

International Symposium on the Bibliography of Polish Judaic Documents, July, 1988

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Background

Over five decades have passed since the great Polish-Jewish historian, Majer Balaban, urged that a center for Judaic studies be established in Poland,

a center which would provide guidance for scholars in Poland and abroad. The best solution would be to establish Departments of Jewish History, or Departments of the History of Jews in Poland, at least in those cities where rich documentation can be found in archives, and where one would find students of this branch of history.

It was only after 1981 that Prof. Balaban's proposal, put forward at the Fifth General Congress of Historians in Warsaw in 1930, could be implemented. The realization of this proposal was made possible by the numerous changes that have occurred in Poland in recent years, which have resulted in an increased interest in the history and culture of Jews in Poland.

After more than fifty years of hope and struggle to overcome existing obstacles, a center for Judaic studies was finally established in Poland in 1986. That center, which is attached to the Jagiellonian University of Cracow, is called the Research Center on Jewish History and Culture in Poland. (Similar centers were established earlier in Jerusalem and Oxford.) One of the center's goals—previously formulated by Prof. Balaban (and earlier by Prof. Mojżesz Schorr)—is the compilation of a comprehensive bibliography of the history of Jews in Poland. This would constitute a bibliography in the widest sense of the word, encompassing books, press articles, periodicals, announcements, posters, and other documentation. Centers for Judaic Studies in Jerusalem, Oxford and Storrs, Connecticut, have expressed interest in this aspect of the research that is being conducted in Cracow.

In order to review bibliographical research into Judaic documents in Poland to-date,

and to formulate research plans for the near and distant future, Prof. Chone Shmeruk, head of the Center for Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jews at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, suggested that a symposium be organized. The symposium took place in Cracow, at the Research Center on Jewish History and Culture in Poland, from July 5 to 7, 1988. Although the symposium focused on a very specialized area of scholarly research, it attracted considerable attention.

The Program

The formal opening of the symposium was conducted by Prof. J. Wyrozumski, Vice-Rector of the Jagiellonian University. The opening addresses were delivered by Prof. Shmeruk and Prof. Józef Gierowski, head of the Cracow center and former Rector of the University. During the first session, two papers were presented: "Jewish Writings in Yiddish in Poland—A Bibliographical Review," by Prof. Shmeruk and "Bibliography of Jewish Written Sources in Poland—State of the Art: Methodological Remarks and Postulates," by Dr. K. Pilarczyk (Jagiellonian University). These two papers served as an introduction to the symposium.

The second session focused on the bibliography of the Jewish press in Poland. A paper on this topic, "Bibliography of the Jewish Press in the Polish Language," was read by Dr. Alina Cala (Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw). Dr. Cala discussed the difficulties that she encountered in supplementing an inventory of Jewish press by P. Glikson (*Preliminary Inventory of the Jewish Daily and Periodical Press Published in the Polish Language: 1823–1982*, Jerusalem, 1983). Her paper provided an excellent occasion to discuss criteria relating to the "Jewishness" of newspapers and other periodicals. The next speaker, Dr. S. Dziki (Center for Research on the Press, Cracow), discussed research on the Jewish press in Poland in

the context of research on the Polish press in general. In conducting research on the press, he said, one should not overlook its usefulness as a source of data for historians. The usefulness of press inventories was demonstrated by Dr. Cz. Brzoza (Jagiellonian University, Cracow), who read a paper on "The Jewish Press in Cracow in the Years 1918–1939."

During the second day's morning session, the following papers were presented: "Church Archives as Sources of Data on the History of Jews in the Eighteenth Century," by Prof. S. Litak (Catholic University of Lublin); "Postulates Concerning Bibliographies of Judaic Documents," by Prof. I. Ta-Shma (Hebrew University of Jerusalem); and "Jewish Topics in Polish Writings on Ethnography," by Prof. Olga Goldberg-Mulkiewicz (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). These papers were followed by a short report on the Jagiellonian Library's holdings of the Polish-language Jewish press of Cracow, presented by Ms. E. Bąkowska.

The afternoon session took place in the library of the Czartoryski Museum in Cracow, where the participants were able to view an exhibition of Hebrew manuscripts and printed works owned by the Museum. A description of manuscripts was presented by Dr. A. Homecki (Czartoryski Museum, Cracow), followed by Dr. T. Frączyk (Czartoryski Museum, Cracow) who discussed the Museum's printed sources in Hebrew. A report on Judaic documents held by the Jagiellonian Library was presented by Mrs. A. Partyka and Mrs. Z. Steczowicz-Sajderowa (both of the Jagiellonian Library). In their report, the authors discussed the library's catalog of Judaic documents, which could serve as a model for other libraries. The last paper in the session, "Bibliography of Jewish Art in Poland," by Prof. J. Samek and Dr. I. Rejduch-Samkowa (both of the Jagiellonian University), was delivered by Prof. Samek.

The papers read during the third day of the symposium concerned bibliographical

jects already realized by the Jerusalem and Cracow Centers. Dr. Hanna Volovici (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) discussed the bibliography of antisemitism (which includes Polish sources) currently being compiled at the Hebrew University's Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism. The first volume, entitled *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*, has already been published. Mr. J. Jackowicz-Korczyński (Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Gdańsk) and Dr. K. Pilarczyk, (Jagiellonian University, Cracow) read a paper on a planned bibliography of Polish-language Judaica, published in Poland in the years 1945–1985. The thematic range and period of time covered by this bibliography make it complement the *Bibliography of Hebrew and Yiddish: Publications in Poland since 1944*, published in 1987 by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The authors of the bibliography also set a goal of registering all Judaica published in Poland, not only works in the Polish language.

Proposals

In the final session, the participants agreed that the symposium had contributed significantly to the synchronization of research carried out by bibliographers of Polish Judaica, and that it created an opportunity for cooperation between research teams from various centers. The most important proposals put forward by the participants are:

1. Bibliographic research should encompass all writings concerning Jews that have been published in Poland. Bibliographies already published (e.g., the Estreicher bibliography) and those awaiting publication (e.g., *Polish Bibliography, 1901–1939*, compiled by the National Library in Warsaw) would be of great assistance to the bibliographer.
2. Catalogs should be compiled for manuscript sources owned by individuals and public institutions (the catalog compiled by the Jagiellonian Library could serve as a model), with a view to compiling a central catalog of Judaic documents.
3. Inventories of the Jewish press in Poland that have been prepared by the Jerusalem Center need to be supplemented.
4. Issues of the Jewish press that are stocked in libraries need to be preserved on microfilm or microfiche, so that a more permanent

record of these sources can be maintained.

5. Microfilms and microfiches of the press should be stored at, and made accessible by centers of Judaic studies, above all in Jerusalem, New York, Cracow, and Oxford.

6. A bibliography of Polish literature containing Jewish motifs is a desideratum. (Such bibliographies have been compiled for most European literatures.)

7. Research needs to be undertaken on the inventory of printed sources in Hebrew. This should include the preparation of monographs on Jewish printing houses.

8. The search to identify sources on Hebrew books and manuscripts should be continued, with special attention paid to the bindings of old manuscripts and printed books, where Hebrew manuscripts of great value might be found (as was the case in the Jagiellonian Library).

9. A guide to existing Polish bibliographies of Judaic sources needs to be written.

10. The search for Judaic documents in Polish state archives needs to be continued and a symposium organized, in two or three years' time, to review the results of the search.

Adequate funding and equipment will be necessary to assure implementation of the proposals listed above. The Cracow center is in urgent need of both. Participants in the symposium felt that the University of Connecticut, cooperating closely with the Jagiellonian University, might be of some help. U Conn was represented at the symposium by Prof. Louis Gerson.

The symposium was concluded at the University house in Modlnica, near Cracow, with Vice-Rector J. Wyrozumski participating in the closing ceremony.

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Editor's Note: Prior contributions related to the theme of this article include:

Baker, Zachary, "RESPONSA [on the Jewish Press in Poland]," *Judaica Librarianship* vol. 1 no. 2 (Spring 1984), p. 110–111.

Friedman, Mark, "APPROBATIONS [Review of] *The Jews in Poland and Russia: Bibliographical Essays*," *Judaica Librarianship* vol. 2 no. 1–2 (Spring 1985), p. 9, 14.