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Joshua D. Zimmerman, ed. *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its Aftermath.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003. xx + 324 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8135-3158-8.

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At their best, relations between Poles and Jews have always been contentious. With the publication of *Neighbors* in 2000, Jan T. Gross challenged Poles to confront the issue of their participation in the direct killing of Jews during World War II.[1] A re-calibration of the accepted image of Poles as bystanders necessitates another look at relations between Poles and Jews, both by both scholars and the general public. Indeed, what makes this topic so important is the need to address, and even to change, common perceptions of the relationship between Jews and Poles. *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews During the Holocaust and its Aftermath* reflects scholars' willingness to re-examine an issue that is still painful for many.

This volume of essays offers a summary of scholarly thought on Polish-Jewish relations at the beginning of the twenty-first century.[2] *Contested Memories* provides both an overview of issues already well known to scholars of the period, and suggests important directions for further research. The essays here will be of interest not only to scholars of Polish and Jewish history but also to those interested more generally in the history of genocide, war crimes, and memory. Some of the essays provide clearly opposing viewpoints, making this volume especially useful for instructors wishing to provoke student discussion.

Joshua Zimmerman's introduction masterfully summarizes the stages of Polish and Jewish opinion throughout the twentieth century. Zimmerman shows us how wartime events conditioned later opinions. Only in the 1980s do we see the beginning of Poles' changing relationship between historiographers of the "condemnatory camp" (who focused on the anti-Semitism of Poles), and the "apologetic camp" (who defended Polish passivity during the war).[3] These changes came in the form of international scholarly conferences that initiated public debates on Polish-Jewish relations, and sparked a growing historiography.

The essays collected here are divided into four sections, "The Prewar Legacy," "The Widening Gap, 1939-1941," "Institutional Polish Responses to the Final Solution," "Poles through Jewish Eyes," "The Destruction of Polish Jewry and Polish Popular Opinion," and the "Aftermath." Emanuel Melzer and David Engel address the prewar legacy, while Barbara Engelking-Boni, Andrzej Zbikowski, Ben Cion Pinchuk, and Jan T. Gross turn our attention to the German and Soviet occupations of 1939-1941. Dariusz Stola, Shmuel Krakowski, and John T. Pawlikowski focus on the Polish government-in-exile, the Polish underground, and the Catholic Church, respectively. Daniel Blatman explains how Poles were portrayed in the Jewish underground press, while Feliks Tych examines images of Jews and Poles in wartime

diaries and memoirs. Samuel Kassow reviews Polish-Jewish relations in the work of Emanuel Ringelblum, while Gunnar S. Paulsson evaluates Ringelblum's accuracy in determining how many Poles aided Jews. Henry Abramson describes the depictions of non-Jews and metaphysical nationality in the work of Rabbi Kalonimus Kalmish Shapiro. Nechama Tec considers questions of gender and its importance in individuals' experiences during the Holocaust, and Israel Gutman surveys Polish-Jewish relations during the war. Six scholars address the war's aftermath, highlighting important new topics for research: Anna Cichopek, Bozena Szaynok, Natalia Aleksiun, Michael C. Steinlauf, Zvi Gitelman and Stanislaw Krajewski.

The most successful essays here pay close attention to primary sources, and introduce new information to the reader, suggesting that although much has already been written on this topic, much more remains to be explored. For example, David Engel's contribution, "Lwow, 1918: The Transmutation of a Symbol and its Legacy in the Holocaust," analyzes how anti-Jewish violence in Lwow in 1918 became a symbol for Poles of "Polish victimization at Jewish hands" (p. 39). The events in Lwow were important for Polish officials in their negotiations with Jewish leaders in Palestine in 1942 to win support for Polish claims to Lwow and Wilno. Engel's article, as important for the study of the interwar period as it is for the Holocaust, touches on important issues present throughout many of these essays: the need to reconsider the actions, attitudes, and diplomacy of other groups (most notably, the Germans, Russians, and the Americans) in the study of Polish-Jewish relations and the dilemma of collective feelings of shame and guilt for individual actions.

The essays by Andrzej Zbikowski, Ben Cion Pinchuk, and Jan T. Gross illustrate clearly how the war made Polish-Jewish relations even more complex than they already were. Zbikowski, in "Polish Jews under Soviet Occupation, 1939-1941: Specific Strategies of Survival," and Pinchuk, in "Facing Hitler and Stalin: On the Subject of Jewish "Collaboration" in Soviet-Occupied Eastern Poland, 1939-1941," examine the issue of Jews welcoming the Soviets with bread and salt. Pinchuk writes, "Did they wave? Indeed they did" (p. 64). Zbikowski and Pinchuk agree that what was most offensive to Poles was not this "festive" welcoming, but the fact that Jews, as a strategy of survival, accepted employment in the new Soviet administration. This was enough for Poles to regard Jews as "collaborators." Zbikowski and Pinchuk, like Jan Gross in Neighbors, stress the context in which individuals took specific actions, a context determined neither by Poles nor Jews.

Dariusz Stola's "The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Final Solution: What Conditioned its Actions and Inactions?" reminds us of the concrete ways in which prewar attitudes affected wartime behavior. Jewish leaders wanted, indeed needed, the Polish Government-in-Exile to depart from prewar policies, a task that would have been very difficult even in optimal conditions. Stola makes clear that the anti-Semitic attitudes of Polish political parties carried over into discussions of government leaders during the war. In their contributions on the Polish underground and the Catholic Church, respectively, Shmuel Krakowski and John T. Pawlikowski stress that conclusions about the institutional responses of Poles must still remain tentative because of the need for further research to clarify important points, such as the number of Jews liberated with the aid of the Polish underground. Pawlikowski also points out that Catholic attitudes in contemporary Poland continue to develop.

Two of the strongest essays in the book focus on the central and familiar figure of Emanuel Ringelblum, the chronicler of life and death in the Warsaw Ghetto. Samuel Kassow and Gunnar S. Paulsson review familiar sources but make important contributions. In "Polish-Jewish Relations in the Writings of Emmanuel Ringelblum," Kassow reminds us of Ringelblum's remarkable contribution to the study of Polish-Jewish relations. Ringelblum's motivation as a historian was to "demystify Jews in the eyes of Poles," both in his work before and during the war (p. 145). Paulsson's insightful essay, "Ringelblum Revisited: Polish-Jewish Relations in Occupied Warsaw, 1940-1945," takes Ringelblum's comparison of the aid provided to the Jews by Poles in Warsaw with that provided by non-Jews in the Netherlands and subjects it to extensive analysis. Paulsson finds Ringelblum's assessment that Western Europeans provided more aid than Poles is in need of revision, but he acknowledges Ringelblum's achievement in employing rigorous analysis to such complex questions under very difficult conditions.

The essays focusing on the aftermath of the war provide a reason for some optimism, as scholars have begun to address new, yet no less important, issues. By focusing on anti-Semitism in postwar Poland, Anna Cichopek and Natalia Aleksiun have drawn our attention to the individual and collective actions of Poles and Jews in a new context. Cichopek's "The Cracow Pogrom of August 1945: A Narrative Reconstruction," extends our knowledge of the extent of anti-Semitism beyond the events in Kielce

in 1946. Aleksiun's "Jewish Responses to Antisemitism in Poland, 1944-1947," explains why individual Jews and Jewish organizations supported emigration from Poland as a rational response to continued anti-Jewish violence.

Though most Polish Jews thought Jewish survivors would be best protected outside of Poland, some remained, proving that the often heard statement "There are no more Jews in Poland" is simply false. In "The Impact of the Shoah on the Thinking of Contemporary Polish Jewry: A Personal Account," Stanislaw Krajewski explains the difficulties in determining the size of Poland's Jewish population today. He rejects the usual figure of five to ten thousand because of the presence of "marginal Jews," Jews who may have assimilated, intermarried, or simply hidden their existence as Jews after the war. Because many of these individuals are renewing their acquaintance with the Jewish community in Poland's newly open society, the exact size of the Jewish community is, in Krajewski's opinion, impossible to determine. Krajewski describes a process of deassimilation, which, he explains, is not necessarily the same thing as de-Polonization (p. 302). Krajewski describes well the fear among Polish Jews in the postwar period, the extent of Jewish participation in Poland's Communist elite, and the conditions that have led contemporary Polish Jews to describe themselves as both Polish and Jewish.

While Krajewski describes the general situation of contemporary Polish Jews, Michael Steinlauf and Zvi Gitelman focus on specific aspects of the contemporary relationship that have significant implications for the future. "Teaching about the Holocaust in Poland," Steinlauf's survey of history textbooks for the information they include about the Holocaust, is rather discouraging. Steinlauf notes that some initiatives have been taken to educate both teachers and students about the Holocaust and that it is even possible in a few schools to learn Hebrew. But, ultimately, his reading of history textbooks leads him to conclude that the Jewish fate in Poland has been sorely neglected in favor of a narrative that focuses almost exclusively on Polish victimization. Relying heavily on recent surveys of Polish attitudes toward Jews sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, Gitelman concludes that younger Poles display less negative attitudes than older generations. Gitelman's most surprising conclusions in his essay, "Collective Memory and Contemporary Polish-Jewish Relations," relate to Jewish attitudes toward Poles. Gitelman points out that there is an unfortunate lack of data regarding Jewish attitudes toward Poles or Polish-Americans. Further, he astutely criticizes the study guide of the *March of the Living* for not including sufficient information on the history of Polish Jewry, and for portraying Poland as a country "seething with antisemitism" (p. 286).

The enterprise of studying ethnic relations can at least help us to get the historical record straight. It is less certain that an improvement in the historical record can affect contemporary relations between Jews and Poles, but one can certainly hope that a truer picture of what happened during the war will encourage both groups to consider the experiences of their neighbors more empathetically. Much of the value of this work lies in bringing the arguments of Polish scholars into the discussion in English concerning Polish-Jewish relations. The broadening of the international discussion serves to highlight notable gaps in the historiography that can ultimately help us to understand these complex relationships more precisely. For example, Andrzej Zbikowski rightly laments the lack of a basic study of Polish anti-Semitism that accounts sufficiently for regional differences, especially in the mid to late 1930s. Aware of the need for more research on specific issues, the scholars here make only tentative conclusions.

Reviewing Ringelblum's work, Kassow writes: <blockquote> "These efforts to interest the masses in history also served another purpose: to remind Jews of their ties to their surroundings, to their region, and to their neighbors. Where they lived was 'home.' They were an integral part of the Polish landscape. They belonged as much as the Poles. By the same token they could not know themselves if they failed to study their relations with their non-Jewish neighbors" (p. 143).</blockquote>

Ringelblum's sense of the interconnectedness between Poles and Jews is precisely what was lost in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The idea that Jews were an integral part of Polish history is part of what Jan T. Gross, in his publication of *Neighbors*, has contributed to the international debate begun in the 1980s. This idea reflects a reality that makes both Poles and Jews uncomfortable. The authors included in this volume explore that reality carefully and responsibly, and they suggest that, quite possibly, Poles and Jews may eventually be able to reconcile their differences.

Notes

[1]. Jan T. Gross, *Sadziezi: historia zaglady zydowskiego miasteczka* (Sejny: Pogranicze, 2000); published in English as *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jew-*

ish Community in Jedwabne, Poland (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, eds. Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[2]. Many of the essays collected here were first presented at a conference sponsored by Yeshiva University in 2000, though some were first presented or published elsewhere.

[3]. The camps Zimmerman describes reflect the terms used by Ezra Mendelsohn, "Jewish camp" and "Polish camp," in his article "Interwar Poland: Good for the Jews or Bad for the Jews?" in *The Jews in Poland*, eds. Chimen Abramsky, Maciej Jachimczyk, and Antony Polonsky (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

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