

*Boskovice Synagogue and Castle. Mark Podwal, 2017. Used with permission*

# Gazeta

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# Message from Irene Pipes

President, American Association  
for Polish-Jewish Studies

Founder of *Gazeta*

Dear Friends,

POLIN Museum is once again open, but travel restrictions make it difficult for visitors to come to Warsaw. As a result, most of the museum's activities continue to take place virtually. Among the most recent and important of these was the highly successful online conference "What's New, What's Next? Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies," held in October 2021 (and reported in this issue). More than 500 people participated in this event, which aimed to explore new directions in the study of East and Central European Jews.

The museum has published a new and corrected edition of the *Legacy of Polish Jews*. Edited by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition at the museum, and Tamara Sztyma, curator of temporary exhibitions, the book accompanies the online opening of the museum's Legacy Gallery. A Polish version, *Dziedzictwo Żydów polskich*, has also been published. The interviews "Meet the Family," in which Prof. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett discusses the lives of prominent Polish Jews with members of their families, continues with two new episodes: one about Helene Rubinstein and the other about Jan Marcin Szancer. Also in press, Volume 34 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, deals with Jewish self-government, one of the features that has shaped East European Jewish history. In addition to its many activities, the museum conferred the Nagroda POLIN 2021 award this year on Dariusz Popiela for his project "Ludzie, nie liczby" (People, Not Numbers), a project that restores cemeteries to memorialize the names of the victims of the Holocaust in the Nowy Sącz area.

The Gierowski-Shmeruk prize, a joint initiative of the Jewish Studies programs at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and the Marie Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin, and financed by the Marcel and Maria Roth Foundation (established by my parents), is awarded annually to a scholarly publication in the field of the history and culture of the Jews of the Polish lands. In November it was awarded to Magda Sara Szwabowicz of the Jagiellonian University for her book *Hebrajskie życie literackie w międzywojennej Polsce* (Hebrew Literary Life in Inter-War Poland). We report here on many other book announcements and awards that continue to inform and uplift our Polish-Jewish history, both past and present.

I hope you are all well and that we shall soon be able to meet in person.

With best wishes,

Irene Pipes  
President



Irene Pipes

# Message from Tad Taube and Shana Penn

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



Tad Taube



Shana Penn

It seems appropriate that the year-end issue of *Gazeta* should offer a broad view of the people, ideas, and events that have made 2021 such a challenging, yet rewarding, twelve months. The challenges are obvious enough, including concerns about rising antisemitism in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere. But we should also look at the positive side.

In our first feature story, the esteemed American Jewish artist, Mark Podwal, describes the creative surge that the discovery of his family's Polish Jewish experience before and during the Holocaust gives to his art, in a collaborative new work with preeminent Holocaust scholar Robert van Pelt. Together they consider, in art and text respectively, the concept of Jewish Space in its territorial, architectural, psychological, theological, and intellectual dimensions, traversing a historical landscape that includes the great heights of spiritual aspiration and the profound depths of despair caused by the Holocaust. In our other feature piece, Jagiellonian University's notable Holocaust scholar Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs presents her rigorous study of attitudes about Jews and the Holocaust among young people in today's Poland. Several key conclusions offer hope for better times. Other stories survey page after page of festivals, exhibitions, and conferences ranging across Europe and America, plus two pages describing meetings and podcasts of POLIN Museum's Global Education Outreach Program. The reviews of publications run to even more pages and describe eleven recently published books.

The fact that so many scholars, writers, performers, and artists are creating works like these in Poland, Europe, the United States and elsewhere, testifies to the wide and growing interest in Jewish, and especially Polish Jewish, life, culture, and history. As we contemplate the end of one year and the beginning of another, we hope you will take as much pleasure in reading this chockfull issue of *Gazeta* as we have had in helping to bring it to you.

Tad Taube and Shana Penn  
Chairman and Executive Director



## As to Two Jewish Spaces: *How Beautiful Are Your Dwelling Places, Jacob. An Atlas of Jewish Space, a Synagogue for Babyn Yar*

Mark Podwal

**E**ditors' Note: The two-volume set of *How Beautiful Are Your Dwelling Places, Jacob. An Atlas of Jewish Space, and a Synagogue for Babyn Yar*, by Robert Jan Van Pelt, Mark Podwal, and Manuel Herz, will be released by Park Books in Switzerland, December 2021, and by The University of Chicago Press in March 2022.

**A**ccording to the artist Ben Shahn, in his 1956 lecture as part of the Charles Eliot Norton lecture series at Harvard University, for an artist, each work is often instilled with doubt. "There are no guideposts, no maps, no geography" to tell the artist that he or she "is on the right path." Nevertheless, I'd like to acknowledge two Jewish spaces that set me on my path: one, Dąbrowa Białostocka, my mother's birthplace, a shtetl in northeastern Poland, was burned to the ground by the Germans in 1941. The other was a Jewish camp 100 miles north of New York City.

In 1929, when my mother, at age eight, emigrated with her family to the United States, her brother David was denied entry based on an erroneous diagnosis of an eye infection and had to remain in Dąbrowa. Letters from eye specialists in Warsaw attesting that David had been misdiagnosed failed to help. Moreover, attempts to arrange a visa for David to immigrate to Latin America were unsuccessful. When the German army reached Dąbrowa in July 1941, in revenge for finding the body of a slain German officer, the command burned down the entire town. Only two small stone houses on the edge of town and a partially destroyed church were left standing. About 300 Jews lived under desperate conditions, finding refuge



*Boskovice Synagogue and Castle.* Mark Podwal, 2017. Used with permission

wherever they could in huts or in storage basements. In November 1942, the Jewish population was forced to run most of the eighteen miles to Grodno, where they were placed in the Kelbashin camp, previously used for Russian prisoners of war. The Dąbrowa Jews remained there for nearly six weeks before the final trip



*Yiddish Dąbrowa.* Mark Podwal, 2016.  
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to the Treblinka extermination camp. My mother's mother, on learning that her son David had perished in Treblinka, became severely depressed and was committed to a psychiatric hospital for the last eighteen years of her life. The closest I ever got to my grandmother was when I helped carry her coffin.

Since early childhood, Dąbrowa Białostocka lived in my imagination. Although for many years I had wanted to visit Dąbrowa, the incentive came when its mayor sent me an invitation to participate in a conference on the history

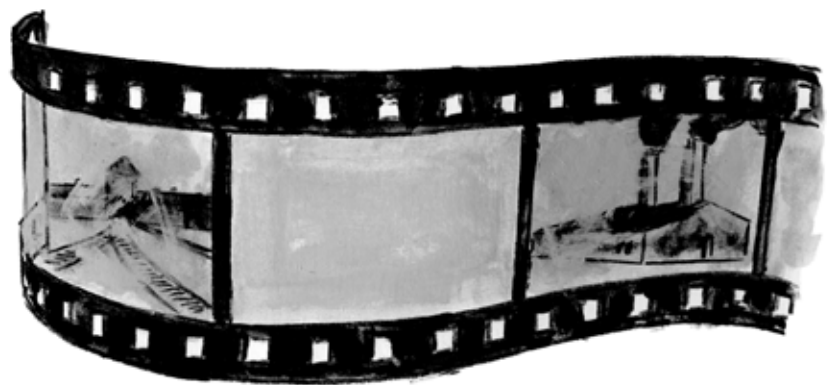
of the town's Jews. Although Dąbrowa was once 75 percent Jewish, no Jews currently live there. My visit on May 24, 2016, resulted in a series of drawings, some of which are published here.

The other Jewish space was one of my childhood spent in the summers at Cejwin Camps, a camp of a completely different kind. When at age twelve I first arrived at Cejwin,

having grown up in a non-observant Jewish home, I was overwhelmed with a Judaism I barely knew anything about—and enthusiastically embraced. More interested in arts and crafts than sports, I spent many afternoons sawing wood to shape into Jewish motifs for

the camp's newly constructed synagogue. Little could I envision that five decades later I'd design the textiles for Prague's 700-year-old synagogue, the Altneuschul. Nor could I have conceived that in a forty-year span I would illustrate the works of Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel or be commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to create its Passover seder plate.

Preoccupied with Jewish history and fascinated by its traditions, legends, and mysticism, I have tried to imaginatively interpret and faithfully transmit my heritage through pictorial narratives. Much of my art involves inventing visual metaphors adapted from Jewish symbols and iconography. When chronicling an event, although my art at times may include anachronisms, I like to be accurate concerning historical



*mark podwal*

*Film Strip.* Mark Podwal, 2021.  
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details. Drawing for more than forty years for the *New York Times* very much influenced my art. The role of Op-Ed art is not to “illustrate” but to expand the impact of the word, as opposed to a literal interpretation. Literary critic Harold Bloom said about our book *Fallen Angels*, “Mark Podwal is in every sense an illuminator.” The term “illumination” denotes to reveal information or details; to clarify; to help understand something.

Although museum directors and curators have urged me to broaden my subject matter—to become an artist more universal rather than being limited by Jewish content—my heart is with the Jewish experience. Franz Kafka once described writing as a form of prayer, and that definition has resonated with me. For me, drawing is a form of prayer.

To have been asked by the preeminent Holocaust scholar and architectural historian, Robert Jan van Pelt, to collaborate on this volume is a tremendous honor. The book’s leitmotif is the concept of “Jewish space,” understood in its territorial, architectural, psychological, theological, intellectual dimensions.

It traverses a historical landscape that includes great heights of spiritual aspiration and profound depths of despair, caused by antisemitism and the persecution, massacres, and genocide that resulted from it.

The artworks chosen for the book represent nearly fifty years of my art on Jewish subjects. Many of the original drawings, paintings, and prints are in the collections of institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Jewish museums in Prague, Berlin, and Vienna, the Terezín Ghetto Museum, the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, and the Warsaw Ghetto Museum (under construction), among numerous other venues and private collections. In gathering my art to partner with Robert Jan’s illuminating texts, I’m delighted to say that, without question, I’ve chosen the right path.



*Yiddish Typewriter*. Mark Podwal, 2018.  
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To preorder the book, please see the University of Chicago Press link:  
<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/H/bo161735832.html>. ■

*New York-based Mark Podwal is an illustrator whose work is represented in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and other public collections. He has illustrated many of Elie Wiesel’s books and also published several of his own, including a new color edition of A Jewish Bestiary (Penn State University Press).*



## FEATURE ARTICLES

# *Islands of Memory. A Reflection on Holocaust Education in Poland*

Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs

**E**ditors' Note: The following essay is based on the preface of a new book by Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, *Islands of Memory. The Landscape of the (Non)Memory of the Holocaust in Polish Education between 1989–2015* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2020).

**T**his book aims to discover the place that Jews have in the culture of memory in Poland, which was once home to Europe's largest Jewish community. It addresses the attitudes of young Poles toward Jews and the Holocaust, in the comparative context of educational developments in other countries. It focuses on education (transmitting values) and attitudinal changes and actions undertaken to preserve (or counteract) the memory of Jews and their culture in contemporary Poland. My intention when undertaking this book was to help those whose work involves or requires attention to attitudinal changes, including academics,



Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs.  
Photograph by Monika Broz. Used with permission

employees of governmental agencies, and members of civil society organizations (NGOs).

### **Methods of Inquiry and Analysis**

My analysis identifies trends and outcomes of specific educational interventions that are universal and may therefore set examples for various geopolitical contexts. I focus less on the politics of remembrance, which often takes a national approach—although state initiatives are

also brought to the attention of the reader—than on grassroots action, often initiated by NGOs or individual teachers and/or students. The challenge is to show the diversity of phenomena needed for integrating Jewish history and culture into Polish national culture. These include areas of extracurricular education that may run counter to mainstream educational policy, bearing in mind that Jews currently living in Poland are also, in many cases, active partners in various public initiatives.

The book relies mainly on a study done in 2008, itself a follow-up to a study of a national representative sample of Polish adolescents undertaken in 1998. The empirical part of my project consisted of two research sections, quantitative and qualitative, and addressed the attitudes of Polish youth toward Jews and the Holocaust, while keeping in mind the notion of the collective construction

of memory and its role in active citizenship.

I divided the book into three parts: Memory, Attitudes, and Actions, each grounded in different theories and informed by various concepts. Prior to undertaking the study I had assumed that this complex process of attitudinal change could not be interpreted and explained within the framework of a single academic discipline or theory. My analysis also evaluates specific educational programs and projects of state-funded schools by employing qualitative research methods such as focus group interviews to collect data, individual semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and participant observation of selected school activities. Teachers were asked to identify and explore the determinants of successful educational programs. This part of the research employed the inductive process and paid attention to the personal voices of social actors and the recipients of education.

Part three of the book offers examples of how the Holocaust “exists” in the memory of the generations of Poles who followed

*The control group is less prejudiced toward Jews than [that] of the same age ten years earlier.*

those who witnessed the Holocaust. The key section, “Actions,” presents case studies aimed at developing an open, non-biased attitude and consciousness of the Holocaust, understood as interpretation of the past as it is connected with the present and the future. I hope to use the findings to influence school policy by indicating the need for components on prejudice-awareness in educational programs and for changes in the methodology of teaching about the Holocaust.

**A Case Study**

One example illustrates the nature of the evidence provided by the research for the book. The following data is taken from a report by students of Robert Szuchta, a history teacher from the LXIV Lyceum in Warsaw, about a field trip to two sites of memory. Financed entirely by their parents, the students visited Treblinka and the synagogue and Jewish cemetery in Tykocin. The initiative behind the trip came

directly from the students. They asked their history teacher to organize the trip for them, something which was both unusual and remarkable.

The guiding idea of the trip was to follow “from life to death.” The teacher lectured on the life and culture of Polish Jews before the Holocaust. Starting with a two-hour visit to the museum in Tykocin, where they learned about the life of the pre-war inhabitants of the town, the students then visited the Jewish cemetery. Szuchta emphasized that Polish Jews were not alien, but were part of the indigenous population of Poland. They had been settling in Polish lands from the very beginning of the formation of Polish statehood, like other nationalities who were living on Polish soil at that time. “All these people were constantly migrating across the whole of Europe, and they were contributing to the culture [and] economy of the land,” explained the teacher. “And they stayed until today.” Seen in historical context, the Jewish minority was not represented as an alien minority, strangers, or the symbolic Other, as is common in the right-wing



Polish students from the LXIV Lyceum in Warsaw at the Jewish cemetery in Tykocin. Photograph by Szymon Beźnic. Used with permission

discourse in Poland and even in the mainstream media.

When the students were asked why they decided on a class trip to Treblinka, they offered several reasons:

They wanted to see Treblinka “with their own eyes” (*I would like to see how it looked*).

They wanted to have an interesting history lesson outside of the classroom (*I would like to hear what Mr. Szuchta has to say about the subject, because he is very interesting to listen to, and I think that in such a place this history would be explained and illustrated even better by the memorial site itself*).

They wanted to confront the subject of the Holocaust (*I still haven’t had an opportunity to go to Treblinka, but I know that something really terrible happened there and that I should know more about it, simply for my own sake. I often come across this topic. It’s as if I can’t get away from this Treblinka and the concentration camps; we have to remember it!*).

Other reasons given were that the Holocaust was an important topic, tied to Poland as a nation, and that visiting a concentration camp would help internalize the history of the Shoah, to imagine the scale of the crimes committed

and give a direct experience of this history (*When we go to Treblinka now, this fact of the mass murder of Jews, it is a very recent event that is very much tied to Poland as a nation. [I]t is easier to understand something if you see at least a part of what it looked like. When we read about the Holocaust, about the concentration camps, then we acknowledge the tragedy, but it is really difficult to imagine it. But when you go to Oświęcim (there is nothing left in Treblinka) and you’re there, you go in, you see the piles of hair, of shoes, you see the mementos left by these people who died because they were Jewish, then it really hits you*).

Memory, a need to remember, was offered as (*a sort of historical bridge between the living and the dead, or perhaps we are counting on the fact that the moment will be imprinted on our memories*).

Some students highlighted the need to become more aware of the victims (*To learn more about how these people lived, what was happening during World War II, what really happened to these people; of course it will broaden my understanding. I will better understand these people, who*

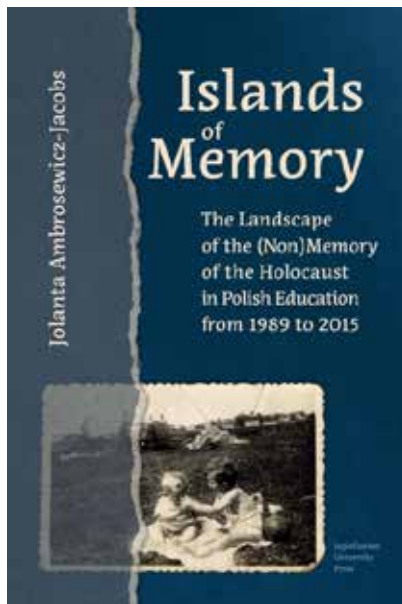


they were. I will see what really happened to them. I will get to know their culture better).

A hope to learn from the past was also expressed (*We learn not to make the same mistakes which were made in the past; I think this event taught us to never again make this same mistake*).

The students highlighted the significance of presenting the tragedy of the Holocaust through the prism of the individual fates of the victims, and not only by discussing the scale of the crime. The teacher's approach helped students to treat the memorial site as a grave not only of anonymous victims but of real people. Students praised the teacher's effort to keep emotions balanced and avoid over-dramatization. They considered it important to present factual data and to refer to specific experiences while ensuring quiet moments for reflection. Students had an awareness of the ir retrievable loss of Jewish culture (*At this moment, when it comes to Jews, generally nothing has remained. And that for me is the most shocking*).

Also shocking was the number of victims and the attempt to



kill all Jews (*The intentional, systematic, programmed killing of people as if on an assembly line ... I was aware of this, but at this moment it hit me and shook me to the core*).

Students commended the teacher's courage in discussing historical inaccuracies (*I think that one must be as honest as possible, and as truthful as possible, and not necessarily pleasant*).

And a student made a rewarding comment for any teacher (*Today's experience has inspired me to expand my knowledge*).

Participants appreciated the unhurried pace which ensured they were able to experience the trip in an emotional dimension (*That there was no hurry ... There was a chance*

to feel it all. Not only to learn something, but to feel it).

## Conclusions

My main conclusions are that ethnocentric and antisemitic attitudes exist among young Poles, but that students in alternative, experimental programs are less prejudiced and less antisemitic than the control group. The control group is less prejudiced toward Jews than the control group of same-age respondents ten years earlier, when the attitudes of young Poles toward Jews and the Holocaust were first measured in the nationwide survey. ■

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To learn more and order copies of the book, *Islands of Memory*, please visit <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/islands-of-memory/9788323349303>.

**Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, PhD**, is a professor at Jagiellonian University, where she is a lecturer at the UNESCO Chair for Education about the Holocaust at the Institute for European Studies. Among her many publications is *Me-Us-Them. Ethnic Prejudice and Alternative Methods of Education: The Case of Poland* (2003).



## CONFERENCES

# Symposium on “Confronting Antisemitism” at the Center for Jewish History, New York

Antony Polonsky

The Center for Jewish History (CJH) in New York City is the umbrella organization for five major Jewish historical institutions: the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute (which deals with German-Jewish history), the Yeshiva University Museum, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, originally founded in Vilna and devoted to the history of the Jews of Eastern Europe. The CJH is the largest and most comprehensive archive of the Jewish experience outside of Israel and also has a library of more than half a million books. A major force in the Jewish scholarly world, it offers fellowships, organizes conferences, lectures, and symposia, and provides a wide range of cultural, educational, and genealogical programs for the general public.

The last decade has seen a resurgence of antisemitism. How this phenomenon

is to be understood and confronted remains a matter of controversy. There is no clear explanation of what has caused it—to what extent it is the product of the climate of increased populism, xenophobia, and fear of immigrants, and how much it is the result of an extreme form of anti-Zionism. Moreover, there is no agreement about how it can be confronted and contained. It was with the purpose of examining these issues that a one-day online symposium was organized on October 17, 2021, with the support of the David Berg and Leon Levy foundations, by the CJH and jMUSE, a new body in arts and culture philanthropy that seeks to bring together institutions, experts, and philanthropists to foster new ideas and innovation in the United States and Europe. The goal was to create a forum to discuss the present crisis and produce initiatives to deal with it. In the words of Bernard Michael, CJH’s

president and CEO, “The Confronting Antisemitism symposium ...[presented] cutting-edge analysis, offering strategies to resolve barriers to action, and identifying a landscape of possible initiatives. We hope that the distinguished speakers’ insights and experiences will catalyze cultural institutions to take a new, crucial role in empowering members of the public to confront antisemitism and, ultimately, to achieve new understanding.”

His words were seconded by Michael Glickman, founder of jMUSE: “Cultural institutions are well positioned to reach and impact individuals and help groups of people recognize and understand antisemitism as a problem for everyone. This symposium will activate cultural institutions in the struggle to stem the tide of antisemitism, to marry thought with action and deploy every tool that they have

to effectively confront and combat it.”

A pre-symposium workshop moderated by Bernard Michael focused on the collections of the CJH and the research undertaken there. Its theme was “Understanding Jewish Life, Resilience, and Resistance in the Face of Persecution.” The directors of the center’s five constituent organizations made presentations: Gemma R. Birnbaum, executive director, American Jewish Historical Society; Jonathan Brent, executive director, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research; Jason Guberman, executive director, American Sephardi Federation; William Weitzer, executive director, Leo Baeck Institute; and Shulamith Z. Berger, curator of special collections, Yeshiva University Museum. The symposium opened with remarks from Peter Baldwin, professor of history at UCLA, and Michael Glickman, chair of the CJH board of directors and founder of jMUSE. They both stressed the perilous nature of the present situation, which constitutes a major threat to democratic

*This [roundtable] format highlighted the symposium’s goal of suggesting concrete ways to respond to the rise of antisemitism.*

societies, and posed the key question which the symposium sought to answer: As trusted public institutions with diverse audiences, how can universities, archives, libraries, museums, and cultural institutions use their unique strengths to combat antisemitism and create lasting change?

The symposium’s format differed from that of an academic conference. Instead of formal lectures, the participants engaged in dialogue with experts in their field or took part in roundtable discussions. This format highlighted the symposium’s goal of suggesting concrete ways to respond to the rise of antisemitism. The first session was a dialogue between Simon Schama, University Professor of History and Art History, Columbia University, and Peter Baldwin of UCLA

on the topic, “Reflections on the History and Persistence of Antisemitism.” Schama stressed the *longue durée* of antisemitism. He argued that the frequently made distinction between Christian anti-Judaism, with its stress on the Jewish responsibility for deicide and the superstitions which accompanied it, most notably the accusation that Jews used Christian blood in making matzah, and modern antisemitism, which has been seen as a conspiracy theory holding the Jews responsible for the ills of modernity, is misplaced. Rather, this view of the Jews as a malevolent conspiracy has a long history and draws extensively on the view of the Jews as the religious “other” in Christian (and Muslim) worlds.

This was followed by “Advancing Awareness and Sparking Change: Museums and Libraries in the Fight Against Antisemitism,” a panel moderated by Paul Salmons, an independent curator based in London. It offered a spirited and stimulating exchange among Ronald Leopold, executive director of Anne Frank House

(Amsterdam), Dr. Louise Mirrer, president and CEO of the New-York Historical Society, Dariusz Stola, professor of history at the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences and former director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, and Oren Weinberg, CEO of the National Library of Israel.

The next session was a dialogue between Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, and David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, on a key topic, “Preserving History, Providing Information, Supporting Democracy: Exploring the Unique Roles of American Institutions.”

One of the most stimulating events of the symposium was the panel discussion “Holocaust Remembrance and the Study of Antisemitism: The Power and Potential of Public Dialogue,” which was moderated by Dr. Stephen D. Smith, Viterbi Endowed Executive Director, USC Shoah Foundation.

The participants consisted of Susan Abrams, CEO of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, Father Patrick Desbois, president

*In his presentation Snyder stressed that antisemitism was a conspiracy theory which rested on the propagation of falsehoods.*

of Yahad-In Unum, Mary Pat Higgins, president and CEO of Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, Tali Nates, founder and director of Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, and Dr. Toby Simpson, director of the Wiener Holocaust Library, London.

This was followed by another symposium highlight, the exchange between Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, University Professor Emerita, NYU, and Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, and Timothy Snyder, Richard C. Levin Professor of History and Fortunoff Archive Faculty Advisor, Yale University, and Permanent Fellow, Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. The topic was one on which Snyder has written extensively, “Antisemitism is Everyone’s Problem: Considering the Dangers Antisemitism Poses

to Free Societies.” In his presentation Snyder stressed that antisemitism was a conspiracy theory which rested on the propagation of falsehoods. The creation of a civil society which could distinguish between truth and politically inspired lies was a key factor in the preservation of a democratic and pluralistic polity.

This was followed by two policy-oriented discussions. The first, “Strategies for Confronting Antisemitism: Informing and Empowering Students, Teachers, and Members of the Public,” was moderated by Jeffrey Veidlinger, Joseph Brodsky Collegiate Professor of History and Judaic Studies, University of Michigan. It featured Kirsten Fermaglich, professor of history and Jewish studies, Michigan State University, David Frey, professor of history and director, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, United States Military Academy at West Point, Tony Michels, George L. Mosse Professor of American Jewish History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Magda Teter,

professor of history and Shvidler Chair in Judaic Studies, Fordham University.

The final session was an exchange between Lawrence S. Bacow, president of Harvard University, and Christopher L. Eisgruber, president of Princeton University, moderated by Dara Horn, author of the recently published *People Love Dead Jews. Reports from a Haunted Present*. The theme of the exchange was “The Evolution of Understanding: Universities and the Fight Against Antisemitism.” Bacow and Eisgruber stressed the dangers of polarization at the universities and the need to create an atmosphere in which constructive dialogue can take place, noting that one of the key elements in a liberal education is to enable students to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

This was a most stimulating and thought-provoking symposium. At its close Bernard Michael posed the question to the participants and the worldwide audience, “What will you do now?” calling on them to come

*Universities...need to create an atmosphere in which constructive dialogue can take place...One of the key elements in a liberal education is to enable students to distinguish between truth and falsehood.*

together to push back against the rise of intolerance and antisemitism. The proceedings of the symposium are to be published digitally early next year and it is hoped that this will encourage collaborative projects and suggest specific steps for cultural institutions to take to ensure that antisemitism matters not only to Jewish people, but to all people. ■

To view the recorded symposium, visit <https://confrontingantisemitism.info/>.

*Antony Polonsky, PhD, is Chief Historian at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. He is founding editor of Gazeta.*



## “What’s New, What’s Next?” at POLIN Museum

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

To celebrate its fifth anniversary in 2020, the Global Education Outreach Program (GEOP) at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews organized an international conference, “What’s New, What’s Next?” Due to the ongoing pandemic, the conference was held online a year later, in 2021. Over the course of five days, across multiple time zones, scholars from many countries and disciplines explored the conference themes: innovative methods, new sources, and paradigm shifts in Jewish studies. The conference featured four keynote speakers and twenty-one panels, including one on the role of philanthropy in the future of Jewish studies, and a roundtable on the future of museum architecture. Among the more than 100 speakers were senior scholars as well as doctoral students who presented their work in poster sessions. Approximately 700 individuals registered for the conference, and more than 500

*The conference represents not only the culmination of five years of GEOP’s activity but also demonstrates why it is important for a museum, and POLIN Museum in particular, to support scholarly activity, both as the basis for ongoing projects and activities and for the field of Jewish studies in general.*

attended, far more than would have been possible in person.

The conference represents not only the culmination of five years of GEOP’s activity but also demonstrates why it is important for a museum, and POLIN Museum in particular, to support scholarly activity, both as the basis for ongoing projects and activities and

for the field of Jewish studies in general. The museum has the capacity to convene a conference of this scope and, even more importantly, it can serve as a bridge between the academy and the public. The event was open to all and free of charge. The entire conference was recorded and will be made available online. There are also plans for publication.

What emerged from an intense five days of discussion? First, a broad picture of the field, its emphases, gaps, and new directions, and its history in different national contexts. There continues to be strong interest in the modern period, especially the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Holocaust, and post-war period, and in antisemitism. History continues to be the dominant discipline. That said, there were topics that have received scant, if any attention until now: Jewish conversion, “lost museums,” contemporary Hasidic Yiddish, cookbooks as object of study and historical

source, urban space, *shund* as vernacular modernism, synagogue architecture, the Jewish family, Holocaust photography, trans-regionalism and the mapping of Ashkenaz, how micro-histories can illuminate big questions, mobility and migration, digital tools for analyzing Yiddish folksong, klezmer music, “iconotexts” such as Kabbalistic scrolls, and much else.

Just as important as the intellectual content of the conference were the relationships that were formed. The GEOP team collaborated with many international partners and patrons in organizing the conference. The closing session communicated a message that was echoed repeatedly by the participants: working together, we can move Jewish studies forward, especially the study of Central and East European Jews. POLIN Museum is playing an important role in this endeavor through GEOP. (See other GEOP announcements in this issue.) This conference is a tribute to the vision of Tad Taube, Chairman, and Shana

Penn, Executive Director, of Taube Philanthropies, who conceived and initiated the Global Education Outreach Program at POLIN Museum and raised the funds for it.

For more information about the conference and its funding partners, please see <https://www.polin.pl/en/whats-new-whats-next-2021>. ■

***Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, PhD***, is the Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition and Advisor to the Director at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

# Online Discussion at the POLIN Museum, “1941, the Year of Pogroms: History, Memory, Evaluation”

Antony Polonsky

To mark the eightieth anniversary of the murders in Jedwabne, an online discussion was held at the POLIN Museum, on June 11, 2021, on the topic “1941, the Year of Pogroms: History, Memory, Evaluation.” It was moderated by Dr. Krzysztof Persak of the Historical Department of the POLIN Museum and a member of the Institute of Political Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He is co-editor with Professor Paweł Machcewicz of the two-volume study *Wokół Jedwabnego* (About Jedwabne, 2002). The three participants were Dr. Joanna Michlic of University College London, co-editor with Antony Polonsky of *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy Over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland* (2004) and author of *Poland’s Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (2006); Saulius Sužiedėlis, emeritus professor at Millersville University, author with

*The goal of the symposium was to reflect on the characteristics of the 1941 pogrom wave and on how contemporary Poles, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians remember and come to terms with these events.*

Christoph Dieckmann of *The Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews during Summer and Fall of 1941* (2006) and a recently completed history of the Holocaust in Lithuania (and a member of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, established in 1998 by the President of Lithuania); and Dr. Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe of the Free University of Berlin, author of *Stepan Bandera. Życie i mit ukraińskiego nacjonalisty.*

*Faszizm, ludobójstwo, kult* (Stefan Bandera. The Life of Myth of a Ukrainian Nationalist. Fascism, Genocide, Cult, 2018). The goal of the symposium was to reflect on the characteristics of the 1941 pogrom wave and on how contemporary Poles, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians remember and come to terms with these events.

Persak posed a series of questions to the participants. The first concerned what occurred at the turn of June and July 1941. What was the course of the pogroms? Who were the local Lithuanian, Polish, and Ukrainian perpetrators? Were there some organized formations? Finally, what was the role of the Germans in inspiring and actively participating in the pogroms and murders of Jews?

Responding, Michlic argued that it is important to study the pogroms of the summer of 1941 in a comparative perspective. It is necessary to determine whether this anti-

Jewish violence should be seen as ethnic cleansing or as a continuation of pre-war anti-Jewish pogroms. Should we also see the difficulties Jewish fugitives faced from the ghettos in the period after 1943 and the post-1945 pogroms as a continuation of the earlier violence?

A striking feature of the violence was its character of enactment, which involved the destruction of monuments erected by the Soviets during their occupation of the area and was seen as the re-establishment of a just social order after the end of Soviet rule. Another shocking aspect was that the brutality and cruelty were directed especially against Jewish women and children. A “pogrom atmosphere” emerged in the aftermath of the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, marked by the first rapes of Jewish women and the refusal of local peasants to sell food to local Jews. The people who took part in the subsequent anti-Jewish violence in Jedwabne and twenty-five other locations in northeastern Poland were

*A “pogrom atmosphere” emerged in the aftermath of the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, marked by the first rapes of Jewish women and the refusal of local peasants to sell food to local Jews.*

not marginal members of society, but members of local elites: merchants, pharmacists, medical orderlies (*felczers*), craftsmen, and peasants from local villages. Teenage males chased and killed Jews.

According to Sužiedėlis, actual pogroms occurred in Lithuania only during the first week of the Nazi-Soviet war at the end of June 1941. Of these, the largest were those in Viljampolė (Slobodka) and at the Lietūkis garage in Kaunas. The number who were murdered in these events is disputed, but may be around 1,000 people. There were also a number of smaller pogroms in which another 1,000 Jews perished. The Germans were present but had

no actual control over these events. The violence took place against the background of a massive revolt against Soviet power between June 23 and 28, leading to the emergence of a group of armed insurgents numbering between 10,000 and 20,000. The Twenty-Ninth Riflemen’s Corps of the Red Army, which was around three-quarters Lithuanian, mutinied at this time and participated in the violence. Many excesses were committed not only against Jews but also against those accused of collaborating with the Soviets. This was exacerbated by the fact that the Soviets had murdered around 1,000 political prisoners before they retreated from Lithuania.

In Rossoliński-Liebe’s view, about 20,000 Jews were murdered in pogroms in western Ukraine immediately after the Nazi invasion, a small proportion of the 800,000 Jews who lost their lives in west Ukraine. The lower figure of 8,000 given by Kai Struve refers only to violence in which armed formations did not participate. Pogroms took place in over 100 places. The



largest was in Lviv where over 2,000 Jews were murdered. As in Lithuania, the murder of political prisoners by the NKVD was blamed on the Jews and led to brutal revenge. The pogroms were incited by the German *Einsatzgruppen* with the active participation of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and local people, mainly Ukrainians. Many of those who participated in these pogroms became members of the Ukrainian police and administration and participated in the Nazi-organized mass murder of Jews.

The second question put by Persak was: Why did local populations attack the Jews? What were the immediate and longer-term reasons for the pogroms and the motivations of the perpetrators? What was the role of nationalist ideology and pre-war antisemitism?

Michlic responded that before the violence erupted there was a period which was marked by Nazi attempts to incite pogroms among local civilian population. However, home-grown antisemitism was as important as German

*Bitterness against the Soviet occupation strengthened the equation of Jews and Bolshevism in spite of the fact that the Soviets had banned most Jewish organizations and Jews constituted a significant proportion of those deported by the Soviets.*

incitement. Before the war, in northeastern Poland the nationalist Endecja and the extreme National Radical Camp (ONR) were the strongest political forces and also had a major influence on the Catholic church in the area. Local society was fed extreme anti-Jewish propaganda in churches, in the local press, and in schools. Without taking into account local antisemitism and the dehumanization of Jews before the war, we cannot understand the cruelty of the anti-Jewish murders. One of the key elements in this anti-Jewish propaganda was that everything that Jews owned

should rightfully belong to Poles. This partly explains the widespread looting which accompanied the violence.

The bitterness against the Soviet occupation strengthened the equation of Jews and Bolshevism in spite of the fact that the Soviets had banned most Jewish organizations and that Jews constituted a significant proportion of those deported by the Soviets. The first Soviet occupation seemed to validate the pre-war myth of Jewish Bolshevism in the region: every Jew was perceived as a communist.

By contrast, in the Belarusian areas of the Second Polish Republic, where exclusivist ethnic nationalism with its image of the Jew as a central enemy was much less significant before 1939, the Germans had some difficulty recruiting the local Belarusians to participate in anti-Jewish violence. They had to bring in the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Ukrainian forces to orchestrate the pogroms there.

In the view of Sužiedėlis, an important fact in provoking

anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania, as in eastern Poland, was the Soviet deportations of June 14-17. Although there were many Jews among those deported, in the eyes of a considerable number of Lithuanians, these were the work of Judeo-Bolsheviks, and this created a pogrom-like atmosphere. Jews frequently observed that “we are living on a volcano.” What motivated most Lithuanians was hatred of Soviet power. They did not know much about Nazi ideology. It is true that antisemitism had been growing in the 1930s and was greatly intensified by the Soviet occupation. The Lithuanian Activists Front was certainly influenced by fascism and National Socialism, but its support was originally rather limited. It did proclaim the establishment of an independent Lithuanian state on June 24, but this was not recognized by the Germans. By the beginning of July, it was allowed to organize militarized formations, but anti-Jewish violence was still on a somewhat restricted scale. Until the first week of August 1941, between 85–90 percent of Lithuanian Jews were still alive.

By contrast, during the period between the “Grosse Aktion” in Kaunas on October 29, 1941, and the end of the year, 75 percent of Lithuanian Jews were murdered, so that by then, four-fifths of the Jewish population was dead. Initially, with the exception of the massacre by the Nazis and their collaborators in Plungė in mid-July, the dead were mostly men of military age. This was subsequently extended to older men, women, and children. Though several hundred Germans participated directly in the killings, the vast majority of those responsible were ethnic Lithuanians, possibly as many as 5,000 to 6,000, organized in self-defense battalions and police formations. Most Lithuanian Jews died at the hands of ethnic Lithuanians, whereas in Poland, with exceptions, the bulk of the killers were German. Another difference was Lithuania had a local administration, and the German occupation was much milder.

Rossoliński-Liebe stressed the importance of Ukrainian nationalism in its fascist and racist versions in fomenting anti-Jewish violence. Crucial

for understanding the pogroms was the increasingly fascist character of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian national revolution it was planning. From the mid-1930s, the OUN had taken the view that Ukraine should be a mono-ethnic state and planned to drive out Poles, Jews, and Russians. It obtained support from Mussolini and the Croatian Ustashe. In 1940, the OUN Congress in Kraków had led to the split between the more radical OUN-B and the OUN-M, and Stepan Bandera was elected *Providnyk* (Leader) of the OUN-B. Both groups prepared in advance for the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. When this took place the OUN-B sought to seize power and establish its own administration. Mass violence and state-building were the two main features of this revolution. The Ukrainian state was proclaimed in the Lviv town square in the name of Bandera by Jaroslav Stetsko, de facto leader of the OUN-B, on June 30, while the pogrom was taking place there. The Germans were not prepared to recognize the new state,

and when Bandera refused to rescind the declaration of independence he was placed under house arrest on July 5, and later detained under relatively comfortable conditions in Sachsenhausen concentration camp

The last three questions posed by Persak related to the present state of debate on these difficult issues in independent Poland, Lithuania, and Ukraine and the discussion of the involvement of the local population in the mass murder of the Jews. How far-reaching has this debate been and what are the prospects for the future? All three participants stressed the importance of a transnational approach to the issue. This makes it possible to identify the common features in the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence, the increase in antisemitism in the late 1930s, the effect of the Soviet occupation of the area in exacerbating inter-ethnic tensions, and German incitement without which the violence would not have occurred. The temptation of easy gain and the carnival element which

accompanied anti-Jewish violence was common to the region. There are also some specific elements. In both Lithuania and Ukraine the hope, ultimately in vain, that the Germans would accept the establishment of a pro-Nazi satellite, stimulated collaboration and allowed the creation of local militias and police forces; whereas in the Polish territories, collaboration on this level was desired neither by the Germans nor the Poles.

As for the attempt to come to terms with the painful fact of the participation of significant numbers of locals in the violence against their neighbors, these facts seemed to be making significant progress in both Poland and Lithuania in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some advance, although on a smaller scale, was also to be seen in Ukraine. In more recent years, however, these ideas have provoked a backlash determined to defend national honor which has been strengthened by the rise of populism and the ways in which social media have cheapened historical

debate. In both Ukraine and Lithuania, attempts have been made to make heroes of those who attempted to establish Ukrainian and Lithuanian states. The moderator and the three participants, while all stressing the need for a proper reckoning with the past as a necessary part of the establishment of a democratic and civil society, expressed some doubt about how this could be achieved. In particular, they expressed concern over the rise of antisemitism and the way the Jews were often held responsible for their own fate. Nevertheless, they stressed the importance of debates like this one in fostering an atmosphere in which the difficult problems of the past could be engaged. In their view, the transnational approach did show that these problems were not a question of an exclusive national guilt but of specific historical conditions. This made it easier to accept unpalatable facts. It was regrettable that everywhere in the region views had become polarized. Dialogue was the only way that some degree of consensus could be achieved. ■

## 2021 ASEEEES Convention in New Orleans and Virtually

The Association for Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies (ASEEEES) held its fifty-third annual convention in two installments, one in person and one online. The face-to-face convention was held in New Orleans on November 18–21. The virtual convention took place December 1–3. An international forum, the annual gathering seeks to facilitate a broad exchange of information and ideas, stimulating further work and sustaining the intellectual vitality of the field. This year’s theme is “Diversity, Intersectionality, Interdisciplinarity.” The convention organizers note that while studies of Eastern Europe and Eurasia have been well informed about class and economic questions, thanks largely to socialist scholars, the societies and their discourses also bring other kinds of diversity: ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, and sexuality. These may be perceived differently in Eastern Europe and Eurasia than in the Americas or Western Europe, suggesting possible approaches for study. ■

For more information on the conference, please visit <https://www.aseees.org/convention>.

## Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Chicago December 19–21, 2021

The conference of the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) is the world’s largest annual international gathering of Jewish studies scholars. With more than 1,200 attendees expected, over 190 sessions, a book exhibit of leading publishers, cultural programming, a plenary session, and awards, the conference provides a unique opportunity to share ideas and explore the world of Jewish studies scholarship.

The sessions will begin Sunday, December 19, at 10 a.m. (US Central Time) and will end Tuesday, December 21, at 4:30 p.m. Additional programs and events are scheduled before and after conference sessions. ■

For more information, please visit the AJS Conference website at <https://associationforjewishstudies.org/conference>.



## UCL Institute for Jewish Studies Fall Lecture Series

Since mid-October, the University College London Institute of Jewish Studies has been presenting its highly regarded series of weekly lectures and book launches. Done via Zoom, the series will conclude on December 16.

Opening the series on October 14, historian Sarah Abrevaya Stein, of UCLA, presented “Family Papers: A Sephardic Journey through the Twentieth Century.” Stein related the saga of the prominent Levy family of Salonika, publishers and editors who helped chronicle modernity as it was experienced by Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire and later Greece. Family members soon moved to Israel, Brazil, and India, and to Western Europe where they suffered during the Holocaust.

The series continued on October 19 with a book launch for *The Frog Under the Tongue: Polish-Jewish Medical Traditions* by Marek Tuszewicki of Jagiellonian University. The following week, at the Michael Goldmeier Memorial Lecture, UCL’s Shirli Gilbert spoke on “German-Jewish Refugees in South Africa.” October 28 was the occasion of another book launch, *London Yiddishtown* by Vivi Lachs of Queen Mary University of London.

November featured three book launches and two lectures. The month began with the launches of *It Could Lead to Dancing* by Sonia Gollance of UCL on the 4th, followed by *Hasidism Beyond Modernity* by Naftali Loewenthal of UCL on the 11th. The third launch, on the 16th, was for *Weimar and Now: Yiddish Writers in Weimar Berlin* by Marc Caplan of Dartmouth College. The month concluded with lectures. On November 23, Roni Mazal of Ben Gurion University of the Negev presented “Yiddish in South Africa,” and on the 30th, Thomas Römer of the Collège de France spoke about “The Ark Narrative.”

The series concludes with two lectures in December. On the 9th, Nadia Vidro of UCL discussed “Saadya Gaon’s Works on the Jewish Calendar.” On December 16, David Jacobson, of AIAS, will present the concluding lecture of the series, “Agrippa II, the Last of the Herods.” ■

For more information on the series please visit the UCL Institute of Jewish Studies website, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/institut>.

## Call For Papers: Bridging Divides. Rupture and Continuity in Polish Jewish History

In honor of its seventy-fifth anniversary, the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, together with Yale University's Fortunoff Archive and Yeshiva University's Emil A. and Jenny Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, will host "Bridging Divides: Rupture and Continuity in Polish Jewish History," an international conference in Warsaw from May 23 to 26, 2022. The organizers invite emerging scholars to present their research and gain introduction to the rich holdings and projects of the Jewish Historical Institute. They ask presenters to consider the continuities of Polish Jewish culture before, during, and after the Holocaust in areas like biography, geography, language, politics, gender, secularization and traditionalism, literary and artistic production, legal practices, documentation, memory studies, and Jewish-Christian relations. They have invited advanced doctoral candidates and recent PhD recipients (past ten years) to submit an abstract of their research and a brief bio. Travel and accommodations in Warsaw will be provided for selected participants, whose presentations will be eligible for inclusion in a published volume. ■

<https://www.jhi.pl/en/articles/call-for-papers-conference-honor-75-anniversary-jhi,4292>



The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.  
Photograph by Grzegorz Kwolek. Courtesy of the Jewish Historical Institute

## EXHIBITIONS

# “Time Recovered—Memory and Participation” Dialogue and Arts Festival at Orla Synagogue

Michael Mail

This past September, the 17<sup>th</sup>-century synagogue of Orla, Poland, was the locus of a week-long festival, “Time Recovered – Memory and Participation.” Intended to encourage public dialogue through art, music, and discussion, the festival featured highlights from Orla’s past,

with the synagogue as a focus. Participants included leading artists and members of the Orla community, as well as artists and academics from the University of the Arts in Poznań (UAP) and the Białystok University of Technology (BUoT). The many offerings included workshops

on ceramics, a theater performance, guided tours of the synagogue, a conference, and a concluding concert.

Prof. Wojciech Hora, Dean of UAP, created a dramatic installation in the synagogue’s main hall consisting of a Star of David suspending a precise



Festival activities at the synagogue in Orla.

Photograph by Michael Mail. Courtesy of the Foundation for Jewish Heritage

arrangement of stones representing a narrative based on two Jewish women his family hid during World War II. The Pygmalion Brigade Sculpture Theatre produced a striking work in front of the synagogue's entrance of two expressive Jewish figures embracing. Another piece by Dr. Daniel Koniusz used highly sensitive recording equipment to capture sounds emitted by the building itself. In addition, an exhibition, *Time Recovered*, showcased a variety of visual artistic works, many of which employed natural phenomena, like sound and light, to achieve innovative and evocative effects.

Jews constituted a majority of Orla's population until World War II, when they were moved into a ghetto and later transported to Treblinka extermination camp. German soldiers destroyed the synagogue's ark and used the building as a storehouse for property stolen from the Jewish population. In 2010, the synagogue came under the ownership of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, and several

*Jews constituted a majority of Orla's population until World War II, when they were moved into a ghetto and later transported to Treblinka extermination camp.*

local organizations began working to conserve the building with support from the mayor and municipality. Though devoid of Torah scrolls and a *bimah*, the structure nevertheless evoked traces of its former splendor and its desecration.

The festival owed its origins to the UK-based Foundation for Jewish Heritage, which started discussions on innovative uses of Jewish heritage sites with the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland. The municipality of Orla and local universities joined the conversation, leading to the creation of the festival. Plans are now being considered for follow-up activities.

For further information, please contact Michael Mail, head of the Foundation for Jewish Heritage, at [michaelmail@foundationforjewishheritage.com](mailto:michaelmail@foundationforjewishheritage.com) or +44 7968 529609. ■

*Michael Mail is founder and CEO of the Foundation for Jewish Heritage. He is a trustee of ICOMOS-UK and the Brussels-based Future for Religious Heritage (FRH).*



# Galicia Jewish Museum's Szancer Exhibition Travels to California

Jakub Nowakowski

In 2020 the Galicia Jewish Museum in Kraków opened a temporary exhibition devoted to the life and work of Jan Marcin Szancer, one of the best known Polish illustrators of Jewish origin. Using Szancer's characters, the museum transformed the artist's biography into a fabulous and colorful narration that encourages children and adults to use their imagination and sense of play, while learning about Szancer's work.

A traveling version of the exhibition was created in 2021, thanks to generous support from Poland's Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport, and in partnership with Taube Philanthropies and Tad Taube, the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in San Francisco.

The traveling exhibition launched at the Addison-Penzak Jewish Community Center of Silicon Valley on September 19, accompanied

by special events, including a panel discussion with Shana Penn, Executive Director of Taube Philanthropies and Vice Consul of the Republic of Poland in San Francisco, and Jakub Nowakowski, Director of the Galicia Jewish Museum.

The panel was followed by a children's art workshop and a virtual lecture by Dr. Edyta Gawron (Jagiellonian University) about the influence of Polish Jews on Polish culture and art in the

second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibition opened on November 9 at the Peninsula JCC in Foster City, California, where it will be on view until January 19, 2022. ■

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

Szancer exhibition at Peninsula JCC in Foster City, California.  
Courtesy of Galicia Jewish Museum



## *Hidden Image. Vilna Gaon*

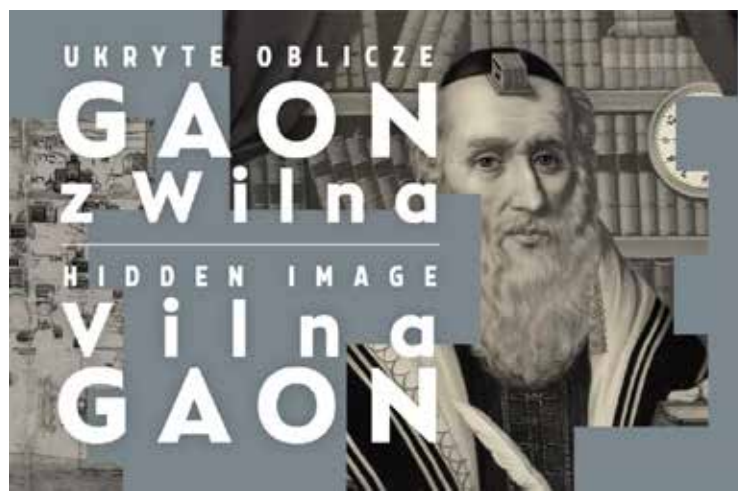
Temporary Exhibition at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw

October 22, 2021, to February 27, 2022

Aleksandra Sajdak

The Hebrew word for genius, *gaon*, was appropriately bestowed upon Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna. The Gaon's extensive knowledge left almost no subject unexamined. His Jewish writings reveal a knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, science, music, philosophy, and linguistics.

Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman was a unique individual in the history of Judaism. As one of the most outstanding Jewish scholars, he shaped the modern study of the Talmud and participated in the turbulent religious disputes of his time. His fame radiated throughout Europe. A new exhibition by the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI) recalls the figure of the Vilna Gaon to honor the 300th anniversary of his birth, celebrated in 2020. The great scholar is an example of the durability of Polish-



Lithuanian relations and proof of the authority enjoyed by representatives of the Jewish community living in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The Vilna Gaon developed methods of studying the Torah and its commentaries still applied today. He also contributed to the concept of the yeshiva as a religious university and to the system for studying the Talmud.

A rich program of events accompanies the exhibition. The institute invites online meetings about Kabbalah, legends about the Gaon, and Jewish Vilnius, as well as free

guided tours of the exhibition on selected Tuesdays and Sundays. As a part of the exhibition, the spaces of the JHI that are generally inaccessible to visitors will be open to the public, including digitization and conservation workshops and the library, where visitors

will be able to get to know the “behind the scenes” work of museologists and archivists.

The exhibition was organized by Curator Marta Kapełus in cooperation with the research and coordinating team: Magdalena Bendowska, Jan Doktor, Monika Krawczyk, Anna Michałowska-Mycielska, Jakub Bendkowski, Franciszek Bojańczyk, and Michał Krasicki. For more information, please visit the JHI website at: <https://www.jhi.pl/en/articles/hidden-image-vilna-gaon-temporary-exhibition-october-22,4310>. ■

# *In Real Times. Arthur Szyk: Art & Human Rights* Exhibition Traveling to The National WWII Museum September 2022—May 2023

The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at the University of California, Berkeley, has announced that its exhibition, *In Real Times, Arthur Szyk: Art & Human Rights (1926–1951)*, will be showing at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans from September 2022 to May 2023. Arthur Szyk was a Polish Jewish artist and illuminator known for his advocacy of religious tolerance, racial equality, and human dignity. After relocating to the United States in 1940, he gained an international reputation through his striking cover art for national magazines, such as *Collier's* and *Time*.

This first-ever traveling exhibition from The Magnes will showcase Szyk's art across the US and internationally. Taube Philanthropies provided funding that enabled The Magnes to purchase much of Szyk's original work, now The Taube Family Arthur Szyk Collection.

“When we funded the acquisition of the Szyk collection by The Magnes, we hoped that it would receive global exposure and ultimately revive interest in the work of this great artist,” said Tad Taube, Chairman of Taube Philanthropies. “Our dream has come true with the news that the exhibit will travel to the National WWII Museum and beyond. Sharing Szyk's art with younger generations and inspiring them to defend personal dignity, identity and freedom is an important part of Taube Philanthropies' work to effect positive change in our world.” ■



Installation images from The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life's Arthur Szyk traveling exhibition, opening at The National WWII Museum in 2022.  
Photos courtesy of the Magnes Collection



## *They Fill No Space: Reviving the Memory of Polish Jews in Public Spaces*

An ongoing traveling exhibit, first produced in 2017 in cooperation between POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and the Norwegian Centre for Holocaust and Minority Studies in Oslo, is now making its way through five cities in Poland. *They Fill No Space:*

*Reviving the Memory of Polish Jews in Public Spaces* features thirty murals that present topics about Polish Jews and the history of Jewish life in Poland. The murals focus on Polish-Jewish relations and efforts to remember those relationships by urban activists and by local associations.

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, one of the exhibit's organizers, notes visitors "will learn about the contribution of Polish Jews to Polish culture and economy, Jewish life in Poland throughout the centuries and the Polish Righteous Among the Nations. Difficult chapters



Exhibition *They Fill No Space: Reviving the Memory of Polish Jews in Public Spaces*, in Lublin. Photograph by Dorota Dee Bielak, courtesy of the Centre for the Meeting of Cultures



in Polish-Jewish history are also discussed, including the Holocaust and the antisemitic campaign launched by the Communist authorities in March 1968.”

Traveling from Lublin to Warsaw, the exhibit is scheduled to be displayed in front of the Old Synagogue in Kraków, and then to Łódź

and Rzeszow. Each showing will be accompanied by educational and cultural events organized in collaboration with local partners. Related activities include a walk along the trail related to local Jewish history, a cycling tour, discussions about new ideas for commemorations, and family workshops. In 2022,

the exhibit will be featured at the Holocaust Museum in Slovakia. ■

For more information and updates about the exhibit, please visit the Friends of POLIN Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofPOLINMuseum>.



Exhibition *They Fill No Space: Reviving the Memory of Polish Jews in Public Spaces*, in Lublin. Photograph by Dorota Dee Bielak, courtesy of the Centre for the Meeting of Cultures

## NEWS & REPORTS

# Verdict of the Appeal Court in the Libel Action Against Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski

Antony Polonsky

In her justification of the dismissal on August 16 of this year of the libel action against the historians Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, the appeal court judge, Joanna Wiśniewska-Sadomska, held that “[i]nterference in scholarly research is not the responsibility of the courts.” The two historians had been found guilty of libel in the civil action brought in the Warsaw District Court by Filomena Leszczyńska in February 2021. It was alleged that in the book *Dalej jest noc: losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* (The Night Is Still Far Off: The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland, 2 volumes, Warsaw, 2018, published by the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences), they had libeled her uncle, the late Edward Malinowski. She claimed that in the book it had been asserted that Malinowski, former mayor (*sołtys*) of the village of Malinowo (located in the district of Bielsk

Podlaski, near Białystok, in present-day eastern Poland), had been implicated in the roundup of Jewish citizens of his district.

The lawsuit was clearly intended to discredit this 1700-page study, a joint effort of nine scholars who were investigating the fate of the Jews in nine areas of occupied Poland in the final phase of the Holocaust after the mass deportations. At that time, around 200,000 Jews were confined to ghettos in smaller towns, where barely 50,000 survived until the end of the war. Many of them perished because of the involvement, direct or indirect of Poles, among them Polish underground groups, policemen and firefighters, mayors of towns and villages, and rank-and-file citizens.

Referring to a paragraph written by Barbara Engelking (Grabowski is one of the editors of the book), Leszczyńska claimed that it was not true that her uncle had

defrauded a fugitive Jewish woman, Estera Drogicka (née Siematycka), or that he had assisted in the rounding up and murder by the German occupiers of a group of over twenty Jews hiding in a nearby forest. (At his trial in August 1949 for collaboration under the law of August 1945, in which he was acquitted, Malinowski had admitted to participating in the roundup but denied involvement in the murder of any Jews.) Drogicka had spoken in Malinowski’s defense (perhaps under coercion) at this trial, but had accused him of these actions in her hours-long testimony to the Shoah Foundation in 1996. Explaining this discrepancy, Drogicka, who had subsequently remarried and was now known as Maria Wiltgren, explained, “When the war ended, he would have been sentenced to death...I saved him, in spite of the fact that he did me much harm.” It seems that she felt some gratitude to Malinowski, who

by helping her pass as a non-Jew and by sending her to Germany as a forced laborer, had saved her life.

In the libel action, Leszczyńska, who was supported by a right-wing foundation, Reduta Dobrego Imienia (Redoubt of the Good Name of Poland) and its founder, Maciej Świrski, demanded 100,000 zloties compensation and a public apology. On February 9, 2021, Judge Ewa Jończyk rejected her claim for financial compensation in order that the verdict should not have “a cooling effect on academic research.” She then ordered the two historians to send a letter of apology to Leszczyńska for “violating the honor” of her late uncle, to post a statement on the website of the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research, and to correct the “mis-statements” in subsequent editions of the book. The court held that was the only injury that Leszczyńska had suffered and that her claim that her “identity and national pride” had been slandered was not actionable. While the court conceded that “[I]t must be underlined that the court is not empowered to decide disputes

*On appeal, the judge found that the libel action was without merit and dismissed it entirely. She argued that the case revealed a clash between an individual’s right to defend the reputation of a dead relative ... and values such as the freedom of scholarly inquiry about the past and the freedom of witnesses of the past to speak openly.*

of a historical nature,” it critically assessed Engelking’s use of sources. In particular, the judge held that the 1996 testimony was full of “inaccuracies and contradictions,” that Drogicka was not a direct witness of what she described and that, therefore, her account should be described as “gossip and rumors.” It had furthermore led Engelking to “unjustified conclusions” which were “not in accordance with the facts.”

On appeal, the judge found that the libel action was without merit and dismissed it

entirely. She argued that the case revealed a clash between an individual’s right to defend the reputation of a dead relative, to which the plaintiff was entitled, and values such as the freedom of scholarly inquiry about the past and the freedom of witnesses of the past to speak openly. The right to defend a dead relative was not absolute, and “freedom of speech is one of the pillars of a democratic society, essential for its development.” She continued that “the assessment of the methodology of historical research, the criticism of historical sources and the verification of such sources, indeed the way historical scholarship should be evaluated is not the subject for a court decision.”

For a court to decide on the credibility of historical sources or to instruct historians as to which sources should be believed would constitute “an unacceptable form of censorship and interference in the the freedom of research and scholarly work.” The judge continued that “the only circumstance” in which such interference would be justified would be a case of “obvious injustice...resulting from the ill will and the propagation of

historical falsehood.” This was not the situation in this instance. On this occasion, Professor Engelking had to decide between two contradictory accounts. She set out the historical context of the trial which took place in 1949, described the intimidation of witnesses, including the murder of one of them, and explained why the account given in 1996 was more believable. At the same time she did give the reader an account of both versions. Judge Wiśniewska-Sadomska concluded:

*In this situation, in the opinion of the appeal court, to evaluate*

*or reject the scholarship involved, as is demanded by the plaintiffs, would constitute an unacceptable interference in the freedom of scholarly research and speech.*

*It cannot be ruled out that the results of this research are not free from mistakes of fact or interpretation. However, these cannot be the basis for a decision in this matter.*

*A court room is not the appropriate place for conducting a historical debate.*

In a statement issued on August 16, and published on the website of the Polish

Centre for Holocaust Research, the two historians “[g]reeted this verdict with great joy and satisfaction, the more so because the result of our trial is of fundamental significance for the entire Polish scholarly community and in particular for historians of the Holocaust.” One can only echo these sentiments. However, as of this writing, the Reduta Dobrego Imienia has appealed the case to the Supreme Court and we will have to await the outcome of its decision before this matter is finally resolved. ■

## Update to the Lawsuit Following the Death of Filomena Leszczyńska

Filomena Leszczyńska, who sued the historians Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, for allegedly libeling her uncle, the late Edward Malinowski (as described in the above article), died on October 8, 2021, at the age of eighty-one. Her death was announced by the Reduta Dobrego Imienia (Redoubt of the Good Name of Poland), which has played a major role in pursuing this legal action.

Her funeral, held on October 11, was a public event. Among those who participated were Minister Jan Michał Dziędziczak, the

government’s plenipotentiary in matters concerning Polonia and Poles abroad, Maciej Świrski, president of the Reduta Dobrego Imienia, the *starosta* of Siematycze where Filomena Leszczyńska lived, and the chairman of the district council of Siematycze. Minister Dziędziczak gave the funeral address. According to the report on the portal [wPolityce.pl](http://wPolityce.pl), he said:

*Poland is grateful to Filomena Leszczyńska. She is a heroine of our times. Today, fortunately, we don’t need to defend Poland with a gun in one’s hand. Today as a patriot of the twenty-first century, it is enough to fight for truth and the good name of our country.*

Nevertheless, with her death, it must be assumed that her appeal to the Supreme Court will now lapse.



# Rally in Kalisz Burns Copy of Statute of Kalisz of 1264

Editors' Report

On the night of November 11, 2021 as part of the commemorations of Polish Independence Day, a mob of several hundred right-wing nationalists assembled in the town of Kalisz in Central Poland shouting “Death to the Jews!” and “the Zionists and the LGBTQ are our enemies!” They also burned a copy of the Statute of Kalisz of 1264, a proclamation issued by Prince Bolesław the Pious, that made Jewish settlement in the country possible, allowing them to engage in trade, and providing penalties for desecration of a Jewish cemetery or a synagogue, and condemning the blood libel directed against Jews.

The Union of Jewish Religious Communities, Poland’s Jewish community, stated in a public statement that Jews “have not experienced such contempt and hatred expressed in public for years...Poland is our homeland. We are both Jews and Poles. We are asking, however, why our right to

*[T]he Union of Jewish Religious Communities...stated that Jews “have not experienced such contempt and hatred expressed in public for years...Poland is our homeland. We are both Jews and Poles.”*

regard Poland as our home is being questioned ever more often and ever more openly?”

President Andrzej Duda responded strongly, “I firmly condemn all acts of antisemitism. The barbarism shown by a group of hooligans in Kalisz runs contrary to the values which underlie the Polish Republic.” The Polish Foreign Ministry called the incident an embarrassment, adding that the ministry has filed a complaint with the state attorney. The minister said that the rally “goes against Poland’s

struggle for independence and freedom for centuries. It goes against the history of Poland, the history of Kalisz and the basic values of our nation. There is no place for racism in the Polish political conversation.”

The incident has also been condemned by the Polish Episcopal Conference. In response to the day’s events, on November 14, residents of Kalisz staged a “Kalisz — Free from Fascism” demonstration in the city center. Poland’s Interior Minister described the incident as “outrageous” and on November 15 he announced that three people, named as Piotr R., Wojciech O. and Marcin O., had been arrested in connection with the incident. Two weeks later they were released on bail. This led to a demonstration in which their supporters celebrated what they described as “the freeing of patriots and shouted “We will win!” We hope that the counter forces of justice will prevail. ■

# Polish Independence Day

Aleksandra Sajdak

On November 11, Poland celebrated National Independence Day: the anniversary of Poland regaining sovereignty in 1918. After 123 years of captivity and the partitions of Poland between three neighboring powers, Poland was reborn as a sovereign and democratic European state.

Today, Polish Independence Day is celebrated each year with commemorations held across the country, culminating in the main event on Piłsudski Square in Warsaw, where the first celebration took place before World War II. As in prior recent years, thousands gathered in Warsaw this year for an annual Independence Day march, carrying Polish and nationalist group flags, an event the far-right organizers dedicated to uniformed “protectors of the border” amid an escalating migrant crisis at the country’s eastern border. Warsaw authorities had secured a court ban on the event, which runs separately from official commemorations



Royal Castle in Warsaw on Independence Day, 2021.  
Photo courtesy of A. Sajdak

*According to the Warsaw police, this year’s commemorations were “among the safest in recent years.”*

and has a history of occasional violence. Still, Poland’s national government challenged the ban.

Marchers, including families with children and representatives of nationalist groups like ONR (National Radical Camp, or *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*), fired red flares and chanted “Viva,

viva border guard!” and “God, Honor, Homeland!” as they walked through Warsaw.

At the same time, the Anti-fascists Coalition organized its march, held under the slogan “For Your Freedom and Ours,” which gathered thousands of people with rainbow, Polish, and EU flags. The anti-fascist demonstration took an alternative route in central Warsaw.

According to the Warsaw police spokesman, Sylwester Marczak, this year’s celebrations were “among the safest in recent years.”

All around Warsaw, various organizations held concerts, marathons, and other activities to celebrate the 123<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of regaining independence. Maybe, someday, we will all walk together. ■

*Aleksandra Sajdak is Senior Program Manager and Genealogist at the Taube Center for Jewish Life & Learning in Warsaw, and Assistant Editor of Gazeta.*

# The Conflict Over the Polish Restitution Law

Konstanty Gebert

In July this year, the Polish parliament – the Sejm – passed an amendment to the country’s Code of Administrative Procedure, making it impossible to raise legal challenges to administrative decisions after thirty years “even if made in flagrant violation of the law.” The amendment was initiated by the ruling PiS party and passed with the support or abstentions of the opposition. Similar amendments exist in analogous codes of many countries and aim at providing basic legal security to subjects of such administrative decisions.

Yet the amendment was received with great concern in Israel and the United States. Eighty-two Knesset members representing all parties but Ra’an had signed a letter to the Sejm, calling on it not to pass the amendment. They argued that it “denies Holocaust survivors and descendants of Holocaust victims [the right] to demand

*The Polish government falsely claims that Jews demand not restitution of such property as still exists, but compensation for wartime losses, and then legitimately argues that such claims should be directed to Berlin.*

the return of the property stolen from them,” adding that there “is no doubt that Poles took part in the persecution, theft and extermination.” In addition, the amendment states that “Acknowledging history, not rewriting it, is the act that would increase the respect for the Polish nation.”

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid called the amendment “immoral.” Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Paweł Jabłoński responded by calling

his statement “uninformed” and expressing “ill-will.” Relations deteriorated from there, with Israel ordering its new ambassador to Poland not to leave, recalling its *chargé d’affaires*, and suggesting the Polish ambassador, in Poland at the time, not return. In the meantime, the Polish Senate had attached additional amendments to the amendment itself, thereby delaying its enforceability and preventing it from affecting cases already under consideration.

The Sejm, however, promptly rejected them, and the President immediately signed the amendment into law without sending it to the Constitutional Tribunal for review, which would have delayed its coming into force. As rhetoric on both sides escalated, with Lapid accusing Poland of “antisemitism” and “offense to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust,” Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki stated that “the

Jews will not get one zloty, not one Euro, not one dollar,” and Jabłoński announced that Polish consent to organized visits by Israeli youth will be “re-examined.” The matter became the most serious crisis in mutual relations since diplomatic relations were re-established in 1990, and no solution is in sight.

Israeli criticism is entirely justified, but totally misplaced. The problem is not the amendment itself but the lack of a restitution law as passed by all other EU nations. In its absence, claimants have to either work their way through courts on general principles — a lengthy, costly, and often ineffective procedure — or rely on administrative decisions, arbitrary and now irrevocable. Had Israel criticized the scandalous lack of such a law, and stressed that this lack makes the amendment unfair to all who lost property, not only Jews, the message would have been clear. As things stand, however, Jerusalem has played into the hands of the ruling nationalists in Warsaw.

*Israeli criticism is entirely justified, but totally misplaced.*

*The problem is not the amendment itself but the lack of a restitution law as passed by all other EU nations.*

The Polish government falsely claims that Jews demand not restitution of such property as still exists, but compensation for wartime losses, and then legitimately argues that such claims should be directed to Berlin. Furthermore the issue is clouded by the question of heirless property, with the Polish extreme right claiming that Jews also demand, without legal grounds, \$350 billion USD. The Polish government presents the amendment as a means to put a definite end to any Jewish claims, even though it does not, and gives the antisemitic extreme right a reason to vote PiS in the next elections. Jerusalem’s overblown reaction convinces Polish

antisemites that PiS has hit Jews hard and might just give the party the electoral margin it craves. ■

*Konstanty Gebert is a journalist and Jewish activist, author of numerous books and articles on post-war Poland, including Living in the Land of Ashes (2008). He was co-organizer of the Jewish Flying University, which was an unofficial Jewish study group that helped to rekindle free Jewish life in the waning years of the communist regime.*



# Observances Marking Łódź Ghetto Liquidation

## Editors' Report

Public ceremonies in August marked the seventy-seventh anniversary of the liquidation of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto by Poland's Nazi occupiers. As many as a quarter of a million Jews passed through the ghetto, from the time it was established in Łódź in spring 1940 until the last motor

transport of inmates on August 29, 1944. The commemoration was attended by survivors, Jewish and non-Jewish Poles, including Marian Turski, and guests from abroad.

Events began on August 22, with burial of a Torah scroll in the Jewish Cemetery, and continued on the 26th with "Between Two Worlds," a

concert inspired by the music of Dawid Bajgelman. The next day saw a symbolic lighting of candles at the Monument to the Memory of Łódź Jews at the Jewish Cemetery. Later that day, the mayor of Łódź and the local Jewish community hosted the main event. Participants met to lay flowers and place lighted candles at the Radegast



Official ceremonies at the Radegast Station, August 2021.  
Photograph by HaWa. Courtesy of Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź



Station Memorial, the place where ghetto inmates waited for transport to their final destination.

Litzmannstadt was the second-largest ghetto in German-occupied Europe after the Warsaw Ghetto. As an industrial center important to the German war machine, the ghetto survived longer than most in occupied Europe. Its grim walls also harbored a camp that imprisoned orphaned Polish children,

some of them the sons and daughters of parents who had been deported to work in Germany or to concentration camps or prisons.

The final deportations from the ghetto took place in June through August 1944, when the Germans moved the inmates to Auschwitz-Birkenau and another extermination camp. Between 8,000 and 15,000 prisoners of the ghetto survived the war, but few of those from Łódź returned to their

hometown. The Jews of Łódź and their descendants have scattered all over the world, but, as the commemoration shows, they have not forgotten their heritage. ■

A livestream of the commemoration events is archived on the Centrum Dialogu Łódź Facebook group at: [www.fb.com/centrumdialogulodz](http://www.fb.com/centrumdialogulodz).



Religious ceremonies at the Jewish cemetery, August 2021.  
Photograph by HaWa. Courtesy of Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

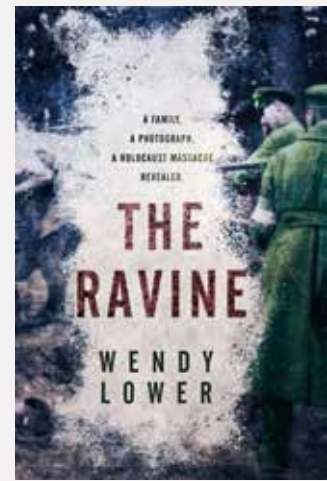
### Books

#### *The Ravine. A Family, a Photograph, a Holocaust Massacre Revealed*

By Wendy Lower

New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Books, 2021

A single photograph—an exceptionally rare “action shot” documenting the horrific final moment of the murder of a family—drives a riveting process of discovery for a gifted Holocaust scholar. In 2009, the acclaimed author of *Hitler’s Furies* was shown a photograph just brought to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The documentation of the Holocaust is vast, but there are virtually no images of a Jewish family at the actual moment of murder, in this case by German officials and Ukrainian collaborators. A Ukrainian shooter’s rifle is inches from a woman’s head, obscured in a cloud of smoke. She is bending forward, holding the hand of a barefooted little boy—only one of the shocking revelations of Wendy Lower’s brilliant ten-year investigation of this image. ■

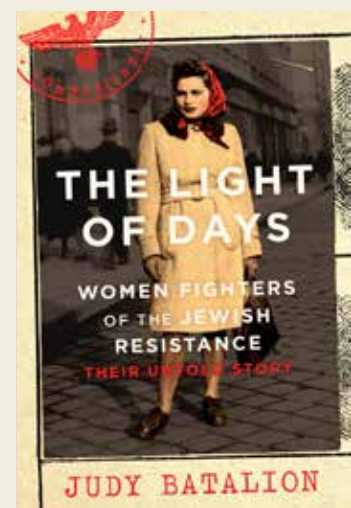


#### *The Light of Days: The Untold Story of Women Resistance Fighters in Hitler’s Ghettos*

By Judy Batalion

HarperCollins, 2021

Judy Batalion tells the story of “ghetto girls,” the young Jewish women who became resistance fighters against the Nazis. During the German occupation, the girls began organizing youth groups into resistance cells across Poland. As spies, armed fighters, saboteurs, and in other roles, they helped anti-Nazi groups harass and attack the occupiers, at great personal risk. Batalion organizes her narrative around the life of eighteen-year-old Renia Kukielka, who was a weapons smuggler and messenger. The author also follows the lives of some of the women who survived the war. Photos provide a visual counterpoint to the text of this remarkable story. ■



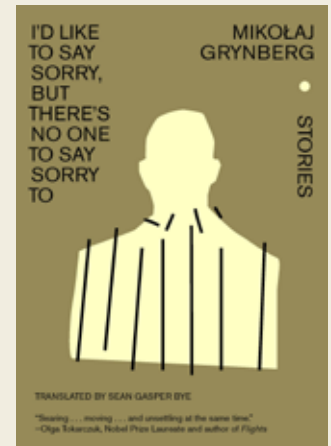
## *I'd Like to Say Sorry, But There's No One to Say Sorry To*

By Mikołaj Grynberg

Translated from the Polish by Sean Gasper Bye

The New Press, available February 2022

This collection of thirty-one first-person fictionalized accounts explores modern Poland's complex and difficult relationship with its Jewish past. Psychologist and photographer Mikołaj Grynberg has published oral histories of Polish Jews in three books, *Survivors of the 20th Century*, *I Accuse Auschwitz*, and *The Book of Exodus*. In *I'd Like to Say Sorry*, his first book of fiction, Grynberg reworks the histories into ironic, often darkly humorous short stories providing a lens for examining daily life in Poland between Jews and gentiles and the continuing presence of the Holocaust. In one of the vignettes, "Unnecessary Trouble," a grandmother's deathbed revelation that she is Jewish bequeaths to her family the struggle of deciding what to do with this information. In "My Five Jews," a non-Jewish narrator remembering interactions with Jewish countrymen, and her own antisemitism, wonders if perhaps she should apologize, but finds no one left to say "I'm sorry" to. ■

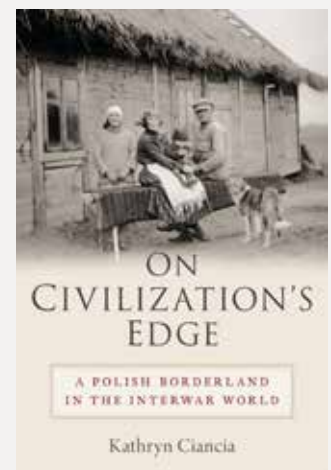


## *On Civilization's Edge: A Polish Borderland in the Interwar World*

By Kathryn Ciancia

Oxford University Press, 2020

Between the world wars, the new Polish nation consolidated its authority in lands that had long been governed by other countries. Volhynia, an eastern borderland that was home to Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews, became a center of attempts to assert state power in a place where Poles constituted an ethnic minority. An ambitious nation-building attempt was designed to transform a Russian imperial backwater into a modern, and Polish, region. The effort raised many difficult questions, such as whether to integrate the disparate ethnic groups within the new nation or to compel Polonization even at the cost of forcing some groups to emigrate. *On Civilization's Edge* mines extensive research to provide a detailed examination of the Polish government's twenty-year campaign in Volhynia. The story touches on such key issues as national inclusiveness, the place of minorities, and the nature of national identity. ■



## *People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present*

By Dara Horn

W. W. Norton & Company, 2021

In these essays, novelist Dara Horn explores the current fascination with Jewish deaths. “Sometimes your body is someone else’s haunted house,” she writes. “Other people look at you and can only see the dead.” To make her point she draws on her own experiences as she moves through a varied collection of popular and sometimes barely acknowledged beliefs and myths, ranging from the international veneration of Anne Frank, to the traveling exhibition *Auschwitz*, to the marketing of the Jewish history of Harbin. Going beyond the traditional antisemitism enshrined in literary characters like Shylock, Horn explores recent attacks on the American Jewish community, which she considers part of a dehumanization built into the public piety that surrounds the Jewish past. Against the rising tide of antisemitism she sets the vitality, complexity, and depth of Jewish life. ■

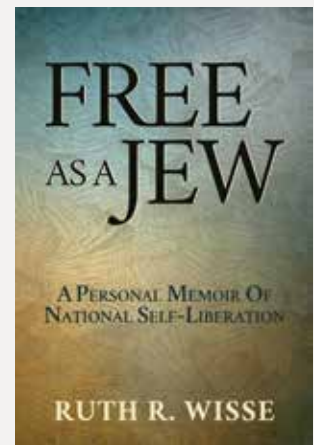


## *Free As a Jew: A Personal Memoir of National Self-Liberation*

By Ruth R. Wisse

Wicked Son, 2021. Distributed by Simon & Schuster

Ruth R. Wisse is an emeritus professor of Yiddish literature and comparative literature at Harvard University and before that helped found the Jewish Studies Department at McGill University. Born to a Jewish family in Czernowitz, in what is today Ukraine but was then part of Romania, Wisse emigrated to Canada in 1940. She grew up in a Yiddish-speaking household and came easily to the idea that love of the heritage of European Jewry and Zionism were compatible and indispensable aspects of Jewish civilization. She has written widely on cultural and political subjects. *Free As a Jew: A Personal Memoir of National Self-Liberation* tells of her lifelong love affair with Yiddish and literature, against the background of the Jewish history that she witnessed. ■



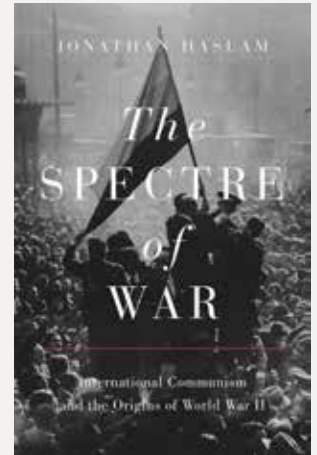


## *The Spectre of War: International Communism and the Origins of World War II*

By Jonathan Haslam

Princeton University Press, 2021

*The Spectre of War* advances fear of communism as a decisive factor in the origin of World War II. Jonathan Haslam argues that fear of communism and the concomitant efforts to promote anticommunism were crucial elements during the inter-war years, not only in Germany and Eastern Europe but in the UK and elsewhere. Soviet efforts to promote communist movements in Europe and China led conservative elements in many nations to regard fascism as an important barrier to unrest and radical political change. Haslam presents British inter-war diplomacy, including the appeasement policy of the late 1930s, in the context of the perceived need to avoid conflict with fascist, and therefore anticommunist, regimes. ■

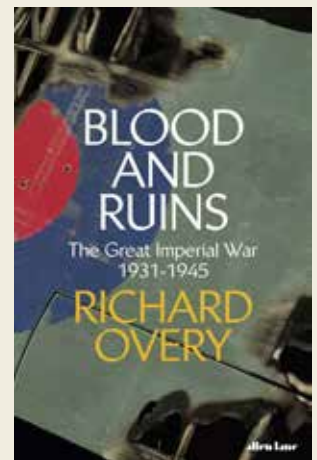


## *Blood and Ruins: The Great Imperial War 1931–1945*

By Richard Overy

Allen Lane, 2021

In this book of more than a thousand pages, British historian Richard Overy reexamines the origins and aftermath of World War II. He regards the conflict as the “last imperial war,” culminating nearly a century of competition among European nations and Japan to acquire or extend colonies in Asia and Africa. He sets the war in a global perspective that looks beyond the military conflict between the Allied and Axis powers. In a concluding chapter he advances the generally accepted view that the war marked the end of a century-long imperial structure that had organized much of the world. The crumbling of this old order opened the way for colonies to attain independence, producing today’s varied landscape of nations. Originally published in the UK, the book will appear in a US edition by Viking in 2022, under a slightly revised title, *Blood and Ruins: The Last Imperial War, 1931–1945*. ■



## *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, Volume 34: Jewish Self-Governance in Eastern Europe*

Antony Polonsky

Volume 34 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, edited by François Guesnet, Professor in Modern Jewish History in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London, and Antony Polonsky, Chief Historian of the Global Education Outreach Program of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw, is an analysis of the structures of Jewish self-governance in Eastern Europe beginning with their origins and ending in 1939. From the exile of the Jews to Babylon in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Jews have sought to create institutions to organize communal life and the practice of Judaism in the diaspora. This volume investigates the nature and functioning of the system of Jewish self-government created in the medieval Kingdom of Poland and Grand-Duchy of Lithuania, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and elsewhere in East-Central Europe. Extensive autonomy

### *The long history of Jewish autonomous organizations in the Polish lands accustomed Jews to working in representative bodies.*

and complex structures of civil and religious leadership were central features of the Jewish experience in this region. The volume probes the emergence of such structures from the late medieval period, looking at the legal position of the individual community and its role as a political actor.

Few other features have shaped the trajectory of East European Jewish history as much as the extent and continuity of Jewish self-governance. Among its most important features is the role it played in implementing the constantly changing interpretation of Jewish legal traditions and the way its institutions reflected the embeddedness of the Jewish

community in the administrative, political, and economic fabric of early modern states, most notably Poland-Lithuania. The differentiated and complex structure of responsibilities in the individual community—most prominently in the form of the board of governors, or *kahal*—made possible considerable sophistication in shaping relations with the crown, nobility, the Roman Catholic Church and the Jews' neighbors, and had a long-lasting impact on Jewish political culture. So too did the regional councils and the two national councils, the Council of Lithuania and the Council of Four Lands, which were a remarkable feature of supra-communal representation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Individual chapters discuss the implementation of Jewish law and the role of these councils.

The volume then examines how this system was partially abolished and transformed under Stanisław August, the

last king of Poland-Lithuania, and subsequently by the governments of Prussia, Austria, and Russia, which partitioned this state at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Under the influence of Enlightenment principles, these authorities sought drastically to limit the operation of Jewish self-government, which was held to prevent the desired transformation of the Jews from a community transcending existing boundaries and linked by a common faith and culture into citizens, or, where the concept of citizenship did not exist, into useful subjects of their respective states. These policies were pursued with varying results. In general, where some modernized form of Jewish self-government was retained, the transformation of the Jews into citizens or subjects was most successful. For this to take place, it was also necessary for there to emerge a significant group of acculturated Jews willing to participate in the transformation of their communities. These conditions could be found most noticeably in Prussia and to a lesser extent in Galicia in the Habsburg Empire and in Congress Poland, the semi-autonomous statelet in dynastic union with

the Tsarist Empire created at the Congress of Vienna in an attempt to reconcile Polish national aspirations with Russian *raison d'état*. They were much less a feature of the Tsarist Empire itself.

Finally, the volume explores how, with the emergence at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century of autonomous concepts of Jewish self-understanding, attempts were made to create a modernized version of this system of self-government. Polish independence made possible the creation of a single uniform system of Jewish self-government for the nearly 900 *kehillot* in the country, which played an important role in Jewish life. Jews also began to participate in the organs of local self-government that developed first in the partitioning powers and then in independent Poland. Cooperation between representatives of the Jewish and non-Jewish communities at the local level is discussed down to the inter-war years, when Jewish self-government was considered both a cherished legacy of pre-partition autonomy and a threat to the modern nation state.

The long history of Jewish autonomous organizations in

the Polish lands accustomed Jews to working in representative bodies. Governmental attempts to reform or even to abolish Jewish self-government in the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to the emergence of very different systems in the partitions, some more and some less effective. Everywhere Jewish self-government persisted and from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was seen as the basis for a system of Jewish national autonomy. This proved incapable of implementation, although, both in Poland and in Lithuania, *kehillot* continued to function and acquired new responsibilities. Jews were also represented both in parliament and in the municipalities.

The long tradition of self-government had a significant impact on the Jewish commitment to representative government elsewhere, above all in Israel. It does also seem, paradoxically, that participation in Polish and Lithuanian parliamentary life and, even more, engagement in local government in both countries, even for those parties committed to a national understanding of the Jewish identity, was more fruitful and brought greater results. ■

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Awards

## Shana Penn Awarded Medal of Gratitude



Ceremony at the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk. August 2021. Left to right: Basil Kerski, Shana Penn, Bogdan Lis. Photograph by Jakub Łysiak. Used with permission.

**S**hana Penn, Executive Director of Taube Philanthropies, scholar, and author of *Solidarity's Secret: The Women Who Defeated Communism* (University of Michigan Press, 2005), was this year's honored recipient of the Medal of Gratitude award, conferred on August 31 as part of the Freedom Days commemoration in Gdańsk. This year's events took place from August 27 to September 1, with the award ceremony as the culminating event.

Freedom Days honors the signing of the Gdańsk Agreement on August 31, 1980, which is marked annually by a weeklong celebration at the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk. The 1980 agreement between the workers and the government began a process that led eventually to the Round Table dialogue and to partially free elections in Poland in 1989. These events inspired other Eastern Bloc movements for civic and human rights.

The Medal of Gratitude honors international scholars who contributed in significant ways to the Solidarity movement. Shana Penn's pioneering research has influenced scholars, activists, politicians, and others to understand Solidarity's legacy from a perspective recognizing the valuable and historically overlooked contributions of women to the democratic movement in Poland. ■



## Jan Doktor Receives Jan Karski and Pola Nireńska Award

Historian, author and translator, Jan Doktor, has received the 2021 Jan Karski and Pola Nireńska Award. A researcher at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Dr. Doktor is the editor-in-chief of the *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* (Jewish History Quarterly). His impressive scholarly expertise extends from Jewish spirituality to Christian missions among Polish Jews.

Among his publications and studies are *Początki chasydyzmu polskiego* (Beginnings of Polish Hasidism), *Misjonarze i żydzi w czasach mesjańskiej zawieruchy 1648–1792* (Missionaries and Jews in a Time of Messianic Turmoil 1648–1792), *Słowa Pańskie. Nauki Jakuba Franka z Brna i Offenbachu* (The Words of the L-rd. Teachings of Jakub Frank from Brno and Offenbach), and *Bracia, obcy czy współobywatele. Debaty chrześcijańskie na temat judaizmu i jego wyznawców w Europie do początków XIX*



Jan Doktor.  
Courtesy of Jewish Historical Institute

*wieku* (Brothers, Strangers or Fellow Citizens. Christian Debates on Judaism and Its Followers in Europe to the Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century).

Jan Doktor's national awards include the Meritorious Activist of Culture medal and the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta.

The Jan Karski and Pola Nireńska Award was established by Jan Karski, the

military courier of the Polish Government-in-Exile, to honor his wife, dancer Pola Nireńska, who was Jewish, and the only one of her extensive family to survive World War II. The award is now funded and administered by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York in collaboration with the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw. ■

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### GEOP

# Global Education Outreach Program of POLIN Museum Fall Events 2021

### **Call for Applications Extended: GEOP Interdisciplinary Research Workshops 2022**

The POLIN Museum—through the Global Education Outreach Program—invites scholars and academic institutions to propose three-day research workshops to be held at the POLIN Museum in 2022. Workshops may be devoted to any topic of relevance in Polish-Jewish studies such as history, cultural studies, art history, public history, museology, memory studies, or related subjects. We invite applications that approach the field from new and innovative perspectives and especially encourage interdisciplinary and comparative research.

Call for applications: GEOP Interdisciplinary Research Workshops 2022 can be found here: <https://polin.pl/en/news/2021/03/18/call-applications-geop-interdisciplinary-research-workshops-2022>.

### **“Ethics and the Presence of God: Hasidim, Mitnagdim, and Modern Jewish Thought,” Online Lecture by Don Seeman in the Distinguished Lectures Series**

This online lecture, given in English via YouTube on November 14, addressed the conflict between the Hasidim and the *mitnagdim* and its resonance today. The stronghold of Hasidim was in Poland, and that of the *mitnagdim*, their Orthodox opponents, in Lithuania. Professor Seeman argues that the conflict between their differing positions on God’s “presence” defines two different approaches to ethics and Jewish life that continue to define conversations between Jews and non-Jews today.

### **“Images After: Wilhelm Sasnal’s Uses and Abuses of Abstraction,” Online Lecture by Kasia Redzisz in the Distinguished Lecture Series**

In her November 21 lecture, Kasia Redzisz explored the relationship of abstraction and

realism in Wilhelm Sasnal’s work. Taking Sasnal’s *Shoah (A Forest)*, 2003, as her point of departure, Redzisz discussed how Sasnal’s works of the last two decades, while abstract, are strongly rooted in a reality that is faulty, banal, and lacking. The lecture accompanied Sasnal’s exhibition *Such a Landscape* at POLIN Museum. It is a major event in contemporary art, both in Poland and globally. The lecture, which took place on YouTube, was moderated by Mark Benjamin Godfrey, a British art historian, critic, and curator.

### **November 23–24, Research Workshop “Hidden in Plain Sight: Yiddish in the Socialist Bloc, 1941/44–1991”**

Organized by Columbia University, Wrocław University, Free University Berlin, Jena University, and the POLIN Museum, and building on important scholarly findings, this workshop discussed Yiddish culture—its web of meaning and cultural expressions—and

the role of *mame-loshn*, be it symbolic, ritualistic, cultural, or political, in communist countries after World War II until the collapse of the socialist bloc. The (hi)story and role of Yiddish in the post-war socialist bloc has been studied selectively and is yet to be told comprehensively. The few Eastern European Yiddish speakers who survived Nazi occupation and Stalinism, and decided to stay, gradually assimilated to Russian, Polish, or the other hegemonic languages around them—at least, so the accepted story went.

The program began on November 22 with “A Tribute to David Shneer: Yiddish in East Berlin,” a concert by Jalda Rebling with Tobias Morgenstern and Daniel Weltlinger, who took audiences back to Yiddish East Berlin with a deep dive into Rebling’s song repertoire. She is the youngest daughter of Lin Jaldati, the famed voice of socialist Yiddish culture during the Cold War. Jaldati, an Amsterdam native, a Holocaust survivor herself, and lifelong socialist, accepted an invitation by the German Democratic Republic with her husband, the German socialist Eberhard Rebling, and emigrated to East Berlin in 1952. She gained fame across the spreading communist

bloc with her performances of Yiddish anti-fascist music. Jalda Rebling continues her mother’s legacy today. The event was followed by a Q&A with Gregg Drinkwater.

The workshop’s opening and closing events were open to the public: <https://polin.pl/en/event/special-music-events-opening-and-closing-night-geop-interdisciplinary-research-workshop>.

**November 24 World Premiere of “Fighting with Music: Yiddish Songs of World War II from Central Asia and Chuvashia,” a Lecture-Concert with Anna Shternshis and Psoy Korolenko**

Anna Shternshis and Psoy Korolenko made history in 2018 when their album “Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of World War II” was nominated for a Grammy under the category of World Music. The album offered a selection from hundreds of Yiddish war songs that Soviet Jewish ethnomusicologist Moisei Beregovskii had gathered from refugees, evacuees, soldiers, and Holocaust survivors in the Soviet Union and that were deemed lost until Shternshis

unearthed them in a Ukrainian archive. At the November 24 lecture-concert, Shternshis and Korolenko premiered “Fighting with Music: Yiddish Songs of World War II from Central Asia and Chuvashia,” their newest recording from Beregovskii’s treasure trove.

Event organizers included Miriam Schulz (University of Toronto) and Alexander Walther (Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena), with co-organizers Taube Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław and Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena, and sponsors Deutsch-Polnische Wissenschaftsstiftung and European Association for Jewish Studies. The workshop was organized within the Global Education Outreach Program, POLIN Museum. The closing event was sponsored by Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, and Canada Council for the Arts. ■

The Global Education Outreach Program (GEOP) was made possible thanks to Taube Philanthropies, the William K. Bowes Jr. Foundation, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland.

## OBITUARIES

# Zbigniew Pełczyński

December 29, 1925–June 22, 2021

Antony Polonsky

Zbigniew Pełczyński, who died in June at the age of ninety-five, made his mark in both England and Poland. He had a successful career as a political scientist at the University of Oxford, and after the negotiated end of communism in Poland he contributed to the development of a democratic and constitutional system.

Zbyszek (as he was known) was born in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, some twenty miles from Warsaw. He had a troubled childhood because of the bankruptcy of his father, a local wholesale and retail merchant, and the strains this imposed on his parents' marriage. He was fourteen when the Germans invaded Poland and continued his education in underground schools, joining the Home Army in 1943 and taking part in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, when he was nearly killed in a bombing raid. Taken prisoner by the



Zbigniew Pełczyński.  
Courtesy of the School for Leaders

Germans, he later served in the First Armored Division of General Maczek.

Zbyszek decided not to return to Poland, going instead to the United Kingdom in January 1946. After studying as an undergraduate at St. Andrews University in Scotland, he completed his doctorate in 1956 at Queen's College, Oxford, focusing on Hegel's minor political works. His *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives:*

*A Collection of New Essays* (Cambridge, 1971) marked the bicentenary of Hegel's birth. This was followed by two edited volumes, *Conceptions of Liberty in Political Philosophy* (John Gray, London, 1984) and *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1984). In 1957 he was elected a fellow of Pembroke College, an institution to which he was devoted and where he lectured in politics until his retirement in 1992. Among his students at Pembroke were former US President Bill Clinton and the present prime minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán.

Zbyszek was fully integrated into English life, a process which was facilitated by his Italian-born wife, Denise, a BBC journalist to whom he was devoted and who predeceased him in 2013. He was, however, always conscious of his Polish roots, asserting often that he believed an



individual could have more than one patriotism. “National identity is not something you are born with,” he noted, “nor is it determined by legal status. It is rather the consequence of what you take and what you reject from your country of origin and from where you live and what are your main fields of activity.” Once, at a party at the Polish Embassy in London, he told the Polish Ambassador, “I am a man of 200 percent. I am 100 percent British and 100 percent Polish.”

Zbyszek was active in Poland, where he returned for the first time in December 1956. The emergence of the Solidarity movement strengthened his links with the country. As he put it, “I was very proud of what the Poles had achieved and were trying to achieve.”

In 1982 he took advantage of the desire of the government of General Jaruzelski to improve its image to set up a program to bring Polish academics to Oxford for short periods, founding the Oxford Colleges Hospitality Scheme. Colleges offered

*Once, at a party at the Polish Embassy in London, he told the Polish Ambassador, “I am a man of 200 percent. I am 100 percent British and 100 percent Polish.”*

Polish scholars free room and board in the summer vacation, while the university offered free access to libraries and laboratories. Later expanded to become the School for Young Social Leaders (today the Association for Social Leaders), the program received support from the Stefan Batory Foundation, created at his suggestion by George Soros, the Hungarian-born financier and philanthropist who later established a similar program for Hungary.

The program, later extended to Cambridge, reflected Zbyszek’s view that the democratic system would only work in Poland if there was an independent

and competent civil service and intellectuals who could strengthen civil society. Since its inception, several thousand Poles have taken advantage of the scheme, and some of them, notably former Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski, who was also part of the circle of pro-Solidarity activists in England in the mid-1980s, were later to play important roles in Polish life.

In the 1990s he advised the Constitutional Committee of the Sejm in drafting the new Constitution of Poland and was also an advisor to the prime minister’s chancellery on institutional reform. For his activities, he was awarded the Commander’s Cross and Star of the Order of Reborn Poland and the Order of the British Empire.

Zbyszek was impressed by Poland’s rapid transition to a Western-style democracy and with the far-reaching privatization of industry but saw the dangers inherent in the inequalities it created. According to his biographer, David McAvoy, in *Zbigniew Pełczyński: A*

*Life Remembered*, knowing that drastic economic reforms were planned, he asked Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki what measures the government would take to prepare public opinion for the hardships ahead. “You need a top-level minister whose only job it is to keep up a relentless barrage of information and stories for all the mass media,” he declared. Mazowiecki’s hostile reaction was, “We have just got rid of the communists. We don’t want any more state propaganda in Poland.” One factor in the rise of populism in Poland has certainly been the suffering of a large part of the population as a result of the rapid and often brutal privatization, which was not sufficiently anticipated by the liberal elite.

An aspect of Zbyszek’s involvement in Polish affairs was his participation in the multi-authored *History of Poland Since 1863* (Cambridge, 1984), which was edited by Robert Leslie and included contributors Jan Ciechanowski and me. Both Ciechanowski and Zbyszek

*Given his liberal political views, Zbyszek was a strong supporter of the attempts in the 1980s to improve Polish-Jewish understanding.*

had fought as adolescents in the Warsaw Uprising and both saw this event as a tragic mistake. I remember once visiting with Zbyszek at the Powązki cemetery in Warsaw where many of the insurgents are buried. We walked past a succession of the graves of members of scout troops, mostly fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds who had perished in the uprising. “What sort of men,” he asked bitterly, “would send boys like this their deaths?”

Zbyszek’s contribution to *History of Poland Since 1863* has been criticized for giving too sympathetic a treatment of the People’s Republic, but it reflected his rejection of the blind condemnation of the communist regime which was common in the Polish

diaspora. He described the rise and ebb of Stalinism and how forced industrialization vastly expanded the urban and working-class population and created the environment in which the emergence of Solidarity was possible.

A dinner at Pembroke College at the end of March 1981 to celebrate the launch of the book coincided with the crisis provoked by a proposed nationwide protest strike called by Solidarity against police brutality in Bydgoszcz. Both Ciechanowski and Zbyszek repeatedly left the table to telephone young nephews in Poland in order to dissuade them from going onto the streets in the event of a Soviet invasion. Both came back gloomy. “They are just like we were at their age—they can’t be stopped.” Fortunately, the crisis passed peacefully.

Given his liberal political views, Zbyszek strongly supported the attempts in the 1980s to improve Polish-Jewish understanding. He was one of the organizers of the Conference on Polish-Jewish

Relations held at Oxford in 1984. His links with George Soros played a crucial role in the success of the largest and most ambitious of the series of conferences, which took place in Jerusalem in early 1988. It proved difficult to raise money for the airfares to Israel. I was a member of the organizing committee, and at a meeting in Jerusalem, the chairman, Chone Shmeruk, told me bluntly that it was my obligation to find this money.

I had no idea how to do so and decided to consult Zbyszek, who introduced me to Soros. After I explained our financial needs, Soros asked me, “How many of the people you have invited from Poland are Jews?” I explained that we didn’t ask such questions, but, given the small number of Jews in Poland, most of the invitees were not Jewish. “On that basis,” he replied, “you can have the money.” Soros, a Hungarian-Jewish integrationist, saw antisemitism as a problem in the creation of the open and outward-looking societies he was trying to create.

Zbyszek remained active in Polish-Jewish affairs and despite failing health was vice-president of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies until his death. He was a remarkable and creative individual and will be sorely missed. Asked what he had learned from life, he gave a characteristic response: “Try to have a specific purpose in life. It is as if you are in a boat, trying to get to a destination, never let the boat drift. This purpose may change and lead your life in a clear direction. Do not ever be frightened by difficulties. All life’s difficulties can be overcome.”

We extend our deepest condolences to his three children, Jan, Wanda, and Tonton (Antonia), and their families. ■



*Yiddish Typewriter,*  
Mark Podwal, 2018.  
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If you would like to suggest an author or article 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 **March 1, 2022**.

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



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