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Roman Vishniac (1897-1990) *Albert Einstein in his office, Princeton University, New Jersey, 1942*. Gelatin Silver print. The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley, gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, 2016.6.10.

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Message from Irene Pipes

President, American Association
for Polish-Jewish Studies

Founder of *Gazeta*

Dear Members and Friends,

This Spring 2019 issue of *Gazeta* welcomes a diverse set of voices. I am pleased to see a discussion of Volume 32 of POLIN, titled “Jewish Realities Compared,” on the theme of Poland and Hungary. This volume is dedicated to my late husband, Richard Pipes, who died last May. It is a hard time for me.

The outstanding activity this past year was a performance in Lexington of *Remembrance of Things Past: Keeping the Stories of Jewish Poland Alive*. It consisted of a performance by Witek Dabrowski of the Lublin Brama Grodzka Theater in Polish [also known as the Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre] in Polish, and David Liebers and Leora Tec reading the stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer. In the latter, the Jew did not feel any connection to Poland; in the former, a non-Jewish Pole did not know what had befallen the Jews during the war. Unwittingly, walking these parallel paths, they do the same work of preserving the Jewish memory in Poland.

Finally, we organized a film showing of *A Town called Brzostek*, from where Jonathan Weber’s grandfather emigrated, and where Jonathan restored the cemetery. The film shows how, after many years of hatred, suspicion and fear, neighbors finally united.

Looking ahead to a pleasant Passover.

Irene Pipes
President



Irene Pipes

Message from Tad Taube and Shana Penn

Chairman and Executive Director,
Taube Foundation for Jewish Life
& Culture



Tad Taube



Shana Penn

Elie Wiesel once remarked that a single person of integrity can make a difference. The stories in this issue of *Gazeta* bear him out. Among our feature articles, for example, the first describes the strenuous efforts of Jewish leaders in Palestine and Europe during the 1930s to find a refuge for Polish Jews on the eve of a seemingly inevitable disaster. They met only partial success, but not for lack of commitment. The second article is the obituary of a modern-day Polish political leader, Paweł Adamowicz, who paid the ultimate price for publicly exercising his moral integrity, including strong support for Poland's Jews. Another article describes the astonishment of an American Jew who visited the town of her mother's childhood in Poland, to find that non-Jewish Poles were carefully preserving the history of the long-gone Jewish community because they regarded it as part of their own history.

Many such persons of commitment and honor adorn the life and history of the Jews of the Polish lands. Some of them are household names, some obscure, but as Elie Wiesel would surely have agreed, they all matter. We are honored to tell you their stories.

Tad Taube and Shana Penn
Chairman and Executive Director

FEATURES

The Road to September 1939

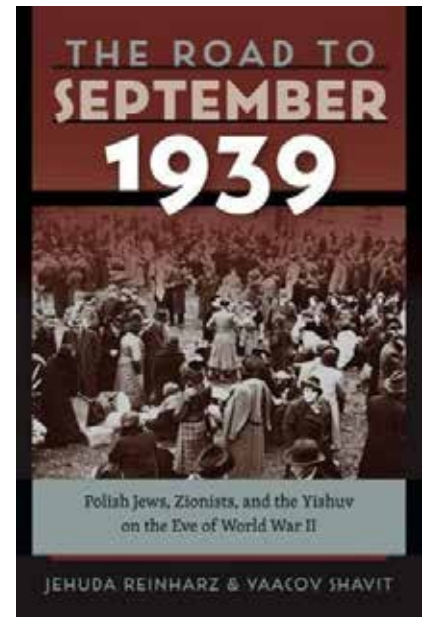
We are pleased to present in this issue of *Gazeta* an essay adapted from the introduction of *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* by Jehuda Reinharz and Yaacov Shavit. Originally published in Hebrew by Am Oved Publishers in 2013, this translation, published by Brandeis University Press in the Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry, introduces English-speaking audiences to the important scholarship of Professors Reinharz and Shavit. *The Road to September 1939* shows, through letters and memoirs, that contrary to popular belief, Zionists in the Yishuv worked tirelessly to attempt to save European Jews from Hitler in the years before World War II. As we approach the eightieth anniversary of Germany's invasion of Poland, this book offers an opportunity for critical reflection on what was, and was not, possible before the storm clouds of the war fell on Europe.

—*Gazeta* Editorial Team

This book serves as a sort of collective diary of statesmen, social and political activists, and ordinary people whose first-person eyewitness accounts were recorded in personal diary entries, letters, and memoirs, along with daily newspaper accounts. These accounts are a record of what they knew, thought, and felt in “real time.” In their focus on the vicissitudes of

We do not intend to describe the events by reading history backward. We have tried not to read the story from its endpoint but rather as much as possible in the “present.”

Jehuda Reinharz and
Yaacov Shavit



Jacket image for *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* by Jehuda Reinharz and Yaacov Shavit.

everyday life, rather than on the big questions of the hour, they bring to life this crucial moment in Jewish history and illuminate more effectively than some traditional histories the events that led up to World War II and the Holocaust.

We do not intend to describe the events by reading history backward. We have tried not to read the story from its endpoint

but rather as much as possible in the “present.” Before August 1939, as well as during that month, no one really knew what was in store. It is only a retrospective reading that determines that the events moved inexorably toward an unequalled calamity and that it was impossible to halt their course. A fog of uncertainty and lack of knowledge shrouded that month. And in any case, even if everyone had known where history was heading, they would have been helpless to divert the ship toward a safe haven. The processes that preceded the breakout of the Second World War have been reconstructed and analyzed in numerous books, some of them recording and reconstructing the behind-the-scenes occurrences that were unknown to people at the time. The history of the Jewish people, the Zionist movement, and the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, in the 1930s have been the subjects of an extensive body of literature. This book could not have been written without consulting it.

The countries of the free world had no interest in resolving Poland’s internal problems by opening their gates to a large Jewish immigration.

The reader of this book will find almost no German Jews in it. Likewise, it will not discuss the fate of the Jews of Romania, Hungary, or France, for example. The choice to focus on Polish Jews seems obvious to us. Poland was home to the largest Jewish population in the world—around 3.5 million Jews in 1939—and after 1924, it was the main source of Jewish emigration across the Atlantic and to Palestine. From 1929 to 1938, more than 400,000 Jews left Poland. Initially, most of them went to the United States, but from 1924 onward the rate of those immigrating to Palestine increased. Between 1929 and 1935, Palestine absorbed around 43.7 percent of the total Jewish emigration, whereas the United States absorbed 10.9 percent.

If in 1929 Palestine took in less than a tenth of Jewish emigration from Poland, then in the years prior to the Second World War it became the principal destination for that emigration. In 1935, Palestine absorbed around 80.6 percent of the emigrants, and in 1937, 32.2 percent. Between 1919 and 1939, around 140,000 people emigrated from Poland to Palestine—around 35 percent of the mandate’s total Jewish population. During the mandate period, Poland was thus the largest source of immigration to Palestine and the main source of the Yishuv’s demographic growth. In addition, a large part of the private capital that was imported to Palestine belonged to Polish Jews, who made a considerable contribution to the national funds.

In the middle of the 1930s, as the pressure to leave Poland grew and Palestine became the almost exclusive destination, the British government imposed new restrictions on Jewish immigration. As a result, the country’s gates were shut to many who wanted to immigrate to it. The Zionist movement and

its institutions had to lay the bridge on which at least some Polish Jews would cross over to Palestine. The Yishuv's political future and its power were now intertwined with the fate of Polish Jews. The fate of Polish Jews, however, as opposed to the fate of German Jews and later that of Jews under the Third Reich, was not on the public and international agenda. It did not occupy any place in British or international policy considerations, because Polish Jews had not been expelled and therefore did not become asylum-seeking refugees. The countries of the free world had no interest in resolving Poland's internal problems by opening their gates to a large Jewish immigration.

The Zionist movement found itself in a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, putting the need for Jewish emigration from Poland on the international agenda was welcomed. On the other hand, directing this emigration to different countries in Africa or South America meant that Zionism would become irrelevant. In October 1936, for example, Chaim Weizmann

Polish Jews had a rich and multifaceted existence as an integral part of Polish life and under its influence. The shadow of a possible war weighed on them without being necessarily tied to the future of the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine, and even in isolation from it.

wrote to Moshe Shertok (Sharett), director of the Jewish Agency's political department, that Poland had put the question of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe on the international agenda: "The recent pronouncements of the Poles have made a very great impression. The Polish problem transcends the ordinary boundaries and makes it patent to everybody that our misfortunes will soon grow to a first-rate international calamity for which we cannot take responsibility and which may affect vitally the state of affairs in the East and South East Europe."

This led to the conclusion that it would be possible to spur the governments and the world's conscience to see finding a solution for the Jews' plight as a lofty conscientious duty. This was also accompanied by a belief that the power of the Jewish world could not be reduced to its plight. Weizmann, however, did not mean that putting the subject of Jewish emigration on the international agenda would include alternatives to Palestine. He—and others—believed that when it would become clear that there were no such alternatives, Palestine's status as the only destination would be reinforced.

However, it would be a mistake to describe the history of Polish Jews between the two world wars only from a Zionist or a Palestinian perspective. Most of the Jews in Poland were not Zionists, and many of them opposed Zionism or were indifferent to it. Nor did many Zionists show an urgency or eagerness to immigrate to Palestine. Polish Jews had a rich and multifaceted existence as an integral part of Polish life and under its influence.

The shadow of a possible war weighed on them without being necessarily tied to the future of the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine, and even in isolation from it.

At the end of a dinner held on February 22, 1938, at the house of Leopold Amery, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs from 1924 to 1929, Ben-Gurion told Sir Harold MacMichael, who was appointed High Commissioner for Palestine in 1938 (and held the position until 1944), that the Zionist movement wanted “to save the young generation of Eastern and Central European Jewry—and it’s possible. It’s a question of two million Jews.” MacMichael replied that the Jews were “rushing things.” Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: “And again I saw that we are hitting a wall. The Englishman doesn’t know what time means for us.”

What was the Zionist “dimension of time” in the 1930s? Can we distinguish between rhetoric and plans of action, wishes and means? The research literature, and even more so the political and public debate, have been suffused for over fifty years with a

The research literature, and even more so the political and public debate, have been suffused for over fifty years with a bitter disagreement around the question to what extent Jews in general, and the political leadership of the Zionist movement in particular, were aware that time was pressing.

bitter disagreement around the question to what extent Jews in general, and the political leadership of the Zionist movement in particular, were aware that time was pressing. Did the “awareness of time” change between 1935 and 1939? What was done under the pressure of time in order to break through the “wall,” and did the Jews of Poland and of the Yishuv share the same “concept of time”?

Various plans and solutions were mooted and discussed

publicly and behind closed doors, stirring up the debate and creating polarization. Plans can testify to the sense of time and to a will to act. But they do not indicate that those who thought up the plans had the power and the means to carry them out. As will become apparent in the narrative that follows, individuals and organizations within the Zionist movement feared for the fate of the Jews of Europe and did what they could within the fog of uncertainty and with limited resources. Once the war broke out, however, the fate of European Jewry was virtually sealed. ■

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Yaacov Shavit is Professor Emeritus at Tel Aviv University.

Honoring the Memory of Paweł Adamowicz: November 2, 1965 – January 14, 2019

Antony Polonsky

The tragic death of Paweł Adamowicz, murdered on January 13, 2019, while speaking on the stage at the concert of the Great Orchestra of the Christmas Charity Foundation, has robbed Poland of one of its most able and progressive leaders. As mayor of Gdansk since 1998, he was responsible for numerous civic innovations, including Poland's first "civic panel," to develop policies on flood prevention, with residents drawn at random to "raise the level of civic engagement in the areas most challenging to the city." According to Adamowicz, civil society "is not about enlightened absolutism imposed from the top. It takes place through the activism of different entrepreneurs and people of different professions and ideas, as well as through public disputes and conflicts. That is how civil society is created."

Born of parents who emigrated after the war from Vilnius to Gdańsk, Adamowicz became active



Paweł Adamowicz in July 2018. Photograph by Rudolf H. Boettcher. Wikimedia Commons.

in politics as head of the committee that organized the strikes in Gdańsk in 1988, and that contributed to the convening of the roundtable talks culminating in the negotiated end of communism in Poland. He was elected to the Gdańsk city council in 1990 and in 1998 became its mayor, a post to which he was re-elected several times. In 2018, he was re-elected as an Independent, although he had previously been a co-founder

According to Adamowicz, civil society "is not about enlightened absolutism imposed from the top. It takes place through the activism of different entrepreneurs and people of different professions and ideas, as well as through public disputes and conflicts. That is how civil society is created."

and member of Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska—PO*).

He made his reputation as a progressive, supporting the settlement of immigrants in Gdańsk, sex education in schools, gay and lesbian rights—in 2018 he was an honorary patron of the fourth Gdańsk Gay Pride Parade, in which he also participated—and the national rights of the Kashubes. As a symbol of his support for women's rights,

he granted the keys of the city to the women of Gdańsk to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of women's suffrage in Poland. As he told *The Guardian* in 2016, "I am a European, so my nature is to be open. Gdańsk is a port and must always be a refuge from the sea."

He spoke out strongly when the windows of the Gdańsk synagogue were broken last year, denouncing the vandalism. In the aftermath of Adamowicz's assassination, all the main Jewish organizations in Poland issued a joint statement. It asserted: "Sadly, hatred is becoming more and more visible and more widely accepted in Polish political and social life. The death of Mayor Paweł Adamowicz is yet another tragic warning signal that in our society, ideological differences, and differences of worldview, can lead—in extreme cases—to acts of physical violence."

The mayor's assassin, a 27-year-old resident of Gdańsk, had a criminal history that included bank robberies and an attack on a police officer. According to reports in the Polish press,

"The death of Mayor Paweł Adamowicz is yet another tragic warning signal that in our society, ideological differences, and differences of worldview, can lead – in extreme cases – to acts of physical violence."

—Joint statement issued by Polish Jewish organizations

he was treated for paranoid schizophrenia while in prison but stopped taking his medication before his release. After stabbing Adamowicz, the assassin seized the microphone and claimed that he had been falsely imprisoned and tortured at the hands of the previous PO government. One of the main claims of the present Polish government, headed by the Law and Justice Party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość—PiS*), is that the courts were dominated by a PO-created mafia, and that this had necessitated the large-scale purge of the judiciary—a claim that led many to assert that the hate-filled atmosphere

created by PiS had led the assassin to commit his heinous act.

Adamowicz had previously been verbally attacked by right-wing politicians. In 2017, the *Młodzież Wszechpolska* (All-Polish Youth), whose president, Adam Andruszkiewicz, was recently appointed Deputy Minister for Digitalization, published a series of ten "political death certificates" of pro-European politicians. Adamowicz's certificate described his "cause of death" as "liberalism, multiculturalism, stupidity." The prosecutor's office decided that these tacit threats did not constitute a breach of the law, but were rather a form of legitimate criticism of the politicians involved. In an interview with a right-wing media outlet broadcast on the day that Adamowicz's death was announced, the far-right politician Grzegorz Braun described him as a "traitor to the nation."

According to Rafał Pankowski, head of the *Nigdy Więcej* (Never Again) association, an anti-racist campaign group, Adamowicz became a symbol of something bigger than the

attack itself. “He died during a charity event that tries to bring Poles together. As a result, he became a symbol of the death of unity in this society.” In Pankowski’s view, Adamowicz “started to become more and more outspoken on issues of diversity and minority rights and tolerance, just as society was moving in the opposite direction. It was very impressive. He was a very brave man—and he paid for it.”

The government claimed there was no evidence that the attack was politically motivated, and that the assassin had also threatened the president. President Duda condemned the murder as a “hard to imagine evil.” The stabbing was also condemned by other members of the PiS. Less than ten days after the murder, however, one of President Duda’s advisers, on state television, talking about Lech Wałęsa, Jerzy Owsiak (the founder of the foundation that sponsored the charity event), and Paweł Adamowicz, claimed that the public scene was affected by a form of “mystification” that “makes angels of individuals whose behavior raises many questions.”

It is vital to “put an end to the wave of hatred, respect the dignity of man, and engage in a reckoning of conscience.”

*—Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz,
Archbishop of Warsaw*

It is to be hoped that this tragic event will lead to a diminution of the divisive and abusive character of Polish political life. Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, Archbishop of Warsaw, at the mass celebrated in the presence of members of the government on the Sunday after the murder, argued that it is vital to “put an end to the wave of hatred, respect the dignity of man, and engage in a reckoning of conscience.” ■

Antony Polonsky, PhD, is Chief Historian at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

Roman Vishniac Archive Gifted to the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life (University of California, Berkeley)

Roman Vishniac (1897 – 1990) was a Russian-born modernist photographer who is best known for his poignant images of traditional East European Jewish life, especially Polish Jewish street life, in the years immediately preceding the Holocaust. His photographs of this era also capture the plight of Jewish and other displaced persons across Europe before and after World War II. Once in the United States, Vishniac photographed minorities and immigrants in New York City and elsewhere. He was also a passionate science photographer and a pioneer in microscopic photography.

The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at the University of California, Berkeley, is now the grateful repository of Vishniac's complete archive, representing one of the museum's most important acquisitions since its founding in 1962. The Roman Vishniac Collection includes not only thousands

of photographic prints, but also negatives, contact sheets, slides, and personal and professional records. The Magnes will exhaustively catalogue, document, and organize all of these materials so that they will be accessible for teaching, research, and, ultimately, public display. The collection likewise promises to be of inestimable value to the UC Berkeley community of research into 20th-century East European Jewry.

We are especially grateful to Roman Vishniac's daughter, Mara Vishniac Kohn, and her children, Naomi and Ben Schiff, who gifted the collection to UC Berkeley. [Please see obituary for Mara Vishniac Kohn in this issue of *Gazeta*, [page 45].

Roman Vishniac: A Conversation

Following is an edited version of a conversation between Frances Spagnolo, curator of The Magnes Collection, and Dr. John Efron, Koret

Francesco Spagnolo

Professor of Jewish History at UC Berkeley, which took place at The Magnes last November, days after the collection was moved to Berkeley.

Francesco Spagnolo: The photograph, *An Elder of the Village, Vysni Apsa*, is one of the most iconic and well-known images by Roman Vishniac. It went on the cover of his book, *A Vanished World* (1983). What does the image mean, and what does the book mean? They have a global significance, but they're also very particular.

John Efron: Yes. [This man] is from Vysni Apsa, in Carpathian Ruthenia, which is sort of Ukraine today and was divided up between various new countries after World War I. And it's iconic because the portraiture is just perfect, the way he's both leaning the hand on the cane, and his head in his hands, so he's in this deep thoughtful pose, and he's an elder of his community. And so for Vishniac, it



Roman Vishniac (1897-1990), [Woman walking on crutches through ruins], [Berlin (Germany)], 1947. Black-and-white inkjet print (from original negative).

The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley, gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, 2016.6.15.

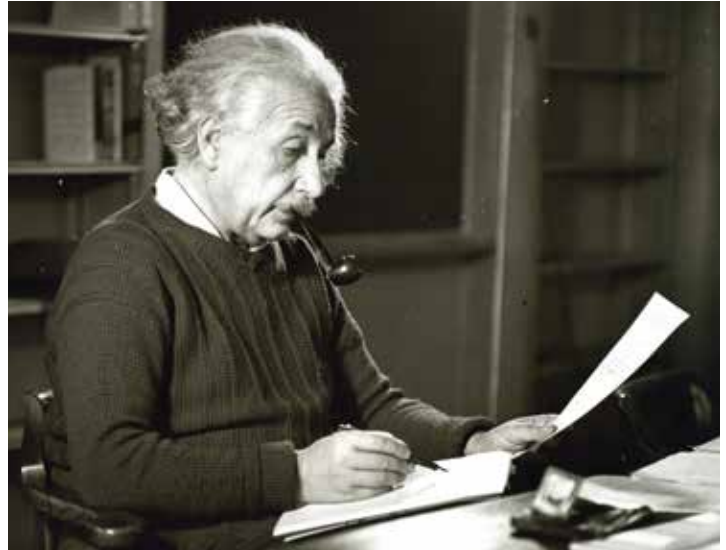


Image 1: Roman Vishniac (1897–1990), *Albert Einstein in His Office, Princeton University, New Jersey, 1942*. Gelatin silver print.

The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley, gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, 2016.6.10.

signifies the community itself. Vishniac represented this part of the community as deeply religious and deeply pious.

FS: Once Roman Vishniac arrived in the United States, he set up to do studio photography, and traveled to Princeton to take portraits of Albert Einstein (Image 1), who apparently stated that his portraits by Vishniac were among his favorites. It's a different type of both Jewish American and global iconography here, right?

JE: Right, but there are two things: [the village elder and Einstein] were both, at this particular point, relatively elderly Jewish men from different parts of Europe, very

clearly, but both learned in their own way, and they're both deep in thought. You wouldn't expect this small town elder from the *shtetl* and Einstein to have much in common, but the way Vishniac has portrayed them, I think I can say that they actually do have something in common, and of course we know that both of their worlds came to an end.

FS: I remember that when I exhibited these images I put them one next to the other for the very same reason.

Roman Vishniac took many, many photographs of storks (e.g., *Stork in Flight*). It's something that could be surprising, but if we relate this

to materials in the Vishniac archives—things he wrote—we see that there is not only a poetry in how he describes a living animal, but there is really a humanist gaze on science that we also see reflected in a more scientific, taxonomic gaze on human beings. So he's a man of the two cultures combined, science and humanities. He writes about the stork, "the wings of the planing bird are the prototype of our airplane wings. Gliding and sailing birds were the models for inventors," and he talks about the struggle of the flight of the stork in detail in his notes. And these notes in his archives were typewritten at the same time as his reflections on the city of

Paris (from the point of view of a gargoyle on Notre Dame), as well as on the toils of the European Jews. He writes about Jews in the same way that he writes about storks, and their struggle in flight: “Four million human beings driven to despair by humiliation, suffering, and destitution, hope to be saved if not for themselves, then for their children that they may grow up to live and work in a better world.”

JE: He doesn’t express any knowledge of the systematic extermination of European Jewry, but needless to say, he’s fully aware of the systematic *persecution* of Europe’s Jewry. So we’re at a point where for him personally that knowledge is not there, and then there’s still sort of a glimmer of hope, perhaps tied to ... the picture of the stork, that the stork will still be able to make its ascent and remain in the air, so he still sees a possibility at this particular point ... and doesn’t realize that there is none.

FS: Roman Vishniac was a pioneer in microscopic photography. The Vishniac collection now at The Magnes includes around 1,500 scientific prints, plus



Image 2: Roman Vishniac (1897–1990), *Amino Acid (00 000)*, ca. 1970. Chromogenic print.

The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley, gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, 2018.15.

negatives and other materials, [including images like *Amino Acid* (Image 2), of microscopic objects which are photographed—in stark contrast to his black-and-white photos—in color], that we hope will unleash numerous paths of research on the UC Berkeley campus.

Many of his photographs depict children—he devoted a whole book to Jewish children—but he photographed children in many communities, in many ways, and especially children who were also readers (*Boy Reading*), like his photographs of East European and Jewish children in the *cheder*, a religious elementary school.

JE: There almost is a disproportionate representation of Jews reading, both children and adults, and even in the picture of Einstein, he is reading. So, Jews as a sort of a reading civilization is the way he wished to portray them, irrespective of what country they’re in, or where they’re from: whether they’re from Germany, like Einstein, or whether they’re from Carpathian Ruthenia, or whether they’re now in America, reading what looks like an English-language book. They’re nonetheless reading.

FS: Roman Vishniac traveled to Israel several times, and



Image 3: Roman Vishniac (1897–1990) [*Israel*], October 1967. Diapositives (slides).

The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley, gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, 2018.15.

[his slide series] *Israel* (Image 3) depicts a trip in October–November of 1967, shortly after the Six Day War. We have no prints in the archive, but we have many, many slides. He gives a wide-ranging portrait of Israel, and especially Jerusalem, the Old City, which had just been re-

acquired for access to Jews. And also there is again the topic of elderly Jewish, or in this case even Samaritan, men with ritual texts, and of bearded elderly men.

JE: Also, one of the things that's most noticeable is that he's known, of course, for these stunning and striking

black-and-white photos, and the [slides] are in color. So it sort of represents a dawn, as it were, a brightness of a possible future, as opposed to a visual recording of photographs of a civilization that's on the brink. This is a civilization on the brink of a new future; so these are in color, and they're also very striking. But these are very intimate portraits, again, of both Jews and non-Jews.

FS: And self-portraits, as well! We see him in action, roaming the roads of Israel. What's interesting, and very important, about these images, is that there is no real public documentation of Vishniac in Israel. This gives us a sense of the potential of this archive, and how many more roads we need to take in order to document the extraordinary work of this photographer. ■

Frances Spagnolo is Curator of The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at UC Berkeley, and Affiliated Faculty with the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion.

John Efron, PhD is Koret Professor of Jewish History at UC Berkeley.

Keeping Jewish Memory Alive in Poland

Leora Tec

We trudged through the snow up a steep hill. I had to pull myself up by the bannister that had been installed to make access easier. My host Inga Marczyńska and I were headed to the mass grave where 260 Jews from Kołaczyce and Brzostek are buried. They were marched there on August 12, 1942—mothers carrying their babies and toddlers, with no bannister to steady them. Inga, who is tireless in her efforts to commemorate the Jews of Kołaczyce, seemed unbothered by her high heels or the fact that her skirt was covered in snow. When we reached the site, Inga asked if I wanted to light candles in memory of the dead. She reached into her tote bag and pulled out two candles. She never goes anywhere without them.

Like so many extraordinary non-Jewish Poles whom I have had the honor to meet in the course of my work

When we reached the site, Inga asked if I wanted to light candles in memory of the dead. She reached into her tote bag and pulled out two candles. She never goes anywhere without them.

to create a video archive of Rescuers of Memory, Inga is trying to save Jewish memory “from oblivion,” to borrow the words that Rafał Kowalski, Deputy Director of the Museum of Mazovian Jews in Płock uses to describe his own activities. My recorded conversations with Inga and Rafał will join other conversations to be archived on the Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre website.

It is appropriate that Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre should house them. Brama is an amazing organization of more than fifty non-Jewish Poles who, for almost three decades,

have dedicated themselves to Jewish remembrance in Lublin, Poland. I first encountered them in 2005, when visiting Poland with my mother, Nechama Tec. Her memoir *Dry Tears*, about her experience passing as a Catholic girl during the Holocaust, had just been translated into Polish, and Lublin was one of the stops on her book tour. I had no inkling that there were people in my mother’s hometown honoring the memory of Jews of that place. I now must admit that I had barely thought about my ancestors in Lublin—barely thought beyond my mother’s immediate family. But the non-Jewish Poles that I encountered there were remembering for me. They were gathering facts, photos, sounds, testimonies, and lovingly placing them in what they call an Ark of Memory.

I was so moved by their reverence and dedication that I felt called to highlight them and those that do similar work—not only people doing



Inga Marczyńska at the mass grave where 260 Jews from Kołaczyce and Brzostek were murdered.

Courtesy of Leora Tec.

grassroots projects such as cleaning up cemeteries, but also teachers, those working in institutions, and academics. What moves them to do this precious work? After my friend Robert Kuwalek (an expert on the Bełżec and Majdanek death camps and the Jews of Lublin) died unexpectedly at the age of forty-seven, I became even more convinced of the

importance of recording the voices and stories of people like him. He counted survivors among his friends. In a hundred years, who will carry on this memory work? Rafał Kowalski from Płock says it was almost as if he were possessed by a *dybbuk* when he set out to find the survivors from Płock all over the world and interview them. Perhaps I am not possessed by

a *dybbuk* but I am determined to shout from the rooftops in my own way—through video, writing and talks—to tell the world about these amazing people who wake up every morning looking for new ways to fill the hole left in Poland after the Holocaust. ■

Leora Tec is the founder and director of Bridge to Poland and an AAPJS board member. She is currently in Poland as a Stevens Traveling Fellow from Wellesley College.

Correction: An earlier electronic version of this article contains an incorrect photograph and corresponding caption. *Gazeta* apologizes for this error.

The Untorn Life of Yaakov Weksler

Michael
Schudrich

I first met Yaakov Weksler more than twenty years ago when he was Father Romuald Waszkinel, a priest and a professor of theology in Lublin. Only a few years earlier he had discovered that he had been born a Jewish baby near Vilna, around the year 1941, and had been given away by his Jewish mother in order to save him from the Shoah. While Yaakov's adoptive Polish parents risked their lives to save him, they never wanted to tell him that, in fact, he was not their biological child. More than fifty years ago, Yaakov decided to enter the priesthood and asked his parents if he was really theirs since he did not look like them. They responded by saying "Don't we love you?" but could not tell Yaakov the truth. So Yaakov went on to enter the priesthood. Around twenty-five years ago, his adoptive father passed away, at which time his adoptive mother told him the truth—that he was not their biological child and



Former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel Meir Lau, Yaakov Weksler, and Shaya Ben Yehuda, who is reading from the Torah.
Courtesy of Chief Rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich.

that he was born to Jewish parents who gave him to them in order to save his life. A few years later, Yaakov met his biological uncle, the brother of his Jewish father, and then traveled several times to Israel to meet him.

And so began Yaakov's Jewish journey.

For him, a theologian, this journey was a profoundly spiritual and intellectual one. Yaakov spent years learning more and more about Judaism, following in the footsteps of Pope John Paul II of discovering the Jewish

roots of Christianity as well as his own family's roots. The journey was deep and therefore took time. Indeed, it was the journey of a lifetime.

About ten years ago, Yaakov decided that he wanted to live on a religious kibbutz in order to taste in some way the way his parents and grandparents had lived their lives. After a soul-searching discussion with the rabbi of the kibbutz, Yaakov was accepted and lived on the kibbutz for over a year. This gave him the opportunity for the first time to see Jewish life up close, and to

live Jewishly every day. His experience was an inspiration to others, and is depicted in the film *Torn*, made during his stay on the *kibbutz*. The movie's title aptly describes Yaakov's dilemma between the two worlds in which he lived.

I was in regular contact with Yaakov throughout his incredible journey of self-discovery, full of its ups and downs and his search for self-reconciliation.

Over the years in which we met, I increasingly encountered a person who was becoming more and more at home with himself and his newly "untorn" identity.

This past Yom Kippur, Yaakov was in Warsaw and attended services at our Nożyk Synagogue. I offered him an *aliya*, to be called to the Torah. He declined, saying that he was home in the synagogue but not yet ready for an *aliya*.

On February 6, 2018, Yaakov decided to put on *tefilin* and to be called to the Torah for the first time in the Yad Vashem synagogue. A very belated Bar Mitzvah!

Watching Yaakov beaming from cheek to cheek, watching a man who as a baby had survived the Shoah, so full of happiness and contentment was an experience that transcends words.

I arrived at the synagogue that day and found a packed room full of people who had only one goal in mind: to wish Yaakov a *mazal tov*! All had gathered to wish him well in the next part of his life's journey, to welcome him home.

Watching Yaakov beaming from cheek to cheek, watching a man who as a baby had survived the *Shoah*, so full of happiness and contentment was an experience that transcends words. This seemingly impossible moment filled the room with awe—to see a person who persevered for over twenty-five years as a conflicted human being now standing proudly in his *tallit* and *tefilin* in perfect wholeness, no longer "torn."

Yaakov shared with us, in Hebrew, his tremendous happiness, his gratitude to both his Jewish and Polish parents and to all of us. "*Chazarti habayita*," he said. "I have returned home." The torn man is now whole.

Mazal tov, Yaakov! *Ohavim otcha!*—We love you!

Postscript: Yaakov decided that he wanted to stay in Israel and has been working at Yad Vashem since 2011. ■

Michael Schudrich lives in Warsaw and is the Chief Rabbi of Poland.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Books

Elie Wiesel: An Extraordinary Life and Legacy *Writings, Reflections, Photographs*

Edited by Nadine Epstein. Foreword by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.
Afterword by Ted Koppel (Moment Books, 2019)

Reported by
Tressa Berman

This newly released tribute to the late Elie Wiesel (1928–2016) is a selected compilation of visual narratives and personal reflections on the life and legacy of one of the most preeminent human rights thought leaders of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Elie Wiesel is remembered here by such prominent and diverse Jewish voices as Itzak Perlman, Michael Berenbaum, Dani Dayan, Mark Podwal, and Martha Hauptman (his personal assistant for almost thirty years), plus many more unexpected contributors, including Oprah Winfrey. Most vivid are the portraits by those who knew him best, and most telling are the praises by historians of the Holocaust and Jewish history, the survivors, the celebrators of life, and the recoverers of loss, to which Wiesel’s life itself was a living testament. Indeed, as Rabbi Jonathan Sacks points out in the preface of the book, “Whatever he did and wherever he went, Elie

“I have learned the danger of indifference, the crime of indifference. For the opposite of love ... is not hate but indifference.”

—Elie Wiesel

carried with him six million fragments of our people. His was the voice of memory when others sought to forget.”

Included in this compendium is an interview with Wiesel himself, conducted by Elisha Wiesel (the son of Elie and Marion), standing before the famous quote of his father: “One person of integrity can make a difference.” This personal and public account of his father’s accomplishments and teachings segues into perhaps the most captivating section of the book—Elie Wiesel’s own words, essays, and speeches, written and presented in over forty years. His mission was not only to remember, but to act in accord

with that memory to prevent collective harm and to heal it where it already occurred. As he stated in his acceptance speech for the 1985 Congressional Gold Medal of Achievement, “I have learned the danger of indifference, the crime of indifference. For the opposite of love, I have learned, is not hate but indifference.” From receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 until the final decade of his life, Elie Wiesel lived his words with a prophetic grace and an empathy for humankind borne of his own experience. ■

Tressa Berman, PhD, serves as Managing Editor of Gazeta.

Józef Czapski: Three New Books

Reported by
Adam Schorin

Last autumn, *The New York Review of Books* published three books by and about Józef Czapski, the 20th-century Polish painter and writer.

Czapski was born in Prague in 1896 and died in France in 1993: he lived through and witnessed the Russian Revolution, the Parisian art world of the roaring twenties, the front lines of World War II, the Siberian gulag, and the fall of communism. As a young man, he studied law in Saint Petersburg and painting in Warsaw and Kraków; in 1924, he moved to Paris, where he worked as a painter and critic. As a Polish reserve officer fighting against the Nazis in the first weeks of World War II, he was taken prisoner by the Soviets. One of the few soldiers excluded from the massacre of Polish officers at Katyn, he was sent instead to a gulag labor camp. Though he never returned to Poland after the war, he continued in his adopted France to fight



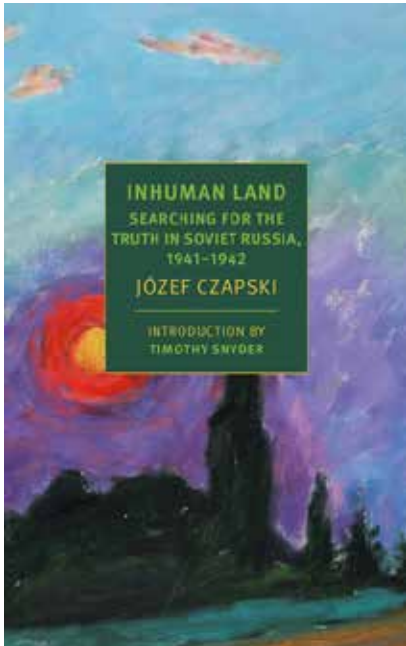
“Together these books document Czapski’s physical and spiritual survival during a nightmare era, but, more than that, they re-create an overlooked life, one marked by an exemplary measure of modesty, moral clarity, and artistic richness.”

—Cynthia Haven,
The Wall Street Journal

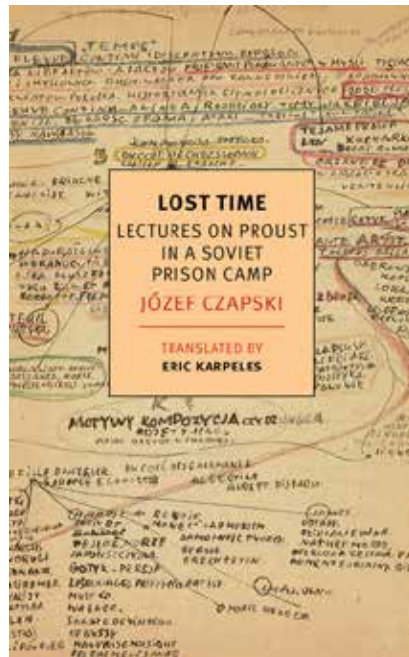
for public awareness about the situation in Communist Poland.

The recently published books are *Almost Nothing: The 20th-Century Art and Life of Józef Czapski*, *Lost Time: Lectures on Proust in a Soviet Prison Camp*, and *Inhuman Land: Searching for the Truth in Soviet Russia, 1941–1942*. The first of these is a biography of Czapski by Eric Karpeles, a painter himself, that has been reviewed by Robert Hass as “an amazing and completely unexpected achievement told with a steadiness of vision that is breathtaking.” Karpeles also translated Czapski’s lectures on Proust (collected in *Lost Time*), which he originally delivered to his fellow inmates in a labor camp in Siberia.

Inhuman Land is Antonia Lloyd-Jones’s new translation of Czapski’s reportage of his time in Anders’ Army. General Władysław Anders had



personally assigned Czapski the task of investigating the disappearance of thousands of Polish officers, including those who had been killed on Stalin's orders at Katyn, a crime for which the USSR never accepted responsibility. In the book, Czapski also describes his release from the gulag labor camp, and his arduous journey with Anders' Army through Central Asia and the Middle East to fight on the Italian front. The book includes an introduction by Timothy Snyder, Yale University Professor and historian of Eastern Europe and the Holocaust.



Cynthia Haven writes in *The Wall Street Journal*:
“Together these books document Czapski’s physical and spiritual survival during a nightmare era, but, more than that, they re-create an overlooked life, one marked by an exemplary measure of modesty, moral clarity, and artistic richness.” ■

Adam Schorin is Assistant Editor of Gazeta.

Recent Polish Jewish Studies Books of Note

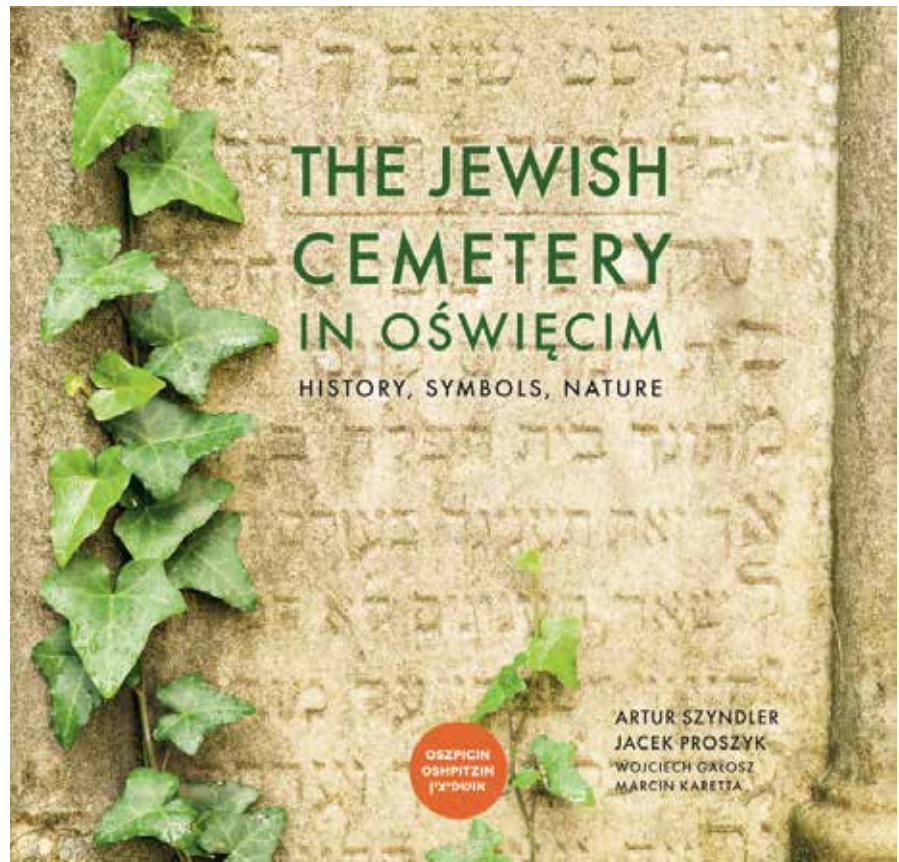
Compiled by Agnieszka Ilwicka

1. Anna Bikont, *Sendlerowa. W ukryciu*. Warszawa: Czarne, 2017
2. Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne archiwum getta Warszawy, t.29. *Pisma Emanuela Ringelbluma z getta*, ed. Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2018
3. Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne archiwum getta Warszawy, t. 29A. *Pisma Emanuela Ringelbluma z bunkra*, ed. Eleonora Bergman, Tadeusz Epsztein, Magdalena Siek, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2018
4. Mordechaj Canin, *Przez ruiny i zgliszczka. Podróż po stu zgłodzonych gminach żydowskich*, trans. and ed. Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Nisza, 2018
5. Maria Cieśla, *Kupcy, arendarze i rzemieślnicy. Różnorodność zawodowa Żydów w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w XVII i XVIIIw.* Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2018
6. *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*. Ed. Barbara Engelking, Jan Grabowski, Warszawa: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2018
7. Urszula Glensk, *Hirszfeldowie. Zrozumieć krew*. Kraków: Universitas, 2018
8. Karolina Koprowska, *Postronni? Zagłada w relacjach chłopskich świadków*. Kraków: Universitas, 2018
9. Joanna Lisek, *Kol isze. Głos kobiet w poezji jidysz (od XVIw. do 1939r.)*. Sejny: Pogranicze, 2018
10. Artur Markowski, *Przemoc antyżydowska i wyobrażenia społeczne. Pogrom białostocki 1906 r.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2018
11. *Ojzer Warszawski. Szmuglerzy*, trans. and ed. Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, Magdalena Ruta, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2018
12. *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku. Tom 1: Literatura I sztuka*, ed. Sławomir Buryła, Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2018
13. *Przecież ich nie zostawię. O żydowskich opiekunkach w czasie wojny*. Red. Monika Sznajderman, Magdalena Kicińska. Warszawa: Czarne, 2018
14. Monika Stępień, *Miasto opowiedziane. Powojenny Kraków w świetle żydowskiej literatury dokumentu osobistego*. Kraków: Austeria, 2018
15. Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego*. Warszawa: Czarna Owca, 2018
16. Marcin Wodziński, *Hasidism: Key Questions*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018
17. Marcin Wodziński, *Historical Atlas of Hasidism*, Cartography by Waldemar Spallek, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018
18. *Żydzi polscy w oczach historyków. Tom dedykowany pamięci Profesora A. Gierowskiego*, ed. Adam Kaźmierczyk, Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2018

Agnieszka Ilwicka is a Yiddish Studies scholar and a researcher at Taube Philanthropies.

Auschwitz Jewish Center Publishes Guidebook to Oświęcim Jewish Cemetery

The Auschwitz Jewish Center (AJC) recently published a guidebook titled *The Jewish Cemetery in Oświęcim: History, Symbols, Nature*, written by Dr. Artur Szyndler, the chief curator of the Jewish Museum at AJC, Dr. Jacek Proszyk, Wojciech Gałosz, and Marcin Karetta. The book describes the cemetery's history and current condition, presented in four sections: "History," "People," "Symbols," and "Nature." Each section addresses different aspects of the cemetery, ranging from the notable community members buried there to the unique biodiversity of the site. The text, illustrated with photographs from the cemetery and including details of particular headstones, is available in Polish and English. ■



Jacket image of *The Jewish Cemetery in Oświęcim: History, Symbols, Nature*, published by the Auschwitz Jewish Center.

ANNOUNCEMENTS Conferences

Art and the Holocaust Conference in July 2019

The international conference Art and the Holocaust: Reflections for the Common Future will take place on July 2–3, 2019, in Riga, Latvia. The conference is organized by the Riga Jewish Community Museum, Jews in Latvia, and the Museum of Romans Suta and Aleksandra Belcova, in collaboration with the International Centre for Litvak Photography (Kaunas, Lithuania) and the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw, Poland). The aim of the conference, according to its call for papers, is “to present new researches about the relationships between the Holocaust and art (drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, contemporary art, the art of commemoration),” as well as about the ways in which individuals behaved during the Holocaust and how the Holocaust has influenced European society. Some thematic areas to be covered are the fates of artists during the Holocaust, the Holocaust



Monument at the site of the Great Choral Synagogue in Riga, which was burned down in 1941 by the Nazis.

Photograph by Adam Jones. Wikimedia Commons.

as depicted by non-Jewish artists, and art created in sites of imprisonment. ■

For more information, please visit http://www.jewishmuseum.lv/en/item/318-international_conference_art_and_the_holocaust_july_2-3.html.

Conferences

Reported by Antony Polonsky

November Hopes: Jews and the Independence of Poland

An international conference —November Hopes: Jews and the Independence of Poland in 1918—convened on November 29-30, 2018, at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. It was organized by the POLIN Museum and the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw, within the framework of the Global Education Outreach Program and under the patronage of the Polish Society for Jewish Studies. It received generous support from Taube Philanthropies, the William K. Bowes, Jr., Foundation, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland, with additional support from the European Association for Jewish Studies and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, as part of the commemoration of the centennial of independence.

The re-emergence of the Polish state after World War I was the most obvious example of the postwar triumph of the

[T]he fact that Jews were a significant proportion of the Communist leadership in Russia and in Poland, and that some of them had welcomed the Bolshevik revolution, was seized upon as a means of discrediting the postwar revolutionary wave as a primarily Jewish phenomenon.

principle of nationality. In the new state, the largest and most powerful in East Central Europe, the Jewish community perceived both positive and negative implications in national independence. The rights of the Jews in Poland were assured under the treaty protecting national minorities that the Poles had been compelled to sign. The democratic constitution established in 1921 strengthened the hope that Jews would be equal citizens.

At the same time, these years were marked by a series of anti-Jewish outrages, in which between 350 and 500 Jews lost their lives. As the Poles fought to establish their frontier, they showed little understanding for the desire of Jews in ethnically mixed areas such as East Galicia or Lithuania to maintain a neutral posture in the national conflicts. Moreover, the fact that Jews were a significant proportion of the Communist leadership in Russia and in Poland, and that some of them had welcomed the Bolshevik revolution, was seized upon as a means of discrediting the postwar revolutionary wave as a primarily Jewish phenomenon.

These complex and controversial issues received careful and insightful examination in a speech at Carnegie Hall in New York on July 28, 1919. Louis Marshall, one of the main architects of the National Minorities' Treaties, described what had been achieved in ecstatic terms. "For the first time, the

nations of the world have recognized that, in common with all other peoples, we are entitled to equality in law ... It has now become an established principle that any violation of the rights of a minority is an offense not only against the individuals but against the law which controls all of the civilized nations of the earth.” One hundred years later, the conference amplifies these themes from historical perspectives.

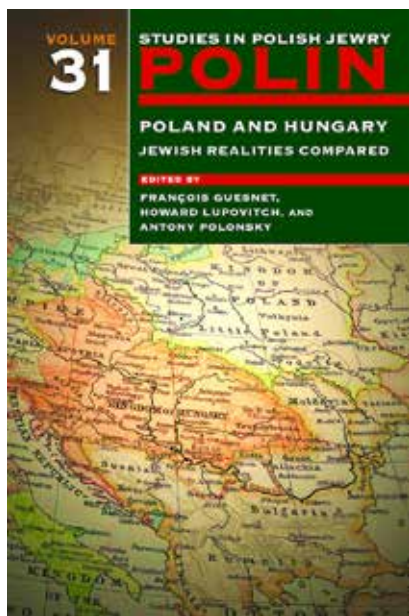
The conference opened with addresses by Professor Dariusz Stola of the POLIN Museum and Professor Lukasz Niesiolowski-Spano of the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw. A roundtable on “Polish Independence, the Jewish Question and the Neighbors” was then chaired by journalist Maciej Zakrocki. The next panel dealt with the “hope” of independence and was chaired by Kamil Kijek of the University of Warsaw. After that came a session, chaired by Jerzy Kochanowski of the Institute of History, that addressed the “fears” that accompanied the regaining of Polish statehood. The evening featured a stimulating and provocative keynote

speech by David Engel with the title “Independence for Whom? Jews and the New Political Order in Eastern Europe after 1918.” The second day opened with a session, “Realities,” chaired by Professor Stola. Antony Polonsky led the concluding roundtable on “Jews and Polish Independence. 100 Years Later.” The deliberations of this stimulating and thought-provoking conference will be published in a special edition of *East European Jewish Affairs*. ■

Poland and Hungary: Jewish Realities Compared

On January 29, a daylong conference at the Polish Embassy in London launched Volume 31 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, edited by François Guesnet, Howard Lupovich, and Antony Polonsky, on the theme of “Poland and Hungary: Jewish Realities Compared.” These two communities were once the largest in Europe and among the most culturally vibrant, yet they have rarely been studied comparatively. Despite the obvious similarities, historians have preferred to highlight their differences and emphasize instead the central European character of Hungarian Jewry.

The conference opened with welcoming remarks by the Polish ambassador, Arkady Rzegocki, Vivian Wineman, president of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, and Sir Ben Helfgott, its chairman. The first session took the form of an exchange between Howard Lupovich of Wayne State University and Antony Polonsky, chief historian of



The latest volume of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* was released on January 29, 2019.

These two communities were once the largest in Europe and among the most culturally vibrant, yet they have rarely been studied comparatively.

the POLIN Museum, who examined the main themes of the volume. There followed a session exploring the potential of historical comparison between the two communities.

Victor Karady of the Central European University discussed how identification with the Magyar national idea facilitated Jewish integration in Hungary. Tim Cole of the University of Bristol compared the ghettos established in Warsaw and Budapest. Anna Manchin compared a number of museums in Budapest with the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

The next session brought an examination of the role of Jews in Hungarian and Polish popular entertainment before World War II. Jews in Hungary were aware of their somewhat precarious situation. Mary Gluck of Brown University examined the unease which many of them felt, as reflected in the humorous sketches played in Jewish music halls. In Poland, according to Beth Holmgren of Duke University, the largely Jewish-created cabaret was used to mock the pretensions of acculturated Jews and depict a multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan Warsaw. Issues of integration and acculturation also dominated

the final session. Barry Cohen presented his book *Opening the Drawer. The Hidden Identities of Polish Jews* (2018). This is an account of three generations of Polish Jews—those who survived the war, those who grew up under communism, and the third generation which has emerged since the end of communism—and how they have participated in the revival of Jewish life since 1989.

The conference program included a showing and discussion of the film *Pilecki* (2015), directed by Mirosław Krzyszkowski, which describes the services of Witold Pilecki, a Polish soldier who volunteered to be arrested by the German authorities so he could be sent to Auschwitz to instigate a resistance movement there. After escaping from the death camp in 1943, he wrote an extensive report which has since been published as *The Auschwitz Volunteer: Beyond Bravery* (Los Angeles, 2012).

Warm congratulations must go to the organizers and supporters of this stimulating, thought-provoking, and very successful conference: the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies; the American

Association for Polish-Jewish Studies; the Institute of Jewish Studies, UCL; the European Institute, UCL; the Embassy of the Republic of Poland; and the Polish Cultural Institute. ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Exhibitions

The Free Bird: An Exhibition of Jewish Caricature from the Inter-War Period at the Jewish Historical Institute

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of Polish independence last November, the Jewish Historical Institute opened an exhibition of satirical illustrations from the inter-war Jewish press. The title of the exhibition—*The Free Bird. Der Frayer Foygl. Caricature from the Jewish Press in Independent Poland*—refers to a pioneering humor magazine that used a white eagle, the symbol of the independent Polish state, as its logo.

By sharing the work of Jewish illustrators and cartoonists of that time, the exhibition presents a seldom-told perspective of Polish independence. Included in the exhibition are artworks by Jakub Bickels, Szaja Fajgenbojm, Samuel Finkelstein, Chaim Goldberg, Fryderyk Kleinman, Leon Dawid Izrael, Artur Szyk, and many others. In some cases, the illustrations in the exhibition represent the only remaining traces of artists who



The Free Bird. Der Frayer Foygl was on display November 16, 2018–March 24, 2019 at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

In some cases, the illustrations in the exhibition represent the only remaining traces of artists who were killed in the Holocaust and whose entire bodies of work were destroyed.

were killed in the Holocaust and whose entire bodies of work were destroyed.

The illustrations highlight major political events of the inter-war period and offer

commentary on ongoing social changes, women's emancipation, the Great Depression, and anti-Semitism. Taken together, the artworks paint a complex picture of the inter-war Jewish community and its relationship with the non-Jewish majority.

The exhibition was on display November 16, 2018–March 24, 2019. ■

Terribly Close: Polish Vernacular Artists Face the Holocaust Awarded Best Cultural Event

Terribly Close: Polish Vernacular Artists Face the Holocaust was on display at the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków from December 1, 2018, to March 31, 2019. The exhibition featured work by Polish folk artists that, “intentionally or by chance,” contained depictions of the Holocaust. The exhibition was the product of three years of research conducted by its curators: Drs. Erica Lehrer and Roma Sendyka, Magdalena Zych, and photographer Wojciech Wilczyk.

Throughout the exhibition, the curators explored the forces influencing Polish representations of the Holocaust, among them the Communist suppression of Jewish issues, the demands of foreign collectors, and the photographs of the Holocaust that were widely circulated after the war. The exhibition was completed with photographs taken by Wilczyk that, by showing the artworks



Fragment of the artwork *Oświęcim* (1962) by Zygmunt Skrętowicz. Photograph by Wojciech Wilczyk from his series *Blow-ups*.

Courtesy of Wojciech Wilczyk.

We hope the exhibition was able to stir up some emotions and get people to think critically about Holocaust memory.

—Dr. Erica Lehrer, co-curator



Fragment of *Deutsche Fabriken* (1970) by Jan Wojtarowicz. Photograph by Wojciech Wilczyk from his series *Blow-ups*.
Courtesy of Wojciech Wilczyk.

up close, attempt to bring the visitor's gaze in line with that of the objects' creators.

The weekend the exhibition closed, the curators received very good news: Radio Kraków had selected *Terribly Close* as the best cultural event in Kraków of December 2018.

Dr. Lehrer commented: "We hope the exhibition was able to stir up some emotions and get people to think critically

*Radio Kraków named
Terribly Close the best
cultural event in Kraków
of December 2018.*

about Holocaust memory...
[t]o connect with emotions
some of the artists may have
felt, or to mourn this loss of
something that perhaps has
never been possible to fully
acknowledge or assimilate."

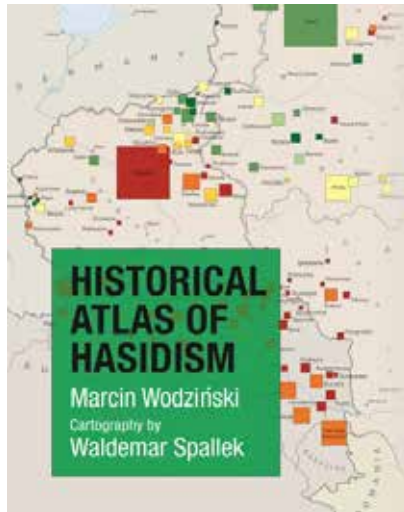
A book about the research that informed the exhibition is forthcoming in Polish and English. ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Awards

Marcin Wodziński Wins 2019 U.S. National Jewish Book Award

On March 5, 2019, Marcin Wodziński received the prestigious National Jewish Book Award for his groundbreaking *Historical Atlas of Hasidism*. (See the Summer 2018 issue of *Gazeta* for more information about the book.) Winner of the 2018 Nahum M. Sarna Memorial Award for Scholarship, the book documents the demographic shifts, expansions, and migrations of Hasidism, visualized through a catalogue of more than seventy maps, hundreds of photographs, and graphic summaries that together depict this comprehensive history. As a historiography that combines interpretive, visual, and statistical data, the book is a milestone and breakthrough in tracing this religious aspect of Jewish thought and social movement. In his March 4, 2019, interview with the Jewish Book Council, Wodziński stated, “[T]he *Atlas* looks at Hasidism beyond the leaders—at thousands of their followers living far from



Jacket image for *Historical Atlas of Hasidism* by Marcin Wodziński with cartography by Waldemar Spallek.

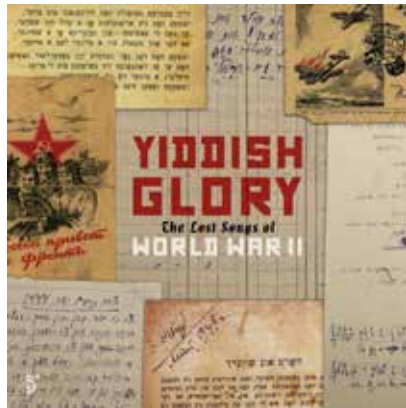
Hasidic centers. This is a new, innovative, and very needed corrective and I hope readers will appreciate it.” ■

Yiddish Glory Nominated for Grammy Award

In the early 2000s, Professor Anna Shternshis, of the University of Toronto, was sifting through documents at the Verdansky National Library of Ukraine. She was conducting research for a book about Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union during the Holocaust when a librarian directed her to a cache of barely catalogued songs.

The collection—fragile, mostly handwritten—was part of the work of Moisei Beregovsky, an ethnomusicologist famous for documenting and preserving Jewish music from the beginning of the 20th century. Though scholars knew Beregovsky had continued collecting songs during the war, most assumed his work had been lost or destroyed.

“These songs are the first eyewitness testimonies by Jews on the eve of the Holocaust,” Professor Shternshis told CBC News. This discovery “actually changes the whole



Album art for *Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of World War II*.

way we understood the history of Soviet Jews.”

The songs themselves represent a range of perspectives and tones: they were written by Red Army soldiers, children, and widows, and contain stories of loss and mourning, defiance and love.

Some also poke fun at figures like Lenin and Hitler. “On the High Mountain,” a song written by Veli Shargorodskii near the end of the war, ends with the words, “Germany is in trouble, Hitler is kaput!”

Instead of merely showing her findings, Professor Shternshis

teamed up with Russian musician and composer Psoy Korolenko to create a musical presentation out of the Beregovsky collection. Many of the songs in the collection were recorded only as lyrics, so Professor Shternshis and Korolenko set them to music.

Spurred on by the success of the presentation, Professor Shternshis, her husband, and Korolenko put together a team of musicians to create an album out of the songs. The result was *Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of World War II*.

The album was produced by Six Degrees Records and nominated for a Grammy in the world music category. Though it did not go on to win the award, the team behind the album was thrilled and surprised by the nomination.

“Given the whole history, where it all started,” Professor Shternshis told JTA, “it’s unbelievable.” ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

General

Auschwitz Jewish Center Releases New App

The Jewish Museum at the Auschwitz Jewish Center has released a new phone application called *Oshpitzin*. The app includes a guide to the museum and to the traces of Jewish history in Oświęcim. It makes use of a Beacon technology to help visitors interact with the exhibition, and lets users view an augmented-reality version of the streets of Oświęcim, with historical photographs and 3-D models of long-gone buildings superimposed on what's currently there.

“The project started six years ago when we decided that the hand-drawn map from *Sefer Oshpitzin*, a memorial book compiled by survivors from Oświęcim in the 1970s in Israel, needed to be made more accessible to our visitors,” said Maciek Zabierowski, the app’s project manager at the museum. “We wanted to give them a chance to look at this unique town through the eyes of its former Jewish residents.”



Homepage of the Auschwitz Jewish Center's *Oshpitzin* iPhone application.

Development of the app was funded by the US Consulate General and the German Consulate General in Kraków, the Town of Oświęcim, and the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund. The app is available for free download in English, German, Hebrew, and Polish in the Apple App Store and Google Play. ■

For more information about the Auschwitz Jewish Center please visit www.ajcf.pl.

Helping Jews and Poles to Discover their Roots

Highlights from the 2018 Annual Report of the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute

For over twenty years, the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center has been helping people from around the world with their family history searches. It is important to us to share the understanding of the differences between a genealogy search and a family history search, and the search for an individual versus the search for general answers. While we may not have the answer to every question, thanks to little pieces of information, family stories, gossips in the family, photos of unknown people, or documents in foreign languages, we try, and almost always succeed, to find something—a trace—which we can follow.

Below are just a few human-interest stories taken from the many accomplishments, meetings, and people we enjoyed over the past year, and the beneficial outcomes of our work.



Adam and Lolek meeting for the first time in Warsaw.

Courtesy of the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute.

Lost and Found: Brothers Reunited After Seventy Years

Adam, age eighty-six, came to us with the kind of story that can usually only be seen in films. He was born to a Jewish family in a small village near Tarnów. The family—Adam, his younger sister, and their parents—survived the war in hiding. Toward the end of the war, another brother, Lolek, was born. Not long after, tragedy hit. In early 1946, both

parents were murdered. The children (Adam was fourteen years old, Lolek was just a few months old) were separated. Adam and his sister were taken to a children's home outside Warsaw while Lolek was put in an orphanage for younger children. Adam and his sister were adopted by a Jewish family and moved into a new apartment in Warsaw. Adam insisted that the family also adopt Lolek, but his younger brother was already adopted by another family.

Adam could never forget his brother. He searched for him for seventy years. Then he came to our office. With documents in our archives we were able to find information regarding Lolek's adoption. As it turns out, the adopting family left for Israel a few years after his adoption. In Israel we were able to find Lolek, or Arie, Adam's brother. Lolek knew nothing about his early years nor about the fact that he was adopted or had a brother. Thanks to our work, the

brothers met for the first time in decades. Sadly, both passed away shortly after the meeting. We can only find comfort in the fact the brothers were able to meet at the last years of their life, and that we could play a part in making that so.

Special Guests: A Visit from the Tzadik (Biała Admor)

Every guest in our office is a blessing, but it is not every day that one of our guests can give us a blessing. Earlier this year, the Admor (Tzadik) of Biała-Bnei-Brak sought our help in locating information about his ancestors, the Rabinowicz family of Admors of Biała. To thank us, he took the time to install our new *mezuzah*.

Special Projects Continuing into 2019

Relocating Children: Seventy Years Later with Anna Bikont

We regularly cooperate with local and foreign writers and researchers. Currently we are assisting renowned author Anna Bikont with research for a new book. The book is focused on children who



The Admor (Tzadik) of Biała-Bnei-Brak installing a new *mezuzah* at the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center.

Courtesy of the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute.

survived the war under false identities, living with non-Jewish families, and located after the war by Lejb Majzels, a representative of the Central Jewish Committee. To date, we have tracked down several of these children and their families.

Jewish Soldiers

Among hundreds of unidentified soldiers and victims of oppression buried at “Sector 3a” at the Okopowa Jewish Cemetery, only around fifty fallen soldiers of the

Polish army are named. These Polish patriots of Jewish heritage fought to protect the young state from Nazi aggressors. Many of them lost their lives during the first weeks of battles. Below is the story of one of them:

Alfred (Fred) Putzman was born in Łódź on August 10, 1904. He was the son of Zygmunt (Zyskind) Putzman, a dentist from Łódź, and Cecylia (Cyrla) Beldoch, the daughter of hotel owners from Warsaw. The young family did not enjoy many happy days, as shortly after Alfred’s birth, Cecylia fell ill. At the age of three, young Fred became an orphan. From that time on, he came under the care of his mother’s parents in Warsaw. Two years later, in 1909, Zygmunt left Poland to the United States, where some of his brothers were already living. He settled in Boston and lived there until his death in 1957. In the meantime, Alfred received his education in Warsaw and discovered his athletic tendencies. As a young adult he played professionally as a member of the Warszawianka football club. In 1925 he travelled to



The grave of Alfred Putzman at the Okopowa Street Jewish Cemetery in Warsaw. Courtesy of the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute.

Grenoble, France, to continue his studies, while also continuing his professional sports career at the F.C. Grenoble team.

Eventually Alfred returned to Poland. When the war broke out in September of 1939, he was drafted as a reserve officer. Alfred was killed during the first month of the war and is buried together with three unknown soldiers at the Jewish cemetery at

Okopowa. We do not know much about Alfred's adult life: Where did he live? What did he do for a living? Did he have a family? These are all questions we try to answer. We would like to apply our resources to recover the biographies of Alfred and the other soldiers buried at Sector 3a. To do this we would like to conduct archival research (for example, in the the military archive in Rembertów), in an effort to commemorate not

only Alfred Putzman, but all of the fallen soldiers whose stories remain to be told. ■

For more information about these projects and the work of the JGFH, please visit: <http://www.jhi.pl/genealogia>.

New Director Appointed to FODŻ

The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FODŻ—*Fundacja Ochrony Dziedzictwa Żydowskiego*) recently appointed as its new executive director Piotr Puchta, an experienced Polish diplomat with more than thirty years of service in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is the second director of the 17-year-old organization, succeeding lawyer Monika Krawczyk, who is the new board president of the Union of Jewish Communities of Poland. (See page 39.)

Mr. Puchta has served in Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinian National Authority, and was the Ambassador of Poland to Egypt from 2009 to 2013. From January 2014 to March 2016, he was the chairperson of the Polish delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, an organization devoted to promoting Holocaust education and remembrance worldwide.



Piotr Puchta.
Courtesy of Piotr Puchta.

“I am honored to join FODŻ in leading an organization that has a well-established mission to preserve the dynamic Jewish heritage of Poland,” said Mr. Puchta. “I believe preserving these meaningful memories will help connect both Jews and Poles and will have a special significance for future generations.”

Alicja Kobus, Co-Chair of the FODŻ Board of Directors, said, “Mr. Puchta’s extensive experience and leadership skills will advance FODŻ’s work in Poland in the many communities where there is a

vital need to preserve Jewish cultural heritage.”

Since 2002, FODŻ has worked to protect and commemorate sites of Jewish cultural heritage in Poland. The foundation has been especially active in parts of Poland where no Jewish community exists today or where small Jewish communities lack the funding to provide long-term care and maintenance of these sites. FODŻ has been involved in the restoration and preservation of 200 synagogues and 1200 Jewish cemeteries across Poland.

Mr. Puchta officially assumed the position of Director on April 8, 2019. ■

New Leader of Union of Jewish Communities of Poland

Fay and Julian Bussgang

In March 2019, Monika Krawczyk became president of the board of the Union of Jewish Communities of Poland (ZGWŻ–Zarząd Gmin Wyznaniowych Żydowskich). The main office in Warsaw was created in 1949 as the Religious Association of Jews in Poland. In 1992, not long after the fall of communism, it was reorganized and renamed the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland. The Association, located in Warsaw, is currently composed of eight Jewish municipalities: Bielsko-Biała, Katowice, Kraków, Legnica, Łódź, Szczecin, Warsaw, and Wrocław.

The goal of the association is to organize both religious and cultural life for all members of the Jewish community in Poland. The union maintains all seven of the active synagogues, fifteen prayer houses, and the historical cemeteries in Poland. It oversees the organization of ritual dining, slaughter of animals, distribution of kosher



Monika Krawczyk, the new President of the Board of the Union of Jewish Communities of Poland. Image courtesy of Monika Krawczyk.

food, and the administration of ritual baths. It is a partner with many state institutions and non-governmental organizations, working toward the preservation and promotion of Jewish heritage in Poland.

The association also runs language schools, organizes educational courses, lectures, seminars, conferences, and training sessions, and

publishes its own magazines and books. Through its Social Welfare Department, the union offers its members financial support, material aid, medical assistance, and home and nursing care. In addition, it helps Polish Jews, including the descendants of Holocaust survivors, in a variety of legal matters, both communal and personal, including aiding in the process of recovery and restoration of property once owned by the Jewish Kehilla and later nationalized in Communist Poland.

ZGWŻ activities are financed by the resources of the union, and, in part, by grants from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Certain specific projects are also supported financially by the Ministry of Culture and private sponsors.

Monika Krawczyk will be the first woman to hold the position of President of the Board of the Union of Jewish Communities of Poland. A real estate and mortgage lawyer,

for fifteen years she was the head of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FODŹ–*Fundacja Ochrony Dziedzictwa Żydowskiego*). During her tenure, FODŹ worked closely with ZGWŻ to enact part of its mission in the protection of Jewish synagogues, cemeteries, and other physical sites of Jewish significance.

In accepting the position, she stated, “I am very honored to be elected President of the Jewish Community in Poland. This is a very responsible and important task – taking into consideration the symbolic value of Polish Jewry and the magnitude of historical heritage. We need to focus on stabilization of the financial side of our work, and support the individual Jewish Communities and strengthen them by offering integrated social, cultural, educational and religious services. I would like to take this opportunity and thank Tad Taube and Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture for many years of supporting Jewish activities in Poland. We hope to continue this important cooperation.”

In 2013, Krawczyk was honored by the President of Poland with the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland for her work as the head of FODŹ. ■

Fay and Julian Bussgang
edited Gazeta for years.
Today they serve as
Contributing Editors.

Global Education Outreach Program and POLIN Museum Announcements and Opportunities

GEOP Distinguished Lecture Series—new lectures online

A new lecture in the GEOP Distinguished Lecture Series is now online. Daniel Kupfert Heller from Monash University spoke about one of inter-war Poland's most popular Jewish youth movements, Betar, and the turbulent lives of Polish Jewish youth on the eve of the Holocaust. His lecture "Two Fatherlands? Right-Wing Zionism and the Politics of National Belonging in Interwar Poland" is available online at: <https://www.polin.pl/en/event/two-fatherlands-right-wing-zionism-and-the-politics-of-national>.

International academic conference November Hopes: Jews and the Independence of Poland in 1918—recordings now available online

The recordings from the international academic conference are now available at:

<https://www.polin.pl/en/event/international-academic-conference-november-hopes-jews-and>.

The conference was attended by distinguished scholars from Europe, the United States, and Israel, and addressed the lack of historical awareness concerning the history of Polish Jews in the study of their problematic relationships with the government, as well as with non-Jewish residents of reborn Poland.

The international conference November Hopes: Jews and the Independence of Poland in 1918 was financed under contract no. 880/P-DUN/2018 by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education within the framework of disseminating research findings. The conference was made possible thanks to the support of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, the William K. Bowes, Jr., Foundation, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland.

The conference also enjoyed support from the European Association for Jewish Studies.

The project was implemented as part of the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of Polish independence.

GEOP Call for Applications for 2019 and 2020 will soon open

The Global Education Outreach Program invites scholars to join us in activities for 2019 and 2020. We welcome applications and proposals from scholars at all stages of their careers and in all relevant academic disciplines, including history, political science, literature, art history, musicology, theater studies, philosophy, religion, sociology, anthropology, and law.

Soon, we will open calls for:

- GEOP Research Fellowships for Doctoral and Post-doctoral candidates 2020
- GEOP Doctoral Seminar 2019/20

- International conference on the biographical method in Polish-Jewish studies in winter 2019
- GEOP Research Workshop 2020

For open calls please check: <https://www.polin.pl/en/geop-open-calls>.

At the POLIN Museum

The Daffodils Campaign

April 19, 2019, marked the seventy-sixth anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—the biggest Jewish military revolt during World War II, and the first urban insurgency in occupied Europe.

What is the Daffodils Campaign?

POLIN Museum created the Daffodils Campaign to commemorate the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Every year on April 19, hundreds of volunteers hand out paper daffodils to raise awareness of the uprising and its significance.

Why the Daffodil?

Marek Edelman, a leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising who survived and remained

in Poland, received a bouquet of yellow daffodils from an anonymous person every year on April 19. He would lay them at the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in memory of those who fought and died. The paper daffodils, which people wear on this day, are inspired by this custom.

Our Daffodils Campaign Ambassador

Our Daffodils Campaign ambassador is Marian Turski (b. 1926), a Holocaust survivor, historian, journalist, human rights activist, and chair of the POLIN Museum Council. He is a member of the International Auschwitz Council, and he was awarded Poland's Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland. In addition he was awarded the country's Medal for Merit to Culture, as well as France's National Order of the Legion of Honor, and Germany's Federal Cross of Merit. In January of 2019, Turski was a keynote speaker at the United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Day. ■

New GEOP Fellow at the POLIN Museum and JHI

In February 2019, Dr. Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe from Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, started his fellowship at the POLIN Museum and JHI. During his stay, Dr. Rossoliński-Liebe will be working on the project *Polish City Mayors and the Jews in the General Government: Collaboration, Occupation, and Administration*. Rossoliński-Liebe is a research associate at the Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut of the Freie Universität Berlin. He studied cultural history at the Viadrina European University and holds a PhD from the Universität Hamburg. He is the author of the first comprehensive and scholarly biography of the Ukrainian fascist politician Stepan Bandera. Rossoliński-Liebe has published many articles and edited three volumes about various aspects of the Holocaust in Ukraine and East Central Europe, anti-Semitism at European universities, transnational fascism in Western and Eastern Europe, racism and historiography, World War II, and Ukrainian, Polish, and Jewish history. He is currently exploring German-Polish collaboration during World War II and the conduct of mayors in the General Government.

Information on the GEOP Fellows can be found here: <https://www.polin.pl/en/research-collections-research-global-education-outreach-program/current-fellows>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In Brief

Reported by Fay and Julian Bussgang



Jewish recruits in Poznań pledge their allegiance to Poland in December 1932; Rabbi Sonnaben receives the oath.

Image courtesy of the National Digital Archive (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe).

Jews in the Military Conference at POLIN Museum

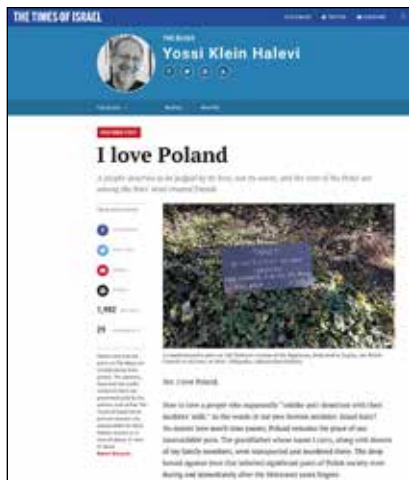
On March 7, 2019, Dr. Christhard Henschel gave a talk at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw titled “Loyalty. Jews and the Military between Integration and Exclusion.” Dr. Henschel has been affiliated with the German Historical Institute in Warsaw since 2015.

The lecture, which accompanied the exhibit *In Poland, King Matt, the 100th Anniversary of Regaining Independence*, addressed the military service of Jews in the Polish Army during the period between the two world wars. At the beginning of this period, Jews were included in the battles of the legions of Marshal Józef Piłsudski. However, for fear they would sympathize with the Bolsheviks, they were excluded from fighting the Polish-Bolshevik

war and many were interned in the Jabłonna Camp, where about 17,000 Jewish officers and soldiers were detained. The camp was created at the order of the Minister of Military Affairs, General Kazimierz Sosnowski, in August 1920, but it was closed twenty-five days later at the initiative of Deputy Prime Minister Ignacy Daszyński. The Polish repulsed the Bolshevik troops and the reconstituted Poland continued until World War II. ■

“I Love Poland” Blogger Yossi Klein Halevy

The *Times of Israel* of February 20, 2019, has a remarkable blog entitled “I Love Poland” by Yossi Klein Halevy (<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/i-love-poland/>). He begins with the statement: “A people deserves to be judged by its best, not its worst, and the best of the Poles are among the Jews’ most trusted friends.”



Halevy is an American-born Israeli writer, senior fellow and co-director at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. Halevy spells out for the reader the many reasons why he loves Poland. He reminds us that while the pain that the Jews in Poland were subjected to is not forgotten, many Poles were among the best of humanity and were trusted friends of Jews. At Yad Vashem, there are more trees to honor Righteous Poles than trees that honor individuals from any other nation. He credits the Polish people as being major contributors to bringing down Stalin and later to the freeing of thousands of Soviet Jews to depart and come to Israel. Halevy also notes that the Polish Pope, John Paul II, was the greatest friend of the Jews in the history of the

Catholic Church. He commends Jan Karski for his courage to gather evidence about the Holocaust and communicate it to the British and to President Roosevelt. He praises the annual Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków started by Janusz Makuch, and the work of many Polish youngsters who undertake to restore Jewish cemeteries.

While Halevy acknowledges that there are some things he does not like about Poland, such as the effort to suppress scholarly inquiry into certain parts of the past and the re-emergence of anti-Semitism, he nonetheless reaffirms that he is incurably in love with Poland. Halevy's recognition of Polish contributions to the fate and memory of the Jews is a welcomed voice of tribute. ■

Nevzlin Center International Book Prize for Kamil Kijek

Kamil Kijek's monograph *Children of Modernism. Socialization, Culture and Political Consciousness of the Jewish Youth in Interwar Poland* (*Dzieci modernizmu.*

Świadomość, kultura i socjalizacja polityczna młodzieży żydowskiej w Polsce międzywojennej), University of Wrocław Press, won first prize in an international competition for outstanding academic publications on "Jews and Illiberal Regimes in Eastern Europe after 1917" organized by The Leonid Nevzlin Research Center for Russian and East European Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. An international committee selected the best academic book and the best article on the topic published in Hebrew, English, Polish, German, Russian, or Ukrainian. ■

OBITUARIES

Mara Vishniac Schiff Kohn

September 24, 1926 – December 17, 2018

Mara Kohn, age ninety-two, a forty-year resident of Santa Barbara, passed away on Monday, December 17, at Cottage Hospital. Born in Berlin, she escaped Nazi Germany with her family, arriving in New York City in 1940. Residing first in New York, then in North Carolina and Ohio, she arrived in California in 1959 with her first husband, Otto Schiff, and their children Naomi and Benjamin.

Volunteering at the Sunair Home for Asthmatic Children in Tujunga, beginning in 1963, she rose to become the institution's director. Subsequently she entered the field of special education, eventually becoming a lead teacher and administrator at the Mardan School in Costa Mesa.

Mara moved to Santa Barbara in 1978 with her second husband, Professor Walter Kohn, when he became the founding director of the Institute for Theoretical



Mara Kohn.
Photograph by Laura Bialis. Used with permission.

Physics at UC Santa Barbara (now the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics). Mara taught English as a Second Language and brought the Portraits of Survival project to the Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara.

From 1990 onward, Mara was absorbed with organizing and managing the legacy of her father, photographer, and biologist Roman Vishniac. She edited three books reproducing his work and managed innumerable details

in connection with exhibitions and related publications.

In 2018 she donated approximately 30,000 items to the University of California at Berkeley's Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, constituting the bulk of the Vishniac archive.

Professor Kohn, a 1998 Nobel Laureate, died in 2016. Mara is survived by her daughter Naomi Schiff, son Ben Schiff, granddaughters Ruby and Zina Goodall and Melina Schiff, Walter's family, and many wonderful friends.

This obituary originally appeared in the Santa Barbara Independent. ■

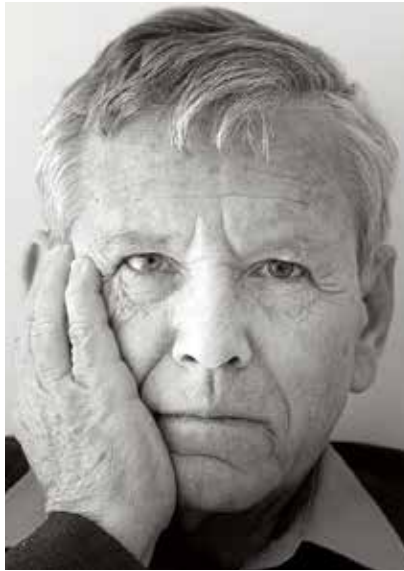
Thanks to Ben and Naomi Schiff, the surviving son and daughter of Mara Vishniac Schiff Kohn, for permission to reprint this obituary which first appeared in the Santa Barbara Independent.

OBITUARIES

Amos Oz

January 4, 1939 – December 28, 2018

The death late last year of Amos Oz has robbed Israel and the Jewish world of a leading literary figure, and an outstanding moral authority—in the words of the *New York Times*, one of “Israel’s most prolific writers and respected intellectuals.” Born in Jerusalem, the only son of Yehudia Arie Klausner and Fania Mussman, Amos Oz came from a family of intellectuals. His great uncle was Joseph Klausner, who held the chair of Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University, and his father had studied history and literature at Vilna University. Frustrated in his desire to pursue an academic career, he worked for most of his life as a librarian at the Jewish National and University Library. Many of the Klausners were politically on the right, and Joseph Klausner, a revisionist Zionist, stood against Chaim Weizmann as the group’s candidate for the presidency of Israel. Oz’s mother, Fania Mussman, was



Amos Oz in 2005.
Photograph by Michael Hendryckx.
Wikimedia Commons.

the daughter of an enlightened mill-owner from Równo (now Rivne) in west Ukraine. She had been forced to abandon her studies of history and philosophy at the Charles University in Prague when her father’s business collapsed.

Neither of Oz’s parents had much interest in organized religion. However, because of their hostility to the Labour Zionist character of the lay school system in mandate Palestine, they sent him to the

Antony Polonsky

local Tachkemoni religious school, from where he went to the Rehavia gymnasium. His life changed drastically in January 1952, when his mother, a depressive, took her own life. He became a Labour Zionist and left home to join the radical Kibbutz Hulda, where he changed his name to Oz (which means “courage” in Hebrew)—perhaps a reference to what he needed to come to terms with his mother’s death, but also as a way of cutting himself off from his Klausner relations. As Oz put it, he “decided to become everything his father was not.” In his new life, in his own words, he was “a disaster as a labourer ... the joke of the kibbutz,” but when he became a successful writer the kibbutz did agree to give him one day a week off to practice his vocation. According to Oz, when his novel *My Michael* became a best-seller, “they still said I could have only three days a week to write. It was only in the eighties that I got four days for my writing,

two days for teaching, and Saturday turns as a waiter in the dining hall.” Oz, his wife, and three children continued to live on the kibbutz until 1986, when they moved to Arad in the Negev because of his son’s asthma. In 2014, the family moved to Tel Aviv, but Oz was buried in Hulda.

Oz was sent by the kibbutz to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he studied philosophy and Hebrew literature and then taught in the kibbutz high school. He served as a reservist in a tank unit that fought in the Six Day War in Sinai and on the Golan Heights in 1973. From 1987, he was a professor of Hebrew literature at Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

Oz was a prolific writer. Among his published works are fourteen novels, five collections of stories and novellas, two children’s books, and twelve books of articles and essays. Among his many literary prizes were the Israel Prize, the country’s highest civilian award, the Goethe Prize, the Brenner prize, the Franz Kafka prize, the Primo Levi prize, and the

Knight’s Cross of the Légion D’Honneur. He was regularly considered a possible recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In an interview with Judy Bolton-Fasman he distinguished between his fiction and his political writing:

When I am full of rage and anger, I write an essay. I write for rage and nothing else. In a different mood I might write a story. On my desk I have two simple ballpoint pens. I have them for symbolic reasons. One is for stories and the other is for telling government what to do or where to go.

He had a strong sense of empathy and attempted to reach out to Palestinian figures—in March 2011 he sent a copy of his autobiographical *A Tale of Love and Darkness* to the imprisoned Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti with a personal dedication: “This story is our story, I hope you read it and understand us as we understand you, hoping to see you outside and in peace.” In his view the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict is not a war of religion or cultures or traditions, but rather a “real estate dispute,” to be solved in a painful territorial compromise. Indeed, in a 2013 interview with the *New York Times* he observed:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a clash of right and right. Tragedies are resolved in one of two ways: The Shakespearean way or the Anton Chekhov way. In a tragedy by Shakespeare, the stage at the end is littered with dead bodies. In a tragedy by Chekhov, everyone is unhappy, bitter, disillusioned and melancholy, but they are alive. My colleagues in the peace movement and I are working for a Chekhovian, not a Shakespearean conclusion. ■

Simcha Rotem

February 24, 1924 – December 22, 2018

Simcha Rotem, one of the last surviving fighters from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, died in Jerusalem on December 22, 2018. He famously led a group of fighters through the sewers to the “Aryan” side, and in so doing, saved the life of Marek Edelman. He subsequently fought in the Israeli War of Independence.

Born Szymon Ratajzer in the Warsaw suburb of Czerniaków, he was the eldest of four children. His mother came from a “Polonized” family and ran a soap factory. In the biographical film *Rotem* (Warsaw, 2013) made by Agnieszka Arnold, he observed, “My mother was not a typical Jewish woman.” He gave an account of his life in *Wspomnienia bojowca ŻOB* (Warsaw, 1993), which was translated into English as *Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter: The Past within Me* (New Haven, 1994), as portrayed in the TV mini-series *Uprising* (New York, 2001). His father, who came from a traditional Hasidic family,



A still of Simcha Rotem from the documentary film *Rotem* by Agnieszka Arnold.

was a *chazan*. Simcha grew up speaking Polish among the mixed Polish and Jewish populations of Czerniaków. He was also active in the Zionist youth movements Akiba and HaNoar HaTzioni. In September 1939, his grandfather’s house where the family was living was hit by a bomb. His grandparents, his aunt and uncle, and his brother were killed and he and his mother were seriously wounded.

In 1940 the family moved to the ghetto. Because of his “good”

Antony Polonsky

appearance—he was blond—and knowledge of Polish, he was able to obtain documents which made it possible for him to leave the ghetto. In 1942, he spent several months with relatives in Klwów, which had an unwallled ghetto. According to Rotem:

[I]t was here that I saw for the first time a German killing a Jew and how his blood flowed. He had been caught outside of the ghetto and even though there was no wall, it was prohibited to exit the ghetto limits. The head of the Judenrat arrived and begged for the Jew’s life, but to no avail. They shot and killed him, departing on their horses. Simple. That was the first time I witnessed killing.

He decided to return to the Warsaw ghetto where he joined the Jewish Fighting Organization (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa—ŻOB) and took the pseudonym Kazik. In his memoirs, he has described the outbreak of the

uprising in the ghetto on April 19, 1943:

At dawn, about 4:00 am we saw German tanks advancing from Nalewki. Tanks, armoured cars, cannons and columns of SS men on motorcycles. "It looks like they are going to war," observed a girl standing next to me. I realized how weak we were, how limited our strength. We had only revolvers and grenades. But the desire to fight didn't leave me. We would have to deal with them.

He felt his fellow fighters had no choice but "to choose the kind of death" they wanted, but, in his words, "to this very day I keep thinking whether we had the right to make the decision to start the uprising and by the same token to shorten the lives of many people by a week, a day or two." He fought with the group of Henocho Gutman in the brush makers' workshop on Świętojerska Street and then in the center of the ghetto. On April 29, on the orders of the ŻOB, he left the ghetto through a tunnel under the wall. He became the principal liaison between the fighters and the "Aryan" side and he was instructed to link up with Antek Zuckerman, the deputy of ŻOB leader Mordechai Anieliewicz, in order to get

outside help to continue the revolt. When the uprising was coming to its end, he organized, with the help of sympathetic Poles, the escape of thirty ŻOB fighters (some sources give higher figures) through the sewers. In 2010, a monument was erected over the manhole at 51 Prosta Street from where the group emerged. Waiting for them was a lorry acquired by some members of the Polish Workers' Party. According to Rotem:

[I]n all the confusion a Polish police officer passed by and started walking in the direction of the Germans. I went over to him and told him that this was an operation by the Polish underground and I asked him to go back to where he had come from ... In retrospect this was foolish, because he could have reached the Germans from a different direction. But I wasn't thinking ... I was thinking only of preventing him.

After this lucky escape the whole group, including Edelman, was transported to shelter in Łomianki, a town outside Warsaw. In 1944, Rotem took part in the Warsaw Uprising in an Armia Ludowa formation. After the war he belonged to a secret Jewish organization, "The Revengers"

(Nakam), who attempted, for the most part unsuccessfully, to take action against those they held responsible for the Jewish fate. In autumn 1946 he moved to Israel, taking the name Rotem (Broom Tree), the tree under which the prophet Elijah sat in the desert. He was interned by the British as an illegal immigrant in the Atlit Detention Camp. Subsequently he joined the Haganah, and, after fighting in the war of independence, served as a manager in a supermarket chain until retiring in 1986. On the seventieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 2013, he was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Reborn Poland. He remained active until the end of his life. He was a public speaker and member of the Yad Vashem committee responsible for adjudicating the award of the decoration "Righteous Among the Nations."

He is survived by his two children and five grandchildren. We owe it to him that the difficult task of investigating these complex and painful matters is carried out with honesty and empathy so that we can seek to establish a view of the past acceptable to all those of good will. ■

Leopold Kozłowski

November 26, 1918 – March 12, 2019

Antony Polonsky

Leopold Kozłowski, often described as the “last klezmer,” died on March 12, having reached the venerable age of one hundred. Born in Przemyślany near Lviv (now Peremyshlany in western Ukraine) into a musical family, his original name was Kleinman. His maternal grandfather Pesach Brandwein was a famous klezmer violinist, and his father Zvi (Herman) and Zvi’s eleven brothers were also musicians. According to Kozłowski, “They even appeared before Kaiser Franz Joseph.” Another of Pesach Brandwein’s sons, Naftule, a clarinetist, emigrated to the United States in 1908, where he had a successful career. Leon’s brother, Yitzhak-Dulko, was a gifted violinist, the winner of a pre-war music competition in which Kozłowski won second place. After graduating from gymnasium, he studied piano at the Lviv Conservatory.

Leopold and his family suffered greatly during the war.



Leopold Kozłowski in 2007.
Wikimedia Commons.

Przemyślany, a town of 7,000 people, half of them Jews, was annexed after the Polish defeat in 1939 by the Soviets. Its population nearly doubled as Jews fled there to escape Nazi rule. It was occupied by the Nazis after the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, and a ghetto was established from which many Jews were sent to nearby labor camps and to the death camp at Bełżec. The final destruction of the ghetto took place in May 1943, and the town was then declared *Judenrein*. When it was liberated in July 1944, only a few dozen survivors returned

from their hiding places in the town and surrounding forests.

Kozłowski, along with his father and his brother, initially fled eastward with the retreating Red Army soldiers; his mother stayed behind believing that the Germans would not harm women. They got as far as the outskirts of Kiev, where they hid in a cemetery “right among the graves.” Subsequently they returned to Przemyślany, where in November 1941 the Gestapo ordered all the Jewish adults to assemble in the town square. According to Kozłowski, “My

father went, together with 360 other Jews ... They brought them to the forest and shot them all.” His mother was murdered soon after when her hiding place in a barn was discovered. Kozłowski spent several months in the labor camp at Kurowice. He recounts that he taught a Nazi officer the accordion in exchange for food, and that, on another occasion, the Nazis forced him to compose a “death tango” and play while other Jews were led to their deaths. He and his brother escaped and joined the Partisans in the summer of 1943, but his brother was stabbed to death by Ukrainian collaborators.

He survived and resettled in Kraków, where he studied conducting at the Higher State Music School. He recalls that he came there for the first time as a soldier after the war ended in the spring of 1945. “I knew nothing about this city, even less about Kazimierz. I went there, I saw around me the landscape of death: houses without people, mutilated blinds, silent stones and I felt that these stones need music, my klezmer music, which was so brutally taken from them.”

For twenty-three years Leopold Kozłowski was the

conductor and musical director of a military orchestra. He subsequently became musical director of the Jewish Theatre in Warsaw and of a Roma musical ensemble. He composed music for films and the theatre, and even acted in *Schindler's List*, also serving as an advisor on the music of the ghetto. He produced six versions of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Music was central to him. “Music saved my life. I was in a concentration camp, in a ghetto and in the forest. Music gave me strength. Hitler destroyed Judaism, but not its music. It lives forever.”

He performed widely in Poland, Europe, the United States, and Israel and continued to play until the end of his life, appearing annually at the Kraków Jewish Culture Festival. He was the subject of a 1994 documentary film, *The Last Klezmer: Leopold Kozłowski, His Life and Music*, made by Yale Strom, which documented his first trip back to Przemyślany since 1945, and also of a biography by Jacek Cygan, *Klezmer. Opowieść o życiu Leopolda Kozłowskiego-Kleinmana* (Kraków, 2009). He saw himself as the guardian of a tradition of music-making

which needed to be preserved and to retain its links with the past. He was conscious of the difficulty of achieving this, in spite of the revival of interest in klezmer. “I’m the last *klezmer* who stayed real and with a Jewish soul. The others are new, with chords and a different harmony, musicians who profess to be *klezmerim*, but play modern music. Genuine Jewish music isn’t a melody—it’s a story, the story of what is in the heart.” He instructed the young musicians in Kraków to keep sheet music at a distance and to improvise. “In Jewish music the notes are in the heart, the heart will tell you how to play.”

Asked why he remained in Poland, he responded, “My father, my brother, my whole family lie in this soil, I cannot leave them ... Music is my revenge, my life, I intend to keep playing to the last moment.” To hear him was a great privilege, a link with an almost vanished world. He has now gone from us, but fortunately, through recordings we can still savor his artistry, though they cannot replace the vivacity and joy his life brought to us. He will be sorely missed. ■



Roman Vishniac (1897–1990), [Woman walking on crutches through ruins], [Berlin (Germany)], 1947. Black-and-white inkjet print (from original negative). The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley, gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, 2016.6.15.

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