

HAYNT

PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE



ASPJ
Australian Society of Polish Jews
and their Descendants

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Shanah Tovah

*In a world beset by conflict, war and hatred we pray
for peace, understanding, love and harmony.*

Yusuf Tyebkhan. Cairo, Egypt

PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Disclaimer

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

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From the President



Ezra May
President ASPJ

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

Although we had high hopes in our prior Rosh Hashana/ Jewish New Year edition in September last year, for an upcoming happy & peaceful year for all, little did we know what was about to occur. And now, almost a full year later, we are still very much living with the ongoing trauma of the 7 October 2023 massacre in Israel. And all the tragic challenges, consequences and losses of the ongoing war to return the kidnapped hostages and eliminate the threat of future terror.

The accompanying surge in antisemitism both overt, and perhaps more sinisterly covert, here in Australia and throughout the world continues to shock many. And the increased social tension, seemingly manipulated by some bad faith actors, has caused much strain on interfaith and multicultural engagement between sections of the Australian community. However, reassuringly and encouragingly, the ASPJ has received messages of support from a range of people and organisations throughout the community. These acts of friendship have not only been greatly comforting, but also significantly motivating in highlighting that we have built real relationships and provided added impetus for us to continue to do so.

On the diplomatic front, we farewelled His Excellency Mr Maciej Chmielinski who finished his term as Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Australia, at the end of July this year. We are very grateful for his, together with the First Secretary of the Embassy, Mr Łukasz Graban's, strong friendship and support.

We look forward to continuing this with the new Ambassador and the rest of the staff at the Polish Embassy.

The wide range and mix of ASPJ events continued throughout 2024. In June we hosted a conversation with renowned photographer Chuck Fishman from New York, who took us through a presentation and provided the background stories of some of the photos he has captured of Jewish life in Poland from the 1970s until today.

As I write this, our next upcoming function on 16 September 2024 is a webinar with Rabbi Yitzhak Rapoport from Warsaw, on Reflections on the exodus of Polish Jews in 1968.

The ASPJ Board are also currently finalising plans for events, including with international guests, for later this year as well as early 2025 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.

Shana Tova & Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku.

From the New South Wales desk



Estelle Rozinski
Vice President ASPJ NSW

Dear Friends,

The past few months have continued to be challenging. It has been, for me, a time of grief and deep reflection. In many ways, the Australia that provided a safe haven for our families after the second world war has shifted since October last year. Here in Sydney, the ASPJ Committee has been reflecting on our role. We are exploring new avenues of engagement to find meaningful ways of connection with our friends in the Polish community, and beyond.

As a backdrop, ASPJ's recent events have woven together threads of history, memory, and resilience. In June, we had the privilege of hearing from award-winning photographer Chuck Fishman, who shared his powerful and poignant work documenting what

he thought was the final chapter of Jewish life in Poland from 1975 to 1979. The unexpected revival of these fractured communities came about with the collapse of the Communist government in June 1989, fostering new hope.

On Monday September 16th, ASPJ was fortunate to host a webinar "In the Shadow of March '68," featuring a conversation between Rabbi Yitzhak Rapoport from Warsaw and Professor Lucy Taksa, ASPJ Board Member. Their talk focused on the momentous events that occurred in Poland in 1968 and the Anti-Zionist campaign that began in the aftermath of the Six-Day War in 1967. This ultimately led to the expulsion of some 13,000 Polish Jews. If you were unable to attend this thought-provoking webinar it is available for viewing on the ASPJ website and at: <https://youtu.be/B7x79yFEq28>

Meanwhile, the ASPJ NSW Board continues to recalibrate its mission with the promise of some new initiatives in 2025. We hope you will join us.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement as we navigate these complex times together.

Shana Tova Umetukah,

Estelle Rozinski

What the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising means to me



Jerzy Warman with a daffodil.

Dear Friends,

My name is Jerzy Warman, and I was born in Warsaw after the war and grew up in Poland, a son of ghetto survivors. I live in New York City and serve on the board of the American Friends of POLIN Museum, but my life – my entire being – has been marked by the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto.

As we approach April 19, the 81st anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, my thoughts turn to the people I knew who were at the center of that event. They were among the most important figures in my life.

I belong to the second ring around the actual participants and witnesses of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. As a member of the generation born a few years after the war, the uprising is still very personal. My older sister, Ania, was only a year old when our father, who worked as the secretary of the Jewish Council in the Warsaw Ghetto, was forced to attend the

fateful meeting on July 22, 1942, when the Nazis ordered the deportation of most of the Jews in the ghetto. The next day Adam Czerniaków, the head of the Council, committed suicide in protest. During the following two months, almost 300,000 Jews were loaded onto cattle cars and sent to their deaths in Treblinka – my grandmother among them. This action prompted Jewish organizations in the ghetto to form a tiny army of underground resistance, ŻOB, the Jewish Fighting Organization, leading to a military action in January 1943, and then the uprising of April 1943.

Both of my parents escaped from the ghetto to the “Aryan side” a few months before the uprising. My mother, who had worked at the Bersohn and Bauman Children’s Hospital in the ghetto, began to carry out assignments for the resistance, using a false ID and a pseudonym “Marysia with Blue Eyes.” She was given the task of finding hiding places for those who also managed to escape and, especially, for the surviving partisans. Together with other female couriers (“łącniczki”), she maintained a network of secret apartments where Marek Edelman, the last commander of the uprising, Yitzhak (“Antek”) Zuckerman, the deputy chief of ŻOB, and fighters like “Kazik” Ratajzer (Simcha Rotem), Tziviah Lubetkin, Baruch (Broniek) Spiegel, Tuviah (Tadek) Borzykowski, and many others hid until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944. My parents were part of the Jewish detachment, commanded by Antek, which



Bronka Feinmesser, Jerzy Warman’s mother, obtained this German-issued I.D., so she could pass after leaving the ghetto, using the false name of Maria Radlow.

fought together with the (communist) People's Army. When the Warsaw Uprising ended in defeat on October 2, the ŻOB partisan unit, unable to surrender, hid in a cellar amid the ruins of Warsaw for six weeks until a miraculous rescue mission saved them all. Every year, on November 15, they celebrated this second "birthday" in my parents' Warsaw apartment, with Ania and me listening to their stories.

When I was growing up these people were not "heroes." For a child like me, they were simply Marek, Kazik, Bronek... but there was an aura of great moral authority about them. Marek's outward cynicism was a mere cover for his lifelong commitment to the humanist ideals of the Bund, the Jewish democratic socialist party. Kazik's modesty arose from his deep reflection on the moral dilemma of whether the ghetto fighters had the right to choose hopeless armed struggle that condemned tens of thousands of civilians to death in flames when these civilians possibly could have lived a few weeks or months longer.

These are the memories I inherited from my parents and their closest friends, which coalesced around this most symbolic of dates. Anniversaries mark the milestones of collective memory. From the formative experiences of a generation that lived through the ghetto uprising, individual memories pass into the realm of history, forming the knowledge that guides the generations who come after.

Ever since I can remember, every April 19, we gathered under Nathan Rapaport's Monument to the Ghetto Heroes – just a small group of survivors who had remained in Poland and those who came from Israel and other countries. We walked with Marek, who stood on the sidelines until official state delegations laid their wreaths, and then, alone, put a bouquet of yellow daffodils beneath the dramatic bronze figures leaning out of the rectangular granite prism of the monument.

Marek always refused to join state officials, whose speeches attempted to use the uprising for their own political purposes. We were there solely to reflect on his comrades who perished in the flames, and to mourn the void their deaths left in our hearts.

In 1983, when Poland was under martial law, Marek issued an impassioned appeal to Jews around the world, calling on them to boycott the official ceremony sponsored by the military government. Not many listened. Ten years later, on the 50th anniversary in 1993, when Poland's resurgent democracy after the fall of communism changed the meaning of our

commemoration, he did walk toward the monument, in silence, with Lech Wałęsa, the President of Poland, and Marek's six-year-old grandson between them holding their hands. This was the one exception he made. Ever since, we have held our tribute apart from the world's officialdom, joined by the growing company of young people for whom our memory became their meaningful history.

Then came the 70th anniversary in 2013 which ended an era because it was the last time when a living fighter in the uprising was present. It was Kazik, who had led a few dozen surviving fighters out of the Warsaw Ghetto through the sewers, and whose testimony forms the last words in Claude Lanzmann's documentary film Shoah. It was at that 2013 event that I last saw Kazik, whom I had known since I was 16. He died at the age of 94 in 2018 in Israel.

The commemoration of April 19 has fully passed into the hands of generations whose connection to the uprising has been less direct. Would they feel the shivers that shot through me every time I stepped toward the monument? Do they sense the historical forces that I felt so deeply? I really wish that they could experience these anniversaries on as personal a level as I have.

Until ten years ago the monument on the site of the ghetto stood alone as a symbol of death and resistance – the embodiment of memory. Today it looks smaller – but not diminished – against the building facing it, our POLIN Museum. The contrast in scale is apt – the Monument of Jewish Memory reflected in – and amplified by – the Museum of Jewish Life. Each in its own way ensures that both memories and history speak to the future. On April 19, this year or next, please join us in Warsaw. And wherever you are, pick up the memorial paper daffodil distributed by our campaign, which finds its inspiration in the yellow flowers Marek left at the monument each year.

Jerzy Warman
New York City, 2024

The original essay appeared in the newsletters of the American Friends of Polin Museum, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute in Polin, and was also posted on the Polin Museum website.

The *Remember the Yom* project



Haim Alon, 5 May 2024, Central Synagogue, Sydney

By: Estelle Rozinski

On May 5, 2024, in the Central Synagogue courtyard, a drone-mounted camera hovered overhead, capturing an unforgettable image: over 100 people formed a giant yellow ribbon, photographed by Haim Alon.

This year, 'the Remember the Yom' project paid tribute to the 250,000 people with disabilities who were murdered by the Nazis. Central to this year's event was sixteen-year-old Milla Wolman who delivered a powerful address, honoring Ruth Peretz, the 16-year-old wheelchair bound teenager born with cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy, who, along with her father, Eric, were murdered by Hamas during the Nova Festival. Milla, also 16 years old with cerebral palsy, spoke powerfully and passionately: "Ruth was full of joy and light... today, we honor you."

A reminder that Never Again can happen again.

This striking form of iconic image making is part of an annual event, "Remember the Yom," founded by artist and creative Robyn Pakula.

In 2017 Pakula sought to contemporise Holocaust remembrance in a way that would resonate with a younger generation. In collaboration with drone photographer Larnc Gold, Pakula transformed Holocaust remembrance into an immersive visual experience. On this Yom Hashoah, 28 volunteers formed the shape of Pakula's late father, Joseph's, Auschwitz prison number on the sands of Bondi Beach.

Yom Hashoah for 2018, was created by Pakula's team in Melbourne. One hundred community members, mostly descendants of survivors, travelled to Cranbourne, to create the Yellow Star on an old unused railway line.

With these symbolic and iconic images Pakula



Larnce Gold and Robyn Pakula, 2017, Bondi Beach, Sydney



Larnce Gold, 2018, Melbourne



Larnce Gold, 24, March 2019, Diamond Bay, Sydney



Stephen Brooks, April 2023, Bondi Beach, Sydney

continues to create powerful statements as acts of memory and solidarity.

On Sunday 24 March 2019, 120 descendants of Holocaust survivors gathered together at dusk to create the Hebrew Chai. The group led by volunteer musical director Sarit Michael sang Ani Meamin (I Believe) were filmed by two drones above Diamond Bay in Sydney.

As the group finished their collective hymn, the heavens opened above them.

To watch this powerful video please go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=remembertheyom>

On Monday 17th April 2023 Yom Hashoah began.

This work, a pink triangle, which was the Nazi symbol for LGBTQ+ was created in collaboration with DAYENU's Saul Flaxman and ACON's Nicolas Parkhill. Together they stood in solidarity with members of the Jewish Community to remember the 6 million Jews, the LGBTQ+ Community, and the others who were murdered for being different.

For Pakula, remembrance is not passive—it's an active responsibility. The "Remember the Yom" Project not only honors the victims of the past but also serves as a call to action in the face of contemporary atrocities.

Pakula's vision for the future is clear: to build a world that remembers, learns, and grows from history.

"Remember the Yom" will carry on its work connecting past and present, building a more compassionate and just future for all.

For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=remembertheyom>

"Remember the Yom" is more than an act of remembrance; it is a message of solidarity, inclusion, and a reminder that history must never be forgotten. As the world reflects on the atrocities of the Holocaust, this initiative calls for ongoing conversations, not only about the Jewish experience but also about those from all marginalised communities who were targeted. The beauty and creativity of this year's campaign remind us all of the importance of standing together against hate.

10th Anniversary of POLIN Museum



Photo: Magda Starowiejska

This autumn marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of the POLIN Museum's Core Exhibition, which is dedicated to the 1,000-year history of Polish Jews. This history is not only alive but remains relevant today, with new chapters still being written. During the Grand Opening in 2014, Marian Turski, Chair of the Museum Council and a Holocaust survivor, quoted a line from a Jewish partisan song: "We are here. Mir zenen do." These words symbolize the enduring presence of Jews in Poland, despite the Holocaust and other adversities.

Ten years later, these words remain just as meaningful: "We are here," in Warsaw, in Muranów—the former Jewish Quarter, once bustling with life before World War II. Today, the POLIN Museum is revitalizing the memory of Polish Jews. "We are here," for you, our audience. You are our most important supporters, and we strive to continue growing for you. As we celebrate our anniversary in 2024, we want to thank you for these ten years together. "We are here," because of you—our donors—who made the museum's opening possible. Without your generosity, we could not have brought our vision to life. And lastly, "We are here," the POLIN Museum team, a group of dedicated individuals who have

worked tirelessly over the past decade. Anniversaries are the perfect time to celebrate this achievement.

As we reflect on our journey, we also look toward the future, especially in a world increasingly shaped by misinformation, conspiracy theories, divisive rhetoric, and the harsh reality of ongoing conflicts. This is why our mission—to educate, inspire, and build bridges—remains more important than ever.

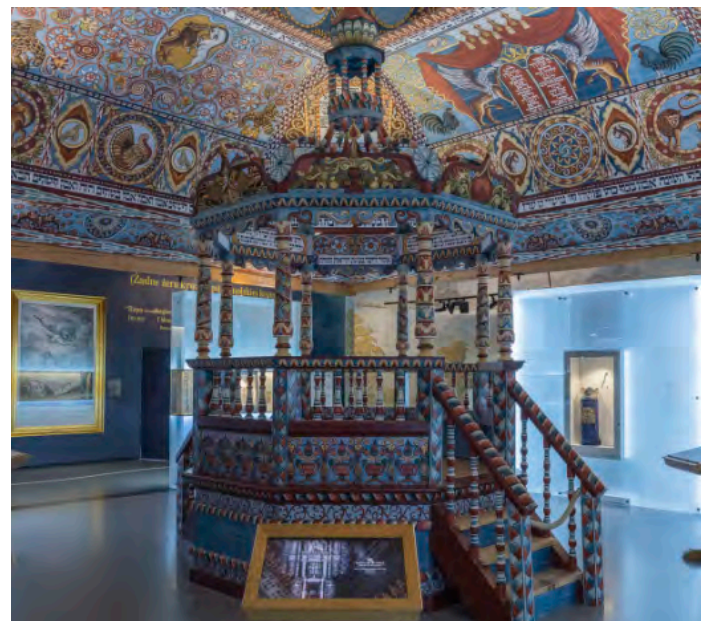
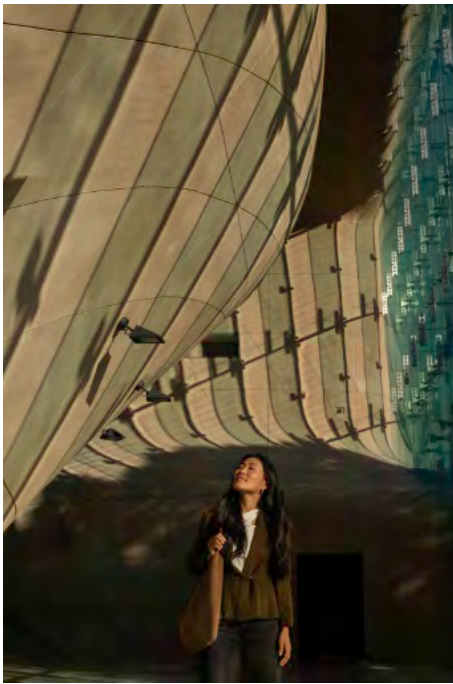


Photo: Sebastian Rzepka Van Dorsen Artists



Photos: MaciekJazwiecki

Changing Minds, Changing Hearts

POLIN Museum plays a vital role in education and culture, having hosted thousands of workshops and events for nearly six million people over the past ten years. Through our programs, we foster openness toward others, raising awareness of exclusion and discrimination. We firmly believe that openness is a key skill for the future, and we carry out all our work with this mindset. We challenge misconceptions about Polish Jews, dispel myths, break taboos, and uncover the forgotten histories of Polish towns and cities. Together, we are rediscovering our shared past.

At the core of our activities is a commitment to discussing values. Through engaging stories, we help our visitors better understand both themselves and others.

10th Anniversary Celebration Program

We warmly invite you to join us for POLIN Museum's 10th birthday celebrations on the weekend of September 28-30, 2024. The festivities will feature special guided tours offering new perspectives on the Core Exhibition, a birthday cake inspired by Jewish culinary traditions, a concert, and discussions on the challenges faced by cultural institutions in the 21st century.

As a preview of the celebrations, we have recently unveiled a new arrangement in the Postwar Gallery,

showcasing works by two renowned contemporary artists: a painting by Wilhelm Sasnal and a documentary film by Mikołaj Grynberg. We have also launched the "We Are Here. Rotating Gallery" project, focusing on the work of Jewish artists. For fans of our Core Exhibition, we have produced a series of films titled "Planet POLIN," which highlights selected stories from the exhibition. These films are available on the Museum's YouTube channel.

Stay with us at POLIN



Photo: MaciekJazwiecki

Memory Keepers



On October 28th POLIN Museum will present its POLIN Award for the tenth time. This prestigious award honors individuals and organizations actively working to preserve the memory of Polish Jewish history and to foster Polish-Jewish relations. This year's event holds special significance, as it coincides with the 10th anniversary of the opening of the museum's permanent exhibition.

In 2014, at the opening of the exhibition, Marian Turski, Chairman of the Museum Council and a Holocaust survivor, said: "We are here. Mir zenen do." Thanks to the tireless efforts of local activists and volunteers—individuals who selflessly work to preserve the memory of their Jewish neighbors—this sentiment has grown into something deeply symbolic. "Here" is no longer just a single location; it represents a growing number of places across Poland, where the memory of Jewish life is being revived and honored.

The first recipient of the POLIN Prize in 2015 was Tomasz Pietrasiewicz, the founder and director of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre in Lublin. Since 1998, he has been implementing educational and artistic projects dedicated to preserving Lublin's Jewish heritage. Other notable recipients include Jacek Koszczan, president of the Association for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in the Dukla Region, Katarzyna Łaziuk from Mińsk Mazowiecki, Paweł Kulig, caretaker of the New Jewish Cemetery in Łódź, and Mariusz Sokołowski, who is committed to

restoring the memory of the Jews of Wasilków and Białystok. In total, 56 individuals and organizations have been shortlisted for this award, all dedicated to keeping the history of Polish Jews alive while fostering mutual understanding and respect.

"For us to say, 'there is no history of Poland without the history of Polish Jews,' we need extraordinary individuals—brave, wise, and determined," says Zygmunt Stępiński, director of the POLIN Museum and a member of the award committee. "These are people who, often with no resources and sometimes against all odds, work to revive the memory of Jews in their small hometowns. The POLIN Award is a celebration of their dedication, a tribute to their tireless efforts. Thanks to them, Polish Jews are no longer just a distant mention in history books or a



Zygmunt Stępiński, director of the POLIN Museum and a member of the award committee

forgotten past. Their memory lives on, and with it, the shared Polish-Jewish heritage that shapes our future."

The competition is co-organized by the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland, with the Jankilevitch Foundation serving as the patron of both the competition and the final gala. The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Polish Righteous – Recalling forgotten history project



30th Gala of the Polish Society of the Righteous Among The Nations

History of the project

The Polish Righteous – Recalling Forgotten History project was launched in 2007 at the initiative of Ewa Junczyk-Ziomecka and Ewa Wierzyńska, Deputy Directors of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. It was initiated by the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute, and its achievements – interviews with witnesses to history, articles and photographs – were posted onto the www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl.

The project was granted an honorary patronage of the then President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, who initiated the process of awarding state decorations to Poles who had rescued Jews – something which the successive presidents of Poland have continued. Presentation ceremonies were accompanied by publications based on our project's resources.

In 2012, our website, www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl, together with all its resources, was handed over to POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, founded at the initiative of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute, in partnership with the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the City of Warsaw. Since then, the project has continued to expand and develop. The Polish Righteous website along with the Virtual Shtetl are the two most important internet projects of POLIN

Museum. Through them, the Museum spreads knowledge about the history of Polish Jews and Polish-Jewish relations. They provide access to POLIN digital collections – studies, oral histories, photographs, films as well as educational material.

What we do?

The Polish Righteous – Recalling Forgotten History is a project of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. It is dedicated to the Righteous Among the Nations – people who extended help to Jews during the Holocaust. The rescue stories are published on the [Polish Righteous](http://PolishRighteous) website.

Collection of stories of help

The aim of the project is to document and make known the stories of Jews being rescued during World War II. We conduct interviews with both the Righteous and with Holocaust survivors. We collect archival testimonies, as well as stories testimonies which have survived only within the memories of families.

Our collection, begun in 2007, now contains almost 1,000 stories of help. We publish [list the names](#) of the Righteous and those whom they helped alphabetically, so that interviews, articles and photographs are easily accessible.

Among others, we cover extensively the activities of the ["Żegota" Council to Aid Jews](#).

Yad Vashem honour of righteous among the nations

We explain the procedures one must follow in order to apply for the title of Righteous Among the Nations granted by the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, as well as the history and symbolism of the award. We display images of the medals and certificates, as well as the olive tree planting ceremonies in the Garden of the Righteous.

Education and resource material about the righteous

We publish educational material, virtual exhibitions as well as sources relating to the history of the Holocaust and the attitudes of Poles towards Jews, with particular emphasis on help provided to Jews and the penalties that might have arisen from those deeds.

We run educational online campaigns as well as regular meetings with witnesses to history – the Righteous, as well as the Holocaust survivors. We take part in the training of teachers, educators and of people interested in history and human rights.

We believe that the attitudes of the Righteous could be extended to other contexts. For this reason, we address the topic of the Righteous in a more universal dimension by joining initiatives whereby people who, at various times and places around the world, have opposed evil and have fought for human rights are honoured with the title of the Righteous.

Share your stories with us

Anyone, who wishes to share their stories of help or survival, or who is seeking witnesses of events which took place during the Holocaust, is invited to send us stories about those events.

80th Anniversary of the passing of Henryk Ślawik



Photo of Dr Henryk Ślawik during the war by Zdzisław Antoniewicz.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of Henryk Ślawik's murder by the Nazis on the 23rd August 1944

Henryk Ślawik was a journalist, a participant in the Śląsk Uprising and an activist in the Polish Socialist Party. During World War II he headed the Citizens' Committee for the Care of Polish Refugees in Hungary.

While in Hungary, among the refugees to whom Ślawik and his associates extended aid, were Polish Jews who

found themselves in Hungary. For the adults, Ślawik made false documents and, for the children, he established an orphanage in Vác. Among those with whom he worked was Hungarian politician József Antall. It is hard to estimate just how many people they helped. Researchers estimate that it was between 5,000 and even up to 14,000 Jews.

Henryk Ślawik was arrested by the Gestapo in July 1944. After being brutally interrogated he was transferred to the Gusen I (Mauthausen) concentration camp. He was hanged there on 23rd August 1944.

He was posthumously honoured with the title of Righteous Among the Nations (1977) and the Order of the White Eagle (2010).

Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants honour the memory of Dr Henryk Ślawik by presenting the Henryk Ślawik Award.

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

The Częstochowa Yizkor book project



By Andrew Rajcher

When the World Society holds academic conferences, the papers delivered at these events are sent to me to translate from Polish to English and then to place both the Polish and English versions onto the World Society's website.

In 2017, one such conference was held, entitled "The History of the Jewish Population of the Częstochowa Region". One of the papers was delivered by Professor Dr. hab. Magdalena Ruta, head of the Judaica Institute at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków – and a Częstochowa native. Her topic was "Yiddish Sources for Researching the History and Culture of Częstochowa Jews in the First Half of the Twentieth Century – an Overview".

The last section of her paper dealt with Yizkor Books (Memorial Books) as a source. Yizkor Books were written after the War, by survivors, in order to preserve their memories of Jewish life in their home city/town/village and to relate their wartime experiences. These were written mainly in Yiddish, but also, quite often, in Hebrew.

Regarding these books, Prof. Ruta warned about the quality of the translations of these books, which were available online at the time. She was critical regarding the accuracy of and omissions in many of these translations, often carried out by well-intentioned, but amateur, translators.

She wrote:

... the English-language versions of these memorial books contain numerous factual errors, mistakes in the names of places and of people, shortcuts and/or omissions. They should therefore be treated with caution, even distrust and should be strictly compared with the original text and with other historical sources.

She also pointed out that, with some Yizkor Books, they had only been partially translated. However, what stood out for me was when she wrote that some Częstochowa Yizkor Books had never been translated into English at all – in particular, the two-volume "Sefer Czenstochow" ("The Book of Częstochowa"), which was published in 1968. Were not these two books among those that I had inherited from my late parents? I went to my bookshelves and, sure enough, there they were.

Flicking through their pages, I decided that they had to be translated into English. After all, their pages contained the words of Holocaust survivors speaking to us from "beyond the grave." They deserved the respect to have their words translated accurately and in their entirety.

This bothered me for quite a while, until I realised that, through my late parents' charitable foundation ("Wolf & Dora Rajcher Memorial Fund"), I could do something about it and have this two-volume Yizkor Book professionally translated.

But to achieve this aim, I needed to find an excellent, professional translator (possibly two – one for Yiddish, one for Hebrew). I searched for quite a while and, finally, I was very fortunate to find David Horowitz-Larochette, a former Chasid who lived, at that time, in Haifa. I had found a translator whose English was excellent and who could translate both the Yiddish AND the Hebrew texts!

Once we had agreed upon terms, David began his work with a passion. The more he worked, the more he immersed himself into the Jewish history of my family's home city. With his religious background, his many explanatory footnotes added so much more meaning to the authors' words.

While David worked on the two-volume Yizkor Book, Prof. Ruta's words, about the online previously translated Częstochowa Yizkor Books, began to really

bother me. I began to do my own research and, with David's comments about them, I verified that her words about these "translations" were, sadly, all too true.

The translations were truly below standard and, in a way, insulting to those Holocaust survivors who had written their stories. They deserved better!

Name of places and people were misspelt, with no regard to Polish diacritics (e.g. ą,ć,ę,ł,ó,ś,ż,ź) and that the letter "v" does not, and never did, exist in the Polish alphabet. Also, names of people were mistranslated. For example, "Moshe" was a post-war rendition of the word – it never existed in pre-war Poland. It was either "Mojsze", "Moszek" or "Mojżesz" – but that did not seem to matter to the translator. It was the same with many other names.

I discovered, in some translations, that entire paragraphs had been omitted and my translator, by just casting his professional eye over them, found countless errors in the translations. The sad part of it was/is that researchers are reading these other translations, for historical or for genealogical reasons, and are either not finding the data they need (due to misspelling or omissions) or are being misled by the errors in translation. The more I researched, the more horrified I became. I just could not let this situation continue.

Częstochowa is a city about halfway between Warsaw and Kraków. Before the war, it had a population of 90,000, about one-third of whom were Jews (30,000). David's and my research led me to discover a total of fifteen Yizkor Books regarding Częstochowa, two Yizkor Books regarding nearby Krzepice and one Yizkor Book regarding nearby Żarki.

I decided that all eighteen Yizkor Books deserved to be professionally translated – accurately and in their entirety – into English, and that those translations would be made available to the world on the World Society's website.

Thus began the Częstochowa Yizkor Book Project.

David, my translator, has been blessed with an exceptional memory. As he worked on the translations, he discovered contradictory or differing descriptions of various incidents. The problem was, which was correct? At that point, I decided that we needed some professional help. I formed an "Academic Consultative Panel" to whom these anomalies would be referred and whose comments would appear as footnotes on the appropriate pages.

The Panel consisted of four very eminent historians:

Prof. Dr. hab. Magdalena Ruta – head of the Judaica Institute of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków

Prof. Dr. hab. Jerzy Mizgalski – the foremost expert on the Jewish history of Częstochowa

Prof. Dr. hab. Janusz Spira – a senior history professor at the Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa, and

Prof. Dr. hab. Dariusz Stola – former Director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, in Warsaw.

I then realised that, with these four historians agreeing to become involved in this Project, by virtue of their involvement, and considering their high academic standing, they have added immense credibility to the overall endeavour.

Four years and three months later, all eighteen Yizkor Books have now been professionally translated into English – accurately and in their entirety. David has translated and I have proofread a total of 4,737 pages!!

It has been a major undertaking which, I hope, future generations of historians, genealogists and descendants of Częstochowa Jews will find both valuable and useful.

Is the Project finished? The answer to that question is probably "yes" – until someone, somewhere, discovers yet another Częstochowa Yizkor Book that requires my attention.

ASPJ treasurer and webmaster, Andrew Rajcher, is also a board member and webmaster of the World Society of Częstochowa Jews & Their Descendants. He writes here about a project which he initiated, in order to preserve Częstochowa's pre-WWII, wartime and post-WWII Jewish history and to make it available to a worldwide readership.

World Society of Częstochowa Jews and Their Descendants:

<https://www.czestochowajews.org/>

Częstochowa Yizkor Book Project:

<https://www.czestochowajews.org/history/yizkor-books/>



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**Australian Society
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Preserving the names of those who perished in Treblinka death camp



Symbolic concrete blocks mark the path of the former railway line at Treblinka.

At the end of April 2024, ASPJ treasurer and webmaster, Andrew Rajcher, visited the site of the infamous German death camp in Treblinka and met with a couple who are committed to ensuring that its victims will be remembered. He writes:

The Treblinka death camp was established as part of "Operation Reinhard", the goal of which was to eliminate the Jewish population. It was in a secluded area, four kilometres away from the Treblinka train station, between Warsaw and Białystok.



Around 900,000 Jews perished there – the vast majority of them from Poland. One of them was my paternal grandfather, Marek Mordechaj Rajcher (pic left). After having restored, in Poland, the graves of my other three

grandparents, I wanted to do something in Treblinka, in honour of his memory.

To this end, I was directed to The Memory of Treblinka Foundation, which was established by the late Paweł Śpiwak, former Director of the Jewish Historical Institute, and the late Samuel Willenberg, the last living survivor of the Treblinka rebellion. At their invitation, Polish couple Paweł Sawicki and Ewa Teleżyńska-Sawicka joined the Foundation. Together with them, I visited Treblinka in late April 2024.

Today, the site of this death camp contains 17,000 stones, of varying sizes, symbolic matzevot (Jewish headstones), commemorating the victims of the Holocaust, whose final resting place is Treblinka. Of those stones, 216 bear the names of the cities and towns from where Jews were transported to their deaths.

The only preserved records are waybills of those transported to Treblinka from outside Poland – Terezin (18,000), Darmstadt (883), as well as from Greece and Macedonia (11,000, the list prepared two weeks prior to deportation). For the rest, within a few hours of their transport arriving in Treblinka, they were murdered – and their names were never recorded.

Paweł and Ewa felt that these victims deserved better and decided to rectify this situation.

The aim of the Foundation is to gather and disseminate knowledge about the camp, to collect existing reports by witnesses and survivors and to inform about historical and archaeological research.

To this end, Paweł and Ewa created the Foundation's "BOOK OF NAMES" – an online database of Treblinka victims. To discover victims' names, they search through other databases, reports, documents, memoirs, as well as pre-war and post-war sources. They interview the last living witnesses of the Holocaust and the families of the victims.

At the time of writing this article, this online database contained the names of 108,286 victims (including my paternal grandfather), and continues to grow. With around 900,000 Treblinka victims, the work continues. In building its database, the Foundation works closely with, among others:

Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Arolsen Archives International Centre on Nazi Persecution

Terezin Memorial

Beit Lohamei Hagetaot – the Ghetto Fights' House Museum

Jewish Historical Institute

The Foundation is also now working on its next major project – "THE WALL OF NAMES", the beginning of which will be located near the Treblinka Museum, which is currently under construction.

The Wall's concept is that, with a potential 900,000 names, it will be capable of being extended, within the Treblinka site, as more names are uncovered. A huge effort is also being made to group names into families so that, on The Wall, their names will appear together.

The Wall will be made up of panels containing the engraved names of Treblinka victims. It is hoped that the beginning of the Wall will be erected in late 2025 or early 2026.

The Foundation's website, "MEMORY OF TREBLINKA" contains a wealth of information. It contains an online database of Treblinka victims, whose names have been discovered, a listing of transports of Jews arriving at Treblinka, a database of Treblinka escapees and an audio guide to the Treblinka II extermination camp.

Of course, the Foundation's work is in constant need of financial support and, after looking through the Foundation's website, I encourage others, especially with family members who perished in Treblinka, to also support the Foundation's important work.

Memory of Treblinka:

<https://memoryoftreblinka.org/>

Book of Names:

<https://memoryoftreblinka.org/the-names-of-the-victims/>

Listing of Transport Arrivals:

<https://memoryoftreblinka.org/transports-to-treblinka/>

Treblinka Escapees Database:

<https://pamiectreblinki.pl/uciekiniierzy/>

Support the Foundation:

<https://memoryoftreblinka.org/support-the-foundation/>

Contact the Foundation:

<https://memoryoftreblinka.org/contact/>

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Rachel Holzer

Internationally acclaimed Australian Jewish theatre actor and director

Holzer was born in 1899 in Kraków, Poland. Her parents were Anna Holzer (born Blatt) and her husband Ignacy (Isaac) Holzer. Her mother was a home maker and her father was a house painter who led the local Yiddish Workers' Union.

She appeared in *Di Emese Kraft*, a play by the Russian American playwright Jacob Gordin when she was six. It is said that this experience created her ambitions to become an actress.

She attended Krakow Polish Drama School, graduating in 1925. She was an actor with the Polish National Theatre and worked in Yiddish Theatre throughout Poland. She was married to the playwright Chaim Rozenstein.

In 1939 Holzer and her husband arrived in Melbourne as part of a world tour. While Holzer was performing in Australia, the Germans invaded Poland. Holzer



would remain in Australia for the rest of her life.

Holzer had a successful career in the theatre in Australia as an actress and director. One of her most important performances was in 1966 when she recited Yevgeny's Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar" in poetry. He was there as she performed his poem for 6,000 people which told how thousands of Jews had been massacred by the Nazis. She used her skills to speak in the voice of a mother whose children were killed.

She often worked at the Dovid (David) Herman Theatre in

Melbourne, Australia. She retired in 1977.

Rachel Holzer died in Melbourne on November 14, 1998, at the age of 99.

80th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising

Rescued Jewish prisoners join in the fight

On August 5, the Scout Assault Battalion "Zośka" attacked the German concentration camp Warsaw, the so-called Gęsiówka, and liberated 348 Jewish men and women imprisoned there. Only 89 prisoners were Polish citizens, the rest came from various European countries, including: Hungary, Greece, France, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and Lithuania.

Most of those released joined the fight in the Warsaw Uprising, including foreign prisoners who took part in fortification, auxiliary work and extinguishing fires.

Jewish prisoners released from the Umschlagplatz by the Kedyw unit on August 1 also joined the uprising.

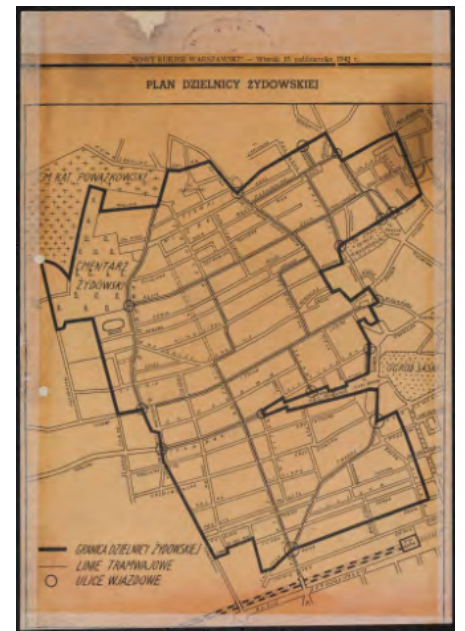


Jewish prisoners of Gęsiówka and Polish resistance fighters

The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute



JHI building at Tłomackie 3/5, Warsaw



City map marking the "Jewish Residential Area", October 1940
ARG I 1283_4

By: The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute

Today, the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute (JHI) is more than 75 years old and is the oldest Jewish organization and one of the world's most important research institutions dedicated to the study of Jewish history and culture in Poland. The JHI is also a rare example of a Warsaw institution that can be proud of its "genius loci". From the very beginning, the headquarters of the Institute has been at Tłomackie 3/5, Warsaw, on a small street just behind the skyscraper known as the "Blue Building," in the place that before the war housed the Central Judaic Library and the Institute of Judaic Studies, being a part of the Great Synagogue complex on Tłomackie Street.

During the war, meetings of the clandestine organization Oyneg Shabes (Hebrew: "Joy of the Sabbath") took place at the current headquarters of the JHI, which, on the initiative and under the leadership of historian Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum, today's patron of the Institute, collected documentation of the life and extermination of Jews in Poland during the German occupation. The Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto, the so-called Ringelblum Archive, is a



Opening of milk cans with the second part of the Ringelblum Archive, December 1st, 1950

unique collection of documents constituting one of the most important testimonies of those times, which in 1999, right next to *De revolutionibus* of Nicolaus Copernicus and the manuscripts of Fryderyk Chopin, was inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World list. It is the most valuable collection housed at the Jewish Historical Institute and owned by the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland.

In November 1940, Ringelblum created a Oyneg Shabes documenting the life, suffering, and death of

those in the Warsaw Ghetto and elsewhere in occupied Poland. In the summer of 1942, members of Ringelblum's team buried tens of thousands of eyewitness accounts in ten tin boxes. Others buried the second part of the Archive in two milk cans a few months before the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in the same place in February 1943. In September 1946, three surviving members unearthed the first part of the Archive. The second part was found by accident in December 1950.

The original documents of the Archive are presented in the permanent exhibition "What we've been unable to shout out to the world" opened on November 14, 2017. In 2023, in cooperation with the Nazi Documentation

Center in Munich, we opened a traveling exhibition, which draws on the permanent exhibition, showcases the most valuable documents from the Archive. And now, after huge success in Munich, it is showing in the Melbourne Holocaust Museum.

The exhibition "Underground: The Hidden Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto" will be open from November 2024 to March 2025. More information: <https://mhm.org.au>



Travelling exhibition in Munich.



Genealogy department at JHI



Invitation to "A Great Children's Show" on the occasion of "Holiday of the Child—30. 5.1942," ARG I 314_4



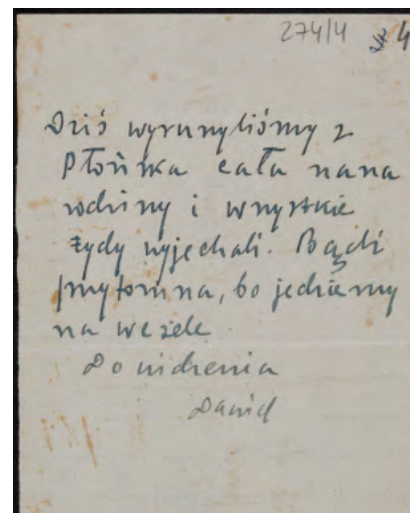
Gela Seksztajn, Self-portrait. MZH A-891



March of Remembrance on July 22. Photo: Andrzej Stawiński



Armband from "Czyste" Jewish Hospital for Infection Diseases. ARG II 238



Postcard tossed from the train from Płońsk to Auschwitz and delivered to a family in the Warsaw Ghetto (duplicate made by the Oneg Shabbat), ARG II 359

Today we set off from Płońsk. Our whole family and all Jews left. Be clear-headed because we are going to the wedding. Goodbye, Dawid

Chuck Fishman: A photographer's journey through Poland's Jewish legacy



By Estelle Rozinski

In the mid-1970s, Chuck Fishman, then a senior photography student, crossed the border from East Germany into Poland, embarking on a journey that would define much of his career. Poland was still under the shadow of World War II, its Jewish community decimated by the Holocaust. Fishman's initial project, an exploration of what remained of Jewish life, would later become his first monograph, *Polish Jews: The Final Chapter*, published in 1977.

Fishman's first encounter with Poland's Jewish population found it in decline—99% of its members were Holocaust survivors, with almost no younger generation to carry on. The work was not intended for publication but rather a personal documentation of a world on the verge of disappearing. Yet, these photographs continued to reverberate far beyond his imagination.

The photos Fishman captured were raw, unfiltered moments of a vanishing world. Among his subjects were survivors – many elderly – clinging to the rituals of their faith.

A sexton tending the near empty Beit Midrash in Lublin, a soup kitchen feeding the few who remained, and the secret preparation of Kosher meat. His images reveal the quiet resilience of a community almost extinguished.

Over the course of his 45-year career, Chuck Fishman's lens has focused on capturing pivotal social and political movements, always through a lens of social justice. His works have been published in some of the most renowned international publications and have garnered four prestigious awards from the World Press Photo Foundation.

His connection to Poland continues long after his first visit. In 2019, his second book on the subject, *1975–2018 A Portrait of Polish Jews*, showcased not only the remnants of that nearly extinguished community but also its slow resurgence. His exhibition, "ReGeneration: Jewish Life in Poland," opened in Warsaw and later travelled to the United States, illustrating how Jewish

life in Poland have been revived in places like the JCC Krakow.



Fishman's latest book, *80 YEARS LATER: JCC Krakow's Response to the War in Ukraine*, tells the story of Ukrainian refugees being assisted by the Jewish community – survivors helping survivors. From documenting the decline of Polish Jewry in the 1970s to capturing its remarkable resurgence decades later, Chuck Fishman's

work stands as a testament to the enduring power of memory, survival, and regeneration. His photographs provide a bridge from the past to a still evolving future.

Available from Amazon. <https://www.amazon.com/80-Years-Later-Krakovs-Response/dp/8396657513>



Yoram Jerzy Gross

Australia's leading animation producer and director



Yoram Jerzy Gross AM was born in Kraków, Poland on 18 October 1926 to a religious Jewish family.

The Gross family survived World War II in Poland by moving around hiding places 72 times.

Yoram studied music and musicology at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (also known as Krakow University).

He first entered the film industry in 1947 at the age of 20 when he became one of the first students of Jerzy Toeplitz (founder of the Polish Film Institute, the Swiss Film Institute and the Australian Film and Television School).

In 1950 Gross moved from Poland to Israel, where he worked as a newsreel and documentary cameraman. He then became an independent prize winning film producer and director.

Gross, his wife Sandra and young family migrated to Australia In 1967 and lived in Sydney. They established Yoram Gross Film Studio in their house.

After 1977 Gross devoted his energies to animated films and series, but maintained an interest in



experimental films with awards to assist young filmmakers including the Yoram Gross Award for Best Animated Film at the Sydney Film Festival and the Yoram Gross Best Animation Award at the Flickerfest International Film Festival.

The first animated feature film produced by the Yoram Gross Film Studio was called *Dot and the Kangaroo* in 1977. It was followed by *The Magic Riddle* in 1991, *Blinky Bill* in 1992.

In 1993 Yoram Gross Film Studio diversified into animated series for television.

Gross went on to produce, direct, and script a total of 16 feature films for children.

Coinciding with the release of the films, Gross also published books based on the films *Dot and the Kangaroo*, *The Little Convict* and *Save the Lady*.

Yoram Jerzy Gross AM died in Sydney aged 88 on 21 September 2015.



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