

HAYNT

PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE



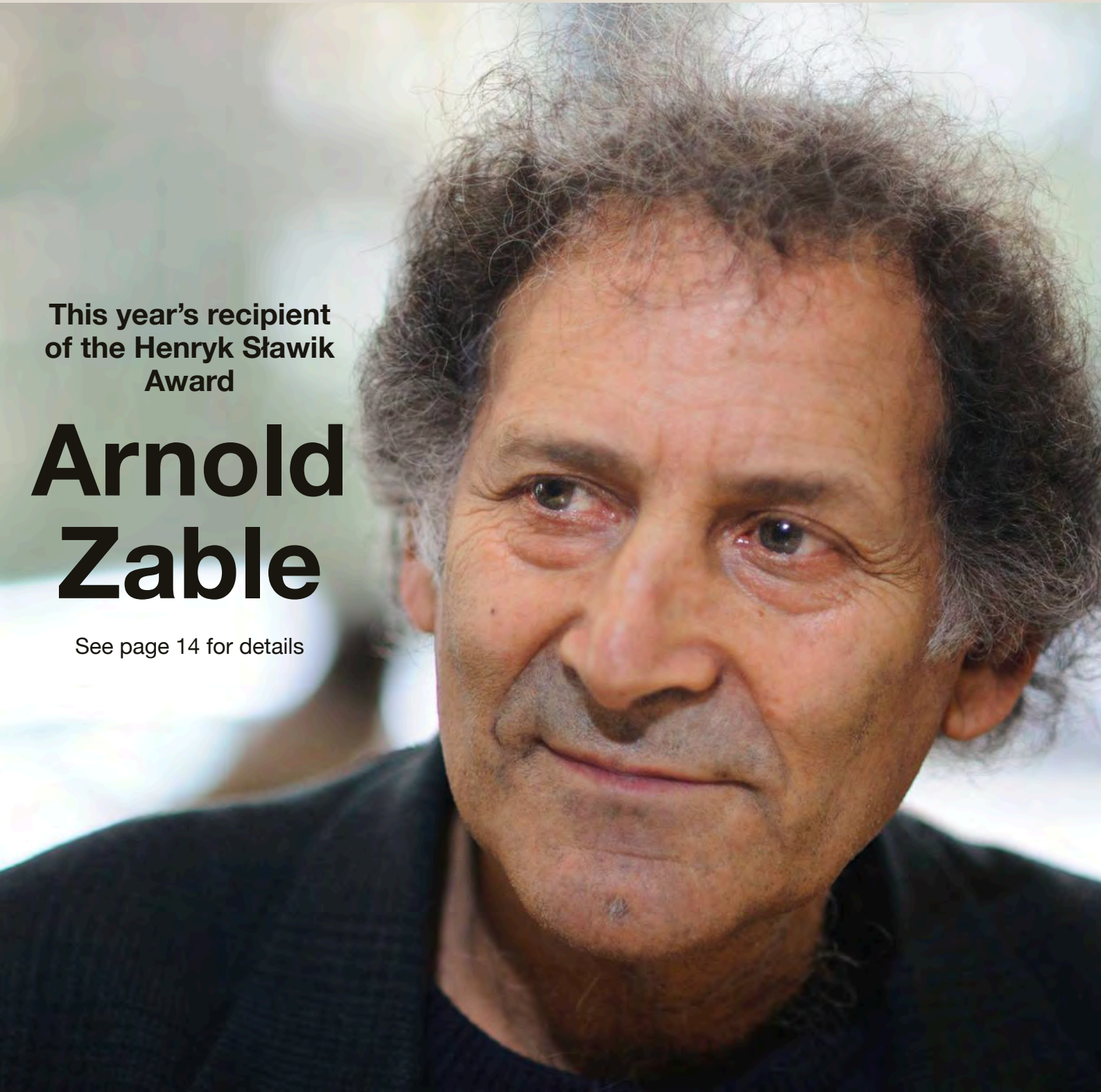
ASPJ
Australian Society of Polish Jews
and their Descendants

SUMMER 2021 ISSUE 14

This year's recipient
of the Henryk Sławik
Award

Arnold Zable

See page 14 for details



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. 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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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Ezra May
President ASPJ

Dzień dobry and welcome to our 2022 Summer edition of Haynt.

Although this time last year I expressed a similar sentiment, thankfully it now appears (primarily due to high vaccination target rates being met), that after what has seemed a long, continuous Covid impacted 2020 and 2021, we are now well on our way to returning to a more normal, albeit Covidsafe, lifestyle.

As we are all aware, throughout 2021 Covid continued to significantly impact the Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants (ASPJ). Our suite of planned in-person postponed 2020 and planned for 2021 events and functions were all further delayed. Of particular frustration was the delayed launch of our NSW Chapter.

However, on the positive side, the momentum built in 2020 by the ASPJ pivoting to hosting online webinars gained further strength throughout this year with an outstanding array of guests. These included Michael Rubinfeld, Director of FestivALT; Dariusz Popiela, a Polish Olympian and founder of People, not Numbers; and acclaimed Holocaust historian Professor Jan Grabowski on History on Trial.

Since the last edition of Haynt, we have hosted a very successful panel discussion on Jewish Life in Lodz Today with Joanna Podolska from The Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre, Kasia Jelen of the Guardians of Remembrance Association and Dawid Gurfinkiel from HaKoach. This Webinar alone has been viewed over 1,200 times. Our most recent

Webinar with Agnieszka Magdziak-Miszewska, the former Polish Ambassador to Israel, discussing Poland and Israel – Friends or Enemies, was also notable for it being co-hosted with the Australian Institute of Polish Affairs (AIPA).

These ASPJ webinars are well worth watching and have drawn significant viewer numbers both locally and internationally. As always, they remain available on our Facebook page and our Youtube channel for viewing.

Following the retirement of Bernard Korbman last year, as advised in the previous edition of Haynt, Izydor Marmur – who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours List for "service to the Jewish community" retired from the ASPJ Board. Whilst still missing Izi and Bernard, the ASPJ has recently welcomed Lucy Taksa to the Board. Lucy is Professor of Management and Director of the Centre for Workforce Futures in Macquarie University's Business School. Lucy brings a wealth of talent to the ASPJ, as well as further strengthening our NSW representation.

Despite the challenges and restrictions of 2021, the ASPJ as an organisation has continued to develop and adapt to the changing environment successfully. These successes are due to the incredible effort and commitment of the ASPJ Board, which continues individually and collectively to devote so much passion and time to further our aims.

The ASPJ is already busy planning our 2022 and 2023 calendar, potentially featuring a wide array of events and functions, including our Oration, a film night and further webinars. The good news is that we now look forward to welcoming you in person to our Henryk Slawik Award on 15 December 2021.

As we approach the upcoming summer holiday period, we wish everyone a safe and happy time, with many wonderful opportunities to reengage with family and friends.

Enjoy reading the 2022 Summer edition of Haynt.

FROM THE NEW SOUTH WALES DESK



Estelle Rozinski
Vice President

Dear friends,

As COVID restrictions have finally lifted, the Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants (ASPJ) is pleased to announce its Sydney debut is on track for early 2022. A victim of the lockdowns, ASPJ Sydney's launch 2.0 will feature live music, film, conversation and, we hope, some input from you, our valued supporters.

To this end we invite you to provide us with some information about your backgrounds. This will help

us create a snapshot of our community so that we can get to know each other a little better.

Operating from Melbourne for more than a decade, ASPJ has continued its mission to preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland as well as to foster understanding between the Polish and Jewish communities.

Over lockdown, our popular webinar series featured guests ranging from Poland's Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich to activists committed to restoring the Jewish world in Lodz, while our regular publication, *Haynt* – under the steady hand of founding member Izi Marmur – continued to deliver news from Poland and from within our communities. In December, Melbourne will host our first post-COVID function, the ASPJ Henryk Slawik Award, while next year promises the return of the ASPJ Oration.

Meanwhile, in our new terrain of Sydney, the coming year will be packed with events from lectures to films to music recitals.

We can't wait to meet you in person!

Estelle Rozinski, Lucy Taksa and Karen Pakula

TELL US YOUR STORIES

- 1 Which town in Poland are your people from?
- 2 What year did you or your family arrive in Australia?
- 3 Who were these first arrivals? (Names and relationship to you.)
- 4 Do you have a photo of your family from around the time of their arrival that we could use in a slide show?

Answers can be written in an email with photos attached. Please indicate in writing your permission for us to include your information and images in our presentations and stories and send to **erozinski@gmail.com** by December 15.

HONOURED. JEWISH CHILD CIGARETTE TRADERS DURING THE NAZI OCCUPATION



Commemorative plaque at Three Crosses Square in Warsaw

Article was published in Jewish.pl on 10 October 2021. Translated from Polish.

The unveiling of the plaque commemorating cigarette traders at Three Crosses Square, 10.10.2021

A plaque commemorating Jewish children who traded in tobacco products in the German district, so that their families had a chance to survive, was unveiled at Three Crosses Square in Warsaw.

A committee consisting of: Anna Cukierman-Podgyrska; Aleksandra Fafius; Tomek Jędrzak, Elżbieta Magenheimer, Sebastian Tkacz; Agata Żurowska, sought to commemorate the cigarette sellers. On 10 October, on the facade of the Jakub Falkowski Institute for the hearing impaired, a plaque devoted to a group of over twenty children aged 6 to 16 who sold cigarettes and newspapers to German soldiers during the war was unveiled.

German occupiers were not able to recognise at first glance whether the children were Jewish or Polish so the children were able to conduct their illegal activities.

During the war, Three Crosses Square was part of the German district. Among other stores, Julius Meinl ran his shop, where only Germans could do their shopping.

The young Jewish cigarette sellers stood in front of this shop, buying cigarettes from customers leaving the store to sell them at a reasonable profit.

On 19 September 1940 a Polish blue police officer, Jozef Bożyk, noticed two boys who "appeared to be Jews," he wrote in his report. The boys were not wearing the yellow star armbands, thus breaking the law. "So I turned to one of them and asked if he was a Jew, to which he replied that he was not a Jew and that I was wrong. When I asked for proof, he replied that he did not have" reported Bożyk.

The policeman took the boys to the police station. There they gave their names: Mojżesz Borensztein (son of Szmul-Josek and Mindla, born on May 18, 1926 in Łódź, residing at Wołyńska 19/26) and his brother, Icek Borensztein, who was two years older. "All the time when I led them to the police station, they maintained that they were Poles, only at the police station, when I declared that we will check their place of residence, they admitted that they were Jews and that the arm bands were hidden in their pockets. The boys have been doing this for a long time as I have seen them before," reported Bożyk.

The boys were interrogated. They admitted that the Square, in front of the shop at ul. 27 Nowy Świat Street, they stayed without "Jewish arm bands". Moses said they had a sick father and were left without a livelihood. "Therefore he took the arm band off his sleeve because nobody would want to sell anything to the Jew" the report on the interrogation stated.

Both brothers survived the Holocaust.

WARSAW STREET NAMED AFTER RABBI DOW BER MEISELS



Dow Ber Meisels was born in 1798 in Szczekociny in Silesia. After moving to Krakow, he became an orthodox rabbi, just like his father. He was also an entrepreneur, banker and leader of the Jewish community.

As the Chief Rabbi of Warsaw (1856-1870) he was an outstanding Polish patriot and throughout his life he strove for the support of Jews for the liberation of Poland from Russian rule and the granting of full civil rights to the Jewish minority. When Catholic churches were desecrated, Dow Ber Meisels in a gesture of solidarity ordered the closure of the synagogues. He took part in buying weapons for the November insurgents and encouraged Jews to support the

uprising in Krakow in 1846. As the chief rabbi of Warsaw, he participated in patriotic demonstrations of 1861, for which he was imprisoned by the Russians in the Citadel.

He rests in the cemetery at Okopowa Street.

Meiselsa Street existed in Warsaw in the years 1938-1939 in the area which currently houses the POLIN Museum. Thanks to the Jewish Historical Institute of Emanuel Ringelblum and the rabbi's descendants, the spirit of pre-war Warsaw is coming back to the district where Warsaw Jews lived and where the tragedy of the Holocaust happened.

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SO THAT THEY MAY SPEAK FROM "BEYOND THE GRAVE"



"Czenstochower Yidn " Częstochowa Jews

By Andrew Rajcher
Board Member ASPJ

As well as being a Board member, Treasurer and Webmaster of the Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants, Andrew is also a Board member and Webmaster of the World Society of Częstochowa Jews and Their Descendants. He writes:

In 2017, an academic conference was held at the Jewish Museum of Częstochowa, in my family's home town. As with all previous academic conferences held there, I was asked to translate into English and to put up onto the World Society's

website, all the papers which had been delivered during that event.

One of these papers really grabbed my attention. It was presented by Professor Magdalena Ruta, head of the Judaic Studies Department of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków – probably Poland's most prestigious institution of higher learning.

Her topic was "Yiddish Resources for Researching the History and Culture of Częstochowa Jews in the First Half of the 20th Century – a Reconnaissance". In this paper, Professor Ruta devoted a large section to the role of Yizkor Books (memorial books written, after the War, by Holocaust survivors).

In it, she says:

In 1967-1968, a two-volume work was published in Jerusalem. In both Yiddish and Hebrew, it was entitled Sefer Czenstochov 9 (The Book of Częstochowa) and it was edited by M. Szucman there is no English translation of this book.

I was certain that I had inherited this two-volume Yizkor Book from my late parents and that it was now sitting somewhere on my bookshelves. Sure enough, it took me very little time to locate both volumes, whereupon I was determined to ensure that this Yizkor Book WOULD be translated into English for future generations to read.

Thus began the World Society's CZĘSTOCHOWA YIZKOR BOOK PROJECT.

I was then extremely fortunate to find an excellent translator, a former Chasid, who is proficient in both Yiddish and Hebrew and who has an almost pedantic, eye for historical accuracy and discrepancies. So, in 2019, the translation, into English of this two-volume Yizkor Book began.

Little did I know at that time, that this was just the Project's beginning!

I soon discovered that there were other Yizkor Books, from Częstochowa and the surrounding region, that had also never been fully translated into English.



New Częstochowa Synagogue was built in 1893 and destroyed in 1939 by the German police and their henchmen.

Yizkor Books were, in the main, written by Holocaust survivors, in the late 1940's through to the 1960's. I realised that, once this Holocaust Survivor generation is no longer with us, these books enable these survivors to continue to talk to us, and to future generations "from beyond the grave".

Bearing this in mind, before embarking upon translating more Yizkor Books, the Project needed to be based on one most important principle:

When translating Yizkor Books into English, we owe it to our Holocaust survivors and to their ancestors to have their words translated **ACCURATELY, CORRECTLY and COMPLETELY.**

HOWEVER, it must be said that Yizkor Books cannot entirely be relied upon as definitive resources. They do contain some errors and inaccuracies regarding people, places, dates and times. This is quite understandable, as:

- often articles have been written twenty or more years after the events described have taken place and, while Holocaust memories are certainly burnt into the consciousness of survivors, the accuracy of the details associated with these memories may fade;
- a Survivor's memory has become interwoven with other survivors' recollections and certain details have become less accurate in what has become a "collective memory" (Research into the fast-growing field of memory studies shows that collective memories evolve and may differ at various moments in time.);
- certain events have been witnessed from a personal perspective only and can, obviously, only be written about from that perspective and not from an overall, historical context;
- Yizkor books, as a rule, are compilations of the works of many different authors, each with his/her own worldview (some of which may seem quite extreme to today's "politically correct" reader), and with his/her own distinctive literary style and capability.

Considering these factors, I decided to form an Academic Consultative Panel for the Project in order to aid in the accuracy of the facts contained in the texts of authors in the Yizkor Book translations. This panel consists of four of the most highly regarded experts on the Jewish history of Poland, in general, and in Częstochowa, in particular. The panel is comprised of:

- Professor Dr. hab. Jerzy Mizgalski, professor of history, University of Częstochowa
- Professor Dr. hab. Magdalena Ruta, head of Judaic Studies, Jagiellonian University
- Professor Dr. hab. Janusz Spyra, professor of history, University of Częstochowa
- Professor Dr. hab. Dariusz Stola, former Director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

When details of a particular incident, from before, during or after the War, differ in the account of one Yizkor Book article writer, from details about the SAME incident as written by another Yizkor Book article writer, these anomalies are referred to the Academic Consultative Panel for their opinion. While the text of the article is translated as written by the

author, the Panel's opinion is included as a footnote on the appropriate page.

Thus far, the Project has translated eight Yizkor Books which had never before been completely translated into English. They comprise five books directly regarding Częstochowa, plus three others relating to Krzepice and Żarki, two towns close to Częstochowa. All these translations are available on the World Society's website. All these translations are available on the World Society's website.

During the process of translating these Yizkor Books, another passage from Professor Ruta's paper kept bothering me incessantly. She wrote:

Many of them [Yizkor Books] have been translated into English – if not entirely, then in fragments.

These translations [...] have been done by volunteers [...]. As a result, the English language versions of these memorial books contain numerous factual errors, mistakes in the names of places and of people, shortcuts and/or omissions. They should therefore be treated with caution, even distrust and should be strictly compared with the original text and with other historical sources.

Recalling these words, I then decided that, out of respect for the Holocaust survivors who wrote in these Yizkor Books, this situation could NOT be allowed to continue. So, after the first-time Yizkor Book English-language translations had been completed, I engaged our amazing, professional translator to translate, FROM ZERO, all the other previously "translated" Yizkor Books relating to Częstochowa and the surrounding area. This would be far more cost-effective than to look at what had already been translated and then to compare it with the original text.

We have now completed our first "re-translation" of a Yizkor Book - "Czenstochower Yidn," first published in 1947. By comparing our translation with one that had been completed by a volunteer elsewhere, sure enough, Professor Ruta's words rang loud and clear. There were numerous inaccuracies. My professional translator makes every effort to transliterate, from the Yiddish texts, as accurately as possible, the names of both people and places, as they would have been spelt in a historically accurate manner (surnames may have been changed post-War). This includes the use of Polish diacritics where appropriate.

So, for now, the Project continues – there is more to be done. We have now discovered yet another Częstochowa Yizkor Book which has never before been translated into English. The work on that book is about to commence. We also have discovered another Yizkor Book, relating to Krzepice, which has never before been translated into English and there are still other Yizkor Books which are crying out to be "re-translated".

Of course, professional translations cost money.

All costs relating to this Project are covered by the **WOLF and DORA RAJCHER MEMORIAL FUND.**

For more information, go to:

www.czystochowajews.org/history/yizkor-books/ - the Project's "home" page

www.czystochowajews.org/history/yizkor-books/about-czystochowa-yizkor-books-project/ - about the Project and its background

www.czystochowajews.org/history/yizkor-books/academic-consultative-panel/ - about the Project's Academic Consultative Panel



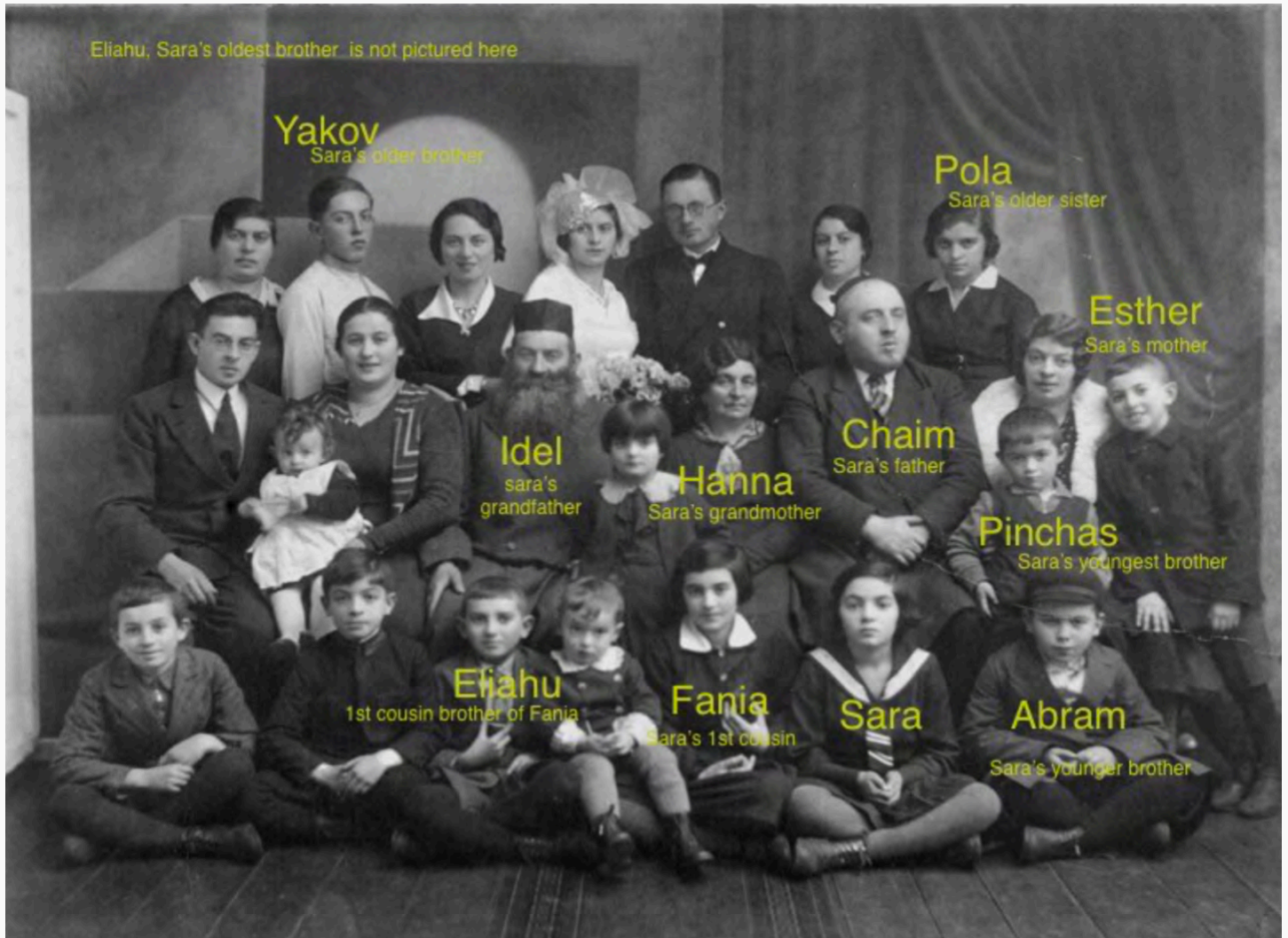
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**Australian Society
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SULA'S STORY–PART 1



Family wedding in Zdunska Wola

By Estelle Rozinski
Vice President ASPJ

Sula Rozinski nee Sara Złotogórska

My mother Sara was born in 1921, to Chaim Yehezkiel and Ester (nee Tondowska) Złotogórski and their large extended family. Sara was the fourth child, and the first of her siblings to be born in Lodz. She followed three rumbunctious and intelligent blonde-haired, blue-eyed children born in Zdunska Wola, at regular two-year intervals.

My mother was born as a raw and unprotected nerve covered in eczema from head to toe. In my mind's eye,

her raw skin was a corporeal premonition of what was to come. Florcia, the young country girl employed to help with the chores, bundled the tiny Sara in gauze and pulled her from room to room in a wicker basket.

Sara was to become a dark-haired beauty with huge, black saucer eyes. She was also a left-hander. To be blonde and blue-eyed held currency and sway in Poland, in a way that being brunette and a left-hander did not!

Like most, the Złotogórski household was religious, strictly kosher and observant of Shabbat. They followed Radoszyce Hassidim but my grandfather with his trimmed beard and manicured hands was more akin to today's modern orthodox. He was a business man and revered as an advocate for the community Beth Din.



Sula Rozinski nee Sara Złotogórska

Their Shabbat table, replete with homemade challahs, chicken soup, goose and visiting yeshiva bocher students spoke of the good times before the Great Depression, when their stomachs were still full. The four-part harmony sung between courses took care of their souls. Sadly, my mother with her lack of musicality was not one of the singers. In acknowledgement of the family's Zionist belief, simple requests like 'pass the salt' were given in Hebrew. Otherwise, the family's first language was Polish and the Polish literature of Mickiewicz and Tuwim filled their home.

While Summer holidays were spent as a family at a *dacza* in the countryside, Sara spent her Hanukkah winter holidays with her two younger brothers, Abram and Pinusz, and their cousin Fanny in their grandparents' home in Zdunska Wola. *Djadziusz* (grandfather) Idel with his red tickly beard was kind and playful. It took Sara years before she realised that her grandfather hadn't really lost those card games that she frequently rejoiced in winning. *Babcia* (grandmother) Hanna was a healer, wise and down to earth. She gently manipulated the clicky hips of babies and treated older people, both Jews and Gentiles, with salves and medicines. They came to her from as far away as 10 kilometres. On Shabbat morning cake and milk were

left on the tiled oven, gently warming for the children when they awoke. Shabbat afternoon was spent in quiet reverie reading the Tseno U'Reno.*

The household was full of lively political discussion. During the Russian occupation of Poland, the Zdunska Wola aunts Balcia and Lipcia, taught Polish language illegally in the cellar of their home. Later, Sara and her older sister Pola taught themselves Esperanto by torchlight under the bedclothes. Meanwhile a deep rift between the Zionist and Bundist factions of the family, remaining unresolved until my parents' arrival in Australia in the 1950s.

During the Depression, Sara's mother Ester insisted that all their creditors be paid, despite the hardship it caused them. Meanwhile Pola, informed by social justice and a bid for a more egalitarian world, turned to communism. The smuggling of the older sister in and out of windows to rallies and May Day marches was facilitated by Sara, the complicit younger sister who was also charged with the smuggling of fresh underwear for the next day to the house of a trusted friend.

On reflection, my mother's family represented many of the threads of pre-war Jewry. Eliahu, her adored oldest brother was an adventurer, strong, challenging and a brilliant mathematician. At age 14 he took off to join the merchant marines but was hauled home by the Polish police. Jakub, the Zionist, did Hachsharah near Zdunska Wola in the 1930s where he came under the influence of Jabotinsky and left for Palestine. Pola the intellectually erudite older sister left Poland with her new husband in 1939 to cross the green line into communist Russia. My mother, the devoted daughter stayed behind to look after her parents and her younger siblings. Abram with the flawless memory could recite the Chumash from the age of three and Pinusz, the 'baby', became the family comedian.

It was my mother's dream to become a nurse, sadly not possible for a young Jewish girl of her background at that time. 1939 and the unspeakable years that followed changed all of that, and somewhere in the mix, Sara became Sula.

*a Yiddish-language prose work of c. 1590s whose structure parallels the weekly Torah portions and Haftarahs used in Jewish prayer services.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tseno_Ureno

LOCKDOWN'S GIFT? TIME WITH MY FATHER



David Prince and his daughter Frances Prince

By Frances Prince

David Prince, my 96-year-old Polish Jewish Holocaust survivor father, lives alone, around the corner from me. During 2020, as the coronavirus pandemic spread across the world and the people of Victoria were locked down, my concerns over caring for Dad became more and more acute.

Dad's many activities were cancelled. He had few friends left. He no longer drove. He was not online. I feared for his mental health. What could I do to alleviate Dad's boredom and inertia?

We began to spend every afternoon reading together at my place, on the couch in the lounge room. We needed to get comfortable - we were in it for the long haul. (Not that I knew that this long haul would morph into a mighty marathon.)

I brought out blankets. Dad wanted to sit up straight, with a cushion behind his lower back and a footstool upon which to stretch out his legs, covered by a blanket. I preferred to sprawl along one length of the couch with my pillow behind me, covered by two blankets. So our reading ritual began.

What did we read? Mainly Holocaust memoirs. Perhaps this does not appear to be an appropriate

genre. But for us it was. Reading aloud to Dad about prewar Jewish Polish childhoods induced him to remember and talk about his own early days growing up in Lodz. Listening to the ordeals of others triggered his recollections of the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Friedland concentration camp. He spontaneously commented on the experience of others in relation to his own. Much was familiar to me; much was not. Some of what I knew was fleshed out, clarified and given new meaning in Dad's present-day telling.

One afternoon, after we settled into our usual positions on my spacious couch, Dad said: "Maybe we are masochists?"

I said: "Who?"

He said: "Both of us."

We laughed together and began the day's reading.

The postwar period, still an oft-neglected topic of historical study, became a focal point of our readings and conversations. This was perhaps the most riveting time in my father's life. In the late 1940s this young Jewish man, whose formal schooling ended after Year 7 with the outbreak of World War II, became a university student in Munich, Germany, in the most unlikely of circumstances. This was followed by migration to Australia and the rebuilding of a life.

Survival is more than a narrow escape from death and a perpetual haunting thereafter; it is revival and restoration. It is assertion of purpose, agency and vitality. It is a commitment to rebuilding oneself, family, community and society.

Would we have shared this daily rich mixture of reading about other people's lives, Dad's instinctive reminiscences and our resultant conversations, in a COVID-free world? The answer is painfully obvious. I have been provided with a gift; the gift of time with my elderly Dad.

Frances Prince is an executive member of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, holding the Multicultural and Interfaith Portfolio. Her new book, Gift of Time: Discoveries from the Daily Ritual of Reading with my Father, is published by Real Film and Publishing.

Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants

HENRYK SŁAWIK AWARD 2021



2021 recipient

Arnold Zable



Wednesday 15 December 2021
7.00pm for 7.30pm start

**Beth Weizmann Jewish Community Centre,
306 Hawthorn Rd, Caulfield 3162**

**This is a CovidSafe event.
Entry upon proof of vaccination.**

To register your in-person attendance please email: info@polishjews.org.au

No Cover Charge.

This event will also be livestreamed on Zoom & the ASPJ Facebook Live

Please click the link to join: <https://polaron-au.zoom.us/j/81325826850>

Webinar ID: 813 2582 6850



The Henryk Sławik Award is dedicated in memory of this great Polish diplomat, politician and humanitarian.

Henryk Sławik saved several thousand Jews between 1940 and 1944, and was subsequently murdered by the Nazis in the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria.

The Henryk Sławik Award is bestowed upon an individual or organisation that contributes to a greater understanding of the unique and dynamic contribution by the Polish Jewish community to the all-embracing Polish culture and ethos.

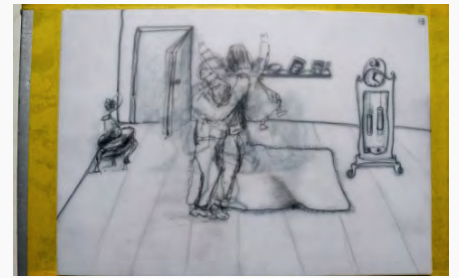
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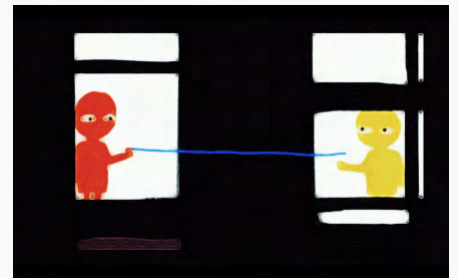
...AND HE TAUGHT THE CANARIES TO SING



David Asher Brook - ... and he taught the canaries to sing



Steven Durbach - birds of us



Anita - Lester Boys from Łódź

By Ruth Tofler-Riesel

Late in 2020, the consulate of the Republic of Poland with the support of the Polish Consul Monica Konczyk sponsored a small pilot project of 3 animations celebrating the diversity of Jewish life in Poland before 1939.

When the project was launched on 20 May 2021 at the Polish Consulate in Sydney, it quickly became apparent that the appreciative audience was hungry for more stories. On this evening they saw, they felt, and they learned about aspects of Jewish life in pre-war Poland that had frequently been lost amidst a more pressing historical narrative.

'...and he taught the canaries to sing' is the creation of Sydney artist, curator and educator Estelle Rozinski who uses her art practice to explore the commonalities and differences that make up our communities. The animated vignettes by celebrated Australian artists Anita Lester, David Asher Brook and Steven Durbach are visually rich, engaging, and transporting.

The vignettes portray simple yet heart-warming scenes from everyday life in Poland before the war: pranks played on the streets of Lodz, a father teaching canaries to sing, and the antics of a sister, a brother and their grandfather clock. Rozinski hopes

these animations will help challenge the stereotypes of pre-war Jewry, and leave us wanting to know more about the shape and texture of the ordinariness of everyday life. Her aim with this project is to bring a new perspective to the stories of Jewish Poland, offering us a warm and rich history to coexist with the tragedy of the Holocaust.

A discussion between curator Rozinski and the artists was followed by a musical performance that drew us further into Polish Jewish life. Michael Seeff and his Klezmer clarinet lured us into the richness of days gone by; Ella Haber (vocals) accompanied by Yianni Adams (guitar) captivated the audience with her compelling rendition of Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew songs specially learnt for this event.

On the 26 September, during Sydney's lockdown the Sydney Jewish Museum hosted an intimate version of this event, which is still available to view online:

<https://sydneyjewishmuseum.com.au/shop/webinars/public/celebrating-jewish-life-in-poland-before-1939/>

Two more animations are in the pipeline and are scheduled to launch with ASPJ's NSW inaugural event early next year. Meanwhile Rozinski continues to collect stories for this project.

If you would like to contribute your family story or learn more about this project please contact Estelle at erozinski@gmail.com

VALE DR ZDZISLAW ANDRZEJ DERWIŃSKI



By Lucyna Artimiuk.

Dr. Zdzisław Andrzej Derwiński was known by many simply as Zdziś, Zdzichu or Zdzisiek, and by his Australian friends and colleagues, as Andrew.

Dr. Zdzisław Andrzej Derwiński was born in 1956 in Bogatynia, Poland.

Zdzisław began studying history at the University of Wrocław, where he got his masters degree and started working on his doctorate at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He held the position of an assistant at the Department of Contemporary History at the Historical Institute of the Wrocław University.

In 1987, Zdzisław completed his doctorate and in the same year, together with his wife and son, migrated to Melbourne. Like many migrants, he initially worked as a labourer and later as a Social Support Coordinator with the Polish Community Council of Victoria.

Having noticed the gradual passing of the post-war generation he recognised the need to save as much of their history as possible. This resulted in his founding of Polish Museum and Archives in Australia. As well as being the President of PMAA and the editor of its publications and Annual, he edited the

Chronicle of the Polish Community Council of Victoria (1962-1992). The book summarised the establishment of the organised Polish community in Victoria.

From 1998–2002 Zdzisław was the editor of *Tygodnik Polski* and in more recent years became an advisor to the Polish Community Council of Australia on historical matters.

Having an extensive understanding and knowledge of Polish settlement in Australia, much of which was undocumented, he published *The Government of the Republic of Poland in exile during the Warsaw Uprising (1944)*, Melbourne 1991. As well, he initiated and created a number of exhibitions on Polish history and on the Polish communities's contribution to Australia.

In 2018 he was honoured with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, for outstanding services in the Polish community and for popularising Polish history.

Dr. Zdzisław Andrzej Derwiński was a friend and a supporter of the Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants' activities.

In his final interview in September 2021 for the "Portal Polonii w Wiktorii," he summarised his own contribution to the Polish community and his hope for the future:

"I feel unsatisfied that more has not been done, or better. Perhaps there was no favourable environment, atmosphere, understanding or support in the Polish community for these things to occur. However, I think that if I got involved in these initiatives, it was clearly meant to be. My greatest dream is that all the initiatives I have started will be successful. I also hope that the new generation of Polish community activists will take over the Polish Museum and Archives in Australia and place it on solid foundations, because it is definitely needed."

Zdzisław had retired in 2020 with the intention of devoting more time to the topic he loved: Polish Australian history. He died suddenly on 3 October 2021 in Melbourne.

A FORGOTTEN PLACE



Bas-relief by Dariusz Kowalski, Teresa Pastuszka and Leszek Waszkiewicz at the newly built main gate.

As well as the well known Jewish cemetery in Okopowa street in Warsaw, near the Bródno Catholic cemetery, there is a much lesser known oldest surviving Jewish cemetery in Warsaw.

From the beginning of the year 1527, Jews were not permitted to reside in Warsaw. The *Privilegium de non tolerandis Judaeis* prohibited the followers of Judaism from settling, owning real estate and staying within the boundaries of some royal cities except for markets and fairs days. The ban remained enforced throughout Mazovia until the 18th century.

The authorities decreed that as there were no Jews living in Warsaw, there was no need for a Jewish cemetery.

However in 1780, Szmul Jakubowicz Zarówkaer, a Jewish entrepreneur asked King Stanisław Poniatowski for permission to establish a Jewish cemetery.

Permission was granted by the king and a plot of land was allocated for this purpose on the edge of Bródno and Targówek.

The first official burial in the new cemetery took place in 1784.

But ten years later, during the Kosciuszko Uprising in 1794 the cemetery sustained a great amount of damage as the site and surrounding areas became a centre of fierce fighting.

Szmul Jakubowicz died in 1801 and soon after, the heyday of the Praga cemetery was over.

In 1806, a second cemetery was established on the left side of the Vistula River. The new Okopowa Street cemetery gained the reputation of being the more prestigious of the two. As it became even more popular, Praga cemetery was designated for the poor.

During the last decades of the 19th century, major changes to the appearance of the Praga cemetery



Matzevot at the Praga cemetery

were implemented. The Jewish community enlarged the Jewish cemetery area, planted trees, built a funeral home building and erected several impressive monuments and a fence.

However the improvements did not survive the First World War, during which - mainly due to the Russian soldiers stationed nearby, the tombstones were destroyed, the trees were cut down for fuel, and the cows were grazed in the already unfenced area. Despite this, up to 5,000 Jews were still buried there annually.

In the interwar period, large amounts of money were allocated to cleanup work, but the events of 1939 brought about gradual annihilation both of the cemetery and the Jews of Warsaw.

The Germans used *matzevot* to build roads, bunkers and barricades, and at the devastated Jewish cemetery executed several thousand both Jews and Poles.

During the occupation the cemetery became a contact point for people who smuggled goods into the ghetto, and then weapons for the insurgents.

The last Praga funeral took place on 8 December 1947,

when the remains of Jews murdered during the war were buried in a common grave.

In the following years many plans for the area were considered but never realised and the cemetery fell into ruin.

The rescue of this important Jewish heritage site was undertaken in the 1980s by Zygmunt Nissenbaum, one of the Warsaw Jews who survived the Holocaust.

As a teenager Nissenbaum was hiding at the cemetery during the war and witnessed the execution of Jews as they prayed. This scene is depicted on two bass relief panels on the newly built main gate.

Many *matzevot* that were removed and put to other uses were slowly returning to the cemetery. Fragments of tombstones from various places in the capital were collected in huge baskets.

In 2012, the cemetery was handed over to the Jewish community.

Over 300,000 Jews are buried at the Praga cemetery. Renovation of the Jewish cemetery, which has been going on for several years ensures protection against further devastation of what remains.

TOP JEWISH FOOTBALL CLUBS IN PRE-WWII WARSAW



According to historian Dr Robert Gawkowski, between 1918 and 1939 there were 176 sports clubs in Warsaw, out of which 70% had a football team. Jewish clubs making up about 25% of them.

The leading Jewish football clubs in the interwar era in Warsaw were *Makabi* (Maccabi) and *Gwiazda* (Star).

Makabi was the first Jewish sports club in Warsaw and hosted many sport disciplines, of which football was one.

The club itself participated in the founding of the Warsaw Regional Football Society (WRFS) in 1920, but only had moderate success.

After advancing to the Warsaw A-class in 1926, *Makabi* football club remained playing in the league until 1933 and during that time managed to finish runner-up once. After

being relegated to the B-class, they managed to return to the top league soon before the war broke out in 1939.

One of the most famous *Makabi* footballers was Józef Klotz, who transferred to *Cracovia* in 1925. He wrote his name in history thanks to scoring the first goal for the Polish national team during the match with Sweden in Stockholm in 1922, won by Poland (2:1).

Gwiazda football club was founded in 1923. In 1924 the club played their first season in C-class and in 1926 advanced to B-class and then further to A-class in 1928.

Their greatest achievement was victory in 1932 and in 1934 of the A-class competition.

Having won a A-class competition twice, of all the Jewish clubs in Poland, *Gwiazda* came the closest to joining the First League.

In the play-offs to progress to the First League, *Gwiazda* competed against three other teams: *Legia Poznań*, *ŁTSG Łódź* and *Polonia Bydgoszcz*. However they only managed to reach third place.

After Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 the activities of all Jewish sport clubs ceased.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date: ____/____/____

Title: _____ Given Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

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Please tick the relevant box.

Full Membership ☐

Associate Membership ☐

Membership Fee: \$25 p.a.

Cheque ☐

Cash ☐

Direct Debit ☐

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Taken by: _____

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Approved ☐

Date: ____/____/____