



of Jewish Life in Poland



TAUBE
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The Hebrew word for Poland is *Polin* (understood to mean “rest or dwell here”) and indeed, throughout much of Polish Jewish history, Jews have found in Poland a place to rest, to make their homes and to feel at home. Polish Jewish history, sometimes fraught with trauma and at other times filled with extraordinary creativity and cultural achievement, is an ongoing story of intertwined narratives. This Timeline introduces key dates, personalities and trends that illustrate the richness and the complexities of 1,000 years of Polish Jewish life.

I. POLIN: JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN POLAND 965-1569

965-966 A Jewish merchant from Spain, Ibrahim ibn Yakub, travels to Poland and writes the first descriptions of the country. During the 10th and 11th centuries, Jewish merchants and artisans settle in Poland. Persecuted and expelled from Western Europe, Jews find refuge and a haven under the Piast and Jagiellonian dynasties.



Early Polish coin with Hebrew inscriptions.

1206 The first **Polish coins** are minted; some bear Hebrew inscriptions, as the mintmasters are Jews.

1237 The Jewish settlement in Płock is the first to be mentioned in written records.

1264 The Statute of Kalisz is issued by Duke Boleslaw the Pious. The Statute, a general charter of Jewish liberties in Poland, establishes a legal foundation for a Jewish presence in Poland. Subsequently, Jews are granted special status subject directly to the king or the duke and are excluded from municipal jurisdiction. Jews assume positions in commercial and economic life, becoming merchants, money lenders, tax collectors and innkeepers.



Illuminated illustration by Arthur Szyk, inspired by the Statute of Kalisz.

1267 The Catholic Council of Breslau (Wrocław) creates segregated Jewish quarters. Jews are ordered to wear special emblems and are banned from holding public offices higher than those held by Christians. When these measures prove largely ineffective, they are repeated in subsequent years.

1285 The first recorded mention of a *kahal* (Hebrew: community) is in Kalisz. The kahal collects taxes, oversees communal services, enforces Jewish law and is responsible for the education and social welfare of its members.

1334 King Kazimierz the Great extends the **Statute of Kalisz** throughout Poland and broadens Jewish privileges. According to medieval chronicler Jan Długosz, the king had a love affair with a Jewish woman named Esther. This legend will reverberate through Polish folklore over the ages.

1348 Waves of migrations from Western Europe bring more Jews to Poland after the epidemics known as the Black Death for which the Jews are blamed. Anti-Jewish riots are perpetrated in Silesia and later in Poznań (Posen) and Kraków.

1414 Documentation confirms that Jews first lived in Warsaw between Wąski Dunaj and Piekarska Streets (now in Warsaw’s Old Town), with a synagogue on the corner of Żydowska (Jewish) and Dunaj Streets. The community numbered approximately 120.

1483 Jews, expelled from Warsaw, are permitted to live outside the city limits. The expulsion order, although largely ineffectual, is nevertheless repeated in subsequent years.

1495 Jews are expelled from Kraków, capital of the Polish Kingdom. Kraków is granted the royal privilege *de non tolerandis Judaeis* (Latin: to not tolerate Jews). King Jan Olbracht designates **Kazimierz**, outside the city walls, as a settlement for Jews with the parallel right *de non tolerandis Christianis* (Latin: to not tolerate Christians).



Kazimierz (left) and Krakow (right), 1495.

Between the 11th and 16th centuries, Jews from communities along the Rhine in Germany, known in Hebrew as Ashkenaz, migrate east, settling in today's Poland, Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine and Russia. In the Polish lands, some of them serve the king, as well as members of the Polish aristocracy, as tax collectors, becoming merchants and innkeepers. They bring with them Jewish religious practices and political and commercial experience, as well as Yiddish, a German-based language with a Hebrew component, written in Hebrew letters. Yiddish, with its geographical nuances and range of dialects, becomes the *lingua franca* among Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe. Yiddish will preserve the richness and vibrancy of Eastern European Jewish culture and heritage despite many shifts in national borders and changes in political regimes.

1509 Rabbi Jacob Polak sets up a *yeshiva* (Hebrew: Talmudical academy) in Kraków, which introduces the methodology of *pilpul* (Hebrew: sharp analysis), which becomes the standard method of Talmudic and Jewish textual studies in the Ashkenazic world.

1525 King Zygmunt I for the first time knights a Jew, Michał Ezołowicz, without requiring conversion. Jewish converts to Catholicism, until the partitions of Poland, were usually granted noble status.

1527 Jews are again expelled from Warsaw.

1534 The first book printed in Yiddish in Poland, a biblical concordance by Rabbi Asher Anshel, is published in Kraków.

1547 Poland's first **Hebrew-language printing** house is established in Lublin.



Page of an early Hebrew text printed in Poland.

II. THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH 1569-1795

During the first century of the Commonwealth, often referred to as the *Paradisus Judaeorum* (Jews' Paradise) or the Golden Age, Jewish life in Poland flourishes. Granted relative autonomy, Jewish communities enjoy economic growth and stability. Jewish culture thrives with the opening of Talmudic academies and centers of learning, as well as a proliferation of Jewish literature, secular and religious. Tensions between the king and the nobility, however, provoke instability, with many parties vying for power. Embroiled in wars with Sweden, Russia and Turkey, the Commonwealth begins to deteriorate. Growing poverty and discontent give rise to increasing anti-Semitism.

1569 The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, known as the Republic of the Two Nations, with a unified federal system and an elected monarchy, is one of Europe's major political and cultural powers.

1570 Warsaw obtains the privilege *de non tolerandis Judaeis*, which remains in force until 1797. Jews are forbidden to settle within two miles of the city limits, except when Parliament is in session.



Rabbi Moses Isserles.

1572 **Rabbi Moses Isserles**, known as the ReMA (or Remuh) and author of the *Mapa* (Hebrew: Tablecloth), the fundamental Ashkenazic commentary on the Sephardic *Shulchan Aruch* (Hebrew: Set Table), dies in Kraków. (The *Shulchan Aruch* is the fundamental codex of *halachah*, Jewish law, and is still considered authoritative.) His grave is in the Kazimierz district of Kraków in the cemetery adjoining the synagogue that bears his name. The synagogue still serves Kraków's Jewish community.

1576 **King Stefan Batory** issues decrees forbidding blood-libel accusations, effectively preventing such trials during his lifetime. They will resume, however, after his death in 1586.

From the late 16th to the mid-18th century, Polish Jews were governed by the *Va'ad Arba Aratzot* (Hebrew: Council of the Four Lands): Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, Lithuania and Mazovia. The Va'ad's primary function was to levy and collect taxes among Jewish communities. The Council, made up of delegates from the different Jewish communities and recognized by the king, becomes the central body of Jewish self-government, the only institution of its kind in the history of the Diaspora.

1580 The first session of the Va'ad Arba Aratzot is held in Lublin.

1586 According to popular legend, after King Stefan Batory's death, his "court Jew" Saul Wahl becomes king of Poland for one night until the procedure for electing a new king is put into place.

1588 The first Jewish community is established in Zamość by Sephardic Jews from Spain, Portugal and Turkey. By the 17th century, with migrations from Western Europe, Ashkenazic Jews become the majority. Zamość's Jewish character will again be transformed, reflecting the influences of the *Haskalah* (Hebrew: enlightenment).

1609 *Meynekes Rivke* (Rebecca's Nursemaid), an erudite work by Rivke Tikhtiner of Tykocin on the care and education of children, is published posthumously in Prague. Her work, the first known publication in Yiddish by a woman in Poland, will be re-published in Kraków in 1618.



King Stefan Batory.

1618-1648 The Thirty Years War brings the last major wave of Jewish refugees from Western Europe to Polish lands.

1622 *Tz'ena U-Rena* (Hebrew: Go Out and See), a commentary on the Pentateuch for women written by Rabbi Yaakov Ashkenazi and one of the most important works in Yiddish to date, is published in Kraków and Lublin.

1632 King Władysław IV of Poland forbids anti-Jewish books and publications.

1648-1655 Bogdan Chmielnicki, a Polish nobleman rebelling against his country, leads a Ukrainian Cossack uprising against Polish and Polonized gentry, Jesuits and Jews. Tens of thousands of Jews fall victim

to the massacres; many were sold into slavery and later ransomed by a multinational effort of *pidyon shvuyim* (Hebrew: redeeming the captives) among Jewish communities throughout the Four Lands and reaching as far as Amsterdam. Pogroms also follow the war with Sweden, with Jews accused of complicity with the enemy. Jewish communities, in spite of being shaken by the ferocity of the attacks and the heavy loss of life and property, move to re-establish themselves as quickly as possible.



The Kingdom (Crown) of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, circa 1600.

1670 The Va'ad condemns Shabbetai Tzvi, the false messiah from Montenegro. His activities, which attract many of those who survived Chmielnicki's atrocities, will influence Jacob Frank (1726-1791), a Polish-born false messiah.

The 18th century sees the birth of the Hasidic movement, founded by Israel Ba'al Shem Tov. While its tenets are embraced by many in Ukraine and Central Poland, it is criticized by the Mitnagdim (Hebrew: opponents) as being incompatible with traditional rabbinic Judaism. These tensions create new frictions and factions within the growing Jewish world.

1698 **Israel Ba'al Shem Tov**, known as the Besht, is born in southeastern Poland (now Ukraine). Hasidism, stressing spontaneity over observance and spirituality over learning, represented a direct challenge to the Jewish religious and communal establishments.

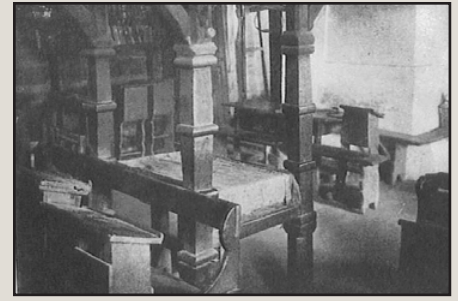
1720 The Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman, is born (d. 1797). Though he held no official position, he was regarded as the spiritual leader of the Mitnagdim. The Mitnagdim reaffirmed study, ritual observance and *halachah* as the cornerstones of Jewish life.

1759 An estimated 500 Jewish families, followers of Jacob Frank, convert to Catholicism and join the ranks of the Polish nobility.

1760 The Praga district of Warsaw, on the east bank of the Vistula River, is exempted from the *de non tolerandis Judaeis* law. The Praga Jewish community develops as a center of commerce and Jewish life, largely due to the efforts of Samuel Zbytkower, a merchant and developer. The Zbytkowers contribute toward the future building of the communal synagogue and the Jewish Cemetery in Praga. Much of the district survives World War II. Many of the matzevot (Hebrew: headstones), though badly damaged, can still be found in the cemetery.

1761 A provincial court orders the burning of the Talmud, the last such event in Europe until the Third Reich's burning of books.

1764 The Polish Parliament (Sejm) abolishes the Va'ad on the grounds that it is no longer capable of collecting taxes effectively. With the abolition of the Va'ad, a census of the Jewish population is taken. According to the figures, there were 748,968 Jews over a year old in Poland-Lithuania: 548,777 in Poland and 201,191 in Lithuania. It is estimated that at least 20% of Jews, afraid that the results would lead to heavier taxation, do not participate.



Interior of the Ba'al Shem Tov's Synagogue.

III. POLAND PARTITIONED 1795-1918

By 1795, as a result of the third partition of Poland, the country is essentially erased from the map of Europe until it regains independence in 1918 at the end of World War I. During the partition, the population falls under the domination of one of the three empires: Russian, Prussian or Austrian. Polish Jewish families find themselves on different sides of the borders, serving in different armies, and integrating different cultural traditions. It will become difficult to define Polish Jewry as a monolithic entity.

The *Haskalah* movement begins to take root in Polish lands during the 19th century. Maskilim, the followers of the Haskalah, introduce the notion of Jews as citizens of Europe, encouraging assimilation and engagement in secular life. The Haskalah quickly becomes a common enemy of the Hasidim and Mitnagdim. The latter half of the 19th century sees the spread of Yiddish culture and increasing Jewish involvement in Polish society, as well as a growing interest in Zionism and socialism.

1772 The first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Habsburg monarchy.

1772 The Vilna Gaon puts Hasidim in *herem* (Hebrew: ostracism; exclusion from the community). The conflict intensifies between the Mitnagdim and Hasidim.



The Partitions of Poland.

1791 Poland becomes the first European country with a constitution. At the same time, Catherine the Great of Russia establishes the Pale of Settlement, restricting Jewish settlement in the Russian Empire. The Pale includes what was eastern Poland and parts of present-day Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. Jews in Russia, with very few exceptions, are forbidden to reside outside its borders.

1793 The second partition of the Commonwealth, by the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia, creates new territorial divisions.

1794 Many Jews join Tadeusz Kościuszko, a veteran of the American Revolutionary War, in an insurrection against imperial Russian rule.

1794 **Berek Joselewicz** joins the Kościuszko Insurrection and forms a Jewish cavalry regiment, probably the first Jewish military unit in the history of the Diaspora. Later, as a colonel, he leads another regiment during the Napoleonic wars and dies in battle against the Austrians in 1809.



Berek Joselewicz, painting by Juliusz Kossak.

1795 The third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth erases Poland from the map of Europe. The hope of regaining independence will inform Polish social, political, cultural and intellectual life throughout the 123 years of foreign occupation. Jewish life under the partitions, in spite of the challenges and difficulties, continues to expand and develop. The influence of the three empires will manifest itself in the development of Polish Jewish life and culture.

1797 The Warsaw Jewish Community is established by the Prussian government.

1800 Rabbi Shneur Zalman (1745-1812) founds the Lubavitch Hasidic movement in Lyadi (in Belarus today). Now known as Chabad-Lubavitch, it has become the largest and most influential of the Hasidic movements.

1802 The **Volozhin Yeshiva**, one of the most important centers of Talmudic learning in the 19th century, is established. The yeshiva will be re-established in Israel after World War II. Other yeshivot, including the Mir Yeshiva, are also re-established in Israel and in the U.S. after the Shoah.



Volozhin Yeshiva. Volozhin is now in Belarus.

1802 The first “progressive” synagogue in Warsaw, influenced by the German enlightenment, is opened on Daniłowiczowska Street.

1806 The Warsaw Jewish community is granted permission to create a cemetery on Okopowa Street. With approximately 250,000 graves, the cemetery, still in use today, is one of the largest in Europe.

1807 The constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw, a Polish state set up under Napoleon, grants Jews equal rights. In spite of the suspension of this ruling in 1808, it allows Jews to integrate into the wider society.

Jews living under Austrian rule are granted equal rights in 1861, under Prussian rule in 1869 and under Russian rule in 1917. Each regime requires that Jews take on hereditary surnames for purposes of tax collection and the draft.

1815 The Congress Kingdom of Poland, with Warsaw as its capital, functions as a semi-autonomous Polish state under Russian rule following Napoleon’s defeat. It grants Jews limited rights and the ability to work in banking and industry.

1821 The Congress Kingdom abolishes the institution of the kahal, replacing it with Jewish community boards with limited powers.

1823 The first Jewish newspaper in Poland, the weekly *Dostrzegacz Nadwiślański/Der Beobachter an der Weichsel (The Vistula Observer)*, is published in Polish and Yiddish.

1826 A rabbinical school, the first such institution accredited by the government of the Congress Kingdom, is established in Warsaw. The institute, directed by a radical maskil, Antoni Eisenbaum, will be closed by Russian authorities in 1864, following years of Polish patriotic agitation there.

1830 During the ultimately unsuccessful **November Uprising** in the Kingdom of Poland against the Tsar, Jewish militias take part in the defense of Warsaw.

1832 Influential Polish émigré Joachim Lelewel issues an appeal from Paris encouraging Polish Jews to support the Polish national cause.

1833 Izrael Kalmanowicz Poznański is born in Aleksandrów Łódzki (d. 1900). Poznański, who built a textile empire in Łódź, will be remembered as a pre-eminent entrepreneur and philanthropist. His **palace** is now the City Museum of Łódź (Lodz).

In the 19th century, Łódź (Lodz) is populated by Russians, Poles (Catholic and Jewish) and Germans. It becomes the largest center for textile manufacturing on the continent. Jewish manufacturers and industrialists were a major driving force of the Polish economy, especially in Russian Poland. Many among them, like Izrael Poznański, were also major philanthropists, contributing to worthy Polish and Jewish causes, creating public housing and hospitals and founding museums and schools.



1830 November Uprising in Warsaw, painted by Marcin Zaleski.

1835 The Round Synagogue is built in the Praga district of Warsaw.

1843 The first Jewish confirmation ceremony for girls is celebrated in Warsaw.

1846 A failed uprising against Austrian rule in Kraków is supported by local Jews, who are subsequently accused of treason by Austrian authorities.

1848 A failed uprising against Prussian rule in Poznań is not supported by the Jews, who are subsequently accused of treason by the Poles.

1852 **Isaac Leib Peretz** (d. 1916), known as one of the fathers of Yiddish literature, is born in Zamość. His license to practice law revoked by the Russian authorities, he applies himself to writing in Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish. The cultural association *Hazomir* (The Nightingale) he founded becomes a center of Yiddish life in Warsaw. After World War II, a street in Warsaw is named for him.

1858 Samuel Orgelbrand, a Warsaw-based printer and publisher, begins work on what will become the first modern Polish encyclopedia (28 volumes). Among many works published, Orgelbrand also prints a 20-volume edition of the Babylonian Talmud.

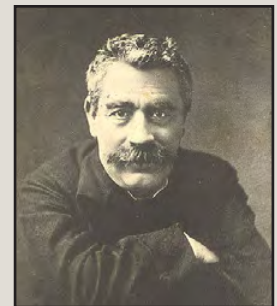
1859 Some Polish newspapers in Warsaw, for the first time, initiate an anti-Semitic campaign.

1861 Jews in the Kingdom of Poland participate in the Polish national movement against Russian rule. Michał Landy, a rabbinical student in Warsaw, is killed by Cossack fire during a patriotic demonstration, having picked up a cross that a slain Catholic protester had been carrying. Landy represented a significant number of Jews with pro-Polish sympathies.

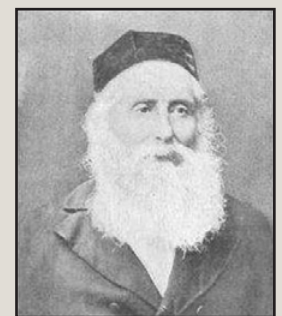
1862 *Ha-Zefira*, the first Hebrew-language newspaper printed in Warsaw, was founded by **Chaim Zelig Słonimski**, a prolific inventor, rabbi, and government advisor. *Ha-Zefira* offered both secular and religious perspectives. Słonimski's grandson Antoni will become one of the major Polish poets of the 20th century.



Poznański Palace, now the City Museum of Łódź.



Isaac Leib Peretz.



Chaim Zelig Słonimski.

1863 During the January Uprising against Russian rule, Chief Rabbi of Warsaw **Dov Ber Meisels**, a political activist in the fight for Polish independence, is arrested and deported from Warsaw and moves, temporarily, to Kraków.



Dov Ber Meisels.

1870 Mendele Moicher Sforim's *Di Kliatche* (Yiddish: The Mare) is published, launching contemporary Yiddish literature.

1876 Jan Jeleński publishes "The Jews, the Germans and Us," the first manifesto of modern Polish anti-Semitism.

1878 **Naftali Hirsch Imber** from Galicia pens the words of *Hatikvah* (Hebrew: The Hope), which becomes the Zionist anthem and, subsequently, the national anthem of the State of Israel in 1948.



Naftali Hirsch Imber.

1878 **The Great Synagogue of Warsaw**, designed by Leandro Marconi, a "progressive" synagogue that seated 2200 people, is dedicated on Tłomackie Street.

1879 Samuel Gebfisz, born in Warsaw, leaves Poland in his youth. In 1899, he emigrates to the United States. He will become Samuel Goldwyn, co-founder of one of Hollywood's leading film studios, Metro Goldwyn Mayer.

Between 1881 and 1914, in the face of pogroms, rising anti-Semitism and increasing economic hardship, more than one and a half million Jews emigrate from the Pale of Settlement and Galicia to the United States and elsewhere.

1881 Pogroms in the Pale of Settlement follow the assassination of reformist Tsar Alexander II. As a result of Russian law which forbids Jews to move east of the Pale, thousands of Russian Jews flee to the west, many settling in Warsaw and Łódź, with many others making their way to Prussian Poland and the United States.

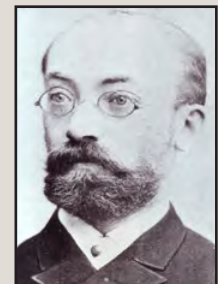


Great Synagogue of Warsaw.

1884 The first conference of *Hibbat Zion* (Hebrew: The Love of Zion) is held in Katowice. Zionist ideology begins to take root and to spread.

1886 The first Yiddish play, *Shulamis* by Abraham Goldfaden, known as a "father of the Yiddish theater," is performed in Warsaw.

1887 **Dr. Ludwik Zamenhof** publishes his treatise, *Lingvo Internacia: Antaŭparolo kaj plena lernolibro* (International Language: Introduction and Complete Textbook), on Esperanto, a language he created. He believed that a common language would facilitate co-existence among different cultures. Esperanto is still used by thousands of people worldwide.



Dr. Ludwik Zamenhof.

1888 The first Yiddish theater opens in Lwów (Lemberg), Galicia (Austrian Poland).

1891 Identifying herself as a "revolutionary Jewish woman," Puah Rakovsky becomes the director of a modern Jewish elementary school for girls in Warsaw. Two years later, she establishes a Hebrew high school for Jewish girls and soon after becomes a leader of the women's Zionist movement in Poland.

Many Jewish women receiving secular educations begin to seek new avenues for expression and social equality, often leaving behind their traditional religious roots. Overcoming discrimination, Jewish women become community activists and gain recognition in Jewish political movements such as the Bund and Zionism and in social welfare, education and, later, in the cultural and political arenas.

1895 Industrialists and philanthropists **Hipolit Wawelberg** and Stanisław Rotwand establish a prestigious mechanical and technical college, which will eventually become the Warsaw Polytechnic.

1897 The Bund (General Jewish Workers Union of Lithuania, Russia and Poland) is founded. The party's ideology is based on the tenets of socialism and a commitment to Yiddish language and culture. It will become the most important Jewish political party in interwar Poland.

1897 Delegates from Poland's partitioned lands participate in the first Zionist Congress in Basel.

1897 Pogroms in Galicia lead to the revival of Jewish political activism.

The early 20th century ushers in a new era of Jewish political expression and national aspirations in partitioned Poland, which find their expression through the Bund or the many different Zionist movements ranging from religious to Marxist in ideology.

1902 The **Nożyk Synagogue**, funded by Zalman and Rywka Nożyk, is dedicated in Warsaw. The synagogue, still in daily use today, was among the more than 400 Jewish houses of worship in Warsaw prior to World War II.

1902 While Zionism is banned by the Tsarist authorities, the religious Zionist movement *Mizrachi* (Hebrew abbrev.: Spiritual Center) is established in Vilna.

1904 The founding conference of the Zionist-Socialist movement *Poalei Zion* (Hebrew: Workers of Zion) is held in Kraków. Among the delegates is Dawid Grin, born in Płońsk in 1886. He leaves for Palestine in 1906 and, as **David Ben Gurion**, becomes Israel's first prime minister in 1948.

1905 The failed revolution in Russia incites pogroms. A boycott of Jewish businesses, the first of its kind, is organized in Warsaw by Polish nationalists, when Jews refuse to endorse their candidate for the Russian parliament.

1905 The Bund organizes an armed attack on Warsaw's brothel district near Grzybowski Square. Many of the brothels at that time were owned by Jews. The Bund attacks them in the name of the "defense of the dignity of the Jewish woman." Tsarist police suppress the attackers after a gun battle that lasts several hours.

1908 The mass-circulation Yiddish newspaper *Haynt* (Yiddish: *Today*) is launched, followed by *Der Moment* (Yiddish: *The Moment*) in 1910.



Portrait of Hipolit Wawelberg.



Nożyk Synagogue.



David Ben Gurion in 1918.

1908 Mathias Berson, an active philanthropist, donates his private art collection to the Jewish community. The Community establishes a Jewish museum, which will be looted by the Germans during World War II.

1910 The Old People's Home Association (in Polish: *Moszew Zkenim*) is established in Warsaw, with Adolf Peretz as its president.

1911 The first Yiddish films, among them "The Hasidic Woman" and the "Apostate," are produced, inspiring many full-length features and documentaries. Twelve new Yiddish-language films will be produced before World War I.

1912 *Agudas Isroel* (Hebrew: Union of the Jews), a political party dedicated to preserving rabbinic authority, is founded in Katowice.

1912 A Jewish orphanage on Krochmalna Street in Warsaw, directed by Janusz Korczak, is opened.

1913 *HaShomer HaTzair* (Hebrew: The Young Guard) a Zionist socialist youth movement, is established in Galicia.

1914 World War I breaks out. It was a disaster for Poland and its Jews, as they served in each of the armies, with family members sometimes fighting one another. In the early months of the war, Russian authorities deport thousands of Jews from the border zones, suspecting them of disloyalty. Much of Russian Poland is occupied by Germany and Austria. Jewish communities flourish under German rule.

1917 **Sarah Schenirer**, a daughter of Hasidic parents and a pioneer of Jewish religious education for girls, organizes her first group of Orthodox girls to teach them Judaism and tailoring in Kraków. She develops a network of schools, *Beis Yaakov*, which is supported by *Agudas Isroel*. After World War II, the *Beis Yaakov* movement takes root in Israel, the United Kingdom and North America and is now one of the main educational networks for Orthodox girls.

1917 The Bolshevik Revolution. The Pale of Settlement is abolished.



Sarah Schenirer.

IV. INDEPENDENT POLAND: INTERWAR POLAND 1918-1939

Poland regains independence in 1918. During the turbulent years immediately following World War I, Jews were among the thousands who perished in pogroms instigated by Polish, Ukrainian and Russian civilians and military forces. In Lvov and in Vilna, both incorporated into newly-independent Poland, Jews often suffered at the hands of the Polish military.

In spite of massive unemployment, a rising number of anti-Semitic incidents and pogroms and growing tension between a multicultural Poland and increasing nationalism, Jewish life and culture flourish: schools, youth movements, sports clubs, theater, cinema, literature and the press all develop exponentially to meet the needs of the growing Jewish population and the diversity of Jewish expression.



Jews in Dęblin welcome Józef Piłsudski after the 1920 Polish-Soviet War.

1918 The core of pre-partitioned Poland is reunited in the Second Polish Republic. **Józef Piłsudski**, interim head of state, invites Jewish parties to participate in coalition talks.

1919 The Jewish Delegates Committee represents Polish Jewry at the Versailles Peace Conference. The conference obliges newly-independent countries, including Poland, to sign a treaty guaranteeing minority rights.

1919 The first parliamentary elections give seats to Jews in the Sejm and the Senate. Roza Pomerantz-Melzer, a member of a Zionist party, is the first woman elected to the Polish parliament.

1919 The Jewish Writers' and Journalists' Union is formed. Its headquarters is at 13 Tłomackie Street. *Tłomackie 13*, a book about the union written by Zusman Segalowicz, will be published by the Central Union of Polish Jews in Argentina in 1946.

1920 Many Polish Jewish army volunteers in the Polish-Soviet War are interned by Polish authorities as potentially untrustworthy.

1921 Following a year of bitter war and a strategic Red Army defeat at the gates of Warsaw, the Polish-Soviet peace treaty is signed in Riga. Thousands of Jews, in particular shopkeepers and professionals forbidden to work in the Soviet Union, move to Poland and are eventually granted citizenship.

1921 The Polish Constitution grants legal equality to all citizens.

1921 The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) appoints Yitzhak Giterman as its first director in Poland.

1921 The first Polish national conference of the Hebrew-language **Tarbut educational network** convenes in December 1921 in Warsaw, attended by 178 delegates. The number of Jewish schools proliferates to include secular, Yiddish language and religious schools, as well as Polish schools called *szabasówki*, which offer classes on Sundays rather than on Saturdays.

1922 Poland's first president, Gabriel Narutowicz, largely supported by minorities, including Jews, is assassinated on the steps of the Zachęta National Gallery two days after his election.

1923 Some universities introduce *numerus clausus* (quotas), limiting the number of places for Jews, based on their percentage of the population.

1923 The first issue of *Nasz Przegląd* (Polish: *Our Review*), the largest and best-known Jewish daily in Polish, is published in Warsaw. At the time, there are 13 journals in Yiddish, 11 in Hebrew and 7 in Polish. The **Jewish press**, which appeared in Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish, provided entrées into different Polish Jewish milieus, often serving as bridges among the assimilationists, the Bundists, the Zionists and the more traditionally religious communities. *Nasz Przegląd* will be published until September 1939.



Poster of the Tarbut educational network.



Flourishing of the Jewish press.



Gravestone of Ester Rachel Kamińska in the Warsaw Jewish Cemetery.

1924 Due to the restrictive economic policies of Prime Minister Władysław Grabski, thousands of Jewish businessmen, threatened by bankruptcy, make *aliyah* to Palestine — a phenomenon known as the “Grabski aliyah” or “the fourth aliyah.”

1925 The “mother of Yiddish theater” **Ester Rachel Kamińska** dies in Warsaw. At this time, there are many Yiddish theaters in the city.

1925 The Yidisher Visnshaftlikher Institut (YIVO) or Jewish Scientific Institute, the first secular Jewish research institution, is established in Vilna to study and document Jewish life and promote Yiddish language and culture. Its work is continued today by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York.

1926 Piłsudski seizes power in a coup and institutes a quasi-authoritarian regime. His opposition to anti-Semitism, however, will protect Jews and other minorities, who constituted approximately 10% of the population. He earns the nickname of “Grandpa.”

1926 The Polish government expresses its official support for the Balfour Declaration. Polish support for Zionism will increase over the years.

1927 Hazzan Moshe Koussevitsky, hired away from the Vilna Shtetl Shul, becomes the chief cantor of the Great Synagogue in Warsaw, contributing to the growing canon of Jewish liturgical music created in Central and Eastern Europe.

1928 The **Institute for Judaic Studies**, directed by **Rabbi Moses Schorr**, is established in Warsaw. The languages of instruction are Polish and Hebrew.

By 1930, the world Jewish population is estimated at 15,000,000 — with 4,000,000 in the United States, 3,500,000 in Poland and 2,700,000 in the Soviet Union. Despite waves of emigration, Jewish population in Poland increases to an estimated 3.5 million by 1939. Jews constitute more than 10% of the population in Poland and provide one-half of all the lawyers and one-third of all the doctors in Warsaw and one-quarter of all the university students in Poland.

1930 The **Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva** is founded by Rabbi Meir Shapiro. It becomes a major center of Orthodox learning.

1931 Clashes in universities in Wilno (Vilna) and Lwów between the anti-Semitic National Democratic Party and Jewish students leave one Polish student dead, as tensions and the imposition of quotas at universities increase.

1932 At the first worldwide Maccabiah in Tel Aviv, Poland sends the largest and most successful delegation with 66 members. Between World War I and World War II, more than 100 Jewish sports clubs were registered in Warsaw alone.

1932 Jewish artist Arthur Szyk publishes an illustration of the thirteenth-century “Bill of Rights” for Polish Jews, the “Statute of Kalisz” (see illustration, page 1). A committed Polish patriot, political activist and prolific artist, his contributions to the art world in Europe and the U.S. span several decades.



Professor Rabbi Moses Schorr at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Institute for Judaic Studies, 1928.

Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute



The Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva.

Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute

1933 Mieczysław Kaplicki (Maurycy Kapellner) becomes mayor of Kraków.

1934 Shimon Peres (Szymon Perski), born in Wiszniewo in 1923, moves to Palestine with his family. He will go on to serve Israel in a variety of government positions, including prime minister and president, and will win the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1994.

1935 The Museum of Jewish Art opens in Lwów.

1935 Polish poet **Zuzanna Ginczanka** (née Ginsburg) becomes active in Skamander, a group of avant garde poets created by Julian Tuwim and Antoni Słonimski among others. She is killed in Płaszów, a labor camp near Kraków, in 1944. Much of her work will be published posthumously.

1936 As violent boycotts of Jewish businesses become commonplace, Jews sometimes organize in self-defense. In the small market town of Przytyk, members of one such group attacked an organized anti-Semitic group, killing one member. A pogrom ensued, in which a Jewish couple extraneous to the incident were murdered. Members of both the Jewish self-defense and the anti-Semitic group were subsequently sentenced, but the latter were treated with lenience. Boycotts and pogroms, sometimes with fatalities, occurred elsewhere in Poland in the late 1930s.

1936 The Main Judaic Library and the Institute of Judaic Studies move into a new building adjacent to the Great Synagogue on Tłomackie Street in Warsaw. One of the few Jewish buildings in Warsaw to survive World War II, the building is now home to the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute.

1936 Extremist leader Adam Doboszyński and his followers organize a “March on Myślenice,” occupying the town, arresting local authorities, plundering Jewish shops and attempting to set fire to the synagogue. Doboszyński is arrested and sentenced to three and a half years in jail.

1936 The prime minister and Catholic Primate both endorse an economic boycott of Jewish businesses and shops proclaimed by the extreme right, yet condemn physical violence against Jews.

1936 Zionist Revisionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky calls for 750,000 Jews to be evacuated to Palestine over ten years. The proposal is largely rejected by Jews, but the Polish government strengthens ties with the Revisionists, while considering other “solutions to the Jewish question,” including emigration to Madagascar.

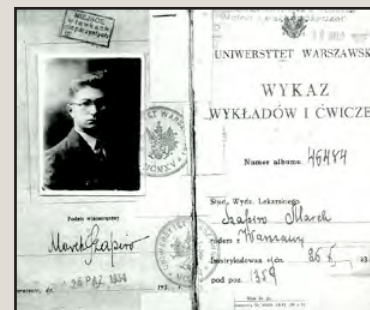
1936 First congress of Polish “progressive” Judaism is held.

1937 “**Bench ghettos**” (separate benches for Jewish students) are introduced in a majority of Polish universities. While this move is opposed by the democrats and by members of academia, the right and others demand a *numerus nullus* (Latin: null number), i.e., the total exclusion of Jews.

1937 “**The Dybbuk**,” Michał Waszyński’s (born Moshe Waks) feature film based on S. An-ski’s play, premieres in Warsaw to critical acclaim. It will become one of the greatest hits of Polish Jewish cinema.



Zuzanna Ginczanka.



University identification of a Jewish student with a “bench ghetto” seal.



Lili Liliana in “The Dybbuk.”
(Photo courtesy YIVO.)

1938 The Sejm re-introduces a draft law banning *shechitah* (Hebrew: kosher ritual slaughter), generating heated debate.

1938 The Sejm passes a law stripping Polish citizens who have resided abroad for more than five consecutive years of their citizenship. When Germany deports 17,000 Polish Jews to the border at Zbąszyn, they will initially be denied admission. Among the deportees is Warsaw-born Abraham Joshua Heschel, who had been living in Frankfurt. He spends ten months, prior to emigrating to the U.S., teaching philosophy and Torah at the Institute for Judaic Studies in Warsaw.



Emanuel Ringelblum.

1938 In spite of official protests by Poland, the situation in Zbąszyń deteriorates, provoking widespread outrage among the Jewish communities in Poland. Assistance is provided by the General Aid Committee for Refugees from Germany (established by **Emanuel Ringelblum** and Yitzhak Giterman), as well as by a local Jewish committee.



Herszel Grynszpan.

1938 **Herszel Grynszpan**, a Polish Jew, assassinates a German diplomat in Paris in outrage over the persecution of Polish Jews in Germany. The assassination provides the Nazis with a pretext for the Reich's *Kristallnacht* (German: The Night of Broken Glass) on November 9th.

1938 The ruling party officially endorses anti-Semitism as part of its political platform.

1939 A Polish-German agreement provides for the restitution of property of deported Polish Jews. Poland re-admits more than 12,000 deportees.

1939 As war looms, Polish Jewry massively supports, politically and financially, the Polish war-preparedness effort. Jews constitute approximately 10% of the Polish military forces.

Assimilated Polish Jews made significant contributions to Polish culture in the 20th century. Educators such as Janusz Korczak, painters such as Henryk Berlewi, poets such as Julian Tuwim, writers such as Bruno Schulz, musicians such as Artur Rubinstein, and a host of others contributed new content and form, which enriched Polish culture. Many Polish-born Jews who emigrated made significant contributions to Jewish life, literature, science, the arts and the humanities around the world: Rabbis Joseph Ber Soloveitchik and Israel Meir Lau, Nobel Prize-winning physicist Isidore Isaac Rabi, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman and architect Daniel Liebeskind, to name but a few.

V. THE WAR AND THE HOLOCAUST 1939-1945

Though the early Nazi policies of anti-Semitism and racism in Germany were becoming widely known, and while, on the eve of the war, anti-Semitism was on the rise in Poland, in the rest of Europe and beyond, the enormity of the tragedy of the Shoah could not have been foreseen. Germany's "final solution" was implemented primarily on occupied Polish territory, because that is where the largest Jewish population was living.

1939 September 1: Nazi Germany invades and occupies western Poland. The Soviet Union invades on September 17, occupying the eastern half of Poland following the secret Nazi-Soviet pact signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov on August 23.

1939 The Nazis begin targeting Jews immediately and introduce anti-Semitic laws, including confiscation of private property, limits on travel, freezing bank accounts, forced labor and restrictions on what jobs Jews could hold. Mandatory armbands or yellow badges are introduced.

1939 The first ghetto in German-occupied Poland is established in Piotrków Trybunalski.

The **Warsaw Ghetto**, the largest ghetto in German-occupied Poland, is sealed on November 16, 1940. While several thousand Jews manage to remain outside of the ghetto and others manage to flee with the help of non-Jews, the vast majority of Jews are forced into the ghetto. Many Jewish communal and religious institutions and cultural organizations are re-established in the ghetto. Schools, hospitals, orphanages and theaters are set up. The Judenrat, an administrative body set up by the Germans, tries to reconcile submission to the Nazi authorities with protection of the welfare and interests of the Jewish population. Underground activity, including the publishing of 51 newspapers, begins almost immediately. Of the ghetto's population of approximately 450,000, 100,000 will die of cold, hunger and disease, 300,000 will be gassed in Treblinka and another 50,000 will be executed.

1940 Oneg Shabbat, a clandestine network founded in the Warsaw Ghetto, is established to document Jewish life and death during the German occupation.

1940 Zionist Ignacy Schwarzbart joins the Polish National Council, the Polish parliament-in-exile in London. Poland is the only country in occupied Europe to have a parliament-in-exile.

1940 Soviet authorities begin mass deportations of Polish citizens to the east, including to Siberia and Kazakhstan, from Russian-occupied Poland. Thirty percent of the deportees are Jews. Despite extreme hardship, most will survive the war.

1940 The YIVO Institute relocates its headquarters from Vilna to New York.

1940 The Soviets murder 21,500 captured Polish officers. Their bodies are buried in Katyń, Smoleńsk and the surrounding area. Roughly 8-10% of the victims were Jews, among them Chief Rabbi of the Polish Army Col. Baruch Steinberg.

1940 Bund leaders **Wiktór Alter** and Henryk Erlich are arrested by the Soviet authorities and released in 1941. They are re-arrested as "German spies" and executed.

1941 Nazi Germany invades Soviet Russia. The Nazi Einsatzgruppen (German: Special Operations Groups), in cooperation with local SS troops and police, murder approximately one million Jews in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine.

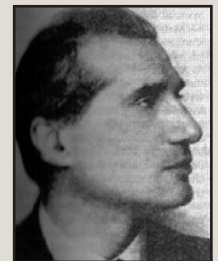
1941 In secret radio messages, the Polish Prime Minister-in-Exile warns the Polish population against participating in German atrocities against Jews.

1941 Germany occupies former eastern Poland in the wake of its invasion of Soviet Russia. In the first days after the invasion, Poles murder hundreds of their Jewish neighbors in Jedwabne in northeastern Poland, the largest such massacre in occupied Poland.

1941 The Polish Army-in-Exile is set up in Russia under the command of General Władysław Anders. Anders' Army will eventually be evacuated through the Middle East to fight in Italy (in Monte Cassino, among



Warsaw Ghetto wall being built, 1940.



Wiktor Alter.

other battles). Roughly 3,000 Jewish soldiers desert, with the tacit approval of their officers, and remain in Palestine, among them Cpl. Menachem Begin. Begin, a graduate of Warsaw University, born in Brest-Litovsk in eastern Poland, will, in 1977, become Israeli prime minister and will be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978.

1941 The death penalty is introduced by German authorities for Jews leaving ghettos without authorization. Thousands of Jews are executed as a result. Hundreds of Poles who helped Jews escape or hide are summarily murdered along with their families.

1942 After the Wannsee Conference, the Nazis begin to carry out the “Final Solution.” Chełmno nad Nerem, the first German death camp, is set up. Four of the German death camps (Treblinka, Majdanek, Sobibór and Bełżec) are located in occupied Poland. Two (Auschwitz and Chełmno) are located in Polish territories annexed by the Reich.

1942 The **United Partisan Organization** is set up in the Vilna Ghetto. Similar armed-resistance organizations are set up in Warsaw, Kraków, Białystok and elsewhere.

1942 The first transport of Jewish prisoners reaches Auschwitz, originally set up in 1940 as a concentration camp for the Polish intelligentsia, clergy and members of the resistance. Auschwitz-Birkenau will claim 1.1 million victims from Nazi-occupied Europe, 90% of them Jews.

1942 The Polish government courier **Jan Karski** secretly parachutes into occupied Poland. He visits, among other places, the Warsaw Ghetto and Izbica, a sub-camp of Majdanek. He delivers the first credible report on the mass murder of Jews to the Polish government-in-exile and to the British and American governments. His testimony is met with widespread disbelief.

1942 The Polish National Council (PNC) in London launches an appeal to the Allies to prevent what it calls “the German attempt to murder all the Jews in Europe.”

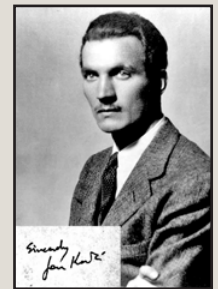
1942 Mass deportation, over the summer months, of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to the Treblinka death camp. Judenrat chairman Adam Czerniakow commits suicide. The death camp ultimately claims 850,000 Jewish victims. Among those deported is **Janusz Korczak**, who refused to abandon the children of his orphanage.

1942 Żegota, the Polish Underground Council to Help the Jews, is set up. Its initiator, a pre-war anti-Semitic writer, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, publishes an appeal in the underground Catholic press condemning Polish inactivity in the face of the Holocaust. Several thousand Jews, including 2,500 children saved by **Irena Sendler**, were saved by Żegota. However, thousands of other Jews in hiding are either denounced to the Germans by their Polish compatriots or murdered. Incidents of Polish complicity in the Shoah are only recently being acknowledged by Polish historians, stirring public debate and discussion.

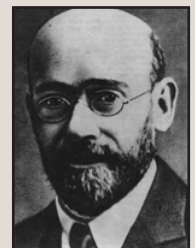
1943 The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on the eve of Passover, the largest act of armed resistance in German-occupied Europe to date, triggers smaller uprisings in the ghettos in Białystok, Częstochowa, Będzin and Kraków. Different organizations and factions operating in the Warsaw ghetto—among them the Jewish Fighting Organization [ŻOB] and the Jewish Military Union [ZZW]—participate in the combat that rages on for several



Jewish Partisans, including Faye Schulman, in a forest outside Warsaw, 1943.



Jan Karski.



Janusz Korczak.



Irena Sendler.

weeks. Though sporadic fighting continues into June, many of the leaders of the Jewish Fighting Organization die in their besieged command bunker at 18 Miła Street.

Resistance in the ghettos took on different forms: cultural, intellectual, physical and spiritual. Rabbi Kalonymos Kalman Szapira, the Piaseczner rebbe, compiled copies of his weekly sermons, addressing the difficult questions of faith and religious observance in the face of increased suffering in the ghetto. Prior to being transported to a sub-camp of Majdanek, Trawniki, Rabbi Szapira buried the collection. Found after the war by a construction worker, the book was later published in Israel in 1960 under the title *Esh Kodesh* (Hebrew: The Holy Fire).

1943 **Szmul Zygielbojm**, Bund member of the PNC in London, commits suicide to protest world indifference to the mass murder of Jews.



Szmul Zygielbojm.

1943 To proclaim that Europe's largest Jewish community had been exterminated and Warsaw made "*Judenrein*" (German: cleansed of Jews), the Germans blow up the Great Synagogue on May 16, 1943.

1943 As the tide of the war shifts, a new, Communist-dominated Polish Army is set up in Russia under General Zygmunt Berling. It is largely commanded by Soviet officers and includes many Polish Jews.

1943 Jewish and Soviet partisans kill more than 100 Poles in the villages of Naliboki and Koniuchy. The villagers were suspected of collaborating with the Germans.



Marek Edelman.

1944 Starting in July, Communist control is taken of eastern Poland, including Lublin and the death camp of Majdanek, by the Red Army and Polish Army under General Berling. An unelected, Communist-dominated government is set up by the Soviets. It signs a border treaty ceding to Russia almost all of the Polish territories previously occupied by it under the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement. As a result, about 1.5 million Polish citizens, mainly ethnic Poles, eventually flee into western Poland.

1944 As Soviet forces drive German forces out of eastern Poland, the Communist-dominated government sets up a Central Committee of Jews in Poland (CKŻP) to represent the Jews. Nearly 300,000 Jews will eventually register with CKŻP, which organizes aid programs, providing food, housing, education, medical assistance, employment and vocational services, as well as cultural activities. A "Committee to Help the Poles," which will eventually provide material assistance to dozens among those Poles who saved Jews during the war, is also set up.

1944 Hundreds of Jews, among them veterans of the Warsaw Ghetto, including **Marek Edelman** and Antek Zuckerman, participate in the Warsaw Uprising, along with other Polish fighters and civilians. The 63-day battle, which began on August 1st, leaves approximately 180,000 casualties. Soviet troops stop their offensive on the east bank of the Vistula waiting for the uprising to be crushed. In spite of Jewish support for the Uprising, some 50 Jews who had previously been hiding in Warsaw during the German occupation are murdered by Polish forces.

1944 The last transport of Jews from the Łódź Ghetto is sent to Auschwitz on August 29.

1944 The Bund becomes the first of eleven Jewish parties to re-establish themselves (three of them, including Agudas Isroel, do so illegally). All Jewish organizations support the Communist government, which they see as the sole bulwark of their security in the face of violent anti-Semitism, but which is vehemently

opposed as illegitimate by the majority of the population. Jewish Communists become prominent in the new State apparatus, including the dreaded secret police. As suspected opponents of the new regime are jailed and deported, clashes bordering on civil war break out.

1944 The Central Jewish Historical Commission is established, the first institution in the world to collect Holocaust documentation, survivor testimonies and evidence of war crimes.

1945 The Red Army, having camped on the east bank of the Vistula River since the summer of 1944, takes the rest of Warsaw on January 17th. Close to 85% of the city lies in ruins.

1945 **Auschwitz-Birkenau** is liberated by the Soviet Army on January 27th. In 2005, the UN will declare it International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

1945 The war in Europe ends on May 8th.



Auschwitz-Birkenau liberation, January 1945.



Contemporary Poland.

More than five million Polish citizens perished in World War II. Of these, three million were Polish Jews murdered by the Germans in death camps, ghettos and execution sites. This constituted 90% of pre-war Poland's Jewish population. While some Jews trying to survive under the German occupation received help from the Polish population, there were also Poles who blackmailed Jews in hiding or denounced them to the Germans. The majority of Poles were indifferent to Jewish suffering as they themselves tried to survive the occupation. It is to be noted that in Poland there was no organized collaboration with the Germans, unlike in many countries, and that Poland was one of the only countries in German-occupied Europe where helping Jews was punishable by death. In spite of this risk, of the more than 21,000 Righteous Among the Nations recognized by Yad Vashem, more than 6,000 are Poles, the single largest national group.

VI. POST-WAR COMMUNIST POLAND 1945-1989

The war ends in stages as the Soviet army advances from the east in 1944, though Auschwitz and Warsaw will not be liberated until January 1945. The map of Poland is once again redrawn, based on the Roosevelt-Stalin-Churchill Yalta agreement in February 1945. The Soviet Union annexes the eastern half of the country, while Poland receives territorial "compensation" from Germany in the north and west. After the genocide of the majority of Polish Jews and the expulsion of Germans, Lithuanians, Belarusians and Ukrainians, Poland's population becomes near-homogeneous.

A Communist-led government is imposed on the country against popular will. One and a half million people from former eastern Poland, now part of the USSR, have to resettle within Poland's new borders. Many of those rendered homeless by the war, particularly residents of Warsaw, must find new homes as well. The remnants of the Jewish community, made up primarily of those who survived the war years in the Soviet Union, begin to rebuild Jewish communal life. Some choose to affiliate with Jewish communities, others opt to assimilate, and still others choose to emigrate. Thousands of others, having been hidden as children during the war with no inkling of their Jewish roots, make their lives in post-war Poland.

1945 The Jewish Religious Congregations are recognized by the government, but denied the right to claim pre-war communal property, as they are not considered successors of the pre-war Jewish communities. A government decree nationalizes Jewish property, previously seized by the Nazis, under the category of "former German and abandoned properties." In the following year, Parliament passes a series of laws nationalizing private property.

1945 Some 250,000 Polish Jews begin returning from the Soviet Union and are met with growing hostility. Most resettle in former German territories in what is now western Poland. The German population is being deported to areas within Germany's new borders.

1945 The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) is granted the right to function in Poland anew. It is largely the Joint that will finance the reconstruction of post-war Jewish life, but it will be forced to temporarily discontinue its work in 1950.

1945 The Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw, used as a stable and storehouse by the Germans, is reopened in spite of structural damage.

1945 First post-war pogrom in Kraków; other pogroms follow. In a climate of growing lawlessness and conflict, the number of Jewish fatalities as of April 1946 is estimated at 800.

1945 Jewish schools are established in the larger cities in which Jews settled or were resettled after the war. By 1950, the Jewish school in Warsaw is closed and the remaining schools are nationalized. The curriculum is divested of Hebrew and Jewish history and, while Yiddish often remains part of the program, Polish studies are increased as Stalinist policies take hold. The I.L. Peretz School in Łódź and the **Shalom Aleichem School in Wrocław** will eventually be closed by the end of the 1960s, following the enforced emigration of Jews in 1968.

1946 The **Kielce pogrom**, provoked by a blood-libel rumor, claims 42 victims. Attempts to provoke similar pogroms also occur in other cities. The pogroms are condemned by the liberal intelligentsia, but the Church largely keeps silent, or expresses only general condemnations of “all violence.” The primate of Poland, speaking to American journalists, says that the pogrom, though deplorable, is a result of the Jews having too much power in a government many Poles do not accept. In subsequent show trials, several members of the mob are sentenced. The pogrom was widely suspected by Poles to have been a provocation to divert attention from the Communist power-grab, but this has not been proven. Over 100,000 Jews leave Poland by the end of the year. The government allows mass Jewish emigration and permits the creation of an armed Jewish self-defense force.

1946 The world’s first **Holocaust memorial**, in the shape of a manhole cover with a sculpture of a sprouting plant and the letter “bet” signifying *bereshit* (Hebrew: “In the beginning”), is dedicated by members of the Polish Jewish community on the site where the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising started.

1946 The first part of the **Ringelblum Archives**, hidden in 1942, is recovered from the ruins of Nowolipki Street in Warsaw. The cache includes diaries, documents, leaflets, newspapers, posters and paintings collected by the conspirators of Oneg Shabbat.

1947 The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is established at the site of the death camp by an act of the Polish Parliament. It is to commemorate “the martyrdom of the Polish and other nations.” Jewish suffering at Auschwitz is consistently underplayed; this will be corrected only after the fall of Communism.

1947 The **Jewish Historical Institute (JHI)**, successor to the Central Jewish Historical Commission, is established in Warsaw and housed in the former Main Judaic Library of the Great Synagogue. The Institute, which holds the Ringelblum Archives, is the largest repository of Polish Jewish heritage in the world, with collections of wartime testimonies and survivor records, a vast collection of artwork and Judaica, pre-war press and more than 60,000 volumes.



Jewish school in Wrocław.

Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish
Historical Institute



JDC delegation marching in funeral procession of the victims of the 1946 Kielce pogrom.

Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish
Historical Institute



Building a Holocaust memorial in 1946 amid the ruins of Warsaw.

Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish
Historical Institute



Recovery of Ringelblum Archives from ruins of Warsaw ghetto.



The Jewish Historical Institute.

Hubert Smietanka

1947 A Haganah training camp, set up in Silesia under Polish Army auspices, provides military training for 2,500 volunteers who then move to Palestine to fight for Israel's independence.

1947 Poland actively supports the UN Lake Placid resolution on the partition of Palestine.

1948 After the declaration of the State of Israel, tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors begin leaving Poland for Israel. Others leave for the United States, Canada, Australia, Central and South America and western European countries. The remaining Polish Jewish population is estimated at 100,000.

1948 The **Monument of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising**, designed by Natan Rapoport, is unveiled on the fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

1949 As Stalinism grows more severe, the Bund and other Jewish parties are disbanded. Emigration to Israel is blocked. Independent Jewish organizations and institutions are closed down.

1950 The government sets up the Jewish Socio-Cultural Association (TSKŻ) to replace Jewish organizations, which have been officially dissolved. The Union of Religious Congregations is the only other recognized organization. As only a few Jewish cultural, social and educational activities are permitted to continue, TSKŻ and the Union support Jewish communal life throughout the Communist period.

1950 A second cache of the Ringelblum Archives, hidden in February 1943, is recovered. The third has yet to be located. The caches, on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register since 1999, are housed in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

1951 Idysz Buch (Yiddish Book) publishers start printing mass editions of Yiddish classics.

1953 The Israeli consul is expelled for alleged espionage.

1955 The State Yiddish Theater, revived in Wrocław (pre-war Breslau) immediately after the war and directed by Ida Kamińska (Ester Rachel Kamińska's daughter), moves to Warsaw. Yiddish-language plays are still performed there today.

1956 De-Stalinization brings both increased anti-Semitism and new repatriations of Jews from the Soviet Union. Aliyah is permitted again and the JDC is once more permitted to operate. By 1960, approximately 45,000 Jews live in Poland.

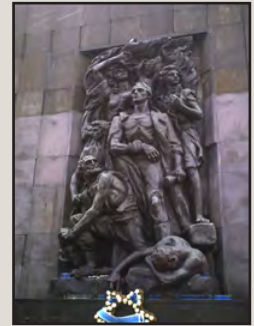
1957 Five former high-ranking Polish secret police officers, all of them Jewish, are tried and found guilty of torture. They are all sentenced to jail, the only members of the Stalinist power structure to be so punished.

1958 A Jewish museum opens in the "Old Synagogue" in Kraków.

1961 The Round Synagogue in Praga is demolished—in spite of plans to renovate it—due to the ill will of the authorities and a lack of Jewish communal funds.

1964 The Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council issues a breakthrough declaration on relations with Judaism, opening opportunities for dialogue between the two religions.

1967 In the wake of the Six-Day War, Poland, following the Soviet lead, breaks off diplomatic relations with Israel. Many Poles, including non-Jews, cheer Israel's victory.



Monument of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in Warsaw.

1968 Student strikes and **demonstrations** in support of democratic socialism erupt in many Polish universities. Many of the activists are identified as Jews, triggering the Communist regime's so-called anti-Zionist campaign in Poland. About 15,000 Polish Jews are pressured into emigrating. Jewish schools around the country are closed and Idysz Buch disbanded. Remaining Jewish organizations are largely prevented from functioning until the mid-1970s. The Jewish Historical Institute and the State Yiddish Theatre in Warsaw are the only Jewish institutions that will continue to function.



Student demonstrations at Warsaw University in March 1968.

1970 **Willy Brandt**, Chancellor of West Germany, kneels in front of the Monument of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in a symbolic gesture of penitence.



Willy Brandt kneeling at the Monument of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

1971 150 artists, writers and Jewish activists meet in Śródborów, a TSKŻ retreat outside of Warsaw, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of *Folks-Sztyme*, the Warsaw Yiddish newspaper.

1974 The last rabbi in Poland, Wawa Morejno of Łódź, is forced to emigrate.

1975 Poland co-sponsors the UN's "Zionism is racism" resolution.

1977 Renovation begins on the Nożyk Synagogue. Religious services are held in the adjacent community building.

1978 Kraków Cardinal Karol Wojtyła is elected pope. As **John Paul II**, he will spearhead a breakthrough in Catholic-Jewish relations by clearly and consistently calling anti-Semitism a sin and seeking out ties with Jews as Christians' "elder brothers in faith."



Pope John Paul II visiting Poland.

1978 Polish-born Yiddish writer **Isaac Bashevis Singer** wins the Nobel Prize for literature and becomes widely published in Poland in Polish.

1978 In the Auschwitz State Museum, a pavilion commemorating Jewish victims is opened.

1979 Pope John Paul II makes his first official visit as Pope to Poland. The visit galvanizes the nation, eventually leading to the Solidarity movement.



Isaac Bashevis Singer.

1979 As public dissent against Communism grows and the democratic opposition is formed, the unofficial Jewish Flying University is set up in Warsaw by, among others, Stanisław Krajewski, a future intellectual leader of the revival of Jewish life in Poland. It holds fortnightly seminars and organizes unofficial commemorations of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

1980 The Solidarity movement is established after a victorious strike, led by **Lech Wałęsa**, in the Gdańsk shipyard.



Lech Wałęsa.

1981 Solidarność / Solidarity, a 10,000,000-strong trade union campaigning for human rights and political self-determination, condemns anti-Semitism, although some expressions of anti-Semitism reverberate within its ranks. Many assimilated Jews will

be at the forefront of the movement, including future foreign minister Bronisław Geremek, future editor-in-chief of Poland's leading newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Adam Michnik, and the paper's deputy editor, Helena Łuczywo. Other members of Solidarity will later lead the revival of Jewish communal life.

1981 The Citizens' Committee on Jewish Cultural Monuments is set up. It focuses largely on the preservation of cemeteries. It is the first organization dedicated to Jewish heritage preservation legalized since 1950.

1981 On December 13, the Polish army stages a coup and declares **martial law**. Some 5,000 Solidarity activists are interned without trial and the trade union is eventually banned. Though almost 100 people will be killed in the years following the coup, nonviolent responses to the military take-over will eventually lead to the fall of Communism.

1981 On December 14, the Polish government authorizes the JDC's re-entry into Poland.

1983 As Poland remains internationally isolated following the military coup, the Communist authorities invite Jews worldwide, including some from Israel, to participate in the 40th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Former uprising deputy commander and Solidarity activist Marek Edelman calls on visitors to boycott the official ceremonies, yet his appeal goes unheeded. Unofficial ceremonies organized by the Jewish Flying University are disrupted by police; Solidarity spokesman Janusz Onyszkiewicz is jailed for six months for reading a message of support from Lech Wałęsa. The anniversary is covered in both the official and underground press and spurs a publishing boom of books of Jewish interest, which will continue unabated.

1983 The Nożyk Synagogue is reopened after six years of renovation. It will become a center of traditional religious Jewish life after the fall of Communism, with daily, Sabbath and holiday services.

1984 First informal contacts between Polish and Israeli governments since 1967.

1984 A Carmelite convent is set up on the site of the Auschwitz death camp and is met with Jewish protests.

1984 The first conference on the history of Polish Jews is held in Oxford, England. Several Polish historians participate. The conference launches the Association for Polish Jewish Studies and leads to contact among academics in Poland, the U.S. and Israel.

1985 Sigmund Nissenbaum, a Holocaust survivor born in Warsaw, establishes the Nissenbaum Foundation, which will finance the restoration and preservation of some Jewish cemeteries and cultural monuments in Poland.

1986 An abbreviated version of Claude Lanzmann's documentary "**Shoah**" is shown on Polish State TV. Debate in the official and underground press ensues. The full version is subsequently shown in cinemas.

1986 The first volume of **Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry** is published in Oxford.

1986 Poland and Israel establish interest sections in the Dutch Embassy in Warsaw and in the Polish PKO Bank's Tel Aviv branch.



The front page of the Communist Party daily, proclaiming martial law.



Film poster for the documentary "Shoah."

1986 The Center for Polish Jewish Studies opens at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Jewish studies departments will be opened at major universities in Warsaw, Wrocław, Łódź and Lublin.

1986 The Polish Episcopate's Commission for Dialogue with Judaism is initiated.

1987 The first major public discussion on wartime Polish-Jewish relations is triggered by the publication in Catholic opposition weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* of an essay by Jan Błoński, stating that Poles, as witnesses to the Shoah, bear a moral responsibility which they have yet to acknowledge.

1987 The Catholic Church and Jewish organizations sign an agreement stipulating that the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz will be moved in 1989.

1988 The first **Jewish Culture Festival** in Kraków, organized by a group of young non-Jewish Polish enthusiasts spearheaded by Janusz Makuch, is mainly attended by non-Jews. It will eventually become Europe's largest festival of Jewish culture, attended by Jews and non-Jews from Poland and around the world.

1988 A conference on the history and culture of Polish Jews in Jerusalem draws participants from Poland and around the world.

1988 A direct air link between Warsaw and Tel Aviv is established.

1988 The March of the Living is held for the first time in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

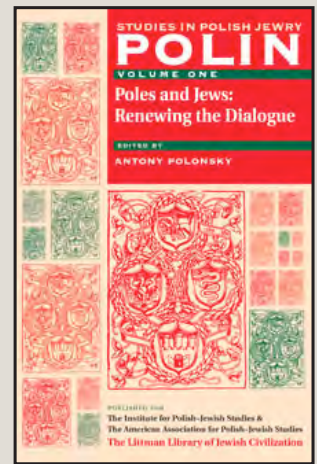
1988 The anti-Communist opposition commemorates the 45th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising with a several-thousand-strong rally at the Monument of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Police do not intervene.

1988 The Path of Martyrdom and Remembrance is created between the Ghetto Uprising Memorial and a monument erected on the site of the Umschlagplatz, from which Jews were transported to Treblinka in 1942 and 1943.

1988 **Pinchas Menachem Joskowicz**, a Polish-born Israeli and Auschwitz survivor, becomes Poland's first Chief Rabbi since the mid 1970s.

1988 A summer Jewish educational retreat, which focuses on Jewish tradition and observance, is organized outside of Warsaw by a small group of Polish Jews. It will lay the foundations for the creation of future Jewish educational initiatives.

1988 The first post-war Jewish kindergarten, started by a small group of Jewish families, opens in a private apartment in Warsaw.



Cover of Volume One of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*.



Poster for the first Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, 1988.



Rabbi Joskowicz, named Chief Rabbi of Poland in 1988.

Tomasz Terlecki

VII. THE REBIRTH OF JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND 1989-present

In 1989, Poland becomes the first Soviet Bloc country to dismantle the Communist system. Following groundbreaking negotiations, semi-free elections are held in June and a non-Communist government is formed under Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a former political internee. Jewish communities, repressed for decades under Communism, begin to re-emerge and to re-establish Jewish communal institutions. The revival of Polish Jewry, with its spiritual leaders, Polish-born

Rabbi Chaskel Besser ז"ל and American-born Rabbi Michael Schudrich, was initially supported by American Jewish philanthropists in the United States, such as Ronald S. Lauder, as well as significantly by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and other organizations worldwide. Since the start of the 21st century, philanthropist Tad Taube, born in Kraków, has become the largest American Jewish patron of Poland's Jewish cultural renaissance, with an office in Warsaw and working in concert with the JDC and donors such as Sigmund Rolat, Victor Markowicz, the Rothschild Foundation Europe, and others. As the generation coming of age in democratic Poland begins to take the helm, Jewish communities in Poland move toward sustainability and the future.

1989 The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation begins operating in Poland; the RSLF and the JDC will finance the rebuilding of much of Poland's Jewish communal infrastructure in the 1990s.

1989 On June 4th, the first semi-free elections since the war bring the anti-Communist opposition to power.

1989 Poland replaces Hungary as the main transit point for Soviet Jews moving to Israel; tens of thousands transit through Warsaw without incident.

1989 As the Auschwitz convent has not been moved as agreed, Rabbi Avi Weiss of New York stages a sit-in at the site and is attacked while attempting to enter the convent's grounds. The Primate of Poland, Józef Cardinal Glemp, condemns Rabbi Weiss' actions in an anti-Semitic sermon. The incident polarizes Polish public opinion.

1990 The Polish Council of Christians and Jews is established.

1990 Poland becomes the second ex-Communist country, after Czechoslovakia, to re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

1990 Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa is elected president. His use of anti-Semitic innuendo against his rival Tadeusz Mazowiecki is condemned by a large segment of public opinion.

1991 Polish delegates participate in the First International Gathering of Children Hidden During World War II in New York City. They return to Poland and establish the Association of the Children of the Holocaust. Many of the "hidden children," saved and raised by non-Jewish Poles, begin to seek out their Jewish roots and become active in Jewish communal life, as do many of their children and grandchildren.

1991 The Catholic Church publishes a pastoral letter deploring anti-Semitism.

1991 President Wałęsa visits Israel. In a speech to the Knesset, he asks forgiveness for wrongs committed against Jews by his country.

1992 **Chaim Herzog**, President of Israel, visits Poland. It is the first state visit. Polish-Israeli ties will continue to develop and strengthen.

1992 Poland co-sponsors the repeal of the UN's "Zionism is racism" resolution.

1992 The Polish Union of Jewish Students (PUSZ) is founded. It will be succeeded by **ZOOM, the Polish Jewish Youth Organization**, in 2007.

1992 TSKŻ begins to publish *Słowo Żydowskie-Dos Yiddishe Vort* (The Jewish Word) in Yiddish and Polish. It is the successor to *Folks-Sztyme*.



Chaim Herzog visiting Kraków cemetery.

Yad Vashem



ZOOM, the Polish Jewish Youth Organization.

1993 Under pressure from Pope John Paul II, the convent in Auschwitz finally relocates.

1993 The 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is commemorated with the participation of Polish President Lech Wałęsa and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

1993 The Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland is registered as the legal successor to pre-war Jewish communities. The Union currently represents and serves Jewish communities in Warsaw, Wrocław, Kraków, Łódź, Lublin, Szczecin, Katowice, Bielsko-Biała, Poznań, Legnica and Gdańsk.

1994 The Lauder-Morasha School, the first school under Jewish auspices in Warsaw since 1949, opens with a first grade of 18 students. Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek will participate in the dedication ceremony of the school's permanent home in 1999, quoting the Talmud in his remarks.

1994 *And I Still See Their Faces*, an exhibition of pre-war photos of Jews and Jewish families collected from the public at large by the Shalom Foundation, is enthusiastically received in Warsaw. Its catalogue sells out immediately. The exhibition is still on world tour.

1995 The Polish Association of Jewish Studies is launched in Kraków.

1995 International commemoration marking the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau stirs conflict and catharsis worldwide. Inside Poland, it fosters public education, shedding light on the history of the Nazi death camps – a history that had been distorted or denied in the Communist era.

1996 At a commemoration for the 50th anniversary of the Kielce pogrom, Polish Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz expresses contrition. A monument is eventually erected to commemorate the victims.

1997 The Sejm passes a law governing relations between the State and Jewish Religious Communities allowing, among other things, for the partial restitution of pre-war Jewish communal property seized by the State. To date, there is no law regulating the restitution of private properties.

1997 *Midrasz* magazine is launched. Founded by Konstanty Gebert, it is the first Polish-language Jewish monthly published in decades. The annual Jewish Book Festival is inaugurated a year later.

1997 The Conference of the Episcopate of Poland declares an annual “Day of Judaism” to be celebrated by the Catholic Church and parishes around the country.

1998 Extreme-right activists set up hundreds of crosses on the site of the former convent in Auschwitz. Eventually, the small crosses will be removed by the Polish government after a compromise is reached, but the large cross will remain.

1998 The Forum for Dialogue Among Nations is created. The Forum's educational and leadership development initiatives foster Polish-Jewish dialogue, promoting tolerance and understanding through exchange programs, publications and school-based educational programs.



And I Still See Their Faces catalogue.



Midrasz First Issue.

1999 Beit Warszawa, a Reform congregation and a member of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, is founded in Warsaw.

1999 Poland joins NATO.

2000 The publication of Jan Gross's book *Neighbors*, documenting the 1941 wartime massacre of Jews by Poles in Jedwabne, sets off an anguished public debate. As the Institute for National Remembrance confirms most of Gross's findings, many Poles accept the facts.

2000 The **Auschwitz Jewish Center**, now affiliated with the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, opens in the renovated Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue, comprised of a museum presenting the Jewish history of the town Oświęcim (German: Auschwitz) and an educational center.

2001 Polish **President Aleksander Kwaśniewski**, at a 60th-anniversary commemoration in Jedwabne, expresses contrition for the wartime massacre, marking the first official apology by a Polish head of state for crimes against Jews committed by Poles during the Holocaust. Local residents boycott the ceremony, as does the Catholic Church – which, however, held an earlier penitential service of its own, attended by half of Poland's bishops.

2001 The first post-war edition of the Torah with Polish translation is published in Poland, followed by the publishing of a prayer book, a Passover haggadah, a tractate of Talmud, as well as other Jewish texts.

2002 The **Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland** (FODZ) is established by the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) to preserve Jewish heritage sites in Poland and to promote awareness of the history of Polish Jewish communities.

2003 Two Jewish film festivals are launched in Warsaw, both drawing large audiences.

2003 The Jewish Agency for Israel in Poland assumes responsibility for Taglit-Birthright Poland. By 2010, it will have sent 500 participants on ten-day tours of Israel.

2003 The **Jewish Heritage Initiative in Poland (JHIP)**, established by the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, is created to support and promote Jewish culture and education. In 2004, the JHIP opens a field operation in Warsaw.

2003 The Professor Moses Schorr Foundation is established to support the expanding adult education programs of the Moses Schorr Center in Warsaw. The Center, Poland's largest Hebrew-language program, also offers lecture series and seminars, an intensive summer school, and an e-platform "Makledet."

2004 **Rabbi Michael Schudrich** is appointed Chief Rabbi of Poland. Rabbi Schudrich previously served as Rabbi of Warsaw and Łódź.

2004 The Galicia Jewish Museum, created by photographer Chris Schwartz, opens in Kraków. The museum celebrates and commemorates Jewish life in Polish Galicia.

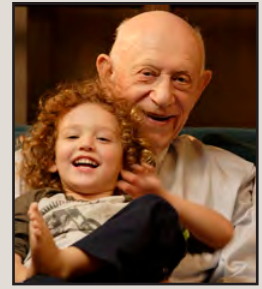
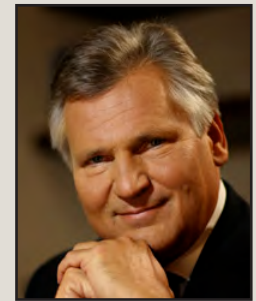


Photo from a 2009 Auschwitz Jewish Center exhibit.

Photo by Hamutal Davidi



President Aleksander Kwaśniewski.



Zamość Synagogue renovated by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland.



Konstanty Gebert heading the Jewish Heritage Initiative in Poland, Warsaw office, 2004.



Rabbi Michael Schudrich.

2004 Czulent, a Jewish youth and student group, is created in Kraków.

2004 The first annual “Singer’s Warsaw” festival, a celebration of Yiddish culture and I.B. Singer, is organized in Warsaw by the Shalom Foundation.

2004 Poland joins the European Union.

2005 Chabad-Lubavitch opens a center in Warsaw, followed by a center in Kraków.

2007 Polish-born Rabbi Maciej Pawlak, trained in the U.S., becomes principal of the Jewish Day School in Warsaw.

2007 **Tad Taube**, founder and chairman of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture, is named Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland in the San Francisco Bay Area.

2007 The **Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center** is established at the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute. The Center, which helps Jews with Polish roots and Poles with Jewish roots explore their family heritage, assists in finding documentation, reconstructing family histories and reuniting lost family and friends.

2007 The groundbreaking ceremony for the **Museum of the History of Polish Jews**, scheduled to open in Warsaw in April 2013, is attended by President Lech Kaczyński, former Israeli Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau and dignitaries from around the world. Funded by the Polish Government, the City of Warsaw, the Jewish Historical Institute Association and individual and institutional donors worldwide, the Museum will transmit, through state-of-the-art and virtual exhibits, the 1,000-year history of Polish Jews.

2007 The Polish State Radio’s *Kol Polin* (Hebrew: Voice of Poland) service starts broadcasting in Hebrew.

2007 President Lech Kaczyński becomes the first Polish President to visit a synagogue and lights Hanukkah candles in the Presidential Palace for the first time. This tradition of presidential Hanukkah candle lightings will continue.

2007 The Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva Synagogue is re-opened and re-dedicated after extensive renovations undertaken by the Warsaw Jewish Community.

2008 The Polish Year in Israel, a nationally-sponsored cultural-promotion program, is celebrated.

2008 As a result of a visit from Prince Charles, the **JCC in Kraków** is opened with the support of World Jewish Relief, the JDC and the Jewish Community of Kraków. It serves the growing Jewish community of Kraków.

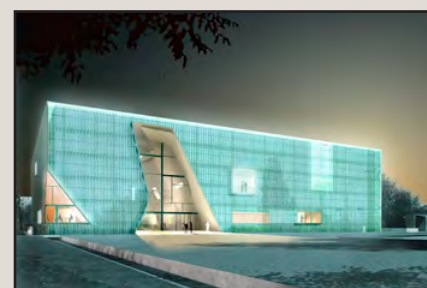
2008 The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the City of Warsaw and the Jewish Historical Institute create and install the “Ghetto Borders” in Warsaw. The project consists of 21 markers erected at different points along the borders of the former ghetto, and signs embedded in the sidewalks in Polish and English reading: “Mur Getta 1940-1943 / Ghetto Wall 1940-1943.”



Tad Taube at the 2007 ceremony naming him Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland in the San Francisco Bay Area.



Director Yale Reisner at the Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage Center.



The Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw.

2008 Righteous Among the Nations honoree Irena Sendler dies at age 98. A social worker and anti-Nazi partisan, Sendler organized an underground operation rescuing 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto. She had been nominated by the Polish government for the Nobel Peace Prize.

2009 The **Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute** (formerly the Jewish Historical Institute) is formally established by Poland's Minister of Culture and National Heritage as a new institution of culture.

2009 The **Irena Sendler Memorial Award** is established by the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture to honor Poles who contribute to the preservation of Jewish life and promote Jewish culture in Poland. Janusz Makuch, creator and director of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, is the first recipient. Future honorees will include Jan Jagielski, director of the Jewish Historical Institute's Historical Documentation Department; former Polish president Aleksander Kwaśniewski; and Magdalena Grodzka-Gużkowska. Ms. Grodzka-Gużkowska, honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations in 2009, worked with Sendler, helping to save Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto.

2009 Marek Edelman, deputy commander of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, veteran of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, well-known cardiologist, author and a member of Solidarity, passes away in Warsaw and receives a state funeral in the Warsaw Jewish Cemetery with military honors.

2009 Beit Kraków, a Reform congregation led by Rabbi Tanya Segal, is established.

2009 The Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture establishes the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland (Fundacja Centrum Taubego Odnowy Życia Żydowskiego w Polsce) in Warsaw. Helise E. Lieberman is named Director.

2010 Rabbis, with the support of the Union of Polish Jewish Communities, Shavei Israel, and other organizations, serve communities in Warsaw, Kraków, Katowice, Łódź and Wrocław. The rabbis, along with students from Warsaw's Kollel, provide religious and spiritual outreach and Jewish learning opportunities in smaller communities, including Gdańsk and Lublin.

2010 The Yiddish Culture Center is opened in Warsaw by the Shalom Foundation, joining its Open Jewish University and University of the Third Age.

2010 The Polish Association of Yiddish Studies is launched in Warsaw.

2010 A branch of the Kraków City Museum in the former Schindler factory opens in Kraków. The Museum documents the fate of the inhabitants of Kraków during the Nazi occupation.

2010 The Second Generation Association, children of survivors, is created by and for Jews raised during the Communist period. This is the first such initiative of its kind in Poland.



JCC in Kraków.



Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute.



Irena Sendler in 2008.

2010 A memorial service is held by the Jewish community in the Nożyk Synagogue for the President, First Lady and 94 other victims of the plane crash near Smoleńsk.

2010 The **Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków** celebrates its 20th year with more than 25,000 attendees.

2010 The Michael H. Traison Fund for Poland honors non-Jewish Poles active in the promotion and preservation of Jewish heritage. This initiative, in its 13th year, recognizes a grass-roots movement that involves hundreds of dedicated volunteers nationwide.

2010 The third Limmud Polska gathering, a weekend of Jewish educational and cultural programs organized and sponsored by JDC, draws over 600 participants representing 19 communities around the country.

2010 The Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland launches **Taube Jewish Heritage Tour Programs** for family and group visits to Poland.



Taube Jewish Heritage Tours.



Crowds at the closing night concerts of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków.



1,000 Years of Jewish Life in Poland



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