



THE KOSCIUSZKO FOUNDATION ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

in cooperation with The Kosciuszko Foundation Poland,
the Kosciuszko Foundation, Inc. in New York
and the Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw

is pleased to announce a lecture by

PROFESSOR YOHANAN PETROVSKY-SHTERN

(Northwestern University)

The Kosciuszko Foundation Visiting Professor at the University of Warsaw

Rise and Fall of the Shtetl:

Poles, Russians, and Jews in a Polish private town, 1770s-1914

In the late 18th and most of the 19th century, Polish private towns in the former borderlands (*kresy*) remained the administrative islands of Polish *latifundia* situated geographically on the Russian Empire's lands and driven economically by the Jews. Three elements of what Jews called the *shtetl* and Poles called *miasteczko*--namely, economic, political, and administrative powers of the three ethnic groups found themselves in a complex competing relationship. Jews sought to preserve their status as the marketplace driving mechanism, Poles tried to persevere the financial control the towns, while Russians bent themselves backwards to confiscate the towns from the previous owners or to downgrade them economically. What historians described as anti-Jewish reforms of the Russian government turns effectively to be Russian geopolitical efforts to subjugate newly acquired Western imperial borderlands. I will discuss the rise and fall of the shtetl as result of clashes between these competing forces.

Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern is the Crown Family Professor of Jewish Studies and a Professor of Jewish History in History Department at Northwestern University. He teaches a variety of courses that include early modern and modern Jewish History; Jews in Poland and Russia; Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah; history and culture of Ukraine; and Slavic-Jewish Literatures. He holds a Ph.D. in Modern Jewish History from Brandeis University (2001) and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Moscow University (1988). He has been a visiting professor at the universities in Chicago, Boston, Toronto, Paris, Kyiv, Lviv, Warsaw, Krakow, Munich, and Jerusalem. For his expertise, Petrovsky-Shtern has been appointed a Fulbright Specialist on Eastern Europe; a Fellow at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute; an Honorary Visiting Professor at the Free Ukrainian University in Munich, and an honorary doctor of the National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy in Kyiv. He has published more than a hundred articles and six books, including most recently *The Golden-Age Shtetl: a New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* that appeared in paperback with Princeton University Press in 2015 and won a National Jewish Book Award (2015).

Tuesday, March 15, 4:30 PM, Kolegium Artes Liberales UW, Dobra 72, Warszawa, conference hall in the basement