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Ludwik Hirszfelf – A Forgotten Giant of Bacteriology and Immunology

On May 28, 2024, the PAS Scientific Center in Paris hosted a unique event dedicated to Ludwik Hirszfelf: a distinguished yet somewhat forgotten Polish bacteriologist and immunologist.

In 1950, Ludwik Hirszfelf was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his work on the serological conflict between mother and fetus. His achievements include establishing the foundations of blood group science, identifying blood types, discovering the cause of serological conflict, and founding a new field: seroanthropology. His research also launched the development of transfusion medicine and blood donation in Poland.

The event opened with a lecture by Professor Bogumiła Szponar from the PAS Institute of Immunology and Experimental Therapy. Professor Szponar highlighted Hirszfelf's major contributions and the evolution of his scientific thinking, which continues to inspire new generations of researchers.

The evening's main feature was a screening of "Mensch," the first full-length film about Ludwik Hirszfelf. Using previously unpublished archival materials, interviews with scientists, and re-enact-

ments, the film portrayed the life and achievements of this remarkable researcher. His story, marked by sacrifice and an unwavering dedication to science, made a powerful impression on the audience. Following the screening, director Paweł Wysoczański shared insights into the making of the film and the origins of the project. The portrayal of Hirszfelf's life in the Warsaw Ghetto, where, despite the chance to escape, he chose to stay, mentor young people, and aid those in need, drew particular interest. The event stirred a range of emotions – both uplifting and poignant – and brought renewed attention to Polish scientists whose stories merit rediscovery.

The exhibition, "Ludwik Hirszfelf – The Polish Blood Group Researcher," at the PAS Scientific Center in Paris concluded on August 30, 2024. We thank everyone who visited to learn about this extraordinary scientist and his invaluable contributions to medical science. ■

