenticity completely. Ruth Ellen Gruber demonstrates that outside of the museum context, it is possible to create experiential authenticity with only references to fiction.<sup>131</sup> Museums, on the other hand, and especially memorial museums, always combine some form of indexical authenticities with experiential ones, to produce complementary authenticities. One of the best-known object-free museums, the Beth Hatefutsoth in Tel Aviv, was still anchored in history thanks to the research utilised to create its exhibitions.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> AMHK, ‘Apteka, Scenariusz.’

<sup>130</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *The Museum as Catalyst*, p. 5.

<sup>131</sup> Gruber, *Beyond Virtually Jewish*, p. 490.

<sup>132</sup> Selwyn, p. 23.



Figure 7: The Eagle Pharmacy, 2013.

The realities recreated in both Museums, then, were at once false and genuine. They were false in the sense that none of those spaces had really existed in the form presented in the museums. The interior of the Pharmacy looked similar to the War-time original, but there were still significant discrepancies between the two versions. In the 1940s, the Dispensing Room (site for patrons) and Prescription Room (first laboratory) were completely divided, with only one door connecting them behind the counter. This division, however, was impossible to maintain in a museum that would be visited by a large number of people at once, so in the modern-day space, what had been a wall between the two rooms was turned into a huge cabinet, delineating but not fully dividing the two rooms. Visitors could walk around the cabinet, meaning that there were now two passages between the Dispensing and Duty Rooms. The fifth room, originally the main Laboratory, meanwhile, had been turned into an artistic installation, with no attempt made to claim it as resembling the war-time interior.<sup>133</sup> In the Factory, even the most authentic space – Schindler’s office – far from reflected the original design, since the architects had never managed to successfully recreate the old plan and look.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Pióro, *Apteka Pod Orlem*, p. 15.

<sup>134</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2007,’ Sig. 602/1, fol. 99.

At the same time, however, the Museums' realities were genuine, insofar as they referred to the past through the facts of history; the information provided by the spaces allowed visitors to sample history, not fantasy. Both the factual aspect of the exhibitions and their designs were as close to the truth as possible. Even if *this* particular flat had never existed, or *this* particular street had no equivalent in Kraków, thousands like it did. The same or similar furniture was used, the same pictures were hung on the walls, and even the same soap could be found, next to a similar washbasin.<sup>135</sup> These relations to facts, while obviously selected and shaped according to curators' values and ideas, formed the primary anchor to the past. Another came in the form of rare artefacts. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett refers to objects used in the new museum as 'iconic,' which highlights their special nature; such objects are either the best examples of a category of objects, or are items of particular importance or value, and they are often exhibited in a way that highlights this elevated status.<sup>136</sup> Even when the objects at their disposal were not initially deemed as iconic in any way, the curators at the Pharmacy and Factory museums skilfully created an aura around them that in turn reinforced the story they told. In the section of the Pharmacy focusing on Pankiewicz, for example, his hat was displayed; exhibited in an open wardrobe, next to a laboratory coat, it gave the impression of life, as if Pankiewicz had put it there and left the room moments before the visitors had arrived.<sup>137</sup>

In the Factory, meanwhile, a larger number of objects were used in a similar manner. One section showed how the Nazis tried to rid the city of any symbol of Polishness, including, among others, the Grunwald Monument, commemorating a battle from 1410, which was torn down. At the exhibition, visitors could wander around the square where the Monument had once stood, and view large format photographs from the demolition. A preserved fragment of the monument was presented in a glass case, but the case had been built into the photograph wall in a way that made it appear as if a piece of debris had fallen from the monument and been left lying on the street.<sup>138</sup> In effect, visitors could feel as if they had arrived at the square at the exact moment that the Monument was dismantled. In this way, the 'iconic' objects displayed at the Pharmacy and Factory served to support their claims to both indexical and experiential authenticities. On one hand, the artefacts indexically referred back to the past, while on the other, they contributed to the impression of immersion in time, helping to bridge the gap between past and present. They

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<sup>135</sup> AMHK, 'Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945,' Sig. 603/4.

<sup>136</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2000: 5.

<sup>137</sup> AMHK, 'Apteka, Scenariusz.'

<sup>138</sup> AMHK, 'Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945,' Sig. 603/4, fol. 145.

thus served to strengthen the experience of the visit, and contributed to eliciting an emotional response from museum visitors.

Another strategy used to enhance the impression of experiential authenticity consisted of the incorporation of personal testimonies into the exhibition. Jones notes that witness testimonies strengthen indexical authenticity through appearing to anchor the presentation in the past and to provide ‘factual’ proof.<sup>139</sup> More importantly, however, they personalise exhibitions, facilitating the visitor’s emotional connection to the past: the very reason that the 1980s exhibitions avoided personal statements, and that the new Factory and Pharmacy museums used them in abundance.<sup>140</sup> One of the key ways in which the Pharmacy engaged with personalisation in this way was to use cards featuring testimonies: visitors were invited to rummage through the drawers of the laboratory furniture, to discover that the original equipment had been partially substituted with these cards.<sup>141</sup> In the Factory, designed for a mass audience and therefore less interactive, personal stories were presented more openly; for example, snippets of the testimonies of children who had survived the Ghetto were stylised to look like pages torn from diaries, and were glued to a recreated Ghetto wall.<sup>142</sup>



**Figure 8: The Oskar Schindler's Factory.**

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<sup>139</sup> Jones, *Memory*, p. 196.

<sup>140</sup> On the 1980s exhibition and testimonies see Chapter Three, p. 135.

<sup>141</sup> AMHK, ‘Apteka, Scenariusz.’.

<sup>142</sup> AMHK, ‘Kraków – czas okupacji 1939-1945,’ Sig. 603/4, fol. 69.

It is worth noting that there was one case in which the curators did not insist on evoking experiential authenticity: they did not depict death. In the meticulously reconstructed Schindler's office, for example, visitors could sit at Schindler's desk and look through his papers. The impression of authenticity was broken by the presence of an art installation: in the middle of the office there was a cubicle constructed from pots produced in the Factory, which visitors could enter to learn about the list – but because the impression of reality was broken, they were not made to feel as if they were deciding on someone's life, as Schindler's original list had.<sup>143</sup> Similarly, in the section on the Ghetto, none of its inhabitants were shown. Instead, the curators filled the rooms with white mannequins, which more resembled phantoms than actual people. Indeed, the booklet accompanying the exhibition specified that those sculptures had been designed to seem 'unreal.'<sup>144</sup>

Commenting on the representation of death camps in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Ziębińska-Witek notes that 'in the case of the exhibition in the Washington museum, what troubles me is not only the creation of the simulation, but also the assumption that the exhibition, as it stands, reflects the real horror of the camps, while in fact we see only a highly stylised vision of the camps' universe that never, and nowhere, existed in that form.'<sup>145</sup> Her critique is but a recent entry into the ongoing debate on how to represent the Holocaust and its victims, and how to deal with the unimaginable.<sup>146</sup> The Kraków curators decided not to recreate any of these realities; the acts of killing themselves were not recreated, and neither were the victims. Information about the final moments of Krakowians was delivered via other media, either using written texts or with archival photographs.

This shift in modes of authentication was partially necessitated by the new topics the curators introduced to the 2010 and 2013 exhibitions. At the same, however, the curators were also seeking to fulfil the new expectations of their visitors. They had grown aware of an increasing interest in reconstruction and *mise-en-scène*, and a need for emotional experience. The success of the Warsaw Rising Museum, filled with reconstructed spaces, had proved as much, and the research trips undertaken by curatorial team members to the United States Holocaust Museum and to museums in Israel

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<sup>143</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek, p. 32.

<sup>144</sup> Ibidem, p. 30.

<sup>145</sup> Ziębińska-Witek, *Kicz i Holocaust*, p. 81.

<sup>146</sup> Ziębińska-Witek, *Historia*, p. 162.

strengthened this conviction.<sup>147</sup> As a result, they aimed to ‘create an «emotional history of the city»,’ and to thus enable visitors to ‘feel the story [the curators - JG] describe.’<sup>148</sup>

The growing interest in ‘emotional histories,’ reconstructions, and *mise-en-scène* – in other words, the growing interest in exhibitions based on experiential authenticity – was not simply the fad of an audience bored with object-in-case presentations, but rather emerged from far more fundamental changes. As explained in the Introduction to Part Two, from an indefinite point in the 1960s and the 1970s, a crisis of values typical of modernity could be observed across society in general. Within that context, Svetlana Boym notes that an ‘optimistic belief in the future was discarded like an outmoded spaceship sometime in the 1960s,’<sup>149</sup> and Jay Winter observes the emergence of a ‘different kind of war remembrance’ that depicted war as a source of evil, rather than glory.<sup>150</sup> Ulrich Beck, one of the proponents of the concept of ‘second modernity,’ writes of an emerging ‘transition between the cosmopolitan perspective and that of the nation-state within the framework of an epochal distinction between the familiar image of the first age of modernity and the indistinctness and ambivalence of a second age of modernity.’<sup>151</sup> The conceptualisation of terms such as ‘first’ and ‘second modernity,’ or postmodernity for that matter, is highly problematic, and lies outside of the scope of this thesis; here, it suffices to note that majority of scholars commenting on the most recent developments in museum theory, and often also in collective memory, agree with the general framework offered by Beck. Levy and Sznajder, for example, make extensive use of Beck’s research,<sup>152</sup> while more recently Sara Jones, writing on the emergence of the ‘complementary authenticities’, has noted that they were the logical outcome of ‘the ontological uncertainty of the postmodern world.’<sup>153</sup>

The present thesis suggests that the first symptoms of this cultural change could be observed in Poland at almost the same time as in Western Europe, and that as early as the 1980s such symptoms had an impact on memory work in Kraków. The increasing interest in new topics, and the new focus on suffering rather than on heroism and martyrdom alone, expressed by the curators of the 1980s exhibitions provides evidence of this influence. With the fall of Communism, this cultural change accelerated. In the latter years of its rule, the PZPR had guaranteed, or at least tried to enforce, the stability and immovability of

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<sup>147</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2008’, Sig. 603/2, fol. 549.

<sup>148</sup> Ibidem, fol. 601.

<sup>149</sup> Boym, p. xiv.

<sup>150</sup> Winter, ‘Human Rights’, p. 49.

<sup>151</sup> Beck, p. 81.

<sup>152</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust*, p. 3-4.

<sup>153</sup> Jones, *Memory*, p. 195.

numerous aspects of life: it had tried to freeze debates on social relations, class, and history. Even if in most of these cases the immovability was but a façade, it nevertheless created an impression of stability for many citizens. In 1989, that façade crumbled, and the resulting period of prolonged transformation spelled instability and change for most areas of social life. Dan Stone, commenting on the particular issue of memory in Eastern Europe, notes that ‘the end of the Cold War permitted the articulation of sentiments that had been hitherto suppressed.’<sup>154</sup> As this thesis demonstrates, Jewish topics were largely excluded from these debates in the immediate years after the fall of Communism, although the conflict around the Carmelite Convent in Auschwitz did escalate during that period. However, a number of other historical topics crucial for Polish self-definition were opened up to debate. Palpable changes, from the toppling of monuments to the renaming of streets, followed closely behind.<sup>155</sup>

Combined with this more general impression of unpredictability of life in the 1990s and 2000s, insecurity about the past gave rise to a need for new modes of authentication of identity. Commenting on Western Europe in 1996, Selwyn connects the new interest in experiential authenticity with the problem of identity. He elaborates on the ‘quest for «authentic Self»’ undertaken by individuals who yearn for ‘authenticity of feelings,’ for what he calls ‘hot’ (experiential) authenticity.<sup>156</sup> Seen through this framework, the demand for ‘emotional histories’ observed by the MHK curators was in fact the manifestation of a search for new points of reference for the consolidation of identity. With the crumbling of the stable frames of reference that had been provided by post-war social structures, people searched for new ways of defining themselves, both individually and as group members. Since knowledge had lost its objective status, the general public turned toward ‘real feelings’ as an alternative source of stability.<sup>157</sup> As Charles Lindholm demonstrates, ‘authenticity gathers people together in collectivities that are felt to be real, essential, and vital, providing participants with meaning, unity, and a surpassing sense of belonging.’<sup>158</sup> Experiential authenticity, ‘a vehicle through which visitors experience the past,’ allows the subject to plunge deep into the past, to move back to a long-lost time when life was simpler, black was black, and white was white.<sup>159</sup> It came to be perceived as an antidote to the

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<sup>154</sup> Dan Stone, *The Holocaust, Fascism and Memory Essays in the History of Ideas* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 175.

<sup>155</sup> Nijakowski, pp. 123-125.

<sup>156</sup> Selwyn, p. 21.

<sup>157</sup> See Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 4.

<sup>158</sup> Charles Lindholm, *Culture and Authenticity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p. 1.

<sup>159</sup> Athinodoros Chronis and RD Hampton, ‘Consuming the Authentic Gettysburg: How a Tourist Landscape Becomes an



fluidity of the norms of the present, by offering the elusive promise of bringing back the norms of the past.<sup>160</sup>

Paradoxically, however, the search for new self-definition via the ‘authentic’ historical experience served to destabilise identity even more, and became the source of another wave of changes. Jones, examining the modes of authentication in German museums, demonstrates that the use of experiential authenticity, supplemented by indexical authenticity, contributes to the emergence of authenticity of affect, all three of which form complementary authenticities.<sup>161</sup> Authenticity of affect, in this formulation, ‘has the ability to shape that person’s subjectivity and politics’ to use Alison Landsberg’s formulation.<sup>162</sup> The affective engagement with the past engendered by the new museum allows for changes and redefinitions of identity, but not according to traditional (e.g. nationalistic) values; on the contrary, according to Jones the ‘response to human rights abuses will inspire positive political engagement.’<sup>163</sup> As a result, ‘complementary authenticities that are accompanied by narratives that focus on the dangers of authoritarianism and the importance of democratic freedom may, therefore, support engagement for those values in the present.’<sup>164</sup> The change in identities brought about by these authenticities is, then, potentially cosmopolitan in nature.

In defining the institution of the museum, I have shown how the claims of authenticity made by the Kraków curators had importance on three different levels.<sup>165</sup> First, the curators had to persuade their audiences of their right to narrate the past. In the case of the post-2010 MHK, the authority of the institution, strengthened by the aura of the Programme Boards, was the strategy of choice. Secondly, curators had to prove that the narrative they offered was itself authentic. As demonstrated in this section, to achieve this end MHK employees incorporated into their exhibitions the experiential authenticity of subjects, and combined it with the indexical authenticity of objects. Finally, the effect of visiting the museum had to meet with the expectations of the visitors. In the twenty-first century, the visitors had come to expect an immersive experience that would allow for an emotional connection with victims from the past. To fulfil these wishes, the MHK utilised witness and experiential authenticities, and combined them to produce a complementary

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Authentic Experience’, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 2008, p.114.

<sup>160</sup> Lindholm, p. 47.

<sup>161</sup> Jones, *The Media*, p. 42.

<sup>162</sup> Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 2.

<sup>163</sup> Jones, *The Media*, p. 43.

<sup>164</sup> Jones, *The Media*, p. 43.

<sup>165</sup> See Defining Museum, pp. 107-114.

authenticity that offered a symbolic journey back in time, an experience strong enough to force the visitors to rethink their identities, norms, and values. In the section that follows, I will investigate the respective narratives provided by the Factory and the Pharmacy to elucidate the desired direction of this change in perspectives.

### **To Exclude or to Include?**

The 2010 and 2013 exhibitions discussed in this chapter constitute an interesting case study in part because they were at once a total negation and a logical continuation of their predecessors in 1980, 1983, and 2004. On one hand, they continued the trend of including Jewish stories in the narrative of Kraków, and they were inclusive and open, which further carried forward the ideas developed in the 1980s. On the other hand, however, after 2010 the Holocaust was presented from the point of view of the victims, and not the perpetrators as it had been before. A huge number of testimonies were incorporated, and these new artefacts largely replaced official documents. The story of the Jewish Genocide was shown in conjunction with the story of Polish experiences of the Nazi occupation, which also constituted a break with past tendencies. In fact, the new exhibitions presented Jews and ethnic Poles as members of one nation; the curators found a way to circumnavigate contradictions of ‘Rankean’ history, which tends to elevate one ethnic group over another. As this section demonstrates, to underline their message they occasionally sacrificed the facts and historical accuracy of the story. Moreover, the symbolic reconciliation with the Jews came at the price of maintaining the depiction of Germans only as perpetrators, casting them as the Threatening Other.

‘In this space, we show Poles and Jews in a parallel manner.’<sup>166</sup> This message, from the curators of the 2010 Factory exhibition to its graphic designers, reveals that the curators were determined to merge the narratives on ethnic Poles and Jews. All previous exhibitions had espoused the point of view of the perpetrators, and told the story in the way it had been perceived by Nazi officials; seen from this perspective, the division of Krakowians into Poles and Jews was inevitable. Moreover, since 1983, the exhibitions had expounded the uniqueness of the Holocaust, which further contributed to the separation of the two groups.<sup>167</sup> After 2010, however, the curators changed their points of view, and sought to depict war in Kraków as the citizens of the city had seen and felt it. The division

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<sup>166</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2008’, Sig. 603/2, fol. 629.

<sup>167</sup> On the issue on the uniqueness in the 1980s’ exhibition see Chapter Three, pp. 120-122.

into 'racial' categories, clear in the light of the Nuremberg Laws and Nazi 'racial science,' was not at all evident when investigated through the stories of ordinary Krakowians. Meanwhile, the curators did not negate the historical singularity of the Genocide, but represented it, along with the persecution of ethnic Poles, with greater attention to historical accuracy. The atrocities against Jews and Poles were respectively depicted as two different but interconnected crimes, outcomes of evolving Nazi policies, and as events that happened in the same city, though ultimately in isolation from one another.<sup>168</sup>

This depiction stood in stark contrast to the traditional interpretation promoted by the ethno-nationalist vision, and to 'Rankean' interpretations of history, which traditionally focus on the national (and often, in reality, ethnic) past and thus tend to interpret history in a way that validates one group over another.<sup>169</sup> The 'Rankean' approach results in a seemingly unresolvable conflict in which the overemphasis of one crime is seen as an attack on the sanctity of the history of the other group. 'Overemphasis' on the history of the Jewish Genocide led to protests from Poles, who requested 'proper' representation of their own suffering;<sup>170</sup> 'overemphasis' on the history of Polish suffering, meanwhile, might lead to Israeli protest.<sup>171</sup>

In the post-2010 exhibitions, curators chose to circumnavigate that problem by focusing on memories rather than making claims about history. The first draft of the scenario of the 2013 Pharmacy exhibition begins with a mission statement, of sorts, which confirms this change in approach: 'Mission: RESPECT FOR VARIOUS MEMORIES. [...] 2 WORLDS, TWO MEMORIES – RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT MEMORIES – DIFFERENCE [capitalisation in original - JG].'<sup>172</sup> Moving away from ostensibly objective documents to personal reflections and individual experiences opened up both exhibitions to various, often mutually exclusive interpretations. The same events were experienced and interpreted differently in the past, and could be differently interpreted in the present; thus the potential for controversy was limited, if not fully eliminated.

This merging of different stories was built into the design of the exhibitions. In the Factory, a variety of public spaces were chosen to show the relationship between Poles and Jews. The opening section, the photographer's atelier, showed pre-war Kraków using

<sup>168</sup> For a similar interpretation of the War atrocities see Snyder.

<sup>169</sup> See Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, 'Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A Research Agenda. 2006.', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61 Suppl 1 (2010), p. 395 and Burke, pp. 3 and 6.

<sup>170</sup> Andrzej Nowak, 'Świnie i myszy w Fabryce Schindlera. Analiza wystawy w oddziale Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa', *Presje*, 2011, 26/27 pp. 216-224.

<sup>171</sup> AMHK, 'Apteka, korespondencja.'

<sup>172</sup> AMHK, 'Apteka, Scenariusz.'

‘photographs of contemporary [pre-war] Krakowians: Christians and Jews.’<sup>173</sup> The part telling the story of the early stages of Nazi occupation included the first pieces of information on the exclusion of Jews from society. At this stage, the narrative was presented through a set of common spaces, and gradually depicted the isolation of the Jews; nevertheless, the information on the expulsion of the majority of Kraków’s Jews was delivered on the ‘mixed’ streets. Only later, when the route led round to the section on the Ghetto, were the Polish and Jewish narratives isolated from each other. The story of the Ghetto began with information on relocations and on the plunder of wealth, before interlinking with – but remaining clearly distinguished from – sections on life in ‘Polish’ Kraków, forced labour, and on Oskar Schindler and his factory. This nuanced intertwining served to highlight the impression that the separation of Jews and ethnic Poles was artificial, and that it had divided the city and people living in it. Toward the end of the exhibition, in the ‘Polish’ space, information on Jews hiding on the ‘Aryan’ side of the Ghetto walls was provided again, to emphasise that the Nazi plan to isolate the groups had never fully succeeded. Similarly to at the 2004 Pharmacy exhibition, the photographs used at the new Factory exhibition depicted both Orthodox and highly assimilated Jews.<sup>174</sup> Moreover, the authors of the booklet accompanying the Factory exhibition used the non-capitalised term ‘żydzi,’ which as mentioned above denominates a follower of Judaism in the Polish language, rather than a member of a separate nation. The term is thus one of the few ways of highlighting that ‘Christians’ (however imprecise this description) and ‘Jews’ were members of one nation.

Levy and Sznajder claim that espousing the perspective of the victim is conditional for the emergence of cosmopolitan memory, and that it is, in fact, one of the most important aspects of the common patterning of memory work in the global age. In addition, they emphasise that ‘cosmopolitan memory thus implies some recognition of the history (and the memories) of the «Other».’<sup>175</sup> The 2010 Factory and 2013 Pharmacy exhibitions went even further than Levy and Sznajder might have anticipated. The curators from the MHK adopted the perspective of the Holocaust’s victims in order to ‘defend the equality and freedom of all human beings,’ to use Montserrat Guibernau’s phrasing.<sup>176</sup> In both the Factory and the Pharmacy exhibitions, Jews were not depicted as the Other; on the

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<sup>173</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek, p. 10.

<sup>174</sup> AMHK, ‘Korespondencja, 2008’, Sig. 603/2, fols. 629-639.

<sup>175</sup> Levy and Sznajder, *Memory Unbound*, p. 103.

<sup>176</sup> Guibernau, p. 161.

contrary, the differences between the two groups were downplayed and the interconnections highlighted to present them as members of one nation.<sup>177</sup>

The exhibition in the Pharmacy had fewer occasions than that of the Factory to demonstrate the interconnections between Poles and Jews. It did, however, bring to the fore another group that had traditionally been disregarded and relegated to the background, by foregrounding the fate of Jewish women. The majority of Ghetto topics, such as the story of the Judenrat and most of the official and semi-official self-help organisations and hospitals, could only be depicted through the eyes of men, since in the traditional Polish-Jewish society of the 1940s men were far more likely to be found in positions of power or privilege than their women counterparts.<sup>178</sup> However, the curators made a concerted effort to highlight women's roles wherever possible. The exhibition's second section, 'Prescription for survival,' which demonstrated the strategies taken by Ghetto inhabitants as reflected in their testimonies, was presented predominantly through stories of Jewish women. Alongside information on daily life, this section included details on the Jewish Fighting Organisation. The main source of information about the Kraków JFO was a diary written by Gusta Draenger, a young Jewish woman who had been part of the resistance. This information had been obscured at the earlier exhibitions, but in the 2013 exhibition the curators restored Draenger to her rightful position as the narrator of the story of the resistance.<sup>179</sup> Sonja Hedgepeth and Rochelle Saidel note that women's stories are still largely missing from both scholarly and popular accounts of the Holocaust, and emphasise the backlash with which researchers on gender in the Genocide often meet.<sup>180</sup> Their assertion reminds us that there is no cosmopolitanism, no 'defend[ing] the equality and freedom of all human beings,' without bringing back the stories of women.<sup>181</sup> The curators in the MHK made sure that female witnesses, representatives of the doubly oppressed half of the society of the time, were newly visible.

The decision to represent ethnic Poles and Jews as members of one nation, however, ultimately became a somewhat ungrounded insistence on showing their harmonious coexistence. The 2013 Pharmacy exhibition focused on life in the Ghetto, and therefore Poles (other than Pankiewicz and his staff) were by default excluded. It was the exhibition

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<sup>177</sup> AMHK, 'Korespondencja, 2008', Sig. 603/2, fol. 629.

<sup>178</sup> Joan Ringelheim, 'The Holocaust: Taking Women into Account', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 82 (1992), p. 22.

<sup>179</sup> AMHK, 'Apteka, Scenariusz.'

<sup>180</sup> Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel, 'Introduction', in *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*, ed. by Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel (Hanover, H.N, London: University of New England Press, 2010), pp. 3-4.

<sup>181</sup> Guibernau, p. 161.

in the Factory that was able to fully elaborate on the topic. As mentioned above, ethnic Poles and Jews were depicted together in the section covering the early years of the War, and then Jews were isolated behind the Ghetto walls, to emerge on the 'Aryan side' again in the final section of the exhibition. The anti-Jewish sentiments of Polish Krakowians were noticeable only in two instances, at the beginning and the end of the presentation respectively, and in both cases were downplayed. First, on the staircase leading to the entrance to the main exhibition, four photographs were exhibited. One depicted a group of ethnic Poles passing a group of Hasidic Jews on a street, with one of the Poles visibly grimacing.<sup>182</sup> The initial section of the exhibition, the photographer's atelier, documented pre-War life in the city but did not mention the calls for 'ghetto benches' at the University, or the attacks on the Jewish newspaper. Throughout the exhibition, anti-Jewish crimes were consistently ascribed to the *szmalcownicy*: infamous outcasts, people of the social margins, and criminals, who informed on Jews. The Hall of Choices offered the potential to balance that representation, but even here the curators chose not to face Polish crimes directly. To quote the official accompanying booklet, the first part of the Hall referred to 'attitudes of neglect, lack of empathy,' both of which were understandable under the duress of the War and were qualitatively different to racial prejudice.<sup>183</sup> The second part of the Hall, which presented longer stories, mentioned '*volksdeutsche*, informers, collaborators, *szmalcownicy* who for money, satisfaction or simply out of fear denounced the Poles [...] hiding Jews to their deaths.'<sup>184</sup> Anti-Semitism was not mentioned, and all the crimes were attributed to either criminals or *volksdeutsche*, both groups that stood outside of the Polish community.

While commenting on the glocalisation of memory work in Kraków, I highlighted the impact of national and international memory frameworks, and demonstrated how they constrained Krakowian curators. The same process partially accounts for the lack of direct mention of Polish anti-Semitism in either the Factory or Pharmacy. In short, the curators chose to pick their battles carefully. They reintegrated Jews into Polish society and they broke away from the idiom of Polish martyrdom, but at the same time, they struggled with their depiction of the Germans. On one hand, they represented Germans as ruthless killers, and omitted information about the historical conditions that made them such; on the other, they did provide some information about German projects that were not war crimes.

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<sup>182</sup> Ziębińska-Witek, *Historia*, p. 194.

<sup>183</sup> Marszałek and Bednarek, p. 40.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40.

Finally, curators minimised information on Polish anti-Semitism, and ascribed anti-Jewish crimes to the *szmalcownicy*, who, as people from the social margins, were easy to exclude from 'normal' Polish society. All these problems covered contentious topics that were interpreted differently by proponents of the ethno-nationalist and critical approaches to the Polish past. The MHK curators, generally supporters of the critical reading, made certain concessions to the ethno-nationalist approach. Nevertheless, they were still criticised for overly emphasising Jewish topics.<sup>185</sup>

The present study demonstrates that memory work in Kraków contributed to the cosmopolitanisation of Polish collective memory, and, in turn, identity. It does not, however, seek to imply that the process was ever completed. It is clear that Kraków's activists extended the cosmopolitan values of tolerance, openness, and inclusivity to the Jews, but not to the Germans. Moreover, they did not try to engage with Polish sins, a topic that remains highly controversial even in the 2010s. Like every other museum exhibition – like every other representation of the past, in fact – the 2010s exhibitions did not narrate the whole of a given history; nor were they entirely objective or accurate recreations of the past. Rather, they were narratives created in the early twenty-first century, limited by contemporary frameworks of collective memory, and designed to address contemporary problems. The MHK curators chose to face the issues of nationalism, and exclusion based on ethnicity, while leaving other controversial issues to one side. Cosmopolitanisation in Kraków, then, was indeed an 'interactive relationship of de-nationalization and re-nationalization, de-ethnicization and re-ethnicization, de-localization and re-localization,' to recall the words of Ulrich Beck.<sup>186</sup>

## Conclusion

In the years after the fall of Communism, and especially after 2000, Kraków's memory workers reaffirmed the exceptionality of their city as they worked to strengthen the critical approach to Poland's past and promote the pluralisation of contemporary Polish society. The commercial success of the MHK attests to the increasing popularity of urban expressions of the critical approach.<sup>187</sup> Memory actors were, however, limited by the lingering popularity of ethno-nationalist interpretations. The concessions made by the

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<sup>185</sup> Nowak, see also Salwiński, p. 150.

<sup>186</sup> Beck, p. 98.

<sup>187</sup> Salwiński, p. 150.

MHK curators to ethno-nationalist viewpoints, and the lack of developments in the former Plaszow camp, speak to the power of the conservative contingent.

The first of the interventions into urban memory analysed in this chapter, the ‘Restoring Memory’ campaign, took place between 2002 and 2004. It was realised by the construction of a counter-monument, which, however it was interpreted, infused memory work with a strong cosmopolitan message. It drew attention to the local victims of the Jewish Genocide, and implied that any other group could fall victim to genocides of the future. In the same vicinity, the refurbished Eagle Pharmacy Museum, and two plaques respectively affixed on a remnant of the Ghetto wall and on one of the tenement blocks on the Square, offered different readings of the past. The plaque on the Ghetto wall recalled the suffering of Jewish victims. The Pharmacy museum took the first steps toward espousing the victims’ perspective, but combined it with the perspective of the perpetrators; furthermore, it maintained the division between ethnic Poles and Jews, despite steps having been taken to depict them as members of one nation. While the exhibition can be read as a stepping stone in the process of cosmopolitanisation of memory work, connecting the presentations from the 1980s with those opened in 2010 and 2013, the plaque placed on one of the tenements on the Square showed that cosmopolitanisation was a complex process. Traces of the previous representations of the Jewish tragedy were left intact, and references to conservative narratives were maintained.

2010 and 2013 witnessed another development in urban memory work on the Holocaust past, when the MHK opened a new branch in Oskar Schindler’s former Factory and refurbished the exhibition in the Eagle Pharmacy. Both branches came to form part of the Memorial Trail, a coherent presentation of the War-time past of the city. The Factory offered a narrative that focused on the daily lives and suffering of Krakowians of both Polish and Jewish origin. The narratives of both groups were reconnected, but at the same time, historical distinctions were upheld. The 2010 Factory exhibition aimed toward cosmopolitan equality and inclusiveness with regard to Jews, but also re-established Germans as the Threatening Other of the Polish nation. The 2013 presentation in the Pharmacy focused on daily life in the Ghetto, telling its story through the testimonies of Ghetto inhabitants. Significantly, a vast number of the narrators were women. By bringing back the forgotten half of the population, the exhibition strengthened its cosmopolitan



message, reiterating that it had been designed to ‘defend the equality and freedom of all human beings.’<sup>188</sup>

To successfully frame these innovative and potentially controversial exhibitions for the public, the curators moved from the paradigm of the modern museum to that of the new museum, and from witness to complementary authenticity. They built their presentation with reconstruction and *mise-en-scène*, in order to allow the visitor to move back in time, and ‘feel’ the reality of life during the war. The aim of both exhibitions was to provoke an emotional response in visitors that would spark action and change; that would compel them to rethink their attitudes toward others. The 2010 and 2013 exhibitions were the cumulation of glocalised memory work. Interestingly, global pressure, exerted by activists from supranational organisations, did not necessarily support the creation of critical or cosmopolitan narratives. On the contrary, it was the representative of a supranational NGO that contributed toward the creation of a narrative of exclusion that reaffirmed Germans as the Threatening Other.

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<sup>188</sup> Guibernau, p. 161.

# Conclusion

The good Ariel has not only a Jewish, but a Kraków feel to it [...].<sup>1</sup>

The main objective of this thesis has been to examine the ways in which the Holocaust and the Jewish past have been revisited in Kraków, and to investigate the impact local memory work has had on Polish collective memory. The thesis demonstrates that the urbanisation of Krakowian memory that took place between 1980 and 2013 helped to incorporate references to the Jewish past into Polish collective memory. At the forefront of the process of excavating and presenting Kraków's Jewish past were local memory activists: mid-ranking officials from state and municipal administrations, supported by the members of a fictive kinship, and local elites. These individuals and groups translated the ideas of critical engagement with the nation's history, propagated by some sections of the national elite, into a form of memory that could be consumed by a mass audience. As a result, they strengthened this critical narrative on the Polish past, and offered new readings of Polish identity that ultimately came to include Jewishness in its remit. In addition, the thesis has shown that memory work on a local level persisted almost uninterrupted through the transition to democracy, since no radical reformulation of the Jewish past or the Holocaust took place in the early 1990s. The local narratives grew progressively more critical and increasingly more cosmopolitan from the 1980s onward, a process that accelerated after 2010. The present thesis argues that this post-2010 acceleration was only possible after local activists had embraced new forms of commemoration and new modes of authentication within museum exhibitions. It thus relates the developments of memory work in Kraków to broader changes in culture, rather than solely to changes in political life.

The epigraph to this Conclusion, taken from an interview with one of the most important activists behind the revitalisation of Kazimierz in the 1990s, reminds us of the importance of the mythicised image of Kraków for the success of local memory work. The city was imagined as quieter, more peaceful, and more in thrall to its past than any other city in Poland. While creating oppositional and minority narratives, local activists were inspired by this myth and sought to contribute to it. However, Kraków never existed in a symbolic or political void. Rather, it 'occupied a nodal position in national and

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<sup>1</sup> Kugelmass and Orla-Bukowska, p. 332.

international networks of [...] knowledge.’<sup>2</sup> The national frameworks of collective memory delineated local memory work. Throughout the period discussed here, local activists built on, and were limited by, the ideas developed by national elites: both the proponents of critical interpretations of Polish history and supporters of the ethno-nationalist version.

Two recent interventions into Polish collective memory allow for the boundaries of its frameworks to be retraced, and at the same time aid understanding of the impact memory work in Kraków has had on Polish memory as a whole. The opening of the core exhibition at the POLIN Museum of the History of the Polish Jews in Warsaw in 2014 attested to the ever-increasing popularity of the critical narrative, while comments made by a member of the Polish government in mid-2016 on the Jedwabne and Kielce pogroms confirmed the strength of the ethno-nationalist interpretation. ‘The decision to call Warsaw’s newest museum the Museum of the History of Polish Jews is strategic. By referring to Polish Jews, rather than Jews in Poland, the museum’s name points to the integral and transnational nature of the story,’<sup>3</sup> notes Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, commenting on the exhibition she herself curated. Opened in the capital in 2014, four years after the unveiling of the exhibition in Schindler’s Factory discussed in Chapter Four, POLIN espoused an even more critical approach to the Polish-Jewish past than that first outlined in Kraków, shedding light on the genealogy of the critical narrative. In the early 1980s, the critical approach was all but absent from the capital’s cityscape, although it could be traced in the discourse of the democratic, oppositional elite, and in historical museums in Kraków. By 2014, the ideas first engendered in Kraków were being exhibited in the capital, too.

In July 2016, Anna Zalewska, Minister of Education in the right-wing, conservative government of the PIS, refused to name the perpetrators of the Jedwabne and Kielce pogroms. During a televised interview, she attempted to change the topic five times, eventually referring to ‘various historical complexities’ that had led to the deaths of Jews in Kielce in 1946. At the same time, she mentioned that Polish youth should be educated about the Holocaust so that it could never happen again.<sup>4</sup> Zalewska thus revealed the line that supporters of the ethno-nationalistic version of Polish history are not willing to cross.

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<sup>2</sup> Houlbrook, p 9.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, ‘The Museum of the History of Polish Jews: A Postwar, Post-Holocaust, Post-Communist Story’, in *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*, ed. by Erica Lehrer and Michael Meng (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015). 264.

<sup>4</sup> *Kropka nad i*, TVN, 13 July 2016, 8.30 pm.

She admitted that the Holocaust should be taught in Polish schools, but refused to admit the Polish implication in it; at the same time, she became visibly uncomfortable at having to evade a truth she appeared to have known. By 2016, even the proponents of the ethno-nationalist narrative were aware of the extent of Polish historical guilt, but were still ready to obscure any information about it. The critical narrative, meanwhile, remained controversial and problematic for a number of Poles, but had still moved from the margins to the mainstream.

## **Jewish Spaces – Spaces of Shared History**

The present thesis has demonstrated that the majority of the memory activists working on commemorations of the Holocaust and the Jewish past in Kraków subscribed to the critical approach, and that the development of this approach came about via a series of breakthroughs. The first breakthrough took place in the early 1980s, and pertained to the preservation of the Jewish ruins of Kazimierz, the old Jewish Town in Kraków city centre. Local activists reconceptualised Kazimierz as a space that encouraged engagement with the forgotten and marginalised past. The quarter was reimagined as a quaint, magical town, stuck in a romanticised nineteenth century. The curators from the MHK and preservationists associated with the WUOZ created an image of ‘shtetl-romance,’ a set of stereotypes wherein the Jew was depicted as a ‘sympathetic,’ non-Threatening Other. In the process, however, Jewish relics were recast as part of Polish heritage, and the Jewish past as an integral part of the history of Poland.

Large-scale restoration projects of Kazimierz started only in the 1990s. In fact, the revitalisation of the area was one of the rare instances in which the fall of Communism had a direct impact on memory work in Kraków. However, as local entrepreneurs renovated and commodified the Jewish Town, they followed the ideas first developed by curators and preservationists in the 1980s. Even though the creation of a heritage theme park – the ‘Disneylandisation’ of Kazimierz – has frequently been criticised, this thesis recognises commodification as part and parcel of heritage work, and emphasises that in the course of this heritage work, Jewish Spaces, spaces of meeting and cooperation, were created too. Some delivered kitsch tourist products, while others offered the opportunity for more critical engagement with history. They varied from Spaces of celebration of multiculturalism, in which the Jewish Culture Festival developed throughout the 1990s and

2000s; through the inner Spaces of religious life of the local Community, where the Jewish revival took place; to the Spaces of pubs and bars that self-reflexively referenced the Jewish past. All of these Spaces contributed to the normalisation of Jewishness. Some of the sites maintained the Jew in the position of Other, while others treated Jewishness as interesting, different, but included in a broader definition of Polishness nonetheless.

Parallel with the reconceptualisation of Kazimierz in the early 1980s was the redefinition of the Holocaust. First in a short exhibition in the Old Synagogue, then in the stand-alone National Memorial Museum at the former Eagle Pharmacy, it was depicted as a unique tragedy of the Jewish people. Contrary to the rare national commemorations of the Holocaust sponsored by the state, which focused on Polish help and obscured Jewish suffering, in Kraków curators excluded or marginalised the information about Polish helpers and instead focused on the Jewish story. At the same time, to make the story more accessible to the general public and more congruent with the typical Polish (and European) modes of storytelling, they added a positive post-script: the Pharmacy exhibition finished with a presentation on the prosecution of selected high-ranking German perpetrators. In this way, the story of the crime ended with a punishment; German perpetrators were justly punished, and law and order were restored.

In contrast to the case of heritage work, typified by the restoration of Kazimierz, memory work on the Holocaust in Kraków nearly ground to a halt in the 1990s. It was only in the new millennium that memory work accelerated once more. First came the 'Restoring Memory' campaign, partially triggered by political pressure, but also an expression of genuine engagement with the contentious past. Organised by a mid-ranking municipal official, the campaign transformed a section of Podgórze district, the War-time Ghetto, into a complex *lieu de mémoire*. The Ghetto Heroes Square was turned into a provocative counter-monument. Open to interpretations and challenging established post-War narratives, the monument focused on victims and commented on the universality of evil. It suggested that Jews were the victims of the Holocaust, but any other nation or group could fall victim to similar persecution and genocide in future. The counter-monument was complemented by the new exhibition in the Eagle Pharmacy, whose thoroughly redesigned presentation was the first in Kraków to incorporate aspects of social history into the narrative on the War. It experimented with switching from the perspective of the perpetrator to that of the victim, but the top-down point of view was maintained. The second major development came in the form of the creation of the Memory Trail, which narrated the War story of Kraków. As part of the project, a new museum was opened in

Oskar Schindler's Factory in 2010, and the Eagle Pharmacy was newly refurbished in 2013. The new exhibitions in both spaces depicted Jews as members of the Polish nation, and presented the Holocaust as an important part of Polish history. At the same time, they maintained the historical distinctiveness of both the Jewish Genocide and the War fate of ethnic Poles.

## Urbanising Memory Work

This thesis has sought to establish that local memory activists engaged in urban memory projects supporting critical readings of the past both locally, and, owing to Kraków's exceptional status within Polish culture, also nationally. In addition, it has shed new light on the intricacies of urban memory work, and in particular on the role of local activists within it. Following John Czaplicka, I understand urban memory work as an attempt to uncover the multi-ethnic pasts of non-capital cities, often conducted in opposition to state memory workers, who usually support the (re)nationalisation of memorial narratives.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to Czaplicka's framework, however, this thesis locates the source of the urbanisation of memory in Kraków not in the fall of Communism, but in the first attempts at rediscovering the past of the Other that had already taken root during the 1980s. Moreover, the thesis has problematised Michael Meng's argument regarding the acts of superficial, 'redemptive' engagement with the dark past that took place in Warsaw and Wrocław, demonstrating that the narrative developed in Kraków supported the critical reading of Polish history.<sup>6</sup>

From as early as the 1980s, local memory workers expressed 'the need for authentic – and not-illusory and alibi-creating – absolution for the sin of indifference towards anti-Jewish actions.'<sup>7</sup> In this way, they reflected the stance of both the groups responsible for the *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *ZNAK* periodicals, and the KIKs, which consisted primarily of members of the oppositional, intellectual, and often Catholic elite. The vast majority of local activists involved in the revitalisation of the Jewish spaces and the memorialisation of the Holocaust, however, were not members of the political opposition. Rather they were mid-ranking officials working in municipal or regional institutions. Some were MHK curators, some worked for preservation services, while

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<sup>5</sup> Czaplicka, 'Conclusion', p. 377.

<sup>6</sup> Meng, *Shattered Spaces*, p. 250.

<sup>7</sup> Kersten and Szapiro, p. 265.

others represented the regional office tasked with overseeing local religious life. All of these individuals were obliged to carry out instructions coming from their superiors, whether from the central government or the office of Kraków's Mayor. However, most chose to strategically negotiate their agency vis-à-vis the state, taking advantage of the relative independence of their offices, and, on occasion, obscuring the true intentions of their efforts. As a result, they were able to incorporate their critical interpretations into local memory work. Prior to the fall of Communism, these actions placed local activists in opposition to the official stance of the government; after 1989, they continued to represent the minority approach. The efforts of mid-ranking officials were complemented by representatives of the local intellectual and business elite. The 'Circle,' a fictive kinship responsible for the creation of the Eagle Pharmacy Museum in 1983, was comprised of academics and members of the intelligentsia. The heritage workers responsible for the creation – and commodification – of Jewish heritage in Kazimierz, meanwhile, represented local entrepreneurs.

The thesis contributes to research on the urbanisation of memory work not only by identifying key local activists and analysing their motivations, but also by investigating their connections with international actors and illustrating the nature of the impact they have had on remembrance in Kraków. The study attests to the importance of glocalisation for urban memory work, and demonstrates that from as early as the 1970s Western diaspora Jews had an impact, albeit a very limited one, on memorial production in the city. It establishes, furthermore, that external influence did not always support critical engagement with the past; on the contrary, as evidenced by their intervention into the 2010 Schindler Factory exhibition, on occasion supranational activists in fact contributed to the creation of narratives of exclusion.

## **Cosmopolitan Memory Work: New Content and New Modes of Representation**

As the present thesis has demonstrated, the efforts of local activists, and their insistence on supporting critical engagement with the past, add up to produce an uneasy story of attempts to cosmopolitanise Polish memory. Much like the critical narrative on the Polish past, the cosmopolitan memory project was never recognised by the whole, or even the majority, of the Polish population. And, much like the critical narrative, the

development of cosmopolitan memory work was characterised by constant negotiations with, and concessions to, ethno-nationalist representations and narratives of exclusion, supported by local, national, and even international activists.

The thesis understands the cosmopolitanisation of memory as the attempt to promote values such as openness, tolerance, and inclusivity within memory work, and it traces the manifestations of these attempts back to representations created as early as the 1980s. The vision of the 'shtetl-romance' instilled in Kazimierz, and the 1983 Pharmacy exhibition depicting the Holocaust as uniquely Jewish but nonetheless strongly connected with the Polish War experience, both formed part of the cosmopolitan memory project, challenging the popular imagining of Polish history as the mono-ethnic story of blameless Polish martyrs. Year by year, decade by decade, representation by representation, these flashpoints of cosmopolitanism forced the Polish general public to reflect on the place of the Jewish minority in the national imagination, and on Polish sins, be they of omission or murder. In spite of the limitations imposed by the dominant framework of the ethno-nationalist interpretation of the past, Kraków's memory activists worked to prove that 'the history of Polish Jews is an integral part of the history of Poland, and the history of Poland is not complete without a history of Polish Jews.'<sup>8</sup>

Having connected research on cosmopolitan memory with investigation into urban memory work, this thesis has also provided insight into the relationship between the content and form of memorial narratives. In particular, it demonstrates that implementation of the cosmopolitan memory project was fully possible only after memory activists had embraced new forms of monuments and new modes of authentication within museum exhibitions. The refurbishment of the Ghetto Heroes Square, which challenged existing interpretations focused on the glorification of War heroes, included the installation of a counter-monument. New exhibitions in the Pharmacy and Schindler's Factory, meanwhile, which sensitised their visitors to the suffering of their neighbours and depicted ethnic Poles and Jews as members of one nation, were created in the paradigm of the new museum, utilising complementary authenticities.

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<sup>8</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'The Museum of the History of Polish Jews', p. 277.



## The Importance of the 1989 Threshold

One of the key contributions to knowledge of the present thesis is its problematisation of the importance of the 1989 threshold for memory work in Kraków concerned with the Jewish past. The direct impact of this political change is evident only in the case of the revitalisation of Kazimierz. The fall of Communism, and the embracing of economic liberalism that followed, opened up new avenues for local entrepreneurs and relieved them of the constraints hitherto imposed by the state and by local agencies controlling memory work. State censorship was abolished, and, in practice if not formally, so too was state control over heritage protection services. Even so, local entrepreneurs in Kraków continued to follow ideas developed before 1989.

It is my contention that the development and implementation of the majority of new representations of the past in Kraków followed a rhythm of changes and controversies in Polish national memory only loosely related to politics. In fact, the findings of the present study suggest that a thorough reconceptualisation of the history of memory in Poland is needed. Once again, as Svetlana Boym reminds us, ‘the twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia. Optimistic belief in the future was discarded like an outmoded spaceship sometime in the 1960s.’<sup>9</sup> It was nostalgia that took the place of this utopianism. Complementing her observation is Jay Winter, who explains that ‘[...] there was a change in the practice of history itself. From the 1920s, military history was told from the top-down, and it was only in the 1960s that there occurred a shift first toward a history of societies at war, followed by a cultural history of war.’<sup>10</sup> It is my contention that both these shifts were interconnected, and, in fact, propelled one another. The very modernistic belief in the future, designed by great men of their nations and written through the political history of wars, ceased to be attractive. It was substituted by the stories of people struggling to survive wartime atrocities, who, if they did survive, looked back to a distant past in search of Golden Ages: times of peace, calm, and cooperation. With this transition came the incorporation of cosmopolitan values into memory work. Nationalistic narratives built around mechanisms of exclusion were gradually substituted by newly emerging critical interpretations that supported openness, tolerance, and inclusivity.

As the present study has shown, this pattern is clearly identifiable in the Polish case. The first wave of interest in the Jewish past came in the late 1960s and 1970s. It was

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<sup>9</sup> Boym, p. xiv.

<sup>10</sup> Winter, ‘Human Rights’, p. 50.

triggered by political turmoil, but flourished because of the reorientation of culture as a whole toward the past. Thus, on one hand the KIKs, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and ZNAK began to regularly engage with the Jewish past, and on the other, the Communist government supported the inclusion of Kraków on the UNESCO World Heritage list, organised the fortieth anniversary commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and initiated a debate on Lanzmann's Shoah. These events were closely followed by Błoński's intervention, which was itself soon overshadowed by the first stirrings of controversy around the Carmelite Convent in Auschwitz, which eventually gave rise to what became known as the War of the Crosses. The end of this latter conflict in the early 1990s heralded the beginning of a decade in which almost no new collective representations of the Holocaust were generated. Even the new eruption of the War of the Crosses in 1998 played out along the lines and meanings formulated during its first manifestation. The next major controversy to shake Polish memory arrived in the form of the publication of *Neighbors* in 2000, an incident that was amplified due to coinciding with Poland's EU accession negotiations.

Memory work in Kraków followed a similar trajectory. There were three moments in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century which saw important new interventions take place. First, in the early 1980s Kazimierz was redefined, and Eagle Pharmacy Museum, the first Polish stand-alone Holocaust museum was opened. The ideas that had then crystallised were circulated, in one form or another, for the next twenty years. The second pivotal intervention into memory took place during the 'Restoring Memory' campaign initiated in 2001, which saw interpretation of the Holocaust undergo common patterning, and local narratives created in dialogue with international templates and redesigned to focus on victims and not on perpetrators. The third intervention began in 2010, when the curators of the exhibition in Schindler's Factory embraced narratives rooted in cosmopolitan values to an extent never seen in the city before.

The reconceptualisation of the history of Polish memory, I propose, connects to broader changes in culture, as suggested by both Boym and Winter. It is my contention that changes in Polish memory furthermore connect to modes of representation of the past, and to the move from fact-oriented to emotion-focused narratives. The move from a top-down military history to 'a history of societies at war'<sup>11</sup> was followed by a switch from indexical authenticity to complementary authenticities, based primarily on the utilisation of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 50.

experiential authenticity. Visible to some extent in Kazimierz (the creation of the immersive experience of Szeroka Street can be interpreted as such), it was most important for the memory work carried out in Kraków's museums. The indexical authenticity of facts, utilising the objects-in-cases mode of presentation, upheld top-down exhibitions of military and political history. Common patterning, a focus on individual human beings, and sympathy for the suffering of others was impossible to achieve under this regime of indexical authenticity. The fates and emotions of individuals are incompatible with the 'objective' facts of military history. It is only through complementary authenticities, which combine a commitment to facts with an interest in the interior lives of individual people, that a transition to histories of societies at war, and to cultural histories of war, is feasible. This research suggests that to merge the narratives of Jewish and Polish pasts, Kraków's local curators not only embraced complementary authenticities, but also shifted their focus from narratives on history to presentations on memory. They perceived memory as a far more malleable category, and thus a category that facilitated the telling of inclusive stories of meeting and coexistence.

This thesis, then, offers a direct intervention into debates on the history of the Polish memory of the Jewish past. It problematises Michael Meng's argument on redemptive cosmopolitanism and its earlier incarnations, and the widespread critique of 'Disneylandisation' of Jewish heritage. It demonstrates that in the course of the urban memory work that has been developed continuously since at least 1980, the remembering the Holocaust and the Jewish past helped to strengthen the critical strand of interpretation of the Polish past. In sum, it highlights the central role that memory work in Kraków has played within the complex and frequently fraught development of Polish collective memory.

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