

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

# THE ARTHUR SZYK SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE RENAISSANCE  
OF ARTHUR SZYK

Vol. 3 No. 1

Newsletter

Fall 2001

## Diller Foundation Awards Traveling Exhibition Grant to The Society

### *Haas Fund Provides Matching Support for University Showings*

The Arthur Szyk Society is the proud recipient of a \$35,000 grant from the Helen and Sanford Diller Foundation to create a traveling exhibition for display at San Francisco Bay Area universities. Lehrhaus Judaica and the Hillel Societies at the University of California Berkeley and San Francisco State University will partner with The Society to bring *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk* to Berkeley and San Francisco campuses.

Earlier this year, the Helen and Sanford Diller Foundation, based in San Francisco inaugurated a Traveling Exhibition Awards Program. "Designed to help make high quality exhibits of Jewish cultural interest widely available throughout the Bay Area," stated Phyllis Cook, Executive Director of the Diller Foundation, the program aims to broaden knowledge of the Jewish experience by enabling Jewish and non-Jewish institutions to share creative resources and endeavors. The Society is honored

*(continued on p. 3)*

## The Four Freedoms

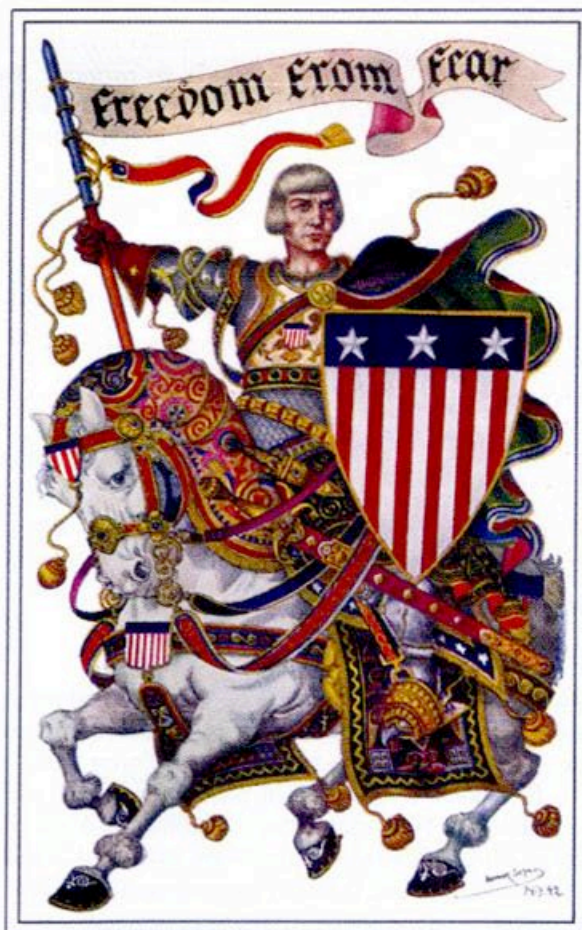
On the brink of U.S. entry into World War II, in January 1941, Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered the historic State of the Union, which became known as the "Four Freedoms" speech. At the time, Arthur Szyk's celebrated works of George Washington and the American Revolution were on display in FDR's White House. These works, 38 watercolors entitled *Washington and His Times*, had been previously exhibited at the Library of Congress in 1934, Szyk's first notable American exhibition and his first visit here. That year, the U.S. Congress presented him with the prestigious George Washington Bicentennial Award. The paintings were purchased in 1935 by the President of Poland and presented as a gift to FDR.

Szyk immigrated to the U.S. in December 1940, one month before President Roosevelt delivered the "Four Freedoms" State of the Union, which articulated the moral justification for American involvement in World War II. Szyk realized he had arrived just in time to join America's battle against fascism and to become, as he was called, the FDR Administration's "citizen-soldier."

*(continued on p. 3)*

### "ARTIST FOR FREEDOM"

As part of its millennium celebration in the year 2000, the Library of Congress exhibited Szyk's art for the second time in 65 years. Today, that exhibition, *Arthur Szyk: Artist For Freedom*, can be viewed on the web. Visit The Society's website at [www.szyk.org](http://www.szyk.org) and click on the link to the Library of Congress exhibition, or go directly to [www.lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/szyk](http://www.lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/szyk)



*Freedom from Fear. New York, 1942*  
One of the Four Freedoms illuminated by Arthur Szyk



## Letter from Board President, Dr. Charles S. Syers

Dear Members and Friends,

I am proud to report that The Arthur Szyk Society is succeeding in its mission to bring Szyk's art and messages to life for new audiences across the nation.

*The long-term vision of The Society is to build a cultural and educational institution that functions as a memorial, art gallery and research center. Over the next three years, The Society will build upon its existing programs and resources to establish a core art collection, a traveling exhibition program, education curriculum, a research archive, a gallery space, a documentary film and a book retrospective.*

As you may know, some of Szyk's paintings, drawings, sketches, and caricatures are housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Library of Congress, The Jewish Museum New York, the Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, and Windsor Palace.

*Most remarkably, the largest collection and archive of Szyk's work are on loan through The Arthur Szyk Society. The Society is building the nationally recognized collection of Szyk's paintings, prints, illustrations, and personal papers to commemorate the entire span and diversity of his career.*

I invite you — our membership, friends and long-time supporters — to renew your support of The Society as we enter a new year of celebrating Arthur Szyk, spreading his vitalizing message of justice and freedom, and preserving his legacy for generations to come.

*Please lend support to The Society as we further our mission. Now more than ever, we look to you for sustenance. All the best wishes to you in this holiday season.*

Sincerely,  
Charles (Chuck) S. Syers

### THE ARTHUR SZYK SOCIETY A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

1200 Edgehill Drive  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
Tel. 650-343-9588  
Fax 650-579-6014  
info@szyk.org  
http://www.szyk.org

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Charles S. Syers  
*President*

Seymour Fromer  
*Vice-President*

Sander I. Stadler  
*Treasurer*

Pamela H. Stein  
*Secretary*

Irvin D. Ungar  
*President Emeritus*

Leslie Brenner  
Alex Lauterbach  
Jack Schwartz

#### HONORARY BOARD

Alexandra Szyk Bracie  
*Daughter of Arthur Szyk*

The Hon. Tom Lantos  
*U.S. Congressman (D - CA)*

*"I consider myself as being on duty in my cartoons... We are not entitled to do things we like today."*

— Arthur Szyk  
*(The New Yorker, August 2, 1941)*

*Self-portrait: Szyk creating caricatures, Ink & Blood*



## September Mourn

by Irvin D. Ungar, Board Member, Curator

I awoke on the morning of September 11, my mind filled with last-minute plans to complete before flying to New York to prepare the opening of a Szyk exhibition at The Forest Hills Jewish Center. For months, we had been planning a special event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Arthur Szyk's death on September 13, 2001. A memorial service, exhibition and reception were to be held on Thursday evening at The Forest Hills Jewish Center, where, in 1949, Arthur Szyk designed a two-story Ark for the main sanctuary of the newly erected building. His beautiful design was created to symbolize religious tolerance and

freedom for American Jewry in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

Fellow board member Pam Stein was already on board an airplane from Florida to New York on that fated Tuesday morning. Alexandra Szyk Bracie, a Florida resident like Pam, was also getting ready for her flight to New York. We were all to participate in the commemoration. Alexandra, the daughter of Arthur Szyk and an Honorary Board Member of The Society, was to be guest of honor and keynote speaker. She, Pam and I planned to meet in New York and visit Szyk's gravesite before opening the

(continued on p. 8)

to have been recognized by the Diller Foundation in its first selection process. In addition, a \$7,500 grant was awarded by the Walter and Elise Haas Fund.

*Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk* will introduce university and local communities to Szyk's manuscript illuminations and anti-Nazi political art. The University of California Berkeley Hillel and Lehrhaus Judaica will co-host the first exhibition, scheduled for the Fall 2002 at the Reutlinger Center, and will organize special lectures, public programs, an opening reception and other outreach activities to bridge the university and local communities, which each serves. "I am convinced that Szyk's art

will make a great impact on the Berkeley campus," stated Fred Rosenbaum, Founding Director of Lehrhaus Judaica. Adam Weisberg, Executive Director of UC Berkeley Hillel concurred: "Students will be inspired by his messages of value for human dignity and the inherent value of human life."

---

***"The future of a peaceful and democratic world will depend upon countries who can sacrifice their own personal ends toward the greater good of all peoples."***  
— Arthur Szyk

---

The Hillel Societies at two San Francisco campuses including San Francisco State University will co-host the next showings, scheduled for Winter-Spring 2003. Szyk's talented artwork coupled with his commitments to human rights and the Jewish people will resonate with our students," stated Brysk, Executive Director of San Francisco Hillel. The Society plans to schedule future presentations at other Bay Area universities as well as in other parts of the country.

University campuses are ideal locations in which to introduce students, faculty and local communities to Arthur Szyk. Last year, The Arthur Szyk Society curated an exhibition at the University of Scranton Art Gallery, where we collaborated with our university partners to produce companion course curricula in art history, the visual arts, World War II/Holocaust history and Jewish Studies. The Society will offer these materials to faculty at Bay Area host institutions.

"The Society is eager to bring our message and mission home to local communities, especially now that we have enjoyed national visibility," said Seymour Fromer, Board Vice-President and Director Emeritus of the Judah L. Magnes Museum, in Berkeley, CA. "Peace- and freedom-loving San Francisco Bay Area audiences will be especially moved by Szyk's artistic expressions of justice, tolerance and activism."

If you are interested in hosting a future showing of *Justice Illuminated*, or have questions regarding the traveling exhibition and its Bay Area openings, please contact The Society at [info@szyk.org](mailto:info@szyk.org)

The relationship between Szyk and Roosevelt thus continued. Greatly inspired by the President's State of the Union, Szyk illuminated the *Four Freedoms* later that year. They were reproduced as poster stamps during the war, and later incorporated into a Four



Freedom Award certificate, which was presented, in 1953, to President Harry Truman by Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Other prominent recipients of Szyk's illuminated certificate included General George Marshall (1952) and Senator (later Governor) Herbert H. Lehman (1954). It is interesting to note that Norman Rockwell's *Four Freedoms* were not painted until 1943. Szyk was one of the first artists to illuminate Roosevelt's message for the American people.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" State of the Union Address, January 1941: "...In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression --everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way-- everywhere in the world.

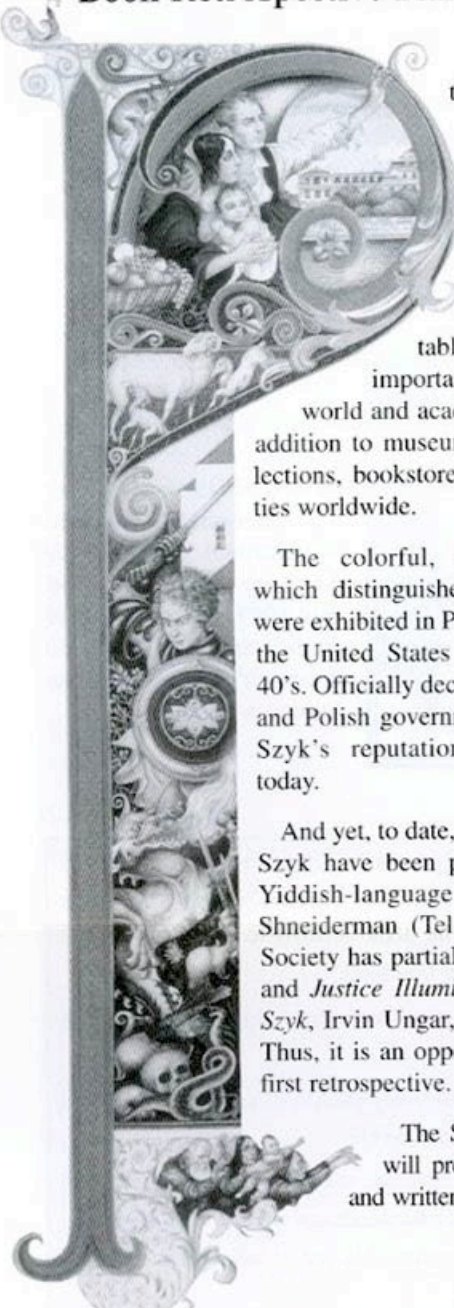
The third is freedom from want, which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants --everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear, which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor -- anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation...

This nation has placed its destiny in the hands, heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women, and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God. Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights and keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory."

## Book Retrospective Planned



The Society is planning the first art retrospective of Arthur Szyk's prolific body of paintings, manuscript illuminations, political caricatures, lithographs, book illustrations, and magazine covers. The coffee-table-sized book will fill an important void in both the art world and academia. It will be an ideal addition to museums, galleries, private collections, bookstores, libraries, and universities worldwide.

The colorful, elaborate illuminations, which distinguished Szyk's artistic career, were exhibited in Paris, Geneva, London, and the United States between the 1920's and 40's. Officially decorated by the U.S., French and Polish governments during his lifetime, Szyk's reputation remains international today.

And yet, to date, only two books on Arthur Szyk have been published: *Arthur Szyk*, a Yiddish-language biography by S.L. Shneiderman (Tel Aviv, 1980), which The Society has partially translated into English; and *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk*, Irvin Ungar, Curator (Chicago, 1998). Thus, it is an opportune time to publish the first retrospective.

The Society's book retrospective will preserve and present a visual and written record that ensures a long-

lasting appreciation of Szyk's diverse works. This book will open a window to once again envision and experience Szyk's artistic genius. It will celebrate the life and work of this native-born Polish Jew and American citizen, his role in the art world, and his legacy today.

With the publication of a book retrospective, art lovers and historians, social advocates and educators, students and their families will be able to take Szyk into their hands and hearts.

## Image Database

The Society is creating the first database of Szyk's original works of art, which will be accessible worldwide to researchers and the general public for a nominal fee. The database

will categorize all known pieces of Szyk's art, which are housed in collections worldwide. It will also be an important resource, supporting The Society's various programs, especially the creation of exhibitions, expansion of our collection and archive, and development of educational materials. The database will contain the following categories of information on each work of art: image, title, year, place, medium, dimensions, style, subject areas, keywords, description, exhibition history, provenance, and ownership.



*Illustrations above and at left, details from Szyk's Covenant of the League of Nations series, Paris, 1931. Szyk's response to Death and destruction is embellished by symbolic figures representing peace and the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of humankind. Exhibited in the Musée de'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva.*

## Traveling Exhibitions 1998 - 2003\*

- *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk*, Spertus Museum, Chicago (August 16, 1998- February 28, 1999)
- *Arthur Szyk: Manuscript Illuminator, Political Artist and Advocate for Humanity*, University of Scranton Art Gallery, Scranton, PA (November 29, 1999 - February 11, 2000)
- *Arthur Szyk: Artist for Freedom*, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (December 9, 1999 - May 6, 2000)  
See the on-line version: *Arthur Szyk: Artist for Freedom*, <http://www.lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/szyk>
- *Washington and His Times*, Burlingame Main Library, CA (February 1 - March 31, 2000)
- *The Art and Politics of Arthur Szyk*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC (April - October 2002)
- *Arthur Szyk Remembered*, The Forest Hills Jewish Center, Forest Hills, NY (forthcoming, April-May 2002)
- *Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk*, University of California Berkeley Hillel and Lehrhaus Judaica (forthcoming, August-December 2002); San Francisco State University (January-May 2003)

\* The Arthur Szyk Society organizes, curates, and loans artwork to exhibitions and institutions.

## IN MEMORY OF ARTHUR SZYK

on the 50th Anniversary of His Death

September 1951 - September 2001

Arthur Szyk died on September 13, 1951 of heart failure in his home in New Canaan, Connecticut. He was 57 years old. The following are excerpts from the eulogies delivered at his funeral in Forest Hills, New York.

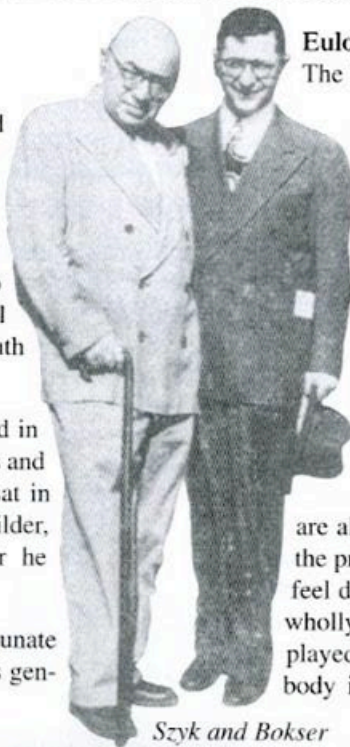
### Eulogy, by Judge Simon H. Rifkind

September 14, 1951

"The Arthur Szyk whom the world knows, the Arthur Szyk of the wondrous color, and of the beautiful design, that Arthur Szyk whom the world mourns today -- he is indeed not dead at all. How can he be when the Arthur Szyk who is known to mankind lives and is immortal and will remain immortal as long as the love of truth and beauty prevails among mankind?"

Unfortunately, like the rest of us, he lived in an age in which the wreckers, the destroyers and the desecrators were in the limelight and sat in the seats of the mighty. He chose to be a builder, a beautifier, one who hallowed whatever he touched with his spirit.

What, then, can we say except that fortunate are we and truly chosen to have lived in his generation..."



### Eulogy, by Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser

The Forest Hills Jewish Center

"...Arthur Szyk was a great artist. Endowed by God with a rare sensitivity to beauty and with a rare skill in giving it graphic representation, he used his talents to create a series of works of splendor and magnificence that will live forever in the history of art. But Arthur Szyk was more than a great artist. He was a great man, a champion of justice, a fearless warrior in the cause of every humanitarian endeavor. His art was his tool and he used it brilliantly. It was in his hands a weapon of struggle with which he fought for the causes close to his heart.

We grieve for Arthur Szyk's passing, but at this hour, we are also grateful for the privilege of his life, and above all for the privilege that has been ours in having been close to him, to feel directly the blessings of his influence. He is gone, but not wholly gone. Music survives the instrument on which it is played and so does the work of a man of true greatness. The body is perished, but the work he performed will, like great music, live on after him."

Szyk and Bokser

## Arthur Szyk, My Landsman

On His 50th Yahrzeit \*

by Herman Taube



June 3, 1894  
Lodz, Poland  
September 13, 1951  
New Canaan, CT, USA

Yours was a short life,  
but rich with grandiose  
mastery, bordering on  
stunning achievements.  
Your life, like your art,  
broad as our planet Earth,  
reached from the dark  
abyss, high to the skies.

You came from a pathway of  
famous scholars, trailing from  
Reb Yomtov Lipman Halevi Heller,  
the author of Tosefos Yomtov.  
Your creations and illustrations  
traveled with you from our native  
Lodz to Krakow, Paris and New York,  
where your talent blossomed.

The pogroms by Cossacks,  
German occupants and Polish

Legionnaires became your goal:  
Drawing martyrdom and resistance.

You perpetuated the memory  
of Eugenia, your mother and Josefa,  
her servant, both perished  
in the furnaces of Majdanek.  
You preached and participated  
in resistance under the disguise  
of Lieutenant Alex Szinkarenko,  
saving Jews from bloody pogroms.  
We named you: Artist of Freedom,  
for your patriotic masterpieces of  
the Declaration of Independence  
and the images of great Americans.

For us, survivors of the Holocaust,  
Your cartoons and caricatures of  
our tormentors: "Das Herrenvolk"  
is your call: Don't Forget Amalek!"

*Yahrzeit* - "anniversary of a death," Yiddish

Herman Taube, poet, novelist and columnist, shares the same birthplace as Szyk -- Lodz, Poland -- and remembers Szyk from his early days there. Mr. Taube, a Holocaust survivor, publishes regularly in *The Jewish Forward*, and lives in Rockville, Maryland.

## Society Welcomes New Board President

The Arthur Szyk Society is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Board President, Dr. Charles S. Syers, of Hillsborough, California. Dr. Syers is Associate Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at both The University of California School of Dentistry and the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry. Dr. Syers and his family relocated from Michigan to California in 1968, when Dr. Syers became Chief of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at French Hospital Medical Dental Center. Dr. Syers has served on the Boards of Allied Savings Bank and The Greater Bay Area Alzheimer's Association. Dr. Syers succeeds Irvin D. Ungar as Board President. Mr. Ungar, a former rabbi and chief curator for The Society, continues to serve on the Board of Directors.

## New Edition January 2002 of *Pathways Through The Bible* Society Contributes Foreword

The Jewish Publication Society is producing a third edition of *Pathways Through The Bible*, the excellent religious school textbook taught in Sunday school classes across America for nearly sixty years. Publication is January 2002.

Arthur Szyk illustrated the Biblical stories told in the book, first published in 1946. Society board member Irvin Ungar wrote the Foreword to the new edition.

The book will be in hardcover, approximately 550 pages, and will list for \$40. To order copies of the new edition, please call the JPS toll free number: 800-832-0603; or order through the JPS web site at <http://www.jpspub.org/Store>.

## A Special Thanks and Farewell to Board Member Lawrence Udell

Lawrence J. Udell is stepping down from the Board of Directors after two years of service to officiate over the Wright Brothers Centennial of Flight worldwide celebration, planned for the year 2003. Thank you Larry!

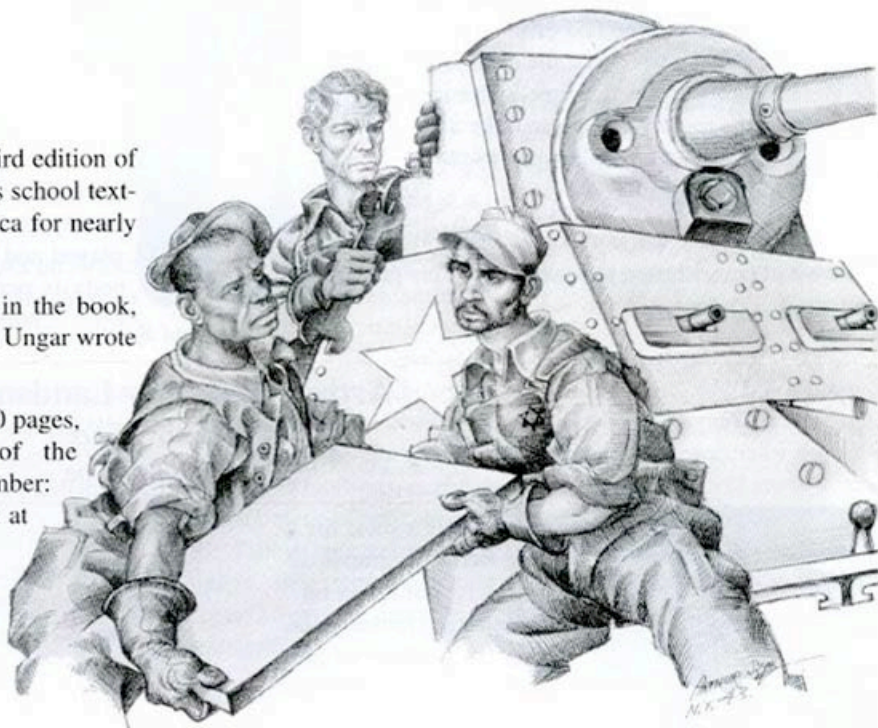
## New Publication about Szyk

Joseph Ansell, "Arthur Szyk's Depiction of the 'New Jew': Art as a Weapon in the Campaign for an American Response to the Holocaust." *American Jewish History* [quarterly publication of the American Jewish Historical Society], March 2001. Call AJHS: 212-294-6160 to order your copy.

## Coming Soon— New Exhibition to Open in New York in April 2002 *Arthur Szyk Remembered at The Forest Hills Jewish Center*

The Forest Hills Jewish Center and The Arthur Szyk Society will co-host the exhibition *Arthur Szyk Remembered*, to open on Tuesday, April 16, 2002. The exhibition had originally been scheduled to open on September 13, 2001, to mark the 50th anniversary of Arthur Szyk's death. The exhibition was postponed as a result of the September 11 tragedies.

Szyk made a long-lasting contribution to The Forest Hills Jewish Center. In 1949, he designed the Center's Ark and Menorahs. For more information about the opening night reception and program, please contact The Society: Tel. 650-343-9588; E-mail: [info@szyk.org](mailto:info@szyk.org).



*Black, White & Jew in Common Cause*  
New York, 1943

## United in Common Cause

The Society recently discovered this powerful drawing, which Arthur Szyk originally created for the New York State Committee on Discrimination in Employment. At the height of World War II, a unifying message was needed to join America's ethnic and religious groups together in common cause. The faces of the figures above reflect the seriousness of their endeavor on behalf of the American military which is represented by the tank behind them. New York's Governor Dewey declined using this image as a poster at that time.

## SZYK [Pronounced *Shick*]: A Linguistically Daunting Surname

Your friends may tell you that they are not familiar with Arthur Szyk. They may wonder how to pronounce his name. It is Shick. But chances are that your friends will recognize at least a few of Szyk's brilliant works of art. Here are several samples, which are representative of his prodigious talent. Share these images with your friends and help The Society realize another one of our goals — that Americans of all ages and backgrounds will not only embrace Szyk and his art, but will know how to pronounce his linguistically daunting surname!



*George Washington  
with His Soldiers*  
**Washington and  
His Times, 1930**

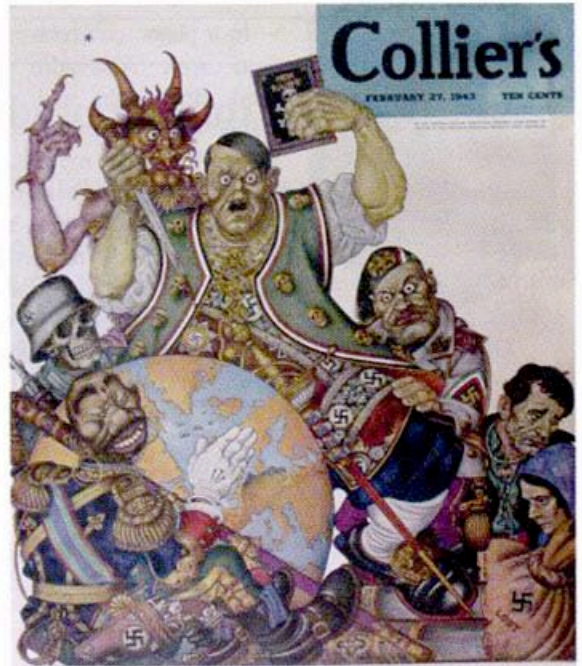
Those of you who collect Americana may have first discovered Szyk's patriotic series *Washington and His Times* hanging in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, NY. Who recalls that the U.S. Congress awarded Szyk the George Washington Bicentennial Medal? Or, that the paintings were exhibited in the Library of Congress and then the White House up to 1941?



*The Seder Table*  
**The Haggadah,  
1936**

During the Jewish holiday of Passover, you may have participated in a seder, where you read from the *Szyk Haggadah*. The most reprinted of all 20th century haggadahs, *The Times* of London praised it as "one of the most beautiful works produced by the hand of man."

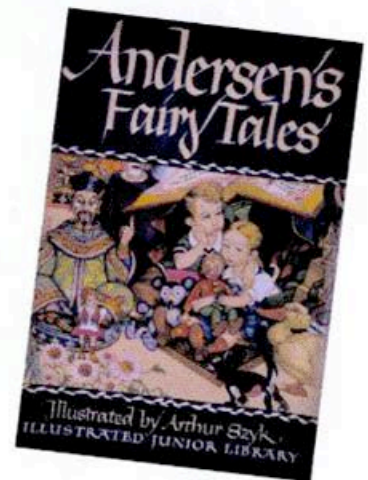
*Hitler, Evil, and Mein Kampf.*  
*Collier's Magazine cover. Feb.*  
*27, 1943. The Fuhrer holds a*  
*bloody knife in his right hand*  
*and a copy of Mein Kampf*  
*in his left. The Devil stands*  
*authoritatively behind him while*  
*Death, Hirohito, and Mussolini*  
*gather like obedient students*  
*around a globe. The victims of*  
*these monsters - a downtrodden,*  
*enslaved, refugee couple -*  
*crouch behind a bag of stolen*  
*Nazi booty.*



*Collier's Magazine Cover*  
**February 27, 1943**

If you are a World War II media buff, you might already reap righteous pleasure in Szyk's anti-Nazi caricatures, which appeared on the wartime covers of *Collier's* and *Time*, and generated widespread American interest in support of the war effort.

*Dust jacket*  
**Andersen's  
Fairy Tales, 1945**



Of Szyk's many illustrated books, you might recognize his exotic illustrations in Hans Christian Andersen's *Fairy Tales*, the most reprinted illustrated edition.

exhibition with our co-hosts at The Forest Hills Jewish Center.

And then came the news of the three attacks. The horror and shock. A phone message from Pam that her flight had been rerouted to Atlantic City, New Jersey. E-mail exchanges with The Forest Hills Jewish Center to postpone the commemoration.



Detail of NYC  
United States of America,  
1945

In a phone conversation with Alexandra Szyk Bracie, she said: "This day makes me shiver. It reminds me of when I was a little girl in London in 1939, sitting in the living room and hearing the news of Hitler's invasion of Poland. On that day, the world was changed forever. And again, today, in light of what has now happened in America, life has forever changed again. This is like an invasion."

---

*No true artist has the right to avoid using his strength to strike at the darkness.*

---

The events of September 11 and the weeks since have augmented my awareness of the powerful relevance of Szyk's artistic vision and mission. His life and art represent the vigilant fight that must be waged against terrorism, past, present and future.

In this period of danger and uncertainty of extreme proportions, Szyk's artistic portrayals of human dignity, justice and the fight for freedom possess an uncanny timeliness. We can find strength in his vivid illuminations of American ideals and, to quote *The New York Times*, in his "savagely effective" political art.

He told the *New York Daily Mirror* on April 10, 1941, during World War II: "The Revolution America fought was an ideal that any artist could thrill to. Today art must be almost negatively directed against a force that destroys all ideals. But no true artist has the right to avoid using his strength to strike at the darkness." Szyk remains a true artist for us now. In these days of darkness, his life and art are a vital reminder that peace, freedom and security must be restored, and the evil foes vanquished.



**THE ARTHUR SZYK SOCIETY  
1200 EDGEHILL DRIVE  
BURLINGAME, CA 94010**



**MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR SZYK**

**On the 50th anniversary of his Death, September 1951 – September 2001**