



Gazeta

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Main Market Square in Kraków during the pandemic.
Photograph by Edyta Gawron. Used with permission.

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Message from Irene Pipes

President, American Association
for Polish-Jewish Studies

Founder of *Gazeta*

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Cambridge, where I am waiting out the pandemic. I hope you are comfortable and safe in this unprecedented situation.

As this issue of *Gazeta* shows, we are determined to carry on our important work in spite of the difficulties created by the COVID-19 virus. We congratulate Zygmunt Stepiński on his appointment as director of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. We are glad that the long-running dispute over the directorship has been brought to an end and look forward to its future flourishing. We are very impressed that the museum has used the resources of the Internet to continue its activities while it is forced to close to the public.

We welcome the publication of volume 32 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, which has as its theme “Jews and Music-Making on the Polish Lands.” It deals with an important theme and is divided into five sections, Cantorial and Religious Music, Jews in Polish Popular Culture, Jews in the Polish Classical Musical Scene, The Holocaust Reflected in Jewish Music, and Klezmer in Poland Today. Preparations for volume 33 are well underway and we look forward to its publication.

We hope you will find some comfort in the resources our editors and contributors have collected for this special issue, and that the crisis will soon be over so that we can resume normal activity.

With best wishes,

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

This issue of *Gazeta* differs considerably from the one we planned. When we began working on it in early February, COVID-19 was rampaging in faraway China, on the periphery of our awareness in the United States. We focused instead on collecting articles about matters of concern to our readers, like the leadership transition at POLIN Museum, new books and awards, recent conferences, and plans for the Jewish Culture Festival's thirtieth anniversary celebration in Kraków.

In mid-February, as the virus began ripping through Europe, we welcomed POLIN Museum's Chief Curator Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett to the San Francisco Bay Area, where she gave the keynote at the opening of an Arthur Szyk exhibition organized by the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at the University of California, Berkeley (reported in this issue).

By March, the faraway virus had reached our shores and was causing alarm, from Washington state down the coast to the Bay Area and beyond. Meanwhile, our Polish colleagues and *Gazeta* contributors began telling us about the advent of the virus in their communities and the health measures being taken in universities and other public institutions and places in Warsaw, Kraków, and elsewhere. Clearly, the pandemic's momentous events were demanding our attention.

This revised spring edition of *Gazeta* presents, as always, topics and events of primary concern to you, our readers, while also recognizing the global health and economic crises confronting us today. Like many previous generations, we live in times that can be difficult, even deadly. We are grateful to be in conversation with you as we move together into an uncertain future.

Tad Taube and Shana Penn
Chairman and Executive Director

SPECIAL REPORTS

Academia during the Pandemic

Edyta Gawron

Jagiellonian University in Kraków started its spring semester on February 24, 2020. The first week of classes, usually busy and exciting, was already marked by some uncertainty. We received recommendations regarding travel abroad (destinations to avoid) and international visitors (visits from COVID-19 affected countries had to be cancelled or postponed). At the Institute of Jewish Studies, following the new restrictions, the visit from a Japanese delegation was cancelled at the last minute. Soon after, questions arose about upcoming important public events underway. For example, what would happen to the Polish-Israeli ambassadors' debate, marking thirty years of reestablishing diplomatic relations between the two countries?

A few days later, one of the students enrolled in the international educational program Erasmus+ returned from Italy. Knowing the



Kraków, March 2020

Photograph by Edyta Gawron. Used with permission.

situation there, we asked her to self-isolate and refrain from attending classes for the next two weeks. Our colleagues in the institute were asked to assist her with materials and provide individual mentoring. This was when we introduced

e-learning in response to the coronavirus. The quarantined Italian student was offered Skype access to Hebrew classes, and a few days later, with events moving so quickly and dramatically, this would be required for all of our classes.

Within the first month of the new semester, we found ourselves displaced and working from home as all classes transitioned to online teaching. Fortunately, Jagiellonian University already had programs and online platforms to facilitate remote teaching.

We miss Kazimierz, though. The Institute of Jewish Studies is located in the heart of the Jewish quarter, where we had just attended Purim celebrations. We were expecting dozens of student groups to arrive in March, mainly from Israel, the United States, and Europe, but all visits were cancelled at the last minute. Within a few days, Kazimierz, together with other parts of Kraków, resembled a ghost town. Suddenly, all of the tourists were gone and the locals had to comply with strict lockdown protocols. All public activities were cancelled, including the March of Remembrance, held annually on the anniversary of the liquidation of the Kraków Ghetto.

Confronted with all the depressing news, we want to

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lift the spirits of our students. Working on a regular schedule and seeing each other online helps us all to focus on teaching and learning.

Most of my classes this semester are on the Holocaust or Holocaust-related topics. Some of my students had experienced stressful travel back to their respective countries. Unfortunately, we did not have time to say goodbye. Luckily, we will continue working together online, and one of the first topics to be discussed is survival strategies in a time of catastrophe. How ironic, yet also fitting!

University classes remain suspended as of this writing. New security measures have been implemented in all of Poland, such as directives to walk around neighborhoods or take public transportation only for reasons essential for health or work.

The streets of Kraków are almost completely empty. From time to time, the voice from the loudspeakers installed on police cars reminds inhabitants to stay at home—*Zostań w domu!* ■

Edyta Gawron, PhD, is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Jewish Studies, Jagiellonian University in Kraków. From 2009 to 2017, she was director of the Centre for the Study of the History and Culture of Kraków Jews. She is president of the Management Board of Galicia Jewish Heritage Institute Foundation (Galicia Jewish Museum in Kraków) and served on the team that designed the historical museum in Oskar Schindler's Factory in Kraków.

Zygmunt Stępiński is New Director of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

Antony Polonsky

In a statement issued to the press on February 14, 2020, the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage announced that it had “reached agreement with the co-organizers of POLIN Museum—the mayor of Warsaw and the executive of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute—on the position of director and intends to appoint Zygmunt Stępiński, who has held the post of acting director since February 2019, for a three-year term.” It further stated that “in accordance with the regulations laid down in the law of October 25, 1991, on the organization and management of cultural affairs, the minister will seek to obtain from trade unions active in the museum and professional and cultural associations their opinion of the candidate for the post of director to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. The new director of POLIN Museum should be appointed by the end of February 2020.”

In response, the mayor of Warsaw, Rafał Trzaskowski, expressed his satisfaction at the agreement while also expressing regret that it had not been reached earlier. Its conclusion was the result of the “responsible and exceptional gesture of Professor Stola, who for the good of POLIN Museum has renounced his legal right to the position of director ... We are happy that the deadlock has been broken and such an important institution will now finally have an administration which will ensure the realization of its programs and secure its future development.”

This followed an earlier statement by the mayor and the executive of the Jewish Historical Institute. Acting “in accordance with the interests of the institution and of Polish-Jewish relations,” they said, “as well as the image of Poland in the world, after the difficult but exceptionally responsible statement by

Professor Dariusz Stola that he renounced his rights as winner of the competition for the post of director of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, on condition that the parties running the museum reached agreement on another candidate.” They nominated Zygmunt Stępiński as the “common candidate of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute and the City of Warsaw.” They reached this decision after consulting with “Jewish circles, friends of the Museum and donors.”

The dispute over the position of director began in February 2019, when the Minister of Culture, Piotr Gliński, refused to renew Stola’s five-year appointment, which held the option of extension. The minister never made clear the grounds for his action, but he seems to have objected to the fact that Stola protested against the amendment of the 2018 law on the Institute of National Remembrance

(Instytut Pamięci Narodowej-IPN), which made claiming that the Polish state or the Polish nation bore responsibility for the Holocaust a criminal offense. (The law was subsequently amended to remove these criminal penalties.)

Further conflict arose over *Obcy w domu* (“Estranged,” the museum’s translation), one of the museum’s temporary exhibitions, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the anti-Zionist campaign of 1968, which the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage had refused to fund. A huge success, the exhibition drew 116,000 people. It included a final section comparing the hate speech which had marked the events of 1968 with that which had become increasingly prevalent since the amendment of the law on the IPN. Minister Gliński also seems to have been angered by the failure of the museum administration to turn over any part of a large, multiyear education grant that it received from the Norwegian government and its alleged failure to sponsor a conference devoted to the

Recent years have seen an attack on history as a scholarly discipline that has threatened the great progress made in understanding the complex problems of the history of Jews in Poland and of Polish-Jewish relations.

contribution to Polish-Israeli relations of Lech Kaczyński, former president of Poland, who died in the Smoleńsk plane crash of April 2010.

Minister Gliński was unwilling to reappoint Stola, but under pressure from the representatives of the two other bodies involved in running the museum, he agreed to an open competition for the post of director in which Stola could participate. Only one other candidate applied, Monika Krawczyk, then Chair of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland and former Chair of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (Fundacja Ochrony Diedzictwa

Żydowskiego-FODŻ). In May, the selection committee, chaired by Deputy Minister of Culture Jarosław Sellin and made up of two representatives each of the ministry, the municipality of Warsaw, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute, and nine members representing independent bodies, among them Jewish organizations and institutions engaged in education, including several senior professors, voted in May, 11 to 3, with one abstention, to reappoint Stola.

Stola had certainly been a very successful director. According to Tad Taube, chairman of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture and one of the main supporters of the museum, Stola is “the most outstanding scholar and director we could ever get for that museum. He has been responsible for all the positive things.” His views are shared by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the chief curator of POLIN’s core exhibition, Professor Emerita of Performance Studies at New York University, and a 2020 recipient of a Dan

David prize for her work at the museum. She observed that “all the success of the last five years is his [Stola’s] doing. All the awards, all of the visitor numbers—all of it is his doing.”

They were right to talk of numbers. Since it opened in 2013, the museum has been visited by 3.75 million people, while nearly 2 million have visited the core exhibition, which opened in October 2014. Around 44 percent of these visitors come from abroad, the largest group coming from Israel, followed by the United States. Under Stola’s leadership, the museum was awarded the title of European Museum of the Year in 2016 and the EMA (European Museum Academy Award), and in 2017, it received the Europa Nostra Award, the most important award in Europe for outstanding achievement in the protection, research, and promotion of cultural heritage. According to the award, the museum “created a safe haven to engage in an intercultural dialogue, thus offering a vital lesson to today’s world.”

Stępiński “has a very deep connection to the history of Polish Jews. He is loyal, capable, and dedicated, and he has been with the museum since it opened.”

– Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

The minister again failed to appoint Stola, and by February 2020 the situation had become critical, since Zygmunt Stępiński could only hold the post of acting director until the end of the month. It was then that the compromise solution of appointing him director for a three-year period was adopted.

Stępiński graduated in history from the University of Warsaw and became active in politics after the introduction of martial law in December 1981, when he became secretary of the editorial board of the underground publishing house CDN (Ciąg Dalszy Nastąpi, “To Be Continued”). The son of a celebrated architect, he has worked as a journalist and was one of

the creators of the publishing house MURATOR (now ZPR media S.A.) in 1982, as well as the social programs “Available Housing” and “Housing Without Barriers.” He was also active in Polish-Jewish life and has worked in service to POLIN Museum since 2012, and as one of its three deputy directors was responsible for education, communication, sales, and marketing.

His appointment has been welcomed by many of the museum’s key supporters, who are concerned to safeguard its institutional autonomy. According to Warsaw Mayor Trzaskowski and Piotr Wiślicki, the head of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute, Stępiński “has many years of experience in the field of management, including in the field of cultural institutions, [and] he enjoys the trust of the team and the museum’s donors and Jewish communities in Poland and abroad.” Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett agreed: “He has a very deep connection to the history of Polish Jews. He is loyal, capable, and dedicated, and



Professor Dariusz Stola, former Director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Photograph by Omar Marques. Getty Images.

he has been with the museum since it opened.”

The general consensus was well expressed by Tad Taube. Calling the solution “a bittersweet pill,” he said it was “much better than having Minister Gliński appoint the director without the agreement of his partners.” Praising Stępiński as an “able administrator,” he concluded that the most important thing is that “we now have a leader for a great museum that was heretofore in a state of flux for almost a year.”

The museum has gone through a difficult period. It is to be hoped that under Director Stępiński it will

Stola is “the most outstanding scholar and director we could ever get for that museum. He has been responsible for all the positive things.”

– Tad Taube

continue to contribute to the preservation and informed appreciation of the history and accomplishments of the Jews of this region and of their descendants all over the world.

Recent years have seen an attack on history as a scholarly discipline that has threatened the great progress made in understanding the complex problems of the history of Jews in Poland and of Polish-Jewish relations. In these conditions, the importance of the museum in fostering a nuanced and balanced attitude to the past is all the more important. One can only echo the sentiments of Arkady Rzegocki, Polish ambassador to the United Kingdom in the *Jewish Chronicle* of February 19, 2020: “The POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw is

perhaps the next best-known Jewish landmark in Poland. Built on the site of the former Warsaw [G]hetto it celebrates the thousand-year history of Poland’s Jewish community and is a place where you can learn about past and present Jewish culture, confront stereotypes, and consider perils from today’s world—such as xenophobia and nationalistic prejudices.”

To see the public statement issued by Dariusz Stola, former director of POLIN Museum, on February 10, 2020, go to: <http://szih.org.pl/en/dariusz-stola-statement-regarding-polin-museum/>. ■

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

Statement of New Director of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

Over the past year POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews has been going through the worst crisis since its inception. The crisis was caused by the conflict between the museum's co-founders regarding nomination for the post of director. As you all know, a competition for the post was held in May 2019. It was won convincingly by Professor Dariusz Stola—my mentor, my superior, and a dear colleague.

It would be inappropriate to comment here on the process of nominating, or rather on the failure to nominate, Professor Dariusz Stola for a new term as POLIN Museum director. I myself was put in a rather difficult position, serving as acting director. I was striving to fulfill my role to the best of my abilities, yet with full awareness of its interim nature. POLIN Museum was molded by Professor Stola, who was about to return and occupy again his empty office in the museum building.

Alas, that never happened. According to the common intention of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute and the City of Warsaw, and with the approval of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, I received the nomination for a three-year term as POLIN Museum director. I have decided to accept it. I am sure you are all aware how awkward the position I was put in has been, notwithstanding the fact that my candidature was supported by all three museum co-founders, many different milieus and authority figures, including those that the museum holds in the highest regard—first and foremost the donors, but also the Nationwide Workers' Initiative Trade Union in operation at the museum, as well as POLIN Museum staff council.

Above all else, my nomination was supported by Professor Dariusz Stola.

Darek, I would like to address these words to you directly. They say no one is irreplaceable. Perhaps it is true. What is also true, however, is that there are people among us who are truly unique and extraordinarily clever; people who change the course of events and thus shape our history. We have had a great honor and privilege to work with such a person. POLIN Museum is one of the most important institutions of culture in Poland and it will follow the course that you have mapped out for us. I am sure that our paths will cross along this course, and more than once at that.

Today I have entered the building as the Museum Director, overwhelmed by most ambivalent feelings. Nonetheless, I wish to pass on this message to you all: I will make every effort to further develop the potential of POLIN museum—the institution which Professor Stola held dear and where he left a piece of his heart. The museum will continue to fulfil its mission of preserving the memory of Polish Jews, of retelling their history in an engaging, captivating, and authentic way. It will continue to teach about the tradition, culture, religion, and patriotism of the Jews who have always been and will always remain an inseparable part of the multinational and multiethnic Republic of Poland—the home of people of various denominations, viewpoints, traditions, and customs.

Zygmunt Stępiński
Director of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews



Zygmunt Stępiński, the new Director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Photograph by M. Starowieyska. Courtesy of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

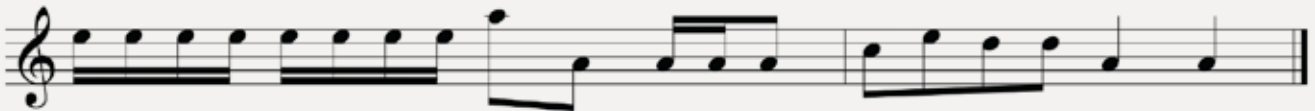
SPECIAL FEATURES IN RESPONSE TO SHELTERING-AT-HOME

Sunday Potatoes! Monday Potatoes!

Editor's Note: You can sing this while washing your hands for 22 seconds!



Zun-tik bul-bes, Mon-tik bul-bes, Dins-tik un Mit-vokh bul-bes, Do-ner-shtik un Fray-tik bul-bes



Sha-bes in a no-ve-ne a bul-bes ku-ge-le, Zun-tik vay-ter bul-bes!

Zuntik – bulbes	Sunday, potatoes
Montik – bulbes	Monday, potatoes
Dinstik un mitvokh – bulbes	Tuesday and Wednesday, potatoes
Donershtik un fraytik – bulbes	Thursday and Friday, potatoes
Ober shabes in a novine	But on Shabbes something special
A bulbe kigele!	A potato kugel!
Un zuntik vayter – bulbes	And Sunday—and so on—potatoes
.	
Broyt mit bulbes	Bread with potatoes
Fleysh mit bulbes	Meat with potatoes
Varemes un vetshere – bulbes	Noon meal and evening meal potatoes
Ober un vider – bulbes	Here and there potatoes
Ober eynmol in a novine	But now and then, a novelty
A bulbe kigele!	A potato kugel!
Un zuntik vayter – bulbes	And Sunday—the usual—potatoes
.	
Ober – bulbes	Here potatoes
Vider – bulbes	There potatoes
Ober un vider – bulbes	Here and there potatoes
Vider un ober – bulbes	There and here potatoes
Ober shabes nokhn tsholnt	But on Shabbes after the chulent
A bulbe kigele!	A potato kugel!
Un zuntik vayter – bulbes	A Sunday, here we go again, potatoes

בולבעס

זונטיק – בולבעס
מאָנטיק – בולבעס
דינסטיק און מיטוואָך – בולבעס
דאָנערשטיק און פֿרייטיק – בולבעס
אַבער שבת אין אַ נאָווענע – אַ בולבע קוגעלע!
און זונטיק ווייטער – בולבעס
און זונטיק ווייטער – בולבעס.

ברויט מיט בולבעס
פלייש מיט בולבעס
וואַרעמעס און וועטשערע – בולבעס
אַבער און ווידער – בולבעס
איינמאָל אין אַ נאָווענע
אַ בולבע קוגעלע!
און זונטיק ווייטער – בולבעס
און זונטיק ווייטער – בולבעס.

אַבער – בולבעס
ווידער – בולבעס
נאָך אַ מאָל און אַבער אַ מאָל – בולבעס
היינט און מאָרגן – בולבעס
אַבער שבת נאָכן טשאַלנט
אַ בולבע קוגעלע!
און זונטיק ווייטער – בולבעס
און זונטיק ווייטער – בולבעס.

<https://musicalexplorers.savannahmusicfestival.org/2019-19-curriculum/unit-5-klezmer-music/lesson-1-learning-bulbes/>

Cooking in Containment

Editor's Note:

Once many of us realized we would be sheltering at home for a month if not longer, we made our shopping lists for durable groceries and household supplies, applied research zeal to culinary creation, and transferred commute hours to cooking hours. *Gazeta* readers reported to us that after teaching their classes on Zoom and reading students' exams, after researching and sharing online reputable sources about the pandemic, they were passionately reading cookbooks, exchanging recipes, and creating feasts for their mostly modest-sized households. It seems many of us are now thoroughly occupied with cooking—and wherever there is cooking, eating is sure to follow. Here are some personal culinary stories, helpful tips and recipes for cooking in containment.



Jewish Food Is Grounding, Especially Now

Jeffrey Yoskowitz

Pickles and gefilte don't always get the same level of attention by scholars and cultural activists as, say, literary works of Sholem Aleichem or the revival of the Yiddish language. In recent years, however, that's been changing. Food is "in"—at least as an entry point into the folk history of Jews in Eastern Europe. As a matter of fact, in the age of coronavirus, as restaurants remain shuttered and much of the world is sheltering-in-place, cooking has become a survival skill as well as a deserved object of study. More than ever, we can learn from Jewish cooks who navigated scarcity and short growing seasons with artistry and skill.

For over a decade I've straddled both the culinary and scholarly worlds, as a writer, a researcher, culinary revivalist, gefilte fish manufacturer, and an entrepreneur.

I began my journey into Jewish food when I moved onto an organic Jewish farm called Adamah in northwest Connecticut. That year, the farm

was building a value-added products business and pickles were at the heart of it (the farm's slogan: "Young Jewish farmers changing the world one pickle at a time"). I learned to make the old-fashioned method of saltwater pickles, which, it turns out, are actually good for you. The Jewish/Slavic pickling method is a live-cultured process of fermentation that doesn't just preserve a cucumber but improves it: it sours it and makes it pro-biotic such that it aids in digestion and strengthens immune systems.

I see much of Jewish history and culture like a sour pickle. Rather than just preserving it, I think culture needs to ferment—to transform itself from within.

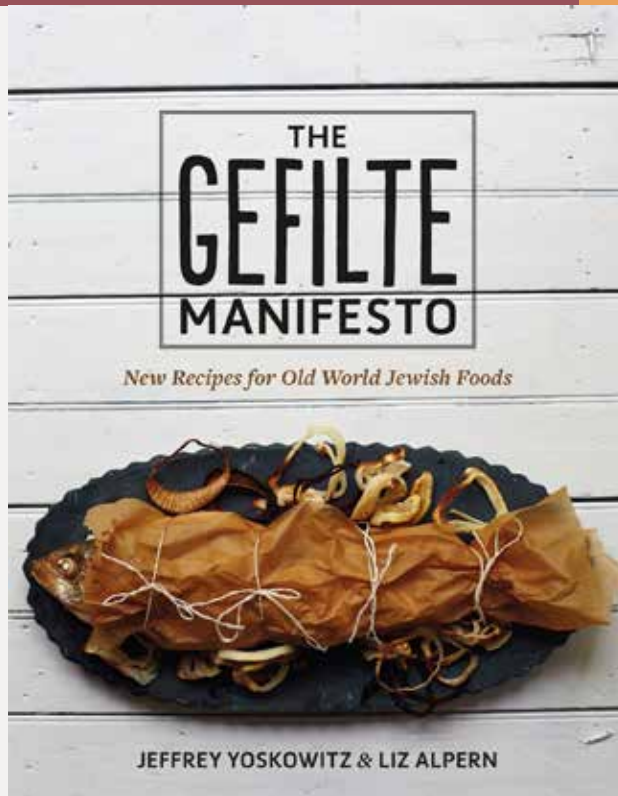
I left the farm and moved to New York City where I began working in the food world. I turned my attention to the negative perceptions of Ashkenazi cuisine among my peers in the food world. Gefilte fish was the natural

place to start since it's often the butt of jokes—and yet, when it's made right, with fresh ingredients, an eye to freshness and with deference to tradition, it can be transcendent. I launched a venture called The Gefilteria to spread gefilte fish appreciation. We manufacture an artisanal (read: gourmet) gefilte fish and produce culinary events and workshops that explore the breadth and history of Eastern European Jewish cooking. Gefilte fish, for better or worse, became the venture's symbol. To this day, we travel the world, cooking and teaching, and continue to manufacture our signature gefilte fish for major holidays.

My work in the world of Ashkenazi cooking converged with my work as a writer and researcher. Soon, my focus turned to the lost and distorted histories of Jewish cooking and eating. When writing my cookbook, *The Gefilte Manifesto: New Recipes for*

Old World Jewish Foods, I became obsessed with the dishes that I didn't know about. What was lost in the Old World? Through reading those Sholem Aleichem stories, it became clear to me that very little of Ashkenazi foodways is represented by the Jewish delicatessen in New York. I've been writing and researching and investigating a deeper, richer food tradition ever since.

I'm proud to have worked with the Taube Jewish Heritage Tour team to develop "History, Heritage, and Herring," Taube's first-ever Jewish culinary heritage tour. Our focus has been understanding Ashkenazi material food culture and connecting to the mindset and the wisdom of Jewish cooks of the past. We eat together and meet chefs and relevant food producers in the region. We also examine the climate, the seasons, and the land as we taste the fresh currants, gooseberries, and bilberries in the summertime, or the foraged mushrooms in the autumn. And, of course, we



The Gefilte Manifesto: New Recipes for Old World Jewish Foods by Jeffrey Yoskowitz and Liz Alpern, published by Flatiron Books in 2016.

tie it all into the thousand years of Jewish history in the region.

As the food world is struggling now with restaurants unable to serve customers in-house, and much of the world sheltering-in-place, I realize we can use digital tools to eat and cook together. We also can find new ways to support those especially hard hit by the pandemic. With that in mind, I've been producing "The Great Big Jewish Food Fest: Online & In The Kitchen," along with a team of culinary professionals and food thinkers. The festival—a collection of book talks, films, workshops, culinary talks, panels, and

innovative digital food programming, opened May 19 and ran through May 28. (Participation is free for most events, except for a few that are by donation for COVID-19 relief efforts).

As so much of our world remains in question, as countries grapple with the reality of the coronavirus and the need to stay indoors, Jewish culinary narratives and traditions have the power to ground and comfort us. Food is much more than sustenance; now, more than ever, the wisdom and recipes from generations past are especially relevant.

Herbed Gefilte Fish

At its most basic, gefilte is a cold fish appetizer served before Ashkenazi holiday and Shabbat meals, and is made by mixing freshwater fish with eggs, onions, and spices. One of the things that drew us to gefilte fish was that it stood as a symbol of resourcefulness—how far a single fish could be stretched to feed an entire family. It had a practical aspect, too. On the Shabbat, Jews are prohibited from separating bones from

flesh, so by finely grinding the fish, the proscription was circumvented. We love thinking of ways to restore gefilte to its rightful place on the table, especially for the Passover seder, when gefilte is often front and center. This recipe has a classic base, but we've added herbs to give it a taste of spring and a touch of color. There is also no matzo meal or bread crumbs in this recipe, giving it a lighter texture and removing any gluten. You have two options for how to cook and serve your gefilte fish. Poaching quenelles in a fish broth is a classic method used by generations of Jewish cooks, and baking the fish in a terrine is a quick and contemporary approach that will slice and plate beautifully. Liz and I both prefer the baked terrine, but enough friends and family members request the poached option that we couldn't ignore the pull of tradition. The first stage of the process for this gefilte fish is nearly identical to the Smoked Whitefish Gefilte Terrine and the Old World Stuffed Gefilte Fish until it gets stuffed into the skin.



Herbed gefilte fish terrine, as per the recipe below.
 Photograph by Lauren Volo. Courtesy of Jeffrey Yoskowitz.

Note: The whitefish we use here refers to the species *Coregonus clupeaformis* from the Great Lakes. If you can't find whitefish, substitute any one of the following: hake, sole, flounder, whiting, tilapia, or halibut.

Baked Terrine

Makes 1 small terrine; serves 8 to 10

1 small onion, coarsely chopped

12 ounces whitefish fillet, skin removed, flesh coarsely chopped

1¼ tablespoons vegetable or grapeseed oil

1 large egg

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh watercress (or spinach)

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh dill

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/8 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper

1 tablespoon sugar

Horseradish relish, store-bought or homemade, for serving

If there are any bones left in your fillets, remove the larger ones by hand, but don't fret about the smaller ones since they'll be pulverized in the food processor. You can buy your fish pre-ground from a

fishmonger (usually a Jewish fishmonger) to ensure all the bones are removed, but try to cook your fish that day since ground fish loses its freshness faster.

Place the onion in the bowl of a large food processor and process until finely ground and mostly liquefied. Add the fish fillets to the food processor along with the rest of the ingredients, except for the horseradish. Pulse in the food processor until the mixture is light-colored and evenly textured throughout. Scoop into a bowl and give it an additional stir to ensure that all the ingredients are evenly distributed throughout.

Preheat the oven to 350 F.
Line an 8 x 3-inch loaf pan

with parchment paper and fill the pan with the fish mixture.

Smooth out with a spatula.

Place the loaf pan on a baking sheet on the middle rack of the oven and bake for 40 to 45 minutes. The terrine is finished when the corners and ends begin to brown. The loaf will give off some liquid. Cool to room temperature before removing from the pan and slicing. Serve with horseradish relish.

Poached Gefilte Quenelles

Makes 10 2-ounce quenelles

Heads, bones, and tails from a fish (see Note)

4 quarts water

1 tablespoon kosher salt

2 onions, coarsely chopped

4 medium carrots

3 tablespoons sugar

Gefilte terrine mixture from Baked Terrine recipe (see steps 1 and 2)

Horseradish relish, store-bought or homemade, for serving

Place the fish parts, salt, onions, carrots, sugar, and water in a large stockpot and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, cover, and simmer for at least 45 minutes before poaching the quenelles. Skim off any foam that rises to the surface.

Wet your hands and form the gefilte fish mixture into about 10 quenelles the size of an egg, with a similarly oblong shape. They will expand as they cook.

As a culmination of much of my Ashkenazi food research, I've spent the past year co-producing with YIVO Institute for Jewish Research an online course of Ashkenazi culinary history called "A Seat at the Table: A Journey into Jewish Food," which launched May 1. The course features a trove of archival objects that illuminate Yiddish-Jewish history in the kitchen, a collection of cookbooks that trace the Jewish recipe's evolution over time, lectures by leading scholars (including Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett on bagels, and more), and plenty of cooking demos by Joan Nathan and other cookbook writers and chefs. I serve as the guide for the course, so you can find me cooking and kibitzing throughout. The course is free for a limited time.

[Register before August 31 for free tuition; take the class at any time, at your own pace.](#)

Place them one by one into the poaching liquid. When all the servings are in the pot, make sure the heat is on low and cover the pot. Poach for 30 minutes. Remove the quenelles with a slotted spoon and place them in a bowl or deep serving dish. Spoon enough poaching liquid over to cover the quenelles and let cool slightly before refrigerating. The poaching liquid will gel slightly as it chills.

To serve, remove the carrots and cut them into 3-inch-thick rounds. Serve the quenelles chilled, with the carrot pieces and fresh horseradish relish. If you're old-school or adventurous, serve with spoonfuls of the poaching gel alongside.

Note: If poaching, a fishmonger can save the head, bones, and tail for you if he/she sells you the fillet—just ask. The poaching liquid can be made without these fish parts, but the gefilte quenelles will be slightly less flavorful.

Jeffrey Yoskowitz, a Brooklyn-based writer, food entrepreneur, pickler, and public speaker,



A photograph of classic sour dill pickles from *The Gefilte Manifesto* by Jeffrey Yoskowitz and Liz Alpern.

Photograph by Lauren Volo. Courtesy of Jeffrey Yoskowitz.

shares his special recipes for gefilte fish, one of his specialties at The Gefilteria, which he co-founded as a hub for innovation in Jewish food. The recipes below are excerpted, with permission, from the book

The Gefilte Manifesto, which he co-authored with Liz Alpern. Reprinted with permission from Flatiron Books.

Cooking in Containment: More Tips and Recipes

Quarantine Cooking Tips from Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, in Warsaw, and professor emerita at New York University, shares her special tips for shopping, stocking, and cooking while “sheltered-in-place” during COVID-19. The following “principles” and recipes were originally posted on her Facebook page and are reprinted here with permission.

If you are not going out to shop or cannot find what you want locally, you can order most everything online and have it delivered.

Principle #1: Cook from scratch. Healthier, tastier, more economical. Great activity to share with homebound family. Chance to up your game, experiment, and share the experience and



Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's mushroom barley soup.
Courtesy of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett.

the pleasure. No need to stock the fridge, freezer, and pantry with prepared food.

Principle #2: Water expands everything. Dried goods are much better than tins, more compact for storage, cheaper, and healthier (less fat and salt). This is the time for rice (brown, jasmine, basmati, black, and more), beans (split peas, brown lentils, black

beans, chickpeas, and more), pasta (white, whole wheat, gluten free), oatmeal (rolled and steel cut), and grains of all kinds: millet, buckwheat, quinoa, barley, cornmeal, polenta. And, flour, about which more below. In addition to all the ways you already cook these grains, you can also sprout them for highly nutritious fresh greens.

Beans are an adventure: order the freshest and most interesting from Rancho Gordo <https://www.rancho-gordo.com/>. Speaking of water, add powdered milk to the list, a good solution in a pinch. And how could I have forgotten dried mushrooms!

Principle #3: Always wanted to bake? Now is the time. You are home working, caring for family, so why not bake? Time for sourdough. You don't need yeast, just flour and water. An alchemical adventure, and I bet kids would love it. Delicious fresh bread on hand all the time. Out of butter? There is always olive oil.

Principle #4: Vegetables and fruit that keep, which are the ones in season, so roots (potatoes, turnips, beets, carrots, rutabaga, daikon, onions, parsnip, parsley root, sweet potatoes, garlic, among others), cabbage, kohlrabi, kale, winter squash of all kinds, ginger root. And, apples, Bosc pears, lemons, oranges, grapefruit, avocado. You can stock up for weeks at a time. Consider signing up with Misfit for home delivery of imperfect organic produce at reduced price: <http://bit.ly/2vo5qPb>.

Principle #5: For the pantry, nuts of all kinds, nut butters, seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, flax), raisins, prunes, figs, and crystalized ginger for those yearning for something sweet. You will have what you need, with rolled oats, to make gorgeous granola. Let me know and I will post a great recipe. And olive oil, vegetable oil with a high smoke point for frying (sunflower, safflower, peanut), unpasteurized apple cider vinegar, honey, maple syrup, all-fruit conserves (no added sugar), and, if you cook Chinese dishes, soy sauce and sesame oil. Tinned tomatoes: I always have lots of them on hand—crushed, chopped, and whole. And, nutritional yeast, a good substitute for cheese. And, TVP (textured vegetable protein), a terrible name for a byproduct of soy oil extraction. Bob's Red Mill is a good source. TVP is versatile and nutritious, great substitute for ground beef in a red bean or kidney bean chili. My favorite black bean chili: <http://bit.ly/2IOY765>. It's flexible, so don't worry if you don't have all the different chilies. No chipotle? Substitute smoked paprika. You can order all the chilies and paprika online. And, if you are so inclined: anchovies (perfect

for a simple classic spaghetti dish, with bread crumbs and grated Romano), tinned tuna, sardines, and salmon. Wasa whole-grain crackers.

Principle #6: For the refrigerator: tofu. Infinite ways to prepare soft, firm, extra firm. This recipe cannot be beat, <https://tinyurl.com/qthnm72>. I already have pickles and sauerkraut that I made in the fall. You can still make your own sauerkraut with nothing more than cabbage and salt (Diamond kosher salt, no additives). Hard cheese in a block, not sliced, and if you are so inclined, miso, butter, eggs, herring, smoked fish.

Principle #7: Cook for a few days at a time (soup, beans, grains, stews, bread). Freeze some for a day when there is no time to cook.

Principle #8: Sign up for your favorite food blog. One of mine is Woks of Life, <https://thewoksoflife.com/>. If you love Chinese food, this is the go-to place. You can order pretty much everything you need online and much of what you need is not perishable—dried mushrooms, bean threads, rice noodles, dried tofu sticks, cloud ears, tiger lily buds, jujubes, kombu, and much

more. Don't feel like cooking? Social distancing at home and avoiding restaurants? Order food from your local Chinese restaurants. They are hurting and need our business.

Mushroom Barley Soup

2 cups of barley, rinsed

Long white part of one leek, thinly sliced

2 medium carrots, diced

3 stalks of celery, diced

Start with 2 quarts of water and add more as soup thickens.

After 45 minutes, add sliced fresh mushrooms. I used shiitake, but any will do. I also used Polish dried mushrooms (porcini / boletus), which are nothing short of divine.

Salt and pepper.

Simmer till thick and barley is soft.

In normal times, I would have added a small piece of celery root, a small parsley root, and I would have served it with chopped fresh dill (or parsley).

Perfectly vegan, whole grain (organic barley), no fat.

<https://www.jewishfoodsociety.org/posts/2018/1/15/bkg-soup>,

“A Soup From Poland Travels Thousands of Miles— Only to Return Home”

Shared by Barbara

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett



Celia Ores and her grandson Marc Schorin prepare potato-and-onion pierogi. Photograph by Michelle Ores. Used with permission.

Celia Ores on Pierogi and Horseradish

Celia Ores, age 92, is a Holocaust survivor from Dubienka, Poland, and now resides on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. She spent the war years in Siberia in a labor camp, then in Kazakhstan; after the war, a DP camp outside of Frankfurt, Germany, and completed medical school at the University of Berne, Switzerland. She published her memoir, Reading Pushkin in Siberia, and Other Tales of Survival, in 2015.

In addition to being a full-time pediatrician and full-time mother, Celia also found time to be a full-time chef, bringing her family recipes from Poland with love, care, and a lax understanding of “I can’t have another bite!” Here are her

recipes for potato and onion pierogi and horseradish.

Potato & Onion Pierogi

Prepare the potato onion mix first as it has to cool off.

Potato Onion Mix:

Sauté 1 large onion separately until brown. Add some salt.

Cook 6 peeled russet (large white) potatoes until soft.

Mash the potatoes and mix with the sautéed onions.

Let cool.

To Make the Dough:

For the dough, combine 8 cups flour, 2 eggs, and 2 cups of water.

Mix until you have the right consistency. Let sit for 20 minutes.

Cut the dough into 4 pieces.

Roll out the dough a piece at a time (cover the other pieces).

Make 3-inch circles. Put in a dollop of potato onion mix.

Fold over and pinch and crimp the edges. Make sure they are sealed well.

Boil the pierogi in water for a few minutes. Let pierogi cool. Then cook the pierogi in vegetable oil until browned on each side. Serve with sour cream.

Horseradish:

One horseradish root (finely grated by hand or in a food processor)

Cook 1 beet until soft and and then finely grate it.

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

1 tablespoon sugar

Add the sugar and vinegar to the grated horseradish root. Mix well. Then add the grated beet. Add a little kosher salt. Let it sit for a day or two before using. The flavors need to blend together.

From Kasia Leonardi's Kitchen

Kasia Leonardi is director of catering and events at the JCC Kraków. Many of us are familiar with her Erev Shabbat dinners served in the JCC with the help of the JCC volunteers, known as the Meshugoyim. Others of us have marveled at her impressive supervision of the



Kasia Leonardi teaches a cooking workshop.
Photograph by Sebastian Rudol. Courtesy of JCC Kraków.

JCC Kraków's annual summer Erev Shabbat dinner, which is held on the last Friday evening of Kraków's Jewish Culture Festival, following the day's revelatory Ride for the Living bicycle trek from the gates of Auschwitz to Kazimierz, where the JCC is located. Each year this Shabbat dinner hosts up to 700 guests from around the world in a beautiful, spacious hall, walking distance from the JCC. After bicycling the 55km Ride for the Living, Kasia welcomes all to the dining hall, in her characteristically warm and relaxed manner, as if supervising a 700-person glatt-kosher buffet is everyday fare. Thank you, Kasia!

Cymes—A Vegetarian Tzimmes

I often give cooking workshops at JCC Kraków

and I like to write out the recipes by hand and illustrate them. My students appreciate the personal touch and a few even collect them! *Cymes*, a classic Ashkenazi Jewish food from old Galicia, is a diced-carrot stew that includes dried fruits, is flavored with honey and cinnamon, and has a beautiful orange-gold color, always sweet and aromatic. *Cymes* is from the Yiddish, and when it became part of the Polish language, it became a word for something good, special, a delicacy, a miracle, a treasure. In this difficult time of COVID-19, we need something optimistic, a miracle, a tasty golden dish that will remind us of a better tomorrow! I hope everyone enjoyed a peaceful and healthy Passover and a lot of optimism for a better tomorrow!

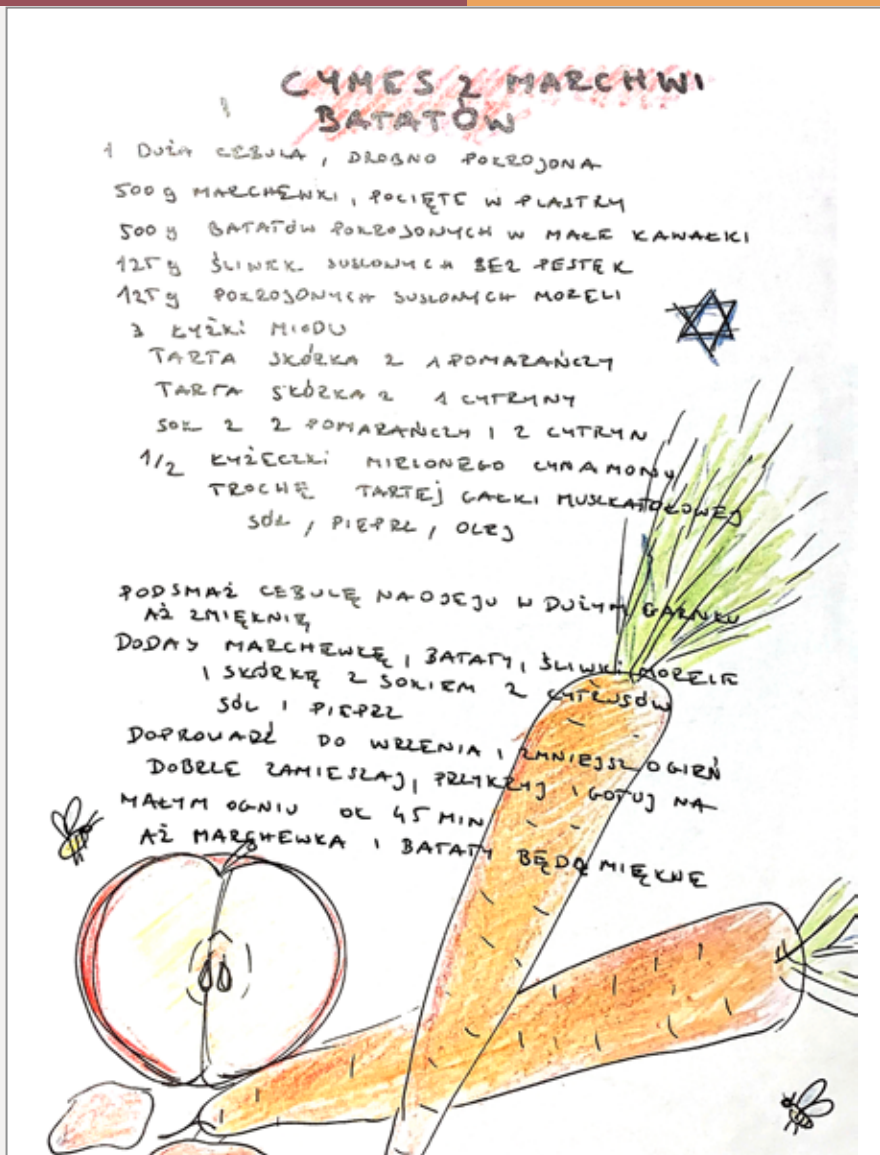
Ingredients:

- 1 large onion, cut into small pieces
- 1 apple, cut into half-inch pieces
- 4 carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch rounds
- 4 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into half-inch pieces
- 1 cup dried prunes
- 1 cup dried apricots
- ½ cup raisins
- 3 large spoons honey
- Orange and lemon zest
- 2 cups orange juice
- 1 cup lemon juice
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

Extra-virgin olive oil

Instructions

- Fry onions in olive oil in a large heavy pot.
- Add the rest of the ingredients and stir gently.
- Reduce heat to a gentle but constant simmer. Cover.
- Cook on low heat for 45 minutes.
- Serve warm as a side dish to a festive holiday meal.
- I like doing experiments in



Kasia Leonardi's hand-written and illustrated recipe for vegetarian tzimmes. Courtesy of Kasia Leonardi.

the kitchen and mixing the flavors from childhood with new ones. I like preparing traditional Polish dishes like *makowiec* (poppseed cake), *sernik* (cheesecake) and *barszcz* (borsch), but in a lighter way.

Kale Salad

I like all food that is fresh and easy to make, like this kale salad.

All you need is:

Kale

Polish apples

Dried cranberries

Apple cider vinegar

Canola oil

You can also add some walnuts if you like.

Toss ingredients together. It's perfect!

Coconut Macaroons

A Passover-perfect dessert and delicious year-round

Ingredients:

4 egg whites

3 cups of sweetened coconut shreds

½ cup of granulated sugar

Method:

Preheat the oven to 350 F.

In a bowl, whisk the egg whites until frothy.

Add sugar and mix.

Add the coconut shreds and mix everything with a spoon.

With a rounded spoon drop dough onto the cookie sheet.

Bake for 15-20 minutes or until brown on the top.

After they are baked, you can dip the macaroons in chocolate.

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler over simmering water. Dip the bottom of the macaroons in the chocolate.

Place the macaroons in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes.

Smaczego! (Bon appétit!)

Essential Kneads From the Kitchen of Sharon Bernstein

Sharon Bernstein, Cantor at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, San Francisco, shares her love of baking, mixed with her whimsical humor, and voila! the joy of challah.

I like to bake. With baking, there are instructions, and things tend to turn out predictably (unlike the rest of my life).

To be clear, I like baking pretty much everything but bread. Bread has always eluded me. It's the yeast thing—I could never get the hang of it. Rise too little? Too much? Is the yeast still active? The couple of times I tried to bake challah—out of some sense that it was something I “ought” to do, it felt like a Herculean effort for something that was dry and yeasty-tasting.

Enter coronavirus. It was the first week of Zoom broadcasting my shul's Friday night service from my living room, and I didn't have a challah. We sometimes don't have challah at home, reciting the *b'rachah* instead over a local baguette or olive bread that God has made spring forth from the earth. But this week, we didn't have even that, as I was tentative about the succulent crusts peeking forth from the crisp white paper bags. I wondered, how many skulking molecules might be lying in wait? And I wasn't sure about the nutritive qualities of disinfecting wipes. That's if I even had wipes!

So it would have been bleach poured on the bread, and I'm pretty sure that's not what is meant by bleached white flour. Besides, we had flour to use up before Pesach. So I decided to try making a challah.

This time, however, I had a secret weapon in my oven mitt. My son and I are ardent fans of *The Great British Baking Show*, and my husband and I had given him Paul Hollywood's *How To Bake* last Hanukah, out of a completely selfless desire on our part to further his baking skills. I looked to see if, by any chance, there was a recipe for challah, which there was. It was called “Cholla Loaf,” which was a bit concerning, but I decided to give it a try. I followed the guidelines, allowing the dough to be a lot stickier than feels comfortable, and kneading through stretching the dough repeatedly between my hands. As I worked, something magical happened. The dough became silky and supple, the rhythm a happily tactile stretch and pull. I put it in an oiled bowl to rise, and, remarkably, it rose as it should, punched down as it should, and then, though I let it rise again too much, until the braids were hardly visible, it tasted as it should.

Now I'm eager to bake challah every week. If I could only find flour in the wake of the pandemic!

Recipe, Annotated, Abbreviated, and Slightly Modified:

List of ingredients, modified for my own dietary predilections, and to have more fat and salt, per Joan Nathan's recipes:

500g flour, plus extra for dusting

10.5g salt

25g sugar

10g instant yeast

45g fat—olive oil or margarine—the original recipe calls for butter.

2 eggs plus 1 for glazing the bread. The original recipe calls for medium eggs, but I only buy large eggs, so just keep an eye on the liquids.

50 ml warm milk or milk substitute. I use almond milk; something richer is possibly better, but I like the neutral-ish flavor of almond milk.

180 ml cool water

Put flour, salt, sugar, and yeast in a large mixing bowl. The original says to put the salt and sugar on one side of the bowl, and the yeast on the other, but the first time I neglected to do that and it turned out just



Challah with sesame seeds.
Courtesy of the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco.

fine. Main thing is not to put the salt directly on top of the yeast, which can kill it. Add the fat, 2 beaten eggs, the milk or milk substitute, then half the water. Turn the mixture with your fingers. It will be super sticky. Go with it. Continue to add water, a little at a time, until you've picked up all the flour from the sides of the bowl. You may not need to add all the water, or you may need to add a little more—you want dough that is soft but not soggy. This is the hard part, getting the dough to an "ideal" wetness. It needs to be a lot wetter than you think it should be. Basically, go for as wet as is still semi-manageable. Use the mixture to clean the inside of the bowl and keep going until the mixture forms a rough dough.

Lightly flour the work surface (I use a silicone mat), then tip the dough onto it and begin to knead. Hold the dough in place with one hand and stretch it away from you with the other, then fold over, turn 1/8 circle, and repeat. Keep kneading for 5-10 minutes, at least. Work through the initial wet stage until the dough starts to form a soft, smooth skin. Add a little flour if you really, really need to, but don't overdo it.

When your dough feels smooth and silky, put it into a lightly oiled large bowl. Cover with a tea towel or any cloth available and leave to rise until at least doubled in size, at least 1 hour, but it's fine to leave it for 2 or even 3 hours. I put it in my oven on the "proof" setting for 1 hour.

Line a baking tray with baking parchment or silicone paper.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Fold it inwards repeatedly until all the air is knocked out and the dough is smooth. You can start with punching the dough in, which is deeply satisfying. Divide it into 3 equal pieces. Many challot use a 4, 5, 6, or even more braid; instructions abound online. Roll each piece out to a sausage (a kosher one, of course), about 22 cm long. The dough should be stretchy enough as to be slightly comically resistant, trying to shrink back on itself. Join the 3 pieces together at one end, and braid. The book gives detailed instructions, but I'll save the space here. Tuck the ends underneath to neaten. Lift the dough onto the prepared

baking tray. Beat the remaining egg and brush over the top of the loaf. I do this slowly, brushing along the lines of the braid, and trying to make sure the egg doesn't pool anywhere.

Put the tray inside a clean plastic bag, making sure the bag doesn't touch the dough. I have no idea how this works, having neither a big enough plastic bag nor a way of keeping it from touching the dough, so I put a baking rack over the loaf and a cloth over that.

Leave to proof for about 1 hour, or until the dough is at least doubled in size and springs back quickly if you prod it lightly with your finger. (I accidentally left it to proof 1.5 hours the first time, and it poofed up so much the braids were barely visible.)

Meanwhile, heat your oven to 200 C.

Per Joan Nathan's challah instructions, for a glossy crust, brush again with egg before putting in the oven. Bake the loaf for 20-25 minute or until it sounds hollow when tapped on the base. The loaf will color quickly due to the sugar and egg, so keep an eye on it. Leave to cool on a wire rack.

Once the challah is out of the oven, you will have to resist—for the sake of familial relationships and waistline—sneaking off with it and eating it by yourself in entirety. This is not easy. The aroma will invade and inflame all your senses, and any carefully cultivated self-discipline will want to fly out the window. Bake at your own peril. ■

HISTORIANS COOKING THE PAST

In the spirit of these creative historians featured below, we offer all of the recipes and tidbits for your enticement and enjoyment, so you may look back on this historical time as one that we came through with well-being, nourishment, and connection to our traditions and history.

Dawson history teachers Stacey Zembrzycki and Cassandra Marsillo and their colleagues Margo Shea, Salem State University, and Kate Preissler, public historian for the City of Holyoke, launched a blog last week called *Historians Cooking the Past*.

"Facing the daily challenges that come with living through this pandemic has led us to rethink how we engage with the past," Stacey writes. "In this vein, we have asked storytellers throughout the world to share food memories and a recipe that speaks to these COVID-19 times.

"If we can't gather and share space, we might as well ground ourselves in well-told stories that provide perspective as well as comfort in good food. We view this temporary project as an old-school, wire-bound community cookbook that's now gone digital, and invite you to follow along." ■

Things To Do While Sheltering-at-Home: Online Cultural Resources

Below, we invite you to explore online resources suggested by *Gazeta's* assistant editors Aleksandra Sajdak and Adam Schorin, *Gazeta* friends on Facebook, and the Congress for Jewish Culture website.

Aleksandra's Recommendations

Warsaw's Museum of Modern Art

<https://artmuseum.pl/en/wydarzenia/kontemplacja-w-czasach-pandemii>

Classic Polish Movies (with English subtitles)

<https://www.youtube.com/user/StudioFilmoweTOR>

A large collection of classic Polish movies on YouTube. For example, in 2013, the renowned Polish film studio TOR—which produced more than a hundred feature films between the years 1967 and 2019—decided to share some of its pictures on the website. The uploaded films can be streamed free of charge and have English subtitles.



A still from Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Amator* (*Camera Buff*), available with English subtitles on Studio Filmowe TOR's YouTube channel.

Take a Tour of Jewish Warsaw

<http://warsze.polin.pl/en/>

CBJ (CJL)

Centralna Biblioteka Judaistyczna (Central Jewish Library) is one of the major world repositories of digitized Judaica, available for free via the Internet. The CJL presents books, works of art, old prints, manuscripts, archival materials, ephemera, and newspapers housed by the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish

Historical Institute in Warsaw (ŻIH). <https://cbj.jhi.pl>

Adam's Recommendations

Ninateka.pl has films, theatre, and concerts online for free. I think their collection of theatre might be most exciting: <https://ninateka.pl/filmy/teatr>. Many of them are available with English subs, but you might have to click on them to check. We'd recommend Tadeusz Kantor's *Dead Class* (<https://ninateka.pl/film/umarla-klasa-tadeusz-kantor>—



A scene in Krzysztof Warlikowski's *(A)pollonia*. A recording of the play is available, for free and with English subtitles, at ninateka.pl.

Photograph by Magda Hueckel. Press materials.

only available if you're in Poland), Krzysztof Warlikowski's *(A)Pollonia* (<https://ninateka.pl/film/apollonia-krzysztof-warlikowski>), and Anna Smolar's *Jewish Actors* (<https://ninateka.pl/film/aktorzy-zydowscy-anna-smolar>)—only in Polish).

Teatr Powszechny has made several of their plays available online: <https://www.powszechny.com/aktualnosci/powszechny-online-teatr-minimum.html>. They're available to watch on specific days, and they're regularly adding more.

Nowy Teatr has shared some work online, usually adding shows to the website on Sunday and making them available for thirty-six hours. They also have shows for children in Polish: <https://nowyteatr.org/en>.

Eastern European movies—Poland. Unlike the other options on this list, this one is not free. But it is such an impressive collection of Polish films with English subtitles that we felt we had to include it. From classics like *Ashes and Diamonds*, *The Saragossa Manuscript*, and *Blind Chance*, to contemporary gems like *The Lure* and *Cold*

War, there's something here for everyone. If you're looking for films specifically about Polish Jewry, we recommend starting with *Austeria*, *The Hourglass Sanatorium*, and *Ida*. For a fee of \$30, you get access to the entire site for one month, and in that time you can download as many films as you like. You can also browse and download a vast collection of films from Russia, Bulgaria, Czechia, and the rest of Eastern Europe. Check it out here: <https://easterneuropeanmovies.com/country/poland>. ■

EXHIBITIONS AND MUSEUMS

In Real Times. Arthur Szyk: Art & Human Rights at the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life (UC Berkeley)

Francesco Spagnolo

After three years devoted to cataloging and researching the Taube Family Arthur Szyk Collection, the University of California, Berkeley, Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life presented a new exhibition, *In Real Times. Arthur Szyk: Art & Human Rights*, showcasing over fifty original works of art and two interactive workstations. The exhibition opened with a private event on February 19, featuring talks by Tad Taube, Magnes Museum's Interim Director Prof. Benjamin Brinner, Curator Dr. Francesco Spagnolo, and a dynamic presentation by Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, in Warsaw, followed by exhibition tours guided by UC Berkeley students.

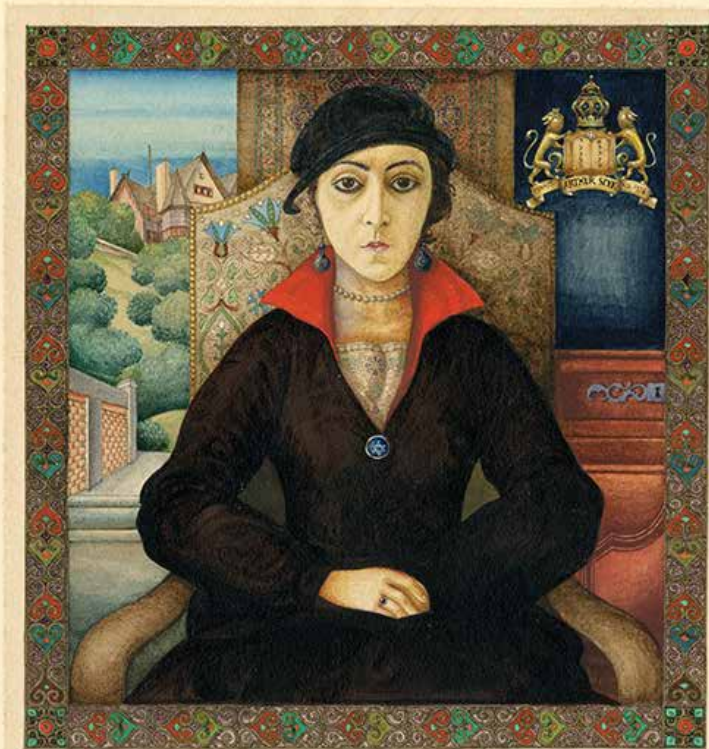
On Monday, April 13, the exhibition on Arthur Szyk was presented alongside a new



The miniature painter, Arthur Szyk, New York, 1942.
Photograph by Roman Vishniac (1897-1990). Courtesy of The Magnes Collection.

installation, *An Archive of Archives: Roman Vishniac's Exhibition History*, featuring the recent gift of the Roman Vishniac Archive to The Magnes. With the Szyk and Vishniac collections, The Magnes has now received two of the four largest gifts of art in the history of the University of California, Berkeley.

Born into a middle-class Polish Jewish family, Arthur Szyk (Łódź, Russian Empire, 1894 – New Canaan, Connecticut, 1951) lived a life framed by two world wars, the collapse of European democracies, and the rise of totalitarianism. A refugee, he ultimately settled in the United States in 1940.



Untitled [Portrait of Julia Szyk] (1926) by Arthur Szyk. Watercolor, gouache, and graphite on paper.

Taube Family Arthur Szyk Collection, The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, UC Berkeley.

Throughout his work as a miniature artist and political caricaturist, he used motifs drawn from religion, history, politics, and culture, pairing extraordinary craftsmanship with searing commentary on a diverse range of subjects including Judaism, the American Revolution, World War II, the Holocaust, and the founding of the State of Israel.

Szyk's modular aesthetics are deeply connected with the political scope of his art. Medieval and Renaissance techniques, multilingual

literary quotations, witty visual allegories, as well as modernist depictions of technology recur in his works. These themes are often paired with enticing decorative themes that have made his body of work both popular and successful during, and well after, the span of the artist's life.

Broad concerns for human rights are woven into Szyk's entire oeuvre. In paintings and political cartoons, the artist exposed the Nazi genocide, supported the Polish

resistance, exalted the establishment of the United Nations, and ridiculed dictators of all stripes. His unwavering denunciations of fascist crimes in Europe, the suppression of national rights worldwide, and the endless violations of civil rights in America, are rooted in the experience of marginalization that characterized Jewish life in Eastern Europe in modern times. These concerns still resound strongly today.

The exhibition is organized into six sections focused on various aspects of human rights:

- **Human Rights and their Collapse** is an introduction to Szyk's world with a timeline showing his life in the context of the progressive failure of European democracies and the human rights and national rights movements, beginning with the American Revolution. Here, a selection of Szyk's works begins to show his lifelong focus on freedom and the dangers of tyranny and totalitarianism, culminating in the artist's depictions of

the Holocaust as it was taking place in Europe.

■ **The Rights of Global Refugees** shows Szyk's deep concern for refugees like himself, and their lack of the legal protections of citizenship. This section features depictions of refugees in many contexts, from cartoons of innocent children declared enemies of the Third Reich to biblical narratives and a self-portrait included in Szyk's ode to Canada.

■ **The Right to Resist** highlights the role of resistance in preserving human rights, with Szyk's paintings of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and his internationally acclaimed illustration of "The Statute of Kalisz." The statute, which granted Jews legal rights and liberties in Poland in medieval times, was displayed in London in 1933 to denounce anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany.

■ **The Rights of Nationhood** further explores Szyk's belief that human rights are inextricably tied to



Israel [Heritage of the Nations series] (1948) by Arthur Szyk.
Taube Family Arthur Szyk Collection, The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, UC Berkeley.

citizenship, featuring designs he created for countries and organizations. These detailed illustrations became letterheads and stamps and often found their way into his political cartoons.

■ **The Right to Expose: Executioners at Work** displays many of Szyk's most powerful pieces,

which depicted the crimes of Axis leaders and Nazis during the Holocaust. This portion of the exhibition also explores an interesting parallel to Charlie Chaplin's characters in his 1940 movie, *The Great Dictator*.

■ **The Right to America** highlights Szyk's appreciation of his new home country and the

multi-ethnic fabric of the U.S. Army, positioning it in direct contrast to Nazi Aryan supremacy. The work in this section reflects Szyk's objection to racial discrimination and the organizations that perpetuate it, such as the Ku Klux Klan.

Working with the curatorial staff of The Magnes, UC Berkeley undergraduate students digitized the entire Taube Family Arthur Szyk Collection of more than 450 works of art. The results of this work animate two workstations. While one of the digital installations features the entire collection in a high-resolution slideshow that visitors can stop and inspect in vivid details, the other encourages visitors to examine the characters and motifs digitally cropped from the original artworks, and then recombine them to make their own political cartoons. This work is projected on large wall surfaces within the gallery itself, and can be instantly published online, giving the contemporary exploration and reinterpretation

Working with the curatorial staff of The Magnes, UC Berkeley undergraduate students digitized the entire Taube Family Arthur Szyk collection of more than 450 works of art.

of Szyk's art for a broad audience "in real time."

Addressing a crowded audience at the opening, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett highlighted how the exhibition encourages three pillars of "21st century literacy," namely: digital competence, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. Her words echoed those of Prof. Deborah Liptstadt, who visited the exhibition days before the opening, and who described Arthur Szyk's political art as the "Instagram of its day."

Keynote address: Professor Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, NYU and POLIN Museum, introduced by Dr. Francesco Spagnolo, Curator, Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Culture:

<https://www.taubephilanthropies.org/sites/default/files/vid/200310-magnes.mp4>.

More on the exhibition and Arthur Szyk can be found at <http://bit.ly/inrealtimes>. ■

Francesco Spagnolo, PhD, is Curator at The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, and Adjunct Professor, Department of Music, University of California, Berkeley.

Cities of Peace Illuminated at the Galicia Jewish Museum

Eleven paintings, eleven cities, and thousands of little pieces of gold-leaf

Cities of Peace Illuminated is an exhibition which presents a suite of monumental gold-leaf paintings that honor the history and culture of world cities that have experienced major conflict and trauma, including Baghdad, Beijing, Hiroshima, Kabul, New York, Sarajevo, and more. Transforming anguish into beauty, the work emphasizes understanding as a prerequisite to peace, and celebrates the best of the human spirit.

As part of the Cities of Peace international project created by Dr. Ellen Frank, the exhibition took place in Poland at the Galicia Jewish Museum from January 28 through March 31, 2020. Its opening featured the ceremonial unveiling of the eleventh painting of the collection, which was created in Kraków, as part of the Auschwitz Liberation Initiative. The monumental work commemorates the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration and death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The work is thanks to the initiative of Dr. Frank and the involvement of Polish and foreign artists, as well as cooperation with the Galicia Jewish Museum, JCC Kraków, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow (MOCAK). ■



Ellen Frank.
Photograph by Piotr Banasik. Used with permission.



Sparkling Light, Ellen Frank, created for the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz.
23k "H," red, champagne gold, palladium leaf, aquarelle on Belgian linen,
175 x 225 cm. Courtesy of Galicia Jewish Museum. Used with permission..

#GaliciaOnline: Exhibitions and Programs at the Galicia Jewish Museum

Jakub Nowakowski

From Home to Home. A Tale of the Wartime Exile and Survival of the Pisek Family

Online exhibition tour with Curator Paulina Banasik

Today, if we decided to go on a 12,000-plus kilometer journey, we would either take a 15-hour flight or drive a car for 153 hours. If we chose to cover this distance by foot, it would take 2,300 hours, an approximately 100-day march, non-stop. Such a journey was made by the Pisek family and took over three years, from August 1939 to December 1942. They left home and they arrived home. They were only supposed to leave for a short time and travel not too far away, but the turmoil of war drove them into the unknown, across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

It was not an easy journey. And it wasn't easy to talk about. Irena Pisek did so — in pictures and in words — only a few decades after the end of

the war. A series of her pastel drawings and her memoirs, handwritten in Polish, gave rise to this exhibition.

We would like to invite you to an online exhibition tour with its curator, Paulina Banasik. The tour will be in English.

A special invitation comes from Irena Pisek's grandson, Mr. Amichai Pardo, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=657476468361605>, and Tomasz Strug, deputy director and chief curator of the Galicia Jewish Museum: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=160366895158985>.

Click here to view the first episode of the online tour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukAmERQW8TY&feature=youtu.be>

Subsequent episodes will be published on the Facebook page and YouTube channel of the Galicia Jewish Museum.

#StayHome and join us for the online tour!

The Galicia Jewish Museum has, for many years, been cooperating with Witnesses to History: Holocaust Survivors, former camp prisoners, and the Righteous Among the Nations. Thanks to this cooperation, visitors to the museum have had the chance to meet Witnesses, listen to their stories and, we truly believe, learn something new that may shape their own future in some small way. These meetings have great educational value, allowing us to focus on the history of individuals. As a result, we can better understand the tragic events of the past and how they influenced the experiences of these individuals. We do not want this important voice to be silent, especially in such a difficult time for all of us.

For now we cannot meet at the museum in person, but we can continue learning from the witnesses by reading their biographies, including

those published by the Galicia Jewish Museum, and by participating in live events—including a recent lecture and Q&A with Professor Anita Panek, a Holocaust survivor, which will be broadcast and archived on the Galicia Jewish Museum Facebook page: www.facebook.com/zydowskiemuzeumgalicja.

Click here to download biographies of Witnesses to History (free of charge): <http://www.galiciajewishmuseum.org/en/witnesses-to-polish-jewish-history>.

Virtual Tour of the Area of the Former Płaszów Concentration Camp

Between the streets of Wielicka and Kamieńskiego in Kraków there is an area which, during the World War II, was a tragic and horrible space. Today not much is left of the former concentration camp and the atrocities that took place there. We invite you to this virtual tour of the site, during which we will present the topography and history of the Płaszów camp by showing things that we

would usually be unable to see if we visited the camp and saw it with the naked eye.

Follow our Facebook page.

Guide: Bartosz Wencel, in Polish.

Virtual Tour of Kazimierz, the Jewish District of Kraków

During the virtual tour we will tell you more about Kazimierz, a place that could be spoken about for eternity and yet still hold secrets to discover. What can be seen from a bird's-eye view? What are the traces of the most distant history, and where can you see them, if you look closely at a satellite map and digital models? How did Kazimierz change and how it is changing now? How is Kazimierz displayed in the photographs of the creators of *Traces of Memory*, the Galicia Jewish Museum permanent exhibition?

Follow our Facebook page.

Guide: Bartosz Wencel, in Polish.

“What Were You Thinking?” – An Exhibition of Children’s Works at the Galicia Jewish Museum

Let the small works of art, which were created by your children, be mounted among the works of a true master of imagination, Polish illustrator Jan Marcin Szancer, to whom a new exhibition at the Galicia Jewish Museum will be devoted. We would like to invite you to participate in an exhibition of children’s works.

The expression “What Were You Thinking?” does not need to have negative connotations—it is simply a question about what is going on inside someone’s head. What are your children imagining, and how far do their dreams reach? Their small works of art will create a gallery which we will mount together with the artworks of Jan Marcin Szancer.

We do not impose any special technique. The method of creating the work depends on you. But we do encourage you to get inspiration from

the works of Szancer. The submitted works will be framed and displayed at the exhibition of children's works. Let your children take their first steps on an artistic path!

In the upcoming weeks we will show you a few ideas that might inspire you about how to create small works of art from seemingly trivial objects. *"What Were You Thinking?"* accompanies the exhibition *Szancer, Imagine!*, a narrative on the life and works of the prominent Polish illustrator. His books shaped the imagination of many generations of Poles, and that is why it is worth remembering them and discovering them again.

More information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1073786286327578/>

The Second Edition of the Project "(In)separable. Difficult Subjects in Polish-Jewish Relations"

Recent surveys conducted in Europe and North America revealed an alarming trend. According to a 2018 CNN poll, one in twenty Europeans had never heard

of the Holocaust. More than a quarter believed Jews have too much influence in business and finance. One in five believed anti-Semitism is a response to the everyday actions of Jews. This lack of knowledge is especially visible among the young. One in five people in France between the ages of 18 and 34 said they had never heard about the Holocaust. This was also true for 12 percent of young Austrians. In Poland, 32 percent of young people claimed to know nothing, or just a little, about the Holocaust. At the same time, over 30 percent of Europeans believed that the Jewish people use the Holocaust to advance their position or to achieve certain goals. In Poland this was true for 50 percent of the respondents.

What these polls therefore reveal is not only lack of basic knowledge, but also a large number of misconceptions and anti-Semitic stereotypes that shape the way Jews and the Holocaust are perceived.

In Poland, these stereotypes are amplified and echoed

by some politicians, but also some of the media, which present a fragmentary approach to Polish Jewish history and support a nationalist agenda.

The intensification of such attitudes and growing anti-Semitism are related to a deep crisis of democratic values that we have been dealing with in recent years. Throughout Europe, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, we have observed a retreat from fundamental democratic values and a growing popularity of nationalist, populist, and Euroskeptic political parties. New media and various forms of propaganda, including fake news, are becoming more and more influential in shaping public opinion. Anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia have become weapons in the struggle for power.

To discuss and address these issues, the Galicia Jewish Museum presents the second edition of *"(In)separable. Difficult Subjects in Polish-Jewish Relations."* Through a series of panel discussions

and educational materials, the museum challenges some of the most persistent fake news and misconceptions that have been repeated in the mass media during the recent crises in Polish-Jewish relations, while educating the public on Polish-Jewish history by providing true and fair knowledge.

Over 850 people participated in the discussions of the first edition of the series, as well as more than 5,000 viewers of the discussion broadcasts, suggesting that there is great public demand for such information.

The second edition of the project will deepen some of the issues addressed in the first series. We will also focus on problems that have not been discussed before.

The discussions will feature such subjects as:

- (post-)Jewish property in Poland
- anti-Jewish pogroms on Polish soil
- anti-Polish attitudes in Israel

- Polish-Jewish rivalry in suffering, commemoration, and mourning
- responsibility over Jewish heritage in Poland
- the identity of Polish Jews
- philosemitism in Poland
- images of Jews and other minorities in the media

This project is carried out in cooperation with the Evens Foundation, the Koret Foundation, and our partnering institution, the Institute of Jewish Studies of Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Media patrons include: *Polityka*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Chidusz*, *New Eastern Europe*, Radio Kraków, and monthly magazine *Kraków*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO-n3xx6shE&feature=youtu.be>

Information on the dates of the events will be provided soon. Meanwhile, we encourage you to view the educational materials from the first series of discussions, which are available on our website:

<http://www.galiciajewishmuseum.org/en/series-of-discussions-in-separable-difficult-subjects-in-polish-jewish-relations>.

They are also on YouTube (in Polish), <https://www.youtube.com/user/galiciajewishmuseum>.

Jakub Nowakowski is Director of the Galicia Jewish Museum in Kraków.

POLIN Museum at a Distance

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

Museums the world over are adapting to a new reality. Closed during the pandemic, they have found their way into your home—online. Some museums are gradually opening up, but not fully. Until there is a vaccine, COVID-19 remains a danger. How then are museums making themselves safe to visit? What will the new normal look like when this epidemic has passed?

Lockdown

During the period that POLIN Museum was forced to close, the museum team has been working from home. POLIN Museum began as a museum without walls and has always had a lively online presence. As a result, it was well-positioned for “home delivery” of its rich content to all those sheltering-at-home. There is much from which to select. Our task is to curate from our archive of online content, while continuing to create interesting new

events online—lectures, book launches, interviews, cooking workshops, and more—during the period in which our doors must remain closed.

Virtual tours: While nothing compares with visiting our exhibitions in person, we have curated a selection of virtual tours of past exhibitions and created a new series, “Tour the Museum without Leaving Home,” in Polish.

Thematic tours of the Core Exhibition: We developed four thematic paths—“Jewish Religious Life,” “Jewish Women,” “Yiddish: Fourteen Highlights,” and “One Hour, Eight Highlights”—in response to visitor interests. We intended them to be used in the exhibition as self-guided thematic tours and provided them as printed handouts at the entrance to the Core Exhibition, and also as downloadable PDFs. <http://virtualltour.polin.pl/>

Behind the scenes: Lectures about the Core Exhibition. For those interested in the making of POLIN Museum and its Core Exhibition, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s illustrated lectures offer both a walkthrough of the Core Exhibition and an inside view of the principles guiding its creation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ENRSIIfhCQ&t=68s>

Temporary exhibitions:

- *Frank Stella and Synagogues of Historic Poland* can be viewed in its entirety online thanks to the support of George S. Blumenthal and Patricia Kenner.
- *Blood: Uniting and Dividing* is a virtual walkthrough of an exhibition that explores the role of blood in Judaism and Christianity and in Polish-Jewish relations. <http://krew.polin.pl/en/186-2/>

- *How to Make a Museum* is a temporary exhibition documenting the entire process of creating the POLIN Museum, from the initial idea in 1993 to the Grand Opening in October 2014. This exhibition was itself part of the Grand Opening. <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/how-to-make-a-museum/wR7xiggx>

Lectures: POLIN Museum's Global Education Outreach Program (GEOP) offers video-recordings of lectures at the museum by outstanding scholars and colleagues, whether at conferences or as part of our distinguished lecture series: https://www.polin.pl/en/geop-distinguished-lecture-series?mc_cid=7b310066da&mc_eid=84722e0ad0. It also links to international lectures. Notices of lectures that are being delivered live online during the time the museum is closed are announced on POLIN Museum's Facebook page, most recently the "Voices from Warsaw" series that accompanies the new temporary exhibition *Here Is Muranów*.

- Dariusz Stola, *POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and the Politics of History in Today's Poland* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6zSTO1Q2xo&list=PLWNftBqbZr5AtIis2kr7rhebgydH_Ch7A&index=15&t=0s

- Dariusz Stola, *Exhibiting Difficult Histories: March '68* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAXm0iXaFkE&list=PLWNftBqbZr5BX4CtQruxt7t5Af3VRPRay&index=9&t=0s>

- Marian Turski, keynote address, commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz

Music: POLIN Museum is now renowned as a music venue and concerts are among the most popular events. This October, POLIN Museum will celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Grand Opening. The open-air musical performance created to mark the Grand Opening is online: <https://www.polin.pl/en/news/2014/10/15/great-musical-performance-to-mark-the-grand-opening-of-the-core>

Education: POLIN Museum's education programs, which have garnered top awards, are especially important with schools in Poland being closed and families relying on online learning. Our educators have developed resources available on social media for teachers, students, and families sheltering-at-home.

Explore the Collection: POLIN Museum has been building its collection, and we encourage visitors to explore the Central Judaica Database <http://judaika.polin.pl/> and Virtual Shtetl <https://sztetl.org.pl/en/>.

Conferences: A major international conference, *Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies*, organized by GEOP, was scheduled for October 2020. Given the uncertainties, we decided to reschedule the conference for October 2021. To build interest and momentum during the intervening months, we are organizing a series of podcasts that will explore the themes of the conference in relation to epidemics past and present from interdisciplinary

perspectives. <https://www.polin.pl/en/whats-new-whats-next-2020>

Radio POLIN: One of the most exciting initiatives to emerge during the lockdown, Radio POLIN offers a golden opportunity to broadcast the many concerts, lectures, and other programs organized by POLIN Museum, as well as to develop programs specifically for radio, which is enjoying a revival. For now, the content is in Polish, but English-language programming is planned. <https://www.polin.pl/pl/radio>

Reopening

Cultural institutions in Poland are beginning to open on a limited basis and will need to follow strict safety protocols. At POLIN Museum, which is scheduled to reopen in June, a limited number of visitors will be admitted at a time. They will be able to visit the new temporary exhibition, *Here Is Muranów*, which explores the history of the neighborhood where the museum is located. This was the pre-war Jewish neighborhood where the Germans created the ghetto.

Unfortunately, the Core Exhibition will remain closed for now because of narrow spaces, where crowding would occur, and interactive touch screens will be off limits for hygienic reasons. Going forward, we may see a shift to motion activation and to visitors using their own mobile devices.

POLIN Museum, like other museums, is facing an immediate shortfall in earned income. With thirty percent of its annual budget coming from ticket sales and space rental, the museum is struggling to cover operating support and above all, salaries. Our talented and dedicated staff is our most precious resource. The museum has had to cancel some events, postpone others, and move many online. With warm weather on its way, programming outdoors might also become an option. With the downturn in travel and tourism, connecting with the local community has become even more important—and the timing of our *Here Is Muranów* opportune.

Post COVID-19

Life will never be the same, nor will museums. What did we learn? With their doors closed, museums went online. An online experience cannot replace being in the museum, and a “virtual tour” cannot stand in for the in-person or face-to-face experience, which is at once embodied and social. While online experiences do provide an alternative in times like this, museums are reporting that after an initial burst of interest in virtual exhibitions and tours, people have grown tired of them, turning instead to games, projects, especially downloadable ones for children and families, workshops like POLIN Museum’s Jewish food workshops, “how-to” videos, lectures, discussions, and concerts, both live-streamed and archived, and access to collections and the opportunity to curate your own exhibition online. These activities show that audiences are looking for something more active, an experience that is about connection. As Ben Davis notes in “How We Should Reimagine Art’s

Mission in the Time of ‘Social Distancing,’ “passive cultural consumption is going to make us feel disempowered and alienated just when we need to maintain social connection.”

<https://news.artnet.com/opinion/social-distancing-art-1810029>

In a word, museums need to rethink the relationship of the experience they offer in person and what they offer online—less a “virtual” version and more something unique to the online medium and its various platforms, as well as to old media and the merging of them—Radio POLIN is a good example. These media are not only reaching those who would otherwise come to POLIN Museum, but also potential new visitors. According to a recent NEMO (Network of European Museum Organizations) survey, “over 82% of Europeans are online [75% in social media], yet only 42% of Europeans visited museums at least once last year” (<https://www.ne-mo.org/news/article/nemo/nemo-survey-on-museums-and-covid-19-museums-adapt-to-go-online.html>). We need

to understand who we are reaching online and what it would take to bring them into the museum once we reopen.

POLIN Museum records and also live-streams events within its walls so that those at a distance can experience concerts, lectures, debates, and other programs in real time, as well as after the fact. During the pandemic, live Zoom became the norm. There is potential for such platforms to function as more than a lesser replacement for in-person presence. Social distancing during the pandemic has inspired experimentation, to mention only ensemble musical performances across multiple locations, as well as Zoom Passover seders.

Indeed, creative responses to the pandemic have prompted Jewish museums to collect “digital ephemera.” The Rothschild Foundation has been supporting the collection of Jewish ephemera—and now, specifically, Jewish responses to COVID-19—at the National Library of Israel. This effort reminded me of the Oyneg Shabes underground archive, organized by

Emanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw Ghetto, collected on the spot, in the moment, in real time.

While historians have typically taken the position that the line between history and the present is an arbitrary number, perhaps fifty years, the realization that one is living in a moment that is already historical makes it urgent to document it as it unfolds. This is precisely one of the topics that the planned GEOP podcasts will address in the run-up to the postponed conference: new sources, new methods, and new ways of thinking about Jewish studies, especially in a museum setting. The challenge now is for museums, and POLIN Museum in particular, to continue to respond creatively to a new global reality. ■

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, PhD, is Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and Professor Emerita at New York University.

REPORTS

Commemorating Thirty Years of the Jewish Culture Festival



Janusz Makuch,
Director, Jewish
Culture Festival.
Used with permission.

Dear Friends of the Jewish Culture Festival,

Due to the pandemic we are all facing, I have decided that the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, scheduled for June 26 – July 5, will not be held. We have been forced to postpone it until a time that will be safe for all of us. We will inform you of all decisions as soon as the situation in Poland and around the world has stabilized enough to act responsibly.

Despite being physically apart, we are still with you and we are asking you to be with us. Let's support one another in these difficult days, show mutual respect and kindness, and meet in the only space available—in the space of the spirit. Yes... and on the Internet!

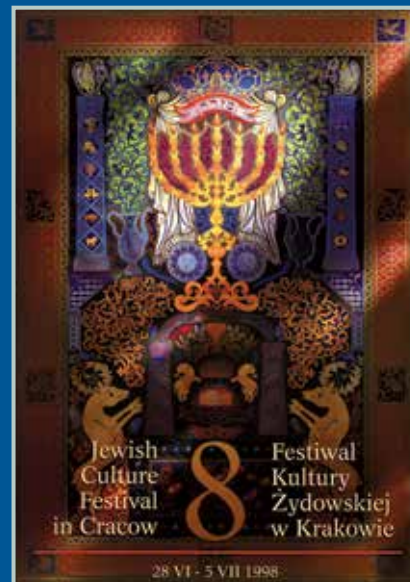
We aren't stopping our work, though. We will soon post information about the festival's presence in a new, updated formula on our Facebook fan page and on our website.

Thanks to our donors and to your dedication, the festival will continue to exist and develop. Over the past thirty-two years, we've created a space of spiritual and intellectual presence that will be threatened by neither the COVID-19 virus nor by an even worse menace—the virus of hatred.

I hope that you emerge from the shadows stronger than ever before. I hope that all of us meet soon, face-to-face; and I persist in my unshakeable conviction that we are the ones who are capable of building our good, common, Polish-Jewish world.

Respectfully and peacefully yours,
Shalom!

Janusz Makuch
Director, Jewish Culture Festival



Above: Official poster of the 8th Jewish Culture Festival. **Below:** Official poster of the 13th Jewish Culture Festival. **Page 43, top to bottom, left to right:** *Songs of Love and Loss* at the 29th Jewish Culture Festival; Neta Elkayam performing at the 28th Jewish Culture Festival; *Songs of Love and Loss* at the 29th Jewish Culture Festival; Gili Yalo performing at the 27th Jewish Culture Festival; Cantors' Concert at the 29th Jewish Culture Festival. Photographs by Michał Ramus. **Page 44, top to bottom, left to right:** Shalom on Szeroka, the final concert of the 29th Jewish Culture Festival, photograph by Michał Ramus; Mała Orkiestra Dancingowa performing at the 29th Jewish Culture Festival, photograph by Michał Ramus; Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company performing at the 26th Jewish Culture Festival, photograph by Michał Ramus; a view from Cheder café during the 29th Jewish Culture Festival, photograph by Bartosz Dittmar; Victoria Hanna performing at the 28th Jewish Culture Festival, photograph by Michał Ramus; Shalom on Szeroka, the final concert of the 28th Jewish Culture Festival, photograph by Bartosz Dittmar. All photographs courtesy of the Jewish Culture Festival.







One Thousand Stories about Yiddish Language and Culture: The Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project

Christa P. Whitney

“We didn’t have a sewage system ... but we had a very active cultural life.” Reflections such as this one from Holocaust survivor Jack Lewin represent the personal perspectives documented as part of the Yiddish Book Center’s Wexler Oral History Project, now in its tenth year. The growing collection of interviews offers a rich and complex chronicle of Ashkenazi Jewish life through examination of the legacy and changing nature of Yiddish language and culture. To date, interviews on five continents have been video-recorded in English, Yiddish, Polish, and other languages.

Of the more than 1,000 interviews now in the collection, many document the lives of Jews born in the region of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and their descendants, including Jack Lewin, who was born in Łódź in 1927 and interviewed in Los Angeles in 2013. In his native Yiddish,



Christa P. Whitney, Director of the Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project, at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Photograph by Agnieszka Ilwicka. Used with permission.

The growing collection of interviews offers a rich and complex chronicle of Ashkenazi Jewish life through examination of the legacy and changing nature of Yiddish language and culture.

Lewin explained how reading books distracted him from hunger during the ghetto period, and how a beloved copy of *David Copperfield*,

translated into Polish, accompanied him to Auschwitz. Many interviews like this reach back into the inter-war memories of survivors now in their 90s.

Other interviews document the rebuilding of post-war Jewish culture in Poland and in displaced persons’ camps. For instance, Lea Szlanger describes how she and others were recruited by Ida Kamińska, then artistic director of the Jewish State Theater in Warsaw.

The project not only looks back in time, it also documents the place of Yiddish in the world today. In 2013, as project director, I traveled to Poland with (then) Yiddish Book Center Fellow Agnieszka Ilwicka. We interviewed Marcin Wodziński, Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov, Kamil Kijek, and other luminaries in Yiddish studies. We also interviewed Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, chief curator of the Core Exhibition and advisor to the director of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, about her background and experience living in Poland during the development of the exhibition. Other subsets of the collection focus on Yiddish theater, klezmer music, and Yiddish writers and their descendants.

The work of the project, including processing and archiving interviews, is undertaken by a small staff based at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts. In addition, several oral history field fellows record interviews



Henryk Robak, a Polish Holocaust survivor who passed away last year, pictured here being interviewed for the Wexler Oral History Project. Photograph by Christa Whitney. Used with permission.

around the world and send them back to Amherst for processing. One of the ongoing objectives of the Yiddish Book Center is to make the interviews accessible to the public. Today, three-quarters of the interviews can be watched in full on our website, along with thousands of excerpts. You can search about a topic that might be included within the collection by keyword or name at www.yiddishbookcenter.org/tell-your-story.

If you have a story you think would be of interest to the Yiddish Book Center's Wexler

Oral History Project, please contact us at tellyourstory@yiddishbookcenter.org. ■

Christa P. Whitney is Director of the Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project.

The Great Synagogue of Oświęcim

Maciek Zabierowski

Before Oświęcim became Auschwitz, it was home to a Jewish community for 400 years. Today, with no Jewish residents, the town recently paid tribute to its Jewish past and honored the Great Synagogue of Oświęcim, destroyed by the Nazis in November 1939.

Before the outbreak of World War II, Jews constituted 60 percent of the local population. Called “Oshpitzin” by the local Jews, the town had over twenty synagogues and prayer houses. However, the social and religious life of the Jews of Oświęcim focused above all on the largest temple—the Great Synagogue. It was built in 1588 on a plot of the Jewish community donated by Jan Piotraszewski, a townsman and Oświęcim elder. Over the centuries it was destroyed several times.

For decades the Great Synagogue was the place around which the life of the Jewish community in Oświęcim was concentrated, said Tomasz



Lea Gletiman, a 95-year-old survivor from Oświęcim, speaks at the ceremony for the opening of the Great Synagogue Memorial Park. Photograph by Andrzej Rudiak. Courtesy of Maciek Zabierowski.

In the park you will be able to rest on benches with symbolic perforations depicting the signs of the zodiac—a reflection of the ornamentation from the Great Synagogue.

Kuncewicz, director of the Auschwitz Jewish Center, which runs the local Jewish Museum and maintains the only synagogue left in the town.

In the middle of the night on November 30, 1939, the Nazis

burned the Great Synagogue to the ground. Its last traces were removed on German order by a specially created commando consisting of Auschwitz prisoners, mainly Poles, who, as part of enslaved labor, were forced to complete the demolition of the building in the summer of 1941.

On November 28, 2019, exactly eighty years after its destruction, residents of Oświęcim and guests from around the world, including Holocaust survivors and their descendants, gathered at a special ceremony to

inaugurate the Great Synagogue Memorial Park. This grassroots project came to life thanks to the involvement of many people and institutions, including the town of Oświęcim and the local residents.

In the park you will be able to rest on benches with symbolic perforations depicting the signs of the zodiac—a reflection of the ornamentation from the Great Synagogue. The history of the temple will be presented through the installation with its historical

photos and a 3-D model of the building. The park contains forty stone slabs, arranged in a free composition, whose irregular arrangement symbolizes the ruins. In addition, the synagogue perimeter is marked and a copy of the synagogue chandelier is hanging over the site. The goal, added Director Kuncewicz, is to create a site that will be meaningful for residents and the increasing number of tourists coming to Oświęcim in conjunction with visits to the Auschwitz Memorial.

The park, designed by Kraków architects from the NArchitektURA Design Studio and Imaginga Studio, will contain over twenty species of various shrubs and flowers, while incorporating the decades-old trees, to enhance visitor experience. ■

Maciek Zabierowski is Education and Special Projects Director of the Auschwitz Jewish Museum.



The Great Synagogue Memorial Park in Oświęcim.
Photograph by Piotr Strycharski. Courtesy of Maciek Zabierowski.

FestivALT Moves Online

Adam Schorin

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, FestivALT, like many arts and culture organizations, has moved most of its programming online. FestivALT, an independent Jewish arts collective based in Kraków, had scheduled its fourth annual festival for late June, to be themed around identities in flux. Instead, the collective is focusing its energy on producing work

online, developing its long-term projects, and promoting its artists.

On Monday, April 13, FestivALT produced a six-hour online version of its *Lucky Jew* performance, a live artwork created in response to the common Polish practice of buying and selling images of Jews with coins for good luck. The performance took place on the day that the Emaus

Easter market, where this practice is especially popular, would normally have been held. Meeting on Zoom and livestreaming to the FestivALT Facebook page, two of FestivALT's co-directors, Michael Rubinfeld and Adam Schorin, welcomed virtual passersby to their stalls, selling parody "Lucky Jew" objects and hosting a complicated conversation about stereotypes and



A screenshot from FestivALT's online performance of *Lucky Jew*. Courtesy of FestivALT.

tradition. They were joined by approximately 100 people on Zoom and Facebook, including Bogusław Sonik, a member of the European Parliament who had recently petitioned the mayor of Kraków to monitor the sale of Jewish figurines for expressions of anti-Semitism. (For more information about the *Lucky Jew* performance, see Adam Schorin's essay in our summer 2019 issue.)

Over the coming months, FestivALT will be producing virtual tours, interactive online

performances, and a series of workshops and discussions on Zoom and Facebook. The first virtual tour will address points of tension in Jewish heritage sites in Kazimierz, adapted from a tour that FestivALT produced for the Unsound Festival in October 2019, and will encourage audience participation via Zoom. "We're learning to adapt, and figure out how we can still produce things we're passionate about in the current climate," says Magda Rubinfeld Koralewska, another of FestivALT's

co-directors. "We have a unique opportunity to engage a global audience in critical conversations about contemporary Jewish Poland, and to bring our particular blend of arts and activism (and *chutzpah*) to a new platform."

To stay updated on FestivALT's work, visit them at festivalt.com or [facebook.com/festivaltkrakow](https://www.facebook.com/festivaltkrakow). ■

Adam Schorin is a contributing editor to Gazeta.



Betty Q performs at FestivALT 2019. Photograph by Adam Schorin. Used with permission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

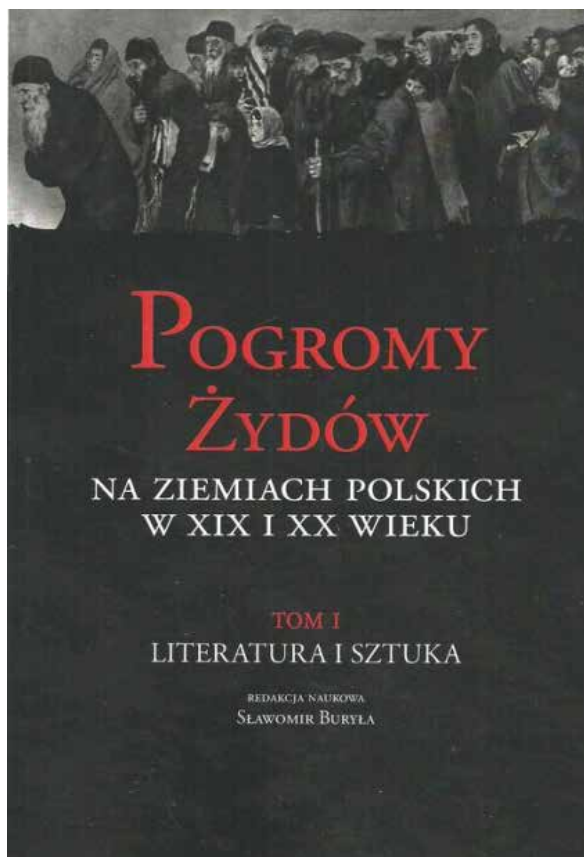
Books

Major Work Published on Anti-Jewish Pogroms

A major four-volume work entitled *Anti-Jewish Pogroms on Polish Lands in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (*Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*) was recently released as the result of an international research project headed by Prof. Artur Markowski of the History Department of Warsaw University, within the framework of an NPRH Polish ministerial grant (“Pogroms. Collective Violence against Jews on Polish Lands in the 19th and 20th Centuries and its Influence on Polish-Jewish Relations. History, Memory, Identity”). Kamil Kijek, associate professor at the Taube Department of Jewish Studies, participated in the wide-ranging project as both coordinator of the research team working on the inter-war period and as co-editor of the second and third volumes. The series was co-funded by the Taube Department of Jewish Studies.

The goal of the project was to describe and present the genesis of the most notorious pogroms, placing them within the widest possible perspective of political, social, and cultural changes taking place on Polish territory over a 200-year period. ■

Antony Polonsky

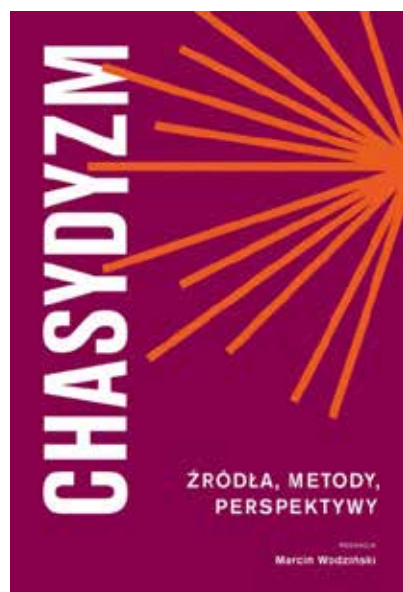
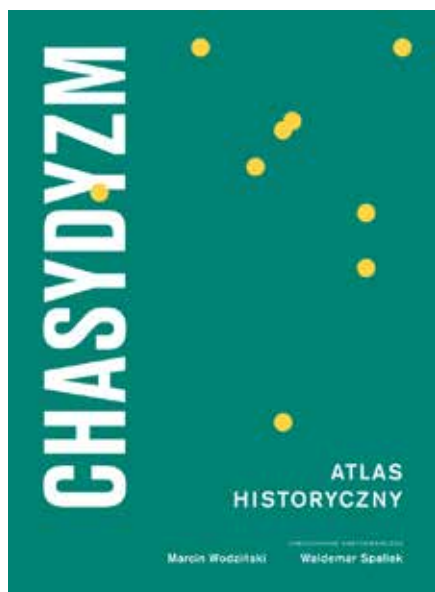


Volume I of *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku* (Anti-Jewish Pogroms on Polish Lands in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries), published by The Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, in 2019.

Third Volume of Hasidism Series Published in Polish

Edited by Marcin Wodziński

Austeria Press, Kraków-Budapest, 2019



The Polish editions of Marcin Wodziński's Hasidism trilogy, published by Austeria Press in 2019.

We are pleased to announce the arrival of *Chasydyzm. Źródła, Metody, Perspektywy*, the Polish-language version of *Studying Hasidism. Sources, Methods, Perspectives*, edited by Marcin Wodziński and published by Austeria Press. It is the third volume in a new three-volume research series on Hasidism

that first appeared in English in 2018.

The Introduction opens with the Latin title *Ad Fontes*, indicating that the contents will take readers to the origins of Hasidism: “We hope that ... the book we are offering the reader will be a valuable teaching and academic

resource. We trust that it will introduce new students to the secrets of using sources on the history of Hasidism, and that it will illuminate for experienced scholars new ways of expanding their source base and of bringing in new sources, methods, and research perspectives.” ■

Polacos in Argentina: Polish Jews, Interwar Migration, and the Emergence of Transatlantic Jewish Culture

By Mariusz Kałczewiak

University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 2019

Argentina was the third most popular destination for Eastern European Jews seeking safety and a better life during the first three decades of the 20th century. Between 1918 and 1939 alone, sixty thousand Polish Jews established new homes in Argentina, forming a strong ethnic community that embraced the local culture while maintaining a unique Jewish-Polish character. This mass migration was exceeded only by the flows to the United States and Palestine.

Mariusz Kałczewiak has constructed a complex narrative based on archival research, Yiddish travelogues, and the Yiddish and Spanish-language press to reveal how the migration transformed political and cultural environments not only in Argentina but in Poland too. He argues that the migrants and their children kept meaningful ties with Poland and thought of Argentina as part of a global Yiddishland, involving mutual interactions between the sending and receiving communities. Kałczewiak's book has been praised as a case study of "how ethnicity evolves among migrants and their children, and the dynamics that emerge between putting down roots in a new country and maintaining commitments to the country of origin."

Kałczewiak is senior research associate and lecturer in the Slavic Studies department at the University of Potsdam. He has published in *American Jewish History*, *The New Ethnic Studies in Latin America*, and *Studia Judaica*. ■



Polacos in Argentina: Polish Jews, Interwar Migration, and the Emergence of Transatlantic Jewish Culture by Mariusz Kałczewiak, published by University of Alabama Press in 2019.

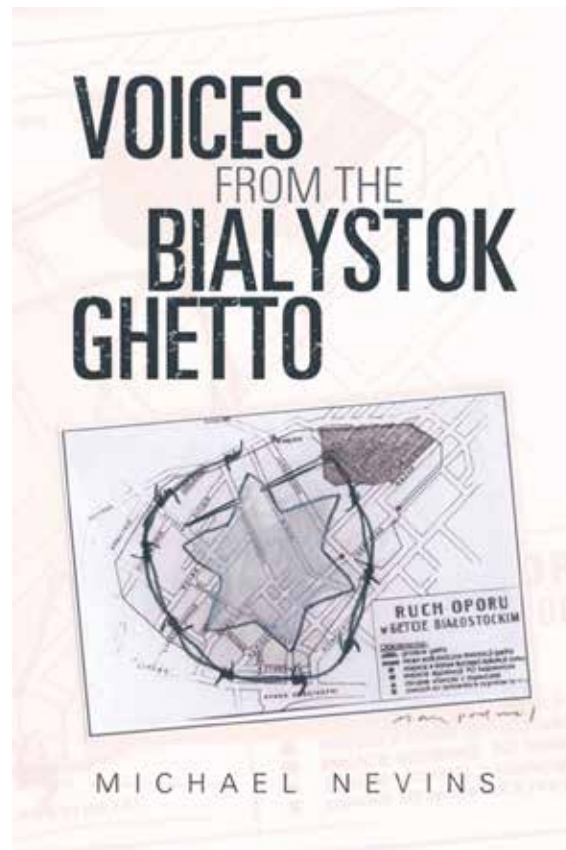
Voices from the Białystok Ghetto

Edited by Michael Nevins

iUniverse, Bloomington, Indiana, 2019

For more than seventy years, a diary written in Białystok during World War II was virtually unnoticed and about to be discarded with trash when someone looked inside and discerned its historic value. It was written between 1939 and 1943 by young David Spiro (in Polish Dawid Szpiro), who probably died during the city's ghetto uprising against the Nazis. The diary describes life in the city during Russian and then German governance from the perspective of an ordinary young man—certainly not a charismatic leader. As Spiro explained, “If someone reads my diary in the future, will they be able to believe soemthing like that? Surely not, they will say poppycock and lies, but this is the truth, disgusting and terrible; for me it's a reality.” This diary is a critical testimony to those dark times. ■

Dr. Michael Nevins is a retired physician who has been studying his paternal grandparents' roots in Dąbrowa Białostocka. He published a memoir about it in 1982.



Voices from the Białystok Ghetto by Michael Nevins, published by iUniverse in 2019.

Autobiography. Literature. Culture. Media: A Journal of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Szczecin

The editors-in-chief are Professors Inga Iwasiów and Jerzy Madejski

As described by its editors, Professors Inga Iwasiów and Jerzy Madejski, “In *Autobiography...* we analyze the evolution of old autobiographical sources (letters, autobiographies, chronicles, diaries, memoirs, etc.), as well as their present-day variants (emails, blogs, internet autobiographical comic strips, profiles on social media, internet family chronicles, etc.). We ask the question of how new forms affect personal narratives and how they modify present-day ways of expression. In short, we describe a wide variety of multimedia biography, which has become more and more popular. The autobiographical need, in our opinion, triggers not only stories, but research methods and styles of critical narration. We present both analyses of actual autobiographical practices and scientific descriptions of concepts of Polish and foreign scholars concerning the title categories of our journal. One of the topics is regional identity as reconstructed in the form of reminiscences, such as: a diary, an essay, a scientific monograph, a novel, a film, a blog, a press polemic, typical of the present day.”

The journal is published twice a year in accordance with an open access policy. Each issue is devoted to one subject. For example, in 2017 an issue dedicated to Yiddish texts, was edited by Joanna Lisek from the University of Wrocław. The authors analyzed handwritten documents of Bronia Baum, intimate letters of Rachela Auerbach, Holocaust literature of Yitzhok Katzenelson, and post-war letters from the audience of the Jewish Department of Polish Radio in Poland. An important part of the issue consisted of translations of the autobiographical texts of Malka Lee, Bronia Baum, and I. J. Singer. ■



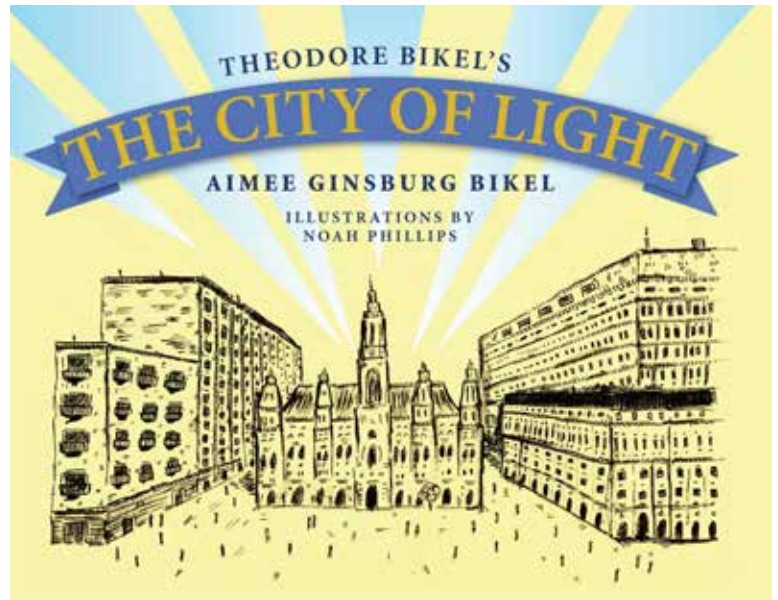
A 2018 edition of *Autobiography. Literature. Culture. Media*.

Read more at: <https://wnus.edu.pl/au/en>.

The Theodore Bikel Legacy Project Announces Theodore (“Theo”) Bikel’s *The City of Light*

By Aimee Ginsburg Bikel with illustrations by Noah Phillips
Moment Books/Mandel Vilar Press, Washington, D.C., 2019

Based on a short story Theodore Bikel wrote before he died, *The City of Light* was expanded by TBLP director Aimee Ginsburg Bikel into a book. It tells the story of Theo’s happy childhood in Vienna in the years leading to the Anschluss, and of his escape at the age of thirteen. The book, for all ages of young adult and up, and for all occasions, highlights Theo’s commitment to *tikkun olam* and shows that the light and goodness in our hearts can prevail over hatred, bigotry, and injustice with a deep commitment—even if it takes time. The book includes a glossary of Yiddish words (so the kids can learn their own secret language!), a honey cake recipe from Theo’s grandmother, and an old, new song by Theo. ■



Theodore Bikel's The City of Light by Aimee Ginsburg Bikel with illustrations by Noah Phillips, published by Moment Books/Mandel Vilar Press in 2019.

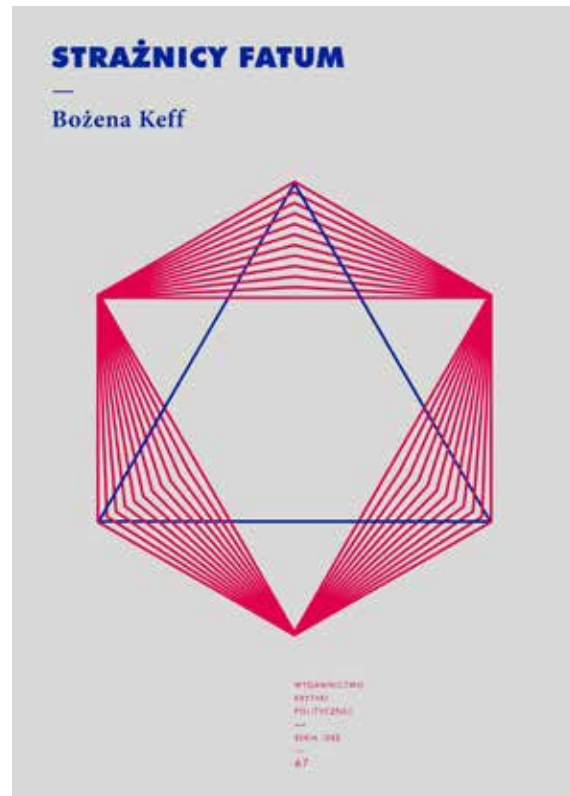
Strażnicy Fatum (Guardians of Fate)

By Bożena Keff

Krytyka Polityczna, Warsaw, 2020

“Guardians of Fate” is how Bożena Keff refers to the people who, sometimes even before the summer of 1942, considered the destiny of Jews to be a foregone conclusion. This “Jewish fate” found its embodiment in the Nazis, but its wardens were Poles—those of them who made sure that no victim was to escape their doom. Often, the Nazis were imagined to be omnipresent, making the death penalty for helping Jews a realistic fear. But in reality, the punishment had to be brokered first by complicit fellow Poles. The idea of ever-present Nazis was used to cloak the basic lack of empathy toward Jews and the commonplace denunciation, plunder, pogroms, and murders committed against them.

Polish literature of the 1940s and 50s provides important insight into the behavior of Poles during the Holocaust. It is expressed by, among others, Zofia Nałkowska, Adolf Rudnicki, Kazimierz Brandys, Ludwik Hering, and a forgotten writer, Lwów-born Kazimierz R. Frenkel. From the examples of Julian Tuwim and Tadeusz Różewicz, Keff analyzes the discourse in which the circumstances of the Shoah and characteristics of Jewish identity were presented. The conclusions drawn from this re-reading of literary works are not comforting. Depressing as they are, they may guide us toward collective self-awareness. They should also urge us to face current pressing concerns about the role of minority groups—stigmatized and humiliated—within the Polish community. ■



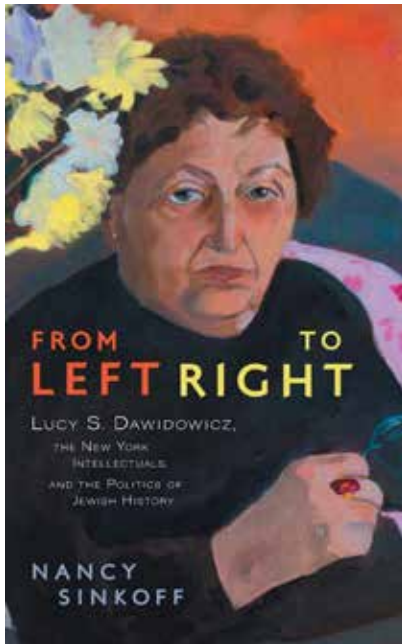
Strażnicy Fatum (Guardians of Fate) by Bożena Keff, published by Krytyka Polityczna, Warsaw, 2020.

From Left to Right. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, The New York Intellectuals and the Politics of Jewish History

By Nancy Sinkoff. Wayne State University Press, 2020

From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History is the first comprehensive biography of Dawidowicz (1915-90), a pioneer historian in the field that is now called Holocaust studies. Dawidowicz was a household name in the post-war years, not only because of her scholarship but also due to her political views. Dawidowicz, like many other New York intellectuals, was a youthful communist, became an FDR Democrat mid-century, and later championed neo-conservatism. Nancy Sinkoff argues that Dawidowicz's rightward shift emerged out of living in pre-war Poland, watching the Holocaust unfold from New York City, and working with displaced persons in post-war Germany. Based on over forty-five archival collections, *From Left to Right* chronicles Dawidowicz's life as a window into the major events and issues of 20th-century Jewish life.

From Left to Right is structured in four parts. Part one tells the



From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History by Nancy Sinkoff, published by Wayne State University Press, 2020.

story of Dawidowicz's childhood, adolescence, and college years when she was an immigrant daughter living in New York City. Part two narrates Dawidowicz's formative European years in Poland, New York City (when she was enclosed in the European-like world of the New York YIVO), and Germany. Part three tells how Dawidowicz became an

American while Polish Jewish civilization was still inscribed in her heart, and also explores when and how Dawidowicz became the voice of East European Jewry for the American Jewish public. Part four exposes the fissure between Dawidowicz's European-inflected, diaspora-nationalist, modern Jewish identity and the shifting definition of American liberalism from the late 1960s forward, which also saw the emergence of neo-conservatism. The book includes an interpretation of her memoir *From That Place and Time*, as well as an appendix of thirty-one previously unpublished letters that illustrate her broad reach.

Dawidowicz's right-wing politics, sex, and unabashed commitment to Jewish particularism in an East European Jewish key have resulted in scholarly neglect. Therefore, this book is strongly recommended for scholars and general readers interested in Jewish and women's studies. ■

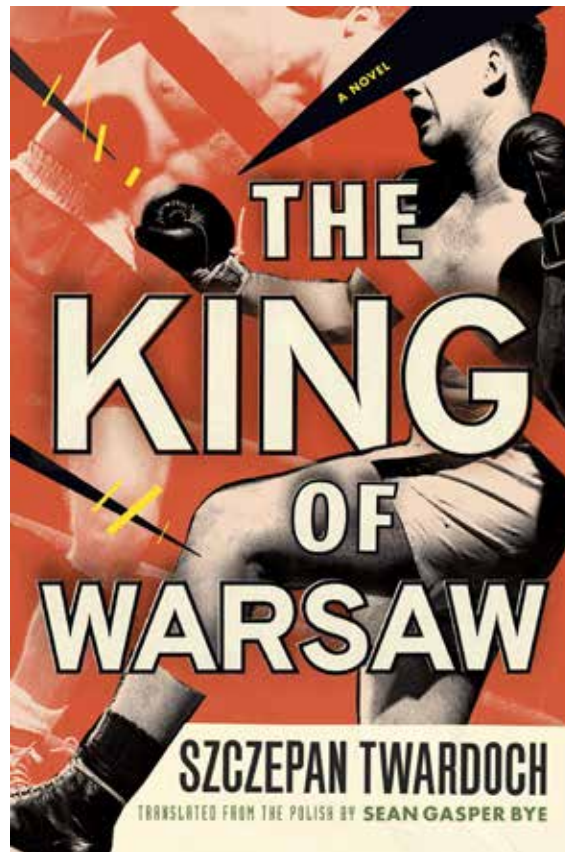
The King of Warsaw

By Szczepan Twardoch, translated by Sean Gasper Bye

Amazon Crossing, 2020

The King of Warsaw, the first novel by the widely celebrated Polish writer Szczepan Twardoch to be translated into English, takes the reader into the grim underbelly of pre-war Warsaw. Twardoch deploys a mastery of historical detail to depict the violent, corrupt underworld of 1937 Warsaw, where Jewish boxer Jakub Szapiro schemes to fulfill his obsession with achieving power over the city. The boxer leverages his victories in the ring and on the street to gain respect in the Jewish community and breed fear among his enemies. Yet he also senses, in the rise of fascism and dictators like Hitler, that the world is changing in ominous ways. While many Jews around him feel threatened and contemplate leaving Poland, Szapiro must remain in the city to win his dream, despite the specter of rising forces that may destroy him.

Journalist and author Szczepan Twardoch, born in Silesia, is one of the new generation of Polish writers. His many works, which include the bestselling novels *Morphine* and *Drach*, address issues of personal and national identity and have brought him numerous awards and honors. Sean Gasper Bye is an American known for his translations of Polish literature, including books by Lidia Ostafowska, Filip Springer, and Małgorzata Szejnert. ■



The King of Warsaw by Szczepan Twardoch, translated from the Polish by Sean Gasper Bye, published by Amazon Crossing in April 2020.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Honors and Awards

National Jewish Book Council 2019 Awards



Robert Alter in his home office
Photograph by David A.M. Wilensky.
Used with permission.

Professor Robert Alter of the University of California, Berkeley, received the National Jewish Book Council's Lifetime Achievement Award for his monumental and decades-long project *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary* (W. W. Norton & Company). Alter's once-in-a-generation translation of the entire Hebrew Bible into English began in 1997 with the publication of his translation of Genesis. In 2018, with the last few books complete, a three-volume boxed set of the complete translation was released. ■



Deborah Lipstadt
Author's collection. Used with
permission.

Deborah Lipstadt was honored with the Jewish Education and Identity Award in Memory Award of Dorothy Kripke for her most recent book, *Antisemitism: Here and Now* (Schocken, 2019). The book gives us a penetrating and provocative analysis of the hate that will not die, focusing on its current, virulent incarnations on both the political right and left. ■



Naomi Seidman in Warsaw, 2013
Graduate Theological Union. Used with
permission.

Naomi Seidman, professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto and former director of the Dinner Center for Jewish Studies at UC Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union, received the Barbara Dobkin Award in Women's Studies for her acclaimed *Sarah Schenirer and the Bais Yaakov Movement* (Littman Library of Jewish Civilizations and Liverpool Press, 2019). This vivid portrait of Sarah Schenirer and her founding of the Bais Yaakov schools in inter-war Poland explores the context and tensions that led to their founding and subsequent movement in Orthodox education for girls—to their near destruction during the Holocaust, to their post-war reconstruction. (See the fall/winter 2019 issue of *Gazeta* for this book announcement.) ■

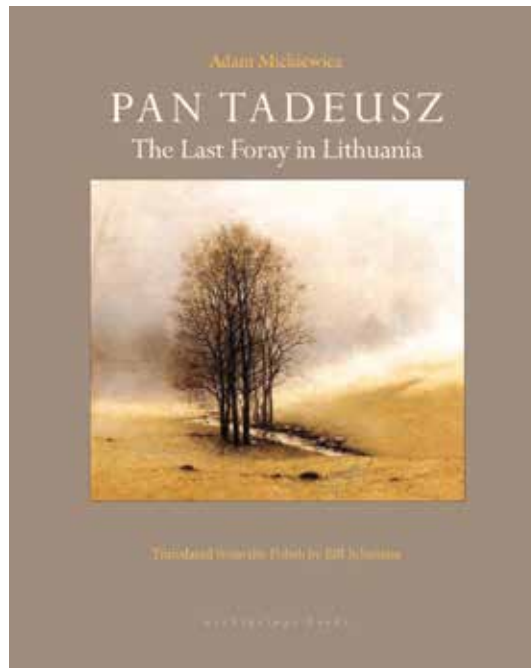
2019 National Translation Award in Poetry for *Pan Tadeusz: The Last Foray in Lithuania*

By Adam Mickiewicz, translated by Bill Johnston

Pan Tadeusz: The Last Foray in Lithuania has won the 2019 National Translation Award in Poetry. The award is given each year by the American Literary Translators Association.

The jury remarked: “Presented here for the first time in modern English, Johnston’s translation of *Pan Tadeusz* masterfully captures the exceptional beauty and disarming directness of Mickiewicz’s rhymed couplets. With its riveting narrative propulsion, intertwining plot lines, effortless ironic wit, and lovingly detailed portraits of a bygone gentry, *Pan Tadeusz* invites comparison with the best works of Byron or Pushkin.”

Congratulations to Archipelago Books translator Bill Johnston! ■



Pan Tadeusz: The Last Foray in Lithuania by Adam Mickiewicz, translated from the Polish by Bill Johnston, published by Archipelago Books in 2018.

Museum Worlds Honors Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

Editors: Sandra Dudley, University of Leicester, Conal McCarthy,
Victoria University of Wellington

Museum Worlds, Advances in Research has dedicated a special section of its 2019 annual journal to POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews Chief Curator of Core Exhibitions, Dr. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. This special tribute includes an introductory article by volume co-editor Conal McCarthy, “Destination Museum,” which is a play on Dr. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s seminal book, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (1998). The tribute also includes articles by Erica Lehrer and Monika Murzyn-Kupisz, “Making Space for Jewish Culture in Polish Folk and Ethnographic Museums: Curating Social Diversity after Ethnic Cleansing,” “Anthropology, Art and Folklore,” by Ira Jacknis, and “Field Notes and Reading Notes,” by Nélia Dias.

Museum Worlds is a part of the Berghahn Open Anthro subscribe-to-open initiative, a pilot aiming to convert thirteen anthropology journals to full open access on an ongoing and sustainable basis. ■



Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett.

Photograph by M. Starowieyska. Courtesy of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.



Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (in the middle) with the co-directors of Handshouse Studio (on the left) and some of the 200 people who volunteered to help reconstruct the Gwoździec synagogue bimah and painted ceiling.

Courtesy of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

Devilspel Wins Literary Prize

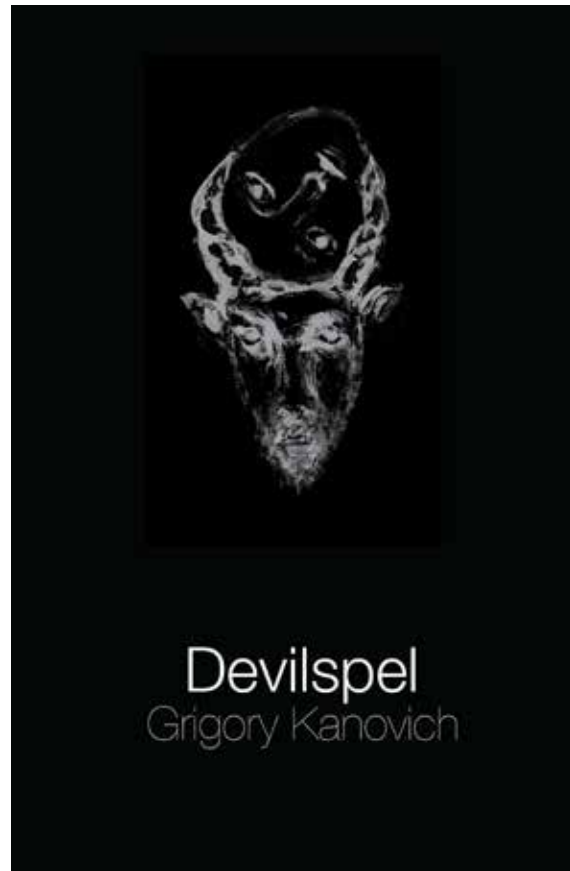
By Grigory Kanovich, translated by Yisrael Elliot Cohen

Noir Press, Nottingham, 2019

A novel about the world of Lithuanian Jews during World War II has won the EBRD Literature Prize of 2020. The author and his translator will share the €20,000 honor.

Grigory Kanovich, whom the *Forward* has called “one of the most important Jewish authors of our time,” deploys his skill for creating strong but subtle characters to populate the town of Mishkine, one small place amid the terrible events that devastated Eastern Europe and shook the world. One of the judges of the award panel called the novel “a literary microcosm of world history related through the lives of ordinary people ... in a small town at a watershed moment of Lithuanian history when ethnic cleansing and the Holocaust enter the lives of the local Jews and non-Jews alike, dividing neighbors and families into persecuted and persecutors.” She praised the narrative for avoiding “breast-beating in spite of its horrific and heart-breaking subject matter.”

Kanovich is one of today’s most prominent Lithuanian Jewish writers and has written more than ten novels dealing with the history of Eastern European Jewry from the 19th century to the present. Born into a traditional Jewish family, he has dedicated his life “to what has been lost, to what has been destroyed—the small Jewish town.” His novel *Shtetl Love Song* was awarded the Liudas Dovydenas Prize by the Lithuanian Writers’ Union. ■



Devilspel by Grigory Kanovich and translated from Russian by Yisrael Elliot Cohen, published by Noir Press in 2019.

POLIN Award 2019 to Natalia Bartczak

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews has granted its 2019 POLIN Award to Natalia Bartczak, who has cared for the Jewish cemetery in Wińsko, in western Poland, for sixteen years — starting when she was just thirteen years old.

The award—presented in conjunction with an award to the Auschwitz Jewish Center—was bestowed at a gala ceremony at the museum on December 3, 2019. It was the fifth edition of the award, which “honors people, organizations and institutions that, in the past few years, contributed to both the revival of the memory of the history of Polish Jews, and to building mutual understanding and respect between Poles and Jews.”

“All over Poland,” said Marian Turski, president of the POLIN Museum Council, “there are many people who work to preserve the heritage of Polish Jews ... Through the POLIN Award, we want to express our appreciation and gratitude for their work. We care to show how important and needed what they are doing [is], because it is



Natalia Bartczak.

Photograph by M. Starowieyska. Courtesy of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

thanks to them that the memory of the history of Polish Jews is reborn. They are the ones who really contribute to mutual respect and understanding between Poles and Jews.”

Natalia Bartczak wrote her master’s degree thesis on the Jewish Cemetery in Wińsko while a student at the Institute of Prehistoric Studies of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Her thesis became the basis for the Wińsko town council applying for EU funding for the restoration of the cemetery. Bartczak was also a consultant to the translator

of a book by Rita Steinhardt-Botwinick, about Wińsko from 1933 to 1946, as well as to the film *Maleństwo na górze* and to an exhibition of old photographs of the German-Polish-Jewish history of Wińsko. ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conferences and Seminars

Conference at the Polish Embassy in London to Launch *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, Volume 32*

On January 23, 2020, a one-day conference, “Jews and Music-Making in the Polish Lands,” was held at the Polish embassy in London to launch volume 32 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*. The astounding variety of music of all genres and styles produced by musicians of Jewish heritage in Europe since 1750 has been examined almost entirely in the context of German-speaking Europe or in studies of a group of composers who strongly self-identified as Jews. In five thematic sections, this multi-disciplinary volume presents rich coverage of the main genres produced by musicians of Jewish origin in the Polish lands: Cantorial and Religious Music, Jews in Polish Popular Culture, Jews in the Polish Classical Music Scene, The Holocaust Reflected in Jewish Music, and Klezmer in Poland Today. It thus explores the activities and great creativity of musicians of the “Mosaic persuasion,” covering the

In five thematic sections, this multi-disciplinary volume presents rich coverage of the main genres produced by musicians of Jewish origin in the Polish lands.

area of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its successor states from 1750 to the present.

After the formal opening by H.E. Arkady Rzegocki, ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Vivian Wineman, president of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, and Sir Ben Helfgott, chairman of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, the first session was devoted to a general introduction to the topic and a discussion of changes in Jewish cantorial practice in the 19th and 20th centuries. This took the form of an exchange between two of the editors of the volume, Antony Polonsky,

Antony Polonsky

chief historian of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, and Benjamin Matis, spiritual leader of the Agudath Achim Congregation, Altoona, Pennsylvania. Cantor Matis also performed examples of cantorial music.

The second session was devoted to Jews in Polish popular music. Tamara Sztyma of POLIN Museum delivered a paper, “Popular Music in the Inter-war Period: Polish, Jewish, Shared.” Beth Holmgren of Duke University could not attend, but her paper, “The Jews in the Band: Anders Army’s Special Troupes,” was read by Dr. François Guesnet. One of the most stimulating papers of the conference, it highlighted the paradox that General Anders, in spite of his somewhat prejudiced view of Jews, was eager to recruit Jews for his army’s entertainment corps.

The afternoon session examined “Yiddish Folk Song and Klezmer” with

a presentation by the independent scholar Michael Aylward on “Gimpel’s Theatre, Lemberg: The Sounds of a Popular Yiddish Theatre Preserved on Gramophone Records 1904 – 1910,” and one on “Klezmer for All Occasions. The Consumption of ‘Jewish Music’ in contemporary Poland,” by Magdalena Waligórska of the University of Bremen.

The day ended with a concert of popular Polish songs from the inter-war years, many of which were either written or performed by Jews. The singer was Katy Carr, a local artist who also has Polish connections. Among the songs she performed was *Miłość ci wszystko wybaczy* (Love Forgives Everything; 1933, music by Henryk Wars, lyrics by Julian Tuwim) and many other collaborations among Polish recording artists. Her performance was enthusiastically received, and a CD recording is underway.

The conference was organized by the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies and the Institute of Jewish Studies, UCL. It was

co-organized and supported by the Polish embassy in London and the Polish Cultural Institute, London, and was made possible by the support of Slipaczek Chartered Financial Planners and the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies. Attended by over a hundred people, it was a most stimulating and diverse event, which highlighted an aspect of Polish life whereby people of all backgrounds—Catholic, Jewish and non-religious—cooperated to produce art which still moves audiences today. ■

Biographies and Politics: The Involvement of Jews and People of Jewish Origin in Leftist Movements in 19th and 20th Century Poland

Antony Polonsky

From its inception, the socialist movement, whether in its parliamentary or its revolutionary form, has attracted significant support from people of Jewish origin. Some saw socialism, with its promise of a world where ethnic and religious difference would play no role, as a more effective path to the integration of the Jews. Others were inspired by the similarity between the millennial promises of the socialist movement and Jewish messianism, while many were impelled to support the movement as a means of redressing the growing impoverishment of the Jews and of the larger society in the course of industrialization. Jewish support for socialism was also strongly attacked. The movement was seen as a new form of the alleged Jewish desire to dominate the world. The view that communism, as it had established itself in the Soviet Union, was merely a new form

of Jewish clandestine rule was embodied in the Polish stereotype of *Żydokomuna* (Judaeo-Communism). Thus, during the Polish-Soviet war of 1920, in an attempt to discredit communism as a Jewish phenomenon, the Polish episcopate published an open letter to the bishops of the world:

Bolshevism is truly aiming at the conquest of the world. The race which leads it previously subordinated the world to it through gold and the banks. Today, driven by the age-old imperialist drive which flows in its veins, it is undertaking the final conquest of all peoples under its yoke. All the slogans which are used: People, Workers, Freedom and so on are only masks whose aim is to hide the true face.

In an attempt to move beyond oversimplifications and stereotypes, POLIN Museum

of the History of Polish Jews organized an international conference late last year (December 1-2), “Biographies and Politics: The Involvement of Jews and People of Jewish Origin in Leftist Movements in 19th and 20th Century Poland,” attended by over sixty leading scholars in the field from Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Croatia, Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Poland. The aim of the conference was to investigate the actual Jewish engagement in leftist movements in Poland from the point of view of their individual ideological choice. Biographical tools were to be used to examine personal histories, family fortunes, and developing political identities to help answer the question of what drove Polish Jews to join leftist organizations.

The conference raised many issues and shed much new light on the complex question of why socialism

proved so attractive in the Jewish world. The issues were examined in eleven parallel sessions. On the morning of the first day, the topics discussed were “How Jewish are Leftist Ideas? How Leftist is Jewishness?” and “Internationalist Politics, Transnational Biographies, Local Activism.” Four topics were discussed in the afternoon sessions: “Social and Cultural Activism,” “Anti-Fascism Facing the Holocaust,” “Exclusion and Inclusion in Leftist Jewish Biographies,” and “After the Holocaust, Towards a Brighter Future?”

In the evening, the keynote speech was given by Karen Auerbach of the University of North Carolina, author of *The House at Ujazdowskie 16: Jewish Families in Warsaw after the Holocaust* (Indiana University Press, 2013), which is a collective portrait of the generation of ‘68, the children of those Jews who opted for the socialist alternative and remained in Poland after the war, later becoming active in the opposition to communism. She has continued this approach in her analysis

The conference concluded with a showing of the documentary film Tonia and her Children by Marcel Łoziński, an account of the life of Jewish communist Tonia Lechtman.

of people of Jewish origin involved in the publishing industry in Poland, and used these techniques to provide an innovative and challenging account of what led Jews to adopt a socialist point of view, with the title “Jewish Biographies, Leftist Politics, and the History of Emotions.”

The morning of the second day was devoted to sessions on “Negotiating Religion and Socialism,” on “Jewish Perspectives on the History of the Left—Marxist Approaches on Jewish History,” on “Emancipatory Empowerment and Leftist Politics,” and a most stimulating session on “Responsibility.” In this, Stanisław Krajewski, a key figure in Polish Jewish life and the great-grandson of Adolf Warski, a founder

of the Communist Party of Poland, reflected on “How Jewish Were My Communist Ancestors? Revisiting the Question of Jewish Responsibility.” Another striking presentation was the attempt by Marcin Moskalewicz of Poznań University of Medical Sciences to assess how one should evaluate the actions of Helena Wolińska, wife of the economist Włodzimierz Brus, who as military prosecutor in the Stalinist years in Poland has been accused of organizing the unlawful arrest, trial, and execution of General Emil August Fieldorf, a commander of the underground Polish Home Army during World War II.

The afternoon session included “Different Generations? Different Biographies?” in which the tensions between different communist generations were analyzed. Also presented was a roundtable on “Jewish Left-wing Activism and Family History” in which Alex Sobel, a Labor MP in the UK, and his father, Leopold Sobel, Ewa Herbst, a descendant of the PPS leader Herman

Diamand, and David Slucki, child of Bundist activists in Melbourne, reflected on their families' past.

The conference concluded with a showing of the documentary film *Tonia and Her Children* by Marcel Łoziński, an account of the life of Jewish communist Tonia Lechtman, who was sentenced in 1949 to five years in prison for allegedly spying for the United States. This moving and disturbing film presents the figure of Tonia Lechtman through her prison correspondence as well as the reminiscences of her adult children, Wera and Marcel, who recall being separated from their mother and being moved from one orphanage to the other. This was a traumatic experience. At the front door of a children's home in Wrocław, they are asked who they are. Wera replies, "We are children of communists." In response the teacher shouts at her, "Why do they only send us Judeo-communists?!" The showing was preceded by an account by Dr. Przemysław Kaniecki from the POLIN Museum Collection Department of

the archival resources in the museum on the subject of Tonia Lechtman.

The conference was jointly organized by POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the Aleksander Brückner Center for Polish Studies (Halle/Saale), the Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University of Oxford, and the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London, within the framework of the Global Education Outreach Program of the POLIN Museum. It was made possible thanks to the support of Taube Philanthropies, the William K. Bowes Jr. Foundation, the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland, the Stiftung für deutsch-polnische Zusammenarbeit, the European Association of Jewish Studies, the Deutsch-Polnische Wissenschaftsstiftung, and the Gotteiner Institute for the History of the Bund and the Jewish Labor Movement at the University of Haifa. It was a most stimulating and thought-provoking event, shedding light on many complex and disputed topics.

It is very much to be hoped that the papers presented will be published as soon as possible. ■

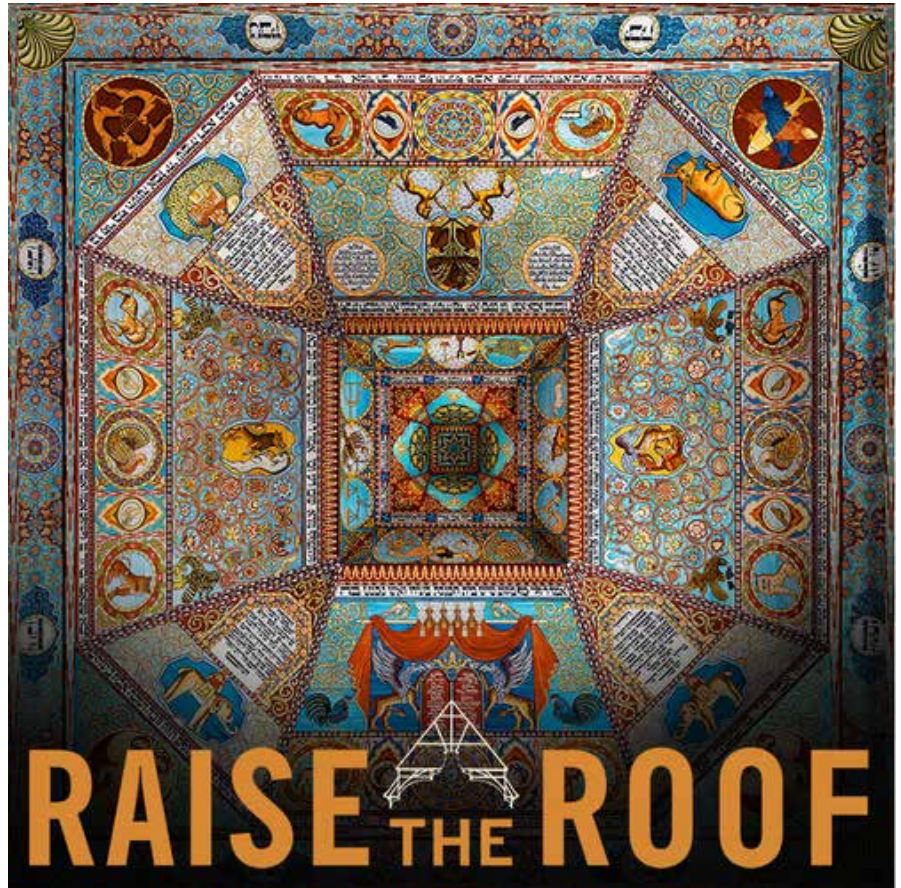
ANNOUNCEMENTS

In Brief

Newly Released on Amazon: *Raise the Roof* by Filmmakers Yari and Cary Wolinsky

This 2015 feature documentary tells the story of a ten-year campaign to reconstruct the beautifully decorated roof and ceiling of an 18th-century wooden synagogue inside POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Wooden synagogues once dotted many parts of the Eastern European landscape, but fire and the vicissitudes of time had greatly reduced their number when scholars began to document them in the 20th century. American designers Rick & Laura Brown of Handhouse Studio, though not Jewish, found the wooden synagogue so intriguing that they decided to recreate one—the mural-covered Gwozdziec synagogue, which had been burned by the Nazis during the war.

Assembling an international team of artisans and students, the Browns used period tools and techniques, applied according to the best scholarly advice, to build and paint the twenty-two-ton replica. Their reconstruction was unveiled in 2014 as the centerpiece of the new museum. Filmmakers



Yari and Cary Wolinsky place the synagogue in the context of a thousand years of Polish Jewish history, with klezmer music providing an evocative sonic background.

Non-profit Handhouse Studio, based in Norwell, Massachusetts, is an educational organization that creates hands-on projects through community service

projects with partners around the world as a way to explore history, science, and the arts. *Raise the Roof* is distributed by Trillium Studios (<https://www.polishsynagogue.com/>) and is available at Amazon (<https://www.amazon.com/Raise-Roof-Yari-Wolinsky/dp/B081ZJYPFW/>). ■

Midrasz Closes its Doors

The Editorial Board of *Midrasz*.

Dear Friends and Readers,

The next copy of *Midrasz* magazine will be the last. Yes, it is true. We have been struggling with this decision for some time, and upon deciding on it and sharing the news with some of our friends, we heard voices of disbelief and the question how it is possible. We therefore now officially confirm it: after twenty-two years, *Midrasz* will no longer be published. Twenty-two years, like twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, one for each year. Maybe it is just a coincidence, maybe there is some hidden meaning. In either case, let it become a symbol. When, at the turn of 1996 and 1997, under the leadership of Konstanty Gebert, we began planning the newspaper and established the office at 6 Twarda Street, probably no one—not the editorial staff, not the sponsors, not the readers—could have guessed that *Midrasz* would have lasted

this long. We did not expect it ourselves, nor that these twenty-two years would have passed so quickly.

The reasons why *Midrasz* will stop being published are complex—from local to global. To stop any further speculations, we need to openly reveal that the crucial factor lies in the annually progressing financial problems. We struggled with them for a long time, and despite continual and generous donations from the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration, the Book Institute, and the Jewish Community of Warsaw, as well as private philanthropists, we were unable to solve them systemically. We would like to whole-heartedly thank our benefactors, without whom the experience of *Midrasz* would not have lasted as long as it



The final issue of *Midrasz*, winter 2019.

did. It probably would not have started at all. Now, as the financial situation of the paper print media market (as well for the small as for the giants) gradually deteriorates, our adventure is coming to an end.

We are closing the magazine aware of the era behind us. When the first issue of *Midrasz* was released in April 1997, the Internet was

in its infancy, there were no social media, and printing of an illustrated magazine lasted over a week. On the “Jewish street,” the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, our first sponsor, was energizing a small community of Polish Jews for whom *Midrasz* was intended. We were spectators and participants of this process, and over time—also under the influence of online forums—we changed our profile from informational to socio-cultural, and finally to cultural-literary, as we followed the transformations of this community. Today, it is transformed. The formula, the needs have changed, and the people have changed as well. Many of the most faithful friends of *Midrasz* are gone. Within the last two decades, almost a full generation of readers has regrettably passed away, among them Jews from Poland and from the diaspora, who were our main subscribers. We were not very successful with finding new readers. Maybe it is our fault, but probably also a sign of the times, and therefore another reason why we must say good-bye to you.

We would like to wholeheartedly thank our benefactors, without whom the experience of Midrasz would not have lasted as long as it did. It probably would not have started at all.

We have twenty-two years behind us, 210 issues of *Midrasz*, and several thousand articles, journalistic texts, essays, translations, religious commentaries, notes, interviews, and pieces of literature. Almost 200 colorful covers, hundreds of illustrations. The editors have initiated a dozen or so discussions on all topics, although always related to the main mission of *Midrasz*—to explain and familiarize the readers with Jewish tradition, culture, and identity. Some of them are reprinted in the first part of this issue. They will tell more about us than just dry statistics.

The work of archivists is ahead of us, with a duty toward future readers, toward the press and the history of

Polish Jewish research and researchers that obliges us to celebrate our achievements and summarize them, to create a public online archive, and to present selected texts in books to be published. It is not a small task, but, to say the least, we already have some practice in it.

To all of our readers and co-creators past and present, thank you!

Note: All archival issues will be available online on the National Library website. To learn more about *Midrasz*, visit our website at: www.midrasz.pl. ■

Contemporary Jewish Art and Artists in Poland

Fay Bussgang

Despite the rise in anti-Semitism in many parts of the world, Jewish art in Poland seems to be flourishing.

One of Warsaw's most visible landmarks, the "blue skyscraper" at Plac Bankowy, was built on the former site of Warsaw's historic Great Synagogue, the Tłomackie Synagogue, destroyed during the war. The façade of the modern building, made completely of glass, served as the perfect backdrop for the projection of an image of the former synagogue created by artist Gabrielle von Seltmann. This stark, nostalgic image was made visible on two occasions, first in April 2018 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and last year on the uprising's 76th anniversary.

As reported by *Foreign Press*, Gabi von Seltmann is one of a small number of artists who live in Poland and are actively engaged with commemorating the Holocaust by keeping the legend of Polish Jewry



Gabi von Seltmann's ceremonial reconstruction of Warsaw's Great Synagogue, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on April 19, 2018.

Photograph by Marta Kuśmierz. Used with permission.

alive in art and film. In addition to her own work, she has collaborated with her German-born husband, Uwe von Seltmann, on several films, among them *Boris Dorfman, a Mentsh* (shot entirely in Yiddish) and *Die dritte Generation nach der Shoah* (The Third Generation after the Shoah), as part of *Denkzeit*, a TV series in Germany.

Another artist active in the Jewish art world in Poland, Yaelle Wiśnicki-Levi, based in Warsaw since 2015, is the founder of Artours Warsaw, an organization that provides contemporary English-language art tours in Warsaw. Born in New York, Wiśnicki-Levi attended school in the U.S. and Israel and is now a Polish citizen. She is a member of the Six Verbs Movement,

an ongoing artistic research project that takes place in public spaces around Poland and brings together artists who work in different media such as theater, dance, visual arts, and music. One of their projects was a work in 2015 focusing on the history of Lublin, examined from a contemporary point of view while bringing in the past perspectives of different religious groups.

Zuza Hertzberg is a painter and author of installations and performative actions. Her works use the artist's own method of mixed painting techniques, rich texture, and intense color. Hertzberg is interested in memory and body, as well as issues related to a broad sense of identity and belonging to a place. In 2019, she took part in *Individual and Organized Resistance of Women During the Holocaust*, an exhibit at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

Two artists in Warsaw who create modern versions of Jewish religious objects are Alexander Prugar and his partner, Helena Czernek. They founded Mi Polin, a design collaborative specializing in contemporary Judaica. After having photographed traces of mezuzahs found on older buildings, the pair began to

create their own. Taking a wax imprint from door frames where mezuzahs were once attached, they hand cast a three-dimensional bronze replica of the original. They also have a line of menorahs, candles, and assorted jewelry, largely sold online. In addition to creating works of art, they are helping to preserve the memory of Jews who once lived in Poland.

FestivALT is an independent arts collective in Kraków that produces an annual program of critically-minded Jewish art and activism. Each year, they invite artists from Poland and around the world to produce visual art, theater, site-specific performance, and activist interventions. FestivALT aims to provide an inclusive platform for under-represented voices and perspectives. (See Adam Schorin's update on FestivALT activities in this issue, pp. 47-48)

On the grounds of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is an outstanding temporary installation commemorating the 75th anniversary of the camp's liberation. *Through the Lens of Faith* consists of twenty-one



Zuza Hertzberg, *Tribute to International Brigades*, 2016, mixed media on canvas, 46x38 cm. Photograph by Mikolaj Tym. Courtesy of the artist.

color portraits taken by Caryl Englander—over the course of three years—of Jewish, Polish Catholic, and Sinti survivors of the camp. The repetitive pattern of the three-meter-tall, vertical steel panels on which the portraits are placed is reminiscent of the stripes of a prisoner's uniform. The proportion of Jews to non-Jews depicted in the show is roughly that of the population murdered at Auschwitz. Erected in July 2019, the installation is scheduled to remain at Auschwitz-Birkenau through October 2020, by which time we hope to be able to travel again to see these and other inspiring works of art. ■

Fay Bussgang, along with her husband Julian Bussgang, is a longtime contributing editor to *Gazeta*.

OBITUARIES

Krzysztof Penderecki

November 23, 1933–March 29, 2020

Antony Polonsky

Krzysztof Penderecki, a composer of international reputation, died on March 29, 2020. According to the Ludwig van Beethoven Association in Kraków, with which he was closely associated, Penderecki was “an eminent artist and humanist, one of the world’s best known and most acclaimed Polish composers... [whose music] with its unique dramatic structure and a deeply humanistic message... transcended the avant-garde and became popular with a wide audience.”

Penderecki came from a mixed background. He was born in Dębica in Galicia, about 120 km southeast of Kraków. His grandfather, Robert Berger, a talented painter and director of the local bank, was the son of Johann, who had moved to Dębica from Breslau (today Wrocław) in the mid-19th century. Penderecki’s grandmother was an Armenian from Isfahan with whom he attended the Armenian Church



Krzysztof Penderecki. Photograph by Mirosław Pietruszyński. Wikimedia Commons.

in Kraków. He paid homage to his Armenian background in his choral work, *Psalm no. 3*, which was premiered in Carnegie Hall in 2015 on the centenary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

Penderecki received his musical training at Jagiellonian University and then studied composition at the State Higher School of Music (now known as the Kraków Academy of Music)

between 1954 and 1958, whereupon, after graduation, he was appointed a teacher of composition. He came to intellectual maturity just as the Stalinist system was collapsing in Poland, and his early work, reflecting the new freedom achieved with the Polish October, was characteristic of the modernism of the period. It was now, for instance, that Witold Lutosławski introduced the twelve-tone

system into his compositions. Works in this style were also often premiered at the annual Warsaw autumn international festival of contemporary music which began in 1956.

In compositions from these years, Penderecki replaced themes and tonality with new and innovative textures, influenced by Anton Webern, John Cage, and Pierre Boulez. What marked his work was his reliance on sound itself, rather than on melody or harmony—an approach that came to be called “sonorism.” He came to prominence in an unusual manner. Three works he had submitted anonymously, as was required by the rules, to a competition for young composers organized by the Union of Polish Composers—*Strophes*, *Emanations*, and *Psalms of David*—won the first three prizes and established him as a leading avant-garde composer.

His first major work was *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1961), for which he won a UNESCO prize. It is written for a large string orchestra and uses many unconventional techniques,

including quarter-tones, tremolos, and multiple glissandi. Similar in character is his *Saint Luke’s Passion* for two vocal soloists, reciter, three mixed choruses, children’s choir, and orchestra—employing chanting, recitative, and chorales. He composed it as part of the commemorations in Poland of the thousandth anniversary of the Christianization of the country. Characteristic of his desire to overcome national and political divisions, its premiere took place in March 1966 in Münster Cathedral. The German critic Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt remarked on the singularity of this event:

A large ecclesiastical choral work, composed by a representative of the new music in socialist Poland, performed for the first time in a centre of West German Catholicism, in the former bishop’s seat of the daring anti-Nazi Graf von Galen [a prominent critic of the Third Reich when bishop of Münster during the 40s]: this gives occasion to a variety of thoughts.

His later style was more lyrical and romantic, redolent of 19th-century compositional techniques. It was attacked by some critics as an abandonment of his modernist principles but it assured Penderecki a large audience. He defended this musical shift, claiming “[it] wasn’t I who betrayed the avant-garde, but the avant-garde which betrayed music.” Examples of his later work are his *First Violin Concerto*, written in 1977 for Isaac Stern, the *Polish Requiem* for four soloists, chorus, and orchestra (1984, revised in 1993), although here the *Dies Irae*, composed in 1967, remained evocative of his modernist period, as did his *Credo* for five vocal soloists, chorus, children’s choir, and orchestra (1998), which makes use of material from Bach and early Polish music, treated in a generally diatonic manner.

The British premiere of *Polish Requiem* was organized under the auspices of the Oxford-based Institute for Polish Jewish Studies, sister body of the American Association for Polish Jewish Studies—a reflection of the



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

From: Lady-in-Waiting to H.R.H. The Princess of Wales

29th January 1987

Dear Mr. Stoutzker,

The Princess of Wales has asked me to write and thank you very much indeed for all the help you gave to make her visit to the Arthur Rubinstein Memorial Concert such a relaxed and happy occasion.

Her Royal Highness was so pleased to have been able to be present at the first British Performance of Krzysztof Penderecki's Polish Requiem and greatly appreciated the opportunity to talk with some of those who helped to make the Concert possible.

It was a memorable evening, and one which Her Royal Highness was delighted to have attended.

Yours sincerely
Alexandra Loyd

Miss Alexandra Loyd

Mr. I. Stoutzker

A letter written on behalf of Diana, Princess of Wales, following the Arthur Rubinstein Memorial Concert, the British premiere of Krzysztof Penderecki's *Polish Requiem*.

Used with permission.

commitment of Penderecki and his second wife Elżbieta, whom he married in 1965, to Polish-Jewish understanding. As a child, he himself had witnessed the liquidation of the ghetto in Dębica. The concert commemorated the 100th anniversary of Arthur

Rubinstein's birth and took place at the Royal Festival Hall in London in support of the Royal College of Music and the institute. The concert was attended by Princess Diana, patron of the Royal College of Music, and Rubinstein's widow, Nela. The

requiem, which was made up of different works composed between 1967 and 1984, turned out to be an appropriate choice. The *Lachrymosa* had been commissioned by Lech Wałęsa to accompany the unveiling of a statue in the Gdańsk shipyards honoring those killed in the strike there in 1970; the *Agnus Dei* was dedicated to the memory of Cardinal Wyszyński, and the *Dies Irae* commemorated the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It is a very powerful piece and its impact is increased by the way in which it quotes old Polish hymns. After the concert, Alexandra Loyd, lady-in-waiting to Princess Diana, wrote to Ian Stoutzker, chairman of the concert organizing committee, expressing her pleasure "to have been able to be present at the first British performance of Krzysztof Penderecki's *Polish Requiem*."

Penderecki was by then a well-established international figure. Those who commissioned work from him include Mstislav Rostropovich, for whom the *Second Cello Concerto* (1982)

was written, and Anne-Sophie Mutter, for whom both the *Second Violin Concerto*, subtitled *Metamorphosen* (1995), and *La Follia* (2013), a virtuoso set of variations for unaccompanied violin, were composed.

He wrote four operas, including one, *The Devils of Loudun* (1969), based on a book by Aldous Huxley. Parts of this work, as well as his string quartet and a canon for orchestra and tape, were used on the soundtrack to the film *The Exorcist* (1973). Penderecki's music has also been used in other films, including Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990), Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006), and Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island* (2010), as well as in the TV series *Twin Peaks*. He was friendly with fellow Cracovian Andrzej Wajda and provided the music for his film *Katyn* (2007).

Penderecki wrote eight symphonies, commemorating historical events with his compositions. His seventh symphony, *The Seven Gates*

Penderecki was by then a well-established international figure, as reflected by those who commissioned work from him.

of Jerusalem, a choral work with three choirs, had its premiere in Jerusalem in January 1997 as part of the celebrations of the three-thousandth anniversary of the founding of the city. Its title alluded to its seven legendary gates, and the work was composed of seven parts, each using texts from the Hebrew Bible. His eighth symphony, finally finished in 2008, for three vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra, has the title *Lieder der Verganglichkeit* (Songs of Transience) and is made up of twelve movements setting 19th- and early 20th-century German poets. Another commemorative composition is the *Dies Illa*, which premiered in Brussels, in Koekelberg Church, on November 9, 2014, and honors the victims of World War I.

Penderecki was a very successful conductor, not only

of his own music but also of other composers, most notably Dmitri Shostakovich. Between 1972 and 1987 he was rector of the Kraków Academy of Music and between 1973 and 1978 taught at Yale University. He won four Grammy awards, most recently in 2016 for his CD *Penderecki Conducts Penderecki, Volume 1*. His work has also inspired that of the English pop musician Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead. Penderecki and his wife often entertained friends in the manor house and estate at Lusławice near Zakliczyn, not far from his birthplace, which they had painstakingly and beautifully restored. It has become a center for musical education. The Pendereckis were committed to the establishment of a tolerant and civil society in Poland. One of his final public appearances, in spite of the severe illness which marred his last years, was to attend the funeral of Paweł Adamowicz, the mayor of Gdańsk, murdered by a right-wing fanatic in January 2019. We express our condolences to his wife Elżbieta and his five children. His music will live on. ■

Remembering Mikhl Baran: American Yiddish Cultural Icon

1922 – April 17, 2020

Samuel Norich

I have the sad duty to inform you of the death of Mikhl Baran, at age ninety-seven, after a long illness unrelated to the coronavirus. Our condolences go out to his dear wife Millie and daughters Ruth and Janice.

A member of the Forward Association for many decades, Chaver Mikhl was admired by generations of listeners to the *Forward's* radio station, WEVD, where he had a daily news broadcast, as he was by successive cohorts of his students in the Workers Circle *shules* on Long Island, where he taught. During World War II, Mikhl Baran fought the Nazis and their local helpers as a partisan in the forests of Lithuania and northeast Poland and as a soldier in the Red Army. After four years in DP Camp Feldafing, he and Millie emigrated in 1949 to the United States, where he became a teacher and a communal activist. His articulate and engaging personality made him an effective transmitter of the Yiddish cultural traits he absorbed during his youth in Europe, which he embodied and taught in the decades that followed.

Zol er hobn a likhtikn gan-eden. ■

Samuel Norich is President of the Forward and has served as executive director of the Forward Association since 2000. He was the publisher of the English and Yiddish Forward for nineteen years until 2016.



Mikhl Baran. From the personal archive of Nikolai Borodulin. Used with permission.

Walentyna Janta-Pończyńska

February 1, 1913–April 2, 2020

Antony Polonsky

Walentyna Janta-Pończyńska, who died at the beginning of April at the age of 107, was one of the last of those who served in the Polish government-in-exile in London during World War II. She was frequently interviewed by scholars working on this period, and most recently by Andrew Nagorski for his book *1941: The Year Germany Lost the War* (2019). Her father, Ludwik (William) Stocker, was an English engineer working in the Galician oil industry and her mother, Karolina Kochanowska, was Polish. In 1938, Walentyna moved from Lwów to London to further her education, and when the war broke out was hired by the Polish embassy, where her knowledge of English was clearly useful. When in June of 1940 the Polish government-in-exile, established in France in September 1939, moved to London, she became secretary to Prime Minister

and Commander-in-Chief Władysław Sikorski. She acted as translator in his meetings with allied statesmen, including Winston Churchill, and was responsible for translating and editing the reports brought to London in November 1942 by Jan Karski regarding the conditions of Nazi-occupied Poland, including the mass murder of the local Jewish population. She admired Sikorski enormously, but as she told Andrew Nagorski in 2016, she felt he lacked “the temperament that you needed to deal with the Russians.” After Sikorski was killed in a plane crash at Gibraltar in July 1943, she worked for the radio station Świt (Dawn), broadcasting to Poland from the intelligence



Walentyna Janta Potczyńska in the uniform of the Polish Armed Forces in the West, American Zone of Occupation, Germany 1945

Photo from the Karolina Rostafiński Merk collection. Used with permission.

center at Bletchley Park. At the end of the war she was assigned as a translator with the rank of second lieutenant in the Polish army to the U.S. forces in Frankfurt. She was principally responsible for interviewing Poles

who had survived German concentration camps and were then in the American zone of occupation. She was particularly concerned with women prisoners who had been subjected to medical experimentation.

In 1947, she emigrated to the United States with her mother (her father had died before the war). There she married the Polish writer and journalist Aleksander Janta-Pończyński, whom she had met in London after his escape from German captivity. They settled first in Buffalo and subsequently in Elmhurst, Queens, in New York City, where they ran an antiquarian bookstore that also supported exiled Polish writers, scholars, and artists. Their home became a meeting place for leading Polish intellectuals and she was described as “the first lady of American Polonia.” Among their guests were Jan Kott, Jerzy Kosiński, Zbigniew Herbert, Antoni Słonimski, Kazimierz Wierzyński, Marek Hłasko, Jerzy Giedroyc, Witold Gombrowicz, and Czesław Miłosz. She remained active in Polish immigrant

Among her many decorations were the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, the Polish Ministry of Culture’s Medal for Services to Polish Culture, and the Jan Karski Eagle Award.

communities, and from 1959-61, she and her husband (who died in August 1974) succeeded in facilitating the return to Poland of artworks from the Wawel in Kraków which had been stored in Canada during World War II. After her husband’s death she donated maps, documents, manuscripts, and early printed books that the couple had collected to the National Library in Warsaw. Among her many decorations were the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, the Polish Ministry of Culture’s Medal for Services to Polish Culture, and the Jan Karski Eagle award.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, her many friends and relations had to watch her funeral online. Her ashes will find their final resting place alongside those of her husband in the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw. ■

Jerzy E. Głowczewski (1922-2020)

Jerzy Głowczewski, who was said to be the last known Polish fighter pilot to have flown for the RAF during World War II, died in New York on April 13 at the age of ninety-seven.

Jerzy Eligiusz Głowczewski was born November 19, 1922, in Warsaw, Poland, where he lived until the outbreak of the war. On September 6, 1939, he left Warsaw with a few other men of his family, crossing the border into Romania on September 17. After the Germans entered Romania in the winter of 1941, he left via Turkey for Palestine. Both in Bucharest and again in Tel Aviv, he attended a Polish refugee high school directed by Pani Helena Barysz.

In July 1941, Jerzy joined the Polish Carpathian Brigade, fighting in Egypt. After completing the Polish Officers' School, he signed up to join the Polish Air Force in England. In August 1942, he joined a military team that left Egypt and traveled through

South Africa, Rio de Janeiro, and New York en route to Liverpool, while escorting 4,000 German prisoners of war.

In England, he trained to become a pilot in the Polish Air Force in the west, and in July 1944, he joined Polish fighter squadron 308, flying some one hundred missions. He received the Polish Cross of Valor three times for his service.

After the war, Jerzy returned to Poland. He studied architecture in Warsaw and then participated extensively in the reconstruction of the city. In 1961, he was invited by the Ford Foundation to go to the United States, where he began teaching as head of the Architecture Department at the University of North Carolina in Raleigh. He then worked as chief architect to build a new city in Aswan, Egypt. In 1967, he returned to the U.S., taught at Pratt Institute in New York, and continued working as an architect worldwide.

Julian Bussgang

In retirement, Jerzy wrote his memoirs, producing three volumes in Polish, which were combined and translated into English under the title *The Accidental Immigrant*.

Having made lifelong Jewish friends at the Polish refugee schools in Bucharest and Tel Aviv, Jerzy gladly accepted an invitation to be on the board of the newly formed American Association for Polish Jewish Studies and participated in its endeavors. Living in New York and having a connection with the Polish Consulate, he often represented AAPJS at events there.

His wife Irena ("Lenta") passed away in December 2018 after a long illness. Daughter Klara is executive travel editor of *Town & Country*. ■

Julian Bussgang, along with his wife Fay Bussgang, is a longtime contributing editor to *Gazeta*.

Passing of Dr. Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, Longtime Activist Regarding Jewish Heritage and Holocaust Studies in Poland

Dr. Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, for decades a key figure in research on the Holocaust and Jewish heritage in Poland, died February 27 at the age of eighty-two.

Pawlicka-Nowak was the director of the District Museum in Konin, in central Poland, from 1975 to 2006 and was founder of the Museum of the Former German Kulmhof Death Camp in Chełmno nad-Nerem, which was established in 1990. She carried out extensive research and commemoration work regarding Jewish cemeteries and heritage in the Konin region and was an early recipient of the Preserving Memory award, a recognition established in 1998 to honor non-Jewish Poles preserving Jewish heritage. Under her direction, the Konin Museum organized research, recovery, and commemorative efforts at approximately twenty Jewish cemeteries, marking them with signage, commemorative plaques, and memorials. She



Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak (1938-2020). Photograph courtesy of the District Museum in Konin. Used with permission.

and her team also rescued several hundred matzevot or fragments which had been removed from Jewish cemeteries.

Her obituary on the Konin Culture Foundation website noted: “Dr. Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak was particularly involved in documenting the lives of Jews in Konin and the Konin region. She did it with tireless energy, saving matzevot and numerous Jewish cemeteries. In order to be able to work more effectively, she learned Yiddish, established contacts with the Institute of Martyrs and Holocaust Remembrance,

with Yad Vashem in Israel, and with American Jewish communities. In a letter read out at her funeral, the Jewish Community in Poznań recalled her as “an extraordinary figure, deserving of great respect and gratitude.” Her life was devoted to a noble and sacred mission, namely to commemorate Jewish cities, towns, and villages murdered by the German occupier. Jewish martyrs were not buried, prayers over their bodies were not said, they were not escorted in a funeral procession to a place where they would wait for the coming of the Messiah. Mrs. Łucja, through her many works, mourned for those who did not have to mourn.” ■

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29th Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków in 2019
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If you would like to suggest an article or author for the next issue of *Gazeta*, or submit one yourself, please email: info@taubephilanthropies.org. The submission deadline for the next issue is **July 15, 2020**.

We accept queries and submissions for feature articles of no more than 1500 words, and up to 500 words or less for all other announcements or reports.



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