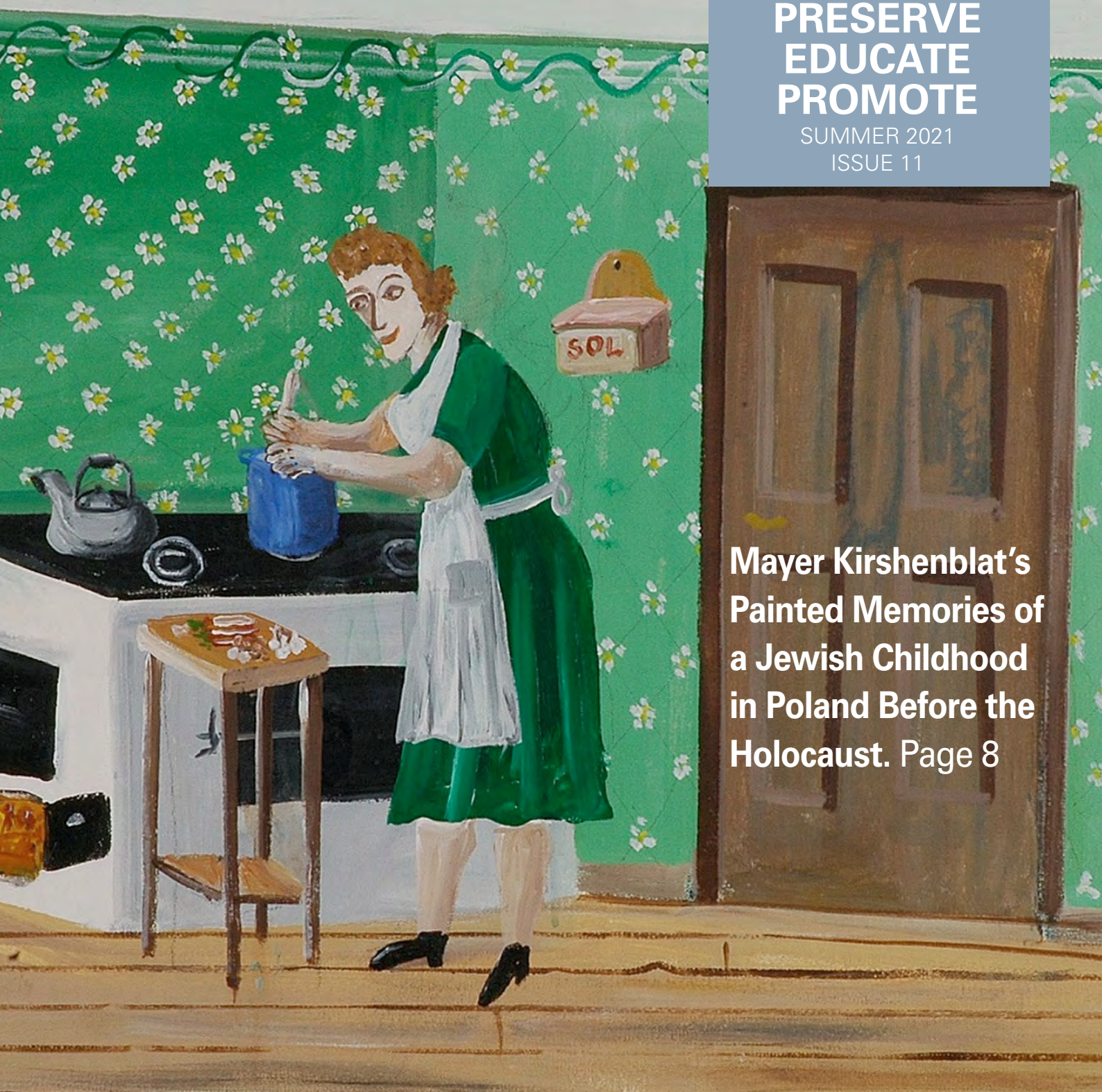


**PRESERVE
EDUCATE
PROMOTE**

SUMMER 2021
ISSUE 11



**Mayer Kirshenblat's
Painted Memories of
a Jewish Childhood
in Poland Before the
Holocaust. Page 8**

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PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE

SUMMER 2021 ISSUE 11

“Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants is dedicated to preserving and promoting the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland and to fostering understanding between current and future generations of the Polish and Jewish communities”

The ASPJ coordinates with the established Jewish and Polish communal bodies, religious leadership, governmental, parliamentary and diplomatic bodies, as well as historical, cultural and educational organisations in both Australia and Poland.

Polish–Jewish dialogue in Poland today is growing, particularly among the post-communist, educated young. There is a growing understanding and acceptance of the past, both the good and the bad. A new spirit of positive cooperation has emerged. Young Catholic Poles, more than ever before, are expressing an interest in the Jewish history of their country. This dialogue and interest needs to be nurtured and encouraged.

We organise educational and cultural events that cover the broad range of Polish–Jewish relations.

Our *Haynt* magazine is published three times a year, showcasing cultural, social and political articles of interest to Polish and Jewish communities.

ASPJ is a resource for educational material and offers a speaker service in a variety of topics relating to Polish–Jewish relations.

The Henryk Slawik Award is bestowed by the ASPJ to a person or institution that helps foster a deeper understanding of Polish–Jewish history and relations.

ASPJ Oration invites national or international speakers who can address complex and relevant issues regarding Polish–Jewish concerns.

Based in Melbourne, Australia, we invite all people, Jewish and non-Jewish, whose roots lie in Poland, to join our organisation.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors.
They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of ASPJ or its members.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Ezra May
President ASPJ

As outlined in our earlier 2020 editions of *Haynt*, as we have all experienced and are acutely aware,

especially those living in Victoria, 2020 has continued to be unprecedented in almost every way. The COVID19 pandemic significantly impacted the Australian Society of Polish Jews & their Descendants (ASPJ) with our suite of planned 2020 events & functions almost entirely postponed or cancelled.

Notwithstanding our understanding and acceptance of the primacy of public health, it still nevertheless remains disappointing for us to have had to cancel our flagship 2020 Oration in July with the inspirational Dariusz Popelia – a current Polish Olympian and founder of *People, not Numbers*. Our much anticipated formal launch of the ASPJ NSW chapter in March was an early COVID casualty and unfortunately our Henryk Slawick Award scheduled for December this year has also regrettably been cancelled.

The other great disappointment for the ASPJ this year was the retirement of Bernard Korbman OAM. A previous edition of *Haynt* paid tribute in greater detail to his contribution as founder and former President. The absence of his contribution is still felt.

However as is always the case, a change in circumstances provides opportunities. With the necessity to switch to an online format, it was a great thrill for the ASPJ to enter a partnership with FestivALT - an independent, arts collective that produces acclaimed, Jewish art and activism, based in Kraków, Poland. The ASPJ & FestivALT partnership has already successfully collaborated on a number of online events & tours specifically curated for an Australian audience, and we look forward to furthering this relationship.

A notable highlight this year was the inaugural ASPJ webinar in September featuring Poland Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich. This event was a resounding success with over 500 combined views. A great thrill for the ASPJ was the unsolicited request from Australian Ambassador to Poland Lloyd Brodrick to join the webinar and say a few words in appreciation of Chief Rabbi Schudrich. I regard that as a great honour and mark of respect for both Chief Rabbi Schudrich & the ASPJ.

Despite the challenges & restrictions of 2020, I believe the ASPJ as an organisation has developed & grown. We responded and adapted to the changed environment successfully and expanded our reach & branding.

These successes are due to the effort and commitment of the ASPJ Board, which individually & collectively devote much passion & time to further our aims. Personally, I have totally relied upon their support, guidance & advice, for which I cannot adequately express my appreciation for.

Although we are grateful that Australia seems now to have contained the pandemic and we are able to re-emerge from lockdown restrictions. Our thoughts remain with Poland where the pandemic continues to rage. We also remain concerned at the internal political challenges Poland is facing. We wish for a safe & speedy resolution on both fronts that enables Polish civil society to emerge healthier, stronger & more vibrant.

We look forward to being able to reintroduce, when permitted to do so, our headline functions in 2021. We have an outstanding line-up of guests who have accepted invitations for the coming year and are excited by the opportunities ahead of us.

Wishing everyone a safe & happy summer.

MOVING FORWARD POST THE PANDEMIC



Izydor Marmur
Co-Vice President

It has been what seems like an eternity since we all went into restrictions and then lockdowns. For many people this has been a very difficult time indeed.

Understandably, there was much frustration and pain about a situation which was unprecedented in most people's lifetime. For those of us who were familiar with stories of survival during World War 2, it was possible to put things in perspective and realise that we should count our blessings.

At this stage, Australia seems to have emerged from the worst of the pandemic, but our families and friends in Poland, Israel and other places are still facing dangerous times. The news of successful trials of vaccines give reason to hope.

Let us hope that there will be enough wisdom and compassion among the world's leaders to ensure that the resources needed to fight this pandemic will be made available to all who need them.

During the past months, in order for ASPJ to continue functioning during the restrictions we have successfully embraced technology and are constantly thinking and moving ahead.

We found new opportunities to communicate our message to a wider audience, not only here in Australia but also in many places around the world.

And of course, *Haynt* will continue to be published as usual.

However, we do recognise the importance of face-to-face communication in keeping existing and forming future relationships in both the Jewish and Polish communities.

Having lost some momentum during the past months, in some cases it will be necessary to re-kindle the relationships.

Let's not forget the importance of continuing the dialogue and act accordingly to build on our past successes and look toward future ones.

Wishing you all a much happier year than 2020 has been. May 2021 bring you health and success in all your endeavors!

Życzę wszystkim Wesołych Świąt i do zobaczenia w przyszłym roku 2021.

GEORGE LUK-KOZIKA RETIRES

Honorary Council of the Republic of Poland, George Luk-Kozika, is well liked and respected in the Jewish community, but above all by the members of our ASPJ. We consider him a good friend.

George is known for his manners, friendliness, good sense of humor and for being a true gentleman.

He holds true to the belief that since we are all made in God's image, we should celebrate the fellowship of his creation.

These strong convictions led him to an important role in the process of rapprochement and building dialogue between Polish and Jewish communities in Victoria.

From the very beginning of our organisation, George was ready to help and advise on many issues facing us. He actively promoted and participated in educational programs and events. George is committed to combating stereotypes held by members of both communities.

For his contribution, in the year two thousand and eleven, George Luk Kozika received an award in the name of Henryk Ślawik.

We thank him for his unwavering commitment and wish him good health and a happy retirement.



WOLF & DORA RAJCHER
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the work of the**



**Australian Society
of Polish Jews
and Their Descendants**

SEARCHING FOR A YIZKOR BOOK. CAN YOU HELP?



ASPJ Treasurer and Webmaster, Andrew Rajcher, is also a Board member and Webmaster for the World Society of CzeŹstochowa Jews & Their Descendants. In 2019, he began the CzeŹstochowa and region YIZKOR BOOK PROJECT, with the aim of translating into English all Yizkor Books relating to that region of Poland.

"I initially began this project when I discovered that several CzeŹstochowa Yizkor Books had either never been or had only ever been partially translated into English", he said. "From numerous, respected Polish historians, I also learned that for many of those Yizkor Books already translated into English, the quality of those translations was quite low, as they had been carried out by well-meaning amateurs and not by professional translators".

So, through his CzeŹstochowa Jews website, Andrew decided to establish his Yizkor Book Project to translate or re-translate into English all Yizkor Books pertaining to that region.

He has been extremely fortunate in finding an exceptional, professional translator in Dave Horowitz-Larochette. Andrew added, "Based in Haifa, Dave is a former *Chassid*, so that he is very proficient in translating from both Hebrew and Yiddish. His eye for detail and for historical anomalies is amazing and his *Translator's footnotes* add to the reader's appreciation of the text".

To date, the Project has translated into English, for the first time, three CzeŹstochowa Yizkor Books and two books about the nearby town of Krzepice. The Project is currently translating into English, for the first time, a Yizkor Book about another nearby town – Źarki.

Andrew said, "Once we have completed the task of translating books for the first time, we will turn our

attention to those that have already been translated by amateurs and then have them professionally re-translated. We owe it to our Holocaust survivors to have their words translated accurately, correctly and completely so that they can continue to speak, 'from the grave', to us and to our future generations".

However, Andrew needs your help!

One of the first Yizkor Books to appear after World War II was "In the Ghettoes of Warsaw and CzeŹstochowa" by Adam Zilbersztajn. It was published in December 1945 by *Sifriat Ha'Poalim* (Workers' Library) and contains 122 pages.

"We're scouring the world to find a copy of this book, so that we can have it translated into English for the first time and to make that translation available on our website", said Andrew. "So far, we have had no luck. The publishing house has no copy of it. Right now, we have people at Yad Vashem and the National Library of Israel searching for a copy.

"If anyone has a copy of the book and can supply it to us, we will take great care of it and guarantee its safe return to the owner. If a scan can be provided, we will cover all associated costs."

To learn more about the World Society of CzeŹstochowa Jews and Their Descendants YIZKOR BOOK PROJECT, go to:
www.czeŹstochowajews.org/history/yizkor-books/

You can email Andrew Rajcher:
aragorn@axiomcs.com.au

WE POLISH JEWS



By Julian Tuwim

August 1944, London

I am a Pole, because it pleases me. It is my personal and private matter, and I do not intend to submit a report nor an explication, an explanation to justify the basis of it. I do not divide Poles into 'native-born' and 'not-native-born'; I leave that for the native-born and non-native-born racists, the local and non-local Hitlerites. I divide Poles and Jews as well all other nations, into intelligent and stupid, honest and thieves, intelligent and dullards, interesting and boring, those who have been harmed and those who harm, gentlemen and not, etc. I also divide Poles into fascists and anti-fascists. These two camps, are not, of course homogenous, each of them disperses shades of color of differing intensities. But, the line of demarcation most certainly exists and shortly will be clearly seen. Shades will remain shades but the color of that very line will be intense and deeper in a marked way.

I could say that in a political sense I divide Poles into anti-Semites and anti-Fascists. Because Fascism is always anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is the international language of Fascists.

However, if I did ever have to justify my nationality, or rather my national feelings, then I would say I am a Pole for the simplest, almost the most primitive of reasons, generally rational, frequently irrational, but without a 'mystical' addition. To be a Pole, it is neither an honor, nor glory, nor a privilege.

It is the same as breathing. I have not yet met a person that is proud of the fact that he breathes.

A Pole – because I was born in Poland, grew up, was educated, taught, because it was in Poland that I was happy and unhappy, because from my exile I necessarily want to return to Poland, though they may promise me Paradisiacal delights elsewhere.

A Pole – because through a loving superstition which no reasoning or logic can explain, I desire that after my death, it shall be Polish soil that will absorb and consume me and none other.

A Pole – because that is what I was told in Polish in my family home; because I was suckled on the Polish language as a newborn, because my mother taught me Polish poems and songs, and when my first great poetic tremor came, it was in Polish words, because all that, which became most important in life – poetic creativity – is unimaginable in any other language, no matter how fluently I may speak it.

A Pole – because it was in Polish that I confessed my first love and its fears, and it was Polish in which I sobbed of its joys and storms.

A Pole also because the birch and the willow are closer to me than a cypress or a palm, and Mickiewicz and Chopin dearer than Shakespeare and Beethoven. Dearer for reasons that no reasoning can justify.

A Pole – because I have absorbed a certain number of their national faults.

A Pole – because my hatred of Polish Fascists is greater than of Fascists of other nationalities. Moreover, I believe this to be a major trait of my Polishness. But above all – a Pole because it pleases me.

A JEWISH CHILDHOOD IN POLAND BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST



By Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator, Core Exhibition and Advisor to the Director at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

In 1967, I began interviewing my father about his childhood in Poland. He was born in Opatów (Apt, in Yiddish) in 1916 and immigrated in 1934 to Toronto, where many people from his region had settled. Although he did not live through the Holocaust, his parents' families were murdered. As a result, his memories of growing up in Poland in the 1920s and 1930s were not filtered through direct experience of the trauma. As a folklorist and ethnographer, I recorded our interviews for over forty years. Our focus was on life before the Holocaust in a typical Polish town – population of 10,000, including around 6500 Jews.

My father completed the seven grades of Polish public school and attend heder after-schools, but his real school was the town itself. Indeed, he failed a grade of public school because he played hooky. I was shocked. He is so intelligent, and he always encouraged us to excel at school. I asked him how this could have happened. And, he answered, I played hooky! how do you think I know all about

the blacksmith, the shoemaker, the tailor, the brushmakers, and everything else about the town?" The town, like other towns located in Poland, laid out according to German town law, was arranged around a town square. It was large enough to be complete, with its weekly market day, annual traveling circus, street performers, religious processions, and much else, and small enough for a boy to run around with his hoop, chase after fires, watch the goings on in workshops, play in the river, and skate on the ice. He played violin in the school mandolin orchestra and belonged to a Zionist youth group.

My father's memory was extraordinary. I was struck, first, by the visual nature of his memory, which was key to his amazing ability to recall his childhood in such detail. The town was his memory palace. By visualizing the town, street by street, shop by shop, house by house, he could retrieve memory after memory. Second, he was also a wonderful raconteur, and narrative is also a key to organizing memory. A third key to his exceptional memory was his insatiable curiosity about the world. Recalling how things work, the steps in the process, is another way of organizing recall.

I also knew from childhood that he had an artistic flair and recall his interior decorating skills – he worked as a house painter and eventually opened his own paint, wallpaper, and floor coverings store. He painted our bedrooms, made the curtains and bedspreads, and loved refinishing furniture. And, during our interviews, when I did not understand what he was explaining, he would make drawings in my notebook. But he had not taken up making paintings.

He retired young, at the age of 59, after a serious illness, from which he fully recovered, and was at loose ends. After ten years of begging and pleading – my mother, my husband, who is an artist, and I were unrelenting – my father finally agreed to paint what he remembered. I knew he could, but he did not, and he resisted until he could resist no longer. He completed his first painting, the kitchen, in 1990, when he was 73 years old, and continued to paint for twenty years, until he died in 2009. He painted the marketplace on market day, the synagogue inside and out, the cemetery, heder, the two rooms of his



The black wedding in the cemetery



The circus would come to Opatów



The Cracow Wedding" Purimshpil in Opatów

home, the Jewish holidays, the many trades, and the places where children loved to play. He also painted how he visualized stories that he had read in the memorial book for his town – the black wedding in the 1890s to bring an end to an epidemic and shaving the corpse of a man who had abandoned tradition. He wore a top hat, never went to synagogue except for Yom Kippur, and shaved off his beard. While he was sick in the months leading up to his death, his beard grew back. The rabbis decided that he should appear before the Lord as he appeared in life and shaved the corpse in the synagogue courtyard.

I first visited Poland in 1981, during martial law. I had urged my father to come with me, but he flatly refused. A few years later he expressed an interest in visiting his hometown, though he was anxious about the prospect. A very short stop in Opatów on a hot summer day, the town was sleepy, with no one about – this was not a successful visit. However, in 1995, when I was teaching a New York University summer seminar with Jan Gross and Steven Zipperstein in Kraków, I took my parents with me. This time our visit to Opatów took a surprising turn. My father had been painting for five years by this time, and I had arranged for his paintings to be



Synagogue interior

photographed. He brought a little album of images with him and, during our visit to Opatów, accosted strangers in the street, showing them the paintings, and asking if anyone remembered anything about life before the war. One young man, Dariusz Sobczyk, took an interest and brought us to his home, a two-room abode, just like Mayer's, and called for his grandmother. The whole family appeared and the neighbors too, and soft drinks and snacks were brought out.

That relationship endured over the years, first by letters and phone, then also by email and visits during the Kraków Jewish Culture Festival. Darek followed my father's "career," his exhibitions and the publication of his book. On one of our visits, Darek insisted that we meet with the county chief – Darek had convinced him to host an exhibition of my father's paintings.



I thanked him but protested that it would not be feasible to bring the original paintings, but that my father could deliver a slide lecture – which he did, to a full house and standing ovation. Darek and the county chief insisted on the exhibition. Finally, we agreed that I would provide tiffs, they would print them on their massive printer for maps, and

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews would help them with translations and other technical issues. We attended the opening of the exhibition, which was a red-letter event, and Sławomir Grünberg documented the event in his film *Paint What You Remember*.

But the story does not end there. We had been befriended by the high school art teacher and her husband, a conservator who had renovated the interior of the town's Romanesque church, the Collegiate Church of St. Martin. She organized a competition for her students. They

were to find places in the that my father recalled from his childhood make a drawing or take a photo of what they looked like today.. The winner was to be announced on a Sunday in October. A few days later we received an email. On that Sunday the Bernadine Church had organized a commemoration of the expulsion of Jews from Opatów to Treblinka. This was the very first time that the town had commemorated this event. A special mass was held, blue and white candles were lit, Jewish music was performed, and high school students read eyewitness accounts of the expulsion.

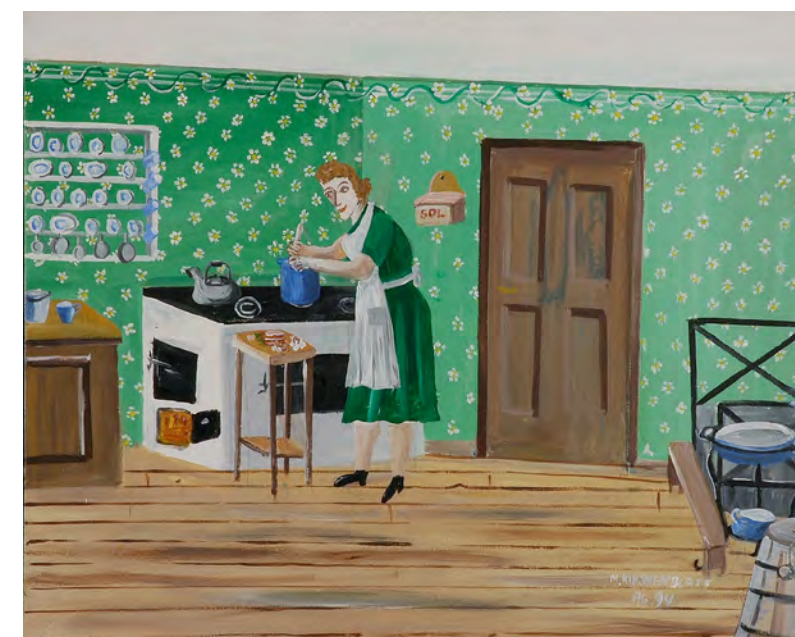
We donated the prints of Mayer's paintings to the town, and the local high school continues to use them, most recently for an Erasmus educational

project and often in presentations of the history of the town. There was an effort to declare my father an honorary citizen of Opatów, and Dariusz is now trying to establish a museum dedicated to my father's paintings in an empty building on the town square. The Kirshenblatt family has also donated his paintings, drawings, and prints to POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

From *They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust* by Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).



Boy in the white pajamas



The kitchen



Hanukkah, 1920s, in Opatów



From November 26th–29th, Poland's alternative Jewish arts collective, FestivALT is launching The Lucky Jewathon – a three-day non-stop durational interactive performance event.

The Lucky Jewathon is a response to the popular and controversial motif in Poland of buying and selling

caricatures of Jews counting money. It is believed that these objects, often paintings or figurines, will bring its owner economic luck.

For 72 hours, 18 guests from around the world will talk about these "Lucky Jews" and the themes it ignites.

Hosts will include academics, artists, anthropologists, journalists, community leaders and politicians from around the world. The event will play host to panels, conversations, DJ sets, film festivals, music, art experiments and more.

Pour yourself a coffee or a glass of wine (depending on which hemisphere you are in) and join us on Zoom where you are invited to participate.

You can also choose to sit back and observe the live stream on YouTube and Facebook. Register now for updates!

FACEBOOK EVENT PAGE:

<https://www.facebook.com/events>

ZOOM REGISTRATION:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register>

THE MISSING MEZUZOT PROJECT



In August, Co-Vice-President of the Australian Society of Polish Jews and their descendants (ASPJ), Estelle Rozinski spoke to the Australian Jewish Genealogical

Society (AJGS) about The 'Missing Mezuzot Project', now a permanent exhibit in the museum of Zdunska Wola, the town of her great grandparents, which records the history and stories of this town prior to 1939 when the town had a population of about 12,000 people, a third of whom were Jewish.

The 'Missing Mezzuzot Project' is the first of a series of living history projects on Jewish life in pre-war Poland.

It was created to provide a parallel history to the Holocaust so that the next generations might better understand how people lived, worked and prayed before the war. The project also helps to preserve the names of those who disappeared without a trace.

To watch the presentation go to:

<https://youtu.be/994yT3tcXpU>

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR JOINS PROTESTS OVER TOP APPOINTMENT AT YAD VASHEM



In letter to President Rivlin, Marian Turcki warned that Effi Eitam's appointment would 'greatly undermine Yad Vashem's authority'

By Judy Maltz

Published in Haaretz on 09.11.2020

One of Poland's most prominent Jewish citizens and Holocaust survivors has added his voice to the growing controversy over the appointment of Effi Eitam, former politician and military commander, to the top position at Yad Vashem.

In a letter sent several days ago to President Reuven Rivlin, historian and journalist Marian Turcki warned that Eitam's appointment as chairman of the Yad Vashem directorate would "greatly undermine Yad Vashem's authority around the world."

"Faced with the global rise of nationalism and populism, a renewed wave of antisemitism and the return of Holocaust denial propaganda, the chairman of Yad Vashem needs to have impeccable moral authority," he wrote in the letter, which was also addressed to Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, chairman of the Yad Vashem council, which oversees the Jerusalem-based museum and commemoration center.

"When the moment comes to stand up against xenophobia, racism and antisemitism in the international arena, who the chairman of Yad Vashem is will be extremely important if we don't want Yad Vashem to be limited only to the state of Israel but to remain a leading worldwide moral authority."

Turcki, 95, is a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buchenwald. In addition to heading the council of POLIN, the relatively new museum of the history of Polish Jewry based in Warsaw, he has served as chairman of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland and is a member of the International Auschwitz Memorial Council. Turin (who was born Moshe Turbowicz) has lived in Warsaw since the end of World War II. He emphasizes in his letter the strong ties that have hitherto existed between Yad Vashem and Polish institutions active in commemorating and researching the Shoah.

In his letter to Rivlin and Lau, Turin beseeches them to use their influence "to prevent decisions that can only hurt the Jewish cause in international public opinion," noting that Eitam is "known as a person of extreme views."

As reported in Haaretz, the Anti-Defamation League, in a rare move last week joined the campaign against Eitam's appointment citing his "problematic moral record." The ADL was particularly concerned about Eitam's calls for the mass deportation of Palestinians from the West Bank and his description of Arab Israelis as a "fifth column." It is almost unprecedented for the ADL, which monitors antisemitism worldwide, to intervene in appointments at other Jewish organizations and institutions.

In a letter to Lau, Carole Nuriel, the head of the ADL office in Israel, also expressed concerns about an incident in the 1980s in which soldiers under Eitam's command beat to death a Palestinian prisoner. They later testified that they had received their orders from Eitam.

After retiring from the military, Eitam served as head of the National Religious Party and was known for his close ties to the settler movement.

Before his appointment comes up for a final vote in the cabinet, Eitam must be vetted by a special committee tasked with screening candidates for top jobs in the public sector.

The appointment has also sparked outrage among prominent Holocaust survivors in Israel, the organizations that represent them and members of the so-called "second generation."

LOOKING BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

By Michał Kołodziejcki

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland

In February 2020 Poland and Israel were about to start celebrating the 30th anniversary of the resumption of Polish-Israeli diplomatic relations. No one expected that within weeks of this anniversary, our lives would dramatically change. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has revolutionized the world ever since, dominated the media, the Internet and our conversations. The pandemic has changed our thinking about the world, family, transformed travel, politics, work, education, made us rethink our priorities and even revalue our interpretation of freedoms. It is coming to almost a year now since the virus emerged but we are still bombarded with media reports about records in the number of new infections and continuously trying to keep up with ever-changing restrictions.

Still, we are not sure when this bad dream will end, when will a cure or a vaccine be available, when will we finally stop thinking and talking about COVID-19, when will normality return or what will a "new normality" mean, in particular whether it will be something that will limit us, our plans, ambitions and dreams.

Australia's response to the coronavirus outbreak has so far been among the most successful in the world. Despite that the overall situation is still difficult and challenging, Victoria is now seeing prospects for reopening. Currently, infections of a second wave of the virus alarmingly surge at a record pace in Europe as the global coronavirus cases hit 40 million. This dismisses or delays in time the prospect of victory over the invisible enemy. The economic and social effects of this pandemic, experts predict, could last for many years to come.

The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canberra, like all other institutions and organizations, including the ASPJ, was forced to significantly alter its activities and plans. The closure of international borders, changing rules and bans on travel made consular support for Polish citizens living in Australia a priority among all other activities of the Embassy. Our educational, promotional and cultural events planned for this year had to be either fully suspended or postponed, including those events relating to the Polish-Jewish dialogue.

At the same time, we observe with appreciation that a number of projects and initiatives of our Australian friends and partners, including the ASPJ, take place in a changed format, hybrid or fully online. During the pandemic, also Australian and Polish governments, despite geographical distance, time difference, current sanitary measures, travel and other restrictions, continue developing friendly relations and enhance cooperation embracing new technology. While personal presence and face-to-face conversations cannot be fully substituted by online interactions, we all learn not only how to survive in times of pandemic, but also how not to surrender to adversities and continue doing so successfully.

I am very pleased that the ASPJ, notwithstanding the extremely onerous restrictions imposed on the residents of Melbourne, has been carrying out its mission this whole time and delivering a range of activities that help Australian audience better understanding of Polish-Jewish relations, in cooperation with partners from Poland, Israel and other corners of the world.

The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canberra, capitalizing on stable epidemiological situation in the ACT, plans to organize a small ceremony on the occasion of the official inauguration of the exhibition entitled "Bracha-Blessing Back to Polish Shtetls", featuring Hasidic men coming back to their familiar places, visiting the tombs of Tzaddiks in Poland, by a Polish documentary producer and photographer Agnieszka Traczewska.

This event is organized together with our local partner, ACT National Jewish Memorial Centre and the exhibition can already be seen by the visitors of the beautiful new building of the Center. "Bracha" was previously displayed at the United Nations Headquarters in New York last year, as well as in Dusseldorf, Montreal, Tel Aviv and Sao Paolo, among others. We are very glad that it finally arrived in Canberra. The first reviews and observations of the exhibition are very positive and made a lasting impression on the public. The author said "I felt like I had an obligation to my people to educate them, and toward Hasidim who shared with me so much trust and the obligation not to fail this trust" and "Despite our vast differences



At the Jewish cemetery, Cracow (Yid. Kroke), 2015

and cultural disparities, the side-by-side coexistence between Poles and Jews can be relived on a micro scale in my photographs. It is my sincere hope that by breaking my own stereotypes, I can inspire people from the world over to bridge gaps for a better and more unified socio cultural society." This exhibition marks a profound Jewish imprint on the Polish history, culture and society and we are glad to show this exhibition in the Australian capital. The Embassy would like to see these unique artistic photographs shown also in other places in Australia, particularly in Melbourne. We hope that as the restrictions related to the pandemic are lifting, this will enable us to bring the exhibition to Victoria.

We trust that in a near future we will return to organizing other projects, including in a traditional format. Meanwhile, we encourage all interested to use online educational and cultural resources to follow and engage in events organised, both by ASPJ in Australia and other institutions and organisations in Poland, such as for example the initiatives and projects of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews; virtual tour and e-learning of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum; resources of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust or of the Institute of National Remembrance; record of the course of the 17th Jewish Culture Festival – Singer's Warsaw organized in August by the Shalom Foundation in a hybrid formula. The Festival of Jewish Culture in

Krakow, also well-known in Australia, is taking place in an innovative formula, transferring many events online, in preparation for its 30th edition next year. Last but not least, we are very pleased that the ASPJ entered into a partnership with an independent arts collective FestivALT promoting Jewish culture in Kraków.

There are many events and sources of information on a variety of topics related to Polish-Jewish dialogue, including historical aspects, culture and art. In challenging times of pandemic, these events may be the only possibility for our activity, but they are a useful and interesting supplement to our knowledge and a tool for a continuing dialogue. We wish that in the post-COVID world, events and initiatives supporting Polish-Jewish dialogue organised in traditional format, including cultural ones, such as festivals, theatrical performances and art exhibitions, will be available live again, especially in the usually bustling Melbourne and Krakow.

As we are struggling with not only limited possibilities for overseas travel from Australia to Europe (and Poland), but also limited access to culture and art, let us remember that we are in this together. Societies in other hemispheres, including our friends and relatives in Poland, whom we cannot see or visit now, have similar problems, but they also share similar hope for a better, safe, more "normal" future. This is what we all wish for today and with hope we all look forward to the future.

Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants
together with FestivALT

PRESENT **MICHAEL RUBENFELD**
CO-FOUNDER OF FESTIVALT

FOR A FREE LIVE WEBINAR.
WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2020
8.00PM

[HTTPS://POLARON-AU.ZOOM.US/J/87557948742](https://polaron-au.zoom.us/j/87557948742)

The Lucky Jew of Poland

In 2012, Canadian Jewish theatre artist, Michael Rubinfeld proposed to his mother that they go to Poland together "for the first time" and see the country their family is from, and the places they had survived. This trip was to serve as research for a play they would make together. This "research" would ultimately turn into a much larger project, resulting in Michael now living in Krakow, and co-founding FestivALT, an alternative Jewish arts festival.

Join Michael for this exclusive ASPJ presentation where he will share this journey and why he believes Poland is such an important contemporary space for the Jewish people.



AMBASSADOR OF IMAGINATION



Fairy Tales



Pinocchio



"The Crooked House of Sopot",
based on one of Szancer's drawings.

Jan Marcin Szancer was born in Krakow, Poland in 1902 into a Jewish family. He became interested in drawing from an early age. Despite resistance from his parents he continued with his passion and was accepted to and began his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow.

Having travelled widely to Italy and France, Jan gained experience and expanded his knowledge of drawing and illustration.

Unfortunately little is known about his experience during the World War 2 years.

At the end of the war, in early 1945 he took on a position of editor and cover-illustrator for the children's magazine *Świerszczyk*. At the same time he participated in the publishing of *Płomyk* as a photographer.

Jan Szancer was very well regarded among his peers and became famous as a book illustrator. He illustrated over 200 books for both children and adults, including: *Mr. Kleks's Academy*; *About Janek, who sewed dogs' shoes*; *Pinocchio*; *Mr. Kitten was sick*; *About dwarfs and Marysia's orphan*; *Brzechwa for children*; *Locomotive*; *Rzepka*; *Bird radio*; *The Nutcracker*; *Andersen's Tales*; *Fairy Tales and Satires by Krasicki*; *Pan Tadeusz by Mickiewicz*; *Sienkiewicz's Trilogy* as well as books by *Amicis*, *Carlo Collodi*, *Cervantes*, *Hašek*, *Edith Nesbit*, *Pushkin*, *Swift*, *Mark Twain*.

As well as a series of three comic books with Mr. Soczewka as the main character: *Mr. Soczewka in the forest*, *Mr. Soczewka na dnie oceanu* and *Mr. Lenticular on the moon*.

One of the first books illustrated by him is *Our City* – a Polish reader for elementary school students, published in Lviv in 1935.

Jan Szancer also wrote popular fairy tales and columns for newspapers and magazines.



Jan Marcin Szancer

A man of many talents, Jan Szancer wrote the script and directed the film *Look at my huge theater*, created set designs for theatre and film and was the first artistic director of Polish TV.

He attained professorship at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, was awarded the state award

of the 2nd degree and the Golden Cross of Merit.

He was married to the actress Zofia Sykulska-Szancerowa.

Jan Szancer died in 1973 and is buried in Warsaw's military cemetery.

NEW HOLOCAUST MUSEUM OPENS IN THE HEART OF ADELAIDE'S CBD



Andrew Steiner

By Kathy Baykitch

Centre Director.

Adelaide Holocaust Museum & Steiner Education Centre Inc

The new Adelaide Holocaust Museum and Andrew Steiner Education Centre (AHMSEC) was officially launched on Monday 9 November in the heart of Adelaide's CBD. With the generous support of the Catholic Archdiocese, the museum is housed in the historic Fennessey House at 33 Wakefield Street.

The launch coincided with the annual communal commemoration of *Kristallnacht* which served as a poignant reminder that the Holocaust was not inevitable. The lens of history provides important insights to recognise signs that could lead to genocide and encourage individuals and governments to take action to ensure that such atrocities do not happen again.

The development of the AHMSEC has been a challenging journey for the many individuals and organisations who have worked tirelessly to bring this museum to fruition.

This museum and education centre has only been made possible from the vision, passion and

commitment of one man, Andrew Steiner OAM, a child survivor of the Holocaust and committed Holocaust Educator in Adelaide and regional South Australia for the past 30 years.

Andrew and his late wife Helen Tversky-Steiner established the Remember the Holocaust Compassion for All Foundation in 2015, which was the start of the movement to develop a centre dedicated to the continuation of Andrew's legacy of delivering Holocaust education to South Australian schools.

Today more than ever it is crucial that the history of the Holocaust, and the lessons to be learned from it are not lost. With the rise, yet again, of antisemitism, racism, prejudice, and bigotry around the world, it is imperative that our future generations are educated about the Holocaust.

As a society we must ensure that our younger generations are equipped with knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust and other genocides; that these atrocities were born out of hatred and fear and made possible by the indifference of so many. Combating antisemitism, racism, hatred and prejudice in all its forms, is a virtue we hope to instil in all who visit the museum, particularly South Australian school students, so that they are inspired to lead the world driven by the virtues of compassion, acceptance and kindness to all people.

In 2017 an initial grant was received from the Frenkiel Trust, which allowed the Trustees of the Foundation to appoint a Project Manager, Sue Drenth, to commence the work of fundraising and bringing the project to fruition. Since then, the Frenkiel Trust has continued to be a major funding partner of AHMSEC and we are extremely grateful to the administrators of the trust for their ongoing support of our museum.

Through Andrew's long association with the Adelaide Catholic Archdiocese, we received an initial boost by being offered a room in Fennessey House, the location in which the museum is now housed. As the initiative got underway, that one room was converted into "whole of building" exclusive use on a 5+5+5 commercial peppercorn lease arrangement.

It was through Sue that the project was brought to the attention of a great friend, Bill Appleby, CEO Jewish Care Victoria. Through Bill we were extremely fortunate to be introduced to and receive support from our Principal and Founding Funding Partner Gandel Philanthropy, who in early 2018 made a lead pledge to kickstart the capital campaign on a dollar for dollar basis up to \$100,000.

It is true to say that without that initial pledge and the ongoing support of Vedran Drakulic, CEO Gandel Philanthropy in supporting our applications to other philanthropic organisations and private family donors that the project would not have been possible.

The exhibition is organised to guide visitors through 10 main themes asked as a series of questions. This approach was chosen to give teachers, students and visitors multiple entry points into the topic. Throughout each theme quotes from Adelaide survivors personalize the information on the wall in a story trail format.

The education program was developed in 2019 by Gandel Scholar and High School educator Kerryn Langman in conjunction with a community of practice of South Australian Secondary School Teachers and then trialled across 13 metropolitan Adelaide schools (public and independent) as an outreach program. The program was independently evaluated with



The Trustees of Gandel Philanthropy shared our vision in supporting the development and establishment of AHMSEC, and we are extremely grateful for their generosity and faith in this project. As a leader in Holocaust Education, Gandel Philanthropy sees this Museum and Education Centre as vital to ensure all people, particularly students, can learn about the Holocaust, its relevance today, and Human Rights in general. The grant from Gandel Philanthropy was used for the development and fit out of the permanent Holocaust exhibition housed in Gallery 1, the Anne Frank Gallery.

overwhelmingly positive results for the content, delivery and format.

Learning about the Holocaust is not compulsory yet, so there are wide differences in what students are being taught in South Australia. The Holocaust topic is in the year 10 Australian Curriculum, and Hitler's Germany is a topic in Stage 2 (Year 12) Modern History.

Some teachers introduce students to the topic in English through texts. Teachers have given us excellent insights into how the museum can support their teaching and this feedback was built into the exhibition

design and content. Because the topic is so big and complex and emotional, many teachers are reluctant/concerned about teaching it and need support.

The Holocaust is an extremely broad and complex topic. By telling the stories of the Holocaust, AHMSEC will educate and inspire South Australians to stand up against antisemitism and racism, and actively contribute to a fairer, more just and compassionate world.

We have been most fortunate to work with a local SA design and creative team, Igauna Creative, led by Jeff Fulford. His team are responsible for putting the walls of the museum up. Jeff and graphic designer Ollie

curator from September 2019. The visual impact of the displays, panels and images on the walls of the Anne Frank Gallery are a testament to all who were involved in the curation of the permanent Holocaust exhibition.

One of the most important aspects of AHMSEC is the focus on local South Australian Holocaust Survivors. It has been an incredibly moving experience to hear from survivors and receive contact from second and third generation family members who have generously shared their stores of survival and precious artefacts with our museum. We acknowledge in particular Andrew Steiner, Eva Temple, and the families of John

Hirschfeld, Fred Steiner, Gary Rodgers and Regina Zielinski for sharing their stories of survival.

The Sydney Jewish Museum and Jewish Holocaust Centre have provided valuable support, advice and artefacts and resources. The support of established Holocaust museums has been and continues to be vital as AHMSEC commences operations and establishes collegiate relationships for a sustainable future.

With the onset of a Global pandemic, 2020 has been a challenging year for all. The AHMSEC Board, including Chair, Nicola Zuckerman,

Jill Noble, Jill Peisach, Andrew Steiner OAM, Ron Peisach, Heidi Limareff and Tim Wilson has provided extraordinary leadership in supporting the project team and staff.

Holocaust Education highlights the importance of democratic principles and values, social justice, human rights, compassion and respect in society.

The museum aims to be a space where difficult topics around genocide can be discussed in a safe and supportive environment.

Open:

Tuesday, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays

Times:

Weekdays 10am to 4pm and Sundays 11am to 3pm

Website: www.ahmsec.org.au



Luckman's commitment to our vision has gone beyond expectations.

The magnificent displays, imagery and historical content that is now up on the walls of the museum must also be attributed to the team who curated our permanent Holocaust exhibition. In the initial stages of the curation AHMSEC was most fortunate in receiving the support of Dr Avril Alba who agreed to take on the role of Curatorial Consultant for the conceptualizing and support of content development and imagery for the core exhibition. With historians from the University of Adelaide, Drs Vesna Drapac and Gareth Pritchard, who generously provided their time and scholarship for the content for the theme-based narrative, Dr Alba oversaw the project to the point where Pauline Cockrill, Senior Curator from the History, took over the role of

THE LASTING INFLUENCE OF JEWISH CUISINE IN POLAND



Author: Magdalena Kasprzyk-Chevriaux

Excerpt from article published in 2015

The cuisine of the Ashkenazi Jews who lived in Central and Eastern Europe before 1939 drew inspiration from a variety of culinary traditions – much like the cuisine of other Jewish ethnic groups.

If local dishes fitted in with kosher principles, they were adapted to the form of Jewish cuisine. That is why, 'in each particular country, Jewish people would assimilate a variety of local dishes, while giving them a particular character. Besides that, they use a bounty of scents and spices – a remnant of the East, and lots of onion in rather unexpected combinations', as one pre-war journalist wrote in *Bluszcz* (Ivy), an illustrated women's weekly.

After reading Rebeka Wolff's 19th-century book *Polska Kuchnia Koszerna* (Kosher Polish Cuisine), the emerging image of Polish Jewish cooking is one of crude, yet refined and tasty food. The book, which was highly popular and enjoyed numerous reprints, is now also available in digital libraries. It provides recipes for completely unknown dishes, with examples of foods that used to be typical of old Polish cuisine (such as *półgęski*, which have recently been rediscovered by Poles).

In the 1920s, a prominent French gastronome of Polish origin, Professor Edward Pożerski de Pomiane, conducted research on the foods of Polish Jewish communities. He found their dishes to be

rich in nutmeg, vanilla and orange rind. His *Cuisine Juive: Ghettos Modernes* (Jewish Cuisine: Modern Ghettos) was published in France, and it comprised a collection of recipes from Polish Jews which he had collected in different cities across Poland.

Apart from the significant quantities of spice, the recipes also included sweet and sour flavours, thanks to the addition of vinegar and lemon, sugar, and onion – a flavour that was in fact a favourite tang in the Polish cookery of the Baroque period. Wolff thus pointed to various 'principles of taste':

Poland's food never had its moment in the spotlight – one that would

establish it as something the international public could appreciate on a daily basis. Could all of that be changing with a new twist on Polish cuisine?

When more dishes are served, they have to be varied. Thus, before a sour fish, for example, a sour and savoury soup would be out of place, but prior to a fish cooked on butter, such a soup is very appropriate. After a sour vegetable, soured meat is not a match...

Some dishes were only served during holidays or Shabbat, since, as can easily be guessed, Jewish cuisine is filled with symbolic references, and most holiday dishes possess a hidden significance. Putting it in very simplified terms, kosher cooking was meant to protect from all that was unhygienic and sinful.

The fact that a few million Jews lived on the historic territory of Poland must have also influenced Polish cuisine. It would not be an exaggeration to say that both culinary cultures are intertwined. Dishes as popular in the everyday as *gołąbki* and even potato pancakes likely have Jewish origins.

Since the political turn of events of 1989, a very distinct revival of Jewish culture has been taking place in Poland.

In Poland – in Warsaw and Kraków in particular – several restaurants specialise in dishes of the Polish Jewish tradition, but almost none of these restaurants are kosher.



**Australian Society of Polish Jews
and their Descendants**

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Please tick the relevant box.

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In making this application, I confirm that the above details are true and correct.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Account Name: Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants Inc
ANZ Elsternwick.
Sort code/routing/BSB: 013-304
Account Number: 0086-15341

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