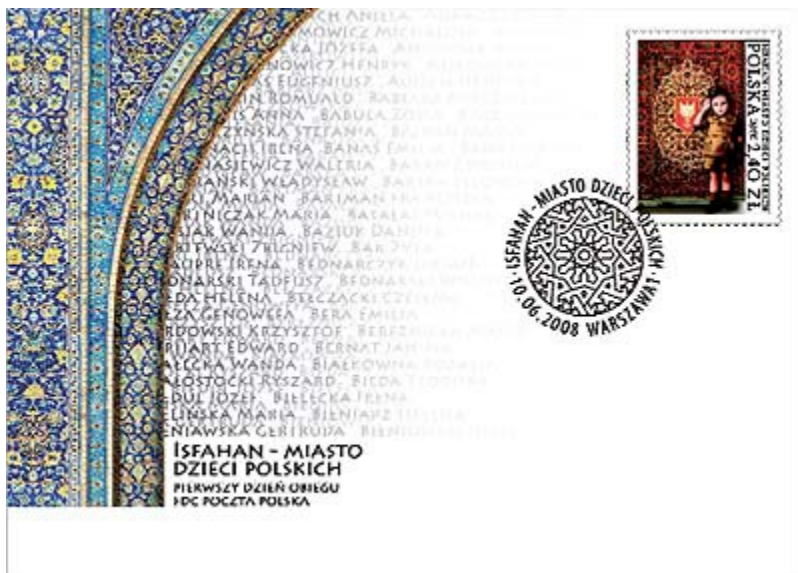


Isfahan - City of Polish Children



Poland commemorates her refugees in Iran

by [Ryszard Antolak](#)
24-Jun-2008

The Polish Postal Service has commemorated the role Isfahan played during World War 2 in caring for Polish orphans.

The new stamp, "Isfahan - the City of Polish Children", went on sale earlier this month. It depicts a pupil at School No. 15 near Isfahan (Stanislaw Stojakowski), standing in front of a Persian carpet woven at the city's Carpet School in 1944.

In 1942, Isfahan housed thousands of Polish orphans released from the Soviet work camps of Siberia and Kazakhstan. At its peak, twenty one areas of the city were exclusively allocated to the welfare of the ragged and emaciated orphans who had been sent there from reception centres in Anzali, Tehran and Mashad. Many of them remained in the city for up to three years, earning it the title "City of Polish children", the name which also appears (in Polish) on the stamp's First Day Commemorative Cover. In addition, the cover sports a design showing hundreds of the Polish names fading illegibly into oblivion.

Between 1942 and 1945, Iran played host to almost 150,000 men, women and children of the "Polish Exodus from Russia". The majority of the children ended up in Isfahan.

The stamp, issued on 10th June 2008, has a face value of 2 zloty 40 groszy, and is already proving extremely popular with the Polish public.

Armenian Cafe

by Anoosh (not verified) on *Wed Aug 13, 2008 10:00 PM PDT*

For your information and, of course, for others to know as well, Cafe Polonia was not a Polish Cafe but was owned and operated by an Armenian couple. Their names were Karapet and Emma, and I knew them for

years in New Julfa. They had two girls my age, and one of them stil lives in New Julfa. We always used to go there, and yes he was a kind and smiley man, always talking with customers. He was exactly what you described, but not Polish but 100% Armenian. Thanks.

Many Thanks!

by Shahrzad (not verified) on *Fri Jun 27, 2008 08:40 AM PDT*

My mother lived in Isfahan when she was a child for couple of years. Her father was assigned to different cities to study malaria and so they moved few times. She has always told us the story of the Polish children in Isfahan. She remembers them fondly. My mother would see the children lined up in the morning walking in the streets on their way to either school or park. They were beautiful children. It is nice to hear that the children also have a fond memory of their stay in Iran. I always wondered what happened to them. How many went back to Poland and how many stayed? There is an Orthodox cemetery in south of Tehran where Russians and East Europeans who could not go back to Russia are burried. I hear that Polish embassy gets called about locating loved ones in Iran. God bless Iranians for their generosity and warm hearts.

Polonia

by cyrus Omoomian (not verified) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 10:35 PM PDT*

.....I remember so vividly the Polonia pastry shop in Chaharbagh, I stopped there with my older brother few times a week to buy Ponchik or in polish Ponchki.(my wife of 7 years is polish so I know :) I'm from Esfahan, I loved Mr. Polonia ,he was round and jolly ,someone all kids loved and same as his wife, they were so kind and pleasant even they were immigrants and..... Because of the Armenian community in Esfahan , they felt more comfortable there and Esfahani people treat them very kind and hospitable Good ol Esfahan where in my childhood I grew up and went to school with armenians, jews and moslems and all others sat together , played football and became great friends.

I grew up in jolfa by Zayandehrood, jae ke hameh ba ham zendegi mikardand!
A place by the river of river livelihood(Zayandehrood) where people of all religion lived together with love and respect eachother.I remember all those people with great feeling and compassion.
Now 40 years later I'm still free of religion boundaries , but this time I'm free by observing the truth through window of science on my desk top.
i miss you Polonia,
Thank you to country Poland for publishing " Esfahan, city of Polish children" stamp.
ba sepas,
cyrus

When I Met a Polish Child of Esfahan

by abbasabadi (not verified) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 09:54 PM PDT*

It was in the late 70's and I was attending college in the US. On a nice autumn afternoon, I was walking on a pedestrian mall and talking in Farsi with one of my buddies when an old gentleman approached us and politely asked: "Are you from Iran?" I said: "Yes". And then he said:" I can count to ten in Farsi; yek, do, seh, chahar, panj,shish.." I was totally amazed and intrigued! "How do you know all this stuff?" I asked. He explained in great length that as a Polish orphan child he was sent to Esfahan to escape the harsh life in Europe. He said that he never had a decent meal and was always hungry until he got to Iran and for the first time in many months he had eggs! He talked about the fruits in Esfahan, the cherries,

especially. I just looked at him in amazement and said that I don't know anything about the story of Polish people in Iran.

Then he said that his best memory of Esfahan was about the bike shop where he and his best friend used to rent bikes to ride around town. On occasions when they did not have money to pay the owner of the bike shop, they would drop the bikes in front of the shop and run away!

He then said with a broad smile on his face "The shop owner would run after us and say Pedar Sag!" I saw the smile of a 10-year old on the old man's face!

Anyone remember the lyric/song for those immigrants?

by Anonymous irani (not verified) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 04:50 PM PDT*

I put up the first line of a lyric that iranian folks were reciting for polish girls brought to iran during WWII, but for some reason it was censored although it had nothing bad in it.

A related story...

by Anonymous irani (not verified) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 04:42 PM PDT*

Maria Nemat is a former prisoner of IRI. In her book, she tells that she was of russian descent who were brought to iran during WWII and partly remained in iran. She also tells the story of her husband, a Hungarian, whose family was also brought to iran in the same time period and partly remained in the beautiful iran. A Hungarian who spoke perfect persian, attended Univ. of Tehran and then taught at Univ. of Sistan & Baluchestan for a while before migrating to canada.

very kind offer

by Parisa. (not verified) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 04:25 PM PDT*

Dear Ryszard,

Thank you for your very kind offer.
I will contact you in the near future through this site.
Have a wonderful trip to Iran.
Parisa

Also to Reza555:

Thank you for the very detailed info.
regarding the book.

City of Polish Children

by Reza555 (not verified) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 02:34 PM PDT*

Ham'Mihanan'e aziz,

There is a book that you may also find an interesting read:

Book Title: ISFAHAN – City of Polish Children

Association of Former Pupils of Polish School, Isfahan and Lebanon 1989.

Editors: Irena Beaupre-Stankiewicz
Danuta Waszczuk-Kamieniecka
Jadwiga Lewicka-Howells, O.B.E.

Dedication: " To those who let us out of an inhuman land and to all those who, by their loving care and goodness, helped us to regain our childhood and youth, we dedicate this book in deep gratitude."

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Printed by: Caldra House Ltd. 23 Coleridge Street, Hove, Sussex, BN3 5AB. United Kingdom.

BEST POLISH BOOK PUBLISHED OUTSIDE POLAND IN 1987
Prize of the Union of Polish Writers Abroad.

Thank you Ryszard...

by [Abbas Zeineddin](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 02:23 PM PDT*

...for providing me a link to the Polish Postal Service. It looks like I can't buy them online. I'll have to find a way to get my hands on the stamp! Any suggestions? And please email me a copy of your mother's book too after you get back from Iran. I would love to read it. Have a great time in Iran!

Really nice

by [Abarmard](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 01:59 PM PDT*

To hear something positive about Iran :)

Very Interesting

by [Zion](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 01:50 PM PDT*

Thanks. Iran, when true to her identity has always been a haven of multi-cultural respect and tolerance. That deserves a lot of respect and is worth fighting for to be preserved in face of this constant ideological attack being waged against it by the revolutionary islamist regime. My two cents.

Fantastic

by [Ryszard Antolak](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 01:42 PM PDT*

Only a minority of the children were of Jewish descent. The vast majority of them were not.

the journey

by [Ryszard Antolak](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 01:37 PM PDT*

Dear Parisa,

she started to write about it eight or nine years ago. And yes, it was a painful process. So the ending was hurried. I gave her a notebook to use. But she preferred to jot it all down on scraps of paper, napkins, bus tickets, the back of supermarket receipts, anything that presented itself - and then left me with the task of putting together hundreds of pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle.

If you are (really) interested in reading it, I can e-mail you a copy. Unfortunately, I am just about to leave on holiday (to Iran). But if you contact me sometime in the second half of next month, I will send you it.

Thank you for your interest.

Fantastic

by PersianChick (not verified) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 12:51 PM PDT*

Thanks for sharing this interesting part of our history. Question - were these children of Jewish descent?

the journey

by Parisa. (not verified) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 11:44 AM PDT*

Dear Ryszard,

Could your mother possibly tell her tale?
Would it be too painful?
Could she take us through her journey?

The world should know more of how the children suffered.
The world should learn... perhaps...perhaps to diminish the suffering of the children that is still going on.

Thank you,
Parisa

I am sure some never left Iran

by [Ryszard Antolak](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 09:56 AM PDT*

For the 120-150,000 or so of those who were allowed to leave Soviet Russia in 1942, Iran was a long-awaited "Promised Land" of Freedom. My mother was one of those young exiles on the first transport to arrive in Anzali and even today, she still speaks of Iran in hallowed terms that seem almost messianic.

The debt and gratitude felt by the exiles towards their host country echoes loudly throughout all the literature. The kindness and sympathy of ordinary Iranians towards the Poles is everywhere spoken of.

Only a small fraction of the Poles released from the camps, however, managed to reach Iran. Almost a million others were left behind in the Soviet Union to face their sorry fate.

For information on how to obtain the stamps, see: <http://www.poczta-polska.pl/znaczk/en/index.php>

I am sure some never left Iran

by [Abbas Zeineddin](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 08:13 AM PDT*

Thank you Ryszard. Can you tell us how we can purchase the first day commemorative cover or the stamp? I will definitely read the background information that you and DK provided again.

Back in the 80's, when I was a child in Tehran, there was a family living in our street whose matriarch was Polish. She was very nice and lived with her daughter and her children. Her daughter had married an Iranian, but everyone in the family had a light complexion with blond hair. Sadly, we never played with the children, but we all liked the grandmother. As a child, I always wondered how this woman ended up in Iran. She may have been part of this group. My father used that during World War II, a lot of Polish refugees were in Tehran around where he lived.

Years later when I was a volunteer translator for the Iranian delegation during the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, a fellow Polish translator told me the story. He was one of these children. What was amazing was that he spoke of this ordeal in his life with a happy face and was grateful to the Iranian people. He told me that if he wasn't transported to Iran, he probably would not be standing in front of me that day. He still remembered the names of all of the cities.

I have been hearing for

by [KavehV \(not verified\)](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 02:15 AM PDT*

I have been hearing for years from my father's side of the family about growing up in Esfahan and having Polish friends in their neighborhood. Although, I did not know there were so many orphans among them. I was always curious about the circumstances that led their families flee Poland. I knew some were residents from western Poland who happened to be visiting the east in September of 1939 and became instant refugees behind Soviet lines. I suppose most fled into USSR for safety after June '41. Arguably, the prospects for Polish population in those years was either the forced labor concentration camps of the Nazis, or the equivalent Gulags of USSR.

I am glad to know that some of these families had a little respite in Iran in those days. Also proud that our family stood up to some Islamist's indignities toward their friends in Esfahan at the time.

Wonderful News Ryszard !

by [Darius Kadivar](#) on *Wed Jun 25, 2008 01:11 AM PDT*

More on the "Tehran Children" at Bandar Pahlavi :

<http://www.zchor.org/tehran/children.htm>

More Information

by [Ryszard Antolak](#) on *Tue Jun 24, 2008 11:18 PM PDT*

For more information on this episode of Iranian History please see:

http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Personal_Names/polis...

<http://www.iranian.com/main/2007/lost-requiem>

vow,

by nanaz (not verified) on Tue Jun 24, 2008 10:07 PM PDT

I never knew we had polish living in iran, base on what you post, they just stayed in iran for three years, and then left somewhere else.

Appreciative nation

by Parisa. (not verified) on Tue Jun 24, 2008 09:36 PM PDT

What an appreciative nation Poland must be.

After all these years to still remember and print a stamp in remembrance of what another nation did for her citizens and children.

My question is: Should borders really mean that much?! Aren't ALL children OUR children?

Thanks for the info Ryszard.

Polish in Iran

by ahvazi on Tue Jun 24, 2008 08:20 PM PDT

In the movie "White Balloon" there is a character who is an old lady of Polish heritage. For those interested Ahvaz too hosted a number of the Polish refugees.

Iran has always been amongst the top countries in terms of hosting refugees whether Polish or Afghanis, part of our heritage of Mehman-navazi.

Iranian People are Poetic and Peaceful people

by Amir Nasiri (not verified) on Tue Jun 24, 2008 08:11 PM PDT

Even under the rogue and savagery by the barbaric regime in Iran, Iranian people still have withheld the proud Iranian custom and culture.

We have always helped the victims of war and provided sanctuary and refuge to the ones who needed it. Iranian people are giving and forgiving.

I only wished they would teach our population more history and knowledge about our culture so we don't repeat the same mistakes and we become proud of our heritage and ethnicity and of who we are Iranians.

I wish you would provide

by ncnologgin (not verified) on Tue Jun 24, 2008 06:35 PM PDT

I wish you would provide more historical info. Terribly fascinating.

Thanks!

by Parham on Tue Jun 24, 2008 05:22 PM PDT

I think a lot of people don't know that we had Polish immigrants in Iran. A lot of them stayed later on and melted into the population.

<http://www.iranian.com/main/2008/isfahan-city-polish-children>

City of Polish Children

by Reza555 (not verified) on Wed Jun 25, 2008 02:34 PM PDT

Ham'Mihanan'e aziz,

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