



Leonard Cohen  
September 21, 1934-November 7, 2016

Photo: Photofest

# *Gazeta*

Volume 24, No. 1  
Fall 2016/Winter 2017

A quarterly publication of  
the American Association  
for Polish-Jewish Studies  
and Taube Foundation for  
Jewish Life & Culture



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## Message from Irene Pipes

**President of the American Association  
for Polish-Jewish Studies**

**Founder of *Gazeta***

Dear Members and Friends,

Once more I would like to share with you my most recent experience while in Poland in October. I started in Kraków where I opened the Marcell and Maria Roth Center for the Study of the History of Polish Jews headed by Prof. Michał Galas. I then took the train to Warsaw, which now makes it in a little over two hours. I attended the conference in the POLIN Museum on “The Present Past” where I met Antony Polonsky, who opened the conference, and young scholars from both Poland and Israel. While there, I donated a bundle of letters and postcards to the POLIN Museum archive written by my grandmother in 1939-41 from the German-occupied Warsaw Ghetto.

My best wishes for 2017.

Irene Pipes  
*President*



Irene Pipes

# Message from Tad Taube and Shana Penn

**Chairman and Executive Director  
of the Taube Foundation for  
Jewish Life & Culture**



Tad Taube



Shana Penn

Even by *Gazeta's* standards, this is an especially full issue, presenting a wide array of themes, topics, and perspectives. Some of them explore the edges of key social issues such as the intersection of gender, Jewishness, and nationalism in Poland. Others may be uncomfortable, like the review of a film on Polish-Ukrainian relations in WWII. Another article profiles Poland's first woman rabbi. Perhaps as remarkable as any of these is the opening interview of the nonagenarian architect who discusses her lifelong fascination with the wood and stone synagogues of the Polish lands. Maria Piechotkova's passion and expertise informed generations of scholars as well as the famous reconstructed model of a wooden synagogue in POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Complementing these thematic articles are many, many announcements of recent or soon-to-be conferences, exhibits, and films. As a fitting conclusion to the issue, we have presented thoughtful reflections about four men, recently passed, who have shaped our lives: a philanthropist, a world leader, a filmmaker, and a musician.

That we have been able to present so much news of vital interest in just one issue of *Gazeta* is testimony to the amazing progress of Poland's Jewish cultural revitalization. It also demonstrates the growing international recognition of Poland as a center of Jewish history, vitality, and creativity. This is wonderful news. But it means that when you begin reading your copy, you may not be able to put it down. We suggest you select a very comfortable chair.

Tad Taube and Shana Penn  
*Chairman and Executive Director*



## FEATURES

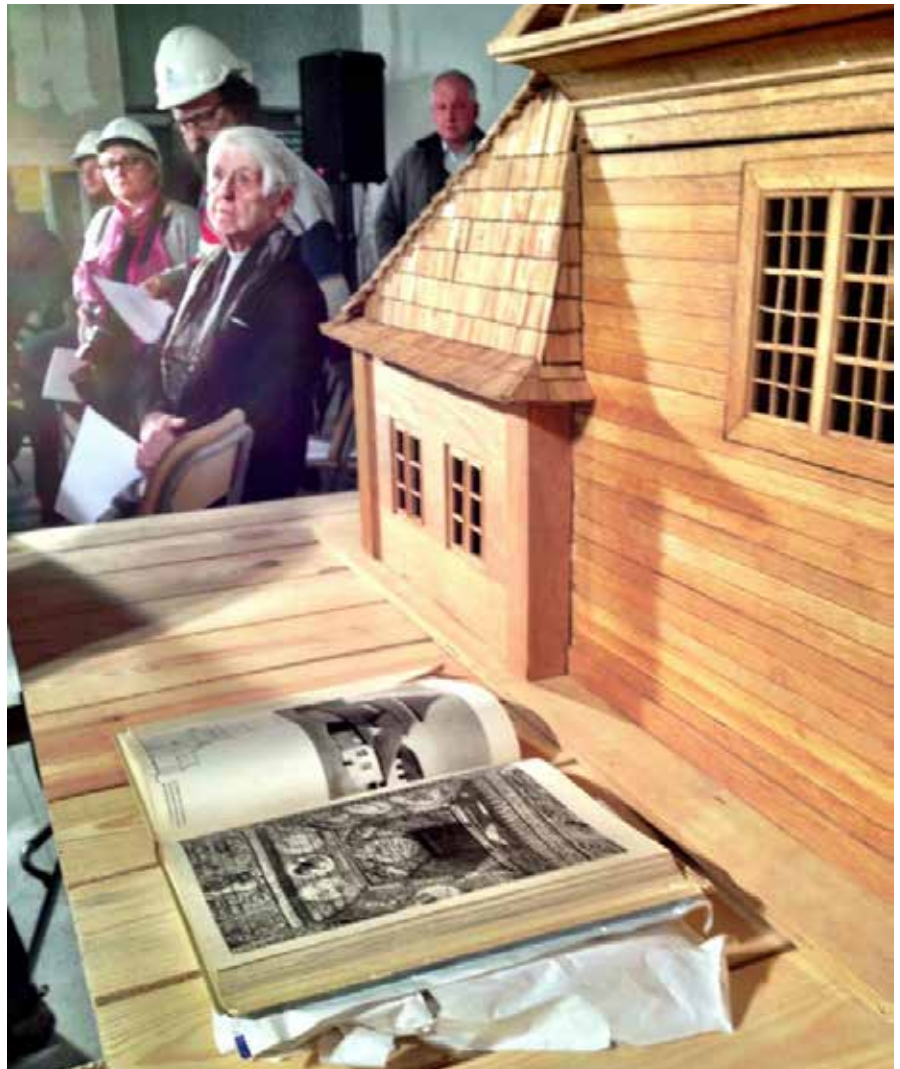
# Interview with Maria Piechotkova

Filip Lech  
Mikołaj Gliński  
*Culture.pl*

“I was fascinated by the synagogues. They were so wonderful and so different from everything I’d seen before! And simultaneously Polish in their character. I wanted to see them in nature,” says Maria Piechotkova, winner of the Taube Foundation’s 2016 Irena Sendler Memorial Award. Born on July 12, 1920, Maria Piechotkova is an architect and scholar of Jewish cultural heritage. Together with her late husband, architect Kazimierz Piechotka, she has written books devoted to the history and culture of Polish Jews, including *Wooden Synagogues*, first published in 1957, which has become a seminal work in its field.

**Filip Lech:** You were writing books about synagogues long before this topic became popular in Poland. Where does this interest come from?

**Maria Piechotkova:** I was an architecture student at Warsaw University of



Maria Piechotkova next to a model of the Gwoździec synagogue, POLIN Museum, with the book she and her husband wrote open to the Gwoździec page.  
Photo: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

Technology (WUT) in 1938. One of the subjects was the history of Polish wooden architecture. The lectures were delivered by Professor Oskar

Sosnowski, who established the Department of Polish Architecture in 1923 and who conducted extensive studies covering Jewish architecture.

He collaborated with a photographer and Jewish researcher, Szymon Zajczyk. During lectures, Professor Sosnowski used to show pictures and surveys of wooden synagogues. I was fascinated by the synagogues. They were so wonderful and so different from everything I'd seen before! And simultaneously Polish in their character. I wanted to see them in nature.

**FL:** The war broke out soon afterwards.

**MP:** Professor Sosnowski was killed in September 1939. Zajczyk was murdered by the Germans in 1942, and wooden synagogues ceased to exist. I lived in Kraków during the war but would commute to Warsaw to attend classes at the secret Faculty of Architecture. There I was caught by the Uprising. Right after the liberation, my husband and I came back to Warsaw, to the Polish Department of Architecture

at WUT, where my husband was an assistant to the department's head, Professor Zachwatowicz.

Surveys and pictures of several dozen synagogues, including several wooden ones, survived in the department, but the subject was known only to a limited group of interested people. With Professor Zachwatowicz's consent, my husband and I started works devoted to this topic. We published *Wooden Synagogues* in 1957, and the English translation followed in 1959. This book made a huge impression on Jews, particularly American ones. They learned about the Polish wooden synagogues. We also heard that we had restored the self-esteem of the so-called *Ostjuden*, the Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, who had been perceived as culturally inferior to Western European Jews.

**FL:** Did this book provoke a discussion in Poland?

**MP:** It met with a positive response from experts, but there was no publicity. Those weren't the times to popularize such a topic, especially considering the fact that we had also described synagogues located in the eastern borderlands of the Second Polish Republic that were not within the borders of postwar Poland. The censors made sure that books were not touching upon this sensitive issue.

Silence also hung in Israel. While building their state, the Jews consolidated their citizens by isolating them from such issues. That did not change until the 1980s.

**Mikołaj Gliński:** Do you remember any contacts with Jewish culture from your childhood?

**MP:** No, I don't. I lived in Tarnów, where 30 percent of inhabitants were Jewish, but these were two worlds, almost isolated. There was no hostility. I personally never



The 2016 Taube Foundation Irena Sendler Memorial Award was given to Maria Piechotkova at a ceremony held in the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, on September 16, 2016. Photo: Maciek Jazwiecki

saw any antisemitism. We lived side by side.

**FL:** Did you have a chance to see prewar Warsaw?

**MP:** Warsaw – yes.

**FL:** And the Jewish quarter?

**MP:** My contact was limited to passing it by tram. It was inhabited mostly by Jews who were faithful to traditional ways. They differed in looks, language, and lifestyle. Assimilated Jews and the Jewish intelligentsia lived near the edge or outside of the Jewish quarter. Great masses, over 300,000 people, lived in the Jewish quarter.

**FL:** Did you have a chance to experience the architecture of Polish Jews before the war?

**MP:** Before I started my studies, I hadn't known that such architecture even existed. My interest began at the faculty of architecture with historic wooden synagogues. Later my husband and I wanted to take up stone synagogues, which were also very interesting. But what happened was that we took up something totally different, architectural design. Later we began collecting information about synagogues, thinking that we might take up this subject again in the future. When we retired in 1980 we started to think, What next? Political changes were slowly taking shape. A program devoted to Jewish architecture was created at the Institute of Art at the Polish Academy of Sciences, and we were asked to participate. We gained access to previously

inaccessible Polish and foreign archives. In 1986 we received our first opportunity to travel abroad – to Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Israel, and the USA.

We published our second book on wooden synagogues, *Heaven's Gates: Wooden Synagogues in the Territories of the Former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, in 1996. Its scope was more extended, including descriptions and the iconography of objects but also interior design. We then took up stone synagogues, publishing *Heaven's Gates: Stone Synagogues* in 1999. Later came *Oppidum Judaeorum: Jews in Urban Space of the Old Commonwealth*, a history of Jewish settlements through the end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.



**FL:** What materials did you have access to in the 1940s and 1950s?

**MP:** Mostly prewar surveys collected by the Department of Polish Architecture and pictures from the Central Office for Art Monument Inventories (later the Institute of Art at the Polish Academy of Sciences). We also collected everything we could, old publications and illustrations.

Interest in wooden synagogues started in Europe, in the second half of the 19th century. Jewish and German as well as Russian researchers were interested in wooden synagogues. There was an expedition by Szymon Anski, who set off in 1916 along the Dnieper River in a search for the roots of Jewish culture. In 1934 a book by Alois Breier, *Holzsynagogen in Polen*, was published. It was his doctoral thesis, presented in 1913 at the university in Vienna. That is when he took a series of extremely interesting photographs, including synagogues

that didn't survive World War I. We used them too.

**MG:** What interested you, as an architect, in these synagogues?

**MP:** Why were they built in Poland? Why these synagogues and not different ones? Why was the wooden synagogue born in Poland? Because it was a country rich in conifer wood, pine, fir, spruce, and larch. Perfect material for carpentry constructions. Halls of one hundred and fifty and sometimes even over two hundred square meters, frequently without internal supports, were covered with multilevel domes built into the roof framework.

**FL:** Who built the synagogues?

**MP:** We found it really interesting. The list of crafts performed by Jews in the 17-18th centuries and mid-19th century included several dozen professions,

but not builders. Therefore Polish builders must have been doing it. It combined Jewish religious thought with Polish architecture, a unique example of intertwining cultures. Meanwhile, rich interior design in the form of carved *aron kodesh*, polychromes, furniture, fabrics, embroideries, and silver – these were expressions of Jewish craftsmanship. The POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews displays a replica of the synagogue in Gwoździec. There we can see Polish construction and Jewish painting.

**MG:** In 1973 American artist Frank Stella prepared a series of abstract paintings and sculptures inspired by your book.

**MP:** It is a very interesting, rich work by an outstanding painter, with a high degree of abstraction and significant formal distance from the object of inspiration. Other painters also took up this topic, mainly in the context of extermination. They drew

inspiration from our book, but they were making realistic paintings, for instance showing the drama of burning.

We once received a letter from Israel written in a very poor Polish. A certain kibbutz member from Sokółka, Mosze Verbin, was building models of wooden synagogues based on our books. He made them of small pieces of wood. We visited this kibbutz in 1986, and Mosze showed us several dozen of his models, which were extremely intricate. Later we attended an exhibition of the models in a museum in Tel Aviv. We even wanted to bring this exhibition to Poland, but unfortunately the exhibits were so delicate that no one would insure their transport.

**MG:** What about stone synagogues?

**MP:** There were many magnificent ones. Let's not forget that the Jews were driven out of Western Europe in the Middle Ages. When they arrived in Poland they were warmly welcomed and

synagogue architecture thrived here at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. That's when synagogues were built in forms unseen anywhere else. However, Polish synagogues fell victim to the Holocaust. Not only wooden but also numerous stone synagogues were entirely demolished, burned, or at least vandalized.

The Nazis turned many of them into garages, stables, and warehouses. Later some of them were renovated and transformed into libraries, archives, community centers – also devoted to Jewish culture – or museums. Others decayed, deprived of users and care. Fortunately, during the last several years, and particularly after joining the EU, a majority of the historically and artistically valuable synagogues were renovated, mostly with the help of foreign funds. Many had their interior design restored and were adapted to cultural needs, and some had religious functions restored. There's this particularly beautiful

and splendid synagogue in Orla, near Hajnówka, a tiny town in the borderland with not a single Jew. A local community cultural center organizes concerts, speeches, and exhibitions there, but they have problems getting funds for maintenance, not to mention preservation.

**MG:** Do any of the wooden synagogues you have described still exist?

**MP:** They were all ruined. Only a few modest Jewish houses of prayer from the 20th century survived, thanks to the fact that their size and form did not differ from neighboring residential housing. Now they contain day rooms, kindergartens, and in one case a shop. ■

*A longer version of this interview first appeared in [Culture.pl](http://Culture.pl); republished with permission of the interviewers.*

[culture.pl/pl/artykul/maria-piechotkowa-dlaczego-drewniane-boznice-powstaly-wlasnie-w-polsce](http://culture.pl/pl/artykul/maria-piechotkowa-dlaczego-drewniane-boznice-powstaly-wlasnie-w-polsce)

# Notes from a Polish Jewish Feminist

**Agnieszka Graff**

*American Studies Center  
University of Warsaw*

*The following is an excerpt from Agnieszka Graff's talk at a panel entitled "Polish Jewish Women and Leadership: Then and Now," as part of the 8th International Bet Debora Conference of European Jewish Women, Activists, Academics, and Rabbis, which took place in Wrocław on September 1-4, 2016. The panel included Anna Azari (Ambassador of Israel to Poland), Anna Chipczyńska (head of the Warsaw Jewish community), Bożena Keff (scholar), and Kazimiera Szczuka (literary critic), moderated by Anna Makówka-Kwapisiewicz (Jewish Association Czulent).*

I am an academic and I tend to talk about other people at conferences, preferably about books by other people. But this time I will take a risk. I will talk about myself, at least to some extent, treating myself as a "case study" in Polish-Jewish-feminist identity. I will try to engage you in an exploration of my own adventures with the question that Bożena Keff started her speech with:



Photo: Bernard Osser

Why are so many feminists Jewish? Perhaps we should phrase the question the other way around: Why do so many Jewish women become feminists? Other questions follow these two: Does it matter that they are Jewish? Should we talk about it? I have had my own troubling adventures with these questions – with asking them or refusing to ask them.

Stage one of my feminist-Jewish adventure was about disavowal. I came back to Poland in '95 from my studies at a progressive college in the

United States, and I had one feminist's telephone number in my notebook. She was placed under F, "feminist." I didn't even know what her name was; I got it from a professor who taught me poetry in the U.S. I called the number and Bożena picked up – that's how we met. Later I became close friends with Kazimiera Szczuka, another Polish-Jewish feminist. We were graduate students together and we started a kind of intellectual and activist partnership. We taught classes together, and we were among the founders of the Polish Manifa Movement.

At the time, I refused to contemplate the fact that I'm Jewish. I was not Jewish; I just had a strange name and a Jewish father. I was one of those Jewish people who were raised Catholic and never talked about being Jewish. I knew Kazimiera and Bożena were Jewish, but it was not a topic that we discussed. Bożena did let me know

occasionally that she thought I was a little odd to avoid this topic or to be nostalgic about my Catholic childhood, but this did not affect me much.

The anecdote that best explains how I felt about Jewishness in this period in my life has to do with my first book, *World Without Women*. It was 2000 or 2001, and I told my mother that the book was about to be published. My mom is a feminist herself and at first she was very proud of me. Then she had a panic attack, which took me by surprise. “You cannot publish this book. You cannot publish a feminist book with your name on it.” I was stunned. My mother explained what made her so anxious: the connection between feminism and a Jewish name in Catholic Poland. I explained to her what I then thought was true and I now know is not true, which is that Poland is a democracy, antisemitism is a thing of the past, and so



Agnieszka Graff (r) and Deborah E. Lipstadt (l) at a panel entitled “Holocaust Memory in the ‘Post-truth’ Age” at *Krytyka Polityczna*, co-organized by the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland, on January 19, 2017.

there is no real issue here. I honestly believed I was going to help win more space within Polish democracy for women. We were doing this together with a bunch of friends who called themselves feminists – a generational effort, as we thought of it. I believed it didn’t matter at all that so many of us were Jewish – it seemed utterly irrelevant. My book became well known, even a bestseller briefly. Everybody politely ignored the fact that I was Jewish.

The polite silence ended a few years later, and that was stage two – marked by political but not personal awareness that the question of Jewishness is not to be ignored if you are a feminist. By 2005 Poland was in the midst of its first nationalist revival since 1989. It suddenly became very clear and significant that many of the people whom I had described in my book as ultra-conservatives, or old-fashioned, or misogynists also happened to be antisemites.

These people – anti-choice, anti-gay, and unabashedly nationalistic – were now in power. They were politically successful because there was a strange coalition of the right-wing parties (PiS) and more extreme nationalist and Catholic conservatives (LPR). As I observed the developing public discourse, I became interested in the connection between nationalism and gender. This is the subject of my second book, *Stray Bullets* (2008).

This brings me to another side of my Jewish story, the American one. In 2005 I was on a Fulbright in New York City to interview second-wave feminists. I didn't realize that most of the women on my list were Jewish. Or perhaps I knew but did not know. This "knowing and not knowing" is part of the story. What I didn't realize is that the reason they agreed to talk to me was that they knew I was a Jewish woman from Poland.

These were famous feminists I had dreamt of meeting; some of the founders of the '60s women's liberation movement. I talked to Ellen Willis, Phyllis Chesler, Susan Brownmiller. My mentor was Ann Snitow. I knew that Ann was Jewish, and it did strike me as an interesting coincidence that I too had Jewish roots.

My most intense meeting was with Vivian Gornick. We talked until 3:00 in the morning in her New York City apartment, and at one point I thought, Oh my goodness, she is the Jewish aunt I never had, she is the grandmother I never had. I asked her, "Does it matter that you have Jewish origins?" She told me, "Well, it mattered at the time because feminism freed me from being Jewish." What followed was a fascinating story of an American Jewish woman who never quite felt she fully belonged in the U.S. until feminism made her feel she did. She was a red-

diaper baby, the daughter of Jewish communists and the granddaughter of religious Jews. She believes she was the first in her family to be assimilated completely, and it happened through the values of American feminism. She embraced it as a critique of America and a form of universal sisterhood.

Much later I read Joyce Antler, the historian of American Jewish women including Jewish feminists. I realized there was a story that Gornick was not telling me, perhaps because it was getting late. Many of the Jewish women who had assimilated into American-ness by embracing American left-wing dissidence in the '60s were back to being Jewish by the '70s. They were making the Jewish feminist revival.

What made me think about these experiences in a complex and personal way was a trip to Israel. Around 2010, Kazimiera Szczuka



invited me to join a Polish/Israeli exchange with feminists from Tel Aviv. When I went there it clearly mattered that I was Jewish. It mattered to me personally and it mattered to my being a feminist.

*“I was learning that Jewishness and gender have a complicated history. And it was no longer irrelevant that I am Jewish.”*

That was the beginning of stage three, where things really came together. I was learning that Jewishness and gender have a complicated history. And it was no longer irrelevant that I am Jewish. As others including Betty Friedan have said, one form of oppression makes you allergic to other forms. It’s true but only a part of the story. A much more complicated story behind it has to do with Jewish traditions of

giving to the world, a sense of duty at the intersection of what is secular and what is religious. I think American feminism is permeated by this idea, with connections to both Protestant and Jewish traditions. There is also the complicated history of denial and anxiety — the part that I am both interested in now and a little afraid of. There is the complicated history of Cold War antisemitism and anti-feminism, their connection to each other. These links are much older than the 1950s. Sander Gilman wrote about them when he wrote about Freud and gender and Judaism. George Mosse theorized it in his brilliant study of gender and nationalism, where he shows the common sources of antisemitism and homophobia. Karen Brodtkin writes about this when describing how Jewish men assimilated into 1950s American culture by being misogynistic (think: Norman Mailer).

In stage three, I discovered the anti-Semitic aspect of the war on gender. In 2012 and 2013 Poland was swamped with right-wing obsessive ranting about “genderism,” a foreign ideology, a grave danger to the Polish nation and Polish culture. The American, Michael Jones, who is quoted by all the anti-genderists in Poland, Germany, and Belgium, is a man who views mass killings of Jews as understandable responses to Jewish misdeeds and beliefs. In Jones’s worldview, Jews have a conspiracy against Western culture that starts in ancient times. Jews want to demoralize good Christian people. Freud is part of that evil plot, of course. Basically, Jews are perverts and feminism is part of this perversion. Abortion is part of this plot — Jews want to depopulate the Christian world, while pretending to defend human rights. It is rarely stated explicitly, but gay rights are of course



*Świat bez kobiet* (*World Without Women*), Graff's first book, 2001.

viewed as a Jewish invention. Judith Butler comes along at the end of a long chain of horrible Jewish feminist perverts.

It is emotionally taxing to follow this hateful obsession. I'm pursuing my question of Jewish identity and feminism and then I go to Jones and the German anti-gender expert Gabrielle Kuby, and I find myself personally attacked. They are saying: "Look at all

those feminists, they are Jewish and it's not a coincidence. They are the enemy of Western Civilization."

There is no coincidence here. Jewishness matters to women's rights and sexual rights in fascinating ways. The link is about more than awareness of oppression in general. It is also about a long history of denial and hatred and fear. Now I understand much better the panic attack that my mother had in 2000. Of course, I put my name on my books. Yes, it is a Jewish name. We Jewish feminists have to face the intersection between antisemitism and anti-feminism. There's no way around it. ■

*Agnieszka Graff is an associate professor at the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw, and the author of four books: Świat bez kobiet* (*World without Women*, 2001); *Rykoszetem* (*Stray Bullets – Gender, Sexuality and Nation*, 2008);

*Magma* (*The Quagmire Effect*, 2010); and *Matka Feministka* (*Mother and Feminist*, 2014).

## AWARDS

# Jan Karski Promoted by the President of Poland

The Polish daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, reported on November 11 that the president of Poland, Andrzej Duda, declared a posthumous promotion of WWII hero Jan Karski to the rank of Brigadier General in the Polish Army. During World War II, Karski, a secret courier of the Polish government-in-exile in London, was smuggled out of Poland to report to British and U.S.

leaders what was happening to the Jews of Poland.

Karski, who died in 2000, has received many awards, including the Righteous Among The Nations (Yad Vashem, 1982); the Order of the White Eagle (Republic of Poland, 1989); and the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom (United States, 2012). ■

**Julian and Fay Bussgang**  
Co-editors, *Gazeta*



# Professor Moshe Rosman Awarded PhD *honoris causa* at the University of Wrocław

Professor Moshe Rosman (Bar-Ilan University) was awarded a PhD *honoris causa* at the University of Wrocław in a special ceremony on November 15, 2016.

“Professor Moshe Rosman is currently one of the most remarkable living Israeli historians and undoubtedly the greatest living authority in the field of the history of Polish Jews,” said Professor



Prof. Marcin Wodziński awards diploma to Prof. Moshe Rosman, left.

Marcin Cieński, Dean of the Polish Philology Faculty. “His research made the history of Polish Jews part of the world’s debate on

**Agnieszka Ilwicka**  
*Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture*

Jewish historiography. He served as an advisor for the POLIN Museum. He is a friend of Poland, Wrocław, and the University of Wrocław.”

The diploma was awarded by Prof. Marcin Wodziński, Chair of the university’s Jewish Studies Department. ■

# Professor Ewa Geller Receives YIVO's Karski Award

YIVO's 2016 Jan Karski and Pola Nirenska Award was presented to Professor Ewa Geller of the University of Warsaw at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw on October 20, 2016.

Professor Ewa Geller earned her PhD in 1988 with her dissertation on Polish and East Slavic influences in Yiddish on the basis of I.B. Singer's works. Her post-doctoral work was on Warsaw Yiddish, published as *Warschauer Jiddisch*, Tübingen, 2002. Her works in Yiddish studies also include Ludwik Zamenhof's manual of Yiddish grammar and a 17th-century health handbook in Yiddish, which Prof. Geller found in Vienna and translated into Polish.

Endowed by Professor Jan Karski at YIVO in 1992, the Jan Karski and Pola Nirenska Award is awarded annually to authors of



Prof. Ewa Geller

published works documenting Polish-Jewish relations and Jewish contributions to Polish culture. ■

[www.yivo.org/jan-karski-and-pola-nirenska-award](http://www.yivo.org/jan-karski-and-pola-nirenska-award)

## Polityka Book Awards

**Agnieszka Ilwicka**

*Taube Foundation for Jewish Life  
& Culture*



Adam Sitarek

The award ceremony for books on Polish history published in 2015 was held at the offices of *Polityka* weekly magazine on May 10, 2016. It is the first award in Poland, initiated in 1959, to recognize publications related to the recent history of Poland.

Of the four prizes awarded this year, two were to works in the field of Jewish studies in Poland.

In the category of “author debut works,” the jury selected historian Adam Sitarek’s *Otoczone drutem państwo. Struktura i funkcjonowanie administracji żydowskiej getta łódzkiego* (*The Country*



Karolina Szymaniak

*Surrounded by the Fence. The Structure and Function of the Jewish Administration in the Łódź Ghetto*). The book describes how the Jews who were restricted to the 1.5-square-mile area of the ghetto oversaw 160,000 people from Łódź and neighboring towns.

In the category of “primary source material,” *Polityka* selected Yiddishist Karolina Szymaniak for her translation of Rachela Auerbach’s *Pisma z getta warszawskiego* (*Writings from the Warsaw Ghetto*). Rachela Auerbach was one of the three survivors from the Ringelblum Oyneg Shabbes group. *Pisma z getta*

*warszawskiego* is the first complete critical edition of her famous diary. This is the second time Karolina Szymaniak has received a *Polityka* award. ■

[www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/historia/1659852,1,nagrody-historyczne-2016.read](http://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/historia/1659852,1,nagrody-historyczne-2016.read)



## AJS 2016 Cashmere and Innovative Scholarship Award Winners

The Association for Jewish Studies Women's Caucus is delighted to announce the Cashmere Subvention Grant in Jewish Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies has been awarded to Dr. Natalia Aleksion and Dr. Elissa Bemporad for their forthcoming volume, *Gender and Jewish Women in Central and Eastern Europe*.

The AJS Women's Caucus congratulated this year's



Dr. Elissa Bemporad

winner during the annual Women's Caucus breakfast on December 19, 2016, in San Diego. ■

### Agnieszka Ilwicka

*Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture*



Dr. Natalia Aleksion

[www.ajswc.org](http://www.ajswc.org)

## Zygmunt Gloger Merit Medal for Krzysztof Czyżewski

Congratulations to Krzysztof Czyżewski, who received first prize of the 25th Zygmunt Gloger Medal for his lifetime achievements at the Borderland Center of the Arts, Cultures, and Nations (Pogranicze). Since 1996, the press association *Stopka* has awarded the Zygmunt Gloger Medal to researchers, social

activists, and activists who promote Polish culture. ■

[bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/1,35241,20839064,-male-centrum-swiata-jest-goscinnie-gloger-dla-krzysztofa-czyzewskiego.html](http://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/1,35241,20839064,-male-centrum-swiata-jest-goscinnie-gloger-dla-krzysztofa-czyzewskiego.html)



Krzysztof Czyżewski

# Taube Foundation receives Kraków Patron of Culture Award

We are honored that the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture was awarded the 20th annual Kraków Patron of Culture Award, specifically the highest level of the award in the donor category, which is titled “Golden Donor Statue.”

The official award ceremony took place on November 14, 2016 at Kraków City Hall. Helise Lieberman, director of the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland, accepted the award on the Foundation’s behalf.

The Galicia Jewish Museum (GJM), in Kraków, nominated the Taube Foundation in recognition of its decade-long support of Kraków’s nonprofit sector, including the GJM, Jewish Culture Festival, JCC Kraków, and Jagiellonian University, among others, as well as the establishment of the San Francisco-Kraków Sister Cities relationship. The review committee, consisting of representatives of the Mayor of Kraków, the Kraków City Council Chair and Members,



L to R: Bogusław Kosmider, Chairman, Kraków City Council; Helise Lieberman, Director, Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland; Jacek Majchrowski, Mayor of Kraków

previous awardees, and others, was unanimous in its selection of the Taube Foundation.

Mayor of Kraków Jacek Majchrowski said of the awardees: “For many years, we have been observing the development of Kraków’s artistic life. Renowned festivals have become permanent fixtures and new events have been quickly gaining publicity and recognition. It is hard to imagine an individual organizer carrying the financial burden required to realize a good idea. It would be impossible without

the participation and valuable contributions of partners and sponsors – patrons of culture.”

Tad Taube, Chairman of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, said of the award: “It is particularly meaningful to be recognized in the city of my birth and where my maternal family lived for centuries, and to be recognized for my foundation’s support of the revitalization of Jewish life and culture, which is an integral part of the identity of the City.” ■

## NEWS AND EVENTS

# Poland's First Woman Rabbi

**Krzysztof Bielawski**

*Virtual Shtetl portal specialist*

*Translated by Maayan Stanton*

**M**ałgorzata Kordowicz is the first Polish woman to take the title of Rabbi after receiving *smicha* (ordination). Rabbi Kordowicz is also the first woman from Poland to study at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York. She was ordained with the title of Rabbi following her studies at this seminary of conservative Judaism. Her *smicha* was held on May 17, 2016.

Małgorzata Kordowicz is a member of the Warsaw Jewish Community where she was previously involved in education, including creating the guides *Prayers for Children* and *Sfatenu*.

Regarding her future, Rabbi Kordowicz said, "I will most likely return to Poland to serve the community." ■



Rabbi Małgorzata Kordowicz is the second from right in the front row.  
Photo: Jewish Theological Seminary

*Excerpted from an article on Virtual Shtetl, translated and reprinted here with permission.*

[www.sztetl.org.pl/pl/cms/aktua/Inosci/5200.polka-z-tytulem-rabina/](http://www.sztetl.org.pl/pl/cms/aktua/Inosci/5200.polka-z-tytulem-rabina/)

# Man Sentenced to Prison for Burning Effigy of a Jew

**Julian and Fay Bussgang**  
*Co-editors, Gazeta*

On November 21, 2016, Channel TVN 24 and Radio Poland in Wrocław reported that the local court had sentenced a man named Piotr Rybak to 10 months in prison without suspension for having burned the effigy of a Jew, unmistakable since it had side curls, on the Wrocław Market Square in 2015. The effigy was holding in its hand a European Union flag, which was also soaked in gasoline and burned. The incident took place during a demonstration against Poland's allowing immigrants from war-torn countries to enter its borders. Europe has been experiencing a large influx of refugees from Islamic countries.

Before the court case began, Rybak reportedly denied that the burning was an expression of hatred toward the Jewish people, and defended himself by claiming that burning an effigy was not the same as burning an actual person.

The head of the local Jewish Social-Cultural Association, Artur Hofman, commented

that burning a symbolic Jewish effigy was reminiscent of Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass, November 9, 1938), when the Nazis burned Jewish synagogues and businesses and committed acts of extreme brutality toward the Jews of Germany and Austria.

The prosecutor had asked that the man be penalized by having to carry out some prescribed community service activities during a period of 10 months. However, after hearing the case, Judge Marek Górny ruled that the penalty should be more severe, because although the act may have seemed inconsequential to the accused, it inflicted great damage to the community and its reputation.

Attending the court session were both representatives of the Jewish community and supporters of Mr. Rybak. Some of the latter objected during the proceedings and were removed from the courthouse.

Wrocław had recently been

named the European Capital of Culture (ESK). Significantly, on November 20, 2016, a number of the local ESK leaders of the city of Wrocław issued a statement, addressed to the prime minister, the minister of culture, the minister of internal affairs and the administrative office of the prime minister, with a severe condemnation of the burning of the effigy. The ending quote of their letter states that those who engaged in the offensive act are just a few radical nationalists “who do not represent Wrocław, or God, or Honor, or Our Fatherland.” ■

Sources:

[www.tvn24.pl/wroclaw,44/wroclaw-10-miesiocy-wiezienia-za-spalenie-kukly-zyda,693635.html](http://www.tvn24.pl/wroclaw,44/wroclaw-10-miesiocy-wiezienia-za-spalenie-kukly-zyda,693635.html)

[www.rmf24.pl/fakty/polska/news-pojdzie-za-kratki-za-spalenie-kukly-zyda,nld,2309518](http://www.rmf24.pl/fakty/polska/news-pojdzie-za-kratki-za-spalenie-kukly-zyda,nld,2309518)

[www.tvn24.pl/wroclaw,44/przedstawiciele-kultury-pisza-list-po-antyimigranckim-protescie,596437.html](http://www.tvn24.pl/wroclaw,44/przedstawiciele-kultury-pisza-list-po-antyimigranckim-protescie,596437.html)



## CONFERENCE REPORTS

# Bet Debora Conference, Wrocław, September 1-4, 2016

**Agnieszka Ilwicka**

*Taube Foundation for Jewish Life  
& Culture*

On September 1-4, 2016, the 8th International Bet Debora Conference of European Jewish Women, Activists, Academics, and Rabbis took place in Wrocław, with the theme “Creating Alternatives for Jewish Women in Europe.” The conference was organized by The Bente Kahan Foundation (Wrocław), The Jewish Association Czulent (Kraków), and Bet Debora (Berlin), and was hosted by the White Stork Synagogue. Among the guest speakers were Edyta Gawron (Jagiellonian University, Kraków); Małgorzata Stolarska-Fronia (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń); Rabbi Tanya Ury (Kraków); Anna Chipczyńska (Warsaw Jewish Community); Agnieszka Graff, author; Bożena Keff, author; Alina Marincean (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj Napoca, Romania); Rabbi Barbara Borts; Gail Reimer (Jewish Women’s Archive, Boston); Eleonore Lappin-Eppel (IKT – Institute of Culture Studies and



Theatre History, Vienna); Gabriela von Seltmann, artist (Kraków); and many others.

The panels included: “Jewish Women in Breslau/Wrocław”; “Polish Jewish Women and Leadership: Then and Now”; “New Roles and Spaces

for Women in Judaism”; “Religion, Feminism, Politics — New Roles, New Contributions”; and “Jewish Women Growing up under Communist Rule.” ■

[www.bet-debora.net/  
activities/8th-conference/](http://www.bet-debora.net/activities/8th-conference/)



# Great Figures from Łódź: Yitzhak Katzenelson September 25, 2016

On September 25, 2016, a large audience attended an all-day session at the Museum of the City of Łódź. The academic panel was dedicated to the life, art, and literary reception of Łódź resident Yitzhak Katzenelson, a poet born in 1885 in Karelitz, near Minsk, Belorussia, and murdered in 1944 at Auschwitz. The keynote speakers at this event were Jagiellonian University lecturers Magdalena Sitarz and Andrzej Pawelec, who discussed the various translations of the poet's famous "Song of the Murdered Jewish People" (*"Dos lid fun oysgehargetn yidishn folk"*). Anna Łagodzińska, Museum of the City of Łódź, Department of Education and Outreach, led a tour following Katzenelson's footsteps in Łódź, and Moshe Shner from Israel gave a lecture prior to the conference on "The City of Łódź and the Ghetto Fighters Kibbutz, a Galilee Community of

Life and Commemoration in Israel – the line that connects two homes of one Jewish family." During the following conference days, scholars Moshe Shner, Andrzej Pawelec, Rafał Szrajber, Anna Łagodzińska, Dariusz Dekiert, Tomasz Majtczak, Karolina Koprowska, and Magdalena Sitarz debated the reception of Katzenelson. The scholars discussed his friendship with Moyshe Broderzon and collaboration with the unique art group Yung Yiddish and the Jewish theater scene in Łódź, as well as his representation of Jewish writers and journalists in the Workers League.

The "Great Figures from Łódź" project has also featured: Jan Karski, Marek Edelman and Alina Margolis, Izrael Poznański, Julian Tuwim, Jerzy Kosiński, Karl Dedecius, Władysław Reymont, Aleksander Tansman, and Artur Rubinstein. ■

**Agnieszka Ilwicka**

*Taube Foundation for Jewish Life  
& Culture*



Moshe Shner; Photo: Tomasz Ogródowczyk

[muzeum-lodz.pl/pl/muzeum/archiwum-wiadomosci/1258-sesja-qwielcy-odzianie-jicchok-kacnelsonq](http://muzeum-lodz.pl/pl/muzeum/archiwum-wiadomosci/1258-sesja-qwielcy-odzianie-jicchok-kacnelsonq)

# First Joint Conference of the Polish Association for Jewish Studies (PAJS) and the Polish Association for Yiddish Studies (PAYS), Kraków, September 26-27, 2016

On September 26-27, 2016, the first Joint Conference of the Polish Association for Jewish Studies (PAJS) and the Polish Association for Yiddish Studies (PAYS), on the subject of “The Shoah in Central and Eastern Europe — New Sources, New Interpretations,” took place in Kraków, organized in collaboration with Jagiellonian University. The conference was opened by President of PAJS Michał Galas, President of PAYS Magdalena Ruta, Vice Director of Jagiellonian University Jewish Studies Marek Tuszewicki, and Polish Center for Holocaust Research (Warsaw) historian Alina Skibińska.

The first panel, led by Antony Polonsky (Chief Historian, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews) was dedicated to the dilemmas of editors and translators of sources related to Shoah research, with Magdalena Ruta, Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow, and Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska contributing. Leszek Hońdo

then led the first session on “New Sources and New Readings.” Participants Monika Szabłowska Zaremba, Magdalena Tarnowska, and Anna Kuligowska-Korzeniowska presented papers on photography as media of the war, the art of Tadeusz Bornstein (1919-1942), and an essay by Tymon Terlecki, respectively. Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska led the second session, during which Jacek Proszczyk, Leszek Hońdo, Alicja Jarkowska-Natkaniec, and Karolina Panz presented their research on Holocaust topics. On the second day of the conference, Anna Kuligowska-Korzeniowska chaired the first session on institutions and projects, during which Ewa Wiatr discussed the *Łódź Ghetto Encyclopaedia*. Agnieszka Żółkiewska discussed the problems and opportunities in publishing material from the time of the Holocaust based on a case study of books already published by the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute. Piotr Setkiewicz presented research on the first

## Agnieszka Ilwicka

*Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture*

Jews in Auschwitz. Magdalena Sitarz chaired the second session, in which Aleksandra Przeździecka-Kujałowicz addressed POLIN’s collection of Shoah artifacts, and Moshe Shner spoke about the concept of “community of commemoration.” Edyta Gawron shared final comments and reflections. ■

## 48th Conference of the Association of Jewish Studies, San Diego, December 18-20

During the recent AJS annual conference, a panel session entitled “Representations of Poles in Modern Jewish Literatures” explored how Jewish literary representations of Poles often exceed their role as the “Threatening Other,” and instead reflect an ongoing tension among Jewish authors to understand themselves as a part of and apart from their geopolitical contexts.

While the image of the Pole as the savage “goy” and consummate antisemite is a familiar trope in modern Jewish literature, the four panelists examined representations of Poles that express not only the complex history of Polish-Jewish relations since the mid-19th century, but also challenge the idea that “Polish” and “Jewish” are stable or discrete categories of identity that exist in opposition to each other.

In his paper on Yiddish writers and the question of

acculturation into Polish society at the turn of the 20th century, historian Gil Ribak (University of Arizona) argued that shifts in the representations of Poles in the work of both Sholem Asch and Itshe Meyer Vaysenberg reflect what might be termed “dissimilation”: after advocating for Jewish integration and acculturation, these figures became ambivalent about the feasibility of Polish society accepting Jews as equals. Meanwhile, historian Karen Auerbach (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) examined literary representations of secondhand bookstores, which served as crucial contact zones for Poles and Jews before WWII—spaces in which the boundaries between Polish and Jewish cultures and identifications were blurred at the same time that they were sites in which antisemitic actions and rhetoric became most visible. Literary scholar Karolina Szymaniak (Wrocław University) further

complicated the idea of Poles and Jews as discrete categories of identity by examining the fierce interwar period debates between the competing factions of Polish Jewish writers who worked within, between, across, and against the various linguistic and ideological boundaries represented by the Polish-language literary paper *Wiadomości literackie* and its Yiddish counterpart, *Literarische bleter*. Finally, American literary scholar Denise Grollmus compared representations of Poles in second- and third-generation American and Israeli fiction that challenge inherited images of Poland and Poles and use the complex history of Polish-Jewish relations in order to think through contemporary issues of coexistence and Jewish identity beyond Poland. ■

Karen Underhill (University of Illinois at Chicago) chaired the panel, organized by the Polish Jewish Studies Workshop (PJSW).

[www.ajsnet.org/conference-menu-2016.htm](http://www.ajsnet.org/conference-menu-2016.htm)

## CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

# Generations and Genealogies: 4th Annual Polish Jewish Studies Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, April 2-4, 2017

The 2017 Polish Jewish Studies Workshop (PJSW), to be held April 2-4, 2017 in Ann Arbor, will explore key developments and new directions in the field of Polish Jewish studies, focusing on changing approaches to Polish Jewish culture, scholarship, and identity under the rubric of “Generations and Genealogies.” Panelists will address:

How does the **concept of generation** figure in understanding and interpreting Polish Jewish life as well as Polish Jewish relations? Is it a useful concept to make sense of social change, historical ruptures, and continuities? What does it allow us to uncover, what does it conceal?

Are there distinct **generations of scholarship** in Polish Jewish studies, or more or less coherent traceable genealogies?

Are there distinct **generational identities**

**for Polish Jews?** Are the experiences of Polish Jewishness and Jewish Polishness different for 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century Polish Jews and for various post-WWI generations?

### **Generations of narrative:**

How have Polish Jewish narratives, both communal and literary, and Polish narratives about Jews, changed across generations? How are the narrations of prewar, occupied, and postwar periods in Poland different in the writings of different generations of non-Jewish Poles/Polish Jews/diaspora Polish Jews?

Are there distinct **generations of memory**, or more or less identifiable **genealogies of mnemonic cultures**? Do the public and private have different ways to remember the Jewish presence in Poland?

How does the experience of March 1968 for Polish Jews and non-Jewish Poles differ?

Where does it fit in the Polish national narrative, and what is its place in the broader context of the 1968 upheavals? How is the legacy of the **'68 generation** felt and assessed today in various Polish and Diaspora milieu?

### **Generational attitudes towards Polish Jewish culture:**

How have the relationships with certain elements of Polish Jewish culture, and their representation in literature, film and scholarship, changed over time? ■

Confirmed speakers include Bożena Keff, Adam Michnik, Antony Polonsky, and Agata Tuszyńska.

**Organizer:** Geneviève Zubrzycki

**Advisory Committee:** Irena Grudzińska-Gross, Jessie Labov, Karen Underhill

[lsa.umich.edu/slavic/news-events/all-events.detail.html/34440-4926123.html](http://lsa.umich.edu/slavic/news-events/all-events.detail.html/34440-4926123.html)

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

# Global Education Outreach Program (GEOP) Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Fellowships

**P**OLIN Museum's Global Educational Outreach Program, supported by the William K. Bowes, Jr. Foundation, the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland, is offering up to 6 doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships for from three to five consecutive months in residence at POLIN Museum and the Jewish Historical Institute (ŻIH). The fellowship stipend is \$2,000 per month.

The goal is to support scholarship on Jewish history and culture in the territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its successor states and to develop a new cohort of scholarly experts in this field. Fellows will draw on POLIN Museum's Core Exhibition, Resource Center, library, and collection and on its expert staff. They will also have access to the archive, library, and collection of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, as

well as to libraries, archives, academic institutions, and research centers in Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, and elsewhere in Poland.

The Museum will offer assistance in finding housing in Warsaw.

### Requirements

Candidates must have at least a passing knowledge of Polish and a working knowledge of English. Applicants from any discipline related to the history and culture of Polish Jews are eligible to apply. Applicants from doctoral programs from the United States and Canada should be ABD. Those from Europe, Israel, and other countries should be within two years of completing their PhD. Post-doctoral candidates must have completed a PhD within the past five years.

### Application Process

Applicants should submit their curriculum vitae (no longer than 4 pages), a detailed statement of current research, including work plans during the fellowship

(up to 2000 words), and one writing sample (no more than 25 pages). Applications should be submitted in English and in PDF format to [geopfellowships@polin.pl](mailto:geopfellowships@polin.pl).

Two letters of recommendation should be submitted directly by recommenders in English by email to [geopfellowships@polin.pl](mailto:geopfellowships@polin.pl).

**Deadline for the applications and letters of recommendation:  
Jan. 31, 2017.**

- **Decisions will be announced in March 2017.**
- **Fellowships may start as early as September 2017, and should be completed no later than August 2018.**
- **For more information, please email:** [geopfellowships@polin.pl](mailto:geopfellowships@polin.pl) **or go to:** [polin.pl/en/research-collections-research-global-education-outreach-program/polin-research-fellowships-for-doctoral-and-postdoctoral](http://polin.pl/en/research-collections-research-global-education-outreach-program/polin-research-fellowships-for-doctoral-and-postdoctoral)



# 15th International Summer Seminar in Yiddish Language and Culture in Warsaw July 3-21, 2017

The Summer Seminar in Yiddish Language and Culture in Warsaw is a continuation of the International Summer Seminar in Yiddish in Śródborów, established by the Shalom Foundation in 2002. Students of all backgrounds are invited to explore the Yiddish culture of Warsaw with native Yiddish speakers from Poland and teachers from all over the world.

The program offers 60 hours of language instruction, 10 hours of afternoon language tutorial for beginners, and speaking classes for advanced students. Participants are invited to attend a wide range of cultural events, lectures, and workshops, and to visit the Jewish cemetery, the Jewish quarter of Praga, and the remains of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Financial aid is available. Preference will be given to students from Central and Eastern Europe, but other students are also encouraged to apply. ■



Yiddish Culinary Workshop

For more information please contact [zumerkurs@shalom.org.pl](mailto:zumerkurs@shalom.org.pl) or [jidyszland.pl/en/edukacja/](http://jidyszland.pl/en/edukacja/)

# A Journey through the Yiddishlands - AHEYM in Poyln

**Agnieszka Ilwicka**

*Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture*

During their first journey through Poland from May 14-29, 2016, the project team for AHEYM (Archives of Historical and Ethnographic Yiddish Memories) visited and recorded 12 Yiddish native speakers in such locations as Warsaw, Wrocław, Łódź, Kraków, Częstochowa, and Lublin. AHEYM is based at Indiana University, Bloomington.

Since 2002, AHEYM has explored Jewish life in Eastern Europe before, during, and after World War II. The archive consists of nearly 400 interviews, conducted primarily in Yiddish and mostly in small towns throughout Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia.

In 2015 Prof. Dov Ber Kerler, Chair of Yiddish Studies at Indiana University, met with student Agnieszka Ilwicka during the Yiddish summer program in Vilnius regarding the enrichment of the collection of the Polish



Prof. Dov Ber Kerler, Indiana University, and Agnieszka Ilwicka in Góra Kalwaria.  
Photo: Pawel Figurski

native speakers of the Yiddish language. After almost a year of preparation and with the help of TSKŻ - Social and Cultural Association of the Jews in Poland, Marek Tuszewicki, Vice-Director of Jewish Studies at Jagiellonian University, and Agata Rybicka, lecturer in the Jewish Studies at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University of Lublin, Ber Kerler and Ilwicka connected with Yiddish speakers across Poland.

The first interview was conducted by Ber Kerler and

Ilwicka with Henryk (Avrom) Prajs, who was born in Góra Kalwaria in 1916, the year Sholem Aleichem passed away in New York. He found it difficult to explain what exactly helped him stay alive all those years, and referred to himself as a “simple Jew,” a “Sholem Aleichem type of Jew,” or *folksmench*. The interview took place in May 2016, in his native Ger, just a few months before his 100th birthday.

In Wrocław, Ilwicka and Ber Kerler interviewed Henryk Robak, a former student of

historian Emanuel Ringelblum, Szymon Tenenbaum z”1, and Tenenbaum’s wife Dwora. In the nearby town in Bielawa, they met with Raja Połoniecka, who shared stories about Jewish life in Lower Silesia after the war. In the local division of TSKŻ in Częstochowa, they met Halina Wasilewicz, and from there interviewed Emanuel Elbinger at the JCC Kraków and Roman Litwin in Lublin. In Łódź, a city which, before the war, was a vibrant, Yiddish-speaking community, they were greeted by a Yiddish-speaking couple, Liliana and Jankiel Mitelman. Liliana works as a Yiddish teacher in the Jewish community in Łódź and she has organized a Yiddish language program since the ’90s.

The diversity of the Yiddish speakers in Warsaw is reflected in the various interviewees: Eugenia Bergner, former editor of the *Folks Shtime*; Marian Majerowicz, originally from Myszków, a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau; Marian



Halina Wasilewicz and Prof. Dov Ber Kerler in TSKŻ, Częstochowa. Photo: Paweł Figurski.



Eugenia Bergner in her apartment in Warsaw and Prof. Dov Ber Kerler. Photo: Paweł Figurski



Józef Hen in his Warsaw apartment and Prof. Dov Ber Kerler. Photo: Paweł Figurski



Turski, historian, journalist, and Chair of the POLIN Museum Council; Bella Szwarcman-Czarnota, Yiddish translator, writer, and feminist; and Józef Hen, a writer who studied Yiddish at school before the war.

Photographer and videographer Paweł Figurski, who has cooperated with AHEYM for many years, accompanied the interviewers. The photographs and videos from the interviews were on display in June 2016 in Wrocław as an exhibit entitled, “A Journey through the Polish Yiddishlands,” during the opening of the “Cultural Capital of Europe Wrocław” ceremonies, as a part of the “Floating Boat of Memory” project, curated by Agnieszka Ilwicka. ■

For video clips, stories, and analyses of some of the collection highlights, view the collection (searchable by person, location, or subject) on the project’s website: <http://www.iub.edu/~aheym/>



Szymon z"l and Dwora Tenenbaum in their apartment in Wrocław. Photo: Paweł Figurski



Prof. Dov Ber Kerler, Agnieszka Ilwicka, and Bella Szwarcman-Czarnota in Plac Grzybowski, Warsaw. Photo: Paweł Figurski



Henryk Prajs in his house in Góra Kalwaria and Agnieszka Ilwicka. Photo: Paweł Figurski

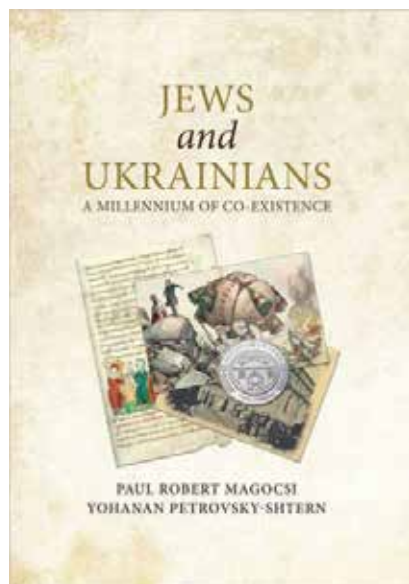
# *Jews and Ukrainians: A Millennium of Co-Existence*

Paul Robert Magocsi and Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern  
University of Toronto Press

In November 2016, the University of Toronto Press released *Jews and Ukrainians: A Millennium of Co-Existence* by Paul Robert Magocsi (University of Toronto) and Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern (Northwestern University). *The publisher's description follows:*

There is much that ordinary Ukrainians do not know about Jews and that ordinary Jews do not know about Ukrainians. As a result, those Jews and Ukrainians who may care about their respective ancestral heritages usually view each other through distorted stereotypes, misperceptions, and biases. This book sheds new light on highly controversial moments of Ukrainian-Jewish relations and argues that the historical experience in Ukraine not only divided ethnic Ukrainians and Jews but also brought them together.

The story of *Jews and Ukrainians* is presented in



an impartial manner through twelve thematic chapters. Among the themes discussed are geography, history, economic life, traditional culture, religion, language and publications, literature and theater, architecture and art, music, the diaspora, and contemporary Ukraine. The book's easy-to-read narrative is enhanced by 335 full-color illustrations, 29 maps, and several text inserts that explain specific phenomena or address controversial issues. *Jews and Ukrainians* provides a wealth of information for

anyone interested in learning more about the fascinating land of Ukraine and two of its most historically significant peoples. ■

[www.utppublishing.com/Jews-and-Ukrainians-A-Millennium-of-Co-Existence.html](http://www.utppublishing.com/Jews-and-Ukrainians-A-Millennium-of-Co-Existence.html)



# *Auschwitz after Auschwitz*

Dr. Tomasz Cebulski

Wydawnictwo Libron, Kraków 2016



*In this article, Dr. Cebulski discusses his new book: Auschwitz after Auschwitz.*

**W**hat is Auschwitz today? The territory of the former concentration camp has become a site of documentation and research, providing evidence and education for future generations. The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, established in 1947, has developed a history of the site. At the same time, however, a whole range of texts, interpretations, and meanings of the history of the former

camp have been created. Some are complementary; others, especially those politically motivated, stand in opposition to one another. During the last 30 years we have seen a process of globalization of the memory of Auschwitz, which often leads to a clash of opposing historical narratives and instrumental and selective treatments of history. In many cases, the layers of interpretation may engender a secondary memory that does not correspond with the fading primary one, and this may ultimately lead to the complete transformation or obliteration of history. At the same time, Auschwitz is a place dominated by political disputes about the shape of various national memories, transformed and more and more often violated by mass tourism.

Today, for a better understanding of the complexity of what Auschwitz was and of the contemporary work of the museum, it is necessary to deconstruct these meanings and

the events evoking them. In previous decades, when people spoke about the site, they often displayed emotional reactions typical of mourning. Visitors and political leaders posed questions about the meaning of the site in the history of humanity. We could perceive an attempt to alienate the experience of Auschwitz as an inhuman event, incomprehensible and, in its vastness, impossible to explore and understand. The history of the camp was interpreted as a kind of aberration or even a denial of the natural development of civilization. During this long period of mourning, the history and memory of Auschwitz were defined by the emotions connected with loss. Consequently, by becoming partially unreal, they became objects of political manipulation embellished with new meanings.

In the period of transition from the living memory to the secondary one, the amorphous and paralyzing Auschwitz is being gradually redefined through rigorous new research and interdisciplinary

approaches. Under the pressure of facts and comparisons, the interpretive path of the period of mourning, defining Auschwitz as unique and unprecedented, reflecting a politicizing process and leading to the appropriation of memory, may prove to be inaccurate. Knowledge based on facts that are verified and free of ideological interpretations is the safeguard against the manipulation of history.

Those facts need to be completed and complemented with the testimony of the survivors. In addition, the museum should initiate comparative studies or an exhibition on the sources and consequences of the world's genocides. It is necessary to situate the history of Auschwitz strongly in the history of mankind, to realize that it was an experience that under certain conditions could occur again. Such an extended point of view would not depreciate the experiences of the victims of Auschwitz. On the contrary, by advancing our reflection on

*Advancing the need to prevent genocide in the world would give a deeper educational meaning to Holocaust survivors' sacrifice.*

the need to prevent genocide in the world, it would give a deeper educational meaning to their sacrifice. Such action would accord with the document establishing the International Center for Education on Auschwitz and the Holocaust in 2005, described as the testament of the former prisoners. In the words of Primo Levi, "You have to listen to us. Above all, and regardless of our personal experience, we collectively experienced a fundamental and unexpected event, fundamental precisely because of being unexpected, unforeseen by anyone. It happened, so it can happen again. This is the essence of what we have to say. It can happen and it can happen anywhere." ■

[libron.pl/katalog/czytaj/id/217](http://libron.pl/katalog/czytaj/id/217)

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[www.jewish-guide.pl](http://www.jewish-guide.pl)

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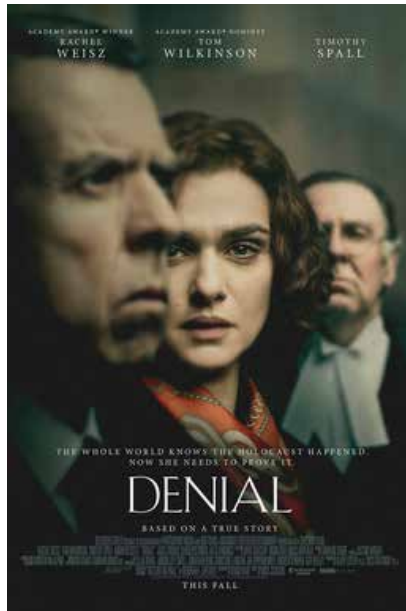
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## FILM REVIEWS

# Denial, Hatred, and a Dedication to Truth

*Denial* is an astonishingly accurate film reenactment of the famous 2001 court case Irving vs. Penguin Books Ltd. In this case, renowned historian Deborah Lipstadt stood trial against David Irving, an infamous Holocaust denier. After Lipstadt called Irving a Holocaust denier, falsifier, and bigot in her book *Denying the Holocaust*, Irving accused Lipstadt of libel. This case came to fruition due to the British legal system, which requires those accused of libel to prove their innocence—the opposite of the legal system in the United States. The movie portrays the struggles, and eventual triumphs of Lipstadt and her legal team in their battle against pure hate.

As a Jew with grandparents who are Holocaust survivors, I have an inherent emotional connection to this case—and in turn, this film, which I saw at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s premiere screening. Following the



film, there was a discussion with Deborah Lipstadt and the producers Russ Krasnoff and Gary Foster. The sheer amount of historical detail incorporated by the filmmakers was astounding. The producers pointed out a perfect example of this meticulousness during the question-and-answer session: the head of Lipstadt’s legal team, Richard Rampton (Tom Wilkinson), never made eye contact while addressing Irving (Timothy Spall). A factual detail so easy to

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*Moment Magazine*

abandon would never make it into the screenplay of a generic blockbuster hit.

“Deborah said, ‘I’m about to sign this paper giving you these rights. You need to promise me one thing: the truth,’” Russ Krasnoff, one of the producers, explains. “It was our mantra.” In other words, a painstaking dedication to portraying the truth was one of the *Denial* team’s core values. The producers explained that this pursuit even extended to having Lipstadt on the set, in order to make sure everything was accurate from her point of view.

The film’s realism was bolstered by outstanding performances from Rachel Weisz (Deborah Lipstadt) and Timothy Spall (David Irving), who flawlessly portrayed opposing forces in what might be their best roles to date. The support and fondness I felt for Lipstadt also extended to Weisz, who was able to

transform expertly into the historian over the course of the film's nearly two-hour runtime. Timothy Spall has always been excellent at playing fictional villains; his transition from fictional evil to real-world evil was seamless.

Where the illusion of realism that drives this film was somewhat shattered was with actors Tom Wilkinson and Andrew Scott, whose performances sometimes felt unnatural. There were also occasional shots that either lingered too long, or placed emphasis on subjects that should not have been emphasized, which was a bit jarring for me.

But what I enjoyed most about *Denial*, aside from its potent accuracy, was its timelessness. "It's not just about Holocaust denial," says Lipstadt. "It's vaccines. It's the environment. It's Sandy Hook in Connecticut, where kids were murdered."

***Denial's purpose surpasses entertainment.***

***This movie should be used as a tool, a weapon in the fight against hate.***

Producer Gary Foster explains this best: "If we can spark and inspire conversation—and get people to say, 'Hey, there's a difference between opinion and fact'—then we have done good." ■

*This article originally appeared on Moment Magazine's website. Moment Magazine is an independent bimonthly of politics, culture, and religion, co-founded by Nobel Prize laureate Elie Wiesel. For more, go to [momentmag.com](http://momentmag.com)*



# Wołyń

Directed by Wojciech Smarzowski

Wojciech Smarzowski, Polish screenwriter and director, started his film career as a video camera operator. In 2004, he made his directorial debut with the comedy *The Wedding*, loosely related to Stanisław Wyspiański's play of the same title. In 2011 he directed the film *Rose*, which depicts the love story between a Masurian woman and a Polish officer in postwar Poland in the shadow of the humiliating nationality verification procedure.

In 2016 Smarzowski's *Wołyń* was released, based on a story by Stanisław Srokowski entitled *Hate. The stories from the borderlands*. This film incited a large public debate regarding Polish and Ukrainian memory of the mass killing in the course of an attempted ethnic cleansing of the Polish population in Volhynia during World War II.

Wołyń (Volhynia, Volynia, or Volyn) is the name of the historic region in Central



Michalina Łabacz as Zosia Głowacka in *Wołyń*

and Eastern Europe that straddled Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus. It was dominated by Ukrainians, and it has been a part of independent Ukraine since 1991. During World War II, once Volhynia was annexed under the Nazi German occupation, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) carried out an ethnic cleansing operation from the beginning of March 1943 until the end of 1944. This period is known in Polish as *rzeź wołyńska*, or "Volhynian slaughter," due to the massacres of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia. The exact number of murdered Poles is unknown, but Polish

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historians estimated that 50,000-60,000 people were killed by Ukrainians. Most victims were women and children.

In *Wołyń*, Smarzowski presents the stages of hate and the consequences of seemingly innocent acts of humiliation and lack of respect accompanied by intense dislike. The movie begins with a love story between a young Pole, Zosia Głowacka (Michalina Łabacz) and a Ukrainian boy Petro (Vasyl Vasyluk), which is ended by Zosia's father, who promised her to a rich widowed older man. The outbreak of the war changes the old order of the world in Volhynia for everyone: Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Byelorussians, Russians, Germans, and others. Smarzowski expresses the complexity of relations in the borderland by revealing one additional important motive for the slaughter of Poles. The main character, Zosia, was hiding Jews, which



Still from the film *Wołyń*

was discovered when she was trying to defend herself against a rape attempt by a local Ukrainian policeman. Zosia has no choice but to regularly serve him sexually to protect the Jews living in her home. The culmination is the massacre of Poles by Ukrainians in the summer of 1943. Some Ukrainian actors refused to take part in the film after reading the screenplay because, in their opinion, the movie propagates hate.

Ewa Siemiaszko, independent researcher and collector of

oral accounts and historical data regarding the slaughter of Poles in Volhynia, cooperating with the Institute of National Remembrance, told the Polish Press Agency that the movie presents the events accurately. She quoted witnesses of the slaughter, who said the movie is like a documentary of the events in Volhynia.<sup>1</sup> *Wołyń* received many awards and nominations in Poland

<sup>1</sup> [wpolityce.pl/historia/310937-ewa-siemiaszko-nie-nalezy-traktowac-ukraincow-protekcjonalnie-w-sprawie-rzezi-wolynskiej-lecz-jako-odpowiedzialnych-ludzi-wywiad](http://wpolityce.pl/historia/310937-ewa-siemiaszko-nie-nalezy-traktowac-ukraincow-protekcjonalnie-w-sprawie-rzezi-wolynskiej-lecz-jako-odpowiedzialnych-ludzi-wywiad)



in the last year. After more than 70 years, *Wołyń* opens with the quote from a priest, Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski: “People from the borderlands were killed twice. Once, by the blows of an ax and the second time by omission.” Smarzowski’s image of Volhynia Polish-Ukrainian relations breaks the silence and begins a much-needed discussion, which will be constructive for both sides. ■

[filmwolyn.org](http://filmwolyn.org)

*Wir sind Juden aus Breslau. Überlebende Jugendliche und ihre Schicksale nach 1933*  
(*We are Jews from Breslau. Young Survivors and their Fates after 1933*)

Directed by Karin Kaper and Dirk Szuszies

The documentary *Wir sind Juden aus Breslau. Überlebende Jugendliche und ihre Schicksale nach 1933* (*We are Jews from Breslau. Young Survivors and their Fates after 1933*) tells the history of pre-1945 Breslau from the perspective of 14 still-living survivors from the area, interviewed by young Polish and German students. The survivors, children at the time of the Holocaust, lead the students through Wrocław, telling their stories and enabling the students to view the landscape through their eyes. A few of the survivors had returned to Wrocław over the past 25 years, such as Professors Walter Laqueur, Abraham Ascher, and Fritz Stern. The film also follows some of the survivors to Germany, Israel, and the U.S.

The film is not simply a nostalgic journey; it chronicles life in and then the destruction of prewar Breslau, the creation of contemporary Wrocław,



and the need to still combat intolerance there.

The young interviewers themselves are part of the narrative, as they attempt to discover their place in an environment saturated with historical memory and sometimes conflicting identities. As one student said, “We became participants in the survivors’ lives.”

The film not only looks backwards to the transition from Breslau to Wrocław, but to the current revival of Jewish life in Wrocław, and

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the role of volunteers, often non-Jewish, in that revival. The film is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Fritz Stern, one of the interviewees, a historian who devoted his life to finding a common understanding between Jews, Poles, and Germans. In the film, Professor Stern proudly declares that he will donate his own library to the University of Wrocław, reflecting the greater message of the film: to remember and honor the past and continue to learn from it.

The film opened in Wrocław on November 6, and had its German premiere on November 12. ■

[www.judenausbreslaufilm.de](http://www.judenausbreslaufilm.de)

## OBITUARIES

# David Mitzner: April 11, 1915-September 23, 2016

David Mitzner, who died on September 23, 2016 at the age of 101, was a Holocaust survivor and philanthropist who made his fortune in real estate in New York. Born in Warsaw where his father was the owner of a factory producing sweaters, he attempted to survive without papers in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. He then succeeded with his father and brother in fleeing to Lviv in the Soviet-occupied part of Poland and became involved in smuggling scarce goods and money to his mother and two sisters in Warsaw. His mother died in Majdanek. He was arrested while crossing the frontier and sentenced to eight years in a Soviet camp in western Siberia. His father and brother died in the gulag. Released in 1948, he returned to communist-ruled Poland, from where he was able to make his way to New York. Here, with almost no initial resources, he created RIDA Development, a real estate company that became one of the largest



builders of convention hotels and mixed-use developments in the United States. In 1995 he began involvements in property development in Poland (e.g. the Warsaw Trade Tower and 28 shopping malls of the M1 in Kraków), where his company Apollo-RIDA became a major investor. His biography, *Nesim All Around Me*, was written by the well-known Polish-Jewish journalist Konstanty Gebert.

He generously supported many institutions in Israel including Yad Vashem, where he was one of the principal funders of the Warsaw Ghetto Square, and the Shaare Zedek

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Medical Center. He was also a major donor to Yeshiva University in New York, where he endowed two chairs, one in memory of his wife, Ruth, and the David Mitzner Chair for the Center of the Jewish Future.

He was active in civic, business and cultural affairs in Houston, Texas, where he established the Mitzner High School and the Mitzner Family Building of United Orthodox Synagogues.

He was also awarded an honorary doctorate by Yeshiva University and in November 2014 received the Order of Polonia Restituta in the Presidential Palace from the President of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski, for his role in the development of the business and industrial infrastructure of the country. On the occasion of this award, his son Ira, who succeeded him as President of RIDA Development and represented his father at the ceremony, said:



We are very proud of our chairman and founder for receiving this prestigious award. The honor is well deserved after the decades of effort that my father has invested in his country of birth...He is the true embodiment of the American dream who later in life decided to return to Poland to help in the rebuilding of his childhood homeland. To receive such an outstanding honor is truly a reflection of all he has accomplished in his lifetime.

His wife, Ruth, daughter of Rabbi Jacob Tuvia Buchbinder, who led the largest Orthodox synagogue in Harlem, NY, and was a renowned Torah scholar, died in 2005. He is survived by his sons Jacob and Ira, daughters-in-law Mindy and Marilyn, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. We extend to them our sincere condolences in their sad loss. ■



The Warsaw Trade Tower, the fourth-tallest building in Poland and Poland's largest office building, purchased by Mitzner's Apollo-RIDA development corporation



# Shimon Peres: August 2, 1923- September 28, 2016

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Former Israel Prime Minister Shimon Peres died on September 28 in Tel Aviv at the age of 93. The last member of Israel's founding generation to serve in public office, Peres was a complex figure who achieved the status of elder statesman at a time when most of his contemporaries and opponents had long since left the political stage. He served as Israel's Prime Minister twice and as head of its Defense Ministry, in which capacity he was a key figure in the country's acquisition of nuclear weapons. From 2008 to 2014 he held the office of President.

His most important achievement was the agreement he reached with the Palestine Liberation Organization to introduce self-government in Gaza and in part of the West Bank, both of which were then occupied by Israel. After months of secret negotiation with representatives of the P.L.O., conducted with the help of Norwegian diplomats and



intellectuals, Peres persuaded his old political rival Yitzhak Rabin, then the prime minister, to accept the plan. The resulting Oslo Accords were signed on September 13, 1993 on the South Lawn of the White House in the presence of Rabin and Yasir Arafat, the chairman of the P.L.O., who also, after some prodding from then President Bill Clinton, shook hands. The accords have not resulted in a general peace, although this has seemed on some occasions to be tantalizingly close. As a result they remain controversial.

There is no doubt, however, of Peres's deep commitment

to achieving peace with the Palestinians. On the occasion of the signing he observed: "What we are doing today is more than signing an agreement; it is a revolution. Yesterday a dream, today a commitment." To the Palestinians, he pledged, "We are sincere. We mean business. We do not seek to shape your lives or determine your destiny. Let all of us turn from bullets to ballots, from guns to shovels."

In May 1997 he was awarded an honorary doctorate at Brandeis University. I was given the responsibility of hosting him. He was somewhat depressed having lost the Israeli general election to Benjamin Netanyahu in May 1996 and having also just lost the leadership of the Israeli Labor Party. He was to be the commencement speaker and when I asked him what he intended to speak about he replied that he would discuss the role of Justice Louis Brandeis in developing the Negev. I told him that Brandeis was one of the strongholds

of the more liberal section of American Jewry and that those present, the graduating class and their parents, wanted to hear from him what had gone wrong with the peace process and what were its prospects in the future. At the event Peres gave a deeply moving speech defending what had been done and culminating in a description of the final rally where Yitzhak Rabin had been shot. He had been standing next to Rabin and both had been singing the “Peace song” when the shots that killed Rabin were fired. He took out of his pocket the blood-stained copy of the songsheet from which Rabin had been singing. “I always carry this with me to remind me of my commitment to the late Prime Minister to carry on the search for peace.” He received a standing ovation.

Peres was born in what was then known as Wiszniew, Poland (today Vishneyeva in Belarus), as Szymon Perski, and immigrated to Palestine with his family at the age

of 11. He always spoke Hebrew with a Polish accent and remained devoted to his Polish roots. He was chair of the International Honorary Committee of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which supported the initiative to found the Museum and in 2007, together with Polish President Lech Kaczyński, signed the foundation act. In his speech in the Polish parliament in April 2008, Peres observed, “The heritage of Polish Jews will influence the Jewish nation for generations. It cannot, and should not, be erased. It exists in the spiritual dimension, even if the physical Jewry was largely exterminated.” His role in the founding of the Museum was recalled by President Bronisław Komorowski during the POLIN Museum’s Grand Opening in October 2014. He quoted Peres’s words from 2002: “If I were to summarize Jewish-Polish relations throughout history, then,

without forgetting moments of bitterness and tragic downfalls, I feel gratitude for Poland. For a very long time, Poland, to Jews, was home.” As recently as March of this year, Peres wrote to Dariusz Stola, the Museum’s director: “I have been involved in the Museum’s journey since its foundation and am inspired by how it has grown and overjoyed by what it stands for today — an exemplary establishment for all.”

In the last years of his life, he restored dignity to the office of the Presidency of Israel, using this largely ceremonial office to become a conciliatory and unifying national figure. He inspired others, particularly young people, with his vision, optimism, and belief in the future. He was a great man, a great patriot, and a convinced believer that Israel would ultimately find peace with its neighbors. He will be sorely missed. ■

# Andrzej Wajda: March 6, 1926-October 9, 2016

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Andrzej Wajda, who died in Warsaw on October 9 at the age of 90, was one of the greatest film directors to emerge in the second half of the twentieth century. Not only did his films arouse widespread acclaim in Poland and abroad, but through his work he also contributed significantly to the democratization of Poland and to the negotiated end of Communism in 1989. Born in Suwałki in northeastern Poland, he was the son of a cavalry officer who was murdered by the Soviets in Kharkiv in spring 1940. Wajda himself joined the Armia Krajowa at the age of sixteen and after the war graduated from the Łódź film school.

He explored these themes in his trilogy devoted to the Polish underground, which drew on his own experiences, *Pokolenie* (*A Generation*, 1954), *Kanał* (*Channel*, 1957), and *Popiół i diament* (*Ashes and Diamonds*, 1958). The first two films, which described aspects of the



Warsaw Uprising of 1944, contributed significantly to the mood that produced the Thaw in Poland and to the return to power of Władysław Gomułka in October 1956. The most striking of these films was the third. Based on a novel by Jerzy Andrzejewski, it describes the tragic fate of Maciek, a young man caught up in the anti-communist underground in the last days of the war. In the final scene, he is shot and his body is shown sprawled on a rubbish heap as the first day of peace dawns.

Wajda attempted several times to deal with the dehumanizing character of war and to attack Polish patriotic clichés. In *Lotna* (1959) he described

how Polish cavalry attempted in 1939 to resist German tanks (such attacks are now held to be mythical) while in *Krajobraz po bitwie* (*Landscape after a battle*) he showed how difficult it was for those imprisoned in German concentration camps to come to terms with postwar reality. In his film version of Stefan Żeromski's novel *Popioły* (*Ashes*, 1965), which described the Polish participation in the Napoleonic wars, he raised critical questions about national legends, what national liberation meant, and how it could be achieved.

In his work, Wajda explored Jewish themes on a number of occasions. In his remarkable screen version of Stanisław Wyspiański's classic, *Wesele* (*The Wedding*, 1972), describing the wedding of a member of the nobility and a peasant girl, Wajda highlighted the role of the Jewish innkeeper in bringing together these two conflicted strata of Polish society. This

theme was also evident in his film version of Adam Mickiewicz's classic *Pan Tadeusz* (1999). In *Ziemia obiecana* (*Promised Land*, 1974), based on the novel by Władysław Reymont, he described the attempt of three young men, a Pole, a German and a Jew, to build together a factory in turn-of-the-century Łódź. In *Korczak* (1990), Wajda gave a moving account of the life and death of Janusz Korczak who accompanied the children of his orphanage to their deaths in Treblinka. His most penetrating account of Polish-Jewish relations is to be found in his film version of Jerzy Andrzejewski's novella *Wielki tydzień* (*Holy Week*). This drew on the tragic coincidence that Easter coincided with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943 and contrasted the Christian obligation to love one's neighbor with the failure of the Polish inhabitants of Warsaw to assist their Jewish neighbors.

Wajda contributed significantly to the ferment that led to the emergence of the Solidarity movement. *Człowiek z marmuru* (*Man of Marble*, 1977) was a striking and shocking account of the betrayal by the communist bureaucracy of a worker, eager to build socialism in the 1950s. Its successor, *Człowiek z żelaza* (*Man of Iron*, 1981) described the emergence of the Solidarity movement and its challenge to the communist regime. In his film *Danton* (1982), he describes the bitter ideological conflict between the warmly idealistic Danton and the coldly pragmatic Robespierre, who can be seen as counterparts of Lech Wałęsa and Wojciech Jaruzelski. Wajda returned to this theme towards the end of his life in his film *Wałęsa: Człowiek z nadziei* (*Wałęsa: Man of Hope*, 2012).

His film *Katyń* (2007) is a tour-de-force, describing not only the murder of 22,000 Polish officers by Soviet security forces in 1940, but

the subsequent attempts of both the Soviets and the Polish communist authorities to shift the blame for this atrocity onto Nazi Germany. His last film *Powidoki* (*Afterimage*, 2016) deals with struggles of the avant-garde painter Władysław Strzemiński.

The quality of Wajda's work was increasingly recognized outside Poland. In 1996, he was awarded the Japanese Imperial Prize and in 2000 an honorary Academy Award. He also received lifetime achievement awards from the European Film Awards in 1990 and from the film festivals in Venice in 1998 and Berlin in 2006.

Wajda was also a great moral authority. As the obituary writer in *Rzeczpospolita* put it, "He posed the questions, 'Who are we?'; 'Where did we come from?'; 'Where are we going?'" We need such authorities in Poland today. ■

# Leonard Cohen:

## September 21, 1934–November 7, 2016

Leonard Cohen was born on September 21, 1934 in Westmount—an English-speaking area of Montreal, Quebec—into a middle-class Jewish family. His mother, Marsha Klonitsky, was the daughter of a Talmudic writer, Rabbi Solomon Klonitsky-Kline of Lithuanian Jewish ancestry. His paternal grandfather, whose family had emigrated from Poland, was Lyon Cohen, founding president of the Canadian Jewish Congress. On the topic of being a *kohen* (descendant of the ancient Jewish high priests), Leonard Cohen has said, “I had a very Messianic childhood.”

Sylvie Simmons, author of *I’m Your Man: The Life of Leonard Cohen* (2013), said of his Jewish family heritage: “Leonard’s ancestors had built synagogues and founded newspapers in Canada. They had funded and presided over a lengthy list of Jewish philanthropic societies and associations.”



Photo: Leonard Cohen press photo

Sharon Robinson, a backup singer for decades with Cohen and author of the book *On Tour with Leonard Cohen* (2014), wrote, “He comes from a long line of rabbis. References to Judaism can be found throughout his work, probably in every song. There is a very deep and profound connection with his Jewish faith.”

Cohen himself said in 1974, “I’ve never disguised the fact that I’m Jewish and in any

crisis in Israel I would be there. I am committed to the survival of the Jewish people.”

Cohen will be remembered for his beautiful, poetic compositions spanning five decades in his musical career, including “Suzanne,” his first breakout song (1967), “First We Take Manhattan” (1988), “Bird on the Wire” (1973), “I’m Your Man” (1988), and his deeply spiritual “Hallelujah” (1984).



Cohen is a member of the American Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, and the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. He is also a Companion of the Order of Canada, that nation's highest civilian honor, and in 2011 he received Spain's Prince of Asturias Award for literature. ■

## HALELUYE

**Recently translated and recorded in Yiddish by Daniel Kahn from Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," with help from Michael Alpert, Mendy Cahan and Josh Waletzky**

*Geven a nign vi a sod,  
Vos Dovid hot geshpilt far Got.  
Nor dir volt's nisht geven aza  
yeshue.  
Me zingt azoy: a fa, a sol,  
A misheberekh heybt a kol,  
Der duler meylekh vebt a  
haleluye...*

*Dayn emune iz gevorn shvakh,  
Basheva bodt zikh afn dakh,  
Ir kheyne un di levone dayn*

*refue  
Zi nemt dayn guf, zi nemt dayn  
kop,  
Zi shnaydt fun dayne hor a tsop  
Un tsit fun moyl arop a  
haleluye...*

*O tayere, ikh ken dayn stil,  
Ikh bin geshlofn af dayn dil,  
Kh'hob keynmol nisht gelebt  
mit aza tsnue  
Ikh ze dayn shlos,  
ikh ze dayn fon,  
A harts iz nisht keyn meylekhs  
tron,  
S'iz a kalte un a kalye  
haleluye...*

*Oy vi amol, to zog mir oys  
Vos tut zikh dortn in dayn  
shoys?  
To vos zhe darfst zikh shemen  
vi a bsule?  
Nor gedenk vi kh'hob in dir  
gerut,  
Vi di shkhine glut in undzer  
blut,  
Un yeder otem tut a haleluye...  
Zol zayn mayn got iz gor nishto  
Un libe zol zayn kol-mumro,  
A puster troym tsebrokhn un  
mekhule,  
Nisht keyn geveyne in mitn*

*nakht,  
Nisht keyn bal-tshuve  
oyfgevakht,  
Nor an elnte kol-koyre  
haleluye...  
An apikoyres rufstu mikh,  
Mit shem-havaye lester ikh,  
Iz meyle, ikh dervart nisht keyn  
geule.  
Nor s'brent zikh heys in  
yedn os  
Fun alef beys gor bizn sof  
Di heylike un kalye haleluye...*

*Un dos iz alts, s'iz nisht  
keyn sakh.  
Ikh makh dervayle vos ikh  
makh.  
Ikh kum do vi a mentsh,  
nisht keyn shiluye.  
Khotsh alts farloyrn say vi say  
Vel ikh farloybn "Adoynay"  
Un shrayen vi l'khayem  
"haleluye."*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=XH1fERC\\_504](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XH1fERC_504)



Photo: Andrzej Zbraniecki/PAP

Andrzej Wajda  
March 6, 1926-October 9, 2016

If you would like to suggest an article and/or author for the next issue of *Gazeta*, or submit one yourself, please email: [info@taubephilanthropies.org](mailto:info@taubephilanthropies.org). The submission deadline for the next issue is **February 20, 2017**.



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