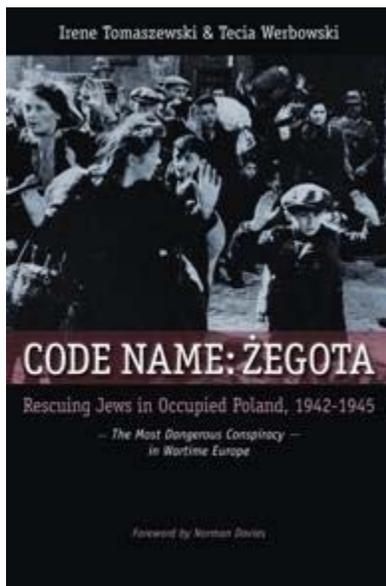


Code Name: Żegota

Praeger | Amazon

by Irene Tomaszewski

An underground organization that provided assistance to persecuted Jews during the Holocaust in German-occupied Poland, Żegota's existence has, until recently, still been relatively unknown in North America and even in parts of Europe. In Żegota: The Council for Aid to Jews in Occupied Poland 1942-45, the author describes in harrowing, compelling detail the lengths this group went to in order to save Jewish peoples from certain death. A moving story of heroism in times steeped in the worst ugliness humans are capable of, this account adds another dimension to the Second World War and those who fought tirelessly and bravely to free fellow humans from brutal tyranny.



As of May 2010, a new version of Irene Tomaszewski's important book, "Żegota," is now available. Titled "Code Name: Żegota," the new book is co-authored by Tomaszewski, a writer and activist of Polish-Catholic heritage, and fellow Montrealer, Tacia Werbowska, a novelist of Polish-Jewish heritage. The book's foreword is by British academic, Norman Davies, author of several of the most authoritative histories of Poland. "Code Name: Żegota" is published by Praeger, an imprint of ABC-CLIO of Santa Barbara, California.

The number of Jews rescued by the war-time, Polish organization, Żegota, was small in comparison to the number of Jews murdered by the Nazi Germans. Still, Żegota was an impressive effort that deserves to be better known. "At least half of all Jews who survived the Holocaust in Poland did so thanks to the heroic efforts of Żegota," says Davies in his foreword. Żegota's "self-declared mission was to save as many Jews as possible from the death sentence imposed on the entire Jewish nation by the occupying forces," write Tomaszewski and Werbowska. "A conspiracy is not usually required for committing acts of kindness, but it was essential in the environment of the time."

During World War II, Poland was occupied by both the Nazis and the Soviets. The invading forces, bent on the systematic destruction of Poland and all its people, deprived all Polish citizens of all human rights. Any Pole could be killed at any time. That Żegota existed for three hellish years and succeeded in some small measure is a compelling testament to the human spirit. Would you risk your life, and the lives of your family members, to save the life of another person, often a stranger? Would you do this over and over again? Not many of us would answer, "Yes!"