

Gazeta

Newsletter of the American Association for Polish Jewish Studies

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1583 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, (617)547-7701

Fay Bussgang, Genia Shrut, Editors

Antony Polonsky Appointed at Brandeis

Professor Antony B. Polonsky, editor of *POLIN*, the leading journal of Polish-Jewish studies, is now at Brandeis University. Polonsky, an active member and advisor of the AAPJS (American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies), has been named Professor of Modern East European Jewish History in the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.

An outstanding scholar in Polish-Jewish history, Polonsky is the author of *Politics in Independent Poland, the Great Powers and the Polish Question*, and *The Little Dictator: The History of Eastern Europe since 1918*. He also edited the prize winning book by Abraham Levin, *A Cup of Tears: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto*.

Polonsky lectures internationally on Polish-Jewish topics and has appeared frequently as a commentator on radio and TV programs. Prior to his appointment at Brandeis, Polonsky was a professor at the London School of Economics.

Polonsky was warmly welcomed to Brandeis by the University Provost, Professor Jehuda Reinhartz, who is also a Board member of AAPJS.

Polish Ambassador to Israel Addresses AAPJS

Professor Jan Dowgiałło, the first Polish Ambassador to Israel since 1967, was the guest of honor at a reception given by the AAPJS at the home of Richard and Irene Pipes in Cambridge.

Ambassador Dowgiałło addressed the group, offering his interpretation of Polish-Israeli and Polish-Jewish relations, with special emphasis on the first visit to Israel by Lech Wałęsa, President of Poland

The Ambassador spoke of plans for the economic and cultural cooperation between Poland and Israel.

AAPJS Panel in Worcester

Sunday, October 4

A panel discussion "Witnesses from the Lost World" will take place on October 4, 1992 at 3:00 P.M. at the Congregation Temple Emanuel, 280 May Street, Worcester, MA. Temple Emanuel is located directly across from Worcester College. Speakers will include Dr. Halina Nelken, Dr. Julian Bussgang, Mr. Witold Henneberg, and Dr. John Saunders. The moderator will be Dr. Gershon Weisenberg, Worcester County Regional Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

The speakers will describe the Jewish community of pre-World War II Poland and recount some of their personal wartime experiences. The program was organized by Mrs. Alexandra Watkins, Chairperson of the Outreach Committee of the AAPJS and Dr. Weisenberg.

Dr. Nelken, an art historian born in Kraków, was imprisoned in several concentration camps, including Auschwitz. Her *Diary of the Kraków Ghetto* was published in 1987. Dr. Bussgang is a retired scientist-entrepreneur, born in Lwów. After fleeing Poland, he enlisted in the Free Polish Army to fight the Nazis. Witold Henneberg, an architect, is a Christian who grew up in Słonim, a town which was 80% Jewish. He was a member of the underground Polish Home Army in Warsaw. Dr. Saunders, a dentist, was born in Stanisławów. He was deported to Auschwitz as a youngster. He escaped but was re-captured.

The speakers will share their recollections of Polish-Jewish interactions and a variety of wartime experiences. They will entertain questions from the audience.

There will be no admission charge, and everyone is welcome. Ample parking is available. For further information or directions to the Temple, please contact the office of the National Council of Christians and Jews in Worcester at (508) 753-1681.

Letter from the President

Dear Members,

After a good summer, our first board meeting was held at my house on September 23. I am happy to report that it was well attended, and the board members were most enthusiastic about our plans for the future.

We welcomed Antony Polonsky who has moved from London to Cambridge, MA. We elected Alexandra Haviger Treasurer, and Baruch Frusztajer Assistant Treasurer. Genia Shrut and Pat Trevisani will be in charge of activities; and Fay and Julian Bussgang will edit *Gazeta*.

We are planning three or four events this year centered around persons many of us would like to meet and hear. Among the names suggested were: Marek Edelman, survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto Jewish Fighting Organization; Israel Gutman, leading historian of the Warsaw Ghetto; Agnieszka Holland, film producer; Jan Karski, courier to the West for the Polish Underground; Charles Merrill, educator and philanthropist; Adam Michnik, editor of *Gazeta Wyborowa*; Czesław Miłosz, Nobel Prize winning poet; Grażyna Pawlak, director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw; Robert Scharf, writer on Polish Jewish topics; Harvey Sarnier, who takes Christian rescuers to visit Israel; Andrzej Szczypiorski, leading novelist; and Jacek Woźniakowski, former mayor of Kraków.

I will be glad to hear from you if you have any suggestions or ideas, particularly for programs in New York or in other cities.

All of us wish you a very good New Year.

Irene E. Pipes
President

First Issue of *Gazeta* A Success

We were very pleased to receive a number of favorable comments about the first issue of *Gazeta*. Please send us any news you believe would be of interest to our readers. We welcome your suggestions and contributions.

A pleasant by-product of our first issue was the reunion of two former classmates. Dr. Stanisław Korzeniowski of Chicago recognized in the *Gazeta* the name of his old friend from the Polish-refugee High School in Tel Aviv, Board Member Julian Bussgang. Following their graduation, Julian had joined the Polish Second Corps in the Middle East, and Stanisław had enlisted in the Polish Navy, both under command of the British. The two had been out of touch for fifty years!

Volume 6 of *POLIN* Available

Volume 6 of *POLIN* has been distributed to all qualifying members of AAPJS. This volume, devoted to the Jews of Łódź 1820-1939, benefited from the generous support of long-time board member Eugenia Shrut. Her children Neil, Roger and Glenn Asch dedicated this volume to the memory of their grandparents and two uncles who perished in Trawniki and Poniatowo in November 1943.

In addition to the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies, previous benefactors of *Polin* have included Mrs. Irene Pipes, the Jewish Presence Foundation, the M. B. Grabowski Fund, the American Jewish Committee, the Polish American Congress, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, *Commentary* Magazine, *Present Tense* Magazine, Gadsby and Hannah, Paisner and Co., and Edmund Gibbs and Co.

You may purchase *POLIN* directly from the AAPJS office in Cambridge, Massachusetts. You may also request that your closest public or university library order a copy.

If you wish to sponsor or dedicate a future issue of *POLIN*, with particular interest in areas that are meaningful to you, please contact Professor Polonsky at Brandeis.

Some volumes of *POLIN* are now out of print, but a few copies are still available from AAPJS headquarters in Cambridge. Please contact the office if you wish to complete your *POLIN* set.

Condolences

We extend condolences to Professor Jan Karski, board member of AAPJS, on the recent death of his beloved wife Pola Nirenska.

Pola Nirenska was a noted teacher and choreographer and a major force in dance in Washington for many years. After starting her brilliant dance career in Poland, she was forced, as a Jew, to flee the Nazis. Many of her relatives perished in the death camps. Some of her works in the past decade have dealt with the Holocaust. She was eighty one years old.

During World War II, Karski was a courier for the Polish Underground. In October 1942, prior to a secret mission to London, he was smuggled into the Warsaw Ghetto to provide an eyewitness report of its horrors. In London and Washington, he tried to persuade the Allied leaders to take action to prevent the further annihilation of the Jews. His moving recollections were featured in Claude Lanzmann's video production "Shoah". In November 1989, the Boston chapter of AAPJS held a special dinner in Karski's honor.

Julian Bussgang Speaks in Warsaw and Kraków

In May, board member Dr. Julian Bussgang gave talks on growing up Jewish in Poland at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and at the Jagiellonian University Research Center for Jewish Studies in Kraków. Julian was also interviewed on Polish Radio.

Julian and his wife Fay are actively engaged in genealogical research of their families. They visited various destroyed Jewish communities in Poland and were able to locate the birth certificates of Fay's father and Julian's mother and many other metrical documents (births, deaths and marriages) in Civil Registry Offices and State Archives.

Polish Radio Has Program on Jews

In May, Polish Radio devoted a four-hour program to Jews and Israel in connection with the state visit of Chaim Herzog. The program included material about Israel, the history of the Jews in Poland, and an interview with Herzog. A panel of Polish educators discussed Polish Jewish experiences.

Tribute to Janusz Korczak

In August, board member Eugenia Shrut attended in Warsaw the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Janusz Korczak. This very moving event took place at the site of the orphanage, miraculously still standing, where Jewish orphans lived before and during the first years of the war.

Janusz Korczak was the pen name of Dr. Henryk Goldschmidt, pediatrician, educator, famous writer, and founder and director of two Polish orphanages, one, Jewish, the other, Christian. When mass deportations from the Warsaw ghetto began, Dr. Korczak remained at his post as the director of the Jewish orphanage *Dom Dziecka* (Home of the Child). Although offered a hide-out by Polish friends, he renounced this opportunity in order to stay with the children to comfort them. Thus, he marched with the youngsters to the Umschlagplatz and shared their fate in the gas chambers of Treblinka.

Youth and educators from several countries attended the Korczak anniversary ceremonies in Warsaw. Children representing sixty Polish schools from all over Poland took part in a commemorative march to the Umschlagplatz, retracing the steps of Korczak and his young charges. Buses were provided to take school children and others attending the ceremonies to visit Treblinka.

Board Member Profile - Jehuda Reinharz

AAPJS Board Member Jehuda Reinharz is Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. In addition to being the chief academic officer of the university, he is the Richard Koret Professor of Modern Jewish History and has served for many years as director of the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry.

Born in Israel, Reinharz was educated in the United States. In 1967, he earned concurrent Bachelor's degrees from Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary. He received a Master's degree from Harvard University in 1968 and a doctorate from Brandeis in 1972. He came to Brandeis in 1982 from the University of Michigan where he had been a faculty member in the history department.

Reinharz is the author and co-author of 17 books and more than 70 articles. The second volume of his widely acclaimed biography of the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann will soon be published.

In 1990, Reinharz was the first recipient of the President of Israel prize, awarded annually by the Israeli Knesset for outstanding scholarly work dealing with Zionism.

Reinharz is married to Shulamit Reinharz, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Women's Studies Program at Brandeis. They have two daughters.

Warsaw Ghetto Exhibit at Tufts University

An exhibit of photos entitled *A Birthday Trip in Hell: A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto* is being shown at the Tisch Gallery, Aidekman Arts Center, Tufts University, from September 10 - December 20, 1992.

In 1941, a German soldier, Heinz Jöst, entered the ghetto on his birthday to try out a new camera. Contrary to regulations against taking photographs, he shot over a hundred pictures. He kept the photos hidden until 1987, when, shortly before his death, he sent them to the German magazine *Stern*. *Stern* turned them over to Yad Vashem which cooperated with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service to provide them for this exhibit.

A complementary exhibit, portraits of "Rescuers of the Holocaust", will be displayed at the Koppelman Gallery of the Aidekman Arts Center from November 19 through December 20. The opening reception will be Thursday, November 19, from 5:00-8:00 P.M.

A New Video Documentary *Zegota*

Dedication in Lvov

On Sunday, August 23, a monument to 135,000 Jewish victims of the Lvov Ghetto was dedicated in the city of Lvov (formerly in Poland, now in the Ukraine). This dedication took place through the cooperative efforts of the Government of the Ukraine, the local Jewish community, a few Jewish families from Lvov, and the Lvov Association in Israel (*Irgun Yotzei Lvov b'Israel*). A number of Jewish survivors born in Lvov returned to the city for the first time since the war.

An account of the destruction of the Jews of Lvov appears in *Lvov Ghetto Diary*, the recent memoir of a surviving rabbi from Lwów., David Kahane, who later became the Chief Rabbi of the Israeli Army. The book was published by University of Massachusetts Press.

Zegota was the code name for a little known effort by the Polish Government in London and its underground organization in Poland to assist Jews under German occupation during 1943 and 1944. A new videocassette entitled "*Zegota - A Time to Remember*" documents this story.

Copies of the cassette are available for \$54 from Documentaries International, Ltd., 1800 K Street, NW, Suite 1120, Washington, DC 20006.

Hold November 15 for a Special Event

November 15 has been set as the date for a talk by Charles Merrill, author and founder of the Commonwealth School in Boston. More information will follow.



We hope you enjoy our newsletter. We welcome your comments and suggestions. We would like to remind those of you who have not yet renewed your membership to do so; the Association needs your support to continue its work. Subscribing members and above receive the latest volume of Polin. To join, check the appropriate category of membership, and send your name and check to: American Association for Polish Jewish Studies, 1583 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Benefactor ___ \$1000, Sponsor ___ \$500, Subscribing Member ___ \$ 100, Member ___ \$50.

Name and address _____.

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