

# THE ARTHUR SZYK SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE RENAISSANCE  
OF ARTHUR SZYK

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

Vol. 1 No. 2

Newsletter

Spring 1999

## Chicago Exhibition a Landmark Show *Leading Art Critic Proclaims "Justice Illuminated" as a "fascinating exhibition full of memorable commitment"*

*Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk* concluded its six-month showing Sunday, February 28 at The Spertus Museum amidst a true sense of accomplishment and purpose. Reviews by museum visitors, art critics, educators, and art world professionals hailed Szyk's art as "timeless, taking us into the next millennium." Leading Chicago art critic, Alan Artner of the *Chicago Tribune* (August 21, 1998), called *Justice Illuminated* "a fascinating exhibition, full of high craft and memorable commitment."

Several hundred people attended the opening day on August 16. Events included a festive brunch to commemorate the opening and honored Arthur Szyk's daughter, Alexandra Bracie, and her family, members of The Arthur Szyk Society Board, lenders and donors to the exhibit and additional local and out of town invited guests. Dr. Howard Sulkin, President of Spertus Institute, made gift presentations of Szyk's art to both the Polish and Israeli consuls, who in turn, spoke about Szyk's importance for their respective countries and as a modern bridge in Polish-Jewish relations.

Afterwards, Mrs. Bracie charmingly reminisced about growing up as a youngster in the Szyk household. Following the brunch, Guest Curator Irvin Ungar delivered a lecture and slide presentation to a standing room only crowd in the Spertus auditorium. Ungar concluded his remarks by quoting the words of the Polish Consul General who presided at an opening of Szyk's works in Toronto in 1940. He stated: "You will learn of Arthur Szyk's amazing knowledge of the history of nations, races, and personalities, of his meticulous thoroughness, his originality, his psychology, his unusual memory, his profound knowledge of human nature, and last but not least, of the spirit which animated his works." Ungar's presentation was acclaimed by a standing ovation.

(continued on next page)

## Metropolis Selects Szyk Exhibition

*Metropolis*, a prominent magazine for architecture and design, chose the Spertus Museum's *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk* as its featured exhibit in its October 1998 issue. The review, the only one illustrated with a picture, topped Van Gogh at the National Gallery of Art and Henry Moore at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

In the article, the *Up & Coming* agenda was headlined "a one-man army" and showed Szyk's illustration of "Poland Fights Nazi Dragon." The caption underneath read, "In the years leading up to the U.S. involvement in World War II, Polish-born illustrator Arthur Szyk, who worked as an editorial cartoonist for the *New York Post* and other newspapers, profoundly altered American public opinion. His anti-Nazi doodles, which often ran on the front page rather than in the back on the editorial page, attracted the admiration of Eleanor Roosevelt and the fury of Hitler who allegedly put a price on the artist's head. *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk* demonstrates the positive side of propaganda." For back issue availability (Tel. 800.344.3046 or 815.734.4151).

## Landmark Show (continued from previous page)

Attendees were then led into the 3500 square foot climate- and light-controlled exhibition area which featured over one hundred of Szyk's original works of art plus over one hundred prints, posters, illustrated books, magazine covers, stamps, commercial advertisements, sketch books, and related material. There were several vinyl blow ups of Szyk's work -- almost ten feet tall; while nearby stood the watercolor and pen and ink originals less than ten inches in height. Spertus offered magnifying glasses to visitors to view the detailed miniature works and provided a first-rate setting which gave grand impact to the artist's themes of justice, freedom, and democracy.

Typical reaction by visitors to the Szyk exhibition included such comments as "I've seen his work all my life and I just didn't know who he was". "He's concerned about freedom for everyone." "How did any one person do all this in such a short period of time." Arthur Szyk was 57 years old when he died in New Canaan, Connecticut 1951. His art and his legacy remain alive, offering a message for all times and generations.

*Free copies of Alan Artner's review, entitled "Arthur Szyk's meticulous, paradoxical, politically committed art" which appeared in the Chicago Tribune may be obtained by writing to The Arthur Szyk Society.*

## Edition Sold Out

The softcover edition of the first illustrated book about Szyk entitled *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk* is reportedly sold out according to the Spertus Museum Bariff Gift Shop. A few copies of the numbered Limited Deluxe Edition are still available at the original price of \$300 (a portion of this amount is tax deductible). Copies may be ordered through Historicana, Burlingame, CA (Tel. 650.343.9588; ungar@historicana.com) or through the Bariff Gift Shop, Chicago, IL (Tel. 888.322.1740).

## Szyk Featured in Leading Magazines

As a result of the Spertus Museum exhibit, in its February 1999 issue (Vol. 4, No. 2) *Biblio Magazine* featured an article written by Irvin Ungar and Joseph P. Ansell entitled *Justice Illuminated*. This eight page article about Arthur Szyk, which includes almost a dozen color illustrations, can be ordered from *Biblio* (Tel. 800.840.3810 or 541.345.3800; fax 541.302.9872; or email: circulation@bibliomag.com). *The New Horizon, Polish American Cultural Review* (January 1999, Vol. 24) carried a full-page illustrated essay on Szyk (Tel. 212.594.2266).

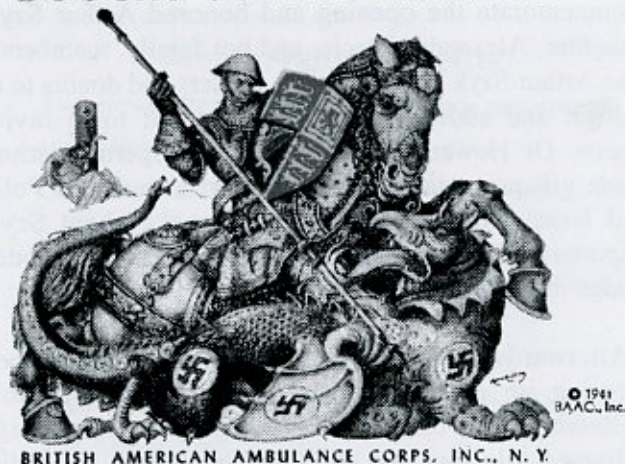
## Fall Exhibitions Planned

The Library of Congress is planning to hold an exhibition this fall entitled "Arthur Szyk: Artist for Freedom." It will be displayed in the Jefferson Building Swann Gallery of Caricature and Cartoon. More information will be forthcoming in the next issue of our newsletter. In addition, the University of Scranton Art Gallery in Scranton, Pennsylvania is preparing to host an exhibition of Arthur Szyk beginning in November 1999.

## British American Ambulance Corps Inquiry Leads to Szyk Archives

Recently, Mark Dodge sent The Arthur Szyk Society an inquiry regarding any information that we might provide about the BAAC. He had heard about Szyk designing a stamp for the Corps and thought we could add to his knowledge. As it turns out, Arthur Szyk, the world's greatest living illuminator in 1941, donated his efforts to aid British children and refugees by creating the first St. George Poster Stamp as a fundraiser. The design features England's modern St. George besting the Nazi dragon. The first sheet of St. George stamps was presented to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Anyone with further information about the BAAC may reply directly to Mr. Dodge at tigerstripedesign@msn.com.

## BOUGHT TO AID BRITAIN



## Update on Szyk Society Membership

Since the renaissance of its membership drive this past summer, The Society's roster has added members from fifteen different States plus others from England, Poland, and Israel. Volunteers currently run The Society, but we hope to add a professional staff member during this coming year.

# NASZA TRYBUNA

(OUR TRIBUNE) • PISMO ŻYDÓW POLSKICH

REDAKTORZY:

J. Apenszlak -:- Dr. A. Tartakower

WYCHODZI

dwa razy na miesiąc

CENA NUMERU

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No. 4. (8) NEW YORK, N. Y., PIĄTEK, 28-go LUTEGO, (FRIDAY), FEBRUARY 28, 1941.

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ROK II.

WIELKI ARTYSTA, ŻYD POLSKI, SKOMPONOWAŁ ZNACZKI ARTYSTYCZNE  
NA RZECZ "BRITISH AMERICAN AMBULANCE CORPS"

ARTUR SZYK, WRĘCZA PIERWODRUK SWEJ KOMPZYCJI PANI  
PREZYDENTOWEJ ELEANOR ROOSEVELT



Dnia 19 lutego odbyła się w Nowym Yorku, w studio radiostacji WMCA audycja p. n. "MOST PRZYJAŹNI", poświęcona działalności BRYTYJSKO-AMERYKANSKIEGO KORPUSU AMBULANSÓW. Pani Prezydentowa, Eleanor Roosevelt, wygłosiła podniosłe przemówienie, transmitowane do Anglii, Afryki Południowej i innych części Imperium Brytyjskiego. Po audycji wielki artysta, ARTUR SZYK wręczył Pani Prezydentowej pierwodruk swej kompozycji artystycznych znaczków pocztowych na rzecz BRITISH AMERICAN AMBULANCE CORPS. Pierwodruk ten ofiarowany został do zbiorów filatelistycznych Pana Prezydenta Roosevelta. Rysunek Szyka przedstawia "Św. Jerzego w walce ze smokiem". W przemówieniu swoim Pani Prezydentowa Roosevelt podkreśliła, że znaczki, przeznaczone do rozpowszechnienia, są niezmiernie efektowne dzięki pięknemu rysunkowi Artura Szyka.

### Artystyczne znaczki Artura Szyka dla Federacji

Znakomity malarz o światowym rozgłosie, p. Artur Szyk, wykonał dla Federacji piękną rycinę, przedstawiającą grupę Żydów z opaskami, wędrujących w nieznaną dal. Z tej ryciny, pełnej ekspresji i tragizmu, będą zrobione artystyczne znaczki celem przedsięwzięcia szerokiej akcji pomocy dla pozbawionej środków żywnościowych ludności żydowskiej w Polsce.

Coverage of Arthur Szyk's support of the British American Ambulance Corps appeared in various newspapers, and in several languages throughout the United States. Szyk volunteered to design the St. George poster stamp as a fundraiser for the BAAC and is shown here presenting the first set of stamps to Eleanor Roosevelt. (This page and the reverse are reproduced from Szyk's personal scrapbooks which are part of The Arthur Szyk Archives)

# St. George in a Tin Hat Battles the 1941 Dragon



Inspired by Winston Churchill's recent radio speech—"Give us the tools and we will finish the job"—Arthur Szyk, (right) Polish artist, made this design for a poster stamp, which will be sold nationally by the

British American Ambulance Corps. Proceeds will be used for ambulances, medical supplies, vitamin capsules for British children.

BOUGHT TO AID BRITAIN



BRITISH AMERICAN AMBULANCE CORPS, INC., N. Y.

BOUGHT TO AID BRITAIN



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BRITISH AMERICAN AMBULANCE CORPS, INC., N. Y.

## ST. GEORGE

The twenty-third of April is still celebrated in the British Empire as St. George's Day. St. George is the patron saint of England, and the cross of St. George (red cross on a white ground) forms a flag still to be seen floating over parish churches in England and is the basis of the White Ensign, the flag of the Royal Navy. How far back the celebration goes, is not known, but it was for a long time celebrated with great splendour as a national festival at Windsor and other places in England. The modern day is linked with one of the great exploits of the British Navy when, on St. George's Day, 1918, British seamen and marines blocked the German submarine base at Zebrugge thereby closing it and hampering the operations of the enemy submarines.

Inspired by Winston Churchill, Arthur Szyk, Polish artist and world's greatest living illuminator, drew England's modern St. George besting the Nazi dragon. The proceeds of the sale of these poster stamps, selling at \$1.00 for a sheet of 25, will go to help the cause.

## YOU ARE SAVING LIVES THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF THESE STAMPS

BRITISH AMERICAN AMBULANCE CORPS, Inc.  
420 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Enclosed \$..... for ..... sheet(s)

Each sheet contains 25 St. George stamps which can be used on packages, personal and business correspondence and can be kept as a philatelic souvenir.

Name .....  
Mr., Mrs. or Miss ..... Please print name

P. O. Box, Street or Rural Delivery .....

Post Office .....

County ..... State .....

Printed  
in  
U.S.A.

## YOU ARE SAVING LIVES BY DISTRIBUTING THESE STAMPS

### A Personal Message

The British American Ambulance Corps was organized last June for the sole purpose of supplying such aid to Britain and her Allies as was permissible under the laws of this country. Such service as we have been able to render has been due entirely to the wholehearted generosity of the American people and to these people we extend our deepest and most sincere thanks which we know is reiterated by soldiers and civilians who "over there" are helping in this battle for democracy.

Through the sale of these St. George Poster Stamps, we hope to continue and enlarge the scope of our relief activity. Whatever benefit that may be derived from it, through your continued cooperation, will go towards sending assistance and comfort to a gallant people, a people who have dedicated their lives to the preservation of humanity's most precious ideal—Democracy and the right to Liberty. Any one who has done anything to help their cause, which in turn is our cause, knows that their efforts will not be in vain.

Give us the dollars and we will continue our job.

WILLIAM V. C. RUXTON  
President, B.A.A.C.

Please make checks payable to:

British American Ambulance Corps, Inc.  
420 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Registered with U. S. State Dept., No. 234

BOUGHT TO AID BRITAIN



BRITISH AMERICAN AMBULANCE CORPS, INC., N. Y.

BOUGHT TO AID BRITAIN



BRITISH AMERICAN AMBULANCE CORPS, INC., N. Y.



B.A.A.C. President Ruxton (left) with artist Arthur Szyk, presents first sheet of St. George stamps to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Mrs. Roosevelt commented that "The British American Ambulance Corps has been particularly successful in finding ways in which to raise money rather painlessly and I am sure these stamps will be a particularly effective way, because of Mr. Szyk's delightful design."

## What I Learned from Arthur Szyk

by Rabbi Shmuel Jablon

*"Art is not my aim. It is my means."*

— Arthur Szyk

The Rabbis teach us in *Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers)* that one who is wise learns from everyone. Though I cannot yet claim wisdom, I want to share what I have learned from a fascinating artist named Arthur Szyk.

Arthur Szyk was a Jewish artist from Poland. He trained in France and was, by the 1930's, one of the world's most prominent illuminators. This was a style, reminiscent of the medieval Moors, which featured both miniature figures with incredible detail and bright colors that seemed to leap from the page.

Among other things, Szyk designed a *Hagaddah* (reprinted many times) that is viewed as perhaps the most beautiful book ever illustrated. He designed pictures of American heroes (even before ever seeing the shores of this continent) that were presented to President Roosevelt. Then the Nazis came to power, and eventually conquered Poland and its millions of Jews. Szyk had escaped to England, and later emigrated to the United States. It was at this time that Szyk, the master artist, used his talents as a weapon against fascism. He drew editorial cartoons and magazine covers that led the modern Pharaoh, Hitler, to put a price on his head at about the same time as his henchmen were murdering his mother. The same detailed work seen in his pictures of George Washington can be seen in the faces of Jews facing imminent death and the expressions of the workers making armaments to fight the modern Amelekites. At the conclusion of the war, Szyk used his incredible talents not only to illustrate images from the Bible, but also to promote the Zionist cause in the Holy Land of Israel.

And so I have become fascinated with this artist. Some copies of his pictures hang in my office. I've even started a small "Szyk Essay Contest" which invites our 6th-8th graders to write an essay analyzing a Szyk World War II-era cartoon. The pictures are dramatic. But many artists' pictures are dramatic. Why does Szyk hold my fascination?

Perhaps it is the quote at the beginning of this article. "Art is not my aim. It is my means."

Szyk is a modern example of how every talent can be a means to serve the Jewish People and better our world. Whether one is an artist or a scientist, a musician or a doctor, a business person who gives their 10% to *tzedakah* (charity) or even a Rabbi, a committed Jew knows that all talents are gifts of God. Thus, they have the responsibility not to see how much money can be made, but how many people can be helped. They have the responsibility not to pursue honor, but to pursue world justice. A pen, a

computer, a guitar or a test tube should not be aims, but should be means of service to humanity.

This is one of the many reasons that I am a strong believer in our school. A Day School gives our children the tools they need not merely to succeed, but to use their talents -- whatever they may be -- to make the world a better place!

*Reprinted with permission of Rabbi Shmuel Jablon, Associate Headmaster of the South Peninsula Hebrew Day School in Sunnyvale, CA. This article appeared in the school's newsletter as a result of an 8th grade student body trip to visit the gallery of Historiana and view some of Arthur Szyk's works.*

*The Arthur Szyk Society Newsletter welcomes articles and items of interest for inclusion in forthcoming issues. Send your articles to the Editor, Szyk Newsletter, c/o The Arthur Szyk Society, 1200 Edgehill Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010.*

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### Museum Association Organizing Tour

The Associated American Jewish Museums, under the direction of its president/director, Dr. Walter Jacob, plans to travel an exhibition of approximately twenty-five Arthur Szyk prints to small synagogue museums and Jewish Community Center galleries throughout the United States.

Planned in conjunction with The Arthur Szyk Society, Dr. Jacob, Rabbi Emeritus of Rodef Shalom Congregation in Pittsburgh, PA, envisions the tour beginning in September 1999. Communities interested in making arrangements for a Szyk exhibition in the year 2000 or after, should contact either Dr. Jacob (Tel. 412.621.6566; wjacob@pgh.net) or Irvin Ungar (Tel. 650.343.9588; ungar@historiana.com).

The Arthur Szyk Society  
1200 Edgehill Drive  
Burlingame, CA 94010

## About the Society

The Arthur Szyk Society welcomes new members and offers a wide range of services to the educator, the private collector, and the professional art world. The Society is committed to rekindling and sustaining an interest in the art and messages of Arthur Szyk. Its purpose is to develop educational programs for schools and institutions, maintain a speaker's bureau, and encourage museum exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad.

The Society is dedicated to maintaining the integrity of Arthur Szyk's works and is consulted by major auction houses, dealers, and collectors on issues of authentication. The Society is committed to the renaissance of Arthur Szyk.

For membership information, contact:

THE ARTHUR SZYK SOCIETY

1200 Edgehill Drive Burlingame, CA 94010 Tel. 650.343.9588

## Membership Benefits

- Two newsletters per year that include newsworthy and scholarly articles
- Occasional select photocopies of documents from the unpublished Arthur Szyk Archives
- Reduced fee for evaluation and/or authentication of Szyk art
- Discounts to exhibitions and lectures
- Discounts on educational materials distributed by The Arthur Szyk Society

### Membership Categories:

\$25 - students or seniors

\$35 - contributing members

\$75 - institutions or dealers

*The Arthur Szyk Society is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational foundation dedicated to the renaissance of Arthur Szyk.*

*Established in 1991 by its founder, George Gooche, the Society is represented by Board Members throughout the United States.*