

Gazeta

Newsletter of the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies
1583 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 547-7701

Vol. 7 No. 2 SUMMER 1998
Fay and Julian Bussgang, Editors

Letter From the President

Dear Members and Friends,

I shall try to report to you, as briefly as I can, on the conference we held in Kraków at the end of May, since you can read a more detailed account of it in the following pages.

A special treat awaited members of the Board of AAPJS the evening before the conference, as we were invited by the well-known Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki and his wife, Elżbieta, to the Penderecki estate in Lusławice, east of Kraków. The Pendereckis, who have been friends of board member Klara Sklar for many years, provided a wonderful reception for the group in their lovely manor house and gardens. The prize-winning Dafo string quartet from the Kraków Conservatory, joined by an expert clarinetist, provided classical music before dinner, while during and after dinner, a trio of students from the conservatory played Klezmer music.

On Saturday evening, May 30, Prof. Antony Polonsky of Brandeis University opened the conference with a short talk on the occasion of Tikkun leyl Shavuot (the first night of Shavuot). A well-attended reception followed during which I presented a check from AAPJS to Joachim Russek, Director of the Judaica Foundation, in appreciation for all he and his associates had done to make the conference a success.

The next day and a half were devoted to lectures and discussions on "The Golden Age of Jewish Galicia," covered elsewhere in this issue.

On June 2, twenty-four of us left Kraków early in the morning by chartered bus for Lviv, Ukraine. We started our visit of the city with Prof. Honigsman of the Lviv University Faculty who pointed out the sad remains of what was once Jewish Lwów.

In the afternoon we were shown the city and its most interesting sights. It is a very attractive city but very much neglected during all those years that it was part of the Soviet Union.

The next two days were free for everyone to "do their own thing" which meant going to various villages and places in the area where they had family connections, sightseeing, or visiting the state archives. Some of us went to the opera, a smaller copy of the Vienna opera house, to attend a ballet.

We traveled back via Przemyśl, where Krystyna Shmeruk, widow of Prof. Chone Shmeruk of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was our guide. Prof. Shmeruk, a great scholar of Jewish literature and one of the last survivors of the prewar Jewish literary world, was a member of the editorial board of POLIN.

All and in all the trip was a good and happy experience, as all the plans worked out well, and we had no problems. Since most of the participants from the United States were members of our board, it gave us a chance to get to know each other better so that we might be able to work even more closely in the future. We also had a chance to meet Polish scholars and diplomats interested in the study of Polish Jewry.

We are now looking forward to a year full of activities. Our first meeting will take place October 4 when B. J. Lifton, Ph.D. will speak on "Janusz Korczak, Pole and Jew," Lifton is the author of *The King of Children, the Life and Death of Janusz Korczak*. At the same time, we will launch Volume 11 of POLIN. Volume 12 is already at the copy editors.

As we start out the season, I hope you will all renew your membership to the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies. A form is printed on the next-to-the-last page for your convenience. Please send it in with your check. Membership dues allow us to carry on our various activities, print *Gazeta*, and publish POLIN, the annual journal of articles on Polish-Jewish topics. We look forward to your participation.

Let me wish all of you a good and healthy year ahead.

Irene E. Pipes

Dr. Lifton to Speak on Korczak

Dr. B. J. Lifton, author of *The King of Children: The Life and Death of Janusz Korczak*, will speak on Sunday, October 4, 4:00 PM, at Harvard Hillel, 74 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge. *POLIN 11* will be launched at that time.

Dr. Lifton's book was a New York Times "Notable Book of the Year" in 1988 and was recently reissued by St. Martin's Press with an introduction by Elie Wiesel.

Dr. Janusz Korczak, renowned physician, writer and educator, was head of the orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto. Offered asylum on the Aryan side, he chose to stay with his children and accompany them to Treblinka where they all perished.

"And I Still See Their Faces"

Efforts are underway to bring to Boston the exhibit entitled "And I Still See Their Faces," a unique photographic record of the lost world of Polish Jewry. If all goes as planned, the exhibition will open in October 1998 at the Boston University Gallery, 808 Commonwealth Avenue, Brookline and will be shown for approximately two months. The exhibit is cosponsored by Boston University's Hillel Foundation and the Shalom Foundation of Warsaw, with support from the American Association of Polish-Jewish Studies.

Bohdan Strumiński

Dr. Bohdan Strumiński, editor of *Życie Polonii*, the Eastern Massachusetts newsletter of the Polish-American Congress, died of cancer June 21 at age 68.

A contributor to Polish and Ukrainian literature and an expert in Old Slavonic, Strumiński was associated with the Ukrainian Studies Center at Harvard.

Strumiński took a special interest in fostering good relations between the Polish-American Congress and the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies. He frequently attended AAPJS events and was on a committee consisting of members of both organizations that sought to resolve conflicts through an informal exchange of views.

Strumiński leaves his wife, Kathleen M. Lestition and a son, Igor, living in Poland.

Did You Know?

Most Polish newspapers are now accessible on the Web at <http://www.TITLE OF PAPER.pl>.

Program on Polish Jews at Workman's Circle

On Sunday, November 19, from 2:00–5:00 PM, Workman's Circle will present a program on "Polish Jewry Between the World Wars" at the Fuller Building, Boston University, 808 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston. This program is being held in association with the Boston University Hillel and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston (JGSGB).

The keynote speaker will be AAPJS Board Member Professor Antony Polonsky of Brandeis University. Halina Nelkin, art historian and author of *Images of a Lost World*, will describe the life of Polish Jewry between the world wars through painting and art objects. Daniela Harpaz will perform a concert of Yiddish songs. Marek Leśniewski-Laas, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Boston and AAPJS Board member, will add some remarks.

A talk by Warren Blatt on Jewish genealogical research in Poland will precede Prof. Polonsky's talk, and a genealogical workshop will be presented after the formal part of the meeting by Patti Couture, co-president of the JGSGB. Warren Blatt's comprehensive volume, *Resource Guide to Genealogical Research in the Boston Area* will be available for purchase at the meeting, as will copies of Julian and Fay Bussgang's translation from the Polish of *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, featured elsewhere in this *Gazeta*.

Gift to YIVO by George Szabad In Memory of Dr. Lucjan Dobroszycki

AAPJS Board member George Szabad donated \$10,000 in memory of Dr. Lucjan Dobroszycki, long-time teacher and Senior Historian at YIVO in New York. Dobroszycki was the author of several important books about Polish Jews, including *Image Before My Eyes* and *Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*.

A board member of the AAPJS, Szabad had worked extensively on improving Polish-Jewish relations along with Dobroszycki on the National Polish-Jewish Council. Szabad is now co-chair of the council. His grandfather, Dr. Tsemakh Szabad, was one of the founders of YIVO.

**Please Renew Your Membership
and Subscription to *Gazeta*!**

Report on the AAPJS Conference

The official program of the AAPJS conference on "The Golden Age of Jewish Galicia" started Sunday morning, May 31 after Shavuot services and lasted until the afternoon of June 1. Talks were given in Polish or English, and attendees had an opportunity, through simultaneous translation, to listen to either language.

On Monday, the program concluded with an outstanding panel discussion. Highlights of the sessions are summarized below. A more complete rendering will be presented in Volume 12 of *POLIN*, due to be published in 1999.

The Galician Triangle —Poles, Jews and Ukrainians

On Sunday morning May 31, the lead-off speaker of the AAPJS conference in Kraków was Prof. John-Paul Himka of the University of Alberta, an expert on Ukrainian history. His topic was "Dimensions of the Triangle: Socioeconomic, Political, Religious and Cultural Aspects of Polish-Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Austrian Galicia."

Under Austro-Hungarian rule (late 18th century till the end of World War I), there were approximately 800,000 Jews living in Galicia—one third in cities, one third in towns and one third in small villages. Poles constituted 3.3 million and Ukrainians roughly 3.1 million, the latter mostly in the countryside.

At first, Poles, Jews and Ukrainians led pretty much separate lives, with three different alphabets, three different calendars, three different religions and little intermarriage.

It was a time of transition economically. In 1848 serfdom was abolished. Railroads were constructed in the 1850's. Jews were emancipated by the Austrian Emperor in 1868 and given equal rights as citizens. In the late 1860's, compulsory education began, and newspapers appeared. Religion began to erode in the face of secularism.

The German language was then the official language and the language of instruction, although the German minority in Galicia was small. German culture was much admired, and some Jewish authors even wrote in German. The dominant culture, however, was Polish. It was the Poles who made the rules. The Polish gentry was spread throughout the region, while Polish peasants were mostly in the west. Both gentry and

Many of the talks were given by Polish or other international specialists rarely heard in the U.S. Among Polish scholars in attendance was Professor Jan Błoński, well known for his 1978 article in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, "The Poor Poles look at the Ghetto," that stimulated much discussion in Poland about Polish-Jewish relations.

The conference was organized by Professor Polonsky and Dr. Joachim Russek, Director of the Center for Jewish Culture, the host organization in Kraków.

peasants were predominantly Roman Catholic.

In the late 19th century, Jews began to assimilate and take on Polish culture. They became known as Poles of the Mosaic faith. Jews and Poles united to form a political alliance against the Ukrainians.

A debate arose as to whether Jews could be Poles. Attempts to bring about a compromise failed. By and large, Poles rejected Jews as citizens, and the Catholic Church questioned whether the nation should be so secular as to include Jews. In the 1880's, Jews began to assimilate to Polish culture. In 1898, there was a Polish pogrom in western Galicia. Anti-Semitic doctrines were being imported from Germany and France. By 1900, relations between Jews and Poles had deteriorated.

Ukrainians were mostly backward peasants. They had no philosophical debates. There were no Ukrainians of the Mosaic faith. Since most Jews spoke Polish, the Ukrainians saw them as Poles. The budding Ukrainian Nationalist movement was against Poles and Jews alike. The Ukrainians opposed Jewish emancipation.

Galicia had little industry, except for the oil fields near Borysław and Drohobycz. The region was primarily agricultural. About 14% of Galician Jews were in agriculture.

Jews and Ukrainians were traditionally economic antagonists. The Ukrainians were serfs, and Jews worked for Polish landlords and even became landlords themselves. The peasants produced everything they needed except for salt, matches and vodka, which became the objects of Jewish trade. Tavern keepers, merchants and money lenders were almost all Jewish and were seen as agents of the state. They charged high

interest on loans because they were risky, and when borrowers defaulted, they took over their property. The peasants did not understand the use of money and suspected the Jews of cheating them. The Ukrainian clergy, in their sobriety campaigns, railed against tavern keepers and encouraged their parishioners to buy only at Christian stores.

By 1905-7, things had begun to change. Jews saw Poles as being more anti-Semitic than the Ukrainians and started to cooperate politically with the latter. The first Zionists elected to parliament were elected by a Ukrainian-Jewish alliance.

The period from 1905 to 1914, until the outbreak of

World War I, was relatively comfortable for the Jews of Galicia. Nonetheless, this was a period of great migration to Vienna and the U.S., perhaps more to opt for modernity than to escape poverty and persecution.

Between the world wars, all of Galicia became Poland. The Ukrainian Nationalist movement was thus thwarted and became more radical. The 1918 Ukrainian pogroms against Jews had less bearing on Jews directly than the fact that they were perceived as being disloyal to the Ukrainian cause. The Ukrainians during this time gave in to right-wing tendencies and became more violent toward both Poles and Jews.

The Jews of Kraków and Their *Kehillah*, 1868-1919

The next talk was by Professor Andrzej Żbikowski of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw on "The Jews of Kraków and Their *Kehillah*, 1868-1919."

Kraków had been a provincial city where attitudes towards Jews were in general positive. There were no pogroms or economic boycotts. In 1868, following the Jewish emancipation, Jews began to move from the Kazimierz district of Kraków, where they had been concentrated, to other parts of the city. Nonetheless, 70% of Kraków Jews continued to live in Kazimierz. As to preferred Jewish professions, 80-90% of the stores in Kraków were owned by Jews, and 60% of Kraków physicians were Jewish.

The *kehillah/kahal* was the semi-autonomous religious organization set up to administer the Jewish community. Initially, traditionalists dominated the boards of the *kahals* and tried to oppose modernization. However, by the late 19th century, about a third of the Jews belonged to the *Tempel*, the Progressive synagogue. The remaining Jews were divided between Orthodoxy and Hasidism.

In 1860, Jews started participating in municipal elections, and in 1875, in parliamentary elections. Often

kahal leaders were also elected municipal leaders of the city itself. During the 1890's, there was economic growth in Galicia. At the beginning, Jews and Poles had cooperated, later Jews were described in the press as exploiters and blood-suckers. As the religious community became less important, Jews began to feel lost in the new world. An Independent Jewish Party (Socialist) was organized.

The Austro-Hungarian Emperor, Joseph II, had seemed to support Galician Jews, making them politically equal, but discrimination still persisted. Jews paid more taxes and had fewer benefits. Their charitable and religious institutions did not receive government funds. The activities of the Jewish community were financed by the ritual slaughterhouse tax and from assessments.

Affluent members of the Jewish community wanted to have special privileges and represent all Jews in the *kahal*. Thus, initially the voting formula for elections to the *kahal* favored the rich. Later, the *kahal* was democratized, and all Jews had an equal vote. Attempts at making the *kahal* in Kraków more religiously progressive, however, did not succeed.

Consequences of Galician Autonomy after 1867

Professor Józef Buszko of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków gave a talk on "The Consequences of Galician Autonomy after 1867 for Jews, Poles and Ukrainians."

In 1869, Galicia had approximately 5.5 million residents of whom 2.5 million were Poles, 2.3 million Ukrainians, 600,000 Jews (10.5%) and 50,000

Germans/Austrians. Jews were generally the swing vote between Poles and Ukrainians.

Most of the Jews (428,000) lived in eastern Galicia; a smaller number (147,000), in western Galicia. Ukrainians lived primarily in the east where they constituted 65% of the population; in the west, they were only 22%. Poles lived primarily in the west where

they comprised 82% of the population.

Kraków, where there was a liberal attitude toward Jews, was about 25% Jewish. Lwów, though 30% Jewish, was not as liberal toward Jews. Nonetheless, in Lwów democratic rules were instated for the general elections because of its varied ethnic composition. Lwów was the only city in Austria where democratic elections were held. In 1867, 41 liberals were elected, including four Jews.

In the east, the Podolian Nobility, the Podolaks, had an economic antagonism toward Ukrainian peasants. The Ukrainian Nationalists, their strongest opponents, were hostile both to Jews and Poles. The grounds for this attitude were of a social nature. They saw Jews and Polish nobles as exploiters. Polish and Ukrainian Socialists, on the other hand, saw Jewish Socialists as a separate ethnic group but acting in harmony with them.

In the 1860's the first generation of Jewish children started attending public schools. This fostered Polonization among the Jewish intelligentsia and reinforced their support of Polish causes. Historian Philip Friedman characterized Jewish Poles as romanticizing Polish causes and ideas—the uprising of Piłsudski, Polish poets, etc.

As to Jewish political organizations, Shomer Israel (Guardian of Israel) was a pro-Austrian Jewish party. In general, however, Jewish parliamentarians joined the Polish parliamentary club. The party Agudas Achim (Gathering of Brothers) advocated cooperation with Poles. Its leaders included Loewenstein, Feldman and Aszkenazy.

When a Polish army was formed, there were four Jewish generals, the best-known being Bernard Mond. The Socialist leader of Galicia was Ignacy Daszyński, a Pole, but among other labor activists were prominent Jews, such as attorney Herman Lieberman and Herman Diamand, both members of parliament.

In 1887, the Zionists came out against assimilation. In 1895, Theodore Herzl's historic book *Der Judenstaat* appeared, calling for the establishment of a Jewish state. The Hasidim were critical of Zionism.

In 1911, the Zionists were defeated in the elections to the parliament. In Drohobycz, the Zionists and the assimilationists contended for the same seat.

During the interwar period, the extreme wing of the National Democrats gained power in Poland. The National Democrats (ND–Endecja) were not very significant in Kraków but were quite strong in Lwów.

Jewish Large Landowners in Galicia

Dr. Tomasz Gąsowski of Jagiellonian University, the final speaker on Sunday, discussed the little known fact that 5% of the large land owners in Galicia in the second half of the 19th century were Jews. This phenomenon had no counterpart in other regions of Poland. (A large property is defined as being at least 50 hectares/123 acres.) An article by Gąsowski on this topic entitled "From Tavern to Manor" will appear in *POLIN*, Vol. 12.

The crash of 1883 caused many bankruptcies among Polish landowners, and the number of Jews who were able to acquire properties thus increased. By 1912, there were 561 such persons (22% of all landowners in Galicia). Indeed, I. B. Singer describes in his book, *The Manor*, the taking over of an estate of a mortgagee by a Jewish mortgage-holder.

In the southeast of Poland, much of the land was covered by forests. Some Jews acquired land because of an interest in agriculture, others to engage in processing lumber. Though they may have made such acquisitions as a means of gaining status, drawn by the prestige associated with being a landowner, not many of them raised horses, hunted or entertained on a large scale.

The fifth largest property owner in Galicia was Baron Berthold Popper. Among other owners were such prominent Jewish leaders as Emanuel Blumenfeld, Józef Horowitz and Maurycy Lazarus, the benefactor of the Jewish Hospital named for him in Lwów.

In the late 19th century, there was a favorable attitude toward Jewish landowners. However, in the 20th century, a negative one developed. Poles objected to land changing from Polish to Jewish hands. They thought the Jewish landlords exploited the land and then sold it. Both the Church and the National Democrats championed Polish ownership.

Jewish landowners were also not trusted by other Jews who were critical of assimilationists attempting to gain a better position in the non-Jewish world. Jewish landowners never developed a specific milieu. They were individuals suspended between two worlds.

Jewish ownership of large tracts of land was unique to Galicia. In Poland as a whole, the number was insignificant. During the 1914-20 economic crisis and rural reform, the number of Jewish large landowners in Galicia shrank. In the interwar period, fewer than 2% of landowners in all of Poland were Jewish.

Jewish Life in Przemyśl

Prof. Waław Wierzbieniec of the Pedagogical University in Rzeszów, himself a native of Przemyśl, gave a talk on Monday, June 1, entitled "The Evaluation of Jewish Life in Przemyśl in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century."

Although Przemyśl was the third largest city in Galicia, after Lwów and Kraków, few studies of the Jews of that city have been conducted.

In the 1860's, Jews made up the largest population group in Przemyśl (30%), owned 40% of the real estate, dominated local industry and crafts and constituted 70% of the lawyers. Gradually, although the number of Jews increased as the city grew, their percentage decreased.

The local *kahal* regulated the religious life of the Jews—the mikvah, the slaughterhouse, religious schools, the salaries of rabbis. It also provided social assistance and support for the Israelite hospital. There were three synagogues, many houses of prayer, three Talmud Torahs, numerous cheders. The *kahal* covered 110 localities in the area, not just Przemyśl.

In the 1870's, progressive circles formed that challenged orthodoxy. Nonetheless, the Orthodox dominated both the Hasidim and the Progressives. As

the election rules favored the Orthodox, the Progressives were not well represented in the *kahal*.

By 1890, the first Progressive *Tempel* opened. In 1901, there was a liberalization of election rules. The new rules favored government officials, men of higher education and retired officers. In 1902, five Progressives were elected to the *kahal* council, and the Polish language became its official language.

There was an increasing differentiation among Jews in response to modernization. Before the 1980's, the official language of prayer in the synagogue was German. By the mid 80's, as Polonization increased, it became Polish. Many Jewish children attended local Polish schools except for the Orthodox. In 1865 a school was formed for Jewish children to study in the Polish language. By 1880, about 60% of Jewish children went to specifically Jewish schools.

More factors causing polarity within the Jewish community occurred with the establishment of Socialist and Zionist organizations. While the Jewish Socialist Party attracted workers and cooperated with Poles and Ukrainians, the Zionist Party encouraged the self-identification of Jews as a distinct group.

Conference Roundtable Discussion

The last day of the AAPJS Conference was dedicated to a panel discussion on the three-way relationship in Galicia between Jews, Poles and Ukrainians.

The panel, chaired by Prof. Polonsky included Prof. John-Paul Himka of the University of Alberta, Prof. Richard Pipes of Harvard University, Prof. Włodzimierz Mokry of Jagiellonian University and Dr. Krzysztof Śliwiński, Polish Ambassador to the Jewish Diaspora.

Prof. Polonsky began by explaining that the period prior to world War I is described as the Golden Age of Jewish Galicia only by comparison with what went before and what came after. During this time, Jews were transformed from a restricted group into citizens with full rights. By 1914, however, the era was over in which people believed that liberal ideas would create a stable and viable environment for Jews, a pluralistic society with ethnic diversity and a democratic government.

Prof. Himka stressed that with respect to Galicia what is past is past. Since World War II, the people of

Galicia have become separated into three states—the Ukraine, Poland and Israel. The Jewish community is small and still vulnerable. The Ukrainian population in Poland is also small. What then is left? the collective memory of exiles and their descendants.

Himka believes that our goal should be to foster tolerance for minorities, to discuss our different histories with each other, to neither hide the truth nor exaggerate. Poland and the Ukraine need to reach out to each other. The collapse of the Soviet Union has exacerbated Jewish and non-Jewish relations, but there may be more tolerance with the passage of time.

Prof. Pipes struck a personal note describing his own experiences in Poland before and immediately after the outbreak of the war. His father owned a chocolate factory in Cieszyn (which he and his wife visited on this trip). In 1920, his father sold the factory and moved first to Kraków and then to Warsaw. His family was not very religious. He went to a school whose student body was half Jewish and half Polish. He and his family left Poland for the U.S. only at the end of October 1939.

Prof. Mokry opened his remarks by citing the great Ukrainian writer Shevchenko's recognition of a communality between Jews and Ukrainians because Ukrainians are followers of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Religious themes have long been important in the Ukraine because the Orthodox Church was the uniting force when Ukrainians lost their freedom in 1240. Several Ukrainian philosophers had great interest in the Jewish tradition, such as Skawarada and Władimir Słowij, who studied the Talmud. Much Ukrainian poetry also reflects the biblical tradition. Mokry thus asserted that there is no inherent anti-Semitism in the Ukrainian tradition.

When questioned about the anti-Semitism of Ukrainian Nationalists and Ukrainian concentration camp guards and militia, Mokry stated that the Ukrainian Nationalist Stepan Bandera spent much of the war in jail, detained by the Germans, and did not collaborate with the occupiers. As to camp guards serving Germans, they were recruited from among the most primitive individuals in Ukrainian society. Ukrainian moderates and their leaders had already been deported to Siberia by the time Germany invaded; only the extremists among political activists remained.

Andrzej Żbikowski asked Mokry about the role of the Ukraine in the Holocaust. Mokry said that it is a subject that needs research, perhaps now made possible by the recent opening of archives. Żbikowski remarked that Jan Błoński's article started a time of reflection for Poles of their role in the Holocaust and that the Ukraine, now an independent state, needs to reflect on its role also. Mokry stated that the Holocaust was so terrible that Ukrainians do not know how to deal with it. There is resistance to research into whether Ukrainians murdered Poles and Jews during the war because

* * *

Conference on Ashkenazic Jews

A conference on Ashkenazic Jews was held in May at the Center for Jewish Culture in Kraków, attended by Polish, American and other international scholars.

Ashkenaz was the son of Gomer, the grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:3). The term came to denote a tribe and certain lands in the region of Medea. Eventually, the word Ashkenaz came to denote Germany and Germans, who are said to originate from Medea. Ashkenazic Jews, as distinguished from Spanish/Mediterranean Jews (Sephardim) come from Germany, Poland and other central and eastern European countries.

Ukrainians are afraid that it will feed into the stereotype, created by the Communists, that Ukrainians are barbarians.

Ambassador Śliwiński described his assignment as Ambassador to the Jewish Diaspora, a post unique to Poland and indicative of the importance of Polish-Jewish memory to the Polish people. The Polish-Jewish past dominates relations between Poles and Jews in the western world even today. The issues are emotional for those who remember the tragic events during the war. Poles need to cope with their history in this regard. Anti-Semitism is a Polish problem, not a Jewish one. He noted that Polish-Israeli relations are not as sensitive or emotionally charged. Present day economic interests foster good relations between Poland and Israel.

Śliwiński remarked that on the whole, there has been an improvement in Polish-Jewish relations during the last five years, partially through the work of such institutions as the Center for Jewish Culture in Kraków and the many Polish-Jewish publications.

Two unfortunate themes still pervade Polish-Jewish relations. The priest in the north (Father Jankowski in Gdańsk) represents one type. Some people simply must have an enemy to attack. These people have not changed. The other theme is that Poles cannot accept the fact that all over the world the emotional and visceral memory of the Holocaust is associated with Poland. It offends Poles to hear people speak of Polish rather than German concentration camps. Poles are unable to think about the Holocaust objectively. They also suffered greatly during the war, and they see their principle role in the Jewish tragedy as having been unlucky eyewitnesses. One thing is certain—there are no Holocaust deniers in Poland, as too many people witnessed the atrocities.

Michael Steinlauf's *Bondage to the Dead*

On April 21, Dr. Michael Steinlauf, resident scholar at YIVO in New York, spoke at Harvard's European Studies Center about his book, *Bondage to the Dead*. (Syracuse University Press, 1997).

Steinlauf, who addresses the history of Polish-Jewish relations just prior to the war, during the war and under Communism, tries to give a full picture from the Polish historical perspective without taking sides. He draws extensively on a psychological analysis of the behavior of people left with a sense of guilt and thus in bondage to those feelings, hence the title.

Karski-Nirenska Award to Ruta Sakowska

Ruta Sakowska, researcher at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, was honored with the Jan Karski-Pola Nirenska Award granted to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the literature on Polish Jews. The award was presented to her personally in Warsaw by Jan Karski, AAPJS Board member and famed courier of the Polish Underground who alerted the West to the fate of Polish Jews. Karski, now 84, resides in the Washington, DC area.

Sakowska is the author of the 1993 book *Ludzie z dzielnicy zamkniętej* (People from the Closed Quarter), a study of the Warsaw Ghetto, and a more recent work on the Ringelblum Archives, the secretly maintained detailed record of events that took place in the Warsaw Ghetto. Discovered after the war, this hidden archive contains 1,680 individual documents (25,000 pages) in Polish, Yiddish and German. Sakowska has undertaken the daunting task of editing and publishing this material.

Some of the writers of the preserved letters disguised their messages hoping that relatives would understand them but the censor would not. "Pinkert (the undertaker) has established here a wholesale business," indicated that people were dying in droves.

Twelve volumes of this work are planned. The Foundation for German-Polish Cooperation is helping to subsidize the effort.

Return of Citizenship to March 1968 Émigrés

In March 1968, many Jews who were still living in Poland left the country because they were discriminated against and made to feel unwelcome during an anti-Zionist campaign.

In March, on the 30th anniversary of this exodus, a plaque was erected at the Gdańsk railroad station in Warsaw, from which trains with Jewish refugees left for Vienna en route to further destinations.

After appeals to the government by political parties, university senates, magazines and public figures, President Kwaśniewski and his staff announced that any 1968 émigré who was forced to surrender Polish citizenship can recover it now by writing to the president. The press has extensively covered stories associated with this new policy.

Please Renew Your Membership !

The Janowska Road Camp Site

When participants in the AAPJS excursion to Lviv (Lwów) went to the Janowska Camp outside the city to view the plaque that commemorates the victims who had perished there, they were greeted by a shocking sight. Beyond the green area around the plaque, there was a metal fence behind which ferocious dogs were being trained for police work. Adjacent to this area, on the former site of the camp, surrounded by barbed wire, was a prison for violent criminals. It seems that no respect is being given to this solemn site of tragic events where mass executions of Jews took place.

Established in October 1941, the Janowska Camp on the northwest outskirts of Lwów became one of the major German extermination camps. Although Janowska had no gas chambers, few people confined to this camp survived. One survivor estimates that anyone at Janowska was either shipped out to the Belżec death camp or perished within three weeks by being shot in the area called *Piaski* (the "Sands").

The noted Polish-Jewish historian Philip Friedman estimated that between 300,000 and 400,000 Jews passed through Janowska, which serviced the entire region around Lwów. At least 200,000 of them were executed in the "Sands" and in the forest of Lesienice, another suburb of the city. The horrors of the camp are vividly described by survivors Leon Weliczker-Wells (*Janowska Road*), Rabbi David Kahane (*Lvov Ghetto Diary*) and Helen C. Kaplan (*I Never Left Janowska*).

One AAPJS Board member remarked that if there were more visitors to Lviv, and the Jewish world knew what was happening at this site, there would be a worldwide outcry greater than the protests against the monastery at Auschwitz. Local Jews informed us that they have a promise from municipal authorities that the dogs will be moved when a monument to the victims, now in the planning stage, is ready to be dedicated.

Jewish Roots in Poland

A listing of various types of Jewish records in the archives throughout Poland has been assembled by genealogist Miriam Weiner in an attractively illustrated book, *Jewish Roots in Poland*. This book, co-sponsored by YIVO, can be purchased from Routes to Routes Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 2879, Clifton, NJ 07015-2879. Further information is on the web site <www.rtrfoundation.org>.

The eleventh volume of *POLIN*, which focuses on the Jewish religious experience in the Polish lands, will appear in September. Jewish life in Poland was marked by a high degree of religious intensity. This volume examines some aspects of that spiritual and religious life, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Within the all embracing and ongoing sphere of normative Jewish religious belief and practice, there were two traditions on the lands which made up the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. One had its origin with the great Hasidic masters of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, tracing itself back to the Baal Shem Tov himself, and the other derived from their *mitnagdic* opponents, ranging from Rabbi Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna, to Rabbi Israel Lipkin of Salanter.

The Hasidic tradition, which originated at least in part in a folk culture of healing and magic, was originally most concerned with prayer as a means of direct communion with God (*devekut*); all the rest of religious behavior is an extension of the life of prayer. Hasidism can be seen as a reaction against the stress on learning and on the interpretation of canonical texts, whose excesses in the form of *pilpul* the early Hasidic masters strongly criticized.

Different aspects of this tradition are examined by Rabbi Louis Jacobs and Rabbi Harry Rabinowicz of London, Shaul Magid of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Ira Robinson of Concordia University, Montreal and Shaul Stampfer of Hebrew University. Kimmy Kaplan of Hebrew University investigates how a rabbi trained in the *mignagdic* tradition, which became dominant in historical Lithuania, adapted to very different conditions in the United States.

Alongside the normative traditions, the nineteenth century saw attempts to modify Jewish religious practice on the lines advocated by the *Haskalah* (Jewish enlightenment) in Germany and to bring it in accord with what was regarded as the "spirit of the age." Religious observance was to be more orderly, a choir was to accompany the *hazan* and a sermon in the language of the country was to be preached.

Changes in the practice reflected a deeper philosophical position that argued that Jewish religious practice had been modified continuously over the course of the centuries and should now be brought into

harmony with the increasingly secular education and science-based culture of the nineteenth century. In addition, secular education and the knowledge of European languages were regarded as essential if Jews were to find their appropriate place in the modern world.

Characteristics of modern synagogues that developed in Warsaw, Łódź and Lwów are presented by Alexander Guterman of Hebrew University, Krzysztof Stefański of the University of Łódź and Julian Busgang, editor of *Gazeta*. Shraga Ben Sella of Haifa University describes the attempt of Hillel Zeitlyn, in the interwar years, to draw the religious well-spring of the community and to reinterpret those traditions taking into account the emergence of the Jewish national movement and modern philosophical developments.

In the section "New Views," Bernard Wasserstein, President of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, investigates Polish influences on British policy towards Jewish rescue efforts in Poland during the second world war; Janusz Tazbir of the Polish Academy of Sciences examines the reception of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" in Poland; and Anna Clarke of Ottawa describes the life and work of Yehiel Yeshai'a Trunk.

Other topics in this section include an account by Shimon Redlich, Beersheva University, of Jewish-Ukrainian relations in interwar Poland as reflected in the Ukrainian press, a study by Józef Wróbel, Jagiellonian University, of the work of the Jewish writer Adolf Rudnicki, and an investigation by Anna Landau-Czajka, University of Warsaw, of the views expressed on the Jewish question in the Catholic press in Poland between the two world wars.

Białystok Guidebook

Journalist Tomasz Wiśniewski of Białystok has published a book intended to guide Jewish visitors to Białystok and Tykocin. A chronology of Jewish life in the area is included. The paperback book can be ordered from The Ipswich Press, Box 291, Ipswich, MA 01938.

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The Future of Self-Help in Poland

On May 24, the Joint Distribution Committee (JOINT) held a conference in Warsaw on community self-help. The purpose of the conference was to encourage members of the Jewish community in Poland to emancipate themselves from an over-reliance on aid from foreign Jewish organizations and to begin to establish within Poland the traditional spirit of *Chevra Kadisha*, brotherhood of help.

Leaders of many Jewish organizations from all over Poland, as well as invited public figures such as member of parliament Jacek Kuroń, attended the event, held in the auditorium of the Goethe Foundation in Warsaw's Palace of Culture.

One member of parliament reminded the audience that Jews as Polish citizens have every right to seek social assistance from the government whether financial or emotional. Part of the concept of such assistance is for local administrations in Poland to partner with non-governmental organizations, such as religious groups, that can often best mobilize a force of volunteers.

Before the war, there were 1400 Jewish communities in Poland. A special commission of Jewish citizens in each community taxed members of the Jewish community according to their means. Such a taxation mechanism no longer exists. The community must look for funding from other sources.

Denis Roswald, chair of the Central Charitable Commission of the Katowice Jewish Community, addressed the meeting with a recommendation for other communities to adopt the system already used in Katowice. He suggested the restructuring of both the central and the local administrative bodies to provide organized social assistance locally, better training of social workers in order to improve professionalism and increase client privacy, and a better definition of criteria for matching client needs with appropriate help.

Other talks dealt with different aspects of effectively organized community self-assistance, not just financial, but also volunteerism. A lively discussion followed. Examples were discussed of difficult situations where additional volunteerism from within the community could have been helpful.

The theme seemed to be that as Polish Jewry emerges from the post-war crisis conditions and as a new society is being built in Poland, the Jewish community itself needs to take on a larger share in helping its own needy citizens.

Netanyahu Visit to Poland

When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to Poland this year, he visited the former death camps Auschwitz and Birkenau to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day, April 23. This year 7,000 people from 42 countries took part in the annual march to honor Jewish victims. The local Jewish community, however, was not invited to the ceremonies.

The Christian Science Monitor of May 5 carried an interview with Arnold Mostowicz, head of the Association of Jewish Veterans and War Victims in Poland and one of the official representatives of the Jewish community. Speaking to reporter Nanette van der Laan, Mostowicz expressed the sense of isolation, even of rejection, felt by the Jewish community in Poland during Netanyahu's visit.

"To the rest of world Jewry, the Jews in Poland simply do not exist," said Mostowicz. "In the eyes of Jews outside Poland, we are only guardians of our ancestors' graves. But Poland is not a cemetery; it was and is the cradle of the Jewish nation."

In Warsaw, Jewish leaders convinced Netanyahu that he should visit the Jewish elementary school and the synagogue. When Netanyahu entered, 40 Jewish children in a festive mood sang, "Shalom, Shalom." Jerzy Kichler, chair of Poland's Union of Jewish Congregations, welcomed Netanyahu in English.

The Prime Minister, who speaks English fluently, chose to respond in Hebrew, a language that few understood. Netanyahu's concluding message was that there is no future without Israel.

Mostowicz called the speech "tactless." Vice chair of the Warsaw *Gmina*, Helena Datner, said, "We truly regret that Netanyahu did not want to address us at all."

Purim Celebration in Warsaw

The Jewish community of Warsaw celebrated a very joyous Purim including an original Purimspiel. The synagogue was packed and festooned with Purim posters carrying outlandish messages.

The Purimspiel was preceded by a festive megillah reading and followed by a Purim ball in the Yiddish theater. The event was sponsored jointly by all the Jewish organizations in Warsaw.

School children in the Lauder-Morasha School presented a Purimspiel of their own, and Purim was also celebrated by Jewish communities in several other Polish cities.

Israeli Embassy Honors Poles

Ruth E. Gruber of the Jewish Heritage Research Center reports that at the conclusion of the Kraków festival of Jewish Culture in July, the Israeli Ambassador to Poland, Yigal Antebi, held a ceremony to honor more than twenty non-Jewish Poles for their work on preserving Jewish cemeteries and other sites of Jewish heritage in Poland. Among those honored was Janusz Makuch, who founded the Festival in 1988, even before the fall of Communism.

Receiving special honors for his work on documenting and preserving Jewish cemeteries was Jan Jagielski of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. One of Jagielski's most recent publications is *Niezatarte Ślady* (Enduring Traces), *Remnants of the Warsaw Ghetto*, ŻIH, Warsaw 1997.

Others honored included individuals from all over Poland who did work mainly on a voluntary basis.

The idea to recognize these deserving Poles originated with Michael Traison, a Jewish lawyer from Detroit with close ties to Poland, as a means of showing appreciation to those who have dedicated so much effort in this cause.

Preserving and protecting Jewish cemeteries continues to be a daunting task. Incidents of wanton vandalism continue. Recently in Rzeszów, a commemorative plaque was defaced by graffiti only a week after its dedication. In Warsaw and Palmiry several Jewish graves were overturned and damaged.

The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak

The English edition of *Dzieci Holocaustu Mówią*, a profoundly moving collection of 65 war-time accounts written by child survivors still living in Poland, has finally appeared in print. Edited in Poland by Wiktoria Śliwowska, herself one of the authors, the book was translated into English and annotated by the *Gazeta* editors, Julian and Fay Bussgang. Published by Northwestern University Press, the English title is *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*.

This book with its diverse accounts provides a comprehensive perspective on the experiences of Jewish children in Poland under German occupation and following liberation. While mean-spiritedness and anti-Semitism are described, the reader also becomes aware of the great risks taken by truly courageous individuals in order to save Jewish children.

The English version contains explanatory notes, a glossary, historical notes, an index of names and places to help those looking for family, and a separate index listing different topics illustrated by the stories. These additions were designed to help the American reader understand the context of the events and to make the book useful for courses teaching about the Holocaust.

The book can be found in bookstores, obtained through the Internet at <BarnesandNoble.com> and <Amazon.com> or ordered from Northwestern University Press, Chicago Distribution Center, 11030 S. Langley, Chicago, IL 60628 (ISBN 0-8101-1511-5).

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Teresa Prekerowa

Teresa Prekerowa, noted historian and writer about the fate of Polish Jews during the war, died in Warsaw on May 19, 1998, after a serious illness. She had worked closely with the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw for many years.

Among her publications were *The Underground Council to Assist Jews in Warsaw, 1942-1945* (Warsaw 1982), *An Outline of the History of the Jews in Poland: 1939-1945* (University of Warsaw, 1992), and "The Jewish Underground and the Polish Underground," *Odra*, No. 4, 1991.

Prekerowa, decorated by Yad Vashem as one of the "Righteous Among the Nations of the World," was a member of the Polish PEN Club and recipient of the Ksawery Pruszyński prize. She is survived by a son and grandchildren.

Who Represents the Jewish Community?

As the nature of the Jewish community in Poland changes, the question arises as to who should represent the Jewish community vis à vis state authorities. Under Communist rule, it was usually a secular organization, the Jewish Social and Cultural Organization (TSKŻ), established in 1948.

Recently, Jews in several major cities and towns have revived a religiously oriented Jewish Community Organization (*Gmina Żydowska*). Previously, the *gminy* were controlled by religiously observant Jews. Now, however, less observant Jews have started to participate in *gminy* activities and have assumed some leadership positions.

In several cities of Poland, TSKŻ and the *Gmina* cooperate, but in others, each feels it should be the true representative of the Jewish community.

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