

Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry. Vol. XIX. Polish-Jewish Relations in North America. Hrsg. von Mieczysław B. Biskupski und Antony Polonsky. The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. Oxford – Portland 2007. XVI, 653 S. ISBN 1-874774-97-8. (\$ 34,95.)

The subjects discussed in the 19th volume of *Polin* are rich and diverse. The whole annual is divided into three parts; the first one, "Polish-Jewish Relations in North America", forms the title and the essential part of the publication, comprising nineteen articles. The second part is formed by "New Views", and the third one concludes the whole and comprises two chapters: "Exchange", where Leszek Hońdo polemicalizes with Andrzej Trzciński and Marcin Wodziński, and "Obituary", in memory of the late Jacek Kuroń († 2004) by Joanna B. Michlic. Although the common trait of all the articles in the first part of the annual is North America, this geographical classification is to some extent misleading as almost all the texts relate to Polish-Jewish relations in the United States of America. The exceptions are the article by Tomasz Potworowski on the evacuation of Polish Jews from Portugal to Jamaica during the Second World War and Daniel Stone's article on Polish-Jewish relations in Canada.

The volume begins with the Introduction written by Antony Polonsky and Mieczysław B. Biskupski. This certainly interesting text is a review of Polish-Jewish relations in the United States from the arrival of a major group of Polish immigrants to George Washington's country until the 1960s. The relatively correct Polish-Jewish relations started to deteriorate, according to the authors of the article, with the next migration wave from the Polish territories, which was of a mass and economic character¹. It is impossible to discuss the whole contents in a short review, I am puzzled, however, by one of the authors' statements concerning the increase in anti-Semitism in the United States in the 1920s. In Polonsky's and Biskupski's view, the said anti-Semitism "manifested itself in the adoption of severe restrictions on Eastern European immigration in 1921 and 1924" (p. 36). In reality, the migration quotas were intended to stop the influx of all emigrants from Eastern Europe, not only Jews. Hence I consider the conclusion that the introduction of emigration barriers for Eastern Europeans was dictated by anti-Semitic feelings in the USA too far-reaching.

Despite the above reservations, the general assessment of the analyzed article and the nineteenth volume of *Polin* as a whole must be definitely positive. The reader will find a lot of interesting information in the annual. For instance, the article by Maja Trochimczyk mentioned at the beginning, about the experiences of Polish Jewish composers in California, reminds us of the Jewish roots of Henryk Warszawski (Henryk Wars, Henry Vars), the author of highly popular Polish pre-war hits. The artist, who lived in the USA from 1947, did not particularly identify himself with his Jewish origin but his children, after his death, started to identify themselves with the Jewish American community.

Antony Polonsky is also the author of the chapter on the Jedwabne debate in the USA. A debate similar to the Polish one took place also on the other side of the ocean but not with the same impact and intensity as in Poland. The still little known issue of the American Jews' attitude to the Polish question and Poland during the First World War was taken up by Mieczysław Biskupski in the article "Poles and Jews in America and the Polish

¹ A. Polonsky and M. Biskupski quote data according to which in the period from 1870-1914 some 3.5 million people left the Polish territories in search for work. A significant portion of these emigrants were Polish Jews. Suffice it to say that in the period from 1881-1914, nearly 2 million Jews from the Russian Empire, Austria-Hungary (mainly from Galicia) and Romania settled in the USA. As a result of the extensive migration movements, the number of Poles on the other side of the Atlantic in 1900 amounted to nearly 400 thousand citizens, according to cautious estimates of the federal census, but in fact was much higher.

Question, 1914-1918”². In the author’s opinion, the decisive influence on the negative character of Polish-Jewish relations in the USA was exerted by the political evolution in the Polish community abroad before the Great War. As a result of this evolution, the political outlook of the National Democracy had become the most popular one among the majority of the major parties in the Polish community in America. It is needless to stress that such a situation did not facilitate Polish-Jewish communication in the United States in 1914-1918. However, the First World War years were also the time of strengthening of the Zionist ideology in the United States, namely Jewish nationalism. Yet, such an interpretation of the Polish-Jewish conflict would be too much of a simplification. Poland was attacked on the other side of the Atlantic not only by Zionists but also by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) led by Louis Marshall, as mentioned by Biskupski in his article. But the AJC gathered influential American Jewish activists of German origin, strongly assimilated into the American culture and opposing the Zionist ideology. It is worth quoting the author’s comment that the Polish-Jewish relations in the United States during the First World War were rather unlikely to take on a positive dimension in view of the nationalist fever of those times. For, if the leadership of the American Polish community was taken over by Piłsudski-supporting circles, the Polish question would suffer even more harm due to suspicion arising in President Woodrow Wilson’s administration that the American Polish community supported the Central Powers.

The second part consists of thirteen chapters, each taking up a different topic. The article by Gunnar S. Paulsson, “The Report of the Institute of National Remembrance on the Massacres in North-Eastern Poland in Summer 1941”, is a review of “Wokół Jedwabnego”³, a publication fundamental for the studies on the massacre of Jews in Jedwabne and other surrounding towns. As the review’s author noted, the studies performed by historians of the Institute of National Remembrance reduced the number of the Jews murdered in Jedwabne from 1,600 to 1,000. In addition, Polish researchers confirmed the participation of a German unit in the crimes committed in Jedwabne and other towns of the region. However, the role of the Germans was mainly limited to inspiration while the Poles, eagerly and without any coercion on the occupant’s part, carried out the massacres of the Jews. This aspect of the crime is emphasized by Paulsson’s review. In my view, the German inspiration cannot be underestimated – it was not by accident that the wave of Jewish pogroms swept through this part of Poland as late as in summer 1941, that is, at the beginning of the German occupation. By comparison, during the two years of the Soviet occupation of these territories in 1939-1941, no such crimes were committed against the Jewish population. The general assessment of “Around Jedwabne” is decidedly positive. Paulsson describes the publication as a “fine and thoughtful contribution” (p. 537) to the studies of the events under discussion.

In the article “The Polish Plan for a Jewish Settlement in Madagascar 1936-1939”, Carla Tonini tackled the topic of the Polish plan of mass relocation of the Polish citizens of Jewish heritage to Madagascar, which was then part of the French overseas dominions. This issue is quite well known to historians. Madagascar has almost grown into a symbol

² In the first sentence of the article (p. 87), the author declared that “Jewish reaction to the reappearance of the Polish question in international politics during the First World War remains a topic without its historian”. The quoted opinion was true at the time of publication, but in the same year a monograph discussing this problem came out, see PRZEMYSŁAW RÓŻAŃSKI: *Stany Zjednoczone wobec kwestii żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1918-1921* [The United States and the Jewish questions in Poland over 1918-1921], Gdańsk 2007, pp. 7-8, 33, 42-61, 71-102.

³ *Wokół Jedwabnego*. T. 1 Studia, T. 2 Dokumenty [Around Jedwabne. Vol. 1 Studies, Vol. 2 Documents], ed. by PAWEŁ MACHCEWICZ and KRZYSZTOF PERSAK, Warszawa 2002.

of Polish anti-Semitism in the interwar period. Historians tend to forget, however, that from the second half of 1938 some Jews had also been inclined to emigration plans. I wonder about Tonini's remark about the negative opinion of the commission the Polish government sent to check the climatic conditions on the African island in terms of its usefulness to the Polish colonization. I am familiar with a document in which Major Mieczysław Lepecki, a member of the Study Commission, clearly approved on behalf of the whole commission the usefulness of the central plateau of the island with a surface of approx. 170 000 km² to colonization from Central Europe⁴. These discrepancies only prove the necessity of further studies of this fascinating problem which was associated with the competition for power within the camp of Józef Piłsudski's adherents, which is also mentioned in this article by the Italian scholar.

In the annual *Polin* the reader will find a number of interesting and novel articles but, due to the diversity of the topics covered and the size of the volume, it is impossible to discuss all the texts in this paper. However, it is due to the diversity of topics that the reviewed annual contributes an exhaustive presentation of Polish-Jewish relations on both sides of the Atlantic. The nineteenth volume of *Polin* is a must for everyone taking up serious studies of Jewish issues not only in the United States, but also in Poland.

Gdańsk

Przemysław Różański

⁴ The document I refer to is a copy of an open letter to the press by Lepecki, where the author "on account of the contradictory comments in the press" on the final conclusions of the work of the Study Commission, stressed the unanimity of all the three members of the expedition to Madagascar who, in a joint report, state the usefulness of the island to the Polish colonization operation. See Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw, Collection: Presidium of the Council of Ministers, folder 72-19, Warsaw, 3 January 1938, The Truth about Madagascar. An Open Letter from Major M. Lepecki, pp. 6-7.

Samuel D. Kassow: Ringelblums Vermächtnis. Das geheime Archiv des Warschauer Ghettos. Deutsch von Karl Heinz Siber. Rowohlt. Reinbek bei Hamburg 2010. 750 S. ISBN 978-3-498-03547-1. (€ 39,95.)

„Falls keiner von uns überlebt, soll wenigstens das bleiben.“ Das schrieb der Historiker Emanuel Ringelblum nur wenige Tage, bevor die Deutschen sein Versteck in einem unterirdischen Bunker im besetzten Warschau entdeckten und ihn ermordeten, an seinen Freund Adolf Berman. Er sprach von den Quellen, die er und seine Mitstreiter im Untergrundarchiv des Warschauer Ghettos gesammelt und selbst verfasst hatten. Ringelblum und seine Kollegen wollten Leben und Sterben der jüdischen Bevölkerung im besetzten Polen dokumentieren, sie wollten Sorge tragen, dass an sie erinnert und die Geschichtsschreibung nicht den Tätern überlassen würde. Fast niemand von ihnen hat die Shoah überlebt (von den engsten Mitarbeitern Ringelblums nur Bluma und Hersch Wasser sowie Rachel Auerbach), doch große Teile der Dokumente konnten auf abenteuerliche Weise gerettet werden. Es sind Quellen von unschätzbarem Wert, die wir dem Wirken dieser außergewöhnlichen Persönlichkeiten verdanken.

Samuel Kassow hat Emanuel Ringelblum und seinen Freunden und Kollegen ein grandioses Buch gewidmet. Bereits 2007 erschien unter dem treffenderen Titel „Who Will Write Our History?“ die englische Originalausgabe¹, nun liegt eine deutsche Übersetzung

¹ SAMUEL D. KASSOW: Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto and the Oyneg Shabes Archive, Bloomington – Indianapolis 2007. Mitunter sind in der deutschen Übersetzung nicht so gelungene Begriffe benutzt worden, so werden, um ein Beispiel zu nennen, die Jüdischen Gemeinden der Vorkriegszeit teilweise als „Juden-