

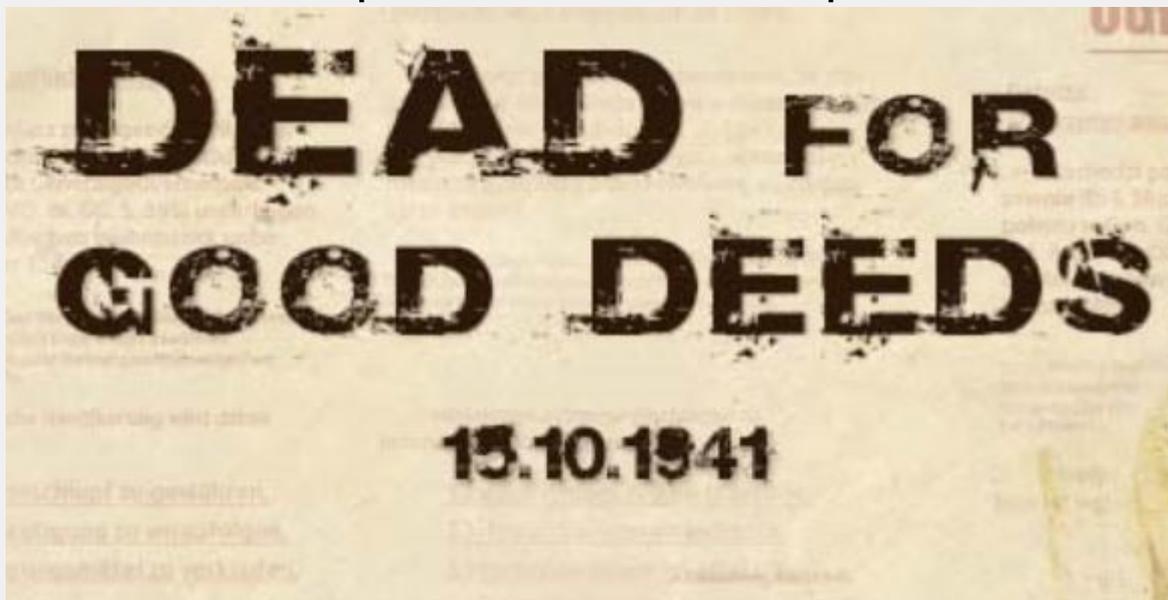
Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/4553,The-execution-of-Michal-Kruk-of-Przemysl-in-German-occupied-Poland-6-September-1.html>

25.04.2024, 07:50

04.09.2020

The execution of Michał Kruk of Przemyśl in German-occupied Poland - 6 September 1943



On 6 September 1943, German Police authorities of Przemyśl, in one of countless such executions in occupied Poland, murdered Alexander Hirschberg and Michał Kruk – a Jew and a Pole who tried to help him.

In the first months of the occupation it was the Poles, not the Jews, who became German prime targets, but in the second half of 1940, when the Third Reich turned its attention to Jews, the Poles did not turn their backs on their neighbours. During the German occupation, Michał Kruk, a retired railway worker, lived just next to the ghetto in Przemyśl, witnessing the Jewish population decrease day by day due to hunger,

diseases, executions and deportations to extermination camps. The plight of the neighbours turned the witness into active helper. Kruk became a liaison between ghetto inhabitants and the Poles who were willing to offer assistance, organized an escape of a big group of Jews to the farm run by the Banasiewicz family a few kilometres off Przemyśl, and tried to rescue Alexander Hirschberg of the "Bund" Jewish Labour Unions.

Kruk's case shows how aggressive German propaganda aiming to turn the Poles against the Jews failed, while ghettoization, discrimination, exploitation through labour and forced contributions the Jewish part of the society fell victim to met with various forms of Polish help.

Thousands of Poles helped, on the off-chance of saving the lives of former neighbours, business partners or competitors, employers or employees – but most frequently complete strangers. There were so many of them that the Germans employed harsher measures, since the propaganda wasn't working. In October 1941 – when German plans of solving the Jewish question through physical extermination crystallized – the General Government Poles were banned from extending any assistance to the doomed group on pain of death.

That is why in early September 1943 Kruk's flat was raided by a squad of local Gestapo officers led by SS- Hauptsturmführer Schwamberger, why the owner was arrested and murdered, and why after the execution both bodies were left hanging as an example.

Opcje strony

- [Print this page](#)
- [Generate PDF of this page](#)
- [Notify about this page](#)

• Share this article

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Share on Twitter](#)