

# Vladka Meed (Feigele Peltel) (29.12.1921 – 22.11.2012)

**Community activist, member of the Jewish Labour Bund and the Jewish Combat Organization**



Born on December 29, 1921 in Warsaw as **Feigele Peltel**, she was the oldest of three siblings. Her mother ran a small haberdashery store and her father worked at a leather factory. Feigele went to a Jewish secular school where the courses were held in Yiddish. However, she learned to speak Polish fluently thanks to her sister who attended a Polish school. While still a teenager, Feigele joined **Cukunft**, a left-wing youth organization of the Bund.

In 1940, the whole family was forced to move into the Warsaw Ghetto. The father soon died of pneumonia. Feigele and her younger sister worked in German factories. Together with their mother, they also sold their belongings to be able to buy food.

During the liquidation of the ghetto, Feigele's mother and brother were deported to the Treblinka death camp. A couple of days later her sister was deported, too.

In 1942, Feigele Peltel joined the **Jewish Combat Organization** (ŻOB). She got through to the „Aryan” side of Warsaw where, thanks to her non-semitic appearance and fluent knowledge of Polish, she could be relatively safe. It was then when she started calling herself 'Vladka'. To earn her living, she had to work as a seamstress in a tailor shop run by a Polish woman **Wanda Wnorowska**, a Polish officer's widow, who at the time was also hiding other Jews.

Peltel was involved in helping the Ghetto prisoners and the Jews hiding on the „Aryan” side; she was also engaged in finding a safe shelter for Jewish children sneaked from the Ghetto. During the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, she smuggled weapons, dynamite, money and documents into the Ghetto. She watched the end of the Ghetto from the outside, having no way to contact her friends who remained on the other side of the wall. “I felt that this was the end. Sometimes I was mad at myself that I survived, that I wasn't there with them” – she admitted in an interview.

During the Warsaw Uprising, she was hiding in the suburbs of Warsaw. After the war, together with her husband **Benjamin Międzyrzecki**, she moved to the USA where both adopted a new last name 'Meed'. In 1948, Vladka Meed published an autobiographical book **“On Both Sides of the Wall ”** in Yiddish; the English translation was published with an introduction by **Elie Wiesel**.

In the United States, Vladka continued her community work. In 1983, together with her husband she founded the **American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors**. She also organized numerous educational trips to Poland for American high school teachers and took active part in lectures and meetings about the Holocaust. Till the very end, she was highly engaged in remembering the tragedy of Shoah and bringing back the memory about its victims.

Vladka Meed died on November 21, 2012 in Arizona.

## Vladka Meed





Vladka Meed and her husband Benjamin Meed at Miła St. in Warsaw. Photo: Ghetto Fighters' House

Vladka Meed, a Jewish underground courier, posing at the Theatre Square in Warsaw. Photo: USHMM

You can learn more information about Vladka Meed's life story from her own interviews on the USC Shoah Foundation website: <https://sfi.usc.edu/content/vladka-meed-0> and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504647>

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