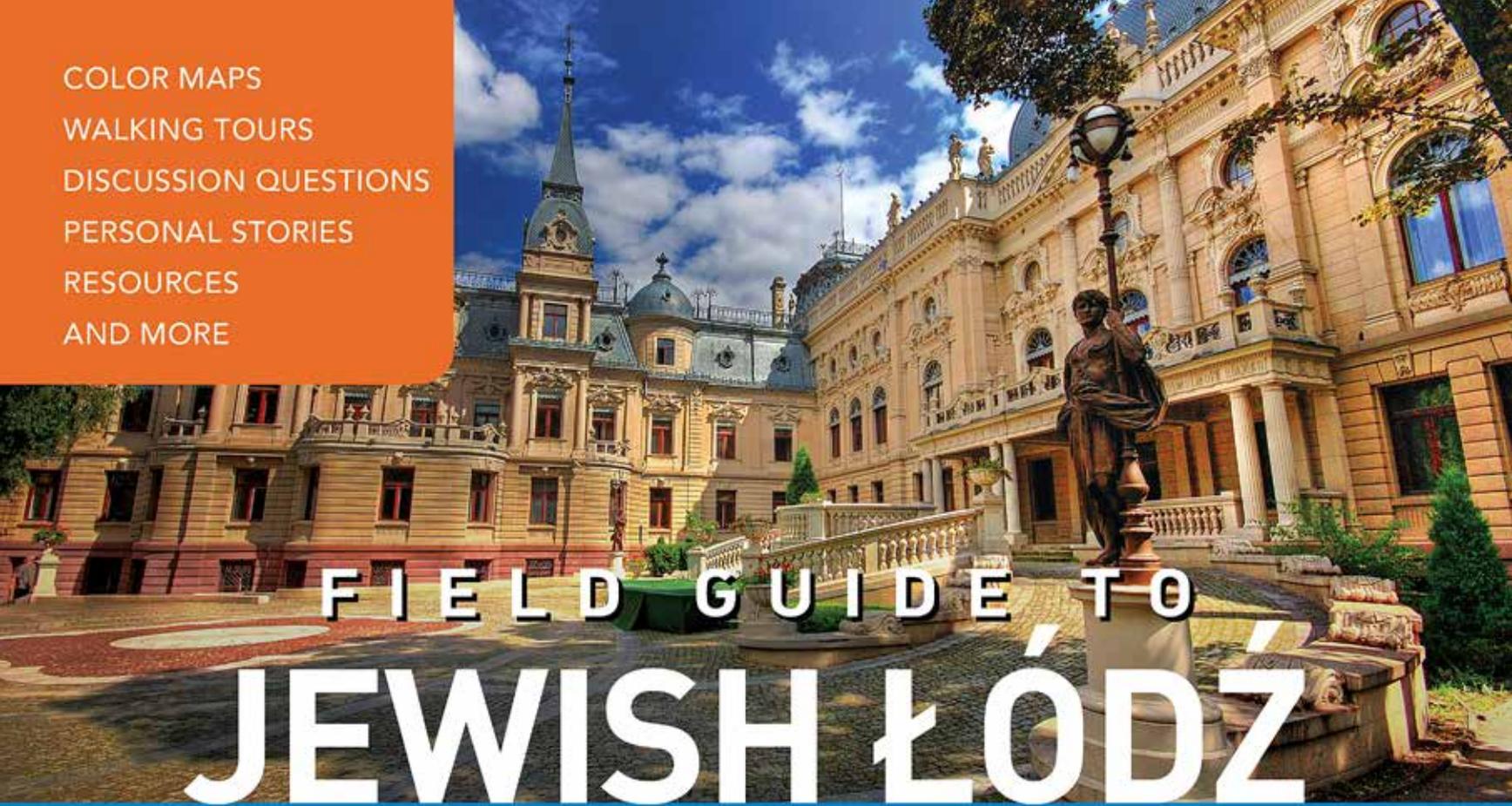
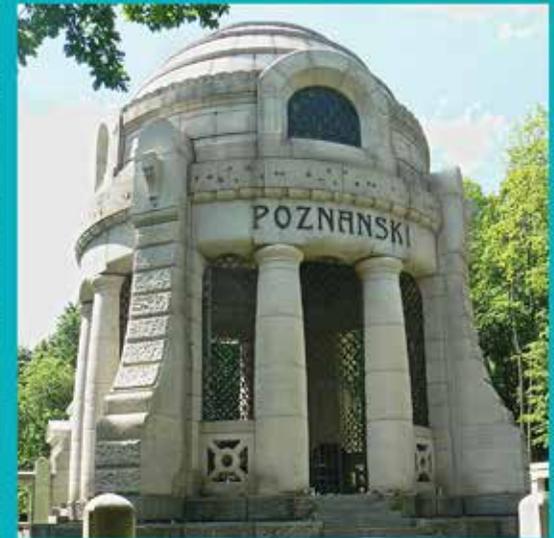
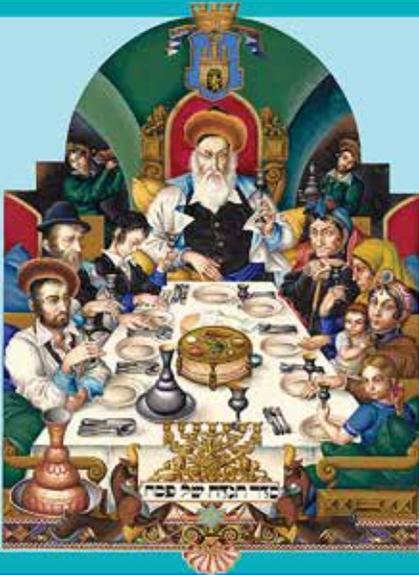


COLOR MAPS
WALKING TOURS
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
PERSONAL STORIES
RESOURCES
AND MORE



FIELD GUIDE TO JEWISH ŁÓDŹ



Manufaktura | Poznański Palace | Liberty Square | Piotrkowska Street | Revolution of 1905 Street | Peretz School | Arthur Rubinstein |
HollyŁódź | Arthur Szyk House | Jewish Avant-Garde | Old Market Square | Ghetto | Gypsy Camp | Survivors' Park | New Jewish Cemetery |
Marek Edelman Dialogue Center | Jan Kariski | Radegast Station | Julian Tuwim | Abram Cytryn | Pomorska 18 | Holocaust Memorial

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In the summer of 2013, the Libitzkys returned to Poland with three generations of their extended family, including Moses's 89-year-old mother, Eva Libitzky, a Łódź native who wanted to show her family where she was born and raised, and how she survived the Łódź ghetto and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Their 10-day customized family legacy tour was crafted by Taube Jewish Heritage Tours.

We are indebted to the Libitzkys' commitment to engaging visitors from around the world in exploring their own roots and discovering their communal traditions birthed in Poland.



Susan and Moses Libitzky, standing behind Moses's mother, Eva, traveled to Poland with three generations of their family in June 2013.

SPECIAL THANKS



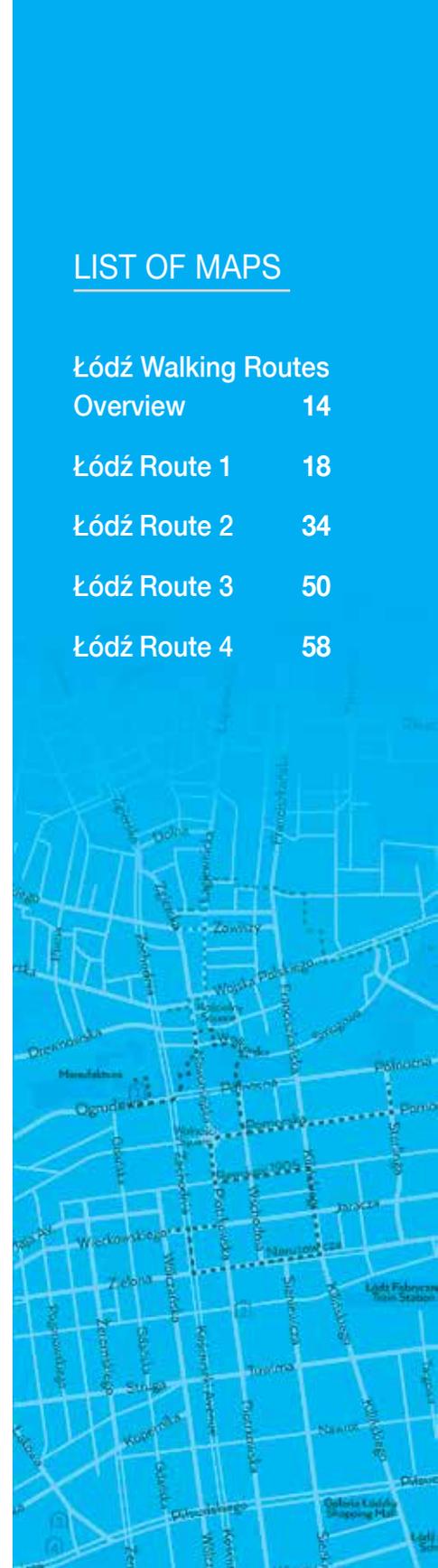
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Welcome



Welcome to Jewish Poland! The experience of coming to Poland to learn about the Jewish past, and to think about the present and future of Polish Jewry, can be a transformative journey. More than seventy years after the Holocaust and almost three decades after the fall of Communism, a visit to Jewish Poland is filled with a multitude of questions and myriad surprises. It brings to life complex emotions, from profound sadness to deep connections that may throw our preconceptions into startling relief. It invites us to examine our past, both personal and communal, and to consider what it is we care most about in Jewish culture, history, and traditions.

Jews visit Poland for many reasons: to see the towns where their families lived and perhaps touch their homes and gravestones; to visit the death camps where family members tragically died; to learn about European Jewish culture, or to enjoy the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, the world's largest festival of its kind. But all visitors discover things they did not expect, and find their understanding of Jewish culture in Poland permanently transformed.

Readers may have encountered some version of a conversation that runs: "I'm planning to take a Jewish heritage tour of Poland." "A tour of what? There's nothing left."

Not so! History doesn't move. Poland is the birthplace of Ashkenazi, or East European Jewish, culture. To explore Jewish roots in Europe means to return to the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which are today's Poland, Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine.

It is also true, however, that while history cannot be moved or changed it can be forgotten, intentionally or unintentionally. At every moment it is being recreated and reinterpreted. So it is with the history and heritage of the Ashkenazi civilization that developed over nearly a millennium on Polish lands. While Polish Jewish culture has found new life in many parts of the world, the appreciation of its roots is on its way to being lost or forgotten. The discussion about the relevance of Poland as a site for Jews to visit, or for those interested in Jewish culture and Jewish education, raises questions about how we understand our own history and how we envision our role in constructing meaningful connections to Polish Jewish heritage and transmitting them to our children.

Reconnecting with Our Heritage

Not only can we reconnect with Jewish history and culture by visiting Poland in ways not possible in America



Shabbat dinner hosted by JCC Kraków during the Jewish Culture Festival, summer 2014. (JCC Kraków)

or Israel, but such visits are transformative. They have a deep and lasting impact on how individuals relate to their own European Jewish heritage and explain and transmit Jewish identity to their children and friends.

Philosopher and rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel spoke to the same conviction over half a century ago, in a public lecture that he gave in 1945 in New York City at YIVO, a great repository of Jewish historical documents from Central and Eastern Europe. “The Eastern European era can become a source of inspiration for all of us,” he told his American audience. “A day will come in which the hidden light of the Eastern European era will be revealed. This era was the Song of Songs (which according to the rabbis is the holiest of Holy Scripture) of Jewish history in the last two thousand years. If the other eras were holy, this one was the holy of holies.”

During the half-century after Heschel gave this speech the political realities of the Soviet-dominated People’s Republic of Poland made it very difficult to explore and maintain a connection with the Jewish heritage in the country and to uncover the treasures that lay beneath the postwar surface of a rebuilt Poland. Between 1945 and 1989 the Jewish culture and Jewish heritage and history of Poland were rarely discussed in public. Today, however, almost three decades after the transition to democracy, Jonathan Ornstein, the director of the Kraków Jewish Community Center, argues that there is no country in Europe where citizens are more knowledgeable about Jewish culture or more welcoming to Jews than Poland, no European city where it is more comfortable to be a Jew in public than Kraków.

Visitors find two elements of this process particularly surprising. First is the fact that Jewish communities exist and are growing in many Polish cities, and that young people are growing up in Poland comfortable with their identities as Polish Jews. Museum exhibits, publications, and tour guides in English make it possible to become immersed in Polish Jewish heritage in ways that were impossible three decades earlier. Second is that scores of non-Jewish Poles have embraced their role as stewards of Jewish heritage and history. Visitors often take tours led by non-Jewish Poles who are committed to teaching about the Jewish past of their towns and cities.

Why Is This Guide Different from All Others?

We based this guidebook on the model of the Passover haggadah, which relates the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The haggadah begins by setting the scene with a brief introduction and then poses four questions,

Discussion Topics and Questions

We raise questions about the past and present and we offer, if not definitive answers, at least new ways of thinking about the issues. Throughout the guide we pose questions that visitors often raise, as well as some of our own. We offer them as opportunities for discussion and reflection and for challenging assumptions.

For educational tour groups, the questions may serve as the basis for group discussions and for the sharing of opinions, after participants have learned basic information during their tour. For student groups and educator tours, the questions may be used as potential essay topics, as encouragement to further research or interviews, and as material for discussion within communities once participants return home.

We encourage readers to formulate their own questions and to share them with us via the Taube Center’s website, www.centrumtaubego.org.pl or by email: fieldguide@centrumtaubego.org.pl.

which in turn help shape the direction of the narrative. For each question there may be many answers, or perhaps the question will lead to more questions. The purpose is to engage each person in the journey, offering insights into the story and illuminating the paths, both physical and spiritual, that may be followed.

Our story contains dramatic moments, traumatic events, cultural achievements and social innovations, and describes many remarkable people. Like the haggadah it poses questions that hold our attention and help move us to reflection.

We are storytellers, and we offer a contemporary haggadah of the story of Jewish Poland.

Our guidebook tells a story, a tale of a great city, Łódź, and its Jewish community, and begins by setting the scene, in an opening section entitled “Poland’s Jewish Revival.”

To tell our story we travel across nearly a thousand years of history, but our goal is not to write history. We are storytellers, and we seek to provide a contemporary haggadah of the tale of Jewish Poland, an experiential journey framed by unique narratives, commentaries, and questions. We hope that our haggadah will enable you to journey with us and to explore more deeply the long and amazing tale of Jewish Poland.

Our walks offer an opportunity to engage with Polish Jewish heritage and to gain a sense of ownership of the Jewish past of Eastern Europe. The history sometimes pokes through layers of paint on neglected buildings, where a scrupulous eye might find traces of a mezuzah. In other places the history is buried underneath the surface. Our narrative moves downward and upward, fluidly, through layers that reflect the changes of time.



Street musicians during the annual Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków.

Even during a first encounter, a reader may wonder about which layers we chose to emphasize. The fall of Europe’s communist regimes has brought a climate of democracy and intellectual openness, while attitudes within the Jewish world toward both East European Jewish heritage and the centrality of the Holocaust to Jewish identity are undergoing a generational shift. Many individuals and educational institutions are beginning to explore new ways of visiting Poland in their search to explore Jewish heritage, history, and identity.

At the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland Foundation, we seek to advance the new narratives of Jewish Poland. We represent different religious and cultural backgrounds, as well as different professions, and each of us brings a personal perspective to the endeavor. Several of us were born and raised in Poland, others are more recently minted or honorary citizens. ■

Poland's Jewish Revival

Yes, There Are Jewish Communities in Poland Today!

Not only in Warsaw and Kraków but in Łódź, Gdańsk, Wrocław, Bielsko-Biała, Poznań, and Katowice. This may be one of the world's best-kept secrets. After all, who expects to find a living Jewish community in a country so often described as the world's largest Jewish cemetery? Maybe you visit Warsaw to see the remains of the ghetto or the grave of a rebbe, but the option to chat with a young Jewish journalist or a Polish-born rabbi may shake up your preconceptions and sensibilities. You expect to find a semi-functional synagogue, the minyan made up of seniors. But to find a day school? Summer camps? A Jewish student organization? An adult education center? Jewish magazines? A Yiddish theater? A Jewish academic institute and university-level Jewish studies programs?

Open the *Yellow Pages* or Google "Jews in Warsaw" and you will find listings from A to Z: everyone from an artist who makes exquisite paper cutouts to a Zionist who coordinates the Polish Taglit-Birthright Israel program; from those who are as orthodox in their secularism as others are Orthodox in their religious practice; from those who are cultural Jews to those who are Jews only by dint of family history. Some are defined as Jews by others, and others define themselves as Jews.

There are Jews who live in Poland and there are Polish Jews. A few are American and foreign ex-pats, including the current Chief Rabbi of Poland, but most were born and raised in Poland. There are those who were raised in Yiddish-speaking homes and those who were raised in

what is often derogatorily called *żydokomuna* – Jewish members of the communist regime. There are those who always knew they were Jewish and those who are just finding out. Then there is a growing list of those who are not Jewish but who passionately and thoughtfully support, promote, and contribute to Jewish life and culture in Poland.

How did this happen? This is a good moment to look at the historical roots of the Jewish presence in Poland, and at its rebirth after the Holocaust and decades of communist repression.

Why Did Jews Come to Poland, and Why So Many?

There is an ancient legend that the name Poland is derived from two Hebrew words, *Po-lin* (Here abide), which were inscribed on a note that descended from heaven and was found by Jewish refugees from Germany at the time of the Black Death (ca. 1350 C.E.) and the attendant massacres of Jews. The earliest firm evidence of a Jewish presence on Polish lands, however, is a description left by Ibrahim ibn Yakub, a Jewish merchant and diplomat from Spain in the mid-10th century.

Persecution in Europe – connected with the crusades and outbreaks of plague (for which Jews were blamed), and during the Spanish Inquisition in the late 15th century – caused many Jews to migrate to the Polish Kingdom, where they could find safety. Originally most of them came from Bohemia (now in the Czech Republic) and from German lands along the Rhine River known as Ashkenaz. These migrants are referred to as

Ashkenazi Jews, but a small number of Sephardic Jews came as well.



Early Polish coin with Hebrew inscription.

The Polish kings and the nobility, who represented two separate spheres of economic power, invited Jewish settlers to help them develop almost every aspect of their country's feudal, farm-based economy. The legal rights and status of Polish Jews were defined by the Statute of Kalisz (1264), a ducal

privilege that guaranteed Jews freedom of religion, protection against false charges, and the right to trade. By the turn of the 13th century, Jews were hired to run the first mint in Poland. One of the coins minted under Duke Mieszko the Elder actually bore both Hebrew and Polish letters!

Jews found more freedom and personal security in the Polish lands than elsewhere in Europe.

The largest wave of Jewish immigration came under the reign of Kazimierz the Great (1333-70), when Jews gained an important role as bankers and moneylenders and helped develop real estate in Kraków, then the royal seat of the Kingdom of Poland. One of the greatest bankers under Kazimierz was a Jew, Lewko of Kraków, who ran both the royal mint and salt mines in Wieliczka and Bochnia.

Jews played a special role in the development of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was created by the union of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1569. Jews were important contributors to this vast new realm in financial services, crafts, commerce, and the management of estates and farms. Jews were



The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1569-1795.

granted exclusive or monopoly rights over many aspects of production and tax collection on the privately held lands of the nobility. They became responsible for many aspects of the feudal economy besides farming itself, such as managing the estates of Polish lords, cutting timber, engaging in commerce in raw materials like grain and furs, and collecting taxes or in-kind payments from the peasants.

The union of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania opened up vast territories in the East, on lands that are today Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. From the 15th through the 16th centuries waves of Jewish immigrants moving east would pass through Kraków, which became a hub of cultural life and influences from Western Europe. Within this powerful and ethnically and

religiously diverse state, the Jewish community grew strong in numbers, and its culture flourished. It was a Golden Age in the history of Polish Jews, lasting from the 16th to the first half of the 17th century.

Jewish Privileges and Government

The Commonwealth had one of Europe's first parliamentary governments, owing to the Polish nobility, which took part in the Parliament (*Sejm*), elected the king, and was fiercely committed to preserving its rights and freedoms. This tradition of the so-called Golden Freedom also included religious tolerance, at a time when it was largely unknown in the rest of Europe torn apart by religious strife. Poland in the 16th century became a haven not only for Jews but also for Protestants, anti-Trinitarians, and early Unitarians (the progressive intellectuals of their age), all of whom were considered heretics by Catholic Europe and even burned at the stake in Italy or Spain. The Warsaw Confederation, established in 1573, promoted legal religious tolerance for non-Catholics, a unique attitude at that time, while the kings extended privileges to Jewish communities and passed laws ensuring their protection.

The kings also granted the Jewish communities considerable rights of self-government. The Council of the Four Lands (*Va'ad Arbà Aratsot*), which consisted of representatives from some 50 districts of the kingdom, was established in 1580 to manage the collection of taxes from Jewish communities. It quickly became a full and separate representative body, or state within a state, that acquired judicial functions in addition to its fiscal responsibilities. This remarkable system, unique in Europe, lasted until 1764, when the crown abolished the Council as no longer necessary for tax purposes. Also, in 1623 the Lithuanian Jews decided to create their own council and withdrew from the *Va'ad Arbà Aratsot*.

Throughout the feudal period, Jews were permitted to organize their communal life as they wished. Each

community council, or *kahal*, received an official charter that provided for establishment of a synagogue, a cemetery, and other basic institutions. The *kahals* regularly sent representatives to Jewish regional councils, which deliberated over matters of common concern and held regional law courts.

Jews had a significant presence in Warsaw, Kraków, Lublin, and other big cities. Jews lived in the center of the town, often around the main square, the *rynek*, and owned the surrounding buildings and shops. To live in a Polish town therefore also meant living in a Jewish *shtetl*. For example, Jews called a certain town *Ger*, while non-Jews called it *Góra Kalwaria*. Each group led a largely separate existence, with its own traditions and memories. Yet their lives intersected daily in the market square, in the local inn and other establishments, and in the homes of Jewish residents, whose children were often cared for by Polish, Belarusian, and Ukrainian women who themselves spoke Yiddish. Today the Polish towns remain but the *shtetls* are gone.

Jews found more freedom and personal security in the Polish lands than elsewhere in Europe, but even so they might experience resentment and hostility. Christian communities could petition the crown for permission to exclude or expel Jews, the right *de non tolerandis Judaeis* (not having to tolerate Jews). In some cases it is likely the king made the grant as a way of separating and thus protecting the Jews from their Christian neighbors. Kazimierz, now a district of Kraków, began as a separate Jewish town, granted the royal *privilege de*



Page from an early Hebrew text printed by Polish Jews. (JHI)

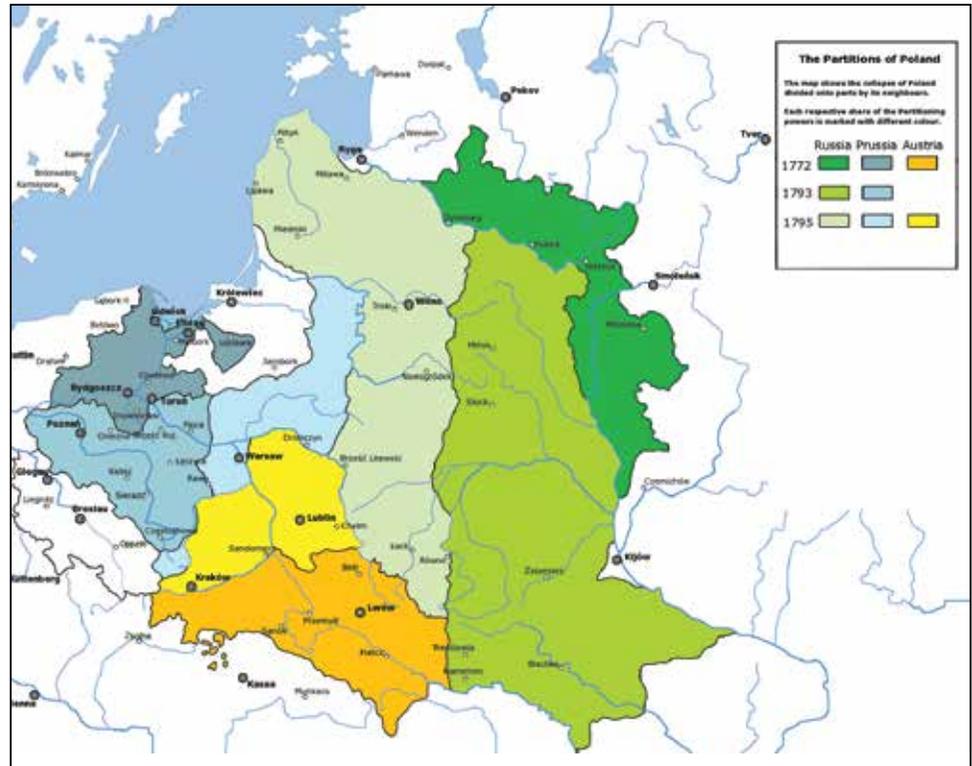
non tolerandis Christianis (not having to tolerate Christians).

There are many possible causes for the antagonism, including fear or distrust of strangely dressed people speaking an incomprehensible language and keeping unknown customs. There were also causes tied to the economic system. In the feudal period, which lasted until the second half of the 19th century in most of the Polish lands, Jews had a privileged place as the middlemen, the mediators, between the landowners and the peasants who tilled the land. For example, Jews were often granted the sole right to run the local tavern and to produce alcohol. A system developed in which Jews helped the landlords to exploit their peasants: collecting grain grown by the peasants, turning it into alcohol, and selling it back to the peasants, often on credit. It was easier for the peasants to resent the Jews than the lords themselves, with whom they did not have direct contact.

The Three Polands of the Partitions

The Commonwealth ended in the late 1700s when it was divided among the newly dominant powers in Eastern Europe. During the late 18th century, the rulers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Prussia, and Russia agreed to divide the lands of a weakened Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth among themselves.

By that time, too, Jews residing within the borders of Russia were legally restricted to the empire's western regions, known as the Pale of Settlement, which embraced much of today's Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and parts of the Baltic states.



The partitions of Poland: 1772, 1793, 1795.

The partitions carried out between 1772 and 1795 put an end to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Polish culture, and also the culture of Polish Jews, would begin to develop distinct characteristics, depending on which of the three empires a given region had been incorporated into. Polish and Jewish communities living in each would enter the period of modernization and industrialization in different cultural and political environments.

Millions of Poles chose to leave their homeland for more freedom and economic opportunity elsewhere in Europe and in the New World. In the Russian Pale of Settlement, a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms from 1881 to 1884, following the assassination of Czar Alexander II, and again in Kishinev in 1903, spurred mass emigration to the United States. Despite the emigration, however, Jews retained an especially large presence in what

Table 1: Interwar Poland, Jews in Selected Cities

City	Number of Jewish Residents	Jewish Proportion of All Residents
Warsaw	352,659	30.1 %
Łódź	202,497	33.5 %
Białystok	39,165	60.0 %
Lublin	38,537	34.7 %
Pinsk	20,220	63.4 %
Kraków	56,515	25.8 %

Adapted from Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), and Jewish Virtual Library (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org, accessed April 2012).

Table 2: Interwar Poland, Jews in Selected Professions

Profession	Number of Jews	Proportion of Jews in the Profession
Medicine	4,488	56.0 %
Law	6,454	33.5 %
Journalism & Publishing	1,315	22.0 %
Education	13,320	43.3 %

Adapted from Raphael Mahler, *Yehude polin ben shte milhamot ha-olam* (Tel-Aviv, 1968), p.159.

would become interwar Poland. During the early 20th century Jews made up approximately 10% of the Polish population. Consider that in Germany at the time Jews were about 1% of the population, though very influential within letters, philosophy, and culture. In Hungary the figure was 5%. In the United States today Jews make up 2% of the population. New York City, which many think of as a city that feels very Jewish, has a population that is 12% Jewish. Imagine that most of Poland, including the small towns, was far more Jewish than New York. In the major Polish cities in the 1920s and 30s, Jewish populations ranged from around one-third in Warsaw, Łódź, and Lwów (now Lviv, Ukraine), for example, to over one-half in Białystok. Polish towns, especially those in the eastern half of the country and Galicia, were from 50% to 80% Jewish (see Tables 1 and 2).

Independent Poland

After the end of World War I, on November 11, 1918, Poland regained independence. A former freedom fighter and military leader, Józef Piłsudski, became head of state of the Second Polish Republic.

Jewish life and culture flourished during the interwar period (1918-39), in spite of economic hard times, high unemployment, and rising tension between proponents of a multicultural Poland and the nationalists. Jews created their own schools, summer camps, youth movements, sports clubs, theater, cinema, literature, and a press in three languages: Hebrew, Polish, and Yiddish.

The enormous wealth of Jewish life during this period is sometimes referred to as the Second Golden Age in the history of Polish Jews. Some Jews were involved in building independent Poland and participated in politics, while others collaborated with Soviet communists against Polish interests. Between 1922 and 1928 there were 35 Jewish members of the Polish Parliament (8%) and 12 Jewish senators (6%). Theaters playing in Yiddish proliferated, producing classic plays as well as contemporary Polish and foreign dramas. Szymon Anski's "Dybbuk" became especially popular. Jewish movie producers (Leo Forbert), directors (Marek Arnsztein), and songwriters (Henryk Wars) contributed to the development of Polish film, while others chose Yiddish film. Interwar Poland offered more Jewish press titles in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish than are available now in Israel.

End of Multicultural Poland

On the eve of World War II, Poland was home to about 3.5 million Jews. During World War II, as a result of German and Soviet aggression, some 5.7 million Polish citizens perished. Of these almost 3 million were Jews. For much of Poland's history, until the Holocaust, about two-thirds of the population consisted of ethnically

Discussion Topic

The beginnings of the Jewish revival in Poland.

[I]n 1979, we were among the founders of an intense underground seminar, the “Jewish Flying University.” Its Jewish and non-Jewish participants were equally ignorant. For the Jews the first aim was therapeutic.... This meant the beginning of a real Jewish identity, one not imposed from outside but derived from a sense of connection. Not in fear but with pride; not an unfortunate ancestry but a fascinating heritage.

Some of us began to recreate rituals. We mostly used American books, and occasional contacts. At the first Passover seder, conducted in my home by a friend who was more experienced because of his trips abroad, I asked the four questions; I really was like a child. The following year I conducted the seder myself.... We learned a lot from books, especially *The Jewish Catalogue: A Do-It-Yourself Kit*, and later from educational activities under the auspices of the Lauder Foundation. Because we could always choose our pace, and our interpretations, there was no need to rebel.

As the president of the Jewish Forum in Poland I initiated a Jewish identity telephone hotline. We offered hidden, insecure Jews an opportunity to talk about their problems relating to their Jewishness. Then we helped create support groups in the hope that among thousands of people with Jewish ancestors some would begin the uneasy journey into Jewishness.

—Stanisław Krajewski, *Poland and the Jews: Reflections of a Polish Polish Jew* (2005)

Questions

How has the experience of discovering or embracing one’s Jewishness in Poland changed from those early days described by Professor Krajewski?

Is it likely that young Poles who learn that they are of Jewish background feel problems or stresses created by this identity?

How might the experience of discovering one’s Jewishness differ between individuals living in major Polish cities and those living in small towns without any known Jewish population?

Polish residents and the other third of Jews (up to 10%), Ukrainians (16%), Belarusians (5%), Germans (3%), and smaller numbers of other ethnic groups (1%). Germany’s “final solution” was implemented primarily on occupied Polish territory, because that is where the largest Jewish population was living.

“I have always believed that our work in Poland is to revive the Jewish identity of individuals. I want to give people the chance to decide to be Jewish.”

—Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Chief Rabbi of Poland

The loss of 85–89% of Polish Jews meant the end of the Ashkenazi civilization that had developed and thrived on Polish lands for almost a millennium. Another major change came after the war with the redrawing of Eastern Europe’s borders, which placed Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine in the Soviet Union, and the forceful resettlement of many Germans and Ukrainians to the west or the east. Poland’s postwar communist government was installed with Soviet support against the wishes of the majority of the population. The new government did its best to level differences, whether ideological, religious, or cultural. As a result, Poland lost its ethnic and religious diversity.

Yet an estimated 300,000+ Polish Jews survived the war, most of them in the former Soviet Union. Some had survived in ghettos and camps or fought with the partisans or were saved by Polish military units. Many survived hidden by non-Jewish Poles or in monasteries. Some of them, adopted as children, were raised as Catholics and may not have remembered their Jewish parents once the war ended. What happened to these Jews?

One result of the communist regime’s official government policy was to make Jewishness and Jewish identity

detriments for anyone who wanted a public career. The many Jews who assumed high positions in the government disavowed or disregarded their Jewish identities in public and even in private. Others chose to remain under the false identities that had protected them during the war. Many left Poland for then-Palestine, Australia, Argentina, or the United States. Postwar violence and pogroms, such as one in Kielce in 1946, where 46 Jews were murdered, did not encourage Jews to stay.

Jewish families maintained contact with those who emigrated as best they could, but aside from occasional letters and packages and support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), connections with Jews outside of Poland were tenuous. It is not surprising that Jews and others outside of Poland commonly believed that no Jews or Jewish life remained. In truth the numbers fell during the postwar period, in particular in 1946, 1956, and 1968, but even then thousands of Poles with Jewish roots remained in Poland.

So much for the “official” view, but we know that in Polish history there is always something bubbling under the surface, underground, whether clandestine patriotic groups opposing the Czar or so-called Flying Universities teaching and discussing politically or ideologically touchy issues.

It was so for Poland’s postwar Jews. Those who remained in Poland began quietly to reconstruct their lives as Jews, in the narrow space permitted by the authorities. Jews in Warsaw might attend the Nożyk Synagogue, if only as a place to congregate, participating in the activities of the communist-run Socio-Cultural Society of Jews in Poland (TSKŻ). By 1950 only two Jewish organizations headquartered in Warsaw were allowed to continue functioning, the Jewish Religious Union of Poland, which ran a kosher canteen and provided for the community’s religious needs, and the TSKŻ, which offered cultural and social activities that were the last visible links to Jewish life.

Discussion Topic

New models of “Jewishness” and of Jewish community.

How Jewish-non-Jewish cooperation in Poland is transforming the ways we understand Jewish community and peoplehood.

One of the first questions that most visitors ask is: How many Jews are there in Poland? If you ask this question of your hosts you may find it interesting to compare the answers. Many will say “no one knows exactly,” or “estimates for the entire country range between 5,000 and 30,000.”

They may also say “that depends on what you understand Jewishness to be.” The question of how to define Jewishness (religion, culture, or ethnicity?) and whether by oneself or others has been debated for almost two centuries, since the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment. (Perhaps the very fact of asking oneself what it means to be Jewish serves as a marker, as some have proposed.)

On a personal level, the variety of ways in which individuals in Poland negotiate their paths into or back to Jewishness challenges existing definitions. In a communal sense, the range of forms of cooperation between Jews and Gentiles, who are together building Jewish institutions and programs, calls into question any attempt to determine what institutions are “really Jewish.” Many who are taking part are themselves changed and moved to reflection by a type of cooperation and mutual engagement in Jewish life by Polish non-Jews, Jews and new Jews, and also non-Polish Jews (American, European, Israeli) that is probably unprecedented in history, and was certainly unforeseen.

Question

Do we need a new vocabulary to describe the communal landscape of Jewish Poland today? If so, why, and what would be addressed?

Nevertheless, some communities, with the help of the JDC and private donations, managed to provide basic Jewish needs. Many parents raised their children in Yiddish and sent them to the city's Jewish school, while others chose the path of the Jewish intelligentsia, undeniably Jewish but fiercely secular and adamantly Polish. After the communist government launched a so-called anti-Zionist campaign in 1968, at least 15,000 Jews were forced out of the country. Those who still didn't know their true identities remained invisible, and those who did know burrowed further underground.

“Among the younger generations of educated Poles, including high school youth, the percentage of those declaring anti-Semitic attitudes has declined markedly, while that of respondents expressing hostility to anti-Semitism is on the increase.”

—Honorary Consul Tad Taube, Chairman, Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture

Renewing Poland's Diversity

The seeds of today's vibrant Jewish community were sown by the children of the survivors, especially the intellectuals, and the offspring of highly placed Communist Party members, some of whom later became anti-communist dissidents. Some grew up in Yiddish-speaking homes, perhaps devoid of religious observance but steeped in a form of Polish yiddishkeit. Many, especially those involved with the growing Solidarity movement and underground activities, created the illegal Jewish Flying University in 1979.



Solidarity march in Warsaw.

Meanwhile both Catholics and Jews were suffering repression from a communist regime that was trying to enforce its authority amid mounting popular discontent. In 1981 a military junta seized power and ruled without even the pretense of democratic window dressing. For the next few years, as the world watched in astonishment, Poles began to organize quite openly against the regime under the banner of the Solidarity movement, a mass phenomenon that had the support of Catholics, Jews, and others. One-quarter of Poland's population of 37 million became Solidarity members, while others supported it privately.

Communist regimes in Europe and elsewhere had never allowed such defiance, but in Poland the opposition benefited from open support by Pope John Paul II – a Pole – and the U.S. government. Michael Schudrich, now Chief Rabbi of Poland, watched “in amazement as the country's democratic movement, crushed by the tanks of the military coup of 1981, refused to die. I observed with even more amazement as the few Jews who remained fought tooth and nail for their Jewishness, long concealed or denied by their families, and treated with outright hostility by the regime.” This led him to the realization that “these Jews were often personally part of that former, wider struggle: it was, in fact, the same struggle.”

With the end of the communist regime in 1989, Poles could reconstruct a democratic government and begin reorganizing civil society in the context of their thousand-year history, a history inseparable from that of Polish Jews. The post-communist era opened up broad spaces for Jews. As early as 1988 a courageous and determined handful of parents established a Jewish kindergarten, the first in Warsaw since World War II. The kindergarten led to the opening of the primary and middle schools of Lauder Morasha and also paved the way for the opening of youth clubs and summer camps, followed by the creation of a student organization and eventually Birthright Poland (Taglit). Synagogues around the country, barely used since the early 1970s, reopened their doors. A new Jewish intellectual magazine, *Midrasz*, was born in 1997, and an adult educational center began operating in the early 2000s.

Today 240 children attend the Lauder Morasha School (a majority of whom now have Jewish roots), and the summer camps are filled with children, families, and seniors learning about and living a Jewish life. Jewish community centers have opened in Kraków and Warsaw. Jewish studies programs exist in universities in Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, Lublin, and Łódź to name only a few. The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute has begun making its treasured archives accessible via the Internet, and POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which opened in 2013, provides entrée to a thousand years of Polish Jewish history. The Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków attracts more and more visitors annually. Hillel, established in 2016, engages students from Warsaw's universities.

Perhaps most significantly, the communal Judaism of the early revival period has given way to home-based Jewish life. Mezuzot are reappearing on doors, Chanukah menorahs are in the windows, and more people celebrate Passover at home than at the communal celebrations. A new generation of Polish

How to Use the Guide

We have divided a visit to Łódź into four routes, each identified by its own color and with its own map. The routes are coordinated so that the end of one walk can be followed by the beginning of the next, but you should feel free to take as many walks as you like, in whatever order seems best. The individual route maps note the primary sites described along the route, as well as major city venues and sites that may not be described in the text but might be of interest. Sidebar images and texts provide additional information about the places you will see as you walk, as well as about themes and topics of more general relevance. The Discussion Topics and Questions add yet another dimension to your explorations of Łódź. At the back of this guide is a glossary that explains terms, phrases, and organizations with which you may not be familiar.

Jews is prepared to build on an extraordinary and complex past, and to create and contribute to Polish Jewry and to a democratic Poland.

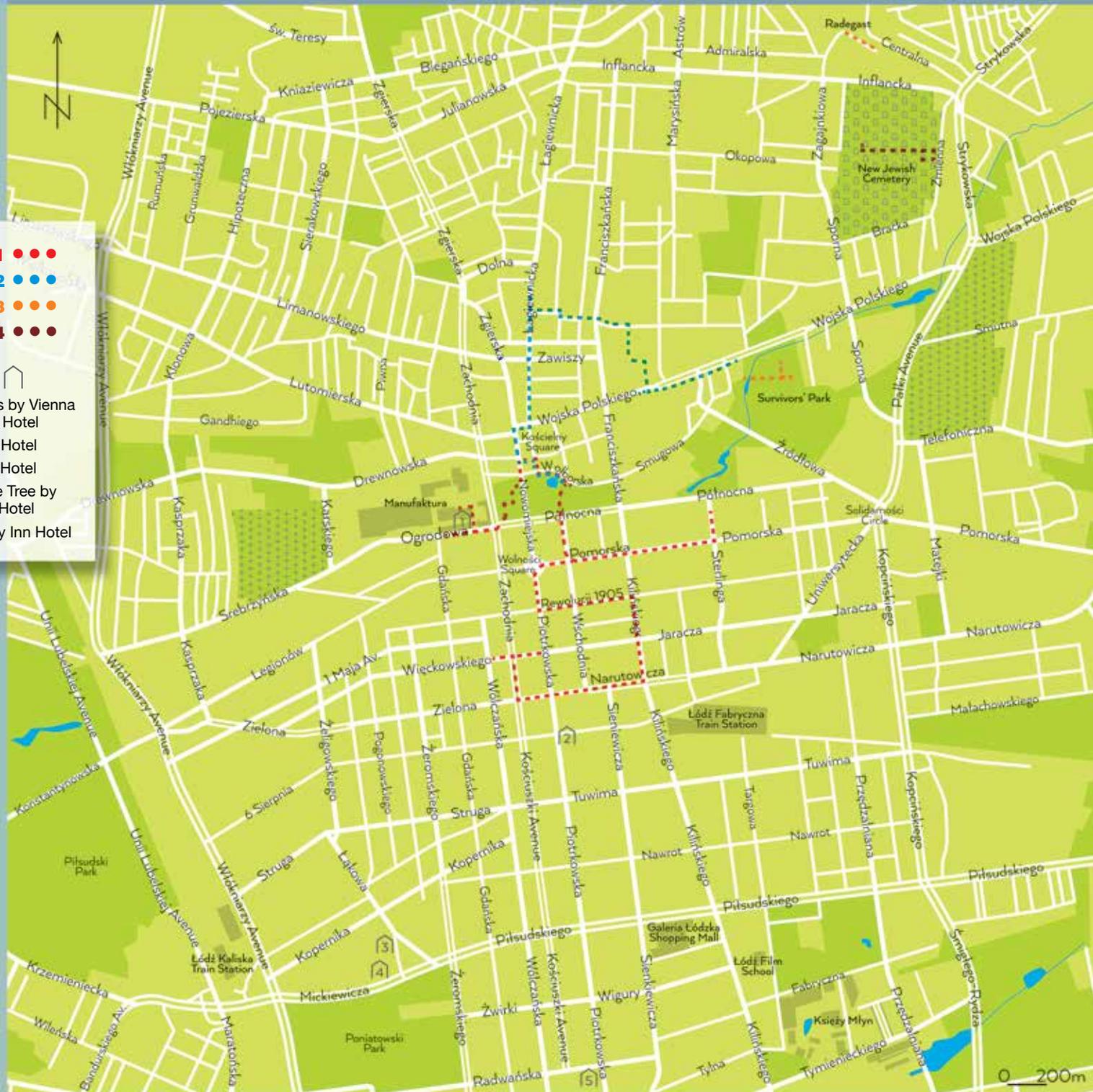
Many of today's Poles regard prewar Poland, with its multiethnic and multireligious society, as the authentic Poland, one of which they are proud. Public discourse has seen renewed interest in exploring the complex, multicultural history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and of independent Poland between the world wars. School textbooks, museum exhibits, and narratives of Polish identity are being rewritten to integrate Jewish experience. ■

—Konstanty Gebert, Helise E. Lieberman,
Shana Penn, Dr. Karen Underhill

Łódź Walking Routes: An Overview

Route 1 ●●●●
Route 2 ●●●●
Route 3 ●●●●
Route 4 ●●●●

Hotels 🏠
 1. Andel's by Vienna House Hotel
 2. Grand Hotel
 3. Focus Hotel
 4. Double Tree by Hilton Hotel
 5. Holiday Inn Hotel



INTRODUCTION TO ŁÓDŹ

Łódź symbolizes the cosmopolitan, multiethnic industrial city of the 19th century. “The Polish Manchester”, as it was called, underwent unprecedented economic development and growth, its population rising by one thousand percent in little more than a century. Many of its residents were Jews, drawn here by the opportunity to find work in the new factories. Some Jews were themselves entrepreneurs and factory owners, persons of wealth and standing in the city. They settled primarily in the Old Town and in the neighboring village of Bałuty – an area that had once been officially designated a “Jewish district” (a status that was abolished in 1862).

Łódź grew from a little village called Łódka to become the leading textile center in the Kingdom of Poland. Its rise was encouraged with government incentives in the form of tax exemptions and loan guarantees, along with an influx of private capital and entrepreneurs. A key date is 1839, when Ludwig Geyer launched the city’s first fully mechanized factory – powered by steam – starting rapid development of the local textile and cotton industries. The city’s amazing growth was not interrupted until World War I, with the onset of heavy fighting in Poland and other eastern lands.

The history of the Jewish community is interrelated with the economic growth of the city. The first Jewish families came to Łódź before 1775, but the earliest significant increase came at the beginning of the 19th century, when Jews made up one-third of the population. The first synagogue in Łódź was established in 1809 at Wolborska Street. The small wooden building was replaced in 1871 by a beautiful brick synagogue, built in Moorish style.



Izrael Poznański's factory. (Wikimedia)

At the opening of the 20th century Jews continued to migrate to Łódź, mostly Litvaks fleeing from pogroms in the Russian Empire. The resumption of economic growth after World War I brought yet others into the city. According to data from 1936, almost 230,000 Jews lived in Łódź (about 30% of the total population). Many were involved in the commercial and finance sectors, including trade, banking, and insurance. In the years 1865-1913, Jewish business owners constituted from 21% to 47% of the city’s middle class.

Growing affluence made Łódź a city of contrasts, with luxury apartment houses sitting amid slums. Alongside the relatively small number of rich families of industrialists, who were often interrelated, there lived a much larger number of Jewish laborers and small-scale traders and artisans. The evident wealth of the factory owners, the families of Scheibler, Grohmann,

Geyer, Poznański, Heinzel, Biedermann, and others, might excite general envy and the ire of socialists and communists, but it also helped create the city's numerous financial institutions, schools, hospitals, theaters, synagogues, and churches.

A distinctive feature of the Łódź Jews was their rapid assimilation, resulting in the creation of a strong class of highly educated and affluent Jewish residents. The popularity of social activities led to the establishment of organizations and clubs for purposes of charity, science, tourism, culture and the arts, and sports. They constituted an important node of Jewish life in central Poland.

The position of the Jews deteriorated rapidly after the German invasion in September 1939. Łódź was annexed and incorporated into the Third Reich, unlike Warsaw or Kraków, which were part of the General Governorship, a German-occupied zone. On the order of Adolf Hitler in April 1940, the city received a German name, Litzmannstadt, memorializing a German general who had distinguished himself during the 1914 Battle of Łódź in the opening stage of World War I.

German authorities immediately began excluding Jews from the city's economic life by depriving them of civil rights and humiliating and stigmatizing them. This included roundups for forced labor and the obligation to wear a yellow Star of David. The occupiers also destroyed synagogues as well as objects related to Jewish culture.

The Germans established a ghetto in February 1940. During the next five years, approximately 200,000 people were sent there, including city residents and people deported from surrounding towns and from Western Europe. Of this number, more than 43,000 died in the ghetto because of disease and hunger, while others were sent to forced labor camps. After the authorities ordered the implementation of the "final solution" in 1942, those who remained in the ghetto were deported. At least 77,000 were gassed in the extermination camp at Chełmno on the Ner and approximately 65,000 were



Piotrkowska Street during the German occupation. (Wikimedia)

transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is estimated that no more than 15,000 ghetto inmates survived the war.

Despite violence against the Jews, the city as a whole escaped major war damage. After the war ended in 1945, Łódź became one of the centers of Jewish life in Poland. Many survivors, including those who had fled to the Soviet Union, came here to build Communism. In the succeeding years, however, many Jews also left Łódź – the volume reaching its peak during a so-called anti-Zionist campaign by the communist regime in 1968.

Łódź has gradually regained its Jewish history while simultaneously building its future. A small group of Jews chose to stay in Łódź and revive Jewish life and traditions. The past decade has seen the flourishing of the Jewish community and the establishment of new Jewish organizations. They include Matanael, the first Jewish kindergarten, organized by Miriam Szychowska, the wife of the Łódź rabbi, and a Jewish Sunday School for children run by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Every year the community marks the anniversary of the ghetto liquidation with a ceremony and the participation of NGOs and local authorities. The Center for Jewish Research was established at the University of Łódź in 2005. ■

The Promised Land

The dynamic development of Łódź gave birth to its nickname, “The Promised Land,” a city of opportunity for those who founded industrial empires and for ordinary people who saw factory labor as the road to a better life. The social changes inspired Polish author Władysław Reymont, a Noble Prize winner in literature, to write *The Promised Land* (1899), a novel that vividly describes the rapid industrialization of Łódź and its cruel effects on workers and mill owners. In 1975, Andrzej Wajda made a movie based on the novel. It tells the story of three friends, a Pole, a German, and a Jew, struggling to build a factory in the raw world of 19th-century capitalism. The picture of the city, with its dirty and dangerous factories, ostentatiously opulent residences, and ruthless characters, was filmed in the original Łódź spaces with the best Polish actors. It was an official Oscar nominee in 1975 and today provides a unique entrée into the history of Łódź.



General view of Łódź in the early 20th century.



Postcard view of Łódź in the 19th century.



Workers of the Poznański textile factory. (State Archives in Łódź)



Scene from the film *The Promised Land* by Andrzej Wajda. (Wikimedia)

Łódź Walking Route 1

Łódź Walking Route 1

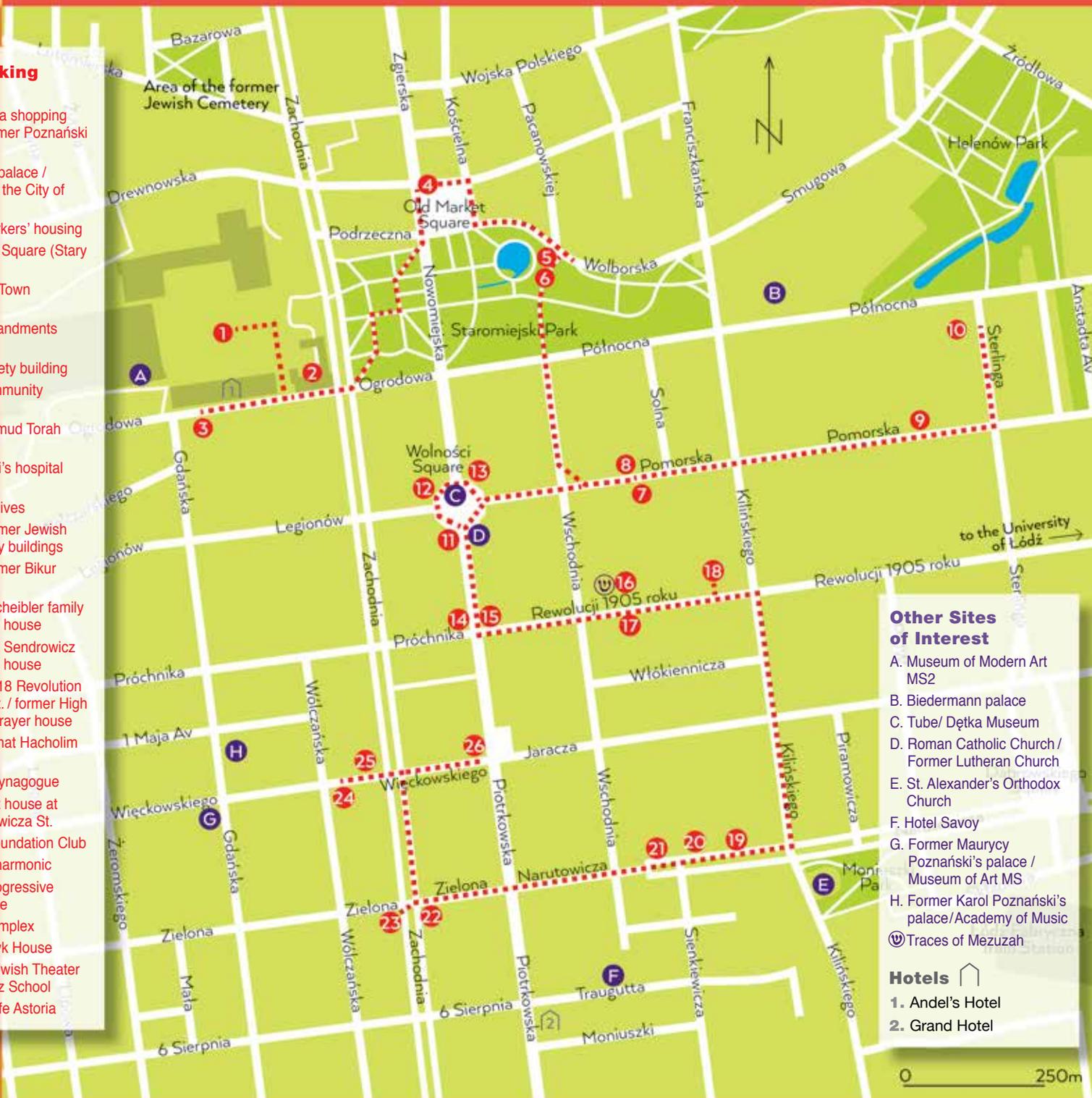
1. Manufaktura shopping center / former Poznański factory
2. Poznański palace / Museum of the City of Łódź
3. Former workers' housing
4. Old Market Square (Stary Rynek)
5. Site of Old Town Synagogue
6. Ten Commandments Monument
7. Credit Society building
8. Jewish community buildings
9. Former Talmud Torah School
10. Poznański's hospital buildings
11. State Archives
12. Site of former Jewish community buildings
13. Site of former Bikur Cholim
14. Former Scheibler family apartment house
15. Former D. Sendrowicz apartment house
16. House at 18 Revolution of 1905 St. / former High School / prayer house
17. Former Linat Hacholim building
18. Reicher Synagogue
19. Apartment house at 32 Narutowicza St.
20. Lauder Foundation Club
21. Łódź Philharmonic
22. Site of Progressive Synagogue
23. Pinkus complex
24. Arthur Szyk House
25. Former Jewish Theater and Peretz School
26. Site of Cafe Astoria

Other Sites of Interest

- A. Museum of Modern Art MS2
- B. Biedermann palace
- C. Tube/ Dętka Museum
- D. Roman Catholic Church / Former Lutheran Church
- E. St. Alexander's Orthodox Church
- F. Hotel Savoy
- G. Former Maurycy Poznański's palace / Museum of Art MS
- H. Former Karol Poznański's palace/Academy of Music
- Ⓜ Traces of Mezuzah

Hotels

- 1. Anel's Hotel
- 2. Grand Hotel



Jewish Heritage in Łódź: From the Past to the Present

Manufaktura and Poznański's Palace /
The Old Town / Old Town Synagogue /
Pomorska 18 and the Jewish Community
/ Liberty Square / Piotrkowska Street /
Revolution of 1905 Street / Mezuzah
at No. 18 / Dos Naje Lebn and the
Philharmonic / Dajcze Szil / Szyk House /
Theaters and Peretz School / Jewish
Avant-Garde

Manufaktura and Poznański's Palace: Dialogue between Past and Present

We begin our walk in the Manufaktura shopping center **No. 1, Map 1**, one of the city's most recognizable landmarks, embracing the buildings of former factories. Operating since 2006, the center combines culture, entertainment, and shopping in the largest urban revival project in Europe, thanks to which the factory complex, dating back to the late 19th century, has regained its splendor.

The history of the place dates to the 1870s, when the land was purchased by Izrael Poznański, a Jewish entrepreneur. The son of Kalman Poznański, a wealthy merchant, he added textile production to the family business. Along Ogródowa Street he built one of the city's first



Model of "The Lost Quarter," a part of the Old Town that was not preserved. (Museum of the City of Łódź, photo by Stefan Brajter)

mechanically powered weaving mills, and through expanded production made himself an industrial tycoon and one of the Łódź "kings of cotton." He erected weaving and spinning plants, workshops, and warehouses, as well as a fire station and power plant. Today we can admire them around the Manufaktura complex.

Poznański built an impressive palace **No. 2, Map 1** as his residence and office. Its location near the factory – with an elegant French garden separating the two buildings – allowed him to directly oversee production. Although the mansion on Ogródowa Street was the biggest that the Poznańskis built in Łódź, it was not the only one. Approximately 600 yards south

ROUTE 1



The factory of Izrael Poznański was for many years the largest in Łódź. (State Archives in Łódź)



The main residence of the Poznański family is an impressive structure that today houses the Museum of the City of Łódź. (State Archives in Łódź)

ŁÓDŹ



The Old Market, when it was the city's economic center. (Museum of the City of Łódź, photo by Stefan Brajter)



The market on Wschodnia Street, with the Old Town Synagogue in the background. (Museum of the City of Łódź, photo by Stefan Brajter)



Model of the Old Town Synagogue. (Museum of the City of Łódź, photo by Stefan Brajter)

of the Manufaktura, on Gdańska Street, two sons of Izrael Poznański – Maurycy and Karol – owned their own impressive palaces. Today these buildings house the Academy of Music **Point H, Map 1** and the Museum of Modern Art **Point G, Map 1**.

Apart from his business activity, Poznański supported other initiatives: the construction of a hospital named after him and his wife; the purchase of land to establish a Jewish cemetery; contributions to schools; and financial support for the construction of a Christian Orthodox church and a Progressive Synagogue. The synagogue, located in former Spacerowa Street (now Kościuszki) **No. 22, Map 1**, was an impressive structure designed by Adolf Wolff and Hilary Majewski and opened in 1887. Its construction was sponsored by other wealthy citizens of Łódź including Karol Scheibler, who was a Lutheran. Only members of the upper classes had access, especially those who had contributed to its founding. They listened to sermons delivered in Polish and enjoyed special celebrations on Polish holidays.

Poznański built a complex of houses for workers **No. 3, Map 1** on the other side of Ogrodowa Street, near the factory, to ensure that workers would appear promptly for work and to guarantee a regular labor supply for developing his business. His workers lived in the shadow of the factory chimneys, and their lives were defined by the factory owner's many establishments such as the hospital, cultural center, and a wooden church moved from the Old Town. The modest one-room apartments were quite



The Manufaktura shopping center is a vibrant place offering a wide range of cultural activities. Formerly the textile production center of Izrael Poznański, it is an example of a successful revitalization of a post-industrial urban space. (Wikimedia)

respectable by the standards of the day, but working conditions were harsh. The work day lasted 16 hours (beginning at 5 a.m.) and often included the holidays. Attempts by workers to go on strike were suppressed by the Czarist police, and the ringleaders were summarily fired.

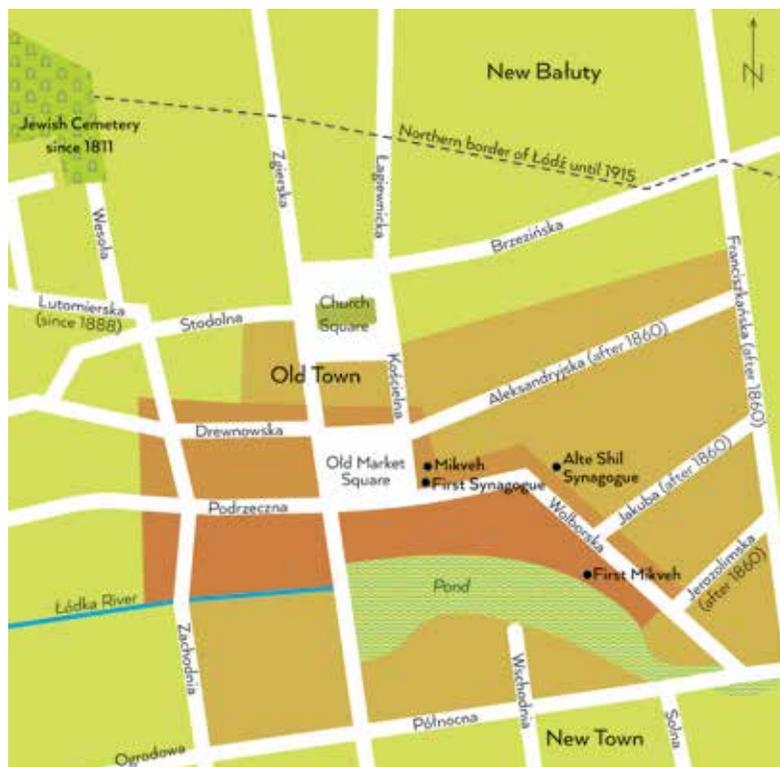
We enter through the historic gate of the Poznański plant, located on the other side of Ogrodowa. Upon turning left, we admire the palace's richly decorated façade. According to one legend, when the architect asked Poznański what style of decoration he wanted, he replied "All of them," because he could afford it. The interior, which can be accessed through the entrance on Ogrodowa, is as impressive as the initial view. Some residents call it the Louvre of Łódź.

The building is home to the Museum of the City of Łódź, the city's most important historical museum. It offers a fascinating exhibition dedicated to the Poznański family as well as

renovated offices and rooms associated with prominent inhabitants of Łódź. One of them was Jan Karski, a courier of the Polish resistance during World War II, who passed information about the Holocaust to Western Allies. Another was the renowned Polish Jewish composer and pianist Arthur Rubinstein. The diorama exhibition “The Lost Quarter” presents a part of Łódź that was once a lively Jewish district that was razed during World War II and is today known as Staromiejski (Old City) Park.

After leaving the museum, we walk back past Ogródowa Street toward Manufaktura. The Museum of Modern Art MS² **Point A, Map 1** has its headquarters behind the impressive weaving hall, which has been converted into one of the most modern hotels in Łódź. The repurposed building features one of the largest and oldest European collections of avant-garde art. Here we can see works by Fernand Léger, Max Ernst, Hans Arp, Kurt Schwitters, and other famous artists.

The Museum of Modern Art MS² is the last place we will visit in Manufaktura. Coming out of the museum, we turn on Ogródowa Street, where we can again admire the former industrial buildings on



one side and the workers' houses on the other. We are going past the mansion toward the Old Town, the district where the history of Łódź began.

The Old Town

Just a few hundred yards from the Poznański factory is the Old Town and its central point, the Old Market Square. Rebuilt after World War II in accordance with Socialist Realism principles, it no longer resembles its original form.

We are standing in the Old Market Square (Stary Rynek) **No. 4, Map 1**, where the history of Łódź began. A plaque explains that Łódź became a town in 1423. First houses were built around the Old Market Square, while farmlands stretched behind.

ROUTE 1



The home of the Jewish community on Pomorska Street has a guesthouse and kindergarten. (Photo by Adam Sitarek)



Talmud Torah Jewish school at the turn of the 20th century. (State Archives in Łódź)



The oldest buildings on Liberty Square – the Town Hall and the Lutheran Church – were built in the 1820s. (State Archives in Łódź)

Rediscovery of a Writer

The writer Jacob Morgenstern (born Yaakov Kaczka in 1820 in Piotrków Trybunalski) lived most of his adult life in Łódź in the vicinity of the Old Market Square. His humorous and entertaining books in Yiddish reveal considerable knowledge of the Torah and the Talmud, as well



One of Jacob Morgenstern's books in Yiddish.

as a deep understanding of human nature. His best-known is *Reb Simkhe Plakhte: Der velt shvindler* (*Reb Simkhe Plakhte: The World Swindler*). In it a simple water carrier who is snubbed by prominent villagers accidentally gives good advice to the King of Poland, who rewards him beyond his wildest dreams. The theme of ordinary people as heroes runs through many of Morgenstern's books. Despite the popularity of his books, he remained poor because the publishers did not pay him fairly. He supported his family by teaching at a girls' school, serving as a matchmaker, performing as a wedding jester, translating literature from various languages, and writing letters for illiterate women who wanted to contact husbands and sons who had been conscripted into the Russian army.

His books can be found in libraries around the world, including the Library of Congress and the National Library of Israel. Morgenstern died in 1890 and is buried in the Old Jewish Cemetery on Wesola Street, paved over for housing in the 1950s. The grave of one of his sons, Szymon Wolf, is in the New Jewish Cemetery.

Morgenstern disappeared from the literary world and his family's memory until 2013, when his great-great-granddaughter Patti Morgenstern-Clarren delved into a family story about "a famous writer." She put together the pieces of the puzzle and in 2015 traveled to Łódź with her 90-year-old father Stanley Morgenstern and her husband Hadley. Guided by Magdalena Matuszewska, they walked the streets to see Szymon Wolf's grave. The Morgensterns have had some of Jacob's works translated into English, including *Bintshe the Tsadeykeste, or the Demolished Bathhouse*, accessible at the website ingeveb.org

—Patti Morgenstern-Clarren

South of the market, by the park, flows the Łódka River, site of the oldest mill in Łódź.

The first Jewish residents settled in modest wooden houses built around the Old Market Square and on adjacent streets. In 1809, the first synagogue was built, followed two years later by a cemetery (now vanished) on Wesola Street near the Old Town. The number of Jews grew from fewer than 100 in 1809 to more than 162,500 (out of a total pop. of 506,000) by 1914. No other city in the Kingdom of Poland experienced comparable growth.

The Old Town became the heart of the Jewish quarter. Craftsmen, tailors, merchants, and innkeepers lived and worked around the market. A mikveh and synagogue were nearby. Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish could be heard in houses of worship, cheders, workshops, small shops, and modest dwellings in the streets adjacent to the market. Initially most of the Jews rented houses from Christians. The first brick house was built on the western side of the square by Kalman Poznański, the father of Izrael Poznański. In a house in the Old Market, Kalman Poznański ran a shop selling fabrics and spices.

To encourage assimilation, the authorities of the Congress Kingdom of Poland passed a law that obliged Jews to reside in designated areas of cities. In Łódź in 1825 all Jews were ordered to settle within an area of the Old Town defined initially as the southern part of the Old



During the 20th century, as the population grew, upper- and middle-class Jews moved to the area of Liberty Square, the elegant center of the city. (Wikimedia)

Market Square and the southern side of adjacent Podrzeczna and Wolborska Streets. The city's continued economic and demographic growth meant that the number of Jews in Łódź was growing steadily, so the district enjoyed frequent enlargements.

Permission to reside outside the designated zone was awarded to Jews who had enough assets, could read and write in Polish, French, or German, did not stand out by their clothes, sent their children to state schools, and were willing to build a brick house or set up a factory outside the designated area. Once civil-equality laws were introduced in 1862, the authorities abolished the designated zones and Jews could settle wherever they wanted.

During the 20th century, more and more Jews decided to leave the Old Town and buy apartments in the elegant city center of Łódź. This resulted in a shift of Jewish life toward Liberty Square, although

mainly for the upper and middle classes. The Old Town and the Jewish district of Bałuty remained for the poor.

Wolborska 5: Moses and a Grand Synagogue

From the Old Market Square we now head east past Wolborska Street, which used to be a border of the Jewish district, and go to the former site of a truly magnificent synagogue. But first we pause on the banks of the Łódka at the Ten Commandments Monument **No. 6, Map 1** of Moses raising the Decalogue tablets. It commemorates the presence of Jews in Poland and is located near the former site of the Old Town Synagogue **No. 5, Map 1**, a picture of which can be seen on a panel standing near the monument.

The synagogue, when it was built (1860-61), was the most beautiful building in this part of town, distinguished by a unique profile and Moorish motifs. Facing the valley of the Łódka in the

Discussion Topic

Memorialization and memory-work.

Standing on a site of a former synagogue in Wolborska Street, we want to ask more general questions about the postwar processes of Jewish memory throughout Poland.

Question

For whom, and by whom, should elements of Poland's Jewish past be commemorated publicly? By the Polish Jewish community? By Polish local and national government bodies? By and for Gentile Poles or Jewish communities outside of Poland? Where should funding come from for such efforts? What kinds of stories about the Jewish past should be told in public spaces throughout Poland?

Discussion Topic

Polish Philosemitism

Philosemitism is an interest in, respect for, and appreciation of Jewish culture and religion by Gentiles. It is visible in the many festivals of Jewish culture throughout Poland, the scope of Jewish-themed programs on public television, government sponsorship of Jewish museums and memorials, the emergence of Jewish studies programs at Polish universities, the popularity of plays, movies, and books by Israeli and Jewish artists, and the participation of Polish politicians in Jewish commemorations.

Question

How can we make sense of this phenomenon? What does Poland's Jewish renaissance teach us about the uses of memory in contemporary Poland?

corner of one of the largest squares in the Old Town, it towered over the district and became its symbol. Contemporary descriptions indicate that the sumptuous interior housed a beautifully decorated aron ha-kodesh (ark). Nearby was a municipal beit midrash with numerous prayer halls and a rich library.

The German occupation authorities destroyed the synagogue in 1939 – setting it on fire and then demolishing the remaining walls. Today, at the place of the former synagogue, the corner of Wolborska and Pacanowskiej Streets, a small hill covers the ruins of the destroyed buildings.

Leaving the Ten Commandments Monument, we go through the park and reach Wschodnia Street. Note that the house numbers start at 5, indicating that the street used to begin elsewhere – in this case, in the big market square by the former synagogue. This park once contained a dense urban development, demolished during the war and never rebuilt. On the left side of the park in the distance we can see one of the most beautiful villas built by the industrial grandees – the mansion of the German Robert Biedermann **Point B, Map 1**, now part of the local university.

Walking along Wschodnia, we reach Pomorska Street, where at No. 18 the Jewish community has its seat.

Pomorska 18: Jewish Łódź at a Glance

The main gate to the heart of the Jewish community is located opposite the

magnificent edifice of the Credit Society. The building housed the most important institution financing the construction of factories in Łódź in the 19th century. It is well preserved, and the lavishly decorated meeting room of the Credit Society **No. 7, Map 1** merits a look.

Across Pomorska, at No. 18 (former villa of industrialist Karol Gebhard, built in the 1840s), are the most important Jewish institutions of Łódź – the community center, synagogue, and mikveh **No. 8, Map 1**.

The community in Łódź dates to the early 19th century, but its center moved to Pomorska Street in the early 20th century. The buildings on Pomorska stand witness to the tragic events of 1939, when the German authorities arrested many prominent Łódź Jews here in the first months of the war. After World War II, Łódź became a center for rebuilding Jewish life in Poland. Survivors of the ghettos and camps and deportees from the Soviet Union managed to rebuild various Jewish associations and institutions, including the community center (known then as the Religious Jewish Congregation). Owing to postwar emigration that peaked in 1968, fewer Jews were involved in the life of the community. Despite the difficulties, many tried to preserve their identity by leading culturally rich lives and celebrating holidays.

Since the fall of Communism, the community center has prospered and today has more than 300 members. Rabbi Symcha Keller chaired its board for many

years, actively participating in the social life of the city, representing the Jews of Łódź during local and national celebrations, and educating residents about Judaism. In June 2016 the center installed a new board.

The building best representing the community is the Łódź Synagogue, a living center that invites all for prayer and Shabbat or festival meals. It is situated next to a newly built mikveh – the pride of the Łódź community. In the front of the building is the Linat Orchim guesthouse, which also functions as a Jewish kindergarten, Matanael, run by rebbetzin. Thanks to community funds, the kindergarten has a religious profile and the children learn Hebrew and participate in Jewish festivals. An adjacent building has the only shop in Łódź that offers kosher products.

This area contains other interesting sites. On the same street as the community center is the building of the former Talmud Torah vocational school **No. 9, Map 1**. The school was established in the late 19th century by the most important Łódź industrialists, including Izrael Poznański, Szaja Rosenblat, and Zygmunt Jarociński. In honor of his 50th wedding anniversary, Jarociński paid for construction of the building, where Jewish students could study weaving and mechanics; it now houses the University of Łódź's Faculty of Pedagogy. Around the corner on neighboring Seweryn Sterling Street is a beautiful, slightly rundown hospital complex **No. 10, Map 1** named after Izrael and Eleonora Poznański and established

by the family for workers and the city's poor.

We leave the community building and turn right onto Wschodnia Street. We cross it and, while heading toward the magnificent monument of Polish national hero Tadeusz Kościuszko, reach one of the most important places in Łódź – Liberty Square.

Liberty Square: Heart of the New City

While the Old City is associated with the history of a small agricultural town, Liberty Square witnessed the flourishing of an industrial city. At the beginning of the 19th century the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland decided that Łódź, along with other locations in the country, should become centers for modern industry, and started to create conditions for the development of workshops and factories. The plan of the “new” city of Łódź, designed for clothiers and textile makers, laid a geometric grid over fields and meadows in the south part of old Łódź. Streets named after North (Północna), East (Wschodnia), South (Południowa), and West (Zachodnia) framed the quarter-sections around an octagonal space that formed the center of the new city.

Buildings erected in the central space and around it – mainly along Piotrkowska Street – were inhabited by newcomers from all over Europe. Even today the space is considered a reference point for the numbering of all the streets in Łódź. Its crucial role was emphasized by the presence of magnificent public buildings

ROUTE 1



Piotrkowska Street is lined with beautiful buildings dating from the turn of the 20th century, including the apartments of the Scheibler and Sendrowicz families. (Photo by Adam Sitarek)



The walls of the courtyard at Piotrkowska 3 feature a mirror mosaic, “Pasaż Róży” (Rose Passage), by Joanna Rajkowska. (Photo by Adam Sitarek)

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within it: the town hall, a church, and a school. The nearly 100-year-old town hall building houses the State Archives **No. 11, Map 1**, which holds documents about the history of Łódź.

Next to the town hall, across Piotrkowska Street, is one of the oldest churches in Łódź **Point D, Map 1**. Formerly it served German Lutheran settlers; now it functions as a Roman Catholic church. A former public school building now houses the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography with a large collection of monuments dating to the prehistory of Łódź. We can discover additional interesting sights not only on the square but under it. An old circular sewer system, commonly known as the Tube (Pol. Dętka), has recently been opened to the public **Point C, Map 1**.

As Jewish life in Łódź shifted toward the city center, Liberty Square **No. 12, Map 1** and its surrounding quarters became the new focus of the Jewish middle class. During the interwar period the Jewish community had its headquarters at Liberty Square (later at Pomorska 7). A few blocks away, at No. 10, the Bikur Cholim charity society was built with a synagogue **No. 13, Map 1**.

It is also in Liberty Square that Piotrkowska Street begins, so let us move in that direction.

Piotrkowska – a Street Instead of a Market

From Liberty Square we go south on Piotrkowska – the elegant promenade

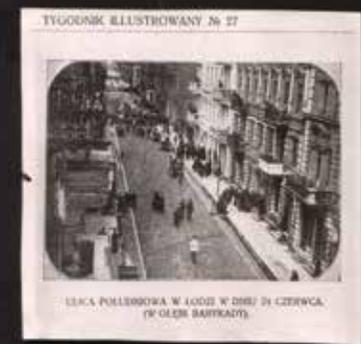
of the city. For centuries this street has been an important transportation route connecting two local municipalities, Piotrków and Łęczyca. With the transformation of Łódź into a factory town, the street became the geographical core of the industrial city.

Piotrkowska (informally called “Pietryna” by Łódź’s residents) quickly became the most important thoroughfare, home to prestigious shops, hotels, and banks, including some of the most architecturally impressive ones in the city. But Piotrkowska was not only about commercial buildings and hotels. Cultural life flourished in cinemas and theaters, while artists and their associates held lively discussions in local cafes. To this day Piotrkowska Street is known as the center of Łódź’s social life.

At the first intersection we walk past great apartment houses: a neo-Renaissance one built by the Scheibler family on the right **No. 14, Map 1**, and on the left the neo-Gothic pile of David Sendrowicz **No. 15, Map 1**, which housed a private synagogue until 1939. Turning left we enter Rewolucji 1905 roku Street (Revolution of 1905 Street) – where workers staged a dramatic protest about their working conditions.

Revolution of 1905 Street

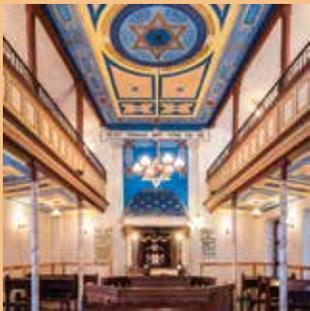
Revolution of 1905 Street, which used to be called Południowa, bounded the new town quarter on the south, the center of which was Liberty Square. Inhabited mostly by the middle class and workers,



Barricades on the streets of Łódź during the 1905 workers’ uprising. (State Archives in Łódź)



A small synagogue of the Reicher family estate still serves its original religious purpose.



The modest interior of Reicher Synagogue, the only surviving synagogue in Łódź. (Photo by Patryk Grądyś Fotografia)

ROUTE 1



The 1905 workers' uprising has become part of the city's lore. The text accompanying the mural reads, "You live in the city of revolution." (Photo by Adam Sitarek)

It got its name (in 1955) after protests by workers to improve their working conditions. The events began in June 1905 with a large factory strike – more than 30,000 workers. When they were attacked by czarist military units, the workers waged a two-day street fight, the "Uprising of Łódź." At the intersection of Wschodnia and Południowa Streets, Cossacks and Russian infantry fought against Jewish, Polish, and German workers, who stood shoulder to shoulder. In just a few days, nearly 200 workers were killed. In memory of those events Południowa was changed to Revolution of 1905 Street and a plaque about the fight was affixed to one of the houses.

The street is associated with more than struggle. Several important institutions were located here. Walking east, at No. 18, we pass the building that housed one of the best prewar schools for Jewish girls, Jaszunski-Zeligmanowa High School **No. 16, Map 1**. When Łódź became a center for rebuilding Jewish life in Poland after World War II, a

Hebrew school named after the fighters of the Warsaw ghetto was built in the same place and operated by the Zionist organization HeHalutz.

Across the street, on the building at No. 19, we can see the remains of a Hebrew inscription above the gate: "Linat Hacholim" (Society for Helping the Sick) **No. 17, Map 1**. It was a clinic and a pharmacy. Today the building houses a kindergarten.

A few yards away, on the other side of the street, at No. 28, we enter the backyard of a large apartment house that contains the only surviving Łódź synagogue **No. 18, Map 1**. Century-old frescoes barely visible on the front of the building show that it belonged to William Reicher. The inscriptions are in Latin and Cyrillic letters.

The synagogue is located in the second courtyard of the building. Built in 1902 as a private house of prayer for the Reicher family, it now serves the Jewish community as a place for prayer and meeting during the most important celebrations. Although modest in form, the building tells a remarkable story of survival. During World War II, when the Nazis destroyed or damaged almost all the synagogues, this small building was preserved because its owner prepared a fake document saying he had sold it to a German friend. The friend, in turn, arranged a salt storage on the premises. After the war, the sole survivor of the Reicher family gave the building to the Jewish community of Łódź. Plaques



St. Alexander's Orthodox Church and nearby St. Olga's Church were considered symbols of Russian domination, but they also contributed to the city's unique atmosphere and multicultural character. (State Archives in Łódź)



Dos Naje Lebn (New Life), appearing weekly in Yiddish, was the first Jewish periodical published in Poland after World War II. Most of the stories concerned the situation of Jews in Poland and reports on the activities of Jewish organizations. (Jewish Historical Institute)

Mezuzah from This Home

The “Mezuzah from This Home” project, run by MiPolin (see page 29) seeks to preserve the few mezuzah traces left in Poland. Prior to World War II, Poland had 3.5 million Jewish inhabitants, and in almost every residence there was at least one mezuzah on the doorframes of entrances to buildings, apartments, and rooms. Of the several million of them in Poland, few remain, having disappeared during the reconstruction or demolition of old buildings. The traces are cast in bronze to create new mezuzot, which can again fulfill their holy function. An address is engraved on the side of every “new” mezuzah. Research about each place helps recover the memory of the people who perished. To date the project has made 35 bronze casts from 35 different cities. The effort is being expanded into parts of pre-war Poland that now belong to Ukraine and Belarus

A search for mezuzah traces in Łódź revealed one containing a scroll in the workshop of a bookbinder at **18 Revolution of 1905 Street**. The non-Jewish owner of the workshop told a MiPolin representative, “The mezuzah has grown into this place, and having found out what it is, I would feel inexplicably sad if it were to be gone.” [Point@Map 1](#)

The building at No. 18 had different functions over the years. On 21 April 1893 it was registered as a prayer house in the names of elders Jakub Inkelberg, Wolf Majer Berman, and Abram Markowicz. Then in 1902 the building became the site of Józef Nelken’s synagogue, also a private prayer house.

Among later residents of the building, in 1930, were Chaim Moszek Dudelzak with his wife Rywka and a son Manela. Chaim was born in 1889 in Nowe Miasto (New Town) and died in 1942 in a hospital in the ghetto. Manela, a Talmud scholar, was born on 1 September 1917 and died on 30 June 1942, probably of tuberculosis in a hospital in the ghetto. During the postwar years some 454 holocaust survivors gave the building as their address.



A replica mezuzah (bottom photo), made from a cast taken from the doorframe (top), of the building at 18 Revolution of 1905 Street (center). (Mi Polin)



The synagogue on Spacerowa Street was the most beautiful building in this part of Łódź. It was surrounded by a garden with exotic fruit trees. (State Archives in Łódź)

inside the synagogue commemorate the founder, who died in the Łódź ghetto, and those who helped restore the building after a fire in 1988.

After leaving the Reicher property we turn left into Kilińskiego Street, then right, heading south toward the golden domes of St. Alexander's Orthodox Church **Point E, Map 1**.

Dos Naje Lebn and the Philharmonic

We head south past Kilińskiego Street until the junction with Narutowicza Street. From here we can see beautiful St. Alexander's Orthodox Church and the modern Łódź-Fabryczna railway station on the left side. We turn right and go down Narutowicza until we see a building of extraordinary architecture.

Number 32 is one of the most beautiful apartment houses in Łódź **No. 19, Map 1**. Its rich decoration inspired by Romanesque and Renaissance architecture includes diabolical creatures such as bats with human faces. Constructed in the late 19th century, the building was home to many Jewish institutions, including the concert hall of a Jewish singing society, Shir (Song). After World War II, when Łódź became a center of Jewish life in Poland, it housed a kibbutz of Holocaust survivors, served as the seat of the Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists, and was used by the offices of the first postwar newspaper published in Yiddish, *Dos Naje Lebn* (New Life).

Mi Polin

Mi Polin is the first studio to design and produce contemporary Judaica in postwar Poland. It was established in 2014 by Helena Czernek and Aleksander Prugar to strengthen Jewish identity. Their works combine Jewish tradition with present-day design. Mi Polin, a Hebrew phrase, means "From Poland." Mi Polin's creative motifs relate to *hiddur mitzvah*, which states that all ritual artifacts should be made beautiful.

We now move down Narutowicza toward Piotrkowska Street. Passing by the Lauder Foundation Club **No. 20, Map 1** on the right side – the only place in today's Łódź to learn Hebrew – we reach an impressive modern building of glass and concrete. This site **No. 21, Map 1**, has housed the Arthur Rubinstein Łódź Philharmonic since its founding in 1915. The Philharmonic was established as the Łódź Symphony Orchestra, an ensemble that featured many eminent Jewish musicians. Arthur Rubinstein, who was named the patron of the renamed Łódź Philharmonic in 1984, was born and raised in Łódź. Although he left Poland in 1939, he returned to his hometown regularly and performed here.

We move west in the direction of Piotrkowska Street. Upon crossing it we stop at the next intersection – Zielona and Tadeusz Kościuszko Streets. A square fills the site where the most beautiful synagogue in Łódź stood until 1939.

Dajcze Szil

The Progressive Synagogue **No. 22, Map 1** was located at Spacerowa Street 2 (now Tadeusz Kościuszko Avenue). Like the synagogue at Wolborska Street, it was one of the city's most impressive religious buildings. Factory owners such as Izrael Poznański and

ŁÓDŹ



Renowned Polish Jewish artist Arthur Szyk (1894-1951) holding a Torah scroll. (Wikimedia)



Piano virtuoso Arthur Rubinstein (1887-1982). (Wikimedia)

a Lutheran, Karol Scheibler, contributed heavily to its construction. It drew congregants mainly from the affluent and wealthy who identified with progressive Judaism. On national holidays the service was also performed in Polish.

The building's layout included choirs reminiscent of evangelical churches, and that is why the building was called a *dajcze Szil* (German shul). The building was destroyed in 1939 by the Germans but its image was captured photographically. An obelisk at the corner of the square bears a 1914 quotation from the first Chief Rabbi of the Land of Israel: "When the temple in Jerusalem is rebuilt, I would like to make it at least as beautiful as this synagogue."

On the other side of Tadeusz Kościuszko Avenue, a characteristic yellow building

catches our attention – the impressive Pinkus complex **No. 23, Map 1**. Owned by a family of cotton traders, the building visually complemented the Progressive Synagogue on the other side of the street. It housed offices, schools, courts, and a registry office. The attic rooms were rented as studios to artists, including Samuel Hirszenberg, a highly regarded painter who later emigrated to Israel.

Let us move north along Zachodnia Street in the direction of Manufaktura.

Arthur Szyk House

Walking down Zachodnia, we soon reach Więckowskiego Street. On the left side of Więckowskiego, just before the junction with Wólczańska Street, sits a distinctive red building that was the home of Arthur Szyk (1894-1951) **No. 24, Map 1**.



The façade of the Łódź Philharmonic Hall is inscribed with a depiction of the old Vogel Concert House that stood on this site until the end of the 20th century. It is the home of the Arthur Rubenstein Łódź Philharmonic Orchestra. (Photo by Adam Sitarek)



One of the 45 miniatures from “The Statute of Kalisz” by Arthur Szyk.

A renowned graphic artist and miniaturist, Szyk valued his Polish upbringing. “I am a Jew, and Poland is my homeland. I cannot separate one from another in my heart,” wrote Szyk, who devoted his life to supporting the idea of Polish-Jewish reconciliation.

Together with Julian Tuwim he set up the Bi-Ba-Bo cabaret in Łódź, creating posters, cartoons, and scenery in the Savoy Hotel **Point F, Map 1** on today’s Traugutta Street. During the interwar period he was invited to Paris, where he became a highly regarded illustrator. At the end of 1926, he started work on his masterpiece, 45 miniatures celebrating the Statute of Kalisz, a document issued by Duke Boleslaus the Pious in 1264 that defined the

legal status of Jews in greater Poland. Szyk wrote, “The Statute of Kalisz glorifies one of the most beautiful acts of Polish liberalism within the history of Europe.” The miniatures depict Polish-Jewish history from the 13th century through the participation of Jews in Polish national liberation struggles and the years immediately after World War I. Szyk dedicated one sheet to his hometown, Łódź, and the first copy of the entire work to Marshal Józef Piłsudski, whom he considered a savior of Poland and an enemy of nationalism.

In 1940 Szyk went to Canada, then the United States, where his caricatures ridiculing German aggressors and their supporters appeared on the covers of leading U.S. magazines. Szyk died on 13 September 1951 in New Canaan, Connecticut.

We retrace our steps toward Zachodnia across Więckowski Street. Almost opposite the Arthur Szyk House stands the New Theater – one of the most interesting in Łódź. Until the 1960s it housed the Jewish Theater.

Theaters and the Peretz School No. 25, Map 1

The building at Więckowskiego Street 13/15 has offered artistic performances since the beginning of the 20th century. Before World War II, as the Scala Theater it presented artists associated with the avant-garde group Jung Jidysz (Young Jews). After the war it was decided to locate the Jewish State

Discussion Topic

The relevance of pre-war Jewish life in Poland to the development of Jewish identity today.

Poland and the former lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth are the birthplace not only of Ashkenazi Jewish culture but also of Jewish modernity. In Poland of the late 19th and early 20th centuries Jews posed questions that we continue to ask ourselves today. Today’s younger generations are often attracted to movements like Diaspora nationalism or the Yiddishism of the Bund, which affirmed Jewish life in Poland before the war and viewed Ashkenazi Jewish culture and the Yiddish language as native European developments.

Question

How does the study of the Polish Jewish world, when it was in the process of creating these diverse and competing modern movements, help to deepen our understanding of the identities we have embraced today and the choices we make about our own forms of Jewish expression?

Gołda Tencer and the Peretz School

One of the residents of Łódź after World War II was Gołda Tencer, a graduate from the Peretz School and a well-known actress. “I recall the Peretz School as a very familiar and uncommon place. I graduated with a matriculation certificate in Yiddish, which was a rarity at that time. Many friendships were made, and because the classes weren’t large, we felt an unusual intimacy. The school functioned over 20 years and pupils took their graduation exams for 13 years.” She noted that although many graduates were forced to leave Łódź or emigrate, most of them remain close even today.



Tencer’s parents met after the war and set up house at 28 Próchnik Street. Her father was a leather worker. “Actually, my father ran a private business and didn’t have to work hard. We lived in comfort because his work let him escape living in the poor district – Bałuty. In our non-religious home, all the Jewish feasts were celebrated. My parents spoke Yiddish. The backyard on Próchnik Street, and shabby-looking streets like Wschodnia, Zachodnia, Zielona, Gdańska – that was the landscape of my happy childhood. I didn’t need to go far away. But when we set out – five friends, all in high metal heels – on Piotrkowska Street, sparks flew from our feet.”

After World War II about 30,000 Jews who survived in Poland and Russia arrived in Łódź, where Jewish theater, clubs, and restaurants still operated. An anti-Zionist campaign started by the communist authorities in 1968 affected mainly the intelligentsia. Tencer was preparing for her graduation exam when 10 of the remaining 60 pupils left. “For me, the year 1968 had different overtones than for the dignitaries’ children. My parents didn’t need to worry about their careers – my mother didn’t work, nobody was lying in wait for my father’s post. But as a result of the March events, the streets of our childhood emptied.”

Tencer became an actress in the Jewish Theater in Warsaw in 1969 and is still involved with the E.R. Kamińska State Theater in Warsaw. She established the Shalom Foundation in 1989 with the motto “Memory can be saved.” She organized the Singer Festival of Jewish Culture in Warsaw and also the Center of Yiddish Culture in 2012.

Theater where the old Scala had been. Financial support from individuals and the government enabled the first season of the Jewish State Theater to launch in 1951, sharing the premises with the New Theater, which is also housed here.

The adjoining building used to contain one of the most important institutions of Jewish life in Łódź after 1945 – a school named after Y.L. Peretz (Icchok Lejbusz Peretz). Its students still call themselves *perecowicz*. This extraordinary institution made an invaluable effort to revive Jewish life in Poland after World War II. Prospective students could take the matriculation exam in Yiddish. Classes were very small, and students built relationships that lasted long after graduation.

The school was closed after the communist government’s anti-Zionist campaign in 1968, when most of the Jews of Łódź decided to leave Poland. A plaque on the wall has an inscription, “This address is a place on the memory map of the former students of this school, scattered around the world.”



The Academy of Music is housed in the mansion of Karol Poznański, a son of wealthy factory owner Izrael Poznański. (Photo by Adam Sitarek)

Time permitting, we should head to the nearby main building of the Museum of Modern Art in Gdańska 32 **Point G, Map 1** and the Academy of Music in Aleja Pierwszego Maja 4 **Point H, Map 1**, each located in a large palace that originally belonged to the Poznański family.

Jewish Artistic Avant-Garde

Więckowskiego Street brings us back to Piotrkowska Street. Piotrkowska 27 **No. 26, Map 1** used to house the Café Astoria, an important spot on the map of artistic Jewish Łódź in the interwar period. This was a meeting place of the avant-garde artists who called themselves *Jung Jidysz* (Young Jews). Beginning in 1919 it drew writers, painters, and sculptors like Mojsze Broderson, Icchak (Wincenty) Brauner, Icchak Kacnelson, Jankiel Adler, and Henocho (Henryk) Barciński. They published a magazine, *Jung Jidysz*, and other items inspired by futurists, cubists and primitivists. The common language was Yiddish. Mojsze Broderson established the Ararat Theater in 1927, whose cabaret *shmonzes* (Jewish jokes, often based on wordplay) were known in the whole city. As Chone Shmeruk (1921–1997), a historian of Yiddish literature) wrote: “It was a definitely Łódź type of a theater. And not just because of the composition of the management and the team. Its programs included usually specifically Łódź stunts. Programmatically the team performed ... in a characteristic Łódź (melodious) variant of Yiddish dialect.”

Taking a ride to Kamińskiego 27A, we reach the University of Łódź – the largest university in the city. Its Center for Jewish Research was founded in 2005 to examine the history of the Jewish community in Łódź and environs as well as the ghetto. Among the center’s English-language publications are *Synagogues and Houses of Prayer in Łódź*, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto / Litzmannstadt Ghetto 1941-1944*, and the *Encyclopedia of the Ghetto: Unfinished Project of Archivists from the Łódź Ghetto*. ■

—Dr. Adam Sitarek

Yiddish Comedy Duo for the Ages

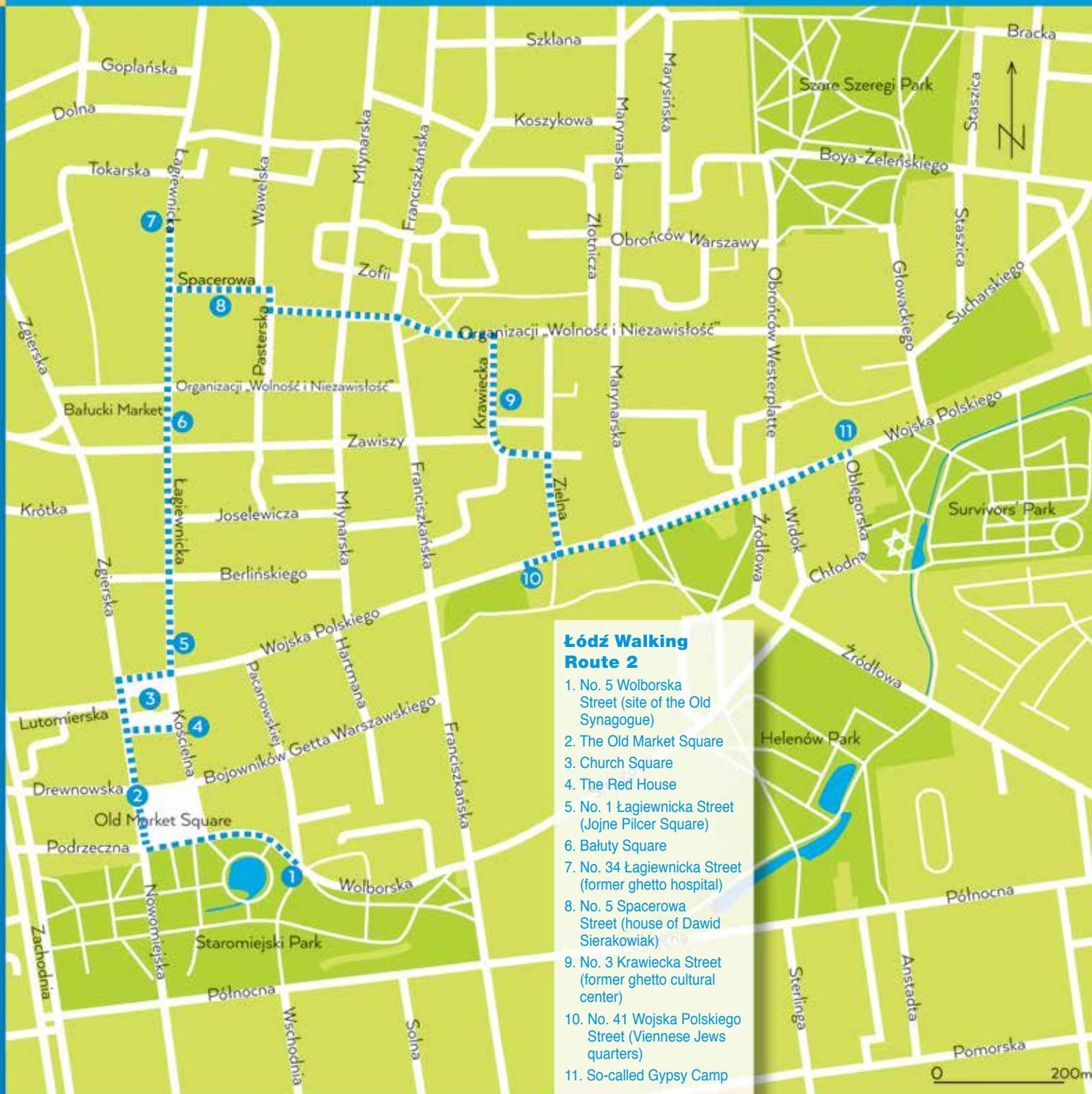
Born in Lodz, the inimitable Yiddish comedy team of Dzigan-Szumacher performed regularly at the Ararat Theater and then went on to found their own cabaret company in Warsaw in 1935. The signature style of Szymon Dzigan (1905–1980) and Izrael Szumacher (1908–1961) pitted



Szymon Dzigan and Izrael Szumacher in a scene from *On a heym* (Without a Home, 1938). (Jewish Historical Institute)

the manic beggar (Dzigan) against the restrained bespectacled straight man (Szumacher), a comic recipe used to great success. They starred in such Yiddish films as *Freylekhe kabsonim* (Jolly Paupers, 1937) and *On a heym* (Without a Home, 1938). During World War II they fled to Białystok and toured Soviet cities, bringing far-flung Yiddish-speaking audiences the uplift of humor from home. After the war they were arrested and served time in Soviet prisons before making their way back to Warsaw in 1947. There they starred in one of the first postwar films about the Holocaust, *Undzere kindere* (Our Children, 1948). In 1950 they emigrated to Israel and began a renewed and successful career together until 1960, enjoying large audiences both in Israel and on tours abroad. Szumacher died in 1961 but Dzigan continued his comedy for another 19 years until his death in 1980. Their clever humor remains alive on YouTube today.

Łódź Walking Route 2



Ghetto Memories Embedded in Buildings and Streets

No. 5 Wolborska Street / The Old Market Square / Church Square / The Red House / No. 1 Łagiewnicka Street (Jojne Pilcer Square) / Bałuty Square / No. 34 Łagiewnicka Street / No. 5 Spacerowa Street (House of Dawid Sierakowiak) / No. 3 Krawiecka Street / No. 41 Wojska Polskiego Street (the “Gypsy Camp”)

As we start on our way looking for the remains of the Łódź ghetto, we should keep in mind some basic information:

- The ghetto was created on February 8, 1940, and by April 30 of that year, it was closed off and isolated from the rest of the city. It was the longest functioning ghetto on Polish territory – in operation until August 1944.
- About 200,000 people passed through the Łódź ghetto. While most of them were from Łódź, as the war progressed, about 20,000 Jews from Western Europe were deported to the Łódź ghetto, and in 1942, Jews still able to work were brought in from ghettos in the vicinity that had been liquidated.
- The ghetto witnessed two waves of deportations: January to May 1942, when nearly 55,000 were taken to the Chełmno on the Ner death camp (Pol.



Wolborska Street during the ghetto, with synagogue in background. (Wikimedia)

Chełmno nad Nerem; Ger. Kulmhof am Ner) and September 1942, when over 15,000 children and elderly Jews were deported to the same camp. Liquidation of the ghetto began in June 1944, with 7,000 being sent to Chełmno and the rest to Auschwitz-Birkenau (65,000).

- It is estimated that up to 15,000 people survived the ghetto.
- A distinguishing factor of the ghetto was the unusually efficient Jewish administration that managed the closed district under German control. Those in control demanded peace and production and in return provided food. Chaim Mordechaj Rumkowski,

ROUTE 2



Entrance to the ghetto. (Jewish Historical Institute)



Chaim Rumkowski (white hair), president of the Jewish Council (Judenrat), conferring with three Germans. (Jewish Historical Institute)



Footbridge over Zgierska Street in the ghetto. (Jewish Historical Institute)

Discussion Topic

Accomplice or rescuer?

Chaim Mordechaj Rumkowski, an extremely controversial figure both before and after his death, died in a gas chamber at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944. Some see him as a brave rescuer of Jews who saved thousands, others as an obedient Holocaust accomplice.

Question

Was Rumkowski right? Could he have chosen a different path? To what extent was his strategy of “survival through work” proved right?



Rumkowski testing soup. (Wikimedia)

the head of the Jewish administration (the *Judenrat*), established a de facto dictatorship, which became a source of criticism. He has been declared a collaborator – in addition, one with an extremely high opinion of himself. Over time, this opinion has become less harsh, with some emphasizing that he was only a puppet who tried to save the people in the ghetto at all costs, even using brutal methods to extract obedience. There is no doubt, however, that Rumkowski ruled with an iron fist, and that unfavorable phenomena, such as corruption, favoritism, and excessive bureaucracy, were rampant in the ghetto. Hunger and misery led to an increase in crime, which in turn led to an even stronger police and judicial apparatus.

- It should be remembered that under such extreme circumstances, the Jewish administration tried to create conditions that would at least superficially resemble a normal life. There were schools and kindergartens,

and a number of workshops were organized, giving people the opportunity to earn wages. There was a functioning court where one could seek justice. People got married, obtained divorces, and bore children, although we know of only two who were born at the time who survived the war.

It is also important to be aware that Łódź was renamed Litzmannstadt in April 1940, in honor of the Prussian general Karl Litzmann, an ardent Nazi. Hence, that name for the city appears in the original wartime documents.

No. 5 Wolborska Street

This place holds much symbolic meaning for Jewish Łódź. In 1809, Łódź's first wooden synagogue was constructed here, later to be replaced in 1860 by a beautiful brick synagogue in the Moorish architectural style, known in Łódź as the *Alte Szil* (The Old Synagogue)



The memorial at the museum of the Kulmhof death camp in Chełmno on the Ner. (Wikimedia)

No. 1, Map 2 It's destruction in November 1939, together with Łódź's other synagogues, marked the beginning of the end of Jewish Łódź. Where the synagogue once stood, there is a monument of the Decalogue in remembrance of Poland's Jewish inhabitants.

The Old Market Square (Stary Rynek) / Zgierska Street

Before Freedom Square (Plac Wolności) took on that designation in the early 19th century, Old Market Square was the center of pre-industrial Łódź.

Standing at the Old Market Square **No. 2, Map 2** by Zgierska Street and looking around through the eyes of a ghetto inhabitant, we would see the bridges and gateways that were typical of ghetto scenery.

The poorer neighborhoods of Bałuty and the Old Town, inhabited largely by impoverished Jews, were designated for the Łódź ghetto area. A fence surrounded it, with German police posted on the outside and Jewish Police Service patrols within. The German authorities also took further care to isolate the ghetto from the rest of the city, ordering the buildings along Północna Street (North Street) to be demolished. This created a so-called "sanitary zone" – the threat of infectious diseases was one of the propaganda schemes used to explain the

need to separate the Jews from the rest of the population. It was impossible, however, to completely isolate the ghetto, because an important thoroughfare connecting Łódź with the towns of Zgierz and Aleksandrów passed through it. Hence, two streets, Zgierska, where we now stand, and Limanowskiego, were excluded from the ghetto and divided the area into three parts. To get from one part to another one had to use one of the three gates or one of the three bridges. In the place where we are now, there was a gate for carts and people with heavy luggage, and nearby were two bridges – one at Podrzeczna Street and another at Lutomińska Street. The bridges, so characteristic of the ghetto landscape, were often overcrowded, especially before the starting hours of work. For the hungry and sick trapped in the ghetto, crossing over the bridges was agony, especially in the winter when their wooden steps were covered with ice. The bridges also became a site for suicidal leaps.

Church Square (Plac Kościelny)

This is a very important place on the map of the Łódź ghetto. You can see the dominant church towers **No. 3, Map 2**, visible from virtually everywhere in the ghetto. There were several Christian churches in the ghetto, all turned into storage



Arnold Mostowicz. (Wikimedia)

"Misery and Crime"

Do you know what the Łódź Bałuty was before the war? It was a mixture of misery and crime. For a few cents, you could buy everything – a switchblade knife, a diamond ring of the Tsar's family, a girlfriend, an ointment for corns – courtesy of an official, or the empathy of a police officer. For a few bucks, you could get stabbed in the back, hit with a stick on the head or with brass knuckles in the eye. Bałuty could have been created by Dickens and Balzac together. But no Fagin or Vautrin made that Łódź district famous. Nobody looked into the pot or in the pocket of another, but it was known that those pots in Bałuty were often fasting and those pockets empty.

– Arnold Mostowicz, *With a Yellow Star and a Red Cross: A Doctor in the Łódź Ghetto*

Filthy Slum

The Germans selected the worst part of Łódź, where Jews had been forced to live in centuries past, Old Town and the much larger Bałuty [...]. Bałuty in particular was disgusting, among the filthiest slums anywhere in Europe. There were no zoning laws, so flimsy wooden tenements had been put up alongside warehouses and factories, on crooked unpaved streets and alleys, with no thought to fire, sanitation, or ventilation. There were neither gutters, nor sewers, nor streetlights. The neighborhood was rife with disease and crime – a nest of drug-dealers, prostitutes, and thieves. By the 1930s some solid working class and even middle-class families, including a number of Jews, lived in the district but it still had a terrible reputation. If someone was a low-life, we said he was from Bałuty.

– Eva Libitzky, Fred Rosenbaum, *Out on a Ledge. Enduring the Łódź Ghetto, Auschwitz and Beyond*



facilities or workshops. This church was used, among other purposes, as a warehouse for items collected from nearby ghettos after the deportation of their Jews to the Chełmno extermination camp. The preserved photos show that there was plenty to be collected – the stacks of bundles reached as high as the windows.

Standing in front of the church, we turn our gaze towards Lutomierska Street. The Jewish fire brigade was very close by, at 13 Lutomierska Street. The square in front of its headquarters was where the head of the Judenrat, Chaim Mordechaj Rumkowski, gave speeches to the assembled ghetto inhabitants. This is where, on September 4, 1942, in one of his most dramatic speeches, he appealed to parents to voluntarily surrender their children for deportations demanded by the German authorities. Rumkowski believed in his own greatness. He thought the speech would calm the ghetto populace, and the deportations would take a peaceful course as they had in the first half of 1942, when over 44,000 people were taken to the Chełmno extermination camp. However, this proved too much for the parents and the Jewish police. After an unsuccessful attempt by the Jewish police to collect



The interior of St. Mary's Church, where the Germans piled the belongings of those sent to the death camp at Chełmno on the Ner. (IPN: Institute of National Remembrance)

parents' arms. Many mothers volunteered for deportation, not wanting to abandon their children. Even newborns were taken and mothers in childbirth. The German army took by force over 15,000 children and elderly Jews, all of whom were murdered at the Chełmno death camp. The days from the 5th to the 12th of September belong to the most dramatic in Łódź's history. The painful memory of them lives on to this day. This event is sometimes referred to as the "Great Sperre" (Pol. Wielka Szepera, from Ger. Gehsperre).

The Red House (Czerwony Domek)

We are now standing near a church, the Red House (Yiddish, rojtes hajzel) **No. 4, Map 2**, a place that struck fear in the hearts of ghetto residents – here they were brutally interrogated and forced to reveal where their valuables were hidden. Many did not survive



Soup provided in the workshops was often the only meal of the day. (Jewish Historical Institute)

the torture carried out in the cellars of this building. The Germans would meticulously note every time that “heart attack” was the cause of death.

One didn’t even have to spend time in the Red House to die from it. As was noted in the *Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto*, on September 13, 1941, “62-year-old Majer Gelibter died on the street of a heart attack. Gelibter died in front of the Kripo [German criminal police] building at number 6 Kościelna Street, where he was going having received a summons.” He died from fear.

At number 4 Church Square, just across from the Red House, some of the ghetto’s more unusual institutions were housed. To understand their importance, we must first imagine that more than 160,000 people lived in the ghetto. Although that number would decrease as inhabitants died from starvation and disease (more than 40,000 people died in the ghetto), and as the inhabitants were deported to labor camps and death

camps (more than 77,000 to Chełmno, and over 60,000 to Auschwitz-Birkenau when the camp was liquidated in 1944), this still meant that hundreds of thousands of people passed through the ghetto, amongst whom food and medicine had to be shared, marriages performed, clothing and allowances provided, payments collected (e.g., rent). Administrative institutions were crucial in keeping order. The building at 4 Church Square, with its view of the church and bridge, was home to the Records Division, Registration Office, Bureau of Statistics and Rabbinical College. It also housed a post office, although contact with the outside world was hampered by censorship and frequent blockades. Nevertheless, the mail played a significant role in internal communication.

This was also home of the Ghetto Archive, where materials were collected. Here, they came up with the idea of writing the *Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto* – a nearly daily record of events and news from January 12, 1941 to July 30, 1944, including information about the state of the population, illnesses, deportation to “unknown destinations,” the weather, news about provisions and work. Another project was initiated when it seemed that the

Friday, 4 September [1942]

The mood of panic is intensifying by the second. All kinds of rumors are repeated from lips to lips that we should expect the worst. At four Rumkowski and [Dawid] Warszawski, the supreme director of a number of workshops, gave speeches on Firemen’s Square (13 Lutomska Street). They said that “the sacrifice of the children and the elderly is necessary,” and asked us “not to hinder carrying out the deportation action.”

Saturday, September 5

My most sacred, beloved, worn-out, blessed, cherished Mother has fallen victim to the bloodthirsty German Nazi beast!!!

– Dawid Sierakowiak, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak: Five Notebooks from the Lodz Ghetto*



Children from the orphanage at Marysin (the northeastern part of the ghetto) being collected for transport to death camps in 1942. (Jewish Historical Institute)

Discussion Topic

The Judenrat

Many Jews in the ghetto blamed the Jewish police for their behavior during the eight days of the curfew. For their assistance with the deportations, they had been guaranteed the safety of their own families. The Jewish police were also spared no criticism in postwar discussions on the Judenrat.

Questions

Do we have the moral right to judge the policemen's behavior in such an extreme situation? Do we have the right to demand heroism from them?



Jewish police salute a German officer leaving the Red House. (State Archives in Łódź)



One of three coal markets in the ghetto. (Wikimedia)

end of the war and the ghetto was near – the *Encyclopedia of the Ghetto*. The several hundred entries describing the people, events, words, and phenomena typical of the place and time are truly unique to Łódź, they have no counterpart in any of the other ghettos in occupied Europe.

It is worthwhile to consider the people who worked in the Archive. They were journalists, writers, lawyers, mathematicians, doctors – the Jewish intelligentsia, educated at European universities. Some of them came from Łódź, others had been deported to the ghetto in the fall of 1941 from Western Europe. They had been authorities in their circles. In the ghetto, they were fortunate enough to be working at desks as

clerks – they didn't have to drag handcarts filled with coal, potatoes, or feces, or to sit for the entire day in a dark hall at a sewing machine. The price for having such a good job was submission to Rumkowski and accepting the rules for running his "Jewish statelet."

One of the tasks of the Archive workers was documenting Rumkowski's achievements – which means that many of the documents produced bore elements of propaganda, and the thousands of photographs that the Jewish administration had made were intended to show the ostensible greatness of the organization. Thanks to this, the Łódź ghetto has very rich documentation, but it is important to be able to read it

properly and see, under the guise of success, the huge, bordering on impossible, effort of existence on a daily bread allocation of 27 dekagrams (9.5 ounces). Heroism in the ghetto was the even apportioning of the daily food allotment. If hunger won and everything was eaten at once – death by starvation loomed. Even greater heroism was demonstrated by those who shared their food with their loved ones. There were times, however, when the bread was stolen. Families who had been loving ones before the war were subjected to a very hard trial in the ghetto. Many did not come out victorious.

No. 1 Łagiewnicka Street (Jojne Pilcer Square)

Heading from Church Square towards Łagiewnicka Street, we pass a corner building where there had been a pharmacy before and during the war. Medications were very few and did not meet the needs of the sick, but in any case, most people lacked the money to buy them as they didn't even have enough for their food rations.

We are now by the prewar Jewish market, the so-called Jojne Pilcer Square, **No. 5, Map 2** where you could hear the specific variation of Łódź Yiddish. The ghetto was home to one of four vegetable markets. It was here that potatoes, carrots, and mackerel were collected to be measured in grams. Often, these were the remains and sweepings from markets in the city, which were then sold to the ghetto for a profit.

The provision of food was the sensitive nerve of the closed district. The authorities knew well how to use hunger to force the people in the ghetto to obey and docilely follow orders. The constant, ever-increasing hunger forced people to relinquish their ideals, to steal, to denounce others, to work beyond their strength.

A little further along, at 29 Łagiewnicka Street, was one of the three Coal Depots in the ghetto. Fuel, like all the products needed for everyday life, was allocated. There was no private trade – only the illegal black market.

From the *Encyclopedia of the Ghetto*

Life under duress from the outside without the possibility of consciously creating a community, with time, took on forms that were possible only in the ghetto. The daily existence of the population required the elaboration of certain norms of coexistence depending on the creation of the population's own structure, language, and terminology. Nowhere in the world was there such a community of people that could be compared to that of the ghetto. The alteration of all social, spiritual, and economic functions was accompanied by the transformation of the meaning of most terms. [...]

Words for items of everyday use suddenly became dominant in the active vocabulary. When one is preoccupied with the meager products necessary for preparing a meal, all other functions of animal being are swept aside, and so these items take on a prioritized meaning – expressed in Yiddish, Polish, or German.

Intellectual needs have been forced into a very narrow frame. Only a few words, concepts, and compound expressions were needed to express them. The ghetto had to renounce the technical means of civilization. Political and metaphysical aspirations have been excluded. Religion has been restricted to a narrow range. And finally, only sustenance and work in departments remained, a meager medium for fostering language.

– Oskar Rosenfeld, of one of the Archive staff
1 December 1943

Primitive Pain

A huge line! Very huge! By chance, I stood among some very talkative women. They were talking about the coal collection, but they spoke metaphorically. I'll write down what struck me the most: One said, "It seems that at 7:00-7:30 p.m. there is a smaller line, since people are busy at their supper." "Yes!" the other responded, "and so at 9:00-9:30 p.m. they set out to hunt after supper. Ah, we are living like the primitives, we come home after working all day, we quickly eat our 'supper' and then we 'set out to hunt'..." Something stirred inside me, it sobbed, hurt... Yes, we are primitive people, wild, and we set out to hunt... Oh, how much that hurts!... We, people of the twentieth century, who only a few years ago had stood, one could say, at a fairly high standard, are now comparable to the primitives!... Oh, God!...

– Diary of Rywka Lipszyc,
15 March 1944



Jojne Pilcer Square, site of a ghetto vegetable market. (Wikimedia)

All goods were supplied by the Germans, paid for with goods manufactured by Jewish workers.

There were constant shortages of fuel in the ghetto, both for cooking and for heating the apartments in the winter. Furniture and doors were often burnt. In some buildings, even the wooden stairs were pulled out. The official allowances were usually small, and to get them, one had to stand in long lines and then bring the allowance home, often having to cross over the bridges while hauling the heavy burden on one's back.

Bałuty Market (Rynek Bałucki)

We are at the square that was designated in the middle of the 19th century as the center of Nowe Bałuty, a mill town. Until 1939, it was one of Łódź's most important market places. **No. 6, Map 2**

After the creation of the ghetto, its significance continued to grow. It was the location of the office of Hans Biebow, the ghetto supervisor appointed by the German Occupation authorities, while the nearby ground-level wooden barracks contained the central offices of the Jewish administration of the ghetto, including an office where the Head of the Council of Elders, Chaim Rumkowski, officiated. Products intended for the German economy, created in hundreds of so-called departments (workshops and factories), were supposed to guarantee the Jews their survival. An electronic clock was constructed at the Bałuty Market (Ger. Baluter-Ring), which made it possible to synchronize all the clocks in the ghetto.

The square had an extraterritorial quality to it, visible even on maps of the ghetto. From the square, one could see two gates to two different worlds. One gate stood on Zgierska Street, under the guard of German policemen, leading into the city. The other gate was positioned on Łagiewnicka Street, manned by a guard from the Jewish ghetto police, leading into the ghetto. Both gates required a special permit to pass through.

Food, goods, and resources, if they were not delivered by train – and consequently, through the Radegast Station – arrived at the ghetto through the Bałuty Market. And since the ghetto suffered constant food shortages and was plagued by famine, countless onlookers gathered around the market despite all the restrictions against doing so, deluding themselves with the hope of spotting carts with potatoes or flour. For the residents of the ghetto, the Bałuty Market not only helped measure the current mood, but also served as a forecast for food. People were observed with curiosity and envy – both the “ghetto aristocracy,” as well as those coming from the city without the mandatory yellow patches on their clothes.

In the immediate vicinity, at the intersection of Zgierska and Limanowskiego streets, stood the outposts of the German secret police (Gestapo) and the German state protection police (Schupo). Numerous branches and offices of the Jewish ghetto administration were situated around the market. For instance, the building at 25 Łagiewnicka Street housed the Department of Studies established on the orders of the Germans, which was to document the life and traditions of the Eastern European Jews. Meanwhile, the building on the corner of Łagiewnicka and Dworska streets housed the Office of Petitions and Complaints. A special box was affixed to the wall of the building, into which people dropped their requests for help, most often regarding food, work, or tokens for bread or medicine for children. Hundreds of thousands of these requests were made – many of which were preserved and are held to this day in the Archive, constituting a record of severe personal tragedies.

No. 36 Łagiewnicka Street

A grand building, before the war it had housed the National Health Fund clinic and was the most modern and best-equipped building in pre-war Bałuty.

The Baluter-Ring

The main public square of the district, and so of the entire ghetto [...] the Baluter-Ring was a sort of neutral zone, serving as a meeting-place for Jews and Germans, separated from the rest of the ghetto with barbed wire. One gate at Zgierska Street (Hohensteinerstraße) provided an exit from the city while the other led to the ghetto at Łagiewnicka Street (Hanseatenstraße). Both gates were well guarded by the Schupo at the German side, and the OD at the Jewish [...].

All international visitors entered the ghetto via the Baluter-Ring. The offices were located in barracks [...].

One barrack at the Baluter-Ring served as a disinfection chamber for Jews and deliveries for the city. The ghetto was seen as a contaminated zone. Local dialect dubbed the Baluter-Ring a symbolic government headquarters, as Wilhelmstraße or Downing Street.

– From the *Encyclopedia of the Ghetto*



A leadership conference in the ghetto. From left to right: Hans Biebow, the German director of the ghetto; an unidentified German officer; Dora Fuchs, secretary of ghetto President Chaim Rumkowski; and Rumkowski himself. (Jewish Historical Institute)

Culture Shock

Oskar Singer was a German-speaking Czech Jew deported to the Łódź ghetto. During his confinement he described the ghetto's terrible living conditions and housing, which included people crammed into former school buildings, some unheated. His experiences led him to reflect on the fragility of European culture.

“How much time in such conditions do Europeans need to get rid of their ‘cultural’ habits? Can culture be maintained by draconian penalties such as deprivation of soup or bunk? How was it possible that lice have not eaten people who have not had the opportunity to wash, change, or air their linen, underwear or clothes? What is culture?”

– Oskar Singer, *Problems of the East and the West*, ca. 1942

No. 7, Map 2 After the creation of the ghetto, the Jewish Hospital was relocated there with an outpatient clinic, children's infirmary, pharmacy, and emergency center. It was also the headquarters of the ghetto Health Department, in charge of seven hospitals and the entire ghetto health service. Here, at the first-floor left wing, was where Rumkowski lived until 1941. The hospital functioned until September 1, 1942, when all patients were evacuated to an “unknown destination,” meaning their death. The place was emptied to serve as a collection point during the most tragic episode in the ghetto's history – the Great Sperre. People rounded up for deportation were collected there and then sent to Radegast Station, where they were stationed for several days while their families tried to buy them out.

After the Sperre, the ghetto's status changed. Its autonomy was curbed, and most public buildings were turned into workplaces. What counted was work alone. The hospital became a tailor department employing a few hundred workers.

This building had yet one more role to play in the ghetto's history. After its liquidation but before the end of the war, it housed several hundred people who had been chosen by German and ghetto authorities to be spared and become a factory crew in Germany. The group of 600, composed mostly of skilled



The ghetto hospital at Łagiewnicka 36. (Wikimedia)

specialists and former ghetto officials, was deported on October 21, 1944 to concentration camps near Berlin. Many of them survived.

No. 5/7 Spacerowa Street

We follow here in the footsteps of Dawid Sierakowiak, the young author of a breathtaking diary he kept from late June 1939 until April 1943. Only five books remained, another four probably were destroyed.

Dawid was 16 when he was forced to move with his parents and sister, Nadzia, to the ghetto from a far-south neighborhood of Łódź. A middle-class youngster and a good student at a respected Jewish high school, he had probably never seen the poor district of Bałuty.

In the ghetto, his family shared one tiny room at 5/7 Spacerowa Street. **No. 8, Map 2** Dawid made daily entries in his diary, writing with a stunning sincerity that revealed his family problems, due foremost

to poor relations with his father who was psychologically unable to cope with hunger. We feel for Dawid when his beloved mother was taken during the Sperre. We feel his hunger – a mounting emotion taking away his will to read and learn, which had been the true essence of his life. When in the fall of 1941 the ghetto schools closed, Dawid started working in a leather department, sewing rucksacks for the German army. He joined a communist organization yet limited his activity to preserve his strength. He managed to get an office job through connections, but it did not save him from tuberculosis. He died on August 8, 1943.

No. 3 Krawiecka Street

The inconspicuous and rather unattractive building we see today at 3 Krawiecka Street, **No. 9, Map 2** was for a long time the ghetto's cultural center. Before the war, it had been a movie theater with a stage and seats for 300 viewers. In March 1941, it was turned into a Community Cultural Center and

became a new workplace for many prewar artists, including musicians from the Łódź Symphony Orchestra. Soon theatrical performances began, often adopting their themes to the changed situation. Concerts of classical music, arranged once or twice a week, attracted particularly large audiences of the Jewish intelligentsia in the ghetto confines. With the arrival of Jews from Western Europe, a handful of new musicians and painters beefed up the Community Center. Their ambitious repertoire included famous European composers.

After the tragic Sperre of September 1942, the Center temporarily suspended activities. After the break, with most artists deported or dead, the new program presented popular vaudeville revues mocking such ghetto vices as the ubiquitous corruption. Shows presented by various labor departments for their jubilees were especially popular. The performances provided a rare chance to break away from the hardships of everyday life, as well as an opportunity to get an extra food coupon from President



Portrait of Chaim Rumkowski in the ghetto by Izrael Lejzerowicz, a Łódź artist who was a portrait painter before the war. While in the ghetto he made sketches of everyday life and also painted several portraits of Rumkowski, president of the Jewish Council. Lejzerowicz lived and worked on Rybna Street, where he led an artistic-literary salon. (Jewish Historical Institute)

ROUTE 2



Bronisława Rotsztat, Polish-Jewish violinist, giving a concert in 1941 at the House of Culture. She survived the war. (Jewish Historical Institute)



Jazz Orchestra of the Sonderabteilung (special unit of the Jewish Police) in a 1941 event at the House of Culture. (Jewish Historical Institute)



Theater performance at the House of Culture in 1941, with stage design by Pinkus Szwarc, an artist who later died in Auschwitz. (Jewish Historical Institute)

“Our Only Path”

Rumkowski saw how vulnerable we were. Caught in his vise, we'd either be starved to death or sent off to a horrible fate in the east. So, he struck a unique deal with the Nazis that would last the next four and a half years: He proposed that the ghetto, with its many industrial buildings and skilled artisans, become a manufacturing hub for Germany. Factories and workshops would churn out war material as well as goods for civilians, and in return the entire Jewish community would receive food and be allowed to live.

There was no other way we could survive, he was certain. “Our only path is work,” he declared repeatedly. But it meant that Rumkowski constantly had to prove our usefulness to the Nazis.

– Eva Libitzky, Fred Rosenbaum, *Out on a Ledge. Enduring the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz and Beyond*

Rumkowski, so people were eager enough to participate.

The Community Center existed until its liquidation in August 1943, when it was turned into a quilt factory. In the same building, Rumkowski organized briefings, so-called “conferences,” with the heads of workplaces on the upcoming changes and plans for the ghetto. We should keep in mind that the circulation of news in the ghetto faced difficulties. Information relating to ghetto life was spread in the form of posters put up on walls, at the above-mentioned briefings and during public assemblies, where Rumkowski quite cleverly addressed the crowds. A Yiddish newspaper (*Getto Cajtung*) was published for a few months, which was merely a propaganda tool for the Jewish administration. Gossip and rumors were the fastest, though not always the most credible, source of information. News from the outside world reached the ghetto illegally, most often via illegal radio or secretly smuggled German newspapers.

No. 41 Wojska Polskiego Street (during the war – Brzezińska Street)

We are looking at the building where several hundred Viennese Jews found lodging from early November 1941. **No. 10, Map 2** They were a small part of the estimated 20,000 Jews deported to the already overcrowded ghetto from the Reich, Austria, and

Czechoslovakia, mostly aged and ailing, but also families with small children, mixed marriages, and converts. Their arrival in Łódź – now, unbeknownst to most of them, the city of Litzmannstadt – was a road to hell. Leaving their fancy houses, good jobs, and families, they could take only a few belongings and were on top of that expected to pay for the trip. Some, like those expelled from Berlin, had even been deprived of the few belongings they had. Welcomed by Jewish policemen whom they had never seen before, they sometimes mistook them for porters and asked for directions to a decent hotel. The reality was, unfortunately, much uglier than that. They were given collective accommodation in schools that had been closed for that purpose. Some slept on makeshift racks, others just on the floor. They were offered watery soup and chicory coffee with bread that initially aroused their disgust. Soon, however, gnawed by hunger, they welcomed every meal with joy, as did the rest of the inhabitants.

The West European Jews relocated to the ghetto had trouble finding their way in the new reality. Their advanced age, poor physical condition, and the difficulties of adapting resulted in illness and death. Those who found jobs had a chance to stay, while the residents of collectives and retirement homes,

the helpless and abandoned, were considered an “unproductive element,” a dead weight slowing the ghetto’s economy, and were deported in May 1942 to the Chełmno death camp. Many were relieved to leave the ghetto, believing that nothing worse was possible.

Wojska Polskiego Street (the so-called “Gypsy Camp”)

In a separate block, between today’s Wojska Polskiego, Obrońców Westerplatte, Sikawska, and Głowackiego Streets, **No. 11**, **Map 2** a camp for Roma and Sinti was located, with almost 5,000 Romani inmates deported from the Austrian-Hungarian border. The camp was surrounded with a barbed wire and a deep moat. The planked windows of the peripheral buildings prevented ghetto inhabitants from seeing the inside. The German

administration of the ghetto policed the camp, and designated Jewish institutions to provide for the camp, in particular with food and medical care. Overpopulation and the lack of running water and sanitation facilities caused a very rapid outbreak of typhus. Several of the Jewish camp doctors died, as did the German camp commandant who had contracted the disease from his dog. More than 700 people died there and were buried in a nearby Jewish cemetery. The German authorities, fearing the typhus would spread, decided to liquidate the camp – all its inmates were deported to Chełmno in January 1942 in the first mass transports from Łódź to the death camp. Out of these 5,000, no one survived. The only trace of them that remains are the passenger manifests. ■

—Dr. Ewa Wiatr



Outside one of the entrances to the Gypsy camp, a memorial plaque in Polish, English, and Hungarian explains, in part, the tragic fate of the 5,000 Roma people brought to the ghetto. (Wikimedia)

“Straw and Rags”

The view was shocking. Both rooms represented an appalling picture, even for me, accustomed to the terribly overcrowded ghetto lodgings and camps for the newcomers from Germany or Austria. [...] No bunks, not to mention beds, just as in other rooms that I could see out of the corner of my eye. Straw and rags scattered on the floor served as bedding for how many? thirty? forty? a hundred occupants of that anthill? It was shocking...

[...] In the ghetto, Jews lived in horrible conditions. So, what to say about the Gypsy Camp? Three or four buildings – altogether no more than one hundred twenty to one hundred fifty small rooms. And this should accommodate thousands. Accommodate? Why, these people all had to live, eat, and be ill here ... Most Gypsies probably did not move from their sacks.

– Arnold Mostowicz, *With a Yellow Star and a Red Cross: A Doctor in the Łódź Ghetto*

A Łódź Musical Dynasty



David Beigelman (1887-1945).
(Wikipedia)

The Baigelman (Beigelman) family of Łódź were prominent musicians, composers, conductors, and theater performers. The patriarch, Simon (Szymon) Baigelman was first oboe for the Łódź Symphony Orchestra, which was populated mostly by musicians related to the family including the last names of Spielman, Mutzman, Ostrowiec, and Spaismacher. Perhaps the most famous was prodigy David (Dawid) Beigelman (1887-1945), a violinist, orchestra leader, and composer of Yiddish theater music and songs. He became director of the Łódź Yiddish Theater in 1912. Among other major accomplishments, he arranged the music for the hugely popular S. Ansky play, *The Dybbuk*. In 1929 he became composer and music director of the Łódź Ararat Theater.

Forced by the German occupiers to move to the ghetto section of the city in 1940, he helped keep culture alive by conducting the first symphony concert there on 1 March 1941 in the House of Culture on 3 Krawiecka Street. Two of the Yiddish songs he composed that have survived to the present are “Kinder Yorn” (“The Years of Childhood”) and “Tsigaynerlid” (“Gypsy Song”), the latter a tribute to the 5,000 Roma people relegated to perhaps the most abysmal living conditions in the overcrowded ghetto. In 1944, David was deported to Auschwitz where he

was forced to do slave labor and died of exhaustion in February 1945. In 1994 he was posthumously honored with the Humanitarian Award of the Interfaith Council of Remembrance on the 50th anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto.

Henry (Chaim) Baigelman (1911-2002), one of David’s younger brothers, was also an extremely talented musician. When Henry was 6, his brother-in-law, Samuel, taught him to play the violin. He joined a conservatory and at 15 began playing both the violin and the saxophone professionally. He played with the family band, named *The Jolly Boys*, at the Łódź Ararat Theater. After his family was confined to the ghetto, he played the violin in the ghetto orchestra, conducted by his brother David. On June 10, 1944, when the Nazis ordered the destruction of the ghetto, David hid the family instruments, including Henry’s violin, in the attic of a hat factory where Henry had been working. After horrendous stints at Nazi work camps, Henry became part of a 12,000-person forced march. Starving and freezing, and barely able to walk, he was liberated April 23, 1945 by U.S. Army troops. Only 3,000 prisoners survived.

Finding himself alive in the chaos of postwar Germany, Henry formed a band he named *The Happy Boys*, in homage

to his earlier band name and also to emphasize that they were happy to have survived. The band toured displaced persons camps, bringing the joy of American jazz and swing to refugees and U.S. troops. During this time, Henry wrote the lyrics to the popular Yiddish song “Es Bengt Zich Nuch a Hajm” (“One Longs for Home”). The words, in part, convey the dark past combined with a fierce optimism:

*. . . One longs for home
Our mourners must have retribution.
It was once terrible,
But it has changed for the better.
Now one must live
Because the time has come!*

Henry’s brother-in-law had retrieved the hidden family instruments from the Łódź ghetto following its liberation by the Soviet Army. After migrating to New York City with his new wife, Gita (who survived the Łódź ghetto and Ravensbruck), Henry continued performing with his band until 1959 and later became successful in real estate. In 2010, Henry’s children, Riva Berelson and Simon Baigelman, donated their father’s rescued instruments, two violins and a saxophone, to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. ■



The Happy Boys Band in Germany, circa 1947. From left: Sam Spaismacher, Henry Eisenman, Abraham Mutzman, Henry Baigelman (the band’s leader), Elek Silberstein, Itchak Lewin, Abraham Lewin, and Josel Lewin. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy Henry Baigelman)

Łódź Walking Route 3



Commemoration and Education

Survivors' Park / Radegast Station / Memorial Site / Last Journey / The Tunnel / Hall of Towns and Column of Remembrance

Survivors' Park

We are in Survivors' Park, standing before the Marek Edelman Dialogue Center **No. 1, Map 3**, established by the municipal authorities in 2010 to highlight the city's multicultural and multiethnic heritage, with an emphasis on Jewish culture. It sponsors activities and events commemorating the survivors and the righteous and their families. It also presents exhibitions about Łódź's Jewish history, the ghetto, and personages connected with Polish-Jewish relations. The center's namesake, Marek Edelman (d. 2009), was a leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1944 and in the postwar period a doctor, political activist, and widely read author. An honorary citizen of Łódź, he was made a Knight of the Order of the White Eagle and also received honors from universities in Poland, Europe, and the United States.

The idea of planting a row of trees to represent those who survived the Holocaust was initiated by a survivor of the Łódź ghetto, Halina Elczewska (1919-2013). With support from the



Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)

president of Łódź, Jerzy Kropiwnicki, 387 trees were planted in August 2014 by people who came from all over the world to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liquidation of the Łódź ghetto **No. 2, Map 3**. Among them were Holocaust survivors and their children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. New memorial trees are planted annually. Each person or family honored with a tree receives a certificate

ROUTE 3



Trees in Survivors' Park. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)

Discussion Topic

The world's indifference.

The Polish National Council in London in 1942 launched an appeal to the Allies to prevent “the German attempt to murder all the Jews in Europe.” They presented a diplomatic note to the United Nations summit to speed up military actions and bring about intensified help for those who were still alive. In 1943 Jan Karski delivered a report on the mass murder of Jews to the British and American governments, including Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. However the leaders undertook no action in response.

Questions

Why was rescuing the Jews not a priority for the U.S. government? Was it possible to rescue Jews, e.g., by bombing railways to the extermination camps? Could Jewish organizations outside of Europe have helped the Jews in Poland?



After the war Marek Edelman worked as a doctor in Łódź. (Wikimedia)

signed by the president of Łódź, and their names are engraved on the granite plaques arranged along Mostowicz Avenue. The Dialogue Center collects information about survivors and their families, maintains contact with them, and organizes exhibitions and publications.

Just behind the Dialogue Center, on the left, is a small hill – Karski Mound, or the Mound of Remembrance **No. 3, Map 3** – named after a Pole who was the one of the first to give the Allies eyewitness proof of what was happening to the Jews in Nazi Europe. A monument to Jan Karski (1914-2000) was placed on the top of the mound in 2009. In 1942, he was smuggled into the Warsaw ghetto dressed as a Hiwi (Ukrainians or Balts serving as guards in German service), then into the Izbica Lubelska “transit camp” to gather information for delivery to the Allies about the conditions of the Jews in German-occupied Poland. Both the British and the Americans received his reports with disbelief.

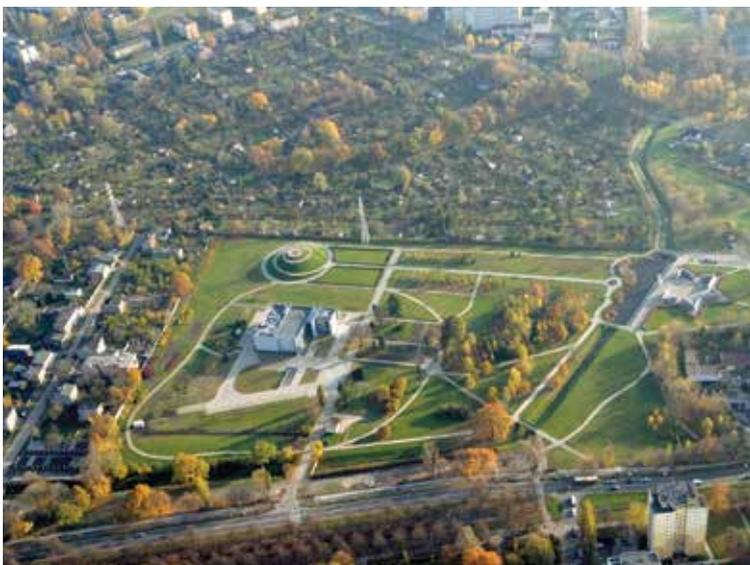
He was born on 24 April 1914 in Łódź as Jan Kozielski to a family of craft

workers. After studying law and diplomacy in Lwów he worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then during the war became an emissary of the Polish Underground Government. Under the pseudonym Jan Karski he conveyed information about the situation in occupied Poland. After the war he joined Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and delivered lectures at the Pentagon for officers of the U.S. armed forces. The first time he came to modern-day Łódź, after 65 years of absence, was in 1996, when he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Łódź. In October 1999, in the Museum of the City of Łódź, he opened an office that now contains documents, medals, and souvenirs, as well as furniture and paintings from his Washington, D.C., apartment. A Righteous Among the Nations and nominee to the Nobel Peace Prize, he died on 13 July 2000.

Looking west from Karski Mound we can see the Monument of the Polish Righteous Among the Nations in the distance. The arms of the memorial form a Star of David.



Jan Karski and Jan Karski Bench in Survivors' Park. (Wikimedia)



Aerial view of Survivors' Park and Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź.
(Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)

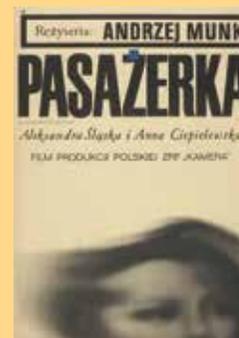
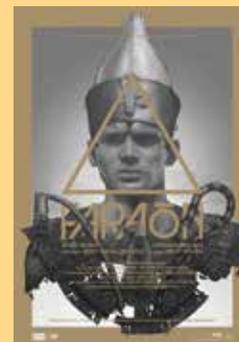
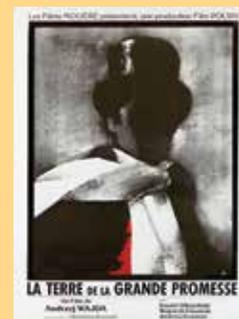
The main axis of Survivors' Park is Mostowicz Avenue **No. 4, Map 3**, lined with plaques bearing the names of those who have trees. The avenue was named for Arnold Mostowicz (1914-2000), a writer and journalist who survived the Łódź ghetto. He wrote a memoir, *A Yellow Star and a Red Cross*, and was also the narrator of *The Photographer*, an important documentary film about the ghetto. Route 2 is enriched with selections from his diary. He is an honorary citizen of Łódź and the first president of the Monumentum Iudaicum Lodzense Foundation, whose aim is to care for the heritage of the Jews of Łódź.

At the western border of the park, across the Łódka River, is the Monument of Polish Righteous Among the Nations **No. 5, Map 3**, unveiled in August 2009 on the 65th anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto. Poland was the only country in Nazi-controlled Europe where the authorities could inflict the death penalty on anyone who offered help to Jews – including minor acts like sharing food. They could apply this punishment even to the rescuer's family, including children and pregnant women. Each Jewish person rescued required help from at least 10 Poles to survive the war.

“HollyŁódź”

The Polish National Film, Television and Theatre School (commonly called the Łódź Film School) has made an undeniable impact on the world of cinema since its establishment in 1948. It is often referred to as the Polish Hollywood. After the war, many of Warsaw's theater and artistic groups relocated from the ruined capital to its nearest large neighbor, Łódź. The mansion that houses the Film School (at Targowa Street 61) used to be the villa of Oskar Kon, a Jewish industrialist.

The school has two distinct departments, film direction and cinematography. In addition to producing the largest number of Polish films after World War II, it was the first place in Poland to host jazz jam sessions, officially outlawed by the communist authorities. Many film schools in Eastern Europe and elsewhere took it as a model, and its faculty were invited to international conferences around the world. Graduates like Andrzej Wajda, Roman Polański, Jerzy Skolimowski, and Krzysztof Kieślowski have had great influence on the development of cinema.



Posters from the Łódź Film School.
(Wikimedia)



Home of the Polish National Film, Television and Theatre School.
(Wikimedia)

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Monument to Polish Righteous Among the Nations. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)



Radegast Station and memorial. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)



Ghetto residents being moved to Radegast Station for transport to extermination camps, 1944. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)

The monument was designed by Polish Jewish architect and politician Czesław Bielecki. Its walls take the form of a six-pointed Star of David and bear the names of more than 6,000 Poles who have been honored as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. One of them is Irena Sendler, who helped save more than 2,500 children from the Warsaw ghetto and found shelter for them on the “Aryan” side. A high triangular pedestal supports an eagle with spread wings (the symbol of the Polish nation) and the words: “He who saves one life, saves the whole world.”

The park also contains a small monument to Żegota, the Council to Aid Jews, an underground organization that operated under the auspices of the Polish Government in Exile **No. 6, Map 3**. It was the only government-run organization in German-occupied Europe established to save Jews.

Returning to the Dialogue Center along the paths through the memorial trees, we walk toward Radegast Station.

Radegast Station: Łódź Umschlagplatz

Radegast Station has been a memorial site since 2004. Built before World War II, it is closely linked to the history of the ghetto as a station for people transported to the ghetto from the Reich and elsewhere in occupied Europe, and later as the place from which thousands of people were sent to extermination camps.

As we approach the main part of the memorial site, we walk along the road from the Column of Remembrance **No. 11, Map 3**, with the inscription “Do not kill,” and through a tunnel engraved with the beginning and ending dates of World War II **No. 10, Map 3**. In the distance we can see the paved courtyard and wooden building of the train station. We walk in that direction to learn about the history of this unique place.

The German occupying authorities designated the station as a transfer point for supplies and materials needed for production in the ghetto workshops. They

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added the wooden building of the station in 1941 and enclosed the surrounding area with barbed wire. German police posts set up nearby made the station one of the most heavily guarded places in the ghetto. After World War II the station building **No. 7, Map 3** was forgotten and unnoticed. It was “discovered” again in 2004, when the city authorities decided to make this decaying building a memorial site. Restoration meant a renovation so drastic that it left untouched only the brick floor. The entire structure was rebuilt and surrounded by a memorial site.

Inside the building we can take a closer look at the contents. Tables in the middle of the room hold copies of transportation lists with the names of those deported to the ghetto or sent from there to the labor and extermination camps. The lists are drawn from the collection of the State Archives in Łódź and have helped reconstruct the lives of many Holocaust victims.

A small case on one of the walls displays an original chest belonging to the Schwarz family, deported to the ghetto from Vienna on Transport No. 14 on 29 October 1941. They stayed in the ghetto until 14 May 1942, when the names of the chest owners – Anna and Erich Schwarz – appeared on the list of people transported to the extermination center in Chelmno on the Ner. The chest was found in the attic of one of the apartments in Bałuty in 2004.

The main room of Radegast Station offers an exhibit by the federal Museum of Independence Traditions – a scale model depicting the topography of the closed district as well as aspects of life in the ghetto. Complementing the model is a multilingual web portal, www.radegast.pl, that provides four thematic walking routes: “The Ghetto,” “Deportations,” “Archives,” and “Childhood during the Holocaust.”



Radegast Station during the war. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)



Entrance to the commemorative tunnel. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)



The commemorative tunnel, Hall of Towns, and Column of Remembrance. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)

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Exhibition inside the tunnel. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)



The Hall of Towns and the Column of Remembrance. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)

Going outside, we turn left in the direction of the obelisks in the shape of gravestones that enclose the commemorative space.

Memorial Site

Radegast Station is also a memorial site **No. 8, Map 3**. The major commemorative element is the paved courtyard, surrounded on one side by a wall, to which plaques are fixed, and on the other side by the station building. The space is closed in with an installation that resembles gravestones – matzevas – with plaques listing the names of the concentration and extermination camps where the prisoners of the Łódź ghetto were deported. Ceremonies held every year on 29 August, on the anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto, are held in this place – the symbol of the last journey of the deported.

Last Journey – Wagons and Ramp

Turning left from the side of the railroad tracks, we walk on the renovated ramp

along the station building **No. 9, Map 3**. Here sits a train with cattle cars, pulled by one of the original locomotives used by the German Reich Railway during World War II. The cars are replicas of those used for deportations to extermination camps. We may walk into one of the cars, if we dare, but it can be a powerful, even painful experience.

During the reconstruction process, workers found many personal objects – keys, glasses, small coins – next to the ramp. They are now part of the museum's collection.

Leaving the cramped space of the ramp, we walk along the edge to the entrance of the tunnel – another space that is both museum and memorial.

The Tunnel

Built parallel to the railroad tracks, the tunnel **No. 10, Map 3** is the last element of the commemorative site of Radegast



The memorial at Radegast Station. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)



Railway car and ramp. (Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in Łódź)

Station. Czesław Bielecki, its architect and constructor, adjusted the length to the number of the transportation lists of people sent to the ghetto and those deported to the labor and extermination camps. The lists cover two walls of the gradually brightening space. Empty sheets of paper represent those whose names were not put on any lists such as those deported from the liquidated ghetto to Auschwitz-Birkenau in summer 1944.

The walls on the left provide a narrative about the most important events in the Jewish community of Łódź during World War II. As we walk and read, the tunnel tapers gradually, provoking anxiety and growing tightness.

The final display cases offer pictures of children from the ghetto. Adjoining cases contain items that belonged to those murdered in Chelmno on the Ner. They were found in “trash holes,” where belongings taken from the

victims on their last journey were buried, probably by camp staff.

Hall of Towns and Column of Remembrance

The tunnel ends with a spacious room called the Hall of Towns **No. 11, Map 3**. Engraved on its walls are the names of all the hometowns of Jews imprisoned in the Łódź ghetto, many of which are in Western Europe. A candle in the middle of the room is lit during ceremonies to remember those who died.

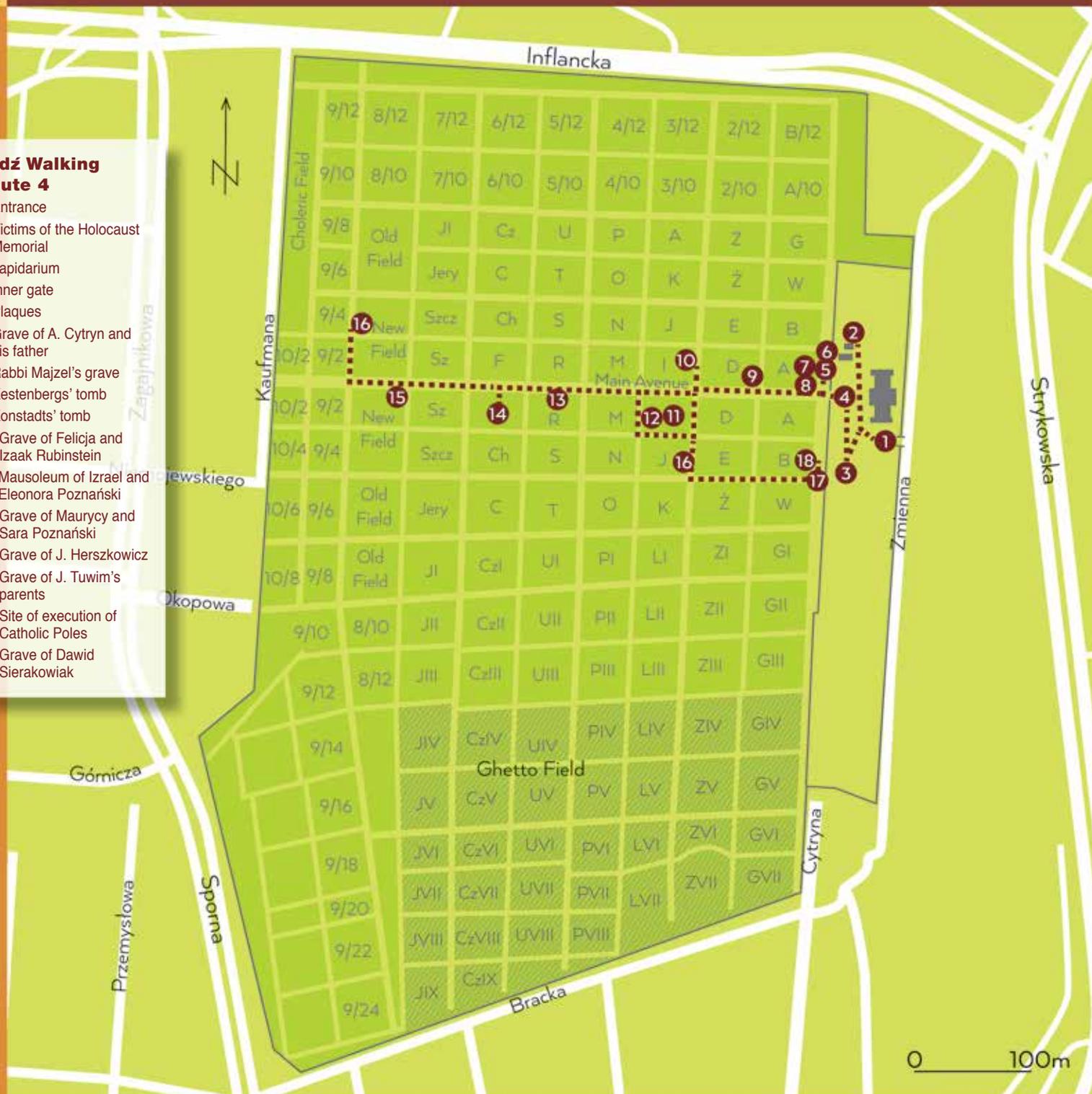
Leaving the hall, we see a broken column – symbol of an abruptly ended life. After the walk through Radegast Station memorial site, the inscription on the Radegast monument, “Do not kill,” seems even more expressive. ■

—Joanna Podolska-Płocka

Łódź Walking Route 4

Łódź Walking Route 4

1. Entrance
2. Victims of the Holocaust Memorial
3. Lapidarium
4. Inner gate
5. Plaques
6. Grave of A. Cytryn and his father
7. Rabbi Majzel's grave
8. Kestenbergs' tomb
9. Konstads' tomb
10. Grave of Felicja and Izaak Rubinstein
11. Mausoleum of Izrael and Eleonora Poznański
12. Grave of Maurycy and Sara Poznański
13. Grave of J. Herszkowicz
14. Grave of J. Tuwim's parents
15. Site of execution of Catholic Poles
16. Grave of Dawid Sierakowiak



New Jewish Cemetery on Bracka Street: History Engraved in Stones

New Jewish Cemetery / Victims of the Holocaust Memorial / Walking the Paths

New Jewish Cemetery

The New Jewish Cemetery, located on a small hill in the southeastern part of Bałuty, is one of the most frequently visited places in Łódź. It draws all kinds of people, including tourists from Poland and abroad, relatives of those buried there, as well students from local schools, and those who are interested in Jewish history. It is the largest Jewish cemetery in the country, with about 160,000 graves, and one of the largest in Europe. The main gate on Bracka Street is open only for special occasions, so visitors usually enter from Zmienna Street through a small gate in the wall **No. 1, Map 4**. The cemetery is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (November-March) or 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (April-October), except for Saturdays and religious holidays. According to Jewish custom, head coverings are required.

This is the second Jewish cemetery in Łódź. The first one, the Old Jewish Cemetery, was established in 1811 at Wesoła Street and enlarged several



The New Jewish Cemetery. (Wikimedia)

times as the community was growing. Its borders were eventually drawn along Bazarowa, Rybna, and Zachodnia Streets. That cemetery no longer exists.

The New Jewish Cemetery was established in the late 19th century, when there was no longer any space available in the old one and further enlargement was opposed by local residents. Izrael Poznański contributed significantly to the establishment of the new cemetery, opened in 1892. During World War I, the cemetery was extensively damaged in 1914 during the battle of Łódź. After Poland regained its independence, the war damage was repaired in the 1920s



The Victims of the Holocaust Memorial, built during the 1950s to honor residents of Łódź and environs. Ceremonies at the monument each year mark the anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)



The main gate of the cemetery. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)

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The Lapidarium, made of matsevas from a part of the cemetery that was destroyed during World War II. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)



The grave of Szymon Cytryn, who died of starvation in the ghetto in 1942. His son, Abram, a young poet, was sent to Auschwitz in 1944 and executed there. The path leading to the cemetery's main gate is named Abram Cytryn Street in commemoration of the generation of young people whose potential was brutally cut short. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)

and a surrounding wooden fence was replaced with the red brick wall we see today.

The first attempts to protect the cemetery after World War II date to the mid-1970s and were made by Łódź conservators, who collected photographs and archival materials and did some clean-up work. In 1980 the cemetery was listed as a historic site, allowing the Łódź Voivodeship Historic Preservation Office to allot funds for its renovation. The first sponsors also appeared: the Nissenbaum Foundation, Josef Buchmann from Frankfurt am Main, and the family of Lola and David Scharf from Israel. On November 16, 1995, the Łódź City Council and the Association of Former Residents of Łódź established the Monumentum Iudaicum Lodzense Foundation to preserve the cemetery and its cultural heritage.

Victims of the Holocaust

The Victims of the Holocaust Memorial **No. 2, Map 4**, built in the 1950s, resembles a chimney, candlestick, and some broken trees. The trees, often present at Jewish cemeteries, connote a life that ended too soon. An inscription in Polish, Hebrew, and Yiddish reads: “A memorial in bright memory of the innocent victims, the Jews of Łódź and the region, who were murdered by the Nazis in the ghettos and camps in the years 1939-1945. Your memory will remain in our hearts forever.” Every year, on the anniversary of the liquidation of the ghetto, ceremonies take place at the memorial.

Standing in front of the inner gate, on the left in the distance we can see the historic main gate, opened only for funerals or special occasions. The city council in 2008 renamed the part of historic Chryzantem Street that leads to the cemetery's main gate after Abram Cytryn, a teenage poet. “Naming the street that leads to the gate of the Jewish cemetery after Abram Cytryn is a symbolic commemoration of the generation of Łódź residents of Jewish origin who were unable to fulfill their full creative potential to the city due to the Nazi atrocities,” according to the declaration that announced the naming.

Abram Cytryn (1927-1944) was born and raised in Łódź, attending the Hebrew Icchak Kacnelson Gimnazjum (Middle School). He wrote his thoughts in poems and short stories, even after he and his family were sent to the ghetto. In August 1944, he was taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered there. His symbolic grave is at the cemetery in the place where his father, Szymon Cytryn, is buried **No. 6, Map 4**.

To the left of the main gate is the Lapidarium, which contains matsevas from the area of the cemetery that was destroyed **No. 3, Map 4**. Prior to World War II the site held a synagogue and mikveh. The buildings were already in poor condition before the war and were demolished shortly after its end.

When we walk through the inner gate **No. 4, Map 4** we enter the burial area. Cemeteries are often described as

bridges between the past and the present. Danuta and Lech Muszyński, in their 1995 book *Cmentarz Żydowski w Łodzi* (The Jewish Cemetery in Łódź), noted their importance: “For cultures of all times and all over the world, cemeteries ... reflect the culture’s attitude to the previous generations, traditions, or values that their fathers taught them. They also express the attitude toward the future, the very future that crosses the borders of the earthly. Moreover, cemeteries stand as bridges which connect previous civilizations – extinct or exterminated – with people living now. They tell stories about different realities, people, and days which will never come back.”

Standing in front of the gate is like holding a book and opening it to chapters of Łódź’s Jewish history. It gives a specific account to a particular community. To learn about it, we can examine what kinds of graves dominate, what forms the graves take, and what the inscriptions say. The Jewish cemetery is often referred to as Beit Kvarot (House of Tombs) or Beit Chaim (House of Eternal Life) but for many visitors it is also a place to study the history of the local Jewish community. Łódź used to be a factory city; therefore, grand and elaborate tombs of local tycoons line the main avenue. A walk reveals the social structure of 19th-century industrial society: a dozen or so mausoleums of the wealthy, mostly families of manufacturers, are the nearest ones; farther from the middle of the main avenue are the tombs of intellectuals; and then thousands of graves of ordinary people who came to Łódź to



Plaques on the wall put up by relatives of residents of Łódź who are not buried at the Łódź cemetery because they were murdered in extermination camps or their fate is unknown. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)

find a better life. The cemetery is divided into sections: males, females, and children. The predominant type of grave is an upright tombstone with bas-relief and an inscription in Hebrew, facing east toward Jerusalem.

Walking the Paths

A left turn on the path brings us to plaques on the wall **No. 5, Map 4**. They were put there by the families of those who do not have graves – who were murdered in extermination camps or whose place of burial is unknown. Further along we see a dozen or so graves from World War II just by the wall.

We can also see the grave of Rabbi Eljahu Chaim Majzel **No. 7, Map 4**, who died in 1912. The shape of his tombstone resembles Torah scrolls and is located in a relatively larger gravesite, reflecting his position and standing in the community. Eljahu Chaim Majzel was the Chief Rabbi of Łódź for nearly 40 years. Like many

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The grave (center) of Eljahu Chaim Majzel (1821-1912), Chief Rabbi of Łódź for more than 40 years. He was an important force in the city’s charitable and civic activities. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)

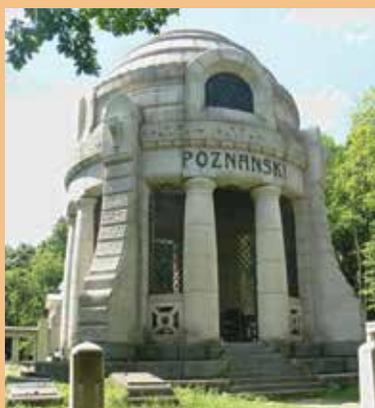


The tomb of the Kestenberg family. The shape of the arches recalls the Golden Gate in Jerusalem. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)

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The grave of Felicja and Izaak Rubinstein, the parents of world-renowned pianist Arthur Rubinstein.



The mausoleum of Izrael Poznański (1833-1900), one of the wealthiest industrialists of Łódź. (Photo by Milena Wicypolska)



The tomb of the Konstadts, important industrialists of Łódź. This was the cemetery's first family grave. (Photo by Milena Wicypolska)

other prominent residents of 19th century Łódź, he was not born in the city itself. As rabbi, he contributed to numerous charity organizations and supported the development of the local community by giving financial help to the poorest. He also cooperated with the leaders of other denominations in Łódź to provide food to poor children. There is an urban legend about a visit he once made to Izrael Poznański, the second-wealthiest manufacturer in Łódź. According to the story, Rabbi Majzel came to Poznański's door to talk with him. It was in the fall or winter, it was cold, so Poznański invited the rabbi inside, but Majzel continued to stand at the door. Finally, he said to Poznański: "You see, Izrael. It is hard for you to spend a few minutes in the cold, so what are these poor people in Bałuty supposed to do?"

When Rabbi Majzel died, thousands of people gathered at his funeral. Every year, on his *yahrzeit* (death anniversary)

his grave draws visitors from all over the world.

Back on the main avenue is a tomb with a shape that looks familiar to visitors who have been to Jerusalem **No. 8, Map 4**. The Kestenbergs were a family of wealthy manufacturers, and their tomb has a different form than the surrounding matzevas. It was meant to resemble the walls of Jerusalem or even, according to a local legend, the Golden Gate through which the Messiah would pass.

A little farther along the main avenue we pass the mausoleum of the Konstadt family **No. 9, Map 4**. Like many other business families, they were engaged in numerous charity initiatives. Herman and Mina Konstadt were the first married couple to be buried together in a family grave, not a common practice in Łódź



The grave of Maurycy Poznański, a son of Izrael Poznański, and his wife, Sara, née Silberstein, daughter of well-known Łódź industrialists, whose family grave is located next to that of Izrael Poznański. (Photo by Milena Wicypolska)

Jewish cemeteries where males and females were buried in separate sections. Mina Konstadt, however, stipulated that there had to be a distinct area for a family tomb, when she was giving funds to the administrative unit of the Jewish community. The inscription on the tomb is in Polish, but the inscriptions on the sarcophagi are in Polish and Hebrew next to each other.

Along the main avenue, on the left, we see Izrael Poznański's mausoleum. Turning right and going down the aisle, on the left, behind the mausoleum of the Stiller family, stands the light pink matzevah of the parents of the pianist Arthur Rubinstein **No. 10, Map 4**. Felicja and Izaak Rubinstein lived in Łódź and raised their children here. From his youth Arthur Rubinstein

was an artist who traveled around the world, but he kept returning to Łódź to visit his family and to perform.

Returning to Poznański's mausoleum **No. 11, Map 4**, we can see how, despite the surrounding trees, it definitely stands out among other graves. The mausoleum is said to be one of the largest Jewish tombs in the world. Its relatively uncommon shape, which Poznański approved personally, may be modeled after the Mausoleum of King Theoderic in Ravenna, Italy.

Izrael Poznański was the second wealthiest industrialist in Łódź. (See his mansion in Ogrodowa Street in Route 1.) When he died in 1900, a local newspaper wrote the following: "Yesterday at 6 in the morning, I. K. Poznański passed



The grave of the parents of Julian Tuwim: Izydor, who died in Łódź in 1935, and Adela, née Krukowska, who was murdered in the Otwock ghetto. (Photo by Milena Wicypolska)

ROUTE 4



The tomb of the Silberstein family, notable manufacturers related by marriage to the Poznańskis. (Photo by Milena Wicypolska)

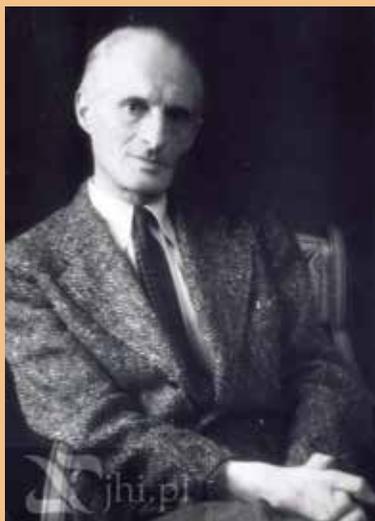


The grave of Jankiel (Jakub) Herszkowicz (1910-72), known for the songs he wrote in the ghetto, which served as inspiration for the film *Song of the Łódź Ghetto*. (Photo by Milena Wicypolska)

ŁÓDŹ



A memorial stone at the execution site where Polish Boy Scouts, soldiers of the underground Home Army, and communists from the “Promieniści” unit were executed by the Germans during World War II. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)



Major Polish literary figure Julian Tuwim (1894-1953) in a portrait by Polish photojournalist Julia Pirotte (1907-2000). (Jewish Historical Institute)

away after a long illness. Every child knows who this person was, so the news about his death has spread over the city, causing public sorrow. I. K. Poznański was born on August 5, 1833, in Aleksandrów. He graduated in Łódź, where he eventually settled. In the initial growth period of Łódź industry, he took his first steps as a merchant, later as an industrialist....”

Poznański attended the local German-Russian Real School (secondary school) together with students of different denominations. After gaining professional experience, he married Eleonora (Leonia) Hertz from Warsaw. She is interred next to him in the family vault. Eleonora contributed greatly to his success as she brought a substantial dowry to their marriage and her family was well-connected in Warsaw’s bourgeoisie circles. Poznański’s factory, where the Manufaktura shopping center is now located, became the second largest factory in the city.

Behind Poznański’s mausoleum is the modest grave of his son Maurycy and his wife, Sara Silberstein **No. 12, Map 4**. It lies between the family graves of the Poznańskis and the Silbersteins. Visitors may be surprised at the simplicity of its form, especially in comparison to Izrael’s. The Poznański family went bankrupt and left Łódź before World War II. Maurycy and Sara died in France. When their remains were brought to Łódź, the family’s reduced finances could not support an elaborate tomb.

Returning to the main avenue, we see graves from the postwar period. One of them is the grave of songwriter Jankiel (Jakub) Herszkowicz, on the left **No. 13, Map 4**. Herszkowicz moved to Łódź before World War II, and during the war he and his family were imprisoned in the ghetto. He started writing songs about life in the ghetto, the head of the Jewish Council Chaim Rumkowski, important events, and hunger. His most recognizable compositions are “Geto, getunya,” “Rumkovski Khayim,” and “Kartofl,” referencing the potatoes that everyone dreamt of. Herszkowicz survived the war and spent the rest of his life in Łódź. His songs were recorded by the klezmer band “Brave Old World”; David Kaufman, a photographer and director, produced a film about Herszkowicz, *Song of the Łódź Ghetto*.

If we walk along the main avenue and turn left onto another well-worn path, we arrive at the grave of Julian Tuwim’s parents **No. 14, Map 4**. Every child in Poland knows about Tuwim, whose poems have entered the canon of Polish children’s literature. But Tuwim’s artistic activity reached much further, including poems for adults, song lyrics, cabaret and operetta texts, and literary essays. He co-founded the so-called Skamander group of poets, which drew leading intellectuals of the interwar period.

Tuwim was born and raised in Łódź. His maternal grandfather published *Dziennik Łódzki*, a local newspaper in Polish. Although his father, a bank clerk, spoke several languages, young Tuwim grew

up in an assimilated family that spoke only Polish at home. He married Stefania Marchew in the Progressive Synagogue (the one financed by Izrael Poznański). The couple later moved to Warsaw, where Tuwim became an important figure in the capital's intellectual life.

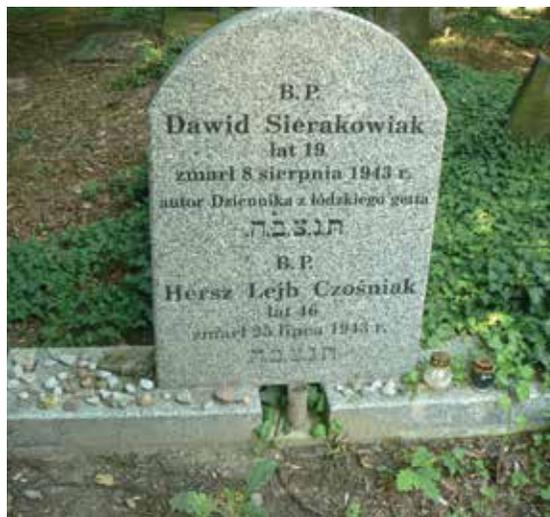
Tuwim devoted a great deal of attention to the question of identity. The fact that he was born to an assimilated Jewish family influenced his work and its public reception. He often focused on issues related to language, assimilation, and stereotypes. When World War II broke out, Tuwim left Poland. During his stay in the United States he became involved with Communism, and when he returned to Poland he supported reconstruction based on Soviet concepts.

Tuwim's mother, Adela, was imprisoned and died in the Otwock ghetto. After the war, when Tuwim returned to Poland, he brought her remains to the Jewish cemetery in Łódź and wrote *Matka* (Mother) in her honor. The poem speaks of her, of longing, and of war, but most importantly of identity – both Polish and Jewish.

Mother

At the cemetery in Łódź,
The Jewish cemetery, stands
The Polish grave of my mother,
My Jewish mother's tomb.

The grave of my Mother the Pole,
Of my Mother the Jewess;
I brought her from land over the Vistula
To the banks of industrial Łódź.



The grave of Dawid Sierakowiak, born in Łódź in 1924, who died in the ghetto in 1943. His diaries are an important source of information about life in the ghetto. (Photo by Milena Wicpolska)

Farther along the main avenue, we turn right and walk until we notice a small monument **No. 15, Map 4**. During World War II it was the site of the executions of Poles engaged in the resistance movement: Boy Scouts, Home Army (AK) soldiers, and “Promieniści” (a communist underground unit). The remains of the victims were buried in the Catholic cemetery.

Now we return to the main avenue, walking to Izrael Poznański's mausoleum, and when we reach it, we turn right and go straight. On the right hand of the quarter, in the left corner, is the grave of Dawid Sierakowiak, author of a diary from the ghetto **No. 16, Map 4**. (We followed his footsteps in Route 2.) Sierakowiak died in 1943 and was buried not in the so-called Ghetto Field but here, in a grave only recently identified.

Discussion Topic

Assimilation, pros and cons.

We are familiar with the important contribution of educated and accomplished Jews to the cultural and economic life of Europe. We commonly associate this oft-praised model of acculturation and assimilation with countries like Germany and France, or great cities like Vienna and St. Petersburg in Russia. Yet we often view with disdain or skepticism the idea of Jews assimilating into the cultures of Poland and other Eastern European lands.

Questions

Do you think differently about Jewish assimilation into German vs. Polish culture? Why?

To what extent are you assimilated into your own nation and culture?

ŁÓDŹ



The interior of the Poznański family's mausoleum. (Wikimedia)



An old faucet in a 19th-century ornamented niche. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)

Dawid and his sister, Nadzia, were born and raised in Łódź. Dawid showed remarkable talent – smart, analytical, well-read, and sensitive. He attended Hebrew Markus Braude Gimnazjum (Middle School) and started writing his diary. His five surviving notebooks record events in Łódź before the war, during the German occupation, and in the ghetto. He also set down his own reflections, the voice of a sophisticated young intellectual interested in politics, literature, and languages. Deprived of access to knowledge, he found his intellectual hunger gradually giving way to physical hunger, which became the central theme of his accounts.

Despite the worsening conditions, Dawid kept writing as he waited for a position in a bakery – a dream job that might provide access to some food.

“In the afternoon, I received a notice from Wolkówna that my request (?!) for a position in the bakery was approved and the job I am supposed to do will soon be assigned.... I can't wait for the day when Nadzia gets better, so I could easily indulge in the pleasure. Nothing new in politics.” He then began writing a sentence, but it ends incompletely, the last of his words that we have: “I feel again that I am starting to get depressed out of impatience.... There is actually no escape from...”

He died of tuberculosis and starvation soon after. None of his closest family members survived. His mother was murdered in Chełmno extermination camp, his father died of hunger, and his sister died in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Only his diaries and a new headstone placed over his grave remain.



Along the cemetery wall are the remnants of pits intended as mass graves. The 800 prisoners assigned to clean up the Łódź ghetto after it was liquidated in 1944 were ordered to dig their own burial sites. The prisoners survived when the Nazis fled the city as Soviet forces approached. The abandoned pits were never filled in and have been left as a grim reminder. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)

Ghetto Field

A walk along the side aisle brings us to the Ghetto Field. Here the look of the cemetery changes. Traditional matzevas give way to a large open space dotted with concrete stones, small metal plaques, vertical slabs, and a few matzevas newly placed by families. This land was vacant prior to the outbreak of World War II but was turned into a cemetery when the ghetto was established. Chevra Kadisha (the funeral brotherhood) divided the area into quarters, kept a record of burials, and tried to provide an individual burial to everyone and make it as ceremonial as possible. The ghetto's high death rate might have outpaced the ability of Chevra Kadisha to perform the burials. Szloma Frank wrote in his diary for January 25, 1942: "Bialer, the cemetery administrator, told me today that he doesn't know what to do with the 402 [unburied] dead bodies that are at the cemetery. Some of them have been there for eight days, and the cemetery service is unable to keep up with burying them." Families sometimes

left pieces of furniture or other objects to help in future identification of the burial place. Although the burial records are incomplete, the commemorative stone in front offers the number of the buried as 43,527.

As we turn left and walk in the direction of the wall, we see the Ghetto Field on the left. At the wall, we turn left and walk along the prewar quarters to a row of pits on the right, by the wall. They were intended to serve as mass graves for over 800 Jews who, after the liquidation of the ghetto in 1944, were left to clear the land. They survived the war, however, as the Germans fled when the Red Army approached the city. The pits have remained uncovered to remind visitors of that time.

On our way to the exit we pass the graves of Jewish community members who passed away recently. We have walked the paths of Jews from the time of industrial Łódź to the present day. ■

—Milena Wicepolska



The Ghetto Field, burial grounds for those who died in the ghetto. (Photo by Milena Wicepolska)

ROUTE 4



View of the New Jewish Cemetery.
(Photo by Milena Wicepolska)



View of the New Jewish Cemetery.
(Wikimedia)

Glossary of Terms, Phrases, and Organizations

Please note that there is no single, universal system for representing Hebrew and Yiddish words in English. The Glossary offers common spellings, which in some cases may differ from what you are accustomed to seeing.

Aram. = Aramaic

Ger. = German

Heb. = Hebrew

Pol. = Polish

Yid. = Yiddish

Aron ha-kodesh (Heb. “holy ark”). The cabinet on the eastern wall of a synagogue in which Torah scrolls are kept.

Ashkenazi. The term derives from a Hebrew name “Ashkenaz”, a biblical figure mentioned in *Genesis*. Ashkenaz was later associated with a region where Jews lived in the Middle Ages along the Rhine River in parts of France and Germany, from where they had fled to the East to avoid growing persecution. Eastern Europe became the center where Ashkenazi life and culture of the Yiddish-speaking Jewish populations flourished in the lands of contemporary Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, until the outbreak of World War II. The Eastern European Jews constituted majority of the Holocaust victims. Survivors live now in Ashkenazi communities dispersed throughout the Jewish world.

Beit midrash (Heb. “study hall,” “house of learning/interpretation”). It is a colloquial

designation of a place or room for learning and an intensive study of Jewish texts and learning.

Bikur Cholim (Heb. “visiting the sick”). An association within a Jewish community tasked with extending aid to the sick.

Bund (Yid. “league” or “union”) or **Jewish Labor Bund.**

Established in 1897, was a Jewish Socialist party active in Poland until 1948. The party promoted political, cultural and social autonomy of Jewish workers, fought antisemitism, and was generally opposed to Zionism, believing that Polish Jews belong into the Polish lands.

Chanukah (Hanukkah) (derived from the Heb. *Chanah*, “to dedicate”) Eight-day festival starting on the 25th of the Hebrew month Kislev (usually December) to commemorate the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after its desecration and the Maccabean revolt (2nd century B.C.E.).

Cheder (Heb. “room”). Jewish religious elementary school.

Chevra Kadisha (Aram. “holy society”). A group of community members dedicated to the ritual

preparation of bodies for burial according to Jewish tradition and to conducting funerals. It is one of the most important organizations of the kehillah.

Haggadah (Heb. “telling”). A Jewish text that presents the order of the Passover Seder. Reading the haggadah at the Seder table is a fulfillment of commandment to retell the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus.

He-Chaluts (Heb. “Pioneer”). One of the Jewish Zionist youth movements that prepared young people for settling in Israel, first established in the Russian Empire in 1905.

Hiddur mitzvah (Heb. “beautification of a divine commandment”). Enhancement or meticulous observance of a commandment beyond the formal demands of the law.

Judenrat (Ger. “Jewish Council”). The Jewish administrative body that the Nazis imposed on ghettos to implement their policies. Its authority was enforced, in part, by the Jewish Ghetto Police.

Kahal (Yid. “community”). See *kehillah*.

Kehillah (Heb. “community”). The organization regulating daily life in a Jewish community. A kehillah is generally governed by a board of elected and honorary officials who hire rabbis, conduct tribunals, maintain ritual baths, administer interest-free loans, provide social relief and kosher food, and supervise Jewish education. In Polish, the corresponding term is *Gmina* or *Gmina Żydowska*.

Linat HaCholim (Heb. “lodging for the sick”). A Jewish institution providing aid for the sick in the community.

Lodzermensch (Yid. and Germ. “a man of Lodz”), was a popular term to describe the wealthiest and most successful manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and businessmen of the late 19th and early 20th century Łódź. Used as a pejorative or ironical epithet when referring to their ruthlessness, moral ambiguity, and pursue for power and money.

Matzevah (Heb. “sacred pillar”) Plural: matzevot. Jewish tombstone ritually marking a grave.

Menorah (Heb. “lamp”). Seven-branched candelabrum made of gold that stood in the Temple in

Jerusalem. Though a symbol of Judaism and an emblem of Israel, it is not used in Jewish ritual outside the Temple. The type of menorah used for Chanukah (called a *chanukiyah*) has eight main branches, plus the middle ninth lamp set apart, which is used to kindle the other lights.

Mezuzah (Heb. “doorpost”), plural, mezuzot. A crafted container, attached to the doorpost of a Jewish home, which encases a parchment bearing specific citations from the Torah (Deut. 6:4-9, 11:13-21). The verses include the biblical commandment to “affix these words to the doorposts of your home” (Deut. 6.9).

Midrash (Heb. “commentary” or “interpretation”). An interpretative commentary on the biblical texts.

Mikveh (Heb. “ritual bath”). A place for Jewish women and men (separately) to immerse themselves in water from a natural source to meet the requirements of ritual purity.

Minyan (Heb. “quorum”). The minimum number of Jews, 10, necessary for the recitation of certain prayers, including Kaddish (prayer for the deceased) and the public reading of Torah.

Pesach (Heb. “Passover”). An eight-day festival starting on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Nisan to commemorate the Exodus of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt.

Rebbetsin (Yid.). Wife of a rabbi.

Seder (Heb. “order”). Ritual meal, including the retelling of the Exodus story, eaten during the first, and in the Diaspora second, eve of Pesach.

Sephardic (From Heb. *Sepharad*, lit. “Spain”). Usually denoting the descendants of Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century. Many Sephardic Jews subsequently established new communities around the Mediterranean basin and elsewhere.

Shabbat (Shabbas) (Heb.). Seventh day of the week, Saturday, observed by many Jews with special prayers, foods, rituals, and rest.

Shoah (Heb. “total destruction”). The Hebrew term for the Holocaust, used to designate the German Nazi genocide of Jews during World War II.

Shtetl (Yid. “small town”). A small town, which had a significant Jewish population or Jewish majority.

Taglit-Birthright Israel. Non-profit organization providing trips to Israel for Jewish young adults around the world. Known also as Birthright Israel or simply Birthright.

Talmud (Heb. “learning”). According to tradition, Jews received a written and an oral Torah. The latter was eventually written down and redacted as the Mishnah. Commentaries were also compiled as the Gemara. Together they make up the Talmud, in Babylonian and Jerusalem versions, which share the Mishnah but have different Gemaras.

Talmud Torah. Jewish religious elementary school for Jewish boys of modest means, mostly children of Jewish craftsmen.

Tzedakah (Heb. “justice or righteousness”). The word, frequently translated as “charity”, denotes a religious obligation to support others and Jewish community institutions. Money is often collected in tzedakah boxes (Yid. *pushke*, derived from the Pol. word *puszka*, “metal can”).

Yiddishkeit (Yid. “Jewishness”; “Jewish way of life”). A term referring to the “Jewish essence” of Ashkenazi Jews in general and the traditional Yiddish-speaking

Jews of Eastern and Central Europe in particular. It can also refer to an emotional or cultural identification with the Jewish peoplehood.

Zionism (After *Zion*, *Tzion* or *Sion*, the Hebrew name for the Mount Temple in Jerusalem). A political and national movement established by an assimilated Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl in the late 19th century. It encouraged Jews to move to the land of Israel, where a form of Jewish collective self-government was to be organized. With the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, the primary objective of Zionism was fulfilled.

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Taube Jewish Heritage Tours and the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland Foundation

Taube Jewish Heritage Tours (TJHT), the flagship program of the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland Foundation, invites people from around the world to explore Polish Jewish culture and to connect with the country's enduring Jewish legacy, which has shaped modern-day Israeli and American Jewish societies and permeated all facets of Western culture. Taube Jewish Heritage Tours is committed to strengthening the bonds between Poland and Jewish communities worldwide.

The mission-driven, on-the-ground Jewish educational tour program designs customized journeys for families, community organizations, students and faculty, VIP delegations, and individuals, from the United States, Canada, Australia, Israel, and Europe. The TJHT professional team of academics, guides, educators, and community leaders provides meaningful and participatory explorations of Poland's multicultural landscape, infusing each encounter with illuminating personal stories and insights from those engaged in Polish Jewish life and committed to the preservation of Polish Jewish heritage.

About Taube Jewish Heritage Tours:

- TJHT's full-service operation oversees travel logistics, offers special rates at five- and four-star hotels, and partners with land providers in the U.S. and Israel.
- TJHT guides are scholars and educators who have been trained to present Poland's multicultural narratives in stimulating, informative tours and workshops.

- TJHT tours are available in English, Hebrew, French, German, and Spanish.
- TJHT provides orientation programs and educational resources in advance of the journey as well as post-tour opportunities to remain connected
- TJHT works with an array of partner institutions in the United States, Israel and Poland, as well as in Europe,
- TJHT has extensive experience in organizing educational and community group tours, family genealogy excursions, VIP delegations and can accommodate groups of all sizes, types, and ages.

Revenue from the nonprofit Taube Jewish Heritage Tours supports publications, educational programs, and cultural and public events that enrich Jewish communal life, promote civil society, ensure the continued transmission of Polish Jewish history, and strengthen connections among Poles, Polish Jews, and Jews from around the world.

The **Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland Foundation** (Fundacja Centrum Taubego Odnowy Życia Żydowskiego w Polsce) was established in Warsaw in 2009 with generous support from the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture. The Taube Center is dedicated to enriching Jewish life in Poland and connecting Jews from around the world with their East European heritage, creating unique educational experiences for Jews and non-Jews from Poland and around the world, including workshops, fellowships,

heritage study tours, publications, and partnerships that extend throughout Poland and internationally.

The Taube Center's programs increase Polish Jewish literacy, cultivate leadership of the younger generations, and expand global Jewish engagement in a living Polish Jewish heritage.

The Taube Center's Sefarim Book Publishing Project provides support for the writing, translation and publication of nonfiction works in Polish Jewish studies, making them accessible to academia and the wider Polish public. Through its own publications — *Field Guide to Łódź*; *Field Guide to Warsaw and Krakow*; *Deep Roots, New Branches: Personal Essays on the Rebirth of Jewish Life in Poland Since 1989*; and *A Timeline: 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in Poland* — the Taube Center provides resources that enrich a visitor's understanding of Jewish Poland, past and present. Our publications are in English; two are in Hebrew and French as well as English.



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www.centrumtaubego.org.pl



Partner Organizations and Cooperating Institutions

POLAND

Auschwitz-Oświęcim

Auschwitz Jewish-Center

www.ajcf.org

Plac ks. Jana Skarbka 5

Phone 48-33-844-7003

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

www.auschwitz.org

ul. Więźniów Oświęcimia 20

Phone 48-33-844-8100/8099/8000

Center for Dialogue and Prayer

www.cdpm.pl

Ul. Maksymiliana Kolbego 1

Phone 48-33-843-1000

Będzin

Cukerman Gate Foundation

www.bramacukermana.com

Al. Hugona Kołłątaja 24/28

Phone 48-511-016-322

Chmielnik

Świątokrzyski Shtetl

www.swietokrzyskisztepl.pl

Ul. Wspólna 14

Phone 48-734-158-969

Email kontakt@swietokrzyskisztepl.pl

Gdańsk

Jewish Community of Gdańsk

www.gdansk.jewish.org.pl

ul. Partyzantów 7

Phone 48-58-344-0602

European Solidarity Centre

www.ecs.gda.pl

Plac Solidarności 1

Phone 48-58-722-4112

Email ecs@ecs.gda.pl

Museum of the Second World War

www.muzeum1939.pl

1 Władysław Bartoszewski Sq.

Phone 48-58-323-7520

Email sekretariat@muzeum1939.pl

Gdynia

Emigration Museum

www.polska1.pl

Ul. Polska 1

Phone 48-58-670-4161

Email biuro@muzeumemigracji.pl

Gliwice

Upper Silesian Jews House of Remembrance

dom.muzeum.gliwice.pl

Ul. Księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego 14

Phone 48-32-441-9639

Email dompamieci@muzeum.gliwice.pl

Katowice

Jewish Community of Katowice

ul. 3 Maja 16

Phone 48-32-253-7742

Email gwzkatowice@poczta.onet.pl

Kielce

Jan Karski Association

www.jankarski.org.pl

ul. Paderewskiego 40

Phone 48-41-343-2840

Kraków

Austeria

www.austeria.pl

ul. Józefa 38

Phone 48-12-411-1245

Beit Kraków

www.beitkrakow.org

ul. Augustyńska 4/26

Email kontakt@beitkrakow.org

C-2 Południe Cafe

www.c2poludniecafe.blogspot.com

ul. Górali 5

Phone 48-660-676-441

Email c2poludniecafe@gmail.com

Chabad

www.chabadkrakow.org

ul. Kupa 18

Phone 48-12-430-2222

Cheder Café

www.jewishfestival.pl

ul. Józefa 36

Phone 48-12-431-1517

Czulent

www.czulent.pl

ul. Kupa 18

Phone 48-12-350-2395

Department of Jewish Studies Jagiellonian University

www.judaistyka.uj.edu.pl

ul. Józefa 19

Phone 48-12-427-5918

Frajda Kindergarten

www.przedszkole-frajda.pl

ul. Świętego Bonifacego 106

Phone 48-664-700-055

Email info@przedszkole-frajda.pl

Galicja Jewish Museum

www.galicjajewishmuseum.org

ul. Dajwór 18

Phone 48-12-421-6842

JCC Kraków

www.jcckrakow.org
ul. Miodowa 24
Phone 48-12-370-5750

Jewish Community of Kraków

www.krakow.jewish.org.pl
ul. Skawińska 2
Phone 48-12-429-5735

Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków

www.jewishfestival.pl
ul. Józefa 36
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Klezmer Hois

www.klezmer.pl
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Massolit Books

www.massolit.com
ul. Felicjanek 4/2
Phone 48-12-432-41-50

Stradomskie Centrum Dialogu

www.scd.krakow.pl
ul. Stradomska 11/13
Phone 48-12-421-2290

Łódź**Jewish Cemetery of Łódź**

www.jewishlodzcmemetery.org
ul. Pomorska 18
Phone 48-42-639-7233
Email fundacja@lodzjews.org

Łódź Kehilla

ul. Pomorska 18
Phone 48-42-633-5156

**Marek Edelman Dialogue Center
in Łódź**

www.centrumdialogu.com
Pl. Wolności 5
Phone 48-42-636-3821

Matanel Kindergarten

www.matanel.pl
ul. Pomorska 18
Phone 48-601-151-003
Email miriamszychowska@gmail.com

Lublin**Grodzka Gate and NN Theatre**

www.tnn.pl
ul. Grodzka 21
Phone 48-81-532-5867

Jewish Community of Lublin

www.lublin.jewish.org.pl
ul. Lubartowska 85
Phone 48-81-747-0992

Rootka

www.rootkatours.com
ul. Niepodległości 28
Phone 48-720-885-533
Email info@rootkatours.com

State Museum at Majdanek

www.majdanek.eu
ul. Droga Męczenników Majdanka 67
Phone 48-81-710-2833
Email centrum@majdanek.eu

Markowa**The Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving
Jews in World War II**

muzeumulmow.pl
Markowa 1487
Phone 48-17-224-1015
Email sekretariat@muzeumulmow.pl

Ruda Śląska**Jan Karski Foundation**

www.instytut-karskiego.org
ul. 1-go Maja 32
Phone 48-32-797-6535

Tarnów**Museum of Tarnów**

www.muzeum.tarnow.pl
ul. Rynek 1
Phone 48-14-622-0625

Treblinka**Museum of Struggle and Martyrdom in
Treblinka**

www.treblinka-muzeum.eu
08-330 Kosów Lacki
Phone 48-25-781-1658
Email biuro@treblinka-muzeum.eu

Warsaw**Adam Mickiewicz Institute**

www.iam.pl
ul. Mokotowska 25
Phone 48-22-447-6100

**American Jewish Joint Distribution
Committee in Poland**

www.jdc.org
ul. Twarda 6
Phone 48-22-652-1754

Association of Children of the Holocaust

www.dzieciholocaustu.org.pl
Pl. Grzybowski 12/16
Phone 48-22-652-1220

Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation

www.auschwitz.org
ul. Twarda 6
Phone 48-22-620-4899

**Beit Warszawa
(Progressive Community)**

www.beit.org.pl
ul. Wiertnicza 113
Phone 48-789-217-685

**Center for Yiddish Culture of the
Shalom Foundation**

www.jidyszland.pl
ul. Andersa 15
Phone 48-22-620-47-33

Chabad Lubavitch of Poland

www.chabad.org.pl
ul. Słomińskiego 19 (Suite 508A)
Phone 48-22-637-5352

**Ec Chaim Chawura
(Progressive Community)**

www.ecchaim.org
Al. Jerozolimskie
Phone 48-511-764-099
Email ecchaim@jewish.org.pl

**Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish
Historical Institute**

www.jhi.pl
ul. Tłomackie 3/5
Phone 48 22 827-9221

**Ester Rachel and Ida Kamińska
Jewish Theatre**

www.teatr-zydowski.art.pl
Phone 48-22-620-6281

Forum for Dialogue among Nations

www.dialog.org.pl
ul. Chmielna 15/9
Phone 48-22-827-2207

**Foundation for the Preservation
of Jewish Heritage in Poland**

www.fodz.pl
ul. Grzybowska 2
Phone 48-22-436-6000

History Meeting House

www.dsh.waw.pl
ul. Karowa 20
Phone 48-22-255-0505

Institute of National Remembrance

www.ipn.gov.pl
ul. Marszałkowska 21/25
Phone 48-22-581-8660

Jewish Agency in Poland

Plac Bankowy 2/1914
Phone 48-22-620-0553

Jewish Cemetery

www.cemetery.jewish.org.pl
ul. Okopowa 49/51
Phone 48-22-838-2622

Jewish Community of Warsaw

www.warszawa.jewish.org.pl
ul. Twarda 6
Phone 48-22-652-2805

**Jewish Genealogy & Family Heritage
Center**

www.jhi.pl/en/genealogy
ul. Tłomackie 3/5
Phone 48-22-828-5962
Email familyheritage@jhi.pl

The Jewish Word Newspaper

www.tskz.pl/slowo-zydowskie-2/
Email slowo@tskz.pl

Joseph Rotblat Foundation

www.fjr.org.pl
Email kontakt@fjr.org.pl

Katyń Museum in Warsaw

www.muzeumkatynskie.pl
Email muzeumkatynskie@muzeumkatynskie.pl

Lauder Morasha School

www.lauder-morasha.edu.pl
ul. Wawelberga 10
Phone 48-22-862-6330

Menora Info Punkt

Grzybowski Square 2
Phone 48-22-415-7926
Email mmaslak@polin.pl
nczarkowska@taubejewishheritagetours.com

Midrasz Magazine

www.midrasz.pl
ul. Twarda 6
Phone 48-22-654-3156

Moses Schorr Adult Education Center

www.schorr.edu.pl
ul. Twarda 6
Phone 48-22-620-3496

Mi Polin

www.mipolin.pl
Plac Bankowy 2
Phone 48-502-043-935
Email contact@mipolin.pl

Muranów Station

www.stacjamuranow.pl
ul. Andersa 13
Phone 48-22-119-6633
Email lukasz@stacjamuranow.pl

Never Again Association

www.nigdywiecej.org

Phone 48-601-360-835

Email redakcja@nigdywiecej.org

Nożyk Synagogue

ul. Twarda 6

Phone 48-22-652-2805

Office of the Chief Rabbi of Poland

Nożyk Synagogue

ul. Twarda 6

Phone 48-22-624-1484

Open Republic

www.otwarta.org

ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 16/18

Phone 48-22-828-1121

Email otwarta@otwarta.org

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

www.polin.pl

6 Mordechaja Anielewicza St.

Phone 48-22-471-0301

Polish Council of Christians and Jews

www.prchiz.free.ngo.pl

Political Critique

www.krytykapolityczna.pl

ul. Foksal 16

Phone 48-22-505-6690

Email redakcja@krytykapolityczna.pl

Shalom Foundation

www.shalom.org.pl

Pl. Grzybowski 12

Phone 48-22-620-3036

Szymon An-ski Association

www.anski.org

ul. Kwiatkowskiego 1/36

Email stowarzyszenie@anski.org

Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland Foundation

www.centrumtaubego.org.pl

ul. Tłomackie 3/5

Phone 48-22-831-1021

Taube Jewish Heritage Tours

taubejewishheritagetours.com

ul. Tłomackie 3/5

Phone 48-22-831-1021

TSKŻ Socio-Cultural Society of Jews in Poland

www.tskz.pl

Pl. Grzybowski 12/16

Phone 48-22-620-0554

Żabiński's Villa in Warsaw Zoo

www.panda.panda.zoo.waw.pl/willa-zabinskich/

ul. Ratuszowa 1/3

Phone 48 -22-619-4041

Wrocław**Bente Kahan Foundation**

www.fbk.org.pl

ul. Włodkowicka 5

Phone 48-71-341-8947

Chidusz

www.chidusz.com

Email redakcja@chidusz.com

Jewish Community of Wrocław

www.wroclaw.jewish.org.pl

ul. Włodkowicka 9

Phone 48-71-343-6401

Jewish Information Center

www.chidusz.com/cizcafe

ul. Włodkowica 9

Phone 48-504-905-358

Simcha Festival of Jewish Culture

www.simcha.art.pl

ul. Chorzowska 10/2

Phone 48-71-328-0734

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Phone 48-71-375-2017

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www.jewish-heritage-europe.eu

Rothschild Foundation

(Hanadiv) Europe

www.rothschildfoundation.eu

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jewish-heritage-travel.blogspot.com/



Model of the Jewish District of Łódź (Museum of the City of Łódź, photo by Stefan Bratjer)



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