



Visit to Jewish Poznan (Posen)



First encounter with Alicja Kobus-Brom Berger

On Thursday 16 June 2009 visited the Polish-Jewish Alicja Kobus-Brom Berger (see photo left) with her daughter and brought interpreter Sjef Foxes the LJG Utrecht, the following representatives were present: Rose-Marie Frijda, Tine

Middleton, Sanne Terlouw and myself (Tom Fürstenberg). It appeared that Alicja came from Poznan, the city where coincidentally my ancestors lived until 1921 (then called the city still *Posen*). When I was told that the surname of my ancestors Latz was an example Solomon Benjamin Latz said (to whom I am named, vwb my Jewish names), hit Alicja in surprise her hand to her mouth: that was a very well-known Jewish family in the history of Poznan / Posen, and especially this very Solomon Benjamin Latz, who was a personal friend of the famous Rabbi Akiva Eger, also known as the Gaon of Posen said. I knew from tradition that my father such a Jewish hospital is built, but not that there is then a special foundation was established (The Latz Foundation) and that it still exists (and very familiar). When I said that in my living room and the only original portrait (see the right figure, the at least 200 years old silver tobacco box is still in my possession!) Solomon Benjamin Latz hanging was the excitement complete. At last they would see a picture of this remarkable man, who for so many Jewish Posen / Poznan had meant.

The 'twinning'

The main purpose of the visit of Alicja, in Poznan chairman and driving force of the (small) Jewish community there, was to investigate the possibility and enthusiasm for starting a so-called 'twinning', a *partnership*, as many cities that enter. To this end she had many gifts appropriate for our chilly included, such as pictures of their synagogue, a DVD about the initiation, the introduction of the sefer torah, replacing the matsewe of Rabbi Akiva Eger, etc.

Because my roots in Posen / Poznan, and then also with Latz, was immediately obvious click / band needed for starting the twinning. The board of the LJG Utrecht me also subsequently invited as 'ambassador' v / d LJG Utrecht Poznan to act, which I obviously wanted to do.



Visit to Posen / Poznan

After this particular meeting, I contacted g ehouden with Alicja. Almost exactly one year later, on Wednesday, June 23, 2010, I drove my father and my friend Dannie Klompsma to Poznan, moreover transit to Krakow Jewish Cultural Festival to be there to do (this one about 4 minute movie of our travel). We arrived at the end of the afternoon, met at our hotel by Alicja and Marcus, a member of the cold both Polish and (reasonably) spoke English and acted as interpreter. We had this time all gifts to us on behalf of our chilly

for our sister congregation: some copies of *Jewish ride and and symbols* of Rabbi de Vries (grandfather of Tamar), in Polish translation! Furthermore, large (about

A4 size) photos of our shul and services, well framed. Finally a reproduction on canvas / canvas of the portrait of Solomon Benjamin Latz, full size. A symbol of our shared history. When Alicja the portrait in a prominent place in their Jewish Cultural Center (JCC, see photo left) hung up she said, "You have brought him back to where he once was." A touching moment. In that JCC is also a small shul space (pictured right) where we brief Ma'ariv evening service have gedavvend and a sjachariet service the next morning, where many more people came down than we expected on a weekday, we were more than happy minje, because since it was Thursday morning we have from the sefer



Torah reading. For me it was all so impressive that I stood there and davvenen laajnen at (approximately) the place where my ancestors have done. And for a small, chilly ignorant who almost never appeared to do. There was only me again for the first time from the sefer gelaajnd since the inauguration a few years ago!

The 'pool Synagogue'

After sjachariet (and an extensive and pleasant Kiddush, they had special kosher delicacies from Warsaw to come) suggested Alicja for the former shul view, diagonally across from the JCC. The shul where my ancestors (and the Gaon of Posen) ever davvenden, at least, in a previous version of the building, because it is in the



course of time grown, the last time in 1939 by the Nazis to pool the wehrmacht soldiers ... Left is an image of the synagogue as he once was. Right now how the building looks from the outside.



Within the shock was even greater. The contours of the interior of this former synagogue were clearly recognizable, the atmosphere is palpable, you saw as it were the chill down, the men down, the women's gallery, and you could hear the singing chazzan. And while there was nothing left, the entire floor was occupied by a pool (see the picture on the left, under the old photo), which is still used. What a macabre symbol of the destruction of yet another thriving Jewish community, and that is a thing in 1939, the Nazis made haste with ontjoodsen of Posen (the town was also close to the German border, they were perhaps already the first days of the war).

Dannie and I have, without prior consultation, spontaneous and 2-part Adon Olam deployed. We cried sometimes from our throats, out of anger, sadness, as a tribute to those who once davvenden and nobody did it hurt. Then Alicja and I fell weeping into each other's arms.

The Concert

Recently, Alicja again contact me to ask if I wanted to give chazzanut concert on 16 January. The concert should be given in the 'pool-shul' and should include for attention and money to get the building into a Jewish monument / museum to do instead (by the Nazis constructed) pool. Well, of course I like to work with, but at the same time I see a little reluctant. First, it would for me be the first time that I 'officially, really, completely' chazzanut concert would give. Secondly, I found it hard to imagine that in that pool would be, although the acoustics are magnificent. Thirdly, I wondered whether and how many people would come off then on. Fourthly, I



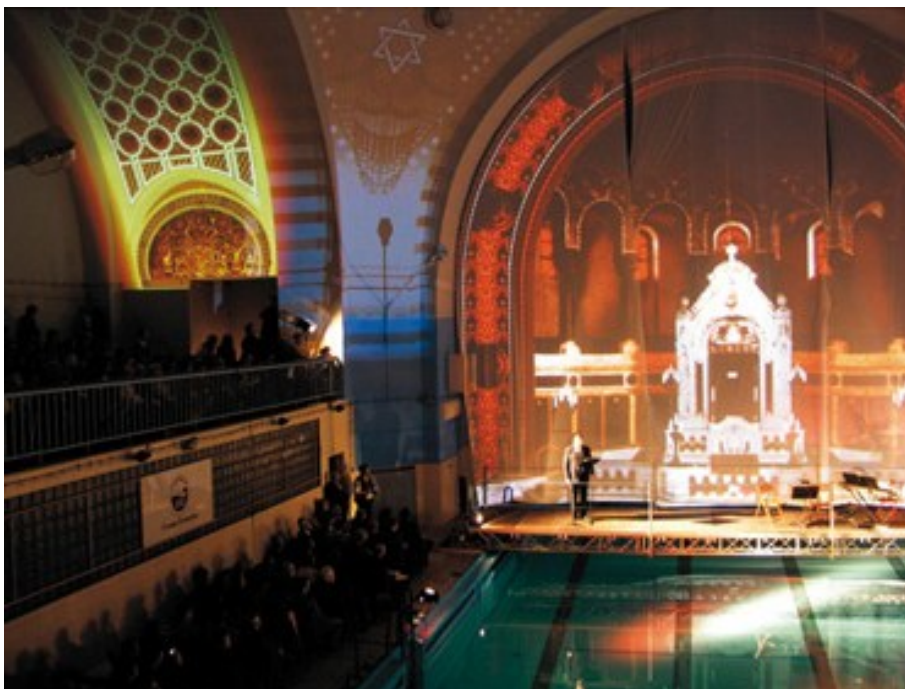


looked reluctant because of the emotion that undoubtedly will bring with it. But while this was precisely the mitzvah, the koved I felt for it to do, precisely there, in the Nazi-ontjoodste building another Jewish sound to sound, and then also in the building, the neighborhood, the city where my ancestors davvenden.

It is also clear to me the last few days how it will look like, and in what context exactly that on January 16. For some years the Catholic Church the so-called "Day of Judaism" set annually on 17 January. In the Netherlands since 2008, see www.dagvanhetjodendom.nl. It appears that this day is held in more countries, also in Poland. That on January 16, evening at 9:00 p.m., it is the eve of this day, say *erev shel yom Yehudim katholien* J ... And they assured me that a lot of people (mainly Catholics believe me) to afk away, the "shul" will completely full. Moreover, it appears that there are professional so called 'scenographers' are hired throughout the decor, stage decor to design and implement. I got a taste: projections of the interior of this former synagogue on the walls and ceiling with all mu urschilderingen, decorations, color, see photo at left and right. Behind the stage where I will stand even the aron projected. A virtual shul, incredible, if you compare it with the pictures of the 'bare'

pool-shul above, very well done, I get in advance all the chills that I then stand and sing. My ancestors could not imagine what happened to their shul and common ap in the years from 1939 happened, but they would then perhaps can not imagine

that one of their descendants there anyway would stand to sing, and how many non-Jewish interest and substantive contributions to this would be there. Besides the public is namely also virtually the entire 'crew' non-Jewish, very special that they have so much expertise, time, money, equipment, etc. to invest in the shul on this impressive to also virtually non-Jewish public can show and Judaism would bring back a little in atmosphere, entourage, sound / voice. Given the prejudices that I (and probably you too) have about Poland and the Polish anti-Semitism, I am more impressed by all this. After 16 January next, I will report on this special event. See [here the concert program](#).



Latz-building and foundation

Finally something about the aforementioned Latz Foundation and its building that was once a hospital. Solomon Benjamin Latz has ordered in his will to the bulk of his estate to a foundation with the goal of a hospital and Beth Hamidrash to build and manage.

Furthermore, it was his express wish that Rabbi Akiva Eger, the Gaon of Posen, supervised the construction and management would get, that it would meet all halachic requirements. There was at that time ie in Posen a battle underway between modernizers and traditionalists (which we now reforming / or liberal. Orthodox call), and my father was, it must be said, very traditional, along with Akiva Eger. From tradition, I know that my father sjolem-macher was no quarrel

searched with the innovators, and the whole to vote if innovators are great friend Akiva Eger attacked because he simply can not (sufficiently) would renew, and my father respected director of the Jewish community always stood behind the Gaon.

In the biography of Rabbi Akiva Eger, entitled "Gaon of Posen" is a special anecdote about Solomon Benjamin Latz and the Gaon. Solomon Benjamin Latz is seriously ill in hospital (not his own), and the doctors prescribe it for certain foods that are not entirely kosher. When the Gaon Latz Latz in the hospital asked him whether, given the gravity of his physical condition, now exceptionally prescribed this food could eat. The Gaon forbade him, but then



went to the kitchen and instructed the staff that they Latz exactly the food prescribed by the doctors had to give. He explained that he wanted to make Latz not worried by explicitly allowing violating the kashrut laws, only in life-threatening situations is permitted.

The picture on the postcard and the black and white photographs

(the elongated shows the inscriptions, right Ivrit) show how the building once looked, the color I made myself when I was there in June jongstl oaths was, and am also in it. Below a picture of the interior of the Beth Hamidrash, Beth Shlomo called to Solomon (Shlomo) Benjamin Latz. In the aforementioned biography of the Gaon of Posen, the will of my father (regarding the hospital and Beth Hamidrash) and its implementation by Akiva Eger also described (see [here](#) on the 4 pages of this biography).

Tom A. Fürstenberg

