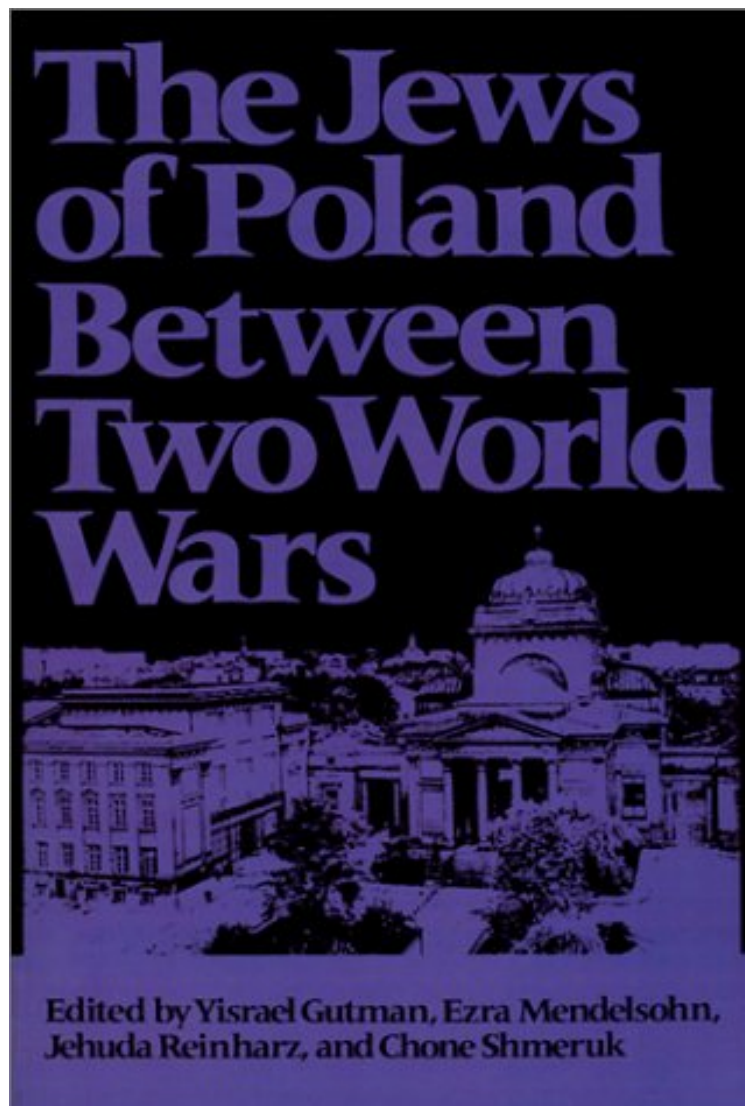


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## The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars (Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series)

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**From Brand: Brandeis University Press : The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars (Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars (Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Interesting collection of papers By Tom The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars contains twenty-six scholarly papers that were presented at a 1986 conference at Brandeis University. Included are articles from some of the most respected scholars on Polish-Jewish relations including Yisrael Gutman, Emanuel Melzer, Ezra Mendelsohn, Antony Polonsky, and Michael Steinlauf. The articles address a wide variety of topics related to Jewish life in interbellum Poland and are grouped under the following categories: The Political Arena Antisemitism Economic and Social Spheres Patterns of Religious Life Literary and Cultural Creativity Historiography I took special interest in the articles under the first three categories but labored to get through the balance of the papers. Much of the information contained in those articles is aimed at specialists and may not consistently appeal to the general reader. This is a worthwhile collection and students of Polish-Jewish relations will appreciate it but be forewarned that several papers are drier than the Bledow Desert. The virulent anti-Semitism of interbellum Poland is referenced throughout this volume although not in great detail. Below is a list of books which examine Polish anti-Semitism: Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland by Robert Blobaum Between the Brown and the Red: Nationalism, Catholicism, and Communism in Twentieth-Century Poland by Mikolaj Stanislaw Kunicki Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust by Michael C. Steinlauf Boycott! The Politics of Anti-Semitism in Poland, 1912-1914 by Robert Blobaum Bystanders, Blackmailers, and Perpetrators: Polish Complicity During the Holocaust by Jacob A. Flaws Collaboration with the Nazis: Public Discourse after the Holocaust by Roni Stauber Conflicts Across the Atlantic: Essays on Polish-Jewish Relations During World War I and in the Interwar Years by Andrzej Kapiszewski Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath by Joshua D. Zimmerman Difficult Questions in Polish-Jewish Dialogue by Jacek Santorski Economic origins of Antisemitism: Poland and Its Jews in the Early Modern Period by Hillel Levine Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland by Brian Porter Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz by Jan Gross Forced Out: The Fate of Polish Jewry in Communist Poland by Arthur J. Wolak From Assimilation to Antisemitism: The "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850-1914 by Theodore R. Weeks Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust by Jan Gross Holocaust and Memory by Barbara Engelking Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German Occupied Poland by Jan Grabowski (available 10/30/2013) Imaginary Neighbors: Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations after the Holocaust by Dorota Glowacka In the Shadow of the Polish Eagle: The Poles, the Holocaust, and Beyond by Leo Cooper Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland: A Beleaguered Church in the Post-Reformation Era by Magda Teter Karski: How One Man Tried to Stop the Holocaust by E. Thomas Wood Memory Offended: The Auschwitz Convent Controversy by John K. Roth My Brother's Keeper: Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust by Antony Polonsky Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland by Jan Gross Neutralizing Memory: The Jews in Contemporary Poland by Iwona Irwin-Zarecka New Poland and the Jews by Simon Segal No Way Out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939 by Emanuel Melzer On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland Between the Two World Wars by Celia Stopnicka Heller Poland and the Jews: Reflections of a Polish Jew by Stanislaw Krajewski Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew From 1880 to the Present by Joanna B. Michlic Poles and Jews: A Failed Brotherhood by Magdalena Opalski and Israel Bartal Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, Volume 8: Jews in Independent Poland, 1918-1939 Polish Politics in Transition: The Camp of National Unity and the Struggle for Power, 1935-1939 by Edward D. Wynot Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War by Emanuel Ringelblum Polish-Jewish Relations Since 1984: Reflections of a Participant by Antony Polonsky Rethinking Poles and Jews: Troubled Past, Brighter Future by Robert Cherry Rome's Most Faithful Daughter: The Catholic Church and Independent Poland, 1914-1939 by Neal Pease Search and Research: Lectures and Papers, Vol. 18, Changing Perspectives on Polish-Jewish Relations During the Holocaust by Havi Dreifuss Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940-1945 by Gunnar S. Paulsson Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews by Eva Hoffman Sinners on Trial: Jews and Sacrilege after the Reformation by Magda Teter Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland 1919-1939 by Joseph Marcus Studies on Polish Jewry, 1919-1939: The interplay of social, economic, and political factors in the struggle of a minority for its existence by Joshua A. Fishman Symbiosis and Ambivalence: Poles and Jews in a Small Galician Town by Rosa Lehmann The Catholic Church and Antisemitism: Poland, 1933-1939 by Ronald E. Modras The Convent at Auschwitz by Wladyslaw Bartoszewski The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland by Genevieve Zubrzycki The Hidden Pope: The Untold Story of a Lifelong Friendship That Is Changing the Relationship Between Catholics and Jews - The Personal Journey of John Paul II and Jerzy Kluger The House at Ujazdowskie 16: Jewish Families in Warsaw after the Holocaust by Karen Auerbach (available June 26, 2013) The Jews in Poland and Russia: Volume III: 1914 to 2008 by Antony Polonsky The Jews in Poland by Chimen Abramsky The Jews in Polish Culture by Aleksander Hertz The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars by Ezra Mendelsohn The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars by Yisrael Gutman The Legacy of Polish Jewry by Harry M. Rabinowicz The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy Over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland by Antony Polonsky The Populist Radical Right in Poland: The Patriots by Rafal Pankowski There Once Was A World: A 900-Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok by Yaffa Eliach Thou Shalt Not Kill: Poles on Jedwabne Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1919-1945 by Shimon Redlich Traitors True Poles: Narrating A Polish-American Identity, 1880-1939 by Karen

Majewski Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe by Roger Peterson Unequal Victims: Poles and Jews During World War Two by Israel Gutman Warsaw Between the World Wars by Edward Wynot When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland by Brian Porter

11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Limited Polish Anti-Semitism; 1930's Pogroms, Jewish Violence, etc. By Jan Peczkis

Of the numerous authors in this anthology, this review focuses on only a few. In spite of the great deal of attention given to prewar Polish anti-Semitism, its effect on Jews was rather limited. As Yisrael Gutman, an eminent Holocaust scholar, writes: "It should be made clear that political antisemitism and anti-Jewish economic policies did not impinge on the considerable freedoms the Jews enjoyed in their organizational life and social and cultural activities. The Jews were free to set up their own political organizations, to bring up their children as they saw fit, to publish a whole range of newspapers and literary works relatively free of outside interference, and to present their cause to the Sejm and before the court of public opinion. Furthermore, Jews--mostly assimilated ones--occupied important positions in Polish literature, art, and the theater." (pp. 103-104). Most Polish Jews were not only unassimilated, but did not even speak Polish. Gutman says: "Boguslaw Miedzinski, ... a leader in the camp of Pilsudski's heirs, quipped in the Sejm (House of Deputies) in 1937 that he personally like Danes very much but if there had been three million Danes in Poland he would want to get rid of them as soon as possible." (p. 101). A long-term source of Polish-Jewish antagonisms has always been Jewish economic dominance. Jerzy Tomaszewski (p. 147) found that Jews (at 10% of the population) accounted for 73.7% of those active in agricultural-related commerce in all of prewar Poland. He concludes: "No matter how good the relations between the shopkeepers and their customers seemed, there was always some level of distrust. In the traditional values of the villagers, manual work in the fields was the main--or even the sole--worthy occupation; all other professions and occupations were considered to exploit the hard labor of the peasants. This distrust grew during economic disturbances, when peasants received less for the goods they produced." (p. 147). Taking this further, the reader may be intrigued by Edward D. Wynot. He cites a 1933 study, by political liberals, of peasant attitudes towards Jews. Contrary to the stereotype of peasants being virtually all bigoted, challenged by the blood libel, etc., their attitudes are described as follows: "The first volume of selected responses revealed overt antisemitism in nearly ONE-FOURTH [Emphasis added by reviewer] of those surveyed. Although actual wording varied according to the individual authors, the general viewpoint expressed was consistent on certain points: The Jew was a parasitic middleman who exploited the naive, ignorant peasants by paying submarket prices for farm products and then charging exorbitant ones for manufactured goods or essentially raw materials, often dealing dishonestly with them in the process; the Jew was an archetypal "loan shark" who deceived the peasants into overextending their credit at usurious [usurious] rates, then foreclosing on their land; the Jew was responsible for using his influence abroad to knock the bottom out of the international market for Polish agricultural products. The second volume contained fewer peasant contributions, but more than one-half of those expressed anti-Jewish feelings to some extent." (p. 48). Even assuming that the foregoing attitudes are entirely unjustified, the 25-50% level of anti-Semitic attitudes in prewar Poland contrast sharply with the stereotype of nearly all Poles (save that of political leftists, plus a tiny number of other enlightened individuals) being rabid anti-Semites. Not mentioned in all of this is the fact that the seller-buyer relationship is, to a degree, an inherently adversarial one. When the sellers tend to be of one nationality and the buyers a different nationality, and moreover this pattern persists for generations, how can there NOT be resentment and conflict? To show the irrationality of anti-Semitism, a number of Jewish authors have pointed out that Poles often remained anti-Semitic despite having friendships with Jews. Such Jews were considered exceptions. It turns out that exactly the same attitude existed on the Jewish side. Ben-Zion Gold comments: "The teachers of secular subjects were either nonreligious Jews or Christians. They usually treated us well, and the stories and poems we read with them were interesting. Strangely enough, these teachers did not effect our general prejudice against Gentiles or secular Jews except perhaps subliminally. We thought that each teacher was an exception." (p. 274). Relative to the 1930's pogroms, and bearing in mind that, whether justified or not, violence tends to escalate, it is interesting to note that the line of murderous violence had often been first crossed by Jews. Emanuel Melzer comments: "The anti-Jewish excesses and pogroms in the years 1935-37 had their specific characteristics and dynamics. Usually they resulted from the killing of a Pole by a Jew, either as an act of self-defense or as a criminal act of an individual committed out of personal revenge. For this killing the entire local Jewish community was held collectively responsible. The pogroms of Grodno (1935), Przytyk (1936), Brzesc nad Bugiem (1937), and Czestochowa (1937) all followed this pattern. In other cases the Endeks used anti-Jewish violence as a means for undermining the authority of the government." (p. 129). Not mentioned is the fact that, although collective responsibility is part and parcel of interethnic violence, the small number of Jewish victims overall (a few hundred) does not support a high degree of collective blame directed against Jews in general. Violence also existed within the Jewish community. Samuel D. Kassow writes: "Contrary to popular perceptions, the shtetl saw its share of violence and chicanery... Grudges and grievances often interrupted Sabbath prayers and even led to fights in the synagogue. Incidents such as that which occurred in Minsk Mazowiecki in the 1930's, when the local butchers assaulted a respected Zionist delegate to the kehillah after he raised the meat tax to pay for the local Tarbut school, were not uncommon. Bribery to fix elections of new rabbis was rampant, and the disgruntled party often brought in its own

candidate, thus leading to serious conflicts that split families and friends"(pp. 204-205).6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Could have been better...or worse.By historiker33This work has benefits and drawbacks. It is a compilation of articles written by many scholars. While this makes the book undeniably comprehensive, the articles qualify more as survey pieces than argumentative essays. In fact, it is difficult to identify a thesis in several of them.The book is a must have for any scholar of Eastern European/Polish Jewish history, but be advised that it is more informative than analytical.

Jews have long seen the interwar years as a golden age for Polish Jewry and hold it in special reverence because of the community's heroic struggle against the encroaching darkness of antisemitism. During the years 1918 to 1939, Polish Jews constituted the largest Jewish community in noncommunist Europe and were the leading cultural and political force in the Jewish Diaspora. In this volume distinguished American, West European, Israeli, and Polish scholars combine forces to explore the politics, antisemitism, economic and social life, religious patterns, and cultural creativity of a period whose relevance is heightened because of current changes under way in Eastern Europe.

From Publishers WeeklyAn international group of scholars presents 27 essays about the dynamic pre-Holocaust period when, despite anti-Semitism, the Yiddish culture and language flourished. All aspects of Jewish life are considered: political, economic, social, religious, literary and cultural. (Aug.)no PW reviewCopyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalJewish life in interwar Poland was one of great upheaval and dynamism. It was a time of flowering for the Yiddish language and culture. Political movements such as Zionism and Bundism were gaining strength. Religious efforts were manifold. Much of this was destroyed by the Holocaust. In the 27 essays presented here by an international group of scholars this period is examined painstakingly and minutely. All aspects of Jewish life are considered: political, economic, social, religious, literary, and cultural. Anti-Semitism--a rampant force in interwar Poland--is also discussed. The scholarship evident in this book will be appreciated by academics and knowledgeable lay readers. Recommended for libraries with strong Judaica and European holdings.-Paul Kaplan, Highland Park P.L., Ill.Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. Virtually all the articles shed light on problems, phenomena, or events that have until now not received in-depth treatment. Moreover, the articles are based on primary sources that were heretofore unknown or present a reevaluation of data culled from a wide range of sources . . . This is a publication of the greatest importance for anyone interested in the history of the Jews of Poland.Zion