



# Jan Karowski Society

Institute for the Culture of Encounter and Dialogue



24<sup>th</sup> April 2014  
Jan Karowski's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday

## The most important events of 2014:

- 4<sup>th</sup> Kielce Christian-Jewish Meetings
- Sukkot Shalom – Israelis celebrate the feast in Kielce for the third time
- Freedom and Peace Festival – 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
- Establishment of the Institute for the Culture of Encounter and Dialogue



In March 2015, the Jan Karski Society will begin the 11<sup>th</sup> year of its activities. So far, we have realized our projects in various cultural centres, numerous schools, churches as well as public spaces in Kielce and the region. On the basis of a lease agreement between the Society and the Mayor of Kielce, Wojciech Lubawski, since 1st November 2014 we have had our own seat in which we established the Society's Institute for the Culture of Encounter and Dialogue. The seat is situated at the ground floor of a house at 7 Planty Street, formerly occupied by the BWA Gallery of Photography. More information about the Institute and its future activities is available at the end of the booklet.



By virtue of the decision of the Sejm, the year 2014 was to commemorate Jan Karski. In December 2013, in connection with the hundredth anniversary of Karski's birth, we announced a literary competition for students entitled 'Karski's Bench'. Its grand final took place in September and the collection of the best submitted works, written under the supervision of a well-known Kielce journalist Jadwiga Karolczak, was published as a commemorative edition.

In May, in cooperation with Stefan Żeromski Theatre in Kielce we presented a play performed by American artists entitled *'Przyjechałem do ciotki Zofii'* [I Came Over to My Aunt Sophia]. The screenplay of the play was based on Karski's biography. On the day of the hundredth anniversary of Karski's birth a screening of films *'Moja misja'* [My Mission] and *'Człowiek, który chciał zatrzymać Holokaust'* [The Man Who Wanted to Stop the Holocaust] was organized at the Regional Public Library in Kielce.



1. Kaya Mirecka-Ploss, a friend of Jan Karski, by his monument in Kielce.
2. The prize awarding ceremony of Karski's Bench literary competition.
3. Sebastian Ryś presenting a monodrama about Jan Karski.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS ORGANIZED BY JAN KARSKI SOCIETY IN 2014

### JANUARY

**14<sup>th</sup> January: 2nd Close Christian-Jewish Meetings** at the Nożyk Synagogue in Warsaw. A performance of St. Nicolas Orthodox Church Choir from Kielce, conducted by Rafał Bazanek, who sang psalms in Old-Church-Slavonik language, was a historic event. During the meeting, co-chairmen of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews delivered their speeches: Professor Stanisław Krajewski – ‘What I am Grateful for to Christians’ and Bogdan Białek – ‘What I am Grateful for to Jews’. A special guest of the evening was writer Józef Hen.



**17<sup>th</sup> January: Biblical Worship Service** on the 17<sup>th</sup> Day of Judaism held at St. Francis Catholic Church in Kielce.

**27<sup>th</sup> January: International Holocaust Memorial Day.**

A prayer meeting at Menorah monument in Kielce and documentary films screenings ('Wyrzutki' directed by Tomasz Wiśniewski and Sławomir Grünberg as well as 'Nie wolno się brzydko bawić' directed by Urszula Sochacka).



**MARCH**

**18<sup>th</sup> March: 3<sup>rd</sup> Close Christian-Jewish Meetings** at St. Albert Chmielowski and St. Andrew the Apostle Church in Warsaw. The main focus of the event was awarding the title of 'The Man of Reconciliation' to Rabbi Boaz Pash by the Polish Council of Christians and Jews.

**APRIL**

**2<sup>nd</sup> April:** Catholic Information Agency published a **talk with Bogdan Białek** entitled **'There is a Special and Unique Bond Between Jews and Christians'** conducted by Andrzej Piskulak. On 30th May, the interview was published by Catholic weekly magazine 'France Catholique' – the largest Catholic magazine in France.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> April: 4<sup>th</sup> Kielce Christian-Jewish Meetings:

- **An opening of two photographic exhibitions:** ‘Przybyli, odeszli... są: Żydzi polscy’ [They came, they left... they are here: Polish Jews] and ‘Kolory prawosławia’ [Colours of Orthodoxy].
- **‘O Duszo wszelka’** [All devout souls] – **a concert of the choir** the Society of Friends of Bieliny ‘Sabbaton’, Anna Hajduk, soloist of the choir of the Szir Awiv Synagogue and Włodzimierz Kiniorski. Awarding the Hana Goldszajd and Dawidek Rubiniowicz Prize to Barbara Tkacz, a teacher from Wola Jachowa, and Menorah of Friendship Prize of the Jan Karski Society and the Jewish Community in Katowice to Professor Stanisław Meducki and journalist Jerzy Daniel.



- **‘Is Christianity a Religion of Peace?’** – a debate attended by Tomasz Terlikowski, Jacek Prusak, SJ, Zbigniew Nosowski, Krzysztof Dorosz and Janusz Poniewierski.
- **‘Peace. How Do You Do It?’** – a debate with the participation of Shaykh Andrzej Ahmed Saramowicz, Jan Oleszko, SAC and Rabbi Symcha Keller.
- **‘Symcha Keller and Friends’** – a concert performed by Rabbi Symcha Keller and his friends from the Jewish Community from Łódź.



- **‘Lord, hear my words...’** - second psalm meetings attended by Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz and Priest Grzegorz Michalczyk.
- **‘The Legend of Enchantment – on Hassidim’** – a workshop conducted by Piotr Kostuchowski.
- **‘Church in Hell’** – a screening of the film with the presence of its director and chairman of the Social and Cultural Jewish Society in Poland Artur Hofman.
- **‘Fiddles Play in Your Ears’** – an evening of music and poetry organized by the Social and Cultural Jewish Society in Poland and performed by the artists of the Jewish Theatre in Warsaw.
- A meeting with writer **Anka Grupińska**.
- **From 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> April 4<sup>th</sup> Christian-Jewish Meetings were also held in Pińczow and Bodzentyn.** The events organized included film screenings of ‘Wyrzutki’ directed by Tomasz Wiśniewski and Sławomir Grunberg as well as ‘Nie wolno się brzydko bawić’ directed by Urszula Sochacka, a performance entitled ‘Fiddles Play in Your ears’, a meeting with Anka Grupińska as well as the workshop ‘Legends of Enchantment’ and meetings with Children of the Holocaust.

## MAY

**5<sup>th</sup> May: 1<sup>st</sup> Close Meetings of Christians and Jews in Krakow** entitled ‘Tikkum Olam and the Gospel of Blessings – the Duty of Jews and Christians to the World’ were held at St. Catherine Church in Krakow. Among the invited speakers were Krakow Bishop Grzegorz Ryś as well as philosopher and Jewish activist Professor Stefan Krajewski.

**15<sup>th</sup> May: ‘I Came Over to my Aunt Sophia’** – a play performed at Stefan Żeromski Theatre in Kielce by Crossroads Theatre from Indiana State University. The play is based on Jan Karski’s biography and its title refers to a secret password used by the

emissary during his last mission to Poland during the war. The play written by Arthur Feinsod and directed by Dale McFadden was also presented during Jan Karski Days organized by the Polish History Museum. The performance of the play in Kielce was organized by the Jan Karski Society, Stefan Żeromski Theatre in Kielce and the Mayor of Kielce.

**10<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May: The visit of Bogdan Białek, president of Jan Karski Society, to Israel.** Białek was invited to Israel by the Polish Institute in Tel Aviv. During his visit he conducted workshops for Israeli students on Polish-Jewish relations and met with the mayor of Ramla, Kielce's twin town, as well as members of Kielce Jews Society in Israel.

## JULY

**4<sup>th</sup> July: 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kielce Pogrom.** The celebrations included prayers of Christians and Jews at the grave of the Pogrom's victims from 1946, a walk following the traces of Kielce Jews as well as a ceremony in front of the building where the Pogrom took place, during which special prizes of the Jan Karski Society, Vir Bonus and Femina Bona, were awarded to Stanisław Krajewski, co-chairman of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews, Monika Krajewska, Jewish activist and Andrzej Dąbrowski, director of the Regional Public Library in Kielce.



## SEPTEMBER

**17<sup>th</sup> September: the grand finale of ‘Karski’s Bench’ Literary Competition.** In November 2013 we invited students of Kielce schools to participate in the competition. During its first stage, completed in February, students sent their literary works on Kielce. Both the form and the subject matter were not imposed by the organizer but chosen freely by the contestants. During the second stage of the competition, several authors of best works took part in reporters workshops conducted by a well-known journalist from Kielce, Jadwiga Karolczak. Following the workshops, four best documentaries connected with the Karski’s Bench were selected. The competition’s winners were: Barbara Gajos (6<sup>th</sup> Secondary School in Kielce), Zuzanna Śmiech (St. Jadwiga Secondary School in Kielce), Natalia Sikora (1<sup>st</sup> Secondary School in Kielce) and Sara Terelak (6<sup>th</sup> Secondary School in Kielce). Kaya Mirecka-Ploss, Karski’s friend and partner of his last years, participated in prize awarding ceremony, during which Sebastian Ryś presented a monodrama about Jan Karski entitled ‘Fish Soup in Odessa’.

**24<sup>th</sup> September** – a meeting with friar Paweł Kozacki, superior of Polish Dominicans, entitled ‘**St. Dominic in the Third republic of Poland**’ (a series of meetings entitled ‘Motorways and Paths of Faith’).

**26<sup>th</sup> September** – a meeting with Kabir Edmund Helminski, sheikh of Mawlewi Brotherhood, entitled ‘**Sufism, Rumi and the Freedom of Soul**’.



## OCTOBER

**8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October – Sukkot feast in Kielce.** For four days young Israelis were meeting with students from Kielce schools and some citizens of Kielce at Korona Shopping Mall. The meetings were held in a symbolic tent, referring to Jewish tradition of celebrating the Sukkot feast. The guests from Jerusalem spoke about Jews from Kielce who now live in Israel as well as about Jewish customs and traditions. The least event of the celebrations was a concert of Jewish songs by Beata Czarnecka and artists from Krakow's club 'Piwnica pod Baranami'.



**20<sup>th</sup> October** – a meeting with Maciej Biskup, prior of the Dominican Monastery in Szczecin, entitled '**Surprised by Faith. Between Jericho and Jerusalem**' (a series of meetings entitled 'Motorways and Paths of Faith').

## NOVEMBER

**11<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of Freedom and Peace Festival** comprising the following events:

- a concert of Bulat Okudzhava's songs performed by Anatol Borowik.
- a meeting entitled '**A Rosemary's Twig. Night Talks of Poles**' with Leszek Mazan, a well-known publicist from Krakow, Wojciech Lubawski, mayor of Kielce and author of the book 'Mał-

gorzata idzie na wojnę' [Margaret Goes to War], Bogdan Białek, president of Jan Karski Society and Kielce artists – Andrzej Cempura, Mirosław Bieliński and Paweł Piotrkowski.



- a screening of a Polish documentary from 1935 about Józef Piłsudski entitled **‘Sztandar Wolności’** [Banner of Freedom], directed by Ryszard Ordyński.
- a meeting entitled **‘Miriam Guterman in Our Memories’**.
- a meeting with Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz on **‘ABC of Judaism’**.
- a meeting with Tomasz Dostatni, OP, entitled **‘Pope Francis – why is he not understood in Poland?’**.

## DECEMBER

**11<sup>th</sup> December** – a meeting with priest Grzegorz Michalczyk, National Chaplain of Artistic Circles, entitled **‘In Umbra Fidei – a look at the Lord’s Mother’** (a series of meetings entitled ‘Motorways and Paths of Faith’).

**14<sup>th</sup> December** – a meeting promoting a book issued by the Jan Karski Society entitled **‘Stan wojenny i po nim’** [Martial Law and After] by Professor Stanisław Żak. The meeting took place on the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the introduction of Martial Law in Poland, during which the author of the book was imprisoned by the Communist authorities for almost a year.

**18<sup>th</sup> December** – an evening with poetry and music entitled **‘Rumi’s Wedding Night’**. Rumi was an 13<sup>th</sup>-century Persian poet, mystic and theologian of Islam.

## Jan Karski Society

### – Institute for the Culture of Encounter and Dialogue

Since 1<sup>st</sup> November, the Society's main seat is located in the premises at 7 Planty Street in Kielce. The building is significantly associated with the recent Polish-Jewish history. Before the war, it housed a kosher food shop, selling mostly meat. On July 4, 1946 the Jewish inhabitants of the building were murdered by Polish citizens of the city.

The premises needed some refurbishment as they were in poor technical condition. However, thanks to the engagement and assistance of local authorities, the seat is now suitable for the Society to lead its statutory activities. Rooms have been redecorated, new toilets have been built, a new ventilation system installed and doors and windows have been exchanged and walls painted. We would like to express our gratitude to the city authorities for their help.

#### Plans

In our premises we intend to permanently create:

- **A meeting place in an ecumenical hall**, in which believers of different faiths and religions as well as non-believers will be able to devote themselves to contemplation and prayer. They will be accompanied by the message of the Book of Isaiah, „My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”, written in Polish, English, Hebrew, Greek and Latin;
- **“Memory Chamber of the Kotlicki and Goldszajd families”**, which will present the history of Jews in Kielce before World War II, testimonies of joy and sorrow, as well as the life at the Kielce ghetto until its end in August 1942. The exhibition will consist of, among others, photographs and letters of Hana Goldszajd;
- **“Stefan Zabłocki Memory Chamber”** dedicated to the Jewish children from the Kielce ghetto murdered in 1943;
- **“Miriam Guterman Memory Chamber”**. It will be a place to commemorate the history of the Kielce Jews during World War II and after 1945.
- **Małe Kino – Little Cinema** – weekly screenings starting from February

#### Changes

- On November 25, 2014, a General Meeting of Society's members took place at the new seat. **New management** board was appointed, comprising Bogdan Białek, president of the board, Bohdan Gumowski, deputy-president of the board and Andrzej Rogala, treasurer.
- During the meeting, the **Institute for the Culture of Encounter and Dialogue was formally established**. Through its activities the Society will seek to build bridges between the participants of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

# *Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*We are grateful to all individuals and institutions who would like to provide some support to develop our activities and achieve aims of the Institute for the Culture of Encounter and Dialogue. We are deeply convinced that the Institute's work will be beneficial for the citizens of Kielce and for the creation of a positive image of our city as a place of dialogue, cooperation and reconciliation.*



4<sup>th</sup> July, 2014

68th Anniversary of Kielce Pogrom. 7 Planty Street – the place of tragic events from 1946. In front of the building 42 chairs were placed with the names of the Pogrom's victims. Students from Kielce schools lit candles on each one of them. Behind the chairs, there is the entrance to the ground-floor premises, which since November has been the main seat of the Institute for the Culture of Encounter and Dialogue.

## **Jan KarSKI Society** Institute for the Culture of Encounter and Dialogue

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