

MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

MARCH 13, 2008

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MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS

MARCH 13, 2008

COMMISSIONERS

	Page
Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	1
Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Ranking Member, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	2

MEMBERS

Hon. Jeff Fortenberry (R-1) a Member of Congress from the State of Nebraska	14
---	----

WITNESSES

Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka, Undersecretary of State, Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland	4
Ewa Wierzynska, Deputy Director, Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw	7
Sigmund Rolat, Chairman of the Board of Directors, North American Council, Museum of the History of Polish Jews ..	9

APPENDICES

Prepared statement of Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin, Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe	21
Prepared statement of Hon. Christopher H. Smith	23
Joint prepared statement of Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka and Ewa Wierzynska	25
Prepared statement of Sigmund Rolat	38
Letters submitted for the record:	
Bogdan Zdrojewski, Minister of Culture and Heritage in Poland	44
Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, Mayor of Warsaw	46

(III)

MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS

March 13, 2008

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 2:40 p.m. in room B-318 of the Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioners present: Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Ranking Member, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Members of Congress present: Hon. Jeff Fortenberry.

Witnesses present: Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka, Undersecretary of State, Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland; Ewa Wierzynska, Deputy Director, Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw; and Sigmund Rolat, Chairman of the Board of Directors, North American Council, Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. HASTINGS. I'm going to gavel the hearing to order. We have all sorts of complications with votes, as you well know. And my colleague, Representative Smith, is going to be back real shortly. But I'd like to get started, and maybe I can occupy some time with my statement. OK, so we're home free.

Last May, I went to Poland to participate in a conference on security and democracy in the Middle East. And I was fortunate enough, during that visit, to have the opportunity to meet with the Director and Deputy Director of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. And they were kind enough to introduce me to the extraordinary vision they have for this extraordinary museum.

It's my hope that, with today's hearing on Capitol Hill, we can introduce an even larger community of people to that vision.

Prior to the Holocaust, Poland may have had the largest Jewish population in the world. The losses of the Holocaust are measured not only by the number of Polish citizens whose lives were lost during the Holocaust, but by the destruction of a thousand years of extraordinary Polish Jewish cohabitation. Indeed, when French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, spoke of the museum recently, he said, it "will be a reminder of how quickly hatred can doom an entire community to extermination."

And as we know, genocide is not just a remote piece of history, but a terrible plague we will continue to face today and tomorrow, unless we put an end to it once and for all. Today, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews represents a singular historic effort in Europe, not only to honor those victims of genocide, but to reclaim a part of Polish history that the Nazis sought to utterly eradicate.

In a country that still struggles with its own legacy of anti-Semitism, this is a critically important undertaking. I was not able to go back to Poland to attend the groundbreaking ceremonies for the museum last June. But I did send a staffer from the Helsinki Commission. And I'm reliably informed that, notwithstanding extremely heavy rain, this was a well-attended and properly momentous occasion.

Among the many dignitaries who participated in the groundbreaking ceremony, was the chief rabbi of Tel Aviv, Yisrael Meir Lau, whose own parents came from Poland, and who was born in Poland. He invited the Iranian President, who has denied the Holocaust, to visit the museum when it opens.

And I want to quote exactly what the rabbi said: "Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is invited to come here to see the millions of Polish Jews and to know also how they perished from this world, so he will understand the Holocaust is a real thing, is not a legend. You cannot deny history. You cannot deny facts. And the fact and the history of Polish Jews will be shown, expressed, and represented here in this museum."

I hope I'll be in Poland when the museum opens. I'd like to be there for that. And friends, I'd like to see the Iranian leader come to this museum.

Finally, I know that our ranking member, Chris Smith, will talk about the bill he introduced to authorize a \$5 million U.S. contribution for the work of this museum. And I want to commend my friend and colleague, Chris Smith, for spearheading that effort. I co-sponsored this bill when it was introduced in '06 and again last year. And I hope, with the help of Co-Chairman Cardin and others, we can get it passed by the Senate during this Congress. And I thank you very much.

Before introducing the witnesses at this time, I would recognize Chris for any comments.

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, RANKING MEMBER,
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I especially want to thank you for holding this very important hearing and for inviting our distinguished witnesses who are truly visionaries and people committed to making a very important contribution, but one that will keep on giving in terms of people who will be touched for generations to come as this museum gets up and running.

As we all know, Mr. Chairman, at the beginning of World War II, Poland had the largest Jewish population in Europe. According to some estimates, 80 percent of the world Jewry had family ties to this pre-war community. And tragically, as a result of the Holocaust, a once thriving community was virtually destroyed.

In '96, a group of very thoughtful and talented people developed the idea for a museum dedicated to the culture, art and history of Poland's Jews. As one of the museum's founders told me on one trip several years ago, we often learned how Jews died, but rarely how they lived.

The Museum on the History of Polish Jews will change this by not only commemorating and remembering, with great sorrow, the 3 million Polish Jews who died during Holocaust and World War II, but also celebrating the rich 1,000 years of Polish Jewish life. The interactive museum will allow visitors to review the long history of Jews in Poland in context, examining their culture, their accomplishments and the challenges that they faced.

It was on a trip to Warsaw, several years ago, that I met with museum advocates. And this vision of a dynamic institution focused on the lives and contributions of Poland's Jews caught my attention. I have ever since been trying to promote this legislation, as you pointed out so aptly. We saw it die in the last Congress.

But we've now resurrected it, gotten it passed in the House. And I do believe, and I have already made phone calls to friends over at the Senate that we thought might be putting holds on it, and have been advised that that's not the case. And I certainly hope that turns out to be true. But I do think it will get a swift look and passage by the U.S. Senate.

The museum—and I would ask unanimous consent that a lot of the comments here will be made a part of the record, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HASTINGS. Without objection.

Mr. SMITH. Because I know our distinguished witnesses will speak to all of the particulars about this very, very important museum. But I do want to say the \$5 million, it is our hope—which is a modest contribution—will express in some way, some small way, U.S. heartfelt commitment to not just the museum building, bricks and mortar, but obviously and most importantly to the people it represents.

And I do believe this bipartisan effort, which has been strongly backed by our Chairman, Chairman Hastings, and by Ben Cardin that runs the other side, will come to fruition very, very shortly. And I hope and pray that it has a real impact, not only in educating, motivating, enlightening, but also in combating this virulent, new spike in anti-Semitism, which regrettably is growing in Europe, United States, Canada, and really the world.

People can be—young people in particular taught values of tolerance and respect. And this museum, I think, will play a major role in that. So again, I thank you.

And I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Chris. I'd also ask also unanimous consent that Senator Cardin's statement be made a part of the record. And I'm sure there's no objection to that.

We're extremely fortunate to have with us today three outstanding individuals. And their biographies have been made available on the table just outside this hearing room. So I won't read all these fine things about all of you. But I ask our participants to please refer to those biographies in full.

We're joined by Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka. How'd I do?

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. Yes, very well.

Mr. HASTINGS. The Undersecretary of State at the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland in Charge of Social Issues. And she's come all the way from Warsaw to be here with us. And thank you, Minister.

And we're also joined by Ewa Wierzynska, the Deputy Director of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. And we met in Warsaw. And I'm glad that you're here; I most seriously regret that we won't get an opportunity to spend as much time as I'd like; but recognizing that she too came all the way from Poland. Well, when I was in Poland, I came all the way from the United States.

And we're joined by Sigmund Rolat, who came here from just little old up-the-road New York. But he is originally from Poland and is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the North American Council of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

As an aside, when I was in Warsaw, I had an opportunity—a young man from the U.S. Embassy took me to the cemetery. And it's one of—among the many places that I visited that is a poignant reminder of the circumstances, having been left in much of its state through the years. And I mention that, because another person that has been actively involved in all of these endeavors has since departed. And I believe all of you either know him or know of him for sure. And that's mine and Chris' and others' colleague, Tom Lantos.

I had the delightful experience of visiting in the Czech Republic yet another cemetery of some historic significance. And I was with Tom at that cemetery. And it's hard to conduct these kinds of undertakings without his memory hovering over the room. But I'm sure he gives Chris and me his blessings in light of the fact that both of us were among his strong supporters and friends.

We will start with you, Madame Minister, if you would like please.

**EWA JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA, UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE,
CHANCELLERY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
POLAND**

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. Thank you. I would like to thank Chairman Hastings for holding this important hearing and inviting me to testify. I also want to extend my gratitude to Congressman Smith for introducing the legislation in support of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. Let me also express how the Polish authority high value the role of the Helsinki Commission in promoting democracy and human rights.

It is a privilege to have an opportunity to represent new, free and democratic Poland, with it's—one of the most important educational projects, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

For over 60 years, or three generations, Poles have been rebuilding their country and waiting for the time when the whole country reclaims its identity. The time arrived in 1989. Following the political and social changes in years 1989, 1990, when the Communist system collapsed, giving way to democratic structure, significant changes took place and impossible became possible. One such former impossible, even unthinkable, is the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

Democratic changes in Poland took place also within the Jewish community. The representatives, knowing that I'm coming to meet with you, asked me to tell you that there are Jews in Poland—a tiny community of possible 15,000, yet very dynamic and vibrant, and very sensitive to being told it does not exist.

While the number of Jews living in Poland today is small, Jewish presence in public consciousness is large. But, of course, this community is not even a partial of the all the glory the Polish Jewry was. And this is precisely why we have to be. There is, after all, a reason for which Polish Jewry, which was 3.5 million strong at the eve of World War II, is now only $\frac{4}{10}$ of 1,000. That reason is the Shoah.

We will build this museum to reclaim what is the Polish heritage, extending for ages before the Holocaust. This is the legacy of Polish Jews who were on the soil we share, not just tolerated guests, but partners in a common history. A part of that history was stained by oppression and injustice. The museum will document that as well.

We cannot bring the victims back to life; nor can we undo the wrongs they suffered. What we can and will do is bringing back the magnificent history for Poles, whatever the religion, and for Polish Jews, wherever they reside today, to learn and cherish. They have a right to that history. My country has an obligation to ensure the fulfillment of this right.

The new democratic Poland has the courage to confront its history. As President Kaczynski has stressed on many occasions, there is no history of Poland without the history of Polish Jews.

The museum is a public-private partnership established on the basis of an agreement signed on January 25, 2005, by the Polish Minister of Culture, the mayor of Warsaw, Lech Kaczynski, today President of the Republic of Poland, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland. The first institution of its type is the new Poland, the museum has had the honor and faced the challenge of being a trailblazer in the area of the historical preservation in Central and Eastern Europe.

The museum's diverse funding highlights how agendas co-exist among government entities and the private non-profit institution can serve a higher purpose in informing new generation of the war's citizens in the name of education, enlightenment, respect, tolerance and commemoration.

The Minister of Culture, as well as the Warsaw municipal authorities committed themselves to contribute the cost of the creation of the building of the museum by the Association of Jewish Historical Institute offered to finance the cost of the future Berman Exhibition and educational and outreach programs.

Since the signing of the agreement, a new election took place. And the new Polish Government, the new President of Poland and the new mayor of Warsaw were elected. Everybody, the past and current Presidents of Poland, past and current representatives of the Polish Government and the local government support the project to the best of their capabilities.

In the statement by mayor of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, I would like to submit to the Commission, she declared that building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews is a priority

project of that Warsaw local authorities. Both public partners, the city of Warsaw and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, they affirmed their willingness to cover the cost of the construction of museum building, in spite of many competing needs, and a sharp increase in costs.

This is a national commitment above partisan division. The Polish authorities support the museum, but do not control its contents. No other nation in the world, but Americans, can understand such an achievement in less than 20 years after sixty years under Communist control of every aspect of Polish daily life.

The museum is located in what once was the heart of the Warsaw Jewish quarter; from 1940 throughout 1943, the center of the Warsaw ghetto; and following the Ghetto Uprising an area reduced to sea of rubble. This sea of ruin and devastation—that was Warsaw, to tell you the truth, of my early childhood and indeed my playground in the mid-'50s, when the first housing developments were built.

The light feel in the light-reflecting building of the museum will face the monument commemorating the heroes of the Ghetto Uprising—one of the two uprisings of Warsaw during the Second World War. The significance of this site, its historical weight and power with which it speaks to visitors and the people who live there is one of the foundations of the future museum.

No visit to Warsaw, indeed to Poland, would be complete without a visit to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. The museum is the first and only museum to focus on the history of Polish Jews and will take its place alongside the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Beth Hatefutsoth Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv, as one of the most important institutions of its kind.

What makes the museum in Warsaw unique is the very place where the Polish Jews have lived for almost 1,000 years. But they have been able to preserve the culture and the religion with the heritage which has been part of the heritage of Poland, Europe, and the world.

Distinguished members of this meeting, I truly believed that the museum will connect people around the universal value of respect for different culture, which can co-exist and overcome racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance. People of Poland are counting on your support. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Madame Undersecretary Junczyk-Ziomecka—I hope I got that right—thank you so very much for that very powerful statement and for the extraordinary commitment of the Polish Government, and yourself in particular, for this project and the important program. And again, your words were, I think, you know, a call to arms for all of us to make sure that this legislation does indeed get enacted. And hopefully it will be the start. The ongoing commitment should be there as well from our point of view.

So thank you so very much.

Just for the record, Chairman Hastings left for a vote that's occurring on the floor right now, regrettably. You know, democracy is messy. There's always a competing interest. But he wants you to know that he will look at the rest of your statement and is obviously very committed to this project as well.

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. Congressman, I would like to submit two statements, one by the mayor of Warsaw and another by the Minister of Culture and Heritage in Poland.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, those statements will be made a part of the permanent record.

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. I'd like to now ask Ewa Wierzyńska if she would present her testimony.

**EWA WIERZYŃSKA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MUSEUM OF THE
HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS, WARSAW**

Ms. WIERZYŃSKA. Honorable Congressman Smith, ladies, and gentlemen, it's an honor for me to represent the leadership of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews today and Mr. Jerzy Halbersztadt, the Director. Please allow me to take you on a 5-minute tour of the museum, a living center for education and culture dedicated to the preservation of the lasting legacy of 1,000 years of Jewish life in Poland; dedicated to the education of present and future generations in appreciation of the Jewish culture, an education free of prejudice and in the spirit of dialogue and mutual respect.

My distinguished friend and colleague, Ewa Ziomecka, has talked eloquently about the location where the museum will stand. So I will tell you about the building. The museum architect is a Finnish designer, Mr. Rainer Mahlamäki, who emerged as the winner of an international architectural competition. This competition was the first of its kind in free Poland.

The Finnish design, in the best traditions of Finnish architecture, is hailed for the way it incorporated the concept of a narrative core exhibition into the design of the building. It is also admired for how really the architect deals with the historical significance of this special location and the urban environment that surrounds it today.

The museum echoes the geometrical shape of the plaza on which it is situated. But the transparent glass walls reveal an interior of organic undulated forms—forms that allude to the parting of the Red Sea through which the prophet Moses led the Jews. The limestone curved walls and the ceiling are lit from above, providing a dramatic site from both interior and exterior viewpoints. And the transparency and light reflects the desire for an open reckoning of the past.

We like to call this building the House of Light. We like to talk about the various circles of darkness that this light, emanating from our museum, will penetrate.

Education is light. Our museum offers 140-square-foot space comparable to Washington's Holocaust Memorial, which houses not only the core exhibition, but also an auditorium for 500, a screening room, a resource center, meeting rooms for the young people, as well as the core exhibition—a temporary exhibition space, I should add.

The story we tell spans centuries rather than 5 years. But the exhibition used the narrative method of the Holocaust Memorial in your home town. They tell the story of historical events rather than focus on the presentation of objects, artwork or artifact. The eight

galleries that house the museum's core exhibition will be equipped with the latest technology, videos, films, computer-generated holograms and two additional three-dimensional scale models will together enable visitors to explore close to 1,000 years of life in Poland.

The core exhibition is being developed by an international team of scholars, historians, as well as museum experts and designers from Poland, Great Britain, Israel and the United States. Professor Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, with us today—show yourself, Barbara—heads the core exhibition planning team. The daughter of Polish Jews who immigrated before the Holocaust, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is a cultural anthropologist and has written many books and countless articles on the subjects of museums and Jewish culture throughout history.

More than a theater of history and a unique learning environment than a conventional exhibition of objects and labels, our exhibition will creatively engage the minds and hearts of diverse visitors of all ages, whether they immerse themselves in the world of the medieval feudal kingdom of Poland, where the Jews once found direction, or in the culturally diverse and turbulent 20 years of the inter-war Polish republic. The visitors will discover the vibrant civilization of what was once the largest Jewish community in the world and the center of the Jewish Diaspora, so brutally ended by the Holocaust.

As an international educational institution, cultural center and meeting place, the museum will provide a unique learning environment, not only the cutting-edge, multimedia, narrative exhibition I just talked about, but also writing public programs, shows, performances, conferences, symposia, meetings, commemorations and resource center and educational programs for Polish school and Jewish youth groups, international students exchanges and collaborated projects that engage the people in Poland and abroad in the recovery and exploration of the legacy of Polish Jews.

I would like to show you a visual depicting one of these projects—the reconstruction of the roof of a wooden synagogue, with its wonderful polychromy, which we hope will be done by international group of art and architecture students led by an American group specializing in this type of reconstruction. Even before the museum opens, its educational mission has begun. Public programs continue, as I speak here.

Since 2002, the museum has had influential supporters at home and abroad. Former and present Presidents have been supporters, as Madame Ziomecka has said; and Warsaw-born President of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres, since 2003 the Chairman of the International Honorary Committee.

As you have heard, both mayor of Warsaw, Ms. Gronkiewicz-Waltz, and the new Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Mr. Zdrojewski, have reaffirmed their determination in spite of the fact that the cost of the building exceeds by \$51 million the initial 2004 estimates. While we can be certain that the public partners will raise the original prototypical building, approximately \$35 million remains to be raised by the international community of public and private donors.

We are fortunate that, to date, we have been able to raise \$7.6 million from the Government of the Republic of Germany, and more than \$11 million from private foundation, corporate and institutional sources. Most recently, as you heard, the President of France pledged his support. The money that we are raising today, and in the years to come, will be needed to build a museum that will indeed be worthy of the subject that it depicts.

Honorable ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to share with you a very personal conviction. The Museum of the History of Polish Jews, with its boldness of vision, its noble mission and its international scope appeals to true visionaries. We have seen it demonstrate the power to inspire and even create philanthropists, people who saw in our museum a way to engage with the past, the present, and the future.

We hope that we will find amongst you visionaries and the next friends of the museum. Thank you very much for your attention. And I would like to submit my full presentation for the record.

Mr. HASTINGS. I thank you. And Madame Minister, I'm sure that Representative Smith offered the same for you. I saw you flipping through your pages. We will include all of it in the record. And we do apologize for going back and forth. But the record is what's important. And it will be made a part of the museum one day I'm sure.

Mr. Rolat, please, if you will go forward.

**SIGMUND ROLAT, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL, MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF
POLISH JEWS**

Mr. ROLAT. Chairman Hastings, it is a very great honor for me to address you here today—an honor perhaps even more appreciated by a naturalized citizen of this wonderful country. Only in America could a young boy, a survivor of a terrible war, find the opportunity which I found here for education and success.

I am here today to summarize this testimony already submitted to explain why now is the right time for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews and why Warsaw is the perfect place for it. For the sake of brevity, my short remarks will be personal. But when I refer to my children, I speak for all Jewish youngsters. When I refer to my native city in Poland, it exemplifies most of Poland today.

Some 10 million Americans have Polish roots. Over 70 percent of American Jews have Polish roots. Proudly, I'm one of them.

I was born in Czestochowa on July 1 many years ago. I fondly remember my happy childhood. My parents and my older brother, Jerzyk, were killed during the war. Both my father and Jerzyk died fighting the Nazis. Jerzyk at 18 was the youngest in a group of six partisans. My father was killed in the Treblinka death camp uprising.

Czestochowa is the most Catholic city in Poland. When the Pope visits Poland, it is not Warsaw or Krakow which are first on his itinerary. It is Czestochowa, the seat of Jasna Gora Monastery and of the Black Madonna icon.

One-third of Czestochowa's pre-war population was Jewish—a very important and productive third. Not only did Jews build the

first textile mill and paper factory, but also a concert hall and theater were founded by Jewish philanthropy. Czestochowa is typical of other Polish cities.

Years ago, before the bar mitzvah and bat mitzvahs, I took my son and my daughters to Poland to see their ancestral land. I meant for them to learn, not only about the Nazi factories of death; I also wanted them to see where Jews thrived and co-existed with Poles for almost 1,000 years. It was, I suppose, my own private version of the March of the Living.

How enhanced would have been the experience of my children if their tour commenced at our projected museum? How profoundly a few hours there would have prepared them for the next few days? How important then is this museum now for Polish young people?

The history of Polish Jews is almost as old as historic Poland. No less, no less, than the current president of Poland, Lech Kaczynski, stated at the groundbreaking of our museum last year that there is no history of Poland without the history of Polish Jews.

Elaborating—for hundreds of years, more Jews lived in Poland. In fact, ever since the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, more Jews lived in Poland than anywhere else in the world. The Va'ad Arba' Aratzot, the Jewish Council of the Four Lands of Poland, was in fact the only Jewish executive political body which existed between the destruction of the second temple and the creation of the Jewish agency in Palestine.

Elaborating on the writings of the German Jewish philosopher, Emil Fackenheim, Boston Rabbi Joseph Polak states directly, in a recent letter to me: "Without Poland, there would be no Torah today."

Interestingly, a Polish historian, Pawel Spiewak, in a new interview—recent interview—also cites the same philosopher. And he says that, in addition to the Ten Commandments, there are 613 injunctions which are the body of the Jewish law. He is now the architect of the 614th injunction, which states: "most important is that Yiddishkeit, 'Jewishness,' be preserved. Otherwise, we allow the Nazis to triumph. For that, we owe a debt of gratitude for that preservation. . . . We owe a debt of gratitude to historic Poland."

Through the millennium, the Yiddishkeit thrived and was preserved in Poland and the world from the descendants of Polish Jews. As Senator Menendez so well put it, when introducing the Museum Assistance Bill, our museum will protect a spirit deeply connected to our own, our American heritage.

And that Jewish heritage in Poland, we cannot afford to let slip away. Jews fought in Poland's wars and uprising to reclaim Polish independence. They fought and died for that great cavalry commander Joselewicz—over 800 Polish Jewish officers butchered at Katyn in the Soviet Union.

As U.S. culture is magnificently the product of its melting pot civilization, so too Polish Jews played an integral part in enriching their Polish fatherland. The poetry of Julian Tuwin, the prose of Isaac Bashevis Singer, the art of Bruno Schulz, the music of Arthur Rubinstein, the greats of theater and film, all these were proud elements of what we call today Polish culture.

On one of my many visits in Poland, I met with several officials in Czestochowa. Professor Jerzy Mizgalski asked me at that time

for my help in presenting an exhibition about the long history of Jews in Czestochowa. The rich original archive of information, artifacts, photographs, multimedia—in fact, a microcosm of what our museum is going to show in Warsaw. He stated at that time would provide the first such showing of a once-proud community, now reduced to a handful and almost forgotten.

In my own meetings with Polish young people, I too invariably found almost total ignorance about the not-so-long-ago Jewish neighbors. But without exception, they were very eager to find out. Still, I was fascinated. And Professor Mizgalski related to me his recent Jewish history course for which a 35-seat classroom was assigned, and for which over 300 students applied.

The exhibition, “Jews of Czestochowa,” and an academic symposium were very successful. In an annual contest of the largest newspaper, the exhibition was voted the best cultural event of the year.

Perhaps the most important consequence was a program at the local college of fine arts entitled, “From the Inspiration of Jewish Culture,” which after Czestochowa was shown at the National Library in Warsaw. And the Ministry of Culture incorporated that very program into a nationwide curriculum. Many encouraging events and programs followed.

Incidentally, the exhibition, “The Jews of Czestochowa,” accompanied by examples of the art from the inspiration of Jewish culture is traveling throughout the U.S.A. And the condensed version was shown in 2006, right here at the Rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building.

This trend is the milieu and the need and the spirit where our museum will rise. Like the phoenix out of ashes, it will become the deserved paragon of excellence.

And when I express my gratitude for Representative Christopher Smith and Senator Benjamin Cardin for their sponsorship of H.R. 3320, it is not only in my name or in the name of the North American Council for the Museum, or even for the three official partners of the museum—the Polish government, the city of Warsaw, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute.

The thanks, the sincere thanks, are to you on behalf of all the young people—Poles and Americans, Jews and Christians, and all people of good will—who will now have a very good, a very special reason to visit Warsaw and Poland. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Rolat, thank you so very much for your leadership on all of these issues, but in particular your leadership on behalf of the museum and for your kind words.

We’ve been joined by Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, who is a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and a very active member very much focused on human rights and humanitarian issues, including combating anti-Semitism.

So thank you for joining us, Mr. Fortenberry.

Just a few questions, if I could. The completion date 2011—I mean, when the museum actually opens its doors—I would hope that, you know, in the planning, that there might be some thought given, especially since those of us on the commission are committed to combating anti-Semitism. And it’s truly a bipartisan—I mean,

there's no space between us. We have been working on that issue since day one.

The Commission really emphasized, since the early 1980s, that issue—Soviet Jews and the like—was raised on [inaudible]. The thought—and maybe you can bring this back—would be at some point if Poland, in the future—and the last time I understand that they hosted an OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was back in 1997.

But should there be an offer from the Polish Government to do it again, it would seem to me that the venue of the museum, you know, would be a tremendous opportunity for parliamentarians to really get further inculcated in how the Jews lived and lived both positive and negative during those 1,000 years; because we all on this Commission—and I believe it passionately—believe that, you know, Members of Parliament, when they go back to their individual countries, they need to walk point and not just say, “Yeah, me too,” and then fade into the woodwork somewhere when it comes to these issues.

And it's all about sensitizing, mobilizing, educating. And my sense is that this museum is going to be the quintessential educational tool going forward to propel that, especially in Europe.

The Holocaust Museum here—and I've been through this museum several times. I never walk out the same. Matter of fact, I actually authored some legislation that is going to be on the floor we believe soon called, “The Global Online Freedom Act, which is an attempt to ensure that Google, Yahoo, Cisco, Microsoft and like are not complicit with dictatorships, have standards that they have to follow in terms of personally identifying information, not being part of—for instance, like in China—of the effort to promote propaganda.

Because Google censors out anything that you and I would believe is human rights. And they do it voluntarily amazingly.

Well, before the big hearing that we had 3 years ago—it turned out to be an 8-hour hearing—I read a book called, “IBM and the Holocaust.” And the author talks about how, when he was going through the Holocaust Museum, he saw this small box that had IBM indicia on it.

And then he, you know, did some looking into it and came to the conclusion, based on his research, heavily footnoted in his book, that—did you ever wonder why the Gestapo always had all of those very well-laid-out prints of where the Jews lived, because IBM made it happen.

And high-tech is doing it today, regrettably, in places like China and Belarus and Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, Vietnam. But I think, you know, we need to get those parliamentarians in to realize that, you know, what can be prevented through education—and that came out of a visit by an author to the Holocaust Museum. He ended up writing a very incisive book.

So I think so much good will come to of it. Hopefully many politicians and lawmakers will be sensitized by their visit. So maybe at some point, either a separate venue or something, that the Polish Government, if they were to host a P.A. suddenly again, that would be a wonderful place to do it; and really get people immersed, because I think that's when things change. When you really catch the

spirit of what was, what is and what can be. So I just throw that out as a possibility.

And second, the integration of Holocaust remembrance education and sensitizing for young people. Since I was back and forth and Alcee's doing the same thing, and Jeff, for these votes, how well are you going to be able, do you think, integrate getting Polish children and young adults, students and others into the museum; because you've got to get them to set foot into the museum, so they can, you know, be sensitized and educated? Whoever would like to take that.

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. When we started this project long time ago, and there was no other way to talk about the idea with Americans and with representatives of other countries, until we invite people to come to Poland. The people found it easy to organize the group that we call Mission to Poland. And among them were Holocaust survivors. And I think that there's some different organization. And that groups came.

And when they saw, on the spot, the places of the Holocaust, the new Poland—which is energetic and vibrant. And when they start to talk to people, they realize that something really happened in that part of Europe. So we believe, on the principle context, they are different study groups that the Polish government invited, representatives of parliament and governments. And this is—I agree with you, that it will be very important that we extend to organize such a visit.

The coming occasion—of course, there's some anniversaries are good occasion to extent invitation. The coming occasion will be the 65th anniversary of Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which will be commemorating in Poland, in Warsaw, in 3 weeks. All the Jewish organizations, in the United States and in Europe and in Israel, are invited to participate.

And I'm looking forward to it, because there are three people who are witness participants in the Ghetto Uprising. And we would like to surround them with the young generations. And imagine the place. All of the people meet in front of the Warsaw Ghetto Heroes. And they will face the site where the future museum is going to be built.

So they will be—their past that we confront with ourselves. But we are looking so at the future; because the museum is not only the core exhibition, the story about the past. But it is going to be also place to meet, classes for students, films, theaters, place for conferences, for people to meet, from all over—to meet, not only to learn, but also to confront ourselves with our stereotypes and with stereotypes of others.

So I share your opinion that we have to concentrate more on personal contacts. And we have to invite each other. And I will pass this help to the Polish Government and to the President.

Mr. SMITH. I was suggesting that they explore the feasibility of, whether it be a P.A. or an OSCE summit itself, at the museum.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes.

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. Yes.

Ms. WIERZYNSKA. Can I take the opportunity—seize the opportunity to just talk a little—for a moment about the educational programs which we are actually now conducting. The museum doesn't

have a home yet. But we are already conducting educational program, outreach programs to the community.

And one of my favorites is an international youth exchange program between Poland and Israel. We send Polish students to Israel, and we receive Israeli students in Poland. They live with one another. It's a home-stay, kind of phased visit. It's a limited program. But we are committed to it, because it has done wonders for the increase, the expansion, of the people, of the leaders, the young leaders—of dialogue in Poland.

There are many people interested in Jewish legacy and in Jewish culture in Poland. But there are not that many people able to actually moderate a group of young Israeli high school kids, who come to Poland on an educational tour; and young Poles who do not know much about their Jewish peers. So this is a very important program for us.

And we are trying now to—and talking to Israeli authorities, so that they can give us their young people who come—about 30,000 of them every year—come to Poland to see the sites of martyrology, the concentration camps; so that one of the days—one day of their 7-day stay is for meetings with the Polish youth; because otherwise these young people leave Poland without ever meeting a Polish person. And we need those meetings very much; otherwise, there's no meeting of souls and no common history—no common legacy that we are creating together.

So thank you for the opportunity to talk about this.

Mr. HASTINGS. You introduced Jeff already? OK.

Representative Fortenberry, we're glad you're with us. We'll open up another seat for him.

**HON. JEFF FORTENBERRY (R-1) A MEMBER OF CONGRESS
FROM THE STATE OF NEBRASKA**

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a privilege to be with you. And we appreciate all of your good leadership on the floor. And if you'll indulge me for a moment, I thought I'd make a quick comment to you and ask if you had any comment in return.

I've never had the privilege of visiting Poland; although Ms. Wierzynska—my roommate in college was named Weirzvicki. So I hope that—

Ms. WIERZYNSKA. Close enough.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Close cousin.

Nonetheless, Mr. Rolat, something you said I thought was particularly profound, even though I didn't hear the full context of your comments. Your conversations with young people in Poland who are less and less familiar—as the horrific events of World War II unfold to them, in Poland particularly—are less and less familiar with that history. And yet, there's a real deep, abiding interest in learning more about it.

I was reminded, even though again I've not visited Poland nor had the opportunity to visit any of the concentration camps or other sites where such horror took place there, I have done so in Germany. And as a young person, I remember quite vividly being at Dachau and seeing the pile of shoes; and then watching the film of person after person who had been killed or died of starvation

being so unceremoniously piled up, naked, in such an undignified fashion.

And it's so overwhelming, the mind can almost become numb and desensitized to it, until you remind yourself that every single one of those persons who was being piled up in such a disgraceful, horrible manner had a mother, had a father, had children, had hope, desire to live.

So I just want to commend you for your passion on this issue and for your willingness for the Commission today, Mr. Chairman, to entertain the concept of providing whatever assistance is appropriate for us to provide in helping preserve this memory, particularly as the event grows more and more remote; and your willingness, as you said as well, to do so—not only to look at the past, so that we know that won't happen again, but to begin to open up new dialogues and chapter for the future, particularly with the young people who may live as far away as Israel now.

So I just want to commend you, again, for your passion on this. And I'm sorry if this evokes painful memory for you, because I was reading a bit of your bio. And——

[Crosstalk.]

Mr. ROLAT. Thank you for your comments. Thank you very much. I can only add an answer that I'm very much involved in many different projects in Poland. People think that I have, in my old age, have become a builder. And in fact, I do. I sometimes say jocularly, I build bridges now. And I think those bridges are very important.

But none is more important than our museum, because our museum is really for the future. It is not a museum of the Holocaust. The Holocaust will obviously be shown there as a very defining chapter of what happened to us in Poland. But it is really to show young people especially—it's a museum of life.

It's a museum of what life was like, of what the co-existence was like, in times good and bad for almost 1,000 years. How much Jews had accomplished in Poland. How important that millennium was for the Jews of Poland.

And I think that finally, only those corpses that you just referred to, they too would be forgotten if not for museums.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Yes.

Mr. ROLAT. But our museums will show more than just corpses. Our museum will show life. And that, to me, is so important for my children, for my grandchildren, for young people—Jews, Christians, Americans, Poles.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. You've stated it well that we can do both and to remember, and then also celebrate. Thank you.

Mr. ROLAT. Yes.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thanks very much, Jeff.

I appreciate very much all of you. And as I indicated my regrets for bouncing back and forth as Representative Smith and I had to do. But the good thing that came out of that is he brought Jeff Fortenberry back with him from the floor.

Obviously, we are all big supporters. But I would like to take cognizance of the fact that we received numerous letters. And I won't bother to go into all of them—and statements that will be included and made a part of the record.

I'd also like to recognize two good friends that I have worked with in a lot of places around the world and here in Washington. And that's Eric Fusfield from B'nai Brith and Mark Levin, my friend that works with Russian Jewry. And I'm glad that they're here. I'm sure that there are numerous others. I just happened to recognize them.

Ms. Wierzyńska, how is the museum going to deal with resurgent anti-Semitism, like the kind that last year greeted the publication of Jan Gross' book, "Fear," which documented post-war anti-Semitism in Poland?

Ms. WIERZYŃSKA. The museum, as it tells the story of a Polish-Jewish life and in Poland. And it also deals with anti-Semitism. There is no doubt that these two topics are inseparable. And, for example, in the post-war gallery, one of the main things is the theme of memory. And one of the memories that are so painful is the Kielce pogrom. That is, in fact, one of the big topics of Jan Gross' book—the Kielce program.

So as we see it, the publication of Jan Gross' book, which has sold in thousands and thousands of copies to non-Jewish Poles, to Christian Poles, and has been read by them; and people had to face these facts, because these are facts that are not being denied. Even the critics of the books who look for holes in the book cannot deny that the facts are correct; that there had been a program; and that innocent people, including children, were killed. They have to face these facts.

And I think it is—these books have done our museum a great service, because the discussion is out there. And Poles are reckoning with a very uncomfortable past. They are dealing with it. They are sometimes unhappy with it. And they are voicing their unhappiness. But it has become a part of the public discourse.

I was thinking about bringing with me dozens and dozens of articles from the recent months, that I get on my desk every day, dealing with Polish-Jewish relations with a discussion on Jan Gross' book and other discussions. And I can tell you that maybe half of them are articles that are about a commemoration, a discovery, a dialogue going on, student exchange or, you know, something positive. And the other half is about anti-Semitic incidents that are taking place, et cetera, et cetera.

So the discussion is a public discussion—something, as Ewa Ziomecka said, unthinkable in the days of Communism. And I think we are slowly, slowly reckoning with it; which is not to say that anti-Semitism is going away, as this discussion is progressing. No. But I think our museum will have a healing power by the very fact that it will show a story. And it will counteract stereotypes that are often at the base of anti-Semitism for many people.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes. One of the letters that we received was from Rabbi Andrew Baker of the American Jewish Committee, who has been actively involved as well. And I wanted to take cognizance of that.

Mr. Rolat, a member of Poland's Jewish community was quoted as saying the following: It is wonderful that they are building the museum, that the history of Polish Jews will not fade into oblivion. But that's a lot of money to put into history. Why can't they see that they're Jewish people who want to continue Judaism, who are

fighting to be Jewish? And how do you respond to that concern that was expressed?

Mr. ROLAT. I really don't think that we need to worry about Jews who want to continue to be good Jews here in the United States or in Israel, or for that matter in most of the world. Synagogues are thriving. So are Talmudic schools and so on.

I think that history is perhaps the only one that's lacking, especially I would say for some of my co-religionists who need actually to go to present-day Poland, which is not the post-war Poland of Communism, where everything was distorted and upside-down. But regrettably—and mind you, I do not look. You know, I went through too much during the war. And I have an excellent memory. And I remember what happened in the immediate post-war periods in Poland. I was there.

But regrettably, some of the stereotypes persist also among my many Jewish friends. And I can tell you that this exhibition, "Jews of Czestochowa," which was accompanied—it was part of the 3-days of memory. Since they, many wonderful things have happened.

One of them was a revival, if you will, of a Jewish community, the small community of Czestochowa. And we had two wonderful, wonderful return meetings, at which hundreds of people came from all over the world.

And it was really great to read some of the comments which they've left: how pleasantly surprised they were; and for me, how wonderful it was when I saw how many of these stereotypes were shed aside, especially by the children; because you see, it's the children who inherit these terrible memories, some of which are very well-grounded, and some not.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes.

Mr. ROLAT. And so I think the museum will—the education role which the museum will play cannot be overstated. And it cannot be overstated, as I mentioned before, not just for our Jewish youngsters, but also for the Polish young people who, by the way from my own experience I can tell you, are not really very much interested anymore in this old anti-Semitism and so on. So that much of these canards—Poles drink their anti-Semitism, you know, from their mother's breasts and so on. My answer to that is that mainly they now drink formula. [Laughter.]

Mr. HASTINGS. I certainly understand and appreciate. I do wish to share, and I invite my colleague to continue with any other questions that he may have or statements. But I want to make one recommendation that I don't think is anything new at all; although Ms. Wierzynska, I would appreciate it very much, as your pledges become fruitious—in real terms to become money—that you keep us advised as to that amount.

I can assure you that Chris Smith is going to be unrelenting in pursuing dollars that our government rightly ought contribute. And I will be his partner in that effort. And we're very fortunate, even though he is not here—a colleague of ours that served with us in the House now is in the U.S. Senate and is co-chair. He and Chris Smith were on the commission when I came to the commission.

And I can assure you that we will have a different perspective offered on the Senate side. And hopefully, in spite of budgetary

constraints here in the United States, we will recognize the wisdom of this.

Let me broaden it and go along with you, Mr. Rolat, and you, Madame Minister. The one thing that I've learned over the course of the years is that multiethnic, interdenominational, ecumenical, intercultural activities help create atmospheres of tolerance and understanding. Toward that end, I think this museum will be a living example of how, when folk who are not Jewish and who are not Polish, have an opportunity to see and experience those things that did take place that were those atrocities, that it will make a difference.

It's ironic that I mentioned earlier that, at the groundbreaking as Ms. Schlager, who was there, pointed out—that it was raining. Fourteen years ago, my first visit to Poland was to Warsaw. And it was the parliamentary assembly of the OSCE that was meeting there.

I went on a day trip to Auschwitz. And it was during that day trip that two gentlemen—one now the majority leader here in House of Representatives, Steny Hoyer; and another from Canada who went on to become the foreign minister and defense minister, named Bill Graham—put my name in nomination without asking me to be a rapporteur of a committee. I didn't know how to spell rapporteur, let alone—and when I got back from Auschwitz, and it was raining all that day. But it was a chilling experience.

I also share with you, sir, I have visited Treblinka, where you lost your family. And you can feel what transpired, even though you're not Jewish, and even though you were not there.

One other experience from the time that you were experiencing the Second World War with the bombing and the killings, I as a child was in Jersey City, New Jersey. And I lived on a street going to second and third grade, where Polish ex-patriots had come to the United States to work in factories. And so did Italian emigres that lived there. It was Manning Avenue. I'll never forget it. I, like you, have an excellent memory—and my best friend.

And I was a little boy, I mean scrawny. And my best friend was a young Polish fellow named Albami who was big and bad. And so I hung with him everywhere we went in Jersey City, because he would help me not get beat up.

But my dad used to say if the Second World War had lasted another 5 years, that segregation in America would have ended much quicker. I remember vividly those Polish families and my family—Black and Italian families—sharing coupons for shoes and for sugar and for meat and for gasoline—as if it were yesterday. And that bonding that took place there can be reflected in these museums and in this museum.

And toward that end, I would hope that we have the kind of travel through it once it is fully open that will allow for others. One final note on that, and then I turn to Chris.

We encourage youngsters to go to the Holocaust Museum here in Washington. And I have had the good fortune of meeting with some of them after they have visited the Holocaust Museum and not always Jewish children—Black and white children. And it makes a lasting impression. Of all of the places that they visit here in Washington, I consider that to be of immense significance.

And so just like that museum, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, other places around the world, provide this history of what transpired. I think that this museum will be a shining beacon in that area of Europe and much needed. I apologize for the length of my statement. But I turn to my colleague, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. I think the Chairman really concluded very well. And I do have other questions, but I'll forego those. But maybe just raise one issue that I think could be very helpful. And you probably have already thought about it. And that is that working with the American Jewish Committee and USAID, and although the funding is on-again, off-again, we've been pushing the idea of training the trainer, trying to get the police to understand what a hate crime looks like. When you find or discover a Swastika on a Jewish grave, that's not some act of hooliganism or some petty crime. That's an act of hate.

The thought would be—and maybe in terms of outreach, because you'll be outreaching, I'm sure, to just about everybody. But the more effectively you can get police and police academy types as they're going through into the museum to see it—and I would agree with my friend and colleague, Mr. Hastings. The first time I went to the Holocaust museum, I was just absolute bowled over. I mean, I walk out of there numb. I've gone back many times since. And every time, I walk out with some additional, "Oh, how could they?"

I remember looking at one big mural, like the size of this wall behind us, of all these young German youth looking up at the Fuhrer with this look in their eye of mesmerized by his rhetoric, I guess. But how could they have followed such a monster? Well, they did. And some were naive. Lots of others were complicit and very much aware and did it anyway.

So the more we can get police into the museum to get sensitized and maybe some police training at that venue itself might be something you would consider; because if you get the police right, less—for years I've worked on the Northern Irish issue and held 12 hearings on policing in Northern Ireland and the lack of honesty, the collusion that was so rampant and, you know, mostly was siding with the Protestant side. But it was a very, very bad situation.

Once you get the policing right—they really know what they're doing, and they know how to discern a hate crime, and are not looking the other way or looking askance, and you prosecute, and there's predictability in the sentences that are meted out, the better. And I think that getting police into the museum could be a very, very helpful way of mitigating crimes against Jewish people.

Mr. HASTINGS. Just one final statement, if I may. And then we'll conclude. And that's Minister Ziomecka, you said in your remarks that the museum is a national commitment above partisan divide; and that the government is going to support, but not control, the content. We especially welcome the messages that you've brought from your government and the mayor of Warsaw. And we'll also do what we can, as you well know, to support the museum as well.

Yes, Mr. Rolat, you have—

[Crosstalk.]

Mr. ROLAT. I would just like to add, in line with what you just said, that that is also a concern of the Jewish community here. And

this is a very, very important point to remember—that this is really a partnership. In a way, it's the first kind, actually, of this sort of a museum; because as you know, in Europe museums are national. This museum actually is a partnership of the Polish Government.

And the Polish Government provides the mortar, the bricks, the land. It's all provided and paid for fully by the Polish Government. But the exhibition itself, the outreach programs, the educational programs and so on are really overseen, provided, by the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, in very close relationship with us here in the United States and with the Jewish communities in Europe.

So I think that's a very, very important point to remember—that there is no hint, nor any possibility, of any governmental censorship or dictation. And I would only like to add, if I may, that we have here the one person who is perhaps more responsible for this state of affairs. And I cannot really just see this meeting adjourned without my mentioning; because this very week, the largest news magazine in Poland, *Post*, has an article—a two-page article—about our museum, singling out the efforts and success of Secretary Ziomecka.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yes.

Mr. ROLAT. A Christian, the most wonderful example of what ecumenism should be all about.

Mr. HASTINGS. Right.

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. Thank you very much.

Mr. ROLAT. Thank you.

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. Thank you. [Applause.]

Mr. HASTINGS. With that—

Ms. JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA. And if I may add one sentence. When the museum was almost gave up, because there was no support, I was in Warsaw. And I called—on the project. It's a project. I lived in Warsaw at that time. And I called my friends, Ewa, Steve and Sigmund and said, "Well, you have to help. You have to help." And that, without them, this project will collapsed.

So I'd like to use this opportunity to thank all the American friends who are on the board, who are supporting us already. I thank you them very, very much.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you, all. And that concludes our hearing. I'm delighted that you were here. Thanks for everything.

Ms. WIERZYNSKA. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, CO-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Six decades ago, Nazi occupiers of Poland established a ghetto in the heart of Europe, into which they rounded up an estimated 450,000 Polish Jews. After brutally crushing the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, they liquidated the Warsaw Ghetto, and sent most of the small number of remaining survivors to concentration camps and death camps.

Today, next to the Ghetto Heroes Memorial, work has begun on the Museum of the History of Polish Jews—a Museum to reclaim the culture and contributions of Polish Jewry that the Nazis sought to destroy forever. It is no wonder this Museum has been called by some “a Museum of life.”

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for your personal leadership in convening this hearing on a very important subject. I commend you for recognizing the role of this Museum in reclaiming a shared experience, a common history that was rent apart by the Holocaust. With a large number of Polish-Americans and Jewish Americans of Polish origin, I believe our country is also a stakeholder in the success of this endeavor. Indeed, the question of how one reclaims memory is not unique to Poland, and there may be lessons here for other countries in the OSCE region. This Museum will serve as a living educational center that will contribute to combating anti-Semitism, bigotry, and intolerance in all its forms.

To support this effort, I co-sponsored the Support for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews Act when it was first introduced by my colleague Chris Smith in the House in 2006, and I have co-sponsored Senator Menendez’s companion bill, S.2679. I commend Chris for recognizing the important contribution this Museum can make, not just for Poland but for the many Americans who trace their heritage to that country.

The fact is, Polish-Jewish history is complex, and much of the last century has been dominated by deeply painful experiences—and here I am speaking not only of the Holocaust.

But it was not always that way. Poland became home to the world’s largest Jewish community because it was a place of refuge, a safe haven, as Jews were forced out of other parts of Europe by repression and persecution. Polish lands gave birth to great Jewish scientists, artists, writers, and theologians, and enriched the Yiddish-speaking world beyond measure. The thousand years of Polish-Jewish life should be embraced, taught, and shared. Indeed, former Polish Prime Minister Leszek Miller called this Museum a “restitution of memory.”

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would be remiss if I did not mention an issue I raised with Polish officials in Warsaw in 2003. Poland stands alone, among the post-Communist, Central European countries, in its failure to adopt a comprehensive property restitution or compensation law. That is a separate issue from today’s hearing, but I must say that I regret this issue has not yet been resolved,

I hope the next time I visit Poland, that issue will be definitively addressed. And next time, I hope to visit the Museum of Polish Jews.

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
RANKING MEMBER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND CO-
OPERATION IN EUROPE**

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our guests who have come here today to bear witness to this important project.

At the beginning of World War II, Poland had the largest Jewish population in Europe. According to some estimates, eighty percent of world Jewry has family ties to this prewar community. Tragically, as a result of the Holocaust, a once thriving community was virtually destroyed.

In 1996, a group of people developed the idea for a museum dedicated to the culture, art, and history of Poland's Jews. As one of the museum's founders told me, "We often learn how Jews died, but rarely how they lived." The Museum of the History of Polish Jews will change this, by not only commemorating the three million Polish Jews who died during the Holocaust and World War II, but also celebrating the rich 1,000 years of Polish Jewish life. The interactive museum will allow visitors to view the long history of Jews in Poland in context, examining their culture, their accomplishments, and the challenges they faced.

It was on a trip to Warsaw several years ago that I met with museum advocates and this vision of a dynamic institution focused on the lives and contributions of Poland's Jews first caught my attention. I have been following and supporting the development of the museum ever since.

I look forward to hearing more today about the museum's facilities: its multimedia installations and an archive that I understand contains over 60,000 computer files of images collected from around the world. The museum has assembled a team of scholars, historians and museum experts from Poland, Israel and the United States to develop the collections.

The museum will have a 5,400 square-foot, state-of-the-art education center for visitors. Multimedia displays and terminals will share the museum's electronic holdings with visitors, who will also have access to a reading room and library.

This public outreach element is an important part of the museum. Today we know that anti-Semitism is a dangerous and growing force—in Europe and elsewhere in the world. A better understanding of the great contributions that Polish Jews have made to their communities, in addition to an examination of the Holocaust, will help fight off the ignorance and lies that bring about this bigotry.

There is no better time for a living monument to stand against anti-Semitism than now, and no better place than a country in the heart of Europe—the lands the Nazis invaded to carry out their murderous plans, killing Jews from a dozen countries, along with Polish Catholics, Roma, and other "undesirables".

The Government of Poland and City of Warsaw have combined to designate some 38 million dollars for the museum, in addition to a parcel of land in the heart of what was once the Warsaw Jewish Quarter. A number of private corporations and individuals from the United States, France, Germany, Israel, Poland, and other European countries have also agreed to contribute. In November, the government of Germany signed an agreement to donate 7.6 million

dollars to the effort. All these donors want to do whatever they can to preserve the memory of these communities—and combat anti-Semitism.

In a similar way I felt it would be appropriate for the United States government to do what it could to make this vision a reality, so I introduced HR 3320, which authorizes 5 million dollars for support of the museum. I'm happy to report that 17 members of congress co-sponsored the resolution, including my good friend Chairman Hastings, and the former Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Holocaust survivor Tom Lantos, who sadly did not live to see the museum completed. This bill was just one of many examples of bi-partisan cooperation that I enjoyed with Tom on important human rights issues.

Our bill passed by a resounding margin in the House (407–13) on November 14, and is now being considered in the Senate. I wish to thank my friend Senator Cardin, for his work in guiding this bill through his chamber.

Our contribution of 5 million dollars will be more than just a symbol of American commitment to religious freedom and the fight against anti-Semitism, although that is important. It will be more than a reminder of the historical ties that bind descendants of Polish Jews in the United States to their roots, although that, too, is a worthy goal. This contribution will help take another step in bringing this project to completion.

I salute all those, including many of our guests here today, who are devoting themselves to the completion of the museum. I, for one, look forward to visiting it when it is completed, and supporting what has been called a “restitution of memory”.

**JOINT PREPARED STATEMENT OF EWA JUNCZYK-ZIOMECKA,
UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE, CHANCELLERY OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND AND EWA
WIERZYNSKA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MUSEUM OF THE HIS-
TORY OF POLISH JEWS, WARSAW**

MISSION

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews (MHPJ)—a center for education and culture—is dedicated to preserving the lasting legacy of Jewish life in Poland and of the civilization created by Polish Jews over a period of 1,000 years. The Statute of the Museum declares that the Museum’s mandate is to exhibit the history of the Jews on the historical territory of the old Republic of Poland, including Warsaw. The Museum will foster respect for Jewish tradition and culture and stimulate dialogue in the spirit of mutual acceptance and tolerance. The founders of the Museum are the City of Warsaw, the Minister of Culture of Poland, the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland as well as an international community of donors and friends.

VISION

The Museum is the first and only museum to focus on the history of Polish Jews. Located on the site of the former Warsaw Ghetto, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will take its place alongside the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, D.C.), the Jewish Museum (Berlin), Yad Vashem (Jerusalem), and Beth Hatefutsoth, Museum of the Jewish Diaspora (Tel Aviv), as one of the most important institutions of its kind. The Museum of the History of Polish Jews will also provide Poland’s capital city with a multifunctional cultural institution that will set a new standard for museums internationally.

Poland was once home to the largest Jewish community in the world and center of the Jewish Diaspora. 80% of the world’s Jewry trace their ancestry to Poland, which was one of the largest and most culturally diverse countries in Europe. As a result, the legacy of Polish Jews extends also to areas that are today Lithuania, Belarus, and Latvia, as well as to parts of Ukraine, Estonia, and Western Russia.

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews will be a portal, a place to begin an exploration of the world of Polish Jews. It will be a forum, a place of dialogue and civic engagement. It will be a catalyst that inspires visitors to reflect on the personal and historical significance of the civilization of Polish Jews and take action to recover this legacy for future generations. The Museum of the History of Polish Jews will confront hatred, promote moral responsibility, and democratic values. The Museum will harness the emotional power of this site to animate dialogue about the past in relation to the present and the future.

As an international educational institution, cultural center, and singular meeting place for a diverse public, the Museum will provide a unique learning environment through cutting-edge multimedia narrative exhibitions, lively public programs, a resource center, education programs, and collaborative projects that engage a

broad public in Poland and abroad in the recovery and exploration of the legacy of Polish Jews.

THE AUDIENCE

No visit to Warsaw, indeed to Poland, will be complete without a visit to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. We expect 450,000 visitors a year, most of them from Poland. Jewish visitors from Israel, United States, Europe and elsewhere are estimated at 150,000–200,000, with international visitors making up the balance. The Museum is prepared to accommodate this diverse, multilingual audience and a wide variety of visiting patterns from large organized tour groups to school classes and families to individuals.

While the number of Jews living in Poland today is small, Jewish presence in the public consciousness is large. The Museum will build upon the growing interest in Polish-Jewish history, thereby encouraging discussion and building awareness among opinion leaders, the media, and the general public. The Museum will also inspire and support collaborative projects across Poland and abroad that engage a wide public in recovering and exploring the legacy of Polish Jews.

Polish visitors will see their history and the places where they live today in a new way. They will discover that the history of Poland is not complete without a history of Polish Jews. They will become acutely aware that their towns once had large and lively Jewish communities. They will discover the richness of the civilization that Jews created on Polish soil. For Jews across the globe, 80% of whom have roots in Poland, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will add depth and resonance to their visit to Poland and to their understanding of the Holocaust by presenting not only how Jews died, but also how they lived. All visitors will discover the vibrant civilization of what was once the largest Jewish community in the world and center of the Jewish Diaspora.

LEGAL STATUS AND SOURCES OF FUNDING

Founded in January of 2005, the Museum is the first public-private partnership of its type in Poland, a joint project of the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the City of Warsaw and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute. A crowning example of public-private collaboration in contemporary Europe, the Museum's diverse funding highlights how coexisting agendas among government entities and individual donors can serve a higher purpose in informing new generations of the world's citizens in the name of education, enlightenment, respect, tolerance and commemoration.

According to the Trilateral Agreement signed on January 25, 2005, the City of Warsaw and the Polish Government represented by the Ministry of Culture are each mandated to provide public funds needed to cover the cost of the construction of the building. The City additionally donated the land on which it will stand. A worldwide fundraising campaign led by the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute and administered in the United States and Canada by the North American Council of the Museum of the His-

tory of Polish Jews is focused on covering the costs of designing and installing the core exhibit and the educational programs.

The Museum already enjoys the support of a growing number of corporate and foundation partners, as well as individuals and institutions in the United States, France, Germany, Israel, Poland, and other European countries. A group of private philanthropists from Europe and the United States have each donated a million or more dollars to the Association. The German government has also provided funding to help reach the fund raising goals set by the Association. Several other governments have also either committed funds or indicated their intention to support the museum, and plans are in development to step up current fundraising efforts.

MUSEUM ORIGINS AND LOCATION

The idea for the Museum first came about in 1996 by a team led by a visionary Jeshayahu Weinberg—the founding director of the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv and director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum from 1988 to 1994. Before his death in 2000, Weinberg moved to Warsaw and assembled a team dedicated to the establishment of the Warsaw museum. He also chose present director of the Museum, Jerzy Halbersztadt to lead this new project. Mr. Weinberg's ideas de-emphasized the traditional focus on the display of objects and artifacts in most museums, and instead insisted that the Museum present a narrative through interactive activities and experiential exhibitions.

The Museum is located in what was once the heart of the Warsaw Jewish Quarter, where from the 19th century through 1939, between 70 and 90% of its inhabitants were Jewish. Beginning in 1940, the German Nazis began concentrating Poland's population of over three million Jews into a number of extremely overcrowded ghettos in various Polish cities. The Warsaw Jewish Quarter became the Warsaw Ghetto, holding an estimated 440,000 people in a densely-populated area surrounded by a wall. Even before the Nazis began their massive deportation of Jews from the ghetto to extermination camps, thousands of Warsaw Ghetto Jews died due to rampant disease or starvation. The ghetto was also the site of the largest Jewish revolt against the Nazis in occupied Europe: the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. This month-long struggle led by members of organized groups attempted to prevent further deportation of ghetto residents to concentration camps. The Nazis brutally ended the fighting by burning the ghetto and killing or deporting any surviving Jews.

In 1998, the Warsaw City Council donated 3.2 acres (13,000 square meters) within the former Prewar Jewish Quarter and Warsaw Ghetto to the future home of the Museum. In 1999, archaeological excavations of the museum land uncovered documents buried during the war years. These documents have entered into the permanent collection of the Museum. In 1948, a monument designed by Natan Rappaport was dedicated to the resistance fighters. This monument is located directly across the plaza from the future museum. The significance of this site, its historical weight and the power with which it speaks to visitors is one of the building blocks of the future Museum.

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

The Finnish architectural team of Rainer Mahlamäki and Ilmari Lahdelma was selected to design the Museum in 2005 after winning an international competition conducted by a jury of 13 architectural scholars, museum directors and cultural affairs professionals from around the world. This competition was the first of its kind in Poland. 117 architects submitted proposals to Phase One of the competition, and the winning design prevailed over 10 other shortlisted entries, including those by Studio Daniel Libeskind, Peter Eisenman Architects, Kengo Kuma and Zvi Hecker.

The museum exterior is square in plan to echo the shape of the plaza on which it is situated but the transparent glass walls reveal an interior of organic, undulating forms. The design alludes to the Old Testament's miraculous parting of the Red Sea through which the prophet Moses led the Jews to escape captivity in Egypt to life in the Promised Land. The curved walls and ceiling are faced in limestone and lit from above, providing a dramatic sight from both interior and exterior viewpoints. In this way, the museum's design foregrounds the life of the Jewish people over any particular catastrophic events in history, and its transparency reflects the desire for an open reckoning with the past.

Many of the complex architectural details of the five-story cultural center are without precedent in Poland and Europe. The soaring entrance hall reaches from ground level to the roof, measuring over 52 feet high and stretches across the length of the building, providing sightlines to the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes, situated across the plaza from the Museum. The chasm that divides the 16,000-square-foot main lobby underscores the contrast between the building's minimalist exterior and multifaceted interior program.

In the words of architect Rainer Mahlamäki: "The counterpoint for the new building is Monument to the Ghetto Heroes and the square in the front of the monument. This monument has a great historical and symbolic value which should not be obscured by the Museum building. Thus our goal was to combine the building and the square into one symmetrical entity. The square basis of the Museum is mirrored by the square whose center is marked by the monument. Thus even during the designing period a dialogue was initiated between the monument and the Museum building: a dialogue rooted in their geometrical analogy."

"The dramatically curved walls and their limestone or sandstone texture should not only cause a viewer to contemplate Polish Jewish history but also the vibrant history of all Jews. The Hebrew name for our design was Yum Suf (Parting of the Red Sea) and it was adopted during the modeling of this interior. A ramp completes the multifaceted symbolism of the main hall. It is like a bridge spanning the depths of time reaching to the future, symbolizing an Israeli hillside landscape and the passage of the Red Sea."

With the permanent exhibition at its core, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will serve as a center for cultural, educational and social activities. It will include facilities for conferences, seminars, lectures, gatherings of various size and character, film festivals, concerts, and other events.

MUSEUM MAIN SPACES

Core exhibition 4,331 sq. meters / 46,618 square feet
 Temporary exhibition space 991sq. meters / 10,667 square feet
 Education center 500 sq. meters / 5,400 square feet
 Library - mediatheque 428 sq. meters / 4,606 square feet
 Auditorium with movie-theatre and concert hall 2,140 sq. meters
 / 23,034 sq. feet
 Restaurant 400 sq. meters / 4,305 square feet

THE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Phase 1 architectural design Sept. 08–March 08
 Phase 2 construction company selection April 08–Dec. 08
 Phase 3 building construction Dec. 08–Dec. 10

THE CORE EXHIBITION

The MHPJ is a 140,000 square-foot interactive, narrative museum where exhibitions are designed to tell the story of historical events rather than focus on the presentation of objects, artworks or artifacts. The eight galleries that house the museum's core exhibition provide 46,618 square-feet of space and will be equipped with the latest technological capacities to showcase a variety of multimedia techniques. Videos, films, computer-generated holograms, as well as traditional three-dimensional scale models, will together enable visitors to experience first-hand the presentation of 1,000 years of life in Poland.

Since 2006, a team of scholars, historians and museum experts and designers from Poland, Great Britain, Israel and the United States have been developing the core exhibition. Professor Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett of New York University heads the Core Exhibition Planning Team. The daughter of Polish Jews who emigrated from Poland before the Holocaust, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is trained as a cultural anthropologist and has written seven books and countless articles on the subject of museums and Jewish culture.

Using a wide variety of primary sources, media, and cutting-edge technology we will create evocative environments, engrossing narratives, and interactive installations that encourage visitors to explore subjects in depth.

More a "theatre of history" and unique learning environment than a conventional exhibition of objects and labels, our exhibition will creatively engage the minds and hearts of diverse visitors of all ages. Visitors to the Museum will have a sense of actually "being there" as they immerse themselves in the world of a culturally diverse Polish Republic. They will discover the vibrant civilization of what was once the largest Jewish community in the world and center of the Jewish Diaspora.

The main exhibition entitled "The 1000 year-history of Jews in Poland" will provide a key educational tool for visitors and a frame of reference for all other museum activities. Based on a narrative experience the exhibition will consist of eight main galleries:

- The First Encounters: 10th to 15th centuries
- Paradisus Judeorum: 16th to mid-17th centuries
- Into the Country: mid-17th century - end of the 18th century

- Under the Three Empires; Encounters with Modernity: 1795–1914
- The Street: 1918–1939
- The Holocaust: 1939–1945
- The Post War Years: 1946 to the Present
- Legacy

In June of 2007 the Core Exhibition Planning Team completed a 250 page document outlining the scheme design of the future exhibition. The project is now in the detailed design phase. This phase includes an intensive process of research, historical programming, design, production and installation. It will be conducted simultaneously with the construction of the Building and it is expected to conclude six months after the opening of the building in early 2011.

Below are some of the names of prominent academics involved with the creation of the core exhibition and their affiliations.

Professor Hanna Zaremska, Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences; Adam Teller Ph.D., Haifa University; Professor David Assaf, Tel Aviv University; Marcin Wodzinski Ph.D, University of Wroclaw; Professor Samuel Kassow, Trinity College Hartford; Michael Steinlauf Ph.D, Gratz College Philadelphia; Associate Professor Barbara Engelking-Boni, Polish Center of the Holocaust, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences; Jacek Leociak Ph.D, Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences; Havi Ben Sasson Ph.D, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Helena Datner, Jewish Historical Research Institute in Poland and Professor Stanislaw Krajewski, Warsaw University.

The Core Exhibition Project Schedule

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

As an international educational institution, cultural center and meeting place, the Museum will provide a unique learning environment through:

- a cutting-edge multimedia narrative exhibition,
- lively public programs (films, performances, conferences, symposia, meetings, commemorations)
- a resource center and educational programs for school and youth groups, as well as international student exchanges
- collaborative projects that engage a broad public in Poland and abroad in the recovery and exploration of the legacy of Polish Jews.

The Museum will be filled with programs for schools, families, young people and teachers. International youth exchange programs will provide an interchange of ideas and perspectives, while ongoing community outreach and public programs, currently held at the museum's temporary outpost, "The Ohel," will focus on Jewish traditions and culture, as well as civic education.

Even before the Museum opens, its educational Mission has begun. Its public programs, such as film screenings, school partnerships, academic panels, concerts and visual art projects seek to inspire questions and stimulate exploration and learning. The Museum's Educational Center opened in Spring of 2007 and is supported by the creation of the sophisticated, ever-growing database of over 60,000 records of visual images collected from archives, libraries,

galleries, museums and private collections in Eastern Europe and around the world.

WEB-BASED LEARNING

Technology will provide remote access to the Museum resources for those who cannot visit. Among the web-based projects in development with the support of Polish and foreign foundations is the Virtual Shtetl web project, which supports the work of a dispersed community of local keepers of Jewish heritage, many of them young Polish amateur researchers who document remaining Jewish material culture and memory in the most remote towns and villages. The Museum provides a platform where cutting-edge technology and professional services (i.e. translations) augment human passion, thereby enabling the virtual community to share work and discoveries within the country and all over the world.

CURRENT RESEARCH, EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Memorabilia Collection Program

Objects of interest include: personal and family mementos, paintings, photographs, official documents, everyday articles, letters or memoirs, which tell the history of Polish Jews. The donated memorabilia are recorded and then returned to their owners.

Recording Polish Roots in Israel—an Oral History Project

This will provide many answers to the questions about how to create an engaging historical display. Fragments of personal accounts, pictures and audio records will be included into the galleries. Plans to extend the Polish roots program to the United States, Canada, Western Europe and Australia are under way.

Polish Righteous—Recalling Forgotten Memory

Exploring the life-stories of Poles who rescued Jews during the Holocaust, this project aims to create a comprehensive Internet data base related to the Polish Righteous among Nations. The multimedia resources on the web will be fully accessible for everyone interested in this subject—schools, universities, scholars, educational institutions and individuals.

The Poland-Israel Student Exchange

This program will provide Polish university students with the opportunity to study at Tel Aviv University and live with Israeli families. Israeli students then reciprocate by taking part in study tours, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and breaking down stereotypes.

One-Day Youth Encounters

Thousands of young Israelis will have the chance to travel to Poland on educational tours in order to meet and interact with their Polish peers for a day. Friendships will develop as they work on historical sites, explore common history and participate in fun activities.

The PIYE Blog Project

Utilizing the latest in internet technologies, this interactive and multimedia program brings together young Israelis and Poles in the exploration of common history and rewards the most creative blog authors with study tours in the partnering country.

The Muranów Outreach Project

This program, based in the former Jewish neighborhood of Muranów where the museum will stand partners with neighborhood schools in the pursuit of maintaining and sharing the unique history and lasting legacies of this part of Warsaw.

VIP Presentations about the Museum

These are offered to a variety of international and Jewish groups, individuals, researchers, students and opinion leaders not only in the future premises but also in “the Ohel,” the museum’s temporary site.

“The Ohel”

Since its inauguration on September 21, 2006 the Museum’s team has managed to establish “the Ohel” as an important spot in the cultural landscape of Warsaw through various public projects conveying knowledge about the history of Polish Jews, the richness of their culture and the Jewish contribution to the culture of Poland.

The Museum’s Musical Scene

On September 1st and 2nd, The Mizrach project brought avant-garde and jazz music to “the Ohel,” inaugurating the first of many musical programs the Museum hopes to host. There are plans to bring the Mizrach project back in 2008 not only to Warsaw but also other cities.

The Night of Museums

With a screenings of two pre-war films: ‘Cult of the body’ (silent film, 1927) and ‘Jidn mitn fidl’ (with a live musical score) the Museum took part in an annual Warsaw event The Night of the Museums.

Rethinking Commemorations

In a commemorative project named Urban Playground: Postcards from a Non-Existent City, young participants had an opportunity to rediscover places altered by history. This was done with the help of game sets, each containing a special map, on which today’s street plan overlaps the pre-war city plan of the pre-war Jewish quarter and in the Ghetto. The task was to find 12 locations of special historical significance. More than 400 Warsaw youth participated.

Storytelling and the Jewish Holidays

Workshops for neighborhood children include storytelling and a play based on the traditional themes of the Jewish Holidays, introducing a lost tradition and largely unknown history to the younger generations.

LEADERS WHO SUPPORT THE MUSEUM

Since 2002, the Museum has been developed first, with the support and then under the auspices of the Presidents of Poland. It also enjoys the influential support from abroad such as President of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres, from 2002–present, Chairman of the International Honorary Committee.

A short list of today's honorary leaders includes: The President of the Republic of Poland, Prof. Lech Kaczynski, Former President Aleksander Kwasniewski, Mayor of Warsaw Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz and the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Bogdan Zdrojewski.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FROM GERMANY AND OTHER COUNTRIES OF EUROPE

On November 12, 2007, German Ambassador to Poland, Mr. Michael H. Gerdts, and the Chairman of the Jewish Historical Institute Association, Mr. Marian Turski, signed the agreement regarding the German government's donation for the Museum. Five million Euros, from the financial resources of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs will support the design and production of the Museum core exhibition and information technology (IT) infrastructure of the new building.

In the words of Ambassador, Michael H. Gerdts, Germany's donation will "support this one-of-a-kind design of the Museum. A museum which, with the use of high-end technology to introduce, particularly to young people, a thousand-year long history of Jewish contribution to the history and culture of Poland."

Five million Euros from the Germans was the first government grant received from abroad. Negotiations on the possibility of receiving support from other governments are in progress. Most recently, during the annual meeting of the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF), Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France declared the support of France for the museum in the following words: "The Museum of the History of Polish Jews will be built opposite the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes. It will commemorate 1000 years of Jewish history and culture in Poland and will be a reminder of how quickly hatred can doom an entire community to extermination. France supports this project—one that is very important for European memory—and will help in its realization."

COMMITTEES OF SUPPORT AND THE NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE MUSEUM

Committees of support now exist in Poland, The United States, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, The Netherlands and Israel. These committees rally friends of the Museum within their respective communities. They also work to promote the Museum, organizing fundraising and awareness campaigns, and recruit new supporters.

The North American Council of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, a 501(c)(3) organization based in New York, is the most active of these organizations with a devoted board of American philanthropists, including Sigmund Rolat, Victor Markowicz

and Tad Taube and a professional staff headed by Stephen Solender.

To date the North American Council has raised approximately 10 million dollars and mounted dozens of successful educational events. It is aided by a community of Polish-American and Jewish-American volunteers who have been active in promoting the Museum on both coasts.

The North American Council's fundraising goal for 2008–2010 is 34.8 million dollars. The funds will be earmarked for the creation of the galleries, supporting educational and public programs as well as current operations. Discussions about creating a 40 million dollar endowment is under way. An endowment of this sort would be another "first" in Poland's culture institutions. It would serve to introduce new ways of financial management in the field of preservation of cultural heritage in Eastern and Central Europe.

INDIVIDUAL, CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT

The Museum, with its boldness of vision, modernity and originality, as well as the fact that it seems to go against some of the deepest held stereotypes, and touches history in a very personal, dramatic way seems to appeal to true visionaries. The Museum even has the power to engage an entirely new group of philanthropists who understand the importance of its mission and share its vision.

The below list of names—individual, foundation and corporate—lead the list of the Museum benefactors. We are grateful to all who have lent and who continue to lend their support to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

BENEFACTORS:

Monica and Victor Markowicz, Maurice Bidermann, Corinne Evens, Janette and Aleksander Goldberg, Koret Foundation, Ryszard Krauze Foundation and Prokom Investments S.A., Jeanette and Joseph Neubauer and The Neubauer Family Foundation, Carmit and Ygal Ozechov, Sigmund Rolat, Tad Taube and Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, Tomek Ulatowski. The Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation, The Przezornosc Foundation on behalf of Prudential plc., The Rothschild Foundation Europe, Yaron Bruckner, The German Committee for the Support of the Museum, The British Committee for the Support of the Museum, TP Group Foundation, Polonia Aid Foundation Trust in the United Kingdom, PKN Orlen, Weil, Gotshal & Manges, Bank BPH, American International Group Inc., Boeing International, KPMG, Bank BISE, Eurozet, Deutsche Bank PBC S.A., AIG Polska, WestLB Bank Polska S.A., Ronson Development Group, Kraft Foods, Axel Springer Polska, Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan, Robinski & Associates Sp. z o.o., The GESSEL law firm.

In 2006 an initiative was started to encourage the corporate world in Poland to aid in the creation of the Museum. A Corporate Committee was formed to lead and advise on a program of sponsorship and support for the Museum. The committee membership includes representatives from AIG Polska, Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan, Eurozet, KPMG (Poland), McDermott

Will & Emery LLP, and Weil, Gotshal & Manges (Poland), each of which has lent support to the Museum.

Former Polish foreign minister and a “Righteous Among the Nations” Wladyslaw Bartoszewski helped elucidate the role of Museum support at a meeting of Polish corporate leaders: “Your participation in the creation of this Museum speaks volumes about your openness and the respect you have for people of other countries, cultures, religions and races. This is the type of person, the type of attitude that Europe, America and the entire world need so much. Those who help build this Museum automatically gain the right to call on that fact and use it as a passport to the world.”

WHY SHOULD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SUPPORT THE MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS IN WARSAW, POLAND?

80% of today’s world Jewry traces its roots to Poland and to life that was destroyed during the Holocaust. The Museum will not only maintain and disseminate the innumerable accomplishments and vast history of the Polish Jews, but it will also work tirelessly to build bridges between individuals, communities, and cultures.

To rekindle the spirit of one thousand years of Polish Jewry, our Museum will be more than a repository for historical data. Rather, it will instill a considerable measure of pride in the Jewish story of Poland and Eastern Europe.

Nine separate and engaging galleries and on-going, dynamic programs showcasing how Jewish life coalesced with Polish life from the beginning of both civilizations to the present day will leave visitors better informed and changed in their perspectives.

The world today is much better prepared to understand the lessons of intolerance and bigotry. Poland of the 21st century, especially, is taking bold steps necessary to move ahead. Yet regardless of one’s genetic makeup, a gift to create funding for the permanent exhibits for the Museum or to establish a \$40 million endowment housed in the United States makes a statement for peace and unity in a world that is still marred by war and ethnic and religious strife.

More than 400,000 visitors from around the world will participate each year in the Museum’s numerous cultural and educational programs, will see firsthand the thought-provoking exhibits and learn from provocative presentations, and attend various educational and cultural programs.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment no. 1—Milestones in the History of the Museum

1996—The Museum project is initiated by a group of dedicated individuals from the Jewish Historical Institute Association in Warsaw, led by Jeshayahu Weinberg, the founding director of the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv and director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum from 1988 to 1994.

1997—The Warsaw City Council donates 145,000 square feet of land for the Museum in front of the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes, already the primary locus of Polish and international Jewish commemorations of the uprising and the Holocaust.

1998—A Judaica database is initiated that will ultimately document more than 60,000 objects from more than a thousand repositories in Eastern Europe, Israel, and the United States. Excavations at the site of the Museum uncover documents and artifacts from the Warsaw Ghetto.

2000–03—International support committees organized around the Museum's mission and goals are established in Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States.

2001—Event Communications, the London-based, award-winning designers of exhibitions at the Memorial Museum Passchendaele in Belgium and the Imperial War Museum in Manchester, starts work on the museum's content and interior design.

April 18 2002—Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Shimon Peres (now the president of Israel) and many other leading members of the international community approve the concept of the Museum and the plans for the permanent exhibition at an international conference convened for this purpose by Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz.

2003—The Master Plan of the museum is completed. Each of the eight major sections in its core exhibition is devoted to a different time period in the history of Polish Jews. The storyline starts from the "First Encounters" and ends with a final section about contemporary "Revival of Jewish life in Poland"

January 2005—The Polish government and the Municipality of Warsaw sign a binding agreement with the Jewish Historical Institute Association to contribute the first \$26 million towards the Museum's construction and to cover 97% of its subsequent operating costs.

2005—The International Architectural Competition for the Museum building is held and the winners selected by the international jury. The design by Rainer Mahlamäki and Ilmari Lahdelma, architects from Finland is chosen as the future home of the Museum.

July 2005—An initial group of seven private philanthropists commit \$7 million to the Museum.

2006—The first meeting of the international core exhibition planning team. Based on the original terms of reference, the experts decide on the final shape of the exhibition. Professor Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, a cultural anthropologist at New York University leads the team.

September 2006—Michał Borowski, Warsaw's Chief Architect, signs the agreement with Rainer Mahlamäki on the final building design. "The Ohel", a temporary on-site artistic installation, is opened for Museum activities.

April 2007—The Education Center of the Museum opens. A group of 10 high-school students from Poland, and 10 from Israel are the first participants in the PIYE high-school exchange program.

May 2007—After four years of intense work, the core exhibition planning team and the Event Communications designers complete the Scheme Design, another important phase in the exhibition development.

June 2007—the official groundbreaking ceremony in Warsaw with the presence of the President Lech Kaczyński, The Minister

of Culture and National Heritage Kazimierz Micha. Ujazdowski, Warsaw Mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, President of Germany 1984–1994, Richard von Weizsäcker; private donors and Museum's friends represented by Victor Markowicz, Sigmund Rolat and Tad Taube.

November 2007—The German Government signs an agreement to provide 5 million Euros for the construction of the Museum.

January 2008—The technical documentation of the building is approved by the investors in opening the way for a public tender for construction of the Museum building.

Attachment no. 2—The Museum Leadership Team

According to Polish law, the Museum is led by its Director and a team of deputies:

Jerzy Halbersztadt—Museum Director, historian, former director of the Museum of the History of the University of Warsaw, in the years 1992–2003 project director for Poland of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.

Ewa Wierzyńska—Deputy Director and supervisor of the newly created Educational Center of the Museum.

Robert Supe.—Deputy Director for Finance and Operations.

Agnieszka Rudzińska—Deputy Director in charge of communication, public programs and cooperation with the Museum partners in Europe.

Renata Piatkowska, PhD.—Coordinator of the Core Exhibition Planning Team.

The Museum Executive Team works in close collaboration with the Board of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute—the parent organization of the Museum.

The Association of the Jewish Historical Institute is a non-profit, public interest entity, responsible for the raising of funds, as well as overseeing the use of these funds for expenses not directly related to the construction of the building, such as the design and the production of the core exhibition, the educational and public programs.

The Board of the Association comprised of 10 members, is chaired by Marian Turski—Chairman of the Board, historian and co-editor of the weekly *Polityka*, Lodz Ghetto survivor, member of the International Auschwitz Council.

Attachment no. 3—Selected articles in English language media

1. The Chicago Jewish News, February 2008
2. The New York Sun, June 2007
3. The New York Jewish Week, June 2007
4. The Jewish Exponent, March 2007
5. The New York Times, January 2003

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF SIGMUND ROLAT, CHAIRMAN OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL,
MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS**

Honorable Chairman Hastings and Members of the Commission:

In the following pages, I would like to explain why I believe now is the right time for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews and why Warsaw is the perfect place for it. Our Museum there will excel both in its content and context.

What better portal for any visitor wishing to trace the footsteps of Polish Jews, their millennium of accomplishment? Even the terrible holocaust cannot extinguish what the Polish Jews and their descendants achieved.

I disagree with the very direction of the so-called March of the Living which brings hundreds of thousands of American and Israeli youngsters to Poland. Thankfully, it is slowly changing but not enough. Its very name is a misnomer. Mainly it is a tour of the triangle of death—Auschwitz, Treblinka and Majdanek. While it is important to know about the horror perpetrated by the Nazis in Poland, is it not even more important to learn about the millennium of Jewish achievement in Poland? Are not the places of birth and the landscape of the great Polish Jews and their fascinating history more interesting than the German death camps? Especially for the young?

Years ago, before their Bar and Bat mitzvahs, I took my son and my daughters to Poland to see their ancestral land. It was, I suppose, my own, private version of the March of the Living. How enhanced would have been the experience of my children if their tour commenced at our projected Museum?! How profoundly a few hours there would have prepared them for the next few days?! Their itinerary would of course include my native city—a wonderful microcosm of Polish municipalities. I wanted my children to see the site of the Old Synagogue, the beautiful Mirowska which was where our Grand Rabbi officiated. Traditionally, with a Torah in his arm, the Grand Rabbi would greet the Polish President on his visit to Czestochowa. The synagogue boasted ceiling and wall frescoes by the renowned Prof. Peretz Wilenberg which he painted for three years á la Michelangelo.

In that synagogue, like national treasure, was preserved for over a hundred years a battle flag with its white eagle. It was entrusted for safe-keeping by a Polish troop detachment, commanded by Prince Poniatowski retreating with the Napoleonic Army. For all these years it became the inner lining of the plush cover of the Holy Torah ark sanctum.

I was born in Czestochowa and I fondly remember my happy childhood. My grandfather operated a small school at Stary Rynek where all subjects were taught in the Polish language. Ever the schoolmaster, he taught me how to count to 100 in Russian and he gave me a Kolo Swiata, an ingenious two part cardboard disk which, when properly aligned, showed you the capitals and other information for all the countries in the world. I must have been the only five year old boy in Czestochowa who could tell you that Bangkok was the capital of Siam and that Siam was a kingdom.

My parents and my older brother Jerzyk were killed during the war. Both my father and Jerzyk died fighting the Nazis. Jerzyk at

18 was the youngest in a group of six partisans. My father was killed in the Treblinka death camp uprising.

Jerzyk and I attended the Hebrew Gymnasium, a most prestigious old school once headed by Daniel Neufeld who first translated the sidur Hebrew prayer book into the Polish language.

Czestochowa, famed for the Black Madonna icon at Jasna Gora, is the most Catholic city in Poland. One third of its prewar population was Jewish. A very important and productive third. Not only did Jews build the first textile mill or paper factory but also a concert hall and theater were funded by Jewish philanthropy.

I was a Pole whose religion happened to be Jewish. On high holidays, we attended the handsome New Synagogue but we also celebrated the Constitution Day on May 3rd. When our beloved Marshall Pilsudski died, there was pervasive sadness and mourning among the Jews of Czestochowa.

We who lived in Czestochowa during the war in the ghetto, in hiding, in the Hasag camp where I survived with some 30 children carry with us some harrowing memories.

I was lucky to immigrate to the USA where I proved, as millions before and after me, what America is all about. A young penniless, orphaned boy willing to apply himself, can receive the best education, prosper and secure a solid place in society for his family and himself. Only in America!

The history of Polish Jews is almost as old as historic Poland. We hear about Poland from early Jewish medieval chronicles. Earliest mentioning of Poland is on the first coins ever minted there by the Jewish minters. More prolific are later accounts of the great period of the Golden Ages of the Polish Commonwealth. As Spain and Portugal persecuted and expelled Jews, while onerous restrictions were commonplace elsewhere in Europe, Polish kings welcomed them and granted them privileges and special charters.

For hundreds of years more Jews lived in Poland than anywhere else in the world. The Va'ad Arba' Artzot, the (Jewish) Council of the Four Lands (of Poland) was the only Jewish Executive political body that existed between the destruction of the Second Temple and the creation of the Jewish Agency in Palestine.

And so as Polish Jews, we lived for nearly a millennium in the land that once made up the Kingdom and the Commonwealth of Poland. These lands were much bigger than the territory of the present Polish State. At their maximum, they stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from Germany to the borders of Asiatic Russia; they coincided broadly with what we call today Eastern Europe. You found there a very diverse array of people and cultures. While the rulers were Polish, the peasants were always Polish, but at various periods also Lithuanian, Latvian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian. Cities and towns were populated by Poles, Jews and Germans but also by Armenians, Greeks, Kazakhs, Tatars and other groups. In the past two hundred years, these lands were first annexed by the empires of Russia, Austria and Germany and then in the 20th century they were partitioned into nation states.

Our Museum, through its multimedia narrative exhibitions will magnificently portray the centuries of Jewish life and accomplishments in the early settlements and the Middle Ages. In the cities and towns, Jews often made up half or more of the population. In

the largely agricultural economy, Jews cultivated commerce and crafts. They helped shape the country - not as tolerated guests but as proud builders. They developed a unique diaspora civilization that thrived amidst the cultural diversity of Polish lands. A strong minority, they managed to maintain an identity rooted in a clearly defined Jewish way of life. Hundreds of magnificent wooden and masonry synagogues became the backdrop for Yiddish, the vernacular language of Polish Jews. Born was Hassidism, the revivalist movement that wished to serve God through song and dance. The countless Talmudic study centers spawned great sages and teachers—Baal Shem Tov and the Vilna Gaon, other gaonim and tsaddikim. The intellectual ferment brought about the Haskalah movement, the precursor of Zionism and Israel.

Elaborating on the writings of the German Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim, Boston Rabbi Joseph Polak states flatly in a recent letter to me

“... without Poland there would be no Torah today.” Interestingly, a Polish historian Pawel Spiewak in a new interview also cites Emil Fackenheim as the architect of the 614th injunction (in addition to the Ten Commandments, there are 613 injunctions—the body of Jewish Law): “Most important is that (Yiddishkeit) ‘Jewishness’ be preserved—otherwise we allow the Nazis to triumph. For that we owe a debt of gratitude to historic Poland.”

Through the millennium, Yiddishkeit thrived and was preserved in Poland and the world through the descendants of Polish Jews. As Senator Menendez so well put it when introducing the Museum assistance bill, our Museum “will protect a spirit deeply connected to our own, a heritage we cannot afford to let slip away.”

Jews fought in Poland’s wars and uprisings to reclaim Polish independence. They fought and died—from that great cavalry commander Berek Joselewicz to over 800 Polish Jewish officers butchered at Katyn. As US culture is magnificently the product of its melting pot civilization, so too Polish Jews played an integral part in enriching their Polish fatherland. The poetry of Julian Tuwim, the prose of Isaac Bashevis Singer, the art of Bruno Schulz, the music of Artur Rubinstein, the greats of theater and film—all these were proud elements of Polish culture.

Throughout its entire post-war history, Poland has struggled with the memory of its Jewish past. Having witnessed the most devastating genocide in human history, committed by the Germans on Polish soil, in front of Polish witnesses would have, all alone, been hard enough to deal with. Human societies do not witness genocides and then carry on as usual. The memory remains, in stories told and untold and in the nightmares. This burden alone would have been hard to bear. The burden was compounded by the fact that while so many wonderful, brave men risked theirs and their families’ lives to save their Jewish neighbors, some collaborated with the occupiers. While doubtless most Poles lamented the Jewish tragedy, among some there was shameful glee for finally having been freed of the “Jewish question”—a slogan very current in the Fascist wave of prewar Europe which also found strong echoes in Poland of the late 1930s.

Any meaningful discussion of Polish Jewish history of the war-time years or of the nine hundred years which had preceded them

was impossible with the advent of Soviet communism. France, for instance, had faced similar problems of memory as Poland. True, there the Jewish death toll was smaller but there the French state itself and not only individual Frenchmen had participated in the crime. France struggled for half a century to come to terms with the problem. And France had a double advantage over Poland in that respect. Not only had it emerged from the war only wounded and not nearly shattered but, even more importantly—it emerged from the war a free country. Poland had lost 6 million dead (more than half of them Jewish) or over 15 percent of its population to France's 560 thousand or less than 1½ percent. And Poland fell victim to Soviet occupation. The war that broke out over Poland's independence ended with the country losing it again.

The Polish communist regime the Soviets had set up was bloody, brutal and hostile to free discussion. The country was far too traumatized to be able to engage in much intellectual introspection anyway but when on occasion it tried, the communist censor would intervene.

Communism not only stifled debate but twisted and perverted it. To be fair, there were some prominent Polish communists of Jewish origin which rendered the quandary even worse—at least until the “anti-Zionist” purge of 1968. By then, the small and shrinking community of Jewish survivors was too weak to provide any counterweight. Apart from a brief mention here and there, the history of Polish Jewry disappeared from textbooks of Polish history and even from guidebooks to formerly significantly or predominantly Jewish towns. The communists reveled in what they considered one of their main successes - the new ethnic unity of Poland. And for once nobody challenged them. Not only the Jewish origins of many communist politicians became unmentionable; the same became true of the biographies of outstanding figures of Polish science, art and letters—including some of the country's most beloved poets. Remaining Jewish monuments gradually decayed. Cemeteries became dumps or construction sites, synagogues were converted into storage facilities, sport clubs, or at best, museums or concert halls.

History of the war was rewritten; its Jewish victims became anonymous “Polish citizens”; the Shoah merely a footnote to the—only too real—“suffering of the Polish nation at the hands of the Hitlerites.” The Auschwitz site was officially named “Museum of the Martyrology of the Polish Nation and Other Nations.” In that list, Jews were mentioned last as the Polish word for Jews begins with the last letter of the Polish alphabet. (I well remember my heated argument with an Auschwitz guide in 1967 when a 3-hour tour ended without him once mentioning the word Jew). The only remaining visible sign of nearly a millennium of history—Nathan Rappaport's towering Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Fighters—stood on the central square of a new housing development which had grown around it out of the ghetto ruins. One almost wondered why it had been built at all.

Much has been done to change this sorry state of affairs since Poland recovered its independence in 1989, became part of Europe and proudly a friend of the USA and Israel. Literally hundreds of books of Jewish interest have been published. The Jewish culture festivals in Krakow and Warsaw have become the European con-

continent's largest. Hundreds of Polish scholars, writers, journalists and community activists have produced an impressive array of works, scientific monographs, journalistic debates, memoirs and local commemorations of neighbors lost. Public debates about the iniquities of the past—honest now and daring—attract widespread attention and passion. Jan Gross' seminal "Neighbors" was read or read about by a stunning 85 percent of Poles. The nascent Jewish community, through its recovered rebuilt synagogues, schools and organizations and events directed to society at large is very much part of this vibrant scene.

In the waning days of communism, Congressman Steven Solarz met with Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader in Gdansk. Present was also a young State department intern Christopher Hill (later American Ambassador to Poland and now the Under Secretary conducting negotiations with North Korea). My friend Solarz asked me to accompany him as his interpreter. Since those heady days in 1990, I have become a frequent visitor and investor in my native Poland.

On one such visit, I met with several officials in Czestochowa. Professor Jerzy Mizgalski asked for my help in presenting an exhibition about the long history of Jews in Czestochowa. Rich, original archival information, artifacts, photographs, multi media would provide the first such showing of a once proud community now reduced to a handful and almost forgotten. In my own meetings with Polish young people, I invariably found almost total ignorance about their not so long ago Jewish neighbors. But without exception, they were very eager to find out. Still, I was fascinated when Prof. Mizgalski related to me his recent Jewish history course for which a 35 seat classroom was assigned and for which over 300 students applied.

And thus commenced what Israeli Ambassador to Poland Shewach Weiss succinctly described as "Przyklad Czestochowy", the Example of Czestochowa.

Many encouraging events and programs followed. In an annual contest of the largest newspaper, the Exhibition was adjudged the best cultural event of the year. Perhaps, the most important consequence was a program at a local College of Fine Arts entitled From the Inspiration of Jewish Culture which after Czestochowa was shown at the National Library in Warsaw and then incorporated by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage into nationwide curriculum.

Incidentally, the exhibition The Jews of Czestochowa, accompanied by examples of the art From the Inspiration of Jewish Culture is traveling throughout the USA and a condensed version was shown in 2006 at the Rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building.

May I mention some reasons for my sponsorship of the exhibition which have more than a little in common with my fervent support for our Museum?

We wanted young Poles to learn the true history of their fellow countrymen for centuries. We wanted once and for all to kill the terrible lie that Jews went to their death like sheep. We wanted the many Jewish visitors to shed their own stereotypes and mis-

conceptions. And we wanted to clean up the Czestochowa Jewish cemetery which has become a jungle in recent years.

We had press and TV coverage of all the ceremonies including the speeches of the diplomatic corps and the religious heavyweights—imagine the Chief Rabbi of Poland and the Archbishop of Jasna Gora on the same podium at the Philharmonic Hall which the Archbishop acknowledged as the site of the once beautiful New Synagogue. All that and the academic symposium presentations were valuable and educational.

We persuaded the city authorities to make a good start in the cemetery clean-up. Within weeks prior to the Exhibition opening, they did an incredible job which we all applauded. That set the stage for the rededication of the cemetery not only with a Kaddish and El Maleh Rachamim but also with a stirring Military Roll Call. For the first time, at a Polish Jewish cemetery Jewish resistance fighters were given their due by a Polish Army Honor Company in a ceremony broadcast by nationwide television.

Hundreds of Jews and Christians, young and old from around the world attended the events replete with joy and sadness, drama, emotion and nostalgia. From Mayor Wrona to the police; from members of the philharmonic, museum and theater, from staffs of the hotels (managers to porters and the volunteer students at hospitality desks) from the friendly crowds—there was not even one untoward incident, quite the contrary. And from Up High the verdict seemed favorable as well because the weather was just glorious.

This then is the milieu and the need and the spirit where our Museum will rise. Like the phoenix out of ashes, it will become the deserved paragon of excellence.

When I express my gratitude to Representative Christopher Smith for his authorization of HR 3320 it is not only in my name or in the name of the North American Council for the Museum or even for the three official partners of the Museum—the Polish government, the City of Warsaw and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute. I thank Congressman Smith on behalf of all the young people, Poles and Americans, Jews and Christians and all people of good will who will now have a very good, a very special reason to visit Warsaw and Poland.

In addition to the all important cutting edge exhibition, our Museum will provide a learning environment and outreach programs. It will make us all glad to have been at the “creation”.

I think that any person who visits our Museum, if he is Jewish he will be proud and if he is not Jewish he will walk out knowing all there is to know about the Jewish history in Poland.

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Warsaw, March 13, 2008

*Members of the Commission on Security and
Cooperation in Europe*

DEAR SIRS, The Polish government sees more than 1,000 years of coexistence of Poles and Jews primarily as an obligation to commemorate those who over the centuries have influenced and shaped Polish cultural and social life. It is also our responsibility to pass the memory and heritage of the Polish-Jewish world on to the younger generations.

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is a institution, established on the basis of an agreement, concluded on 25th January 2005 by the Minister of Culture Waldemar Dąbrowski, the Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw Lech Kaczyński and the Jewish Historical Institute Association in Poland, in which the purpose, organisation and financing of the future Museum were defined. In accordance with the founding agreement and other trilateral agreements including the one of June 2005 on cooperation on the History Museum of Polish Jews, the Minister of Culture pledged to provide from the state budget resources in the amount of 40 million zlotys to carry out the joint investment project involving the construction of the Museum building. The Warsaw Municipal authorities committed themselves to contribute another 40 million zlotys and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute offered 20 million zlotys to finance the costs of the future permanent exhibition. It was assumed that the total cost of building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews would not exceed 80 million zlotys.

The concluded agreements have served as the basis for developing a long-range programme entitled 'The Building of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews', adopted by the government in July 2005, which defines the public-spending schedule of the Minister and the City of Warsaw in 2006–2009.

The competition for the Museum's architectural design was won by Finnish architects Rainer Mahlamäki and Ilmar Lahdelma. Since the main construction work is due to be carried out in 2008–2009, a resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2007 revised the 2006–2009 spending schedule for public funds.

Apart from pursuing this investment project, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, as the Museum's organiser, is also financing its current activities on the basis of general principles in an amount that is agreed annually. A gradual increase in the financial contribution as per the ongoing construction of the Museum complex and the development of its activities has been agreed. In 2006, the Museum received 500,000 zlotys, and during the 2007 fiscal year the subsidy amounted to 1,064,000 zlotys. The sum of one million zlotys has been allocated to the Museum in 2008. At present, the most important issue is to raise and secure additional funds towards the museum's construction. According to the latest cost estimate, submitted by the designer of the Arkkitehtitoimisto Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Oy firm, the cost of the investment has grown to 235 million zlotys.

In view of the above, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, appreciating the Museum's unique rank and significance, has

declared his readiness to sign an annexe to the above-mentioned agreement concluded in June 2005, prepared by the City of Warsaw, in which the terms of the Museum's further financing—taking account of the financial capabilities of the parties to the agreement—will be defined. The act of signing will be the next important step taken to continue the project, crucial as the point of reference for all those worldwide interested in the Polish Jews' heritage as well as a visible sign of breakthrough in the Polish-Jewish relations.

Yours faithfully,

BOGDAN ZDROJEWSKI,
Minister of Culture and Heritage in Poland.

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Warszawa, March 7, 2008.

To: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission)

With reference to: a hearing on the support declared by the US Government for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews

STATEMENT

Distinguished Members of the Commission

I am honored to have the privilege of addressing you in my capacity as the Mayor of Warsaw, a proud and beautiful city of 1.7 million people, that symbolizes all that is great and eternal in the history of Poland.

A city that has been doomed to death by Nazi Germany and has against all odds risen from the ashes.

A city which treasures its history and that has since 1989 when the Solidarity movements resulted in the restoration of Poland to the family of democratic nations, been paying homage to those important fragments of its history which the communist regime had tried to obscure and falsify.

A city whose inhabitants and whose leaders feel deeply that the life and history of the Jewish people, in Warsaw as well as all over Poland, the Jewish culture and tradition that flourished in Poland for centuries, needs to be not only remembered but also taught to the generations to come. So that the young people of the free Republic of Poland grow in the spirit of respect towards the traditions and culture that is and unquestionable part of our common heritage. And that the young Jews of the world understand somewhat better what Poland once was and what it is today. So that all visitors to Warsaw, learn more about the life, culture, the civilization that once was and ended in the horrors of the Nazi-imposed destruction.

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is a special project, of significance not only for the people of Warsaw and Poland, but whose influence shall reach far beyond the borders of our country.

The project is being carried out within a unique public-private partnership, in which the private donators are represented by the Association Jewish Historical Institute in Poland while the public—by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Capital City of Warsaw. In this process, Warsaw not only co-finances, in equal parts with the Ministry of Culture, the Museum project. The Capital City of Warsaw has also been vested with the honorable responsibility of erecting the building to house the Museum.

As the Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw, I wish to declare that building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews is a priority project of the Warsaw local authorities. I am also happy to tell you that supplementary design works shall be completed by the end of March 2008, which shall permit to announce a tender to select the contractor for the Museum's in April. I also wish to confirm that formal procedures have been started to update the costs of building the Museum from the level assumed in 2005, at the mo-

ment of agreements' execution, to the level of present valuation being an element of the architectural design.

We expect to have the project completed by the end of 2010.

Everybody—my predecessors, Mr. Lech Kaczyński, now President of Republic of Poland; Mr. Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz; as well as the present Polish Government headed by Prime Minister, Mr. Donald Tusk—support the project to the best of their capabilities. The project unites all political and social organizations in Poland. As the Mayor of Warsaw, a city cocreated for ages by its Jewish inhabitants, I am determined to make everything, to make the Museum of the History of Polish Jews available, as soon as possible, to Poland, Europe and the world, and to have its mission of commemorating the heritage of Polish Jews, a great and important lesson of tolerance and mutual respect, carried out.

Esteemed Congressmen and Senators, co-authors of the Bill stipulating support for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw—thanking you for this important initiative I wish to give my best regards to you on behalf of the City's inhabitants who in the names of important places in Warsaw, pay everyday homage to the Founding Fathers and to great American friends of Poland, such as President Woodrow Wilson, the people, to whom Poland owes so much.

HANNA GRONKIEWICZ-WALTZ,
Mayor of Warsaw.

BACKGROUND

Below I wish to present the steps that have been made towards building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

- January 25, 2005: execution of an agreement on establishment of a cultural institute named the "Museum of the History of Polish Jews" between the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, the Capital City of Warsaw—as the organizers, and the Association Jewish Historical Institute—as the co-founder of the Museum.
- June 30, 2005: execution of a cooperation agreement between the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, and the Capital City of Warsaw, related to performance of a project named the "Museum of the History of Polish Jews".
- July 11 2005: Resolution No. LVI/1541/2005 of the Council of the Capital City of Warsaw on establishment of a cultural institute named the "Museum of the History of Polish Jews".
- Pursuant to the January 25, 2005 agreement, the Minister and the City undertook to provide funds of PLN 40,000,000 (US \$ 16,000,000) each, for carrying out a joint project of building a facility to house a cultural institute named the "Museum of the History of Polish Jews" and to provide the Museum with funds needed to carry out the Museum's statutory activities, in equal sums, determined by both parties in structuring the budget for each fiscal year.
- in 2005, the task named "Building the Museum of the History of Polish Jews" was included in the Long-term Investing Plan, and each year, the City's budget assigns funds for the project and for the Museum's statutory activities.
- In the years 2005–06, a contest for the building's architectural design was announced and resolved, and the project was assigned

to the City Development Authority as the Investor Representative, acting in the name and on behalf of the City and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

- June 26, 2007: the foundation deed was laid to build the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, in the presence of President of Republic of Poland, Mr. Lech Kaczyński; Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Mr. Kazimierz Ujazdowski; Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw, Ms. Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz; Israel's Ambassador to Warsaw, Mr. David Peleg, special envoy of President of the United States, Mr. Tevi D. Troy, former President of Germany, Mr. Richard von Weizsäcker, Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Mr. Meir Lau; and other guests from Poland and the whole world.

- At this moment, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews project is in the performance stage. Its cost has grown significantly, compared to the provisions of the June 30, 2005 agreement. This is due to, among other things, a low rate of exchange of the American dollar growth of the costs of material and labor. It will be necessary to execute an addendum to the agreement, in which the total cost of completion of the Museum's building shall be determined, pursuant to expert opinions, on the level of PLN 200,000,000 (US \$ 85,000,000).



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