



THE ARTHUR SZYK SOCIETY

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED
TO THE RENAISSANCE OF ARTHUR SZYK

Vol. 2 No. 1

Newsletter

Fall 1999

"Arthur Szyk: Artist For Freedom" to Open at Library of Congress December 9, 1999

Szyk's "Declaration Of Independence" Unveiled in Millennium Exhibition

"Arthur Szyk: Artist for Freedom" will open at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC in the Swann Gallery of the Jefferson Building on December 9, 1999. Harry Katz, curator of prints and drawings is assisted by Irvin Ungar, author of *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk*. Ungar will also deliver the keynote opening lecture at a gala preview Wednesday evening, December 8th. Members of The Arthur Szyk Society, members of Congress, and invited guests will gather for the opening preview and reception, which is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Rose of New

A special feature of the exhibition will be Arthur Szyk's largest and most valuable single piece, the *Declaration of Independence*, which on July 4, 1950 was dedicated in a festive ceremony in New Canaan, CT, Szyk's last place of residency. It was Szyk's dream that this work would one day belong to the people of the United States and reside in the collection of the Library of Congress. During this past year, an anonymous donor fulfilled Szyk's wish almost exactly 50 years after its creation. The New Canaan Edition of the *Declaration of Independence* takes its place as part of the Library of Congress' permanent collection and will be the centerpiece of the exhibition. It will be flanked by two other brilliant watercolor and gouache miniature paintings, Szyk's *Bill of Rights* and *Four Freedoms Prayer*, both gifts to the Library by Alexandra Szyk Bracie, daughter of Arthur Szyk. Additional works of art and illustrated books including Szyk's famed book of freedom, *The Haggadah*, will be on display.

This exhibition marks Arthur Szyk's second appearance at the Library of Congress. In 1934 during a brief visit to the United States, Szyk was given an exhibition, as well as the prestigious George Washington Bicentennial Medal, in honor of the creation of his 38 miniature portraits celebrating *Washington and His*

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University of Scranton to Host Szyk Exhibition

On November 29, 1999 "Arthur Szyk: Manuscript Illuminator, Political Artist, and Advocate for Humanity" will open at the University of Scranton Art Gallery in Scranton, PA. "We were looking for an artist who would symbolize the beginning of the new millennium and whose work would bridge the generations," said Gallery Director, Dr. Darlene Miller-Lanning. "We searched the Internet and discovered Arthur Szyk." Irvin Ungar, who will curate the exhibition, previously served as the guest curator for the Chicago Spertus Museum exhibit "Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk." Among the over 30 works to be shown in the Scranton exhibition will be the *Statute of Kalisz*, Szyk's most famous historical work celebrating ethnic and religious toleration. "Szyk would have been pleased to see this work exhibited in a Jesuit-affiliated university which hosts a strong Judaic Studies program," commented Rabbi David Geffen, religious leader of Scranton's Congregation Temple Israel. The keynote lecture by guest curator Irvin Ungar has been set for January 9, 2000. The exhibition will run through February 11, 2000.

Library Exhibit ... (continued from previous page)

Times. Polish President Ignacy Moscicki subsequently purchased and presented these original watercolors to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. They hung in the White House until 1941. Today they are permanently housed in the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, NY. Szyk spent the years 1934-1940 in Europe, but returned to the United States in 1940 where he continued to dedicate himself to the pursuit of individual and national freedom until his death in 1951. The "Arthur Szyk: Artist for Freedom" exhibit will continue through May 6, 2000.

Szyk Illustrated Books and Original Works of Art Active in the Marketplace

During October Arthur Szyk's art has been selling quite actively. The most important sale in recent years was transacted privately by a collector* who acquired the prestigious *Book of Esther*, executed by Szyk in 1950. In addition, *Fabric of American Life*, Szyk's second largest watercolor illumination after the *Declaration of Independence*, found another buyer. A prominent New York bookseller was recently seen advertising for sale the famous Szyk *Haggadah* (one of 250 copies on vellum and signed by Szyk) for \$28,000 in *The New York Times Book Review* section.

* It is policy of the *Society Newsletter* not to reveal private buyers, sellers, or their transaction amounts.

Justice Illuminated Republished

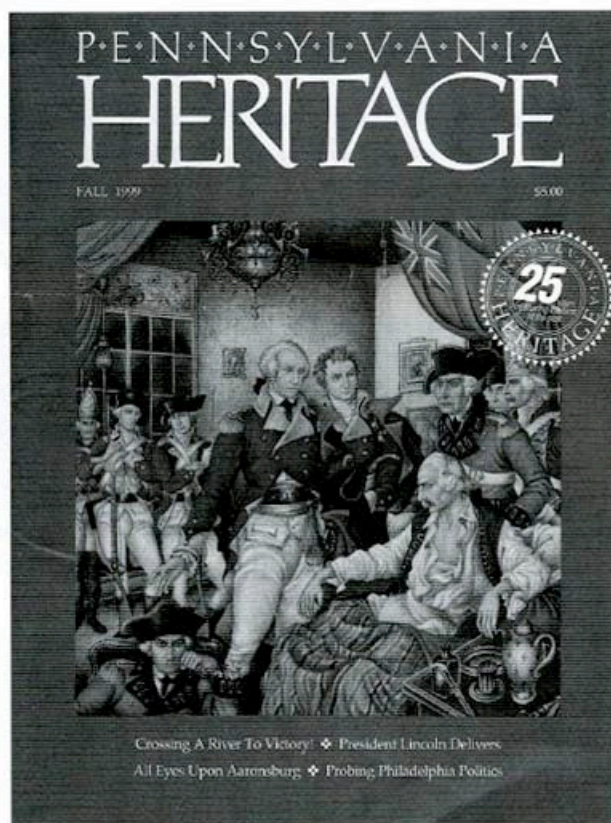
Historicana (Burlingame, CA) and Frog Ltd. (Berkeley, CA) have jointly republished the first illustrated book about Arthur Szyk, *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk*. Distributed by Publisher's Group West, it is expected to be in local bookstores by December. Copies may be ordered directly through Historicana, 1200 Edgehill Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010, Tel. 650.343.9578 or Fax 650.579.6014. The price is \$30. A limited quantity of the First Edition *Deluxe* numbered copies is available at \$300 each.

Barnesandnoble.com to Carry Szyk Posters

In an agreement with Buyenlarge (Philadelphia, PA), Barnesandnoble.com, among other retailers, will be offering for sale and distribution on the Internet, enlarged posters of Arthur Szyk's art on canvas. The first group of images is expected to be available in November.

Szyk on Magazine Front Covers

Typical of the resurgence of interest in the art of Arthur Szyk is the appearance of Szyk's *Rosh HaShanah* image on the front cover of *Amit* magazine (Fall 1999, Vol. 72 No. 4) and his *Hillel* piece on the front cover of *JTS* magazine (The Journal of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Spring 1999, Vol. 8 No. 3). Both images were illuminated by Szyk in 1948 and 1949, respectively. Szyk's illustration of *George Washington Visiting the Dying Gen. Nathanael Greene* (see below) appeared on the front cover of the *Pennsylvania Heritage Quarterly* (Fall 1999), Vol. 25 No. 4. (This was one of 38 images from Szyk's *Washington and His Times* series, printed in Vienna 1932.) A feature article on Szyk, written by Jennifer Breger, appeared in the Swiss magazine, *Shalom*, this past spring in both their French and German editions.



Szyk's Washington image on front cover of a Fall 1999 magazine

Sponsorship Sought

The Society is interested in publishing an illustrated book/booklet of Szyk's colorful and historic 1930's-40's commercial advertisements. The Arthur Szyk Society is seeking a sponsor and underwriter for this unique project. Contact Irvin Ungar at The Arthur Szyk Society to learn more about what is involved in funding this project.

Drive Carefully -- The Life You Save May Be Your Own
NEW CANAAN ADVERTISER

14 Pages

A HOME NEWSPAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF A LIVE AND GROWING COMMUNITY

xt Station to Heaven."

MOTTO: -- "GROW OR GO."

PRICE TEN CENTS

NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT, THURSDAY, JULY 4, 1950

ESTABLISHED 1909

Scenes At Independence Day Program

Szyk Given Great Ovation At July Fourth Ceremony

Over 300 Present To See Unveiling Of Declaration Of Independence



Szyk holding his Declaration of Independence illumination in his New Canaan home in 1950

Arthur Szyk, internationally noted artist, and his illumination of the Declaration of Independence were given an ovation by more than 300 persons who crowded the auditorium at town hall for a special Independence Day ceremony Tuesday morning.

The reading of a paper on the circumstances which led to the Declaration by H. Monroe Humason, historian of the New Canaan Historical society, and the unveiling of the document for its first public showing by a group of local Girl Scouts were highlights of the program.

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Mr. Szyk was deeply moved by the standing ovation from the audience which came after he was introduced by the chairman, Carlton Hill. The spectators also rose to applaud as the flag draped across his coat of arms was lifted and folded by Girl Scouts.

Dated at New Canaan, July 4, 1950, his illustration measures about 48 by 30 inches. It has battle scenes and a portrait of George Washington in the wide panel to the left of the document. Between the lines of the text are pictures of Minute Men and other Revolutionary soldiers. Beside the signatures and around the top and right border are flags and wigs of the American colonists.

He plans to send the original to the Library of Congress and copies of it will be available for schools, government offices and other places. A native of Poland, Mr. Szyk came to this country ten years ago and was made an American citizen two years ago. He has made his home here in Weed Street for some time past.

The program opened with musical selections played by the New Canaan Band, directed by Harold B. Swinfield, on the town hall lawn. Joan Faraday, young daughter of Malcolm Faraday, president of the band, gave a demonstration of baton twirling at the same time.

James Catts, director, and two members of the Fire Company File and Drum Corps, Jerry Paschella and Walter Spence, marched from the rear of the hall to the stage, playing "Yankee Doodle" in "Spirit of 1776" style for the unveiling ceremony.

Behind them were Girl Scouts Margaret O'Neil, Margaret Quinn, Elizabeth Loukhurst and Elizabeth Tharler, who mounted the stage to remove the flag from the declaration. Girl Scouts Marjorie Henderson, Sarah Severance, Janice Houghton and Kathy Rogers also helped by distributing programs.

Red, white and blue flower arrangements set before the document were provided by Stephen B. Hoyt. Mr. Hoyt and Miss Marjorie Dickerman were members of the committee which arranged the ceremony.

After the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner" at the start of the indoor ceremony, Mrs. Dorothy M. Burnham, chief selectman, spoke a word of greeting. Mr. Humason was then introduced by the chairman.

It was not the Declaration that made this country free and independent, nor that gave birth to the war of the American Revolution, Mr. Humason said. It was, he said, the men and women of the colonies who worked and fought in a long and bloody war.

When the Declaration of Independence was signed in July of 1776, he said, that war had been going on for more than a year—since the battle at Lexington on April 19, 1775. It took some time for the Continental Congress to realize the war meant either separation from England or complete subjugation, he said.

In fact, Mr. Humason traced the course of rebellion back to 1773, saying the 13 colonies had only one thing in common: a bitter resentment at the treatment accorded them by the English government. Then, on May 18, 1774, he said, orders arrived from England declaring Boston's port was to be closed.

It was announced General Gage was coming over with an army and Boston would be treated as a captured city until its citizens paid for the tea they had thrown into the city's harbor in December of 1774.

This was such important news, Mr. Humason said, an express rider was sent south, arriving in Philadelphia, 100 miles away, five days later. That ride should have made the rider famous, the speaker declared, but it was for a shorter ride, nearly a

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Ovation ...

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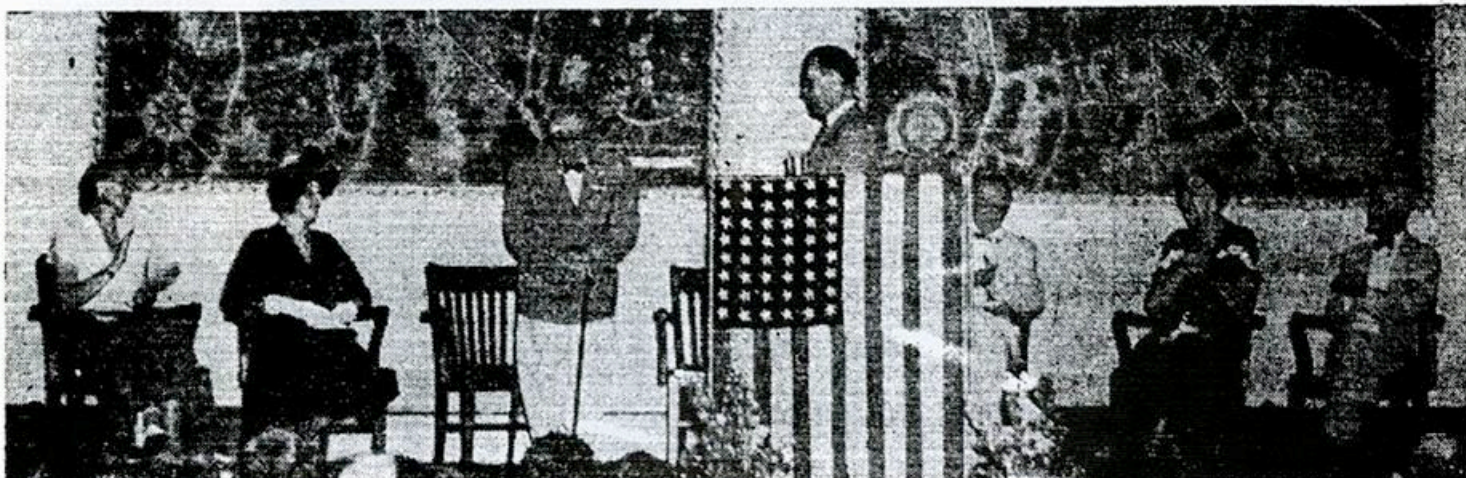
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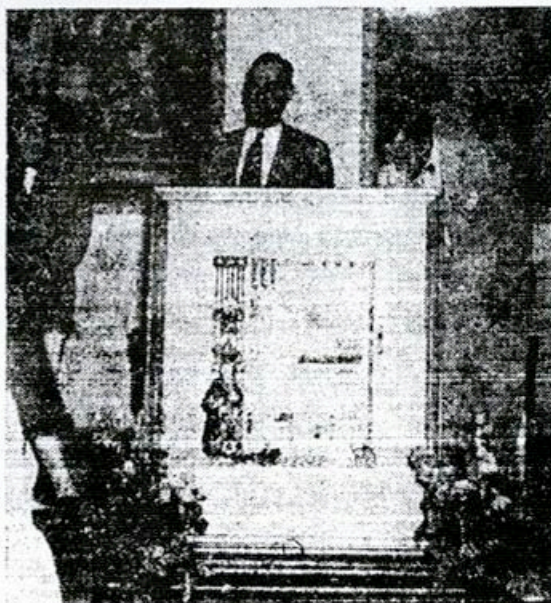
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This article was originally published by the New Canaan Advertiser, New Canaan, CT on Thursday, July 6, 1950.

Scenes At Independence Day Program



The introduction of Arthur Szyk just before the unveiling of his illumination of the Declaration of Independence is shown above and the picture at the right was taken just after the unveiling. On the stage, left to right, are Mrs. Dorothy Burnham, third selectman, Mrs. Szyk, Mr. Szyk, Carlton Hill, H. Monroe Humason, Miss Marion Dickerman and S. B. Hoyt.



Arthur Szyk's War-Era Artwork: Tears Of Rage

by Rabbi Shmuel Jablon

His pictures rise off from the page, as if the figures in them - living and dead - exist before our very eyes. His artwork, intended to arouse action more than anger, symbolized the valiant effort of far too few American Jews to save their brothers and sisters from the Holocaust. And when that battle was completed, though surely not won, he turned his pen to the struggle for a Jewish Homeland.

Arthur Szyk was more than just an artist. He was a soldier with a pen, a Jewish patriot who hoped that his pen might stir others to wield the sword in the Jewish People's defense. It is well known that there were two responses among World War Two-era American Jews to the horrors of the Holocaust.



The first response was of the "establishment" assimilationist-minded Jews. They sought to do whatever they could do that was both within the law and American public opinion to sway the American and Allied governments to aid their brethren in Europe.

The second response was from those who sought to do anything possible - without regard for law or public opinion - to save Europe's doomed Jews. Following the traditional dictate that the commandment to save lives supercedes all but the three cardinal prohibitions (idolatry, murder of innocents and sexual crimes), these Jews protested publicly, smuggled food to occupied lands and forged visas. This group was led by the Orthodox Jews who formed the *Vaad Hatzalah* (see Amos Bunim's *A Fire In His Soul* and Aaron Rakeffet's *The Silver Era* for two outstanding descriptions of this vital organization) and the "Revisionist Zionists" who formed such groups as the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation. Sometimes there was an interesting cooperation between these two groups of people whose views sometimes (though not always)

diverged. Yet, whether organizing petition drives, "The Emergency Committee to Save the Jews of Europe" or massive demonstrations, the commandment to save lives outweighed deeply felt disagreements.

Weighing heavily as an active participant in the battle to help the Jewish People was the internationally known artist Arthur Szyk. As has been well documented, Szyk was perhaps the greatest "miniaturist" of his time. He drew in the old Persian style, giving tremendous detail and color to his subjects. He illuminated the *Book of Esther* and the Passover *Hagaddah* (which one art critic suggested was the most beautiful book ever produced). Yet, following the Nazis's conquering of much of Europe, all of his talents were put to use in the attempt not only to fight fascism - but also to save the Jews. This double goal is crucial for modern historians to understand.

The first goal, fighting fascism, was, of course, the single minded goal of all those who loved freedom. Prior to Pearl Harbor, Szyk used his talents to illustrate such works as *The New Order*. His cartoons dramatized the plight of the victims of Nazism, and were indeed intended to evoke rage. Following Pearl Harbor and the American entrance to the Second World War, images of American pride became part of his artistic repertoire. The colorful images found on the front of *Collier's* magazines portrayed the evil of the Axis powers and the glory of the American soldiers fighting the noble cause.

Sadly, however, the goal of actively saving the persecuted Jews of Europe was not a universally held goal. The silence of the Allied Powers, including the United States, has been well documented. The sad truth of American complicity with the Holocaust can be found in such books as David Wyman's *The Abandonment of the Jews* and Deborah Lipstadt's *Beyond Belief*. Even many in the Jewish community (as noted above) sought not to "rock the boat" by actively agitating to help their brothers and sisters. Seeking "special treatment" for those who were being murdered might be viewed as disloyalty for diverting the war effort.

Yet, Szyk was an active participant in the efforts to publicize the atrocities and convince American authorities to open the gates of immigration and to intervene to halt the slaughter. Szyk served as Vice Chairman of the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe. In his autobiography, *A Child of the Century*, Ben Hecht (a prominent writer who led efforts to draw attention to the plight of Europe's Jews) wrote, "He [Szyk] drew program covers for all the pageants I invented. He drew posters and pictures for throwaways at rallies, for invitations to shake-down dinners..."

Tears of Rage ... (continued from previous page)

Szyk's haunting pictures appeared on poster stamps (designed for both fund raisers and awareness-building) and in the programs for the *We Will Never Die* and *Show of Shows* productions orchestrated by Hecht. And when the "mainstream" Jewish organizations of Chicago dared criticize the Emergency Committee, it was Szyk, along with Hecht, who responded with venom.

The fight which is being conducted in Chicago against the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe is most damaging to the interests of the Jews of Europe who at a time of greatest tragedy did not receive any consideration from most of the gentleman and organizations who now rush to print unjustified denunciations of a Committee all of whose efforts are conducted for the saving of the Jews of Europe. The Emergency Committee is non-sectarian, and it is high time that people stopped to abuse and slander the sincerity and intentions of leading Americans, who conscientiously and with admirable devotion are working for this cause...It is sinful, to say the least, on the part of Jews in this country to deal frivolously and irresponsibly in these grave matters involving other peoples lives. It is this attitude which brought messages of "We Hate You" from the Warsaw Ghetto and drove Samuel Ziegelbaum to suicide. As a Jew from Poland, I urge you, most solemnly, having been spared by the grace of God the plight of my brethren in Poland, that you at least stop wrecking the only serious and large scale effort for the salvation of our people.

Indeed, Szyk's sarcasm was as apparent in the written word as with his art. In his role as Vice President of the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation (Peter Bergson's Irgun-related group) he wrote:

There are anti-Semites who perk up at the 'noise' Jews are making about their plight and their rights. I beg their pardon for the lack of manners on the part of Jews refusing to die quietly. I hail the fight of these Jews for our honor with all the means at their command. Let others show how well-behaved they would prove in the same situation." (The Answer, August 1944)

Yet, this artist who would before the War draw images of Washington and Lincoln - and after the War drew Bar Kochba (leader of the failed Jewish revolt against Rome) - wrote with even greater venom against those Jews of America who refused to join his fight.

In the present crisis the American of Jewish descent has proven himself neither intelligent nor courageous... Your rich and assimilated American of Jewish descent, in his passive attitude toward the whole question of anti-semitism here and extermination abroad, acts like anything but a native American. In the eyes of the world, an American is a straight speaking, straight shooting, fearless individual. You would expect that our assimilated brethren therefore would speak fearlessly and with great indignation against the evils being committed against a helpless minority...You would think that our Americans of Jewish descent would now press Congress with all the great influence they really possess to make this country's position clear with reference to the shocking things that are going on in Europe...But your American of Jewish descent does not act as an American. He has proven himself a coward. He is a chameleon, so anxious to assume



the protective coloring of Americanism that he has failed to notice there is no yellow in the red, white and blue. (The Answer, August 1944)

It is little surprise that Szyk, who had been a friend of Jabotinsky, contributed his time and talents after the War to the Irgun (in the form of the reconstituted Hebrew Committee of National Liberation and the American League for a Free Palestine). He contributed his artwork in the form of poster stamps portraying the Wise Son of the Hagaddah in a battle helmet, in post cards portraying the Jewish settlers as David fighting the British Goliath, and in the images for programs designed to use the "Show of Shows" as an Irgun fund raising vehicle. Szyk wrote in *The Answer* (February, 1946) of his prayers for the Committee "which aspires to place [the Jewish] people on an equal footing with the rest of the world and at least to redeem our soul."

In a sense, Szyk and his comrades lost the battle to save the Jewish People of Europe. But they were American Jewish heroes who won the battle for Jewish Pride and contributed, at least in some measure, to the establishment of the Jewish State in the Land of Israel. Thus, they served as role models for those who wished to combine American patriotism with Jewish nationalism, Judaism with Zionism, and God given talent with a desire to help humanity.

Rabbi Shmuel Jablon, Arthur Szyk Society member, is the Associate Headmaster of the South Peninsula Hebrew Day School in Sunnyvale, California. Reference material for this article was provided by The Arthur Szyk Archives.

Local Szyk Activities

"Evenings with Arthur Szyk" have begun in several homes in Northern California. Irvin Ungar has been the guest speaker. Art is exhibited, refreshments are served, and guests are encouraged to join and support the Society and its activities. In Alexandria, VA Szyk Society member Eric Slone delivered a talk recently to the Israeli Philatelic Society about Arthur Szyk. Jeff Rudolph, Society member, displayed his collection of Szyk art at his local West Hartford synagogue. Szyk Society board member and collector, Jack Schwartz, recently compiled a list of commercial advertisements illustrated by Szyk. Many of these were commissioned by U.S. companies in support of the War effort (for example, U.S. Steel and Casco), and others such as those for Nescafe and Columbia Pictures were non-war related.

New Society Seal -- Prize Offered!

In looking for a new logo to symbolize the Society one had to look no further than a seal designed by Arthur Szyk himself — more than forty-five years before The Society was established! As a visionary, Szyk originally designed this seal for his proposed Jerusalem World Art Museum (to our knowledge, no museum exists by this name). Szyk would have been very pleased to witness this medallion adapted as the official Arthur Szyk Society Seal.



Prize Offered for Description of this Seal Contest Open to High School & College Students

High school and college students are encouraged to write a 400-500 word essay describing the contents, symbols, and imagery in Szyk's design. A \$250 prize will be awarded for the best submitted essay, plus a \$150 donation will be made to the winning student's school in his/her name. For a Szyk Seal Essay Contest Application, please write to The Arthur Szyk Society, 1200 Edgehill Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010, or send email to ungar@szyk.org.

Communication from Poland by Szyk Society Member

Alex Lauterbach, board member of the Society, recently received an email from Society member Marek Szukalak of Lodz, Poland (the birthplace of Arthur Szyk). Mr. Szukalak, publisher of Polish books about Lodz and of Szyk's *Statute of Kalisz*, is busy researching Szyk's Paris years (approximately 1921-31). Mr. Szukalak wrote, in part, to Alex:

"I have surveyed the Lodz press of the 1918-1939 period where Szyk was frequently mentioned and I made notes. All this is included in my book *Lodz Drawings of Artur Szyk*. Szyk permanently left Lodz in the fall of 1924. Before that he made visits lasting a few months. In the thirties he was registered here in Lodz and had an apartment here, even though he did not reside there. He stayed there only when he was here in town. His mother lived in that apartment and she did not perish in Treblinka, but in Chelm on the River Ner. She was deported on the 10th of September 1942. A brother of Szyk was also in the Lodz ghetto who, in the beginning lived with his mother. I was unable to determine his fate, I also did not find out what happened to his other brother, who apparently lived in the Soviet Union during the war. Now I am writing a book about Szyk during his French period."

Society Volunteer Opportunities

Members interested in becoming more active in The Arthur Szyk Society and learning about specific projects needing volunteers are encouraged to phone Society President Irvin Ungar 650.343.9588. There is something very special happening and you are invited to become part of the excitement.

Art Historians Welcome

Art history teachers and professors are encouraged to contact the Society for research and access to the "Arthur Szyk Archives" and other library references.

Generous Gift to Society

The Arthur Szyk Society has recently received a generous *Sustaining Sponsorship* from Society members, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Rose of New York. Mr. Rose remembers with fondness his father taking him as a young boy to visit Arthur Szyk in his New Canaan, CT home. We are deeply grateful to the Rose family for their meaningful and timely support of The Society.

Szyk Society Goals

- Rediscover the art and messages of Arthur Szyk
- Advocate the ideals of liberty, human dignity, and social tolerance
- Stimulate social action through the arts
- Facilitate scholarly research
- Network Arthur Szyk activities worldwide

Szyk Web Site Launched

The Arthur Szyk Society, committed to the worldwide networking of all Szyk-related activities has launched <http://www.szyk.org>. As a non-profit organization dedicated to the renaissance of Arthur Szyk, this Society site will provide up-to-date information on member services and programming activities. Future members may download Membership Applications and mail them to The Society.

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BURLINGAME, CA 94010**



I HAVE SWORN UPON THE ALTAR OF GOD ETERNAL HOSTILITY
AGAINST EVERY FORM OF TYRANNY OVER THE MIND OF MAN
— Thomas Jefferson

Join the Society! Become Part of the Szyk Renaissance

Membership Dues:

Students	\$15
Contributing members	\$35
Business members	\$250

Corporate & Individual Sponsors:

Ambassador	\$2000
Patron	\$5000
Enhancing	\$10,000
Sustaining	\$20,000

For membership information, contact:

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