



E.M. Lilien, "The Jewish May"

Gazeta

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Message from Irene Pipes

**President of the American Association
for Polish-Jewish Studies**

Founder of *Gazeta*

Dear Members and Friends,

My letter today is dedicated to thoughts about Ben-Zion Gold, who died April 18, 2016. Our friendship goes back to the '60s, when he first came to Harvard. He had miraculously survived being burned with the rest of his family in a Nazi concentration camp. He felt that he could no longer observe all he was taught by his father in order to be a Jew, and for a while even ate pork. But after some months he realized he was punishing himself, and when he was adopted by an American family in 1947, he took their name, Gold, and decided to become a rabbi. His first and only job was to head the Harvard Hillel, which at that time was located in a small house on Bryant Street.



Irene Pipes

I got to know him because we shared the country of our birth. He pretended not to know Polish but later insisted on speaking Polish to me. He knew I felt strongly as a Jew, but never insisted on my becoming observant. He bought a modest house not far from my cottage in New Hampshire, where he came whenever he could get away. We used to take endless walks in the woods, discussing plans for the future. We never missed picking mushrooms, a thing every child in Poland was used to doing.

Whenever my parents came to visit, Ben was there. During those years he decided Hillel had to grow and needed a proper building. He and my father discussed how to raise funds, and my father was the first to contribute. At the opening of Rosovsky Hall in 1994, my mother was honored.

In the past few years I saw how quickly Ben had deteriorated. He developed a problem with directions and memory, but in his own house, he read, cooked for himself, and still spoke Polish to me. I saw him for the last time at the Rosh Hashanah service two years ago, when he recited the traditional blessing before the sounding of the *shofar*.

I miss him very much.

Irene Pipes
President

Message from Tad Taube and Shana Penn

**Chairman and Executive Director
of the Taube Foundation for
Jewish Life & Culture**

In this issue we mark the passing of two great souls who have helped define Jewish life and perspectives for more than half a century. Elie Wiesel and Ben-Zion Gold witnessed the enormity of the Holocaust and still found the strength to embrace life and the future. For Ben-Zion Gold, the future meant becoming a rabbi and directing the Harvard Hillel, where he inspired generations of students and colleagues. For Elie Wiesel, the future was filled with teaching, speaking, and writing about the full and humane measure of life for Jews and indeed all the world.

“Elie was a good friend. I first met him on the occasion of the Koret Prize, which was awarded to him in 2007, when I served as president of the Koret Foundation. I was proud that Koret recognized Elie Wiesel as the voice and the conscience of the Jewish people.”

—Tad Taube

Their lives have guided us as we seek meaning and fulfillment in the world that has emerged since the Holocaust. This issue of *Gazeta* reports some of the remarkable developments in that world. It highlights new developments in Polish Jewish Studies, from our feature story on Polish Jewish modernism to the new doctoral seminar program established as part of the Global Education Outreach Program (GEOP) at POLIN Museum. This issue delves into the role of memory during powerful commemorations at Kielce and Jedwabne, and includes announcements of recently published works by Elizabeth Rynecki and Dr. Naomi Seidman on searching for the lost art of a Polish-Jewish great-grandfather and the evolution of Jewish love and marriage, respectively.



Tad Taube



Shana Penn

These stories are much more than news items. As Ben-Zion Gold and Elie Wiesel would surely agree, they acknowledge Jewish life and culture of the past and augur well for its future.

Tad Taube and Shana Penn
Chairman and Executive Director

FEATURE STORY

Bruno Schulz, Ephraim Moses Lilien, and the Archaeology of Polish Jewish Modernism

This article is excerpted from a talk delivered at the 3rd International Polish Jewish Studies Workshop, held April 10-12, 2016 at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

This paper offers an introduction to a remarkable, previously unknown piece of writing by one of Poland's leading modernist prose writers, the Galician Jewish artist Bruno Schulz. Entitled simply "E.M. Lilien" and published in 1937 in a local Drohobycz newspaper, the essay offers a lengthy discussion of the artwork of Drohobycz-born artist Ephraim Moses Lilien, best known for his Zionist-themed graphic works in the secessionist style. As the first known document in which Bruno Schulz openly presents his views on the contemporary political, cultural, and spiritual concerns of his Jewish generation in Poland and Eastern Europe, the Lilien essay has tremendous significance for understanding



Cover, *Lieder des Ghetto* (*Songs of the Ghetto*) by Morris Rosenfeld, illustrated by E.M. Lilien, 1902

Since 1989...the Jewishness of the Polish landscape, and of Polish-language modernist writing, is becoming more accessible.

Schulz's aesthetic project – as a form of participation in the Jewish Renaissance of the early 20th century, and a contribution to the development of Jewish modernism both in interwar Poland and internationally.

The discovery of the Lilien article serves to highlight the fact that our understanding

Dr. Karen Underhill

*Assistant Professor
Department of Slavic & Baltic
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of Polish modernisms has been severely restricted by our lack of access to, and knowledge of, the Jewish realities out of which so many of the seminal works of Polish modernism arose: the Jewish cultural contexts and questions that informed the work of canonical Polish Jewish writers like Bolesław Leśmian, Julian Tuwim, Jan Brzechwa, Antoni Słonimski, Janusz Korczak, Aleksander Wat, and Bruno Schulz. With the destruction of Polish Jewish communities, and a large portion of the Polish-speaking Jewish readership of modern Polish literature written by Jewish authors, the multi-voiced nature of this literature, and its complex resonances with Jewish hermeneutic and theological tradition, have slipped out of reach, or at the very least, out of the dominant discourse on Polish modernism.

Since 1989, as a result of several factors – the increasing recovery of knowledge about

the Jewish past of Poland; the growing study of Jewish languages in Poland and of Yiddish language worldwide; the East European turn in Jewish Studies, and a renewed interest in diasporism – the Jewishness of the Polish landscape, and of Polish-language modernist writing, is becoming more accessible.

It is in the context of this process – that I refer to here as the archaeology of Polish Jewish modernism – that I would like to extend my discussion of the Jewish sources and contexts for Bruno Schulz’s aesthetic project, by drawing attention to a previously unknown and major piece of writing that resurfaced in late 2015 as a result of recent advances in the digitization of interwar Polish periodicals. The article, entitled simply “E.M. Lilien,” was identified almost simultaneously by Ukrainian researcher Bohdan Lazorak and Poznań-based Piotr Sitkiewicz. It opens with these lines:

When I was not yet 14 years old, my elder brother brought to me one day *Lieder des Ghetto*, an illustrated book by Ephraim Moses Lilien, and gave it to me with the words: have a look at this, I borrowed it for you, but I have to return it this evening.

Schulz goes on:

I took it indifferently into my hand, but when I opened its cover with the weeping willow and the harp, I was dazzled. From the solemn silence that I suddenly felt within myself I knew that I stood at the threshold of a great and decisive experience, and with a kind of fearful joy I turned the pages of that great book, intoxicated and happy, advancing from delight to delight.

I spent that entire day over Lilien’s book, enchanted, unable to tear myself away from it, its interiors filled with the pathos of shining black and white chords that stood forth from the bright quiet of these pages and ornaments.

There took place in me at that time a kind of internal shift. Lilien effected a

powerful fertilization of my internal world, that revealed itself in an early, youthful and clumsy creativity.

The book that Schulz’s elder brother Izydor brought to him that day – if indeed this significantly autobiographical opening, which reads like a real-world version of events later mythicized in the short story *Księga*, is true – was a 1902 German-language translation by Berthold Feiwel of poems by American Yiddish poet Morris Rosenfeld, one of the so-called “sweatshop poets” of New York City’s Lower East Side. An expression of the Cultural Zionist project of Jewish artistic renewal promoted by Martin Buber, it was lavishly illustrated by Ephraim Moses Lilien. A native of Drohobycz and 20 years Schulz’s senior, Lilien had become the most famous and popular Jewish artist of his generation, developing the iconic style of Jewish-themed *jugendstil*, based on Zionist and biblical

Archaeology of Polish Jewish Modernism, Continued

imagery, that critic Michael Stanislawski has playfully described as *Judenstil*.

“Lilien was the first spring of my sensitivity,” writes Schulz, “my mystical marriage with art; and it seems that this is the effect that he had on many of my generation.” In the opening of the essay Schulz tells his readers that his own artistic awakening began not only in the “dawn of childhood,” but in the encounter of a young man, in his bar mitzvah year, with a new, and, as he argues in the Lilien essay, *authentic* form of the Jewish book, that gave vital expression – sensual, rhythmic, organic, and liberating expression, and above all *modern* expression – to what he calls in his essay “the mythic roots of his tribe.”

Why was this essay not discovered earlier? In the short story “Spring,” Schulz writes, “Where is the truth to shelter, where is it to find asylum if not in a place where nobody



E.M. Lilien, “The Creation of Man”

Schulz reveals a strong commitment to Jewish Cultural Renaissance.

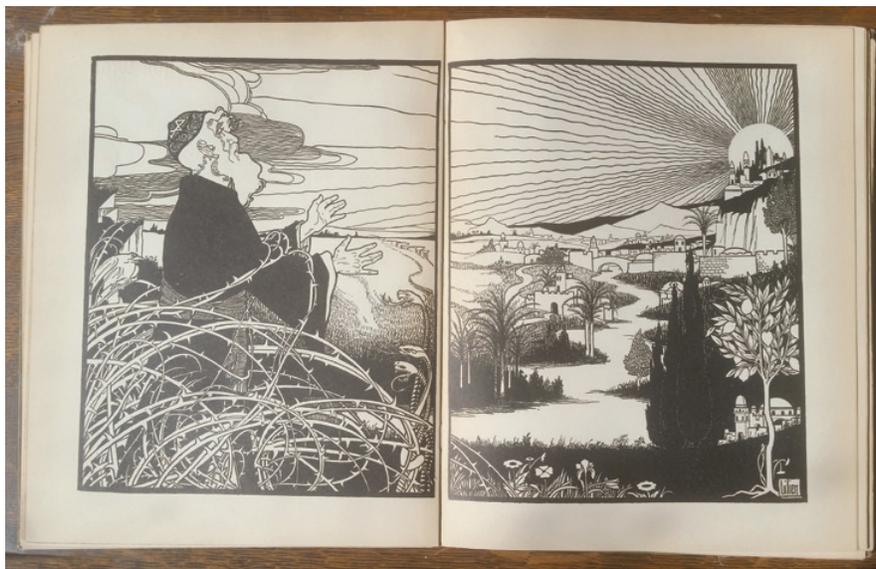
is looking for it: in fairground calendars and almanacs, in the canticles of beggars and tramps...?” Schulz published “E.M. Lilien” between 1937 and 1938 in seven separate fragments in successive issues of the *Drohobycz-Borysław-Truskawiec Przegląd Podkarpacia* (*Subcarpathian Review*), an unremarkable four-page weekly newspaper

– in other words, in the disposable margins of the publishing world.

Recovered, as it were, from the trash, the essay is revelatory. While it is not Schulz’s lost novel *Messiah*, it contains something that many readers who wished they could read *Messiah* were longing for: a more direct, less veiled or encrypted discussion about the Jewish questions of Schulz’s interwar generation. Situating Lilien’s work within the history of the Jewish art book, Schulz

uses his reading of Lilien's life and work as a platform to undertake a lengthy reflection on the nature of the Jewish cultural revival of his time; on the sources of Zionism as one form of secular messianic expression; and on the pressing question of whether political Zionism and the settlement of Palestine could represent *for him* an authentic and vital continuation or renaissance of Jewish myth and tradition.

Schulz reveals here a strong commitment to the *fin-de-siècle* project of Jewish Cultural Renaissance, and at the same time – a deep reticence about, and finally a rejection of, political Zionism. His Lilien essay may be read as an apologia for his own decision to seek a continuation of what he calls the “religious, mythic and messianic Jewish tradition” not through participation in political programs, but through the medium of literature – of



E.M. Lilien, “The Jewish May”

modernist *midrash*, that has access, in Schulz's words, to “the spiritual depths of the individual and the collective.”

The Lilien essay, I propose, points to a turning point in Schulz's artistic development, during which he began to experiment with an ambitious modernist project in the art of the Jewish book. The project entailed the dispersal by Schulz of his writings on Jewish spiritual renewal, and on the return to a lost fatherland or homeland, into the “trash” – that is, into the contemporary, disposable, and popular printed media; the fragmentary and transient material of the modern world – where they would await discovery and exegesis.

This project to create a kind of *tandetna Haggada* (kitsch/

trash *Haggada*) or *tandetna Księga* can be read as a Polish Jewish corollary to Walter Benjamin's ambitious *Aracades Project* of the same period, but in reverse. If Benjamin's project was based on *collecting*, and sought to compile scattered fragments of the modern historical and cultural landscape in one magnum opus, Schulz's is based on *dispersal and concealment*. Each model represents a modern Jewish rewriting of the Hasidic and kabbalistic concept of divine shards or sparks, shattered, trapped, or hidden in the fallen world, which it is the work of the hasid to recuperate. ■

polishjewishstudies.uic.edu

SCHOLARSHIP

A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS
WITH A SINGLE STEP:

Inaugural Doctoral Seminar of the Global Education Outreach Program at POLIN Museum

We scholars of Polish Jewish Studies have long felt the need for a seminar dedicated to Jewish history and culture. None of Poland's research institutions is independently strong enough to offer students a sufficiently comprehensive and methodologically rigorous Jewish Studies curriculum. The community of scholars has also hoped to create opportunities for more contact between our doctoral students and peers from other research institutions in Poland, as well as with faculty from outside of the parent institute. We decided that what we could not accomplish individually, we would do together.

Dreams do not come true easily or quickly, however, and definitely not on their own. In our case they were made possible by the founding of the POLIN Museum and the Global Education Outreach Program (GEOP).



GEOP doctoral seminar at POLIN Museum. Photo: Danuta Matloch/POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

In the spring of last year, POLIN Museum director Dr. Dariusz Stola proposed establishing an inter-university seminar to present doctoral projects dedicated to the history and culture of

Today, no Polish academy offers a doctoral curriculum in Jewish Studies.

Polish Jews. The proposal was received with enthusiasm, and all Polish Jewish Studies institutions and the Polish Association for Jewish Studies joined the venture. We started recruiting in the summer of 2015 and selected 16 students from over 30 applications.

Dr. Marcin Wodziński

Director

Department of Jewish Studies

University of Wrocław

The concept of the seminar was ambitious, which also made it rather risky. We assumed that the seminars would be open both to doctoral students and to their advisors, which meant encouraging the regular attendance of people with a chronic time shortage and too many conflicting responsibilities. We also assumed that participants would commute to the Warsaw-based seminar every month from places as far away as Rzeszów, Wrocław, and Nowy Targ. Further, we assumed that every presentation would be subject to discussion by students, advisors, and an invited expert; and that the seminar would provide students with the opportunity to get acquainted

with one another and with scholars from abroad.

It is hard to believe, but we accomplished all of the above. The seminar started in December 2015, and its first speaker was Dr. Moshe Rosman of Bar-Ilan University, who is perhaps the greatest living Jewish historian. In May 2016 we hosted Dr. David Biale of the University of California, Davis, the author of breakthrough publications and one of the greatest contemporary Jewish Studies scholars, who conducted a class on Hasidic messianism. A worthy start indeed!

But the biggest successes were the participants, who attended the seminars regularly and were active in the spirit of constructive criticism and friendly sharing of opinions.

The next seminar will start in October 2016. I hope for the return of many participants

from this year's seminar, but I also hope for some new researchers, and I hope that this will continue for a few years into the future.

I say "a few" and not "many" because I see the seminar as the first step in the development of a network for scholarly and educational cooperation in the field of Polish Jewish Studies. My dream is to see the seminar evolve into an inter-university doctoral curriculum – for which there is clear demand. Today, no Polish academy offers a doctoral curriculum in Jewish Studies. Our students undertake their research through other specializations: history, cultural studies, or philology. This is not a bad thing for developing methodological awareness and research resources, but it reduces the potential for developing strictly Jewish Studies competencies. The problem will continue until an inter-university curriculum is established, because no individual Polish academy is capable of conducting advanced

courses to educate doctoral students in Qumranistics, Karaite studies, rabbinic literature, and Sephardi culture, while simultaneously training them in advanced research methodologies and Jewish languages.

I am optimistic. The GEOP seminar is proof that we can work together, and that together we can succeed. ■

www.polin.pl/en/nauka-i-zbiory-dzialalnosc-naukowa-pobyty-badawcze-i-warsztaty/geop-doctoral-seminars

EXHIBITION

Ringelblum Archive Exhibition to Open at the Jewish Historical Institute in November 2017

Dr. Paweł Śpiewak

Director

*Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish
Historical Institute, Warsaw*

In November 2017 the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw will unveil a major new exhibition about the Jews of Poland during the Shoah. Based on the famous Ringelblum Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto, the exhibition will celebrate the miraculous survival of this precious collection and mark the full publication of the documents and other historical materials that it contains. The curators of the exhibition include Dr. Paweł Śpiewak, director of the Institute, and Tomasz Pietrasiewicz, founder and director of the Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre Center, along with experts from the Emanuel Ringelblum Archive. The exhibition will also profile Oneg Shabbat's members, including its leader, Emanuel Ringelblum, who was denounced and died in March 1944.

On October 5, 1940, a small group gathered in Dr. Ringelblum's Warsaw



Jewish writers and academics, circa 1930s. From left: Emanuel Ringelblum, Icyk Manger, Rachela Auerbach, Jakub Szacki, Berk Horowc, Rafael Mahler, and M. Weinberg. Photo is courtesy of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

apartment. In the face of unprecedented persecution of the Jewish community, Ringelblum and his friends decided to create a center that would document the plight of the Jews under the German occupation. The group chose the name Oneg Shabbat, "Joy of Shabbat." A month later the closed Jewish district was created in Warsaw and the area was encircled by a brick wall.

Oneg Shabbat was an underground organization, a secret from both the Germans and the Jewish administration. Its members were trusted

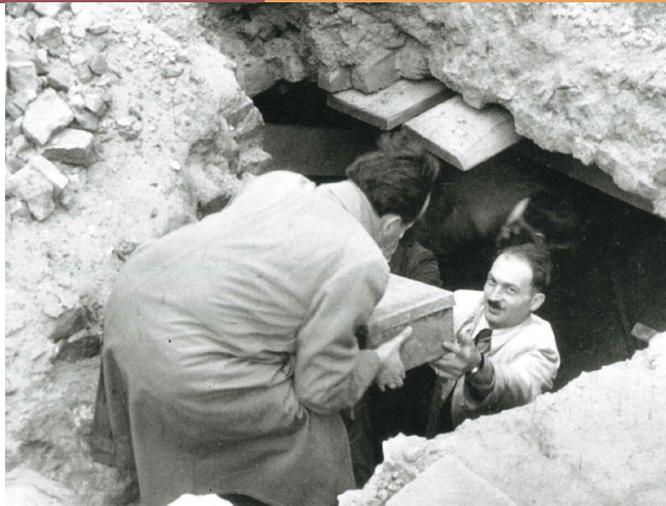
people, most of them known to Dr. Ringelblum before the War, including political activists from Poale Zion (of which Ringelblum was also a member), the Marxist-Zionist party, the associates of YIVO (where Ringelblum worked before the war), and teachers. All understood the responsibility they had taken upon themselves and the magnitude of their task.

They collected thousands of testimonies and documents related to all aspects of Jewish life under the occupation: labor camps, the situation of

women, religious life, health and epidemics, social work, and deportations, among others. They applied research methods as close to rigorous scholarly investigation as was possible under the grueling conditions in which the organization operated. The scholarly apparatus, however, did not overshadow the centrality of individual voices and experiences. Thousands of unique testimonies were at the heart of the archive.

While Oneg Shabbat was preparing a large-scale work entitled *Two and a Half Years of the War*, news about mass deportations and murders reached the Warsaw Ghetto. Members of the group decided they had to gather and distribute all available information about the death camps and the plight of the Jews. They enlisted the help of the Polish government-in-exile to spread information. Radio broadcasts based on the information gathered by Oneg Shabbat aired on the BBC in June 1942.

The recovery of one of the boxes of documents of the Ringelblum Archive. Photo: Yad Vashem Archives



When the process of mass deportation and extermination began on July 22, 1942, the members of Oneg Shabbat decided to hide the documents. One of the students tasked with burying the documents wrote in his testament, “What we did not manage to scream out, we hid in the ground.”

The members and associates of Oneg Shabbat prepared a report about the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto and published bulletins devoted to the ongoing mass extermination. January 1943 saw more deportations. Six thousand people perished, including many associates of Dr. Ringelblum. In February 1943 another large section of the archive was buried, in two milk cans.

Only three members of Oneg Shabbat survived the War: Hersz and Bluma Wasser and

Rachela Auerbach. The latter spearheaded the efforts to recover the buried Archive, which was assembled in the building of the Main Jewish Library that now houses the Jewish Historical Institute. The documents are still in the same building, while the Jewish Historical Institute has tasked itself with publishing a full edition of the Archive, scheduled for completion in 2017.

The place of the Ringelblum Archive in world historiography is unquestioned. UNESCO registered it in 1999 as part of the Memory of the World program. For us, the work of Oneg Shabbat is a symbol of Jewish resistance and, as such, priceless. ■

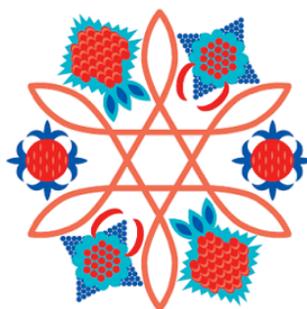
www.jhi.pl/en/exhibitions

RECENT CONFERENCES AND RESOURCES

POLIN Museum Jewish Cultural Heritage Conference, June 8–10

The conference explored issues related to Jewish cultural heritage in contemporary Europe – preservation, animation, engagement, and impact. These issues were addressed through presentations of specific projects and initiatives – historic sites, heritage routes, museums, exhibitions, educational programs, artistic interventions, and new media. Participants shared innovative methods, ideas, and good practices. Creative international networking for practitioners was one of the main aims of the conference.

The conference opened with a keynote speech by Dr. Diana Pinto, from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, in London, titled “Jewish cultural heritage 1989–2015: hopes and reality. What kind of a success story?” It was followed by the talks “Dark matter: the role of the internet in society and the future of memory institutions” by Michael Peter Edson from UN Live – Museum



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for Humanity; and “Whose heritage? Jewish heritage and social engagement” by Ruth Ellen Gruber from Jewish Heritage Europe. The closing roundtable discussion “Where do we go from here? A glimpse into the future of Jewish cultural heritage projects” was chaired by Dr. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett from POLIN Museum. It gathered together panelists with strong academic and practical backgrounds: Assumpció Hosta Rebés (European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage – AEPJ), Dr. Erica Lehrer (Concordia University), and

Dr. Małgorzata Owczarska

Education Department

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw

Dr. Brigitte Sion (Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv Europe)).

The 11 discussion sessions contained 56 presentations from 18 countries. Each of the presentations introduced a separate project or initiative considering Jewish heritage in Europe. During the Project Village, which accompanied the conference, 35 institutions and NGOs exhibited their stands, materials, or held a workshop. Twenty-seven films were displayed in the Film Installation. About 140 people attended the conference. The Jewish theater Golem staged *The Final Cut* during the conference; it attracted an audience of approximately 350.

Participants found the conference important for networking and inspirational reasons. The general conclusion was that there has been a lot of progress in the field of Jewish cultural heritage that manifests itself in the diversity of projects,

but they are not sufficiently connected. The conference was a good starting point for making those connections.

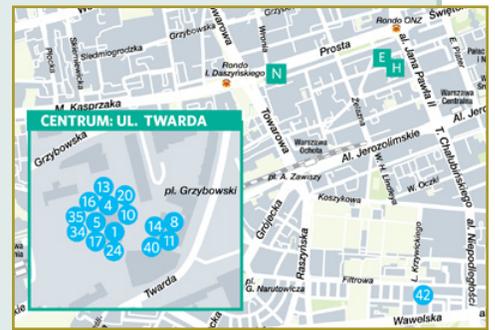
The conference was organized by POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in collaboration with The Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities in Norway, and the 'Never Again' Association in Poland. The project was supported by the Norway and EEA Grants by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. ■

www.polin.pl/sites/default/files/program_konf_ost2.pdf

www.polin.pl/en/education/conference-jewish-cultural-heritage-projects-methods

MAP OF JEWISH WARSAW

A new map of Jewish Warsaw has been published through a partnership between the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and the Warsaw Jewish Community. It is published in both Polish and English.



PL: www.polin.pl/sites/default/files/mapa_pl_e4.pdf

EN: www.polin.pl/sites/default/files/mapa_eng_ed4.pdf

MAP OF JEWISH WROCLAW

A new guide to Jewish Wrocław, created by the City of Wrocław, was announced by Jewish Heritage Europe:

www.jewish-heritage-europe.eu/2016/04/06/poland-new-guide-to-jewish-wroclaw-online/%E2%80%9D



Wrocław City Museum

Nomadic Shtetl Archive Travels through Poland

Maayan Stanton

The Nomadic Shtetl Archive is a mobile archive that recently traveled through former shtetls in southeastern Poland, gathering archival materials, documenting the present conditions of Jewish material heritage, and juxtaposing architectural memory of these formerly Jewish towns with their current urban reality. The Nomadic Shtetl Archive works to generate new knowledge about the urban aspects of former shtetls, in order to trigger social imagination to deal with the void left by the absence of the Jewish population who had once lived there. The project is a response to the neglect and slow eradication of Jewish heritage in Eastern Europe, as the traces of the former populations disappear, not only from urban reality, but also from public discourse and social memory.

From July 25-August 4, 2016, the Archive stayed for one day in each town it visited:



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Kraśnik



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Kraśnik



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Biłgoraj



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Kraśnik



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Piaski



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Kock

Kock, Piaski, Bychawa, Lublin, Biłgoraj, Tyszowce, Szczepieszyn, Józefów, Krasnobród, and Kraśnik. It served as a mobile library, meeting spot, and a traveling exhibition. It hosted a meaningful public program, engaging each town's residents, politicians, and other cultural actors in discussions related to the issues of Jewish heritage.

The Archive is the project of artist and architect Natalia

Romik, under the patronage of the Bartlett School of Architecture - University College London. Other members of the Archive's team include Sebastian Kucharuk, Piotr Jakoweńko, and Agata Korba.

The Nomadic Shtetl Archive is supported by the Brama Cukermana Foundation, Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre Center,

Koret Foundation, Polish Association of Architects, Singer Festival, Virtual Shtetl, as well as by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in the framework of its program "Patriotism of Tomorrow." ■

www.facebook.com/Nomadyczne-Archiwum-Sztetla-Nomadic-Shtetl-Archive-289476394735718/?fref=ts



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Bychawa



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Kraśnik



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Biłgoraj



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Tyszowce



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Kraśnik

EVENTS

AAPJS Hosts POLIN Museum Director

Julian and Fay Bussgang

Co-editors

Gazeta

In a packed lecture hall at Harvard Hillel in Cambridge, MA, Dr. Dariusz Stola, director of the POLIN Museum, addressed the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies (AAPJS) on June 18. The speaker was introduced by Dr. Antony Polonsky, an AAPJS board member and professor emeritus at Brandeis University, who is chief historian of the Museum.

Explaining the goals and tasks of the POLIN Museum, Dr. Stola described some of the honors it has received, including most recently being named the 2016 European Museum of the Year by the European Museum Forum – an award given to newly opened or refurbished museums that promote excellence. In November the Museum will receive the European Museum Academy Prize, which recognizes pioneering museums and projects destined to influence international museological discourse.



Dr. Dariusz Stola. Photo: POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

The success of the Museum can also be measured by how many people have walked through its doors. Some 450,000 visitors are expected this year. Initially the Museum had mainly local visitors. Now the number of international visitors is growing, many of them coming from Germany and Israel.

When questioned, 95% of the visitors expressed satisfaction with their visit, 87% of them having expressed great satisfaction. These are remarkable numbers for a historical museum.

Four successive presidents of Poland supported the creation of the Museum, as did successive presidents of Israel – in particular, Shimon Peres.

The City of Warsaw donated the land, and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage gave much support. An unprecedented number of donations from many sources made the building and the creation of the Core Exhibition possible. The building opened with much celebration in April 2013, and in October 2014 the



Photo: Magdalena Starowieyska/POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

Grand Opening of the Core Exhibition took place.

During the question period, Dr. Stola mentioned that in addition to educational and cultural programs held inside and outside the Museum, there is now a “Museum on Wheels,” a traveling exhibit that brings the history and culture of Polish Jews to

towns where residents might not have the opportunity to travel to Warsaw. Looking to the future, the Museum plans to raise funds for updating its technology to keep abreast of new developments.

Dr. Stola’s presentation elicited great appreciation and applause.

Before the public presentation, Dr. Polonsky hosted a meeting at his home in Cambridge for Dr. Stola to meet with academics from universities in the greater Boston area, among them Harvard, Brandeis, Boston College, Boston University, Dartmouth College, Brown, Clark, and the University of New Hampshire. The topic for discussion was how to strengthen cooperation between these institutions and the Museum and how to begin joint projects. ■

Matan Shefi, Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center (Warsaw), in SF Bay Area

Maayan Stanton

Matan Shefi, one of the genealogists at the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center (JGFHC), housed in the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, visited the Bay Area in August to hold three days of private genealogical consultations. There was overwhelming interest from those around the greater Bay Area to learn more about their Polish-Jewish family history — over 100 people requested consultations, five times the number of available sessions.

Shefi had 19 consultations with nearly 30 people. Each of the consultations took unique, interesting routes. For one family, scans of an 1870 Russian marriage book were used to locate the hometown of their forefathers. Another family managed to find pictures of a lost relative in the *Grodno Yizkor* books.

Shefi said of the experience, “It is great to be in a place



where JGFHC can help so many people translate, relate, and connect people to their own story, family, and identity.”

Established more than 20 years ago, the JGFHC promotes the study and preservation of Polish-Jewish heritage and helps individuals and families from around the world discover new information about their Jewish ancestry originating within the borders of today’s Poland and interwar Poland.

Israeli-born, Matan Shefi served in the Navy, after which he

studied history and reconnected with his Polish-Jewish ancestry. His pursuits led him to move to Poland where he began working at the JGFHC.

The free 45-minute sessions, sponsored by the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, were held at the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art & Life in Berkeley, the JCC San Francisco, and the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation. Shefi came to the Bay Area after participating in the 36th IAJGS (International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies) Conference in Seattle, WA. The 37th Conference will be held in 2018 and will be co-sponsored by the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute and the POLIN Museum. ■

www.jhi.pl/en/genealogy

MILESTONES AND AWARDS

Marian Turski Turns 90

This past June, Marian Turski turned 90 and a celebration was held in his honor at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, where he serves as Chairman of the Museum Council and Vice-Chairman of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland.

Turski and his well-wishers had much to celebrate over his many years of dedication to developing relations and cooperation between nations. His efforts have had a tremendous positive impact, and they continue to do so.

As a birthday present, the Polish National Symphony made a dream of Turski's come true – he was allowed to conduct a private performance of the Warsaw Symphony Orchestra.

A Holocaust survivor from Łódź, Turski is a historian and a long-time journalist and editor for the Polish news weekly *Polityka*. He



Marian Turski conducts a private performance of the Warsaw Symphony Orchestra. Photo: POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

has tirelessly advocated for Polish-Jewish relations, and relations between the Jewish Diaspora and many nations, including Poland, Israel, France, and Germany. Upon his 90th birthday, he received greetings from President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda, President of the United States Barack Obama, Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, President of Germany Joachim Gauck, President of Israel Reuven Rivlin,

and former President of Israel Shimon Peres. Their words are reflective of the significance of Turski's work. Chancellor Merkel said, "I wish you furthermore health, vigor, and success in your so very important work for understanding between Jews, non-Jews, Poles, and Germans." President Obama wrote, "In the example you have set throughout your life, we see the resolve and courage the human spirit is capable of summoning."

He has been decorated with the prestigious French National Order of the Legion of Honor medal, and in 2015 the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights decorated Turski with the honorary medal "For Merit to Human Rights Protection" for the "[devotion of] his entire creative life to reminding us about the human right to dignity." ■

www.polin.pl/en/news/2016/06/26/happy-birthday-marian-turski

MILESTONES AND AWARDS

Maia Ipp Awarded Thesaurus Poloniae Fellowship

FROM MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND NATIONAL HERITAGE

We congratulate our colleague Maia Ipp on being awarded a Thesaurus Poloniae Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland. Hosted by Kraków's International Cultural Center, Maia will spend the autumn in Kraków continuing work on a project she began last summer as part of the Taube Study Seminar on the contribution of non-Jewish Poles to Jewish culture and heritage initiatives.

Maia Ipp is a 2015-2016 Taube Study Seminar Fellow, in the fellowship program led by TCI/Jewish LearningWorks in partnership with the University of San Francisco (Museum Studies Program and the Swig Program in Jewish Studies and Social Justice) and made possible by the support of Taube Philanthropies. In 2015, she also participated in the POLIN Academy Summer



Seminar (PASS) of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, supported by the Jim Joseph Foundation.

Ipp is a graduate student at San Francisco State University, studying theoretical and historical models of post-conflict dialogue, and also a practitioner of sustained, guided intercultural dialogue among groups who share a common legacy of historical trauma. ■

COMMEMORATIONS

The 70th Anniversary of the Kielce Pogrom

**Julian and
Fay Bussgang**

Co-editors

Gazeta

A ceremony took place in the city of Kielce on July 2-4 to commemorate the pogrom that occurred there in 1946, shortly after the War, when Jews were returning from Russia and elsewhere. Reporting on the ceremony, the Polish weekly *Polityka* of July 3 stated that 37 Jews had been killed and 35 wounded during the pogrom. It also mentioned that persons accused of participating in the murder had been tried and nine were executed. A memorial ceremony organized by the Jan Karski Society also took place in Kielce. The society is named for Jan Karski, a Polish underground courier, who, in November 1942, secretly traveled from occupied Poland to London and Washington, DC, to brief British and American leaders about the persecution of Polish Jews under German occupation.

Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło sent a special letter to the city president of Kielce



and to the chair of the Karski Society that was read at the ceremony. It emphasized that there was no place in Poland for racism or for persecuting people because of their religion. Prime Minister Szydło expressed particular respect and appreciation for the work of the Karski Society.

A special attendant at the ceremony was Yaacov Kotlicki from Israel, chair of the Kielce Area Jewish Association in Israel. His father was one of the few who survived the pogrom. Mr. Kotlicki made a solemn plea at the ceremony for the individual victims of the pogrom to be remembered.

wpolityce.pl/polityka/299206-beata-Szydło-dzisiejsze-kielce-i-dzisiejsza-polska-z-szacunkiem-chyla-glowy-przed-ofiarami-pogromu-i-czerpia-ze-wspolnego-polsko-zydowskiego-dziedzictwa

www.jankarski.org.pl

REFLECTIONS ON Jedwabne and the Importance of Memory

Jonathan A. Greenblatt
*CEO and National Director
Anti-Defamation League (ADL)*

Standing at the Jedwabne massacre memorial, I had one foot in the past and one in the present. Seventy-five years earlier, Polish residents of Jedwabne had burned hundreds of their Jewish neighbors in a barn at that spot. Though the area was under Nazi occupation in 1941, native anti-Semitism drove the attackers, who wanted to remove the Jews and loot their property. Today Jedwabne has become a rallying cry of Polish ultra-nationalists, who see any mention of the pogrom as a smear on Poland's reputation. Responsibility for the mass murder is deflected onto the Nazi regime. Jews are blamed for falsely accusing Poles of murder as a means of blackmailing Poland.

I came to Jedwabne with members of an Anti-Defamation League (ADL) leadership delegation to express solidarity with both Jewish and Polish citizens, both the dead and the living;



L: Jonathan Greenblatt, R: Chief Rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich.
Photo: Marek Czekalski

to remember the murdered and to stand with the slandered; to reject the anti-Semitism of the past and the anti-Semitism of today.

I was honored to have been invited by Chief Rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich to say a few words at a memorial ceremony. I told the group that had gathered to commemorate the victims that it was events like the Jedwabne massacre that

ground our work to fight anti-Semitism, bigotry, and racism. I noted that Jews had lived in Poland for a long time as Jews and as Polish citizens. But they were killed as Jews, and died here because of their faith. Remembering honestly the entirety of the past – the good and the evil – was necessary to build a future in which Jews felt able once again to live openly and freely as Jews and Polish citizens.

The day and evening before, we had spent Shabbat with leaders of the Jewish community in Warsaw, including our wonderful hosts at the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland, and later that week we visited Jewish leaders in Kraków. Our delegation was delighted to hear about the growth of their communities, but we had also seen plenty before this trip to cause us concern.

While anti-Semitic incidents are fortunately few, ADL's Global 100 survey of anti-Semitic attitudes found in 2014 that 45 percent of Polish adults believed a majority of anti-Semitic stereotypes on which they were tested. In the 2015 follow-up survey, 37 percent of respondents agreed with a majority of stereotypes that were tested. Since the nationalist Law and Justice government entered office in November 2015, instances of anti-Semitic rhetoric have increased at right-wing

Remembering honestly the entirety of the past – the good and the evil – is necessary to build a future in which Jews feel able once again to live openly and freely as Jews and Polish citizens.

political demonstrations. Most notably, an effigy of a Hasidic Jew holding an EU flag was burned at an anti-immigrant demonstration in Wrocław, and at a pro-government demonstration in Warsaw a huge banner read, “We demand that the government eliminate Jewish Masonry in Poland. It threatens the Polish people.”

The anti-Semitic nature of such actions and statements is clear to all, but such egregious cases are not the only ones. Denying Polish responsibility for the Jedwabne pogrom is a form of Holocaust revisionism,

and Holocaust revisionism is also anti-Semitism. We saw instances during and immediately after our visit.

In a meeting with Dr. Rafał Pankowski of the ‘Never Again’ Association, he showed us that week’s edition of the news magazine *W Siece*, which had put on its cover a burning barn and the headline, “Jedwabne: We Need to Investigate Anew” (“Jedwabne: Trzeba Zbadać Od Nowa”). As I was flying back to New York, I learned that Polish Education Minister Anna Zalewska in a televised interview had repeatedly refused to acknowledge that Polish citizens were responsible for killing their Jewish neighbors in Jedwabne and during the 1946 anti-Semitic pogrom in Kielce.

Exactly one decade ago, ADL published “Poland: Democracy and the Challenge of Extremism,” a report about the inclusion of anti-Semitic

Reflections on Jedwabne and the Importance of Memory, Continued

and xenophobic parties in Poland's governing coalition, led by the Law and Justice party. We saw a political landscape shaped by ultra-nationalist politicians and civil society actors that encouraged anti-Semitic speech and intimidated the small organized Jewish community.

Today we see the same worrying signs, though we note some positive signals as well. We were glad when representatives of President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Beata Szydło attended and presented memorial wreaths at the Jedwabne ceremony. President Duda gave a remarkable speech at the commemoration of the Kielce pogrom, where he said "there is no room for anti-Semitism" in Poland and acknowledged that "ordinary [Polish] people were involved in the attack." However, Law and Justice

party leader Jarosław Kaczyński, President Duda, Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski, and Culture Minister Piotr Gliński have all made statements about the need for a new "politics of memory," which would show Poland's wartime history in a more favorable light, solely as a victim. The Ministry of Culture reportedly has a department devoted exclusively to historical policy.

As we wrote to Foreign Minister Waszczykowski, "Minister Zalewska's obfuscations about well-established historical truths represent the insidious phenomenon the Polish government should be fighting, not promoting."

The Anti-Defamation League will continue to speak out to make clear that the Polish government needs to be on the right side of history. Standing at

Jedwabne reinforced for me the importance and sense of obligation to do so. ■

www.adl.org/press-center/press-releases/anti-semitism-international/adl-leadership-delegation-75th-anniversary-commemoration-polish-pogrom-jedwabne.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/#.V6u0ZSMrKfU

BOOK REVIEW

Pani Stefa

By Magdalena Kicińska
(Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2015)

A famous Jewish orphanage once located on Warsaw's Krochmalna Street was run by a woman who, until now, has lived in the shadow of the renowned pedagogue and children's author Janusz Korczak. Stefania Wilczyńska, born in Warsaw in 1886 to a well-to-do family of assimilated Jews, had not completed her studies in Belgium before she and Korczak began to organize a house for orphaned Jewish children in 1912. Deploying and sometimes creating revolutionary ideas about childrearing, such as respect for their dignity, individuality, and intellect, Wilczyńska directed the day-to-day life of the children and staff while Korczak was the public face of the orphanage.

After Nazi Germany invaded Poland in September 1939 and began persecuting Polish Jews, the efforts of Wilczyńska and Korczak to care for the Jewish orphans of



the Warsaw Ghetto drew great attention and appreciation. Emanuel Ringelblum, the chronicler of the Warsaw Ghetto, wrote: "Everything that is being associated with Korczak – the boarding house, the propagation of love for children, and so on, everything – is their common achievement. It's hard to say where Korczak starts and where Wilczyńska ends." When the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto began in 1942, Wilczyńska and Korczak

Review by
Paweł Łukasiewicz and
Maayan Stanton

refused to abandon the children, accompanying them to their death at the Treblinka death camp.

In her award-winning book *Pani Stefa*, journalist and first-time author Magdalena Kicińska has restored Wilczyńska's deserved place in history. She tells us Wilczyńska's story against a meticulously delineated background, from the hardships of young pedagogues trying to establish an innovative orphanage designed to protect children's individuality and well-being in the early 1900s, through the reestablishment of independent Poland when their work gained both applause and harsh criticism, until the end of Jewish Warsaw in the early 1940s.

The book also delves into the complicated relationship between Wilczyńska and Korczak. They worked together for three decades and gave up their personal lives

Pani Stefa, Magdalena Kicińska, Continued

“It’s hard to say where Korczak starts and where Wilczyńska ends.”

—Emanuel Ringelblum

for the good of orphaned children, but their partnership had deeper layers. It was an encounter of two individuals devoted to their work and shared values. Kicińska depicts it as a strange form of love that Wilczyńska felt for Korczak, and that Korczak also felt, based on a mutual indispensability. “She was simultaneously his secretary, colleague, reviewer, confidante, personal assistant, and guardian,” Kicińska writes. “He had to be thrilled when he found in Stefania Wilczyńska someone who thought as he did. She loved him.” In this insightful biography Wilczyńska takes her place among the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto. The book has gained wide acclaim among Polish critics and the general public.

The accolades include the prestigious 2016 Literary Award of the City of Warsaw and the Poznań Literary Prize of 2016. ■

czarne.com.pl/katalog/ksiazki/pani-stefa



Author photograph courtesy of Magdalena Kicińska

NEW PUBLICATIONS

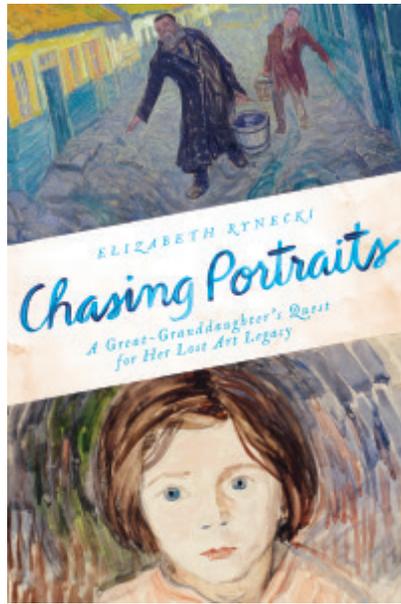
Chasing Portraits: A Great-Granddaughter's Quest for Her Lost Art Legacy

By Elizabeth Rynecki
New American Library
September 2016

C*hasing Portraits: A Great-Granddaughter's Quest for Her Lost Art Legacy* is the memoir of one woman's emotional quest to find the art of her Polish-Jewish great-grandfather, lost during World War II.

Moshe Rynecki's body of work reached close to eight hundred paintings and sculptures before his life came to a tragic end. It was his great-granddaughter Elizabeth who sought to rediscover his legacy, setting upon a journey to seek out what had been lost but never forgotten.

The everyday lives of the Polish-Jewish community depicted in Moshe Rynecki's paintings simply blended into the background of Elizabeth Rynecki's life while she was growing up. But the art transformed from familiar to extraordinary in her eyes after her grandfather, Moshe's son George, left behind journals detailing the loss her ancestors had endured during



“A page-turning personal history of Rynecki’s search for her great-grandfather’s legacy... A wonderful story beautifully told. Rynecki’s years-long search, successes, frustrations, and failures are a study in perseverance.”

—Kirkus Starred Review

World War II, including Moshe's art. Knowing that her family had only found a small portion of Moshe's

art, and that many more pieces remained to be found, Elizabeth set out to find them. Before Moshe was deported to the Ghetto, he entrusted his work to friends who would keep it safe. After he was killed in the Majdanek concentration camp, the art was dispersed all over the world. With the help of historians, curators, and admirers of Moshe's work, Elizabeth began the incredible and difficult task of rebuilding his collection.

Spanning three decades of Elizabeth's life and three generations of her family, this touching memoir is a compelling narrative of the richness of one man's art, the devastation of war, and one woman's unexpected path to healing. ■

For more information about the book and a list of upcoming talks by the author, please go to this link: www.chasingportraits.org/book/

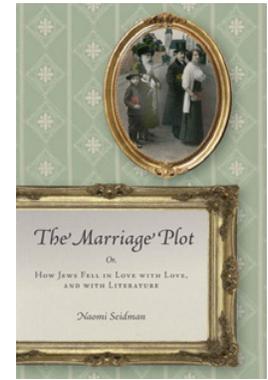
The Marriage Plot: Or, How Jews Fell in Love with Love, and with Literature

By Dr. Naomi Seidman

Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture Series

Stanford University Press

June 2016



For nineteenth-century Eastern European Jews, modernization entailed the abandonment of arranged marriage in favor of the “love match.” Romantic novels taught Jewish readers the rules of romance and the choreography of courtship. But because these new conceptions of romance were rooted in the Christian and chivalric traditions, the Jewish embrace of “the love religion” was always partial.

In *The Marriage Plot*, Dr. Naomi Seidman considers the evolution of Jewish love and marriage through the literature that provided Jews with a sentimental education, highlighting a persistent ambivalence in the Jewish adoption of European romantic ideologies. Nineteenth-century Hebrew and Yiddish literature tempered romantic love with the claims of family and community, and treated the rules of gender complementarity as comedic fodder. Twentieth-century

“Once again, Naomi Seidman has given us a beautifully written book that is equally illuminating about traditional texts and contemporary performances. The Marriage Plot is a foundational work for anyone interested in Jewish literary and cultural studies, in questions about gender and translation, and in understanding how Jews ‘fell in love with love’ in the mid-19th century.”

—Dr. Anita Norich,
University of Michigan

Jewish writers turned back to tradition, finding pleasures in matchmaking, intergenerational ties, and sexual segregation. In the modern Jewish voices of Sigmund Freud, Erica Jong, Philip Roth, and Tony Kushner, the Jewish heretical challenge

to the European romantic sublime has become the central sexual ideology of our time.

About the author

Naomi Seidman is Koret Professor of Jewish Culture at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, and a 2016 Guggenheim Fellow. She is the author of *Faithful Renderings: Jewish-Christian Difference and the Politics of Translation* (2006) and *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish* (1997).

For more information about the book and upcoming talks by the author, please go to these links:

[www.sup.org/books/
title/?id=25475](http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=25475)

[us8.campaign-archive1.com/
?u=fb445b531689306ab9fb
49bda&id=f7bb912aff&e=
e21a07fa4f](http://us8.campaign-archive1.com/?u=fb445b531689306ab9fb49bda&id=f7bb912aff&e=e21a07fa4f)

Upcoming Events

Festiwal Singera / Singer Festival

Warsaw, Poland
August 27-September 4, 2016
www.festiwalsingera.pl

Showcasing Yiddish theater, films, music, and themed artistic exhibitions, the festival aims to “reconstruct” the arts and cultural scene of interwar Warsaw. The Festival was started by the Shalom Foundation, a Polish initiative to re-animate Yiddish language and culture, on the 100th anniversary of Isaac Bashevis Singer’s birthday in 2004. Singer, the Festival’s namesake, was a Nobel Prize-winning Yiddish language author who captured much of the life and spirit of interwar Yiddish Poland. The Festival includes a recreated street of bookshops, newspaper stands, bakeries, and other small stores, providing a momentary experience of a culture that no longer exists.

72nd Anniversary of the Liquidation of the Łódź Ghetto

Łódź, Poland
August 29, 2016
[www.centrumdialogu.com/
program-obchodow](http://www.centrumdialogu.com/program-obchodow)

The commemoration will begin with a March of Remembrance from the Jewish Cemetery to Radagast Station, culminating in an official ceremony. The exhibition “Post 41. Relations with Litzmannstadt Ghetto” will open to the public, followed by a medal ceremony for newly recognized Righteous Among The Nations. The day’s events will culminate with the film premier of *Dziennik Sierakowiaka* (*Sierakowiak’s Journal*) (dir. Michał Bukojemski, Poland, 2016), after which there will be a panel with director Bukojemski, Marian Turski, and Adam Sitarek.

8TH BET DEBORA CONFERENCE

Jewish Women in Europe: Creating Alternatives

Wrocław, Poland
September 1-4, 2016
[www.bet-debora.net/
activities/8th-conference](http://www.bet-debora.net/activities/8th-conference)

Held in the White Stork Synagogue, the conference will honor the women who have contributed to the formation of a lively and diverse Judaism in the past and present, as well as to fighting for a tolerant and pluralist Europe. The conference is organized by Bet Debora (based in Berlin and Vienna), Bente Kahan Foundation (based in Wrocław), and Czulent (based in Kraków).

Upcoming Events, Continued

EUROPEAN DAYS OF JEWISH CULTURE CONFERENCE

Jewish Languages

Lviv, Ukraine

September 4, 2016

www.jewishheritage.org/web/agenda/2016/ukraine

The conference will investigate the numerous Jewish languages and dialects from around the world and throughout history. Thirty-five countries will be taking part in this conference. The conference is a program of the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage.



DISCOVER
JEWISH CULTURAL
AND HISTORICAL
HERITAGE
**European Days
of Jewish Culture**
September 4th 2016



AUSTRIA - AZERBAIJAN - BELGIUM - BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA - BULGARIA - CROATIA - CZECH REPUBLIC - DENMARK
FINLAND - FRANCE - GEORGIA - GERMANY - GREECE - HUNGARY - IRELAND - ITALY - LATVIA - LITHUANIA - LUXEMBOURG
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - NETHERLANDS - NORWAY - POLAND - PORTUGAL - ROMANIA - RUSSIA
SERBIA - SLOVAKIA - SLOVENIA - SPAIN - SWEDEN - SWITZERLAND - TURKEY - UKRAINE - UNITED KINGDOM



ZBLIŻENIA Festival / “Close Up” Festival

Gdańsk, Poland

September 8-11, 2016

zblizeniafestival.org

The “Close Up” Festival is a Jewish culture festival in Gdańsk, started in 2013. The 2016 Festival includes panels by authors Bella Szwarzman-Czarnota, Marek Suchar, and Magdalena Kicińska (author of *Pani Stefa*, reviewed on p. 25), art and dance workshops, films, concerts, art exhibits, and theater performances.

The event is free and open to the public.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Museums and Their Publics at Sites of Conflicted History

**INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE,
MARCH 13-15, 2017**

**POLIN Museum of the
History of Polish Jews,
Warsaw**

Museums of history face a particular challenge in societies that have recently experienced conflict and violence, radical geopolitical and ideological change, and socioeconomic and technological challenges. Multiple and rival historical perspectives characterize the dynamics of public memory in these societies. Differing narratives of the past are told in parallel or appear in open conflict with each other, while memories still hidden and silent await public articulation.

Divided memories are characteristic of post-communist Europe and in other regions that have experienced totalitarian regimes, wars, mass violence (ethnic cleansing,

population transfers), radical border changes, and other disruptions. The present day brings additional tensions: liberal democratic societies in the West are called on to respond to global crises, the massive population shifts that ensue, and creation of new national and ethnic minorities within multinational and ethnonational states. In some societies, attempts at expanding democracy and human rights, through such mechanisms as truth and reconciliation commissions, bring new waves of difficult knowledge into public circulation, challenging long-held national narratives enshrined on the walls of museums and in the minds of many visitors.

The conference aims to explore these issues in relation to the changing character and role of museums today. POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw is a prime site for such a conference, given the

complex history it presents. While seeking to present an authoritative, but not authoritarian, historical account, museums such as POLIN offer an open narrative in multiple voices and invite the public to play an active part in interpreting historical processes and events. The exhibition itself, using a variety of media, offers an experience that is thought-provoking, sensory, emotional, and memorable. Projects and events such as performances, workshops, debates, and lectures invite the public to add their experiences and voices. Curating historical narratives becomes a collaborative, inclusive, and dynamic process.

Museums have a responsibility to those whose story they tell, as well as to their publics and stakeholders. As institutions of public history, they aim to build lasting relationships with audiences, both local and international. This is especially important in post-

Museums and Their Publics at Sites of Conflicted History, Continued

communist and post-conflict societies, where museums can help build a robust civil society and bring history – and historical debate – into the public domain.

The conference will explore the role of museums in negotiating new public histories in societies in transition, as old narratives and historical policies are questioned and stories once silenced are given voice. Of special interest is how the historical narratives constructed in museums help to shape new social relations in a dynamically changing present.

Scholars in various disciplines (anthropology, sociology, history, memory studies, museology, art history, and political science, among others) and museum professionals, including curators and museum educators, are invited to discuss the role of museums in negotiating contested histories in relation to their publics. ■

Send abstracts, maximum 300 words, and short bio to GEOP@polin.pl.

The deadline for submission of abstracts is September 15, 2016.

Academic Committee:

- Prof. Bruce Altshuler (New York University)
- Prof. Dorota Folga-Januszewska (International Council of Museums)
- Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (POLIN Museum, chair)
- Dr. Gabriel Koureas (Birkbeck University of London)
- Dr. hab. Iwona Kurz (University of Warsaw)
- Prof. Erica Lehrer (Concordia University)
- Dr. Małgorzata Pakier (POLIN Museum, conference coordinator)

www.polin.pl/en/conference-museums-and-their-publics

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Fall 2016 Auschwitz Jewish Center Program for Students Abroad

Applications are now open for the Fall 2016 Auschwitz Jewish Center Program for Students Abroad (PSA). The program takes place from October 6-9, 2016; **applications will be accepted until September 6.**

The AJC, under the auspices of the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, has offered subsidized educational programs for students of all backgrounds since 2000. The PSA, established in 2010, is a long-weekend (Thursday-Sunday) academic program in Kraków that takes place during fall and spring semesters. Its curriculum includes tours of historical and contemporary Kraków, testimony, in-depth study visits to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and academic discussion.

Students of all backgrounds and nationalities who are studying in Europe, Israel, and the region are encouraged to apply. Financial aid is available for the \$375

AUSCHWITZ JEWISH CENTER PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS ABROAD
FALL 2016
Long-weekend programs in Poland on Jewish life and the Holocaust, open to students of all backgrounds

Enrich Your Studies With A WEEKEND IN POLAND

DATES
OCTOBER 6-9, 2016
(celebrate September 6!)

Spring 2017 programs take place in April and May; dates will be announced in advance.

Each PSA begins Thursday evening and ends Sunday evening during fall and spring semesters. Housing is available Sunday evening upon request.

CUSTOMIZED PROGRAMS:
The AJC is available year-round to develop programs in Poland of varying length for groups of all sizes. Please visit mjhny.org/PSA/cust for more information.

PROGRAM

Visit Krakow, Oswiecim, work with scholars, take in-depth tours of Auschwitz-Birkenau, hear testimony, and engage in meaningful discussion.

Led by American staff from the Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York and Polish staff from the Auschwitz Jewish Center.

A \$375 non-refundable fee includes lodging, food, transportation during the trip, entrance fees, and tours; travel-related expenses are available.

INFORMATION Contact DBramson@mjhny.org for further information.
COLLEGE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS AND MAJORS ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

 LEARN MORE AT MJHNYC.ORG/PSA
APPLY ONLINE @ WWW.MJHNYC.ORG/AJCBROAD

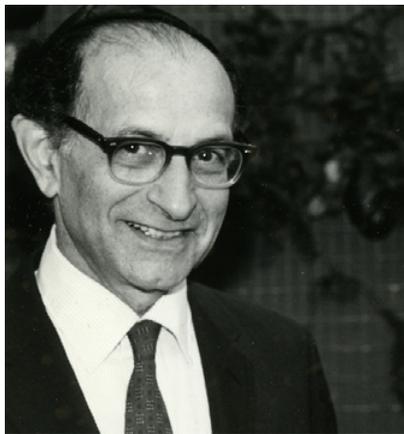
program fee, covering meals, accommodation, entrance fees, and local transportation during the program. Please visit our website for a sample syllabus and eligibility FAQ; flyers are available for distribution upon request.

For more information on the PSA, funded fellowships, local programming, and year-round Customized Programs, please contact DBramson@mjhny.org or visit ajcf.pl/en/education-center.

OBITUARIES

Ben-Zion Gold: July 26, 1923-April 18, 2016

Ben-Zion Gold, a long-time member of the Board of the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies, who died on April 18, was Hillel rabbi at Harvard University from 1958 until he became rabbi emeritus in 1990. He grew up in a traditional religious Jewish family in Radom in central Poland and has described his childhood in a beautifully written memoir, *The Life of Jews in Poland Before the Holocaust* (University of Nebraska Press, 2007), which was translated into Polish as *Cisza przed burzą. Życie polskich Żydów przed Holokaustem* (Austeria, 2011). In it he described his experiences as a student in a number of yeshivot, most notably in the preparatory program of the Khakhmei Lublin Yeshiva, which had opened just a few years earlier in 1930 in the building that still stands, and has recently been returned to the Jewish Community of Poland.



Ben-Zion's parents, three sisters, and brother were murdered in the Holocaust. He attributed his survival to his religious faith and claimed that experiences in German concentration camps deepened his attachment to Judaism and strengthened his devotion to his heritage. But he was also aware that the world of unquestioning faith in which he had been brought up could not be recreated after the devastating revelation of what humanity was capable of. As he put it:

Sometimes when I visit Meah Shearim, the quarter of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem, I feel as though I had returned to the scenes of

Dr. Antony Polonsky

Chief Historian

POLIN Museum of the

History of Polish Jews

my childhood...They speak Yiddish, their children go to *Heder* and *Yeshiva* the way I did, even the foods served in their restaurants are similar. But it is only an illusion. For all of the similarity in language and way of life there is a significant difference. The resemblance is like that of a sect that is dedicated to the preservation of a way of life that no longer exists.

After liberation he found himself in the Feldafing DP camp in Germany, where he learned the details of his family's destruction. In 1947 he emigrated to the United States. In spite of his crisis of faith, he decided to enroll in the rabbinical school of the Jewish Theological Seminary. As he wrote, "Once the certainty of knowing the ways of God was gone, I had to live with imponderables and paradoxes, with more questions than answers. Eventually I understood that questions, no matter how many and how cogent, are only questions. It is our

impatience that turns them into answers.” As Hillel rabbi, he lovingly evoked this destroyed world and attempted to convey its deep spirituality, while distancing himself from its fundamentalism and ethnic self-centeredness.

The principal theme of his life was his recovery of faith in a new and contemporary form. He seldom discussed his experiences in Nazi camps, a central episode in his life that functioned as a void. Its absence spoke much louder than any description, no matter how moving, of the horrors of camp life. Ben-Zion’s life was an account of the resilience of the human spirit.

As Hillel director he was committed to strengthening Jewish faith and communal sentiment, and succeeded in fostering an active Jewish life at Harvard where its presence had previously been somewhat tenuous. He was a devoted Yiddishist and friend of Isaac

Bashevis Singer. He fought the latent cultural anti-Semitism at the University and delivered an angry sermon reprinted in the *Harvard Crimson* when the festive first-year registration was scheduled on Yom Kippur. A strong supporter of Zionism and the State of Israel, he was also critical of the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians. As he put it in 2002, “Those of us who criticize Israel do so because Israel is an important part of our identity, because criticism is an integral part of our traditional culture.”

He was also keenly committed to social justice. At a rally calling for Harvard to divest itself of its holdings in corporations doing business in South Africa, he remarked:

When I departed the gates of Auschwitz, leaving my family behind in the ashes, I made two promises to myself. First, that I would dedicate my life to the well-being of the Jewish people. That is why I am a rabbi today. Second, that I would dedicate

my life to ensuring that nothing like the Holocaust would ever happen again, to anybody. That is why I am here today.

Ben-Zion was a unique individual, a survivor from a lost world. He will be sorely missed by his long-standing partner Nurit, his daughters Merav and Hannah, and his many friends. ■

OBITUARIES

Remembering Elie Wiesel: A Tribute From a Friend and Disciple

Elie Wiesel died Saturday, July 2, at the age of 87. Much has been said and written about this man, who emerged from the horrors of Auschwitz and Buchenwald determined to perpetuate the memory of the millions of European Jews murdered in the Shoah. He became the acknowledged voice of its survivors. He often said that he could not, would not speak on behalf of the dead. He did, however, speak forcefully, eloquently for the collectivity of the survivors, and they revered and loved him for it. “Accept the idea that you will never see what they have seen – and go on seeing now,” he wrote in his classic essay, “A Plea for the Survivors,” perhaps subconsciously opening a window into his own heart.

Not all survivors of the Shoah were able to transcend their experiences in what Elie Wiesel famously referred to as the “Kingdom of Night.” Suffering, he once observed,

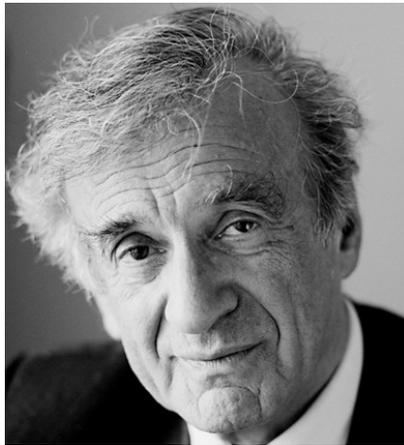


Photo: Sergey Bermeniev/NPR

“gives man no privileges; it all depends on what he does with it. If he uses his suffering against man, he betrays it; if he uses it to fight evil and humanize destiny, then he elevates it and elevates himself.” He described his own reflective existential crossroads in his lecture upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize: “A recollection. The time: After the war. The place: Paris. A young man struggles to readjust to life. His mother, his father, his small sister are gone. He is alone. On the verge of despair. And yet he does not give up. On the contrary, he strives to find a

Menachem Z. Rosensaft
General Counsel
World Jewish Congress

place among the living. He acquires a new language. He makes a few friends who, like himself, believe that the memory of evil will serve as a shield against evil; that the memory of death will serve as a shield against death.”

Elie Wiesel came to public prominence as an author whose use of words was invariably elegant, direct, and piercing. The overriding common theme of his books is survival, not just the factual circumstance of survival but its transformative nature and power. Equally important was Elie Wiesel the teacher, who made a lasting, often life-changing impact on thousands of students who sat in his classes. His lectures at the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan made the mysteries of Hasidism and Jewish biblical thought accessible to Jews and non-Jews alike. At the same time, he was adamant in excoriating those who sought to exploit or trivialize the Holocaust. “Auschwitz,” he

wrote, “signifies not only the failure of two thousand years of Christian civilization, but also the defeat of the intellect that wants to find a Meaning – with a capital M – in history. What Auschwitz embodied had none.”

Much has also been said and written about Elie Wiesel the activist and man of conscience, who urged one U.S. president publicly not to honor the memory of members of Hitler’s notorious Waffen-SS, and who implored another to put an end to the crimes against humanity being perpetrated in Bosnia.

I knew Elie from the time I was a teenager. He was a close friend of my parents, a frequent guest in our home. He and my father would sit for hours discussing the politics of the day. Far more than dwelling on their respective memories of Auschwitz-Birkenau and other Nazi camps, they would focus on the present-day

“To be Jewish is to recognize that every person is created in God’s image and thus worthy of respect. Being Jewish to me is to reject fanaticism everywhere.”

—Elie Wiesel

challenges of remembrance and on improving the lot of their fellow survivors.

One evening at the beginning of my senior year of high school, he asked me, as he invariably did, what I was studying and how my classes were going. I told him that the only class I did not enjoy was an advanced English seminar. I was frustrated by the teacher’s approach and his insistence on intellectually pigeonholing the assigned material. I showed Elie the most recent written assignment I had received back annotated with the

teacher’s comments. Elie read it over, and said, “I see what you mean. You won’t learn anything that way.” He then offered to get together with me once a week to review the readings with me, as well as my weekly papers. He was living at Master Apartments on Riverside Drive and 103rd Street, and for the rest of that year I went there to receive a weekly tutorial.

When Elie was appointed Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at New York’s City College in 1972, I was back in New York after graduating from Johns Hopkins. He asked me to be his teaching assistant for a course on the literature of the Holocaust and a seminar on Hasidic thought. What struck me the most was how accessible he made himself to his students, especially the sons or daughters of survivors, who wanted to speak with him not about their studies but about themselves, their relationships with

Remembering Elie Wiesel: A Tribute From a Friend and Disciple, Continued

their parents, their efforts to understand what their parents had experienced. He would listen patiently, empathize, give advice.

Elie was always unabashedly Jewish. But he neither flaunted his Jewishness nor presumed to impose it on others. Rather he sought to explain its mysteries and to convey his love of Jewish religion, culture and tradition, mysticism and mysteries. Most important, his Jewishness was never chauvinistic or exclusionary. “To be Jewish,” he explained, “is to recognize that every person is created in God’s image and thus worthy of respect. Being Jewish to me is to reject fanaticism everywhere.”

In his eulogy at my father’s funeral he said, “I know countless souls, sanctified by fire, will soon greet you there ... And they will embrace you as one of their own and bring you to the Heavenly

Tribunal and, still higher, to the Celestial Throne, and they will say, ‘Look, he did not forget us.’ Day in, day out, from morning until late at night, everywhere and under all circumstances, even on *simchas*, his spirit glowed in our fire. Few sanctified the Holocaust as he did. Few suffered it as he did. Few loved its holy martyrs as he did. So they will embrace him with love and gratitude as though he were their defender.”

I can think of no more appropriate words with which to bid a most reluctant and love-filled farewell to my friend, my teacher, my mentor, Elie Wiesel. ■

A longer version of this story originally appeared in *Tablet* magazine, at tabletmag.com www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/206702/remembering-elie-wiesel-a-tribute-from-a-friend-and-disciple



Nomadic Shtetl Archive, Bychawa

If you would like to suggest an article and/or author for the next issue of *Gazeta*, or submit one yourself, please email: info@taubephilanthropies.org. The submission deadline for the next issue is **October 21, 2016**.



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