

Instytut Pamięci Narodowej

<https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/historia-z-ipn/214144,Anna-Plonska-Droga-ktora-serce-zna-Sluby-wsrod-polskich-uchodzcow.html>
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Anna Płońska: „Droga, którą serce zna”. Śluby wśród polskich uchodźców

Materiały archiwalne zgromadzone w Archiwum IPN pochodzą z wielu zakątków świata. Odczytać w nich można niesamowite losy ludzkie, tworzące mniejsze lub większe historie. Chcielibyśmy przybliżyć te mniej znane, które pokazują, iż podczas wojennej tułaczki nie brakowało historii ludzi złączonych „sercem na Szlakach Nadziei”.

[Emigracja](#)

14.02

„Jest jedna droga, którą serce zna
I nocą po niej błędzi, i za dnia”.

Piosenkę tę, zatytułowaną „Jest jedna droga”, śpiewała Irena Bogdańska (późniejsza żona gen. Władysława Andersa) w pierwszym polskim powojennym filmie fabularnym pt. „Wielka droga” z 1946 r. Film opowiadał o dramatycznych losach Polaków deportowanych w głąb Związku Sowieckiego, którzy następnie wraz z tworzącą się słynną Armią Andersa opuścili „niehumanitarną ziemię”.

Związki małżeńskie wśród uchodźców

W książce Mariusza Solarza pt. „Działalność duszpasterska wśród ludności ewakuowanej w ZSRS (1942-1958)”, autor wymienia liczbę zawieranych małżeństw w poszczególnych ośrodkach uchodźczych. Dla przykładu podaje m.in., iż w polskim osiedlu w Masindi (Uganda) do stycznia 1944 r. udzielono trzech sakramentów małżeństwa. Podobnie statystyka wyglądała w Kidugali (ob. Tanzania), zaś w Forcie Jameson (ob. Zambia) odbyło się sześć ślubów.

Warto przy tym nadmienić, że w zasobie Archiwum IPN znajdują się wykazy parafialne polskiego osiedla w Afryce, w Tengeru, przekazane przez p. Iwonę Śliwowską. W jednym z nich odnotowano, iż w latach 1943-1947 zawartych zostało 47 małżeństw.

W publikacji Mariusza Solarza zawarto również analogiczne dane dotyczące Polaków skierowanych do osiedla Santa Rosa w Meksyku. Wedle szacunków w 1943 r. w związek małżeński wstąpiły 4 pary, w 1944 r. - 15 par, w 1945 r. - 7 par, w 1946 r. - 10. W 1947 r. odbył się tam jeden ślub. Odnotowano również 9 przypadków zawarcia małżeństw mieszanych pomiędzy Polkami a Meksykanami.

Wśród Polaków z Valivade

W przypadku Polaków skierowanych na teren Indii, w obozie tranzytowym w Karaczi, w latach 1942-1945, związek małżeński zawarło 10 par. Dla porównania w największym polskim ośrodku uchodźczym na Półwyspie Indyjskim, Osiedlu Polskim w Valivade, w latach 1943-1948, udzielono 64 ślubów.

[Czytaj artykuł Anny Płońskiej „Droga, którą serce zna”. Śluby wśród](#)

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Artykuł



1946: AN INDO-POLISH Love Story



HAND IN HAND: Wanda Kashikar, who came to Kolhapur as a World War II refugee, and her husband Vasant set out for a walk from their home in Kolhapur (above). A family portrait of the Kashikars (left) in which Wanda, then in her teens, is seen second from left, dressed like a typical Maharashtrian bride.

Kolhapur sheltered more than 20,000 refugees from Poland during the Second World War. The tie endures 61 years later — through one woman. The amazing story of Wanda Kashikar nee Nowicka

Text: Aditya Ghosh
Photos: Satish Bate
Kolhapur

NO ONE in Huta Pieniacka, an obscure village of ethnic Poles in the Ukraine, has heard of the chapati-like Maharashtrian sweet called the *puran poli*. So their oldest daughters, Wanda Nowicka (now Wanda Kashikar) half a world away in the distant Maharashtrian town of Kolhapur, is today one of the *poli*'s best exponents — we have her Maharashtrian husband's word on this.

The Polish government has just honoured this frail, smiling 82-year-old who has quietly nurtured an emotional link of 61 years between the bloody, painful past of her old homeland and India. It is a little-known past that brought 20,000 Polish refugees to Kolhapur in 1946, where they lived for six years. Wanda was the only one to stay back and this June, was felicitated by the Polish government with the Medalion of Honour. A movie project has kicked off and an association of Poles in London is set to begin a chronicle on Polish refugees in India between 1941 and 1949.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT
Wanda Nowicka was 15 when she left her village in 1939, before what is known as the Huta Pieniacka massacre, where Nazi Ger-

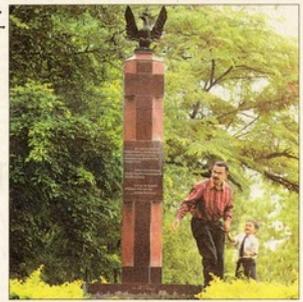
many's notorious SS squad massacred most of the villagers and burnt their houses. It was just one of many such episodes as Nazi troops swarmed over Poland in the early years of World War II. Wanda remembers her great transcontinental journey from a war-ravaged home in the Ukraine to refugee camps across Siberia, Tehran, Karachi, Jamnagar in Gujarat and finally, Kolhapur. "We gratefully remember how some of the local people helped us feel at home," says Bylinski. Wanda first met her husband Vasant Kashikar at a photo studio. "These Polish women were very fond of photographs — they would come to my friend's studio on weekends, the only days they were allowed out of the camp," remembers Vasant, who retired as an assistant commissioner in the regional transport department. "I met Wanda there and immediately fell in love."

He was 19, she 17. She did not know a word of Marathi, he knew no Polish. "The British government never approved of the marriage," says Vasant. "The then Collector of Kolhapur threatened me, he said I would lose my job if I married Wanda. She was also warned by the British not to marry a local as it would harm diplomatic ties. But I couldn't care less."

So on a sultry summer afternoon in 1946, Vasant, accompanied by 20 youth armed with hockey sticks, almost invaded the camp and took his bride away. They married at a local temple (which was all they could manage) and Wanda started living with Vasant. He lost his job as a clerk in a local college but Vasant's father, a well-known writer, graciously accepted Wanda. "My father-in-law and the family gave me so much of respect and love," recalls Wanda, unsteady in English but fluent in Marathi. "Other girls in the camp who married local boys left for Europe after the war was over, leaving their husbands here. I did not — I loved the family too much." Her sister returned to Poland in 1948 and it was only then that the family found out about her marriage. (Her father had died in Siberia and her only brother had settled in Italy.)

Today, Wanda has five sons and 15 grandchildren, scattered around India. Only one grandson, Rajesh, lives in Kolhapur. Vasant is the only one in the family who can speak a bit of Polish. Though Wanda chuckles, "He started with *Joe Kochan Ciebie* (pronounced *Yo Kaham Chhebi*) in 1946, and hasn't gone much further." "I love you," she says, shyly.

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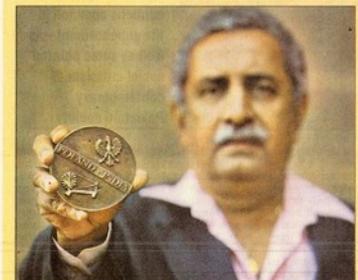
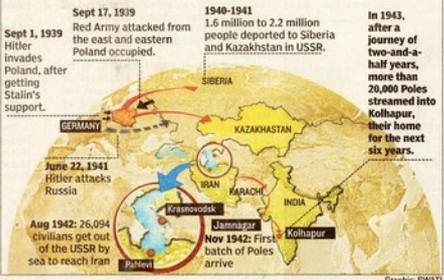
FORGOTTEN: Few locals are aware of what this Kolhapur monument, erected by The Association of Poles in India, stands for.

“The most difficult thing to adjust to was the spices in the food. The famous Kolhapuri chillies used in curries made me cry. It took time but I even learnt how to cook. Though I went back to Poland for a visit in 1955, I could take Vasant there only in 1994. My family was so happy. WANDA KASHIKAR, wife of Vasant Kashikar

We are emotionally attached to Kolhapur — we recovered from the trauma of war and settled here. There was a Polish secondary school where, besides science and maths, the syllabus included Polish language, literature and history.”

JAN SIEDLECKY, Vice President, The Association of Poles in India, London

POLES APART: A people's flight

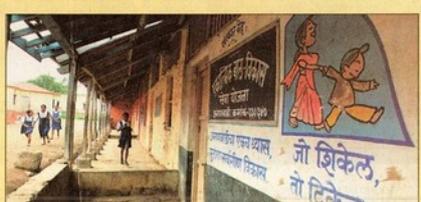


HONOURED: Colonel Vijay Singh Gaikwad shows the Polish government medalion he received for the help his family extended to the refugees.

KOLHAPUR'S FORGOTTEN POLISH PAST

NOT MANY in this town in Maharashtra's southern tip know how Kolhapur housed more than 20,000 Poles for over six years. Even fewer care. At least not the government, it would seem. Most of the barracks the Poles lived in have been razed. The few that remain are in a shambles. Vallvade railway station, where trains carrying Polish refugees once halted regularly, is now a haunt for gypsies. And weeds and filth cover a cemetery filled with the graves of 250 Poles who died in India. "Were there any Polish refugees?" asks RN Hegde, superintending archaeologist of state, archaeology department of Maharashtra. "We don't know anything about the Polish refugees and we are not responsible for maintaining any of the sites you mention."

"Only Gaikwad sanb takes an interest. He gets the cemetery cleaned at his own expense every year on November 2, the day many Poles also come to pay tribute," says Dayanand Hegde, caretaker of the cemetery, referring to Vijay Singh Gaikwad, a retired Indian army colonel who was felicitated by the Polish government this year. But in London, in Mumbai's Polish consulate, and in Poland, Kolhapur is living history. Two years ago, The Association of Poles in India, a body of those refugees who later settled in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, helped erect a monument in remembrance of their stay. "We come every few years to Kolhapur to show our children where we spent the most crucial time of our lives," Jan Siedlecky, vice president, Association of Poles in India tells HT from



MAKEOVER: The barracks where Polish refugees once lived now house a school.

London. This is where, he says, "We finally gained peace of mind and regrouped after weathering the trauma of Second World War, leaving behind our homes and the death of our families." AG

Artykuł prasowy dotyczący losów Wandy Nowickej i Vasanta Kashikara z 26 VIII 2007 r. Dokument pochodzi z kolekcji przekazanej do zasobu Archiwum IPN przez Koło Polaków z Indii 1942-1948