

DEDICATION
of the
JOSEPH CARDINAL BERNARDIN CENTER
for the
STUDY OF EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWRY
Dr. Howard A. Sulkin, President
Spertus College of Judaica
July 22, 1987

There are many important leaders of the religious, educational, arts, political and civic community with us today. Please forgive me for not introducing you all individually. I would, however, like to recognize two people who are here as representatives of their governments: Ambassador Zvi Brosch of the State of Israel, and Jan Rabs, Minister Plenipotentiary and Consul General of the Polish People's Republic.

It has taken five years of preliminary work to get to this day, and yet, today is just a beginning. We have set an ambitious, exciting, and hopefully, productive agenda for the next decade. We felt that a project of this magnitude was worthy of asking you to join us on such a hot and humid day.

We would like to share with you, during this formal part of the program, a little about our goals, our motivations, and our progress to date. We will not have time for questions during the program, but we encourage you to meet with us afterwards -- either during the reception or at a later time -- if there is anything that you would like to discuss.

This Center has its roots in the early dreams of Dr. Mira Brichto, who you will be meeting in a few minutes. She has worked for years on the pioneering idea of bringing to light the art, artifacts and scholarly works of a 1,000 years of Eastern European Jewry that were saved during World War II by churchmen, private individuals and government.

Cardinal Bernardin, when he was Archbishop of Cincinnati, joined with Dr. Brichto to give his help and support to this project. Those early efforts have led us to this day.

I am pleased now to announce the establishment of The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Center for the Study of Eastern European Jewry at Spertus College of Judaica.

Spertus College is honored to be associated with Cardinal Bernardin, who has dedicated his life, and has demonstrated his commitment locally, nationally and internationally to the elimination of anti-Semitism and racism. He has been instrumental in the early stages of the Center, and has committed himself, with even greater vigor, to our future.

What is The Bernardin Center? The Center will include five Institutes, in which leading international scholars will participate. We will be cooperating with many research centers, museums and organizations throughout the world.

The first of these Institutes is for the Study of Polish Jewish Art, Artifacts and Artists, where our first project will be an exhibition entitled "Three Hundred Years of Polish-Jewish Art" which will open at our Spertus Museum in 1991. This exhibition will then travel throughout the State, nationally and the western world. A Planning Committee of internationally renowned art historians is already working on the exhibit.

The second Institute is for the Compilation of a "Bibliographia Judaica" catalog. Working with the Scientific Council of the Polish Academy of Sciences, we will catalog the collections of Judaica in Poland, and microfiche as many materials as possible.

It is envisioned that one catalog will be prepared for books and manuscripts, and another for art and artifacts consisting of approximately 22 volumes.

Both the art, books and manuscripts are so precious to the history of the Jews, and yet, Western scholars with rare exceptions, have not previously had access to these materials.

With the first two Institutes in place, and with major materials available for study, we will then be able to establish our third Institute: The Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies. Several scholars, from a range of disciplines, will be invited to Spertus College each year to study, publish and teach about the results of their research.

In becoming associated with this Center, the Cardinal was very pleased that it was located in his own See, where a large number of his congregants originated from a part of the Old World where interreligious ecumenism was the exception rather than the rule.

The opportunity for access to documents and materials, never before examined by Judaic scholars, will be available for the first time. Critical research into the history of Jewish/Church relationship may give us new insights into how to creatively deal with these problems. Thus, the fourth Institute, the Institute for the Study of Christian-Jewish Experience, will sponsor educational programming for professionals and lay people devoted to applying these new learnings to dealing with these problems.

Lastly, we want to make as much of our findings easily available to people throughout the world. In addition to educational programming, we will establish an Institute for Publication and Translation to make articles, books and materials available in paper form and in microfiche.

I hope, by this time, you have begun to see the potential for this Center, and to feel some of the excitement that those of us who have been planning it for the last two years feel.

During these two years, we have received seed money from several sources. However, the majority of these preliminary seed funds came from a wonderful couple, who I would like to introduce at this time. They had the vision, the hopes, the love and trust to take abstract statements and make the major leap to outcomes that might result a decade from now. Please join with me in thanking Sylvia and Joe Radov.

I am also pleased to announce that we have now secured generous support toward the first Institute: Polish Art, Artifacts and Artists. We have been notified of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities. We have also received funds to be used by our people while in Poland. These have been made available by the Polish Government. We are deeply grateful to all of them.