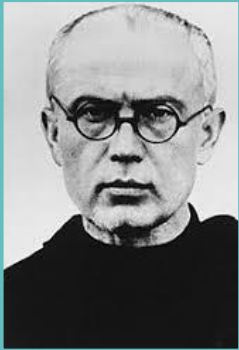


STORIES OF POLISH RESISTANCE



Irena
Sendler



Maximilian
Kolbe



Emanuel
Ringelblum



Mordechai
Anielewicz



Witold
Pilecki



Janusz
Korczak



Jan
Karski



Zofia
Kossak-
Szczucka



Father
Marceli
Godlewski



Jan &
Antonina
Zabinski



Józef &
Wiktorina
Ulma

About half of the six million European Jews killed in the Holocaust were Polish. In 1939 a third of the capital city Warsaw, and 10% of the entire country was Jewish. By 1945 97% of Poland's Jews were dead.

These eleven examples of Polish resistance *do not* purport to give an overview of what happened in Poland during The Holocaust. They have been chosen to reflect the unimaginably difficult choices made by both Jews and non-Jews under German occupation – where every Jew was marked for death and all non-Jews who assisted their Jewish neighbours were subject to the same fate.

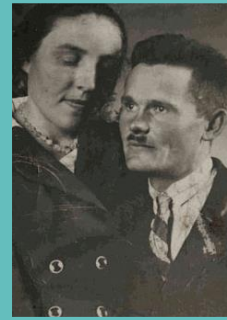
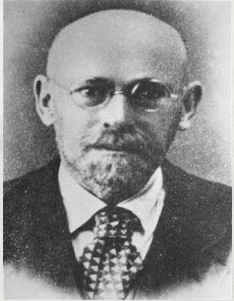
These individuals *were not* typical; they were exceptional, reflecting the relatively small proportion of the population who refused to be bystanders. But neither were they super-human. They would recoil from being labelled as heroes. They symbolise the power of the human spirit – their actions show that in even the darkest of times, good can shine through...

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Learning from the Righteous
Inspiring children with the courage of the few

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Jan and Antonina Zabinski

Józef & Wiktoria Ulma

Created by



JÓZEF (1900-42) & WIKTORIA (1912-42) ULMA

Józef and Wiktoría Ulma lived in Markowa, in the Podkarpackie Province, in the south east of Poland.



Despite the fact that the occupying German Army executed Poles who gave shelter to Jews, they hid eight Jewish people in the attic of their home for over a year. On 24th March 1944, after this act of rescue was reported to the local Gestapo by a vindictive, antisemitic neighbour, they were shot, along with their six children and the hidden Jews.

JÓZEF (1900-42) & WIKTORIA (1912-42) ULMA



The Ulmas were farmers who lived in a remote part of the countryside. They produced a wide range of vegetables and nuts and kept many beehives as well as silkworms. Józef was very active in the local community, but his biggest passion was photography. Consequently, there are many images of life on the Ulma farm before and during the war.



JÓZEF (1900-42) & WIKTORIA (1912-42) ULMA



By the summer of 1942 most of Markowa's 1000 Jews had either been shot by German death squads or were deported to Belżec extermination camp. From July the Germans led hunts in the surrounding forests to search for any Jews who were hiding there. For the few who remained the only option was to hope that a friendly Polish family would agree to offer them shelter. One such family was the Goldmans. They had previously leant their home to a Polish policeman called Włodzimierz Leś in return for supplies, but Leś deceived the family and claimed the property for himself.

One evening in the autumn of 1942, Saul, the father of the family, arrived at the farm with his four sons. He had known the Ulmas before the war and knew them to be humane principled people. Józef agreed to offer them shelter in their attic. A few weeks later they were joined by Saul's two daughters and a granddaughter.

JÓZEF (1900-42) & WIKTORIA (1912-42) ULMA



A neighbour, Stanislaw Niemczak, testified after the war that - “They stayed on the premises and slept in the attic of the house... They never hid in particular, since all of them were busy helping to run the farm. They helped in tanning animal hides and chopped wood from the nearby forest for fuel.” This went on for over a year. Józef even photographed them at work (above).

But this act of rescue was tragically brought to an end on March 24th 1944...

JÓZEF (1900-42) & WIKTORIA (1912-42) ULMA



The Goldman family contacted Włodzimierz Leś, who had taken up residence in their home, to request that he at least return some of their property. Instead of agreeing to this request, Leś responded by reporting the Ulma family to the local German authorities. Consequently, German police came to Markowa, found the Jews on the Ulma farm and executed them.



Afterwards they summoned the entire Ulma family to stand beside their murdered guests and they too were shot - Józef, Wiktor, who was seven months pregnant, and their children - Stanisława, Barbara, Władysława, Franciszka, Maria, and Antoni.

JÓZEF (1900-42) & WIKTORIA (1912-42) ULMA

The German's brought local people to see the bodies in order to warn other family's who were sheltering Jews of the consequences of being caught. News of the Ulma atrocity spread fear amongst the local population and there is evidence that this terror-tactic had a profound and tragic effect on the population. Yehuda Erlich, a Jewish man who was hiding in a village a couple of miles from Markowa, wrote after the war - "Searches were conducted both by the Germans and the Polish peasants themselves, who wanted to find the hiding Jews. In spring 1944 a Jewish family (*the Goldmans*) was discovered hiding with Polish peasants (*the Ulmas*). The Polish family – eight souls, including the pregnant wife – was killed with the hiding Jews. As a result, there was enormous panic among the Polish peasants who were hiding Jews. In the days after these murders the bodies of 24 other Jews were discovered in the fields - they had been murdered by the peasants who had been sheltering them for the past two years".



A monument to the Ulma Family in Markowa

The fact that rescuers could so quickly become murderers illustrates how terrified the local population were of the German authorities – they decided that the only certain way of hiding the fact that they had been sheltering Jews was to silence the very people they had been hiding and anonymously leave their remains in a field. But many other family's in Markowa and the surroundings continued to shelter the Jews.

JÓZEF (1900-42) & WIKTORIA (1912-42) ULMA



A museum in honour of the Ulmas and other Polish rescuers in the region, opened in 2016. It teaches about the compassionate and self-sacrificing rescuers who helped Jews during World War II, as well as the more shameful aspects of Polish-Jewish relations during German occupation. The aim of this museum is to promote honest dialogue and mutual respect against the background of the tragic events experienced by Poland and Europe during World War II.

The Ulma family are recognised as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem and there is a process underway to have Józef and Wiktorina recognised as saints by The Vatican. In March each year the museum in Markowa marks the National Day of Remembrance of Poles who saved Jews from the Holocaust during World War Two.

