

Gazeta

Newsletter of the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies
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Fay and Julian Busgang, Editors

Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends:

I thought I would report to you on our trip to Gdańsk where we were invited to participate in the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of Solidarity.

On August 31 we joined a huge assembly of people in a newly constructed but not quite finished hall near the Gdańsk shipyard. Prof. Bronisław Geremek was a perfect master of ceremonies. The first person he asked to speak was Lech Wałęsa, who got the longest and most enthusiastic standing ovation. He looked embarrassed and said that he hoped the audience would feel the same way when he finished.

Wałęsa's speech described the well-known events that led to the shipyard strike to which he gave a lot of credit for the fall of communism in the world. Speeches by presidents of many countries followed: the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Germany, France, Poland, and others. James Baker spoke for the United States. Zbigniew Brzezinski, considered a hero in Poland, also made a speech.

There was a lot of excitement in Poland because the election for president was imminent, and the two major candidates, Lech Kaczyński, from PiS—Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [Law and Justice party] and Donald Tusk, from PO—Platforma Obywatelska [Citizen's Platform party], were in a close contest. They present more right-wing views than the current government. Kaczyński is mayor of Warsaw; Tusk, popular in Gdańsk, close to where he lives, is vice marshal of the Senate. What they have in common is that they have no past record of working with the Communists. As we go to press, news has arrived that Kaczyński has won.

As to the Association's program, we project some exciting events for the fall and winter but will not have definite plans until the beginning of November, following the meeting of the board. I very much miss Genia Shrut, who helped me with all the planning, and Jana Prot, who was in charge of the distribution of POLIN, Gazeta, and much more, but moved recently to Seattle. Antony Polonsky is spending his sabbatical year in London, which leaves many decisions to me.

All of us wish you a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Irene Pipes

Preserving Jewish Cemeteries in Poland

The Poland Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project (PJCRP), established by Norman and Hannah Weinberg of the United States, is cooperating with the Foundation for Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland to restore, protect, and preserve what remains of Jewish cemeteries.

The PJCRP project started in 2001 with the cemetery in Ożarów, the native village of Norman Weinberg's ancestors, but it has rapidly increased in scope. Currently there are about 30 cemetery projects in various stages of progress. Restorations in Karczew, Strzegowo, and Szadek are virtually completed; those in Ilza and Wąchock will be completed soon. In Łosice approximately 1500 monuments were located in the former Gestapo headquarters and will be returned to their rightful place when additional funding is collected.

Some cemeteries have been completely destroyed, but PJCRP Shtetl coordinators, supporting Jewish foundations, and U.S. and Polish government agencies, all working together, have made the PJCRP a great success. More than 1200 cemeteries still need protection, care, and restoration, and PJCRP plans to continue its work with the support of donations from Jewish communities everywhere. Further information is available on the Internet at <<http://www.pjcrp.org/>>.

A book to be assembled in cooperation with the March of the Living organization, called *My Shtetl—My Town*, is in the planning stage, as described on the web at <www.marchoftheliving.org>. The book will be printed first in English and then in Polish.

Progressive Jewish Life in Warsaw

The World Union of Progressive Judaism reports that Beit Warszawa Cultural Jewish Association, affiliated with Progressive Judaism, now counts more than 400 members and friends.

Beit Warszawa attracts Warsaw residents who have discovered their Jewish roots and want to continue the liberal Jewish tradition that flourished in Poland before World War II. They seek modern egalitarian Judaism and get support from many of the American Jews who reside in Warsaw. Actor and folk singer Theodore Bikel, age 80, recently visited Beit Warszawa and took part in the Shabbat services.

ECRI Publishes a Report on Poland

In June the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), set up in 1993 by the Heads of State and Government of the member states of the Council of Europe, published its third report on Poland. The report covers the situation in Poland over the last four years. Among its recommendations, ECRI mentions the need to introduce a comprehensive body of anti-discrimination legislation and to create an immigrant integration policy.

ECRI is concerned that “anti-Semitism without Jews” is still an important problem in Polish society. While Poland has introduced programs to combat racial discrimination, xenophobia, and race and ethnicity-related intolerance, the Commission reports that some strong anti-Semitism still remains and cases of reported racial hatred are rarely investigated or prosecuted.

Fortunately, acts of violence against Jews and vandalism against synagogues, Jewish schools, or Jewish cemeteries are not common in Poland. However, the report specifically mentions that despite several reprimands from the Catholic Church, public occurrences of written and verbal abuses against Jews by some church-related sources have continued. The report mentions *Radio Maryja*, anti-Semitic literature in a church bookstore in Warsaw, and anti-Semitic comments in sermons by a well-known priest in Gdańsk.

The Commission found it disturbing that the word “Jew” is sometimes used as a pejorative term at public events, e.g., at football games, against opponents, and is being encountered on offensive websites. ECRI also expressed concern that some politicians of extreme-right or nationalistic parties, such as the League for Polish Families (LPR—*Liga Polskich Rodzin*) or the National Rebirth of Poland (NOP—*Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski*), seem to believe that resorting to anti-Semitic language will gain them support of voters.

The ECRI report acknowledges that there are laws in existence intended to combat anti-Semitism as well as other types of religious or racial intolerance. However, it believes that Polish authorities need to act with more determination to reduce the number of manifestations of anti-Semitism. Public awareness has to be raised, police have to receive more training, and the public has to be made to understand that freedom of speech has its limits when human beings are singled out for abuse.

ECRI is certainly not totally critical. It praises the steps being taken by the Polish authorities, some non-governmental organizations, and the Jewish community itself to fight against all forms of anti-Semitism. Particularly singled out for recognition are measures taken in the field of education and consciousness-raising among the general public. ECRI encourages these efforts to continue. The full report is available at: <www.jewish.org.pl/polskie/materialy/raport/ecri_eng.pdf>.

U.S. Congress Takes a Position on Restitution

As part of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, H.R. 2601 for the Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives called for the fair, comprehensive, and nondiscriminatory restitution of private property confiscated in Poland by the Nazis during the occupation or by the Communist Polish government after World War II (Sec. 1428).

Expressing the sense of Congress, the bill declares the protection of and respect for property rights as a basic tenet for all democratic governments that operate according to the rule of law. It finds that Poland has continuously failed to enact legislation that requires realistically achievable restitution or compensation for those individuals who had private property confiscated. It notes that, in contrast, several other post-Communist countries in Europe have taken steps toward compensating individuals whose property was unlawfully seized during or after World War II.

The Polish Parliament passed a bill in March 2001, later vetoed by President Kwaśniewski, that would have provided compensation for seized and confiscated property—but only to individuals who were registered as Polish citizens as of 31 December 1999, thereby excluding all persons who emigrated from Poland during or after World War II.

Although President Kwaśniewski met in 2002 with congressional leaders of the United States and the Helsinki Commission and stated that he intended to draft a new law—to take effect by the beginning of 2003—requiring restitution that is not based on residency or citizenship, so far, no such law has been drafted.

A proposal being considered by the Polish Parliament falls far short of the U.S. Congress’s declared goal; instead of returning private property that was seized, compensation equal to only 15% of the assessed value would be offered to the owners or their heirs.

Restitution in Ukraine

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) publication *World Jewry* reports that the speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, Volodymyr Lytvyn, recently stated that his Parliament supports the return of property seized from Jews during the Soviet era. Lytvyn is quoted as saying that new legislation may be needed, but part of the process would simply be enforcing existing laws.

New Rabbi In Kraków

The Associated Press announced that Rabbi Avraham Flaks, a 38-year-old Russian-born Israeli, will serve as full-time rabbi for the Jewish community in Kraków. About 200 persons are registered with the Jewish community, but it is estimated that there are more than 1,000 persons of Jewish descent now living in Krakow.

The Ringelblum Archive Exhibition

by Marjorie Federbush of ASJHIP

Gazeta readers may recall that the impetus for the formation of the American Society for Jewish Heritage in Poland (ASJHIP) was the desire of its founders to help preserve Poland's rich Jewish heritage. Of particular interest was the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI) of Warsaw and its Ringelblum Archive, the Archive that UNESCO, in 1999, included in its "Memory of the World Register," calling for it "to be protected for the benefit of all mankind."

The Archive is a remarkable compilation of printed matter, photographs, and watercolors assembled by a clandestine group calling themselves "Oyneg Shabbes" (Sabbath joy). Led by the well-known historian Emanuel Ringelblum, their mission was to document every aspect of Jewish life in the Warsaw Ghetto. From 1940 to 1943, they furtively gathered huge quantities of materials, ranging from official records to eyewitness testimonies. Despite almost impossible conditions, the group managed to produce a historically accurate, emotionally devastating account of the day-to-day consequences of the Nazi campaign to exterminate Jews.

Their documentation served as the basis for reports filtered to the Allies beginning in March 1942, detailing the slaughter of Jews in occupied Poland. As the situation worsened, those still surviving in 1943—just before the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—buried the last of the materials they had amassed in two metal milk cans; previous documents had been interred in metal boxes.

Miraculously, as they had hoped, most of the archival containers were dug up after World War II and turned over to the Jewish Historical Institute.

ASJHIP leaders Nancy Brumm and Maxine Rockoff, dedicated to heightening public awareness about the valuable Archive, began actively seeking U.S. sponsors and venues to show a newly reformatted Ringelblum Archive Exhibit, an exhibit curated by Dr. Lena Bergman of JHI and first displayed at the Frankfurt am Main Book Fair in 2000.

Their efforts achieved success. New York City's Museum of Jewish Heritage welcomed the opportunity to mount an exhibit of the Ringelblum Archive materials. The museum's installation "Scream the Truth at the World" ran from November 2001 to January 2002.

Recently, ASJHIP arranged through Alex Lauterbach, a Los Angeles resident born in Kraków, for the Ringelblum exhibition to appear once again—this time at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, in the early part of 2006. Plans are underway to bring students and various groups to the exhibit to educate them about the heroism of Emanuel Ringelblum and the Oyneg Shabbes group in resisting the Nazi onslaught and proclaiming to

posterity the horrible truth about the systematic destruction of the Jews of Poland.

"The Jews of Częstochowa" – An Exhibition

by Marjorie Federbush of ASJHIP

The American Society for Jewish Heritage in Poland (ASJHIP) will hold a special event for its supporters on Monday evening, November 7, to view firsthand the compelling exhibition "The Jews of Częstochowa" at the Polish Consulate in New York City. The exhibit will be open November 3–10.

Prior to its opening, ASJHIP is hosting an evening at the NYC home of Marian Marill to screen a short related film and to introduce the ASJHIP board to the film's creator and exhibition sponsor, Sigmund Rolat. Rolat, born in Częstochowa, and his cousin, Alan Silberstein, are both facilitators and generous funders of the exhibit.

After its New York City showing, the exhibition will travel throughout the United States. ASJHIP is partnering with Rolat and Silberstein to help plan additional showings. Negotiations are currently underway to bring the exhibit to Boston in 2006.

Opening last year in Częstochowa and subsequently at the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI) in Warsaw, this carefully and thoughtfully assembled installation attests to the vibrant life of the 30,000 Jews who made up one-third of the city's prewar population.

"The Jews of Częstochowa" exhibit is comprised of ritual objects, secular artifacts, and contemporary art newly created by local students after visiting the original exhibit. An "audio-visual theater" component features three specially prepared videos that serve as orientation.

The evolution of the exhibit is the result of a fortuitous collaboration among the current progressive Catholic mayor of Częstochowa, a dedicated local historian, a visionary Venezuelan professor and film maker originally from Częstochowa, and the two successful American businessmen already mentioned—Sigmund Rolat and his cousin, Alan Silberstein—who have retained their ties to Częstochowa.

The Polish Consulate, under the leadership of new Consul General Tomasz Wielgomas, is also devoting much energy and enthusiasm to its role as local exhibit sponsor. In addition to a press campaign and radio advertising, the Consulate is intent on bringing the exhibit to the attention of members of the Polish, Jewish, Roman Catholic, and academic communities in New York. Likewise, it hopes to attract students from public, Jewish, and Catholic schools to view this celebration of Jewish life in prewar Poland.

A docent who will be on hand whenever the exhibit is open to visitors is receiving training in presenting the exhibit from materials prepared by Facing History and Ourselves, an organization that helps young people to understand diversity and thereby become more tolerant.

In honor of the opening on November 3, an academic symposium will be held at the Consulate with the participation of Professor Feliks Tych, director of JHI.

List of Polish Citizens Deported to USSR

A new Polish website provides the names of “repressed” Polish citizens; i.e., those who were arrested, sentenced, and deported to the USSR during the 1939–1941 occupation of eastern Poland, western Ukraine, and Belarus. Many of these persons were Jews. The records come from NKVD (Soviet Secret Police) files, which have been recently released. Some of those deported were sent to Siberia, some as far as Vorkuta (Komi Republic). The web page where one can search for the names of these “repressed persons” is to be found at <www.indeks.karta.org.pl/wyniki_old.asp>.

One can search by surname only or by adding other information for an advanced search. By clicking on a person’s name when the list of those with a certain surname appear, one can get further details about date of arrest, deportation, and release. Father’s name is included for identification purposes. One can also search on the name of a town and get a list of all deportees who come from that town, if the town name is on the record.

Holocaust Era Insurance Claims

Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, chairman of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), has announced that ICHEIC has offered approximately \$16 million to 11,000 Holocaust victims and their heirs.

The amount offered falls into two categories: (1) \$5.5 million for life insurance policies held with companies that were liquidated or nationalized after World War II and for which there are no present day successor companies; and (2) \$10.5 million for claims containing only anecdotal information referencing a Holocaust-era insurance policy and for which no supporting documentation could be found. More information about ICHEIC can be found at <www.icheic.org>.

In the Garden of Memory: A Memoir

The book by Joanna Olczak-Ronikier, *W ogrodzie pamięci*, won a Polish literary award, the Nike Prize, in 2002. The English version, *In the Garden of Memory*, was published by Orion (London, 2004).

The author describes her family’s story in prewar Poland, including a special account of the life of her grandfather, Jakub Mortkowicz, publisher and owner of an important bookstore in Warsaw specializing in Polish literature. On her mother’s side, she is related to André Citroën, maker of the Citroën automobiles in France.

Olczak-Ronikier and a few other members of her family survived, saved by Polish friends. The book gives the sense of what Jews experienced during the two

occupations—German and Soviet. The author now lives in Kraków.

American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies

The American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies (AAPJS) was established to help document and preserve the history of Polish Jewry. Our major goal is to support the publication of a collection of scientific papers in the yearbook *POLIN* in collaboration with our sister organization, the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies in Oxford, England. The AAPJS also organizes occasional lectures, conferences, and seminars.

The origin of AAPJS goes back to the International Conference on Polish-Jewish Studies held in Oxford in 1984. We attempt to focus the attention of the American and world public on what is most significant and precious in the legacy of Polish Jewry. Our website is <<http://aapjs.brandeis.edu/>>.

Our newsletter, *Gazeta*, is issued three times a year. Its purpose is to inform our members of relevant AAPJS meetings and related events, give a summary of them afterward for those unable to attend, and report on the content of forthcoming volumes of *POLIN*, the Association’s annual journal—which is distributed to paid-up members (AAPJS dues are \$100 per year).

Gazeta also keeps its readers up to date on Jewish-related events taking place in Poland today and reports on other topics that may be of interest to those concerned with Polish-Jewish history and Polish-Jewish relations. We report on the appearance of interesting books and movies related to our aims. Priority is given to items unlikely to appear in the U.S. press. We welcome suggestions and relevant news reports that our readers may wish to share.

The newsletter is sent out free both to members of AAPJS and to supporters of ASJHIP. One can also subscribe independently to *Gazeta* for \$50 a year. A form is provided for your convenience on page 7. Please renew your membership and support the AAPJS.

New Jewish Books in Poland

Our president, Irene Pipes, recommends two recently published books to our members:

Poland and the Jews: Reflections of a Polish Jew by Stanisław Krajewski, Austeria (Kraków, 2005) [in English] is a collection of Krajewski’s articles written over the years. Krajewski is well suited to discuss this topic from various angles since he grew up in Poland as the child of nonreligious communists, has become an observant Jew, and now serves as the representative of the American Jewish Committee in Poland. The section on Jews in the communist party is especially interesting.

Piotr Zettinger’s *Nietutejszy* (Not from Here) [in Polish only] is a well-done take-off on the life of a young Polish-Jewish man during the time of the Polish People’s Republic. It is well written and witty.

Architect Named for Design of Museum of History of Polish Jews

Architect Rainer Mahlamäki of the Finnish firm Lahdelma and Mahlamäki has been selected as the designer for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews to be built in Warsaw, according to Carolyn Slutsky of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA). The international competition involved some 250 prominent architects from all over the world.

The Museum, which will focus on the history and culture of Polish Jews rather than on their destruction, will be located on a site opposite the Monument to the Heroes of the Ghetto Uprising erected in 1948. The land for the Museum was donated by the city of Warsaw, which also contributed \$13 million to the project, a sum matched by the Polish government in 2003. The total cost is estimated to be \$50–60 million. The U.S. House of Representatives has a bill pending to allocate funds to the project, which is badly needed to supplement current official and private contributions.

Leading the effort in Warsaw is Jerzy Halbersztadt, director of the museum. Dr. Halbersztadt points out that the museum would serve both the visitors to Poland, who want to understand the history of Polish Jews, and the people living in Poland, who no longer have their Jewish compatriots near them. Many do not know about the rich Jewish culture that flourished in Poland when 10% of the population (30% in many cities) was Jewish.

A major supporter of the museum project is the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture set up by Tad Taube, chairman and founder of the Woodmont Companies (a large real estate investment firm) and a very active philanthropist.

An American support group has been established, and donations can be made to: The Museum of the History of Polish Jews c/o North American Council, Stephen D. Solender, United Jewish Communities, 130 East 59 Street, New York, NY 10022. Tel.: 212-836-1536. Email: <stephen.solender@ujc.org>. For more information, see <www.jewishmuseum.org.pl/>.

Kutno – Sholem Asch Contest

The town of Kutno announced a contest highlighting the work of Sholem Asch (Szolem Asz). Contestants are invited to submit essays relating to the writings of Sholem Asch and the interrelationship of Polish and Jewish literature. Winners of the contest will be announced on 3 December 2005 in connection with Kutno's Sholem Asch festival.

Sholem Asch (1880–1957), child of a poor Jewish family, was born in Kutno and moved to Warsaw at age 19. In 1909 he came to the United States; later he lived in Israel. Asch's works are very popular and have been widely translated from Yiddish into many languages.

Contributions of Polish Jews: Sir Joseph Rotblat

Sir Joseph Rotblat, who died on 9 February 2005 at age 96, was born in Warsaw and received a doctorate in physics from the University of Warsaw in 1938. He left Poland in 1939 to continue work in physics at the University of Liverpool. His wife, who was too ill to travel, stayed in Poland and was sent to a German concentration camp, where she perished.

Rotblat, an outstanding nuclear physicist, came to the United States in 1944 to work with the Manhattan Project in Los Alamos on the development of the atom bomb. He was the only scientist to later resign from the project for reasons of personal conscience, objecting to the continued development of nuclear weapons after it became known that Germany did not possess such weapons. He returned to England and became a British citizen.

In 1955 he joined ten other prominent individuals, including Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell, to sign a manifesto calling for scientists of all nations to convene for the purpose of seeking ways to avoid nuclear war.

The first such meeting took place in Canada in 1957 at Pugwash, Nova Scotia. Other meetings of like-minded scientists followed and became known as the Pugwash Conferences, concerned with the proper use of science to help rather than harm mankind. Rotblat, who previously used his knowledge of physics to produce nuclear weapons, switched to applying his skills to medicine.

Rotblat wrote, co-wrote, or edited over twenty books and was the editor of the journal *Physics in Medicine and Biology*. He served as president of the Pugwash Conferences from 1988 to 1997. In 1995, at age 86, Rotblat was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. Also that year he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with the Pugwash group for their many years of determined effort to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

Rotblat held honorary degrees from universities all over the world and received many other awards. He was named a foreign member of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1966, awarded the Albert Einstein Peace Prize in 1992, and knighted in Great Britain in 1998.

Jews in Kraków – 700 Years of History

Books about Kraków that may be of interest to our readers: Henryk Halkowski, *The Legends from the Jewish Town in Kazimierz near Cracow* (Kraków, 1998) [order at henryk@kehillah.jewish.org.pl.] and Michał Rożek, *Przewodnik po zabytkach i kulturze Krakowa* (Guide to the Monuments and Culture of Kraków), PWN (Warszawa–Kraków, 1993).

Please Renew Your Membership in AAPJS

Judaic Conference in Warsaw

The Mordechaj Anielewicz Center for the Study and Teaching of Jewish History and Culture at the Institute of History at Warsaw University held a major conference on Jewish topics 21–23 June.

Titles of sessions at the conference included: Jews in Poland Today; Jews in Poland Before 1918; Judaism; Polish Writers and Historians' Views of Jews; Accounts of the Holocaust; The Jewish Diaspora Outside Poland; Jewish Shtetls; Language, Art and Music of Jews; Political Zionism and the State of Israel; Holocaust Literature; Holocaust: Escape and Ways of Survival; Jews and Christianity; Polish-Israeli Interaction; From Poland to Zion—Jewish Painting in the 20th Century; Jews in the 1930s; Holocaust Era Communications; and Jewish Identity in Modern Poland.

Papers were presented by Polish historians and researchers from the Jagiellonian University in Kraków; from academic institutions in Warsaw, Wrocław, and other cities; and from the Polish Academy of Science. Universities outside of Poland were also represented, e.g., Cambridge University. From the United States, Monika Rice of Brandeis University discussed the Jewish viewpoint regarding the beatification and canonization of Edyta Stein.

A Jewish Book Fair in Warsaw

The Polish-Jewish magazine *Midrasz* organized the eighth annual "Jewish Book Fair" 18–21 September at several locations in Warsaw, including the Nożyk Synagogue and the nearby Jewish community building. The program featured the selling of books, interviews with authors, exhibits, and lectures.

Among the participants were well-known authors Anna Bikont, Wilhelm Dichter, Michał Friedman, Jan Tomasz Gross, Henryk Grynberg, Józef Hen, Eva Hoffman, Joanna Olczak-Ronikier, Theo Richmond, David Weinfeld, and former ambassador Szewach Weiss.

Topics included: Shtetl—The Real World and Its Glorification, by Armin Eiherr; Known and Unknown Israel, by Elim Barbur; Jewish Traces in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, by Piotr Paziński; Judaism as Fate: about Bogdan Wojdowski, by Alina Molisak; Jewish Landowners and Their Polish Neighbors, by Tomasz Gašiorowski; Poetry of Chaim Nachman Bialik, by Maciej Tomal; The Eleventh Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Forget, by Michał Mosze Chęciński; Return to Lilit, by Bella Szwarzman-Czarnota; and Genealogical Research About Jewish Ancestors, by Yale Reisner.

Panel discussions were held on such subjects as the future of Jewish communities in post-communist European countries and the attitude of the Catholic Church toward Jews. One session was entitled "Is There Jewish Art in Poland today?" There was also an exhibit of photographs by Andrzej Pelc called "Shtetl."

Jews of Gliwice

As part of an ongoing project called "The Gliwice Minorities," the museum in Gliwice, an important industrial city in Upper Silesia, is preparing an exhibit entitled "The Gliwice Jews." The exhibit, which will open 10 November 2005 and continue until the end of January 2006, will present the history, life, and cultural achievements of Gliwice and Silesian Jews before 1939.

In addition to presenting items from its own collection, the museum plans to display artifacts borrowed from the Jewish Museum and Centrum Judaicum in Berlin, the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, and museums in Zabrze, Chrzanów, Tarnowskie Góry, and Sosnowiec, as well as items on loan from private collections.

A special catalog will illustrate important Judaica, holidays and rituals will be explained, and references to literature on related subjects will be provided.

Along with the exhibit, a conference dedicated to a presentation of the role played by Gliwice Jews in the economic and socio-political development of Poland, Germany, and Central Eastern Europe will be convened 17–18 November. The program will include concerts of traditional and synagogue music, as well as films. Participants from various academic institutions in Poland, Germany, and the United States are expected to attend.

The exhibit and conference are being organized under the honorary patronage of the Israeli ambassador in Warsaw, David Peleg, and with the cooperation of the chairman of the Jewish community in Katowice, Włodzimierz Kac, and representatives of Gliwice Jews in Poland and abroad. Ms. Bożena Kubit, manager of the Department of Ethnography at the Gliwice Museum, is the principal organizer.

Prominent Jews of Buczacz

Buczacz is a small town near Tarnopol, which is now in Ukraine. Before WWI, it was in eastern Galicia; between the wars, in southeastern Poland. It is rather remarkable how many prominent Jews trace their roots to Buczacz.

Among those who were born in Buczacz are Shmuel Yosef (S.Y.) Agnon (1888–1970), Emanuel Ringelblum (1900–1944), and Simon Wiesenthal (1908–2005).

Agnon, whose original name was Shmuel Yosef Halevi Czaczkes, was the first Hebrew writer awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature (in 1966). Ringelblum was the great Polish-Jewish historian who organized a group to document the tragedy of the Warsaw ghetto. His hidden diary and many other documents were recovered after the war. Wiesenthal, who died recently, gained fame by hunting Nazi criminals after the war.

The father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), also descended from a Buczacz family. His grandfather, Schlomo Freud, was born in Buczacz.

Ringelblum Fellowships at JHI

Now in its fourth year, the Ringelblum Fellowship is an annual fellowship established through the effort of the American Society for Jewish Heritage in Poland (ASJHIP). A successful applicant is expected to continue his or her dissertation work and also devote half-time to a collaborative project currently pursued by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and dedicated to the publication of the Emanuel Ringelblum archives.

ASJHIP is pleased to report that the current Ringelblum Fellow, Rachel Harrison, newly arrived in Warsaw, will give a special report on her experiences-to-date at the JHI for the next issue of *Gazeta*. Rachel, who received an M.A. from Brandeis, is planning to continue study toward a Ph.D. at Indiana University.

Festival of Jewish Culture in Warsaw

The city of Kraków has had an annual Festival of Jewish Culture for the past several years. This year, for the second time, the Szalom Foundation, under the direction of Golda Tencer, organized a four-day Festival of Jewish Culture in Warsaw, 15-18 September.

Patrons of the festival included Waldemar Dąbrowski, minister of culture; Lech Kaczyński, mayor of Warsaw; and David Peleg, ambassador of Israel.

An enormous variety of events included Jewish dances, concerts, films, and theater, klezmer music, Yiddish songs, Jewish calligraphy, exhibits of Jewish life, lectures on Jewish topics, samplings of Jewish cooking, and a children's program. Special tours of Warsaw emphasized the Jewish sites of the city.

Many events took place in the Grzybowski Square area, where the Nożyk Synagogue, the Jewish Theater, and other Jewish buildings are located. The festival was very successful and is likely to be repeated next year.

Foundation Monumentum Iudaicum Lodzense

The Foundation Monumentum Iudaicum Lodzense is dedicated to the preservation of Jewish monuments in Łódź. Established in 1995, the FMIL popularizes the history, culture, tradition, and religion of Jews in Łódź and tries to preserve the sites that survived the Holocaust but were neglected during the Communist era. Its first president was the late Dr. Arnold Mostowicz. The Foundation cooperates with the Association of the Former Residents of Lodz (sic) in Israel, the Jewish Community in Łódź, and the officials of the city of Łódź. It helped organize the commemoration in 2004 of the 60th anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto.

The most important activities of the Foundation include cleaning, restoration, and research at the Jewish Cemetery on Bracka Street and work on the preservation of places connected with the Łódź ghetto. The Foundation welcomes donations and support. Their address is: ul. Pomorska 18, 91-416 Łódź, Poland. The director of the Foundation, Marek Szukalak, can be contacted at <fundacje@lodzjews.org>. The FMIL website is: <www.lodzjews.org/>.

Exchange Program Between AJC and Forum

In July the Forum for Dialogue Among Nations in Poland hosted a visiting delegation from the American Jewish Committee (AJC). The AJC/Forum interchange places special emphasis on contemporary Polish-Jewish life. The nine AJC visitors toured sites in Kraków, Lublin, Warsaw, and Łódź. Although this is the fifth year for such a program, it was the first time the AJC group visited Łódź.

The exchange program is sponsored in part by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture.

To: American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies

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The Last Eyewitnesses, Vol. 2 Published

The English version of Volume 2 of the book *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak* (*Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*), edited by Jakub Gutenbaum and Agnieszka Latała, was published in September 2005 by Northwestern University Press.

The book contains some thirty riveting accounts written by members of the Association of “Children of the Holocaust” in Poland, the majority of whom were less than fourteen years of age by the end of the war. Many of the authors describe not just wartime experiences—most of them were in hiding—but also post-war experiences as well. The accounts in Volume 2 are somewhat longer than those in Volume 1 and describe events and feelings in greater detail.

While most of the contributors still live in Poland, four now live in the United States: Dr. Jana Prot-Wald, member of the board of AAPJS, Stella Kolin, Dasha Rittenberg, and Sven Sonnenberg.

The book was translated from the Polish into English by Julian and Fay Bussgang (your editors of *Gazeta*) and Simon Cygielski. List price of the paperback is \$35. Copies can be obtained through <www.amazon.com> or <www.bn.com>, or directly from the Bussgangs (at the AAPJS address above), at a discount.

Letter to a Jewish Friend—from Pope John II

A remarkable book by Gian Franco Svidercoschi describes the friendship of the late Pope John Paul II with Jerzy Kluger, the pope’s Jewish childhood friend. The book, *Letter to a Jewish Friend* (Crossroad, New York, 1994), is based on a letter the pope sent to Kluger in 1989, in which he encouraged Kluger to visit their native town, Wadowice, and to participate in the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the Jews of Wadowice who had perished during the Holocaust.

The author, deputy director of *L'Osservatore Romano*, interviewed the late pope several times and also spoke with Kluger, who lives in Rome.

Jerzy Kluger and Karol Wojtyła (later Pope John Paul II) grew up together in the small town of Wadowice and attended school together. The book recounts the background of their friendship and provides a powerful explanation of Pope John Paul’s outreach toward Jews—a prominent aspect of his papacy.

What is an important additional quality of this book is its vivid depiction of friendly and collegial relations between Jewish and Catholic schoolboys in Poland before the war, a fact that tends to be forgotten because of divisive experiences during the war and later under Communism.

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