The Poles and Polish – Americans have a rich history of fighting for freedom, liberty and equality. From Casimir Pulaski and Thaddeus Kosciuszko who helped America win its independence from Britain to Ignacy Paderewski, concert pianist, statesman and freedom fighter to Jan Karski, Humanity’s Hero who risked his life to bring proof of the Nazi extermination camps to the west, to Lech Walesa and Pope John Paul II who were integral in bringing down the communism and the Soviet Union, the Polish/Polish Americans have been in the forefront of the struggle for justice and liberty.

Casimir Pulaski Day is celebrated in Chicago on the first Monday in March. This year offers us an opportunity to expose all Chicago students, not only to the contribution made by Pulaski to America but the contributions the Polish and Polish Americans have made to Chicago, the United States and the world.

For many of our students Pulaski is a little known hero of the Revolutionary War. In 1977, Illinois enacted a law designating the first Monday in March as "Casimir Pulaski Day," to recognize the contributions Pulaski made toward the creation of our great country.

Casimir Pulaski was born in Warsaw, Poland on March 4th, 1745. After opposing Prussian and Russian interference in Poland with his father in support of Polish liberty he was declared an outlaw by the Prussians and the Russians and he left Poland to travel to Paris.

In Paris, Pulaski became friends with Benjamin Franklin, a spokesperson for the American Colonies trying to obtain their freedom from English rule. Pulaski, familiar with a people’s deep desire for freedom and opposition to tyranny volunteered his services to the fledgling army of the Continental Americans.
Pulaski arrived in Philadelphia in 1777 and was later made the head of the American Cavalry by George Washington. Pulaski was the "Father of the American Cavalry" and as head of the Cavalry, Pulaski trained his men using tactics that he had used fighting the Prussians and Russians while fighting for the freedom of Poland.

In a time when the new Continental Army was struggling to pay its bills and buy equipment, it is noteworthy that Pulaski used his own funds to equip his cavalry. Such was his dedication to his men and this new country he was helping in its quest for freedom.

General Casimir Pulaski was mortally wounded by a cannon as he charged into battle during the Battle of Savannah on October 9, 1779 and died 6 days later on October 15th at the young age of 34.

Teaching about Pulaski Day provides teachers and students unlimited opportunities to explore both the issues leading to the creation of Pulaski Day and the Polish contributions to the founding of America it was meant to commemorate. This year we are encouraging every school to observe Pulaski Day by helping students explore lessons and web sites that put the day and its meaning to Chicago into historical perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Lesson Plans and Links to Curriculum Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casimir Pulaski</td>
<td>Lesson Plans and Links to Curriculum Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thaddeus Kosciuszko</td>
<td>Links and Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignacy Paderewski</td>
<td>Links and Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Karski</td>
<td>Links and Lesson Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lech Walesa</td>
<td>Links and Links to Lesson Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope John Paul II</td>
<td>Links and Links to Lesson Plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources:

One of the best resources pertaining to Polish/Polish American history, culture and art available to our students and teachers in Chicago is the Polish American Museum of America. The Polish Museum of America was established in 1935 and is located at 984 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chicago IL 60622.

The Museum is under the direction of its director Jan Lorys. The Polish Museum of America is the “crown jewel” of the Polish American community. Established 75 years ago it has preserved and exhibited the history and culture of the Polish American community and our ancestral homeland – Poland. Its all-inclusive exhibits are both educational and entertaining. Its Library and extensive Archives have rendered invaluable services to historians, researchers, students and genealogists.

The Polish Museum of America, one of the oldest and largest ethnic museums in the United States, offers visitors a range of exhibits, resources and activities related to Polish history, culture and heritage, as well as Polish American history. Tour guides are available to assist visitors and provide additional information. There is handicapped access and a wheelchair is available upon request.

The Polish Museum of America Library has over 100,000 books in both Polish and English languages on subjects of interest to Polish Americans, including such topics as Polish art, music, biographies, genealogy, immigration and history. Students and teachers are welcome to use these resources for on-premises research.¹

Website:

Phone: (773) 384-3352

---

Resources

Polish Curriculum Resources:

- http://cpssocialscienceinstruction.wikispaces.com/Polish+Curriculum+Resources

Casimir Pulaski:

- http://www.polishamericancenter.org/Pulaski.htm
- http://info-poland.buffalo.edu/web/history/hist_persons/pulaski/link.shtml

Thaddeus Kosciuszko:

- http://educationextras.com/LOCelementary.html Lesson Plan

Ignacy Paderewski:

- http://www.paderewskiassociation.org/Paderewski_Biography.htm
- http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/composer/paderewski.html

Jan Karski:

- http://www.jankarski.net/

Lech Walesa:

- http://www.cps.edu/Programs/Academic_and_enrichment/Documents/ChicagoSTTPCurriculum.pdf Lesson Plan

Pope John Paul II

- http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/pope/communism/

- http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers/lessonplans/history/pope.html Lesson Plan
Why do we recognize Casimir Pulaski Day?

PUBLIC ACT 80-621. ILLINOIS STATE GOVERNMENT.
BIRTHDAY OF CASIMIR PULASKI--FIRST MONDAY IN MARCH-HOLIDAY.

AN ACT to make Casimir Pulaski’s birthday a holiday. Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

Section 1. The first Monday in March of each year is a holiday to be observed throughout the State and to be known as the birthday of Casimir Pulaski.

Within 10 days prior to the first Monday in March of each year the Governor shall issue a proclamation announcing the holiday and designating the official events which shall be held in honor of the memory of Casimir Pulaski and his contribution to American independence.


Casimir Pulaski Commemorative Stamp

On Jan. 16, 1931, the U.S. Post Office Department issued this commemorative stamp honoring Polish patriot Casimir Pulaski, who fought with American forces during the American Revolution. The stamp was first released in Savannah, where he died, as well as in eleven American cities with large Polish populations.

The 2-cent stamp was released to mark the 150th anniversary of the death of Casimir Pulaski, who was mortally wounded in the siege of Savannah. However, as Pulaski died on Sept. 11, 1779, the stamp came over a year after the sesquicentennial of his death. However, on the bicentennial of Pulaski’s death in 1979, the Postal Service released a postal card showing him on horseback.

Casimir Pulaski Commemorative Postal Card

The Postal Service issued this postal card on September 11, 1979 with first-day-of-issue ceremonies in Savannah. The design shows Count Pulaski on horseback at the siege of Savannah in 1779. Sometimes called the father of American cavalry, Pulaski came to Georgia in the fall of 1779. His land forces, joined by the French Navy, unsuccessfully attempted to dislodge British forces holding Savannah. On September 9, Pulaski was mortally wounded, and he died two days later.
S.J.RES.22 -- Whereas Casimir Pulaski was a Polish military officer who fought on the side of America against the British in the American Revolutionary War; (Introduced in Senate - IS)

109th CONGRESS
1st Session
S. J. RES. 22

Proclaiming Casimir Pulaski to be an honorary citizen of the United States posthumously.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

July 28, 2005

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Ms. MURKOWSKI) introduced the following joint resolution; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proclaiming Casimir Pulaski to be an honorary citizen of the United States posthumously.

Whereas Casimir Pulaski was a Polish military officer who fought on the side of America against the British in the American Revolutionary War;

Whereas Benjamin Franklin recommended that General George Washington accept Casimir Pulaski as a volunteer in the American Cavalry and said that Pulaski was `renowned throughout Europe for the courage and bravery he displayed in defense of his country's freedom';

Whereas after arriving in America, Casimir Pulaski wrote these words to General Washington, `I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it, and to live or die for it';

Whereas the first military engagement of Casimir Pulaski with the British was on September 11, 1777, at the Battle of Brandywine, and his courageous charge in this engagement averted a disastrous defeat of the American Cavalry and saved the life of George Washington;

Whereas on September 15, 1777, George Washington elevated Casimir Pulaski to the rank of Brigadier General of the American Cavalry;

Whereas Casimir Pulaski formed the Pulaski Cavalry Legion, and in February 1779, this legion ejected the British occupiers from Charleston, South Carolina;

Whereas in October 1779, Casimir Pulaski mounted an assault against British forces in Savannah, Georgia;

Whereas on the morning of October 9, 1779, Casimir Pulaski was mortally wounded and was taken aboard the American ship USS Wasp, where he died at sea on October 11, 1779;

Whereas before the end of 1779, the Continental Congress resolved that a monument should be erected in honor of Casimir Pulaski;

Whereas in 1825, General Lafayette laid the cornerstone for the Casimir Pulaski monument in Savannah, Georgia; and

Whereas in 1929, Congress passed a resolution recognizing October 11 of each year as Pulaski Day in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Casimir Pulaski is proclaimed to be an honorary citizen of the United States Posthumously.

http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:S.J.RES.22.IS:
History News Cast: Who would you invite?

Purpose:

Imagine if you could gather a group of people who were instrumental to American history and freedom to dinner. Who would you invite? Chances are many immediately think of George Washington, James Madison, Martin Luther King, Jr. and others that we learned about in history class. This lesson seeks to have students research and identify some of American history’s activists whose stories are not so well known but are important to the development of American democracy. Students are then asked to research and prepare to attend a history dinner-table and act out their activist and contribute to a history time-capsule in which their story will be preserved.

Objectives:

Students will describe characteristics of important citizens in order to discuss the role of individuals in the cause of liberty.

Students will examine biographies of Casimir Pulaski and Thaddeus Kosciuszko in order to determine their roles in the establishment of American Democracy.

Students will research the role of citizen action throughout American history in order to defend their inclusion in a history dinner-table.

Materials:

Student Resource Sheet- Individuals in Action: Pulaski and Kosciuszko

Student Resource Sheet- Individuals in Action: Research Guide

Student Assessment Sheet- Dinner Table Inclusion Sheet

Suggested Resource:


http://europeanhistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa060801c.htm


http://info-poland.buffalo.edu/classroom/pulaski/children/CPheroes.html

http://info-poland.buffalo.edu/classroom/index.html
Procedure:

Warm Up/Motivator: Have students brainstorm who is included as a Founding Father from the Howard Chandler Christy painting, The Signing of the Constitution of the United States. What characteristics do they have in common?

Have students create a list of characteristics of the people in the painting. Comments will appear include: Bravery, intelligence, work for change, positive, good leadership skills, ability to communicate, ability to see solutions, and in the right place at the right time- students can add other answers as suitable.

Ask the students to make suggestions as to who else could be added to the painting of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Ask them to think of people throughout history who have worked to promote the cause of freedom and liberty. Record the answers on the board or overhead.

what can students see or infer in the artwork. Do the same thing with the following stamp
Most students will have little or no knowledge of either gentleman. The point of the activity is to highlight the idea that many American heroes have been forgotten throughout history.

Distribute the student resource sheet, Individuals in Action: Pulaski and Kosciuszko and direct them to highlight the answers to the guide questions found at the end of each biography. For lower level readers, use the suggested resource- Twice a Hero with the accompanying DVD to highlight the achievements of both men. Summarize the activity by asking students to write a sentence or two on the following questions:

What did each man do to promote the cause of liberty in America?

Why do you think more is not known about their actions?

Using Slide 9, introduce students to the concept of an American History Dinner-Table. Each student will be asked to research and role-play a person who has influenced American democracy and history but is not traditionally recognized. It is up to the students to choose who to research but a suggested list might include:

Distribute student resource, Individuals in Action: Research Guide and ask students to complete the graphic organizer with their research. Another option is to have students research two individuals and choose one to invite to the dinner table.

Assessment: Host a History Dinner Table. Students should come in character prepared to defend their inclusion at the table and bringing an object to be included in a time capsule of American History. Ask each student to introduce him/herself and describe the object brought and why it will help history to remember his/her actions. As a group discuss:
Why do you think our group has not traditionally been included in popular discussions of American history?

What contributions did we make to the promotion of freedom and democracy?

What lessons can we take from this table?

Student Resource

Individuals in Action: Pulaski and Kosciuszko

Casimir Pulaski

Casimir Pulaski was born March 6, 1745 in Warsaw, Poland. His father, Józef Pulaski, was a well-respected lawyer in the area and a deputy to the Polish Sejm (Parliament). The family owned an estate in Warka, south of Warsaw, where young Casimir grew up. Early in his youth, Casimir Pulaski was sent to Warsaw, where he studied at the local college of Theatines. At a young age he began studying the military crafts which would become his legacy.

A skilled military commander and a son of one of the notable families, Pulaski became one of the co-founders of the Bar Confederation, together with his father, on February 29, 1768. The confederation, aimed to curtail Russian hegemony over the Commonwealth, was actively opposed by the Russian forces stationed in Poland. In November 1771, an attempt was made to take the king hostage. However, the attempt failed, and the Confederation was disbanded soon afterwards. Pulaski was blamed for the attempt, made a public enemy, and eventually sentenced to death in absentia, though he maintained until the end of his life that he had nothing to do with the abduction. He fled the country, eventually moving to France. There he met Benjamin Franklin — the representative of the American Congress who persuaded him to go to America and gave him a letter of recommendation to George Washington.

There, he became a soldier and military commander who fought in the American Revolution under the command of George Washington. Pulaski was a noted cavalryman and played a large role in training Revolutionary troops, with Congress naming him "Commander of the Horse." From 1777 until his death, Pulaski fought in the American Revolutionary War for the independence of the United States. He created Pulaski's Legion, one of the few cavalry regiments in the American Continental Army. He took part in the defense of Charleston and of the siege of Savannah and fought in
the battles of Brandywine, Warren Tavern, Germantown, and Haddonfield. He is today considered by many historians to be the "Father of the American Cavalry."

On October 9, 1779, Pulaski – during a cavalry charge, while encouraging the troops to renew their attack during the Battle of Savannah – was gravely wounded. Several days later, without having regained consciousness, he died of his wounds.

Many tributes have been made to Pulaski starting on November 11, 1779 when Washington ordered that the challenge and response in all Army units for the day had to be "Pulaski" and "Poland."

Today Pulaski’s memory and contributions to American independence are remembered on "General Pulaski Memorial Day," October 11 of each year. Numerous statues, memorials, parks, streets, and schools around the United States are named in his honor and in recognition of the ultimate sacrifice he made in the name of his adopted nation, the United States. On May 10, 1910 the Pulaski monument was dedicated in Washington.

Student Resource

Guide Questions:

What did Pulaski do to promote the cause of American freedom?

What should Americans remember about Casimir Pulaski?

How have Pulaski’s contributions to the nation been commemorated?

Thaddeus Kościuszko

Thaddeus Kościuszko was born February 4, 1746, in Poland, to the noble family of Ludwik Tadeusz Kościuszko. By the time Thaddeus was born, however, the family had fallen upon hard times and the village with its small manor was their only property.

He attended Cadet Academy in Warsaw before studying to become an engineer. In 1776, after being recruited by Benjamin Franklin in France, he came to America to offer his engineering services in the colonies’ struggle for independence. He initially served
as a volunteer, but on October 18, 1776, Congress commissioned him a Colonel of Engineers in the Continental Army.

He was sent to Pennsylvania for his work with the Continental Army. Shortly after arriving, he read the United States Declaration of Independence. Kościuszko was moved by the document because it encompassed everything in which he believed; he was so moved, in fact, that he decided to meet Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the Declaration. The two met in Virginia a few months later. After spending the day discussing philosophy, and other things they shared in common, they became very close friends. Kościuszko was a guest at Monticello on many occasions, and spent prolonged visits there.

Kosciusko's first task in America was the fortification of Philadelphia. His first structure was the construction of Fort Billingsport. On September 24, 1776, Kościuszko was ordered to fortify the banks of the Delaware River against a possible British crossing. In the spring of 1777 he was attached to the Northern Army under General Horatio Gates. As the chief engineer of the army he commanded the construction of several forts and fortified military camps along the Canadian border. His work made significant contributions to the American successful retreat from the battle of Ticonderoga and victory at Saratoga in 1777. After the battle, Kościuszko, then regarded as one of the best engineers in American service, was put in charge by George Washington of military engineering works at the stronghold in West Point on the Hudson River.

After seven years of service, on October 13, 1783, Kościuszko was promoted by Congress to the rank of brigadier general. He was also granted American citizenship, 2.5 square kilometers of land in America, and a large sum of money. He used the money to help some black slaves gain their freedom and acquire an education. He was also admitted to the prestigious Society of the Cincinnati and to the American Philosophical Society.

After the American colonies won their independence, Kościuszko returned to Poland in 1784 to help his own country fight for independence from the surrounding European powers. Upon his departure he charged his friend, Thomas Jefferson with the task of disposing of his property. Kosciusko asked that the money from the sale of his property be used to purchase the freedom of slaves- including Jefferson’s. Although this was not accomplished, it demonstrates the Kosciusko’s belief in the freedom of all Americans. He became a national hero for his efforts, and today is recognized for his contributions to both American and Polish freedom, and numerous memorials in both countries serve to remember his work.
Guide Questions:

What did Thaddeus Kosciuszko do to promote the cause of American freedom?

What do you think Americans should remember about Thaddeus Kosciuszko?

How have Kosciusko’s contributions to American democracy been commemorated?

______________________________

Individuals in Action: Research Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>American history activist #1</th>
<th>American history activist #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and place of birth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did this person do that makes him significant?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How was this person instrumental to American history? (include specific dates and locations)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can he/she donate to the table?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What specific issues would he discuss?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note any specific personality traits or unique views he/she has:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Capsule Inclusion Sheet

Who would you chose to put in a time capsule?

Why do you think he is important?
What would you ask this person and how would this person respond? (Minimum of 3 questions)

1.

2.

3.

If you could give that person a nickname what would it be?

Why do you think his story is not so well known among Americans? How would you interest people in his story? What makes him fascinating and unusual?
Looking at events in the past in the proper historical context is challenging even for experience historians. We, as students of history have to try and look at past events through the eyes of those who lived during those times. Thomas Jefferson, by all accounts, was a complicated individual. This exercise should be looked at with this in mind.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko a lover of, and fighter for, liberty and freedom in Poland came to America in 1776 to help a fledgling country win its freedom and liberty from a tyrannical British empire.

In 1777, Agrippa Hull, a freeborn black man from the Berkshire County town of Stockbridge, signed on to serve in the Continental Army for the duration of the Revolutionary War. The 18-year-old was one of over 5,500 men of color to fight for American independence.

Shortly after he enlisted Hull was reassigned to serve as Kosciuszko’s aide de camp. This launched a long friendship between the two. Hull constantly served by Kosciuszko’s side for over four years. After Kosciuszko was sent south to serve with Washington’s Continental Army, Hull and Kosciuszko were thrust into the bloodiest and most intense fighting of the war.
While in the Carolinas Kosciuszko and Hull had many opportunities to witness the deplorable conditions for slaves on plantations in the South. Above all, they learned that southern slaves were willing to pledge their lives for the British cause in exchange for freedom. Wherever they went, they found that plantation slaves fled to join the British army whenever they could. To witness these conditions must have deeply impressed Hull and Kosciuszko. Indeed, it shaped Kosciuszko’s attitude toward slavery and inspired him to think about how America might be transformed after the war.

After the war Kosciuszko returned to Poland to continue his fight for freedom there. After being severely wounded and in ill health after being first imprisoned and then exiled to France Kosciuszko decided to return to the United States.

When Thaddeus Kosciuszko returned to the United States in 1797 in triumph he lived in Philadelphia as a revolutionary war hero. However, Kosciuszko had more than praise in mind; he intended to collect some $12,000 plus interest in overdue pay from the American Revolution. The American Congress, aware of his enormous popular appeal, quickly voted to allot the back pay, which, with interest rose to over $15,000.

Kosciuszko remained in Philadelphia, where he befriended Vice President Thomas Jefferson. The pair talked of Poland, France, liberty and slavery on numerous occasions in the winter of 1797-1798. Kosciuszko wanted to travel to Paris to gather support for the regeneration of Poland. Jefferson was distraught over the possibility of war between the United States and France and asked Kosciuszko to act as a secret ambassador while Kosciuszko was there.

Kosciuszko wasn’t sure what to do with his $15,000 pension. He gave Jefferson power of attorney and the two men drafted an extraordinary will that required Jefferson to use the money to purchase, manumit [free], educate and give land and cattle to as many of his and other enslaved people as could be afforded. It was a solemn pact between two noble men.

20 years later at Kosciuszko’s death in late 1817, Jefferson’s realized that his promise was now due. So why did Jefferson decide to abandon being the executor and allow the will to waste away in the courts without trying to follow through on his agreement? The pension was now worth in excess of $20,000. was Jefferson’s decision to shed his oath of honor to Kosciuszko a betrayal of a promise?

Jefferson’s attitude about black potential for American citizenship have long been debated, but is his inaction in this affair of honor a symptom of a betrayal of African Americans by a man esteemed as America’s greatest symbol of liberty?
Not mentioned here is who took over Kosciuszko’s money after Jefferson stepped away. How well were the Polish freedom-fighter’s wishes carried out? According to Prof. D. Benjamin Barros the estate was still being litigated in 1834, years after Jefferson had died.

Jefferson’s reasoning for not trying to follow through on the will was that he was too old being over 70 years old. Plus he had deep financial problems and could he afford to free his slaves, give them an education and give them some land? Jefferson claims he was not sure the wills were legal since Kosciuszko had supposedly written two more wills afterward.

However, Jefferson’s grandson felt that the will was enforceable and claimed his grandfather did too. So he tried to get the money to free slaves per Kosciuszko’s request. Just months after Thomas Jefferson died in 1826, Jeff Randolph tried to revive the Kosciuszko bequest, "to save some of the Slaves left by Mr Jefferson, from a Sale by his creditors." Furthermore, Thomas Jefferson himself thought the will would stand. The will's administrator, Benjamin L. Lear, replied that "I had a conversation with Mr Jefferson on the subject at Monticello about three years ago, in which: he approved very heartily the plan I then proposed to adopt"-- a plan to free slaves from elsewhere, not Monticello. Jefferson had no interest in releasing his extremely valuable slaves, but he believed the bequest was perfectly valid.

Why did Jefferson, while throwing himself energetically into the creation of the University of Virginia, plead that he was too old and tired to carry out Kosciuszko's will and betray the trust of his Polish compatriot? Was one of the key reasons Jefferson's allegiance to the Virginia aristocracy and his devotion to maintaining the economic and cultural power of the white South in national politics? Did he also feared offending friends, especially slave-owners already shaken by the actions of others in Virginia who had freed their slaves from bondage.²

Looking at the documents below, and after researching Jefferson’s attitudes on slavery and race debate the merits of the will and discuss how this might have changed American history.

When that is done you should write an argument as to who was the more patriotic, Jefferson or Kosciuszko.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENT # 1, Will of 1797</th>
<th>DOCUMENT # 2, Will of 1798</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I beg Mr. Jefferson that in the case I should die without will or testament he should bye out of my money So many Negroes and free them, that the restante [remaining] sums should be Sufficient to give them education and provide for thier maintenance, that . . . each should know before, the duty of a Cytyzen in the free Government, that he must defend his country against foreign as well as internal Enemies who would wish to change the Constitution for the worst to inslave them by degree afterwards, to have good and human heart Sensible for the Sufferings of others, each must be married and have 100 Ackres of land, wyth instruments, Cattle for tillage and know how to manage and Gouvern it well as well to know [how to] behave to neyboughs [neighbors], always wyth Kindnes and ready to help them . . . .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. KOŚCIUSZKO.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The misspellings are just as they were in the original document)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOCUMENT # 3, Will of 1806.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know all men by these presents, that I, Thade Kosciuszko, formerly an officer of the United States of America in their revolutionary war against Great Britain, and a native of Lilourui, in Poland, at present residing at Paris, do hereby will and direct, that, at my decease, the sum of three thousand seven hundred and four dollars, currency of the aforesaid United States, shall of right be possessed by, and delivered over to the full enjoyment and use of Kosciuszko Armstrong, the son of general John Armstrong, minister plenipotentiary of the said States at Paris. For the security and performance whereof, I do hereby instruct and authorize my only lawful executor in the said United States, Thomas Jefferson, president thereof, to reserve in trust for that special purpose, of the funds he already holds belonging to me, the aforesaid sum of three thousand seven hundred and four dollars, in principal; to be paid by him, the said Thomas Jefferson, immediately after my decease, to him, the aforesaid Kosciuszko Armstrong; and in case of his death, to the use and benefit of his surviving brothers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given under my hand and seal, at Paris, this 28th day of June 1806.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THADE KOSCIUSZKO. SEAL.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In presence of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHARLES CARTER,

JAMES M. MORRIS.
Statement by Ignacy Paderewski on the League of Nations, 18 September 1919

From a Polish point of view, our one hope of future security as a State lies in the League of Nations. Upon it, and I fear upon it alone, depend the liberty of the Polish people and the successful development of democratic and liberal government in Poland.

Standing, as we are, between Germany on one side and Russia on the other, we cannot hope to maintain our integrity during these years, while we build up the strength of our people, unless we have the protection of the League.

Poland at the present moment has 500,000 men under arms. Our people are short of food supplies, short of clothing, short of many of the necessaries of life. We are compelled to make every sacrifice to sustain the army, and this, with our population needing its resources for the up-building of the nation, in order that we may protect ourselves from encroachment.

Today we are defending 1,500 miles of front against Bolshevist forces, and in so doing, we stand as the front line in Europe against Bolshevist invasion from the east.

We are endeavoring to maintain this front line and at the same time to achieve an economic stability, to recuperate our people from the effects of repeated invasions of German and Russian armies. The task is a terrible one. The tax upon our strength will be too great unless we can have the assurance that there will be a body in the world to whom we can appeal for aid in the righting of our wrongs.

Poland has set up a democracy under the inspiration of the American people. Had it not been for American intervention in Europe we might possibly have had some semblance of independent Government under an autocratic overrule, but with American intervention and American help we have sought to establish not only the independence of the State, but also the internal liberty of our people, through the difficult road of democracy.

The pressure is upon us on all sides through military action and through Bolshevist propaganda and an intense propaganda from Germany. Unless we have a protective power in the world, under whose strength we can secure an opportunity for peaceful development and the solution of our internal problems, free from distracting and antagonistic influences, I fear for the safety of our democracy.

The great power and the support which it may furnish need not be military, its moral and economic force is all that we ask, and that power is the League of Nations.

League of Nations Political Cartoons

Today you will analyze three political cartoons about the League of Nations. You will complete several activities for each cartoon you analyze. The last step of the activity is to create your own political cartoon on the League of Nations. Be sure to read and follow all directions/instructions carefully!

Political Cartoon #1: Analyze the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow using complete sentences. HINTS: Who is in the cartoon? What actions are being taken? What message is being made? Read all captions!

OVERWEIGHTED.

Cartoon from the magazine Punch, March 1919.

President Wilson. "HERE'S YOUR OLIVE BRANCH. NOW GET BUSY."

Dove of Peace. "OF COURSE I WANT TO PLEASE EVERYBODY; BUT ISN'T THIS A BIT THICK?"
1. What message do you think the cartoon is trying to make about the League of Nations? Be sure that you explain what details in the cartoon help get this message across.

2. Is the cartoon optimistic or pessimistic about the League of Nations? Provide reasons from the cartoon to support your answers. Use your bell work definitions for assistance!
Political Cartoon #2: Analyze the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow using complete sentences. HINTS: Who is in the cartoon? What actions are being taken? What message is being made? Read all captions!

Tied Up
1. What message do you think the cartoon is trying to make about the League of Nations? Be sure that you explain what details in the cartoon help get this message across.

2. Is the cartoon optimistic or pessimistic about the League of Nations? Provide reasons from the cartoon to support your answers. Use your bell work definitions for assistance!
1. What message do you think the cartoon is trying to make about the League of Nations? Be sure that you explain what details in the cartoon help get this message across.
2. Is the cartoon optimistic or pessimistic about the League of Nations? Provide reasons from the cartoon to support your answers. Use your bell work definitions for assistance!

3. Which of the above cartoons support the speech given by Paderewski and how does it support the speech?
Your Own Political Cartoon: Complete the following on a piece of white computer paper.

1. Create your own political cartoon about the League of Nations. Your political cartoon must include a drawing of some sort, 2-3 captions (written messages), as well as a clear optimistic or pessimistic message about the League of Nations.

2. Somewhere on your white computer paper copy and fill in the following statement: My political cartoon about the League of Nations is ____________________________________________ (optimistic or pessimistic) because ____________________________________________.
WHY JAN KARSKI?

History is generally seen as a collection of dates, names and facts from the past – a perception historians have no small role in creating. But hidden behind these dry facts are tragic, touching and momentous events. To understand history is to understand dilemmas that we often face ourselves.

Jan Karski was the emissary of the Polish Underground State, a man who gave the Polish government-in-exile the first credible report about the annihilation of the Jews and the scale of this tragedy, which he based on his own observations and accounts he took from members of the Jewish community.

Karski reached the most important Allied leaders, including U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and tried to convince them to counter the German annihilation. Karski worked to raise public awareness abroad about the horrendous situation on the ground in occupied Poland; the determined efforts of the Polish Underground in occupied Poland; and the efforts of the Polish Underground State. The publication of Karski’s *Story of a Secret State* in 1944 represented a significant milestone and made a large splash. After the war, Karski stayed abroad, teaching at Georgetown University for many years.

Jan Karski’s story is timeless and universal as it shows how to behave when one is confronted with evil. His life is proof positive of what to do in face of impossible challenges such as violence, totalitarianism and hatred.

Karski bridges one of the most important subjects of international discourse about contemporary history - World War II and the Holocaust - and the tragic history of occupied Poland.

His story is important for many reasons but most of all it demonstrates that you can be loyal to your homeland while rejecting hatred and totalitarian, nationalistic or racist ideologies.

It helps us address the complex subject of Polish-Jewish and Christian-Jewish relations during World War II. Jan Karski belongs to a significant group of Poles engaged in helping the Jews. At the same time his attitude is a condemnation of all those in Poland, Europe and the world who were indifferent toward the Holocaust.

Robert Kostro, Director of Polish History Museum

---

3 Used by permission, The Polish History Museum, Warsaw, Poland
Jan Karowski (Jan Kozielewski) April 24, 1914 (Łódź) – July 13, 2000 (Washington D.C.)

Before the outbreak of World War II on September 1, 1939, Jan Karski was a Polish reserve officer and a junior diplomat with large ambitions and a bright future. On September 17, 1939, Soviet forces invaded his country from the east, and Karski’s life was sent careening in a new direction. Rounded up along with thousands of Polish officers, policemen and leading citizens from the eastern part of his country, he was being sent to his certain death at Katyn Forest when he managed his first escape. Posing as an enlisted man, he fled Soviet captivity and returned to the German Nazi-occupied part of Poland.

Before long, Karski became a courier for the Polish Underground resistance where he played a large and remarkable role in the struggle for his country, putting his life on the line numerous times. After being tortured by the German Nazis, he attempted suicide, but later continued his mission of smuggling information out of Poland to the Polish government-in-exile, first in France and later in England. On his return trips to Poland, he would bring orders and information for the Underground government. Drawing on his photographic memory, Karski delivered the Polish government-in-exile’s orders for merging a full-fledged Underground state into the country’s already strong military resistance.

On one of his many courageous missions, an unshaven Karski twice infiltrated Warsaw’s Jewish Ghetto to witness its horrors (including starvation and despair). An especially gruesome spectacle was watching young Nazi soldiers hunt down Jewish children for sport. Karski subsequently posed as a Ukrainian guard at the Izbica transit camp to witness Jews being herded onto train cars, to be sent to their deaths.

After his final mission from Poland, Karski was ordered to spread the word in the West about what he’d seen. In addition to detailed written reports, he personally delivered his eyewitness account – and urgent appeal for intervention – to British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and later President Franklin Roosevelt in the White House. He pleaded with both leaders to stop the Holocaust. Sadly, his message largely fell on deaf ears.

In addition to meeting with Roosevelt, he met with Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, a close friend of the president. Karski remembers Frankfurter’s reaction: “Mr. Karski,” he says emphatically, ‘A man like me talking to a man like you must be totally frank. So I must say: I am unable to believe in what I have just heard, in all the things that you have just told me.”

Once in America, Karski was assigned by the Polish government-in-exile to write his account. Improbably, his book, Story of a Secret State, was published in 1944 in the United States and became an overnight best-seller, being picked as a Book of the Month Club selection and selling 400,000 copies. This opened the door for Karski to
conduct an extensive speaking tour throughout the United States and Canada, influencing public opinion.

Born Jan Kozielewski in 1914 in Łódź, Poland, a heterogeneous city composed of Polish Catholics, Polish Jews, Germans and Russians, he was the youngest of eight children in a Roman Catholic family. His father was a leather merchant. Young Karski studied law and diplomacy at the University of Lwow (Lviv).

After the war, choosing to remain in the United States rather than return to an uncertain future in Communist Poland, he earned his Ph.D. at Georgetown University, where he subsequently taught in the School of Foreign Service for 40 years. In 1965, he married Pola Nirenska, a Polish Jewish dancer whom he had first seen perform in London in 1938. In yet another tragedy in Karski’s life, his wife took her own life in 1992.

Initially loath to discuss his wartime experiences, wanting to put that horrific chapter behind him, ultimately, he had no choice but to speak out. “I have no other proofs, no photographs,” Karski wrote later in a memoir about witnessing Jews being sent to their deaths. “All I can say is that I saw it, and that it is the truth.” Half a century later, Karski told Maciej Kozlowski, author of the biography, *The Emissary: The Story of Jan Karski*. “I spent about an hour in that camp. I came out sick, seized by fits of nausea. I vomited blood. I had seen horrifying things there. Disbelief? You would not believe it yourself, if you saw it.”

In addition to *Story of a Secret State*, Karski also published *The Great Powers and Poland, 1919-1945: From Versailles to Yalta*, an insightful analysis of the politics of power. In 1982, Jan Karski was Yad Vashem in Jerusalem awarded him the title of Righteous Among the Nations, and the Israeli government declared him an Honorary Citizen in 1994, as did his native city of Łódź.

According to biographer Kozlowski, “There could hardly be another person who felt more deeply, painfully, and bitterly the expedient abandonment of Poland by the Allies in World War II. Jan Karski was a man who, tragically, had to feel that his own prodigious efforts on behalf of the Jews of Europe - and on behalf of his briefly independent native land - were an utter failure. Regarded as a hero in both Poland and Israel, his was a heroism not of triumphs but of extraordinary integrity and courage.”

Though the large ambitions and bright future of Jan Karski failed to place him on the course that he had imagined as a youth, he ended up playing an enormous role on the world stage, offering lessons to us all. His mission was courageous, his testimony powerful, the moral standards he set for himself and others of the highest order; indisputably he became humanity’s hero.⁴

---

⁴ Text used by Permission: www.jankarski.net
JAN KARSKI – AN ATTEMPT AT
RECREATING A BIOGRAPHY

Goals:

- Introducing the students to phases of Karski’s life and development and to his times;
- Developing the skills of extracting information from primary sources, posing research questions, critiquing sources;
- Developing the skills of arranging events in chronological order;
- Developing the skills of creating a biographical note;
- Developing the skills of constructing a biographical story and relating the life of an individual to the context of European and world history;
- Developing the skills of essay writing.

Note: This type of lesson helps students better understand the hero, his motivations and his experiences; it helps them understand the reasons why the person in question is a role model and an example to follow.

Methodology:

Divide the class into groups. Each group works on a specific part of the resource package located at:
http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/#!exhibit:exhibitId=QR_UaCtP

Teaching aids:

- Primary sources from the package;
- Selection of photos of Karski from different moments of his life;
- Historical maps of the world from World War II and the period after the war.

Lesson plan:

A short introduction of Jan Karski in a historical context (reviewing the most important events of World War II, interwar Poland and the German Occupation of the country)

Division of students into groups:

a) Group I – Childhood and the Pre-War years (Maciej Wierzyński's interview with Jan Karski)
b) Group II – The War Erupts and The German Occupation
c) Group III – The Polish Underground State
d) Group IV – The Mission
e) Group V- Life after the War
With the help of supporting questions, each group should familiarize itself with the documents regarding a part of Jan Karski's life, write up the facts from his life in chronological order and identify the matching photos.

After the preliminary work, every group writes down and presents their findings in front of the entire class, preferably in a timeline.

After creating the timeline, the students, along with the teacher, consider and discuss the continuity of the narration and try to find the missing information in the supplementary materials from the package or in literature or online.

**Follow-up**

a) Write a biographical note about Jan Karski. An assignment for students from 12 to 15 years old.

b) Write an essay with the following prompt: Can Jan Karski be a positive and relevant role model for young people today and if so, why?

c) Write an outline of a biography (or a short biography) of Jan Karski. A list of sample supporting questions for the groups:

A) Group I: Childhood and the Pre-War Years

- In what city was the hero born and raised?
- What can you say about his family and friends?
- Where did he study and what was his major?
- What can we say about his way of thinking and his views on Poland and the world?

B) Group II – The War Erupts and the German Occupation

- Where and in what division (infantry, cavalry, artillery) did Karski serve in September of 1939? Who did he fight?
- What happened to him when Poland surrendered?
- How did he end up in the territories under German occupation?
- In what conditions did he live and what was he doing at the time?

C) Group III – The Polish Underground State

- Why was Karski using two names?
- What did he do in the Polish Underground State?
- What were the dangers he was facing and how did he avoid them?

D) Group IV – The Mission
- With what task was Karski assigned in the summer of 1942 and from whom did he get it?
- How did he prepare for the mission?
- What was the danger he faced because of the mission?
- Who did he visit in London and Washington, D.C. and why?
- Was his mission successful?

“After my preliminary report, I was asked to see Prime Minister General Sikorski. My admiration and the admiration of our people in Poland for this man grew tremendously. […] I had a long conversation with him about the plans of the men in the Underground for the future organization of Poland, the common desire so deeply rooted in all our fighters to make Poland a genuine, unshakable democracy, one that would assure social justice and freedom to every inhabitant. I told Sikorski that the hopes of the people centered around him, that the desire of the overwhelming majority was that he carry out our aspirations and lead the nation during the difficult years to come. […] When I took leave of Sikorski, he said to me: ‘Young man, you have worked hard in this war. For what you have done you will be decorated with the Virtuti Militari order. The ceremony will take place the day after tomorrow.’ J.Karski, *Story of a Secret State*, London, 2011 pp. 411-412)

E) Group V – Life after the War

- Why didn’t Jan Karski return to Poland?
- What was he doing during his stay in Washington D.C. in 1944?
- What did he do after the war?
- Did he have a family?

F) Questions for all the groups:

- Where do we find most of the information about Karski’s life and efforts?
- What are the traps and dangers for a researcher?
POLISH ATTITUDES TOWARD JEWS

DURING WORLD WAR II

Goals:

- To familiarize the students with the German occupier's legislation in the General Government dictating the Jews’ situation and regulating their lives;
- For the students to learn the ways in which the Polish Underground State counteracted the annihilation of the Jews;
- For the students to understand the attitudes of Poles toward the Jewish population during the Nazi occupation;
- For the students to identify the range of emotions among the Polish populace and relate it to the students’ own experiences or those of their loved ones;
- To understand the usefulness of psychology in interpreting selected primary sources.

Methodology:

Discussion, group work, elements of drama.

Teaching aids:

The educational package

Lesson plan:

The teacher starts by posing a question:

Is it easy to judge historical figures?

The teacher gives an example not necessarily connected to the lesson's topic – such as President Truman's decision to bomb Japan. The teacher presents the problem of moral dilemmas, especially in difficult situations (she/he can utilize psychological knowledge of people’s behaviors under long and heavy stress). She/he explains that a valuable and realistic judgment of people’s behavior can only be made after analyzing as many facts as possible.

The teacher divides the class into five groups and distributes materials from the educational package:
- Definitions of the term "Jew"
- Death penalty for leaving the Ghetto
The students analyze texts and categorize the dangers associated with helping Jews along with the array of Polish attitudes. The teacher introduces the students to a situation in which they are forced to make a decision about their actions under the German occupation of Poland from 1939-45.

The groups draw from the following stories:

**Family 1:**
You are a multigenerational family consisting of grandparents, parents and four children. A small farm provides for your living. It becomes harder and harder to subsist, because the occupiers have introduced mandatory food delivery for the Third Reich. You are trying to hide at least part of your crop from the German officials. If they found out, you will be sent to a concentration camp. You are well aware that everybody in your village is hiding their crops, and some of them are even taking their illegal produce and slaughter to the city and selling it.

**Family 2:**
You are a family of Warsaw intelligentsia*: a mother and two sons in their mid-teens. The father, a doctor, is in German captivity and hasn't come back from the POW camp. The Germans evicted you from your city center apartment, because it was where they formed the Jewish ghetto. Now you live in one room in an attic. The mother, who studied German at university, translates various letters and petitions to the occupying authorities, and the younger son works as a waiter. You are all involved in the resistance efforts of the Home Army. The older son, who is serving in the Bureau of Information and Propaganda has a fake “Ausweis,” or worker's card, to avoid being sent to a work camp in the Reich.

*intellectual elite

**Family 3**
You are a multigenerational family from Radom, a smaller city: parents and four children, the youngest two years old, the oldest, eight. The father is working 12 hours a day in an arms plant taken over by the Germans. He gets food ration stamps in return. If it weren't for family in the country, you wouldn't be able to survive. You live in a rented apartment – a small room with a stove.

**Family 4**
You are an older married couple from Dębica, a small town. The husband works at the post office, and the wife mends clothes. Your son – an officer, whom you were very proud of - was captured by the Soviets in 1939 and you haven't heard from him in a long time. All of your Jewish neighbors have been deported, along with the owner of the building where you rent your apartment.
Family 5
You are a multigenerational family from the Polish nobility – grandparents, parents, three children and two unmarried aunts. You have a big estate and farm, where you employ twenty workers. The Germans placed two families who were thrown out of Wielkopolska, a region incorporated into the Third Reich, in your estate. You are in constant cooperation with the Home Army. You often host “cousins” from the city. And while people come to the country sometimes because they need to cure their ailments, these “cousins” often don't need any medical help.

After familiarizing themselves with the stories, the students draw tasks.

Task 1
In the neighboring house or apartment owned by an elderly couple, you hear a baby crying. You've noticed before that the couple was behaving pretty strangely, coming home with various packages. If you can hear the child, the Volksdeutsch** from the other side of the street can hear it as well. What do you do?
**An ethnically German person living outside the German Reich. They had special rights in Nazi-occupied Poland

Task 2
It is after police curfew, when a very scraggly, dark-haired and dark-eyed man comes to your door. He asks whether you wouldn't give him some old, warm clothing and a piece of bread, and then he would leave. What do you do?

Task 3
One of you finds a little girl on the street/road. She is thin and dirty: hunger caused her to emerge from her hiding place. It is getting dark on the otherwise empty street, and you can hear the footsteps of a German patrol from a distance. What do you do?

Task 4
A boy comes to your place; he has no place to go. His father was your friend before the war. He's a Jew, but you can't tell by his looks. You might run into problems when Germans start checking his documents. What do you do?

Task 5
An hour after hearing shots not far away, suddenly a young man knocks on your door. He is pale and he is oddly holding his side with his hand. He asks you to let him in. What do you do?

The teacher asks the students to look at the tasks and then fill out the table. It shouldn't take them much time – a maximum of five minutes.

Identify the emotions felt by the family in the situation described

Decision

Justifying the decision
Conclusion:

Based on their presentations, the students expand their previous categorization of attitudes and dangers.

Assignment:
Write an essay: based on the attitudes described during the lesson, describe and evaluate Jan Karski’s actions.
“WHAT IS GOING ON IN MĘTÓW?”

Goals:
- Developing the skills of critical reading, posing research questions, finding and interpreting information.
- Developing the skills of drawing conclusions and formulating historical judgments.

Methodology:

Working with a specific primary source

Lesson plan:

To introduce students to the situation of the Polish and Jewish populations during the German occupation.

The teacher distributes the following text.

A letter to the German authorities:
(Note: the original is written in simple language with numerous grammatical and spelling mistakes. There is almost no punctuation. The translation reflects the original).

"Sirs, you do not even know what is going on in Mętów. Stanisław Grzesiak is hiding Wicinski, the one who lives in Głuszczyzna, the one that you want to catch, the one who sold some Jews a rifle. Jan Lawędorski is selling food to some Jews. At Michał Czernic's a Jewish bunch was drinking at Christmas and they remain there now. Elżbieta Kowalczyk is keeping a Mętów Jew in that cabin up north. Please conduct a careful search. The entrance to the cellar is probably next to the stove. Jan Dziachan sold some Jews a rifle, they were there at his place and they beat him up and asked him for the gun and he went with them into the field and gave it to them. Now he is getting these secret publications. The vodka smuggler Władysław Jelemiski is selling Jews food. And his mother-in-law was bragging at her neighbors' about the Mętów Jewess who came to her with 40 kg of scrap meat to hide her, and that is what they are doing now. Teofil Malec is smuggling scrap meat, flour, groats and kielbasa and he takes it to the woods to the groups of Jews. Antoni Stachura took those Jews that were in the fields of Mętów and brought them to the woods in Chmielów and they paid him well for that."

This letter was written by a person from the village of Mętów, Zemborzyce County.

An example of source analysis:
In their answers, the students should only use information from the source, except for question number 5, which should be used as an opportunity to use the
knowledge of interpersonal relations stemming from the student’s wider, outside experience.

1. What kind of source is this?
2. Who is the author of the letter? Based on the text, give as many details as possible.
3. What is the relationship between the author of the letter and the people he is denouncing (the Poles and the Jews)? List these people. What can we say about them based on the text?
4. List the actions of the people being denounced described in the letter (the Poles and the Jews).
5. What is the motivation of the letter’s author? (This question is speculative and does not have a direct answer in the sources.)
6. Describe life in the country during the German occupation.
7. Why did some of the Poles help the Jews? What were their motivations?

The questions above are examples that can be related to the text.

Conclusion: Look for documents in the educational package that show the position of the Polish Underground State regarding the attitudes described in the text.
BEYOND KARSKI

Goals:
- Introducing students to information about how the Poles helped the Jews during World War II;
- Introducing different ways of helping the Jews;
- Developing the skills of working with primary sources: critical reading and text analysis

Methodology:
Group work, brainstorming, working with primary sources

Teaching aids:
Primary sources

Lesson plan:

Distribute texts showing different ways that Poles helped Jews. The texts will serve as “confrontation” with the conclusions from the previous discussion.

Draw a diagram together: How did the Poles help the Jews?

An account from Alicja Resich-Modlińska about her grandmother, Franciszka Budziaszek-Resich. Source: Życie za Życie [Life for Life], a film by A. Gołębiewski, 2007

My Grandmother was a well-known person in Krakow. She had a great beauty parlor by Grodzka Street. She was once walking down Floriańska Street – and as the legend goes - she turned everybody’s heads. She had gorgeous hair, and she was apparently very beautiful. It is important to remember this hair, it was long, blond, platinum blond. When she let it down it came to her feet. She had a big heart. Crowds of poor people would come to her and she would give them money or clothes. When the war came, grandmother turned her heart to the Jews, and she started dying their hair blond, straightening it, dying their eyebrows and eyelashes and whitening their skin. She saved countless people. Unfortunately, as the story goes, because there is no proof, somebody denounced her. She was taken to Ravensbrück, and that is where she died, unfortunately. And what I can also say is that there, in Ravensbrück, they made three beautiful wigs from her hair.
Irena Sendler’s account from Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej [This One Is From My Homeland] by Bartoszewski and Lewinowna, Warsaw, 2010, p.99

[...] It was in the days when the Nazi torturers were constantly herding the inhabitants of the ghetto on the so-called Umschlagplatz (where the Jews awaited deportation). [...] It was then when it became necessary to help bring the biggest number of people to the Aryan side. When it came to the adults, we took advantage of the fact that Jews were escorted to various work sites outside the ghetto.

We would bribe the guards who counted the groups when they passed the gates.

Getting the children out was worse [...]. Children were usually brought out through the underground tunnels of the courthouses or the tram junction building in the nearby Muranów district. The children were placed in apartments set up just for this purpose, emergency care and distribution centers where they were given first aid and prepared for life in new, different conditions."


“I was in Warsaw during the occupation […]. I had an emergency care center in my house. Children rescued from the ghetto would stay in my house for a few days before they were placed somewhere for longer. I remember a little girl who was thrown over the ghetto wall wrapped in a blanket; another one was brought to me in a basket. They sent children pulled out from the sewage tunnels. You had to wash them, dress them and prepare them for life in a new environment. […] Every child that we found out about was, if necessary, placed in an orphanage or with a family. The orphanages, run mostly by convents, would take in any Jewish child without reservations, knowing about all the dangers involved. It could've been a death sentence for an entire convent. And to put up a Jewish child in an orphanage, you had to prepare a fictional community interview, get a fake birth certificate. On this basis you would get a reference necessary to place the child in an institution. The interviews were written by trusted social workers. The fake birth certificates were issued by many Catholic parishes.

Ludwik Rostowski and Tadeusz Stępniewski’s account, compiled by Helena Kozłowska from “Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej” [This One Is from My Homeland] by Bartoszewski and Lewinowna, Warsaw, 2010, pp. 111-112

“Dr. Rostkowski would find out about people of Jewish descent who needed medical help. […] He would get the addresses of the sick people, whom he had to visit with a tentative diagnosis. With the help of his son he would recruit the relevant specialists or nurses necessary to perform the procedures. They went to the patient not only with the standard medical or first aid equipment – stethoscope, syringe and bandages, but also with medication, often some clothing, food and money. There were many house calls. The number would vary from merely a few to tens of visits per month per doctor.”

Hanna Krall, “The Game For My Life”. Hanna Krall's account from Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej [This One Is From My Homeland] by Bartoszewski and Lewinowna, Warsaw
“They drove us out of our house. I remember that we were standing among helpless and terrified people – my mother was holding my hand and repeating that we couldn’t go where everybody else was going, that it surely wouldn’t be good if we went there – but we were still standing among this terrified crowd and screaming Germans, because we didn’t know what to do with ourselves. The person who came up to us was Zygmunt Wojtecki. Mr. Zygmunt ran up to us, put us on his horse cart – the horse cart was waiting – and took us to the country. That’s how it began. Then there were countless people, apartments, places. There was the Krasnogliny village, a couple with a child, a Christmas tree, a Christmas Eve table – I sat where [according to Polish tradition] you usually leave an empty place for a wandering traveller. There was this apartment where people from the resistance would meet. Actually they shouldn’t have kept me there, because they were putting the people who met there in additional danger. Then there was the small, modest apartment of Mrs. Podhorska and her sick daughter. Then there was the short-term hiding place at Mr. Nowak’s. I couldn’t be there longer because they were hiding someone else. Then there was the luxurious apartment of the Lysakowskis with a front entrance [and a back one] and servant quarters. Then there were the Czapskis. They got my mother a job in their store in Ryki. In Ryki there was Mrs. Lejwoda, a teacher who taught Underground classes. And Mrs. Makowa, who had a dairy and would give us and the nuns from Zyczyn milk and butter. Then she put me in this convent, with the Albertine nuns.

Thanks to the nuns I learned the catechism* and all the prayers by heart. It came in handy when they stopped my mother and me on the street. We spent the night in a jail cell. In the morning the policeman said: “If you don’t reference someone who has an unquestionable [non-Jewish] background who can vouch for you, you will immediately go to Szucha Street [the Gestapo headquarters and prison]. My mother, in desperation, without hope, uttered the last name of one of her pre-war neighbors. After half an hour we heard that she came. She was screaming: “What?! My sister a Jew? What insolence! I'll show you! Jadzia! Where are you! I'll show them, to call you a Jew?! I brought your documents. And there they were - her sister's papers. Maria Ostrowska-Ruszczynska, who lent us her last name and her sister's documents up until the end of the occupation, works currently in the sewing department of the State Clinic on Oczki Street. Then there were other apartments and other people – a long chain of risk, people and places. By rescuing me, they were all risking their lives and the lives of their families. In the game for my life - the stakes were the lives of 45 people.”

*Catholic doctrine

Assignment: Research and write down what is the “Righteous Among the Nations” distinction. Who bestows it and what is it for? Find and describe a story of Poles rescuing Jews