



HAYNT



ASPJ

Australian Society of Polish Jews
and their Descendants

**PRESERVE
EDUCATE
PROMOTE**

WINTER 2020 ISSUE 9

Cover photograph by Phillip Mazel

Fighting for freedom of speech

COMMEMORATE AND REFLECT– CELEBRATE AND REJOICE



By Bernard Korbman
Co-President and CEO

As public gatherings are banned due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we, at Haynt, during this period of isolation, add our voice to the following important days of the Jewish calendar. In Israel, the entire nation mourns and rejoices as one.

- Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Remembrance Day
- Yom Hazikaron – Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism
- Yom Ha'atzmaut – Israel Independence Day
- Yom Yerushalayim – Commemorating the reunification of Jerusalem in the aftermath of the June 1967 Six Day War

On **Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day**, less than a week after Passover, the people of Israel join together with the memory of the six million martyrs of the Jewish people who perished at the hands of the Nazis in the Holocaust. Modern rites of public bereavement and special ceremonies are

held. On this day a siren is sounded at 10 a.m., as the nation observes two minutes of silence, pledging "to remember, and to remind others never to forget."

Remembrance Day for the Fallen of Israel's Wars is commemorated a week later, as a day honouring those who fell in the struggle for the establishment of the State of Israel and in its defence. At 8 p.m. on the eve of Remembrance Day and at 11 a.m. on the following morning, two minutes of silence, as a siren sounds, give the entire nation the opportunity to remember its debt and express its eternal gratitude to its sons and daughters who gave their lives for the achievement of the country's independence and its continued existence.

Independence Day (5 Iyar) directly follows Remembrance Day for the Fallen of Israel's Wars and is held on the anniversary of the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel (May 14, 1948). While this is not a centuries-old celebration, it is a day that means a lot to many citizens who have physically and actively participated in the creation of a new state and its struggle for survival and have witnessed the enormous changes that have taken place since 1948. On the eve of Independence Day municipalities sponsor public celebrations, loud-speakers broadcast popular music and multitudes go "downtown" to participate in the holiday spirit.

On Independence Day, many citizens get to know the countryside by travelling to battlefields of the War of Independence, visit the memorials to the fallen, go on nature hikes and, in general, spend the day outdoors picnicking and having barbecues.

Israel Prizes for distinction in literary, artistic and scientific endeavour are presented and the International Bible Contest for Jewish Youth is held. Army bases are opened to the public and air force fly-bys, as well as naval displays, take place.

Jerusalem Day is celebrated on 28 Iyar and commemorates the 1967 reunification of Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, after it had been divided by concrete walls and barbed wire for 19 years. On this day, we are reminded that Jerusalem is "the focal point of Jewish history, the symbol of ancient glory, spiritual fulfillment and modern renewal."

MY THOUGHTS



Bernard Korbman
Co-President and CEO

There's an old joke about a Nazi rally in Nuremberg where Hitler is screaming, "Who causes all of Germany's problems?" An old man in the crowd shouts back, "The bicycle

riders." Hitler's taken by surprise and asks, "Why the bicycle riders?" To which the old man replies, "Why the Jews?" That was the 1930's, however, scratch the surface and little has changed. We're still asking the same question in the 21st century

We live in troubled times. Antisemitism has reached pandemic proportions worldwide, and the physically violent manifestation of this Jew hatred has both shocked us and placed fear in our hearts. Nations which we considered to be friends of the Jews and accepting of their Jewish population have turned their backs on our brethren.

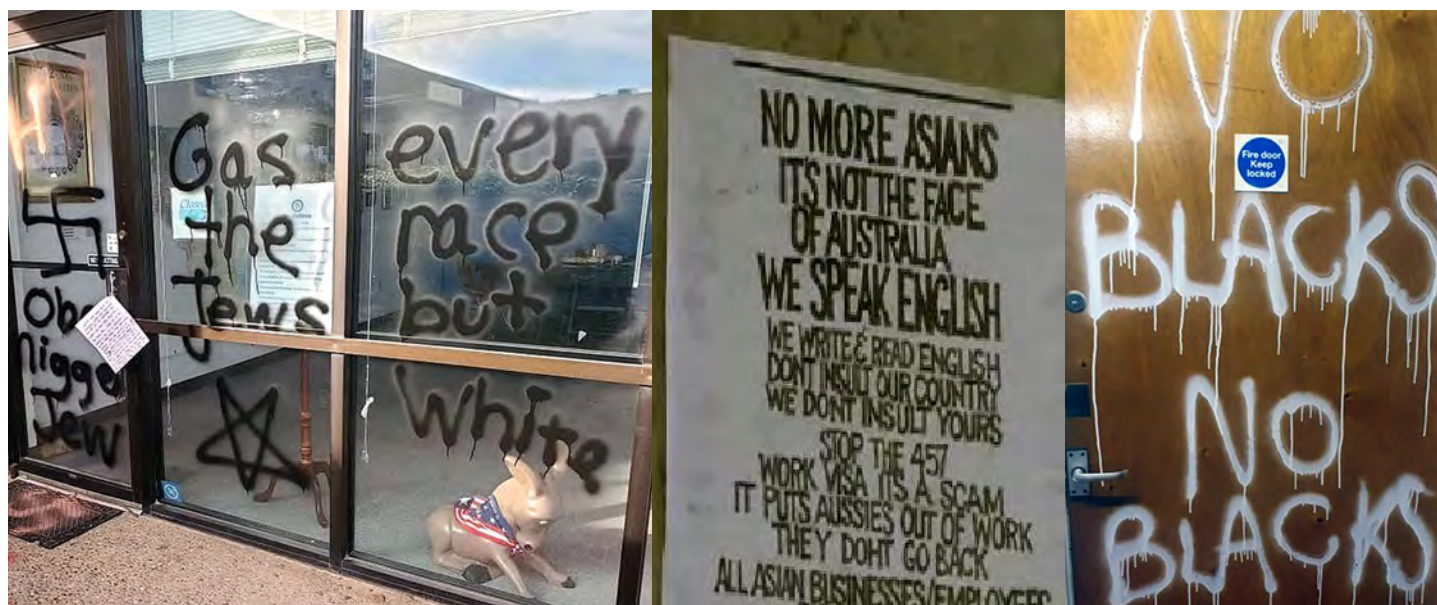
This new surge of antisemitism has also an insidious side to it. Not only does it continue with the old myths of Jews as Christ killers, the charges of blood libel, and the Jewish cabal that rules the world, but

it has now added the greatest international fraud, historical revisionism. The openness by which peoples of many nations proudly parade hostility, acrimony and malice towards our people, under the guise of freedom of speech and freedom of expression, at so called cultural events, sporting events and in academia, is reminiscent of Nazi Germany, only now in a broader context.

Added to this is society's psychological need to find scapegoats in a time of crisis or malaise. As we have seen in Australia, as well as overseas, China is being blamed for the COVID-19 pandemic. Anti-semitic organisations have also claimed that Jews are spreading the virus, which culminated with the raising of two Chinese flags and a swastika between them with the words corona virus.

The consequences of such blatant racism have led to the physical and verbal abuse of Asians throughout Australia, including doctors, nurses and other health workers who put their lives at risk fighting on the front lines.

The phrase "never again" has become cliched. Repeating it over and over again helps no one. **We must live it. We must advocate for ourselves and for others who are being marginalised and vilified. We must never be bystanders in the fight against injustice, be it friend or foe.**



Racist graffiti from around the world

THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL



Izydor Marmur
Co-Vice President

It isn't news when I say that the world is going through a very difficult time and that here in Australia we are not immune to the great difficulties facing us all.

We have gone through a hell of a summer with fires and floods and now we are facing a major pandemic that's causing havoc to us all.

COVID-19 does not discriminate between colour, religion, sexual preferences or political beliefs. We are all in this together. If there is anything positive that can be taken out of this situation is that in the main Australians are working together in solidarity.

In Polish and Jewish relations here in Australia we have and are still facing many challenges. We are all too easily influenced by events that are out of our hands, not of our making, and that we have no control over. But we can make our own choices on how we want to respond and overcome these challenges.

For over ten years ASPJ have been active in forging good and solid relations between Polish Jews and non-Jewish Poles. Overall we have been successful but I believe that we can do better by recognising

our similarities and our differences, by taking time to get to know and understand each other better. Let's have a real conversation about how we can proceed forward and become an example to other communities on how to work together to achieve harmony in spite of difficulties.

There were so many plans for this year that due to the restrictions could not be implemented.

Regretfully, the planned event to officially launch ASPJ in NSW had to be postponed until it will be possible to make it happen. We will be resuming all our planned events in Melbourne and Sydney as soon as we are able to do so. We will keep you posted.

Haynt newsletter is issued three times a year and, as always, we invite our members and interested readers from both communities to contribute articles, poems, stories or responses to published articles. Your contributions should be respectful to all our readers whether in agreement or not.

We would especially like to hear from our friends in the Polish community and the young generation.

If anyone would like to place an advertisement in the *Haynt* newsletter please email izi@izigraphics.com.au for a media kit.

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THE LIMITS OF MAJORITY RULE: FOOD FOR THOUGHT

(Based on John Stuart Mill's, *On Liberty* 1859)



People gather in front of the seat of the Supreme Court in Warsaw to protest against PiS reforms of the justice system.

Bernard Korbman
Co-President and CEO

I write this small piece after watching an episode of Foreign Correspondent, ABC TV, 28/04/2020, titled *A New Crusade*. The program's contention is that elements of the Catholic church in Poland and the Law and Justice party currently in government are forming a holy alliance, joining forces to denounce Western-style liberalism as the new enemy. The report postulates the view that Poland is a deeply divided nation in the throes of a culture war.

My aim is not to attack the Polish people, or peoples of any other countries for that matter, but to put forward J S Mill's views on what is today termed, "populist government".

Mill pointedly observes that "the will of the people practically means the will of the most numerous or most active of the people" - the majority of those who manage to get accepted as such. **The tyranny of the majority** is just as much of a threat to individual liberty as the dictates of individual tyrants.

I believe that it is legitimate to criticise the current Polish government, by virtue of the fact that many institutions which are in place to safeguard democratic rights, human rights, constitutional rights and the moral rights of individuals, have been abolished or taken control of by party apparatchiks.

This total disregard of democratic principles is the reason why Poland increasingly comes under scrutiny and criticism. Those criticisms are not driven by deep-seated anti-Polish feelings, but as a consequence of the current government's total disregard for the European Union's unflinching and unconditional commitment to a fair and just legal system, which is totally free from political interference. At present, many groups have been placed outside the law, because their agenda or their *raison-d'être* does not fit in with the government's vision of what it means to be a Pole. Thus, historical revisionism, propaganda and censorship have become the norm.

Pastor Martin Niemöller's statement is as relevant today as it was in 1946.

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out

because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out

because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out

because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me.

Lest we forget

MARCEL WEYLAND. AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR



Andrew Jakubowicz and Marcel Weyland launch of *Boy on a Tricycle* (Marcel's autobiography), Polish Consulate, Sydney, 2016

By Andrew Jakubowicz

Marcel Weyland arrived in Australia on the SS *Yochow* from Shanghai via Hong Kong, in the spring of 1946. At nineteen his teenage years had been spent as a refugee, fleeing Poland in the first few days of the Nazi invasion, living precariously for sixteen months in Vilnius, mostly under Soviet control, escaping to Japan on a Sugihara visa, and then surviving internment in Shanghai by the Japanese until his release at the end of the Pacific War. His father died in Shanghai, so it was with his sister and her husband (one day to be my parents) and mother that he disembarked in Sydney, an unexpected destination. In Sydney he studied architecture, and went on to become a partner in the firm Wilshire Hodges and Weyland.

This child of secular Polish Jewish parents, marrying the daughter of Irish Catholic Australians, parenting with Philippa five children and twenty one grand children, became feted by the Polish government

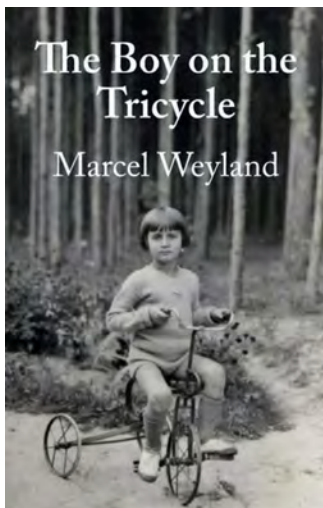
as the preeminent translator of Polish poetry (three medals) and awarded by the Australian government for this same work.

Marcel's life trajectory as Polish and Jewish and Australian marks his presence in both his professional and literary spheres. Early on he designed an aged accommodation project for the Baptists, which they chose to name "Shalom". Wanting to ensure his children knew about Polish culture and why it had been important for him, he began to translate the epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz, into a modern English poetic form, while retaining its Polish rhyming system. He had first encountered the book as a refugee child in Wilno/Vilnius (where Mickiewicz had studied) and through the 1960s he tried to clean up the poor translations that were then available. He trained as a lawyer in the 1980s and became a building industry arbitrator, though he increasingly focused on his literary works.

His *Pan Tadeusz*, published in 2004, was just the first of his increasingly creative forays into

rendering Polish literature into English, starting a long partnership with publishers Brandl and Schelsinger with volumes in both languages, often illustrated by Philippa. One of the characters in the poem, old Jankiel, is a Jewish musician who is a retainer on the noble lands of the returned Tadeusz. Marcel once told me about the challenge of translating one of the lines in the poem, about Jankiel's identity and nationality. Was it that even Jankiel, a Jew, could be a Polish patriot? Or Jankiel surprisingly had proved himself a true Polish patriot, or Jankiel, even though a Jew, was a better Pole than many who claimed to be Polish? At its heart in this simple example lay the tortured history of the Jews in Poland and the continuing contemporary conflict between some Jewish and Catholic Poles, between visions of Polin and Polonia.

Marcel insisted that this conflict should be viewed as historical and not permitted to poison the reality of a shared history, both tragic and heroic, on common lands. Having first translated *Pan Tadeusz*, which is revered by Polish nationalists as an essential text of national honour, Marcel then addressed the other side of history, researching, resurrecting and translating a volume of Holocaust poetry – by Jewish and non-Jewish authors – and including some found under the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto. *Echoes* leaves no doubt about the interweaving of these histories and the necessity of a shared memory of recognition and acknowledgment.



The Boy on the Tricycle
autobiography by Marcel Weyland

His second magnum opus, *The Word: 200 years of Polish poetry*, demonstrates how much Polish culture was (and remains) in fact the creation of both non-Jewish and Jewish Poles, sharing themes, especially those directed to freedom from domination by outside forces. He then focused on three modernist Polish Jewish poets of

the Polish Republic period, Szlengel (who was killed in the Warsaw ghetto), Lesmian who died just before the War, and Tuwim who survived the war. All three were poets of the people, contemporary wordsmiths delighting in the complex sounds of Polish and engaging with the no-less-complex political culture of their homeland. One of Marcel's great

achievements has been to translate both – bringing to life the world that existed before the Shoah ended such a huge community of creativity and celebration, and before so much of the soul of Polish culture was shredded first by the Nazis, then by the Soviets.

As well as the translations and explanations of the texts, and issues in translating particular segments, the books contain detailed historical materials about the context of the poetry's creation and reception.



George Sternfeld and Marcel Weyland at Marcel's 90th birthday. 2017

His most recent work, a book of Polish love poetry, celebrates his lifelong partnerships in love and art with Philippa, who died before she could see her memorial.

Marcel's last home in Lodz, that he left in 1939 expecting to return within months, was an apartment not far from the main boulevard Ul. Piotrowska, where he had also lived. The street has been renamed Ul. Julian Tuwima (Tuwim returned to Poland after the war as a supporter of the Soviet-backed regime – but his dreams of freedom and equality were thwarted: he died in 1953). As a child, Marcel used to play in a park across the street named for Henryk Sienkiewicz, a Nobel laureate for literature, and best known for his epic novel *Quo Vadis*. Indeed.

THE AMAZING POLISH WOMAN WHO HID 16 JEWS AND ONE GERMAN IN HER HOUSE



By Judy Maltz

Feature writer, *Haaretz*.

This article was originally published in May 2019.

Though she died without revealing her secret war-time efforts, Franciszka Halamajowa and her daughter were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.

More than a decade ago, I decided it was time to repay a longstanding debt to the remarkable woman who had saved my family during the Holocaust, and the best way to do that was to dedicate a film to her.

Thus began the making of “No. 4 Street of Our Family” – a documentary about Franciszka Halamajowa, a Polish Catholic woman, who with the help of her daughter Helena and her son Wilusz, saved 16 Jews during the

Holocaust, including eight members of my family. I could never have embarked on this project were it not for the fact that my grandfather Moshe Maltz kept a diary in which he meticulously recorded details of this rescue story.

In 1939, roughly 6,000 Jews lived in Sokal, a small shtetl in Eastern Galicia. Only about 30 of them survived. For close to two years, Franciszka and her daughter hid their Jewish neighbors in their tiny home and cooked and cared for them, right under the noses of German troops camped on her property and of hostile neighbors. Two families were hidden in the hayloft of her pigsty, and one family in a hole dug under her kitchen floor. Franciszka’s son provided her with the means to provide them with food and other necessities.

In the final months of the war, Franciszka also provided shelter to a German soldier who had defected – an act that nearly led to her execution. Considering the number of Jews she rescued, and the amount of time she fed and cared for them, her story is by all accounts extraordinary.

Following the release of the film, the Anti-Defamation League post-humously honored her with its “Courage to Care” award. Both Franciszka and Helena were recognized in 1984 as Righteous Among the Nations by the Israeli Holocaust memorial institution, Yad Vashem.

You can watch the film through this link:

www.haaretz.com/jewish/holocaust-remembrance-day/the-amazing-polish-women-who-hid-and-saved-16-jews-and-one-nazi-in-her-house-1.7191898

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SULA ROZINSKI: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

By Bernard Korbman
Co-President and CEO

I met Sula and Pietrek Rozinski on the 2nd of February 1957, my ninth birthday and my second day in Australia. My aunt Zosia, kindly thought of inviting some of her friends to help me celebrate my birthday and, as I was unhappy to be in Melbourne and wanted to go back to Paris, she invited Sula and Pietrek so that I would have people I could converse with in French.

For me, I cannot say Sula without immediately following up with Pietrek. It just rolls off the tongue. They were a double act, like "Fred and Ginger", or "George and Gracie". Each a unique individual in their own right and together, a warm, affectionate and giving couple.

I was not your traditional good boy, and caused my parents a great deal of angst and grief, so much so, that my father and my school principal were on a first name basis after what seemed to be my regular visits to get "six of the best" straps on each hand, to try to keep me on the straight and narrow.

However, throughout my troubled youth and early adulthood, Sula and Pietrek stood by me. They interceded on my behalf, telling my parents and many others who shared my parents' view about me, that I was a good person. That I was not the unintelligent hooligan that I was painted out to be, and that I would one day make them proud.

Pietrek had a beautiful grey jacket that I admired greatly. On a visit to the Rozinski family home, I would have been sixteen years old, Pietrek just handed me his jacket and said, "this is for you". I had never mentioned to him that I thought his jacket was "awesome", but he somehow knew, and it was now mine. I treasured it for many years and actually wore it out.

When I finally got accepted into a university, (by invoking the love of my homeland rather than



through my Matriculation results), I was sure that as far as family and friends were concerned I would be "out of sight out of mind". Sula however, organised a farewell party for me and made sure that I left Australia feeling wanted and cared for.

Emotional well-being, and eventually self-esteem and self-respect were the outcomes of this gesture. No gift has meant more.

RIP dear Sula, you will always be in my thoughts.

WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING DEPICTED IN THE ARTS OVER THE YEARS

By Izydor Marmur

On 19 April 1943, Himmler sent in SS forces and their collaborators with tanks and heavy artillery to liquidate the Warsaw ghetto.

Several hundred resistance fighters, armed with a small cache of weapons, managed to fight the Germans, who far outnumbered them in terms of manpower and weapons, for nearly a month.

However, during that time, the Germans systematically razed the ghetto buildings, block by block, destroying the bunkers where many residents had been hiding. In the process, the Germans killed or captured thousands of Jews.

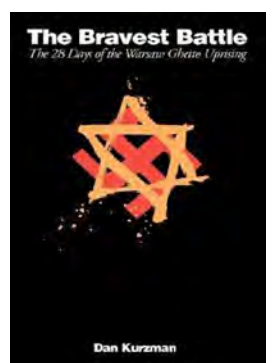
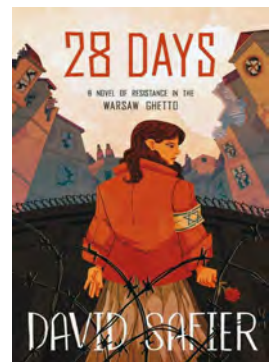
By 16 May, the ghetto was firmly under Nazi control, and on that day, in a symbolic act, the Germans blew up Warsaw's Great Synagogue.

An estimated 7,000 Jews perished during the Warsaw ghetto uprising, while nearly 50,000 others who survived were sent to extermination or labor camps. It's believed that the Germans lost several hundred men in the uprising. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was the first urban revolt against the Germans in occupied Europe and the largest armed action of the Jewish resistance movement during World War II.

This event seventy seven years ago has been remembered and depicted in many different ways in fine art, literature, film and graphics over those many years.

Shown here is a collection of just a few examples.





THE KADIMAH JEWISH CULTURAL CENTRE AND NATIONAL LIBRARY: A BRIEF, 108 YEAR HISTORY



By Alex Dafner

Kadimah Honorary Secretary
Ex-President (1995–2015)

The “Kadimah” was founded on 26 December 1911, at 59 Bourke Street, just down from the Victorian Parliament in central Melbourne. The founders were predominantly recently arrived immigrants, Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia. The inaugural Kadimah Committee and its first 80 members led by President Yehushe Rochlin chose to launch this secular, cultural initiative “davke” on Boxing Day, perhaps illustrating both their confidence in, and deference to, the “arumike svive” (environment). This was 60 years before the launch of multiculturalism as a national cultural policy.

Melbourne’s existing Jewish population at the time, about 5,500 Jews of predominantly Anglo-Germanic background, were not particularly welcoming of their new brethren from overseas. Most of these “folks yidn”, or folk Jews, were escaping the turmoil of the old world and the failed revolution of 1905. As

recent arrivals, they threatened and embarrassed the previously settled and more established “Melburnians of Hebraic persuasion”. From the very start of the Kadimah’s founding, the disparate member factions began wrangling over languages and the character of the new institution. English and Hebrew were at first the preferred languages of the majority of members and Yiddish was still looked down upon by many. And so, it was not surprising that the Hebraic-Yiddish name “Kadimah” (meaning progress or forward) was chosen by the founding committee.

Just prior to WWI, as the membership rose steadily to more than 200, the Kadimah decided to move to larger premises. In 1915 it was relocated to 313 Drummond Street Carlton, where cheap rent was attracting new migrants in greater numbers. At the end of WWI came a lull, which saw Kadimah’s activities almost cease completely. Then in 1919, a struggle amongst the membership, essentially a battle between the leftist supporters of the 1917 Russian Revolution and Zionist supporters of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, led to the Kadimah being

absorbed by the pro-Zionist Hachia organisation.

When one of the shining lights of the East European Yiddish literary renaissance, Peretz Hirshbayn, arrived for a series of lectures in 1921, he was welcomed like a movie star and proved to be a harbinger of a new, dynamic, Yiddish-dominated era. In 1926 the Kadimah broke away from Hachia, again forming an independent organisation. By 1933, as Hitler came to power in Germany, marking the beginning of the end for Eastern European Jewry, the Kadimah blossomed into a fully-fledged cultural centre and built new, larger premises at 836 Lygon Street, Carlton. The new building also contained a 400-seat capacity theatre/hall and library. Boldly renamed The Jewish Cultural Centre and National Library Kadimah, its numerous activities included lectures, recitals, concerts, debates and plays. A youth committee was formed to co-ordinate special activities aimed at the growing number of younger members.

With the worsening situation in Europe and the arrival of such Jewish luminaries as the writer/poet Melekh Ravich and the pedagogue Josef Giligich, the Kadimah published the first ever Yiddish book in Australia, *Der Oystralisher Almanach* (*The Australian Almanach*) in 1937. A year later the pioneer Yiddish writer Pinkhas Goldhar published his excellent *Dertzaylungen fun Oystralye* (*Stories from Australia*) and a Yiddish weekly, *Di Oystralishe Yiddishe Naves* (*Australian Jewish News*) appeared under his editorship in 1939. As news of the looming disaster in Europe began to emerge, the Melbourne Jewish community rallied, beginning with a Kadimah-initiated protest against the Nuremburg Racial Laws. And as one tragedy followed another, the Kadimah continued its cultural activities interspersed with further rallies, protests and solidarity meetings.

Appeals, petitions, fund-raising and attempts to speed up the immigration process now became the prime concern of the Kadimah and the community as a whole. While the war in Europe raged and ravaged Jewish life there, the local ideological battles also continued. A local spat over a 1944 Jewish Board of Deputies resolution, supporting the declaration of a

Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, nearly split the Kadimah apart. In 1945, as news of the full extent of the Jewish tragedy in Europe unfolded, the Kadimah held the first Warsaw Ghetto Commemoration and in 1948 joyously celebrated the establishment of the Jewish State in Israel. Following the 1948 new immigration policy, the immediate post-war trickle of Jewish refugees to Australia turned into a torrent of newcomers. Many of these new arrivals were Holocaust survivors and those returned from the Soviet Union, making Melbourne the second-highest per capita home of such survivors after Israel.

The Kadimah soon became the focal point of the cultural and intellectual life of the growing Jewish community, concentrated around the inner



Kadimah ball 1936

Melbourne suburbs of Carlton and Brunswick. By 1950, the Kadimah had a thousand members and a paid librarian had to be engaged to cope with the growing demand for books, magazines and newspapers. A year later yet another schism threatened the future of the institution. The leftist youth section was at odds with the Kadimah committee. Yet indicatively, both the leftist Bundist-SKIF and centrist Zionist-Habonim youth movements were allowed to use the Kadimah premises for their respective meetings. The 1953 protest rallies against the Soviet Union's persecution of Jews, the Doctors' Plot and the Slonsky Show Trials galvanised the community around the Kadimah. Surviving prominent actors and artists such as Yankev Waislitz and Rokhl Holtzer, who were

amongst the immigrants to find refuge in Melbourne, began to build on an earlier, amateur local Yiddish theatre tradition. They established a new ensemble and renamed it the Dovid Herman Teater By Der Kadimah, after the famous director of the renowned Vilne Troupe. So began a rich era of theatrical productions of a high calibre. By 1953 they were staging five separate productions a year and the Kadimah membership had reached 1300.

Melbourne's reputation as an important centre of Yiddish and Jewish life soon spread around the world and so did the Kadimah's cultural and theatrical achievements. From the early 1950s until the present day, a steady stream of well-known performers, directors and lecturers have visited and toured. Prominent guests of the Kadimah have included Mandl Man, Yankev Pat, Avrom Sutzkever,



Yiddish lesson

Shimon Dzigan, Zygmunt and Rosa Turkow, Jankev Malkin, Sidor Belarski, Ida Kaminska, Josef Shayn, Prof Eliezer Naks, Dinah Halpern, Josef Rotboym, Leah Kenig, Tzvi Shtolper, Rabbi Dr Heshl Klepfish, S Berkowicz, Shmuel Rudensky, Shmuel Segal, Shmuel Atzmon, Wolf Tambur, Melekh Frydman, Nekhama Lifshitz, Yehuda Elberg, Prof Eugene Orenstein, Prof Dov Noy, Prof Gershon Winer, Prof Moskowicz, Prof Avrom Novershtern, Michael Alpert, Adam Gruzman, Rafael Goldwasser, Michael Wax, Tal Hever-Chybowsky and Shane Baker.

These visiting luminaries unfailingly packed out the auditorium of the Kadimah, and their guest presentations and performances were augmented all year round by an impressive array of local talent, artists, actors, lecturers, writers and poets, such as

Avrahm Kahn, Dr Mark Varshtendik, Lova Frydman, Bono Wiener, Avraham Cykiert and others. Many of the local writers and poets also published their work in the Kadimah's literary journal *Di Melbourne Bletter* (*The Melbourne Chronicle*). The Yiddish section was, since its inception, edited by writer-broadcaster Moishe Ajzenbud and the English, by a number of writer-editors, Ron Abel 1975-1977, Serge Liberman 1977-1984 & 1991-1996, Yvonne Fein 1984-1990, Zoi Juvris 1992-2001, Alex Dafner 2002 and Arnold Zable 1988, 1991 & 2012.

Those interested in these personalities are encouraged to turn to the *Kadimah Almanachs*, the Presidents' honour board and other records of the Kadimah.

In the late 1950s and early '60s, as the Jewish community became more settled and prosperous, it began to shift from Carlton pursuits over more than a century

The Kadimah more than century-long history reflects much of the story of 20th Century Jewish migration and settlement in Australia. Its fortunes wax and wane with the influx and decline of immigration in general and Jewish immigration to Melbourne in particular, but overall it is a proud history of exemplary service and self-efficiency, a pioneering example of cultural autonomy within an increasingly dependent, multi-ethnic, multicultural society.

The Kadimah has fulfilled the vital cultural, linguistic, intellectual and social needs of a nascent, dislocated Jewish migrant community. At times it has served as a platform for expressions of anguish and struggle, much of it reflecting the turbulent and tragic Jewish experience in 20th Century Europe. The challenge for the future is to make the Kadimah relevant to the needs of second and third generation Australian-born Jews, offspring of those migrants who made this country and this institution a real home away from their home that was so cruelly destroyed forever. For the Kadimah, there's much cause for celebration and the challenge is currently being taken up by President Renata Singer and a reinvigorated Kadimah board. So, "L'chaim un biz 120 un nokh vayter!" (To life, may it live to 120 and then some!).

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN YOUTH AND THE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST



From left: Youth HEAR founders Jesse Lenn, Joel Grunstein, Harry Rosen, Julia Sussman and Jared Engleman.

ways for young people to learn about the Holocaust. We believe it is vital to remember and commemorate the sorrows, loss and dehumanisation of the Holocaust while paying tribute and memorialising the deaths, terrors and trauma. Congruently, we endeavour to emphasise the resilience, rebirth and courage so many had, enabling us to be here today. By continuing to understand and learn about the complexity of this time period, we can shed light on the agency we have in our own lives and become upstanders in society. In this way, we strive to learn the lessons of the past in the hope that we will truly be able to say never again.

By Julia Sussman

Co-Founder and Managing Director

Youth HEAR (*Holocaust Education And Remembrance*)



A study conducted across the US in 2018 found that 22% of millennials have never heard of the Holocaust, 41% don't believe that six million Jews were murdered and 66% were unsure or had never heard of Auschwitz, the most infamous

concentration camp responsible for the death of one million Jewish men, women and children. As we move further away from the events of the Holocaust and our ability to access first-hand survivor testimony diminishes, our fear is that these percentages will increase.

Youth HEAR (Holocaust Education And Remembrance) is an organisation that was formed in late 2017 to ensure that these numbers do not keep on rising. We are dedicated to mitigating hate in society by bridging the gap between Australian youth and the memory of the Holocaust. Achieving this goal requires making every person aware of where hate leads if left unchecked. Unfortunately, we won't always have Holocaust survivors around to share their stories and so it falls to our generation to create new and engaging

Over the past three years, our dedicated team of 32 young passionate volunteers have connected face to face with over 4,000 people who have each walked away motivated to take a stand against hate in society. Most recently we released a social media campaign commemorating Yom HaShoah. The campaign was supported by state and federal members of parliament, young adult leaders, community leaders and our peers and friends from both Jewish and non-Jewish communities. This campaign reached over 30,000 people on Facebook and showcased the positive power of small actions, like sharing a post. The video encouraged the audience to actively take part in their own commemoration using the tradition of lighting a candle in memory of those who perished and to honour those who survived.

You can engage with Youth HEAR content and stay updated with our new and continuing projects on our official Youth HEAR Facebook page (@youthhear). We look forward to the future growth of Youth HEAR and the power we can all make to the world by aiming to mitigate hate, one act at a time.

Should you want to speak to our team directly and learn more about our projects please feel free to contact our Managing Director, Julia Sussman, by emailing julia@youthhear.com.

POLAND'S CONSTITUTION: THE WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHERE AND WHEN OF EUROPE'S OLDEST CONSTITUTION



The Constitution of May 3, 1791, an 1891 Romantic oil painting on canvas by the Polish artist Jan Matejko. It is a large piece, and one of Matejko's best known. It memorializes the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791, a milestone in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the high point of the Polish Enlightenment. National Museum of Poland Catalogue

By Aleksander Nowacki
The First News May 03, 2019.

Poland took time to celebrate the signing of the first modern constitution in Europe (and second only to the United States in the world) on May 3.

The constitution was well ahead of its time, coming out at a time when most of Europe was still dominated by autocratic monarchies that viewed

the progressive principles laid out in the document as dangerous heresy and a threat to the established order.

But the creators of the May 3, 1791 Constitution were, in fact, hardly sticklers for procedural niceties, secretly moving the parliamentary vote two days forward in a bid to pass the constitution before its opponents could return from Easter holidays. Even then the proceedings had more than a whiff of a coup d'état, with the royal guard surrounding the debating chamber.

Despite its questionable legality, the gambit worked – for a while at least. For in hindsight the May 3 Constitution proved, in the words of one of its creators, “the last, brilliant gasp of a state in its death throes.”

The union of Poland and Lithuania, known as the Commonwealth of Both Nations, was in the late 18th century a European backwater with an archaic economic system based on extreme exploitation of the peasantry by the nobility that made up perhaps 10 percent of the society and enjoyed political privileges unparalleled elsewhere at the time. Nobles elected the king for life and chose deputies to the lower chamber of parliament, known as the Sejm, with strict instructions on how to vote.

Their jealously guarded “Golden Freedom”, which included the right to veto all the laws passed during a parliamentary session with just a single vote, paralysed the state and rendered it easy prey for neighbouring powers – Austria, Prussia and most of all, Russia: two decades before the constitution, in 1772, the powers had forced Poland to cede over a quarter of its territory and a third of the population.

The constitution aimed to address these ills through centralisation and consolidation of power in the newly instituted hereditary monarchy. It abolished the Polish-Lithuanian union in favour of a unitary state and reformed political institutions, streamlining decision-making processes; instituted permanent taxation and expanded the army. All this was to prove too little too late.

The constitution's critics rightly painted it as an assault on the uniquely Polish political traditions of “Golden Freedom” and “noble democracy” (all nobles were theoretically equal). Infused with the ideas of the Enlightenment, its framers sought to imitate the progressive institutions of the

revolutionary United States and France, importing modish political philosophies from western Europe and the east coast of America.

The response of the conservatives, proud defenders of Polish exceptionalism, was swift and effective, as Empress Catherine the Great of Russia proved only too glad to accept their invitation to intervene in defence of Poland's ancient institutions. Barely a year after the constitution was passed, it was abandoned with the Russian army marching on Warsaw.

The radical attempt at modernisation of the Polish state and bringing it into the western European mainstream resulted in a rebellion by the traditionalists and a resounding defeat at the hands of Russia. On the heels of military catastrophe followed the second partition of Poland, which under the rule of Russia and Prussia destined it to disappear off the map of the world a mere four years after the intoxicating triumph of May 3, 1791.

Later historians were to speculate that without acts of defiance of Russian domination, such as the constitution, the Polish state might have perhaps staggered on until the Napoleonic wars would offer a more opportune time for state renewal.

Whatever such counterfactuals are worth, May 3rd remains Poland's most important state holiday, and Targowica, a town formerly in Poland and now in the Ukraine, which was the ostensible headquarters of the opposition to the constitution, still functions in Polish as shorthand for treason.

The constitution of 1791, preserving as it did serfdom of the peasants and criminalising the rejection of Christianity from the Roman Catholic Church, offers few direct lessons for today.

“DIFFICULT QUESTIONS IN POLISH/JEWISH DIALOGUE” – THE BOOK



By David A. Harris

AJC Executive Director (excerpt from the Preface)

The book *Difficult Questions in Polish-Jewish Dialogue* is a collaborative work of Forum for Dialogue and the American Jewish Committee. The project was created after analysing over one thousand questionnaires from Poland, US, Israel, Canada and Australia. In them, young Poles and Jews posed questions regarding the past, present and future of Polish/Jewish relations. Editors selected 50 most difficult and most frequently asked question for the book and had experts from Poland, Israel and the United States provide the answers.

Where did Jews in Poland come from? How could it be that Poles allowed Germans to build concentration camps in their neighborhoods? Why has the Israeli army shelled districts where Palestinian civilians live? Answers to these and other questions can be found in the book *Difficult Questions in Polish-Jewish Dialogue*.

“We set out to identify which themes present the greatest difficulty for dialogue among young Poles and Jews. But we realised the difficulty these young people had in even formulating many of the “difficult questions” they would have liked answered; they worried that even putting them into words might

offend the “other side.” When such questions did arise in the course of a Polish/Jewish encounter, the result was open contention – some people became agitated, others burst into tears.” – explain book editors in the preface.

The book is the first endeavor in Polish publishing to build bridges of understanding between Poles and Jews. The history which is learned in school by young American and Israeli Jews is an entirely different version from that which young Poles are taught. *Difficult Questions* aims to present perspectives of both sides.

This book, built around actual questions raised in Polish/Jewish encounters, is our way of acknowledging two central points. First, the topic of Polish/Jewish relations is immensely important – not just for considering the past, but, every bit as much, for charting the future. And second, let’s be honest; there have been some tough issues. But rather than either bury them or simply talk past one another, we believe they should be thoughtfully and constructively considered, which is precisely what this book aims to do.



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