

Article title: Beyond the Familial Impulse: Domestic Photography and Sociocultural History in Post-communist Poland, 1989-1996

Authors: Gil Pasternak and Marta Ziętkiewicz

Biography: **Dr. Gil Pasternak** is Senior Research Fellow in Photographic History in the Photographic History Research Centre at De Montfort University (UK), and co-convener of Ph: The Photography Research Network. His writings on the political lives of photographs are found in volumes published by Dartmouth College Press, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Diaphane éditions, and in the journals *Photography & Culture*, *Life Writing*, *Object*, and *Fotografija*.

Marta Ziętkiewicz is Researcher for the project *Sources for the Nineteenth-century History of Polish Photography* at Society Liber Pro Arte (Poland). She is currently writing a Ph.D. in the Institute of Fine Art at the Polish Academy of Sciences, where she studies the development of the photographic market in nineteenth-century Poland, and the subsequent establishment of international networks of photographic knowledge exchange.

ABSTRACT

In 1994 the Jewish-Polish Shalom Foundation announced a photographic contest whose intention was to reconstruct the social and cultural histories of Polish Jews who lived in the geographical region of Poland before, during and after the Second World War. For this purpose the Foundation invited contributions from the public. Its initiative emerged shortly after the 1989 collapse of the communist regime in Poland, and alongside other similar projects that reflected the desire of Poland's ethnic minorities to salvage their sociocultural histories – histories the communist government had virtually erased from the country's formal historiography. In a short period of time the Foundation received more than seven thousand annotated photographs in response to its public appeal, most of which emanated from domestic photographic collections. As scholars interrogating domestic photography do not often have access to empirical data about the practices it entails, in this article we consider the Foundation photographic collection as a resource preserving invaluable information about the diverse uses and perceptions of photography in the sociocultural sphere. Yet, whereas existing scholarly literature in the field of photography studies tends to frame domestic photography with reference to affectionate familial behaviors allegedly common in democratic states, we introduce the Foundation collection as a case study that sheds light on domestic photographs created and maintained in a sociocultural environment that did not see democracy before 1989. Analyzing and discussing the various ways in which the photographs' owners saw the photographs' relationships with the broader politically unstable reality that has enclosed their production and preservation, our study diversifies some of the meanings and functions current literature often associates with domestic photographic collections.

Keywords: domestic photography, domestic photographic collections, Polish Jews, Poland's ethnic minorities, Polish collective memory, photography contest, Shalom Foundation

BEYOND THE FAMILIAL IMPULSE

Domestic Photography and Sociocultural History in Post-communist Poland, 1989-1996

Gil Pasternak and Marta Ziętkiewicz

In 1994 the Shalom Foundation made a public appeal on the Polish public television channel, prompting viewers to send to the Foundation any photographs of Polish Jews they might have had at home.¹ Between December of the same year and January 1995, the Foundation used the local and international printed media to frame the call as an invitation to partake in a public contest, with precious awards promised for winners and participants. The contest organizers wished to receive photographs as well as films featuring Jewish life in Poland before, during, and after the Second World War. Their project culminated in a large-scale exhibition entitled *And I Still See Their Faces*. Accompanied by an illustrated book publication of the same title, it opened to the public at Zachęta – National Gallery of Art in Warsaw on 18 April 1996.

The Shalom Foundation was established in 1987 by actress and director of the Ester Rachel and Ida Kamińskie State Yiddish Theatre, Gołda Tencer. It has been dedicated to salvaging the image of the Eastern European Jewish world annihilated during the Second World War, and preserving its history as well as memory for future generations. In line with this ambition, the Foundation has published materials about local Jewish folklore, founded the Centre for Yiddish Culture, organized workshops and contests about Jewish history and traditions as well as festivals of Jewish culture. *And I Still See Their Faces* has been one of the Foundation's most successful projects to date. By the time the exhibition opened, the Foundation had received more than seven thousand photographs in response to its appeals.² Accompanied by explanatory letters, they arrived from various countries, including Poland, Israel, Venezuela, Brazil, Italy, Argentina, Canada, the United States of America and others. Some of their senders were Jews, mostly the descendants and friends of the individuals shown in the pictures submitted, or of those who have made the photographs. However, a large number of the other participants were Poles whose family members or themselves have acquired the photographs they submitted in a variety of ways to which we attend below. Since 1996 the exhibition has travelled in different cities in Poland as well as in a great number of countries around the world, and the book publication has so far been reprinted in four editions.³

The Foundation has retained the submissions it received for *And I Still See Their Faces* in the form of an indexed collection. Letters and photographs are kept separately in two sets of box files arranged in a corresponding numerical order. Whereas the Foundation publicized its public appeal with a view to excavating photographic images bearing witness to the life of the Jewish population in Poland before, during, and after the Second World War, we consider its collection from a different perspective. On the one hand, we approach it as a resource preserving invaluable information about the diverse uses and perceptions of photography in the sociocultural sphere. On the other, we introduce the Foundation collection as a case study demonstrating how, owing to their emergence against the background of Poland's tempestuous history, domestic photographic collections have helped transforming national and social histories in post-communist Poland without necessarily changing the meanings they held while in private domestic photographic collections.⁴

As a result of the privacy that surrounds the making, conceptualization, and presentation of domestic photographic collections, scholars interrogating this field do not often have much access to empirical data about such practices. In addition, existing scholarly literature in the field of photography studies tends to frame domestic photography with reference to photographs made by or for nuclear families living in the relatively stable social environment conjured up by capitalist democracy.⁵ Consequently, much of this literature often attends to photographs that denote, or at least connote the familial affection and sociability allegedly prevailing within the nuclear familial environment. We perceive these studies as invaluable in that they account for the ways in which groups and individual subjects employ photographic practices to narrate their lived experiences, visually shape and project their preferred characters in relation to prevalent social customs, as well as pass on private information to other relations and family friends.⁶ But, as opposed to the majority of previous scholarly considerations of domestic photography, the photographs we discuss in this article had emerged and been kept for a long period of time in unstable and undemocratic sociopolitical surroundings. Therefore, contrary to the domestic photographs often attended to by scholars in the field, the sights shown by the photographs we consider and the experiences these photographs entail could not necessarily be deemed familiar, neither in terms of their production nor with regard to the range of uses often associated with domestic photographs.⁷ Studying the Foundation collection in relation to the voices of the photographs' most recent owners, we wish to help develop as well as render complex some of the theoretical models often employed by scholars when analyzing the place of photographs in

the domestic sphere. Previous knowledge of the literature in this field is assumed in the article owing to its scope. Yet, paying careful attention to the significance given to domestic photographs by non-professional camera users and collectors, we show that such photographs must not be understood as exclusive references to family members or familial life narratives alone.

Indeed, with the contest participants' voices in mind, throughout the article we study how their words and the deployment of their photographs within the Polish public domain have helped subvert historical narratives about Poland and its Jewish communities, narratives that were initially evoked by Soviet Communism at the end of the Second World War and had prevailed in Polish society until the fall of this regime in 1989. To this end, we primarily, though by no means exclusively, use the photographs included in the book *And I Still See Their Faces* as guiding references for our study in conjunction with information extracted from the letters which accompanied them upon receipt. Doing so allows us to consider the historical narratives the Foundation inserted into the Polish public domain and thereby made readily available within the Polish sociocultural and political sphere. Having sampled other data from the diverse range of photographs and letters kept by the Foundation, we have deduced that the photographs reproduced in the book account for the wider scope of materials found in the collection.

But before commencing our study, we want to clarify that even where participants offered the Foundation the most sincere information about their photographic submissions, inevitably they were only able to do so to the best of their knowledge, memory and, at times, only by recourse to their subjectively informed understanding. In other words, even though the photographic knowledge voiced by the contest participants is often not the product of any formal, systematic educational infrastructure, one must acknowledge that they have been at best partly inspired by the sociocultural, historical, and political circumstances to which the participants have been exposed during the course of their lives. One must also acknowledge that sociopolitical institutions contribute to shaping the environments in which such circumstances are formed, interpreted, and commemorated – the Shalom Foundation included in this context. Our study, therefore, first considers the Polish sociopolitical and cultural histories that have contributed to the inception of the Foundation's project in the first place, as well as the information provided in the Foundation's public appeals as some of the parameters that might have affected the contest participants' photographic and contextual choices.⁸

Awakening Minorities

When Poland restored its independence towards the end of the Second World War, the newly formed Polish government was politically dominated by Soviet communism, rebuilding the Polish nation on the socialist principle of social equality (Kemp-Welch 2008: 21-26; Micgiel 1997). In accordance with this political disposition, the government considered Poland as a country of one people. Although ethnic minorities lived amongst the Poles, the government refused to acknowledge this sociocultural diversity so openly. In fact, to perpetuate the political ideology of one country for one people, the Polish government nurtured the view that no other nationals lived in Poland other than Poles. This, they explained, was the consequence of Europe's post-war national partition (Farmer 1985: 51-55). To turn this ideological narrative into a reality, the Polish political regime called upon the country's ethnic minorities to endeavor to assimilate into Polish society and contribute to its development, as equals amongst equals. Alternatively, individuals who refused to comply with Polish communism were encouraged to leave the country. Even though officially the Polish government portrayed a different picture, some ethnic minorities still chose to stay in Poland without fully assimilating, some Polish Jews included (Łoziński 1994: 1-2).⁹

The Polish communist government repressed ethnic minorities in the country throughout its rule (1945-89). Limiting the number of the institutions and organizations these groups were allowed to run for their own communities and monitoring their activities were the most common means the government employed to that end. The political regime's position as regards Poland's ethnic minorities found its official expression in the communist party's third plenary meeting of 20 February 1976, where party members affirmed that Poland had to become an ethnically homogenous state (Drozd 1998: 237). Subsequently, ethnic minorities were largely deprived of their political influence and visibility, which helped the Polish government cement the illusion of a socially unified and politically united Poland.

But, in the second half of the 1980s the communist party gradually weakened both in Poland as well as in the rest of the communist bloc (Davies 2005: 496-501). This process matured in Poland in 1989, and resulted in the replacement of the communist regime with a democratic government. Similar to other regimes in formerly communist European countries, the new Polish government desired to establish political relationships with democratic western European countries. Hence, it had to demonstrate its genuine adherence to

international human rights laws, by allowing the low percentage of the minorities still left in the country to exist in the open, and enable them to enjoy the same political as well as social rights as any other Polish citizen (Fleming 2002: 534–535; Smooha 2002: 428-429).

The gradual democratization of Poland since the mid 1980s has seen numerous attempts to salvage historical narratives about the past experiences of the country's previously repressed ethnic minorities, and photography was frequently called upon to assist these efforts. On 16-19 September 1992, for example, a group of scholars affiliated with the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw) held a conference in collaboration with the Institute of Polish Diaspora and Ethnic Studies of the Jagiellonian University (Kraków), to attend to some issues concerning ethnic minorities living both in Poland and Europe at large. In the context of the Polish state, the conference organizers considered Belarusians, Gypsies, Czechs, Greeks, Karaites, Lithuanians, Lemkos, Macedonians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Tatars, Ukrainians, Hungarians, and Jews (Władyka 1994: 5–6). A photography exhibition curated by Aleksandra Garlicka of the Institute of Literary Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences accompanied the four-day conference. Herself an amateur photographer and a member of the Association of Polish Art Photographers, Garlicka already curated some photographic exhibitions about Polish life and society, all of which she put together following public calls for contributions of historical photographs.¹⁰ In a book published in 1994 Garlicka described the exhibition shown in conjunction with the 1992 conference, which bore one of the conference panels' title, *Obcy wśród swoich* [*Others Among Us*]. Garlicka noted that she had selected the chosen photographs from a range of public and private family collections that together covered the period 1861-1992, pointing out that only a relatively small number of individuals had responded to her public appeal (Garlicka 1994: 151).¹¹ "For sure," wrote Garlicka (151), "it was determined by the hostile actions carried out by the previous communist authorities against national minorities, and perhaps also by the minorities' xenophobia."¹² The conference organizers voiced a similar view as Polish minorities also virtually ignored their call for papers. "This is the price to pay for the past," noted one of them in hindsight (Władyka 1994: 6), and Garlicka added during the event that:

It was quite a surprise, although one that could have been anticipated, that mainly those minorities who do not have their own countries were keen to take part in the contest. It was difficult to get to other minorities. Those who already have their own countries ... wanted to create this kind of an exhibition, but only by themselves and about themselves.¹³

Echoing the sentiment of Garlicka's words, the Shalom Foundation's public call for photographic contributions for *And I Still See Their Faces* was successful beyond expectation. One of the earliest appeals the Foundation publicized provides an insight into the criteria it required respondents to have in mind when preparing their submissions:

If you have at home photographs of Polish Jews, documents of their life and history - or if you are a photographer (no matter professional or amateur) and in your travels in Poland you captured the present-day small Jewish community – you can participate in a contest organized by the American-Polish-Israeli Shalom Foundation ... Photographs - also series of photographs - can be of any technique and format. All photographs should be described and accompanied by information clarifying where and when they were created, and whom do they show ... The organizers promise precious awards for the winners and other contestants. The contest will be concluded by an exhibition that will be displayed in central Polish cities, the United States of America and in Israel.¹⁴

This announcement also explained that submissions would be assessed in relation to three categories: historical photographs created before 1945, contemporary photographs created after 1945, and films recording the Jewish world both before and after the Second World War. In addition, it featured a short statement in which the organizers framed their aspiration, thereby providing prospective participants with further details for consideration:

In 1939 three and a half million Jews constituted the second biggest diaspora in our country. At present, there are a few thousands Jews living in Poland. Let's try to reconstruct and save from oblivion the diverse colorful world of Polish Jews and what was left after their extermination.¹⁵

In another announcement from 27 January 1995 the Foundation extended the deadline for submissions, and required that participants “describe the circumstances in which the photographs were made.”¹⁶ It also informed prospective contributors of its intention to produce an exhibition catalogue, and feature some selected photographs therein. This version of the call ended with a list of names of some renowned Jewish as well as Polish journalists and artists, identifying them as those who would assess the suitability of photographs to the project and, by extension, shape the way in which the memory of Poland's Jewish minorities would be awoken in the public domain.¹⁷

Recalling Jewish-Polish Coexistence



Fig. 1 Sent by: Krzysztof B. Kowalski.
Photo: Photographer unknown. FS_1_0041_0002

In particular the Foundation's framing of the public appeal as a contest, with winners and awards, might have influenced the participants' photographic choices, the specific narratives they used in conjunction with visual materials, and their particular phrasing. For example, one of the photographs the Foundation received depicts a child sat in the crotch of a tree. Associating the photograph with the days of Poland's German occupation, the letter accompanying this submission explains that German soldiers had ordered the child to stay there until he would have not been able to hold himself in place any longer, fall, and die (Figure 1). Looking at the photograph, however, the Foundation felt the textual details did not match with the photographic image. Some clarifications were necessary. The Foundation contacted the participant to verify the narrative and tease out some more information about the circumstances that have led to the production of the image. It transpired that the sender was a 13-year-old boy who made up the story as he wished to receive an award (Bikont 1996). Therefore, whereas research for each part in our study has involved a careful critical assessment of the textual materials we present below, we cannot vouch for the credibility and accuracy of the narratives voiced by the contest participants. Nevertheless, it is the photographs they chose to submit, the ideas they pronounced about their photographs, and the meanings they imbued them with through their written accounts that we consider as most significant. Their examination clarifies what social functions domestic photographs might have performed in the project participants' view, as well as how they rendered them historically and politically meaningful.

Some of the photographs we have identified as references to Jewish life in Poland before the Second World War represent the captivation of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European culture with notions of social and racial difference. Submissions of this kind were made primarily by Poles whose domestic photographic collections included pictures of Jewish individuals whom they perceived as descriptive of the Jewish "type".



Fig. 2 Częstochowa, 2 April 1915. Sent by: Leszek Wójcik.
Photo: Photographer unknown. FS_1_0142

Leszek Wójcik, for instance, submitted a photograph featuring three elderly Jews at a tenement house (Figure 2). An inscription appears on the photographic print, suggesting the image was taken in Częstochowa on 2 April 1915, when the Germans already occupied the city during the First World War. In his letter, Wójcik explained that his father had kept the photograph all these years because “he was fascinated by these physiognomies.” (1995) Historically, the fascination with human physiognomy emerged in nineteenth-century Europe in light of the colonial-era discovery of

human specimens different in their appearance to the people of Europe. Yet, the European production of photographs depicting “racial types” had gradually expanded to address the range of ethnic minorities living in European society itself (Maxwell 2008). In the early twentieth century photographic taxonomies of national and racial types became manifestations of exclusive, nationalist social politics. European subjects used photographic images of “types” as propagandistic instruments, to differentiate between peoples residing within the European social fabric based on their racial origin, as well as to mark out minorities as inferior to the dominant national group in each European country. In the context of the relationship between the Jewish people and the European nations that surrounded them virtually throughout the European continent, visual depictions of the “Jewish type” were often used to disseminate anti-Semitic ideology. Such photographs portrayed the Jews as biologically different and physically awkward, often showing specific Jewish individuals whose bodily or physiognomic appearance seemed unusual (Morris-Reich 2013; Struk 2004: 58–61; Gilman 1991: 60-103). Nevertheless, as submissions similar to that made by Wójcik clarify, the European fascination with the Jews’ perceived strange appearance must not be understood in this light alone.

Participant Ryszard Krasnodębski sent to the Foundation 31 photographs on behalf of Helena Rogala-Krasnodębska, six of which were made by her friend Stanisław Birecki (see for example Figures 3–4). The Germans expelled Rogala-Krasnodębska and Birecki from the



Fig. 3 Sent by: Ryszard Krasnodębski.
Photo: Stanisław Birecki. FS_1_0191_0003



Fig. 4 Sent by: Ryszard Krasnodębski.
Photo: Stanisław Birecki. FS_1_0191_0006

Poznań region in the west of Poland around December 1939 – alongside the majority of this geographical area’s Polish residents – and relocated them to the small town of Baranów Sandomierski in south-east Poland. At the time, the number of non-assimilated traditional Jews was significantly lower in the west of Poland than in the south-east part of the country. According to Krasnodębski’s letter (1996), Rogala-Krasnodębska had asked Birecki to take the photographs out of mere interest in the “Jewish look,” which seems to have been considerably different in her eyes to that of the people she encountered while still living in Poznań. “One could not,” wrote Krasnodębski in his letter, “meet such Galician figures in the region of Poznań.”¹⁸

Whereas one may imagine that traditional Jews were ever-present throughout the various regions of early twentieth-century Poland, in fact the distribution of this population was unequal in the country’s geographical terrain. Thus, the experience of encountering them for the first time as a consequence of the reality imposed on Poland by German politics just before and throughout the Second World War was not exclusive to Rogala-Krasnodębska or her circle of friends. Tadeusz Ordyński, for instance, submitted a photograph of two subjects dressed in traditional Chasidic costume (Figure 5). In his undated letter, Ordyński explained that in 1939 he acted as a warrant officer in the Polish artillery regiment, stationed in Góra Kalwaria, where he captured this image. Albeit in hindsight, Ordyński rationalized the reason for taking the picture by noting that, “I saw these kinds of physiognomies for the first time, so I photographed them”. Bearing these words in mind could assist one gain a clearer insight into Rogala-Krasnodębska’s decision to collect and incorporate photographs of traditional Jews into her domestic collection of photographs.

The remaining 25 photographs of the 31 Krasnodębski submitted on behalf of Rogala-Krasnodębska were made by another one of her friends, Irena Florkowska. Florkowska was also expelled from the Poznań region to the south-east of Poland, to be relocated in the town of Tarnów. While living in Tarnów, Florkowska “worked for a German photographer, and took some photographs



Fig. 5 Sent by: Tadeusz Ordyński.
Photo: Tadeusz Ordyński. FS_1_0272_0001

at her own initiative.” (Krasnodębski 1996) She has given Rogala-Krasnodębska some of her independently taken photographs “as a gift” (Krasnodębski 1996), which further highlights the value Rogala-Krasnodębska bestowed on such pictures, at least around the time of her expulsion (see for example figures 6–8). However, as before her expulsion from Poznań Rogala-Krasnodębska was not familiar with the social types represented by the pictures, her incorporation of these photographs into her domestic photographic collection must not be understood as her tacit absorption of racial ideology. Rather, similar to Ordyński’s fleeting but significant experience, it would seem that Rogala-Krasnodębska intended to update this collection with a view to reflecting a new chapter in her lived experience – a chapter that now included the presence of the curiously looking members of Poland’s Jewish population in her new hometown of Baranów.

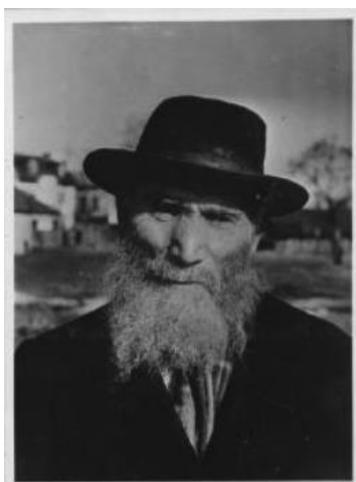


Fig. 6 Sent by: Ryszard Krasnodębski.
Photo: Irena Florkowska.
FS_1_0191_0017



Fig. 7 Sent by: Ryszard Krasnodębski.
Photo: Irena Florkowska.
FS_1_0191_0018



Fig. 8 Sent by: Ryszard Krasnodębski.
Photo: Irena Florkowska.
FS_1_0191_0020

Submissions of this type inserted into the Polish sociocultural sphere photographs whose senders framed as testimonies to the diversity of Polish society in Poland's pre-communist history. They contested the communist regime's historical narratives about this society's ethnic homogeneity, thereby raised questions about the nature of Poland's social history, questions which the communist regime considered as both socially non-conformist and politically subversive. Yet, other submissions further complicated the Polish understanding of the country's social history through presentations of Polish Jews whose appearances, or alleged lifestyles, do not live up to historical formulaic depictions of European Jewish subjects. Primarily taking the form of private snapshots, they depict the life of the Jewish people in early twentieth-century Poland as comparable with the lived experiences of Polish subjects. Showing Jews in modern dress, within diverse modern social environments, at work or while partaking in leisure activities, in domestic scenarios or at social public events, each of these photographs demonstrates that, to a greater or lesser extent, members of the European Jewish community in fact assimilated into the European social order, and contributed to its perpetuation. Even when the images depict subjects dressed in line with Jewish ultra-orthodox fashion, the subjects' adherence to early twentieth-century European photographic representational conventions attests to the inclusive relationship of Polish Jews with European culture, and their adoption of its dominant social values. Thus, whether bearing visible signifiers of Jewish identity or not, such pictures attest not only to the diversity of Polish society in Poland's pre-communist twentieth-century history, but they also representationally embed the Jewish-Polish community of that period in the fabric of Polish society.

Some submissions made this point even more explicit by highlighting the contributions made by subjects of Jewish origin to Poland's strife to maintain its political independence during the interwar period (1918-1939). The most unambiguous examples in this sense are photographs submitted by participants of Jewish origin who entered the contest with pictures featuring Jewish subjects in military uniform. Early twentieth-century European nations considered the participation of individual subjects in activities that contributed to strengthening the nation's physical force as expressions of loyalty to the people and indications of good citizenship (Gilman 1991: 38-59). In turn, owing to their appearance in military uniform, the projected images of these men who joined any of the European nations' armies often transformed. This was even more pertinent with regard to soldiers of Jewish origin, as their look often ceased to comply with the politically constructed image of the unfit

traditional Jew that informed much of the Jewish community's perception as socially peculiar in most of Europe. The historical implications expressed by photographs of Jews in uniform did not escape the Foundation which included many of them in the contest's resulting exhibition and book publication.

The full-body studio portrait of a man identified as Mr. Ring and its accompanying letter reveal its sender's conscious attempt to affiliate the Jewish body with Polish history and sociopolitical values (Figure 9).¹⁹ The participant, Albin Kac, explained in his letter that Ring served in the Austro-Hungarian Army during the First World War and that, when Poland restored its independence, Ring fought in Kiev as a Polish soldier, this time in the 1919-21 Polish-Soviet War (1996). Generally speaking, Poland fought this war to capture territories that were parts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569-1795) before Poland lost its independence as a consequence of its 1795 partitioning by Russia, Prussia, and Austria (Davies 2005a: 386-411). But owing to the Red Army's counterattacks, from 1920 the war threatened Polish independence. The Soviets pushed the Polish forces westward, threatening to capture the Polish capital of Warsaw, a plan that eventually failed (Davies 2005b: 292-297). Kac's letter thus emphasizes Ring's participation in the Polish-Soviet War as a demonstration of his allegiance to the Polish people. An inscription at the back of the photograph presents Ring as "A Jew whom Józef Piłsudski decorated with the *Virtuti Militari* for his heroic acts in Kiev in 1920." The inscription also asserts that Ring "had many Austrian military decorations," and that he was "the Chairman of the Association of Jewish



Fig. 9 Mr. Ring. Sent by: Albin Kac.
Photo: Photographer unknown. FS_1_0346_0001

Combatants in Nowy Sącz."²⁰ Shown in a representative Polish army's officer uniform, Ring's photograph does not bear witness to his Jewish heritage. Instead, it portrays him as a loyal and fit member of Polish society. But anchored, as it were, to the surface of the photographic paper itself, the inscription seems as an explicit private effort to merge Ring's honorable depiction with politically meaningful details about his social esteem as a valued citizen of the Polish state and a Jew respected by the Jewish community.

Showing the Jewish people as assimilated into Polish society is meaningful here for their representations in Poland before the making of *And I still See Their Faces* tended to focus on traditions of difference and separation. As Polish photographer and the exhibition curator Tomasz Tomaszewski explained in an interview, the photographs received by the Foundation are “extremely important because they remind us of a significant part of our culture.” (Kuc 1996) Journalist Jerzy Sławomir Mac complemented this view in his review of the exhibition (1996), arguing that, “these photographs ... give testimony of the symbiotic relationship that once prevailed between these two nations in Poland.” Furthermore, renowned Polish publicist Krzysztof T. Toeplitz argued in his critique of the exhibition that the photographs opened up an alternative way to think about the lives of the Jews in Poland (1996). Prior to the exhibition, according to Toeplitz, Polish popular culture had typically presented the Polish Jews in line with two common ideas. On the one hand, the lives of the Jews in Poland have been imagined in association with “ashes and tombs”; that is, in relation to the Jews’ systemic elimination in Auschwitz and Treblinka. On the other hand, Toeplitz explained, films and plays about Jewish life in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Eastern Europe have further influenced the way in which the Poles have imagined the Jewish world of prewar Poland. According to Toeplitz, the popularity of, for instance, the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* has inspired the Polish people to think of the Jews who lived in prewar Poland as traditional, poor and simple, yet wise and cheerful. Therefore, Toeplitz argued, whereas the exhibition showed people whose existence is now associated with the experience of Jewish traditions and the Shoah, it also clarified that their lives and occupations were in fact interwoven with the structure of Polish society, Poland’s economy, and its culture.

Interrelating the Shoah with Polish Trauma

The Polish communist regime’s historiography on the German occupation of Poland focused much attention on the impact the Second World War had on Poland and the Polish people. Between 1945 and 1989, Polish historians had taken interest mainly in the Polish experience of the war, and repressed specific discussions about the fate of Poland’s ethnic minorities during the country’s occupation. Thus, most often the Shoah did not feature in communist historical accounts, and certainly not in formal narratives about Poland’s history (Steinlauf 1997: 63–74). Instead, the Nazi’s victims of concentration and death camps were discussed

within the context of a German plan to exterminate the Polish population – Poles and ethnic minorities alike. Consequently, while in Jewish historiography the memory of the Second World War has predominantly become associated with death and personal loss, national trauma and ethnic genocide, to a great extent the Shoah has been written out from Poland's history (Cała 2006: 201–202; Steinlauf 1997: 81–83). Yet, other reasons apart from the communist regime's political agenda also contributed to the repression of the Shoah in the Polish collective memory. By the time the Second World War ended only few Jews remained in Poland to recall their experiences. In addition, those who survived the German persecution and systematic elimination of the Jews either chose to live the rest of their lives elsewhere, or preferred to repress their memories rather than share them with others and relive their traumatic recollections. Furthermore, Polish Jews who returned to Poland after the war did not want to acknowledge their Jewish origin owing to waves of Anti-Jewish violent acts that Poles carried out between 1944 and 1946, primarily as a consequence of their assumption that the Jews were supporters of Soviet politics and those responsible for the establishment of the communist regime in post-war Poland. As Poland remained communist until 1989, many of its Jewish citizens opted to hide their Jewish background throughout this period.²¹ In this sense, the Foundation contest provided an opportunity for memories of the Shoah to be told and heard in the Polish public domain. This way it facilitated the Shoah's gradual integration into historiographical debates about Poland's history.

But, because the Foundation invited prospective participants to submit *photographs* of Polish Jews, rather than written recollections of the past alone, the Foundation's public appeal compelled participants to voice memories that relate specifically to the photographs themselves or to the images they show. As a result, submissions addressing memories of the Shoah often narrated not only what Jews had gone through during the war period but also the submitted photographs' social biographies: in what circumstances they were taken, how their contemporary owners obtained copies of the images, and how the photographs survived the war period.²² The information that these submissions included was not necessarily completely unknown or unimaginable, but its historical implications were often unexpected.

One striking submission included Zahava Bromberg's recollections about the way in which she rescued some of her family photographs from destruction while her own life was at risk. As Bromberg put it in her letter (1995), these photographs, "are likely to be of importance because of the history of *their* survival."²³ Elucidating to what history she referred, Bromberg explained that, "I myself carried [the photographs] through two selections

by Dr. Mengele when I was in the Auschwitz concentration camp.” (1995) She later gave some further enlightening details about these occurrences:

In one selection I kept the photographs in my mouth. During the second selection they were taped with a plaster to the bottom of my bare foot. Even today I cannot understand how I was able to do something so dangerous. Obviously I could have been sentenced to death by what I did. (Bromberg 1995)

As Bromberg was willing to risk her life to protect the photographs, one can only assume it was the images they feature that she wished to adhere to. In another letter Bromberg sent to the Foundation it becomes apparent that she was rather reluctant to pass on to the contest organizers the very same prints she carried in Auschwitz (1996). She wrote her second letter in response to the Foundation’s request to obtain the actual prints, in place of their reproduced copies. Referring specifically to a photograph of her mother (Figure 10), Bromberg clarified that, “it is very difficult for me to separate from this photograph for sentimental reasons.” (1996) Instead of sending the original copy, Bromberg only agreed to post a higher resolution image. That she did not mind reproducing the image but refused to enable the Foundation to do so for her suggests that Bromberg considered the photographs as relevant to the contest primarily for their direct involvement in the events she described in her letter. By themselves, the photographic images appear to have been meaningful to her alone. And yet, historians of Poland’s communist period considered Auschwitz as a site at which the



Fig. 10 Sent by: Zahava Bromberg.
Photo: Photographer unknown. FS_1_0348_0009

Germans mainly eliminated unwanted Polish citizens, without revealing that at least half of them were of Jewish origin and that normally this was the only reason for their organized execution. This strategy enabled the Polish regime to prioritize notions of Polish victimhood and avoid addressing the German elimination of Polish minority groups (Steinlauf 1997: 69). Therefore, by inserting into the Polish sociocultural domain narratives about her experience in Auschwitz, Bromberg publically merged the Jewish and Polish experience of the Second World War.

Submissions akin to Bromberg's contributed to the accumulation of knowledge about the interrelated sufferings experienced by Polish Jews and other Polish citizens during the German occupation of Poland. However, additional narratives elicited through the participants' discussions of the photographs they submitted elaborated on aspects concerning Jewish-Polish relations during the Shoah, further demonstrating the close relationship between Polish and Jewish history in the country and, in particular, the two nations' interrelated wartime memories. Most illuminating in this regard were submissions sent by non-Jewish Polish citizens. Some of these entered the contest with photographs related to relationships they or their families had with individual members of the Jewish-Polish community, which the Shoah brought to an untimely end.

Maria Fijałkowska's entry, for example, records varying memories about her childhood friend, Józef Stending. "We played together when we were children," she wrote in the undated letter she enclosed to a wedding photograph showing Józef's parents, Szymon and Nusia Stending (Figure 11). The Stendings gave the photograph to Fijałkowska's mother as a souvenir of their wedding day. Signed by the Stendings on 10 October 1924, the inscription at the back reads, "For our beloved friends Mania and Kasia." Fijałkowska's letter mentions both Szymon and Nusia Stending. However, the main part of the letter revolves around the story of Józef's death, which stands in opposition to the happy memories alluded to by the photograph:

He was killed when a group of Jews from Leżajsk were forced to march all the way down to Kuryłówka and when they reached the river San they were told that the ones able to swim across the river would be free. Józio [Józef's nickname] along with other young people jumped into the water. All of them were shot in the water. People told this story to my mum, knowing she was a friend of the Stendings. (Fijałkowska)

Fijałkowska included in her letter a short explanation regarding her choice to submit the Stendings' photograph. "I thought to myself," she reflected, "let other people see this photograph. Maybe in Israel there is someone from Leżajsk. The photograph may help them remember some good and tender memories about the time before 1939."



Fig. 11 Nusia and Szymon Stending. Sent by: Maria Fijałkowska. Photo: Rembrant, Pasaż Hausmanna, Lwów. FS_1_0139_0001

Whereas Fijałkowska considered the photograph as an image capable of reminding Jews some pleasant memories about the peaceful and harmonious relationships some of them nurtured with the Poles in pre-war Poland, other non-Jewish respondents used their photographs to recall relationships that their families cultivated with Jews during the war period, in light of the new reality that Germany imposed on Polish society.

In 1994, when the Foundation first introduced the project to the public on Polish television, the broadcast featured some photographs as examples of the kinds of images the Foundation wished to obtain. Jerzy Dąbrowski watched the appeal and recognized many of the photographs that appeared on his TV screen. They were taken by his late father, Michał Dąbrowski, a Polish photographer who had operated a commercial studio in Baranów Sandomierski from the interwar period until the 1970s. As Jerzy Dąbrowski explained in his letter, his late father “has shown me the photographs I have seen on TV as well as others, equally interesting in terms of framing although not always of a good technical quality.” (Dąbrowski 1995) But the core of his letter does not focus on any particular photographs or their technical evaluation. Rather, it tells the story of his father’s attempt to turn his photography studio into a place of Jewish refuge during the Second World War:

My father told me that before the war he had business links with Jews and claimed they had a good relationship – a key for that was a necessity to respect the Jews. During the [German] occupation my father naively thought that Germans would not deport Jews who held a job, he employed quite a few ... One day my father had a search conducted by two German soldiers. My father said prays for one of them for the rest of his life, being grateful that he conducted only a cursory search in the places where my father hid weapons and radio receivers. (Dąbrowski 1995)



Fig. 12 Sent by: Jerzy Dąbrowski.
Photo: Michał Dąbrowski. FS_1_0265_0047



Fig. 13 Sent by: Jerzy Dąbrowski.
Photo: Michał Dąbrowski. FS_1_0265_0008



Fig. 14 Sent by: Jerzy Dąbrowski.
Photo: Michał Dąbrowski. FS_1_0265_0021

Dąbrowski's submission included 58 photographs taken by his father prior to the war. Most often their subjects either wear traditional Jewish clothing or present themselves to the camera as secular, socially assimilated individuals (see for example figures 12-14). By themselves the photographs serve as more visual records of Polish Jews who lived in Poland before 1939, while also attesting to

Michał Dąbrowski's prewar professional relationships with this community. But Jerzy Dąbrowski's letter indicates that his father did not only see them as customers, but also as fellow citizens whom he had thought he could have protected from their awaiting tragic fate.

Poles and Jews interrelated histories, wartime memories, as well as the tragic fate of the Jews during the German occupation of Poland dominated the narratives that accompanied another group of photographic submissions. Similar to Fijałkowska's and Dąbrowski's, they also revolved around Polish recollections. However, the pictures they included show anonymous Jews whose photographs those contest participants or members of their families found during the war, and incorporated into their domestic photographic collections despite the risk that being found with pictures of Jews entailed. Some found these photographs in Jewish ghettos, shortly after their liquidations. Others encountered them in abandoned attics, perhaps the last hiding places of Jews who hoped to escape their fate. Numerous submissions also explain that Polish citizens kept the photographs Jews left at the train stations from which the Germans deported them to camps, most likely not allowing them to carry much of their luggage any further. According to the letters sent by this group of participants, many of these found photographs were hidden during the war in various locations around their families' houses; beneath staircases, in sewage pipes, coal cellars, behind framed pictures and under legitimate photographs in albums. Their storage conditions may account for some of the stains, tears and other damage now integral to the photographic objects. But, more to the point, when they were received by the Foundation, such submissions revealed that non-Jewish Poles silently bore the Jewish-Polish community's memory throughout the communist rule of Poland, if only because they understood that Poland's history would be incomplete without it.

Jan Kochański's submission is a case in point. He entered the contest with a picture he found during the Second World War and had kept in his domestic photographic collection thereafter. The photograph shows two anonymous elderly Jews (Figure 15) but, similar to Bromberg's submission which we discussed earlier, it is the entanglement of the photograph in history that turned it so meaningful in Kochański's view. In his letter, Kochański explained he had worked at the Zawiercie steelwork factory throughout the German occupation of Poland (1994). Every so often the German army sent to the factory's workers some cloths that used to belong to Jews, to wipe the machinery. Kochański found the photograph amongst the items of clothing that arrived at his workshop in one of these deliveries. By itself, it does not help retrieve any information about the subjects it depicts, nor any definitive knowledge about their eventual fate. Yet, Kochański's adherence to the photograph, coupled with his decision to entrust it to the Foundation in association with a narrative about his own wartime experience elucidated that, at least some Polish citizens saw in the Foundation's project an opportunity to open up a discursive space capable of accommodating their own traumatic experiences of the war, which cannot be understood without the insertion of the Shoah into Poland's history. To be sure, referring to photographs sent by Polish participants, journalist Joanna Dąbrowska, for example, clarified in her critique of the exhibition that, "the pictures tell a lot about those who saved the photographs.

We therefore ought to remember that all these pictures are part of the history of Poland." (1996) Communist Polish historiography could not afford to open up this space for such citizens, because their traumatic memories and, indeed, their photographs, are entwined with recollections of Polish Jewry, Jewish life in the country, and accounts about Jewish suffering that consequently detract from narratives about exclusive Polish martyrdom. But, in the context of the Foundation contest, their accounts could be heard and validated.



Fig. 15 Sent by: Jan Kochański.
Photo: Photographer unknown. FS_1_0114_0001

The desire to open up this discursive space also characterizes submissions made by Poles who witnessed the German mass deportation of Jews from large Polish cities and local communities alike. The Germans removed Jews from these spaces to segregate at least the

majority of the Jewish-Polish community, frequently leaving whole streets and neighborhoods empty of their Jewish inhabitants, and thereby turning the non-Jewish Poles' daily reality unrecognizable. When deportations were underway, German soldiers often abused the Jews for their own amusement (Struk 2004: 63–66), and a significant number of the contest participants revealed that Poles photographed as well as obtained photographic records of some of these atrocities.



Fig. 16 Sent by: Stanisław Leszczyński.
Photo: Photographer unknown. FS_1_0273_0001



Fig. 17 Sent by: Stanisław Leszczyński.
Photo: Photographer unknown. FS_1_0273_0002

Stanisław Leszczyński's submission included two photographs that bear witness to such calamities, which he used to provide a testimony of what he saw in his hometown of Krosno during the war. One photograph depicts four Jewish subjects in an urban environment, facing each other in pairs and pulling one another's beards (Figure 16). The other was taken from further afar, revealing that these four subjects were part of a longer lineup of other Jewish individuals, also positioned in front of each other and engaged in the same degrading activity (Figure 17). "These photographs," Leszczyński noted, "were taken by some Kraut who gave them to a photographer to make prints and we made copies for ourselves on the sly." (1995) It is unclear from the letter why Leszczyński asked for these copies in the first place. But, he sent them to the Foundation "as they evidence the Polish Jews' martyrdom." (Leszczyński 1995) Adhering to his perception of the photographs as credible testimonies to Jewish suffering, throughout the letter Leszczyński used them as a point of departure for a broader narrative about the possible fate of those shown in the pictures. He noted, for example, that they had been made "on the marketplace in Krosno during the war, by the river Wisłok ... where the Jews were first rounded up and later deported to the death camp in Belżec ... They were taken away through the city in open

tracks, for the local people to see.” (Leszczyński 1995) Positioning himself at the scene, however, Leszczyński also wrote that (1995), “I have eye-witnessed the deportations of the Jews from Krosno, often recognizing familiar faces. They were seen for the last time.” In doing so, Leszczyński established the status of the photographs as possibly the last records in existence showing the Jews of Krosno in their hometown. He described the photographs as supplementary visual materials capable of attesting to the atrocities carried out against the Jews who lived in his town, as well as to his own wartime memories, which he could not have shared in public before the democratization of Poland in 1989.

The Sociocultural Lives of (Repressed) Domestic Photographs

In this article we aimed to attend to two complementary questions. On the one hand, we wanted to explore the sustainability of the meanings given to domestic photographic collections by scholars in the field, when considered in relation to politically unstable sociocultural environments. On the other hand, we wished to investigate whether and how local sociocultural and political processes may reframe personal, social or cultural perceptions of photographs kept in the domestic sphere. The photographs and letters submitted in response to the Shalom Foundation’s project *And I Still See Their Faces* provided us with ample materials to attend to the two questions, in the specific context of Polish society and Poland’s turbulent recent history. They allowed us to examine photographic samples from individual domestic photographic collections created and maintained in a sociocultural environment that did not see social or political rest before 1989, while also giving us an insight into the various ways in which the collectors saw the photographs’ relationships with the broader reality that has enclosed their production and preservation.

As we pointed out, prevailing debates in the study of domestic photographic collections tend to adhere to conceptual frameworks concerning with familial cross-generational communication and its interrelationship with democratic capitalist sociocultural values. Thus, interrogating photographs that were made and had been kept under more precarious political and living conditions, and understanding them in line with their owners’ voices, we were able to expand the visual as well as discursive field currently prevailing in such debates. As we demonstrated, perhaps precisely because the Foundation public appeal

required participants to consider other aspects than family life, the resulted collection exposes a large number of types of photographs that rarely receive scholarly attention in the study of domestic photographic collections, a large number of which only vaguely relate to family life, familial ties or pleasing experiences. Furthermore, in giving voice to the respondents' perceived personal value that each of them bestowed either upon the pictures or on the photographic objects themselves, as well as to their interpretations of the photographic past and their thoughts about the information they saw the photographs capable of communicating at least when they were preparing their submissions, we were able to diversify the meanings, significance and functions current literature often associates with domestic photographic collections. In this respect, our study shows that individual subjects may develop a sense of attachment to photographic images and objects for other reasons than whom they depict or what their *visual* content represents in the collector's view. It would in fact seem that individuals occasionally consider the photographs they collect and keep in the domestic sphere as any other casual objects that may turn significant because of the times they connote, regardless of their specific visual or material properties.

Focusing specifically on the Shalom Foundation collection however, and the impact its photographs have had on local social historiography, also helped us consider intersections of domestic photographic collections and the public domain. Whereas leading debates in the field argue that domestic photographs cease to function as such as soon as they depart from "home", we believe our case study raises some questions as regards this supposition, questions whose answers may require a much more nuanced attention to detail, circumstances and terminology. When domestic photographs enter the public environment they certainly become subjected to other forces than the institution of the family. And yet, our case study serves as a reminder that photographs kept in domestic collections might have begun their social lives elsewhere as well as that domestic photographic collections are not necessarily exclusive repositories of domestic narratives, postmemories and familial biographies. In the context of this article we showed that domestic photographic collections may include photographs referencing domestic life as well as sociopolitical conditions, photographs of individuals familiar as well as unfamiliar to their collectors, photographs whose perceived significance often lies with their owners, but also photographs whose perceived meanings first emerged in public and were absorbed along with the photographs into the domestic environment.

Understanding domestic photographic collections in line with this study's findings suggests that the terminology currently used in the field needs sharpening. Treating domestic photographs as related to the notions of home, family, friendship, privacy and love merely obfuscates their many uses and understandings in the vernacular, not enabling scholars to consider dominant and repressed categories of domestic photographs concurrently, nor account more accurately to these photographs' amorphous qualities and temporal manifestations that may survive their movement between the public and the domestic sphere.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Philip Cox, Elizabeth Edwards and Marta Leśniakowska for supporting and facilitating our cross-institutional collaboration. We are also grateful to Gołda Tencer-Szurmiej and Ewa Pałuba for granting us access to the Shalom Foundation photographic collection. All the photographs reproduced in the article are part of the collection *And I still See Their Faces*, courtesy of Gołda Tencer-Szurmiej, General Director of the Shalom Foundation in Poland.

References

- Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value. In Appadurai, Arjun, ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3–63.
- Batchen, Geoffrey. 2008. Snapshots: Art History and the Ethnographic Turn. *Photographies* 1(2): 121–142
- Bikont, Anna. 1996. Pamięć polska, pamięć żydowska [Polish memory, Jewish memory]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Magazyn. 12 April, 10–12.

Bromberg, Zahava. 27 December 1995 [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_0348.

Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

---. 10 January 1996 [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_0348. Warsaw: Shalom

Foundation.

Cała, Alina. 2006. Przekleństwo pamięci traumatycznej [The Curse of Traumatic Memory].

In Engelking, Barbara et al, eds. *Zagłada Żydów: pamięć narodowa a pisanie historii w*

Polsce i we Francji [Annihilation of the Jews: National Memory and History Writing in

Poland and France]. Lublin: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie, 195–

213.

Dąbrowska, Joanna. 1996. Wystawa w warszawskiej “Zachęcie”. Pamięć [Exhibition in

Zachęta, Warsaw: Memory]. *Sycyna*. 12 May, 2.

Dąbrowski, Jerzy. 13 February 1995 [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_0265.

Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

Davies, Norman. 2005a. *God's Playground: A History of Poland*. Volume I, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

---. 2005b. *God's Playground: A History of Poland*. Volume II, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Drozd, Roman. (1998) Ukraińcy w Polsce w okresie przełomów politycznych 1944-1989

[Ukrainians in Poland in the periods of political transformations 1944-1989]. In Madajczyk,

Piotr, ed. *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce: państwo i społeczeństwo wobec mniejszości*

narodowych w okresach przełomów politycznych 1944-1989 [Ethnic Minorities in Poland:

The Polish State and Society's Approaches Toward Ethnic Minorities in Periods of Political

Transformations 1944-1989]. Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii

Nauk, 180–244.

Duda, Eugeniusz and Sosenko, Marek. 1997. *Old Jewish Postcard: from Marek Sosenko's*

Collection. Translated from Polish by Michael Huffmaster and Małgorzata Walczak.

Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa.

Farmer, Kenneth C. 1985. National Minorities in Poland, 1919-1980. In Horak, Stephan M., ed. *Eastern European National Minorities, 1919-1980. A Handbook*. Littleton: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 35–106.

Fijałkowska, Maria. Undated. [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_0139. Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

Fleming, Michael. 2002. The New Minority Rights Regime in Poland: The Experience of the German, Belarussian, and Jewish Minorities since 1989. *Nations and Nationalism* 8(4): 531–548.

Garlicka, Aleksandra. 1994. Inni wśród swoich – wystawa w Muzeum Niepodległości [Other Among Us – Exhibition in The Museum of Independence]. In Władyka, Wiesław, ed. *Inni wśród swoich [Białorusini, Cyganie, Czesi, Grecy, Karaimi, Litwini, Łemkowie, Macedończycy, Niemcy, Ormianie, Rosjanie, Słowacy, Tatarzy, Ukraińcy, Węgrzy, Żydzi] [Other Among Us (Belarusians, Gypsies, Czechs, Greeks, Karaites, Lithuanians, Lemkos, Macedonians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Tatars, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Jews)]*. Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 151–153.

Gilman, Sander. 1991. *The Jew's Body*. New York: Routledge.

Gross, Jan Tomasz. 2006. *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hirsch, Julia. 1981. *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning and Effect*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hirsch, Marianne. 1997. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hirsch, Marianne, ed. 1999. *The Familial Gaze*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.

Holland, Patricia and Spence, Jo. 1991. *Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography*. London: Virago Press Limited.

Hryniewicz, Wojtek. 1996. I ciągle widzę ich twarze [And I Still See Their Faces], *Przegląd Polityczny* 31. [No date], 119–120.

Kac, Albin. 14 March 1995 [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_0346. Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

Kemp-Welch, Anthony. 2008. *Poland Under Communism: A Cold War History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kochański, Jan. 3 December 1994. [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_114. Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

Kopytoff, Igor. 1986. The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process. In Appadurai, Arjun, ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 64–91.

Krasnodębski, Ryszard. 18 January 1996. [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, Letter FS_1_0191. Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

Kuc, Monika. 1996. Przez powiększenie. Fotografia Żydów polskich w Zachęcie. [Zoom in. Photography of Polish Jews in Zachęta]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Co jest Grane. 19 April, 12.

Leszczyński, Stanisław. 15 February 1995. [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_0273. Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

Łoziński, Sławomir. 1994. *Polityka państwa polskiego wobec mniejszości narodowych w latach 1989-1993. Raport nr 55 Biura Studiów i Ekspertyz Kancelarii Sejmu* [Politics of the Polish State Toward National Minorities 1989-1993. Report no. 55 of Bureau of Research of the Chancellery of the Sejm]. Warszawa: Kancelaria Sejmu.

Mac, Jerzy Sławomir. 1996. Fotografie Żydów Polskich. Twarze nieobecnych [Photographs of Polish Jews: Faces of Absence]. *Wprost*. 21 April, 83.

Maxwell, Anne. 2008. *Picture Imperfect: Photography and Eugenics, 1870-1940*. Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press.

Mazur, Adam. 2009. *Historie fotografii polskiej 1839-2009* [Histories of Polish Photography 1839-2009]. Kraków: Fundacja Sztuk Wizualnych.

Micgiel, John. 1997. 'Bandits and Reactionaries': The Suppression of the Opposition in Poland, 1944-1946. In Naimark, Norman and Gibianskii, Leonid, eds. *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Easter Europe, 1944-1949*. Colorado: Westview Press, 93–110.

Morris-Reich, Amos. 2013. Photography in Economies of Demonstration: The Idea of the Jews as a Mixed-Race People. *Jewish Social Studies* 20(1): 150–183.

Ordyński, Tadeusz. Undated. [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_0272. Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

Pasternak, Gil. 2014. Intimate Conflicts: Foregrounding the Radical Politics of Family Photographs. In Sheehan, Tanya, ed. *Photography, History, Difference*. Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 217–239.

Polonsky, Antony. 2013. *The Jews in Poland and Russia: A Short History*. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

Rose, Gillian. 2010. *Doing Family Photography: The Domestic, the Public and the Politics of Sentiment*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.

Segel, Harold B., ed. 1996. *Stranger in Our Midst: Images of the Jew in Polish Literature*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Smootha, Sammy. 2002. Types of Democracy and Modes of Conflict Management in Ethnically Divided Societies. *Nations and Nationalism* 8(4): 423–431.

Steinlauf, Michael C. 1997. *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Stokes, Phillip. 1992. The Family Photography Album: So Great a Cloud of Witnesses. In Clarke, Graham, ed. *The Portrait in Photography*. London: Reaktion Books, 193–205.

Struk, Janina. 2004. *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Toeplitz, Krzysztof T. 1996. Ciągłe widzę ich twarze [I Still See Their Faces], *Wiadomości Kulturalne*. 5 May, 12–13.

Władyka, Wiesław. 1994. Wstęp [Introduction]. In Władyka, Wiesław, ed. *Inni wśród swoich [Białorusini, Cyganie, Czesi, Grecy, Karaimi, Litwini, Łemkowie, Macedończycy, Niemcy, Ormianie, Rosjanie, Słowacy, Tatarzy, Ukraińcy, Węgrzy, Żydzi] [Other Among Us (Belarusians, Gypsies, Czechs, Greeks, Karaites, Lithuanians, Lemkos, Macedonians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Tatars, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Jews)]*, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 5–9.

Wójcik, Leszek. 18 February 1995. [Letter]. *And I Still See Their Faces*, FS_1_0142. Warsaw: Shalom Foundation.

Notes

¹ The Polish TV channel TVP1 broadcasted the appeal on 11 November 1994.

² Ocalone fotografie [Saved photographs]. *Gazeta Stołeczna*, 14 April 1996: 7.

³ The exhibition was shown in, for example, Palacio de Canete (Madrid, 2012), London City Hall (London, 2008), Yeshiva University Museum (New York, 2007), Vystavochnyj centr Sankt-Peterburgskogo otdelenija Sojuza hudozhnikov Rossii (St. Petersburg, 2001), Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu (Paris 1998), Yad Vashem (Jerusalem, 1998), The Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance (Los Angeles, 1997), and Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych (Kraków 1996).

⁴ On some of the public debates triggered by *And I still See Their Faces*, see Mazur (2009: 120–125), Hryniewicz (1996), Teoplitz (1996).

⁵ Some examples include, Rose (2010), Hirsch (1999; 1997), Stokes (1992), Holland and Spence (1991), Hirsch (1981).

⁶ On the historiography of domestic photographic practices, see Pasternak (2014).

⁷ Geoffrey Batchen (2008), for example, suggested one studies domestic photographs through engagement with the familiarity of the moments they tend to connote, the familiarity with their common uses, as well as with the emotions and sentiments they allegedly often trigger. While, generally speaking, we find the method Batchen proposes applicable to photographs made and collected in *democratic* environments, in this article we demonstrate that it may not be as beneficial when studying the photographs inserted into domestic photographic collections created and maintained under less politically stable circumstances.

⁸ Numerous other Poland-based public institutions have contributed to the revision of the history of Polish Jews and to the revival of Jewish culture in Poland since the fall of communism. Perhaps the most dominant example is the 2013 establishment of POLIN – the museum of the history of Polish Jews in Warsaw – and the core as well as changing exhibitions it has hosted since then. The contributions made by POLIN and similar institutions to the expansion of nuanced historical narratives about Jewish lived experience in Poland must not be underestimated. However, the article considers an earlier historical moment in Poland's post-communist history, which could be described as the period of the country's transition to democracy and whose end was arguably marked by Poland's admission to the European Union in 2004.

⁹ In taking issue with the post-war social histories of Polish Jews we certainly do not wish to suggest that Jews and Poles lived together peacefully and harmoniously in the pre-war era. We, equally, do not suggest that Polish Jews had not been subjected to socioeconomic discrimination as well as victims of private and organised, racist and nationalist, verbal and physical abuse, before, during and after the war. The complex histories of Jewish lived experience in Poland throughout its history are well documented in scholarly literature (see, for example, Polonsky 2013, Gross 2006, Segel 1996), and our article's historiographic contribution intends to elaborate and offer nuances to, rather than challenge, such historical accounts.

¹⁰ Altogether Garlicka organized four exhibitions in Narodowa Galeria Sztuki Zachęta [Zachęta National Art Gallery]: *Inteligencja polska* [Polish Intelligentsia] October-December 1995; *Lwowiaci i ich miasto* [People of Lvov and their city] March 1991; *Robotnicy* [Workers] May 1989; and *Fotografia chłopów polskich* [Photography of Polish Peasants], organized with Maria Bijak in July-September 1985.

¹¹ For Garlicka's call for participation in the exhibition see, 'Inni wśród swoich' ['Others Among Us'], *Polityka*, 11 January 1992: 2.

¹² See also, Aleksandra Galicka's "'Rodzina człowiecza' w Polsce" ("The Family of Man' in Poland"), an unpublished paper found in Garlicka's private archive currently held uncatalogued by the National Library of Poland (Warsaw).

¹³ Unpublished shorthand text from the panel discussion, found in Garlicka's private archive, currently held uncatalogued by the National Library of Poland (Warsaw).

¹⁴ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17 December 1994: 4. Another, similar version of the call was also published in *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 November 1994: 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27 January 1995: 11.

¹⁷ The list included, Małgorzata Niezabitowska, Szymon Szurmiej, Szymon Kobylński, Waldemar Dąbrowski, Nechemie Nissenbaum and Golda Tencer.

¹⁸ The Jews were not allowed to wear their traditional dress in parts of Poland that had been under Russian control from the 1795 Partition of Poland until the end of the First World War. However, as Galicia used to be part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Galician Jews kept wearing their traditional cloths as well as their beards and sidelocks (Duda and Sosenko 1997: 9).

¹⁹ In his letter, Kac did not note Ring's full name.

²⁰ Józef Piłsudski was a well-respected statesman and a Polish national hero who held various leading positions in the Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939) until his death in 1935. *Virtuti Militari* is the highest Polish military decoration awarded for acts of valor to this day.

²¹ It must be noted in this context that a large number of Polish Jews opted to carry on hiding their Jewish background even after the fall of the communist regime, and some prefer to withhold their Jewish identity to this very day.

²² We use the term "social biographies" with reference to notions such as "the social life of things" (Appadurai 1986) and "the cultural biography of things" (Kopytoff 1986). Put somewhat reductively, such terms emerged in recent anthropological studies to reflect the suggestion that different stages in things, objects and commodities' motion as well as mobility within sociocultural spheres may imbue them with value as well as different meanings.

²³ Our emphasis.