

THE IVANSK PROJECT e-NEWSLETTER

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The Ivansk Project Temporary Web Address

<http://www.ivansk.thirdeyview.net/>

Hinda's Story

by Mona Brown

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

[In 1988, when my mother-in-law was 94 years old, her son, Leo (my husband) and I finally persuaded her to allow us to record her memories of growing up in Ivansk. Hinda had been reluctant to speak about the past; so before she had a chance to change her mind, we inserted a new tape into our little tape recorder, picked up our cups of tea and carefully nibbled on the cookies she had baked that day. We made certain that we didn't drop any of her cookies on our toes as they were likely to cause irreversible injury.]

The interview was conducted in Yiddish. I have transcribed Hinda's testimony into English and have set down some of the memories of her life in Ivansk at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. I have inserted editorial comments to enlarge or to clarify Hinda's statements; these are italicized within square [] brackets.

Hinda Saltzman Brown was born in Ivansk in 1894, one of three children of Shaindl (Singer) and Leibish Pesach Saltzman...all were born in Ivansk. Her brothers "Loozer" (Lazer) and Mendl were born before her, and her brother Baer was the youngest in the family.

We began asking Hinda about her family, how they lived, and what they grew on their farm.]

Q: What did your father do for a living?

Hinda: He was a farmer. He grew oats, wheat, potatoes, cabbages, corn, and carrots. We sold them at the market in the middle of town once a week to the local peasants. We all worked hard – my brothers in the fields with my father, and my mother and me sewing aprons and men's shirts to sell. We had a stand at the roadside where we sold our vegetables, too.

Q: So you didn't go hungry because you grew food, but how did you store it, and how did you prepare for the winter?

Hinda: We dried apples, plums and pears, and stored them in the *boidem* [attic], and the vegetables we put in a hole in the ground outside our house. We kept geese in a coup on the roof, and we killed them for special holidays, and used their feathers for pillows and quilts. They were very warm – not like the stuff you buy here!

Q: What special holidays did you celebrate? How did you spend the holidays?

Hinda: Shabbos was Shabbos. Sometimes we had fish, or we bought a chicken from the farmers and had the *shoichet* slaughter them. We made *cholent* on Friday and took it to the baker to cook in his oven overnight. Sometimes we were hungry, but we managed.

The best holiday, though, was Purim. For Purim the baker made *challah* with raisins, the children all got *shelachmones* [gifts exchanged by friends and neighbors on Purim] of candy, cookies, and a few *groshen* [pennies], and *klezmerim* [Jewish musicians] came to town. At the *Shul*, everybody got together to sing and dance, and even had a *l' Chayim* [To life!].

Q: So you had a Shul. Did the kids go to Cheder there?

Hinda: Sure. Not just the boys. The boys learned in the Shul, and the girls also learned in the *Bet Midrash [study hall]* next door. The girls didn't learn as much as the boys, but we learned how to *daven* and to read the *Chumash [the five books of the Torah]*. Of course, everybody learned Yiddish too. We could read and write.

Q: Your father was a farmer. Did he own his own land? What about the other Jews in the Shtetl – what did they do?

Hinda: My father loved his *felder [fields]*, but I don't know if he owned them. There were not many Jews, but people tried to make a living.

My grandfather was a *felcher [barber/surgeon]*, and others were tailors, tinsmiths, woodworkers, peddlers.

My *Yeukl* was also an Ivansker and a scholar, a *Talmud Chochim*, who studied to become a Rabbi. [*Yeukel, (Jacob Brown; in Poland the family's surname was "Brauner") became Hinda's husband. He attended the yeshiva in Ostrowiec but abandoned his studies during WWI to earn money to help support his parents.*]

Q: It was not an easy life. People worked hard, and suffered deprivations. Was there anti-Semitism?

Hinda: When the bell rang in the church steeple at Easter, we knew a pogrom was coming. My mother hid me among the dried fruit in the attic, and people hid whatever and wherever they could.¹

Q: Besides that, the First World War started. What happened during that time?

Hinda: Before the United States came into the War, relatives from America sent parcels of food and clothing, but when they came into the War, that stopped, and we were often hungry.

Pa [*Yeukl Brown*] made a violin out of scraps of wood, and sold it to people in another town. [*Yeukel had many talents. How he learned to make violins is not known, but it helped support his family during WWI.*]

People did what they could. Mama and I made pickles out of the cucumbers we grew, and mixed the pickle juice with water to make a drink. It was good. We sold it to the peasants in the market place. Now you would drink it with ice cubes. [*This drink sounds as if it would be best taken before undergoing colonoscopy.*]

Q: Did people start to leave after the War? Where did they go?

Hinda: Yeah, people left. When we decided to leave, we got married, but first we had to have "*Tnoim*", a formal engagement. I had to have a hat, so I went to Warsaw on the train to get a hat. Not many girls had this chance; so after I wore the hat at our party, all the young

¹ [*In the 1960s Hinda's grandson, Jeff Brown, visited Ivansk. Upon returning home, Jeff showed slides of the shtetl to the family. That night Hinda had terrible nightmares the focal point of which was the church steeple and its clanging bell. Hinda referred to the church as "The Tuma", The Impure.*]

brides in town borrowed it! [*Hinda was 25 and Yeukel was 24 years old when they married. We don't know if it was an arranged marriage nor do we know anything about the wedding celebration.*]

You want to know where people went? They went where they had somebody who could help them.

My brother Mendl went to Chicago, where his wife had relatives; my brother Loozer went to New York, and Pa [Yeukel] came to Toronto, where some of his family had already settled.

Q: How long did Pa stay here on his own before you arrived?

Hinda: Your Pa came to Toronto in 1920, soon after we got married. He joined his parents, the Bubba (Riva Yehidas Teperman) and the Zaida (Abish Brown), and all the other brothers and sisters who were already here.

Pa's sister, Hinda Gittl [*Gladys*] and I came about a year later from Ivansk. We sailed from Danzig on the S.S. Grampion and landed in Halifax. Soon, I became pregnant with your sister Soorah [*Shirley Raskin*].

Pa got a job in a mattress factory and also started to learn how to do watchmaking.

My father came to Toronto soon after, to see if he wanted to come here too. But he missed his "*felder*", and decided to go back.

My brother Baer tried to find a way to come with his wife and two small children, but nobody could get the money together. It was 1922, people were trying to start a new life, and we couldn't get enough money together.

My father died before the War, and my mother, brother, his wife and two children were murdered, probably at Treblinka, where most of the Jews of Ivansk were sent by the Germans.

Q: Soorah [*Shirley*] was your first child, and Leo was born three years later. What was Pa doing then?

Hinda: He opened a jewelry store on College Street [*310 College St between Robert and Major in Toronto*], and we lived upstairs. The name was "Brown's Credit Jewelers", and people bought their wedding and engagement rings and Bar Mitzvah presents there.

Q: Your life revolved around the children, the store, and Pa's family. Everybody lived nearby. Did all Pa's family live in Toronto?

Hinda: After she got married only Hinda Gittl [*Gladys*] left and moved to Detroit.

Pa's sister Faiga was married to Yankel Dovid Freedman and they had three children, Lil, Bernie, and Jean; his brother Joe married Lena Solursh, and they had three children, Helen, Beatrice and Gilda; his brother Sam married Bella Ruback and they had two children, Leo and Geetie; and his sister Bessie married Bennie Wolfish, and they had one daughter, Joyce.

Q: So you always talk about how good life was in Ivansk. We haven't heard anything to make us feel that.

Hinda: Sure, some things were not so good, but the food tasted fresh and good, life was simple, and in spite of hard work, we had good times. We had community. We had *Yiddishkeit*. Families stuck together. We worked hard here, too, but at least we were able to raise and educate our children without fear.

Q: Did the family get together often?

Hinda: Sure. Every Sunday and every holiday the family came together at the Bubba Yehidas' house, even after the Zaida Abish died. Auntie Bessie and Uncle Bennie and their daughter Joyce lived at the Bubba's house, and everybody else came.

On holidays, Gladys came from Detroit, too. There was lots of food, and all the cousins played together.

Q: What kind of special food did you have on Sundays at the Bubba's.

Hinda: Auntie Bessie made delicious puddings, apple cake and honey cake.

When Gladys came she made cherry cake. The Bubba made *shteffen* [*a special treat which was usually made for Purim*] from cooked beets wrapped in pastry and soaked in honey.

Q: The Zaida died when he was 79 years old. How long after that did the Bubba die?

Hinda: Maybe three or four years.

After the Bubba died, the family didn't get together so much any more.

Q: Well, here you are at age 94, *kein ein hora*, and you have children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren and you've maintained your independence. That's a great accomplishment.

Hinda: Yeah. *Nu, es is gefindished?* (Is the interview over?)

Epilogue:

[This was the last time we were able to ask Hinda questions about her early life in Ivansk.

After her death at age 96, two years after this interview, we tried to find more information about Hinda and Yeukel's early life in Toronto (Yeukel died in 1974), but by then there were no family members left who were able to communicate this kind of information.

Like so many immigrant families of that time between the wars, their lives centred around family, community, work and religious practice. They didn't share a lot of information with their children, and we were deprived of a history that had meaning for us.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to share this bit of history with Hinda, and hope that others will have the opportunity of sharing the past with those with whom they share the present.]



The Brown Family, Toronto, 1927

(Left to Right: All members born in Ivansk unless indicated otherwise)

Top Row:

Gladys (*Hinda Gittl*); **Bessie** (*Pessl*);
Joe (*Yossl*); baby **Helen** (b. Toronto, daughter of Joe and Lena);
Lena (*Solursh*) Brown (b. Staszow);
Bella (*Ruback*) Brown (b. Switzerland); **Sam** (*Gavriel*)

Middle Row:

Yankl Dovid Friedman (holding his daughter, **Jean** (*Sheindle*) b. Toronto);
Faiga (*Brown*) Friedman; **Abish** Brown (b. Bogoria);
Riva Yehidas (*Teperman*) Brown;
Yeukel (*Yakov Dovid*; holding his son, **Leo**, b. Toronto);
Hinda *Layah* (*Saltzman*) Brown

Bottom Row:

Bernie Friedman (*Boruch*, son of Faiga and Yankl Dovid, b. Toronto);
Lil (*Dena Layah* Friedman (daughter of Faiga and Yankl Dovid);
Shirley (*Soorah*) Brown, daughter of Hinda and Yeukel, b. Toronto)

SPLIT FINGERS

by **Bobby Rotenberg**

Toronto, Canada

My first morning in Poland.

Fighting jet lag, the disorientation of staying at an elegant hotel in, of all places, Warsaw, and just the strangeness of being in this country, I join our newly-assembled group as we pile onto a luxury tour bus that is to be our second home for the next eight days. The first stop is the Jewish Warsaw Cemetery. I haven't even been in Poland for 24 hours, and here I am in a place where Jews are buried.



Boldly located right in the middle of the city, high-walled beside the busy Okopowa Street, the graveyard is enormous. A shocking 33 hectares. Think 15 football fields. With more than 250,000 graves and tombs in 100 different sections, the most remarkable thing is that, in a city where every other sign of Jewish life has been systematically destroyed, this vast graveyard is largely untouched. Like some oversized time capsule from a long lost civilization.

As we enter the high white gate and wash our hands in the ritual water, our talkative Polish tour guide tells us that this well-preserved cemetery is a rare exception in this country. Before the war there were an estimated 1,200 Jewish cemeteries throughout Poland. The Nazis – and after the war the Poles - systematically plundered almost all of them, using the flat headstones for road building or house foundations.

There seem to be two explanations for this morbid historic fact.

The first theory has to do with the nature of the headstones in the Warsaw Cemetery. Elsewhere in the country most Jewish communities were rural, less sophisticated. Their more prosaic nature was reflected in the simple stone slabs that dotted their modest graveyards. For the Nazis and Poles, these were easy to rip out and use as construction material. But the Warsaw Cemetery reflects the tremendous prosperity of the city's Jewish community, which before the war numbered more than 300,000 people – about a quarter of the population of the city. Hence the tombstones are ornate. Not great construction material.

The second, more chilling theory, is that the Germans simply didn't get around to it. Killing live Jews was a higher priority than desecrating the tombs of the dead.

I try to imagine New York without African Americans or Puerto Ricans. Toronto without Italians or Chinese. The numbers are too large. The scale too immense. The enormity of this cemetery, I realize, should not surprise me.

The entrance way features the tombs of many famous Warsaw Jews. There's the tomb of Dr. Janusz Korczak. A neurologist, but better known as a writer and educator, he established an orphanage for Jewish children in Warsaw. As a physician he could have temporarily avoided deportation. Instead, he chose to accompany and comfort his children as they were taken away to their deaths in Treblinka. A little further in is Dr. Lazaro Zamenhof's grave. He created the international language, Esperanto, in the hope that if people could speak to each other, perhaps they'd stop killing each other.

We keep going. Elaborate headstones reflect the diversity and wealth of the community: prominent Polish musicians, actors, journalists, politicians, union leaders. You name it.

Our group passes a tall black obelisk that's peppered with jagged holes.

"Are those what I think they are?" I ask our talkative tour guide.

"Bullet holes," she says. "Many people hid here." (Later I learn the cemetery was also the scene of many Nazi executions.)



They hid because in 1940 the Germans started moving Jews from all over Poland, and Europe, into the bricked-in Warsaw Ghetto, which became their temporary prison, until they were shipped out for extermination, like the good Dr. Korczak.

As I walk down the long bricked paths I think this place would be a treasure trove for archaeologists. I learn that although the Nazis didn't rip out the Jewish tombstones, they destroyed all the cemetery records. I imagine a whole class of graduate students from some Israeli university setting up a decade-long study program to catalogue it all, and then begging for a ten-year extension on their grants to try to complete the task.

After a few minutes I feel an urge to break away from the crowd and our verbose guide.

Deeper inside the cemetery tombstones are crammed closer together, some are overturned, trees and wild bushes grow everywhere. The further back I go, the wilder it becomes. And darker. The smell of the city gives way to the scent of moulding earth and dense foliage.

Soon I am very much alone.



Amongst the silence of the tombs, I notice a recurring motif carved into the top of some of the headstones: Two hands, the thumbs touching, then the four fingers split down the middle, the pointer and middle finger to one side, the ring and baby finger to the other side, forming a distinctive 'v' shape.

Since I was a child, I've been able to make my fingers split down the middle like this, form a 'v' between my second and third finger. For me it's no

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effort at all, as easy as making a fist. A bit of a parlour-trick perhaps, like my wife who can curl her tongue or my father-in-law who can wiggle his ears. It's always surprised me that other people can't split their fingers this way.

There is Hebrew writing, or course, on the tombstones. Like most of my friends growing up in suburban Toronto, this was a language that was jammed down my throat three days a week at Hebrew School, and which I dropped like a stone the moment I turned 14. And like most of my friends, when my oldest child Peter turned 12, I began to learn it again as he prepared for his Bar Mitzvah.

My Hebrew is still very primitive, but I find I can read a few words. Still I find these split finger carvings perplexing.

Another traveller from our trip wanders by and I wave her over.

"What does this two hand symbol mean," I ask her. "I see it on a lot of the tombstones."

"It's the mark of the Kohain," she says without missing a beat.

The word Kohain hits me in the solar plexus.



Bobby and his Father, circa 1963

My first memory of going to a cemetery is as an eight-year old child. My whole family went together in my father's Buick, but at the cemetery gate my dad hung back, staying on the road outside the grounds and refusing to come in.

"I did that because we're Kohains," he explained to me later as we were driving back home.

"What's a Kohain?" I asked.

"We were the ancient priests. We had special duties to perform in the community and are not allowed to touch the earth in a graveyard. Some people would be upset if I entered it."

"How would they know we're Kohains?" I asked. (Today I make my living as a criminal lawyer, and looking back I realize even then I wasn't a bad cross-examiner.)

"They would just know," he said.

By my father's tone I could tell this was all he had to say on the subject. Clearly I was not going to get any more evidence from this witness. I still remember that drive home, looking out the window of the car and thinking how strange, and yet somehow special, this felt.

My mother, who liked to brag that she was from simple Russian peasant stock, didn't think much of what she considered my father's pretensions to Jewish aristocracy, and slowly but surely his fidelity to such social strictures modified. Through the years, as we went to various family funerals, I would watch him out of the corner of my eye. At first he'd come onto the grounds but stay back on the roadway. Then he'd come up closer to the grave but stay on the nearest concrete path, refusing to touch the earth.

When my mother, his wife of 54 years, died, he stood beside me on the grass by her grave.

(Earlier this morning I've just met for the first time a cousin Ethan Rotenberg, from New York. He's from what I like to call "the religious side" of the Rotenberg family. He, and his brother Josiah, who joins the tour later, look alarmingly similar to me, except, of course, they wear *keepahs*. When our group got off the bus and went into the cemetery, I noticed he stayed outside, a practice he and his brother will continue as we travel throughout Poland, from cemetery to cemetery. When I leave, I see he's waited patiently amongst the assembling busses filled with Israeli school children, the smoggy traffic and the overhanging billboards advertising slick cell phones, sexy lingerie and Coca Cola.)

I go deeper into the cemetery. The path becomes narrower, overgrown. The silence and the stillness whole. A road less taken.

Off the path I see a stone nearly buried to its top. I walk over on the dark earth and bend down. The recurring split hands motif is just barely visible. I rub the mud off the sculpted fingers. The gravestone feels coarse. Rough. Reassuringly solid.

Totally alone now, I say the word "Kohain" out loud and, lifting my hands, I put my thumbs together and split my fingers into a "v."

Effortlessly.



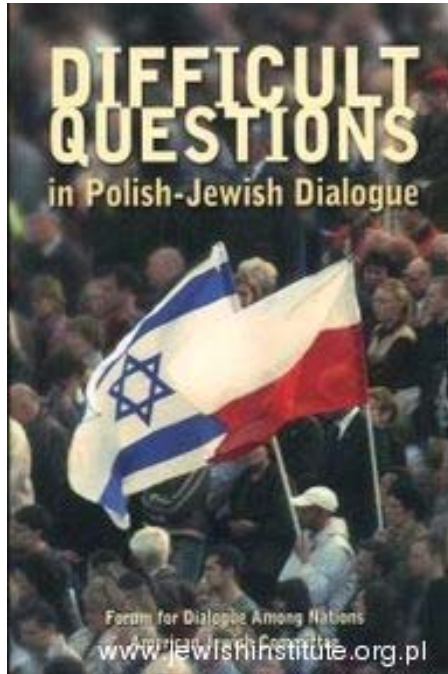
The Rotenbergs in Poland, October 2006
L to R : Ken, Lisa (Newman-Greenspan), Bobby, Ethan and Josiah

Difficult Questions in Polish - Jewish Dialogue

How Poles and Jews See Each Other: A Dialogue on Key Issues in Polish-Jewish Relations.

a book review by **Grzegorz Gregorczyk**

Warsaw, Poland



- Do Poles really "ingest anti-Semitism with their mother's milk"?
- Why is anti-Semitic graffiti still apparent in many Polish towns?
- Is the history of Poland, especially during the WWII, adequately presented to Polish and to Jewish students?
- Will relations between Poles and Jews always be overshadowed by history?

These as well as other crucial questions are considered in "Difficult Questions". The book is published in Polish and in English and will soon appear in Hebrew. It is a collaborative effort of *The Forum for Dialogue Among Nations* (in Poland) and *The American Jewish Committee* (in the USA). It does not provide easy, one-size-fits-all answers. It is guaranteed to make you think. And it certainly helps you to better understand how both nations, living once side by side, see each other and what the future can bring to them. It's basic stuff and an essential purchase even for initiated readers!

Published by:

The Forum for Dialogue Among Nations and The American Jewish Committee. 2006.

\$10.00 (US)

To order English Edition on

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Scroll down to: "AJC STORE"

Click on: "INTERNATIONAL"

Until the fall of communism in Poland the study of Polish-Jewish relations was obscured by state-dictated propaganda. One could hardly think of critically exploring the complexities of these relationships, especially the course of events during and after the World War II. Even after being freed of Russian domination, Poles seemed reticent to objectively tackle these issues. Believe it or not, unlike the Germans who had already agonized over the Holocaust and National Socialism, many Poles, especially the younger generations, knew nothing or very little about the shadows that darkened their history. They were largely ignorant of the behavior of their government and many of their countrymen towards Jews during and after the war. Had it not been for communism, Poles might have gone thru a similar catharsis as the Germans, but the subject remained taboo for decades. All this changed with the revelations of what happened in *Jedwabne*.

Jedwabne was a small Jewish *shtetl*. During the Nazi occupation, and with the encouragement of the German military, Polish townspeople rose up and cruelly murdered their Jewish neighbors. This terrible crime was brought to light in 2001 by **Jan Tomasz Gross** who documented the massacre in

his book, *“Neighbors”*.² Gross’ revelations marked a significant milestone: it made Poles look upon their history from an entirely different perspective. To put it mildly, Jedwabne was a cold shower for the Polish memory (although not willingly accepted by everybody). It suddenly turned out that we were not a nation of heroes as many of us wanted to believe. Gross’ *“Neighbors”* unlocked the doors to a mutual dialogue, understanding and, what I also strongly believe, mutual reconciliation. Many subsequent books on this and related subjects have opened the door even wider and now *“Difficult Questions”* has come on the scene. I trust this work will elevate the dialogue to the next level by exposing the myths, clichés and other misleading, deeply rooted stereotypical beliefs still held by both sides.

Over the past years one can easily notice that there’s been a substantial increase in the number of Jewish-sponsored “journey of roots” to Poland, especially amongst young students from America and Israel. In the land that their ancestors once shared with Poles and where Jewish life once blossomed, they visit the death camps and the monuments built in memory of those who were consumed in the Holocaust. In more recent times these visitors have been encouraged to interact with their Polish counterparts discovering how different or, more often, how similar they are. This is the point in which *The Forum for Dialogue Among Nations* is of tremendous help. Led by a young Pole, **Andrzej Folwarczny**, this non-profit Polish organization has made great strides in making it possible for Polish and Jewish people to come together, sit side by side and talk. In association with the *American Jewish Committee* the book, in fact, is the outcome of these on-going encounters. Financial support for the project was received from the *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust, Remembrance and Research*, and from the *Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture*.

The focus of project started with an analysis of more than a thousand questionnaires gathered from Polish, Israeli as well as Jewish American, Canadian and Australian students who were asked to note the most sensitive issues that dominated their thinking about Polish-Jewish history and relations. Their responses were then analyzed by a group of sociologists working for The Forum for Dialogue Among Nations. The most significant questions posed by both sides were given to prominent experts in history, religion or sociology to come up with answers.

Questions and answers, answers and questions...all reflecting the traps of historical myths, stumbling blocks of misunderstandings, lost opportunities, serious accusations, controversial interpretations and so on ... thorny problems demanding objective and factual answers. Instead of burying or sweeping these complexities under the carpet and engaging in an exercise of political correctness, 50 of the most imperative questions were gathered and considered in chronological order (past – today – future) in this 260 page, abundantly illustrated book. The answers to each were succinctly summarized in 3-4 pages; in themselves many of the issues could easily constitute the subject for an entire book.

To give you a flavor of what to expect from the book, here are a few examples of the questions/responses that are covered in the book:

- Why do Jews accuse Poles of complicity in the Shoah?
- Why were Jews murdered by Poles after the war? (*nota bene*: another book, **“Fear”** by **Jan T. Gross** dealing with this topic has been published in the past year...yet another milestone.³)
- Why were Jews thrown out of Poland in 1968?

² Gross, Jan T. 2001. *Neighbors. The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

³ Gross, Jan T. 2006. *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz*. Random House, New York

- Why is anti-Semitism still a problem in Poland today?
- Why is Israel building a wall to separate themselves from the Palestinians?
- Are human rights respected in Israel?
- Can we expect Jews to live in Poland where their ancestors were murdered?
- Should Jews be allowed to reclaim property taken away from them in Poland?

Among the most prominent contributors are:

Władysław Bartoszewski (his preface to the book is brilliant) – an Auschwitz survivor and active member of the Żegota movement, one of the best foreign ministers Poland has ever had;

Israel Gutman – a historian, born in Warsaw, fought in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, chairman of the Scientific Council at Yad Vashem, deputy chairman of the International Auschwitz Council,

Miriam Akavia – an Israeli writer, born in Cracow, another Holocaust survivor;

David Peleg – the Ambassador of Israel to Poland;

Konstanty Gebert – an outstanding Polish journalist and writer, former editor-in-chief of *Midrasz*, a Jewish intellectual monthly;

Stanisław Krajewski – a logician and writer, co-chairman of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews;

Michael Schudrich – American-born, chief rabbi of Poland;

And many, many other scholars, “tycoons” and celebrities in the subject of Polish-Jewish relations.

The book provides comprehensive coverage of so many difficult subjects. Is it too concise? Maybe, but it is not oversimplified.

It goes without saying that no single publication will change the way we look at each other. Still it can make a difference.

I believe that “*Difficult Questions*” can be even considered a comprehensive, one-volume encyclopedia of the Polish-Jewish relations, a thoughtfully conceived work, broad in scope, which both the scholar (ourselves?) and the novice (Jewish and Polish teenagers) can dip into.

Let me refer to **David A. Harris**, the executive director of the American Jewish Committee. In his introduction to the book he borrows from Confucius saying, “*It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.*” In many ways this is what “*Difficult Questions*” is supposed to do. In my view the book lights many candles in the minds of both Jewish and Polish readers. This needs to happen to overcome stereotypes, half-truths and populist simplification towards reaching a better understanding of each other. We all deserve it.

It’s a fascinating and rich book of inestimable value. A must-buy! A must read!!

On the Web.....

Platform for Polish-Jewish Dialogue.

An ambitious web site which strives to foster better relations between Poles and Jews, featuring thought-provoking essays and links to other sites with similar objectives.

<http://www.dialog.org/dialog.html>

Images of a Lost Community: Finding a 60-Year-Old Treasure.

This is the incredible story of a collection of 178 family pictures, which were hidden in the walls of a house in Poland just before the Holocaust, only to be found some 60 years later and returned to their rightful owners.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3387796,00.html#n>

Restoration of Kirkut Cemetery: Polish Teacher and His Students Care for Abandoned Jewish Cemetery.

In Wielowieś, a small village in rural Poland, a teacher inspires his students to learn more about the Jews who lived in their community and to honor their memory by tending to their cemetery.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JO9Xujf4T-o&mode=related&search>

Being Jewish in Poland: Daniela and Kuba Talk About Their Lives.

Young adults describe how they are trying to preserve Jewish life in Poland.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntizAnFWBxU>

Pre-War Images of Krakow Jewish Quarter, Kazimierz Market Square.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ne1m0KXKbw&mode=related&search=>

Ivansk Humor

Life on Mars (Thanks to Arthur E. Zimmerman)

Two Ivanskers joined the Space Program. After graduating, the new astronauts boarded their space ship and took off. Their mission: to determine whether there is oxygen on Mars; if the answer was “yes” than Mars might be suitable for human habitation.

After landing on the red planet, one of the Ivanskers said, “Give me the box of matches. Either it burns and there is oxygen, or nothing happens.”

So he takes the box and is ready to strike a match when, out of the blue, a Martian appears, frantically waving his six arms: ... ***“NO, NO, DON'T DO IT!!!”***

The astronauts look at each other, worried. Could there be an unknown explosive gas on Mars?

Undaunted, the Ivansker takes another match ... and now ... a crowd of hysterical Martians appears, all waving their arms: ... ***“NO, DON'T DO IT! STOP! DON'T DO IT!!”***

The other Ivansker says, “This looks serious. What are they afraid of?”

“But we're here for science to know if man can breathe on Mars”, says his companion and strikes the match which flames up, burns down, and absolutely nothing bad happens.

He turns to the Martians and asks, “Why did you try to prevent us from striking a match?”

The leader of the Martians says, ***“IT'S SHABBOS!”***

Gone Fishing (Thanks to Darren Taichman)

Two Ivanskers rented a boat, rowed out to the middle of the lake and cast their lines into the water.

Immediately, fish began biting like crazy.

Soon, the boat was overloaded with fish and the Ivanskers began rowing back to shore. This was the most memorable fishing expedition they could ever remember.

Just before returning the rented boat, one of the Ivanskers took out a “magic marker” and made a big “X” on the bottom of the boat.

The other Ivansker wondered what that was all about. “Why did you do that?” he asked.

His friend answered, “The “X” will tell us where to find this great fishing spot again when we come back next time.”

The other Ivansker scratched his head, “But how will we make certain to get the same boat?”