



# Gazeta

Volume 28, No. 2  
Spring/Summer 2021

Wilhelm Sasnal, *First of January (Side)*,  
2021, oil on canvas.  
Courtesy of the artist and Foksal  
Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

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



## CONTENTS

Message from Irene Pipes ..... 4

Message from Tad Taube and Shana Penn ..... 5

### FEATURES

Lucy S. Dawidowicz, Diaspora Nationalist and Holocaust Historian ..... 6

From Captured State to Captive Mind: On the Politics of Mis-Memory

*Tomasz Tadeusz Koncewicz* ..... 12

### EXHIBITIONS

New Legacy Gallery at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

*Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett*

*Tamara Sztyma* ..... 16

*Wilhelm Sasnal: Such a Landscape*. Exhibition at POLIN Museum ..... 20

*Sweet Home Sweet*. Exhibition at Galicia Jewish Museum

*Jakub Nowakowski* ..... 21

A Grandson's Reflection on *Sweet Home Sweet*

*Adam Schorin* ..... 24

### REPORTS

Kraków to Stop the Sale of "Lucky Jews"

*Magda Rubinfeld Koralewska* ..... 25

Changes in Governance at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

*Antony Polonsky* ..... 27

### CONFERENCES

History of the Jewish Workers' Alliance—the Bund

*Antony Polonsky* ..... 28

Symposium in Honor of Professor Antony Polonsky

*Michael Fleming, François Guesnet, and Christine Schmidt* ..... 30

"What's New, What's Next?" Online Conference at POLIN Museum ..... 32

International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) ..... 33

"Restoring Jewish Cemeteries of Poland" ..... 33

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### BOOKS

*Warsaw Ghetto Police: The Jewish Order Service during the Nazi Occupation.*

By Katarzyna Person ..... 34

*Islands of Memory.* By Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs ..... 35

*The Stage as a Temporary Home.* By Diego Rotman ..... 35

*The Rebellion of the Daughters.* By Rachel Manekin ..... 36

<i>Hasidism, Suffering and Renewal: The Prewar and Holocaust Legacy of Rabbi Kalonymus Shapira.</i> Edited by Don Seeman, Daniel Reiser, and Ariel Evan Mayse .....	36
<i>The Touch of an Angel.</i> By Henryk Schönker .....	37
<i>Tale of a Niggun.</i> By Elie Wiesel .....	37
<i>The Towns of Death: The Pogroms of Jews by Their Neighbors.</i> By Mirosław Tryczyk .....	38
<i>Ashkenazi Herbalism.</i> By Deatra Cohen and Adam Siegel .....	38
<i>The August Trials: The Holocaust and Postwar Justice in Poland</i> By Andrew Kornbluth .....	39
<i>Philo-Semitic Violence: Poland's Jewish Past in New Polish Narratives</i> By Elżbieta Janicka and Tomasz Żukowski .....	39
<b>AWARDS</b>	
Barbara Engelking Receives 2021 Irena Sendler Memorial Award .....	40
Józef Hen Receives Lifetime Achievement Award .....	41
<b>IN BRIEF</b>	
Stanford Libraries Receives International Military Tribunal Nuremberg Trial Archives .....	42
Jewish Historical Institute Dedicates Jan Jagielski Heritage Documentation Department .....	43
GEOP Announcements .....	44
New Foundation to Support LGBTQ+ Communities in Poland .....	46
<b>OF SPECIAL INTEREST</b>	
The Rediscovered Caricature Art of J.D. Kirszenbaum-Duvdivani <i>Nathan Diamant</i> .....	47
<b>POEM</b>	
<i>The Tale of a Niggun</i> (Excerpt) <i>Elie Wiesel</i> .....	49
<b>OBITUARIES</b>	
Roman Kent <i>Antony Polonsky</i> .....	50
Jan Jagielski <i>Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute</i> .....	53
Faye Schulman <i>Tressa Berman</i> .....	54
Marek Web <i>Joanna Lisek</i> .....	56
Jewlia Eisenberg <i>Naomi Seidman</i> .....	57
Teresa Żabińska-Zawadzki .....	59

# Message from Irene Pipes

President, American Association  
for Polish-Jewish Studies

Founder of *Gazeta*

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Cambridge, Massachusetts. I am very happy that the POLIN Museum in Warsaw is again open and very much hope to be able to visit it in the near future.

We have continued to take advantage of the wonders of technology to carry on our important work. In my last message I described the opening of the Legacy gallery at POLIN Museum which honors Polish Jews who have made a major contribution to the life of Poland and the wider world. A series of online events has marked its opening. Among these are the series of interviews “Meet the Family” in which Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition at the Museum, discussed the lives of prominent Polish Jews with members of their families.

Antony Polonsky, Chief Historian of the Global Education Outreach Program of POLIN Museum, has organized a series of online discussions of recent books on the history of Jews in Poland, intended to lead up to the international conference “What’s New, What’s Next? Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies” to be held at POLIN this October. Among the most recent books to be discussed are Nancy Sinkoff’s, *Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History* (featured in this issue in an interview conducted by Professor Samuel Kassow), Jeffrey Shandler’s *Yiddish: Biography of a Language*, and others.

One notable event also described in this issue was the online symposium held in honor of Professor Antony Polonsky on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. Its theme was “The Holocaust in Eastern Europe: Sources, Memory, Politics,” and it brought together established and junior scholars to review the state of knowledge on this complex and disputed topic. The importance of this sort of exchange is made clear by Tomasz Tadeusz Kuncewicz’s article, which clearly shows the complexities of history and memory to meet the challenges that face Poland today.

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

Two of our lead stories in this issue of *Gazeta* address a very serious issue: intolerance and its impact on Jewish communities from the end of World War I until today. Our first story is an interview conducted by Samuel Kassow with Nancy Sinkoff, the biographer of Lucy Dawidowicz, arguably one of the most influential Jewish writers since World War II. In her most famous book, *The War Against the Jews*, Dawidowicz argued that anti-Semitism was the driving force in Hitler's worldview and an essential part of his European war. She also argued that Poles themselves had a strong anti-Semitic streak, as she witnessed first-hand on a visit to Vilna in 1938.

Sinkoff concludes her interview with questions that Davidowicz's writings pose for today's readers. "How do we understand the penetration of intolerance in a society? Who's responsible for it?"

These are exactly the kind of questions that dominate our second lead story, by Tomasz Tadeusz Koncewicz, a legal studies scholar from Poland known for his human rights scholarship and advocacy. His article focuses on the current Polish government's efforts to define Poles and Poland in a way that imposes a single national narrative. Unfortunately, explains Koncewicz, that ultranationalist narrative discourages, even punishes, the unbiased examination of Poland's complicated and often painful history, including the relations between gentiles and Jews. To Sinkoff's query of "Who's responsible" for the "penetration of intolerance in a society?" Koncewicz has a direct and sobering answer.

Both of our lead stories urge the importance of maintaining an open and objective public and scholarly dialogue as a way of curbing intolerance. And this, in turn, flourishes best in a democratic nation animated by civility and the freedom to speak frankly about truth and justice. We hope you will find that this issue of *Gazeta* helps to advance this critical discussion.

Tad Taube and Shana Penn  
Chairman and Executive Director

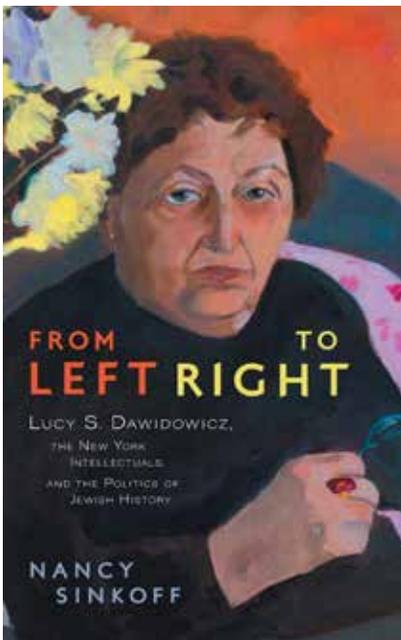
## FEATURE ARTICLES

# Lucy S. Dawidowicz (1915–90), Diaspora Nationalist and Holocaust Historian

Samuel Kassow Interviews Nancy Sinkoff About Her Award-Winning Book

**E**ditors' Note: This interview has been adapted from a conversation between Professors Nancy Sinkoff and Samuel Kassow on Sinkoff's award-winning book, *From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, The New York Intellectuals and the Politics of Jewish History* (Wayne State University Press, 2020). Sinkoff and Kassow spoke on the webinar series *Encounters*, co-hosted by the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Institute for Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, and the Avraham Harman Research Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. See the full interview at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdvwgrpiW\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdvwgrpiW_Q).

**Kassow:** Congratulations, Nancy Sinkoff, on a wonderful book. Your book claims that Dawidowicz argues “Jewish history must be written with *Ahavat Yisrael*, ‘love of



the Jews.’” What does that mean, and how does the approach relate to her diaspora nationalism and to the traditions of Jewish historical writing that preceded her in Europe?

**Sinkoff:** Lucy Dawidowicz embodies transnationalism. She was an American-born immigrant daughter raised in an intensely Jewish environment in inter-war New York City. In 1938, she made a fateful decision to go to Vilna, then within the boundaries of the Second

Polish Republic, to spend a year as a research fellow at the YIVO Institute. She returned to New York during the war years, working closely with refugee scholars. She went back to Europe, to post-war occupied Germany, in both the American and the British zones. After fifteen months in two very different areas of the occupation, she returned to New York. She quite literally was transnational in her peregrinations. Intellectually, she connected the US diasporic experience back to Europe. She also connected what I call the long Jewish past in European historiography to the post-war American Jewish experience.

The book covers all these subjects and is sensitive to the long Jewish past, Dawidowicz's present moment, and the context, namely, the worlds of Yiddish scholarship, American Jewish politics, and the transnational connections that she—and I—would argue exist among

Jews. She saw herself as deeply connected to this entity called the transnational Jewish people.

Dawidowicz was informed by the ideology known as “diaspora nationalism,” or diaspora national identity, which insists on the peoplehood of the Jews. The people themselves are the motor of their history. Their religion, ideology, and politics all derive from their existence as a nation, which embodies a sense of belonging to a people with a long historic past. She was educated in diaspora nationalist institutions. Starting in childhood, she wrote in Yiddish, studied Yiddish literature, and many of her teachers were great Polish Jewish historians.

Her diaspora nationalism encouraged her to go to Vilna. Diaspora nationalism infused the Yiddishist ideologues with *ahavat yisra’el/ahaves yisroyel* (Heb. and Yid. love of the Jewish people). In a 1968 talk, she recalled that her childhood teachers “wanted to transmit what was viable of East European Yiddish culture to their children, namely its ambience, the mood, the spirit, the values of the internal Jewish society from which



Professor Nancy Sinkoff.  
Nan Melville. Used with permission

*[Dawidowicz] connected what I call the long Jewish past in European historiography to the post-war American Jewish experience.*

—Nancy Sinkoff

they had come and which they cherished.” She was taught to love Jews and Jewishness, to relish Jewish experience and creativity.

This meant that in her perspective the historian of the Jews should acknowledge a commitment to the Jewish people and care about it. It was a form of nationalism that privileged the belonging of the Jews to a people.

**Kassow:** Can you discuss her main contributions to the history of the Holocaust? How do they stand up today, forty-five years after the publication of *The War Against the Jews*?

**Sinkoff:** Dawidowicz was not Lucy Dawidowicz until January 1948. Born in 1915, her name was Lucy Schildkret, or Libe in Yiddish. In December 1947, she returned to the United States, and at age thirty-three, after her two sojourns in Europe, she married Szymon Dawidowicz, a refugee from Warsaw who immigrated to New York before the Holocaust but lost his wife and children in the Warsaw Ghetto. They had a wonderful marriage. They did not have children, but she got a Polish surname, Dawidowicz.

Until the publication of the *Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe* in 1967, her anthology of East European Jewish life, she was relatively unknown. The book that makes her famous is the *War Against the Jews: 1933–1945*. It’s still in print, which is interesting because, in many ways, Dawidowicz has been disregarded or is

no longer significant to the historians who write on the Holocaust. Highly acclaimed in 1975, it is known for its perspective on the causes of the Final Solution. She wrote that Hitler's ideology of anti-Semitism was a linear steppingstone to the destruction of the Jews during the war. That concept is called "intentionalism."

When the book was re-issued in 1985, she wrote, "It has been my view, now widely shared, that hatred of the Jews was Hitler's central and most compelling belief and that it dominated his thoughts and actions all his life. The documents amply justify my conclusion that Hitler planned to murder the Jews in coordination with his plans to go to war for *Lebensraum* (living space) and to establish the Thousand Year Reich. The conventional war of conquest was to be waged parallel to, and was able to camouflage, the ideological war against the Jews. In the end, as the war hurtled to its disastrous finale, Hitler's relentless fanaticism in the racial ideological war ultimately cost him victory in the conventional war."

Among historians of the Holocaust, this paragraph is



Lucy Schildkret, Hunter College graduation, 1936.  
Courtesy of Laurie Sapakoff

the gift that keeps on giving. Scholars are still arguing about this. To what degree was anti-Semitism the motor of Hitler's ideology? Can modern anti-Semitism be linked to earlier forms of anti-Jewish hatred? How influential was it among the masses of German soldiers? How important are ideas in shaping historical change? How important are "great men in history"? How important are structures of society, socio-economics, happenstance, idiosyncrasy, etc.?

Dawidowicz's statement that her views were widely shared is not true, but it represents her position that, in contrast to conventional war, the

war against the Jews was a distinct and deliberate war. The campaign to destroy the Jews was already a blueprint in Hitler's mind from the publication of *Mein Kampf*. That forms the first part of her book.

The second part, "The Holocaust," is about the Jewish communal response to the attack. In this regard, the book differs from the works that had preceded it in English because it emphasizes Jewish sources, Jewish historical agency, and the Jewish collective will to live, which is a reflection again of her diaspora nationalism.

**Kassow:** Though the book has been superseded by other research, her discussion of the Jews—especially of the ghettos—brought the attention of the wider public to the fact that the ghettos were Jewish communities and were worthy of study. Outside of Israel, the ghettos were not being studied, they were regarded as holding pens for the death camps. One issue that stands out is Poland. Can you discuss her analysis of Poland, Polish-Jewish relations in the inter-war period especially, and the war period? Other historians, such as Celia Heller, whose

book was entitled *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland between the Two World Wars*, saw Poland as inexorably anti-Semitic and Jewish life as doomed from the onset of the Polish state's independence after World War I. How did Dawidowicz evaluate those years in her memoir *From That Place and Time*?

**Sinkoff:** There are two parts to your question. First, what is the “reality” of Polish-Jewish relations in the inter-war years? Second, how does Dawidowicz remember that when she writes her memoir in 1989–90? The memoir is a late-in-life reflection on the important years of being in Europe, returning to New York, and the destruction of Ashkenazi Jewish civilization. The book is poignant and written with a great sense of loss.

Lucy Dawidowicz is living in the Cold War period. She looked at Eastern Europe through the lens of the Cold War and the destruction of Jewish particularism, of autonomous Jewish culture in the Soviet Union and in communist Poland.

She didn't have full access to much that was happening



Lucy Schildkret in Vilna, August 1939.  
Courtesy of Laurie Sapakoff

*How do we understand the penetration of intolerance in a society? Who's responsible for it? I think the issues raised during Lucy S. Dawidowicz's life will speak to people today.*

—Nancy Sinkoff

underground in those societies. It was difficult to be publicly involved with autonomous Jewish culture in Eastern Europe. We knew later that there were continuities of Jewish identity under the Soviet

system. Her view of Eastern Europe was decisively shaped by her anti-communism.

Regarding the inter-war years, when Dawidowicz arrived in Poland in 1938, she's already reading about Nazism and fascism. The Yiddish press reports the discrimination against Polish Jews. Still, it was better to be a Polish Jew in inter-war Poland than it was to be a German Jew after the rise of Nazism. There were no Nuremberg Laws in Poland, even if anti-Semitism increased after the military hero Józef Piłsudski died in 1935. Before that, anti-Jewish actions were present but were not instrumentalized through the state, unlike in Nazi Germany.

Dawidowicz arrives in 1938, which we now know was the beginning of the end. The drums of war are beating hard. She's well aware of anti-Jewish hatred and predations on the street and in the university. But in 1938, no one knew about Zyklon B gassings. The Celia Heller perspective, that Jews lived on the edge of destruction, gives you the false sense that Jews woke up in August 1938 and rent their clothing in mourning.



Lucy Schildkret and Szymon Dawidowicz, 1946.  
Courtesy of Laurie Sapakoff

A poignant part of Dawidowicz’s memoir describes going to see an exhibit, *Jews in Poland*, that CYSHO (Yid. Tsentral yidishe shul organizatsye) had prepared on Jewish life in Poland, which opened with a map showing Jewish communal life everywhere. The Jews were an urban majority in Poland; they were everywhere. This exhibit was to show the *doikeyt* (Yid. “hereness”), the relatedness, the belonging of Jews to the

Polish landscape. Jews felt that way, and they did so in Yiddish, in Hebrew, and in Polish. The exhibit showed the enormous cultural and political vitality. Some Jews left if they could, but Poland was their home.

Dawidowicz, however, observed the discrimination, the anti-Jewish violence, the ghetto benches. Later, in an interview, she said—in her typical forthright fashion—“It’s very fashionable now

among some historians to say that Polish anti-Semitism has been greatly exaggerated. I hope that by spelling out, in small detail, what really happened, my book will help to set the record straight.”

**Kassow:** While there was increasing anti-Semitism after Piłsudski died, Poland never passed a version of the Nuremberg Laws. Once the Polish pre-war government realized they needed the support of the Western

democracies, they had to put on hold many restrictions that they had intended to inflict on Polish Jews. Many Polish Jews, at the end of the 1930s, were cautiously hoping for new grounds within Polish society. Dawidowicz made no effort to learn Polish or to really understand the Poles. I'm not apologizing for the Poles, but in this I think she was strident and unable to understand some deeper things that were going on within Polish society.

**Sinkoff:** I agree with your comments 100 percent. She did not learn Polish. Her husband spoke Polish. One of the reasons she could never forgive the Poles was deeply personal. First, the murder of her beloved mentors, Zelig and Riva Kalmanovich, who were like parents to her. Second, the murder of Szymon's daughter, who was a ghetto fighter. And so, she was angry and embittered.

One of the complexities of studying the relations of locals to anti-Jewish incitements is this divide, if you will, between governmental practices and from-the-ground attitudes. That's part of what historians can do because of the opening of the archives



Lucy Schildkret in Belsen.  
Courtesy of Laurie Sapakoff

and because of the learning of languages. What did it mean for the average peasant hearing a sermon chastising the Jews versus a functionary in a bureaucracy? And Jan Gross put this question on the map again with his famous book, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, about the murder of the Jews by their neighbors.

These are big questions. How do we understand the penetration of intolerance in a society? Who's responsible for it? I think the issues raised during Lucy S. Dawidowicz's life will speak to people today. ■

*Nancy Sinkoff, PhD, is the Academic Director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life and Professor of Jewish Studies and History at Rutgers University—New Brunswick. From 2014 to 2018, she served as Rutgers University's Director of the Center for European Studies.*

*Samuel D. Kassow, PhD, is Charles H. Northam Professor of History at Trinity College, where he specializes in the history of Ashkenazi Jewry. His groundbreaking book, *Who Will Write Our History?* was adapted into an award-winning film in 2018.*

# From Captured State to Captive Mind: On the Politics of Mis-Memory

Tomasz Tadeusz  
Koncewicz

In loving memory of my late grandmother Czesława Strąg, a Righteous Among the Nations, who taught me that in order to move forward, we must never forget about where we come from.

## Poland, March 2021

A court's finding, only weeks ago, that two Polish history professors are guilty of defaming an individual for activities during the Holocaust, is not just a case brought to protect the reputation of a relative. Rather, we seem to be entering uncharted territory, where the long arm of the law becomes a method of settling scores. In this case, the sacred dignity of the Polish nation, hidden under the argument of protecting the "good name" of a person, overshadows the need to have a robust historical conversation about the fate of millions of often anonymous victims. Our focus on this one case runs the risk of obscuring a national debate about fundamental questions: Who are we? What have we



Czesława and Maria in 1994.  
Family Archives of Tomasz T. Koncewicz.  
Used with permission

*In a room where people  
unanimously maintain  
a conspiracy of silence,  
one word of truth sounds  
like a pistol shot.*

—Czesław Miłosz,  
Nobel Lecture (1980)

done and, ultimately, are we ready to face it now, if ever?

These questions face Poles today. The defamation suit of the historians did not happen in a legal vacuum, nor can we claim that we did not see it coming. Quite the contrary. It follows from the logic of

the state capture that has taken place in Poland since 2015. With the judiciary and public media in tatters, the government is now implementing what I have called elsewhere a "politics of mis-memory" that seeks to present one correct vision of history for all Poles.

The most dangerous installment of such politics came with the 2018 amendment to the Law on the Institute of National Remembrance, which criminalized perceived erroneous public statements which assigned to the Polish nation any blame for crimes committed by the Nazi invaders. Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro presented the rationale as follows. The Polish government, he said, "took an important step in the direction of creating stronger legal instruments allowing us to defend our rights, defend the historical truth, and defend Poland's good name everywhere in the world." He vowed to prosecute all those who defame the Polish nation by these means.

Even at its drafting stage, the law sparked an uproar over its breathtaking scope and the severity of its sanctions (up to three years' imprisonment) and has been criticized as yet another example of the ultranationalist revival in Poland and the return of a right-wing revisionist history. Critics have pointed out the possible dangers of limiting free speech and of building a martyrological narrative claiming that the world does not understand how much Poland and Poles have suffered.

The diplomatic fallout with Israel that followed the law's entry into force saw the government finally cave in to pressure by withdrawing the most controversial provision. This minor concession was intended to improve the diplomatic optics. A more general provision (Article 133 of the Criminal Code) remains in force and states: "Whoever publicly insults the Nation or the Republic of Poland shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to three years." It is now being deployed to impose the approved historical narrative on all of us. Civil liability, as used in the case of the two historians, completes the repression.



Czesława Strąg and Rozalia Kateganer (Maria Damaszek) during the war. Czesława decided to protect Rozalia by having her baptized, with the name of a Polish girl who was thought to have been sent to Siberia. Family Archives of Tomasz T.Koncewicz. Used with permission

### **Facing History Honestly and Openly**

In trying to understand the current Polish way of historical mis-memory, the analysis of the late historian and essayist, Tony Judt, can be instructive. He has argued that two kinds of memories emerged from what he calls the official version of the wartime experience, which became dominant in Europe by 1948. One was that of the things done to "us" by the Germans during the war, and the other that of things (however similar) done by "us" to "others" after the war. According to Judt, this

split perception created "two moral vocabularies, two sorts of reasoning, two different pasts. In this circumstance, the uncomfortably confusing recollection of things done by us to others during the war ... got conveniently lost." Judt rightly points out the communists' interest in "flattering the recalcitrant local population by inviting it to believe the fabrication now deployed on its behalf by the USSR—to wit, that central and eastern Europe was an innocent victim of German assault."

The retracted legislation sends the signal that history is being instrumentalized to serve a new vision of the past. Imposing or threatening sanctions for statements contradicting the official understanding of "what happened" clearly inhibits the free flow of ideas and leads to a singular vision of the past. Protecting the good name of the state or nation is deemed more important than a robust, comprehensive, and inclusive discussion about the past—a discussion that must tolerate statements, often shocking and controversial, though nonetheless adding to the debate. Historical discourse belongs to this category.

By revealing the past, we discover the present. This

approach allows us to bring controversial aspects of the nation's history to the fore and discuss them openly and dispassionately. These are both the price for and the challenge of maintaining what American political philosopher John Rawls has evocatively called an "overlapping consensus" and living in a society with competing visions and understanding of our history. Nobody should be excluded, much less penalized, for professing their own vision of history, which may go against the mainstream political narrative.

### **Moving Forward: A Collective Denial?**

Poland and the Poles find themselves at a critical juncture, suspended between old myths and the narratives of "what happened," on the one hand, and the rejection of any attempts to discover the multi-dimensional past, on the other. Historical debate should strive for pragmatic recognition that we reshape and re-examine our civic and constitutional commitments as we move forward. As legal scholars J. Balkin and R. Siegel remark, "we turn to the past not because the past contains within it all of the answers to our questions, but because it is the repository of our common



Tomasz Tadeusz Koncewicz accepts Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations medal on behalf of his family, 2014.

Family Archives of Tomasz T. Koncewicz.  
Used with permission

struggles and common commitments." This is the kind of intellectual and civic fidelity that should inform our understanding of our history.

Unfortunately, in Poland the past continues to be seen as a collection of indisputable truths, not open to divergent interpretations and historical debate. Paranoid politics, having destroyed judicial review, the courts, and the free media, have now set their sights on historical memory. The Polish "politics of resentment" and the rising politics of mis-memory threaten to make the past an uncontested sphere, dominated by one truth superimposed by the state.

All this must not be read as belittling the sufferings

of the Polish people and the heroism of the Polish Righteous Among the Nations or questioning Poland's resistance in the face of the Nazi atrocities. Nobody denies that. My point is different. We survived because history was always a repository from which to imagine a new order and rebuild life. We relied on our shared commitment and moved forward. We remembered both the good and the bad and what saved us and our way of life. Therefore, my argument against an imposed understanding of history favors an inclusive historical memory that brings together and exposes all national experiences and narratives. Building a historical debate calls for a living pact among the past, present, and future. That would move us away from what American historian J. Connelly has called "a historiography obsessed with minutiae and overgrown with easy assumptions about martyrology," and push us toward more critical understanding of who we Poles are and where we come from. A nation unready to embark on a comprehensive journey into its past cannot move forward. When grand gestures dominate, and soul-searching is lacking, the

nation becomes a captive of its past rather than its master.

More than thirty years ago, Jan Błoński's taboo-breaking essay, "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto," broke the cycle of silence. He wrote (my translation):

*Genocide, of which the Polish people were not guilty, happened after all on our soil and stigmatized this soil forever...Our memory and public consciousness must never forget about this bloody and heinous sign ... Our homeland is built first and foremost of memory; in other words, only memory of the past gives us a chance to be ourselves. This past is not to be disposed of freely, even though we cannot be held directly responsible for the past in our individual capacity. We are obliged to carry this past inside us, irrespective of how painful it might be. And we should strive to cleanse it ... all the profanity that happened here on this soil obliges us to perform such an act of cleansing. On this graveyard this obligation really boils down to a respect for one thing: to see our past in truth.*

The last thing Poland needs today is the spreading of a culture of treason, using its own vision of the past

*With the judiciary and public media in tatters, the government is now implementing what I have called elsewhere a "politics of mis-memory" that seeks to present one correct vision of history for all Poles.*

as a tool to fight political adversaries and to divide Poles into "better" and "worse" sorts. Yet, this politics seems to be engulfing Poland. What is most alarming is the rise of a government-backed historical narrative claiming that a bunch of fancy historians, by revisiting a settled and one-dimensional history, has transformed poor Poles from victims into perpetrators. We are told that their research and academic queries betray the nation and aim at deforming the history by equating Nazi crimes with the actions of the heroic Poles. Is this attractive for the masses? By all means, as the captive mind is prone to embrace intuitive and exonerating myths.

Again as put by Błoński, "On this graveyard this obligation really boils down to ... one thing: to see our past in truth." My understanding of civic and constitutional commitment

in this context is about a generational reading of our national history. It is not about uncritical iconoclasm. It is about recognizing that the past must be a key to the future. After all, national constitutions must be understood as documents made for people of different views. What matters is that no one overarching narrative exists, and that disagreement should account for many "contested pasts."

In Poland in 2021, we may be crying out in the historical wilderness, but we must not give up. After all, this is my history, your history, our civic history that should be recognized and owned up from bottom-up, rather than be ordained top-down by the sleight of opportunistic political hand. And for carrying this truth with me, I will be forever grateful to my grandmother. ■

*Tomasz Tadeusz Koncewicz is Director of the Department of European and Comparative Law, University of Gdańsk, a member of the Council of the Fondation Jean Monnet Pour l'Europe, and an attorney specializing in litigation before European supranational courts.*

## EXHIBITIONS

# New Legacy Gallery at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

Tamara Sztyma

The new Legacy gallery at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews features distinguished Polish Jews and their achievements. Conceived as an epilogue to POLIN Museum's Core Exhibition, which presents the thousand-year history of Polish Jews, the Legacy gallery showcases exceptional individuals in a beautiful architectural space overlooking the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes.

In determining whom to feature in the new gallery and how to present them, we considered the following questions:

- Who is a Jew? Who is a Polish Jew? How do individuals identify themselves in relation to how others identify them, whether as Jewish or Polish? If they do not identify themselves as Jewish or “of Jewish origin,” on what grounds would we include or



Legacy gallery in POLIN Museum.

Photograph by Maciek Jazwiecki. Courtesy of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

- exclude them? What about converts? Would the individual in question want to be identified as a Jew (and as a Polish Jew) and to be included in this presentation?
- Why does it matter? Assuming a case can be made for identifying an individual as a Jew (and as a Polish Jew), what is the relevance of such identifications for each individual and for the Legacy gallery more generally?

- Who is representative? Which individuals best represent the diversity of what it means to be a “Polish Jew” and the broad spectrum of fields in which they were active—from the 18th century to the present?
- Who is distinguished? On what basis should “distinction” be determined?
- Should living individuals be included?
- And finally, how does the story of a particular individual illuminate the

history of Polish Jews, and how does the history of Polish Jews illuminate an individual's story?

Our goal as curators was not simply to select outstanding individuals, but to make a selection that would form a coherent whole, however kaleidoscopic it might be, and to raise questions, indeed the very questions that we asked ourselves. The twenty-six individuals featured in the Legacy gallery represent but one constellation—twenty-six is the numerical value of *koved* (Heb. honor) in gematria. The volume that accompanies this gallery (see link below) presents many more individuals, and we hope even more will be nominated by our visitors and readers and included in an online supplement to the gallery.

The Legacy gallery offers another way to engage with the history of Polish Jews. Hopefully, those who experience this gallery will be inspired to revisit the Core Exhibition and rediscover some of these luminaries within the historical narrative presented there. The Legacy gallery offer a more intimate visitor experience in an inspiring space and opportunity

*Our goal as curators was to make a selection that would form a coherent whole, however kaleidoscopic it might be, and to raise questions, indeed the very questions that we asked ourselves.*

to explore the lives, careers, and achievements of the twenty-six individuals in greater depth. Tamara Sztyma, co-curator of the gallery, undertook extensive research and selected the rich content for beautifully designed interactive stations.

In this gallery and in the accompanying volume, we bring a critical perspective to what might otherwise be a “Hall of Fame” and Jewish apologetics, by considering the social and historical conditions that affected Jewish creativity throughout the thousand-year history of Polish Jews.

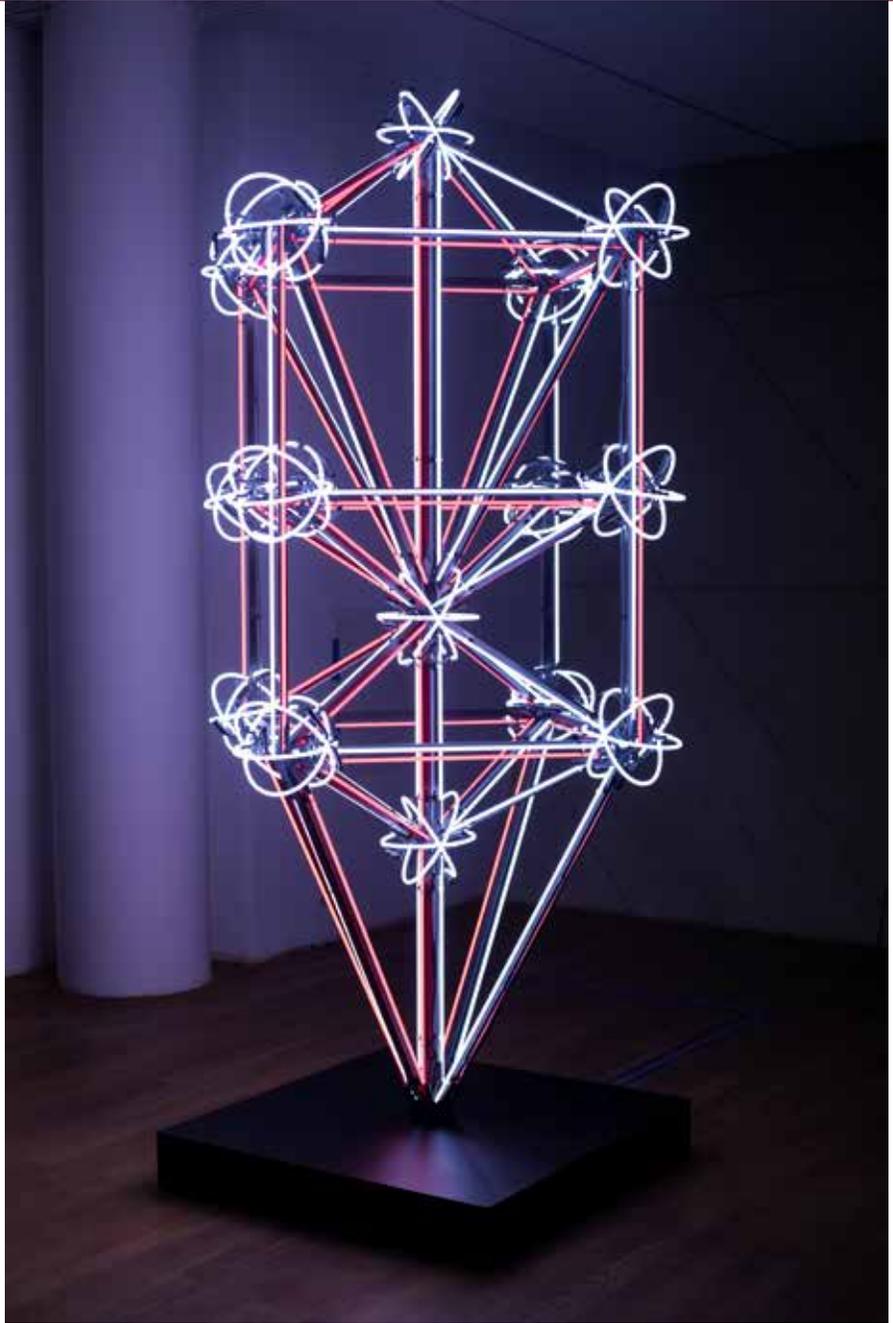
### **The Twenty Six**

■ **Julian Tuwim**, one of the most admired creators of modern Polish poetry, who combined the creative potential of language, poetics of the paradoxes of everyday

life, and reflection on the condition of modern man.

- **Isaac Bashevis Singer**, Nobel laureate, who, in his novels written in Yiddish but translated into many languages, evoked the world of Jewish towns in Poland.
- **Shmuel Josef Agnon**, Nobel laureate, who was a creator of modern Hebrew literature, where his Polish hometown of Buczacz, in Austrian Galicia, and the Land of Israel meet.
- **Bruno Schulz**, who combined literature and art and made the world of Drohobycz, his provincial hometown, the mythical center of his artistic microcosm.
- **Henryk Berlewi**, a founder of the Jewish and Polish inter-war avant-garde, who was also a pioneer of modern typography.
- **Alina Szapocznikow**, whose highly personal sculpture, at the juncture of body, memory, and trauma, defined a new direction in contemporary art.
- **Ida Kamińska**, doyenne of the Yiddish stage as actress, director, and theatre manager before and after the Holocaust.

- **Arnold Szyfman**, founder of modern Polish theatre as director, playwright, and institution builder.
- **Samuel Goldwyn**, one of Hollywood's creators, a film producer known for excellence in the movie industry.
- **Aleksander Ford**, key figure in 20th-century Polish cinematography and creator of the iconic film, *The Teutonic Knights*.
- **Henryk Wars**, a popular composer for cabaret and film, remembered to this day for his hit tunes in both Poland and the United States.
- **Artur Rubinstein**, virtuoso pianist, considered his era's greatest interpreter of Chopin.
- **Bronisław Huberman**, celebrated violinist and founder of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra (forerunner to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra) in 1936, who helped musicians flee Europe for British Mandate Palestine on the eve of the Holocaust.
- **David Ben-Gurion**, first Prime Minister of Israel, signed the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948.



Hubert Czerepok's *Tree of Life*, inspired by the Kabbalah, won POLIN Museum's competition for an artwork capturing the Legacy gallery's celebration of the achievements of Polish Jews.

Photograph by Maciek Jaźwiecki. Courtesy of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

- **Rosa Luxemburg**, activist of the Polish and German socialist movement, supporter of democracy and the proletarian revolution, who paid with her life for her involvement in the revolutionary movement.
- **Marek Edelman**, member of the Bund, the Jewish Labor Movement, a leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and an activist in Poland's post-war democratic opposition.

- **Ludwik Zamenhof**, creator of Esperanto, the most successful international language, in support of the utopian ideal of universal humanity.
- **Janusz Korczak**, educator, pediatrician, and writer, founder of Jewish and Catholic orphanages, creator of a modern pedagogy that supports the autonomy and rights of the child.
- **Sara Schenirer**, creator of a network of pioneering Bais Yaakov schools, which transformed the education of Orthodox Jewish girls by offering secular subjects, and which continue to this day in Europe, North America, Israel, and South Africa.
- **Abraham Stern**, brilliant mathematician and inventor, active in the 18th and 19th centuries, the first Jew admitted to the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Science.
- **Helene Deutsch**, disciple of Sigmund Freud, co-founder of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute, pioneer in the study of female psychology.
- **Moses Schorr**, rabbi, historian, Member of

*The Legacy gallery offers a more intimate visitor experience in an inspiring space and opportunity to explore the lives, careers, and achievements of the twenty-six individuals in greater depth.*

Parliament, co-founder of the Institute of Judaic Sciences in Warsaw, and a leader in Jewish communal life in Poland during the inter-war years.

- **Joseph Rotblat**, nuclear physicist who worked on the atom bomb, but abandoned that project to devote himself to research on the devastating effects of radiation, and who received the Nobel Peace Prize for his advocacy for nuclear disarmament.
- **Raphael Lemkin**, lawyer who created the word “genocide,” after the Holocaust, and who fought tirelessly for the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was ratified in 1948.

- **Leopold Kronenberg**, entrepreneur, industrialist, banker, and philanthropist, active in Polish and Jewish worlds during the 19th century.
- **Helena Rubinstein**, an art collector and business woman who created one of the first cosmetic empires in the world, revolutionizing the idea of beauty.

The Legacy gallery’s companion book is *Legacy of Polish Jews*, edited by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Tamara Sztyma, published by POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, 2020. ■

Copies of the e-book can be ordered at:  
[https://ebookpoint.pl/ksiazki/legacy-of-polish-jews-barbara-kirshenblatt-gimblett-tamara-sztyma\\_e\\_1wzg.htm](https://ebookpoint.pl/ksiazki/legacy-of-polish-jews-barbara-kirshenblatt-gimblett-tamara-sztyma_e_1wzg.htm).

**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.

**Tamara Sztyma, PhD**, is Curator of Exhibitions at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

## *Wilhelm Sasnal: Such a Landscape*

Temporary Exhibition at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

June 17, 2021–January 10, 2022

In June 2021, a new exhibition of works by Wilhelm Sasnal, one of the most outstanding contemporary Polish artists, opened at POLIN Museum. The exhibition presents paintings and drawings depicting familiar and remote landscapes juxtaposed with well-known figures.

Set against the “landscape” of the Shoah, this exhibition is part of POLIN Museum program activities in which artists explore the history, culture, and legacy of Polish Jews. The exhibition, curated by Adam Szymczyk, promises to draw international attention to new ways of (re)configuring the land in relation to its peopled history. In 2003–14, Szymczyk was at Kunsthalle Basel, and during 2014–17 served as artistic director of Documents 14 in Athens and Kassell.

The exhibit features works on loan from the artist, international collections, and public and private collections in Poland, including POLIN Museum. Some of the approx-



*First of January (Back)*, 2021, oil on canvas.

Courtesy of the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

imately sixty artworks will be presented for the first time.

Wilhelm Sasnal’s work has been inspired by visual information derived from various sources and contexts, including television, the internet, and the press. Sasnal also draws inspiration from works by other artists, especially photographers.

Online events will accompany the exhibition. The program will include a discussion on the lasting impacts of Holocaust landscapes (September), a

debate on the difficult past and art (October), and a lecture on Wilhelm Sasnal’s abstract painting (November). For information on the Sasnal exhibition and activities, please visit:

<https://www.polin.pl/en/wilhelm-sasnal> and

<https://www.polin.pl/en/geop-online-activities-and-initiatives>. ■

## *Sweet Home Sweet: A Story of Survival, Memory, and Returns*

Galicia Jewish Museum

August 2021–July 2022

Jakub Nowakowski

*When [my father] was in the Kraków ghetto he was still taking photos, and those photos were buried in Plaszów and discovered after the war, he hid them in a pickle jar, a glass pickle jar in Plaszów . . . So I sat with him in his home with these photographs and I asked him who everyone was in the photo . . . and he told me. He remembered their names, he remembered if they survived the war, he remembered everything about them.*

—Michelle Ores

*Sweet Home Sweet: A Story of Survival, Memory, and Returns*, an upcoming exhibition at the Galicia Jewish Museum in Kraków, Poland, is devoted to three generations of the Ores



Clockwise from top left: Lutz Bergman, Ernest (“Erni”) Abraham, Adam Goldberger, and Richard Ores. Likely in late 1941 or early 1942 in the Kraków Ghetto.

Courtesy of Michelle and Nina Ores

family and their relationship to Poland. The exhibition will explore how Holocaust memory and narratives are transmitted through the generations, and how the children and grandchildren of survivors engage with contemporary Poland.

### **Background on the Ores Family**

*Two men came with a stretcher . . . and started*

*to remove the dead bodies in a wooden cart. When they got near me, I spoke and scared them. “Sorry,” I said. “I am still alive. Could you take me to the hospital, please?”*

—Richard Ores’s testimony

Oskar Ryszard Ores, known as Richard, was born in Kraków

in 1923, into an assimilated Jewish family. His father held several jobs and his mother's family owned a kosher sausage factory in Kraków. After the outbreak of World War II, Richard was forced to live in the Kraków ghetto with his mother and sister. In March 1943, he was marched to Płaszów, a nearby labor camp. In the final months of the war, he was a prisoner in three other concentration camps: Sachsenhausen, Flossenbürg, and finally Dachau, where he was liberated in April 1945.

Richard was the only one in his immediate family who survived. After the war, he recuperated in a US Army hospital and, a few years later, attended medical school in Bern, Switzerland, emigrating to New York in 1955. But he never forgot about Poland.

Richard maintained a relationship with Poland after the war, returning frequently and staying in touch with friends in Kraków, among them heroes from the Kraków Ghetto like Julian Aleksandrowicz and Tadeusz Pankiewicz. In New York, he raised funds for hospital equipment for a clinic in Kraków and for the renovation



Irena Keller, Richard Ores's first wife, in the early years of the war.  
Photograph by Richard Ores. Courtesy of Michelle and Nina Ores

and care of many of the city's Jewish heritage sites, with the Ronald Lauder Foundation. For these actions, he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, the Cross of the Home Army, and the Oświęcim Cross. He was also a consultant on the film *Schindler's List* as the film depicted several of the places in which he survived the war.

Though Richard died in 2011, the second and third generations of his family have continued to be involved with Polish Jewish life. His daughter Michelle is engaged in the Kraków Jewish community and the preservation of Jewish life and heritage in Poland. One of her sons, Adam, has lived in Poland since 2017, where his

work has focused on Jewish history and heritage. Many other members of the family have forged their own various relationships to Poland and the Holocaust.

### **The Galicia Museum Exhibit**

*I lived in Kraków for two years, that's where my grandfather grew up. He was there during the war, he was in the Płaszów concentration camp. When I was in Kraków, for most of the time I lived a ninety-second walk away from the apartment my grandfather lived in before the war . . . and the market I would always*

*go to was right across the street from it. . . . I would pass by the cemetery where there's a monument for his family members and a little plaque for his family members who were killed in the Holocaust, and I gave tours of the concentration camp that he was in . . . and of the ghetto that he was in. I went to Rosh Hashanah services in 2018 in the room where he was Bar Mitzvahed in the High Synagogue.*

—Adam Schorin

Many Polish Holocaust survivors and their descendants understandably have a view of Poland that resembles the Poland of their parents' or grandparents' childhood and the horrors of the war. The Ores family, through its continued engagement with Poland, has a relationship with the country that, while very centered on the Holocaust and their family history, has a strong connection to Poland as a whole and to the renewal of Jewish Polish



Richard Ores (hidden in middle) and two friends, likely during forced labor on a farm in Prokocim in 1941.

Photograph preserved by Richard Ores. Courtesy of Michelle and Nina Ores

life today. Richard visited Poland frequently, bringing his family to visit Kraków and Warsaw during communism, the early days of democracy in the 1990s, and the current period of Jewish renewal. The family's story offers a path of how one family formed their own vibrant connections to the country of their roots, while still living with the pain and trauma of the Holocaust.

While Poland has become an important destination for Jewish heritage tourism over the last few decades, there is rarely any meaningful interaction between visitors and locals. This exhibit will raise challenging questions

about the relationship between ethnic Poles and Jewish survivors and visitors, with the goal of understanding this relationship today.

The exhibition will be arranged in a modern and visually attractive style. It will present both historical objects (letters, documents, photos) and audiovisual materials: interviews and testimony from Richard, recorded in the 1990s and early 2000s, as well as interviews with family members recorded specifically for the exhibition. ■

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

# A Grandson's Reflection on *Sweet Home Sweet: The Ores Family Exhibition*

Adam Schorin

For the past nine months, I have been on the curatorial team behind *Sweet Home Sweet*, the Galicia Jewish Museum's upcoming exhibition on Richard Ores and his family's relationship to Poland. Unique among the curators, I am also a member of this family—Richard was my grandfather. I didn't know him very well: he was somewhat estranged from the family, having left my grandmother nearly thirty years before I was born. My grandmother, Celia, is also a Holocaust survivor. I grew up seeing her several times a week and I've known her story of survival as long as I can remember. But Richard's story was something of a mystery to me. There were comments he'd made to me about Kraków in the latter years of his dementia (comments I hardly remember now), the framed *Jude* star he kept in his living room (I didn't even know if it had been his), and the handful of wartime stories passed down by my mother.

It wasn't until I moved to Poland in 2017 that I finally watched Richard's testimony and looked through the photographs he buried in a glass jar in Płaszów. These were photographs of his family and friends from childhood, as well as some taken in the early years of the war, at a forced labor farm in Prokocim and in the Kraków Ghetto. In one photograph, of several friends including Richard and his future first wife Irena, everyone seems to have removed their armband (which Jews were forced to wear and which appear in other photos), or hidden it behind the arm of the person next to them. They look like any group of young people from the past, some smiling, some stiff, some (Richard included) not looking at the camera. You don't realize anything is wrong until



One of the photographs Richard Ores buried in Płaszów. It depicts, from left: Adam Wnuczek, Rena Rosenberg, two unidentified people, Lusja Łuszczanowska, Helga Łuszczanowska, Irena Keller, Władek Ratner (or Rath), Helena Haber, and Richard Ores.

Courtesy of Michelle and Nina Ores

you notice the arched wall of the ghetto stretching from the edge of the frame, peaking in a small hill over Irena's head.

What to make of these images? What do they tell us about the people and events they depict, and the person (or persons) behind the camera? Richard continued to take photographs (and videos) for the rest of his life, leaving behind boxes and trash bags and film canisters with thousands of images across continents, marriages, families. He often appears himself, handing the camera off to a wife, a child, or a friend, smiling goofily or looking formal and composed. Taken together, these photographs and videos form a kind of auto-ethnography of Richard, a narrative threaded through the various states and stages of his life. Even though I knew him only obliquely, it occurred to me recently that I've seen more images made by Richard than by anyone else in my family—probably more than by anyone else I know. That's been near the heart of the work I'm doing with the museum team in preparing this exhibition: coming to know my grandfather through the images he saved and the ones he created. ■

*Adam Schorin is a writer and former co-director of FestivALT. Based in Warsaw, he is a former assistant editor for Gazeta.*

## REPORTS

# Kraków to Stop the Sale of “Lucky Jews”

Magda Rubenfeld Koralewska

The city of Kraków recently announced that it would stop the sale of figurines of Jews holding coins. “These figures are anti-Semitic and it is time for us to realize that,” said Robert Piaskowski, the Plenipotentiary for Culture of the Mayor of Kraków, in an interview with *Gazeta Wyborcza*. “In a city like Kraków, with such a difficult heritage and a painful past, they should not be sold.”

Figurines of Jews have appeared in Poland for more than a century. They were originally sold alongside other Polish archetypes, such as peasants, priests, and highlanders. In the early 1980s, figurines of Jews reappeared in Poland, this time holding coins or bags of money, and were bought and sold as charms guaranteeing financial luck. They’ve become particularly popular in Kraków, where they can be found in most crafts markets and, especially, at the annual

Easter Emaus market. For many visitors to Poland, and many of us who live here, these objects are obviously anti-Semitic, as they call to mind the harmful stereotype of Jews as greedy financiers. On the other hand, for many who buy and sell the objects, they are a positive symbol, representing the promise of capitalism in the latter years of communism, celebrating Jews’ perceived capacity for business, and functioning as a remembrance of Poland’s destroyed Jewish community.

For the last four years, FestivALT (of which I am a co-director), an alternative Jewish arts and activism collective based in Kraków, has produced “Lucky Jew,” a project in which a performer dresses up as a traditional Jew and tries to sell images of himself. (See Adam Schorin’s article about performing as the Lucky Jew in the Summer 2019 issue of *Gazeta*.) The project, at once serious and funny, engages passersby in an open, non-

didactic conversation about these objects, stereotypes, and cultural representation. It spawned a 72-hour virtual “Lucky-Jew-a-Thon” in November 2020, in which, among performers from around the world, Mr. Piaskowski and Nina Gabryś, the mayor’s advisor on issues of discrimination and equality, held a compelling discussion about how the objects are treated in Kraków.

That same month, FestivALT, in cooperation with the Czulent Association, the Autonomia Foundation, and the Villa Decius Institute for Culture, launched the first in a series of roundtable discussions under the title “Addressing Poland’s ‘Lucky Jews.’” At this first meeting, a task force was established to advise the city on issues relating to Jewish heritage. I am excited and humbled to be on the task force, along with Artur Wabik, Berenika Błaszak, and Piotr Kwapisiewicz.



Jewish figurines holding bags of money at the Emaus market in 2019.  
Photograph by Adam Schorin. Used with permission

To date, some sixty individuals, including leaders from Poland’s Jewish communities, politicians, and leaders in the arts and culture sector, have met to investigate and unpack the problem of these Jewish figurines. The process resulted in the announcement the city made in early June, a formal recommendation to end the sale of “Lucky Jews” in Kraków’s public spaces.

The experience has shown that conversation, education,

and civic engagement are key to creating lasting change in the community. At FestivALT, we’re thrilled to see a public art project actually build greater awareness around a social issue and lead, in part, to real action and reform.

In September 2021, we will take part in the third roundtable discussion, at which the task force will present its recommendations to the municipality. And on July 3, 2021, there will be a

conversation on “The Future of the Lucky Jew in Kraków,” at the Galicia Jewish Museum, featuring myself, Mr. Piaskowski, and others. We will stream the discussion live on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FestivaltKrakow>.

**Magda Rubenfeld Koralewska** is a co-founder and co-director of FestivALT and Regional Coordinator for Limmud for Central and Eastern Europe.

# Changes in Governance at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland

Four members of an advisory council for the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland have resigned after the government appointed former Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło, a top member of the country's right-wing ruling party, to serve on the council.

Culture Minister Piotr Gliński recently appointed Szydło to a four-year term on the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Council, a nine-member body made up of Poles who meet once a year to advise the museum's director.

The first advisory council member to resign was philosopher Stanisław Krajewski, who said he took the step to protest what he called the "politicization" of a group so far made up of experts. He was followed by historians Marek Lasota, who also belongs to the ruling party, Krystyna Oleksy, a former deputy director of the Auschwitz Museum, and

Edward Kosakowski. The appointment of Szydło has also been harshly criticized by the son and grand-daughters of one of Poland's legendary World War II resistance heroes, Captain Witold Pilecki.

The advisory council is separate from the International Auschwitz Council, which includes Holocaust survivors and international experts. Perhaps in order to create a counterweight to the politicization of the advisory council, in June 2021, Christoph Heubner, vice-president of the International Auschwitz Council and a member of the Committee of the Foundation for International Youth Encounters in Auschwitz, announced that Marian Turski had been chosen to succeed Roman Kent, who died in May 2021, as Chairman of the International Committee. (See Roman Kent's obituary in this issue of *Gazeta*.) Turski, born in Łódź in 1926, is an Auschwitz survivor and a prominent Polish journalist.

Antony Polonsky

He is a long-standing member of the committee, and spoke in 2020 at the seventy-fifth anniversary commemoration of the liberation of the camp. He was also a key figure in the founding of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, and has remained active in its activities to this day. According to Christoph Heubner:

*Marian Turski has for many years been one of the most important political voices of the survivors of Auschwitz, who are urgently needed in these days marked by anti-Semitic hatred and the new willingness to engage in violence of right-wing extremists emerging everywhere.* ■

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

## CONFERENCES

# International Online Conference on the History of the General Jewish Workers' Alliance—the Bund

Antony Polonsky

On April 15 and 22, 2021, an online international conference, “For Socialism, for Freedom. The Jewish Bund: History of Yesterday, Memory of Tomorrow,” explored the history and memory of the General Jewish Workers' Alliance, or the Bund, one of the major Jewish political movements in the Tsarist Empire and Poland. The conference took place under the auspices of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures of the University of Genoa and the Primo Levi Cultural Centre, in association with the Italian Association for Jewish-German Studies. The members of the organizing committee were Piero Delio Strologo, President of the Primo Levi Cultural Center and Councilor of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities; Włodek Goldkorn, who left Poland in 1968 and has been for many years responsible for the cultural section of the Italian weekly *L'Espresso*; Antony Polonsky, Chief Historian of

the Global Education Outreach Project of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw; and Laura Quercioli Mincer, Associate Professor of Polish Literature and Culture at the University of Genoa.

The inaugural lecture was given on April 15 by Włodek Goldkorn on “Three Crucial Aspects of the Bund. An Account of a World of Fraternity.” His wide-ranging address discussed the implications of three aspects of the Bund: that it was a party of Jewish workers, that it was opposed to Zionism and sought to resolve the problems of Jews where they lived in the Tsarist Empire and subsequently independent Poland, and that it aimed to establish a socialist state in which Jews would enjoy non-territorial autonomy



An election poster of the General Jewish Labour Bund hung in Kiev, 1917. Heading: “Where we live, there is our country!” Inside frame: “Vote List 9, Bund.” Bottom: “A democratic republic! Full national and political rights for Jews!”

Wikimedia Commons

expressed through a modernized Yiddish language and culture

The remainder of the conference took place on April 22. The morning session offered four papers. The first, presented by Reyzl Zylberman,

Director of Studies and of Jewish languages at Sholem Aleykhem College in Melbourne, and Dvora Zylberman, teacher of Yiddish and Jewish Studies at the same college, examined “The Jewish Labour Bund Down Under: How the Movement Thrives in Australia.” Antony Polonsky gave the second paper, “The Bund in Polish Political Life 1935–39.” As he explained, the political crisis which followed the death in 1935 of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, the charismatic Polish leader, and the worsening of the situation of the Jews that ensued, created new opportunities for the Bund, which had been only a marginal player in both Polish and Jewish politics.

Frank Wolff, professor at the University of Osnabrück and a member of its Institute for the Study of Migration, presented “In Other Streets: How the Bund Turned Transnational.” He analyzed how Jewish migrants brought the values of the Bund to Western Europe, North and South America, and the Antipodes. The final presentation, by August Grabski of the Mordechai Anieliewicz Center for the

Study of the History and Culture of Polish Jews at the University of Warsaw, examined “The Real History of the Polish Bund and Its Distortions in the Current Mass Media’s Coverage.” Grabski explained the problems of presenting an accurate history of the Bund in Poland today.

In the afternoon session, the first paper was presented in fluent Italian by David Fishman, Professor of Jewish History at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and examined “The Years 1890–1914: The Golden Period of the Bund in the Tsarist Empire.” It was followed by Laura Quercioli Mincer’s comprehensive presentation, “An Art for the Jews, an Art for the World: the Jewish Avant-Garde During the Times of the Bund.” Włodek Goldkorn’s paper, “The Future of Memory. The Case of the Bund,” generated much thought-provoking discussion.

The final presentation, “My Bundism: More Than a Memory,” was given by Irena Klepfisz, daughter of Michał Klepfisz, one of the leaders of

the Jewish Fighting Organization (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa), who was killed on the second day of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Before the uprising, Irena and her mother were smuggled out of the Ghetto and later emigrated to New York after the war. Irena described herself as “a survivor, a poet, a lesbian and a translator of Yiddish” and also as “an eternal Bundist and Yiddishist, secular Jew and socialist.” Her account of the Bundist milieu, which included Vladka Meed, Bernard Goldstein, Marek Edelman, and other participants in the Ghetto uprising, provided a deeply moving end to the conference. It highlighted the tragic fact that in Poland the Bund effectively came to an end with the suicide in 1943 of Szmul Zygielbojm, the Bundist representative on the Polish parliament in exile in London, who expressed his “most profound protest against the inaction with which the world watches and permits the destruction of the Jewish people.” ■

## Symposium in Honor of Professor Antony Polonsky: “The Holocaust in Eastern Europe. Sources, Memory, Politics”

Michael Fleming,  
François Guesnet  
Christine Schmidt

On March 16, 2021, the Institute for Polish Jewish Studies, the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London (UCL), and The Wiener Holocaust Library convened an online symposium in honor of Professor Antony Polonsky on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. Entitled “The Holocaust in Eastern Europe. Sources, Memory, Politics,” the symposium brought together established and junior scholars researching the Holocaust in Eastern Europe and provided a timely overview of the state of knowledge. Professor Polonsky’s immense contribution to the broad field and his critical role in constituting the field of Polish Jewish studies was recognized. Connie Webber, the Managing Editor of the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, in her moving tribute to Professor Polonsky, pointed to his decades of work on *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, his collegiality, generosity, and wisdom.



Professor Antony Polonsky.  
Photo courtesy of A. Polonsky

In the opening session on “Sources,” Katarzyna Person (Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw) provided a detailed and nuanced discussion of micro-narratives of everyday life revealed through an analysis of the Ringelblum Archive. This was followed by Hannah Wilson’s (Nottingham Trent University) discussion of the work of archeologists at the Sobibór death camp. In her paper, Wilson highlighted that the discovery of particular artifacts has helped identify individual victims, but has

also raised questions about how such artifacts should be classified and about their future use, for example, in museums. She also contrasted the divergent interests of archeological exploration and commemorative practices. Agnieszka Wiercholska (German Historical Institute, Paris) discussed everyday life in Tarnów during the German occupation and the Holocaust. Using untapped source material, such as court cases brought against Poles by Jews who faced increasing levels of persecution and lawlessness before the final deportations of the summer 1942. Dr. Wiercholska offered penetrating insights into social interactions between neighbors living under such extreme circumstances.

The second session focused on “Memory” and opened with Lukasz Krzyzanowski (Warsaw University). Building on his recent important book, *Ghost Citizens*, the speaker

elaborated on how survivors of the Holocaust in Radom commemorated those who had perished, and through their memory practices marked their presence in the post-Holocaust city. Piotr Forecki (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań) analyzed Holocaust revisionism in contemporary Poland. Drawing on the statements of politicians, officials, articles in the press, and works of various historians, Prof. Forecki convincingly argued that Holocaust distortion is widespread. The developments of recent years suggest that the willingness to confront a difficult past, as demonstrated in the Jedwabne debates of the early 2000s, has declined significantly, to be replaced by a reassertion of national mythologies and heroic narratives. The session closed with Mary Fulbrook's (UCL) discussion of conflicting accounts of guilt and complicity and the difficulties historians face in relating personal experiences and atmosphere in their work. Prof. Fulbrook called for a comparison between the different trajectories of anti-Semitism in Western and Central Europe, on the one hand, and eastern Central and Eastern Europe, on the other.

The final session explored the contemporary political implications of the Holocaust and its repercussions. Joanna Michlic (UCL) discussed the early post-war testimonies of child survivors and showed how these testimonies undercut the skewed narratives of the Holocaust promoted by the current Polish government's historical policy. Darisuz Stola (Polish Academy of Sciences) considered how, following the fall of communism, Poland became a leader among post-communist states in confronting its difficult past. In public debates, scholars not only provided empirical material but helped shaped the constructive form of those debates. The erosion of respect for scholarly expertise and the jettisoning of conciliatory memory policies has undermined both scholars and the tenor of debates on the past. Antony Polonsky provided expansive expert commentary on the papers and joined other participants of the symposium in a rigorous discussion of the issues raised.

The symposium showcased some of the ways in which scholars are making use of new or hitherto underresearched

sources and highlighted some of the challenges of researching and writing about the Holocaust in the context of an assertive and well-funded state-backed historical policy in Poland as well as in the more general context of debates over memory. The conference papers will be published in early 2022 in *Jewish Historical Studies: Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*. The sessions can be viewed online at The Wiener Holocaust Library's Youtube channel: <http://bit.ly/Polonsky21>. ■

**François Guesnet, PhD**, is Professor of Modern Jewish History in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London, and is co-chair of the editorial board of *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry*.

**Michael Fleming, PhD**, is a historian at The Polish University Abroad, London. He is the author of *Auschwitz, the Allies and Censorship of the Holocaust*, Cambridge University Press.

**Christine Schmidt, PhD**, is Deputy Director and Head of Research at The Wiener Holocaust Library in London.

# “What’s New, What’s Next? Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies”

Online Conference at POLIN Museum

October 3–7, 2021

This international interdisciplinary conference will explore new directions in the study of East and Central European Jews. At the heart of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews is a multimedia narrative exhibition that draws upon the best recent scholarship in a broad range of disciplines. Scholars in Poland, Israel, and North America collaborated on creating an open historical narrative that begins in the 10th century and comes forward to the present. Methodological and theoretical issues raised by the exhibition have inspired “What’s New, What’s Next? Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies.” The conference will address many important questions, such as: What constitutes Jewish studies today, and in which direction should we be heading? Which paradigms are guiding the field today? How are theoretical and methodological developments

in the humanities and social sciences shaping Jewish studies? How are scholars working in a broad range of disciplines, from history and the social sciences to literature, visual and performing arts, and other disciplines, contributing to the field? What interdisciplinary approaches are contributing to the field? What is the impact of studies of Jewish life in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on a wider understanding of world history?

The meeting’s distinguished Academic Committee, with Dr. hab. Artur Markowski of POLIN Museum as official conference convener, is chaired by Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator, POLIN Museum Core Exhibition. ■

# International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)

Conference to Meet Online, August 2–5, 2021

The Board of Directors and the Conference Committee of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies have decided that the 2021 IAJGS Conference will be held online. Initially, the conference was planned to convene in Philadelphia, but concerns about health risks and travel restrictions caused the change to an online format.

The conference is hosted by the IAJGS, an umbrella organization of more than ninety Jewish genealogical organizations worldwide. The organization seeks to foster a network of Jewish genealogical research organizations and partners working together as one coherent, effective, and respected community—enabling people to research Jewish ancestry and heritage. ■

## “Restoring Jewish Cemeteries of Poland: The Task Ahead”

Online Conference at Jewish Heritage Europe.

On July 1, 2021, Jewish Heritage Europe hosted an online conference which addressed the important topic of “Restoring Jewish Cemeteries of Poland: The Task Ahead.” Speakers included Jarosław Sellin, Secretary of State at the Poland Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sports; Tal Ben-Ari Yaalon, Chargé d’Affaires, Israel Embassy, Warsaw; Ronald S. Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress; and other distinguished panelists. The conference was intended as a continuation of Jewish Heritage Europe’s conference on this same topic from 2020.



Video presentations from the conference can be found at this link:

<https://jewishheritagepoland.org/conference.html>. ■

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Books

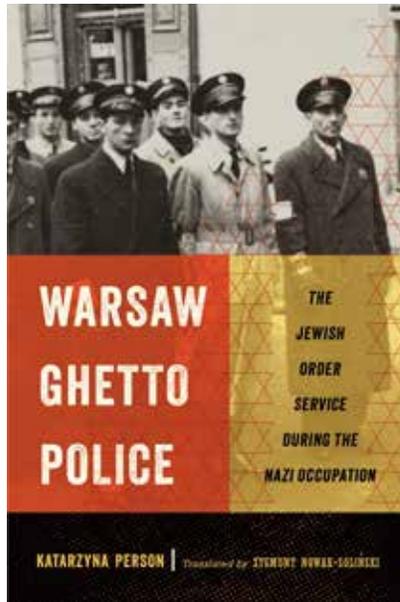
# *Warsaw Ghetto Police: The Jewish Order Service During the Nazi Occupation*

By Katarzyna Person

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021

This moving and disturbing book, based on a large range of primary and secondary sources, is a detailed account of the functioning of the Jewish Order Service, usually referred to as the “Ghetto Police,” in the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. The sources used include documents from the wartime period, diaries, German and Jewish official documentation, and ghetto newspaper articles. These are supplemented by post-war materials, trials of former members of the Jewish Order Service, which took place in Poland and Germany, as well as interviews with former policemen and those who witnessed their actions. The study examines both the opinion about the police in the ghetto and the way that members of the force developed a mechanism for coping with this and justifying their actions.

The picture which emerges is a dark one. Although initially the Ghetto Police



saw themselves as a barrier between the Jews in the ghetto and the German authorities and Polish police, its members quickly became corrupted in the difficult situation in which they found themselves. Given that most policemen were not paid, bribery became widespread and a degree of brutality was widely accepted. As a result, the force was subjected to harsh criticism by the inhabitants of the ghetto. The book also explains how the police became a tool of the Nazi occupiers and how it came to play a nefarious role

Antony Polonsky

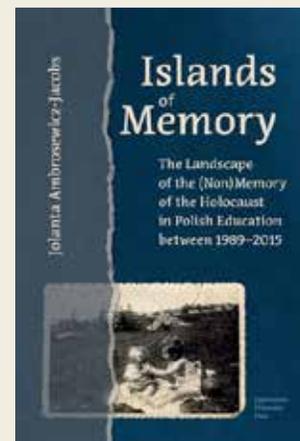
during the great deportation of the Jews of Warsaw to the Treblinka death camp in the summer of 1942. This is a major study of the difficult question of Jewish collaboration, as it deals with the complex moral questions raised by the author in a clear and dispassionate manner. It should be read by all those interested in the Holocaust in Poland. ■

## *Islands of Memory: The Landscape of the (Non)Memory of the Holocaust in Polish Education between 1989–2015*

By Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs

Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2021

This book addresses issues of Holocaust memory among young Poles and the attitudes toward Jews and the Holocaust in the comparative context of educational developments in other countries. The book is divided into three parts: “Memory,” “Attitudes,” and “Actions.” All three parts, although aimed at analyzing an ongoing process of reconstructing and deconstructing memory of the Holocaust in post-2000 Poland, are grounded in different theories and were inspired by various concepts. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs shows the diversity of phenomena aimed at integrating Jewish history and culture into national culture, including areas of extracurricular education (often against mainstream educational policy), in order to discover the place that Jews have (or do not have) in the culture of memory in Poland, home to the largest Jewish community in pre-war Europe. ■

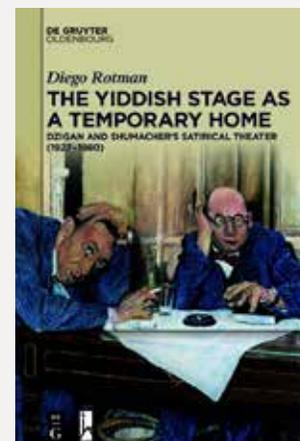


## *The Stage as a Temporary Home*

By Diego Rotman

Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021

*The Stage as a Temporary Home* explores the fascinating life and career of the most important comic duo in Yiddish theater, Shimen Dzigan and Isroel Shumacher. Spanning half a century—from the beginning of their work at the Ararat avant-garde Yiddish theater in Łódź to their Warsaw theatre—they produced bold, groundbreaking political satire. The book further discusses their wanderings through the Soviet Union during World War II and their attempt to revive Jewish culture in Poland after the Holocaust. It concludes with a description of their time in Israel, first as guest performers and later as permanent residents. Despite the restrictions on Yiddish actors in Israel, the duo insisted on performing in their language and succeeded in translating the new Israeli reality into unique and timely satire. In the 1950s, they voiced a political and cultural critique unique on the Hebrew stage. Dzigan continued to perform on his own and with other Israeli artists until his death in 1980. ■



## *The Rebellion of the Daughters*

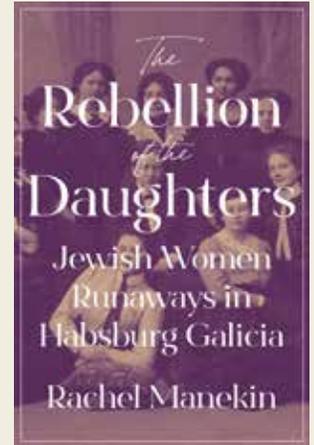
By Rachel Manekin

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020

*The Rebellion of the Daughters* investigates the flight of young Jewish women from their Orthodox, primarily Hasidic, homes in Western Galicia (now Poland) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In extreme cases, hundreds of these women sought refuge in a Kraków convent, where many converted to Catholicism. Those who stayed home often remained Jewish in name only.

Relying on a wealth of archival documents, including court testimonies, letters, diaries, and press reports, Rachel Manekin reconstructs the stories of three Jewish women runaways, Michalina Araten, Debora Lewkowicz, and Anna Kluger, and reveals their struggles and innermost convictions.

Exploring the estrangement of young Jewish women from traditional Judaism in Habsburg Galicia at the turn of the 20th century, the book brings to light a forgotten, yet significant, episode in Eastern European history. ■



## *Hasidism, Suffering, and Renewal: The Prewar and Holocaust Legacy of Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira*

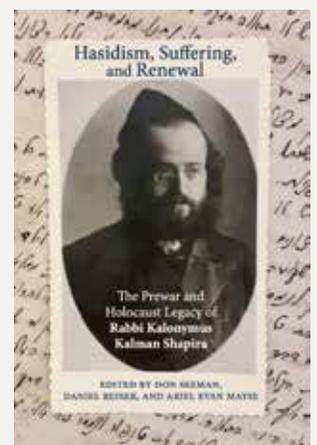
SUNY Series in Contemporary Jewish Thought

Edited by Don Seeman, Daniel Reiser, and Ariel Evan Mayse

Albany: SUNY Press, 2021

Kalonymus Kalman Shapira (1889–1943) was a noted Hasidic leader and mystic who wrestled with forces of modernity that were confronting Poland's Jews, especially the need for more education in an increasingly secularizing community. During the Nazi occupation, Shapira became an important spiritual and communal leader in the Warsaw Ghetto, until he and his close family perished in the Holocaust.

Recent publication of his writings and sermons in the Warsaw Ghetto has generated considerable scholarly interest in Shapira's ideas about educational reform and his spiritual concepts and contributions. This collection of essays presents studies by scholars from a variety of fields, from history to theology and anthropology, who examine Shapira's thought and impact, the world in which he lived, and broader issues related to the study of Jewish mysticism. ■



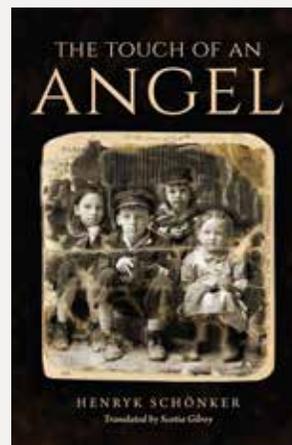
## *The Touch of an Angel*

By Henryk Schönker. Translated by Scotia Gilroy

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021

*The Touch of an Angel* is the extraordinary story of a child's survival of the Holocaust. Henryk Schönker was born in 1931 into one of the most prominent and highly esteemed Jewish families of Oświęcim—the Polish town renamed Auschwitz during the German occupation. He and his family managed to flee Oświęcim shortly before the creation of the Auschwitz death camp, and survived the war through sheer luck and a strong will to survive.

The Schönker family's return to Oświęcim in 1945 provides a fascinating glimpse of challenges faced by Jews who chose to remain in Poland after the war and attempted to rebuild their lives there. Schönker's testimony also reveals an astonishing fact: the town of Oświęcim could have become the departure point for a mass emigration of Jewish people instead of the place of their annihilation. Documents included with the narrative provide support for this claim. Although he was only a child at the time, Henryk Schönker's life experience was the Holocaust. Even so, death and the threat of death are not the focus of this memoir. Instead, Schönker, with a touching personal style, chooses to focus on how life can defy destruction, how spirituality can protect physical existence, and how real the presence of higher powers can be if one never loses faith. His story has been made into an award-winning documentary film in Polish and German, *The Touch of an Angel*, directed by Marek T. Pawłowski. ■



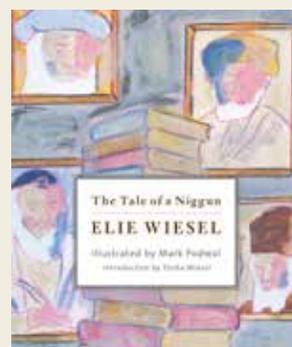
## *Tale of a Niggun*

By Elie Wiesel

Illustrated by Mark Podwal

New York: Schocken Books, an imprint of The Knopf

Doubleday Group, a division of Penguin Random House, 2020



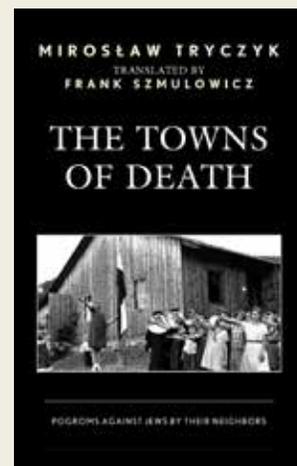
Based on an actual event that occurred during World War II, Elie Wiesel's heartbreaking narrative poem about history, immortality, and the power of song is accompanied by magnificent full-color paintings by award-winning artist Mark Podwal. Wiesel tells the story of the evening before the holiday of Purim, when the Nazis have given the leaders of a nondescript Eastern ghetto twenty-four hours to turn over ten Jews to be hanged to “avenge” the deaths of the ten sons of Haman, leading the Ghetto's rabbi to call up spirits from centuries past for advice. Wiesel's tale is a testament to the wisdom of Jewish sages and to the Jewish communities who perished, ending with an unending collective song. ■

## *The Towns of Death: The Pogroms of Jews by Their Neighbors*

By Mirosław Tryczyk  
Lexington Books, 2021

In *The Towns of Death*, Mirosław Tryczyk describes attacks by non-Jewish Poles on their Jewish neighbors in 128 towns of the Podlasie region of Poland in 1941–42. Based on witness testimony in legal proceedings, German and Russian sources, and materials gathered by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), he describes murderous events that occurred following the German invasion of June 1941. Initially most of the violence was justified to rid the region of the “Bolshevik Jew,” a staple bogeyman of Polish nationalists, fascists, and anti-Semites. Then the murders and looting escalated, but without linkage to the communists, and often with the support and even encouragement of the Catholic clergy and the local intellectual and political elites.

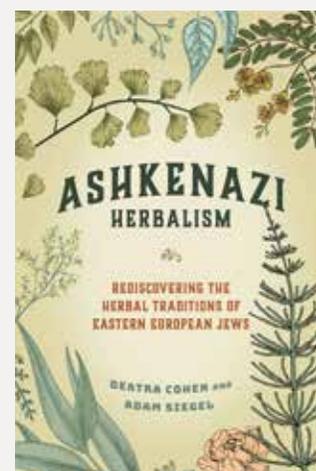
The author, an intellectual born in northeastern Poland, wrote the book to come to grips with events that deeply affected his own family. “One must fight not only with the passage of time which shrouds, erases, and destroys everything,” he writes, but also with “our civilization’s preoccupation with the present and its avoidance of the problems of the past and the future.” ■



## *Ashkenazi Herbalism: Rediscovering the Herbal Traditions of Eastern European Jews*

By Deatra Cohen and Adam Siegel  
Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2021

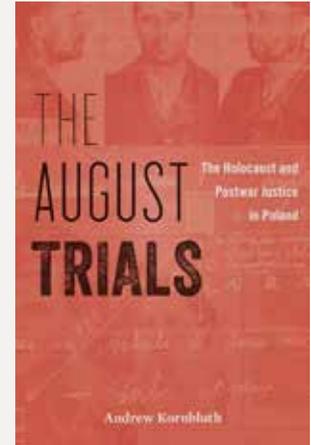
This pathbreaking illustrated book describes the plant-based medicines and procedures of Ashkenazi healers. Its discussion covers the *materia medica* of plants and herbs essential to Ashkenazi folk medicine, as well as applications and other aspects of a herbal tradition long hidden from outsiders by language and cultural barriers. ■



## *The August Trials: The Holocaust and Postwar Justice in Poland*

By Andrew Kornbluth

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021

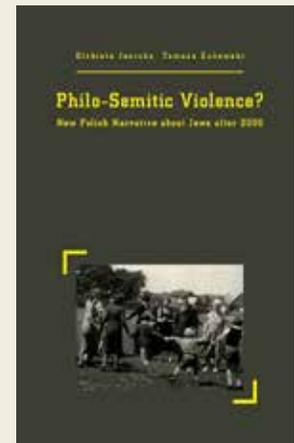


Andrew Kornbluth analyzes the “August Trials,” held in Poland after World War II to provide justice for Jewish victims and survivors of the Holocaust. He concludes that the thousands of trials were a serious attempt to reveal the truth, but that they also uncovered extensive local participation in illegal and violent acts against Jews during the Nazi occupation. Poland’s new communist government, seeking to buttress its position and unify the nation, gradually moved away from frank confrontation with the past and instead favored a heroic vision of national resistance to the Nazi occupation and genocide. This foundational myth, Kornbluth argues, failed to provide justice to the Jewish victims and left a lasting mark in Polish–Jewish relations. The author further argues that other attempts to bring justice for victims of genocide in both Eastern and Western Europe also largely failed. ■

## *Philo–Semitic Violence: Poland’s Jewish Past in New Polish Narratives*

By Elżbieta Janicka and Tomasz Żukowski

Idaho Falls: Lexington Books, (July) 2021



Originally published in Polish and now available in English, this book examines the current scholarly and pedagogical vogue for a philosemitic narrative based on a perceived multicultural past that was destroyed by the Nazi occupation of Poland and the succeeding communist regime. The authors argue that the emphasis on a common past has obscured deep processes and cultural patterns essential for illuminating the realities of the East European Jewish Diaspora and of the Holocaust. They argue that anti-Semitism remains a community-building force and a powerful political tool behind the collapse of liberal democratic institutions in Poland. They further claim that the philosemitic narrative’s emphasis on common history between Polish Jews and non-Jews before the Holocaust helps buttress the ultranationalist myth of a unified Polish people and nation, without removing the underlying anti-Semitic beliefs about Jews as a separate, non-Polish component. ■

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Awards

# Barbara Engelking Receives 2021 Irena Sendler Memorial Award

Taube Philanthropies has named Professor Barbara Engelking as the recipient of its 2021 Irena Sendler Memorial Award, in recognition of her outstanding scholarly contributions to Holocaust research. A sociologist by training, Prof. Engelking founded and directs the Center for Holocaust Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences. At this globally recognized research center, she explores new directions in research and interdisciplinary methodology. She has published dozens of books and articles, edited several volumes of primary Holocaust sources, and with Jacek Leociak has written the most authoritative monograph on the Warsaw Ghetto. As lead scholar and co-curator for the Holocaust gallery in the eight-gallery Core Exhibition of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, she helped to create a compelling historical narrative that meets the highest scholarly standards.



Prof. Barbara Engelking.

“Professor Engelking is an outstanding and internationally respected Holocaust scholar,” said Tad Taube, Chairman of Taube Philanthropies. “Through the Irena Sendler Award, Taube Philanthropies expresses our deep appreciation and respect for her stellar accomplishments.”

One of Prof. Engelking’s most ambitious works is *Dalej jest noc: losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* (Night Without End: The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland), a two-volume work co-edited with Jan Grabowski of the University of Ottawa and published in 2018. It analyzes nine counties in Nazi-occupied Poland and

identifies small Polish towns as “death traps” for Jews in hiding during the Holocaust. The intense public debate generated by government criticism of the book in Poland is discussed in the Winter 2021 issue of *Gazeta*. An abridged English-language version will be published later this year by Indiana University Press.

Plans for the annual award ceremony, which is usually held at the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków or at POLIN Museum in Warsaw, will be announced.

Taube Philanthropies established the Irena Sendler Memorial Award in 2008 in memory of Irena Sendler, whom Yad Vashem named a Righteous Among the Nations. Each year, the award is presented to those who have been exemplary in preserving and revitalizing Poland’s Jewish heritage. Nominations for the award are reviewed by a panel of Taube Philanthropies advisory board members and Jewish cultural leaders in Poland. ■

# Józef Hen Receives the 2021 Cyprian Kamil Norwid Lifetime Achievement Award

Reported by *Gazeta*

The awarding of this year's Statuettes of Norwid is a special event marking two jubilees: the 200th anniversary of the birth of Cyprian Kamil Norwood and the twentieth anniversary of the Cyprian Kamil Norwood Award. The recipient of this year's *Dzieło Życia* (Life Achievement Award) is Józef Hen, a playwright, director, journalist, and author of more than thirty books, thirty-two film and theater scripts, and four TV series. The award ceremony will take place on September 24, 2021.

Tomasz Miłkowski, speaking on behalf of the award committee, praised Józef Hen as “an outstanding writer, doyen of Polish writing, a presence in our literary culture since 1947. In those powerful times, his writing accompanied many generations.” Miłkowski characterized Hen as “a versatile, extremely sensitive writer,” prolific in virtually all fields, from short stories



Józef Hen at the 2013 Warsaw Book Fair.  
Wikimedia Commons

through novels and biographical works, drama, film scripts, and even journalism. One member of the committee, Marek Wawrzekiewicz, declared Hen “writes better and better.”

The award is named for Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821–83), a highly regarded Polish Romantic poet, playwright, painter, and sculptor, and was established in 2001 by the Masovian Regional Council (Sejmik Województwa Mazowieckiego). It is conferred annually on a Masovia-based artist in one of

four categories: literature, music, visual arts, and theater. The award committee includes outstanding artists, art theoreticians and critics, and representatives of the Warsaw departments of Polish artistic associations and councilors of the Masovian voivodeship from the Culture and National Heritage Commission. ■

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### In Brief

# Stanford Libraries Receives International Military Tribunal Nuremberg Trial Archives

The International Court of Justice in The Hague has authorized Stanford University Libraries to digitally preserve and host the records of the war crimes trial conducted at Nuremberg after World War II. The proceedings of the tribunal at Nuremberg in 1945 and 1946 established the principle that individuals, including heads of state, can be held criminally accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity. All current international tribunals such those at the United Nations are based on ideas and precedents established by the Nuremberg court.

Support from Taube Philanthropies will enable Stanford Libraries to host the records and will also create an endowment to ensure the archive remains secure in the Stanford Digital Archive, where it will be known as the Taube Archive of the International Military Tribunal of Nuremberg. “As a survivor of the Holocaust,” said Tad Taube, Chairman

of Taube Philanthropies, “the opportunity to help Stanford finance this project is a great personal honor.”

In partnership with the Stanford Center for Human Rights and International Justice, Stanford Libraries will provide a unique multimedia research and educational resource for scholars, students, and the public. For the first time, all of the Nuremberg tribunal’s documentation, including film, audio recordings, photographs, evidence, and other documents, will be hosted online in one location. Until now, explained Michael Keller, vice provost and university librarian at Stanford, materials have been scattered in many repositories and institutions, making access difficult. This has been a significant barrier to research owing to the difficulty of comparing documents, annotating pages and images of trial proceedings, linking to related

websites, and sharing scholarly annotations. The consolidation of the documents in one globally accessible online archive will greatly enhance scholarly research, something that “would not have been possible without the significant support of Tad Taube and Shana Penn of the Taube Philanthropies,” Keller said. ■

## Jewish Historical Institute Dedicates Jan Jagielski Heritage Documentation Department

On June 9, 2021, the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute unveiled a plaque dedicated to the late Jan Jagielski, a longtime employee of the institute and a steward of Jewish heritage in Poland. The plaque commemorates the naming of the institute's Heritage Documentation Department in his honor.

The unveiling of the plaque was attended by the director of the Jewish Historical Institute, Monika Krawczyk; Piotr Wiślicki, Chair of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland; and Halina Hila Marcinkowska, Chair of the Council of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in the Republic of Poland.

“We are meeting here to commemorate our colleague, a longtime employee of the Jewish Historical Institute, in fact, the creator of the Documentation Department,” said Monika Krawczyk. “We will continue



Plaque commemorating the Jewish Historical Institute's Jan Jagielski Heritage Documentation Department.

Courtesy of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute

to fulfill the unwritten will of Mr. Janek, that is, to protect Jewish heritage in Poland.”

**Editor's Note:** Please see Jan Jagielski's obituary in this issue of *Gazeta*. ■

# GEOP: Global Education Outreach Program of POLIN Museum

## *What's New, What's Next?* Events and Programs

### Online Conversations

Under the general title *What's New, What's Next?*, POLIN Museum began two series of podcasts exploring important topics that will be examined in depth later this year at a major international conference, “What's New, What's Next? Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies,” in October 2021 (see details below).

One podcast series consists of book discussions hosted by Prof. Antony Polonsky, Chief Historian of POLIN Museum and its Global Education Outreach Program (GEOP). The other podcast series explores thematic questions of scholarly methods, sources, and concepts.

The book-discussion podcasts, presented in English, bring together renowned international scholars to discuss the latest publications on the history of Polish Jews, and include the following books:

- *Conscious History: Polish Jewish Historians before the Holocaust* by Natalia

Aleksiun. (Read more: <https://polin.pl/en/event/jewish-historiography-holocaust>.)

- *Hasidism: A New History* by David Biale et al. (Read more: <https://polin.pl/en/event/next-stage-history-hasidism>.)
- *Sarah Schenirer and the Bais Yaakov Movement: A Revolution in the Name of Tradition* by Naomi Seidman. (Read more: <https://polin.pl/en/event/revolution-name-tradition-book-talk>.)
- *Przemoc antyżydowska w wyobrażenia społeczne. Pogrom białostocki 1906 roku* (Anti-Jewish Violence and Social Imagery. The Białystok Pogrom of 1906) by Artur Markowski, and *Pogromy Żydów na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku. Tom 2: Studia przypadków (do 1939 roku)* (Pogroms of Jews in the Polish Territories in the XIX and XX Century, Vol. 2: Case Studies [to 1939]), edited by Artur Markowski, Kamil Kijek,

and Konrad Zieliński. (Read more: <https://polin.pl/en/event/pogroms-historical-agents-book-talk>.)

- *From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History* by Nancy Sinkoff, whose interview by Samuel Kassow appears in this issue of *Gazeta*. (Read more: <https://polin.pl/en/event/left-right-transformation-pioneering-holocaust-historian>.)
- *Key Concepts in the Study of Antisemitism*, edited by Sol Goldberg, Scott Ury, and Kalman Weiser. The editors spoke with Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska and Robert Blobaum, and Prof. Antony Polonsky was the moderator. (Read more: <https://polin.pl/en/event/study-antisemitism>.)

The thematic series of podcasts has offered two presentations to date:

- Prof. Marcin Wodziński discussed “Jewish Studies after the Epidemic.”

- Prof. Havi Dreifuss spoke about “The Future of Digital Research and Jewish Studies in Light of These Uncertain Times.”

More information about the thematic podcasts is available on Spotify and the POLIN Museum website: <https://polin.pl/en/podcasts-geop-whats-new-whats-next>.

### **Online Conference in October**

POLIN Museum has closed the call for applications for the conference “What’s New, What’s Next? Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies.” This international interdisciplinary conference will be held online on October 3–7, 2021, and will explore new directions in the study of East and Central European Jews. (Read more: <https://www.polin.pl/en/whats-new-whats-next-2021>.)

### **Ghetto Uprising and Civil Resistance**

On the occasion of the seventy-eighth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, scholars debated the significance of civilian resistance (both civil disobedience and the

participation of unarmed fighters) in the Ghetto before and during April 1943. (Read more: <https://polin.pl/en/event/warsaw-ghetto-uprising-and-role-civil-resistance>.)

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

POLIN Museum—through the Global Education Outreach Program—invites scholars and academic institutions to propose three-day research workshops to be held at the museum in 2022. Workshops may address any topic relevant to Polish-Jewish studies, including history, cultural studies, art history, public history, museology, memory studies, and related subjects. The museum invites applications that explore new and innovative perspectives and it especially encourages interdisciplinary and comparative research. For details see <https://polin.pl/en/news/2021/03/18/call-applications-geop-interdisciplinary-research-workshops-2022>.

Subscribe to the GEOP’s newsletter to follow opportunities and events: <https://www.polin.pl/en/nauka-i-zbiory-dzialalnosc-naukowa-global-education-outreach/geop-newsletter>.

Check for updates at <https://www.polin.pl/en/geop>.

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

## New Foundation to Support LGBTQ+ Communities in Poland



The new Equaversity Foundation has announced an initiative to raise funds for LGBTQ+ rights groups in Poland, citing increasing anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination as the reason for its formation. Campaign Against Homophobia, the Love Does Not Exclude Association, and the Polish Association of Anti-Discriminatory Law are among the organizations to receive money from Equaversity. The foundation's co-founders and board include such prominent figures as film director, Angiezska Holland, *Queer Eye* television star Antoni Porowski, singer Mary Komasa, writer and activist, Olga Tokarczuk, film director Kasia Adamik, and model Anja Rubik, who stated that the LGBTQ+ community "can't count on aid from within the country." ■

For more information go to: <https://www.equaversity.org>.



Pride Parade in Warsaw 2021.  
Photo by Anna Szcześniak. Used with permission

## OF SPECIAL INTEREST

# The Rediscovered Caricature Art of J.D. Kirszenbaum-Duvdivani

Nathan Diamant

Five years ago, *Gazeta* published an article on my granduncle, the Polish-born painter and caricaturist, Jechezkiel David Kirszenbaum (1900–54). Kirszenbaum was one of the few family members to survive the Holocaust. Fifteen years of research had uncovered nearly 400 paintings and a wealth of caricatures in collections of museums throughout Europe, such as Poland, France, Germany, Holland, and Switzerland, as well as in Israel. Solo exhibitions of the artist's works were organized in 2013 and a number have been mounted since then in France, Croatia, and Germany as well.

Among the most exciting discoveries were Kirszenbaum's caricatures, published in the German press in the early 1920s and into the early 30s under the pseudonym Duvdivani ("Kirszenbaum" in Hebrew). The discovery of his caricatures was especially noteworthy as, from the beginning of my research, I was convinced that most of Kirszenbaum's works



J.D. Kirszenbaum in his studio in Paris, circa 1952.  
Courtesy of Nathan Diamant

dating back to his pre-war time in Germany, where he studied at the Bauhaus with painters such as Paul Klee and Wladimir Kandinsky, had been destroyed. The Nazi regime had designated Kirszenbaum, and many of his fellow artists, "degenerative artists."

One day, I was at the Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, on my way to India. I ran into an old friend, a lawyer named Joel Levy. We had served together in the Israeli Army unit devoted to public communication. I told him about my research

and findings regarding my great-uncle's artistic career. He explained that he had been involved in the research and restitution of paintings stolen, or those that had gone missing, during World War II and offered to look into whether any of Kirszenbaum's works were among those discovered.

A few weeks later, he contacted me and informed me that although his research had been complicated by the artist's use of a pseudonym, he had discovered that Kirszenbaum had been one of the leading



Left to right, top and bottom: "The Movie Stars," "Untitled," "Always Drink Harder," "Film Stars," "Representatives of the People."  
 All images from the Kirszenbaum-Duvdivani Collection, 1926–27. Heidelberg University archives. Courtesy of Nathan Diamant

*The story of the existence of these works and their significance to Jewish art history is nothing less than incroyable mais vrais! Too amazing to be believed!*

Beginning on August 26, 2021, adult education centers across Germany will be exhibiting the caricatures produced in Berlin in the 1920s and 30s. So far, around twenty adult education centers have agreed to showcase the exhibition, including multimedia platforms and institutions in Paris and Warsaw. The details of the multi-sited concept are being prepared by the curator, Dr. Bernhard Post, under the auspices of the Weimar Adult Education Center.

The story of the existence of these works and their significance to Jewish art history is nothing less than *incroyable mais vrais!* Too amazing to be believed!!

For further reading and information about the artist and his work, please visit: <https://www.kirszenbaum.com/bio>. ■

*Nathan Diamant is a Holocaust survivor and the great-nephew of J.D. Kirszenbaum-Duvdivani, whose work he has devoted his life to preserving and disseminating.*

caricaturists of the 1920s and early 30s.

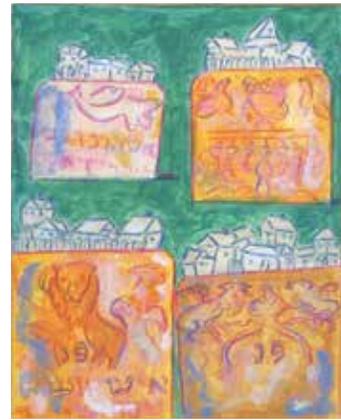
This discovery proved that traces of his early artistic period survived and that beyond creating portrayals of *shtetl* life and having been active in the Paris school, Kirszenbaum-Duvdivani was well known as a caricaturist in Berlin before World War II.

That was only the beginning of the discovery. Since then, Duvdivani's caricatures have been included in exhibitions on the artist's career and will soon be the feature of a documentary produced by the Willy Brandt Center in Jerusalem.

## POEM

# *The Tale of a Niggun* (Excerpt)

by Elie Wiesel. Illustrated by Mark Podwal



A ghetto,  
somewhere in the East,  
during the reign of night,  
under skies of copper  
and fire.

The leaders of the community,  
good people all,  
courageous all,  
fearing God and loving His Law,  
came to see  
the rabbi  
who has cried and cried,  
and has searched  
darkness  
for an answer  
with such passion  
that he no longer  
can see.

It's urgent,  
they tell him,  
it's more than urgent;  
it's a matter  
of life or death  
for some Jews  
and perhaps  
all Jews.

Speak,  
says the rabbi,  
tell me all:  
I wish not to be spared.

This is what the enemy demands,  
says the oldest

of the old Jews  
to the rabbi,  
who listens  
breathlessly.  
The enemy demands  
ten Jews,  
chosen by us  
and handed over to him  
before tomorrow evening.  
Tomorrow is Purim,  
and the enemy,  
planning to avenge  
Haman's ten sons,  
will hang ten of our own,  
says the oldest  
of the old Jews.  
And he asks:  
What are we to do, rabbi?  
Tell us what to do.

And his colleagues,  
brave people  
though frightened,  
repeat after him:  
What are we to do, rabbi?  
Tell us what to do.

We are afraid,  
says the oldest  
of the old Jews,  
afraid to make a decision—  
afraid to make the wrong  
decision:  
Help us, rabbi,  
decide for us—and

in our place.  
And the rabbi,  
their guide,  
feels his knees weakening,  
the blood rushing to his face,  
his chest is ready to burst,  
and the room is turning,  
turning,  
turning around him,  
and so is the earth,  
and so are the skies,  
and soon,  
he feels,  
he will fall  
as falls the blind man,  
a victim of night  
and its prowlers.

He demands an answer,  
says the oldest  
of the old Jews,  
the enemy demands an answer;  
tell us what it must be,  
your duty is to guide  
just as ours is to follow.

What should we do  
or say?  
ask the leaders  
of the ghetto  
somewhere in the East  
under forbidden  
and cursed skies;  
what can we do  
so as not to be doomed?

Excerpt and image reprinted from *The Tale of a Niggun* by Elie Wiesel. Illustrated by Mark Podwal. New York: Schocken Books, an imprint of The Knopf Doubleday Group, a division of Penguin Random House, 2020.

Used with permission

## OBITUARIES

### Roman Kent (1929–2021)

Antony Polonsky

Roman Kent, an indomitable and indefatigable fighter for the rights and memory of the survivors of the Holocaust, died on May 21 at his home in New York City at the age of ninety-two. He was born in the Polish textile town of Łódź in 1929 as Roman Knyker, one of four children of a prosperous factory owner, and enjoyed a carefree youth, horseback riding, and cycling in the summers at the dacha owned by the family thirty miles outside Łódź.

All this changed with the Nazi occupation of his native town and the establishment there in February 1940 of a ghetto, the second largest in Poland. In 1943, his father, Emanuel, succumbed to the widespread disease and malnutrition. When the ghetto was liquidated in August 1944, Roman was sent with his brother, two sisters, and mother to Auschwitz, where his mother, Sonia, was murdered. With his brother



Twenty-fourth Annual Holocaust Remembrance Program at the Lincoln Theater, Washington, DC, on April 26, 2017.

USDA Photo by Lance Cheung. Public domain

Leon he was assigned to a work detail in Auschwitz. Subsequently, after the camp's closure in January 1945, they were sent to the concentration camps of Gross-Rosen and Flossenburg and were liberated by the United States Army while on a death march to the camp of Dachau in April 1945. His two sisters had also survived Auschwitz and had been able to find sanctuary in Sweden, and the four siblings were reunited there. Sadly one sister, Dasza, died soon

afterwards from the effect of her wartime ordeals. The other sister, Renia, married in Sweden where she remained.

Roman and Leon were among the first of the Jewish Holocaust survivors to emigrate to the United States in 1946, in spite of the post-war restrictions, as a result of a special directive from President Truman admitting a few thousand orphans. They were settled with foster families in Atlanta, where both attended Emory

University. Leon became a neurosurgeon and Roman established a successful international trading company. He subsequently moved to New York, where he married Hannah Starkman, also a native of Łódź and a survivor of three concentration camps. She died in 2017.

His experiences during World War II dominated his life and determined his later activities. As he put it during a 2019 visit to the Auschwitz exhibit at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Lower Manhattan: “How can I forget the smell of burning flesh that constantly filled the air? Or the heartbreak of children torn from their mothers? Those shouts of terror will ring in my ears until I am laid to rest.”

Kent was convinced that the world needed to be reminded of the six million Jews who perished at the hands of the Germans and their collaborators. In a speech he gave in 2015 on the seventy-first anniversary of the liquidation of the Łódź ghetto, he asserted that it was the obligation of adults to teach children to understand

*Kent asserted that it was the obligation of adults to teach children to understand “what happens when hatred and prejudice are allowed to flourish.”*

“what happens when hatred and prejudice are allowed to flourish.” He also believed that Germany needed to repay the remnants of European Jewry for what they suffered. At the same time, in the words of Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, with whom he worked on Auschwitz commemoration, “He was not seeking revenge, he was seeking justice. He was a person who looked to the future instead of the past.” Because of this he was determined to memorialize and materially assist non-Jews who had hidden Jews or helped them escape.

He played a key role in mobilizing the survivor community and devoted himself unstintingly to Holocaust commemoration

and to the pursuit of reparations. In the words of Greg Schneider, Executive Vice President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany:

*From negotiating billions of dollars in pensions and compensation for Jewish Holocaust survivors from the German government, championing survivor interests with insurance companies, German industry, and Eastern European governments, to advocating for Holocaust education, to taking on Facebook, demanding that they remove Holocaust deniers from their platform, no task was too large or too overwhelming. Even as his own health waned, he continued to fight against anti-Semitism and hatred.*

Kent held the positions of vice president, and, from 2011, president of the International Auschwitz Committee, established by survivors of the camp in 1952; chairman of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and their Descendants; and president of the Jewish

Foundation of the Righteous, an organization that provides financial assistance to those recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. He was from 1988 a board member of the Claims Conference, which negotiated most of the \$80 billion that Germany has paid in assistance to survivors and for educational and memorial programs, serving as treasurer on the Leadership Council, special advisor to the president, and co-chair of the Claims Conference negotiating committee. Stuart E. Eizenstat, a former Deputy US Treasury Secretary and the conference's chief negotiator, praised his skill in these discussions:

*[He] made it his personal mission to advocate for his fellow survivors to the very end, participating on negotiations calls as recently as last week. His strength and fortitude were unmatched, and his drive and determination to see justice served knew no bounds.*

In 1998 he was appointed by President Clinton to the Presidential Advisory Commission of Holocaust

*He was determined to memorialize and materially assist non-Jews who had hidden Jews or helped them escape.*

Assets in the US and in October 2011 by President Obama to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, the body that oversees the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Roman Kent was the author of two books, an autobiography, *Courage Was My Only Option* (New York, 2008) and one for children, *My Dog Lala* (Auburn Hills, 2006), which tells how his pet dog was taken from him when he was confined in the Łódź ghetto. He also played a key role in the making of *Children of the Holocaust*, a 1980 documentary film dedicated to the memory of the children who died during the Holocaust. Among his many honors are the Medal of Honor and Recognition from the Polish Government, the Interfaith Committee of Remembrance Humanitarian

Award, the Elie Wiesel Holocaust Remembrance Award, and the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

He is survived by daughter Susan Kent Avjian, son-in-law Robert Avjian, and son Jeffrey Kent as well as three grandchildren, Dara Avjian, Eryn Kent Roberts, and Sean Avjian, with a great-granddaughter, Hannah Leona Avjian Roberts. To them we express our heartfelt condolences. He is a person who is truly irreplaceable. ■

## Jan Jagielski (1937–2021)

Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute

Poland's Jewish community mourns the passing of Jan Jagielski, a social activist and guardian of Jewish cemeteries in Poland. "For us," declared the website of the Jewish Historical Institute, "he was first of all Mr. Janek, who treated the ŻIH as his second home." Born in Toruń and trained as a chemical engineer, Jagielski worked for decades at the Institute of Industrial Chemistry in Warsaw. Though not Jewish himself, he made a life's work of recovering and preserving the Jewish heritage in Poland, a quest begun during the communist years, when he traveled widely in Poland in search of cemeteries and synagogues and compiled an important archive of personal notes and photographs. In the late 1970s, he was a founder of the so-called Jewish Flying University—a semi-clandestine study group—and in 1981 he co-founded the Citizens' Committee for the Care of Jewish Cemeteries and Monuments. Among its many efforts, the committee helped restoration efforts at the Jewish



Jan Jagielski.

Courtesy of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute

cemetery in Warsaw, organized readings and film screenings, and began drawing up a list of Jewish cemeteries in Poland.

Jagielski joined the staff of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw in 1991 and became director of its Heritage Documentation Department. He also chaired the Foundation of Eternal Remembrance, established in 1993 on the initiative of the Polish Government. His many awards include the Taube Foundation's Irena Sendler Award for contributions made

to the preservation of Jewish heritage in Poland (2009), the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polish Rebirth awarded by President Lech Kaczyński in 2008, the Jan Karski Prize and the Nireńska Polyneto in 2005, as well as the Gloria Artis Silver Medal for Culture in 2015.

"Jan was everyone's teacher and mentor in showing us the way to preserve Jewish cemeteries and memory," wrote Poland's Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich, in one of many tributes made on the announcement of Jagielski's passing. ■

# In Tribute to the Life of Jewish Partisan Faye Schulman

(1919–2021)

Tressa Berman

Faye Schulman was 101 when she passed away on April 24 of this year. Born Faigel Lazebnik, she grew up in the small town of Lenin in the Polesia region of Poland, separated from Russia by a bridge and the Sluch River, which townspeople could only cross with a government-issued visa. In her 1995 autobiography, *A Partisan's Memoir*, she recalled a happy childhood in her family's sprawling home, built by her father and shared with her parents and six siblings. She described Lenin as a vibrant village of markets and orchards, where Jews and non-Jews lived peacefully together. Until 1942. In that year, Nazi occupiers sealed the *shtetl*, relocated able-bodied men to labor camps (including one of her older brothers), then murdered its remaining Jewish inhabitants—an act which she witnessed twice. The first time was when it occurred right before her eyes; the second time was when she was forced to develop the films taken by Nazi occupiers that documented the horror of the



Faye Schulman with her Compur camera.

Photo courtesy of *A Partisan's Memoir: Woman of the Holocaust* by Faye Schulman, published by Second Story Press

***We were not like lambs going to the slaughter. Many fought back.***

villagers' and her own family's demise. A third time, when she returned to Lenin with a group of Russian Partisans, she lit the match that burned her family home to the ground.

Faye Schulman's life was epic and extraordinary. Foremost was her triumph as a survivor of her massacred family

(along with a brother who had escaped from the Nazi labor camp), and historically as the only photographer to have captured Jewish partisan life inside of the camps. Indeed, her photography skills saved her life, as the Nazis recruited her to document their activities and atrocities. After witnessing the murder of her family and the destruction of Lenin, she fled to join the Molotava Brigade, a group of Russian soldiers and officers who themselves had escaped from Nazi prisoner of war camps. As she described in her memoir, "We faced hunger and cold; we faced the constant threat of death and torture; added to this we faced anti-Semitism in our own ranks. Against all odds we struggled."

In her photographs, we glimpse both quotidian partisan life (building boats, loading supplies, waiting, always on the move) alongside shocking images of mass graves and demolitions. In her witnessing, she was both deliberate and prolific. As she stated in the 1999 PBS documentary *Daring*

*to Resist*, she wanted to show that “we were not like lambs going to the slaughter. Many fought back.”

I first encountered Faye Schulman’s life and photographs fifteen years ago, when I worked with the Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation, a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization dedicated to developing and distributing educational materials about Jewish Partisans. I became entranced and inspired by the power of her life story, conducted exhibition research, and wrote descriptive scenes generated from her images, including a work-in-progress. I regret that I did not get to meet her toward the end of her celebrated life.

After the war, she and her husband Morris Schulman—a fellow partisan—lived in the Landsberg displaced persons camp in West Germany, where they worked on behalf of Israeli independence. In 1948, they emigrated to Canada, where they raised a family. Faye Schulman continued working with photographic collections, though no longer as a photographer.

Not only was her life an example of fierce courage, it was also a testament to grace and beauty, poised, as she is often depicted in her



Faye Schulman with fellow partisans, 1942.

Photo courtesy of *A Partisan’s Memoir: Woman of the Holocaust* by Faye Schulman, published by Second Story Press

photographs, in the leopard-skin coat given to her by her family that kept her from freezing to death in winter under beds of leaves on the ground of the forest.

Trained as a nurse during her time in the resistance, she tended to fellow partisans, was a humanitarian who temporarily adopted an orphaned girl in the forest, and above all, was a brave woman with the observational skills of a soldier and a journalist, flanked by a sixteen-shot rifle on one shoulder and a Zeiss Ikon Compur camera on the other. Referencing the more than 100 photographs that are her legacy, she said in a video interview, “Every picture is a story, and the stories are my memories. So I

really cannot separate one from the other.” One well-known photograph (pictured on p. 54) shows her, in her eighties, holding the treasured camera. She kept it through all as an accompaniment and remembrance of the “most painful time of my life,” as she wrote of the scorching, unforgettable, and necessary truths that she showed to the world. For her example and her life, we can all be grateful.

Faye Schulman was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Morris Schulman, who died in 1992, and is survived by their son and daughter and six grandchildren. ■

*Tressa Berman, PhD, is an anthropologist, writer, and managing editor at Gazeta.*

# Marek Web, Historian, Journalist, and YIVO's Former Chief Archivist

(1938–2021)

Joanna Lisek

Sad news unfortunately travels all too fast. We regret to inform you that our friend Marek Web passed away in New York City on May 14, 2021. Historian, journalist, and former head of the YIVO archive in New York, Web was born in 1938 in Łódź to a secular family. His parents moved in left-wing circles and supported Yiddish language and culture. He survived World War II with his mother in Uzbekistan, while his father joined the Anders Army and traveled with it along the military route from Russia through Iran to Palestine, where he was demobilized. The family moved to Łódź after the war. In the early 1960s, Marek Web taught history at the Sholem Aleichem Jewish high school in Wrocław. He began working at the editorial office of *Folks Sztyme* in Warsaw in 1964.

In 1969, he emigrated with his family to the United States as a result of the anti-Semitic



Marek Web in Wrocław in 2014. Chidusz Jewish Magazine. Used with permission

campaign in Poland. A year later he was employed by the YIVO Institute in New York City, where he played a key role in the modernization of the archives and was eventually made chief archivist.

Web was a valued expert on issues related to Jewish culture in Poland. He co-edited a guide to the YIVO archives and published *Poyln*, an extremely valuable album of Alter Kacyzne's photographs taken from the YIVO archives. An

exceptionally lovely person, Web was always happy to help Polish researchers and visitors who turned up at YIVO for whatever reason. His assistance was crucial for many successful projects, including creation of the *Babiniec—Women in Yiddish Culture* exhibit at the White Stork Synagogue in Wrocław.

**Editors' Note:** In an interview with Teresa Torńska, "We Are Here: Jewish Narratives of Poland's March 1968 Events," Marek Web talked about his life in Poland before he was expelled as a result of the 1968 anti-Semitic/anti-Zionist campaign. <https://wearehere68.com/the-journalist-marek-web>. ■

*Joanna Lisek, PhD, a literary scholar, translator, and faculty member of the Tadeusz Taube Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław, is studying Jewish poetry and the participation of women in Yiddish culture.*

# Remembering Jewlia Eisenberg

(1971–2021)

Naomi Seidman

Jewlia was proud to be Jewish. I'm aware as I write that sentence how inadequate it sounds, like something you'd hear in a Jewish summer camp pep talk or in a Bar Mitzvah sermon or in a more conventional obituary. But Jewlia was not conventional, and my relationship to her was more personal. Jewlia's Jewish pride was of a different type altogether. Who else do you know who changed the spelling of their name to write in the word Jew? On the secular left, in Jewlia's various overlapping circles, Jewishness can be a complicated thing, tinged with insecurity ("How Jewish am I really?") or embarrassment ("Look at what those Jews are doing!") or confusion ("What does Jewish mean anymore?"). Jewlia wasn't insecure, or embarrassed, or confused about being Jewish—she was crazily passionate about it, the way she was about music and the people in her life. It's true, a lot of what she loved about being Jewish were things from an earlier, richer and more radical era—a world of Jewish anarchists and immigrants and



Jewlia Eisenberg z"l performing in Tel Aviv, August 25, 2007.  
Wikimedia Commons

cantors and the Yiddish press and poets and chanteuses. But she wasn't shy about writing herself into those chains of inheritance, as well as she could, in her politics and her music. All while being entirely of the times and places she lived, New York and Berkeley, and especially punk.

Jewlia's name marked her as unmistakably Jewish, but it was also a punk rock Jewish name, unimaginable outside the particular era in which she thrived, of Charming Hostess, a punk music band that played in the south-of-Market-Street nightclubs in San Francisco, when "south of Market" was

mostly warehouses. As "punk" as Jewlia was, she wasn't afraid of seeming uncool or square. Maybe the "punkiest" Jewish thing Jewlia did was go back to school to become a cantor. There was nothing ironic about how she went down that path. In a KPFA interview with her that was replayed a few weeks after she died, Jewlia explained to the host of the radio show that the rabbi was in charge of teaching the congregation, while a cantor was in charge of the spiritual and emotional experience they were having of the service. This was clearly a calling she took very seriously.

My husband and I lead very different lives—he's a musician, I'm a professor—and our social circles rarely intersect. But they intersected at Jewlia. We met her separately, a year or so before we met each other. Jewlia was an undergraduate at Berkeley while I was a doctoral student, and we met in Bluma Goldstein's Yiddish literature class in the early 1990s. Yiddish was rarely taught, and there was something of a pioneering spirit

to the class. It was a graduate seminar, but Jewlia, then a freshman or sophomore, talked her way into the seminar. What I remember most is her chunky Doc Marten boots, which she put up on the chair across from the seminar table. I think I've already said she wasn't shy.

John met her at a Passover seder in his apartment. She'd been invited by his housemate, who was a teaching assistant for a course on Zionism that she was taking. The housemate remembers her, too—basically, all he remembers of the course where he met her was Jewlia arguing with the instructor. It's no surprise she was invited to that seder. Jewlia had a talent for more-or-less instant friendship, leaving aside all questions of social status or age and with all preliminary stages shrunk into five minutes, to get to the juicy parts, which were about life. By the evening after that first seminar meeting, we were zooming around the Berkeley Hills on my motorcycle, with Jewlia screaming in ecstasy. She didn't hold back. If you've heard her sing, you know what I mean.

John was devastated by Jewlia's death. He wasn't done with her, with their friendship, with making music, with traveling around together, the way they had

done with the band The Ark Ensemble. It was so clear with Jewlia that there was more. But there was also regret, for missed opportunities, and one particular unfortunate event. Back when we were all younger, John was at the Starry Plough music venue in Berkeley to hear some music, and the topic of the new Charming Hostess record came up and someone asked him what he thought of it. John said, "Well, it was like being yelled at by three women for forty-five minutes." And there was Jewlia, behind him, having heard every word, booming out with that wild laugh of hers. But he felt awful, and that was what he was remembering, among all the other things, in those days after Jewlia died.

I had regrets, too. I hadn't seen Jewlia all that much in the past fifteen or so years, although we lived close by each other, and every time we did meet it felt like a party, like a red-letter day. Jewlia Eisenberg! Hearing her voice reminded me of something one of my son's pre-school teachers had said after a three-year-old had slammed full force into me: "Uninterrupted chi." Jewlia had uninterrupted chi—forceful energy. I was once in the zoo on a snowy day, and all the animals were indoors, and having the place

to myself I started imitating them, allowing myself in my privacy with the animals to make sounds I didn't know I could make. Most of us don't use the full range of our voices, but keep to a narrow path, where the sounds that come out of us stay inside the lines of normal, proper, feminine, male, human. Jewlia busted through those lines, and not only in her singing, but every time she opened her mouth.

I listened to the KPFA radio interview from bed. The interviewer asked her about Charming Hostess, and Jewlia started laughing. "Every time I think about Charming Hostess I think about what John Schott said about it, that it was like listening to a bunch of women yelling at you. I have to give a shout out to my buddy John, a great musician and friend. In case you're listening, John, I love you!"

Jewlia had uninterrupted chi, until she didn't. In case you're listening, Jewlia, I love you, too. ■

*Naomi Seidman, PhD, is Jackman Humanities Professor at the University of Toronto.*

## Teresa Żabińska-Zawadzki (1944–2021)

Reported by *Gazeta*

With the death of Teresa Żabińska-Zawadzki, on January 30, the Warsaw Zoo lost a living connection to two of its most famous staff members. Żabińska-Zawadzki was the daughter of Jan and Antonina Żabiński, who saved hundreds of Jews from the

*She always talked with pride about her parents and their heroism.*

Holocaust by hiding them in their residence at the zoo or in empty animal enclosures. Yad Vashem recognized the Żabińskis as Righteous Among the Nations, and Hollywood told their story in a widely viewed movie, *The Zookeeper's Wife*.

Żabińska-Zawadzki was born at the zoo in 1944 but chose to live in Denmark after the war, before returning to Poland recently. According to a spokesperson from the zoo, “She always talked with pride about her parents and their heroism.” Her brother Ryszard



Teresa Żabińska-Zawadzki.  
Courtesy of Żabiński Foundation

(d. 2019), who was twelve years her senior, brought food to those in hiding and was featured in the movie. ■



Wilhelm Sasnal, *First of January (Back)*, 2021, oil on canvas.  
Courtesy of the artist and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

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 **August 30, 2021**.

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.



[info@taubephilanthropies.org](mailto:info@taubephilanthropies.org)

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