

# LETTERS TO HENIO



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# LETTERS TO HENIO







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THE STORY OF HENIO ŻYTOMIRSKI  
IN THE ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE  
“GRODZKA GATE – NN THEATRE” CENTRE IN THE YEARS  
2005–2020



LUBLIN 2022



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This photo of a small boy was taken in one of Lublin's main streets. It is rather ordinary and not much more can be said about it. Some inhabitants of Lublin may be able to recognise the place where the boy stands. People go past it every day without paying any attention. Looking at this photograph, we cannot even tell when it was taken. Thousands of similar pictures of children have been taken in the streets.

However, behind this seemingly ordinary photo, there is a story of a Jewish boy born in Lublin in 1933. His name was Henio Żytomirski. He is the boy in the photo.

On 1 September 1939, six-year-old Henio was supposed to start his first year of primary school, but this was the day the war broke out and Henio did not go to school. He probably perished in a gas chamber at Majdanek in 1942.

This is the last of a series of Henio's photos taken by his father each year.

**Tomasz Pietrasiewicz**



”

We must not forget  
lest we lose ourselves.

NN



## THE LIFE OF HENIO ŻYTOMIRSKI AND HIS FAMILY

### **An attempt at reconstruction based on family and archive documents.**

**1933**

**25 March:** Henryk Żytomirski was born as the first child of Samuel (Szmuel) Żytomirski and Sara née Oksman from Luboml. Henio's parents got married in Lublin in 1931. The family lived first at 2 Kapucyńska Street and then at 3 Szewska Street.

Samuel Żytomirski was a Hebrew and history teacher at the Primary School at 21 Zamojska Street in Lublin and the Tarbut Jewish school in Bychawa. He was involved in civic and political activities as head of the local branch of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), chairman of the Lublin branch of Poalei Zion Right party and the committee of the He-Chalutz organisation as well as a member of the Dror youth organisation and the Board of the Jewish Community in Lublin.

Sara Żytomirska worked in a stationery shop. Henio's grandparents from Lublin – Froim Żytomirski and Chaja Dwora née Melamed, lived at 22 Lubartowska Street. Besides Szmuel, they had four children: Sonia, Estera, Leon (Lejbuś, Jehuda) and Rachela. Froim owned a stationery shop at 17 Nova Street, and was a respected member of the city's Jewish community.







## 1937

**15 March:** Leon Żytomirski, Henio's uncle, emigrated to Palestine. During the farewell at the Lublin station, the last picture of the whole Żytomirski family together was taken.

**1 September:** Henio goes to the Trachter nursery school.



## 1938

**Summer:** Henio spent the holidays in the village of Rudy near Puławy.

**1 September:** Henio continued his nursery school education.







## 1939

**1 September:** Outbreak of World War Two, the aggression of German troops against Poland. Henio did not start his first year at school.

**September:** At the beginning of the war, Henio's father, Szmuel Żytomirski, lost his position at the Lublin branch of HIAS. He went to Lviv to try to get certificates enabling the emigration to Palestine. He returned to Lublin a few months later.

**2 September:** The first German air raid on Lublin took place.

**18 September:** German troops entered Lublin.

**26 September:** The establishment of the Generalgouvernement (General Government). Lublin became the capital of the Lublin district.

**31 October:** The first confiscation of Jewish property (shoes, fur coats, warm underwear, food supplies).





**I December:** All Jews over the age of 10 had to be marked, initially with a yellow star sewn onto their clothes, later with a white armband with the Star of David.

**11 December:** All Jewish schools were closed while Jewish pupils and teachers were removed from other schools.

*In Lublin at that time, there were over 100 Jewish teachers, most of whom were involved in clandestine education and were teaching children in private homes. The secret classes usually consisted of 10 children, mostly from the neighbourhood.*

– excerpt from an account in the *Lublin Memorial Book*.

**20 December:** *I am sending you and your family heartfelt greetings from us all. We are healthy, thank God, please let our relatives know about that.*

– excerpt from a postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman (Mamza) living in the USA.

**22 December:** Jewish shops were closed down and appropriated for the German Reich.

**28 December:** A register of Jewish children of school age was carried out by the Jewish community administration.

## **1940**

**January:** Establishment of the Judenrat (Jewish council) in Lublin. The first cases of typhus in the Jewish Quarter.

**15 January:** The Jewish population was forbidden to use the means of public transport, hotels, restaurants, cafés, hairdresser's shop and healthcare establishments outside the Jewish Quarter.

**February:** Sara Żytomirska's shop at 2 Kapucyńska Street was requisitioned along with the goods and equipment inside it.

**6 February:** Leon Żytomirski sent a telegram from Palestine to Lublin via the Red Cross in Geneva. It contained a message in German to Froim Żytomirski, residing at 22 Lubartowska Street in Lublin, that his son was waiting for some news. The addressee was Samuel Żytomirski, residing at 3 Szewska Street.

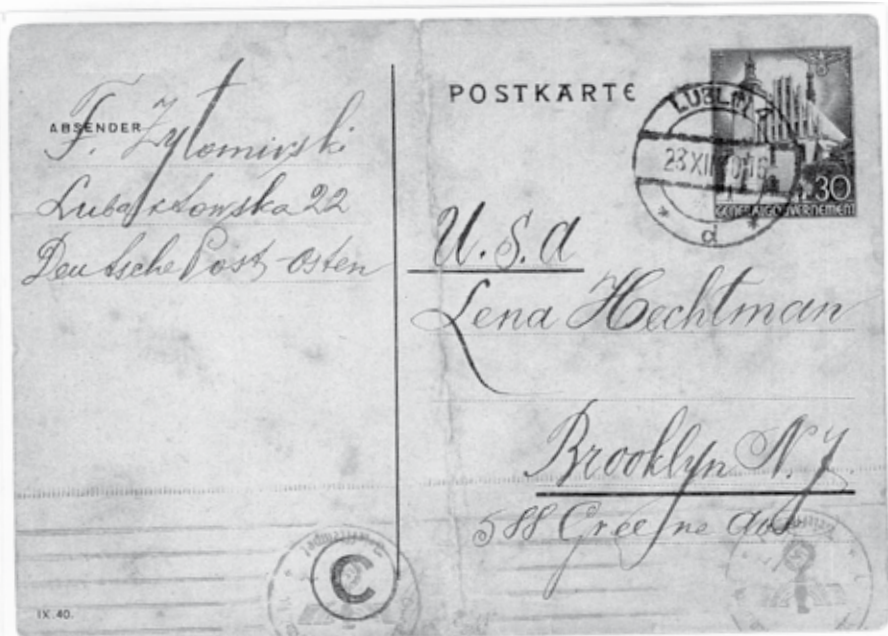
**19 February:** Distribution of 62 kg of bread among the Jewish population.



## 26 February:

*All this time, I have not received any news from you, which I find quite surprising. My dear, I have also asked you to inform my son Leon about our health and there is no news from him again. So please, answer soon and tell me how you are doing and whether you have news from my sons. We, thank God, are all healthy.*

– excerpt from a postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman (Mamza) living in the USA.



**1 March:** Distribution of 249 kg of bread among the Jewish population.

**14 March:** Announcement of curfew for the Jewish population between 7 pm and 5 am.

**15 March:** Distribution of 413 kg of bread among the Jewish population.

26. X - 40

Najdroga Mamec  
Przerzyna nie od mnie za-  
leżna zatrzymała moją odpowiedź  
na ostatnią pocztówkę Trojki. -

Terdecie dziękuję Cię, Kochana,  
za wiadomości od siebie, od drogiej  
dzieci i od Lejbusia od którego  
żadnej wiadomości nie mamy  
oprócz przez Ciebie. -

Napisz droga, czyś, jak Wy  
życie i co pisze Lejb, bo  
słyszałem że on pragnie podobno  
ożenić się, czy to prawda?

Gdzie on obecnie mieszka?

U nas nic nowego. My, Sonia  
i Smułek jesteśmy zdrowi i  
mieszkamy na swoich miejscach. -

Żeś, Kochana, zdrowa i dzie-  
mi i napisz do nas. -  
Twój Trojka



**19 March:** *All our families – Szmulek's, Sonia's and the Warsaw family – are healthy. Try to obtain certificates for our whole family.* – excerpt from a postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his son Leon Żytomirski in Palestine, sent via the Red Cross.

**21 March:** Samuel Żytomirski was hired as an office worker in the Judenrat's Emigration Department at 11 Lubartowska Street.

**22 March:** Food rationing – the amounts per person: 350 g bread per day, 2 kg flour, 1 kg salt, 300 gr sugar and 2 matchboxes per month. The Jewish population was excluded from the distribution of sugar.

**27 March:** Vaccination against typhus for the Jewish population. Men were to attend the vaccination on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, while women and children on Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

**30 March:** *Everyone is healthy. Samuel with his family soon leaves for Palestine. Try to obtain certificates for parents and sisters. Sara* – these words were written on the back of a telegram sent by Leon from Palestine to Lublin on 6 February 1940.

**3 April:** The Department of Emigration received new powers that enabled people living in Lublin to send letters to their relatives in all countries in Europe and overseas.

**23 April:** Jews were forbidden to enter the municipal parks in Bronowice and Krakowskie Przedmieście (Saxon Park), part of the Lithuanian Square, and Rialto cinema.

**6 May:**

*I am in Lublin again. I have been told about the certificate and make every effort to be able to use it. I expect that it may take two to three months to prepare for the trip. [...] We are all healthy. [...] Parents and siblings also want to go. Can't something be done for them?* – excerpt from a letter written by Szmuel Żytomirski to his brother Leon in Palestine, sent via Meir Hochberg (brother of Chana Hochberg, Leon's fiancée) in Vilnius.

*A note by Froim: I, Mum, Sonia, Estera, Rachela, Sara, Józef, Henius, Abramek and the Warsaw family are healthy and hopeful.*

**23 June:** In accordance with the new procedure, cards and letters had to be submitted at the desk of the Postal Department at 2 Kowalska Street. It was forbidden to paste stamps and seal envelopes, and the addresses of the sender and addressee had to be written clearly. Correspondence could be written in German, Polish and Russian. Correspondence with countries at war with Germany was forbidden on pain of imprisonment.

**1 September:** 2063 Jewish children were registered as receiving meals prepared in volunteer kitchens.

**8 September:** Samuel Żytomirski was working as head of the Department of Emigration.

**2 November:**

*Forced by difficult financial circumstances, I submit [...] the following request: I have been working in the Department of Emigration of the Jewish Council since the first days of its establishment. [...] I support not only my wife and child but also my parents who, due to their age, are unable to work for money, and they do not have any funds to support themselves. I have totally*



*exhausted all my savings and I have found myself in a dire financial situation. [...] I request [...] that a permanent monthly allowance be granted to me.*  
 – excerpt from Samuel Żytomirski's request submitted to the Judenrat.

**10 December:** Jews not allowed to enter Krakowskie Przedmieście Street.

**26 December:**

*Heartfelt thanks, my dear, for news from you, from the beloved children and from Lejbuś of whom we have no other news except through you. [...] what has Lejbuś written, because I have heard that he probably got married, is that true? [...] Nothing new with us. We, Sonia and Szmulek are healthy and living at our places.*

– excerpt from a postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman (Mamza) living in the USA.







## 1941

### **7 January:**

*All of us, thank God, are healthy and living at our places. I hardly earn anything, I have not left home all this time, Mum, as usual, is tending the household, Estusia [...] is earning for her needs, Rachela the same. Szmullek is working on his position without remuneration, Sara takes care of the household, and Heniuś is a very good boy, he is learning willingly.* – excerpt from a letter written by Froim Żytomirski to his son Leon Żytomirski in Palestine.

**24 January:** The Judenrat in Lublin sent the Jewish Council in Kraków the curriculum for Jewish primary schools to be approved by the German authorities. The letter contains the following message: *The authorities have not responded to our request yet.*

**2 February:** The offices of the Department of Emigration were moved from 11 Lubartowska Street to premises at 2 Kowalska Street.

### **5 March:**

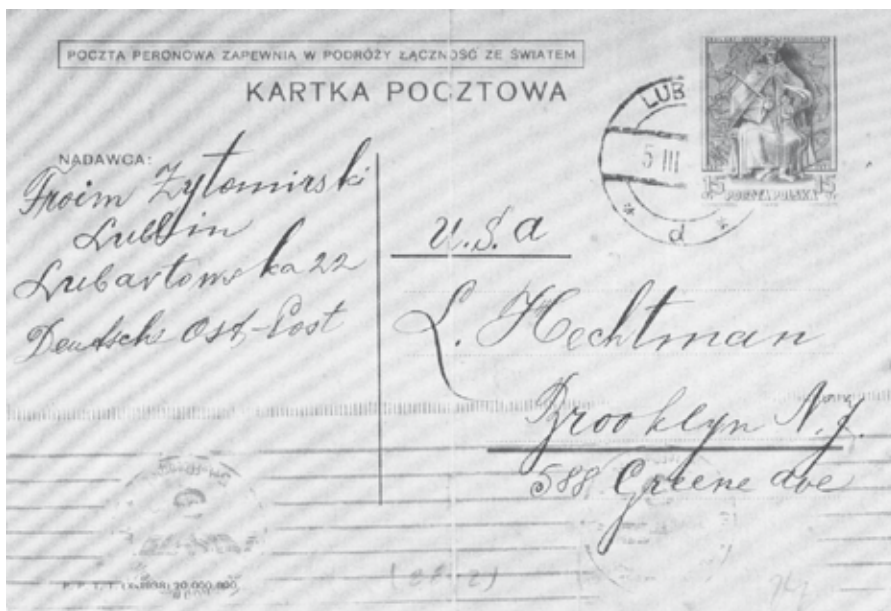
*We are all alive, thank God, but one could wish for a better state of my and my wife's health. [...] If it is not too hard for you, my dear, please send me a food parcel, for which I thank you in advance.*

– excerpt from a postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman (Mamza) living in the USA.

**10 March:** Jews were forbidden to send letters abroad without appropriate permission.

**10-13 March:** The forced resettlement of about 12,000 Jews from Lublin to towns in the region. This action was closely related to the plan of establishing the ghetto. At the same time, Jews were absolutely forbidden to maintain contacts with international organisations and states at war with Germany.

**24 March:** On the order of Ernst Zörner, Governor of Lublin District, a closed residential district for Jews was established. All the Jews staying in the city were to be relocated there by 15 April.



Sablin d. 5. III 41

Najdroższa Mańcia

Serdecznie dziękuję Ci, kochana,  
za prośbionką z dnia 15/1 i za porównanie  
od mego syna Lejbusia. —

My, młodzi, żyjemy, dzięki Bogu,  
ale stan narodził się jej piśmion  
możno sobie życzyć lepszego. —

My też dostaliśmy list od  
Lejbusia, jest jeszcze bardzo dobre  
o wieli lepiej od nas. —

Jak się ma Twój Tawo, no  
i wszystkie dzieci? Będzie, moi  
drodzy, zdrowi i szereglini, weseli  
i miłi — Wasz Fryja

P.S. Jeżeli nie jest ciężko dla Ciebie  
mój droga, to b. proszę przysłać  
mi paczkę żywnościową, jako  
dziękuję w góry. — Porównanie od  
m. Heleny, Amulka, Symy, Estery i  
Racheli z porównaniem n. lepszego.



**March/April:** The Żytomirski family had to move from their flat at 3 Szewska Street to 11 Kowalska Street, inside the ghetto. Excerpt from the account by Józefa Paciorkowa, relocated to a house that the Jews had to leave:

*We had three days to leave our current flat and move to one of the vacant dwellings from which Jews were expelled a few days earlier. [...] It was a very sad and unpleasant situation. [...] We were bewildered and terrified by the sight of the empty Jewish flats where they sent us. There was a wide choice, but it was very unpleasant and extremely difficult in human terms. The flats we looked at filled us with terror. Everywhere there were traces of the recent presence of people who had to leave their homes in a great rush. A modest meal that someone began to cook; an unfinished glass of water; a dishevelled bed that looked as if someone had just got up from it. [...] We were allocated to a flat at 3 Szewska Street.*



**1 April:** Forced typhus vaccinations for Judenrat officials and members of their families.

**24-25 April:** The census of the ghetto population indicated 34,149 people. That figure was higher than the target of the German authorities who had planned to let only 25,000 Jews stay in Lublin.

**12 May:** Samuel Żytomirski was still registered as head of the Department of Emigration with its office at 2 Kowalska Street. In the Memorial Book, Nachman Korn remembers that Samuel was a post office official:

*The Post Office was at 2 Kowalska Street. [...] The Judenrat appointed Szmuel Żytomirski as head of the office. He accepted it so as to be close to the window to the world that the Germans left open for a short time. Polish publications reached the ghetto via this office. Korn, Żytomirski and Nissenbaum were constantly in touch with each other and shared secret messages that were circulating in the ghetto.*

These words confirm Szmuel's involvement in clandestine activities in the ghetto.

**10 July:** Establishment of the Jewish Epidemic Hospital at 23 Ruska Street.

**September:** The number of meals handed out to Jewish children by volunteer kitchens increased from 1,170 to 1,290.

**8 September:**

*Thank God, we are all healthy and we wish the same to you, my beloved. [...] Kisses and greetings to you all from our family. Have a happy year. Frajka* – excerpt from a postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman (Mamza) living in the USA.



### 8 October:

*Thank you for remembering about me and, please, do not forget about us in the future.* – excerpt from the last postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman (Mamza) living in the USA. The words in this message are, so to speak, a statement of Froim Żytomirski's last will.

**15 October:** General Governor Hans Frank issued an ordinance whereby leaving the ghettos by Jews and giving them any kind of help was punishable by death.

**29 October:** 111 patients were staying at the Jewish Epidemic Hospital at 23 Ruska Street. The Judenrat passed a resolution to move the Jewish Epidemic Hospital to the building of the former Perec School at 4 Czwartek Street.

P.X 41

Maja droga

Jestem szczerzliwym otrzymaniem  
Twojej pocztówki od 18.VIII. Cześć Ty,  
droga Mama, Twoja rodzina i  
Lejbus jestesie zdrowi. -

Dziękuję za dobrą pamiątkę o mnie  
i proszę w przyszłości nie zapomnieć  
o nas. - My wszyscy żyjemy i  
jestemy zdrowi o czym proszę po-  
wiedzieć i Lejbusowi. -

O naszej wspólnej, to jest Twojej i  
mojej, rodzinie absolutnie nie  
nie słysz. -

W oczekiwaniu dobrych wiesto-  
ści od Was - Cielu, Ciel z Twoimi  
dziećmi z życzeniem szczerzliwego  
Trojka

Perdanie porównanie od mojej  
matki i dzieci

**10 November:** Froim Żytomirski died of typhus.

In the *List of death incidents – November, October 1941* the following information about Froim was entered: *Religion teacher, place of death: 11 Kowalska Street, age: 68.*

He kept peace of mind and optimism until the end. When he was dying, he reportedly asked to be buried close to the cemetery gate so that he could be the first to witness the liberation of Lublin. In the preserved document entitled *List of monuments at the Jewish cemetery in Lublin, including surnames*, held by the State Archive in Lublin, there is an entry under number 17884 about the burial of Efraim, son of Ozer.

**November:** According to official data, 205 Jews, including 118 men and 87 women, died during that month.

## 1942

### 7 January:

*Dear Parents! My heart is with you. I have not received any news from you for a long time. How is the health of mother, father, sisters, brother and children? Stay strong! Your son Leon.* – telegram sent by Leon Żytomirski from Palestine to his father Froim Żytomirski, to Lublin, 11 Kowalska Street.

**7 March:** The commander of Sicherheitspolizei ordered all Jews employed in German companies and offices, the Judenrat and its institutions to have their work cards and the cards of their closest family members stamped.

**16/17 March:** *The Final Solution of the Jewish Question* in the General Government, codenamed Operation Reinhard, began with the liquidation of Lublin ghetto. About 1,400 people were deported in sealed rail cars every day to the death camp in Bełżec.

**31 March:** The SS announced that to stay in the ghetto a J-Ausweis would be required rather than the Arbeitsausweis (stamp from the Sicherheistpolizei) in the work card as it had been the case before. J-Ausweis did not protect the members of the holder's family.

**15 April:** The German authorities ended the liquidation of the ghetto in Podzamcze district. As a result of the extermination action, at least 871 people were murdered on the spot and about 28,000 Jews were taken to the Bełżec death camp; Henio's grandmother with her daughters were most probably among them.

**16 April:** Establishment of the second ghetto, in Majdan Tatarski, where the Jews having J-Ausweis papers (about 4,200 according to the census) were ordered to move. The name of Samuel Żytomirski was added to that list, in handwriting, under number 3194. In the Majdan Tatarski ghetto, Samuel Żytomirski held the role of a post office clerk. Eventually, over 7,000 people ended up in the new ghetto.







- 20 April:** As a result of a selection in the Majdan Tatarski ghetto, about 3,000 people without the J-Ausweis were taken to KL Lublin (concentration camp at Majdanek) and those incapable of work among them were then shot in the Krępiec Forest.
- 26 April:** Efforts to establish a kindergarten in the ghetto for children over 3.

**27 May:** *Dear Leon! I have received the greetings. Extremely touched. [...] Little Henio and I are together* – excerpt from a letter from Samuel Żytomirski to his brother Leon in Palestine. These words were written on the back of a telegram sent by Leon from Palestine to Lublin on 7 January 1942.

The postcard was registered in the Warsaw office of the Red Cross on 10 August 1942 and most probably in the Geneva office on 8 January 1943.

**It is the last preserved piece of information about Henio.**

Write in Block Capitals



In grossen Druckbuchstaben  
auszufüllen.

From:

**WAR ORGANISATION OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS  
AND ORDER OF ST. JOHN**

Postal Message Scheme

To:

Comité International  
de la Croix Rouge  
Genève

P.O.B. 1085,  
David Building,  
Jerusalem,  
Palestine.

**ENQUIRER**  
Fragesteller

Name

ZYTOMIRSKI

Christian name

LEON

Vorname

Address

"AMIR"

Address

ROSH-PINA,

PALESTINE.

**CENSOR**

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Message — Mitteilung.

(Message not to exceed 25 words, family news of strictly personal character).

(Nicht über 25 Worte, nur persönliche Familiennachrichten).

KOCHANI RODZICE!

SERCE MOJE Z WAMI. DAWNO NIE OTRZYMALEM OD WAS  
WIADOMOSCI. JAK ZDROWIE MATKI, OJCA, SIÓSTR, BRATA  
I DZIECI?

BĄDZIE SIŁNI!

WASZ SYN LEON.

Date

7-1-42.

**ADDRESSEE**  
Empfänger

Name

ZYTOMIRSKI

Christian name

ERIC

Vorname

Address

LUBLIN,

Kowalska 11.

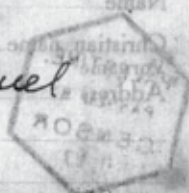
G.P.

27 MAI 1942



Kochany Leonie! Powrocieńie zdrowiem.  
 Niezmienne uczucie. Ojciec i matka  
 10 listopada 1941 r. Ja z Heleniem  
 jesteśmy razem. Powróć Chanie,  
 całą naszą rodzinę.

Samuel



8 JAN. 1943

**23 July:** *I was very, very sick, doctors said I would not live, but I somehow got out of it. [...] You know how lonesome I feel and how lonely I am. If only my dear wife and my devoted parents were alive, the situation would be completely different. You are my only hope now. That's why I expect food parcels from you as often as possible.*

– excerpt from Samuel Żytomirski's letter to Natan Schwalb who ran a clandestine outpost in Geneva on behalf of the Dror organisation. His task was to find and maintain contact with members of the Zionist movement in occupied Europe, send them parcels and provide all the help possible.

**2 September:** Selection in the Majdan Tatarski ghetto. Nearly 1,000 people, mostly women and children, were deported to the transit ghetto in Piaski, from where they were most probably sent to the Sobibór death camp.

**24 October:** Selection in the Majdan Tatarski ghetto. Nearly 1,000 Jews, including some Judenrat officials, were sent to KL Lublin and the transit ghetto in Piaski.

## **9 November:**

Final liquidation of the Majdan Tatarski ghetto. About 3,000 people were taken to KL Lublin. Women, children and old people were led to the gas chamber. The remaining Jews were assigned to various *kommandos* (slave labour units). Szmuel Żytomirski probably ended up in an external *kommando* of KL Lublin at the Sportplatz camp in Wieniawa district where Jewish prisoners were building a sports stadium for SS functionaries.

## 1943

### **21 January:**

Neta Żytomirska was born in Palestine as the first child of Leon Żytomirski and Chana née Hochberg.

### **19 March:**

*My current address is Lublin, 7 Drobna Street, there were some difficulties with the previous address [...] I am not writing about our current situation because you surely know about it anyway.*

– excerpt from a letter, sent by Szmuel Żytomirski to the office of the Jewish Agency in Istanbul; in the letter, he thanks for the food parcel received two days earlier. The Agency was sending parcels to Europe and organising help for Jews trying to leave the occupied countries. The address, 7 Drobna Street, was the Sportplatz camp in Wieniawa district. The letter was signed: M. Żytomirski. ‘Mieczysław’ was the false name used by Samuel Żytomirski in his clandestine contacts.

**3 November:** Mass execution of all Jewish prisoners from KL Lublin and labour camps for Jews in Lublin. Over 18,000 people were shot at Majdanek during this massacre known as Operation Erntefest.









**1944**

**6 January:**

*At present I'm unable to say anything about our family. I don't know where they are now. I'm doing everything I can to learn something about them. Four weeks ago, they were packed and sent to the camp at Majdanek. Most of them are no longer alive, but is anybody still alive anywhere? Getting any information is very difficult and you know that I can't do anything on my own. [...] You can imagine how I am feeling now that I am in this difficult situation. [...] At the moment, my biggest goal is to survive it all and learn something about our poor family. [...] You can't even imagine how hard and dangerous it is to live here. It is very unlikely that I will be able to bear and survive it all. [...] I'm dreaming of the time when I will leave this terrible country and see you again. This time must come soon because I can't live like this anymore. [...] Most heartfelt greetings to you and all those who are still thinking about us.*

– excerpt from the last letter written by Samuel Żytomirski to the Istanbul office of the Jewish Agency. The letter suggests that Samuel was hiding in Lublin and needed financial support.

The letter was typed in German on a typing machine and signed “Mieczysław Z.”. This letter is the last sign of life from Samuel Żytomirski.

**24/25 July:** Lublin was liberated by the Red Army from German occupation.













”

You lived in times so distant from mine,  
but your story seems so close to me.

Ewelina



## NETA'S STORY

Neta Żytomirska-Avidar, Henio's cousin, daughter of Leon Żytomirski (Henio's uncle) who emigrated from Lublin to Palestine before the Second World War, visited Lublin for the first time in 2001 with a group of friends from the landsmanshaft [society] of Lublin Jews in Israel.

This is how she remembered the visit:

*My father's family was well known and respected in Lublin's Jewish community. My father spent his childhood and youth in this city. His close relatives died hungry, stripped of everything, leaving no trace behind. My parents would tell me about our family and Lublin, always with a strong sense of longing and pain. These feelings have stayed with me. When I first came to Lublin, I did not even need a guide. All places associated with the fate of my family were quite familiar to me.*

During her visit to the "Grodzka Gate Centre – NN Theatre" Centre, Neta told the story of little Henio. Then she donated two photo albums depicting the life of Henio and his family. The preserved photographs show the boy in each year of his life until the outbreak of the war. Thus Henio 'returned' to his city.

These albums are an extraordinary document. Thanks to them, the fate of one boy has become a symbol of the fate of Lublin's Jewish residents who perished during the war.



Henio was born in Lublin on 25 March 1933. He was the first child of Szmuel and Sara Żyto-mirski, and beloved grandson of grandpa Froim. The pride and joy of the family!





On his second birthday, Henio was a real king for a day. He was smart and full of energy. He was singing and jumping! Sometimes his grandparents would say when he left after his visit: *Oh, it's quiet again.*



The family loved Henio. Look how his mom dressed him! Henio's mom was exceptionally kind. She had blue eyes and black hair.





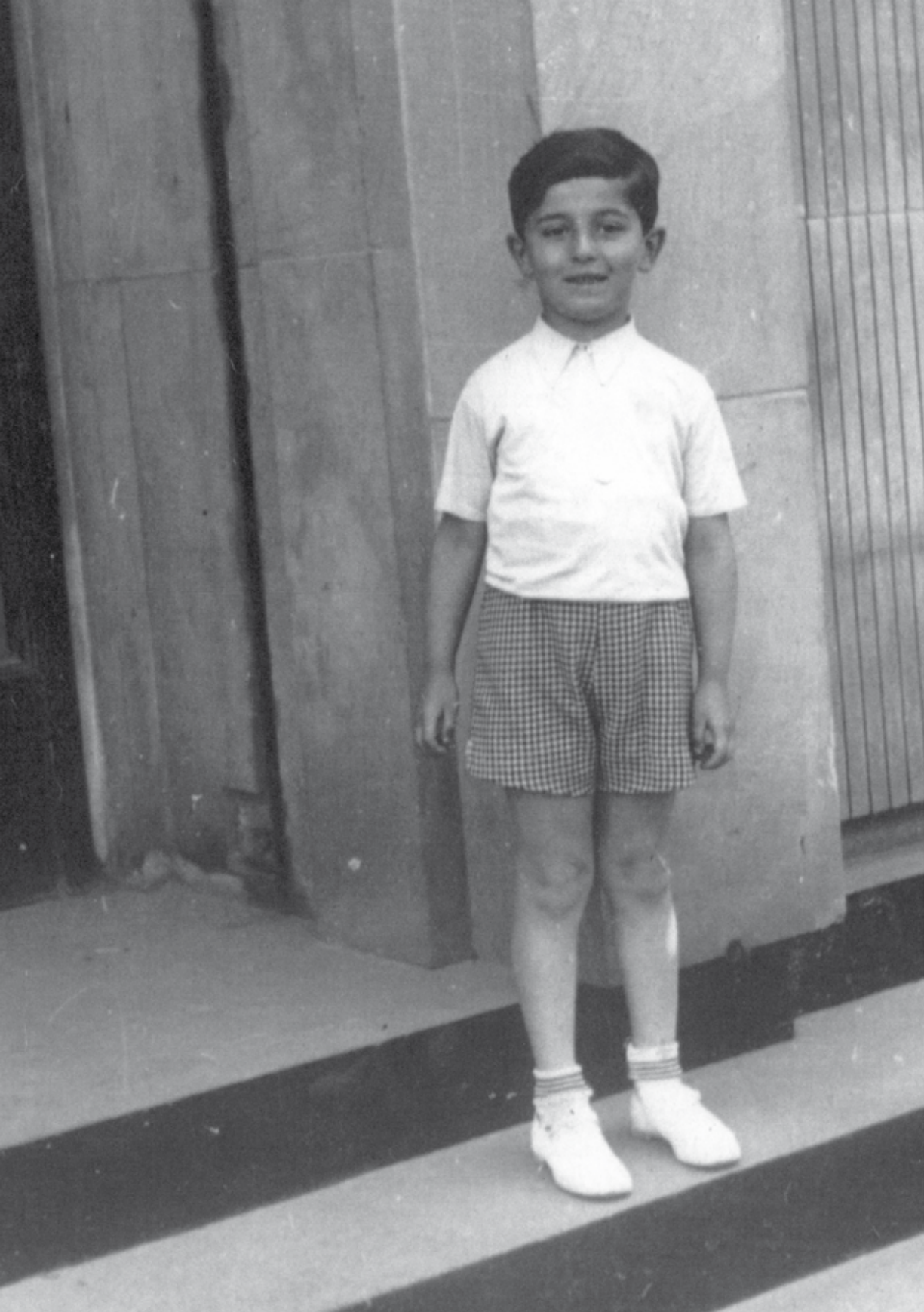




In September 1937, Henio began attending nursery school. He was learning Polish songs; he knew the national anthem. He was very clever. Everything aroused his interest.

In July 1938, Henio spent his summer holidays in the village of Rudy, near Puławy. In September, his education continued at Trachter nursery school. Henio's father wanted his son to learn Hebrew so that he could go to Palestine one day.







On 5 July 1939, Henio rode a two-wheeled bicycle for the first time! It was a bike more suited for a larger boy. That was the day this picture was taken. In September, he was supposed to begin learning at a Jewish school run by the Tarbut association. Henio was prepared to attend first grade.



The Second World War broke out when Henio was six.  
How did Henio's childhood unravel in those early days?  
What horrors did he witness?  
What were children of his age doing in the ghetto? I don't know.

Henio's father wrote this on a Red Cross postcard dated 27 May 1942,  
"Little Henio and I are together". He mentioned just the two of them,  
which means that the others had perished.  
What happened to the whole family?  
I don't know.

In a letter from 19 March 1943, Szmuel Żytomirski wrote only about himself. This means that his only son Henio was no longer alive at the time.  
How did this happen?  
I don't know.

Neta Żytomirska-Avidar, 2002.



”

Dear Henio! I am writing to you because I want to express my protest against what happened in the times in which you happened to live.

NN



## THE STORY OF HENIO ŻYTOMIRSKIW DZIAŁANIACH IN THE ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE “GRODZKA GATE – NN THEATRE” CENTRE

### 2002-2004

Henio's story appeared in the Centre's activities for the first time in 2002. Tomasz Pietrasiewicz, founder and director of the “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre, decided to add Henio's name to the list of addressees of letters sent to the non-existent addresses as part of the **Letters to the Ghetto** project. On 16 March, the anniversary of the liquidation of Lublin Ghetto, young people of Lublin were sending letters to the deceased residents of Podzamcze district. The letters could not be delivered to the addressees and were returned with a note ‘The address does not exist’. This was an attempt to touch the void left by the destroyed Jewish Quarter in Lublin. *Among the 43 thousand nameless victims of the Holocaust, Henio has become an exceptional figure – we know his name, his family, his story*, said Tomasz Pietrasiewicz.

This story turned out to be a key to the narration about the Destruction of the Lublin Jews in various activities conducted by the Centre.

Henio's story soon became part of an **exhibition entitled *The Primer. Children in the Majdanek camp***. It was opened in 2003 at the initiative of the “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre in barrack No. 53 at the State Museum at Majdanek. This unique exhibition reminds us that the story of the Second World War is also the story of children, thousands of whom were murdered in concentration and death camps. At the Majdanek camp, these were Jewish, Belorussian and Polish children. Some of them were supposed to go to school on 1 September 1939, carrying *The Primer* in their school bags. The exhibition, co-worked



by Marta Grudzińska, tells the story of four children imprisoned at Majdanek. These are Jewish children – Halina Birenbaum and Henryk (Henio) Żytomirski, Belorussian – Piotr Kiriszczenko, and Polish – Janina Buczek-Różańska. One of them – Henio – probably perished in the camp. This exhibition was also visited by Henio’s cousin Neta Żytomirska-Avidar with her family.

## 2005

The Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity, celebrated for the first time in 2005, was an opportunity to present the story of Henio and his family to pupils, students and teachers in Lublin. Based on an earlier experience, **an educational project entitled *Letters to Henio*** was initiated.





1. Nazwisko
2. Numer w
3. Data i mie
4. Narodowo
5. Wykształc
6. Zawód prz
7. Miejsce sz
8. Data i mie
9. Data i mie
10. Data i mie

...e coś w  
... 3000

...nie był  
...ettach

...nie przybr  
...arstef 9,  
...liniów z  
...bozu,  
...a którym po  
...liniów z  
...przybyciu

Czy posiada d  
...koresponden

Aktualnie miesz

20. Jeżeli egipski, p  
...dumski i tenc  
...rakomstoku  
...został umies  
...został po prz

21. Przy wypełnien  
...WYKONANIE

22. Nazwisko (jezeli  
...WYKONANIE

W wypełnien  
...na Alajętku. Z  
...grosz, zostało ob  
...pomocy wstąpił

Lublin

Gruciszka Ma  
...podziwiał



Special issues of **students' newsletters**, prepared with the support of the Centre, brought information about Henio to the school community. A website **[www.henio.teatrnn.pl](http://www.henio.teatrnn.pl)** was specially created to provide access to the archive and educational materials that are related to Henio's story and the Holocaust in Lublin and can be used by teachers to conduct lessons in the field of humanities.

Based on the reconstructed story of Henio's life and archive photographs, the Centre has published **an artistic booklet entitled *Henio***, authored by Małgorzata Rybicka. It has been distributed to schools and libraries.







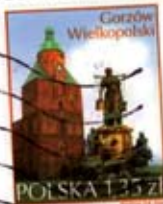
**BAR** smaczek

**TLUSZCZ**

Henryk Jaglaminowski

ul. Szewska 3

Lublin Polska



**ZWROT  
RETOUR**

Sylvia Liba Internet 245 TK  
W Lublinie  
Zemobazyska 8  
Polska 202  
Proszę NIE  
CZYTAĆ!





Maciej Rybicki  
Gimnazjum nr 13 d  
20-016 Lublin  
ul. Narutowicza 32A

**ZWROT**

- ☐ Brak dokładnego adresu  
☐ Adresat odmówił przyjęcia  
☐ Adresat wyprowadził się  
nie podając nowego adresu  
☐ Adresat zmarł  
☒ Adresat nieznany  
☐ Nieprawidłowy adres



Henio Zytomirski  
ul. Kamilska 11

ul. Szwedzka  
Lublin, Polska



**Actions in an urban space** have also been initiated. On 19 April, a photo of Henio was placed at 64, Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, at the exact spot where it was taken in July 1939. Next to it, there was a table at which people could **write a letter to Henio** and have it marked with a stamp specially designed for this occasion before putting it into a special NN Theatre post-box. That is where young people gathered to send their letters to the Jewish boy. Passers-by who were walking along Krakowskie Przedmieście [Lublin's High Street] that day could listen to Henio's story coming through the loud-speakers and spontaneously write their letter too. Maike Limprecht, doing volunteer work at the Centre, was the first to send letters from German youth.

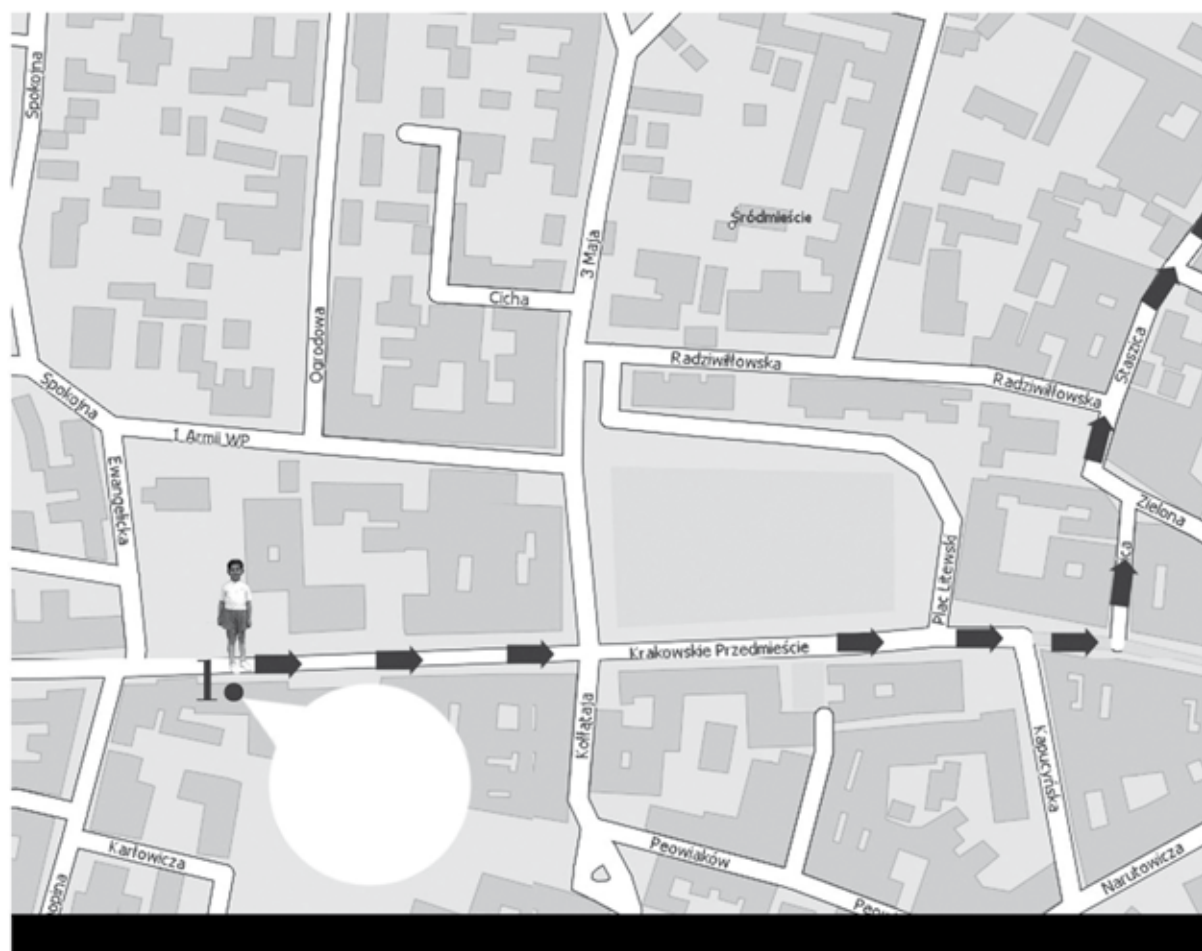


After posting their letters, all those gathered went on a **city walk in the footsteps of Henio**, visiting places related to his life, including his family home at 3 Szewska Street, and the house at 11 Kowalska Street, where Henio and his family moved when the ghetto was established. The walk ended at the Lamp of Memory in Podwale Street, the last surviving lamp of the Jewish Quarter.

The subsequent editions of the project have been accompanied by additional undertakings. The actions in Krakowskie Przedmieście Street have been enriched with music played by Maike Limprecht, Ewa Grochowska, Violaine Lochu and Regina Menke. A map with the route of the walk has also been published. **Young people met witnesses of history:** Irena Karczewska, a Holocaust survivor, and Stefan Mazur, a Righteous Among Nations. Piotr Sztajdel also designed a **multimedia presentation called *Henio Żytomirski***. The Story, featuring a song *Małe dzieci po to są* (*This Is What Little Children Are For*) sung by Anna Maria Jopek.

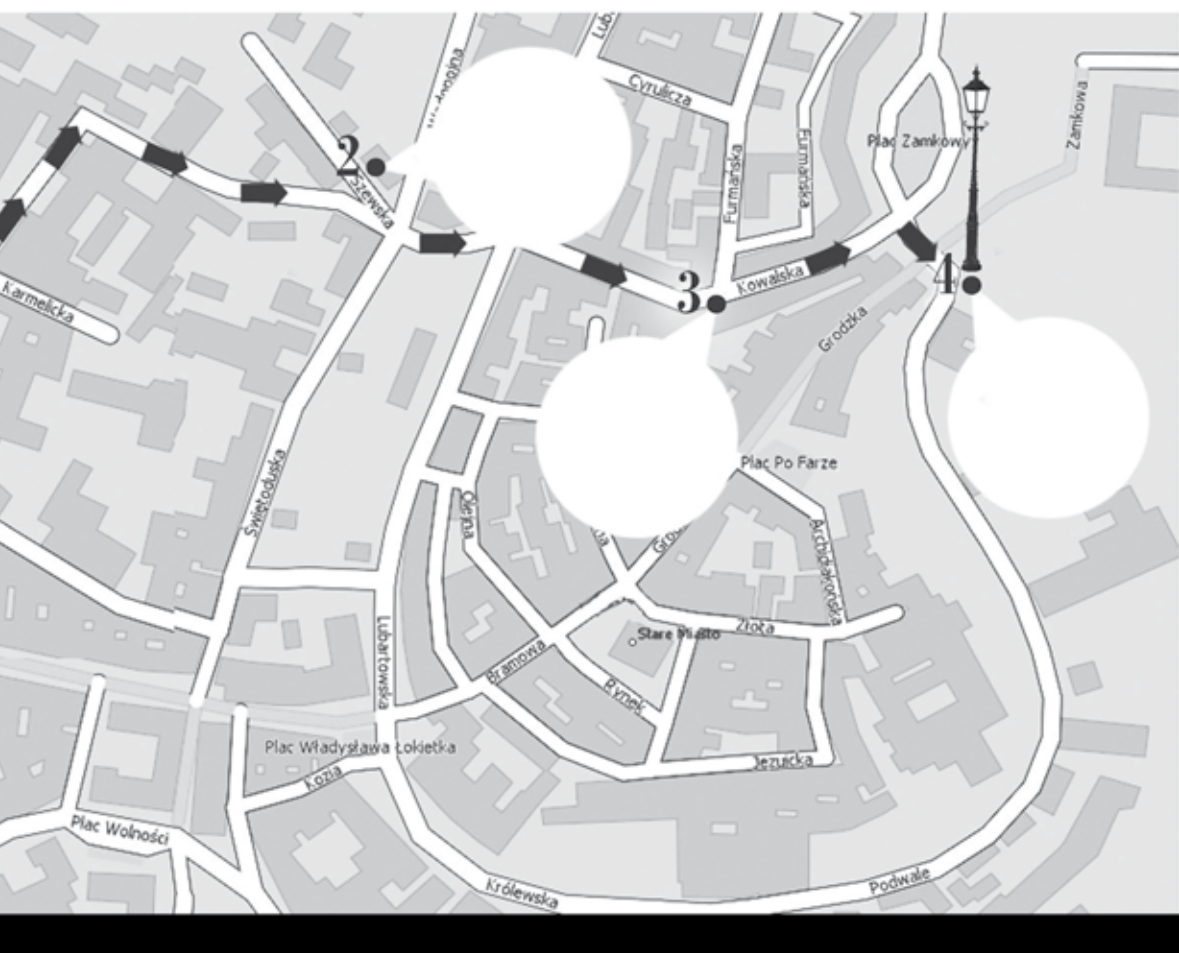






1. Krakowskie Przedmieście 64 - tutaj wykonano ostatnie zdjęcie Henia (5 lipca 1939).
2. Szewska 3 - tutaj mieszkał Henio z rodzicami (Sarą i Szmuelem Żytomirskimi) przed II wojną.
3. Kowalska 11 - tutaj Henio mieszkał z rodzicami po przeniesieniu do getta.
4. Latarnia Pamięci - Wieczny Płomień Pamięci o Mieszkańcach Dzielnicy Żydowskiej.

# Śladami Henia













## 2006-2010

In 2007, Neta Żytomirska-Avidar came to Lublin again, bringing her works with her. Her lithographs were presented at **an exhibition at the Michałowski Gallery.**

During her visit to “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre, **Neta Żytomirska-Avidar met teachers and educators.** She talked about Henio and Holocaust education:



*I know how hard it is to teach about the Holocaust, but Henio is a small boy, and you can identify yourself with a child. Majdanek is nearby so what should you tell children when they ask “What is it?”, “What was there?” The Holocaust existed and was part of the life of children who survived or perished.*

On that occasion, Neta Żytomirska-Avidar also brought a special letter to Henio, entitled *My Friend in the Ghetto*, written by his childhood friend Esther Bernhard (née Rechtman). Photographs showing them together in Lublin have been preserved. Estera was luckier than Henio as she and her parents left for Palestine before the war broke out. When she learnt that a project dedicated to Henio was taking place in Lublin, she wrote a letter to him.







**Henio Zytomirski** Jeśli ktoś mnie kiedyś zapyta czy mam ulubione zdjęcie, odpowiem, tak. Pokażę mu wtedy mojego tatusia, który trzyma mnie na rękach. Tatus się uśmiecha a ja się trochę boję. To moje pierwsze zdjęcie. Moje ulubione.



25 sierpnia 2009 o 14:14 · Dodaj komentarz · Lubię to! · Udostępnij

Craig Kimble, Lexi Rigby, Halina Szmańda i 3 innych lubią to.



**Beata Sławińska** Śliczne zdjęcie. Co się stało z Twoim Tata?

25 sierpnia 2009 o 14:33 · Lubię to! · Usun



**Beata Sławińska** Anno, dzięki za informację...

25 sierpnia 2009 o 14:57 · Lubię to! · Usun



**Beata Sławińska** Tak, bardzo mądry, mówi o tym co ważne...

25 sierpnia 2009 o 15:05 · Lubię to! · Usun



**Halina Szmańda** Tatuś Cię bardzo kocha...trzyma Cię mocno i To jest bardzo ładne zdjęcie!

30 sierpnia 2009 o 10:02 · Lubię to! · Usun



**Jessica Bragg** Look at that beautiful baby and how loved she is... This photo brings tears to my heart and soul. I hate to think ...HOW UNFAIR and how blessed I am

24 marca o 06:06 · Lubię to! · Usun



**Angel Cheppo** Such a gorgeous baby. And just look how proud the papa is!

27 marca o 03:09 · Lubię to! · Usun



**Henio Zytomirski** Tata mówił, że w pisaniu listów chodzi o pamięć. Mama mówiła, że powinno się pamiętać tylko dobre rzeczy. Ja wiedziałem, że to była prawda...

Usun

18 października 2009 o 18:11 · Dodaj komentarz · Lubię to!



Aleks Yen, Paweł Lesiakowski, Lucyna Artymiuk i 5 innych lubią to.



**Ewa Teleżyńska** Heniu, nie da się pamiętać tylko dobrych rzeczy... złe nie dają o sobie zapomnieć. Chciałabym, żebyś tych złych miał jak najmniej...

18 października 2009 o 18:17 · Lubię to! · Usun



**Ewelina Małgorzata Łukasiewicz** Te złe rzeczy także należy pamiętać... To dzięki naszej przeszłości i także dzięki tym złym doświadczeniom jesteśmy kim jesteśmy dziś... Doświadczając tych złych zdobywasz rutynę...

18 października 2009 o 18:21 · Lubię to! · Usun



**Anna Król** Każdy list to utrwalona chwila. Pisz Henio, pisz...

18 października 2009 o 23:48 · Lubię to! · Usun

When searching for new ways of keeping memory alive, the “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre created **a Facebook profile of Henio Żytomirski** in 2009. Thanks to this, thousands of social media users around the world have learnt about the Jewish boy from Lublin. The story on Facebook was a fictionalised first-person narrative about real events in Henio’s life set in the historical reality of the period. ‘Henio’ wrote on Facebook:

*I am seven years old. I have a mom and dad. I have my favourite place. Not everyone has a mom and dad, but everyone has their favourite place. Today I decided to never leave Lublin. I will stay here forever.*

The boy’s words, moderated by Piotr Brożek, the Centre’s staff member, were accompanied by archive materials – photographs and documents. The Facebook profile also presented the Centre’s work related to commemorating Henio.





This innovative project in the field of memory work was met with mixed reactions. On the one hand, it attracted the attention of international media to Henio's story (it was covered by German, American, British, Mexican and Israeli) and triggered a debate on ways of keeping memory alive in the age of social media. On the other hand, it met with accusations of unethical exploitation of the story of the murdered boy. The response to the criticism came from Neta Żytomirska-Avidar who wrote in a comment on the profile page:

*We seek to reconstruct Henio's life in the ghetto based on witness accounts, documents and historical facts related to Lublin under occupation. Based on all of that, we try to guess how he would have told his story. Henio is a symbolic figure, an icon through which the story of the Jewish community during the Nazi occupation and the Holocaust is brought to Facebook.*

Henio's profile soon reached the maximum number of five thousand friends. However, after a year of online presence, it was deleted



by Facebook due to a violation of its community standards prohibiting the creation of accounts on behalf of other persons.

In 2009, Naama Egozi, an educator from the Israeli Yad Vashem Institute, came to Lublin with a group of her students to show them the city of Henio Żytomirski. Naama decided to **share Henio's story with young Israelis**.

Since 2010, the Letters to Henio project has been accompanied by **educational workshops** offered to secondary school students. Aleksandra Zińczuk has designed a workshop where participants work with documents such as photographs, oral history accounts and letters, and learn about pre-war Polish-Jewish Lublin. Discovering the story of Henio Żytomirski and his family gradually introduces the participants to the successive stages of the Holocaust. The workshop ends with the young people writing letters to Henio and sending them on 19 April during the event in Krakowskie Przedmieście Street.



The participation in the workshop not only broadens the young people's knowledge about pre-war, multicultural Lublin and the Holocaust but also enhances their intercultural competence by teaching them to show empathy towards the 'other' and overcome cultural barriers and stereotypes. Thanks to the workshops, young people begin to see Henio Żytomirski as both a real person – their peer and colleague who had a life, family and dreams – and a symbol of the suffering of the innocent. **A script of the Letters to Henio workshop** is available in the PDF format at

**[www.listydohenia.teatrnn.pl](http://www.listydohenia.teatrnn.pl)**.









## 2011-2015

In 2011, **the story of Henio Żytomirski became part of the Lublin. Memory of the Place exhibition** at “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre. Henio’s family album with photographs in wooden frames can be seen near the model of pre-war Lublin. The last photo of Henio from July 1939 is shown at the spot where the story of the Destruction of Lublin Jews begins. The boy gazes towards the dark staircase, at the other end of which is a contemporary photo of the same spot where he was standing then. Several thousand people visit the exhibition each year, and every visitor learns the story of little Henio.

Looking for an adequate form of presenting Henio’s story to young people, in w 2012 the Comic Book Laboratory of “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre published **a comic book entitled A Walk** by Maciej Pałka. It is an illustrated story of one day in the life of Henio Żytomirski.





MOJA NOGA  
WIĘCEJ TU  
NIE POSTANIE!

SZMULEK,  
MOŻE WEJDZIEMY TUTAJ?  
KUPIMY HENIOWI CZAPKĘ  
DO MUNDURKA A TOBIE  
NOWY KAPELUSZ...

NIE DZISIAJ SARO.  
JAK LEFLER SKOŃCZY ROBOTĘ  
TO WTEDY PÓJDZIEMY  
PO WYPRAWKĘ DLA HENIA.





SENSAAAAAACJAAAAA!!!!

RADIO  
Z OBRAZEM!!!

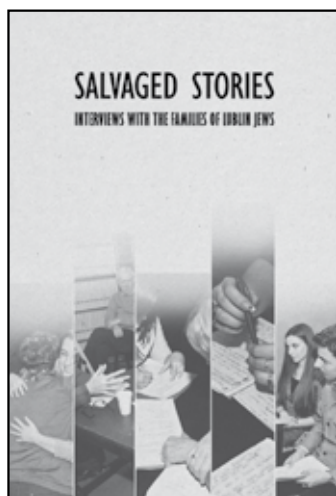




In 2012, Neta Żytomirska-Avidar came to Lublin again, this time with a group of second- and third-generation Lubliners. Their visit marked the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of Lublin Ghetto. On that occasion, the “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre organised an artistic event called **Salvaged Stories Mystery of Memory**, during which descendants of the Lublin Jews told the stories of their families to high school students. Within the space of the Centre, Neta told young people about her family – grandpa Froim, father Leon and little Henio. The event was a symbolic act of passing down the memory of the dramatic events of the Holocaust to a younger generation.



The interviews recorded during the Mystery of Memory were published in English **in a book entitled *Salvaged Stories. Interviews with Families of Lublin Jews.***



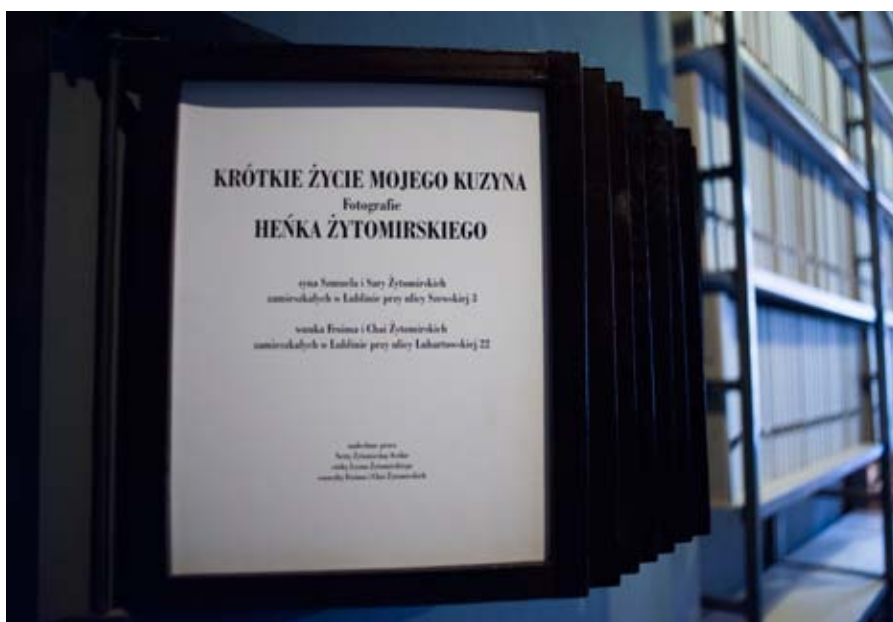
In 2013, the Centre put out a small **publication entitled *The Stories Heard***. This collection of mini-stories, presenting specific events from the Holocaust period that witnesses cannot and do not want to forget, includes The Story of Henio, too. Based on The Stories Heard, a musical and literary oratorio entitled *Stories from the Night* was produced in 2015, a new art form in the NN Theatre's work so far.

The permanent exhibition at Grodzka Gate is complemented by the **Lublin. 43 Thousand project**. This number represents all of the Lublin Jews who were condemned by the Nazis not only to death but also oblivion.









Since 2015, the Centre has been collecting all sorts of personal details based on archive sources (documents, memoirs, letters, photographs) and then inserted into folders integrated with the exhibition. Most of the 43 thousand folders will remain empty, but each one is a symbolic proof of the existence of every individual behind this enormous number. The folder of Henio Żytomirski is among the few that contain relatively ample evidence of life.

In 2015, we celebrated **the 10th anniversary of the Letters to Henio project**. During this edition, the regular annual programme was enriched with additional activities. Students from two schools in Lublin took part in a journalists' workshop that led to articles about Henio published in school newsletters. Thanks to the involvement of Volodymyr Dyshlevuk, a volunteer from the ASF organisation in Ukraine, letters to Henio were also written by school students from Medzhybizh and Khmelnytskyi in Ukraine. The workshop about Henio's story in Medzhybizh was exceptional because that is where Henio's grandfather Froim (Efraim) Żytomirski, son of Chaim Ozer, was born in 1880. From there he moved to Warsaw and then, already with a wife and children, to Lublin. **The Letters to Henio workshop in Ukraine** was organised thanks to the involvement of the *Tchija* Jewish Community of Khmelnytskyi in cooperation with the Provincial Public–Academic Library in Khmelnytskyi, School Complex No. 5 in Khmelnytskyi, Polish-Ukrainian Centre in Khmelnytskyi, and the European Club at the Secondary School of General Education in Medzhybizh.

POCZTA

MIN

SPACER

SPACER

(plan 4)

## 2016-2020

The subsequent years of the project have demonstrated the universal dimension of Henio's story. **Letters to Henio began to arrive at the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre from abroad.** In 2016, the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Warsaw presented the Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre with a letter from Prof. Azamat Akbarov, dean of the Faculty of Education at the International Burch University in Sarajevo, in which he wrote:

The last photo of you was taken 67 years ago. I wish I could tell you that no child has fallen victim to gratuitous violence since then, that all children have been to school. But the reality is quite different, only too similar. [...] I wonder how many Septembers will pass before we begin to respond to what is happening around us. Nearly 70 years have gone by, and we are still committing the same mistakes. Perhaps we would stop committing them if we realised that all our children are equally valuable. Perhaps this is what we should be teaching at schools.

These words are particularly poignant when one thinks about all the children that died during the recent Balkan War and armed conflicts still taking place around the world.

In 2018 and 2019, the Centre received letters to Henio written by second-grade pupils (12- and 13- year-olds) from Istituto Comprensivo Bosco-Venisti in Capurso (Bari) in Italy. Teacher Maria Teresa Radogna handed over the documentation of educational classes on the Holocaust, during which pupils were introduced to the stories of Henio Żytomirski and Halina Birenbaum. The young people wrote:





*Learning the story of Henio is much better than learning about general history because we have had an opportunity to get closer to his experience and feel his emotions rather than learn just the dates and facts.*

*We feel extremely sad thinking about Henio, but thanks to his story we have learnt to fight for a future without wars, intolerance and inequality.*

*Thank you, Henio and Halina, for teaching us about the importance of remembering.*

On 29 April 2019, letters to Henio were also written by fifth-grade pupils from Begin Primary School in Netanya in Israel – colleagues of Gur Avidar, grandson of Neta Żytomirska-Avidar. When Gur turned eleven, his grandma told him the story of his family from Lublin and what happened to them during the war. That was the first time he heard about his cousin Henio and the project conducted in Lublin. The boy was so moved by the letters and drawings made by children from Poland that he decided to show them to his classmates. Together, Gur and Neta presented their family history to the class, and then the pupils wrote their letters to Henio:

*Some say that sending letters to someone dead is a bad idea. But I believe that from up high, you can see all those who are writing to you.*

*My grandmother also lived through the Shoah, she survived. She was 95 when she died. How sad it is to die when you are only nine. I am so sorry.*

The excerpts above show the power of Henio's story today.



In 2016, the “Grodzka Gate–NN Theatre” Centre carried out a project to commemorate places connected with the destruction of the Lublin Jews in the form of a Memory Trail in Lublin’s public space. It is called **Lublin. Memory of the Holocaust**. The artistic installation at the so-called Lublin Umschlagplatz is the key element of the Memory Trail. Murals were also created within the former ghetto area. The largest one is a 100-metre collage inspired by pre-war photographs of streets in Lublin’s Jewish Quarter. The mural depicts retail and service shops, with signs in Polish and Yiddish, and people walking in the streets, Henio Żytomirski and his father among them.



n cmentarzem,  
nie można się  
o ziemia dostów-

bie ten zaszczyt,  
Żydów, ma to na-  
iej żydowskiej  
dł właśnie tobie,  
ntarzy stał się  
- żydowskiego  
rchochodzę do lasu  
bo naród żydowski  
nych pokoleń.

je święte miasto,  
aw i jesteś jedną  
hówki, kładzie  
skudny świat, ale





The mural was created on a wall along the banks of the Czechówka river, below street level. This location is symbolic because the nearby Castle Hill used to be surrounded by the Jewish Quarter. Thanks to the mural, Henio is back in Lublin.

Between 3 and 7 July 2017, Lublin hosted the first international meeting of its Jewish residents and their descendants, for the first time in 70 years. **The Lubliner Reunion** was attended by over 200 people from around the world. The participants of this convention had an opportunity to learn about Lublin's history and present-day life. The family stories of the Lubliners were among the most important items on the agenda. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar was one of the persons presenting the story of their family. The Reunion was an important part of the celebrations of the 700th anniversary of Lublin's incorporation as a city and was aimed at highlighting the significance of the Jewish community in the city's history. On that occasion, several Lubliners, including Neta Żytomirska-Avidar, received the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medal of the City of Lublin. The presentation of the medal by the Deputy Mayor of Lublin took place at Lublin Castle.





April 19, 2020 was another round anniversary of the *Letters to Henio* project. Due to the pandemic, all of activities traditionally accompanying the implementation of the project, as well as those planned especially for the celebration of its 15th anniversary, were cancelled. The place to remember Henio's fate was in the space of the Internet. **The film *Stories from the Gate***. Henio, summarizing fifteen years of the Centers' activities around Henia's history, was prepared by Agnieszka Łakocy-Sulej.

**A symbolic typographic letter to Henio**, referring to a postcard template, was created by Robert Sawa from Printing House at the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre. A unique typographic accident prepared by him consists of quotations from earlier letters written to Henio by young people from different countries. Their message is heard in English, German, Hebrew and Polish.

Over the last 15 years, the *Letters to Henio* project has become one of the core activities of the “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre with regard to the memory of the Lublin Jews. Thousands of letters to the small Jewish boy have been sent by young people since 2005. Some of these letters have been returned to the senders with a note ‘Addressee unknown’. The project activities have been developed by many people working and collaborating with the “Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre” Centre, including Beata Markiewicz, Monika Krzykała, Aleksandra Zińczuk, Aleksandra Duż, young people from the Civic Academy (Akademia Obywatelska), Piotr Brożek, Bartosz Gajdzik, Dominika Majuk.

During the 15 years of the project, the letter-writing activities have been attended by several dozen schools from Lublin and places such as Bełżyce, Borzechów, Brzeźno, Bydgoszcz, Chełm, Częstochowa, Dubeczno, Kalinówka, Charleż Kolonia, Legionowo, Nakło nad Notecią, Oświęcim, Piotrowice, Poniatowa, Raszyn, Stargard Szczeciński, Świdnik, Warszawa. Letters to Henio have also been written by pupils, students, teachers and educators from Germany, Ukraine, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Israel and the United States.

The project has received numerous mentions in the media in Poland and abroad and has become an integral part of extracurricular education as a model of memory work related to the Holocaust.

Information about the project is available at  
**[www.listydohenia.teatrnn.pl](http://www.listydohenia.teatrnn.pl)**







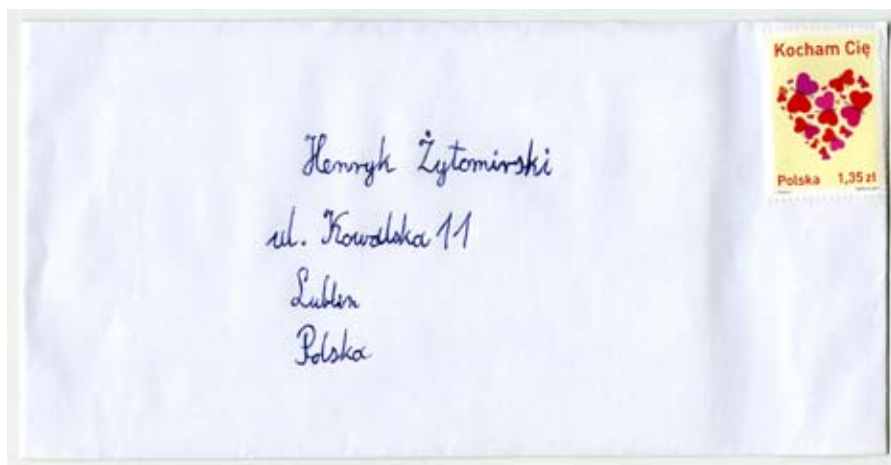
”

When writing a letter to you, describing your story, I am writing to everyone, about everyone, because we cannot be really sure that this will not affect us too.

Łukasz

## LETTERS TO HENIO

Selection of letters to Henio written by pupils  
and students in the years 2005–2020.



## Drogi Heniu!

Mam nadzieję, że mój list dotrze do Ciebie. Wierzę że usłyszysz te słowa czytane przez kogoś starszego, tak żeby nawet brak umiejętności czytania nie przeszkodził Ci w usłyszeniu tych kilku zdań. Obawiam się jednak że pomimo opłaconych kurierów, paczka którą także wysłałam, może nie nadejść.

Ostatnimi dniami strasznie do Ciebie tęskniłam, więc postanowiłam obejrzeć zdjęcia które mi po Tobie pozostały-przechowuje ich jeszcze kilka, tak aby uchronić je od zapomnienia. Przypominałam więc sobie po kolei jak bardzo zmieniałeś się z biegiem lat. Od momentu kiedy byłeś malutki jak laleczka, minęło już tyle czasu...Zawsze jednak ozdabiała Cię piękne, czarne loki i rysy twarzy małego aniołka...Pamiętasz to zdjęcie gdy podtrzymywany przez silne ramiona ojca stałeś niepewnie na podwyższeniu? Twoja twarz wyrażała wtedy bezgraniczne zdumienie...Za to Twój tato patrzył pełnym dumy wzrokiem zza ciemnych oprawek okularów-jak on Cię kochał... Od Twoich najmłodszych lat hucznie świętowano Twoje urodziny-korona i płaszcz nad którym tak długo pracowaliśmy leżała potem długi czas zawinięta w szary papier, bo szkoda było nam ich wyrzucać...Zapraszaliśmy Twoich przyjaciół, żeby wspólnie cieszyć się tym dniem-tak, dobrze pamiętam, cieszyliśmy się wtedy nie tylko każdym następnym rokiem życia...nadszedł czas że liczyliśmy nie tylko dni ale i godziny...a potem...a potem były momenty że woleliśmy nie wiedzieć co będzie dalej...chcieliśmy żeby TO się już skończyło...jak my się wtedy mimo wszystko kochaliśmy...Pamiętasz wspólne spacerowanie z matką? Tak bardzo się o Ciebie bała, żeby nic Ci się nie stało-starannie Cię ubierała, stosownie do pogody-tak żebyś się ani nie zgrzał ani nie zmarzł-jak ona się o Ciebie lękała!Prawie ani na chwile nie wypuszczała Twojej dłoni-to się z czasem (w miarę jak dorastałeś) zmieniało-Mój Boże jak ona się o Ciebie lękała-tak bardzo Cię kochała...Pamiętasz ten szary płaszczyk?Byłeś taki zły że nie może być tak długi jak ojca...jak Ty ojca kochałeś...Przypominasz sobie może swojego wujka Leona? Gdy emigrował do Palestyny miał zaledwie 4 latka, zaczynałeś chodzić do przedszkola...Bardzo baliśmy się o niego...okazało się, że to co czekało nas TU w DOMU miało być o wiele straszniejsze...Rosłeś jak na drożdżach, byłeś takim energicznym, wesołym dzieckiem...Wszędzie gdzie się pojawiałeś towarzyszył Ci Twój perlisty śmiech-rozbrzmiewał on wszędzie, jednając Ci ludzkie serca-gdybyśmy wtedy wiedzieli jak będzie wyglądała Twoja przyszłość...nie interesowały Cię wielkie ideologie-byłeś tylko dzieckiem, radosnym dzieckiem łakącym życia... Tyle wspomnień obrazów, wydarzeń...czapka która zawsze przechylała Ci się na bakier-tak też została upamiętniona na jednej z fotografii. Twoje ostatnie zdjęcie pochodzi z 5 lipca 1939. Już wtedy nie mogłeś się doczekać momentu rozpoczęcia edukacji, choć miało to nastąpić dopiero za kilka miesięcy-ile Ty opowiadałeś, że jak tylko pójdziesz do szkoły to Ty się będziesz tak dobrze uczył, że pani nauczycielka zobaczy, a najwięcej to zobaczy tatuś i mamusia, jaki to on wspaniały jest, tak żeby już nie musieli się martwić, bo on na pewno da sobie radę w tej nowej szkole, i będzie prymusem i... I tyle się naobiecowałeś, żebyśmy wreszcie wszyscy byli tacy jak przedtem-Ty mimo wszystko wiedziałeś że jakaś troska nas wszystkich męczy, choć przecież nikt się nie przyznawał do tego co wszyscy już przeczuwaliśmy-kochaliśmy się tak bardzo, że nikt nie chciał martwić innych...

Wszystko co było potem ciągle wydaje mi się nieprawdopodobne-nikt z nas nie potrafi zrozumieć jak to wszystko było możliwe...ale jednak Człowiek był do tego zdolny...to WSZYSTKO zasługuje na wybaczenie ale i upamiętnienie...Są to rzeczy trudne, jednak jeżeli nie chcemy powtarzać błędów, inaczej nie można...Pozdrawiam i ściskam mocno

Justyna Wójcik





HENIU

ODEZWIJ SIĘ  
NA CHWILĘ,

WRESZCIE HENIU. BOJĘ SIĘ, BO NA DW  
A CO Z NAMI? TAK BARDZO CHCIAŁABY





ORZE CZUĆ ZAPACH WOJNY. DRZEWIA UMIERAJĄ TYLKO  
MIEĆ NADZIEJĘ, BY UJRZEĆ PIĘKNO WIOŃNY. KOZIŃSKA  
KLAUDIA

12.04.10 Lublin

Heniu,

Mudno jest pisać do Ciebie, tak samo jak ciężko jest zrozumieć świat. Jego ulotności, ułogę, zmienności. Wiem, że nigdy nie będzie w stanie mi opisać i właśnie to dożyła mnie najbardziej. Nie potrafię sobie wyobrazić jak czuwałym się żyjąc w Twoich czasach. Nie mogę Ci powiedzieć, że pływając przez ocean głodny w środku dnia to podkuliłabym się z Tobą ostatnim kęsem chleba. Wiem na pewno tylko jedno, że BYŁEŚ.

Tak samo jak ja miałeś rodzinę, swoje wspomnienia, bratysę. Pozostawiłeś na świecie swój niekwestionowany ślad i bez względu na to jak potoczyło się Twoje życie nikt nie zabierze Ci tej przeszłości. Jak należy do Ciebie? Żyć wciąż w naszych sercach. Nie jesteś tylko jedną samotną sylwetką ginącą w statystykach, które pomimo swojego gromu nie krzyczą do nas. Mamy Cię poznać bliżej, zrozumieć, ale tym samym stając się reprezentantem wszystkich dzieci, których już prawie nigdy się nie dowiemy.

Ewelina Górecka



Drogi Henry!

Pełna smutku i rozczalenia piszę do Ciebie ten list.

Rozmawiając Twoje niewiarygodną i bardzo przejmującą historię, pomyślałam, że napiszę wiersz, o Tobie i dla Ciebie:

Nim kruczo-brunatny suit  
otworzył cię  
i skrzydłami mymli objął  
cały Twój mały świat  
zycie było nieco inne...

Podziwiam za echem wspomnień,  
złote konie, czarno-białe fotografie,  
ulica Szeuwska,  
miejąc marzec  
- Ty -

Żali od nowości  
przez szkołę  
kochających rodziców,  
wryków i ciotki  
gdzieś poza granicę,  
każdą chwilę pełną sekretów,  
ale i niepokoju  
chciałabym przeżyć razem z Tobą...

Tak więc idę ulicą Kowalską  
spoglądam w okna  
wypatniesz Ciebie  
- chyba tutaj Cię nie znajde ...

Słyszysz płacz, niepewne kroki,  
słychać dźwięk z szarych kominów,  
w powietrzu dźwięk woli przemijania,  
a pragnienie bycia  
większe niż wszystko...

Podziśnij mój mały Ryjacielu  
obłamy zimnymi potęgami i niepojętym strachem  
wydeptam, jedynkami, maydaniami dwórką  
... nie zobaczę Cię już więcej...

Choć to już nie to samo miejsce,  
nie ten sam czas,  
nie Ci sami ludzie  
dziś idę z Tobą,  
od dziś ... p a m i e t a m ...

Z uczuciami szczeniaka  
Margarita Dylewska  
ul. Mienica 11, lokum nr IV  
w Dublinie



Malutki!

Opowiem Ci bajkę.

Razu pewnego, w dzień słoneczny, na wielkim kamieniu wygrzewała się zielona gosiennica. Hej, czy pamiętasz gosiennicę? Pamiętasz, jak uciekała na widok naryzeli dławu? Leżąc, myślała o tym, jak wibreskie potrafi być niebo, z którego spada złoto. Na wspomnienie o groźnym ptaku, który pragnie ją pożreć, szybko zmusiła się do zejścia z uagnanego kamienia. Ale nie bój się, nie się jej nie stało. Zsiadła się w szereg zielonych, wilgotnych traw.

I tam zasnęła.

A wiesz, co stało się w nocy, Hej? Przypomnij sobie Nocny Wroźka. To sliczną panią, która wieczorem odwiedza Cię, by dać Ci dobre sny. Ta sama przyszła do malutkiej, zielonej gosienniczki, wiesz? Spojrzała na jej drobne i bezbronne ciatko, po czym uśmiechnęła się. Podniosła do góry swoją czarodziejską różdżkę i wyszeptała tajemnicze zaklęcie. Nie, Hej, nie to na dobre sny. Ona zamieniła zieloną gosienniczkę w piskiego motylka. Pamiętasz, jak tapaliśmy motylki?

Rano, gdy gosienniczka otworzyła oczy, szybko zorientowała się, że wygląda zupełnie inaczej. W szklistej tafli jeziora wyjrzała swoje wieloboczne skrzydetka i parę czarnych czutek. Jakie kolory miały skrzydetka? Wybierz sobie, Hej. Były takie, jakie chcesz, by były.

Motylek cieszył się wolnością. Latał w przestrzeniach wiebieskiego nieba i zwyczajnie płakał ze szczęścia, jakie go spotkało. Jednak nie trwało długo.

Nagle, zza ogromnej chmury wyłonił się również wielki co chmura Sokół. Nie zwracając uwagi na szczęście Motylka, szybko i brutalnie porwał go w swoje szpony. Nie bój się, Hej, nie. Motylek zebrał wszystkie swoje siły, by się wyrwać i... Udało mu się! Szybko poleciał nad jezioro, uciekając od oprawy.

Tafla ukazała straszny widok Motylkowi. Jego skrzydetka, Hej... One... straciły wszystkie swoje barwy...

Nie płacz, Hej, postępuj.

Motylek udał był cudownym Motylkiem, wiesz? Bo liczy się tylko to, co czujesz i co masz w środku, Heniu. Nawet wtedy, gdy odbiorę Ci swoją tożsamość. Tożsamość, Heniu, mojej Małutki, to te kolorki na skrzydłach, ale też to, co wypłisz i to, jakim jesteś człowiekiem. I to jest nawet ważniejsze.

Na zawsze twoja,  
Karolina.







Ziemie  
 wyrosła ci się niewzruszonym, który zrobiłem po wojnie. Przedstawia ci drzewo, które było  
 wieloletnim wspaniałym drzewem. Poznaję. Było ono bardzo duże, ale nigdy się nie ugęsto, gdy  
 się po nim wspinał. Chciało srebro, kręgiem, ciemne, nadaje najlepszą jakość,  
 Słuchano namiętnie rozumiem i patrzyło na moją ciemność i także na tych, którzy  
 nam to dawało. Znamyśmy, choć też wielu z nich. Oni jednak  
 nie byli się ludzkiej spójności.

Józef Maryja

Błażej Kuchta

Tomasz  
 3.01.1941

Drogi Heniu narysowałem Tobie smoka na znak odwagi  
oraz walki.



23.03.2002

Witaj Heniu

Minęło tyle lat. Zastanawiam się czy jesteś  
jeszcze gdzieś w okolicach Lublina? Myślałem  
żeby Cię odwiedzić. Jak idą sprawy? Czy  
odkryłeś TO? czy się pogodziłeś? Co  
myślisz o Bogu, o sprawiedliwości, o nas?  
Gdybym przyjechał do Lublina, moglibyśmy  
do tego powrócić, porozmawiać gdzieś  
w cieniu kamienicy. Gdybyś żył --

ps. Heniu, właśnie wkroczyłeś do mojego życia.

Patryk



24.6.14, Lublin

Dragi Heniu!

Myszę, że powinnam napisać słowa  
Grubsoma:

„Jestem tego pewny,  
w głębi duszy o tym wiem,  
że gdzieś ma szczyt góry,  
WSZYSTY RAZEM

SPOTKANY SIĘ!

Tyle chciałam napisać,

Pozdrawiam,

— ..

L. J.

## **Drogi Heniu!**

*Piszę do Ciebie ten list, ponieważ ostatnio czytałem o Twojej rodzinie i bardzo poruszył mnie jej los. Wciąż próbuję sobie wyobrazić, co czuleś jako mały jeszcze chłopak, gdy wokół Twojego domu gromadziło się widmo wojny. Z pewnością wyobrażenia nie podpowiadała Ci aż tak potwornych obrazów, które czekały Twój naród. Holokaust ... Czy ktokolwiek z mieszkańców Lublina, ktokolwiek z Twojej rodziny przeczuwał zbliżającą się grozę najbliższych miesięcy? Pewnie spod przymkniętych strachem powiek pielegnowałeś ciepły obraz domu rodzinnego. Gdy patrzę na zdjęcia Waszej rodziny widzę kochających się ludzi. Ty, jako 4-latek, przedszkolak, myślałeś zapewne, że cały świat stoi przed Tobą otworem. Beztroskie spacerowanie po Krakowskim Przedmieściu pod czujnym okiem dziadka.*

*Niedawno byłem w Lublinie i przechodząc właśnie Krakowskim Przedmieściem chyba po raz pierwszy inaczej spojrzałem na te ulicę. Twoimi oczami... Patrząc na kamienice zastanawiałem się, czy Ty także wtedy przechodziłeś, czy również przypadkowo spoglądałeś w głąb bramy? Na kilka powróciłeś do swojego przecież Lublina. Nie potrafię pisać jeszcze o tym, co spotkało Ciebie i Twoją rodzinę. To jest dla mnie zbyt przerażające i sam nie umiem sobie odpowiedzieć na pytanie: jak to się mogło stać?! Skazać na Zagładę drugiego człowieka tylko dlatego, że jest Żydem. Nie można nawet powiedzieć utartego zdania, że to „człowiek człowiekowi zgotował ten los”. W moim pojęciu ktoś, kto doprowadził do holokaustu człowiekiem po prostu nie był.*

*Pamięć o Tobie jest we mnie.*

*Adam Rafał*



Lublin, 12.06.2010.

Kochany Heniu!

Właśnie ustynałam historkę o Tobie i twojej  
wolności. Jest mi smutno, że musisz w tak młodym  
wieku potęgować się z igłami. Wiem, że każde dziecko  
ma swoje marzenia, pragnie miłości. Ja mam brata  
w twoim wieku ~~to~~, jest on radosnym  
chłopcem. Tak właśnie wyobrażam sobie Ciebie,  
jako uśmiechniętego, pełnego energii chłopca,  
który potrzebuje opieki. Ty miścis wózek,  
kochałbyś, która intensywnie się Tobą wspomina  
o Tobie w listach. Jednak pomimo miłości  
ze strony wózków, nie ~~staniesz~~ oduczasz tego  
ucucia od innych. Wiele zastajesz rozmów  
przez swoich morderców. Zabrak Ci uśmiechu,  
marzenia, możliwości poznania świata.

Będąc mieszkańcem getta pewnie  
nie wędrujesz, że ucieka Ciś śmierć. Była to tylko  
umiana miejsca zamieszkania, pobytu. Może  
w danym mieszkaniu zastanawiasz ulubionego  
misią, bez którego nie mogłeś żyć,  
Miścis nadzieję, że wróci po niego  
i on będzie ukojenie na Ciebie.

tylko mogę ci obiecać. Jeśli kiedyś znajdziesz  
tego małego to bądź z nim opiekować.

Postaw go na półce w moim pokoju.

Kocham cię, jak się spotkamy, to ci go oddam.

Heniu, wiem, że twoje życie było trudne,  
ale mimo wszystko potrafisz uśmiechnąć się  
każdy dzień. Chęć, patrzeć na twoje zdjęcie  
uśmiechnąć się tak, jak ty.

Ewelina

Lublin, 19.04.2010r.

Drogi Heniu,

Od wojny dużo się zmieniło. Według mnie wszystko na lepsze. Nikt  
nie chodzi już z bronią, nie trzeba się ukrywać i ~~nie ma~~ każdy  
człowiek może wyjść spokojnie na ulicę. Nie ma już znaczenia: kolarz, skoczek,  
wynalazca czy pochodzenie. Razem teraz. Twoją historię, która bardzo  
mnie wciągnęła. Żałuję, że nie mogę cię poznać. Myślę, że moglibyśmy  
się zaprzyjaźnić. Dziś jest piątek, który wiadomo, że wróci do  
normalności. Mimo wszystko piszę, bo jest coś w tym ~~niezwykłego~~ pięknego  
i niesamowitego.

Michał Koma.



Lublin 22.03.05

Szanowny Panie Henryku

Jestem uczniem pierwszej klasy gimnazjum w Lublinie.  
Mieszkam tu od sześciu lat. Moja rodzina nie pochodzi  
z Lublina, historyę tego miasta poznaje z literatury,  
jak wyglądało przed laty, to ze zdjęć.

Od czasu wojny, to miasto bardzo się zmieniło,  
rozbudowało. Zepię starych domów została wybudowana,  
na to miejsce powstały nowe osiedla.

Gdybyśmy się kiedyś spotkali, to ja bym pana  
oprowadził po nowym Lublinie, a pan by mi  
opowiedział co było inaczej przed wojną, w tym  
zanim mięliśmy. Myśle, że mielibyśmy  
spędzić czas i nauczyć się od siebie się dużo  
dowiedzieć. Pozdrawiam i do zobaczenia.

Krzysztof Niemura

Lublin, 14.04.15<sub>N</sub>

Drogi Haniu !

Wiem że ten miasteczko w Lublinie takale my.  
Od Twojej śmierci Lublin bardzo się zmienił.  
Nie ma obecnie żydowskich ani getta, nie poznałbyś Lublina.  
Wojna się już w państwie Polskim skończyła.  
Dziś już nie ma tyle Żydów, ale pamięć po nich  
pozostaje.

Chodząc do gimnazjum, możemy się bez przesady  
użyć polskiego. Znać historię i dzieje Polski. Wiemy że Ty  
nie miałeś takiej możliwości. Pozналиśmy Twoją historię  
na wykładach poświęconych II wojnie światowej. Dowiedzieliśmy  
się o Twoją historię i rodzinie, wiedzieliśmy o jej życiu. Miałeś  
śmiertne chrześcijaństwo, marnotrawstwo wojny i krwi...  
Twoja historia na zawsze pozostanie w naszych sercach.

Wiem, że ten list nigdy nie dotrze do Ciebie,  
ale chcemy w ten sposób <sup>zob.</sup> Twoją historię dotrzeć do  
większej naszej polonij.  
Haniu naszym idolem.

Natalia, Karolina, Halina

Dear Henio,

It's 75 years after the war today. Lublin, as a city, has changed, but also as the people living in it. Your story is only one of the many, but each of the stories are of the same importance. Today you've helped to educate young students about the history of Poland. Funny thing, considering you are six.

Thanks from the bottom of our hearts,  
Students of 21<sup>st</sup> century

TANTI ALTRI  
HENIO NON

MORIRANNO PIÙ

#NOALLA MORTEDIALTREMIGLIAIADI PERSONE! ♥

א.ה.נ.ו ה'יקר 28M

[illegible]

I am so sorry

Lublin, 19 kwietnia 2016

Drogi Henryku:  
Mija 44 lata kiedy ostatni raz przebywałeś  
w pobliżu miejsca swojego urodzenia, w Lublinie.  
Podróżując tranzytem los swojego Narodu.  
Mam ci dziś wręczyć mój niewielki uścisk lat od  
ciebie gdy musiałeś z powodu wojennych działań  
odwiedzić stację żelaznic. Niech cię wspomnienia i  
razem kiedykolwiek byty jesse przywróci tak  
niektórej tragedii jaką spotkała Ciebie i Twoją  
rodzinę, zginęłaś w mieście w Lublinie  
całej Polsce. Trzymam cię w sercu.  
Hania Zawada



Дорогий Геньо!

Пише тобі учениця Меджибізької школи I-III ст. Мазур Діана.  
Я стала учасницею проекту “Listy do Henia”.

Мені відома трагедія, яка сталася з тобою, адже у віці дев’яти років ти був страчений у газовій камері концтабору Майданек. Звісно, тебе спіткала дуже жорстока доля, тому що до початку війни ти жив звичайним життям і ніколи не міг збагнути, що могло б з тобою статися. Як мені вже відомо, ти був веселим і дуже жвавим хлопчиком. Твій дідусь – Фроїм Житомирський, родом із Меджибожа, в якому більша частина жителів селища були євреї. Трагедія, що сталася у Майданеку, болем відгукнулася у серцях жителів нашого селища: у Меджибожі в роки другої світової війни фашистами було розстріляно 3500 євреїв. Було створене гетто, яке поступово знищувало людей.

У 1941 році почалась друга світова війна в Україні, в той час, як в Польщі вона вже тривала 2 роки. Але незважаючи на те, що більше ніж півстоліття минуло після закінчення війни, український народ зараз потерпає від агресії Росії. На щастя, жах війни ще не торкнувся нашого селища, але мені добре відомо про життя людей, які перебувають в постійному остраху. Частина території України охоплена. У числі захисників держави є і мій дядько. Прикро, що діти стають жертвами війни...

P.S. Маленький Геньо! Цими листами ми не зможемо тебе повернути, але принаймні вшануємо твою пам’ять.

Мазур Діана, 14 років.

11.03.2015 р.

Lieber Henio,

ich hoffe dir gehts gut & du hattest eine schöne Kindheit, auch wenn sie sehr kurz war.

Es tut mir leid, dass du so etwas schreckliches erlebt hast in deinem jungen Alter, das sollte keines durch machen müssen, egal in welchem Alter.

Deine Geschichte bleibt in Dublin in Erinnerung und bewegt viele Menschen und lebst in den Erzählungen weiter!

Liebe Grüße deine

Claudia



Henio  
ul. Szwedka 3  
0-086 Lublin



20







Henio Żytomirski  
ul. Szewska 3  
20-086 Lublin



Henio Żytomirski  
ul. Szewska 3  
20-086 Lublin





”

Dear Henio! I have found out about you just a few hours ago, but I feel like I have known you for a very long time.

Alina

## LETTER FROM ESTHER

### **“My friend in the ghetto”**

My name is Esther Bernhard, née Rechtman. I was born in December 1932. My parents emigrated with me to Palestine in 1933. Three years later, my mom and I visited Lublin and stayed there until 1938.

We would often call at Henio Żytomirski's home. His father taught my mom Hebrew and the Bible, and members of the family became our friends. I have vague memories of Henio's home, a place where children were loved. I can remember his grandfather, with his bright, loving eyes.

I can remember the apartment with many books, a desk, and particularly a room full of toys, where Henio would stay. I am sure that my memories have been influenced by my mom's memories, but I believe that I can really remember some scenes, for example when Henio's father saw us off to the door at the end of each visit.

The war broke out a year after our return to Tel Aviv. During those years, the image of Henio became fixed in my heart. Henio became 'my friend' from the Jewish ghetto. I worried about him.

I was looking at the photograph of us together, the copy that I have, and I felt that I missed that boy, my peer.







In the following years, I found out that neither he nor his family members were among the survivors. Henio remains locked in my heart. How painful, how sad.

I left Lublin before I turned five, but I can still remember some scenes and emotions. I long for something that is no more, but it was the landscape of my childhood, etched in my heart. This longing is mixed with pain and inconsolable grief.

Esther Bernhard,  
daughter of Dawida Rechtman and Perla Laks from Lublin.  
Henio's childhood friend.  
Israel 2007

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page No. 133 - Henio with his friend Estera, 1937.

page No. 134 - Third birthday of Henio - below, first from left - Estera, 1936.



”

I am really glad that I have had the opportunity to learn your story. I will be able to pass it on, thus making you immortal.

Michał



## **Captions to iconography in the chapter “The Life of Henio Żytomirski and his family”**

**page No. 8** – Henio Żytomirski with his father Szmuel Żytomirski in the Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in Lublin, 1938. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar’s collection.

**page No. 10** – Wedding photograph of Szmuel Żytomirski and Sara Oksman. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar’s collection.

**page No. 10** – Sisters: Rachela Żytomirska, Sonia Kornberg (with her son Abramek) and Estera [below] Żytomirska, Kazimierz Dolny 1937. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar’s collection.

**page No. 11** – Farewell with Leon Żytomirski before his emigration to Palestine, Lublin 1937. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar’s collection.

### **pages**

**No. 12, 13** – The Żytomirski family at a reception celebrating the wedding of Sonia Żytomirska and Józef Kornberg at the home of Froim and Chaja Żytomirski at 22 Lubarowska Street, Lublin 1932. In the photo: Froim and Chaja Żytomirski, Chaja’s sisters – Gołda Ajzynberg and Lea Lapicki with her husband Max, Chaja’s brother Icchak Mełamed, Froim and Chaja’s children including the newlywed couple Sonia Żytomirska and her husband Józef Kornberg, Rachela, Estera, Leon and Szmuel with his wife Sara. The portrait on the wall shows great-grandmother Mełamed – Chaja Żytomirska’s mother. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar’s collection.

**page No. 14** – Air raid on Lublin on 9 September 1939. Destroyed buildings in Kapucyńska Street. Photo by Ludwik Hartwig. Marek Pluta’s collection.

**page No. 15** – A column of German soldiers on Zamojska Street, the cathedral fire and smoke over the Old Town in the background, Sep. 18, 1939. Marek Gromaszek’s collection.

### **pages**

**No. 17, 18** – Postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman living in the USA, dated 26 December 1940. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar’s collection.

**page No. 21** – The Jewish Quarter in Lublin, Kowalska Street, 1940. Collection of Max Kirnberger’s photographs from the Deutsches Historisches Museum.

**pages**

**No. 22, 23** – The Jewish Quarter in Lublin, Cyrulicza Street, 1940. Bicki family collection.

**pages**

**No. 25, 26** – Postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman living in the USA, dated 5 March 1941. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar's collection.

**page No. 27** – Resettlement of the Jews from Lublin to towns in the region in March 1941. Rajmund Krzyżewski's collection.

**pages**

**No. 29, 30** – Postcard written by Froim Żytomirski to his cousin Lena Hechtman living in the USA, dated 8 October 1941. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar's collection.

**page No. 32** – A group of children on Jateczna Street in Lublin, a fragment of the Great Synagogue visible in the background, around 1940. Marek Gromaszek's collection.

**page No. 33** – Interior of a house from the Lublin ghetto area, around 1940. Symcha Wajs' collection.

**pages**

**No. 34, 35** – Letter from Samuel Żytomirski to his brother Leon in Palestine sent on 27 May 1942 via the Red Cross. Date received: 8 January 1943. Neta Żytomirska-Avidar's collection.

**pages**

**No. 38, 39** – Ruins of the beit ha-midrash in Jateczna Street, Maharshal synagogue in the background, 1942–1943. Symcha Wajs' collection.

**page No. 41** – Ruins of Szeroka Street after the demolition of the ghetto, 1942/1943. Symcha Wajs' collection.

**pages**

**No. 42, 43** – Ruins of Podzamcze Street and Krawiecka Street after the demolition of the ghetto, 1942/1943. Collection of the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning of the Lublin City Office.

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The cover photo is a photo of Henio Żytomirski taken on 5 July 1939.

All photos of the members of the Żytomirski family are  
from Neta Żytomirska-Avidar's collection.

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Unless otherwise stated, digital copies of the photographs in the publication come from  
the collection of the Iconography Archive of the „Grodzka Gate – NN Theater” Centre

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