

2019

## ANNUAL REPORT

The Jan Karski Society



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# LETTER OF THE SOCIETY'S PRESIDENT



## Thank you for the past year!

In 2020 the Jan Karski Society will be celebrating 15th anniversary of its operations. We have filled that time with numerous activities organized in cultural and spiritual space of the city.

In the following report I wish to present to you the Society's achievements of the last year **which would not have been possible but for the support of our Donors**. Together with the Society's team I would like to thank you for all the payments and support.

In November and December 2019 I visited the USA and Israel where I participated in important meetings related to remembrance, reconciliation and Kielce. I had an opportunity to speak about the ways Kielce deals with its difficult memory about the Kielce Pogrom of 1946. **This experience is perceived as a universal message which may become an inspiration for every human being.**

I look forward to continued cooperation and your support.

Bogdan Białek  
President of the Jan Karski Society



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In 2019 we conducted 120 workshops for young people and 50 for adults.

There were more than 40 meetings with writers, scientists and artists opened to all. We also organized a national conference for teachers and a literary festival.

All the events were attended by more than 6,500 people.



# HELP US CHANGE THE WORLD!

The Society's activities are possible thanks to the support of our donors.  
**You can be one of them!**

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# EDUCATIONAL YOUTH WORKSHOPS



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Naftali Teitelbaum  
dr Seweryn Kaczyński  
Mojżesz Morawiec  
Rendel Mikolowski

We teach respect for other people and bearing in mind the tragic history of the Jews of Kielce we remind others that great crimes begin with the usual stereotypes and offensive words. The workshops organized by our Society are attended by students and pupils. This year, they were organized both at the Society's main seat as well as in other educational centres.

In 2019 we conducted 120 workshops for more than 3,000 participants.

The project of free intercultural workshops for young people from Kielce was founded by the Municipal Office of Kielce.



# ABCs of JUDAISM AND JEWISH CULTURE



In 2019 we continued the implementation of our original program of ABCs of Judaism and Jewish Culture. Until June 2019 more than 80 people participated in lectures conducted by Polish rabbis. The beginners learned about the main ideas of Judaism whereas the advanced learners studied Talmudic texts and Hasidic masters.

In the second half of the year, the program concentrated on workshops devoted to Jewish cemeteries, the Hebrew language, cuisine of Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews or commemorating Jewish communities. More than 100 people participated in 10 workshops, most of which consisted of several meetings.

The implementation of the program was supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Poland.



# NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS



On June 7 – 8, 2019 more than 30 teachers from all over Poland learned practical skills on how to respond to various manifestation of anti-Semitism at school. The workshops were conducted by Bogdan Białek, President of the Jan Karski Society, Arkadiusz Walcza, head of the Warsaw Centre for Educational and Social Innovations and Training, Małgorzata Rusiłowicz, educator specializing in intercultural dialogue as well as Dorota Krzemionka, PhD, scientific editor of "Charaktery" monthly magazine covering psychology-related topics. The conference aroused great interest and attracted more than 100 teachers from across the country.

The conference was organized thanks to the support of Fundusz Obywatelski managed by Fundacja dla Polski.



# PERMANENT EXHIBITION ON THE KIELCE POGROM OF 1946

nijcie na minione dni.  
(Iz 46,9)  
the former things of old.  
(Iz 46,9)

## YDÓW KIELECKICH DO 1939 ROKU



Thanks to the exhibition “Remember the Former Things of Old” opened in 2016 the visitors can learn the most important information about the Kielce Pogrom, read archival documents and listen to the testimonies of the Pogrom’s survivors.



# NEW EXHIBITION ON THE KIELCE POGROM OF 1918



In 2019 we expanded our permanent exhibition including a new room devoted the first Kielce pogrom of November 11, 1918. The exhibition consisted of copies of unique archival documents and photographs presented within social and political context of anti-Jewish riots which took place days after Poland had regained its independence.

**Blessings Room**, a space of silence and a moment of reflection, houses a scroll of the Torah from the Kielce pre-war synagogue.



# VISITS OF POLISH AND FOREIGN ORGANIZED GROUPS



The house at 7 Planty Street is a symbol of how Kielce has coped with its difficult history. Meeting with Bogdan Białek and watching the film 'Bogdan's Journey' our visitors talk about and share experiences related to the activities of the Society.

In 2019, we were visited by 32 organized groups, approximately 1,680 people, from Poland, Israel, the USA and their countries. The exhibition was visited by 350 individuals, including 150 people from Poland and 200 people from abroad, mainly from Israel, the USA, Germany but also from Japan and the Netherlands.



# 73<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE KIELCE POGROM



It is our duty as the Society to commemorate the victims of the Kielce Pogrom. The commemoration of the 73rd anniversary of the Pogrom included the opening of the new exhibition, a lecture of Rabbi Alan Iser on Christian-Jewish relations, a discussion about various forms and the sense of commemoration and memory led by representative of local cultural institutions as well as professor Stanisław Obirek as well as a march of Prayer and Remembrance attended by guests from Poland and abroad.



# OTHER ANNIVERSARIES



We also remember about other anniversaries related to the history of Kielce Jews. Last year, together with a group of 50 students from Kielce we commemorated 45 Jewish children murdered by German on May 23, 1943. In order to remind the city residents of the martyrdom of 20 thousand Jewish inhabitants of Kielce we organized an exhibition in the city space, a commemoration event attended by a group of young people from Israel and a pilgrimage of memory to Treblinka, attended by several dozen people.



# NON-FICTION LITERATURE AND POETRY FESTIVAL



The Non-fiction Literature and Poetry Festival is our flagship event. Last year it was organized with the leitmotif 'Dialogue Against Hatred'. For an entire month our Institute served as space for discussion about the legacy of the Round Table and the meaning of dialogue. Books written by the invited guests (Olga Tokarczuk, Adam Michnik, Ludwik Wiśniewski, Józef Hen, Ewa Lipska and Michał Rusinek) triggered our debates.

**16** meetings were attended by nearly 1,300 people and the Internet broadcasts reached more than 7,000 viewers.

The organization of the festival was supported by the **Stefan Batory Foundation** and through crowd funding at [www.zbiorka.pl](http://www.zbiorka.pl).



# IDEAS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTAURY - SERIES OF LECTURES



In 2019 we organized a series of meetings revolving around “Ideas of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, which created an opportunity to understand contemporary social and cultural phenomena explained by prominent intellectuals, including Professor Paweł Śpiewak, Professor Aleksander Smolar, Professor Stanisław Obirek and Professor Edward Nęcka.

The meetings were attended by nearly 500 people.

The organization of the meetings was supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Poland.



# “PLANTACJA” SOCIAL LAB AND CAFÉ



“Plantacja” Social Lab and Café situated in the house at 7 Planty street creates an additional meeting space for discussions about literature, psychology and the ways of coping with everyday life. The space is used by representatives of various non-governmental organizations operating in Kielce, including KOD (Committee for the Defence of Democracy) Kielce Branch, Pestka Foundation, Society for Secular Culture.



# OUR PLANS FOR 2020

The year 2020 will be the year of new opportunities and new possibilities. Thanks to the support of our donors and partners we will continue our educational, commemorative and cultural activities.

We want to organize more workshops on respect towards the Other and human dignity. We are planning a series of conferences for teachers, organized across Poland, focusing on how to react to the manifestations of anti-Semitism at school. The program of ABCs of Judaism and Jewish Culture will be implemented throughout the entire year. We will continue to commemorate the victims of the Kielce Pogrom of 1946, Jewish children murdered by Germans and the liquidation of the Kielce ghetto. Our most important event, however, shall be Shabaton Festival – a series of religious and cultural events including prayers, discussions, exhibitions, concerts and performances devoted to Jewish culture. In December we are planning to organize another Kielce Christian – Jewish Meetings.

A new city space installation will commemorate the victims of the Kielce ghetto. Additionally, we are planning to erect a commemorative plaque at the Jewish cemetery to honour all victims of German shootings which took place there.

As far as possible we will be expanding and modernizing our exhibitions.





## OUR DONORS



Urząd Miasta Kielce



**Fundusz Obywatelski**



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