

Gazeta

Newsletter of the American Association for Polish Jewish Studies Vol. 3 No. 2 Summer 1994

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

Fay and Julian Bussgang, Editors

"Legacy of Polish Jewry"

International Conference - Revised Schedule

Saturday, October 8: Welcoming Reception at the home of Irene and Richard Pipes in Cambridge. Entertainment by Klezmer Conservatory Band.

Sunday, October 9: 9:00-9:15: *Introduction*, Antony Polonsky; 9:15-10:30: *Hasidism as a Reflection of Jewish Spirituality*, Arthur Green; 11:00-12:15: *Legacy of Yiddish Literature in Poland*, David Roskies; 12:15-2:00 Lunch; 2:00-3:15: *The Interpenetration of Two Literary Worlds: Interactions between Jewish and Polish Writers*, Jadwiga Maurer and Michael Steinlauf; 3:15-3:30: Tea; 3:30-5:30: *Inheriting the Polish Jewish Past: Envisaging its Future: a Round Table Discussion*, Jan Błński, Zbigniew Brzeziński, Israel Gutman, Jan Karski, Allan Nadler, Magda Opalska, Michael Stanisławski, and Jerzy Tomaszewski; 7:30: Reception and Dinner, *Yiddish and Polish Multiculturalism in Folk and Popular Culture*, Robert Rothstein;

Monday, October 10: Trip to New Hampshire to view fall foliage at its height. Lunch hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Merrill in Hancock, NH.

Speakers Slated for October Conference

An outstanding group of scholars will be speaking at our Tenth Anniversary Conference to be held October 8-10 in Harvard-Radcliffe Hillel's new building at 52 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge. Arthur Green, will open the day's discussion. President of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College since 1987, he has just accepted the prestigious Philip W. Lown Chair of Jewish Thought at Brandeis University. An acknowledged expert on Jewish mysticism, Professor Green is the author of a prize-winning biography of

Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, a man whose complex parables have exercised a strong fascination on many writers, including Martin Buber and Franz Kafka.

David Roskies, the second speaker, is Professor of Jewish Literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Born in Montreal, his main field of interest is the world of Eastern Jewry; its achievements, its confrontation with modernity, its destruction and its living heritage. His critical study, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* won the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award from Phi Beta Kappa.

Jadwiga Maurer, who will be addressing the first session in the afternoon, is Professor of Slavic Literature at the University of Kansas. She is the author of a much acclaimed study of Mickiewicz's Jewish connections, *Z matki obcej... Szkic o powiązaniach Mickiewicza ze światem Żydów*, which was reviewed in our *Gazeta* last spring. (Vol. 3, No. 1).

Michael Steinlauf, who will be speaking at the same session, is Professor of Jewish Literature at Franklin and Marshall College in Pennsylvania and a member of the editorial board of *POLIN*. His special field of interest is Polish Jewish cultural history and Polish-Jewish relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He has written widely on these topics. He is currently studying the development of Yiddish theater in Poland and has undertaken the translation of the works of Y.L. Peretz into English.

Robert Rothstein, our dinner speaker, is Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He is a master of the field of Yiddish folklore - from folk songs to proverbs - and its relation to that of the Slavs among whom Jews of Eastern Europe lived. All of these scholars are skilled at presenting their ideas in a vivid and striking way. We can look forward to an intellectual treat in October!

Letter from the President

Dear Members,

I am certain that by now you have received the invitation to our TENTH ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. We, the organizers, are very enthusiastic about it and feel that the program is both intellectually stimulating and exciting. We are very fortunate to have the use of the beautiful new facilities of Harvard-Radcliffe Hillel for our meetings.

Please return the registration form as soon as possible to enable us to arrange for hotels, meals, etc. We appeal to all of our readers for donations of any size to help us with the cost of bringing participants from Israel and Poland.

I spent two weeks in Poland in May and discovered the beginnings of a new Jewish presence there. It is no longer just the symbolic Jewish theater and kosher restaurant but ordinary people who openly say they are Jews. I was asked to join a committee composed of both Christians and Jews that is organizing a competition for the best photographs of Jewish life in Poland. I told them that, coincidentally, we are planning an exhibition of such photographs during our conference. Anyone interested can send copies of photographs meant for our exhibit to Warsaw.

I also found that in some spheres, e.g., the universities, the Poles are eager to honor Jews for their contributions before the war and the Holocaust to Polish learning, the economy, and other fields.

In Kraków, my husband and I visited the new Jewish Cultural Center in the renovated synagogue in Kazimierz. Professor Gierowski and Joachim Russek, who are the driving forces behind it, would like the center to become an active place for lectures, concerts, and meetings. My husband, whose talk was well attended, was one of the first to speak there. The Center hopes to raise additional funds for a most ambitious plan for future development.

Once more, let me urge you to come and participate in our conference.

Irene Pipes

Lauder Group Awarded TV License in Poland

A partnership including Ronald Lauder of New York and Wojtek Fibak, the former professional tennis player, has been awarded a license to create a new TV network of eleven stations covering all of Poland.

Jewish Historical Institute Fund Drive

A major campaign has begun to create, at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, a Polish-Jewish Museum which would reflect the one thousand years of Jewish presence in Poland. In May, the Consul General of Poland, Jerzy Surdykowski, hosted a reception in New York to inaugurate the drive. Members of the International Committee include Chaim Herzog, former President of Israel, and Ronald Lauder, Head of the Lauder Foundation in New York which provided the seed money for the initial planning. Grażyna Pawlak, Administrative Director of the Jewish Historical Institute, is coordinating the activities in Warsaw.

Educational Series Published

The Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw has recently published the first post-war series of educational texts. They are designed to provide information concerning Jewish history and culture in Poland to Polish teachers and high school students

The first books issued are primarily source books on the history of Jews in Poland from the XIth Century to the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Additional books in the series will be published in 1994. The project is being supported by the Polish Ministry of National Education.

What Willi Georg Saw

In collaboration with the Goethe Institute, the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw opened an exhibit of photographs secretly taken in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941 by a German soldier Obergefreiter Willi Georg.

Georg, a photographer by profession, wandered around the Ghetto, documenting what he found there - beggars swollen from hunger, dying children, street vendors selling their wares, the dead, the desperate, and those who tried to preserve some dignity.

These photographs came to light only recently when the eighty-year-old former soldier rediscovered them and offered them to our Board Member Rafael Scharf of London. The photographs were published last year.

These photos supplement those of the Heinz Jöst Exhibit "A Birthday Trip in Hell: A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto", shown in the U.S. in 1992.

Richard Pipes Honored in Poland

In May 1994, Professor Richard Pipes of Harvard was awarded the degree *Doctor Honoris Causa* by the Cieszyn Branch of the University of Silesia. Professor Pipes was born in Cieszyn, where his father had a chocolate factory, but moved with his parents at the age of three first to Kraków and then to Warsaw. It was his first visit in fifty-five years to the town where he was born. On this occasion, Professor and Mrs. Pipes visited two Jewish cemeteries with gravestones dating back to the seventeenth century, guided by a local scholar, Mr. R. Spyra, who specializes in the history of the Jewish community of Cieszyn. They also visited the house in which the Pipes family resided at the time of his birth. The mayor bestowed on Professor Pipes an honorary citizenship of Cieszyn. The reception was extraordinarily cordial.

The 4th Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków

In announcing this year's Jewish Culture Festival, the Mayor of Kraków, Józef Lasota, remarked that just as Aushchwitz has become the symbol of Extermination, he would like to see Kraków become the symbol of Preservation, i.e., preservation of the memory of Polish Jews and Jewish Culture in Poland.

The Jewish Cultural Festival opened on June 19, in the partially restored Progressive Synagogue, with a stirring performance of prayers and Jewish music by the "Choir of Cantors" of the Moscow Great Synagogue, under the direction of Misha Touretsky.

Other features of the Festival were a poetical-musical performance based on the writings of Mordechaj Gebirtig, Bruno Schultz and Osip Mandelstam, and concerts by the Kraków Philharmonic Orchestra, violinist Krzysztof Jakowicz, the Shashmaqam group (USA), and the Ellis Island Band. There were also performances of Klezmer music by Kroke (a Kraków group), the Klezmatics (USA), and a group from Austria, as well as a program of traditional Jewish dances by the Brave Old World group (USA).

Also featured were theatrical performances, films from various countries, and exhibits of paintings. Special workshops were held on Hebrew calligraphy and Jewish cut-outs (Mizrachi or Shiviti).

Two special events at the new Jewish Cultural Center were an 80th Birthday Celebration for Rafael Scharf and an evening of poetry with Natan Gross.

Lauder-Morash School Dedicated in Warsaw

In April of this year, a new Jewish elementary school was dedicated in Warsaw, sponsored by the Lauder Foundation. The school will be called the Lauder-Morash School ("Morash" means "Heritage" in Hebrew). Helise Lieberman was appointed its director.

The initial enrollment in the three lower grades is expected to be about twenty pupils. The curriculum will include Hebrew, Jewish culture and tradition. Tolerance and respect for others will be emphasized, and the school will be open to all students.

During the remodeling of the Twarda Street building, formerly part of the Warsaw Ghetto, a veritable archival treasure was discovered under the floorboards. Old letters, school notebooks, bills, and papers found there offer an insight into life in the Ghetto. Many of the newly discovered objects were displayed at the opening of the School in an exhibit put together by Yale Reisner, husband of Ms. Lieberman.

Attending the dedication were the Polish Minister of Religious Affairs, the Ambassador of Israel, and the Deputy U.S. Ambassador.

The Synagogue of Bobowa Returned

Not a single Jew lives in the town of Bobowa (district of Nowy Sącz) today. Recently, however, an old wooden synagogue building there was returned to a sect of Hasidic Jews who trace their roots to Bobowa.

A century ago, Bobowa was an important center of Hasidic activity. The most famous *tsadyk* of Bobowa was Salomon ben Natan Halberstam. For the last fifteen years, his followers have been coming annually to visit his grave in Bobowa.

Bobowa Hasids came from Israel and the USA to attend the transferring ceremony. Worldwide, there are about 30,000 Hasids who trace their roots to Bobowa.

Bernstein's Kaddish in a Warsaw Church

This year's program of the annual Festival of Sacral Music in Warsaw, which began with the 1991 visit of Pope John Paul II, included Jewish as well as Catholic and Protestant music.

The greatest attraction was Leonard Bernstein's Symphony III "Kaddish". It was performed in the Church of All Saints in Warsaw by the Symphonic Orchestra of Lviv (Lwów) and two Ukrainian choirs.

Michał Cichy Stirs Up a Storm

This winter, a young Polish historian, Michał Cichy, wrote in *Gazeta Wyborcza* that during the Warsaw Insurrection, both the AK (*Armia Krajowa*, the war-time underground Home Army reporting to the Polish Government in London) and the NSZ (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*, a radical right-wing underground army disgraced by its excesses against Jews) murdered many remaining survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Cichy clarified that while AK authorities never condoned murders of Jews and indeed often helped them, some murders were committed by individuals in insurrectionist uniforms. He acknowledged that the AK as an organization had programs to help Jews and even a policy to kill their denouncers. He pointed out, however, that this is not the entire story. Immediately following the outbreak of the insurrection in Warsaw, when Poles took over control of the city, many Jews who had escaped from the Ghetto (estimated at 7,000 - 30,000) found themselves again in mortal danger.

For Poles, the beginning of the insurrection was a long awaited dawn of freedom. However, for the Jews hiding out on the "Aryan side", the beginning of the insurrection was a moment of chaos. In many cases, it forced them to appear in public for the first time in months. When they did surface, they were often hounded and even murdered, this time by Poles. Sometimes, the dazed Jews were accused of being German spies. Their persecutors argued that if they survived, they must have been collaborators.

Cichy gave details both from accounts of Jewish survivors and from AK documents. He carefully summarized the documentation about a mass murder in Warsaw of twenty-five to thirty Jews on Długa Street, by the NSZ units, and of fourteen or fifteen Jews on Prosta Street, by members of the AK. The AK did conduct an investigation into the Prosta Street massacre, but no one was tried for the crimes.

It should be noted that last year, many Jewish organizations objected when the Polish Government honored the NSZ by giving them virtually the same standing as the AK.

The long piece by Cichy has fueled much debate in Poland, reopening war-time wounds. Some AK veterans have written letters describing how they, or other Polish people, helped Jews.

Commenting on Cichy's controversial article, Adam Michnik, editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, pays tribute to the heroism of the AK. He also discusses attempts by Communist authorities to denigrate these patriots who set out to free Warsaw ahead of the Red Armies. He notes that there were good and bad people both among Poles and Jews.

Michnik defends the discussion of the painful past as a true test of the new Polish democracy, posing the question, "Is it an attack on Polish people when the past is being explored to seek the truth?"

The International Korczak Association Meets

Janusz Korczak, pen name of Henryk Goldszmit (1878-1942), was a writer, teacher, psychologist, social and educational activist, and physician. He was also Director of the Jewish Orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto. He had many opportunities to save himself but chose to remain with "his" children until the end.

Warsaw's tribute to this legendary figure is a monument of Korczak holding a child in his arms and calmly leading his charges from the orphanage to the Umschlagplatz from which they were sent to Treblinka.

In May, the International Korczak Association met in Warsaw. Representatives from Israel, France, Austria, Sweden, the Ukraine, and Russia attended. The Polish Committee will organize an International Theatrical Festival for Children and Youth from September 19 -26 at the Ochota Theater in Warsaw.

Spielberg's Movie Brings Tourists to Kraków

The appearance of *Schindler's List* and its subsequent fame have stimulated interest in visiting the sites of events depicted in the movie. Special travel tours come to Kraków to retrace places where the movie was filmed. Typically, the tour includes Kazimierz, the Jewish quarter of Kraków, the Płaszów Camp, and the quarry "Liban" where Spielberg built a set reproducing the camp.

Municipal authorities hope that Kazimierz can be refreshed and restored and become a great tourist attraction bringing many more visitors to the city.

In Kazimierz, two side-by-side cafes, both called Ariel (the use of the name is being disputed in the courts) operate across the square from the old Remuh Synagogue. They cater to tourists (Jewish and non-Jewish) and offer Jewish specialties and music.

The Battle at Monte Cassino Remembered

In May of this year, mid-way during a three-month stay in Poland, my wife Fay and I flew to Italy to attend ceremonies commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino. We joined a tour group of Polish-Americans from the U.S. traveling together to visit the sites meaningful to former Polish soldiers.

On May 18, 1954, as part of the British Eighth Army, the Polish Second Corps under the Command of General Władisław Anders captured Monte Cassino. Polish soldiers assaulted with great determination the seemingly invincible German positions on the mountain. Many lost their lives in this and other battles in the Italian Campaign.

Today, a large Polish Cemetery lies below the rebuilt Benedictine Abbey near the top of Monte Cassino. As with other Polish military cemeteries in Italy, a section is dedicated to the Jewish soldiers who fell along side their non-Jewish colleagues.

The Fiftieth Anniversary ceremonies, held at the cemetery on May 18, 1994, were attended by veterans of the Second Corps from all over the world.

President Wałęsa and Prime Minister Pawlak came from Poland to participate in the ceremonies.

As part of the ecumenical program, Rabbi Pinkhas Rosengarten from London, who had served as Chaplain to the Second Corps, conducted memorial services for the Jewish soldiers buried at Cassino. Cardinal Glemp, the Primate of Poland, conducted the Catholic mass.

Among the wreaths placed at the cemetery were flowers from Jewish Veterans of the Polish Army in Israel and from the Association of Jewish Combatants and Repressed Persons in Poland.

Despite the heavy rainfall and lack of organization which marred the ceremony, the anniversary commemoration was very meaningful to the veterans who attended.

The day before attending the ceremonies at Monte Cassino, our group visited the large and beautiful Polish Cemetery in Loretto, lovingly kept by descendants of Polish families living there. In this cemetery, I was touched to come across the grave of a friend and classmate from Polish High School in Tel Aviv.

American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies
1583 Massachusetts Avenue
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Name:	Will Attend:	Reception	Oct 8	Yes__	No__
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Address:		Dinner	Oct 9	Yes__	No__
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		Need Housing		Yes__	No__
FAX No:	Full Program (meals, sessions, NH trip)	\$100	incl. Proceedings		
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