

HAYNT

PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE



Australian Society of Polish Jews
and their Descendants

SPRING 2022 ISSUE 16



Vale David Prince

PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE

“Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants (ASPJ)
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 and Sydney, 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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CONTACT US

Telephone: +61 0413 351 852
Email: lfiszman@bigpond.net.au
Website: www.polishjews.org.au

Mailing Address:
PO Box 56,
Elsternwick, Vic., 3185,
Australia

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Ezra May
President ASPJ

Shalom, Dzień dobry and welcome to our latest edition of *Haynt*.

Thankfully 2022 has seen us emerge from the Covid impacted 2020 & 2021. And although there are still some legacy pandemic adjustments, it is pleasing to report that the Australian Society of Polish Jews & their Descendants (ASPJ) is back full throttle.

Since recommencing our first in-person event in December 2021, with the 2021 Henryk Slawick Award – a wonderful evening where we caught up with friends we hadn't seen for a while, heard wise words from our recipient Arnold Zable and awarded Life Memberships to past ASPJ Presidents Bernard Korbman and Izidor Marmur, the ASPJ has hosted further live events.

It was a great thrill in July 2022 for the ASPJ to host in a packed Beth Weizmann auditorium in Melbourne, the acclaimed creative project curated by our Vice-President Estelle Rozinski from NSW, "... and he taught the canaries to sing" featuring animations and stories celebrating vignettes of pre-war Jewish life in Poland.

Most recently, in September 2022 in Melbourne and in Sydney (for the first time), the ASPJ hosted its 2022 ASPJ Oration, featuring Dariusz Popiela of "People, not Numbers" and the Australian premiere of the film *Edge of Light*. Dariusz's visit to Australia, highlighted by the film and his Orations, were an outstanding success. Dariusz's charming personality coupled with his humility, universally impressed and inspired all those who took the opportunity to hear

about his work in restoring forgotten cemeteries and identifying forgotten victims.

As well as the above live events, during the past few months the ASPJ has continued hosting high quality webinars, which included, in August, an online tour of the Galicia Jewish Museum from Krakow, followed by a discussion with its director Jakub Nowakowski. And in June 2022 a webinar "Jewish-Poland and its Role in the Ukraine Refugee crisis" with Poland Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich. Recordings of these plus a host more webinars, functions and material are available for viewing on our website < www.polishjews.org.au > and our youtube channel, ASPJ.

On the diplomatic front, the ASPJ was invited to farewell the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Australia, His Excellency Mr Michał Kołodziejcki, in July 2022 at both a public gathering and also in a private meeting. The ASPJ formally acknowledges the friendship and efforts of HE the Ambassador in further developing Polish-Jewish relations. The ASPJ was also pleased to hear from HE Lloyd Brodrick, Australian Ambassador to Poland, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, who personally advised that he accompanied in July 2022 Australian Governor-General David Hurley, on the first-ever visit to Poland by an Australian Governor-General, on an Australian Governor-General's first-ever official visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he paid respects to the victims on behalf of the Australian Government and people.

I'll also take this opportunity to reiterate publicly our very warm & heartfelt congratulations to the Polish Community Council of Victoria (PCCV) on the milestone of the 60th anniversary of their establishment. The strong relationships developed, both personally and communally, between the ASPJ and the PCCV, reflects the genuine commitment and cooperation of our organisations to strengthen our areas of common interest. It is also an indication of the remarkable people involved in both organisations since their establishment.

The ASPJ's Statement of Purpose is: To preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland and to foster understanding

between current and future generations of the Polish and Jewish communities.

These are ambitious and noble aims. Yet ones, at least I think, we do well. Notwithstanding the challenges, it is the work the ASPJ and its members and supporters do, as highlighted earlier, at grass roots, communal and high level governmental & diplomatic levels, that is very much at the forefront of preserving and promoting the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland and fostering increased understanding between the Polish and Jewish communities.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible both online and especially in-person at our upcoming functions. There are already many and varied webinars, events & functions in planning for the coming months.

As we approach the Jewish New Year season, the ASPJ wishes everyone a Sweet & Happy New Year. May it be a year full of health, happiness and peace for all.

Shana Tova, Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku, Happy New Year.



Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in Canberra

Canberra, 12 August 2022

Mr Ezra May
President Australian Society of Polish Jews & their Descendants

Dear Ewa,

I am about to conclude my posting as the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Australia. I have had the honour of serving and living in this fascinating country for almost five years. It has been an incredible journey, also very much due to the remarkable people encountered during my tenure here.

As I say my final goodbyes, I wish to express my gratitude for your support and cooperation. My time in Canberra has coincided with an exciting period in Australian-Polish relations as well as with many interesting – and oftentimes challenging – regional and international developments.

I am glad to have been given the opportunity to contribute my share to fostering cooperation between Australia and Poland. I have also appreciated working with you to further the relationship between Poland and the Australian-Jewish community. It has made my work much easier and professionally fulfilling.

I am confident that my successor will receive the same warm welcome as the one I have had the good fortune to have, making my posting in Canberra a pleasant and rewarding experience.

Thank you once again. Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration and the very best wishes for the future.

Sincerely yours,
Michał Kołodziejski
Michał Kołodziejski
Ambassador

7 Turrana Street
Yarralumla, ACT 2600, Australia

Phone: (61 02) 6272 1000
Fax: (61 02) 6272 3184
e-mail: canberra.amb.sekretariat@msz.gov.pl
www.gov.pl/australia-en



FROM THE NEW SOUTH WALES DESK



Estelle Rozinski
Vice President. NSW

Dear Friends,

NSW's winter quarter has presented the opportunity for new beginnings after the many Covid false starts.

On June 1, with the technical assistance of Andrea at Polaron, Karen Pakula skilfully led a webinar with Rabbi Michael Shudrich on the Polish Jewish response to the Ukrainian crisis. Karen used her journalistic prowess to navigate her way through a discussion and Q & A, as the rabbi arrived at Warsaw's Chopin airport. While the content was riveting in terms of the Polish political backdrop and content, there was something of a James Bond air, as Rabbi Shudrich ducked in and out of halls and taxis as he negotiated his way home.

July 10, Sydney came to Melbourne, where ASPJ generously hosted an 'In Conversation' event with Jewish educator Frances Prince on my project "...and he taught the canaries to sing". The project focuses on the vibrancy of pre-war Jewish Poland through animation and music. Elisa Gray and Tomi

Kalinski added joy and poignancy to the event. There was a warm reception from about 100 people, many of whom were new to ASPJ.

July 16: board member Eva Hussain and I were honoured to attend a farewell for the outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Michal Kolodziejski, hosted by the Polish Consulate in Sydney. Of particular note was the talk given by his liaison in Papua New Guinea on the scholarship programs which continue to be supported by the Polish Government.

By far the stand-out event of the last quarter was the ASPJ oration delivered by Polish Olympian Dariusz Popiela, 'People not Numbers' (Ludzie nie Liczby) and his film, *Edge of Light*. Dariusz's ongoing commitment and respect for Jewish memory, the Jewish people and Jewish sacred sites is profound. This was ASPJ's first face-to-face event in NSW, with approximately 60 attendees. This is a fantastic number, given the challenge of the various other Jewish functions on the day.

Over the four-day period of hosting Dariusz, the NSW executive has forged a strong friendship with AIPA, through Robert Czernkowski. Robert stepped up and supported us like an old friend. We look forward to working together in the future.

Our next event is scheduled for late October, when the Waverly Library in Bondi Junction will be hosting "...and he taught the canaries to sing" for 3 weeks.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the NSW executive to wish you all a happy and healthy new year.

Warm wishes,

Estelle

CELEBRATING JEWISH LIFE IN PRE-WAR POLAND



ASPJ President Ezra May



The Healer by David Asher Brook



Birds of us by Steven Durbach



Performer Elisa Gray



In conversation. Estelle Rozinski and Steven Durbach



Estelle Rozinski and Frances Prince

Melbourne's Beth Weizmann Jewish Community Centre was the venue for a dynamic and vibrant afternoon of animations and music celebrating the diversity of Polish Jewish life before 1939.

The project was conceived and produced by Estelle Rozinski, a Sydney based artist, curator, educator and the Vice-President at ASPJ NSW.

Estelle's project entitled "...and he taught the canaries to sing," created by three celebrated Australian artists, Anita Lester, David Asher Brook and Steven Durbach, received seed funding from the Republic of Poland's Consulate in Sydney, where it was first launched in May 2021.

Estelle believes the animations, told through a child's lens, "challenge some of the preconceived ideas people have about the way in which our Jewish families lived. The animations leave us wanting to know more about the shape and texture of everyday life in pre-war Poland.

These stories depict the ordinary: pranks played on the streets of Lodz; a father teaching canaries to

sing; the story of a sister, brother and their grandfather clock; and a visit to grandparents at Hannukah. Estelle says that, 'the animations will help children assimilate normalcy into their post-Holocaust family histories.

The Melbourne event provided something for everyone. The warmth and familiarity of Yiddish songs, performed by Elisa Gray, accompanied on the piano by Irene (Tomi) Kalinski, transported the audience to another time.

Frances Prince's skilful "in conversation" framed Estelle's intent and focus, and brought some clarity to the "why", the "how", and the "where to from here" of the project.

Estelle has three more projects evolving from her interactive exhibition *The Missing Mezzuzot of Zdunska Wola*, which is on permanent display in the historical museum of Zdunska Wola in Poland. Most recently, David Asher Brook's animation 'The Healer,' about Estelle's grandmother, has been published as a children's book.

2022 ASPJ ORATION. AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE OF THE FILM *EDGE OF LIGHT*



It was a real highlight for the ASPJ, after a two-year Covid absence, to host on 7 September 2022 in Melbourne, and for the first time in Sydney on 11 September 2022, the 2022 ASPJ Oration. Many thanks to the Wolf & Dora Rajcher Memorial Fund for its generosity in allowing these Orations to occur.

In 2019, the ASPJ hosted Dariusz Stola, the then director of the world famous Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. This year the 2022 ASPJ Oration was delivered by Dariusz Popiela, of "People, not Numbers".

Dariusz Popiela is an Olympian, ten-time Polish champion and multiple medalist at World and European championships in kayaking. But additional to his very successful sporting career, Dariusz also founded and directs "People, not Numbers".

ASPJ President Ezra May opened the Melbourne ASPJ Oration and referred to his own attendance at the 17 June 2018 unveiling of the memorial in Kroszow (featured in the Spring 2018 edition of Haynt). In attendance at the oration were also descendants of the Susskind family, one of only 6 survivors now memorialised in Kroszow.



Visiting the Shrine of Remembrance



A visit to Polish Community Council of Victoria



Dariusz Popiela and Ezra May



Sightseeing in Sydney



At the Sydney film premiere



At the Sydney film premiere

Ezra May explained Darek's vision of "People, not Numbers", of granting a final dignity to each person murdered, individually rather than grouped collectively. And the remarkable care, effort and dedication required to ensure that each individual victim is identified and recognised. Dariusz doesn't just erect monuments on mass grave sites – as worthy as that would be – he researches the name and age of each victim.

After the Australian premiere of the film *Edge of Light*, which follows Dariusz as he and his team of volunteers identify, research & erect a monument to the murdered Holocaust victims in Czarny Dunajec, as well as repatriate removed Matzevot, Dariusz delivered the 2022 ASPJ Oration. In a 20-minute address, Dariusz, in a charming, informative and yet humble manner, explained his motivations for his work, as well as some of the challenges and stereotypes he faces and also the amazing support he receives from other like-minded non-Jewish Poles. Dariusz also focused on the need for increased education of the residents of small towns about their former Jewish populations.

In the following half hour Dariusz answered questions from the audience, encompassing how he manages to research the names and identity of the victims, the reception he receives for his work, how he deals with attempts at political interference, how Poland is dealing with the Ukrainian refugees, and the difference between memorialisation of Holocaust victims in Poland & Ukraine.

Ezra May then closed the event by explaining how "every victim has a name" is a phrase often used in

reference to the Holocaust. As the numbers are so large – one million in this death camp, thirty thousand in this forest – it is too big to comprehend. But as seen in the film, what Dariusz does is treat each individual victim – each person killed in the Holocaust, as well as those buried before – not only as a name, but a life.

Many people might say "Every victim has a name", but there would unlikely be many other people in the world who have returned more names to Holocaust victims than Dariusz, with the number of identified victims over 15,000 now.

When the Nazis came into a shtetel or town, they rounded up the Jews and shot them all, often in one day. That was it. Herded together, killed together and buried together. Simply gone together, forever. But thanks to Dariusz and his team, these victims now each have a name – an individual identity and dignity. This honours them and ensures they are not forgotten. Consequently, this makes the tragedy of the individual murder of each of the 6 million Holocaust victims so much more profound.

The feedback from those who saw the film and heard the 2022 ASPJ Oration was overwhelmingly positive. Dariusz thoroughly impressed and inspired all those who took the opportunity to hear about his work in restoring forgotten cemeteries and identifying forgotten victims. For those who didn't, you can click on the ASPJ website to view Dariusz's Oration **<https://www.polishjews.org.au>**.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY FATHER, DAVID PRINCE



David Price and Frances Prince

By Frances Prince

David Prince passed away in the early hours of Monday 28 March 2022, with both his adult children (my older brother Issy and myself) by his side. This was a few weeks before what would have been his 97th birthday.

David was an inaugural Board Member of the ASPJ. He felt honoured to have been approached to join the organisation. He sincerely believed in its aims and aspirations.

Dad was born in Lodz, Poland, to Frymet Chaya (Klejnbaum) and Israel Princ. He and his twin brother, Heniek, were born during Pesach/Passover, 1925. They enjoyed a lower-middle class, family-oriented childhood in the heart of Jewish Lodz. In David's words, "What were kids doing? Hanging around other kids, skating in winter, soccer in

Summer, running 400m and 800m races, indoor gym, chatting up girls."

His primary education was undertaken at the Fajnhaus School at 26 Zawadska Street and State School 123 at 21 Wolczanska Street. His one precious year of secondary education took place at the Szwajcer School. In my many conversations with Dad about his childhood and identity, he was always clear that his Jewish and Polish identities sat side-by-side comfortably. As he said, "Polish is my first language. It's my mother tongue. We spoke Polish at home. But my grandparents spoke Yiddish to us. At school I learnt Polish history, Polish literature, Polish geography.

The books I read as a child were all in Polish. It was a normal part of my life. Polish and Jewish; Jewish and Polish. That's just how it was."

On the 1 September 1939, this carefree childhood ended. David was fourteen years old. Within weeks of the German invasion of Poland, David, together with all the Jews of Lodz, was subjected to a slew of anti-Jewish laws and the enforced wearing of the blue armband, and then later, the yellow star.

When the Lodz (Litzmannstadt) Ghetto was formed, Frymet Chaya, Israel, Heniek and Dad moved into the ghetto's designated borders in Baluty. They lived with Dad's youngest aunt, Mala, and her husband, Salek. As Dad would describe, "It was the oldest, poorest, shabbiest, and the unsewered part of town."

Dad and his family were incarcerated in the Lodz Ghetto from the day it was 'closed', 1 May 1940, until the end of August 1944. They experienced forced labour, diminishing food supplies, unhygienic

living conditions, resultant disease, and on-going violence. The transportations to the death camp of Chelmno claimed countless family members and friends.

Frymet Chaya, Israel, Heniek and Dad were pushed onto the very last train that left the Lodz Ghetto, the last ghetto in Europe, bound for Auschwitz-Birkenau. Upon their brutal arrival, Frymet Chaya was viciously separated from Israel, Heniek and Dad. Dad would say, "It all happened so quickly. There was no time for a motherly kiss or hug goodbye."

After one week in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Israel, Heniek and David were placed on a train to a slave labour camp called Friedland. There they made propeller parts for the German air force. On 8 May 1945 they were liberated.

The immediate years after the war saw Dad living in Munich as a university student, studying Pharmacy. How Dad ever passed the entrance exams to the Ludwig Maximillian University with his one year of high school education, confounded him for the rest of his life. As he often said, "How could I have ever aspired to such a thing as a university education?"



David portrait photo late 1940's Munich

Unbeknownst to him, another survivor from Poland, Ella Salzberg, was undergoing the same gruelling study regime in order to gain entrance to the same university. Dad, the pharmacy student, met Mum, the dentistry student, at the Jewish Students Cafeteria. They married on 23 December 1947.

Mum and Dad immigrated to Australia in January 1950. Dad worked as a fitter and turner, on a lathe, in factories. This was a skill he learnt in the Lodz Ghetto. His German pharmacy degree was not recognised in Australia, and they didn't have the finances for him to return to university. Through determination, perseverance, and hard work, Dad went back to university in the mid 1950's to study Pharmacy. He was ten years older than the rest of



David, Heniek, Frymet, Israel Prince 1927 Lodz

the students, with a wife and child, my brother, Issy. When Dad graduated, I was born.

Throughout the decades Mum and Dad focussed on building his professional pharmacy career and on raising Issy and myself. They created a loving Jewish home for the two of us. Our wellbeing was their priority.

Dad had a love of life and energy levels to be admired and emulated. He liked to engage with all those around him, no matter what age or generation. Always the life of the party.

His interests and passions included Yiddishkeit, appreciation of the State of Israel, loyalty in friendship, professional excellence, integrity, service to the community, having a sense of humour, pride in a job well-done and love of family.

May his memory be for a blessing

Frances Prince is David Prince's daughter.

LOOKING FOR THE HEART OF JEWISH KRAKOW



From left: Meydad Eliyahu, Pawel Kowalewski, and Yael Sherill, who curate Maiseh, a series of site-specific art projects that ran throughout Krakow's Jewish Culture Festival

By Joe Baur
July 20, 2022

The 31st Jewish Culture Festival kicked off on a toasty evening on June 24 in Krakow's historic Jewish neighborhood of Kazimierz. The tourist crowds were out in full force, though it was hard to gather who was in town for the festival, and who was simply visiting Krakow's miraculously unbombed UNESCO World Heritage city center.

I came exclusively for the festival, an event I first learned of back in Germany a few years ago. I'd also been interested in a return visit to Krakow, specifically Kazimierz, since leaving the neighborhood at the end of a self-made heritage trip in March 2019.

Critiques I've since read of the neighborhood's alleged Disneyfication left me curious to further explore just how Jewish Kazimierz really is these days. Is the klezmer music blaring out across Szeroka

The annual cultural festival gets bigger and bigger. But has the city become a Jewish theme park, or is it proof that Jewish life in Poland continues to endure and even thrive?

Square kitsch or simply echoes of the historic heart and soul of Kazimierz?

Klementyna Pożniak, communications specialist at the Jewish Community Center of Krakow, met me at the Miodowa tram stop at the edge of Kazimierz. The JCC of Krakow is a local partner of the festival, organizing (among other events) the annual 60-mile Ride of the Living cycling event from the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps to the JCC Krakow headquarters in Kazimierz.

The 25-year-old Pożniak shared her journey of leaving Poland as a child for the United States, going to school outside Cleveland, and following the pull back to Krakow as a young adult: "Poland has always been my home, and for years I felt as if I was living in exile, waiting to return," said Pożniak.

"Now that I am back and can be a part of such incredible work, I know I made the right choice."

We didn't get far in our jaunt before noticing some graffiti scribbled across a large, wraparound poster promoting the festival. With the word "Palestyna" and an incorrectly drawn Star of David, it was easy to get the message without speaking Polish.

"Unfortunately this does happen," said Pożniak.

"What does it say?" I asked.

"'Free Palestine' and 'Zionism is fascism.'"

I noticed similar markings on Jewish Culture Festival posters across town. Elsewhere in the neighborhood, I spotted another incorrectly drawn Star of David next to an equal sign and a lopsided swastika.

Fortunately, the antisemitism seemed to be limited to these sloppy scribbles. Everyone, from the festival founder Janusz Makuch to longtime attendees, like Jewish heritage author and scholar Ruth Ellen Gruber, said that there's never been an incident at the festival. Some security measures have tightened, namely at

concerts, but no more so than what seems to be standard practice at Jewish gatherings in Europe.

What was more apparent was the city's Jewish life. Only a few minutes into our conversation, Pożniak spotted Rabbi Avi Baumol on a Shabbos stroll, giving a tour of the neighborhood to some visitors to Krakow. Baumol was sporting a suit and tie with the demeanor of a blues band frontman: suave, shooting off sarcastic barbs left and right.

The rabbi was participating in the festival as a lecturer. I asked what he thought of it, having been in Krakow for nine years. "I'm for it," he said succinctly with a wry smile before shifting to a more earnest gear. "I think it's incredible to see non-Jews take such an interest to put this on, the largest Jewish festival in the world."

Indeed, what some call the Jewish Woodstock continues to grow and pull travelers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, from across the world. Estimates have the festival drawing upward of 30,000 annually in a nonpandemic year to its varied program of art exhibitions, religious services, parties, guided tours, lectures, films, workshops, and concerts.

Pożniak took me by a market stand and pointed out a man selling menorahs and other lost family heirlooms. This is an aspect of Kazimierz that Pożniak said she can do without. The assumption is, given the context of Polish history, that this man ended up with the items from less than ethical means. After all, it's not like this is a merchandise stand at Coachella.

This is where, for some, the critique of Kazimierz comes into play. It's a neighborhood that's been maligned by some Jewish travelers as a Disneyfication of Jewish life. There's the seemingly omnipresent echo of a lost klezmer clarinet, constant streams of tour groups bouncing over cobblestones on trackless tourist trains, and restaurants in the heart of Kazimierz are dressed up like the dining room of a mid-20th century bubbe with the menu to match.

Yes, that's there. But to flippantly dismiss contemporary Krakovian Jewish life would be both an insult and play into false narratives that Jewish culture is a relic of history, destroyed by the Nazis. The fact that Jewish life is growing in Krakow is immeasurably more important to young Krakovian Jews like Pożniak. They're the ones joining the local JCC and getting involved with community events, like the Jewish Culture Festival and the Ride of the Living. Events like the festival, she says, show people that Jewish culture is alive.

Ruth Ellen Gruber is a journalist, author, editor, and researcher whose work focuses on Jewish heritage and contemporary Jewish issues in Europe. She's also a longtime festival visitor and remembers those early years when Kazimierz was a "ghost town." This year, she sat on a two-person panel at the New Realities of Jewish Heritage conference that took place during the festival.

I asked her about the Disneyland criticism. "I reject that," Gruber said, her hand wrapped around a Bagelmama bagel smothered in cream cheese. "Disneyland, to me, is something that comes from the top down. The growth of Jewish-themed tourism that is sometimes criticized as 'Disneylandification' was an organic development."

But prior to the commercialization of the neighborhood, the festival became a draw for a slew of Jewish performers, more of whom came year after year. "It became the best party you can ever imagine," Gruber said. It also started to influence how Jews saw Poland. It was no longer this crumbled up bit of black-and-white celluloid frozen in time, but a place full of color and flowers.

Yael Sherill, 39, is a Berlin-based Israeli artist and curator for Maiseh, a series of site-specific art projects that ran throughout the festival. Discussing representations of Poland in the Jewish world, she shared her frustration with the way Israeli education engages with the topic. She referred to school trips to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp where students deal solely with the darkness of this history, ignoring the complexity of Jewish life that once thrived and is actively rebuilding in Krakow, highlighted in events like the Jewish Culture Festival. "If you really look at the format of the festival, the depth, and the complexity of things that are being dealt with, it's really a contrarian approach to the touristification, to the Disneylandification that is happening in the neighborhood," she said.

Sherill joined me at the Cheder Café, doubling as festival headquarters, with her fellow Maiseh curators: the locally based Paweł Kowalewski, 36, and Jerusalem-based Meydad Eliyahu, 39. It's the second year in a row that the three have worked together.

Sitting around a small wooden table, Sherill explained that the escalation of the war in Ukraine and the presence of Ukrainian refugees in Krakow played a role in their decision to name their program Maiseh—a Yiddish word usually used in reference to a legend. "We were looking for a way to react to that situation



Janusz Makuch, the festival's founder.

in Ukraine] and bring people together around storytelling," said Sherill. "We wanted to look at the local tales of Krakow and how those tales are now merging with all of the different communities that find themselves living here."

It's a sentiment Poźniak touched on as well. Since the Russian invasion began in February, an estimated 50,000 Ukrainian refugees have fled to Krakow. In response, Poźniak and her colleagues have welcomed Jewish and non-Jewish refugees to the Jewish Community Center. A yellow banner stretches across the metal gate entrance to the JCC with blue Cyrillic letters welcoming Ukrainians next to the Ukrainian flag.

"We became relief workers overnight and had to learn everything on the job," said Poźniak, who spent time volunteering on the Polish-Ukrainian border. "We've managed to balance both our responsibilities to the Jewish community and the Ukrainian refugees."

Back at the Cheder Café, the conversation turned to Jewish representation at the festival. None of the Maiseh curators particularly cared who was Jewish and who was not.

For Sherill, there's a big difference between a Jewish festival and a Jewish culture festival. "Jewish culture is not owned by Jewish people," she said. "Jewish culture is a culture that was here, that can be experienced from different perspectives, and it was a huge part of local society."

She resents any attempt made by others to label or decide who is allowed to deal with Jewish themes

and doesn't believe having more Jewish people involved will give the festival more legitimacy than having someone like the festival's non-Jewish founder, Janusz Makuch. "He probably knows 2,000% more about Jewish culture than I do," she said. "And I grew up in Israel, in a Jewish family."

I was noshing on a rose baklava when Makuch walked into the Cheder Café. He's a theatrical man. Dressed in a black T-shirt with "The Macher" (Yiddish for an influential person, someone who gets things done) in small text, he leaned forward, he leaned back, his voice went high, his voice went low, he tucked his bearded chin in and bellows a few bass lines of an old Yiddish tune. He stood up, he embodied someone else, he imitated, he waved his hands like a weather forecaster tracking a storm, and he cursed with full-throated emphasis on his profanity of choice—all in the span of a few minutes. The voice of Orson Welles came to mind, with a dash of Werner Herzog.

A simple question didn't get a simple answer. To talk about the water theme of this year's festival, he was compelled to go back to the beginning—to his shtetl, as he calls it, of Puławy in eastern Poland, where he first learned about Jewish culture and of his town's Jewish history.

Makuch peppered his English with more Yiddish and Hebrew than I've ever heard before. He self-deprecatingly dismissed himself on a couple of occasions as an "alte kacker," Yiddish for "old-timer," or the "meshuggah Shabbos goy." Although in another breath he said he's more Jewish than Pole. It could be difficult to keep up. In many ways he's a reflection of the complex, evolving nature of Polish history.

But at the end of a nearly hourlong monologue, his passion for the festival and celebrating Jewish culture was unmistakable. "I want to emphasize that the festival is a living Jewish cultural festival," he said. "We are the keepers of this living space where Jewish people from all over the world can find themselves. It's a space which is painful and full of hope at the same time."

The hope for some is a new relationship between Jews and places like Krakow.

"I don't want younger generations to just learn about how Jews were killed," said Gruber. "I want them to learn about how they lived and continue to do so."

Joe Baur is a Berlin-based writer, author, and filmmaker from Cleveland.

PolArt SYDNEY 2022.

A POLISH TAPESTRY THROUGH TIME



A Polish Tapestry Through Time is a unique visual and emotional experience that connects the expression of Polish culture in Australia and New Zealand across different artistic disciplines. It is the collaboration of a diverse generation of

talented artists celebrating Polish heritage through dance, music, song, literature, theatre, and visual arts.

Stemming from age-old traditions, the festival of PolArt embodies the evolution of Polish culture in Australia – from its humble origins 50 years ago in Sydney as a vision of the Polish Women's Auxiliary to its influence in modern Polish Australian communities today. The 'father' of Polish ethnography, Oskar Kolberg, catalogued traditional folklore for the benefit of future generations. PolArt Festivals too, chronicle the cultural diversity of Australian and New Zealand communities.

Drawing upon Polish textile traditions that developed through history, the festival entwines distinct artistic disciplines to tell a story – like threads of wool finely woven into an intricate tapestry. Unique patterns are created, taught, inherited, and handed down over generations – contributing to a distinctive and multi-

layered identity. They incorporate shared ideas, and thus evolve over time. This can be seen in the vibrantly coloured costumes worn by the festival's dancers which, to this day, reflect the same patterns used in handmade kilims originating centuries ago from the central regions of Lowicz, Opoczno and Sieradz – each deriving influence from each other, but distinct in their appearance.

Even the master composer of classical music himself, Frederic Chopin, was exposed to traditional folk music early in his youth, which later manifested in a plethora of Romantic Music that we still hear performed today.

Whether you are reconnecting with your heritage or discovering the Polish arts for the first time, PolArt Sydney 2022 will be your opportunity to fully experience and enjoy the richness and remarkable diversity of Polish culture.

HISTORY

Originating in Sydney under the name of ArtPol in 1975, the festival was the brainchild of the Federation of Polish Women in Australia and New Zealand and was created to promote and contribute to the multicultural character of both nations. This truly remarkable community initiative unites communities



across Australia and New Zealand with first, second, third and now fourth generation Polish youth the main performers and volunteers.

PolArt festivals are held every 3-4 years in capital cities around Australia. They have been held in Sydney (1975, 1991, 2003), Adelaide (1981, 1994, 2009), Brisbane (1988, 2000, 2018), Melbourne (1984, 1997, 2015), Hobart (2006) and Perth (2012), with each festival growing larger and more popular than the previous.

The largest and longest-running Polish cultural festival outside Poland, PolArt, returns to Sydney this December after 19 years touring other Australian Capital cities.



PolArt Sydney 2022 Inc (PolArt) is a not-for-profit organisation that will be hosting the 15th Polish Visual and Performing Arts Festival. For over 45 years, PolArt Festivals have been celebrating Polish culture and heritage through art, dance, music, theatre, and literature.

PolArt Sydney 2022 will be held between 27 December 2022 and 7 January 2023 celebrating Polish culture in Australia and New Zealand. There will be over 65 events during the festival, there is something for the whole family to enjoy.

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SZALOTKA – POLISH APPLE DESSERT FOR ROSH HASHANAH



This Polish apple dessert is something out of the ordinary. It's the recipe your friends will remember you for.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups flour (250 g)
1 cup sugar (200 g)
3/4 teaspoon baking powder
9 tablespoons butter (125 g)
1 egg
2 egg yolk
1 Kg Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, & sliced
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F (180 C)
Combine the flour, sugar, and baking powder

Cut in the butter (with a pastry blender, two knives, or rub into flour with fingers) until it resembles coarse meal

Work in egg and egg yolk, the dough will be crumbly, cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes

Reserve 1/3 of the crust, pat the remaining 2/3 into a 9 inch springform pan, covering the bottom and the sides

Toss the sliced apples in the cinnamon, and add to the pan, piling them up

Crumble the remaining 1/3 crust and sprinkle over the apples

Bake for about 50 minutes, until crust is lightly brown and the apples are tender. If it seems to be getting brown before the apples are tender, loosely tent with aluminum foil

NOTES

You could add some ground almonds on top of the crust before the apples, or mix in 1/2 of raisins or dried cranberries with the apples.



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

POLISH AMBASSADOR MICHAŁ KOŁODZIEJSKI'S END OF DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN AUSTRALIA



ASPJ Board member Eva Hussain, his Excellency Michał Kołodziejcki, Dorota Phd (surname unknown) and ASPJ Vice President Estelle Rozinski



Izydor Marmur, his Excellency Michał Kołodziejcki and Bernard Korbman
Photography: Bogdan Platek

The Polish Ambassador to Australia, his Excellency Michał Kołodziejcki, has been a great friend to ASPJ and the Polish-Jewish diaspora in Australia.

After nearly five years, sadly, his posting has come to an end and he is returning to Poland.

It was such a privilege for two of our board members, our Vice President Estelle Rozinski and Eva Hussain to attend his farewell at the Polish Consulate, Sydney.

Hosted by the Polish Consul General, Ms Monika Kończyk, and attended by representatives of the consular corps, Polish community organisations and Australian government, the event was a meaningful way to say goodbye to the Ambassador.

We wish the Ambassador all the very best in his future endeavours and thank him for five years of excellent diplomatic service and friendship.

In Melbourne the farewell to his Excellency Michał Kołodziejcki was hosted by Honourary Consul General Andrew Soszynski and held at his residence.

Among a number of representatives of the Polish community, Bernard Korbman and Izydor Marmur, both past board members of ASPJ, attended the gathering. In his speech, Bernard acknowledged the contribution

that Michał Kołodziejcki made to the good relationship that exists between the Polish and Jewish community.

Michał Kołodziejcki's diplomatic mission in representing the Republic of Poland, his valued support for ASPJ's mission and his friendship will be greatly missed.



Photography: Bogdan Platek

Attendees in Melbourne farewell function.

JEWISH WROCLAW POST WW2



Group portrait of survivors from the Jewish community of Czortkow, who are attending a memorial service in Wrocław, Poland.

Following the end of World War II, Wrocław became a transit center for Jewish survivors returning from concentration camps in Silesia and Poland. Jews from former Polish territories that had been annexed to the Soviet Union during the war began arriving in the city in waves beginning in 1946, making Wrocław the largest Jewish community in Poland. Though the number of Jews in Wrocław rose to 17,747 in 1946, after the pogrom in Kielce in July of that year the numbers dropped considerably; by the spring of 1947 there were about 15,000 Jews living in Wrocław.

The postwar Jewish community attempted to rebuild and established a religious community, schools, Jewish cooperatives, and a Jewish theater, as well as other organizations and political parties. The population continued to drop, largely as the result of emigration, and by 1960 there were 3,800 Jews left in the city.

The Six Day War and anti-Semitism led to a marked increase in emigration after 1967. This led to the closing of the Jewish school and theater.

In 1974 there were 3,000 Jews in Wrocław.

A Jewish revival began during the late 1980s. In the year 2000 the city reopened the Jewish Social-Cultural Society, and was home to a Jewish school. The White Stork Synagogue, which had been used by the Nazis as an auto repair shop and to store stolen Jewish property, was rededicated in 2010 after a full-scale restoration.

As of 2014 there were 350 registered members of the Jewish community in Wrocław, making it the second-largest organized Jewish community in Poland, after Warsaw.

When visiting Wrocław, you may pass by what was once the city's magnificent main synagogue – torched on Kristallnacht (November 9, 1938). A small memorial remembering where it once stood is located at ul. Łąkowa 6.

The only synagogue in Wrocław to escape the torches of Kristallnacht, the White Stork was built in 1829, taking its name from the inn that once stood in its place. Following the design of prominent German architect Karl Ferdinand Langhans, it is ironically considered a sterling example of 18th century Protestant sacral art. Discreetly hidden from view in a courtyard, it was here that members of the Jewish

community were rounded up for deployment to the death camps during WWII. Badly damaged, but not set ablaze (thanks only to its proximity to residential buildings), the synagogue was literally left to rot after the war, before the Jewish community was finally able to recover it from the Polish government in 1996 and initiate restoration. Re-opened in May 2010, the synagogue now serves as a worship space, cultural centre, and branch of the Jewish Information Centre, with a new multi-functional hall in the synagogue's basement, two exhibition spaces on the balconies (one houses a permanent exhibition about the History of Jews in Wrocław and Lower Silesia, while the second is for temporary exhibitions), and a ritual bath which opened in January 2019.

Right next to the synagogue, you will find the Bente Kahan Foundation, which organises monthly events, including exhibitions, film screenings, workshops, lectures, concerts, theatre performances, and more. There is another Jewish cultural center in the same street: After renovations, the Jewish Information Centre has reopened as CIŻ Cafe – a kosher coffeehouse, bookshop, and tourist info centre. In addition to being a new venue for Jewish-related lectures, workshops, and other events, this outfit also arranges Jewish walking tours of Wrocław. While you're there enjoy Middle Eastern snacks and the all-day breakfast. Note that this Jewish center also edits the Jewish-Polish magazine *Chidusz*.

ASK NO QUESTIONS.

A MEMOIR BY EVA COLLINS



AIPA members Alexandra Dunwill, Author Eva Collins and Jan Pakulski

Source: Australian Institute of Polish Affairs.

AIPA members Irena Zdanowicz, Zofia and Jan Pakulski, Alexandra and Julian Dunwill attended a book launch of AIPA's long-standing member Eva Collins.

The launch was MC'ed by Rosie Lew, AM, a philanthropist supporting education, medical research, and the arts. She has been involved with the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute since 1991 and was instrumental in the formation of the Peter Mac Foundation, raising millions of dollars for cancer research, education, and care.

The speakers were Anne Carson, a leading poet, and Dr. Hass Dellal, AO, CEO of the Australia Multicultural Foundation and former SBS television and radio chair.

The book is available from Readings and Dymocks and the author.

Aside from the actual story, the theme has universal implications. It applies to all migrants and refugees from anywhere, at any time. It is written with pathos but also with humour, making it easier to carry the message across.

The book was written with nostalgia, but also with gratitude, as Australia has offered a fresh start to so many people who had to leave their homeland.

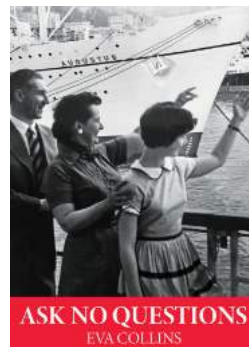
A FEW NOTES ON MY BOOK LAUNCH –
by Eva Collins.

On 3 July, at the East Melbourne Library, I had the launch of my book, a verse memoir titled *Ask No Questions*, published by Puncher & Wattmann.

Ask No Questions is a refrain that I heard my parents say whenever I questioned their decisions.

It is a record of my family's migration from Poland to Australia during the Cold War in the late 1950s. It is told from my 12-year-old's perspective, delving into the heartache I felt in leaving my mother country. I felt violated, as my life was ruptured. I often wonder if I still miss Poland because it wasn't my decision to leave.

And would I feel similarly, if Australia was suddenly a place I could not come back to.



The book's language is restrained and sparing, matching the caution, alertness and fear my parents felt whilst living in communist Poland, under its surveillance regime and widespread anti-Semitism.

In my father's words his decision to go to the other side of the world was 'to be as far away from Moscow as possible'. This sadly is topical today when we watch Moscow rain its will and destruction on Ukraine.

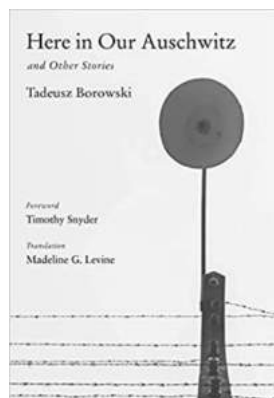
Although there are compelling reasons why people emigrate, the transition is rarely easy or straight forward. You gain something and you lose something in the process, but the gain and the loss don't necessarily cancel each other out. In leaving your country you leave behind the things which formed your identity. Once you're in a new land it is this identity which is challenged as the usual reference points are not there.

Just as for the Australians migrants are foreigners, so too for the migrants it is the Australians who are foreign.

BOOK REVIEW

By Adam Warzel

Member of Australian Institute of Polish Affairs



***In Our Auschwitz,* the prose of Tadeusz Borowski**

Timothy Snyder has called Tadeusz Borowski's short stories "perhaps the most unflinching literary account we have of the Holocaust". Yet, until recently he remained largely unknown outside Poland. Last year the prestigious publishing house, Yale University Press, released the selection of his most acclaimed short stories under the title *Here in Our Auschwitz*.

Borowski's book tells the story of life in concentration camps during the Second World War and its devastating effect on human psyche. Relations between prisoners, daily struggle for survival, dehumanisation and brutalisation of inmates, cynicism and contempt towards others, are major themes of his prose.

The most confronting of Borowski's stories is undoubtedly *Ladies and Gentlemen, Welcome to the Gas*. The contrast between the ironic title and its actual meaning is devastatingly provocative. In *Ladies and Gentlemen*, Borowski depicts the day in life of the special commando working in Auschwitz on unloading trains that transport Jews from Sosnowiec and Będzin to the gas

chambers. The narrative is unemotional, which only deepens the feeling of horror.

In one of few post-war stories, *The Battle of Grunwald*, Borowski analyses the impact of war on those who survived it. The action of Grunwald takes place in an American-run displaced persons' camp in Germany soon after the war. The meeting between a young Christian Pole and a Polish Jewish girl gives the author opportunity to reflect on love, death and the fickleness of life. An acclaimed Polish film director, Andrzej Wajda, based his 1970 film *The Landscape on the Battle on the Grunwald* story.

The themes of his stories reflect well Borowski's own complicated biography. He was born in 1920 into a Christian family in Zytomierz (Zhytomyr) in central-western Ukraine. His parents were imprisoned in the Soviet gulag as part of anti-Polish terror unleashed by Stalin in the late 20s and early 30s. The young Borowski managed to escape Stalin's horrors by moving to Poland. He settled in Warsaw and eventually got reunited with his parents. He graduated from high school in 1940 and proceeded to study Polish literature at the clandestine courses run during the war by the Warsaw University. In 1943, while visiting the apartment of his girlfriend who was of Jewish origin, he was arrested by Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz, from where he was transferred to Dachau. After the war he returned to Poland and worked as a journalist. In 1948 he joined the Communist party.



Borowski died by suicide in 1951. The factors that led to this tragic death have never been fully determined, however historians point to his deep disillusionment with communism and an unhappy love affair as the likely motives.

VALE PHILLIP MAISEL OAM



By Izydor Marmur

Phillip Maisel OAM died in Melbourne on Monday, just eight days after celebrating his 100th birthday.

During the Holocaust, Phillip endured two years in a Jewish ghetto and survived several Nazi labour and concentration camps.

Both he and his twin sister Bella survived the Holocaust and four years after their liberation, Phillip and his sister Bella settled in Australia. Here he met and married his wife Miriam, and they raised two daughters.

At age seventy he decided to take on a new challenge – to record video testimonies of survivors for the Jewish Holocaust Centre and give survivors an opportunity to tell their stories. These stories became valuable resources in the study of the Holocaust.

To all who knew him he was a true mensch. He was loved and respected by many in the Jewish and wider community.

I met Phillip first time at a party of a mutual friend. We talked over a few sour cherry vodka shots. Soon I felt as if I had known him for a long time.

Among many other things, Phillip told me about his testimonies project at the Jewish Holocaust Centre (now Melbourne Holocaust Museum).

Until that moment, the JHC was not on my radar.

Phillips' personality, enthusiasm, and commitment for the work was infectious. His story and his work at the Centre pricked my interest and I asked him if there was anything I could help him with. He said that as a matter of fact there was... And this was the beginning of my friendship with Phillip and my long association with JHC.

Over the coming years, as I progressed from helping Phillip to my role as a graphic designer for the Centre, I would visit him often in his office and spend time talking. We covered many topics. From our past experiences to politics, family, and the future. I loved those meeting and no matter how busy he was he made the time to talk with me.

As my role at the Centre diminished and Covid 19 happened, I rarely met with Phillip in person, but kept in touch with him on Facebook.

Meeting Phillip made a positive impact on my life, and I feel privileged to have known him.

Rest in peace my friend.

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