

GSA 2021 Sybil
Halpern Milton
Memorial Book
Prizewinner:
Lukasz Krzyzanowski

Prizewinner: Dr. **Lukasz Krzyzanowski** (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw; and History, University of Ottawa, Canada)

Book: *Ghost Citizens: Jewish Return to a Postwar City* (Harvard University Press, 2020, translated by Madeline G. Levine).

Announced at #thegsa2021 conference on September 30, 2021, by Dr. Janet Ward, GSA President.

The committee members of the Sybil Halpern Milton Memorial Book Prize are Dr. Doris Bergen (University of Toronto), Committee Chair; Dr. Neil Gregor, History, University of Southampton); and Dr. Todd Presner (University of California Los Angeles).

2021 Winner of the Sybil Halpern Milton Memorial Book Prize:

Lukasz Krzyzanowski, *Ghost Citizens: Jewish Return to a Postwar City* (Harvard University Press, 2020, translated by Madeline G. Levine)

Laudatio:

The 2021 Sybil Halpern Milton Memorial Book Prize has been awarded to Professor Lukasz Krzyzanowski (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw) for *Ghost Citizens: Jewish Return to a Postwar City*, translated by Madeline G. Levine (Harvard University Press, 2020). *Ghost Citizens: Jewish Return to a Postwar City* is a bold, honest, and extremely important book. Drawing on an extraordinary collection of Jewish Committee documents from 1945-1950, plus archives in five countries, haunting photographs, and original interviews, Krzyzanowski analyzes the lived experience of Jewish Holocaust survivors in the Polish city of Radom. Every aspect of postwar existence was marked by Nazism and the Holocaust, he shows, and the distance between Christian Poles, and the small and increasingly closed community of Jews became a chasm. Krzyzanowski brilliantly develops the concept of “ghost citizens” and grounds it in specific archival moments that are all the more powerful because he lets the difficult material speak for itself. He focuses on familiar themes – violence, communal life, and restitution of property – yet his innovative approach, a blend of everyday, social, legal, and local histories with close attention to material culture and deep respect for his subjects as historical actors, reveals interconnections that cut across the many stories that could be told and keeps us reading and reflecting.

Krzyzanowski navigates very sensitive terrain, and he does not make any easy polemical moves. He situates himself in the narrative to powerful effect; Krzyzanowski grew up in Radom, and his intimate knowledge of the city and its people informs his study in significant ways. Originally published in Polish, this book brings into the light issues that remain controversial and timely for Poles, Germans, and anyone who cares about how people live on after destruction. Beautifully translated by Madeline Levine, *Ghost Citizens* is a tour de force of historical scholarship and a profound and deeply humane book.