



NOMADIC MEMORY

PHOTO: MIKOLAJ TYM



Zuzanna Hertzberg, *Nomadic Memory*, 2017, intervention in the public space, Defilad Square: Step Forward, 9th edition of the festival Warsaw under Construction, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

PHOTO: PIOTR STASIAK

ARTIVISM AS THE PRACTICE OF RECOVERING MEMORY

by **Zuzanna Hertzberg**

Memory can be retained and archived. You can, however, also manipulate it, obliterate its fragments and sometimes whole segments, using its stores as a tool in a political fight with minorities. Historical memory is only seemingly a domain of objective knowledge. In reality it constitutes a part of political discourse and social engineering tactics, aimed at erasing facts inconvenient for a one-track narrative. The monolithic character of the historical message is a strategy for domination and symbolic power. The purpose of this strategy is to seize and hold power, as well as to preserve a hierarchical and patriarchal social order based on fascist social practices. This power is set on pushing alternative and minority narratives to the sidelines.

The point of departure for my artistic practice is always work with archival material. With time, my experiences led me to outline a specific understanding of historical memory as a process in which the most important role is played by the migration of ideas, a peculiar kind of nomadism. The perception of memory as an unchanging set of “objective” historical facts does not appeal to me. This is because such a notion of memory perpetuates the myth of a false, frozen identity, which confines a community in the belief of its uniqueness, leading it astray into the wilderness of regionalism and cutting it off from a universal message.

Nomadic memory, on the other hand, is like a vehicle, a process of crossing boundaries. Its main feature is extraterritoriality. In places distant from one another, geographically and culturally different, memory spreads, uniting various groups, showing

them common aspirations and emotions. Artivism attempts to transfer ideas from one territory to another, thus being a journey in time and space, over the divisions and pressure of majority narrations. Politically dominated historical interpretations are always about the so-called roots and the coherence of the story. From this vantage point, history is a tool for domination, the imposition of one-track messages, and a kind of social engineering, which strives after antagonizing social groups and glorifying tribal identity. It is crucial to understand that, moving from one place to another, we take our roots with us.

When, following the traces left in the chronicles of my family, I started to explore the maps of the journeys made by the *Dąbrowszczacy*,¹ Polish citizens fighting in Spain under the motto “For your freedom and ours”, it could not escape my notice how closely their fate is bound up with the history of contemporary Poland, and how much the fight against blotting out male and female members of the International Brigades from memory unites various territories and cultures. And it struck me how much this is a story about what is happening now in Polish public institutions, offices and on Polish streets.

THE NOMADIC CHARACTER of memory is not only a fact, but also a call to action – an artistic action undertaken to actively recover blurred truths and restore non-normative historical messages in such a way that it creates a foundation for a new social order. To build this foundation is an everyday practice. Artivism is a tool for fighting, a tactic for self-defense against physical oppression and symbolic power. Nomadism is a means which activates

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another memory, an account given from another perspective. A history researcher, an archivist and an artist are, in fact, nomads. The historical truth is like a rhizome – the memory of our roots does not attach us to the ground on which we grew up, but makes us overstep boundaries and seek guidelines on action in a different cultural context. Events in remote lands often open up a crevice of historical memory, in which we suddenly discern blurred or buried facts concerning us as well. That memory, in turn, also stirs ours.

The glorification of Polish “disavowed soldiers”, whom I will talk about later in this text, is an attempt to erase this nomadism and push historical narration into regionalism, ahistoricism, falsely understood uniqueness of an alleged national community, and politically inspired manipulation of testimonies and facts. It is an attempt to sever the bonds that link us with the



In memory of Mirjam Gothelf/Maria Melchior and In memory of Zofia Szleyen (fragment of artwork), The cycle *Volunteers for Freedom*, 2016–2020, each box 57×49×7 cm (closed).

internationalism of ideas. To reduce everything to the Polish catalogue of myths and ignore the background of all-European phenomena, of which we formed a part.

The geopolitical context in which my works come into existence and function is essential. Due to this context, I define them as the practice of activism. I presented the documentation of my actions at the symposium in Tallinn. I also refer to them in this essay in which they serve to illustrate my attitude as an activist, performer and researcher.

In Poland, as in many so-called post-communist countries, if you refer to any historical event, you always actively take a stance on some option – either nationalist, environmental, ideological or cultural. Historiography, as well as the archiving and the distribution of historical sources, has a clear cultural subtext and gender-related connotations. It is important who comes into possession of this deposit and in what political circumstances, and who manages, protects and uses it. A very transparent model of historical narration has been adopted in Poland – dominated by the account of the heroism of heterosexual men and the secondary, auxiliary role of women. Obliteration and symbolic violence are basic tools which the monocultural historical narration has at its disposal in order to remove from social attention inconvenient truths which disrupt the ideological unification of events and processes. Uncertainty about their own cultural value drives many countries and societies to replace history with false national myths and follow the so-called politics of memory, which attacks otherness and the individualism of attitudes. In this model, the state, instead of assuming the role of a patron supporting free research and archival activity, takes the role of an agency which pays a lot of money to historians hired in order to propagate and promote (including abroad) a false image of history in the name of party loyalty. It is the state that holds a monopoly on the truth and knows best how to disseminate it.

My artistic practice aims at challenging this monopoly. As an activist heavily involved in putting archival truths (read: myths) straight, I look for a germ of a new story in them, a minority story, *herstory*, a new kind of archive based on women's perspective and narrations.

“THE POLISH HISTORICAL NARRATIVE SHOWS HOW THE MYTH ABOUT POST-WAR HEROES IS FOISTED ON THE MAJORITY OF SOCIETY.”

IN THE POLISH HISTORICAL and patriotic discourse, the term “disavowed soldiers” or “forgotten soldiers” (because as it is claimed they were forgotten in recent decades) has functioned for twenty years. The term “disavowed” achieved its popularity thanks to the French poet Paul Verlaine, who used it (in a book from 1884) to describe poets defying the bourgeois order of social conventions, and not avoiding alcohol and drugs. Since then, they have been called *Les poètes maudits* [cursed poets].

To be disavowed can, consequently, mean to be excluded. It is a paradox that sometimes those excluded enter the school canon, and they do it in many fields. At other times, people are artificially portrayed as disavowed and excluded and, apart from being mentioned in handbooks, they are suddenly recognized as heralds of the political and historical mainstream. The Polish historical narrative shows how the myth about post-war heroes is foisted on the majority of society. It is for them that museums in Poland are built,² and squares and streets are named after them, blotting out the memory of real heroes, especially heroines, and real war victims.

Polish “disavowed soldiers” were a more or less consolidated association of military formations which fought with the mandate of the foreign authorities, imposed from the outside. Despite the order for demobilization issued by the Polish government-in-exile (based in London), they did not lay down their arms and did not join the rebuilding of a country after the ravages of World War II. Instead, they stayed in guerrilla groups stationed in forests.

According to the currently binding interpretation, the “disavowed” killed people and groups collaborating with the Soviet



In memory of Elżbieta Borensztejn/Bekier (fragment of artwork), In memory of Wera Luftig and In memory of Anna and Adela Korn, The cycle *Volunteers for Freedom*, 2016–2020, each box 57×49×7 cm (closed).

authorities. In reality, however, they were called “bands” by civilians (such an expression can be found in archival testimonies and accounts given by still living witnesses to those events). They plundered peasant cottages and slew not only representatives of movements and left-wing groups, but also – and primarily – members of national and ethnic minorities (also pregnant women and children), including Shoah survivors, Jewish Poles. Spontaneous folk anti-Semitism, supported by the Catholic tradition of excluding ethnic and cultural otherness, was their ally.

Pushed to the sidelines of historical narration by the communist regime for obvious reasons, the “disavowed soldiers” were revived in the Polish consciousness thanks to right-wing and protofascist movements and groups, as well as the actions of neoliberal governments, which noticed a convenient tool of political and social populism in their “message”. The official version was about bringing back memory, but in actual fact the aim was to win the votes of the traditional, conservative electorate. It was a neoliberal government that established a public holiday on March 1 – the Day of Remembrance of the Disavowed Soldiers.

To portray disavowed soldiers as heroes, and a new shining example, is not only an element of post-communist processes of constructing a new history, but also popularizing a new model of national identity – white, monoethnic, heteronormative, Catholic, and of course extremely patriarchal. A model with very clear lines of division: we – strangers, men – women.

The paradox of Polish historical awareness of the last 15 years is that the “disavowed” have suddenly become idols of unseemly worship, their apologists – priests, while the historical narrative has changed into a deceitful and false idolatry. The scale of commemoration has overstepped any rational boundaries. This indoctrination went hand in hand with a rapid change of course in describing Polish-Jewish relationships during the Nazi occupation in Poland. The main message is a belief in a genetic, inborn immunization of the Polish nation against any evil.

AS FAR AS LEGISLATION is concerned – apart from the establishment of the holiday in honor of the disavowed – there is the

Decommunization Act. Its aim is to prevent the propagation of communism and other totalitarian ideologies by forbidding the naming of objects, places and streets in a way that alludes to these regimes. However, the law has been used to provoke divisions and erase the memory of inconvenient facts and people in Polish history.

Although communism was introduced in Poland after World War II, the invocation of the Decommunization Act has systematically obliterated en bloc any forms of commemorating anarchist, left-wing and anti-fascist movements from handbooks and public space (monuments, names of streets and squares). The process removes the traces of memory of those opposing Nazism and fascism during World War II as well as people found in the pages of an even more remote Polish history. It is a process observable – to different extents – in many former socialist countries. An analogous law has been enacted in Ukraine.

The International Brigades aroused my interest not only because of my personal family history. An event in the multicultural town of Żelów, where I was staging my performances in February 2015, was a direct reason behind starting work on the first action devoted to the *Volunteers for Freedom*. Just before March 1, the town was covered with posters by the National Radical Camp (ONR), which organized the celebrations of the Day of Remembrance of the Disavowed Soldiers using public – so also my own – money.

WHEN I STATED THAT the memory of the International Brigades had been blotted out and its members “disavowed”, it turned out that nobody knew this story. Thus I started my endeavors to add the narration about the “forgotten soldiers” to the public discourse, to revive the memory of such people as my grandfather – the Dąbrowszczacy: Polish citizens fighting in the International Brigades in 1936–1939 to defend the democratically elected government of the Spanish Republic.

In my interventions and performances I always tried to combine activism as everyday feminist, antifascist practice with research on political and social mechanisms of historical erasure. At the symposium “Prisms of Silence”, I discussed some artistic

“THE PERFORMANCE SHOWED THAT THE MEMORIAL IS AN IDEOLOGICAL MATTER/OBJECT, SUSCEPTIBLE TO POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND (AB)USES.”

interventions that addressed these issues, involving notions of nomadic memory and memory recovering practice as well.

The *Dąbrowszczacy – disavowed among the disavowed* (2016) was an artistic performance given during the official national commemoration ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It brought back the memory of interwar Poland's citizens serving in the International Brigades.

March 1 was the official Day of Remembrance of the Disavowed Soldiers; 2016 also marked the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Civil War in Spain.³

Dąbrowszczacy were Polish citizens, members of the International Brigades in 1936–1939, defending the democratically elected government of the Spanish Republic.

In the 1990s, the plaques with the inscriptions commemorating the battles fought by *Dąbrowszczacy* in the Spanish Civil War were removed, supposedly for renovation. The places of the battles that vanished from the list on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were Madrid, November 7, 1936, Guadalajara, March 18, 1937, and Ebro, August 8, 1938. It's a significant lack, showing how one manipulates and divides a historical memory.

MY PERFORMANCE aimed at creating a narrative which would incorporate the *Dąbrowszczacy*, who are currently erased from history and gradually forgotten. I wanted to present them as the actual Disavowed Soldiers. They fought for the freedom of Europe during its first confrontation with fascism, and then for the independence of Poland on many fronts. I wanted to bring back the memory of those combatants fighting under the banner “For Your Freedom and Ours.”

A Polish national hero, Tadeusz Kościuszko,⁴ was the first to involve all the citizens of Poland, or rather all Poles, in the fight for freedom and put the slogan “For Your Freedom and Ours” on his banners. It was at his side that Jews, for the first time since biblical times, led by Berek Joselewicz⁵, were allowed to fight as soldiers of a national army. This shows how ideas travel in time and how strongly our present is linked to the past.

This performance was meant as a symbolic dialogue between the canonized nationalistic history represented by the Tomb and the reality of actual anti-fascist organization in interwar Poland. It was also queering the tradition of official gestures based on ritualized commemoration.

I prepared a tricolor wreath, the flowers of which were composed into the symbol of the flag of the International Brigades. I also sewed replicas of the flags of the XIII International Brigade from Poland. The first banner, that of the Naftali Botwin Company of the Palafox Battalion,⁶ was created on the basis of the original stored in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. The other – that of the Adam Mickiewicz Battalion – was recreated on the basis of the documentation from the times

of the Civil War in Spain. Similarly, a few antifascist flags were made, including one with the slogan “No Pasaran” – originating from World War I, and popularized by Dolores Ibarurri in her famous speech on July 18, 1936.

The choice of those two banners was not accidental: it was in the Naftali Botwin Company, comprising Jewish volunteers who spoke Yiddish, that my grandfather fought. The

Adam Mickiewicz battalion, on the other hand, comprised mostly members of ethnic and national minorities of Poland and bore the name of a famous poet, whose Jewish origins the majority of Polish people are completely ignorant of.

Together with friends invited to take part in the event, we marched from the monument of Marshal Józef Piłsudski – another “father” of Polish independence – to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We walked in two rows with me at the front carrying the wreath, and the other members carrying the banners and flags. We paid tribute to the *Dąbrowszczacy*, laying the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, just as any other official delegation would. I announced: To the Volunteers for Freedom, members of the XIII International Brigade, *Dąbrowszczacy*. Next, an actress read a poem dedicated to these soldiers (the poem *Glory and Dynamite* by Władysław Broniewski).

The performance showed that the memorial is an ideological matter/object, susceptible to political transformations and (ab)uses. Through this performance, I was able to seize the public space and demonstrate that the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier should be a memorial of collective history of the Polish citizens who fought for freedom and independence on different fronts, and remain independent despite the whims of current governments.

This activist act was the first commemoration of the International Brigade in Poland after the fall of the Berlin Wall. As a result of that performance certain changes have been initiated. It started a broader campaign to restore the memory of the International Brigade in Poland, thus giving evidence that activism may have real impact.

MY OTHER ARTWORK, a series of eight art objects (2016–2020) entitled *Volunteers for Freedom*, was a direct response to the cooption of the International Brigade's story into a masculinist narrative about heroism. The project aimed to challenge the erasure of women from stories of heroic anti-fascist opposition and show the diversity of antifascist activism that went beyond armed interventions. After the *Dąbrowszczacy* regained their own historical identity (they were the first reinstated “disavowed” in my account), I also recovered “disavowed” female combatants, expunged by a one-track narration. They became for me a distant echo of “damned of the Earth” from “The Internationale”.



Zuzanna Hertzberg, *Nomadic Memory*, 2017, intervention in the public space, Defilad Square: Step Forward, 9th edition of the festival Warsaw under Construction, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

This work is about women who fought in defense of Republican Spain in the international anti-fascist uprising. When they were deprived of the opportunity to take part in direct combat, with weapons in their hands, they worked in hospitals, kitchens, and transport, editing texts and conducting educational activities.

The project takes the form of 3D collages series, presented in boxes, and is accompanied by a spoken word performance depicting their personal stories. Each box is dedicated to one particular woman. It consists of an abstract portrait of a participant in the Spanish Civil War (the heroines are: Mirjam Gothelf/Maria Melchior, sisters Anna and Adela Korn, Elżbieta Borensztejn/Bekier, Zofia Szleyen, Wera Luftig, Dora Goldszajder/Klein/Lorska, Miriam and Braina Rudina) and a collage created of elements from her biography which was reconstructed on the basis of archival documents and interviews conducted with their families and friends. I analyze archival resources in terms of women's strategies of changing reality, the functions that women chose and the environments they co-created.

The art pieces created by me are presented in the form of boxes. The format of a box – which can be closed, and we can choose if we want to look inside – was chosen as it resembles a

space where certain family stories are kept and where traces of presence, such as old photos and documents, are stored. Boxes are also objects used by many women to keep and lock up their secrets and memories. When I met with the family members of military groups fighting “For Your Freedom and Ours”, it was from various cases and boxes that they pulled out things that had belonged to their relatives; they examined boxes that they had never, or hardly ever, looked into.

THIS VISUAL TALE aims not only to bring out the participation of women in the International Brigades, but also to give them their rightful place in history, which, as women, they had been denied.

The origin and fate of the heroines I have chosen are very diverse, so that they can become a universal story of female fighters who decided to go to Spain to fight the military coup of General Franco. They went there overcoming many difficulties – it was not easy then. They crossed the borders illegally, dressed up as men, sometimes even walking for months. I tell about their later anti-fascist activities led by those imprisoned in concentration camps, and about their fight in anti-fascist guerilla groups in many places in Europe during World War II. All these activities



Zuzanna Hertzberg, view from the exhibition "A Microcosm of Things: The Public and Private Lives of Collections", 2017–2018, Museum of Warsaw.

were subordinated to their dream of creating a better, equitable world for themselves and for others.

Their biographies are analyzed in terms of social conditions during the twenty years of the interwar period, the social solidarity in the name of which they acted and the type of struggle they undertook. In addition to individual stories of the participation of Jewish women in major events and social changes, I tried to restore stories of emancipation that concern many aspects of the lives of these heroines – as women and as the members of ethnic minorities and often class-disadvantaged strata of society.

ALL THESE ACTIONS and researches made me realize how memory migrates, pushing boundaries and crossing borders: And how closely this memory is connected with a notion of liberty. Gradually, I became aware of the fact that I also am the part of this “travelling” international mechanism of recovering memory.

This experience led me to my next artistic project called *Nomadic memory* (2017).

(Visibility and equality go hand in hand
– Hannah Arendt).

My intervention was meant as a gesture of overwriting, re-reading and introducing a new narrative.

In this piece my goal was to change relations, redistribute the political space. The project shows how memory works as a nomadic force, bringing back the historical facts which had been blotted out, and how much this “time-travelling” memory depends on our personal engagement.

Warsaw was greatly damaged during the war, thus the way it looks now is very different from how it looked in the 1920s and 30s. When, after World War II, there were no more traces of the old city tissue, an attempt was made to fill this lack by putting up a stone with a commemorative plaque. It was a reminder of the existence of the building, and about the fact that within its walls the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) was proclaimed in 1918. Now it is the corner of Defilad Square (the main square in the center of Warsaw).



“MONUMENTS ARE STRATEGIES; THEY ARE PART OF THE SOCIAL DISCOURSE.”

In Warsaw’s municipal register, we can still read about the stone that is placed at the corner of the streets that no longer exist. The plaque, which was probably put up there at the end of the 1940s, disappeared silently, one day, after the 1989 transformation.

The plaque was gone, yet for years the place where it was mounted was still visible. It became a monument to the lack of memory, a memorial of erasure. This lack was a sign. This stone became a scar of memory. On the scar left by the original plaque on this stone, I affixed a bandage of memory dedicated to the International Brigades.

Monuments are strategies; they are part of the social discourse. By this action I wanted to mobilize memory through the introduction of a new narrative and to transform the way in which this fragment of public space impacted its environment. It was also an attempt to stop the spread of this new false historical narrative, the policy of no memory which erases the memory of anti-fascist movements, excluding them from Polish history and public memory.

AS A PART OF the “de-communicization” process, it is not only the Dąbrowszczacy who are being wiped out from social awareness, but also people like Lewartowski,⁷ who was the leader of the Anti-Fascist Block in the Warsaw Ghetto, where he was killed.

A memorial, an object that is a physical manifestation of memory, serves as a reminder. Instilling a plaque in homage to the Dąbrowszczacy is also a warning: fascist and xenophobic attitudes are reviving today.

No pasaran! was a motto expressing rejection of fascism in Europe. The members of International Brigades were ready to die for social equality for everyone. It is also a contemporary message: Let’s remember the political idealism represented by those

who went to Spain to fight against General Franco’s military coup.

They went to fight “For Your Freedom and Ours”. This means not only the fight for freedom as independence, but also as emancipation, social equality, the rights of women, minorities, and workers. “For Your Freedom and Ours” means defending other people and their own right to be different. Everybody is different from the point of view of somebody else. This is a beautiful example of social solidarity, that we miss so much today.

In Spain in 1936–1939, volunteers fought to defend a democratically elected government. It was a fight against a dictatorship which ruled until 1975.

Warsaw is inscribed in the history of the World War II with the most tragic uprisings: with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, then the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. It is impossible to delete antifascism from the history of Warsaw.

Having more than one historical narrative, and implementing different, diverging types of memory in the public space and discourse, always works towards anti-totalitarianism and the extension of the realm of freedom.

THE LAST ARTISTIC ACTION I talked about during Tallinn Symposium was my project realized as a part of the exhibition *A Microcosm Of Things: The Public and Private Lives of Collections* (2017/2018 Museum of Warsaw, curator Tomasz Fudala). I queered the museum space by prioritizing objects disregarded in conventional museum practice, and reinterpreted them via abstract art to discuss the travelling ideology represented under the slogan “For Your Freedom and Ours”.

This project was a creative interpretation of objects found throughout 2015 in the area of the Warsaw Ghetto during the search of the Bund’s Archive. I selected objects from the Museum of Warsaw’s Archeology Department. In this project I used them as a starting point for a new body of works which derived its inspiration from the objects’ appearance, condition, textures, and colors as well as the places in which they were found. In the exhibition space the archeological remains are juxtaposed with my own work as an attempt to tell their story from a contemporary perspective.

I tried to show the hidden history of objects, as well as the history of the persons they belonged to. Sewing machines, for example, some of whose owners I managed to identify, were a symbol of survival in the Warsaw Ghetto. Everybody desperately longed to get one as the Germans needed people who could sew and who had their own equipment. A sewing machine meant life.

I also created a glass case entitled *Migration of Ideas* where I placed materials from my own archives and the museum’s collections, illustrating the functioning of the “For Your Freedom and Ours” slogan. This slogan had originated with the Thaddeus Kosciuszko’s uprising of 1794 and continued throughout the works of Adam Mickiewicz. It was also used as a motto by the International Brigades fighting in the Spanish Civil War and the title of the Bund’s newspaper, created, printed and issued in the Warsaw Ghetto and distributed to the other ghettos throughout the country. During the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising 1943 three flags

were visible among the flames: Polish, Zionist and this particular one with a slogan “For Your Freedom and Ours” – three emblems of the same battle. The last – chronologically – object in this glass-case was the sticker art with the inscription “For Your Freedom and Ours”, an invitation to antifascist demonstration organized each year by my milieu on Independence Day (November 11th).

In the artwork *Migration of Ideas* I have shown how the idea “For Your Freedom and Ours” migrated and travelled in time. The guiding principle of the whole project was my attempt to show how strongly and paradoxically the objects, places, people and ideas are interlinked – and to demonstrate how abstract art can become the vehicle for conveying human emotions and experiences in difficult times. ✖

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references

- 1 Volunteer military unit (XIII International Brigade) founded in 1936 in Spain to fight against the military coup of General Franco (named after Jarosław Dąbrowski [1836–1871], a Polish officer in the Imperial Russian Army, involved in the preparation of the Polish anti-Russian January Uprising 1863, then a general and military commander of the Paris Commune in its final days).
- 2 See the website for the Muzeum Żołnierzy Wyklętych i Więźniów Politycznych PRL muzeumzolnierzywyklętych.pl and also pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muzeum_Żołnierzy_Wyklętych_i_Więźniów_Politycznych_PRL.
- 3 One of the last living Brigades’ fighters, Josep Almudever, whom I met during commemoration of the 80th anniversary of International Brigades (autumn 2016, Spain), has insisted on not using term Spanish Civil War. For him it was just a militant resistance against military coup of General Franco.
- 4 Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura Kościuszko (1746–1817) was a Polish military engineer, statesman, and military leader who became a national hero in Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and the United States. He fought in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth’s struggles against Russia and Prussia, and on the US side in the American Revolutionary War. As supreme commander of the Polish National Armed Forces, he led the 1794 Kościuszko Uprising. He fiercely opposed slavery of African Americans in the United States. In his will, Kościuszko left his American estate to be sold to buy the freedom of black slaves, including Thomas Jefferson’s own, and to educate them for independent life and work.
- 5 Berek Joselewicz (1764–1809), a Polish merchant of Jewish origin and a colonel of the Polish Army during the Kościuszko Uprising, commanded the first Jewish military formation in modern history.
- 6 Naftali Botwin (1905–1925) was a Polish communist and labor activist who was executed for the murder of a police informer. In the Spanish Civil War, the Naftali Botwin Company was named after him. The Palafox Battalion was a volunteer unit composed of largely Polish and Spanish soldiers fighting in the ranks of the International Brigades.
- 7 Józef Lewartowski, birth name Aron Finkelstein (1895–1942), was a Polish communist politician of Jewish origin, revolutionary, member of the KPP (Communist Party of Poland) and PPR (Polish Worker’s Party), one of the first organizers of the Jewish resistance in Nazi occupied Poland, co-founder of the Anti-Fascist Bloc in the Warsaw Ghetto.