



Photos: Marek Loś

FALL 2011

The Museum Gets Its Face

INSTALLATION OF THE MUSEUM'S COPPER-GLASS FAÇADE BEGINS

The Museum's walls are up! The Museum's unique copper-and-glass exterior creates a dynamic interplay between light and form, captivating visitors with its dramatic backlit views. With the successful completion by Polimex-Mostostal S.A. of the building's structure, the glass panels are being embellished with a special screen print pattern of elegant letters taken from Latin and Hebrew alphabets. Together, the letters signify the word "Polin" (פּוֹלִין) — the Hebrew word for Poland — interpreted as "Po-lin": po ("here") lin ("[you should] dwell"). In the dramatic reach of the building's exterior, the medium is the message. Reported to have come to Poland's first Jewish settlers from a divine voice, the message of Polin was interpreted as a haven for Jews. Now, in this very place, a thousand years of Jewish history shines through, as visitors will experience in the light of the building's façade. As they enter the Museum grounds, viewers will see the symbols of a thriving and creative culture reflected in the letters and relayed through their material design: the fragility of glass, the sturdiness of copper, and the illumination of light shed on the past and in celebration of an active Polish Jewish cultural center.

A Museum for the Jewish People

Meet the Museum leadership

MESSAGE FROM



Photo: Marek Łoś

Piotr Wiślicki
Chairman of the Board
Association of the
Jewish Historical
Institute of Poland



Marian Turski
Chairman of the Council
Museum of the History
of Polish Jews

“For generations my family was active in social and political life, both Jewish and Polish. My commitment to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews continues a family tradition of public service. For me, this Museum affirms the permanence of Jewish life on Polish soil.”

— Piotr Wiślicki

A dream coming true!

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is becoming a reality before our very eyes. It has been a long path from 1995, when the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland initiated the project, to April 2013, the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, when the Museum

this exhibition, which will occupy more than a third of the building (43,000 square feet), is exclusively the responsibility of the Association.

On January 25, 2005, The Association, an NGO created in the 1950s to preserve the history and culture of Polish Jews, established a partnership with the Minister of Culture and National Heritage

“Who is the Museum for? For Poles – particularly Polish youth – to offer them a virtual way of filling the void left after almost 1,000 years of Jewish presence on Polish soil. For Jews – particularly Israeli youth – to make them familiar with a very important chapter in their past; indeed, for many centuries Poland was home to the largest and most significant Jewish Diaspora community. For everyone – to give all people the opportunity to explore a Jewish community that offered world civilization fabulous thinkers, leaders, scholars, writers, musicians and painters.”

— Marian Turski

will open. The centerpiece of the Museum will be 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in Poland, a multimedia narrative exhibition. The production and funding of

and the Mayor of Warsaw, who signed a formal agreement to establish the Museum as an institution. This private-public partnership is unique in Poland.

Under the founding act, the public party finances the construction of the Museum building, at a cost of approximately PLN 200 million (approx. USD \$65 million), while the Association must finance and produce the Core Exhibition, at a cost of over PLN 117 million (approx. USD \$40 million).

The support of individual and institutional donors all over the world has helped to make the Museum a national institution on a world stage. More than PLN

79 million (approx. USD \$25 million) has been raised to date for the design and production. The Naming Campaign is intended to secure the remaining funds.

We express our appreciation to all those who have made it possible to bring the project to this stage. We now invite your support to complete the production of the Core Exhibition. Help us tell the story of what was once the world's largest Jewish community. Join us in celebrating the great civilization they created. ■



Agnieszka Rudzińska
Director
Museum of the
History of Polish Jews

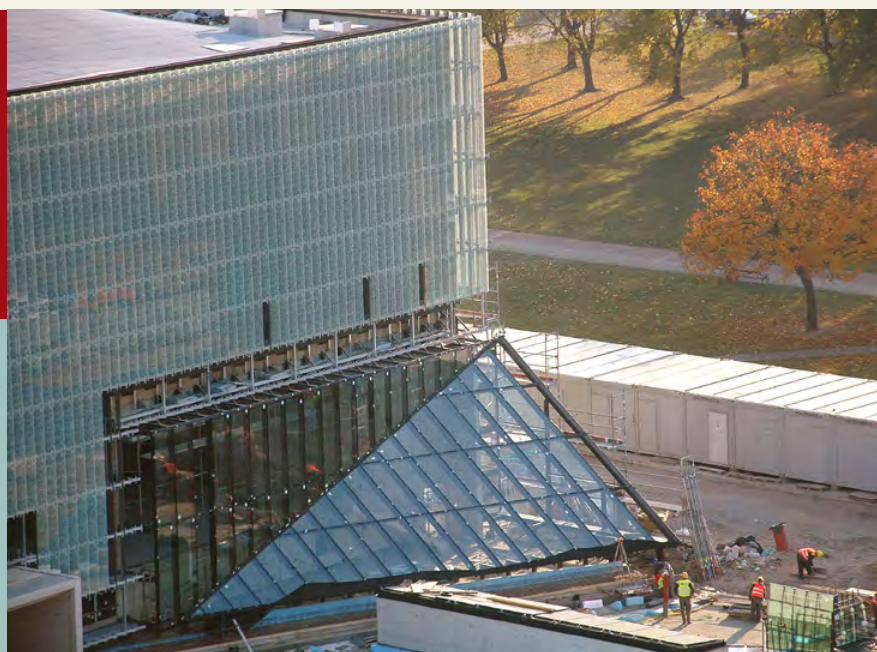


Photo: Marek Łoś

In Poland the hand of history weighs heavily on individual lives and mine is no exception. After the war, the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto, where the Nazis had imprisoned half a million Jews and whose walls bordered my parents' house, filled my childhood imagination with thoughts of those who fought and died on the place where the Ghetto Uprising Memorial stands today.

I have been working with the Museum of the History of Polish Jews for the last ten years. As an organization and above all as an idea, this Museum will be the starting point of a transformative journey for young Poles and Jews alike. It is a grand mission.

The Museum is now entering a new stage. The building is nearing completion, and we are developing the organizational structure, staffing, and programs for the Museum to be fully operational when it opens in April 2013.

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews will welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors a year, many of them from abroad. Through the Core Exhibition and the Museum's many educational and cultural programs, they will discover the living legacy of Jewish civilization. By telling the story of

“The ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto, where the Nazis had imprisoned half a million Jews and whose walls bordered my parents' house, filled my childhood imagination with thoughts of those who fought and died on the place where the Ghetto Uprising Memorial stands today.”

— Agnieszka Rudzińska

Polish Jews in the very place where it happened, the Museum will provide a memorable experience in a unique environment. The Museum's luminous architecture will provide a welcoming setting for exploration, reflection, and dialogue. Join us. Your support will allow us to complete the project in time for the opening in April 2013. ■



MESSAGE FROM

Tad Taube

Co-Chairman, Distinguished
Benefactors Committee

As the last stages of the building façade are put into place, we eagerly look forward to the 2013 opening of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Standing on the ground of what once was the Warsaw Ghetto, the Museum will be a site for the living, as well as a keeper of memories — as the flames of the lives that came before must also be kept alive for the benefit of humankind. This is an ambitious undertaking, and one we approach with pride.

As we continue to welcome new supporters and distinguished visitors to participate in the Museum’s progress and success, we skillfully prepare the beautiful, modern, and interactive spaces that will serve as an invitation to all to learn about the history of Polish Jews, one inseparable from the other. I know, because Polish Jewish history is also my history. My family and I left Poland just before the Nazi invasion on September 1, 1939. A lucky child, I was able to live a free and prosperous life in the United States of America. It is that freedom and richness of spirit and hope that this Museum stands for, and will be its great achievement.

4

Tad Taube

Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland
Chairman, Taube Philanthropies
President, Koret Foundation



HANDS-ON HISTORY: The Wooden Synagogue Cupola Project

This past summer, the town of Sanok, Poland, echoed with the sounds of axes and saws as an international group of volunteers — historians, artists, master timber framers, architectural preservationists, and students — came together to recreate the 17th century Gwoździec synagogue, destroyed during World War I. This reconstruction project is unique: under the tutelage of the Handhouse Studio and Timber Framers Guild, the volunteers are building the synagogue replica of the timber-framed roof and painted ceiling by hand, using only the tools and techniques of the period. This process of learning-by-building gives unparalleled historical authenticity and deep cultural significance to the re-creation, and makes it the perfect centerpiece for the Museum’s Core Exhibition.



This summer, in Sanok, Poland, an international crew of timber craftsmen and students worked on the building of a replica of the timber-framed roof of the ornate wooden synagogue that stood for 300 years in the town of Gwoździec, now in Ukraine.



Photos: Handshouse Studio



MESSAGE FROM

Carol Stulberg
Western Regional
Director

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews presents a historic opportunity to honor and preserve ten centuries of Jewish life, history and culture in Poland. This exceptional educational institution will serve as a living legacy, providing multitudes of visitors with extraordinary resources for understanding the achievements of Jews in Poland during major periods in Poland's history.

This Museum will create a vibrant center where visitors from all over the world can discover, connect and learn about our rich heritage. It will illuminate for the world the light that the Holocaust failed to extinguish.

Please join in supporting the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Your gift will enable us to fulfill our mission to present educational programs and experiences that preserve, explore and celebrate the epic history of Jews in Poland.

Carol Stulberg
818-386-1411
carol@stulbergassociates.com

Once the roof was raised in Sanok, the team moved on to Rzeszów, Kraków, and Wrocław, where they hand-painted three of the eight ceiling panels. The workshop in Wrocław took place in the restored White Stork Synagogue, in cooperation with the Jewish Community of Wrocław. The last five painting workshops will take place in synagogues in different cities in Poland during the summer of 2012. The local population is always invited to presentations of the project during the workshops.

When completed, the synagogue exhibit will serve not only as a monument to the preservation of Jewish cultural history but as a symbol of the celebration of its continuation.

“It really is a labor of love, re-creating this synagogue, which was destroyed through all of this hate. But it’s going back to what was before, just centuries of people using these buildings and loving these buildings and coming together as a community, and we’re recreating that memory in the physical sense, just putting back what was.”

— Student participant, Sanok

Once all of the synagogue components are complete, they will be disassembled and shipped to Warsaw, where they will be installed in the Museum. Special thanks go to Ms. Irene Pletka, who joined the Museum's circle of Distinguished Benefactors this April and has ensured that this replica of the roof and painted ceiling of the Gwoździec wooden synagogue will be a highlight of the Museum.

For more information on the Gwoździec Reconstruction please visit:

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews
www.jewishmuseum.org.pl/en/cms/gwozdziec-re-construction

The Timber Framers Guild
www.tfguild.com

Museum of the History of Polish Jews Welcomes

Helen and Jack

It is an honor to welcome Helen and Jack Tramiel to the Museum's Circle of Distinguished Benefactors. Their generous gift of one million dollars will support the completion of the Core Exhibition. We met recently in their beautiful home in the San Francisco Bay Area, where they recalled their family histories in Poland — stories of survival, triumph and love.

"This sense of being connected to the past and to the community that gave so much instills in the Tramiels a deep sense of giving."

Born Hinda Goldgrub in Łagow, Poland, Helen moved with her family to Łódź at the age of five. Raised in a religious household where Yiddish was spoken in the home, her father supported them as a tailor. Jack, born an only child into a secular family in Łódź, was named Idek Trzmiel. His father worked as a subcontractor for a shoe manufacturer. Age-mates in Łódź, Jack and Helen were only 10 years old when the Nazis marched into Poland in 1939. Soon after, Jack and his parents were moved into the Łódź Ghetto. Helen and her family already lived in the ghetto, where approximately 300,000 Jews were forced to live in terrible conditions. Helen was put to work in a Nazi-run tailor factory at 37 Łagiewnicka; Jack worked in a similar factory across the street at number 36. Though they endured hardships practically side-by-side, they did not meet until after the war.

Helen and her mother were sent to Auschwitz in 1944, then to Poppenbuttel, a labor camp near Hamburg. From there, they were sent to Bergen Belsen, where they remained until liberated by the British Army in April 1945. In 1944, Jack was sent to Auschwitz, along with his father and mother, who were cruelly separated at the camp. After three weeks, Jack and his father were

sent to a labor camp at Steckin, Germany, where they worked for the Continental Rubber Company. After the bombing of the camp a few months later, they were transported to Ahlem Concentration Camp, where they worked digging an underground factory. In December 1944, Jack's father, too weak and sick to work, was murdered by the Nazis. In the spring of 1945, the American Army liberated Ahlem.

After traveling to Łódź to see his mother, Jack went back to Germany, where, in a small town near Hanover, he met and married Helen in 1947. Their love story set them on a path toward a new life in North America.

In November 1947, Jack emigrated to the United States and with the help of the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society got a job in a Fifth Avenue warehouse.



Tramiel

As New Distinguished Benefactors

By Carol Stulberg

He learned English from watching movies and in 1948 joined the U.S. Army. Helen joined him in the U.S. in 1948. Soon the Army put Jack in charge of repairing office equipment. Upon leaving the army, Jack bought a typewriter shop in the Bronx and started importing typewriters from Italy. He learned he could get exclusivity only by moving to Canada, so the couple moved to Toronto, where, in 1955, he founded



Łódź factories were emblematic of the industrialization of the region in the 19th century and will be a feature of the Encounters with Modernity Gallery.

a company called Commodore. Commodore would grow to become one of the world's leaders in the adding-machine business. Adding machines evolved to calculators, and by the 1970s, Commodore was one of the largest suppliers of calculators in Europe and North America. As a businessman and inventor, Jack was a man of courage and vision.

In 1976, Commodore acquired MOS Technology, a Pennsylvania semiconductor manufacturer that had a line of advanced calculator chips and an 8-bit microprocessor. This microprocessor led to the introduction of the Commodore Pet, one of the world's first personal computers. Jack is widely considered the "father of the home computer." In 1984, Jack took over Warner Communications' floundering Atari operation, turned things around, and eventually folded Atari into a Silicon Valley disk-drive manufacturer, JTS.

The Tramiels have since retired to Monte Sereno, California, where they are the proud parents of three sons, Sam, Leonard and Garry. Their family life is filled with the joy of their children and five grandchildren. As Holocaust survivors, they never forget where they came from and that they survived when millions did not. This sense of being connected to the past and to the community that gave so much instills in them a deep sense of giving. They generously support a wide range of charities, including the Army Relief Fund, the American Red Cross, Blue Star Alliance, the Anti-Defamation League, and AIPAC. They were the first one million dollar donors to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Now, with our deepest respect and appreciation, they have become Distinguished Benefactors of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. ■

MUSEUM WELCOMES FIRST CORPORATE SPONSOR TO DISTINGUISHED BENEFACTORS CIRCLE

Fundacja
Orange



TP Group is the partner of the educational projects and the Core Exhibition of the Museum of the History of the Polish Jews

The TP Group, the largest telecommunications group in Central Europe, is the Museum's largest and first corporate donor to join the Circle of Distinguished Benefactors. The TP Group and its Orange Foundation exemplify the kind of public-private partnerships that make the Museum possible. Most notably, their telecommunications support has enabled the creation and expansion of the "Virtual Shtetl" website; the development of the Museum's Educational Center; and construction and maintenance of the "Ohel" temporary artistic installation on the Museum site between 2007-09.

In addition, the TP Group has provided support for the Core Exhibition, including the development of the architectural documentation that will allow the installation of the exhibition, as well as making possible the graphic design for the first three galleries. We welcome the TP Group into the Museum's exclusive Circle of Distinguished Benefactors, and look forward to an ongoing and fruitful partnership!



Event Communications

The Town Game is a sophisticated multimedia interactive game based on the town plan of Kalisz. There are five "players": Jewish Community, Municipal Authorities, Church, Prince, and Townspeople. Drawn on surviving archival material, the Town Game scenarios enable visitors to explore conflict and cooperation in the medieval Polish town.

NIZIO DESIGN INTERNATIONAL: New Contractor for the Core Exhibition

Nizio Design International (NDI), founded in 1996 by architect Mirosław Nizio, will complete the graphic design and construction of the Museum's Core Exhibition. In the past 15 years, NDI has established itself as a world-class design firm and, since 2000, has maintained its studio in Warsaw's Praga district. Specializing in exhibition and museum design in the U.S. and Poland, their notable projects include an exhibition in the Factory Museum at Łódź's Manufaktura shopping center, the Warsaw Rising Museum, and the Wrocław Contemporary Museum. As specialists in monumental architecture in tune with its urban context, the studio will bring a contemporary look and feel to the Museum's Core Exhibition — from exhibition and museum scripts to interactive technology and new media design. In its supervisory role, NDI will integrate technical know-how with elegant and functional applications. The result will be a seamless experience as visitors flow with the contours of the Exhibition's structure and content, moved by the emotions that expert design brings forth.



Event Communications

In the Club, a multimedia environment in the Post-War Years Gallery, visitors will be able to explore Jewish social and cultural life during the 1950s and 1960s.

Naming Opportunities Campaign in Progress

Crucial to the Core Exhibition, the Museum welcomes major gifts as key to its completion. Since May, the Museum's Naming Opportunities Campaign has introduced the Museum of the History of Polish Jews to potential new donors, growing our global constituency while attracting worldwide support for the Core Exhibition.

As the primary tool of the Capital Campaign for financing the production of the Core Exhibition, Naming Opportunities are available for the Core Exhibition, as well as for the Education Center, temporary exhibition galleries, auditorium and screening rooms, restaurant, and various educational and cultural programs. Gifts will also support the operation of the Museum once it is open, as well as new developments as it evolves.

There are many ways to join the Museum's Circle of Distinguished Benefactors. As a donor, you or your organization may make a gift in your name, in honor or memory of another person, or in recognition of a group or event related to the history of Polish Jews. (As of today, the total potential value of the Naming Campaign exceeds 272.9 million Polish zlotys, or ca. \$95.4 million.)

We invite you to consider these possibilities, knowing that your gift lives on through this extraordinary and historically rare opportunity.

There are other history museums and cultural centers, and other museums with Jewish content, but nowhere and never again will there be an opportunity to help build a living memorial and active Jewish historical and cultural center on the very grounds that for a millennium drew Jews to worship, live and thrive in the heart of their homeland in Poland.

For more information on how to make your gift to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, please contact:

Carol Stulberg,
Western Region Director
carol@stulbergassociates.com
or call her office at 818-386-1411
Thank you for your consideration.

THANK YOU TO OUR

California Donors

Your support of the Museum is crucial to the success of our mission.

For more information on how to become involved, please contact:

Carol Stulberg
Western Regional Director
Museum of the History of Polish Jews

(818) 386-1411
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The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is the largest public-private enterprise in Poland and is estimated to cost close to \$108 million. Poland's Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Warsaw have committed the entire cost of the building, estimated at \$65 million. More than \$25 million has already been raised from private contributors. An additional \$15 million remains to be raised to complete the Core Exhibition for the Museum's grand opening in 2013. This public-private partnership is similar to the public-private venture that created and continues to sustain the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

The Museum is indebted to the many generous and thoughtful donors who have already become part of the MHPJ family, especially here in the Western Region. We gratefully recognize their support.

Eric Benhamou

Maria and Jerry Brenholz

Linda and Neil
Brownstein

John and Jill Freidenrich

Phyllis Friedman

Jewish Community
Endowment Fund
of San Francisco

Frances K. and
Theodore H. Geballe

The Goldrich
Family Foundation

John and Cynthia Gunn

Shelley and John Hebert
Philanthropic Fund

Warren Hellman and the
Hellman Family Fund

Nita and Robert Hirsch

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James and Catherine
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Tad Taube and the
Taube Foundation for
Jewish Life & Culture

Laszlo Tauber Family
Foundation

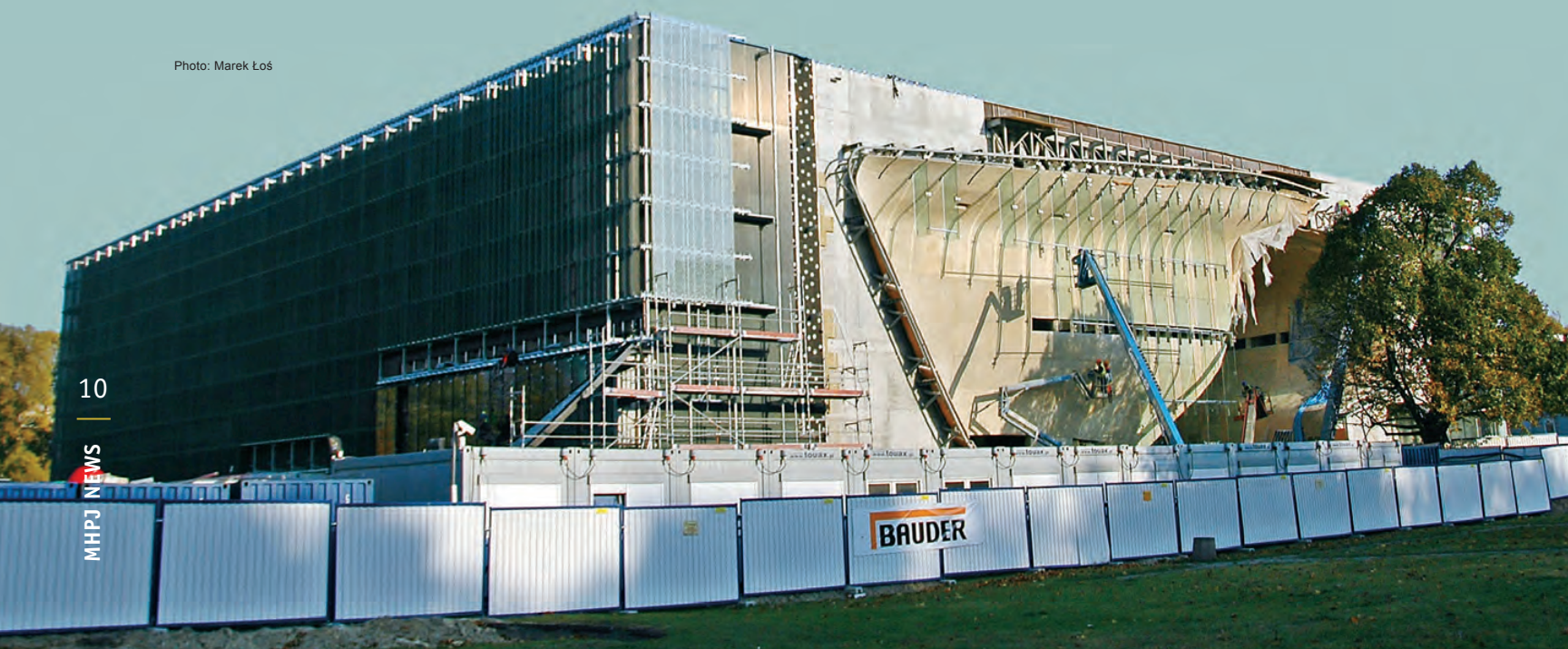
Jack and Helen Tramiel

Tomasz Ulatowski

John Weiser

Ronald and Anita
Wornick

Photo: Marek Łoś



Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of Poland (1995-2005), addressed a forum on “The Economy and Culture of The New Poland” at the Milken Institute’s 2011 Global Conference, in Los Angeles on May 3. The Museum of the History of Polish Jews was the main focus of the roundtable discussion. Offering a rare opportunity for invited guests to converse with President Kwasniewski and Museum leadership, the President was joined by a roster of distinguished guests. Among them were the **Honorable Tad Taube**, Chairman of Taube Philanthropies and Honorary Polish Consul of San Francisco; **Irene Pletka**, a Distinguished Benefactor of the Museum and Founding Chairman of the Kronhill Pletka Foundation; and **Dr. Arnold Eisen**, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Below are some highlights of their conference remarks.

Milken Institute Global Conference

Hosts Private Roundtable on Poland and the Museum



Aleksander Kwasniewski: It is impossible to speak about Jewish history without discussing Polish history, and it is absolutely impossible to speak about Polish history without Jewish history. What’s more, when we do speak about Polish Jewish history, it is important to re-

member that we are speaking about a thousand years of a great civilization.

It is also important to remember that, at the beginning of the Second World War, Poland was home to the largest Jewish population in the world, with almost 3.5 million Jews. Due to the Holocaust, my country lost 3 million Jewish Polish citizens. After the Holocaust, the anti-Semitic events, which culminated in the Communist government’s brutal 1968 campaign against Jewish citizens, further drove away the remaining Jews.

But for the last 22 years, Poland has been living in a new socio-political environment. We see new possibilities, we have democracy, and we can embody the politics of tolerance and reconciliation with our Jewish citizens. After 22 years of these new

democratic changes, we see a renaissance of Jewish culture and appreciation of Jewish history, not only in the official legal documents of our country, but in the understanding and in the memory of our people.

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews promises to be one of the most important venues for a

“We need such international centers like the Museum, because we need places that illuminate our deep roots, our common history, mutual respect and shared moral values.”

— Aleksander Kwasniewski
President of Poland (1995-2005)

renaissance of mutual interest in our common Polish Jewish history. During my Presidency, the Polish Government, the City of Warsaw, and Jewish NGOs decided to erect this museum in our nation’s capital, because Warsaw was one of the most important cities for Jewish history. Today, we’ve almost completed the building, the design for which resulted from an international architectural competition. Public opinion

in Poland also makes it clear that this project and this Museum are supported by the Polish people and will therefore enjoy great success.

We need such international centers like the Museum, because we need places that illuminate our deep roots, our common history, mutual respect and shared moral values. Today, we are seeking strong and active support for the permanent exhibition. This is one of the reasons why, with Tad Taube and others, I saw fit to look for supporters and donors to organize this final stage. So if you want to protect the history of Jews and nourish Jewish heritage in Europe, I actively encourage you to support the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. ■



Irene Pletka: I'm going to tell you the story of how I became involved in supporting the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. I was born in Shanghai; I survived thanks to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which kept my family alive on three dollars a

month. After the war I went to Australia, and I grew up in Melbourne. I visited Poland in the 1970s with my parents, and I visited again in 1990-91; both times it felt like a visit to a graveyard. In 2008, I was talking to the JDC staff in Israel, where I was supporting some programs, and they said, "There's a rebirth of Jewish life in Poland, you really should go and have a look." I was invited to go to Limmud, a weekend retreat of lectures and events on Jewish subjects. So I arrived at Warsaw Airport in Fall 2008. On the way from the airport, the driver said to me that at the age of 52 he had discovered he was Jewish. And all of a sudden, things started to make sense to him. I went to Limmud, held in a suburban hotel near Warsaw; there were 450 people, mostly young, lots of kids running around everywhere, Chassids, families, a sprinkling of elderly people, and every single person had a story. The guide that I had in Warsaw, who was a devout Roman Catholic, told me that his one niece was getting a Masters degree in Hebrew and another was getting a Masters degree in Yiddish.

I realized that everything had changed, that it was a different scenario, in which Jewish heritage and culture were alive and growing. It was as though I was seeing green shoots coming up through the ashes. It turned my opinions around 180 degrees. And so I decided to get more involved in the Jewish rebirth in Poland.

The most compelling remarks I heard repeated by Polish citizens were, "During the Nazi era and the Communist era, we didn't know anything about who we were, but now when we look at our history, we see that there's a gaping hole, and that gaping hole in fact was inhabited by the Jews," and that's why there's this extraordinary interest in who we were, what we

"I really think that the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will go a long way towards showing not only to the citizens of Poland but to the citizens of the world what an extraordinary culture we came from, and what that really meant in the history of our entire civilization."

— Irene Pletka
Distinguished Benefactor

did, and what this culture was. Poles now have the opportunity to fill their history's painful gap. I really think that the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will go a long way towards mending that hole, and showing not only to the citizens of Poland but to the citizens of the world what an extraordinary culture we came from, and what that really meant in the history of our entire civilization.

I strongly believe that if there's one thing we can do to show our children and grandchildren who we were, what we accomplished, what we stood for, and what this entire period, this 1,000-year history made of us, the Museum goes a long way towards explaining that. It's a source of pride for me. I saw it, and I decided, I'm going to donate one million dollars and make this



a memorial to my parents. I can only urge you all to take a really long look at what it is, the totality of what it represents, and get involved. ■



Dr. Arnold Eisen: Jews in the United States today are living in the single most blessed diaspora that Jews have ever known. And we not only live in the single most blessed diaspora, we're living at the same time as the reborn sovereign state of Israel. This imposes obligations, it opens up

tremendous opportunities, and one wants to have the wisdom to take advantage of the opportunities that are open to us, and focus on what is possible for the Jews, where we can go forward in this world.

One such place in the world is Poland. In Poland, we have an opportunity to work with a country that has thrown off its past in amazing ways and embraced Jews and embraced Israel, and we have a chance to build a future for the Jews of Poland at the same time that we have the chance to help build the future of Poland. It's an opportunity one wants to take advantage of the best one can.

There is a portion of the Torah, called "After the death of the two sons of Aaron," and it's usually joined with a portion we read on Shabbat, called "Holiness." The rabbis often said that when these two portions are pulled together, that is the message of Judaism. After the death, our job is to put holiness in the world, our job is to build. To me, it is more than symbolic that we are here the day after Yom HaShoah, and what the Jews do when we remember is not just allow the past to flit before us, but we make resolutions about how we're going to take that past forward and build on the basis of it. This entire period of modern Jewish history, after the Holocaust, with the flowering of American Judaism, with the flowering of the state of Israel, is the period when Jews are rising from the ashes of the Holocaust and building, trying to be a holy community and make

the world better. This to me is what this moment in Jewish history is about.

And so the Museum of the History of Polish Jews is not just rising from the recent ashes of the Holocaust, building on 1,000 years of history, but it's rising literally on the site of the Warsaw Ghetto, which is the site par excellence of Jewish resistance. And Jewish resistance means perpetuating the things that Jews have stood for, which include freedom, making the world better, seizing hold of opportunity, and being focused on the future. While there are many sites of Jewish cultural renaissance in the world, having a Polish site of Jewish renaissance, linked

"Having a Polish site of Jewish renaissance, linked with the Polish democratic renaissance, is a unique opportunity for Jews. . . . It's a good thing for Poland, it's a very good thing for the Jewish people and for Judaism as well."

— Dr. Arnold Eisen
Chancellor, Jewish Theological Seminary

with the Polish democratic renaissance, is a unique opportunity for Jews. This site will take its rightful place as one of those deeply significant destinations for Jews.

I just want to close with one memory of my trip to Poland. When we got into Warsaw, I said, "Oh my God, Warsaw is not in black and white"; there was actually living color in Warsaw. I could not believe it, because in my images of Warsaw, it was all black and white, it was all Communism and Holocaust, it was all death. We have a chance now to build a future for the Jews, which is a future in living color. The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is one of the sites of that future, and in the process we help Poland go forward in living color. It's a good thing for Poland, it's a very good thing for the Jewish people and for Judaism as well. ■



The wedding of Bobowa tzadik Ben Sion Halberstam's daughter.
 Author: unknown / City: Bobowa / Date: 1931-02-20
 Source location: National Digital Archives

Where can a history buff, descendants of Polish Jews, and enthusiasts of Polish Jewish culture find, upload and share cultural information, historical images, and testimonies of Polish Jews? The place for that and more is the Virtual Shtetl. The Virtual Shtetl community, an online social networking site, has collected information on more than 2,000 towns, including 60,000 photographs, and 1,000 video clips and audio testimonies. Through innovative new technologies, the Virtual Shtetl puts the concept of “a museum without walls” into practice. Available in four languages (Polish, English, German and Hebrew), the Virtual Shtetl is now even more internationally accessible. Via its new online application, users can now access the content of the Virtual Shtetl through their smartphones from anywhere in the world. The application offerings include photographs of Jewish sites and landmarks, maps and GPS coordinates of Jewish monuments, and current events on contemporary Polish Jewish life. So, join us in an old world village in a site for a new century — one that closes the gap between history and the contemporary, old and young, and brings visitors together in a true global shtetl!

Obama Visits Site of Museum of the History of Polish Jews and Warsaw Ghetto Memorial

Warsaw, Poland – On May 27 while visiting in Warsaw, U.S. President Barack Obama placed flowers at the Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Heroes in honor of the victims of the Holocaust, then met with the leadership and staff of the emerging Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

“President Obama said that the Museum of the History of Polish Jews is an important project not only for Poles and Jews, but for the whole world,” said Museum Director Agnieszka Rudzińska.

Friday’s meeting with the U.S. President was also attended by Poland’s Culture Minister Bogdan Zdrojewski, Warsaw Mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz and Distinguished Benefactor Sigmund Rolat of New York.

“It was an extraordinary meeting, President Obama had more time for us than we expected,” said Rudzinska. “The President wished us success in the mission of building this Museum.”

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is being built in front of the Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Heroes. Completion of construction is planned for autumn 2012, and its opening ceremony is to be held in the spring of 2013.



From left: Sigmund Rolat, Warsaw Mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, U.S. President Barack Obama, Museum Council Chair Marian Turski, Minister of Culture Bogdan Zdrojewski.



OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAR EXHIBITION DIRECTOR'S PRESENTATION IN U.S., ISRAEL AND EUROPE

Dr. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is on the road again. She will be taking with her the story and the progress of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. As Director of the Core Exhibition Team for the Museum, she will present "Rising from the Rubble: Creating the Museum of the History of Polish Jews" at the Polish Embassy and "The Elusive Object: The Role of Things in a Digital Age" at George Washington University. Her lively talks and presentations will explore what it means to create the Museum in our contemporary post-war, post-Communist era, and the role the Museum can

play in furthering the new ideals of Polish society. For Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, museum professional, anthropologist, and distinguished professor at New York University, the project of the Museum is the culmination of a lifetime of committed scholarship. Summarizing her decision to lead the core exhibition development team of the Museum, she stated, "I think it is an incredibly important project, and I wanted to bring everything I've ever learned to bear on it. I felt as if nothing I'd ever done or learned would be wasted." Indeed, Professor Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's itinerary affirms it!

USA

November 6

"Creating the Museum of the History of Polish Jews"
Harry G. Friedman Society
New York City
Details: Ira Rezak
Immobilis@aol.com

November 7

"Rising from the Rubble: Creating the Museum of the History of Polish Jews"
Polish Embassy
Washington, D.C.
<http://www.polandembassy.org/>

November 8

"The Elusive Object: The Role of Things in a Digital Age"
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.
7:00 pm in the Media and Public Affairs Bldg.
Jack Morton Auditorium
<http://programs.columbian.gwu.edu/judaic/>

November 10

Concluding Speaker: "From Access to Integration: Digital Technologies and the Study of Jewish History"
Center for Jewish History
New York City
<http://www.techconference.cjh.org/conference.php>

Europe

November 20

"Why do we need Jewish museums? An international perspective."
European Association of Jewish Museums
Jewish Museum, London.
<http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk>

November 22

Featured Speaker in special series History and Memory of the Shoah in Poland
French Embassy
Paris, France
<http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/>

Israel

May 22, 2012

Panelist with Avner Shalev and Dr. Orit Shacham-Gover:
"Passing on the Memory of the Holocaust: Shifting Contexts of Museum Commemoration"
Yad Vashem,
Jerusalem, Israel
<http://www.yadvashem.org/>

Facing History Organization Excited by the Museum's Educational Plans

Meeting with the Museum's Educational Centre, executive staff from Facing History and Ourselves, a leading educational NGO in the United States, had the chance to learn more about the Museum's educational programs. CFO Marc Skvirsky and Jan Darsa shared their experiences with Museum staff, bringing to bear the organization's reach of more than 29,000 educators and more than two million students through its online educational platform.

Excited by the research and materials available through the Core Exhibition program and Education Centre, Mr. Skvirsky declared that "the Museum is one third a narrative and two thirds a dialogue, a conversation of the young with the old about life in a pluralistic society. The dialogue conducted by institutions such as the Museum...provides the content [of the] history of the Jews, and opens it up to the broader perspective of life in a democratic society." Noting that one of their Board members is Michelle Obama, Facing History promised a lively and ongoing collaboration between the Museum and its own educational outreach across the U.S.

Museum Invited to celebrate

THE JEWISH NEW YEAR AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On September 21, the European Jewish Community Centre in Brussels invited the Museum to take part in a special celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Marking the International Day of Peace, the event took place at the European Parliament, where Jerzy Buzek, Polish President of the European Parliament presided, under the patronage of the Polish Presidency of the EU. The Museum was represented by Director Agnieszka Rudzińska.

At a celebratory cocktail hour, distinguished guests toasted L'Chaim! to usher in the Jewish new year

of 5772. To commemorate the event, the Museum presented an exhibition screening of seven short films — one for each gallery of the Core Exhibition. Together, they tell the story of “Polin: A Thousand Years of Jewish Life in Poland.” The film series was part of an exhibition of the same title that had previously screened in Kraków and Israel. For its final event, the Museum showcased the short film “The Museum of Life,” which highlights the main theme of renewal, symbolized in the ringing in of the new year. For all of our supporters, we wish you L'Shanah Tovah — Happy New Year!

The event was co-organized by the European Jewish Community Centre, the European Jewish Union and European Jewish Public Affairs.



Jerzy Buzek, Polish President of the European Parliament, blows the shofar in front of a crowd of over 600 at a special Rosh Hashanah celebration.

Architectural rendering of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, designed by Rainer Mahlamäki of the Finland firm Lahdelma and Mahlamäki, winners of the Museum's international architectural competition, the first successful architectural competition of its kind in Poland.



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