

From grey to technicolour



Students of the Grozisk Mazowiecki High School, taking a group of overseas visitors to their town's Jewish Cemetery and explaining symbols and lettering on headstones.

Dynamic, energetic, bustling, vibrant and spirited are adjectives that aptly describe the Poland of today. Having thrown off the shackles of occupation from 1939 to 1989, the transformation of Poland over the past twenty-five years has been an outstanding success story.

The reconstruction of Warsaw, a story of grit and resilience in itself, is a symbol of Polish determination and resilience. Ninety percent of Warsaw was totally destroyed by the Germans.

The destruction of the city was so severe that in order to rebuild much of Warsaw, a detailed 18th century landscape of the city, painted by the Italian artists Marcello Bacciarelli and Bernardo Bellotto, who had been commissioned by the government before the Partitions of Poland, had to be used as a blueprint to recreate most of the city and buildings.

Poland is however much more than reconstructed buildings and new museums. It is a country that has

embraced democracy and has worked hard to establish a strong economic base, attracting international investment for economic growth and for modernizing a great deal of previously neglected infrastructure.

A new Polish culture is surfacing after sixty years of subjugation, blending the old with the new and creating an exhilarating and invigorating cultural milieu for the arts, music and literature to blossom.

The most significant change however is in the spirit and self-esteem that has coalesced into the Polish psyche. There is a great pride in what has been achieved over the past twenty-five years. In order to define and strengthen modern Polish identity, people are willingly engaging in honest research and discussion about the past and how to move on with dignity and integrity. Above all, one sees modern Poland in the eyes of her children. Children who are proud to be Poles, who are proud of their nation, and who embrace the universal values of tolerance and acceptance of others.

Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants
is proud to present an event
Honouring the Polish *Righteous Among The Nations*

The Australian Premiere of the Documentary Film

OCALENI

(The Rescued)

DIRECT FROM
WARSAW'S
MUSEUM OF
THE HISTORY OF
POLISH JEWS

Followed by the
Official Opening of the Exhibition

THEY RISKED THEIR LIVES

— Poles who saved Jews during the Holocaust



2.30pm Sunday 5 July 2015

Beth Weizmann Jewish Community Centre
306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield

Entry: \$15
Refreshments will be served

 **ASPJ**
Australian Society of Polish Jews
and Their Descendants Inc.


Polish Community Council
of Victoria Inc.

The Fryderyk Chopin Airport
in Warsaw, 2009. Giza
Alterwajn, survivor of the
Warsaw ghetto, in the arms
of Danuta Galkowa at their
first meeting in over 60 years.
Danuta took care of tiny Giza
in 1942 and Giza lived with
her until the end of the war.
Giza's relatives reclaimed her
and took her abroad.

Bookings: www.trybooking.com/130855 For more information: Lena Fiszman 0413 351 852 Bernard Korbman 0418 194 802
PO Box 56, Elsternwick VIC 3185 Australia e: lfiszman@bigpond.net.au www.polishjews.org.au

Exhibition prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland

**We thank the
sponsors who made
They Risked Their Lives
exhibition possible**



Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in Canberra



EMBASSY OF ISRAEL
IN AUSTRALIA



Polish Community Council
of Victoria Inc.



Ms Eva Hussain



Andrew Rajcher and
Mrs Dora Rajcher



This exhibition was printed
and constructed by:

consolidatedsignage
COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE & GRAPHICS

Warto być przyzwoitym (It's worthwhile being decent)

It is with immense sorrow that the Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants marks the passing of a true Polish hero, a Righteous Among the Nations, an Honorary Citizen of the State of Israel – Professor Władysław Bartoszewski – academic, writer, journalist, diplomat, social activist and true humanitarian.

During World War II, he co-founded ŻEGOTA – the Council for Aid to Jews, which has been credited with saving the lives of thousands of Jews.

Bartoszewski was born in Warsaw into a devout Catholic family. When war broke out in 1939, as a teenager, he began working with the Polish Red Cross. On 19th September 1940, he was unfortunately caught in a Nazi round-up in the Warsaw suburb of Żoliborz and was sent to Auschwitz from where he was released on 8th April 1941.

From his release, Bartoszewski became active in the underground wartime resistance and in the Polish Home Army. It was during that period that he co-founded ŻEGOTA and also organised support for the April 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. On 1st August 1944, he began his involvement in the Warsaw Uprising and rose to the rank of Second Lieutenant in the Home Army. For his service, he was decorated with both the Silver Cross of Merit and the Cross of Valour.

Following the war, he provided the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) with information about Nazi war crimes, the situation in concentration camps and prisons and on the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people.

He then became involved with the Polish Peoples Party (PSL), at the time the only real opposition to the communist government. He was active in numerous organisations resisting the oppression of successive Polish Communist governments. Because of this activity, he was falsely accused of spying, and from December 1946 until April 1948 was an inmate of Mokotów

1922–2015



prison. He was again arrested in December 1949, again falsely convicted of being a spy, and was imprisoned until August 1954. Upon his release and under Polish communist rule, he devoted himself to journalism and writing.

In 1963, Bartoszewski was awarded the medal of Polonia Restituta for his work helping Jews during the war. Also, in that year, he began his work with Radio Free Europe.

In 1965, he was recognised by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem as a Righteous Among the Nations and, years later, was made an Honorary Citizen of the State of Israel by the Knesset.

From 1974 through to the late 1980s, he lectured at tertiary educational institutions around Europe and attended many international conferences and seminars devoted to World War II issues, the Jewish genocide and Polish–Jewish relations.

He was a prolific writer, having over thirty books in current publication. When asked once why he had done what he did during World War II, he replied that it was worthwhile being decent (warto być przyzwoitym). By default, that response became his catchcry and the phrase by which he was best known for the rest of his distinguished life.

Professor Bartoszewski passed away on 24th April 2015 at the age of 93. He is survived by his wife and son. In accordance with Jewish tradition, we wish his family long life. May his memory be a blessing to them and to both the Polish and Jewish peoples.



The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage is today one of the most important and best known organisations involved in the protection of the monuments of Jewish culture in Poland. Since its beginning, the Foundation had many spectacular successes, which had an important and lasting effect on the way in which Jewish heritage issues are perceived.

The Foundation's achievements are today widely known and discussed, both in Poland and abroad, hence the large number of people and institutions interested in the history of our organisation.

The Foundation's statutory tasks cover the protection, in a broad sense, of Jewish culture and tradition. This is done largely through the renovation and protection of monuments, especially Jewish cemeteries.

To Bring Memory Back

To Bring Memory Back is the Foundation's largest educational undertaking. It aims to encourage schoolchildren to search for traces of Poland's multicultural past and to take care of Jewish cemeteries. Between 2005–2012, seven editions of the programme took place, with a total participation of 350 schools, 10 000 students and 400 teachers. Successive editions were held under the patronage of Voivodeship Educational Curators and of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment. At the end of each edition, participants could present the results of their work at the national finals presentation held at the Nozyk synagogue in Warsaw. The ceremony was regularly attended by representatives of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland, the embassies of Israel, the United States, Germany and many other countries.

The "To Bring Memory Back" programme was supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Bank BPH, the Leopold Kronenberg Foundation, the Civic Initiatives Fund, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

Haverim – Friends. Polish–Jewish Youth Meetings

Since 2007, the Foundation has also undertaken the "Haverim – Friends Polish–Jewish Youth Meetings" project, which evolved directly from the "To Bring Memory Back" programme. Its aim is to abolish mutual stereotypes, prevalent both in Poland and in Israel, by organising meetings between young people from both countries.

Thanks to the project, Israeli students, whose chief exposure to Poland is usually only through bus windows, have the opportunity to meet their peers engaged in Polish–Jewish dialogue and actively involved in efforts to preserve the heritage of Polish Jews.

The "Haverim – Friends, Polish–Jewish Youth Meetings" project is supported by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland.

Research on Attitudes Towards Jews

The Foundation also led the "Research on Attitudes Towards Jews and their Heritage, Cooperation with Local Partners in 15 Selected Towns, Education for Tolerance". Fifteen towns from the Podlaskie, Lubelskie and Podkarpackie voivodeships took part in this project. Sociological research was carried out in each town in order to gauge the attitudes of the inhabitants towards Jews and their heritage. Next, educational activities aimed at popularising attitudes of tolerance and openness towards other cultures and religions were conducted in each town, based on the research results.

Over 90 events took place in the 15 towns covered by the project (workshops, lectures and competitions), attended by a total of 4600 people.

The project "Research on Attitudes Towards Jews and their Heritage, Cooperation with Local Partners in 15 Selected Towns, Education for Tolerance" was supported by the Stefan Batory Foundation, as part of the "Programme For Tolerance – Countering Intolerance".

“THEY RISKED THEIR LIVES – Poles who saved Jews during the Holocaust” TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

Poles, direct witnesses of German crimes against Jews, were forced to experience the Holocaust in a special way. They were not only subjected to the brutal terror of war, but also confronted with the cruel extermination of their Jewish neighbours.

In occupied Poland, unlike in the countries of Western Europe, helping Jews was punishable by death. Despite this fact, there were Poles who stood up to evil and saved Jews. In the name of helping others, they risked not only their own lives, but also those of their families. These rescuers managed to save tens of thousands of Polish Jews. Many of them were honoured for their heroism with the state title of

Righteous Among the Nations, awarded by the Yad Vashem Institute in Israel.

The exhibition shows the phenomenon of Polish rescuers. It presents their stories, faces, and motivations, as well as the historical context, circumstances and the scale of the help given.

The exhibition is based on a unique collection of testimonies from the Righteous Among the Nations as well as Holocaust survivors gathered within the framework of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews oral history project “Polish Righteous – Recalling Forgotten History”.

Fifth Reunion in Częstochowa – 29th September to 1st October 2015



The World Society of
CZĘSTOCHOWA JEWS
AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

Held every three years, the fifth Reunion of the World Society of Częstochowa Jews and Their Descendants will take place in Częstochowa, Poland, over Chol Hamoed Sukkot later this year.

Following WWII, many surviving Częstochowa Jews left Europe to settle in Melbourne. The World Society urges their children and grandchildren to attend this year's Reunion to trace their roots and retrace the footsteps of their ancestors.

This year's Reunion will include a tour of Jewish Częstochowa, a memorial service at the Częstochowa Jewish cemetery (the third largest Jewish cemetery in Poland), lunch in Europe's largest purpose-built sukkah (seating 600 people), an academic conference, a banquet dinner, a reception

at the Częstochowa Jewish Social-Cultural Centre, tours through the surrounding district and a concert featuring the world-famous Jewish violinist Joshua Bell, accompanied by the Częstochowa Philharmonic Orchestra.

Bell owns and will play the Stradivarius violin which was once owned by Bronisław Huberman, a Częstochowa Jew and an outstanding violinist who later founded the Palestine Symphony Orchestra (today known as the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra).

During the Reunion, the National Archives in Częstochowa will open an express desk for Reunion participants who wish to obtain copies of documents and certificates relating to their Częstochowa ancestors.

More information can be obtained on the World Society's website: www.czestochowajews.org or by contacting Andrew Rajcher on 0417-013-690 or via email to aragorn@axiomcs.com.au

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

President:

Bernard Korbman, OAM

Vice-Presidents:

Izydor Marmur

Andrew Rajcher

Treasurer:

Andrew Rajcher

Secretary:

Lena Fiszman

Members:

Moshe Fiszman

Ezra May

David Prince

Peter Schnall

Telephone: +61 (0)3 9523 9573

Facsimile: +61 (0)3 9528 2082

Website: www.polishjews.org.au

Email: lfiszman@bigpond.net.au

Mailing Address:

PO Box 56, Elsternwick, Vic., 3185

To find out more about the Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants please visit www.polishjews.org.au