



Po-Lin

By Shmuel Ben Eliezer
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Dedication Of Jewish Community Center

Whenever I go to Poland it is for a specific occasion. This last trip was to cover the laying of the foundation stone of the Museum of Jewish History, the Krakow Jewish Cultural Festival and the weddings and bar mitzvah of my friends in Warsaw. In evidence of the growing maturity of the Jewish community in Poland, it seems that not a day goes by without an activity worthy of a story. There are exhibit openings, film festivals, *semachot*, recitals and visits by dignitaries. Over the next few weeks, I will be writing about some of these events.

Mr. Sigmund Rolat, of N.Y., has been a great supporter of Jewish causes in Poland for many years. He has contributed generously to the Jewish Festival in Krakow, as well as the museum in Warsaw, but he reserves his greatest efforts for his hometown, Czestochowa. Over the years he has cleaned up the cemetery, which had been described as a jungle, and made great strides in building bridges between the Jewish and non-Jewish communities through supporting cultural projects inspired by Jewish rituals and symbols.

On June 28, once again, he was at the forefront of Jewish activity in his hometown. He brought in two busloads of visitors to Czestochowa for the dedication of a Jewish Community Center. Most were in Poland for either the museum event or the festival.

Present were Mr. Sigmund Rolat; Chief Rabbi Of Poland Rabbi Michael Schudrich; Mr. Tad Taube of the Taube Family Foundation; Theodore Bikel; noted professor Michael Berenbaum; along with many local officials including the city mayor.

Mr. Sigmund Rolat speaking to the people gathered at the JCC in Czestochowa. (L-R) Mr. Soigmund Rolat; Mr. Tad Taube; Mayor of Czestochowa Tadeusz Wrona; Israeli Ambassador to Poland David Peleg; and Theodore Bikel.



We began the day with an hour-and-a-half ride from Krakow, which provided the participants time to schmooze together. On arrival in Czestochowa we drove around as Mr. Rolat led a tour of the former Jewish sites in the

city. At the JCC Rabbi Michael Schudrich affixed a mezuzah to the door, and Theodore Bikel treated the group to an impromptu mini-concert.

After the ceremony the group ate lunch, kosher food from Warsaw provided by Rabbi Schudrich. Afterwards, those interested visited the famous Jasna Gora sanctuary, while others chose a more detailed tour of the city.

The Yiddish Theater of Warsaw came to Czestochowa and gave a fantastic performance, a medley of Yiddish and Polish songs that awakened genetic memories, and even songs we couldn't understand, sounded like long-forgotten lullabies.



Rabbi Michael Schudrich and Mr. Sigmund Rolat, affixing the mezuzah to the doorpost of the JCC in Czestochowa.

The final event of the day was a buffet at the atelier of one of Poland's most famous contemporary artists, Tomasz Setowski.

While the JCC contains little Jewish material, the few remaining Jews in Czestochowa now have a place to gather, a place they can call their own and develop as needed. A big *Yashar Koach* to Mr. Rolat for all his continuing efforts on behalf of the Jewish Community in Czestochowa and Poland in general.