



A panel discussion marking the 90th anniversary of the Polish Diplomatic Mission in Berlin: (from left) Prof. Irena Lipowicz, the historian Jürgen Vietig, Johannes Bauch (former German ambassador to Poland) and Dr. Marek Prawda (Polish ambassador to Germany)

## Polish-German History

RAFAŁ ŻYTYNIEC

Center for Historical Research, Berlin  
Polish Academy of Sciences  
zytyniec@panberlin.de

**A research unit of the Polish Academy of Sciences dealing with the modern history of Polish-German relations has now been operational in Berlin for two years**

The Center for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin, set up in 2006 under the direction of Prof. Robert Traba, is the Academy's first foreign unit to have a specific research profile – it pursues its own original projects in historical sciences.

The Center's objective is to present the results of the historical research projects pursued by its scholars to the broader public via modern forms of media. It is currently involved in two core projects: "We Berliners!" and "Polish-German Realms of Memory." Overall, the Center's research focuses on such issues as collective memory, history-driven politics in Poland, Germany, and Europe, the history and current state of Polish-German cultural relations, migration between Poland and Germany, and WWII as preserved in the memories of Poles and Germans.

Aside from the pursuit of such long-term research projects and the individual research specializations of its staff members, the Center organizes research conferences in cooperation with top German research institutions, addressing topics that form part of the mainstream of scholarly and public discussion in Germany and Poland.

Moreover, the Center invites institutions and scholars from other countries (e.g. France and Lithuania) to collaborate in work on modern history.

### ***My, berlińczycy – Wir Berliner!***

One of the Center's core projects, "We Berliners! - Poles in the Development of the 17th-21st Century Berlin Metropolis," aims to study the activity of Poles in Berlin and their impact on its cultural and social development over the past 300 years. A culminating moment for the project came with the opening of the *My, berlińczycy! Wir Berliner!* exhibition, on display from April to June 2009 at the Berlin City Museum (Stadtmuseum Berlin). Developed in collaboration with the Berlin City Museum and the Polish National Museum in Poznań, the exhibition traces the Polish presence through three centuries of Berlin's history and familiarizes visitors with profiles of both well-known and little-known Polish migrants, with Polish places and symbols, and with the contribution of Polish art and science to the development of multicultural Berlin.

The other core project, "Polish-German Realms of Memory," an interdisciplinary project carried out since 2006, has drawn together about 100 authors and focused them around the challenge of looking at the history of Polish-German relations from new perspectives. Its output will be a four-volume collection edited by Prof. Robert Traba and Hans Henning Hahn from Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg (in collaboration with Maciej Górny and Kornelia Kończal), slated for publication in both Polish and German in late 2010, presenting an analysis of shared (in both senses: as common and as separate) and parallel Polish-German realms of memory. From the methodological standpoint it will be the first attempt at combining research on "cultures of remembrance" with the history of mutual relations. Each volume of the publication will contain approx. 2300 pages.

### **Meeting place**

Another of the ways the Center fosters better Polish-German research cooperation is through its Colloquia - research workshop meetings that mainly seek to encourage discussion and the free exchange of views. The guests at these Colloquia are scholars who work with issues in Polish-German relations and comparative research in the Central European perspective.

Various presentations organized and co-organized by the Center, highlighting the achievements of leading Polish and German humanists, also serve the similar purpose of encouraging the exchange of ideas. As part of such activity the Center has organized public discussions and presentations involving such outstanding professors as Jerzy Holzer, Heinrich August Winkler, Tomasz Szarota, Jerzy Jedlicki, Jürgen Kocka and Karol Modzelewski.

The research findings and papers that emerge from such conferences and discussions are published in the Center's annual journal *Historie*, which also chronicles the events at the Center. Its objective is to better inform German readers about the current trends of research in Polish historiography and the broadly-interpreted humanities. The journal is published in 700 copies by Budrich Unipress in Leverkusen, a publishing house specializing in the humanities, and is available from German booksellers. The Center intends to publish thematic issues: the first issue of the annual is entitled "War and its Aftermath," reflecting the dominant topic in public Polish-German discourse in recent years.

### **Library**

The library of the Center supports its own staff members and grant holders, but also strives to serve anyone with an interest in Polish and Polish-German issues. The collections will ultimately consist of well over 10,000 volumes, including the most important books on the history of Poland and Polish-German relations. More than 7,000 volumes have already been collected, and the library moreover subscribes to 24 of the most important Polish research journals.

The library has two special collections. The first consists of Polish-related materials collected from throughout Germany - gathering and preserving such materials from destruction is one of the library's top priorities. The other special collection is comprised of Polish émigré periodicals from outside Germany, such as the Paris-based *Kultura* journal, plus several hundred volumes of émigré publications mainly from the United Kingdom, France, and the United States. The Center's library proudly opened its doors to the public in January 2009, and its catalog is accessible online at [cbh.allegronet.de](http://cbh.allegronet.de).

More details about the research projects of the Center for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin can be found online at [www.cbh.pan.pl](http://www.cbh.pan.pl) ■



The building of the Center is located at Majakowskiring 47 in Berlin's Pankow district

Archives of the Center for Historical Research