

The State of the Research on the Holocaust in Częstochowa

Wiesław Paszkowski

Even before the end of WWII and certainly in its immediate wake, the Jewish participants of the Holocaust tragedy tried to record and study the history of the Jewish community in our town. Testimonies, memoirs, articles were abundant. Soon monographs followed. During the first post-war decade about a hundred of them, of various scope, were published in Poland and abroad. After that time the emotions subsided and despite some new accounts being written down, nobody was interested in publishing them, neither did anyone venture to bring the entire material together and draw up an overall history of the period. The research has obviously regressed recently.

But time and people have not stopped in their destructive doings. Some documents have been dispersed and probably irretrievably lost. The topography of the Jewish part of town has also been blurred: more houses in the large and small ghettos area are being pulled down, a shopping center has shielded the foundations of the old synagogue, the burn-out structure of the new synagogue has been rebuilt to house Częstochowa Concert Hall, the cemetery on Olsztyńska Street has been devastated, memorial tomb plates were stolen, inscriptions on *matzevahs* wore away. Quite recently Częstochowa Warta station, the departure place for the transports to the Treblinka killing center in September and October 1942, station has been completely demolished.

Let me recall the sequence of events concerning Jews during the German occupation of Częstochowa.

The first corps of the 10th German Army under the command of General von Reichenau entered Częstochowa in the morning of September 3, 1939. The series of German crimes started the very next day. The first blow was aimed at the Polish population, as most victims of the bloody Monday of September 4 and the following days were Polish. Jews were humiliated and exploited, while the occupant tried to persuade them that submissiveness would guarantee survival. The bloody AB action that resulted in the extermination of a major group of Polish intelligentsia, did not involve Jews, who were, on the other hand, plundered and robbed of their possessions. A history of each community took a different course. On "Polish" streets people were hunted and captured to be sent to Germany proper as forced laborers, Jews were allowed to "decide" who would go to forced labor camps. Even the most ominous camps in the Lublin region were supposedly short term labor camps, to which people would go for a month or three months. There was a possibility to buy oneself out of forced labor by paying some poor Jew to act as replacement. The Germans set up the pretense of Jewish self-autonomy. When the Jewish population was imprisoned in the ghetto, German soldiers were, at the request of the Council of Elders (Judenrat), forbidden to enter the Jewish quarter. Now the Jews had "their" representation and "their" police force. The ghetto seemed to be a relatively safe place. The beginning of the great deportation in the morning of September 22, 1942, was a terrible shock to Częstochowa Jews. Every three days the death transports would leave headed for Treblinka. Murderous selections of people doomed to die and looting of Jewish possessions never stopped in the streets of the ghetto. The only survivors of the 50,000 strong ghetto population were 5,000 "legalized" camp prisoners and about 1,500 people in hiding, who would not stand a chance in the open: children and

the elderly. These people lost their close ones, were robbed on entire property and confined in the camp.

In these circumstances armed resistance emerged in the form of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB), which was soon 300 people strong. Human lives and enormous effort and work, it took to get organized, were to a certain degree wasted by premature attempts at armed defense on January 4, 1943 and the following days, as well as by the headquarters' disregard of the need for secrecy in clandestine work. The crushing of ŻOB on June 25, 1943 marked the end of the small ghetto. The Germans seized all the arms, killed those who tried to fight back, and then proceeded systematically with the liquidation of the small ghetto. About 1,500 people were murdered on the spot, and the remaining 4,000 were imprisoned in the high-security camp at HASAG Pelttery. Other camps were soon set up at Rakow steelworks, Czestochowianka, and Warta factories. Their inmates were prevailingly out of town, brought from other places than Czestochowa. In December 1944 the SS took over the HASAG camps. In mid-January 1945 a hurried evacuation of prisoners started, yet 5,200 Jews stayed long enough to be liberated by the Soviet army.

The first Jewish history of German occupation of Czestochowa was written there, at the registration and Statistics Dept. of the Judenrat, as early as 1942. Its initiator was probably the supreme Chief of the Judenrat organization, Szymon Pohorille, a lawyer. The work on *Rocznik statystyczny za rok 1940* [The 1940 statistical yearbook]¹ was continued almost up to the time of great deportation. The chairman Leon Kopinski handed the copies of three completed volumes to the mayor of Czestochowa, Stanislaw Rybicki, practically on the eve of the deportation in September 1942. He must have had their preservation in mind.

Authors of some publications have already used the data from *Rocznik*, but as a whole it is still waiting for a thorough study and perhaps a print edition. It is the only such document produced in Poland (although the original starting material, namely graphic charts of statistical data, were also drafted in some departments of Lodz Judenrat and preserved at its archives). The Judenrat leaders must have sought rationalizations for their activity by having such charts drawn up as a historical evidence. They believed the law of large numbers would prove them right, once the number of survivors exceeds the number of victims. The material might help in objective evaluation of the Judenrat role. Still, it calls for further study, as many facts could not be stated openly under German rule and their presentations were veiled in charts, tables, and figures.

When the war ended, commissions investigating Nazi war crimes in Poland set to work. The investigators gathered chiefly documents, since the Allies assumed them to be the most powerful evidence in the Nuremberg trials they were preparing. Still, their practical goal, that was judging war criminals, did not require extensive studies. Thus it were mainly the historical commissions of the Central Committee of Polish Jews who were recording witnesses' testimonies, sometimes without enough diligence. Many accounts held at the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute are just brief summaries of

¹ *Rocznik statystyczny za rok 1940* consists of three thick volumes (and the fourth, unfinished, one) with many charts, tables, and figures, presently at the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. These were copied from the original, which was beautifully bound and whose photographs were published after the war. The original could have survived the Holocaust and be at present somewhere in America.

interviews with the survivors. Testimonies written down by their authors are rare, but generally many such accounts were somehow recorded. At least a hundred is at least partly connected with Częstochowa. Subsequent volumes of the inventory of testimonies have been published by ŻIH. The collection of testimonies has not been a subject of scholarly study yet. Several extensive Częstochowa-based memoirs were written, but only the memories of Ita Diamant, written during the war, were published after many decades under the title *Moja cząstka życia*².

Some personal accounts were also printed in press or in anthologies. Deep emotional involvement of the authors of early reports resulted in their painstaking accuracy. The horror of atrocities called for high standards of narration. The forced silence during the war years made people appreciate the newly regained right to tell their stories. Still, more extensive studies were produced by larger groups of Częstochowa survivors or at centers already capable of editing such works.

The American Jewish community was the first to do it. The United Committee of Częstochowa Jews in New York was working on a volume of materials on the history of Jewish Częstochowa even before WWII. In 1942 the book *Czenstochov* was ready to be printed. Then the editors lost contact with our city and decided to suspend the publication. The early escapees brought the news of the tragedy to Palestine and the U.S., but then the Allies imposed information blockade. Besides, many found the reports on the destruction hard to believe. They were assumed to be exaggerated. It was only the end of the war that provided plenty of material evidence of the crimes, the information blockade was raised and all the survivors could use their relative freedom of speech.

The book was finally revised and published in 1947 under the title *Czenstochover Yidn*³. The monumental volume was expanded with a major section on the destruction of Jewish Częstochowa *Churbn Czenstochov*⁴. It includes materials of great historical value, mainly memories of participants of these tragic events. Some documents were also reprinted, though unfortunately in some cases important editorial elements, like dates, are missing. No information is provided on their whereabouts and their originals are now unavailable. Thus the book is the only source of information it contains. One of the essential documents is the report written down (probably just after the war ended) by four Częstochowa Bundists and concerning the history of Jewish resistance in town. The text is known only in the form it was published in this book.

Prior to liberation many Częstochowa Jews found themselves in Germany proper. The chief of a cultural committee of Centralverwaltung fun Czenstochover Landsmanschaft in Amerikaner Zone in Daychland [Central Board of the Association of Czestochovers in the American Zone in Germany] was Benjamin Orenstein. Though not a Czestochover by birth, he was imprisoned there in the ghetto and a camp, evacuated to Germany, liberated, and placed in a DP camp. He collected testimonies from former inmates.

Benjamin Orenstein's *Churbn Czenstokov*⁵ is a bulky book and half of its 500 pages are devoted to the Holocaust period. The author drew from his own experiences and observations, but also from numerous relations of former Czestochovers. He also made use of some original documents. In his review of Orenstein's book Dr. Wolf

² I. Dimant *Moja cząstka życia*, Warszawa 2001.

³ *Czenstochover Yidn*, red. R. Mahler, New York 1947.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 187-254.

⁵ B. Orenstein, *Churbn Czenstochow* [The Destruction of Czenstochov], 1948.

Gliksman⁶ pointed out some major mistakes. Orenstein wrote that the ghetto was established in Częstochowa in April 1940, while it happened a year later, that the Judenrat was nominated by the Gestapo etc. Gliksman concluded that the significance of Orenstein's book declined, especially with the publication of Liber Brener's work, which outshined its predecessor.

Another major center of study and documentation was the Association of Polish Jews in Argentine. The 43rd volume in the Polish Jewry series published in Buenos Aires was another major book on the Holocaust in Częstochowa. It appeared in 1949 and was also entitled *Churbn Czenstochov*⁷. The author, Salomon Waga, based it entirely on his own recollections and the narrative discontinued after March 1943 and the infamous Palestine action in which members of the Council of Elders (Judenrat) were murdered with their families and many educated Jews, mainly physicians with their families. Waga's detailed and heartrending story won recognition of the Jewish historian Gliksman, who found it valuable. Given the lack of any documents Waga's testimony is meaningful as a historical source.

In Częstochowa itself the most active milieu of survivors was the group of the Bund members sharing their former involvement in the resistance movement. It included many strong personalities, to mention only Motek Kusznir, famous for his bravery. Yet it was Liber Brener, who proved to be the most productive author, at the time assuming the proportions of the chief representative of Częstochowa Jews, first as the chairman of the District Jewish Committee in Częstochowa, and then a member of the Central Committee of the Bund, to be finally included in the commission for the liquidation of Jewish parties after 1948. His studies were published in the New York book on Częstochowa Jews, but he wrote also for the Częstochowa press and *Glos Bundu*.

In pre-war times Liber Brener taught at Jewish Yiddish schools. He was born in 1907 in Turzyn (Volynhya). The town was a hasidic center with the court of Turzyn Tzaddik. Brener broke with his family religious tradition, graduated from a teachers seminar and set to organize and administer secular school with Yiddish as the language of instruction first in Volynhya and then in the Lublin region. In Częstochowa he first taught at the Perec school, but lost his teaching license in 1935, due to his wife's, Jadwiga nee Szajn, engagement with the communists (Liber's party, the Bund, was legal). On the eve of the outbreak of WWII Liber was staying near Częstochowa and he spent all the years of the German occupation in town.

Brener contributed to the fact that the Health Society (TOZ) resumed its medical activity in September 1939. His political involvement continued, as he participated in many endeavors as a representative of TOZ and of his party. Throughout the occupation, even as an inmate of the HASAG Peltser camp Brener kept a diary, supplemented later with data quoted from documents. Brener was the first, and so far the last, to make such an extensive use of official German and Jewish sources. Beside holding his formal posts he produced and published many texts in Yiddish and Polish. His major work was a substantial monograph *Umkum un vidershtand in czenstochover geto*⁸ published in 1951

⁶ W. Gliksman, *Notitsn un retsenzjes*, [in:] *Czenstochov. Naye tsugob-material cum buch „Czenstochower Yidn”*, ed. by Sz. D. Zinger, New York 1958, pp. 205-206.

⁷ Sz. Waga, *Churbn Czenstochov*, Buenos Aires 1949.

⁸ L. Brener, *Umkum un vidershtand in czenstochower geto* [Destruction and resistance of the Częstochowa ghetto], Warszawa 1951.

by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. With the March 1968 campaign Brener was forced to leave Poland and emigrate to Israel, where he died in the 1980s.

The strong points of Brener's study are his extensive use of documents, variety of topics discussed, and authenticity of description indicating an eye-witness account. As a resistance member, editor of a satirical underground journal (*Rasta*), and a social leader, Brener had an excellent grasp of the occupation time reality. As the ghetto chronicler he was from the very beginning information oriented, and ready to collect documents at a later stage. Despite having no formal historian's education he did very well. His book is arranged chronologically though problem-focused. Without disturbing the sequence of events Brener discussed main spheres of Jewish life in separate chapters. He brought many otherwise unrecorded facts to our attention. His work has been treated as a historical monograph ever since, even if Brener, aware of some deficiencies of his work, disclaimed giving it such a status in his preface.

His narrative is, however, erratic. The author sometimes strays from the manner of detached scholarly account to make his text more of a literary recollection. Some of the events are described without proper time-setting. His typical faults are categorical arbitrary judgments, which make him sometimes ignore the facts. In later discussions Brener was denounced for politically motivated falsehoods, such as diminishing the role of activists of non-leftist orientation. The book, published at the height of Stalinist era, had to follow the pattern of the then propaganda. The author might have been sincere in his adherence to the obligatory views, but some of his concessions to the propaganda style disqualify several portions of his text. Presently Brener's judgments need to be verified anew. Still, hardly any other monograph of the Holocaust in Częstochowa has been published for over 50 years.

A 1955 issue of the scholarly journal of the Jewish Historical Institute includes an important text by Adam Rutkowski: *Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim*⁹. Despite its undoubtedly scholarly manner, Rutkowski's study hardly contains any new material on Częstochowa.

In 1958 the New York milieu produced a supplement to their 1947 publication on Częstochowa Jews under the title *Czenstochov*¹⁰. The part on the war destruction is 40 large page long, which is not much anyway. Still, it includes the following noteworthy pieces: Dr. Benjamin Orenstein's *Jews of Częstochowa under Nazi rule* with a balance sheet of the number of victims and survivors; memories of Salomon Waga *Dos blut fun di umgekumene shrayt fun erd* [Blood of the murdered calls from the soil] on the situation at the craftsmen's house and in the small ghetto, as well as on the burials on Kawia Street; Abraham Bomba's *Moja ucieczka z Treblinki*; B. Orenstein's *Czenstochova folklore under nazi rule*. This part of the book was concluded with the precious and rare annotated bibliography *Umkum un viedershtand fun czenstochover yidn in der tsayt natsisher okupatsye* [Destruction and resistance of Częstochowa Jews under Nazi occupation].

Two volumes of *Sefer Czenstochowa* were published in Jerusalem in 1967 and 1968.¹¹ A valuable contribution is Wolf Gliksman's article *Daily Record Sheet in the*

⁹ A. Rutkowski, „Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim”, *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 1955.

¹⁰ *Czenstochov. Naye tsugob-material tsum buch „Czenstochover Yidn”*, ed. by Sz. D. Zinger, New York 1958.

¹¹ The present author failed to reach the study nor any reviews.

*Czenstochowa Ghetto 1941-1942*¹². The author analyzed the daily records of the Jewish auxiliary police. Liber Brener did also use and discuss this source, but not thoroughly enough to match Gliksman's monograph.

Another history of Cześćochowa Jews was published in Tel Aviv in 2000: *Tholedet Yehudi Czenstochova*¹³ written in Hebrew by Wila Orbach. The war time is discussed in part 3, which is 55 pages (out of total of 160 pages), thus making it the least extensive of the studies on the subject.

Except for the concluding bibliography, the author did not consider putting any notes to the text necessary, and in fact just summarized, not flawlessly either, the books of Jan Pietrzykowski and Liber Brener. Her bibliography is rather a recommended reading list. The author did not seem to have studied the originals of the statistical yearbook drafted at the Elders' Council herself, otherwise she would have known that its segments are registered at the ZIH Archives as *Wydział administracyjny* [Administrative Dept.], whereas the volume she refers to as statistical yearbook II, is in fact the unfinished fourth volume of the yearbook.

Some dates are incorrect, e.g., the deadline for Jews to move into the ghetto and for non-Jews to leave the area was not April 23rd, 1941, but April 17th. The active participation of General Dr. Hermann Boettcher, the Radom district police commander, and his staff, in the first deportation on September 22, 1941, has been ignored in Orbach's account of the action. The omission resulted in the overrating the role of Hauptmann Degenhardt, the commanding officer of local Schutzpolizei.

Wila Orbach's book may certainly help make the subject more popular in Israel, but it cannot be regarded as a scholarly work and from a researcher's perspective is a step backwards.

As for Polish studies, I will start with the most noteworthy memories of Stanislaw Rybicki¹⁴, the war time mayor of Cześćochowa. A municipality official before the war, Rybicki was nominated to the post by the German administration and faced the tricky task of fulfilling the German ordinances to the least detriment, or even occasionally to some advantage, of Cześćochowa inhabitants. Stanislaw Rybicki was a member of military resistance movement, even though his duties left him no time to actually pursue clandestine activity. Nevertheless, his relationships with the underground, with the Catholic church, and social leaders provided him support and guidance in his office. By frequent contacts he came to know German officials well, and his recollections are a valuable source of information on the interaction in the occupied Cześćochowa and on the workings of the German apparatus.

Rybicki's duties included being in touch with the delegates of the Council of Elders, its chairman Leon Kopinski, a former town councilor, with Dr. Szymon Pohorille, the lawyer, and with a former bank director in Cześćochowa, Prusicki. Their dealings would not, unfortunately, go beyond issuing passes to leave the ghetto, provisions for the ghetto (especially turning a blind eye to the inflated number of food rations distributed in the ghetto), or similar administrative matters. No broader cooperation was ever arranged and for that Rybicki blamed the Judenrat's separatist policy, which he did not approve,

¹² W. Gliksman, „Daily Record Sheet in the Czenstochowa Ghetto 1941-1942”, *Yad Vashem Studies*, no. V, Jerusalem 1967, pp. 331-357.

¹³ W. Orbach, *Tholedet Yehudi Czenstochova* [History of Cześćochowa Jews], Tel Aviv 2000. By the courtesy of Dr. Jerzy Mizgalski I could use a typewritten copy of the English version of this book.

¹⁴ S. Rybicki, *Pod znakiem lwa i kruka. Fragmenty wspomnień z lat okupacji*, 2nd exp. ed., Warszawa 1990.

but could not counteract it without provoking German intervention to the obvious damage to both Jewish and Polish communities.

Mayor Rybicki used to meet with Dr. Adam Wolberg, a regular officer of the Polish army before the war, who during the occupation headed TOZ and acted as the military commandant of underground resistance set up by the Bund and Poale-Zion Left groups. Wolberg was also a social leader and an author of a satirical illegal journal ridiculing and contesting the Judenrat. Yet he hoped Rybicki would use his acquaintance of German officials to persuade them to change the makeup of the Judenrat to the advantage of Jewish population. Such actions run counter to the prevailing strategy of Polish society under German occupation.

In his study Rybicki expounded the difficulties that prevented any joint Polish-Jewish initiatives.

The most important Polish study of the Holocaust in Częstochowa was produced by Jan Pietrzykowski¹⁵. A lawyer by profession, Pietrzykowski was a member of Polish resistance movement and after the war joined the staff of the High Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland. He also testified at the trials of German war criminals. In his numerous studies on the German occupation of Częstochowa he dwelt also on the history of Jewish community there. Still, the quantity would not translate into quality, in time both the issues and the materials used started to recur. Pietrzykowski's best presentation of the problems which interest us, was in his book *Cień swastyki nad Jasną Górą* [Jasna Góra in the shadow of swastika]. Jews of Częstochowa were the main focus of his unpublished study *Gwiazda Dawida*¹⁶, whose typescript is illustrated with archival and documentary photographs. Unfortunately it is evidently Pietrzykowski's least satisfactory work, overburdened with lofty pathos and pointless verbosity, while not grounded sufficiently in facts, marred by major errors.

The strong point of Pietrzykowski's works is his comprehensive perspective of the resistance and martyrology. His historian's competence is also indisputable: the reference notes in his books point precisely and directly to the source of information. But again, in some cases Pietrzykowski failed to give any details of his sources, being probably German documents in his private collection.

German research can prove very revealing. The Justiz und NS-Verbrechen, Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile book series (partly accessible on the Web), published by K.G. Saur Verlag in München and by Amsterdam University Press, included in volume XXIII the text of a sentence passed on Hauptmann Schutzpolizei Paul Degenhardt, who was in charge of the liquidation of the Częstochowa ghetto¹⁷. The efforts of the bench resulted in the sentence being more of a historical study on the Holocaust in Częstochowa, including even a separate section on the historical context of the defendant's actions. The extensive judicial opinion with fragments of witnesses' testimonies is a very valuable source of Jewish history.

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These studies are well known, therefore I will mention only the major ones: Jan Pierzykowski, *Hitlerowcy w Częstochowie w latach 1939-1945*, Poznań 1959; *Hitlerowcy przed sądem w Częstochowie*, Katowice 1964; *Hitlerowcy w powiecie częstochowskim 1939-1945*, Katowice 1972; *Cień swastyki nad jasną Górą. Częstochowa w okresie hitlerowskiej okupacji 1939-1945*, Katowice 1985; chapter *Getto w Częstochowie*, s. 162-187.

¹⁶ Typewritten copy in the Regional Information collection at the W. Biegański City Library in Częstochowa.

¹⁷ *Der „Vater der Juden“ und die Morde im Ghetto von Tschenschostchau*, „Justiz und NS-Verbrechen, t. XXIII, LFD. Nr 631; a shortened version of the sentence is available at: www1.jur.uva.nl/Excerpts/63100.htm.

On the Web there are some other reports of the trials of Nazi German war criminals active in Częstochowa.

The weak point of the above studies is their focus on events. Liber Brener alone used the data from *Rocznik Statystyczny* to describe also the demographic situation, to write about the economic condition of Jews and their social work, etc. Even the most traditional field of biography was pursued solely by the New York milieu (consistently in both volumes). To his book Brener attached just the list of murdered physicians and dentists from Częstochowa.

Jewish authors did not for the most part concern themselves with German perpetrators nor the working of the German administration and government. Not much did they write about the Polish majority, either. Their main interest in this respect were Polish-Jewish relations from the perspective of settling historical accounts.

No studies have been accomplished yet on the Częstochowa activity of Żegota, the Rescue Council for Jews, nor in more general terms, on Polish help to the Jews. Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna published the testimonies they gathered in both the 1960s editions of their book *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej* [English edition: *Righteous Among Nations: How Poles Helped the Jews*], but no systematic research was carried out then. In 1982 Teresa Prekerowa in her work on *Żegota*¹⁸ was still using the 1969 materials. The situation has not changed ever since, even if there is still a slim chance to obtain new testimonies. The major obstacle in the Holocaust research is its irregularity. More and more information has been recently available on the Web concerning new accounts being recorded at some research centers in the U.S. or even Australia. Sample texts published on the internet do not inspire much hope, to mention only very extensive testimony of Leo Scherr. The authors, writing for readers ignorant of the war time reality or even European reality in general, make use of gross oversimplifications. Time has blurred the details in the memory of witnesses, while the post-war history inflicted anachronistic perspective. The number of people with Yiddish skills (including Jewish historians, Israeli in particular) is decreasing, while many accounts were written in this language.

Jewish history has for a long time been a separate field of study, though it is pointless to blame ideology or Polish reservations, despite such voices being heard even during the present seminar. The actual reason for this is the need to specialize. It was only natural for Jewish historians to pursue such studies, which required the fluency in Yiddish and Hebrew, both posing problems for Polish scholars. Jewish historians were also assumed to be more objective. As we see it now, comprehensive research is a necessity. Jewish scholars need to make good use of Polish history avoiding simplifications, while Polish ones should strive to acquire necessary language skills and general orientation in Jewish-related subjects.

We have been missing a center focused on the continuity of research, on gathering all available materials and working on them. This is not easy to achieve, as the only center with adequately qualified staff and sources in Poland is the Jewish Historical Institute. Still, as the only one in Poland, it will probably not specialize in regional studies. Thus the chain of research is devoid of the major link.

It seems that the only answer is to resume earlier research, draw up professional inventories of source materials, and pursue comprehensive studies.

¹⁸ T. Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 230-234.

Non-Jewish scholars were disinclined to enter this territory, unless encouraged by a friendly translator and educator. This was the role of the lawyer Alfred Kromolowski by the side of Jan Pietrzykowski. Yet recently Judaic studies have been increasingly present in Polish universities and the number of Polish scholars focused on Jewish history has been rising. Our city needs to get back the Jewish chapter of its history through integrally pursued research.