

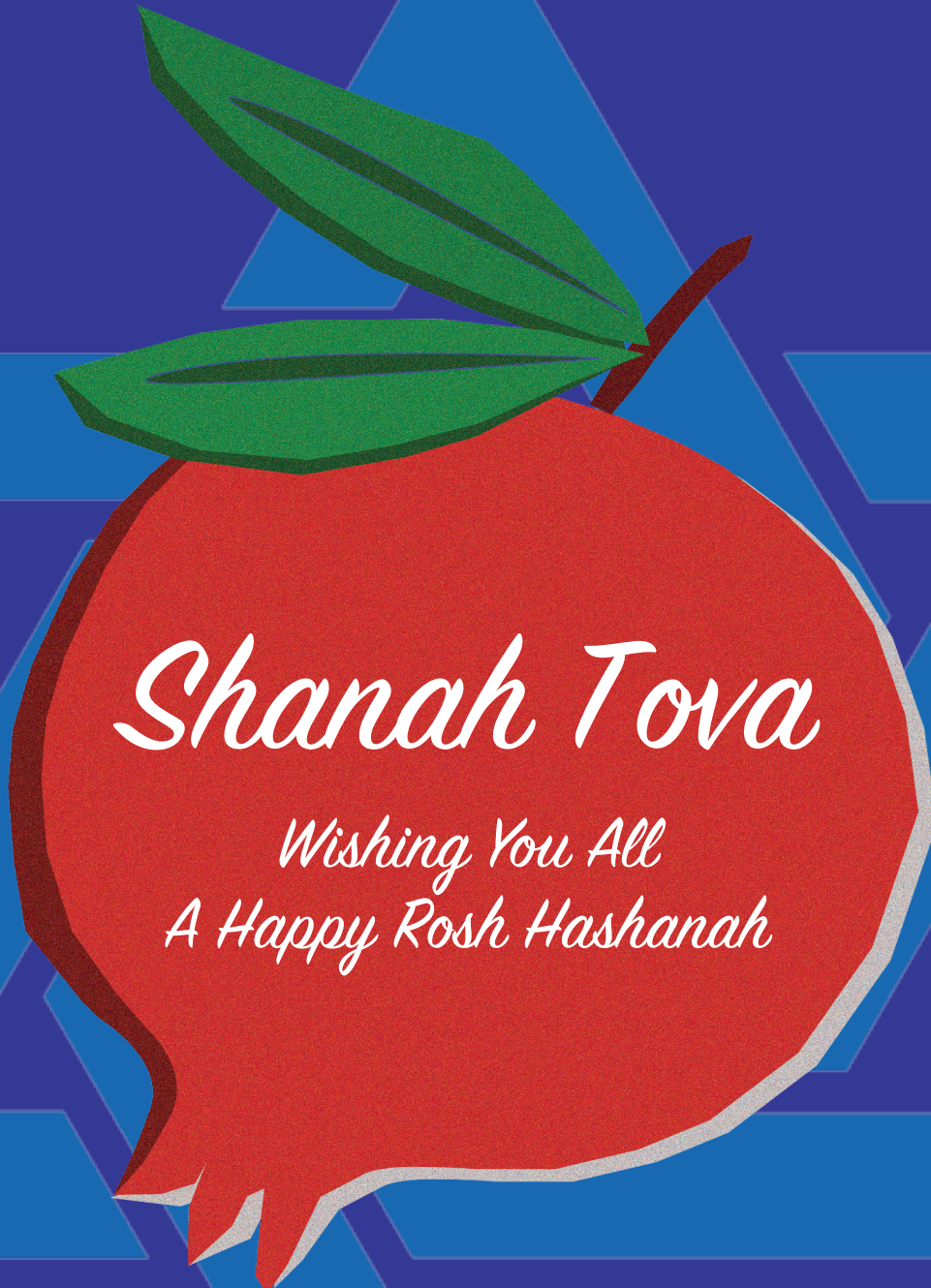
HAYNT

PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE



ASPJ
Australian Society of Polish Jews
and their Descendants

SPRING 2025 ISSUE 22



Shanah Tova

*Wishing You All
A Happy Rosh Hashanah*

On Rosh Hashanah, we pray for the strength to be peacemakers,
to be beacons of hope in a world filled with darkness and turmoil.

May our actions and words reflect love and compassion,
bringing healing and harmony to all those around us.

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.

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

Shalom, dzień dobry and welcome to the latest edition of Haynt.

We are now almost two years post October 7, 2023. Although we had high hopes in our prior Rosh Hashana/Jewish New Year edition, in September last year, for an upcoming happy and peaceful year for all, a further year later we are still very much living with the ongoing trauma and aftermath of the October 7 massacre. The subsequent war brought with it tragic challenges, consequences and losses of innocents, all impacted by the conflict.

Thankfully, Israel has had some stunning military successes and further hostages have been returned. However, given their condition upon release, the confirmation of dead hostages, and the fear for the remaining hostages amidst continuing further violence, it remains an anxious and fraught time for many.

Very troubling is the continuing rising trajectory of anti-Semitism, both overt and, perhaps more sinisterly, covert, here in Australia and throughout the world. This increased social tension and division, and the disappointingly underwhelming response by some of our politicians, media, 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 continues to strengthen its relationship and co-operation with the Chargé d'affaires (and Acting Ambassador) of the Republic of Poland to Australia, Mr Marcin Kawałowski, 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, as well as that of the PCCV and our friends in the Polish community.

The wide range and mix of ASPJ events continued throughout 2025. We hosted a two part webinar series on the story of Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust under Stalin and then their return to Poland post War, presented by ASPJ Board member Rita Nash. We also hosted a webinar with the Memories of Treblinka Foundation, and have an upcoming webinar with the Matzevah Foundation.

The ASPJ Board are also currently finalising plans for major events later this year, as well as early 2026, that should be of great interest and display the extensive spectrum of the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland.

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.

As we now approach Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, it is our fervent hope that Australia remains 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. We pray for a Sweet New Year with peace and security for all, especially in Israel.

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

Ezra

From the New South Wales desk



Estelle Rozinski
Vice President ASPJ NSW

Dear Friends,

In these challenging times community and personal relationships play an integral role in our lives. ASPJ's extended branch in NSW is laying its foundations, slowly establishing itself and forging new connections with old and new friends. In that context I look forward to welcoming and meeting Mr Piotr Rakowski, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Sydney.

In the last month, Melbourne board member and ASPJ Vice President, Izi Marmur OAM, visited us here with his wife Eti. Together they met with NSW Board members face to face for the first time. The meeting was a warm exchange of friendship and ideas for new projects with which to extend our organisation's mission of understanding between Polish and Jewish cultures.

NSW's contribution in this last quarter was mostly by way of webinars. In May, NSW board member Rita Nash presented two erudite webinars covering her research on Polish Jewish survival in the Soviet Union during the Second World War and the repatriation of Jews to Poland from 1945 to 1950. Please see Rita's excellent article, 'The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: A New Imagining' on page 18 of this issue.

Our most recent webinar was an 'in conversation' with former photojournalist and ordained Baptist minister Dr. Steven Reece, founder and president of The Matzevah Foundation, and me.

Steven spoke about the Foundation's mission to remember and honour the lost vibrant Jewish heritage of Poland by restoring cemeteries, commemorating mass grave sites, and fostering dialogue between Jews and Christians. Just recently returned from Poland on a Fulbright teaching grant, Steven reflected on some of the political changes in Poland post October 7.

In this world of dramatic change, we wish for peace and a New Year full of light, miracles and happiness.

Warmly,

Estelle

2024 POLIN Award Winners. The Memory of Treblinka Foundation



Ewa Telezynska-Sawicka and Pawel Sawicki,
receiving the POLIN Award

Posted on 1 November 2024 in POLIN Museum Events

The POLIN Award competition aims to promote attitudes and actions which are in line with the Museum's mission. The laureates of the Award are social activists who preserve the memory of the history of Polish Jews and contribute to shaping a common future, mutual understanding, and respect. The POLIN Award, presented since 2015, has been awarded to 10 laureates to date, and over 65 individuals have been finalists in the competition.

We are happy to announce that the winners of the main prize of the POLIN Prize 2024 competition are **Ewa Telezynska-Sawicka** and **Pawel Sawicki**, members of the Board of Directors of our Foundation.

For years they have been commemorating those murdered in the Treblinka death camp. They are creating the Book of Names – an online database of victims. There are already nearly 109,000 people in it, with another 20,000 waiting to be compiled. Every last Saturday of the month – on the site of the former camp – they read the Names of the Jews along with the stories they have found about them. They are also creating a data base of refugees, date base of transports and a multilingual educational path with new technologies.

We are incredibly touched and moved. Thank you for this award. We are absolutely convinced that it is related to how important Treblinka is. The largest war cemetery of Warsaw, Kielce, Radom, Opatów, 100, 200 maybe 300 Polish cities, and many people in Poland do not even know where Treblinka is. For more than a dozen years we have been trying to recreate the individual stories of those who died there, so that it is not numbers, but people who speak. We have collected tens of thousands of these stories. We have collected the data of more than 100,000 people. And today we would like to tell about one such person.

It was a poor shoemaker from Minsk Mazowiecki. His name was Grojzdyk. He saw people being led to their deaths at Treblinka. He asked a German to exchange him for a teacher from the local school, he really didn't want her to die. Shoemaker Grojzdyk went to his death and no one remembered him. A few weeks ago, one of our colleagues found another account from which we learned that this shoemaker still had a name. He was called Nuta, Nuta Grojzdyk.

I have a huge request to each of you, remember Nuta Grojzdyk. – said Pawel Sawicki during the presentation of the award.

ASPJ were proud to have presented Ewa Telezynska-Sawicka and Pawel Sawicki as guests on one of our webinars. This webinar as well as others in ASPJ webinar series can be viewed on our website: <https://polishjews.org.au>

For more information about the The Memory of Treblinka Foundation go to: <https://memoryoftreblinka.org>

Saved by Stalin?

Polish Jews in the Soviet Union and their Postwar Return to Poland

The ASPJ was thrilled to host a two-part webinar series: *Saved by Stalin? Polish Jews in the Soviet Union and their Postwar Return to Poland* presented by ASPJ Board Member Rita Nash on 6 May 2025 & 13 May 2025.

Although forming the overwhelming bulk of the surviving remnant of the Jews of Poland, until relatively recently, this has been a largely unexplored chapter of the Holocaust narrative.

In the first Webinar: *Polish Jews flight to the Soviet Union 1939-1945*, Rita explained how with the 1939 Nazi Germany invasion of Poland, hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews fled into the Soviet-occupied Eastern Borderlands of Poland. Before long, most were declared 'enemies of the people' and deported to labour camps to work in harsh conditions in Siberia and Central Asia.

In the second Webinar: *Polish Jews return to Poland 1945-1950*, Rita explained how the post-war redrawing of the Polish borders resulted in a major repatriation program where Polish citizens in the Soviet Union were sent to populate the newly acquired Western Borderlands 'Recovered Territories'.

For less than five years, the surviving remnant of Polish Jews created a viable and vibrant life. However, the onset of Stalinisation coupled with the continued ancient hatred of antisemitism, meant that once more, these few remaining Polish Jews had to flee.

As with all our webinars, recordings of these 2 webinars can be viewed on our website < <https://www.polishjews.org.au/rita-nash/> > and youtube page < <https://www.youtube.com/@aspj4456> >.

Treblinka- Putting Names to Numbers

On 17 June 2025, the Australian Society of Polish Jews & their Descendants (ASPJ) hosted a compelling webinar: *Treblinka – Putting Names to Numbers*, presented by Pawel Sawicki & Ewa Telezynska-Sawicka of the Memory of Treblinka Foundation.

The webinar began with Pawel & Ewa outlining the history of the Treblinka death camp. They then explained some of the projects the Memory of Treblinka Foundation, established 2015, undertakes, including monthly site visits to Treblinka where they read Psalms and recite names of some of the victims.

Pawel then provided details of the main goal of the Memory of Treblinka Foundation – the Book of Names. They explained the process of researching various Databases & data sources to try and identify as many names as possible of the victims

exterminated at Treblinka. It is estimated that around 900,000 Jews were murdered at Treblinka between July 1942 and September 1943, yet until the Memory of Treblinka Foundation undertook this research, their identities remained unknown.

Currently over 113,000 victims have been identified and the aim of the Memory of Treblinka Foundation is to record these victims on a Wall of Names monument in a Treblinka Museum.

Following the formal presentation, a QandA was held, where issues such as the importance of researching the victims of Treblinka and learning the lessons of history were discussed.

A recordings of this webinar can be viewed on our website < <https://www.polishjews.org.au/treblinka-foundation/> > and youtube page < <https://www.youtube.com/@aspj4456> >.

Life Between Sirens:

A note from Jerusalem



Frances Prince in shelter in Jerusalem

By Frances Prince

This story first appeared in *Jewish Women of Words*.
June 26, 2025

Countless words are being written, and will be written, about the current situation in Israel. Analyses, investigations and scrutinies will continue for years to come. Filmscripts are probably already in production. However, perhaps modest personal vignettes also have their place.

Our Jerusalem home has neither a mamad (a fortified reinforced room within one's own apartment) nor a miklat (a building's bomb shelter.) The one-hundred-year-old building, that we share with four other sets of neighbours, is architecturally significant and aesthetically striking. However, it was neither built nor renovated to withstand ballistic missiles.

Prior to Friday, projectiles were fired at us only by Hamas or Houthis. We felt that we were adequately protected by nestling cosily next to each other in the stairwell within our apartment. This is an area with ultra thick walls and no visible windows. We huddled up in that space and vacated it after the requisite ten minutes.

But now we are living in another reality. Our stairwell sanctuary is no longer considered sufficient.

I belong to an array of WhatsApp groups who keep me informed about all manner of events and local knowledge. There is English Baka City Council, Jerusalem Municipality Updates and JAC (Anglo English Adult Centre) Over 60's. In addition, I receive notifications from Telfed Jerusalem Coffee Club and English Bird/Nature Activities. Less relevant now. Then there are the groups undertaking various agricultural volunteering endeavours in the Gaza Envelope kibbutzim and moshavim. Just as relevant as ever.

At this stage we need information about public miklatim (as in plural of miklat) in our area. And nearly all these WhatsApp groups metaphorically illuminate my phone with instructions, suggestions and the all-important addresses of public miklatim in the area. I probably have passed most of these places in my daily Jerusalem life but never took too much heed. However, now I examine the list in detail. Almost forensically so. Firstly, I eliminate addresses that are even a tad further than a fast five-minute walk from home. Then I scour the list of those in the nearby streets. Then I dig deeper and enlist the assistance of Google Maps (probably should use the Israeli Waze mapping system but old habits die hard). Is it closer to get to the miklat on X Street or Y Street? One is listed to be 80 metres from home. The other is 210 metres. However, Google Maps doesn't seem to know about the narrow walkway parallel to my building that makes the miklat that is purported to be 210 metres away, only about 150 metres away.

My husband decides to go and check out one of the miklatim. My mechutenet (daughter-in-law's mother) who lives nearby, checks out the other one. We exchange information after the initial reconnaissance forays. Ours is large, spacious, clean. Hers? Not so much. We need to focus just on the two of us. She needs to focus on her 99-year-old father.

At this stage, the Iranians have sent their drones and missiles only at night, and so that is the time we prepare for. We go to what I already think of as 'our' miklat during the daylight hours. We enter via the carpark under a four-storey apartment building, scour the place, choose a yet unclaimed corner and begin to deck it out. We don't have forty years of accumulated belongings here. Melbourne is the depository of all of that. But we manage with yoga mats, spare pillows, light blankets and two folding chairs. (Plus, the all-important bottles of water.) Cosy. Toilets nearby. Like on a plane, I like toilets nearby.

The first night that the warning alarm on our phones awaken us to prepare for entry into a safe space, we calmly grab our pre-packed bag of dried fruit, nuts, newspapers, crossword puzzles, pens, eye-patches, additional bottles of water and of course, toilet paper. (How can we forget our Melbourne Covid days?) Dressed in clothes ready to move I put on my runners. I read somewhere that closed shoes are recommended in case of broken glass. My quandary is whether to have gone to bed with my bra on or not. (Too much information I know, but I share this dilemma the next morning with one of my local café friends. She tells me that this was her quandary too.)

As we make our way quickly but calmly to our miklat in the warm Jerusalem night, people exit from buildings joining the growing troupe heading in the same direction. Young families, some carrying sleeping children and others wheeling prams, single people, middle-aged couples with their pets in tow, strapping off-duty soldiers with their weapons slung over their pyjamas. We're all in it together.

My husband and I are reminded of an iconic scene in the 1960 movie based on H.G. Wells' 1895 novella 'The Time Machine.' This is the scene when sudden sirens (not dissimilar to ours) wail, the Eloi people make their way, en masse, in a trance-like stance, towards the structure designated by the Morlocks.

But I say, "I'havdil". This is a Hebrew term usually used to make a comparison between events or ideas that are in fact totally different from each other and really should not be used as analogies at all. So many English words for one Hebrew word.

In the movie the Eloi are being lured to their deaths. Hopefully, we are making our way towards continued life.

I see people who look familiar. But where from? Perhaps my local café or fruit shop or drycleaner or makolet (milk bar)? I recognise one of the women as an organiser of the weekly mishmeret (vigil) for the Hostages that takes place in our neighbourhood every Shabbat. I do not know her name, but I do know she is a member of the Hakhel Synagogue community which is less than a five-minute walk from our home. The same synagogue community that the venerable Polin-Goldberg family belong to.

This woman wears her white adhesive tape with number 619 (days since 7 October 2023) stuck onto her t-shirt, though it has come a little unstuck at two edges. Perhaps this is symbolic of the issue of the plight of the Hostages currently. It's not quite so 'full on' anymore. It's literally coming unstuck. It's receding. Perhaps falling apart at the seams. A woman entering the shelter with me has a small bag draped across her with a yellow ribbon tied casually appended onto it. I am wearing a similarly sized bag with a similar yellow ribbon attached. We look at each other. We look at each other's bags. We hold them up and sigh simultaneously. She says sadly, "It isn't even an issue anymore, is it?"

The dominant language being spoken in our shelter- Public Shelter number 685- is not Hebrew. It's English and French. This reflects the demographics of our neighbourhood. However, Hebrew is the language of communication. Announcements, titbits of news, offers of assistance- these are all exchanged in Hebrew. And now, as of this morning, a WhatsApp group has been formed for Public Shelter number 685. A notice with a QR code is placed on the entry door for all who wish to join. The first WhatsApp message we receive, and it's in Hebrew, is that the toilets are blocked and the plumber can't come until tomorrow. So much for getting a spot close to the toilets.

Day time sirens have now begun for the first time. People look different in the glaring summer daytime

light. Perhaps more self-conscious of what they look like? Or is that just me? At night I give no thought to wearing old 'tracky daks', a mismatched t-shirt and dishevelled hair on my way to our miklat. During the day, the dishevelled hair bothers me. However, Jerusalem is not exactly the fashion capital of the world.

I see a woman talking with another woman. A Muslim woman. They are chatting amiably. My first thoughts are warm and fuzzy. The Jewish woman is taking care of her friend, her colleague, perhaps a passerby. And then, given it's about 8.30 in the morning, I say to my husband, "I hope she's not just her cleaning lady."

The 'all-clear' is given by the Home Front Command. We all head home. Later in the day we meet friends at our café, do some food shopping and enjoy the

sunshine and buzz of our neighbourhood. I wander around to see what is open, what is not open. I am glad to see that Eytan, my hairdresser, is hard at work in his salon. Obviously, he classifies his business as an 'essential service.' I agree.

Frances Prince is a Melbournian now living in Jerusalem. She enjoyed a long and fulfilling career as a Jewish educator, Holocaust educator, interfaith activist and communal representative. Together with her husband, Frances officially made Aliyah in December 2024, after living part-time in both Melbourne and Jerusalem for the past nine years. She is the author of "Gift of Time- Discoveries from the Daily Ritual of Reading with my Father", published in 2021 by Real Film and Publishing.

Vale Julie Meadows OAM



Julie passed away on 7 July 2025. Born in Poland, she arrived in Australia with her parents when she was two-years-old, while a large extended family remained in Poland and perished in the Holocaust. After a long and successful teaching career, Julie ran the 'Write Your Story' program at the Makor Jewish Community Library (now Lamm Library), a program that facilitated the writing and publication of memoirs of community members. Later she worked on publications by the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University.

Her genuine interest in the life stories of each person she encountered made her a perfect listener and encouraged the writers to explore deeply and share their memories. Those who had the privilege of knowing her well became her friends and admirers. She will be missed by many.

Revival of Jewish Cuisine in Poland



Latkes



Kugel



Gefilte Fish

By Izydor Marmur OAM

The history of Jewish cuisine in Poland is a rich and complex story, shaped by centuries of cultural exchange, religious tradition, hardship, and resilience. Jewish food in Poland developed from a blend of local Polish ingredients and Jewish religious dietary laws (kashrut), evolving over hundreds of years into a distinct culinary tradition known as Ashkenazi (Descendants of Jews who lived in Central or Eastern Europe) cuisine.

Jews began settling in Poland in the early Middle Ages, after being welcomed by Polish rulers who offered them relative religious freedom and economic opportunity. These early Jewish communities brought food traditions from Western Europe, especially from German-speaking lands.

Jewish life flourished in Poland, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth became home to the largest Jewish population in the world at the time.

Some traditional dishes were adapted and new ones developed during this time. Dishes such as cholent (A slow-cooked stew eaten on Shabbat), Kugel (Baked pudding made with noodles or potatoes) and

Gefilte Fish (Ground fish patties or loaves served cold) were developed.

As Poland was partitioned and industrialised in the 19th century, many Jews moved to towns and cities, working as tailors, merchants, and in trades. Poverty often limited food choices, but resourcefulness led to culinary creativity.

Bagels became widespread in Polish cities. Herring, pickles, and black bread were common staples.

In rural Jewish villages (Shtetls), meals were humble but hearty—potatoes, cabbage, and beans featured heavily.

Before WWII, about 3.3 million Jews lived in Poland—the largest Jewish population in Europe. The Holocaust annihilated 90% of Polish Jewry. Thousands of unique family recipes, food traditions, and community cooking practices were lost.

Of the survivors, most emigrated to Israel, the U.S. and elsewhere, taking elements of Polish-Jewish cuisine with them.

In the post-war communist Poland, Jewish culture was suppressed, and very few Jewish communities remained. However, since the 1990s, there's been a cultural revival. Poland is experiencing a revival of Jewish food traditions, a movement woven into the

broader resurgence of Jewish culture across the country.

What's Driving the Revival?

Reconnecting with history: Chefs, activists, and cultural groups are working to resurrect recipes passed down through generations, honouring Poland's deep Ashkenazi roots. Warsaw and Kraków now host Jewish food festivals, kosher bakeries, and pop-up culinary events as part of this cultural renaissance.

Many of these initiatives are led not only by Poland's Jewish community but also by non-Jewish Poles eager to re-embrace this part of their shared heritage.

Reintroduction of Jewish cuisine offers a respectful way to acknowledge and re-embed Jewish culture within Poland's national identity, especially poignant given the historical devastation.

These efforts are more than culinary—they're part of a vibrant cultural revival including music, film, museums, education, and communal spaces.

Polish-Jewish cuisine is not just a menu of recipes—it's a living memory of a once-vast and vibrant community. It tells stories of survival, adaptation, celebration, and mourning. Today, these foods remain central to Jewish identity and cultural memory, both in Poland and among the Jewish diaspora.

Recipe for Sweet Noodle Kugel:

Ingredients:

1/2 kg egg noodles (medium or wide)
 1/2 cup butter (unsalted)
 1 cup sugar
 1/2 cup sour cream
 1/2 cup ricotta cheese (or cottage cheese)
 4 large eggs
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 1 tsp cinnamon (optional, or to taste)
 1/4 tsp salt
 1/2 cup raisins (optional, can also use dried cranberries or other dried fruit)
 1/4 cup crushed cornflakes or breadcrumbs (for topping, optional)

Instructions:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the egg noodles according to package instructions (usually about 7-9 minutes). Drain and set aside.

Prepare the Kugel Mixture:

In a large bowl, melt the butter in the microwave or on the stove. Once melted, mix in the sugar, sour cream, ricotta cheese, eggs, vanilla, cinnamon, and salt. Whisk until smooth and well combined.

Combine the Noodles and Mixture:

Add the drained noodles to the mixture, stirring gently to coat the noodles evenly. If you're adding raisins or other dried fruit, stir them in now.

Preheat the oven to 175°C. Grease a 23 cm x 33 cm baking dish.

Pour the noodle mixture into the prepared baking dish. Smooth the top to even it out.

If using, sprinkle crushed cornflakes or breadcrumbs over the top for a crunchy topping.

Bake for about 45-50 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and the kugel has set. It should be firm to the touch and slightly crispy on top.

Let the kugel sit for about 10 minutes before slicing. It can be served warm or at room temperature.

Notes:

This kugel can be made a day ahead and refrigerated, then reheated in the oven before serving.

You can adjust the sweetness by adding or reducing sugar or cinnamon based on personal taste.

Feel free to add nuts (like walnuts or almonds) for extra crunch, or experiment with other dried fruits.

1945 Was Just The Beginning



Holocaust survivors and their families at the 2025 HSD celebration in Kraków, Poland.

The fifth-annual Holocaust Survivor Day (June 4th) honored post-war lives and legacies, spreading a message of hope and resilience all around the world.

By JCC Krakow | September 2025

At the signal of warm applause, Ryszard Orowski rose smoothly from his chair. He navigated friends, relatives, and wayward verdure en route to the lectern, where he paused for a moment to survey his surroundings. To his left, a colorful banner proclaiming "Holocaust Survivor Day / Dzień Ocalałych z Holokaustu"; above, a kaleidoscopic canopy of rainbow umbrellas. The octogenarian smiled and began addressing the crowd.

Orowski's remarks centered on joy: joy at reaching this fifth annual June 4th Holocaust Survivor Day (HSD) and joy in general for belonging to the reborn Jewish community of Kraków, Poland. After all, how many individuals get to meet the king of England three times (as Orowski has following Charles's January trip

commemorating the 80th anniversary of liberation)?

Finishing his reflections, Orowski glanced back at Jonathan Ornstein, both his friend and an architect of Polish-Jewish revival as the founding CEO of JCC Krakow. The two shared a moment of mutual gratitude before the afternoon continued with a garden party and family portrait studio. Peals of laughter throughout. Amid such turbulent times, these festivities alone would warrant recognition, but they also accompanied a vast array of other international HSD programming. A tea meeting in Johannesburg. An educational workshop in Buenos Aires. Intergenerational events throughout North America. Luncheons in Melbourne and Sydney.

The Holocaust Survivor Day movement germinated in Kraków during the lingering doldrums of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ornstein and his staff felt that, in a moment of universal uncertainty, one truth remained constant: survivors deserved attention and



Ryszard Orowski and Jonathan Ornstein at the 2025 HSD celebration in Kraków, Poland.

acknowledgement as eternal emblems of courage. These were the people who forged new lives in the aftermath of genocide; their will to live nurtured new generations, new societies.

In spring 2021, Ornstein and Holocaust expert Michael Berenbaum co-authored an op-ed, enjoining readers to join an annual “day of lectures, symposia, and multi-generational experiences when these heroes can pass on their message of hope and resilience to the next generation, as well as an opportunity to simply honor those tender souls who have withstood the worst humankind is capable of [and] deserve a day of joy, a day of celebration; not a day to share with condemnation of the Nazis, but a day to celebrate their lives they built in response to the Holocaust, to celebrate what they have given and continue to give.”

The founders chose June, the birth month of Holocaust survivor and historian-journalist Marian Turski, whose impassioned 2020 speech at the ceremony for the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz had stirred global consciousness and conscience. Here was a man who had endured a civilizational atrocity yet devoted his future to societal progress. Ornstein and Berenbaum thus noted in their public invitation: “Holocaust survivors represent the best in all of us, the best of the human spirit. They are our treasure and our light and we must shine that light into every dark corner of our world.”

Over the past five years, that vision has materialized through an international movement honoring the contributions of survivors and their descendants. In 2025, HSD celebrations transpired on all six inhabited continents, uniting thousands regardless of age or background.

Participation remains open and flexible; each community can choose the optimal way to share its love and well-wishes. Whether a concert or an ice cream social, a picnic or a black-tie function, the currency of affection is fungible. Even the smallest interpersonal gestures, even smiles of recognition, help enact the mission of solidarity.

A few weeks after the most recent HSD party in Kraków, a group of student volunteers delivered framed photographs to survivor attendees. Orowski ushered them into his living room and poured glasses of cola, averting his gaze from a close tennis match to peruse the portraits and chat. Later, his wife made an inquiry at JCC Krakow: was there a matching picture frame for his January snapshot with the king? You know; just another photo on the shelf. As Holocaust Survivor Day proudly asserts, these local heroes’ stories didn’t end in 1945.

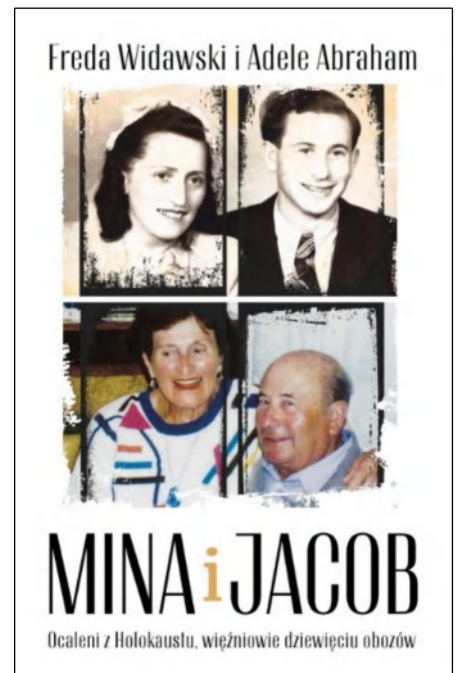


Portrait of Ryszard Orowski and family, taken at the 2025 HSD celebration in Kraków, Poland.

"Mina & Jacob..." in Poland



l-r: Michelle, Adele, Paulina & Freda, Poznań, 9 July 2025



By Adele Abraham and Freda Widawski
July 2025

In 2019 we published a book about our parents Mina and Jacob Widawski, entitled "*Mina & Jacob. Holocaust survivors of nine camps*". Following its publication, we forwarded copies to Museums of Remembrance around the world, including Poland. A couple of years later, we were contacted by Paulina Matuszewska, Senior Lecturer from the Martyrs' Museum in Żabikowo (Muzeum Martylogiczne w Żabikowie), with the idea of translating and publishing our book in Poland. We were obviously delighted by this proposal, particularly as Żabikowo held a special significance as it was our father's first forced labour camp. The museum had been established almost 50 years ago, in memory of a 'corrective' camp for Poles arrested for minor offences, and the Jewish Forced Labor Camp across the road. Little documentation was available about the Jewish camp, so any information provided by survivors or their descendants is deemed by the museum's director, Dr Anna Ziółkowska, as

priceless. Along the way, it was decided that the Polish version will be co-published with the recently established Museum KL Płaszów. Important to our mother's story, as she was incarcerated there, with her sister Freüda.

"*Mina i Jacob ..Ocaleni z Holokaustu, więźniowie dziewięciu obozów*" was published in December 2024, and we were invited to Poland for 'meet the authors' functions in both Kraków and Poznań. The Kraków presentation was arranged for June 26th, to coincide with the annual Jewish Festival of Culture, and was held in the Old Synagogue (*Stara Synagoga, Kazimierz*). Unfortunately, it also coincided with the Israel/Iran war, so Adele and her daughter Michelle who both live in Jerusalem, were unable to come. Hence the presentation became a one-woman show. What made the event so special, was the level of love and support from friends who travelled far and wide to be there with us, and the warmth and interest from the audience. The director of the Płaszów museum, Monica Bednarek and her staff, did everything in their power, to make the event as successful as possible.

Then finally the good news, that Adele and Michelle were able to get on a flight, and it was with great joy that we were united in Kraków. Also joining us for the second leg of our journey, were cousin Gerard, and his wife Marelyne from France. We travelled by train from Kraków to Wrocław, our birthplace. Our schedule was very tight, but we managed to see the White Stork Synagogue (Synagoga Pod Białym Bocianem); the Main Square; and made a nostalgic visit to our old apartment block and the park where we played as children.

Next day we packed into a van, and were driven some 100 kilometers to Wieruszów, Jacob's home town. Located on the River Prosna, the town still has an old-world charm. We were greeted by Basia Frankowska, the daughter-in-law of our father's dear childhood friend Józio Frankowski. We had met on a number of occasions during previous visits, and both Basia and Grażyna (Józio's daughter), travelled to the Kraków presentation. There is a bond that binds us, passed down from our fathers, which is very special. Basia hosted us in her usual generous fashion, and then walked with us around town, to all the key locations: the timber houses by the river that had been part of the ghetto; the old *mikva* (bathhouse) where some 86 Jews had been murdered; the location where the house shared by the Widawski and Frankowski families stood. We walked in dad's 'footsteps' recalling his walks with his elderly grandmother; and most movingly visited the old Jewish cemetery where a mass grave for the 86 victims is located. We believe that our grandmother – Brucha Widawski is buried in that grave, along with other members of Jacob's family. So, it was especially moving and meaningful to have two generations of Brucha's descendants there to pay their respects, as well as Gerard with whom we share a great-grandmother. We lit candles, laid down some stones, Michelle said *Kadish*. Despite difficulties in communicating – Basia's comments translated from the Polish into English for Michelle and Gerard, who in turn translated her words into French for his wife – Basia's and her families' warmth towards us, transcended the language barriers.

Late afternoon, we said an emotional goodbye to Basia and her family, and piled into the van for our journey to Poznań. On our first day we were escorted by Paulina to Żabikowo museum, where we were greeted by its director. After visiting the exhibition, we shared afternoon tea with her and senior museum staff. Our second function was held the next day, at the Poznań Raczyński Library. Just prior to our presentation, we were greeted with a pleasant surprise – we were to be interviewed by a local radio station. The interview went very well as the interviewer was extremely kind and respectful, which settled any nerves.

Dr Ziolkowska introduced us to the audience, and spoke of our book's valuable contribution to the region/period. Paulina conducted the interview, and our presentation was well received. We were particularly pleased that Michelle was able to present the third generation's perspective (Paulina translating her English). The audience was engaged, and we enjoyed meeting members of the local Jewish community in attendance. Afterwards we celebrated by consuming a sumptuous meal hosted by Dr Anna at a nearby restaurant.

Our trip to Poland was important to us, on a number of levels. First and foremost, to present our book to the Polish public, and we are very proud of the final product. Our parents would also be very moved and proud! Secondly it was important to revisit those places that have a connection to our family with Michelle, and to share them with our cousin.

During our month-long journey across the country, we were exposed to the difficulties and problems faced by the local Jewish communities. Furthermore, one personal, unpleasant encounter, clearly illustrated that a level of underlying and ongoing antisemitism prevails among certain strata of society. However, overall, we found most people that we dealt with were helpful and welcoming. Particularly those associated with the museums, who were very supportive and respectful.

2025 Melbourne Cracow Memorial



Jimmy Schnall

By Peter Schnall

Perpetuating the annual commemoration of the Liquidation of the Kraków Ghetto.

The Melbourne Kraków Memorial Service in 2025 adopted the theme of "What and Why we Remember."

What we remember this year is the 82nd Yahrzeit of the destruction of the Kraków Ghetto on 13th March, 1943. For many years the Melbourne Kraków Memorial has sought to maintain the memory of the large and vibrant pre-war Jewish Community of Kraków.

Why we remember includes paying respect to the survivors, many of whom are no longer alive, who we love and miss greatly.

Survivors dearly wanted to prevent the Holocaust from ever happening again, and their establishment of the Melbourne Holocaust Museum is their testament to this.

Today, in the wake of the ongoing October 7 2023 War, we maintain our resolve to remember those who perished, survived and also those who escaped from the Holocaust. Both the Holocaust and October 7 touch Jews in the same way.

We want to see an end to ongoing attacks on Jews altogether, and at the 2025 Melbourne Kraków Memorial we gathered with the same thoughts of our Survivors in our hearts and in our minds.

The Kraków Memorial Service is a result of dedicated efforts and strong community collaboration. Peter Schnall, the President of the Melbourne Kraków Memorial, was recognized for his tireless work behind the scenes in organizing the event. Every year the Melbourne Holocaust Museum play a crucial role as host, with thanks extended to Maya Feder, Dr. Steven Cook and the Melbourne Holocaust Museum team for their ongoing support.

Following the July 6, 2025, service, Julia Reichstein, Librarian at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum, affirmed the Melbourne Holocaust Museum's commitment to remembrance by setting up a Kraków Ghetto display by the research computer, which was kept on show for the week. This display served as a tangible educational resource, further enhancing public understanding of the Kraków Ghetto's history.

The service also noted apologies from prominent community leaders, including Mr. Josh Burns MP, Mr. Mark Dreyfus KC MP, and David Southwick MP, indicating their consideration for attending and the broader community's engagement with the Melbourne Kraków Memorial.

The Melbourne Kraków Memorial is actively enhancing its accessibility and reach through digital platforms. An updated website (see link below) now serves as a central hub, providing resources for memberships, tickets to future memorial services, and other relevant information.

The Melbourne Kraków Memorial also maintains an unlisted YouTube channel where both current and previous years' memorial services can be viewed and shared. Lena Fisman was specifically thanked for her voice-over work on our presentation (see link below) made available to our *Haynt* readership.

Beyond digital preservation, the Melbourne Kraków Memorial is engaged in ongoing projects relevant to the memory of the Holocaust:

Memory and Healing: Intergenerational Trauma Assistance (see link below)

Memory and Justice - Real Property Restitution for displaced persons, refugees and their descendants - in the Holocaust Era (see link below)

Updates on these important initiatives are annually posted widely in Jewish community announcements; to our email subscribers and on the website, inviting continued engagement and support.

The Melbourne Kraków Memorial's ongoing commemoration, testimonies and dedications illustrate how the memory of the Holocaust continues - and will continue in the collective consciousness of all humanity forever.

For more information see links below.

Melbourne Kraków Memorial website:

<https://cracowmemorialcomm.wixsite.com/melbourne-cracow-mem>

Melbourne Cracow Memorial YouTube presentation:

https://youtu.be/On-XFp9bEYM?si=rskQ34TGisSf_4b5

Memory and Justice - Real Property Restitution for displaced persons, refugees and their descendants - in the Holocaust Era:

<https://wjro.org.il/#mypropertystory>

The Melbourne Cracow Memorial refers to work of others involved in Memory and Healing:

Jewish Care Victoria, who offer direct support and guidance for those affected by intergenerational trauma.

<https://www.jewishcare.org.au/services/social-services/we-stand-with-our-community>

Melbourne Holocaust Museum provides resources and programs focused on child survivors and their families:

<https://mhm.org.au/support/#:~:text=Paul%20Valent%20with%20current%20President,Minds:%20Tales%20of%20a%20psychotherapist>

Healing Through Hearing (A Jewish Community Center (JCC) Krakow Podcast)

JCC Krakow was opened in 2008 by HRH the Prince of Wales, serving Krakow's growing Jewish community and visitors from all over the world.

Listen on Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/77gAtO3tabHmG3lJuWpbZ1>

Listen on Apple Podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/me-bernard/id1777084291>



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The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: A New Imagining



By Rita Nash
ASPJ Board member
in Sydney

The underground bunker at Miła 18 was the final nerve centre¹ of the heroic but ultimately futile Warsaw Ghetto Uprising led by Mordechai Anielewicz, leader of the ŻOB (Jewish Combat Organization).² This article explores how the use of non-invasive technologies, especially in archaeology, has enhanced our understanding of Miła 18 and its adjacent areas.

From August to September 1942, the *Grossaktion* or Great Deportation had been unleashed on the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. Nearly 300,000 Jews (5-6,000 per day) were deported, the vast majority to Treblinka where they were murdered on arrival. Around 60,000 Jews remained in the Ghetto. Facing inevitable extermination, the Jewish resistance began to mobilise.

On April 19, 1943, around 750 young ŻOB fighters³ began a revolt using smuggled arms and home-made explosives against the might of the Nazi forces who were unprepared for the attack. When SS commander Stroop⁴ realised that the entire Ghetto area was a network of interconnected bunkers and tunnels he ordered the systematic burning of buildings and entire blocks to force civilians and fighters out of their bunkers, cellars, and attics. Many died by suffocation or fire, others were shot when they emerged from the cellars, and the remaining survivors were sent to Treblinka or labour camps. A few survived by escaping through the sewers and/or found hiding places in collapsed buildings. But the fighters persevered until 8th May when, in the Miła 18 bunker, Anielewicz and some 120 fighters committed suicide rather than surrender. On 16th May, the Great Synagogue of Warsaw on Tłomackie Street was blown up - the final symbol of Nazi victory.

Image 1. Survivors of the Uprising on the ruins of the Miła 18 bunker in Warsaw, July 1945. On the left is Simcha Rotem who assisted in the escape through the sewers.



¹ The first headquarters of ŻOB was at Miła 29. When the bunker was discovered, the headquarters were moved to Miła 18 just before the Uprising began.

² ŻOB was formed by the merger of five Jewish political and youth organisations: Hashomer Hatzair, the Polish Workers' Party, Habonim Dror, Poale Zion, and the Bund.

³ In his wartime memoir, *The Ghetto Fights*, one of the leaders of the revolt, Marek Edelman remarked of the others: "I looked at their young faces, did the math, and realized that all of us together were scarcely 125 years old."

⁴ As a gift for Himmler, Stroop prepared a celebratory album titled *The Jewish Quarter is No More!* full of daily reports and photographs. It was used at the Nuremberg Trials to showcase Nazi brutality.

After the Uprising was crushed, the Nazis razed the entire Muranów⁵ area leaving about 3 million cubic metres of rubble. A new housing estate was planned after the war, but the strictures of time and money meant that it was impossible to adequately deal with the enormous quantity of rubble.

In July 1945 a few Uprising survivors returned to Warsaw and identified Miła 18, now covered by the rubble of a decimated city. It was considered to be a gravesite, likely the final resting place of the brave but doomed fighters including Anielewicz.

One year later, at the intersection of what were Miła and Muranowska Streets,⁶ some of the rubble was formed into a large mound which became known as the Anielewicz Mound. The Mound is positioned over the bunker and is topped with an obelisk which bears an inscription in Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish:

On May 8, 1943, in this place, Mordechai Anielewicz, the commander of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, died as a soldier, together with the headquarters of the Jewish Combat Organization and several dozen fighters of the Jewish resistance fighting against the German occupiers.



Image 2. The rubble of Muranów. In the background is St. Augustine's Church - the only building left standing.



Image 3. The obelisk on the top of the Mound.



Image 4. The Anielewicz Mound today. The obelisk stands at the top of the steps. At the forefront is the 2006 granite memorial inscribed with the names of 51 fighters.

⁵ Muranów is the once bustling old Jewish district of Warsaw and the site of the Ghetto. Before 1939, the population of Muranów was 90% Jewish.

⁶ The Mound is now located on the corner of Miła and Dubois Streets. Miła Street today bears no resemblance to the lively street it was before the war, nor do building numbers correspond.

A significant proportion of the rubble was made into 'rubble bricks'⁷ which were subsequently used in the rebuilding of Muranów and Warsaw itself. In the interests of expediency, the remainder of the rubble was levelled and, in the 1950s, the planned housing estate was built on top of the rubble, making post-war Muranów a district built from ruins on top of ruins. In this process several streets were redirected, truncated or disappeared altogether.

Nineteenth century tenements⁸ in Warsaw often formed whole blocks with frontages on two different streets resulting in two separate addresses. This was

the case with Miła and Muranowska Streets which ran parallel to each other. Miła 18 and 20 were the same building as Muranowska 39 and 41. Most tenements had below ground cellars which were often connected under the streets, an invaluable feature once the Ghetto was sealed.

Generally, cellars were used for storage, but after the Ghetto was established, the cellars were turned into bunkers where people could hide from danger. They were also used to store essential supplies smuggled into the Ghetto. In particular, the ŻOB hid the armaments to be deployed against German forces.

The decision to rebuild Muranów on the levelled rubble had far-reaching implications. This 'underground city' of cellars and basements which had held secrets for so long was from that time closed to historians, archaeologists, teachers, students and the general public. With regard to the Ghetto in particular, apart from survivor accounts, the ability to glimpse into and imagine the underground life led by the young Ghetto fighters and the other inmates of the Ghetto was lost.

However, advances in non-invasive archaeological technology have enabled researchers to analyse a site without disturbing its physical integrity and make better informed decisions about excavation. Magnetic gradiometry, ground-penetrating radar, and electrical resistivity tomography provide investigators with the ability to detect materials underground without disturbing the soil. In other words, drilling, blasting or digging were not required to examine what lay beneath. Further, drone multispectral imaging, manual scanning of the open excavation (see image next page) and LiDAR⁹ scanning could be used to create models of the site and provide realistic portrayals of cellar and sewer layouts.



Image 5. Pre-war tenement on the corner of Waliców and Pereca Streets, Warsaw 2025 This building was inside the Ghetto.

⁷ The rubble bricks, akin to 'Besser' blocks or cinderblocks, were made by crushing the rubble and mixing it with concrete. These bricks were used extensively in the rebuilding of Warsaw and foreshadowed the concept of sustainable building practices. Bohdan Lachert, the architect of the new estate, hoped that re-using the rubble would be a way of memorialising the deaths of so many Jews.

⁸ Warsaw tenement buildings were typically four to six stories tall and housed multiple families in small apartments designed to accommodate a large population within limited urban areas. Interior courtyards provided some light and ventilation and a sense of communal living despite the lack of privacy.

⁹ LiDAR (Light Detecting and Radar) emits laser pulses and measures their return time to map distances and generate precise 3D models



Image 6. 3D rendering of the bunker near the Anielewicz Mound: 1 & 2. Remains of the concrete bunker ceiling; 3. Exit to the corridor which led to the Anielewicz bunker; 4 & 5. Remains of the brick and concrete bunker wall which had been reconstructed by the inhabitants.

Despite the passage of more than eighty years, could these techniques be used at the Miła 18 site? What might be revealed? Could this lead to a powerful new form of memorialisation and remembrance?

In 2021, the Warsaw Ghetto Museum invited Dr. Jacek Konik from the Aleksander Gieysztor Academy of Humanities in Pułtusk, a branch of Vistula University, Poland, and Professor Richard Freund from Christopher Newport University in Virginia, USA, to conduct a non-invasive geophysical survey of four locations in Muranów beginning with the Krasinski Garden. The aim was to “find out if [these] locations contained tangible relics of the buildings from the period of the Ghetto’s existence.”¹⁰ The team worked on the assumption that the cellars had been undisturbed and that any artefacts would be left in place. This investigation confirmed that the Brushmakers’ Workshop area, one of three major combat zones of the resistance, was close to the northern part of the garden as stated by Marek Edelman in *The Ghetto Fights*.¹¹

In the summer of 2022, the research team, on the basis of results from the non-invasive investigation, decided to start excavating the cellars at 41 Muranowska (20 Miła) to avoid disturbing the Anielewicz Mound. According to Judaic belief, burial sites must not be disturbed and it was known that the bodies of the fighters in the Miła18 bunker had not been exhumed. Consultation with Michael Schudrich, the Chief Rabbi of Poland, and the Rabbinical Commission for Jewish Cemeteries in Poland, confirmed that the Miła 18 bunker itself was not to be excavated.

While we cannot see inside the bunker, Zivia Lubetkin, one of the leaders of the Uprising, provides a contemporaneous description in her memoir:

I learned that Mordechai Anielewicz and the other fighting units had chanced upon the bunker at Miła 18 at the outbreak of the fighting. I too made my way there. The bunker belonged to the members of Warsaw’s Jewish underworld, including some notorious thieves. They had dug a large shelter deep into the earth underneath a block of three huge buildings which had been destroyed in September,

¹⁰ Konik, J. 2024 : Underground City: archaeology of the Warsaw ghetto in its academic, memorial and social context. *Internet Archaeology* 66. <https://doi.org/10.11141/1a.66.16>. Accessed 18 July 2025.

¹¹ Edelman, 1946, 67.



Image 7. Aerial drone shot of the Anielewicz Mound and the dig. The closeness of the two streets is obvious. The dig uncovered the cellar at what was 39 and 41 Muranowska Street which no longer exists. The dig is on the edge of a large empty green space.

1939. A narrow passageway cut through the bunker and the ample shelter, with its many rooms, electricity, running water, kitchen, bedroom and even a living room.

Shmuel Asher, the gang-leader, reigned supreme in his underground world [...] He controlled all the eating and sleeping arrangements as well as all movement to and from the bunker. [...] every night [he] sent out people to bring back loot from the outside. [...] The bunker, originally designed for a few dozen underworld figures, had quickly been transformed into home for over three hundred people crammed into every nook and corner.”¹²

Since the rubble layer near the dig site was only 40 cm. thick, the cellars at 20 Miła – 41 Muranowska Street were exposed in just one day. It was clear that modifications to the original layout had occurred. “A room with concrete walls and remnants of a concrete ceiling was exposed, together with electrical and water installations [...] This room was connected to the Anielewicz Mound through a network of corridors that were partially uncovered.”¹³ The connection between the Mound and the exposed excavation was confirmed in December 2022 during a small excavation from the Miła Street side west of the Mound.

The Jewish Military Union (ŻZW)¹⁴ was also altering cellars under their headquarters at Muranowska 7-9. In fact, ŻZW had built a tunnel leading to the Aryan side which they were able to escape through after the battle at Muranowska Square. The tunnel led from the basement which had been turned into a bunker reinforced with a concrete ceiling. Such work required intense caution to avoid detection: concealing entrances and exits was paramount; and removal of debris and water had to occur in darkness.

It is important to realise that it was not only the fighters who were living in bunkers, cellars and attics. Since the Great Deportation, “the entire population, young and old, were busy creating hiding places, particularly underground. To all intents and purposes the Ghetto appeared to be a military camp. In the courtyards one could see Jews carrying sacks of sand, bricks and mortar. Work was carried out day and night. [...] These people, survivors of previous deportations, now prepared everything needed to survive in hiding for months”¹⁵ The Miła18 bunker had six exits, a positive feature at first. But, on 8 May, Germans surrounded five of the exits.

¹² Lubetkin, Zivia *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt*. Translated from the Hebrew by Ishai Tubbin. Israel, Ghetto Fighters' House, 1981, 244. Lubetkin was one of the few survivors of the Ghetto Uprising. She escaped through the sewers to the Aryan side of Warsaw and fought with ŻOB units in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. Lubetkin married Yitzhak Zuckerman, another Ghetto hero, and they settled in Palestine in 1946. They helped found the Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz and the Ghetto Fighters' Museum and testified dramatically at the Eichmann Trial in 1961.

¹³ Konik, 2024.

¹⁴ ŻZW consisted of former officers of the Polish Army and activists from the Revisionist Zionist Movement and its youth wing Betar. Initially it concentrated on gathering arms and organising mass escapes. ŻZW fought mainly in the northern part of the Ghetto, especially around Muranowska Square while the ŻOB operated in the central area of the Ghetto.

¹⁵ Testimony of Mordechai Lanski, Yad Vashem Document Archive, O.33/257, Manuscript, p. 306-307.



Image 8. Evidence of a sewerage system in a bunker.



Image 9.
A longitudinal view of the dig under its protective tent. Note an entry/exit way in lower half of photo. The slab in the middle is a fragment of the concrete ceiling of the bunker.



Image 10. A Jewish man emerges from his hiding place below the floor of a bunker.

The civilians inside obeyed the order to leave, but the fighters stayed, armed for battle. However, the Germans did not enter the bunker; instead, they threw gas canisters into it. This was the point at which the fighters decided that death was preferable to surrender. They shot each other or themselves or slowly suffocated. “Thus perished the heroic flower of Jewish Warsaw” proclaimed Zivia Lubetkin in her memoir.¹⁶

The fighters who had not been in the bunker on 8th May returned to find all the entrances impenetrable due to explosions and fallen material. Although consumed by despair at what had happened to the fighters inside the bunker, they realised that they needed to escape quickly - the Ghetto was in flames and most of their comrades were dead. Their only option was to escape through the labyrinthine sewer system, guided by two sewerage workers.¹⁷ It is this system which has been captured by Paul Bauman using LiDAR technology to map the Miła 18 and Muranowska sewer lines. In her memoir, Zivia Lubetkin describes their escape in the most visceral manner:

We jumped down from the bunker into the sewers. [...] It seemed as if you were leaping into the darkness of the depths, with the filthy water splashing and spraying about you. You are overcome by a terrible feeling of nausea. Your legs are drenched with the foul-smelling cold slime of the sewer. But you keep on walking!¹⁸



Image 11. Inside the sewer looking up at manhole opening. The ladder rungs extend for 5 metres.



Image 12. 110 cm high sewer line down the middle of present day and pre-1945 Miła Street – Zivia’s escape route.

¹⁶ Lubetkin, 1981, 233.

¹⁷ Sewer survivors included: Cywia (Zivia) Lubetkin, Marek Edelman, Tuwia (Tadek) Borzykowski, Chaim Frymer, Chana (Hanka) Krysztal-Frykszdorf. They were led out of the sewer at 51 Prosta Street by Simcha (Kazik) Rotem-Ratayzer and two sewer workers. Rotem organised hiding places for the survivors several of whom joined the resistance fighters in the Polish Uprising in 1944.

¹⁸ Lubetkin, 1981, 190-1.



Image 13. Silver and silver-plated cutlery.

During the excavation of this underground city, thousands of objects were recovered. The majority of these were prosaic, the stuff of everyday life: spectacles, shoes, crockery, cooking pots, enamel serving dishes, a citrus juice squeezer. These simple objects are reflections of the Ghetto inhabitants' struggle to live lives as normal as possible in the most appalling and dangerous conditions. "[The objects] remind us that even in the most desperate circumstances, people held on to fragments of their former lives."¹⁹ There were bottles which had contained beer, a long-necked wine bottle and glass pharmacy bottles (one still containing Jecorol, a cod liver oil substitute). The remains of furniture were present, along with numerous shards of building and decorating materials such as cornices and ceramic floor and stove tiles, many still bearing their manufacturers' marks. These objects indicate that "the buildings were inhabited on the whole by representatives of the middle class."²⁰



Image 14. A coffee container manufactured by Leon Czumanski, Włocławek.



Image 15. A vase made by Huta "Niemen" pattern #1816 of 1926 catalogue.



Image 16. Fragment of a charred prayer book

*"Finding these objects and giving them to the world
is for me giving a voice to their owners"*

Dr. Jacek Konik

¹⁹ Gilly Carr quoted in Weddepohl, 2025.

²⁰ Konik, 2023, 50.



Image 17. The probable prayer room



Image 18. Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital, 1930.

At Muranowska 39, one room in particular stood out. The team decided it was probably a prayer or study room due to the ritual objects found which included enamel *netilat yadayim* cup (used for ritual hand washing), silver Sabbath candlesticks, a hannukiah (candelabra used during Hannukah, the Festival of Lights) and part of a yad (Torah pointer). A pair of tefillin (small black boxes containing Torah texts) had also survived.

Also notable, in a basement room (possibly a library of sorts) were charred fragments of the Talmud and siddurs (prayer books) and a Polish novel. It should be noted that since many of the buildings were erected in the second half of the 19th century, it is likely that many of the objects would have predated the Ghetto period – a lot of work lies ahead for patient researchers.

It is gratifying to know that the objects found during the excavation have been deposited in the Warsaw Ghetto Museum which is due to open at the end of 2026. Even more affecting is the site chosen for the Museum. In March 2018, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage announced that the former Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital would become the home of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum.

Founded by two Jewish families, Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital opened in 1878 at Śliska 51 and Sienna 60 (another example of a two-street address). Although established as a Jewish institution, it treated all children and became known as one of the most advanced children's hospitals in Poland attracting pioneers such as Janusz Korczak and Anna Braude-Heller.²¹

In 1940 the hospital was incorporated into the Ghetto boundaries. Severe overcrowding and lack of food and medicine took their toll on staff and children, leading some doctors to undertake illicit research into "starvation disease."²² A typhus branch opened in Leszno Street in 1941. On 11 September 1942, about 1,000 children and most of the staff were deported to Treblinka. After the war, the building housed the Central Committee of Polish Jews until 1950. It returned to use as a hospital for some years until the hospital was incorporated into another institution in another town.

It is entirely fitting that the new Museum will be housed in this beautiful, iconic building which was so central to Jewish life before the war and during the Ghetto years. While renovation is proceeding, museum staff have been mounting temporary external exhibitions, planning for the permanent exhibition, procuring artefacts and gathering testimonies.²³

In the meantime, a new excavation began mid-2025 at Dzielna Street. Professor Gilly Carr from Cambridge University joined Dr Konik in unearthing some of the cellars there. Once again, objects from everyday life have been

²¹ Marek Edelman also worked at the hospital as a messenger, allowing him to liaise between the Ghetto and the outside world. In addition, he was commander of the Brushmakers' Workshop area, a major battle site of the Uprising. After the war he trained as a cardiologist and remained in Poland until his death in 2009.

²² The Disease of Starvation: Clinical Research on Starvation in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 was published by American Joint Distribution Committee in 1946 and is still considered to be one of the most extensive examination of severe malnutrition in adults and children. Some of the doctors performing the study noted ironically that the superb quality of the study was enhanced by the sheer number of participants.

²³ In 2022, ground penetrating radar studies of the hospital site detected soil disturbance in the courtyard area, a finding consistent with burial activity. No excavation has occurred.

These objects will be key for telling the story of the ghetto in the Warsaw Ghetto Museum showing both daily life among the ghetto fighters and ordinary people who were not necessarily fighting.

Prof. Gilly Carr



Image 19. Renovation work continues at the hospital, June 2025.

revealed: rusted bed frames, a perfume bottle, Shabbat candles and house keys.²⁴

So, what will happen to the excavation near Miła 18? It is not entirely clear. The lease provided to the investigating team by the Warsaw Council expired at the end of 2024. However, the site is still accessible for viewing three hours, three days per week when it is staffed by volunteer guides. It has been entered into the register of immovable monuments of the Mazovian Voivodeship²⁵ and "provides permanent legal protection, which will allow the site to be preserved for future generations and enable scientific research and reflection on the dramatic history of the site."²⁶

The main problem is the protection of the site. At the time of writing, it is entirely covered by a pavilion which is presumably as secure as possible (within the limitations of its structure and material).

In Dr Konik's words:

There are proponents of covering it up in a systematic way [...] In archaeology, it is one of the methods of protecting a monument [...] but the monument is then invisible. [...] in my opinion, in the case of this site, covering it up no longer makes sense and this method will no longer work. The site has been exposed for too long, and, as they say in archaeological jargon, "the walls have already caught the wind." However, most interested parties are looking for a solution that will allow the monument to remain open. The problem, of course, is the financial costs.²⁷

To lose this memorial and treasure of Holocaust research would be unconscionable. In the eighty-two years since the destruction of Muranów so much has already been lost or destroyed across Poland in general and Warsaw in particular. The excavation at Miła 18 may well be the last vestige available to scholars and to the public.

Visiting the excavation site provides the viewer with an inimitable and moving experience where one can peer into the 'rooms', trace the escape outlets, envision the huddling and the conversations, the intense planning and execution of this most dramatic act of self-determination. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising quickly became a universal symbol of resistance and human dignity. It still is. This archaeological dig provides a rare and priceless opportunity to experience it intimately.

... the Warsaw Ghetto excavations [are] precious and important. Archaeology can be a powerful tool when a site no longer exists above the soil.

Professor Gilly Carr, Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge



Image 20. The cocooned dig sits peacefully ensconced on a grassy plot which was once Muranowska Street.

²⁴ Weddepohl, Kate "Fieldwork from Warsaw: Reflections from Professor Gilly Carr" <https://www.pace.cam.ac.uk/fieldwork-warsaw-reflections-professor-gilly-carr>. Acc. 20 August, 2025.

²⁵ A voivodeship is a Polish province or administrative region. Warsaw is in the voivodeship of Masovia.

²⁶ Mateus Markowski "The Cellars at 18 Miła have been included in the register of historical documents." *Mad White* October 24, 2023. <https://www.whitemad.pl/en/the-The-cellars-at-18-mila-street-have-been-included-in-the-register-of-historical-monuments-thousands-of-artefacts-have-been-found-there/>. Accessed 14 August 2025.

²⁷ Email correspondence with Dr Konik, 30 July 2025.

Image Credits

Image 1. Survivors of the Uprising on the ruins of the Miła 18 bunker, Warsaw, July 1945.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, photo archives #45670.

Courtesy: Leah Hammerstein Silverstein.

Image 2. The rubble of Muranów. St Augustine's church in the background...

PICRYL, Public Domain Media <https://picryl.com/media/ruiny-gettawarszawskiego-w-drugiej-polowie-lat-40-d47650>

Image 3. The obelisk on the top of the Mound.

https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/mordecaianielewicz#google_vignette

Image 4. The Anielewicz Mound today. The obelisk stands at top of the steps..

Adrian Grycuk, Wikimedia Commons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Obelisk_Anielewicz_Mound_18_Mila_Street_in_Warsaw.JPG

Image 5. Pre-war tenement on the corner of Waliców and Pereca Streets, Warsaw.

Rita Nash, June 2025.

Image 6. 3D rendering of the bunker near the Anielewicz Mound. The image was created by Michał Chrzanowski using a hand-held device to scan the open excavation and a tablet with special software.

Courtesy of Michał Chrzanowski and Jacek Konik.

Image 7. Aerial drone shot of the Anielewicz Mound and the dig.

Courtesy of Miron Bogacki www.fotostacja.pl

Image 8. Evidence of a sewerage system in a bunker.

Rita Nash, June 2025.

Image 9. A longitudinal view of the dig under its protective tent...

Rita Nash, June 2025.

Image 10. A Jewish man emerges from his hiding place (from the Stroop Report, May 1943).

Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stroop_Report_-_Warsaw_Ghetto_Uprising_-_26559.jpg

Image 11. Inside the sewer looking up at the manhole opening.

Courtesy of Paul Bauman of Paul Bauman Geophysics.

Read an excellent explanatory blog at: <https://www.paulbaumangeophysics.com/blog/mila-18>

Image 12. Sewer line down the middle of present day and pre-1945 Miła Street.

Courtesy of Paul Bauman of Paul Bauman Geophysics.

Read an excellent explanatory

blog at <https://www.paulbaumangeophysics.com/blog/mila-18>

Image 13. Silver and silver-plated cutlery.

Image 14. A coffee container manufactured by Leon Czamanski, Włocławek.

Image 15. Charred remains of a prayer book.

Image 16. A vase made by Huta "Niemen" ...

Photos of the above objects are courtesy of Beata Jankowiak-Konik & Jacek Konik. More objects can be seen in Jacek Konik's *Voices of a Murdered City: Preliminary Presentation of the Results of Archaeological Research in the Area of the Former Warsaw Ghetto in 2021-2022* (See bibliography for more details).

Preliminary Presentation of the Results of Archaeological Research in the Area of the Former Warsaw Ghetto in 2021-2022 (See bibliography for more details).

Image 17. Probable prayer room.

Courtesy of Jacek Konik.

Image 18. Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital, 1930.

Photographer unknown. Originally published in *Światowid*. Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=49033428>

Image 19. Renovation continues at the hospital, June 2025.

Rita Nash, June 2025.

Image 20. The cocooned dig sits peacefully ensconced on a grassy patch...

Rita Nash, June 2025.

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²⁸ The Hebrew edition of *Muranowska 7: The Warsaw Ghetto Rising* is titled *The Massada of Varsha [The Masada of Warsaw]*. The comparison between the siege at Masada and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is made frequently. Masada is an ancient fortress high up a mountain in the Judaen Desert. In 72 AD, Masada was the last stronghold of 960 Jewish rebels who chose to commit suicide rather than fall into the hands of their Roman rulers. The young fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising chose armed resistance over deportation to death camps. Both places became symbols of dignity, defiance and moral courage. As in the Warsaw dig, new technologies such as drones, Mila modelling and remote sensing have been used recently at Masada enhancing the understanding of the water systems, access routes, and siege structures.



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