HAYNT

ASPJ
Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants

PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE

AUTUMN 2025 ISSUE 21

Happy Passover

Chag Sameach

Zissen Pesach

Wesołej Paschy

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 twice 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.

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From the President

Ezra May
President ASPJ

Shalom, dzien dobry and welcome to our first edition of *Haynt* for 2025.

This is now our 3rd edition since 7 October 2023. Over 500 days later, we are still very much living with the ongoing trauma and aftermath of the massacre and subsequent war in Israel, with all its tragic challenges, consequences and losses. Although thankfully some hostages have been returned, given their condition upon release, the confirmation of dead hostages, and the fear for the remaining hostages amidst a continuing further violence, it remains an anxious and fraught time for many.

The post October 7 surge in anti-Semitism, both overt and perhaps more sinisterly covert, here in Australia and throughout the world continues to plague us. This increased social tension and division, and the disappointingly underwhelming response by some of our politicians, media personalities, communal leaders and social influencers, has heightened the strain and feeling of abandonment by many. However, reassuringly and encouragingly, the ASPJ continues to receive messages of support from a range of people and organisations throughout the wider community.

On the diplomatic front, the ASPJ has forged a close relationship with the Chargé d'affaires (and Acting Ambassador) of the Republic of Poland to Australia, Mr Marcin Kawałowski. As well as the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Sydney, Mr Piotr Rakowski and Beata Koropatwa from the Office of Honorary Consul General of Republic of Poland in Melbourne. We are very grateful for their strong friendship and support.

Organisationally, it was pleasing to see the continued growth of our NSW chapter and we welcome our new board members.

The wide range and mix of ASPJ events continued at feverish pace in the back end of 2024. In September, we hosted a webinar, 'In shadow of March 68' with Rabbi Yitzhak Rapoport. A highlight was a concert in November of works by twentieth century Jewish-Polish composers, performed by artists Karolina Mikołajczyk and Iwo Jedenecki. Later in November we also hosted an evening with Dr. Michał Trębacz, Acting Director of the Żydowski Instytut Historyczny (ŻIH) – the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Further webinars with POLIN Museum genealogy researcher Matan Shefi, as well as KulturDocs – a new online documentary series produced by FestivALT, were also hosted. As always, recordings of these events can be found on our website, youtube and Facebook pages.

It is also with great anticipation that we are about to release details of our upcoming webinars in 2025. Including a two part series on 6 May and 13 May on the story of Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust under Stalin and their return to Poland post War, presented by ASPJ Board member Rita Nash. And then on 12 June, a webinar with the Memories of Treblinka Foundation.

As we are about to celebrate the Festival of Pesach – Passover, one can only hope that globally and individually we all experience its central themes of liberation and freedom. The upcoming days also include periods of reflection and gratitude, as in the coming weeks we commemorate Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day – and the following week Yom HaZikaron – Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror. This is immediately followed by Yom HaAtzmaut – Israel's Independence Day. In Australia we also commemorate ANZAC Day. All of these days should cause us to pause and reflect not only on the tremendous debt we owe the generations before us to ensure that people, all peoples, can live in peace, friendship and tolerance, but also to be aware of the terrible suffering and devastation that can result when we don't.

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.

It is our fervent hope that Australia will remain the welcoming land of opportunity. A country of religious freedom and protection, where people and communities of different religions, race, ethnicities all live together without hate or fear in a vibrant, prosperous multicultural community that benefits us all.

Enjoy this latest edition of *Haynt* and much thanks to our editor Izi Marmur for all his effort in producing another excellent edition.

Ezra May

From the New South Wales desk

Estelle Rozinski
Vice President ASPJ NSW

Dear Friends,

Against a backdrop of uncertainty internationally and nationally ASPJ continues to grow in its diversity and membership.

In early February Lucy and I welcomed our two new board members Rita Nash and Helena Ameisen with a modest celebratory dinner. Rita has a master's degree in librarianship and is a published researcher specialising in Polish Jews in the Soviet Union 1939-1945 and their return to Poland 1945-1950. Helena, a speech therapist is more contemporaneously a soon to be published author of her life's story. Together they have added depth to our ranks and brought with them a swag of new ideas and initiatives. Indeed the 2025 ASPJ events calendar opens on 6 May with a talk by Rita Nash, The flight of Polish Jews to the Soviet Union 1939-1945.

Our organisation's friendships and outreach continue with other agencies. Special thanks to Shefi Matan of the Polin Museum in Warsaw who stepped in to support a member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS), under the auspices of Barbara Simon with practical suggestions on ways to locate street names in the town of Włocławek.

The Australian Institute of Polish Affairs (AIPA) has always played a special role with our community so we hope our connection will continue to grow under the stewardship of Dr Robert Czernkowski.

In the meantime, we wish to welcome Poland's new Consul General Piotr Rakowski to Sydney and look forward to meeting him more formally in the near future.

Hag Pesach Sameach,

Estelle Rozinski

In One Voice. The Jewish Cultural Festival 2025

Braving the weather at the festival

Ezra May and Bernard Korbman, Lena Fiszman and Peter Schnall

Ezra May and David Southwick MP

Ezra May, Josh Burns MP and Lena Fiszman

The annual "In One Voice" Jewish Culture Street Festival – a celebration of Jewish Melbourne's culture through community groups, music and art was held on Sunday 16 March 2025. And despite the un-seasonal relentless rain, ASPJ had a stream of people stopping by. Many friends said hello and other people introduced themselves, enquired about the activities of the ASPJ or shared their stories of their Polish Jewish ancestry and connection.

The ASPJ was also visited by dignitaries, and our local Federal & Sate politicians, Josh Burns & David Southwick.

But best of all, previous ASPJ President Bernard Korbman came by too.

Jewish Wroclaw

By Urszula Rybicka
(Maciek Jaźwiecki / POLIN Museum)

Urszula Rybicka is a publicist, reviewer, and educator. She graduated from the University of Wroclaw. She is the founder and editor of Żydoteka – the only Polish medium about Jewish literature, where readers are introduced to the literature and culture of the Jews. She conducts lectures, workshops and meetings with authors devoted to Jewish issues. She runs the Żydoteka Foundation, the aim of which is to popularize the culture and history of Jews. In 2021 she was presented honorable mention POLIN Award, and her project Jewish Wroclaw was implemented in 2021 as part of the Artistic Scholarship of the Mayor of Wroclaw.

The Idea Behind the Project

Jewish Wroclaw is a project aimed at commemorating and emphasizing the achievements of the Jewish inhabitants of the city and their influence on its development. In our daily rush, we may not notice how many places or institutions were raised on their initiative. History, however, was not favourable to them. Much of it has been deliberately erased, and what has not been erased has been blurred or forgotten.

By indicating both existent and non-existent artefacts, institutions and buildings, I am trying to tell about the people who stood behind these undertakings. My goal is to outline the history of Wroclaw Jews and, on this basis, try to define the Jewish identity of the city. I am not deliberately presenting the entire legacy of Wroclaw Jews, but I only focus on the most important – in my opinion – manifestations of their activity in the city.

By creating this website, I would like to outline a relationship with the past and the past world, or – using an expression by Stefan Zweig, an Austrian writer of Jewish origin – with the world of yesterday. How to think about the history of Wroclaw Jews?

Since today most of the city's inhabitants are Polish Catholics, what and to what extent can connect them with German Jews? Is it just topography, architecture or the legacy of material and non-material culture? I ask myself what the cultural continuity between the Jewish Breslauers and the contemporary inhabitants of Wroclaw may look like and how to cultivate this continuity.

Of course we cannot make an attempt to understand the history of Wroclaw Jews in isolation from the history of the city. The fact that German Jews lived here before the war, unfortunately, condemns them to double exclusion from collective memory. After all, they are not the main subject of interest, neither for institutions fostering the memory of Poles nor the communities fostering the memory of Polish Jews. So I would like to point out a new possible direction – we do not have to be related by blood with the German Jews; it is enough that we are associated by the place. We do not have to think of them as ancestors; it is enough that they will be our predecessors. A change of perspective can open up

Włodkowica Street (Daniele Liberati)

to the past. Since the changed ethnic composition of the city discourages people from looking for information about the past, I would also like to point out that interest in local history is important for our current functioning in the city.

This website also shows the history of Polish Jews and the revival of modern Jewish life in post-war Wroclaw. Bearing in mind the effects of the two totalitarian regimes, we know that it was not an easy process. Therefore I want to find out to what extent the non-Jewish inhabitants of Wroclaw derive from the currently developing Jewish culture and does this culture also draw from the experiences of German Jews? And after many inglorious experiences from the past, including in the recent history, are we able to create a real environment for mutual respect?

Undoubtedly, Jewish culture is currently enjoying great popularity, and there are many organizations and initiatives promoting it in Wroclaw. Opposite, however, there are neo-Nazi organizations, which are also recovering. When describing the story of Wroclaw's Jews, I also look to the future: I am curious to see what the development of the city and the cultivation of common memory will look like not only by our generation but also by the generation of our children.

About the Project

Jewish Wroclaw is an original project of Urszula Rybicka which aims to present the history of Jews and their contribution to the development of the city from the beginning of the 19th century to the present day.

Jewish Wroclaw focuses on such issues as history, culture, education and religion, presents prominent Wroclaw inhabitants of Jewish origin and outlines the framework of Jewish heritage in Wroclaw. This website also shows unknown or concealed stories, tells about the victims of the Holocaust and people persecuted by the communist authorities. The project was initiated hoping that the growing awareness of the significant contribution of Jews to the development of Wroclaw could contribute to an increase in tolerance in the capital of Lower Silesia.

Introduction

The Jewish community lived in Wroclaw already in the Middle Ages and was one of the largest Jewish communities in this part of Europe. The history of Jews, depending on the ruler, political system and social mood, was turbulent – beginning with acceptance, ending with expulsions and

The Jewish Square (Poloniae Amici)

The matzevah of cantor David from1203

pogroms. **You can read about it in my ebook – download for free a guide to Jewish Wrocław.**

To provide the framework for the project, I decided to tell about the modern history of Wroclaw Jews from 1812 to the present day. This history begins with the Emancipation Edict that enabled the amazing development of the local community, which lasted until the 1930s. The Nazis' rise to power, World War II and ultimately the Holocaust annihilated most European Jewish communities, including those in Wroclaw. The post-war times, on the other hand, were an interesting but short-lived attempt to resume Jewish life in Lower Silesia. The period of anti-Semitic repressions, with their peak in March 1968, disappeared with the fall of communism, and another attempt to revive the Jewish community began in post-communist Poland. I am also trying to find out what the Jewish life in Wroclaw looks like today and, what is equally important, how the memory of the past looks like.

So let's look back – one of the traces of the medieval Jewish community is the matzevah of cantor David from 1203, most probably from the medieval Jewish cemetery. It can therefore be concluded that the local Jewish community was already developed in the 12th century. Interestingly, the matzevah of David is the oldest fully preserved Jewish tombstone in Poland. Today it is an exhibit of the Historical Museum in the Royal Palace. The medieval Jewish district was located in a completely different place than the modern one – its traces can be found in the vicinity of Uniwersytecki Square and along Uniwersytecka, Garbary, Nożownicza, Więzienna and Kuźnicza Streets. Two synagogues and a Jewish cemetery were most probably located within it. Until the nineteenth century, there were, among others Die Judengasse, i.e. the Jewish Alley. Its name testifies that Jews settled there.

Over the next decades, with short breaks, the Jewish community could develop in Wroclaw, but the first pogroms took place in the mid-fourteenth century. A tragedy occurred almost a hundred years later – forty-one Jews were burnt in Solny Square. Wroclaw also obtained the de non tolerandis Judaeis privilege granted by Casimir IV Jagiellon, which meant that Jews were not allowed to settle in the city.

From the mid-15th to the mid-17th century, Jews could not live in Wroclaw; the only exception were the fairs, to which they had the right to come several times a year for commercial purposes. This changed only in 1657, when the supplier of the imperial mint, Zacharias Lazarus, was permitted to settle in the city. The modern Jewish commune was established in the middle of the 17th century, and the later transition of Silesia to Prussian rule was initially very favourable to it. From the 18th century, Jews settled around the present Ghetto Heroes Square – previously it was the Jewish Square – and established their institutions and centres there, as well as several inns and synagogues. So when the Emancipation Edict was

announced in 1812, the Jews became full citizens of the city. They had the right to settle down, buy real estate, practice their religion and pursue a profit-making activity. This is how the great period of prosperity began – the economic, cultural and intellectual boom of the Jewish community of Wroclaw occurred.

Post Second World War Settlement

Both Wroclaw and almost all of Lower Silesia were a place that became home to thousands of Jews after the war. Not only the Holocaust survivors came here, but also the so-called repatriates from the Eastern Borderlands and former prisoners of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp and its numerous branches located in the region. Jews from the Soviet Union and other regions of Poland also came to Lower Silesia. Thus, such a large number of Jewish settlers was a phenomenon in the country, which was recovering from the conflagration of the war. Settlement was fostered by the ethnic population exchange in these areas, which made it possible to build post-war life away from family traumas, although this does not

Rabbi Szulim Trejstman in Wroclaw
(Yad Vashem, Photo Archive, Jerusalem)

mean that Polish Jews were relieved after the Holocaust. On the contrary, the trauma associated with the war continues to this day in many families.

The center of Jewish activity in Wroclaw, both secular and religious, was the building at Włodkowica Street, which was a new-old Jewish district. It housed institutions, a kosher canteen, a synagogue with a mikveh, as well as books and press publications. Until 1951, the Jews of Wroclaw could use four synagogues: the White Stork Synagogue, the shul, i.e. a small synagogue, and the houses of worship at Oleśnicka 11 and Żeromskiego 24.

Jewish settlement in Lower Silesia was also part of the communist ideology aimed at concentrating and unifying the resurgent Jewish life. It is estimated that 100,000 Jews settled here after the war, but this number gradually decreased over time. One of the most famous and significant political activists in Wroclaw was Jakub Egit, the chairman of the Provincial Committee of Polish Jews in Lower Silesia. The efforts of the author of the book *Towards a New Life* were intended at creating a strong Jewish center in the then Wroclaw Voivodeship. The Jewish settlement here was so large and its cultural and intellectual capital so great that researchers indicate that Lower Silesia was the most significant center of post-war Jewish life in Europe. However, Jakub Egit was active here only until 1949, when he was deprived of power, and accused of nationalist activities aiming at the separation of Lower Silesia.

There were important institutions under the aegis of the Provincial Jewish Committee, such as the publishing house and the Yiddish newspaper "Niderszlezje". With the successive influx of Jewish population, cultural life flourished, and one of its outstanding manifestations was theatrical life. In 1946, the Lower Silesian Jewish Theatre began operating in Wroclaw, and although the plays were staged in Yiddish, the performances were open to all interested persons. Theatre, and comedies in particular, was one of the informal therapeutic measures that helped to deal with the trauma of the Holocaust. Its seat was at Świdnicka Street, one of the performers was Ida Kamińska, the most famous Jewish actress in Polish history, nominated for an Oscar and Golden Globes.

The first post-war years abounded in the formation of many new organizations in Wroclaw – numerous schools, social and political institutions. Jewish children could attend religious or secular schools, which put strong emphasis on teaching Hebrew or Yiddish. Artistic education was also at a high level – Jews could take lessons at the Wroclaw Ballet School of Sylwia Swen, the wife of the eminent theatre director Jakub Rotbaum, or attend the Wroclaw

Holocaust survivors
(Bronisław Eidler / Taube Department of Jewish Studies)

Poster of Lower Silesian Jewish Theatre in 1949
(National Library of Poland)

Jewish Music School. Unfortunately, the end of education came quite quickly, as the authorities ordered all the institutions to be nationalized in 1949. The Talmud-Torah Jewish Religious School at Włodkowica Street operated until the 1960s, while the Szolem Alejchem at Icchak Lejb Perec Street, where Yiddish was the language of tuition, operated the longest – it was closed only in 1968, when all Jewish children left the school.

The Bund, the Jewish workers' party, also strengthened efforts to revive the national and cultural ideals of Jews, promoted Yiddish culture as the language of the Jewish masses, and insisted on staying in the country. At the same time, numerous Zionist organizations were active in the region. They insisted on learning Hebrew and organized colonies and kibbutzim.

Even before establishing the State of Israel, they encouraged to participate in military training in Lower Silesia, which was to prepare for the departure to Palestine. Regardless of political beliefs, post-war emigration was still relatively numerous, as anti-Semitic witch-hunt campaigns, robberies and killings were frequent. A particularly large emigration action took place as a result of the Kielce pogrom at the end of July 1946, when Jews realized that they could not feel safe in Poland. The Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948 was also not without significance – it encouraged a large group of Jews to emigrate to the Jewish state.

The degradation of Jewish life took place after 1949, when all institutions were nationalised and the Polish United Workers' Party took control of them. At that time, Jewish schools, clubs, libraries, cooperatives, organisations and parties were closed. The Social and Cultural Society of Jews in Poland was established by the merger of the Central Jewish Committee with the Jewish Cultural Society. Religious matters were supervised by the Congregation of the Mosaic Confession. Thus, after just a few years, a significant period of the post-war revival of Jewish life in Poland ended. The following decades and the intensifying anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist campaigns carried out by the authorities resulted in mass emigration and a slow disappearance of important manifestations of Jewish life in Wroclaw.

Contact

Do you have any questions? Write a message to:
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https://zydowskiwroclaw.pl/en/

Check the Żydowski Wrocław profiles in social media.

Evening with Michał Trębacz

Director of the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI) Warsaw

On Tuesday 19 November 2024, the ASPJ was honoured and pleased to present an evening in the Glen Eira Town Hall Auditorium with Dr Michał Trębacz, Director of the Jewish Historical Institute (JHI), Warsaw.

ASPJ President Ezra May opened the evening, outlining the activities of the JHI – the home of the largest collection of records, documents, testimonies and memoirs of Polish Jews. Including the registration cards of over 300,000 Polish Jews after WW2, and the famous Ringleblum Archive from the Warsaw Ghetto.

He recounted a personal anecdote from his 2018 visit to the JHI, where he entered only knowing his father's grandparents' names. But 2.5 hours later, had managed to uncover 8 generations back to 1730, almost 300 years of Polish ancestry.

In his presentation, Michał Trębacz provided an outline of the JHI. Beginning with the history of its building, and how the institute was forged during the destruction of Polish Jewry as a vision for the victims to record their own history.

He then outlined: the JHI permanent and temporary exhibitions; annual events, including March of Remembrance and Anniversary of Treblinka uprising; Collections, including the Ringleblum Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto, the 300,000 post-war survivor Registration Cards and pre-War immigration records; and Art Collection.

Michał also explained how the JHI library, with over 100,000 volumes, was the biggest in the Jewish world.

Following the presentation, a Question & Answer session was held.

The evening concluded with Ezra May commenting that the archives preservation, education and research work of the JHI, more than any other single organisation, allows descendants of Polish Jewry access to its history, heritage & identity.

Michał Majewski, Ezra May and Dr Michał Trębacz

Karolina Mikołajczyk & Iwo Jedynecki in Concert

On Sunday 10 November 2024, the Australian Society of Polish Jews & their Descendants (ASPJ) hosted, with support from the Polish Embassy, a very successful classical chamber music concert by Polish touring duo Karolina Mikołajczyk & Iwo Jedynecki.

The Karolina & Iwo duo are considered one of the most vibrant and innovative chamber ensembles in the current scene, being winners of Grand Prix and First Prizes at international music competitions and having performed at Carnegie Hall, Guangzhou Opera House and Warsaw Philharmonic. Karolina played a 1776 Duke violin and Iwo a Pigni Sirius Millenium accordion.

For this special ASPJ concert, Karolina & Iwo performed compositions from somewhat neglected Jewish Polish composers of the early 20th century, including: Gregorz Fitelberg's Berceuse; Roman Ryterband's Trois Ballades Hebraiques; Aleksander Tansman's Cinq Pieces; Ignacy Friedman's Romans & Szymon Laks's Suite Polonaise.

During the concert, Karolina and Iwo brought alive the life stories of these composers and their pieces, who were all impacted by the Holocaust.

The concert was attended by the newly appointed Acting Ambassador of Poland Mr Marcin Kawalowski, the Consul-General of Poland Mr Piotr Rakowski and Beata Koropatwa from the office of Honorary Consul General of Poland in Victoria, amongst other dignitaries and attendees.

ASPJ President Mr Ezra May noted how the concert fits the ASPJ Statement of Purpose: To preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland. He also remarked that on the 86th Anniversary of Kristallnacht – this was one appropriate way to remember – by listening to the music of these Polish Jewish composers whose lives, like so many millions of others, were destroyed by the Nazis.

Acting Ambassador Mr Marcin Kawalowski advised how the Polish Embassy was proud to support such initiatives that celebrate Polish Jewish culture in co-operation with the ASPJ.

This widely acclaimed and greatly appreciated chamber music concert, a departure from the usual lecture or webinar, displayed the broad range of events the ASPJ hosts.

KulturDocs - Online Documentary Series

On 10 December 2024, the Australian Society of Polish Jews & their Descendants (ASPJ) in conjunction with FestivALT presented a compelling webinar about *KulturDocs* - a new online documentary series, produced by FestivALT, exploring the vibrant world of contemporary Jewish artists in Poland.

The webinar began with FestivALT co-founder Lena Rubenfeld providing a brief overview of the inception and history of FestivALT and how it has now developed into a pioneering Jewish-led multidisciplinary cultural organization, producing critically-engaged contemporary art, performance, and activism in the realm of Jewish Poland today.

Canadian-Jewish born, and now Krakow-based theatre creator, actor and FestivALT co-founder Michael Rubenfeld provided an outline of his personal history from comfortably growing up and being raised Jewish Canadian, to what inspired him to move to Poland to further explore his Jewish identity.

Trailers, with ensuing explanations and commentary, were then shown of the 3 KulturDocs, showcasing musician Mikołaj Trzaska, performer Betty Q, and artists Marcella Szabłowska and Ezra Wojakowski.

A discussion was then held primarily focusing on the impact on the Polish Jewish artist environment post October 7, as well as the overall Polish Jewish artist experience.

KulturDocs was a recipient of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland's Public Diplomacy 2024 grant and was produced in partnership with the: Ashkenaz Festival Toronto, Canada; Asylum Arts NYC, USA; and Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants (ASPJ), Australia.

Matan Shefi – Discovering Your Heritage

Matan Shefi

On 26 November 2024, the Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants (ASPJ) hosted a webinar featuring POLIN Museum Chief Queries Specialist Matan Shefi titled: **Discovering Your Heritage – how to trace your heritage with simple tools.**

The webinar began with Franciszek Bojanczyk, POLIN Museum Chief Specialist for Promotion and Cooperation with the Diaspora, who graciously offered POLIN's assistance to people seeking guidance in researching their heritage.

Matan Shefi then provided an overview of POLIN Museum and its exhibitions and its critical role in informing and educating people as well as strengthening their connection to their Polish roots.

Valuable insights when conducting genealogical research were then provided, including exploring what 'Polish ancestry' might mean as well as outlining and explaining Poland's changing borders throughout history.

Matan then conducted a live demonstration of some of the best websites and online resources to uncover a wide range of documents and information to assist genealogical history research.

Vale Marian Turski
1926–2025

A survivor of the Holocaust, a historian and journalist, as well as a member of the Council of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, and a long-time editor of the weekly "Politics".

A person of great importance for commemorating the history of Polish Jews and building Polish-Jewish relations.

The Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute

The Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute owns the largest collection of documents related to the history of Polish Jews in the 20th century in Poland.

The history of the Archive begins in 1944, when, soon after the Red Army entered Lublin, the Central Jewish Historical Commission (CŻKH) was established as a section of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (CKŻP) – a body of Jewish self-government. In 1945, the headquarters of the Commission were moved to Łódź, with additional branches opened in Kraków, Białystok, Warsaw, Katowice, Wrocław and others.

The Commission's main goal was to document the Holocaust, so it had immediately began to gather testimonies from Jewish survivors and to collect documentation issued by German authorities and Jewish organizations during the war. By the end of 1945, the Commission had collected about 1300 testimonies from witnesses and the documents of the Jewish Social Self-Help, of the German administration of the Łódź Ghetto (Ghettoverwaltung), several registries of Jewish prisoners (for example from the Hasag camp in Częstochowa), documents of certain Jewish councils (the most extensive one containing a large number of personal documents, came from Kraków). Soon, the collection was expanded with documents from the American Joint Distribution Committee central – an organization which provided financial support for social care in ghettos during the war.

In September 1946, the Commission's collection was expanded with the first part of the Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto – the Ringelblum Archive, discovered in the remains of the 68 Nowolipki street house (the second part was found in the Hi Archive in 1950). The collection of documents, testimonies and reports, comprising over 2000 units, was collected in the Warsaw Ghetto by the Oneg Shabbat group, led by Dr Emanuel Ringelblum, and provides a unique insight into the Holocaust and into the life of Jews in occupied Poland. The Ringelblum Archive has been included on UNESCO's Memory of the World list since 1999. Currently, the collection is available as scans and, in the complete version, as books.

In 1946, the CŻKH completed the documents of the Underground Archive of the Białystok Ghetto – partly original, partly copied. In 1947, the Archive received the majority of documents from the Jewish Religious Community in Wrocław (1852-1943). The Archive also contains an enormous collection of documents from the Kraków Jewish Community (1822-1939).

When the Jewish Historical Institute was established in October 1947, the CŻKH and its units were gradually dismantled. The archives were moved to the renovated JHI building in Warsaw – before the war, the Main Judaistic Library and the Jewish Sciences Institute.

In 1949-1950, the JHI Archive became an owner of documents from dismantled post-war Jewish organizations, mainly the CŻKP, but also Organization for Development of Creativity, Healthcare Society, various Zionist parties and organizations (Ichud, Hanoar Ha-Cijoni, Poalej Syjon Hitachdut, Keren Kajemet, Keren Ha-Jesod) and the Bund. Additionally, the Archive received documentation of international organizations whose agendas were functioning in post-war Poland: American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) and Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). These document bodies are very large and present a detailed view on the life of Jews in post-war Poland, including emigration. The archive of Jews registered in Poland after the war (over 300,000 names) is unique in a global scale.

Over many years, the JHI Archive had gathered an enormously valuable collection of testimonies and memoirs – a shocking evidence of the fate of Polish Jews during World War II and of the Holocaust. The collection of testimonies consists mainly of accounts given to the CŻKH employees (later the JHI) by the survivors – regarding their experiences but also the activity of informers and war criminals. As time went on, the collection was expanded with letters from Jews and Poles, regarding mainly help offered during the war. The memoirs contain a collection of original memoirs and diaries made during the wartime, sent to competitions organized by the CŻKH and the JHI, as well as memoirs written after many years. The collection is open and constantly expanded with new items, many of which have been published in print.

One of the particularly valuable positions in the JHI Archive is the „Lviv Case" with memoirs from the Lviv Ghetto (e.g. by Professor Maurycy Allerhand) and documents regarding the beginnings of the Jewish Council in the city. In the spring of 1949, workers in the Muranów district found Jewish death certificates from 1939 and 1941. The collection, comprising ca. 10,000 items, is a shocking evidence of often partly burned, sometimes illegible documents of extermination of the Jewish nation. The Archive contains also a small section of private letters from the wartime period, for example from families Naimark, Halperson or Finkelsztejn.

Between 1979-2004, the Yad Vashem Award Documentation Department at the JHI helped complete documents necessary to apply for the „Righteous Among the Nations" title, granted by the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem to people who saved Jews during the war. The documents from this section are currently stored at the JHI Archive and provide a valuable resource on Poles saving Jews.

The Archive also provides access to the legacy of private persons, mainly former JHI employees, such as longtime JHI director Bernard Mark (including many valuable copies of documents from various international archives), Tatiana Brustin-Berenstein, Artur Eisenbach.

The JHI Archive has been expanding its collections since the very beginning. Currently, we mainly receive new items from donators – usually personal documents of persons of Jewish descent who have died recently, memoirs summarizing lives, or accidentally-found pieces of Jewish prints.

Sharing

The JHI Archive is open to everyone interested. No authorisation from tutors or company or organization seniors are required. The only requirement is to complete and to sign a declaration of the Archive resource user.

The Archive workshop is open Monday–Friday, between 9 AM and 3 PM, aside from Polish bank holidays and Jewish holidays (dates are announced on the JHI website). Note: due to the coronavirus pandemic, access to the collection of the Jewish Historical Institute is limited. Please check the latest regulations in the 'Plan your Visit' tab.

A visit to the Archive should begin with browsing the index of Archive sections. The index is available online, in the tab: "Inventories. Index of JHI archive items". Then, one has to use the archive inventories. They are usually available in the pdf form, also online, and contain personal and geographical indexes.

Some documents from the JHI Archive are available only in the digital form, on computers at

the Archive workshop or in the Reading Room. The www.cbj.jhi.pl website contains some scanned archives from the JHI Archive resources: documents of Jewish religious communities from Włocławek, Bydgoszcz, Żychlin, Wrocław, Prague; a collection of documents from masonic lodges; pre-war register of the Jewish population of Gliwice (a fragment of the Jewish Community in Gliwice section); a collection of pre-war flyers and announcements related to social and political life of the Jewish communities; a collection of documents from ghettos and camps located in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939-1944 [Judenrat documents]; a collection of death certificates of people who died in the Warsaw Ghetto (which makes only about 2% of murdered Jews of Warsaw); Society of Jewish Writers and Journalists in Poland; Jewish Society for Popularization of Arts; Jewish Cultural Society in Poland; documents from the Ringelblum Archive.

Non-digitised documents should be ordered from the archivist through filling a reverse. The orders are completed on the same day, before 2:30 PM. Non-digitised documents are available only in the JHI Reading Room in the working hours – which are different than the Archive workshop.

There is a possibility to obtain a copy of documents from the Archive – photocopies or scans. In order to do so, one has to fill in an order form. In case of larger orders, the term should be arranged with the archivist. The current pricelist of photocopying services is available at the JHI website.

JHI (ZIH) Art Department

The Jewish Historical Institute's museum collection, which has existed for over 70 years, comprises about 15,000 objects: works of arts and crafts, religious Judaica, objects of daily use, historical memorabilia, photographs etc. In terms of collections dedicated to the Jewish heritage and the Holocaust, it is the most important in Poland, and one of the key ones in the world. Its position is owed to historical and artistic value of the collection and to its diversity.

The base of this special collection was made between 1944-1952 thanks to the efforts of the Jewish community. In war-destroyed Poland, it struggled to preserve the material traces of once rich culture of their own nation for future generations. Collecting the works of arts and crafts, treated then as material proofs of Nazi crimes, was initiated by the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Lublin in 1944. Three years later, it developed into Jewish Historical Institute, which continued its efforts. In 1948, the JHI opened the first post-war Jewish museum: The Museum of Jewish Martyrdom and Struggle, with a permanent exhibition open to the public. The collection was subsequently expanded with public (state) donations, private donations and purchases.

Józef Badower, "Water carrier", oil on canvas / JHI collection

The JHI Museum, situated in the Institute's structure next to three rich departments (the Archive, Photography Documentation and Library) has never had the status of a state museum. It has formally

existed until 2009, when the JHI, then an Academic Research Institute, received the status of a state culture institution.

Currently, the Art Department is responsible for the JHI museum collection. We are a small team composed mainly of young people who are aware of the historical significance of the place we are working at. We are passionate about Jewish art, culture and religion. We carefully store, catalogue and professionally preserve objects and works of art, both those which had survived the Holocaust and the post-war ones.

We share our resources with various audiences, institutions and experts. Every year, we organize our temporary exhibitions dedicated to Jewish history and art, which often provide an opportunity to present objects from our collection. They are complemented with albums and academic monographs. Our exhibitions are presented at the Institute, next to the permanent exhibition about the Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto – "What we were unable to shout out to the world". Every year, we lend several dozen objects from our collection to museums in Poland and in other countries. We also lend travelling exhibitions, mainly dedicated to photography, to schools, libraries and cultural institutions countrywide. About 4,000 objects from our collections are also available online at our portals Central Judaic Library and Delet.

We are open to cooperation with everyone who is, like us, interested in the material heritage of Polish Jews, conducts research and preserves it – with researchers, curators, custodians, students, local culture activists and everyone interested, both from Poland and abroad. We don't offer expertise on authenticity or provenience of artworks and objects from outside the JHI collection, but we offer our knowledge and experience within our possibilities.

Our collection, a shared heritage of the Polish and Jewish nations, is expanded every year with new objects. We are glad to welcome
new donations and deposits – objects and artworks related to the history of Polish Jews, especially from the World War II period.

Contact us:

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Vale Christopher J Lancucki AM. Longtime community activist, mentor and friend has died aged 90

By Izydor Marmur

Praise must be given to Mr. Christopher Joseph Lancucki AM, longtime community activist, past President of the Polish Community Council of Victoria and his Board, who worked very closely with ASPJ (Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants) since its conception.

He was born on 6 January 1935 in Sanok, Poland. In 1940, Christopher and his mother were deported by the Soviets to northern Kazakhstan.

In 1942, together with the army of General Władysław Anders, he followed the route through Iran and India to East Africa.

Aged fourteen he and his mother emigrated to Australia. He studied physics at the University of Western Australia, where he graduated.

For a long time he worked as researcher at the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) Construction Laboratory in Melbourne.

Christopher and George Luk-Kozika were the first members of the Polish community to embrace the mission of ASPJ. He became an integral partner in establishing a solid relationship between our two communities.

As time went on, deep personal friendships developed. Christopher was an intelligent, wise and compassionate friend and an absolute pleasure to be around. Even when he retired from PCCV he was always ready to be of assistance and give valuable advice.

Christopher was a respected leader and an activist for human rights and justice within the Polish and the wider community.

In 2016, ASPJ presented Christopher with the Henryk Sławik Award for promoting understanding between Jewish and non-Jewish Poles.

He will be deeply mourned by everyone who knew and loved him. The memory of him will remain in the hearts of his family, friends, and all those who were honoured to have had the privilege of knowing him. His legacy will live on.

Katyn

By Ewa Lobaza

Remembering a conversation with Krzysztof (Christopher) Lancucki from 2009.

I am sitting on a chair, opposite Pan Krzysztof Lancucki, President of the Federation of Polish Organisations in Australia.

I've known Krzysztof like he was family all my life, yet our fifty-six year age difference means that I know very little about who he is.

I find myself apprehensive, at first, to ask him what I long to find out. Perhaps it is that I'm scared of opening old wounds. I'm entering unknown territory and unsure how to approach. It feels as if I'm standing blindfolded with arms outstretched, reaching into the darkness and taking a step forward, one foot at a time.

Krzysztof, 74, was sitting in a meeting when he first heard the news.

"My first reaction was sheer disbelief," he pauses. His strong Polish accent is emphasised by a croaky voice; he is run down from a cold. He talks slowly, drawing out his sentences and often pausing to think. It's as if he is choosing his words carefully, wanting to express his thoughts as eloquently as possible.

"Things like that. You can't get your head around things like that."

He recalls feeling the same way he did when he first heard of 9/11. *"I opened the television in the morning and there are those skyscrapers collapsing. I thought it was some kind of photomontage. For some film production. I couldn't believe its happening! The same here when I saw this smouldering ruin of a plane and I knew who was in the plane.*

Because, by that time you knew."

On April 10 2010 a plane carrying the Polish President Lech Kaczynski, his wife, Maria, and 87 polish dignitaries to a ceremony commemorating the 70th anniversary of the 1940 Katyn massacre in Russia, crashed approaching Smolensk airport, very close to the Katyn site.

This led to the death of 96 of Poland's top political personalities, including past presidents, presidents of the national bank and national security, and members of the political party.

In one swift moment the nation of Poland was beheaded.

"This...This can't happen! And you realise it could. And then, you know. Well, who survived? Nobody survived!"

There is something that makes this catastrophe dig a lot deeper into the hearts of the people of Poland. The plane crash marks the second tragedy at Katyn. The passengers in the plane were heading towards a ceremony commemorating the first.

At first, I find the cruel irony of the passengers' fate hard to grasp. For Krzysztof, however, the significance of the situation has already sunk in. *"The soil soaked with the Polish blood has claimed more victims..."* His words trail off.

It was a high price to pay for the world to learn about Katyn but the plane crash has made the horrifying massacre, a crime intended to remain a secret forever, exposed to the world.

To the people of Poland the word Katyn ignites feelings of oppression and injustice. It signifies the mass murders committed in 1940 in the Katyn forests just west of the Russian town of Smolensk by troops of the Soviet Union who secretly killed 22,000 defenseless captive polish prisoners.

The victims of the atrocity accounted for much of Poland's military as well as intellectual elite. Of the 22,000 victims there were soldiers, doctors, lawyers and teachers; brothers, fathers, husbands and sons. And they were all shot, one by one, in the back of the head then dumped into mass graves.

One of these sites, the first to be uncovered, was in the forest of Katyn. Though only 3000 bodies have been discovered here, the place has become a political symbol integral to Polish identity.

Krzysztof's father was one of the 22,000 taken from his wife and son and transported to the Soviet Union to be killed, unarmed, by Russian soldiers and thrown into a pit with thousands of bodies. His body was hidden in the earth, hundreds of miles from home, and left there with no intention of ever being uncovered.

Krzysztof is shaking his head solemnly. I find it hard to look at him so instead I look at my hands. For something to do, I swing my legs back and forth under the table. I wince in pain as my heel nicks the leg of the chair and reminds me of a deep cut that throbs on the sole of my left foot. Two days ago I had stood on the corner of a metal box and the pressure of my body weight on the sharp corner had sliced a long, deep cut down my heel into my foot. I was stunned and watched in fascination as blood poured out, staining the wooden floorboards. Then the pain kicked in.

Now my foot is safely bandaged up tight and healing. But I cannot help but wonder what it would feel like to kick the back of the chair hard enough to split the wound open again and watch the blood trickle onto the carpet. I shudder at the imaginary pain.

Krzysztof, the only child of Wlodzimierz and Helena Lancucki, was born in Sanok in South Central Poland, now near the South Eastern border of Poland. His parents were both teachers. His father, Wlodzimierz, was also a reserve officer in the Polish army. He was 30 years old when the war broke out and only 32 when he was killed.

I want to know what Krzysztof remembers about his father. He shows me a single photo in his possession.

"My memories are very scarce. I am not quite sure where my memories begin and what I was told", he corrects himself, "Where my memories end and what I was told begins".

The photo is a coloured, passport sized portrait of Wlodzimierz, faded with age. It shows a young man in uniform smiling. There is a striking resemblance to Krzysztof's son, Peter. Peter is celebrating his 32nd birthday this year.

Krzysztof was only 4 years old at the start of WWII on September 1, 1939. *"In April 1940 we were already deported to the Soviet Union. So my childhood was 2 years in Soviet Union and then 8 years in Africa."* Two days before the war broke out Wlodzimierz received his mobilisation and was sent to his infantry in Kamien Kaczynski, Eastern Poland, now in Belarus.

Although Krzysztof says he can remember very little of this time in his life, his recollections are detailed and vivid. It is clear these moments have left a lasting impression on him. He looks up to the ceiling, squinting into the light, and I know he is far away from the dining room table we are currently seated at.

For the next two hours I am immersed in Krzysztof's memories of the following ten years of his life. He recalls a bomb threat on a terrifying train ride to meet his father after the war broke out, only to discover on arrival that Wlodzimierz had already been sent to the front. Krzysztof and Helena were soon deported from Poland.

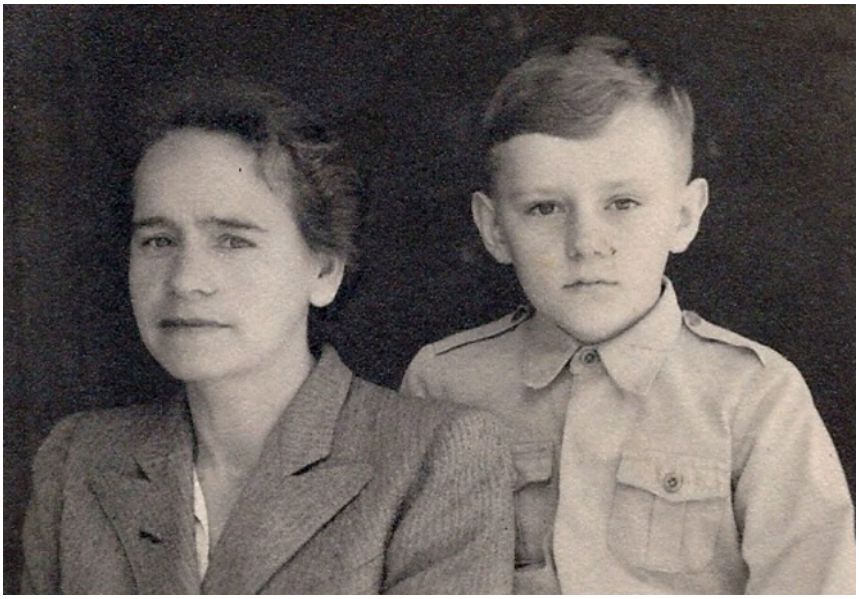
They were woken up in the early hours of the morning by Russian soldiers and taken on a long, crowded journey out of Poland in a cattle truck with no bathroom facilities but a hole in the floor.

They were given hot water with cabbage leaves every two days for food.

Soon he and his mother found themselves dropped off lorries in the snow in North Kazakhstan, left to die.

"But nobody wanted to die particularly" he chuckles.

He lived on co-operative farms with his mother, surviving as best they could. They overcame starvation and illness, bartering clothes for food, working on the railroads and journeying to Iran with the hope of finding the Polish military. They soon found themselves in camps in Africa.



Helena Lancucka with Christopher Lancucki

Out of the 1.2 million Poles that made a similar journey, only 100,000 officers and 700,000 civilians survived. Krzysztof and his mother stayed in Africa until 1950, choosing not to return to Poland after the war. *"Those who had known Poland under the control of the Soviets had no intention of returning".*

At the age of 14 he migrated to Australia with his mother, who lived to the *"ripe old age of 95".* They heard nothing more of his father.

There are two aspects of Katyn that define its significance in Poland's history and national identity. There is the crime and there is the lie.

It is an obscene offence to kill a country's head officers, but to deny the truth is inconceivable. A dirty, tainted wound covered by hands. The spread of infection is inevitable.

Nazi Germany announced the discovery of mass graves in the Katyn Forest in 1943. The revelation led to the end of diplomatic relations between Moscow and the London-based Polish government-in-exile.

As lists of the victims' names started to appear, a blame game between Germany and the USSR erupted. The NKVD denied any involvement, instead blaming the Nazis for the mass killings. However, the people of Poland always knew the truth. *"There was no doubt as to who committed the crime. There were no Germans in 1940 near Katyn."*

What happened in the forest 70 years ago was for many years a forbidden fact of life in Polish society. From the end of World War II to 1989, Poland was politically subservient to the Soviet Union and unable to openly acknowledge the truth.

Even the closest relatives of the victims of Katyn were not allowed to talk about it. *"You could be put to prison for speaking loudly about. Even asking a question: well, who did it? That was already bad. Of course, you couldn't say that the Soviets did it. That would be a crime."*

The USSR continued to deny responsibility for the massacres until 1990, when the continuous appeals to uncover the truth were finally heard. On 13 April 1990, the 47th anniversary of the discovery of the mass graves, the USSR formally expressed "profound regret" and admitted Soviet secret police responsibility. The day was declared a worldwide Katyn Memorial Day.

Krzysztof surprises me when he pulls out a letter from his father, dated November 25 1939. The paper is yellow-old, thin and delicate, the cursive writing faint. I cannot describe the feelings I have as I stare at the words on the paper. I cannot read them, they are in Polish, but I have just seen a photo of this man and now I am looking at words that he wrote. Krzysztof roughly translates its message:

"Darlings Helena and Krzysztof,
I am in the USSR at the moment. I am healthy and whole. I do not know where you are, that is why I am writing to Sanok. I will write nothing more. Reply only to my letters. Do not write of your own initiative, only after receiving a letter from me. To my mother: if they are not in Sanok please inform them that I am alright. I send a lot of greetings for you all.
I send you love and kisses,
Wlodzimierz"

In the Guardian, on April 18 2010, Neal Ascher wrote *"A human being cannot be beheaded twice. But a nation can".*

It is no wonder wild conspiracy theories have already been assumed. The harsh irony of the situation is too much to accept in a passive manner.

Questions have arisen as to why so many important people were allowed to fly on one plane. However, I think this I can understand. I imagine how it would feel for Poland as a liberated nation, their leaders

entering Smolensk airport together and arriving, united, in Russia.

A passage stands out in President Kaczynski's unread speech he was to give at the commemoration:

"All the circumstances of the Katyn crime must be fully investigated and explained. It is important that the innocence of the victims be confirmed in accordance with the law, that all the documents relating to this crime be released. We call for this first and foremost out of consideration for the memory of the victims and respect for the suffering of their families. But we call for this also in the name of common values, which must form the foundation of trust and partnership between neighbouring nations in the whole of Europe."

President Kaczynski was looking towards the future, towards the reconciliation of Russia and Poland. I wonder if Krzysztof honestly thinks the relations between Poland and Russia could improve, even move forward, from this moment.

Krzysztof takes off his glasses and places them on the table. He rubs his eyes and looks at me. I notice that his eyes are a clear blue colour.

"We can only hope that it will. But there is one basic thing that will never let the relations get good unless the Russians do it. You see, up until now they have admitted it was the Soviet Union who has done it, obviously under Stalin's orders. But 70% of those files relating to the internment camps and the people who were executed are under lock and key and they are not opening them up. Unless they show those there can never be an honest reproachment."

"There are files that refer to people being questioned and what was the basis of this decision for execution. Of course, they were executed without any due process it was purely an administrative decision."

"But there is a lot of paper that would", he pauses, *"illuminate this crime much better".*

I sense that he feels there is more to this than simply knowing the facts. His hands are now on the table, palms facing upwards, and his expression is hard.

"But, you see, this would be the most profound expression of goodwill."

The wound has been left, partially exposed. But how is any kind of cut able to heal without being cleaned? Without removing all the dirt trapped inside.

It's getting late, and I'm starting to feel guilty for keeping Krzysztof from recovering from his cold.

"Make sure to give me a copy of what you write" he says as I stand up to leave.

I assure him I will and that I will say nice things about him.

He looks at me intently, "Don't make me sound nice, just be honest. Write the truth".

And after all that has happened, I think that he deserves this.

WOLF & DORA RAJCHER

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Saviour of the Warsaw Ghetto wall

Eva Collins and Mieczyslaw Jedruszczak with his certificate.

By Izydor Marmur

During a chance meeting at a play, Eva Collins mentioned a story of a man who saved the last remnants of the Warsaw Ghetto wall. As I found the story moving, I felt that it should be shared with our readers.

In early 2007 Eva Collins, an Australian writer and freelance journalist, travelled to Poland where she met 86-year-old Mieczyslaw Jedruszczak.

Mieczyslaw Jedruszczak has spent half his life painstakingly caring for the remaining section of the Warsaw Ghetto wall which runs through the courtyard of his apartment building.

This is someone who is not Jewish, who spent years preserving this very important monument and now you have people who go to the wall and all the neighbours just put up with it. I very much would like to pay tribute to him, Eva Collins said.

Mieczyslaw Jędruszczak was born in Puławy in 1921. He was a veteran of Poland's underground Home Army under the pseudonym "Jastrząb". In 1944, after the front passed, he was arrested by the Red Army and after brutal interrogation, which took place in the Lublin NKVD prison on Chopin Streethe, was sentenced without trial and spent three years in a Soviet gulag in Borowicze.

Jędruszczak's involvement in documenting and preserving the memory of Jewish victims in World War II dates back to the 1960s. He undertook to document the fortunes of Jewish soldiers deported in the winter of 1940 from Lublin to Biała Podlaska. During a strenuous march in harsh weather, many prisoners died of exhaustion or were killed.

He also advocated for placing a gravestone on one of the unmarked graves of the death march participants.

After the war, back in Warsaw, Jedruszczak was intrigued by the wall that ran through the courtyard of his apartment on Sienna Street, and decided to investigate its origins using archives and old documentation.

He was best known for his dedication to protecting and preserving the few surviving remnants of the wall that had surrounded the Nazis' Warsaw Ghetto and making these memorials to the hundreds of thousands who Jews who were confined there, died there, or were deported from there to their deaths.

In the 1970s, he fought a one-man battle to prevent two sections of the wall, including one in the back yard of his home, from being demolished.

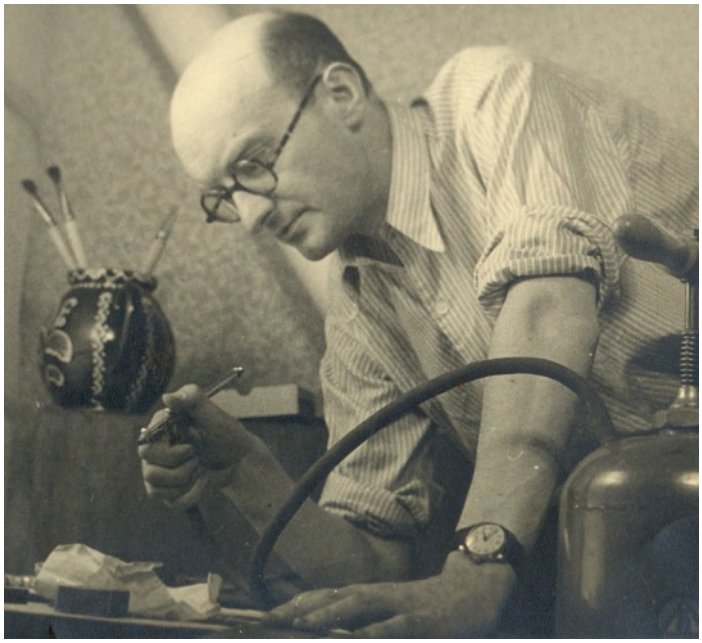
Eventually, word got out about the wall and the work Jedruszczak had been doing to maintain it. His dedication was recognised by Yad Vashem in 1991 and he was presented with a certificate "for helping to preserve the memory of the Jewish tragedy in Warsaw Ghetto".

In 1992, Israel's president at the time, Chaim Herzog, visited Jedruszczak to thank him and to place a plaque on the wall that recognises the significance of the remaining fragment of the ghetto wall.

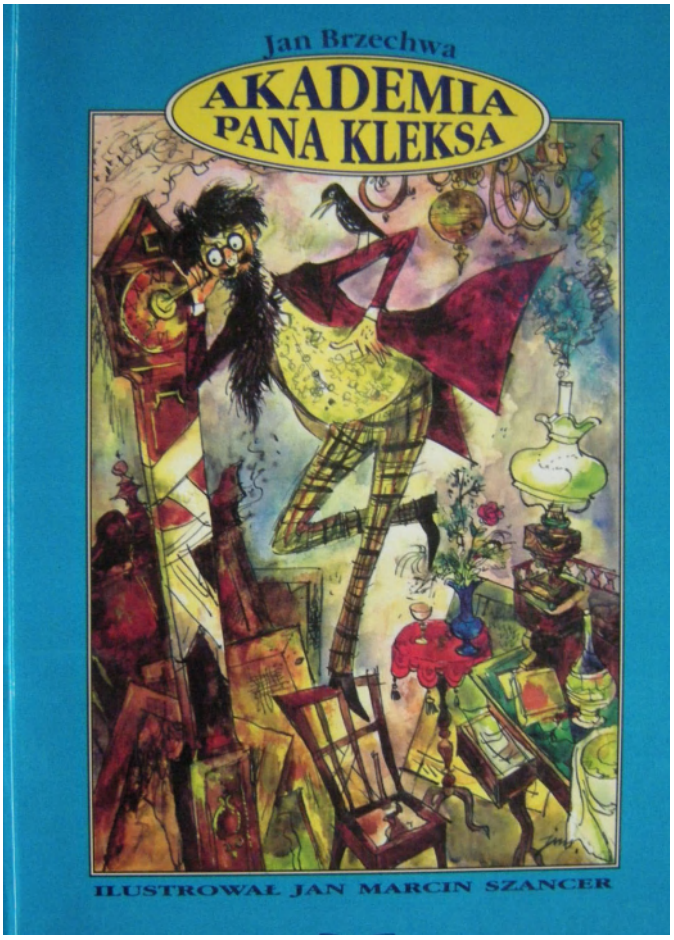
Three bricks have been removed from the Warsaw Ghetto wall. One is now held at Yad Vashem, one at Melbourne's Holocaust Museum and one at the Holocaust Museum in Houston, USA.

Mieczyslaw Jedruszczak died on 23 March 2016 (age 94 years) in Warsaw, Poland

Jan Marcin Szancer



Jan Szancer



Kleks Academy by Jan Brzechwa illustrated by Jan Szancer

By Izydor Marmur

Jan Szancer (12 November 1902 – 21 March 1973) was born into a Jewish family in Kraków. He was a well respected Polish illustrator, scenographer and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

Following his studies at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts, he continued his studies in France and Italy.

He was a friend of Jan Brzechwa, a Polish poet, author and lawyer, known mostly for his contribution to children's literature, and illustrated many of Brzechwa's poems.

During his career Szancer illustrated over 200 books, including Henryk Sienkiewicz's Trilogy, Adam Mickiewicz's Pan Tadeusz and Brzechwa's Pan Kleks series.

In 1938 he became the illustrator of the short-lived children's weekly Gazetka Miki.

Beginning in May 1945, Szancer was the editor and cover-illustrator of the children's magazine Świerszczyk. He was the first (post World War II) artistic director for Telewizja Polska, the Polish broadcasting organization.

The Krzywy Domek (crooked house) in Sopot is based on one of his drawings.

Crooked House in Sopot, Poland

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