

## 2018, YEAR OF BUILDING ON THE SUCCESSES OF PREVIOUS YEARS

**PRESERVE  
EDUCATE  
PROMOTE**

SUMMER 2018 ISSUE 2



Every year since our humble beginnings, all of us at ASPJ worked hard to take our organisation to where it stands today in both the Jewish and the Polish community. The experience of the past years and the determination of many dedicated people resulted in 2017 being a very successful year.

We held a number of events, exhibitions, meetings, gave radio interviews, have taken part in and attended a number of commemorations in both the Jewish and the Polish communities. Most importantly, we have formed friendships and initiated honest dialogue between varying voices of Jewish and non-Jewish Poles.

Through friendship and co-operation with a number of Polish organisations, including Polish Community Council of Victoria, Albion Polish Club, Syrena Polish Club, Polish clergy, Australian Institute of Polish Affairs and many others, there is now a dialogue taking place that was almost unthinkable a few years ago. We have formed working relationships with the Victorian Government and the Opposition, as well as the Polish diplomatic corps, both in Australia and Poland. This resulted in ASPJ becoming an influential and well respected organisation.

Our board now includes a new member, Estelle Rozinski, who will represent our organisation in NSW. The long-term plan is to have a presence in other Australian states.

In today's world there is a clear trend in many countries towards an increase in nationalism. This results in an inward-looking attitude and resentment of 'the other'. In that atmosphere, it is easy to create divisions and suspicion between people, so even actions not intended to offend can be interpreted as hostile. History and current events are portrayed in a way that justifies one side and condemns the other, sometimes based on 'alternative facts'.

Organisations like ours aim to encourage dialogue between communities and individuals based on a genuine desire to understand the facts and to react appropriately.

To have an impact and to make a difference, we will need active participation from our members and other like-minded people, and assistance from those who share our values.

We are positive about the future of ASPJ. We look forward to this year's many challenges and will work to meet them successfully.

On my behalf and that of our board I would like to wish all our members and friends a very happy 2018.

Izydor Marmur  
President

## Polish Government legislation regarding the Holocaust. Page 2

### IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Meyn Gedanken</i> (My Thoughts)	Page 2-3	The new Ambassadors	Page 13
Andrew Korab obituary	Page 4	AIPA and the beginnings of Polish-Jewish dialogue	Page 14
Birth of the Jewish Culture Festival in Cracow	Page 5-7	Missing Mezzuzot of Zdunska Wola	Page 15-16
One who stayed	Page 8-1	A gentleman of honour and decency	Page 17
Forum for Dialogue	Page 11	Exhibition information	Page 18
Foundation for Jewish Heritage	Page 12		

# POLAND PASSES CONTROVERSIAL HOLOCAUST LAW



Polish President Andrzej Duda announces his decision to sign a legislation penalizing certain statements about the Holocaust, in Warsaw, Poland, Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2018.

## **Summary of Polish Government legislation regarding the Holocaust**

Poland's President Andrzej Duda signed a controversial bill that outlaws blaming Poland for German Nazi crimes committed during the Holocaust. The bill calls for up to three years in prison or a fine for accusing the Polish nation as a whole of involvement or responsibility for Nazi atrocities and the near annihilation of Polish Jewry during World War II. The proposed legislation has raised concerns among critics about how Polish courts will decide what they consider to be facts.

According to the Polish PM, legal measures will not be pursued against those who refer to heinous cases of crimes committed by individual persons.

The legislation only criminalizes any mention of the Polish nation as a whole for being responsible or complicit in the Nazi crimes committed by the Third German Reich. The harshest penalties are reserved for those who refer to Nazi-era concentration camps such as Auschwitz as "Polish death camps." Only scientific research into the war and artistic work are exempted.

## **Yad Vashem's response to the legislation recently passed in Poland regarding the Holocaust. 06 February 2018**

This law has been the subject of discussions over the last year and a half during which Yad Vashem repeatedly warned Polish authorities regarding the flaws in the wording of the law. These flaws are liable to result in the distortion of history due to the limitations that the law places on public expressions regarding the collaboration of parts of the Polish population – either directly or indirectly – in crimes that took place on their own land during the Holocaust.

Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, reiterates and emphasises that the term "Polish death camps" is erroneous. The concentration and extermination camps were built and operated by the Germans in Nazi-occupied Poland with the express purpose of murdering and annihilating the Jewish people within the framework of the "Final Solution". The law relates to additional elements that will jeopardize the free and open discussion about the role

of Poles – individuals and groups – in the persecution and murder of the Jews during the Holocaust.

We are concerned that this law will have repercussions in the areas of Holocaust research, education and remembrance. Yad Vashem will be watchful of the implementation of the law and the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal of Poland and will study the new reality created in their wake.

## **MEYN GEDANKEN (MY THOUGHTS)**

**Bernard Korbman**  
CEO, ASPJ

The Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants is closely monitoring the reaction of all international Jewish and Polish organisations involved with this issue. In fact, on Saturday 10 February 2018,

President Izydor Marmur and I met with His Excellency Michal Kolodziejcki, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, to voice our concern at the recently passed legislation regarding the Holocaust.

Although we fully understand and in fact support unconditionally the removal of the term Polish death camps, we hold grave fears for the consequences that could ensue from the passing of this bill.

Since its inception, our philosophy at the ASPJ has always been to overcome the distrust that some members of both the Jewish and Polish communities have towards one another. Our mission is to “To

preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland and to foster understanding between current and future generations of Polish and Jewish communities”

To ensure the success of our endeavour, our credo has always been that honesty is the best policy. Therefore, in our dialogue with the Polish Community in Australia, as well as with Polish Government officials in Australia and Poland, no topic has been taboo. We have discussed such diverse topics as anti-Semitism before the war, Jedwabne, Kielce and murders after the war, the role of the Home Army and partisan groups in the murder of some Jews, as well as the role of the Roman Catholic Church in cultivating anti-Semitism over many centuries.

We have also listened to Polish concerns about how their plight and suffering during World War II has often been ignored, their contribution to the war effort never fully recognised or spoken about and that their historical narrative was often manipulated by outside forces for their own political gains.

Rather than having a knee-jerk reaction to the current situation, the most important question to answer is where to from here? For the ASPJ, it is now more important than ever that we continue our dialogue with the Polish community and the Polish Diplomatic Corps. If through discussion and careful consideration Poles can come to some sort of understanding as to the underlying cause of our deep concern and disquiet, then we may at least help to enlighten people and make the Australian Polish Community more responsive to our apprehension and malaise.

With this in mind, the ASPJ and the Polish Community Council of Victoria have decided in goodwill to meet and to continue to work together for the benefit of both communities.

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# VALE ANDRZEJ (ANDREW) KORAB

## 17 JANUARY 1955 – 1 JANUARY 2018



Andrew Korab

Andrew Korab was the personification of the word gentleman. He was well educated, had a sharp mind, excellent listening skills and a most welcoming demeanor. These traits made him a natural leader in the Polish community as people respected him and above all, trusted him. Andrew was a unifying force in the world of community politics.

Andrew Korab was a shining example of the success of Australia's and in particular Victoria's multicultural policy.



He combined his Polish heritage with Australian values that he held dearly, especially the precept of a fair go. This was exemplified by his Presidency of the Polish Sporting, Recreation and Community Association of which he was president for a number of years.

Under Andrew's leadership, the club became the meeting place for a number of local ethnic groups from many diverse national and religious backgrounds.

One of Andrew's greatest achievements was to help bring the Polish and Jewish communities of Australia closer together. These two communities, which at times have differing interpretations of recent historical events, were able to hold amicable and frank discussions over sensitive issues. Although not easily resolved, through Andrew and his team, trust and friendship have certainly flourished, thus laying the groundwork for further cooperation and understanding between the two communities.

In many ways however, having given Andrew the accolade that he certainly deserves, I believe that his uniqueness lies beyond all the positive descriptors mentioned. In a spiritual sense, Andrew's soul transcended nationality, religion or community. Without ever making an issue of it, and in his most unassuming, humble manner, ultimately, all of Andrew's efforts were for the benefit of humanity. There is one less bright light over Victoria.

We send our deepest condolences to Andrew's wife Anna, his children Kuba, Tomek and Dorota and all family members.



# THE BIRTH OF THE JEWISH CULTURE FESTIVAL IN KRAKÓW



An interview with Robert Gądek  
Deputy Director, Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow

## **When did the idea of a Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow germinate, and what was the main catalyst for such an idea?**

It was in late '80s of the past century, when Janusz Makuch and Krzysztof Gierat had the idea to organise an event that would introduce contribution of the Jews to Polish culture.

For many decades all things Jewish in Poland were a taboo. The tiny Jewish community of Poland was totally invisible and absent in Polish public and social lives. But the Jewish heritage was still here. Visible not only in architecture, visible traces in many Polish cities, but first of all it was in the cultural heritage of all Poles. For many centuries, the Jews contributed a lot to all aspects of Polish life: from politics, to culture. One could not forget it. Jewish heritage has been an integral part of Polish heritage. Yet under communism there were attempts to erase that fact.

When the communism was about to collapse, Poles started to claim their history. Real history, not the one manipulated by communists. Many blank spots were discovered and among them – the one related to Polish-Jewish history and to the role the Jews played in development of our country and society.

That's why Janusz and Krzysztof decided to save the memory of Polish Jews, present their contribution and promote the heritage of Polish Jews.

The festival was not planned as an annual event. However, it was received with such enthusiasm by Cracovians that – one may say: on public demand – they decided to organise another edition of the festival two years later and then another one and since 1991 it has been held annually.

## **What was the original concept of the festival and has it changed or evolved over the years? How?**

As mentioned above, the original idea was to bring back the memory of Polish Jews to the mainstream of our society and to present the culture of Polish Jews. But shortly after, Janusz realised that 'to present' is not enough: the festival needed to educate Poles and give them a real Jewish experience, in order to understand better the Jewish heritage.

This is when he introduced numerous workshops and other activities that would involve participation of audience, that until now have been a core of the festival. As Janusz says, the festival is a continuous educational process, stretched over the years.

First editions of the festival focused mostly on Ashkenazy culture, as it was related to local Jewish culture. Another change in the festival started when Shlomo Bar and his Habrera Hateveet came to the festival for the first time in early '90s. This opened the festival to Sephardic culture, recently also to Mizrahi one. It gives our audience of 30,000 people annually a chance to encounter diversity of Jewish culture(s) and lives.

Whereas most of the Jewish festivals in Poland and in Europe are focused on remembrance, on presentation of the lost Jewish culture, our festival presents its contemporary face: one could not experience here a pre-war Jewish culture from the Galician shtetl. What you can experience is contemporary interpretation of that culture. The main question for the festival is not what was Jewish culture like in Poland decades ago. We are trying to answer the question about

where Jewish culture is now and where it is heading. We think about Jewish culture of tomorrow and its actual role in changing our contemporary society and shaping the future.

This symbolic change from history to future, mirrors also one of the ideas of the festival: to show the victory of life over death.

To sum up: from a small local event, focused on local Jewish culture, the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow has grown to the largest in the world presentation of contemporary Jewish culture from Israel and the entire Diaspora.

### **Was there any opposition towards your project and if so from whom?**

The need to get to know our real history was so big in those years among Poles, that the festival was accepted immediately, as mentioned earlier. It has developed, because that was what our society needed. Now, after 30 years of its existence, the festival is the most recognisable cultural event in Krakow (by both locals and Polish as well as international visitors – as stated in the official Report about culture in Krakow published in 2016 by the municipality of Krakow) and one of the most recognisable Polish cultural events abroad.

Of course, there are voices criticising the festival but they are barely to be heard and the general acceptance and supports definitely seems to be the main attitude towards the festival.

### **Who were initially your major supporters and who contributed financially towards festival?**

From the very first editions, the festival got support from local authorities, especially the City of Krakow, that until now remains the most important sponsor of the festival. Soon after, Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage joined as a sponsor and in the recent years, contributions of these two institutions create approx. 50% of the annual budget of the festival.

The rest of the budget (as well as the subvention from the City and Ministry) is annually raised from very much diversified sources, including Polish and international Jewish and non-Jewish foundations, organizations, as well as private persons, business partners and European Union.

### **Are the different strands of Polish government in favor of the festival? Was this always so?**

For all democratic governments in Poland it was crucial to develop and stimulate creation of an open and civic society in our country. Krakow's Jewish Culture Festival has been a symbol of democratic changes in Poland and as such got support (not only financial) and recognition from all governments. Even the current government is aware of the role and importance of our festival, despite its right-oriented rhetoric.

### **Was the local Krakovian Jewish community approached for input or asked for their response towards your proposal? In fact was the local Jewish population in favor of such a festival?**

From the very first edition of the festival, it has been organised in very close cooperation with the local Jewish community. In course of the years, when the community started to grow, be more active on a public scene and visible in our society, we extended our cooperation to all of the Jewish institutions in our city. Official Jewish Community of Krakow still remains an important partner of the festival, JCC Krakow as well as Galicia Jewish Museum, Association of Progressive Jews in Krakow and other Jewish institutions contribute also their events to the program of each edition of the festival, giving our international audience insight into what is important for our reborn Jewish community in Krakow and Poland.

### **In many countries such as Australia, the Jewish community, especially Polish Jews and their descendants are skeptical about the burgeoning Judaizing of the Polish tourist industry, especially in Krakow. The Kazimierz District has become like a Disneyland virtual shtetl where a near Jew-less society can make a tourist buck from those visiting Auschwitz and other death camps. (Restaurants play Klezmer music and serve pork cholent and so on.) What is your response to this type of reaction from many Polish Jews living abroad?**

Well, this question could be answered in many different way. The first one would be: how many of those who repeat such statements have recently visited Krakow and Kazimierz? Of course, there is certain commercialisation of Kazimierz and exploitation of its Jewish heritage, but show

me places like Kazimierz that do not have this element. Commercialisation is a direct result of massive tourism. Is that worse than treating Auschwitz – Birkenau as a tourist destination by many international (including Jewish) tourists? Commercialization and exploitation are the answers to growing and massive touristic interest.

This statement above is not to diminish this darker side of Kazimierz's gentrification. It is just to put it into the right perspective and give it a proper scale. Bad news always sell better than good news.

And what is the good news? That Kazimierz is a home for the growing Jewish community in our city, that most of the synagogues are places of worship, that there is a first in post-war Poland Jewish kindergarden opened here in Kazimierz, that there are no anti-Semitic events, synagogues are not guarded and walking the streets wearing yarmulke is not dangerous as it is in many countries of the world. And that the Jewish community here is growing – which is exceptional in Europe, where Jewish population is disappearing due to political and social situation.

So, my advice for those who repeat such statements is very easy: get on the plane and come to Krakow, instead of sitting at home and kvetchen. This is what we do here at the festival: we give non-Jewish people a real Jewish experience to replace and eliminate stereotypes they might have about Jews. I think the same treatment shall be prescribed to some Jews: come and get Krakow experience instead of living in a world of stereotypes and clichés. Many, who did that keep returning to Krakow and to the festival and some of them even became our supporters.

BTW – give me the name of the restaurant where they serve pork cholent. I haven't heard about that. Will deliver them a real recipe...

**Have you personally ever been criticized or attacked by either Poles or Jews for your perseverance in building the festival to now being one of the largest cultural festivals in Europe?**

Well, first of all we are not a music festival. Although music is the most visible part of our festival, it constitutes only some 20% of our events. As mentioned above – education and Jewish experience

are key issues for us, that is why the majority of festival events are workshops, lectures, seminars, guided tours, presentations, art...

During those 30 years, me and my festival were many times awarded and appreciated – also by Polish President and numerous Polish and international organisations. Every year after the festival, we also receive many positive responses and comments from individual people – and frankly speaking – these e-mails, telephones, letters are much more important than any public or state recognition. Because we create the festival for people and their reaction is something that really matters and motivates.

As it is always in life, next to those who appreciate and admire, there are those who criticize. As long as this criticism is just and serious, I always give it a thought. But when the criticism is rooted in lack of knowledge, experience and repeats simple clichés, I do not really care about that.

I precisely know why I am doing what I am doing – this is not random. This is a consequence of my thought and choices I made throughout my entire life and that is why I can always face any criticism and defend my position.

The most common question or criticism I encountered, was the fact, that my Jewish Culture Festival was established and is being organised by a group of non-Jewish Poles. That's a problem for some Jews in Poland and abroad, that's the reason for them to be suspicious and to criticise. However, once I was told by my Jewish friend that not being Jewish gives us a better perspective on the Jewish world: we are not engaged in various discussions, even conflicts within the larger Jewish community and thanks to that fact, we can really objectively describe what Jewish culture is and that's the reason, why our festival embraces both Haredim and secular Jews, performing on the same stage and sharing the same lecture rooms. So, what I am trying to say is that what for one person could be a subject of criticism, for another is an advantage. And that's how I try to look at life: see advantages and challenges rather than falling a victim to criticism and follow the beaten tracks. You know: *gesher tzar me'od*: world is a narrow bridge, the important thing is not to be afraid, as Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav used to say.

# THE ONE WHO STAYED



Marek Edelman

By Arnold Zable

First published in *The Age*, April 2009

Marek Edelman, a leader of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, is the most remarkable man I have met. We conversed in a Warsaw apartment in September 2006. For many of his former comrades Edelman was an enigma. There are survivors in Melbourne who were with him in the city of Lodz in 1948, the night before they left for the Polish border to escape to the West. In post-war Poland Edelman became revered as an innovative cardiologist and a stalwart of the Solidarity movement that finally toppled the communist dictatorship in 1989. But his former comrades could not understand why he did not escape with them. He remained a mystery and became known as the one who stayed.

Like Edelman, my parents were pre-war members of the Bund, the Jewish labour movement that commanded a mass following in Poland in the inter-war years. For Edelman, whose father died when he was

young, and whose mother died when he was fourteen, the Bund was family. Formed in Vilna, in 1897, in response to mass impoverishment and anti-Semitism, the party's focus shifted to Poland after the Bolshevik revolution. Its democratic ideals and love of Yiddish secular culture would sit easily alongside contemporary ideals of multiculturalism, but had no place in totalitarian Russia.

All but annihilated during the Holocaust, the remnants of the Bund regrouped in far-flung Jewish communities, among them Melbourne. Throughout the 1950s and sixties, the community would assemble on the evening of April 19 at the Kadimah Hall in Lygon Street, North Carlton, opposite the Melbourne General cemetery.

At those memorial evenings, and on weekly Sunday afternoon meetings of the Bund youth group, we came to know the details of the uprising. At its height, there were up to half a million Jews crowded into the five square miles of the Warsaw ghetto. By April 1943, the population had been reduced to just over 60,000 through deportations, disease and starvation. Beginning in July 1942, inmates were transported to the Treblinka death camp where they were killed in gas chambers.

Edelman was a co-founder of the Jewish Fighting Organization, a coalition that united members of the Bund, left wing Zionists, communists and others, under the leadership of twenty-four-year-old Mordechai Anielewicz. The resistance was formed as a response to mass murder. Its aim was to disrupt the deportations and to make a final stand. The young fighters had no illusions about their chances, but reasoned it was better to inflict as much damage as possible on the enemy, and to choose their own way of dying.

Early morning, on April 19 1943, the first day of Passover, a German force of over 2000 men, with SS and police units entered the ghetto to begin the final liquidation. The walls were surrounded with armed guards and additional security forces were on standby. The streets were deserted. The inmates had retreated into hiding. The force was met by gunfire from the rooftops and windows, and a barrage of Molotov cocktails. The Germans retreated in panic.

There were, according to Edelman, just 220 ghetto fighters armed with a limited arsenal of pistols,



homemade grenades, a few automatic weapons and rifles. The fierce battles continued for weeks. The buildings were razed street-by-street and burnt to the ground to flush out the fighters. The ghetto ceased to exist on May 16. All that remained were piles of charred rubble.

On those Sunday afternoons in Carlton we heard tales of extraordinary feats. We were in awe of the fighters, among them children who had smuggled in dynamite and pistols through the sewers. We were haunted by images of young men and women dashing through the flames, jumping from burning buildings, swallowing cyanide rather than fall into the hands of the enemy.

We heard tales of the teenage commander Dovidl Hokhberg, who when cornered in a bunker with his battalion and several hundred civilians, blocked a narrow opening with his own body, allowing the others to escape before his bullet riddled corpse could be dragged clear. And of Mikhal Klepfish, the young engineer who set up a secret factory manufacturing Molotov cocktails and who, on the second day of the revolt, threw his body against a machine gun allowing his fellow-fighters to escape from their besieged attic. We learnt of the exploits of the youngest commander of a Bund fighting unit, sixteen-year-old Yurek Blones, who held off a Nazi attack single-handedly and continued shooting as he led his force to the surest escape route, the sewers.

Edelman was a leading figure in the pantheon, and reputed to have led his fighters in a red sweater and brandishing two pistols. The commander of the Bund battalion in the brush-makers' factory district, he was admired as a calm and calculating strategist who valued human life. 'We fought to protect the people in the ghetto, to extend their life by a day or two or five,' he once said.

The ghetto uprising became a part of my childhood dreaming. It was one of the reasons I journeyed to Poland in 1986 to explore the Polish towns and villages my parents were raised in, and to reflect upon the fate of my murdered grandparents and their families.

At the time the Soviet controlled dictatorship was still in power, but facing growing resistance from the Solidarity movement. Edelman's name came up in almost every conversation I had with Solidarity activists. I learnt he had been jailed when martial law was imposed on December 13, 1981. The following year he was kept under house arrest. He was admired for his resolve

and daring, and referred to as the moral conscience of Poland.

Twenty years later, in the autumn of 2006, I returned with my twelve-year-old son to show him the towns and villages of his forbears. We spent our first few nights in Dom Literaturny, the House of Literature, located in the old quarters of Warsaw. The fourth floor served as a hotel for writers, while the others were given over to literary groups, among them the Polish Centre of International PEN. As a result I was able to meet the vice-president Adam Pomorski.

Again Edelman's name came up in conversation. In recent years he had defended Roma Gypsies whose camps were destroyed by the police. He had expressed solidarity with multicultural Sarajevo in the 1990s when the city was under siege, and he had participated, in 1989, in the round table talks that had led to the introduction of a democratic system in Poland. At 87 he was still working as a cardiologist in Lodz, still active in human rights.

Edelman was due in Warsaw to be honoured as one of the founders of KOR, the worker's defence group formed in response to Government repression in 1976, and a precursor to Solidarity. Would I like to meet him? I was elated.

Two weeks later I was ushered into the living room of a Warsaw apartment by Edelman's assistant and close friend Paula Sawicka, president of the Polish Association against xenophobia and anti-Semitism. As forewarned, Marek Edelman was a crusty old warrior, wary of sentiment. He warmed when we conversed in Yiddish, a language that evokes a sense of fraternity and intimacy. We were connected as members of the Bund family. He enquired after the welfare of his two former comrades still alive in Melbourne, Pinche Wiener and Avram Zeleznikow, who had been with him on the night before they escaped Poland. Yes, he did get drunk with Pinche that night, he confirmed. Edelman was known to be a connoisseur of cognac.

When our conversation turned to the uprising Edelman was forthright. 'Anyone can learn how to shoot,' he said. 'Far more important than the number of fighters was their spirit. The uprising began in the first days of occupation, and intensified when the ghetto was set up. The Bund organized underground schools and theatres, social welfare groups, public kitchens.'

He singled out Bund activists who taught the children songs in the ghetto tenements and courtyards. He

reiterated what he had once written: 'In all of the filth that lay about, the hunger, the humiliation and waste of every kind of human feeling, in spite of everything, we managed to give these children a little joy, a little bit of a cheerful life. For a few hours daily they lived a normal life as if the war, the ghetto, and all the rest didn't exist.'

Edelman extended his understanding of resistance to the parents who tried desperately to buoy their children's spirits, and those who chose to accompany loved ones to the death camps. It was far more difficult to go to your death in Auschwitz and Treblinka, he said, than to die with a gun in hand.

He had escaped the burning ghetto on May 10 1943, with the help of members of the Polish resistance, waiting 48 hours in a sewer 28 inches high, where the water reached to his lips. He moved about hiding places in Warsaw and fought in the ill-fated Polish uprising against Nazi occupation in August 1944. The Red Army had advanced to the outskirts of the city but stood by and waited until the fierce battles were over and the city levelled.

'We had no illusions about the Stalinists,' said Edelman. By 1948 the Polish Communists had ruthlessly consolidated their power establishing a de facto single party dictatorship, and creating a satellite state of the Soviet Union, despite mass opposition. This was the final straw for Edelman's comrades. There could be no viable future for the Bund in post-war Poland.

Yet Edelman remained even after his wife, Alina Margolis, a nurse in the Warsaw ghetto, finally left Poland in 1968 after anti-Semitic purges instigated by the government. A pediatrician, she settled in Paris with their two children and became active in the human rights group Doctors without Borders.

So why did he remain in Poland? I asked. 'Why should I have left?' Edelman retorted. 'Is it any better anywhere else? All countries face the challenge of protecting human rights and opposing racism. The fight for democratic rights and social justice has to be fought here as elsewhere.'

Edelman was emphatic. His whole life had been 'one consistent, unbroken thread' which stretched from his youth as a pre-war member of the Bund, through his struggles against the Nazis and the post-war Stalinists.

With the fall of the Polish communist regime in 1989, his major goal had been realised. With each passing year the democratic culture was more deeply rooted.

'Poland is now another world,' he said. 'The people have finally put an end to dictatorship and occupation.' His lifelong struggle had borne fruit, although he was pessimistic about the rise in recent years of the nationalist right in Europe.

On further reflection, he quietly echoed remarks he had made on previous occasions. He had remained in Poland because, 'someone had to stay here with all those who perished. You don't leave and abandon the memory of them.' In numerous interviews and writings Edelman continued to document the deeds and names of individual fighters. Each year on the anniversary of the uprising, he would lay flowers at Warsaw's monument to the ghetto heroes.

The Edelman I met was a hardened activist without illusions. A wry skeptic and an acute observer of character, he valued most his work as a cardiologist. Better to heal than to kill, he said. The young ghetto fighters had taken up arms because there was no other way. He was wary of nationalism and retained a dim view of humanity. 'People have to be educated from kindergarten on against hatred,' he emphasized.

On April 19, 2009, confined to a wheelchair, Edelman laid the flowers for the final time, and called for tolerance. He died months later, on October 2, aged 90, in the apartment where I had met him, 'at home, among friends, among his close people,' said Paula Sawicka. Several thousand mourners, including the president of Poland, attended his state funeral. Edelman's coffin was draped with the Bund banner. A band played Klezmer-style arrangements of jazz standards as the procession made its way past sites of the former ghetto to the Warsaw Jewish cemetery, where a choir sang the Bund anthem by the graveside.

On April 19 in Melbourne, the Bund community will again gather and light the six candles. We will recall the feats of the ghetto fighters and recite the works of the ghetto poets. We will honour the six million who perished, and recall the victims of contemporary genocides from Armenia to Rwanda. And six months after his passing, we will pay tribute to Marek Edelman, the last surviving leader of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, a healer, and lifelong fighter against injustice. The one who stayed.

## FORUM FOR DIALOGUE.



Photo. M.Halaczek

### **Forum for Dialogue is dedicated to inspiring new connections between contemporary Poland and the Jewish people.**

Forum recognises that the traces of ties that were ruptured in World War Two remain in memories and family stories, but also in misunderstandings and prejudices harbored.

Forum's work in Poland focuses on raising awareness of the histories of Jews in Poland, including the way these histories were conveyed to descendants of Polish Jews.

Forum shows different perspectives on shared historical events. Internationally, we facilitate the formation of bonds between Jews and the country of their ancestors.

"We build people-to-people trust. We confront difficult questions. We connect people and their histories.

Forum works with thought leaders, activists, teachers and students from Poland and from abroad.

Together we hope to write a new chapter in Polish/Jewish history."

More information available: [www.dialog.org.pl](http://www.dialog.org.pl)



### **Andrzej Folwarczny**

President of Forum for Dialogue

Founder and President of Forum for Dialogue. He is a former Member of the Polish National Parliament (Sejm) and acted as the Chairman of the Polish-Israeli Parliamentary Group. He is the co-editor of the anthology "Difficult Questions in Polish-Jewish Dialogue", published in 2006. Between 1999 and 2004, he served as the Vice-President of the Israel-Poland Friendship Association (Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Izraelskiej).

# FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH HERITAGE

## PRESERVING THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE



For the Jewish people with traditions built on memory, such places give meaning to the Jewish present and future, strengthening awareness and connection. They are also testimony to the remarkable Jewish contribution to world civilization; powerful visual tools for education on Judaism, Jewish history and culture promoting understanding, respect and dialogue, impacting on the moral direction of society as a whole.

However, the Jewish people no longer 'live where they had lived'. The story of the 20th century is one of transitions, including massive, and often tragic, population loss and displacement. Without a community of users, a vast and ancient Jewish cultural heritage has been under attack in many parts of the

The Jewish people have produced a vast cultural heritage; a remarkable visual chronicle across the ages. It is an irreplaceable inheritance, a precious legacy for those to come – and it is in danger.

The Foundation for Jewish Heritage is dedicated exclusively to the preservation of Jewish architectural sites, working internationally to ensure a future for historic synagogues, Jewish monuments and places of cultural significance.

Sites of Jewish heritage are repositories of Jewish life, art and customs with many unique and beautifully constructed buildings displaying real architectural and artistic achievement.

world through neglect, natural forces, and human actions – and today is in crisis.

If you would like more information, or would like to play a role in the vital cause of safeguarding Jewish heritage, please contact the Foundation for Jewish Heritage.

Chief Executive: Michael Mail  
michaelmail@foundationforjewishheritage.com



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# THE NEW POLISH AND ISRAELI AMBASSADORS TAKE UP THEIR POSTS



Michał Kołodziejcki

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Poland Michał Kołodziejcki commenced his mission in Australia.

The new Ambassador of Poland in Canberra officially took his office on 26 November 2017.

Ambassador Michał Kołodziejcki graduated from the University of Warsaw

where he completed an MA program in Japanese Studies. He has also completed a 5-year-program in Management at the University of Warsaw and a one-year-program in Japanese Language and Culture at the University of Kanazawa in Japan. In addition, in 2014 he concluded a 3-year-PhD program in the Collegium of World Economy at the Warsaw School of Economics. Admitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2003, he started a professional diplomatic and consular training at the Diplomatic Academy. Having successfully passed final exams he was appointed as a member of the foreign service. He is also a career civil servant.

Ambassador Kołodziejcki worked in the Asia-Pacific Department in 2005-2006. From 2007 until 2011 he was a First Secretary in the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Singapore where he was responsible for economic issues. In the period 2011-2013 he worked in the Secretariat of the Minister and then in 2013-2014 in the Department of Economic Cooperation in the capacity of the Deputy Head of the Department. From 2014 until 2017 he worked as a Deputy Head and then Head of the Department (from 2015).

Ambassador Kołodziejcki is fluent in English, Japanese and Russian. He is married and has two daughters.

Apart from Australia, he will be accredited to neighboring countries in the Pacific: the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Fiji, Solomon Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Nauru, the Republic of Vanuatu, the Republic of Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands.



Mark Sofer

Mark Sofer is Israel's present ambassador to Australia.

Ambassador Sofer was born on September 22, 1954 in London. He holds a B.Sc in economics and international relations from the London School of Economics, and an MA in international relations from the Hebrew University. He speaks Hebrew,

English, Spanish and French.

Following his army service between 1979–1981 he joined the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

Mark Sofer is married to Sarah and a father of three.

Prior to taking up the top diplomatic role in Australia Ambassador Sofer held a number of diplomatic posts: 2014–2017 Deputy Director General, Head of Asia and the Pacific Division.

2011–2014 President, The Jerusalem Foundation

2007–2011 Ambassador of Israel to the Republic of India and Non-Resident Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

2003–2007 Deputy Director General, Head of Central Europe and Eurasia Division.

1999–2002 Dublin (Ireland), Ambassador

1996 – 1999 Head of the Division for Middle Eastern Economic Affairs

1994–1996 Policy Advisor to Foreign Minister, Mr. Shimon Peres.

1991–1994 New York, Deputy Consul General

1988–1991 Director General's Bureau, Counsellor

1985–1988 Oslo (Norway), First Secretary

1983–1985 Lima (Peru), Second Secretary

# AIPA AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE POLISH-JEWISH DIALOGUE



By Adam Warzel

Founding member of AIPA and President 2005-09 and 2015-17

It's futile to try to pinpoint a date or a single event that would mark the beginning of the Polish–Jewish dialogue in Australia. Both communities have lived in Australia for generations, and given their common geographical, linguistic and historical roots, contacts between them were inevitably frequent. But while contact is an essential element of dialogue, on its own, it does not constitute dialogue. For the dialogue to occur there must be a genuine willingness to engage in it and a conscious effort made by participants to listen to each other's stories.

And that brings us to AIPA (Australian Institute of Polish Affairs) which made the fostering of Polish-Jewish relations one of its constitutional aims. The chief architect of the dialogue was prof. Andrzej Ehrenkreutz, the leading light of AIPA in its early years. It was his

idea to use the opportunity arising from the presence in Australia of prominent AIPA guests, who were invited to give lectures about the historical transformation of post-1989 Poland, for developing closer relations between Poles and Jews in Australia. At the end of 1992, AIPA found its Jewish organisational partner to carry out this noble goal – the Federation of Polish Jews in Australia (Vic Chapter). This organisation was the predecessor of today's Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants and was headed by Tadeusz Zygiel, a post-war Jewish refugee from Poland.

Zygiel and Ehrenkreutz were kindred-spirits. They were convinced that the dialogue was not only necessary but that with a bit of luck, it would succeed. To carry out their agenda, they established a core group of dedicated activists from both communities who met regularly in the homes of Leon Lew and Janek (David) Landau. Later, the group expanded to include Mieczyslaw Nadworny, Piotr Koziell and Adam Warzel. Soon they were joined by the stalwart of Melbourne Jewish community, Shmuel Rosenkrantz.

Thanks to Ehrenkreutz's extensive contacts, the group succeeded in bringing to Australia in 1993 alone, two giants of the common Polish–Jewish history. Firstly, prof. Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, a co-founder of Żegota (the Council to Aid Jews) and then Prof. Jan Karski, often referred to as the man who tried to stop the Holocaust. Those who attended the public meeting with Karski, held in the giant hall of Glen Eira council, will forever remember the huge crowds, the humble speech of the main guest and the riveting oratories of Ehrenkreutz and Isi Leibler.

But, hey, that was 25 years ago. What's been happening since then? Well, a lot. In fact so much that it would take another three issues of *Haynt* to fit all the details. Yes, the dialogue continues and it is not limited to those two organisations anymore. What is most pleasing is that events concerning Polish-Jewish issues feature regularly in organisational calendars of both communities. The legacy of Ehrenkreutz and Zygiel continues. And who would think 25 years ago that this was possible?

# THE MISSING MEZZUZOT OF ZDUNSKA WOLA



Launch of the exhibition. Zdunska Wola, 2017

By Estelle Rozinski

Director curator of the mezzuzah project

I was born in Melbourne to Holocaust survivors from the industrial city of Lodz, Poland. I have worked as a teacher for all of my professional life, first in the public school system and since arriving in Sydney in 1987, where I trained as an artist, in TAFE. My work mentoring youth at risk and working with students from the Aboriginal community of La Perouse is a source of great pride.

In 2012 I began curating visual artists for the Shir Madness Jewish Music Festival. In 2015, in response to growing anti-Semitism and anti-refugee sentiment across Australia, I began my own hybrid of curating, a fusion of education and the arts.

My Tikkun Olam series “my place + your place = a better place” brings together artists of different backgrounds looking for common ground and shared experiences.

The mezzuzah project is my most recent passion. It celebrates the diverse and vibrant Jewish communities of Poland from before 1939. The Missing Mezzuzot of Zdunska Wola is the first exhibition in this series. Launched in 2017, it is now a permanent exhibition in the Jewish room of the Zdunska Wola museum, Poland.

It's hard to know where the idea for this project begins and ends. It is in essence the journey of two cousins, my cousin Jan, a child of communist Poland, and myself Estelle, a child of the Holocaust, our lives parallel and vibrant in our search for our collective stories.



Estelle Rozinski

The project is the sum of threads intertwined with emotion, historic events and incidental happenings:

A visit in the early '90s to a pretty village in southern Germany where each doorway was 'chalked' in the Catholic tradition the Christmas before, for blessings and protection and where each right-hand door jamb was marked by a carved rectangular recess, now empty, the missing mezzuzah!

Where on that same trip, when crossing the road to the Berlin Opera, pre Liebeskind, I had a sense that the boulevard beneath me had opened and closed over a dynamic people, never to be heard of again.

Around the same time Jan, our family historian, began to return to the town of our great-grandparents and his mother's birthplace, Zdunska Wola, to research our family history.

It was in Zdunska Wola a decade or so earlier, that a beautiful young girl played with her friends daily in a magical mystical garden full of stone relief carvings and "hieroglyphics" only to discover a few years later that her garden was the Zdunska Wola Jewish cemetery and she, Kamila Klauzinska, a passionate, talented and dedicated researcher began her journey of discovery, documentation and recovery of our cemetery with

Professor Daniel Wagner, Weizmann Institute and the high school students of Zdunska Wola and Israel.

It is here that the threads of our stories converge. Jan began to recount his meetings with the extraordinary Kamila and I began to marvel and question how it was possible that a gentile woman would care more about my history than me.

What could I do to add to and enhance Kamila's efforts?

I could get the prewar stories, soon to be lost and overshadowed by the Holocaust. So the journey began.

At its heart the exhibition/project commemorates and celebrates the vibrant energy and diversity of Jewish life in Zdunska Wola before 1939. It provides the next generations with a sense of their history alongside the knowledge of the Holocaust and it is there to encourage and promote intercultural dialogue and understanding.

On the 27th August 2017 the living history project and exhibition, *The Missing Mezzuzot of Zdunska Wola* opened at the Historic Museum, in Zdunska Wola Poland. It opened on the anniversary of the liquidation of the Zdunska Wola ghetto. It is now a permanent interactive exhibit.

For more information contact Estelle on:  
+61413 557 133 or [themezuzahproject@gmail.com](mailto:themezuzahproject@gmail.com)





# A GENTLEMAN OF HONOR AND DECENCY

By Bernard Korbman OAM  
CEO Australian Society of Polish Jews and  
their Descendants

When speaking to the Polish Honourary Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Dr George Luk-Kozika, one is transported back to an era long gone, where manners, courtesy, wit and charm prevailed.

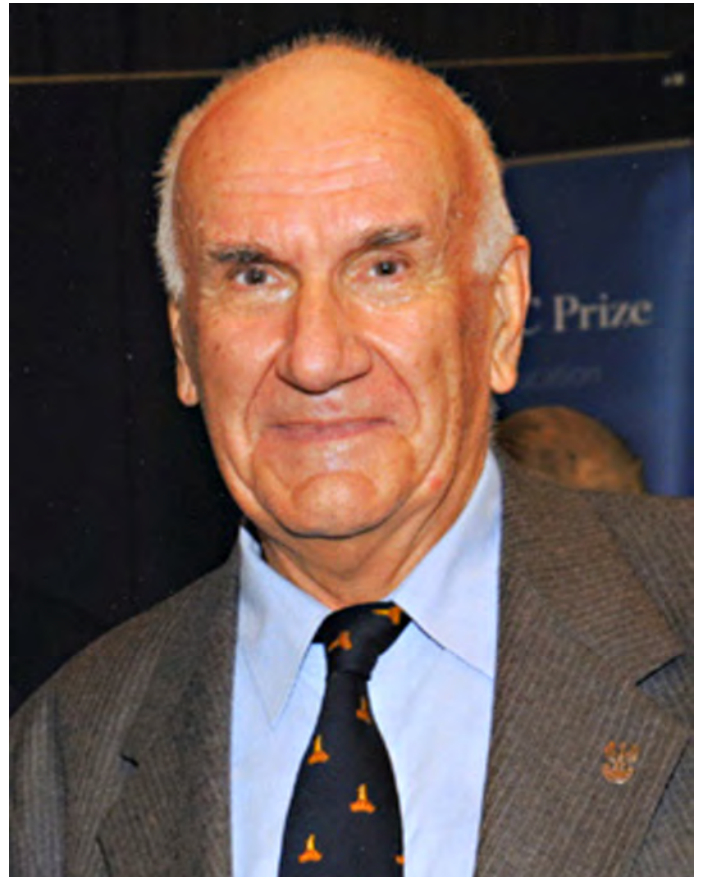
George has served the Australian Polish community as well as a number of Polish governments and their ambassadors with a great deal of dignity and diplomatic skill, so much so that five years ago the Polish Government raised George's status from Melbourne Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland, to that of Consul General, one of only three Honorary Consuls General in the world.

The foundation upon which George's worldview and moral and ethical beliefs, as well as day-to-day practices, are formed lies in his strongly held belief in God and the Roman Catholic Church.

For George, religion is a unifying force and its teachings and doctrines are meant to be inclusive rather than exclusive and the path to peace and harmony is through God's love for us all rather than the false labels placed by those in power trying to divide and conquer us for their own gains. As we are all created in God's image we should celebrate the fellowship and consanguinity of our creation. This firmly held belief has led George to playing a prominent leadership role in the process of rapprochement and bridge-building between the Polish and Jewish communities.

George has been active in promoting and participating in educational programs and events whose aims are to dispel long-held myths and stereotyping maintained by members of both communities. His quiet demeanor, his excellent listening skills and his intellectual acuity make him an outstanding mediator for reconciling opposite points of view.

In between running a most successful dental practice and lovingly fulfilling family obligations and interests, George's time and commitment to his community



Dr George Luk-Kozika.  
Polish Honourary Consul General of the Republic of Poland

duties seem boundless. He makes himself available to individuals and organisations seeking his advice or help.

George's greatest asset however is the highly talented, discerning and proficient Mrs. Denise Luk-Kozika. With her erudite and cultured disposition, Denise has charmed and impressed all who have had the good fortune and pleasure of meeting her.

We of the Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants thank them both for their tireless efforts in combating prejudice in any form it may manifest itself and for being a bridge between our two communities.



CRACOW MEMORIAL COMMITTEE OF MELBOURNE



For many years the Cracow Memorial Committee of Melbourne has sought to maintain the memory of the large and vibrant pre-war Jewish Community of Kraków.

# MEMORIAL SERVICE

75th anniversary of the destruction of the Kraków ghetto on 13th March 1943



This year the service for the 75th commemoration is scheduled for: Noon, on Sunday 11 March 2018 at the **Jewish Holocaust Centre.**



13-15 Selwyn St Elsternwick Telephone: 03 9528 1985 Email: [admin@jhc.org.au](mailto:admin@jhc.org.au)

For more information, or if you require transport to attend the service, please call Peter Schnall (president) Cracow Memorial Committee of Melbourne.

Telephone: 9563 9385

Mobile: 0403 800 734

Email: [cracowmemorialcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:cracowmemorialcommittee@gmail.com)



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