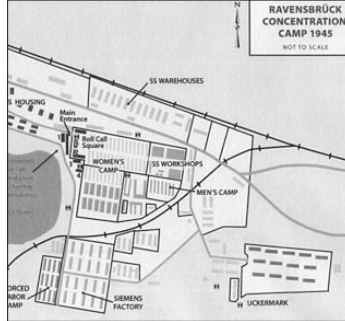


The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933-1945

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VOLUME II

Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe

Part A

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PREFACE

Shortly after the first volume of the Museum's *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* appeared in 2009, a group of the Holocaust survivors who inspire us through their presence as volunteers at the Museum gathered to discuss the volume with its editors. In the course of the discussion, one thing became very clear: the survivors and the editors appreciated the work from very different perspectives. The editors saw the volume primarily as a groundbreaking reference work, a work that would allow laymen and scholars alike to learn about the complex universe of Nazi concentration camps and to carry out further research. The survivors, on the other hand, while recognizing the *Encyclopedia's* utility, saw the work's deeper value in the fact that it documented all the unknown or barely known places where they and their fellow victims had suffered. Camps such as Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald, and Bergen-Belsen are almost household names, but hundreds of other camp sites remain unrecognizable and "nameless" to all but the people whom the Germans and their allies incarcerated there and to a handful of scholars. The survivors were immensely gratified to see those sites, and their victims, lifted out of obscurity at last.

This second volume of the *Encyclopedia* aims to continue in that vein. Many people have heard of the ghetto in Warsaw and perhaps of others in places such as Kaunas and Łódź. Some people may even have heard that there were "hundreds" of ghettos. But how many people would guess that the Germans alone set up more than 1,100? These Holocaust sites of perpetration existed in a great swath of territory from Poland to Russia, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Approximately 75 percent of all the victims of the Holocaust lived in that area, and about half of that huge number endured a ghetto experience during their ordeal. This volume serves the purpose, first and foremost, of memorializing the ghettos established under direct German authority, of literally preserving their memory and that of the people who lived and died in them. Entries address key questions about the ghettos: when they were created, who "managed" them, how long they existed, what life inside them was like, and their inhabitants' ultimate fate. Finally, as in the first volume, this one includes numerous references to extensive ghetto-related documentation located in the holdings of dozens of repositories worldwide, to provide a basis for further research. No other work provides the same level of detail and supporting material.

Five more volumes of the *Encyclopedia* are still to appear. The next of these will cover sites (including over 220 additional ghettos) set up and run by other states—states such as Slovakia, Hungary, Vichy France, and Romania—that affiliated themselves with Nazi Germany in one way or another. Later volumes will cover prisoner-of-war camps, extermination camps, forced labor camps, prisons, euthanasia centers, as well as other categories. Our goal remains to produce the most comprehensive examination possible of Nazi sites of deten-

tion, persecution, and murder. By the time the entire project is finished, it will have involved the labor of hundreds of people, working from locations and institutions in many countries.

The *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* is one of several recent efforts by the Museum and its Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies to open the way for future research and teaching about the Holocaust. In addition to its determination to provide Holocaust survivors with information long denied to them, the Museum played the central role in opening the archives of the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen, Germany, with the same purpose in mind. The Center's Jewish Source Study Initiative is focused on understanding the Holocaust through the perspective of the targets of Nazi brutality and has helped produce a series titled *Documenting Life and Destruction* that includes source volumes to present and analyze the responses of Jewish individuals, organizations, and communal authorities to assault. Through these efforts and others, the Museum is fulfilling its commitment to memory and to enhancing the breadth and depth of knowledge about the Holocaust, its perpetrators, and its victims.

Anyone who reads through any significant portion of this volume will find the contents chilling. There is a dismal sameness to each of the stories here: of the Germans' arrival; of increasing persecution, theft, displacement, abuse, and murder; of the formation of a ghetto and the deteriorating conditions within it; of the inhabitants' desperate efforts to live and to resist their oppressors; and in every case, of the ultimate destruction of the entire community, save for a tiny number of traumatized survivors. These stories are central to understanding the Holocaust. Individually and collectively, they highlight the willingness of perpetrators to participate in acts of violence and barbarism that, sadly, are part of the human potential. They also illustrate the confusion, the brutality, the suffering, and the hopelessness that the victims experienced, and their mixed reactions to circumstances beyond their control or understanding. These are stories that give back to the victims a small part of what the Nazis took from them. We hope that their experiences will provide a measure of understanding and wisdom for those who read this work.

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A Jewish policeman stands guard while Łódź ghetto residents wait in line to cross one of the pedestrian bridges, n.d.
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INTRODUCTION

The existence of ghettos in the German-occupied territories of Poland and the Soviet Union was so ubiquitous, on the one hand, and in hindsight so useful to the Nazi goal of total extermination of Polish and Soviet Jewry, on the other, that the temptation to see Nazi ghettoization policy as a uniform, centralized, and calculated preparatory step for the “Final Solution” was irresistible to many historians in the early stages of Holocaust scholarship. For example, one of the most insightful pioneers of Holocaust research, Philip Friedman, wrote that Nazi Jewish policies in Poland from 1939 to 1941 “were not of a spontaneous or accidental nature, but were rather part and parcel of an unfolding plan, which began with the concentration of the Jews” and, furthermore, that “ghettos were designed to serve the Nazis as laboratories for testing methods of slow and ‘peaceful’ destruction of whole groups of human beings.”¹ And Andreas Hillgruber described ghettoization of the Polish Jews as a step parallel to Hitler’s conquest of France, securing himself in both cases for the simultaneous war for Lebensraum in the east and the Final Solution, which together constituted the nucleus of his long-held “program.”²

A younger generation of historians, emphasizing improvised local initiative rather than calculated central planning, has portrayed ghettos as the means by which local authorities pursued a ghetto policy of willful destabilization and then pressed the central government to sanction ever more radical measures. For instance, Ulrich Herbert has written:

The administration of the General Government therefore endeavored to portray as ostentatiously as possible that the living conditions of the Jews were “untenable.” . . . To the reports coming from everywhere over the “untenable circumstances” and urgent inquiries as to what now must be done with the Jews, the Berlin authorities reacted with continual instructions and subsequent sanctioning for ever more radical measures, which once again accelerated the anticipatory actions taken regionally.³

In short, in this view local ghettoization policy was an important element in a process of “cumulative radicalization” of Nazi Jewish policy that led to the Final Solution.⁴

Neither interpretation is convincing. The Polish ghettos of 1939–1941 did ultimately serve to concentrate, debilitate, and decimate the Jews, as well as provide an ideal control mechanism and staging area for eventual deportation to the extermination camps, but they were not initially created and managed for that purpose. The ghettos did present an “impossible situation” and “untenable circumstances” for beleaguered local authorities but most sought—albeit with only partial success—to stabilize ghetto conditions out of their own conception of

duty and self-interest, not to aggravate such conditions to manipulate and pressure central authorities to sanction a policy of ghetto liquidation and Jewish extermination.

There is no single interpretive framework that encompasses ghettoization in the German-occupied east throughout the war years. Rather, there are two distinct regions and two distinct periods that must be taken into account. For German-occupied Poland in 1939–1941, ghettoization occurred in different places at different times in different forms and for different reasons. Insofar as there was a common thread in this welter of local decision making, it was that, among local ghetto managers, more often than not “productionists” attempting to harness and profit from ghetto labor prevailed over “attritionists” eager to decimate the incarcerated Jews through starvation and disease.⁵ Beginning in the summer of 1941, ghettoization was extended to the newly occupied Soviet territories east of the 1939 demarcation line, including the Baltic states and the eastern territories of pre-war Poland. In sharp distinction to earlier ghettoization further west, ghettoization was now both simultaneously and inextricably connected with the implementation of the Final Solution. Here indeed ghettos served as holding areas for Jews who could not be killed immediately in mass executions by gunfire, and exploitation of ghetto labor—though not absent—was often peripheral. With the onset of the Final Solution in the territories already occupied during 1939–1941—beginning in the Warthegau Region in December 1941 and in Distrikt Lublin of the Generalgouvernement in March 1942—the ghettos now indeed took on the additional function as staging areas for deportation to the extermination camps as well. It is to the examination of ghettoization in these two distinct phases and two distinct regions that we now must turn.

THE CREATION AND MANAGEMENT OF POLISH GHETTOS, 1939–1941

On September 21, 1939, Reinhard Heydrich met with the division chiefs of his security apparatus, the leaders of the Einsatzgruppen in Poland, and his adviser for Jewish affairs, Adolf Eichmann, to clarify issues of occupation policy in the newly conquered Polish territories. Concerning the fate of the Jews, Heydrich was quite explicit: “The Jews are to be concentrated in ghettos in cities, in order to facilitate a better possibility of control and later expulsion.” While the expulsion of the Jews would extend over the next year, it was “urgent” that “the Jew . . . disappears from the countryside.” Thus the initial concentration in cities, Heydrich insisted, “must be carried out within the next three to four weeks.”⁶ Opposition from the military to the negative economic consequences of such an abrupt demographic upheaval, however, forced Heydrich



Portrait of Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Security Police and the SD, and Acting Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, 1942. USHMM WS #91199, COURTESY OF NARA

to relent, and on September 30 he informed his Einsatzgruppen leaders that the timing of Jewish concentration would depend on not disturbing military interests.⁷ Thus Heydrich's initial directive for widespread ghettoization as a short-term measure facilitating Jewish expulsion was not implemented. What remained of his first attempt to set uniform Jewish policy was the instruction to impose Jewish Councils on all Jewish communities and the recognition that "obviously the tasks at hand cannot be laid down in detail from here."

The first Polish ghetto was created in Piotrków Trybunalski, a medium-sized city of about 50,000 inhabitants—some 30 percent of them Jews—located 40 kilometers (25 miles) south-southeast of Łódź, but just beyond the border of the "incorporated territories" annexed to the Third Reich, in Distrikt Radom of the Generalgouvernement. An eager German occupation official, Hans Drechsel, who was first appointed by the army and then confirmed by the subsequent civil administration to be in charge of the city, ordered the usual barrage of anti-Jewish edicts in the last months of 1939. Unlike local German occupation officials elsewhere in Poland, however, he also ordered the formation of an "open" ghetto (that is, not enclosed by walls or fences) restricting Jewish movement and residence on October 8, 1939.⁸ However, it was not obscure Piotrków but rather the much larger city of Łódź to the north

and just within the incorporated territories annexed to the Third Reich that became the first site for extended debate and experimentation over Nazi policies of ghettoization and the model invoked and studied by others thereafter.

Located in an administrative district designated as the Warthegau, Łódź was the largest city and largest Jewish community in the incorporated territories. The goal of the Nazi regime, articulated in the fall of 1939, was to "Germanize" these territories by expelling the entire "alien" population of 7.5 million Poles and 500,000 Jews and replacing them with repatriated "ethnic Germans" from the territories ceded to Stalin in the Nonaggression Pact. A total demographic revolution on such a staggering scale proved impossible to realize immediately under the exigencies of war. Though some Łódź Jews were indeed expelled and others fled eastward of their own accord, the vast bulk—though targeted for expulsion—remained, and their continued presence constituted a problem in the eyes of local authorities that demanded a solution.

As early as December 1939, Warthegau authorities recognized that an "immediate evacuation" of the Łódź Jews was not possible and proposed sealing them "temporarily" in a "closed ghetto" so that the wealth they had "hoarded colossally" would have to be "given back" in exchange for food. The ghetto was to be only a "transition measure" for extracting wealth; thereafter, the Germans would "burn out this plague boil," and the city would be "cleansed of Jews."⁹ Several other constituencies joined in support of ghettoization to pursue their own agendas. Urban planners looked forward to making the city now renamed "Litzmannstadt" a model of German culture and beautification, on which work could begin by removing Jews to the most squalid corner of the city. And German public health officials argued for the "irrefutable necessity" of "hermetically" sealing off the Jews, who were deemed the



Adolf Eichmann listens to the proceedings through a glass booth during his trial in Jerusalem, 1961. Pictured in the foreground are defense attorney Dr. Robert Servatius; prosecutor Gideon Hausner; Hausner's deputy, Gabriel Bach; and [from behind] possibly the prosecution advisor, Jacob Robinson.

USHMM WS #24373, COURTESY OF ELI ROSENBAUM



A group of Jewish men stand outside the entrance to the *mikveh* (ritual bath) in the Piotrków Trybunalski ghetto, May 15, 1942.
USHMM WS #04099, COURTESY OF BEN JACHIMOWICZ JAMES

carriers of epidemics endangering the rest of the population.¹⁰ The ghettoization decree was announced on February 8, and some 162,000 Jews were sealed off on April 30, 1940.

As the expulsion of the ghettoized Łódź Jews was expected by the end of July 1940, and the interim goal was to force the Jews to give up all of their wealth in return for food, the German authorities had little interest in organizing and exploiting Jewish labor. However, when it was clear by the end of summer 1940 that the Łódź Jews could not be expelled in the foreseeable future, that little in the way of “hoarded” wealth was any longer being extracted to purchase food, and death rates in the ghetto were skyrocketing, German authorities had to reassess their policies towards the ghetto. Alexander Palfinger was unconcerned by the evidence of rising death rates and continued to argue that only the “most extreme exigency” would induce the Jews to part with their wealth. And in any case, “the rapid dying out of the Jews is for us a matter of total indifference, if not to say desirable.”¹¹ Palfinger’s immediate superior and ghetto manager, Hans Biebow, argued for a different course; he wanted “to facilitate the self-maintenance of the Jews through finding them work.” Biebow’s position pre-

vailed at a meeting of German officials on October 18, 1940, where “it was established at the outset that the ghetto in Łódź must continue to exist, and everything must be done to make the ghetto self-sustaining.”¹² Therefore, the character of the ghetto had to be “fundamentally altered” from that of “a kind of holding or concentration camp” designed for “drawing off the wealth of the ghetto inhabitants” into an “essential element of the total economy, a one-of-its-kind large-scale enterprise.”¹³

Łódź was the first major sealed ghetto created and the first whose long-term duration was reluctantly accepted. Here the argument between the attritionists and productionists had first been waged, and the productionists had prevailed. It would also become, therefore, the first site of an experiment in harnessing the labor of ghettoized Jews to make the ghetto self-sustaining. It was destined to be not only a model that other German authorities studied and modified but also “a ‘tourist attraction’ that never failed to excite the most lively interests of visitors from the Old Reich.”¹⁴

Throughout 1940 and 1941, most but not all of the smaller Jewish communities in the Warthegau were ghettoized as well. Some were open, but many were enclosed. Local authorities cited various reasons, especially the housing shortage, fear of epidemics, and the alleged key role of Jews in the black market.¹⁵ But the real center of ghettoization had shifted to the Generalgouvernement and particularly to the largest Jewish community in all of Nazi-occupied Europe, Warsaw. There, in contrast to Łódź, the move towards ghettoization proceeded in fits and starts, and attritionists initially prevailed over productionists until the head of the Generalgouvernement, Hans Frank, and his economic experts intervened from outside.

In the fall of 1939, an SS initiative for establishing a ghetto in Warsaw was indefinitely postponed by the army.¹⁶ In the following spring of 1940, the head of Distrikt Warschau’s Resettlement Division, Waldemar Schön, proposed a ghetto across the Vistula River on the east bank, which was rejected by city officials as economically too disruptive.¹⁷ Schön’s next proposal for two suburban ghettos received impetus from a major conference on the use of Jewish labor in the Generalgouvernement, which concluded in early June 1940 that all cities should erect work camps, concentration camps, and ghettos “so that the Jews cannot move about freely.”¹⁸ But this impetus was nullified a month later when Frank ordered a sudden halt to all ghetto building in the Generalgouvernement, which was now deemed to be “for all practical purposes illusory” in view of Hitler’s recent approval of the Madagascar Plan and the seemingly imminent deportation of all of Europe’s Jews to that island in the Indian Ocean.¹⁹

After many false starts, the final impetus for creating the Warsaw ghetto came from public health officials. The chief public health official in Distrikt Warschau, Dr. Lambert, argued that “with absolute certainty” deadly epidemics would sweep the Distrikt in the coming winter and that ghettoization of Jews was urgent to protect the increasing concentrations of troops there. This position was endorsed by Frank’s chief health official, Dr. Jost Walbaum, and on September 12, Frank approved the creation of a sealed ghetto, “above all” due to the

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danger to public health posed by Jews “roving about.”²⁰ At the same time, other towns in the Distrikt were also to construct ghettos, and Schön’s Resettlement Division was entrusted with the implementation. For the sake of time, his idea of two suburban ghettos was abandoned in favor of locating the ghetto in the most densely Jewish section of the city. There the Warsaw ghetto was sealed on November 30, 1940.

If the warnings of public health officials had tipped the scales in favor of ghettoization, many other justifications were offered in its favor both before and after: removing Jewish political, cultural, and moral influence on life in Poland; ending Jewish black marketeering and price speculation; the aesthetic removal of the “Jewish imprint” from Warsaw; and the ability to control large numbers of Jews with a relatively small claim on German supervisory personnel.²¹ In Warsaw as in Łódź, though more gradually, the creation of the ghetto became a consensus policy. Likewise in Warsaw, the subsequent struggle between attritionists and productionists was more prolonged.

With the sealing of the Warsaw ghetto, all economic exchange was to run through the Transfer Station (*Transferstelle*) established by Waldemar Schön, who pursued the announced goal of extracting all of the ghetto’s “hidden” wealth while avoiding “premature impoverishment” before the ghetto inhabitants could be expelled to Madagascar.²² In reality, Schön constructed a coalition of attritionists, hiring the disgruntled Alexander Palfinger away from Łódź and siding with Karl Naumann, the Distrikt’s head of the Division for Food and Agriculture, who deliberately withheld food supplies from the ghetto. As reports of surging starvation in the Warsaw ghetto spread, Frank’s economic experts, Walter Emmerich and Rudolf Gater, presented him with a stark alternative: one could view the ghetto either “as a means . . . to liquidate the Jews” or as a source of labor that had to be sufficiently fed to be capable of productive work.²³ Overcoming the mendacious denials of Warsaw officials, Emmerich prevailed: “The starting point for all economic measures has to be the idea of maintaining the capacity of the Jews to live.”²⁴ In May 1941, Schön and Palfinger were given other duties, Heinz Auerswald was appointed commissioner of the Jewish district, and the banker Max Bischof was placed in charge of the Transfer Station. Together they worked for a productionist solution, specifically “improvement in the hygienic situation in the interest of combating epidemics” and “the prevention of an initially feared economic failure” through the “employment of a large number” of Jewish workers.²⁵

Ghettoization in the other Distrikts of the Generalgouvernement—Krakau, Radom, and Lublin—followed yet another trajectory and timetable. In April 1940, Hans Frank determined that his capital city of Kraków should become the “most Jew-free city” in the Generalgouvernement, so he and his officials could “breathe German air.” Thus the vast bulk of Kraków’s 60,000 Jews were to be expelled from the city and dispersed among the smaller towns and villages of the Distrikt, while only 5,000 to 10,000 would be allowed to

remain as indispensable skilled workers.²⁶ Even as expulsion on this scale proved utterly impossible to implement in Kraków, German Distrikt governors in Radom and Lublin—citing above all a shortage of housing—attempted the same policy of reducing the urban Jewish populations of their capital cities as well. In short, dispersal, not concentration as an alleged preparation for deportation to extermination camps, was one initial German goal in these Distrikts. With the massive buildup of German troop levels in the Generalgouvernement in preparation for the invasion of the Soviet Union, the housing shortage intensified further, and ghettoization of more Jewish communities in the cities and towns throughout Distrikts Krakau and Radom was ordered in late March and early April 1941. When the ghettos in the larger cities were sealed, they contained far larger numbers of Jews than the German authorities either desired or anticipated—in Kraków and Radom, 40,000 and 25,000, respectively, rather than 10,000; in Lublin, 40,000 rather than 20,000. Needless to say, the larger number of Jews was not accommodated by giving them more housing but rather by crowding them together more densely. Open ghettos were more prevalent in the smaller towns in Distrikts Radom and Krakau. “In Distrikt Lublin,” one German official reported nearly a year later, “with one exception, regular and sealed ghettos do not exist. There are many Jewish quarters and special Jewish communities, but these are not specially isolated.”²⁷

Since detailed arrangements were left to the local authorities, the process of establishing ghettos was extremely decentralized and drawn out over more than two years. In Distrikt Radom, for example, it lasted until the summer of 1942, when the deportations to killing centers began. Both open and closed ghettos were established, with the latter type predominating from the spring of 1941. In the case of some small ghettos, the inhabitants were simply ordered not to leave the limits of their village. In the fall of 1941, concerns to suppress the spread of typhus and black market activities led German officials to intensify restrictions on Jews’ freedom of movement and introduce a more systematic ghettoization, which produced more than 100 ghettos in Distrikt Radom. By December 1941, Distrikt governor Kundt had proclaimed the death sentence both for Jews leaving their place of residence and for Poles sheltering or providing assistance to Jews. Signs were to be erected marking the boundaries of the Jewish districts (*Jüdischer Wohnbezirke*) and informing the Jews of the death penalty for leaving them. In response, several Kreishauptmänner declared remaining villages with a Jewish population to be ghettos by early 1942. Subsequently in Kreis Opatow, 17 specified ghettos were to be established by June 1, 1942.²⁸

As a general rule, the more hermetically sealed the ghetto and the larger the Jewish population, the greater the task of sustaining that population against the threat of death through starvation and disease. Thus Łódź and Warsaw above all presented the greatest difficulties to both the German productionist ghetto managers and Jewish leaders in harnessing Jewish labor and establishing viable ghetto economies. The respective

ghetto managers, Hans Biebow and Heinz Auerswald, and their respective Jewish counterparts, Chaim Rumkowski and Adam Czerniaków, followed divergent strategies. In Łódź, Biebow's ghetto administration kept a tight and centralized control over workshops set up within the ghetto as well as the inflow of food and raw materials and outflow of goods produced. Private contracting and smuggling were effectively prohibited. Rumkowski in turn assured the assignment and discipline of labor and tolerated no dissent or challenge to his authority. In Warsaw, Auerswald and Bischof allowed for the emergence of a "free enterprise" ghetto economy in which German businessmen were invited to set up shops inside the ghetto, confiscatory controls on currency and accumulated wealth were lifted to encourage Jewish business activity, and a blind eye was turned towards the considerable economic traffic in and out of the ghetto outside the supervision of the Transfer Station. And Czerniakow, in contrast to Rumkowski, permitted pluralistic political as well as economic activity.

Ghetto production rose in both Łódź and Warsaw, the soaring death rates stabilized, and the ghettoized Jews did not simply die out as the attritionists had hoped. Nonetheless, life within the ghettos remained miserable and precarious, and the triumph of the productionist ghetto managers was only partial for several reasons. First, the ghettos were still viewed by German occupation authorities as a "most unwelcome" but "necessary evil" granted no permanent right to exist.²⁹ As Auerswald noted, "[T]he best solution would apparently still be the removal of the Jews to some other place."³⁰ Thus even German authorities with a vested interest in the productivity of the ghettos could not resist putting immediate and predatory pillaging of ghetto "profits" ahead of long-term investment in the sustenance of ghetto labor. Most notoriously, Gauleiter Greiser of the Warthegau skimmed off 65 percent of the proceeds from ghetto production for his own coffers, leaving the malnourished ghetto workers to a fate of gradual decline. Greiser's windfall from the Łódź ghetto, combined with his close personal ties to Himmler, saved it from the fate of general liquidation and the transfer of a remnant of survivors to labor camps, the fate that other Polish ghettos suffered in 1942–1943. But the Łódź Jews suffered an agonizing and prolonged process of debilitation and decimation until the final liquidation of the ghetto in the summer of 1944.

Second, the ghettoized Jews were at the bottom of the Nazi racial hierarchy and thus had the last claim on resources. Pleas for more food for the ghetto workers and more resources for the ghetto economies were, in a wartime situation of overall and growing shortages, constantly met with the rejoinder that no one else could be "impaired or disadvantaged even in the slightest for the benefit of the Jews."³¹ Thus ghetto managers were free to improve ghetto economies only as long as they worked with marginal resources not previously claimed by others. What they could not do was achieve a reallocation of resources to benefit ghettoized Jews at the expense of anyone else. This meant, moreover, that unrepentant attritionists were generally free to sabotage productionist efforts with im-

punity. Requests for food and raw materials were met with the standard reply that nothing was available for the Jews. In vain, one frustrated German official noted: "It is thereby completely overlooked that these requests serve much less the interests of the Jews than the appropriate exploitation of Jewish manpower for the good of the Reich."³²

Under such circumstances productionist ghetto managers gradually changed the terms of their argument. Initially, they had argued that Jews must be put to work to feed the ghettos at no expense to the Reich and thereby avoid the calamitous consequences of widespread starvation and unchecked epidemics. As the ghettos became more productive, they then argued that their Jewish workers must be fed to continue producing for the German war effort. When Berlin opted for mass murder, by their own revised argument they had already abandoned nonworking Jews to their fate.

GHETTOIZATION IN THE SHADOW OF THE FINAL SOLUTION: OCCUPIED SOVIET TERRITORY AFTER JUNE 1941

In preparation for the "war of destruction" that Nazi Germany would wage against the Soviet Union, Hitler called for the removal of the "Jewish Bolshevik intelligentsia." The military guidelines for troop behavior called for "ruthless measures" against "bolshevist agitators, guerrillas, saboteurs, Jews." Economists planned to decimate the urban population through deliberate starvation. And Heydrich specifically ordered his police units to execute "Jews in state and party positions." However ominous the implications were concerning the long-term fate of Soviet Jewry, pre-invasion documents were quite vague about specific measures. Even Alfred Rosenberg, who in his capacity as the designated future Reich Minister for the Eastern Occupied Territories churned out a veritable blizzard of memoranda, mentioned specific ghettoization policies only briefly and inconsistently. On one occasion he specified "forced labor, ghettoization" as a "temporary, transitional solution" to the Jewish question.³³ Just a week later he wrote that a "definitive solution" would be obtained through the "creation of ghettos or work columns. Compulsory labor must be introduced." Crossed out was the additional qualification "as is already being done in practice in Litzmannstadt [Łódź]."³⁴ Clearly Rosenberg looked to the Polish model and saw the exploitation of Jewish forced labor and ghettoization as two aspects of a single policy.

But the installation of Rosenberg's civil administration, limited to the western portions of the occupied Soviet territory, did not begin until many weeks and months after the invasion. Aside from the initial policies of instigating murderous pogroms, followed by the selective mass murder of Jewish adult males, especially those deemed Jewish leaders or professional elites, carried out by various SS police units, the more mundane policies for controlling the remaining Jewish population were introduced by local military authorities. In addition to marking, forced labor, exclusion from various economic



Defendants Hans Frank and Alfred Rosenberg stand during a recess of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, n.d. Also pictured, from left to right, are Alfred Jodl, Franz von Papen (from the back), and Artur Seyss-Inquart.

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activities, confiscation of property, and the mandated creation of Jewish Councils, these local regulations often included restrictions on movement and relocation to specified areas of residence, both to facilitate control of the Jewish population and to free up housing for the benefit of the local population. The result was that in many regions a decentralized and unsystematic but nonetheless de facto ghettoization process was set in motion.

In midsummer two developments began to occur simultaneously on Soviet-occupied territory: the gradual installation of Rosenberg's civil administration in rear areas and the re-targeting by SS killing squads from adult male Jews to now include women, children, and elderly that signaled the onset of the Final Solution. These simultaneous developments set the stage for a conflict between the civil administration and the SS over the viability of extending the Polish model of ghettoization to Soviet territory. The so-called Brown Folder of Rosenberg's ministry proposed "preparatory measures" for a postwar European-wide solution to the Jewish question. Jews were to be expelled from public life, restricted in movement, and separated from the rest of the population through "a transfer into ghettos." Given the priority of economic concerns during the war, however, anti-Jewish measures were not to damage economic interests, and Jews were to be harnessed

to "productive" manual labor.³⁵ In early August 1941, Hinrich Lohse, Rosenberg's appointee as Reichskommissar Ostland, circulated "guidelines" whereby Jews would be cleared from the countryside and concentrated in "hermetically" sealed ghettos in the cities. Private employers would pay the civil administration for the use of Jewish labor, which in turn would fund minimal provisions for the ghettoized Jews.³⁶ Quite simply, this was a copy of the "practice in Litzmannstadt."

Walter Stahlecker, head of Einsatzgruppe A in the Baltic, objected to the guidelines, which were "not in agreement" with the orders—which could "not be discussed in writing"—that he had been given for the treatment of the Jewish question. In trying to regulate the Jewish question on the model of the Generalgouvernement, Lohse ignored "the radical treatment of the Jewish question now possible for the first time" in the east, namely, "an almost 100 percent immediate cleansing of the entire Ostland of Jews." Moreover, Stahlecker asserted, because of the collapse of the economy, there was no shortage of workers, and therefore, considerations for the use of Jewish labor could be excluded.³⁷

The conflict between a Polish model of ghettoization and an "almost 100 percent immediate cleansing" was resolved through compromise. Lohse informed his men that the civil administration could proceed with ghettoization "where and so long as further measures in the sense of a Final Solution to the Jewish question are not possible." Stahlecker informed his men that while they were not in a position to implement their own "difficult" measures at the moment, they had to keep their focus "on a Final Solution to the Jewish question with quite different measures than those envisaged" by Lohse.³⁸ In short, in Reichskommissariat Ostland (RKO), ghettoization would be a temporary measure, carried out by the civil administration and tolerated by the SS only where and as long as elimination of the Jews through mass execution was not possible.

In August, September, and October 1941, a cautious and conditional consensus on ghettoization was being reached by other agencies in other regions of the newly occupied Soviet territories as well. In mid-August the Army High Command articulated its policy, according to which ghettoization could be carried out "if" it was "useful and necessary" and "if" the means were available to accomplish it without disadvantaging other more urgent priorities (*italics added*).³⁹ On September 5, 1941, Erich Koch, Lohse's counterpart in the south, ordered the establishment of ghettos in those regions in which the civil administration was being established in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine.⁴⁰ On September 28, even the SS-Cavalry Brigade operating in the Pripet marshes of Belorussia welcomed ghettoization as an expedient under some conditions: "If a unit is stationed in one place for a long time, Jewish quarters or ghettos are to be set up directly, if they [the Jews] cannot be exterminated immediately."⁴¹ Last on board were the German occupation authorities in Eastern Galicia (Distrikt Galizien), which had been joined to the Generalgouvernement in August 1941. They initially experienced the ban on further ghetto building that was in force throughout the Generalgouvernement "because the hope exists that the Jews

will be deported out of the Generalgouvernement in the near future.” Pleading their special case, Distrikt authorities obtained permission in October 1941 to erect ghettos at least in the major cities of Stanisławów, Tarnopol, and Lwów to isolate “the Jews from the rest of the population as quickly and as extensively as possible.”⁴²

Given the lack of a single, uniform policy, the emerging pattern of ghettoization in the newly occupied Soviet territories was therefore an uneven patchwork that depended on a number of variables, including above all the timing and logistics of the massacre of the local Jewish populations, on the one hand, and the decisions of local authorities balancing the demands for food and housing and need for Jewish labor, on the other. Five general configurations can be identified.

First, in the occupied territories further east and closest to the front, where much of the Jewish population had had a chance to flee and where destruction of urban areas was great and economic activity slight, immediate mass executions were sometimes carried out without any ghettoization at all. The classic example of mass execution without preliminary ghettoization is of course the massacre of more than 33,000 Jews in the ravine at Babi Yar on September 29–30, just days after the German occupation of Kiev. Also among the largest mass killing Aktions that took place without prior ghettoization were those in Dnepropetrovsk (November 15, 1941) and Simferopol (December 9–13, 1941).

Second, and more commonly, very brief, makeshift measures of concentration were carried out prior to mass killings in 1941. The term *ghetto* was used, often to camouflage German intentions and create the illusion of long-term viability among the victims, but liquidation occurred before these ghettos took on many of the institutionalized characteristics of the “Polish model.” In Lithuania the Germans began concentrating Jews outside the major cities in improvised camps in mid-July, and more systematic killing began in mid-August.⁴³ In Latvia, some of the “provincial” Jews were concentrated in mid-sized towns like Jelgava and Litene and held for two to three weeks before their execution, while others were killed directly in their home villages and towns.⁴⁴ In central Ukraine, the Jews of Zhytomyr were concentrated on July 9, and successive waves of executions had destroyed the Jewish community there by mid-September. Less incrementally, most of the 15,000 Jews of Berdichev were ghettoized on August 26 and killed in a massive Aktion on September 15–16, 1941. In Vinnitsa the Jews were concentrated in a brick factory and several other buildings shortly before more than 10,000 Jews were killed on September 19, leaving only a remnant of 5,000 alive until the next spring.⁴⁵ In southern Ukraine, the Jews of Kherson were ghettoized on September 7 and killed on September 24–25, and the Jews of Mariupol were placed in barracks on the edge of the city on October 18 and killed on October 20–21.

Starting somewhat later than in the Baltic and Ukraine, German occupation authorities liquidated the ghettos of eastern Belorussia, beginning with Mogilev on October 2–3 and 19. In Vitebsk some 15,000 Jews had been concentrated in a ruined factory, and perhaps as many as two thirds had already

perished from starvation and epidemics when the rest were killed on October 8–10. Ghetto liquidations followed in Borisov on October 21–22; in Gomel’, Bobruisk, and Orsha in November; and Polotsk in early December.⁴⁶ In Generalkommissariat (Gk) Wolhynien und Podolien the order for ghettoization was issued in early September 1941,⁴⁷ which was implemented only quite slowly in practice. Apparently desirous of a capital city virtually “free of Jews,” the local authorities carried out a carefully planned killing Aktion that took the lives of 18,000 to 21,000 Jews in Równe on November 5–6, 1941, which prepared the way for the establishment of a ghetto for the remaining 5,000 Jews there in December. The bulk of the 130 ghettos in Gk Wolhynien und Podolien were established between October 1941 and May 1942, to collect Jews in the Rayon centers, as in almost all locations only partial killing Aktions had been conducted in the summer and fall of 1941. The main wave of ghetto liquidations here occurred in the summer and fall of 1942.⁴⁸ In eastern Ukraine, Khar’kov was not occupied until late October. The more than 10,000 remaining Jews were moved to a tractor plant outside of town on December 16 and killed in early January 1942.

A third configuration—prevalent in Distrikt Bialystok and Gk Wolhynien und Podolien—most closely followed the “Polish model.” Here the Einsatzgruppen and other German police units carried out massacres of thousands of Jews in the summer of 1941 but then quickly moved eastward, leaving the bulk of the Jewish populations still alive. They were incarcerated in ghettos that were then left relatively undisturbed until their final liquidation many months later. During this period of relative stability, especially in places where both German authorities and Jewish leaders were similarly inclined, Jewish workers were extensively mobilized and significant ghetto economies were created. In the city of Białystok, German Order Police battalions killed thousands of Jews in two Aktions in late June and mid-July 1941. Thereafter, Ephraim Barash pursued an unabashed policy of “survival through labor” and cultivated a network of German authorities willing to profit. The Białystok ghetto became a beehive of factories and workshops producing for both the Germans and the underground economy. Even when the small ghettos of Distrikt Bialystok were liquidated in November 1942 and the larger ghettos of Łomża, Prużana, and Grodno were liquidated in early 1943, the Białystok ghetto—despite a partial deportation of 10,000 of its population in February—continued in existence until its final liquidation in August 1943. In the area across the Bug River that would become Gk Wolhynien und Podolien, the Jewish communities of Brześć and Pińsk were savaged by massacres in early July and early August 1941, respectively, as the German advance passed through, but here, too, stability followed. In Brześć an alliance of SS and civil administration authorities consciously sought to maximize the economic exploitation of Jewish labor, citing the model of Odilo Globocnik’s economic ventures in Distrikt Lublin of the Generalgouvernement. Many of the ghettos in Gk Wolhynien und Podolien were cleared during the summer of 1942, and in late August 1942, Koch ordered a “one hundred percent cleansing”

XXXIV INTRODUCTION

with no exceptions. Despite the explicit protestations of the German authorities in Brześć, after more than a year of relative peace, the ghettos in Brześć and then Pińsk were subjected to sudden and total liquidation in October.⁴⁹ Following the murder of 4,000 unskilled workers in Włodzimierz Wołyński in November 1942, only a small remnant ghetto there for about 1,000 Jews existed as the last ghetto in Gk Wollhynien und Podolien until its final liquidation in December 1943.

The fourth and perhaps most prevalent configuration for ghettoization in the newly occupied Soviet territories involved an ongoing interplay between ghettoization and massacre. In these cases, mass killing often preceded initial ghettoization, and thereafter the surviving remnant was subject to the constant threat of renewed selections reducing the ghetto population even further. In some places and on some occasions the depleted ghetto populations would be reinforced by contingents of Jews brought in from the outside. In this ongoing process of periodic selection and ghetto reduction, Jews deemed useful to the war economy were advantaged over those classified as nonworkers, as the Germans attempted to exploit Jewish labor and advance towards completion of their “Final Solution to the Jewish question” simultaneously. This was the pattern of events most evident in the Baltic, western Belorussia (Gk Weissruthenien) and Distrikt Galizien.

In Wilno (Vilnius), some 5,000 Jews were killed in July 1941 and another 14,000 in the first days of September at the infamous execution site of Ponary, before the remaining Jewish population of some 40,000 was forced into two ghettos. After nonworkers had been concentrated in the second ghetto, they were killed in October. Two further selections and killing Aktions in the main ghetto in November and December reduced the Jewish population to 20,000. Only then did a period of stability set in, with the bulk of the ghetto population working in the war economy. Nearly half the Jewish population was dispersed to labor camps before the final liquidation of the ghetto in September 1943. In nearby Kaunas, some 10,000 Jews were killed in the summer of 1941, before the surviving remnant of 30,000 was ghettoized in late August. A series of selections in the fall of 1941 claimed the lives of 12,000 more Jews before a period of stabilization set in. Close to 7,000 Kaunas Jews were dispersed to labor camps in the fall of 1943. Then the ghetto was administratively transformed into a concentration camp and finally liquidated in July 1944.

In pre-war Polish territories of Gk Weissruthenien the Germans killed Jewish leaders and intelligentsia in the major towns of Słonim, Nowogródek, and Baranowicze and some smaller towns in July 1941. In Słonim the Jews were placed in a ghetto with two sections, one for workers and families and the other for nonworkers. On November 14, 1941, the Germans killed 8,000 Jews derisively referred to as “useless eaters” by Gebietskommissar Erren.⁵⁰ The ghetto was repopulated with Jews brought in from the surrounding area. Then 8,000 more Słonim Jews were killed on June 29, 1942, and the remnant ghetto was then liquidated the following December. In Nowogródek 5,000 Jews were killed on December 8, 1942,

and additional Jews were brought from the surrounding area into a newly established ghetto that was divided into three sections. Two of these sections were liquidated in succession on August 7, 1942, and February 4, 1943, before most of the few remaining Jews escaped through a tunnel on September 26, 1943. In Baranowicze the mass killing started somewhat later but followed the same pattern. After 2,300 Jews were killed on March 2, 1942, some additional skilled workers were brought in from surrounding smaller ghettos. The ghetto was liquidated in two further Aktions, which started on September 22 and December 17, 1942. A few Jews remained alive in various work camps in Baranowicze until the fall of 1943.⁵¹

An even more complex interaction of massacre and ghettoization occurred in Eastern Galicia. Following the first wave of killing in the summer of 1941, the Distrikt authorities obtained permission to begin ghettoization in three cities: Stanisławów, Tarnopol, and Lwów. In Stanisławów this led directly to the infamous “Bloody Sunday” massacre of 10,000 Jews on October 12, since the space allotted for the closed ghetto that was finally established in December was so small. The open ghetto established in Tarnopol in September was likewise closed in December, but the attempt in Lwów failed. Some 60,000 Jews were uprooted; forced into two narrow passageways through a railway embankment, where a murderous selection of thousands who were deemed unfit took place; and resettled on the site of the prospective ghetto. Before the last 20,000 Jews in Lwów could be moved, however, the Aktion was broken off in early December when epidemics spread through the city.

In March and April 1942 a vast four-pronged attack on the Jews of Distrikt Galizien was set in motion: (1) open ghettos were established in a number of the major towns, often divided into three sections for skilled workers, manual workers, and nonworkers; (2) from there many thousands of Jews deemed least useful for labor were sent either to the gas chambers at the Bełżec extermination center or shot locally; (3) Jews in the outlying areas were concentrated in the urban centers where the Jewish populations had been reduced; and (4) slave labor camps were set up for road construction (the Durchgangsstrasse [highway] IV [DG IV] camps) and outside Lwów (Janowska). This massive uprooting and killing operation gradually subsided after Bełżec was temporarily shut down for enlargement and could take no further transports from Distrikt Galizien. By then the killing campaigns of the summer of 1941, late 1941, and the spring of 1942 had claimed some 7,000, 30,000, and 40,000 Jewish lives, respectively, but over 400,000 Jews still remained alive.

On July 19, 1942, Himmler ordered the liquidation of all Jews in the Generalgouvernement by the end of the year. In an extraordinarily intense killing campaign that lasted from late July into December, the German authorities in Distrikt Galizien claimed another 260,000 victims, most through deportation to the now-enlarged extermination camp at Bełżec. Having decimated the Jewish community of Lwów by nearly half in August, a sealed ghetto was created there in early September after a grotesque public hanging of the Jewish Coun-

cil. The same pattern was followed elsewhere as closed ghettos were created to hold the decimated survivors. Here, the completion of the ghettoization process was not a preparatory step for mass murder but a measure to control the remnant of survivors. At the end of 1942, some 160,000 Jews were in fact still alive in Distrikt Galizien, interned in either labor camps or around 35 permitted “work ghettos” (*Arbeitsghettos*) that were often scarcely distinguishable from labor camps. Despite the Himmler order of the summer before, the deteriorating military situation and the vast roundups of Ukrainian workers sent back to the Third Reich (as well as the limited killing capacity of Belżec) had made the total liquidation of Jewish labor by the end of the year unobtainable.

Numerous killing Aktions continued in the first four months of 1943, especially another roundup of 10,000 Jews in the Lwów ghetto in January. Thereafter the ghetto was officially reclassified as a *Julag* or “Jew camp.” The final sweep of ghetto liquidations occurred in May and June 1943 on Himmler’s orders, immediately in the wake of the security panic that resulted from the Warsaw Uprising. The remnant of 21,000 Jews then still alive in labor camps were mostly killed in the liquidation of the DG IV camps in July and the Janowska camp in November 1943.

The fifth and rarest configuration for ghettoization in occupied Soviet territory involved just two cities—Riga and Minsk—which became the sites for ghettos of German-speaking Jews deported from the Third Reich in late 1941 and early 1942. In September 1941 Himmler had obtained permission from Hitler to commence the deportation of Jews from the Third Reich, but as yet no extermination camps had been constructed and the regime was still uncertain in any case as how best to proceed with the potentially more politically sensitive killing of German Jews. Thus the deportees were initially to be sent to eastern ghettos before being sent “yet further to the east next spring.”⁵² Some 20 transports were sent to Łódź, after which Minsk became the next recipient. To make space for the new arrivals, approximately 18,000 local Jews were killed in two Aktions on November 7 and 20, 1941. German authorities in Minsk protested the arrival of the transports of Central European Jews so vociferously that the influx was stopped after 7 transports. The deportees were interned in a “German ghetto” separated from that of the Belorussian Jews by an internal wire.

In Riga, following early pogroms and numerous killing Aktions in the nearby Bikernieki Forest, German authorities ordered the formation of a ghetto in late July 1941. When finally sealed on October 25, 1941, the ghetto held 29,600 Latvian Jews. On November 30 and December 8, all but 5,000 (confined to a “small ghetto”) were killed in two horrific mass shootings at Rumbula. The main ghetto as well as nearby camps at Jungfernhof and Salaspils were filled with some 20,000 Jews from the Third Reich, who arrived on 20 transports between November 30, 1941, and February 10, 1942. Mass executions and high attrition cut the population of newcomers in half within months. A remnant of some 8,000 Jews was transferred to the concentration camp at Kaiserwald and

its subcamps before the ghetto was dissolved in November 1943.⁵³

LIQUIDATION OF THE POLISH GHETTOS, 1942–1944

When Joseph Goebbels visited Hitler’s headquarters on August 19–20, 1941, he referred to Hitler’s Reichstag speech of January 1939 prophesying that another world war would result in the “destruction of the Jewish race in Europe.” Goebbels then recommended not only the marking of German Jews but also their deportation to the east. Convinced that his prophecy was “being confirmed,” Hitler approved the marking decree but made an important distinction in the timetable for the realization of his prophecy. “In the east the Jews are paying the price, in Germany they have already paid in part and will have to pay still more in the future.” But this future was not distant. The deportation of German Jews would begin “immediately after the end of the campaign in the East.”⁵⁴

The renewed Nazi offensive from early September to early October led in rapid succession to the surrounding of Leningrad in the north, the capture of Kiev in the south, and the double encirclement victory of Vyazma and Bryansk on the Central Front. With victory now seemingly in sight, the Nazi regime also made a cluster of decisions in September and October 1941 that would extend the Final Solution that had sealed the fate of Soviet Jews to the rest of the European Jews within the German sphere, namely, the decisions to begin the deportation of Jews from the Third Reich to the east that Hitler had still shied from in August, to begin construction of a fleet of gas vans and two prototype extermination camps at Chełmno and Belżec, and to forbid any further emigration of Jews from the German sphere. In short, the previous vision of a solution to the Jewish question through decimating expulsion had been replaced by a new vision of total and systematic mass murder through deportation to camps in the east equipped with gassing facilities.

In turn, Polish ghettos that had previously functioned as temporary holding areas for Jews until they could somehow be expelled now became staging areas for selection and deportation to extermination camps. However, immediate implementation of the new policy was not possible until the new killing centers had been constructed and they as well as the techniques of ghetto liquidation and deportation had been tested. The Nazi regime was venturing into totally uncharted territory, and necessarily there would be a significant “lag time” between the fateful decisions of the fall of 1941 and the extension of the Final Solution from the Soviet territory to the European Jews in practice.

Once again the Łódź ghetto was a key site in the history of Nazi ghettoization, where the course of events was shaped by four distinguishing factors. It was already the first ghetto in which, due to the joint efforts of ghetto manager Hans Biebow and Jewish Council chairman Chaim Rumkowski, an extensive employment of Jewish labor had been harnessed to the German war economy. It was the only Polish ghetto (in addition to Minsk, Kaunas, and Riga further east) to which German,

Austrian, and Czech Jews were deported in the fall of 1941, posing the problem of overcrowding and evoking strong protest from local authorities. It was now the first major ghetto from which Jews were selected and deported to their deaths by poison gassing (in this case in the gas vans of the Chełmno camp), beginning in January 1942. And in the end, as the major Polish ghetto furthest from the reach of the advancing Red Army and the ghetto most profitable to local German authorities, it would be the last to be liquidated.

The dovetailing of Rumkowski's strategy of survival through labor with the needs of the German war economy and the interest of local Nazis in enriching themselves meant that the Łódź ghetto was targeted for the elimination of all nonworking Jews but not total destruction. This also meant that the Łódź ghetto was a major site of one of the most excruciating dilemmas facing some but not all Jewish Councils, namely, participation in the selection of who would live and who would die. Between January and May 1942, Rumkowski's ghetto bureaucracy chose more than 55,000 Jews to be sent to Chełmno, and Jewish ghetto police escorted the unfortunate victims to the waiting trains. However, when the Germans demanded renewed deportations in September 1942 of the sick and unfit as well as all those over 65 and under 10 years of age, they had to enter the ghetto in force to carry out with terrible violence the deportation of an additional 16,000 Jews. While attrition from starvation continued within the ghetto unabated, that was the last deportation until the final liquidation of the Łódź ghetto in the summer of 1944.

Elsewhere in Poland there was no such prolonged pause in the ghetto liquidation process. Within the Generalgouvernement the Lublin ghetto was the site of the crucial "trial run" for mass ghetto-clearing and the operation of the Bełżec extermination camp. Beginning on March 16, squads of SS, Order Police, and East European auxiliaries (euphemistically called Hiwis or "volunteers") struck the ghetto on a daily basis. By April 14, over 30,000 Jews had been sent to Bełżec, thousands had been shot in the course of the violent roundups, some 4,000 were approved for transfer to a makeshift work ghetto, and another 4,000 "illegals" managed to evade the roundups and join the temporarily spared workers. In short, within one brief month over 80 percent of the inhabitants of the Lublin ghetto were murdered, and a remnant of less than 20 percent clung to life under a precarious stay of execution.

One Nazi official immediately perceived the significance of what had happened: "The Jewish resettlement has proved, therefore, that the action can be carried out also on a large scale, that is[,] for the entire Generalgouvernement."⁵⁵ And Goebbels recorded in his diary: "Beginning in Lublin, the Jews in the Generalgouvernement are now being evacuated eastward. The procedure is a pretty barbaric one and not to be described here more definitely. Not much will remain of the Jews. On the whole it can be said about 60 percent of them will have to be liquidated[,] whereas only about 40 percent can be used for forced labor."⁵⁶ Deportations to Bełżec were extended simultaneously to other parts of Distrikt Lublin and two other Distrikts—Galizien and Krakau—in the spring of

1942. The ghetto clearance Aktions at this time were accompanied by the establishment of a number of short-lived ghettos designed primarily to assemble the Jews for deportation. Very quickly the limited gas chamber and burial capacity of Bełżec was overwhelmed. Operations there were halted in May while larger gas chambers were constructed, but a new camp at Sobibór opened, and construction of a third Generalgouvernement extermination camp at Treblinka began.

In mid-June the ghetto-clearing and deportation Aktions were temporarily halted due to a lack of trains, owing to the demands of the renewed German offensive on the Eastern Front. During the brief pause Himmler pushed for an even more sweeping liquidation of the ghettos than reflected in Goebbels's estimated ratio of 60 percent liquidation/40 percent labor. The existing arrangements for the employment of Jewish labor were voided, and Himmler imposed new, much more stringent conditions for its use. Then on July 19, 1942, directly following a meeting with Hitler and a visit to Auschwitz, Himmler set a deadline for "total purification" of the Generalgouvernement: "I order that the resettlement of the entire Jewish population of the Generalgouvernement be carried out and completed by December 31, 1942. As of December 31, 1942, no person of Jewish origin may reside in the Generalgouvernement except in internment camps. . . . All other labor projects that employ Jewish labor must be completed by then, or if this is not possible, transferred to an internment camp."⁵⁷

Just days later, on July 23, the trains rolled again, and the newly opened extermination camp at Treblinka began receiving massive transports from the Warsaw ghetto and Distrikt Radom. The five months following the setting of Himmler's deadline were undoubtedly the most lethal in the history of the Holocaust, as every ghetto in Poland was devastated, and the vast bulk of Polish Jewry perished in the face of the manic Nazi assault. While the largest ghetto, Warsaw, had to be emptied incrementally, most were liquidated quickly. For instance, from Częstochowa 50,000 ghettoized Jews were sent to Treblinka in a single brutal Aktion lasting two weeks. Other ghettos, like Międzyrzec Podlaski, were virtually emptied, refilled with Jews from the surrounding region, and then emptied again in repeated Aktions. Only by the narrowest margin was Himmler's end-of-the-year deadline not met. From January through September 1943, the "remnant ghettos" were in turn liquidated. Thereafter, Jews in the Generalgouvernement survived either in work camps or illegally in hiding or under false papers.

Alongside Łódź, the other major concentration of Jews in the "incorporated territories" of western Poland was found in Eastern Upper Silesia (Ost-Oberschlesien). Just as Łódź was the site of the first work ghetto, Eastern Upper Silesia was the site of a widespread system of forced labor camps, run by Organisation Schmelt. And just as the Germans found a compliant Jewish leader in Łódź in Chaim Rumkowski, in Eastern Upper Silesia, Moshe Merin of Sosnowiec proved so useful that—contrary to the normal practice of keeping Jewish Councils isolated from one another—he was given author-

ity over all Jewish communities in the region. Perhaps for these reasons, Himmler felt less urgency here. Two massive selections in May–June and August 1942 sent 35,000 non-working Silesian Jews to Auschwitz, but closed ghettos for those Jews not already in work camps were not created until the spring of 1943, most notably in Sosnowiec, Będzin, and Zawiercie. In stark contrast to the Generalgouvernement, at this point in time the majority of Jews in Eastern Upper Silesia were still alive, though sealed in either ghettos or labor camps. The Warsaw ghetto uprising, however, induced Himmler to change course. Contrary to the fate of Łódź that remained in existence for another year, the Silesian ghettos were liquidated in August 1943.⁵⁸

JEWISH COUNCILS, GHETTOS, AND STRATEGIES OF SURVIVAL

Despite the variation in Nazi ghettoization policy that differed widely according to time and place, once incarcerated the ghettoized Jews had certain common experiences and faced certain common dilemmas. From the start of the camp system in 1933, the Nazis had employed a method of prisoner control—the so-called Kapo system—that involved granting some prisoners the power to control other prisoners in return for special privileges. This cynical method of divide and rule was applied to the Jews of occupied Poland, when Heydrich ordered the creation of Jewish Councils in each community in September 1939, with the collective responsibility for disseminating German orders and implementing German policies. As Heinz Auerswald, the ghetto manager in Warsaw, noted, the imposition of Jewish Councils—a German policy to serve German purposes—had two distinct advantages. The councils proved to be a valuable instrument through which the Germans exercised maximum control with minimum manpower. Moreover, the councils served as lightning rods for the anger and frustration of other Jews. “When deficiencies occur the Jews direct the resentment against the Jewish administration, and not against the German supervision.”⁵⁹

For the most part, the Jewish members of the councils, who at least initially were drawn primarily from the cadres of traditional community leaders and activists, thought of themselves not as Nazi puppets but rather as community representatives given the thankless task of trying to protect Jewish interests under the most difficult of circumstances in which they had no choice but to carry out German orders. To mitigate German demands and Jewish suffering, they resorted above all to two strategies of survival: bribery and labor. In the first they sought out corruptible German officials who individually could be given a vested interest in continued Jewish existence and at least minimal well-being. In the latter they pursued the same logic on a broader, systemic level. In the words of Ephraim Barash of Białystok, the Jews had to make “every effort to penetrate the economy” through providing essential labor, so that “we should be missed if we were destroyed.”⁶⁰ At least initially in Poland, both strategies dovetailed with the interests of productionist ghetto managers and

appeared to be successful. What Jewish leaders had trouble imagining was that local German authorities, who wielded the power of life and death over their communities, were just minor functionaries with no power to influence, much less determine, the ultimate goals of Nazi Jewish policy. The policies of mitigation of Jewish Council leaders that worked before the implementation of the Final Solution would prove tragically illusory and counterproductive thereafter.

As Isaiah Trunk noted in his classic study of Jewish Councils, *Judenrat*, ghettoization posed tremendous problems to Jewish leaders, who with few resources all had to deal with hopelessly inadequate food supplies, terribly overcrowded housing, and the constant threat of epidemics.⁶¹ They also needed to help create innovative ghetto economies for self-maintenance. In occupied Poland, there was at least a period in which most councils could deal with these “normal” problems of ghettoization before they were confronted with the excruciating threat of the Final Solution. In occupied Soviet territory, all these problems converged.

By the time the Jewish Councils in occupied Poland faced the supreme challenge, their composition had tended to change in two ways. First, there was a process of “negative selection” as the Germans replaced less compliant with more compliant members. Traditional community leaders played a declining role as the Germans handpicked subservient outsiders more suited to their purposes.⁶² Second, collective leadership gave way to the domination of individuals, as the Germans preferred to work with those of more authoritarian temperament who mirrored their own preference for the *Führerprinzip* (leader principle). The culmination of the latter trend, atypical in the extreme it reached, were two men whom Philip Friedman dubbed exemplars of the “messianic complex”—Chaim Rumkowski of Łódź and Moshe Merin of Eastern Upper Silesia.⁶³ In those ghettos where incremental decimation rather than total liquidation faced Jewish Councils with the “choiceless choice”⁶⁴ of participating in the Germans’ selection process in the hope of limiting losses and



Judenrat chairman Mordechai Rumkowski (left) poses with Moshe Merin, the chairman for the Jewish councils in Eastern Upper Silesia, during the latter's visit to Łódź, 1941–1942.

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XXXVIII INTRODUCTION

buying time, Jewish Councils and ghetto police often tragically complied with the succession of German demands for ever more victims. But Rumkowski and Merin went beyond this. Convinced that they alone were destined to be the saviors of a surviving remnant, they were exceptionally intolerant of opposition to their policies of total compliance. Rumkowski included those he deemed “troublemakers” in the first transports to Chełmno, and Merin denounced his opponents to the Gestapo. At the other end of the spectrum of Jewish Council response to German demands to participate in the selection process were Adam Czerniaków of the Warsaw ghetto, who took poison rather than comply with German demands to round up children, and Artur Rosenzweig of Kraków, who chose to march at the head of the first column of deportees sent to Bełżec rather than sacrifice others to temporarily save himself.

Ultimately, Jewish leaders had no option or choice at their disposal that could save their communities. Whether the Germans ghettoized their victims for varying periods of time or killed them immediately, as in Kiev at Babi Yar, and whether Jews complied to the end, as in Łódź, or turned to a “resistance of the doomed,” as in Warsaw, the catastrophic and tragic end result was determined by German intent and power, not by Jewish decisions. The ghettos constitute an essential chapter in how and where the destruction of the European Jews occurred, but they do not explain why.

Christopher R. Browning

NOTES

1. Philip Friedman, “The Jewish Ghettos of the Nazi Era,” in Ada J. Friedman, ed., *Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust* (New York: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980), pp. 61, 69. See also Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 61.

2. Andreas Hillgruber, “Die ‘Endlösung’ und das deutsche Ostimperium als Kernstück des rassenideologischen Programms des Nationalsozialismus,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 20:2 (1972): 133–153.

3. Ulrich Herbert, “Vernichtungspolitik,” in Ulrich Herbert, ed., *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939–1945: Neue Forschungen und Kontroversen* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1998), pp. 58–59. See also Götz Aly, *Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1995), pp. 317–324.

4. For the concept of “cumulative radicalization” as a key to understanding National Socialist policymaking, see Hans Mommsen, “National Socialism—Continuity and Change,” in Walter Laquer, ed., *Fascism: A Reader’s Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 183.

5. The author has examined ghettoization in this region and time period in three publications: “Nazi Ghettoization Policy in Poland: 1939–41,” *Central European History* 19:4 (December 1986): 343–368, subsequently reprinted in Browning, *The Path to Genocide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 28–56; “Before the ‘Final Solution’: Nazi Ghettoization Policy in Poland (1940–41),” in *Ghettos 1939–1945: New Research and Perspectives on Definition, Daily Life, and Survival* (symposium presentations printed as an occasional

paper of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2005), pp. 1–13; and *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), pp. 111–168.

6. NARA, T-175/239/272836-40: Report of September 29, 1939, on meeting of division heads and Einsatzgruppen commanders on September 21, 1939. Heydrich’s infamous Schnellbrief of September 21, 1939, summarizing the same meeting, included mention of concentrating the Jews in cities with good rail connections as a “short-term goal” but did not use the term *ghetto*.

7. Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Das Heer und Hitler. Armee und nationalsozialistisches Regime 1933–1940* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1969), pp. 671–672 (Doc. No. 47: Heydrich to Einsatzgruppen leaders, September 30, 1939).

8. Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 193–195; Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), pp. 27, 48, 228, 230, 261. Promoted to Kreishauptmann of Kielce in 1941, Drechsel was arrested for corruption in 1944.

9. Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Fascismus, Getto, Massenmord* (hereafter *FGM*) (Berlin [East]: Rütten & Loening, 1960), pp. 78–81 (Rundschreiben of Übelhoer to party and police officials, December 10, 1939); BA-BL, BDC: Greiser Pers. Akten, Besuchs-Vermerk of the staff of the Führer’s Deputy, January 11, 1940.

10. For the consensus of German officials on ghettoization, see Gordon J. Horwitz, *Gettostadt: Lodz and the Making of a Nazi City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 34–56.

11. YVA, JM 799/193 (A. Palfinger Aktennotiz, July 16, 1940); and O-53/78/76-82 (A. Palfinger “critical report,” November 7, 1940).

12. *Dokumenty i materiały do dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce*, vol. 3, *Getto Łódzkie*, ed. Artur Eisenbach (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół CZWH w Polsce, 1946), pp. 102–104 (conference of October 18, 1940).

13. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 177–179 (Marder to Übelhoer, July 4, 1941).

14. *Dokumente Occupationis Teutonicae* (Poznań, 1949), vol. 8, pp. 57–58 (undated document of the Reichsjustizamt).

15. Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 193–206.

16. Israel Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 49.

17. *FGM*, pp. 108–109 (Schön Report, January 20, 1941).

18. Hans Frank, *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen*, ed. Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer (Stuttgart: DVA, 1975), pp. 227–239 (Wirtschaftstagung, June 6–7, 1940).

19. *FGM*, p. 110 (Schön Report, January 20, 1941).

20. YVA, JM 814 (Lambrecht Report, September 3, 1940); International Military Tribunal, ed., *Trial of the Major War Criminals*, vol. 29 (Nuremberg, 1947), p. 406; Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 281 (Abteilungleitersitzung, September 12, 1940).

21. YVA, JM 1112 (Auerswald Report “Zwei Jahre Aufarbeit,” September 26, 1941); O-53/48/792-816 (complete Schön Report).

22. Ibid., O-53/48/792-816 (complete Schön Report).
23. Ibid., JM 10016 (“Die Wirtschaftsbilanz des jüdischen Wohnbezirk,” March 1941), also published in *Beiträge zur nationalsozialistischen Gesundheits- und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 9, *Bevölkerungsstruktur und Massenmord: Neue Dokumente zur deutschen Politik der Jahre 1938–1945*, ed. Götz Aly and Suzanne Heim (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1991).
24. Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, pp. 343–346 (conference of April 3, 1941).
25. YVA, O-53/49/132 (Auerswald’s retrospective report on his activities in Warsaw, n.d. but after January 1943).
26. Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 165 (entry of April 12, 1940).
27. YVA, O-53/82/465 (Lublin department of population and welfare to Kraków, February 6, 1942).
28. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 121; Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, p. 247.
29. *Dokumente i materiały*, vol. 3, pp. 241–242 (Łódź conference of October 24, 1940). In almost identical language Frank termed the Warsaw ghetto a “lesser evil” and temporary wartime measure that was not to be a “permanent burden.” Frank, *Diensttagebuch*, p. 361 (conference of April 19, 1941).
30. Auerswald to Medeazza, November 24, 1941, printed in *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow*, ed. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermisz (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), p. 402.
31. *Dokumente i materiały*, vol. 3, pp. 241–242 (Łódź conference of October 24, 1940).
32. YVA, JM 798, auditor’s report for February 1941. This document has now been published in Aly and Heim, *Bevölkerungsstruktur und Massenmord*, pp. 39–71.
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37. Ibid., pp. 42–46 (Stahlecker position paper, August 6, 1941).
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41. Cited in Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, p. 529.
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51. Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde*, pp. 609–623.
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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

From the time that work began on this volume in January 2002, unique challenges arose that made the production process different than it was for Volume I. The existing lists of ghettos were by no means complete and were somewhat contradictory. In addition, there was no clear definition of what a ghetto was. Even the wartime German authorities themselves had varying conceptions of a ghetto, using it to mean quite different things according to the time and place. They also made only very sporadic attempts to record where ghettos existed, other than the few major ones. Whereas the concentration camp system was highly organized with a considerable degree of internal documentation, ghettoization was at best a regional—and often, a local—phenomenon. What soon became clear was that there were many more ghettos than recorded on the previous lists and that a great many sites would have to be examined closely to determine whether or not a ghetto existed. In addition, due to the scarcity of German documentation, a considerable amount of reliance would have to be placed on the accounts of survivors and postwar investigations.

Fortunately, the timing of this project was very opportune. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of most archives in Eastern Europe, a flood of primary documentation became available in the 1990s. A new generation of scholars soon started to mine these sources, writing detailed monographs on the Holocaust for many regions of Eastern Europe, such as the groundbreaking work of Dieter Pohl for Eastern Galicia. Partly inspired by German compensation for forced and slave laborers, the State Archives in Belarus and Ukraine published their own lists of camps and ghettos. For Poland, a similar comprehensive list of camps and ghettos had been prepared at the end of the 1970s, which also included detailed references to back its claims. Most Western lists, which estimated that somewhere between 400 and 800 ghettos may have existed, were based primarily on the list published by the International Tracing Service (ITS) after the war, which unfortunately contained large gaps, especially for the former Soviet Union.¹

The joint tasks facing the project, then, were clearly linked: to establish a satisfactory definition of a ghetto and to draw up a new list of ghettos that was as comprehensive and accurate as possible.

For much of the duration of the project, the main working definition of a ghetto was primarily the language used to describe it in the contemporary documentation and survivors' accounts. German documentation uses a number of different terms, including *Wohngebiet der Juden* or *Jüdisches Wohnviertel*, as well as *ghetto*, to describe a separate and consolidated Jewish residential district in which non-Jews were not permitted to reside. Polish-language sources refer also to a *dzielnica*

Żydowska, or “Jewish quarter,” and similar terms can be found in Yiddish and Russian (e.g., *kvartal*).

About halfway through the project, another very important source, the Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation (abbreviated in this volume as VHF), became available for direct access at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). This was of great significance, as VHF's approximately 50,000 survivor interviews had by then been indexed for references to ghettos. Despite a few probably mistaken references, these interviews proved immensely useful, mainly to corroborate other sources on details about the ghettos and, in a few cases, to assist us in identifying ghettos mentioned in few, if any, other sources. The hundreds of recent interviews of local Ukrainians collected by Yahad-In Unum (YIU), led by Father Patrick Desbois, many of which are now accessible at the USHMM, provided an additional useful resource for a number of ghettos in Ukraine.²

By the end of the project in 2009–2010, a more coherent definition of a ghetto had crystallized from the many diverse examples documented. In essence, a ghetto is a place where the Germans concentrated the Jews. For this volume, in determining whether or not a ghetto existed, the most important indicator was establishing whether the German authorities ordered the Jews to move into a designated area, where only Jews were permitted to live. Since the Germans established a great many open ghettos, not enclosed by a wall or fence, the existence of such barriers could not be used as part of a definition. Likewise, other simple tests that had been proposed previously to define a ghetto, such as poor and overcrowded housing conditions or the existence of a Jewish self-administration, were equally unhelpful. As Dan Michman has noted, the establishment of Jewish Councils often preceded ghettoization by a considerable period of time, and therefore no causal link between the two can be assumed.³ Many places had Jewish Councils but no ghetto.

Using the above straightforward definition still leaves the question of what distinguishes ghettos from forced labor camps and other camps used to detain Jews. A number of distinctions offer themselves. First, in most cases ghettos contained larger family units and remained close to the original location of the Jewish community, as opposed to many labor camps based in factories, at other work sites, or at some distance from previous Jewish settlements. Most labor camps differed in a number of other ways from ghettos; for example, often men and women were segregated and most inmates were housed together in barracks. Nevertheless, as a number of entries in this volume demonstrate, many ghettos closely resembled labor camps, and vice versa. Ultimately in most borderline cases, the editors have sided with the favored designation used by the German authorities or by most survivors,

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wherever such a distinction can be discerned in the sources. Of course, a number of debatable cases remain, and some—but not all—of these have been included to demonstrate the range of situations that existed. In a few cases, a possible ghetto was not included due to the simple lack of detailed or clear-cut information. A few smaller ghettos or possible ghetto sites are mentioned briefly in the entries for the larger ghettos nearby.

Christopher R. Browning's Introduction to this volume lays out how historians have understood the role of ghettos within the development of the Final Solution, illustrating the complexity of that relationship. The aim of the next several pages is to highlight briefly a few of the regional patterns that have become apparent through our research and to distill out one or two of the most striking insights gained from this uniquely comprehensive view. For more detailed regional analysis, please go to the 19 regional essays, which review the main features of ghettoization in each region.

From the start, there were a number of surprises regarding the patterns of ghettoization, and new discoveries were made in every region. For example, the Germans established several small improvised ghettos in Pruchnik, Sanok, and Leżajsk, all in the Kraków Region (Distrikt Krakau), in late 1939, just after the first documented ghetto in Piotrków Trybunalski (Radom Region, Distrikt Radom) in October. These smaller ghettos were formed once initial German expulsion efforts in these towns had failed to drive all Jews across the Soviet border nearby.

Another major surprise was the comprehensiveness of ghettoization efforts in the Lithuania Region (Generalkommissariat Litauen) during the summer of 1941. Ghettoization orders were issued by the German and Lithuanian authorities throughout much of the country, and local evidence confirms that these were implemented in various ways at around 100 locations. Many of these ghettos were short-lived, leading us to use the term *destruction ghettos* for those places that existed for less than two months and served mainly for the concentration of the Jews prior to their murder. Examples of this type were also the ghettos in Khar'kov, Nikolaev, and Kherston in Ukraine, which were directly linked to the destruction process.

Another region that contained more ghettos than expected was on Occupied Russian Territory, where the Germans established some 50 ghettos. Most of these were concentrated in the former Pale of Settlement—in areas already captured by the Germans up to October 1941. Here German genocidal plans were still pursued in stages, of which ghettoization was sometimes a part. A few of these ghettos, such as that in Smolensk, existed for several months into the spring and summer of 1942.

In the Weissruthenien Region (Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien) and the Volhynia and Podolia Region (Generalkommissariat Wolhynien und Podolien), the Germans set up the most comprehensive networks of ghettos, establishing them in almost all Rayon centers, as well as in a number of other small towns and villages. The period of ghettoization

spanned from the summer of 1941 until the summer of 1942, with Jews from many small communities not concentrated in ghettos until the spring or summer of 1942, just prior to the ghetto liquidations. In many places, some Jews were selected for work before or during the liquidations and placed into labor camps or remnant ghettos. Most of these Jews did not remain alive for more than a few weeks, as the Germans intended for the liquidations to be complete. In several ghettos in these regions, the Jews responded with armed uprisings once the ghetto was surrounded, such as in Łachwa and Nieśwież, but the most common response was for Jews to prepare hiding places or attempt to flee.

Whereas the major ghettos in Warsaw and Łódź, which were enclosed behind high walls, have dominated our understanding of what ghetto life was like, hundreds of other ghettos remained unfenced or open. This facilitated vital economic contacts with the surrounding population, despite official German prohibitions. Some ghettos, such as that in Koźienice, initially remained open, but a fence was set up later, as German restrictions intensified. Many open ghettos were marked by signs, warning non-Jews not to enter, as well as prohibiting the Jews from leaving. Some were guarded, but others were not.

A variety of reasons were given by the German authorities for establishing ghettos, such as fear of the spread of disease, the need to free up housing space, or controlling black market activity, as well as the desire to isolate Jews on both ideological and security grounds. In the Warsaw Region (Distrikt Warschau), a number of short-lived, mostly open ghettos were set up to the west and south of the city in the summer and fall of 1940, primarily as concentration points and staging posts for the transfer of the Jews into the Warsaw ghetto by April 1941, as the respective Kreise were to be cleansed of Jews. These clearances were accompanied by the first order to shoot Jews caught outside the ghettos, announced in Kreis Grojec in January 1941.

This shooting order was subsequently extended to the entire Generalgouvernement in October 1941 and clearly had an important impact on ghettoization. Some historians have argued that all places where Jews continued to reside after this time became *de facto* ghettos, as Jews could be shot for leaving. Similar movement restrictions and punishments were applied to the occupied territories of the Soviet Union soon after the German invasion. For the purposes of compiling this volume, however, we have looked where possible for evidence of resettlement of the Jews into a specific part of a town or village, as well as the collection of Jews from surrounding places, as clear evidence of ghettoization. Nonetheless, in the Radom Region, for example, the announcement of the shooting order caused several Kreishauptmänner to declare those places where Jews resided to be ghettos. In some cases, signs were placed around the borders of the settlement, warning the Jews not to leave, without changing patterns of Jewish residency.

In the Lublin Region (Distrikt Lublin), the discussion of ghettos was further complicated by successive waves of deportations and resettlements, which brought in Jews from the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich, from within the

Generalgouvernement, particularly from the city of Kraków (as well as Jews expelled from the city of Lublin), and also from Germany, Austria, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and even Slovakia. Many of these expellees were housed together in temporary accommodations that resembled ghettos in many respects. However, close examination of the sources, especially contemporary reports of the German authorities and the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), revealed that only a few of the destinations of these resettlements were viewed at the time as ghettos. In some places, the aim was rather to disperse the Jews, not concentrate them, and it was not uncommon for mixed patterns of residency to persist with no concentration of the native Jews.

The decisive evidence for a number of places was to be found in answers to a questionnaire distributed to many local branches by the central office of the JSS in Kraków in the spring of 1942. These forms included the question, "Was there a separate Jewish residential district [*dzielnica Żydowska*] in the town?" Rarely used by historians previously, these questionnaires provide contemporary evidence from the Jewish communities themselves, answering yes or no and, in some cases, giving more details. Using these sources, as well as postwar testimonies from yizkor books and many different archives and also a variety of postwar governmental investigations, careful efforts were made to disentangle where ghettos existed and where they were absent.⁴

The term *transit ghetto* has been used only sparingly in this volume, despite its previous use by historians such as Robert Kuwałek, mainly to avoid confusion with a number of transit camps that existed within the area covered by the volume. These transit camps were usually located near railway stations and were used mainly as temporary holding pens for Jews in transit. An example of this would be the camp at Działdowo (Soldau), used to assemble Jews from the Zichenau Region (Regierungsbezirk Zichenau) for transfer into the Generalgouvernement.

Another common ghetto type was the remnant ghetto (*Restghetto*). These ghettos were often formed for a select group of workers, sometimes with their families, who were spared from the main liquidation Aktion against a ghetto or a previously unghettoized Jewish community. Apart from retaining some Jews for work, these ghettos had the additional function of attracting Jews out of hiding, who had managed to evade the Aktions. In October and November 1942, these ghettos achieved an additional significance when the Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer (Higher SS and Police Leader) in the Generalgouvernement, Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, ordered that Jews were only permitted to reside in a few nominated remnant ghettos or otherwise in enclosed labor camps. In the Eastern Galicia Region (Distrikt Galizien), more than 30 places were named as remnant ghettos, many of them in locations without ghettos previously. These ghettos came at the end of a lengthy process of deportations, murders, and consolidations, lasting from the summer of 1941 until the end of 1942. This had reduced the Jewish population in Eastern Galicia, which numbered some 540,000 people at the time

of the German occupation, down to around 160,000, who were then interned either in labor camps or in the remnant ghettos that now closely resembled labor camps. The last ghettos in Eastern Galicia were in turn annihilated over the next six months, in bitter struggles, as German and Ukrainian police rooted out Jews from bunkers and other hiding places, who by then had no illusions as to their fate.

The very brutal nature of the ghetto liquidations and deportation Aktions throughout the broad area of Eastern Europe covered by this volume, documented here in hundreds of individual entries, is itself an important statement regarding the essential character of the Holocaust. Even in the Generalgouvernement, where a majority of the Jews were deported by train to be murdered at only a few killing sites, the liquidation Aktions were usually accompanied by widespread killing of Jews found in hiding or trying to escape. In many locations, those who were elderly or unable to walk were killed locally rather than added to the transports. The searches for Jews in hiding, involving the participation of local auxiliaries and sometimes assisted by denunciations from non-Jewish local inhabitants, went on for weeks and sometimes months after the ghetto liquidations. In short, the still preponderant image of the Holocaust as a mechanized and impersonal process needs correcting, as more information about the hands-on and brutal slaughters in the east, where most Jewish victims lived and died, continues to come to light.

The temporal aspect of the unfolding genocide is also an important theme. For example, the first Jewish communities to be annihilated at the Chełmno extermination camp, such as Koło and Izbica Kujawska, in December 1941 and January 1942, respectively, had very few survivors, as the Jews did not expect that they were being sent to their deaths. By contrast, Jews in those ghettos located close to Treblinka, such as Stoczek Węgrowski, were well informed about events at the extermination camp, both from local Jews who worked there and clandestinely passed back messages and from Jews who had jumped from the trains that passed close by throughout the summer. These warnings enabled many Jews to evade the initial roundup by hiding in bunkers when the Germans liquidated the Stoczek ghetto in late September 1942.

The German authorities were aware of the need to act swiftly once the destruction process was under way. In the Volhynia and Podolia Region the civil authorities blamed acts of resistance on the liquidation of some larger ghettos before those in the surrounding villages, allowing the Jews there to become forewarned. In the Białystok Region (Distrikt Białystok), the Germans liquidated almost all of the ghettos simultaneously in early November 1942, using five transit camps to concentrate the Jews prior to their subsequent deportation, which was necessarily spread over several weeks due to the limited capacity of the killing centers. In the Zichenau Region, the remaining Jews were consolidated into just a few ghettos prior to their deportation to the Auschwitz concentration camp in November and December 1942.

Despite the more coordinated nature of the destruction process, in which many of the ghetto inmates were transferred

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to specific killing centers, concentration camps, or labor camps, in general it is not possible to speak of a ghetto system. The establishment of ghettos was conditioned by a wide variety of local and regional factors. Only once the Final Solution was already in progress were ghettos harnessed more closely to this end.

Nevertheless, a constant to almost all ghettos was the exploitation of part of the population for forced labor. Perhaps more so than historians previously considered, forced labor was a key aspect of how ghettos functioned. From an early stage, young and physically able Jews were selected out from ghettos and transferred to forced labor camps, leaving behind a population predominantly of the elderly, women, and children. Partly for this reason, the survival rates for most ghettos were alarmingly low. Of those who did survive, many were among those transferred into the camp system, which gave them at least the opportunity to survive longer into the war, as Christopher Browning's recent study of the Starachowice labor camp demonstrates.⁵ The recently opened ITS archives contain unfortunately relatively little information regarding ghettos. However, for those who were deported to Auschwitz, for example, from ghettos in the Zichenau Region or also on a few transports from the transit camps in the Białystok Region, ITS records confirm their arrival and also provide some information about their subsequent fate.

This volume of the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* has truly been a collaborative work in many different respects. Not only have more than 100 individuals been involved in its preparation, but many essays were written by two or more people, and in some cases, more than one translator was involved in the preparation of an entry. This reflects above all the multilingual nature of the source material used. Often drafts were received in Russian or Polish from historians working with documents from archives in Eastern Europe; then additions were made to the entries from archival sources, yizkor books, or other publications located at USHMM. A number of volunteers played an important role translating and summarizing many oral and visual histories, documents, and publications in languages such as Polish, Hebrew, Russian, Yiddish, and Lithuanian, which were then incorporated into the essays.

It is important to stress that the main aim of the *Encyclopedia* has been to document carefully as many of the ghetto sites as possible. To achieve this, strict word limits were applied to the entries, generally in accordance with the number of Jews confined within the ghetto. However, as considerable published literature exists for most of the larger ghettos, such as Łódź or Warsaw, these entries have been kept relatively short, to provide only essential data concerning these sites. The relevant source sections provide references to key publications, which deal with these main ghettos in much greater detail.

Given the nature of many of the sources, which for some ghettos consist primarily of postwar testimonies and investigative materials, there are inevitably some contradictions and inaccuracies concerning dates and figures. Where possible,

attempts have been made to document the sources used, especially concerning the establishment or existence of a ghetto or regarding its liquidation and the fate of the Jewish inmates. However, as many of the secondary sources themselves contain no references, it has not been possible to verify all information. Primary sources have been used by most authors where available, but the scattered nature and wide scope of Holocaust sources meant that often only a sample of all known material could be examined. A further complication is that the vast majority of the sources were not in English, requiring careful translation from languages such as Polish, Russian, German, Yiddish, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Latvian, French, and Ukrainian. In light of this, and given the enormous scope of the project, inevitably a few errors and contradictions will have crept into the manuscript, despite all our best efforts to reflect the events as accurately as possible. The Museum is in the authors' debt for the material they have gathered and contributed; responsibility for any remaining flaws rests with us.

Even more so than for the sites of concentration camps and most other types of camps, the physical sites of most ghettos are not marked and are becoming increasingly difficult to identify. As ghettos existed within urban landscapes, which naturally change their appearance over time, little, if anything, remains of the physical structures that formed the ghettos. The Warsaw ghetto was literally razed to the ground. Cases such as Riga, Terezín, or Mir, where the physical structures still exist, are quite rare. At almost all ghetto sites there are no museums, memorials, or even any sign at all of what occurred there. The danger exists that as the last survivors pass away, so too will any knowledge of the places where they suffered. One aim of this volume was to collect detailed information about the locations of the ghettos to assist in the preservation of that memory.

Where possible, entries include descriptions of the ghetto locations, the type of buildings they contained, and sometimes also their subsequent fate. Unfortunately, even this basic information is unavailable for many of the sites. Nonetheless, we hope that their inclusion here will encourage more scholars and researchers to scour local archives to dig up further details beyond the possible scope of this work.

MARTIN DEAN
July, 2011

NOTES

1. Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941–1944* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996); Vladimir Adamushko et al., eds., *Spravochnik o mestakh prinuditel'nogo soderzhaniiia grazhdanskogo naseleniia na okkupirovannoi territorii BSSR 1941–1944 gg.* (Minsk: Gosudarstvennyi komitet po arkhivam i deloproizvodstvu Respubliki Belarus', 2001); *Handbuch der Lager, Gefängnisse und Ghettos auf dem besetzten Territorium der Ukraine (1941–1944)* (Kiev: Staatskomitee der Archive der Ukraine, 2000); Martin Weinmann, with Anne

Kaiser and Ursula Krause-Schmitt, eds., *Das nationalsozialistische Lagersystem (CCP)* (prepared originally by ITS in 1949–1951; reprinted, with new introductory matter, in Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1990).

2. On the work of YIU, see Patrick Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets* (New York: Palgrave in cooperation with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2008).

3. Dan Michman, “The Jewish Ghettos under the Nazis and Their Allies: The Reasons behind Their Emergence,” in Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. xxxix.

4. The contemporary ghetto questionnaires can be found in USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124 (AŻIH, 211 [JSS]). Polish official postwar questionnaires concerning camps and ghettos can be found in USHMM, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG). Information about a number of ghettos on occupied Soviet territory can be found in the reports of the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK); see USHMM, RG-22.002M (GARF, 7021). Other postwar investigations into war crimes can be found, for example, at BA-L and IPN.

5. Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010).



READER'S GUIDE

The purpose of this section is to give the reader some tips on how to use this volume and to offer some information on the more technical aspects of the work, such as the use of foreign terms, naming conventions, the source sections, geographical headers, and the indexes.

The *Encyclopedia's* primary purpose is to provide as much basic information as possible on each individual ghetto. To achieve this end and to provide for some consistency among the entries, we asked our many contributors to try to answer the following questions, as best they could, in the limited amount of space available:

- When was the ghetto established, under what authority, and for what purpose? Was there a physical barrier, and at what stage was this constructed?
- Were there any special restrictions applied to the Jewish population or notable aspects about living conditions in that particular ghetto?
- Did ghetto inmates perform forced or paid labor, and what type of labor did they perform?
- What were the methods, motives, and circumstances of killing ghetto inmates? Give details of any large-scale killing Aktions, personnel involved, circumstances, location, and any evidence of resistance.
- What were the demographics of the ghetto population? Give details of any incoming groups and of transfers out to killing sites, labor camps, or other ghettos.
- Who were the local civilian authorities and police commanders in the town? What was their attitude towards people in the ghetto?
- What was the attitude of the local population towards the Jews? Can you offer specific examples of their participation in German persecution or providing help for the Jews?
- Is there information concerning the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in the ghetto? What were its functions and who was in charge? How did the ghetto population view the Judenrat and its relationship with the Germans?
- Was there a unit of Jewish Police inside the ghetto? Who were its leaders, and how did it treat the other ghetto inmates?
- What cultural activities were organized by the inmates of this ghetto? Was there some particular aspect of the way ghetto inmates coped with their conditions that are worth mentioning? Did the Jews continue religious observance openly or in secret?

- Were there any key events in the history of the ghetto, such as resistance and/or escapes, organized or otherwise? What was the attitude of the Jewish leadership and the Jewish Police towards resistance activities?
- Was the ghetto guarded? If so, what was the composition of those units?
- When and under what circumstances was the ghetto liquidated or evacuated?
- Did postwar trials of persons involved in guarding or liquidating the ghetto take place? If so, what were the results from those proceedings?
- How many Jews survived from the ghetto?

The *Encyclopedia's* secondary purpose is to encourage additional research on the sites in question, and therefore we also asked each author to include, first, citations to key documents, when available, and second, a list of published and archival sources, both primary and secondary, at the end of each entry. For reasons of space, abbreviations were used for the archives, but since just a few archives are cited in many of the entries, those who are interested will soon become familiar with the relevant abbreviations for these key archives. The comprehensive List of Abbreviations with the archives' full names in their native language and in English is included at the back of the book.

Apart from the 1,142 separate entries dealing with the ghettos located in specific cities, towns, and villages covering more than 1,150 ghetto sites in total (some places had more than one ghetto site, which are covered in a single entry, e.g. Šiauliai), Volume II also includes 19 regional essays that examine the patterns of ghettoization in regions that contain more than one ghetto entry. The regional entries summarize the key events in each region and provide some of the overall historical context that may be missing from the specific entries, which focus on the events in just one place.

The overarching architecture of the volume is geographical, being divided into 21 separate regions that German occupation authorities established and that contained ghettos. These 21 regions have been aggregated into eight separate units of administrative authority, reflecting the geographical structures imposed by the German occupiers. One should note that all of the ghettos in this volume were located on German-occupied territory in Eastern Europe, as no ghettos were established within the pre-1938 German borders (the Alt-Reich) or in Western Europe.

Finding a particular essay should be fairly easy. If you are looking for a specific ghetto and you know the German-administered region in which it was located (e.g., Lublin Region in the General Government), just look in the appropriate

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section of the table of contents; the ghettos appear alphabetically within each of the 21 regions. If you are not sure in which German-administered region a ghetto was located, check the Places Index in the end matter; it includes references to alternate names and spellings for the ghetto locations.

For the ghetto entry titles, we have used the names that were in use in those places in 1938, with just a few exceptions, such as Warsaw (instead of Warszawa). A few key alternative names are given after the title in parenthesis, but generally alternate names are covered in the geographical headers, just below the entry title, or otherwise in the body of the entry. In a small number of instances, one essay covers two or more ghetto sites together, which were located in the same city, town, or village. Essentially each place or Jewish community is treated as one entry, covering the various ghettos that were set up in the population center or nearby for that community.

As many of the ghetto sites have changed both their names and their administrative subordination, including the country in which they were located, at least once during the twentieth century, we have included detailed geographical headers at the start of each entry. These give, first, the name of the ghetto site, its region, and the country of location before the German occupation. Next, similar information is listed for the period of German occupation. Finally, we provide the same information according to the most recent renaming or administrative restructuring (e.g., post-1998 for Poland or post-1991 for Ukraine), to allow the reader more easily to find the place today. Where the place name, status, or administrative subordination has not changed from one time period to the next, this information has not been repeated; for example, where a place name was not changed under German occupation, the 1941–1944 section might start simply with the Rayon or the Kreis (e.g., Pre-1939: Kielce, city and center, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Kielce, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland).

Within the geographical headers and also within the entries, we have employed the terms for administrative units and their subdivisions used locally at the time: for example, *województwo* and *powiat* (for Poland pre-1939 and post-1998); *oblast'* and *raion* (for the Soviet Union); *Gebiet* and *Rayon* (for Reich Commissariat Ukraine, 1941–1944); *Distrikt* and *Kreis* (for the General Government, 1939–1945); or *apskritis* and *rajonas* (for the Republic of Lithuania). These were employed rather than English terms such as *region*, *county*, or *district*, because they convey the concepts of size and subordination far more accurately, concepts that are crucial to understanding the different administrative structures before, during, and after World War II. The different German spellings for areas, such as Kreise or Gebiete (e.g., Kreis Opatów), have also been used throughout the entries to help differentiate these entities from the towns (e.g., Opatów), which are usually referred to using their 1938 spellings.

Most of the foreign geographical terms, as well as titles, organizations, and also foreign words commonly used in English, have not been italicized because of their frequent use

within the volume. The various terms used for “ghetto” in the sources are examined in the Editor’s Introduction, as no comprehensive attempt to examine the ghetto phenomenon has been attempted previously. As in Volume I, no glossary has been included, but a few key terms require some explanation. Among the less familiar terms, for example, a *wójt* is a civil administrator, a *starosta* is a village elder, a *sołtys* is a village head, and a *kehillab* is a Jewish community. A number of terms concerning Jewish holidays and religious practices have been used, not always with an explanation; explanations for most of these can be found on the Internet or in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* or similar reference works and dictionaries.

Regrettably, for reasons of space, it has not been possible to include a description of the Jewish communities in each ghetto location before World War II beyond giving available population figures. While this would have enhanced understanding of the events during the ghetto period, similar information is already published in a number of places, such as in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Yad Vashem’s *Pinkas ha-kehillot* series, or *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life*. Most entries include references to relevant yizkor books and other sources that also contain information on the pre-war period.

While terms in German, Polish, Lithuanian, and other foreign languages using Latin characters have been rendered as in the original, including diacritics, text from Russian, Hebrew, Yiddish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, and other languages using the Hebrew, Cyrillic, and other alphabets has been transliterated using standardized systems. This applies especially to the titles of books in the source sections and also to the archival abbreviations. Some attempt has been made to standardize the spellings of people’s names, occasionally giving alternate spellings that have been encountered among the different sources consulted. However, since much of the information has been translated and transliterated, including from Hebrew sources (where the vowels are not clear), some degree of inconsistency between standard Polish, Russian, German, Hebrew, English, and other spellings is inevitable. Street names have generally been rendered as found in the sources.

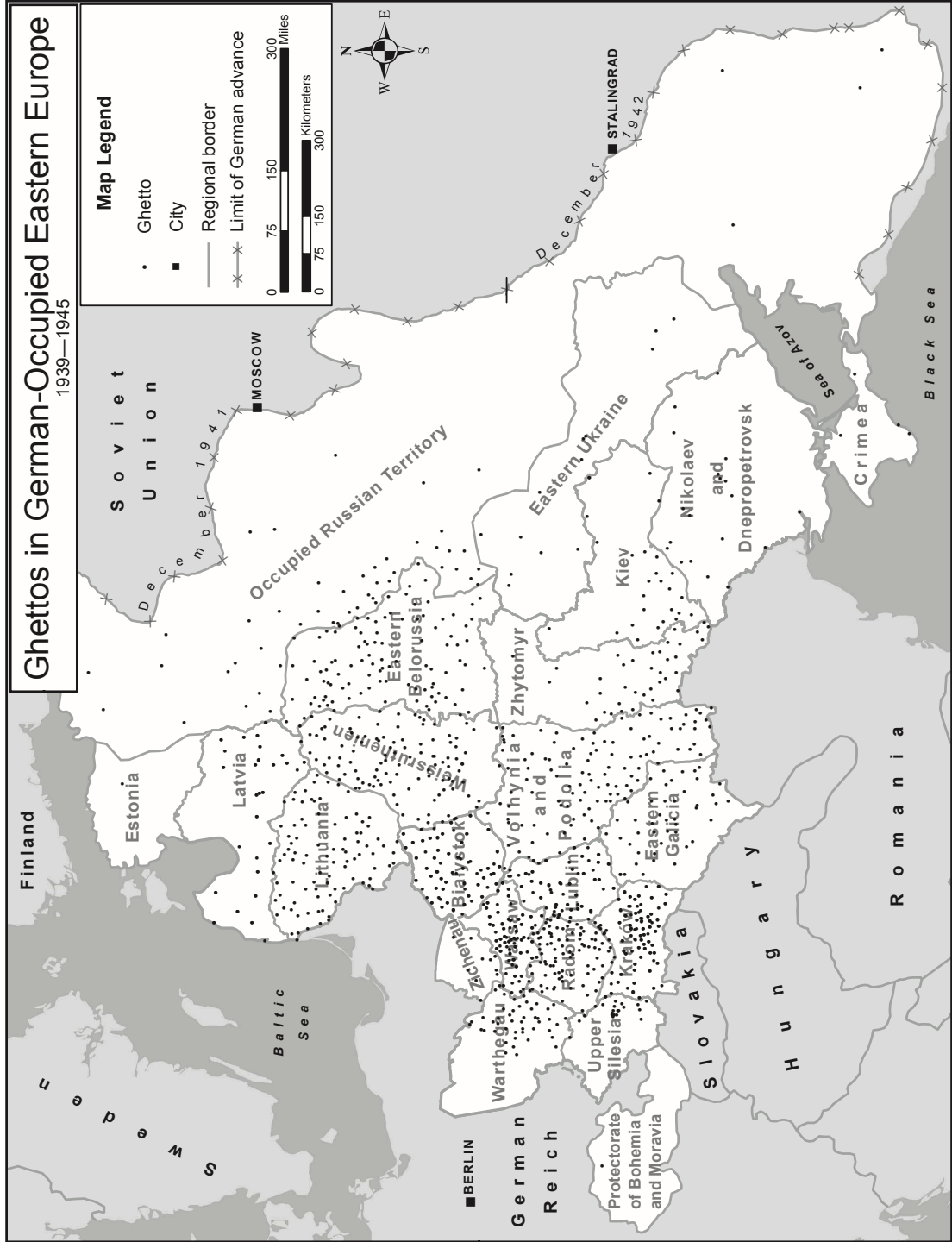
The *Encyclopedia* also includes maps covering the locations of all the ghettos in the 19 regions that had more than one ghetto. These are located after the regional entry but before the first ghetto entry for each region. In most cases these maps include the subdivisions of the regions into Kreise, Gebiete, and sometimes Rayons, so that a clear visual impression of the distribution of ghettos in each region can be gained.

The end matter includes three separate indexes: Names Index, Places Index, and Organizations and Enterprises Index. The page numbers for the ghetto entries are marked in bold in the Places Index to distinguish them from references to those places in other entries. Certain very common terms, such as Jewish Council (Judenrat), have not been indexed, as they appear on almost every page.

The *Encyclopedia* has been written primarily as a reference work on the individual ghettos. However, its geographical organization according to German administrative struc-

tures and the inclusion of contextualizing regional entries give it a coherent structure that helps to explain the development of ghettoization and its key role in the Holocaust far more effectively than a simple alphabetical approach would

achieve. It serves especially as an important memorial for the victims of the many small and forgotten ghetto sites, literally putting them on the map for scholars of the Holocaust through careful documentation.



SECTION I

INCORPORATED EASTERN TERRITORIES

In the fall of 1939, shortly after the German defeat of Poland, Adolf Hitler ordered the annexation to the Reich of large swaths of western and northern Poland. These new territories were either added to the existing regions of Provinz Ostpreussen and Provinz Schlesien or became part of two new regions, Reichsgau Wartheland and Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen.

No ghettos were established within the Alt-Reich (pre-1938 German territories); ghettos were only established within the Third Reich in those eastern territories annexed from Poland (eingegliederten Ostgebieten). Of these incorporated territories, no ghettos were established in Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen, but a number of ghettos were established in the three regions known as Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Reichsgau Wartheland, and Provinz Oberschlesien.

Regierungsbezirk Zichenau was composed of the area to the north of Warsaw, also known as Northern

Mazovia (part of the Warsaw województwo), which was attached to Provinz Ostpreussen in late 1939. The new district was named for the city of Zichenau (Ciechanów in Polish).

To the west of Warsaw, the Germans took parts of the Polish Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Łódź, Płock, and Wielkopolskie województwa to establish a new region, known from January 1, 1940, as Reichsgau Wartheland, which also included the major city of Łódź.

To the south, Provinz Schlesien was expanded to include parts of the Kielce, Kraków, and Śląskie województwa. In 1941, Provinz Schlesien was divided in two to form Niederschlesien, its western half, and Oberschlesien, its eastern half. Ghettos were only established on the eastern fringes of Oberschlesien, usually referred to in German documentation as Ost-Oberschlesien (Eastern Upper Silesia).



ZICHENAU REGION



Jews from Ciechanów are marched into the fortress, 1941-1942.
USHMM WS #50341, COURTESY OF IPN

ZICHENAU REGION (REGIERUNGSBEZIRK ZICHENAU)

Pre-1939: part of the Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: northern part of województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The region designated by the Germans as Regierungsbezirk Zichenau comprised the northern part of the Warsaw województwo (as of the summer of 1939) and is most commonly known as Northern Mazovia. Jews are recorded as having settled in some parts of this region by at least the thirteenth century, and several larger towns had a significant Jewish presence by the mid-sixteenth century. Other places witnessed Jewish settlement only later; in Czerwińsk nad Wisłą Jews were barred until the late eighteenth century, as the Catholic Church owned the land. The Jewish population of the region increased considerably during the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century; Jews comprised a considerable share of the urban population (between 30 and 50 percent or more) in several of Northern Mazovia's larger towns on the eve of World War II. Much of the Jewish population in the region worked as artisans or tradesmen. In the interwar period, the Jews suffered economically due to the worldwide economic slump and commercial boycotts by the Poles.

German military forces occupied the Ciechanów region of Poland in September 1939. During the first days of the war, as German bombs fell on the towns of the region, many Jews fled to Warsaw and other places, away from the advancing German front. The first days and weeks of the German occupation saw the humiliation and murder of Jews and the destruction and plunder of their property. In Nowe Miasto, the Germans killed 8 Jews on September 14 and several more on September 23. Men of the SS-Panzer Division "Kempf" shot 50 Jews in Krasnosielc, and 2 Jews were killed by the Wehrmacht in Różan. German Security Police (Sicherheitspolizei und SD) set fire to the synagogue in Sierpc at the end of September, and the synagogue in Mława was burned in November. Units of Einsatzgruppe V operated in the region, but other police units, the Wehrmacht, ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), and some Poles also participated in anti-Jewish attacks and looting. The plunder of property and arrests of Jews in some places caused young Jews to flee to those parts of eastern Poland that were occupied by the Soviets after September 17, 1939.¹

From the start, it was the German intention to cleanse the region of Jews, as it would be annexed directly to the Reich. In the fall of 1939, the Germans undertook some deliberate efforts to drive Jews into the Soviet zone, but much latitude was left to specific local commanders regarding implementation. On September 28, 1939, 40 Jewish youths were arrested in Sierpc, loaded on trucks, and driven to the new German-Soviet border. Mass expulsions of Jews into the Soviet zone took place from Pułtusk, Przasnysz, and some other towns with large Jewish populations.² In Ciechanów, a Wehrmacht

officer advised the Jews to leave town; he offered transport to the Soviet border, warning them that the impending civil administration would introduce further anti-Jewish laws. In Mława, an attempt to transport all the Jews into Soviet territory was abandoned abruptly after the Jews had been assembled.

On October 26, 1939, the Germans established the Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, which was annexed to Provinz Ostpreussen in the Third Reich, ruled by Gauleiter Erich Koch. The Regierungsbezirk consisted of nine Landkreise: Mackheim, Mielau, Ostenburg, Plönnen, Praschnitz, Schröttersburg, Sichelberg, Scharfenwiese, and Zichenau. Initially, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau had around 850,000 inhabitants, of which some 80,000 were Jews, while probably a similar number might be classified as ethnic Germans.³ The governor (Regierungspräsident) was Hermann Bethke. In 1940, Paul Dargel succeeded him. SS-Sturmbannführer Hartmut Pulmer, who had been in charge of an Einsatzgruppe during the Polish campaign, was subsequently appointed as head of the Płock-Ciechanów Gestapo.

In October 1939, the German authorities expelled a number of Jews from the town of Ciechanów to the Lublin region.⁴ This was only one of several further expulsions and deportations carried out in the last three months of 1939. In November, for example, the Germans conducted a mass expulsion of Jews from Sierpc to Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki and Warsaw. In December 1939, at least 3,000 Jews from the towns of Serock and Nasielsk were deported to Biała Podlaska, Międzyrzec, and Łuków in Distrikt Lublin.⁵ At the same time, hundreds of Jewish refugees poured into towns such as Mława and Płońsk from Sierpc, Rypin, Dobrzyń nad Drwęcą, and other places. Some Jews who had fled to Warsaw during the fighting, or even thereafter, gradually returned, as they realized conditions might be better in their own home environment. These large population movements, followed on occasion by some people returning illegally, make it very difficult to track the demographic changes in the region.⁶

Historians have identified three main phases to the anti-Jewish policy in Regierungsbezirk Zichenau. The initial period of occupation and brutal repression lasted from September to December 1939, aiming primarily to drive out large numbers of Jews, preferably across the border into the Soviet-occupied zone. The period from January 1940 to the end of 1941 was characterized by further deportations and expulsions of Jews into the Generalgouvernement and was accompanied by the gradual concentration of remaining Jews into a limited number of ghettos. Then from the end of 1941 the application of the terror apparatus against the ghettoized Jews

was intensified to suppress any possible resistance in preparation for the final liquidation of the ghettos, which was completed in the last months of 1942.⁷

Forced labor for Jews was imposed from the first days of the occupation. In most places the Jewish Council (Judenrat) became involved in the assignment of men to forced labor to prevent Jews from simply being seized from the streets. In Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, a number of sources indicate that Jews were paid for forced labor; indeed, Emanuel Ringelblum described conditions there as somewhat better than in Warsaw on this account. He may have been impressed by the fact that some refugees in the Warsaw ghetto received food packages from relatives in Regierungsbezirk Zichenau.⁸ In Płock, Jewish workers received only half the minimum wage; however, the Judenrat supplemented this by taxing wealthier Jews. In some places, however, survivors indicate that working Jews remained unpaid.

A number of Jewish communities in the region received material assistance from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) during the course of 1940. For example, the Judenrat in Drobin opened a soup kitchen with the help of AJDC funds on February 22, 1940. However, due to restrictions on the AJDC sending funds from Warsaw into the Reich, this support had dried up by the end of 1940.⁹

The German authorities established a total of 12 ghettos in Regierungsbezirk Zichenau. The first ghettos were established in Sierpc and Maków Mazowiecki in the spring of 1940. Initially, these two were open ghettos (unfenced). In the course of 1940, additional ghettos were established in Płock, Płock, and Mława. The ghetto in Płock remained open throughout its existence, as did that in Ciechanów, established in December 1940. However, the majority of ghettos in Regierungsbezirk Zichenau were enclosed, at least for the latter part of their existence. Wooden fences surrounded the ghettos in Strzegowo, Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, and Czerwińsk; and that in Drobin was surrounded by barbed wire. By the fall of 1941, the Maków Mazowiecki ghetto was enclosed with a wooden fence, topped with barbed wire.

In 1941, there were further waves of ghetto formation: in March 1941, ghettos were established in Drobin and Wyszogród; and in June 1941, in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki. Then in November 1941, the last three ghettos were established in Strzegowo, Nowe Miasto, and Czerwińsk. By this time the Jews from almost all the other large towns had been expelled, deported, or moved into one of the nearer ghettos. For example, those Jews still in Zakroczym were sent to the Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki ghetto, and the few remaining in Bielsk were expelled at the end of 1941; the Jews from Biezuń and some of those from the liquidated ghetto in Sierpc were moved to the Strzegowo ghetto by early January 1942.¹⁰

The successive concentration of Jews in ghettos was accompanied, however, by further sporadic waves of deportations into the Generalgouvernement. In early December 1940, the German Police conducted a mass deportation from Mława. They selected 3,000 Jews (more than half of the total), who were transported first on trucks to the transit camp at



Jews from Ciechanów ghetto are assembled in the fortress, 1941–1942. USHMM WS #50343, COURTESY OF IPN

Działdowo; and from there, they were deported into Distrikt Lublin by freight train. There they were split up among several towns, including Międzyrzec, Lubartów, and Łuków.¹¹ Several hundred of these deportees later managed to return to Mława in 1941, where they were given falsified identification documents by the Judenrat.¹² In response, the German Police conducted a search for Jews residing illegally in the Mława ghetto in the spring of 1941.

In February and March 1941, some 6,000 Jews were deported from the Płock ghetto, again via Działdowo, to a number of ghettos in Distrikt Radom, including Chmielnik, Stopnica, Bodzentyn, Wierzbnik, and Częstochowa. At this time 600 Jews from Drobin (mainly the sick and elderly) were also deported via Działdowo to the Piotrków Trybunalski ghetto and a similar number from Wyszogród to Nowa Słupia, also in Distrikt Radom. These mass deportations into the Generalgouvernement were halted in March 1941 because of German military preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union.¹³

On July 4, 1941, the Gestapo resettled up to 2,000 Jews from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki to the labor and concentration camp in Pomiechówek, where some 4,000 Jews from the region were collected together, including more than 1,000 from the Płock ghetto. Conditions in the Pomiechówek camp were appalling; many people died there from beatings, hunger, and typhus. Sick people were shot on the spot, and those who were healthy were subsequently marched southward into the Generalgouvernement, when the camp was emptied of its Jewish population. There were many further losses before the remnant reached the Warsaw ghetto.¹⁴

Living conditions in the ghettos of the region were generally better than in the Pomiechówek or Działdowo camps, but there was a gradual deterioration as the ghettos became more overcrowded. Food also became harder to obtain, as the Jews bartered away their last possessions. The rations in the Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki ghetto consisted of only 330 grams (11.6

6 INCORPORATED EASTERN TERRITORIES

ounces) of poor bread per day and 120 grams (4.2 ounces) of horseflesh per month, which was not always supplied. These rations were sold at fixed prices, but smuggled goods demanded much higher prices. The Judenrat in the Mława ghetto tried to ease conditions by organizing smuggling rings, using Jews who worked outside the ghetto to bring food back in. In 1942, however, the Germans began to crack down on smuggling, forcing black market prices even higher. Despite the threat of capital punishment, Jews from many ghettos continued to sneak out to buy food. Overcrowding was severe in most ghettos, with up to 15 people sharing a room. Several ghettos were wracked by severe outbreaks of typhus, in some places claiming hundreds of lives. Medical care was limited, and the outbreaks may have led to an intensification of the Jews' isolation from the rest of the population.

In the last months of 1941, the Germans consolidated the Jewish population of the region further, as they also began to enforce the death penalty for Jews caught outside the ghettos without permission. Assisted by massive bribes, the Jewish Council in Strzegowo managed to persuade the Germans to establish a "Jewish quarter" there, which saved the community from the inevitable stresses of transfer to the Warsaw ghetto.¹⁵ In November 1941, the Germans permitted the Judenrat in Mława to expand the ghetto area a little, to absorb the arrival of about 1,000 Jews from Sześćńsk, Radzynów, and Zieluń. At this time, the Wyszogród ghetto was liquidated, with about 1,000 Jews being sent to the ghetto in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki and another 600 to the Czerwińsk ghetto. Approximately 1,000 Jews were moved from Ciechanów to the Nowe Miasto ghetto on December 11, 1941, although the open ghetto in Ciechanów was not liquidated until November 1942.

By mid-January 1942, it is estimated that about 40,000 Jews remained in Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, concentrated mainly in the nine remaining ghettos of Ciechanów (7,000), Czerwińsk (700), Maków Mazowiecki (5,500), Mława (6,000), Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki (6,000), Nowe Miasto (2,100), Płońsk (10,000), Sierpc (500), and Strzegowo (about 2,000).¹⁶

Little information is available on the German administration of the ghettos, although occasional mention is made of particular Germans who were seen by the Jews as having been in charge.¹⁷ The ghettos were guarded internally by a Jewish police force and externally by the German Order Police (Ordnungspolizei), which in some places also contained local ethnic Germans. Isaiah Trunk has commented on the fluctuation in the leadership on several of the Jewish Councils in the region,¹⁸ and there were attempts to bribe German officials to ameliorate conditions, which might produce some temporary relief. Some Jewish Councils were accused of corruption and favoritism, and in one or two ghettos, the Jewish Police earned themselves a bad reputation by their brutality towards other Jews.¹⁹

One of the more notorious German officials was the chief of the Płock-Ciechanów Gestapo, SS-Sturmbannführer Hartmut Pulmer, who organized a number of mass hangings in the region of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki and Czerwińsk in 1940.²⁰ The terror intensified during the winter of 1941–1942

as the Gestapo initiated a crackdown in several ghettos. The number of public hangings rose markedly in 1942, as the Germans clearly sought to intimidate the Jews with harsh punishments for only minor infractions. Jews were executed for leaving the ghetto without permission, for smuggling, and for acts of resistance; and in Mława, 50 Jews were shot in June 1942 for misbehaving during a previous hanging. The Gestapo often forced the Jews to hang other Jews in front of the assembled ghetto population, making these events unforgettable for Jewish survivors who were present.

Acts of resistance in the ghettos of the Zichenau region included contacts with other ghettos and with Polish, mainly Communist, resistance organizations. Before their network was broken up, the underground resistance in the Ciechanów ghetto succeeded in moving some Jewish families wanted by the authorities to other ghettos.²¹ A few Jews who escaped from the ghettos, including some from Czerwińsk, subsequently joined the People's Guard (Gwardia Ludowa, GL), a Communist partisan group that operated around Płock and Płońsk.

A number of able-bodied Jews were sent to work camps within the Zichenau region. These included labor camps at Nosarzewo and Bielsk. As the final liquidation of the ghettos commenced in the fall of 1942, the Jews in nearby labor camps were returned to the ghettos. For example, at the end of October, Jews working outside the Mława ghetto were returned prior to deportations from there in November, and additional Jews were also brought into Mława from the ghettos in Strzegowo and Ciechanów. During the liquidation of the Maków Mazowiecki ghetto in November 1942, at least 50 Jews, mostly the elderly and children, were killed on the spot, and several Polish women, who were driving carts for the Jews, were also killed at this time. According to the records of the Auschwitz concentration camp, analyzed by Danuta Czech, more than 12,000 Jews from Regierungsbezirk Zichenau were deported to Auschwitz in at least eight separate transports between November 14 and December 17, 1942. The transports left from Płońsk, Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, Ciechanów, and Mława and probably included around 30,000 Jews altogether, indicating that the available records are incomplete.²²

It is unknown how many Jews from the ghettos of Regierungsbezirk Zichenau survived the German occupation, but since at least 5,000 of those sent to Auschwitz were initially selected for work, it appears that several hundred of these managed to make it through the various labor and concentration camps they experienced until the end of the war. Since the Germans systematically hunted down those Jews who evaded the deportations, some of whom were turned in by Poles, only a few survived in hiding or on the Aryan side. The files of the Płock-Ciechanów Gestapo include 22 cases of Poles accused of helping Jews, for which the death penalty could have been applied. However, only a few Poles from the region have been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem for the aid they provided.²³

Very few of the Germans responsible for the murder and persecution of Jews in Regierungsbezirk Zichenau were tried

for these crimes after the war. A court in Giessen sentenced three members of the Plock-Ciechanów Gestapo to jail terms of a few years in 1974, but some of these verdicts were overturned on appeal. The Polish courts dealt mainly with low-level perpetrators, including some ethnic Germans and even one member of the Jewish Police.²⁴

SOURCES Useful secondary sources concerning the ghettos in Regierungsbezirk Zichenau include the following: Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w reencji ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984); Jan Grabowski, “Polityka antyżydowska na terenie reencji ciechanowskiej,” in Aleksandra Namysł, ed., *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy* (Warsaw: IPN Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), pp. 59–68; Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja, 1979); Jan Grabowski, “The Holocaust in Northern Mazovia (Poland) in the Light of the Archive of the Ciechanów Gestapo,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 1:3 (Winter 2004): 460–476; and Janusz Szczepański, *Spoleczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku* (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, 2005).

Relevant collections can be found in the following archives: APW; AŻIH (Ring I, 301, and 210); BA-L; IPN; USHMM (RG-15.037M, case files of the Geheime Staatspolizei-Polizeistelle Zichenau; RG-15.039M, case files from the Gestapo in Zichenau; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.019M; and RG-15.084M); VHF; and YVA.

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. Alexander B. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland: Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), pp. 105–106; Jochen Böhrer, ed., “Grösste Härte . . .” *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht in Polen September/Oktober 1939* (Warsaw: German Historical Institute, 2005), p. 119. In Goworowo, Jews were released from a synagogue as it was about to be burned down, due to the intervention of a German officer. On Różan, see Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, pp. 427–429.

2. Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 1031, 1039. See also Szczepański, *Spoleczność*, p. 412, who estimates that some 7,500 Jews fled or were expelled from Pułtusk. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland*, p. 108, cites a German source reporting that “large columns of Jews are being pushed across the demarcation line.”

3. Grabowski, “The Holocaust in Northern Mazovia,” p. 460, estimates that some 10 percent of the population were ethnic Germans.

4. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, p. 389.

5. Spector and Wigoder, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life*, p. 876; and David Silberklang, “The Holocaust in the Lublin District” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, February 2003), p. 63.

6. Grabowski, “Polityka antyżydowska,” pp. 60–61, indicates, however, that 20 Jews attempting to return home to Nowy Dwór from the Generalgouvernement were hanged in January 1940.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62; Grynberg, *Żydzi w reencji ciechanowskiej*, pp. 43–44, gives a similar chronology if he classifies the forced expulsions to the Warsaw ghetto from the summer of 1941 slightly differently.

8. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, p. 389.

9. On support provided by the AJDC in Poland during the occupation, see Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939–1945* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1981).

10. *Sefer Ha-Zikaron Li-Kedoshe Byez’un* (Tel Aviv: Hotsa’at ‘ale Byez’un be-Yisrael, 1956), p. 54; and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, pp. 147–148, 216–218. Grynberg, *Żydzi w reencji ciechanowskiej*, pp. 45–46, indicates that in the summer of 1940 Jews continued to reside in the following places: Biezuń, Bodzanów, Chorzele, Radzanów, Szeńsk, Zakroczym, and Zieluń. Research conducted so far has not revealed evidence of ghettos in these places, which had all been cleared of Jews by early 1942.

11. APL, Gouverneur des Distrikts Lublin (GDL) 891, Heinicke (Department for Population and Welfare, Lublin) to Labor Department Lublin, December 10, 1940; AŻIH, Ring I/674; and Silberklang, “The Holocaust in the Lublin District,” p. 136. See also Götz Aly, “Endlösung: Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden” (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1995), p. 183, who dates the deportation in November 1940 based on transport plans.

12. Jacob Shatzky, ed., *Pinkas Mlave* (New York, 1950), p. 403, indicates that around 200 managed to return from Międzyrzec.

13. Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (London: William Collins, 1986), pp. 142–143. Aly, “Endlösung,” p. 256, indicates that these deportations formed part of the “Third Short-range Plan (3. Nahplan).” Resistance by the civil authorities in the Generalgouvernement also contributed to stopping these deportations. See also Grabowski, “Polityka antyżydowska,” pp. 61–62.

14. BA-L, ZStL II 117 AR 1119/68 (investigation of A. Boldin and others), vol. 1, pp. 1–2, Interim Report, Tel Aviv, July 11, 1968; Szczepański, *Spoleczność*, pp. 424, 443–444.

15. Grynberg, *Żydzi w reencji ciechanowskiej*, pp. 68–70.

16. Frank Golczewski, “Polen,” in Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Dimension des Völkermords: Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1991), p. 451. Golczewski’s figures are derived mainly from Grynberg, *Żydzi w reencji ciechanowskiej*. These figures presumably include a number of Jews temporarily assigned to various forced labor camps within the Regierungsbezirk. The Drobin ghetto was probably liquidated on January 6, 1942.

17. Ghetto Commandant Foch in Płońsk, for example, is remembered as having been particularly brutal.

18. Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 318–319, 324.

19. Shlomo Tzemakh et al., eds., *Sefer Płonsk V’Hasviva* (Tel Aviv: Lidor, 1962), pp. 437, 451; AŻIH, 313/57, Henech Klajnman 1948, and SOPl 246-49 (trial of Henryk Klajnman).

8 INCORPORATED EASTERN TERRITORIES

20. Grabowski, "The Holocaust in Northern Mazovia," p. 462; Pulmer was tried in 1976 but never sentenced due to his "poor health."

21. A. Volf Yasni, ed., *Yizker-bukh fun der Tsbekhanover Yidisher kehile/Sefer-yizkor li-kehilat Ts'eḥanov* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotse Ts'eḥanov be-Yisrael un di Landsmanshaftn in Huts-larets, 1962), pp. 323–325.

22. Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1990), pp. 268–294. There is some speculation that Jews may have been sent to the Treblinka extermination

camp from this region; but this remains unproven at present.

23. Grabowski, "The Holocaust in Northern Mazovia," p. 461; e.g., Shmuel Krakowski and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust—Poland*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pp. 722–723, 876.

24. Verdict of LG-Gies, 7 Ks 1/74 of November 15, 1976; see the files of SOPł and SOMł, especially SOPł 246-49 (Henryk Klajman), who served in the Jewish Police.



Borders as of January 1942

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CIECHANÓW

Pre-1939: Ciechanów, town and powiat center, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Zichenau, Kreis center and capital, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Ciechanów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Ciechanów is located 100 kilometers (62 miles) north-northwest of Warsaw. The first mention of a Jewish presence in the town dates from 1507. There were approximately 5,000 Jews living in Ciechanów in 1939.

By the time German troops entered Ciechanów on September 3, 1939, the Jewish population had decreased to less than 2,000. A period of persecution followed, with German soldiers attacking and sometimes killing Jews, desecrating or destroying religious items, pillaging Jewish homes and businesses, forcing Jews to perform menial labor, and holding Jews for ransom. Harassment aside, however, Noah Zabłudovits (Noach Zabłudowicz), a survivor, recalls the first three months of occupation as fairly peaceful, with “everything open and free.”¹

On October 26, 1939, military rule of Ciechanów ended, and the town was annexed to the German Reich. Renamed Zichenau, it became the capital of the newly created Regierungsbezirk Zichenau. A number of Jews were expelled to the Lublin area in October 1939. The ultimate goal of the new administration was to deport all Jews and Poles from the Zichenau Regierungsbezirk to the Generalgouvernement and resettle Zichenau with ethnic Germans. In the meantime, the local population was to be used as either forced or low-wage labor.

An ethnic German, Mathys, was appointed as Ciechanów's Landrat (district administrator). Two names are mentioned as the town's mayor: Rot and Falk. Ethnic Germans were resettled to Ciechanów, thereby forcing Jews and Poles out of work

and eventually confiscating their businesses, farms, and houses. Anti-Jewish laws introduced by the new authorities included: prohibition of ritual slaughter, shopping in non-Jewish stores, using the sidewalks, use of public places, and performing certain occupations (e.g., driver). Jews were also ordered to wear a yellow Star of David sewn onto the front and back of their clothing. Schools and synagogues were closed. A sundown curfew was imposed.²

The German authorities set up the Jewish Council (Judenrat) in the autumn of 1939. A shoemaker, Ben-Zion Ehrlich, was nominated as its chairman; he performed this duty until the liquidation of the ghetto. Binyamin Kirshenbaum was the Judenrat's treasurer. One of the Judenrat's first tasks was to deliver a list of the names of all Ciechanów's Jews and their property (much of this information was also provided by local ethnic Germans). Very little is known regarding the work of the Judenrat besides its careful fulfillment of German orders and that it consisted of wealthy Jews. According to one survivor, Meyer Hack, the Judenrat was fair and not bribable with respect to conscription for forced labor. Another source indicates that it was only with bribes that one could get a separate apartment in the soon-to-be overcrowded Ciechanów.³

In October 1939, the civil authorities assigned Jews and Poles to demolish those parts of the town with mostly wooden buildings and rebuild these sections in the style of Prussian architecture. The Judenrat's employment agency (Arbeitsamt) was charged with delivering work brigades. Jews as young as 14 years old reported each morning outside the town hall, awaiting the mayor and their work assignment. The daily routine included a chorus greeting: “Good morning, Mr. Mayor”; “Good morning, swine,” was his reply.

The houses designated to be demolished were mostly occupied by Jews. On average, the occupants were given one hour to evacuate their homes. As the demolitions progressed, the homeless moved into cellars, attics, and farm buildings.⁴

Jews tasked with forced labor worked from 6:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. and were paid 9 Reichsmark (RM) per day; half of their salary was deducted in tax. Yet these wages were high enough to allow workers to save some money. Only half the day on Sundays was free of labor, as the German guards were given time off. Other survivors recalled that they also had Saturday afternoons off or that some worked on the Sabbath only when forced.⁵

In the spring of 1940, over 100 elderly and crippled Poles and Jews were taken to the Ościłów Forest, where they were all shot and buried in a mass grave. In the course of 1940, a number of Ciechanów Jews was expelled to Warsaw, while another 1,500 or so Jews from other places were resettled to Ciechanów.

An open ghetto was established at the end of 1940 in the center of Ciechanów. Jews were forced to live in a run-down area that was formerly Jewish and was now crammed with people whose houses had already been demolished or confiscated. Although the ghetto was unfenced, its inhabitants were ordered to stay within its limits. On German orders, the Judenrat established a Jewish police force (Jüdischer Ordnungs-



Jews are packed onto a number of trucks that are parked in front of the courthouse and city hall in Marek Square in Ciechanów, 1941–1942. USHMM WS #50337, COURTESY OF IPN

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945



Group portrait of members of the Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir Zionist youth movement in Ciechanów, among them future Auschwitz resister Róża Robota (third row, fourth from left), ca. 1937.

USHMM WS #18655, COURTESY OF ELIJAHU MALLENBAUM

dienst) to guard the ghetto's gate from the inside. Written permission was required to leave.

Polish doctors were forbidden to attend the sick, and diseases spread quickly. Only after the Judenrat bribed the town's mayor did he agree to set up a small hospital on Zagumienna Street. Another small hospital was set up in a garage. A Jewish doctor named Baran was brought in.⁶

Although Ciechanów's Jews tried their best to get along in the overcrowded ghetto, there was considerable friction and strife, including cases of suicide. A women's group was organized to serve soup to the needy and sick; the extent of this help is unknown. Kosher slaughtering was performed in secret, as well as prayers on the Sabbath.

As the food rations were very meager, the ghetto's Jews took to smuggling. Those who were caught were initially punished by fines or transfer to a labor camp. Punishment was at first administered by the Landrat, then later by the Sondergericht (special court). From 1942 onward, the punishment for smuggling and other minor offenses was death or transfer to a concentration camp.

In the spring of 1941, Ciechanów's authorities discontinued the expulsion of Jews to the Generalgouvernement and started concentrating them in a number of ghettos, including the ghetto of Ciechanów. With the arrival of about 500 newcomers, the Ciechanów ghetto housed Jews from Dobrzyń, Raciąż, Sierpc, Drobin, Żuromin, and some towns in Danzig-Westpreussen, including Rypin. Jews from the surrounding villages also were sent to Ciechanów.

The transfer of Jews within Regierungsbezirk Zichenau continued. On December 11, 1941, approximately 1,000 to 1,200 Jews were evacuated from Ciechanów to the nearby Nowe Miasto ghetto. Many Jews were murdered in the course of this deportation, including Jewish policeman Abe Blum for helping the elderly to board the train. In Nowe Miasto, the newcomers were almost always deprived of any assistance or shelter, and some risked returning to Ciechanów. As a result, periodic identification checks were conducted in Ciechanów,

and "illegals" were usually sent to the Pomiechówek camp. An estimated 7,000 Jews lived in the Ciechanów ghetto at this time.⁷

Terror and periodic public hangings intensified in 1942. The Germans forced the Jews to hang their own. One of the Gestapo officers, Rosenmann, was known for entering the ghetto at night and raping women; he also was allegedly responsible for falsely accusing five Jews of sabotage; they were hanged in 1942. At night, members of the Hitler Youth also broke into Jewish homes, where they intimidated, beat, and tortured the inhabitants. They also reportedly raped women and forced the men to watch; and they even forced siblings to have sexual intercourse with each other.⁸

An underground movement was organized in the ghetto and included the following members: Mojshe Kolka; Godl Zilber; Noah Eisenberg; Yosef Eisenberg; Motl Bergson; Yisroel Likhtenstein; Dovid Shmidt; and three brothers, Pinkhas, Noach, and Khanan Zabłudowicz. Through Noach Zabłudowicz the organization maintained contact with other ghettos in the vicinity. Zabłudowicz was employed as an "ethnic German" driver by the German Bernard Kessler, who was aware of his Jewish identity. Zabłudowicz was able to transport families wanted by the authorities to other ghettos.

Ciechanów's non-Jewish population was too small to provide anonymity to Jews wanted by the German authorities; therefore, flight to another ghetto was the most common means of escape, as long as there were still other ghettos existing nearby.

The liquidation of the Ciechanów ghetto took place on either November 5 or 6, 1942. The operation was led by Commander Meinert.⁹ Ciechanów's Jews were first chased to the market square, where they were ordered to give up their valuables, for which the SS had boxes ready. Three Jews were shot to show the gravity of the demand. A female SS officer randomly searched females, while male SS officers checked the men. All were then led into the courtyard of the medieval castle located outside of the town for a selection.

A group of 1,000 elderly and sick residents was sent to the Mława ghetto (33 kilometers [20.5 miles] northeast of Ciechanów) and from there to the Auschwitz concentration camp in mid-November 1942. A transport of 2,000 stronger Jews was sent to Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Upon their arrival on November 7, 1942, 1,306 people were gassed, while the remainder were selected for work. In the course of the deportation from Ciechanów, a number of elderly Jews were murdered along with 68 patients from the hospital on Zagumienna Street.

In Auschwitz, a member of Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir from Ciechanów, Róża Robota, took part in organizing the prisoner's revolt by distributing explosives. She was hanged with three other women on January 6, 1945.

SOURCES Publications on the Ciechanów ghetto include the following: Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984); Janusz Szczepański, *Spoleczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX*

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wieku (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztor, 2005); A. Volf Yasni, ed., *Yizker-bukh fun der Tsbekhanover Yidisber kehile/Sefer-yizkor li-kehillat Ts'ehanov* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotse Ts'ehanov be-Yisrael un di Landsman-shaftn in Huts-la-Arets, 1962); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ba-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 384–390; and Samuel Althaus, *Where Is God?: Auschwitz-Birkenau to Dachau 1942 to 1945* (United States: S. Althaus, 2000), pp. 42–64.

Documents describing the fate of the Jews of Ciechanów during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AAN; APW (Geheime Staatspolizei—Staatspolizeistelle Zichenau/Schrötersburg in Schrötersburg, zespól nr. 1025, 22 j. a.; Gendermerie Kreis Zichenau, zespól nr. 499, 2, j. a.); AZIH (Ring I/1034; and 301/646); IPN (GK 1795/88x; Geheime Staatspolizei: Polizeistelle Zichenau; and Staatliche Kriminal Polizei Zichenau); USHMM (RG-15.079, Ring I/1034; RG-15.039M; RG-15.037M; RG-50.030*0166, oral history with Lonia Mosak; RG-15.084M, # 646); VHF (e.g., # 6063, 15269, 25241, and 26035); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 26035, testimony of Noah Zabłudovits, 1997.
2. Althaus, *Where Is God?*, pp. 45–46; USHMM, RG-50.030*0166; VHF, # 25241, testimony of Yisrael Fodelovich, 1996.
3. VHF, # 15269, testimony of Meyer Hack, 1996; and # 25241.
4. *Ibid.*, #15269.
5. *Ibid.*, # 26035; # 15269; # 25241.
6. USHMM, RG-50.030*0166.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Althaus, *Where Is God?*, p. 47.
9. AZIH, 301/646, testimony of Motek Popiół, 1945.

CZERWIŃSK NAD WISŁĄ

Pre-1939: Czerwińsk nad Wisłą, village, Płock powiat, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Czerwińsk, Kreis Plönnen, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Czerwińsk Nad Wisłą, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Czerwińsk is located on the right bank of the Vistula River, 61 kilometers (38 miles) west-northwest of Warsaw. An estimated 80 Jewish families lived there in 1939. When the Germans invaded Poland, many Jews fled the village, believing they would be safer in larger towns. The Germans occupied Czerwińsk on September 9 or 10, 1939. As Czerwińsk remained relatively undamaged, most Jewish residents soon returned to their homes. In the course of the September Campaign, Czerwińsk attracted many Jewish refugees, especially from Gąbin, Hów, Leoncin, Rypin, and Warsaw. In October 1939, Czerwińsk was annexed to the Reich as part of Regierungsbezirk Zichenau.

Initially, the Jews of Czerwińsk escaped harassment; however, a curfew was soon imposed. Jews in Czerwińsk were also

forced to wear distinguishing patches bearing the emblem of the Star of David. The Germans confiscated most possessions from both Poles and Jews, especially their estates and businesses. All young Jews were conscripted to perform forced labor, mainly in agriculture, for which they were initially paid.¹ Later, the town's Jews worked fixing roads, clearing snow from the streets, and performing various menial jobs in the village. The German authorities also abducted some of the Jews in Czerwińsk, sending them to labor camps in the vicinity. Roundups were conducted at night.

The Germans set up a Jewish Council (Judenrat) and a Jewish police force (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) to help administer labor conscriptions and maintain order in the Jewish community. Aharon Neiberger (Aran Najberger) chaired the Judenrat. Yehezkel Braverman was the commander of the Jewish Police. In addition to these authorities, there was a German Gendarmerie post located in Czerwińsk.²

In 1940, the chief of the Płock-Ciechanów Gestapo, SS-Sturmbannführer Hartmut Pulmer, organized a number of mass hangings in the region of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki and Czerwińsk.

Either at the end of October or beginning of November 1941, a ghetto surrounded by a wooden fence was constructed in Czerwińsk. The ghetto was located in the predominantly Jewish part of the village and limited to one street leading to the local Catholic cemetery. It had gated exits at each end of the street. The Poles who lived there had to abandon their property and relocate.³

On November 29, 1941, the Germans transferred 600 Jews from the liquidated ghetto in Wyszogród almost 10 kilometers (about 6 miles) away to the ghetto in Czerwińsk. Some of these people were moved into houses deserted by the Poles in Czerwińsk. With their arrival, the Czerwińsk ghetto became extremely overcrowded.⁴

The Germans did not allow any businesses to remain open in the Czerwińsk ghetto. Poles were afraid to help their Jewish neighbors, as large notices were posted throughout the village ordering the death penalty for anyone found providing assistance to Jews. The Judenrat did, however, open a soup kitchen to help the poor and refugees. It also was responsible for providing labor brigades in accordance with German demands. Jewish laborers would leave the ghetto in the morning to work in the fields and come back in the evening. The German authorities rarely entered the ghetto, leaving it up to the Jewish Police to maintain order there. In the spring of 1942, the Płock-Ciechanów Gestapo organized a second round of mass hangings, including one conducted inside the Czerwińsk ghetto. The Germans employed these methods to try to break the spirit of the local Jews.

In the first part of 1942, an underground cell of the Communist Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza, PPR) was organized in the Czerwińsk ghetto. A former party member, Lewicki (Levitsky), was its secretary. The cell maintained contact with the underground of the Płońsk ghetto and PPR in the Płońsk region. Some Czerwińsk Jews joined the People's Guard (Gwardia Ludowa, GL), a Communist partisan group

commanded by Franciszek Lewandowski that operated around Płock and Płońsk. Among these partisans was Marian Berglan, alias Wańka Woroncow, who fell during fighting with the German Gendarmerie in the village of Janikowo on September 15, 1943.

In the summer of 1942, two truckloads of women, children, and sick people were brought into the Czerwińsk ghetto from Ciechanów. By this time, the ghetto's population had reached 2,000. The unsanitary conditions in the ghetto led to an outbreak of typhus. A small hospital was opened and supervised by Doctor Arthur Bauer, who visited once a week from Płońsk. The rest of the time, a single nurse cared for the sick. At its peak, the epidemic resulted in the death of dozens of Jews each week.

The Czerwińsk ghetto was liquidated on October 28, 1942. About 2,600 of its inhabitants were brought on wagons to the ghetto in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki. The deportations of Nowy Dwór's ghetto inhabitants to the Auschwitz concentration camp began three weeks later on November 20, 1942. The third and final transport departed from Nowy Dwór on December 12, 1942.⁵

Hartmut Pulmer was tried in 1976 but never sentenced due to his "poor health."

SOURCES There is no single publication on the history of the Jewish community in Czerwińsk nad Wisłą. A short chapter is dedicated to its fate in Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989). Some information can also be found in: Janusz Szczepański, *Spoleczność żydowska Mazowska w XIX–XX wieku* (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, 2005).

Relevant documentation and testimonies can be found in the following archive: VHF (# 42808 and 30107).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 42808, testimony of Max Lesser, 1998.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., # 30107, testimony of Abraham Szmiga, 1997.
5. VHF, # 42808; # 30107.

DROBIN

Pre-1939: Drobin, town, Płock powiat, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Reichenfeld, Kreis Schrottersburg, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Drobin, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Drobin is located 33 kilometers (20.5 miles) northeast of Płock. The town's first Jewish inhabitants only appeared in Drobin at the end of the seventeenth century, but by 1808, almost all the residents were Jews (1,607 out of a total of 1,717). By 1921, there were 1,096 Jews in Drobin out of a total population of 2,439.



Portrait of the fourth-grade class at the public elementary school in Drobin, attended by both Polish and Jewish children, 1932.

USHMM WS #38516, COURTESY OF SHALOM FOUNDATION, GOLDA TENCER-SZURMIEJ COLLECTION

The Germans occupied Drobin on September 5, 1939, and immediately began committing acts of thievery and vandalism, as well as harassing and attacking Jews. In October, Drobin was renamed Reichenfeld and annexed to the Reich as part of Regierungsbezirk Zichenau.¹ That same month, many anti-Jewish laws were implemented. Jews were ordered to wear an armband bearing the Star of David. They were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks. Although the Germans allowed some Jewish businesses to continue operating, Jews were otherwise banned from self-employment. The Germans took any valuable item they wanted from Jewish homes. In addition, they imposed a financial contribution of 10,000 złoty on the community; although Drobin's Jews tried their best, they were able to collect only 4,500 złoty, which the Germans accepted only after persistent pleading.² At the beginning of 1940, Drobin's synagogue was razed.

Jews were also requisitioned for forced labor. At first, the Germans would round up whomever they found in the street. Some were employed in two hospitals established for Polish POWs in the synagogue and Bet Midrash. Some swept the streets. A number worked in agriculture in the vicinity of Drobin, mainly clearing fields of stones and breaking them up into gravel. The old Jewish cemetery was leveled, and all the tombstones were used to create paths in a park that the Germans designed in Drobin, while others were used to pave roads. Polish engineers supervised the construction of the park, which also used Jewish labor. Bones from the Jewish cemetery were visible all over the town for some time. Jewish craftsmen were employed under Polish supervision in two enterprises for tailors and shoemakers whose workshops had been seized. From 1940 on, Jewish women and children were forced to work along with the men. In the spring of 1940, those Jews employed paving the roads were paid 1.20 Reichsmark (RM) per day.³

In the fall of 1939, the Germans established a Judenrat (Jewish Council) to oversee the implementation of German

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laws. Its primary task was to organize forced labor detachments and distribute to the workers their small wages, from which it deducted 10 pfennigs for operating costs. The German authorities initially appointed Elimelech Buki as the chairman. The other members of the Judenrat included: Josef Segel, Moshe Aron, and Israel and Isaac Braunschweig.⁴ By February 1940, Chaim Przewózman (Pschewusmann) replaced Buki as the chairman. The Judenrat was also charged with organizing social aid, which involved assisting about 100 refugees who had settled in Drobin since the war's onset. Most of them came from the nearby towns of Mława, Sierpc, Raciąż, Rypin, and Lipno.

With the assistance of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), the Judenrat opened a soup kitchen on February 22, 1940. By March, it was distributing 250 meals a day: less than half the demand. From May on, due to financial constraints, the Judenrat charged everyone 5 pfennigs per meal. The economic situation of the Jews worsened day by day. It was at this time that the Germans expelled all of Drobin's refugees, sending most of them to Strzegowo and Płock. A number of them returned to Drobin or went into hiding. In August 1940, 500 poor were registered in Drobin, yet the kitchen was unable to increase the number of meals.⁵

As conditions continued to deteriorate in Drobin, a number of Jews were transferred to the ghetto in Mława. A group of Jews was rounded up one night in July 1940 and was sent to a newly created labor camp for Jews.

The first large deportation from Drobin took place in early March 1941. At that time, Drobin had approximately 1,300 Jewish inhabitants. The Judenrat prepared a list of 600 Jews (mainly the sick and elderly) to be deported by truck to the transfer camp in Dziadówo. A week later, on March 14, they were loaded onto trains and transferred to the ghetto in Piotrków Trybunalski, where the Germans had already crammed in around 20,000 Jews. Most of the Jews from Drobin were housed together in the synagogue at 20 Jerozolimska Street. A typhus epidemic that broke out in the first months after their arrival killed hundreds of them. With the deportation of the bulk of the Jews from the Piotrków ghetto in mid-October 1942, most of the remaining Jews from Drobin were sent by train to the Treblinka death camp.

The ghetto for 700 Jews that remained in Drobin was set up immediately after the departure of the group of 600 Jews (although one account places it earlier, in 1940). The Jews had to vacate their houses on the market square and move to the poorest section of the town, down by the river, near the new Jewish cemetery. Jews could take some of their belongings with them. After their resettlement in the ghetto, on average about four families were forced to share one room. The ghetto was initially open and was not strictly guarded. Later on, however, it was surrounded by barbed wire. There was only one gate by which inhabitants could enter and leave the ghetto.⁶

The Germans gave the Jews a free hand to establish their own police force (Ordnungsdienst). Once the Judenrat had ap-

pointed its members, they were in charge of maintaining order within the ghetto. Its members wore high boots, distinct uniforms with a band at waist level, and special hats. The treatment of individuals depended on the status of the family from which they came. Some members of the force abused their power. They were especially brutal during the Pelzakaktion—when the Germans ordered the surrender of all fur items in the fall of 1941. Jews known to be concealing any fur garments were severely beaten. German police controlled the gate and the external perimeter of the ghetto.⁷

Those Jews who were still permitted to run their businesses were allowed to leave the ghetto and employ other Jews. Many smuggled food into the ghetto. Nevertheless, due to overcrowding, bad sanitation, and severe hunger that made people's stomachs swell, cases of typhus and other diseases developed. To make matters worse, there was no hospital in the Drobin ghetto.⁸

According to one testimony, sometime after the ghetto was set up, a number of young men were rounded up and were sent to the Nosarzewo labor camp near Mława.⁹

The Germans liquidated the ghetto in Drobin in November 1941 (or, by some accounts, in 1942). Its 700 inhabitants were deported to the fenced ghetto in Nowe Miasto near Płońsk. The laborers who had been sent to the Nosarzewo camp a few months earlier were also transferred there. However, in their place another group of young men was soon rounded up and sent to Nosarzewo. The conditions in Nowe Miasto were much worse than in Drobin. The Judenrat tried to accommodate the newcomers, but many ended up sleeping in the streets. There also was an outbreak of typhus. The Germans never entered the ghetto, as they were afraid of becoming infected. The Jews from Drobin worked in the vicinity of Nowe Miasto, mainly in farming and construction. After about seven to eight months, they were transferred to yet another ghetto in Płońsk.¹⁰

The Germans announced that they would only be in Płońsk for a short time before everyone would be sent to work in Germany or Switzerland. The Jews from Drobin stayed in Płońsk for periods varying from only a few days up to three months, depending on the date of their deportation to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Most of them were sent on the second transport on November 30, 1942. They were sent on a regular train, with seats and windows. Only about 50 or 60 Jews from Drobin survived the war.¹¹

SOURCES There is no single publication describing in detail the fate of the Jews of Drobin. A description of the destruction of the community can be found in Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 180–182. Additional brief sections on Drobin can be found in the following publications: Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984), p. 55; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press,

2001), p. 332; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja, 1979), p. 162.

Documentation and testimonies can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/321); UM-DOHA (Simon Kalmas interview, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/51471>); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154, AJDC); VHF (# 2504, 4299, 9954, 13743, 18648, and 51154); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. UM-DOHA, Simon Kalmas interview, 1982.
2. Ibid.; VHF, # 18648-3, testimony of Morris Pfeffer, 1996, and # 2504, testimony of Esther Neimark, 1995.
3. Simon Kalmas interview, 1982; VHF, # 51154, testimony of Cwi Jedwab, 2000; # 2504; # 18648-3.
4. Simon Kalmas interview, 1982; VHF, # 51154; # 18648-3.
5. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/321.
6. VHF, # 13743-2, testimony of Harry Schwartz, 1996.
7. Ibid., # 18648-3.
8. Ibid.; # 51154; Simon Kalmas interview, 1982.
9. VHF, # 51154.
10. Ibid., # 4299-2, testimony of Abraham Feffer, 1995; #13743-2; # 9954-3, testimony of Samuel Sitko, 1995.
11. Ibid., #51154; #9954-3; #18648-3.

MAKÓW MAZOWIECKI

Pre-1939: Maków Mazowiecki, town and powiat center, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Mackheim, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Maków Mazowiecki, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Maków Mazowiecki is located 69 kilometers (43 miles) north of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, approximately 5,000 Jews resided in Maków Mazowiecki (about 55 percent of the total population).¹

Units of the German 3rd Army entered Maków a few days after the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, followed immediately by units of Einsatzkommando 2/V, and a reign of terror began.² Much of the Jewish population attempted to flee the Germans by heading for the larger cities, especially Warsaw, or into the Soviet-occupied zone.

In October 1939, Maków Mazowiecki was incorporated into the Reich as part of Regierungsbezirk Zichenau. For much of the occupation, the Landrat in Kreis Mackheim was Herbert Seiler, and the mayor (Bürgermeister) was Franz Kasischke.³

The first systematic measures against the Jews came in December, when Jews were ordered to wear the Star of David. All private businesses and schools were closed or taken over, and Jewish communities in the area were ordered to pay the German authorities “contributions” amounting to many thousands of złoty.

At the end of 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established. Its tasks included transmitting German orders to the

Jewish community, ensuring their implementation, and tending to the needs of impoverished Jews, especially the many refugees from other towns. The council was obligated to provide the Germans with a list of the Jewish inhabitants, together with an inventory of their property. At first, A. Rzyk and A. Adler were appointed as heads of the Jewish Council; they were soon replaced by Abraham Garfinkel and Ehrlich.

The ghetto in Maków Mazowiecki was established in several stages, starting in the spring of 1940. First, the Jews living in the non-Jewish parts of town were moved into a Jewish “residential area” (open ghetto). Around this time, several hundred Jews apparently arrived in Maków from the surrounding towns and villages, including Różan, Krasnosielc, Chorzele, Rypin, Mława, and Pułtusk, as part of the initial German attempts to concentrate Jews in a few larger towns. Those Jews who only moved within Maków were able to bring most of their belongings, but the refugees from outside towns and villages arrived with only the few possessions they could carry in their arms.⁴

According to a certificate issued by the German mayor of Maków on April 22, 1940, the Jewish community at that time numbered 3,527 people, of whom 517 were refugees; in total, 1,950 Jews were in need of financial assistance.⁵

On December 8, 1940, conditions in the ghetto worsened with the arrival of Jews deported from Chorzele, Mława, and Przasnysz. In December 1940, a report to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) indicated there were 3,800 Jews in Maków, of which some 2,000 were refugees. The total number of Jews fluctuated considerably during the existence of the ghetto, as the periodic influx of more refugees was counterbalanced in part by roundups of Jews for forced labor camps. Close to 12,000 Jews are estimated to have passed through the ghetto during its existence.⁶ Due to its small area, the ghetto was terribly overcrowded. Typically, three families lived in a single room. Some people resided in the synagogue; others, in shops, attics, and barns. The ghetto had no hospital or infirmary to treat the sick and injured.

Available accounts differ, but probably at the end of 1940, and certainly by the fall of 1941, the German authorities enclosed the Jewish residential area.⁷ The Maków ghetto was located near the Zalew River and included the streets of Franciszkańska, Zielony Rynek, Kanałowa, Brzozowa, Dunaj, and Buźniczna. Jewish refugees were employed to erect a wooden fence 4 meters (13.1 feet) high around the ghetto, which was topped with barbed wire. There were three gates around the ghetto for exit and entry.

There were only three wells inside the ghetto, and this led to long lines and a severe shortage of water. For one hour per day, Jews were permitted to leave the ghetto under guard to obtain water from the river. But sometimes the Germans beat the Jews severely as they returned to the ghetto, and on one occasion, a woman was shot for venturing too far into the river. Units of the Order Police (Schutzpolizei and Gendarmerie) guarded the perimeter of the ghetto. Several witnesses

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name a German administrator, Wolfgang Steinmetz, as the ghetto commandant,⁸ but officials of the Gestapo organized the most severe repressive measures. Notoriously brutal officials of the Order Police included Max Plötzke.⁹

With the establishment of the ghetto, the Germans also ordered the creation of a Jewish police force of about 20 men. The ghetto police was subordinated to the Jewish Council and was headed by David Orlik. The council had to provide the German authorities with a specific quota of laborers and assist with roundups for deportation to the labor camps, which soon became widely feared due to the terrible conditions there.

The council had a generally favorable reputation in the ghetto, since it organized aid for ghetto residents. These measures included running a Talmud school for children and a social welfare system that took care of more than 1,200 people, including many refugees. The Judenrat also set up a soup kitchen for the needy, especially children. Each month the support committee of the council distributed approximately 3,000 kilograms (6,614 pounds) of bread.¹⁰ The poor living and housing conditions and the chronic malnutrition caused epidemics of disease and a high death rate. By 1942, Jews caught leaving the ghetto faced the death penalty. However, some Jews continued to leave the ghetto, especially at night when the guard was lax, in order to barter their few remaining personal items for food with the local peasants.¹¹

The German authorities attempted to exploit the residents for work as much as possible. The Labor Department in Maków organized the employment of the Jews, sending them to work in various places in the town and to seven labor camps in the vicinity. Approximately 150 to 300 Jews worked in the Gąsaw, Czerwoniec, Nowa Wieś, and Karniew labor camps. An additional 200 Jews worked at the Różan Castle; 300 ghetto residents went to the Ciechanów labor camp; and some 200 to 400 Jews and Poles worked in another camp established in the town itself, located in the former *mikveh*.¹²

Up until the liquidation of the ghetto in November 1942, German security forces conducted a number of executions in Maków, including at least three public hangings. On July 7, 1942, the Germans hanged 20 Jews following an incident in which 3 escaped Jews attacked a patrol of the Gendarmerie. One of the Jews was wounded and fled back into the ghetto. When it was discovered that the Jewish doctor, Abe Kejtsohn, had treated the escapee without informing the authorities, the Germans arrested him and hanged him a week later.¹³

At the beginning of November 1942, in preparation for the liquidation of the ghetto, the Germans ordered that all the Jews in neighboring work camps be brought back into the Maków ghetto. The Germans started to liquidate the ghetto early in the morning of November 18.¹⁴ During the liquidation Aktion, at least 50 Jews, mostly the elderly and children, were killed on the spot, along with several Polish women who were driving carts for the Jews. All the remaining Jews, about 5,500 people, were herded under severe beatings to Mława, where they were held for a few days. Here, the elderly, chil-

dren, and others unable to work were selected out and sent either to Treblinka or, more probably, Auschwitz (sources differ).¹⁵ The Germans then deported the Jews held in Mława, including some who arrived on November 24 from Strzegowo, in several separate train transports to Auschwitz. The largest transport of Jews from Mława (including many Jews from Maków)—consisting of approximately 2,500 men, women, and children—arrived in Auschwitz on December 6, 1942. Of this transport, 2,094 were gassed immediately, and 406 men were admitted to the camp as laborers.¹⁶ It is unknown how many Jews from Maków survived the German occupation, but several of the men sent to Auschwitz managed to make it through the selections and privations there and in other camps until the end of the war.

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Maków Mazowiecki and the surrounding area during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Yitshak Brat, ed., *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Makov-Mazovitsk* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yotse Makov-Mazovitsk be-Yisrael uve-Artsot-ha-Berit, 1969); Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 264–268; and Janusz Szczepański, *Dzieje Społeczności Żydowskiej w Powiatów Pułtusk i Maków Mazowiecki* (Warsaw: Pułtuskie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne, Towarzystwo Miłośników Makowa Mazowieckiego, 1993). Reference has also been made to the unpublished work by Joann Korniluk, “Maków Mazowiecki: An Oral History; Survivors of World War II in Poland” (Fairfax, VA, August 2004).

Documentation in relation to the ghetto in Maków Mazowiecki can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., 210/482; and 301/6526); BA-L (B 162/7876); IPN (e.g., SWW 750-52); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC, 210/482]); VHF (e.g., # 05384, 15815, and 28862); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. BA-L, B 162/7876, p. 309, statement of Abraham Garfinkel, August 17, 1971.
2. Wolfgang Schumann and Ludwig Nestler, eds., *Dokumentation. Nacht über Europa: Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Polen (1939–1945)* (Cologne, 1989), p. 355.
3. BA-L, B 162/7876, p. 511, Einstellungsverfügung (closing report) in the case against Wolfgang Steinmetz, January 12, 1982.
4. VHF, # 15815, testimony of Sam Itzkowitz; BA-L, B 162/7876, pp. 309–312, statement of Abraham Garfinkel, August 17, 1971.
5. Bürgermeister in Maków, Bescheinigung, April 22, 1940, reproduced in Brat, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 286.
6. BA-L, B 162/7876, p. 277, testimony of Waclaw Wolski, October 20, 1970.
7. See VHF, # 15815; BA-L, B 162/7876, p. 346, statement of Zwi Meir.
8. BA-L, B 162/7876, pp. 309, 313.
9. Ibid., p. 311.

10. VHF, # 15815.
11. Ibid.
12. Szczepański, *Dzieje*, p. 153; Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, pp. 428–429.
13. Grynberg, *Żydzi*, p. 57; BA-L, 162/7876, p. 277, testimony of Waclaw Wolski, and pp. 512–515 (Einstellungsverfügung, Wolfgang Steinmetz); and VHF, # 15815.
14. Mair Hersh Ziechanover, “Klep, peynikungen—umkum,” in Brat, *Sefer zikaron*, pp. 244–245.
15. Survivor testimony (BA-L, 162/7876, p. 312; and VHF, # 15815) points to Treblinka, but Auschwitz is more likely; see Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1990), pp. 283–284.
16. Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle*, p. 280.

MŁAWA

Pre-1939: Mława, town and powiat center, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Mielau, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Mława, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Mława is located 107 kilometers (66 miles) north-northwest of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, there were approximately 6,500 Jews living there. On September 3, 1939, German forces occupied the town. In October, the Germans annexed Mława, renamed Mielau, as part of Regierungsbezirk Zichenau in Provinz Ostpreussen. From May 1940, the Landrat in Mielau was Paul Funk.¹

In November 1939, the Germans ordered Rabbi Segalowicz to organize a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Mława, and by 1940 the Germans had appointed Lejzor Perelmutter as its head. He built up good relations with the German officials and used these to try to help the Jews in Kreis Mielau. A Jewish police force of 10 to 12 policemen was also appointed, headed initially by Menachem Davidsohn. Perelmutter put an end to the kidnapping of Jews by restructuring the forced labor arrangements. Workers were now paid 1.50 Reichsmark (RM) per day by the Judenrat for their work; the money was raised from wealthier Jews who paid to be exempted. Jews were only allowed to buy food from shops run by the Judenrat. However, because the Germans restricted the food supply, the Judenrat began to sell black market food, paid for by taxing Jews. In 1940, living conditions were still bearable in part because of the black market trade with Łódź and Warsaw.

In November 1939, hundreds of refugees began to arrive from Sierpc, Rypin, Dobrzyń nad Drwęcą, and other places; more arrived in 1940. In the summer of 1940, the Judenrat in Mława wrote to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw for clothing, medicine, and money. However, due to German bureaucratic obstruction and the AJDC's limited means, very little aid arrived.²

At the start of December 1940, rumors began to spread of an upcoming expulsion. The Judenrat bribed the Germans with 55,000 RM, but on December 6, German Police selected 3,000 Jews and sent them to the transit camp at Działdowo



The ruins of the city square in Mława, with a possible roundup taking place at left. The original German caption reads: “The city square of Mława.” USHMM WS #49704, COURTESY OF TOM SALMON

and from there into Distrikt Lublin.³ Several hundred managed to return in 1941, when the Judenrat gave them falsified identification documents, and they blended back into the Jewish community.

After those deportations, only 2,450 Jews remained; Funk ordered them to move into a ghetto within 24 hours. The ghetto area comprised the Jewish back streets and Mikveh Square, bordered by Warsaw and Plock Streets. In early 1941 the Jews had to build a wall around the ghetto area.⁴

Due to the desperate overcrowding, a typhus epidemic broke out. The Judenrat organized a sanitation committee to maintain cleanliness in the ghetto and establish a 40-bed hospital. All of the Jews were vaccinated against typhus, which helped to keep down the mortality rate. Clandestine trade with local peasants and other ghettos forestalled starvation.⁵

The Judenrat was given largely a free hand to organize life within the ghetto, but only on the strict condition that nobody came in or out without permission. The Jewish Police guarded the ghetto gate from the inside and ran a prison cell to punish those breaking the regulations. There was also a court within the ghetto to settle disputes among Jews. Schooling was officially banned, but Jewish children received some education in small private groups. A secret radio kept in a cellar brought in some news from the outside world.

In the spring of 1941, the Germans conducted a search for Jews residing illegally in the ghetto. The Judenrat secretly evacuated most of the “illegals” in time, bringing them back in once the search was over. Perelmutter personally risked his life by delivering false documents to those being searched. More than 100 illegals were arrested, but Perelmutter managed to get them released and issued them new, legal documents.

Between 200 and 500 Jews were assigned to forced labor each day, cleaning up debris, constructing roads, building barracks, demolishing houses, loading trains with coal, and working in Polish and German houses and on private farms.

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Several hundred Jews were deported to various labor camps in the summer of 1941.

In November 1941, the Germans permitted the Judenrat to expand the ghetto area a little, to cope with the arrival of around 1,000 Jews from Sześćńsk, Radzynów, and Zieluń. With these refugees, as well as those who had managed to return from the earlier deportation Aktion, the population was now approximately 5,000 people. As there was not sufficient room in the Mława ghetto, the Germans also permitted the establishment of a ghetto in Strzegowo at this time, after the Jewish community there offered bribes.⁶

Conditions in the ghetto grew worse due to severe overcrowding. Some residents had to live in pigsties, barns, granaries, basements, and attics. The Judenrat worked to make the ghetto tolerable by organizing smuggling rings, using Jews who worked outside the ghetto to bring food back in with them. The Jewish Police helped by turning a blind eye at the ghetto entrances. However, the Germans started to crack down on smuggling in December 1941, when they arrested the head of the Jewish Police, Davidsohn.⁷

On January 23, 1942, the Germans arrested 25 Jews for smuggling. They were sent to concentration camps where all perished, including Iccak Alter, a member of the Judenrat. Perelmutter was also arrested on this day and subsequently murdered in the town's municipal court building. On April 19, following the previous day's hanging of 4 smugglers, the Gestapo arrested most of the Jewish Police and several members of the Judenrat. A new Judenrat was formed, which tried unsuccessfully to bargain with the Germans for the release of those under arrest, including Davidsohn.

On June 4, 1942, the ghetto residents were forced to gather in the town square, where 13 handcuffed Jewish men awaited with nooses around their necks. The condemned were mostly members of the Jewish Police arrested for failing to prevent smuggling. The Germans demanded silence and chose several Jews from the crowd to remove the boxes from beneath the victims' feet. When the crowd began to wail and scream in horror, the Germans fired into the crowd, killing and wounding several people. Then, on June 17, the Germans executed 50 more young Jews by shooting, allegedly as a punishment for the Jews' "misbehavior" during the execution on June 4.⁸ After that, most inhabitants became too scared to continue smuggling, and hunger increased dramatically.

In the summer of 1942, the new head of the Judenrat, Paltiel Cegło, was imprisoned in Ciechanów. Another head was appointed, Mendel Czarko, and a new Jewish police force was established. Gutman, a key player in the black market, was appointed as its head.

The Jews that worked outside the ghetto were transferred back into it at the end of October 1942. The Judenrat was ordered to prepare a list of 2,000 elderly, sick, and single Jews. At this time, reinforced German police units began to patrol the ghetto boundaries.

On November 2, there was an influx of ill and elderly Jews from the ghetto in Strzegowo. On November 6, 1,000 more

Jews arrived from Ciechanów. Then on November 10, Mława's elderly and sick Jews were deported; the Jews in Mława believed that they were sent to the Treblinka death camp, but German documentation indicates that they were sent to Auschwitz, where most were gassed on arrival. On November 13 and 17, a selection was performed in the town's flour mill. Those marked for deportation were robbed and then forced to run the gauntlet of the Gendarmes; those who ran too slowly were shot. After this, two more transports left Mława for Auschwitz, containing Jews both from Mława and Ciechanów.

After this third deportation on November 17, only a few hundred Jews remained in the ghetto. However, the population swelled the very next day with the arrival of approximately 5,000 Jews from Maków Mazowiecki. On November 24, 1,000 Jews from Strzegowo arrived. These new residents, along with the remaining Mława Jews, a total of between 6,000 and 7,000 people, were all deported to Auschwitz in three or more transports between November 20 and December 10, 1942.

At least 50 Jews from the Mława ghetto somehow managed to survive their ordeals in the camps, and more than 150 of those who fled into the Soviet Union also survived.

In 1971, Franz Paulikat, a Gendarmerie official who was notorious for his brutality among the inmates of the Mława ghetto, was tried at Arnsherg in Germany and sentenced to life imprisonment.⁹

SOURCES Publications on the Mława ghetto include the following: J. Shatzky, ed., *Pinkas Mławe* (New York, 1950), pp. 401–418; Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w reencji ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984), pp. 57–58; Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ba-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 280–287; David Shtokfish, *Di Yidishe Mławe: Gesbikhte, oysfbtayg, umkum* (Tel Aviv: Yots'e Mławah be-Yisrael uvi-tefutsot, 1984); Ryszard Juszkiewicz, *Losy Żydów mławskich w okresie II-ej wojny światowej* (Mława: Tow. Przyjaciół Ziemi Mławskiej, 1994); David Silberklang, "The Holocaust in the Lublin District" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, February 2003); Jan Grabowski, "The Holocaust in Northern Mazovia (Poland) in the Light of the Archive of the Ciechanów Gestapo," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 18:3 (Winter 2004); and *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 35 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), Lfd. Nr. 755, pp. 373–384. The yizkor books for Sześćńsk and Strzegowo also contain some information on the Mława ghetto. See *Kehilat Szrensk veba-seviva: Sefer zikaron* (Jerusalem, 1960), p. 370; and Feigl Bisberg-Youkelson and Rubin Youkelson, eds., *The Life and Death of a Polish Shtetl* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), pp. 75–77, 88.

Documents describing the fate of the Jews of Mława during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: APL (GDL 891); AŻIH (e.g., Ring I/599 and 865; 210/494); CAHJP (HM/7596); FVA (# 145, 295, and 1533); IPN (GZ); USHMM (e.g., RG-15.019M, reel 13; RG-50.120, # 143; and Acc.1999.A.0154); VHF (e.g., # 12430 and 27157); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/ 403, 468, 539, 914, 1239, 2509; O-3/2190, 2907, 3361; and TR-10/714).

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NOTES

1. *JuNS-V*, vol. 35, Lfd. Nr. 755, p. 376.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH, AJDC records), 210/494.
3. APL, Gouverneur des Distrikts Lublin (GDL) 891, Heinicke (Department for Population and Welfare, Lublin) to Labor Department Lublin, December 10, 1940; AŻIH, Ring 1/674.
4. A small sketch map of the ghetto area can be found in Juskiewicz, *Losy Żydów mławskich*, p. 88.
5. VHF, # 12430, testimony of Leo Beals; USHMM, RG-50.120, # 143, testimony of Elimelech Shklar.
6. *Kebilat Szrensk veba-seviva*, p. 370; and Grynberg, *Żydzi w reencji ciechanowskiej*, pp. 68–70.
7. IPN, archives of the Ciechanów-Płock Gestapo (GZ), 148/265/I, interrogation of Davidsohn, December 10, 1941.
8. *JuNS-V*, vol. 35, Lfd. Nr. 755, p. 377.
9. *Ibid.*, verdict of LG-Arns, 6 Ks 3/70, pp. 373–384.

NOWE MIASTO

Pre-1939: Nowe Miasto, village, Płońsk powiat, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Neustadt, Kreis Plönnen, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Nowe Miasto, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The village of Nowe Miasto is located about 16 kilometers (10 miles) northeast of Płońsk. By 1921, the number of Jews in Nowe Miasto stood at 39.6 percent (i.e., 780 out of a total population of 1,969).

The Germans captured the village on September 5, 1939. On September 14, most likely members of Einsatzkommando 2/V (part of Einsatzgruppe V) killed eight Jews; two of them were shot in their own houses, the remainder near the forest in the “Piaski.”¹ On September 23 (Yom Kippur), the town’s Jews were gathered in the market square, where they were tormented for hours. One source reports that Wehrmacht soldiers murdered seven unidentified Jews on that day.² The Germans tended to pick for torture those Jews who were orthodox in appearance, beating them and shearing off their beards. One Jewish man was reported to have been tied to an automobile and dragged to his death. Soldiers drove a motorcycle and made some of the town’s Jewish inhabitants run after it. Finally, Jews were forced to dance and to dress and undress, just to shame them.³

Due to these severe persecutions at the beginning of the occupation, only 750 of the 1,500 pre-war Jewish residents remained in Nowe Miasto. Some Jews fled east to the Soviet-occupied sector of Poland after the Red Army invaded the country on September 17, 1939. Soon afterwards the Germans imposed a curfew in Nowe Miasto. The Jews also were forced to walk in the streets and not on the sidewalks. In October of that year, the village’s name was changed to Neustadt.⁴

The date of the establishment of the Jewish Council (Judenrat) is not known; however, Szlama Frydman was its chairman, and Chaim Wiatrak served as one of its members.⁵

The German authorities demanded various numbers of Jews for forced labor on a daily basis. The conscription and provision of these laborers was the responsibility of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst). Each house had to supply a predetermined number of people. As one of the survivors notes, none of the jobs assigned to the Jews were especially productive. These laborers primarily dug ditches and paved roads. The only people exempted were a group of tailors assigned to sew Wehrmacht uniforms. The Judenrat also was charged by the Germans to deliver gold, furs, and other clothing items collected from the Jews.⁶

In February 1940, a self-help committee was organized in Nowe Miasto to assist the town’s 50 poorest Jewish families (222 people). The 5-member committee included: Szlama Frydman, Chaim Wiatrak, Gudak Mendel, Jankiel Szyfman, and Anczel Dąbrower. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) provided the community with some money, groceries, and clothing.⁷

Sometime in 1940, the Germans deported a number of Jews from Regierungsbezirk Zichenau to the Generalgouvernement. A number of Jews from Nowe Miasto were sent to various destinations, including Warsaw and Radzymin. On July 5, 1941, about 300 Jews from Nowe Miasto were sent to the Pomiechówek labor camp near Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, where 90 percent of them died.

In the second half of 1941, the Jews of Regierungsbezirk Zichenau were concentrated in a few ghettos in the region, including one established in Nowe Miasto. The fenced ghetto in Nowe Miasto was set up on November 1, 1941. It included the northern and eastern sections of the Market Square, Kościelna, and Senatorska Streets. The Poles had to vacate the designated area, and the Jews moved into their houses. Following the creation of the ghetto, about 1,200 Jews from Ciechanów, 750 from Drobin, and an unknown number from Tomaszów Mazowiecki were resettled there. The latter group of Jews returned to Tomaszów after a few weeks. This influx of deportees increased the number of ghetto inhabitants to 2,700.⁸

As the number of Jews in the ghetto more than tripled, living conditions rapidly deteriorated. Some inhabitants had to build special platforms in order to be able to sleep at night. One survivor estimates that the ghetto was designed to house only 500 to 600 people. A typhus epidemic and hunger killed an estimated 280 Jews; another 30 were murdered. One of the victims was a Jewish man hanged for leaving the ghetto alongside the Nowe Miasto–Szuman road. Despite the threat of capital punishment, the town’s Jews sneaked out of the ghetto to buy food through holes excavated in the ground. The local Jews were more fortunate, as they knew the area and the local farmers. Those Jews who still had some reserves could afford to buy food on the black market.⁹

The ghetto inhabitants were not paid for the forced labor they performed. Most of it was performed within the town limits. They mainly dug holes for construction or cleaned and painted houses. Agricultural labor was not too arduous and was preferred by many, as it also provided an opportunity

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to obtain something to eat from the surrounding fields.¹⁰ According to one testimony, a number of Jews was sent to the Nosarzewo labor camp in the summer of 1942.¹¹

As the news of the liquidation of other ghettos reached Nowe Miasto, the town's Jews attempted to organize an uprising. Contact was made with the local partisan group of the Armia Krajowa (Polish Home Army). Weapons and identity cards (*Kennkarten*) were accumulated. However, no uprising took place because the Polish members of the Home Army opposed it, as they thought it would be impossible to hide such a large number of Jews.

The liquidation of the ghetto took place on November 18, 1942. The German authorities ordered local Polish farmers to assist in the deportation Aktion; the farmers arrived at night with their wagons. Then Nowe Miasto's Jews were chased out of their houses to the market square. They were only permitted to take with them one small bag. According to one testimony, about 2,000 Jews had to jump straight into the wagons, as soon as they had passed through the square. Those who could walk did so. Everyone was escorted to the train station under close guard by the Gendarmerie. At the station, chaos broke out as the Gestapo took over and started pushing the Jews into the freight cars. All the Jews were taken to the Płońsk ghetto.¹²

The Germans deported all the Jews from the Płońsk ghetto to the Auschwitz concentration camp in the course of four transports organized between October 28 and December 16, 1942. The Jews of Nowe Miasto were included in the second transport on November 30, 1942.¹³

After the end of the war, in early 1946, there were 31 Jews living in Nowe Miasto.

SOURCES There is no single publication on the history of the Jewish community in Nowe Miasto. Relevant information can be found in Janusz Szczepański, *Spoleczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku* (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztor, 2005); and Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejonie Ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984).

Relevant documentation and testimonies can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/514); IPN (ASG, sygn. 44, k. 519); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154, AJDC; and RG-15.019M, reel 13); VHF (e.g., # 2504, 4114, 4299, 9954, and 18300); and YVA.

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 13; Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, Główna Komisja Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: województwo ciechanowskie* (Warsaw, 1984), pp. 58–59.

2. *Rejestr miejsc*, p. 59.

3. VHF, # 18300, testimony of Bella Ressler, 1996.

4. Ibid. See also USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).

5. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).

6. VHF, # 18300.

7. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).

8. VHF, # 18300.

9. Ibid., # 4114, testimony of George Vine, 1995; # 9954, testimony of Samuel Sitko, 1995; # 2504, testimony of Esther Neimark, 1995; # 18300; *Rejestr miejsc*, p. 59.

10. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC); VHF, # 4114; # 4299, testimony of Abraham Feffer, 1995; # 9954.

11. VHF, # 9954.

12. Ibid., # 4114; # 18300.

13. Ibid., # 18300.

NOWY DWÓR MAZOWIECKI

Pre-1939: Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, town, Warsaw powiat and województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Neudorf, Kreis Plönnen, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Nowy Dwór is located about 30 kilometers (19 miles) northwest of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, some 10,000 Jews lived in the town. Following the German aerial bombardment that destroyed three quarters of the town and killed dozens of Jews, most Jews fled to Warsaw, leaving only about 1,500 behind. As living conditions in Warsaw deteriorated, with hundreds of Nowy Dwór refugees also falling victim to German bombs there, many Jews returned.¹

The German army occupied Nowy Dwór at the end of September 1939. One of the first German orders forbade Jews from reopening their stores. Jews were seized on the street for forced labor, which included performing humiliating tasks such as cleaning toilets with their bare hands, as well as clearing rubble and, in the winter, snow from the streets. On October 26, 1939, Nowy Dwór was incorporated into the Reich. In December 1939, the Germans conducted a census, registering 2,800 Jews. At this time, the Germans also burned Jewish books in the marketplace.² At the end of December, the leaders of the Jewish community, Nachum Neufeld and Baruch Tick, were informed by the German authorities that the Jews would have to leave town within four days. At the same time, Jewish property, including furniture and even clothing, was confiscated; 20 Jews were arrested at this time, of which 6 died in concentration camps.

In January 1940, owing to brutal treatment and the imposition of a “contribution” of 50,000 złoty on the Jewish community by the Germans, many Jews again fled the town, some reaching the Soviet-occupied regions to the east. Only a few, mostly poor Jews remained. At this time, the Germans introduced identity cards for the Jews.

During the course of 1940, a number of Jews decided to return to Nowy Dwór from Warsaw, owing to hunger and disease in the larger city. The Gestapo, which had its headquarters in the house of Myer Muntlak near the Polish cemetery, arrested some of these returnees for leaving their registered place of residence. These Jews were cruelly tortured, and 41 of those who had returned from Warsaw were sent away and never heard of again. The Germans continued to exploit Jews daily for forced labor, making them

perform physically demanding work and beating them frequently.³

In June 1941, the German authorities ordered the creation of a ghetto in Nowy Dwór, giving the Jews until June 17 to move. The ghetto was located in the “Piaski” quarter, from the house of Moshe Bermann up to the synagogue, which lay outside the ghetto. A wooden fence surrounded the ghetto. There were two gates, and German guards watched the external perimeter. Once the ghetto was created, only a few “lucky” Jews continued to go to work outside where they might obtain some food. On the inside, there was terrible overcrowding, and initially no food supplies were provided.⁴

A few days after the establishment of the ghetto, the Germans ordered the creation of a Jewish Council (Judenrat). The first head of the council was Rotstein, an honorable man who, for this reason, did not stay in office long. He was succeeded by Israel Tischler, who was acquainted with Wendt, the ethnic German mayor of the town. A Jewish police force also was formed, headed by Jakob Baranek. His deputy, Shlomo Soszynski, became particularly notorious in the ghetto. Subsequently a ghetto prison was established and run by the Jewish Police.⁵ Another key post was head of the supply office, held by Israel Skrobanek, which he ruthlessly exploited to make money at the expense of the starving Jews. The rations in the ghetto consisted of only 330 grams (11.6 ounces) of poor bread per day and 120 grams (4.2 ounces) of horseflesh per month, which was not always supplied. These rations were at fixed prices, but smuggled goods could be obtained for much higher prices.

The Jewish Police took over internal guard duty at the gates; Chaim Jacek, who was in charge there, obediently carried out German orders. When the German army attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, this initially brought joy to the ghetto, as people expected they would soon be liberated, but these hopes were quickly dashed, as German forces rapidly advanced deep into Russia. At this time, there were about 3,000 Jews living in the ghetto. Soon after the ghetto’s establishment, a typhus epidemic broke out due to overcrowding and terrible hygienic conditions there. Almost half of the ghetto became infected, and many people died. In response, the Germans forced all the Jews to take a bath in the river, but many fell sick as a result of this “treatment.”⁶

On July 4, 1941, the Gestapo resettled up to 2,000 Jews from Nowy Dwór to the camp in Pomiechówek, where some 4,000 Jews were collected together. The German authorities informed the Jewish Council that only 750 Jews could remain in the ghetto, that is, those who were employed by the Wehrmacht. Living conditions in the Pomiechówek camp were terrible, and many people died there from beatings, hunger, and typhus. Sick people were shot on the spot, and those who were healthy were marched towards Legionowo. Only a few managed to reach the Warsaw ghetto alive.⁷

Some 800 or so Jews remained behind in Nowy Dwór; they were working in various businesses in the town and also in the nearby fortress of Modlin. Periodically, the Germans murdered some of the surviving Jews in the Nowy Dwór ghetto.

At the end of November 1941, the Germans ordered that all the Jews from the surrounding area, including about 1,000 Jews from Wyszogród, be transferred into the ghetto in Nowy Dwór. To accommodate these newcomers, the ghetto area was expanded to the railway lines.⁸ Each day, the Jewish Police rounded up 350 Jews to work in Modlin, where they rolled up barbed wire ready for transportation to the Eastern Front. The work was very demanding, and the pay consisted only of a piece of bread.

One day in the spring of 1942, when only 300 people turned up for the work assignment, a group of soldiers entered the ghetto and rounded up 50 more. These men were tortured, and then more than 30 of them were shot for “being late.” Jews in the ghetto, especially the families of those who were murdered, blamed the Judenrat for failing to protect them.⁹ During the summer of 1942, the Jewish Council was forced to hang 18 Jews who had been caught illegally outside the ghetto, trying to cross the border with the Generalgouvernement or smuggling food.¹⁰

On October 28, 1942, all 2,600 Jews from Czerwińsk were brought to the Nowy Dwór ghetto, producing terrible overcrowding with five or six families to a room, until the start of the ghetto’s liquidation on November 20. First, those unfit for work or unable to pay a bribe were deported. The ghetto was then completely cleared in two additional transports to Auschwitz of 1,000 people on December 9 and finally 1,500 on December 12. The 12 members of the Jewish Council, with their families, were placed in a separate wagon and allowed to go to the Warsaw ghetto. At Auschwitz, those unfit for work were gassed on arrival. Of the 1,500 Jews on the final transport, only 580 were selected as fit for work; the rest were gassed in the crematoria on December 13–14.¹¹ Some Jews from Nowy Dwór participated in the Warsaw Uprising in 1943. It is estimated that only about 30 Jews from the ghetto in Nowy Dwór survived until the liberation.¹² The few that returned to the town found only desolation and a ruined cemetery.

SOURCES Published accounts of the ghetto in Nowy Dwór can be found in Aryeh Shamri and Dov Berish First, eds., *Pinkas Nowy Dwor* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yots’e Novi-Devor be-Yisrael, 1965); and in Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 298–303.

Documentation on the fate of the Jews of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Ring I, 1172); BA-L (ZStL, II 117 AR 1119/68); IPN (Gestapo Zichenau—see also USHMM, RG-15.039M); and YVA (e.g., B-48/681; M-1/E/2189 and 1879).

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. BA-L, ZStL, II 117 AR 1119/68 (investigation of A. Boldin and others), vol. 1, pp. 1–2, Interim Report, Tel Aviv, July 11, 1968.

2. AŻIH, Ring I, 1172; Shamri and First, *Pinkas Nowy Dwor*, p. xv.

3. A. Goldbrach and W. Szlamowicz, “The Pain and Destruction of the Jewish Population,” in Shamri and First, *Pinkas Nowy Dwor*, pp. 320–325.

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4. Senda Blank, "The Jews of Nowy Dwor under Nazi Rule," in Shamri and First, *Pinkas Nowy Dwor*, pp. 326–336; Leib Kochalski, "The Members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police," in *idem*, pp. 337–339.

5. Kochalski, "The Members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police," pp. 337–339. On the prison inside the ghetto, see also YVA, testimony B-48/681.

6. Blank, "The Jews of Nowy Dwor under Nazi Rule."

7. BA-L, ZStL, II 117 AR 1119/68 (investigation of A. Boldin and others), vol. 1, pp. 1–2, Interim Report, Tel Aviv, July 11, 1968.

8. BA-L, ZStL, II 117 AR 1119/68, vol. 1, p. 87.

9. Kochalski, "The Members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police," pp. 337–339.

10. Mordechai Landsmann, "The Destruction of the Jews in Nowy Dwor," in Shamri and First, *Pinkas Nowy Dwor*, pp. 340–342. On hangings in Nowy Dwór, see also IPN, Gestapo Zichenau, file of Szmerek Goldberg, April 24, 1942.

11. Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1990), pp. 268–294.

12. BA-L, ZStL, II 117 AR 1119/68 (investigation of A. Boldin and others), vol. 1, pp. 1–2, 91–93; Shamri and First, *Pinkas Nowy Dwor*, pp. 340–342.

PLÓCK

Pre-1939: Plock, town and powiat center, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Schröttersburg, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Plock, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Plock is located about 100 kilometers (62 miles) west-northwest of Warsaw on the Vistula River. On the eve of World War II, around 10,000 Jews resided in Plock.

Units of the German army occupied Plock on September 8, 1939. In October, the German occupiers renamed the town Schröttersburg and officially incorporated it into the Reich within Provinz Ostpreussen.

On October 30, 1939, the mayor of Plock banned Jews from engaging in any form of business activity and ordered all Jewish businesses to be seized. This was deemed to be a punishment for their alleged involvement in black market activities.¹ The ever-worsening economic situation caused many Jews to flee to the Soviet-occupied part of Poland or to Warsaw. At the end of November 1939, the Jews of Plock were required to wear yellow triangles (later replaced by large circles) on the front and back of their coats.

The Judenrat, with Dr. Bromberger as chairman and Samek Szatan as vice-chairman, and the Jewish police force were formed in mid-December 1939. A Labor Office was also established at this time. The Judenrat was responsible for supplying the Germans daily with several hundred forced laborers between the ages of 16 and 60, including 150 women. The Judenrat complied in the hope that this would stop the Germans from rounding up Jews off the streets. However, random arrests for forced labor continued. The working conditions for the Jewish laborers were appalling. For example, those who



The Jews of Plock, who have been rounded up for a deportation, stand in a long column that stretches as far as the eye can see along a major street in the town, ca. February 1941.

USHMM WS #33477, COURTESY OF GFH

worked for the Gendarmerie and the SS were abused and tortured, one group having swastikas carved into their backs. However, these work tasks at least provided an opportunity to obtain some food.²

From mid-November 1939, hundreds of Jewish refugees began to arrive in Plock following their expulsion from Dobrzyń nad Drwęcą, Rypin, Sierpc, and other towns. These people arrived with few possessions, and their arrival further overstretched the meager resources of the Jewish community in Plock.³

In the summer of 1940, the Judenrat was forced to compile lists of those with tuberculosis and mental or chronic illness. Then, in September 1940, shortly before the establishment of the ghetto, the Gestapo seized 42 Jews from the Old Age Home and sent them to the Działdowo transit camp, where most were killed.

The Germans established the Plock ghetto in September 1940. It was located on Synagoga Street, Szeroka Street, and part of Bielska Street. The resettlement took some time to complete, as the Jews moved out immediately, but many of the Poles ordered to leave the Jewish quarter took their time, causing Jews to sleep on the streets in the interim. In total, the ghetto held about 10,600 Jews, including around 3,000 refugees. The ghetto was extremely overcrowded, with up to 10 Jews sharing one room. The ghetto was unfenced and not guarded, but Jews could not leave without a special pass. Due to the inhuman conditions and the shortage of medical supplies, diseases soon spread.⁴

Acts of resistance included the smuggling of food into the ghetto, sometimes assisted by local Poles, and continuing educational and cultural activities. There was also an unofficial "aid committee" that provided destitute Jews with food and money. Other examples included the hiding of religious books and Torah scrolls. Those caught by the Nazis attempting to

worship in secret were forced to parade through the streets wearing tefillin and prayer shawls, while the Germans beat them as they passed by.⁵

The Judenrat tried to alleviate conditions in the ghetto. It established a sanitation committee, to improve sanitary conditions, and a public kitchen, to feed the needy. It also set up workers' cooperatives for trades, such as tailors, shoemakers, and barbers, which relieved unemployment.⁶ The Judenrat also temporarily housed children whose parents, 39 men and 120 women, were arrested and imprisoned in January 1941. The Gestapo kept these people in prison until the liquidation of the ghetto, then shot the men and deported the women with the rest of the ghetto residents.

In January 1941, the area of the ghetto was reduced, as the Germans opened a bordello in some of the houses. The Jews were even forced to provide furniture for this establishment. Its opening increased the tension, as drunken Germans sometimes stumbled into the ghetto by mistake, which in turn led to German "reprisals" and the arrest of innocent Jews.

Shortly after the January arrests, the Judenrat was required to present a list to the Germans with the names of active Zionists. In an attempt to spare people, the Judenrat included the names of those who had escaped from the ghetto and of some people who were deceased. However, the ruse was soon discovered, and shortly before the first large deportation Aktion on February 21, 1941, the Gestapo arrested about 25 men and shot them in the countryside outside Płock.

The first deportation Aktion in the ghetto started on February 20, 1941, when a group of SS men arrived. The Jewish Police were ordered to report to the local Gestapo headquarters, where they were beaten and whipped. At 4:00 A.M., the SS forced their way into the clinic and ordered the patients, mostly elderly and sick Jews, to vacate the building in five minutes. The SS beat them brutally when they did not obey instantly, killing many on the spot. At the same time, the Germans roused the ghetto residents from their sleep, ordering them to assemble on Szeroka Street at dawn. The Germans went from house to house, driving out the Jews with blows from rifle butts, truncheons, and metal bars. The Judenrat was taken hostage to ensure that all the Jews assembled.

At the assembly point, any possessions were seized, and the Jews were forced to stand in rows until noon. During this period, the Germans mercilessly beat them, killing some, while children and the elderly were trampled in the confusion. When it was time to board the trucks, the SS beat them again, and some were shot. The crowding on the trucks was horrible, and some people suffocated. Each truck was guarded by an armed SS man. Approximately 4,000 Jews were taken away to the Działdowo camp during this first deportation, and many corpses were left on Szeroka Street. The remaining ghetto residents, including the members of the Judenrat, were told to return to their houses.

On February 28, 1941, the Judenrat was arrested, and the next day the final liquidation of the ghetto took place. The brutality of the first deportation was repeated, with the residents being forced to wait on Szeroka Street for almost a full



Płock Jews are loaded onto the back of a truck during a deportation Aktion, ca. February 1941.

USHMM WS #79083, COURTESY OF ZIH

day without food in the bitter cold. Local Poles tried to alleviate their suffering by sneaking some food to them. As the Jews passed through various towns en route to Działdowo, some Poles threw loaves of bread onto the trucks. However, many Jews did not survive this journey.

Descriptions by Płock survivors stress in particular their awful experiences in the Działdowo transit camp. When they arrived, the Germans were waiting for them at the gate with whips and whipped them as they ran the gauntlet into the camp. The prisoners slept on straw in barracks that had at one point been partitioned into horse stalls. The Germans would take out men, especially religious ones, and make them perform difficult frog-jumping gymnastics, beating them brutally at any sign of tiredness. Some older people did not survive. There was little to eat, and some Jews refused the food because it was not kosher. Prisoners were taken out for questioning, where they were beaten and deprived of all money and valuables. Most of the Jews were kept in Działdowo for just over a week before being deported to the Generalgouvernement.⁷

From the Działdowo camp, at least six transports carrying around 6,000 Jews left for a number of ghettos in Distrikt Radom. Among the destinations were the ghettos in Chmielnik, Stopnica, Bodzentyn, Wierzbnik, Żarki, and Drzewica. The Jews arrived in these ghettos completely exhausted and dressed only in rags. A few Płock Jews managed to survive these ghettos and subsequent stints in forced labor camps, including that in Skarżysko Kamienna.

A number of Płock Jews were active members of resistance movements. Simcha Guterman fell during the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944. Tova Biatas was an active member of Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir in the underground movement near Chmielnik; he died in a clash with the Germans. Płock Jews also were instrumental in the Treblinka and Sobibór uprisings.

SOURCES Published sources on the Płock ghetto include the following: Sol Greenspan, *Yidn in Plotsk* (New York: A&H, 1960); Yoysef Horn, ed., *Plotsk: Bletlekb gesbikhte fun Idishn*

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lebn in der alter beym (Buenos Aires: Plotsker landsleyt fareyn in Argentine, 1945); Eliyahu Aizenberg, ed., *Plotsk: Toldot kebilab 'atikat-yamin be-Polin* (Tel Aviv: ha-Menorah, 1967); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 358–372; Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w reżencji ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984), pp. 61–63; Nicole Lapiere, ed., *Das gerettete Buch von Simcha Guterman* (Munich: Hauser, 1993); and Jan Przedpelski, *Żydzi płoccy: Dzieje i martyrologia, 1939–1945* (Płock: Fraza, 1993).

Information on the Płock ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., Ring I/532-41, 797, 883-886, 889, and 903; 210/556; 301/1502 and 5730); BA-L; IPN (SWW 750); LG-Gie (7 Ks 1/74); USHMM (RG-15.079M, reel 40); VHF (e.g., # 397, 5306, and 20367); and YVA.

Shannon Phillips and Martin Dean

NOTES

1. Bekanntmachung, Der Oberbürgermeister, Płock, October 30, 1939, reproduced in Przedpelski, *Żydzi płoccy*, pp. 84–85.
2. VHF, # 20367, testimony of Frank Dobia; and # 5306, testimony of Arthur Grossman.
3. Ibid., # 397, testimony of Helen Anisman.
4. Ibid., # 20367; # 5306.
5. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, pp. 358–372; and Joseph Kermish, “The Jews of Plotzk under the Nazi Regime,” in Aizenberg, *Plotsk*, pp. 70–74.
6. USHMM, RG-15.079M, reel 40, Ring I/886.
7. Personal correspondence from survivor Frank Dobia to Shannon Phillips in 2008.

PŁOŃSK

Pre-1939: Płońsk, town and powiat center, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Plönnen, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Płońsk, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Płońsk is located 65 kilometers (40 miles) northwest of Warsaw. In 1939, there were 8,200 Jews living in Płońsk.

The Germans occupied Płońsk on September 5, 1939. Although there was no fighting in the town, about 2,000 Jewish residents fled east to Soviet-occupied territories or to other locations in Poland, particularly Warsaw. There is also a report of a number of elderly Jews from Płońsk being expelled into Soviet-occupied Poland.

Refugees and expellees replaced Płońsk's former residents in the course of September and October 1939, increasing the number of Jews again to almost 8,000. The newcomers included Jews from Dobrzyń nad Drwęcą, Dobrzyń nad Wisłą, Rypin, Lipno, and Sierpc.¹ In 1941, a new wave of “illegal” refugees arrived (primarily from the Warsaw ghetto).

In October 1939, Płońsk was renamed Plönnen and annexed to the Reich as part of the Regierungsbezirk Zichenau.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

The annexation was followed by a massive expulsion of Jews to the Generalgouvernement in 1939–1940; a second relocation took place in February–March 1940.

Persecutions began soon after the Germans arrived. At the start of 1940, Jewish men—including the elderly—were assembled early in the morning outside the local school and forced to perform physical exercises. They were then marched off to do compulsory labor improving roads. The daily exercises continued for several weeks and were accompanied by beatings. A local Jewish man, Henoch Klajnman (Henryk Klajman), was a drill commander.² At times, the Germans assembled all Jews in the market square to check their residence papers. Those unable to present them were severely beaten by SS troops and their auxiliaries. The Germans used such occasions to search the town's Jews for valuables, and they shot those who had concealed them.

Following the arrival of many newcomers in Płońsk, the Self-Help Committee for Relief of the Poor was established. Its organizer and president, Abraham Lewi, was able to obtain subsidies from various Jewish aid organizations, including the AJDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee),



A Jewish woman pleads with an SS man during a deportation Aktion in Płońsk, n.d.

USHMM WS #18632, COURTESY OF YIVO

CENTOS (Central Organization for Orphan Care), and TOZ (Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population in Poland). Representatives from particular towns distributed donated goods and cash among the expelled. The committee's success earned it a good reputation.³ In addition to welfare services, a unit of Jewish Police (*Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst*) was established on German instructions and charged with maintaining order in the Jewish quarter. It initially consisted of six members, with a refugee known as Lewin as its commander.

In July 1940, the Germans liquidated the committee and created a Jewish Council (*Judenrat*) to oversee the implementation of German decrees. The committee's chairman, haberdasher A. Jakub (Yakov) Ramek, was nominated as the *Judenrat*'s president. Ramek continued to help Płoński's Jews, mainly by bribing the Germans as often as possible. He soon earned the title "King of the Jews." Portraits of him were hung on the walls of Jewish offices and hospitals in Płoński. One survivor described Ramek as honest—although easily influenced by others and ultimately looking out primarily for himself. The other members of the *Judenrat* included Szloma Bogaty, Jakub Grebman, A. Mundlak, Jakub Kubeł, and the secretary J. Sieradzki (Schiradsky). The *Judenrat* opened a charity shelter (orphanage) for approximately 40 children between the ages of 2 to 10 that was supervised by a female teacher called Grynberg. The *Judenrat* also set up a soup kitchen in 1941.⁴

The *Judenrat*'s primary goal was to secure paid employment for the Jews in Płoński, particularly the deportees and refugees. Tailor and communist Szlomo Fuks was the head of the Employment Office subordinated to the *Judenrat*. Over 700 men and women were employed by July 1940; however, they were paid only half the minimum wage, while the local government retained the other half. To compensate for these laborers' losses, the *Judenrat* taxed 500 relatively well-off families. By the end of September 1940, 800 Jews had paying jobs. Jewish labor was assigned to different cleanup projects around the town, as well as working in agriculture, road construction, and cutting peat. The *Judenrat* provided breakfast for the peat workers.⁵

Its successes aside, Płoński's *Judenrat* was also corrupt. Responsible for preparing a daily list of workers for labor assignments, its members took bribes for exemptions and assigned their friends to easy jobs. Comparatively wealthy Jews paid others to perform their labor tasks. Moreover, Płoński's *Judenrat* often feasted well at the expense of others. A number of Jewish men who were not exempted were sent to the Nosarzewo labor camp, and some women were sent to Sierpc. Few of these people survived.

By December 1940, the *Judenrat* estimated that there were 8,000 Jews living in Płoński.⁶

Available sources differ regarding the date on which the Płoński ghetto was created. Some sources state that the Germans established the ghetto in September 1940, while others date it to May 1941. Two survivors report that the Germans initially ordered its creation in 1940 but that this was not implemented until May 1941.

The Płoński ghetto included the following streets: Kozia, Krzywa, Pułtуска, Warszawska, and Wyszogrodzka (comprising about 1 square kilometer, or 247 acres). It was initially open but was later surrounded by a wooden fence and barbed wire. Jews caught smuggling in food were murdered.⁷ Ghetto Commandant Foch frequently visited it accompanied by two assistants, and he always killed at least one Jew during these visits.

The number of Jewish Police was increased to 40 once the ghetto was established. Chanan Ramek, brother of the *Judenrat* chairman, was Lewin's deputy. Jewish Police guarded the ghetto gate and two jails. Two gallows used for public hangings were set up in the square behind the town synagogue. The council frequently intervened to commute death sentences, as it was able to influence the Gestapo. He also succeeded in eliminating several Jewish collaborators. The Jewish Police brutally abused their power, even killing fellow Jews.⁸

The ghetto was extremely overcrowded, with three or four families often packed into a single room. After a time, newcomers were housed in barns and stables. Catastrophic sanitary and housing conditions resulted in an outbreak of typhus. At its height, approximately 60 Jews were dying daily. Doctor Fenigshtein, who attended the ghetto hospital, died of typhus himself. Chairman Ramek convinced the Germans to bring a German doctor (Dr. Ber) from Warsaw to treat the sick. The epidemic was brought under control only in April 1942.

Another wave of deportations from the region to the *Generalgouvernement* took place in July and August 1941. At the same time, the Jews of *Regierungsbezirk Zichenau* were concentrated into a number of ghettos, one of which was in Płoński. On July 13, 1941, approximately 1,200 nonresident Jews were deported to the Pomiechówek concentration camp, following a check of their identity cards. To assist the deportees, the *Judenrat* chairman organized the delivery of food to the prisoners in Pomiechówek, who suffered brutal maltreatment there. However, when Ramek discovered that the commander of the Jewish Police in Pomiechówek, Mejlóch Hopenblum, was stealing packages addressed to the Płoński, he had Hopenblum transferred to Płoński. The Płoński Jews "popped out his eyes" and "spat in his face" before killing him. Probably due to intervention of the Jewish Councils in Płoński, Nowy Dwór, and Zakroczym, the Germans agreed to send those Jews still alive in Pomiechówek to the *Generalgouvernement*.⁹

According to the testimony of two survivors, there was talk of resistance in the ghetto, but without leadership, meaningful contacts on the outside, or trust in the Poles, the efforts were futile. However, other sources mention the Association of Friends of the USSR, a Jewish underground organization in the ghetto that was affiliated with local Polish Communists. The organization was created in the ghetto in 1941 and consisted of over 100 members organized in cells of 5 people. Its leaders included Fuchs, Izraelewicz (alias "Argentyńczyk"), and "Fiszek."

The first bilateral conference of Poles and Jews took place on December 31, 1941, in Młyński, 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) outside Płoński. On June 22, 1942, a conference was organized on the ghetto grounds by Izraelewicz, (Shlomo) Fuchs (the

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head of the Employment Office), Feszek Jagoda, “Paul” Przygoda, and others who were elected to the Party Committee. The contact was maintained through the Serawajski Photo Shop, which connected the ghetto with the Aryan side. A few Jews escaped and joined the Communist partisans of the Gwardia Ludowa (People’s Guard, GL) before the ghetto’s liquidation. All fell in battle or were murdered by the Gestapo after capture.¹⁰

The Germans liquidated the Płońsk ghetto between October 28 and December 16, 1942, in a series of transports that deported up to 12,000 Jews. Initially, Chairman Ramek still believed that Jewish youths would be sent to work. The Judenrat agreed to take part in organizing the transports to try to minimize the brutality that would occur if the Germans carried them out on their own. The Judenrat enlisted 2,000 old and sick Jews for the first transport at the end of October and informed them that they were leaving for work. The Jewish Police assembled the selected Jews in the new prayer house. The transport was actually destined for the Auschwitz concentration camp.

On November 18, 1942, the Germans brought to Płońsk approximately 2,000 Jews from the liquidated ghetto in Nowe Miasto. Another large transport of 1,000 Jews left Płońsk on November 30, 1942, arriving at Auschwitz on December 3, 1942. The last transport (probably the fourth) of 2,000 Jews left on December 16, 1942, and included the Judenrat members as well as 340 children from the shelter. The Judenrat’s secretary, Sieradzki, took his life during the ghetto’s liquidation. The Germans had offered to move Ramek to another still existing ghetto, but he refused. All houses in the vacated ghetto were demolished.

After the war, survivors from the Płońsk ghetto assisted in the arrest of former ghetto commandant Foch by American forces in Marburg, Germany. “He was severely beaten, admitting his role in the ghetto, and begging for mercy.



Members of Einsatzkommando 3/V round up a group of Jewish men in Płońsk, 1939.

USHMM WS #18772, COURTESY OF IPN

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

However, he would not divulge where he had hidden the vast amount of valuables that he had plundered from the Jews.”¹¹

The Żydowski Sąd Społeczny (Jewish Social Court) of the CKŻP (Central Committee of Polish Jews) in Warsaw tried one of the Jewish Police from the ghetto, Henocho Klajnman, who returned to Płońsk after the war. The court found him guilty of brutality before joining the Jewish Police (during organized public drills and while supervising forced labor brigades) and as an official of the Jewish Police (denouncing Jews in hiding to the Germans). The court excluded Klajnman from the Jewish community in June 1948, which was the most severe punishment available to it.¹²

The Jewish Social Court passed Klajnman’s case to the Polish Regional Court in Płock, which found him guilty of brutally murdering Jews in the Płońsk ghetto, as well as in the Auschwitz and Stutthof concentration camps, where he was a Kapo. Klajnman, who never admitted his crimes, was sentenced to death in 1949; the penalty was later commuted to life imprisonment.¹³

SOURCES Much information on the life and destruction of the Płońsk Jews can be found in Janusz Szczepański, *Spoleczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku* (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztor, 2005); Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984); and the yizkor book edited by Shlomo Tzemakh et al., *Sefer Płonsk V’Havivva* (Tel Aviv: Lidor, 1962).

Relevant documentation and testimonies can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/556, 301/23, 301/273, 301/4508, 301/6744, 302/99, 302/134, 301/2079, 313/49, and 313/57); IPN (SOPł 246-49); USHMM (Acc.1996.A.0223 [CKŻP (AŻIH Sądy Społeczne)] and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF; and YVA (O-3/1605).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC); see also AŻIH, 301/6744, testimony of Elja Najman, 1952.
2. AŻIH, 313/57, testimony of Henocho Klajnman, 1948, known also as Chaim, or Henryk Klajnman. In IPN, SOPł 246-49, as Henryk Klajnman, or Chaim, or Henocho, or “Chamek-Ganew,” or “Chamek-Kapo.”
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC)—A.J. (Yakov) Ramek was appointed the chairman of the committee in June 1940; Szczepański, *Spoleczność*, p. 422.
4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. AŻIH, 301/4508, testimony of Jan Ptasieński, n.d.
8. Ibid., 313/57; IPN, SOPł 246-49 (Henryk Klajnman).
9. AŻIH, 301/23, testimony of Nachman Józef Kazimierski, 1944.
10. Ibid., 301/4508.
11. David Kalmanovski, in Tzemakh et al., *Sefer Płonsk*, p. 445; see also Itzhak Pshegoda, *Sefer Płonsk*, pp. 462–464.
12. AŻIH, 313/57.
13. IPN, SOPł 246-49.

SIERPC

Pre-1939: Sierpc (Yiddish: Sherpts), town and powiat center, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Sichelberg, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Sierpc, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sierpc is located 117 kilometers (73 miles) northwest of Warsaw. In 1939, the Jewish population of Sierpc was 3,077 (out of a total population of 10,951).

By the second day of the German invasion (September 2, 1939), refugees from neighboring towns and villages were pouring into Sierpc. The bombing of the town, on September 4, left widespread destruction, including damage to the local hospital. The young people of Sierpc, including Jewish youths, were ordered to head eastward towards Drobin and Warsaw ahead of the advancing German army, which occupied the town on September 8. The town officials also fled, and a committee of local leaders, Jewish and Polish, took charge. Due to a shortage of cash following a run on the banks, the committee issued scrip to allow people to continue trading. The oppression of the Jews began with the start of the occupation, as German soldiers joined by local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) and Poles engaged in a spree of looting. A 4:00 P.M. curfew was imposed on the Jews. Jewish men were grabbed on the streets or from their homes for forced labor—young and old, strong and weak, healthy and sick—more to humiliate them than to have them do anything useful. On the day of Yom Kippur, the army pulled the worshipers from the synagogue and forced them to sweep the streets. The soldiers dragged them through town and cut off their beards.

On September 28, 1939, 40 youths between the ages of 16 and 20 were arrested, loaded on trucks, and driven to an unknown destination. It was later learned that they were taken to an area near the new German-Soviet border, where they managed to slip across the lines. Most of them survived the war. At 10:00 P.M. on the evening of September 29, the Gestapo set fire to the synagogue. The Jews were ordered to hurry from their houses to put out the flames but were then prevented from doing so. A young boy who entered the building to save the Torah scrolls was shot. The Germans promptly accused him of starting the fire and, on this pretext, fined the community 50,000 zloty.

An eight-point decree was published, imposing strict rules on the community. The Jews were ordered to: (1) stay off the sidewalks; (2) doff their hats to any German; (3) wear a yellow patch marked “Jude”; (4) provide an inventory of all their valuables; (5) not use electricity in their homes; (6) pay the 50,000 zloty fine; (7) make a personal “contribution” of 200 to 1,000 zloty per family; and (8) provide 80 men each day for forced labor. Prominent members of the community were arrested, interrogated, beaten, and held hostage until the “contributions” were paid. Members of the Volksdeutsche auxiliary police were sent door to door to rob people of their clothes, valuables, and furniture, which were needed for German officials. News of the spoliation of Jews in the nearby towns of

Lipno and Drobin deepened the desperation of the Jews in Sierpc.

At dawn on November 8, 1939, SS troops and Volksdeutsche police awakened the Jews of Sierpc and ordered them out of their homes. About 3,000 Jews, mostly elderly, women, and children, were assembled in the old marketplace. They were lined up in rows of 5 and marched off to the train station, with the parade band of the local fire brigade playing music and leading the procession. Some Jews were still in their pajamas, having had no time to dress. Penniless and exposed to the cold, they were “jammed like sardines” into the rail cars for a journey to the unknown. Late in the day, the train stopped at a small station about 7 kilometers (over 4.4 miles) from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, northwest of Warsaw. They were put off the train and told to start walking. Late that night, they arrived in Nowy Dwór. Local Jews took in a few, but most spent the night on the cold streets. The police marched about 1,800 Sierpc refugees from Nowy Dwór to Warsaw, where their fate was linked to that of the Warsaw ghetto.¹

Sierpc belonged to the Regierungsbezirk (administrative district) of Zichenau, which was created on October 26, 1939, incorporated into Provinz Ostpreussen and annexed to the Third Reich. The Jews expelled from Sierpc were forced into territory outside this district, that is, within the boundaries of the Generalgouvernement.

About 400 Jews remained in Sierpc, individuals and families considered to have essential skills. Despite dire warnings, a few refugees sneaked back into the town and received permission to stay, increasing the number to 500. The returnees found their houses locked and sealed, apparently reserved for use by future occupants. In March or April 1940, the Jews remaining in Sierpc were confined to a separate ghetto under the eye of the German Police. The ghetto, which was located on Browarna, Górna, and Kiliński Streets, remained open and unfenced, but the Jews were largely isolated and forbidden to leave the ghetto. Only 200 people received special permission to leave to go to their places of employment outside the ghetto. A Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by Mendel Lyss and Yaakov Pokatsch, was appointed to oversee the work assignments and make sure that no other Jews came into town. There were no Jewish Police. The old Bet Midrash was converted into a prison where both Jews and Poles were held by the German authorities. Jews maintained some contact with the Polish population, providing services in exchange for food. The Jews of Sierpc did not suffer from hunger and even sent food packages to their starving relatives in the Warsaw ghetto.²

The ghetto lasted until January 6, 1942, when the Jews were awakened at 5:00 A.M., assembled in the marketplace, robbed of most of their meager possessions, loaded onto trucks, and taken to Strzegowo, a ghetto in Kreis Mielau. A number of Jews were killed during the course of the deportation Aktion. Afterwards, the Germans looted the gravestones and destroyed the Jewish cemetery. The fate of the Jews of Sierpc was the same as that of the Jews in the ghettos to which they were sent. Most died of starvation or disease; others were murdered in death camps, such as Treblinka (via the Warsaw ghetto) and Auschwitz.

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SOURCES The yizkor book edited by E. Talmi (Włoka), *Keblat Sierpc: Sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Sierpc in Israel and Abroad, 1959), contains a number of personal accounts about the Jewish community of the town, mainly in Yiddish but also some in Hebrew. In addition, there are two earlier yizkor books published in Yiddish: A. Meirantz and H. Nemlich, eds., *Kburbn Sierpc: 1939–45; zikbroynes fun di ibergeblibene landslayt vos gefinen zikh in der Amerikaner Zone in Dayt-sbland* (Munich: Committee of the Former Residents of Sierpc in the American Zone in Germany, 1947); and *Zamlbukh fun Sherpser shoyres hakburbn, 1939–1945* (U.S. Zone, Munich, Germany: Sherpser Jewish Committee, 1948). There is also a personal memoir by survivor David Sochaczewski: *My Life Story: A Personal Account of the Holocaust* (self-published, 1990).

A brief history of the ghetto in Sierpc can be found in Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej, 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk., 1984), pp. 65–68. There also is an article on the history of the Jewish community in Sierpc and its destruction in Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas habebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 437–441. The ghetto is also mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja, 1979), p. 452.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Sierpc can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Ring I, 902, 1038); IPN (Gestapo Ziechenau; Ankieta Sadow Grodzkich, sygn. 62, k. 235); ITS (Q 53/K 15); USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 19); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Sochaczewski, *My Life Story*, pp. 47–53.
2. AŻIH, Ring I, 902, 1038.

STRZEGOWO

Pre-1939: Strzegowo, village, Mława powiat, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Striegenau, Kreis Mielau, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Strzegowo, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Strzegowo is located 90 kilometers (56 miles) northwest of Warsaw. The 1921 census recorded 591 Jews living in the village.

On Sunday, September 3, 1939, the village sustained heavy damage from a German bombing raid. Many houses were destroyed, and some of the inhabitants (Poles and Jews alike) sought refuge in the nearby town of Płońsk. The Wehrmacht entered Strzegowo on September 4, 1939. During the first weeks of occupation, the Germans implemented a policy of brutal repression against the local Jews. The Jews were removed from positions of authority, and the new administration seized their real estate and material goods. The Germans took particular pleasure in forcing older, orthodox Jews to work under humiliating conditions and during the Sabbath. In late 1939, local ethnic Germans orchestrated and perpetrated pogroms, during which they abducted several people and shot them in the nearby forests.¹ In January 1940, a group

of prominent community members (Baruch Rebek, Yekhiel Nathan Burstein, David Tik, Israel Rosen, Moshe Michel Sapersztejn, Ben-Zion Bogen, and Rabbi Jacob Solomon Simyitsky) met with the German military authorities in an attempt to remove some of the most draconian restrictions.² During the summer of 1940, representatives of the Jewish community established contact with the Jewish communities in Mława and Łódź.

In the fall of 1941, the German authorities decided to liquidate the smaller Jewish communities and to concentrate their inhabitants in a few larger ghettos. The Strzegowo Jews were slated for removal to the desperately overcrowded and starving Warsaw ghetto. Faced with this threat, the representatives of the community tried to convince the local German military and civilian authorities to establish a ghetto in Strzegowo. With the aid of massive bribes, the Germans agreed to establish a “Jewish quarter” in Strzegowo. The German medical authorities, also bribed by the representatives of the community, confirmed an outbreak of typhus, which served to derail the planned resettlement of Strzegowo’s Jews. The ghetto, which was isolated from the rest of the village by a wooden fence, was finally created on November 1, 1941. The selection of Strzegowo was unusual because the village was 24 kilometers (15 miles) from the nearest railway line. A key prerequisite for the location of a ghetto was often close proximity to a railroad station. On January 6, 1942, the Jews from Bieżeń, Raciąż, Sierpc, and other smaller nearby hamlets were resettled to Strzegowo, increasing the population of the ghetto to about 2,000 to 2,100 people.

The local Judenrat included people involved in the previous negotiations with the Germans (Ben-Zion Bogen, Baruch Rebek, Judel Stawicki, Moshe Michel Sapirsztejn, and Judel Szapiro), as well as several representatives of those Jews recently resettled to Strzegowo from other places. Following a German request, the Judenrat created a Jewish police force recruited mostly from among the Jews from Sierpc.

The living conditions in the ghetto deteriorated very rapidly. The entire Jewish population had to seek shelter in a very small area, with 10 to 17 people to every available room. The drastic food shortage was only offset to a small extent by illegal exchanges with the surrounding Polish population. There was only one 20-man-strong detail that received wages of 1 Reichsmark (RM) each per day. The remaining Jewish workers were forced to perform unpaid labor outside the ghetto. Since leaving the ghetto offered a chance to purchase food, the places in work columns were highly coveted and rotated on a daily basis.

Despite the appalling living conditions and daily threats, Strzegowo was, for some time, perceived as a safe haven for the members of the more threatened Jewish communities. During the spring of 1942, the ghetto received at least 200 refugees from recently liquidated ghettos in western and northern Poland.³ Ewa Stuczynska, living on false papers in Strzegowo, brought in at least one secret transport of Jews from the liquidated ghetto in Gąbin. She was later betrayed and arrested while leading a second transport of Jewish refugees. Some of the arrested Jews (Selig and Hinda Rudnik; Moses,

Chaja, and Natek Wand; and Frajda Zolna) were sentenced to death and shot in Strzegowo. Ewa Stuczynska, who convinced the Gestapo of her alleged Russian ethnic origin, survived the war in the Auschwitz concentration camp.⁴

In the spring of 1942, the Nazis intensified their terror against the Jews. The local policemen, recruited from among the ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), perpetrated numerous crimes, torturing and shooting people in the streets. Berendt, Policat, and Heft were among the most feared policemen.

Rebek, the head of the Judenrat, fled the Strzegowo ghetto in the spring of 1942. Intercepted and arrested in Płońsk on July 14, 1942, he was held in prison awaiting transfer to Auschwitz. Shortly after his arrest, Rebek managed to flee the ghetto prison and left Płońsk. The Płock-Ciechanów Gestapo (officers Hartmann and Apitz) took an interest in Rebek's escape and berated the local police for their sloppy work. To force the fugitive to surrender to the authorities, the Strzegowo police arrested Rebek's family. The former head of the Judenrat outlived most other Strzegowo Jews, but not by much. On December 12, 1942, Patzke, the chief of the Gendarmerie in Strzegowo, received "a confidential report" concerning Jews hiding in the area. The report denounced a Polish farmer, Franz Sprada, from Gizyn, Kreis Mielau, for having offered sanctuary to Jews. During a police search, two Jews were found and shot dead "while trying to escape." The victims were later identified as Rebek and his 13-year-old son Majer.⁵

In the meantime, the situation in the ghetto had worsened daily. On August 6, 1942, the Nazis arrested, tried, and sentenced to death by hanging a group of 20 Jews selected randomly. On September 2, after four weeks of incarceration, the victims were brought to a public square and hanged in the presence of their families and German spectators. The bodies of the victims were exhumed after the war, in January 1948. The end of the Strzegowo Jewish community came not long after this large public execution. The ghetto was liquidated in November 1942. The first transport to Mława and from there to the Treblinka extermination camp left on November 2, 1942. On November 24, 1942, the remaining Jews were brought on horse carts to Mława before being sent to Auschwitz by rail. According to witnesses, most of the people from this transport were killed immediately in the gas chambers.⁶

SS-Sturmbannführer Hartmut Pulmer, the notorious chief of the Płock-Ciechanów Gestapo (Strzegowo came under his authority), was tried in 1976 but never sentenced owing to his "poor health." In 1976, the court in Giessen (Germany) sentenced four other Gestapo officials from the same Gestapo office to prison terms ranging from four to six years. Hans Doerhage was sentenced to four years and three months; Hermann Schaper, six years; Franz Hartmann, four years and three months; and Erich Bartels, six years. Several other officials (Friedrich Schulz, Rudolf Renner, Ernest Baumann, Otto Roehr, Ernest Schardt) were excluded from trial or acquitted in the absence "of conclusive evidence of their guilt." Little is known about Heitmann, Schrimm, Apitz, Friedrich, Schrapf, Dallüge, Rossman, or Grimm, to name but a few of those who signed the Gestapo interrogation forms and

were responsible for killings in the Strzegowo ghetto. Policat, the notorious Strzegowo policeman, was sentenced to life in prison by the court in Arnberg in 1971.

SOURCES The yizkor book for Strzegowo, edited by Feigl Bisberg-Youkelson and Rubin Youkelson, *The Life and Death of a Polish Shtetl* (Stshegove yizker-bukh) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), contains several relevant testimonies for the history of the ghetto; there is also a brief article in Abraham Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 442–445.

AŻIH also holds testimonies relating to Strzegowo and the surrounding area. In IPN there are some captured records of the Gestapo office in Zichenau. The German trial records can be found in the relevant local archives (e.g., LG-Gies, 7 Ks 1/74).

Jan Grabowski

NOTES

1. Testimony of Fishl Meirantz, in Bisberg-Youkelson and Youkelson, *The Life and Death of a Polish Shtetl*, p. 82.
2. Ben-Zion Bogen, in *ibid.*, pp. 73–74.
3. AŻIH, 301/310, testimony of Feliks Kisielewski, and 301/303–4, testimonies of Łucja Stuczynska.
4. IPN, collection Gestapo-Zichenau (see also USHMM, RG-15.039M), file 6123.
5. *Ibid.*, files 5399, 10314.
6. AŻIH, Relacje, Collection 301/303–4, testimonies of Łucja Stuczynska; and Ben-Zion Bogen, in Bisberg-Youkelson and Youkelson, *The Life and Death of a Polish Shtetl*, p. 80.

WYSZOGRÓD

Pre-1939: Wyszogród (Yiddish: Visbograd), town, Płock powiat, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Hohenburg, Kreis Schröttersburg, Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, Provinz Ostpreussen, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: Wyszogród, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Wyszogród is located on the right bank of the Vistula River, 61 kilometers (38 miles) west-northwest of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II in 1939, there were about 2,700 Jews living in Wyszogród.

The Germans had occupied the town by September 9, 1939, following days of heavy bombardment, which had caused most of the town's inhabitants to flee. Starting the next day, those Jews who had remained in Wyszogród were forced to work at rubble clearance and construction. This exhausting work caused many Jews to flee to Soviet-occupied eastern Poland. Most of the town's residents returned to Wyszogród from Warsaw after the fall of the capital on September 28.

In October 1939, Wyszogród was renamed Hohenburg and annexed to the Reich as part of Regierungsbezirk Zichenau in Provinz Ostpreussen.¹ An ethnic German was appointed mayor.

The Jewish Council (Judenrat) was set up soon after the Germans established themselves in Wyszogród. Its responsibilities included the organization of forced labor, the

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communication of new laws to the community, and the provision of social relief. The following were appointed as its members: Josef Diamant (head), Meir Garfinkel, Avraham Israelovitch, Hanoch Cohen, Joseph Lichtenstein, and Meir Shochet. Along with the Judenrat, the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was assigned the task of keeping order within the community.²

At the beginning of November 1939, a detachment of the Gestapo arrived to loot and seize from Jewish houses, businesses, and shops anything of value or interest. During the search for jewelry and money, women were forced to undress. At this time, the community had to assign from 40 to 50 men daily to forced labor. Those who were assigned but did not want to work could pay another person to take their place.³ In December, Jews were made to remove their synagogue's furnishings and surrender them to the Germans for firewood. In the first half of 1940, the synagogue, Bet Midrash, and some 50 Jewish houses were razed.

Deprived of its income from business activity, the Jewish community quickly became impoverished. In May 1940, the mayor of Wyszogród reported to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw that out of 2,427 Jews in the town, 2,300 were in need of social support. The AJDC transferred some cash, clothing, and medicine. There is little information regarding the number of refugees and deportees that came to Wyszogród; however, there is one report of some deportees arriving from nearby Sierpc.⁴

In August 1940, the Judenrat was requested to submit a list of men to be sent to the recently opened labor camp in Bielsk, where about 120 Jews each from Wyszogród, Bodzanów, and Drobin were to work for a period of eight weeks. At first only 40 to 50 male Jews from Wyszogród were sent to Bielsk, but soon 20 more were required to replace those who fell sick. After the Judenrat encountered increasing difficulties preparing successive lists, some of the Judenrat members, including its head Josef Diamant, were deported to the camp as a punishment, along with more of Wyszogród's Jews. Yitzhak Bohla subsequently led the reconstituted Judenrat. By the summer of 1941, the only Jews left in the camp were from Wyszogród.

On March 6, 1941, the Jews in Wyszogród were suddenly ordered to report to the market square within 10 minutes. Accompanied by beatings, all were chased out of their houses. The SS selected about 700 Jews, loaded them on trucks, and drove them to the transit camp in Działdowo. One week later on March 12, the group was deported by train to Kielce and from there onward to Nowa Słupia in Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement, about 196 kilometers (122 miles) south of Wyszogród.⁵ Deportees from Płock and Vienna had already overcrowded Nowa Słupia. Most of Wyszogród's Jews were placed en masse in the synagogue. Some were housed with local Jewish families in the town. Famine and typhus claimed many victims. In September or October 1942, along with the other Jews in Nowa Słupia, the Jews of Wyszogród were sent first to Bodzentyn and then to the Treblinka extermination camp.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

Immediately following the deportation Aktion from Wyszogród on March 6, 1941, the Germans established an open ghetto in the Jewish neighborhood, which was reduced in size. The ghetto included the following streets: Kościelna, Płocka, Krótka, Ogrodowa, and Stary Rynek. Over 1,800 Jews were forced to live within its confines, with about 10 people in each room.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, the Jews were removed from the ghetto and held captive for one day and the following night. During this time, the local non-Jewish inhabitants were permitted to plunder any remaining valuable items from the ghetto. Shortly after this, a doctor came from Płock to supervise the mass delousing of the inhabitants of the ghetto. That summer, about 70 Jews worked to strengthen the Vistula's banks; others worked in road construction and agriculture.

About 400 of those who were deported from Wyszogród to Nowa Słupia attempted to return to their hometown soon after their resettlement. Many of these people were returned again to the Generalgouvernement once discovered and sent on to the Warsaw ghetto by way of the Vistula River. Others were taken outside the town, forced to dig graves, and then shot.⁶

On August 9–10, 1941, 120 Jews capable of work were rounded up and sent to the labor camp in Bielsk. At this time, the Germans also enclosed the ghetto in Wyszogród by surrounding it with barbed wire and announced that henceforth any Jew caught outside the ghetto would be shot. Jews continued to pray together in *minyans* inside the ghetto and improvised celebrations of the High Holidays despite the loss of the synagogue, sensing that this might be the last time they would celebrate together as a community.

On November 27, 1941, the remaining Jews were brought back to Wyszogród from Bielsk. The Germans liquidated the Wyszogród ghetto on November 29, 1941. On that day, 600 Jews were sent almost 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) east to Czerwińsk (Czerwińsk nad Wisłą) and 1,200 to the ghetto in Nowy Dwór (Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki), about 63 kilometers (39 miles) east. The latter was chosen by the Germans as a site of concentration for the region's Jews before their deportation to death camps. Several hundred Jews from Wyszogród died there of typhus. On October 28, 1942, about 2,600 Jews from Czerwińsk were transferred to Nowy Dwór. Deportations of the inhabitants of the Nowy Dwór ghetto to the Auschwitz concentration camp began three weeks later on November 20, 1942. The third and final transport departed from Nowy Dwór on December 12, 1942.⁷

An estimated 250 Jews from Wyszogród survived the war.

SOURCES Much information on the life and destruction of Wyszogród's Jews can be found in the yizkor book edited by Hayim Rabin, *Vishogrod: Sefer zikaron li-kedoshe Vishogrod she-nispu be-sho'at ha-Natsim bi-sbenat 1939–1945* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Vishogrod be-Yisrael, 1971); and in a chapter of *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region*, edited by Abraham Wein (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989).

Relevant documentation and testimonies can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/736, 301/3313); BA-L (ZStL/II 117 AR 1119/68, vol. 1); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/736; and RG-15.019M); VHF (e.g., # 11851, 18668, 35049, 35353, and 49891); and YVA.

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. VHF, # 49891–3, testimony of Mark Wilson, 1997; Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, p. 197; VHF, # 35049–

40, testimony of Wolf Schladow, 1997; and # 18668–3, testimony of Louis Baum, 1996.

2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/736.

3. AŻIH, 301/3313, testimony of Ide-Hersz Puterman, 1948.

4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/736.

5. VHF, # 11851–2, testimony of Marion Lewin, 1996.

6. Ibid.

7. AŻIH, 301/3313; and BA-L, ZStL, II 117 AR 1119/68, vol. 1, p. 87.



WARTHEGAU REGION



A postcard from Łódź with signs that read, "Residential district of Jews, entry forbidden" (right) and "Closed for pedestrians," (center) ca. 1940–1941.

USHMM WS #07065, COURTESY OF ANTONI MARIANOWICZ

WARTHEGAU REGION (REICHSGAU WARTHELAND)

Pre-1939: parts of the Łódź, Poznań, and Warsaw województwa; 1939–1945: Regierungsbezirke Posen, Hohensalza, and Litzmannstadt (1939–1941, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch), Reichsgau Wartheland, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: parts of kujawsko-pomierskie, łódzkie, wielkopolskie, and mazowieckie województwa

On October 26, 1939, almost two months after the German invasion of Poland, the German authorities established Reichsgau Posen, renaming it Reichsgau Wartheland in January 1940. Amalgamating the Regierungsbezirke of Posen (Poznań), Hohensalza (Inowrocław), and, from November 9, 1939, Kalisch (from 1941, Litzmannstadt [Łódź]), this Gau joined Ost-Oberschlesien, Danzig-Westpreussen, and Regierungsbezirk Zichenau as a newly incorporated Reich territory annexed from Poland. The Reichsstatthalter (governor) and Gauleiter of Wartheland, Arthur Greiser, was formerly the deputy Gauleiter of the Free City of Danzig. A dedicated Nazi, he spearheaded the effort to Germanize the Wartheland, pressing for the immediate removal of Jews and Poles soon after his appointment in the effort to make the Wartheland the “model Gau” (*Mustergau*) in the German East. In 1940, his efforts resulted in multiple approaches to Germanizing the Gau, namely, the admission of many thousands of “ethnic Germans” (*Volksdeutsche*) from Eastern Europe, the deportation of Poles and Jews to the Generalgouvernement, and the ghettoization and ultimately the annihilation of Jews. While the deportation of Poles and Jews proved largely unsuccessful, due to strenuous objections by Hans Frank in charge of the Generalgouvernement, Greiser’s anti-Jewish measures contributed to the radicalization of Nazi policy leading up to the “Final Solution.”



Portrait of Arthur Greiser, Gauleiter and governor of the Reichsgau Wartheland, taken when he was deputy Gauleiter of Danzig under Albert Forster, 1930s.

USHMM WS #20379, COURTESY OF NARA

Although the Wartheland is best remembered for the Łódź ghetto, there were in total some 57 ghettos established in the territory. Wartheland was a key laboratory for this aspect of the Nazi regime’s evolving and radicalizing anti-Jewish policy, because it was the site of some of the first ghettos established, and the ghettos’ history in part reflects national and local changes in antisemitic policies, most notably the opportunity (or lack thereof) for deportation to the Generalgouvernement or to Madagascar. Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt held the most ghettos (35, including Łódź), while the remaining 22 were in Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza. The German authorities did not establish any ghettos in Regierungsbezirk Posen.

By county (Kreis), running north to south, the German authorities established the following ghettos. In Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, there were four ghettos in Kreis Hermannsbad (Ciechocinek): Ciechocinek, Piotrków Kujawski, Radziejów, and Służewo; four in Kreis Konin: Grodziec, Konin, Rzgów, and Zagórów; three in Kreis Kutno: Krośnice, Kutno, and Żychlin; three in Kreis Leslau (Włocławek): Brześć Kujawski, Przedecz, and Włocławek; three in Kreis Walderode (Gostynin): Gąbin, Gostynin, and Sanniki; and five in Kreis Wartbrücken (Koło): Bugaj (and Nowiny Brdowskie), Dąbie, Izbica Kujawska, Koło, and Sompolno. In Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt, there were three ghettos in Kreis Kalisch (Kalisz): Chocz, Kalisz, Koźminek, and six in Kreis Lask: Betchatów, Łask, Lutomiersk, Pabianice, Widawa, and Zelów; five in Kreis Lentschütz (Łęczycza): Grabów, Łęczycza, Ozorków, Piątek, and Poddębice; four in Kreis Litzmannstadt: Brzeziny, Łódź, Stryków and Zgierz; five in Kreis Schieratz (Sieradz): Sieradz, Szadek, Warta, Zduńska Wola, and Złoczew; six in Kreis Turek: Dobra, Kowale Pańskie, Tuliszków, Turek, Uniejów, and Władysławów; and six in Kreis Welungen (Wieluń): Lututów, Osjaków, Pajęczno, Praszka, Wieluń, and Wieruszów. In Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, there were no ghettos in the northwestern counties of Altburgund, Dietfurt, Eichenbrück, Gnesen, and Mogilno. In Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt, ghettos were not established in the southwestern counties of Ostrowo and Kempen. The regional pattern thus reflected existing Jewish settlement patterns and the German authorities’ attempt to drive the remaining Jewish communities as close to the borders of the Generalgouvernement as possible. Six sites listed in some secondary sources as ghettos but whose existence have not been confirmed in the primary sources were Aleksandrów Łódzki, Kłodawa, Kobylnica, Osiecin, Sulmierzyce, and Zwierzchów.

As the example of Kłodawa demonstrates, although ghettos were used to concentrate Jews from surrounding villages, as well as refugees from further away, in a few towns Jews continued to live without formal concentration in a ghetto right up to the final liquidation Aktions in the first half of 1942. In Kreis Hermannsbad, the German authorities were anxious to deny the official existence of “ghettos” even in those towns, such as Radziejów, where Jews were resettled into “residential districts” (open ghettos) exclusively for Jews. In such cases, the evidence of Jewish survivors also has been used to assist in determining whether open ghettos, nevertheless, were established.

In 1939, the Wartheland’s Jewish population was 435,000, a number, historian Michael Alberti notes, that exceeded Germany’s total Jewish population in 1933. As a result of pre-war Jewish settlement, especially in the city of Łódź, the vast majority of the Jewish population lived in the eastern portion of the Gau, especially in the cities of Łódź and Kalisz. Anti-Jewish measures followed with the onset of occupation. Immediately following the German advance, Einsatzgruppen tasked with murdering Polish intelligentsia and resisters shot leading Jews in the region, often on the spurious claim of their fomenting resistance, and sometimes publicly exhibited the bodies in triumph. The Einsatzgruppen murdered at least 10,000 Poles and Jews in the Wartheland, but the specific number of Jewish victims is not known.

At the Gau level, the German authorities obligated all Jews to wear a yellow star in December 1939, but this aspect of persecution followed piecemeal local initiatives. The German authorities in Łódź forced Jews to wear white armbands as early as September 10, 1939—nine days after the invasion—while Leslau imposed the wearing of yellow triangles on October 25, and Kalisch similarly ordered the wearing of yellow armbands in November 1939.

An important difference between the implementation of the 1935 Nuremberg Racial Laws in the Wartheland as opposed to the Old Reich was that Jews born in mixed marriages, as well as Jews’ “Aryan” spouses, were treated as full Jews in the Wartheland and thus assigned to ghettos and Jewish forced labor camps. This reinterpretation followed Greiser’s initiative in October 1940.

From late 1939 through the spring of 1940, Greiser, with the support of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler and Chief of the Security Police and SD (CSSD) Reinhard Heydrich, pressed for the removal of Jews and Poles from “his” Gau, which resulted in two “short-term plans” (*Nahpläne*). In the Wartheland, the Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer (HSSPF) for Posen, later Wartheland, SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Koppe, oversaw the plans’ implementation, undertaken in tandem with the simultaneous resettlement of Volhynian and Baltic Volksdeutsche in the region. The first Nahplan, enacted in December 1939, evacuated among others Regierungsbezirk Posen’s small Jewish population—hence the absence of ghettos in the Wartheland’s westernmost Regierungsbezirk. Overall the first short-term plan involved 80,000 Poles and Jews. Before deportation, the resettled Jews were confined

in transit camps (*Durchgangslager*) under the supervision of the ethnic German Selbstschutz, who stripped them of their possessions. The much more ambitious second short-term plan called for the removal of 220,000 additional Poles and Jews, which had resulted by mid-March 1940 in the deportation of just over 2,000 Jews, mainly from Łódź. Apart from Generalgouverneur Frank’s objections, the need for rail transport to execute the invasion of France played a role in further delaying, and ultimately suspending, the second short-term plan, which fell well short (nearly two thirds) of its target of 300,000 deportees.

The forestalling of the second short-term plan stimulated the German authorities’ improvised ghettoization of Jewish communities in the Wartheland. The earliest ghetto appeared in October 1939 at Piotrków Kujawski, and plans were already afoot, in part on the initiative of Litzmannstadt Regierungspräsident Friedrich Uebelhoer, for the ghettoization of Łódź in the winter of 1940. In February 1940, the German authorities established ghettos in Koźminek, Łask, Pabianice, and Złoczew, with a cluster of ghettos, most famously the enclosed ghetto at Łódź, the first major ghetto in occupied Poland, formed in April 1940. In the summer of 1940, 9 ghettos were established in the Wartheland and an additional 10 in the fall of 1940. A few ghettos, including Gostynin, were formed in 1941 and 1, Grabów, perhaps as late as early 1942. Owing to material shortages, among other reasons, many of these ghettos (at least 25) were so-called Jewish residential districts, or open ghettos. Notable in the Wartheland were 5 Kreis-level “village” ghettos (*Dorfghettos*). Located in Konin and Warthbrücken in Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, and in Turek in Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt, the Dorfghettos were Jewish communities removed from smaller towns to facilitate working on farms. This experiment in forced agricultural labor proved to be short-lived, as the inmates were among the Wartheland’s first mass-murder victims, respectively, in the Kazimierz Biskupi Forest and the Chełmno nad Nerem (Kulmhof) killing center. The fact that the Dorfghettos appeared in three separate Kreise in two Regierungsbezirke, however, shows that the German authorities repeated the experiment in more than one locality.

Information on the precise reasons for setting up specific ghettos is sparse, but beyond the overall intent to concentrate the Jews in preparation for their intended deportation, Alberti has identified several concerns that influenced the authorities. In Piątek, Żychlin, and Pabianice, fears about the spread of disease spurred the German authorities to establish ghettos. In some places, such as the county towns of Turek and Sieradz, the need to house German administrators—or possibly make space for ethnic German settlers—played a role. The ghetto in Koźminek was set up in early 1940, as the authorities in Łódź refused to take the Jews concentrated for deportation from Kreis Kalisch. Subsequently some open ghettos were enclosed, again due to the authorities’ medical concerns, to attempt to suppress black market activities, and for other security-related reasons.

36 INCORPORATED EASTERN TERRITORIES

Resettlement into the ghettos generally meant the abandonment of much property. For example, in Pabianice, the Jews could bring in with them only what they could carry themselves. The Jews of Konin, who were resettled without warning to three village ghettos in the Kreis, were collected by German Gendarmes who allowed the Jews to take with them only a small bundle.¹ In Łódź, the Jews were given several weeks to complete the transfer but could bring in only one suitcase and a bed; about 200 Jews were shot dead during the resettlement Aktion in the city.

Living conditions varied quite considerably in the ghettos and depended on the available space per person and access to food and gainful employment, which were influenced in turn by whether the ghettos were open or closed and the strictness of its enforcement. Conditions also deteriorated over time, as reserves were used up, charitable assistance from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) was cut off, and able-bodied Jews were sent away, leaving dependents without breadwinners. By 1942, draconian punishments were meted out for leaving the ghettos without permission or trading on the black market.

Among the worst living conditions were those in the Kutno ghetto, where more than 6,000 Jews were crammed into a dilapidated and unheated factory complex surrounded by a wall and barbed wire. Following an outbreak of typhus, from November 1940 it was more or less completely isolated from the town. When the Jews resisted in February 1941 to protest corruption in the Judenrat, German controls became even tighter.²

Some insights into living conditions for the Jews of the region during 1940 were provided by the records of the AJDC; however, this correspondence dried up by the end of that year, and as a result, only isolated reports mentioned the ghettos. In Szadek, for example, the head of the self-help committee appealed for assistance, as all contacts with the surrounding villages were cut off from the ghetto, drying up the sources from which the Jews had earned their income and obtained food. The Judenrat had opened a soup kitchen, but it needed financial aid to keep it running.³ Apart from the Łódź ghetto, where available documentation is massive, records on the activities of the Jewish Councils are sparse, although a detailed report on the structure and the activities of the Judenrat in Pabianice during 1940 has survived, again owing to the AJDC.⁴

Forced labor was imposed on the Jews from the first days of the occupation, and for the first 12 months, much of this remained unpaid. From October 1, 1940, the German authorities issued instructions for Jewish forced laborers to be paid a minimal amount, but onerous taxes were deducted from even these small sums, and sometimes remuneration was in the form of food, often administered via the Jewish Councils. Some German companies paid Jewish workers late or not at all, but Jews were still keen to go to work as they believed their jobs could provide exemption from deportation. Jewish Councils, which administered recruitment for forced labor, in some places permitted those with financial means to pay for substitutes, and this money was used to pay those who did work.

In Ozorków, for example, the Jews in the ghetto, including children as young as 10, were employed cleaning streets, working on fortifications, and producing uniforms for the Wehrmacht. Work outside the ghetto provided an opportunity to obtain a little extra food by bartering or scavenging, but most work details were closely guarded, allowing little or no contact with local non-Jews.⁵ Other common forced labor tasks included clearing snow from the streets in winter, demolition and construction work in the towns, irrigation projects, and some agricultural labor. In Żychlin, Amtskommissar Karl Hempel requisitioned 400 Jews for the construction of his villa. In the course of their work he tortured the Jews sadistically, murdering a number of them.⁶ Bartering and black market activities were common in almost all ghettos due to the extreme shortages of almost everything. German official correspondence noted that not only Poles but also some German soldiers were trading with Jews on the black market.⁷

In 1941 and 1942, the German authorities conducted extensive roundups of able-bodied Jews for transfer to at least 69 forced labor camps in the Wartheland (and others elsewhere), working on road construction and other tasks, mainly in the area around Poznań.⁸ The Jewish Councils and the Jewish Police were sometimes required to assist during these roundups, and as news spread of the terrible conditions in many of the camps, Jews went into hiding to avoid being deported. Families retained contact with some of the deportees initially, with extra food and clothing being sent from some ghettos, but by 1942, most of these links had been broken irrevocably. The survival rate was not high among those sent to the camps, and many of those who got through their first deployments were subsequently sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp and entered the concentration camp system. Nevertheless, of the few survivors from the ghettos of the region other than Łódź, these younger forced laborers comprise a high proportion.

In March 1941, more than 2,000 Jews were deported from the village ghettos of Kreis Konin to Józefów Biłgorajski and other towns in Distrikt Lublin.⁹ Larger deportations also took place at this time from Regierungsbezirk Zichenau into the Generalgouvernement. However, this wave of deportations was soon stopped, as Germany geared up for the invasion of the Soviet Union.

In an attempt to provide some supposed security from deportation to forced labor, the Jewish Councils in Łódź and other ghettos, such as Grabów, Zduńska Wola, and Pabianice, established workshops, mostly manufacturing uniforms and other equipment for the Wehrmacht. In the case of Ozorków, those working for the Wehrmacht gained a deferral from deportation for a few months, while in Łódź the strategy of survival through work enabled the productive part of the ghetto to keep going for another two years; however, Mordechai Rumkowski's hopes of saving their lives (at the expense of others), for most, proved illusory.

In spite of the harsh conditions, the Jews in many Wartheland ghettos tried to maintain some cultural life. In Kutno, Jews held meetings to discuss literature, sang songs, and or-

ganized a library.¹⁰ Underground schools were operated in a number of ghettos, including Sompolno, and Jews also made efforts to maintain religious observance and bury their dead. In Zduńska Wola, an agricultural kibbutz operated until the ghetto was liquidated. In Łódź, concerts and other cultural events enabled Jews to forget their isolation, hunger, and despair, at least for a time.

For the German authorities in the summer of 1941, the extraction of the able-bodied Jews from the ghettos to forced labor camps raised the question of what should happen with the remaining unproductive elderly Jews and children. In early October, 3,082 relatives of workers deported to Poznań from Kreis Leslau were accepted in the Łódź ghetto, but thereafter the authorities in Łódź made it clear that no more such transports would be accommodated.¹¹ Around this time, SS-Sonderkommando Lange organized the first genocidal mass killings of Jews in the Wartheland, commencing with the murder of the remaining 3,000 or so Jews from the village ghettos in Kreis Konin, most of which by then had been concentrated in Zagórow. Then in November 1941, hundreds of Jews from the ghettos in Koźminek and Kalisz were killed using a gas van operated by Sonderkommando Lange.

In December 1941, SS-Hauptsturmführer Herbert Lange initiated killing operations at the Chełmno extermination camp, murdering first the Jews of Koło and other places nearby. A striking point about these initial complete liquidation Aktions in the Wartheland was that there were almost no survivors, even from communities of 1,000 people or more, as the unsuspecting Jews did as they were told, not expecting they all would be killed. Details of the fate of these communities come mainly from two survivors among the grave-digger detail at Chełmno as well as from the reports of scouts sent out



Mid-1930s portrait of Herbert Lange, commander of Sonderkommando Lange and first commandant of the Chełmno killing center.
COURTESY OF BA-E/BDC



Ten Jews are publicly hanged for black marketeering by the German police in the Zduńska Wola ghetto, February 28, 1942. In Reichsgau Wartheland, such mass hangings served as precursors to killing center deportations.

USHMM WS #18853, COURTESY OF IPN

by ghettos not yet affected, who were urgently seeking news of the vanished neighboring communities.¹² These reports were then passed on by courier and coded letter to Warsaw and Łódź so that the Jewish leadership could begin the difficult task of grasping the reality of genocide.¹³

Alongside the initiation of mass murder, the German authorities increased the level of terror in the remaining ghettos. A wave of public hangings was conducted in a number of ghettos, including in Zduńska Wola, Wieluń, Ozorków, and Bełchatów, in which the Jewish Police sometimes were obliged to conduct the executions.¹⁴ In Ozorków, the executions were followed immediately by a selection, with those unfit for work being dispatched to Chełmno. During the spring and summer of 1942, Jews became increasingly alarmed by the silence from those who had been deported and the intensifying rumors of killings on a massive scale.

As 1942 progressed, the ghetto liquidation Aktions became increasingly brutal, and more Jews sought to flee or hide. A common pattern for many such Aktions was for the Jews to be concentrated first in the local church building (an offense also to the Catholic Poles), where they were held for days with little food or water until a selection of those fit for labor was conducted, sometimes in the presence of Hans Biebow and other officials of the German Ghettoverwaltung (Ghetto Administration) in Łódź. The *Łódź Ghetto Chronicle* records the arrivals of a number of groups of workers spared from the respective ghettos, but those not deemed fit, including children and the elderly, were deported to be killed, under horrendous conditions, at Chełmno.

By September 1942, all the ghettos in Wartheland, except for Łódź, had been liquidated. A few Jews were left behind, or sent from Łódź, to clear out remaining property from the empty ghettos. Any useful equipment, such as sewing machines, and any remaining net profits were transferred for the use of the German Ghettoverwaltung in Łódź. In this way, the Łódź ghetto became the direct beneficiary of other ghetto



Hans Biebow, the Nazi administrator of the Łódź ghetto, sits at his desk, n.d.
USHMM WS #65731, COURTESY OF ROBERT ABRAMS

closings, coming into possession of the small surviving legacy of all the liquidated Jewish communities of the Wartheland. The Łódź ghetto was one of the very last ghettos to be liquidated; most of its remaining population was deported to Auschwitz in August 1944, with the final deportations to the camps from the remnant ghetto leaving in October.

SOURCES The most important secondary sources on ghettos in the Wartheland region are Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006); and Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chelmno/Kulmbof: Der Beginn der “Endlösung,”* trans. Rachel Grunberg Elbaz (Göttingen: Wallstein; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007). On the Einsatzgruppen deployments in Poland, including the Wartheland, the standard account is Alexander Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland: Blitzkrieg, Ideology, Atrocity* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003). Useful studies on the 1940 first and second short-term plans in the Wartheland are Phillip T. Rutherford, *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1939–1941* (Lawrence: University Press of



Night-time view of the members of Reserve Police Battalion 101 guarding the perimeter of the Łódź ghetto, 1940–1941. One image from a photograph album that once belonged to a member of Police Battalion 101.
USHMM WS #47443, COURTESY OF MICHAEL O.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

Kansas, 2007); and the older contribution by Götz Aly, *“Final Solution”: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews*, trans. Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown (New York: Arnold, 1999).

Important collections of relevant published sources include: Lucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chelmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004); Sascha Feuchert et al., eds., *Die Chronik des Gettos Lodz/Litzmannstadt* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), vol. 2 (covering 1942), also available in an earlier abridged English-language version, Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); and Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Die zweite Etappe ist der Tod: NS-Ausrottungspolitik gegen polnischen Juden, gesehen mit den Augen der Opfer. Ein historischer Essay und ausgewählte Dokumente aus dem Ringelblum-Archiv 1941–1943* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1993), originally in Polish as *Dwa etapy. Hitlerowska polityka eksterminacji Żydów w oczach ofiar. Szkic historyczny i dokumenty* (Wrocław, 1986). Material from the trial of Arthur Greiser was published in Poland soon after his trial and execution: *Proces Artura Greisera przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym* (Warsaw: GKBZHWp, 1946).

Primary sources for the Wartheland region may be found in the following archives: APL; APP; AŻIH (e.g., 301, 210); BA-BL; BA-L; IPN (ASG); IPN-Ł; NARA; USHMM; VHF; and YVA. The manuscript of the *Łódź Ghetto Chronicle* is available in USHMM, RG-15.083M (APL, Przełożony Starszeństwa Żydów w Getcie Łódzkim). Also useful are the 1940 and 1941 issues of the *Lodzcher*, later *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, which carried occasional, if tendentious, reports on the formation of ghettos in Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt.

Joseph Robert White and Martin Dean

NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/841, Lb. 848, Mf. 0827, reel 39.
2. AŻIH, 301/304, 301/314.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/669 (Szadek), p. 2.
4. AŻIH, 210/537 (AJDC Pabianice), Arbeitsbericht des Ältestenrates der Juden in Pabianice, November 1, 1939, to November 1, 1940.
5. VHF, # 20279, 20619.
6. OKŚZpNPLdz (IPN-Ł), Ds 151/67.
7. USHMM, RG-15.013M, reel 2, file 5, pp. 12, 34, Gendarmerie Radziejow, December 27, 1940, and February 27, 1941.
8. APP, Reichsstatthalter, sygn. 2124, notes that 39 of the camps were in Regierungsbezirk Posen, as cited by Peter Klein, *Die “Gettoverwaltung Litzmannstadt” 1940–1944: Eine Dienststelle im Spannungsfeld von Kommunalbürokratie und staatlicher Verfolgungspolitik* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2009), p. 456.
9. M. Gelbart, ed., *Kebilat Konin bi-feribatah uve-hurbanah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotse Konin be-Yisrael, 1968), pp. 529–530, 545–546.
10. Sakowska, *Dwa etapy*, p. 142; AŻIH, 301/306, 301/304.
11. BA-BL, R 49/3074, p. 74, as cited by Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 383.

12. Accounts of “Szlamek” and Michał Podchlebnik published in Pawlicka-Nowak, *Chełmno Witnesses Speak*, pp. 100–120.

13. Manfred Struck, ed., *Chełmno/Kulmbhof: Ein vergessener Ort des Holocaust?* (Bonn/Berlin: gegen Vergessen–Für Demokratie e.V., 2001), pp. 91–95.

14. Leib Pudlovsky, “Unter der Nazi Okupatsie,” in *Belkhatov: Yizker-bukh: Gevidmet dem ondenk fun a farsbvundn*

Yidish shtetl in Poyln (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-Farband fun PoylisheYidn in Argentine tsuzamen mit der Belkhatover Landslayt-Farayn in Argentine, Brazil un Tsofen-Amerike, 1951), pp. 434–445, includes a photograph of one of the hangings. *DDR-Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), Lfd. Nr. 1225a, p. 316, implies there was a general order in the Wartheland for a certain number of Jews to be hanged in each community.



BEŁCHATÓW

Pre-1939: Bełchatów, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Bełchatow, Kreis Lask, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (from 1941, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Bełchatów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Bełchatów is located 50 kilometers (31 miles) south of Łódź. By 1939, the Jewish population stood at about 5,500, comprising about half of the town’s population.¹

The German army entered Bełchatów on September 5, 1939. Shortly after their arrival, the Germans humiliated the Jews on the High Holidays, desecrating holy objects, forcing Jews to eat nonkosher food, and cutting men’s beards. Homes were taken from Jews and given to German officials and local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). Other restrictions prohibited Jews from using the sidewalks and from trading with non-Jews.²

Soon after the Germans took control, they established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Bełchatów. The members of the Judenrat changed over the years as they fell in and out of favor with the German authorities. The main tasks of the Judenrat included assigning Jews to forced labor, distributing food, and providing medical care. One Bełchatów survivor reflected on the role of the Judenrat and its ultimate impotence in the face of German rule: “[T]he head of the Judenrat, [Yitzhak] Bogdanski, was a very good and honest man who tried to help the poor, organized kitchens for the poor. . . . Unfortunately, he was arrested and sent to Radogoszcz with his family,” following his failed attempt to escape from the ghetto in 1942.³

A report in a German newspaper (*Die Litzmannstädter Zeitung*) in June 1940 noted that, for technical reasons related to the topography of the town, it had not been possible to establish a ghetto for the 6,000 Jews in Bełchatów but that there was no doubt that a solution would be found.⁴ On March 1, 1941, the Germans established a Jewish residential area (open ghetto) in Bełchatów.⁵ Its boundaries were clearly marked,



Jews stand on Pabianicka Street in the Bełchatów ghetto during a resettlement Aktion, late 1941. USHMM WS #50319, COURTESY OF IPN



Jewish forced laborers from Bełchatów walk along an unpaved road carrying shovels, 1941. USHMM WS #50320, COURTESY OF IPN

but it was not physically enclosed. According to several Polish witnesses, the Jews were still permitted to move freely about the town but had to obey a curfew.⁶ A report by the Polish Underground noted in January 1942: “An enclosed ghetto has still not been established to this day. . . . Several streets have been designated, in which the Jews are permitted to reside.”⁷

Until the summer of 1941, the Jews were able to get by despite the numerous restrictions. Many Jews continued to trade illegally, but punishment always loomed over their heads. Those unable to escape arrest were often tortured before being released. Smuggling enabled the Jewish community to survive, and families sold their possessions in order to have something to eat.⁸

When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, a glimmer of hope appeared for the Jews of Bełchatów. At first, they believed the Soviets would soon defeat Hitler’s army, but the rapid German advance into Russia soon dispelled this notion. Even as their hopes faded, the Bełchatów Jews could not imagine the fate awaiting them. Most believed that the Nazis would need them to help rebuild the country once the war was over and that they would, therefore, keep them alive.⁹

On August 19, 1941, Bełchatów Amtskommissar, Josef Trahner, instructed the Judenrat that all men between the ages of 18 and 45 years not employed in garment-manufacturing workshops must report to the Kluk Company together with the Jewish doctor on the following day.¹⁰ About 2,000 men assembled there and waited in a building all day until 250 of them were selected and sent to the Poznań region for forced labor. Some families were able to obtain the release of a son or a husband by paying bribes.¹¹

Henry Haft, a Holocaust survivor who moved to America and became a successful boxer, recalled that his elder brother answered the call that day. After his brother had been gone for several hours, Henry began to ask questions. A group of older men told him, “Haven’t you heard? Not one Jew who went to register has come back.” Henry managed to save his

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brother from being sent to Poznań, but, in the process, he was caught and found himself in his brother's place.¹²

About three weeks later, a second group of around 500 men was sent to work in the Poznań region, but this time there was no call to "register." Instead, German forces raided Jewish homes to round them up. With 700 heads of households taken from their families, the economic situation of those left behind soon deteriorated.¹³

In the fall of 1941, the Jews from a number of neighboring towns and villages, including Szczerców, Grocholice, Kleszczów, Przyrownica, Bełchatówek, and Chabielice, were brought to Bełchatów with most of their belongings, considerably worsening overcrowding in the ghetto.¹⁴ There was inadequate medical care and poor sanitation, which resulted in a deadly outbreak of typhus in early 1942. This epidemic forced Trahner to allow another doctor into the ghetto.¹⁵

On March 18, 1942, on the orders of the Gestapo, the Gendarmerie, assisted by the Jewish Police, publicly hanged 10 Jews from various social backgrounds in Bełchatów.¹⁶ According to the report by Trahner, the execution set an example of the punishment in store for Jews who repeatedly violated the economic regulations.¹⁷

At 6:00 A.M. on August 11, 1942, a group of foreign police auxiliaries, German Gendarmerie, and German civilians began a four-day Aktion to render Bełchatów "free of Jews" (*judenrein*). A few Jews attempted to escape the night before in the direction of Piotrków, but most of the escapees were shot. The German forces surrounded the ghetto and drove the Jews to the center of town. Initially, a group of Jews was rounded up almost at random and sent off in trucks in the direction of the Chełmno death camp, where most of Bełchatów's Jews would be killed. Then, assisted by the Jewish Police, the Germans selected most of the elderly and sick and dispatched them in the same direction. On the same day, another 850 able-bodied men were selected and sent to the Łódź ghetto. The remaining population, possibly as many as 4,000 Jews, was driven to the synagogue courtyard. Many were forced into the synagogue where they were held for three days without food or water. They were packed in so tightly that children and elderly people died either from starvation or suffocation.

The Germans selected 200 Jewish men from the synagogue to collect and sort the valuables from the empty Jewish homes. For four days, these men were forced to clean up the Jewish quarter and send any useful manufacturing equipment to the Łódź ghetto. On the night of the third day, the Germans made them sleep in the now-empty synagogue. All the people from inside the synagogue had been deported to Chełmno. Then 79 of these remaining men were sent to the Łódź ghetto after the fourth day of work; the fate of the others is unknown. With their departure, the Jewish community of Bełchatów ceased to exist.¹⁸

SOURCES Published sources on the ghetto in Bełchatów and the destruction of its inhabitants include the following: *Belkhatov: Yizker-bukh: Gevidmet dem ondenk fun a farsbuundn Yidish*

shtetl in Poyln (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-Farband fun Poylishe Yidn in Argentine tsuzamen mit der Belkhatover Landslayt-Farayn in Argentine, Brazil un Tsofen-Amerike, 1951); Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 70–77; and Alan Scott Haft, *Harry Haft: Auschwitz Survivor, Challenger of Rocky Marciano* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006).

Documentation on the Jewish community of Bełchatów and its fate during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AAN (202/II-29); AŻIH (301/84, 1243, and 1413); BA-L (203 AR-Z 161/67, Bd. XI, pp. 94–113); IPN; USHMM; VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 70–77. Estimates of the Jewish population of Bełchatów in 1939 vary from about 4,000 up to 10,000, but most sources remain in the range of 5,000 to 6,000.

2. AŻIH, 301/84, testimony of Chiel Maczak; 301/1243, testimony of Monick Kaufman.

3. *Ibid.*, 301/1413, testimony of Monick Kaufman; see also M. Kaufman, "In the Years of the Holocaust," in *Belkhatov: Yizker-bukh*, pp. 463–476 (an English translation is available via jewishgen.org); Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 70–77.

4. *Die Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, June 16, 1940.

5. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 93.

6. Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2006), p. 200; BA-L, ZStL, 203 AR-Z 161/67, Bd. XI, pp. 94–113.

7. AAN, 202/II-29, p. 6, DR, Departament Spraw Wewnętrznych: Meldunek o sytuacji Żydów poza Warszawą, January 16, 1942.

8. AŻIH, 301/1413.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Amtskommissar Trahner an den Aeltestenrat der jüdischen Gemeinde Belchatow, August 19, 1941, reproduced in *Belkhatov: Yizker-bukh*, p. 439.

11. AŻIH, 301/1413.

12. Haft, *Harry Haft*, pp. 24–33.

13. AŻIH, 301/1413.

14. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 70–77.

15. Haft, *Harry Haft*, pp. 24–33.

16. Leib Pudlovsky, "Unter der Nazi Okupatsie," in *Belkhatov: Yizker-bukh*, pp. 434–435, includes a photograph of the hanging, erroneously dated March 19, 1943. *DDR-Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), Lfd. Nr. 1225a, p. 316, implies there was a general order at this time in the Wartheland for a certain number of Jews to be hanged in each community according to its size.

17. Amtskommissar der Stadt Belchatow an die Standortkommandantur Lask, March 19, 1942, published in *Belkhatov: Yizker-bukh*, pp. 436–437.

18. Pudlovsky, "Unter der Nazi Okupatsie," p. 445; Zohken Lieberman, "Die Sheuderlekhe Teg," in *Belkbatov: Yizkerbukh*, pp. 456–462; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, pp. 70–77.

BRZEŚĆ KUJAWSKI

Pre-1939: Brześć Kujawski (Yiddish: Brisk de Koyavi), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Brest Kujawien, Landkreis Leslau (Włocławek), Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Brześć Kujawski, województwo kujawsko-pomorskie, Poland

Brześć Kujawski is located about 101 kilometers (63 miles) north-northwest of Łódź. On the outbreak of World War II, there were 633 Jews residing there. Jews comprised between 15 and 20 percent of the town's population. At the beginning of 1941, the number of Jews in the town rose slightly, due to the arrival of about 40 refugees.¹

The German army occupied the town in early September 1939. Immediately afterwards Jews were compelled to perform forced labor, and the Germans began to confiscate their property. Among the early measures of persecution suffered by the Jews was the burning down of the synagogue. In the last weeks of 1939, the Germans sent dozens of Jewish men to the Wittenberg camp for forced labor. By 1940, the Germans had ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) to assist them with organizing forced labor and raising "contributions" from the Jewish population.²

In October 1940, all Jewish enterprises in the town were expropriated, and the property was given to German trustees. Several sources, including the yizkor book for Włocławek, make specific reference to a "ghetto" in Brześć Kujawski, but almost no details are known.³ Danuta Dombrowska, on the other hand, maintains that no ghetto existed there.⁴ On September 28, 1941, 399 "inmates of the local ghetto" (109 men and 290 women) were deported to the ghetto in Łódź, joining a mass transport of Jews coming from other places in the Włocławek area. Between the end of September and early October 1941, these deportations included 3,082 people in



Jews wearing unusually large Jewish stars carry bundles during a resettlement or deportation Aktion in Brześć Kujawski, n.d. USHMM WS #41039, COURTESY OF YIVO

total.⁵ On their arrival, it was noted that the Jews from Brześć Kujawski and other nearby towns wore different identity badges than those in Łódź—a yellow triangle in the middle of the back and a large Star of David (25 centimeters or about 10 inches across) on the chest.⁶ Most of these individuals died in the Łódź ghetto of disease and hunger. The few Jews remaining in Brześć Kujawski were deported to the Chełmno extermination camp in April or early May 1942, where the Germans killed them using poison gas. Their last personal belongings were sold to the local population. The proceeds—457.02 Reichsmark (RM)—were placed at the disposal of the Ghettoverwaltung (Ghetto Administration) in Łódź.⁷

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews of Brześć Kujawski during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: K.F. Thursh and M. Korzen, eds., *Votslavek veba-sevivab: Sefer zikaron* (Israel: Association of Former Włocławek Jews in Israel and America, 1967), pp. 175–178; Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 145–146; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 119.

Documents on the persecution and destruction of the Jewish community of Brześć Kujawski can be found in the following archives: IPN (collection "Ob," sygn. 177); ITS; and USHMM (RG-68.066M, selected records from AJDC, GIV/27-1B, includes a list of survivors from Brześć Kujawski). A list of additional sources can be found in *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 173.

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NOTES

1. Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab: Sefer zikaron*, p. 780; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson Gale/Keter, 2007), 4:230.
2. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, pp. 145–146.
3. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945*, p. 119; Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab: Sefer zikaron*, p. 780; Roman Mogilanski, *The Ghetto Anthology: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Extermination of Jewry in Nazi Death Camps and Ghettos in Poland* (Los Angeles: American Congress of Jews from Poland and Survivors of Concentration Camps, 1985), p. 104.
4. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 4:230.
5. Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (1972; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 50; Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab: Sefer zikaron*, p. 780.
6. Łucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 78.
7. Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab: Sefer zikaron*, p. 780; Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), p. 204.

BRZEZINY

Pre-1939: Brzeziny (Yiddish: Brzezin), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Löwenstadt, Kreis Litzmannstadt, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Brzeziny, Łódź województwo, Poland

Brzeziny is located 19 kilometers (12 miles) east-northeast of Łódź. The Jewish population stood at approximately 6,850 on the eve of World War II.

Brzeziny was occupied on September 8–9, 1939. Within a month, a series of anti-Jewish measures went into effect, and the local Jews suffered beatings, forced labor, and looting at the hands of the occupiers and local ethnic Germans.¹

The German authorities demanded that the remaining members of the Jewish kehillah (community), Yitzhak Dymant, the chairman, and Avraham Szafman, the secretary, supply a daily quota of workers for forced labor. The workers were ordered to pave roads and perform other arduous jobs and were often beaten and tormented by their German taskmasters. When the required number of Jews did not report for work, the German authorities berated the community leaders and beat them. Prominent members of the Jewish community formed a committee with the aim of aiding the Jewish population, who at this time also began to experience hunger and impoverishment. Yitzhak Dymant, Dr. Sh. Warhaft, Yaakov Za-

gon, and Dr. Ehrlicht collected money from members of the community who wanted to free themselves from forced labor duty and created a community treasury. The committee also raised funds surreptitiously: Zagon assigned a group of workers in the German clothing warehouse to smuggle out suits that had been confiscated from Jewish clothiers, by wearing them in layers. These suits were then sold and the money used for the benefit of the community. The committee aimed to create a public kitchen and to pay forced laborers supplied to the Germans. In time, the Germans treated this committee as a Judenrat.²

The German persecution of the Jewish community in Brzeziny intensified in November 1939. On November 9, they set fire to the great synagogue and tortured the rabbi. Rabbi Zalman Borensztajn was beaten, his beard was set on fire, and he was forced to sign a statement that he and other Jewish leaders had started the fire. A notice in the German newspaper in Łódź reiterated this fabrication and announced that the “provocateurs” had been arrested. The Germans fined the Jewish community 10,000 zloty and arrested the rabbi and other prominent members of the Jewish community; they were sent away to a jail in Łódź or other towns, where they were imprisoned for several months.³

In November and December 1939, the Germans violently evicted Jews living in better apartments, and a rumor spread that Brzeziny—renamed Löwenstadt and annexed to the Reich as part of the Wartheland—was going to be made *judenrein* (cleansed of Jews). The Jews were forbidden to remove anything except some clothing from their homes, which were then sealed. Members of the committee petitioned the mayor of Brzeziny and then the district head in Łódź to delay the expulsion and received his approval. The police in Brzeziny accepted a bribe and agreed to consider those Jews who had been expelled from their homes and were now living with relatives in other parts of the city as having “left” (*farlozt*) Brzeziny. Using the time bought (the district head delayed the expulsion until April 1, 1940), the committee proposed that the Germans employ the tailors in service of the German war effort. A small delegation then negotiated with the chamber of commerce in Łódź, and aided by a generous bribe, the plan was approved. The Jewish tailors were employed in the Guenther Schwartz workshops, producing German army apparel.⁴

The German authorities established the Brzeziny ghetto in April 1940 (some sources say May 1940) and ordered all the Jews in Brzeziny to move into the designated area. Roughly 6,000 Jews were imprisoned in the Brzeziny ghetto and were not permitted to leave its boundaries. The ghetto was surrounded by a fence. Occupants of buildings whose windows and doors looked out on to streets not within the ghetto’s boundaries had to enter through interior courtyards or through openings in the interior walls.⁵ The Gestapo created a Judenrat to replace the kehillah and appointed Fiszke Ikka, who had earlier been named the head of the kehillah, as the chairman of the ghetto. The Judenrat operated several departments focusing on: finance, housing, provisions, post office operations,



Pre-war photograph of the Brzeziny town synagogue, which was destroyed by the Nazis during the war.

USHMM WS #12231, COURTESY OF ADELE RAPAPORT

clothing manufacturing, a civil court, social welfare, and (security) police. Survivor testimony in the town's yizkor book suggests that Ikka was not well liked; Dr. Warhaft remarked that he "ruled as a dictator."⁶ Nevertheless, some members of the previous Jewish committee served on the Judenrat, including Avraham Szafman as secretary and Yitzhak Dymant as head of the housing office. Ikka was a controversial figure: in a trial after the war, he was accused of having been a Gestapo agent who pointed out well-to-do Jews to the police, who would then arrest and extort money from them. Others testified, however, that he had no choice but to obey German orders. When his opponents in the Judenrat attempted to influence the Germans to appoint a different chairman, four of them—Zagon, Grynspan, Stark, and Sender—were arrested and tortured. Three later returned to the ghetto, but Sender was killed.⁷

Brzeziny was a working ghetto, and people worked 12 hours a day, primarily in large tailoring workshops producing clothing for the German army. Approximately 90 percent of the Jewish population was employed in manufacturing work for the Guenther Schwartz and Forschter und Bunger firms, according to a member of the Judenrat's manufacturing committee. The committee also opened workshops to offer more employment, including a netting shop, which employed 9- and 10-year-old children. Moreover, the manufacturing committee embellished the statistical listing by adding children's names to it, to show a larger number of Jews employed. The Judenrat tried to find work for all employable Jews, to provide them with a means of subsistence and security against deportation. The German authorities continued to demand a daily quota of workers for hard labor after the ghetto was established and also deported young men to forced labor camps. Those who were sent were abused and subjected to terrible work conditions. A group of 150 young men taken to dig peat near Stryków in June 1941, for example, returned to the Brzeziny ghetto severely emaciated two months later. Another challenge the ghetto faced regarding labor was the German inspection teams and Gestapo agents from Łódź, which occasionally visited the tailoring workshops. The Gestapo demanded expensive gifts from the community, which contributed to the impoverishment of the Jewish population.⁸

The living conditions in the Brzeziny ghetto were harsh; Jews suffered in overcrowded and cold apartments and experienced hunger and deprivation. Under these conditions, diseases spread throughout the ghetto. The food allotment was 200 grams (7 ounces) of bread daily and 250 grams (8.8 ounces) of sugar, 200 grams (7 ounces) of flour, 150 grams (5.3 ounces) of margarine, 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of honey, and small amounts of vegetables, soap, and coal weekly per person. Jews employed in the ghetto workshops could augment these rations by purchasing additional food with their small wage. They also received a daily bowl of soup and rations from their employers. To further supplement their food allotment, Jews also sold items of clothing made privately in a clandestine cottage industry. Polish neighbors provided food to the ghetto inmates as well—one baker prepared batches of bread espe-

cially for the Jewish population, which he had young children bring into the ghetto. Other sympathetic Poles also passed meat and other food products through the ghetto fence, often at no cost.⁹

A riskier illegal activity was smuggling, which was not uncommon in the ghetto. In the early history of the ghetto, it became established custom that when a smuggler was caught, the Jewish Police would confiscate the goods and the smuggler would pay a ransom for his or her release. If the smuggler was caught by the Gestapo, however, the punishment was more severe; one Jew received 50 lashes and was detained in the Gestapo building for 48 hours.¹⁰ Later, smuggling and trading were more severely punished and were greatly curtailed because the fence was guarded more rigorously by German guards. The Jews in the Brzeziny ghetto then began to suffer more severely from malnutrition, which resulted in reduced productivity by the physically weakened workers. The German overseers in the workshops responded with reduced food rations, further exacerbating the situation, and with greater violence.¹¹

The German authorities ordered a public hanging of 10 people on Purim in March 1942 as a punishment for smuggling. They ordered the Judenrat to select the victims, build the gallows on the site of the remains of the burned synagogue, and carry out the public execution. Germans posted notices announcing the execution and demanding that the entire Jewish population must witness it. The selected people were imprisoned smugglers and marginalized community members, including people who were mentally ill and homeless. After the hanging, all the Jews were forced to march past the scaffold with their faces towards the bodies.¹²

The work situation in the ghetto also deteriorated in 1942. German orders to the workshops declined and production slowed, then stopped. The Judenrat distributed funds to lessen the impact of the loss of income. The assistance did little to alleviate starvation throughout the ghetto, which was aggravated by the loss of rations from the workshops and food from trade and smuggling activity.¹³ In April 1942, the Germans demanded that the Judenrat conduct a census to provide exact numbers for the ghetto population. At that time, a Gestapo agent ordered Dr. Warhaft, the ghetto doctor, to prepare a transport of typhus patients, who would be taken to a "special sanatorium." The medical personnel would be permitted to accompany them. Suspicious, Dr. Warhaft and his staff decided to send home the sick, and only those patients on their deathbeds remained in the 25-bed hospital when a closed van arrived the next morning. According to Dr. Warhaft, the truck's doors were hermetically sealed behind the sick inmates, who were suffocated by gas fumes. Rumors about an impending resettlement spread among the ghetto population at this time.¹⁴

All Jews were then ordered to appear before a German medical commission, and healthy Jews capable of work were stamped on the chest with an "A," while the elderly and the sick received a "B." The Germans tormented and maltreated the Jews, especially elderly men and women, by sexually harassing and humiliating them.¹⁵

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The liquidation of the ghetto began on May 14–15, 1942, when Hans Biebow, the chief of the German administration of the Łódź ghetto, and members of the Gestapo arrived in the Brzeziny ghetto and ordered all Jews marked with a “B” and mothers with their children up to the age of 10 to assemble in the market square. Some 40 young people from the ghetto who accompanied them to assist the mothers witnessed the Aktion. The mothers and children were forced to wait all day. At 3:00 A.M., the Gestapo arrived, began beating them with whips, and ordered the mothers to hand over their children. A horrible tumult ensued. The Germans tore children away from their mothers, as the mothers cried, pleaded, and fought to save their children. One witness gave testimony that the Germans killed three babies by throwing them against the doors of the train. Their screaming mothers were shot. The children and the people from group “B,” about 1,700 in total, were deported to the Chełmno extermination camp.¹⁶

Three days later, the final stage of the liquidation of the ghetto began on May 18, 1942. The Germans announced that the Jews could bring baggage up to 10 kilograms (22 pounds) and ordered them to assemble in front of their buildings in groups of 5. The Germans made another selection in the market square, and healthy men were sent off to work camps, while most people were deported to the Łódź ghetto via Gałkówek station. Younger Jews walked to Gałkówek, while others traveled by wagon. On the way, the Jews were beaten and a few were shot by the Germans. At the station, the Jews were loaded onto trains without their baggage and sent to the Łódź ghetto. Their baggage was returned to them in Łódź, less any food they brought with them, which was confiscated and sent to the ghetto’s storehouses for general distribution. About 4,300 Jews from the Brzeziny ghetto arrived in three transports to the Łódź ghetto on May 18–20. About 300 Jews remained in the Brzeziny ghetto after its liquidation to clear out the ghetto area for the Germans; they were shot dead on August 22, 1942.¹⁷

In the Łódź ghetto, the new arrivals were immediately quarantined in apartments separate from the rest of the population to avoid a potential typhus epidemic, since there were cases of the disease among the Jews from Brzeziny. Following another selection completed in the Łódź ghetto, over 1,200 men were sent for forced labor to Dąbrowa. To avoid a transport for forced labor, 268 Jews from Brzeziny went into hiding and later reported their presence in the ghetto. The remaining Jews of Brzeziny suffered further despair when a rumor spread that 200 children had arrived on May 19; however, these children were all above age 10.¹⁸ Heartbroken parents affected the mood of the Łódź ghetto, as local Jews began to wonder when their families would be torn apart.

Many of the Jews from Brzeziny who remained in the Łódź ghetto died of hunger and disease in the ghetto. Those still alive in August 1944 were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp during the liquidation of the Łódź ghetto. Only 200 to 300 Jews from Brzeziny survived the war from the pre-war population of about 6,850.¹⁹



Jews from the Brzeziny ghetto are marched through town en route to the Gałkówek railroad station, during the deportation Aktion of May 18–19, 1942.

USHMM WS #91561, COURTESY OF IPN

SOURCES The Brzeziny memorial book edited by A. Alperin and N. Summer, *Brzeziny Yisker-Bukh* (New York and Israel: Brzeziner Book Committee, 1961), contains survivor testimonies on the history and fate of Brzeziny’s Jewish community. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984) contains several references to the Brzeziny ghetto, including a report also published in Józef Kermisz, ed., *Akcje i wysiedlenia* (Łódź: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce, 1946), pp. 223–225. Oskar Rosenfeld wrote about the Brzeziny ghetto in his diary, *In the Beginning Was the Ghetto: Notebooks from Łódź* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002). The Brzeziny ghetto survivor George Fox’s interview conducted in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on July 12, 2006, was also referenced. There are encyclopedic entries in Danuta Dąbrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 61–66; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1979), p. 119; Roman Mogilanski, ed., *The Ghetto*

Anthology: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Extermination of Jewry in Nazi Death Camps and Ghettos in Poland (Los Angeles: American Congress of Jews from Poland and Survivors of Concentration Camps, 1985), pp. 104–105; and Sara Neshamith, Shlomo Netzer, and Danuta Dąbrowska, “Brzeziny,” in Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, eds., *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), 4:230–231. There is also mention of the Brzeziny ghetto in Isaiah Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto: A History*, ed. Robert Moses Shapiro (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); and in Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006).

Documentation on the Brzeziny ghetto can be found among other places in the YIVO Archive’s Nachman Zonabend Collection, YIVO, RG 241 (folders 912, 916).

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NOTES

1. Dr. S. Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction of Our Shtetl: Recollections of the Ghetto Doctor,” pp. 135–139, here 135; and Abraham Blanket-Sulkowicz, “Destruction of Brzeziny,” pp. 140–143, here 140—both in Alperin and Summer, *Brzeziny Yisker-Bukh*.
2. Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction,” p. 135.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 135–136; and D. Tuszynski, “There Once Was a Jewish Shtetl Brzeziny,” in Alperin and Summer, *Brzeziny Yisker-Bukh*, pp. 144–146, here 144.
4. Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction,” pp. 136–137; Tuszynski, “There Once Was,” p. 145; and Dora Zagon-Winer, “I Saw the Hurbn,” in Alperin and Summer, *Brzeziny Yisker-Bukh*, pp. 147–148, here p. 147.
5. Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, pp. 182–183.
6. Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction,” p. 138; Tuszynski, “There Once Was,” p. 145; Blanket-Sulkowicz, “Destruction of Brzeziny,” p. 141.
7. Rebecca Hender-Gocial, “The Brzeziner Jewish Community during the Time of the Ghetto,” in Alperin and Summer, *Brzeziny Yisker-Bukh*, p. 156; and Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction,” p. 138.
8. Hender-Gocial, “The Brzeziner Jewish Community,” p. 156; Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction,” p. 138; Tuszynski, “There Once Was,” p. 145.
9. Rosenfeld, *In the Beginning Was the Ghetto*, p. 107; Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, p. 183.
10. Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, p. 183; and PARI, interview of G. Fox.
11. Blanket-Sulkowicz, “Destruction of Brzeziny,” p. 141.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 142; Zagon-Winer, “I Saw the Hurbn,” p. 148.
13. Hender-Gocial, “The Brzeziner Jewish Community,” p. 156.
14. Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction,” pp. 138–139.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 138; Blanket-Sulkowicz, “Destruction of Brzeziny,” p. 142; Tuszynski, “There Once Was,” p. 145.
16. Tuszynski, “There Once Was,” pp. 145–146; Rosenfeld, *In the Beginning Was the Ghetto*, p. 107; and interview of G. Fox.
17. Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, pp. 183–184; Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction,” p. 139; Blanket-Sulkowicz, “Destruction of Brzeziny,” p. 143; and interview of G. Fox.
18. Dobroszycki, *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, pp. 185, 217.
19. Warhaft, “I Saw the Destruction,” p. 139.

BUGAJ (AND NOWINY BRDOWSKIE)

Pre-1939: Bugaj, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Bugitten (and Neubagen), Kreis Wartbrücken (Koło), Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Bugaj, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Bugaj and neighboring Nowiny Brdowskie are two villages in the community of Lubotyń, located 82 kilometers (51 miles) northwest of Łódź. In the fall of 1940 both villages were turned into a *Dorfghetto* (village ghetto), occupying an area of about 300 hectares (741 acres) and containing about 165 houses that formerly had been owned by Polish farmers.¹ The German designation for the ghetto was “Jüdische Kolonie Bugitten und Neuhagen” (Jewish colony Bugitten and Neuhagen).² On October 2, 1940, all the Jews, approximately 240 people, from the village of Babiak (German: Waldau) were resettled into the ghetto. Also, part of the Jewish community of Koło (German: Wartbrücken) was assigned to the “Jewish colony” (about 150 to 200 families).³ This brought the total number of people in the ghetto to about 800 (300 families). The ghetto residents were used for seasonal labor in the neighboring fields, farms, and estates. They fed themselves by selling their remaining possessions to non-Jews living in the area.⁴ Archival material at the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO) in New York documents the harsh living conditions of the resettled Jews. In April 1941, the Jewish Council (Judenrat) reported to the “Service for Promotion of Agriculture among Jews,” based in the Warsaw ghetto, that the condition of the agricultural buildings was terrible. The available livestock consisted of only seven horses and a score of goats and fowl. The Jewish Council planned to acquire more horses, chickens, and other animals, as well as to grow potatoes, corn, other vegetables, tobacco, and medicinal herbs.⁵

These plans were not realized. The Germans liquidated the ghetto and transported the residents to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they murdered them using gas vans on Tuesday, January 13, 1942. About 15 or 16 able-bodied Jews from Bugaj had been sent to Chełmno by the Gendarmerie a few days before, and some of them were assigned to the grave-digging section there. One of them, Michał Podchlebnik, wept bitterly on returning to the camp cellar on the evening of January 13, as he had been forced to unload the bodies of his wife and two children from the third van that arrived at the grave site.⁶

After the Jews were deported, the Germans ordered that the remaining buildings of the ghetto be demolished, and a forest was planted on the site.⁷

SOURCES The main literature dealing with the Bugaj ghetto includes: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 339, no. 3019; Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 201; Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (1972; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 113; and Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Die zweite Etappe ist der*

Tod: NS-Ausrrottungspolitik gegen polnischen Juden, gesehen mit den Augen der Opfer. Ein historischer Essay und ausgewählte Dokumente aus dem Ringelblum-Archiv 1941–1943 (Berlin: Hentrich, 1993).

Primary sources regarding the ghetto in the villages of Bugaj and Nowiny Brdowskie can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (AJDC 210/123 [Jüdische Gemeinde in Bugitten und Nowiny Brdowskie an AJDC in Warsaw, January 1941]; and Ring I/152, 255, 382, 394, 665, 972, and 1219); IPN (ASG, sygn. 54, p. 103); ITS; USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 16); YIVO (Wassermann collection, document 48a); and YVA. Further information on archival sources can be found in *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 132, 136, 169. The court testimony of a survivor from the Bugaj ghetto can be found in Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), pp. 119–124.

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NOTES

1. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 339.
2. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 201.
3. Ibid.; Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 59; D. Dabrowska, “Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w ‘Kraju Warty’ w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 169, table 12.
4. AŻIH, Ring I/152, report on the Chełmno extermination camp by “Szlamiek,” published in Sakowska, *Die zweite Etappe ist der Tod*, pp. 159–185, here p. 176; and USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (IPN) ASG, województwo poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 103 and reverse.
5. YIVO, Wassermann collection, document 48a.
6. AŻIH, Ring I/152, report on the Chełmno extermination camp by “Szlamiek,” and Ring I/665; Pawlicka-Nowak, *Chełmno Witnesses Speak*, pp. 11, 119–124, 204–205. The testimony of Michał Podchlebnik given to the Polish authorities on June 9, 1945, is on pp. 119–124; a photograph of him is reproduced in Władysław Bednarz, ed., *Obóz straceń w Chełmnie nad Nerem* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1946), p. 11, which also includes the original Polish text of his testimony.
7. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (IPN) ASG, województwo poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 103 and reverse.

CHOCZ

Pre-1939: Chocz, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Petersbagen (1939–1943), Petersried (1943–1945), Kreis Kalisch, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Chocz, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Chocz is located about 32 kilometers (20 miles) northwest of Kalisz. There were 99 Jews living in Chocz in 1921, constituting 5.6 percent of the total population.

On November 18, 1939, 44 Jewish residents of the village were deported to Kalisz, where Jews from throughout the Kreis were being concentrated while awaiting deportation into the

Generalgouvernement. They were held there behind barbed wire in a temporary transit camp set up in the “Market Hall.”

In the first months of 1940, most of the Chocz Jews who were being held in Kalisz were sent to Koźminek to work, around the time of the establishment of the Koźminek ghetto. Among these Jews may have been some who were sent initially to Łódź at the end of January 1940, only then to be returned to Kalisz after they were refused admittance to the city.

There were reportedly 40 Jews still living in Chocz in January 1940. As the German plan to clear the Wartheland of all its Jews during the winter of 1939–1940 encountered various difficulties and had to be postponed, a number of ghettos were established in the region.

A small ghetto was established in Chocz in March 1940. The local German Gendarmerie commander—Piechota—and his subordinates (i.e., Stefan Emanuel, Julian Peda, and Alfred Peda) were put in charge of the ghetto’s affairs.

The ghetto had 39 residents, including a Polish woman married to a Jewish convert to Catholicism and their children. There was also one foreigner, a Jewish doctor from Berlin. The ghetto inmates were forced to perform cleaning jobs in the village, sweep streets, chop wood, and carry water for the Germans.

The ghetto consisted of a single house standing on a 100-square-meter (1,076 square feet) piece of land. There is no information on whether the ghetto was fenced off from the rest of the village or concerning living conditions for the Jews residing there. There were no outbreaks of epidemic disease.

The Chocz ghetto was liquidated after 12 months, in March 1941, when all its residents were transferred to the ghetto in Koźminek,¹ which was ultimately liquidated in July 1942.

SOURCES The following publications were used to prepare this entry: Tomasz Kawski and Monika Opióła, *Gminy żydowskie pogranicza Wielkopolski, Mazowsza, Małopolski i Śląska w latach 1918–1942* (Toruń: Wydawn. Adam Marszałek, 2008), pp. 131, 240, 245; A. Pakentregger, “Dzieje Żydów m. Kalisza i powiatu kaliskiego w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej (od 1940 do 9 sierpnia 1942 r.). Martyrologia i zagłada,” *BŻIH*, nos. 2–3 (1980): 5; and Janusz Wróbel, *Przemiany ludnościowe spowodowane polityką okupanta hitlerowskiego w tzw. rejencji łódzkiej w latach 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 1987), pp. 169–171, 178.

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NOTE

1. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), file 59 (Chocz), pp. 1–3.

CIECHOCINEK

Pre-1939: Ciechocinek, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Hermannsbud, Kreis Hermannsbud, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Ciechocinek, powiat Aleksandrowski, województwo kujawsko-pomorskie, Poland

Ciechocinek is located about 28 kilometers (17.5 miles) north-northwest of Włocławek. In 1921, there were 769 Jews out of

a total population of 2,451. A Jewish sanatorium opened in this famous spa resort in the early 1930s.

The first weeks of German occupation were relatively quiet in Ciechocinek. Only with the arrival of Gestapo representatives in the fifth week of the occupation did the situation deteriorate for the Jewish community. Decrees against the Jews were issued, forbidding them to walk on sidewalks, forcing them to pay special taxes, and requiring them to wear a yellow patch on the front and back of their clothes. The entire Jewish community was required to perform forced labor initially for no pay, often to the accompaniment of brutal beatings. Jews were also robbed of their possessions; business property was confiscated, leaving Jews without any means of earning a livelihood. The German authorities confiscated the better Jewish homes, forcing many Jews out onto the streets.¹ Some witnesses claim that this was the reason that a number of Jews were expelled to places in the Generalgouvernement in the fall of 1939, for example, to Wodzisław and towns in the vicinity of Siedlce. In any case, the number of Jews living in Ciechocinek declined considerably within a short time after the German occupation, probably to only about 120 people.

In 1940, the Germans forced the remaining Jews of the town into the former house of Lieb Wuzek. About 100 people



A man and young boy stand outside the Café Gastronomja in Ciechocinek, May 20, 1934. This photograph was discovered at the Majdanek concentration camp following its liberation in July 1944.

USHMM WS #70456, COURTESY OF APMM

were housed in this single building under terrible sanitary conditions. The residents suffered from hunger, overcrowding, and various diseases.² German documentation explicitly avoids the use of the term “ghetto” when describing the concentration of Jews onto certain streets or in single houses in this Kreis.³ However, the Jewish survivors recall their experience in Ciechocinek as being forced into a ghetto for the Jews in the town.⁴

In 1941, all the adolescent Jews (about a dozen) in Ciechocinek were taken for forced labor in Inowrocław. On April 19, 1942, the German police “evacuated” all the remaining Jews from Ciechocinek. The inmates of the Wuzek house were brutally beaten and loaded onto waiting trucks. German police deported them to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were murdered using poison gas. On April 23, 1942, the Gendarmerie Kreis Hermannsbad reported that all the Jews of the Kreis had been “evacuated,” including 80 people from Ciechocinek. The deportation Aktion in Ciechocinek was conducted by the Schutzpolizei section stationed there.⁵ A subsequent German report dated July 1, 1942, recorded that only a single Jew was living in Ciechocinek at that time.⁶

At the end of the war, only six Jewish survivors from the town returned to Ciechocinek in search of their relatives.⁷

SOURCES This report on the Ciechocinek “ghetto” is based on two published sources: K.F. Thursh and M. Korzen, eds., *Włocławek ve-ha-sevivab: Sefer zikaron* (Israel: Association of Former Residents of Włocławek in Israel and the USA, 1967), p. 186; and Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 395–396.

Archival documentation concerning events in the Ciechocinek district (Kreis Hermannsbad) under German occupation can be found in the following archives: BA-L (B 162/ Bd. XXXVIII Polen, p. 37); IPN (RStiW 120); and USHMM (RG-15.013M).

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NOTES

1. Thursh and Korzen, *Włocławek ve-ha-sevivab: Sefer zikaron*, p. 186.

2. *Ibid.*

3. USHMM, RG-15.013M (records of the Gendarmerie Kreis Hermannsbad), reel 2, files 5 and 6. Several reports for the Gendarmerie Kreis Hermannsbad from the end of 1940 until May 1941 mention the concentration and isolation of the Jews in certain towns but insist that no ghettos had been established.

4. Thursh and Korzen, *Włocławek ve-ha-sevivab: Sefer zikaron*, p. 186.

5. USHMM, RG-15.013M (records of the Gendarmerie Kreis Hermannsbad), reel 2, file 7, Gendarmerie Kreis Hermannsbad an den Kommandeur der Gendarmerie bei dem Regierungspräsidenten in Hohensalza, April 23, 1942.

6. IPN, RStiW 120, folder 47, Regierungspräsident Hohensalza, “Breakdown of the population according to ethnic origin (Volkstum), as of July 1, 1942.”

7. BA-L, B 162, Bd. XXXVIII Polen, p. 37.

DĄBIE NAD NEREM

Pre-1939: Dąbie nad Nerem (Yiddish: Dombie), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Eichstädt, Kreis Wartbrücken, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Dąbie, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Dąbie is located on the Ner River about 16 kilometers (10 miles) to the southeast of Koło. There were probably around 1,100 Jews in Dąbie at the outbreak of World War II in September 1939.

German forces occupied Dąbie in mid-September 1939. Soon after their arrival, they insisted on removing Jews from the town's administration and ordered the Jews to present themselves for forced labor. By mid-October, the German authorities had confiscated several Jewish businesses, appointing German trustees in charge. During the first weeks of the occupation, Jews were humiliated, being forced to perform gymnastics on the market square, and were rounded up for forced labor. In December 1939, Jews were ordered to wear yellow Stars of David. At this time Jews were also forbidden to use the sidewalks.¹ The Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in the town, chaired by Josef Dyament. Other members included Lejb Strykowski, Pinkas Elbojm, Mosze Gostyński, Gerszon Engel, and Chaim Elie Lewin. Initially, the Germans appointed a local ethnic German, Nelter, as mayor of the town, but within a few weeks he was replaced by another ethnic German named Woltmann. By 1940, a German from the Reich had been appointed mayor of Dąbie.²



A church in Dąbie used in the liquidation of the ghetto's Jews at the Chełmno killing center photographed as part of a war-crimes investigation by the Tribunal of Łódź, ca. June 1945. The church was not a place of worship during the war.

USHMM WS #65656, COURTESY OF MUZEUM OKRĘGOWE KONIN

In the spring of 1940, the Jewish community in Dąbie applied for help from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw. However, an initial payment of 4,000 złoty was not received until May 1940, owing to the need to obtain approval from the German Currency Office (Devisenstelle). This money was used to distribute bread, flour, and sugar to more than 75 needy families, but further support from the AJDC was then interrupted due to German objections. The aid committee, also headed by Josef Dyament, raised some money within the Jewish community in order to maintain welfare efforts, and in September 1940 it opened a bakery. Profits from the bakery were used to provide bread to needy families, but in December 1940 the bakery was forced to close, owing to objections by the local ethnic German bakers. A further subvention of 500 Reichsmark (RM) was received from the AJDC in December 1940, which was used to aid 70 needy families, but after this date there is no further correspondence regarding welfare matters.³

The German authorities established a ghetto in Dąbie in the summer of 1940 on Kiliński Street.⁴ The ghetto contained about 1,100 Jews, and up to 10 people had to share one home. It remained an open ghetto throughout its existence, but Jews were only allowed to leave it with a special pass. The synagogue and the Bet Midrash were converted into storage areas by the Germans. The inhabitants of the ghetto were employed in various craft shops in the town and also cleaned the town's streets and parks.⁵ At the end of the summer of 1941, about 200 Jews—150 men and 50 women—were deported to two labor camps in the Poznań region. Most of those who survived these forced labor camps were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp from the fall of 1942.

On hearing news on December 9, 1941, of the deportation of the Jews from the nearby Koło ghetto, the Jewish Council in Dąbie sent a man named Volkevitch to Koło to try to discover what had happened to the Jews there.⁶ The liquidation of the Dąbie ghetto started on December 14, 1941. First the mayor summoned Josef Dyament and informed him that the Jews were being sent out of the town. German police forces then rounded up the remaining Jews on the market square—just less than 1,000 people—and concentrated them in the theater and the church. Here they were beaten, and the rabbi was threatened with a revolver and forced to scream that the war was the fault of the Jews. On the next morning, the Jews were released back to their homes, but soon afterwards the mayor ordered 6 men to report for work, and they were sent to the Chełmno extermination center, where they joined the gravedigger detachment that worked in the forest. On December 17, 1941, the Jews were gathered again in the theater and the church, and after being beaten there and tormented, on December 18–19 they were deported on trucks to Chełmno, where they were murdered by poison gas.⁷ After the deportation, the belongings of the Jews were collected and also stored in the church.⁸

A few survivors of the camps returned to Dąbie in 1945, but these people left soon afterwards, and the Jewish community in Dąbie was not reconstituted.



A house where Jewish victims' belongings were kept photographed as part of a war-crimes investigation by the Tribunal of Łódź, ca. June 1945. USHMM WVS #51703, COURTESY OF IPN

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Dąbie during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Danuta Dąbrowska, “Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w ‘Kraju Warty’ w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 122–184, pp. 136, 169; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 149, no. 729; and Danuta Dąbrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 86.

Primary sources on the Dąbie ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Ring I/394 and I/799; 210/314); IPN (ASG sygn. 54, p. 93); USHMM (RG-15.079M; RG-15.019M, reel 16 [ASG, vol. 54]; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/314); USHMMPA (2005.429.1); VHF (# 7567); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.079M, reel 38, Ring I/799; and VHF, # 7567, testimony of Martin Gruenfeld.
2. USHMM, RG-15.079M, reel 38, Ring I/799.
3. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/314.
4. Ibid., RG-15.079M, reel 38, Ring I/799. RG-15.019M, reel 16, ASG, vol. 54 (województwo poznańskie), p. 93 (Dąbie), gives the date of July 15, 1941, for the establishment of the ghetto and states that it was on Kiliński and Pilsudski Streets.
5. Ibid., RG-15.079M, reel 38, Ring I/799.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., RG-15.079M, reel 14, Ring I/394, and reel 38, Ring I/799; Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 437. Dąbrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 86, claims that there were about 1,000 inhabitants of the ghetto at that time. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 149, put the number at about 920.

8. USHMMPA, WS # 51704 and 51707.

DOBRA

Pre-1939: Dobra, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Doberbübl, Kreis Turek, initially Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (from 1941, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Dobra, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

The town of Dobra is located 66 kilometers (41 miles) northwest of Łódź. The 1921 census registered 1,207 Jews living in Dobra.

As soon as the town was occupied, the Wehrmacht shot 10 residents, including both Poles and Jews. Wehrmacht forces and a detachment of the German Gendarmerie were permanently stationed in Dobra. A German named Schweikert was nominated as the Kreis administrator; after the ghetto's establishment, he was placed in charge of its affairs.

Mordka Francuz was the chairman of the Jewish Council (Judenrat). The Judenrat conscripted Jews for labor that consisted of cleaning for the Wehrmacht and manual gravel extraction for road repair projects. As the Germans decided to redesign the center of the town, its streets were widened, and the rows of tenement houses on the market square and on Kilińskiego Street were demolished.

Some of the better-off Jewish families were driven out of their houses and businesses, which were given in turn to Germans and ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). The synagogue and two adjoining houses were razed in December 1939; other sources mention that the synagogue was converted into an officers' mess (*Kasino*).

Restrictions imposed on the community included a 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. curfew, which was so strictly enforced that several Jews were shot for disobeying it. The number of people allowed to attend Jewish funerals was limited to six. Jews above the age of six were obliged to wear a yellow patch with a Star of David emblem sewn on the front and back of their clothing. The word “Jude” also had to be written inside the star using Hebrew-like letters.¹

In May 1940, German soldiers stationed in Dobra were sent to fight in France and were replaced by another group that was more hostile to the Jewish population.

In the summer or fall of 1940, as survivor Benjamin Jacobs reported: “the Nazis decided to clear Dobra’s slums and create a ghetto there.” The ghetto was located in the town’s center, around Składkowskie and Tylna Streets. Jewish families who already lived there were allowed to keep only one room for

themselves and had to give up the rest to those moving in from other parts of Dobra. Jacobs estimates that the ghetto held 300 to 400 Jews. Throughout its existence its population had no access to medical assistance. The ghetto remained unfenced, but Jews were ordered not to leave it. Trade with Poles took place in secluded parts of the ghetto.²

In May 1941, Schweikert ordered the Judenrat to deliver men aged 15 to 60 for labor. Only one man in each family could remain in Dobra; the selection was left to the family. According to Jacobs, laborers were dispatched by trucks to a labor camp in Steineck, near Poznań.³

The Dobra ghetto was liquidated on October 3, 1941, and its Jews were deported to the gmina of Kowale Pańskie, where Jews from other towns in the Kreis (including Turek, Tuliszków, and Uniejów) were also transferred. Jechewet Trzaskała was registered as “deceased” in the course of the deportation from Dobra.

On October 20, 1941, the Kowale gmina and the settlements it encompassed became a so-called rural ghetto under the collective name of Kowale Pańskie. Such rural ghettos were erected for Jews deported from nearby towns, but they were treated by the Germans only as a temporary holding place. In Kowale, Jews were quartered in houses and farm buildings of evicted Polish farmers; some Poles remained there and were forced to house several Jewish families on their farms.⁴

In December 1941, the Judenrat in Kowale was ordered to select 1,100 Jews deemed unfit for labor, who were then deported via Dobra to the newly opened Chełmno extermination camp.⁵ The final liquidation of the Kowale ghetto took place at the end of July 1942, when its remaining residents were sent to Chełmno for extermination.

SOURCES Most of the information regarding the Dobra ghetto comes from Benjamin Jacobs, *The Dentist of Auschwitz: A Memoir* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995). The same survivor also has a testimony in VHF (# 17426).

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NOTES

1. See the Web site www.dobra.net.pl/dobra/strony/historia.htm; VHF, # 17426, testimony of Benjamin Jacobs, 1996; Jacobs, *The Dentist of Auschwitz*, pp. 20, 22–23, 25, 29.

2. See www.dobra.net.pl/dobra/strony/historia.htm; VHF, # 17426. Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2006), pp. 202, 205, dates the formation of the Dobra ghetto in December 1940, citing OKBZHL, KO 13/85, p. 50, and describes it, however, as having been enclosed.

3. VHF, # 17426.

4. Czesław Łuczak, *Dzień po dniu w okupowanej Wielkopolsce i na Ziemi Łódzkiej (Kraj Warty)* (Poznań: Wyd. Lektor, 1993), p. 159; Artur Eisenbach, *Hitlerowska polityka zagłady Żydów* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1961), p. 226; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: województwo konińskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1981), p. 21.

5. Łuczak, *Dzień po dniu*, pp. 167–168.

GĄBIN

Pre-1939: Gąbin (Yiddish: Gombin), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Gombin, Kreis Gostynin, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Gąbin, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Gąbin is located about 60 kilometers (37 miles) northeast of Łódź. On the eve of World War II the Jewish population of Gąbin was 2,312.¹ German troops captured Gąbin on September 17, 1939. In the first days of occupation a German military administration was in control of the town. At this time the synagogue was burned down, and the rabbi was arrested and probably murdered. Soon Jewish stores were confiscated, and some Jews were evicted from their homes to make room for ethnic German families. In October 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat), consisting of six persons, was established. The head of the Judenrat was Mosze Want; his brother served as head of the Jewish Police. The tasks of the Jewish Council included the preparation of identification registers and the collection of items demanded by the German authorities.² Forced labor was a key element in the persecution process from the start. Initially, Jews were kidnapped on the streets and were put to work clearing debris left from the bombardment of the city. Subsequently the Judenrat organized the compulsory forced labor imposed by the Germans on all Jewish men aged between 18 and 60.

According to a census conducted by the authorities in Hobensalza in December 1939, the Jewish population of Gąbin consisted of 1,949 Jews and 5,501 non-Jewish inhabitants.³

The first signs of a large Aktion against the Jews came on April 20, 1940, when a large number of German policemen arrived from Gostynin and the neighboring villages. During this Aktion the Jews were forced out of their houses and beaten with sticks and whips. Elderly and sick people were killed. Dozens of Jews were locked in the local pub guarded by the SS, where they were beaten with metal chains to force them to pay a large ransom. Such incidents happened repeatedly. Even the young son of the head of the Jewish Councils and a 14-year-old girl named Hanna Klinger were murdered. The following people were particularly brutal towards the Jews: Gustav Kramer, a pre-war resident of Gąbin and an active member of the Hitler Youth during the occupation, and others including Heinz Mass, Braun, Heiniger, and Schumacher.⁴

The Gąbin ghetto was established by August 1941. It was located in the southeast part of town. It was surrounded by Kiliński Street, Poprzeczna Street, Cmentarna Street, and parts of Suchy Pień Street. Poles who lived in houses located in the ghetto area were moved out and received mostly small former Jewish apartments.⁵ The mayor, Rode, was responsible for the maintenance of the ghetto. The following people occupied this position during the occupation: Ferdinand Schneider, Rode, Erich Ratzlaff, and Richard Hacke.⁶ At first the ghetto was “open.” That is, Jews could still contact the non-Jewish section of the population relatively easily. Subsequently,

the ghetto was surrounded by a fence and strictly guarded. The guards were ordered to shoot anybody who came close to the ghetto fence or who attempted to escape from the ghetto. In spite of the harsh conditions, such as the confined space and the prevalence of disease, especially typhus, school education continued within the enclosed ghetto under the supervision of Pola Pindok and Hinda Brzezinska.⁷ A.L. Gips managed financial resources received from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). The money donated by people in the ghetto helped to establish a communal kitchen for the poor and the distribution of clothes and medicine. However, conditions in the ghetto became so harsh that the Jewish Council requested help in an official letter. In the middle of 1941, the German authorities started to deport Jewish men from Gałab to forced labor camps around Poznań. The Jewish Council was forced to prepare the lists of the men to be transferred. When news arrived about the terrible living conditions in these labor camps, the Jews were no longer prepared to report as requested. The German police and the Jewish ghetto police then conducted raids in the ghetto, dragging the men from their apartments.

In 1942, a total of 2,150 people were registered in the Gałab ghetto. Among them were 250 Jews who had been driven into the ghetto from the surrounding area.⁸ In March 1942, a group of about 500 men was deported from the ghetto to the labor camp of Konin-Czarków (Gemeinschaftslager der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, no. 23 Konin). Before the deportation Aktion took place, the head of the local labor department personally shot the following people: Albert Eichel, a printer; Majer Kielbert, a trader; and Moszke Geista, the night guard on the local estate. According to the available death records from just one of the labor camps, at least 23 Jews from Gałab died there between 1942 and 1943.⁹ Sick and elderly people who were not able to work were transferred to the extermination camp at Chełmno and killed. The liquidation of the ghetto was carried out between April 12 and April 14, 1942. The Jews were told that they had to pay a fee of 8 Reichsmark (RM) per person in order to be sent to other ghettos in the "Wartheland." However, they were sent to Chełmno to be gassed.¹⁰ The following units participated in this Aktion: Schutzpolizei, Auxiliary Police (Selbstschutz), the SS, and the local Gendarmerie (Gendarmerieposten Gombin). Some local German residents also took part in the Aktion. At first, the Jews were herded to the Strażacki Square, where many of the victims were beaten, and some of the sick Jews, such as Rafal Mejdak with his wife Hanna and the tailor Żolna, were shot by the SS. The Jews were kept on the square for two to three days before facing a selection among the men, women, and children. The local Polish inhabitants were strictly forbidden to approach the Jews or give them food. However, some local residents managed to bring bread and water to the captives. The only provisions the Jews received from the German authorities for almost three days was a barrel of unclean water from the local pond. After a couple of days, the square became too small for all the gathered Jews. The first transport of 1,900 people was sent to Chełmno.¹¹

One week after the liquidation of the Gałab ghetto, the remaining Jewish property was auctioned off to the local population. The German authorities took the most valuable items, while any worthless remaining Jewish property was simply burned. In May 1942, the Germans settled Poles into the former Jewish residences in the ghetto area. In exchange, the former Polish houses were given to ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) resettled from Romania to Gałab. Between August and September 1942 the Jewish cemetery was destroyed.¹² Of the 2,312 prewar Jews residing in Gałab, only 212 survived. Of these, just 32 survived the forced labor and concentration camps, were hidden by non-Jews, or lived on the Aryan side; the remainder had escaped to the interior of the Soviet Union.¹³

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Gałab can be found in the following publications: Jack Zicklin et al., eds., *Gombin: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Town in Poland* (New York: Gombiner Landsmanschaft in Amerike, 1969); Janusz Szczepański, *Dzieje Gałabina do roku 1945* (Warsaw, 1984); Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, 3 vols. (Warsaw: PWN, 1997), vol. 1; Danuta Dąbrowska, "Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w 'Kraju Warty' w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955); and Janusz Wróbel, "Getta w powiatach gostynińskim i kutnowskim," in *W 45 rocznicę zagłady skupisk żydowskich w Kraju Warty* (Zduńska Wola, 1987).

Documentation regarding the Gałab ghetto can be found in the following archives: APŁ (sygn. 29698, Ghettoverwaltung); APP (sygn. 594, Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Wartheland); AŻIH (sygn. Ring 1/108); OKŚZpNPŁdz; USCK (Death books of the concentration camp Konin-Czarków); USHMM (2002.199.1); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Szczepański, *Dzieje Gałabina*, p. 52; M. Chudzyński, ed., *Dzieje Gostynina i ziemi gostynińskiej* (Warsaw, 1990), p. 229; Dąbrowska, "Zagłada skupisk żydowskich," p. 168, table 11.
2. H. Krzewińska, "Zagłada Żydów gałabińskich," part II, in *Notatki Płockie* (Płock, 2000), no. 4/185, p. 18.
3. APP, sygn. 594, Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Wartheland, p. 17.
4. J. Borysiak, "W 50 rocznicę likwidacji getta. Prześladowanie i zagłada ludności żydowskiej Gałabina," in *Notatki Płockie* (Płock, 1992) no. 4/153, p. 37; Krzewińska, "Zagłada Żydów gałabińskich," part II, p. 19.
5. OKŚZpNPŁdz, sygn. OKŁ Ko 11/83, against Z. Tancer, J. Oziemski, J. Sobieski, and J. Matuszewski; OKŚZpNPŁdz, sygn. OKŁ Ko 27/83, against Z. Pytl; IPN, sygn. Zh III/31/35/68, getta, woj. warszawskie.
6. J. Borysiak, "Kalendarium wojny i okupacji w Gałabie 1939–1945" (unpublished manuscript) p. 2; O. Budrewicz, "Ostatni polski mennonita," *Perspektywy*, no. 38 (1976).
7. Krzewińska, "Zagłada Żydów gałabińskich," part II, p. 19. Before the German occupation, both women had worked as teachers in Polish schools.

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8. Dąbrowska, “Zagłada skupisk żydowskich,” p. 168, table 11.

9. APŁ, Gettoverwaltung, sygn. 29698, pp. 110–117, 63–65; USCK, Death books of the labor camp Konin-Czarków; Jack Frankel, “Gombin Children in the Camps,” in Zicklin, *Gombin: The Life and Destruction*, pp. 79–82.

10. Sakowska, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, 1:65–70.

11. Wróbel, “Getta w powiatach gostynińskim i kutnowskim,” p. 14.

12. Szczepański, *Dzieje Gąbina*, p. 282.

13. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), 7:235; APŁ, Akta Gąbina, sygn. 763, p. 125—report from the town council to the elder of the region in Gostynin on February 4, 1946, which states that 16 Jews were saved; Krzewińska, “Zagłada Żydów gąbińskich,” part II, p. 24. Elisabeth Bates from Gąbin survived on the “Aryan” side on false papers; see USHMM, 2002.199.1.

GOSTYNIN

Pre-1939: Gostynin, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Gasten (renamed Walderode from September 12, 1943), Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartbelaend; post-1998: Gostynin, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Gostynin is located about 75 kilometers (47 miles) north of Łódź. On the eve of war in August 1939, 2,269 Jews were living in the town.¹

German troops occupied Gostynin on September 16, 1939. Despoliation, humiliation, beatings, and killings followed in the months after.

At the end of December 1939, 2,051 Jews were still residing in Gostynin, which had a total population of 9,744.² The German occupation authorities ordered the demolition of the Bet Midrash and used the wood from the ruins as heating material. After German forces had burned down the synagogue in November 1939, they levied a contribution of 10,000 złoty on the Jewish community, to be paid on the following day. This was the first of a series of financial demands made by the German authorities, including one for 25,000 Reichsmark (RM) in December 1939 and another for 5,000 RM in February 1940. This last demand produced only 3,300 RM. As a result, SS forces were sent to check every Jewish household, collecting the remaining amount by violent means.³

Sources disagree about the date on which the ghetto was established, but it was probably on March 15, 1941.⁴ It encompassed the right side of Zamkowa Street from the market square to Bagnista Street. It also included one house on Bagnista Street and one house on Piłsudski Street. On the left-hand side, the ghetto area extended from Olszowa Street and from Piłsudski Street to the Skrwa River. The area of the ghetto was 1.5 hectares (3.7 acres).⁵ Initially the ghetto was open, but later it was strictly isolated from the outside world. It was surrounded by barbed wire and a wooden fence. At first the residents of the ghetto maintained frequent contact



Jewish men wearing triangular badges walk along a street in the Gostynin ghetto, 1941–1942.

USHMM WS # 33442, COURTESY OF GFH

with the Polish population, who were always willing to exchange groceries for craft products. But this period of relatively easy contact between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds was brief. During this period, Itsak (Antek) Cukierman came to the ghetto several times in his capacity as leader of the Hechaluts-Dror organization. Among the Germans, the following individuals acted in a particularly hostile manner towards the Jews: Jacob Pohl (the owner of a store selling metal products), Buder, Gustav Baum Arendt (partner of the company Arendt & Wilhelm, Hoch- und Tiefbau), Gustav Ilichmann, Weiland (the head of the labor office), and Hein (a shoemaker).⁶

On the orders of the German authorities a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, and among others, individuals named Zajac and Burak became members. A Jewish police force was also established, among whose tasks was to control—from inside the boundaries—entry into and exit from the ghetto. Outside the ghetto, the German Order Police (Gendarmerie and Schutzpolizei) were in charge and were assisted by the local auxiliary police. In accordance with the German authorities' orders, a number of Jews worked for companies outside the ghetto area in tailor workshops, in laundry shops, or in the fields. They were also used for construction projects, including the destruction of churches in Gostynin.⁷

The food ration for the Jews consisted of 250 grams (8.8 ounces) of bread per day, 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of fat per week, 250 grams (8.8 ounces) of sugar per month, and a quarter of a liter (half a pint) of milk daily. The Jews who worked outside the ghetto received an additional 250 grams (8.8 ounces) of bread.⁸ In the spring of 1941, a fire decreased the ghetto to only half of its size, with only the western section of the ghetto remaining. According to German sources, their troops accidentally set the buildings on fire on their way to the east. However, the majority of the local population of Gostynin, Jews and Poles, believed that the Germans intentionally set the ghetto on fire.⁹ After this incident, living conditions deteriorated considerably inside the ghetto. Two or more families had to live crammed together in one small apartment. There were also

10 Jewish families from Gdynia and Pomorze in the ghetto. These people had fled from the Generalgouvernement and became trapped in the Gostynin ghetto. One Jewish woman from Palestine was in the ghetto as well.

In June 1941, the first cases of typhus were recorded in the ghetto. Two Jewish medics from the Koło ghetto were sent to Gostynin to care for the patients. The Jews living in the ghetto received help from the Polish population, especially deliveries of food. There were some cases in which Polish families hid Jews. The Piechowicz family on Trakt Gąbin Street hid Moszek Dancyger throughout the occupation; the Sadowski family hid Berl Lejwin and his wife and daughter.¹⁰

In the spring of 1941, the Germans started to deport Jewish young men and women to labor camps in the Poznań region, including the Chodzież camp, called Kolmar in German. In March 1942, a number of Jewish men were transferred to labor camp number 23 in Konin-Czarków (Gemeinschaftslager der Deutschen Arbeitsfront). One German company, Otto Trebitz, Tiefbau, employed 71 Gostynin Jews from this camp on the construction of a railway line. Altogether 850 people from Kreis Gasten were deported to this camp. On February 14, 1942, a poll tax of 8 RM per person was levied on the residents of the ghetto. In the ghettos of Reichsgau Wartheland this tax was a signal of the impending deportation to the extermination camp in Chełmno.

The liquidation of the ghetto took place on April 16–17, 1942. Women with children and also the sick and the elderly—altogether about 350 families—were sent to Chełmno. In total, some 2,000 Jews from Gostynin were murdered in the Chełmno camp. Only about 30 Gostynin Jews survived the war in Poland under German occupation.¹¹

Jewish patients in Gostynin's ward for the mentally ill were exterminated within the framework of the T4 euthanasia program. In early 1940, the authorities ordered that Jewish patients be separated from Polish patients. The extermination of the Jewish patients began on February 27, 1940, when Gestapo men from Płock took away 3 men and 3 women and shot them in the forest near Łąck on Górskie Lake. Those who remained met a similar fate in subsequent transports.¹² In each of these cases, the Gestapo demanded that the patients be released to them on the basis of an order in their possession. It was established that before the war all of these patients had received medical treatment at the expense of the places from which they came. On October 22, 1940, 15 men and 7 women were deported to the institution in Kobierzyn near Kraków. During the first days of June 1941, the German authorities conducted a selection among those who were sick and unable to work. All of the sick Jews were selected. On June 9, 1941, 12 men and 10 women were taken to an institution for the poor in Śrem, close to Poznań. These were the last of the mentally ill Jews from the Gostynin hospital. Between June 10 and June 12, 1941, they were taken from Śrem to a forest in the vicinity of Mosina near Poznań, and there they were murdered, poisoned with fumes in a gas truck. This

Aktion was conducted by a special SS unit, called Sonderkommando Lange (named after its head, SS-Obersturmführer/Kriminalkommissar Herbert Lange) made up of Gestapo officers.¹³

SOURCES Information on the Jewish community of Gostynin and the ghetto can be found in the following publications: Y.M. Biderman, ed., *Pinkes Gostynin: Yizkor Bukh* (New York: Gostynin Yizkor Book Committee, 1960); Marian Chudzynski, ed., *Dzieje Gostynina i ziemi gostynińskiej* (Warsaw, 1990); Danuta Dąbrowska, "Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w 'Kraju Warty' w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955); Janusz Wróbel, "Getta w powiatach gostynińskiej i kutnowskiej," in *W 45 rocznicę zagłady skupisk żydowskich w Kraju Warty* (Zduńska Wola, 1987); and Marian Kaczmarek, "Eutanazja," *Kraju Warty, Kronika wielkopolski* (Poznań), no. 1 (36) (1985).

Documents on the Gostynin ghetto can be found in the following archives: APP (Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Wartheland, sygn. 594 and 211); and AŻIH (Ring I, no. 952).

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NOTES

1. Chudzyński, *Dzieje Gostynina*, pp. 229, 311; Dąbrowska, "Zagłada skupisk żydowskich," p. 168, table 11.
2. APP, Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Wartheland (Reichsstatthalter), sygn. 594, p. 17.
3. R. Sakowska, "Relacje Daniela Fligelmana czfonka 'Oneg Szabat,'" *BŻIH*, no. 1-2/137-138, pp. 188–189.
4. B. Konarska-Pabiniak, *Gostynin. Szkice z przeszłości* (Gostynin, 2004), p. 40, gives the date of March 15, 1941, for the establishment of the ghetto in Gostynin; see also Sakowska, "Relacje Daniela Fligelmana," p. 189; Wróbel, "Getta w powiatach," p. 3; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 186.
5. Konarska-Pabiniak, *Gostynin*, p. 40; Wróbel, "Getta w powiatach," p. 5.
6. APP, Akta Miasta Płocka, Zarząd Miejski w Gostyninie. Referat Administracyjny. Rejestracja Zbrodni Niemieckich 1945, sygn. 123.
7. Wróbel, "Getta w powiatach," p. 7.
8. Konarska-Pabiniak, *Gostynin*, p. 40.
9. Chudzyński, *Dzieje Gostynina*, p. 540.
10. APP, Reichsstatthalter, sygn. 2111, pp. 262–264; Chudzynski, *Dzieje Gostynina*, pp. 540–542.
11. R. Sakowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy* (Warsaw, PWN, 1997), 1:25, 27; AŻIH, Ring I/57, letter of M. Habergryc on February 17, 1942, to his family in the Warsaw ghetto regarding the impending liquidation Aktion; Chudzyński, *Dzieje Gostynina*, p. 542.
12. E. Wilczkowski, "Los chorych psychicznie w szpitalu dla psychicznie i nerwowo chorych w Gostyninie w latach okupacji niemieckiej," *Rocznik Psychiatryczny* (Warsaw) 37:1 (1945): 104–112.
13. *Ibid.*; Kaczmarek, "Eutanazja," p. 78; Z. Jaroszewski, ed., *Zagłada chorych psychicznie w Polsce 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1993), p. 138; OKSZpNPPoz, sygn. OKP. I.S. 24/67.

GRABÓW

Pre-1939: Grabów, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Grabow, Landgemeinde in Kreis Lentschütz (Łęczycza), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Grabów, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Grabów is located 52 kilometers (32.5 miles) north of Łódź and 17 kilometers (11 miles) northeast of Łęczycza. The 1921 official census recorded 915 Jews out of a total population of 1,658—or 55.2 percent.

German forces occupied Grabów about a week after the start of the invasion on September 1. Soon after their arrival, German forces temporarily rounded up all men aged between 16 and 30. In the fall of 1939, Jewish males, including young boys, were captured and sent to perform forced labor.¹ At this time, Jews who had escaped from other regions of the German occupation settled in Grabów. For January 1, 1940, it is reported that 142 of the 967 Jews living in Grabów were refugees.² By December 1940, the number of refugees had declined somewhat to 60 people out of a total population of 960. The refugees came from Pomerania, Poznań, Kalisz, and Łódź.³ Not much is known about antisemitic events in Grabów following the German occupation. Michael Alberti states that the Jewish population lived widely spread among the Germans and other non-Jews, and therefore it was impossible to impose restrictions on them, regulating the areas where they were allowed to live, or their access to certain areas of the town.⁴

Up until October 1940, there were 120 Jews employed by the authorities on local estates, receiving 50 Reichpfennigs per day. Initially the community was able to look after the refugees and impoverished Jews from its own funds, but by the end of 1940, 70 percent of the Jews were in need of help and local resources had been exhausted. Therefore, the Jewish aid committee in Grabów appealed urgently to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw for financial aid in December 1940, as scores of Jewish families were starving and freezing due to a lack of food and heating material.⁵

In 1941, the Germans began to concentrate the Jews in Landkreis Lentschütz. One of the designated concentration points was Grabów. Already in the first quarter of 1941, most likely in January, about 400 Jews arrived from nearby Łęczycza.⁶ According to *Obozy hitlerowskie*, in February 1942 there was a ghetto in Grabów, and the Jews from Łęczycza were moved into this ghetto. The ghetto probably held about 1,200 people.

Jewish survivor Harry Jacuby also mentions a ghetto, noting it was formed by the time Jews were brought in from other towns. The Jews were all confined within the ghetto and not permitted to leave. Additional people were moved into the houses of those Jews who lived there previously. By this time most Jewish stores had been closed down or taken over by local ethnic Germans. As shortages increased, Jews sold their remaining property to buy bread.⁷

In the course of 1941, the Germans began to make use of the Jewish labor force by establishing, as in many other

ghettos, a number of “workshops,” mainly sewing workshops. According to *Pinkas ha-kehillot*, a significant number of Jews was employed in these sites. The legal income provided here offered them a meager means of survival, as did smuggling and illicit commerce with the surrounding Polish population⁸—both indicators of the harsh living conditions in the ghetto.

During the summer of 1941, there were a series of round-ups of younger Jews, who were sent away to forced labor camps, including a camp known as Dornfeld, near Poznań. For a time their parents who remained behind in the Grabów ghetto were able to send them packages with food and extra clothing, but afterwards this contact was broken off. Some of the youths who survived these forced labor camps were subsequently sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp and, if they survived the selections and other ordeals there, on to other camps.⁹

Grabów was located not far from the extermination camp in Chełmno, so it is not surprising that the Jews of Grabów were among the first to learn about the events taking place there, once the Germans had commenced the mass murder of the Jews in Warthegau during the winter of 1941–1942. By January of 1942, the rabbi of Grabów sent a letter describing the Chełmno extermination camp to the Jewish Council in the Łódź ghetto, but the letter did not arrive there until the summer. An eyewitness who had escaped from Chełmno and arrived in Grabów in the second half of January 1942 provided details about the extermination of the Jews.¹⁰ Similar postcards with coded references to the fate of the Jews of the region around Grabów were also sent by the rabbi and other inhabitants of the town to relatives in the Warsaw ghetto.¹¹ As a result of this knowledge, some Jews tried to escape from the town and to reach the Generalgouvernement. Others tried to get back to Łęczycza, where they had come from originally. But not many succeeded, and the majority of the Grabów Jews had no place to escape to. In April 1942, the Jews in Grabów, around 1,240 people, were taken to the extermination camp at Chełmno and killed.¹²

SOURCES A detailed description of the Jewish community of Grabów can be found in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 84–85. One of the earliest mentions of the Grabów ghetto can be found in *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 137, 161. The fate of the Jewish population of Grabów is also documented in Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 201–202. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), mentions Grabów on p. 190.

Archival sources on the fate of the Jewish community of Grabów during the Holocaust include the following: AŻIH (Ring 1/549 and 210/351); IPN (kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC 210/351]); VHF (# 9788); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 9788, testimony of Harry Jacuby.
2. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 84.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/351, Jüdische Hilfskomiteet an AJDC Warsaw, December 18, 1940.
4. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 201.
5. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/351, Jüdische Hilfskomiteet an AJDC Warsaw, December 18, 1940.
6. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 84; Yitzhak Frenkel, ed., *Sefer Linsbitz* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Leczyca in Israel, 1953), pp. 182–83.
7. VHF, # 9788.
8. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 85.
9. VHF, # 9788.
10. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. xx–xxi.
11. Manfred Struck, ed., *Chełmno/Kulmbof: Ein vergessener Ort des Holocaust?* (Bonn/Berlin: gegen Vergessen—Für Demokratie e.V., 2001), pp. 91–95.
12. Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbof: Der Beginn der "Endlösung"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), p. 84.

GRODZIEC

Pre-1939: Grodziec (Yiddish: Gruyets), village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Grossdorf, Kreis Konin, Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Grodziec, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

The village of Grodziec is located 8 kilometers (5 miles) southwest of Rychwał. The 1921 census registered 107 Jewish residents.

In November or December 1939, the German authorities expelled approximately 300 Jews from Rychwał to Grodziec. Each of the newcomers was permitted to take with them up to 13 to 14 kilograms (30 pounds) of belongings. According to one of the expellees, survivor Lena Obar, each Grodziec family had to take in up to three families from Rychwał. She recalls life in Grodziec as very depressing, particularly due to the housing situation, as people were forced to sleep on the floor. As regards labor, Obar stated that the Jews did not have to work “too much.” She also described Grodziec “as a little ghetto” on her arrival.¹

Most sources date the establishment of the ghetto in the summer of 1940, when the remaining Jews of Kreis Konin were deported to a network of so-called hamlet ghettos (*Dorfghettos*) in the southern part of the Kreis; one of them was Grodziec and its adjoining settlements.

According to Ryszard Głoszkowski, the Germans planned to build a military training ground in the southern part of the Kreis and so wanted to depopulate the area of all its inhabitants; however, on July 14, 1940, the plan was postponed

“until the end of the war,” and “for this reason the deportations from the area were delayed.” The temporary abandonment of the construction of the training ground likely influenced the decision to concentrate the Jews of the Kreis in this area.

With the final expulsion of the Jews from Konin in mid-July 1940, some of its residents were resettled to the Grodziec ghetto. An account from the Ringelblum Archive, by an anonymous Jew from Konin, describes the deportation to the hamlet ghettos: “On July 17, the Gendarmes burst into all Jewish apartments, allowing everyone to take a small bundle and then driving them out, not even excluding the sick and paralyzed . . . to an assembly point. From there, after a nightlong march, everyone was brought to three villages: Grodziec, Zagórow, and Rzgów (around this time the remainder of the [Jewish] population of the Konin Kreis was [also] resettled there).”²

The same author adds:

One has to admit, that the [Christian] inhabitants of those villages took on a more warm-hearted attitude towards us. Before the war, there were boards with inscriptions like “Jews out!” or “Beat the Jew!” Now the deportees were offered bread and potatoes, [the locals] refusing to accept payment for them. There was a priest from Grodziec who told [his parishioners] to bring out bread and milk for the deportees, and then called from the pulpit “to help out our brother Jews.” He was later imprisoned in the concentration camp in Dachau.³

A Judenrat was organized in the ghetto; its composition is unknown. On their arrival, the Kreis Landrat had declared that the Jews in hamlet ghettos would have to “muddle through on their own,” denying them any special help, although other accounts credit him with having arranged at least some transport for the deportees. At that time, the Jews concentrated in Grodziec apparently were restricted in their movement. The Ringelblum account mentioned above notes that two days after their resettlement, five Konin Jews were required to obtain a special permit in order to return to Konin. Other accounts indicate that at least one Jew was severely beaten and died from his wounds when caught attempting to return home to salvage part of his property, as such trips were forbidden on pain of death. In the meantime, resettled ethnic Germans had moved into many of the vacated Jewish properties in Konin.⁴

Around this period (July 17–18, 1940), the Jewish community of nearby Skulsk (Jewish population of 210 in 1939) was expelled, with some of its inhabitants being relocated to the Grodziec ghetto. In addition, K. Górczyca and Z. Lorek have established that the Jews from Kramsk and Wilczyn and a number of Jews from Ślesin were also relocated to the Grodziec ghetto that same summer,⁵ raising the number of inhabitants to 2,000.

According to Isaiah Trunk, residents of such hamlet ghettos in the Warthegau were supposed to draw their livelihood from farming. Secondary sources state that the majority of such ghettos were unfenced, unguarded, and only occasionally patrolled by the Germans. They disagree on whether Poles

living in the Grodziec hamlet ghettos were evicted from their households to accommodate the ghetto residents; it appears, however, that some at least took in the Jews on their farms, using them as unpaid labor in return for food and shelter. Jews generally describe conditions here as tolerable, although work hours were long. Some Jews subsequently were sent back from Grodziec to Konin and other towns for periods of forced labor, with most returning to Grodziec by February 1941.⁶

At the beginning of March 1941, it appears that all of the Jews were deported from the hamlet ghetto in Grodziec and its surrounding villages as part of the further removal of non-Germans from the region, but also in connection with the resumption of plans to establish a military training ground south of Konin. The Jews in Grodziec were loaded onto about 300 wagons and divided between their deportation destinations only during the journey to the Konin railway station. Some of the Jews were sent to the nearby Zagórów ghetto, and the others were destined for the town of Józefów Biłgorajski (Distrikt Lublin). According to one account, some people decided to go with the group destined for Józefów, as they wanted to see their hometown of Konin for one last time.⁷ This latter group was sent by rail first to Łódź, where they were forced to hand over jewelry and other valuables. Then they were dispatched to Distrikt Lublin by train a couple of days later. It appears that some of these deportees were instead sent to other destinations in Distrikt Lublin, including Izbica and Krasnystaw, while of those who reached Józefów Biłgorajski, some of them were sent on after a few weeks to other destinations, such as Dęblin, Szczebrzeszyn, and Zamość, due to overcrowding in Józefów. More than 2,000 Jews were deported from Kreis Konin at this time, of which just under half were probably from the Grodziec ghetto.⁸

Of the group of about 1,000 Jews sent from Grodziec to Łódź, some 180 able-bodied men were selected out from the deportations to Distrikt Lublin and kept initially for about six weeks in the Łódź ghetto for various work tasks. After that they were sent to a labor camp near Gdańsk to work on road construction. Subsequently some of the survivors of this group were deported to labor camps in the Baltic states.⁹

One account in the yizkor book mentions that some of the elderly and sick were selected out in Łódź and killed by lethal injections, but this report remains unconfirmed.¹⁰ Other sources indicate that there may have been a subsequent deportation from Grodziec to Distrikt Lublin, but most date the evacuation of the Jews from Grodziec and the surrounding villages in early March 1941, which effectively meant the liquidation of this hamlet ghetto.

It should be noted, however, that there were Jews and Poles working in a labor camp established in Grodziec at the turn of 1942–1943, but the origin of these Jews and their subsequent fate are unknown.

The fate of the Jews sent to the Zagórów ghetto is difficult to reconstruct, as there were probably no survivors. Available sources indicate that the Zagórów ghetto was liquidated in the fall of 1941, probably between September 24 and October 3 but possibly a few weeks later. Its inhabitants were murdered

between Niesłusz and Rudzica, in the “Długa Łąka” Forest or, according to other sources, in the Kazimierz Biskupi Forest. The executioners were members of an SS-Sonderkommando, led by SS-Obersturmführer Herbert Lange of the Gestapo in Poznań. According to a Polish witness, Dr. Mieczysław Sękwicz, who was taken to the grave site to sort out the clothing during the massacre and fill in the graves, some of the Jews were more or less boiled alive in one mass grave when water was poured onto quick lime already in the trench, and other victims were brought to the site as corpses by a gas van. Presumably the Germans were experimenting with various forms of mass murder, as this was at the very onset of the killings in the Warthegau.¹¹ Buried in mass graves, the victims' bodies were exhumed and burned in 1944.¹²

SOURCES The following publications contain information on the Grodziec ghetto: D. Sierpacka, “Postawy Polaków wobec ludności żydowskiej w Kraju Warty,” in A. Namysło, ed., *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy* (Warsaw: IPN, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), pp. 201–202; Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 196; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 192; Ryszard Głoszkowski, “Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na ludności polskiej w powiecie konińskim w latach 1939–1945,” in *Eksterminacja ludności polskiej w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Wyniki badań ośrodków terenowych* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, GKBZHwP, 1979), pp. 77, 81–82; J. Gulczyński, “Konińska relacja z Archiwum Ringelbluma,” *Rocznik Koniński*, no. 14 (2003): 198–199; Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 113; Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 165 (Skulsk) and p. 262 (Rychwal); Janina Kielboń, “Deportacje Żydów do dystryktu lubelskiego (1939–1943),” in D. Libionka, ed., *Akcja Reinhardt: Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: IPN, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2004), pp. 163–164; and M. Gelbart, ed., *Kebilat Konin bi-ferihatab uve-burbanab* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotse Konin be-Yisrael, 1968).

Relevant archival documentation includes the following: OKŚZpNPPoz (III Ds. 19/68); USHMM (RG-15.079M, Ring I/841); and VHF (# 31143).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 31143, testimony of Lena Obar, 1997.
2. Julius Ancer, www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/minnesotansandHolocaust/ancer/index.html; USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/841, Lb. 848, Mf. 0827, reel 39.
3. USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/841; see also Gelbart, *Kebilat Konin*, pp. 526–527, who notes that the priest soon died in the camp.
4. Gelbart, *Kebilat Konin*, pp. 527, 559.
5. “We Remember the Extermination Pits!” at www.zchor.org/extermination/pits.htm.

6. Gelbart, *Kehilat Konin*, pp. 536, 541.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 536.
8. VHF, # 31143—Obar believes she was deported to Józefów in 1939 or 1940; Ancer, www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/minnesotans/andHolocaust/ancer/index.html. See also Gelbart, *Kehilat Konin*, pp. 529–530, 545–546, which estimates that about 800 Jews from Grodziec were sent to Józefów.
9. Gelbart, *Kehilat Konin*, pp. 545–546; but see also USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/841, for a diverging account.
10. Gelbart, *Kehilat Konin*, pp. 528–529.
11. OKŚZpNPPoz, III Ds. 19/68, testimony of Dr. Mieczysław Sęnkiewicz; Gelbart, *Kehilat Konin*, pp. 595–601; see also Isaiah Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto: A History*, trans. and ed. Robert Moses Shapiro (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in cooperation with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2006), pp. 229–230.
12. “We Remember the Extermination Pits!”

IZBICA KUJAWSKA

Pre-1939: Izbica Kujawska, town, Poznań województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Mühlenthal, Landgemeinde, Kreis Wartbrücken (Kolo), Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Izbica Kujawska, województwo kujawsko-pomorskie, Poland

Izbica Kujawska is located 88 kilometers (55 miles) northwest of Łódź. Before the outbreak of World War II, there were about 1,400 Jews living in Izbica Kujawska.

In the first days of the war, a number of Jews fled to areas further to the east, but some of these people returned within a few days, only to find their homes destroyed and the contents robbed. According to the account of Sarah Mancha, local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), who were mostly wealthy farmers, were among those who participated in plundering the Jews. Among the ethnic Germans who showed particular cruelty to their Jewish neighbors during the occupation were men named Schmalz, Hubert, Lizka, Karger, Wiesenthal, and Otto Parizka.¹

In early 1940, the German authorities established a ghetto in Izbica Kujawska in which about 1,000 people resided, possibly including Jews from nearby villages. In the ghetto, severe overcrowding, hunger, and disease caused a number of deaths.²

In the records of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), one letter has survived and states that by the end of 1940 the Jews of Izbica Kujawska were starving and in desperate need of support. On December 4, 1940, the Reichsvereinigung der Juden (Reich Union of Jews) in Germany sent 500 Reichsmark (RM) via the AJDC to support the Jews in Izbica Kujawska. The Jewish Council (Judenrat) then asked for additional support, due to the onset of winter and the large number of Jews in need of help. In particular, the council asked for bread, potatoes, and other groceries.³

Another witness, Jehuda Czarnoczapska, claims that on June 24, 1941, all the men of the Izbica Kujawska ghetto—according to his statement, 255 men—were arrested and taken to labor

camp in the Poznań region. They had no time to say goodbye to their families.⁴ Among the various camps to which men from Izbica Kujawska were sent were those in Mogilno, Dąbrówka, Inowrocław, and Poznań. In the camps they suffered from hunger and exhaustion, and most probably did not subsequently return to the ghetto.⁵

The ghetto remained in existence only until January 1942. On January 12, 1942, the seven Gendarmes based in Izbica Kujawska ordered the Jewish Council to assemble a group of men for work. About 40 men reported and were told to come back the next day with shovels and bread rations for two days. Then on January 13, since only 15 men from Izbica reported for work, another 14 were taken from a work site in nearby Bugaj, and these 29 men were sent to the Chełmno extermination camp by truck. The Izbica Jews each carried a rucksack with spare clothes. As they departed, some of the younger Poles mocked them, but the elderly Poles wept to see them go.⁶

Then on January 15, 1942, the Germans ordered the Jewish Council in Izbica to gather all the Jews of the ghetto on the following day for the collection of a poll tax. Fearing that a deportation Aktion was likely, it seems that the Judenrat probably advised the Jews to hide or flee. At 5:00 A.M. on January 16, large units of German police, assisted by local ethnic Germans, searched the ghetto house by house and gathered the Jews in the local church. During the manhunt, several Jews were shot, including the head of the Jewish Council, Eliyahu Izbicki. Only a handful managed to escape and find refuge in other nearby Jewish communities that were still intact. The Jews in the church were closely guarded overnight and then sent to Chełmno the next day, where they were all murdered by asphyxiation.⁷

The male Jews from Izbica Kujawska and Bugaj sent to Chełmno a few days before were among the grave-digger detail; they had to bury the corpses of the Izbica Jews, once they were unloaded from the gas vans, in mass graves in the forest, not far from the Chełmno camp. Szlamek and Michał Podchlebnik said Kaddish (prayers for the dead) together briefly as they helped to cover the grave—a grave that held their relatives.⁸ By January 19, 1942, word had reached the ghetto in Grabów that the Jews of Izbica Kujawska had all been murdered either by shooting or by poison gas.⁹

SOURCES Information on the Izbica Kujawska ghetto and its liquidation is available in the following publications: Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbof: Der Beginn der “Endlösung”* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), pp. 38–39; Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), pp. 120, 120; and Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Die zweite Etappe ist der Tod: NS-Ausrottungspolitik gegen polnischen Juden, gesehen mit den Augen der Opfer. Ein historischer Essay und ausgewählte Dokumente aus dem Ringelblum-Archiv 1941–1943* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1993), pp. 177–178. The ghetto is also mentioned in: Czesław Pili-chowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 200, no. 1441; and *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 169. On the operation

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of the gas vans at Chełmno, see, for example, Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 427–432.

Several primary sources exist regarding the fate of the Jews of Izbica Kujawska during the Holocaust, including the following: AŻIH (210/386A, 301/786, and Ring I/412); IPN (“Ob,” sygn. 177); USHMM (RG-15.084M [AŻIH—Relacje], 301/786 [testimony of Czarnoczapska] and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC], 210/368A); and YVA (O-3/2228).

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NOTES

1. YVA, O-3/2228, testimony of Sarah Mancha, as cited by Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbof*, p. 38. Schmalz later served in the Gendarmerie.

2. Ibid., gives the date of early 1940 and indicates that the Jews of Babiak and other places were moved in. Other sources, however, indicate that the Jews of Babiak were sent to the “village ghetto” of Bugaj. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 200, no. 1441, dates the establishment of the Izbica Kujawska ghetto in 1941.

3. Jewish Community of Izbica Kujawska to AJDC Kraków, December 23, 1940. See USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/368A.

4. USHMM, RG-15.084M, 301/786.

5. YVA, O-3/2228, as cited by Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbof*, p. 38.

6. Accounts of Szlamek and Michał Podchlebnik published in Pawlicka-Nowak, *Chełmno Witnesses Speak*, pp. 101, 120.

7. YVA, O-3/2228, as cited by Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbof*, p. 38.

8. Sakowska, *Die zweite Etappe ist der Tod*, pp. 177–178, testimony of Szlamek. This source, however, dates the murder of the Izbica Jews a couple of days earlier, on January 13–14, 1942. See also AŻIH, Ring I/412.

9. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. xxi.

KALISZ

Pre-1939: Kalisz, city, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kalisch, center, Kreis Kalisch and Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Kalisz, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Kalisz is located 94 kilometers (58 miles) west of Łódź. On the eve of war in August 1939, there were between 24,000 and 28,000 Jews living in the city.

Around the time of the German invasion on September 1, 1939, thousands of Jews fled, and about three quarters of the population abandoned the city. German armed forces occupied the city on September 6, 1939.¹ Almost immediately the Germans began a typical program of murder, abuse, and robbery.

On October 10, 1939, the Germans ordered the establishment of a “Council of Elders of the Jewish Community” (Judenrat). Since none of the former community leaders re-

mained, the German governor of Kalisz summoned the cantor of the New Synagogue, Gustav Hahn, and ordered him to establish the council with 25 members to represent the Jews to the German authorities and ensure their obedience to all German orders and regulations. The Judenrat recruited a large staff of officials to carry out its tasks and prepared a detailed register of the Jewish population, with precise details about their professions and property. A series of German restrictions and orders soon followed, including demands for war compensation to be paid in money and valuables.²

Every day the German authorities requisitioned about 150 young men, sometimes more, for forced labor. The Jews were summoned for work two or three days per week, but the more wealthy Jews were permitted to buy replacements, which also supplemented the income of the Judenrat. The Jews were required to empty Jewish shops, clear away ruins, sweep the streets, repair damaged buildings, and clean barracks and police stations. The Jewish workers were brutally beaten, and Jewish women were forced to take off their clothing and use it to wash floors and clean toilets. Sometimes Jewish forced laborers were required to bury those sentenced to death and shot in the Jewish cemetery; some of these workers were also shot. The Germans did not pay any wages but provided food at some workplaces.³

In early November a rumor spread that a ghetto was to be established in a very small area. This required a number of Jews to move into the indicated quarter, away from the city center and major streets. Certain areas of the city began to be cleared systematically to make room for ethnic Germans resettled from the Baltic states. On November 15, Jews living on specific streets were given only a few minutes to pack and were led under guard to the monastery. Anxiety in the Jewish community grew, especially when the Jews were ordered to wear an identifying yellow badge.⁴

On November 20, 1939, several hundred German Gendarmes went into action, clearing entire streets of their Jewish population. The inhabitants were quickly removed from their homes, taking only a few of their belongings, and were escorted to the “Market Hall,” where the hundreds of Jews previously held at the monastery had now been taken. Here the Jews were robbed of any remaining valuables and held in overcrowded conditions under close guard until the next day, when the first group was packed like herrings into trains destined for Warsaw, Rzeszów, and other towns to the east. Many other Jews decided it was impossible to remain in Kalisz and left voluntarily by train. By the end of December 1939, several large transports had left Kalisz, taking almost 20,000 Jews, destined for various towns in the Generalgouvernement, including Lublin, Sandomierz, Kałuszyn, Łuków, Łochów, and Rembertów near Warsaw. The property of the expelled Jews was gathered in large warehouses. The best items were taken by German officials for themselves or sent to Germany, and less valuable items were sold cheaply to the Polish population.⁵

In mid-February 1940, 1,912 Jews held behind barbed wire at the “Market Hall” were receiving rations from the Jewish

hospital. On February 23, 1940, these Jews were transferred to the “open ghetto,” which was established for them and other Jews of the region in the small town of Koźminek about 20 kilometers (12 miles) to the northeast.⁶

After this deportation, only a few hundred Jews remained in Kalisz, mostly as patients or workers at the Jewish hospital, the Jewish old people’s home, or the Jewish orphanage, as well as a few unskilled laborers. These people were gradually augmented by a number of Jews who returned to Kalisz or emerged from hiding. For example, in the spring of 1940, some Polish-Jewish prisoners of war (POWs) returned to the city after being released by the Germans.

In June 1940, the residents of the old people’s home in the Talmud Torah were forced to move to a former lace factory at POW Street no. 13 (formerly Nowa Street). This location became the center of the Jewish labor camp or “ghetto,” which also comprised the Jewish hospital at Szopena 4, and two houses for the roughly 120 Jewish workers at POW Street nos. 16 and 18. Jews were not permitted to go out into the city without a special permit, but contacts with Poles continued, nonetheless. The reorganized Judenrat, still led by Hahn, organized craft workshops at POW Street no. 13 for tailors, shoemakers, furriers, and hatmakers, using machinery brought from workshops in the city that had closed down.⁷

The Jewish hospital, which from November 20, 1939, was directed by Dr. Devorah Gross-Shinagel, served as an important resource for the Jews of the Kalisz region for more than a year. About 1,000 patients passed through it, including some sick Jews brought from the ghettos and camps in the vicinity. Dr. Gross-Shinagel also organized inoculations against typhus for the Jews of the region.⁸

According to the Kalisz yizkor book, on October 26, 1940, the former mayor, Walter Grabowski, now in charge of the health department, selected more than 250 Jews as “unfit for work,” half of them chronic patients from the Jewish hospital. These Jews were loaded into “gas vans” and driven to a nearby forest, where the corpses were unloaded and subsequently burned. The Germans had previously stated that they were being sent for convalescence.⁹

On January 3, 1941, 439 people were registered in the ghetto. In spite of the difficulties, a number of Jews observed Passover in 1941, obtaining matzot from the Koźminek ghetto. In the fall of 1941, about 100 men from the Kalisz ghetto were sent to the Poznań region for forced labor in agriculture, leaving about 350 Jews in Kalisz. In mid-November 1941, the Gestapo conducted another selection, sending 127 Jews, mostly the sick and elderly, including 15 children, to their deaths. These Jews were murdered using a gas van (probably by forces of Sonderkommando Lange). At this time the remnant of the hospital on Szopen Street no. 4 was also closed down. Another 100 Jews, including the remaining youngsters, were sent to their deaths two weeks later on December 1, 1941. Even though the Jewish Council knew of this Aktion in advance, it did nothing to warn those affected.¹⁰

In 1942, the remaining Jews continued to work refurbishing army uniforms for a German industrialist named Sannwald. At the end of May, about 40 more Jews capable of work were sent to the labor camps in Poznań. Then on July 6–8, 1942, the last remaining Jews in the Kalisz ghetto (about 120) were transferred to the Łódź ghetto, and the Jewish community of Kalisz ceased to exist.¹¹

SOURCES The yizkor book edited by I.M. Lask, *The Kalish Book* (Tel Aviv: Societies of Former Residents of Kalish and the Vicinity in Israel and the USA, 1968), contains several personal accounts of the fate of the Jews under the German occupation. Mention of the “ghetto” in Kalisz can be found in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 214–215. Published memoirs concerning the initial German occupation of Kalisz in 1939 include: Henry Skorr, *Through Blood and Tears: Surviving Hitler and Stalin* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006); and Michael Kaplan, *Autobiography of Michael Kaplan* (Miami, FL: Michael Kaplan, 1990).

Documentation on the fate of the Jews of Kalisz during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/4490; and Ring I/469); IPN (ASG sygn. 54, k. 62; and 202/II-29, p. 12); USHMM (RG-15.015M, reel 4); VHF; and YVA.

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. “From the Ringelblum Archives,” pp. 281–287, here p. 282; and Wolf Lassman, “Kalish, Kozminek and the Camps,” pp. 275–281, here p. 275—both in Lask, *The Kalish Book*.
2. “From the Ringelblum Archives,” p. 285; Dr. Moshe Gross (Henryk Zelikowski), “The End of the Community,” in Lask, *The Kalish Book*, pp. 251–274, here p. 251.
3. “From the Ringelblum Archives,” pp. 285–286; Gross, “The End of the Community,” pp. 251–252; Skorr, *Through Blood and Tears*, pp. 95–96; and Kaplan, *Autobiography*, pp. 11–12.
4. Gross, “The End of the Community,” p. 252; “From the Ringelblum Archives,” p. 287.
5. Gross, “The End of the Community,” pp. 252–253; Lassman, “Kalish, Kozminek and the Camps,” pp. 275–276.
6. S. Glicksman, “Some Figures (from the Ringelblum Archives and Elsewhere),” in Lask, *The Kalish Book*, pp. 287–288; “From the Ringelblum Archives,” p. 285.
7. Gross, “The End of the Community,” pp. 256–257. The term *ghetto* is used occasionally in the yizkor book, for example, on pp. 263, 272.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 253–256.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 258–259; Glicksman, “Some Figures,” p. 288.
10. Gross, “The End of the Community,” pp. 263–266; see also IPN, CA MSW 775/24, p. 4, Schupokommando Kalisch an Gestapo, Kripo, Gerndarmeriekreis und städt. Wirtschaftsamt Kalisch, November 24, 1941.
11. Glicksman, “Some Figures,” p. 288; Gross, “The End of the Community,” pp. 268–271; see also Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 220–222, 233–234.

KOŁO

Pre-1939: Koło, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Wartbrücken, center, Kreis Wartbrücken, Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Koło, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Koło is located about 73 kilometers (45.5 miles) northwest of Łódź. In September 1939, there were 4,560 Jews among a total of 13,000 residents in Koło.¹

Forces of the Wehrmacht arrived in Koło on September 19, 1939. From the next day on, the Jews of Koło were subjected to forced labor, looting, abuse, and murder.

In December 1940, a ghetto was established in Koło.² It was located primarily in the area of the central market square, and one of its borders was the Warta River. The administration of the Jewish residential area was under the supervision of the mayor of the town, Willi Schönert, whose “energetic” actions against the Jewish population were highly rewarded by the regional government in Hohensalza.³ On the orders of the German authorities a Jewish Council was established. Pinkus Brenner served as the head of this institution. The Jewish Council created a labor department under the supervision of Wron, Neuman, Borkowski, Borensztajn, Lissek, and Frenkiel. The main task of this department was to organize daily the number of Jewish workers demanded by the German authorities.⁴ The ghetto area was supervised and guarded by various police units, including the Gendarmerie, the Security Police, and local ethnic Germans. The nearest main head-

quarters of the Gestapo was located in Konin. The internal Jewish ghetto police consisted of 15 people. The Jews still had the possibility to contact and trade with the surrounding Polish population, which eased living conditions in the ghetto somewhat.

On October 2, 1940, a total of 150 families were transferred to Bugaj and Nowiny Brdowskie (Kreis Wartbrücken, Gemeinde Lubotyń). An unknown number of Jews managed to escape the town, mostly in the direction of Żychlin.⁵ At the end of 1940, out of a total population of 11,228 in Koło, there were still 2,640 Jews.⁶ In June 1941, about 300 Jews were transferred to forced labor camps in the surrounding area. First, those collected were herded into the synagogue, where they had to wait for three days without any food or water. Dr. Franz Sieburg, a representative from the health department of the city of Poznań, was responsible for the selection of Jews fit for work. In addition, engineer Fritz Neumann and the head of the construction department in Poznań were also present.⁷ During their transport to the camps, the Jews were not given any food or water, and the guards beat them. In August 1941, about 100 Jewish girls were transferred to a forced labor camp near Breslau (Wrocław).

From the beginning of 1941, the Jews were strictly forbidden to leave the area of the Koło ghetto. The Jewish Council sent a delegation to the mayor of the town and to the head of the town district, attempting to revoke this order. The result of the negotiation was a ransom demand by the German authorities, officially called a poll tax, of 4 Reichsmark (RM) for every person in the ghetto. The German authorities stated that they required this money to pay for the transfer of the Jews to nearby ghettos in the Generalgouvernement.⁸

On December 8, 1941, the liquidation of the Koło ghetto started. The Jews were deported to the extermination camp in Chełmno. The liquidation Aktion lasted three days until December 10. Before their departure, the victims were gathered in the building of the Jewish Council and in a church. They were allowed to take with them only one piece of hand luggage. During this Aktion, the town was surrounded by armed SS, police, and Gendarmerie units. The Jews were loaded into trucks. During this procedure, one SS member per truck listed the name of every person on their truck (one of the SS men was Hauptsturmführer Böhm). The German authorities tried to make the Jews believe that they were being transferred to labor camps in the east, where they would work on farms and build railroad lines. The sick people were transported in cars and were even given a chauffeur for their “security.” During the organization of this transport the former owner of the sawmill in Koło, named Goldberg, held negotiations with the head of the Jewish Council about his possible succession to the position of “Jewish elder” after the deportation of the ghetto’s inhabitants. He even sent his application for this position to the German authorities.⁹ During the liquidation of the Koło ghetto, many people were shot during the deportation roundup, including Lajzer Feldman, Josef Brandt, Estera Brandt, Chaja Piotrowska, Dawid Zilber, Ela Zilber, and Reisz Zilberberg.¹⁰



German police search an elderly, religious Jew at gunpoint in Koło, ca. 1941. USHMM WS #51047, COURTESY OF IPN

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

The extermination camp in Chełmno was located only 14 kilometers (9 miles) from Koło. On the first day of the liquidation of the ghetto, about 800 Jews were transferred to this camp in groups of several dozen by truck. During this Aktion, between 2,000 and 2,300 Jews from Koło were killed in Chełmno. The Jews of Koło were the first victims of this extermination camp. However, many of the Koło Jews who had been deported earlier to Bugaj and Nowiny Brdowskie were also transported to Chełmno later on January 13, 1942.¹¹ Efforts were made by the Jews in nearby ghettos to discover the fate of Koło's Jews. For example, the Jewish Council in the Dąbie ghetto sent two separate missions to Koło to gather information about the fate of the deported Jews on December 9 and December 11, 1941.¹²

After the war a total of 27 Jews returned to Koło.¹³ The saddler Michał Podchlebnik managed to escape from the Chełmno camp. He was born in Koło, and he gave a statement on June 9, 1948, for the Polish Commission for the Investigation of the German Crimes against the Polish Nation and testified about the liquidation of the Koło ghetto and the killings in Chełmno.¹⁴

At his trial after the war in Poznań, Fritz Neumann was accused of herding the victims to the transfer point and being responsible for their deaths; he was convicted and sentenced to death on November 18, 1948. He was executed on May 13, 1949.

SOURCES Publications with information regarding the Koło ghetto include the following: Mordechai Halter, ed., *Sefer Kolo: Fimfhundert Yor Yidish Kolo* (Israel: Irgune Kolo be-Yisrael uve-Artsot ha-Berit, 1958); Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Dwa etapy. Hitlerowska polityka eksterminacji Żydów w oczach ofiar. Szkic historyczny i dokumenty* (Wrocław, 1986), p. 136; M. Tyszkowa, "Eksterminacja Żydów w latach 1941–1943. Dokumenty Biura Propagandy i Informacji KG AK w zbiorach Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego," *BŻIH*, nos. 2–3 (1992): 47; W. Bednarz, *Obóz straceń w Chełmnie nad Nerem* (Warsaw, 1946); and J. Burszta, ed., *Sześćset lat miasta Kola* (Poznań, 1963).

Documents on the history of the Jewish community of Koło and its fate during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: APP (sygn. 594 and 1407); AŻIH (301/29; Ring I/825, I/844, II/303); IPN (SOP 62); MMŻ (SPK, Zg 33/47, 164/47, 122/47, and 12/48); and YVA.

Anna Ziółkowska
trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTES

1. Danuta Dąbrowska, "Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w 'Kraju Warty' w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 169, table 12.
2. IPN, Kolekcja "Ob.," sygn. 177.
3. APP, Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Wartheland, sygn. 1407, files 62–63.
4. AŻIH, Ring II/300, p. 2.
5. Dąbrowska, "Zagłada skupisk," p. 169, table 12.
6. APP, Reichsstatthalter, sygn. 594, file 26.
7. IPN, SOP 62, case against Fritz Neumann, pp. 66–67, statement of Szymon Frajdlwicz; p. 68, statement of Abram Harap; p. 91, statement of Jakob Szulc; p. 176, statement of

Cham Majer; pp. 176 and verso, statement of Józef Fuchs. See also Halter, *Sefer Kolo*, pp. 252–253.

8. Tyszkowa, "Eksterminacja Żydów," p. 47.

9. Bednarz, *Obóz straceń*, p. 40.

10. MMŻ, SPK, Zg 33/47; Zg 164/47; Zg 122/47; Zg 12/48.

11. IPN, ASG, sygn. 54, file 103.

12. Sakowska, *Dwa etapy*, p. 136.

13. S. Szklarski, "Polityka Niemiec wobec Żydów na przykładzie Ziemi Konińskiej," *Głos Kolski* (Koło), no. 22 (1992): 6.

14. Bednarz, *Obóz straceń*, pp. 39–45.

KONIN

Pre-1939: Konin, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Landkreis Konin, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Konin is about 100 kilometers (62 miles) north-northwest of Łódź. There were 2,300 Jews living in the Konin kehilla in 1936, which apart from Konin included the following gminas with small Jewish populations: Rzgów (Dąbie settlement), Brzeźno (Brzeźno, Krzymów, and Paprotnia settlements), and Gosławice (Czarków settlement). For example, in 1936, there were 11 Jewish families living in Brzeźno and 8 in Gosławice. By 1937, the number of Jewish residents was 2,386 and was estimated at approximately 2,500 in 1939. On the outbreak of World War II, the Jewish population constituted about 20 percent of the total population of Konin.

After the roundup of between 1,080 and 1,200 Jews on November 30, 1939, the first deportation of Jews from Konin took place on December 3, 1939. These Jews were sent to Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski in Distrikt Radom within the Generalgouvernement.¹ People were given only minutes to prepare for this trip and could take with them only necessities. Some of these deportees were reportedly then sent to Gorzków and



Wehrmacht troops prepare to shoot a Pole and a Jew on the Wolność Square in Konin. The Polish victim was Aleksander Kurowski and the Jewish victim was Slodki.

USHMM WS #50294, COURTESY OF IPN

Turobin, both near Krasnystaw in Distrikt Lublin. Witnessing the hostility and brutality of the deportation process, many Konin Jews evaded the roundup to avoid expulsion.

From the fall of 1939, the German authorities ploughed in Konin's Jewish cemetery and began to demolish parts of the main Jewish residential area. In addition, ethnic Germans, who had been resettled from parts of the Soviet Union, were brought into the town. Jews were evicted from the more desirable residences in Konin, and their apartments were handed over to German officials and the newly arrived ethnic Germans.

An open ghetto was established for those Jews that remained, with the Jews being transferred into the designated area as early as December 1939. It was located in a neighborhood that had been predominantly Jewish before the war between the following streets: Słowacki, Obrońców Westerplatte, Zamkowa, Niecała, Mickiewicz, Kiliński, and Plac Zamkowy. The precise number of Jews residing in this ghetto is unknown, but it was probably around 1,000 people.

A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was organized and included Józef Aberman, Ajzyk Kelmer, Abraham Helman, Icchak Zajfer, Noach Helmer, and a man named Rozenberg. Twenty-eight-year-old Józef Aberman was the commander of the Jewish Police in addition to being a member of the Judenrat.²

Throughout the spring and summer of 1940, the ghetto residents were transferred to a single street (Grodzka). Most of the remaining Jews in Konin were deported that summer to a network of hamlet ghettos (*Dorfghettos*) organized around several villages in Kreis Konin: that is, Grodziec, Zagórow, and Rzgów. An account from an anonymous Konin Jew in the Ringelblum Archive describes the deportation from Konin and the Jews' arrival in the hamlet ghettos: "On July 17, the Gendarmes burst into all the Jewish apartments, allowing everyone to take a small bundle and then driving them out—to not even excluding the sick and paralyzed . . . —to an assembly point. After a nightlong march, everyone was brought from there to three villages: Grodziec, Zagórow, and Rzgów (later the remainder of the [Jewish] population of the Konin Kreis was also resettled there)."³

Shortly after their resettlement to the hamlet ghettos, some Konin Jews attempted to return to Konin to salvage some of their property. A few Jews obtained special permits for this, but among those who traveled illegally was at least one Jew who was caught and so severely beaten that he died from his wounds. The authorities had forbidden such trips on pain of death. In the meantime, resettled ethnic Germans had moved into many of the vacated Jewish properties in Konin.⁴

A few Jews may have remained in Konin after this main expulsion in July 1940, and others were subsequently sent back to Konin from the hamlet ghettos for periods of forced labor in the fall of 1940, after the harvest had been brought in. Most of the latter had returned to the hamlet ghettos by February 1941. While in Konin, these Jews slept in a building that had belonged to the Jewish community and worked as painters or in construction.⁵

The three hamlet ghettos were liquidated between March and November 1941. First in March, more than 2,000 Jews were deported from Kreis Konin via Łódź to Józefów Biłgorajski, Izbica Lubelska, Krasnystaw, and other destinations in Distrikt Lublin.⁶ Of this group about 180 were selected out for assignment to road construction work near Gdańsk while passing through the Łódź ghetto. The Jews that remained in the Kreis were mostly concentrated around the village of Zagórow and murdered in the surrounding forests in the fall of 1941.

By 1942, a labor camp was organized in Konin; however, none of its laborers were Konin Jews.

SOURCES Several of the main publications on the fate of Konin's Jews, including the most extensive by Theo Richmond, *Konin: A Quest* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), and also the yizkor book, M. Gelbart, ed., *Kebilat Konin bi-feribatab uve-burbanab* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotse Konin be-Yisrael, 1968), do not mention the existence of a ghetto in Konin and assume that all of Konin's Jewish residents were resettled to hamlet ghettos in the summer of 1940. Nor is the ghetto mentioned by Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 235–238.

The ghetto in Konin is listed as such by Piotr Rybczyński in his article "Likwidacja skupisk ludności żydowskiej w powiecie konińskim," published in J. Kapustka, ed., *Ośrodek zagłady w Chełmie nad Nerem i jego rola w hitlerowskiej polityce eksterminacyjnej* (Konin: Muzeum Okręgowe, 1995), pp. 109–116, an article that discusses the extermination of the Jewish residents of Konin county. It is also mentioned by Ryszard Głoszkowski, "Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na ludności polskiej w powiecie konińskim w latach 1939–1945," in *Eksterminacja ludności polskiej w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Wyniki badań ośrodków terenowych* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, GKBZHWP, 1979), pp. 81–82, 86; and in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 240. Most of the information regarding the ghetto is derived from Tomasz Kawski and Monika Opióła, *Gminy żydowskie pogranicza Wielkopolski, Mazowsza, Małopolski i Śląska w latach 1918–1942* (Toruń: Wydawn. Adam Marszałek, 2008).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Ring I/841, 1089); USHMM (e.g., RG-15.079M); VHF (# 5609, 31143); and YVA.

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. VHF, # 5609, testimony of Felice Nitzky, 1995; Mike Jacob, *Holocaust Survivor: Mike Jacobs' Triumph over Tragedy—A Memoir* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2001), pp. 38–41.
2. USHMM, RG-15.079M, reel 45, Ring I/1089 (1408) (no. 1571), Mf. (ŻIH) 833.
3. Ibid., reel 39, Ring I/841, Lb. 848, Mf. 0827.
4. Gelbart, *Kebilat Konin*, pp. 527, 559.
5. Ibid., pp. 536, 541, 545.
6. VHF, # 31143—Obar believes she was deported to Józefów in 1939 or 1940; Julius Ancer, www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/minnesotans/andHolocaust/ancer/index.html. See also Gelbart, *Kebilat Konin*, pp. 529–530, 545–546.

KOWALE PAŃSKIE (AKA CZACHULEC NOWY)

Pre-1939: Kowale Pańskie, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Heidemühle, Landgemeinde, Kreis Turek, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Kowale Pańskie, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Kowale Pańskie is located 62 kilometers (39 miles) north-northwest of Łódź. The community consisted of 16 hamlets centered on the village of Kowale Pańskie. The Jewish ghetto that was established here during World War II is sometimes also referred to as Czachulec Nowy, the name of one of the main villages in the area.

Until September 1939, only a few Jewish families lived in this mostly agricultural area. On October 20, 1941, about 3,700 Jews from Kreis Turek were deported to the rural sub-districts (Amtsbezirke) of Kowale Pańskie and Malanów. These Jews mainly came from the communities of Turek, Dobra, Władysławów, Pęczniew, Tuliszków, Uniejów, and Brudzew.¹ The Germans instructed the Jews in Turek to pack everything they had, including the bugs. As many families were without their men, members of the Jewish Council (Judenrat) and Jewish Police assisted women to pack up their things. From Turek and Dobra, long columns of Jews, four abreast, followed by wagons carrying their work tools, set off under SS guard to the new “Kolonie.” The SS men of the Resettlement Office reassured the Jews that they would be able to live and work there in peace until the end of the war. Some Jews, however, were skeptical, especially when the displaced Polish farmers reported that they had been told that they would soon be able to return.² The Jews were scattered among the various farms and neighboring buildings in the area, from which the local Poles had recently been evicted to make room for them. The Jews lived under terrible conditions, some being accommodated in barns, and many of them remaining without any shelter, just living in the fields. The relocated Jews were employed on a number of agricultural work tasks and in the construction and maintenance of regional roads. The available bread supplies were rationed out among the Jewish settlements by the Judenrat.³

In late October 1941, the chairman of the Jewish Council, Hershel Zimnawoda, was ordered by the German Landrat in Turek to prepare lists of all ghetto inhabitants incapable of work, including all children under the age of 13 and all elderly persons over 65 years of age. Although the plans to exterminate the Jews were not yet known, the Judenrat was reluctant to obey this order. Zimnawoda asked four rabbis who were among the deportees for their opinion. After two days of deliberation and a day of fasting for the inhabitants of the ghetto, where people prayed, recited psalms, and blew the shofar (horn), the rabbis decided that, according to religious law, a decree of the government was obligatory and had to be

obeyed.⁴ However, after the chairman had prepared the lists, everyone was given a chance to check them and see how they had been marked. Also, the chairman decided to change the birthdates of children and the elderly so that the former would appear older and the latter younger. A few of the Jews classified as unfit fled to the nearby ghetto of Warta or sought refuge with non-Jews in the area.⁵

On Monday, December 8, 1941, German SS and police forces, Nazi officials, and members of the German Labor Front (DAF) drove the Jews from their houses in the Kowale Pańskie ghetto and assembled them in the village of Bielawki for a selection. To the surprise of the gathered Jews, the Germans did not rely on the lists provided, but selected about 1,100 Jews according to their physical appearance. Some members of the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), including Mordechai Strykowski, were able to save a number of children during the selection.⁶ The selected Jews were taken to the village of Dobra, where they were held for a few days under terrible conditions in an overcrowded church without food or water. Some of the Jews died or were shot by the German Gendarmes in Dobra, but a number were also rescued. Then on December 13–14, 1941, the remaining 700 or so were deported to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were gassed. A few weeks afterwards, the remaining Jews in the ghetto learned from local Christians that the deportees had all been murdered.⁷

By the end of 1941, Jews were not permitted to leave the ghetto without permission on pain of death. To obtain food, people traded remaining possessions with local peasants at night. In the spring or summer of 1942, the Germans arrested 10 Jews and hanged them in public, allegedly for evading work, and the Judenrat was also forced to pay a fine.⁸ On the Shavuot holiday (May 21–23, 1942), a group of about 200 men from the ghetto were deported to a forced labor camp near Poznań. They were followed by another group of about 100 women on June 20, 1942. About one month later, the Germans finally liquidated the ghetto. All inmates deemed unfit for deportation were murdered in the vicinity of Kowale Pańskie. Several Jewish policemen were also executed at this time. The Germans selected 89 skilled workers and sent them to the Łódź ghetto. The remaining 1,660 Jews from the Kowale Pańskie ghetto were deported at the end of July 1942 to the Chełmno extermination camp to be killed.⁹ The Germans confiscated the remaining physical property of the deportees, and after the liquidation of the ghetto, the Polish farmers returned to their land.

SOURCES A short description of the Kowale Pańskie ghetto can be found in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 221. Immediately after the war the journal *Fun letstn kburbn* published two articles regarding the Kowale Pańskie ghetto: Y. Waldman, “Di Chelmner Tragedie,” *Fun letstn kburbn*, no. 1 (1946); and Sh. Glube, “Di-din toyre,” *Fun letstn kburbn*, no. 6 (1947): 44–47. More detailed accounts of events in the

ghetto can be found in the yizkor book *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek veli-kedoshbeha* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Turek be-Yisrael, 1982); and Czesław Kazimierz Łuczak, "Extermination of Population of Turek District during the Time of Nazi Occupation," part of his M.A. thesis, "Nazi Occupation in the Turek District during the Years 1939–1945" (Gdansk University, 1972). The ghetto is also mentioned in Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (1972; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 113, 429.

Several primary sources describe the fate of the Jews in the Kowale Pańskie area, including the following: AŻIH (records of JUS, file no. 32; 301/2243 and 2516; and Ring I/255 and 1160); USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, woj. poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 432 and reverse; and RG-50.488*0223); and YVA (M-1/E/758 and 759, M-1/E/1946).

Evelyn Zegenhagen

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2516, testimony of Nachum Zajf. *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek*, pp. 350–351, gives the figure of 3,700 residents. And AŻIH, 301/2243, testimony of Dawid Jakubowicz, dates the establishment of the ghetto on October 20, 1940, stating there were about 4,250 residents. Other sources, e.g., USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, woj. poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 432 and verso, clearly date the establishment in 1941.

2. Shmuel Glubah, "Yidn in Turek in der Tseyt fun der Nazisher Okupatsie," in *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek*, pp. 350–351; Łuczak, "Extermination of Population of Turek District," p. 12.

3. Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2006), p. 203; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 221; *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek*, p. 351.

4. Trunk, *Judenrat*, p. 113, based upon Sh. Glube, "Di-din toyre," pp. 44–47. See also *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek*, pp. 351–352.

5. *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek*, pp. 315–319, reports that the Judenrat and the rabbis also pleaded with the Germans and paid a large bribe to keep the lists as small as possible.

6. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 221; *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek*, pp. 353–354.

7. *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek*, pp. 353–355.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 355–356; USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, woj. poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 432 and verso; AŻIH, 301/2243 and 2516; USHMM, RG-50.488*0223, oral history with Stanisław Piekarski; Łuczak, "Extermination of Population of Turek," p. 13.

9. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, pp. 446–447. *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek*, pp. 360–362, notes that about 1,800 Jews were registered in the ghetto about one month before its liquidation. This source reports that 120 Jews were sent to the Łódź ghetto. AŻIH, 301/2243; the author of this testimony, Dawid Jakubowicz, was among those sent to the Łódź ghetto. Also see USHMM, RG-50.488*0223.

KOŹMINEK

Pre-1939: Koźminek, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Bornhagen, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Koźminek, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Koźminek is located 75 kilometers (47 miles) west of Łódź. In 1921, the Jewish population was 729.

Forces of the German army occupied the village about a week after the start of the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. At the time of the invasion, some Jews fled to the east ahead of the advancing German forces. During the first two months of the occupation, the Jews of Koźminek were subjected to a series of economic restrictions, including the confiscation of property and the imposition of forced labor. At the end of October 1939, the area was incorporated into the Third Reich. Koźminek, which the Germans renamed Bornhagen, became part of Regierungsbezirk Kalisch, in Reichsgau Wartheland. One of the first decrees issued by the governor (Regierungspräsident) of Regierungsbezirk Kalisch, Friedrich Übelhör, on November 14, 1939, was to impose a regulation requiring Jews to wear yellow armbands. Infractions against this regulation were punishable by death.¹ Shortly after this decree, the German authorities forcibly resettled most of the remaining Jews of Koźminek across the border into the Generalgouvernement.

In February 1940, about 1,300 Jews of Landkreis Kalisch were sent to Koźminek. This was seen as a temporary measure made necessary because the authorities in Łódź refused to accommodate them at this time. Most of the Jews were sent from the "Market Hall" in Kalisz, where they were held behind barbed wire, following the cessation of deportations from Kalisz at the start of 1940. However, several hundred Jews were sent to Koźminek from the town of Stawiszyn and a few from the village of Ostrów Kaliski. The arrival of these Jews marked the effective establishment of an "open ghetto" in Koźminek.²

The ghetto comprised a number of primitive single-story houses along a single street. The ghetto area also included a square, where the synagogue was located. Due to the small size of the ghetto, there was considerable overcrowding. The Jews worked mainly as craftsmen, in agriculture in the surrounding area, or on road construction.³ Several hundred Jews from the Koźminek ghetto were sent to the civilian labor camp at Opatówek, 11 kilometers (7 miles) away, where they worked 12 hours a day unloading coal, clearing ditches, building roads, or laboring in nearby factories.⁴

The first commandant of the ghetto was an ethnic German named Büchler. According to one survivor account: "[H]e often burst into the ghetto in a drunken state and beat anyone he met with a stick. If anyone was found with an egg or a pat of butter, he was fined. If word came that the 'Greener' was on his way, they all hid like mice in their holes."⁵ The ghetto was administered internally by the Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by a man named Landau, who received in-

structions directly from Büchler. There was also a Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), which supervised the agricultural work. In charge of the Jewish Labor Office in the ghetto was a man called Haftke, who became notorious for his cruelty to his fellow Jews.⁶

From the summer of 1940, workshops were opened in the Koźminek ghetto. However, many women, children, and elderly people were unable to work. Sanitary conditions in the ghetto were very poor. The only physician was Dr. Shalit, who sent many patients to the Jewish hospital that continued to function in Kalisz. The Koźminek ghetto also received medical supplies, allotted food rations, and post from the Jewish camp or “ghetto” in Kalisz.⁷

German control over the Koźminek ghetto was not as strict as in the larger towns. The German presence consisted mainly of three Gendarmes. Illicit trading with the local population took place in spite of the severe penalties threatened. Jews did not starve as they could buy extra food in the villages. The Jews in the ghetto celebrated Passover in 1941 with dry potatoes and coarse matzot for the Seder.⁸

From the spring of 1941, Ferdinand Göhler, an official in the economic department of the regional government, was placed in charge of the Koźminek ghetto. Following his appointment, conditions in the ghetto deteriorated. The food rations were insufficient and of a poor quality; cases of typhus increased; Jews were forced to perform heavy, often useless, labor. Göhler also organized the collection of any remaining valuables, especially jewelry, from the Jewish inmates of the ghetto.⁹ In May 1941, 300 men from the Opatówek labor camp were sent to the Poznań region for forced labor in agriculture.¹⁰

In the fall of 1941, there were probably still some 1,500 Jews in Koźminek. On November 26, 1941, German police forces surrounded the ghetto. Then, the Gestapo and the SS burst in and drove the Jews into the courtyard of the synagogue. They took mainly the weak, the ill, children, and the elderly. However, with the aid of a bribe, it was possible to be released. The Jews were particularly outraged by the role of Haftke in assisting the Germans to select those who would be sent away.

The Aktion lasted several days, and some 600 Jews, about 75 at a time, were loaded into black trucks (similar to furniture vans). Some mothers chose to be deported with their children. Inside the trucks, it is presumed that the Jews were murdered using poison gas. Subsequently, the trucks were emptied out and the bodies buried in a forest near the village of Jedlec (Kreis Goluchow). The Aktion was possibly conducted by men of Sonderkommando Lange, which also was tasked, at this time, with establishing the Chełmno extermination camp, where killing operations started on December 8, 1941.¹¹

During 1942, the German authorities conducted further deportations from the Koźminek ghetto. Some sources indicate that several hundred (or even up to 1,000) Jews were sent from the Koźminek ghetto to the extermination camp in Chełmno between December 1941 and March 1942. However, this interpretation may also be the result of some confusion with the November 1941 “gas van” deportations. Other

Jews, mostly men fit for work, were sent to perform manual labor in the Inowrocław area in the first months of 1942. The last 400 hundred or so Jews left in the Koźminek ghetto were sent to the Łódź ghetto together with just over 100 Jews from the Kalisz ghetto. This transport arrived at the Radogoszcz station in Łódź on July 8, 1942.¹²

SOURCES The Kalisz yizkor book, edited by I.M. Lask, *The Kalish Book* (Tel Aviv: Societies of Former Residents of Kalish and the Vicinity in Israel and the USA, 1968), contains some information on the Koźminek ghetto. There is also a short article on the Jewish community of Koźminek in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Łódź and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 221–222. The deportation Aktion using gas vans in November–December 1941 was the subject of a trial in Stuttgart (Ks 31/49). The verdict and subsequent revisions are published in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 7 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1979), Lfd. Nr. 231, pp. 187–267. The court’s findings are largely supported by other sources cited by Michael Albertini, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 415–416.

Mention of the ghetto can be found in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 248; *BŻIH*, nos. 111 and 114–115 (1979–1980); and Martin Weinmann, with Anne Kaiser and Ursula Krause-Schmitt, eds., *Das nationalsozialistische Lagersystem (CCP)* (prepared originally by ITS in 1949–1951; repr., with new introduction, Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1990), p. 680.

Documentation on the Koźminek ghetto can be found in the following archives: IPN (ASG, sygn. 54, p. 65); USHMM (RG-15.015M, reel 4); VHF; and YVA (M-21/287).

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. *Łódzker Zeitung*, November 16, 1939, published in Isaiah Trunk, *Łódzker Ghetto: A History*, trans. and ed. Robert Moses Shapiro (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2006), p. 18.

2. S. Glicksman, “Some Figures (from the Ringelblum Archives and Elsewhere),” pp. 287–288; “From the Ringelblum Archives,” p. 285—both in Lask, *The Kalish Book*. Some sources do not date the formal establishment of a “ghetto” until the summer of 1940; see YVA, M-21/287, p. 35.

3. *JuNS-V*, vol. 7, Lfd. Nr. 231, pp. 187–267, here verdict of LG-Stutt, Ks 31/49, August 15, 1950, p. 200.

4. Wolf Lassman, “Kalish, Koźminek and the Camps,” in Lask, *The Kalish Book*, pp. 275–281, here p. 277.

5. Dr. Moshe Gross (Henryk Zelikowski), “The End of the Community,” in Lask, *The Kalish Book*, pp. 251–274, here p. 262.

6. Lassman, “Kalish, Koźminek and the Camps,” p. 277; *JuNS-V*, vol. 7, Lfd. Nr. 231, p. 200.

7. Gross, “The End of the Community,” p. 261.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 261–262.

9. *JuNS-V*, vol. 7, Lfd. Nr. 231, pp. 189–190, 211–212.

10. Lassman, “Kalish, Koźminek and the Camps,” p. 278.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 277–278. This source (probably erroneously) dates the “gas van Aktion” as occurring in March 1941. Also see *JuNS-V*, vol. 7, Lfd. Nr. 231, pp. 187–267.

12. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 220–222, 233–234.

KROŚNIEWICE

Pre-1939: Krośniewice, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Krosniewice, Kreis Kutno, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartbeland; post-1998: Krośniewice, Łódź województwo, Poland

Krośniewice is located about 58 kilometers (36 miles) north-northeast of Łódź.

German troops occupied Krośniewice on September 16, 1939. During the first days of the occupation, Jews were made to perform forced labor, their property was confiscated, and many were expelled from their places of residence. Of the 4,476 inhabitants of the town, there were 1,238 Jews at the end of December 1939.¹ This number included not only local Jews from Krośniewice but also Jews from the surrounding area. An unknown number of local Jews managed to get to Warsaw, largely using the help of Polish guides.²

On May 10, 1940, the German authorities established a ghetto in Krośniewice. It consisted of parts of Kutnowska Street, which ran through the town in the direction of Kutno. The total area of the ghetto was 10,000 square meters (almost 12,000 square yards). The ghetto was under the authority of the mayor and also the head of the local civil administrator (Amtskommissar), Georg Becker.³ There were a number of houses inside the ghetto area. Initially the ghetto was not enclosed and sealed off, so the Jews were able to continue interacting with local Poles. Trade between them continued, with the Jews making handicrafts for the Poles who paid them with food. Poles also consulted Jewish physicians residing in the ghetto. After a while, the ghetto was sealed with a barbed-wire fence and separated from the rest of the town.⁴ On the orders of the German authorities, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in the ghetto. Its head was a man named Zilbe; Grabowski was the head of the ghetto Jewish Police.⁵

Right from the start of the German occupation, the Jewish population was forced to conduct physically demanding work of all kinds. The Jewish community had to meet a quota of 66 laborers per day, although some people who could not work paid 5 złoty per day for a replacement. Jews were employed as laborers on nearby farms, now belonging to newly resettled Germans. In April 1941, about 100 residents of the ghetto were deported to the Hardt labor camp in Wąsowo, close to Poznań.⁶ They worked on the construction of the highway between Frankfurt am Oder and Poznań. Starting in September 1941, other ghetto residents, both men and women, were sent to other labor camps in the Poznań area. Those deported wrote letters to their relatives in the ghetto, describing the terrible conditions in the camps. Hunger and beatings were the order

of the day. In spite of the difficult conditions in the ghetto, many residents responded to the requests of those who had been deported and helped them, sending packages with foodstuffs.⁷

On February 19, 1942, the German authorities demanded that a poll tax of 8 Reichsmark (RM) be paid for every resident of the ghetto. This was the signal for the beginning of the liquidation of the ghetto.⁸ On March 1, 1942, at the time of the Purim holiday, the remaining ghetto residents, mostly women, children, and the elderly, were informed that they were going to be resettled to Bessarabia the next day.⁹ The liquidation of the ghetto took place on March 2–3, 1942. For this Aktion, some market halls where cattle were usually slaughtered were used as a transit camp for the Jews. In this temporary camp the people were virtually starved. Twice a day the inmates received one liter (2 pints) of soup and a piece of bread. Most Jews were unable to eat this food because they did not have spoons or bowls. Some Jews were transferred from the ghetto to the temporary camp, and from there the Germans deported them directly to the Chełmno extermination camp. During the liquidation Aktion, a member of the Jewish medical services named Kopel Geisler and a Polish physician distributed medicine to the victims. Geisler, who was a member of the Krośniewice Zionist movement, became mentally unstable watching the brutal way the Germans forced the Jews into the trucks for deportation.¹⁰ Altogether about 800 Jews from Krośniewice were killed in Chełmno.¹¹

A report of the Amtskommissar in Krośniewice to the mayor of Kutno on April 10, 1942, described this liquidation Aktion as the “evacuation of those Jews unable to work.” After the deportation of the residents of the ghetto, the value of the movable property they were forced to leave behind, such as furniture, dishes, and watches, was estimated at about 25,000 RM, and this property was transferred to the German authorities.¹² After the property had been removed, the ghetto area was disinfected. It is possible that false identification cards were made in Krośniewice in January 1942 and that these helped three deported Jews to escape from the extermination camp in Chełmno. In any case, the German police were searching for these individuals.¹³

SOURCES Two articles published in the *BŻIH* contain information on the Krośniewice ghetto: Danuta Dąbrowska, “Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w ‘Kraju Warty’ w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955); and M. Tyszkowa, “Eksterminacja Żydów w latach 1941–1943. Dokumenty Biura Propagandy i Informacji KG AK w zbiorach Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego,” *BŻIH*, nos. 2–3 (1992). Published survivor testimonies relevant to the Krośniewice ghetto include the following: Abram Korn, *Abe’s Story: A Holocaust Memoir* (Atlanta, GA: Longstreet, 1995); and Dorothea Kusch and Helmut Winter, eds., *Pädagogische Handreichung und Materialien zur Ausstellung “Der Alltag jüdischer Kinder während des Holocausts* (Germany: Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1999), p. 122.

Documentation on the Krośniewice ghetto and its liquidation can be found in the following archives: APŁ (Gettover-

waltung, 30021); APP (Reichsstatthalter, 594); AŻIH (301/4490 and Ring I/469 and I/573); IPN (ASG 50, p. 38; and Zh III/31/35/68); OKŚZpNPŁdz (OKL.Ko 27/83 and 11/84); USHMM; VHF; and YVA.

Anna Ziółkowska
trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTES

1. APP, Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Wartheland, sygn. 594, p. 22.
2. AŻIH, Ring I/573, postcard of February 18, 1942, from Róża Kapłan to her husband in the Warsaw ghetto.
3. IPN, ASG, sygn. 50, p. 38; also Zh III/31/35/68, ghettos in Łódź province; OKŚZpNPŁdz, sygn. Ds. 45/67, zeznania Cz. Trzaskalskiej i R. Bednarka; Dąbrowska, "Zagłada skupisk," p. 172, table 14. In December 1939, 9 Jews from Pawlikowice and 11 from Bardzinek were resettled to Krośniewice.
4. OKŚZpNPŁ dz, sygn. Ds. 45/67, zeznania Z. Dopierały, H. Lubranieckiego, Cz. Trzaskalskiej i R. Bednarka.
5. J. Wróbel, "Getta w powiatach: gostynińskim i kutnowskim," in *W 45, rocznicę zagłady skupisk żydowskich w Kraju Warty* (Zduńska Wola, 1987), p. 7.
6. MMŻ, Wykaz imienny więźniów osadzonych w obozach pracy przymusowej dla Żydów w Wielkopolsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej; see also Korn, *Abe's Story*, pp. 32–37.
7. AŻIH, 301/4490, Abraham Radziecki; AŻIH, Ring I/573.
8. AŻIH, Ring I/573(13), postcard sent on February 20, 1942, by Róża Kapłan to her husband in the Warsaw ghetto; also Ring I/573(8), postcard sent on January 24, 1942, by Róża Kapłan to the Warsaw ghetto.
9. R. Sakowska, *Dwa etapy. Hitlerowska polityka eksterminacji Żydów w oczach ofiar. Szkic historyczny i dokumenty* (Wrocław, 1986), p. 154, report in Oneg Szabat written by members of the Warsaw Ghetto Archives, E. Ringelblum, H. Wasser, and E. Gutkowski, for the representatives of the Polish government in London in April 1942.
10. AŻIH, 301/4490.
11. *Ibid.*, also Ring I/469; Tyszkowa, "Eksterminacja Żydów," p. 55, doc. no. 18.
12. APŁ, Gettoverwaltung, sygn. 30021, p. 53.
13. R. Sakowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, vol. 1, *Listy o Zagładzie* (Warsaw, 1997), pp. 35–36, 43, 113.

KUTNO

Pre-1939: Kutno, city, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: center, Kreis Kutno, Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Kutno is located 50 kilometers (31 miles) north of Łódź. In December 1939, there were 7,709 Jews in Kutno out of a total population of 27,761.¹

German troops arrived in Kutno on September 16, 1939, and the Germans established a civil administration in the city on October 26.² Arbitrary arrests, forced labor, expropriations, and various kinds of abuse became the norm. The head



A German policeman guards the entrance to the Kutno ghetto on Mickiewicz Street, n.d.
USHMM WS #91570, COURTESY OF IPN

of the Kutno Gestapo, Michel Stumpler, and his deputy, Hoffmann, were especially active in the measures taken against the Jews.³

On November 3, 1939, the German authorities established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Kutno. Among those on the council were Bernard Holcman (head of the council), Moses Fluger (deputy head), Sender Falc (head of the financial department), Paweł Goldszejder, I. Kubic, Sz. Opoczyński, Lauzer Praszker, and Maks Zandel.⁴ A Jewish police force was founded, which was commanded by the Frankenstein brothers and subordinated to the Jewish Council. The German authorities tasked the Judenrat with registering the Jews, including details of property ownership, in order to assist them with its subsequent expropriation. For example, a currency protection squad (Devisenschutzkommando Płock) organized the looting of Jewish property, seizing items such as jewelry, money, and valuable household goods in December 1939.⁵ The Jewish Council regularly bribed the German police and civil administration in an effort to appease them. Hoffmann received furniture for his house, valued at approximately 15,000 Reichsmark (RM).

On June 16, 1940, the mayor, Wilfried Schürmann, ordered the establishment of a ghetto. The ghetto was located on the property of a former sugar factory named "Konstancja" and included five buildings already occupied by Jews. Some documents do not refer to this enclosed Jewish area as a ghetto but call it rather a Jewish camp (*Judenlager*). The resettlement of the Jews into the ghetto provided a renewed opportunity for expropriation. The German authorities not only confiscated money; they also took any remaining items of value. The Jews were ordered to move into the ghetto area within one day. During the process, the police forces involved, including the local Criminal Police (*Gemeindekriminalpolizei*), the Order Police (*Schutzpolizei* and *Gendarmerie*), and the SS (*SS-Sturmabteilung III/114*), abused the Jews. Josef Schneider and Wilhelm Sauer attracted particular attention for their brutality.⁶ The Jews were only permitted to bring a small part of their movable property into the ghetto. Due to very limited transportation, most Jews had to carry everything in by hand.⁷

70 WARTHEGAU REGION



Jews transfer their belongings into the Kutno ghetto, July 1940. USHMM WS #06214, COURTESY OF RAPHAEL ARONSON

The ghetto territory covered only 2 hectares (about 5 acres) and was isolated from the rest of the city by a brick wall with barbed wire on top. About 7,000 Jews lived in the ghetto initially, including more than 1,000 refugees from many different places, as well as some Jews who had been resettled into the ghetto from the surrounding villages. For example, 150 Jews were brought in from Dąbrowicki.⁸ Jews were forced to find a home anywhere they could, for example, in former pubs, horse and cow stalls, and even primitive shelters made of wood and mud. By October 1940, the first cases of typhus were reported.

Of the five buildings in the ghetto area, one housed the ghetto guards, and the Jewish Council and their families occupied two others. In one of these buildings, little more than a primitive shack, a hospital (*Krankenabteilung*) was set up. It consisted of one room for the physician and four rooms for the patients. On the first floor was the ghetto post office.⁹ The local police guarded the ghetto. The ghetto guards received the title of “Police Guards, Jewish Camp” (*Polizeiwache, Judenlager*). Their headquarters was located on Posen Street. Among others, 50 members of Police Battalion 132—and after November 26, 1941, 38 members of Police Battalion 41—guarded the Kutno ghetto. They were under the command of Oberleutnant Kurt Weissenborn, who was notorious for his corruption.¹⁰ He took large monetary bribes to allow goods to be smuggled into the ghetto. However, the food situation soon became desperate. The Jewish Council opened a soup kitchen for the poorest ghetto inmates and succeeded in organizing deliveries from farms in Chruścinek in the *Gemeinde Strzelce* and from a dairy farm in Kutno. Despite these efforts, food supplies remained insufficient. Food was distributed three times a day—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—in the Jewish Council’s building. The shortages induced a high level of smuggling. There were also occasional aid deliveries from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC).¹¹

The corruption of some ghetto guards helped a little, as they permitted some Jews to leave the ghetto to exchange

valuables with the non-Jewish population for food. It seems that the Jewish Council played a significant role in bribing the guards, but survivor testimonies remain ambiguous regarding the behavior of the *Judenrat*. Some survivors accuse members of the council of granting privileges to themselves and their families, especially better apartments and larger food rations. The ghetto population referred to the buildings occupied by the Jewish Council as “the House of Lords.”¹²

In February 1941, some ghetto inmates organized a riot against the Jewish Council. The insurgents demanded that the head of the financial department, Sender Falc, give a detailed account of all expenditures by the ghetto administration. The protest turned violent, and some of the rioters assaulted Falc. The German police intervened to halt further unrest.¹³ As a result of this incident, various smuggling operations involving the ghetto were uncovered, and several people were arrested in May 1941. Among those arrested were a Pole named Zenon Rzymowski and a Jew named Leon Stuczynski from the ghetto. All of the prisoners were sentenced to death and hanged in Włocławek.¹⁴ After this incident, several members of the Criminal Police and also the ghetto guards were replaced. The result was a considerable tightening of security around the ghetto, leading to the complete isolation of the Jews. The only remaining route to exit and enter the ghetto was a dried-out canal hidden underground, which, however, was soon blocked by the German police.

In 1941, an unknown number of Jews from Kutno were transferred to forced labor camps in the area around Poznań, where they worked building sections of the highway connecting that city (renamed Posen by the Germans) with Frankfurt an der Oder, a road that led through original German territory (the *Altreich*).¹⁵

There were several escapes by Jews from the Kutno ghetto to other ghettos such as Ozorków (in Wartheland) and Warsaw. In July 1941, the registered ghetto population was 6,015.

The health situation in the Kutno ghetto deteriorated, and the death rate from disease and starvation was very high. On March 21, 1942, the head of the civil administration in Inowrocław sent a letter to the head of the Health Department for Reichsgau Wartheland, stating that 1,369 persons were infected with typhus and 313 had already died in the Kutno ghetto.¹⁶ The Jewish Council managed to bring in two physicians from other ghettos, Juliusz Winsaft and Dr. Apersestein, to provide some medical treatment.¹⁷ Also, some Polish physicians tried to help: Józef Malinowski, Juliusz Perkowicz, and B. Jędraszko obtained permission to enter the ghetto to conduct research into epidemic diseases. However, the German authorities did not permit the delivery of typhus serum to Kutno’s Jews. In addition, there were many cases of abscesses and edemas caused by malnutrition, mainly affecting children. In total, more than 660 Jews died of starvation and disease in the Kutno ghetto, comprising about 10 percent of the average ghetto population.¹⁸

These were not the only causes of death, of course; other inmates were killed, for example, for leaving the ghetto ille-

gally. The German police taunted the Jews when food deliveries reached the ghetto.¹⁹ They threw the groceries into the gathered crowd to provoke a fight and shot at the desperate people grasping for food. The ghetto of Kutno became renowned as one of the worst ghettos, some Germans calling it the “camp of dying off” (*Krepietlager*).

In spite of the harsh conditions, the Jews in the Kutno ghetto, especially the younger ones, tried to maintain some cultural life. They held meetings to discuss literature, sang songs, and organized a library. Attempts were made to found a school in the ghetto, but the intended building was given to the ghetto hospital, which had a higher priority. Nevertheless, an underground education system was established in the ghetto.²⁰

German forces initiated the liquidation of the Kutno ghetto on March 19, 1942. The underground newspaper of the Warsaw ghetto, *Undzer Weg*, reported on May 1, 1942, that the Kutno ghetto had been liquidated on March 23, 1942. A report prepared in April 1942 in the Warsaw ghetto for the Polish government in exile stated that on March 26, 1942, the Jews of the Kutno ghetto were assembled in alphabetical order and loaded onto trucks.²¹ The victims were transported on the narrow gauge train to Koło, and from there they were sent immediately to the extermination camp at Chełmno. This mass Aktion lasted until April 1942, resulting in the death of some 6,000 Jews from the Kutno ghetto.²² The older residents of the ghetto were killed in Kutno. Following the liquidation Aktion, the members of the Jewish Police were shot just outside the ghetto area. Contemporary documentation indicates that Habus Sgiem, a former resident of the Kutno ghetto (born on February 7, 1918), managed to escape from the extermination camp in Chełmno and was wanted for arrest by the German authorities.²³ After the liquidation of the Kutno ghetto, 30 Jews from the Łódź ghetto were sent to Kutno as a so-called Aufräumungstrupp (cleanup detachment) and had to clear out the ghetto and sort the possessions left behind by the Jews. They too were mistreated and suffered from starvation and disease, including cases of typhus.²⁴

SOURCES Publications on the fate of the Jewish community of Kutno during the Holocaust include the following: David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Kutnah veba-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kutnah veba-sevivah be-Yisrael uve-huts-la-arets, 1968); Janusz Wróbel, “Getta w powiatach: gostynińskim i kutnowskim” (paper presented at the conference on the 45 Anniversary of the Destruction of the Jewish Communities of the “Wartheland,” Zduńska Wola, October 23, 1987); and J. Wróbel, “Żydzi w Kutnie 1939–1942,” *Rocznik Łódzki* 39 (1989) 279–288. Among the published survivor testimonies relevant to the Kutno ghetto is Abraham Korn, *Abe's Story: A Holocaust Memoir* (Atlanta, GA: Longstreet, 1995).

Documentation on the ghetto and the fate of the Jewish population of Kutno during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AIZP (IZ. Dok. I-744); APŁ (sygn. 30021); APP (sygn. 594, 21111, and 2430); AŻIH (Ring I/469, 683, 839, and 1157; 301/301-15); IPN (ASG, sygn. 50, pp. 41–46); MMŻ;

OKŚZpNPŁdz (OKŁ, Ds 50/67); USHMM (RG-02.191); and YVA.

Anna Ziółkowska
trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTES

1. APP, Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Wartheland, sygn. 594, p. 23.
2. R. Buzak, “Wojna obronna Polski 1939 i lata okupacji hitlerowskiej,” in R. Rosin, ed., *Kutno. Dzieje Miasta* (Warsaw-Łódź, 1984), pp. 240–241.
3. AŻIH, 301/303, p. 1, testimony of Łucja Stuczyńska.
4. APP, Treuhandstelle Posen, sygn. 2430.
5. AŻIH, 301/313, testimony of Mieczysław Kisielewski; 301/311, testimony of Kazimierz Śpiewankiewicz.
6. Ibid., 301/303, testimony of M. Kisielewski; 301/309, testimony of Tadeusz Białecki.
7. Ibid., 301/303, p. 2, testimony of Ł. Stuczyńska; 301/315, testimony of Luzer Jakubowicz; OKŚZpNPŁdz, sygn. Ds 50/67, testimonies of A. Wojtczak, Z. Koszański, and L. Cieślak. See also Shtokfish, *Sefer Kutnah*, p. 327. Some sources date the establishment of the ghetto earlier, in March or April 1940.
8. D. Dąbrowska, “Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w ‘Kraju Warty’ w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 172, table 14; *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, September 22, 1940.
9. APP, Reichsstatthalter, sygn. 2111, p. 1; see also APP (zespół nr. 4045), an 8mm film made by unknown Germans, which probably includes scenes from the Kutno ghetto.
10. Ibid., Reichsstatthalter, sygn. 2111, p. 112; AIZP, sygn. Dok. I-734, p. 7; *Amtliches Fernsprechbuch für den Bezirk der Reichspostdirektion Posen (1942)*, p. 90.
11. AŻIH, 301/303, testimony of Ł. Stuczyńska.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 301/304, testimony of Ł. Stuczyńska; 301/314, testimony of Stanisław Wojtysiak; J. Wróbel, “Getta w powiatach: gostynińskim i kutnowskim,” in *W 45 rocznicę zagłady skupisk żydowskich w Kraju Warty* (Zduńska Wola, 1987).
14. AŻIH, 301/303, testimony of Mieczysław Kisielewski; 301/303, testimony of Ł. Stuczyńska.
15. MMŻ, Wykaz imienny więźniów osadzonych w obozach pracy przymusowej dla Żydów w Wielkopolsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej.
16. APP, Reichsstatthalter, sygn. 2111, pp. 6–8, 11–13, 111–112, 157–158, 170–171. Shtokfish, *Sefer Kutnah*, p. 329, gives figures of 1,000 typhus cases and 500 deaths.
17. AŻIH, MSS of cities, no. 44, as cited by Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), p. 158.
18. Trunk, *Judenrat*, p. 154.
19. APP, sygn. 2111, p. 157.
20. R. Sakowska, *Dwa etapy. Hitlerowska polityka eksterminacji Żydów w oczach ofiar. Szkic historyczny i dokumenty* (Wrocław, 1986), p. 142; AŻIH, 301/306, testimony of B. Jędraszko; 301/304, testimony of Ł. Stuczyńska; Korn, *Abe's Story*, p. 21.
21. R. Sakowska et al., eds., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Koncepcyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy* (Warsaw: PWN, 1997), 1:18.
22. AŻIH, 301/311, testimony of Kazimierz Śpiewankiewicz.

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23. APP, Gendarmerie Kreis Ostrowo [Ostrów Wielkopolski], sygn. 1, p. 42.

24. APP, Reichsstathalter, sygn. 2111, p. 202; AŻIH, 301/311, testimony of Kazimierz Spiewankiewicz.

ŁASK

Pre-1939: Łask, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Łask, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Łask, Łódź województwo, Poland

Łask is located 32 kilometers (20 miles) southwest of Łódź. At the outbreak of World War II, the population of Łask numbered about 5,000 people, of which 3,864 were Jews.

A few days after occupying the town in early September 1939, a group of Germans came to the synagogue and shot the beadle. Subsequently the synagogue was converted into a slaughterhouse for horses.

The Germans issued an order forbidding Jews from praying in public, so on Rosh Hashanah (September 14, 1939) all Jews had to pray at home. Some Jews were driven onto the streets in their prayer shawls and forced to pluck geese. On the holiday of Sukkot, the Germans threw Rabbi Leib Eisenberg, wearing his prayer shawl, into a garbage bin.

The Germans pillaged the Jews systematically. They demanded that the chairman of the local Jewish bank pay them 40,000 zloty within 24 hours. The Jewish charity fund was also required to pay a heavy “contribution.”



Postcard of the marketplace in Łask during the German occupation. COURTESY OF MUZEUM HISTORII ŁASKU

After hearing from some Jewish informers that Rabbi Eisenberg had hidden a horde of valuables, including silver artifacts from the synagogue, the Germans summoned him and demanded he reveal the hiding place. The rabbi was beaten cruelly, but he only gave away the location of the valuables after the Germans brought his wife to the cemetery and tortured her.

The German sanitary commissioner, who was a degenerate sadist, abused Jewish women, commanding them to wash naked with a brush at the water pump in the marketplace. On other occasions, he ordered women to wash in the *mikveh* (ritual Jewish bath) or in the municipal baths and return to him with a written confirmation. He also arranged orgies in his home, forcing Jewish women to participate. He left Łask in 1941.¹

The chairman of the Jewish community was Salman Kochman. When the Germans established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), they nominated Kochman as its chairman. Among the other members of the Judenrat were Avraham Burakovski, who ran the economics department; Aaron Pinchas Brzezinski, Yekel Levkovitz, and Motle Friedman from Łódź, who ran the labor department; Dov Mandel, who ran the post office; and Wolf Reichert, who ran the secretarial department.

The Judenrat chairman established a court of justice, with the judges Yitshak Kantorowitz and Mordechai Feibel Kochman. He also established the Jewish Police and nominated Hersch Lein as its chief.

The Judenrat tried its best to make life tolerable for the Jews. With some financial assistance received from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), the Jewish Council established a kosher public kitchen, which served a half a liter (1 pint) of soup and a slice of bread to those in need every day.

Despite acknowledgment by some of Kochman's efforts for the community, there were complaints against the Judenrat, mainly concerning how people were selected for labor camps and the brutality of the Jewish Police.²

The Germans started seizing Jews for work off the streets, almost immediately after they arrived. At first Jews were taken to repair two bridges on the Zduńska Wola road, which were blown up in the fighting. Others had to work for local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). Subsequently work tasks included removing and breaking up tombstones from the Jewish cemetery to pave the streets of the town.³

Deporting Jews to work camps, mainly in the Poznań region, had started by the summer of 1941. As time went on, the Germans made repeated demands for workers. The lists of people to be sent away were hung up in public places. When those people named did not report, the Jewish Police, and sometimes also the German Schutzpolizei, rounded them up. This caused a public outcry and even attacks on representatives of the Judenrat and its labor department.

In the years 1939–1940, food supplies were reasonable. Jewish bakeries continued to function until March 1940, as did Yankl Schmuelewitz's butcher shop, which sold horseflesh supplied by the German slaughterhouse in the synagogue. But in March 1940, all the Jewish bakeries were closed, and the Jews had to buy their bread rations only from “Aryan”

bakeries, using official coupons. In time all food was rationed. Only Jews employed as workers by the Germans received a supplementary food ration.

On February 22, 1940, the German authorities ordered the establishment of a ghetto (*Judenviertel*) in Łask.⁴ At first many Jews were ordered to move to the vicinity of Garbarska and Tylna Streets. Then, on November 18, 1940, all Jews in town were driven into the ghetto area, being beaten on the way.

The area of the ghetto was too small for the number of Jews crammed into it, and several families had to share a single dwelling. In October 1940, the number of Jews in the Łask ghetto was 3,467, of which 630 were refugees from other places, including Kalisz and Turek.⁵

In the first year of the ghetto, it was not fenced, apparently due to a shortage of fencing material,⁶ and Jews could come and go as they pleased within the town. They were not, however, permitted to leave the town limits, which had a serious economic effect as many Jews earned their living as peddlers. Only in late 1941 were Jews prohibited from leaving the ghetto. Traffic was allowed between 6:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. for those going out to work. Poles were allowed to enter the ghetto until 6:00 P.M. and Germans until 9:00 P.M. Jews caught outside the ghetto illegally now faced the death penalty. This development dramatically worsened living conditions. Famine and disease became widespread, and the death rate rose steeply. Occasionally the Schutzpolizei broke into the ghetto, searching for valuables and beating and killing Jews arbitrarily.

Nevertheless, Jews continued to sneak out of the ghetto at night to buy food.⁷ The suppliers were non-Jews, and the prices were very high. Jews also slaughtered animals without an official permit. When caught, Jews faced severe punishments, and many of them perished.

The Judenrat undertook various efforts to make life tolerable. In August 1940, the Jewish Council established a hospital on the insistence of the German authorities, following an outbreak of typhus. The hospital was located on Tylna Street and was managed by doctors Bal and Singer. The number of fatalities remained small, despite a large number of sick. The hospital also took in Jews from the surrounding communities, including from Lutomiersk and Żelów.⁸ Religious rites were also observed in spite of the prohibition by the German authorities.

In early 1942, news about the liquidation of other Jewish communities and the extermination of Jews in the Chełmno extermination camp started to reach the Łask ghetto. Responses were varied: some believed, or wanted to believe, that the Jews of Łask would be spared. Others began to look for places to hide themselves or at least their children. There were also some who simply accepted the fact that they were doomed.

At some date in 1942, two brothers, aged 16 and 18, from Kalisz were publicly executed by the Schutzpolizei for stealing coal. Through the intervention of the Judenrat, 10 others were reprieved.⁹

The liquidation of the Łask ghetto started on August 24, 1942, when a special German SS unit arrived from Łódź. The

German head of the local Savings Bank (Sparkasse), Oskar Wolfinger, witnessed the roundup:

The houses were searched individually and the Jews driven onto the street. Some Jews were shot as the houses were searched. The SS-men occasionally shot into the houses, when the Jews did not emerge immediately. In one case, two Jews who had hidden did not come out of the house, but after shots were fired into the doorway, they were driven up onto the roof. Then the SS shot them down from the roof. All the Jews were then driven through the town and herded into the Catholic Church. Here they were held under catastrophic conditions.¹⁰

The Jews were kept in the church for three days, suffering from starvation. In the end, Hans Biebow, head of the German Ghetto Administration (Gettoverwaltung, GV) in Łódź, and Günther Fuchs, of the Gestapo in Łódź, selected 760 people, mostly artisans and men capable of work, and sent them to Łódź.¹¹ The rest of the Jews, about 2,700 people in all, were sent to the Chełmno death camp, where they perished. At the same time the Germans put the Judenrat chairman Kochman with 20 other people on a truck and drove them away, never to be seen again.

After the Germans were driven out of Łask by the Red Army, 1 Jewish survivor emerged from hiding with local peasants, and about 20 Łask Jews returned from the camps.¹²

SOURCES Information on the ghetto in Łask and the persecution and destruction of its inmates can be found in the following publications: *Łask Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Va'adat ha-ma'arekhet shel ha-sefer shele-yad Irgun yots'e Łask be-Yisrael, 1968); Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Łódź and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 134–139; Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006); Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbof: Der Beginn der "Endlösung"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), pp. 92–93; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979).

Relevant documentation on the fate of the Jews of Łask during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: APE (278/994, pp. 166–167); AŻIH (e.g., 210/446 [AJDC]; 301/1874); BA-L (Pol. Ordn. 358, p. 833); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF (e.g., # 17565 and 22839); and YVA (M-1/E/1683 and M-1/Q/511).

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. *Łask Memorial Book*, pp. 91–92.
2. AŻIH, 301/1874, testimony of Dr. Singer.
3. *Ibid.*; *Łask Memorial Book*, pp. 74–75.
4. AŻIH, 301/1874; 210/446, report of the Jüdische Kultusgemeinde in Łask to AJDC in Krakau, July 21, 1941—stated that the Judenviertel had been created 15 months earlier.

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5. *Łask Memorial Book*, p. 91; AŻIH, 210/446, report of the Jüdische Kultusgemeinde in Łask to the AJDC in Warsaw, December 18, 1940.

6. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, April 28, 1940, as cited by Albertini, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 195.

7. VHF, # 22839, testimony of Mordechi Friedel.

8. AŻIH, 210/446, report of the Jüdische Kultusgemeinde in Łask to the AJDC in Kraków, July 21, 1941.

9. *Łask Memorial Book*, pp. 78–80.

10. Report of events by Oskar Wolfinger, trans. from the extract cited by Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chelmno/Kulmbof*, p. 92.

11. APŁ, 278/994, pp. 166–167; VHF, # 17565, testimony of Toby Rais.

12. AŻIH, 301/1874.

ŁĘCZYCA

Pre-1939: Łęczyca, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Lentschütz, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Łęczyca, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Łęczyca is located 38 kilometers (24 miles) northwest of Łódź. In 1939, there were around 4,200 Jews residing in the town.

German forces first captured Łęczyca on September 7, 1939. They promptly ordered all Jewish men into the synagogue and all Polish men into the church and the movie theater, where they were held overnight. The Poles were sent home the next day, but the Jews were sent to dig trenches on the outskirts of town.¹ Polish forces briefly recaptured Łęczyca, and the Germans pulled back, but they returned on September 13. Jews were seized for forced labor marked by cruel beatings, hunger, and no pay. On September 22, all males, Jewish and non-Jewish, aged 16 to 70 were ordered to assemble in the town square. The German commander announced that a high-



View of the Łęczyca ghetto's gate and barbed wire fence, n.d. USHMM WS #91661, COURTESY OF IPN

ranking officer had been murdered by a treacherous citizen of Łęczyca. Therefore, 50 Jews (leading members of the community) and 100 Poles (mostly common criminals) would be held hostage to assure the safety of German personnel. After three weeks the non-Jewish hostages and most of the Jews, with the exception of the rabbi and a few Jewish leaders, were released. The Germans imposed a fine of 1 million złoty on the Jewish community, due by a certain date. They established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) headed by Herzke Muchnik, who then selected the other members of the council. They set to work assessing and collecting the money (and ordering the Jewish Police to arrest recalcitrants). The fine was paid on time.²

In December 1939, Jews living on certain of the “better” streets were ordered out of their homes for relocation to another area—the first step towards a ghetto, which was eventually to be enclosed. Jews were forbidden to appear on certain streets even if they lived there. They had to enter their houses from a side street or alleyway. The Germans ordered that all Jews living on Ozorków, Kalisz, and Piątków Streets, on the city square, and on other major streets must leave their houses and be concentrated on other streets.³ Over the following months, all the Jews were concentrated into a closely confined area that served as an open ghetto. It included the Street of the Jews, Kowalska and Ogrodowa Streets, and the entire area from there up to the jailhouse.⁴

Each day the Judenrat was ordered to provide a certain number of people for forced labor. They were put to work on the most humiliating and backbreaking tasks—one of which was the dismantling of the Jewish cemetery. The gravestones were used as paving stones.⁵ People with money could buy their way out of forced labor, but only a few could afford to do so. Those who had lost their livelihoods sold whatever they had to avoid starvation. In February 1940, the Germans placed buckets of tar and incendiary materials in the large synagogue and burned it down. Then they accused the Jews of arson and forced the Judenrat to sign a statement to that effect. They also imposed a heavy fine.⁶

In late 1940, the systematic expulsions began. The first transport was to Częstochowa in December 1940.⁷ The next expulsion, to Poddębice, was ordered in January 1941. People were told to assemble in the town square within two hours, bringing only household utensils and bedding. Their goods were loaded onto horse-drawn wagons, which also transported children and the elderly. The procession of 500 or 600 people was photographed as they began the forced march to Poddębice.⁸ They were met by the Jewish Police, which put them into horse stables until they could find housing for them. Four families were crowded into a single room. Jews from the surrounding area were brought into Łęczyca, from which in early 1941 there were three additional deportations—to Poddębice, to Grabów, and possibly to Parczew, another concentration point within the Kreis.⁹ The inflow of refugees from the countryside and the expulsions to other ghettos kept the population of Łęczyca at a rough equilibrium. On January 1,

1940, the number was around 3,000. On January 1, 1941, the total was 2,987. In April 1942, it was approximately 1,750.

At some time between December 1940 and February 1941 (just following the expulsions), the establishment of the Łęczycza ghetto was completed when it was enclosed with barbed wire.¹⁰ No one was permitted to leave the area. Within the ghetto there was freedom of movement from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., after which a strict curfew was enforced. At first Jews wore a yellow patch with a Star of David on their sleeves. Afterwards, they were forced to wear it on the front and back of their clothing. Jewish converts to Christianity—still regarded as Jews by the Germans—had to wear an extra-large patch. Judenrat members had their own distinctive patches. Within the ghetto all communal life was suppressed—no prayer services, no cultural programs, no schools, no social interaction, and no trade or business activity were permitted. The ghetto cooperative, which provided meager rations and other basic services, was the only organization allowed to function. Due to famine and lack of fuel, diseases were prevalent, including cases of typhus. Funeral processions to the cemetery were forbidden; only a few close relatives were allowed to inter the deceased.¹¹

After the expulsions, the only Jews left in Łęczycza were the relatively well-to-do, who held on to the delusion that money could shield them from their ultimate fate. Around this time the Germans ordered the Jews to salvage the bricks of the burned synagogue and clean them for further use. This difficult and heartbreaking task was accomplished in three non-stop shifts. Each day the inhabitants of the ghetto were lined up for a head count. In March 1942, 10 men who were under arrest allegedly for smuggling were publicly hanged. After five hours their bodies were buried in a common grave.¹²

On April 11–12, 1942, the remaining 1,750 Jews were sent to the extermination camp at Chełmno.¹³ During the month of April, all the Jews of Łęczycza who had been expelled to the nearby towns of Poddebice and Grabów were also transported to Chełmno and murdered.¹⁴ In June 1942, the Gestapo in Łódź reported that about 9,000 Jews had been evacuated recently from Kreis Lentschütz, which was free of Jews (*judenfrei*) with the exception of the ghetto in Ozorków.¹⁵ During July 1942, a group of Jews was brought to the Central Prison in Łódź from the prison in Łęczycza.¹⁶ At the end of the occupation, local Poles were occupying the houses in the former ghetto area.¹⁷

SOURCES Published sources on the Łęczycza ghetto include the following: Yitzhak Frenkel, ed., *Sefer Linsbitz* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Leczyca in Israel, 1953); Avraham Tsigler, *Hazak ve-balash: Sipuro nitsol Sho'ab* (Israel: A. Tsigler, 1987); and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 151–155.

Information on the Łęczycza ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Ring I/1047 and 1172); BA-L (ZStL, 203 AR-Z 161/67); IPN (ASG, vol. 50, p. 83); USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 15; and RG-50.488*0153); VHF (# 5802, 20465, 21749, and 23061); and YVA.

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NOTES

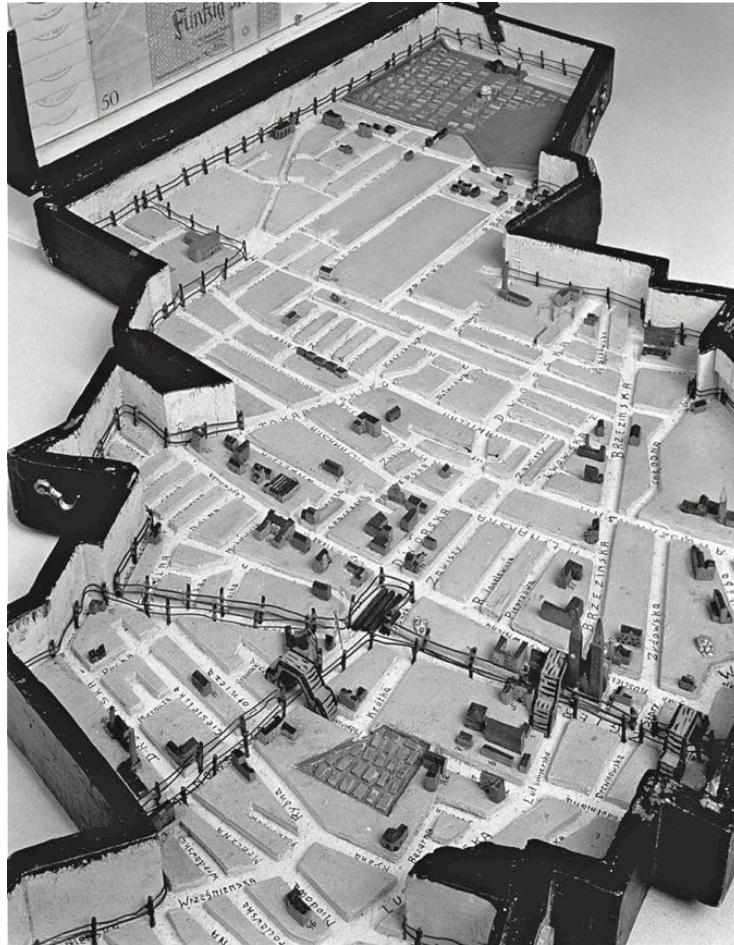
1. Frenkel, *Sefer Linsbitz*, p. 179.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 180–181; a photograph of Herzke Muchnik can be found in Tsigler, *Hazak ve-balash*, on the final page.
3. Frenkel, *Sefer Linsbitz*, p. 181.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 186; and VHF, # 5802, testimony of Abraham Lipschitz.
6. Frenkel, *Sefer Linsbitz*, p. 181.
7. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 155.
8. See Tsigler, *Hazak ve-balash*, final page.
9. Frenkel, *Sefer Linsbitz*, pp. 182–183; Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 202.
10. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 15 (IPN, ASG 50), p. 83, dates the establishment of the ghetto in February 1941. BA-L, ZStL, 203 AR-Z 161/67, vol. 7, p. 181, witness statement of Gerhard J., August 6, 1971, however, dates it only at the end of 1941.
11. Frenkel, *Sefer Linsbitz*, pp. 183–185; AŻIH, Ring I/1172.
12. Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S." ("Oneg Shabbath")* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), p. 686; Frenkel, *Sefer Linsbitz*, p. 185.
13. "Łęczycza," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 12 (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), pp. 594–595.
14. Frenkel, *Sefer Linsbitz*, p. 186; and Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), pp. 205–207.
15. Lagebericht der Gestapo in Lodsch, June 9, 1942, published in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), pp. 285–286.
16. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 236.
17. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 15 (IPN, ASG 50), p. 83.

ŁÓDŹ

Pre-1939: Łódź (Yiddish: Lodzb), city, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Litzmannstadt (April 1940), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (from 1941, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Łódź, Łódź województwo, Poland

Łódź lies 137 kilometers (85 miles) southwest of Warsaw. Its textile industry was the largest in interwar Poland. In 1931, its 604,629 residents included among others 356,987 Poles, 191,720 Jews, and 53,562 Germans. On the eve of World War II, its Jewish community, numbering around 235,000 members, was the second largest in Europe.

Upon occupying Łódź on September 8, 1939, the Germans unleashed three months of sustained anti-Jewish violence, including seizing Jews for forced labor, plundering and confiscating Jewish property, and executing or deporting to



A model of the Łódź ghetto created by ghetto resident Leon Jacobson in 1940. The ghetto's foot-bridges are visible in the foreground.

USHMM WS #N00051, COURTESY OF LEON JACOBSON

concentration camps hundreds of the city's Jewish political, business, and cultural elite.

Arthur Greiser, Gauleiter and Reichsstatthalter of Warthegau, officially lobbied for Łódź's incorporation into Warthegau on November 9, 1939, and because he was anxious to Germanize the city by resettling Reich and ethnic Germans there, authorities initially planned to expel the Jews, rather than to ghettoize them. From December 11, 1939, German police, security officials, and local ethnic Germans organized in a Selbstschutz (Auxiliary Police) unit, and German civilians, including youth brought from the Reich, began deporting Jews (and Poles) into the Generalgouvernement. Plans called for the expulsion of 30,000 Jews (and 30,000 Poles) from Łódź, but protests from Hans Frank, head of the Generalgouvernement, suspended the deportations on December 16, after the transfer of 25,374 people. Jews likely were

overrepresented among the expellees because German youth had targeted them for eviction.¹ Ongoing antisemitic terror and rumors of a total expulsion prompted another 60,000 to 75,000 Jews to leave Łódź on their own.

On December 10, 1939, Friedrich Übelhör, Regierungspräsident in Kalisch, secretly ordered authorities to plan a "transitional" measure: a closed ghetto to imprison the Jews until their expulsion to the Generalgouvernement.² On February 8, 1940, SS-Brigadeführer Johannes Schäfer, the city's Polizeipräsident, publicly announced the establishment of a ghetto in northern Łódź, ultimately on 4.13 square kilometers (almost 1.6 square miles) in the Bałuty, Stare Miasto (Old Town), and Marysin neighborhoods. Ethnic Germans and Poles had until April 30 to vacate residences there. Given until April 19 to move into the ghetto, Jews could bring one suitcase of clothing, linens, photographs, and a bed. Chaim Mordechai Rum-

kowski, whom German authorities appointed head of the Jewish Council (officially, *Der Älteste der Juden*) on October 13–14, 1939, established a Jewish police force (*Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst*) to transfer the Jews into the ghetto.

Starting on March 1, 1940, the SS and police, impatient with the transfer rate, arrested Poles still living in the ghetto and drove Jews into it. The Germans released some 600 Poles, designating them for residency in a Polish neighborhood established in southern Łódź, and filled their places with Jewish expellees. About 200 Jews were shot dead during the evacuations, mostly on March 7–8 (“Bloody Thursday”). Some 160 from among those arrested were executed in the *Lućmierz Forest*, near *Zgierz*. Another 400 to 500 Jewish prisoners were expelled to the *Generalgouvernement*.

In March and April 1940, the Germans encircled the ghetto with a barbed-wire and wooden fence. On April 30, the gates closed on its 163,777 residents (including 6,741 refugees). On May 10, the *Schutzpolizei* (*Schupo*) and its auxiliaries, posted at 50- to 100-meter intervals (about 55- to 109-yard intervals) along the outside of the 11-kilometer (6.8-mile) ghetto perimeter, received orders to shoot Jews approaching the fence without warning. About 180 Jews were killed for being too close to the fence and for other offenses related to securing the ghetto’s perimeter.

In April 1940, the Germans changed Łódź’s name to *Litzmannstadt*. Therefore, the Łódź ghetto is also known as the *Litzmannstadt ghetto*. *Karl Marder* and *Werner Ventzky*, respectively, the city’s *Oberbürgermeister* and *Bürgermeister*, were the chief administrative and economic officers of the ghetto. They initially charged the *Ernährungs- und Wirtschaftsamt Hauptstelle* (Food Supplies and Economy Department) with day-to-day responsibility for the ghetto. The department in turn created a Ghetto division, officially the *Ernährungs- und Wirtschaftsstelle Getto* (*EWG*), led from May 1940 by *Hans Biebow*, a coffee merchant from *Bremen*. The *Schupo*, *Kripo*, and *Gestapo* exercised police authority over the ghetto. In January 1942, *SS-Sturmbannführer* *Dr. Otto Bradfisch* replaced the first commander of the *Litzmannstadt Gestapo*, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* *Dr. Robert Schefer*. In August 1942, *Bradfisch* also assumed *Ventzky*’s position. Through 1943, *SS-Obersturmführer* *Günter Fuchs* headed the *Gestapo*’s section for Jewish Matters (*Judenangelegenheiten*).

Conditions in the ghetto were poor. Because Jewish authorities had designated the housing in *Marysin*, a more rural, middle-class neighborhood, mainly for schools, old-age homes, and an orphanage, almost all the Jews were squeezed into about 2,300 homes located in a 2.31 square kilometer (0.9 square mile) residential area in *Bałuty* and *Old Town*. The two neighborhoods were notorious slums, whose mostly 100-year-old wooden houses lacked central plumbing. The exclusion from the ghetto of *Nowomiejska-Zgierz* and *Limanowski Streets*, throughways left open to non-Jewish traffic, made movement within the ghetto difficult. Initially, the Jews crossed the streets at specific gates, only at designated times.

From the fall of 1941, Jews from beyond Łódź were consolidated in the ghetto: 2,900 from the *Kujawy region* (including

Włocławek, *Brześć Kujawski*, *Chodecz*, *Kowal*, and *Lubraniec*); 19,954 from *Prague*, *Vienna*, *Luxembourg*, *Berlin*, *Düsseldorf*, *Emden*, *Frankfurt am Main*, *Hamburg*, and *Cologne*; and 18,000 to 18,500 from localities near Łódź. From November 5–9, 5,007 *Roma* arrived from *Burgenland*, *Austria*. Additionally, some 2,306 children were born in the ghetto. The total number of people who lived there amounted to around 210,000.

City administrators further exacerbated conditions in the ghetto. Initially, they moved haltingly on *Rumkowski*’s requests, in March and April 1940, to establish factories to enable the Jews to work to pay for their provisioning and instead decided to finance the ghetto by extracting movable wealth from the Jews. The *EWG* debited *Rumkowski*’s account for requests he made to ease living conditions, including for the medical equipment and furnishings in a modern pre-war public health clinic and for three wooden pedestrian bridges (60,000 *Reichsmark* [*RM*]) constructed in July over the roads excluded from the ghetto. To resolve the ghetto’s growing indebtedness, the *EWG* ordered the Jews in June 1940 to exchange their convertible currency at a ghetto bank for vouchers. (The Jews called the ghetto currency *Chaimki* or *Rumki*, because they carried *Rumkowski*’s name.) A special *Kripo* unit, the *Kriminalpolizei Sonderkommissariat Getto*, commanded by *Bruno Obersteiner* and *Wilhelm Neumann*, established offices in the ghetto in May to facilitate searches for items the *EWG* and the Jewish administration ordered the Jews to surrender. In July, *Rumkowski*, on *Gestapo* and *EWG* orders, created a special division of the Jewish Police, the *Sonderabteilung*, to assist in *Kripo* searches. From August, a second ghetto bank assessed and purchased for ghetto currency Jewish-owned valuables, including paintings, jewelry, leather goods, clothing, and linens.³

These policies rapidly pauperized the ghetto because they forced almost all the Jews, save perhaps for the approximately 7,000 employed on June 25, 1940, to sell possessions to survive. By August, just 52.2 percent of ghetto residents could afford to buy food. On August 10–11 and 25, *Rumkowski* called on German forces to dispel food riots and distributed 70,000 kilograms (154,324 pounds) of potatoes to the most impoverished. On September 19, he declared his administration financially incapable of feeding the impoverished and requested a 2 million *RM* loan. Officials caused looting by suspending food deliveries into the ghetto for two weeks to extract additional valuables.

Since *Hans Frank* refused to resettle the Łódź Jews in the *Generalgouvernement*, on October 18, 1940, the municipal authorities acknowledged that the ghetto would continue to exist. They approved a 3 million *RM* loan to provision the ghetto and to develop workshops there. To cut costs, they ordered that the Jews receive prison rations, from the worst of the available food supply, and insisted that only the most productive workers be awarded supplemental rations. *Biebow*’s office became an autonomous division, the *Gettoverwaltung* (*Ghetto Administration*, *GV*), which reported directly to the mayor. *Biebow* elevated the ghetto *Kripo*, giving it identical



Children work in a wood workshop in the Łódź ghetto, 1941–1942.
USHMM WS #89491, COURTESY OF MOSHE ZILBAR

access as the Gestapo to his meetings with Jewish administrators. Police authorities insisted the ghetto be surrounded with an elaborate “fire break,” or a no-man’s land. Some neighborhoods were razed beginning in late 1940. Guard booths and electric lights were installed in the vacant expanse. However, plans to install searchlights and to build watchtowers were never implemented, in part because the subsequent success of industrial expansion eased concerns about security by the spring of 1941 and may also have diminished retributive police terror.

By July 1942, the GV oversaw 74 ghetto workshops, officially called *Arbeitsressorte* (work sections) but popularly known as *ressorts*. Some 90 percent of all production was for the Wehrmacht. German department stores placed most of the remaining orders. A small pre-war railway depot, the Radogoszcz station, located in the ghetto, was expanded to deliver machinery and raw materials and to send out finished products, including clothing, shoes, carpets, furniture, telephone equipment, toys, and paper bags.

Ressort workers labored 10 to 14 hours a day in poorly ventilated, overcrowded workshops, earning wages on a piece-work basis. The wages were held low, because Gau authorities took 35 percent off the top, the GV another 30 percent, and the Jewish administration another 10 percent. The most skilled worker received at best 4 ghetto marks daily. Nonskilled labor received 1 mark. Workers rapidly produced large quantities of finished goods, including in a week’s time almost 5,000 complete sets of Wehrmacht uniforms. Such output fueled industrial expansion but never allowed for full employment. By March 1942, the *ressorts* employed 53,000 workers.

Rumkowski built a vast bureaucracy, numbering more than 13,000 people in August 1942, to oversee factories, housing, food supply, health care, and sanitation. In August 1940, he opened soup kitchens for the poor. In October, he implemented a promised welfare system, sending monthly stipends of 7 to 10 marks to 82,000 children and adults. However, the Jewish administration struggled over how to apportion the limited food the Germans sent into the ghetto, which likely amounted in most food categories to half a prisoner’s ration.

A 15 percent surcharge for food purchased on credit and a 15 percent fee to transfer food into the ghetto added costs to the few provisions the ghetto received.

Rumkowski responded to the food shortages by demanding the Jews work harder to pay for their maintenance and by instituting increasingly authoritarian measures. In December 1940, he ordered the Jewish administration to take over private soup kitchens and restaurants and to ration food. In the spring of 1941, he liquidated the pioneer training camps of young Zionists and seized their farms in Marysin. To snuff out speculation, he ordered periodic crackdowns and arrests of smugglers and black marketeers.

Within the ghetto, the shrinking economy exposed cleavages in the Jewish community. In January 1941, Rumkowski announced a more equitable distribution of bread rations by discontinuing a 600-grams (21-ounces) daily supplemental ration for manual workers to increase the general population’s ration from 300 to 400 grams (10.6 to 14.1 ounces). In February, underground political groups protested the decision with the carpenters’ strike. Most strikers returned to work after Rumkowski offered 580 grams (20.5 ounces) of meat and 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of potatoes to ressort workers. The Jewish Police put down the remaining opposition. In March, 700 welfare recipients demanded increases in relief payments and decreases in the prices of food. The West European Jews, in particular, found adjusting to the ghetto’s economic realities difficult. About half never found jobs.

Material conditions for the Jews continued to decline, just as the daily food rations diminished—about 1,800 calories in the first months of the ghetto’s existence decreased to 600 calories by mid-1942. Most Jews subsisted on a daily bowl of watery cabbage or potato soup, a piece of bread, and a small evening snack of radish greens or potato peels. Paltry heating rations and restrictions on electricity use in residences forced almost everyone to eat collectively in soup kitchens, to curtail the laundering of clothing and linens in hot water, and to eat unheated evening meals—factors that contributed to outbreaks of typhus and dysentery. In 1942, the annual death toll peaked at 18,000. (Officially, 2,811 deaths were attributed to starvation.) The West European Jews, many of them older, also were overrepresented among the victims. From October 1941 to May 1942, 3,318 died in the ghetto (about 50 percent of the total number of deaths in this period). Overall, 45,327 people died from “natural causes” in the ghetto.

Because Rumkowski had centralized so much authority for day-to-day ghetto operations in his hands, portrayed himself as the ghetto’s supreme ruler, and boasted of Jewish autonomy in the ghetto, many blamed him for their plight. Some maintained he had established a system of patronage and privilege in which the ghetto leadership and elite, who were entitled to “enormous” supplemental rations, “[were] gorging, unafraid of death from exhaustion or tuberculosis . . . while the rest [were] swelling up and dying of hunger.”⁴ Others privately bemoaned Rumkowski’s incompetence in economic affairs and castigated him for silencing opponents by ordering them conscripted for forced labor outside the ghetto, among the approximately



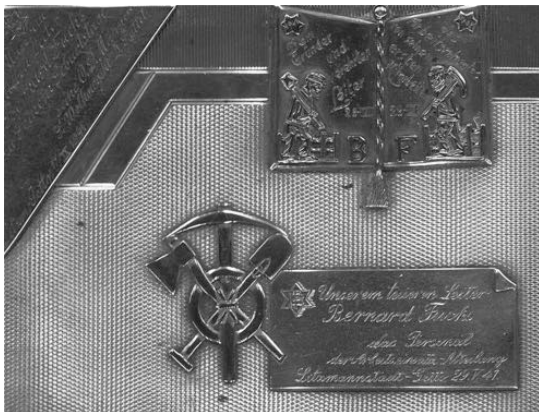
Nachman Zonabend [center] and Mendel Grosman (right) examine a framed portrait of the Łódź Judenrat chairman, Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, 1941.

USHMM WS #02685, COURTESY OF NACHMAN ZONABEND



A 10-Pfennig stamp from the Łódź ghetto, bearing the likeness of the Judenrat chairman, Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, n.d.

USHMM WS #N00359



A silver cigarette case with gold decorations presented to Bernard Fuchs, head of the Łódź ghetto Labor Department, on the occasion of his birthday by his staff. From top left, the inscriptions, which have different signatories and dates, read: "Our beloved director Bernard Fuchs on his birthday - His OD [Ordnungsdienst, Order Service] staff, L. Wolkowyski [and] D. Pyttel, Litzm[annstadt] ghetto, 19 September 1941." Top right: "To the founder and honored director of the Labor Department from his first assistants, 28 June [1941] to 28 June [1942] B[ernard] F[uchs]."

Bottom right: "Our dear director Bernard Fuchs, the personnel of the labor deployment section, Litzmannstadt ghetto 29 May 1941."

USHMM WS #01367, COURTESY OF BERT AND IRENE FLEMING



The Łódź ghetto police at roll call, 1941.

USHMM WS #05653, COURTESY OF JERZY TOMASZEWSKI

13,000 people sent to 160 forced labor camps, established mainly near Poznań, to construct the Autobahn to Frankfurt an der Oder.

Despite the grim living conditions, the ghetto sustained a variety of cultural activities. Until September 1942, religious observance continued in 27 Batei Midrash. Poets, writers, and musicians presented works in soup kitchens and at a cultural

hall, opened in March 1941 by the Jewish administration. Between June 1940 and October 1941, 14,798 children attended 45 primary and 2 secondary schools. The cultural events enabled individuals to forget their isolation, hunger, and despair for a time. The schools served one subsidized meal daily, providing students important nutritional sustenance. A Department of Archives, established in November 1940, wrote a chronicle of events in the ghetto. Though rarely critical of Rumkowski, it remains an important source for understanding daily life in the ghetto.

Starting in the fall of 1941, German authorities debated the Łódź ghetto's fate. Local and regional officials, including Biebow, Übelhör (until his removal in mid-December 1941), and Greiser, had made money from the ghetto and argued for its continued existence based on its contributions to war production. They found powerful allies in those responsible for war production, most notably Albert Speer, and managed to ratchet down demands, from Adolf Eichmann, Reinhard Heydrich, and Heinrich Himmler, to liquidate the ghetto.

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They agreed to shield the ghetto's productive capacities, which netted official profits from March 1942, by targeting first for "resettlement" "non-productive" Jews. Biebow had adopted such a policy from early in 1942, while participating in the liquidation of the provincial ghettos, by retaining 18,000 to 18,500 mostly male craftsmen and laborers for work in the Łódź ghetto.⁵

In March 1942, Rumkowski informed the Łódź Jews: "A new rule has been introduced . . . only working people can stay in the ghetto," and in April he trumpeted employment as a "guarantee of peace."⁶ The Jewish administration attempted to insulate the Jews from German violence by organizing the deportations. Rumkowski appointed a commission of five to draw up deportation lists; the commission in turn sent notices to those slated for "resettlement"; teachers and others from the Jewish administration filled out documentation at assembly points. Those who failed to report were brought to assembly points by the Jewish Police. From April 1942, German authorities intervened, ordering the nonworking population over the age of 10 to report for cursory medical exams, conducted by a commission of a few German doctors, members of the Gestapo, and Jewish physicians, to determine which of the unemployed were fit for labor and which were to be "resettled." The warnings and examinations likely played some role in the Jewish administration's decision in the spring of 1942 to expand factory employment to include tens of thousands of youths aged 8 to 14 in apprenticeship programs.

In Łódź, the first deportation Aktion, totaling 57,064 people, took place from December 21, 1941, to May 15, 1942. The Roma were the first to be transported to the extermination center in Chełmno nad Nerem between December 20, 1941, and January 10, 1942. The Jews, also transferred to Chełmno, left the Radogoszcz station in 55 trains in three deportation waves (January 16–29, February 22–April 22, and May 2–15, 1942). Among the deportees were a third of the Kujawy Jews (January); 10,943 unemployed West European expellees (May); native welfare recipients; and all those convicted of crimes and their families (January).

The second deportation Aktion, on September 1–2 and 5–12, 1942, first targeted the sick at the ghetto's hospitals. On September 4, Rumkowski appealed to the Jews to hand over their children and elderly relatives to save themselves. The German authorities imposed an *allgemeine Ghesperre* (general curfew), forbidding ghetto residents from leaving their homes for five days to make it easier for the Jewish Police and firemen to locate the victims. On September 7, the SS and Kripo stepped in to oversee the searches. Some 164 to 570 people were killed on the spot; 15,682 children, elderly, and infirm Jews were sent to their deaths at Chełmno.

The SS likely ordered the ghetto's children and elderly surrendered.⁷ But because Rumkowski knew at least from the summer of 1942 that the Germans were gassing the Jews at Chełmno, most survivors consider his actions during the Ghesperre unforgivable.⁸ A few survivors maintain the Germans determined the scope and timing of the deportations and believe Rumkowski acted realistically, according to the



A child who has been selected for deportation during the Ghesperre Aktion bids farewell to his family through a fence of the central prison in the Łódź ghetto, September 1942.

USHMM WS #89772, COURTESY OF MOSHE ZILBAR

context and morality of the time, by attempting to make the Jewish labor force indispensable to the Germans, while capitulating to their demands for population reductions in a desperate effort to save a part of the Jewish population. They attribute him with formulating a policy that enabled the Łódź ghetto to survive beyond any other ghetto in German-occupied Poland and as a result increasing the survival chances for many thousands of Jews. All scholars acknowledge the important role economics played in the German decision to maintain the ghetto but tend to attribute its longevity to local, regional, and national German authorities with vested financial or military interests in its retention.

After the deportations, the ghetto resembled more of a labor camp. Some 73,782 Jews, about 85 percent of the surviving population, were employed at 101 resorts, which were monitored directly by Biebow and Germans from the GV. The orphanages, old-age homes, and hospitals were closed. Biebow ordered all Yiddish and Hebrew signs replaced with German signs and suspended the rabbinate. Biebow also diminished Rumkowski's authority by reducing the size of the Jewish ghetto administration and transferring responsibility for factory production and food supply to 2 Jews with close ties to the Gestapo and Kripo.

Some welfare schemes were reestablished, though at times they were transformed to accommodate the new realities. Malnourished workers received eight weeks of bakery employment to provide them extra bread rations. Rest homes provided weeklong vacations, with larger rations, to 11,706 workers before Biebow closed them on August 25, 1943. Rumkowski successfully appealed to ghetto residents to adopt 2,000 children orphaned by the evacuations. He also served as a chaplain at marriages, which the authorities required be civil ceremonies.

In mid-February 1944, Greiser accepted Himmler's demands for a gradual liquidation of the ghetto, ordering in

March the Chełmno extermination center rebuilt and about 1,600 Jews deported to forced labor camps in Częstochowa and Skarżysko-Kamienna. German military defeats in April and May ended whatever hesitation he may have had to liquidate the ghetto. On June 15, Fuchs, recalled to Łódź to oversee the deportations, and Bradfish demanded 3,000 Jews be evacuated weekly, ostensibly to clear war damage in the Reich. Between June 23 and July 14, 10 transports carried 7,196 Jews to their deaths at Chełmno. Fears that the Red Army would capture the extermination center temporarily suspended the deportations. They began anew between August 1 and 29, this time under the pretense that the ghetto was to be relocated to the Reich. Instead, more than 65,000 Jews, including Rumkowski, were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people, including 30 to 270 who had evaded the deportations, remained behind in the ghetto to clear and sort the possessions there and to disassemble some of its workshops. On October 21, 1944, 500 inmates were sent to the Ravensbrück and Königs Wusterhausen concentration camps. In January 1945, as the Red Army approached Łódź, the Germans ordered a brigade of ghetto inmates to dig mass graves at the Jewish cemetery, but on January 17, the Jews hid, rather than assemble for evacuation. Some 877 Jews were still hiding in the ghetto when the Red Army liberated Łódź on January 19, 1945.

Another 5,000 to 15,000 Łódź Jews survived the concentration camps.

SOURCES Contemporary press coverage, important official German documentation, and excerpts of important memoirs are in Alan Adelson and Robert Lapidés, *Łódź Ghetto: Inside a Community under Siege* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989), though the translations have been questioned by Robert Moses Shapiro, “Diaries and Memoirs from the Lodz Ghetto in Yiddish and Hebrew,” in Shapiro, ed., *Holocaust Chronicles: Individualizing the Holocaust through Diaries and Other Contemporaneous Personal Accounts* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1999), pp. 95–115. Shapiro also is the translator of Isaiah Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2006), an important secondary source, which contains translations of about 140 documents. Of the English-language materials, particularly important are the memoir excerpts by Jakub Hiller and Leon Hurwitz, neither of which has appeared elsewhere in English, and by Shlomo Frank and Jakub Szulman, because they are still available only in Yiddish and Hebrew.

Available in Polish, with transcriptions of the original German-language documentation, are: *Dokumenty i materiały do dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce*, vol. 3, *Getto Łódzkie*, ed. Artur Eisenbach (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół CZWH w Polsce, 1946); and the relevant sections in vol. 1, *Obozy*, ed. N. Blumenthal (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Centralnej Komisji Historycznej, 1946), with the first book particularly important, because it established much of the framework for the initial postwar scholarly understanding and subsequent analysis of the Łódź ghetto.

In addition to Trunk, scholarly works include: Łódź ghetto survivor Icchak Rubin, *Żydzi w Łodzi pod niemiecką okupacją 1939–1945* (London: Kontra, 1988); more recently, Michal

Unger, *Lodz: Abaron ba-geta’ot be-Polin* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005); Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006); Andrea Löw, *Juden im Getto Litzmannstadt: Lebensbedingungen, Selbstwahrnehmung, Verhalten* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006); and Peter Klein, *Die “Gettoverwaltung Litzmannstadt” 1940–1944: Eine Dienststelle im Spannungsfeld von Kommunalbürokratie und staatlicher Verfolgungspolitik* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2009). All contain important bibliographies.

Julian Baranowski, an APL archivist and for decades the primary specialist of the repository’s documentation for the Łódź ghetto, has published a smaller, more accessible bilingual history, *The Łódź Ghetto 1940–1944. Łódzkie Getto 1940–1944. Vademecum*, 3rd ed. (Łódź: APL and Biblio, 2005). Gordon Horwitz, *Ghettostadt: Łódź and the Making of a Nazi City* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2008), also an accessible account, devotes several chapters to the ghetto but leaves much unsaid about its main subject.

Diaries, memoirs, notebooks, journalistic accounts, and periodicals left by those who perished in the Holocaust include: *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak*, trans. Kamil Turowski (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Hanno Loewy and Andrzej Bodek, eds., “*Les Vrais Riches*,” *Notizen am Rand: Ein Tagebuch aus dem Ghetto Łódź (Mai bis August 1944)* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1997); “Yomano shel Menahem Oppenheim mi-geto lodzh,” ed. and trans. Mordecai Zer-Kavod, *Sinai* 14: 5–6 (1951): 241–278; a handwritten Hebrew-language periodical published in the ghetto, *Min ba-metsar*, which appeared in *Dapim le-beker ba shoa ve-ha-mered* 2 (February 1952): 149–153; Y. Szulman, “Der Aelteste der Juden,” *Yediot Bet Lobamei ba-Geta’ot Yediot* (April 1958): 69–81; “Papiery oświęcimskie,” in Janusz Gumkowski and Adam Rutkowski, eds., *Szukajcie w popiołach: Papiery znalezione w Oświęcimiu*, trans. Szymon Datner (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1965), pp. 41–121, found buried at Auschwitz; Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., “Polska Anna Frank nazywała się? Fragment pamiętnika dziewczynki z getta łódzkiego,” *Mówią wieki*, no. 7 (1958): 4–11; and more recently, the diary of Jehuda “Lolek” Lubiński, recovered in Bałuty in 2003, available as “Getto Litzmannstadt 1941: Pamiętnik,” *Przegląd Powszechny*, no. 11 (2003): 268–281, with excerpts of the last translated into English at the Web sites of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Łódź Ghetto Museum.

The works of a number of individuals employed by the Department of Archives, who perished in the Holocaust, include: Josef Zelkowicz, *In Those Terrible Days. Notes from the Łódź Ghetto*, ed. Michal Unger, trans. Naftali Greenwood (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002); Oskar Rosenfeld, *In the Beginning Was the Ghetto. Notebooks from Łódź*, ed. Hanno Loewy, trans. Brigitte M. Goldstein (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002); and Oskar Singer, “*Im Eilschritt durch den Gettotag*”: *Reportagen und Essays aus dem Getto Lodz, 1942–1944* (Berlin: Philo, 2002).

Memoirs by survivors include: Riva Chirung, *Bridge of Sorrow, Bridge of Hope*, ed. Rebecca Camhi Fromer, trans. Arlene and Jerry Aviram (Berkeley, CA: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1994); Jakub Poznański, *Dziennik z łódzkiego getta* (Łódź: Bellon and ŻIH, Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 2002); Lucille Eichen-green, with Harriet Hyman Chamberlain, *From Ashes to Life: My Memories of the Holocaust* (San Francisco: Mercury House,

1994); Rebecca Camhi Fromer and Lucille Eichengreen, *Rumkowski and the Orphans of Łódź* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 2002); and Edward Reicher, *W ostrym świetle dnia: dziennik żydowskiego lekarza 1939–1945* (London: Libra Books, 1989), for particularly devastating portraits of Rumkowski. Shlomo Frank, *Togbukh fun Lodzsher geto* (Tel Aviv: Menorah, 1958), from a former policeman, also is important, although it has been criticized for being more of a memoir than a diary. Among memoirists pleading to rethink Rumkowski's reputation are Arnold Mostowicz, *With a Yellow Star and a Red Cross: A Doctor in the Łódź Ghetto*, trans. Henia Reinhartz and Nochem Reinhartz (Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003); and Abraham Cykiert, "The Uniqueness of the Łódź Ghetto," in Paweł Samuś and Wiesław Puś, eds., *Fenomen getta łódzkiego, 1940–1944* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2006), with the latter appearing in a multilingual work in which contributors discuss, among other topics, youth groups, sports organizations, theater, and religious life in the ghetto and which contains a large bibliography, mostly of Polish-, German-, and English-language works.

A vast visual iconography exists for the Łódź ghetto, with selected photographs of the ghetto appearing in publication, including from Jewish ghetto photographers: Mendel Grossman, *With a Camera in the Ghetto*, ed. Zvi Szner and Alexander Sened (New York: Schocken Books, 1972); and Henryk Ross, *Lodz Ghetto Album. Photographs by Henryk Ross* (London: Chris Boot, 2004). *Fotoamator* (The photographer), a 1998 documentary film by Dariusz Jabłoński, juxtaposes the color slides taken of the ghetto by the amateur photographer Walter Genewein, a non-Jewish Viennese accountant employed by the GV, and his writings about the ghetto with Mostowicz's recollections of the ghetto. A rich collection of visual iconography documenting the Łódź ghetto also can be found at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum photo archives.

Also not to be overlooked is the award-winning fictional work written by survivor Chava Rosenfarb, *The Tree of Life: A Trilogy of Life in the Lodz Ghetto*, 3 vols., trans. Goldie Morgentaler (repr., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004–2006); and Gila Flam, *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Łódź Ghetto* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). The songs are available as a CD, *Brave Old World / Song of the Lodz Ghetto* (Winter & Winter, 2005).

Published transcripts are available for several postwar trials, including the updated *Proces Hansa Biebowa: Zagłada getta łódzkiego. Akta i stenogramy sądowe*, ed. Jerzy Lewiński (Warsaw: GKBZHwP, 1987); and *Proces Artura Greisera przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym* (Warsaw: GKBZNwP, 1946), for Biebow and Greiser, respectively, both convicted and executed for war crimes in Poland; with summaries of the trials and convictions in Hanover, West Germany, of Bradfish and Fuchs in *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 19 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1978–), Lfd. Nr. 557; and East German trials of former Schupo members in *DDR-Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 14 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), Lfd. Nr. 2074.

A much larger popular bibliography, with many more works about cultural life, additional memoirs, yizkor books, and published name lists, is available at the Lodz ShtetLinks pages at www.jewishgen.org.

A vast body of sources documents Jewish life in the Łódź ghetto. Archival documentation is located in the following repositories: AAN; APL; AŻIH; BA-BL; BA-L; FVA; IPN; IPN-Ł; NARA; USHMM; VHF; and YVA.

A part of the archival documentation has appeared in publication, including in English, for example, Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto*, trans. Richard Lourie et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), which offers a broad sampling of the *Chronicle* and a valuable introduction with a history of the ghetto. Unabridged translations of the *Chronicle* are available in Hebrew and in German.

Laura Crago

NOTES

1. Ludwik Landau, *Kronika lat wojny i okupacji*, 3 vols. (Warsaw: PWN, 1962–1963), 1:133, 137.
2. *Dokumenty*, 3:26–31; and "temporarily" used in the English translation in Trunk, *Łódź*, pp. 19–21.
3. USHMM, RG-05.008M (Stadtverwaltung Litzmannstadt), EWG Bericht, September 3, 1940.
4. Sierakowiak, *The Diary*, pp. 174, 176, 196.
5. *Proces Hansa Biebowa*, pp. 111–113, 145–146, 155–156, 159, 170, 172–174, 183–184; IPN, SOŁ Biebow, vol. 13, pp. 328, 332–334, 336–339.
6. *Chronicle*, March 1942; also April 18–20, 1942.
7. AŻIH, 301/4006, testimony of Alicja Puterman.
8. *Dokumenty*, 1:233.

LUTOMIERSK

Pre-1939: Lutomiersk, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Lutomiersk (renamed Nertal in 1943), Kreis Lask, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (from 1941, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Lutomiersk, Łódź województwo, Poland

Lutomiersk is located 19 kilometers (12 miles) west of Łódź. By 1921, there were 775 Jews living there, constituting 35 percent of the village's population.

At the beginning of the German occupation, Jews were conscripted for the restoration of a bridge destroyed in the course of the September Campaign, widening roads, and agricultural work at large German and ethnic German (*Volksdeutsche*) estates.

The German authorities established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) including Moritz Curkowicz, Ch. Wartecki, Z. Kępiński, M. Żydkowitz, and Josek Kartovsky. Survivor Frank Burstin (Bursztynowicz) describes one of its members as being "very bad" to Jews.¹

An open ghetto was set up in Lutomiersk in August 1940. Many houses in which Jews were forced to live were pre-war summer bungalows rented to visitors of the Hasidic court in neighboring Aleksandrów Łódzki. These dwellings were not built for year-round occupancy. Many suffered from the cold during the ghetto's first winter. The termination of public works, due to the winter's onset, was another burden, as Jews were previously paid meager wages of 5 Reichsmark (RM) a week

(or 1.20 RM daily) for public works they performed. Jewish craftsmen suffered from a lack of material for production.²

The Judenrat estimated there were 720 Jews living in the ghetto in December 1940, including 35 refugees.³ Nearly 300 people required some sort of financial support. The Judenrat provided cash handouts from its monthly budget of 950 RM, as it was unable to open a soup kitchen due to lack of space and money. The community received some additional financial assistance from Mojżesz Merin, the chairman of the Central Office of the Jewish Council of Elders in Eastern Upper Silesia in Sosnowiec. Burstin recalls that there was no difficulty obtaining sustenance, as Jews were free to leave the ghetto; however, rations for Jews did not include any fat or meat. Smuggled horsemeat was the most commonly consumed form of protein.⁴

The ghetto remained unfenced but was pronounced closed in the summer of 1941. From that time on, Lutomiersk's Jews were required to obtain passes to leave it. Conscripted for labor, they were regularly led out of the ghetto in work gangs, which were guarded by five or six members of the Jewish Police. According to Burstin, some "were just as bad as the Germans." Jews feared most of all Szarpański. There were no German forces stationed in the village.

The first deportation to labor camps was a group of 40 males aged 16 to 40, which took place in September or October 1941. Burstin's brother-in-law, Kartovsky, who refused to enlist Jews for this deportation, was severely beaten and included in the transport. Laborers were held for two days in the Łódź prison and then dispatched to a labor camp near Poznań. A number of sick people were sent to the Łódź ghetto.⁵ In December 1941, 83 laborers were sent to Frankfurt an der Oder.

By the end of 1941, the newly appointed German Amtskommissar in Lutomiersk improved the situation of the Jews by opening a tailors' shop, as well as furrier and tinsmith workshops. The income was divided between the Amtskommissar (50 percent) and the Judenrat (50 percent). The Judenrat paid the workers half of its share. A Polish teacher was the manager of the tailors' workshop.

The Lutomiersk ghetto was liquidated and the Jews were murdered, most likely on July 29, 1942, in the Chełmno extermination camp. A number of Jews were selected for labor and sent to the Łódź ghetto.

SOURCES The following publications include references to the Lutomiersk ghetto: Maria Tyszkowa, "Eksterminacja Żydów w latach 1941–1943. Dokumenty Biura Informacji i Propagandy Komendy Głównej Armii Krajowej ze zbiorów oddziału rękopisów Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego," *BŻIH*, nos. 2–3 (1992): 40–43; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 279; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), 13:272–273; Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbhof: Der Beginn der "Endlösung"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), p. 88; Aleksandra Namysło, "Wpływ kierownictwa Centrali Żydowskich Rad Starszych Wschodniego Górnego Śląska na postawy i zachowania Żydów wobec rzeczywistości okupacyjnej," in A. Namysło, ed.,

Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy (Warsaw: IPN. Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), p. 180; and Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), p. 206.

The following archival sources were used in this entry: AŻIH (210/462 [AJDC]); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); and VHF (# 37151).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/462 (Lutomiersk), p. 1; VHF, # 37151, testimony of Frank Burstin, 1997.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/462, pp. 2–4.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 4. F. Burstin, who stayed in the ghetto until September or October 1941, estimates 700 to 750 residents, all of them local Jews. Some sources give much higher figures, but these could not be substantiated.
4. VHF, # 37151; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/462, pp. 4–5.
5. VHF, # 37151.

LUTUTÓW

Pre-1939: Lututów, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Landstett, Kreis Welungen (Wieluń), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (from 1941, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Lututów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Lututów is located 70 kilometers (44 miles) southwest of Łódź. On the eve of World War II, about 1,100 Jews lived in the town, which had approximately 3,000 inhabitants in total.

With the outbreak of war in September 1939, the number of Jews in the town increased considerably as many people fled to Lututów from other towns closer to the border. Being completely without means and having no chance to make a living, these refugees placed a considerable strain on the Jewish community. Out of 1,375 Jews living in Lututów shortly after the start of the war, 247 were impoverished refugees in need of assistance.¹

At the start of the occupation in the first days of the war, the Germans arrested young Jews and sent them to Germany, where they were paraded as criminals, who supposedly had been shooting at German soldiers.² In the first months of the occupation, the German authorities imposed a number of restrictions on the Jews. Jewish property, especially commercial wares and businesses, was confiscated; Jews were required to wear distinguishing markings; and Jews were made to perform forced labor. By 1940, the Germans had established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by a wealthy man named Noah Erlich, and Jewish Police, which received its orders from the Germans. The Jewish Council raised taxes among the Jewish community to provide bedclothes and other support to the needy, and it agreed to supply a number of Jews for forced labor each day. Erlich died of the cold during the occupation,

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when he went out on a mission to try to save a Jewish youth who had escaped from a camp.³

At some time before the end of 1941 (available sources conflict on this), either during 1940⁴ or in the spring of 1941,⁵ the authorities established a ghetto in Lututów. In addition to the Jews of Lututów, Jews from the small neighboring communities of Łagiewniki, Wydryniwa, and Kobile Wielkie were also brought into the ghetto in 1942.⁶ In total, the ghetto held somewhere between 1,200 and 1,600 Jews.⁷ It was located in a group of separated houses on Wieruszowska Street but was not enclosed by a fence. Many Jews were already living in this area prior to the ghetto's establishment; the few Poles who lived on this street were resettled. As a result of the influx of Jews, there was overcrowding in the ghetto, with several families sharing a single house. Members of the SA and German Gendarmes guarded the ghetto and frequently beat the ghetto inmates. However, at times they were also susceptible to bribes. The Jews of the ghetto were employed to clean streets and public places and to collect trash. Available sources indicate that living conditions in the ghetto were harsh.⁸ In February 1940 or 1941, one Jew, Józef Gelcman, was hanged in public inside the ghetto. Apparently he had refused to give the Germans his secret recipe for tanning leather, which brought him into conflict with the powerful new ethnic German director of the leather company in Lututów, Walter Dittberner.⁹ Six Jews were accused of membership in a resistance movement, and one of Communist agitation. All of them were shot and buried at the Jewish cemetery in Młynek near Lututów. It is not known how many Jews died or were killed in the ghetto in total.¹⁰

Over time, most of the able-bodied Jews were sent away to forced labor camps; mainly women, children, and the elderly remained. Labor in the camps included digging up potatoes and working on water regulation projects.¹¹ Further deportations to forced labor camps in the area around Poznań took place in 1942.

On August 11, 1942, a detachment of the Gestapo from Wieluń arrived in Lututów and organized the liquidation of the ghetto. The Jewish families were driven to the local Catholic Church; then, men of the Gestapo and Gendarmes searched the ghetto and shot everyone they found in hiding. The Aktion continued until the evening.¹² Witnesses mention the following Gendarmes as perpetrators during the liquidation of the ghetto: Georg Streicher, N. Lipa, Link, and Katholnik.

During the liquidation of the ghetto, German forces shot at least 12 inhabitants of the ghetto.¹³ Their corpses were put on horse-drawn carriages and were taken to the local Jewish cemetery, where they were buried. After being held for three days in the local church, where they were kept under terrible sanitary conditions without food, the remaining Jews were loaded onto trucks, which had been provided by the Schutzpolizei in Łódź. The 10 Jews who were too weak or too sick to be transported were shot on the spot. Jews capable of work were taken to the Łódź ghetto; all the others were sent to the Chełmno extermination camp via the Wieluń ghetto.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

On August 21, 1942, the Amstkommissar in Lututów reported having purchased all the furniture and household goods of the “deported” Jews, for which the sum of 5,000RM was paid to the Ghetto Administration (GV) in Łódź, as legal heir to this property.¹⁴ Some of the few Jewish survivors from Lututów were also prisoners in the Auschwitz II-Birkenau extermination camp after working in the Łódź ghetto.¹⁵

Investigations into Nazi crimes committed in Lututów were conducted by the Austrian and German authorities in the 1970s, but these did not result in any prosecutions, owing to a lack of credible evidence against specific perpetrators.¹⁶

SOURCES The most important secondary sources on the Lututów ghetto include the following: Maria Padaszyńska, “Zagłada Żydów lututowskich w latach 1939–1942,” *Biuletyn Okręgowej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Łodzi*, IPN 3 (1994): 74–80; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 280; *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 137, 164; and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 146–148.

Information regarding the persecution and destruction of the Jewish community of Lututów can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Jüdische Gemeinde in Landstett an AJDC 210/106, pp. 10, 50, 52; AJDC 210/126, p. 10; AJDC 210/335, p. 2; and AJDC 210/352, p. 33); BA-L (ZStL, 203 AR-Z 361/77, investigation of the Stapostelle Wieluń and the Gendarmerie post in Lututów); IPN (ASG, sygn. 22, p. 578); USHMM (RG-15.042M [Akta zakończonych śledztw w sprawach o zbrodnie hitlerowskie], reels 32 and 35); VHF (# 3762, 21971, 27524, 38454, 46852); and YVA. See also OKŚZpNPŁdz (formerly OKBZHŁ): Akta gminy Lututów, sygn. 12, Ds 30/67, and zeznania obywateli polskich z 1945 roku, Ds 374/67; these records also contain the names of many of the perpetrators and names of a few of the victims.

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NOTES

1. See Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 208.

2. Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 768.

3. VHF, # 21971, testimony of Abram Erlich; Noah Erlich was his father.

4. BA-L, ZStL/203 AR-Z 361/77, statement of Stanisław Magiera, p. 30.

5. Padaszyńska, “Zagłada Żydów,” p. 77.

6. In 1921, the Jewish populations of these three hamlets was only about 50 people.

7. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 280, gives the number of 1,200 ghetto inmates; USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 32, gives the number as 1,600.

8. USHMM, RG-15.042M; see especially the witness statement of Bronisław Kucharski; and VHF, # 3762, testimony of Mayer Goldbart.

9. BA-L, ZStL, 203 AR-Z 361/77, pp. 30–37, statements of Władysław Stulczewski and Stanisław Magiera.

10. USHMM, RG-15.042M, witness Bronisław Kucharski.

11. VHF, # 21971.

12. BA-L, ZStL, 203 AR-Z 361/77, pp. 27 ff., statement of Stefan Lesiewicz; and Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), p. 207.

13. See USHMM, RG-15.042M.

14. Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 400.

15. VHF, # 46852, testimony of Leon Nyss.

16. See Sta. Wien, 15 St 49.632/71 and ZSSta-D 45 Js 33/75.

OSJAKÓW

Pre-1939: Osjaków, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Ostwerder, Kreis Welungen (Wieluń), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Osjaków, Łódź województwo, Poland

The town of Osjaków is located about 62 kilometers (39 miles) north-northwest of Częstochowa. In 1921, out of 1,544 inhabitants, 759 were Jewish. By 1939, their number had slightly declined to around 700.¹



Deportation of Jews from Osjaków, n.d.
USHMM WS #91674, COURTESY OF IPN

When the Nazis occupied Osjaków in early September 1939, about 100 Jews fled the town. A few days later, the Germans arrested the rabbi of Osjaków in Piotrków Trybunalski and imprisoned him with other Jews.² The prisoners were tortured and then sent to an unknown destination, most likely to be killed.

Within the first weeks of the occupation, the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in the town. In 1940, the Jews were gradually evicted from their homes and were concentrated together in a specific area that became the ghetto.³ The ghetto area was quite small, with more than one Jewish family sharing a house, and according to one witness, it was not enclosed. At first it was not strictly guarded, and Jews were able to leave to supplement their meager rations by exchanging property for food such as potatoes, bread, or chicken with the local peasants. Living conditions were very harsh, and no schools existed for the children.⁴

While some of the Jews in the ghetto were employed locally as forced laborers cleaning and maintaining local roads and buildings, others were rounded up and sent off to labor camps. Over time the roundups by the German police to obtain forced laborers in accordance with name lists became more intensive, and few able-bodied Jews remained. Among the destinations were various forced labor camps for Jews, including that in Bełchatów and one based in a church building in Wieluń, which entailed work on road construction. Subsequently young able-bodied Jews from the Osjaków ghetto were sent further away to labor camps in the Poznań region.⁵

To a limited extent, Jews in Osjaków were still able to communicate with other ghettos by post. In late October 1941, one resident of the Osjaków ghetto wrote to the Jewish Council in the Łódź ghetto to inquire about the health of certain relatives living there, as no news had been received for some time.⁶

In July 1942, in preparation for the final extermination of the Jews in Kreis Welungen, about 500 Jews from the neighboring town of Kielczygłów were brought into the Osjaków ghetto.⁷ The liquidation of the Osjaków ghetto took place around August 15, 1942. The ghetto inhabitants were sent to Wieluń, where a number of those capable of work were selected out and sent to the Łódź ghetto; all the others were sent to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were killed. The Border Police Office (Grenzpolizeikommissariat, GPK) in Wieluń reported to the head of the Gestapo in Łódź that by August 22, 1942, "Kreis Welungen was free of Jews [*judenrein*]."⁸ Only a few Jews from Osjaków managed to survive the rigors of the ghetto and successive labor and concentration camps until the end of the war.

SOURCES The most important published sources on the Jewish community of Osjaków and the ghetto there include the following: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 52–53; Tadeusz Olejnik, "Zagłada ludności żydowskiej w powiecie wieluńskim w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej," *Rocznik Łódzki* 29 (1980): 249–265; and Y. Goldberg and A. Wien, "The

Book of the Community of Działoszyn,” *Pages of History* 16 (1966): 159, 161–162, 170–171.

There are only a few primary sources available on the history of the ghetto in Osjaków: APŁ (Piotrkowski Urząd Włościański 106); AŻIH (301/1904); VHF (# 22539); and YVA. Evelyn Zegenhagen

NOTES

1. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 52.
2. Ibid.
3. AŻIH, 301/1904, testimony of Meir Przemysławski, dates the establishment of the ghetto in 1940.
4. VHF, # 22539, testimony of Esther Sendrowicz.
5. Ibid.; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 52.
6. A facsimile of this postcard has been reproduced on the Web at www.edwardvictor.com.
7. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 53; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2001), p. 622.
8. Excerpt from a situation report by the Grenzpolizei-kommissariat in Welungen to the Head of the Gestapo in Lods, August 31, 1942, published in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 311.

OZORKÓW

Pre-1939: Ozorków, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Ozorkow, Kreis Lentschütz (Łęczycza), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (from 1941, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Ozorków, Łódź województwo, Poland

Ozorków is located about 32 kilometers (20 miles) northwest of Łódź. At the outbreak of World War II, the town had about 15,000 inhabitants including just over 5,000 Jews; the others being about equal numbers of Germans and Poles.¹ After the German occupation in September 1939, the Polish and German populations turned openly against the Jews.

Jews from other towns—among them Kalisz and Zgierz—arrived in Ozorków soon after the occupation began. In the fall of 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, headed by the lawyer Szymon Barczyński.² The members of the Judenrat had been the members of the former Jewish relief committee in the town of which Barczyński had also been the head.³ A Jewish police force commanded by a man named Wartski was established in the winter of 1940–1941.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw distributed some 5,000 Reichsmark (RM) of aid to Ozorków. By this time, the Jewish population in Ozorków numbered about 4,700 people, of whom 200 were refugees.⁴

In the spring of 1941, several hundred young Jews (especially those aged between 17 and 21) were rounded up and sent to forced labor camps near Gdańsk and Poznań.⁵

In the summer of 1941, an open ghetto was established, which contained about half of the Jews in Ozorków, while the others continued to live elsewhere in the town. Although the concentration of the Jews from the surrounding area had already started at this time, initially only male Jews from various locations in the area, including Piątek and Parczew, were resettled to Ozorków. By mid-October 1941, the situation of the Jews in Ozorków had deteriorated so badly that the Amtskommissar considered it “untenable” and a “public danger for the rest of the population.”⁶

There are contradictory statements as to when the Ozorków ghetto finally became the only area in town in which Jews could live. Some sources put the date as November or early in December 1941.⁷ Other sources claim that the ghetto was only finally established—and enclosed—in the spring of 1942 after all Jews incapable of work had been selected and sent to be exterminated.⁸ According to statistics regarding the liquidation of the ghetto, there were likely around 5,000 Jews living there in early 1942, among them probably some German Jews.⁹ The ghetto was located in the Wiatraki suburb of Ozorków along what are now known as Partyzantów, Polna, and Kra-sicki Streets.

The ghetto’s Jews, including children as young as 10, were employed cleaning streets, working on fortifications along the Bzura River, and producing uniforms for the Wehrmacht. Work outside the ghetto provided an opportunity to obtain a little extra food by bartering or scavenging, but most work details were closely guarded, allowing little or no contact with local non-Jews.¹⁰

Living and sanitary conditions in the ghetto were harsh; food and space were both in short supply. The Judenrat established a soup kitchen that distributed 250 grams (8.8 ounces) of bread and one cup of soup per person per day. Local Poles helped the Jews by providing groceries, especially bread and potatoes.¹¹ Only limited medical assistance was available, and according to one source, about 150 people died, most of them from typhus.¹² Some sources note that typhus cases were transferred to a hospital, which had two doctors.¹³

The employee of the Ozorków town administration in charge of the ghetto (Ghettokommandant) was a man named Lenz. He was very much liked by the Jews, and after the war, they made statements in his favor to the investigating authorities.¹⁴

On April 25, 1942, the Germans ordered that 8 or 10 Jews be hanged publicly on the market square, forcing the Jewish Police to participate in the executions. Immediately after the hangings, all Jews were taken to the “white school,” where they were surrounded by armed Gendarmes or SS men and were sorted into two categories, A and B.¹⁵ All “B” Jews had to remain in the school, among them mostly young children and adolescents, comprising about half of the ghetto population. From here they were deported by truck to be murdered in the Chełmno extermination camp. One source claims that the commander of the German police demanded 2,000 RM per person to release some of them, but the Judenrat could only ransom 93 women, without their children, claiming that they

were specialist workers. Within the ghetto, only two children remained, in hiding.¹⁶ According to a witness statement quoted by Isaiah Trunk, the secretary of the Jewish Council, Mania Rzepkowitz, that day rejected an offer by the German official in charge of the ghetto to be excluded from this “re-settlement” and instead, together with her child, joined the group that was taken to Chełmno.¹⁷ A report from June 1942, preserved in the Ringelblum Archive, indicates that by then some 2,700 Jews from Ozorków had been exterminated.¹⁸

A few weeks after the hangings and deportation Aktion, in the first half of May 1942, Biebow (head of the German Ghetto Administration, GV) and Rumkowski (head of the Judenrat) in the Łódź ghetto arrived in Ozorków to claim workers for their enterprises. They selected 1,387 Jews as laborers, who were transferred by tram into the Łódź ghetto on May 21–22, 1942. In June 1942, the Gestapo in Łódź reported that about 9,000 Jews had been evacuated recently from Kreis Lentschütz, which was free of Jews (*judenfrei*) with the exception of 1,000 in the Ozorków ghetto, who were urgently needed to complete production orders for the Wehrmacht.¹⁹

After this large transfer of Jews to Łódź in May, all Jews remaining in the Ozorków ghetto had to perform forced labor in the factories and workshops, making uniforms and boots for the German army.²⁰ The workers received monetary payment, which was sufficient to buy a little food at inflated prices.²¹ The final German selection took place in August 1942. More workers were selected for the Łódź ghetto, and all the others were killed. A handful of Jews remained in the ghetto for a few more days to clean it up and prepare the Jewish property for shipping to Germany.²²

The names of some of the perpetrators active in the Ozorków ghetto are known: Max-Karl Heidenreich, the NSDAP-Kreisstellenhauptleiter and deputy Landrat of Landkreis Lenschütz, frequently visited the ghetto. On these occasions he insulted and beat Jews, searched apartments and took food from Jews, forced the ghetto inhabitants to perform “gymnastic exercises,” and destroyed Jewish property. He was tried in Poland and executed on May 17, 1949.²³ A certain Freund was accused of having murdered children in the ghetto; however, his fate after the war remains unknown. August Binneweis was a Gendarme in Ozorków who participated in the execution of at least eight Jews in April 1942, as well as in the liquidation of the ghetto.²⁴ Witnesses also name several officials of the German Criminal Police (Kripo), including Werner Hermann, Bruno Uhle, Eduard Zimmermann, and Stanisław Przybyłek; the commander of the Gendarmes, Zalewski; and Gendarmes Kar, Schmidt, Land, and Arenz—all perpetrators who beat Jews—including children—and participated in deportation Aktions.²⁵

SOURCES Published sources relevant to the Ozorków ghetto include the following: *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 161; Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); and Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006). Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and*

Individual Behavior in Extremis (New York: Stein & Day, 1979), contains an eyewitness statement on Ozorków on pp. 95–97, recorded in a DP camp in 1946. Trunk also mentions the Ozorków ghetto in his book *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Stein & Day, 1977). Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), lists the ghetto on p. 377.

Quite a number of primary sources exist describing the Ozorków ghetto, including several located in Polish archives. In IPN: Regierungspräsident Posen, Abt. III, an OB Posen und Landräte des Bezirkes, September 17, 1941 (Zbiór “OB” 267, p. 5); ASG sygn. 50, pp. 85, 133; Bd. 505/Rep. 162/50, as well as Ankieta GKBZHWp, getta, województwo łódzkie. APŁ holds the following collections: Judenrat Ozorków an “Ältesten der Juden in Litzmannstadt,” July 18, 1940 (ÅdJ 161, n.p.); and Urząd G-po w Łodzi 1093/1, pp. 4, 11. AAN has further sources regarding the establishment of the ghetto and the internment of Jews from the surrounding villages: see Zespół Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj, sygn. 202/III, t. 28, p. 64; sygn. 202/III, p. 110; sygn. 202/XV, t. 2, p. 258 (report on the liquidation of the ghetto); sygn. 202/II, t. 30, p. 18; and Zespół Ikonografia Nr. filmu A.5872 (nr. oryg. 2466—images of Ozorków taken during the execution in April 1942). At AŻIH, see Ring 1/472, 557/2, 569, 573/6, and 962; and 301/2920 and 3331-33.

At USHMM, a valuable collection is RG-15.042M (Akta zakończonych śledztw w sprawach o zbrodnie hitlerowskie), reels 28 and 51, which contains many witness statements and other information collected from various sources, including a map of the ghetto. Further information on the Ozorków ghetto can be found in RG-15.019M (ASG copied from IPN) and RG-50.002*69, Oral History Interview with survivor Henry Yungst. VHF has 43 testimonies of relevance to the Ozorków ghetto. YVA also holds several testimonies: e.g., testimony R-102/1665, questionnaire No. 462, and testimony W-123/2261. Investigations of the ZStL can be accessed at BA-L (203 AR-Z 161/67, Bd. VII).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-50.002*69 Ozorków, Oral History with Henry Yungst.
2. *Ibid.*, RG-15.042M, reel 28, Postanowienie, 1979.
3. Trunk, *Judenrat*, p. 15, based on YVA testimony R-102/1665.
4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH, AJDC), 210/535, correspondence from March to December 1940.
5. See *ibid.*, RG-15.042M, reel 28, statements of Szmul Drajhorn and Tauba Gelbartowicz; and RG-50.002*69 Ozorków, Oral History with H. Yungst, who erroneously dates this on April 1, 1940.
6. Alberti, *Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 380.
7. See USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 28, statement Tauba Gelbartowicz.
8. Alberti, *Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 205.
9. For German Jews in the Ozorków ghetto, see USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 28.
10. VHF, # 20619, testimony of Irvin Kalski; and # 20279, testimony of Marty Storch.

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11. USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 28, Odpis.
12. See witness statements in *ibid.*, RG-15.042M, reel 28, Postanowienie, 1979.
13. *Ibid.*, among others, see witness Masza Julkiewicz; and RG-15.019M (IPN), ASG, sygn. 50, p. 85.
14. See, for example, witness statement Eugenie St., in BA-L, 203 AR-Z 161/67, Bd. VII, p. 40.
15. USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 28.
16. *Ibid.*, Dzieje getta w Ozorkowie.
17. Trunk, *Judenrat*, p. 443, quoted after YVA, questionnaire No. 462, testimony W-123/2261; see also VHF, # 20279, testimony of M. Storch.
18. AŻIH, Ring I/144, "Die Hölle der polnischen Juden unter der Hitler-Okkupation," Rapport von Oneg Szabat [ausgearbeitet von Emanuel Ringelblum, Hersz Wasser und Eliahu Gutkowski], June 1942, Warsaw Ghetto, published in Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Die zweite Etappe ist der Tod: NS-Ausrottungspolitik gegen polnischen Juden, gesehen mit den Augen der Opfer. Ein historischer Essay und ausgewählte Dokumente aus dem Ringelblum-Archiv 1941–1943* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1993), pp. 200–223, here p. 213.
19. Lagebericht der Gestapo in Lods, June 9, 1942, published in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), pp. 285–286.
20. USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 28.
21. VHF, # 20279, testimony of M. Storch.
22. Alberti, *Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, pp. 446–447; Trunk, *Jewish Responses*, p. 96—unfortunately this survivor account is not reliable concerning specific dates.
23. USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 28, OKL/S.-47/74. The court case reference is SOŁdz 329 and 329a.
24. IPN, Ankieta AGKBZHwP, Bd. 505/Rep. 162/50. See also USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 28, witness statement of Edzia Schesinger, collected in 1948 by the Ojsforszungsapteil der D.P. Police, Jidiszer center Landsberg, in preparation for a trial against Binneweis.
25. APŁ, Urząd G-po w Łodzi 1093/1, pp. 4, 11; and USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 28. See the latter source for more names of perpetrators.

PABIANICE

Pre-1939: Pabianice, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Lask, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Pabianice is located 13 kilometers (8 miles) southwest of Łódź. On the eve of World War II, there were approximately 9,000 Jews living in Pabianice. Units of the German army had occupied Pabianice by September 8, 1939. On their arrival in the town, German soldiers shot several Jews, and other Jews were made to collect the corpses and bury them. Shortly thereafter, on German orders, local inhabitants destroyed the interior of the synagogue.

In the fall of 1939, the German authorities introduced a number of anti-Jewish measures. Jewish factories were confiscated, and several Jews were ordered flogged by other Jews for



A deportation Aktion in Pabianice. The Hebrew annotation reads: "Deportation of Pabianice Jews by the Nazis, 1–2 Sivan [May 17–18] [1942]." USHMM WS #07264, COURTESY OF REGINA FRANT STAWSKI

alleged disrespect to the Nazi flag. On October 21, 1939, the Landrat of Kreis Lask appointed a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Pabianice, which consisted of the leading figures in the community. However, their tenure was short-lived. In November 1939, the German authorities forcibly expelled Jews from the wealthier sections of town to make room for Germans. Members of the Judenrat tried to intercede, but they were arrested and sent to concentration camps, never to be heard from again. A series of Jewish Councils were appointed and then in turn replaced in quick succession. In December 1939, the Judenrat was ordered to organize 1,000 Jews who were to be expelled from Pabianice. The Judenrat supplied these expelled people with food, clothing, and some money for the journey to Kałuszyn in Distrikt Warschau within the Generalgouvernement. On arrival the local Jewish leadership there helped to find them housing. After a few months, several hundred of these Jews returned illegally to Pabianice.

In February 1940, the Germans established a ghetto in Pabianice, which was one of the first to be set up in occupied Poland. Its establishment appears to have been linked to an outbreak of typhus among the Jews, which was defeated with the aid of inoculations given to 3,500 Jews during 1940. The ghetto, which consisted of 109 houses, was located in the old town section of Pabianice. The Jews were required to move into the ghetto by February 21, and according to the *Lodsker Zeitung*, they could bring in with them only what they could carry themselves. The ghetto was not fenced (an open ghetto), but on the border there was a large sign with a yellow Star of David on a light blue background. The ghetto was divided into two sections by a main road, and the Jews were only permitted to cross the road during certain hours of the day. Some Jews risked leaving the ghetto illegally in search of food. Accommodation in the ghetto was allocated by the housing office (Wohnungsamt) of the Judenrat. There was overcrowding, an average of about one room per family.¹

On March 1, 1940, a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was established, which by the end of 1940 employed 34 people. Among its main tasks were securing the

ghetto internally and arresting Jews who did not turn up for compulsory labor or committed other offenses. Such persons could be incarcerated in a separate prison established within the ghetto. The German authorities ordered the establishment of a hospital in the ghetto in April, to isolate those suffering from typhus. In May 1940, responsibility for overseeing the ghetto (*Judenviertel*) was transferred from the office of the Landrat of Kreis Lask to the Polizeiamt (Office of Police) in Pabianice under the command of Hans-Georg Mayer. On the establishment of the ghetto, Jewish communal property, which lay outside its borders, was no longer to be administered by the Jewish Council.²

Many of the Jews in the Pabianice ghetto worked in factories and enterprises taken over by Germans. The Jewish Council was keen to make the Jews productive, such that in November 1940 more than 900 Jews were employed as tailors in various workshops, including more than 600 as new trainees. Two of the main employers were the companies of Kelle and Günther u. Schwarz, which both produced uniforms for the Wehrmacht and competed with each other. Both companies were often late in paying the Jews, but the Jews were still content to go to work, as it gave them the opportunity of bartering items for food and receiving news from the outside world.³ In addition, Jews had to perform forced labor organized by the Judenrat, which included work to assist the resettlement of ethnic Germans into the region in the winter of 1939–1940. Initially this work was unpaid, but from October 1, 1940, German offices began to make payments for this forced labor. Additional sums to pay the laborers were also raised from Jews who paid a levy to be excused from this work.⁴

The Judenrat was responsible for the distribution of food rations, as well as extra support given to the needy. One of the main sources of income for the Judenrat was a 10 percent tax on the income of those Jews who were employed. At the end of 1940, the Judenrat itself employed 130 people and was composed of 10 separate departments: Central Office, General Administration, Finances, Social Welfare, Health, Contracts, Economy, Labor, Court, and Audit Office. Among the Jews that ultimately ended up in the Łódź ghetto, most reported that they had received enough to eat in the Pabianice ghetto, but those Jews who had returned to the ghetto illegally after their initial flight were not registered and received no rations. In addition, there were complaints that some food rations ended up on the black market at high prices and that the Judenrat lived comfortably.⁵

Children were educated in small groups and in a school that was established in the ghetto. After a few months, the Germans closed down the school, but schooling continued clandestinely.⁶ The Jews in Pabianice were forbidden to speak Polish, as German and Yiddish were the only permitted languages. In December 1940, the Jewish Council in Pabianice reported that there were 9,000 Jews in the town, including 320 refugees and 420 returnees.⁷

On May 22, 1941, German police aided by the Jewish Police arrested 231 young men and sent them to the Łódź ghetto; from there they were transferred to forced labor camps in the

area around Poznań. Of this group, about 40 people survived to the end of the war. Similar manhunts for forced laborers continued into 1942; both men and women were sent to forced labor camps. In the winter of 1941–1942, the Germans collected winter clothing in the ghetto, and they also confiscated any hidden food stores.

Living on the margin caused some Jews to complain to the Germans that the Judenrat was responsible for the poor conditions. As a result, the Gestapo arrested the Judenrat members in June 1941 and publicly executed them. It is not known who succeeded the murdered members of the Judenrat, which included Rubinstein, Landsman, and Goldblum.

By late 1941, the Germans began to make preparations for the subsequent deportation of the Jews of Pabianice. The Judenrat was ordered to submit lists of all ghetto inhabitants, with the mentally ill, disabled, and children under age 6 all listed separately. In February 1942, the Gestapo conducted a health examination of everyone in the ghetto. All those under age 60 were tattooed with the letter “A,” the rest with a “B.”⁸ By 1942, restrictions on the movement of Jews were also intensified. At least two Jews were hanged on the orders of the Germans for being caught outside the ghetto without permission.⁹

On May 16, 1942, all the ghetto residents were ordered to appear in front of their houses at 4:00 P.M. The ghetto was surrounded by German police, and all the Jews were ordered to a sports field of the company Krusche und Ender in the center of town, allegedly for a new registration. The German police searched the houses, and anyone found attempting to hide was shot on the spot. The assembled Jews had to stay all night on the sports field. The next day, in the pouring rain, the A group was separated from the B group, with many families being rent asunder. Some members of the B group were killed on the spot, as were 150 sick and disabled Jews in the hospital. The remainder of group B, probably about 3,200 people, was then loaded into cattle trains and transported to the death camp in Chełmno.¹⁰

On May 17–18, 1942, at least 3,648 Jews (those from group A) from Pabianice arrived in the Łódź ghetto by tram with almost no possessions.¹¹ Soon after their arrival, some of them were sent to forced labor camps in surrounding towns. A few of the Pabianice Jews tried to escape, but most were caught with the assistance of the Jewish Police of the Łódź ghetto. Two of the Pabianice escapees, Joseph Greenboim, age 16, and Shimon Makowsky, age 45, were caught and hanged in public in the Łódź ghetto. A smaller group of Jews remained in Pabianice for a time after the ghetto liquidation, to clean up remaining property there.

After the war, 148 surviving Jews returned to Pabianice in 1945. They established a community kitchen and restored the cemetery, but over the following years, all the Jews left the town.

After the war, the U.S. forces extradited Hans-Georg Mayer to Poland, where initially he was sentenced to death by the regional court in Łódź for crimes in Pabianice. In 1948, his appeal saw the sentence reduced to five years’ imprisonment for membership in the SS and preventing escape attempts from

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the Pabianice ghetto. He was released and returned to West Germany in February 1951.¹²

SOURCES Publications on the fate of the Jewish community of Pabianice during the Holocaust include the following: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 172–180; Andrzej Kardas, “Z problematyki organizacji i działalności policji hitlerowskiej w Pabianicach,” *Biuletyn Okręgowej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Łodzi* 1 (1989); Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chetmno/Kulmbof: Der Beginn der “Endlösung”* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), pp. 83–84; and Wolf A. Jasny, *Sefer Pabyanits: Yizker-bukh fun der farpaynikter kebileh* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots’e Pabyanits be-Yisrael, 1956). Further information on conditions in the Pabianice ghetto can be found in Sascha Feuchert et al., eds., *Die Chronik des Gettos Lodz/Litzmannstadt* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), vol. 2 (1942).

Documentation on the Pabianice ghetto can be found in the following archives: APL (PSZ 19); AŻIH (e.g., 210/537 [AJDC]; 301/2764, 2820, 2928, 3584, and 4405); BA-L (e.g., ZStL, 203 AR-Z 161/67, Bd. VII); IPN; NARA; USHMM (e.g., RG-50.030*0002); VHF (e.g., # 18433, 30355, and 40076); and YVA.

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. *Lodsker Zeitung*, February 18, 1940; VHF, # 18433, testimony of Jack Adler; # 30355, testimony of Sarah Brett; USHMM, RG-50.030*0002, oral testimony of Rita Kerner Hilton, 1994; AŻIH, 301/2764; BA-L, ZStL, 203 AR-Z 161/67, Bd. VII, p. 214.

2. AŻIH, 210/537 (AJDC Pabianice), pp. 2, 6, 22, 27, Arbeitsbericht des Ältestenrates der Juden in Pabianice, November 1, 1939, to November 1, 1940.

3. Feuchert et al., *Die Chronik des Gettos Lodz*, 2:206, 209, 228; VHF, # 30355.

4. AŻIH, 210/537 (AJDC Pabianice), pp. 30–31, Arbeitsbericht des Ältestenrates der Juden in Pabianice, November 1, 1939, to November 1, 1940.

5. Feuchert et al., *Die Chronik des Gettos Lodz*, 2:206–207, 228; AŻIH, 210/537 (AJDC Pabianice), p. 54; USHMM, RG-50.030*0002.

6. VHF, # 30355.

7. AŻIH, 210/537 (AJDC Pabianice), p. 54.

8. *Ibid.*, 301/2928.

9. *Ibid.*, 301/2764.

10. Feuchert et al., *Die Chronik des Gettos Lodz*, 2:207–208; AŻIH, 301/2764; see also Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), pp. 285–286.

11. Feuchert et al., *Die Chronik des Gettos Lodz*, 2:201, 203; VHF, # 18433; AŻIH, 301/2928. Regarding the exact numbers, see APL, PSZ 19, p. 234.

12. AŻIH, 301/2928; and Elżbieta Kobierska-Motas, ed., *Ekstradycja przestępców wojennych do Polski z czterech strefokupacyjnych Niemiec 1946–50* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 1991), 2:160.

PAJĘCZNO

Pre-1939: Pajęczno, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Pfeilstett, Landkreis Welungen (Wieluń), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Pajęczno, Łódź województwo, Poland

Pajęczno is located about 45 kilometers (28 miles) north-northwest of Częstochowa. In the 1930s its Jewish population stood at about 450.

German forces occupied the town in early September 1939; vandalism, plunder, and killings followed.

In September or October 1939, the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat). The chairman was Yaakov Lieberman, a member of the pre-war Jewish community council. Around the same time a Jewish police force was appointed, consisting of four policemen and a commander—David Kwart. One of the first problems the Judenrat had to deal with was the influx of more than 1,000 Jewish refugees from the neighboring town of Działoszyn, which had been almost completely destroyed by German bombing during the first days of the war. In Pajęczno, the refugees from Działoszyn, many of whom had nothing, initially received support, thanks to financial aid from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC).

The Jews of Pajęczno were all required to perform forced labor once or twice a week. The assignments were organized by the Judenrat on instructions from the German authorities. Initially, 100 Jews per day had to work in the quarries or on agricultural estates supervised by local ethnic Germans. Women cleaned. According to one source, many of the refugees, like the local poor, took the places of wealthy Jews who paid to be exempted from forced labor.

The ghetto in Pajęczno appears to have been established in two stages. Jewish survivors report that an “open ghetto” was created in the first months of 1940.¹ Certainly a number of Jews were evicted from their houses at this time to make way for Poles, and overcrowding among the Jews increased.²

The establishment of an enclosed ghetto followed at the end of 1941, possibly as a consequence of a visit by the mayor of nearby Praszka, where an enclosed ghetto already existed. On the day of his visit, all the Jews were ordered into the market square, where the elderly were chased and beaten with clubs. Three days later, the German authorities ordered the Jews to move within one day into the poorest quarter in the heart of the town.³ The ghetto area stretched along Kanał, Zapłocie, and Starodziałożyńska Streets.⁴ The Jews were permitted to bring in their belongings, but much was left behind because of the short notice. The German authorities ordered the Judenrat to surround the ghetto with a fence of barbed wire, erected by Jewish laborers. There were two or three gates in the fence, only one of which was for the use of Jews with permits. The Jewish guards ignored illegal movement and transactions with the outside population, which continued up until just prior to the liquidation of the ghetto. Despite the overcrowding—two

families to a room—conditions remained reasonable, mainly thanks to the smuggling, which supplied sufficient food. Official rations supplied by the authorities were distributed within the ghetto. About 30 Jewish craftsmen received permits to continue working, and they also sold some products on the side to private German and Polish customers.

Sholem Weiss, a member of the Jewish Council and the head of the council's labor department, maintained regular contacts with the Polish underground movement. In this way, he was able to help Jewish refugees to cross the border into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Among these refugees, there may also have been some Jews from the Pajęczno ghetto. Weiss, despite his senior position, was not safe either. He managed to operate relatively freely for a while, but ultimately he was compelled to seek refuge in the Częstochowa ghetto.

From the summer of 1941, the Germans rounded up groups of Jews in Kreis Welungen and sent them to camps in the Poznań region for forced labor, including also a number of Jews from Pajęczno. The Jews feared the terrible conditions in these camps, and many tried to evade the roundups. The remaining Jews in Pajęczno organized a "Bread Committee for the men in Poznań" and sent them food, despite an official ban.⁵

Jews from the ghetto were employed at the quarry on Mickiewicz Street and by a German firm, Borne und Guetter. According to one source, in January 1942 there were approximately 2,000 Jews in the Pajęczno ghetto.⁶ Just before Passover (on April 20 in 1942), the Germans terrorized the Jews and looted their property. Just after this, the remaining Jews from Brzeźnica were brought into the Pajęczno ghetto.⁷

There is no information on how many Jews died in the Pajęczno ghetto, but some witness statements claim that several dozen Jews were killed during its existence.⁸ For example, in June 1942, shortly before the ghetto's liquidation, officials of the German Gendarmerie and the SS shot Yaakov Lieberman, the head of the Pajęczno Judenrat, and 11 other Jews. Their bodies were buried in the Jewish cemetery.⁹

The ghetto was liquidated in August 1942. On August 19, 1,800 Jews from the ghetto were herded into the Pajęczno church, where they remained for three or four days without food or water. During this period, about 50 of the younger Jews were formed into a squad to help clear out the ghetto. From the church the rest were transported to Wieluń. Following the selection of some Jews for forced labor in the Łódź ghetto, the remainder of the Jews were sent to the Chełmno extermination camp to be killed.¹⁰ The German Border Police Office (Grenzpolizei-kommissariat, GPK) in Wieluń reported to the head of the Gestapo in Łódź that by August 22, 1942, "the Kreis Welungen was free of Jews [*judenrein*]."¹¹

During the Aktion against the ghetto, at least 3 people—but most probably 5 people (3 men and 2 women)—were killed because they had attempted to escape. A number of other Jews were also shot around the time of the liquidation.¹² On September 7, 1942, 9 Jews from Pajęczno were among 18 Jews hanged on that day in the Łódź ghetto, apparently for at-

tempting to escape deportation or leaving the ghetto illegally.¹³ Only a few Jews from Pajęczno managed to survive until the end of the war, either in the camps or in hiding.

SOURCES There is a short article on the Jewish community of Pajęczno in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 181–184. The Pajęczno ghetto is mentioned in Czesław Pili-chowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja, 1979), p. 378; and in Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Stein & Day, 1977), p. 464.

There are only a few archival sources describing the ghetto and also the collection center that existed in Pajęczno. These include: BA-L (B 162/V 203 AR-Z 109/71); IPN (ASG, sygn. 151, p. 186; and Ankieta GKBZHwP, getta, woj. Łódzkie); OKBZN-R (sygn. 109, k. 55; and kolekcja "ob," sygn. 177); USHMM (RG-15.042M [Akta zakończonych śledztw w sprawach o zbrodnie hitlerowskie]); VHF (# 45083 and 51731); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/1913; O-3/2023 and 2329).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 45083, interview with Avraham Weiss: "In 1940, they took us out of our house and forced us into a ghetto. It wasn't a closed ghetto." Also # 51731, interview with Hayim Wehezel Shvarts: "We escaped to the ghetto in Pajęczno. . . . We got there in March, 1940."

2. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 182.

3. *Ibid.*; see also Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 378.

4. USHMM, RG-15.042M, witness statement of Milewski.

5. VHF, # 51731, interview with H. Shvarts.

6. Frank Golczewski, "Polen," in Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Dimension des Völkermords: Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1991), pp. 411–497, here p. 450.

7. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 962. In 1921, there were 406 Jews living in Brzeźnica; see *Blackbook of Localities Whose Jewish Population Was Exterminated by the Nazis* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1965), Poland, p. 121.

8. USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 4.

9. Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości Główna Komisja Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: województwo częstochowskie* (Warsaw, 1986), p. 68. On this incident, see also VHF, # 45083, interview with Avraham Weiss; his name was on a list prepared by the Gestapo with 11 others, but with the help of a Polish overseer, he managed to escape to Radomsko in time.

10. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 183; and VHF, # 51731, interview with H. Shvarts.

11. Excerpt from a situation report by the Grenzpolizei-kommissariat in Welungen to the Head of the Gestapo in Lodsch, August 31, 1942, published in Tatiana Berenstein et

al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 311.

12. USHMM, RG-15.042M, reel 4, witness statement of Milewski. Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, *Rejestr miejsc i faktów*, p. 68, reports that 14 Jews were shot by the Gestapo at the Jewish cemetery in August 1942. VHF, # 45083, Weiss heard from others that some Jews had been killed in Pajęczno at the time of the deportations.

13. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 267.

PIĄTEK

Pre-1939: Piątek, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Piontek, Kreis Lentschütz, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (from 1941, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Piątek, Łódź województwo, Poland



Postcard of a Jewish family carrying goods in Piątek, used as antisemitic propaganda, and bearing the German caption: "The Jews are the first to return to the completely destroyed town of Biatek [sic], where they descend like vultures upon the empty shops," September 1939.

USHMM WS #68731, COURTESY OF MUZEUM WOJSKA POLSKIEGO

Piątek is located 34 kilometers (21 miles) north of Łódź. Before the war, about 1,300 Jews were living in the town.

Shortly after German soldiers entered Piątek on September 9, 1939, they shot 50 people, including 7 Jews. The men had been taken for forced labor and were murdered after finishing repair work on a bridge. In the fall of 1939, a number of Jews fled Piątek; the Jewish population thus declined by roughly one third. On January 1, 1940, the Jewish population numbered 838, including 18 refugees.

According to Michael Alberti, a ghetto was erected in Piątek not later than April 1940, but there is no information as to whether the ghetto was enclosed by a fence. Apparently, the German administration established the ghetto for one main reason: they were convinced that concentrating the Jews in a certain area of the town would prevent the spread of contagious diseases.¹

Very little information is available regarding conditions in the ghetto. On January 1, 1941, there were 862 Jews residing there. In March 1942, German police murdered one Jew, and in April another two were publicly hanged.² On April 22, 1942, some of the ghetto inhabitants were selected for liquidation in the Chełmno death camp. The ghetto was completely dissolved in July 1942.³

Published in Poliakov and Wulf is a clearing bill reporting income of 5,442.63 Reichsmark (RM) received from the sale of Jewish property by the German administration after the liquidation (*Auflösung*) of the ghetto. These funds were transferred to the German Ghetto Administration (Gettoverwaltung, GV) in Łódź. Among the items listed were 167 RM received for a "damaged piano" and 120 RM for movable household items.⁴ Painstakingly, the administration also listed the expenses it had incurred between April and the end of June 1942: 480.50 RM for "cleaning Jewish laundry," 68 RM for disinfection, 323.40 RM for "disinfection (to kill bugs)," and 17.50 RM for the storage of machinery, in total expenses of 889.40 RM. The same day that the Treasury (Kasse) of Amtsbezirk Piontek prepared this bill, the Amtskommissar in Piontek charged the Nazi People's Welfare (NSV)–Kreisverwaltung Lentschütz for deliveries of former-Jewish goods in June and July 1942 including: 255 down comforters at 1.50 RM, 455 pillows at 0.50 RM, and four big baskets of "used clothes from Jewish property" for 10 RM. In total, the Amtskommissar asked the NSV-Kreisverwaltung to transfer between 550 and 650 RM to his account—resulting in more profit from the liquidated Jewish ghetto in Piątek.⁵

SOURCES The ghetto is documented in a few books, including: Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 194, 197; Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden* (Frankfurt/Main: Ullstein-Verlag, 1983), pp. 70, 72; Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Łódź and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 201–202; and Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbof: Der Beginn der "Endlösung"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), p. 87. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie*

na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), lists the ghetto on p. 382, nr. 3408.

There are not many archival documents available regarding the existence and liquidation of the Piątek ghetto, and the USHMM Survivors' Registry lists only two survivors.

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NOTES

1. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 197.
2. Isaiah Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto: A History*, trans. and ed. Robert Moses Shapiro (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in cooperation with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2006), p. 447 n.114.
3. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 382, claims that the ghetto was liquidated in August, but documents quoted by Poliakov and Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich*, confirm that the ghetto had been liquidated (or at least partially liquidated) by early July 1942.
4. "Abrechnung über die Auflösung des Juden-Ghettos in Piontek," dated July 9, 1942, quoted in Poliakov and Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich*, p. 70, document III.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 72, dated July 9, 1942, document V.

PIOTRKÓW KUJAWSKI

Pre-1939: Piotrków Kujawski, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Petrikau, Kreis Nessau (Nieszawa) (from 1940, Kreis Hermannsbud), Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Piotrków Kujawski, województwo kujawsko-pomorskie, Poland

Piotrków Kujawski is located about 36 kilometers (22 miles) west-southwest of Włocławek. In 1921, the Jewish population was 742, constituting 82 percent of the total. On September 1, 1939, the Jewish population was 915.

German forces occupied Piotrków on September 9, 1939. Soon after the Germans' arrival, Jewish homes and stores were plundered. In the fall of 1939, a Jewish Council (Juderrat) was established in the town. In mid-October 1939, Jews were moved into the area of Orodowa and Kościuszko Streets, which were separated from the rest of the town by barbed wire. The Jewish community was required to pay a war reparations fine of 30,000 złoty. In late 1939, a number of Jews and Poles were deported from the town into the Generalgouvernement. Some of these people subsequently returned with special holiday permits around the turn of 1939–1940. The German authorities were concerned that they were visiting relatives and encouraging them to resettle on their own initiative, which might enable them to take all their valuable items with them without any official control.¹

On October 26, 1939, Piotrków was officially incorporated into the Reich as part of Landkreis Nessau (later Hermannsbud) within Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza. The administrative center of Landkreis Nessau was Aleksandrów Kujawski, which on January 14, 1940, was policed by a force of 45 Gendarmes assisted by 60 auxiliary policemen (Hilfspolizisten), who were probably local ethnic Germans.²

In 1940, with the support of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), Jewish welfare services in Piotrków were provided to 106 needy Jews. Gendarmerie reports in April and July 1940 noted that the Jews were dissatisfied, as they were still being used for forced labor without any pay to clean the streets in the town and also to perform agricultural work on the estates of "Petrikau, Swiecz, and Kischkowitz." In the winter of 1940–1941, there were 615 Jews living in Piotrków, including more than 80 refugees, presumably resettled there from elsewhere in Kreis Hermannsbud, as Piotrków was reportedly the only location where Jews still resided. The Gendarmerie reports indicate that no formal ghetto was established, but as far as conditions permitted, the Jews were concentrated together in the "Sack-und Wiesenstrasse," separated from the non-Jewish population (i.e., in a Jewish residential area), away from the main streets. Jews were only permitted to use the Adolf-Hitler Street for urgent reasons and generally were not permitted to enter other parts of the town. Those over the age of 10 were required to wear Stars of David 15 centimeters (6 inches) in diameter. Male Jews were subjected to unpaid forced labor until December 1940, when an hourly payment of 15 pfennigs was introduced. About 40 Jews were working for the Wehrmacht, preparing a military firing range. Others were engaged in clearing snow, cleaning the streets, and doing road construction. The curfew for the Jews and the prohibition on their using the sidewalks were observed in sullen silence.³ One secondary source indicates that in the spring of 1940, all of the Jews were ordered to move to the outskirts of the town to Piotrków Poduchowy. Each Jew could take with them only up to 150 kilograms (331 pounds) of luggage.⁴

Of the 631 Jews then registered in Piotrków, 80 men capable of work were sent on June 24, 1941, to Mogilno on a labor deployment (*Arbeitseinsatz*). The remaining Jews were mostly living still concentrated together and separated from the non-Jewish population. Most of the men still there and the 60 Jewish girls and women were employed in agriculture. A subsequent transport of men to labor camps near Hohensalza had been implemented by September 1941. Some Jewish artisans were still employed in Piotrków, as they could not be replaced.⁵

Around the middle of April 1942, the remaining Jews in Piotrków were ordered to assemble on the school square and were then deported to the Chełmno extermination center to be gassed. On April 23, 1942, the Gendarmerie in Kreis Hermannsbud reported that all the Jews of the Kreis had been "evacuated," including 544 people from Piotrków. The deportation Aktion in Piotrków was conducted by the available Gendarmerie forces of the Kreis. The Jews were deported using trucks belonging to Einsatzkommando Wartbrücken.⁶ The Gendarmerie section in Piotrków confirmed in September 1942 that no Jews remained within its area of jurisdiction.⁷

SOURCES Published sources on the persecution and murder of the Jews in Piotrków Kujawski under German occupation include: Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 347–348. Additional information

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can also be found on the Web site of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews at www.sztetl.org.pl. The existence of a “ghetto” in Piotrków Kujawski is mentioned in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 994.

Much of the information for this entry has been extracted from the Gendarmerie reports for Kreis Hermannsbad held at IPN (fond 71) and USHMM (RG-15.013M).

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NOTES

1. “Piotrków Kujawski,” at www.sztetl.org.pl; USHMM, RG-15.013M (records of the Gendarmerie Kreis Hermannsbad), reel 1, file 4, p. 19, Gendarmerie Kreis Alexandrow report, January 14, 1940.
2. USHMM, RG-15.013M, reel 1, file 4, p. 19, Gend. Kreis Alexandrow, January 14, 1940.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 41, Gend. Kreis Alexandrow, April 23, 1940; reel 2, file 5, p. 20, Gend.-Abteilung Petrikau report, December 27, 1940; reel 2, file 7, Gend. Kreis Hermannsbad, May 30, 1941.
4. “Piotrków Kujawski.”
5. USHMM, RG-15.013M, reel 1, file 6, p. 41, Gend.-Abt. Petrikau, June 24, 1941.
6. *Ibid.*, reel 2, file 7, Gend. Kreis Hermannsbad, April 23, 1942.
7. *Ibid.*, reel 2, file 6, p. 104, Gend.-Abt. Petrikau, April 23, 1942.

PODDĘBICE

Pre-1939: Poddębice, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Poddembice (in 1943 renamed Wandalenbrück), Kreis Lentschütz (Łęczycza), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (from 1941, Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Poddębice, Łódź województwo, Poland

Poddębice is located 38 kilometers (24 miles) west-northwest of Łódź. In 1921, there were 1,333 Jews living in the town. In September 1939, the Germans, on occupying the town, requested a list of all the Jews living in the town along with their dates of birth and addresses. They appointed Jankiel Sosnowski as chairman of the Jewish Council (Judenrat).¹

The German authorities established an open ghetto in Poddębice on November 12, 1940. From the beginning, the town's Jews were forbidden to leave the ghetto. However, this official restriction on movement was initially not fully enforced, as both *Pinkas ba-kebilot* and survivors note that, at first, Poles could come in and Jews go out with impunity. The ghetto was never physically enclosed.

The ghetto was located in a poor, northern part of the town surrounded by fields. It included Sienkiewicz, Kiliński, and Kamienna Streets, from which Polish residents had been evicted. The ghetto had water and power. In December 1940, the Judenrat reported 1,503 Jews (350 families) living there, including 163 refugees (31 families).²



Exterior view of a church in Poddębice photographed after liberation by a war-crimes investigation team in June 1945. This church is the likely place where the ghetto's Jews were held in April 1942, prior to their deportation to the Chelmno killing center.

USHMM WS #51706, COURTESY OF IPN

German police guarded the ghetto's boundaries. Internal policing was left to the Jewish Police. Regarding the Jewish policemen, Mayer Zyger noted that “some were good, some bad.”³ There was also a Jewish post office run by David Adler, who survived the Shoah. Its employees had the status of Judenrat members, whom the Germans promised to exempt from resettlement.⁴

The Judenrat and the self-help committee for poor Jews opened a soup kitchen in the ghetto on December 8, 1940. It served 120 meals daily at 10 pfennigs each. By January 1941, the number of meals served had almost doubled. At this time there were no medical facilities in the ghetto, and the seriously ill were treated in Łęczycza.

In December 1940, the self-help committee determined that almost all the Jewish craftsmen had lost their income, and those who still ran their workshops were instructed to give part of their earnings to the committee to pay for their exemption from forced labor. Their money was used to support those who were conscripted.

That same month, unemployed Jews organized a demonstration in front of the Judenrat office, shouting, “Give us bread and fuel!” Most of the work came to an end with the onset of winter; up until then, 75 laborers were paid 50 pfennigs daily. The outcome of this demonstration is unknown.⁵

In January 1941, 500 or 600 Jews were resettled from Łęczycza to the Poddębice ghetto. They were allowed to take with them kitchen utensils and bedding. Due to the lack of space in the Poddębice ghetto, Jewish policemen temporarily quartered them en masse in a stable.⁶

Survivor Hershel Menche noted that there were no problems obtaining food, as Jews and Poles used the black market. Despite the ban on practicing religion and the flight of their rabbis (including Y.Y. Rothfeld [Rotfeld]), ghetto residents continued with their religious services and ritual slaughter. Menche's family was apprehended when praying at home. The Germans confiscated all their religious artifacts. However, they were returned to the family on the orders of the Poddębice authorities the next day.⁷

The German who governed Poddębice from 1941 (identified by Michael Alberti as Franz Heinrich Bock) kept a secret diary, which he published in Germany after the war under the pseudonym Alexander Hohenstein. Historian Isaiah Trunk wrote of Bock: "He made sharply critical remarks about the inhuman acts of German officials of all ranks towards the Polish, and particularly the Jewish population . . . and tried to help as much as he could. He befriended the local council chairman (a dentist who treated him in secret) and his wife."⁸

In October 1941, two Germans, members of a crew that came from Poznań to show a film in a German club, attempted to rape two Jewish women. They selected them from a group that the Judenrat had provided on their orders, apparently for a work assignment in Germany. Tried by a special court in Łódź, one was rebuked and the other sentenced to a year and a half in prison, presumably for racial dishonor (*Rassenschande*).

On March 10 or 16, 1942, the Gestapo arranged the public hanging of five Jews in Poddębice. All the Jews of the ghetto were assembled to witness the event. The Judenrat and Jewish Police were ordered to assist. Three of the victims were brought from the Gendarmerie jail and the remaining two arrived from the direction of Łęczycza. The victims were: Abba Grinbaum, Avraham Scheibe, Avraham Koplowicz (Jankiel Kopel), Schmuel Schija, and Wolf Stettländer. Mayor Bock, who defied the order of the Landrat by refusing to deliver an additional Jew for this execution, was severely reproached, and after he was dismissed from his office, he was subsequently sent to the front.

There were at least two roundups of male Jews for labor camps. The first transport was most likely to Liebenau bei Schwiebus, near Frankfurt an der Oder; survivors are unable to date this deportation precisely.⁹ The second transport of 90 men took place on March 21–27, 1942, after the public hanging. The impact of the hanging may have encouraged some Poddębice Jews to volunteer to go to the labor camp in Konin.¹⁰

In mid-April 1942, German police forces conducted the liquidation of the Poddębice ghetto, while Mayor Bock was on leave in Germany. Bock learned about it from one of his aides, who described it as "a mass murder organized by the State."¹¹

The Aktion began when a large force of German police and Gestapo men from Łódź and Łęczycza surrounded the

ghetto. Then the 1,800 Jews were assembled on the courtyard in front of the palace before being forced into a local church. The Jews were held in the church under horrendous conditions for 10 days without blankets, cutlery, or other necessities, and at least 10 people died. Rations were provided only after the Judenrat paid a large bribe.

It appears that the elderly and sick were selected and killed on the spot a few days after being locked in the church, while skilled workers were dispatched for work, probably to the Łódź ghetto. The remaining Jews were sent to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were murdered on arrival on April 23, 1942.

SOURCES The following publications refer to the Poddębice ghetto: Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2006), pp. 21, 67, 201–202, 437; Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Łódź and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 184–186; Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), p. 207; Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbhof: Der Beginn der "Endlösung"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), pp. 76, 81–82; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo sieradzkie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1983), p. 40; and Franz Bock (alias Alexander Hohenstein), *Wartheländisches Tagebuch aus den Jahren 1941/42* (Stuttgart, 1961).

The following archival sources contain information regarding the ghetto in Poddębice: AŻIH (210/558 [AJDC]); BA-L (V 203 AR-Z 161/67); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); and VHF (# 170, 949, 5416, 3657-4, 5416, 10873, 17989).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 10873, testimony of Mayer Zyger, 1996; and # 949, testimony of David Adler, 1995.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/558 (Poddębice), p. 1; VHF, # 5416, testimony of Hershel Menche, 1995; # 10873; and # 949.
3. VHF, # 10873.
4. *Ibid.*, # 949.
5. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/558, pp. 1–5.
6. Yitzhak Frenkel, ed., *Sefer Linshitz* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Łęczycza in Israel, 1953), pp. 182–183; Avram Tsingler, *Hazak ve-balash: Sipuro shel nitsol Sho'ab* (Israel: A. Tsingler, 1987), final page.
7. VHF, # 949; and # 5416.
8. Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 185, 307–308, 483.
9. VHF, # 70, testimony of Chaim Glikzman, 1994; # 3657-4, testimony of Morris Jacobs, 1996; and # 949.
10. *Ibid.*, # 17989, testimony of Irving Mandelbaum; and # 5416.
11. As cited by Trunk, *Judenrat*, p. 314.

PRASZKA

Pre-1939: Praszka, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Prascbkau, Landkreis Welungen (Wieluń), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Praszka, Łódź województwo, Poland

Praszka is located about 56 kilometers (35 miles) west-northwest of Częstochowa. In 1921, the Jewish population of the town was 1,663. Before World War II, the town was located close to the German-Polish border, separated from Germany only by the Proсна River.

German troops occupied Praszka on the first day of the war, September 1, 1939.¹ All Jews were gathered in the synagogue and told that they should continue their business as usual. However, the next day, the German occupying forces went into Jewish stores and took whatever they wanted without paying for it. During the initial months, the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which assisted in recruiting Jews for forced labor. By the start of winter (1939–1940), Jewish forced labor was organized on a regular basis for cleaning the roads and shoveling snow. At the end of 1939, the German security forces began to arrest Jews in the town. The Jews were put on trucks and taken to an unknown destination. None of these arrested Jews ever returned.

According to one source, the ghetto in Praszka was established in the fall of 1940, after the holiday of Sukkot (October 24). Other sources, however, date its establishment and enclosure somewhat later.² The ghetto covered an area of 20,000 square meters (approximately 5 acres), comprising two streets. It was enclosed by a barbed-wire fence. At first, the ghetto was not completely isolated, and Jews were able to obtain some additional food from their Polish neighbors. Over time, the area of the ghetto was reduced, and the main streets of Praszka were declared to be officially “cleansed of Jews” (*judenrein*). In December 1940, the Jewish population was 961, comprising 840 local Jews and 121 refugees.³



Public humiliation of Jews in Praszka, ca. 1939–1940. The policemen, trim the beards of Jewish men. The one on the left, Kulman, was tried after the war. Two Volksdeutsche women from Praszka are also pictured. USHMM WS #50434, COURTESY OF IPN

The names of some of the perpetrators responsible for establishing and overseeing the Praszka ghetto are known. The German mayor of the town was Georg Baumgart; in charge of the ghetto was a German employee of the town administration, Cebula. The local police post was under the command of Georg Weisenberg (or Waisenberg). Witnesses also give the names of several of the Gendarmes in Praszka who were notorious for their cruelty: Fuchler, Lochner, Krause, and Kulman.

At the beginning of 1941, about 500 Jews were taken from the Praszka ghetto to labor camps in the vicinity, where they lived and worked under primitive conditions. For instance, Jews from Praszka were forced to live and work in labor camps in the villages of Przedmość, Sołtysy, and other places, where they were employed breaking rocks and paving roads.⁴ These camps were closed by the summer of 1942, and most of the Jews were transferred to forced labor camps in the Poznań region. At some time before August 1942, probably following the removal of Jews to the labor camps, about 700 Jews were brought into the Praszka ghetto from the larger neighboring ghetto in Wieluń.

The Jews remaining in the ghetto were employed by the Germans cleaning the town, repairing roads, and demolishing houses. Food supplies in the ghetto were severely inadequate. The Jews suffered from terrible hunger, and many died from starvation and disease. Although two or three Jewish families already shared a single room in the ghetto, the area of the ghetto was reduced again in early 1942, to make room for ethnic Germans resettled into the town.⁵ By now, the ghetto only consisted of two barns on the outskirts of Praszka.⁶ At this time, the German police began to conduct arbitrary arrests and shootings of Jews in the ghetto. The Jewish Police assisted them with some of the arrests in the vain hope of saving themselves.

On August 12, 1942, the German authorities liquidated the Praszka ghetto.⁷ At that time, it still held several hundred inmates. The ghetto was liquidated by the Gestapo, assisted by local Gendarmes and employees of the German civilian administration in Praszka. Those Jews who were deemed to be too weak, too sick, or too old to be deported were put into a vehicle and taken to the Jewish cemetery, where they were shot by an execution squad of three German policemen (either Gestapo or Gendarmes). In total, 27 Jews were shot and buried at the Jewish cemetery.⁸

While a small number of workers (mostly craftsmen) was sent to the Łódź ghetto, the majority was sent to the Chełmno extermination camp (probably via Wieluń) and gassed on arrival. By the end of the war, the remnants of the ghetto had been completely demolished. Only about 10 Jews from the Praszka ghetto who had survived the Holocaust were living in the area in September 1945. Several of the survivors from Praszka also passed through the Auschwitz concentration camp.⁹

SOURCES Secondary sources on the Praszka ghetto include the following: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds.,

Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 204–205; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 403; Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 202–203; and *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 137, 165.

The history of the Praszka ghetto is documented in the following archival sources: BA-L (203 AR-Z 161/67 and V 203 AR-Z 66/75, Bd. II); IPN (ASG, sygn. 51, p. 246; OKL/Ds 32/67 [Przedmość Camp, January–July 1942]; OKL/Ds 33/67 [Softysy Camp, January–August 1942]; and OKL/Ds 42/67 [Forced Labor of the Ghetto Inmates]); USHMM (RG-15.042M [Akta zakończonych śledztw w sprawach o zbrodnie hitlerowskie]; and Acc.1995.A.531 [Esther Salamonovich Fortgang memoirs]); and YVA.

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1. For details, see USHMM, Acc.1995.A.531, memoirs of Esther Salamonovich Fortgang.

2. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 205; USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, Ankieta Obozy Ghetta 1939–1945, woj. poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 246 and reverse, however, gives the date of February 1941. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 202, citing the *Litzmannstadter Zeitung*, November 21, 1941, gives the date of August or September 1941.

3. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 205.

4. *Ibid.*, USHMM, RG-15.042M (Akta zakończonych śledztw w sprawach o zbrodnie hitlerowskie).

5. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 202.

6. Regarding the resettlement to the barns, see the witness statements of Władysław G., Piotr Paweł N., and Stanisław Mi., in BA-L, ZStL, 203 AR-Z 161/67, vol. 6, pp. 26, 59, 63.

7. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, woj. poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 246 and reverse.

8. *Ibid.*; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 205.

9. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, woj. poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 247–255, includes a list of 605 names of Jewish inmates of the ghetto. As of September 1945, only 8 were known to be living in Praszka and 1 in Rudniki. The fate of most others is listed as unknown. On the wartime locations of survivors, see *Benjamin and Vladka Meed Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors 2000*, vol. 4 (United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 2000).

PRZEDECZ

Pre-1939: Przedecz (Yiddish: Psbeytsh), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Moosburg, Landgemeinde in Kreis Leslau, Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Przedecz, województwo kujawsko-pomorskie, Poland

Przedecz is located about 75 kilometers (47 miles) northwest of Łódź. In 1921, the town had 840 Jewish inhabitants,

which constituted about a quarter of the total population of Przedecz.

The German army occupied Przedecz in mid-September 1939. Almost immediately, the Germans requisitioned Jews for forced labor, such as chopping wood and cleaning the streets, and seized Jewish property. On the first day of the Sukkot holiday the German military commandant demanded a contribution of 20,000 złoty, issuing threats if this demand was not met. The Jews paid the contribution, but on the next day, the Germans set fire to the synagogue, and the commandant then blamed the arson on the Jews. Shortly after this, at the end of October 1939, German soldiers rounded up a number of male Jews and took them to a swampy area on the edge of town, where they beat them and forced them to roll in the mud, before sending them home drenched and besmirched.¹

On October 26, 1939, Przedecz was officially incorporated into the Reich as part of Kreis Leslau within Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza. Soon after this date, a squad of Gendarmerie replaced the military in control of the town, and a civil administrator (Amtskommissar) was appointed for Przedecz. Shortly after the arrival of the Amtskommissar, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was appointed, headed by Ziklinsky. Together with a number of assistants, Ziklinsky was made responsible for ensuring that the Jews obeyed all the new German regulations. From this time, Jewish forced laborers were assigned by the Judenrat, which brought to an end the seizure of Jews from their houses. In addition, it was now possible for those Jews who had gainful employment to pay for a replacement to perform their forced labor duties. Jews continued to perform forced labor under close guard by armed ethnic Germans, who beat them frequently.

In the fall of 1939, the German authorities and local ethnic Germans started evicting Jews from their houses, giving them only a few hours to leave and ordering them to leave behind their furniture and bedclothes—so these could be taken over by the Germans who moved in. The new Amtskommissar soon imposed a further “contribution” of 40,000 złoty on the Jewish community, which it was unable to meet in full. In response, Jewish shops and businesses in the town were plundered, such that they were effectively forced to close down. Among new regulations imposed was the wearing of yellow patches by Jews and a prohibition on their using the sidewalks.²

According to survivor Milton Daniels, those Jews who were evicted were forced to move in with other Jewish families; eventually several families were sharing each apartment. As the Jews generally lived together in the same part of town, these evictions effectively created what could be described as an open ghetto.³ While the entries in *Pinkas ba-kebilot* and the *Encyclopedia of Jewish Life* use the term *ghetto* to describe living conditions for Jews in Przedecz, the detailed Holocaust account of Ley Shveytser in the *yizkor* book does not refer specifically to a ghetto in the town.

Due to the mounting persecution, a number of young Jews escaped eastward to the eastern part of Poland that was then under Soviet rule. A few other Jews returned from prisoner-of-war (POW) camps, so in 1940 there were 769 Jews living in

Przedecz. The German authorities ordered the destruction of the Jewish cemetery, which had existed for 600 years. Despite the forced conversion of prayer houses to other uses and the exclusion of Jews from schools, Jews continued to pray in groups in their houses and educate their children at home. Jewish craftsmen had their tools and machinery seized. Then they were forced to work for very low wages for ethnic Germans who took over their workshops. To survive, Jews had to sell their last possessions to buy food on the black market.⁴

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the German authorities started to send away those Jews capable of work to forced labor camps. On the first day of the holiday of Sukkot (in early October) in 1941, unmarried Jewish girls and married women without children were deported to a labor camp near Inowrocław. Several days later the Germans went from house to house and rounded up most of the remaining able-bodied men, who were sent to forced labor camps in the region of Poznań. The majority of these people did not survive the war, as conditions in the camps were very harsh.

German police forces liquidated the Jewish community of Przedecz in April 1942. First the remaining 600 or so Jews of Przedecz were assembled and confined within a local church under SS guard. Many of the Jews had brought with them packages with clothing, food, and some valuables, but these were all taken away brutally by the German police.⁵ A number of those held in the church suffocated due to the intense overcrowding. On April 24, 1942, the remaining Jews of Przedecz were deported on trucks to the death camp at Chełmno.⁶

SOURCES Published sources on the persecution and murder of the Jews of Przedecz under German occupation include: Moshe Bilavski, ed., *Sefer yizkor li-kedoshbe 'ir Pashyatsb: Korbanot ba-sho'ah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e ir Pshedets ba-Arets uva-tefutsot, 1974); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ba-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 379–380; and Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1032. In addition, some information on the Jews of Przedecz can be found on the Web site of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw: www.jewishinstitute.org.pl/en/gminy/miasto/210.html.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APL; and VHF (# 17657).

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NOTES

1. Ley Shveytser, “Meyne zkhrunus fun iene tseytn,” in Bilavski, *Sefer yizkor*, pp. 79–88.
2. Ibid.
3. VHF, # 17657, testimony of Milton Daniels (born 1908).
4. Ibid.; Shveytser, “Meyne zkhrunus fun iene tseytn,” pp. 79–88.
5. “Di lezte Shehn,” in Bilavski, *Sefer yizkor*, pp. 73–75.
6. APL, Gettoverwaltung 1744, Amtskommissar Moosburg an Gettoverwaltung Litzmannstadt, betr. Einziehung

eines Sparbuchs bei der heutigen Judenaktion, April 24, 1942, as cited by Peter Klein, *Die “Gettoverwaltung Litzmannstadt” 1940–1944: Eine Dienststelle im Spannungsfeld von Kommunalbürokratie und staatlicher Verfolgungspolitik* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2009), p. 461.

RADZIEJÓW

Pre-1939: Radziejów, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Rädichau, Kreis Hermannsbad, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Warteland; post-1998: Radziejów, województwo kujawsko-pomorskie, Poland

Radziejów is located about 34 kilometers (21 miles) west of Włocławek. In 1921, the Jewish population of the town was 599 out of a total population of 3,164.

German forces occupied the town in the first half of September 1939. Much of the population fled in fear on the outbreak of the war, but most people returned once the Germans had quickly overrun the region. Many Jews came back to find their homes plundered. The German authorities introduced a number of restrictions on the Jews in the fall of 1939. Jews were forbidden to use the sidewalks, and their schools were closed. The Germans burned down the synagogues and attempted to put the blame on the Jews. In November 1939, all Jewish businesses were ordered closed, and Jewish businessmen had to sell personal possessions to buy food. In addition, Jews were required to perform forced labor for the town authorities, such as sweeping the streets, initially without any payment.¹

In April 1940, the Jewish community in Radziejów prepared an official list of 630 Jewish inhabitants, which was confirmed by the mayor of the town. In June 1940, a group of Jewish workers was sent away to work in a village 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) away, and they were rotated with other workers at the end of every week.² Survivor accounts indicate that men were sent away to labor camps from early in 1940; hard labor and poor food there caused some to fall ill from malnutrition and abuse. Those who returned were literally just “skin and bones.” A group of women was sent to work in Inowrocław and demolished buildings and cleaned the bricks for reuse. Here some of the women were coerced to have sexual relations with an ethnic German foreman, as those who submitted were able to receive increased rations.³

By the summer of 1940, survivors report that all the Jews of the town had been moved into a “ghetto” on one street, “Yiddisha-gahs,” where many Jews had lived before the war. Polish families living in this area were also forced to move out. Altogether more than 200 Jewish families were crowded into the designated area. Up to 4 families (more than 20 people) had to share a typical house. According to Joyce Wagner, “[T]he overcrowding was unbelievable. We all had to share the kitchen, which was also the bedroom for one of the families.” The ghetto remained unfenced and unguarded, but there was a 5:00 P.M. curfew.⁴

A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was set up in Radziejów, which acted as an intermediary with the German authorities

and attempted to ameliorate conditions for the Jews. As the roundups for the forced labor camps intensified, Jews went into hiding to avoid being caught.

In the winter of 1940–1941, the Gendarmerie reported that all male Jews were either working for the Wehrmacht or for the local mayor. Some were sent out to clear snow from the streets. At the same time, Jews were active on the black market, trading with Poles and some German soldiers.⁵ Wagner notes that due to limited supplies of food, Jews would remove their yellow Stars of David and leave the ghetto to find food. “After living in the ghetto for a few months we felt like animals locked up in a cage. Food was scant. People were on edge and on each other’s nerves, health deteriorated.”⁶

In April 1941, there were reportedly 1,376 Jews in the towns of Radziejów and Osiećiny combined. The bulk of them probably were registered in Radziejów, as in 1940 there had been only 384 Jews registered in Osiećiny.⁷ According to a Gendarmerie report of May 1941, no formal ghetto had been established in Radziejów, but all the Jews there had been concentrated on certain streets and in general were forbidden to enter the other quarters of the town.⁸

By July 1941, the Gendarmerie reported that the Labor Office in Piotrków had assigned those Jews capable of work to road and railway construction projects away from their home. Only the elderly, those unfit for work, and many women of the ghetto’s population remained in Radziejów. However, in October 1941, many of those who had been sent away to work returned home. In November there were reportedly 622 Jews residing in Radziejów. A Gendarmerie report from December 1941 indicated menacingly that it was expected that soon “all of the Jews would be deported.”⁹

On January 26, 1942, the Jews were ordered to assemble and were searched for money and gold. In the meantime, their homes were ransacked. As people expected soon to be deported, a number of Jews escaped to Częstochowa and Kłobuck, by paying bribes to obtain travel permits.¹⁰

In mid-April 1942, the remaining Jews in Radziejów were deported to the Chełmno extermination camp to be gassed. Fragmentary information about the roundup is available from Wagner, who was fortunate to survive in hiding. First the Jews were driven out of their houses by German Gendarmes shouting, “Juden raus!”—“Jews get out!” Huddled in an attic, Wagner heard shouts, screams, dogs barking, and shots being fired on the streets down below. People were calling the names of loved ones, and some who tried to flee were caught and shot. The bulk of the Jews were gathered on the market square and then placed in a local church overnight, before being sent to their deaths. Wagner’s hiding place would have been discovered, but an ethnic German policeman who recognized another girl hiding with her then decided to turn a blind eye.¹¹

On April 23, the Gendarmerie in Kreis Hermannsbad reported that all the Jews of the Kreis had been “evacuated,” including 230 people from Radziejów, who were deported using trucks belonging to Einsatzkommando Wartbrücken.¹²

Some of the Jews from Radziejów were in a labor camp at Łojewo at the time of the roundup and remained at this camp,

or at other camps nearby, for more than six months before subsequently being deported to the Auschwitz II-Birkenau extermination camp.¹³

SOURCES Published sources on the persecution and murder of the Jews in Radziejów under German occupation include: Joyce Wagner, *A Promise Kept to Bear Witness* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007); and Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 418–419. Additional information can also be found on the Web site of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews at www.sztetl.org.pl.

Relevant documentation includes: AŻIH (210/587, 301/372); IPN (fond 71); USHMM (RG-15.013M and Acc.1999.A.0154); and VHF (# 4593, 12512, 14744, 15884, 17941, 24501).

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1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH), 210/587, AJDC Radziejów, p. 14, Jüdische Gemeinde Radziejów to AJDC Warsaw, June 5, 1940; Wagner, *A Promise Kept*, pp. 22–25; AŻIH, 301/372, testimony of Ludwik Zajf.

2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH), 210/587, AJDC Radziejów, pp. 2–9, 17–19.

3. Wagner, *A Promise Kept*, p. 25; VHF, # 17941, testimony of Ann Goldman, also mentions cases of rape.

4. Wagner, *A Promise Kept*, p. 29; VHF, # 24501, testimony of Jack Marcus; # 4593, testimony of George Grojnowski; # 17941; # 12512, testimony of Sally Klingbaum; AŻIH, 301/372.

5. USHMM, RG-15.013M, reel 2, file 5, pp. 12, 34, Gendarmerie Radziejow, December 27, 1940, and February 27, 1941.

6. Wagner, *A Promise Kept*, pp. 31–33.

7. USHMM, RG-15.013M, reel 2, file 5, p. 12, Gend. Radziejow, April 26, 1941.

8. *Ibid.*, file 7, p. 43, Gend. Kreis Hermannsbad, May 30, 1941.

9. *Ibid.*, file 6, pp. 45, 90–91, 117, Gend. Radziejow, July 26, November 22, and December 26, 1941.

10. AŻIH, 301/372; Wagner, *A Promise Kept*, pp. 33–36.

11. Wagner, *A Promise Kept*, pp. 36–39.

12. USHMM, RG-15.013M, reel 2, file 7, Gend. Kreis Hermannsbad, April 23, 1942.

13. Wagner, *A Promise Kept*, pp. 45–61, dates her arrival in Auschwitz in 1943.

RZGÓW

Pre-1939: Rzgów, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Roggen, Kreis Konin, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: two separate villages, Rzgów Pierwszy and Rzgów Drugi, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Rzgów is located 17 kilometers (10.5 miles) southwest of Konin. In 1921, the Jewish population of Rzgów was 111, out of a total population of 1,808. On the eve of World War II, there were probably slightly less than 100 Jews in Rzgów.

An open ghetto was set up in Rzgów in the summer of 1940, when the remaining Jews of Kreis Konin were deported

to a network of “hamlet ghettos” in the southern part of the Kreis; one of them was established in Rzgów and its 14 adjoining settlements. On July 17–18, 1940, 1,000 Jews from nearby Słupca were resettled to the Rzgów ghetto. Also a number of Jews from Konin, Kleczew, and Skulsk (Jewish population of 210 in 1939) were deported there.¹

An account from the Ringelblum Archive from an anonymous Konin Jew describes the deportation from Konin: “On July 17, the Gendarmes burst into all Jewish apartments, allowing everyone to take a small bundle and then driving them out, not even excluding the sick and paralyzed . . . to an assembly point. From there, after a nightlong march, everyone was brought to three villages: Grodziec, Zagórow, and Rzgów (later the remainder of the [Jewish] population of Kreis Konin was resettled there).” The same author adds, “One has to admit, that the inhabitants of those villages took on a more warm-hearted attitude towards us. Before the war, there were boards with inscriptions like ‘Jews out!’ or ‘Beat the Jew!’ Now the deportees were offered bread and potatoes, [the locals] refusing to accept payment for them.”²

According to Isaiah Trunk, residents of such hamlet ghettos in the Warthegau were supposed to draw their livelihood from farming. Secondary sources state that the majority of such ghettos were unfenced, unguarded, and only occasionally patrolled by the Germans. As such ghettos remained unfenced, historians suggest that it was easier for their residents to buy food and maintain contact with the outside world, as compared to the Jews in enclosed ghettos.

Very little is known about living conditions in the Rzgów hamlet ghetto, but the Jews were probably quartered with non-Jewish farmers, for whom they performed agricultural labor in return for food. In total, there were probably around 1,000 Jews quartered in Rzgów and its 14 surrounding settlements. After the harvest season, it is likely that some Jews were sent back from Rzgów to Konin and other towns for periods of forced labor, with most returning to Rzgów by February 1941.

In early March 1941, partial deportations from the rural ghettos in Kreis Konin began. These deportations occurred as part of the ongoing removal of non-Germans from the region in conjunction with the resumption of plans for the creation of a military training ground south of Konin. In March 1941, a number of Rzgów ghetto residents were sent to Krasnystaw, Izbica Lubelska, and Józefów Biłgorajski in Distrikt Lublin via the railway station in Konin and then to the Łódź ghetto. Some of the Jews from Rzgów arrived in Izbica Lubelska on March 10, 1941, as recalled by Thomas Toivi Blatt.³ A few of the able-bodied men probably were retained in Łódź to work and then sent on after about six weeks to a labor camp near Gdańsk to work on road construction.

The exact numbers of those deported from Rzgów are unknown. Those Jews who were not sent away were resettled to the nearby ghetto in Zagórow, either in March 1941 or just prior to that ghetto’s liquidation between September 24 and October 3, 1941. At that time all the remaining Jews in Kreis Konin were concentrated in Zagórow (up to 3,000 people) and

then taken away to be killed between Nieszysz and Rudzica in the “Długa Łąka” Forest—or according to other sources, in the Kazimierz Biskupi Forest. The killings were conducted by an SS-Sonderkommando, led by SS-Obersturmführer Herbert Lange of the Gestapo in Poznań. Buried in mass graves, the victims’ bodies were exhumed and burned in 1944.⁴

SOURCES The following publications contain references to the Rzgów ghetto: D. Sierpacka, “Postawy Polaków wobec ludności żydowskiej w Kraju Warty,” in A. Namysł, ed., *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy* (Warsaw: IPN Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), pp. 201–202; Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 196; Czesław Pili-chowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 443; Ryszard Głoszkowski, “Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na ludności polskiej w powiecie konińskim w latach 1939–1945,” in *Eksterminacja ludności polskiej w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Wyniki badań ośrodków terenowych* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, GKBZHWP, 1979), pp. 77, 81–82; J. Gulczyński, “Konińska relacja z Archiwum Ringelbluma,” *Rocznik Koniński*, no. 14 (2003): 198–199; Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 113; Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 165 (Skulsk), pp. 235–238 (Konin); and Janina Kiełboń, “Deportacje Żydów do dystryktu lubelskiego (1939–1943),” in D. Libionka, ed., *Akcja Reinhardt: Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: IPN Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2004), pp. 163–164.

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NOTES

1. “We Remember the Extermination Pits!”—available at www.zchor.org/extermiation/pits.htm.
2. USHMM, Ring I/841, Lb. 848, Mf. 0827, reel 39.
3. Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), p. 19.
4. “We Remember the Extermination Pits!”

SANNIKI

Pre-1939: Sanniki, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Gasten (later Walderode), Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sanniki is located 69 kilometers (43 miles) north-northeast of Łódź. In 1921, the Jewish population was 315, out of a total of 1,447 inhabitants of the village.

At the time of the German invasion in September 1939, the Luftwaffe bombed Sanniki, setting many houses on fire. Some local Jews fled towards Warsaw, but other refugees ar-

rived in the village. German forces captured Sanniki during the third week of September. In the first months of the occupation, the Jews were made to perform forced labor, and the German authorities confiscated much of their property. After the establishment of the German civil administration on October 26, 1939, the village was incorporated into the Third Reich as part of Kreis Gasten, in Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland.

In December 1939, Sanniki had 5,382 inhabitants, of which 311 were Jewish. Before the ghetto was established, Jews from the neighboring villages of Słubice and Osmolin were resettled to Sanniki, raising the Jewish population to 351.¹ The ghetto, which was established in September 1940, was under the authority of the local representative of the civilian administration (Amtskommissar). Many Jews were forced to leave their apartments and move into a small ghetto that included just a few streets. The local Gendarmerie post in Sanniki was in charge of guarding the ghetto area.² Jews were able to leave the ghetto to get food in exchange for money or their remaining possessions. In the spring of 1941, the Germans ordered the Jews to demolish the local church. They took photographs of this and used the incident to foment antisemitism.

In early March 1942 (at the time of Purim), refugees who had escaped roundups brought news of the liquidation of neighboring communities to Sanniki. The liquidation of the Sanniki ghetto began shortly afterwards. In March 1942, the Germans deported a number of able-bodied men to the labor camp at Konin-Czarków (Gemeinschaftslager der Deutschen Arbeitsfront Nr. 23—Konin). Among them was Rabbi Yehoshua Moshe Aaronson, who wrote a detailed wartime diary while in the camp.³ Then on April 17, 1942, the remaining ghetto inmates, about 250 individuals, were all deported to the extermination camp in Chełmno, where they were killed using poison gas.⁴ Before the deportation Aktion, the Jews were forced to surrender all their valuable items, such as watches, gold, silver, and money. After the Aktion was completed, the German Amtskommissar in Sanniki took over remaining Jewish property, including sewing machines, hand luggage, and gold items, and sent them to the German Ghetto Administration (Ghettoverwaltung, GV) in Łódź. On July 3, 1942, the Amtskommissar reported that the cleanup of the ghetto had been completed.⁵ There were very few survivors from the Jewish community in Sanniki.

SOURCES Information regarding the fate of the Jewish community of Sanniki during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Józef Kermisz, ed., *Dokumenty i materiały do dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce*, vol. 2, *Akcje i wysiedlenia* (Warsaw, 1946), pp. 126–127; and Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 305–306.

The ghetto in Sanniki is also mentioned in Czesław Pili-chowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 444; Martin Weinmann, ed., *Das nationalsozialistische Lager-system (CCP)* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1990),

p. 706; and Nachman Blumental, ed., *Słowa niewinne* (Kraków: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce, 1947), p. 36.

Documents on the fate of the Jewish community of Sanniki during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: APŁ; APP (sygn. 594, p. 17); BLH; IPN (sygn. Zh III/31/35/68); MMŻ; and YVA.

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trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTES

1. APP, Reichsstatthalter im Reichsgau Wartheland, sygn. 594, p. 17; D. Dąbrowska, “Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w ‘Kraju Warty’ w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 168, table 11.

2. IPN, Ankieta GKBZHWP, getta województwo warszawskie.

3. See J. Aaronson, *Alei Merorot* (Bnei Brak [Tel Aviv], 1996); the original manuscript is in BLH. Also see MMŻ, Wykaz imienny więźniów obozu w Koninie-Czarkowie. See also Esther Farbstein, “The Diary and Memoir of a Rabbi at the ‘Konin House of Bondage,’” *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998): 87–128.

4. IPN, sygn. Zh III/31/35/68, getta województwo warszawskie; Dąbrowska, “Zagłada skupisk,” p. 168, table 11; APŁ, Ghettoverwaltung, sygn. 29698, pp. 63–65, 110–117; Amtskommissar Sanniki an den Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Litzmannstadt, Ghettoverwaltung, July 3, 1942, published in Blumental, *Słowa niewinne*, p. 36.

5. Kermisz, *Dokumenty i materiały*, 2:126–127; Blumental, *Słowa niewinne*, p. 36.

SIERADZ

Pre-1939: Sieradz, city, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Schieratz, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Sieradz, Łódź województwo, Poland

Sieradz lies 56 kilometers (35 miles) southwest of Łódź. It was a garrison town located on the Warta River, about 50 miles east of the border with Germany in 1939.

On the eve of World War II, Jews comprised more than 3,000 of the roughly 10,000 inhabitants of the city.¹ In the fall of 1938, Sieradz was one of the main destinations for the thousands of stateless Jews expelled from Germany to Poland following the assassination by Herschel Grynszpan of Ernst vom Rath, the Third Secretary at the German Consulate in Paris. The Jewish community in Sieradz provided food and shelter for many of these expelled Jews.

German forces captured the city after some fierce Polish resistance in early September 1939. Many Jews fled before the German advance, and when they returned over the following days, some found that the Germans had plundered their homes and shops. Soon, the Germans began to round up Jews off the streets for compulsory labor. Subjected to threats and physical abuse, they were employed to clean streets, to unload railway

cars, and to perform other physically exhausting work.² On September 16, 1939 (Shabbat Tishuvah), the Germans arrested and tortured a number of Jews, accusing them of having shot at German soldiers. In total, they murdered 33 Jews during this Aktion. On November 11, 1939, German soldiers killed two Jewish medical professionals, probably as part of measures taken against the intelligentsia at this time.³ The Germans also vandalized the synagogue and destroyed the Torah scrolls. Subsequently, the synagogue was used as a barn by the German army.⁴ In December 1939, the German authorities expelled hundreds of Jews from Sieradz, forcing them into the newly formed Generalgouvernement to the east. According to the yizkor book for Sandomierz, about 1,200 Jews arrived there from Sieradz and Kalisz at this time.⁵

In the spring of 1940, a Jewish residential quarter (open ghetto) was established in Sieradz, comprising the area between Wodna, Graniczna, Żydowska, Szewska, and Sukienicza Streets. The ghetto was in the poorest part of town, and there was terrible overcrowding, with 10 or more people having to share a room.⁶ Prior to this, a Jewish Council (Juderrat) and Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) were established to supervise the Jewish population and to provide a Jewish labor force for the Germans. To establish the ghetto, extensive resettlements were necessary within the town: non-Jewish inhabitants had to leave the planned ghetto area, while Jews from all over the city and its surrounding villages were forcibly moved into the ghetto.

On average, the Sieradz ghetto held about 2,500 people. Ghetto residents worked in various craft workshops (including one for tailors) and were forced to clean streets and public places.⁷ Later, Jews also were used as laborers outside Sieradz and were kept in camps near the work sites. Only a few Jewish women were subjected to forced labor. The Sieradz ghetto was not fenced in, but all the streets leading out of the ghetto were guarded by members of the Jewish Police on the ghetto side and the German Schutzpolizei outside. Most Jews were forbidden from pursuing their former trades, and they received only meager rations of bread and a little molasses, so hunger and eventually starvation were prevalent throughout the ghetto. Some Jews continued to trade with local peasants despite the risks, exchanging their remaining clothes and other possessions for a little extra food.⁸

Some members of the Schutzpolizei were ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) who also spoke Polish and now found an opportunity to vent their antisemitism. The town mayor of Sieradz was an ethnic German named Alfred (or Adolf) Dressler; in charge of economic affairs was a man named Fuchs; in charge of the ghetto was E. Garnies from Berlin; and the head of the local Gestapo was a man named Abramowski.⁹

At some point in 1941, about 1,000 Jews were expelled from Sieradz and transferred to the ghetto in Zduńska Wola.¹⁰ In the summer of 1941, about 200 able-bodied men from Sieradz were sent to labor camps near Poznań (and more were sent from the region in the spring of 1942).¹¹ Following these departures, the number of Jews remaining in the ghetto was probably reduced to about 1,300.¹² By the spring of 1942, however,

the Germans had enforced a very rigid regime within the ghetto. Twice daily all inhabitants had to participate in a roll call. If someone was missing, the Jewish Police—on orders of the German Schutzpolizei—beat the residents until such time as the missing person was found.¹³

On August 24–27, 1942, the Germans liquidated the ghetto. The ghetto residents were ordered to gather at 8:00 A.M. at the site of a school within the ghetto area. From there, they were taken to the Sieradz monastery, where they were crowded into a small space in a church building and left without food or water. About 20 women and children were killed during the evacuation and were buried at the Jewish cemetery in nearby Dzigorzew.¹⁴ The next day, about 184 skilled craftsmen and women were selected and taken to the Łódź ghetto.¹⁵ The Germans deported all remaining ghetto residents to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were murdered with poison gas. The Gestapo in Sieradz reported at the end of August 1942 that all the Jews had been “evacuated” from Kreis Schieratz during that month without any particular difficulties being encountered and that the Kreis was now “cleansed of Jews” (*judenrein*).¹⁶ Soon the ghetto area was repopulated by Polish inhabitants of the city.¹⁷

SOURCES Published sources on the Sieradz ghetto include the following: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 263–265; *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 162; Danuta Dabrowska and Lucjan Dobroszycki, eds., *Kronika getta łódzkiego* (Łódź: Wydawn. Łódzkie, 1966), 2:226, 229, 237; and Czesław Pili-chowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 451. Arek Hersh, a survivor of the Sieradz ghetto, has published his memoirs under the title *A Detail of History* (Newark, NJ: Quill Press, 2002); and the story of Mayer Hersh, another survivor of the Sieradz ghetto, has been told by Colin Rushton in the book *Beyond the Gates of Hell* (Leeds: Mediaworld PR, 2003), which also contains several rare photographs taken in the Sieradz ghetto.

Documentation on the persecution and destruction of the Jewish community of Sieradz can be found in the following archives: BA-L (203 AR 420/74, pp. 8–40); IPN (ASG, sygn. 51, p. 217; Zh III/31/35/68, getta, woj. Łódzkie); USHMM (RG-50.106*0023 [Oral History with Benjamin Hildesheim]; RG-15.019M [Court Inquiries]; RG-15.015M [Records of Chef der Sipo and UWZ]; RG-15.042M [Akta zakończonych śledztw w sprawach o zbrodnie hitlerowskie], reel 38; and RG-15.083M [Jewish Council of the Łódź ghetto], reel 316); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-50.106-0023, Hildesheim interview. Hirsh, *A Detail of History*, p. 1, gives a Jewish population of about 5,000, but this is probably too high.

2. Hersh, *A Detail of History*, pp. 38–39; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 264.

3. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 264.

4. Rushton, *Beyond the Gates of Hell*, p. 24.
5. Evah Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, ed., *Et ezkerah: Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir (Sandomierz)* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Tsoizmir be-Yisrael: Moreshet, bet'edut "a. Sh. Mordekhai Anilevits," 1993), pp. 562–565; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 264.
6. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, woj. Łódzkie, vol. 50, pp. 217 and reverse. Rushton, *Beyond the Gates of Hell*, p. 30, dates the establishment of the Sieradz ghetto in or around January 1940. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 264–265, date the establishment of the ghetto in March 1940.
7. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 451.
8. Rushton, *Beyond the Gates of Hell*, pp. 34–35; Hersh, *A Detail of History*, pp. 71–72.
9. USHMM, RG-15.042M (Sprawozdanie).
10. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 114–116.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 264, notes that there were several such transports starting from June 1941. However, Hersh, *A Detail of History*, p. 49, puts this event in the context of the early days of occupation.
12. Some sources, however, put the number of ghetto inmates in the ghetto at that time as well over 2,000; see USHMM, RG-15.042M, statements of Stanisław Jasiewicz and Stanisław Jańczak.
13. Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 212. Rushton, *Beyond the Gates of Hell*, p. 37, also mentions the twice daily roll call.
14. USHMM, RG-15.042M, witness statement of Stanisław Jasiewicz.
15. *Ibid.*, RG-15.083M (Jewish Council of the Łódź ghetto), reel 316, list of the names of 184 Jewish craftsmen and women transferred from Sieradz to the Łódź ghetto on August 25, 1942.
16. Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 313, extract from a situation report by the Gestapo in Sieradz, August 31, 1942.
17. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, woj. Łódzkie, vol. 50, pp. 217 and reverse.

SŁUŻEWO

Pre-1939: Służewo, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Służewo, Landgemeinde, Kreis Hermannsbad, Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Służewo, powiat Aleksandrowski, województwo kujawsko-pomorskie, Poland

Służewo is located about 34 kilometers (21 miles) northwest of Włocławek. In 1921, 259 Jews were living in Służewo. In 1939, there were probably about 450 Jews living in the Służewo gmina.¹

German forces occupied Służewo in mid-September 1939. On October 26, 1939, Służewo was officially incorporated into the Reich as part of Landkreis Nessau (later Hermanns-

bad) within Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza. The administrative center of Landkreis Nessau was Aleksandrów Kujawski, which on January 14, 1940, was policed by a force of 45 Gendarmes assisted by 60 auxiliary policemen (Hilfspolizisten), who were probably local ethnic Germans.² During the first months of the occupation, Jews were required to perform unpaid forced labor, and the wearing of distinctive markings by the Jews was introduced. On January 12, 1940, 25 Jewish families were deported from Służewo to Wodzisław in Distrikt Radom in the Generalgouvernement.³

There are conflicting reports regarding the existence of a separate “Jewish residential area” (open ghetto) in Służewo. Whereas German Gendarmerie reports for Kreis Hermannsbad repeatedly state that no formal ghettos had been established in the Kreis,⁴ some secondary sources, including Czesław Pilichowski et al. (*Obozy hitlerowskie*), *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, and Kowski and Opióła, report the existence of an open ghetto in Służewo, which was established in 1940. This probably reflected the eviction of Jews from certain parts of the village, which forced them to move in with other Jewish families, resulting in overcrowded conditions.

At the end of February 1941, there were more than 100 Jews living in Służewo. These Jews were being used by the local administration for demolishing buildings and cleaning streets. Some of the Jews were also employed as artisans. The Jews had to pay half of their wages to the local administration.⁵

In March 1941, or around that time, 22 Jewish youths were deported from Służewo to a labor camp in Janików.⁶ A Gendarmerie report from the end of May 1941 noted that there had been around 100 Jews residing in Służewo, but with the exception of the female Jews, those men incapable of work, and the still-needed artisans, the rest recently had been sent away for forced labor (*Arbeitseinsatz*). The female Jews were being used for cleaning and clearing up work locally. By October the number of Jews in Służewo reportedly had been reduced to only 25 or 30 people, composed of women and old men not able to work, as well as a few craftsmen.⁷ The men and women capable of work had been sent to a labor camp in Mogilno to work on road construction. The Jews were wearing the Star of David and obeying official regulations.⁸

In the first months of 1942, it appears that some of those Jews sent on work deployments may have returned to Służewo. On April 16, 1942, all the remaining Jewish inhabitants of Służewo, 78 people, were rounded up with the assistance of the German Gendarmerie and held in an empty church building for several days. From here they were then deported by truck to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were all killed by asphyxiation.⁹

Only one Jew, Józef Gut, is known to have returned to Służewo after the war.¹⁰

SOURCES The existence of an open ghetto in Służewo is mentioned in the following secondary sources: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 458; Tomasz Kowski and Monika Opióła, *Gminy żydowskie pogranicza*

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Wielkopolski, Mazowsza, Małopolski i Śląska w latach 1918–1942 (Toruń: Wydawn. Adam Marszałek, 2008), pp. 254–255; Danuta Dąbrowska, “Zagłada skupisk żydowskich w ‘Kraju Warty’ w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955):167; Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), p. 333; and Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1203.

Primary sources regarding the persecution and murder of the Jews in Służewo include: BA-L (Polen Ordner 358, p. 38); IPN (kolekcja “ob,” sygn. 177, and library, sygn. 6582); and USHMM (RG-15.013M).

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NOTES

1. BA-L, Polen Ordner 358, p. 38.
2. USHMM, RG-15.013M (Records of the Gendarmerie Kreis Hermannsbud), reel 1, file 4, p. 19, Gend. Kreis Alexandrow, January 14, 1940.
3. BA-L, Polen Ordner 358, p. 38; and USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1115 (Wodzisław), p. 1, and 211/1117, p. 7.
4. See, e.g., USHMM, RG-15.013M, reel 2, file 6, p. 11, Gendarmeriekreis Hermannsbud report, January 5, 1941, and pp. 95–96, Gend.-Abt. Alexandrow report, November 24, 1941.
5. *Ibid.*, reel 2, file 5, p. 42, Gend.-Abt. Alexandrow report, February 28, 1941.
6. BA-L, Polen Ordner 358, p. 38.
7. USHMM, RG-15.013M, reel 2, file 6, pp. 18, 81, Gend.-Abt. Alexandrow reports, May 28 and October 23, 1941.
8. *Ibid.*, reel 2, file 6, pp. 95–96, Gend.-Abt. Alexandrow report, November 24, 1941.
9. *Ibid.*, reel 2, file 7, Gendarmerie Kreis Hermannsbud an den Kommandeur der Gendarmerie bei dem Regierungspräsidenten in Hohensalza, April 23, 1942; and APL, Gettoverwaltung 1746, as cited by Dąbrowska, “Zagłada skupisk,” p. 167.
10. BA-L, Polen Ordner 358, p. 38.

SOMPOLNO

Pre-1939: Sompolno, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Deutschen Ecke, Kreis Warthbrücken, Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Sompolno, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Sompolno is located about 27 kilometers (14.5 miles) northeast of Konin. On September 1, 1939, it is estimated that probably around 1,500 Jews were living in the town.

One week after the outbreak of war on September 1, German troops entered Sompolno. The persecution of the Jews began immediately, with random beatings at the hands of German soldiers and local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). On the first day of the occupation, Jews over the age of 15 were ordered to assemble in the town square. A Gestapo officer proclaimed: “Accursed Jews, your days of glory are over!” He warned that the punishment for disobedience of

any German order would be death. The officer told the Jews to run home, which gave the soldiers an excuse to beat them for “trying to escape.” Each day brought new decrees. The synagogue and prayer halls were turned into warehouses. Children were forbidden to go to school. Within a short time, most Jewish shops were looted and shut down. Germans and local criminals entered private homes and stole whatever they liked. Life came to a standstill as the Jews huddled in their apartments.¹

After recovering from the initial shock, many Jews hid whatever was left of their goods and valuables within their homes. The Germans conducted periodic searches, sometimes tearing out the walls to find hidden articles. The “criminals” who concealed them were sent to Gestapo headquarters, where they were lashed 20 to 100 times on their bare backs.²

The Germans appointed a three-man committee (Judenrat) to convey their orders and decrees to the Jewish population. From time to time a collective “fine” was imposed on the community, which the Judenrat was forced to extort from the Jews. Everyone was required to wear the yellow patch with a Jewish Star on the chest and back. Jews were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks and were confined to their homes after 8:00 p.m. The Judenrat had to provide a daily quota of 50 people for harsh and filthy forced labor. Some were sent to work in the



Jewish men in Sompolno wearing identification tags await removal from the town, July 1941.

USHMM WS #77547, COURTESY OF LEE BERENDT, YAFFA ELIACH COLLECTION MJH/CHS

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

homes of ethnic Germans or to sweep courtyards, clean toilets, or chop wood—always with the intent of abusing the Jews and amusing the local population. Sometimes Jews were ordered to bring Jewish books to the town square and burn them. On one occasion the Germans organized a “party” at which Jews were forced to spread Torah scrolls on the ground and dance on them.

Sometimes Gestapo men from other places came to organize a local pogrom. On one such occasion, remembered as “Black Wednesday,” there was a full day of incitement, cruelty, and abuse. People were dragged out of their apartments to “entertain” the local populace. One man was forced to run a gauntlet by turning somersaults through the mud. Another was caught hiding three eggs in his house; they were thrown in his face and splattered on his body. Still another was forced to lean out of a window and bark like a dog for over an hour. The local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), who seemingly had good relations with Jews before the war, were among the chief instigators of this abuse.³

The Germans may have intended to make life so unbearable that Jews would break down and take their own lives. Nevertheless, there was not a single instance of suicide during the occupation. The death rate among the elderly rose significantly, but the desire to live persisted, and the hopes for a miracle never ceased. There were occasional reports of German military defeats, but at this time most proved unfortunately to be false. The Jewish community in Sompolno had almost no contacts with neighboring towns.

Personal possessions large and small were sold to local ethnic Germans to get money to buy food from farmers—potatoes, dairy products, and grain to grind for bread. Jews who engaged in such transactions did so at the risk of severe punishment. Tailors, shoemakers, and other artisans were allowed to make and sell their products.⁴

A sealed-off area of settlement did not exist in Sompolno. But in 1940 most of the Jews were ordered to leave their apartments and crowd together, with two to three other families per apartment, on specific streets on the edge of town. The Judenrat oversaw these arrangements, and their decisions could not be appealed. As noted above, the movement of the Jews was limited to certain hours of the day. These oppressive living conditions have been viewed by some historians as establishing a form of open ghetto.⁵

The children suffered a harsh fate, their lives disrupted by malnutrition, overcrowding, and closed schools. It was dangerous even to take a child for a walk. During the 2.5 years under occupation, there were no reports of births among the Jews of Sompolno. For over 18 months, an underground school operated for children aged 7 to 11. Three groups of 10 slipped into a private home three times a week for instruction. The classes continued until just before the expulsion in February 1942. Only one child (the teacher’s daughter) survived the war.⁶

Soon after the start of the occupation, the Germans demanded a population count of the Jewish community, which then numbered about 1,200. There were, in addition, a few

refugee families who arrived from the vicinity of Poznań. Five young people are known to have slipped across the border to the Soviet zone of occupation. In 1941, on three occasions, the Germans demanded young men and women for transport to labor camps in Germany. About 150 men and 50 women were sent away. After considering these figures and the high mortality rate, probably about 1,000 people remained in Sompolno at the time of the expulsion.

There were no partial evacuations from Sompolno to ghettos in the large cities. Despite the deteriorating conditions, families were able to stay together and maintain a semblance of community. There were occasionally secret Saturday morning Sabbath services. Some people found solace in the quiet study of traditional Jewish texts. For months on end, people slept in their clothes with a small bundle at their side, based on the assumption that they could be removed from the town at a moment’s notice. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, there was a flickering spark of optimism that this might mean a turn for the better, but the dispiriting news of the rapid German advance soon extinguished these hopes.⁷

The liquidation of the Jews in the Koło region stretched out over two months, in which the Jews of Sompolno awaited their fate with dread and uncertainty. According to one account, the Sompolno Jewish community sent out spies to find out what had happened to the Jews of neighboring towns, which were deported successively from the middle of December 1941.⁸ There was almost no place to hide in the area around the town, but a few Jews managed to find their way to other towns, usually by paying a Pole who was willing to risk taking them in a hay wagon for an overnight journey across dark roads.⁹

On February 1, 1942, the town was suddenly swarming with German police. Shortly after midnight, in the early hours of February 2, the Gestapo and policemen broke into Jewish dwellings. They ordered the inhabitants to dress quickly and hurried them onto trucks, which took them to a large wooden garage next to the train station. Over 1,000 people were pushed into the unheated building. A few slipped through the drag-net and found shelter with Polish neighbors, but only a handful survived the war.¹⁰

The people at the train station were sent to the extermination camp in Chełmno. Those Jews who were used to clean out the property from the area where the Jews had been living were transferred to the Łódź ghetto in June 1942.¹¹

SOURCES Published sources on the fate of the Jews of Sompolno under German occupation include the following: Yitzhak Kominkovski, ed., *Dapei ed shel sarid ha-ayarab Sompolno* (Tel Aviv: 1981); Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 161–162; and Tomasz Kawski and Monika Opióła, *Gminy żydowskie pogranicza Wielkopolski, Mazowsza, Małopolski i Śląska w latach 1918–1942* (Toruń: Wydawn. Adam Marszałek, 2008), pp. 254–255.

Relevant documentation includes: AŻIH (Ring I/473).

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NOTES

1. Kominkovski, *Dapei ed shel sarid ba-ayarah Sompolno*, pp. 28–29.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.
5. *Ibid.*; Kawski and Opiola, *Gminy żydowskie pogranicza*, pp. 254–255; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 161–162.
6. Kominkovski, *Dapei ed shel sarid ba-ayarah Sompolno*, p. 32.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 32–34.
8. Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Die zweite Etappe ist der Tod: NS-Ausrottungspolitik gegen polnischen Juden, gesehen mit den Augen der Opfer. Ein historischer Essay und ausgewählte Dokumente aus dem Ringelblum-Archiv 1941–1943* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1993), p. 186.
9. Kominkovski, *Dapei ed shel sarid ba-ayarah Sompolno*, pp. 36–37.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–41.
11. Kawski and Opiola, *Gminy żydowskie pogranicza*, p. 258.

STRYKÓW

Pre-1939: Stryków, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Stryków, Kreis Brzeziny, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Stryków, Łódź województwo, Poland

Stryków is located about 26 kilometers (16 miles) north-northeast of Łódź.

Just prior to World War II, about 2,000 Jews were living in the town. In September 1939, the German army entered Stryków, and 2 Jews were killed. On December 29, 1939, about 1,600 Jews from Stryków were resettled to Główno. Initially, the authorities in Główno did not want to accept them and tried to send them back to Stryków, but the mayor denied them entry so they remained in Główno. In Stryków itself, only 378 Jews remained, composed of laborers employed in



The rabbi of Stryków, wrapped in a tallit, is forced to ride on a wooden cart carrying a sign that reads, "We wanted war." The cart also has a sign, bearing the antisemitic slogan, "The Jews are our misfortune." USHMM WS #24374, COURTESY OF ZIH

the leather factory and some indispensable craftsmen, together with family members who were permitted to stay with them.¹

The Stryków ghetto was established in the spring of 1940. It was located along Kościuszko Street (37-61) and on Browarowa Street. In the north, the ghetto bordered on the Moszczenica River; its entrance was on the south side, on what is now Kościuszko Street. There was also a synagogue in the area of the ghetto. In the fall of 1940, the Germans enclosed the ghetto, surrounding it with wire mesh topped with barbed wire.²

Five to seven policemen (Gendarmes) were in charge of guarding the ghetto. They were recruited from among local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) and were under the command of the ethnic German Oskar Knappe (or Knapczyński), who was a local from Główno and is described by ghetto survivors as a brutal sadist. He frequently entered the ghetto and stole items or beat people. In charge of the civil administration in Stryków was Amtskommissar Steineck, who also was responsible for establishing and equipping the police. Internally, the ghetto was run by a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which consisted of a small number of officials under the Jewish elder Moses Blusztajn. Among the Jewish Police were people named Chmieński and Żużko.³

The ghetto initially held fewer than 400 Jews from Stryków; but the number rose to around 650 due to the arrival of refugees, including some from Zgierz and Łódź. Living conditions in the ghetto were very primitive, and extreme hunger could only be alleviated a little by black market trading with the surrounding Polish population. The ghetto consisted of 12 to 14 wooden or brick single-story buildings. Living and sanitary conditions were horrendous. People were extremely poor, and up to 8 people had to share one room. There was no sewage system in the ghetto; the only water supply was groundwater taken from flat ditches crossing the ghetto area. Due to the poor sanitation and overcrowding, outbreaks of typhus were a common occurrence; one building in the ghetto was reserved for the isolation of inmates suffering from typhus. A Polish physician, Boguchwał Panaś, treated patients in the ghetto. According to his personal recollection, many ghetto residents suffered from typhus, but none of them died.⁴ Witnesses state that a number of people died from starvation, especially children and the elderly. At least 1 Jew, David Majzels, died a violent death: he was shot in December 1941.

Inhabitants of the ghetto were forced to perform various work tasks inside and outside the ghetto. Once the leather factory was closed down, men over the age of 15 were taken out daily by Knappe to dig fish ponds in and around Stryków for 10 hours a day. Knappe would pick on educated Jews by selecting them for manual labor, and he often beat Jews at work until they were bloody. Other inmates worked repairing streets or tearing down old wooden houses to reduce the risk of fire in the town. Twice daily, ghetto residents had to participate in a roll call to ensure that nobody had escaped. One Jew who escaped and was recaptured was shot by Knappe in front of the others as an example.⁵

In April or May 1942, the Germans liquidated the Stryków ghetto. The roughly 300 remaining residents were ordered to gather at a collection point. They were only allowed to take with them what they could carry in their hands. The Germans marched the Jews from Stryków to Brzeziny, killing a number of the weaker Jews on the way. In Brzeziny, they shared the fate of the Jews of that ghetto, which was liquidated on May 19–21, 1942. Most were deported to the Chełmno extermination camp, while those capable of work were transferred to the Łódź ghetto.⁶ Presumably, the ghetto area in Stryków existed until 1943, then the buildings were torn down.

SOURCES Secondary sources include: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), which lists the Stryków ghetto on p. 474; and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 163–164.

The Stryków ghetto is documented in the following archival sources: BA-L (B 162/7774); IPN (collection “Bd,” sygn. 1175, k. 20–11; collection “Ob,” sygn. 177; and Zh. III/31/35/68, getta, województwo Łódzkie); USHMM (RG-15.042M [Akta zakończonych śledztw w sprawach o zbrodnie hitlerowskie]); VHF; and YVA. Additional primary sources are cited in *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 158.

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NOTES

1. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 164.
2. See a number of witness statements in USHMM, RG-15.042M; and also BA-L, B 162/7774 (Investigation of Oskar Knappe).
3. USHMM, RG-15.042M; and BA-L 162/7774.
4. Witness statement of Panaś Boguchwał, USHMM, RG-15.042M.
5. BA-L, B 162/7774 (Investigation of Oskar Knappe), pp. 50–53, statement of Moses Blusztajn, July 17, 1949.
6. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 119; and Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 189, 191, 236.

SZADEK

Pre-1939: Szadek, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Schadek, Landkreis Schieratz, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartbeland; post-1998: Szadek, Łódź województwo, Poland

The town of Szadek is located 37 kilometers (23 miles) west-southwest of Łódź. There were 523 Jews living there in 1921.

Following Szadek's occupation in September 1939, the Germans set up a Judenrat and a Jewish police force. According to survivor Abraham Pick, the Germans dismissed the pre-war Jewish Council and constituted a new one with “tough guys,” who obeyed their orders.

At the end of 1939, the Germans gave permission for Szadek's Jews to remain in the town conditional on the payment of a massive contribution that had to be delivered within three weeks. This sum was so great that many Jews were preparing for their deportation, and some even left before the deadline. In the end, however, the ransom was paid, and those who had left were instructed to return to Szadek.

From the very beginning of the occupation, Jews were forbidden to engage in commerce. The Judenrat conscripted Jews for forced labor, which consisted of cleaning for various German units and offices, manual gravel production for road repairs, and work in agriculture. Some young Jews were also sent to labor camps; name lists were prepared by the Judenrat.¹

In May or June 1940, the German authorities established a ghetto in Szadek for the 410 Jews still living in the town.

Szadek's mayor, Otto Briese of Berlin, was in charge of ghetto affairs. The ghetto was located on two streets (including Wilanów) in the town center. It encompassed approximately 4,000 square meters (almost 1 acre). Poles living on those streets were evicted from their houses.²

The community was given two to three hours to relocate and allowed to take only portable items. Most Jews took straw mattresses and kitchen equipment. According to Pick, the ghetto was initially open and then sealed in the summer of 1940. Survivor Joel Opatut states that the ghetto was fenced and gated.³

Chaim Most chaired a self-help committee established in the ghetto. In July 1940, he issued an urgent appeal to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw for assistance, as the establishment of the ghetto had cut off all contacts with the surrounding villages, from which previously the Jews had earned their income and obtained food. There were 110 Jewish families living in the ghetto, many of which had no further means of subsistence. The Judenrat operated a soup kitchen but needed financial aid to keep it running.⁴

Despite the absence of medical assistance and terrible hygienic conditions, there were no reports of deaths due to contagious diseases. All forced labor was performed outside of the ghetto.⁵

At some time, probably in the summer of 1941, the Judenrat was ordered to deliver 50 young Jews, who were then sent to a labor camp at Rawicz.⁶

In January 1942, Ewa Smietanska managed to escape from the enclosed ghetto and entreated Małgorzata Podeszwa, who knew her parents, to take her in and give her shelter and food. As she could not obtain Aryan papers, Smietanska remained hidden in Podeszwa's house for no remuneration for the remainder of the occupation. Małgorzata was honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations.

The Szadek ghetto was liquidated on August 14, 1942. All the inhabitants were deported to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were gassed on arrival.⁷

SOURCES The ghetto in Szadek is mentioned by Aleksander Pakentregger, “Polityka władz niemieckich tzw. Kraju Warty

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wobec Żydów,” *BŻIH*, no. 4 (1977): 39; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 482–483; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1274; and Shmuel Krakowski and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust—Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), 2:623.

Archival information on the Szadek ghetto includes: AŻIH (210/669 [AJDC]); USHMM (RG-15.019M [ASG]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); and VHF (# 8829, 23970, 32394).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 32394, testimony of Max Blum, 1997; and # 23970, testimony of Abraham Pick, 1996.
2. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), file 218 (Kwestionariusz o obozach, Szadek).
3. VHF, # 8829, testimony of Joel Opatut, 1996; # 32394; and # 23970.
4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/669 (Szadek), p. 2. A list of 53 heads of families inhabiting the Szadek ghetto is available in RG-15.019M (ASG), file 218.
5. VHF, # 23970; USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), file 218.
6. VHF, # 32394; # 23970.
7. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), file 218.

TULISZKÓW

Pre-1939: Tuliszków, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Liebstädt, Kreis Turek, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Tuliszków, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Tuliszków is located 88 kilometers (55 miles) west-northwest of Łódź. In 1921, the Jewish population numbered 260 out of a total population of 2,358, comprised mostly of Poles and Germans.

Within two weeks after the outbreak of the war on September 1, 1939, the German army had occupied Tuliszków. On the first day of the occupation, the Germans forced the Jews to stand in the marketplace with their hands in the air, while they searched the houses for weapons. Some Jews were abused and had their beards torn out. A number of people decided to flee the town, but most returned shortly afterwards. Poles offering resistance shot a group of 35 Germans from the Poznań region, and Jews from Tuliszków were forced to bury the bodies. However, thanks to the intervention of the ethnic German mayor Wilhelm Ants, no reprisals were taken against the Jews.¹

Soon Jews over the age of 10 were rounded up for forced labor, repairing the roads and pulling out grass by hand. The Jews had to endure abuse, forced contributions, the plunder of their property, and restrictions regarding their freedom of movement and religious life. By the end of November 1939, a German decree ordered them to wear an armband with a yellow star. The

Germans ordered that records concerning members of the Jewish community be surrendered. Then at the end of December 1939, or in early January 1940, all the Jews of Tuliszków were forced to move out of the main streets and into the back alleys formerly occupied mainly by non-Jews, establishing a Jewish quarter or open ghetto. The Jews were given less than an hour to move into their new quarter and were unable to take with them more valuable items, including most of their furniture. The non-Jews who moved out of the area were resettled into the vacated Jewish houses. The Tuliszków ghetto was one of the first to be established in Reichsgau Wartheland.²

The living conditions in the ghetto were harsh. The German administration cut off the electricity supply, and the Jewish families were crowded into a very small area. Shortly after the resettlement into the ghetto, a small Judenrat consisting of Aliezer Hertshik, Jakob Kopolski, and two members of the Jewish Police was established. Personal property such as furniture, furs, and new clothes had to be handed over to the Germans, who distributed these items among the local non-Jewish population.³

In the spring of 1940, a group of more than 50 men was sent without guards to perform forced labor in Rawicz. The men received 900 grams (32 ounces) of bread per week with some sugar and jam. Only once did they receive a small daily payment of 1.5 złoty directly.⁴

The Tuliszków ghetto was in existence for less than 22 months. Around the time of Yom Kippur (October 1, 1941), the majority of the Jews of the Turek Landkreis—including the Jews of Brudzew, Dobra, Turek, Uniejów, Władysławów, and Tuliszków—were resettled into the rural ghetto of Kowale Pańskie (aka Czachulec Nowy).⁵ In total, around 4,000 Jews were moved into this rural ghetto. Only very few skilled workers were excluded from the resettlement and remained in the town of Turek. Subsequently, some Jewish women with their children fled from Kowale Pańskie back to Tuliszków, following the registration of all Jews unfit for work in the fall of 1941. Here they went into hiding with local non-Jewish acquaintances, but most did not survive the war.⁶

The majority of Jews in the Kowale Pańskie ghetto were deported in two transports in December 1941 and July 1942 to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were gassed on arrival. About 200 of those able to work were sent to forced labor camps in the Poznań area in May 1942, and another 112 skilled workers were sent to the Łódź ghetto at the time of the liquidation of the Kowale Pańskie ghetto at the end of July 1942.⁷ Only one survivor from Tuliszków has been registered by the Survivors' Registry of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. As he was also in the Łódź ghetto, he was probably among the skilled workers transferred from Kowale Pańskie. After World War II, only the remnants of the Jewish cemetery in Tuliszków served as a sorry reminder of former Jewish life in the town.

SOURCES A brief outline history of the Jewish community of Tuliszków can be found in: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ba-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communi-*

ties: *Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 123. The transfer of the Jews from Tuliszków to the Kowale Pańskie ghetto is mentioned in *Sefer zikaron li-kebilat Turek v'eli-kedosh'eha* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Turek be-Yisrael, 1982), pp. 350–351.

Among very few archival records with information relevant to the Tuliszków ghetto, see AŻIH (301/2516; and Ring I/585).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2516, testimony of Nachum Zajf.
2. Ibid.; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 123.
3. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 123.
4. AŻIH, 301/2516.
5. Ibid.; and *Sefer zikaron li-kebilat Turek*, pp. 350–351—both give the date as Yom Kippur 1940. AŻIH, 301/2243, testimony of Dawid Jakubowicz, dates the establishment of the ghetto on October 20, 1940, stating there were about 4,250 residents. Most other sources—e.g., USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, woj. poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 432 and reverse; and Czesław Kazimierz Łuczak, “Extermination of Population of Turek District during the Time of Nazi Occupation,” part of his master’s thesis titled “Nazi Occupation in the Turek District during the Years 1939–1945” (Gdansk University, 1972)—date the establishment in August to October 1941.
6. AŻIH, 301/2516.
7. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 233. Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 446, gives the figure of 89 Jews sent to the Łódź ghetto from Kowale Pańskie.

TUREK

Pre-1939: Turek, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: center of Kreis Turek, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Turek is located about 75 kilometers (47 miles) west-northwest of Łódź. The Jewish population of Turek was 2,678 people in 1921, comprising more than 25 percent of the town’s total population, which then exceeded 8,000 people. By the outbreak of World War II, there were about 2,700 Jews living in Turek.

Immediately after German occupation, the maltreatment of Jews began: the Germans confiscated Jewish property, and they seized Jews off the streets for forced labor, especially to clean the streets, to clear rubble, and to repair wartime damage to roads and bridges. Sometimes the Jews were beaten and humiliated during this work. In the first months of the occupation, the synagogue was set on fire and partially destroyed. Probably in October 1939, German security forces shot 15 Jewish men for unknown reasons.¹ In November 1939, about

600 men from Turek were gathered in the synagogue and then forcibly deported to Bochnia near Kraków. In January or February 1940, the first local resettlement of the Jews took place when most were concentrated in one of their traditional areas, along the “Breite Gas” and “Schmaler Gas.” Because of the worsening situation, a number of Jews left Turek, seeking shelter in Warsaw, and some even went to the Soviet-occupied zone in eastern Poland. In 1940, there were only about 1,750 Jews remaining in Turek.²

According to Michael Alberti, the process of creating a ghetto in Turek stretched over several months, beginning in the spring of 1940. One of the main problems was a lack of sufficient space. Many buildings had become uninhabitable due to the war, and initially there was nowhere for the authorities to relocate about 150 Polish families who still lived in the designated ghetto area. As a result, not all the Jews could be moved into the ghetto at once, and therefore the Germans considered even resettling the remaining Jews into the countryside. As Turek was the seat of the Landratsamt and other regional authorities, all available living space in the town was taken up by the demands of newly arriving German administrative personnel.³ One solution to the shortage of space was the resettlement of Jews and Poles, but this proceeded only very slowly. The establishment of the Turek ghetto, according to Alberti, was completed only in the fall of 1940 (October). But according to other sources the ghetto may have been fenced in with barbed wire earlier. Despite the enclosure of the ghetto, inmates were still able to enter and leave it, enabling them to sell property in exchange for food.⁴ Alberti, however, states that the ghetto was never completely sealed and that the Schutzpolizei only patrolled around the perimeter of the ghetto. There was insufficient personnel to guard the ghetto continually. Alberti also states that the German administration in Reichsgau Wartheland never issued a clear order to shoot Jews found outside the ghetto. Nevertheless, the standard “response” in such cases generally was to shoot any Jews who attempted to leave the ghetto.⁵

Jews leaving the ghetto were not the only problem the German authorities faced. One of their main concerns was those Jews in the ghetto who were incapable of work. Constantly, able-bodied Jews were rounded up and taken to forced labor camps, with the result that increasingly only elderly and sick Jews remained behind in the Turek ghetto. The German authorities became concerned that they would have to support these Jews using public funds—something they wanted to avoid if at all possible.⁶

Living conditions in the ghetto were overcrowded and unsanitary, with only limited supplies of food. Most probably, the head of the Gestapo post (Aussendienststelle) for the Turek Kreis, Kurt Dörfel, and an unnamed employee of the local German labor office were in charge of the ghetto.⁷ According to official records collected by the Polish Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes, the ghetto held about 5,000 people from the town of Turek and the neighboring villages,⁸ but probably the actual number of ghetto inmates was less. Many Jews suffered from malnutrition, and therefore the

Judenrat, headed by Herszel Żymanowoda and his assistants Abram Bikowski and Haim Leib Eliaz, set up a soup kitchen and other institutions of self-help. The Germans also initiated the creation of a Jewish police force, under the command of Mordechai Strykowski.⁹

The situation deteriorated in the summer and fall of 1941, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union. More and more men were rounded up during raids on the ghetto and sent to forced labor camps in the Poznań area. By the end of September or in early October 1941, the Jews of the Turek ghetto were resettled into the rural ghetto in the Kowale Pańskie (Czachulec Nowy) region, just south of Turek. About 4,000 Jews from towns and villages in the Turek region—Brudzew, Dobra, Turek, Tuliszków, Uniejów, and Władysławów—were concentrated here in about 16 hamlets in the countryside. In Turek itself, there remained only a few skilled workers needed by the German authorities. Most probably, these Jews were finally deported to Łódź in the summer of 1942, when the Turek ghetto ceased to exist.

A few Jews from Turek managed to survive in the labor and concentration camps, in the Łódź ghetto, or in hiding. One official estimate put the figure at only 26 for the entire Turek powiat. This estimate is probably too low, but the number of survivors was probably still less than 1 percent in total.¹⁰

SOURCES The Turek ghetto is mentioned in a number of publications, including the following: *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 163; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 531; and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 130–131. Key information on the establishment of the ghetto can be found in Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 195–197. More information on Turek, its Jewish community, and the ghetto can be found in Eliezer Esterin, ed., *Turek Sefer Zikaron le-kehillat Turek ve-li-kedosbeha* (Tel Aviv: The Turek Organization in Israel, 1982), especially the articles by J. Seiffe, “The History of Turek,” Shmuel Glubah, “Yidn in Turek in der Tseyt fun der Nazisher Okupatsie,” and Eliezer Orbach and Iccak Orbach, “In Those Dreadful Days”; see also Sz. Gilboa, “Di Din Torah,” *Fun Letstn Hurbn* 6 (1947). Additional information can be found in: Czesław Kazimierz Łuczak, “Extermination of Population of Turek District during the Time of Nazi Occupation,” part of his master’s thesis titled “Nazi Occupation in the Turek District during the Years 1939–1945” (Gdansk University, 1972).

Information on the Turek ghetto is located in the following archives: BA-BL (N 2323/19); CAHJP (HM 7526, HM 8120, and HM 8200); CZA (S.5-1707, S.5-1796, and S.5-1801); IPN (70/710 [SDHAK], file 36; kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177; Zh III/31/35/68, getta, woj. poznańskie; and OKŁ, Ds 438/67, p. 13); USHMM (RG-15.019M, RG-15.015M, and RG-15.040M); VHF (# 7067, 9518, 19603, 21725, 23903); and YVA (M-1/E/759 and O-3/3507).

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NOTES

1. Orbach and Orbach, “In Those Dreadful Days,” p. 316; Łuczak, “Extermination of Population of Turek,” p. 10.
2. Glubah, “Yidn in Turek,” pp. 343–344; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, pp. 130–131.
3. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, pp. 195–197. The author cites a situation report by the SD-Hauptausstelle Kalisch, dated May 1940, located in IPN, 70/710 (Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers-SS, SD-Abschnitt Litzmannstadt, Hauptausstelle Kalisch [SDHAK]), file 36, pp. 107–125, here p. 109. Glubah, “Yidn in Turek,” p. 344, notes that shortly after Pesach 1940, German Gendarmes marked the word “Jew” with chalk on those Jewish houses outside the ghetto.
4. Orbach and Orbach, “In Those Dreadful Days,” p. 318. Łuczak, “Extermination of Population of Turek,” p. 10, dates the establishment of the ghetto as late as December 1940. VHF, # 21725, testimony of Jacob Fogel, and # 7067, testimony of Bronai Roslawowski, both mention the existence of a barbed-wire fence. Roslawowski also describes leaving the ghetto to barter for food.
5. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 209.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 380, quoting Landrat Turek to Reichsstatthalter Posen, Übersicht über die Struktur des Kreises, dated September 9, 1941, in BA-BL, N 2323/19, pp. 73–113, here pp. 111–112.
7. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 211. Glubah, “Yidn in Turek,” p. 348, notes that Dörfel used to check the accounts of the Jewish Council.
8. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 531.
9. Glubah, “Yidn in Turek,” p. 342.
10. Łuczak, “Extermination of Population of Turek,” p. 15.

UNIEJÓW

Pre-1939: Uniejów, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Uniejow, Kreis Turek, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Uniejów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Uniejów was an agricultural center not far from Turek, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) west-northwest of Łódź, situated on the Warta River. In 1921 there were 1,100 Jews living there, out of a total population of 3,657.

Following an aerial bombardment by the Luftwaffe at the time of the German invasion on September 1, 1939, German forces captured Uniejów about one week later. In the first days of the occupation, German forces shot a number of Poles in the town.¹ The temporary German military administration soon introduced discriminatory decrees against the Jewish population. Jews were kidnapped off the streets for forced labor, which involved road construction and repairing bridges. As they performed this physically demanding labor, they were also cruelly beaten. Jewish shops were robbed, and many Jewish families were thrown out of their apartments in order to make way for German soldiers and local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). In December 1939, the Jews were ordered to wear a yellow patch. Around this time the German authorities

established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) to act as an intermediary for them with the Jewish population.²

In 1940, the Jewish community was forcibly moved into a single neighborhood on a side street in the old part of town. The Jews were able to take most of their property with them, but they had to live in very cramped and squalid conditions.³ Although this remained an open ghetto until June 1941,⁴ there was a strict curfew, and Jews were forbidden to leave the area after a certain hour. After this date, the area of the ghetto was reduced, enclosed by a fence, and guarded by ethnic Germans.⁵ The Germans crammed 491 Jews into four buildings under very poor sanitary conditions.⁶ The ghetto inmates suffered from hunger and disease, and there was no school for the children. After the initial establishment of the open ghetto in 1940, able-bodied Jewish men and youths were rounded up and sent to labor camps in the area of Poznań, leaving mainly women, children, and the elderly behind in Uniejów. At first the families were able to send food parcels to the men in the labor camps, but soon all contact with them became impossible. Some of the forced laborers were subsequently transferred to the Auschwitz concentration camp.⁷

The Uniejów ghetto existed only for a few months. On October 10, 1941, all the Jews of the Uniejów ghetto—together with Jews from other towns in Kreis Turek—were resettled into the rural ghetto of Kowale Pańskie (Czachulec Nowy). The Jews from Uniejów were mostly housed in the village of Dzierzbotki, which was 1 of 16 hamlets in the rural ghetto. Only six cottages were allotted to them, which provided shelter for only a few families. Most of the others had to camp out in the open fields. Among the 10 Jews who were hanged in the Kowale Pańskie ghetto on June 23, 1942, were 2 men from Uniejów.⁸

At the time of the liquidation of the Kowale Pańskie ghetto on July 20, 1942, a few Jews from Uniejów were among approximately 100 skilled workers selected to be sent to the Łódź ghetto.⁹ The majority of Jews from Uniejów were sent to the Chełmno extermination camp in December 1941 or July 1942, where they were gassed on arrival. During the liquidation Aktion in July, one man from Uniejów, Lenczicki, was forced to dig his own grave and was then shot along with his child. Another man from Uniejów, Yaakov Waldman, managed to flee. He escaped into the forest and joined the partisans. On September 1, 1945, he was killed in the Turek Forest by men in the Polish underground.¹⁰

SOURCES The Uniejów ghetto is mentioned in BŻIH, nos. 13–14 (1955): 1631; A. Eisenbach, *Hitlerowska Polityka zagłady Żydów* (Warsaw, 1961), p. 226; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 535. For further information, see also Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 202–203, 205, 210; Zbigniew Piechota, “Likwidacja skupisk Żydowskich w byłych powiatach tureckim i kolskim” (a MSS prepared for the conference “W 45 rocznicę zagłady skupisk żydowskich w Kraju

Warty,” Zduńska Wola, October 23, 1987), p. 9; Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 45–47; and Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 113, 429.

There are only a few archival records available concerning the Uniejów ghetto. These include: AŻIH (210/700; Ring I/585); IPN (kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177); VHF (# 9416 and 32551); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo konińskie* (Warsaw, 1981), pp. 59–61.

2. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 45–47.

3. VHF, # 32551, testimony of Rachele Nelkin; and # 9416, testimony of Josef Kiersz.

4. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 202.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 205, 210.

6. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 535.

7. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 45–47; VHF, # 32551; and # 9416.

8. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 45–47; VHF, # 32551; and Czesław Kazimierz Łuczak, “Extermination of Population of Turek District during the Time of Nazi Occupation,” part of his master’s thesis titled “Nazi Occupation in the Turek District during the Years 1939–1945” (Gdansk University, 1972), p. 11.

9. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 233, gives the figure of 112 Jews sent to the Łódź ghetto from Kowale Pańskie. Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, p. 446, gives only 89 as the number.

10. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 45–47.

WARTA

Pre-1939: Warta (Yiddish: Dvart), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Sieradz, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Warta is located about 57 kilometers (35.5 miles) west of Łódź. In 1921, Jews numbered 2,025 out of 4,108 inhabitants of Warta, comprising almost 50 percent of the town’s population.

When the war broke out in 1939, many Jews fled from the town, which is only 60 kilometers (37 miles) from the German border. The fighting destroyed much of the town, including the synagogue and much of the rest of the Jewish quarter. Upon

returning, many Jews found their property in ruins. Moreover, the Germans soon began the typical pattern of abuse, forced labor, and expropriation, with the coerced cooperation of the Jewish Council (Judenrat).

In November or December 1939, plans were announced to evacuate all of Warta's Jews to the Lublin area. Warta was to be annexed to the Reich, and therefore the new German authorities intended to make it *judenfrei* (free of Jews). After a few days of preparation, all the Jews were taken to the train station, but they were released the next day. The initial deportation plans were not implemented.

A ghetto was established in February 1940 in the traditional Jewish area of the town. A number of Jews had to relocate into this mostly poor area, and they were unable to bring all of their possessions, especially furniture, with them. The ghetto covered four streets, in an area approximately 250 meters by 200 meters (273 yards by 219 yards). Among the ghetto inhabitants there was also a small group of Jews from Germany, about 20 people.¹ Some sources say the ghetto was enclosed; others, that it was open, with some Polish families living within its boundaries. Jewish Police guarded the ghetto internally, but entering and leaving the ghetto remained relatively easy for both Poles and Jews. This was important, since the Judenrat had negotiated with the German authorities for Jewish workshops to be set up to produce things for the Germans. Tailors, shoemakers, and furriers began to work for the Germans, probably about 250 people in total, and part of their income was used to rebuild the town of Warta. For the Jews, these workshops meant not only a small source of income, but increasingly they became a means of survival. Additional income came from Poles and their private orders, for which the Jews received payment in cash or in kind, enabling them to buy groceries.

A letter from the Warta Jewish committee addressed to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw, written at the end of December 1940, stated that there were about 1,750 Jews in the town, among them Jews who had fled or been evicted from neighboring towns, as well as some German families. (All told, as many as 2,400 Jews may have passed through the ghetto.) There was no soup kitchen or hospital to take care of Jews in need. As the Warta Jewish committee wrote, so far the Jewish owners of smaller shops had been able to make a meager living. But by January 1, 1941, the Germans planned to take away their business licenses, which would cause the economic situation of the Jewish community to deteriorate further.² The ghetto was overcrowded and had terrible hygienic conditions. As there was no pharmacy inside the ghetto, Minia Jay, who worked outside the ghetto looking after the two-year-old child of the Gendarmerie Meister, used to buy drugs regularly outside the ghetto and bring them back to the ghetto.³

Early on, the mayor of Warta employed Jewish youths from the ghetto on farms in and around Warta, where they experienced reasonable working conditions. But increasingly the young workers were sent to forced labor camps in the Poznań area. A first transport of prisoners left the town in January

1941. Due to these drafts for forced labor, the ghetto population declined significantly.

In the fall of 1941, a few Jews classified as unfit for work in the nearby rural ghetto of Kowale Pańskie fled to the Warta ghetto, where the local Jews welcomed them. However, many returned shortly afterwards, as the deportation from Kowale Pańskie to the extermination camp in Chełmno of those deemed unfit did not take place until December.⁴

During 1941, the Warta Jews had learned about the terrible conditions in the Poznań forced labor camps and tried to provide aid by sending food packages and clothing to their relatives there. It was forbidden by the Germans to send any bread, and on April 14, 1942, 10 or 11 Jews were hanged publicly by the Germans, apparently for breaking this rule. Among those executed were London, the chairman of the Judenrat, the Warta rabbi, Eliahu Laskowsky, and other members of the Judenrat. Members of the Jewish Police were forced to build the scaffold and carry out the hangings. All Jews had to attend the execution. During another incident (time and circumstances are unknown) 9 women from the Warta ghetto were taken to Włyń and shot there.⁵

In mid-August 1942, the Central Armament Office of the Wehrmacht wrote to the Statthalter of the Wartheland, Arthur Greiser, urging him to postpone the planned "resettlement" of Jewish laborers from the C. Klose ammunition factory in Warta until substitutes had been found. Nevertheless, the German authorities proceeded with the liquidation of the ghetto on August 22–25, 1942.

First the inhabitants of the ghetto were ordered to gather at the sports field, and from there they were taken to a monastery and a church close to the ghetto, where they were held for three days with nothing to eat and very little to drink. At least 16 elderly and sick people who could not be moved were shot on the spot during the deportation Aktion and buried in a mass grave at the local cemetery. Some people also died while confined in the church. On the third day, police and SS men arrived and started to deport the Jews by truck. About 1,000 of the ghetto's inhabitants were sent to the Chełmno extermination camp, and 447 of the younger and stronger Jews were selected and sent to the Łódź ghetto, where they continued to work for the Germans. (Another source in the same collection of records states that the number of Jews taken to the Łódź ghetto was much smaller: 97 men and 60 women on August 24, 1942; and 76 men on August 25, 1942.)⁶

The Warta ghetto was dismantled after the inhabitants had been deported. Most of the furniture was given to the local population, and all other property was taken over by the Łódź Gestapo. The names of only two possible perpetrators are mentioned in the sources examined: Herbert Kühne, who was a factory manager, and Heinrich Schmieding. Their fate is unknown.

SOURCES The most comprehensive published source on Jewish life in Warta is Eliezer Astrin, ed., *Sefer d'vart* (Tel Aviv: Artzi Press, D'Vart Society, 1974). The Warta ghetto is described briefly in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein,

eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 89–92. Other publications mentioning the Warta ghetto include: Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 193, 207; Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbhof: Der Beginn der “Endlösung”* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), pp. 91–92; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 556–557; and *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 131, 162.

Documentation on the Warta ghetto can be found in the following archives: APŁ (Ds. 22/67, 1205, p. 1, I 43); BA-L (203 AR-Z 161/67, SB V/I); IPN (e.g., ZH III/31/35/68 [collection Łódź województwo]; ASG, sygn. 51, vol. 2, p. 222; ASG, kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177; and ASG, vol. 3, pp. 489–490); OKŚZpNPEŁdz (Ds. 439/67); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC], 210/704; and RG-15.042M [Akta zakończonych śledztw w sprawach o zbrodnie hitlerowskie]); VHF (e.g., # 23350, 37820); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.042M; and VHF, # 23350, testimony of Minia Jay.

2. USHMM, Acc. 1999.A.0154, 210/704: letter of the Warta Jewish Committee to AJDC Warsaw (most likely around December 20, 1940).

3. VHF, # 23350.

4. *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek veli-kedoshaba* (Tel Aviv: Ir-gun yots’e Turek be-Yisrael, 1982), p. 353.

5. Astrin, *Sefer d’vart*, pp. 375–376; and VHF, # 23350. On Eliahu Laskowsky, see Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbat”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), p. 423.

6. This is according to USHMM, RG-15.042 M, referring to IPN, ASG, vol. 2, p. 222. The second source is APŁ, Ds. 22/67, 1205, p. 1, I 43.

WIDAWA

Pre-1939: Widawa, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Lask, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Widawa is located 56 kilometers (35 miles) southwest of Łódź near Bełchatów. In 1921, Jews numbered 773 out of a total population of 2,209, comprising 35 percent of Widawa’s population.

On the eve of war in 1939, the number of Jews living in Widawa was similar to that in 1921. To escape from the German occupation, many Jews fled Widawa, moving to other towns like Bełchatów or Zduńska Wola nearby or fleeing further to the east. At the same time, a number of Jewish refugees from other towns sought refuge in Widawa. One of the first victims of the war was the last rabbi of Widawa, Rabbi Abra-

ham Mordechaj Maroko, who in September 1939 was killed because he refused to burn the Torah scrolls of the synagogue.¹ In August 1940, the Jewish Council (Judenrat) of Widawa approached the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw for help. At that time, 90 Jewish families (430 Jews) lived in Widawa, and due to the effects of Nazi policies, they had lost almost all of their property. The scant documentation does not indicate whether any support was in fact received from the AJDC in Warsaw.² It is likely that at some time before the summer of 1942 the Germans rounded up able-bodied Jews from Widawa and sent them to the Poznań region for forced labor.

According to a report by the Office of Information and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Polish Underground Army (Armia Krajowa) dated December 1941, an open ghetto had been established in Widawa by the fall of 1941, which contained about 100 Jewish families. The same report indicates that on November 14, 1941, about 25 families were transferred to the ghetto in Bełchatów.³ The article in *Pinkas ha-kehillot* also mentions the existence of an open ghetto in Widawa.⁴

In the absence of survivor testimony, it is difficult to ascertain the precise fate of the remaining Jews of Widawa. As no records have been located concerning the deportation of Jews directly from Widawa to the Chełmno extermination camp, it seems likely that the Jews were transferred first to the nearby ghettos of Łask, Żelów, or Bełchatów, where some may have been selected to work in the Łódź ghetto before the majority were sent on to Chełmno in August 1942 to be murdered by asphyxiation.⁵ In early September 1942, the Gestapo in Łódź reported that Kreis Lask had been cleared of Jews.⁶

SOURCES A brief article on the Jewish community of Widawa can be found in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 94. A brief mention of the ghetto can also be found in: Maria Tyszkowa, “Eksterminacja Żydów w latach 1941–1943. Dokumenty Biura Propagandy i Informacji KG AK w zbiorach biblioteki uniwersytetu warszawskiego, część 1,” *BŻIH*, nos. 2–3 (1992): 35–61.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Widawa during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/711 and Ring I/120); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC] 210/711; Ring I/120); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. See AŻIH, Ring I/120.

2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/711 (Widawa), letter of the Jewish community of Widawa to AJDC Warsaw, August 8, 1940.

3. Tyszkowa, “Eksterminacja żydów w latach 1941–1943,” p. 44.

4. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 94.

5. Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), p. 207.

6. Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chełmno/Kulmbof: Der Beginn der "Endlösung"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), p. 96.

WIELUŃ

Pre-1939: Wieluń, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939-1945: Welungen, center of Kreis Welungen, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Wieluń, Łódź województwo, Poland

Wieluń is located 62 kilometers (39 miles) northwest of Częstochowa in southern Poland, close to the historic border with Silesia. Around the time of Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, there were about 4,200 Jews residing in Wieluń.

Wieluń was among the first Polish towns attacked in the predawn hours of September 1, 1939. The concentrated German aerial bombardment and artillery attack destroyed three quarters of the town, including a synagogue. Thousands were injured and killed; most of the houses were burned down; and masses of people fled, including virtually all the Jews. About half of the Jewish population eventually returned to the town, settling in the rubble of their former homes or on the outskirts of town. Remaining Jewish businesses were taken over by German-appointed trustees (*Treuhänder*), who managed them until their eventual sale to non-Jews. Wieluń was soon annexed to the German Reich. Many Polish citizens were expelled, and ethnic Germans from the Baltic countries were brought in.

From the start of the German occupation, Jewish men were subject to kidnapping for forced labor. They were put to work salvaging the remains of bombed-out houses. The laborers received only a token wage for their work. In the first years of the occupation, hunger was not a factor, since food could be purchased, legally or otherwise, by cash or barter



Group portrait of the male members of the Jakubowicz family wearing yellow stars in the Wieluń ghetto. Pictured are Mr. Jakubowicz [second from right] with his three sons [left to right] Jakub, Mojsze [the photo's donor, now Morris Jacobs], and Henry. All four survived the war. USHMM WS #14296, COURTESY OF MORRIS JACOBS

from the local farmers. In December 1940, there were 4,053 Jews living in Wieluń, including 450 refugees from other places. In March 1941, the authorities in Wieluń established a Jewish residential area (open ghetto) for the Jews around the marketplace, where the Jews lived mainly in derelict old houses and wooden shacks.¹ The area was commonly referred to as the ghetto, but it was not fenced in. Jews were still permitted to move about the entire town with the exception of market days—on Tuesdays, on Fridays, and later, on Sundays as well.² On August 9, 1941, the Germans rounded up a group of Jews in Wieluń and sent them to the Poznań region for forced labor.³ According to one source, several hundred Jews from Wieluń were transferred to the nearby ghetto in the town of Praszka.

In early 1942 (probably on January 12), the German authorities publicly hanged 10 Jews, including 1 woman, allegedly for the illegal slaughter of cattle. This was a traumatic experience that made a deep impression on the Jewish population. Survivor accounts of the incident describe it as a collective punishment, imposed on the entire community. One survivor, Moshe Prager (who dates the event on the holiday of Purim), states that he was among the 10 Jews selected for hanging by lot. He was spared, however, when an elder of the community offered to take his place. This saved Prager's life, but the manner of his survival also caused him lasting anguish and guilt.⁴ Among the victims of German terror during the first half of 1942 was the chairman of the Judenrat, named Lipszyc, and his deputy, who were punished for their refusal to carry out German orders. One source indicates that Lipszyc was among the people hanged, but another report indicates that he was murdered in June 1942 in the office of the Gestapo.

Further forced labor deportations to the area around Poznań took place in the spring of 1942; about 2,000 Jews were sent away. The liquidation of the Wieluń ghetto took place on August 16–22, 1942.⁵ German SS and police forces surrounded the ghetto and drove all the Jews out onto the streets.⁶ A number of Jews were also brought to Wieluń from nearby towns, including Bolesławiec.⁷ About 5,000 Jews were confined together under horrendous conditions in the church building without food or water. A number of Jews, especially the elderly and sick, died of exhaustion in the church or were murdered by the SS in Wieluń. After a week, representatives of the Gestapo and the German Ghetto Administration (*Gettoverwaltung, GV*) in Łódź selected about 900 people (of which about 250 were from Wieluń) for physical labor in the Łódź ghetto. Among them was Szmuel Hecht, who worked in the Łódź ghetto archive prior to his death in 1943. The rest were escorted away by members of the SS-Sonderkommando Kulmhof (Chełmno), assisted by local detachments of the Order Police, and were transported in trucks to the extermination camp in Chełmno, where they were killed using poison gas.⁸

The German Border Police Office (*Grenzpolizeikommissariat*) in Wieluń reported to the head of the Gestapo in Łódź: “[A]t the beginning of August an Aktion against the Jews of Welungen Kreis was started suddenly with the aim of resettling

all of them. Due to the suddenness of the operation, the Jews were rounded up almost without exception, and only a few Jews were able to flee. On completion of the Aktion on August 22, 1942, Kreis Welungen was free of Jews [*judenfrei*].⁹ Following the deportation Aktion, the German police continued to search for Jews in hiding in Wieluń and the surrounding area. Those who were captured were brought back to Wieluń and murdered there.¹⁰ Income from the sale of remaining Jewish property in Kreis Welungen was collected by local officials and paid to the GV in Łódź.¹¹ Subsequently the GV paid for the repair of window panes in the Wieluń church that were damaged during the deportation Aktion.¹²

A few Jewish survivors returned to Wieluń after the war, but most left following the murder of the son of a former Jewish landowner in the nearby village of Wolków, who had tried to claim his inheritance.

SOURCES In preparing this article, reference was made to Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 94–98; and also to the yizkor book edited by Moshe Mendelewitz, *Sefer zikaron le-kehillat Wieluń* (Tel Aviv: Wielun Organization in Israel and the Memorial Book Committee in USA, 1971). Several key German documents are published in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961). The ghetto in Wieluń is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy bitleryjskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 561.

Documents and survivor testimonies on the fate of the Jews of Wieluń can be found in the following archives: APL; BA-L (203 AR-Z 161/67, vol. 11); FVA (# 1400); IPN (ASG, sygn. 22, p. 593); USHMM (RG-02.064*01; and RG-50.002*0011); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. BA-L, ZStL, 203 AR-Z 161/67, vol. 11, p. 3, statement of Franz Eb., June 28, 1971.
2. Mendelewitz, *Sefer zikaron le-kehillat Wieluń*, p. 341.
3. USHMM, RG-50.002*0011, Oral History Interview with David Kempinski, March 9, 1987.
4. See Fritz Bauer Institut Archive, “Das Ghetto in Brzeziny” (8mm film copied from Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, which includes scenes of the execution of 10 ghetto inhabitants in Wieluń on January 12, 1942); Mendelewitz, *Sefer Zikaron le-kehillat Wieluń*, p. 352.
5. Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and District Museum in Konin, 2004), p. 207.
6. Mendelewitz, *Sefer Zikaron le-kehillat Wieluń*, p. 345.
7. USHMM, RG-02.064*01, Louis Brandsdorfer, “The Bleeding Sky—My Mother’s Journey through the Fire,” chap. 3.
8. Mendelewitz, *Sefer Zikaron le-kehillat Wieluń*, pp. 345–346.
9. Excerpt from a situation report by the Grenzpolizei-kommissariat in Welungen to the Head of the Gestapo in

Lodsch, August 31, 1942, published in Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 311.

10. USHMM, RG-02.064*01, Brandsdorfer, “The Bleeding Sky,” chap. 3.

11. Ibid.; Amsttkommissar Landstett, Kreis Welungen, report dated August 21, 1942, published in Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 400.

12. APL, GV, 139/29445, p. 419, GV Litzmannstadt, gez. Biebow, an Luchterhand im Hause, October 20, 1942, as cited by Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 437.

WIERUSZÓW

Pre-1939: Wieruszów, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Wieruschau, Kreis Welungen (Wieluń), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Wieruszów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Wieruszów lies on the Proсна River, 88 kilometers (55 miles) west-northwest of Częstochowa, on the east-west road from Wrocław to Łódź. On the eve of World War II, approximately 2,400 Jews lived in Wieruszów.

In the predawn hours of September 1, 1939, the citizens of Wieruszów were woken by the thunderous sound of bombing and artillery fire that hit nearby Wieluń.¹ Wieruszów also came under heavy fire. Shortly afterwards the bridge over the Proсна River was blown up, and the townspeople were ordered to leave. Many Jews fled, passing through Zduńska Wola (where local Poles denied them entry to the public bomb shelter) and heading towards Łódź and points east. The German army arrived in Wieruszów on September 2 and began their assault on the town, which was set on fire, and on the Jews who remained. Some 24 Jews, whose only mistake was being out on the streets, were shot dead. Shopkeepers were ordered to open their stores, which were plundered by the occupiers as well as by local Poles and ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). Other Jews were rounded up and taken to the railway station. There they witnessed a bonfire of Jewish religious items—prayer shawls, tefillin, and holy books. Then 19 men were taken away to bury the victims of the street murders.² Another 82 men, all dressed in religious garb, were loaded onto trucks and photographed with a sign: “These are the Jews who shot our soldiers.” The Germans held them and others for two months before releasing them.³

The German army ordered all refugees to return to their hometowns. The Jewish population of Wieruszów grew to about 1,700 by the end of 1939. As the refugees trickled back into town, they were appalled by the scene. Most of their homes had been destroyed, and the remaining population was huddled in the ruins. The persecution of the Jews grew increasingly oppressive. They were permitted to be on the streets only between 6:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. On Sundays they were restricted to the morning hours. They were forbidden to walk



View of a street in the Wieruszów ghetto, n.d.
USHMM WS #33539, COURTESY OF GFH



Two sisters, Hinda and Leah Szilit, pose with Leah's daughter in the Wieruszów ghetto, n.d.
USHMM WS #33540, COURTESY OF GFH

on the sidewalks. They were ordered to doff their hats and bow to any German they encountered, even a child. Their possessions were the objects of looting and confiscation.⁴ Jews were forbidden to engage in any form of commerce, and their shops were handed over to local Poles and *Volksdeutsche*. From November 1939, the *Regierungspräsident* in Kalisz, Friedrich Übelhör, ordered Jews to wear distinguishing yellow patches. Later they had to wear a yellow Star of David on their chests and backs.⁵

The Germans sought to impose an orderly and strict regime on the Jews by creating a *Judenrat*. They offered the chairmanship to Mordechai Shmuel Zelikovitch, head of the Jewish Community Council, but he refused to serve. For this insubordination he was sent to a prison camp in Łódź. The position was given to Yossel Yedwab.⁶ The other members included Icha Pankovsky and Chaim Schwarzbart (who survived and contributed a memoir to the *yizkor* book). The *Judenrat*'s first "assignment" was to register the Jews. As in Germany after August 1938, the name "Israel" was attached to every male and "Sara" to every female on the list. Then the *Judenrat* was given only 24 hours to collect and deliver a

"fine" of 25,000 Reichsmark (RM) to German headquarters. After feverish efforts, the committee of three (Yedwab, Pankovsky, and Schwarzbart) delivered the money. The commander accepted it and then, "with a satanic grin," ordered the *Judenrat* to collect another 25,000 RM within 48 hours. The effort failed. With heavy hearts the committee delivered only 15,000 RM, not knowing if they would return alive from German headquarters. The commander gave them a beating.⁷ During the entire occupation there was a relentless search for valuables (money, jewelry, furs, and watches) that the Jews might have hidden away—as was indeed the case.

In September or October 1941, the senior German official (*Amtskommissar*) in Wieruszów established an overcrowded ghetto in the poorest part of town. It was surrounded by barbed wire, and the Jews were forbidden to leave. The Jewish Police enforced the ban. The Jews were ordered to evacuate the former Jewish quarter, and their homes were turned over to Poles. A possible reason for the establishment of the ghetto was the expected arrival of a number of ethnic Germans from Bukovina a few weeks later.

All Jews between 6 and 60—men, women, and children—were ordered to report daily at 6:00 A.M. for forced labor. Some worked for army units stationed in the area, carrying water, shining shoes, and sweeping streets. Others were assigned the task of cleaning up the rubble of destroyed buildings. The salvaged bricks were carefully cleaned, sorted, and packed for shipping to Germany.⁸ The workers were supposed to receive 50 pfennigs a day, but the wages were usually paid by the Judenrat. Yedwab personally oversaw the work assignments to minimize the random kidnappings that had been used to press people into forced labor. The Germans ordered the Jews to destroy Christian religious statues in the town, probably with the intention of further inciting antisemitic sentiment among the local population.

At the beginning of 1941, as the cleanup of the ruins came to an end, the Germans began to send able-bodied men and women to work camps in the region of Poznań. These Jews worked in factories, in agriculture, and also on construction of the main highway from Berlin to Łódź.⁹ Yedwab reportedly warned young people of impending roundups, urging them to hide or flee. The Judenrat sent food parcels (through Polish intermediaries) to the people in the work camps. By the end of 1941 the Jews left in Wieruszów were primarily the sick, the elderly, or the very young. Only a few workers whose skills were deemed essential by the local authorities remained.¹⁰

The liquidation of the ghetto took place between August 11 and August 23, 1942. Military trucks escorted by SS men arrived at the ghetto, which was surrounded by armed troops. The officer in charge was named Schwind. The Jews were marched some 200 meters (219 yards) to the grounds of a local monastery, accompanied by beatings and harassments to hurry them along. A committee of young people was sent back to the ghetto to bring bread and other food. A kitchen was set up in the courtyard of the monastery to prepare and dispense the meals. On the first evening a squad of Germans entered the ghetto and murdered 80 old and sick people who could not make it to the monastery. Over the next two days 104 men were “selected” from the assembly at the monastery and sent for forced labor in the Łódź ghetto. The remaining 800 to 900 people were taken by train to the extermination camp at Chełmno.¹¹

A work crew of Jews from Łódź was sent to collect whatever possessions were left in the Wieruszów ghetto and deliver them to the Germans. The income received from the sale of these items in Kreis Welungen was subsequently credited to the Ghetto Administration (Gettoverwaltung) in Łódź.¹² Then the Germans ordered local Poles to turn over their own apartments and move into the empty Jewish houses.

At the end of the war a few survivors, including some of those sent to Łódź or who had fled to the Soviet Union, returned to Wieruszów. As word reached them about the murder of Jewish returnees by bands of Polish partisans, they left for larger cities or quit Poland altogether.

SOURCES Important for the history of the Jewish community in Wieruszów is the article in Danuta Dabrowska and

Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 98–102; additional information can be found in the personal accounts in the yizkor book, edited by Yehoshua Aybeshits, Avraham Kloshiner, and Yosef Zelkovits, *Wieruszow: Sefer Yizkor* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Wieruszow Book Committee, 1970). The ghetto in Wieruszów is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 561.

Documentation and testimonies regarding the fate of the Jews of Wieruszów during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/1317); BA-L (203 AR-Z 161/67); IPN (ASG, sygn. 51, p. 263); USHMM; VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Aybeshits, Kloshiner, and Zelkovits, *Wieruszow: Sefer Yizkor*, p. 298.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 279–280.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 281–283; AŻIH, 301/1317, testimony of Lejb Bornsztajn.
4. Aybeshits, Kloshiner, and Zelkovits, *Wieruszow: Sefer Yizkor*, p. 298.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 335; *Lodzer Zeitung*, November 16, 1939, published in Isaiah Trunk, *Łódźer Ghetto: A History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2006), p. 18.
6. Aybeshits, Kloshiner, and Zelkovits, *Wieruszow: Sefer Yizkor*, p. 335.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 335.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 302, 315.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 309–311.
12. Amstkommissar Landstett, Kreis Welungen, report dated August 21, 1942, published in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 400.

WŁADYSŁAWÓW

Pre-1939: Władysławów, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Rosterschütz, Kreis Turek, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Władysławów, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Władysławów is located about 82 kilometers (51 miles) west-northwest of Łódź. In 1921, there were 293 Jews living in the village (out of 960 inhabitants in total). Since many Jews from the village tried to move to larger towns or abroad, by 1939 the number of Jews in Władysławów had declined to 115.

Władysławów was occupied by German forces in the first half of September 1939. German soldiers were assisted and supported by the local population in their Aktions against the

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Jews: Jewish property was plundered, and Jews were taken for forced labor in the village. Orthodox Jews were assaulted and had their beards forcibly shaven. By the end of 1939, Jews were forced to wear yellow armbands identifying them as Jews, and they were no longer permitted to leave the village.

According to *Pinkas ha-kehillot*, a ghetto was established in Władysławów in 1940. Food was scarce, so the ghetto inhabitants were forced to leave the ghetto illegally at night to obtain food in nearby villages. On October 20, 1941, on the eve of Yom Kippur, the Jews of Władysławów were deported to the “rural ghetto” (*Dorfghetto*) in the vicinity of Kowale Pańskie. In total, about 4,000 Jews from the Turek area were assembled there.¹

SOURCES Only a few sources exist describing the fate of the Jews of Władysławów. A brief history of the community is available in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 103. Other sources mentioning the fate of the Jewish community in Władysławów include: Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat. The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Stein & Day, 1977), pp. 113, 429; and Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 203.

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NOTE

1. AŻIH, 301/2516, testimony of Nachum Zajf; *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Turek veli-kedosbeba* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Turek be-Yisrael, 1982), pp. 315–319, 350–351; and USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, (ASG) 1939–1945, województwo poznańskie, vol. 54, pp. 432 and verso.

WŁOCLAWEK

Pre-1939: Włocławek, city, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Leslau, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Hohensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Włocławek, województwo kujawsko-pomorskie, Poland

Włocławek is located about 107 kilometers (66.5 miles) north-northwest of Łódź. The Jewish population just before World War II numbered between 10,000 and 14,000 people. Altogether there were some 56,000 residents in Włocławek; therefore, Jews comprised about 20 percent of the total population. The town lies on both banks of the Vistula River, with the majority of Jews residing on the western side where the town center was located.

On September 14, 1939, the German army occupied the town. SA-Sturmbannführer Hans Kramer was appointed as the mayor, and Elliot Hessemayer was his deputy. The ethnic German Max Dunkhorst became “adviser for Jewish affairs,” having been a sports teacher at the Jewish High School and at the Jewish Sports Club in Włocławek before the war. These three men were those most responsible for



A group of four Jews, wearing triangles on their backs, walk along a street in Włocławek, ca. November 1939.

USHMM WS #50402. COURTESY OF IPN

all the Aktions carried out against the Jewish population of the town.¹

The first anti-Jewish measures were introduced shortly after the occupation of the town. On September 24, the Germans burned down both synagogues and arrested 10 Jews who lived nearby as suspected arsonists. At the same time, Jews who had illegally gathered for prayer were shot by the SS. (Among the perpetrators were SS-Standartenführer Paul Nostitz and other members of the 2nd SS-Totenkopfstandarte. The case was tried at Nürnberg after the war.) More than 800 Jews were taken as hostages and were first jailed in the town but were later imprisoned in a local barracks, where they had to perform various work tasks. On September 29, mayor (Stadtkommissar) Kramer published an order that the Jewish community had to pay a ransom of 100,000 zloty for the release of the hostages.² Shortly afterwards, he demanded 200,000 and then an additional 250,000 zloty, which the Jewish community was unable to raise. After eight weeks the hostages were released, but they still had to report daily for forced labor.

On October 25, 1939, the German town administration ordered all Jews to wear a triangle made of yellow cloth on the back of their clothes.³ At the end of 1939, the Germans started an initial wave of roundups and deportations. First, in November on the instructions of Dunkhorst, Jewish teachers and intellectuals were arrested. This was followed by the deportation of poor Jews who were receiving social assistance. On December 1, 1939, the first group of about 400 impoverished Jews was sent to Ożarów in Distrikt Radom; a second group was sent on December 15, 1939, to Włoszów-Zamość in Distrikt Lublin; and then, on February 15, 1940, a third group to Tarnów in Distrikt Krakau. These Jews were given up by the Jewish authorities in the vain hope that this would relieve the pressure on the rest of the community. All of the deportations

took place at night, and those affected could only take a small amount of luggage with them.⁴

By 1940, the Germans had appointed a Jewish Council (Judenrat) headed by Yitzhak Kowalsky. In the summer of 1940, there were some 4,000 Jews remaining in the town, who were concentrated on the Łęgska, Kowalska, Królewicka, and Targowa Streets, as well as the vegetable market. At the end of October or the beginning of November 1940, the Germans established a ghetto in an impoverished section of town near the Jewish cemetery, where the streets were unpaved and there was no electricity. The Jews were housed in old, dilapidated wooden houses, and several families were forced to live in a single room. The German authorities instructed the Jews to maintain a watch at night to ensure that no fires broke out in the ghetto.⁵ Around 1,000 Poles, who originally lived in this part of town, were evacuated and resettled into former Jewish apartments in the town. On November 9, 1940, Kramer, Hessemeyer, and Dunkhorst organized a pogrom against those Jews that had not yet moved into the ghetto and declared Leslau (the new German name for Włocławek) to have been cleansed of Jews (*judenrein*). The resettlement operations against the Jews were probably connected to the need for housing to accommodate ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) arriving from Volhynia, whose resettlement was about to be completed.

A police sergeant (Polizeimeister) Irme was installed as commandant of the ghetto, where he spread fear and terror among the Jews with his draconian orders and trained dogs. On November 9, 1940, the ghetto was enclosed with barbed wire. The external guarding of the ghetto was carried out by German police, and the internal guarding by Jewish Police under the notorious commander Ignacy Fenster.⁶ Initially, the Poles and Germans were still permitted to enter the ghetto, and this enabled the Jews to trade clothes and household items for food in order to stave off starvation. Following the enclosure of the ghetto with barbed wire, this source of food almost completely dried up, and soon only the few craftsmen who worked—for example, as cobblers or tailors for German companies—outside the ghetto were able to bring in some food. On their initiative, a soup kitchen was established for the poorest residents, which received some meager financial support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC).⁷ In the ghetto, cultural activities continued to take place at the ritual purification house near the Jewish cemetery. Here, the members of various political groups (Zionists, the Bund, and Communists who had already shaped political life in the town before the war) came together. The cemetery became the cultural center of the ghetto, where friends met, and social, cultural, and political events were organized. These activities did not remain concealed from the Germans; in the winter of 1941, they destroyed the Jewish cemetery in response.⁸

From the summer of 1941, conditions in the ghetto deteriorated considerably. Increasingly, Jews were sent to perform forced labor outside the ghetto, such as the excavation of ditches 10 meters (approximately 33 feet) deep. On September 26, 1941, police inspector Ott conducted a further selection



Jews are displaced from the Włocławek ghetto, in the vicinity of Wolność Street, n.d.

USHMM WS #50336, COURTESY OF IPN

in the ghetto. A number of girls and young women were sent to a camp near Poznań, known as Antonienhof; others were deported to the Łódź ghetto and subsequently from there to the extermination camp in Chełmno.⁹ After this selection, the area of the ghetto was drastically reduced, and the hygienic conditions deteriorated considerably. On the pretext of a typhus epidemic, the Germans completely isolated the ghetto on November 16, 1941. Those Jews caught trying to leave the ghetto were shot immediately. In addition, a number of Jews were hanged inside the ghetto.

The final liquidation of the Włocławek ghetto took place in April 1942. On April 24, 400 men between the ages of 14 and 50 were deported for forced labor at, for example, the camps at Września and others near Poznań or to other camps in Ojsz, Gutenbrunn, and Nekla. Many of these laborers died in the camps of exhaustion and malnutrition, and the others were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1943. Following these deportations from Włocławek, fewer than 1,000 Jews remained in the ghetto. On April 27, 1942, the remaining Jews were loaded onto trucks and taken to Chełmno, where they were murdered using poison gas. The liquidation of the ghetto lasted three days, after which a special squad of SS men, under the command of the local Gestapo, burned it to the ground.¹⁰

Elliot Hessemeyer was tried and executed by hanging in Włocławek after the war for crimes committed in the town during the German occupation.

SOURCES The ghetto is also mentioned in several academic publications, including: *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955); 135, 173; A. Eisenbach, *Hitlerowska polityka zagłady Żydów* (Warsaw, 1961), pp. 226, 287; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 565.

Several survivors have published their memoirs. Among the more significant is that by Zenek (Selig) Mayor, *Von Auschwitz nach Haifa. Erinnerungen eines polnischen Juden* (Bremen:



The German authorities raze the Włocławek ghetto to the ground, following the deportation of its inhabitants, April or May 1942.

USHMM WS #61359A, COURTESY OF YIVO

Donat-Verlag, 1993), which contains numerous photographs concerning Jewish life in Włocławek before and during the ghetto period. Worthy of mention are also the memoirs of Peninah Cypkewicz-Rosin, *Flight to Survival. Włocławek—Warszawa—Częstochowa . . . Eretz Yisrael, 1939–1945* (League City, TX: Jewishgen, 2006); and the yizkor book by K.F. Thursh and M. Korzen, eds., *Votslavek veba-sevivab: Sefer zikaron* (Israel: Association of Former Włocławek Jews in Israel and America, 1967), which includes much information on the ghetto.

The history of the Włocławek ghetto is documented in the following archival sources: AŻIH (e.g., 301/374); IPN (Kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177); MKW (Zb.fk., nr. 1739); SOTW (sygn. 119, pp. 17, 18, 33, 49, 53, and 58); USHMM (e.g., RG-15.004M); and YVA.

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trans. Martin Dean

NOTES

1. Cypkewicz-Rosin, *Flight to Survival*, p. 44; Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab*, p. 833.

2. This proclamation is published (in English translation) in Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab*, p. 152.

3. For photographs of this and other elements of Jewish life in Włocławek, see Mayor, *Von Auschwitz nach Haifa*; see also Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab*, p. 835.

4. Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab*, p. 836.

5. For more details, see the memoir of Mayor, *Von Auschwitz nach Haifa*, pp. 38 ff.

6. For the notorious Jewish Police, see Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab*, p. 146; and Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 215. According to sources mentioned here, Fenster was probably killed by former inmates of the ghetto.

7. Cypkewicz-Rosin, *Flight to Survival*, p. 168; Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab*, p. 836.

8. Cypkewicz-Rosin, *Flight to Survival*, p. 168; Mayor, *Von Auschwitz nach Haifa*, p. 35; Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab*, p. 840.

9. Thursh and Korzen, *Votslavek veba-sevivab*, p. 841.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 842.

ZAGÓRÓW

Pre-1939: Zagórow, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Hinterberg, Kreis Konin, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Zagórow, województwo wielkopolskie, Poland

Zagórow is located 69 kilometers (43 miles) east-southeast of Poznań and 29 kilometers (18 miles) west of Konin.

On September 1, 1939, about 630 Jews were living in Zagórow. Forces of the German army occupied the town on September 6, 1939, and anti-Jewish measures were immediately instituted. Jews were made to perform forced labor, their property was confiscated, and by the end of 1939 all Jewish inhabitants of Zagórow were forced to wear white armbands. Shortly after their arrival, the Germans humiliated the Jews by forcing them to remove the grass from between the cobblestones on the market square.

The Germans established an open ghetto in Zagórow in the spring or summer of 1940, probably by mid-July. It covered an area of about 8 to 10 square kilometers (3 or 4 square miles).¹ Around July 15, many of the Jewish inhabitants of Kreis Konin—from the towns of Kleczew, Golina, Wilczyn, and other places—were resettled to the Zagórow ghetto.² The Jewish committee of Zagórow took care of the new arrivals and did as much as it could to provide them with food, accommodation, and health care. An aid committee was established, which later was renamed by the Gendarmerie-Kreisführer of Konin as the Jewish Council of Elders (Jüdischer Ältestenrat or Judenrat) for the area.³

Due to the resettlement, there were now 2,170 Jews living in the Zagórow ghetto, of which 1,582 (almost three quarters) were refugees who had no spare clothes, no accommodation, and no means of living.⁴ The Jews had been told by the German authorities that from Zagórow they would be sent to work in the Łódź factories, but this did not occur. Accordingly, in August 1940, the Jewish Council sent a letter to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw in which it described the situation in the ghetto. The living conditions were terrible, with 10 or 15 people forced to live in one room, others had to live in a school building, and many families had no source of income. At the beginning, they had no doctor, no hospital, and no health care. The Jewish Council provided 300 lunches per day, but this was insufficient to feed all the people in need.⁵

On October 24, 1940, the Jewish Council reported to the AJDC that a soup kitchen had been established, which provided meals for 500 people daily, but that they would not be able to continue this activity, as all their financial means for food, health care, and sanitary services were exhausted. “In view of the approaching winter,” the Judenrat reported, “we are completely at a loss as to what to do.”⁶ In December 1940, the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland (Reich Union of Jews in Germany) paid 500 Reichsmark (RM) in aid to ease the situation in the Zagórow ghetto, but this money was still not nearly enough.⁷ The Jews of Zagórow were com-

pletely ruined and unable to contribute to the needs of the ghetto. Furthermore, the Jewish Council also had to pay for the 120 Zagórow Jews who had been taken to a forced labor camp in Konin and needed new wooden shoes. According to one survivor, Jews sent to Konin were used to clear remaining furniture from former Jewish houses there.⁸

As the ghetto remained open, some Jews sneaked out past the few German patrols to beg or buy food from farmers in the surrounding villages. Jews also continued to pray in the ghetto, giving those who died at least a proper Jewish burial. Due to the overcrowding, poor sanitation, cold, and hunger, some Jews fell sick, and an outbreak of typhus occurred. Those who remained healthy feared roundups for forced labor, as they believed that if they were sent away, they would not see their families again. Some Jews hid to avoid the roundups, but the Germans adopted brutal methods of coercion, searching houses with Alsatian dogs.⁹

On March 8, 1941, the Jews from the Grodziec ghetto, including many Jews from the town of Konin, were deported. Some of them were sent back to Konin and from there deported to the town of Józefów in Distrikt Lublin of the Generalgouvernement; the remainder were sent to the nearby ghetto in Zagórow.¹⁰

At the end of the summer of 1941, about 450 men from the ghetto were taken for forced labor to the salt mines of Inowrocław, but most of the Zagórow Jews either had no work at all—which meant no income and almost no food—or were employed in building and maintaining roads and railways. In late September 1941, the remaining inhabitants of the ghetto were taken to the nearby forest of Kazimierz Biskupi in trucks and murdered there.¹¹

Information about the liquidation of the Zagórow ghetto derives mainly from a letter written by Yitshak Laski, the chairman of the Jewish Council in Zagórow, to the Jews in Kłodawa. On the eve of the “Days of Awe” (late September 1941), instructions were issued that a poll tax of 4 RM would be imposed on the entire Jewish population and that an expulsion was being prepared. Reportedly, the Jews would be sent by truck to Koło and from there by train to Łódź; from Łódź they would go on a trip of several days in an unknown direction. The expulsion occurred in this manner: the population was loaded 50 people at a time onto trucks; they were allowed to take with them only 1 kilo (2.2 pounds) of hand luggage each. They were promised that their remaining baggage would be sent on afterwards by train. Each round-trip on the trucks lasted two hours. The Jews, seriously alarmed, arranged that each group that left should mark in red chalk the name of the place where they disembarked. When the truck returned, it turned out that the destination was the Kazimierz Biskupi Forest, not far from Zagórow. No further news was received about the fate of the Zagórow Jews, although the Jews in Kłodawa sent out messengers, Polish and German, in all directions. Only a few families succeeded in fleeing to Koło, but the vast majority perished.¹²

SOURCES Some information on the Jewish community of Zagórow and the ghetto can be found in the following second-

ary works: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 103; Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Stein & Day, 1977), pp. 113, 129, 417; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 580; and *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 135, 170–171.

Primary sources on the Zagórow ghetto include the following: AAN (202/II-29, p. 87); AŻIH (210/738 and Ring I/394); IPN (kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177; and GK, Zh III/31/35/68 [getta, woj. poznański]); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH], 210/738; and RG-15.079M, Ring I/394); VHF (e.g., # 4469, 9257, 24854); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 9257, testimony of Abraham Landau, states that it was roughly 2.4 to 3.2 kilometers (1.5 or 2 miles) in width and length.
2. *Ibid.*, # 4469, testimony of Leon Jedwab; and # 24854, testimony of Bert Gembicki.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/738, Ältestenrat Hinterberg to AJDC, December 12, 1940.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, Ältestenrat Hinterberg to AJDC, August 27, 1940.
6. *Ibid.*, Ältestenrat Hinterberg to AJDC, October 24, 1940.
7. *Ibid.*, Ältestenrat Hinterberg to AJDC, December 12, 1940.
8. VHF, # 24854.
9. *Ibid.*, # 4469; # 24854; and # 9257.
10. M. Gelbart, ed., *Kebilat Konin bi-feribatah uve-hurbanah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotse Konin be-Yisrael, 1968), p. 559.
11. VHF, # 4469, Leon Jedwab, dates the Aktion on the second day of Rosh Hashanah (September 23, 1941). USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/394, dates it as the “Days of Awe” (the 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). See also Theo Richmond, *Konin: A Quest* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), p. 83; and Gelbart, *Kebilat Konin*, p. 559.
12. USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/394, “After January 1942”—protocol about the events in the Koło region.

ZDUŃSKA WOLA

Pre-1939: Zduńska Wola, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Zdunska Wola, Kreis Schieratz, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Zduńska Wola, powiat center, Łódź województwo, Poland

Zduńska Wola is located about 45 kilometers (28 miles) west-southwest of Łódź.

In August 1939, immediately before the beginning of World War II, Zduńska Wola had about 27,000 inhabitants, including 13,190 Poles (48.9 percent), 9,330 Jews (34.6 percent), and 4,480 Germans (16.6 percent). The town was captured by

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Public humiliation of Jews in the Zduńska Wola ghetto, n.d.
USHMM WS #18858, COURTESY OF IPN

the German army on September 6–7, 1939, and the persecution of the Jews began immediately, as ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) and local Poles looted Jewish stores and houses. The synagogue was destroyed, and a few Jews were shot by the Germans. In December 1939, the Germans ordered the Jewish community to prepare for expulsion and demanded a list of 400 families that were to be driven out of town. Apparently, by paying a fee of 50,000 zloty, the Jewish Council was able to prevent this. Instead, about 100 Jewish families that lived outside the main Jewish residential area were resettled into the Jewish area, and their property was confiscated. Some sources claim that at this time the Jews had to pay an additional fee of 250,000 zloty.

A separate Jewish area of settlement had been in existence in Zduńska Wola before the start of World War II. In early 1940, it was converted into an “open ghetto.” Pillars at the corner of one street marked with a yellow Star of David indicated the borders of the ghetto. Most Jews were only allowed to leave the ghetto between 10:00 A.M. and noon, but those employed by the Germans could do so freely during the day. Thus Jews were still able to obtain food relatively freely, although they had to pay exorbitant prices for goods obtained on the black market.

In the course of 1940, the ghetto area was fenced in with barbed wire and separated from the non-Jewish part of town. At this time, the ghetto held about 7,500 local Jews and about 800 refugees or deportees from other locations, mostly in the vicinity of Zduńska Wola.¹ In the period up to 1942, between 1,000 and 3,000 Jews from neighboring towns, including Sieradz, Pabianice, Kalisz, Poddębice, Szadek, Widawa, Burzenin, Klonowa, and Majaczewice, were resettled to Zduńska Wola. Thus the ghetto population rose to a total of between 10,000 and 12,000 people, becoming the second largest ghetto in Reichsgau Wartheland after Łódź.²

The ghetto bordered onto the following streets: 32-2 west and south of Plac Wolności, along Juliusstrasse and Bahnhofstrasse, to the intersection of Schadeckerstrasse, and Feischerstrasse. From there it stretched west along a small channel until Altstadtstrasse and through the original Jewish ghetto.

In the south it reached Grundweg and from there back to Adolf-Hitler Strasse.³ The five entrance gates were guarded by Jewish Police from the inside and German Order Police (*Schutzpolizei* or *Schupos*) from the outside.

A Judenrat had already been established by German decree at the end of November 1939.⁴ Its head was the physician Dr. Jaakov Lemberg, who spoke German fluently and was very familiar with German habits. Early in December 1939, Dr. Lemberg obtained certificates for himself and his family to travel to Palestine, but at the request of the Jewish community, they remained in Zduńska Wola. Lemberg was very well respected and appreciated by the ghetto inmates. As survivor Isaac Neumann describes it, Lemberg possessed a rare gift, “the courage to make difficult decisions in an immoral universe, and the ability to be just under almost impossible circumstances.”⁵ Other members of the Zduńska Wola Judenrat were Leib Brykman, Meir Wieruszowski, Tuvia Najdat, Aharon Pyk, Shlomo Walfisz, Berish Lipszic, Yankel Bulka, Landsberg, Avraham Grynbar, Okladek, Fiszal Lewi, M.F. Krysz, and David Nuskowicz.

A Jewish police force was established and subordinated to the Judenrat. Over time, it expanded to employ 3 inspectors and 17 paid policemen. About 15 more men worked for the police without pay for three to four hours a day. The main tasks of the police were to keep order, to inspect sanitary conditions, and to arrest Jews who did not pay their taxes or refused to participate in forced labor.⁶ The commandant of the Jewish Police was Aharon Pyk, and his deputy was Wajsborg. Additionally, in September 1941, the German authorities established an office of the Criminal Police (*Kriminalpolizei* or *Kripo*) in Zduńska Wola. The Kripo frequently plundered Jewish homes in the ghetto under the pretext of looking for illegal or smuggled goods. Severe punishments were applied in the event that any illegal articles were discovered.⁷

As can be seen from the reports of the Judenrat to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw, the situation of Zduńska Wola's Jews in 1940 was dire. As early as the spring of 1940, 813 Jewish families, about 40 percent of the inhabitants of the ghetto, were considered to be in need of help.⁸ In the first half of that year, the Jewish community distributed almost 40,000 lunch meals at 5 Reichspfennig each to poor ghetto inhabitants. During that time, 870 Jewish families were resettled into the ghetto, and as a result approximately 6 to 7 people had to share each room. Up to June 1940, about 100 to 150 Jews worked for the German authorities daily without being paid, and after July, at least 250 more Jews were employed by the Germans. Most of them now received a salary of 0.10 Reichsmark (RM) per hour, with experienced workers (*Fachmänner*) getting 0.20RM per hour.

Sanitary measures were indispensable in the overcrowded ghetto. In September 1940, a Jewish hospital with 16 beds was established, and the Jewish Police were put in charge of checking hygienic conditions in the ghetto. Everyone was allowed to use the public bath for 0.05 RM, and people without a private bathroom were obliged to do so. Nevertheless, eight cases of typhus were registered. In the second half of 1940,

250 more families arrived in the ghetto, and it became increasingly difficult to accommodate them.

The head of the German Ghetto Administration was an ethnic German from Zduńska Wola, Oskar Fercho. He was replaced in mid-1941 by Wilhelm Bittel. The Stadtkommissar was Alois Versen. The deputy chief of the Schupo in Zduńska Wola, Eichard Helmrich, was responsible for maintaining order in the ghetto. Exploitation of Jewish labor had already started in September 1939, but it was intensified considerably in 1941. In factories and workshops within the ghetto, Jews worked for the German army. About 2,000 inhabitants worked for the largest of these companies, Striegel & Wagner, whose representative within the ghetto was Herr Neubauer. The company specialized in fur clothing and knitting, as well as weaving. There were also workshops for dressmaking, hosiery, and the manufacture of gloves, boots, and straw shoes. Jews were also put to forced labor in the city, on fields and farms around Zduńska Wola, and in Krobanów, about 5 kilometers (3 miles) from Zduńska Wola, where they built homes for ethnic Germans resettled from Volhynia and Romania. Additionally, in the summer of 1941, about 1,000 able-bodied men were sent to labor camps in the Poznań region, especially in Lenzingen and Loebau.⁹

On Ogrodowa Street within the ghetto, in the spring of 1940, the Judenrat established an agricultural farm, which produced milk and vegetables for the inhabitants of the ghetto.¹⁰ The farm covered an area of about 112,000 square meters (133,951 square yards), and there were 28 goats, which provided milk for the ghetto's children. Some 30 men and 20 women



Four of 10 Jewish men publicly hanged for alleged black marketeering by the German police in the Zduńska Wola ghetto.

USHMM WS #059950, COURTESY OF JERZY TOMASZEWSKI

aged between 17 and 21, all members of Zionist youth groups, worked there and acquired experience in agriculture. They also learned Hebrew, studied Jewish and Zionist history, and conducted drill exercises. The training kibbutz was in existence until the ghetto was liquidated; then most of the youth were sent to the Łódź ghetto.

In the course of 1942, conditions in the ghetto continued to deteriorate. In March, between 80 and 90 Jews died in the ghetto—as many as had died in Zduńska Wola each year before the war. On March 3 and May 21, the German authorities conducted two public executions. In each case, 10 Jews accused of smuggling food were hanged, and Eichard Helmrich, the deputy chief of the Schupo, was in charge of both events.¹¹

Either in June or early July of 1942, the Jews in the ghetto were selected and separated into two groups: “A” and “B.” Probably as a result of this selection, by the end of June 1942, 397 Jews were transferred to the Łódź ghetto. The actual liquidation of the ghetto began in the early hours of August 24, 1942. Large numbers of SS and police were mobilized to support the local forces. Hans Biebow, the German administrator in charge of the Łódź ghetto, came to Zduńska Wola to select Jews for his ghetto. He also participated in shooting Jews on their way to the selection site. As a first measure, children, the elderly, sick, and invalid Jews, among them the 40 patients from the hospital, were separated from the others and either shot or put on trucks and taken to the Chełmno extermination camp. In a later selection, which took place at the cemetery and lasted two to three days, about 1,000 to 1,200 Jews were deemed fit for labor in the Łódź ghetto and were sent there. During the 10-hour train ride, 27 people suffocated in the overcrowded cattle cars. Neubauer, the manager in charge of the business of the Striegel & Wagner Company in the ghetto, had tried to negotiate with Hans Biebow to have his workers exempted from the deportation. But Biebow was entitled to choose the forced laborers for the Łódź ghetto, as well as to take over all the property of the Jews and the workshops within the ghetto, so Neubauer's intervention remained futile.

During the selection the Jews were kept at the cemetery, without food or water. About 550 Jews were killed on the spot.¹² Of these, 119 were uncovered during the clearing out of the ghetto. On the third day, between 6,000 and 9,000 Jews were sent to the extermination camp in Chełmno. One of these transports may have been sent to the Chiszczyca Forest near Warta, where the prisoners were shot and their bodies burned.

Dr. Lemberg, the head of the Judenrat, was also killed during the selection. Lemberg had been chosen to go to the Łódź ghetto, but he was shot instead by Biebow. In the fall of 1940, Lemberg had been invited to visit the Łódź ghetto and to meet with its Jewish leader, Rumkowski. He returned completely depressed, disagreeing with Rumkowski's close cooperation with the Germans and being shocked by Biebow's methods of managing the ghetto.¹³ He refused to cooperate with either of them. On a subsequent occasion, Lemberg had denied a demand by Biebow to select 10 Zduńska Wola Jews

for hanging in March 1942 and had offered his own family instead. Now Biebow took his revenge on him.

Some Jews succeeded in escaping from the transport to the Łódź ghetto. All the others shared the fate of the inhabitants of the Łódź ghetto. Some of them were sent to labor camps in the Poznań area, and the rest were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp in the successive deportations from the Łódź ghetto. About 60 Jews from Zduńska Wola are known to have survived.

Hans Biebow was tried in Łódź and sentenced to death in 1947, for various crimes, including his participation in the liquidation of the Zduńska Wola ghetto.

SOURCES A number of secondary sources exist describing the Jewish community and the ghetto in Zduńska Wola. Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 111–116, provide an extensive description. Additional information can be found in the yizkor book edited by Elhanan Erlikh, *Zdunskab-Volah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Zdunskah-Volah be-Yisrael va-'Amerikah, 1968). Another important source is Antoni Galiński, "Getto w Zduńskiej Woli," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* 35 (1993): 142–156. Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), mentions the Zduńska Wola ghetto on pp. 84, 185, 285, 439, and 483. One survivor of the Zduńska Wola ghetto is Isaac Neumann, whose memoirs under the title *The Narrow Bridge: Beyond the Holocaust* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000) are published with Michael Palencia-Roth. For an extensive report on the liquidation of the Zduńska Wola ghetto, see Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chelmno/Kulmbof: Der Beginn der "Endlösung"* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007). Jaakov Lemberg's work as the chairman of the Judenrat and his death are described in Henokh Kazminski, "The Late Dr. Jacob Lemberg," *Landsberger-tsaytung*, no. 40, September 25, 1946.

There are a number of primary sources concerning the Zduńska Wola ghetto. A good summary can be found in the Galiński article. Important archival and survivor testimony collections include the following: APE; AŻIH (e.g., Ring I/220, 571, 1047, 1052, and Ring II/311; 210/747; and 301/947); FVA (# 1501); IPN (OKBZH-L, e.g., Ds 82/76, Ds 438/67, Ds 442/67); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC, 1939–1941], 210/747); VHF; and YVA (M-1/E/644/538, 778/646, 980/849, 1136/1102, 1611/1492; M-1/Q/1817/371; and O-3/1256, 1260, and 1262).

Evelyn Zegenhagen

NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, Jewish Aid Committee Zduńska Wola to AJDC in Warsaw, December 26, 1940.
2. Neumann, *Narrow Bridge*, p. 55.
3. For more details, see Galiński, "Getto w Zduńskiej Woli," p. 145.
4. Neumann, *Narrow Bridge*, p. 96.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
6. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, Jewish Aid Committee Zduńska Wola to AJDC, December 26, 1940.

7. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 111–116.

8. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC, 1939–1941), 210/747, activity report of the Jewish Aid Committee in Zduńska Wola for the period January 1 to June 30, 1940.

9. Neumann, *Narrow Bridge*, p. 69.

10. Galiński, "Getto w Zduńskiej Woli," p. 145.

11. Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S." ("Oneg Shabbath")* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), pp. 421–423, 686.

12. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo sieradzkie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Zbrodni Badania Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1983), p. 59, reports 190 Jews killed during the resettlement on August 24, 1942.

13. Neumann, *Narrow Bridge*, p. 99.

ZELÓW

Pre-1939: Zelów, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Zelów, Kreis Lask, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Zelów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Zelów is located 38 kilometers (24 miles) south-southwest of Łódź. In 1921, the Jewish population of Zelów was 1,816 out of a total population of 5,326 people. German troops entered the town on September 6, 1939, and three days later they started confiscating Jewish workshops and goods. Jewish artisans were forbidden to work in their workshops. Jewish shops remained open until December 1939, but the Germans looted them repeatedly.

A Judenrat was established in the first weeks of the occupation. Naftali Mayer, a Zionist activist, was nominated as its chairman, with Mandel as his deputy. Some of the Judenrat members had formerly been members of the pre-war kehillah. Yosl (or Willek) Frenkiel from Bielsko was nominated as chief of the Jewish Police. The Jews were required to perform forced labor, which initially included cleaning the streets and collecting scrap metal. They also had to wear yellow patches in



Portrait of the Klein family in the Zelów ghetto.
USHMM WS #07263, COURTESY OF REGINA FRANT STAWSKI

the shape of the Star of David on their chests and backs and were forbidden to use the sidewalks. There was a curfew in the evening, and Jews had to doff their hats on encountering a German. Failure to obey these orders could mean the death penalty but usually resulted in a severe beating.¹

Some Jews managed to leave town in the fall of 1939, but many others arrived from other places, such as Wieluń, Widawa, Warta, and Dąbrowa Rusiecka, as well as Szczerców, which was destroyed completely.² Some of the newcomers were injured, and most of them arrived with almost nothing, so the Judenrat had to arrange for their accommodation and opened a public kitchen for them. Some of the arrivals found accommodation with local families who put them up in their homes. The continued influx raised the number of Jews in the town first to around 4,500 (including 2,300 refugees) in December 1940, increasing to some 6,000 or 7,000 by March 1941.

From 1940, the Judenrat was ordered to assist in the transport of hundreds of men to work camps in the Poznań region. From this time on, Jews able to work were kidnapped on the streets and from their homes and sent away. The kidnappers were German policemen assisted by the Jewish Police. Able-bodied Jews hid to avoid being caught. For some time the Jews in Zelów were able to send food packages to their relatives in the labor camps. Groups of Jews were also forced to work paving roads in the vicinity.³

Despite these oppressive measures, life for the Jews in Zelów was not as bad as in some other occupied towns. For example, the Jewish population received official food rations, which were supplied by the German wholesale company Karl Leib. At one point this company was sued for “breach of confidence” for having supplied overly generous rations to the Jews.

Moreover, two Jewish youngsters were included in the football team of the Zelów Hitler Youth organization, which in the summer of 1940 played a match against the Bełchatów Hitler Youth. In August 1940, the mayor of Bełchatów wrote an angry letter about this to Amtskommissar Berger in Zelów.⁴

Information about the establishment of a ghetto in Zelów is somewhat contradictory. Some witnesses, such as Noma Futerman, maintain that no ghetto was established in the town, while others like Pinchas-Menachem Feivlovicz date the existence of a Jewish residential quarter (or ghetto) from early in the occupation.⁵ According to Michael Alberti, citing a report in the *Litzmannstädter Zeitung* dated June 1940, a ghetto had not yet been established in Zelów due to the topography of the town, making it difficult to separate out the Jews, as was the case also in Bełchatów.⁶

Some sources indicate the establishment of an open (unfenced) ghetto by the second half of 1941, by which time strict punishments had been introduced for any Jew caught outside the town limits without permission. The account compiled by Andrzej Selerowicz states that the ghetto was situated in the center of the town, surrounded by the Rynek, Św. Anna, Zeromski, and Kiliński Streets. Zeev Lisner states that no fenced ghetto was created but that the Jews were

prohibited from entering many streets, including the market square.⁷

Relations between Jews and non-Jews were mixed during the occupation. Several accounts mention the brutality of local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), who beat Jews at the slightest provocation. However, some Poles, and especially local Czechs, were more sympathetic, bringing food to the Jews. Some clandestine schooling in Hebrew was provided to Jewish children in Zelów.⁸

In spite of being prohibited from work by the German authorities, Jewish tailors and cobblers continued to work for local non-Jews. At the same time, the Germans established workshops in which Jewish artisans worked for German institutions. Food, even meat and poultry, remained available and reasonably priced. Many Jews made a living by smuggling goods, mostly textiles, from Reichsgau Wartheland into the Generalgouvernement. Smuggling was carried out mainly from Zelów to the town of Piotrków Trybunalski. A few Poles and Czechs also participated in the smuggling. When caught, the smugglers were sent to court and usually sentenced to a few years in prison, but for the many Jews among them, this effectively meant a death sentence, as they were handed over to the Gestapo and sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp or the Blechhammer (Blachownia Śląska) camp, where they perished. A number of Jews escaped across the border to the Piotrków ghetto, as reportedly conditions there were somewhat better.

In the spring of 1942, as in many other towns in the region, all of the ghetto residents were summoned to witness the public hanging of 10 Jews, who were possibly punished for illegal trade or other offenses. By order of the authorities, the bodies were left on the gallows for some time, to intimidate the population.⁹

The total annihilation of the Jewish population was carried out in several steps. First in June, a number of Jews were deported from Zelów to the Chełmno extermination camp, and 96 were selected for the Łódź ghetto. Of these, most were sent on the next day to labor camps in the Poznań region.¹⁰

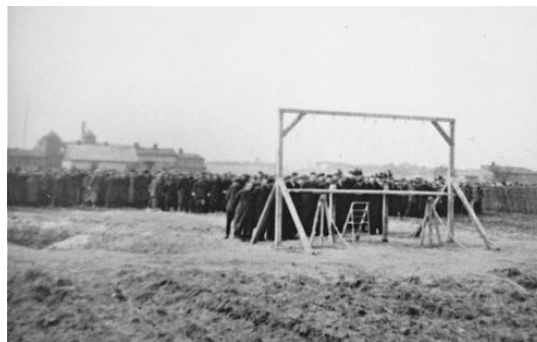
The final Aktion took place probably on August 12, 1942. A detachment of German police rounded up the Jews and concentrated them in the “Lewe” factory and in a local church, where they were held for several days. Some Jews were murdered on the spot, and 149 were selected and deported to the Łódź ghetto. The remainder was deported to the Chełmno extermination camp. A handful of Jews managed to hide in the homes of non-Jews in the vicinity, but in most cases neighbors informed the police, and they were caught and murdered too.¹¹

Pinchas-Menachem Feivlovicz, who was in a labor camp, received a last postcard from his father in Zelów at the end of 1942, which stated that “the Germans were murdering step by step the Jewish residents of Zelów, with the effective assistance of Polish collaborators.”¹² It is likely that some Jews remained behind in Zelów until December, working for the Germans to clear out the ghetto after the liquidation



German police and administrators attend the public hanging of ten Jews in Żelów, March 1942.

USHMM WS #18859, COURTESY OF IPN



The hanging of ten Jews in the Żelów ghetto, March 1942.

USHMM WS #18860, COURTESY OF IPN

Aktion. In early January 1943, Friedrich Wilhelm Ribbe, the deputy to Hans Biebow, head of the Ghettoverwaltung (Ghetto Administration) in Łódź, wrote to Amtskommissar Berger confirming the receipt on December 21, 1942, of the textiles, sewing machines, and other items recovered from the Żelów ghetto. He thanked Berger especially for his support in the resettlement of the Żelów Jews and for the diligence shown in recovering hidden valuables, which had surpassed that in many of the other ghettos that had been cleared.¹³

By 1946, about 40 Jewish survivors had returned to Żelów⁴⁴ only to discover that the old wooden synagogue had been destroyed and that the new synagogue had only survived because the Nazis had used it as a storage space. Most of the survivors immigrated subsequently to Israel, the United States, and other places.

SOURCES Published sources on the fate of the Jews in Żelów during the German occupation include the following: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Łódź and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 119–121; Sławomir Papuga and Andrzej Gramsz, *Żelów, wspólnota nacji, wyznania, kultur* (Łódź: Grako, 2003); Avraham Klushiner, ed., *Sefer-zikaron li-kehillat Żelov* (New York: New York Public Library, 2003); and “Żelów,” a report by Andrzej Selerowicz, February 2004, available on the Web at www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Zelow/zelow-history.htm.

A relevant survivor memoir is Pinchas-Menachem Feivlovicz, *Through Seven Death-Camps: Reminiscences from the Nazi-Hell* (Haifa, 1972). The Żelów ghetto is also mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 589; and Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chelmno/Kulmbhof: Der Beginn der “Endlösung”* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), pp. 95–96.

Documentation on the Jewish community of Żelów and its fate during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: APL (278/994, pp. 166–167); AŻIH (301/3085); BA-L (203 AR-Z 161/67, vol. 7; and Pol. Ordn. 358); USHMM (e.g.,

RG-15.084 [Relacje]); VHF (# 5117, 13139, 37880, 50211); and YVA (e.g., O-3/3178).

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. Klushiner, *Sefer-zikaron li-kehillat Żelov*, pp. 196–197; AŻIH, 301/3085, testimony of Noma Futerman; Feivlovicz, *Through Seven Death-Camps*, pp. 24–25; VHF, # 37880, testimony of Zeev Lisner.

2. BA-L, Pol. Ordn. 358, p. 833, Local Commission in Pabianice, report of January 1, 1946, states that of about 2,000 Jewish inhabitants of Szczerców almost all had fled by the end of 1939.

3. Klushiner, *Sefer-zikaron li-kehillat Żelov*, pp. 197–200.

4. *Belkhatov: Yizker-bukh: Gevidmet dem ondenk fun a farsbvundn Yidish shtetl in Poyln* (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-Farband fun Poylishe Yidn in Argentine tsuzamen mit der Belkhatover Landslayt-Farayn in Argentine, Brazil un Tsafen-Amerike, 1951), p. 477.

5. AŻIH, 301/3085; Feivlovicz, *Through Seven Death-Camps*, p. 24.

6. *Litzmannstädter Zeitung*, June 20, 1940, p. 7, “Die Siedlung Żelow—hochinteressant,” as cited by Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 201.

7. VHF, # 37880.

8. AŻIH, 301/3085; VHF, # 37880 and 13139, testimony of Rachel Einhorn.

9. VHF, # 37880 (this witness dates the event in 1941); # 13139.

10. Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *The Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941–1944* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 205–206.

11. Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chelmno/Kulmbhof*, pp. 95–96, citing BA-L, 203 AR-Z 161/67, vol. 7; APL, 278/994, pp. 166–167; and VHF, # 13139.

12. Feivlovicz, *Through Seven Death-Camps*, p. 24.

13. Ribbe to Herrn Berger, Amtskommissar, January 5, 1942 [*sic* 1943], published in Leon Poliakov and Josef Wulf,

eds., *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden: Dokumente und Aufsätze* (Berlin-Grunewald: Arani, 1955), p. 73.

14. BA-L, Pol. Ordn. 358, p. 833, Local Commission in Pabianice, report of January 1, 1946.

ZGIERZ

Pre-1939: Zgierz, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Leslau (Włocławek), Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Regierungsbezirk Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Słupsk powiat, Łódź województwo, Poland

Zgierz is located 19 kilometers (about 12 miles) north-northwest of Łódź. In 1931, out of the 20,232 inhabitants, 4,547 were Jews. By 1939, this number had risen to about 4,800.

The German army conquered the town on September 7, 1939. According to witnesses, on the same evening several hundred male Jews were imprisoned in a local church where they were kept for two days. Within a few days, the Germans started to organize forced labor for the Jews, which included cleaning the streets and collecting trash. The Germans also began to plunder Jewish property. Jews had to pay enormous “contributions” and “penalty fees.” An ethnic German named Strobach was appointed mayor by the Germans and was responsible for many anti-Jewish measures.¹ In November 1939, the synagogue and the Bet Midrash were set on fire, and the Germans made the Jewish community pay the cost of extinguishing the fires.² Also in November 1939, Jews were ordered to wear a yellow armband on the sleeves of their coats and jackets. In December, this order was changed: as in other places in the Warthegau, Jews were forced now to wear a yellow Star of David on the breast and back shoulder of their outer garments.³ Many Jews tried to flee the town, mainly to Łódź or to Głowno and other places in the Generalgouvernement, especially to Warsaw, but only a few succeeded.⁴ Some sources estimate that almost half of the Jewish population of Zgierz tried to flee.⁵

On December 26 or 27, 1939, the German authorities ordered the Jewish population to assemble in the early morn-

ing. They were allowed to bring over 22 kilograms (about 50 pounds) of luggage and 50 zloty with them but were deprived of these possessions immediately at the assembly point. More than 2,500 Jews were then taken to Głowno, a nearby town just across the new border in the Generalgouvernement, and resettled there. The Jewish community of Zgierz practically ceased to exist.

Only a few Jews remained in Zgierz. They were craftsmen, shoemakers, and tailors with their families, who were considered to be useful to the Germans and, according to one source, had to live in the villages around Zgierz.⁶ By September 1941, this group consisted of 22 men, 30 women, 22 children, and 7 old people. In mid-January 1942, these Jews were transferred to the Łódź ghetto—despite the resistance of the Łódź authorities, who did not want to accept any more Jews in the town. But since the group of Jews from Zgierz was so small, the Zgierz authorities finally succeeded in getting rid of their remaining Jews on January 12, 1942. That day the group—now numbering 84 or 85 people—was sent to the ghetto in Łódź, and they were even allowed to take all of their remaining belongings with them.⁷

Available sources disagree on whether conditions for these last 80 or so Jews living in or around Zgierz should be viewed as a ghetto or not. Several secondary sources refer to a ghetto in Zgierz, which was allegedly liquidated in January 1942 with the transfer of the Jews to the Łódź ghetto, but they supply no additional details.⁸ Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, however, wrote in the Zgierz yizkor book that no ghetto was created in Zgierz.⁹ A Polish Underground report on conditions in German-occupied Poland, dated January 16, 1942, refers specifically to the liquidation of the “Zgierz ghetto” at that time, without being able to specify the destination to which its inhabitants had been sent. As with the other sources, it makes no mention of residential restrictions or living conditions for these Jews prior to this date.¹⁰

About 350 Jews from Zgierz survived the war; almost all of them had left the town at the end of 1939.

SOURCES The main sources on the history of the Jewish community of Zgierz include: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 106–111; and the *Memorial Book Zgierz* (translation of D. Shtockfish, Sh. Kanc, and Z. Fisher, eds., *Sefer Zgierz: Mazkeret netsal le-kebila yebudit be-Polin* [Tel Aviv, 1975–1986]), available on the Web at www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Zgierz/Zgierz.html. Danuta Dabrowska is also the author of one of the earliest descriptions of the Holocaust in Zgierz, in her article “Zagłada skupisk żydowskich ‘Kraju Warty’ w okresie okupacji,” *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955): 135, 158. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), lists Zgierz as a ghetto on p. 590, referring to the Polish Underground report from AAN. Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), mentions the Zgierz Jews on p. 382 in the context of their transfer to the Łódź ghetto.



Expulsion of the Jewish population from Zgierz, n.d.
USHMM WS #91572, COURTESY OF IPN

The following archives contain information regarding the fate of the Jewish community of Zgierz under the German occupation: AAN (202/III/148, p. 41); APŁ (GV 172, p. 8, and Adj 863, pp. 86–87); AŻIH (e.g., Ring I, 108/1, the unpublished essay of Rabbi Shimon Huberbrand titled “Der khurbn fun shiln, bote-midroschim, un beys-hakhaims,” which contains some information regarding Zgierz); CAHJP; USHMM (RG-15.050M [AAN], reel 3); and VHF (# 48980).

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NOTES

1. Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, “Jews of Zgierz under the German Occupation of Terror,” in *Memorial Book Zgierz*.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. W.F., “In One Day (Wednesday, December 27, 1939),” in *Memorial Book Zgierz*.
5. Dabrowska and Wein, “Jews of Zgierz,” p. 548.
6. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol.1, p. 109.
7. Dabrowska and Wein, “Jews of Zgierz,” p. 548.
8. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, lists Zgierz as a ghetto on p. 590; and Roman Mogilanski, *The Ghetto Anthology: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Extermination of Jewry in Nazi Death Camps and Ghettos in Poland* (Los Angeles: American Congress of Jews from Poland and Survivors of Concentration Camps, 1985), p. 342. VHF, # 48980, testimony of Emil Hecht, mentions being sent to work in Zgierz from Stryków, but this probably refers to a labor camp, which has been indexed, however, as a reference to the Zgierz ghetto by VHF.
9. Shtockfish, Kanc, and Fisher, *Sefer Zgierz*, p. 547.
10. USHMM, RG-15.050M (Records of the Delegation of a Government for a Country [Poland], Department of Information and Press, Western Section, 1940–1944 [AAN]), reel 3, 202/III/148, p. 41, *Litzmanstädter Zeitung*, January 16, 1942.

ZŁOCZEW

Pre-1939: Złoczew, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Slotschew, Kreis Schieratz, Regierungsbezirk Kalisch (later Litzmannstadt), Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Złoczew, Łódź województwo, Poland

Złoczew is located 69 kilometers (43 miles) southwest of Łódź. In 1921, there were 1,959 Jews living in the town out of a total population of 4,904. On the eve of war in 1939, approximately 2,000 Jews were living in Złoczew.

Following the German occupation in September 1939, Jews were mistreated and used for forced public labor. At the end of 1939, the Jews of Złoczew were ordered to leave the town “voluntarily.” They were told that they could take their goods and possessions with them—but no valuables, such as gold or silver, and money was not to exceed 100 złoty. The valuables and any money exceeding this amount had to be deposited with the German police. Attempts by the Jewish community to postpone the orders due to the harsh winter were in vain. Jews were only allowed to go in three directions: either to Lublin in

eastern Poland, to Radom, or to the capital of Poland, Warsaw.¹ Among those Jews who decided to leave, most made their way to Lublin or Warsaw.

Not all Jewish families followed these directions and left the town. Some people decided to stay, while others tried to escape to the east, towards the new Soviet border, but most did not succeed and returned to Złoczew. Probably in February 1940, all remaining Jews were ordered to move into a separate area of the town, to Yetke Alley. This was an area where Jews had lived previously, but now their living quarters were reduced to one side of the street, while the other side was burned down—with the exception of one dwelling that had to house several Jewish families.² After a short time, the Jewish ghetto was fenced with barbed wire, 3 meters (9.8 feet) high, and all contact with the non-Jewish population was forbidden. German Gendarmes under the orders of the ethnic German Makowski guarded the ghetto. Not only Jews from Złoczew had to live there but also some Jews from the surrounding area, about 250 to 280 people in total. Accommodations were cramped, with every family receiving just one room for living space. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, and two people were nominated for the position of Jewish elder—Haya Faiwlowicz and Godel Gad.³

A few Jews worked outside the ghetto, cleaning the town, and as porters, stable hands, and workers performing other menial labor tasks. These people could sometimes smuggle food, wood, or coal into the ghetto to improve their situation. All other Jews had to remain inside the fences and endured a very strict regime. There was a curfew between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.; searches of property took place regularly; and food, heating material, and other supplies were scarce.

In January 1942, 50 male ghetto inhabitants were sent to Zuchinia, a forced labor camp near Poznań, where they had to work on the railway line between Warsaw and Poznań. These men never returned to the ghetto. In March 1942, another group of 40 men was selected in the ghetto, among them young boys aged 15 and older. This group was sent to Otoschno, another forced labor camp near Poznań.⁴

The ghetto was finally liquidated, probably in May or June of 1942. As there were no survivors of the deportations, only fragmentary accounts are available, picked up from local non-Jews. It appears that all the Jews were ordered by the Gestapo to assemble on the main square and then driven into a church, where they were held for several days with very little food or water. Many collapsed under these terrible circumstances. A rumor was deliberately spread that they would be sent to a new Jewish colony near Pińsk or in Galicia, to facilitate the deportation. Then they were forcibly loaded onto trucks and driven to the Chełmno extermination camp, where they were gassed.⁵

SOURCES The most extensive source on the Złoczew ghetto is a collection of memoirs of former Jews from Złoczew in *Sefer Złoczew* (Tel Aviv: Committee of Former Residents of Złoczew, 1971). For survivor reports, see especially pp. 19–21 and 288–305 (the following articles: Eisik Faiwlowicz, “Origins of Złoczew’s Jews”; Mordechai Majerowicz, “My City Złoczew”; Raphael Lechman [Kojuch], “During the Shoah

Destruction. From Złoczew to Auschwitz”; L. Wanda, “Between the Jaws of Destiny” and “In the Hands of Brutal Destiny”; and Hawa Bresler [Breslauer], “The First So-called Resettlement of the Jews of Złoczew”). Other sources on the history of the ghetto are scarce. The Złoczew ghetto is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 593; and in Michael Alberti, *Die Verfolgung und Vernichtung der Juden im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 193. *BŻIH*, nos. 13–14 (1955), lists the Złoczew ghetto on p. 162. Regarding the liquidation of the ghetto, see Shmuel Krakowski, *Das Todeslager Chelmno/Kulmbhof: Der Beginn der “Endlösung”* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), p. 87. There is also a brief article on the Jewish community of Złoczew in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ba-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 121–122.

Primary sources on the history of the Złoczew ghetto can mainly be found in Poland, especially at IPN (Zh III/31/35/68, getta, woj. Łódzkie); and in OKBZH-Ł (Ds. 438/67).

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NOTES

1. For a number of survivor statements on this first “resettlement,” see Wanda, “Between the Jaws of Destiny” and “In the Hands of Brutal Destiny”; and Bresler (Breslauer), “The First So-called Resettlement of the Jews of Złoczew.”
2. Lechman (Kojuch), “During the Shoa Destruction. From Złoczew to Auschwitz.”
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. “In seyer letstn veg,” in *Sefer Złoczew*, pp. 409–410.

ŻYCHLIN

Pre-1939: Żychlin, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Żychlin, Kreis Kutno, Regierungsbezirk Hobensalza, Reichsgau Wartheland; post-1998: Żychlin, Łódź województwo, Poland

The town of Żychlin is located 90 kilometers (56 miles) west of Warsaw. By 1921, there were 2,702 Jews living there, in a total population of 7,098.

German forces occupied Żychlin in the early hours of September 17, 1939. Soon after their arrival, they assembled groups of young Jews and took them to a nearby village, where they held them hostage for three days. Searches of Jewish homes as well as beatings and harassment followed the release of the hostages. The Germans registered the Jews and conscripted them for forced labor, which initially consisted of cleaning the streets of the town and also German quarters. By November 1939, Jews were obliged to wear a yellow star on the front and back of their clothes, and each Jewish house had to be marked with a sign bearing the word “Jew” (*Jude*). The ritual slaughter of animals was forbidden, and the Germans imposed a curfew on the Jews between 5:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. All radios had to be surrendered.



A German soldier guards a group of Jews waiting outside in the Żychlin ghetto, ca. 1942.

USHMM WS #21727, COURTESY OF RUTH ELДАР

Many ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) arrived in the Żychlin area during the first months of the occupation. Soon the German authorities confiscated Jewish businesses and real estate, handing them over together with Polish farms mainly to the ethnic Germans. In January 1940, Żychlin became a concentration point for Jews from the surrounding area. Of 3,000 Jews registered in the town, 600 were refugees from nearby towns such as Kutno, Sanniki, and Włocławek.

In April 1940, following several acts of random violence, arrests, and roundups, the Germans arrested members of the Polish and Jewish intelligentsia in Żychlin, particularly teachers, and sent them to concentration camps inside the Reich.¹

In June 1940, the Amtskommissar in Żychlin, Karl Hempel, announced that the Jewish residents of the town would be moved into a designated area. The prime object of the resettlement for the German authorities was to prevent the spread of disease. The main ghetto, into which nearly 1,800 people were crammed, was established in Żychlin between the streets of Budzyń and Buszkowska. A smaller ghetto, in which 300 people were quartered, was also established in a brick factory in the nearby rural settlement of Pabianów. The Germans also established a Jewish Council (Judenrat). The Żychlin Judenrat was headed by Alter Rozenberg; and under its jurisdiction there was a Jewish police force, headed by A. Oberman, as well as an employment office (Arbeitsamt), in charge of organizing the daily forced labor details for the Germans. The residents of both ghettos were initially able to leave their ghetto areas if they possessed a valid work permit. Later on, however, they were permitted to leave the ghetto only under exceptional circumstances. The punishment for those who tried to leave was initially imprisonment; subsequently, the Germans imposed more draconian punishments, threatening Jews caught outside the ghetto with the death penalty. Only the Judenrat and members of the Jewish Police could move freely outside the ghetto (an open ghetto), which was not surrounded by a wall or fence.²

Living conditions in the ghetto were extremely hard. Contact with the surrounding villages was limited to those who

ventured out, desperately hoping to buy or barter some food from the peasants. Often both Polish residents and ethnic Germans entered the ghetto to do business with the few craftsmen who were still able to work. The poorest Jews sold their last belongings for food in an empty lot next to the Judenrat building. The overcrowded housing (two or more families sharing a single apartment), poor sanitation, and malnutrition among the Jewish population contributed to an outbreak of typhus in the ghetto. Although the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization was unable to organize a public kitchen, the Judenrat, aided by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), established a substitute soup kitchen that fed the needy in both ghettos.³

Amts-kommissar Hempel recruited 400 Jews for the construction of his villa. In the course of their work, he tortured the people sadistically, murdering a number of them. For example, he would force Jews to dive into a lake and shot at them if they did not dive deeply enough. If they survived the shots the Jews had to continue working in their wet clothes, which in the winter was also equivalent to a death sentence.⁴

From August 1941 until the end of that year, several transports of hundreds of Jewish workers were sent to various labor camps in the Poznań area from Żychlin. In early 1942, the Germans started to kill Jews inside the ghetto indiscriminately. Some Jews tried to escape or hide with the help of Polish acquaintances. The Judenrat and Jewish Police appear to have participated in robbing Jewish homes to meet German demands and also assisted the German “manhunts” to round up Jews capable of work for the forced labor camps.

By the last week of February 1942, the Jews in Żychlin knew that their “days were numbered.”⁵ The Germans sealed the ghetto, and then they summoned the Judenrat and Jewish Police to the main square and publicly executed them there. Their families were taken to the Jewish cemetery to be killed. The Germans murdered children, the sick, and the elderly; around 200 people perished in the Aktion.⁶

On March 3, 1942, during the Purim holiday, all the Jews, almost 3,200 people, were rounded up in the marketplace. German police savagely beat and robbed the Jews and then loaded them onto horse-drawn wagons to take them to the extermination camp in Chełmno. The German authorities then declared the town of Żychlin to be cleansed of Jews (*judenrein*).

Only a few Jews from Żychlin survived the war. More than half of them were in Nazi forced labor and concentration camps; the others were in hiding, acquired fake Aryan documents, or returned after having found refuge in the Soviet interior.⁷

SOURCES Publications on the Jewish community of Żychlin and its fate during the Holocaust include the following: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 116–119; A. Shamir, ed., *Sefer Z'iblin* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Z'ihlin be-Yisrael uva-



The abandoned property of Jews deported from Żychlin to Chełmno killing center is piled in an open field, March 1942. The piles were later burned. USHMM WS #18865, COURTESY OF IPN

Amerikah, 1974); H. Bodek, *Jak tropione zwierzęta Wspomnienia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1993); and Heinrich Bielowski, *Der Hoelle entronnen: Aufzeichnungen* (London: The World of Books, 1989).

Documentation on the fate of the Jews of Żychlin during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/313, 315, and 3352); IPN; OKŚZpNPLdz (Ds 151/67); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154); VHF; and YVA (JM 1290/1, 9PH/10-4-10, M-1/E/2529, M-1/Q/533, and PH/8-3-1).

Caterina Crisci

NOTES

1. Shamir, *Sefer Z'iblin*, p. 129; Bodek, *Jak Tropione Zwierzęta*, pp. 13, 15, 16, 19–20.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH, AJDC), 210/321, p. 5; Jüdischer Ältestenrat Żychlin to AJDC Warsaw, June 27, 1940; Shamir, *Sefer Z'iblin*, p. 130; and Bodek, *Jak tropione zwierzęta*, pp. 32, 44, 47–49.
3. Shamir, *Sefer Z'iblin*, p. 131.
4. OKŚZpNPLdz, Ds 151/67.
5. Letter from the Żychlin ghetto, February 24, 1942, published in Walter Zwi Bacharach, ed., *Dies sind meine letzten Worte . . . Briefe aus der Schoab* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), pp. 334–335.
6. Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Die zweite Etappe ist der Tod: NS-Ausröpfungspolitik gegen polnischen Juden, gesehen mit den Augen der Opfer. Ein historischer Essay und ausgewählte Dokumente aus dem Ringelblum-Archiv 1941–1943* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1993), p. 218.
7. Łucja Pawlicka-Nowak, ed., *Chełmno Witnesses Speak* (Konin: Council for the Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom in Warsaw and the District Museum in Konin, 2004), pp. 99–208; AŻIH, 301/315, testimony of L. Jakubowicz. According to Bodek, *Jak tropione zwierzęta*, p. 65, during its final days the ghetto was surrounded by barbed wire.

EASTERN UPPER SILESIA REGION



German police round up Jews on Francuska Street in the Dąbrowa Górnicza ghetto, April 4, 1942.
USHMM WS #23977, COURTESY OF SIDNEY SCHLESINGER

EASTERN UPPER SILESIA REGION (OST-OBERSCHLESILIEN)

Pre-1939: parts of the Kielce, Kraków, and Śląskie województwa, Poland; 1939–1945: Ost-Oberschlesien, parts of Regierungsbezirke Kattowitz and Oppeln, (1939–1941: Provinz Schlesien) from 1941, Provinz Oberschlesien, Deutsches Reich; post-1998: parts of województwa śląskie, małopolskie, and opolskie

As a result of the Third Reich's invasion of Poland in September 1939, territories to the east of Provinz Schlesien were annexed and incorporated into the Third Reich. Regierungsbezirk Oppeln saw the addition of three new counties: Zawiercie, Blachownia, and Lubliniec. Furthermore, on October 8, 1939, Adolf Hitler issued a decree establishing a new administrative unit—Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz—composed of parts of the Kielce, Kraków (counties Biała and Żywiec and parts of the counties of Chrzanów and Wadowice), and Śląskie województwa. Also reassigned to Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz were the existing German counties of Zabrze, Bytom, and Gliwice. Walter Springorum became the Regierungspräsident in Kattowitz. Regierungsbezirke Kattowitz and Oppeln initially became part of Provinz Schlesien. Provinz Schlesien

was dissolved on January 4, 1941, to be replaced by two separate provinces: Provinz Oberschlesien (Regierungsbezirke Kattowitz and Oppeln) and Provinz Schlesien (Regierungsbezirke Liegnitz and Breslau). Fritz Bracht became the governor of Oberschlesien. Albrecht Schmelt was appointed in May 1941 as the Regierungspräsident in Oppeln.¹

The Jews inhabiting those parts of Provinz Oberschlesien that had belonged to the Third Reich before the war (i.e., Bytom, Zabrze, and Gliwice) were treated differently from those in the former Polish territories, often referred to as Ost-Oberschlesien (or also as the Oststreifen), where the vast majority of the Jewish population of the Provinz was concentrated systematically in 1940 and 1941.

In the pre-war German (Altreich) territories of Oberschlesien, the antisemitic policies launched in 1933 were continued after the war started. Remaining Jewish property was confiscated, and Jews were forced to emigrate. In December 1940, Regierungsbezirk Oppeln was inhabited by only 3,070 Jews; in March 1941, by 3,020. A few months later in September 1941, Hitler initiated the mass deportation of Jews from the



Portrait of Albrecht Schmelt, head of the Organisation Schmelt, taken when he was a Reichstag member for the Nazi Party, 1936.

USHMM/PHOTOGRAPHED FROM ERNST KIENAST (ED.), DER DEUTSCHE REICHSTAG 1936: III. WAHLPERIODE NACH DEM 30. JANUAR 1933; MIT ZUSTIMMUNG DES HERRN REICHSTAGSPRÄSIDENTEN (BERLIN: R. V. DECKER'S VERLAG, G. SCHENCK, 1936), P. 427.



Portrait of SS-Gruppenführer Bruno Streckenbach, former commander of Einsatzgruppe Wien, n.d.

USHMM WS #26621, COURTESY OF BA-B/BDC

Altreich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Deportations of Jews from Provinz Oberschlesien to the death camps took place in the years 1942–1944. Full details of these transports are not known, but several transports were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp and the Theresienstadt ghetto.²

In the Alt-Reich territories of Provinz Oberschlesien, the pre-war Jewish communities (e.g., Bytom, Zabrze, and Gliwice) were subordinated to the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland. Their regional agency was based in Gliwice. Ghettos were not established in this area.

In total, around 18 ghettos or Jewish residential districts were established in Ost-Oberschlesien. When the German army conquered this region, German forces were accompanied by Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police and the SD. Units active in Ost-Oberschlesien included Einsatzgruppe Wien, commanded by SS-Brigadeführer Bruno von Streckenbach, and Einsatzgruppe zbV, commanded by SS-Obergruppenführer Udo von Woysch. These units committed numerous atrocities against the Jewish population, including killings (e.g., on the pretext of concealing foodstuffs or raising prices), forcing Orthodox Jews to shave their beards, and seizing Jewish property. On September 4, 1939, in Żarki, near Zawiercie, Wehrmacht soldiers slaughtered 102 residents, including 90 Jews. In Ślawków, German soldiers shot nearly 100 Jewish refugees from Będzin and Sosnowiec on September 5–7. On September 8, the synagogue on the Old Market Square in Będzin was razed, and a number of Jews were shot in the vicinity. In September, the Germans also burned down synagogues in Katowice, Jaworzno, Sosnowiec, and other towns in the region.³

From the start, one of the main German goals was to deport or drive out the Jewish population from those areas to be incorporated into the Reich. At the beginning of October 1939, Adolf Eichmann received instructions to prepare the deportation of 70,000 to 80,000 Jews from around Katowice. On October 20, about 1,000 Jews from Katowice, Chorzów, Bielsko-Biała, Lipiny, and Świętochłowice were assembled and designated for deportation by the communities' leadership. They were then transported to Nisko nad Sanem, where most were forced into Soviet-occupied territory. A second group of Jews, also around 1,000 people, was assembled on October 27–28 and sent to Nisko. An additional transport of approximately 1,500 people gathered in Sosnowiec, however, was aborted at the last moment.⁴

Reinhard Heydrich issued guidelines to the Einsatzgruppen on September 21, 1939, regarding the Jewish question in the occupied territories. He ordered as a preliminary measure the rapid concentration of the Jewish population in larger towns (specifically, communities numbering less than 500 were to be dissolved) and the establishment of Jewish Councils (Judenräte). As far as possible, the Jews were to be removed from territories to be annexed (including Ost-Oberschlesien) and resettled into the Generalgouvernement; but in the meantime Jews were to be concentrated in just a few towns.⁵ This plan, however, was implemented only partially. In 1940, many of the Jews in Ost-Oberschlesien were displaced from its west-

ern regions to towns closer to the Generalgouvernement. In May and June, expulsions were conducted, for example, from Bielsko, Katowice, Chorzów, and Cieszyn, as 4,500 Jews were resettled in the Kreise of Chrzanów, Olkusz, and Zawiercie.⁶

From the end of 1939 up until June 1940, the Germans established Judenräte in the remaining Jewish communities. The head of the department for Jewish matters in the Kattowitz Gestapo, Hans Dreier, entrusted the organization of Jewish life in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz to Mojżesz Merin of Sosnowiec. By January 1940, he had become the head of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (the Central Office). The Central Office supervised all Jewish communities in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, as well as part of Regierungsbezirk Oppeln.⁷

In October 1940, 96,283 Jews, concentrated in 34 communities and their branches, were subordinated to the Central Office. This number remained largely unchanged over the following year: there were 97,925 in March 1941; and only 500 people less in July. The communities were divided among eight Kreis Inspectorates, with their own heads answerable to Merin. In October 1940, 11,976 Jews living in 20 localities were under the control of the Kreis Chrzanów Inspectorate. The other Inspectorates were, respectively: Dąbrowa Górnicza (8,883 persons), Bielsko (8,842), Zawiercie (7,494), Olkusz (6,159), Blachownia (3,280), Żywiec (560), and Cieszyn (446). Independence was granted only to the larger communities of Będzin (25,264) and Sosnowiec (23,319). The liquidated communities in Katowice, Rybnik, Chorzów, and Pszczyna were treated separately, referred to in publications of the Central Office as Alt-Oberschlesien.⁸

The German military and civil authorities issued a series of decrees in the first months of the occupation aimed at excluding the Jews from economic life and isolating them from the non-Jewish population. First, the property of displaced people (Jews and Poles) was confiscated; Jewish bank accounts were blocked; shops were marked; and Jewish warehouses and stores were subjected to requisitions and closely regulated. Trustees, supervised by the Haupttreuhandstelle Ost (HTO), were assigned to take over Jewish businesses.⁹

The German authorities systematically restricted the Jews' freedom of movement in many towns, excluding them from specific streets. By November 1939, the obligation to wear a white armband with the Star of David was enforced. Other restrictions excluded Jews from markets and divided trams into two sections, one for Jews and the other for non-Jews. A curfew was enforced in most towns, generally from dusk until dawn.¹⁰

As of October 1940, those Jews living in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz came under the jurisdiction of Albrecht Schmelt's Organisation Schmelt. This organization was responsible for the deportation of Jews to labor camps and their assignment to factories and workshops. At least 93 forced labor camps for Jews existed in Regierungsbezirke Kattowitz and Oppeln between 1940 and 1944. Approximately 50,000 Jews were conscripted to work in them. Initially, the Jews from Ost-Oberschlesien were sent there. From 1941, some Jewish



Jewish men and women work in a sewing workshop in the Olkusz ghetto, ca. 1940.

USHMM WS #15930, COURTESY OF ROSE GRINBAUM FUTTER

laborers from the Generalgouvernement were deployed to these camps, followed from mid-1942 by Western European Jews selected from transports sent to Auschwitz.¹¹ Employment in workshops in the region, especially producing materials for the Wehrmacht, offered protection from deportation for some time.

German repressive measures intensified in 1941. From May 9, Jews were obliged to add the middle names “Israel” or “Sara” to identify themselves as Jews. Then on September 1, 1941, Jews over the age of six had to wear a patch bearing the Star of David on the left breast. Jews were also forbidden to wear honorary badges or military decorations. Police permission was required for Jews to leave their place of residence. From September 30, Jews were obliged to carry identity cards (*Lichtbildausweise*). Jews were also banned from using public transport.¹²

From early in the occupation, the German authorities evicted Jews from the main streets of several cities and towns, to make space for German officials. In Będzin, the Germans started to remove the Jews from the center early in 1940; by May 1942, a Jewish quarter (*Judenviertel*) had been demarcated. In Sosnowiec, the Jewish population was displaced from the town’s three main streets at the end of 1939. In Czeladź a quarter designated for the Jews was demarcated in June 1941. By July 1940, the Germans had created a Jewish quarter in Zawiercie. At first, a wooden fence surrounded the quarter. It is likely that by 1941 this area was partly separated with wire, mortar, and a wooden fence; Jewish Police patrolled the ghetto. There was no permanent police station in the ghetto, but the Gestapo and Orpo conducted searches there. Over time, the ghetto was reduced in size. Space became severely restricted in Zawiercie, as Jews from surrounding communities were transferred there in 1942. The ghetto was enclosed with barbed wire in the winter of 1942–1943.

From November 1940, a ghetto was established in stages in Dąbrowa Górnicza. In February 1942, the Jewish quarter in Dąbrowa was still open—that is, unfenced. Residents of the

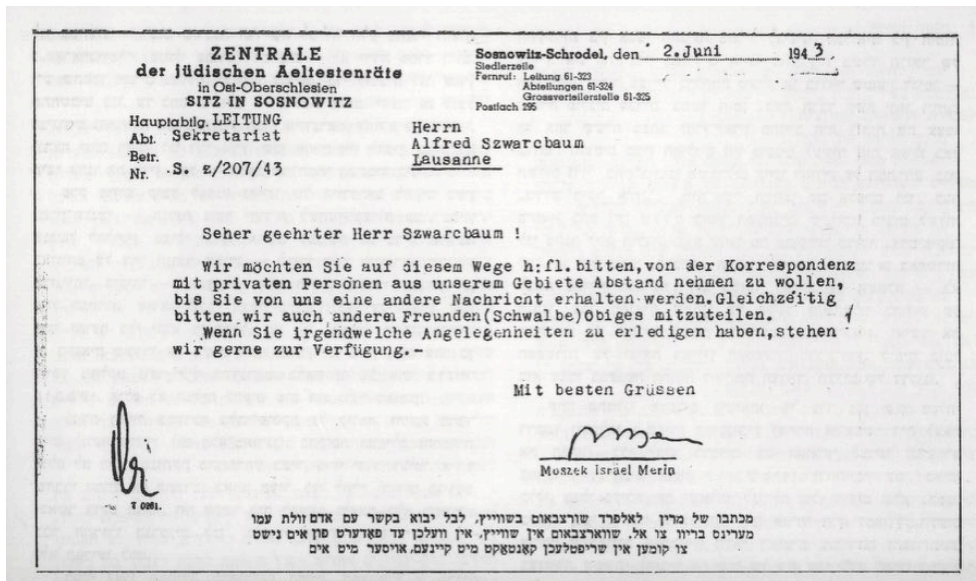
ghetto, however, were forbidden to leave without permission. The non-Jewish population could still enter the ghetto. The Dąbrowa ghetto was enclosed at the beginning of 1943. The Jews of Bielsko were deported from the town center to the nearby village of Lipniki in August 1941, where a ghetto comprising a few houses was established. In Andrychów, a ghetto partially surrounded by a fence was established in September 1941. At this time, an open ghetto was also set up in Olkusz. At the end of 1941, a Jewish quarter was demarcated in Chrzanów. It was not enclosed but was guarded by the Jewish Police. By the spring of 1942, small ghettos had been set up also in Szczakowa and Strzemieszyce.

As this survey demonstrates, many ghettos in Ost-Oberschlesien remained open (unfenced) until their liquidation, and the process of ghettoization in some places was spread over many months. In August 1942, 400 Jewish families still were living outside the Dąbrowa ghetto, and for some towns, such as Jaworzno, there is contradictory evidence as to whether or not an open ghetto existed. Nonetheless, the arrival of waves of Jewish refugees from other towns in 1940 and 1941 created overcrowding, even in places where no formal ghetto existed. In Oświęcim, for example, in 1940 Jews were evicted from the main street, Jagiellońskiej, and other movement restrictions were enforced. In March 1941, Jews were moved from the suburb of Zasole into the town, but preparations for the establishment of a Jewish quarter there were soon overtaken by the expulsion of all the Jews from Oświęcim in April 1941.¹³ Some



Jewish expellees from Oświęcim arrive in Będzin, April 1941.

USHMM WS #08128, COURTESY OF YVA



Letter written by the chairman of the Sosnowiec Judenrat, and chief of the Zentrale der jüdischen Aeltestenräte, Mojżesz (Moszek) Merin, to Alfred Szwarcbaum, June 2, 1943. The text reads: "Dear Mr. Szwarcbaum! We would politely ask you to refrain from correspondence with private persons from our area, until you receive another message from us. At the same time we also ask other friends [Schwalbe] to be informed of the abovementioned. If you have any concerns to be handled, we gladly stand at your disposal. With best greetings, Moszek Israel Merin."

USHMM WS #20737, COURTESY OF ARNOLD SHAY (ABRAM SZYJEWICZ)

ghettos, such as in Sucha, in many respects resembled labor camps, being rather remnant ghettos established only once most of the nonworkers had been deported.

The role of Mojżesz Merin remains controversial. His dynamic and autocratic leadership helped to alleviate conditions for Jews in the region, as he developed a strategy of survival through work. Food rations and living conditions for Jews in Ost-Oberschlesien generally were better than in the General-gouvernement, and tens of thousands of Jews in the larger ghettos were not deported until the summer of 1943. However, Merin's subservient compliance with German demands for forced laborers and ultimately for the sacrifice of Jewish lives earned him the bitter hostility of many Jews. The Central Office and the Jewish Police organized some of the deportations, "in order to prevent the Germans from carrying it out with their customary brutality." In June 1943, the Germans arrested Merin himself, leaving it, as he had predicted, up to history to judge his actions.¹⁴

Several hundred Jews were sent to Auschwitz from towns in the region at the beginning of 1942. On May 12, 1942, a mass deportation Aktion was carried out that included 3,600 Jews from Sosnowiec, 3,200 from Będzin, and 2,000 from Zawiercie. The June deportations also affected the Jews in Sosnowiec and Będzin, especially the poor and sick in the Jewish hospital (i.e., approximately 2,000 people). By July 1942, many of the

small centers in the region had been liquidated, namely: Olkusz, Zator, Kłobuck, Jaworzno, Ząbkowice, Grodziec, Trzebinia, and Blachownia. Approximately 15,000 Jews from communities subordinated to the Central Office were deported between May and July 1942. On August 8, 1942, the Kattowitz Gestapo and Organisation Schmelt posted announcements in several towns, ordering all Jews (employed and unemployed) to report with their families to designated places on August 12, to have their photo identity cards stamped and their employment documents verified. Some of the movement restrictions on Jews in these towns were lifted briefly for the duration of the operation. The chairmen of the Jewish Councils signed the announcements. From among the 50,000 Jews gathered in Będzin, Sosnowiec, Dąbrowa Górnicza, and Czeladź, approximately 19,000 were sent to Auschwitz within a few days.¹⁵

Efforts to fully isolate the Jews in the two largest Jewish population centers—Będzin and Sosnowiec—began in October 1942. The plan of confining the Jews to ghettos outside the town centers was developed by the Sosnowiec Polizeipräsident Alexander von Woedtke. He first proposed this to Regierungspräsident Walter Springorum in February 1942. By creating an isolated ghetto, von Woedtke intended to clamp down on smuggling and black marketeering. At that time, Springorum feared that the Jews' isolation might deprive the economy of vitally needed Jewish forced labor. In the course of numerous

meetings involving the Central Office and the Gestapo, the borders of the new Jewish quarters were established, as well as the dates for their closure. For the Jews of Sosnowiec, a quarter outside the city center was designated in the Polish working-class neighborhoods of Old Sosnowiec and Śródula. The plan was to resettle Będzin's Jews to neighborhoods bordering Kamionka and Mała Śródula. During the resettlement, the problem arose of resettling Polish workers into the former Jewish apartments in the city centers. These issues were resolved with the participation of the Central Office, and particularly of the Resettlement Office, as well as by the Sosnowiec municipal authority. Gradually, various administrative offices, the hospital, and all institutions subordinated to the Central Office were moved to Śródula.

The resettlement process progressed very slowly (e.g., several dozen families per day) until the end of 1942; starting in January 1943, the rate of transfer speeded up dramatically. The residents' placement depended on their "ability to work." Young, able-bodied Jews qualified for hard labor were settled in Kamionka (category "C") or Śródula (category "A"). Those unable to work (likely to be deported first) received categories "D" and "B" and were quartered in Mała Śródula or Old Sosnowiec.

The resettlements were completed in March 1943. The ghetto in Sosnowiec, numbering approximately 20,000 residents, was sealed on May 1, 1943. At this time, the ghettos in Będzin (in Kamionka and Mała Śródula) were also sealed. The remaining Jews from the liquidated Jewish quarter in Dąbrowa Górnicza were resettled there at the end of June. In May 1943, the Gestapo deported the Jews of Czeladź and Modrzejów, as well as approximately 1,000 people (mainly children) from Śródula to Auschwitz.

By May 1943, more than 30,000 Jews were living in the Śródula and Kamionka ghettos. On May 19, the Jews from the Sosnowiec Południowy neighborhood were resettled to the Będzin ghetto. On June 19, 1943, the Germans sent eight officials of the Central Office, including Mojżesz Merin, his brother Chaim, and Fany Czarna, to Auschwitz. Three days later, on June 22, a mass deportation from the Będzin ghetto was conducted. On that day, the Kamionka ghetto was surrounded early in the morning. All its residents were gathered on the main square. The deportations lasted for three days. Over 12,000 Jews went through the selection process; approximately 6,000 to 7,000 were deported to Auschwitz. From the Śródula ghetto, approximately 2,000 Jews were deported, including the sick from the Jewish hospital. Starting in July 1943, several thousand Jews from the liquidated ghetto in Dąbrowa Górnicza were transferred systematically to Będzin.¹⁶

The liquidations of the Będzin and Sosnowiec ghettos commenced on the night of July 31, 1943, with the participation of police units from Sosnowiec, Maczki, Katowice, Bytom, and Gliwice, as well as training, factory, and reserve police. By August 7, approximately 30,000 Jews had been deported to Auschwitz, of which 6,000 then were sent to forced labor camps. At the end of August, the Gestapo left a group of several hundred Jews to salvage Jewish property, adding also those discovered in hiding. At the beginning of January 1944, the last



Group portrait of members of the Ha-Noar Ha-Zioni Zionist youth movement in Sosnowiec, May 1939. All were active in the Zionist underground in Sosnowiec during the German occupation. Among those photographed is Józef Kożuch [second from left].

USHMM WS #06389, COURTESY OF HADASSAH BIMKO ROSENSAFT

few hundred Jews were deported into the camp system, apart from about 50 Jews that remained. These last Jews worked as furriers and tailors. In July 1944, they were sent to the Annaberg camp, then to Auschwitz in October.

The liquidation of the last ghettos took longer than the German authorities anticipated, as members of the Jewish Fighting Organization in the Kamionka and Śródula ghettos offered armed resistance. They fought from three bunkers they had prepared in advance. The following fighters of the Będzin ghetto died in the first days of August: Frumka Płotnicka (member of the Dror organization and a courier between the Będzin and Warsaw ghettos), Józef Kożuch, and Cwi Brandes.

The Jewish community in Zawiercie, numbering approximately 2,500 people sewing soldiers' uniforms in a local factory, was liquidated as the last on August 26. As a result of the August Aktion, only 350 to 400 people remained employed at the Towarzystwo Akcyjne Zawiercia (TAZ) factory. This group was deported to Auschwitz on October 17, 1943.

SOURCES The monograph of Sybille Steinbacher, *"Musterstadt" Auschwitz: Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1999), provides the most comprehensive overview of the fate of the Jews of Ost-Oberschlesien during the Holocaust. Questions regarding living conditions for the Jewish population, their economic exploitation, isolation, and extermination are examined also in several publications by Aleksandra Namysło, e.g., "Postawy mieszkańców rejencji katowickiej wobec ludności żydowskiej," in A. Żbikowski, ed., *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: IPN, 2006), pp. 763–826; or in A. Namysło, ed., *Zagłada Żydów zagłębiowskich* (Będzin: IPN, 2004). There are also several articles on the fate of the Jews in Provinz Oberschlesien in A. Namysło, ed., *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy* (Warsaw: IPN, 2008). In addition, the yizkor books of the communities of Eastern Upper Silesia (e.g., Natan Szternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca* [Katowice, 1946]) also contain much useful information on the ghettos of the region.

A critical assessment of the role played by Mojżesz Merin can be found in Philip Friedman, "Two 'Saviors' Who Failed: Moses Merin of Sosnowiec and Jacob Gens of Vilna," which has been republished in Michael Marrus, ed., *The Nazi Holocaust: Historical Articles on the Destruction of European Jews*, vol. 6, *The Victims of the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Meckler, 1989), pp. 488–492.

A concise overview of the fate of the Jews in Ost-Oberschlesien can be found in Fredka Mazya and Avihu Ronen, "Silesia, Eastern Upper," in Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 4:1351–1355; K. Jonca, "Zagłada niemieckich Żydów na Górnym Śląsku (1933–1945)," in *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka* 2 (1991): 219, deals with the fate of German Jews in Oberschlesien.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AAN; APKat (e.g., RSGŻDG, Polizeipräsident Sosnowiec, M Sosn); AŻIH (301); BA-BL; BA-L; IPN; IPN-Kat; NARA; USHMM; VHF; and YVA.

Aleksandra Namysło and Martin Dean
trans. Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. Ryszard Kaczmarek, *Pod rządami gauleiterów. Elity i instancje władzy w rejencji katowickiej w latach 1939–1945* (Katowice: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1998), pp. 22–23.

2. Jonca, "Zagłada," p. 219; and Alfred Konieczny, "Transporty Żydów z Górnego Śląska do obozu w Teresinie (1942–1944)," *Studia nad Faszyzmem i Zbrodniami Hitlerowskimi* (Wrocław) 24 (2001): 443.

3. Namysło, "Postawy mieszkańców," pp. 768–769; Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski, "Prześladowania ludności żydowskiej w okresie hitlerowskiej administracji wojskowej na

okupowanych ziemiach polskich (1 IX–25 X 1939)," *BŻIH*, no. 39 (1963): 76–77.

4. Götz Aly, "*Endlösung*": *Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1995), pp. 63–64.

5. N-Doc. 3363-PS, Heydrich Schnellbrief, September 21, 1939.

6. Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 21; Peter Maser and Adelheid Weiser, *Juden in Oberschlesien: Historischer Überblick, Jüdische Gemeinden* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1992), 1:60.

7. Namysło, "Centrala Żydowskich Rad Starszych Wschodniego Górnego Śląska," in *Zagłada Żydów zagłębiowskich*, pp. 38–46.

8. APKat, RSGŻDG, 30, Aufstellung der dem Leiter der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Ost-Oberschlesien unterstehenden Ältestenräte der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden, March 12, 1941, pp. 205–219.

9. R. Kaczmarek, "Sytuacja ludności żydowskiej na obszarach zachodnich i południowych Europy wcielonych do Rzeszy Niemieckiej a polityka antyżydowska na polskich terenach wcielonych—próba porównania," in Namysło, *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach*, pp. 16–21.

10. Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 17.

11. A. Konieczny, "Rola Organizacji Schmelz w eksploatacji żydowskiej siły roboczej na Śląsku," in Namysło, *Zagłada Żydów zagłębiowskich*, pp. 32–37.

12. Kaczmarek, "Sytuacja ludności," pp. 16–21.

13. AŻIH, 301/289, 2442, 2489, 2490, 3489.

14. Friedman, "Two 'Saviors,'" pp. 490–492.

15. Avihu Ronen, "The Jews of Będzin," in Kersten Brandt, Hanno Loewy, and Krystyna Oleksy, eds., *Before They Perished* (Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2001), pp. 22–23.

16. Namysło, "Postawy mieszkańców," p. 783.

Ghettos in the Eastern Upper Silesia Region

1941 - 1943



Borders as of 1942

ANDRYCHÓW

Pre-1939: Andrychów (Yiddish: Yandrichov), town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Andrichau, Kreis Bielitz, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Andrychów, województwo małopolskie, Poland

Andrychów is located about 56 kilometers (35 miles) southwest of Kraków. In 1939, the Jewish population of the town was 409 out of a total population of 4,171.¹

When the war broke out, many Jews from Andrychów fled eastward. On the occupation of the town on September 3, 1939, German soldiers and some local Poles broke into and robbed Jewish shops and apartments. After a few weeks, Jewish enterprises, factories, and stores were confiscated and turned over to local ethnic German “trustees.” Many who fled but did not make it to the Soviet-occupied zone gradually returned to Andrychów. At first the Germans denied them residence status, but Jewish leaders interceded with the town mayor, Wyceni, who agreed to register the returnees and issue them ration cards.²

On November 25, 1939, the Germans set the synagogue on fire and prevented the Jews from extinguishing it.³ As the harsh winter of 1939–1940 led to increased hardship, the Jewish inhabitants of Andrychów joined together to provide mutual assistance. Jewish doctors offered medical services. A single community shop was opened to coordinate the acquisition and distribution of food. From the start of the occupation, the Jews were required to provide groups of men for forced labor, which necessitated a survey of people fit for work. Initially Jewish youths and men were sent away to help regulate the flow of water in the river near Kęty; girls and women had to scrub the floors in German offices.⁴ To deflect the intermittent labor assignments away from the town, which were marked by endless beatings, poor conditions, and humiliation, Jewish leaders strove to find employment close to home. Permanent work appeared to offer more security.⁵

A seven-person Judenrat, including one woman (Ella Landau), was established at the end of 1939. The first chairman was Aharon (Arnold) Weinsaft. From the beginning of 1940, the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (the Central Office), headquartered in Sosnowiec, sought to impose its authority over the Judenrat in Andrychów. The refusal to respond to the orders of Mojżesz Merin, chairman of the Central Office, led to increased tension. In January 1940, Merin demanded that the Judenrat submit a roster of the Jews in Andrychów. After he was ignored, he showed up in the company of a Gestapo squad from Katowice. Weinsaft had no choice but to obey instructions from the Central Office and submit to its authority.⁶

In the spring of 1940, Weinsaft was arrested for allegedly abetting the slaughter of animals for kosher meat, which was forbidden by the Germans. He was freed after two months but deposed as chairman of the Judenrat. He was replaced by Dr. Lowicz (an attorney), but Lowicz held the position for only a short time. The next chairman was Isadore Kromholz, who

was appointed on the initiative of Merin. Andrychów also had a Jewish police unit.

In October 1940, the Jewish population of Andrychów was 490 people. In late 1940, the Judenrat received a demand for the transfer of 60 men to a work camp. Kromholz sought to counter the order by arguing that the men were employed in work vital to the German war effort and received the support of local officials. Special representatives of the Central Office were sent to enforce the order, but the Judenrat chairman and the commander of the Jewish Police persisted in their refusal, advising the young men to go into hiding. Merin’s representatives returned empty-handed, but in their place came an SS squad headed by SS-Sturmbannführer Heinrich Lindner, of the Foreign Labor Office known as Organisation Schmelt, which picked up 60 men for the forced labor camp in Sosnowiec. The community sent the men packages of food and clothing until 1942.⁷

In September 1941, the German authorities established a ghetto in Andrychów. The Jews were put into empty Polish houses on Szewska, Brzegi, and Kośvitz Streets in a neglected neighborhood on the eastern edge of the town. The displaced Poles took over the vacated Jewish apartments. The Jews called the ghetto *na brzegach*, after one of its three streets.⁸ One former survivor describes it as being more of a Jewish quarter (*Judenviertel*) or open ghetto, rather than an enclosed ghetto. Two or three families were forced to share each house. Jews were permitted to leave the quarter to go shopping only with a pass.⁹

When Polish shopkeepers refused to sell food to the Jews, they received permission to open their own grocery store to meet the needs of the population. To help stock the store, they received a start-up loan from the Central Office, which was eventually forgiven. The Judenrat was also able to arrange for two Polish doctors to enter the ghetto to attend the sick. A small pharmacy was opened, supplied by a sympathetic friend in Bielsko. From the start of the war until July 1942, there were eight deaths in Andrychów. In each case the Jews were permitted to bury the deceased in the Jewish cemetery.¹⁰

Despite the crowding and isolation, the ghetto inhabitants organized a range of educational and cultural activities. There were Friday evening Sabbath celebrations and programs for the Jewish holidays. Young people continued their studies in clandestine locations, with the older students instructing the younger ones. There was also a day-care program for the children of mothers who worked outside the ghetto. To ease the oppressive conditions, the Judenrat sought and received permission to buy heating coal. A public kitchen was opened, and laborers working under strenuous conditions received extra food.¹¹

The main deportation Aktion against Andrychów’s Jews took place on July 2, 1942. German police surrounded the ghetto, and the inhabitants were forced into the courtyard of the “Czechowicha” factory. The initial order was to clear the town of Jews and send them to the transit camp in Sosnowiec—and from there, most of them to their deaths. However, after the Jews were assembled, there was a “selection.” A group of

100 people unfit for work was sent to Wadowice and added to a trainload of Jews destined, most likely, for the Bełżec extermination camp. Another 40 were sent to the Auschwitz extermination camp. Over 100 others were shipped to work camps via Sosnowiec, and about 60 people, including members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police, were transferred to the Wadowice ghetto. During the selection 20 Jewish policemen from the Central Office, headed by a woman named Czarna, were present. They insisted that German orders be obeyed precisely. Two families were left at the end of the selection, and they too soon had to go to Wadowice. However, after a few weeks, everyone sent to Wadowice was brought back to Andrychów. Their return occurred because the managers of the work sites in Andrychów, in need of trained workers, asked for their return. A labor camp was established for the returnees and other Jews from the area. The Jews of Andrychów again displayed great initiative and resolve as they strove to ease the oppressive conditions. The public kitchen was reopened to provide for the prisoners.¹²

In May 1943, the camp was taken over by the SS and renamed “The Jewish Camp of the Water Management Office in Kattowitz, Branch in Bielsk, construction in Andrychów,” and conditions took a turn for the worse. Men and women were separated, and the food ration was cut off. In July all the men were shipped to other labor camps, leaving only women at the Andrychów camp. In November 1943, the remaining women were deported to Auschwitz.¹³

The men sent to the labor camps were moved from one camp to another, and most of them perished. By the end of the war there were only 25 survivors from Andrychów, mostly from the labor camps. The Jewish presence in Andrychów was not reestablished, and the survivors left Poland for Israel or other destinations.¹⁴

SOURCES Publications concerning the fate of the Jewish community of Andrychów during the Holocaust include: David Jakobowicz, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kebilot Wadowice, Andrychow, Kalwaria, Myslenice, Sucha* (Ramat Gan: Former Residents of Wadowice, 1967); and Avraham Wein and Aharon Weiss, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 3, *Galicja and Western Silesia* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), pp. 55–58. Additional information on the ghetto can be found on the Web site of the Museum of the History of the Polish Jews: www.sztetl.org.pl.

Relevant documentation includes the following: AŻIH (301/2633); IPN (ASG, sygn. 48, p. 20); and VHF (# 8894, 8966).

Samuel Fishman

NOTES

1. Wein and Weiss, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 3, *Galicja and Western Silesia*, pp. 55–56.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.
3. AŻIH, 301/2633, testimony of Artur Markowicz.
4. VHF, # 8894, testimony of Leo Mittler; # 8966, testimony of Ruth Kamaiko.
5. Wein and Weiss, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 3, *Galicja and Western Silesia*, p. 57.

6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*; AŻIH, 301/2633.
8. Jakobowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilot Wadowice, Andrychow*, pp. 283–285; VHF, # 8894. AŻIH, 301/2633, however, dates the establishment of the ghetto in the summer of 1940.
9. VHF, # 8966.
10. Jakobowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilot Wadowice, Andrychow*, pp. 283–285.
11. Wein and Weiss, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 3, *Galicja and Western Silesia*, p. 57.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*; AŻIH, 301/2633.
14. Wein and Weiss, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 3, *Galicja and Western Silesia*, p. 58.

BĘDZIN

Pre-1939: Będzin (Yiddish: Bendin), city, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Bendsburg, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Będzin, województwo śląskie, Poland

Będzin is located about 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) northeast of Katowice. The Jewish population of the city was 21,625 in 1931, comprising 45.4 percent of the total population.

The German army entered Będzin on September 4, 1939. Almost immediately the Germans instituted a reign of terror over the city’s Jews. They burned Jewish homes and the synagogue, took hostages (some of whom they shot), drafted forced laborers, plundered Jewish property, and cut the Jews off from the city’s economic life and from its non-Jewish citizens.

Klaus Udo was named Landrat of Będzin in 1940 and formally served in that position until 1945. After February 1941, his deputy Hieronymus Wolff oversaw operations. From the end of 1942, Hans Feldman, the mayor of Czeladź, served in that capacity.¹



The ruins of the Great Synagogue in Będzin, destroyed by the German police and Einsatzgruppe von Woyrsch during the opening days of war, 1939–1940.

USHMM WS #00427, COURTESY OF YIVO

In late September 1939, a Jewish Aid Committee (Jüdische Hilfskomitee) was set up to replace the pre-war Jewish communal welfare organization. Several weeks later, a Jewish representative body or Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by an engineer, Gustaw Weinzieher, and Lazar Rubinlicht, was established. The Aid Committee opened public kitchens and provided medical care and social assistance for impoverished Jews. On German instructions, a labor center for Jews was established in a local barracks.²

In November 1939, Mojżesz Merin, who was appointed head of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia by Hans Dreier, the head of the department of Jewish affairs of the Kattowitz Gestapo, ordered the Jewish Council in Będzin to submit to his authority. The Będzin Judenrat refused, causing Merin to travel to Będzin accompanied by three Gestapo officers. The Judenrat, under duress, submitted to Merin, who demanded a heavy “contribution” from the Jews of Będzin. He also restructured the Jewish Council. Jakub Erlich, who had been on the old committee, became the new head.³ Chaim Merin, the brother of Mojżesz, served as administrator.

In August 1941, the Judenrat was reorganized again. Chaim Merin became the president (general affairs); the vice presidents were M. Laskier (economic affairs) and M. Manela (financial affairs). Other members were M. Gartner, N. Londner, B. Graubart, Chaim Mołczadzki, M. Lewin, Paradistal, L. Rottner, H. Sztrochlic, Wygodzki, H. Henenberg, Dr. J. Zylberszac, and Ch.M. Szpicberg.⁴ The last chairman of the Będzin Jewish Council was Chaim Mołczadzki.⁵

The Judenrat was divided into several departments, including social services, health, food supply (provisioning), economic, finance and budget, labor, forced labor, housing, and archival-statistical. A department of transport and a postal service also functioned in Będzin. The Judenrat maintained a communal kitchen (at 19 Sienkiewicz Street), a children’s home, and a home for the elderly. The latter was directed by Dr. Weinzieher, who had been a representative in the Polish Sejm. In 1942, an infirmary was established in the home for the elderly on Podzamcze Street. There was also a steam bath with a disinfection room. The Jewish Council issued free passes for haircuts to the poor. The health department exercised strict control over sanitation.⁶

The Będzin Judenrat was subordinated to the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia. It constituted a separate unit—Stadtkreis Będzin, which in October 1940 numbered 25,264 people. Beniamin Graubart served as the Kreis Inspector answerable to the Central Office.⁷

On September 10, 1940, a Jewish police force (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was set up by the Jewish Council, consisting at first of 15 officers. The first commandant was named Kaufman. He was succeeded by Julek Fersztenfeld and then Romek Goldmanc. On August 14, 1941, Chaim Mołczadzki took command.⁸ In September 1942, Wolf Izrael Buchweitz took over.⁹ The last commandant of the Jewish Police was Henryk Barenblatt.

In March 1941, there were 25,171 Jews living in Będzin. On April 5, 1941, a first group of Jews was resettled from Oświęcim

(Auschwitz) to Będzin. Initially they were housed in a Jewish orphanage. Four days later, a second transport arrived; altogether more than 1,000 people. Eventually they were dispersed to private apartments.¹⁰ Thus in July 1941, 27,001 Jews were living in Będzin.¹¹

Jews from Będzin, like all Jews of Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, were placed at the disposal of the Organisation Schmelt; Albrecht Schmelt was appointed as its head in October 1940 and entrusted with sending Jews to forced labor camps and organizing their work deployment in the towns of the region.

From November 1940, the deportation of Jews to forced labor camps started. All men between the ages of 17 and 50, and women from 16 to 45, who were not working in local workshops (shops) or for the Jewish Council, had to appear before a medical commission. Following the selections, many were sent to forced labor camps. This same process took place repeatedly until May 1943.¹²

In Będzin, Jews worked in several factories and workshops. Towards the end of 1940, Rossner established his tailoring shop, which produced clothing for the Wehrmacht. In October 1941, another firm was established—called “Galanterie und Lederwaren E. Nawrat Bendsburg”—a fancy goods and leather goods factory. In January 1942, there were 20 Jews working there; one year later, there were 400.¹³

In late 1941, on Kołłątaj Street, the Michatz shop was founded in a building that was the shirt-making factory of the brothers Faldberg before the war. Some 1,000 people worked there producing shirts, underclothes, and (later) military uniforms. Women worked in the Loytsche shop, which produced ropes and cords. In June 1942, the general textile and iron firm of Rudolf Braun was established in the area. Its first shop was opened in Dąbrowa; then others opened in Będzin and Sosnowiec. The firm produced and repaired shoes.

Several hundred Jews worked in the shop headed by Scherley, a resettled ethnic German from Romania. At several workshops in Będzin, the firm produced women’s purses from oilcloth, bags and suitcases, and parts for bicycles. Scherley took over the pre-war Jewish firms of Rosmarin (suitcase factory), Rottenberg (saddles and seats), and Warsz (bags and purses). There were also smaller businesses in which Jews worked. These included factories on Kołłątaj Street and at 22 Małachowski Street, which both made washing machines; the Gruengrass factory, which produced metal goods;¹⁴ and the shop on Modrzejów Street, which employed 700 to 800 Jews, making uniforms, military overcoats, and other clothing.

From the beginning of 1940, Jews were systematically removed from houses in the center of the city, namely, from Sączewski and Piłsudski Streets. The Jews were moved into apartments on Modrzejów Street, Stary Rynek Street, Podzamcze Street, and Czeladzka Street.¹⁵

A resettlement bureau (Umsiedlungsstab) was established in the town hall to expel Jews from certain streets and house in their place Germans from Bessarabia and Bukovina. Over time the area in which the Jews were allowed to reside or circulate was limited. In the spring of 1941, the Landrat in Będzin issued a *Judenbann* (ban of Jews), which also excluded Jews from

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parks and recreational areas. The Jews were only permitted to live on Modrzejów Street, in Zawale, and near Górka and in neighboring areas. The only route of passage was Modrzejów Street.¹⁶

In May 1942, a Jewish residential quarter (open ghetto) was established. It encompassed Modrzejowska Street, Stary Rynek and the smaller streets around it, and the beginning of Kołłątaj, Czeladzka, and Podgórna Streets. Jews were not allowed to live or walk along Małachowski Street, but some lived in annexes of buildings on that street. Therefore, a passage had to be dug through the basements so they could exit onto Modrzejów Street.¹⁷

The process of resettling the Jews of Będzin from the center of the city to the quarters of Kamionka and Mała Śródula, where Polish workers resided, began in October 1942. It was completed in the middle of March 1943. The ghetto was not surrounded by barbed wire and was guarded by Jewish Police. It was thus easy to enter and leave, as much of the ghetto bordered the Aryan section. The living conditions in the ghetto were very harsh, with filthy, cramped homes and lack of plumbing.¹⁸ A Jewish post office was organized in the ghetto. The Judenrat's construction department built or renovated homes. Several barracks, with plumbing and electricity, were constructed for the workers in Rossner's shop.¹⁹

Ha-Noar Ha-Zioni, a Zionist organization, remained active in Będzin during the entire occupation, even in the ghetto. The leaders of the organization in the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie region were: Józef and Bolesław Kożuchowie, Jan Cymerman, Samuel Majtlis, Israel Diamand, Lola Pomeranczenblum, Karola Bojm, and Henryk Lustiger.²⁰ Also active was the underground organization Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir, led by Cwi Brandes, Chajka Klinger, Dawid Kozłowski and his sisters Idzia and Irena, Lee Peisachsohn, and Hala Katzenholz. In the spring of 1943, a Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir kibbutz was established within the ghetto on Hüttenstrasse. Its leaders were Cwi Brandes and Chajka Klinger. Some 20 people belonged to the kibbutz. They



A Jewish policeman informs a crowd of people about the order to vacate the Zederman house on Zawodzie Street, 1942–1943.
USHMM WS #20743, COURTESY OF ARNOLD SHAY (ABRAM SZYJEWICZ)

participated in various forms of organized resistance against the occupier. Gordonia, led in Będzin by Szłom Lerner and Hanka Borensztejn, was also active.²¹

During the second half of 1942, a Jewish cell connected with the Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Workers' Party) was formed. Its members were Józef Lubling, Mojżesz Szejnberg, Josef Płotek, and Samuel Waldman. After the Gestapo made some arrests among leftist youth in March 1943, the group's activities came to an end.²²

The first mass deportation Aktion in Będzin was on May 12, 1942; about 3,200 Jews were deported to Auschwitz.

On August 12, 1942, the Jews of Będzin were ordered to gather at two separate points in the city—the “Hakoach” sports field on Kościuszko Street and the “Sarmacja” sports field on Małobądz—to have their papers stamped. Merin urged everyone to attend, and the Judenbann was even temporarily set aside to facilitate the operation. Some 23,000 Jews reported to these two selection points. Soon, the German Order Police surrounded the people and were joined by officials of the Security Police. The ensuing selection went on for three days. When they realized their fate, some Jews fled in panic and were shot; others committed suicide. The youth movements smuggled some children away to safety. In total around 5,000 Jews were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp, including the Jewish populations of the nearby towns of Grodziec, Wojkowice, Dobieszowice, Rogoźnik, Bobrowniki, Sączów, and Niezdary, who were brought to Będzin for deportation. Others were selected for the forced labor camps.²³

On May 19, 1943, part of the Będzin ghetto was surrounded by the German police and Gestapo. Several thousand people were rounded up and sent to Auschwitz. On June 22, 1943, at around 3:00 A.M., German police again surrounded the ghetto in Kamionka, and around 13,000 people were gathered in the town square. Of the assembled Jews, several thousand were selected under the supervision of a German officer named Dreier, who disregarded the labor permits of some, and sent them to Auschwitz, where most were gassed shortly after arrival.²⁴

Among those deported was a large group made up exclusively of workers in the Rossner shop and those who worked in the institutions of the Jewish Council. Then shortly afterwards, in July 1943, several thousand Jews from the liquidated ghetto of Dąbrowa Górnicza were resettled into the Będzin ghetto.

On August 1, 1943, the final liquidation of the ghetto took place. Several transports were sent each day for the next three or four days. Armed resistance was put up for several days by the young people in the Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa (Jewish Fighting Organization), which was founded in the fall of 1942 following a visit by Mordechaj Anielewicz to the region.²⁵ During the first few days of the Aktion, several hundred Jews were shot, including the resistance fighters Frumka Płotnicka, Józef Kożuch, and Cwi Brandes.

As a result of the liquidation, around 12,000 people were deported from Będzin. From the crowds gathered for deportation, the head of Rossner's shop selected 600 to 700 Jews and, with the Gestapo's permission, kept them behind. At the end of August, only 230 to 280 Jewish prisoners remained in

Będzin. At the start of January 1944, 200 more Jews were expelled from Będzin, leaving only about 50 people. They worked in the tailor and furrier shops. In July 1944, they were sent to the camp at Góra Św. Anny and from there in October 1944 to Auschwitz.²⁶

More than 200 Jewish prisoners survived the liquidation of the ghetto by hiding in bunkers and other hiding places. They were discovered by the police and Gestapo, then used for cleaning up the ghetto. They survived in this manner in Kamionka until April 1944, when they were sent to Auschwitz.²⁷ Several hundred Jews from Będzin survived the Holocaust, including a number who made it through the further selections in Auschwitz and other camps.

After the war, several German officials of Organisation Schmelt were prosecuted. The officials were held responsible for, among other things, the deportations of the Jewish population from Będzin in May and August 1942. Friedrich Karl Kuczynski was sentenced to death by the local district court in Sosnowiec (SOSn) on September 23, 1948. Another official of Organisation Schmelt, Heinrich Lindner, was arrested by American forces. He committed suicide in January 1949.

On February 7, 1950, an appellate court (Sąd Apelacyjny) sentenced Karol Jenzen to nine years in prison. Jenzen had been head of the Będzin branch of the Treuhandstelle and was involved in the deportation of the Jewish population of the city.

SOURCES Helpful in reconstructing the history of the Jews of Będzin are: J.Sh. Stein, *Pinkes Bendin* (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at Irgun Yots'e Bendin be-Yisrael, 1959); J. Rapoport, *Pinkas Zaglembe* (Tel Aviv, 1972); and D. Liwer, *Ir Hametim* (Tel Aviv: N. Tverski, 1945–1946).

Among a number of published memoirs related to the Będzin ghetto are: Arnold Shay, *From Bendzin to Auschwitz: A Journey to Hell* (Hanover, MA: Christopher Publishing House, 1996); Jochanan Ranz, *In Nazi Claws: Bendzin 1939–1944* (New York, 1976); and Miriam Kipper, *My Memories: Holocaust Memoirs 1939–1945* (Tel Aviv: Kavim, 2006). The diary of a 14-year-old girl, written in the Będzin ghetto, was published in 2007: Rutka Laskier, *Rutka's Notebook: January–April 1943* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007). Among several illustrated books containing photographs of the Jews of Będzin is: Kersten Brandt, Hanno Loewy, and Krystyna Oleksy, eds, *Before They Perished* (Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2001).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APKat (e.g., Polizeipräsident Sosnowitz, 316; Regierung Kattowitz, 2785; RSGŽDG, sygn. 30); AŽIH (e.g., 301/602, 1225, 2449, 2451, 2622, 2711, 2728–2729, 3479–3480, 3536, 4302, 4283, 4295, 4308); BA-BL; BA-L; IfZ; IPN; IPN-Kat; NARA; USHMM; VHF; and YVA.

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trans. Steven Seegel and Claire Rosenson

NOTES

1. R. Kaczmarek, *Pod rządami gauleiterów. Elity i instancje władzy w reencji katowickiej w latach 1939–1945* (Katowice: Wydawn Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1998), pp. 73–74.

2. AŽIH, 301/1225, testimony of J. Sender; 301/2449, testimony of Samuel Pótorak.

3. Ibid., 301/1225.

4. Ibid., Centrala Żydowskich Rad Starszych Wschodniego Górnego Śląska, 212/1, p. 29, Okólnik no. 88, August 13, 1941.

5. Ibid., 301/2449.

6. Ibid., 301/2451, testimony of Abram Szeftel.

7. APKat, RSGŽDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl, July 20, 1942, p. 169.

8. AŽIH, Centrala Żydowskich Rad Starszych Wschodniego Górnego Śląska, 212/1, Okólnik no. 90, August 14, 1941.

9. Ibid., 212/4, p. 44.

10. Ibid., 301/1225.

11. APKat, RSGŽDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl, July 20, 1942, p. 169.

12. AŽIH, 301/1225.

13. Ibid., 301/4302, testimony of S. Pótorak; 301/2449.

14. Ibid., 301/4303.

15. Ibid., 301/2729, testimony of Nacha Krakowska.

16. Ibid., 301/602, testimony of Sali Kanner; see also APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2785, as cited by Sybille Steinbacher, *“Musterstadt” Auschwitz: Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1999), pp. 267–268.

17. AŽIH, 301/2449.

18. Ibid., 301/4308, testimony of Anna Lerhenfeld.

19. Ibid., 301/2449; 301/4308.

20. Ibid., 301/3536, testimony of Jadzia Szpigelman.

21. Ibid., 301/3480, testimony of Fela Katz.

22. Ibid., 301/3479, testimony of Samuel Waldman.

23. Ibid., 301/2622, testimony of Mojżesz Szwarc; 301/2711, testimony of Jakob Freiburger; APKat, Polizeipräsident Sosnowitz, 316, p. 228.

24. AŽIH, 301/1225.

25. Ibid., 301/2728, testimony of N. Krakowska.

26. Ibid., 301/4283, testimony of Chiel Gerlic.

27. Ibid., 301/4295, testimony of Hanka Szajer.

BIELSKO-BIAŁA

Pre-1939: Bielsko-Biała, town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Bielitz, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Bielsko-Biała, województwo śląskie, Poland

Bielsko-Biała is located about 50 kilometers (31 miles) south of Katowice. According to the 1931 census, there were 4,430 Jewish residents in Bielsko. Prior to the outbreak of World War II, there were 12,000 Jews living in the town and its vicinity; in Bielsko proper, there were approximately 4,700 Jews. According to a census conducted in December 1939, there were 7,854 Jews in Kreis Bielitz.¹

German forces entered Bielsko on September 2, 1939. The town's German residents immediately began looting apartments, shops, and workshops that had been deserted by the Jews. It was at this time that the first brutal antisemitic incidents occurred. On September 5, the Germans selected 15 able-bodied Jews and took them to Gestapo headquarters, where they were tortured.



Wartime passport of Bielsko-Biala resident and Holocaust survivor, Herta Frohlich, 1941.

USHMM WS #24092, COURTESY OF HERTA FROHLICH BRANN

They beat their victims over the head with iron chains, and when they fell down unconscious they would pour buckets of water on them, then forcing the victims to get up. Afterwards they hanged them up by their legs, while 15 Hitler Youth members danced around them singing Nazi songs. Next, they were brought down, and taken to a pit, where they were buried up to their necks. Five of them did not survive the beatings and torture—which lasted for three days. The remaining 10—half dead—were released.²

In the first days of the occupation, the Germans set on fire all of the synagogues in the town. Subsequently the Jews were also obliged to pay a large fine to cover the costs of clearing the rubble of these buildings.³

On October 19, 1939, approximately 500 of Bielsko's Jews (aged 18–50) were transported to Nisko near the San River. There, under the threat of death by firing squad, the Germans chased them across the new border with the Soviet Union. On October 28, a second group of 240 men (aged 16–60) was gathered and given the same treatment.⁴

After the chaos of the first days of occupation, the German authorities began to restrict their rights and isolate them from the non-Jewish population. Jews were required to perform forced labor, initially cleaning the barracks where the German army was garrisoned. By the end of 1940, the Ger-

man authorities had introduced a series of harsh economic measures, which first restricted and eventually excluded Jews almost entirely from the sphere of commerce. Based on decrees issued by the military and civil authorities, the property of displaced people (Jews and Poles) was confiscated; Jewish bank accounts and deposits were blocked; cash withdrawals were restricted; shops were marked; and the contents of warehouses were requisitioned. Jewish businesses were placed under the control of trustees, which was tantamount to their confiscation. In November 1939, Jews were ordered to wear white armbands, which were replaced in September 1941 by yellow patches with a Star of David emblem on the left breast.

In May 1940, approximately 1,000 Bielsko Jews were deported to the surrounding towns of Wadowice, Kęty, Oświęcim, and Andrychów. By mid-September 1940, there were only 399 Jews living in Bielsko.⁵

Siegfried Schmidt was appointed as the Landrat of Kreis Bielitz from 1940 to 1942; Bernhard Nienaber replaced him and held this post until the end of the occupation. Rolf Wiesner was the Bürgermeister of the town of Bielsko-Biala. The commander of the Bielitz Freikorps, Ernest Lanz, was nominated as the local head of the Nazi Party in the Kreis. Rudolf Christ was the commander of the Bielsko SA. Kriminalsekretär Güzschel was the first Gestapo chief; this post was filled subsequently by a local Nazi, Kurt Müller.⁶

At the end of 1939, a Judenrat, chaired by Józef Rotter, was established in Bielsko. The Judenrat was supervised by the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia, with Mojżesz Merin as its head. The Kreis Inspectorate subordinated to the Central Office—which supervised several Jewish communities—was also located in Bielsko. In October 1940, the Jewish population of the entire Kreis Bielitz Inspectorate numbered 8,718 Jews and included the following communities: Bielsko (399 people), Dziedzice (89), Kęty (325), Wadowice (1,400), Andrychów (490), Zator (415), and Oświęcim (5,600). In March 1941, there were 351 Jews living in Bielsko, with 9,186 throughout the territory of the Inspectorate. After the expulsion of the Jewish community of Oświęcim in April 1941, the number of Jews in Bielsko did not change, yet the number of Jews in the Kreis declined to 3,028.⁷

In January 1940, the Judenrat opened a soup kitchen, which according to the statistics of the Central Office was used by only six people in March 1941. An infirmary was established in June 1940. According to Arnon Rubin, survivor testimonies indicate some dissatisfaction with the Judenrat, as it remained largely submissive to the Germans and did not achieve much to alleviate living conditions for the Jews.⁸

As of October 1940, the Jews of Bielsko, like all the Jews in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, came under the jurisdiction of Albrecht Schmelt's Organisation Schmelt, which was responsible for the deportation of Jews to labor camps and their assignment to factories and workshops. Bielsko's Jewish youth were employed in an armaments factory in Frysztat, and some of its Jewish women worked in clothing workshops in Wadowice. According to the statistics of the Central Office, on



Wartime photograph of Gerda Weissmann, who was held in the Bielsko-Biala ghetto.
USHMM VWS #ID4323. COURTESY OF GERDA WEISSMANN KLEIN

August 1, 1942, 60 Bielsko Jews were registered as workers in labor camps.⁹

According to survivor testimonies given shortly after the war, in August 1941, Bielsko's Jews were resettled from the center of Bielsko to the village of Lipniki, near Biała, where a ghetto was established. It consisted of a few houses on Zipsersa Street, Lerchenfeld Street, and Listopad Street.¹⁰

The memoir of Gerda Weissmann Klein, however, dates her resettlement to the ghetto on April 19, 1942. The ghetto consisted of a number of buildings clustered together. All the Jews now remaining lived in those few houses and in a huge armory-like building with primitive plumbing, about 10 minutes' walk from the Kultusgemeinde. "More and more frequently the dreaded word *Aussiedlung* [deportation] crept into conversations. Young people, we heard, were sent to labor camps. The old ones were sent to Auschwitz. Even then we knew what kind of camp it was. Somehow we never believed what happened to Jews in other towns would happen to us."¹¹

The Central Office recorded 461 Jews registered in Bielsko-Biała on May 1, 1942.¹² At this time conditions for the remaining Jews deteriorated, as many of those capable of work, including heads of families, were sent away to labor camps. Thus mainly, women, children, and the elderly remained, who suffered from disease and the lack of food.

On June 29, 1942, all the town's Jewish residents were ordered to report to several designated locations, where selections were conducted.¹³ Of those who reported, 40 persons were sent to a labor camp, and the remaining 400 or so Jews were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. The 15 people who remained in the town, including the chairman of the

Judenrat, were left to sort Jewish belongings. They were deported to Wadowice on July 15, 1942. In October 1943, there were 35 Jews and 44 *Mischlinge* (Jews born in mixed marriages) in Bielsko. At this time, approximately 15 men were sent to work in France, only to be sent back after four months. These Jewish men were sent to Thuringia in October 1944, while 44 women continued to work in a local ammunition factory. Of Bielsko's pre-war Jewish residents, between 200 and 350 returned after the war.¹⁴

SOURCES Some information regarding the history of the Jews of Bielsko-Biała can be found in the works of Jacek Proszek, *Cmentarz żydowski w Bielsku-Białej* (Bielsko-Biała, 2002); T. Fałęcki, "Okupacja hitlerowska," in *Bielsko-Biała. Zarys rozwoju miasta i powiatu* (Katowice, 1971); and Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 3, *District Krakow* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2008), pp. 128–129. There is also a yizkor book for the Jewish community, edited by Eljahu Miron, *Bilits-Biala; pirke 'avar* (Israel, 1973). The memoir of Gerda Weissmann Klein, *All But My Life* (New York: Noonday, 1957), mentions the ghetto in Bielsko-Biała.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APKat (RSGŻDG, sygn. 3 and 30; Regierung Kattowitz, 2779); AŻIH (301/3966, 3968, 3970); USHMM; and YVA (O-3/1251).

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NOTES

1. Fałęcki, "Okupacja hitlerowska," p. 232.
2. AŻIH, 301/3966, collective testimony of Róża Reichel, Markus Szajer, Eugeniusz Reich, Rudolf Walaszek, and Adolf Rychter.
3. *Ibid.*, 301/3970, testimony of the Jewish Committee in Bielsko.
4. *Ibid.*
5. APKat, RSGŻDG, 3, Bulletin no. 1, September 15, 1940, pp. 1–2.
6. Fałęcki, "Okupacja hitlerowska," p. 321.
7. APKat, RSŻGDG, 30, Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl, July 20, 1941, p. 128; and Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl, March 12, 1941, p. 209.
8. Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, 3:129.
9. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2779, Statistische Angaben über den Stand der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, August 24, 1942, p. 3.
10. AŻIH, 301/3968, testimony of Franciszek Rychter. Rubin (*The Rise and Fall*, vol. 3) and *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), 3:689, however, both date the establishment of the ghetto in the summer of 1940.
11. Klein, *All But My Life*, pp. 72–79.
12. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2779, Statistische Angaben, p. 3.
13. According to AŻIH, 301/3966, testimony of Róża Reichel, Markus Szajer, Eugeniusz Reich, Rudolf Walaszek, and Adolf Rychter: "On June 29, all ghetto residents were taken with their luggage to Dziedzice." Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 3, dates this Aktion as taking place on June 20, 1942.

14. AŻIH, 301/3966; J. Proszek, *Cmentarz żydowski w Bielsku-Białej* (Bielsko-Biała, 2002), p. 82.

CHRZANÓW

Pre-1939: Chrzanów (Yiddish: Kbzhanev), town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Krenau, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Chrzanów, województwo małopolskie, Poland

Chrzanów is located about 30 kilometers (19 miles) southeast of Katowice. In 1931, there were 7,023 Jews residing in Chrzanów, comprising 39 percent of the total population.

German troops entered Chrzanów on September 4, 1939. The occupying forces immediately began to abuse, plunder, and kill members of the Jewish population. The Germans instituted measures that isolated the Jews from the local population and excluded them from the economy.

In May 1940, a total of 6,807 Jews were residing in Chrzanów. On May 14 and 15, 1940, about 1,200 Jews from Rybnik, Pszczyna, Mikołów, Chorzów, Katowice, and Mysłowice were deported to Chrzanów and the neighboring town of Trzebinia.¹ In March 1941, 7,884 Jews were registered as living in

Chrzanów.² By June, the number had risen to 8,423,³ as in April 1941 a number of Jews arrived in Chrzanów who had been expelled from Oświęcim.

From September 7, 1939, the county official (Landrat) of the Krakau district, Dr. Zilch, was in charge of Chrzanów. A man named Nolke became the mayor of the town. Two days later Eugen Höbert took over as the commander of the military administration. At the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, Theo Schulz was the Landrat in Chrzanów. On May 1, 1941, Dr. Walter Cantner was officially named as the Landrat, after having been the acting Landrat from February 23, 1940. When Cantner was sent to the front in 1943, a man named Groll, the Landrat in Olkusz, assumed responsibility for Chrzanów. First Lieutenant Paul Schindler became the head of the local Security Police. In May 1941, Chrzanów became one of the four police districts (Ortspolizeibezirke) under the supervision of the mayor, J. Gründler (der Bürgermeister der Ortspolizeibehörde-Kriminalpolizei). Otto Westpohl served as the head of the local Criminal Police (Kripo).⁴

The first Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established at the end of 1939. It consisted of the following individuals: Józef Umlauf (a locksmith and chairman of the organization of Jewish War Veterans), Fasek Weber, David Wachsberg, Levi Krauskopf, and Józef Shmuel Shonhertz.⁵ In January 1940, the administration of the Jewish community was reorganized by Mojżesz Merin, the head of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (Central Office).⁶ His brother, Chaim Merin, who held formal authority over the local Jews, implemented the reorganization.⁷ In March 1940, the Jewish Council was reconstituted; in addition to Weber and Wachsberg, the following people joined the Judenrat: Bezael Cuckier, Mojżesz Nagoschyner, Kalmen Teichler, Zelig Grajower, Schmuel Yosef Weiss, and Mendel Nussbaum.⁸ Cuckier (the leader of the local Mizrachi Party) became the head of the Chrzanów Jewish Council in October 1940. Some members of the Judenrat had a fairly good reputation among the Jewish population. The Gestapo deported three of them, Cuckier, Nussbaum, and Teichler, to the Auschwitz concentration camp on February 19, 1942, for alleged sabotage. The last leader of the Chrzanów Jewish Council was Dr. Władysław Boehm, sent by Merin of the Central Office to act in accordance with his strategy of cooperation with the Germans.⁹ Boehm held this position until the liquidation of the ghetto in February 1943. Chrzanów also became one of the eight district centers that were subordinated to the Central Office. In June 1941, the Jewish population of Kreis Krenau numbered 12,708. That figure included the Jewish inhabitants of neighboring villages and communities, such as Jaworzno (2,161 people), Szczakowa (530 people), and Trzebinia (1,242 people).¹⁰

The Jewish community also had its own police force (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) under the command of Weber, a particularly cynical and brutal plunderer. The unit consisted of 20 officers.¹¹ The Jewish community maintained two public kitchens for the poor (established in February and June 1940) and an orphanage (opened in December 1940). In March 1941, 35 percent of the Jews in Chrzanów were receiving public



Three young women from the Chrzanów ghetto, Fella Tag, Sala Raucherger, and Cesia Rabinowicz, pose in armbands, n.d. USHMM WS #49316, COURTESY OF HELEN SENDYK

welfare.¹² Until 1942, Jewish children attended school; the instruction in all of the subjects was in Polish. In the 1939–1940 school year, 900 Jewish children were registered at four elementary schools in Chrzanów.¹³

The Jews of Chrzanów, like all Jews of Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, were placed at the disposal of the Organisation Schmelt; Albrecht Schmelt was appointed as its head in October 1940 and entrusted with sending Jews to forced labor camps and organizing their work deployment in the towns of the region. Jews from Chrzanów were sent to work on highway construction, at other forced labor camps at quarries, and on railway lines or were deployed locally to work in a factory producing rubber products or in a branch of Albert Rossner's clothing plant. Deportations of Jews to the forced labor camps were carried out by the Germans with the assistance of Merin and Jewish Police sent from Sosnowiec by the Central Office.

In 1940, the Germans started removing the Jews from certain streets and resettling them in predominantly Jewish areas. Then by the end of 1941, a Jewish “residential area” or open ghetto was established in Chrzanów. It was situated between the following streets: Kadłubek, Krzyska, Kraków, Garncarska, Luszowska, Balińska, and Berek Joselewicz. It was not surrounded by a wall or fence, and the Jewish Police was in charge of security inside the ghetto.¹⁴ In addition to the ghetto, some Jews also resided on Kraków Street, but exclusively in courtyard buildings (away from the street). It was forbidden for them to walk on Kraków Street.¹⁵ In March and April 1942, approximately 1,000 Jews from neighboring towns, such as Ciężkowice, Chelmek, Kwaczał, Szczakowa, Alwernia, and Łuszowice, were moved to the Chrzanów ghetto.¹⁶ In May 1942, a total of 8,631 Jews were residing in Chrzanów.¹⁷

At the end of May 1942, the German authorities conducted a large-scale deportation Aktion in the Chrzanów ghetto. The selections for these deportations lasted six days and were carried out with the participation of representatives of Merin's Central Office based on Krzyska Street. The selection was based on the Jews' ability to work. During this period, approximately 3,000 Jews were sent to Auschwitz or to labor camps.

Helen Sendyk wrote of the deportation Aktions:

House raids against the Jews came with ever more frequency and malice. Families were torn apart, with mothers being taken away from small children. Fathers, sons, and daughters were shipped away to forced labor camps. The old and the feeble dared not go out in the streets. Starvation, disease, and death found them in their hiding places. Food was ever more difficult for the dwindling Jewish population to obtain.¹⁸

Jews had to appear to register in order to obtain food stamps, but this exposed them to possible deportation.

On July 8, 1942, Paul Schindler of the Gestapo issued an order calling for all of the Chrzanów Jews, with the exception of those transferred from Trzebinia and Szczakowa, to appear at the square on Kupska Street. About 2,500 people complied

with the order. The German authorities selected 1,500 people and led them under police escort to the local elementary school. The next day these people were deported to Auschwitz. From this day on, such Aktions were conducted almost every week, under Westpohl's command.¹⁹ The transports consisted of between 30 and 150 people. In August 1942, a total of 6,551 Jews remained in Chrzanów.²⁰

The workers who remained in Chrzanów by the fall of 1942 were mainly employed in a branch of the Oberschlesischen Gummiwerke GmbH or in a clothing factory making uniforms for the Wehrmacht.

The final Aktion to liquidate the Chrzanów ghetto came on February 18, 1943. The selection of the assembled victims was carried out by an official of Organisation Schmelt, Heinrich Lindner. The residents of the ghetto were divided into two groups. One was sent to Auschwitz, the other to the labor camps in Muszowice. The members of the Jewish Council were sent to Sosnowiec and from there to Auschwitz. Few Chrzanów Jews survived the Holocaust. In May 1945, only 60 Jews were living in Chrzanów.²¹

SOURCES General information on the history of Chrzanów and its Jewish community can be found in: *Chrzanów: Studia z dziejów miasta*, 2 vols. (Chrzanów, 1998–1999), which also includes articles on the German occupation. Information on the history of the Jews of Chrzanów and their fate in the Holocaust can be found in Mordecai Bochner, *Chrzanów: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Shtetl* (Roslyn Harbor, NY: Solomon Gros, 1989), originally published as *Sefer Khzbanew* (Munich-Regensburg, 1949); and in Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 3, *District Krakow* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2008), pp. 152–153. A survivor memoir was published by Helen Sendyk, *The End of Days* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

Relevant documentation and the testimonies of surviving Jews from Chrzanów can be found in the following archives: APKat (RSGŻDG, sygn. 3 and 30; Regierung Kattowitz, 2779); AŻIH (301/2718, 2720, 3016, 4915); IPN-Kat; USHMM (e.g., RG-50.002*0072 and Acc.1997.A.0235); VHF; and YVA.

Aleksandra Namysło
trans. Katrin Reichelt and Claire Rosenson

NOTES

1. APKat, Łagiewniki township, 260, Circular no. 3 Gestapo in Katowice, May 8, 1940, p. 10.
2. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, List of Councils of Elders of Jewish communities in Ost-Oberschlesien, March 12, 1941, p. 211.
3. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, census of the Jewish population, June 20, 1941, p. 173.
4. T. Fałęcki, and I. Sroka, “Chrzanów w latach okupacji 1939–1945,” in *Chrzanów: Studia*, 15–24; R. Kaczmarek, *Pod rządem gauleiterów. Elity i instancje władzy w rejencji katowickiej w latach 1939–1945* (Katowice: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1998), p. 74.
5. Bochner, *Chrzanów*.
6. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 3, Bulletin no. 1, September 15, 1940, p. 2.
7. AŻIH, 301/3016.

8. Bochner, *Chrzanów*.
9. *Sefer Kbzbanev*, pp. 283–285, as cited by Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), p. 331.
10. APKat, RSGZDG, sygn. 30, census of the Jewish population as of June 20, 1941, p. 173.
11. AŻIH, 301/2720.
12. APKat, RSGZDG, sygn. 30 (Jewish Welfare in Eastern Upper Silesia), March 25, 1941, p. 242.
13. Fałęcki and Sroka, “Chrzanów w latach okupacji,” p. 37.
14. IPN-Kat, p. 1/188, investigation of the extermination of the Jews in Wadowice 1942–1943 and in other ghettos in the territories of Zagłębie, Dąbrowska, and Chrzanów, minutes of the interrogation of Stanisław P., April 20, 1989, p. 128. This source dates the ghetto’s establishment at the end of 1941. AŻIH, 301/4915, testimony of Samuel Feiler, however, dates it in February 1941, but the chronology in this account appears unreliable.
15. AŻIH, 301/2720.
16. *Ibid.*, 301/2718.
17. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2779, official data on the Jewish population, August 24, 1942, p. 4.
18. Sendyk, *The End of Days*, p. 129.
19. AŻIH, 301/2720.
20. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2779, official data on the Jewish population, August 24, 1942, p. 4.
21. AŻIH, CKZP, Wydział Kultury i Propagandy, sygn. 129–130, Biuletyn no. 34/35, May 29, 1945.

CZELADŹ

Pre-1939: Czeladź, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Czeladź, Kreis Bendsburg, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Czeladź, województwo śląskie, Poland

Czeladź is located about 9 kilometers (5.6 miles) north-northeast of Katowice. At the time of the German invasion in 1939, the Jewish population stood at more than 1,000 people; Jews comprised about 5 percent of the town’s total population.

The Germans occupied Czeladź on September 5, 1939. On this day 20 Jews from Czeladź were taken as hostages to Będzin; after eight days of beatings and torture they were permitted to return home. When the chaos of the first days of occupation came to an end, the German authorities began removing the Jewish community from economic life in Czeladź, depriving it of certain basic rights, and isolating it from the non-Jews of the town. The Jews in Czeladź were subjected to the same restrictive measures as other Jewish communities in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, which first became part of Provinz Schlesien in 1939, then the new Provinz Oberschlesien in 1941. Among the measures introduced from the fall of 1939 were forced labor and the confiscation of Jewish property. The Jews also were forced to pay a contribution in money or gold of 10 Reichsmark (RM) per head.¹

Meanwhile, the German administration established itself in the town. Hans Felden was appointed as mayor of Czeladź. At the end of September 1939, a detachment of Order Police, subordinated to the Schutzpolizei post in Sosnowiec, was es-



Studio portrait of the Uрман family, ca. 1940. The Urmans were confined to the Czeladź ghetto and murdered at Auschwitz in 1943. USHMM WS #08806, COURTESY OF SALOMON URMAN

tablished in Czeladź. From October 1940, it was subordinated to the newly created Polizeipräsidium in Sosnowiec, under the command of Alexander von Woedtke.

In June 1940, the Gestapo organized an anti-Jewish massacre in revenge for the murder of a German by an unknown person. The Jews and Poles were summoned to appear on the main square, where they were beaten and tortured by German police officers and Gestapo officials, who “jumping and dancing on the bodies, especially the Jews, beat them with sticks and iron tools. The blood flowed in streams and the victims were not even allowed to moan. The wild revel lasted until late at night, and when the Nazis finally had enough, they ordered their victims to return back to their homes.”² Some 20 Jews were detained, then transported to Będzin. They never returned.

In January 1940, a Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia was established in Sosnowiec under the leadership of Mojżesz Merin. All the Jewish inhabitants of Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz and some communities from Regierungsbezirk Oppeln were subordinated to the new Central Office. In the second half of January 1940, according to the instructions of the head of the Kattowitz Gestapo section dealing with Jewish matters (Department J), and with the personal involvement of Merin, the religious community in Czeladź was recognized. It was represented by a Jewish Council of Elders (Ältestenrat der Juden, or Judenrat),³ with Pinkus Koppel initially as its head. In September 1940, the Czeladź Jewish community numbered 1,120 people. It was directly subordinated to the Kreis Inspectorate in Dąbrowa Górnicza and thus to the Central Office.⁴ In March 1941, Szyja Goldberg was the chairman of the Judenrat in Czeladź.⁵ In August 1942, Abram Pozmantir occupied this post. The community maintained a soup kitchen (set up on October 1, 1940) and a fire department. In March 1941, 1,204 Jews were residing in Czeladź, and of these about 15 percent were receiving social welfare benefits of some kind.⁶

A separate Jewish residential district (open ghetto) was established in Czeladź in June 1941. The Jewish district covered 2,400 square meters (0.6 acre) and encompassed the following streets: Żytnia, Żwirki i Wigury, Kamienna, and Spokojna.⁷ The Jewish youth in Czeladź cooperated with the resistance movement of young people, formed mainly by members of the Zionist group Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir, based in Będzin and Sosnowiec.

From June 1940, the Jewish inhabitants of Czeladź, like all Jews living in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, were placed under the authority of Organisation Schmelt for the purposes of forced labor deployment. Albrecht Schmelt was the Special Representative of the Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police for Employing Foreign Nationalities in Upper Silesia and was directly subordinated to Heinrich Himmler. The office of Organisation Schmelt in Czeladź, commonly called the Dienststelle (Office), had all Jewish workers at its disposal, which meant that it was responsible for deciding whether Jews would be allocated to work within the town (in the so-called shops) or whether they would be transported to other forced labor camps. In Czeladź, the Jews worked in the pottery factory "Józefów" (about 50 people), and quite a large group was also employed in Rossner's shop in Będzin, to which they were transported daily by tram. At the same time, contingents of Jews were periodically sent to labor camps. The first transport of this kind was dispatched in October 1940, when 200 people were sent away.⁸

The Germans carried out the first mass deportation Aktion in Czeladź on May 17, 1942. It lasted from 10:00 A.M. until dusk and then on the next day from 8:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. The Jews from Czeladź were gathered in collection camps in Będzin and Dąbrowa, from where some were subsequently sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp.⁹ More than 200 people were deported on this occasion. On August 12, 1942, all Jewish inhabitants of Czeladź were summoned to appear near the barracks on Paul-Keller-Strasse 27 at 7:00 P.M., in accordance with instructions issued by the Gestapo and Stapo (State Police) in Katowice and by Organisation Schmelt. The purpose of the operation was to stamp the identity cards (the so-called *Lichtbildausweise*) of the Jews. Unlike in Sosnowiec, Będzin, and Dąbrowa Górnicza, where the gathering of the towns' Jewish inhabitants ended with their selection and the transportation of some to the Auschwitz concentration camp, in Czeladź the representatives of the Dienststelle and the Gestapo only checked and stamped the documents, and then those assembled were permitted to go home.¹⁰

By the second half of August 1942, about 1,000 Jews remained in Czeladź, following the previous deportations to labor camps.¹¹

The ghetto was enclosed in the autumn of 1942. From the beginning of 1943, German Aktions selecting Jews for transportation to the work camps increased. On May 20, 1943, the Germans liquidated the ghetto in Czeladź.¹² Only 50 Jews employed in Rossner's shop in Będzin and the 37 still working in Czeladź were exempted from the deportations. These Jews were transferred to the ghetto in Będzin, and then after this

ghetto was closed in turn on August 1, 1943, they were sent to Auschwitz.¹³

About 40 Jews from the town are known to have survived until the end of World War II.¹⁴

SOURCES No detailed publication on the fate of the Jews in Czeladź during the Holocaust has been published. A short article by A. Rejdak, "The Jews in Czeladź," is available in *Czeladź Bulletin*, no. 3 (1996). Some information on the Jewish community can be found in Wiesława Konopelska, *Szalom: Pamięci czeladzkich Żydów* (Czeladź: Urząd Miasta, 2008).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APKat (e.g., RSGŻDG, 3 and 30; Polizeipräsident Sosnowiec, 314, 334; and M Sosn, 6368); AŻIH (301/2567); IPN; USHMM (RG-15.033M); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2567, testimony of A. Gelbard, p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
3. Rejdak, "The Jews in Czeladź," p. 77.
4. APKat, RSGŻDG, 3, Bulletin no. 1 of October 15, 1940, p. 2.
5. *Ibid.*, RSGŻDG, 30, Aufstellung der dem Leiter der jüdischen Kultus-Gemeinden in Ost-Oberschlesien unterstehenden Ältestenräte der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden (geordnet nach Kreisinspektoraten), March 12, 1941, p. 214.
6. *Ibid.*, 30, Jüdische Fürsorge in Ost-Oberschlesien, March 25, 1941, p. 245.
7. Rejdak, "The Jews in Czeladź," pp. 77–79.
8. AŻIH, 301/2567, testimony of A. Gelbard, p. 6.
9. APKat, Polizeipräsident Sosnowiec, 316, letter from the Kommando der Schutzpolizei, May 16, 1942, p. 204.
10. AŻIH, 301/2567, testimony of A. Gelbard, p. 8.
11. APKat, M Sosn, 6368, statistical statement concerning the conditions of the Jewish population, information of the Sosnowiec Police Department, August 24, 1942, p. 2.
12. *Ibid.*, Polizeipräsident Sosnowitz, 334, situational report of the commandant of the 4th police precinct in Czeladź to the commandant of the 1st section of the Schutzpolizei in Sosnowiec, June 3, 1943, p. 66.
13. AŻIH, 301/2567, testimony of A. Gelbard, p. 9.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

DĄBROWA GÓRNICZA

Pre-1939: Dąbrowa Górnicza (Yiddish: Dombrowa), town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Dombrowa, Kreis Bendsburg, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Dąbrowa Górnicza, województwo śląskie, Poland

Dąbrowa Górnicza is located about 14 kilometers (9 miles) northeast of Katowice. In 1931 there were 5,100 Jews living in Dąbrowa Górnicza (14 percent of the population). In 1939, there were 5,500 members of the religious community altogether in Dąbrowa and the neighboring town of Strzemieszyce.

The German army entered the town on September 4, 1939; they set the synagogue on fire, partially destroying it



Jewish children and adults pose on the streets of Dąbrowa Górnicza, ca. 1939–1940.

USHMM WS #16571, COURTESY OF ZEV AND YEHUDIT MALACH

(later it was converted into a storehouse). On November 9, 1939, 15 local Jews were arrested and sent away to a prison in Katowice. Several weeks later (probably in May 1940), about 650 Jewish refugees from Austria, Germany, and Cieszyn in Silesia arrived in Dąbrowa Górnicza. At the same time, about 800 young Jews left for the Soviet Union.¹ In September 1940, there were 5,300 Jews living in Dąbrowa Górnicza (14.32 percent of the town's population).²

At the beginning of November 1939, the Germans initiated the first systematic anti-Jewish measures, including confiscations, business closings, a curfew, and the wearing of distinguishing markings (by way of forcing Jews to wear distinctive symbols on their clothes).

In February 1940, Bruno Maier became mayor of the town (prior to this, a Pole, Teofil Trzësimiech, had performed this function). He was in office for just a few months and was dismissed for misappropriation of property confiscated from Poles and Jews. His successor, Gollasch, was also dismissed for similar misdemeanors. In the middle of 1940, a man named Hein



An elderly Jew wearing a yellow star walks along a street in Dąbrowa Górnicza, 1939–1941.

USHMM WS #05942, COURTESY OF JERZY TOMASZEWSKI

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

was appointed to this position, and he remained in the post until the end of the occupation.

Up to the end of 1940, Dąbrowa Górnicza was patrolled by the Third Section of the Schutzpolizei Abschnittskommando (SAk) based in Sosnowiec. After a reorganization of the police structure, Section Headquarters VI of the SAk was established in the town. Police stations in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Zagórze (with a branch in Klimontów), Kazimierz (branch in Porąbka), Niwka (branch in Dańdówka), Strzemieszyce, and Niemce were all subordinated to it. It was in turn subordinated to the Polizeipräsidium in Sosnowiec, under the command of Alexander von Woedtke.

The first police chief in Dąbrowa Górnicza was Gronostaj, and after him (until the end of the war) Paul Baumgart. The head of the local Kripo (Criminal Police) was SA-Führer Friedrich Reese (from January 1940).

In the middle of November 1939, on the orders of the Kattowitz Gestapo (head of the department for Jewish matters, Kriminalkommissar Hans Dreier), the existing community was reorganized, and a Jewish Council (Juderat) was established. It was composed of the following departments: administration, housing, business, budget, social welfare, health, and forced labor. At first Dr. Samuel Mittelman (sent to the camp in Annaberg but returned in July 1942) was the head of the Jewish Council; from 1941, Icek Borenstein was the chairman. The Jewish Council in Dąbrowa was subordinated to the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia in Sosnowiec, which was a higher-level body for the Jewish communities in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz and for some communities in Regierungsbezirk Oppeln. Icek Borenstein also performed the function of Kreis Inspector, representing the Central Office. Apart from Dąbrowa Górnicza, he also was responsible for neighboring Jewish communities and their subordinate branches in: Gołonóg (140 Jews), Zagórze (160), Czeladź (1,220), Grodziec (180), Wojkowice Komorne (75), Bobrowniki (30), Dańdówka (180), Łagisza (30), Ożarowice (50), Modrzejów (1,120), and Niwka (375). In total, he was responsible for 8,865 Jews.³

The seat of the Judenrat was located at 11 Sienkiewicz Street.⁴ A Jewish Order Police (Strassenordner) functioned within the community, headed by Abram Braunstein.⁵ The community established soup kitchens on December 10, 1939, and an orphanage on December 16, 1940, in which there were 59 children. In March 1941, 5,564 Jews were living in Dąbrowa Górnicza, and about one quarter of them were receiving social welfare benefits.⁶ On November 19, 1941, Jews from Zagórze were resettled to Dąbrowa Górnicza, and in the spring of 1942, the Jews from Gołonóg arrived.⁷ On May 18, 1942, Jews from Ząbkowice (about 340 people) were brought to Dąbrowa Górnicza. They were locked in the synagogue and kept there for several days. At the same time, Jews from Strzemieszyce also arrived. As a result, by the beginning of May 1942, there were 5,802 Jews living in Dąbrowa.⁸

The Jews of Dąbrowa Górnicza, like all Jews in this region, were placed at the disposal of the Organisation Schmelt, appointed in October 1940, whose responsibilities included the



Group portrait of Jewish youth in the Dąbrowa Górnicza ghetto, ca. 1941. Top row, left to right, are Bronka Rubinsztajn, Abram Zarnowiecki, Lena Zak (Koenigstein), and Edzia Wajnszok. Bottom row, left to right, are Sabina Szeps, Majer Rotmencz, Symka Spokojna, and Balcia Krysztal. USHMM WS #07131, COURTESY OF MORRIS ROSEN

allocation of Jews to work in forced labor camps or their employment locally near their place of residence. The first transport of Jews from Dąbrowa Górnicza to forced labor camps took place in October 1940. About 400 young Jews, aged 18 to 25, were sent to the Klein-Mangersdorf camp to work on the Reichs-Autobahn.⁹ Other groups were eventually sent to other labor camps or worked in town at the firms of Albert Rossner (clothing manufacture) and Rudolf Braun (shoe manufacture and repair). Braun's positive attitude towards his workers was widely known in the Jewish community, especially his efforts to prevent their deportation to labor camps. Nevertheless, in the spring of 1942, about 100 men from Braun's shop were deported.¹⁰

In November 1940, the German authorities established a Jewish quarter, and the Jews were removed from the center of town. The quarter covered the area of Chopin, Łukasiński, Starobędzinska, Hieronimska Dolna, Hieronimska Górna, Jaworowa, and Mirecki Streets.¹¹ The area of the ghetto consisted of 11,400 square meters (2.8 acres). In February 1942, the Jewish quarter in Dąbrowa was still open; that is, the Germans had not yet enclosed it with barbed wire or a fence. However, the inhabitants of the ghetto were not permitted to leave the ghetto without a pass. Non-Jews continued to have free access to the ghetto.¹² There were 400 Jewish families living outside the ghetto (i.e., 1,524 people).¹³ The ghetto was enclosed at the beginning of 1943.¹⁴ It was framed within Chopin, Miejska, and Polna Streets, a part of Łukasiński, and a part of Okrzeja Street.¹⁵ There were five gates to the ghetto, which were guarded by the Jewish Police.¹⁶

In May 1942, the Germans deported 630 Jews from Dąbrowa Górnicza to the Auschwitz concentration camp.¹⁷ On August 12, 1942, all the inhabitants of Dąbrowa were summoned to appear on Kreuzstrasse at 7:00 a.m., on the basis of orders issued by the Gestapo and the Stapo (State Police) from Katowice and Organisation Schmelt. The aim was to stamp their identity cards (the so-called *Lichtbildausweise*). There were be-

tween 2,500 and 3,500 Jews gathered in the yard. A witness of these events, Karol Herszkowicz, reported: "At about 10:00 a.m., Germans arrived with arms and the police with guns. There were eight of them; groups of three went to the roofs of the houses and were standing there with guns ready for use in a shooting position, while Jewish Police [Ordnern] stood around the people with whips in hands."¹⁸ A commission divided the people gathered there into three groups: one group was to remain in the town to work in the workshops, the second was to remain only temporarily in Dąbrowa, and the third was to be transported to Auschwitz. As a result of the selection, about 1,500 people were deported. At first they were taken to the orphanage in Będzin, then on to Auschwitz. Friedrich Karl Kuczynski, an official of Organisation Schmelt based in Sosnowiec who was in charge of the Aktion, was assisted by Dreier, the military police, and the Jewish Police. After this deportation, according to German figures, 3,783 Jews remained in Dąbrowa; according to Jewish sources, however, the number remaining was only about 1,000 to 2,000 people.¹⁹

From March 1943, the remaining Jews were systematically resettled into the ghettos in Będzin and Sosnowiec, such that in July, the ghetto was finally liquidated. Most of the Jews from Dąbrowa were then transported to the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp at the beginning of August 1943, as these ghettos were liquidated in turn. Only about 300 Jews survived the deportations and liquidation of the ghetto in Dąbrowa (at least one on Aryan documents working in the Bankowa Steelworks, 14 in hiding, the others eventually returning from the concentration camps). After the war, 30 to 40 Jews had returned to Dąbrowa by 1946.²⁰

Only a few perpetrators were tried in the courts. The District Court in Sosnowiec (SOSn) convicted Friedrich Reese and sentenced him to death on February 3, 1948. The same sentence was given to Friedrich Kuczynski, who supervised the deportations of Jews from Dąbrowa Górnicza, working for Organisation Schmelt. The SOSn sentenced him to death on September 23, 1948.

SOURCES Relevant publications on the history of the Jews during the German occupation of Dąbrowe Górnicza include the following: Władysław Starościk, *Żydzi w Dąbrowie Górniczej* (Dąbrowa Górnicza: Kawiarnia Literacka, 1995); and M. Gelbart, ed., *Sefer Kehilat Yebude Dombrovah Gurnitshah ve-burbanah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Dombrovah Gurnitshah be-Yisrael, 1971). Some additional information can be found in the Zagłębie yizkor book: J. Rapaport, ed., *Pinkas Zagłębie* (Tel Aviv: Zagłębie Society in Melbourne, 1972).

The main sources for the history of the Jewish population in Dąbrowa Górnicza under the Nazi occupation are the documents of the Jewish Council of Elders in Dąbrowa Górnicza (1939–1943) located in APKat (RSGŻDG). The deportations and the liquidation of the ghetto are described in the testimonies of witnesses collected in AŻIH (e.g., 301/2577, 2631, and 2705). Other key information can be found in the testimonies of witnesses located in the court files of the case against Friedrich Kuczynski (SOSn 3 and 4).

Aleksandra Namysło

VOLUME II: PART A

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2577, testimony of Samuel Mittelman and Manek Szpigielman, pp. 1–2; 301/1548, testimony of Genia Lewkowicz.
2. APKat, RSGŻDG, 3, Bulletin no. 1, October 15, 1940, p. 1.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3. There were eight such Kreis Inspectors answering to the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia.
4. AŻIH, 301/2577, pp. 1–2.
5. APKat, RSGŻDG, 21, list of officials of the Judenrat, pp. 1–2.
6. *Ibid.*, 30, p. 130, population in the communities subordinated to the Central Office on June 20, 1940; and Jewish Welfare, March 25, 1941, p. 245.
7. APKat, Polizeipräsident Sosnowitz, 316, letter of Polizeipräsident in Sosnowiec to Schupo headquarters in Sosnowiec concerning the deportation of the Jews, p. 78; AŻIH, 301/2577, p. 5.
8. AŻIH, 301/2705, testimony of Lili Better, p. 2; APKat, M Sosn, 6368, statistical list concerning the Jewish community; report of Sosnowiec Police, August 24, 1942, p. 2.
9. AŻIH, 301/2712, testimony of Józef Stawski.
10. *Ibid.*, 301/2577; and 301/2712.
11. *Ibid.*, 301/2631, testimony of Samuel Mittelman.
12. AAN, Delegate Office of the Government of the Country, files no. 202/II-29 (mf 2225/6).
13. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2779, report on streets outside the Jewish quarter, on which Jewish people lived, August 24, 1942, p. 2.
14. Isser Slomnicki, “The 1st of September 1939, the Worst Day in My Life,” in Gelbart, *Sefer Kehilat Yebude Dombrovah Gurnitsheb ve-hurbanah*; AŻIH, 301/1548, testimony of Genia Lewkowicz.
15. AŻIH, 301/2631.
16. *Ibid.*, 301/3476, testimony of Karol Herszkowicz.
17. *Ibid.*, 301/154, testimony of Izrael Rosen.
18. *Ibid.*, 301/3476.
19. *Ibid.*, 301/2577, p. 2; APKat, M Sosn, 6368, statistical list concerning the Jewish community; report by Police in Sosnowiec on August 24, 1942, p. 2.
20. AŻIH, 301/2577.

JAWORZNO

Pre-1939: Jaworzno, town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Krenau, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: województwo małopolskie, Poland

Jaworzno is located about 18 kilometers (11 miles) east-southeast of Katowice. The Jewish population of the town was 1,346 in 1921.

German forces captured Jaworzno on September 4, 1939. Soon after entering the town, the Germans arrested and executed 8 Jews, after alleging that they had shot at German troops from their windows. Subsequently the German authorities demanded a large contribution from the Jewish community and took 25 hostages to ensure its payment. The

Germans also burned down the synagogue and humiliated Orthodox Jews during the first months of the occupation.

A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in Jaworzno, which in January 1940 became subordinated to the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (the Central Office), headed by Mojżesz Merin. The head of the Jaworzno Judenrat was H. Silberschatz. There was also a Jewish police force in the town.¹ According to statistics of the Central Office, 1,878 Jews were residing in Jaworzno in May 1940.²

Information regarding the existence of a ghetto in Jaworzno is contradictory. From early on in the occupation, Jews were forbidden to use the two main streets of the town, Jagiellońska and Mickiewicza. The Germans confiscated the best Jewish apartments and forced the Jews to move out to poorer living quarters. Most secondary sources do not mention a ghetto, but several survivor accounts do use this term. According to Ida Ferson, the ghetto was established approximately one year after the start of the occupation. In the ghetto, her family had two rooms and a bathroom, which was more space than most families received. The ghetto was unfenced, but there was a curfew, which was enforced by the Germans and the Jewish Police. The Jews received ration cards for the distribution of food.³

According to Bernhard Bart, who was deported from Chorzów to Jaworzno in 1940, “Jaworzno already had a ghetto, which was not enclosed by a fence; the Jews were restricted to certain shops and streets.” The Jaworzno Jews had to take in the refugees and provide them with some assistance. Bart had some conflicts with his hosts who were Orthodox and kept kosher. They did not permit him to cook his meat in the house, as he obtained it from the town slaughterhouse where he worked, and it was not kosher.⁴

Bronia Brandman, who does not mention the ghetto specifically, states that the food rations consisted mainly of bread and potatoes with a little margarine and saccharine to replace sugar. Kosher chickens were available but expensive. Religious life continued in secret.⁵

The Jews in Jaworzno were subjected to forced labor from the start of the occupation. In the course of 1940, a number of Jews were moved to Jaworzno from several nearby towns, including Siemianowice and Chorzów, which increased overcrowding among the Jews. The Judenrat set up a public kitchen to assist the refugees, which served 330 hot meals per day. From the fall of 1940, the Jews were also subjected to a series of roundups for the forced labor camps. Jewish policemen sent from Sonowiec by the Central Office also participated in the roundups, which netted hundreds of Jewish men and women. In June 1941, there were reportedly 2,161 Jews in Jaworzno.⁶

On May 30, 1942, the Germans conducted the first deportation Aktion. German SS men surrounded the town and then dragged the Jews out of their apartments in order to assemble them. The German authorities conducted a selection, dividing the Jews into three groups. The elderly, the sick, and children (around 1,000 people) were gathered in the synagogue and held there for several days, before being deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp via Chrzanów. Another group was selected

to go to the forced labor camps, and the rest were to remain in Jaworzno, including the members of the Judenrat.⁷

Several hundred Jews remained in Jaworzno after the May Aktion. The Germans left them there only for another two months. In July, the head of the Gestapo in Katowice, Hans Dreier, demanded 500,000 Reichsmark (RM) and offered to establish a ghetto in Jaworzno (as opposed to deportation) in return for this bribe. Half of this sum was raised, but then Dreier ordered all the Jews to assemble at 8:00 A.M., on July 9, 1942. As the Jews suspected they would be deported, most did not appear. The Gestapo then dragged them from their houses, and all the Jews, including the members of the Judenrat, were deported to Auschwitz.⁸

The German authorities then declared Jaworzno to have been cleansed of Jews (*judenrein*). They subsequently set up a forced labor camp in the town in 1943, but this did not contain any of the local Jews.

SOURCES Published sources on the Jewish community of Jaworzno include: Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 3, *District Krakow* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2008), pp. 193–194.

Documentary sources can be found in the following archives: APKat (RSGŻDG, sygn. 30; HTO 1397); AŻIH (e.g., 301/575, 2648); USHMM; VHF (# 1661, 4577, 40794); and YVA.

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/575, testimony of Eli Greenbaum.
2. APKat, HTO 1397, pp. 66ff.
3. VHF, # 4577, testimony of Ida Ferson.
4. *Ibid.*, # 1661, testimony of Bernhard Bart.
5. *Ibid.*, # 40794, testimony of Bronia Brandman.
6. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, census of the Jewish population as of June 20, 1941, p. 173.
7. AŻIH, 301/575, testimony of Eli Greenbaum; 301/2648, testimony of Jakub Neufeld.
8. *Ibid.*, 301/575; 301/2648.

KŁOBUCK

Pre-1939: Kłobuck, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kłobuzk, Kreis Blachownia (from May 1941, Blachstädt), Regierungsbezirk Oppeln, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Kłobuck, województwo śląskie, Poland

Kłobuck is located about 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) northwest of Częstochowa. In 1921, there were 1,647 Jews living in Kłobuck. Between 1923 and 1939, many young Jews left for larger cities or immigrated to Palestine and other countries.

German forces captured Kłobuck on September 2, 1939, following a battle that lasted only a few hours. Many Jews



Jewish refugees and a German officer in the vicinity of Kłobuck, September 1939.
USHMM WS #50346, COURTESY OF IPN

abandoned their homes on foot. Quickly overrun by the German army, most soon returned to discover that other local inhabitants had looted Jewish stores and the Germans had set the town on fire. The Jews were assembled in the church and sent to help put out the fires. Subsequently they were assigned daily to perform various forced labor tasks. Jewish men were used as horses to move loaded wagons (10 to a wagon). Initially the Jews were ordered to wear armbands bearing a yellow Star of David with "Jude" written in black in its center. The armbands were replaced eventually by yellow stars worn on the front and back of their clothes by all Jews aged 8 and older. Communal prayer was forbidden, and the ruins of the synagogue were converted into a stable for the Germans' horses. Jewish businesses were confiscated, and Jews were excluded from many professions.¹

A few months after the start of the occupation, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) and a Jewish police force (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) were established and made responsible for the full implementation of German regulations and demands. In 1940, the Kłobuck Judenrat was subordinated to the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia, headed by Mojżesz Merin. The Central Office appointed its own "inspectors," Borek Yasne, Wiener, and Shimon Merin, to oversee the activities of the Kłobuck Judenrat. Members of the Judenrat included Benzion Shvartzevski, Yakov Bode (a pre-war Zionist activist), Israel Lefkowitz, Moishe Weissfelner, Yechiel (Fogel) Rosenthal, Abraham Diamont, Yitzchak Buchweiss, and Zisser Lapidés.²

Mojżesz Merin, chairman of the Central Office, came to Kłobuck, accompanied by Yasne, to reorganize the local Judenrat there, with Yasne becoming its chairman. Baruch Sperling, the previous leader of the Kłobuck Jewish community, had refused to work with the Central Office. Soon, however, Merin became dissatisfied with Yasne's performance, and he took over direct control of many of the activities of the Kłobuck Judenrat himself. In June 1940, the German authorities ordered the Judenrat to provide 140 men aged between 18 and 30 for work in Germany. They threatened that if this demand was not met, then all of the Kłobuck Jews would be deported to ghettos in the Generalgouvernement. The men from Kłobuck and other nearby towns were sent to various labor camps inside the Reich.³

As Kłobuck was right on the border with the Generalgouvernement, the Jews were able to smuggle goods across the border and trade with Poles to acquire food. Some Jews from nearby Częstochowa in the Generalgouvernement, who had family in Kłobuck, smuggled themselves into Kłobuck. They were considered "foreigners" and were ordered by the Judenrat, under threat of deportation, to appear for registration. Those with the financial means to pay the high registration fees were allowed to stay in Kłobuck. The others were turned over to the Germans for deportation. In 1941, the wives of three of the deported men received letters signed by officials of the SS informing them that their husbands had died in a camp. In charge of the police in Kłobuck was commandant Datchek, who did his best to make life for the Jews harder and more painful.⁴

Just outside of Kłobuck, there was a forced labor camp, which was occupied by young Jewish men used in construction by the Wehrmacht. This camp remained in existence until 1943, but the Jews there had little contact with the Jews of the town.⁵

After a few months of the occupation, the Jews were forced to vacate the central streets of town, and by late 1941 the German authorities had established a Jewish residential area (open ghetto) in Kłobuck.⁶ All the Jews had to move into the designated ghetto area, exchanging their houses with non-Jews who lived there. As Abraham Besser described it, the ghetto had "no fencing, no guards, just a curfew, but Jews had to live in a certain section of town."⁷ Living conditions in the ghetto were overcrowded, with two or three families forced to share each house. One survivor described the ghetto area as "the worst slum in town" with no running water.⁸ Loss of income led to hunger and disease in the town, and a typhus epidemic claimed many lives.⁹

According to one estimate, there were around 60 or 65 Jewish families living in the ghetto, or probably 300 to 500 people.¹⁰ In order to get by, many Jews sneaked out of the ghetto illegally, taking off their yellow stars to scavenge for food in gardens and orchards or to trade on the black market. After a time, Jews were required to cut a hole in the clothes under the patches, so they could not remove them without showing the hole. In Kłobuck, the Jews continued to conduct schooling and to celebrate Jewish holidays at home clandestinely.¹¹

The German Kreiskommissar arrived in Kłobuck on June 21, 1942, accompanied by Gestapo men and their dogs, as well as Jewish Police from Sosnowiec. They assembled all the Jews in the fire station. The Jewish Police from Sosnowiec reassured the Jews that they were only being sent to work camps. But the Germans shot some old men and set their dogs on old men and children. The Jews were then taken by wagon, under heavy guard, to the Kuźnica Synagogue, a few kilometers outside Kłobuck, which became a concentration point for Jews being deported from the area. Here Mojżesz Merin participated in a selection. Most of those capable of work were sent to labor camps inside the Reich, and those unfit were deported to their deaths.

The fate of one group selected for work is known in more detail. About 25 young females and one young male were given a medical examination in the Sosnowiec transit camp and then were sent to the Grünberg labor camp. After one year, the camp was liquidated, and its inmates sent to a camp in Neusaltz. In December 1944, they were evacuated with other prisoners as the Red Army approached. They arrived at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp after three days in sealed railroad cars without food. The survivors of this group were liberated by the British army on April 15, 1945.¹²

After the liquidation of the main ghetto in June 1942, a small ghetto, consisting of two houses opposite the synagogue, remained, which contained several craftsmen (including a painter and two goldsmiths) and their families. The men worked for the German authorities. In June 1943, all the Jews were rounded up and held in the police station for several days, before being deported by passenger train to the Blechhammer labor camp.¹³

Among the few Jewish survivors from Kłobuck was one of the members of the Judenrat.

SOURCES A key source on the Jewish community of Kłobuck under German occupation is the yizkor book edited by A. Wolf Yasni, *Sefer Kłobuck* (Tel Aviv: Former Kłobuck Residents in Israel, France, and Australia, 1960). The ghetto in Kłobuck is also mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 234.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: IPN (ASG, sygn. 47, p. 17); USHMM; VHF (# 19710, 19988, 32681); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Yasni, *Sefer Kłobuck*, pp. 76–78, 209–218; VHF, # 32681, testimony of Rubin Sztajer.
2. Yasni, *Sefer Kłobuck*, pp. 217–224.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 223–225.
5. VHF, # 19710, testimony of Ann Cyncnatus; # 19988, testimony of Abraham Besser.
6. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 234, dates the ghetto's establishment on October 8, 1941.
7. VHF, # 19988; # 19710; Yasni, *Sefer Kłobuck*, p. 219. VHF, # 32681, Rubin Sztajer, dates the establishment of the ghetto somewhat earlier, probably in 1940.
8. VHF, # 32681.
9. Yasni, *Sefer Kłobuck*, pp. 76–78.
10. VHF, # 19988.
11. *Ibid.*, # 32681; # 19988.
12. Yasni, *Sefer Kłobuck*, pp. 240–244.
13. VHF, # 19710; # 19988.

MODRZEJÓW

Pre-1939: Modrzejów, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Modrzejów, Kreis Sosnowitz, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Modrzejów, województwo śląskie, Poland

Modrzejów is located 10 kilometers (6 miles) east-southeast of Katowice. In May 1939, there were 1,670 Jews living in Modrzejów. Incorporated into the Jewish community of Modrzejów during the first months of the occupation were the Jews of Modrzejów, Niwka, Dańdówka, and Klimontów. The last rabbi of Modrzejów, Szaja Englard, was deported to his death at the Auschwitz concentration camp from Sosnowiec in May 1942.¹

On September 4, 1939, forces of the Wehrmacht occupied Modrzejów. German soldiers plundered Jewish shops and businesses and physically humiliated some Jews. In the first days of the occupation, the Germans also vandalized the synagogues and prayer houses. One synagogue was converted into a warehouse and later into a blacksmith's forge. The Germans took 20 Jewish hostages and interned them for several days until a large ransom was paid.² At the time of the German invasion, many Jews fled Modrzejów in the direction of Sławków,



Portrait of a young Jewish woman, Dorka Moncznik (now Doris Gross), wearing the yellow star in the Modrzejów ghetto, 1940. USHMM WS #13535. COURTESY OF DORIS MONCZNIK GROSS

Olkusz, and Wolbrom, but most returned after a few days.³ In November 1939, groups of Jews who had been deported from Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia arrived in Modrzejów. These Jews were deported in connection with the “Nisko Plan,” which intended to set up a reservation for Jews on the eastern border of the Generalgouvernement.⁴

From the fall of 1939, a series of anti-Jewish measures were introduced in the region. A wide variety of Jewish and Polish properties were confiscated. The Germans took control of Jewish retail and manufacturing businesses, blocked Jewish bank accounts, restricted payments, marked Jewish stores, and closed Jewish wholesale trade. They also established a supervisory organ (the Haupttreuhandstelle Ost) to oversee Jewish and other confiscated businesses and sell off these assets. Two Jewish bakeries in Modrzejów were designated for the Jewish population, as non-Jewish stores were not permitted to sell them food.⁵ At the end of 1939, all Jews were ordered to wear white armbands bearing the Star of David. From September 1941, Jews had to wear yellow patches in the shape of a star on their left breast.

As Modrzejów was a suburb of Sosnowiec, during the German occupation the Jews of Modrzejów came under the rule of the mayor (Oberbürgermeister) of Sosnowiec, M. Schönwalder.⁶ In November 1939, a Judenrat was formed, with Jakub

Hochcajt at its head. It was assisted by a Jewish police force (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst). In February 1940, the Judenrat was reorganized and brought under the firm control of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia, headed by Mojżesz Merin. The Judenrat in Modrzejów was placed under the jurisdiction of the regional inspectorate of Jewish Councils in Dąbrowa, headed by Icek Borenstein.⁷

In February 1940, a public kitchen was set up, which regularly served meals to 58 percent of the Jewish population. In December 1940, an orphanage was created, which housed 70 children. In addition, the community financially and materially assisted the resettled Jews and those who were impoverished in the town. Nearly 30 percent of the Judenrat's budget was assigned directly to welfare assistance.⁸

In 1940, all the Jews in Modrzejów were resettled onto one street (Henryk), establishing a Jewish residential area or open ghetto. The ghetto remained unfenced, but a curfew was enforced at night. The Jews lived in overcrowded conditions, and many of them had lost their previous employment. The Jews suffered from shortages of food, and some people attempted to alleviate conditions by cultivating home gardens.⁹ In October 1940, there were 1,126 Jews living in Modrzejów.¹⁰

The Jews of Modrzejów, like all the Jews in the Katowice region, from October 1940 came under the jurisdiction of Albrecht Schmelt's Organisation Schmelt, which was responsible for the deportation of Jews to labor camps and their assignment to factories and workshops. The first transport of 140 Jews from Modrzejów to the labor camps took place in October 1940. In March 1941, 120 additional Jews were sent to various labor camps in Upper Silesia. These roundups were conducted with the participation of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police.¹¹ Jews from Modrzejów also worked in several shops in Sosnowiec. In addition, a small group of young Jews was sent to work in the Niwka mine. According to statistics from August 1942, there were 230 Jewish residents of Modrzejów working in the labor camps.¹²

The deportations to camps were also interspersed with the arrival of Jews from other places; the Jewish population in Modrzejów fluctuated during the occupation. By March 1941, including the surrounding settlements, there were 1,968 Jews living in and around Modrzejów.¹³ In April 1941, up to 400 Jews arrived from the town of Oświęcim (Auschwitz), which was cleared of Jews at this time. This further aggravated housing conditions in Modrzejów. Some Jews also moved to Sosnowiec and Będzin, to try to avoid roundups to the camps and arrests conducted by the Gestapo.¹⁴

In December 1941, the Jews were ordered to surrender all their furs and other items of winter clothing. On May 8, 1942, about 300 Jews were persuaded by representatives of the Central Office to report for resettlement with only 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of luggage. Some of these people were sent to Auschwitz to be killed, while others were sent to labor camps.¹⁵ In May 1942, the number of Jews in Modrzejów was 1,491. In July 1942, all residents of the ghetto had to assemble at a designated point and get their photo identity cards (*Lichtbildausweise*) stamped. After the documents were verified, the people

returned to their houses. After a selection, another deportation took place in August 1942, which left 1,236 Jews in Modrzejów at the end of August.¹⁶

Witnesses recall a German official, Mates, who always patrolled with his dog. He frequently identified Jews by their armbands and set his dog on them. As one of the witnesses recounted: "One day the dog attacked several Jews. The Jews tried to protect themselves, but then Mates pulled out his revolver. He shot three of them, and two were seriously wounded."¹⁷

As Jews came to expect further roundups for labor camps and deportations, some created concealed hiding places in the area of the ghetto. However, the German authorities and Jewish Police knew who was missing and searched for those in hiding, calling for them to come out.¹⁸

On February 27, 1943, the German police surrounded the Jewish ghetto quarter. Those selected for labor were sent to the Dulag, a transit camp in Sosnowiec, from where they were distributed to other camps in the Reich. A few hundred elderly persons then remained in Modrzejów. A small remnant ghetto was established for them on Henryk Street.

On May 19, 1943, most of the remaining Jews in Modrzejów were sent to Sosnowiec and from there deported by train to Auschwitz. Some 15 Jews remained in Modrzejów, hidden by Polish families. The Germans captured and shot 5 of them.¹⁹

Only about 60 to 80 people survived the various deportations to labor, concentration, and extermination camps.²⁰

SOURCES The only publication specifically concerned with the fate of the Jews of Modrzejów during the Holocaust is Krzysztof Urbański, *Powstanie, rozwój i zagłada gminy żydowskiej w Modrzejowie* (Kielce, 1998). Some information on the history of the Jews of Modrzejów can also be found in Me'ir Shymon Gashury (Brukner), ed., *Sefer Sosnowiec v'hasviva b'Zagłębie*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv, 1973).

Relevant documentation includes the following: APKat (RSGŻDG, sygn. 3 and 30; M Sosn, sygn. 6368; and Regierung Kattowitz, 2779); AŻIH (301/1543); VHF (# 1760, 47836); and YVA (M-49/E/1543).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. Urbański, *Powstanie, rozwój i zagłada*, pp. 8–9.
2. YVA, M-49/E/1543 (AŻIH, 301/1543), testimony of Lejzor Herman and Alter Biber.
3. Urbański, *Powstanie, rozwój i zagłada*, pp. 52–53.
4. YVA, M-49/E/1543.
5. Urbański, *Powstanie, rozwój i zagłada*, pp. 52–53.
6. R. Kaczmarek, *Górny Śląsk podczas II wojny światowej* (Katowice, 2006), p. 119.
7. APKat, RSGŻDG, Bulletin no. 1, September 15, 1940, p. 1. Lejzor Herman testified that the Central Office was not satisfied with Hochcajt and entrusted the supervision of the community to Schmidt (no first name), who ruled over it with an "iron hand." This, however, is not corroborated in the documents of the Central Office. Hochcajt was still officially in charge of the Modrzejów Judenrat in March 1941.

8. Ibid., RSGŻDG, Jüdische Fürsorge in Ost-Oberschlesien, March 25, 1941, p. 245.

9. VHF, # 1760, testimony of Marysia Gordon (née Węgień); Urbański, *Powstanie, rozwój i zagłada*, p. 73.

10. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 3, Aufstellung der dem Leiter der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Ost-Oberschlesien unterstehenden Ältestenräte der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden, October 1, 1940, pp. 109–122.

11. YVA, M-49/E/1543.

12. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2779, Statistische Angaben über den Stand der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, August 24, 1942, p. 4.

13. Ibid., RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der dem Leiter der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Ost-Oberschlesien unterstehenden Ältestenräte der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden (geordnet nach Kreisinspektoraten), March 12, 1941, p. 214.

14. YVA, M-49/E/1543; Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 3, *District Krakow* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2008), p. 267.

15. YVA, M-49/E/1543; VHF, # 47836, testimony of Regina Brecher (née Rosner).

16. See APKat, Akta Miasta Sosnowiec (M Sosn), sygn. 6368, for a statistical comparison of the Jewish community; also information from the police of Sosnowiec, August 24, 1942, p. 2.

17. YVA, M-49/E/1543.

18. VHF, # 1760.

19. YVA, M-49/E/1543.

20. Urbański, *Powstanie, rozwój i zagłada*, pp. 56–58.

OLKUSZ

Pre-1939: Olkusz, town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Ilkenau, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Olkusz, województwo małopolskie, Poland

Olkusz is located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Katowice. In 1921, there were 2,703 Jews living in Olkusz (40.6 percent of the total population). In 1939, there were approximately 3,000 Jews living in the town.¹

The German army occupied Olkusz on September 5, 1939.² From the first days of the occupation, the Jews were required to perform forced labor. The Germans took as hostages the 15 most influential Jews of the town and tortured them for several weeks.³ The German authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures, including the confiscation of businesses, the blocking of Jewish bank accounts, and the marking of Jewish stores. The Haupttreuhandstelle Ost was established to oversee Jewish and other confiscated businesses and sell off their assets. At the end of 1939, all Jews were required to wear white armbands, and as of September 1941, they had to wear yellow patches on their left breast pockets.⁴ Jews had to surrender all gold and silver items.⁵

A German policeman was murdered by an unknown assailant on July 16, 1940. In reprisal 20 Jews were publicly executed. On July 31, 1940, “Bloody Wednesday,” Jews were forced to lie on the ground for hours and were beaten. One



SD and police officers check the papers of Jews assembled on the Czarna Góra green during the “Bloody Wednesday” reprisal Aktion in Olkusz, July 31, 1940. Other hostages can be seen lying in the foreground and in the distance at left.

USHMM WS #21441, COURTESY OF ROSE GRINBAUM FUTTER

Jew who could not stand the torture was shot trying to escape. Among the victims in July was a Jew named Majer, who was a U.S. citizen.⁶

In May and June 1940, several hundred Jews from Bielsko-Biała, Dziedzice, and Chorzów were forcibly resettled in Olkusz.⁷ The number of Jews in Olkusz in June 1941 was 2,932.⁸

Heinrich Groll was the Kreiskommissar in Olkusz until May 1944. An officer named Flechner was the head of the Security Police in Olkusz from 1940 to 1943. He was replaced in 1943 by Kurt Eichert.⁹

In the middle of December 1939, a Jewish community authority (gmina) was established in Olkusz.¹⁰ The dentist Azryl Flaszenberg initially became its head, and the positions on the advisory council were filled by the two brothers Czarniecki and a German-Jewish woman.¹¹ She was appointed on the recommendation of Mojżesz Merin, the head of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (the Central Office). In January 1940, Merin named Dionizy Sobol as the head of the Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Olkusz.

Olkusz was 1 of 10 Kreis Inspectorates established by the Central Office. In October 1940, 6,156 Jews were counted in the entire Olkusz district (Kreis Ilkenau), and in March 1941, there were 5,940 Jews. Sobol was also head of the Kreis Inspectorate. At first, the Central Office recognized separate local branches in the towns of Olkusz (2,940 Jews), Ogródzieniec (43), Sławków (843), Strzemieszyce (1,440), and Ząbkowice (335).¹² In July 1941, the Central Office reorganized the Kreis structure. Ogródzieniec and Sławków were both incorporated into the Olkusz branch, bringing the total number of Jews there to 3,825.¹³ The Inspectorate also employed 100 Jewish artisans, including 39 in Olkusz.¹⁴

A Jewish police force (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was also organized. In Olkusz, a public kitchen was established in November 1939, which accommodated the needs of observant Jews. It served around 300 meals per day. A kindergarten was established in December 1940, providing care for 300 children up to age seven.¹⁵

In October 1940, Albrecht Schmelt's Organisation Schmelt assumed responsibility for the labor deployment of the Jews of the region. At that time, about 140 Jews were sent on the first transport, to work on the construction of a highway in Silesia (Reichsautobahn-Lager). In January 1941, a second transport of 130 people was organized, and a third transport consisting of 300 women was dispatched in August 1941. From the spring of 1942, the frequency of transports to forced labor camps increased. On March 12, 1942, 117 Jewish women aged 13 to 28 were deported from Olkusz. On April 20, 1942, 140 men were sent away. One month later, on May 21–23, 1942, around 1,000 Jews were deported.¹⁶ Those Jews with some financial means could avoid the transports with bribes. By August 1942, there were 525 Jewish residents of Olkusz working at various forced labor camps.¹⁷

In Olkusz itself, Jews worked making suitcases in a workshop of the Albert Rossner Company based in Będzin.¹⁸ Around 50 people also worked in the metalworking factory of the Josef Skopek Company based in Sosnowiec.¹⁹

In September 1941, the Jews were resettled from the center of Olkusz to the northern outskirts of the town, around Parcz, Sikorki, and Słowików Streets. The resettlement was coordinated by a special commission consisting of Germans from Sosnowiec and Będzin. The Jews received a summons in their homes, indicating that they also had to pay for the costs of the resettlement. The operation was headed by an official of the Central Office, Kuba Wulkan, and by Bezalet Zucker, the chief representative of the Kreis Krenau Inspectorate. Also participating in the resettlement efforts were 15 to 20 members of the Jewish Police from Będzin and Sosnowiec, commanded by Lerhaft. Poles moved into the vacated Jewish residences in the center of town. The resettlement took 10 days to complete. The new Jewish residential area (open ghetto) in Olkusz was not surrounded by a fence or wall, but the Jewish and German police patrolled its borders, and the Jews were forbidden to leave.²⁰

The Jews suffered from overcrowded conditions, with several families sharing the same living space. Those Jews who worked in a factory to produce Wehrmacht uniforms were issued passes to leave the ghetto each day. The Jews received only meager rations and had to stand in line for soup and bread. Coal and wood for heating were also in short supply.²¹

On March 2, 1942,²² 3 Jews—Jakub Mordka Glejtman, Herze Moszka Macner, and Chaim Pinkus—were hanged publicly in Olkusz for engaging in illegal trade.²³ The executions took place in the presence of 200 Jews, who had been brought from the Jewish quarter to witness the execution.²⁴

The liquidation of the Olkusz ghetto was carried out on June 10, 1942. The Jews of Olkusz were gathered in the square of the local *gymnazium* (high school). Initially they were led into the building of the former gymnazium for boys, which had become a kitchen area for the Jews. The gymnazium was located next to the Jewish hospital, the place where the first group and some other Jews were brought the next day. In total, 3,400 Jews were assembled. There, under the supervision of SS-Obersturmbannführer Friedrich Karl Kuczynski of the Organisation Schmelt and Mojżesz Merin, accompanied by other officials of the Central Council, a selection was conducted. About 200 able-bodied Jews were sent at first to Sosnowiec; from there they were distributed among the labor and concentration camps in Annaberg, Blechhammer, Gross-Rosen, and Buchenwald. About 200 to 300 Jews remained in Olkusz. These, probably, were the workers from the shop of Albert Rossner, along with officials of the Judenrat, the Jewish Police, and medical personnel. The bulk of the Jews were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp in two transports on June 13 and 15, 1942. Jews from nearby communities and patients from the Jewish hospital were deported along with the Jews from Olkusz. The Jewish Police assisted with the organization of the deportation.²⁵

Efraim Parasol described the events:

On June 9, 1942, while the entire community was still asleep, the ghetto was surrounded by several hundred Gestapo officers and SS men. They fired incessantly



Jewish forced laborers sew military uniforms for the Wehrmacht at a factory in the Olkusz ghetto, 1942.
USHMM WS #10032, COURTESY OF BELLA ROTNER

and drove the entire Jewish population into the former gymnasium building. From then until June 11, it was a horrible scene. Old people, sick people, women, and children were simply crammed together, and suffocated from the heat and lack of oxygen. It was impossible to get even a drop of water, the shooting never stopped, people dropped like flies. The wagons took away around 2,000 Jews, mostly elderly people and children. The dead bodies were thrown together with the living ones into the sealed wagons, which headed off to Auschwitz, directly to the crematorium.²⁶

According to German statistics, in August 1942, there were 555 Jews remaining in Olkusz.²⁷ The last Jews likely were engaged in salvaging remaining Jewish property. In March 1944, the mayor of Olkusz transferred a net sum (after deductions for unpaid taxes and personnel costs) from the liquidation of Jewish property of 114,374 Reichsmark (RM) to the Treuhandstelle Kattowitz.²⁸

It is estimated that around 150 Jews from Olkusz survived to the end of the war, mainly in various forced labor and concentration camps.²⁹

In 1948, a Jewish Court of Honor in Munich condemned as a traitor to the Jewish people a former policeman from the Olkusz ghetto who reportedly rounded up Jews for labor, requisitioned Jewish furniture for the Germans, and exposed the bunkers where Jews were in hiding during the “resettlement.”³⁰

SOURCES The history of the Jews of Olkusz and their fate during the Holocaust are described in two books by Krzysztof Kocjan, *Olkuscy Żydzi. Szkic historyczny* (Olkusz, 1997) and *Zagłada olkuskich Żydów* (Olkusz, 2002). Sources regarding the history of the occupation, including memoirs and unique photographs, can be found in the yizkor book: Tsevi Yashiv, ed., *Olkusz: Sefer zikaron li-kebilah she-bukbadah ba-Sho'ah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Olkush be-Yisrael, 1972). Also of relevance is Ireneusz Cieślik, Olgerd Dziechciarz, and Krzysztof Kocjan, eds., *Olkusz: Zagłada i pamięć: Dyskusja o ofiarach wojny i świadectwa ocalałych Żydów* (Olkusz, 2007), which includes three testimonies by Olkusz survivors.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APKat (RSGZDG, sygn. 3, 23, and 30; and Regierung Kattowitz, 2779 and 3117); AŻIH (301/957, 1550-1, 2830, 3321, and 3475); VHF (e.g., # 7651, 15897, 18894); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Kocjan, *Olkuscy Żydzi*, p. 30.
2. Kocjan, *Zagłada*, p. 7.
3. AŻIH, 301/1551, testimony of Efraim Parasol.
4. Kocjan, *Zagłada*, p. 14.
5. AŻIH, 301/1550, testimony of Marian Auerhahn.
6. Kocjan, *Zagłada*, pp. 9–11. See also Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *The Good Old Days: The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders* (New York: Konecky & Konecky, 1997), pp. 5–7.

7. APKat, Gmina Łagiewniki 260, Okólnik nr. 3, betr.: Umsiedlung der Juden aus dem altschlesischen Raum des Bezirks, May 10, 1940, p. 10; AŻIH, 301/1551, testimony of Efraim Parasol; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 257.

8. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl am 20. Juli in den dem Leiter der Ältestenräte in Ost-Oberschlesien unterliegenden Kultusgemeinden, p. 131.

9. R. Kaczmarek, *Pod rządami gauleiterów. Elity i instancje władzy w reencji katowickiej w latach 1939–1945* (Katowice, 1998), p. 74; I. Sroka, *Policja hitlerowska w reencji katowickiej w latach 1939–1945* (Opole, 1997), pp. 150, 152.

10. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 3, Bulletin no. 3, September 15, 1940, p. 1.

11. AŻIH, 301/3321, testimony of Marian Auerhahn. Efraim Parasol testifies, however, that in October 1939 the Judenrat was established by the German authorities, with a man named Szwarcberg as its head; see also 301/1551.

12. *Ibid.*, 301/1551.

13. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der dem Leiter der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Ost-Oberschlesien unterstehenden Ältestenräte der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden, March 12, 1941, p. 215.

14. *Ibid.*, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl am 20 Juli 1941 in den dem Leiter der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Ost-Oberschlesien unterliegenden Gemeinden, p. 172.

15. *Ibid.*, RSGŻDG, sygn. 23, p. 2.

16. *Ibid.*, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Jüdische Fürsorge in Ost-Oberschlesien, Sosnowitz, March 25, 1941, p. 246; AŻIH, 301/3475, testimony of Maria Adlerflieger.

17. Kocjan, *Zagłada*, pp. 11–12, 16–17.

18. AŻIH, 301/3475.

19. *Ibid.*, 301/2726, testimony of Sara Klein.

20. *Ibid.*, 301/3475; 301/2830, testimony of Elias Lemberg.

21. VHF, # 18894, testimony of Sam Blumenfeld; # 7651, testimony of Helen Bronner (née Kolin); # 15897, testimony of Lola Zigelman.

22. In the testimonies of the witnesses, there are conflicting dates for the events. Information for the hanging of three Jews by the Gestapo in Olkusz, March 2, 1942, is given in: IPN, Katowice Branch, sygn. S.9/79.

23. Kocjan, *Olkuscy Żydzi*, pp. 30–31.

24. AŻIH, 301/3475; 301/2830; 301/1551.

25. *Ibid.*, 301/3475; 301/2830; 301/1551; 301/3321.

26. *Ibid.*, 301/1551. Cieślík, Dziechciarz, and Kocjan, *Olkusz: Zagłada i pamięć*, pp. 26–27, mention a list with the names of 735 Jews who were sent to Auschwitz from the Olkusz ghetto.

27. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2779, Staatliche Angaben über den Stand der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Sosnowitz, August 24, 1942, p. 4. Kocjan, *Olkuscy Żydzi*, pp. 30–31, however, indicates there were only 78 Jews there on August 1, 1942.

28. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 3117, p. 205.

29. AŻIH, 301/1551.

30. Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 556–557.

ŚLAWKÓW

Pre-1939: Sławków, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Sławkow, Kreis Ilkenau, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Sławków, województwo śląskie, Poland

Sławków is located about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) east-northeast of Katowice. According to the 1921 census, there were 610 Jews living in Sławków, comprising 16 percent of the town's population. In 1939, on the eve of war, there were probably around 900 Jews residing in Sławków.

The Wehrmacht entered Sławków on September 4, 1939. The first reaction of the Jewish population was a mass flight towards the eastern regions of Poland. But after a few days, the majority of them returned to the town. Shortly after capturing Sławków, German soldiers shot several dozen Jews, mainly Jewish refugees from Będzin and Sosnowiec, as they tried to cross bridges in Sławków on their way back from the east. At the same time, in nearby Koźle, the Germans murdered several dozen Jews and threw their corpses into an old mining shaft. As Sara Klein recalled this event: "The Germans shot around 70 Jews in Koźle. The Aktion lasted a few days. The Germans stood on the bridge and shot every Jew who tried to cross. When the Jews turned back, they were thrown alive off the bridge, and drowned. Other SS-men drove a transport wagon around and shot those Jews they encountered."¹ After a few days, the German authorities called in Makowski, the chairman of the Jewish community, and made him sign a document reporting that the Jews had perished as a result of bombing raids.²

German soldiers also desecrated the synagogue in Sławków.³ Following the chaos of the initial days of occupation, the German authorities set about removing the Jews from their social and economic positions in the town and limiting their civil liberties. The German military and then the civil administra-



Jewish forced laborers wearing armbands are forced to shovel snow in Sławków, 1941. Chaim Szlojme Imerglik is at the far left. USHMM WS #99631, COURTESY OF DAVID AND MARIA BEITNER

tion implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. Various forms of Jewish (and Polish) property were subject to confiscation. The Germans took control of Jewish retail and manufacturing shops, blocked Jewish bank accounts, restricted payments, marked Jewish stores, and closed Jewish wholesale trade. They also established a supervisory organ (the Haupttreuhandstelle Ost) to oversee Jewish and other confiscated businesses and sell off their assets.

In November 1939, all Jews had to wear white armbands bearing the Star of David. In September 1941, these were exchanged for yellow patches in the shape of the Star of David on their left breasts.⁴ Jewish-owned real estate was confiscated by the German Grundstücksgesellschaft.⁵

Kreis Ilkenau was controlled until May 1944 by Kreiskommissar Heinrich Groll. Georg Willing served as the Amtskommissar in Sławków.⁶ In November 1939, local police forces were organized; Sublieutenant Strauss was in charge of patrols in the town. He was later replaced by Mischock. The police force in Sławków had 14 officers, who served under the Schutzpolizei section in Mikołów. Based in Sławków was also a Gendarmerie precinct, directed by Dahl.⁷

In November 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was formed, with Isidor Laks as its president.⁸ The secretary was Mendel Makowski, and the vice president was Nachman Testiler. There was also a small Jewish police force. The Judenrat was soon subordinated to Mojżesz Merin, who in January 1940 became the head of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (the Central Office), which oversaw the large concentration of Jews in Regierungsbezirke Kattowitz and Oppeln. The Jewish community of Sławków was also supervised by the Kreis Inspectorate in Olkusz, whose head was Dionizy Sobol. In October 1940, the Sławków Judenrat was in charge of 896 Jews, and by March 1941, after the first transport of Jews to the labor camps, 843 Jews remained.

In January 1940, the Judenrat established a public kitchen for the Jews. About half of the Jews of the town ate there. The community also had a medical office in which one doctor and two nurses worked. In 1941, the Judenrat organized locksmith courses for professionalization purposes, and 20 pupils attended.⁹

The Jews of Sławków, like all the Jews in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, in October 1940 came under the jurisdiction of Albrecht Schmelt's Organisation Schmelt, which was entrusted with sending Jews to labor camps and regulating the available Jewish labor force in the towns.

From the first months of the occupation, the Jewish community had to supply around 300 Jews for forced labor. The labor tasks included cleaning administrative buildings and institutions, clearing snow from the streets, performing street sanitation, and maintaining the railroad tracks. The Jews returned also to the businesses that they had owned before the war, but now German commissars ran the businesses and the Jews were relegated to low-paid employees. Among the seized businesses was the wire factory of the Schein brothers, in which several dozen Jews worked.¹⁰ In the town synagogue, the au-

thorities set up a branch of the tin-making workshop of Josef Skopek, where watering cans and toys for children were made. Altogether there were around 50 Jews working in these specialty shops.¹¹

On October 28, 1940, 50 people aged 18 to 50 were deported to the labor camp in Geppersdorf. The day before the transport, Merin arrived in Sławków and persuaded some of the Jews to report for the transport. A series of further roundups of young Jews to be sent to labor camps in the Reich were conducted over the ensuing two years.¹² Official German statistics indicate that by August 1942, 122 Jews had been sent from Sławków to labor camps in the Reich.¹³

In the second half of 1941, the Germans began to create a separate Jewish residential quarter (open ghetto) in Sławków. The ghetto was established on Kiliński, Kościuszko, Kwartowska, and Podwalna Streets. The Poles residing in this area were forced to move out. According to Sara Klein, there was severe overcrowding, with several families sharing each house. These streets were among the poorest and dirtiest in the town, consisting only of one-story houses with no sidewalks. The resettlement into the ghetto was completed by March 1942.¹⁴

The borders of the ghetto were not enclosed by a fence but were guarded by German police with dogs. There was a curfew enforced in the ghetto from 8:00 P.M. until 6:00 A.M. Due to the overcrowding, sometimes four or five people had to share one bed. Food rations were small, so initially the Jews bartered items for extra food. Once the ghetto was set up, Jews were not permitted to leave the ghetto area, and this made bartering more difficult. There was no electricity in the ghetto, and people had to obtain coal or wood for cooking and heating in winter.¹⁵

According to German statistics, on May 1, 1942, there were 924 Jews living in Sławków.¹⁶ On June 10, 1942, one day after the deportation Aktion in Olkusz, the resettlement of Jews from Sławków commenced. The Jewish population was driven into the square on Kiliński Street, where men armed with machine guns surrounded them. From here, the Jews were marched to the town's brewery, where Lindner, an official of Organisation Schmelt, conducted a selection. The young and physically able Jews were sent to various labor camps, including Blechhammer, while some others were transferred to the Strzemieszyce ghetto. The elderly and infirm were deported to their deaths by train from the Bukowno Station most probably to the Auschwitz concentration camp on June 12.¹⁷

By the second half of August 1942, only 122 Jews remained in the town.¹⁸ These people included members of the Judenrat and some skilled workers, who were used to salvage Jewish property. After a few months, they were then sent, along with the Jews of Strzemieszyce and Dąbrowa, to the ghetto in Sosnowiec.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish community of Sławków during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Feliks Kiryk, ed., *Dzieje Sławkowa* (Kraków,

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2001); Leszek Hońdo and Dariusz Rozmus, eds., *Cmentarze żydowskie w Sławkowie i Dąbrowie Górniczej* (Kraków, 2004); Ireneusz Cieślak, Olgerd Dziechciarz, and Krzysztof Kocjan, eds., *Olkusz: Zagłada i pamięć: Dyskusja o ofiarach wojny i świadectwa ocalałych Żydów* (Olkusz, 2007).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APKat (RSGŻDG, sygn. 30; M Sosn, sygn. 6368); AŻIH (301/2726); USHMM (Acc.1998.115); VHF (e.g., # 2601, 3381, 18732); and YVA (O-3/673).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2726, testimony of Sara Klein.
2. Datner, *55 dni Wehrmacht w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1967), p. 276.
3. AŻIH, 301/2726.
4. Kocjan, *Zagłada olkuskich Żydów* (Olkusz, 2002), p. 14.
5. Orłowski, "W czasie drugiej wojny światowej," in Kiryk, *Dzieje Sławkowa*, pp. 412–413.
6. Kaczmarek, *Górny Śląsk podczas II wojny światowej* (Katowice, 2006), p. 114.
7. Orłowski, "W czasie drugiej wojny światowej," p. 407.
8. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der dem Leiter der jüdischen Kultus-Gemeinden in Ost-Oberschlesien unterstehenden Ältestenräte der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden (geordnet nach Kreisinspektoraten), March 12, 1941, p. 214.
9. Ibid., RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Jüdische Fürsorge in Ost-Oberschlesien, March 25, 1941, p. 245.
10. YVA, O-3/673, testimony of Cyrli Rakocz.
11. AŻIH, 301/2726.
12. Orłowski, "W czasie drugiej wojny światowej," p. 413.
13. APKat, Akta Miasta Sosnowiec (M Sosn), sygn. 6368, for a statistical breakdown of the Jewish community; also information from the police of Sosnowiec, August 24, 1942, p. 2.
14. AŻIH, 301/2726.
15. VHF, # 3381, testimony of Eva Jakub; # 18732, testimony of Joe Gleitman.
16. APKat, M Sosn, sygn. 6368, for a statistical breakdown of the Jewish community; also information from the police of Sosnowiec, August 24, 1942, p. 2.
17. AŻIH, 301/2726; YVA, O-3/673; VHF, # 2601, testimony of Jack Mandelbaum; # 3381.
18. APKat, M Sosn, sygn. 6368, for a statistical breakdown of the Jewish community; also information from the police of Sosnowiec, August 24, 1942, p. 2.

SOSNOWIEC

Pre-1939: Sosnowiec, city, województwo śląskie, Poland; 1939–1945: Sosnowitz, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Sosnowiec, województwo śląskie, Poland

Sosnowiec is located about 6 kilometers (4 miles) northeast of Katowice. The Jewish community of Sosnowiec also represented the Jews in the neighboring towns of Modrzejów,



Members of the German Order Police publicly humiliate a group of Jews in Sosnowiec by forcing them to do kneeling exercises, 1939–1940. USHMM WS #74401, COURTESY OF EVA BETTER-HEITNER SAK

Niwka, and Zagórze. In 1939, the Jewish population was around 28,000 (21.5 percent of the total).

German troops entered Sosnowiec on Monday, September 4, 1939, and immediately began random shootings, abductions, abuse, and destruction of property.¹ On September 9, Einsatzgruppe von Woyrsch burned down the synagogue on Dekert Street.²

After the chaos of the first days of the occupation, the German authorities began to eliminate the Jewish population from economic life, limiting their rights and isolating them from the Aryan population. By the end of 1940, the process was complete, with significant participation by the acting mayor (Schneider, the mayor of Wałbrzych). Only the "Jewish Food Distribution Office" (Jüdische Grossverteilerstelle für Lebensmittel und Gartenbauerzeugnisse für die jüdische Bevölkerung in Ost-Oberschlesien) was permitted to buy food for the Jewish population from non-Jewish wholesale shops—and

then only with official authorization. Permitted Jewish stores, bakeries, and artisans' workshops were marked with a Star of David and a sign reading: "Verkäufstelle nur für Juden" or "Werkstätte nur für Juden" (only for Jews).

Toward the end of October 1939, the Germans sent a transport of 300 Jews from Sosnowiec to Nisko nad Sanem, where they forced the Jews to cross over into Soviet-occupied territory. Several days later (October 27–28), the Jewish communal organization summoned more than 1,000 people for the purpose of deporting them, but then suddenly the transport was canceled. Towards the end of the autumn of 1939, the Germans brought to Sosnowiec a transport of several hundred men from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. These men were housed in the Schön factory and put to work on various projects around the city. In July 1940, these Jews were sent to forced labor camps.³

The Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in Sosnowiec on September 6, 1939, on the orders of the German authorities.⁴ Mojżesz Merin became its head. In Sosnowiec, the Gestapo appointed the local teacher, Jerzy Olszewski, as the head administrator of the city, with Milke (an ethnic German) as his deputy. After Merin was appointed as the head of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (the Central Office) in January 1940, Władysław Boehm took over as head of the Sosnowiec Judenrat. He ran the community together with David Lewartowski, Motek Birman, and David Kon. Boehm was dismissed—probably in May 1942—and was replaced by Merin's brother, Chaim.⁵

The Judenrat was made up of a number of departments, including those for social welfare, health, food supply, economic, financial, labor, forced labor, housing, and archival-statistical. In addition, in Sosnowiec there was a department of transportation and a postal service. The Jewish community operated two public kitchens for the poor (established November 27, 1939, at Sudetenstrasse 9 and October 10, 1940, at Schirkerstrasse 9), a day nursery for children (established February 17, 1940), a home for the elderly, an orphanage, and a hostel (established September 20, 1939). The community also ran a hospital, which was directed by a Dr. Libermann.⁶

The Judenrat was assisted by Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), a force established in September 1940. Its first chief, Langer, was followed by Kronenberg, then by Henryk Barenblatt.⁷ A fire brigade was also established and placed under the authority of the Judenrat.⁸ The offices of the Judenrat were located at the corner of Modrzejów and Targowska Streets.

The Sosnowiec Judenrat was directly subordinated to the Central Office. It constituted an independent unit—Stadtkreis Sosnowitz—counting 23,319 people in October 1940 and 24,149 people in March 1941. In April 1941, some 2,000 Jews from the town of Oświęcim arrived in Sosnowiec; in June 1941, the community numbered 27,420.⁹

During the period of civil government, Schneider (the mayor of Wałbrzych) initially set up the administration. Franz Josef Schönwalder, formerly the mayor of Wrocław, subsequently served as mayor of Sosnowiec.¹⁰

The Jews of Sosnowiec, like all others living in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, from October 1940 came under the jurisdiction of Albrecht Schmelt's Organisation Schmelt, which was responsible for the deportation of Jews to labor camps and their assignment to factories and workshops. In practice, all work was directed by Oberinspektor Hentschel, whose subordinates were SS-Obersturmbannführer Heinrich Lindner, Bruno Ludwig, and Friedrich Karl Kuczynski. The Organisation Schmelt Sosnowiec headquarters were located at 6 Pieracki Street.

Hans Held of Berlin established the first workshop for Jews in the city in February 1941. The three branches of the workshop produced underclothing, military uniforms, and corsets and other items of women's clothing. Altogether, 4,000 people were employed in the workshop. In the Schwedler leather workshop at 28 Modrzejów Street, 1,200 people worked in the production of backpacks for the military, suitcases, and leather handbags. Rudolf Braun's shoemakers' workshop at 16 Modrzejów Street employed 1,400 people in the production of boots for the military. In the Dietl workshops on Żeromski Street, 3,000 people produced overcoats and fur coats. Wilhelm Goretzki's workshop at 2 Biała Street employed 2,000 Jews producing brushes, baskets, and bags from leather scraps. There were two carpentry workshops: Landa employed about 200 workers, and Skopko employed 400 Jews. In addition to these large workshops, smaller workplaces operated within the city. In all, more than 13,000 people worked in these workshops.¹¹

In the period from October 1940 to August 1942, there were periodic transports of Jews from Sosnowiec to various labor camps. Between August 1942 and March 1943, there were three major "roundups" in Sosnowiec. More than 2,000 people were rounded up and sent to labor camps as a result. According to German records, 3,033 Jews from Sosnowiec were in forced labor camps in August 1942.¹²

Towards the end of 1939, the Germans removed Jews from apartments on the city's main streets: Pieracki and Małachowski Streets and part of May Third Street. Eventually, Jews were prohibited from using those streets. In mid-1940, the exclusion of Jews was extended to Breslauerstrasse, Hauptstrasse, and Rathausstrasse, as well as all parks, sports venues, and green spaces.¹³

The process of completely isolating the Jews of Sosnowiec began in October 1942. In numerous meetings, the leadership of the Central Office and Gestapo representatives marked out the boundaries of the new Jewish residential area and set the deadline for closing the ghetto. Sections of the city outside of the center, in the working-class districts of Stary Sosnowiec and Środula, were designated for the Jews of Sosnowiec. In the course of the ongoing resettlement actions, a problem arose with the relocation of Polish workers from that area to apartments in the town center that had been vacated by Jews. The solution required effective action on the part of the Central Office, and particularly of the Resettlement Office that had been established alongside it



The resettlement of Jews into the Środula ghetto in Sosnowiec, 1942–1943.

USHMM WS #18824, COURTESY OF IPN

for this purpose, as well as by the Sosnowiec municipal authority.

The resettlement action was completed in March 1943. The Sosnowiec ghetto, which held some 20,000 people, was sealed on May 1, 1943. Initially, there were two separate ghettos: the one in Środula was for young and healthy people (closed on March 10, 1943), and the one in Stary Sosnowiec was for the elderly, the sick, and the handicapped. Towards the end of April, the residents of the Stary Sosnowiec ghetto were moved into the Środula ghetto, as were Jews from the liquidated ghetto in Dąbrowa Górnicza.¹⁴

On May 10, 1943, the Polizeipräsident in Sosnowiec issued a proclamation concerning the ghetto that precisely defined its boundaries. The decree prohibited Jews from leaving the ghetto and forbade members of the Aryan population from entering it. The Central Office was to enforce the observance of these rules; it was required to post signs in two languages barring entry to non-Jews and prohibiting Jews from leaving the ghetto. In addition, the Central Office



View of an apartment block in the Środula district in Sosnowiec, ca. 1942.

USHMM WS #28593, COURTESY OF RINA ZYLBERSZAC NADEL

was to acquaint Jews with the sanctions for violations of these regulations and particularly for maintaining contact with Poles.¹⁵

According to the records of the community, 27,456 Jews were living in Sosnowiec in May 1942. In April 1942, on the order of the Gestapo, the Judenrat prepared lists of people (more than 5,000 altogether) for transport (the elderly, homeless, unemployed, women, children, and refugees). Very few people showed up at the appointed time, so the Gestapo, together with the Jewish Police accompanied by Merin, supplemented the transport (up to a total of 1,500 people) with Jews living at 14 Dekert Street, 2 and 11 Targowa Street, and 23 Modrzejowska Street. On May 12 this transport was sent to the concentration camp in Auschwitz.¹⁶

In the second half of June 1942, the Gestapo organized a second transport, this time of about 2,000 residents of Pańska and Ostrogórska Streets (the poor, handicapped, children from the orphanage, and hospital patients).

The third and largest deportation took place on August 12, 1942. The Germans used the pretext that they needed to inspect and stamp identity papers. The so-called Stadium Aktion lasted two days. Jews were assigned to one of four groups. Families that included no children and whose members worked were released after their papers were stamped. Young people who were unemployed and who did not have a special exemption due to their family were designated for transfer to labor camps. Families in which some members worked and others were unemployed, or in which there were children, were assigned to group 3—their fate was uncertain and was to be considered again later. Elderly people and those who were unemployed or held invalid exemptions (*Sonders*) were assigned to group 4. This group was destined for transport. Of the 25,000 people gathered at the Unia Stadium, some 8,000 were selected and deported over the course of three days to Auschwitz. During this Aktion, several hundred people were shot, died from stress and exhaustion, or committed suicide.¹⁷ On August 20, 1942, there were 20,936 Jews in Sosnowiec.¹⁸

In May 1943, in order to supplement a transport to Auschwitz of Jews from the liquidated Modrzejów and Czeladź ghettos, the Gestapo added about 1,000 people (mainly children) from Sosnowiec.¹⁹ A second Aktion of this type took place in June 1943, in which 2,000 people, among them patients from the Jewish hospital, were sent to Auschwitz.²⁰

The final liquidation of the Sosnowiec ghetto began on the night of August 1, 1943. Police companies from Sosnowiec, Maczki, Katowice, Bytom, and Gliwice arrived for the Aktion, as were training, factory, and reserve police detachments, for a total force of 22 officers and 775 men, armed with machine guns and grenades. Lieutenant-Colonel Schadow, the chief of the Sosnowiec police, directed the Aktion in which about 10,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz, and some 400 people were shot when they resisted or tried to escape. On August 2, a group of 300 people—mainly officials of the Judenrat, the Central Office, and the Jewish Police—was sent to the camp at Góra Świętej Anny. The Aktion lasted until August 15.

Jewish youth movements continued to operate through the entire occupation period—even in the ghetto—especially Ha-Noar Ha-Zioni, headed by Józef and Bolesław Kożuch,²¹ and Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir, which had 200 members and was directed first by Kalman Tencer and then by Cwi (Tzvi) Duński. Other youth organizations active in the region included Gordonia, Poalei Zion, and Hitachdut. In January 1943, Frumka Sultaniuk established a group connected to the Communist movement.²²

In June 1942, Mordechai Anielewicz traveled illegally to the Zagłębie region. As a result, a branch of the ŻOB (Jewish Fighting Organization) was established in Sosnowiec. Eliezer Geller, a representative of Gordonia, also visited Sosnowiec. Young people distributed flyers and attempted to acquire weapons. With the help of couriers Ina Gelbardt and Hela Szancer, they made contact with the ghettos in Warsaw, Będzin, and Chrzanów and obtained false documents that might prevent young Jews from being sent to labor camps. Duński organized an assassination attempt on Mojżesz Merin that ultimately failed. In February 1943, with the assistance of Merin, who relentlessly opposed the Jewish underground resistance in the region, the Germans arrested Duński and Lipek Minc, another resistance member. Both men were executed in April 1943.²³ Members of the resistance built hidden bunkers in and around the ghetto. During the ghetto's liquidation in August 1943, some members of youth movements and a few adults offered armed resistance, while many people sought to hide. As a result, the deportation Aktion lasted two weeks, instead of the two days planned by the SS. Several hundred members of the youth organizations managed to escape across the border into Slovakia and Hungary, where many of them survived the war.

During the August 1943 deportations, the Gestapo kept back several hundred Jews, including members of the Jewish Police, who were employed sorting Jewish property left behind. The Gestapo systematically added to this group Jews found in bunkers or other hiding places. Altogether more than 1,000 Jews remained in Sosnowiec. They were accommodated in a few houses of the Środula ghetto, in the so-called Liquidation Camp. In mid-December 1943, some 800 people were deported to Auschwitz, and another 600 were sent there in January 1944.²⁴

In 1946, 2,300 Jews were living in Sosnowiec, including 400 pre-war residents, but most emigrated in the following years.²⁵ After the war, several officials of the Organisation Schmelt were brought to trial for, among other things, the expulsion of the Jewish population of Będzin in May and August 1942. The District Court in Sosnowiec (SOŚn) sentenced Friedrich Karl Kuczynski to death on September 23, 1948. Heinrich Lindner was arrested by the U.S. authorities and committed suicide in January 1949.

Oskar Bruno Tschammler, an official of the Organisation Schmelt who was active in roundups, selections for labor camps, and the liquidation of the ghetto, was sentenced to death by SOŚn on November 5, 1948, and was hanged on April 28, 1949. Konrad Schiefele, an appraiser of property left by the Jews, was sentenced by SOŚn to a life sentence on July 13, 1948.

SOURCES The main publication devoted to the fate of the Jewish residents of Sosnowiec during the occupation is Natan Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca* (Katowice, 1946). Also helpful in establishing the history of the Sosnowiec Jews are the following works: Geshuri Meir Shimon, *Sefer Sosnowiec* (Book of Sosnowiec and the surrounding region in Zagłębia), vols. 1–2 (Tel Aviv, 1973–1974); J. Rapoport, *Pinkas Zagłębie (Memorial Book)* (Tel Aviv, 1972); D. Liwer, *Ir Hametim* (City of the dead: Extermination of the Jews in the Zagłębie region) (Tel Aviv, 1945–1946).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APKat (RSGŻDG, Polizeipräsident Sosnowiec, M Sosn); AŻIH (e.g., 301/704, 3404, 3480, 3536); BA-BL; IPN; USHMM; VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 10; S. Datner, *55 dni Wehrmachtu w Polsce (1.IX–25. X.1939)* (Warsaw, 1967), pp. 215, 251; M. Łyszczarz, *Sosnowiec w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej (4 IX 1939–27 I 1945)* (Sosnowiec, 1970).
2. Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 11.
3. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Kurzer Überblick über die Organisation und Tätigkeit der Kultusgemeinden und der Zentrale der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden, p. 22; Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 21.
4. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 3, Bulletin no. 1, September 15, 1940, p. 1.
5. AŻIH, 301/4304, testimony of Grzegorz Arbeszyc.
6. APKat, RSGŻDG, Jüdische Fürsorge in Ost-Oberschlesien, March 25, 1941, p. 241.
7. AŻIH, 301/4304; also Sądy Społeczne, sygn. 313/83, p. 4.
8. *Ibid.*, 301/704, testimony of Jan Rosencwajg.
9. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl, July 20, 1942, p. 126.
10. R. Kaczmarek, *Pod rządami gauleiterów. Elity i instancje władzy w rejencji katowickiej w latach 1939–1945* (Katowice: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1998), p. 73.
11. Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, pp. 28–29.
12. APKat, Akta Miasta Sosnowca (M Sosn), sygn. 2779.
13. APKat, Polizeipräsident Sosnowiec, sygn. 363, letter dated June 11, 1940, p. 1.
14. Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 50.
15. APKat, M Sosn, sygn. 6370, Pismo prezydenta policji w Sosnowcu do Centralnej Rady Starszych Wschodniego Górnego Śląska, May 10, 1943, pp. 201–202.
16. Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 34.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 37–39.
18. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz 2779, Statistische Angaben über den Stand der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, August 24, 1942, p. 4.
19. Sztternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 51.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
21. AŻIH, 301/3536, testimony of Jadzia Szpigelman.
22. *Ibid.*, 301/3480, testimony of Fela Katz.
23. J.Sh. Stein, *Pinkes Bendin* (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at Irgun Yots'e Bendin be-Yisrael, 1959), pp. 355–357.

24. Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1990), p. 705; Szternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, pp. 56–57.

25. Szternfinkiel, *Zagłada Żydów Sosnowca*, p. 57.

STRZEMIESZYCE

Pre-1939: Strzemieszyce, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Schümmenschutz, Kreis Bendsburg, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Strzemieszyce, województwo śląskie, Poland

Strzemieszyce is located about 18 kilometers (11 miles) north-east of Katowice. Before the war, there were around 2,000 Jews living in Strzemieszyce.

German forces entered Strzemieszyce on September 5, 1939. They plundered Jewish shops and businesses, physically humiliated the Jewish residents of the town, and immediately demanded monetary contributions. Jews were also ordered to perform heavy physical labor. On the first day of occupation, one Jew was shot on the street.

In early November 1939, more systematic persecution of the Jews began, as a German civil administration had taken over from the military in the region. Various forms of Jewish and Polish property were confiscated. The Germans took control of Jewish retail and manufacturing businesses, blocked Jewish bank accounts, restricted payments, marked Jewish stores, and closed Jewish wholesale trade. They also established a trustee organization, the Haupttreuhandstelle Ost, to confiscate, administer, and sell Jewish and Polish businesses and their assets. In 1940, Jewish real estate was confiscated by the state-owned Grundstücksgesellschaft, and the best Jewish apartments were taken over by Germans.

From the end of 1939, Strzemieszyce was incorporated into Kreis Bendsburg in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz. A man named Zur was appointed as the Amtskommissar in Strzemieszyce in 1941.¹

In November 1939, a Judenrat was appointed, with a man named Horowitz at its head.² In January 1940, on the recommendation of Mojżesz Merin of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (Central Office), the Judenrat was reorganized, and Azryel Flaszenberg was appointed as its new head. The community in Strzemieszyce served under the Kreis Inspectorate in Dąbrowa Górnicza, whose head was Icek Borenstein. Also subordinated to the Judenrat in Strzemieszyce were Jews from the surrounding villages, including Grabocin, Niemce, Porąbiec, Maczki, and Kazimierz. In May 1940, around 400 Jews were resettled in Strzemieszyce, arriving from Cieszyn in the territory of the pre-1939 German Provinz Schlesien.³ In October 1940, there were 1,782 Jews living in Strzemieszyce, including those who had been resettled.⁴

The Jews in Strzemieszyce, like all the Jews in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, from October 1940 came under the jurisdiction of Albrecht Schmelt's Organisation Schmelt, which

was responsible for the deportation of Jews to labor camps and their assignment to factories and workshops.

The first transport to the labor camps from Strzemieszyce took place in October 1940, when 65 Jewish men were sent to work at road construction camps (Reichsautobahn-Lager) in Silesia.⁵ In 1941 and 1942, other groups of young Jews were also sent to these camps. According to German statistics from August 1942, there were 192 Jews from Strzemieszyce working in various forced labor camps within the Reich.⁶

In Strzemieszyce, the Jews worked in two workshops: in a branch of Albert Rossner's tailoring shop and in a branch of the tin-making shop of Josef Skopek.⁷ According to a report in the *Gazeta Żydowska*, the Judenrat obtained permission from the Bürgermeister (mayor) of Strzemieszyce to start a farm plot on 18 hectares (44.5 acres).⁸

Available information regarding the ghetto in Strzemieszyce is somewhat contradictory. According to the recollections of Rose Chrustowski, the ghetto was set up in 1941 in a suburb of the town where previously no Jews were living. About 20 blocks were designated and surrounded with barbed wire. The Jews had to leave most of their possessions behind on moving in, taking only their clothes and a little food. German and ethnic German policemen guarded the ghetto externally, and Jewish Police guarded it internally. The Jews were permitted to leave at certain times to go to the post office or obtain food. Bread and soap were in short supply in Strzemieszyce, as Jews were only allowed the amount on their ration cards. Henry Feigenblatt also recalls having to exchange his apartment for a house in the ghetto.⁹

Jerichem Frajman, however, who remained in Strzemieszyce longer than the above two inmates, who had been deported to labor camps by the spring of 1942, uses the term *ghetto* only with respect to the last months of the community's existence in 1943. He mentions that by then the Jews were not permitted to show their faces on other streets, although the concentration of the Jews on Długa Street appears to have taken place earlier.¹⁰

By June 1942, there were 1,598 Jews left in Strzemieszyce. On June 23, 1942, the Germans unexpectedly cordoned off Długa Street. The Jews were ordered to assemble, and 400 elderly and infirm people, or those deemed unfit for labor, were selected. These people were permitted to collect 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of luggage and then were transferred to Dąbrowa Górnicza. From there they were sent by train to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Among those deported were also Jews brought to Strzemieszyce from Czarne Morze and other places nearby. During the transfer from Czarne Morze about 50 Jews managed to flee from the escorting Jewish policemen before the German police was summoned to restore order.¹¹

At the end of July 1942, all Jewish residents of Strzemieszyce had to assemble at a designated point and get their identity cards (*Lichtbildausweise*) stamped. After the verification of their documents, the approximately 1,000 remaining Jews were permitted to return to their houses.

According to Frajman, by March 1943, all of the Jews of Strzemieszyce had been concentrated on Długa Street, where

they “vegetated in the ghetto” until June 1943, when the Germans liquidated the ghetto. German police forces surrounded the ghetto on June 15, 1943, and deported most of the remaining Jews to Auschwitz. The Germans murdered 43 people in Strzemieszyce during the Aktion, including a number of children. A group of employees of the Judenrat remained in the town for a few more weeks to salvage remaining Jewish property in the ghetto. They were later resettled to the ghetto in Będzin.¹² In March 1944, the Amtskommissar in Strzemieszyce transferred to the Treuhandstelle Kattowitz the sum of 51,150 Reichsmark (RM) arising from the liquidation of Jewish property.¹³

Only around 70 Jews from Strzemieszyce are estimated to have survived the German occupation.¹⁴

SOURCES To date, there is no specific publication concerning the fate of the Jews of Strzemieszyce during the Holocaust. The existence of a ghetto in Strzemieszyce Wielkie is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 151.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APKat (e.g., RSGŻDG, 3; M Sosn, 6368; Regierung Kattowitz, 3117); AŻIH (e.g., 301/919, 1553, 2444); VHF (# 7985 and 11030); and YVA (e.g., M-49/E/1547 and O-3/3391).

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NOTES

1. R. Kaczmarek, *Górny Śląsk podczas II wojny światowej* (Katowice, 2006), p. 106.

2. AŻIH, 301/1553, testimony of Jerichem Frajman.

3. *Ibid.*

4. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 3, Aufstellung der dem Leiter der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden in Ost-Oberschlesien unterstehenden Ältestenräte der jüdischen Kultusgemeinden, October 1, 1940, pp. 109–122.

5. Sybille Steinbacher, *“Musterstadt” Auschwitz: Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1999), p. 146. Local witnesses, however—e.g., YVA, M-49/E/1547, testimony of Samuel Zborowski; O-3/3391, testimony of Ester Malka Zajdman—give higher numbers.

6. APKat, M Sosn, 6368, for a statistical breakdown of the Jewish community; also information from the police of Sosnowiec, August 24, 1942, p. 2.

7. AŻIH, 301/1553.

8. *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 22, March 18, 1941, p. 5.

9. VHF, # 7985, testimony of Rose Chrustowski (née Cygler); # 11030, testimony of Henry Feigenblatt. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 151, date the establishment of the ghetto in January 1941.

10. AŻIH, 301/1553.

11. *Ibid.*, 301/2444, testimony of Roza Felczer; YVA, O-3/3391; M. Guterman, “Holocaust Strzemieszyckich Żydów,” *Ekspres, Magazyn Zagłębowski*, no. 3 (1997): 29–31.

12. AŻIH, 301/1553.

13. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 3117, p. 205.

14. AŻIH, 301/1553.

SUCHA

Pre-1939: Sucha, town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Saybusch (Żywiec), Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Sucha Beskidzka, województwo małopolskie, Poland

Sucha is located 48 kilometers (30 miles) south-southwest of Kraków.

Units of the Wehrmacht arrived on September 4, 1939. In November, the Germans incorporated the town into Provinz Schlesien and annexed it to the Third Reich.

The Germans chose Sucha as the place to concentrate the Jewish population of the Żywiec region. In the fall of 1939, many were expelled into the Generalgouvernement. During 1940–1941, the remaining Jews were brought to Sucha from Żywiec-Zabłocie, Rajcza, Milówka, and smaller villages. By March 1941, the number of Jews in Sucha had reached 480. Subsequently this figure may have grown to 600.

By the end of 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) had been established in Sucha. In 1940 it was subordinated to the authority of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (Central Office), based in Sosnowiec. The first chairman of the Sucha Judenrat was Buchbaum, but his German was very poor. Erwin Klapholz, from a German-Jewish family in Rajcza, took over. The Judenrat members included Dr. Josef Kornhauser (labor coordinator), Klar (food supply), and Egon Wolkan (secretary), all fluent in German. The Judenrat enjoyed the confidence of most Jews. There was also a three- or four-man Jewish police unit. Most of the younger Jews, about 200 men, worked full-time on various jobs, primarily flood control on the Skawa River. Others were put to work on road repairs, tree cutting, street cleaning, and unloading coal. Women were assigned to gardening.¹

The Poles of Sucha were very resentful of the German occupiers, who sought to populate the new German land with ethnic Germans from Bukovina and Transylvania. They forced Poles out of their homes to make room for the newcomers. The embittered Poles saw little reason to join in the German persecution of the Jews.²

The Judenrat opened a bakery and a food center to provide for the community. In 1941 a public kitchen was opened to serve 200 lunches per day. Sick people initially were attended to by Dr. Rauk from Bielsko-Biała. In 1941 a clinic was opened, at which Dr. Kornhauser (a dentist) provided general medical care. There was no charge for medical assistance. Difficult cases were transferred to the Jewish hospital in Sosnowiec. The doctor made monthly visits to Jewish homes to check on sanitary conditions.

The transfers of Jews to labor camps began in 1941, when a group of 50 young men were sent to a camp near Breslau. In March 1942, Jewish policemen from the Central Office took 30 people to a transit camp in Sosnowiec. Every day 70 young women traveled from Sucha to a workshop in Wadowice.

Some sources mention the existence of an open ghetto in Sucha in the period 1940–1942. Leon Kornhäuser maintained

that in the ghetto “there was no public kitchen, so food had to be bought in a small store. The ghetto was unfenced. We could leave it without any problem (up until May 1941), but we were afraid of the people outside. We had to wear our armbands when we went out and the policemen were the masters over life and death, who could decide to punish us for any reason.”³

At the end of June 1942, 40 SS men headed by two German officials—Heinrich Lindner and Friedrich Karl Kuczynski—arrived from Sosnowiec. They were joined by Mojżesz Merin, the chairman of the Central Office of Jewish Councils. Local German police surrounded the town, and the Gestapo pulled Jews out of their houses according to a list that had been prepared in Sosnowiec. The Jews of Sucha had anticipated an Aktion, but only a few attempted to hide. All the Jews, with the exception of the Judenrat members, their clerks, and the Jewish Police, were concentrated in the school building. In the courtyard a selection took place in the presence of Merin. The sick, the aged (even those holding down jobs), and entire families were taken to the train station and sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. It is claimed that the original number marked for transport was 270 but that Merin’s intercession brought the total down to 220; 50 men were supposed to be sent to the transit camp in Sosnowiec. Altogether, about half of the 600 Jews were deported from Sucha.⁴

Thanks to the intervention of representatives of the German waterworks firm in Bielsko, which employed many Sosnowiec Jews for flood control, their 50 workers remained in Sucha, along with the others deemed “fit for labor” and the families of the Judenrat members. The Sucha Jews who worked in Wadowice also were brought back to Sucha. Only 40 of the Jews from Wadowice and Zator remained in Sucha.

After the June deportation Aktion, the German authorities officially proclaimed Sucha to have been cleansed of Jews (*judenrein*), but in fact around 300 Jews remained. All of these Jews were moved into the old beer brewery, which became a remnant ghetto or labor camp, under the direction of the Water Management Office in Bielsko. The camp was known as the “Browar,” the Polish word for brewery. It was surrounded by a 1.5-meter-high (5-foot-high) fence. The large groups of workers assigned to labor tasks in the area were the only ones permitted to leave the premises. The Judenrat chair, Erwin Klapholz, was put in charge of maintaining order. The camp was linked to the Central Office in Sosnowiec, and everyone had to pay a poll tax. Among the 300 Jews in the Browar were 20 children aged 3 to 10. About 200 of the inhabitants were employed in flood control along the Skawa River at Sucha and in the neighboring village of Skawce, about 8 kilometers (5 miles) away.⁵

Opinions diverge on whether this facility was in fact a ghetto or a labor camp. Some Jewish survivors, including the author of the relevant entry in the yizkor book, consistently refer to the Browar as a ghetto,⁶ as do some secondary sources, including Czesław Pilichowski, *Obozy hitlerowskie*, citing a postwar report signed by the mayor of Sucha, which also refers to the “ghetto.”⁷ The entry in *Pinkas ha-kehillot*, however, maintains that it was a labor camp. The concentration of

Jews from other places in Sucha, the presence of children, and the continuity of the Judenrat’s authority all might argue in favor of the status of a ghetto.

In contrast to many other sites, the labor conditions for the prisoners in the Browar seemed more tolerable. Those who worked on the river were issued high rubber boots. They worked a six-day week, from 7:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., and the last workday ended at noon. Those who worked in Skawce were taken to the work site and brought back on a train. Laborers were paid 3 to 4 Reichsmark (RM) per day. About 15 men from the camp worked in the office of the mayor of Sucha.

Some of the inhabitants of the Browar lived with their families in separate rooms. Unmarried men and women were housed in segregated areas and shared a common dining room. The children remained at home, cared for by a kindergarten teacher sent from Sosnowiec.⁸

The flood-control workers received food coupons from the firm, which they used at the Browar food shop. Some foodstuffs were sent to the communal kitchen. In the morning people received coffee and sugar (no limit). At lunch they received servings of two dishes. Meat was available three to four times a week. Many sent food packages to their relatives in Sosnowiec and Chrzanów. On Sabbaths and festivals there were worship services in the dining room. One survivor also mentions a theater and dancing. These favorable conditions lasted about a year.⁹

The managers of the waterworks firm assured the Browar prisoners that they could continue working for them until the end of the war. They received the news with joy, but their hopes were not fulfilled. On or around May 8, 1943,¹⁰ in the early morning, the Browar was surrounded by local German police and Gestapo men, headed by Heinrich Lindner. The selection removed mothers and their children, the aged, and the infirm, 120 in all, and sent them to Auschwitz. Another 120 people deemed “fit for labor” were sent by train to a transit camp in Sosnowiec and then dispersed among other camps.

The survivors did not forget the sympathetic treatment they received from the German mayor of Sucha, Volk, as well as their positive relationships with the local population. The city engineer, Tyszkowski, and his wife paid with their lives for helping the Jews. They also perished at Auschwitz.

SOURCES Much of this entry is based on Avraham Wein and Aharon Weiss, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 3, *Galicia and Western Silesia* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), pp. 274–276. Other information concerning the fate of the Jewish community of Sucha during the Holocaust can be found in David Jakubowicz, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kehillot Wadowice, Andrychow, Kalwaria, Myslenice, Sucha* (Ramat Gan: Former Residents of Wadowice, 1967). Reference to the existence of a ghetto in Sucha can be found in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 478.

Relevant documentation includes the following: IPN (ASG, sygn. 48b, pp. 254–255); USHMM (RG-15.019M); and VHF (# 18757, 25061, 36485).

Samuel Fishman

NOTES

1. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilot*, p. 441; VHF, # 36485, testimony of Saul Rubinfeld.
2. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilot*, p. 442.
3. PAIH, Testimony of Leon Kornhäuser, September 5, 1996.
4. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilot*, p. 442.
5. IPN, ASG, sygn. 48b, pp. 254–255.
6. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilot*, p. 442. VHF, # 25061, testimony of Erna Fishman, uses the term *ghetto*; # 18757, Mina Lustiger, however, says that it was more a labor camp than a ghetto, as single able-bodied Jews were sent there to work. VHF, # 36485, however, referring to the period before the brewery, states that the whole town was a ghetto, due to the overcrowding of Jews brought in from Rajcza and elsewhere.
7. IPN, ASG, sygn. 48b, p. 255.
8. VHF, # 25061.
9. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilot*, p. 443; VHF, # 36485.
10. IPN, ASG, sygn. 48b, p. 254.

SZCZAKOWA

Pre-1939: Szczakowa, town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Schakowa, Kreis Krenau, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Szczakowa, województwo małopolskie, Poland

Szczakowa is located about 21 kilometers (13 miles) east-southeast of Katowice. The Jewish population of the town was 405 in 1921.

After the chaos of the first days of occupation, the German authorities began to restrict the Jews' rights and isolate them from the non-Jewish population. According to decrees issued by the military and civil authorities, the property of displaced people (Jews and Poles) could be confiscated; Jewish bank accounts were blocked; cash withdrawals were restricted; shops were marked; and warehouse stocks were requisitioned. Jewish businesses and workshops were taken over by commissars, which effectively meant their confiscation. In Szczakowa, the last Jewish businesses were closed or placed under trusteeship in December 1940. At the end of 1939, Jews were ordered to wear a white armband, which was replaced in September 1941 by a yellow patch on the left breast. Collective and individual contributions were imposed on the Jews by the German authorities. For example, in April 1940, Szczakowa's Jews were forced to pay the sum of 2,000 Reichsmark (RM). At the beginning of 1940, the authorities prohibited Jews from running pubs; in March, the mayor decreed that Jewish craft shops had to be open on Saturdays. In November, the mayor in Chrzanów forbade Jews from using public parks.¹

In Szczakowa, power was initially in the hands of the Amtskommissar, named Zollna, who subsequently became mayor of the town.²

In January 1940, the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (Central Office) was established, with Mojżesz Merin as its chairman. The Central Office super-

vised all the Jewish communities in the territory of Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, as well as some others in Regierungsbezirk Oppeln. On its authority, a Judenrat was established in Szczakowa in mid-January 1940. Joel Wajs was the Judenrat's first chairman; in April 1940, Chaim Włoszczowski replaced him; and from December 1941, Abram Selinger was the chairman. Szczakowa was included within Kreis Krenau Inspectorate of the Central Office, which was headed by Chaim Merin.³ A soup kitchen was opened in February 1940, which served approximately 36 percent of Szczakowa's Jews.

Approximately 200 Jews from Katowice, Chorzów, Świętochłowice, and Siemianowice were deported to Kreis Krenau, including Jaworzno and Szczakowa, at the end of May and in early June 1940.⁴ There were 480 Jews living in Szczakowa in September 1940; 506 in March 1941; and 503 in July 1941.⁵

At the beginning of the occupation, the German authorities conscripted Jews for forced labor, initially for cleaning jobs. More physically demanding labor was imposed following a registration conducted on January 18–19, 1940. From October 1940, Albrecht Schmelt's Organisation Schmelt assumed responsibility for the labor deployment of Jews in the region. Approximately 250 Jewish men and 70 women from Jaworzno and Szczakowa worked in quarries in Czatkowice near Krzeszowice, at a rubber plant in Trzebinia, in Chrzanów's factories, and in mines in Jaworzno. Approximately 100 people worked for the municipal authority.⁶ Roundups of Szczakowa's Jews, and those from its vicinity, to be sent to labor camps started in the fall of 1940. In April 1941, about 60 Jews were sent to camps and more were sent away at the end of the year. According to German statistics, there were 143 Szczakowa Jews in various labor camps in August 1942.⁷

It is difficult to establish the exact date when the ghetto was established in Szczakowa; it most likely took place in the early spring of 1942. At this time, Polish residents of the "Pasternik" (i.e., the area between the foot of the Góra Piasku Mountain and the Kozi Bród River) were ordered to leave. In March 1942, the first Jewish families were resettled into this area. In the following months, more families were moved in, totaling more than 280 people. They lived in dreadful housing conditions, as the authorities allotted only 44 rooms for them.

The area's natural features favored the isolation of the population residing there. To the south, the area was cut off by a high railway bank, which was convenient for German observation. The river running on the other side was another natural obstacle, preventing escape.⁸

The ghetto's liquidation took place on June 8, 1942. According to German statistics, out of Szczakowa's 470 Jews, 286 were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp, and approximately 200 were resettled in the Chrzanów ghetto.⁹

Only about 15 Jews from Szczakowa survived to the end of the war, including 3 who had fled to the Soviet Union.

SOURCES There is no specific publication on the history of the Jewish community of Szczakowa, but its fate is mentioned in the studies dedicated to Jaworzno's Jews (in 1956, Szczakowa



Group portrait of students and teachers at a school in the Szczakowa ghetto, March 1941. The children are dressed in costume for Purim. All were murdered following a selection in June 1942. At the far left, with his face partly cut off by the camera, is Chaim Wloszczowski, the head of the Judenrat.

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lost its status as a town and became a suburb of Jaworzno). Relevant information can be found in a two-part article by Barbara Legutko, "Żydzi w Jaworznie," published in *Zeszyty Historyczne Miasta Jaworzna* no. 10 (2006); and in Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 3, *District Krakow* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2008), pp. 297–298.

Documentary sources can be found in the following archives: APKat (RSGŻDG, sygn. 30; and Regierung Kattowitz, 2779); AŻIH (301/2635); and YVA (e.g., O-41/108).

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NOTES

1. J. Zawistowski, "Wojna i okupacja," in J. Zawistowski, ed., *Jaworzno. Zarys dziejów w latach 1939–1990* (Kraków, 1996), p. 34.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
3. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Wykaz gmin podlegających Centrali Żydowskich Rad Starszych, October 1, 1940, p. 114; Adolf Tatarczuch, "Monografia Szczakowej," *Zeszyty Historyczne Miasta Jaworzna*, no. 9 (2005): 39.
4. AŻIH, 301/2635, testimony of Matylda Goldberger.
5. APKat, RSGŻDG, Bulletin no. 1, September 15, 1940, p. 2; RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl, July 20, 1942, p. 169.
6. Legutko, "Żydzi w Jaworznie (cz. II)," *Zeszyty Historyczne Miasta Jaworzna*, no. 10 (2006): 14–15.

7. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, Aufstellung der Bevölkerungszahl, July 20, 1942, p. 169.

8. Legutko, "Żydzi w Jaworznie (cz. II)," pp. 17–18.

9. APKat, Regierung Kattowitz, 2779, Statistische Angaben zu den Stand der jüdischen Bevölkerung, August 24, 1942, p. 4.

TRZEBINIA

Pre-1939: Trzebinia (Yiddish: Tšebim), town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Krenau, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: województwo małopolskie, Poland

Trzebinia is located about 38 kilometers (24 miles) west-northwest of Kraków. Before 1939, Trzebinia had about 5,000 inhabitants, including about 300 Jewish families or around 1,200 people.¹

German troops occupied the town on September 5, 1939. Many Jewish inhabitants, as well as many Poles, fled the town during the German aerial bombardments in the first days of the war. Most, however, returned a few days later. Immediately on the first day of the occupation, 87 Jews from Chrzanów and Jaworzno were shot in Trzebinia.² Only three days later, when Isucher Mandelbaum returned to the town, 40 Jews were hastily collected on the marketplace, some without their shoes. They were escorted out of town and forced to dig graves in

the vicinity of a monastery, before being shot and buried there. The Jewish communities of Trzebinia and Chrzanów exhumed the bodies in December 1939 and January 1940.³

In the days following September 8, 1939, there were a series of further raids and killings in which about 40 more Jews were shot. On September 23, 1939 (Yom Kippur), 30 to 40 Jews were herded together at the “Sokół” sports field, where they were shot by members of the Wehrmacht and buried in a mass grave. These corpses were also exhumed so that the victims from Trzebinia, Jaworzno, and Chrzanów could be identified and transferred to their respective Jewish cemeteries.⁴

From the end of 1939, the Jews were required to wear white armbands bearing the Star of David. In September 1941, these armbands were replaced with yellow stars bearing the word “Jew” (*Jude*). At the start of 1940, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established. In the same year, a Jewish police force, consisting of just two people, was set up.⁵

In May 1940, more than 1,000 Jews from Rybnik, Pszczyna, Mikołów, Żory, Chorzów, Katowice, and Mysłowice were deported to Chrzanów and Trzebinia.⁶ Initially the mayor was reluctant to accept them, arguing that the town already had enough Jews, but he was forced to submit to the Gestapo.⁷ Statistics of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia record 1,064 Jews in Trzebinia in May 1940, but these figures probably do not include the resettled Jews.⁸

Some sources maintain that there was no ghetto in Trzebinia.⁹ However, up until the day on which Trzebinia was declared to be “cleansed of Jews” (*judenrein*), on June 10, 1942,¹⁰ there was an open ghetto in the town. The process of ghettoization started in 1940, when the Jews were forbidden to live on or use the main streets of the town. Jews living on Kościuszkowa, Długa, or Stanisławów Street had to move out. In 1941, this ban was extended to Narutowicz and Kraków Streets, as well as to the market square (Rynek), so that it is possible to speak of de facto ghettoization. Jews could not cross these streets without a special permit. Those Jews forced to resettle could take with them their furniture and clothes, but any particularly desirable furniture was confiscated and given to German officials and their families, who had moved to Trzebinia. The Jews were concentrated on two streets: Piłsudski (Bergstrasse) and Ochronkowa (Kinderheimstrasse), close to the synagogue.¹¹ According to Tauba Friedlich, after the Jews were rounded up and concentrated on one street, her entire family of eight people had to live in one room with a kitchen.¹² There was a curfew at 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.; it was hard to make a living and get food.¹³

In October 1939, the Germans began to round up Jews in Trzebinia for forced labor. In order to prevent the random seizure of Jews off the streets, the Jews of Trzebinia established a committee, which assigned Jews to forced labor. Wealthy Jews were able to buy exemptions, and this money was used to pay replacements.¹⁴

In the fall of 1939, a public kitchen was opened, which distributed about 30 lunches and bread daily to the poorest members of the community. Each day, about 40 Jews were sent to perform forced labor. Hana Kotlicki of Trzebinia recalled:

“After Yom Kippur (in 1939) we started immediately with the work—we received the coupons.”¹⁵ The first deportation from Trzebinia for work deployment in the Old (pre-1939) Reich took place in the spring of 1941. One year earlier, the community was able to save its members from deportation for forced labor by bribing the commander of the police to accept a statement by the local doctor that there was a typhus epidemic in the town.¹⁶

In June 1941, the Jewish population of Trzebinia was 1,242.¹⁷ The Jews of Trzebinia worked in the “Zbyszek” coal mine (40 people) and cleaned the streets and performed construction work for the town administration (50 men and 20 women); from June 1941, at least 150 young women and 20 men worked in the rubber-clothing factory (Oberschlesische Gummiwerke GmbH Trzebinia).¹⁸ Some Jewish women were engaged in cleaning work, for the police and other German institutions.¹⁹ Jews who worked regularly received a special status, which protected them from the roundups of people sent to forced labor camps.

On May 30, 1942, German police surrounded the Trzebinia ghetto and organized its liquidation. In the market square, the Germans conducted a selection, and the Jews were separated into three groups. The first group was destined for deportation to the Auschwitz concentration camp; they were held in a municipal building without food or water for several days before their deportation by train. The second group was told it would remain in Trzebinia, and these Jews were permitted to return home. The third group was sent to the labor camps via the transit camp in Sosnowiec. As a result, about 1,000 Jews were deported from the town. Only a few days later, however, on June 7 or 8, 1942, the 300 Jews that remained in Trzebinia were transferred to Chrzanów, where the rubber-clothing factory was then based.²⁰ This “replenished” the Chrzanów ghetto just after a deportation Aktion there. On June 10, Trzebinia was declared to have been cleared of Jews. At that time there were about 6,000 Jews in Chrzanów, to which were now added the 300 people from Trzebinia.²¹

Several labor camps existed in Trzebinia in the period from 1942 to 1944, including a subcamp of the Auschwitz concentration camp from August 1944 to January 1945, which also held a number of Jewish prisoners.

SOURCES Published sources on the Jewish community of Trzebinia include: Pinhas Goldwasser et al., eds., *Kebilat Tshubin* (Israel: Committee of Trzebinians in Israel, 1969); and Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 3, *District Krakow* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2008), pp. 324–327.

Documentary sources can be found in the following archives: APKat (RSGŻDG, sygn. 30; Łagiewniki township, 260); AŻIH (301/2718); USHMM (Acc.2007.226); VHF (e.g., # 3108, 35575, 37652); and YVA (e.g., O-3/9265, O-41/882).

Imke Hansen, Margerethe Mróz, and Martin Dean

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2718. Jacek Chrobaczyński, “Wrzesień 1939. Kłeska. Początek okupacji,” in Feliks Kiryk, ed., *Trzebinia*.

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Zarys dziejów miasta i regionu (Kraków, 1994), pp. 425–502, gives the figure of 600 to 700 Jews in Trzebinia, but this probably refers to the number of adult members of the community.

2. Chrobaczyński, “Wrzesień,” p. 484.
3. AŻIH, 301/2718, testimony of Isucher Mandelbaum, p. 3; Chrobaczyński, “Wrzesień,” p. 484.
4. AŻIH, 301/2718.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
6. APKat, Łagiewniki township, 260, Circular no. 3, Gestapo in Katowice, May 8, 1940, p. 10.
7. AŻIH, 301/2718.
8. APKat, HTO 1397, pp. 66 ff.
9. Chrobaczyński, “Wrzesień,” p. 484.
10. AŻIH, 301/2718, p. 9.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6; VHF, # 3108, testimony of Leopold Popowsky.
12. VHF, # 35575, testimony of Tauba Friedlich (née Langer).
13. *Ibid.*, # 37652, testimony of Miriam Rozenbaum (née Oppenheim).
14. AŻIH, 301/2718, p. 4.
15. YVA, O-3/9265, p. 10, testimony from 1995.
16. *Ibid.*
17. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 30, census of the Jewish population as of June 20, 1941, p. 173.
18. AŻIH, 301/2718, p. 7; 301/2637, p. 3; and YVA, O-3/9265, p. 11. German documentation cites much larger numbers of Jews working at the rubber-clothing factory; see Sybille Steinbacher, *“Musterstadt” Auschwitz: Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1999), p. 151, but this refers to the period after June 1942, when the shop had been transferred to Chrzanów.
19. AŻIH, 301/2637, pp. 1, 3; VHF, # 37652.
20. AŻIH, 301/2637, pp. 1, 3; VHF, # 3108.
21. AŻIH, 301/2720, p. 7.

WADOWICE

Pre-1939: Wadowice, town, Kraków województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Wadowitz, Kreis Bielitz, Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Wadowice, województwo małopolskie, Poland

Wadowice is located about 56 kilometers (35 miles) southeast of Katowice. The Jewish population of the town was 1,437 in 1921, out of a total population of 6,862.

When the Germans occupied Wadowice on September 4, 1939, there were about 1,400 Jews living there. In October, the Zagłębie region, including Wadowice, was annexed to the Third Reich.

In November, the Germans established a four-man Judenrat. The first chairman, Reuven Scharfer, was a past chairman of the community council. He sought to address the needs of the local community and resisted the hegemony of the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (Central Office). The chairman of the Central Office, Mojżesz Merin, demanded unswerving obedience to German orders. Scharfer refused to cooperate and resigned; Berisch

Wolf took over. The representative of the Central Office and enforcer on the Wadowice Judenrat was Baruch Majerczyk, who by July 1942 had become the dominant figure in the town's leadership. The Jews of Wadowice called him the “Commis-sar.” A small Jewish police force was also established.¹

The Germans required that the Judenrat meet their daily demands for forced labor. Jewish women were put to work cleaning the police station, the military camps, and German private apartments. The men were sent to repair roads and bridges and to work on flood control along the Skawa River. The Judenrat also collected funds to meet the German demands for “contributions.” As the economic situation of the Jews steadily worsened, the Judenrat organized support for people in need: food, clothing, footwear, and monthly monetary aid. A public clinic was opened to provide free medical treatment.

The Jewish leadership made efforts to create local jobs deemed critical to the German war effort, to curtail the comman-deering of Jews for forced labor camps. In 1940, the Judenrat opened vocational courses for young Jewish men and set up a sewing and cutting course for 50 young women.

In 1940, about 300 Jewish families who had been expelled from other towns in the area were brought to Wadowice. They came from Cieszyn, Katowice, Żywiec, Bielsko-Biała, Czechowice, and Dziedzice. The local community made every effort to ease their plight. They were housed in community buildings, empty shops, storehouses, and private apartments. The Wadowice Jews opened a community kitchen to provide warm meals for the refugees, as well as for the local needy.

Despite a German ban, secret school groups were organized. Adults and older youths taught the younger ones.²

In the fall of 1940, a group of 100 men was shipped to a labor camp in Ottmut, where they were put to work paving roads and in a shoe factory. At the beginning of 1941, the kidnappings and deportations to labor camps increased. In April, more than 50 men were sent to a labor camp in Gogolin.³ The prisoners worked on road repairs and in the agricultural fields around the camp. Following a “selection,” those deemed unfit for labor were sent from the camp to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

To deter further deportations, the Judenrat stepped up its efforts to find work in or near the town. Jews in the workshops made army uniforms, raincoats, belts, and shirts. People who wanted such work had to bring their own sewing machines and work tools. By early 1942, more than 1,000 Jews from Wadowice and neighboring towns were employed in the shops. Other Jews were still working on the river irrigation projects. But these “essential” jobs did not stop the Germans from deporting people to labor camps. The local Jewish Police were supposed to participate in the roundups, but they did not always obey German orders. To meet the quotas, the Central Office in Sosnowiec had to send in their own police.

Several sources refer to an open ghetto being set up in Wadowice in 1941, but very few details are available.⁴ Sabina Winter mentions that it was in the poorest part of town,

about a 20-minute walk from her former home, and that her family was given one room for five to six people to share. Zygmunt Litwok was sent to the Wadowice ghetto from a nearby town, but he took off his star and returned home on one occasion to forage for food.⁵

In June 1942, Jews from nearby towns—Kęty, Sucha, and Zator—were expelled and sent to Wadowice. It soon became evident that they were brought in to join the first mass deportation, which occurred on July 2. On that day Gestapo and SS men arrived from Sosnowiec. They ordered the Jews to leave their apartments and assemble at the army barracks on Zatorska Road. The apartments were locked and sealed. The Jews at various work sites were all brought to the assembly point for the “selection.” They were divided into two groups according to their place of employment. Those from the shops who were “fit for work” would remain in Wadowice. Those who worked on river irrigation would be sent to labor camps in Sakrau and Gross-Rosen. Women with children, the elderly, the lame, and the sick were kept to one side, soon to be deported. When the Germans realized that the number for deportation was short of their goal (probably at least 1,000 people), they added another several dozen from among the shop workers for the train “to the east,” that is, according to the yiskor book and other sources, to the Bełżec extermination camp even though Auschwitz was only 30 kilometers (19 miles) away.⁶

On the following day, July 3, 1942, an enclosed ghetto was established in Wadowice. The remnants of the community, that is, those whose forced labor was considered “essential,” were moved into the ghetto. Some Jews left over from the deportations in nearby towns, including Andrychów, were also sent to the ghetto. The streets in the ghetto area included Mydlarska, Kerent, Piaskowa, and the left side of Zatorska. Aside from the buildings on Zatorska, the ghetto encompassed the poorest part of town. The Poles who were living there rushed to take over vacated Jewish apartments.

During July, people who had hidden during the Aktions tried to slip back into the ghetto. Many were caught and shot by the Gestapo. Conditions in the ghetto were horrendous. Over 1,400 people lived there, with 20 or more sharing one room. They were so crowded that they had to take turns sleeping on the floor. A barbed-wire fence surrounded the ghetto. The only gate was guarded by the Jewish Police.⁷ Overcrowding, malnutrition, and disease claimed many victims. The Judenrat set up a small grocery and opened a public kitchen to feed the people. A medical crew headed by Dr. Bitter cared for the sick with great dedication. Strict sanitary standards were maintained to prevent the spread of disease.

The ghetto inhabitants opened a kindergarten. They also organized a school program for the children.⁸ Orphans were provided with food and clothing. In April 1943, the ghetto leaders mustered the resources to prepare a Passover seder for the ghetto inhabitants, led by a refugee from Zator.⁹

On May 10, 1943, 100 young women were sent from the Wadowice ghetto to work camps in Germany. They passed through many different camps, and most survived the war.¹⁰

On August 10, 1943, the ghetto was liquidated. By then it was one of the last ghettos left in the region. At the last minute a number of ghetto inhabitants tried to escape across the border into Slovakia. The route was very perilous, and many were caught and shot.¹¹

All the inhabitants were assembled in the town square. Sick people were carried by their families or friends. The Jews were ordered to turn in any jewelry and valuables. Many were killed during the Aktion. The rest were put into freight cars and transported to the Auschwitz extermination camp. On August 11, 1943, the *Oberschlesische Zeitung* proclaimed that the days when “dirty-greasy Kaftan Jews” walked the streets of Wadowice had now passed, and it was now a stronghold of the Germans (*ein Hort des Deutschtums*).

After the ghetto’s liquidation, the Germans searched for people in hiding. Most were captured and killed. About 10 people remained hidden until the town was liberated. Altogether about 170 Jews from Wadowice survived the war, mostly people who were in the labor camps, as well as some of those who had escaped into the Soviet Union in 1939.

SOURCES Much of the information for this entry comes from Avraham Wein and Aharon Weiss, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 3, *Galia and Western Silesia* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), pp. 124–129, also available in English as Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 3, *District Krakow* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2008), pp. 338–341. Reference has also been made to the yiskor book edited by David Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kehillot Wadowice, Andrychow, Kalwaria, Myslenice, Sucha* (Ramat Gan: Former Residents of Wadowice, Andrychow, Kalwaria, Myslenice, Sucha, 1967). The Wadowice ghetto is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 536.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APKat; AŻIH (301/761, 4986); and VHF (# 15968, 20985, 31931).

Samuel Fishman and Martin Dean

NOTES

1. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kehillot Wadowice*, pp. 186–187; VHF, # 20985, testimony of Marian Jurkowski; AŻIH, 301/761, testimony of Sala Luftglas.
2. VHF, # 31931, testimony of Sabina Winter.
3. AŻIH, 301/761.
4. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 536. AŻIH, 301/761, mentions that the ghetto was reduced in size following the deportation Aktion on July 2–3, 1942.
5. VHF, # 31931; and # 15968, testimony of Zygmunt Litwok.
6. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kehillot Wadowice*, p. 192; Wein and Weiss, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, 3:128; AŻIH, 301/761; and 301/4986, testimony of Henryk Klausner.
7. Wein and Weiss, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, 3:128; Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kehillot Wadowice*, pp. 192, 199; AŻIH, 301/761 and 4986.
8. Jakubowicz, *Sefer zikaron le-kehillot Wadowice*, p. 199.

9. Ibid., p. 202.

10. Ibid., pp. 203–204; AŻIH, 301/761.

11. Wein and Weiss, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, 3:128–129, and Pilichowski *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 536, give the date of August 10, 1943; AŻIH, 301/4986, dates it on July 9, 1943.

ZAWIERCIE

Pre-1939: Zawiercie, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Warthenau, Kreis center, Regierungsbezirk Oppeln, Provinz Oberschlesien; post-1998: Zawiercie, województwo śląskie, Poland

Zawiercie is located about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) south-southeast of Częstochowa. From 1919 the Jewish communities in Kromołów, Kroczyce, Mrzygłód, Myszków, Poraj, Łazy, Wysoka, Chruszczobród, Pradła, Ogrodzieniec, Rokitno Szlacheckie, Siewierz, and Koziegłowy all belonged to the district of Zawiercie. Just before the outbreak of World War II, Zawiercie had about 40,000 inhabitants, of which 5,676 were Jews.

The German army entered Zawiercie on September 3, 1939. After the chaos of the first days of occupation, the Germans began to eliminate the Jews from economic life, seizing their property, imposing restrictions on their freedom, and isolating them from the non-Jewish inhabitants.

Dr. Wilhelm Frick, who was also the head of the regional section of the Nazi Party, became mayor of Zawiercie. In 1940, an office of the Grenzpolizei (Border Police), which was subordinated to the Staatspolizei (State Police), was established in the town. At first the head of this office was Kriminalsekretär Georg Folta, and then (from the second half of 1942) Kriminalsekretär Hans Heinz Rother. His deputy was Rudolf Schneider. The Grenzpolizei office in Zawiercie was subordinated to the main office in Lubliniec. The Gestapo in Zawiercie was subordinated to the State Police in Opole. There was also an office of the Kriminalpolizei (Criminal Police) and a Military Police unit in Zawiercie, the head of which was Wilhelm Fuchs.¹



A German policeman publicly humiliates a Jew in the Zawiercie ghetto by shaving his beard, n.d.

USHMM WS #07267, COURTESY OF SCHWARTZBAUM

In December 1939, on the order of Dr. Frick, the Jewish religious community in Zawiercie was reorganized, and a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was appointed. Its first chairman was the sculptor Ignacy Buchner, who was sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1941, with his family, for refusing to organize a transport of Jews to a forced labor camp. The next chairman of the community was a merchant, Mojżesz Windmann from Sosnowiec. The members of the Judenrat included: Dr. Zygmunt (Selig) Lewkowicz, clerk Stanisław Szłoma Lewkowicz, Aleks Turner, Wolf Percis, barrister Bornstein, Justmann, merchant Perelmutter, Sruł Schwarzbaum, and the owner of a sawmill, Potok.² The Jewish community in Zawiercie was subordinated to the Central Office of Jewish Councils in Eastern Upper Silesia (Central Office) in Sosnowiec, which was the supervising body for the Jewish communities in Regierungsbezirk Kattowitz and also for some in Regierungsbezirk Oppeln. In this way, Zawiercie became the seat of one of eight Kreis Inspectorates subordinated to the Central Office, and Mojżesz Windmann performed the function of Kreis Inspector. In September 1940, there were 7,555 Jews registered in Jewish communities in the Kreis: Zawiercie (5,340), Kromołów (160), Łazy (395), Siewierz (235), Poręba (140), Poraj (75) Masłońskie-Natalin (7), Myszków (930), Mrzygłód (30), Koziegłowy (230), and Kamienica Polska (13).³ In May 1940, about 500 Jews from Lubliniec, Tarnowskie Góry, Cieszyn, Karwin, and Bogumin were resettled to Zawiercie.⁴

The Jewish community ran a soup kitchen (set up on January 9, 1940), serving about 40 percent of the community in 1941, and an orphanage (set up on December 22, 1940), where there were 55 children at that time. A hospital was established on Poręba Street. The hospital was located in the house of Rabbi Kromołowski and was run by Zelik Lewkowicz. Probably at the end of 1940 or at the beginning of 1941, a Jewish police force was organized; its first commandant was Jakub Banker (he was probably shot), and then he was succeeded by Wolf Percis.

In July 1940, a Jewish quarter (ghetto) was established. It consisted of Hoża (Wasserwerk), Jasna (Helle Gasse), Apteczna (Apotheker Strasse), Poręba, Marszałkowska (Alte Markt Strasse), and Ciemna (Dunkel Gasse) Streets, as well as the Old Market (Alter Ring) and New Market (Neuer Ring).⁵ At first, it was surrounded by a wooden fence. Later, probably in 1941, the area was partially surrounded with barbed wire, a wall, and a fence; Jewish Police guarded the perimeter. There was no German guard post, but regular inspections of the ghetto were carried out by the Military Police, the Gestapo, and the Order Police.

The ghetto was reduced in size as time went on. The already overcrowded conditions deteriorated further in 1942, when Jews from the surrounding communities were brought into the ghetto from Kromołów, Mrzygłód, Łazy, Poręba, Ogrodzieniec, and Siewierz.

In the winter of 1941–1942, the Germans enclosed the ghetto with a barbed-wire fence. From October 1940, the Jews of Zawiercie, like all Jews in this region, were placed at the disposal of the forced labor authority in Silesia, Organisation Schmelt,



A street in the Zawiercie ghetto, ca. 1941.
USHMM WS #05945, COURTESY OF JERZY TOMASZEWSKI

which decided on the allocation of Jews to forced labor camps or their employment in factories or workshops. One of the largest companies in Zawiercie that employed Jews produced uniforms for the Luftwaffe. It was established in the autumn of 1941 or the spring of 1942 in the former textile factory of Towarzystwo Akcyjne Zawiercia (TAZ), employing about 4,000 Jews, managed by Willy Garbrecht and a man named Teicher. Some Jews were assigned to work at the iron foundry, “Erbe,” while others were forced to work cleaning the streets.

At the end of 1941 an underground anti-Nazi resistance movement of young people connected to the Zionist group Ha-Shomer Ha-Za’ir emerged, headed by Berl Schwartz. It organized the production of forged documents and helped people to escape from the ghetto. This group tried to get in contact with the Polish underground. In the middle of 1942, Mordechaj Anielewicz, one of the founders of the Warsaw Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB) came to Zawiercie. He urged young Jewish people from the area to organize a resistance movement and form combat organizations. There was a Jewish committee in the ghetto, composed of David Grunwald, Zygmunt Grunwald, and Joel Grünkraut, which cooperated with Polish partisans from the Bataliony Chłopskie (BCh). Their tasks included the distribution of food supplied by the BCh group under the command of Antoni Jastrząb, as well as false documents prepared by the partisans, who also



German police round up Jews in the Zawiercie ghetto, ca. 1941.
USHMM WS #07269, COURTESY OF SCHWARTZBAUM

delivered weapons and ammunition into the ghetto. Jastrząb was to warn the Jews about the planned liquidation of the ghetto and to help those who survived the Aktion to escape.

The first transport of Jews (200 people) assigned for forced labor in the Reich left in November 1940.⁶ On March 26, 1941, a second transport of 250 people followed. Heinrich Lindner, of Organisation Schmelt, was in charge of this operation. The Jews called that day “bloody Wednesday,” because many Jews were robbed and beaten and some women were raped as the German police broke into Jewish apartments to drag Jews to the selection.⁷ Another transport to labor camps left at the beginning of May 1941. The Gestapo also arrested a number of Jews as suspected Communists in June 1941, at the time of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. In November 1941, 270 people were sent to labor camps. In February 1942, 100 young women aged 15 to 25 were taken away. On March 12, 1942, about 200 people were sent to a transit camp in Sosnowiec (Dulag), as they had special work cards. This Aktion was commanded by the head of the Criminal Police in Zawiercie—Nertens. The last Aktion of this type took place in the winter of 1941–1942. The Jewish Police detained young Jewish females, who reported to the Jewish community on their orders. Due to active resistance by these young girls, who threw stones at the policemen and broke windows in the offices of the Jewish community, the police only managed to capture about 30 of them.⁸

The first mass deportation Aktion took place on June 16 and 17, 1942.⁹ Reportedly some 5,408 Jews were living in the Zawiercie ghetto at that time.¹⁰ The selection, supervised by Kriminalkommissar and head of the Jewish section of the Kattowitz Gestapo, Hans Dreier, and by an employee of Organisation Schmelt in Sosnowiec, Friedrich Karl Kuczynski, took place on Nowy Rynek (New Market Square). Some 5,000 people were gathered there. Jews from the surrounding communities of Kromolów, Siewierz, Poręba, and Myszków were also brought there (about 2,000 people). During the selection, the Jews were divided into three groups: the young and strong were assigned for labor camps; a part was kept for work in the ghetto or workshops; and the third group, deemed unfit for work, was to be transported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. About 1,650 to 1,800 people were deported at this time. Many Jews hid in bunkers and cellars on that day. If they were found, they were shot on the spot or on Nowy Rynek (about 200 people).¹¹

The second mass deportation of the Jews from Zawiercie took place in May 1943. The old and unfit for work (about 400 people) went to Auschwitz; the physically strong (about 200 people) went to labor camps.¹² First, a German-organized manhunt (Gestapo, Schupo, and Military Police from Katowice, Opole, Sosnowiec, and Lubliniec) aimed at finding escapees from the Warsaw ghetto. The Jews were assembled in the yard at the TAZ factory; and at that time the Jewish living quarters were searched, property was taken, and about 20 people were shot.

The last deportation Aktion combined with the liquidation of the ghetto took place on August 25–26, 1943. The resettlement

was supervised by the Gestapo from Opole; Schupo from Opole, Katowice, Sosnowiec, and Zawiercie; plus the Gestapo and Military Police from Zawiercie. Several dozen Jews were murdered during the selection. One transport was sent at about 2:00 P.M., the other one at about 9:00 P.M. According to the *Auschwitz Chronicle*, around 1,500 Jews from the Zawiercie ghetto arrived there on August 26 and another 1,500 on August 27. Of these arrivals, 1,200 were gassed immediately, and the others, slightly more women than men, were registered in the camp. The Jewish hospital in Zawiercie was also liquidated during the Aktion. Patients who were able to walk were transferred to the ghetto, and the remainder were given morphine injections. Schneider, who supervised the liquidation of the hospital, personally administered lethal drugs to patients. Around 20 ill and elderly Jews were murdered.

After the August Aktion, only 350 to 400 people employed in the TAZ factory remained in Zawiercie. This group was deported to Auschwitz on October 17, 1943.¹³ The main factory master managed to hide 7 people, who worked in a workshop making uniforms for the Luftwaffe until January 1945. They were: Zygmunt Sobelman, Ignacy Rotmensch, Chaim Cukier, Bencjan Brokman, Henryk Landau, Iser Cukrowski, and Joel Grünkraut. They were among the few Jews of the town who survived the war, as were two young boys who escaped from Auschwitz.

During the entire period of the ghetto's existence, apart from the mass deportations, there were 58 documented individual or group murders of Jews. In total, about 100 Jews survived the war and returned to Zawiercie.

SS-Oberscharführer Rudolf Emanuel Schneider, born on March 26, 1910, in Sosnowiec, who was the deputy head of the Gestapo in Zawiercie during the occupation, was tried by the District Court in Częstochowa and sentenced to death on April 7, 1948.¹⁴

SOURCES The history of the Jews of Zawiercie and their fate is mentioned only briefly in the more general historical publications about the town such as: Z. Jagodziński, ed., *Zawiercie* (Zawiercie, 2003); or J. Abramski, *Zawiercie* (Zawiercie, 1994). A description of living conditions for the Jews in German-occupied Zawiercie can be found in the memoir of Inka Wajsbort, *Był świat* (Warsaw, 1996). See also the German-language edition Inka Weisbort, *Im Angesicht des Todes: Von Cborzów über Zawiercie, Tarnowitz, Tschenschow durch Auschwitz nach Malchow und Oschatz: Jüdische Schicksale in Oberschlesien 1939–1945* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2000). The yizkor book, edited by Sh. Spivak, *Sefer zikaron, kedoshei Zawiercie ve-ba-*

sewiva (Tel Aviv, 1948), also contains useful information on the ghetto; as does “Zawiercie,” in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 192–196.

Jan Pietrzykowski writes about the extermination of the Jews of Zawiercie in his book *Oskarżaniem kata Zawiercia. Proces Rudolfa Emanuela Schneidera* (Katowice, 1987). The author based his work to a large extent on the court files of the trial that are kept in the archives of IPN. The evidence gathered by the Katowice Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation (now in IPN-Kat) during its work on cases concerning Gestapo crimes in Zawiercie and the deportation of the Jews from Zawiercie is also of considerable importance. Relevant German court material is in BA-L (e.g., B 162/14682). Personal testimonies of Jewish survivors from Zawiercie can be found in AŻIH (e.g., 301/628, 2625, 3552). Additional documentation concerning the German occupation is located in APKat (e.g., RSGŻDG, sygn. 3; Gmina Łagisza, sygn. 260; Landrat of Zawiercie, sygn. 7).

Aleksandra Namysł

NOTES

1. IPN-Kat, case concerning crimes committed by the Gestapo in Zawiercie, Ds. 19/69, report on the state of the investigation against Hans Heinz Rother and others, January 15, 1969, pp. 1–3.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
3. APKat, RSGŻDG, sygn. 3, Bulletin no. 1, October 15, 1940, p. 1.
4. *Ibid.*, Gmina Łagisza, sygn. 260, Circular letter no. 3 issued by the Gestapo in Katowice, May 8, 1940, p. 11.
5. IPN-Kat, Ds. 19/69, p. 6.
6. AŻIH, 301/2625, testimony of Joel Grünkraut.
7. *Ibid.*; 301/3965, testimony of Szlama Lewkowicz.
8. *Ibid.*; 301/2625, testimony of Joel Grünkraut; 301/3965, testimony of Szlama Lewkowicz.
9. Wajsbort, *Był świat*, p. 63; see also BA-L, B 162/14682, verdict of LG-Hamb (89) 2/83 Ks 2200 Js 2/80, July 29, 1985, p. 108.
10. APKat, Landrat of Zawiercie (1939–1945), sygn. 7, letter of mayor of Warthenau to Landrat, April 2, 1942, p. 56.
11. IPN-Kat, Ds. 19/69, report on the state of the investigation, January 15, 1969, p. 8.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
13. Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1990) p. 508, however, registers the arrival of about 1,000 Jews from a labor camp in Zawiercie on October 18.
14. The case against Schneider is in IPN, SOCz 345–348.

SECTION II

PROTECTORATE OF BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA (PROTEKTORAT BÖHMEN UND MÄHREN)

The Munich Agreement of September 29–30, 1938, which permitted Germany under Adolf Hitler's direction to annex the Sudetenland, was soon followed by the destruction of the interwar independent and democratic state of Czechoslovakia. Further annexations of Czechoslovakian borderlands in November 1938 by Hungary and Poland, with German and Italian backing, were succeeded in March by the secession of Slovakia, which became a Nazi satellite state. Then on March 15, 1939, German troops occupied the rump Czech lands, which Hitler declared to be a protectorate of the German Reich. The new state consisted of two provinces, Böhmen und Mähren (Bohemia and Moravia), which in most respects were treated as part of the German Reich. Much of the Czech administration was left intact but placed under the close supervision of German officials in charge of the various departments.

The first Reichsprotektor was Konstantin von Neurath. He was effectively replaced by Reinhard Heydrich

on September 27, 1941, although Neurath retained the title of Reichsprotektor until his formal resignation in August 1943. After the assassination of Heydrich in May 1942, he was succeeded first by Kurt Daluege (head of the Order Police), then by Wilhelm Frick, who served as Reichsprotektor from August 20, 1943, until the end of the occupation in May 1945.

There was only one ghetto established in the Protectorate in November 1941—the fortress town of Terezín (Theresienstadt), 70 kilometers (44 miles) north-northwest of Prague. The Jews of the Protectorate were concentrated there before most were deported to the east. Additionally, tens of thousands of mostly elderly Reich Jews were sent to Terezín after January 1942, when it was officially designated a “ghetto for the aged” (*Altersghetto*). Some Jews from the Netherlands, Denmark, Slovakia, and Hungary also were sent to Terezín.



TEREZÍN



A large group of Dutch Jews who have just arrived in Terezín are herded into one of the ghetto's entrances, January 20, 1944. This photograph by Ivan Fric was taken in preparation for the Nazi propaganda film, *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* (*The Führer Gives a City to the Jews*).

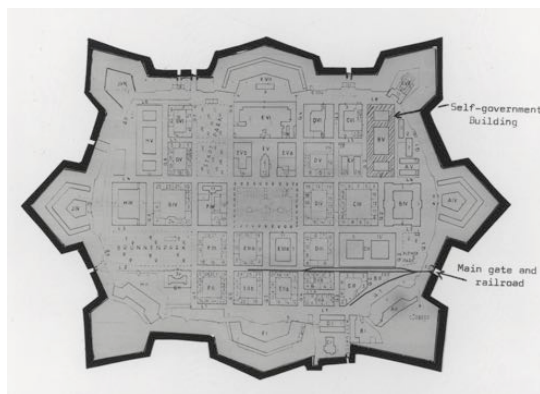
USHMM WS #20255, COURTESY OF IVAN VOJTECH FRIC

TEREZÍN

Pre-1939: Terezín, town, Litoměřice district, Čechy province, Republic of Czechoslovakia; 1939–1945: Theresienstadt, Leitmeritz district, Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren; post-1992: Terezín, Litoměřice district, Usti nad Labem region, Czech Republic

Terezín is located about 70 kilometers (44 miles) north-northwest of Prague. Built in the 1780s, Terezín's existence as a fortress town dominated its history. Terezín's "Small Fortress" was a notorious Habsburg-era detention site that became the Gestapo police prison for Prague in June 1940. On November 24, 1941, after approximately a month's administrative preparation, the German authorities established a ghetto in part of the town. Originally intended for Jews from the Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren, Terezín later held Jews from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Slovakia, and Hungary. By May 8, 1945, approximately 155,000 men, women, and children had passed through Terezín. Some 35,000 of them died in the ghetto; another 83,000 perished after deportation to killing centers, ghettos, and labor camps in the east.

The ghetto functioned as a reception and transit camp, which has led some witnesses and scholars to classify it as a concentration camp. The designation originated during World War II and can be found, for example, in International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) files.¹ Terezín was never subordinate to the SS Business Administration Main Office (SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt, WVHA), however, meaning that it was not a concentration camp in the strictest sense, and the forced removal, by June 1942, of the town's non-Jewish inhabitants strongly suggested that Terezín was a ghetto. As early as the 1950s, scholar H.G. Adler subdivided its World War II history into four phases, an indication of its repurposing or "morphing" over time: "closed camp" (November 1941 to July 1942); "ghetto" (July 1942 to the summer of 1943); "Jewish settlement area" (the summer of 1943 to September 1944); and decline and dissolution (September 1944 to May 1945).



Map of Terezín that was cut out of an original document and mounted on black paper in an album assembled by a survivor, n.d. USHMM WS #42024, COURTESY OF HENRY KAHN

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

On November 24, 1941, a construction kommando of 342 young Jewish men from Prague arrived at Terezín's Sudeten barracks. Its task was to prepare other town structures for the reception of deportees beginning on November 30. Having been stripped of most property during the deportation, except for 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of luggage, the deportees arrived at the Bohušovice railway station, some 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles) away. The new arrivals had to walk from the railway station to the ghetto; many old and ill people did not survive the journey.

The ghetto's commandants were SS-Obersturmführer, later Hauptsturmführer, Dr. Siegfried Seidl; SS-Obersturmführer Anton Burger; and SS-Obersturmführer Karl Rahm. These officers mistreated inmates both indirectly, through a system of orders and prohibitions, and directly, in the bunkers beneath the command post, where inmates were interrogated and tortured. The three commandants were Austrian Nazis with administrative ties to SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann, who headed the Jewish Affairs desk (Office IV-B-4) in the SS-Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, RSHA). Indeed, Eichmann nominated Seidl as ghetto commandant in late October 1941.

The SS transmitted orders to the ghetto's inhabitants through the Jewish self-administration (Jüdische Selbstverwaltung). The self-administration consisted of a Jewish elder (Judenältester), deputy, Council of Elders (Ältestenrat), and Central Secretariat with initially five, later nine, main departments. In succession, the Jewish elders were Jakob Edelstein (December 1941 to December 1943), Dr. Paul Eppstein (December 1943 to September 27, 1944), and Dr. Benjamin Murmelstein (December 1944 to May 1945). According to an organizational table published by the Jewish self-administration on August 10, 1944, the main departments were the Directorate (Leitung), Labor Central Office (Arbeitszentrale), Department for Internal Administration (Abteilung für innere Verwaltung), Economic Department (Wirtschaftsabteilung), Technical Department (Technische Abteilung), Financial Department (Finanzabteilung), Health Matters and Welfare (Gesundheitswesen und Fürsorge), Youth Welfare (Jugendfürsorge), and Leisure Time Organization (Freizeitgestaltung).² While some of these departments and their attendant agencies served Nazi propaganda functions, others somewhat attenuated the inhabitants' suffering. For example, the child welfare division established children and youth homes, where caretakers, officially forbidden to provide schooling, utilized games and songs in the attempt to prepare their charges for life after the ghetto.

Cultural activities, which originally emerged as spontaneous "friendship evenings" that some of the young men among the first arrivals held, soon came under the auspices of the Leisure Time Organization. Although for propaganda purposes the SS later exploited the ghetto's dramatic performances, lectures, and concerts, such activities signified important coping mechanisms, giving inhabitants a temporary escape, a sense of continuity with pre-war lives, and the opportunity to imagine a postwar future. Some inhabitants, such as administrator



Still photograph from the Nazi propaganda film, *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* [*The Führer Gives a City to the Jews*], showing members of the Terezín Jewish Council, 1944. Standing are Otto Zucker, Jewish Elder Paul Eppstein, and Eppstein's successor, Benjamin Murlstein.

USHMM WS #59545, COURTESY OF IVAN VOJTECH FRIC

Philipp Manes, maintained diaries, while others produced works of art. Manes's diary conveyed a sense of the scope of Terezín's cultural activities; he recounted lectures, parenthetically recording the languages other than German in which they were delivered. For the day of August 8, 1944, the host of topics included lectures on Flemish art by Alice Bloemendahl (in French); Jewish mysticism by Dr. Josef Pollak; Joseph in Egypt (in Hebrew); Jewish artists, including Marc Chagall, by Dr. Karl Fleischmann; and the division of labor by Ing. H. Haber (in Czech).³ Among Terezín artists whose work extensively chronicles the ghetto were Leo Haas and Alfred Kantor. Still other inhabitants found other means of escapism. Wilhelmina (Minna) Paechter maintained a small cookbook with recipes in German and Czech. Whether these recipes, which included tortes, strudel, and macaroni, were made in the ghetto is unclear.⁴

The January 9, 1942, order of the day announcing the transport to Riga dashed whatever illusions remained that Terezín might be a place to live and work until war's end.⁵ Indeed, this order explicitly stated: "It is to be reckoned, as far as can now be said, with further transports from Theresienstadt to the East."⁶ The Riga deportation was the first of 63 transports totaling more than 87,000 people from Terezín. Aside from Riga, the deportees were sent to ghettos including Białystok, Łódź, Minsk, Piaski Luterskie, and Warsaw and to concentration camps and extermination centers at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Lublin-Majdanek, and Treblinka. Approximately 3,800 of them survived the war.

At the Wannsee conference on January 20, 1942, Terezín officially became the "ghetto for the aged" (*Altersghetto*) for Jews from Germany and Austria, a policy that followed its provisional designation by the RSHA in October 1941.⁷ People over 65 years of age and famous or privileged people, especially with foreign ties (in Nazi terms, the *Prominente*), were deported

to Terezín. This policy's ultimate purpose was to deflect international criticism of Nazi anti-Jewish policy. The ghetto's new role called for a marked increase in accommodations. Until then, the inmates were crowded in 11 guarded barracks in town. Now, the entire town became a large ghetto. Chief of the Security Police and SD (Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und SD, CSSD) Reinhard Heydrich issued a decree in February 1942 abolishing the Terezín community; the non-Jewish Czech population was removed by the end of June. Elderly and "prominent" Jews poured into the town, first from Germany and Austria, then, beginning in 1943, from the German-occupied Netherlands and Denmark. The ghetto reached peak accommodation capacity in September 1942 with 58,491 inmates, as compared to 12,968 people the previous April. While its population quadrupled between April and September, the mortality rate increased more than 15-fold. Deportations to killing centers continued apace as overcrowding worsened.

Beginning in late 1942, German military reverses affected the implementation of the "Final Solution." The German authorities thereupon sought to exploit the Terezín ghetto for propaganda, launching a "beautification" (*Verschönerung*) campaign in the spring of 1943. On a grand scale, this campaign elaborated on early Nazi camp practices in which foreign visitors, including the ICRC's Carl Burckhardt, were given "Potemkin village" tours of camps in the early 1930s. Growing requests by international organizations, primarily the ICRC, for permission to visit the actual destinations of Jewish deportations culminated in the first half of 1944. The beautification campaign paid particular attention to the cosmetic improvement of houses and green space. Such measures included the planting of flowerbeds, the building of a musical pavilion for concerts on the square, and erecting a children's pavilion and nearby playground. A former gym was turned into a "community center" (*Gemeinschaftshaus*) with halls for cultural programs, a prayer room, a library, and a restaurant on a terrace. As described by Dr. Ludwig Hift, an employee of the ghetto's "bank," another institution devised for propaganda purposes, such measures were "eye-wash."⁸

Headed by delegate Dr. Maurice Rossel, the ICRC visit took place on June 23, 1944. Rossel's report met the German authorities' most optimistic expectations. Uncritically accepting SS efforts at subterfuge, Rossel described Terezín as a "final camp" (*Endlager*) from which Jews were no longer deported and quoted Eppstein as announcing, "You are visiting a normal provincial town."⁹ In a comment redolent of the Nazi association of Jews and Bolshevism, the ICRC delegate observed, "The ghetto of Theresienstadt is a communist society, led by a 'Little Stalin' of high value: EPPSTEIN."¹⁰ In actuality, tens of thousands of Terezín inmates had already perished in killing centers, while death awaited many others, most immediately the inmates of the Czech "family camp" at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, murdered on July 22, 1944, almost one month after Rossel's visit. Historian Otto Dov Kulka connects the timing of the second Czech family camp's destruction to SS satisfaction with the outcome of Rossel's visit: there were to be no more inquiries into the Terezín deportees' fate.

In yet another propaganda tactic, the SS produced a film about Terezín in August and September 1944. The film, best known after the war as *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* (*The Führer Gives a City to the Jews*), used as backdrop the freshly renovated town, thereby creating the false impression of contentment within the “Jewish settlement area.”¹¹ One week after finishing, the SS announced that, due to Terezín’s inadequate production capacity, more inhabitants had to be deported to facilitate war production. One day before this transport began, September 27, 1944, Terezín’s second Jewish elder, Dr. Paul Eppstein, was shot in the Small Fortress. Almost all the members of the Council of Elders, other Jewish officials, and their families were deported, beginning with the September 28, 1944, transport.

Between September 28 and October 28, 1944, a total of 18,400 Terezín Jews were sent to Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Approximately 11,000 people, mostly elderly, remained after the last wave of transports. Such a dramatic population drop put greater reliance on women’s and children’s labor. The Jewish self-administration found it difficult to regain its strength and fully resumed its activities only in December. Dr. Benjamin Murelstein became Jewish elder, and Dr. Leo Baeck headed the Council of Elders.

Beginning in December 1944, new groups started to arrive at Terezín. Four transports holding 1,400 Slovakian Jews were sent from the forced labor camp at Sered. These people were originally sent to Auschwitz II-Birkenau, but after the local extermination facilities ceased operation, they were rerouted to Terezín. The Slovak Jews brought news about the Auschwitz killing center’s actual function. In mid-January 1945, the RSHA ruled that members of mixed marriages from Germany, Austria, and the Protectorate should be sent to Terezín for supervised labor, while persons of mixed “race” (*Mischlinge*) from the Protectorate were also consigned to Terezín. The first such transports arrived from Prague on January 31, 1945. By the end of April, the above-mentioned groups numbered 5,736. Other new arrivals included a group of 1,150 Hungarian Jews, originally deployed for fortification work around Vienna, who were dispatched in March 1945.

Germany’s imminent defeat engendered growing anxiety among the SS. On the one hand, the SS prepared once more to use Terezín in its attempted cover-up of the “Final Solution”; on the other, preparations got under way for the possible massacre of Terezín’s population before the arrival of Allied forces. By this time, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler planned to exploit Jews as his most valuable asset in secret negotiations with the Allies. After his talks on January 15, 1945, with former chairman of the Swiss Federal Council Jean Marie Musy, some 1,200 Terezín inmates departed for Switzerland on February 5. On April 6, 1945, Dr. Otto Lehner and Paul Dunant of the ICRC and Swiss diplomat Buchmüller arrived at Terezín. After the visit, Lehner depicted the ghetto as the “little Jewish state,” another depiction welcomed by the SS.¹²

The war’s approaching end brought little relief for Terezín. On April 15, 1945, as part of Aktion Bernadotte, the humanitarian operation mounted by Swedish rescuer Count

Folke Bernadotte, Danish Jews departed Terezín for Sweden. They rode aboard a convoy of buses supplied by the Swedish Red Cross. In April and May 1945, evacuation transports from WVHA camps arrived in Terezín by train or on foot. The influx of 15,500 people nearly doubled the ghetto’s population, which prior to the evacuations stood at 17,500. The prisoners originated from at least 22 subcamps of Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Gross-Rosen, and Sachsenhausen and from the Bergen-Belsen main camp. Terezín was the destination for evacuations because of its position in what remained of German-controlled territory, its proximity to rail connections, and the neighboring Flossenbürg subcamp at Leitmeritz, which functioned as a transit camp in the same period. In many cases, the SS dispatched Jewish prisoners from the transports to Terezín, leaving the remainder at Leitmeritz. The new arrivals were terribly emaciated. Many were dying, while dead bodies lay on the trains. The arriving transports were rife with contagious diseases, particularly louse-borne epidemic typhus. Typhus exacted a terrible death toll among ghetto inhabitants before and after liberation.

Most of the SS fled on May 4, followed shortly thereafter by Terezín’s last commandant, Rahm. The first Red Army units advancing to Prague passed through Terezín only in the late afternoon of May 8, 1945.

The fight against epidemics continued unabated in the days and weeks that followed. A group of doctors and nurses, named Czech Action for Help (*České pomocné akce*), arrived at Terezín on May 4, 1945. Its services were all the more urgently needed because typhus fever victims from the Small Fortress were brought into the ghetto. Soon afterwards, the Red Army medical service furnished invaluable assistance. But the burden of combating epidemics still fell to Jewish medical personnel. More than 1,500 inmates died from disease during the last days of war and immediately thereafter. The death toll included 43 victims among the Jewish medical staff. Four medics from Czech Action for Help also died, as did some Soviet medical personnel.

In October 1946, the Volksgericht Wien condemned Siegfried Seidl to death in part for 16 counts of homicide arising from his command at Terezín. He was executed on February 4, 1947.¹³ The Litoměřice state court pronounced a death sentence on Karl Rahm, and he was executed on April 30, 1947.¹⁴ The same court condemned to death in absentia Terezín’s second commandant, Anton Burger, who lived in the Federal Republic of Germany under the alias of Wilhelm Bauer until his death on December 25, 1991. Volksgericht Wien also conducted separate investigations of Burger and Rahm.

SOURCES The first major study of the Terezín ghetto, and still a standard source, was H.G. Adler, *Theresienstadt 1941–1945: Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft; Geschichte, Soziologie, Psychologie*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960). A thoughtful critique of the question of whether Terezín should be categorized as a ghetto or a concentration camp may be found in Peter Klein, “Theresienstadt: Ghetto oder Konzentrationslager?” *TSD*, no. 12 (2005): 111–123. Other secondary sources include George E. Berkley, *Hitler’s Gift: The Story of*

Theresienstadt (Boston: Branden Books, 2002); Vojtěch Blodig, Ludmila Chládková, and Miroslava Langhanerová, *Terezín Litoměřice: Places of Suffering and Braveness*, trans. Peter Kurfürst (Prague: Jitka Kejřová, V RAJI Pub., 2003); Ludmila Chládková, *Terezínské ghetto* (Prague: Památník Terezín, 2005); Miroslav Kárný, ed., *Terezínská pamětní kniha: Židovské oběti nacistických deportací z Čech a Moravy 1941–1945* (Prague: Terezínská iniciativa; Melantrich, 1995), available in English as *Terezín Memorial Book: Jewish Victims of Nazi Deportations from Bohemia and Moravia 1941–1945: A Guide to the Czech Original with a Glossary of Czech Terms Used in the Lists* (Prague: Terezín Initiative; Melantrich, 1996); M. Kárný, V. Blodig, and Margita Karna, eds., *Theresienstadt in der “Endlösung der Judenfrage”* (Prague: Panorama, 1992); Zdeněk Lederer, *Ghetto Theresienstadt*, trans. K. Weisskopf (New York, 1983). Other useful studies relating to Terezín include Otto Dov Kulka, “Ghetto in an Annihilation Camp: Jewish Social History in the Holocaust Period and Its Ultimate Limits,” in Israel Gutman and Avital Saf, eds., *The Nazi Concentration Camps: Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), pp. 315–330; and Jan Björn Potthast, *Das jüdische Zentralmuseum der SS in Prag: Gegenforschung und Völkermord im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002). Terezín’s rich cultural history has inspired numerous studies, including: Anne D. Dutlinger, ed., *Art, Music and Education as Strategies for Survival: Theresienstadt 1941–45* (New York: Herodias, 2001); Gerald Green, *The Artists of Terezín* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1969); Joža Karas, *Music in Terezín, 1941–1945* (New York: Beaufort Books, 1985); Elena Makarova, *From Baubaus to Terezín: Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and Her Pupils* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990); Massachusetts College of Art, *Seeing through “Paradise”: Artists and the Terezín Concentration Camp* (Boston, MA: The College, 1991); and Terezín Memorial, ed., *Kultura proti smrti: Stálé expozice Památníku Terezín v bývalých Magdeburšských kasárnách* (Prague: Helena Osvaldová, 2002). Studies of Terezín’s perpetrators include Tomáš Federovič, “Der Theresienstädter Lagerkommandant Siegfried Seidl,” *TSD* (2003): 162–209; T. Federovič, “Neue Erkenntnisse über die SS-Angehörigen im Ghetto Theresienstadt,” *TSD* (2006): 234–250; and Karla Müller-Tupath, *Verschollen in Deutschland: Das heimliche Leben des Anton Burger, Lagerkommandant von Theresienstadt*, foreword by Simon Wiesenthal (Hamburg: Konkret, 1994). Two biographies of leading inmates in Terezín are Ruth Bondy, “Elder of the Jews”: *Jakob Edelstein of Theresienstadt* (New York: Grove Press, 1989); and Albert H. Friedlander, *Leo Baeck: Teacher of Theresienstadt* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968). Studies on youth in the ghetto include Thelma Gruenbaum, *Nešarim: Child Survivors of Terezín* (London, 2004); and Anna Hájková, “Die fabelhaften Jungs aus Theresienstadt: Junge tschechische Männer als dominante soziale Elite im Theresienstädter Ghetto,” in Christoph Dieckmann and Babette Quinkart, eds., *Im Ghetto 1939–1945: Neue Forschungen zu Alltag und Umfeld* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), pp. 116–135.

The first published primary source collection on Terezín was H.G. Adler, ed., *Die Verheimlichte Wahrheit: Theresienstädter Dokumente* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958). This source contains extracts from official documents from the Reich, Jewish self-administration, and the ICRC, but the provenance of many sources is not indicated. Other

published primary sources and collections include Anita Franková, Ludmila Kybalová, and Hana Povolná, eds., *Dětske na zastávce smrti, Terezín 1942–44* (Prague, 1993); *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt; The Führer Gives a City to the Jews*, DVD, directed by Kurt Gerron (1944; Waltham, MA: National Center for Jewish Film, 2005); ICRC, *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on Its Activities during the Second World War (September 1, 1939–June 30, 1947)*, 4 vols. (Geneva: ICRC, 1948); Miroslav Kárný, ed., “Der Bericht des Roten Kreuzes über seinen Besuch in Theresienstadt,” *TSD*, no. 3 (1996): 276–320; Marie Rút Křižková et al., eds., *Je mojí vlastní bradba ghetto?: Básně, próza a kresby terezínských dětí* (Prague: Aventinum, 1995); Markéta Petrášová and Arno Pařík, eds., *Terezín in the Drawings of the Prisoners, 1941–1945*, trans. Olga Berntová (Prague: State Jewish Museum in Prague, 1983); Státní židovské Museum, ed., *Children’s Drawings from the Concentration Camp of Terezín* (Olomouc: Moravské tiskácké závody, 1978); and Hana Volavkova, ed., *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children’s Drawings and Poems from Terezín Concentration Camp, 1942–1944*, trans. Jean Nemcova (New York: Schocken Books, 1993). Terezín’s memoir literature is too extensive for comprehensive enumeration, but the following testimonies give a broad sampling, including one testimony by a Danish survivor and another by a survivor of Terezín’s end phase: Ruth Elias, *Die Hoffnung erhielt mich am Leben: Mein Weg von Theresienstadt und Auschwitz nach Israel* (Munich: Piper, 1988). The anthology by František Ehrmann, Otta Heitlinger, and Rudolf Iltis, eds., *Terezín; Terezín* (Prague, 1965), contains a number of excellent testimonies, including Ludwig Hift, “The Bank of the Jewish Self-Government Administration in Terezín,” pp. 164–168; and Hans Hofer, “The Film about Terezín: A Belated Reportage,” pp. 180–184. Also see Jana Renee Friesova, *Pevnost mého mláde* (Prague: Nakl. Jaroslava Poberová, 2005); Hana Greenfield, *Fragments of Memory: From Kolin to Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 1990); Alfred Kantor, *The Book of Alfred Kantor* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971); Philipp Manes, *Als ob’s ein Leben wär: Tatsachenbericht; Theresienstadt 1942–1944*, ed. Ben Barkow and Klaus Leist (Berlin: Ullstein, 2005); Vera Meisels, *Terezín’s Firefly*, trans. Riva Rubin (Prague: GplusG, 2001); Mélanie Oppenheim, *Menneskefaelden: Om livet i KZ-lejren Theresienstadt* (Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel, 1981); Vera Schiff, *Theresienstadt: The Town the Nazis Gave to the Jews* (Toronto: Lugas, 1996); Gerty Spies, *My Years in Theresienstadt: How One Woman Survived the Holocaust* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1997); and Norbert Troller, *Theresienstadt: Hitler’s Gift to the Jews*, ed. Joel Shatzky with Richard Ives and Doris Rauch, trans. Susan E. Cernyak-Spatz (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

Archival sources on Terezín may be found in A-ICRC; AMv; APT; BLHA-(P); BStU; DÖW; ITS; LBI; NA(P); USHMM; VHAP; WL; YVA; and ŽmP. At APT, the Terezín ghetto documents constitute a modest part of the collection because the archives only began collecting at the end of the 1960s. APT’s collection consists mostly of contributions from former inmates, especially from Czech Jews and their relatives. An important part of the documents was the gift of the Jewish religious community in Prague. Presently there are more than 3,500 inventory numbers registering Terezín ghetto documents. Important groups represent personal documents (identity cards and labor cards), correspondence, diaries, children’s

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magazines (for instance, the well-known magazine *Vedem*), survivors' accounts, and money vouchers. There are also several reports on the Jewish self-administration's activities, orders of the day, and daily lists of deceased prisoners. Unfortunately these collections are fragmentary. The very important collection of transport lists to the ghetto from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia is nearly complete. There are also complete lists of names of Protectorate Jews compiled in the autumn of 1941. Jewish self-administration documents are written in German, and some other materials (for instance, most of the memoirs, magazines, and some diaries) in Czech. USHMM holds a number of Terezín ration books and ghetto scrip, a cookbook compiled by Wilhelmina Paechter (David Stern collection, Acc.1996.109), and a small collection of artwork by survivor Leo Haas. USHMM also has copies of the Seidl trial and investigations against Karl Rahm and Anton Burger, copied from DÖW as RG-17.003M (Acc.2004.118). In addition, USHMM holds an extensive collection of ICRC documentation on Terezín, under RG-19.045M (Commission of Prisoners, Internees, and Civilians; Jews = Israelites, 1939–1961), reels 2 and 6; RG-58.002M (Special Relief Division, 1940–1963); and RG-58.004M (Selected Records of the ICRC). The International Tracing Service (ITS) contains 119 inventory collections for Terezín, making it by far the best-documented ghetto in ITS holdings. These collections include original Gestapo transport lists, postwar lists of survivors, and compilations of burial records.

Vojtěch Blodig and
Joseph Robert White

NOTES

1. P. Kuhne, "Note sur l'activité la Comité international de la Croix-Rouge au camp de Theresienstadt," June 1945,

USHMM, RG-19.045M, ICRC, Commission of Prisoners, Internees, and Civilians, Jews = Israelites, 1939–1961, file G59/3/Th-63, reel 6, frame 0528.

2. Gliederungsplan, August 10, 1944, as reproduced in Adler, *Theresienstadt 1941–1945: Das Antlitz einer Zwangs-gemeinschaft*, pp. 224–240.

3. Manes, *Als ob's ein Leben wär*, pp. 358–359.

4. Wilhelmina Paechter, "Kochbuch," 1942–1944, USHMM, Acc.1996.109, David Stern collection.

5. The January 9, 1942, order is reproduced in Adler, *Die Verheimlichte Wahrheit*, p. 97.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Quotation in Wannsee conference minutes, January 20, 1942, NG-2586-G, *TMWC*, vol. 13, p. 213.

8. Hift, "The Bank of the Jewish Self-Government Administration in Terezín," p. 168.

9. Quotations from Maurice Rossel, "Besuch im Ghetto," trans. Gisela Harras, in Miroslav Kárný, ed., "Der Bericht des Roten Kreuzes über seinen Besuch in Theresienstadt," *TSD*, no. 3 (1996): 286–287.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 297.

11. Quoted from the still photograph from the September 1942 film of Terezín, held by WFDIF and reproduced as cover photo by *TSD* (1998).

12. As quoted in Adler, *Die Verheimlichte Wahrheit*, p. 356.

13. Urteil gegen Dr. Siegfried Seidl, Case no. LG-Wien Vg 1b Vr770/46, DÖW Sign. V37/1-20, USHMM, RG-17.003M, Acc.2004.118, Wiener Prozesse gegen NS-Verbrechern, microfilm no. 1014.

14. On Rahm's extradition to Litoměřice, "Der letzte Leiter von Theresienstadt verhaftet," *Aufbau*, February 7, 1946, filed in USHMM, RG-19.045M, file 659/3/Th-63, reel 6, frame 0575.

SECTION III

GENERAL GOVERNMENT (GENERALGOUVERNEMENT)

Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler ordered the creation of the Generalgouvernement, which was established officially on October 26, 1939. He appointed Hans Frank as Generalgouverneur. Frank soon took up residence in the Wawel Castle in the Generalgouvernement's capital city of Kraków. Initially, the Generalgouvernement consisted of four Distrikte: Krakau, Lublin, Radom, and Warschau. On August 1, 1941, a fifth Distrikt, Galizien, was added, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union; at that point about 10 percent of the roughly 18 million inhabitants of the Generalgouvernement were Jews.

The Generalgouvernement was made up entirely of territory that had belonged to Poland at the start of 1939. Distrikt Krakau consisted of parts of the Kraków, Kielce, and Lwów województwa. Distrikt Lublin was formed of parts of the Lublin, Lwów, and Warsaw województwa. Distrikt Radom contained parts of the Kielce and Łódź województwa. Distrikt Warschau had parts of

the Warsaw, Lublin, and Łódź województwa. And Distrikt Galizien included the Stanisławów, Tarnopol, and most of the Lwów województwa.

Other than his personal subordination to Hitler, Generalgouverneur Frank administered the Generalgouvernement as an independent neighboring territory of the Reich (*Reichsnebenland*). The Generalgouvernement had its own currency and exercised sovereignty regarding customs and taxes. A central bureaucracy, based in Kraków, issued instructions to the regional administrations in each of the Distrikte, which were headed by their own respective Distrikt Gouverneur. The SS and police forces based in the Generalgouvernement, headed by the Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) of the Generalgouvernement, Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, however, owed loyalty both to Frank as Generalgouverneur and to Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler as head of the German police.



RADOM REGION



Clandestine photograph of the deportation of Jews from Pińczów to the Treblinka extermination center, October 1942.
USHMM WS #77726, COURTESY OF SHALOM FOUNDATION: GOLDA TENCER-SZURMIEJ COLLECTION

RADOM REGION (DISTRIKT RADOM)

Pre-1939: parts of the Kielce and Łódź województwa, Poland; 1941–1945: Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: parts of the Łódź, Mazowieckie, Śląskie, and Świętokrzyskie województwa, Poland

Distrikt Radom was established on October 26, 1939, as one of the four initial Distrikte of the Generalgouvernement, which were all made up of parts of occupied Poland. Encompassing 24,500 square kilometers (9,460 square miles), it included much of the pre-war Kielce województwo, as well as stretches of the Łódź województwo, to the west. In Distrikt Radom, the German authorities created 10 Kreise (counties) that were governed by Kreishauptmänner, with centers in Busko-Zdrój, Jędrzejów, Kielce, Końskie, Opatów, Piotrków Trybunalski, Radom, Radomsko, Starachowice (until 1942, Hża), and Tomaszów Mazowiecki. Stadthauptmänner governed the three independent municipalities (Stadtkreise) in the Distrikt: Radom, Częstochowa, and Kielce.

The Distrikt's territory, according to the March 1940 (German) census, was populated by over 2.7 million people, including more than 282,000 Jews. These statistics, however, are considered low, as possibly as many as 3 million people lived in the Distrikt. The number of Jewish residents in 1940–1942 is estimated at 360,000 to 400,000. This number takes into consideration the influx of approximately 70,000 Jewish refugees and deportees, as well as those who fled from the Distrikt. The first wave of deportees reached the Distrikt in late 1939 and included thousands of Jews from the Polish territories incorporated into Germany, especially from Reichsgau Wartheland.

The chief German civil authority in the Distrikt was governor Karl Lasch (October 1939–August 1941), who was succeeded by Ernst Kundt (September 1941–January 1945). The SS and Police Leader (SSPF) was the senior police official in

the Distrikt, subordinated to the Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) of the Generalgouvernement. The position of SSPF in Distrikt Radom was held in the following succession: Fritz Katzmann (1939–1941), Karl Oberg (1941–1942), and Herbert Böttcher (1942–1945). The SSPF oversaw the forces of the Sicherheitspolizei (Sipo) in the Distrikt, comprising the Gestapo, Kripo, and SD and also those of the Ordnungspolizei (Orpo), which included the Municipal Police (Schupo) and Gendarmerie posts in the rural areas. The relevant local civil administrators were generally in charge of ghetto affairs. Surveillance and order were in the hands of the German Sipo and Orpo forces, with Polish and Jewish Police performing auxiliary duties under the Germans. The Jewish Police maintained order in the ghettos and guarded their internal borders, whereas Orpo forces and Polish (Blue) Police patrolled the external boundaries.

Taking over authority from the military on October 26, 1939, the German civil administration exacerbated the situation of the Jews, as previously spontaneous anti-Jewish measures were replaced by the systematic enforcement of antisemitic laws, which deprived the Jews of their economic, cultural, and social rights and introduced forced labor. The Germans ordered the establishment of Jewish Councils (Judenräte) in November 1939, holding the members responsible for the implementation of the authorities' orders, which included the organization of forced labor, the collection of taxes and "contributions," registration, the enforcement of sanitary regulations, and the organization of welfare and medical services. In some cases, pre-war community leaders were included in the Judenrat's composition, for example, in Przedbórz, Szczekociny, and Opatów. As of November 23, 1939, all Jews were obliged to wear armbands bearing the Star of David.

The first ghettos in the Distrikt were established in Piotrków Trybunalski (October 8, 1939) and Radomsko (December 1939). Their creation was largely due to the pressure of large ethnic German (*Volksdeutsche*) communities, which demanded the acquisition of Jewish property. Air raids and the influx of refugees led to considerable shortages of housing, which further increased the pressure for the construction of ghettos. In Piotrków, where the Germans razed the Jewish neighborhood, the community was given three weeks to relocate. In Radomsko, the ghetto's establishment was conducted without warning. Two thirds of Radomsko's Jews (over 4,000 people)—who lived outside the ghetto's delineated borders—were given only 20 minutes to relocate.

The September 21, 1939, express order, issued by Reinhard Heydrich regarding the Jewish question in occupied territory, stipulated the concentration of Jews in only a few towns, close



German troops round up a group of Jewish men on Strażacka Street in Częstochowa, early September 1939.

USHMM WS #26822, COURTESY OF B. ASHLEY GRIMES II

to railway connections with a view to their subsequent evacuation.¹ As Christopher R. Browning notes, however, “the first stage—the process of creating ghettos in the first place—stretched over many months for one reason: there was no centrally ordered, uniform policy of ghettoization.”² Since detailed arrangements were left to the local authorities, the process of establishing ghettos was extremely decentralized and drawn out over more than two years. It lasted in Distrikt Radom until the summer of 1942, when the deportations to killing centers began (e.g., on July 17, 1942, the Jews of Wierzbica, Kreis Radom-Land, were informed that an enclosed ghetto would be established in the village on August 1, 1942).

One ghetto might be very different to another nearby, as there were few clear directives on how to organize them. Some of the ghettos were established only as open ghettos, whereas others were closed, with the latter type predominating from the spring of 1941 onward. Whereas some were physically enclosed with walls and fences and guarded, others remained unfenced, with only signs designating their borders. In the case of many small ghettos, the inhabitants were simply ordered not to leave the limits of their settlement. Alternatively, a ghetto could be fenced but considered by the Germans as open, simply designated as an area for the Jews to live in, with no or few restrictions on their movement—as, for example, was the case in Lipsko. In Jędrzejów, Jews were ghettoized, possibly as early as February 1940. Guards were posted at the ghetto’s exits, but the residents initially were still able to come and go freely.

The same lack of rules applies to the process of ghetto creation; in some cases, it took months or was only announced shortly before the ghetto’s destruction. Most often, the Jews were already the predominant inhabitants of the area selected for the ghetto; otherwise, the authorities would typically seek to relocate them into any run-down or razed part of town.

Krzysztof Urbański points out the sole common denominator in creating ghettos: the area allocated for a ghetto was always much too small for the Jews assigned to live there. Urbański estimates that there were more than 120 ghettos established in Distrikt Radom, but the detailed research undertaken in preparing this volume identified clearly only around 100 such sites, as for some places insufficient evidence exists to make a determination. Most ghettos established throughout the Distrikt were relatively small, holding from only a few hundred up to around 4,000 people.

A number of additional ghettos were established in Distrikt Radom in 1940; among them were Przedbórz (March 1940), Wodzisław (June 1940), and Włoszczowa (July 10, 1940). A temporary halt to ghetto building was called by Generalgouverneur Hans Frank in the summer of 1940, in view of the Madagascar Plan, but then several more ghettos (e.g., Opoczno) were established in the second half of 1940.

In the spring of 1941, German preparations for attacking the Soviet Union were accompanied by ghettoization plans affecting a number of communities within the Distrikt. At



Jewish expellees from the town of Plock in the Wartheland are resettled in Chmielnik, February–March 1941. The Jews wear armbands and circular badges on their coats.

USHMM WS #96916, COURTESY OF VARDA KLEINHANDLER COHEN

a meeting of the Kreis- und Stadthauptmänner, called by Distrikt governor Lasch at the end of March, he ordered the establishment of Jewish residential areas in larger towns and cities (Stadtkreise) by April 5, 1941. At this time, large ghettos were established in Kielce (April 5), Radom (April 3), and Częstochowa (April 9), which together in 1941 held approximately 100,000 people. Shortly afterwards, all three were sealed off, and thereafter the Jews living there needed special permission to leave them safely.

This wave of ghetto establishment in the Distrikt in April 1941 was preceded by a second wave of deportations into Distrikt Radom. In February and March of 1941, 10,000 Jews arrived from Plock and another 4,000 from Vienna. This influx may have accelerated the establishment of some ghettos. From the beginning, conditions for the deportees were much worse than for the local Jews. Prior to their arrival, the Plock deportees were held for several days in a transit camp in Działdowo, and they arrived in the Kreis centers with small bundles, only to be sent away to small villages a few days or weeks later. One of the Plock transports, with 1,000 people, arrived in Końskie on March 6, 1941, in the midst of the ghetto’s construction. Three days later, via Opoczno, these deportees were distributed among six smaller localities (e.g., 200 arrived in Drzewica on March 9, 1941). Most of the Viennese Jews were assimilated elderly professionals for whom life in the shtetl ghettos was especially harsh. They often migrated illegally to larger ghettos. Wherever there were large numbers of refugees, contagious diseases spread inevitably, as most were forced to live in sheds, shops, and synagogues and sometimes even in the streets.

There were also displacements conducted within the Distrikt; for instance, all 3,500 Jews were deported from Przytyk in March 1941, as this area, north of Radom, was designated to become a military training ground.³ In some ghettos, the newcomers outnumbered the local Jews by a factor of two or more: in 1939, there were 500 Jews living in Koluszki, and by

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May 1941 the Jewish population had more than doubled, rising to 1,177 residents of the recently established ghetto of which 873 were newcomers. At the end of 1941, more resettlements were carried out, and Jews from Kreis centers, again most of them deportees and refugees, were relocated to smaller localities due to the risk of spreading disease or simply to “beautify” the town. In Tomaszów, the Kreishauptmann used this opportunity to liquidate two of the three ghettos established there.

The administration of welfare was transferred from the Jewish Councils to the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization (established in Kraków in May 1940) to help newcomers and the local poor. Its branches opened soup kitchens, distributed food and clothing, and sought to provide for children and the elderly. The level of assistance, due to insufficient funds, was disproportionately small in comparison to the need. In instances where the JSS members were also on the Jewish Council, tensions arose and consumed the energy of both sides, largely because the councils were unwilling to give up control of welfare. Consequently, the work of both institutions was hindered by accusations of corruption, em-



Entrance to the Radom Judenrat building at 8 Grodzka Street, ca. 1940. The sign to the left of the door, in German and Polish, reads, “Head of the Council of Elders of the Jewish population of the Radom District in Radom City.”

COURTESY OF MUZEUM OKRĘGOWE W RADOMIU, WS #08305

bezzlement of public funds, favoritism, and political infighting. Jewish Councils were also criticized for their treatment of newcomers and members’ comparatively lavish lifestyles; for enlisting the poor and refugees first for deportations, labor conscription, and transfer to the labor camps; and for being overly acquiescent towards the German authorities.

The Judenrat’s most common and effective means of dealing with the incessant German demands was to respond with bribery. In April 1942, Judenrat leaders from surrounding ghettos attended a joint conference in Sandomierz. One of the questions discussed was the possibility of organizing means of self-defense. Participants decided to look for resources to defend themselves by bribing the Germans, to “ward off disaster.”⁴

In July 1941, Generalgouverneur Frank responded to requests from the Kreishauptmänner to ghettoize Jews, stating that he did not want any more ghettos created, as the Führer had declared on June 19 that soon the Jews would be removed from the Generalgouvernement.⁵ Nonetheless, individual ghettos continued to be set up at this time, for example, in Odrzywół. However, by the fall of 1941, especially concerns about the spread of typhus among the Jews living in Distrikt Radom, as well as a desire to control black market activities, led German officials to intensify restrictions on Jews’ freedom of movement and introduce a more systematic ghettoization throughout the Distrikt.

Until the autumn of 1941, Jews were punished with fines or imprisonment for leaving ghettos without special permission (e.g., in Przedbórz, until October 1941, Jews caught outside were fined between 5 and 50 zloty); yet in practice harsher measures were sometimes implemented. On October 25, 1941, backdated to October 15, Generalgouverneur Frank decreed that henceforth Jews leaving ghettos without permission were subject to the death penalty.⁶ Initially these punishments were to be implemented by the Sondergerichte.

Then, on December 11, 1941, Distrikt governor Kundt announced again the death sentence for Jews leaving their places of residence, while further making the death sentence applicable to Poles sheltering or providing any form of assistance to Jews.⁷ In his accompanying letter to the Kreis- und Stadthauptmänner, Kundt ordered them to put up signs marking the boundaries of designated Jewish districts (Jüdischer Wohnbezirke) and informing the Jews of the death penalty for leaving them.⁸ In response to these instructions, a flurry of ghettoization measures followed, directed on the regional level by the Kreishauptmänner. For instance, the Końskie Kreishauptmann, Kurt Driessen, declared all settlements and villages with a Jewish population in his Kreis to be ghettos as of December 10, 1941. In Hża, the Kreishauptmann announced on December 6, 1941, that such villages where ghettos had not yet been established would henceforth serve as a form of ghetto.⁹

As a result of these decrees, a number of new ghettos were created over the ensuing months, and many existing ones were now pronounced closed. Still, in many cases, “closed” did not mean physical enclosure. Many village ghettos with scattered houses were often impossible to physically divide,

for example, Wolanów or Gniewoszków. The closure of ghettos further devastated Jewish communities. Jews now had to risk their lives by sneaking in and out to barter for or buy food from villagers.

The process of concentrating all the Jews of Distrikt Radom began in early 1942 and lasted until the fall of 1942. Until May, Jews were allowed to live in 150 towns and settlements in Kreis Opatow. Only after an order dated May 13, 1942, from Kreishauptmann Ritter, were all Jews restricted to 5 towns and 12 settlements in the Kreis that were recognized as ghettos. June 1, 1942, was the deadline for resettlement. This late example of ghettoization was conducted as a part of preparations for Aktion Reinhard, the plan to exterminate the Jews living in the Generalgouvernement.

The next stage of concentration in Distrikt Radom aimed at transferring the Jewish communities to ghettos with railway access, that is, to a few selected ghettos in each Kreis. At this stage, the Kreis borders did not matter; for example, the Busko-Zdrój ghetto had no railway connection, so the Jews of Busko were transferred to Jędrzejów. Many such transfers occurred just weeks or days before the collection ghetto's liquidation, and they were always conducted with utter ruthlessness accompanied by murder.

Historians have recognized a number of harbingers of the mass deportations to come. Apart from the death penalty for leaving the ghetto and helping Jews, Adam Rutkowski refers to the February 1942 reduction of food rations (from 337,000 to 200,000) with which Distrikt Jews bought their rations. In addition, ration amounts were reduced by 50 percent. Also, between February and the end of April 1942, the Germans seized and killed prominent Jewish cultural, social, and especially political activists in many ghettos.¹⁰ The goal was to terrorize Jews and forestall any attempts at self-defense. At the same time, the Germans were rounding up young Jews for work in labor camps in the Distrikt, many of which were producing munitions—for example, the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) factory in Skarżysko-Kamienna.

From the spring of 1942, the JSS led a campaign to find employment for as many Jews as possible. It popularized the employment of Jews, including women, in agriculture. It also pushed for local JSS branches to organize vocational training courses and to set up workshops. As news of deportations and intensifying rumors about the killing centers reached the ghettos, there was a growing conviction that only those whom the Germans considered useful would be spared deportation. There are reports that some Jewish youths were volunteering for labor camps or even bribing their way in. Due to Judenrat efforts, tailoring workshops producing German army uniforms were set up in Staszów in August 1942, which temporarily secured the lives of 550 laborers upon the ghetto's liquidation in October 1942. In most ghettos, however, the Germans simply processed permissions to open workshops with the aim of preventing unrest. The limited possibilities for procuring work, whatever they were, were reserved mostly for men, with few openings for women and children.

The preparation of the deportations was in the hands of SSPF Herbert Böttcher and his staff, under the command of SS-Sturmbannführer Wilhelm Blum, who had been transferred in August 1942 from the personal staff of the Lublin SSPF, Odilo Globocnik, the commander of Aktion Reinhard. Execution of their orders was left to the Commanding Officer of the Security Police and the SD (KdS) for Distrikt Radom, SS-Sturmbannführer Fritz Wilhelm Liphardt, who established Sonderkommando Feucht, commanded by SS-Hauptsturmführer Adolf Feucht, to plan and direct the individual deportation Aktions. The ghetto liquidations were implemented with the support of a number of Trawniki-trained auxiliaries (mostly from Ukraine or the Baltic states) and German Order Police units (battalions and stationary units of the Schutzpolizei and Gendarmerie). In some places, units of the Polish (Blue) Police, fire brigades, ethnic German Sonderdienst, and Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) also assisted them.

In many ghettos, prior to the liquidation Aktions, a new round of registrations was conducted and new identification cards issued, to separate so-called productive Jews from the remainder of the population. The number of Jews to be spared for labor camps in the Distrikt was set at approximately 30,000.

Rutkowski estimates that at the onset of Aktion Reinhard (in early August 1942), some 300,000 Jews were living in Distrikt Radom isolated in ghettos. According to Heinrich Himmler's order of July 19, 1942, all Jews were to be deported from the Generalgouvernement by December 31, 1942.¹¹ The process of ghetto liquidation was much more uniform than the process of their establishment and was conducted in an almost identical manner in both small and large ghettos. The destruction of the ghettos is much better researched and understood by scholars than the events leading up to it.

Some organizers of the Warsaw Uprising were in contact with several ghettos in Distrikt Radom, including those in Kielce, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, and Żarki. They distributed underground press materials and supplied funding for other resistance activities. Communist youth in the Ostrowiec ghetto had planned to set the town ablaze to facilitate escape in case of the ghetto's liquidation, but this plan was not realized. A number of Jews managed to escape from the ghettos and join partisan units; and sometimes they established their own, as was the case in Sandomierz, Częstochowa, Jędrzejów, Szydłowiec, and Ostrowiec.

The liquidations began with the seat of the Distrikt governor, Radom, on August 4–5, 1942, and were conducted Kreis by Kreis. Due to the large numbers of escapees during the course of the deportations, on September 21, 1942, Kundt announced once again his order that Poles face the death sentence for even the smallest assistance provided to Jews. As punishment for aiding Jewish escapees, often entire families were gunned down and their households razed. News of such punitive actions terrified the Polish population.

The last of the ghettos, located in Kreis Konskie, was liquidated at the beginning of November 1942. The complete liquidation of the ghettos in Distrikt Radom took only a little over three months. All but one of the transports went to the Treblinka extermination camp. Those Jews concentrated in Sandomierz were deported to the Bełżec extermination camp. In many of the ghettos, a few Jews were retained to sort Jewish belongings or perform other labor tasks, in so-called small ghettos. In larger localities, such as Częstochowa, thousands of Jews initially were spared.

A number of Polish (Blue) Police actively participated in the manhunts that followed the liquidations. The plunder of Jewish property was the main motive for the majority of murders and denunciations of Jews in hiding, as committed by villagers, common criminals, and roving bands of people, who acted under the false cover of "partisan activity." Some right-wing resistance groups also engaged in such activities, and part of their motivation was ideological.

On November 10, 1942, the HSSPF of the Generalgouvernement, Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, issued an order creating four remnant ghettos in Distrikt Radom. They were established in Radomsko, Sandomierz, Szydłowiec, and Ujazd.¹² Their purpose was to lure out of hiding those who had evaded the deportations, by promising them safety and work. Approximately 17,000 Jews eventually were sent to these ghettos. Some people were transferred there from the small ghettos on their liquidation, while others emerged from the forests and bunkers, generally from sheer desperation. All these remnant ghettos were liquidated quickly within a few days on January 5–13, 1943. Although the Germans claimed that at this time the Distrikt was free of Jews (*judenfrei*), some Jews continued to live in small ghettos and other labor camps that the Germans had established, for example, in Częstochowa, Kielce, Ostrowiec, and Radom. Nevertheless, upon the completion of Aktion Reinhard, those Jews permitted to remain in Distrikt Radom were allowed to live legally only in labor camps.

SOURCES Secondary works including regional coverage of the history of Jews in the Distrikt Radom ghettos include Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 75–182; Kazimierz Jaroszek and Sebastian Piątkowski, *Martyrologia Żydów w więzieniu radomskim 1939–1944: Wykaz zamordowanych, zmarłych, deportowanych do obozów koncentracyjnych i obozów zagłady* (Radom: Archiwum Państwowe, 1997); Felicia Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997); Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007); Józef Marszałek, *Obozy pracy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 1998); Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, "Organizacja i realizacja 'akcji Reinhardt' w dystrykcie radomskim," in Dariusz Libionka et al., eds., *Akcja Reinhardt: Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: IPN-Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi

Polskiemu, 2004), pp. 182–202; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979); Alina Skibińska and Jakub Petelewicz, "Udział Polaków w zbrodniach na Żydach na prowincji regionu świętokrzyskiego," *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 1:1 (2005): 114–148, also in English translation, by Jerzy Michałowicz, as "The Participation of Poles in Crimes against Jews in the Świętokrzyskie Region," *Yad Vashem Studies*, no. 35 (2007): 1–44; Stanisław Meducki, "Ekonomiczne aspekty eksterminacji Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim," *Biuletyn Kwartalny Radomskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego* 33 (1998); Sebastian Piątkowski, ed., *Żydzi dystryktu radomskiego w okresie II wojny światowej: Materiały sesji popularnonaukowej odbytej w Radomiu 27 września 1997 roku* (Radom: Radomskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1998); Sebastian Piątkowski, "Deportacje Żydów z dystryktu radomskiego do obozów pracy przymusowej na Lubelszczyźnie w 1940 roku," *Almanach Historyczny* 1 (1999): 185–198; Sebastian Piątkowski, "Organizacja i działalność Naczelnej Rady Starszych Ludności Żydowskiej Dystryktu Radomskiego (1939–1942)," *BŻIH*, no. 3 (2000): 342–355; Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom, 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006); *Ghettos 1939–1945: New Research and Perspectives on Definition, Daily Life, and Survival: Symposium Presentations* (Washington, DC: CAHS, USHMM, 2005); Danuta Dąbrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976); Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999); *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo kieleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHW, 1980); *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo radomskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHW, 1980); *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo częstochowskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHW, 1986); and *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo piotrkowskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHW, 1983).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AAN; APC; APK; APR; AŻIH; BA-BL; BA-L; IPN; NARA; USHMM; VHF; WL; YIVO; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Doc. 3363-PS, Heydrich Schnellbrief an die Chefs aller Einsatzgruppen der Sipo, Betrifft: Judenfrage in besetzten Gebiet, September 21, 1939.
2. Christopher R. Browning, "Before the 'Final Solution': Nazi Ghettoization Policy in Poland (1940–1941)," in *Ghettos 1939–1945*, p. 4.
3. AŻIH, JSS, 211/430; A. Rotkowski [sic], "The War and the Destruction of the Jewish Population in the Radom Region" (trans. Jerrold Landau), in *Przytyk Memorial Book* (translation of David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Przytyk* [Tel Aviv: Przytyk Societies in Israel, France and the USA, 1973]), p. 257.
4. AŻIH, 301/47.

5. Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, eds., *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1975), p. 386.
6. *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs*, 1941, p. 595.
7. IPN, NTN (Bühler Trial), vol. 335, pp. 96 ff.; and APR, *Zbiór afiszów, plakatów i druków ulotnych 1939–1945*, p. 481, both as cited by Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, p. 247.
8. BA-BL, R 52II/254, Rundschreiben Oswalds, Leiter der Abteilung Innere Verwaltung im Distrikt Radom, December 11, 1942, as cited by Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, p. 121.
9. AŻIH, NMO, Fot. dok. Niem. nos. 55 and 56.
10. BA-L, B 162/14521, Verdict of LG-Darm, December 7, 1972, pp. 31–32.
11. BA-BL, NS 19/1757.
12. Police Decree issued by HSSPF Krüger of the Generalgouvernement, November 10, 1942, published in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), pp. 344–345.



BĘDKÓW

Pre-1939: Będków, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Bedkow, Kreis Tomaszow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Będków, Łódź województwo, Poland

Będków is located 26 kilometers (16 miles) east-southeast of Łódź. On the eve of World War II, there were 228 Jews (32.8 percent of all residents) living in Będków.

German armed forces occupied the village in September 1939. According to one source, many Jews left Będków at the time of the occupation, probably in an attempt to escape from the fighting as the front passed through. However, it appears that most returned to their homes shortly afterwards. Within days of their arrival, German forces introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures. Jews were stripped of their property, registered and marked with the Star of David, forced to remain within the town limits, and coerced to perform various kinds of heavy physical labor.

It is not clear when a ghetto was established in Będków. *Pinkas ha-kebilot* states that a ghetto was established in April or May of 1942. Robert Seidel claims that in the second half of July 1942 the Jews from Będków were deported to Biała Rawska, according to a decree issued by the official dealing with Jewish affairs in the Office of Internal Administration (Judensachbearbeiter im Amt Innere Verwaltung) of Kreis Tomaszow, Karl Frees, and in order to concentrate the Jews in a number of selected ghettos.¹ Other sources claim that August 1942 was the date of this resettlement.²

The resettlement to Biała Rawska took place with harsh brutality. Administrative personnel of the village had to report the numbers and names of Jews according to two categories: Jews who had come to Będków before November 1, 1941, were considered to have “moved illegally” and had to pay a fee; Jews who had moved to Będków after November 1, 1941, were accused of having illegally left the location assigned to them—a crime that was subject to the death penalty. All Jews were forcibly moved to Biała Rawska; their houses were searched and their property confiscated. The Jewish Council was forced to pay for the resettlement, and in case there was insufficient money, remaining Jewish property was to be sold to pay for these expenses.³

Most likely, after this resettlement a labor camp (or perhaps rather a “Sammelghetto”) was erected in Będków for a few weeks. Established on September 20, 1942, it was located on the property of Wojciech Pachniewicz, a local farmer, and measured 24 by 50 meters (79 by 164 feet).⁴ About 300 to 350 Jews were kept here, including several dozen Jewish refugees from Tuszyn and Rzgów, in western Poland. The inmates were taken to work in local fields as well as at a construction site along the road connecting Będków and Praszki. According to witness statements, several inmates died in the camp, and about 10 inmates were taken to Koruszki, where they were presumably executed. The camp was dissolved at the begin-

ning of November 1942.⁵ Most likely, the inmates were sent via Tomaszów Mazowiecki to the Treblinka killing center.⁶

SOURCES There are not many sources available on the Będków ghetto. The Jewish community of Będków and its destruction are described in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 77; and a short mention of the ghetto can be found in Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen. Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), p. 298. The ghetto is also listed in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 95. The Będków ghetto is also mentioned in Cezary Jabłoński, “Eksterminacja Żydów i cyganów w zachodnich powiatach dystryktu radomskiego w latach 1939–45,” in GKBZHWP, *Międzynarodowa sekcja naukowa nt. hitlerowskie ludobójstwo w Polsce i Europie 1939–1945*, Warsaw, April 14–17, 1983, pp. 1–10.

Documents describing the fate of the Jews of Będków can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/254); BA-L (ZStL, 206 AR-Z 12/63); IPN; and YVA. Relevant collections at the USHMM include RG-15.019M (IPN—ASG) and Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH—AJDC, 210/254).

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NOTES

1. BA-L, 206-AR-Z 12/63, pp. 447–448, closing report of April 14, 1964.
2. Jabłoński, “Eksterminacja Żydów,” p. 3.
3. Anordnung Kreishauptmann Tomaszow/Innere Verwaltung, July 16, 1942, in BA-L, B 162/26091 (206 AR-Z 12/63, Sonderband I), pp. 139–140. See also final report of ZStL, April 14, 1964, in BA-L, B 162/26092 (206 AR-Z 12/63, vol. 3), pp. 447–450.
4. USHMM, RG-15.019M.
5. *Ibid.*
6. According to the data of ŻIH, Warsaw, the date for the liquidation of the camp (ghetto) is given here as September 1942.

BIAŁACZÓW

Pre-1939: Białaczów, town, Opoczno powiat, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Bialatschew, Kreis Tomaszow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Białaczów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Białaczów is located about 75 kilometers (47 miles) east-southeast of Łódź, a few kilometers due south of Opoczno. In 1921, 166 out of the 1,290 inhabitants of the town were Jews.

In September 1939, the German army took over the Białaczów area. From the start of the occupation, living conditions for the Jewish community steadily deteriorated. Jews lost their property and their jobs, and the Jewish community soon was pressed hard to cover its expenditures. Probably in 1941, a local office of Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was opened in

Białaczów. It was under the supervision of the JSS office in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, run by Henryk Szczęśliwy. The records of the JSS provide valuable insight into the fate of Białaczów's Jews. The local Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by M. Połaczyński, worked hard to provide food and shelter for the members of the community. On June 12, 1941, the Białaczów Judenrat reported to the JSS head office in Kraków that the situation was desperate: a lack of medicine and medical care had resulted in several deaths. A soup kitchen was in existence, which provided 240 lunches per day. However, the prices for groceries were high, the funds of the Jewish Council almost exhausted, and requests for help sent to the Kreishauptmann and the Jewish Council in Tomaszów went unanswered. The situation deteriorated following the arrival of Jews from other towns. On July 9, 1941, about 20 Jewish families (about 205 people) arrived who had been deported from Płock via the Działdowo transit camp in March 1941. Among them were many children, sick, and elderly people. Some 40 more Jews also arrived from Mława. The refugees were impoverished, and there was no work available for them. About 20 families of resettled Jews were in need of immediate help. Many of the refugees were not able to pay for their food, and the Jewish Council was concerned that due to hunger and overcrowding, outbreaks of epidemics, such as typhus and dysentery, might soon develop.¹

The JSS tried to help as much as possible, for example, with repeated distributions of money or groceries. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the small local Jewish community consisted of only about 18 families. Most of them were craftsmen or small merchants who had lost their sources of income and therefore were incapable of providing support for the 50 or so families of refugees.² Out of about 350 Jews in the community altogether, there were some 240 deportees in need, but only about 150 could receive a daily meal from the JSS. The general conditions also deteriorated. According to an eyewitness, two Gestapo men shot a group of Jews in the summer of 1941. The incident happened around noon at the market square: the Gestapo men were drunk and began to fire into a group of Jews. About 30 people were killed or wounded.³

On July 8, 1941, the Jewish Council had to close the soup kitchen due to a lack of funding, but it was instructed by the JSS that they had to reopen it—or otherwise, they would not receive further deliveries of groceries.⁴ In early August 1941, the soup kitchen was reopened, but the Jewish Council reported: “the conditions here are horrible beyond description.”⁵ With the approach of winter, the outlook was bleak. In October 1941, about 25 Jews had to be taken to the Opoczno hospital, as they were suffering from various infections. The Jewish community was not capable of paying the high expenses needed for their hospital stay and funerals, and again they requested help from the JSS. The same applied to expenses of 3,000 złoty needed for a disinfection and delousing chamber, which the German authorities had ordered the Jewish community to build.⁶

There is only limited information on the fate of the Jews in the spring and summer of 1942, as reports from the JSS for

that period are not available. By this time, Jews faced the death penalty if caught outside the town limits without permission, as was the case in the Kreis center of Tomaszów Mazowiecki, where 10 Jews were shot in April 1942 for leaving the ghetto to trade on the black market.⁷ Felix Brand, a Jewish survivor who passed through Białaczów around this time, noted that “the town was a ghetto. . . . Jews were not supposed to leave the perimeter of the town and would be killed if they left without permission.” Despite the dangers, he decided himself to flee once he heard rumors that they were closing up the ghettos, as he feared he might become trapped there.⁸

The number of Jews began to decline—either because people tried to escape or because they were sent to German forced labor camps.⁹ On October 2, 1942, about 250 Jews were sent to Opoczno, and only 27 remained in Białaczów. One source states that 9 Jews were killed around that time and were buried in a nearby forest, but it is unclear if these Jews had tried to escape; were killed during the roundup for expulsion to Opoczno; or were killed at a later date when they were uncovered in hiding. Another source states that about 30 Jews were killed when the inhabitants of the Białaczów ghetto were taken to Opoczno.¹⁰

The concentration of Jews in larger towns prior to their deportation to concentration camps and extermination sites was a common German practice. Usually, only a few Jews were left behind to clear out the empty ghetto. Most likely, the same practice was used in Białaczów, and the 27 remaining Jews were kept behind to sort the Jewish belongings and to clean out the empty Jewish houses. On October 27, 1942, these remaining Jews were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp, as were the Białaczów Jews who had been sent to Opoczno and the Jews from Paradyż and Skrzynno who had all been gathered in Opoczno. The deportation transport to Treblinka consisted of about 3,000 people.¹¹

SOURCES The Jewish community of Białaczów and its fate during World War II are described in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 68; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2007), pp. 165–166, 203, 272; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 96. The Białaczów ghetto is also mentioned in *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 91, 153, 177.

Archival sources concerning the Jewish community of Białaczów during World War II include the following: AŻIH; USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC, 1939–1941], 210/258; and Acc.1997.A.0124 [AŻIH—JSS, 1939–1944], 211/142); VHF (# 2642); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/142, Jewish Council Białaczów to chair of JSS in Kraków, June 12, 1941.
2. *Ibid.*, letter October 19, 1941.

3. According to the recollections of Krystyna Debowska in Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), p. 128.

4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/142, letters of Judenrat to JSS, July 27, 1941, and JSS to Judenrat, July 24, 1941.

5. *Ibid.*, Judenrat to JSS, August 8, 1941.

6. *Ibid.*, M. Plaszyński, Obmann des Judenrates to AJDC Kraków, October 10, 1941. On November 13, 1941, the Judenrat reported that the Jewish hospital in Opoczno charged 15 złoty per person per day and the Polish hospital only 6.

7. BA-L, B 162/14521, Verdict of LG-Darm, 2 Ks 1/69, December 7, 1972, p. 24.

8. VHF, # 2642, testimony of Felix Brand.

9. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 68.

10. *Ibid.*; and Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 96.

11. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 68; and Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 272.

BIAŁA RAWSKA

Pre-1939: Biała Rawska, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939-1944: Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Biała Rawska is located about 70 kilometers (43 miles) east of Łódź. In 1921, there were 1,429 Jews out of a total population of 2,323. In 1939, it is estimated that about 1,250 Jews were residing in Biała Rawska.¹

Units of the German army entered the town on September 9, 1939. When the German forces arrived, they assembled many Jews and Poles in the market square and ordered them to clap their hands and cheer the German troops. These scenes were photographed for propaganda purposes. According to one account in the yizkor book, shortly after their arrival German forces arrested hundreds of Jews in the town, both refugees and local Jews, and then shot every tenth person. On the streets in and around Biała Rawska there lay the bodies of many Jews who had been killed either in the bombardment of the town or having been shot by the Germans.²

At the end of October 1939, Biała Rawska became a town in Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, in the Generalgouvernement. The new German authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures, which effectively placed Jews outside the law. The Jews were forced to wear white armbands bearing the Star of David. Germans assisted by local Poles stole Jewish property from their houses with impunity. Among the restrictions the Germans imposed was a prohibition on Jews working in their professions; Jews were also forbidden to engage in trade.³ The Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) and also a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst).

Since Biała Rawska had not been incorporated into the Reich, it did not suffer from the mass evacuation of much of



A sampling of the more than 300 identification card photos of local Jewish residents found on the floor of the Biała Rawska Gestapo headquarters, January 1945. They were discovered by Leon Sztubert, a Jewish survivor from the town, who spent the war in hiding in a nearby forest. Pictured (from top row left and across each row) are Bolesław Zajz; Jehuda Mayer Kurtzbojm; Dvora Filossoff; Reva [illegible]; "sister of Hinda" (d. 1941); Mendel Weber; Rywka Marchew; Chana Tauba Hauberg; and "Zelcer."

USHMM WS #30125, COURTESY OF LILKA ELBAUM

the Jewish population that affected many other towns in the area around Łódź at the end of 1939. However, during the first year of the occupation, there was a steady influx of many refugees, mainly from the towns near Łódź. In May 1941, among the 2,328 Jews counted in Biała Rawska, there were 928 refugees; and by July 1941, the Jewish population had increased to about 4,700. Some local Jews, however, also left the town during the period up to July 1941. The Jews that remained in Biała Rawska did their best to assist the refugees.⁴ The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization provided aid to 2,000 people, and a public kitchen was organized that served 250 hot meals per day.⁵

In the fall of 1941, the German authorities established a ghetto in Biała Rawska in the western part of town, which occupied about one third of the town's area.⁶ The Jews were forced to live under terribly overcrowded conditions, with six or seven families sharing a room.⁷ As a result, various epidemic diseases, especially typhus, spread among the ghetto population, raising the mortality rate to 10 persons per day. To combat this, a hospital was set up within the ghetto.



A Jewish policeman salutes six other officers standing at attention in the Biała Rawska ghetto, n.d. The policemen's clothing and footwear varied, but most wear armbands, caps with badges, badges and lanyards on their tunics, and belts.

USHMM WS #30203, COURTESY OF LILKA ELBAUM

Jews performed forced labor outside the ghetto on road construction, in agriculture, and cleaning the streets of the town.⁸ Otherwise Jews were forbidden to leave the ghetto, but many Jews continued to sneak out and trade with the local peasants in the villages. They exchanged their clothes for flour, potatoes, bread, and other food products. If they were caught outside the ghetto, they could be shot on the spot. At some time before the liquidation of the ghetto, probably in late April 1942, the Gestapo arrested nine young Jews and shot them in the Jewish cemetery.⁹

Between April and July 1942, a number of Jews capable of work were sent from the Biała Rawska ghetto to perform forced labor at the munitions factory camp (Hugo Schneider AG, HASAG) in Skarżysko-Kamienna. In the second half of July 1942, the overcrowding in the ghetto became more intense when Jews from Będków and Ujazd were rounded up and brought into the Biała Rawska ghetto.¹⁰ This concentration of the Jews, together with rumors of the liquidation of other ghettos, meant that in the summer and fall of 1942 the Jews of Biała Rawska became increasingly nervous that soon their turn would be next. A few people decided to take desperate measures to save what they could. Elke Gviazda gave birth to a son in the ghetto in August 1942, but after much heart searching, she and her husband Antshl gave the child to the family of a Polish cobbler who lived in a nearby village, who agreed to hide the child in return for a sizable payment. The Polish family hid him for much of the time in a small space under a bed before subsequently moving to Warsaw. Their efforts succeeded in saving the life of Mendele Gviazda, who had been circumcised and was only three months old when he was given away just prior to the liquidation of the ghetto.¹¹

On October 26, 1942, the ghetto inmates (about 4,000 people) were forcibly resettled into the ghetto of Rawa Mazowiecka, where they had to sleep on the streets on arrival. At dawn on October 27, the Jews found the ghetto surrounded

by German and Polish (Blue) Police, and over the following days, together with the Jews of Rawa Mazowiecka, the Germans deported the Jews of Biała Rawska by train to the extermination camp of Treblinka. The Jews were crammed into the enclosed railcars so tightly that many people suffocated on the journey. On arrival at Treblinka, all of the remaining Jews were murdered in the gas chambers.¹²

Following the evacuation of the Jews from Biała Rawska, some of the houses in the ghetto were demolished, and the rest were occupied by the local population. After the war, among the very few remaining traces of the Jewish community of Biała Rawska were the ruined walls of the synagogue, which had been built at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹³

SOURCES Publications on the history of the Jewish community of Biała Rawska and its destruction during the Holocaust include: Eliyahu Freudenreich and Arye Yaakovovits, eds., *Sefer yizkor le-kedoshai Biala Rawska* (Tel Aviv: Biala Rawska Societies in Israel and the Diaspora, 1972); and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 68–69.

Documentation on the persecution and destruction of the Jewish community in Biała Rawska can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/210); BA-L (B 162/6090-92); IPN (ASG, sygn. 51, p. 188); USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 16; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 14); VHF (# 24254); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 14, 211/210, p. 3.
2. "Aytsug fun 'Mgilah Pulin' vegn Biala-Ravska," *zugeshtikt fun Velvl Goldberg*, in Freudenreich and Yaakovovits, *Sefer yizkor le-kedoshai Biala Rawska*, p. 175, gives the figure of 1,200 Jews prior to World War II.
3. "Aytsug fun 'Mgilah Pulin' vegn Biala-Ravska," p. 175.
4. Ishrael-Hersh Bielski, "Umkum fun der bialer yidisher kehilah," in Freudenreich and Yaakovovits, *Sefer yizkor le-kedoshai Biala Rawska*, p. 148.
5. Ibid.; A. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 153.
6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 14, 211/210, pp. 3 and 10, reports of June and July 1941.
7. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 69; Bielski, "Umkum fun der bialer yidisher kehilah," pp. 148–149; USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, ASG sygn. 51 (Łódź województwo), pp. 188 and reverse side; Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 153.
8. Bielski, "Umkum fun der bialer yidisher kehilah," p. 149.
9. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, ASG 51 (Łódź województwo), pp. 188 and verso.
10. VHF, # 24254, testimony of Sara Knecht. In April 1942 the Security Police in the Generalgouvernement conducted a widespread Aktion against suspected Communists that resulted in hundreds of Jews being shot.
11. BA-L, B 162/6092, pp. 447 ff., 206 AR-Z 12/63, Abschlussbericht, April 14, 1964; Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besat-*

zungspolitik in Polen: *Der Distrikt Radom, 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), pp. 298–299, 307–308.

11. Velvl Goldberg, “Geratevet a yidish kind,” pp. 194–196; Ziml Kupershmidt, “Der gurl fun a Mentsh,” pp. 202–203—both in Freudenreich and Yaakovovits, *Sefer yizkor le-keidoshai Biala Rawska*. Mendele Gviatza was subsequently identified as a hidden Jewish child by the Jewish Committee in Warsaw in 1946.

12. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 69, 259–260; USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, ASG, sygn. 51 (Łódź województwo), pp. 188 and verso.

13. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, ASG, sygn. 51 (Łódź województwo), pp. 188 and verso.

BIAŁOBRZEGI

Pre-1939: Białobrzegi (Yiddish: Byalobz'ig), village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Białobrzegi, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Białobrzegi, town and county seat, Białobrzegi powiat, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Białobrzegi lies on the Pilica River, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) to the north of Radom, on the main road leading to Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, 1,814 Jews lived in Białobrzegi, constituting 60 percent of the village's inhabitants.¹

The Germans occupied Białobrzegi on September 9, 1939. In the fall of 1939, the German authorities ordered members of the Jewish Council of Elders to collect a “contribution” of 40,000 złoty, an enormous sum, considering local conditions. Białobrzegi Jews were also subjected to various antisemitic measures decreed by the German authorities, including the inclusion of markings on their clothing and confiscations.

In October 1939, the town became part of Kreis Radom-Land, governed by Kreishauptmann Dr. Friedrich Egen, but it lay directly on the border with Kreis Grojec in Distrikt Warschau. There was an outpost of the Gendarmerie on Piłsudski Street but no permanent Gestapo presence.

A Judenrat was established to represent the local Jewish community to the German authorities. Abram Goldberg, a local merchant, became its chairman. The Judenrat created a 20-man Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), which was commanded by Nusyn Minkowski.² In the winter of 1939–1940, the Germans ordered the Jews to perform forced labor, which consisted of removing snow from the roads leading to the village. Subsequent forced labor tasks included bridge construction, work on various surrounding estates, and work for the ZEORK (Zakłady Energetyczne Okręgu Radomsko-Kieleckiego) electrical company, as well as for the Gendarmerie.

From the spring of 1940 until October 1942, living conditions for Białobrzegi's Jews declined steadily, due to the arrival of successive waves of Jewish refugees from other places. For example, in the spring of 1941, the Germans resettled 53 Jewish families from Przytyk in Białobrzegi.³ Jews also came from other

places nearby, including Stromiec and Wyśmierzyce, and in July or August 1942, from Jedlińsk, as well as from towns in Distrikt Warschau, such as from Warka, Grójec, Nowe Miasto, Mogielnica, and Warsaw.⁴ This migration was fostered in part by the widespread belief that one could still secure some kind of livelihood in Białobrzegi, for instance, from trade, as the enforcement of German regulations was initially less stringent than in larger towns. In April and May 1941, scores of Jewish escapees from Warsaw and its environs arrived daily in Białobrzegi. The majority of them were completely impoverished.⁵

The Germans established a Jewish residential area (open ghetto) in Białobrzegi in April or May 1941. The ghetto covered the western part of the village. Its border cut in half Krakowska Street, a main road in Białobrzegi. From there, it stretched to the buildings neighboring the river. Not all Polish families were expelled initially from the ghetto's terrain. Some were permitted to continue living there. In August 1941, official statistics claimed that 2,865 Jews lived in the ghetto, including 135 petty merchants and traders, nearly 200 tradesman, and 180 physical laborers.⁶

Following Kreishauptmann Dr. Egen's order of December 22, 1941, on the establishment of ghettos in the Kreis, the ghetto in Białobrzegi was sealed in January 1942, as more Jews from the surrounding villages were required to move there.⁷ Despite the prohibition on leaving the ghetto, now enforced with the death penalty, many people attempted to leave in search of provisions, and some of these attempts ended tragically. The Gendarmerie maintained a powerful presence. They patrolled Białobrzegi and the surrounding area, shooting on the spot any Jew found outside the ghetto without a valid permit (some Jews were permitted to move back and forth to labor sites outside the town). The Gendarmes frequently entered the ghetto; on occasion, they murdered individual Jews caught not wearing their armband or known to have been outside the ghetto illegally. The commander of the Gendarmerie post was an official of the Schutzpolizei named Wiechern; among the most notorious of his subordinates was a man named Josef Pfalzgraf, who shot Jews on numerous occasions.⁸

Tight control over the ghetto created severe impoverishment and hunger on a massive scale. The official daily food ration was only 80 grams (2.8 ounces) of bread per person. Białobrzegi's Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee, directed by the physician Dr. Rafał Bułka, tried to assist the most impoverished by establishing a community kitchen to offer reduced-cost meals. In the first months of the ghetto's existence, the committee could afford only to distribute 600 meals daily: one third of the demand.⁹ The absence of financial resources forced the kitchen to close after a while. The JSS and the Judenrat worked together to create an isolation hospital for those with infectious diseases; however, it had room for only 15 patients.¹⁰

In the summer of 1942, the poverty and starvation that reigned in the Białobrzegi ghetto reached their peak. Survivor Shlomo Kligerman recalled: “The Nazis massed all the Jews from the surrounding villages in Byalabgige [Białobrzegi], and the overcrowding was appalling. People were dying on the

street from hunger, and from time to time the Nazis would seize people from the streets for labor.¹¹ In July or August 1942, some of the remaining Jews from the Jedlińsk ghetto and also the Jews of Wyśmierzyce were brought to Białobrzegi.¹² In September 1942, there were several recorded incidents of Jews being shot by the Gendarmerie for leaving the ghetto in search of food.¹³

On October 1 (or possibly September 1), 1942, German-led forces liquidated the ghetto.¹⁴ First, members of the Jewish Police went from house to house, telling the Jews to gather at the market square.¹⁵ At this time, a deep cordon of police had already surrounded the ghetto. German Gendarmes, Polish (Blue) Police, officials of the Security Police, and their Ukrainian auxiliaries—many of them drunk—entered the ghetto. The patients of the isolation hospital were murdered on the spot. The Germans also shot many old and sick Jews, as well as children, inside the town. Eyewitnesses indicate that around 200 people were murdered and buried at the Jewish cemetery in Białobrzegi on this day.¹⁶ (A Polish exhumation report indicates that at least 125 people were buried at the Jewish cemetery and that around 500 people [including some non-Jews] altogether were murdered by the German occupiers in and around Białobrzegi during the occupation.)¹⁷ On the market square the Germans selected around 100 Jews who were young and healthy for work tasks. Then about 3,500 Jews were formed into a marching column and escorted through Stromiec to the train station in the town of Dobieszyn. During this march, the police escorts beat or shot many Jews who were unable to keep up with the column. The train, composed of cattle wagons, which was waiting in Dobieszyn, left after a few hours in the direction of the Treblinka extermination camp, where the Jews were murdered on arrival.

About 200 Jewish men and 10 women, who had either been selected on the market square during the liquidation Aktion or returned to Białobrzegi from nearby work camps shortly thereafter, were confined within three adjacent houses next to the market square. Some of these Jews had to work cleaning out the ghetto, while others worked for the ZEORK company or for the Order Police. Most of these Jews were deported by truck to the munitions factory at Skarżysko-Kamienna in December 1942. From here some were sent to Częstochowa, Auschwitz, and other concentration camps. A few Jews from Białobrzegi survived the labor camps in Sucha, Pionki, and other places.¹⁸

SOURCES Publications on the history of the Jewish community of Białobrzegi and its fate during the Holocaust include Regina Renz, ed., *Białobrzegi. Studia i szkice z dziejów miasta* (Białobrzegi, 1996); and the yizkor book edited by David Avraham Mandelboim, *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Byalobz'ig* (Tel Aviv, 1991), which includes short biographical sketches of a number of survivors.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR (AgB 188); AŻIH (211/213-214 [ŻSS Białobrzegi]); BA-L (B 162/6305-06); IPN (ASG); USHMM (Acc.2004.625 [Samuel Heider memoir]); VHF (e.g., # 1969, 39802); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 211/213-214 (ŻSS Białobrzegi).
2. APR, AgB 188.
3. Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1037, dates the resettlement in April 1941; VHF, # 39802, dates it in July 1941; other Jews were moved from Przytyk to Skaryszew and Szydłowiec at this time.
4. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 98; and Sebastian Piątkowski, “Białobrzegi i okolice w latach wojny i okupacji (1939–1945),” in Renz, *Białobrzegi*, pp. 161–162.
5. AŻIH, 211/213-214 (ŻSS Białobrzegi). See also BA-L, B 162/6305, p. 209, statement of Josef Friedmann, March 6, 1964, and p. 235, statement of Arie Leib Berkowicz, March 12, 1964.
6. AŻIH, 211/213-214 (ŻSS Białobrzegi).
7. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), p. 122. Most Jewish survivors date the ghetto's establishment in January 1942; see BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 191, 196, 230, 233–234.
8. Piątkowski, “Białobrzegi,” pp. 163–164; and Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw, 1983), pp. 262–263. See BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 247–249, arrest order for Josef Pfalzgraf, May 19, 1965. VHF, # 1969, testimony of Abram Piasek, mentions that a boy was shot for going only a few yards outside the ghetto.
9. AŻIH, 211/213-214 (ŻSS Białobrzegi).
10. Ibid.
11. Mandelboim, *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Byalobz'ig*, p. 345 (Shlomo Kligerman).
12. BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 200–203, 237–240, 241–243, statements by surviving Jews from the Jedlińsk ghetto; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 578.
13. See, for example, BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 207, 223–225, 235.
14. October 1, 1942, is given by most Jewish survivors; see BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 191, 196, 205, 209, 223, 226, 234. Others, however, date it on September 1; see pp. 213, 217.
15. Ibid., p. 210.
16. Ibid., p. 193.
17. Ibid., pp. 288–289.
18. Ibid., pp. 185, 189, 193–194, 196–197.

BLIŻYŃ

Pre-1939: Bliżyn, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Bliżyn, Kreis Kielce-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Bliżyn, village, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Bliżyn is located about 43 kilometers (27 miles) southwest of Radom. The Jewish population in the village was rather small; the 1921 census registered only 47 Jews in Bliżyn. A few hundred more Jews resided in the surrounding villages. In February 1941, the number of Jews in Bliżyn and the adjacent villages linked to the Bliżyn kehillah was estimated at about 375.¹

After the German occupation, the situation of the Jews in Bliżyn steadily deteriorated. According to the correspondence of the Bliżyn Jewish Council (Judenrat) with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), the 45 families of Bliżyn's Jewish community were already in urgent need of material support in 1940. From the summer of 1940, the AJDC began to deliver food to Bliżyn's Jews. In July 1940, Bliżyn received 45 kilograms (99.2 pounds) of grits, 11 kilograms (24.3 pounds) of sugar, 42 kilograms (92.6 pounds) of flour, 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of lard, and 15 cans of condensed milk.² In total, two deliveries of food were made in 1940. Another indicator of the poor living conditions of the local Jews was the fact that in the spring of 1940 a sanitary commission was established, which consisted of 10 people.³ But there is no indication that a ghetto had been created at this time.

In February 1941, there were already about 100 Jewish refugees from Łódź in Bliżyn, who had arrived at some time after September 1939.⁴ Then in March 1941, the situation was exacerbated by the arrival of more than 200 Jews who had been deported from Płock via the Działdowo transit camp. These Jews arrived completely exhausted and dressed only in rags. About 700 Jews from Płock also arrived in the nearby town of Suchedniów.⁵

With the meager means available to the Bliżyn Jewish community, there was not much it could do to help the new arrivals. The soup kitchen of the Jewish community delivered 250 lunch meals per day, but supplies were scarce. The Jewish population, especially the new arrivals, was in a pitiable condition. In April 1941, the AJDC sent 500 złoty to the Jewish community, but this did not improve the situation very much. In May 1941, Chaim Razenki, chairman of the Jewish Council, reported that Bliżyn was now home to 211 former inhabitants of Płock, of whom about 75 were living in mass quarters, while the others were staying with local families. An outpatient hospital (Ambulatorium) and a quarantine station had been established, where people suspected of infectious diseases could be treated. However, funds were running short, and Razenki pointed out that the soup kitchen could only operate on a limited basis, as the food supply was not guaranteed.⁶ On May 20, the AJDC responded by transferring 750 złoty from its own funds and 500 złoty from the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS).⁷ The regional branch of JSS had been founded on November 20, 1940, headed by Dr. Eliezer Polak.⁸

In the first months of 1942, the German authorities began a larger resettlement within Distrikt Radom. The civil administration began to concentrate the Jews in a few locations, especially bringing Jews from the countryside and villages into towns closer to railroad stations. This was intended to facilitate their subsequent deportation to labor and extermination camps. Due to its proximity to a major railroad line, Bliżyn was selected as one of the locations where Jews were concentrated, serving as a temporary transit ghetto.⁹ Almost no records concerning Bliżyn have survived from this period. Later in that year, probably in August 1942, the Bliżyn Jews, about 600 people altogether, were brought to the collection ghetto in Suchedniów. During this deportation Aktion, about

30 Jews were killed.¹⁰ From there, the remainder were sent with about 3,500 other Jews to the extermination camp in Treblinka on September 22, 1942.¹¹ It is probable that some of the Bliżyn Jews were among the 570 able-bodied Jews selected for work and sent to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) munitions factory camp at Skarżysko-Kamienna in the course of two transports in August and September 1942.¹²

On March 8, 1943, a forced labor camp for Jews (*Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden*) was established in Bliżyn. The camp eventually held about 5,000 to 6,000 prisoners, both male and female, becoming a subcamp of the Majdanek concentration camp in February 1944. The remaining prisoners were evacuated in cattle wagons to the Auschwitz concentration camp in July 1944.

On March 17, 1943, the synagogue of the "former Jewish community in Bliżyn" was confiscated by the Generalgouvernement, as it was deemed to be ownerless (*berrenlos*).¹³

SOURCES Not many sources mention the history of Bliżyn before the village became the site of a forced labor camp for Jews. Brief mentions of the Jewish community of Bliżyn in the period from 1939 to 1942 can be found in Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007); Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, no. 15 (1955): 75–180. Edited by Czesław Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979) lists the Bliżyn "ghetto" and other camps there on pp. 108–109.

Primary sources regarding the Bliżyn ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/264); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/264; and RG-15.031M [Stadt- und Kreishauptmann, Kielce], file 129); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A0154, correspondence with AJDC in Kraków, Bliżyn Judenrat to AJDC, February 12, 1941.
2. *Ibid.*, district inspector of the AJDC in Radom to the Bliżyn Judenrat, July 12, 1940.
3. *Ibid.*, Bliżyn Judenrat to AJDC Kraków, February 19, 1941.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, Bliżyn Judenrat to AJDC Kraków, March 10, 1941; this letter mentions around 300 Jews arriving from Płock. See also Joseph Kermish, "The Jews of Plotzk under the Nazi Regime," in Eliyahu Aizenberg, ed., *Plotsk: Toldot ke-bilab 'atikat-yamin be-Polin* (Tel Aviv: ha-Menorah, 1967), pp. 70–74. In total, some 6,000 Jews from Płock were deported to various towns in Distrikt Radom in March 1941.
6. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, Chaim Razenki (Bliżyn Judenrat) to AJDC Kraków, May 7, 1941.
7. *Ibid.*, AJDC to the Bliżyn Judenrat, May 20, 1941.
8. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 203.

9. Ibid., pp. 252, 270, describes Bliżyn as a collection point (*Sammelort*); see also Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 99–100. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, pp. 108–109, list Bliżyn as a ghetto.

10. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, pp. 108–109; Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 325–326, note an influx of Jews into the Suchedniów ghetto from Bliżyn and other towns in August 1942. Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, Główna Komisja Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo kieleckie* (Warsaw, 1980), p. 21, reports that in 1941 the Gendarmerie shot 23 Jews in Bliżyn.

11. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 270; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 171; and Aizenberg, *Plotsk: Toldot kebilab*, p. 73.

12. Felicja Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), p. 36.

13. USHMM, RG-15.031M, file 129, Stadt- und Kreishauptmann, Kielce, Einziehungsverfügung, Kreishauptmann Kielce, March 17, 1943.

BODZENTYN

Pre-1939: Bodzentyn, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Kielce-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Bodzentyn is located 26 kilometers (16 miles) northeast of Kielce. There were approximately 1,000 Jews living in Bodzentyn on the eve of World War II.¹

The German authorities in Bodzentyn set up a Jewish Council (Judenrat) on February 15, 1940. It included Froim Szachter (chairman), Lejzor Grojsman (deputy), Chil Rozenberg, Szmul Wajntraub (chairman from 1942 onward), and Mejlich Zylbersztajn.² A Jewish police force was also organized, but the date of its establishment and its strength are not known. A Polish (Blue) Police force also was stationed in Bodzentyn. The German Gendarmerie post that was responsible for Bodzentyn was located in nearby Bieliny.³

Between 150 and 300 refugees and deportees (estimates vary), mostly from Łódź and around Kielce, arrived in Bodzentyn soon after the start of the war.

On March 3, 1941, 600 deportees from the town of Płock, which had been incorporated into the Reich in Regierungsbezirk Zichenau, were transferred to Bodzentyn. By March 10, 1941, approximately 1,500 Jews had arrived in a total of three transports. Most of the deportees had spent up to a week in the transit camp at Działdowo, and they arrived via Kielce sick, exhausted, and with no luggage. All were housed in the synagogue. About 1,200 were relocated to local Jewish families within two weeks, but many families had to be split up among the extremely overcrowded households.

The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee established a soup kitchen for the deportees. It was located in a wooden bar-

racks next to the synagogue on Wesoła Street. According to one of the Płock survivors, Michael Zelon, the situation of the Płock Jews was not too bad at the beginning but soon started “going down” for those who had no money or work.⁴

The Płock deportees in Bodzentyn organized a Committee of Płock Compatriots to assist their own. The committee included Dr. J. Bluman (chairman), J. Ajzyk, H. Cytryn, J. Askanas, J. Horowitz, and J. Rubin. By May 1941, both the Płock committee and the JSS office in Kielce were concerned whether the Płock Jews were really getting the help various organizations were supposed to provide them. The committee also described the cooperation with the Judenrat as “loose.” Additionally, the Ringelblum Archives contain correspondence addressed to the committee by individuals citing various forms of discrimination by the Judenrat.⁵

Historians have described the attitude of the Bodzentyn Judenrat towards the Płock deportees as “misguided” (Krzysztof Urbański) and “reprehensible” (Adam Rutkowski). All sources emphasize the extreme hardship faced by the Płock Jews but underline the warmth with which the local Jewish population received them upon arrival. Michael Zelon recalls the largest number of Płock Jews dying in 1942, by which time they were “totally neglected, swollen from hunger, unfriendly, and ready to fight.”⁶

Following the typhus epidemic that broke out in mid-April 1941, the sick were treated in a hospital in Kielce (which admitted a total of 105 patients). On May 20, 1941, the German authorities ordered the Judenrat to set up an epidemic hospital for 25 patients. Although the hospital opened two days later in the synagogue, it lacked basic equipment such as beds, blankets, and medicine. Nevertheless, it treated on average 40 patients who were released as soon as their temperatures dropped. The highest death rate was among the Płock deportees and the elderly.⁷

By the end of June 1941, there were 3,700 Jews registered in Bodzentyn. Out of this number, 72 were registered as working in labor camps outside the gmina. None are registered as working in Bodzentyn. At the time, 102 Jewish businesses were still operating, of which 42 were craftsmen, predominantly tailors and cobblers.⁸

By August 1941, 124 patients of the epidemic hospital in Bodzentyn had recovered. Dr. J. Bluman was the hospital’s manager and the only doctor in town. At the time, disinfections, delousing, and vaccination against dysentery were mandatory for all Jews.⁹ The typhus epidemic did not die out but intensified at the end of September 1941, claiming, however, fewer lives than hunger and—with the winter coming—cold.

In October 1941, a second “general hospital for deportees suffering from cold, swelling, and exhaustion” was set up in the synagogue.¹⁰ A shelter organized at the time solely for refugee and deportee orphans (3 to 12 years old) housed 50 children by January 1942; another 100 were waiting to be admitted. By the end of April 1942, 85 orphans and half-orphans were housed in three rooms. Another 30 were placed with local families to be fed. By February 1942, 5 to 6 Jews were dying daily.¹¹

By mid-March 1942 (or possibly earlier), an open ghetto had been established in the predominantly Jewish neighborhood of Bodzentyn. Jews living in Krajno, Jezioro, Wzdół Rządowy, Ryczywół, and other settlements in the vicinity were forced to move into the extremely overcrowded Jewish quarter. Poles within the designated area, however, were allowed to stay where they lived.

It appears that the ghetto dwellers were still allowed to move freely within Bodzentyn's limits. Going any further was punishable by death. The same punishment applied to Poles caught sheltering Jewish escapees from the ghettos. Special permission was required for Jews to travel outside of Bodzentyn. Trespassers were transferred to the Bieliny Gendarmerie station or were shot outside of the village; there were cases, however, in which only a fine was applied.

The ghetto residents were tormented with day and night searches conducted by the Gendarmes, sometimes assisted by Polish and Jewish policemen. Jews were beaten, arrested, fined, and sometimes killed for offenses that included smuggling, possession of various materials or commodities, profiteering, and theft. Jews in many cases were able to get away with a bribe and confiscation of the discovered commodity.¹²

By May 1942, roundups of Jews for the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp had commenced, for example, on May 6 and 8, 1942. In response, many Jewish men went into hiding. As the set quota was not fulfilled, the Jewish Police were ordered to deliver men to make up the deficit. In Skarżysko, the Bodzentyn laborers were put to work building railroad trucks and cutting trees. Those diagnosed by a doctor as unfit or who could afford a bribe were sent back to Bodzentyn and exchanged for healthy Jews. Such replacements took place on May 12 and 21 and June 1 and 4, 1942. Trucks carrying the sick were unloaded only after an equal number of new laborers were submitted, for instance, 60 men on June 4, 1942. The Judenrat was charged with the delivery of food—collected from their families—to the laborers.¹³

On the night of July 3–4, 1942, the synagogue that housed both hospitals and several dozen deportees burned down.¹⁴

The Bodzentyn ghetto was liquidated in September 1942. The Gendarmerie and Polish and Jewish policemen chased approximately 3,000 ghetto dwellers down to the Lower Market. Family members carried children and the elderly on their backs. All were marched to nearby Suchedniów (18 kilometers [11 miles] away) via Wzdół Rządowy and Michniów; a number of Jews from Słupia Nowa were also added to the transport. The Jewish Police that remained after the ghetto's liquidation were charged with cleaning and sorting the abandoned Jewish property. There is no information as to their fate.¹⁵

SOURCES The Bodzentyn ghetto is mentioned in the following publications: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 111; Dawid Rubinowicz, *Pamiętnik Dawida Rubinowicza* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1987); and E. Fařara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: LSW, 1983).

The following archival sources were used in preparing this entry: AŻIH (210/271 [AJDC], 211/242–245 [JSS], Ring I/165, Ring I/794); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 16 [Bodzentyn]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC Bodzentyn]; RG-15.079M [Ring I]); and VHF (# 4272, 31161, 36287, and 47180).

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NOTES

1. Krzysztof Urbański, *Almanach gmin żydowskich województwa kieleckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach: FPHU “XYZ,” 2007); and USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16, 211/243 (Bodzentyn), p. 46.
2. *Gazeta Żydowska*, March 11, 1941; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16, 211/242 (Bodzentyn), pp. 1, 3, 20, 28.
3. Rubinowicz, *Pamiętnik*, pp. 36, 88–89.
4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16, 211/242, pp. 34, 39, 51–52. In its January 1942 report for 1941, Bodzentyn's JSS reported 1,700 Płock refugees; see Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16, 211/245 (Bodzentyn), p. 8. Also see VHF, # 4272, testimony of Tema Lichtenstein, 1995; # 31161, testimony of Lena Michalowicz, 1997; # 36287, testimony of Nathan Smiga, 1997; # 47180, testimony of Michael Zelon, 1998; and Fařara, *Gebenna*, p. 427.
5. USHMM, RG-15.079M (Ring I/165, Ring I/794).
6. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 99; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), p. 102; and VHF, # 47180.
7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16, 211/243, pp. 5–6, 24–25, 38–39.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–48.
9. *Ibid.*, 211/244 (Bodzentyn), p. 1; *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 13 and 29, 1941.
10. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16, 211/244, pp. 29–30, 37, 41.
11. *Ibid.*, 211/245, pp. 8–9, 12, 19–20, 26, 45.
12. Rubinowicz, *Pamiętnik*, pp. 10, 65–71, 74, 77, 93, 104, 106, 111. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 116, states that the ghetto was set up in 1941. Also see VHF, # 47180; and Fařara, *Gebenna*, p. 425.
13. Felicja Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), pp. 31–32; Rubinowicz, *Pamiętnik*, pp. 88–98, 104, 107, 109; and VHF, # 47180.
14. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16, 211/245, p. 59.
15. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” table 8, p. 149; Fařara, *Gebenna*, p. 430; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 111.

BOGORIA

Pre-1939: Bogoria, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The village of Bogoria is located 55 kilometers (34 miles) southeast of Kielce. In September 1939, Bogoria had 403 Jewish residents.¹

As the result of a Luftwaffe bombardment in the first week of the September campaign, the village was almost entirely razed. This destruction, together with a fear of the approaching German troops, caused many local Jews to flee eastward. They were soon replaced by a flow of refugees who had left from places already occupied by the Germans.²

From the beginning of the occupation, Bogoria's Jews had to collect "contributions" for the Germans in the form of money, silver, gold, or other valuable items. Further monetary payments were imposed on the community in 1940 and 1941, yet some inhabitants still managed to hide some valuables.

The Germans also demanded a daily quota of Jews for forced labor. They would often make them clean horses, trucks, and streets; young men were sometimes dragged out of their homes. The workday started at 6:00 A.M. and, with a short lunch break, ended in the evening. Laborers were given paltry rations, which they received only infrequently.

As work was largely unpaid, the labor pool dried up when Bogoria's young Jews opted to go into hiding. Eventually, the older men were conscripted for forced labor, with the Germans ridiculing their long beards. There is one report of a dozen being humiliated in the market square, where their beards were cut off. Older laborers were often severely beaten by the SS guards who supervised them, as they were unable to work as fast as the young. A special committee was set up to organize the daily labor details and ensure that the quota was met. Before long, the elderly complained to the committee, arguing that it was shameful of the young men to force indirectly their elders to be subjected to such treatment. The committee started sending about 40 young people to meet the labor quota, alternating their workdays. During the winter, labor conscripts were required to shovel the snow off the roads. The winter of 1940 was especially severe; sometimes these young men had to clear up to five feet of snow without proper equipment.³

The date of the establishment of the Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Bogoria is not known; however, Lejb Zymerfogiel is identified as its president in August 1940. At the end of that year, many Jewish businesses were placed under a German, ethnic German (*Volksdeutsche*), or Polish commissioner. In addition to 400 local Jews, there were about 60 Jewish refugees living in Bogoria by January 1941.⁴

On March 27, 1941, a transport of 1,000 Viennese Jews arrived in Kreis Opatow. They came fully equipped with luggage, food, and clothing. Approximately 70 percent were over 60 years old and in ailing health. From that particular transport, 34 people were sent to Bogoria. According to Judenrat records, there were 527 Jews living in Bogoria in April 1941. Of these, 10 were merchants, 17 were craftsmen, and 409 were common laborers. Of those identified as craftsmen, only 12 were licensed to continue their businesses: 4 bakers, 5 tailors, 2 leather stichers, and a watchmaker.⁵

To assist Bogoria's refugees and deportees in their plight, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), based in Kraków, was created, with a Kreis committee set up in Opatów on December 16, 1940.⁶ Bogoria established an unofficial branch in March 1941 but initially did not receive any funds for its deportee popula-

tion. Rabbi Berek Szwarc chaired the official Bogoria JSS committee, appointed in June 1941. Hersz Gutman was the chairman's deputy; its third member was Lejb Zymerfogiel.

The JSS in Opatów agreed to subsidize a soup kitchen and an outpatients' medical service in Bogoria, once the local branch fulfilled their preconditions in May 1941, taking on debt to do so. The soup kitchen located in the rabbi's private apartment distributed from 100 to 140 meals per day. In May 1941, teenage volunteers set up a youth organization to provide child care for roughly 60 orphaned or poor children. There was no building to house its activities; but the JSS believed that, considering the time of the year, staying outside all day was better for the children's health. Volunteers looked after the children between breakfast and dinner, then bathed them and checked their hygiene. From August 1941 onward, half of the children received additional food rations. This level of social assistance was maintained in Bogoria until March 1942. At that time, 70 percent of the Jews in Bogoria used JSS services.⁷

In April 1942, a ghetto was established, requiring a special permit for Jews seeking to leave it.⁸ Until May 1942, Jews were allowed to live in 150 towns and settlements in Kreis Opatow. Then on May 13, 1942, Kreishauptmann Ritter ordered that all Jews would be restricted to five towns and 12 settlements in the Kreis, including Bogoria. Each center was automatically recognized as a ghetto. Jews were given two weeks to move. Those who resettled before May 28, 1942, could take all their belongings with them; after that, they could take only as much as they could carry in two hands. June 1, 1942, was the deadline for resettlement.⁹

Before the arrival of the newest expellees, there were approximately 550 Jews living in the Bogoria ghetto, of which 150 were from elsewhere.¹⁰ Due to the resettlement order, an additional 78 Jews from neighboring villages were transferred to the Bogoria ghetto by June 1. A housing commission was set up to distribute them among private apartments.¹¹

In July 1942, the employment office in Opatów registered 100 Jews from Bogoria to work in agriculture. More than half of them were assigned to work on four estates: Kielczyna (25 laborers), Łaziska (12), Grzybów (11), and Rogoźno (8). Workers departed from the ghetto in the morning equipped with a group travel permit to leave and return to Bogoria in the evening. On the Kielczyna estate, laborers worked from 7:00 A.M. until noon, then again from 1:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. They were paid with food and money based on their performance. On average, a worker would take home half a kilogram (1.1 pound) of wheat and 2.40 złoty per day. Laborers on other estates worked under similar conditions.

At the same time, the JSS in Bogoria tried, with the help of the Kraków headquarters, to obtain permission to set up a tailoring workshop and a straw-shoe workshop. They also tried to find companies who would place orders for these goods. At the end of September 1942, these negotiations were still in progress.

As Jews in Bogoria learned during the summer of 1942 about other towns being cleared of Jews, many expected that they would soon be taken away as well. A number of Jews went

to hide in the forests. Large posters all over the village warned Poles that their houses would be burned down for helping Jews.¹² The liquidation of the Bogoria ghetto took place at the end of October 1942, when around 600 ghetto inhabitants were deported to the extermination camp in Treblinka.¹³

SOURCES Brief articles on the Jewish community of Bogoria can be found in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 80–81; and in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 164–165. References to the destruction of the community can be found in the following publications: Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); and Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004). Some information can be found in the German wartime propaganda newspaper for the Jews, *Gazeta Żydowska*.

Most of the archival information in this article is derived from the following sources: USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 16); and VHF (# 42977).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16.
2. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 88, 163 (table 13), 181–182.
3. VHF, # 42977-4, testimony of Harry Gula, 1998.
4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16.
5. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 140; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN 1979), p. 112; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 93–94; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16.
6. Marek Józwick, “Akta Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Warszawie ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem dystryktu radomskiego,” *Biuletyn Kwartalny Radomskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego* 23:1 (1988): 45–46.
7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, December 7, 1941; June 10, 1941; March 29, 1942; and May 1, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16.
8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16. According to Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 112, the ghetto was set up in the summer of 1942.
9. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 85–86; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 116, 152–153.
10. *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 1, 1942.
11. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16.
12. VHF, # 42977-4.
13. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 80–81; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 181. According to Spector and Wigoder’s *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life*, pp. 164–165, the Jews from Bogoria were deported to “one of the death camps”; according to Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 112, 600 Bogoria Jews were shot during the ghetto liquidation.

BUSKO-ZDRÓJ (BUSKO)

Pre-1939: Busko-Zdrój, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: capital, Kreis Busko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The town of Busko-Zdrój is located 47 kilometers (29 miles) south of Kielce. There were 1,300 Jews living in Busko on the eve of World War II.¹

Following the German occupation of the town in September 1939, Dr. Wilhelm Schäfer was appointed as Busko’s Kreishauptmann. Sources mention the following German offices operating in Busko: the Kripo (Criminal Police); the Gestapo, located on Mickiewicz Street and commanded by Emil Fischer; and the Gendarmerie under Captain Koenig’s command, located in the villa “Wersal” on Mickiewicz Street. There was also a unit of Polish (Blue) Police.

By the spring of 1940, German authorities had set up a Jewish Council (Judenrat). Of its members, the following names are known: Szaja Gertner (chairman), Dawid Promer, Wolf Szpigelman, and Ajzyk Blugrind.

In March 1940, there were 1,700 Jews living in Busko, including 140 refugees. By mid-August 1940, a number of Busko’s able-bodied Jewish men were sent to work in forced labor camps around Biała Podlaska. The Judenrat allocated some of its funds to help these laborers. By December 1940, the number of refugees increased to 250, yet the Jewish population remained at 1,700.

By January 1941, a Kreis self-help committee had been established at 16 Piłsudski Street. Its assistance was limited to the distribution of small benefits and food to the needy in Busko and throughout Kreis Busko. The committee included J. Nadler as chairman, Dr. Aniela Goldschmied (Żwan-Goldshmed, a Pole who through marriage had converted to Judaism), Chaim Rozencwajg (a tailor), Lejb Prajs (a tradesman), and Gerszon Rakowski (a house painter). A few months later, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee was established, to provide welfare for the Jews of Busko and the Kreis; it was located at 9 Stopnica Street (now Partyzantów Street).²

Between December 1940 and February 1941, the Busko Kreis was flooded with Jews deported from larger towns. In December, 1,500 Jews arrived from Radom. On February 24, 1941, a transport of another 966 Jews arrived from the town of Plock, which had been incorporated into the Reich. Both transports were distributed among various localities in the Kreis, causing great overcrowding.³

The Kreishauptmann, Dr. Wilhelm Schäfer, ordered the establishment of several ghettos in the Kreis by April 15, 1941. Around this time, an open ghetto was created in Busko.⁴ According to the postwar testimony of Daniel Fischgarten, the ghetto was unfenced; however, Jews were strictly forbidden to leave it. Fischgarten also testified that the ghetto consisted of two streets. Other sources name three: that is, Stopnica on the northern side of the market square, where the JSS office and the synagogue were located, together with

two parallel streets southwest of the market square—Kościuszkó and Kiliński. It is worth noting, of course, that to physically connect these streets at least one more had to be accessible to Jews. It is possible that the area of the ghetto was reduced over time. There is no information as to whether the ghetto was guarded or if a Jewish police force was organized.⁵

The number of Jews remained stable following the ghetto's establishment, and JSS statistics from the summer of 1941 report 1,723 Jews, including 243 newcomers. With only 16.3 percent of all newcomers, Busko had the lowest number of deportees of any town within the Kreis. This was the result of a deliberate decision by the Kreishauptmann to declare his Kreis capital to be as free of Jews as possible.

At this time, there were 235 children under the age of 10 living in the ghetto. Additional food rations were issued for 89 of them by the soup kitchen set up in the synagogue by July 1941 to serve the impoverished. The ghetto also had an epidemic hospital, an isolation ward, and a sanitation committee supervised by two doctors, Aniela Goldschmied (particularly responsible for children in the ghetto) and L. Zarecki. The sanitation committee checked Jewish dwellings for cleanliness; at least 60 Jews had to be bathed daily. By October 1941, out of the ghetto's 1,728 inhabitants, 560 were seeking JSS assistance; 190 Jewish businesses were still open, 70 of which consisted of tailors.⁶

By September 1941, the Judenrat consisted of the following: Gertner (chairman), Binestock, Szpigelman, Kazimirski (secretary), and Alter Grojs.⁷

On December 7, 1941, first- and second-grade classes were organized for children by the JSS. Segregated according to their age and level of education, the children spent most of the daytime under the care of tutors who helped improve their behavior and cleanliness. The JSS also began serving soup kitchen meals to nonresident Jews held in Busko's prison.⁸

The registration of 670 able-bodied men aged 12 to 60 took place in the summer of 1942. The workers were to perform drainage works in the vicinity and improve the Busko-Wisłica road. At this time, the JSS sought permission to open workshops producing straw-made items.⁹

According to Fischgarten, the Judenrat was ordered in the summer of 1942 to select 250 families who were then to be resettled to a choice of one of several specific locations. If this transfer actually took place, it would have greatly diminished the number of Jews in the ghetto—possibly by almost half of its population. Other sources, however, do not confirm this account. Historian Adam Rutkowski claims that the number of ghetto residents rose to approximately 2,000 just prior to the deportation, most likely due to the German practice of bringing into the nearest ghetto those Jews living in surrounding settlements, shortly before the deportation of the Jews from a given area.¹⁰

Furthermore, Irena Budzyńska, a local Pole involved in saving the lives of many Jews, testified that in September 1942 Busko's Jews had to relocate and were all forced to live in remarkably overcrowded dwellings. Windows facing streets were bricked up, depriving many people of daylight. This ac-

count suggests that the ghetto's size was probably reduced. Budzyńska, however, dates these events as the ghetto's creation, which would suggest that until then the ghetto had remained more or less open. There are no surviving records of Jews being killed for leaving the ghetto; however, a Polish man, Józef Chudy, was shot for supplying food to Jews in the Busko ghetto.

The deportation Aktion took place on October 1 or 2, 1942.¹¹ One day prior to the deportation, the Germans ordered local Poles to bring some 300 wagons to Busko. This caused great alarm among the ghetto's residents, as the ghetto was also surrounded by Gendarmerie forces commanded by Captain Koenig and Polish (Blue) Police.¹²

The next day, Busko's Jews were ordered to leave their dwellings within five minutes and to form up in lines of 10. Commands were given by loudspeaker. In the course of the evacuation, the Germans shot Josef Topiol, the last Judenrat chairman. Children were being killed on the spot; held by the legs, their heads were smashed against walls and poles. The elderly were shot. The German Gendarmerie searched the dwellings for Jews in hiding; those found were shot immediately.

The remaining column of residents was to be marched to Jędrzejów 38 kilometers (24 miles) away, a town with a railroad, from which the Jews of Busko and other ghettos in the Kreis were to be sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. The column was escorted by SS men, spread out every 50 meters (164 feet) on each side; many marchers were shot along the way. On the way to Jędrzejów, Busko's Jews were stopped in Pińczów, where some were selected for work at the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition-factory labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna. The remainder, together with the Jews from the then-liquidated ghetto in Pińczów, were taken to Jędrzejów on October 4, 1942. A number of Busko's Jews managed to escape while crossing the Nida River outside of Pińczów. Upon reaching Jędrzejów, all were loaded on trains destined for Treblinka.¹³

SOURCES The Busko ghetto is mentioned in the following publications: Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); E. Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: LSW, 1983); and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 122.

The following archives were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/640 [AJDC], 211/271–272 [JSS], 301/254, 301/5697, and 301/5698 [Relacje]); BA-BL (R 52III/30); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS Busko-Zdrój], reel 17; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC Busko-Zdrój]); and YVA (e.g., M-49/E/254, M-49/E/5698, O-3/3500, O-3/3553).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 17, 211/272 (Busko-Zdrój), p. 11.

2. Ibid., 211/271 (Busko-Zdrój), p. 4; 211/272, p. 13; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/640, p. 42; and AŻIH, 301/5697, testimony of Irena Budzyńska, 1960.

3. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 91; and BA-BL, R 52III/30, pp. 1–3.

4. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 83.

5. AŻIH, 301/254, testimony of Daniel Fischgarten, 1945; and Fařara, *Gebenna ludności*, p. 185.

6. *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 6, 1941; USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/272, reel 17, p. 11; 211/271, reel 17, pp. 13–14, 26, 58, 76–77. Apart from Pacanów, which had a ratio of 18.9 percent newcomers, the other six towns in the Kreis had from 35.3 up to 51 percent deportees.

7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/271, pp. 26–28, 32.

8. Ibid., 211/272, pp. 55–56, 64–65.

9. Ibid., 211/272, reel 17, p. 71; and *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 12, 1942.

10. AŻIH, 301/254; Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 147 (table 7).

11. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 146–147; AŻIH, 301/5697; and Waćlaw Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1987), p. 19.

12. AŻIH, 301/5698, testimony of Zofia Peretiankiewicz (Zophia Peretiankiewicz), 1960; 301/5697; and Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 100, 108.

13. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 147 (table 7); YVA, M-49/E/254; Ø-3/3500, testimony of Reisl Lemska, p. 2; M-49/E/5698, testimony of Zophia Peretiankiewicz; and Ø-3/3553, testimony of Yosef Rosenberg, pp. 2–3. AŻIH, 301/254, dates the deportation from Busko in September 1942.

CHĘCINY

Pre-1939: Chęciny, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Chęciny, Kreis Kielce-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Chęciny, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Chęciny is located 15 kilometers (9 miles) southwest of Kielce. In 1939, Chęciny had 7,459 residents, including 3,120 Jews.

Following the September 1939 invasion, German troops were quartered in Chęciny's Franciscan monastery.¹ By the end of 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) charged with organizing Jewish labor had been established with J.W. Rajz as its chairman. The local Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) statistics for 1940 indicate 145 Jews laboring in Chęciny and 195 in camps outside the town. On June 24, 1940, 250 Jewish youths were sent to a labor camp in Cieszanów (Distrikt Lublin).²

In February 1940, all Jewish property that had not been registered with the new administration was subjected to confiscation as "ownerless." Subsequently, non-Jewish trustees took over Jewish businesses, and although Jews remained officially the owners, they received only a fraction of any profits. This caused many to sell their stores and turn to black marketeering. In 1940, of 235 businesses in Chęciny, 209 belonged to Jews and 26 to Poles. By 1941, Jewish-owned businesses numbered only 100.



Group portrait of the Chęciny ghetto's Judenrat, ca. 1941–1942. USHMM WS #77501, COURTESY OF YVA

In the spring of 1940, several dozen Jews from Chęciny were murdered in the forest near Zamkowa Góra. By June 1940, the number of local Jews was 2,800, but about 1,000 refugees had arrived in the town. In January 1941, only 630 refugees were reportedly living in Chęciny.

On March 11, 1941, a local branch of the JSS was set up in Chęciny to take over the job of providing welfare from the Judenrat. Chaired by Jakub-Ber Laks, it opened a soup kitchen on May 15, 1941, that served 440 Jews, each receiving one meal every other day.³

The economic situation of the Jews worsened significantly in April 1941, following the establishment of an enclosed ghetto in Kielce. As the JSS put it, Kielce was "the only source of income" for Chęciny's tradesmen. This also coincided with a ban on Chęciny Jews leaving the town due to a typhus epidemic and several weeks of Jewish conscription for forced labor in nearby quarries. About 150 Jews worked in Chęciny in 1941, and the same number worked in nearby labor camps.⁴

Planning for the establishment of a ghetto in Chęciny began in January 1941, as part of an envisaged population exchange of 5,000 Jews from Kielce to Chęciny and 2,500 Poles in the other direction. In May, however, the German authorities reported that its implementation had been delayed due to the typhus epidemic, as there had been further new cases in April.⁵

The order for the establishment of the ghetto was issued on July 5, 1941, and the resettlement had been largely completed by July 22. Key streets entering and exiting the ghetto were blocked by gates that could be opened (*Schlagbäume*), and others were blocked off completely. Signs were also put up around the ghetto warning: "Jewish Residential District—Entrance without a Pass Forbidden." However, the enclosure of the ghetto with a 3-meter-high (9.8-foot-high) wooden fence initially was delayed, due to a shortage of suitable materials. Established within the ghetto were a separate Jewish post office and a 14-man Jewish police force, commanded by Henryk Gotlib and subordinated to the Judenrat and the Gendarmerie.⁶

A letter dated July 17, 1941, from the JSS to the Kraków central office, notes that the establishment of the ghetto had “left over 1,000 Jews on the streets with no roof above their heads and without a warm meal for five days.” It had also affected all local Jews, who sustained themselves by bartering with residents in nearby villages.⁷

The ghetto, measuring just over 7 hectares (17.3 acres), was located in the eastern part of Chęciny and composed of 113 mostly single-story houses. Its borders were Kielce, Łokietek, Plac 2 Czerwca, Radkowska, and Szkolna Streets. The synagogue, inhabited by refugees, was the ghetto’s central point. Most Jews were already living within the ghetto limits, but some had to relocate there, leaving most of their belongings behind. Poles were forced to evacuate the area, and some complained about the loss of barns required for their livestock.

Initially, the ghetto had a total of around 3,600 residents. As the number of reported newcomers actually declined from 630 in January to only 547 in August 1941, it appears that plans to transfer a large number of Jews from Kielce to Chęciny were probably abandoned, following warnings of overcrowding in the Chęciny ghetto and the difficulties faced in expanding its area.⁸

Despite a wooden fence surrounding the ghetto and gates that closed its entrances, its Jews were able to leave at first by obtaining a municipality permit for 5 złoty authorizing travel as far as Kielce. Poles also continued to enter the Chęciny ghetto, despite the signs. There is no information regarding the forces that guarded the entrances, but only Polish and Jewish Police were stationed in Chęciny. The task of the Jewish Police was to enforce German orders. Gotlib reportedly abused fellow Jews with frequency. Following the ghetto’s complete closure in February 1942, the German Gendarmerie—which then reportedly guarded the ghetto externally—shot Jews without warning. There were few fatalities, but several dozen Jews were wounded on attempting to leave the ghetto.

Ghetto residents performed forced labor tasks that included road construction, cleaning, and quarry work near Chęciny. Those who could afford to do so paid the poor to assume their conscript duties. By October 1941, there were only 24 Jewish businesses still operating.⁹

A second typhus epidemic broke out in October 1941. In February 1942, when the overcrowded Kielce hospital denied admission to any more Jews from Chęciny, the German authorities declared the ghetto to be quarantined. On the Kreis doctor’s order, two isolation houses were set up for 150 family members of the 30 sick Jews. The JSS reports indicate that the quarantine hit traders the hardest, who until then had still been able to sneak out of the ghetto for business purposes. In total, there were 62 cases of typhus in 1940–1941 and 78 in 1941–1942.¹⁰

In April 1942, the Judenrat was ordered to select 500 Jews for a labor deportation. Those selected were the poorest. They were sent to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna. Another source reports an additional 105 men being sent to the same camp in June 1942. But the August issue of *Gazeta Żydowska* reported only a total of 500

Chęciny Jews laboring in Skarżysko, in nearby quarries (Miedzianka, Rykoszyn, Siedlce, Sitkówka), and in Chęciny itself.

By September 1942, the number of ghetto inmates exceeded 4,000 due to the arrival of 919 Jews from Łopuszno. Jews living in Korzecko, Piekoszów, and Zajączków were also transferred to Chęciny, at some time in 1942 before September.¹¹

Under the command of Kielce’s Gendarmerie chief, Gerulf Mayer, the Chęciny ghetto was liquidated on September 12, 1942. Chęciny’s Jews were chased out onto the market square, formed into marching columns, and escorted 7 kilometers (4.4 miles) to the Wolica train station. Several dozen were shot along the way. From Wolica they were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.

The Germans left behind 40 Jews unfit for travel; all were shot on September 14, 1942, and buried in a nearby field. A separate group of approximately 30 Jews (policemen, Judenrat members, and young laborers) was left in the ghetto to search for valuables and other property, which was collected in the synagogue. A few from this group managed to escape. Kielce Gendarmes then shot the remaining Jews in December 1942. Following the final liquidation of the remnant ghetto, the German authorities auctioned off some of the possessions collected. They had already confiscated the synagogue and three prayer houses at the end of November as “ownerless property.”¹²

SOURCES The ghetto in Chęciny is described in E. Kosik and S. Meducki, “Martyrologia Żydów chęcińskich w latach 1939–1942,” *BŻIH*, nos. 1–2 (1986): 87–95; and Agnieszka Sabor, *Sztetl: Śladami żydowskich miasteczek: Działoszyce–Pińczów–Czmielnik–Szydłów–Chęciny: Przewodnik* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Austeria, 2005), pp. 152–153.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/294 [AJDC] and 211/296–298 [JSS]); IPN; USHMM (RG-15.031M, reels 2 and 13; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; and Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 18); and YVA (M-1/Q/64 and 65).

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NOTES

1. Marian Paulewicz, “Osadnictwo żydowskie w Chęcinach,” *BŻIH*, no. 2 (1975): 25–28; Sabor, *Sztetl*, pp. 152–153; Kosik and Meducki, “Martyrologia Żydów,” pp. 87–88.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/294, pp. 2–3; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 18, 211/296, p. 29; *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 28, 1942; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson Gale/Keter, 2007), 4:585.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/294, p. 7; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 18, 211/296, pp. 1, 8, 15, 20; Kosik and Meducki, “Martyrologia Żydów,” pp. 88–89; *Gazeta Żydowska*, April 8, 1942.
4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 18, 211/296, pp. 12, 16, 29.
5. *Ibid.*, RG-15.031M (IPN, Stadt- und Kreishauptmann Kielce), reel 13, file 129, letters dated January 23 and May 5, 1941.
6. *Ibid.*, correspondence July 5, 22, and 27, 1941.
7. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 18, 211/296, pp. 51–55; 211/298, p. 32; Sabor, *Sztetl*, p. 153.

8. USHMM, RG-15.031M, reel 13, file 129, Stadtverwaltung Chęciny to Kreishauptmann, August 8, 1941. This letter warns that at most 500 to 600 Jews (in exchange for 300 Poles) could be accommodated but advises against it.

9. Kosik and Meducki, "Martyrologia Żydów," pp. 90–91; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 18; 211/296, pp. 22, 29; and 211/297, pp. 16, 39.

10. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 18, 211/298, pp. 8, 21–22, 32.

11. Kosik and Meducki, "Martyrologia Żydów," pp. 90–92; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 4:586; *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 28, 1942.

12. Kosik and Meducki, "Martyrologia Żydów," pp. 94–95; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo kieleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1980), p. 43; and USHMM, RG-15.031M, reel 2, file 4a, p. 11.

CHMIELNIK

Pre-1939: Chmielnik, city, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Busko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Chmielnik is located about 25 kilometers (16 miles) south of Kielce, on the crossroads between Sandomierz, which lies to the east, and Silesia to the west. On the eve of World War II, there were about 6,000 Jews in the city.

On September 5, 1939, a German military unit entered Chmielnik. Soon a wave of killings began that lasted for three days and took approximately 70 lives.¹ The abuse of Jews, their arrest for forced labor, and widespread plunder characterized the new regime from the start.

During the first week of the occupation, the German commander selected Avraham Langvald and ordered him to set up a Jewish Council (Judenrat). It consisted of 18 Jews in addition to Langvald.²

The Judenrat set up a labor division, led by David Zaltsman and Efrayim Zaltsburg. The Judenrat was obligated to provide the Germans with the requested number of workers, as well as paying their wages. As the work was very hard, and accompanied by denigration and abuse, the Judenrat had difficulty in meeting the required quota of workers each day.

According to the administrative organization of the Generalgouvernement, Chmielnik was in Kreis Busko, within Distrikt Radom. After the occupation of the city, a small unit of the Gendarmerie was stationed there that was subordinated to the SS and Police Leader (SSPF) in Kielce, Ernst Thomas. Werner Munde was head of the local Gendarmerie. The handful of Gendarmes who served in the city could be bribed easily.³

In the summer of 1940, the Germans transferred about 1,150 Jews from various places, including Glinica and Łódź, to Chmielnik, in addition to many refugees who had been driven out of the western areas of Poland that the Germans had annexed to the Reich. The number of Jews in the city increased to about 7,000.

Hundreds of Jews were sent to work in Pacanów, Busko-Zdrój, and Radawiec (near Lublin); a large group was sent to Biała Podlaska, not far from the Soviet border. Due to reports about the harsh conditions, everyone tried to avoid these work details, and the Judenrat did not succeed in enlisting the required number of laborers. At that time, the second half of 1940, a Jewish police force was established, in part to enlist Jewish workers. Moshe Pasternak was appointed head of the Jewish Police; his deputy was Levi Guntsheroski.⁴

In April 1941, a ghetto was set up in Chmielnik, as in most of the towns in Distrikt Radom, and the Jews had to leave their homes and move in there. The ghetto remained open; however, Jews were forbidden to leave it from the beginning, unless they were laborers reporting for work under the supervision of the Jewish Police. Hundreds of refugees arrived; at the end of 1941, the number of Jews concentrated in the city had reached 8,000. The overcrowding was severe, and living conditions continued to deteriorate.

Since most of the refugees arrived lacking all material possessions, the Judenrat, now led by Shmuel Zaltsman, organized an aid council for the refugees. The organization known as Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), which was based in Kraków, transferred funds to the Chmielnik Jewish Council, and a public kitchen was opened in the city to provide food to the hungry on a daily basis. The council also took care of an orphanage in which there were 300 children.

Because of the overcrowding and poverty caused by the relocation into the ghetto, a typhus epidemic broke out, and over 100 Jews died within a few months. With the help of the organization known as the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population in Poland, or Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce (TOZ), the Judenrat opened a hospital and a sanatorium with 400 beds, employing doctors and nurses who also cared for Jews living in the vicinity. The sustenance of the city's Jews was based primarily on trade with the surrounding villages; as time went on, many Jews left the ghetto to sell personal and household items in exchange for food.⁵

In the summer of 1941, workshops were opened in the ghetto for tailors, carpenters, cobblers, upholsterers, and leather workers. The authorities encouraged the Judenrat to open small businesses whose products could aid the Reich's war effort, and the Judenrat convinced the Jews that it was better to work in factories in the city than to be sent to work outside.

At the end of August 1942, news came to Chmielnik about the liquidation of the Jewish community in Kielce; in addition, rumors spread about the extermination camps in the Lublin region and the deportation of the Jews of Warsaw to the Treblinka death camp. In September, when reliable reports replaced the rumors, many Jews began seeking hiding places with Poles in the surrounding area, and hundreds of Jews left the city.⁶

On October 1, 1942, 1,200 women and young men were sent to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna, and 40 Jews were sent to the HASAG Granat camp in Kielce. On October 3, 1,270 Jews who had been deported from the surrounding settlements were transferred to

Chmielnik, and it seemed that the deportation of the Jews of Chmielnik was imminent.⁷

The main deportation of Jews from Chmielnik began on October 5, 1942, when units of SS arrived in the city with an auxiliary force of Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Latvians, commanded by Hans Gaier, head of the Schupo in Kielce. The units that arrived in the city to conduct the deportation Aktion were part of Sonderkommando Feucht, which was established in June 1942 in Radom with the task of carrying out the liquidation of the Jews in Distrikt Radom. The next day, October 6, around 5:00 A.M., gunshots were heard, and Germans armed with rifles and clubs, and accompanied by dogs, swarmed through the streets of the city. With the help of the Jewish Police, the Jews were summoned to present themselves at the livestock market (*Targowica*), located about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the city, near the forest on the road to Szydłów, by 8:00 A.M. The Germans threatened to shoot anyone who delayed, hid, or disobeyed the order, and masses of Jews began leaving their houses for the streets. At the same time, the Germans began carrying out searches in the Jewish houses and shooting the elderly, the sick, and anyone who was found hiding.⁸

At precisely 8:00 A.M., the thousands of Jews who had gathered at the assembly point were ordered to arrange themselves in straight lines. Parents with small children were forced to carry their children in their arms. The Germans walked around with baskets in their hands and ordered the Jews to hand over whatever money, gold, and jewelry they had in their possession. The plundering continued for several hours. There were Jews who were forced to strip so their bodies could be searched. Many were shot, and a number of women who could not bear the situation took their own lives. At 2:00 P.M., the Germans began carrying out a selection, and the head of the Gendarmerie in Chmielnik passed among the Jews with a list of craftsmen. Masses of people threw themselves at him at once to request their inclusion on the list, and because of the chaos that had broken out, the Germans began beating the Jews to restore order. The commander of the Gendarmerie in Chmielnik decided that craftsmen with children and families would not be allowed to remain. Out of thousands of Jews, the Germans selected 72 men and women and instructed them to stand to one side.⁹

From the afternoon to the small hours of the morning, groups of between 1,500 and 2,000 Jews were brought on foot from the assembly point in Chmielnik to the town of Chęciny, about 45 kilometers (28 miles) away, accompanied by guards from the evacuation force. During the course of the day, the Germans and their auxiliaries murdered about 500 Jews, among them Shmuel Zaltsman, head of the Judenrat. There were also some people who collapsed on the way to Chęciny—those who could not keep up with the required pace were shot. Hundreds of corpses were left strewn by the roadside. Those who arrived in Chęciny were brought to a halt near the train station, and when the train arrived, the Germans squeezed between 120 and 130 people into each car and sent them to the Treblinka extermination camp.¹⁰

The local Gendarmerie moved the 72 Jews who had been left in the livestock market back to Chmielnik. They were brought to the former Jewish community building and confined there under guard for the whole night. On the next day, October 7, the women in the group were sent to clean the offices of the Gendarmerie, and the men were sent into the ghetto area and to the livestock market to gather the dead and bury them in the Jewish cemetery in Chmielnik. Not long afterwards several hundred of the Jews of the town who had hidden outside the city before and during the deportation returned to Chmielnik. Despite their fear that they would all be shot, the Germans managed to gather all of them in Pasternak's house on Furmańska Street, where the Jewish Police had previously been located. There, a sort of small ghetto was formed in which there were close to 700 Jews. A communal kitchen was opened, and Leon Korallnik was appointed head of the Judenrat. Scores of Jews went daily to work in places far from the city. They were primarily employed digging ditches and carrying loads. They returned broken and demoralized in the evenings. Those who remained in the ghetto worked emptying the remaining contents of the Jewish houses. Some of them managed to sell various objects to the peasants who came from the surrounding area.¹¹

A month later, on November 5, 1942, a second deportation Aktion was carried out. With the exception of 75 Jews whom the Germans left in the city, hundreds of Jews were put on wagons hitched to horses; the caravan traveled to Stopnica, about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) from Chmielnik. They were supposed to then be transported to Treblinka. Many Jews escaped on the way to Stopnica. About 200 returned to Chmielnik, and others found refuge with Poles or in the forests. Some of the Jews who remained in the city were sent to forced labor in the HASAG Granat camp in Kielce. At the beginning of December 1942, the last Jews were deported from Chmielnik to Sandomierz. The few Jews who remained in Chmielnik after the third deportation lived together and worked performing various services in the local station of the Gendarmerie.¹²

Among the hundreds of Jews in Chmielnik who sought refuge with Poles living in the surrounding towns and villages, many fell into traps that the Poles laid for them. Some were handed over to the Germans, and others went from one Pole to another, trying to convince someone to hide them. Despite the danger that threatened the lives of those who gave food or refuge to Jews, there were a number of acts of rescue in the vicinity of Chmielnik that saved the lives of scores of Jews. One particularly notable act of rescue was performed by Stanisław Kaszuba, his wife, and their children Ryszard, Stefan, and Daniela. In the course of eight months—until the liberation of the city in January 1945—they hid eight Jews from the Shor and Kozłowski families in their house.¹³

SOURCES Information specifically on the Chmielnik ghetto and the destruction of the Jews of Chmielnik can be found in the following three publications: Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7 *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999); Suzan E. Hagstrom, *Sara's*

Children: The Destruction of Chmielnik (Spotsylvania, VA: Sergean Kirkland's Press, 2001); and Adam Neuman-Nowicki, *Struggle for Life during the Nazi Occupation of Poland*, trans. Sharon Stambovsky Strosberg (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998). There is also the important published source: Ephraim Shedletski, ed., *Pinkes Kbmeylnik: Yizker-bukh nokh der borev-gevorener Yidisber kebile* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Hmyelnik be-Yisrael, 1960).

The following primary sources from the Yad Vashem Archives (YVA) were used in preparing this entry—TR-17/83; M-1/E/2364; M-1/Q/69; M-1/E/902/763; as well as file A.520 from the Moreshet Archives (MA), Giv'at Haviva.

Sara Bender
trans. Andrew Koss

NOTES

1. Menashe Montzash, "In di yorn fun der Hitler okupatsye," p. 727; Yehoshuah Shteinfeld, p. 741—both in Shedletski, *Pinkes Kbmeylnik*. Also see YVA, TR-17/83, p. 31.
2. Montzash, in Shedletski, *Pinkes Kbmeylnik*, p. 728.
3. Israel Feingold, p. 706; Montzash, p. 731—both in Shedletski, *Pinkes Kbmeylnik*. Also see Hagstrom, *Sara's Children*, p. 58.
4. Shedletski, *Pinkes Kbmeylnik*, p. 730.
5. Neuman-Nowicki, *Struggle for Life*, pp. 34–35.
6. Mapeh, in Shedletski, *Pinkes Kbmeylnik*, p. 715; MA, A.272, testimony of Tovah Mali, p. 2.
7. YVA, M-1/E/2364, Kleinhendler testimony, p. 2. Also see "Kach Nikhrevah Ayarati," p. 698; Ya'akov Lemberg, "Fun aktsyeh tsu aktsyeh," p. 751—both in Shedletski, *Pinkes Kbmeylnik*.
8. Artur Kleinhendler, "Di 72 nokh der aktsyeh," p. 747; Shteinfeld, p. 745; Mapeh, p. 715—all in Shedletski, *Pinkes Kbmeylnik*.
9. Shteinfeld, p. 746; Kleinhendler, p. 748—both in *ibid*.
10. Shteinfeld, p. 746; Lemberg, p. 752; Kleinhendler, p. 749; "Kach Nikhrevah Ayarati," p. 700—all in *ibid*.
11. "Kach Nikhrevah Ayarati," p. 702; Rivkeh Sametband-Mal, "In kamf farn lebn," p. 762; Feingold, p. 710; Mapeh, p. 716; Lemberg, p. 745—all in *ibid*.
12. Z. Lederman, "Pruvn fun vidershtand," in *ibid*, p. 743.
13. Klaynhert, pp. 813–818; Alteh Shor, "In gerangl farn lebn fun mayn mishpokhe," pp. 824–827—both in *ibid*. Also see YVA, M-31/5826.

CIEPIELÓW

Pre-1939: Ciepielów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Ciepielow, Kreis Ilza (later Kreis Starachowice), Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Ciepielów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The village of Ciepielów is located 32 kilometers (20 miles) southeast of Radom. When Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, Ciepielów had 450 Jewish residents (85 families).¹

In mid-September, a number of Jews from Lipsk and Zwoleń, whose houses had been burned down during the in-

vasion, settled in Ciepielów; they were followed by deportees from the city of Łódź. By April 1940, there were 580 Jews in Ciepielów, 130 of them newcomers. Despite the influx of new arrivals during the first years of the occupation, Ciepielów's Jews continued to live under tolerable conditions without excessive persecution by the German authorities.²

The Germans set up a Jewish Council (Judenrat) to implement their new laws and instructions. The members of the Judenrat included: Lejzor Zylbiergiel (chairman), Fiszal Bluma, M. Korman, Icek Cukier, and Moszek Kirszenbaum. The latter was also a chairman of the town's short-lived self-help committee. Its closure in April 1940 was purportedly connected to allegations against Kirszenblum of pocketing profits made by selling goods intended for distribution among the poor free of charge. Complaints reached the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw and Radom's Judenrat, resulting in an inspection. Afterwards, the Judenrat's social section was again in charge of Jewish welfare in Ciepielów.³

From the onset of the occupation, Ciepielów's Jews were conscripted for forced labor. In April 1940, approximately 160 men (aged 12 to 60) were alternately conscripted three days a week for a full day of unpaid work. This action quickly drained the community's savings, as the men were barely able to feed themselves.

Until June 1940, the Judenrat provided the Łódź deportees with limited financial support, until it was unable to continue doing so. It then assigned them instead to local families that were still well situated and were able to provide them with sustenance. These deportees were housed in private apartments, one room per family. The Judenrat also endeavored to find work for them. In January 1941, those employed received 3.20 złoty per day.

Apart from the deportees, the Judenrat also took care of Jewish refugees, as approximately 20 people were reported as passing through Ciepielów on any particular day. The Judenrat directed those in need to wealthier families for soup or other limited assistance. With Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) support, two separate apartments for male and female refugees were provided.

At the beginning of 1941, the number of Jews in Ciepielów declined slightly to 531; however, none of them had been sent to labor camps or to work assignments outside the Kreis. The Judenrat assessed 397 women, children, and elderly as unable to work. Only 25 Jews—mostly cobblers and tailors—were still permitted to keep their workshops open, employing a total of 37 Jews.

In fear of an epidemic, the German authorities ordered the community to construct a delousing facility that the poor could use free of charge. Most of Ciepielów's Jews were also vaccinated for typhoid and dysentery. Yet despite the precautions, cases of illnesses emerged in 1941. A local doctor treated the town's Jews, charging the Judenrat half price for his services.⁴

A JSS was established to assume from the Judenrat the provision of aid to poor Jews. The Starachowice Kreis committee set up its branch in Ciepielów on June 7, 1941, with Icek Goldbard as the chairman, Berek Sendkowitz as his deputy, and

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Mechel Cukier as the committee's third member. They opened a soup kitchen in November 1941.⁵

On the orders of Kreishauptmann Zettelmeyer, an open ghetto was established in Ciepiałów on December 6, 1941.⁶ Ghetto residents were permitted to leave it for work and to obtain food in the daylight hours.⁷ By February 1942, 531 Jews inhabited the ghetto.

The ghetto in Ciepiałów was liquidated on October 24, 1942.⁸ SS officers ordered all of Ciepiałów's Jews to gather in the market square, where approximately 50 men and women were selected and sent to the Dęblin-Stawa labor camp. The remaining 550 to 600 Jews were sent to the ghetto in the village of Tarłów, where thousands of Jews from nearby towns were being assembled.⁹

The Tarłów ghetto was liquidated on October 29, 1942: all its inhabitants were taken on carts to the Jasice train station and from there to the Treblinka extermination camp.¹⁰

A punitive expedition composed of approximately 30 German soldiers commanded by Birner arrived in Ciepiałów following the ghetto's liquidation. It took up quarters in the Ciepiałów Stary manor (known as Ciepiałów Górka) and conducted roundups of partisans and ghetto escapees. On December 6, 1942, this expedition murdered 21 Poles and two Jews in Ciepiałów Stary. The families of Kosior, Kowalski, and Obuchowicz (Obuchiewicz) were burned alive in their houses for helping escaped Jews. The names of the two murdered Jews are unknown. All the victims were buried in the same grave, in a field near the razed houses. That same day, the expedition burned another 10 Poles in neighboring Rękówka. Relatives and coincidental visitors of the Kosiors in Ciepiałów Stary were also burned to death for helping Jews. This did not deter Stanisława Lewandowska, a neighbor of the Kowalski and Obuchowicz families, from protecting Dawid Semkowicz, who later migrated to Israel.

Following the executions, the Germans warned that the death penalty for helping Jews will apply not only to a family hiding them but also to the village elder. In the course of the December 1942 and January 1943 roundups, more Jews—and the Poles suspected of sheltering them—were captured. The Germans brought the victims to their quarters in Ciepiałów Górka to torture, execute, and bury them on the estate's grounds. They also murdered all Roma hiding in the vicinity, including a Polish man named Kupczyk who had given them shelter. In retaliation, Polish partisans killed some German Gendarmes and a local ethnic German, Antoni Potrząsaj, who had betrayed some Jews in hiding.¹¹

SOURCES The Ciepiałów ghetto is mentioned briefly in Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja, 1979), p. 138.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AOKBZH w Kielcach, Sygn, Ds 85/69; AŻIH (210/303

[AJDC], 211/276 [ŻSS]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 17; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. Adam Pekalla, "Zespół synagogałny w Ciepiałowie," *BŻIH*, nos. 1–2 (1988): 115–120; Krzysztof Urbański, *Almanach gmin żydowskich województwa kieleckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach: FPHU, "XYZ," 2007), pp. 31–32; Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 161 (table 12), 180–181; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).

2. Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 418; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).

3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 17; and Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC). Kirszenbaum was presumably excluded from the Judenrat, as his name does not appear in later documents.

4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 17; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).

5. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 108; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 17.

6. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 85; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 116, 150; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 261; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 138.

7. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 418.

8. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 161–162 (table 12), 180–181.

9. Spector and Wigoder, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life*, p. 261; and Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 138. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 418, mention the "Demblin-Stawa" labor camp, which presumably was located in or around the nearby town of Dęblin.

10. Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), pp. 136–137; Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 161–162 (table 12), 180–181.

11. The sources differ as to the type of forces (Schupo, SS, or Gendarmerie—it was probably the 1st Motorized Gendarmerie Bataillon) and the number murdered on December 6, 1942 (33 to 35): Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna, eds., *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej: Polacy z pomocą Żydom, 1939–1945* (Kraków: Znak, 1969), pp. 862–865; Waclaw Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity* (Washington, DC: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), entries 107–110, and 418, pp. 138–139, and 213; A. Jankowski, L. Kaczanowski, and S. Meducki, "Terror hitlerowski na wsi kieleckiej: Wybór dokumentów źródłowych z AOKBZH w Kielcach," *Rocznik Świętokrzyski* 15 (1988): 73–75; A. Jankowski, "Pacyfikacje i terror na wsi na Kielecczyźnie 1939–1945," *Rocznik Świętokrzyski* (1988): 24; Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, Główna Komisja Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo radomskie* (Warsaw, 1980), pp. 34–36, 156; and Barbara Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twarłych* (Warsaw: ABC, 1997), pp. 233–234.

ĆMIELÓW

Pre-1939: Ćmielów (Chmielów), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Chmielów, Kreis Opatów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Ćmielów województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Ćmielów is located 82 kilometers (51 miles) southwest of Lublin and northeast of the town of Opatów. In the fall of 1939, on the outbreak of World War II, about 500 to 600 Jews were living in Ćmielów.

Beginning in September 1939, the German occupation imposed the same restrictions on Ćmielów's Jews as in other parts of Distrikt Radom. The Jewish Council (Judenrat) was forced to pay monetary "contributions" to the Germans, and the community was brought to the brink of its economic existence. The situation worsened when refugees from other towns started to arrive in Ćmielów in December 1939. On May 1, 1940, the Ćmielów Jewish Council reported to the office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw that about 1,000 Jews were living in the town, among them a group of 128 Jews from Konin, Golin, and Warta. These Jews were assigned to live with local families, and this resulted in

considerable overcrowding, with entire families having to live in one room. None of the Jews had a chance to make a living, and the situation was especially grim for the refugees, who had arrived hungry and without a penny in their pockets. German authorities had requested that public baths be built, and the Jewish community had no funds to pay the estimated 4,500 złoty needed for this construction. The Jewish community also had to provide bed linen, towels, and other textiles for the opening of a hospital for infectious diseases. These expenses were a severe burden on the community.¹

At that time, Abraham Gutman was the chairman of the Jewish Council, and Icek Brykam was his deputy. Other members of the Judenrat were Izrael Maleman, Lejnus Frydental, Jankiel Frydman, Icek Erlichzon, Szmul Kohn, and Chil Goldman. H. Wajgenszperg, who inspected the Ćmielów Jewish community in June 1940, reported that the chairman Gutman was not well liked within the community and that the other members of the council did not trust him.² Even without these problems, the Jewish community faced harsh conditions: 268 people aged between 16 and 60 had to report for forced labor, and each day about 130 were actually sent out to work. Their tasks involved mainly cleaning the streets and public areas of Ćmielów, road construction, work in the porcelain factory, and hard labor in a quarry.³ For the work in the quarry, which took place from the summer of 1940 to the summer of 1942 and was part of the "Otto" program, dedicated to improving the roads and railway traffic, the Jews were paid 20 złoty per week and a few kilograms of bread.⁴ According to research by Robert Seidel, in February 1941, a labor camp was established to employ Jews in building dikes under the supervision of the Water Regulation Administration (Wasserwirtschaftsverwaltung) of Distrikt Radom. The camp in Ćmielów was the second of its kind in the Distrikt,⁵ but it is not clear whether local Jews also were exploited in this camp.

Especially harsh was the situation of the deportees who had arrived in Ćmielów from other towns. In July 1940, they sent a report stating that they had not received any help from the local Jews except for housing and that they had to substitute for the Ćmielów Jews who were assigned to forced labor. They accused Gutman of withholding money and deliveries of food sent for their support. According to their statement, they had refused to go to work unless they were paid by the Jewish Council and were eventually paid for a few days, but the payment was soon discontinued.⁶

No doubt the situation of the Jewish community was critical, and food deliveries did not ease the situation very much. Organizations like the AJDC and Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) tried to help by sending money for the soup kitchen and food. For instance, in July 1940, the Jewish Council received 52 kilograms (115 pounds) of grits, 9 kilograms (20 pounds) of sugar, 46 kilograms (101 pounds) of flour, 6 kilograms (13 pounds) of lard, and 13 cans of condensed milk from the AJDC's Kreis Radom Inspectorate.⁷ Still, the impoverishment of the Jews increased rapidly. In February 1941, the Ćmielów soup kitchen had to provide food for 106 people,



A Jewish youth, Toivia Grunbaum (Teddy Greenbaum), peers out the window of a soup kitchen in Ćmielów, 1941. The small, faded sign in Polish above Toivia's head reads, "Kitchen."

USHMM WS #78932, COURTESY OF TEDDY GREENBAUM

most of them refugees. In March it provided meals for 171 refugees.⁸ Especially grim was the situation of a group of Jewish deportees from Vienna. Although the Viennese Jewish Community tried to send money and food for their support, the German authorities did not permit its transmission.⁹ The survival of the refugees depended completely on the Ćmielów Jews, whose funds were exhausted.¹⁰ To supplement meager food supplies, some Jewish youths would remove their Jewish Stars and sneak out into the fields to steal vegetables.¹¹

A ghetto was erected in Ćmielów on June 1, 1942, following an order issued in mid-May by Nazi Kreishauptmann Ritter.¹² The Ćmielów ghetto was enclosed, and about 900 to 1,500 people had to live there under very overcrowded conditions. A typhus epidemic broke out and claimed many lives. The Ćmielów ghetto was liquidated in the second half of October 1942.¹³ In the months prior to its liquidation, or possibly at the time of the deportation Aktion, a number of male and female Jewish youths were selected for labor, with some being sent to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) forced labor camp at Skarżysko Kamienna. A few of the small number of survivors from the Ćmielów ghetto passed through this camp.¹⁴

According to one source, 24 people were killed during the liquidation Aktion and were buried at the Jewish cemetery. The remaining Jews were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp by train, and the ghetto itself was destroyed.

Afterwards, in January 1943, a camp was set up in Ćmielów, which served as a remnant ghetto for Jews who had escaped the liquidation Aktion in October and were caught or who had tried to survive in hiding. It is not known when this camp was dissolved and what happened to its inmates.¹⁵

SOURCES The most important sources on the Jewish community and the ghetto in Ćmielów include Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 420–421; Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006); and Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007). The Ćmielów ghetto is listed in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 149.

Archival sources on the fate of the Jews of Ćmielów during the Holocaust include the following: USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC], 210/312; and RG-10.369 and 376); and VHF (e.g., # 7759, 19286, and 44455).

Evelyn Zegenhagen

NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, letter of Jewish Council to AJDC, May 1, 1940; and VHF, # 19286, testimony of Esther Tabatchnik, a Jewish refugee from Konin, who arrived in Ćmielów in December 1939.

2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, report of inspection of the Jewish Council in Ćmielów by the secretary of the Jewish Council in Ostrów, June 11, 1940.

3. *Ibid.*; and VHF, # 7759, testimony of Teddy Greenbaum.
4. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 154.
5. Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, p. 206, based on Józef Marszałek, *Obozy pracy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 1988), pp. 37–38.
6. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH—AJDC), 210/312, report of deportees from Konin and Golin, July 23, 1940.
7. *Ibid.*, AJDC, Distrikt Radom Inspectorate, to Jewish Council in Ćmielów, July 12, 1940.
8. *Ibid.*, activity report, February and March 1941.
9. *Ibid.*, AJDC to Komitee der Wiener Juden in Ćmielów, June 18, 1941, and Dr. Josef Israel Löwenherz, Amts-Direktion der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde in Wien, to JSS in Ćmielów, August 26, 1941.
10. *Ibid.*, JSS Ćmielów to AJDC Kraków, September 3, 1941.
11. VHF, # 19286.
12. According to Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 420–421. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 149, date the ghetto's establishment in early 1942.
13. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 149, give the date of October 16; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 420–421, the end of October 1942.
14. VHF, # 44455, testimony of Arie Greenbaum; and # 19286.
15. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 420–421.

CZĘSTOCHOWA

Pre-1939: Częstochowa (Yiddish: Tsbenstokhov), city, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1940–1944: Tschenstochau, Kreisfreie Stadt, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Częstochowa, województwo śląskie, Poland

Częstochowa is located about 200 kilometers (124 miles) southwest of Warsaw. In 1939, there were 28,486 Jews living in Częstochowa out of a total population of 130,000.¹

German motorized units entered Częstochowa on September 3, 1939. On the next day, later referred to as “Bloody Monday,” a three-day assault was unleashed on the Jewish population. The attacks were marked by the murder of 300 Jews and widespread looting. Jewish economic life was paralyzed, and the community’s cultural, social, and political life was totally disrupted. A series of repressive measures were put in place, including an 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. curfew, kidnapping for forced labor, seizure of personal and business property, collective fines (“contributions”), evictions from the better apartments, and compulsory wearing of the Jewish badges (“the marks of shame”).²

On September 19, 1939, the German authorities ordered the establishment of a 15-member Judenrat, headed by Leon Kopinski. As it sought to cope with German demands, the Judenrat constantly expanded. By December 1940, it had 21 departments with a staff of senior and junior officials that to-



View of Koźia Street, situated in the center of the former "small ghetto" at Częstochowa, ca. 1944.
USHMM WS #08791, COURTESY OF BIBLIOTEKA PUBLICZNA W CZĘSTOCHOWIE

taled 676 people. The Judenrat's enforcement of German decrees—confiscation of Jewish possessions, recruitment for forced labor, arbitrary investigations and arrests, and transfers to labor camps—led to a thoroughly negative attitude toward it on the part of the Jewish population.³

Alongside the Judenrat, a Jewish police force was established, originally tasked as "Inspectors of Street Traffic." The policemen worked without pay. They guarded the Judenrat offices and warehouses, maintained order in the streets, and enforced the evening curfew. They initially numbered 50 men, but by December 1940 their number had increased to 80. Later an enlarged and tougher police force was created. Armed with rubber truncheons to enforce German orders, the Jewish Police fulfilled their duties with coercion, house searches, arrests, and beatings. They received a salary for their efforts and were said to include only the most unscrupulous people.

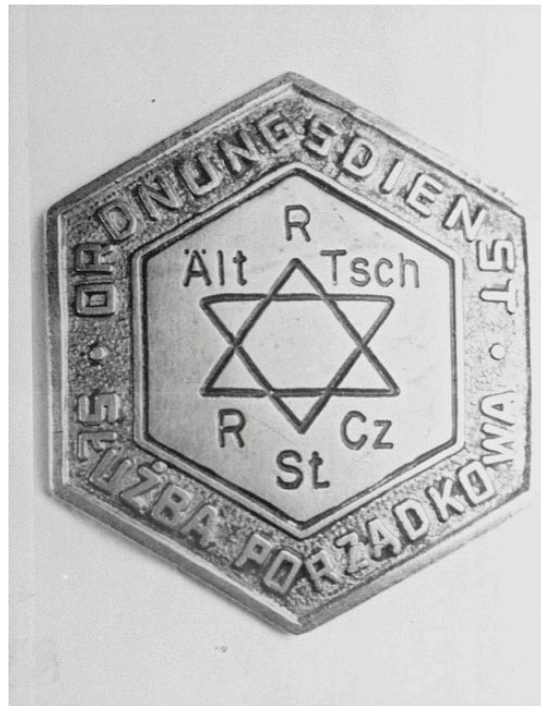
In August 1940, about 1,000 men aged 18 to 25 were sent to a forced labor camp in Cieszanów, Distrikt Lublin, where conditions were very harsh. Many others were sent subsequently to the camps run by Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG), the privately owned armaments manufacturer that operated in Częstochowa and elsewhere.⁴

Ghettoization in Częstochowa proceeded in stages. As soon as the Germans entered the city, they evicted Jews from the better and more comfortable residences and forced them to move together into a Jewish quarter. Jews were still permitted to do business with non-Jews, move about the city, and use the trains. The conversion of the Jewish quarter into a ghetto took place in April 1941. An order issued by Stadthauptmann SS-Brigadeführer Richard Wendler, established a ghetto on April 9, 1941, in the eastern, older part of the city. The ghetto consisted of 28 streets. All Poles were required to move out of the designated area by April 17; like the Jews who moved in, they were permitted to take with them only up to 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of luggage per person. The Jewish Council had to assign living space to the Jews moving into the ghetto.

By April 23 the resettlement was completed, and the ghetto was clearly delineated. Jews were now forbidden to leave the ghetto's confines without an official pass. Initially the penalty for disobeying this order was a fine of 10,000 złoty or imprisonment.⁵ Subsequently the death penalty was applied to those caught outside the ghetto illegally.

Business ties with the Polish population were forbidden. The Jews were completely isolated from all commercial, social, political, and cultural life. The numerous demands for forced contributions and repeated confiscations left them impoverished. Conditions of cold and hunger led to the spread of epidemic diseases.⁶

The ghetto was not enclosed by a fence, and certain designated streets still connected with the surrounding non-Jewish sectors of the city. The "Aryan" population was permitted to pass through these ghetto streets, but interaction with the Jews was illegal. Within the ghetto precincts, small shops and street vendors offered a limited supply of goods—clothing, buttons, a few food products, sweets, tea, and soap. Polish passersby would purchase small items, always on the lookout for policemen who would chase them off and, sometimes, seize the merchandise. Jewish individuals with specific skills—for example, fine tailors and shoemakers—were given monthly passes that allowed them to work on the Aryan side. Some



Metal badge of a Jewish policeman in the Częstochowa ghetto, 1942. In German and Polish, the abbreviation in the center of the badge reads, "Council of Elders, Częstochowa."

USHMM WS #08796, COURTESY OF BIBLIOTEKA PUBLICZNA W CZĘSTOCHOWIE

Jewish entrepreneurs formed silent partnerships with non-Jewish colleagues to continue their businesses outside the ghetto.⁷ Male Jews in the city were registered for forced labor by the Judenrat. The daily average of those taken rose steadily from 2,624 in 1940 to 7,597 in 1942. The Jewish Police escorted the forced laborers to and from various work sites outside the ghetto each day, especially the armaments factories on Krótka Street.⁸ The Judenrat also operated a workshop for carpenters to fill German orders.

The first ghetto, which subsequently came to be known as the “Large Ghetto,” existed up until the mass expulsions that took place between September 22 and October 8, 1942. During the course of its existence, about 20,000 Jews from other cities (e.g., Łódź, Płock, and Kraków) and towns (e.g., Łęczycza) were sent to the Częstochowa ghetto, which eventually held over 48,000 people. The refugees arrived with few if any personal belongings and in a state of exhaustion. They were housed in mass lodgings with no facilities for washing or cooking and were the first victims of typhus and other diseases. Hunger and hardship forced everyone onto the street to sell their remaining possessions for a bit of food. Life was a constant battle against starvation and cold, a struggle to survive until the longed-for defeat of the foe.⁹

One of the distinctive institutions of the ghetto was the Workers’ Council, a spontaneous movement of forced laborers. More well-to-do ghetto inhabitants avoided forced labor by paying the Judenrat a bribe, leaving the poorer strata to suffer the hardship of working as forced laborers. On May 12, 1940, the leaders of the Workers’ Council occupied the offices of the Judenrat and demanded relief from their burdens and suffering. The Judenrat partly acceded to their demands for a public kitchen and the distribution of bread. The Workers’ Council also instituted political, cultural, and professional activity through the establishment of a sickness fund, public kitchens, a mutual-aid society, a disabled workers fund, children’s homes, schools, evening courses, drama groups, and choirs. They also published *Rasta*, an illegal newspaper that was hostile to the Judenrat.¹⁰

In the winter of 1941–1942, the Jews were required to surrender all fur coats to the Germans for the benefit of the German army. Many Jews died of disease, hunger, and cold in this harsh winter. In May 1942, anticipating the mass deportations to come, the Germans seized and killed prominent Jewish cultural, social, and political activists.

The large-scale deportation Aktions from Częstochowa began on September 21–22, 1942. The SS and Police Leader (SSPF) in Radom, Dr. Herbert Böttcher, entrusted command of the Aktions to Hauptmann Paul Degenhardt, the commander of the Schupo in Częstochowa. In the night, SS and Ukrainian forces from Trawniki surrounded the ghetto and installed large searchlights. During the ensuing Aktions, these forces were supported by members of the local Schupo, Reservepolizei-Kompanie Köln, and more than 200 Polish (Blue) Police. In the morning of September 22, the Jews were forced out of their dwellings for a selection. About 7,000 were marched to the

railway ramp at Zawodzie and were taken to the Treblinka extermination camp. About 200 were shot during the roundup and another 300 selected for forced labor. The next Aktions took place on September 25–26 and September 29–30. The Jews assembled voluntarily, having received assurances that they would be going to the work camps, where the first group was happily settled. Another deportation on October 4 swept up almost all the members and families of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police. The last transport, on October 7, stopped in the small town of Koniecpol, where another 1,500 Jews were added to the train. Altogether between 33,000 and 40,000 Jews from Częstochowa were sent to Treblinka, and up to 2,000 were killed in the city during the roundups.¹¹ Several Jews from Częstochowa were retained as workers in Treblinka and subsequently participated in the Treblinka uprising.

After the deportations, the northeastern remnant of the ghetto, called the “Small Ghetto,” held about 5,000 able-bodied Jews. The Small Ghetto was located along Nadrzeczna, Kozia, Mostowa, Spadek, and Garncarska Streets. It was surrounded by barbed wire and had only one gate. Some of the workers sorted out the remaining Jewish property. Others worked in the HASAG factories and workshops. Those selected to remain as laborers were soon joined by many others, who came out of hiding in the days following the deportations. The Germans even permitted the Judenrat to operate a day-care center for 120 children, to further reassure the Jews and lure more from hiding.

The first selection in the Small Ghetto took place on January 4, 1943. Some 350 women and children were deported to Treblinka, and 200 others were executed on Kawia Street. In March 1943, another 130 were shot in the Jewish cemetery. On June 25, 1943, a group was sent to labor camps. The final selection took place in July with the execution of the last chair of the Judenrat and others deemed unfit for work.¹²

During the time that the Small Ghetto existed, some of the young activists from the Workers’ Council banded together to form a Jewish Fighting Organization (JFO, using the same name as the resistance unit in Warsaw). Former party and ideological differences were set aside. It consisted of around 300 members in five cells and was commanded by Moshe Zylberg. During its existence the JFO carried out a significant number of armed actions. In the days of the liquidation of the Small Ghetto, some members of the Jewish underground escaped to the forests, and others died offering armed resistance against the Germans.¹³

The total number of Jews in the Częstochowa Large Ghetto, Small Ghetto, and the various forced labor camps has been estimated at around 58,000. Some 50,000 were killed, and more than 5,000 were liberated by the Allied armies. Of these, however, probably only around 1,500 were originally from Częstochowa itself.

In 1949, Dr. Herbert Böttcher was sentenced to death and executed by the Polish authorities. Paul Degenhardt was tried by a West German court in Lüneburg in 1966 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

SOURCES Publications on the history of the Jewish community in Częstochowa during World War II include the following: M. Schutzman, ed., *Sefer Tshenstokhov*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora, 1967–1968); Raphael Mahler, ed., *Tshenstokhaver Yidn* (New York: United Częstochower Relief Committee and Ladies Auxiliary, 1947); S.D. Singer, ed., *Tshenstokhov; nayer tsugob-material tsum bukh "Tshenstokhaver yidn"* (New York: United Relief Committee in New York, 1958); Shelomoh Vaga, ed., *Hurbn Tshenstokhov* (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun Poylishe Yidn in Argentina, 1949); Harry Klein, *Czenstochov, Our Legacy* (Montreal, 1993); W.M. Glicksman, "Daily Record Sheet of the Jewish Police (District I) in the Częstochowa Ghetto (1941–1942)," *Yad Vashem Studies* 6 (1967): 331–358; L. Brenner, "Ruch podziemny w częstochowskim getcie," *BŻIH*, nos. 45–46 (1963): 159–163; F.J. Pietrzykowski, *Hitlerowcy w Częstochowie w latach 1939–1945* (Poznań, 1959); "Częstochowa," in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 422–461; "Częstochowa," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), 5:1212–1214; and "Częstochowa," in Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990), p. 336. Relevant Web sites consulted include the following: HolocaustResearchProject.org and jewishgen.org.

Documentation concerning the fate of the Jews in Częstochowa during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AAN; AŻIH (e.g., collections 301 and 211); BA-L (e.g., B 162/5074, 6920, 14205); IPN (ASG); USHMM (e.g., RG-02.153; RG-15.061M [Jewish Council in Częstochowa]; Acc.2008.258.1); VHF; and YVA (e.g., O-3/8412).

Samuel Fishman

NOTES

1. Mahler, *Tshenstokhaver Yidn*, pp. x–xi, 9, 16.
2. Singer, *Tshenstokhov*, p. 39.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 40; and HolocaustResearchProject.org.
5. USHMM, RG-15.061M (Records of the Jewish Council in Częstochowa), 213/16.
6. Singer, *Tshenstokhov*, p. 40.
7. Vaga, *Hurbn Tshenstokhov*, pp. 107, 114 (cited from the translation at jewishgen.org).
8. USHMM, RG-15.061M, 213/15.
9. Singer, *Tshenstokhov*, p. 42.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 43. See also Yoram Lubling, *Twice-Dead: Moshe Y. Lubling, the Ethics of Memory, and the Treblinka Revolt* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 80.
11. BA-L, B 162/5074, p. 282; Pietrzykowski, *Hitlerowcy w Częstochowie*, p. 186.
12. HolocaustResearchProject.org.
13. Singer, *Tshenstokhov*, p. 44.

DENKÓW

Pre-1939: Denków, village, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski powiat, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Denkow, Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Denków, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Denków is located 82 kilometers (51 miles) southwest of Lublin. In 1939, the Jewish population was 386.¹

The German army occupied Denków in September 1939. Soon after their arrival the German military authorities demanded extortionate "contributions" from the Jewish community. On October 26, 1939, the Germans established the Generalgouvernement, and authority was handed over to a civil administration. Denków was located in Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom. The Kreishauptmann in Opatów was Dr. Heinz Ritter. On January 18, 1940, the German authorities ordered Jews in the region to wear a white armband with a blue Star of David on their right arm. Failure to comply was threatened with the death penalty.²

From 1939 to 1941, the German authorities in Denków implemented a series of anti-Jewish measures. They seized the Jews' businesses and possessions and obliged them to register with the authorities. They required them to perform various kinds of heavy physical labor. From December 1940, there was a Jewish self-help committee for Kreis Opatow, which also had a branch in Denków. The self-help committee sought to aid the poor by the provision of food and other assistance.

The detachment of the Security Police (Sipo-Aussendienststelle) in Ostrowiec organized the anti-Jewish Aktions in Kreis Opatow, including in Denków. The German Gendarmerie and the Polish auxiliary police also participated in these Aktions. From October 1941, Jews were not permitted to leave their residential areas on pain of death. According to a postwar German investigation, in the winter of 1941–1942 the German Order Police in Ostrowiec reported the shooting of two Jews on the meadow near Denków. The bodies were collected by two members of the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) from Ostrowiec.³

On May 13, 1942, Kreishauptmann Ritter issued an order for the establishment of 17 ghettos in his Kreis, including one in Denków, beginning on June 1.⁴ In July 1941, 503 Jews were living in the village, including about 150 Jewish refugees. These Jews had been resettled into the Generalgouvernement mainly from parts of Poland annexed by Germany or from Vienna.⁵ The Denków ghetto was liquidated on October 13, 1942. German police forces deported most of the remaining 500 or so Jews, together with the Jews of Ostrowiec, to the Treblinka extermination camp.⁶

On the liquidation of the ghetto the German authorities separated from the rest a number of Jews capable of work and sent them to the newly established forced labor camp in nearby Bodzechów. Among those sent to the Bodzechów camp were the brothers Chaim and Moshe Frimel. The two brothers managed to escape on the liquidation of the camp in April 1943 and returned to Denków. Here they were assisted by the family of Jan and Marianna Adamczyk, who hid them in their house at great risk until the Germans were driven from the area in January 1945.⁷

SOURCES Information on the Jewish community of Denków and its destruction during the German occupation can be

found in: Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 143–145. The ghetto in Denków is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 355.

Documents concerning the fate of the Jews of Denków during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: ITS; and YVA (e.g., O-3/3722, O-21/6, 16, 17, and 19).

Alexander Kruglov and Martin Dean
trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955), table 13.

2. Leybush Milshtein Zeyl, “Di Likvidazie fun Ostrowzer geto,” in M. Sh. Geshuri and Gershon Zilberberg, eds., *Sefer Ostrovtseh: Le-zikaron ule-ed* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots’e Ostrovtsch be-Yisrael, 1971), pp. 277–293, here p. 277.

3. *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 20 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1979), Lfd. Nr. 592, pp. 722–723.

4. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 85–86; Krzysztof Urbaniński, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 152–153.

5. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” table 13. According to Zeyl, “Di Likvidazie fun Ostrowzer geto,” pp. 278–279, in March 1940 a transport of mostly elderly Jews from Vienna arrived in Ostrowiec, and most were distributed to the surrounding villages, probably including Denków. Some of the refugees had arrived earlier from Konin at the end of 1939.

6. P. Matusak, *Ruch Oporu na Ziemi Optatowsko-Sandomierskiej w latach 1939–1945* (Warsaw, 1976), pp. 55, 57.

7. Israel Gutman, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust—Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), p. 53; the entire Adamczyk family was recognized as Righteous Among the Nations in two separate ceremonies on October 7, 1975, and January 6, 1997. On the Bodzechów camp, see also YVA, O-3/3722.

DRZEWICA

Pre-1939: Drzewica, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Drzewica is located 47 kilometers (29 miles) west-northwest of Radom. By 1939 there were 750 Jews living in Drzewica.¹

Some time after their arrival, the Germans established a seven-man Jewish Council (Judenrat) that included three pre-war community leaders (Hersz Ajzenman, chairman; Dawid Szyzler; and Herszel Cytrynowicz); two Jews from Łódź (including manufacturer Rubin); and bookkeeper Aron Siwak from Płock. Archival sources also name A. Szejer, P. Rozenbaum, and Josef Wald as members.

The German forces stationed in Drzewica departed at the onset of the German-Soviet war in the summer of 1941.

Thereafter, German Gendarmes based in Nowe Miasto supervised the Jews in Drzewica. Gendarmes Hofman, Servin, and Makowski are mentioned by name. Survivor J. Szyzler described Makowski as especially cruel.²

Deportees arrived between October 1940 and March 1941 from Mława (100), Tomaszów Mazowiecki (500), Skierniewice, Grójec, and Płock (200). After their arrival, the Judenrat reported 2,100 Jews in Drzewica, of whom 800 were deportees.

The Judenrat established an affiliated self-help committee, which opened a soup kitchen. It estimated that 450 newcomers were in need of aid. The committee included: A. Rubin, A. Dąb, Aron Wald, H. Cytrynowicz, Abram Szejer, D. Balsam, and M. Łomaniec.

The Płock Jews were in the worst situation, as there was little housing available on their arrival. The majority of them were quartered en masse in the synagogue on bunk beds and straw mattresses.³

The Płock Jews organized their own committee and, in May 1941, accused the local committee and the Judenrat of appropriating help sent for them “for other purposes.” Their two representatives who initially were added to the local committee were not invited to its meetings and so were unable to see how outside help was distributed. Some 130 Płock Jews used the soup kitchen—located in the same room where they slept—on a daily basis.

The Kreis office of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Tomaszów reported to the Kraków headquarters that the Płock Jews lived in “completely abnormal conditions, caused by the behavior of the Judenrat and its Self-Help Committee.” Ghetto survivor Celina Widawski recalls that some Płock deportees were covered with lice, hungry, and dying of disease. At the end of September 1941, there were 2,226 Jews in Drzewica. It was in that month that an epidemic broke out; 66 people were sick with typhus and 31 with typhoid.⁴

Secondary sources report that the ghetto was established in the spring of 1941; however, primary sources indicate that it was established in the autumn of 1941. The August 1941 self-help committee report shows 690 złoty were spent “in connection with the ghetto’s establishment.” On October 29, 1941, the *Gazeta Żydowska* reported changes implemented with the “recent” establishment of the ghetto.

The ghetto was located on Berek Joselewicze Street and included a stretch of Piłsudski Street, where the Judenrat offices were now based. A post office was established in the ghetto. A Jewish arbitration court affiliated with the Judenrat functioned to resolve disputes among the inhabitants.

Although the ghetto was never fenced and guarded only by the Jewish Police, the residents were forbidden to leave it as of December 1941. No one in the ghetto had the Germans’ permission to leave, not even members of Jewish institutions. Now and then, the Nowe Miasto Gendarmerie would enter the ghetto unexpectedly and shoot people randomly. There were occasions when the Germans took bribes for the release of those caught outside the ghetto.

Nevertheless, according to Szyzler, the Jews still traveled into the countryside to obtain and smuggle in food. Aron-Aba

Kubart remembers beggars swollen from hunger who, on seeing smoke from a chimney, would knock on the door to ask for leftover water from boiled potatoes. Kubart used to smuggle himself out of the ghetto through the window of his house, which overlooked the Aryan side.

The nine-man Jewish police force commanded by Szmul Moszkowicz included his two brothers and Jankiel Perelmuter. In September 1941, its members were equipped with special hats and batons, for which the community paid 546 zloty. Their wages that month were 812 zloty out of a total monthly budget of 22,000 zloty. In October 1941, 100 Jews from the ghetto worked on the Opoczno-Przysucha road.⁵

Despite the fact that 8 to 10 people shared a room, the Germans regularly reduced the ghetto's parameters. Lajbke Kuczyński, who "strayed three meters [9.8 feet] to the toilet" into an area the Germans had excluded from the ghetto, was shot and wounded. Smuggled back to the ghetto by his Polish friends, Kuczyński later died of his wounds.⁶

In November 1941, an official branch of the JSS was established in Drzewica, with local landowner Josef Zameczkowski as its chairman. Two Judenrat members, the above-noted bookkeeper from Płock, Aron Siwak, and tradesman Josef Wald were also included. In January 1942, Zameczkowski reported to Kraków that some members of the Judenrat, including Wald and Siwak, were pocketing income from the arbitration court, the post office, and the Sanitation Committee. Taxes imposed by the Judenrat on the ghetto inhabitants for the purpose of welfare, as well as the income from the sale of small portions of Jewish rations—again deducted by the Judenrat for the same purpose—were also misused. "The chairman of the Judenrat, a craftsman skilled in making shoe uppers and illiterate, allows this system to operate," wrote Zameczkowski. He also insisted on separating JSS bookkeeping from the Judenrat's, so as "not to allow them to hide the real income under a blanket of expenses for the soup kitchen." At the end of the year, the number of meals supplied by the kitchen had declined to 135, at which point the Judenrat closed down the kitchen. It was reopened by the JSS in January 1942.⁷

By mid-January 1942, 63 people had died of contagious diseases in the ghetto. Although the epidemic was losing force, Zameczkowski reported, "There is hardly any house without a sick person, and the epidemic spreads mostly amongst the Płock deportees, who live in deplorable conditions. On average there are 3 to 4 deaths per day." The only pharmacy was outside the ghetto. A Polish doctor, Malinowski, and an elderly Jewish hospital attendant treated the sick. Some were sent to the Opoczno hospital.

With time the conflict between Zameczkowski, other members of the JSS, and the Judenrat only intensified. In March 1942, Zameczkowski wrote to the Kraków JSS that Ajzenman "threatened me that his son will perforate my lungs with a shoemaker's knife." In July 1942, the Kreis branch of the JSS in Tomaszów Mazowiecki assured Kraków that Zameczkowski was "the only conscientious and solid worker of the Committee" and released Siwak of his duties.⁸

According to Szyszler, in July 1942, a partisan unit attacked the Judenrat office, stole money, and cut its telephone line. The Gestapo, with the help of the Jewish Police, searched for the Judenrat members to investigate the matter. All were found "guilty of a partisan attack" and shot. Szyszler added, "After the shooting of the Judenrat the [Jewish] Police took care of Jewish affairs."

In July 1942, a number of ghetto inmates were taken to the Skarżysko Kamienna labor camp.⁹

On October 22, 1942, approximately 500 Jews from the recently liquidated ghetto in Klwów were brought into the Drzewica ghetto and left out on the streets. The ghetto inhabitants were ordered to be ready for resettlement to a labor camp the next morning and to report to the market square. That night, the ghetto was surrounded by the Germans, and fires were lit around it to prevent escape.

On October 23, 1942, the Gendarmerie marched all the Jews to nearby Opoczno. Those who could not keep up with the column were shot; among them was Zameczkowski.

Approximately 50 Jews (including some policemen) were left behind to sort out Jewish possessions. Shortly afterwards, the Germans announced that those who had evaded the deportation were safe to come out. Consequently, 30 Jews came out of hiding. During daily roll calls, the Jewish Police kept assuring the Jews that they would be unharmed—as the Germans instructed them—but some Jews escaped this remnant ghetto. The remainder were most likely sent to the Ujazd ghetto, established in December 1942 as the only legal place for the Jews to stay in the Kreis. The Ujazd remnant ghetto was liquidated at the beginning of January 1943, when its inhabitants were deported to the Treblinka killing center.¹⁰

SOURCES References to the Drzewica ghetto can be found in Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 102, 133, 185–189; Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 84, 99, 153, 177–178.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (301/3132); IPN (ASG); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/322; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], 211/365–367, 211/1035–1038; RG-15.019M [ASG]); and VHF (# 20106, 20871, 33497).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/366 (Drzewica), p. 21.
2. AŻIH, 301/3132, testimony of Josel Szyszler; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/365 (Drzewica), p. 22; 211/366, p. 25; VHF, # 33497, testimony of Aron-Aba Kubart, 1997.
3. *Gazeta Żydowska*, October 29, 1941; USHMM, Acc. 1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/322 (Drzewica), pp. 1, 7, 15, 18, 21; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1035 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), p. 25.
4. VHF, # 20871, testimony of Celina Widawski, 1996; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/365, pp. 6–8; 211/366, p. 21; 211/367 (Drzewica), p. 30; 211/1032 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), pp. 11, 23.

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5. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG Drzewica), file 120, reel 16; *Gazeta Żydowska*, October 29, 1941; AŻIH, 301/3132; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/366, p. 29; 211/367, pp. 1, 5; VHF, # 20106, testimony of Ruth Scheuer, 1996; # 20871; and # 33497.

6. VHF, # 33497; AŻIH, 301/3132.

7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1036 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), p. 66; 211/366, p. 32; 211/367, pp. 7–10, 48.

8. *Ibid.*, 211/366, p. 6; 211/367, pp. 14, 20, 30, 41–43; 211/1038 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), p. 17.

9. AŻIH, 301/3132; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/367, pp. 65–66.

10. Celina Widawski, *The Sun Will Shine Tomorrow* (Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia: Essien, 1993), pp. 41–51; AŻIH, 301/3132; VHF, # 20871; # 20106.

FIRLEJ

Pre-1939: Firlej, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

In 1921, there were 53 Jews living in the village of Firlej, just north of Radom. In March 1940, the Judenrat reported 200 Jews residing in the village, including 15 refugees. Under German occupation, a few individuals were able to earn over a dozen złoty per week, but most Jews had no source of income. Approximately 40 men were assigned daily for—presumably—unpaid forced labor. Motek Szpajzman was one of the Judenrat members.¹

In April 1940, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw informed the Judenrat in Firlej that it could collect 200 kilograms (441 pounds) of matzot for free distribution to the poorest members of the community, especially refugees. The matzot had been imported from abroad with the permission of the German authorities, and it was for consumption during the upcoming Passover holiday.²

By 1941, the number of Jews in the village had increased to 230. In March 1941, a handful of Jews from the recently depopulated village of Przytyk were transferred to Firlej.

As part of a larger process of ghettoization for the Jews still living in the villages of Kreis Radom, Firlej was designated as one of the rural Jewish communities that the Germans intended to liquidate by transferring them to a larger ghetto, at the end of 1941. However, according to the Radom office of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS): “Thanks to efforts of the Main Senior Council of the Jewish Community of Distrikt Radom,” the Germans allowed several rural communities to remain in place by creating Jewish quarters for them.

An order to establish a ghetto in Firlej was issued by Radom’s Kreishauptmann and implemented by early January 1942. Jews from smaller settlements were ordered to move into the ghetto, thereby raising the number of residents to approximately 250. Firlej’s Jews were further ordered to set up an epidemic hospital and a soup kitchen.³

No information is available concerning living conditions in the ghetto. Seamstress Fajga Zeleg (39 years old) was regis-

tered as having been arrested for leaving the Firlej ghetto on July 20, 1942. Zeleg was transferred to the Radom ghetto and then “deported” to a camp on August 18, 1942.⁴

The Firlej ghetto was liquidated in July 1942 when approximately 200 Jews were sent to the Radom ghetto.

SOURCES Figures for the Firlej ghetto population are cited from Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 156, 179.

The following archival sources were used in preparing this entry: AŻIH (210/330 [AJDC], 211/854 [JSS]) and USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/330 (Firlej), p. 1. Note that the majority of the information in this file refers to another Firlej, located near Lubartów, województwo podkarpackie.

2. *Ibid.*, 210/330, p. 2, AJDC Warsaw to Judenrat in Firlej, April 15, 1940.

3. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211//854 (Radom), pp. 5, 7.

4. Kazimierz Jaroszek and Sebastian Piątkowski, *Martyrologia Żydów w więzieniu radomskim 1939–1944: Wykaz zamordowanych, zmarłych, deportowanych do obozów koncentracyjnych i obozów zagłady* (Radom: Archiwum Państwowe, 1997), p. 80.

GARBATKA-LETNISKO

Pre-1939: Garbatka-Letnisko, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Garbatka-Letnisko is located 40 kilometers (25 miles) east-northeast of Radom. When the war broke out, approximately 300 Jews were residing in Garbatka, comprising 8.5 percent of the total population. Soon after the Germans’ arrival, the Jews of Garbatka became subjected to the anti-Jewish regulations enforced in the Generalgouvernement. A Judenrat was established to represent the local Jewish community, which was chaired by J. Perelsztajn.¹ The number of Jews in Garbatka rose rapidly. By 1940 there were 571 Jews, of which the Judenrat registered 100 as being impoverished.² By October 1941, there were 1,300 Jewish men, women, and children in Garbatka-Letnisko.³ This large influx resulted from the conviction that Garbatka was a relatively “safe place,” off the beaten track, and rarely visited by the Germans. The imposition of forced labor by the occupiers (Jewish labor details worked in forestry, road repairs, and clearing snow off the roads around Garbatka), and increasingly harsh living conditions, brought on mass pauperization among the Jews. At the beginning of 1942, it was ascertained that 90 percent of the Jews in Garbatka were living in poverty.⁴

Garbatka is mentioned as one of the places where Jews were to be concentrated in the order issued by the Kreishauptmann,

Dr. Egen, in late December 1941, regarding the establishment of ghettos in Kreis Radom-Land.⁵ Therefore, in the first days of January 1942, as recalled by Jewish survivor Simon Brajtman, a ghetto was established in Garbatka.⁶ It included 22 houses along with some farm buildings on Kochanowski Street, from which all Poles were expelled. Brajtman maintains that the ghetto was unfenced and unguarded, but other sources offer conflicting evidence on this point.⁷ By this time, the Jewish population had become infected with typhus, and the Germans demanded that the Judenrat open an epidemic hospital, a public bath, and a delousing facility, to prevent the spread of the disease. The establishment of the hospital was probably delayed due to a lack of funds, but a Polish postwar report indicates that a small hospital with eight beds was set up inside the ghetto.⁸

On July 12, 1942, the German police conducted an anti-partisan reprisal Aktion in Garbatka, following an attack on a German supply train by forces of the Polish resistance in the vicinity. In and around Garbatka, approximately 300 people were arrested, and countless Poles were murdered. In the course of the Aktion, German units also entered the ghetto and killed approximately 30 Jews. A large group, numbering around 60 people, was driven into a nearby forest and shot in a mass execution.⁹ Afterwards, Jews from the ghetto were forced to bury the bodies of those who had been murdered. Of those arrested, 143 Poles and 74 Jews were selected and sent via a special transport to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Within a few weeks, almost all the prisoners on this transport had been killed in the camp, and their relatives in Garbatka were notified.¹⁰

Following the pacification Aktion, approximately 1,000 Jews remained in Garbatka. Of the few Jews from the ghetto who survived the war, several report that they were transferred to Pionki, shortly after the pacification Aktion in Garbatka.¹¹ According to Brajtman, all the Jews of Garbatka were taken to Pionki, where the local ghetto became so crowded that Jews had to sleep in the streets. Here some Jews from Garbatka were among those selected for work in the Pionki labor camp. Then on August 20, 1942, the Germans liquidated the Pionki ghetto and, according to Brajtman, force-marched all the Jews to the ghetto in Zwoleń, including those who had recently arrived from Garbatka. Brajtman was fortunate to survive, as he returned to Pionki to work in the labor camp in early September, shortly before the liquidation of the Zwoleń ghetto.¹² The arrival of the Garbatka Jews in Zwoleń is confirmed by a Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) report, dated September 18, 1942.¹³ From Zwoleń, the Garbatka Jews were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp, ironically via the train station near Garbatka, at the end of September or in early October 1942.

SOURCES Published sources regarding the ghetto in Garbatka-Letnisko include Sebastian Piątkowski, “Pomoc społeczna i działalność charytatywna w gettach dystryktu radomskiego (1939–1942),” in Marek Przeniosło, ed., *Dobroczynność i pomoc społeczna na ziemiach polskich w XIX, XX i na początku XXI wieku* (Kielce, 2008), pp. 172–177; Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich,

and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 124–127; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 170, 208.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR; AŻIH (211/430, 1164 [ŻSS]; NMO, nos. 60 and 63); IPN (ASG, sygn. 47, p. 98); USHMM (RG-15.019M [ASG]); and VHF (e.g., # 16065, 21336, 44958).

Sebastian Piątkowski and Martin Dean
trans. Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. AŻIH, ŻSS, 211/430.
2. Piątkowski, “Pomoc społeczna,” p. 173.
3. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 156.
4. AŻIH, ŻSS, 211/430.
5. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 122, citing AŻIH, NMO, nos. 60 and 63 from late December 1942.
6. VHF, # 44958, testimony of Simon Brajtman; AŻIH, ŻSS, 211/430; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, pp. 170, 208.
7. VHF, # 44958. See also Maria Dziedzicka, “Holocaust w Garbatce,” *Dziennik Radomski*, no.208 (1996): p. 10; and IPN, ASG, sygn. 47, p. 98; however, both indicate there was a fence.
8. AŻIH, ŻSS, 211/430; IPN, ASG, sygn. 47, p. 98.
9. Ryszard Śmietanka, *Szkice z dziejów Garbatki* (Garbatka-Letnisko, 1992), p. 36; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo radomskie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1980), p. 54.
10. Franciszek Piper and Irena Strzelecka, eds., *Księga Pamięci: Transporty Polaków do KL Auschwitz z Radomia i innych miejscowości Kielecczyzny 1940–1944* (Warsaw, 2006), 2: 733–760; VHF, # 16065; # 44958.
11. VHF, # 16065; # 21336; # 44958.
12. *Ibid.*, # 44958.
13. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), 211/1164, pp. 61, 67.

GIELNIÓW

Pre-1939: Gielniów, village, Opoczno powiat, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Gielniów, Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Gielniów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Gielniów is located 82 kilometers (51 miles) east-southeast of Łódź. On September 1, 1939, 190 Jews were registered in Gielniów.¹

German troops occupied Gielniów on September 9, 1939. Two days later the synagogue was burned down. At that time, about 56 Jewish families, approximately 250 people, were living in the village.² Over the next three years, due to the arrival of refugees and deportees, the number of Jews increased to about 450. In March 1941, about 100 Jewish deportees arrived from

Płock. Other Jews were resettled there from Radom, Skierniewice, Żyrardów, Mogielnica, and Grójec. On January 1, 1942, Jews from the neighboring village of Kuniczki and in February 1942 about 100 more from other villages were brought into Gielniów, as it became one of the collection points in Distrikt Radom, used to concentrate Jews in preparation for their ultimate deportation.³

At some time during the first months of the occupation, a Jewish Council of Elders (Jüdischer Ältestenrat) was established. Its head was Icek Cygielfarb, and its members included Zelman Zalctrejger, Alter Chomontowski, and Wulf and Lejbus Fajfer. Apart from organizing forced labor details, its main task was to try to alleviate the harsh living conditions for the town's Jews. On April 1, 1940, the Jewish Council reported to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) that many buildings in town had been destroyed and many Jews had lost their homes. At that time, 10 Jewish families had been taken in as refugees from other villages and were living in conditions of extreme poverty. As the local community had no funds to assist the refugees, it asked for financial and material support to open a soup kitchen.⁴ In response, on July 12, 1940, the AJDC organized the delivery of 30 kilograms (66 pounds) of grits, 8 kilograms (17.6 pounds) of sugar, 42 kilograms (92.6 pounds) of flour, 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of lard, and 22 cans of condensed milk.⁵ Further help came subsequently from the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), which had been established in Tomaszów Mazowiecki by 1941 and opened a branch office in Gielniów.⁶

During 1941, living conditions deteriorated further as Cygielfarb, the head of the Jewish Council, reported to the AJDC in Kraków. The AJDC delivered more groceries in May—grits, flour, lard, and condensed milk—and 600 złoty in the summer, to support the soup kitchen that supplied daily meals to 93 people. Most of them were Jews who had been forcibly resettled to Gielniów. Due to lack of funds, the soup kitchen had to be closed in the summer of 1941. Dysentery was raging in the community, one person had died already, and there was no physician or hospital to take care of the sick. Cygielfarb made an urgent request for medical assistance.⁷

According to various sources, Gielniów's Jews were also conscripted for forced labor. As Jacek Młynarczyk reports, Jews worked under the supervision of the Water Regulation Authority (Wasserwirtschaftsverwaltung), repairing dams, building ponds, and regulating rivers and creeks. This source indicates that the Water Authority also established a Jewish forced labor camp (*Julag*) in Gielniów in 1940, holding probably between 200 and 400 Jews.⁸ Jews from Gielniów also performed construction work on the road between Przysucha and Opoczno.

Information about the establishment of a ghetto in Gielniów remains sparse. Following the concentration of Jews there from neighboring villages in January and February 1942, the ability of Jews to leave the village became severely restricted by the spring of 1942 with the enforcement of the "Shooting Order" (*Schiessbefehl*) within Kreis Tomaszow, which instructed German police officials to shoot all Jews found outside their

residential areas without permission.⁹ Survivor Sylvia Kasten mentions the existence at some time in 1942 of a ghetto in Gielniów, which consisted of one street from which the Polish inhabitants were removed.¹⁰

The only detailed account of the ghetto was given shortly after the war by Zelman Zalctrejger. He recalled that just before Yom Kippur (September 21) in 1942, one Jew working on road construction was arrested by the Polish (Blue) Police and subsequently murdered for fleeing his workplace. When the Gielniów Jews heard this news, they panicked and hid in their houses. Seven more Jews were then arrested and shot. The German Gendarmerie then ordered the establishment of a ghetto in the town, which was not enclosed by a fence and not guarded. It was located on Bielińskaja Street and consisted of nine wooden houses. Each house had two or three rooms, which meant that 450 Jews were crammed together into about 18 to 22 rooms, with more than 20 people on average sharing a room. Due to the overcrowding, some people initially slept outside. Sanitary conditions soon deteriorated, and at least 10 people died from typhus.¹¹

Only six weeks after the ghetto was established, the Germans liquidated it. On October 22, 1942, three German policemen came from Opoczno and ordered the Polish (Blue) Police to prepare 20 horses and carts to take the Jews to the Opoczno railway station. That night, about 60 Jews were able to escape to the woods before the Polish (Blue) Police cordoned off the town. On October 23, 1942, German police forces assisted by Ukrainian auxiliaries liquidated the ghetto. All the Jews had to gather and form a column, with children and the elderly at the head of the line. From the ghetto they were escorted to the market square, where horse-drawn wagons waited for them. There, Ukrainians searched them and took their watches, jewelry, and other valuables. According to one source, 19 Jews were killed during the Aktion.¹² The Jews were taken to Opoczno, where at least 4,000 Jews from the surrounding area were gathered. The same day or shortly afterwards, all of them were put into freight cars and deported to the Treblinka killing center.¹³

The group of 60 Jews who escaped the liquidation of the ghetto survived in the woods for three days. Hunted by Germans, Poles, and Ukrainians, they split up and went in different directions. Hidden in primitive dugouts in the woods, they awaited the arrival of the Red Army. In this manner, Zalctrejger, one of the members of the Jewish Council, survived until the end of the occupation.¹⁴ Two Jewish girls survived with the assistance of Wiktoria Nowosielska, who took them in on the night before the ghetto's liquidation. She helped them obtain "Aryan papers," and subsequently the girls were sent to Germany as foreign laborers.¹⁵

SOURCES The history of the Jewish community in Gielniów is briefly described in Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 81. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 175, contains a brief summary on the ghetto with source citations.

Primary sources on Gielniów can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/338 and 301/2533); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC], 210/338; and RG-15.084M [AŻIH—Relacje], 301/2533); and VHF (# 2080 and 23418).

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NOTES

1. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 81.
2. USHMM, RG-15.084M, 301/2533, statement of Zelman Zalctrejger.
3. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 81; USHMM, RG-15.084M, 301/2533; and Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 252.
4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/338, Aeltestenrat der Juden in Gielniów to AJDC Kraków, April 1, 1940.
5. Ibid.
6. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, pp. 203–204.
7. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/338, Icek Cygielfarb to AJDC Kraków, August 31, 1941.
8. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, pp. 152–153.
9. BA-L, B 162/14521, Verdict of LG-Darm, 2 Ks 1/69, December 7, 1972, pp. 20–30.
10. VHF, # 23418, testimony of Sylvia Kasten.
11. USHMM, RG-15.084M, 301/2533.
12. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 175, no. 1051.
13. USHMM, RG-15.084M, 301/2533.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 301/2533, appendix, report of Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, July 1947.

GŁOWACZÓW

Pre-1939: Głowaczów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Głowaczów, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Głowaczów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Głowaczów is located 75 kilometers (47 miles) south-southeast of Warsaw. In 1921, the village had 1,411 Jewish residents. By the end of the 1930s, Jews constituted 57 percent of its residents. A large part of Głowaczów was destroyed in the fighting during the September Campaign of 1939. Following the village's occupation, young Jews were rounded up and sent to labor camps in Radom. They were released by the year's end. Others, coordinated by the Judenrat, performed forced labor in the area around Głowaczów, mostly in the lumber industry.

The Judenrat included the following members: Lajbusz Cukerman (chairman), Mosze Kozłowski, Nachman Chanciński, Lajzer Strowjeszczik, and Awisz Zilberman.

Apart from forced labor and a housing shortage, initially the Jews of Głowaczów were able to live their lives much as before the war.¹

In 1940, in preparation for the establishment of a large military training ground north of Radom—along the Radomka



Jews perform forced labor at a lumber mill under German supervision near the Głowaczów ghetto, 1940. The original German caption reads, "Glowuscow [sic], 1940 . . . In the prisoners' camp!" USHMM WS #65620

River—the Germans evacuated all residents (including Poles) who inhabited the western part of the village.² Since a ghetto was set up in Głowaczów that same year, it is possible that this evacuation was part of the process that led to its establishment. Archival sources indicate that in the second half of 1940, two groups of Jewish residents were deported from Głowaczów on the orders of the Kreishauptmann, for the “purposes of the Reich.”

A total of 364 Jews (88 families) were transferred between June and December 1940 to nearby Magnuszew. A list naming the heads of 78 of the deported families (324 persons) can be found in the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) files; however, the names of the 10 families who were not registered by the Magnuszew authorities remain unknown. Because 30 percent of those deported were homeless in the wake of the 1939 invasion, they left for Magnuszew with no resources. A second group of approximately 40 people was deported to Skaryszew in November 1940.

According to the testimony of one survivor, Hanka Grynberg, the Głowaczów ghetto was set up by “deporting all Jews from one part of the town to the other.” A ditch demarcated the ghetto's borders, and Jews were forbidden to cross it. Poles were barred from entering the ghetto. Nevertheless, they managed to order products from ghetto craftsmen, as Jews living there were free to practice their occupations. The ghetto was guarded by the Jewish Police and rarely visited by Germans.³

In 1941 (most likely in the fall), the Germans completed the depopulation of Głowaczów. Historian Adam Rutkowski cites a letter by the mayor of nearby Luta addressed to the Radom Kreishauptmann that reported the deportation of 160 Jewish families from Głowaczów and its vicinity to the gminas of Mariampol, Magnuszew, and Skaryszew on September 20, 1941. From the survivors' testimony, it is clear that the majority of the ghetto residents were resettled to the closest locality, this being fallow lands 4 to 5 kilometers (2.5 to 3 miles) northwest of Głowaczów within the same gmina of Mariampol.

According to the survivor Abraham Kaspi, “the ghetto of Głowaczów’s Jews was situated between Mariampol (known by locals as ‘Marianki’) and Jasieniec; its border was demarcated by a small lake.” Owners of Jewish houses in Głowaczów were allowed to pull them down and move them to the new location. Most of Głowaczów’s Poles were resettled to the village of Jasieniec and fallow lands near Mariampol village. Now deserted, Głowaczów was used as a training site for German artillery.⁴

Housing and sanitation in the new ghetto—referred to as Mariampol—were deplorable. Many Jews lived in overcrowded conditions in primitive huts, which resulted in malnutrition and deaths from various illnesses. The ghetto had one bakery, but the Germans provided insufficient flour to satisfy even a fraction of the community’s needs. There was not a single shop. Kaspi believes that “if it had not been for the help of Polish neighbors, all of the Jews would have died of hunger,” as restrictions regarding movement remained the same in the new location. Despite the ghetto’s poverty, Gendarmes from Kozienice and Grabów demanded the delivery of various goods from the Judenrat, beating its chairman as a warning.

During the winter of 1941 and in April 1942, all men aged 50 and younger were rounded up by the Gestapo and SS and were taken to the nearby Kruszyna labor camp.⁵

In the summer of 1942, the ghetto was enclosed by a fence, yet its inhabitants still used to sneak out at night to forage for food.⁶

The Mariampol ghetto was liquidated in the second half of August 1942, when all of its residents were transferred to the Kozienice ghetto, which was located approximately 30 kilometers (19 miles) away, where the residents of other small ghettos were also gathered. The Kozienice ghetto was liquidated on September 27, 1942, when almost all of its Jews were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.⁷

SOURCES A short description of the Głowaczów ghetto can be found in Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), p. 137.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/480 and 210/630 [AJDC]; and 301/2296 [Relacje]); USHMM (RG-15.084M [Holocaust Survivor Testimonies]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); and VHF (# 20410 and 23383).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 23383, testimony of Sol Rozenzweig, 1996; # 20410, testimony of Abraham Kaspi, 1996; www.zchor.org/glowaczow/glowaczow.htm.

2. A. Kutkowski and I. Boratyn, “Zapłaćcie za wojnę!” *Słowo Ludu, Magazyn Obok Nas*, September 10, 2004, available at www.slowoludu.com.pl/gazeta/codzienna/2004/IX/10/8.pdf; Euzebiusz Małaśnicki, “Moje wspomnienia,” www.glowaczow.republika.pl/chor.html.

3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/480 (Magnuszew), pp. 19–26; and 210/630 (Skaryszew), pp. 24–25, 29–32; AŻIH, 301/2296, testimony of Hanka Grynberg; VHF, # 20410.

4. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 156–157 (table 11), 178–179; Małaśnicki, “Moje wspomnienia”; and Kutkowski and Boratyn, “Zapłaćcie za wojnę!” VHF, # 20410, or possibly a pond, as no lake is visible currently using Google maps. Note also that there is a village by the name of Marianki located approximately 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) west of Głowaczów.

5. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 137; VHF, # 20410; # 23383.

6. AŻIH, 301/2296.

7. *Ibid.*; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 156–157 (table 11), 178–179; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 315. Rutkowski and Pilichowski et al. in referring to the Mariampol ghetto give its population, respectively, as 1,500 and 2,200 residents at the time of its liquidation. Both numbers seem to be too high, at least for the Jews originally brought there from Głowaczów—unless additional Jews were brought in from other localities.

GNIEWOSZÓW

Pre-1939: Gniewoszów (Yiddish: Gnivosbów), village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Gniewoszow, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Gniewoszów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Gniewoszów is located 55 kilometers (34 miles) east of Radom, on the Vistula River. On the outbreak of World War II, 1,580 Jews were residing in Gniewoszów.

Gniewoszów was bombed by the Luftwaffe on September 1, 1939. About two weeks later the German army captured the village, and immediately the Germans started arresting Jews. Gniewoszów was not large enough to have a permanent German garrison, but soldiers often came to Gniewoszów to round up Jews for forced labor and have “sadistic fun,” as Charles Feldman recalled. Jews were required to wear the Star of David on their left arms, and Jewish children no longer went to school.¹ Jacob Goldstein remembers that the Germans stole fabrics and other goods from his father’s textile business. Luckily, his father had hidden some leather goods with Polish acquaintances.²

The German authorities ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) to represent the local Jewish community. In the winter of 1939–1940, Jews had to perform forced labor tasks such as shoveling snow from the roads. The Judenrat decreed that anyone who did not want to work would have to pay a fee and another man would be sent in his place. A curfew was imposed on the Jews, they were given strict rations, and they were not permitted to leave the village. The Germans housed their horses in the local synagogue and desecrated religious objects.³

The number of Jews in Gniewoszów began to increase sharply in 1940 for a number of reasons. The most important cause was the location of the village on the Vistula River, at a point where it was possible to cross. As a result, many refugees and deportees came to the area in order to cross the border

between Distrikt Lublin and Distrikt Radom. Other Jews decided to settle there, as living conditions appeared to be more favorable in the village of Gniewoszów than in the larger towns or cities. This caused many Jews from Kazimierz, Puławy, and Ryki to move to Gniewoszów, as well as refugees from Warsaw and deportees from Łódź and Kraków. Many of these new arrivals had almost no remaining financial reserves. In the spring of 1940, there were 2,750 Jews in Gniewoszów, of which 1,142 were receiving food assistance from the Judenrat because of their poverty.⁴

In March 1941, the Jewish community in Gniewoszów numbered 2,300 people. By October of that year the Jewish population had increased to approximately 3,000, partly due to a further influx from Distrikt Warschau, as Jews there were being concentrated in the Warsaw ghetto. Hunger and the confined space led to the emergence of a typhus epidemic, which the local branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) strived to control by opening—“with great effort”—an epidemic hospital in November of that year. The hospital could help only a small number of the sick.⁵ Local activists tried to provide additional nourishment to Jewish children. According to the yizkor book, a Christian doctor named Kelczinski continued to treat the Jews until the establishment of the ghetto, after which this was forbidden.⁶

Jewish survivors from Gniewoszów give two separate dates for the establishment of the ghetto there. Some date it in 1940, reflecting the influx of refugees, the imposition of a curfew, and other restrictions on the Jews. Feldman notes that they made a ghetto, which segregated the Jews from the Polish population. The Jews were forced into one part of the village (Granica), where they lived in overcrowded conditions, with two or three families sharing each house. At this time a Jewish police force of about six people was created, which was forced to do the dirty work—such as selecting Jews for forced labor.⁷ Goldstein recalled that the fronts of the houses facing the street were boarded up—the Jews could only use the back entrance.⁸

In the period from 1940 to 1942, able-bodied Jews in Gniewoszów were rounded up periodically and sent away to forced labor camps in Radom and elsewhere. Gniewoszów is mentioned as one of the places where Jews were to be concentrated in Kreishauptmann Dr. Egen's order of December 22, 1941, which confirmed its status as a ghetto. As a result, in early 1942, some Jews from the surrounding villages were required to move there.⁹ Bernard Kerschenbaum recalls this date, in early 1942, as the establishment of the ghetto. The ghetto was an open ghetto without any demarcation—no walls and no barbed wire.¹⁰ Due to the lax guarding, some Jews took off their Jewish stars and left the ghetto to buy food from the Polish population. The Germans announced to the Polish population that they would be rewarded with goods, such as sugar, salami, or vodka, if they captured Jews found outside the ghetto and brought them to the Gestapo. Jews who were caught faced the death penalty. However, this did not deter some Jews from sneaking out when they were hungry, and while many Poles were hostile, others continued to give or sell them food.¹¹ Ac-

ording to the yizkor book, a number of Jews lost their lives when they were caught outside the ghetto.¹²

During the first half of 1942, the food supply and sanitation in the ghetto steadily worsened. At this time “the Germans ordered all Jews to shave their heads. Religious Jews . . . suffered miserably. Those who disobeyed had half their beard shaved and were forbidden to do anything about it, such as covering their faces with kerchiefs.”¹³ Leo Kuperman recalls that his father decided to shave his beard, to avoid being picked on and humiliated by the Germans. He mentions also that on one occasion they singled out the rabbi, mocked him, spat at him, shaved his beard, and then killed him.¹⁴

In early August 1942, conditions deteriorated sharply again, when the Germans selected Gniewoszów as a concentration place for the residents of smaller ghettos in the region. Among others, the Jews from the ghettos in Ryczywół and Sieciechów were transferred to Gniewoszów, more than doubling the number of Jews there, raising it to 6,580.¹⁵ Most of these newcomers had no sources of income, and due to the lack of accommodation, many of them were forced to find shelter in barns or sheds or simply live in the streets. The same month the Germans resettled approximately 600 men and women to the Dęblin-Irena ghetto in Distrikt Lublin, and on August 19–20 they sent approximately 5,000 Gniewoszów ghetto residents to the Zwoleń ghetto. The approximately 1,000 people who remained in the village were sent directly to the Treblinka extermination camp on November 15, 1942.¹⁶

SOURCES Published sources regarding the Gniewoszów ghetto include the following: David Sztokfisz, ed., *Sefer Gnivoshov* (Tel Aviv: Irgune Gnivoshov be-Yisrael uva-tefutsot, 1971); Sebastian Piątkowski, “Pomoc społeczna i działalność charytatywna w gettach dystryktu radomskiego (1939–1942),” in Marek Przeniosło, ed., *Dobroczynność i pomoc społeczna na ziemiach polskich w XIX, XX i na początku XXI wieku* (Kielce, 2008), pp. 172–177; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007); and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 181.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR; AŻIH (301/8; 211/405, 430 [JSS]; NMO, nos. 60 and 63); ITS; and VHF (# 4071, 18628, 33250, 42916, 26536).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 4071, testimony of Charles Feldman.
2. Ibid., # 18628, testimony of Jacob Goldstein.
3. Ibid., # 33250, testimony of Bernard Kerschenbaum.
4. Piątkowski, “Pomoc społeczna,” p. 174.
5. AŻIH, JSS, 211/430.
6. Sztokfisz, *Sefer Gnivoshov*, p. 406 (Yiddish).
7. VHF, # 4071.
8. Ibid., # 18628.
9. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 122, citing AŻIH, NMO, nos. 60 and 63 from late December 1941.

10. VHF, # 33250. VHF, # 42916, testimony of Leo Kuperman, also dates the ghetto's establishment in 1942.

11. Ibid., # 4071; # 26536, testimony of Frederick Weinstein.

12. Sztokfisz, *Sefer Gnivosbov*, p. 406 (Yiddish).

13. Ibid., p. 16 (English).

14. VHF, # 42916.

15. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, pp. 181, 208; Sztokfisz, *Sefer Gnivosbov*, p. 9 (English).

16. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 181; Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej dystryktu radomskiego podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 156, 179; Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 274; VHF, # 4071; Sztokfisz, *Sefer Gnivosbov*, pp. 9 (English) and 407 (Yiddish).

ILŻA

Pre-1939: Ilża, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Ilża, town, initially the center of Kreis Ilza (later Kreis Starachowice), Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Ilża, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Ilża is located 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of Radom on the Ilżanka River. There were some 1,900 Jews living in Ilża in 1939, comprising about 37 percent of the entire population.¹

The Wehrmacht conquered Ilża early in September 1939, and on September 11, Jews were already gathered in the street and forced to work for the occupiers, cleaning up the ravages of war. By the end of October, the Nazis had established a civil administration in Poland, and Ilża became the seat of the Kreishauptmannschaft Ilza, which was located in Distrikt Radom of the Generalgouvernement. Kreishauptmann Hans Zettelmeyer took his seat in the town, until he moved his office to Starachowice, which then gave its name to the Kreis on January 12, 1942.² Up to this time, some German SS and Police forces were based in Ilża; later only a Gendarmerie post under the command of Polizeimeister Hofmann remained.³

Antisemitic measures followed soon after the conquest of Ilża. On October 22, 1939, Zettelmeyer requested a list of Jewish entrepreneurs in industry and trade; their businesses were gradually expropriated over the following months. In combination with the prohibition on selling timber to Jews, harsh economic measures impoverished the community.⁴ Additionally, from November 29, 1939, all Jews had to wear an armband bearing the Star of David, so that everyone could recognize them as the Nazi's racial enemies.⁵

Zettelmeyer ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) with 20 members in November 1939; its leader was Baruch Kaminski. The council had to register all the Jews of Ilża and try to convince as many of them as possible to migrate to the Soviet Union. All those leaving voluntarily could take their more easily transportable possessions with them, whereas Jews grabbed without identification papers were deported to the Soviet territories at gunpoint; the Polish (Blue) Police were charged with implementing these measures.⁶ Moreover, in the autumn of 1939, the Judenrat was forced to deliver

two large "contributions" of gold to the German authorities, and while collecting these funds, several Jews were shot in the streets.⁷

In April 1940, a quarrel broke out between Jews and Poles due to disagreements over the use of a well. In consequence, with the aid of German occupation personnel, Jews were beaten and dragged through the streets.⁸ In the summer of 1940, the Nazis rounded up a number of male Jews and sent them to various camps in Distrikt Lublin near the border with the Soviet Union to construct fortifications. The conditions for these laborers were very bad. Most of those sent to Distrikt Lublin returned by 1941, but the raids to round up forced laborers continued.⁹

The Judenrat was responsible for the social and welfare issues of the Jews in Ilża. This was accomplished in cooperation with the newly founded Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee, which was based first in Ilża and later in Starachowice.¹⁰ Thus, the Judenrat was able to receive some funding from Kraków, totaling 4,500 złoty in February 1941 alone, which together with 16,000 złoty collected locally helped to sustain basic food distribution to needy community members.¹¹

An open, but nevertheless closely guarded, ghetto was established in Ilża by an order of Zettelmeyer issued on December 6, 1941.¹² The number of Jews in the town had steadily increased from 1,837 in May 1941 to more than 2,000 in July, as a result of the influx of refugees and deportees. In February 1942, there were 2,067 inmates of the Ilża ghetto, who lived in cramped conditions on a few streets east of the marketplace.¹³ As the available space seemed too sparse even to the Nazis, they initially intended to distribute one third of the Jewish population among surrounding rural villages. But since this plan clearly would have run counter to the aim of concentrating the Jews, it was soon abandoned and not implemented.¹⁴ Due to hunger in the ghetto, some Jews risked leaving it illegally to scavenge for potatoes, but the penalty for leaving the ghetto area was death.¹⁵

In June 1942, 210 Jews from Ilża were working for German industry.¹⁶ However, this contribution towards the German war effort did not protect the ghetto from liquidation. In the months prior to its liquidation, and possibly also during the deportation Aktion, a number of male and female Jewish youths were selected for labor, with some being sent to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) forced labor camp at Skarżysko-Kamienna. A few of the small number of survivors from the Ilża ghetto passed through this camp.¹⁷ On Thursday, October 22, 1942, German SS and Police units, with the assistance of local Polish (Blue) Police, surrounded the ghetto, marched some 2,000 Jews to the nearby railway station, and then deported them to the Treblinka extermination camp. Only a few inmates were able to escape. The Germans and their collaborators searched the ghetto for Jews in hiding, killing on the spot those they found.¹⁸

During the deportation Aktion, one group of Jews was selected and kept behind to clear out Jewish property from the ghetto. To these Jews were added some others who were captured subsequently, bringing the total up to about 100. When

their work was completed the remaining Jews were marched about 40 kilometers (25 miles) to the Starachowice forced labor camp.¹⁹

SOURCES A brief account of the fate of the Iłża Jewish community during the Holocaust can be found in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 75–76. Further information is contained in the town almanac by Jerzy Karol Madejski, *Iłża zapamiętana* (Radom, 2004), pp. 51–55.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR (Gouverneur des Distrikts Radom/39 and 100); AŻIH (NMO 55; JSS 211; 301/4339); IPN (Ob/177); VHF (# 8028 and 14497); and YVA (O-3/6764; M-1/E/1837; and JM/3489).

Stephan Lehnstaedt

NOTES

1. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 75–182, here p. 161.
2. Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom, 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), p. 49.
3. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), p. 82.
4. APR, Gouverneur des Distrikts Radom/39. Tagesbefehle Iłża, October 21 and 22, 1939.
5. Seidel, *Besatzungspolitik*, p. 228; and VHF, # 14497, testimony of Rose Wegman, who never risked removing her armband.
6. APR, Gouverneur des Distrikts Radom/39. Decrees of November 16 and 28, 1939.
7. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 76.
8. *Ibid.*
9. VHF, # 14497; Wegman’s brothers were taken to perform forced labor in Distrikt Lublin.
10. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 203.
11. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 76.
12. AŻIH, NMO 55, decree of Kreishauptmann Zettelmeier, December 6, 1941. Also see VHF, # 14497; Wegman confirmed that at least until her transfer to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp in the summer of 1942, the ghetto remained unfenced.
13. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 161.
14. APR, Gouverneur des Distrikts Radom/100. Report of JSS Radom-Land for January 1942, March 17, 1942.
15. VHF, # 14497; while Wegman did not risk leaving the ghetto herself, she mentioned that others did.
16. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 156.
17. VHF, # 14497.
18. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 85, 161; Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 275; and VHF, # 8028, testimony of Abraham Bleeman.
19. VHF, # 8028.

INOWŁÓDZ

Pre-1939: Inowłódz, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Inowłódz, Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Inowłódz, Łódź województwo, Poland

The village of Inowłódz is located 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) east of Tomaszów Mazowiecki. Archival sources report 519 Jews living in the village in 1939 and 490 in September 1939.

In the course of the September Campaign in 1939, the village was partially burned, and many of the Jewish homes and shops were razed. On December 10, 1939, the Jews were deported from Inowłódz. It is not clear as to where the estimated 120 Jewish families were displaced at that time, but many returned after January 7, 1940, when the Germans permitted them to do so.¹

The German authorities organized a Jewish Council (Judenrat), chaired by the 38-year-old tradesman Hilel Kociński, which included Szmul Desau and Berek Cymerman, among other members.

By March 1940, a Jewish self-help committee had been organized in the village with the intention of procuring some aid for the impoverished community. The committee included the above-mentioned Judenrat members (with Desau as chairman) as well as Dawid Indner, Fajwel Szajnfarber, and Josek Cymerman (treasurer). A two-member review commission controlling the distribution of welfare was composed of Jankiel Donner and Szmul Telerman. The committee managed to open a soup kitchen, but due to lack of funds, it was closed on October 30, 1940.²

Despite the difficult housing conditions, 20 Jewish deportee families from the Łódź area and Distrikt Warschau settled in Inowłódz sometime in 1940. Throughout 1940, 26 Jews worked in a labor camp outside the village.

By May 1941, there were 450 Jews living in Inowłódz, of which 206 applied for social assistance and were registered as “without occupation.” Six cobblers (financially supporting 20 family members) and two tradesmen (supporting 11 family members) were still permitted to keep their businesses open. At this time, 52 Jews were registered as forced laborers in Inowłódz. Their assignments included fixing roads and village sanitation.³

A ghetto in Inowłódz was most likely established initially as an open ghetto, but shortly afterwards—that is, by November 8, 1941—it was designated as sealed, imprisoning 600 Jews within it. On that day, Tomaszów’s Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) branch reported on the situation in Inowłódz to JSS headquarters in Kraków: “The recent decree forbidding Jews to leave the Jewish quarter has deepened the misery of those few Jews who still traveled around the villages and earned their living by crafts or trade.”⁴

The ghetto was located in the center of Inowłódz, encompassing terrain between the market square and the Pilica River, where the synagogue was located. This was a predominantly Jewish neighborhood before the war. The ghetto was

unguarded, but the Jews were forbidden to leave it. The German Gendarmerie from Tomaszów paid visits to Inowłódz.⁵

By April 1942, the ghetto's 545 inhabitants—including 172 refugees—were housed in 28 houses, which provided 78 rooms. The JSS estimated that at least 6.5 persons shared each room. The ghetto had no sewage system, and its residents drew water from wells.

After the ghetto was sealed in November 1941, a typhus epidemic broke out, lasting until March 1942. There was no hospital in the ghetto, but the Judenrat tried to provide free medical assistance and reopened the soup kitchen.⁶

An official branch of the JSS was organized in Inowłódz that same month. It included the Judenrat chairman Kociński, the 33-year-old bookkeeper Chaim Hersz Doner, and the 39-year-old tradesman Szmul Telerman. This composition of the JSS was soon criticized by a number of Jews in Inowłódz, who complained to the Kraków office in December 1941: "The Judenrat, which includes two poor cobblers, one poor tailor, and one tradesman does not fulfill the requirements of any JSS branch or Judenrat. They do not increase the income of our institution from local sources and they do not guarantee the proper use of our subventions." The Tomaszów JSS office investigated the matter but nonetheless supported their initial nominees.⁷

Secondary sources, including *Pinkas ha-kebilot* and the historians Krzysztof Urbański and Czesław Pilichowski, report that the Inowłódz ghetto was liquidated in August 1942, when its residents were transferred to the Tomaszów ghetto.

However, primary sources indicate that the ghetto lasted much longer, for example, possibly until October 1942. Around that time the Inowłódz JSS petitioned the Kreishauptmann for permission to open workshops there. Also, the Inowłódz JSS branch in its initial composition appears on a list of Kreis JSS branches in a letter dated October 12, 1942, addressed to the Tomaszów Kreishauptmannschaft Abt. Bevölkerungswesen und Fürsorge (BuF). Branches of the JSS in such small ghettos were typically dissolved on the ghetto's liquidation.

The October 1942 liquidation is also supported by another primary source: Ankieta Sądów Grodzkich, (ASG—Court Inquiries about Executions, Mass Graves, Camps, and Ghettos), which states that the Inowłódz Jews were deported at that time to Tomaszów's train station and from there to another unknown destination. The Gendarmes in the course of the liquidation shot two elderly Jewish women, who were unable to walk, and a child.

Accordingly, it is possible that the Inowłódz ghetto was liquidated in the second half of October 1942. Its residents would have been then transferred to Tomaszów, where Jews from the Kreis were concentrated.

The Germans conducted a large-scale deportation Aktion against the Jews assembled in Tomaszów from October 31 until November 2, 1942, in the course of which thousands of Jews were deported to the Treblinka extermination center; such a deportation would have included Inowłódz's remaining Jewish population.⁸

SOURCES The following publications mention the Inowłódz ghetto: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 129, 134, 185; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 199; and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 54.

The following archival sources include reference to the Inowłódz ghetto: AŻIH (210/365 [AJDC]; 211/449, 211/1035-1036, 211/1039 [JSS]); IPN (ASG); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; and RG-15.019M [ASG]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/365 (Inowłódz), pp. 2, 10–11; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/3035 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), p. 22; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/449 (Inowłódz), pp. 1, 3.
2. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/365, pp. 6–7, 10.
3. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/449, pp. 1, 3, 11.
4. Ibid., 211/1035, p. 22.
5. Ibid., RG-15.019M (ASG Inowłódz), p. 194.
6. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1035, p. 22; and 211/449, p. 3.
7. Ibid., 211/1036 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), pp. 30, 60, 66–67; and 211/1035, p. 22.
8. Ibid., 211/1039 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), pp. 48–49, 69. Also see RG-15.019M (ASG Inowłódz), p. 194; this source mistakenly dates the liquidation in October 1943.

IWANISKA

Pre-1939: Iwaniska, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The village of Iwaniska is located 55 kilometers (34 miles) southeast of Kielce. Immediately before the outbreak of World War II, 1,663 Jews were living in Iwaniska.¹

After the Germans entered Iwaniska on September 7, 1939, the village and its inhabitants initially remained unharmed. A small Wehrmacht unit was stationed in the village. The Polish local authorities—including the Polish (Blue) Police—remained in their posts, and the Germans did not interfere much in Jewish affairs. The leader of the Jewish community was Israel Hirsh Teperman. The German authorities later replaced Teperman with Szamszon Feder, who became chairman of the Jewish Council (Judenrat), which was established to transmit German instructions to the Jewish community. Until mid-1941, when the Germans imposed heavy taxes on the community, Iwaniska's Jews were generally able to protect themselves from deportations to labor camps through bribes.²

Orthodox and liberal Jews continued political infighting to such an extent that both groups assisted the Germans by

preparing lists of their opponents, whom they claimed were not complying with German orders. A number of these individuals were arrested and later transferred to labor camps.³

There were extensive interactions—both positive and negative—between young Jewish resisters and units of the *Armia Krajowa* (Polish Home Army, AK).⁴

On March 27, 1941, a transport of 1,000 Viennese Jews arrived in Kreis Opatow. They came fully equipped with luggage, food, and clothing. Around 70 percent of them were more than 60 years old and in poor health. From this transport, 75 people were transferred to Iwaniska.⁵

In May 1941, the *Judenrat*—led by its president, Szamszon Feder—constituted an unofficial Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee (based in Kraków; the Kreis committee in Opatów was established in December 1940) and opened a soup kitchen. It distributed free meals to all the deportees from Vienna and to a small part of the local poor. Apart from the Austrian Jews, there were also about 200 refugees from Łódź, Konin, Aleksandrów, and Kraków in Iwaniska, but the JSS did not provide a soup kitchen for them. By June 1941, there was a total of 1,574 Jews living in Iwaniska.

The official Iwaniska JSS committee (chairman: Feder) was established in June 1941. In February 1942, Feder was dismissed, and Szlama Goldwasser was nominated as the chairman. The JSS continued feeding deportees from Vienna and a smaller number of impoverished, local Jews. It also provided 40 poor children with additional food rations.⁶

Until May 1942, Jews were permitted to live in 150 towns and settlements in Kreis Opatow. On May 13, 1942, *Kreishauptmann Ritter* ordered that Jews were to be restricted to five towns and 12 villages in the Kreis—including Iwaniska. The Kreis's Jews were given only two weeks to move; after that, the 17 centers were all recognized as ghettos. Following this concentration, the number of Jews in Iwaniska's ghetto was 1,900.⁷

Although the ghetto was formally established in June 1942, the Jews were banned from leaving the (then) Jewish quarter sometime earlier. By the beginning of May, they were already obliged to obtain a paid permit to leave it. Due to this restriction, trade with local farmers declined to a minimum. The consequences were severe, and the material situation of the Jews in Iwaniska became “critical.”⁸

At the end of 1941, the German construction company *Organisation Todt* (OT) came to Iwaniska to conscript young Jews for forced labor. On the advice of Rabbi Rabinovitz and Zionist leaders, the young men hid in the nearby forest.⁹

In 1942, as the news arrived of other ghettos in the area being cleared out, Iwaniska's Jews, regardless of political orientation, came together and attempted to reach a consensus on their situation. The Hasidim were strongly opposed to the activities of the Jewish underground and chose instead to comply with German orders. The Jewish youths decided to avoid deportation by dividing into small groups and hiding in bunkers in the forest. According to survivor Yitzchak Goldstein, the resisters purchased guns and ammunition from former Polish soldiers and policemen and prepared additional bunkers and food supplies.¹⁰

According to Goldstein, immediately after the Sukkot holiday in 1942, a German *Gendarme* informed the Jewish underground that the Jews of nearby Raków would be deported the next day. The Jews in Iwaniska were convinced that their town would be next, and soon approximately 300 men, women, and children began fleeing to their forest bunkers, while some sought protection with Polish acquaintances.¹¹

The liquidation of the Iwaniska ghetto took place on October 15, 1942. Gestapo officers and Ukrainian auxiliaries first surrounded the town.¹² A Polish witness reports that the Germans arrived in Iwaniska in the morning. Shouting and yelling, they began pushing and beating Jews with their gun barrels, driving them terrorized from their houses to the marketplace. Parents fought to hold babies in their arms, while some people managed to snatch small bundles. A witness also saw Germans shooting Jews during this roundup.¹³ According to Goldstein, about 100 Jews were shot on the day of the deportation.¹⁴

In total, the Germans drove approximately 1,600 Jews into the market square.¹⁵ The houses were then searched; those found hiding were shot on the spot. Iwaniska's Jews were marched in a column for about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) to Ćmielów. From there, together with the Jews from the Ćmielów ghetto, they were taken to Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, where they were loaded on to cattle trains and sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. Only 1 Jew from Iwaniska, Israel Seltzer, is known to have survived the camp, by escaping from it.¹⁶

According to Goldstein, out of the 300 Jews who hid in the woods, he was the only survivor. These Jews divided themselves into small, leaderless groups that fought back only in self-defense against hostile patrols. In his 1979 article, Goldstein stated that the youth of the Polish underground, including his former Communist Party friends, assisted in capturing those Jews who fled from the ghetto. All those caught were turned over to the Germans. In his *Yad Vashem* testimony, Goldstein states that both the Germans and local Polish peasants were engaged in capturing Iwaniska's remaining Jews. Initially, Poles were rewarded with a bag of sugar and a liter of vodka for their help; subsequently, taking the clothes of the unfortunate Jews became their only reward.¹⁷

SOURCES Most of the information in this article is based on the following two sources: YVA, O-3/1252, testimony of Yitz'chak Goldstein; and Goldstein's published account “The Funeral,” *Letzte Neiyes*, April 24, 1979 (English versions of both can be found in *The Iwansk Project e-Newsletter*, no. 3 [March–April 2004]). Although by the same author, there are several discrepancies between the two reports. The entry's third main source is Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 70–72, which is based mainly on Goldstein's accounts. References to the fate of Iwaniska's Jews can be found also in Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and in an article by Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955).

Documentation regarding the destruction of the Jewish community of Iwaniska can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/366 [AJDC], 211/452 [ŻSS]); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [ŻSS], reel 25; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF (# 20037); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 70–72; Jerzy Tomaszewski and Andrzej Żbikowski, eds., *Żydzi w Polsce: Dzieje i kultura: Leksykon* (Warsaw: Wydawn. Cyklady, 2001), p. 189; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 163 (table 13), 181–182. According to YVA, O-3/1252, testimony of Yitz’chak Goldstein, Iwaniska’s pre-war population was approximately 6,000, of which 60 percent were Jews.

2. YVA, O-3/1252; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 25; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 70–72.

3. YVA, O-3/1252; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 71.

4. See Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 225; and YVA, O-3/1252.

5. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 140; USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 25; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 93–93. According to Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 71, the Viennese Jews arrived without basic necessities.

6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 25. According to Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Stein and Day, 1977), p. 339, two Judenrat members were representatives in the JSS branch, one of them the chairman.

7. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 200; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 116, 152–153; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 163 (table 13), 181–182.

8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 25.

9. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 70–72.

10. Ibid.; YVA, O-3/1252.

11. YVA, O-3/1252; Goldstein, “The Funeral.” The mass escape is also briefly mentioned in Dariusz Libionka, *Akcja Reinhardt: Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: IPN, 2004), p. 285; Trunk, *Judenrat*, pp. 466–467; and Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 129.

12. Paweł P. Reszka, “Pyta wojewoda świętokrzyski, pyta wójt gminy Iwaniska: Jacy kolaboranci?” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, August 31, 2007. In Goldstein, “The Funeral,” Goldstein, who was already in the forests, claims that the town was surrounded a day earlier, on October 14, 1942, by other units: namely, German Gendarmes and Polish firefighters.

13. Andrzej Martykin, “Widziałem zagładę Żydów w Iwaniskach,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 10, 2007.

14. Goldstein, “The Funeral.”

15. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 200; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 163 (table 13), 181–182; Tomaszewski and Żbikowski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, p. 189; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 179; and VHF, # 20037–2, testimony of David Gutman, 1996.

16. YVA, O-3/1252. According to Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp.

420–421, the ghetto in Ćmielów was liquidated at the end of October 1942. In “The Funeral,” Goldstein reports Jews being sent straight to Ćmielów and from there to Treblinka. According to Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001) p. 552, Iwaniska’s Jews went to the ghetto in Ćmielów and from there to Treblinka.

17. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 70–72; YVA, O-3/1252; Goldstein, “The Funeral.”

JANOWIEC NAD WISŁĄ

Pre-1939: Janowiec nad Wisłą, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Janowiec is located on the Wisła (Vistula) River, approximately 45 kilometers (28 miles) east of Radom. On the eve of World War II, approximately 300 Jews resided in Janowiec, comprising about 25 percent of the total population.¹

The town was occupied by units of the German armed forces on or around September 9, 1939. Owing to a lack of sources, it is impossible to determine the nature of the initial repressive measures taken against the Jewish community in the first weeks of the German occupation. However, in the area that became part of the Generalgouvernement by the end of October 1939, the Jewish population was the target of antisemitic attacks shortly after the start of the occupation. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, which served as the representative of the local Jewish community. During the winter of 1939–1940, Jews were obliged to perform heavy, manual labor: for example, they had to shovel the snow off the main roads that led into town. In the early spring of 1940, the situation of the Janowiec Jews worsened dramatically. In part, this was due to the closure of the bridge across the Vistula River that had hitherto been open to the public. As a result, the isolation of the residents increased. Still, the town attracted a large number of refugees and other individuals who arrived from other parts of German-occupied Poland. Many of them, particularly the Jews fleeing Warsaw, hoped to stay in Janowiec for a longer period, as the chances of survival there were better than in the rural areas.² This situation severely hampered the activities of the Jewish Council, as each individual who arrived in the town sought at least some modest financial support. In addition, each person who remained in Janowiec needed housing and regular subventions.³

In the spring of 1940, a total of 800 Jews were residing in Janowiec. The living conditions for the Jewish population were already severe, and they continued to deteriorate. Jews faced widespread hunger, starvation, a lack of clothing and shoes, terribly overcrowded housing, and the spread of disease. The poor and those in need received some support from the People’s Committee for Refugees and People in Need, a welfare insti-

tution under the leadership of a man named Grosman. This organization was subordinated to the Jewish Council. In May 1941, a total of 184 of the Jews in most need of support (65 locals and 119 refugees) were registered in their files. However, these numbers increased steadily. Despite a lack of financial resources, the People's Committee maintained a public kitchen that was able to deliver 17 meals (a thin soup and a slice of bread) per day. In July 1941, the People's Committee founded a branch office of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), with Dawid Hilf as its leader.⁴

In October 1940, the Nazis set the synagogue ablaze, burning sacred books and documents. The Bet Midrash, which was next to the synagogue, survived the fire, only to be destroyed later in 1942. The Jewish cemetery was razed, and the tombstones were used to pave roads and for other construction projects. The only building that survived the war was the *mikveh* (ritual Jewish bath).⁵

The precise date of the establishment of the ghetto in Janowiec is not known. The large influx of refugees by 1940 led to considerable overcrowding and ghettolike conditions, but at this time the rigid separation of Poles from Jews had not yet been implemented. According to historian Jacek Młynarczyk, Kreishauptmann Dr. Friedrich Egen in Radom ordered in December 1941 the concentration of the Jews from the villages in a number of specified places, including in Janowiec, which were to be designated as *Judenwohnbezirke* (Jewish residential areas, or ghettos).⁶ As a result, the occupation authorities declared the entire town of Janowiec to be a Jewish residential area, and every person that left this area without permission faced arrest and even the death penalty.

The influx of large numbers of refugees from Distrikt Lublin via the Vistula River and the resettlement of the Jews from the environs of Janowiec into the town caused the size of the Jewish population in Janowiec to rise to around 1,200 people by June 1942, a number about four times greater than in the years prior to the German occupation. Acute poverty characterized the life of Jews now crowded into the small town of Janowiec.

Since Janowiec was located quite far from a major railroad, the German authorities decided to relocate the Jews on foot or in horse carriages to Zwolen, in preparation for their deportation to the extermination camps as part of Aktion Reinhard. It is also likely that some of the Jews of Janowiec were selected as forced laborers to be sent to the labor camps in Skarżysko-Kamienna, Dęblin, and Kurów. On August 3, 1942, 1,200 Jews from the Janowiec nad Wisłą ghetto arrived in the Zwolen ghetto.⁷ Here they shared the same fate as its other residents. On September 29, 1942, almost all the Jews in Zwolen were deported in a single transport to the extermination camp in Treblinka to be gassed on arrival.⁸ It is not known how many Jews from Janowiec returned to their hometown after the war, but very few survived.

SOURCES Information regarding the Janowiec ghetto can be found in the following publications: Sebastian Piątkowski, "Żydzi Janowca, Kazimierza i Puław w latach wojny i okupacji

(1939–1945)," in Filip Jaroszyński, ed., *Historia i kultura Żydów Janowca nad Wisłą, Kazimierza Dolnego i Puław. Fenomen miasteczka—sztetl* (Janowiec nad Wisłą: Tow. Przyjaciół Janowiec nad Wisłą, 2003), pp. 205–206; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955). The figures given by Rutkowski for the number of Jews in Janowiec ("Janowice," 2,000) and also for the number deported from the Zwolen ghetto are probably too high. Additional information on the fate of the Jewish community in Janowiec can be found on the Web at www.sztetl.org.pl.

The following archival sources contain information on the Jewish community of Janowiec during the German occupation: AŻIH (211/456 and 1164 [ŻSS]; 210/369 [AJDC]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [ŻSS]; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

Sebastian Piątkowski and Martin Dean
trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTES

1. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 158. It should be noted that the name of the gmina was Oblasy, a neighboring village, but the county administration was located in Janowiec. Janowiec is a tiny hamlet directly adjacent to Janowiec.

2. AŻIH, JSS, 211/456; Piątkowski, "Żydzi Janowca, Kazimierza i Puław," pp. 205–206.

3. AŻIH, AJDC, 210/369.

4. *Ibid.*, JSS, 211/456.

5. F. Jaroszyński, "Bóżnica murowana w Janowcu nad Wisłą," in Jaroszyński, *Historia i kultura*, p. 226.

6. AŻIH, NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63, Anordnung (decree) and Zustatanordnung (amendment) of the Kreishauptmann, December 22 and 30, 1941, as cited in Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 122.

7. AŻIH, JSS, 211/1164 (Zwolen), pp. 61, 67; on transfers to Skarżysko-Kamienna from Zwolen, see Felicja Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), p. 36.

8. Piątkowski, "Żydzi Janowca, Kazimierza i Puław," pp. 212–213.

JEDLIŃSK

Pre-1939: Jedlińsk, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Jedlinsk, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Jedlińsk, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The village of Jedlińsk is located 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of Radom. The 1921 census registered 762 Jewish residents, constituting 51.1 percent of the total population.

German persecution of the Jews in Jedlińsk was comparatively moderate until 1941. Their forced labor was limited to 10 days a month in agriculture or various services for the

Germans. With their remaining time, Jedlińsk's Jews worked to make a living. By the end of 1940, most of their businesses had been confiscated.

The Judenrat set up by the Germans included Joseph Diamante (chairman), Leslau, Ajger, Geiger, and Wiener. It later organized a soup kitchen for the poor. A Jewish police unit was also set up.

The German Gendarmerie in Białobrzegi and some Schupo members detached to that unit paid visits to the village. There was also a small Polish (Blue) Police force in Jedlińsk.¹

In March or April 1941, 30 Jewish families from nearby Przytyk were transferred to Jedlińsk, as this village was cleared of its Jewish residents.² One of those transferred, Henry Aizenman (at the time 10 years old), believes his family was moved into the Jedlińsk ghetto. This period—the spring of 1941—is considered by several sources to be the time of the Jedlińsk ghetto's establishment.³ This also coincides with an order issued by Karl Lasch, the governor of Distrikt Radom, to his Kreis- and Stadthauptmänner to establish ghettos by April 1941.⁴

Other sources date the ghetto's establishment at the beginning of 1942, when restrictions on leaving the ghetto were intensified, including the application of the death penalty for those caught outside it without permission.⁵ For example, Idesa Bajtel and Frajda Bryner were arrested on February 28, 1942, transferred to the Radom prison, and sentenced to death for leaving the Jedlińsk ghetto. Bajtel was executed on July 7, 1942; Bryner, on August 1, 1942. In Jedlińsk, Schupo members Pflazgraf and Klos reportedly shot other Jews in February and April 1942 for the same reason.⁶

Following the introduction of the death penalty, food became scarce, which in turn forced Jews again to risk leaving the ghetto to buy rations illegally from Poles. With a local priest's knowledge, some Jews used a church passageway that bordered onto the ghetto as a smuggling point.⁷

The unfenced ghetto was located in the center of the village. Survivor Cwi Lenemann places it "on the left side of the country road leading to Radom, across from the commissariat" of the Polish (Blue) Police. All Jews living outside the ghetto's designated borders were forced to relocate. Poles were allowed to remain in their households on the ghetto's terrain. Signs warning Jews of the death penalty for leaving the ghetto were posted at its exits. They could leave it only for forced labor and with a German escort. Those exiting unescorted had to present a special ID with a photo. There is no information as to who guarded the ghetto. All Jews had to wear armbands with a Star of David emblem.⁸ With the transfer into the ghetto of the Jews from the village of Błotnica, the number of Jews living there exceeded 1,000.⁹

The ghetto was liquidated in July or August 1942, when its Jews were transferred to the Białobrzegi ghetto. A number were selected, while others volunteered for labor in the nearby Kruszyna and Wsoła camps. Reportedly 68 old and sick Jews were murdered during the liquidation Aktion.¹⁰

On October 1 (or possibly September 1), 1942, German-led forces liquidated the Białobrzegi ghetto by deporting its Jews to the Treblinka extermination camp.¹¹

Following the Jedlińsk ghetto's liquidation, by December 1942, a labor camp for Poles and Jews had been established on the site of a camp used previously for Soviet prisoners of war (POWs). It is possible that some of the Jews from Jedlińsk were prisoners there.¹²

SOURCES The Jedlińsk ghetto is mentioned in the following publications: Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 254–255; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 208.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (302/290, *Memoirs of Jews*); BA-L (B 162/6305); USHMM (RG-02.208M [*Memoirs of Jews*]); and VHF (# 2192, 2194, 16345, 21670, and 39189).

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1. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 254–255; BA-L, B 162/6305 (testimony of Genia Weisberg), pp. 200–203. There are contradictory testimonies regarding the German presence in Jedlińsk. Survivor Jack Waksal claims that Jews were able to leave the ghetto for work only under German escort; see VHF, #2192, testimony of Jack Waksal, 1995. In addition, a camp for Soviet POWs was established in Jedlińsk, presumably after the German-Soviet war started in June 1941.

2. Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 94–95.

3. VHF, # 16345, testimony of Henry Aizenman, 1996; BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 200–203; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 254–255; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 570. It should be noted, however, that precise dating is not possible on the basis of these sources.

4. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 82–83.

5. BA-L, B 162/6305 (testimony of Cwi [Herszek] Lenemann), pp. 241–243; Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 84.

6. Kazimierz Jaroszek and Sebastian Piątkowski, *Martyrologia Żydów w więzieniu radomskim 1939–1944: Wykaz zamordowanych, zmarłych, deportowanych do obozów koncentracyjnych i obozów zagłady* (Radom: Archiwum Państwowe w Radomiu, 1997), pp. 13–14; BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 200–203, 241–243, 247–249 (arrest order for Josef Pflazgraf, May 19, 1965); Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 254–255.

7. USHMM, RG-02.208M (*Memoirs of Jews*), 302/290 (Icek Heider), 1946.

8. BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 241–243; VHF, # 2192.

9. The number of ghetto inmates reported by Pilichowski et al.'s *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 208, seems most probable, taking into account the 1921 census results and information on the Jews transferred to Jedlińsk by the German authorities. Another historian, Rutkowski, maintains that there were 2,400 inmates prior to the ghetto's liquidation, which he dates on August 15,

1942 (1,400 persons) and August 25, 1942 (1,000); see “Martyrologia,” p. 156 (table 11). None of the other sources, however, report two separate phases to the deportation.

10. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 254–255; BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 200–203, 241–243; VHF, # 2194, testimony of Sabina Waksal, 1995; # 16345; # 2192.

11. October 1, 1942, is given by most Jewish survivors. See BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 191, 196, 205, 209, 223, 226, 234. Others, however, date it on September 1; see pp. 213, 217.

12. To learn more on the Jedlnia labor camp, see also Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 208; VHF, # 21670, testimony of Esther Birnbaum, 1996; and # 39189, testimony of Samuel Dresner, 1998.

JEDLŃIA KOŚCIELNA (AKA JEDLŃIA, POŚWIĘTNE, AND JEDLŃIA-POŚWIĘTNE)

Pre-1939: Jedlnia Kościelna, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Jedlnia-Koscielne, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Jedlnia Kościelna, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Jedlnia Kościelna is located northeast of Radom, 7 kilometers (4.5 miles) west of Pionki. During the 1930s, it was 1 of 19 settlements under the name of Jedlnia spread across an approximately 7-square-kilometer (2.7-square-mile) clearing within Kozienice Landscape Park. The two main sections of Jedlnia—Poświętne and Kościelna—are approximately 0.5 kilometer (0.3 mile) apart within this clearing.

The exact number of Jews living in Jedlnia after the German occupation is unknown. Wehrmacht forces were quartered in a local school, and according to survivor Chaya Luksenberg, the local Jewish men were forced to clean the German quarters.¹ Archival sources show that by August 1940 a Judenrat had been established in the village, which was chaired by Mendel Flumenbaum, with Nachman Kaplan as the secretary.²

As a part of a larger process of ghettoization of the Jews still living in the villages of Kreis Radom-Land at the end of 1941, Jedlnia was one of the smaller rural communities the Germans intended to liquidate by transferring its Jewish residents to a larger ghetto. However, according to the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) branch in Radom: “thanks to the efforts of the Main Council of Elders of the Jewish Community of Distrikt Radom,” the Germans allowed several rural communities to remain in place by creating official Jewish living quarters for them. For the Jedlnia Jews, the area of Kościelna was chosen as the location for a ghetto.³

The Kreishauptmann’s decree of December 22, 1941, and his verbal instructions of January 9, 1942, served as the basis for establishing “the Jewish residential district (*Judenwohnbezirk*) in Jedlnia-Kościelna.” The ghetto borders were delineated by another order issued and enforced on April 23, 1942, which established the borders as follows: “In the west, by the eastern construction limits of the Kozienice-Radom road. In

the south, by the wooden fence of the Zcaban Maria property and adjoining 1.30 meters [4.3 feet] further in a straight-line extension. In the north, by the property of the church community. . . . Insofar as a fence does not yet mark the border of the Jewish residential district, the fencing will be completed. In addition, the border will be marked with signs. In cases of doubt, the actual fencing, in combination with the signs listing prohibitions, will be definitive [in marking the border].” The order excluded from the ghetto an “Aryan bakery of Józef Szlachcic,” already surrounded by a wooden fence.⁴

At this time the Jedlnia Jews were forced to comply with German requirements to be ghettoized in their current place of residence. On February 13, 1942, the Judenrat reported to the JSS headquarters in Kraków that “it was ordered to construct delousing and disinfecting facilities, as well as to construct several houses—all of this under the threat of the deportation of the Jewish population.” At the time, there were 23 Jewish families in Jedlnia Kościelna; however, according to the Judenrat, each day more families arrived from settlements where ghettos had not been established. Most of the newcomers were forced laborers without a source of income.⁵

In April 1942, according to the JSS in Radom, there were only 80 Jews living in Jedlnia Kościelna.⁶ The German authorities pressured for the opening of the requested facilities, at a cost estimated by the Judenrat of 10,500 złoty. On April 27, 1942, the Jedlnia Judenrat sent to the JSS in Kraków another plea for assistance, informing them of the new “ultimate deadline”—May 15, 1942. By that time, the Judenrat had managed to collect 3,700 złoty, of which 1,700 had already been spent on housing. There was no chance to collect more money, as many of the local Jews performed forced labor in the nearby Siczki labor camp. On May 21, 1942, Kraków sent 600 złoty to help meet the German demands.⁷

A survivor of the ghetto, Jokhewed Norman, recalls that there were only three long houses included within the ghetto, which was surrounded by a wooden fence. Jews lived in overcrowded conditions, and there were many conflicts. Every day Norman’s father and two siblings were taken by truck to work in a gunpowder factory in Pionki; four members of the Luksenberg family also performed forced labor in Pionki. The Luksenbergs had not been resettled, as presumably they were already living within the designated ghetto borders. However, they were required to take in other Jewish families. Although Chaya Luksenberg does not directly mention explicitly the existence of a ghetto, she refers to the restrictions on Jews’ mobility: “we could not go out to buy food.” In the Norman family, most of the smuggling was done by the children. At one point, everyone in the Norman family contracted typhus.⁸

In the summer of 1942, the Germans informed those working in Pionki that they had to stay in Pionki, while the elderly, the women, and the children would be transferred to a different labor camp.⁹ Secondary sources confirm that 100 Jews were permanently transferred to Pionki in August 1942. That same day, the remaining residents of the Jedlnia ghetto were sent to Zwoleń. The Zwoleń ghetto was liquidated at the end of September or the beginning of October 1942.

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SOURCES The following publications make reference to the fate of the Jewish community in Jedlnia during the Holocaust: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), p. 165; and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 132, 155 (table 10), 156–160 (table 11), 177–180.

Archival sources include AŻIH (210/382, 211/478, 211/854-855); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]); and VHF (# 38958 and 42273).

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 42273, testimony of Chaya Luksenberg, 1998.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/382 (Jedlnia-Poświętne), p. 2; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/478 (Jedlnia-Kościelna), p. 1.
3. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/854 (Radom), p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*, 211/478, p. 5.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
6. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/855 (Radom), p. 12.
7. *Ibid.*, 211/478, pp. 4–6.
8. VHF, # 38958, testimony of Jokhewed Norman, 1997; and 42273.
9. VHF, # 38958, and # 42273.

JĘDRZEJÓW

Pre-1939: Jędrzejów, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Jędrzejów, Kreis center, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Jędrzejów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Jędrzejów is located 35 kilometers (22 miles) southwest of Kielce. An estimated 4,000 Jews lived in Jędrzejów in 1939. The Jędrzejów Kreishauptmann was initially Dr. Karl Glehn (September 1939–October 1940); he was succeeded first by Dr. Fritz von



A column of Jews who have been rounded up for deportation march out of Jędrzejów, n.d.

USHMM WS #33450 COURTESY OF GFH

Balluseck (November 1940–April 1942) and then by Bernhard Höfer (April 1942–January 1945).

An open ghetto in Jędrzejów was set up as one of the first in the Generalgouvernement in the spring of 1940, possibly as early as February. Located in the eastern part of the town, it included Kiliński, Pińczów, 3 Maja, Duch-Imbora, and Łysakowska Streets. Most Jews living outside the designated ghetto area had to relocate, although more than 20 families were allowed to live outside for some time. Guards watched the ghetto exits, but initially the Jews could come and go.

By this time Jędrzejów already had received 500 refugees, and more were coming. The newcomers were mostly from Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, in Silesia, and the towns of Zgierz, Łódź, Pińczów, and Szczekociny.¹

Dr. Hirsch Beer of Głogów organized the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee and opened a soup kitchen. On August 16, 1940, he was appointed a member of the Jewish Relief Committee for Kreis Jędrzejów (Żydowski Komitet Opiekuńczy Powiatowy, ŻKOP), which the Kreishauptmann established to take over the provision of welfare from the Judenrat. A number of Judenrat members, especially Pinkus Teitelbaum, tried to undermine Beer's activities.² Thus began a struggle for power that continued throughout most of the ghetto's existence.

The 14-member Judenrat and their families lived in the largest house in Jędrzejów, while the balance of nearly 4,200 Jews were squeezed into rooms that three or four families shared. Many accused the Judenrat of corruption.³

A Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) of fewer than 10 men was set up to keep order in the ghetto and to assist the sanitation committee responsible for the ghetto's cleanliness. It is not clear if they were also charged at that time with guarding the exit posts from the ghetto. Their commander was one of the Judenrat members, Jakób Mermelsztajn. According to survivor Renya Kukielko: “[T]here were very few men in the militia [Jewish Police] who had any humanity in them. Most of them behaved like beasts of prey, some even worse than the Germans.”⁴

On January 15 and 16, 1941, the Germans deported 600 Jews (105 families) from Jędrzejów to several other locations within the Kreis. The poor housing conditions caused many to return secretly to Jędrzejów over the following weeks. This operation decreased the number of Jews in the ghetto to 3,600. According to historian Adam Rutkowski, the Judenrat initiated the resettlement to avoid having to provide social services to these Jews; most of those deported were either poor refugees or other impoverished members of the community.⁵

In January 1941, 400 to 600 Jews, including women, cleared snow daily. By February, 100 were tasked with clearing snow, while many also worked loading wood. Later on, 220 young men were sent for forced labor in the vicinity of Lwów. A few of these men survived by escaping from the labor camp and returning to Jędrzejów.

By June 1941, the Judenrat had opened a hospital with 25 beds to serve all the localities in the Kreis (apart from Włoszczowa), under Dr. Beer's supervision. The hospital later treated Poles and Jews, although the latter bore most of the costs of its or-

ganization. The Judenrat also organized its own postal service at this time, as the local post office was forbidden to dispatch Jewish mail.

On the Kreishauptmann's order, the number of Jewish Police grew to 18 in June 1941. The following duties were added: guarding the ghetto, together with the Wehrmacht; enforcing the curfew; and combating smuggling and begging. In the summer of 1941, the Jewish Police conducted a series of round-ups of beggars, who were ordered to relocate immediately away from Jędrzejów.

By October 1941, the so-called Six, comprising the "most energetic" officials of the Jewish Police, were assigned solely to rounding up and escorting Jewish laborers, as well as checking the state of the ghetto's sanitation. In December 1941, the Jewish Police post was moved to 12 Pińczów Street, and its members received instructions to tighten their guard at the ghetto exits, as from October Jews could be shot for leaving the ghetto without a permit.⁶

A few members of the Judenrat were murdered in August 1941. Their names remain unknown. Shootings of Jews in the ghetto without pretext were frequent.

By April 1942, the ghetto leadership had been informed unofficially of the approaching evacuation of the Jews within the Kreis, but it believed the Aktion might be limited to the resettlement to the larger towns of Jews living in the villages.⁷

According to *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, the ghetto was enclosed in March 1942, when it was surrounded with a barbed-wire fence. Contact with non-Jews from then on was prohibited.⁸ In May 1942, 21 Jewish families previously holding official permission from the Germans to live outside the ghetto's limits were forced to relocate within it.⁹

By June 1942, Georg Wall had become the commander of the Jewish Police in Jędrzejów, now 20 strong. The ghetto had 3,807 inhabitants.¹⁰

Between August 17 and 24, 1942, the labor office (having been transferred to the ghetto) conducted the registration of Jewish women aged between 15 and 50. In June 1942, the Kraków JSS encouraged Jędrzejów's Jewish population to organize workshops; however, only shoemakers were interested in the project, as other craftsmen believed they could earn more working independently. At the time, there were 150 craftsmen and the same number of apprentices in the ghetto.¹¹

On August 28, 1942, Jews from the following localities were resettled to Jędrzejów: Sobków (800 persons), Małogoszcz (830), Brzegi (48), Węgleszyn, Oksa, Nagłowice (152), Prząsław (136), Mierzwin (120), Nawarzyce (193), and Raków. By September 4, 1942, 2,200 newcomers were concentrated in Jędrzejów,¹² bringing the total number of ghetto inmates to approximately 6,000.

The Germans liquidated the ghetto on September 16, 1942.¹³ That morning, all Jędrzejów's Jews were gathered in the market square. The selection was conducted following the arrival of Gestapo officer Ernst Thomas. Approximately 240 Jews were sent back to the ghetto; this included the Judenrat, Jewish Police, and their families. Fewer than 200 able-bodied Jews were selected for work at the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG)

ammunition labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna. An additional number of men were selected for labor at the Sędziszów railway depot. The remainder was herded to the train station and from there sent to the Treblinka killing center.

By the beginning of October 1942, the ghetto was reduced to three buildings. All the Jews—including women—were engaged in cleaning out the former ghetto and the train depot. They were able to keep their possessions; the authorities confiscated the possessions of the evacuated Jews.

There were rumors that by the end of the year all Jews would be evacuated from Jędrzejów. Although the soup kitchen was relocated there, there was nothing to cook because the Germans assigned only very small rations to the ghetto inmates. Beer doubted that the ŻKOP could continue its existence with less than 1,000 Jews remaining in the Kreis and no help available. He and Abram Solowicz (Szolowicz) were the only remaining staff. Beer, however, transferred some of the hospital furnishings into the ghetto and set up a seven-bed hospital, which he ran with his wife Regina and one helper.¹⁴

On November 4, 1942, Beer reported the following remnant ghettos existing in the Kreis: Jędrzejów (240 persons), Wodzisław (90), Szczekociny (40), Włoszczowa (250), and several dozens Jews in Sędziszów; another 500 or so Jews were in labor camps.¹⁵

The final liquidation of the Jędrzejów ghetto took place between February 22 and 24, 1942. Approximately 200 Jews were transferred to the HASAG camp in Skarżysko. Thirty-five were shot on the spot.¹⁶

SOURCES The Jędrzejów ghetto is described in the following publications: Renya Kukielko, *Escape from the Pit* (New York: Sharon Books, 1947); Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 81, 96, 101, 145; and Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 259–261. Additional information can be found in Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom, 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006); and Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004).

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/386; 211/483–494); and USHMM (RG-15.019M [court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 17; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.019M (Jędrzejów); Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/483 (Jędrzejów), pp. 1–2, 6, 9, 15; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/386 (Jędrzejów), p. 1. Also see *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 13, 1940, and May 6, 1942.

2. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/483, pp. 15–17.

3. For names, see *ibid.*, pp. 15–16, 27; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/386 (Jędrzejów), p. 2.

4. Kukielko, *Escape from the Pit*, p. 10; *Gazeta Żydowska*, November 8 and December 31, 1940, and August 27, 1941; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/483, pp. 15–17.

5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/484, pp. 25, 28–30; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 96.

6. *Gazeta Żydowska*, June 3, August 27, and October 26, 1941, and January 9, 1942; and Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 84.

7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/492, p. 30.

8. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 261; see also Kukielko, *Escape from the Pit*, p. 8.

9. *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 6, 1942.

10. *Ibid.*, June 28 and July 12, 1942; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 145 (table 6).

11. *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 23 and 26, 1942. Also see USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/489, p. 16; and 211/494, p. 24.

12. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 101, 145–146 (table 6); USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/489 (Jędrzejów), p. 38.

13. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 145 (table 6).

14. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 175; USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/489, pp. 41–43, 45, 48–49, 51–53, 54–55.

15. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/489, pp. 55–56.

16. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 145 (table 6), 172. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 262, date the final liquidation Aktion on September 2, 1943.

KAMIENSK

Pre-1939: Kamiensk, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kamiensk, Kreis Petrikau, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Kamiensk, town, Łódź województwo, Poland

Kamiensk is located about 60 kilometers (37 miles) south of Łódź. According to the Judenrat, there were 834 Jewish residents in the village in 1939. In June 1940, Załma Opoczyński was the Judenrat chairman, and Abram Kimelman was the Judenrat secretary.

The Judenrat estimated that 90 percent of the town’s Jewish houses were razed in fires caused by air raids in the initial days of the war. As a result, many Jews moved to nearby Gorzowice and Gomunice. Fearing the spread of diseases in deplorable housing conditions, the Judenrat organized a sanitation committee and a public bath “for delousing purposes” in August 1940. Doctor Leopold Betler (Better) was the Judenrat person responsible for sanitation issues. Until the ghetto’s liquidation, there was no outbreak of contagious disease.¹

In September 1940, on the German Kreishauptmann’s order, the Judenrat’s composition changed. Herszel Szajnfarber was appointed as the new chairman, while Załma Opoczyński was degraded to his deputy. The 16-member Judenrat also included Pinkus Dłużnowski as treasurer, A. Kimelman as

secretary, Herszel Opoczyński, and Nachman Żelichowski. Lejbusz Goldberg and Kasryel Mokrzański were responsible for provisions, Alter Szlamkowicz and Moszek Lichtensztajn managed finances, and Chaskiel Gliklich was in charge of Jewish labor. One refugee from Vienna, Otto Natowicz, was “the secretary in German language.” The Judenrat headquarters were located on 6 Zjednoczenia Street.²

There were 517 Jews living in Kamiensk in January 1941. By February 1941, there were reportedly 76 newcomers. Most of the Jews lived around the Market Square and on one of the main streets leading north of it (Piotrków), as well as nearby Głowacki, Konopnicka, and Zjednoczenia Streets.³

On February 23, 1941, the Judenrat opened a soup kitchen distributing 100 to 150 meals daily. The soup kitchen was closed on July 18, 1941, from then on working only intermittently. Icchok Wajzman, Abram Suher Gliklich, and Chaim Szmul Rozenwajg organized social assistance provided by the Judenrat. Kasryel Mokrzański replaced Rozenwajg in January 1941. At the beginning of 1942, an official branch of the Jewish Social-Self Help (JSS) was established in Kamiensk under Brygiel Lipman, Hilel Faktor, and Jakub J. Opoczyński.⁴

The number of refugees rose to 95 after more settled in Kamiensk in May and June 1941. In August 1941, there were 558 Jews, of which 73 still held private sector jobs. In July 1941, 25 Jews were performing forced labor, and by August their number had risen to 65. In October 1941, the number of Jews still able to support themselves had dropped to 26, as had the number of forced laborers (to 20). The Jewish population stood at the time at 570.⁵ Daytime child care managed by Gutermanówna was organized in the fall of 1941 for 34 children.

The German authorities established a ghetto in Kamiensk by the beginning of February 1942. In a letter of February 1, 1942, the local JSS branch expressed their “astonishment” on receiving less-than-usual financial help from its Kraków headquarters, “when the living conditions of all our residents have greatly deteriorated due to restrictions on all Jews’ movement.” The JSS expected that more than half of the Kamiensk Jews would be forced to apply for assistance in the near future. In May 1942, the JSS reported on the deteriorating situation of the ghettoized Jews “of whom the larger part made their living from going village to village—the route that was now closed.”⁶

The ghetto’s borders were delineated. The Jews were most likely allowed to stay in their destroyed neighborhood or a section of it. In February 1942, the JSS engaged in organizing agricultural training for 30 volunteers. It planned to use “three strips of land within the [Jewish] Quarter that are owned by the Judenrat” but was also interested in Jewish-owned land outside the ghetto. The farmers themselves offered the JSS to cultivate their fields, but the Kamiensk JSS branch feared the possible consequences and asked Kraków for advice: “Can we cultivate that land? Will not any harm come of it?”⁷

In May 1942, the community reported that it had received “Jewish land for our disposal” and had planted it with potatoes, beans, and millet. In July 1942, the Arbeitsamt refused to per-

mit the employment of Jewish laborers on nearby farms. It also made “the Judenrat responsible for immediate release of those who were already working in agriculture.”⁸

The Kamiński ghetto was liquidated in October 1942. Its residents, approximately 500 prisoners, were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 141 (table 4), 169, lists population numbers during the war.

Archival sources include AŻIH (210/395, 211/519–521) and USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/395 (Kamiński), pp. 6, 11, 17, 26, 29; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/519 (Kamiński), p. 27; and 211/520 (Kamiński), pp. 19, 24–25.
2. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/395, pp. 19–20; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/520, pp. 5–6.
3. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/395, pp. 26, 29–30, 35–50; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/518 (Kamiński), p. 22.
4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/395, pp. 29–30, 33; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/519, p. 17; 211/520, pp. 5–6, 24, 37; and 211/521 (Kamiński), p. 11.
5. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/520, pp. 5–6, 19, 33, 40–41.
6. *Ibid.*, 211/521, pp. 4, 19.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 6.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24, 39.

KIELCE

Pre-1939: Kielce, city and center, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Kielce-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The city of Kielce is located about 175 kilometers (109 miles) south of Warsaw on the Silnica River. By 1939, almost 20,000 Jews lived in Kielce, out of a general population of 60,000.

The Germans conquered Kielce on September 5, 1939. A curfew was imposed on the city, and every contact between the German military administration and the Jews was marked by violence, persecution, and humiliation. Within a short time Jews were being kidnapped on the street for forced labor, evicted from their homes by force, and ordered to clean public buildings and toilets, clear rubble, fill ditches, and repair roads. Kielce, which was in the area of the Generalgouvernement, became the center of 1 of the 10 administrative units (Kreise) in Distrikt Radom. On October 26, 1939, the administration of the city passed from the military to civilian authorities.¹ In November 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established under the leadership of Dr. Moshe Pelc, a surgeon who had close connections to Polish circles and was fluent in German.² In accord with a regulation that everyone had to work, Jews were taken on a daily basis to sites for various sorts of forced



Members of the Kielce ghetto administration pose around a desk in the Judenrat office. This photograph was part of an album prepared by the Jewish Welfare Committee in Kielce for presentation to the Judenrat chairman, Hermann Levi, January 1942.

USHMM WS #03282. COURTESY OF RAFAL IMBRO

labor, such as digging ditches, clearing rubble, repairing train tracks, cleaning, and hard labor in the quarries. In the summer of 1940, Jewish youth from Kielce were sent on forced labor assignments to the area of Bełżec, in Distrikt Lublin, where they were put to work along the Soviet border, digging trenches, building fortifications, felling trees, and performing other tasks such as diverting rivers, drying swamps, and paving roads.

In 1941, thousands of Jewish refugees from German territories that were to be cleansed of Jews arrived in Kielce. Among them were Polish Jews and over a thousand Jews from Vienna. By February 1941, the Jewish population of Kielce had grown to 27,000. The Judenrat initiated the creation of a number of jobs, especially for members of the free professions and Jews from the intellectual class, who could not perform hard labor. However, only a small proportion of the city's Jews found regular employment. The refugees struggled to earn a living, but debilitating hunger led to illness, and the number fit for labor continually declined. Pelc was occupied primarily with matters related to health and welfare. He struggled to communicate with the occupation authorities and finally concluded that he was not suited for the task. In the summer of 1940, as the impoverishment of the Jews reached its peak, Pelc decided, with the agreement of the Germans, to resign. His deputy, Hermann Levi, took his place, a well-to-do industrialist who owned property in Kielce and elsewhere and a man with connections and influence. Levi reorganized the Judenrat and tried to improve the living conditions of the Jewish population.³ But before he could show any results, the decree to establish the ghetto was issued.

On March 31, 1941, the town's German Kommissar, A. Drechsel, issued a signed document ordering the establishment of a “Jewish quarter” (*Jüdisches Wohnbezirk*)—a ghetto. Attached to the order was a list of 500 to 600 buildings, on 26 streets, which had been selected for the ghetto area and could hold at most about 15,000 people. The area of the ghetto was

15 percent of the general area of the city, and most of the houses were one-story high, with no running water or sewers. After five days (on April 5) the ghetto area was declared to be a closed zone infected with contagious diseases; it was surrounded by a fence made partly of stone and partly of wood and topped with barbed wire. Signs were posted along the fence in German, Yiddish, Polish, and Hebrew: "Sealed Area—Entrance Forbidden."⁴

With the transition to a ghetto, authority over the Jews passed from the civilian administration to the German police and the SS. Six weeks after it was closed, the ghetto was opened for passage by Jews with work permits issued by the Protection Police (Schutzpolizei, Schupo) and signed by Hans Gaier, the Schupo commander in Kielce and the dominant figure during the ghetto's existence. Movement into and out of the ghetto was through two gates, guarded by German, Polish, and Jewish policemen. Along with the establishment of the ghetto, a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) of several dozen men was recruited. Most were refugees who had arrived from Austria and the areas annexed to the Reich. Bruno Schindler, a German Jew, was appointed as the police chief, and his deputy was Gustav Spiegel from Austria. The Jewish Police were subordinated to the Judenrat. However, in the case of Kielce, they received orders directly from the Schupo and felt protected by their authority. Most Jewish policemen regarded the native Jews of Kielce as *Ostjuden*—miserable Polish Jews. They did more than what was demanded of them, and the head of the Judenrat was unable to prevail over them. Within the ghetto they were regarded as corrupt opportunists who blackmailed money from the Jews. They lived a life of luxury, and the entire Jewish community feared them.⁵

During the first months in the ghetto, everyone tried to adjust. The schools were shut down. An epidemic of typhus was one of the severe problems threatening the lives of the inhabitants, and the Judenrat established a special section for sanitation. Affluent Jews continued their charitable giving, and Hermann Levi faithfully fulfilled German orders. Everyone working in the Judenrat sought to find a place in its large administration for his own family members to work. By the beginning of 1942, the number of Judenrat employees had reached 4,000. They did not conceal the benefits they received from the other ghetto inhabitants. The entire ghetto knew that the Judenrat and the Jewish Police were not lacking for anything, even as many were dying from starvation and disease. In the summer of 1941, the Gestapo uncovered a Polish underground cell in Kielce, which included a number of Jewish doctors, including Dr. Moshe Pelc. In July 1941, they were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp where, within a few days, while working in a punishment brigade inside the camp, Pelc was murdered by an SS guard who stomped on his neck and strangled him to death.

Inside the ghetto there was no employment for the masses, and the work on the outside was so arduous that only a few heeded the call. This created a severe economic problem, which the Judenrat was unable to overcome. Beginning in February

1942, all Jews in Distrikt Radom, including in Kielce, received on average one quarter of the previous food ration. One could not survive on the monthly ration coupons. A black market developed, and the prices for food shot up. The ghetto inhabitants sold their last articles of clothing for a piece of bread, and children scoured the garbage for food. The task of finding food outside the closed ghetto fell on little children, who overcame fear and sneaked like petty thieves to the "Aryan" side to steal a few potatoes to smuggle into the ghetto. All the written testimonies, without exception, recall the terrible hunger that prevailed in the ghetto, the smuggling, and the difficulties in finding food.⁶

The winter of 1941–1942 was harsh and especially cold. There was no electricity in the ghetto, and it was impossible to put on furs for fear they would be confiscated. In most of the dwellings, they burned whatever they could, including cloth, furniture, floorboards, and doorposts. To provide some relief from the cold the Judenrat opened three coffee centers in the ghetto, at which about 1,200 liters (317 gallons) of coffee were served on a daily basis without charge, enough for at least 5,000 people. In addition to the soup kitchen opened in November 1941, the Judenrat opened another soup kitchen at the beginning of 1942, which served about 3,000 lunches a day. There was also a shop with food to purchase, subsidized by the Judenrat, and a local committee of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), which provided weekly food portions to Jews in the local prison, to Jews discharged from the hospital, and starting in May 1942, to about 1,000 impoverished Jews.⁷

The collection of taxes in the ghetto, on which the Judenrat's revenue and budget were based, was one of the greatest difficulties facing the Judenrat. By the beginning of 1942, most of those on the tax rolls could not meet their obligations. The burden fell on the well-to-do, who were not always impressed by the threats of the Judenrat, which resorted to force to collect the taxes. During the entire period of occupation, the Germans carried out acts of punishment, special *Aktionen*



Portrait of ghetto administrators and Viennese Jews standing in front of a home for the elderly in the Kielce ghetto. This photograph was part of an album prepared by the Jewish Welfare Committee in Kielce for presentation to the Judenrat chairman, Hermann Levi, January 1942. USHMM WS #03276, COURTESY OF RAFAL IMBRO

against the Jews, planned in advance for all of Distrikt Radom. Ernst Thomas, the head of the Gestapo in Kielce, commanded these Aktionen. Among these Aktionen were the “Communist Aktion” (summer 1941), the fur confiscation Aktion (December 1941–January 1942), the “intelligentsia Aktion” (April 1942), and others. There was no system of education or cultural activity in the Kielce ghetto, nor any religious life or organized programs for underground youth groups. Everyone was occupied with searching for a way to make it to the following day. In August 1942, 17 months after the ghetto was established, the expulsion of the Kielce Jews began as a total surprise, as part of the general liquidation of the Jews in Distrikt Radom.

It may be assumed that in August 1942 there were a few more than 24,000 Jews in the ghetto. On August 19, during the evening hours, a train with 50 closed freight cars arrived at the platform of the railroad station. The floors of the cars were covered with lime and chlorine. That night the ghetto was surrounded by scores of police of Sonderkommando Feucht, which arrived from Radom to carry out the expulsion. Among them were Ukrainian auxiliaries, and they were assisted by members of the Kielce Schupo. In three Aktionen between August 20 and 24, 20,000 Jews were sent to the extermination camp at Treblinka in three transports, averaging 6,000 to 7,000 people in each transport, with about 120 people in each freight car. The expulsion was directed by Gaier and Thomas, who were also responsible for the “selections” that were carried out. The evacuation was especially cruel. Since it was obvious to the Germans that the number of freight cars could not hold all of the evacuees, about 2,500 children, women, elderly, and sick people were murdered on the spot. They were torn to pieces by dogs or shot in the back, and the streets of the ghetto were strewn with corpses. More than 10 percent of the Jews being evacuated were shot to death immediately in the course of the expulsion.⁸

At the end of the five days, about 1,700 Jews were left at the site where the selection was carried out, next to the great synagogue, with about 150 women and 60 children among them. The men were people with work permits, doctors and Jewish policemen with their families, and some members of the Judenrat, including Hermann Levi and his family. All of them were taken to a number of streets in the ghetto, which was turned into the “small ghetto.”

There was no Judenrat in the small ghetto. Since Bruno Schindler, the commander of the Jewish Police, had been shot to death in the third Aktion, his deputy, Gustav Spiegel, a Jew from Vienna and a bloodthirsty informer and collaborator, was put in charge of the Jews in the small ghetto, which was essentially turned into a work camp. Most of the Jews remaining in the small ghetto worked at cleaning and sorting all the property and contents of the large ghetto; the others were taken to work at essential installations in the city and at the Kadzielnia quarry. From time to time several dozen Jews were sent to forced labor camps in the area. Many tried to acquire “Aryan” documents from Poles, and there were actu-

ally attempts, which failed, to establish an underground in cooperation with the Armia Krajowa (AK), the underground Polish Home Army.⁹

In January 1943, Gaier and some Gestapo men took Hermann Levi, his wife, sons, and daughters-in-law to the Jewish cemetery in Kielce, where they murdered them. In March 1943, about 40 Jews, mostly doctors and their families, were taken to the cemetery and murdered on the spot.¹⁰ On May 29, the small ghetto was surrounded, and the Jews were ordered to assemble at the site of the mass expulsion of August 1942. Then 50 children were torn from their parents (except for 3 who went into hiding) and were shot to death on the same day in the Jewish cemetery.¹¹ About 500 Jews were sent to the work camp at Pionki, and about 200 were sent to the Bliżyn camp. The remaining 800 were scattered among the Kielce work camps at Henryków, Ludwików, and HASAG (Hugo Schneider AG) Granat, where they were housed in shacks. Ludwików was a steel mill where they made frames for horse-drawn wagons. At Henryków, a carpentry plant, they made wooden parts for the wagons. HASAG Granat was a munitions factory. Conditions at these three camps were tolerable relative to other work camps in the area. Even here, however, several dozen Jews were executed by hanging, mostly men who tried to escape and were caught.¹² As the Soviet front drew closer, the Germans were forced to evacuate the camps in Kielce. During the first days of August 1944, Henryków and Ludwików were evacuated, and the Jewish prisoners were sent on transports to Auschwitz. The Jewish inmates at HASAG Granat were evacuated in stages between June and August and sent to various places, including Przedbórz, Skarżysko-Kamienna, Częstochowa, Buchenwald, and Leipzig.¹³ With a few isolated exceptions, there is no evidence of acts of rescue in Kielce, and there were no Jews in hiding at the time of liberation.

SOURCES Publications on the fate of the Jews of Kielce during the Holocaust include the following: Sara Bender, “The Extermination of the Kielce Ghetto—New Study and Aspects Based on Survivors’ Testimonies,” *Jewish History Quarterly*, no. 2 (218) (2006); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); Adam Masalski and Stanisław Meducki, *Kielce w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej 1939–1945* (Łódź: Ossolineum, 1986); Jacek Młynarczyk, “Bestialstwo z urzędu. Organizacja hitlerowskich akcji deportacyjnych w ramach Operacji Reinhard na przykładzie likwidacji kieleckiego getta,” *Jewish History Quarterly*, no. 2 (203) (2002): 354–379. There is also the yizkor book, edited by Pinhas Tsi-tron, *Sefer Kielce: Toldot kebilat Kyelts mi-yom bivasadab ve-ad bur-banab* (Tel Aviv: Irgun ole Kyelts be-Yisrael, 1957); and the M.A. thesis by Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, “Der Holocaust in Kielce/Distrikt Radom” (Universität Essen, 2000).

Accounts by survivors in book form include the following: Mildred (Mania) Feferman-Washoff, *The Processed* (U.S., 1979); Daniel Wiener, *Daniel’s Story: February 19, 1916–April 3, 2001* (Canada: Bill Wiener, 2001); and Alice Birnhak, *Next Year God Willing* (New York: Shengold, 1992).

Relevant documents and testimonies can be found in the following archives: APK; AŻIH (301/66, 254, 1309, 1705, and

3012); BA-L; BA-MA; IPN; USHMM (e.g., RG-15.031, Stadt und Kreishauptmann Kielce); and YVA (e.g., O-2/516; O-3/2985, 7433, 8911, 9147, 10792, and 11630; O-4/405; 58/2083; TR-10/673 and TR-10/911; M-49/E/1309 and 1704; M-1/Q/174).

Sara Bender
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NOTES

1. APK, 2652; and YVA, M-49/E/1705.
2. Birnhak, *Next Year God Willing*, pp. 6–11.
3. *Gazeta Żydowska* (German newspaper in Polish that served as the propaganda instrument of the German authorities in the Generalgouvernement) (1940) no. 32.
4. *Anordnungsblatt für die Stadt Kielce Nr. 7/1941*, pp. 2–5; USHMM, RG-15.091M, reel 14.
5. Feferman-Washoff, *The Processed*, p. 21; and YVA, TR-10/911, pp. 26–76.
6. *Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement* (1941), p. 595; *Anordnungsblatt für die Stadt und Kreishauptmannschaft Kielce* (January 1, 1942), APK; YVA, O-3/2640, p. 1; YVA, O-3/6782, 8911, 12285, 11630, 9147; also O-33/6442.
7. *Gazeta Żydowska* (1941) nos. 42, 45, 51, 78, 87; (1942) nos. 78, 83, 94.
8. YVA, TR-10/911, pp. 31, 79, 80–81; M-49/E/1309; M-49/E/1704; O-3/2985; O-3/7433; 58/2083; and O-2/516. Also see Feferman-Washoff, *The Processed*, p. 34.
9. YVA, TR-10/911, pp. 34–38; TR-10/673, p. 42; O-3/2985, 8911, 9147, 10792, 11630; O-4/405; 58/2083; M-49/E/1705; M-1/Q/174; Birnhak, *Next Year God Willing*, pp. 219–234; Feferman-Washoff, *The Processed*, p. 51.
10. Wiener, *Daniel's Story*, p. 34.
11. Feferman-Washoff, *The Processed*, p. 51; Birnhak, *Next Year God Willing*, pp. 225, 249–250; Wiener, *Daniel's Story*, p. 34; YVA, O-4/405; M-1/E/75; TR-10/911, p. 38.
12. Feferman-Washoff, *The Processed*, pp. 54–55; Tsila Liberman, *Tselinkab: Yaldab she-sardab et Osbvits* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002), pp. 39–44; “Di letzte 45 kinderlekh in Kelz,” *Fun letstn burbn* (Munich), no. 3 (October–November 1946): 34–35.
13. Feferman-Washoff, *The Processed*, pp. 55–62; Birnhak, *Next Year God Willing*, pp. 225, 279–281, 312–316.

KLIMONTÓW

Pre-1939: Klimontów, town, Sandomierz powiat, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Klimontow, Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Klimontów, województwo małopolskie, Poland

Klimontów is located 101 kilometers (63 miles) southwest of Lublin on the Koprzywnianka River. In 1939, on the eve of World War II, about 3,100 Jews resided in the town.¹

The first German patrol entered Klimontów during the second week of September 1939. Soon after their arrival, German forces assembled all the men, Jews and Poles, on the market square. They warned the local population not to offer any resistance and later released the detainees, shooting three people (two of them Jews) as the crowd dispersed. Over the

following days, German troops passed through the town, plundering Jewish stores and houses and beating Jews in the process.²

At the beginning of October 1939, the Germans established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) consisting of eight members. The men were nominated by the Polish wójt (civil administrator), Stanisław Losata, and initially Chaim Himmelfarb became the chairman. However, he was replaced after a short time by E. Tepperman, who was better suited to this position. At the end of October 1939, the German authorities demanded a large “contribution” from the Judenrat, and 10 hostages were taken until the sum was paid.³

In November 1939, when the Generalgouvernement was established, Klimontów was incorporated into Kreis Opatow, within Distrikt Radom. Deportation Aktions against the Jewish population in Kreis Opatow, including Klimontów, were organized and carried out by the Security Police detachment (Sipo-Aussendienststelle) in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. The German Gendarmerie and Polish auxiliary police also participated in these operations.

In March 1940, the Germans ordered the reconstitution of the Jewish Council, now headed by Motl Shuldman. A Jewish police force was also formed to assist the Judenrat. In the period 1939–1941, the German authorities implemented a series of discriminatory policies against the Jewish population in Klimontów. The occupying forces confiscated Jewish property, ordered all Jews to register and wear distinguishing patches, and prohibited them from moving outside designated areas. The Jews were also forced to perform various kinds of heavy physical labor. Some 100 men had to be provided every day by the Judenrat. The most grueling labor was in a stone quarry at Międzygórz, 18 kilometers (11 miles) to the northeast of Klimontów. About 60 Jewish workers were escorted there each week under close guard from April 1941. The overseers beat the workers if they failed to meet their work quotas. There was some criticism of the Judenrat and Jewish Police, as they and their families were generally exempted from the most onerous forced labor tasks. It was also possible for the more wealthy Jews to pay for substitutes to avoid forced labor, which produced an income for the welfare measures organized by the Judenrat.⁴

In January 1941, the Jewish population was 3,746, and by April 1941 it had risen to 3,872.⁵ Despite transfers for forced labor, the Jewish population increased due to the arrival of refugees from other places and the resettlement of Jews from the surrounding villages. There were also movement restrictions within the town: Jews were no longer permitted to use the market square, and those who lived on the square could only enter their houses from the rear.⁶ From mid-October 1941, German announcements threatened the death penalty for Jews caught outside the town without permission. In December 1941, the Germans demanded that Jews surrender all fur items and winter clothing for the use of the German army. Failure to comply with this order could mean the death penalty.

On May 13, 1942, the Kreishauptmann in Opatów issued orders for the creation of 15 ghettos in the Kreis by June 1,

1942. Among those created was the ghetto of Klimontów.⁷ The ghetto was located on the market square and the adjoining streets. It remained an open ghetto, with no fence surrounding it. At each exit from the town large signs warned: “No Jews permitted past this point.” German patrols with dogs caught at least 3 Jews outside the town and shot them.⁸ The ghetto contained about 3,900 Jews, including a few hundred Jewish displaced persons (some of whom had been deported from Vienna).⁹ In the summer of 1942, about 300 Jews were sent to the forced labor camp at Skarżysko-Kamienna. When one of them illegally returned home, in August 1942 the German police shot all of his 14 relatives and another 22 Jews in a punitive reprisal.¹⁰

On October 30, 1942, the ghetto in Klimontów was liquidated. At 5:00 A.M. German police and Ukrainian auxiliaries surrounded the town and ordered all the Jews to gather in the market square. The German authorities selected 150 of them for the purpose of specialized labor and sent them to a labor camp. Another 65 people, including members of the Judenrat and Jewish Police, initially remained in Klimontów to collect and sort out Jewish property. The bulk of the Jewish population—about 3,700 people—was escorted to the train station at Nadbrzezie near Sandomierz, where they were loaded onto freight cars (120 people in each) destined for the extermination camp at Treblinka. As the Jews were marched to the railway station, the German police shot about 80 elderly and sick people who could not keep up. After the liquidation of the ghetto in the village, the remaining 300 or so Jews, including a number who emerged from hiding, were taken to the ghetto in Sandomierz on November 15, 1942. Polish (Blue) Police and firefighters searched the former Jewish houses for Jews in hiding or any remaining property for weeks afterwards.¹¹ Only a few Jews from the town survived the German occupation in the forced labor camps, in the forests, or in hiding.

SOURCES Articles on the destruction of the Jewish population of Klimontów can be found in L. Zylberberg, *A Yeed fun Klementov Dertzeit* (Warsaw, 1947); Mordechai Pentshiner, “Churban Klimontov,” *YIVO Bleter* (New York) 30: 1 (1947): 147–152; and in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 505–508. An annotated English translation prepared by Alex P. Korn of the article in *Pinkas ha-kebilot* has been published electronically by JewishGen (October 7, 2005).

Documents describing the fate of the Jews of Klimontów can be found in the following archives: IPN; USHMM (RG-15.019M; RG-03.020; and Acc.1995.A.1187); VHF; and YVA (e.g., O-16/379; O-21/15, 16, 17, and 19; M-1/E/1115; M-1/Q/36 and 196).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 505–506.

2. Zylberberg, *A Yeed fun Klementov*, pp. 11–12; USHMM, Acc.1995.A.1187, Mordechai Penczyner, “The Destruction of Klimontow,” testimony to the Historical Committee in Stuttgart (English translation). This is probably another version of his published testimony; see Pentshiner, “Churban Klimontov,” pp. 147–152.

3. Zylberberg, *A Yeed fun Klementov*, p. 14; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 507.

4. USHMM, Acc.1995.A.1187.

5. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955), table 13.

6. Zylberberg, *A Yeed fun Klementov*, p. 31.

7. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 85–86; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 152–153.

8. USHMM, Acc.1995.A.1187.

9. *Ibid.*, RG-15.019M, reel 14 (IPN, ASG, sygn. 47, p. 180).

10. Zylberberg, *A Yeed fun Klementov*, pp. 36–39. USHMM, Acc.1995.A.1187, gives slightly different details regarding this event.

11. Zylberberg, *A Yeed fun Klementov*, pp. 42–50; USHMM, Acc.1995.A.1187; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 507–508.

KLWÓW

Pre-1939: Klwów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Klwów, Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Klwów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The village of Klwów is located 41 kilometers (25.5 miles) northwest of Radom. The 1921 census registered 297 Jewish residents, constituting 30.7 percent of the total population.

According to survivor Mosheh Goldblat, soon after occupying the village in September 1939, the German Gestapo ordered all Jews aged 17 to 80 to dismantle their wooden synagogue, saw the wood into small pieces, and load it onto buses. Under severe beatings, Goldblat was forced to destroy the synagogue’s Ten Commandments.

Next, forced labor was introduced for the Jews of Klwów. Dragged from their homes, they were assigned to carry water and coal, as well as chop wood for the German forces quartered in a local school.¹

At the time 50 local Jewish families were living in the village. The Germans organized a Judenrat chaired by J. Poznański.

Many of the refugees who soon settled in Klwów were from the town of Mława, which was incorporated into the Reich at the end of 1939. By the end of 1940, they had organized their own refugee committee—Komitet Ziomkostwa Mławskiego.

By February 1941, the small, local Jewish community was supporting a total of 120 refugees from Tomaszów Mazowiecki and Mława. The Judenrat spent at least 1,200 złoty to maintain a soup kitchen serving the poor and refugees. On

February 28, 1941, 28 refugee families arrived in Klwów from Mogielnica and Jeżów, located in Distrikt Warschau. At the time, Poznański, who was actively trying to procure assistance from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), reported that there were already a few cases of death from starvation.² In May 1941, there were 546 Jews living in Klwów.

The date the ghetto was established in Klwów is unknown, but the first executions of those attempting to leave the ghetto were reported in 1942. Ten Jews (names unknown) were shot in a nearby forest for an escape attempt sometime in 1942 and possibly all at once.³ In addition, Estera Kac, née Rapaport, is registered as having been arrested in Radom on May 1, 1942, on charges of smuggling and leaving the Klwów ghetto without permission. She was incarcerated in Radom and executed on July 17, 1942.⁴

As for the ghetto's organization, it is not known whether the Jews were resettled to a specific area—and if so, whether it was physically enclosed. It is possible that they remained in their own homes, but they were forbidden to leave the village limits. An estimated 500 Jews lived in the Klwów ghetto.

The ghetto was liquidated on October 22, 1942, when its residents were deported to the nearby Drzewica ghetto (23 kilometers [14 miles] southwest of Klwów). From there, with all other Jews gathered in Drzewica, they were deported by train to the Treblinka extermination camp either on the same or on the next day, that is, October 23, 1942.

SOURCES Information regarding the Klwów ghetto is scarce. Published sources of relevance include Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 234; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 131, 134; and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 153–154 (table 10), 177.

The following archival sources include information on the fate of the Jewish community in Klwów: AŻIH (210/406 [AJDC]); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); and VHF (# 24765).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. VHF, # 24765, testimony of Mosheh Goldblat, 1996.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/406 (Klwów), pp. 1–2.
3. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo radomskie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1980), p. 83.
4. Kazimierz Jaroszek and Sebastian Piątkowski, *Martyrologia Żydów w więzieniu radomskim 1939–1944: Wykaz zamordowanych, zmarłych, deportowanych do obozów koncentracyjnych i obozów zagłady* (Radom: Archiwum Państwowe w Radomiu, 1997), p. 18.

KOLUSZKI

Pre-1939: Koluszki, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: town, Łódź województwo, Poland

Koluszki is located 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) east of Łódź. In 1939, 475 Jews lived there. On September 9, 1939, Wehrmacht troops entered Koluszki.

The first months of the occupation were marked by daily roundups of local Jews for forced labor to clear rubble from the town, fix the railroads, and also drain swamps in the vicinity of Koluszki.

German authorities soon established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) to organize the conscription of forced labor. Sz. Tyrangiel was appointed as its chairman, and Zalman Frydender from Łódź became the secretary.¹

When the western parts of Poland were incorporated into the Reich in October 1939, Koluszki remained just to the east of the new border and exposed to a stream of refugees and expellees, either settling in the town or passing through it. In August 1940, the Judenrat registered 1,017 Jews, 636 of them newcomers (171 families) mainly from Łódź and Brzeziny (located approximately 4 miles [2.5 miles] from Koluszki), both of which had been incorporated into the Reich. The Judenrat concluded that the proportion of Koluszki's original Jewish inhabitants to newcomers was now approaching 40 to 60, respectively.

Given this situation, the efforts of the four-member self-help committee—created by the Judenrat on August 4, 1940—provided little relief. The committee included Sruł Moszkowicz, Simcha Binem Wolberg, Jakob Szymkiewicz, and Mordka Lajbusz Tyrangiel. The committee kept pushing to be officially recognized by the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization in Kraków, as this could lead to more sustainable financial assistance. In the meantime, the minimal financial support received amounted to little more than a drop in the bucket.²

Koluszki's ghetto was set up on April 10, 1941.³ The Jews were forced to move to the other side of the village. At the beginning, the ghetto was not overcrowded, and the residents were able to smuggle food in fairly easily, usually during the night; even cows were smuggled in for ritual slaughter. Available information regarding the enclosure of the ghetto is contradictory; however, the residents were not permitted to leave its borders on pain of death.⁴ With time, killings of Jews for leaving the ghetto limits became frequent, and an estimated 40 inhabitants were murdered as a result. Many of the victims were buried next to the railroad tracks in Felicjanów Stary, near Koluszki. It is known that 11 of them were buried at the Jewish cemetery in Felicjanów, where members of the Gendarmerie executed them.⁵

A five-man unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) commanded by Riwen Berliner from Tomaszów Mazowiecki was organized to maintain order in the ghetto. According to one testimony, Berliner always beat his fellow Jews during his daily rounds of the ghetto.⁶

The creation of the ghetto coincided with the arrival of dozens of families from Warsaw and its environs.⁷ By May 1941, the ghetto had 1,177 residents, 873 of them newcomers. This resulted in a rapid deterioration of living conditions. On June 1, 1941, the self-help committee resigned and ceased all activity. Some ghetto residents found themselves living in the streets or in wooden huts, barns, and attics. Others had to share a single room with more than 10 people. In the summer of 1941, almost 300 ghetto inhabitants were children under 18 years old, for whom no social assistance was provided. Disease spread quickly; 182 Jews were treated for typhus in 1941.⁸

A new, but still unrecognized, self-help committee was set up in July 1941. Aside from reporting to Kraków on the situation in the ghetto, the committee was powerless. By this time, Koluszki's Jews were left with few sources of income, and begging became widespread. All Jewish enterprises had been closed. Only 25 artisans were able to run their workshops.

In September 1941, 140 Jews were registered as performing forced labor "in the Kreis," most probably in Słotwiny, located approximately 5 kilometers (3 miles) from Koluszki. According to one testimony, approximately 200 men from the ghetto performed forced labor six days a week. They were paid low wages and were given some soup at lunchtime. The work was not too hard. A Jewish man registered all workers; however, they were supervised by German and Polish managers, who treated them well. The laborers left the ghetto at 6:00 a.m., walking approximately 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile) to the train station where they would unload railroad cars. (While working, they often witnessed cattle trains filled with Jews passing through, as they could hear voices in Yiddish; sometimes they found letters or notes scattered on the tracks.) Then the laborers would walk to Słotwiny to work in agriculture. In the summer of 1942, about 250 Jewish forced laborers worked in Słotwiny in two shifts. Koluszki's Jews were ordered to provide their sustenance and set up a soup kitchen.

By the end of September 1941, about 3,000 Jews were squeezed into the ghetto. An official JSS branch was established in November 1941 and included the following officials: Binem Wolberg, Mordka Einfeld (Ajnfeld), and Jakub Szymkiewicz. It was subordinated to the Kreis branch in Tomaszów.⁹

In November 1941, the German authorities ordered resettlement to the Koluszki ghetto of approximately 200 refugees living in nearby settlements.¹⁰ In late November 1941, close to 600 Jews from the Tomaszów Mazowiecki ghetto (all refugees from other towns) were transferred to Koluszki. The catastrophic housing conditions worsened, as the deportees' arrival coincided with the ghetto being reduced in size; one quarter of the apartments was lost.

Most of the 500 evicted Jews (80 families) were left to wander around the ghetto; only at night were they allowed to stand (literally) in the single-room premises of the Judenrat. Through great efforts, the JSS provided some relief, but far less than was required.

Many of the Tomaszów deportees returned to the ghetto there after a few weeks. According to witnesses, 33 were caught,

imprisoned, and shot in the spring of 1942, in Tomaszów's forest, near some barracks located there.¹¹

The stream of expelled Jews coming to Koluszki was constant. In December 1941, when the Łódź ghetto authorities determined that there were too many Jews in the ghetto, they began simply to put them on trains to Koluszki. Likewise, in December 1941, a group of 30 Jews from nearby Żakowice was transferred to Koluszki.¹²

At the beginning of 1942, typhus was again on the rise, with 92 Jews infected in January and 75 in February. The hospital was equipped with only 30 beds. Two deportee doctors attended the sick; even minor operations were impossible, and hygienic conditions were catastrophic. Although the number of dead is unknown, it had to be significant. By June 1942, an orphanage for about 120 children was set up.

During the last months of the Koluszki ghetto's existence, the German authorities deluded its residents that they might be spared through employment in workshops and in agriculture.

The Germans liquidated the ghetto, with its 3,000 Jews, in October 1942.¹³ According to one testimony, the Gendarmerie, Gestapo, (ethnic German) Selbstschutz, and Polish (Blue) Police and firefighters surrounded the ghetto by 5:00 a.m. Approximately 50 Jews still managed to escape.¹⁴ Another source relates that 500 people were killed before the train departed for the Treblinka killing center, including a woman who was killed at the platform after giving birth to a child during the Aktion. A small group from Koluszki was reportedly transferred to the remnant ghetto in Ujazd, which was liquidated on January 6, 1943, with its residents also sent to Treblinka.

Four Poles from Koluszki were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp for helping Jews. Two of them, Szymon Bormański and his daughter, Danuta Opuchlik, were murdered there on December 24, 1942. On December 19, 1985, a three-person Koluszki family—the Krzyżanowskis—was recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations for hiding six members of the Buki family. The Bukis had escaped from the Rawa Mazowiecka ghetto and hid with the Krzyżanowskis from October 1942 until January 1945.

A German Gendarmerie official, Harry Szuman, was sentenced to death by the Regional Court in Piotrków Trybunalski for persecuting and killing several dozen Jews and Poles in the Kreis, including residents of the Koluszki ghetto. Szuman was executed on September 9, 1947.¹⁵

SOURCES Information regarding the destruction of the Jewish community of Koluszki can be found in the following publications: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955).

Relevant documentation and testimonies can be found in the following archives: AAN; AŻIH (210/412, 211/547, 211/548, 211/549, 211/550, 301/3079, 301/4071, Ring I/560); SOPi (sygn. 40); USHMM (RG-15.079M [Ring I], reel 22; RG-15.084M

[Relacje]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 29; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF (e.g., # 13377, 15847, and 23787); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 210/412. There are two documents identifying Ch. Kuper as the Judenrat's chairman, dated February 20 and July 17, 1941. Later correspondence is signed again by the chairman Sz. Tyrangiel. According to AŻIH, 301/3079, Frydlander was the chairman.

2. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/547.

3. *Ibid.*, 211/548, L. dz. no. 1/VII-1941.

4. *Ibid.*, 211/548, December 11, 1941; VHF, # 13377, testimony of Simon Ell, 1996; # 15847, testimony of Mirosława Scherer-Abramczyk, 1996; # 23787, testimony of Mina Fuks, 1996.

5. USHMM, RG-15.079M, reel 22, Ring I/560.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/412.

8. *Ibid.*, RG-15.079M, reel 22, Ring I/560; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29.

9. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/548, no. 7/41-S.P and 211/549, Sprawozdanie.

10. *Ibid.*, 211/548, no. 7/41-S.P and no. 12059/41-I/2, T/S.

11. Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), pp. 120–121; and AŻIH, 301/4071, testimony of Samuel Talman, 1948.

12. Dawid Sierakowiak, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak: Five Notebooks from the Łódź Ghetto*, ed. and with an introduction by Alan Adelson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 70–72; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29.

13. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 154 (table 10), 177–178; and Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 233.

14. AŻIH, 301/3079.

15. SOPi 11.

KONIECPOL

Pre-1939: Koniecpol, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radomsko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo śląskie, Poland

Koniecpol is located 41 kilometers (25.5 miles) southeast of Radomsko. When World War II broke out, 955 Jews populated the town.¹

On September 3 or 4, 1939, all the town's residents were expelled to the surrounding villages. When the occupying German forces allowed civilians to return, they found that their houses had been looted. Jews who before the war had made their living in various trades were now put to forced labor six days per week on the railroad and in gravel extraction. From the fall of 1939, a number of Jews were assigned to irrigation and canalization work on the riverbank, while being held at a labor camp in Zarębice near Przyrów.²

Abram Kornberg was the Judenrat chairman. According to *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, the Judenrat did not take advantage of

Koniecpol's Jews. Its two main tasks were conscripting Jews for labor and collecting punitive fines. Three such fines were imposed between September 1939 and January 1940. The community's rabbi and seven other Jews were taken hostage to ensure their payment.³

By June 1940, many Jews were sick with typhus. Christian doctors were forbidden to treat them. Later on, the community found a Jewish doctor, Marian Braun, who also headed the Sanitation Column affiliated with the Judenrat. At this time, there were approximately 700 deportees in Koniecpol—as the Judenrat put it—"wandering about town" and "with no roof above their heads."⁴

Information on the ghetto in Koniecpol remains sparse and somewhat contradictory. Those sources referring to a "ghetto" do not give the date on which it was established but note that it served as a point of concentration for Jews from the surrounding area just prior to their deportation.⁵ However, some sources (e.g., *Pinkas ha-kebilot*) claim that no ghetto was set up. As Jews were able to move within the town limits, they were free to trade with local Poles and ward off hunger.

By January 1941, a soup kitchen had been established, serving 200 meals daily. The Judenrat reported 700 children living in Koniecpol. In the course of a fur requisition operation, Hayim Neufeld was reported to the German police and shot after a fur garment was found in his house. A Jewish youth and his entire family were also killed during the ghetto's existence.⁶

In March 1941, a number of Jews from a transport of 1,000 Płock deportees destined for Radomsko were transferred to Koniecpol; all were later resettled to Częstochowa. By this time, there were 1,182 Jews living in Koniecpol, including 512 deportees.

In June 1941, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was organized to take over the provision of welfare from the Judenrat. Its three members were: Henryk Citron (chairman), Abram Kornberg (deputy), and Szmul A. Goldstein.⁷

By the summer of 1942, rumors of mass murders in the region and the likely evacuation of the ghetto were spreading in Koniecpol. Frightened Jews tried to get work at the local copper factory or in agriculture, as a possible protection against deportation.

In mid-September, the Germans set a deadline—September 28, 1942—for the Jews of Olsztyn (200 persons), Przyrów (ca. 770), Złoty Potok, Dąbrowa Zielona, Małuszyn, Sekursk, and Cielętnik to resettle into the Koniecpol ghetto.

German and Ukrainian guards surrounded Koniecpol in preparation for the ghetto's liquidation on October 6, 1942. A son of the Judenrat chairman was sent door to door to instruct Jews to report to the market square at 6:00 a.m. the next morning. Remnants of the Jews living in the vicinity were brought into the ghetto that day. Some, however, were shot in their places of residence—for example, 25 Jews living in Koniecpol Mały village. On October 7, 1942, 1,600 Jews were convoyed to the train station, loaded into wagons, and attached to a transport of Jews from the liquidated Częstochowa ghetto, destined for the Treblinka extermination camp.⁸

Jewish partisan forces commanded by men with the pseudonyms “Kuba” and “Bolek” reportedly operated in the area of Żłoty Potok, Chrzastów, and Koniecpol after the completion of “Aktion Reinhard.”⁹

SOURCES The Koniecpol ghetto is mentioned briefly in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 239–240; and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 101.

The following archival sources were used to write this entry: AŻIH (210/418, 211/556); and USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 29).

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NOTES

1. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 144 (table 5).
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/418 (Koniecpol), p. 3.
3. Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 233–235.
4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/556 (Koniecpol), p. 18; Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/418, pp. 1, 3.
5. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), pp. 252, 269, refers to the “collection ghetto” (*Sammelghetto*) in Koniecpol.
6. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, pp. 239–240; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 233–235; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 101; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/556, p. 1.
7. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 91–92, 144 (table 5); USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/556, p. 4.
8. Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), pp. 117–118, 197; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 233–235; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 101.
9. Fąfara, *Gebenna*, p. 509.

KOŃSKIE

Pre-1939: Końskie, town and powiat center, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Konskie, Kreis Konskie, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Końskie województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Końskie is located 63 kilometers (39 miles) southwest of Radom. There were 5,333 Jews living there in 1939.

After the occupation of the town in September 1939, the German authorities established two prisons, one of which was under the authority of the German police and Gendarmerie. A Gendarmerie unit was permanently stationed in Końskie.¹

On October 15, 1939, the Końskie Kreishauptmann Albrecht created the so-called Kolonia Żydowska (Jewish Set-



German troops order a group of Jews into a park in Końskie, where they were forced to bury German dead found in the area, September 12, 1939.

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tlement). It consisted of several streets, already densely populated by Jews, and to which other Jews had to relocate. Most of these streets were included subsequently in the ghetto. As a result, the Germans quickly took over the better Jewish houses and businesses. The Kolonia management was authorized to summon Jews for forced labor three days a week with “a shovel, a pickaxe, or a hammer.” It is likely that the organization of forced labor was supervised by the Judenrat, which was set up by the Kreishauptmann on the same day—October 15.

A former municipal official, Josef Rosen (“The Landrat” as Końskie’s Jews called him), chaired the Judenrat. Its staff also included Ezryl Weintraub, Simon Wajntraub, Wolf Frydman, Alter Stark, Nusyn Neufeld, Moszek Goldszer, Chaim Albert, Leon Rozenberg, Samuel Piżyc, and Dr. Hipolit Kon. Its offices were located at no. 50, 3 Maja Street.²

On October 20, 1939, on instructions from the Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (Nazi People’s Welfare, NSV), a self-help committee affiliated with the Judenrat was set up. The Kreishauptmann selected the pre-war leader of the community, Josek (Josef) Kinderlerer, as its president. The other staff consisted of Wigdor Chmielnicki, Szabsia Edelist, Iser Chabański, Izak Wajntraub, Jakub Dawid Ehrenberg, and Dawid Rozenblatt. Located at first in the Judenrat offices, it was moved in November 1940 to 1a Kazanów Street due to deteriorating relations with the Judenrat, which tried to control the committee.

By December 1939, the 2,000 refugees and expellees who had arrived from Łódź and other places nearby had set up their own Committee for Assistance to Refugees and Deportees. The “popular kitchen” that Kinderlerer’s committee opened in January 1940 served 400 meals daily, 80 percent of which went to local Jews.³

On August 16, 1940, 450 Jews from Końskie and its environs were sent to camps in Distrikt Lublin. At first they labored in the Wereszyn camp on the 20-kilometer-long (12.4-mile-long) Mircze-Uhrynów road, which was part of the “Otto Program.” By November, a number of these workers had been released,

but the remainder labored in the Oszczów-Waręż camp on an extension of the same road from Chełm to Sokal. The Oszczów camp was a punitive camp with harsh conditions. Although promised, the laborers received no help from the Końskie committee while in the camp or on their return. Kinderlerer visited the camp twice at the cost of laborers' parents but only achieved the release of his brother-in-law and nephew with a bribe.⁴

Most of the sources maintain that the Końskie ghetto was set up in the spring of 1941, but in fact the Kreishauptmann's order was issued on February 28, 1941. The relocation was completed within seven days. A special housing commission of the Judenrat assigned Jews to their new accommodations.⁵

The ghetto consisted of two parts connected by a narrow tunnel along 3 Maja Street and included the following streets: Kiliński, Piłsudski, Pocztowa, Bóżniczna, Jatkowa, Berek Josesiewicz, Nowy Świat, Przechodnia, Kazanów, Krakow, a section of the market square (Rynek), and 3 Maja.

The 30 members of the Jewish police squad set up in March 1941 were commanded by a deportee from Essen, Lejbusewicz, and included two of his brothers. Among the local policemen were Symcha Szwarcfutter, Moszek Złotogórski, and Uszer Sztajner. A Jewish post office was also set up, and a Jewish arbitration court judged on conflicts between Jews related to housing, personal issues, and money.

The ghetto remained open until the end of 1941, but some movement restrictions may have existed earlier. According to one source, a wooden fence surrounded the ghetto, while another reports barbed wire. The windows of buildings facing out from the ghetto were boarded up. The Jewish Police guarded the ghetto gates and the crossing between its parts. On the ghetto's closure, communication between its two parts was limited to a few hours a day. Poles were then strictly forbidden to enter the ghetto; however, many smuggled themselves in to exchange food for the work of Jewish tailors. The Jewish Police was authorized to solicit identification from Poles found in the ghetto.⁶

At the time of the ghetto's establishment, the percentage of Jews to Poles within the Kreis was 44 percent. In Końskie, however, it was 56 percent.

Just after the ghetto's establishment, German authorities deported 1,042 Jews from Płock to Końskie. They arrived on March 6, 1941, and were housed in a local *gymnazium* (high school). As the Końskie committee reported to Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Kraków, the newcomers were "in a horrible state, all have broken arms and legs." On the morning of March 9, 1941, all the deportees were suddenly taken to the train station and sent to nearby Opoczno; from there they were distributed among six nearby localities. Although the Płock Jews only spent a few days in Końskie, many sources report their arrival without noting their subsequent distribution to other towns, which has added to the confusion about the total number of victims of the Końskie ghetto.⁷

The Końskie JSS committee was criticized by various parties for being run as "a private enterprise for profit." A first investigation by the JSS headquarters in Kraków in Novem-

ber 1940 criticized the Końskie committee for nepotism and its failure to represent the interests of the 2,000 deportees from Łódź. The Łódź committee was the only institution providing help to the newcomers. While almost all locals were able to use the soup kitchen free of charge, newcomers had to pay. Thanks to Kinderlerer's pleading, however, the committee was not dismissed.⁸

A further investigation resulted in a decision in May 1941 to dismiss Ehrenberg, Wajntraub, Chabański, and Chmielnicki, to be replaced by Józef Millner (Milner) and a Łódź refugee. These changes were, however, blocked by an adviser to the chief of Distrikt Radom, Józef Diament, who took Kinderlerer's side. Finally, the committee was transformed into an official branch of the JSS in Końskie on May 22, 1941. Its staff members were Kinderlerer, Edelist, Wajntraub, Chabański, and Millner. Końskie's Jews reported that "the [JSS members] threaten us all with deportation for any complaints [to higher authorities]."⁹

By May 1941, the ghetto was populated by 7,400 Jews, of which 2,000 were dependent on social assistance. Up until the establishment of the ghetto, Końskie's Jews were still running 77 shops and 27 workshops. However, these numbers soon diminished, as businesses outside the ghetto were liquidated. The ghetto's sick initially were treated in the Kreis hospital in Końskie; the Judenrat paid for those unable to afford health services. A Jewish hospital was opened in June 1942.

In June 1941, 41 Końskie Jews were working in a nearby labor camp in Zagacie; 27 unfit workers had by then been released. Laborers performed drainage work under *Sonderdienst* guard. The camp was disbanded on July 9, 1941.¹⁰

On December 10, 1941, Kreishauptmann Kurt Driessen issued a decree imposing the death penalty for leaving the ghetto. The same decree also recognized as ghettos all other localities in the Kreis still inhabited by Jews.¹¹

By June 1942, the kosher kitchen reportedly served up to 2,400 meals a day; however, this service was sometimes interrupted. Deportees and refugees were forced to open their own "self-sufficient kitchen" in December 1941. Used also by the local "intelligentsia," it served 300 meals daily.

In the summer of 1942, 500 Jews were being conscripted for forced labor three days per week. All those enlisted had to report in front of the *Judeneinsatz* (Jewish workforce) office (Rynek 3; later Kazanów 1a) by 6:00 A.M. Checking in after 7:00 A.M. was punishable. Those willing to work six days a week could get additional rations from the Kreishauptmann. On May 22, 1942, 50 Jews were sent to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition plant in Skarżysko-Kamienna. By August 1942, the German administration had permitted workshops to open at 4 Piłsudski Street.¹²

As Końskie's Jews came to realize that the ghetto's liquidation was inevitable, all able-bodied inhabitants tried to procure work for themselves. Agricultural labor outside the ghetto was considered the best protection from deportation. All posts, including various committees and work brigades, were reserved for men. With a bribe, the Gestapo gave unpaid jobs to approximately 30 girls from rich families in a Hitler-Youth

School, to which Jewish Police escorted them. The Germans, however, suddenly liquidated this post in September 1942.¹³

Some sources mention that 1,500 Jews “from smaller nearby towns” were brought into the Końskie ghetto in summer 1942; but according to historian Adam Rutkowski (who also notes the same increase in the ghetto’s population), most Jews from smaller localities in the Kreis were transferred in the spring and summer to Radoszyce, although it lacked a rail connection.¹⁴

Kreis Koneskie was the last to be cleared in Distrikt Radom. On November 3, 1942, the ghetto’s Jews, surrounded by a cordon of Germans and Lithuanians, were gathered at the marketplace. Approximately 60 were shot in the course of the liquidation Aktion; another 70 were sent to Skarżysko. Approximately 6,000 ghetto inmates were taken to the train station and deported to the Treblinka killing center.

There are reports that 4,000 Jews from the liquidated Radoszyce ghetto were added to the Końskie transport, as well as reports of “a second deportation” of “3,000 Końskie Jews,” dated November 7 or 11, 1942. This second deportation was most likely of Jews from Radoszyce. About 600 people were murdered in the course of the deportation Aktion.

Around November 15, 1942, the Germans announced that those Jews who had avoided deportations could work in Końskie. Those who left their hiding places were housed in a ruined barracks. On the night of January 6, 1943, all 300 Jews gathered there were deported to the Szydłowiec ghetto. Szydłowiec, announced as one of the places where Jews could live legally, was liquidated later that month.¹⁵

SOURCES The following publications contain information on the Końskie ghetto: Halina Zawadzka, *Living in Fear on the Aryan Side* (Bowie, MD: Eagle, 2004); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2004); and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955).

The following archival sources were used in preparation of this entry: AŻIH (210/420 [AJDC]; 211/560-65 [JSS—Końskie]; 220/1 (Rady Żydowskie); 301/4824 [Relacje]; and USHMM (RG-15.084M [Holocaust Survivors Testimonies]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.073M [Jewish Councils]; and Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/565, p. 3; Czesław Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 241.
2. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 81, 135; *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 6, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/560, p. 16; and 211/563, p. 31.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/420, pp. 15–17, 33; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/560, pp. 2, 5–6; 211/562, pp. 6–7; and *Gazeta Żydowska*, June 5, 1942.
4. Józef Marszałek, *Obozy pracy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na

Majdanku, 1998), pp. 62, 67, 75; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/560, pp. 36–39.

5. *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 6, 1942.

6. USHMM, RG-15.073M (Jewish Councils), 220/1 (Końskie), pp. 1–331; AŻIH, 301/4824, testimony of Helena Rodeczycka (Rodzycka), n.d.; Zawadzka, *Living in Fear*, pp. 3, 7, 10–11; *Gazeta Żydowska*, June 24 and November 23, 1941; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 99, 135.

7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29, 211/562, pp. 4, 6, 10, 13–15, 21.

8. *Ibid.*, 211/560, pp. 8, 13–18, 31; 211/563, pp. 28–29.

9. *Ibid.*, 211/561, pp. 11–13; 211/562, pp. 9, 23, 53; 211/563, pp. 1, 7; 211/564, pp. 21–23.

10. *Ibid.*, 211/564, p. 36; 211/565, pp. 3, 13; *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 6, 1942.

11. Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 85.

12. *Gazeta Żydowska*, April 17, June 5, June 28, July 8, and August 23, 1942.

13. Zawadzka, *Living in Fear*, pp. 113–119.

14. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), 12:288; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 151–152 (table 9).

15. Felicja Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), p. 36; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 178; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 108–109, 151–152 (table 9), 159 (table 11); Zawadzka, *Living in Fear*, pp. 3–12; AŻIH, 301/4824; and Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 273.

KOPRZYWNICA

Pre-1939: Koprzywnica (Yiddish: Pokshivnitsa), town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: village, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Koprzywnica lies about 17 kilometers (11 miles) southwest of Sandomierz. On the eve of World War II in August 1939, there were about 800 Jews living in the town.

Koprzywnica was captured by the Germans about a week after the start of the invasion. Within a few days the Germans imposed restrictions on the Jewish population. Jews were forced to wear the Star of David, they were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks, and they were not allowed to have contacts with non-Jews. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established at the end of October 1939 and ordered to provide forced laborers. The Judenrat also had to meet demands for large “contributions.” One such demand was for the delivery of “80 pairs of boots of the finest leather” within 24 hours. Fully aware of the consequences of failure, all the men of the town fled into the forest to wait for the anger of the SS to subside.¹

On October 26, 1939, the Germans established the Generalgouvernement, and authority was handed over to a civil administration. Koprzywnica became a town in Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom. The Kreishauptmann was Dr. Heinz Ritter.

Conditions during the first few months of 1940 were relatively stable. One family, which fled from Warsaw to Koprzywnica in March 1940, was amazed at the freedom of movement enjoyed by the Jews in the small town. Religious life seemed to continue as usual, and everyone had enough to eat. There seemed to be scarcely any German presence in the town. All this changed when a 40-man SS unit came into the area and established its headquarters about 6 kilometers (4 miles) from the town. From time to time the SS would show their presence, arresting groups of Jews and taking them away for execution.²

In the course of 1941, Jews from other communities were brought to Koprzywnica. In January 1941, 420 poor Jews expelled from Radom arrived, and in March a group of at least 24 Jews came from Vienna.³ Their arrival exacerbated the overcrowding and hunger, as the Jewish population rose to 1,500 by June 1941.⁴

The flood of refugees was a heavy burden for the local community. The number of Jewish refugees eventually exceeded the number of Jews in the original population. Some financial assistance came from the Kraków office of Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS). The soup kitchen provided 100 hot meals a day, at no charge, to the refugees. The overcrowded conditions led to sanitation problems and the spread of infectious diseases. The small community of Koprzywnica worked valiantly to provide the refugees urgently needed assistance.⁵

On August 27, 1941, the Germans demanded an exceptionally large "contribution," an amount far beyond the means of the impoverished community. When the Judenrat failed to come up with the money, a German police unit from Sandomierz, joined by local German and Polish police, murdered the members of the Judenrat.⁶

In December 1941, the Germans ordered the establishment of a ghetto. At that time the Germans confiscated the fur garments of the ghetto inhabitants. During this period younger Jewish men were sent out of town to work camps. They worked along the Vistula River preparing fields for agriculture and at a munitions factory in Starachowice.⁷

By the summer of 1942, rumors circulated about the deportation of entire Jewish communities to places unknown. The Jews of Koprzywnica felt the noose tightening around their necks with no way out. The Judenrat received an order to provide 50 young men to work at the munitions factory in Skarżysko-Kamienna for an indefinite period. When the head of the German Labor Office, Heinrich, and his aides arrived, many Jews with local work permits went into hiding. Others paraded as instructed, assuming they would not be taken, because their local work was essential to the Germans. But this proved to be wrong. They were loaded onto trucks and taken to Skarżysko. None of their families were permitted to see them off, and the workers never saw them again.⁸

In May 1942, Kreishauptmann Ritter ordered that Koprzywnica was among 12 settlements and five towns that were to serve as concentration points for all Jews in the region (Kreishauptmannschaft). The resettlement into these ghettos was due to be completed by June 1. According to one account, the

area of the ghetto was reduced at the end of August 1942, and on German orders, the Jewish Police closely guarded the new boundaries. Even before this, Jews were forbidden to move freely in the town on pain of death. During the last two months of the ghetto's existence the Jews were compressed together in a small space under terrible hygienic conditions.⁹

By the end of September 1942, the concentration of the Jews from the smaller neighboring communities in the Koprzywnica ghetto had been completed, raising the number of its occupants to 2,140. On September 30,¹⁰ the ghetto was encircled by SS men and Ukrainian police, and the inhabitants were ordered to the market square. During the course of the roundup, the elderly, disabled, and sick were shot and killed. Many tried to flee or to find hiding places (although their prospects for finding shelter among a hostile population were slim). Some managed to get Aryan papers. Others escaped to the forest. About 1,600 people were escorted to the railway station in Sandomierz; from there they were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. Immediately after the expulsion, Polish police swarmed over the Jewish houses, stealing whatever goods were left behind and murdering any Jews they discovered. They tore down the houses and sold the rubble for building materials.¹¹

The chances for survival in the forest were also very poor. Polish partisan units killed Jews who fell into their hands. Some members of the Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa, AK) in the region also revealed the whereabouts of Jews in hiding. Very few members of the Jewish community of Koprzywnica survived the war.¹²

SOURCES In preparing this article, reference was made to Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 475–477. The yizkor book, edited by Elchanan Ehrlich, *Sefer Pokshivnitsa* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Koprzywnica in Israel, 1971), contains several articles on the Holocaust period, including material from the Yad Vashem Archives. The ghetto in Koprzywnica is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 242.

Documents on the fate of the Jews of Koprzywnica can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/2425 and 210/422); IPN; USHMM (Acc. 1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF; and YVA (M-1/E/31 and 443; O-16/9).

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NOTES

1. Ehrlich, *Sefer Pokshivnitsa*, pp. 205–206.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 204–205.
3. AŻIH, 210/422, letter appealing for help signed by 24 Viennese Jews in Koprzywnica addressed to the AJDC in Kraków, May 9, 1941. On February 19, 1941, the Nazi authorities deported 1,010 Jews from Vienna to Kielce; see Florian Freund and Hans Safrian, "Die Verfolgung der österreichischen Juden 1938–1945: Vertreibung und Deportation," in Emmerich Talos et al., eds., *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich: Ein Handbuch*, (Vienna: öbv & hpt, 2001), pp. 767–794, here p. 793.

4. Ehrlich, *Sefer Pokshivnitsa*, p. 245.
5. Ibid., pp. 207–208.
6. This incident is mentioned several times in the yizkor book. One account names a sadistic German Wachtmeister, Lescher, as being responsible. Another account dates the incident in 1942; see *ibid.*, pp. 235, 239–240, 244.
7. Henryk Sharf, “Geto-Tseyt in Pokshevnitse,” in Ehrlich, *Sefer Pokshivnitsa*, pp. 234–238, here p. 234.
8. Ehrlich, *Sefer Pokshivnitsa*, pp. 208–209. See also Felicia Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: OPA, 1996), pp. 34–37, on the various deportations to Skarżysko-Kamienna from August to October 1942 from the Opatów region.
9. Sharf, “Geto-Tseyt,” p. 236.
10. Ibid., pp. 236–238; this source gives the date of September 30, 1942, but a footnote corrects this to October 30. However, this latter date is more likely the date of the deportation to Treblinka from the Sandomierz ghetto. Another source, Dovid Schniffer, “My Town Plontch” (first published in Hebrew in Elhanan Erlikh, ed., *Sefer Stashev* [Tel Aviv: Ir-gun yotse Shtashev be-Yisrael, 1962]), indicates that the Aktion in Koprzywnica must have taken place before mid-October 1942; see www.plontch.net/ybta.htm.
11. Ehrlich, *Sefer Pokshivnitsa*, pp. 236–237, 245.
12. AŻIH, 301/2425, testimony of Zelman Baum (Wacław Kozieniec); *Benjamin and Vladka Meed Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors 2000* (United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 2000), 4:353.

KOZIENICE

Pre-1939: Kozienice, town and powiat center, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Kozienice lies about 80 kilometers (50 miles) southeast of Warsaw, on the Zagożdżonka River. In 1939, the town had slightly less than 9,000 inhabitants, of whom roughly half were Jews.

German forces occupied the town on September 9, 1939. The Germans appointed Marian Trug as mayor and an ethnic German from Wólka Tyrzyńska named Miller as his deputy. The main German police presence in the town was a squad of Gendarmerie under the command of Leutnant Hennig. From September 1939 until June 1941, there was a strong Wehrmacht garrison in Kozienice. The Selbstschutz (Auxiliary Police, subsequently renamed the Sonderdienst) and the Baudienst (Construction Service) were recruited mainly from local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutschen*).¹

In October 1939, the Germans appointed a Jewish Council (Judenrat) consisting of 12 members, with A.H. Perle as chair. The Judenrat had to implement all German orders concerning the Jewish community. Other members of the Judenrat included Shmuel Weinberg, Abraham Shabason, Pinkas Freilich, Zygmunt Halputer, and Josef Lichtenstein. On German orders, a complete list of Jewish residents in Kozienice was prepared.

It lists 4,248 individuals, including their first and last names, addresses, age, and occupation.² The surviving reports of the Judenrat to the Security Police in Radom contain detailed information on the changes in the Jewish population throughout the occupation until the summer of 1942. While the number of births remained unchanged from 1939 to 1941, the number of deaths climbed steadily, from 42 in 1939 to 210 in 1941, then 255 in the seven months to the end of July 1942.³

A number of Jewish charitable institutions operated during the occupation, including the Committee for Aid to the Poor (Komitet Pomocy Biednym), the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), and the “Drop of Milk” Society (Towarzystwo “Kropla Mleka”) to feed poor infants.⁴ At the end of October 1941, a hospital was opened under the management of Dr. Joel Wajner to deal with serious epidemics. In 1942, the Society for Improvement of Sanitation was established. When a severe epidemic of typhus broke out in the spring of 1942, the Department of Sanitation took measures to prevent its spread, including extensive programs of delousing and vaccination.

The Jewish Council mediated all contacts between the Jewish community and the outside world, serving as a post office, a tax office, and also a communal bank. It had to collect money from the Jews to pay the levy demanded by the Germans for the benefit of “needy Germans” (the Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt, NSV). The levy was 18,500 złoty in 1939, and further demands followed.⁵

In principle the Jews were not allowed to work independently. Only a few of them managed to find some gainful private employment or to continue their previous commercial activity. Many Jews and some Poles were recruited for forced labor, digging canals in the area between Kozienice and Gniewosów. From the first days of the occupation, the Jewish Council had to provide a quota of about 500 laborers per day. These people worked mainly on road construction and maintenance, in forestry and agriculture, and on the railroads. Other assignments included digging peat, working in the gunpowder factory in Pionki, and performing cleaning duties at various Wehrmacht and Gendarmerie posts, as well as at the Town Hall. Other groups were detailed to sweep the streets and clear snow in the winter. Some Jews were also employed by private enterprises such as the construction firms of Heinrich Koehler, Paul Gatz of Jedlnia, and the Kozienice-based companies of Czarnota-Bojarski and Eng. Gorczycki (on drainage works). The workers were paid very low wages. In order to survive, Jews had to stretch out their last reserves of food and money and sell off any remaining property; they also obtained some aid from the JSS and continued to make and trade items (illegally). Smuggling and begging were widespread.

There was very little in the way of cultural life, but Jews continued to pray in the synagogue. Religious observance and Jewish responses to adversity in Kozienice were undoubtedly influenced by the community’s strongly Hasidic character. A small school continued operating for about 70 pupils, taught by Rochama Frajlich.

Until December 1941, Jews were relatively free to move about within the town and even to visit the surrounding villages.

At the end of December, in response to orders issued by the German civil authorities for Distrikt Radom, the Jewish Council began to establish a Jewish residential quarter (*Judenwohnbezirk*) in Kozenice. All Jews living outside the designated quarter had to move into it, and any Poles living there had to move out. The streets within the Jewish quarter were 11 Listopada, Piłsudski, 3 Maja, Lublin, Krótka, Magietowa, Pieracki, Targowa, Drzewna, Browarna, Pusta, Czwartek, Szpitalna, Młyńska, Nowy Świat, Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej, and Harmenicka. The ghetto remained open for several months and was guarded only by the Jewish Police internally and the Gendarmerie externally. It was enclosed with a barbed-wire fence in May 1942.⁶ Anyone leaving the ghetto faced the death penalty.

After July 1942, Jews from surrounding towns and villages were systematically relocated into the Kozenice ghetto. By August 1942, a few weeks before its liquidation, around 13,000 Jews had been assembled in the Kozenice ghetto, which became immensely overcrowded.

The German police conducted the liquidation of the Kozenice ghetto on September 27, 1942. First SS forces, Gendarmerie, and Ukrainian auxiliaries surrounded the ghetto early in the morning. The Jews were forced to leave their houses and gather on Targowa and Kościelna Streets. The people were only allowed to take 15 kilograms (33 pounds) of luggage with them. The older people were loaded onto trucks; the sick and anyone attempting to resist, as well as the Jews in the hospital, were shot in the town. In total, at least 100 people were shot in Kozenice on this day. Columns of Jews escorted by Germans marched to the railroad station at around 9:00 A.M., watched by local inhabitants. On reaching the station, they were searched thoroughly and deprived of any valuables.⁷ The first train to the Treblinka killing center left in the afternoon, and the next, a short time later; there were 60 railroad cars altogether with approximately 150 people in each car. Railroad documents confirm the exact date on which these special trains (*Sonderzüge*) from Kozenice arrived at Treblinka.

The Germans retained in Kozenice a group of several dozen male Jews, the "Sonderkommando," in order to clear out remaining property from the ghetto area. This task lasted until December 1942. Less valuable belongings and everyday household equipment (e.g., bedclothes, underwear, clothing, shoes, furniture, and kitchen utensils) were sold to the Poles at auctions or plundered. The more valuable items were locked up and guarded in the offices of the Gestapo. In the spring of 1943, most of the former Jewish houses were destroyed. In the summer, Jewish tombstones were taken to pave the square in front of the Gendarmerie headquarters (the former vicarage) and other places, and the cemetery was eventually leveled.

The largest group of survivors was composed of those who made it through the harsh conditions in the labor and concentration camps until liberation; a smaller number managed to survive in hiding, usually with the aid of several Polish helpers. Moshe Grynberg and his wife, for example, were rescued by the Gawełek family from the neighboring village of Sieciechów,

who were honored with the title of the "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem.

There were at least two trials in postwar Poland concerning crimes committed against the Jews of Kozenice. In one, Bronisław Salomon was accused of robbing Jewish property and was sentenced to death.⁸ In another, Stanisław Sotr was convicted of denouncing four Jews to the Gendarmerie (he received sugar and a coat as a reward). He was also sentenced to death but managed to avoid execution by escaping from the Radom prison, where he was being held.⁹

SOURCES Published sources regarding the Jewish community of Kozenice and its fate during the Holocaust include the following: Barukh Kaplinsky, ed., *The Book of Kozenice: On the 27th Anniversary of the Savage Destruction of Our Former Home* (New York: Kozenice Organization, 1985); Anka Grubińska, "Skrawki opowieści," *Karta: Kwartalnik Historyczny*, no. 47 (2005): 46–63; Sebastian Piątkowski, ed., *Kozenice, monografia miasta* (Kozenice, 2004); E. Jaworski, ed., *Kozenice: Wędrówka przez stulecia* (Kozenice, 2002); Alina Skibińska, "Połowa miasteczka," *Karta: Kwartalnik Historyczny*, no. 47 (2005): 40–45; Ryszard Kucharski, *Życie codzienne w przedwojennych Kozenicach* (Kozenice, 2001); Alina Skibińska, "Życie codzienne Żydów w Kozenicach pod okupacją niemiecką," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, no. 3 (2007): 64–86; Marcin Urynowicz, *Żydzi w samorządzie miasta Kozenice w okresie międzywojennym 1919–1939* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 2003); and E. Stąpór, J. Kuśmierczyk, and L. Wiśniewski, eds., *Ziemia Koziennicka: Periodyk kulturalno-historyczny* (Kozenice), no. 14 (2006). See also J.A. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen. Der District Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt, 2007). Published memoirs and diaries include Gerry Sorkin, with David Bayer, *The Remarkable Odyssey of David Bayer* (Daytona Beach, FL: Marshfire, 2000); Stefan Janeczek, *Z przeszłości Koziennickiej* (Kozenice, 1981); and Kazimierz Mróz, "Kozenice 1939–1944 (fragment dziennika)," *Więś Radomska*, no. 4 (1993).

Other sources used by the author include several articles published in the wartime *Gazeta Żydowska* and personal interviews conducted by the author with local inhabitants of Kozenice and Jewish survivors now resident in the United States and Belgium. The large collection of glass negatives from the photographic studio of Chaim Izrael Berman is now located in the "Shalom" Foundation, as well as in the KARTA Center in Warsaw. The exhibition "The Portrait of Kozenice," which presented several hundred photos from this collection of around 4,500 images in total, was organized by the Foundation "Dialogue Forum among the Nations" and presented for the first time at the Festival of Jewish Culture in Kraków in 2006. The exhibit includes many portrait photographs of Jews, Poles, and Germans taken in the Berman studio during the war.

Available documentation on the fate of the Jews of Kozenice under the German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Ring I/452, 846, 1220/19; Ring II/210 and 460; 210/429; 301/1172, 2296, 3001, 3003, and 3525; and 303/V/582); IPN (SSK1 56 and 105); USHMM (Acc.2003.406.1 [Records of the Jewish Council in Kozenice, 1940–1942]; RG-50.030*0324; RG-50.488*0123-24); VHF; and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/886, 1347, 1542, and 1892; O-3/2523; O-39/105).

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NOTES

1. Based on photos from the collection of Chaim Israel Berman located in the “Shalom” Foundation as well as in the KARTA Center in Warsaw.

2. See USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1 (Lista mieszkańców).

3. *Ibid.*, Aeltesten-Rat der jüd. Bevölkerung Koźienice, reports to the Security Police, 1940–1942.

4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 29, April 11, 1941; and no. 47, June 13, 1941. See also USHMMPA, # 14325.

5. The post of Kreishauptmann was initially occupied by Dr. Friedrich Egen; he was later replaced by Dr. Justus Rubehn.

6. USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1, Aeltesten-Rat der jüd. Bevölkerung Koźienice, reports to the Security Police, December 31, 1941, and May 15, 1942.

7. *Ibid.*, RG-50.488*0124; and RG-50.488*0123—video interviews with H. Siczek and Władysław Krawczyk.

8. IPN, SSK1 105.

9. *Ibid.*, SSK1 56.

KUNÓW

Pre-1939: Kunów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kunow, Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Kunów, town, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Kunów is located 52 kilometers (32 miles) east of Kielce. In 1939, approximately 495 Jews lived there.

The first Wehrmacht units entered Kunów on September 8, 1939. Abuse, plunder, and forced labor began immediately. After the Red Army invaded eastern Poland on September 17, 1939, many young Jews fled eastward into the Soviet-occupied zone. The number of Jews in the village did not, however, change much, as Jews from western Poland replaced the missing locals.

Kunów's Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established on German orders in March 1940. Jankiel Brykman was appointed as chairman. The other members of the Judenrat included A. Szpiro, E. Różany, J. Adler, R. Hilf, M. Wajnszok, and A. Modrzewiecki; Lejbuś Zygman was the secretary. The Judenrat had to organize forced labor and was also the sole source of social relief. With the assistance of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC, based in Kraków), Kunów's Jews received a little help, starting in the spring of 1940.¹

In early December 1940, a group of 50 Jewish deportees was resettled in Kunów.² Another group of 100 deportees arrived from Vienna on March 13, 1941, followed by a smaller group on March 27. Most of the newcomers were over 60 years old and penniless. Many were in poor health; some were disabled. Half of the Viennese Jews were quartered in the local synagogue, while the remainder wandered from one overcrowded place to another. There was still no soup kitchen, no hospital, nor even a Jewish doctor.

The number of Jews in Kunów reached its peak in March 1941, when, according to the Judenrat, there were 600 Jews there, 100 of them new arrivals. By August 1941, the number

of Viennese Jews had decreased from 100 to 76.³ Many of these Austrian Jews found life especially hard in the small shtetls, devoid of the basic comforts they were used to, and a number resettled to larger towns.

Although in December 1940, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization was established to deal with refugee and deportee matters in Kreis Opatow, a branch was not set up initially in Kunów. The JSS committee in Opatów only sporadically transferred funds to Kunów for the purchase of food and its distribution to the needy. Unfortunately, this help was rather ineffective, as the Judenrat in Kunów had to pay black market prices. A lack of local initiative did not help, as, for example, the JSS could only subsidize a soup kitchen in Kunów once the village had established one using its own resources.⁴

The JSS committee in Kunów was established on June 10, 1941. The then-secretary of the Judenrat, Zygman, became its chairman, with the president of the Judenrat, Brykman, as his deputy. Within a month, a soup kitchen was opened, feeding initially 100 and, by August 1941, up to 170 people daily. At that time, the JSS registered 250 Jews seeking assistance.⁵

At some time in 1940, or possibly in 1941, the Germans established an open ghetto in Kunów. Large signs were put up on the streets exiting the ghetto, informing Jews that they were forbidden to leave. Later on, the ghetto was enclosed by a fence.⁶

In the summer of 1941, only 10 of Kunów's Jews were working in labor camps, all in the vicinity of Kunów. In the village itself, 20 craftsmen were still permitted to run their businesses, most of them shoemakers.⁷ There was also a number of Jews working in road construction, forestry, and care of the horses for the German Gendarmes stationed in Kunów. According to one of the Viennese deportees, there were no problems in Kunów; he described it as a “nice little ghetto.”⁸

On the order of Kreishauptmann Ritter in Opatów, effective June 1, 1942, Jews in Kreis Opatow were to be limited to only 17 points of concentration. Kunów was selected as one of the permitted locations. Noncompliance with orders to move to the ghetto was punishable by death. These designated locations automatically became ghettos.⁹ At this time, many of Kunów's Jews were moved to the ghetto in nearby Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, where the Germans forced approximately 5,000 Jews to live in houses on only two streets.¹⁰ In the summer of 1942, 15 Jewish youths from Kunów were sent to the labor camp in Bodzechów near Ostrowiec. There they worked in a quarry under harsh conditions.¹¹

At this time, rumors reached Kunów that the SS and Ukrainian auxiliaries were going from town to town, killing and deporting the Jews. These rumors were initially not believed; however, one day in September 1942, men in black uniforms were spotted approaching the town. Panic broke out, and everybody started running for cover. Many shots were fired. The intruders searched for Jews in hiding and killed a few of them. No deportation was conducted, but this incident shook Kunów's Jews out of their false sense of security.¹²

Another raid on the ghetto took place immediately after Yom Kippur (September 21). Kunów's Jews were ordered to assemble at the market square or they would be shot. On this

occasion, the Germans amused themselves by shooting five Jews selected at random. The others were released after witnessing the execution.¹³ A handful of Jews in the ghetto tried to save themselves by volunteering to work at the Bodzechów labor camp, where they worked for a German company installing electric power lines.¹⁴

At the end of October 1942, SS forces and Ukrainian auxiliaries cordoned off the ghetto. They removed the elderly and the sick from their homes, took them outside the village, and shot them. According to one witness, the market square, where all the Jews were assembled, was an “indescribable shambles.” The SS tore the babies from their mothers’ arms and flung them against the wall or crushed their skulls under their heels. A woman was seen choking her own child before the Germans could get to her. These scenes drove many people mad, and some tore at their clothes. It apparently took several days to complete the deportation of the Jews from the Kunów ghetto.¹⁵

Approximately 500 remaining Jews were sent to the Treblinka killing center.¹⁶ Only two of them, Velvel Hupert and his son Yehoshua, succeeded in jumping off the train. The son was shot, but his father made it to the Bodzechów labor camp. The 15 youths from Kunów sent to Bodzechów in the summer had escaped into the forest and dug a bunker to conceal themselves. At first, a partisan farmer brought them food and news, but this connection was broken when, after the ghetto liquidation, the Germans initiated a round-the-clock search for Jews in hiding. In view of the increased threat, the young fugitives returned to the Bodzechów camp. From there, they were transferred to the labor camp in Starachowice, where they worked in a munitions plant. Subsequently they were sent to the labor camp in Bliżyn; only 1 person from this group is known to have survived.¹⁷

SOURCES The main published source on the fate of the Jewish community in Kunów is the article in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 468–470. See also Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004).

Documentary sources include the following: AŻIH (210/441 [AJDC]; 211/629 [JSS]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 32; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]). Relevant survivor testimonies can be found in DCRO (D/DLI 7/404/12) and VHF (# 1867 and 22708).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 32; and Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/441.
2. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 32.
3. Ibid., Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BZIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955), p. 164 (table 13).
4. Marek Józwiak, “Akta Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Warszawie ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem dystryktu radomskiego,” *Biuletyn Kwartalny Radomskiego*

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

Towarzystwa Naukowego 23:1 (1988): 45–46; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 107; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 32; and Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/441.

5. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 18, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 32.

6. VHF, # 22708-13, testimony of Szmuel Nudelman, 1996, states that the ghetto was established in 1940, but this is not corroborated by other sources. Similar signs were erected in the Kreis capital, Opatów, in October 1941; see Zvi Yasheev, ed., *Apt: (Opatov); sefer zikaron le-ir ve-em be-Yisrael asher hayeta ve-enenab ‘od. Yizker-bukh tsum ondenk fun undzer geburts-shtot in Poyln velkhe iz mer nishto* (Tel Aviv: Yotse Apt be-Yisrael, Ar. Ha-B., Canada, Brazil, 1966), pp. 223, 226.

7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 32.

8. VHF, # 1867, testimony of Herbert Kaufmann, 1995; transcript of statement given by Janette Kaufman in Belsen concentration camp, April 21, 1945, D/DLI # 7/404/12, on the Web of the Durham County Record Office (DCRO) (www.durham.gov.uk); VHF, # 22708-13.

9. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 262; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 116, 152–153; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 85–86; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 470.

10. Marian Tadeusz “Bończa” Mazur, *Szumiały nam świętokrzyskie jodły* (Katowice: Zakłady Graficzne, ca. 1986 to 1999), p. 14.

11. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 470.

12. VHF, # 1867.

13. Transcript of statement given by Janette Kaufmann in Belsen concentration camp, April 21, 1945.

14. VHF, # 1867.

15. Transcript of statement given by J. Kaufmann in Belsen concentration camp, April 21, 1945 Kaufmann was at that time part of the labor detachment sent from Bodzechów to install a conveyor in the immediate proximity of Kunów; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 470.

16. Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 690; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 147; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 262; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 470; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 164 (table 13).

17. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 470.

ŁAGÓW

Pre-1939: Łagów (Yiddish: Lagov), town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Lagow, Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łagów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Łagów is located 113 kilometers (70 miles) northeast of Kraków, not far from the larger town of Opatów. In 1939, at the time of

the Nazi invasion, the Jewish population of Łagów was approximately 1,400 people.

German forces occupied Łagów shortly after the start of the invasion, in early September 1939. At this time some (mainly young) Jews fled to the east, to that part of Poland that was soon to come under Soviet control. As the Germans entered the town, they accused a local Jew of shooting at German troops with a pistol. In reprisal, the Germans pulled Jews out of several houses close to the incident and shot 32 people on the street. They also burned down the houses in this part of town near the market.¹ Within a few days of their arrival, the Germans started using Jews for forced labor. In the fall of 1939, the German authorities in Łagów established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which had to transmit German regulations to the Jewish community and meet German demands for forced laborers. Among the restrictions imposed on Jews was the wearing of a yellow Star of David and a prohibition on eating meat.² The German authorities also demanded large “contributions” from the Judenrat. However, despite dire threats, their exorbitant demands could not be met in full, on account of the impoverishment of the Jewish population in Łagów. Nevertheless, the Germans murdered hostages, searched Jewish homes, and stole what meager possessions they could find.

On March 12, 1941, a deportation train left the Aspang Station in Vienna with 997 men, women, and children on board bound for Opatów. Only 11 of these Austrian Jews survived the war.³ Most of the transport was resettled in Kreis Opatow, with about 100 of them being sent to Łagów. In July 1941, they were joined by a large group of refugees expelled from the city of Radom, who arrived empty-handed, barefoot, famished, and sick. They were housed in the Bet Midrash (study center) and the small synagogue. As a result of the overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions, a typhus epidemic claimed many lives.⁴

At some date before March 1942, with the assistance of the Judenrat, all the Jews in Łagów were resettled into an area around the market square, which became the Jewish residential quarter. This probably took place around the same time as the establishment of a similar open ghetto in Opatów in early April 1941. At first the Jews were permitted to move about with relative freedom. Unfortunately, only scant information on living and working conditions in the Łagów ghetto is available.

Surviving records of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization indicate that by May 31, 1941, 1,694 Jews were residing in Łagów; three months later, by August 31, the Jewish population had increased to 1,805. Of these, 73 were merchants and traders, and 89 were craftsmen; most of the latter were tailors and shoemakers. In addition, there were 32 general workers and laborers, 5 professionals, and 157 unemployed. Over 500 Jews were seeking assistance from the JSS and the Judenrat. The assistance was given in the form of food, clothing, fuel, money, housing, and medical services.⁵

In March 1942, the Jewish quarter in Łagów was enclosed with barbed wire with only one small gate and sealed off as a

ghetto. Leaving the ghetto was forbidden on pain of death. At this time the number of ration cards for Jewish laborers was reduced to one sixth of the previous total, and starvation in the ghetto greatly increased. In May 1942, the Jews from the villages around Łagów were brought into the Łagów ghetto, further increasing the overcrowding there.⁶

In July 1942, the Germans, working from a list prepared in advance, took 460 young men from the ghetto to an unknown destination. It is probable that they were sent to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory in Skarżysko Kamienna, as were many Jews from Opatów at this time, but this cannot be confirmed from available sources.

In August 1942, a rumor spread in the Łagów ghetto that the Germans were sending Jews from neighboring ghettos to extermination camps. Many began searching for hiding places. Some sought help from farmers in the vicinity, but only a few farmers were willing to risk giving aid to Jews. Furthermore, on December 15, 1942, the German governor of Distrikt Radom, Dr. Ernst Kundt, published a decree stating that anyone offering help to Jews would be executed. Nevertheless, there were a few individuals who hid Jews and shared their bread with them.⁷ One such person, Ignacy Bazoriski, was betrayed to the Germans and tortured to death in prison.

On October 27, 1942, SS forces, assisted by Ukrainian police auxiliaries and local Polish (Blue) Police, arrived in Łagów. Several days earlier, on October 20–22, 1942, the Germans had liquidated the Jewish ghetto in neighboring Opatów, sending more than 6,000 Jews to the extermination camp in Treblinka.⁸ In Łagów, the Germans broke into Jewish homes and forced all the inhabitants into the square next to the Judenrat building. The ill and the aged were murdered in their beds. Many children were also shot and killed in the town. On the square in front of the Judenrat, the Jews were grouped by family and lined up in rows. From there they were marched to the train station. Along the way more were murdered.

About 2,000 people were crammed into freight cars dusted with chlorine disinfectant and sent to Kielce, and from there they were sent to Treblinka. The Germans retained a few dozen Jews in Łagów, including members of the Judenrat, and put them to work sorting abandoned Jewish possessions, burying the bodies left on the street, and cleaning up the ghetto area. After a time these Jews were transferred to the Opatów ghetto, and from there most were sent to the ghetto in Sandomierz.⁹

SOURCES Additional information on the history and fate of the Jewish population of Łagów can be found in the following publications: Zvi Yasheev, ed., *Apt: (Opatov); sefer zikaron le-ir ve-em be-Yisrael asber hayetab ve-enenab 'od. Yizker-bukh tsum ondenk fun undzer geburts-shtot in Poyln velkhe iz mer nishto* (Tel Aviv: Yotse Apt be-Yisrael, Ar. Ha-B., Kanadah, Brazil, 1966); and Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 267–269. The ghetto in Łagów is also mentioned in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 700.

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Documentation on the persecution and destruction of the Jewish community in Łagów can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/667); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 33); VHF (# 532); and YVA (O-3/2973).

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NOTES

1. Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gębena ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), p. 21; Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości, Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach Polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo kieleckie* (Warsaw, 1980), p. 140; see also VHF, # 532, testimony of Leon Silberberg.

2. VHF, # 532.

3. See www.doew.at/projekte/holocaust/shoahengl/opatov.html.

4. VHF, # 532.

5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 33, Correspondence of Praesidium of the JSS with the delegation in Łagów (1941).

6. Alina Skibińska and Jakub Petelewicz, “The Participation of Poles in Crimes against Jews in the Świętokrzyskie Region,” originally published in Polish as “Udział Polaków w zbrodniach na Żydach na prowincji regionu świętokrzyskiego,” *Zagłada Żydów 1* (2005): 114–148.

7. See, for example, YVA, O-3/2973, testimony of Maria Guterman.

8. Yasheev, *Apt: (Opatov)*; pp. 234–235 and p. 18 (English); AZIH, 301/3328; and Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ba-kebilor: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 63–64.

9. VHF, # 532.

LIPSKO

Pre-1939: Lipsko, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Ilza (later Starachowice) Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Lipsko is located about 50 kilometers (31 miles) southeast of Radom on the Vistula River. On the eve of war in the summer of 1939, there were about 1,600 Jews living in the town, comprising more than half of its total population.

Units of the German 29th Motorized Infantry Division captured Lipsko on September 8, 1939. On September 9, German soldiers assembled all the men on the market square and shot several Jews, including the local rabbi, named Kronenblatt.¹ From the late afternoon through the next morning, the 3rd Battalion of Infantry Regiment 71 (part of the 29th Motorized Infantry Division) staged a pogrom in which between 60 and 80 Jews were murdered, most of them dying in the flames of the burning synagogue.² A few weeks into the occupation, the Germans established a civil administration, and Lipsko initially became part of Kreis Ilza (from January 12, 1942, it was renamed Kreis Starachowice) in Distrikt Radom of the Generalgouvernement. The Kreishauptmann in

Ilza was Hans Zettelmeyer. In Lipsko there was a Gendarmerie post, comprising only a few Gendarmes commanded by Leutnant Lucheneder.

As in other towns, Jews were required to wear armbands bearing the Star of David and had to perform forced labor for the Germans. In 1940, a work camp with 130 inmates was set up; from here, the forced laborers were sent to various sites in the vicinity. On December 6, 1941, Zettelmeyer ordered the establishment of a ghetto, but this order was implemented only in the spring of 1942.³ The ghetto inmates also had to work for the Germans; the Jewish Police escorted them to their workplaces outside the ghetto.⁴ The ghetto comprised only two smaller streets in the town center, covering an area of approximately 500 by 150 meters (1,640 by 492 feet).⁵ No direct evidence has been uncovered concerning the Judenrat, but it is assumed there must have been one, as a Jewish police force was definitely in existence.⁶

In Kreis Ilza a Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee was founded, which had a branch in Lipsko. It was able to distribute food parcels to the men in the forced labor camps, which it had received from the head office of the JSS in Kraków. Living conditions in the ghetto were quite harsh, with the diet mainly consisting of potatoes and rough bread prepared from flour and baked at home. There was also a shortage of soap, which ghetto inmates had to make themselves. Although most prayer houses had been closed down, observant Jews continued to pray at home and celebrate the High Holidays as best they could.⁷

Jews from the surrounding villages were also brought into the Lipsko ghetto, which due to its location on a railroad line was well suited for the Nazi purpose of collecting and then deporting the Jews. Especially in the spring of 1942, when the Germans began to set up collection ghettos (*Sammelghettos*) in order to concentrate Jews from the smaller towns, Lipsko took on a certain regional importance. In the first months of the occupation, the Jewish population was boosted by refugees from western parts of Poland and especially by many Jews deported from the Łódź region.⁸ Thus, the Jewish population of Lipsko increased from the pre-war figure of about 1,600 to some 2,100 in April 1940. Subsequently, despite certain depletions due to deaths and relocations to labor camps, it was 1,852 in May 1941, and then finally, following the influx from nearby villages, such as Chotcza, it had risen to some 3,600 by October 1942.

In Lipsko, the ghetto was open and not enclosed by walls or barbed wire; Jews were more or less free to come and go as they pleased, which allowed some of them to escape prior to the ghetto's liquidation. However, a strict curfew was enforced at night. The German Gendarmes would occasionally enter the ghetto to round up Jews for forced labor or to carry out other Aktions, more or less at random. Jewish victims shot by the Gendarmerie included an elderly person named Goldfarb in the spring of 1942 and Helena Rozencwajg in the summer of 1942.⁹ Some Jews hid to avoid the roundups. Among the last Aktions before the liquidation of the ghetto was a de-

portation by truck of younger able-bodied Jews (up to the age of 30) to the forced labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna.¹⁰

On October 17, 1942, German police forces comprising about 150 German policemen brought from Radom, together with Ukrainian auxiliary guards and local Gendarmes under the command of Lucheneder of the Gendarmerie post in Lipsko, surrounded the ghetto.¹¹ The Jewish population was ordered out of their houses into the town square. A few managed to escape and hide with Polish acquaintances or were able to join partisan groups in the forests. The German police transported the rest, more than 3,000 people, to the Tarłów ghetto some 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) south of Lipsko, which served as an assembly point for Jews in the area. From there they were transported to the Treblinka extermination camp and were murdered there a few days later. After the deportation of the ghetto's inhabitants, local Poles moved into the houses vacated in the former ghetto area.¹² In December 1942, the Germans murdered three members of a Polish family in Lipsko who had hidden Jews in their house.

SOURCES There is not much literature regarding the Jewish community in Lipsko and especially regarding the ghetto there. A brief account of the fate of the Jewish community during the Holocaust can be found in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 285. The Lipsko ghetto is also mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 271.

Documentation on the fate of the Jews of Lipsko can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/82; 210/451; and 211/640-641); IPN (ASG, sygn. 47, p. 39); USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 15); VHF (# 4822); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. *rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo radomskie* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1980), p. 96; VHF, # 4822, testimony of Eva Young.

2. The massacre is mentioned in AŻIH, 301/82, testimony of Michał Birenbaum, p. 1.

3. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 15, “Kwestionariusz o obozach” (Lipsko), October 1, 1945. Here the exact date given is March 1, 1942, but this could not be verified.

4. AŻIH, 301/82, p. 1.

5. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 15, “Kwestionariusz o obozach” (Lipsko), October 1, 1945; and AŻIH, 301/82, p. 1.

6. AŻIH, 301/82, p. 1.

7. VHF, # 4822.

8. AŻIH, 301/82, p. 1.

9. *rejestr miejsc i faktów: Województwo radomskie*, pp. 96–97.

10. VHF, # 4822.

11. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 15, “Kwestionariusz o obozach” (Lipsko), October 1, 1945.

12. *Ibid.*

MAGNUSZEW

Pre-1939: Magnuszew, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Magnuszew is located about 60 kilometers (37 miles) southeast of Warsaw, on the left bank of the Vistula River. On the eve of World War II, about 700 Jews resided in Magnuszew, numbering about 45 percent of the total population of 1,500.

Magnuszew was invaded by the Wehrmacht in early September 1939. Once a civil administration was established in the newly formed Generalgouvernement, Magnuszew was incorporated into Kreis Radom-Land, a part of Distrikt Radom. Head of the civil administration was a Kreishauptmann; the post was filled by Dr. Friedrich Egen (December 16, 1939, to July 1942; and September 1943 to January 1945) and Dr. Justus Rubehn (July 1942 to September 1943). As Magnuszew was only a small place, no special German outpost was established there, and no German Order Police units (subordinated to Leutnant Wichern in the Kreishauptmannschaft) were located there.

Just as in the entire Generalgouvernement, the Jews of Magnuszew were soon no longer allowed to slaughter animals according to Jewish religious law. Yet two Jews in the village did so, disregarding German orders, and while one was executed, the other succeeded in escaping and went into hiding.¹ Jews were required to wear distinctive markings and perform forced labor, but generally, as no German units were permanently there, the Jews of Magnuszew were able to live in relative quiet during the first two years of the occupation.

This comparatively normal life ended with the establishment of an open ghetto, which was ordered by Kreishauptmann Egen, together with the creation of ghettos in several other towns in the Kreis, on December 22, 1941. The Jews of Kreis Radom-Land had to leave smaller villages and gather in the larger ones.² Thus, the Jewish population of Magnuszew increased, and surviving documentation shows that it rose from 730 in April 1940 to 1,106 in 1941 and finally to 1,200 by August 1942. The formation of the ghetto coincided with an outbreak of typhus in Magnuszew, where no medical services were available. The ghetto itself was rather cramped, comprising only a very small part of the former shtetl near a lake. Living conditions were squalid. In some houses as many as five or six housewives had to share one kitchen, and many Jews were forced to reside together in a large barn that had no facilities whatsoever. Initially the Jews were permitted to leave to buy food during certain hours of the day. Subsequently the ghetto was surrounded by barbed wire, although it was not closely guarded. At least some Poles were willing to help the Jews by selling them food or trading it in exchange for labor.³ Unfortunately, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee

of Kreis Radom-Land, which was founded on August 20, 1940, had no branch in Magnuszew, so that assistance from other Jewish communities was quite rare.

On August 17, 1942, Kreishauptmann Rubehn ordered that all the Jews of the Kreis, including those remaining in the Magnuszew ghetto, be brought into the Kozienice ghetto between August 19 and August 21, 1942.⁴ In the process of assembling the Jews for resettlement, the German police forces murdered 120 of them. Of the survivors, 200 were transported to Ćmielów, where they became slave laborers digging irrigation channels.⁵ The main group had to march about 15 kilometers (9 miles) to the nearby town of Kozienice, taking with them only what meager possessions they could carry in their arms. In total, some 4,000 additional Jews were brought into Kozienice at this time.⁶ Just over one month later, the Germans deported most of these along with many of the Jews from Kozienice (about 13,000 people in total) to the Treblinka killing center on September 27, 1942.

SOURCES A brief history of the Jewish community including its fate during the Holocaust can be found in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 293. The ghetto in Magnuszew is also mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 302.

Documents on the fate of the Jews of Magnuszew can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/3915; Niemieckie materiały okupacyjne, no. 60); BA-L (206 AR-Z 56/72); USHMM (Acc.1988.A.0204; Acc.2003.406.1); VHF (# 9288, 29091, 39189, 43358, and 46716); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1988.A.0204 (Alec Ward, My Story), p. 2.
2. AŻIH, Niemieckie materiały okupacyjne, no. 60. Order of Kreishauptmann Egen, December 22, 1941; see also VHF, # 39189, Samuel Dresner, who dates the establishment of the ghetto in either December 1941 or early 1942.
3. USHMM, Acc.1988.A.0204 (Alec Ward, My Story), p. 2; VHF, # 39189; and # 9288, Freda Landau.
4. USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1 (Kozienice ghetto papers, 1939–1942), report of the Obmann des jüdischen Ältesten-Rates in Kozienice, August 31, 1942.
5. AŻIH, 301/3915, testimony of Szymon Szwarberg, May 29, 1948, p. 1.
6. USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1 (Kozienice ghetto papers, 1939–1942), report of the Obmann des jüdischen Ältesten-Rates in Kozienice on the mood of the Jewish population, August 31, 1942; Acc.1988.A.0204 (Alec Ward, My Story), p. 2.

MAŁOGOSZCZ

Pre-1939: Małogoszcz, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Małogoszcz, Kreis Jędrzejów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Małogoszcz, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

Małogoszcz is located about 25 kilometers (16 miles) west-southwest of Kielce. The number of Jews in Małogoszcz stood at 760 on the eve of World War II, when they comprised about 20 percent of the total population.

A few weeks after the Wehrmacht conquered the village in early September 1939, the Nazis established a civil administration. Małogoszcz became part of Kreis Jędrzejów, in Distrikt Radom of the Generalgouvernement. The Kreishauptmann, based in Jędrzejów, which is situated about 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) south of Małogoszcz, was initially Dr. Karl Glehn (from September 1939 to October 1940); he was succeeded first by Dr. Fritz von Balluseck (November 1940 to April 1942), then Bernhard Höfer (April 1942 to January 1945).¹ As no German offices were stationed directly in Małogoszcz, the Kreishauptmann was the decisive executive figure for the Nazis' anti-Jewish measures in the village. There was not even a detachment of German police based in Małogoszcz; the nearest police post was the Gendarmerie office in Jędrzejów, where Leutnant Wagner was in charge.²

The temporary military administration established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) before the end of 1939. Soon the Nazis started to exploit Jewish labor, forcing Jews to work in a nearby quarry.³

According to the account in *Pinkas ha-kehillot*, early in 1941, the German authorities ordered the relocation of Małogoszcz's Jews into a ghetto, which in combination with the robbery and expropriation of Jewish possessions led to a drastic deterioration in economic, sanitary, and physical conditions. In the spring of 1941, the ghetto was closed, and anyone leaving it without permission was subject to the death penalty.⁴

Unfortunately, no primary sources could be found to corroborate the details given in this account. The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee for Kreis Jędrzejów, which was founded on August 16, 1940, under the leadership of Pinkus Tajtelbaum, set up a branch office in Małogoszcz at the end of 1941.⁵ However, since the funding was very meager, it was unable to provide much assistance. A questionnaire answered by the JSS branch in Małogoszcz on April 1, 1942, reported that no Jewish quarter (*dzielnica żydowska*) had been established in the village. The same report also recorded that in 1940 a number of displaced Jews had arrived in the village from Łódź, Bielsko, and Kielce.⁶

In the town of Jędrzejów, Jews were informed that they would be shot for leaving the ghetto without a permit from October 1941 onward.⁷ Presumably, similar restrictions applied to Jews caught outside the limits of Małogoszcz by 1942, rendering the whole village a de facto ghetto.

The number of Jews in Małogoszcz, which had been 760 in September 1939, fluctuated during the occupation but had apparently increased to more than 800 by August 1942, with some sources putting the total at 1,130.⁸

In the same month, the Germans liquidated the ghetto. On August 28, 1942, 830 Jews were deported to the Jędrzejów ghetto, at the same time as the Jews from a number of other villages in the vicinity.⁹ On September 16, 1942, all but around 250 Jews, who were selected for work, were deported from the

collection ghetto in Jędrzejów to the Treblinka extermination camp, including most of the Jews recently arrived from Małogoszcz.¹⁰ It is possible that a few of the Małogoszcz Jews were among the group of 200 or so Jews transferred to the forced labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna from Jędrzejów.¹¹

SOURCES Published information on the Jewish community of Małogoszcz during the Holocaust includes Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 312–313. The existence of a ghetto in Małogoszcz is mentioned also in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 789; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Gbetos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 451–452; and on the ŻIH (jewishinstitute.org) Web site. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), and the sztetl.org Web site, however, make no mention of a ghetto in Małogoszcz.

Documents on the fate of the Jews of Małogoszcz can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (JSS 211/483, 489, 684; and 301/765); BA-L (B 162/6203); IPN (159/2); and YVA (O-3/8150).

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NOTES

1. Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom, 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), p. 49.

2. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), p. 82.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

4. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 312–313.

5. AŻIH, JSS 211/483 and 489; Judenrat Jędrzejów to JSS head office in Kraków, August 19, 1940; JSS Jędrzejów to Kreishauptmann Höfer, July 30, 1942.

6. *Ibid.*, JSS, 211/684, p. 1.

7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, June 3, August 27, and October 26, 1941, and January 9, 1942.

8. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 75–182, here pp. 145, 172.

9. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/489 (Jędrzejów), p. 38.

10. BA-L, B 162/6203, p. 569, Report, July 6, 1972. See also Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 145; and Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 262.

11. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 312–313.

MARIAMPOL (AKA MARJAMPOL)

Pre-1939: Mariampol, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Mariampol is located about 30 kilometers (19 miles) northwest of Koziencice. Information regarding the ghetto in Mariampol is scarce. Czesław Pilichowski, dates its establishment in 1942 and reports that it had 2,200 inhabitants at the time of its liquidation. Adam Rutkowski indicates, however, that there were 1,500 Jews in 1939 and that the same number of residents was transferred to nearby Koziencice in September 1942, when the Mariampol ghetto was liquidated. Neither offers further details.¹

Since the 1921 census does not seem to register any Jews living in Mariampol, this raises the question of the origin of the inhabitants of the Mariampol ghetto, as the reported ghetto population is too large to have been native to this very small village. Available sources indicate that the inhabitants of the so-called Mariampol ghetto were in fact Jews transferred there from the Głowaczów ghetto.

In the autumn of 1941, German authorities completed the gradual evacuation of all the residents of Głowaczów, including the Jews residing in the ghetto there. This decision resulted from the requisition of this area for German aviation purposes, combined with the establishment of other military installations north of Radom, along the Radomka River.² Rutkowski cites a letter by the mayor of nearby Luta, addressed to the Radom Kreishauptmann, which reported the deportation of 160 Jewish families from Głowaczów and its vicinity to the gminas of Mariampol, Magnuszew, and Skaryszew on September 20, 1941.³

The Radom-Land Kreishauptmann, Dr. Friedrich Egen, formally ordered the establishment of the Mariampol ghetto in an order dated December 22, 1941, in which he instructed that the Jewish inhabitants of 40 rural communities be resettled into Jewish quarters—one of them being Mariampol.⁴

From survivors’ testimony, it is clear that the majority of Głowaczów ghetto residents were resettled to the closest locality, this being a piece of fallow land 4 to 5 kilometers (ca. 3 miles) northwest of Głowaczów.

According to survivor Abraham Kaspi, “the ghetto for Głowaczów’s Jews”—as he refers to it—“was situated between Mariampol (known to locals as ‘Marianki’) and Jasieniec, and its border was demarcated by a small lake.” Owners of Jewish houses in Głowaczów were allowed to pull them down and move them to the new location. Most of Głowaczów’s Poles were resettled to the village of Jasieniec and some other fallow lands near the village of Mariampol. Now deserted, Głowaczów was used as a training site for German artillery.

The name Mariampol (or Marianki) was applied to this ghetto most probably due to its close proximity to the larger of the two villages (Mariampol) and the fact that it remained within the same pre-war administrative gmina of Mariampol (of which Głowaczów was the administrative seat). The gmina comprised a total of 18 settlements.⁵

Housing and sanitation in the new ghetto were deplorable. Many Jews lived in primitive huts made of pieces of plywood, cardboard, and metal. A number of Jews died of various illnesses and suffered from malnutrition. The ghetto had one bakery, but the Germans provided too little flour to satisfy

even a fraction of the community's needs. There was not a single shop. Kaspi believes that "if it had not been for the help of Polish neighbors, all the Jews would have died of hunger," as the latter were forbidden to leave the ghetto. Despite the ghetto's poverty, Gendarmes from Kozienice and Grabów demanded the delivery of various goods from the Judenrat, beating its chairman as a warning.

During the winter of 1941–1942 and in April 1942, all men aged 50 and under were rounded up by the Gestapo and the SS and were taken to the nearby Kruszyna labor camp.⁶

According to Hanka Grynberg, in the summer of 1942, the ghetto, which she refers to as Marianki, was enclosed by a fence, yet its inhabitants continued to sneak out at night to forage for food.⁷

The Mariampol ghetto was liquidated in the second half of August 1942. According to instructions issued on August 17 by the Kreishauptmann in Radom, Dr. Justus Rubehn, all the Jews of Mariampol, Magnuszew, Mniszew, and Sieciechów were to be transferred to the Kozienice ghetto by the end of the month. A report prepared on August 31 by the Judenrat in Kozienice confirms that the arrival of about 4,000 Jews from these places, composed of men, women, and children, including some elderly and sick, had provoked a mood of heavy mass fear (*befrige Massenangst*) among the Kozienice Jews. "The arrival of the transferees with their meager possessions, and the cases of sickness and death that had transpired during the transfer, deeply shattered morale, and the various rumors and unconfirmed gossip about the forthcoming removal of the transferees, increased the panic to the utmost."⁸

On the arrival of the Jews from Mariampol, the Jews in the Kozienice ghetto were already suffering from severe shortages of food and hunger. The new arrivals increased overcrowding to a catastrophic degree, such that now about 15 to 20 people were forced to share some rooms, and numerous people were compelled to live in closets, outhouses, and other improvised accommodations.⁹

The Kozienice ghetto was liquidated on September 27, 1942, when almost all of its Jews were sent to the Treblinka killing center by rail.¹⁰

The number of victims of the Mariampol ghetto—of whom Głowaczów Jews appear to have been the vast majority—requires further research. Given that around 4,000 Jews arrived in Kozienice in late August from four separate ghettos, it is likely that between 1,000 and 1,500 of these people came from the Mariampol ghetto.

SOURCES The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (301/2296 [Relacje]); USHMM (RG-15.084M [Holocaust Survivors Testimonies]; and Acc.2003.406.1 [documents of the Judenrat in Kozienice]); and VHF (# 20410 and 23283).

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NOTES

1. Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 156–157 (table 11),

178–179. Contemporary documentation, however, indicates that the transfer to the Kozienice ghetto took place in late August 1942; see USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1, Kozienice Judenrat report, August 31, 1942. Also see Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 315.

2. Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), p. 137.

3. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 156–157 (table 11), 178–179.

4. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), pp. 122–123.

5. A. Kutkowski and I. Boratyn, "Zapłaćcie za wojnę!" *Słowo Ludu, Magazyn Obok Nas*, September 10, 2004, available at www.slowoludu.com.pl/gazeta/codzienna/2004/IX/10/8.pdf; Euzebiusz Małaśnicki, "Moje wspomnienia," available at www.glowaczow.republika.pl/chor.html; AŻIH, 301/2296, testimony of Hanka Grynberg; VHF, # 20410, testimony of Abraham Kaspi, 1996. The border was possibly a pond, as no lake is visible on current Google maps. Note also that there is a village by the name of Marianki located approximately 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) west of Głowaczów.

6. VHF, # 23283, testimony of Sol Rozenzweig, 1996; and # 20410; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 137. This is mentioned also in the report of the Judenrat in Kozienice, dated August 31, 1942; see USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1.

7. AŻIH, 301/2296.

8. USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1, Aeltesten-Rat der jüd. Bevölkerung Kozienice, report (to the Security Police) on the mood of the Jewish population, August 31, 1942.

9. *Ibid.*

10. AŻIH, 301/2296; Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 156–157 (table 11), 178–179; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 315.

MNISZEW

Pre-1939: Mniszew, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The village of Mniszew is located about 47 kilometers (29 miles) southeast of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 265 Jews living in Mniszew. Following the village's occupation in September 1939, the Germans established a Judenrat chaired by Ajzyk Zysman.

In a letter from the Judenrat addressed to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Kraków, it was reported that by March 1941 the number of Jews in Mniszew had tripled due to the arrival of refugees from nearby small towns, reaching a total of more than 1,000 residents. Two months later in May 1941, the Judenrat reported over 600 Jewish families living in Mniszew, most of which were from Warsaw or other locations in Distrikt Warschau. As refugees continued to stream into the village, a desperate Judenrat pleaded with the AJDC for help. The above figures, however, are inconsistent with the findings of historian Adam Rutkowski, who

recorded 317 Jews living in the village in 1941 (including 131 refugees) and approximately 300 by August 1942. As the AJDC's Mniszew file ends with the May 1941 report, it is possible that those refugees were transferred to another location or that the Judenrat overestimated their numbers in an effort to receive more substantial assistance.

The precise date of the ghetto's establishment is unknown. Mniszew ghetto survivor Henry Brait dates its creation in 1939 or 1940, which, in comparison with other similarly ghettoized communities in Kreis Radom, is probably too early. According to historian Jacek Młynarczyk, Kreishauptmann Dr. Friedrich Egen in Radom ordered in December 1941 the concentration of the Jews from the villages in a number of specified places in the Kreis, including in Mniszew, which were to be designated as *Judenbezirke* (Jewish ghettos).¹ This was presumably implemented in the beginning of 1942 as part of the overall ghettoization process. According to Brait, relocation to the ghetto was sudden and unannounced. Jews moving in had to leave behind their possessions. The Mniszew ghetto was made up of two streets, from which the Jews were forbidden to exit.

The ghetto was liquidated in August 1942. On August 17, the Kreishauptmann in Radom, Dr. Justus Rubehn (who had replaced Dr. Egen), ordered that all the Jews of Mariampol, Magnuszew, Mniszew, and Sieciechów were to be transferred to the Kozenice ghetto by the end of the month. Around 350 Jews from Mniszew were transferred to the Kozenice ghetto, where about 4,000 Jews from the vicinity were being concentrated. The Judenrat in Kozenice reported at the end of the month that the new arrivals, composed of men, women, and children, including some elderly and sick people, had provoked a "heavy mood of fear" among the Kozenice Jews, as they feared that it presaged a major deportation Aktion.²

Accordingly, the Kozenice ghetto was liquidated the following month, in late September 1942, when its residents were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES For demographic information on the Jewish community of Mniszew, see Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 158, 186.

Relevant documentation concerning the Jews of Mniszew during the Holocaust can be found, for example, in the following archives: AŻIH (210/496 and NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/496 [Mniszew], pp. 1, 4, 9, 11; and Acc.2003.406.1 [Judenrat in Kozenice]); and VHF (# 14490, testimony of Henry Brait, 1996).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63, Anordnung (decree) and Zustatzordnung (amendment) of the Kreishauptmann, December 22 and 30, 1941, as cited in Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 122.

2. USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1, Aeltesten-Rat der jüd. Bevölkerung Kozenice, report (to the Security Police) on the mood of the Jewish population, August 31, 1942.

MSTÓW

Pre-1939: Mstów (Yiddish: Emstow), village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Mstow, Kreis Radomsko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Mstów, województwo śląskie, Poland

Mstów is located 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) east of Częstochowa. According to the 1921 census, there were 740 Jews living in Mstów, constituting 37.6 percent of the total population.

An estimated 532 Jews lived in Mstów on the eve of the German occupation in 1939. Upon entering the village, the German forces turned the synagogue, local school, and the offices of the former cloister into military warehouses. The synagogue was later razed on the orders of the German mayor, Klubsch.¹ The village was supervised by the Gendarmerie post in Chorzenice, located 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of Mstów.

Abram Wolfowicz, a survivor of the Mstów ghetto, describes its establishment: "In the first months of 1940, the mayor evicted the Jews from their apartments and established an open ghetto on Kiliński Street. Those who paid a fee were allowed to return to their apartments."² It is not clear if the ghetto was later closed or how long exceptions permitting some Jews to live outside its borders lasted.

Wolfowicz also testified that the Germans murdered the first chairman of the Judenrat, Jankiel Joskowicz, and his two sons. He also named other victims including local butchers Janas Federman, Idel Naparty, Icek Hauptman, Salom Unglik, Jankiel Biber, and Abram Samsonowicz; grave digger Icek Pelta; and baker Jankiel Szydłowski. All were accused of offenses against the German commercial ordinances. The Jewish cemetery on Kiliński Street was often used as a killing site.

In November 1940, the Judenrat opened a soup kitchen that was able to provide 100 meals daily until January 1941. Sometime before January 1941, Izrael Woźnica was appointed as the Judenrat chairman. At that time there were 670 people (about 150 families) living in the ghetto, including a number of deportees. In March 1941, 35 Jews from Płock were resettled into the Mstów ghetto. The kitchen reopened that month, serving 200 meals daily.³

In June 1941, a branch of the Jewish Social-Self Help (JSS) was organized in Mstów. It was named Mstów-Wancerzów, as it also served the neighboring Wancerzów village. The JSS committee included the following members: Szmul Mitelman (chairman, 42 years old), Izrael Woźnica (43), and Icek-Mojzesz Kohn (42). Zisla Mitelman (18) was the Judenrat secretary; Szymon-Dawid Kohn (15) worked as a courier. As of August 1941, the Jews living in the Rędziny community were excluded from the Aurełów JSS and were added to the responsibilities of the Mstów JSS. An estimated 60 Jews from that community were in need of social assistance.⁴

In January 1942, the ghetto had 650 residents, of which, according to JSS estimates, there were 150 children aged 3 to 15. Approximately two thirds of those children were receiving a bowl of soup and a piece of bread daily. The JSS tried to raise more funds for this purpose by organizing a Purim play that year.

In February 1942, the JSS reported that there were still 25 carpentry workshops operating and employing 1 to 3 Jewish workers each. They specialized in the production of ash and oak wood furniture. In mid-March 1942, a Jewish man by the name of Gudsztadt from Radom opened a furniture factory in Mstów. The factory employed 28 carpenters and 10 assistants. It was most likely producing chairs for the Wehrmacht. The JSS also sought employment for 20 local tailors and 15 cobblers.⁵

The ghetto in Mstów was liquidated in August 1942. Approximately 600 Jews gathered there were escorted by the Gendarmerie to Radomsko. The ghetto in Radomsko was liquidated on October 9–12, 1942, and its residents were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES References to the Mstów ghetto can be found in Jan Pietrzykowski, *Hitlerowcy w powiecie częstochowskim, 1939–1945* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo “Śląsk,” 1972), pp. 62, 71, 106, 116, 125; Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 144 (table 5).

The following archival sources were used to write this entry: AŻIH (210/503; 211/707-708); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

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NOTES

1. See “Dzieje Mstowa” at www.mstow.pl/?id=Historia.
2. As cited by Pietrzykowski, *Hitlerowcy w powiecie częstochowskim, 1939–1945*, p. 116.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/503 (Mstów), p. 1; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/707 (Mstów), pp. 1–2, 8–9.
4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, December 12, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/707, pp. 14, 30. The JSS erroneously refers to “Wancerzów” as “Kancerzów.”
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/708, pp. 15, 19, 26, 29.

NOWE MIASTO NAD PILICĄ

Pre-1939: Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Nowe Miasto, Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The town of Nowe Miasto is located some 70 kilometers (44 miles) south of Warsaw and roughly the same distance east of Łódź on the Pilica River. In 1939, more than 1,300 Jews lived in the town, comprising just under half of the town’s population.

Units of the Wehrmacht captured Nowe Miasto in early September 1939. When the Nazis established the Generalgou-

vernement in the fall of 1939, the town became part of Kreis Tomaszów within Distrikt Radom. The first Kreishauptmann was Dr. Fritz von Balluseck (until November 1940); he was succeeded until the town’s liberation in January 1945 by Dr. Karl Glehn. Most of the German administration, including several police offices, was located in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, but in Nowe Miasto there was an outpost of the Gendarmerie (Order Police) commanded by Leutnant Kottlinski.

The Germans established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), headed by Mottel Cilikh, a former restaurant owner. A Jewish police unit was also established. The Germans ordered the dismantling of the synagogue and imposed several large “contributions” on the Jewish community, including one for 10,000 złoty, which was accompanied by the taking of hostages. Among the tasks performed by the Judenrat was the recruitment of forced laborers to meet German quotas, in order to stop Jews from simply being picked off the street.

In the second half of 1940, the German Water Administration Office (Wasserwirtschaftsamt) established a labor camp for Jews (*Julag*) in Nowe Miasto. Between 200 and 400 inmates had to work on land reclamation and draining the countryside. In addition, the Jewish Council in Nowe Miasto was concerned with sending aid to about 50 Jews who had been deported in 1940 to forced labor camps in Distrikt Lublin. By February 1941, however, the Jewish population of the town had roughly doubled, numbering 2,603, of which 1,593 were refugees and deportees, most of whom had arrived almost completely without means and with no suitable clothing.¹ This population increase was due to the Nazis’ transfer of Jews from surrounding towns, including Mogielnica, Będków, Grójec, and Tarczyn, to Nowe Miasto.

An impression of living conditions for the Jews in Nowe Miasto can be gained from the report of the Judenrat to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), dated February 1, 1941. The report noted that material conditions had deteriorated considerably due to recent confiscations by the Germans and due to the large number of indigent Jews among both the refugees and those native to Nowe Miasto. A welfare kitchen was distributing 350 to 400 lunches every day, but this support was still completely inadequate. A recent clothing distribution received from the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) office in Radom had scarcely covered 5 percent of actual needs. The report concluded with an appeal to the AJDC in Kraków to send an emissary to Nowe Miasto to assess the catastrophic situation there.²

According to the same report of February 1, 1941, an enclosed ghetto (*geschlossenen jüd. Wohnviertel*) had recently been established in Nowe Miasto.³ The ghetto was located in the center of town and covered an area of about 4,000 square meters (4,784 square yards). As there was a shortage of labor, many Jews were forced to work outside the ghetto, where they performed road maintenance, cut lumber in the forest, and did agricultural work on surrounding estates.⁴ The number of Jews in the ghetto increased over the following months, rising to 3,375 in May after the arrival of about 600 Jews from Vienna, then to 3,700 by November 1941, but the mortality rate

also climbed during the winter of 1941–1942. There were outbreaks of typhus and tuberculosis; so a special quarantine room was set up in the hospital. Official rations were set at 250 grams (8.8 ounces) of potatoes and 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of bread for Jews in the first month of the occupation, but even these small rations were subsequently reduced considerably, leading to severe food shortages.⁵ Thus, the Jews depended heavily on work outside the ghetto, which permitted them to acquire some additional food. Limited assistance continued to be provided by the JSS committee of the Kreis, whose head, Henryk Szczyński, established a branch in Nowe Miasto, enabling the ghetto inmates to receive parcels with food and clothing. Nevertheless, during the existence of the ghetto, about 300 Jews died solely from malnutrition, insufficient health care, and the exhausting working conditions.

The Germans sporadically shot Jews, both inside and outside the ghetto. Those murdered inside included some suspected of concealing items during searches and also several members of the Judenrat; these people were buried in the Jewish cemetery. By 1942, those caught outside the ghetto, including children caught trying to smuggle food, were usually shot and buried on the spot, in accordance with orders applied by the Order Police throughout Kreis Tomaszów. About 150 Jews from the Nowe Miasto ghetto were shot in total.⁶ Due to these shootings, the high mortality rate due to illness and starvation, and the transfer of Jews to other camps, the number of ghetto inmates had declined to less than 3,000 by February 1942. However, on August 20, 1942, a train carrying 400 Jews arrived from Odrzywół, which increased the number of Jews in the ghetto to about 3,400 by the end of the month.

The ghetto in Nowe Miasto was liquidated by the Nazis on October 22, 1942. German units surrounded the ghetto and gathered the Jews for deportation. More than 3,000 Jews were transported by train to the Treblinka extermination camp. Only a few Jews managed to escape and flee into the nearby woods.

About 20 to 25 people were held back to clean up the Nowe Miasto ghetto and collect the abandoned property. When this task was completed, the remaining Jews were sent to the reconstituted ghetto in Tomaszów Mazowiecki.

The Jewish community in Nowe Miasto was not reconstituted after the war.

SOURCES A brief account of the fate of the Jewish community during the Holocaust can be found in Danuta Dąbrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 156–158. See also Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955); Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom, 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006); and Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007).

Documents on the fate of the Jews of Nowe Miasto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/515); IfZ (Gd 01-60); IPN (ASG/22 and 51); Sta. Darmstadt (2 Js 461/64, proceed-

ings against former Kreishauptmann Karl Glehn); USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 16; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC], 210/515); and YVA (O-3/5238).

Stephan Lehnstaedt

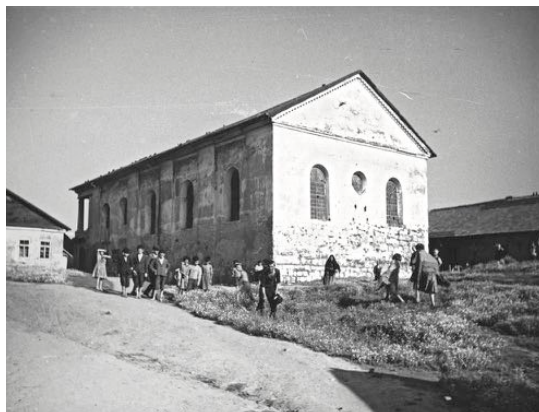
NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH—AJDC), 210/515, pp. 5–7, report of the Vorstand des Jüd. Aeltestenrates to the AJDC, February 1, 1941; and Dąbrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, p. 157. For further details on the Distrikt Lublin camps, see David Silberklang, “The Holocaust in the Lublin District” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, February 2003), pp. 87–127.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH—AJDC), 210/515, pp. 5–7, report of the Vorstand des Jüd. Aeltestenrates to the AJDC in Kraków, February 1, 1941.
3. Ibid. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, p. 119, and Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” p. 154, both date the establishment of the ghetto in the spring of 1941. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, fr. 198, gives the date of November 1940.
4. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 16, fr. 198, Kwestionariusz o obozach (Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą), November 26, 1945.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. On the “shooting order” in Kreis Tomaszów, see BA-L, B 162/14521, verdict of LG-Darm, 2 Ks 1/69, pp. 20–30.

NOWY KORCZYN

Pre-1939: Nowy Korczyn, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Busko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The village of Nowy Korczyn is located some 60 kilometers (37 miles) northeast of Kraków and 50 kilometers (31 miles) south of Kielce at the confluence of the Nida River and the Vistula River.



Jewish children and adults pose outside the Nowy Korczyn synagogue, ca. 1936.
USHMM WS # 77740, COURTESY OF SHALOM FOUNDATION: GOLDA TENCER-SZURMIEJ COLLECTION

The Wehrmacht occupied Nowy Korczyn on September 20, 1939. The Nazi authorities established the Generalgouvernement on October 26, 1939. Nowy Korczyn was located in Kreis Busko, within Distrikt Radom; Nowy Korczyn lay close to the border with Distrikt Krakau. The Kreishauptmann and head of the local administration during the entire occupation was Dr. Wilhelm Schäfer, who together with the SS and police forces in charge of the Kreis was based in Busko. In Nowy Korczyn, there was only a branch of the German Gendarmerie (the rural Order Police) under Leutnant Schwab, which took over a local school as its headquarters. At that time, the Jews of the town numbered 2,462, about two thirds of the entire population.

Upon entry into the town, the occupiers began persecuting Jews there, snatching people from the streets for forced labor, humiliating some of them, and shaving the beards of Jewish men. The Germans also burned the Torah scrolls from the synagogue.¹ After a few weeks the Germans ordered the Jews to establish a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which was made responsible for the collection of a 20,000 zloty "contribution" from the community. After a short while the Germans demanded an additional contribution of twice that amount. Other German regulations prohibited Jewish children from going to school, and adult Jews had to wear a Jewish Star. Subsequently a Jewish police force was established, which also helped the Germans to enforce a nightly curfew.²

It is not clear exactly when the Jewish quarter or open ghetto in Nowy Korczyn was established, but by the summer of 1942 Jews faced the death penalty for leaving the area of the town without permission. In one case, a Jewish woman named Hammer was shot in the summer of 1942 for leaving the ghetto. Despite this risk, some Jews continued to trade remaining property with local peasants up to the ghetto's liquidation.³ The concentration of Jews in the town, however, started much earlier. In the first months of 1941, the Germans had transported Jews from Warsaw, Łódź, Kielce, and Radom to the town, increasing the number of Jewish inhabitants to 3,599 in May 1941. This figure rose to 3,717 in January 1942; then 3,834 in April; and finally about 4,200 in October 1942. As a result of this rising Jewish population, living conditions for the Jews deteriorated steadily, although some of the Jews arriving from larger ghettos noted that conditions were much less oppressive than in Warsaw or Łódź. It remained an open ghetto until its liquidation, but the inmates were forced to live in very overcrowded conditions, with up to 12 people in one room. To obtain some money and food, the Judenrat organized work groups, which were employed in workshops and in service units at the regional military base in Busko-Zdrój. Within Nowy Korczyn, several "workshops" were established for sewing, shoemaking, and carpentry. Some Jews also worked directly for the Gendarmerie or on irrigation projects in the surrounding countryside.

In 1941, the Judenrat set up a public kitchen, which provided 200 meals a day to people in need. In addition, there was a clinic for people affected by the typhus epidemic, which broke out in the ghetto. Further assistance was provided by the Jew-

ish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee of the Kreis, which was founded on December 29, 1940, and which, under the leadership of Josek Topioł and Izaak Nadler, soon opened a branch in Nowy Korczyn.⁴ Nevertheless, all these efforts could not prevent the spread of typhus in the ghetto. Kreishauptmann Dr. Schäfer reported at the end of February 1941 that a dangerous typhus epidemic in Nowy Korczyn had resulted in several deaths and that the ghetto was so overcrowded it could no longer accommodate further deportees.⁵ But as the above-mentioned statistics show, his appeal had no effect in slowing the influx of successive waves of Jewish deportees.

The German Security Police planned for the liquidation of the Nowy Korczyn ghetto at the beginning of October 1942. Units from the local Gendarmerie post and Ukrainian auxiliaries from Radom surrounded the ghetto at dawn on October 2 and assembled about 4,000 Jews on the main square. As there was no railroad connection in Kreis Busko, the deportees had to march or be transported on carts to the neighboring Kreise of Jedrzejow or Opatow. From there, they could be transported by train to the Treblinka death camp.⁶ This was also the fate of the Jews of Nowy Korczyn. First, they were forced to march to the village of Słupia Nowa, 16 kilometers (10 miles) away. Along the way the Nazi guards shot women, children, and elderly people who had difficulty keeping up. On the next day, along with Jewish inhabitants of Słupia and surrounding villages, the Jews were taken to the train station in Szczucin, packed into freight cars and sent to Treblinka.

About 50 to 100 Jews were allowed to stay behind in Nowy Korczyn. These people consisted of members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police, as well as laborers assigned to collect and sort the abandoned Jewish property. According to survivors from this group, they were placed in a few houses that were isolated from the rest of the town, forming a small remnant ghetto. Another 200 or more people who had managed to escape the roundup returned to the remnant ghetto over the following weeks. In one or more transfer Aktions, either at the end of 1942 or in the first half of 1943, the remaining Jews in Nowy Korczyn were loaded onto trucks and taken to labor camps—(especially the Hugo Schneider AG [HASAG] camp) in the area of Kielce.⁷

SOURCES A brief account of the fate of the Jewish community during the Holocaust can be found in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 317–319. Further information is contained in the town's chronicle by Teresa Ginalska, *Nowy Korczyn. Gmina u zbiegu Wisły i Nidy* (Krasno, 1999), pp. 46–53. The memoir of the child survivor Mark Bernard Kupfer, *From Darkness to Sunshine: A Young Boy's Odyssey* (Pittsburgh, PA: Dorance, 2002), includes brief details about the remnant ghetto.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211 [JSS]); BA-BL (R 52 II/30); BA-L (206 AR-Z 29/63); IPN (Ob/177); StA-Münc (Sta. München I, 1a Js 311/60); Sta. Stuttgart (18 Js 597/67); VHF (e.g., # 2256, 9367, 11648, 34033, 37476, and 41643); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/581).

Stephan Lehnaetd

NOTES

1. VHF, # 34033, testimony of Morris Pisarz.
2. Ibid., # 41643, testimony of Rita Nussbaum; and # 37476, testimony of Ted Beckard.
3. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo kieleckie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1985), p. 181.
4. AŻIH, JSS/211, pp. 266–267, JSS Busko to JSS Kraków, January 24, 1941; membership list of JSS branches in the Kreis, March 22, 1941.
5. BA-BL, R 52 II /30, pp. 1–3, report of Kreishauptmann Dr. Schäfer to the Generalgouverneur, February 28, 1941.
6. BA-L, 206 AR-Z 29/63, vol. 2, pp. 202 ff., interrogation of Dr. Wilhelm Schäfer, February 15, 1965; and *Rejestr miejsc i faktów*, p. 181.
7. See Felicija Karay, “Heaven or Hell?: The Two Faces of the HASAG-Kielce Camp,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 32 (2004): 269–321, here pp. 278–280. See also VHF, # 37476; # 2256, testimony of Allen Kupfer; and # 9367, testimony of Mary Hoppe.

ODRZYWÓŁ

Pre-1939: Odrzywół, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Odrzywół, Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Odrzywół, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The village of Odrzywół is located 29 kilometers (18 miles) northeast of Opoczno. In 1921, its 389 Jewish residents made up 29.1 percent of the village's population. There were between 250 and 320 Jews living there in 1939.

Following the German occupation of the region in September 1939, no permanent German authorities were based in the village, but officials of the Gendarmerie from Nowe Miasto supervised its affairs.

A Jewish Council (Judenrat), chaired by N.D. Kozłowski, was organized to represent Jewish interests to the Germans. M. Dessau served as the Judenrat's secretary.

In the autumn of 1940, the Judenrat set up a self-help committee chaired by Alter Weksler. A number of deportees from Mława were resettled to Odrzywół in December 1940. They “arrived literally with no shoes, clothing or bedding,” reported the Judenrat. A number of refugees from Tomaszów Mazowiecki also settled in the village.¹ In January 1941, Weksler sent a letter to the Mława Hometown Association in the Warsaw ghetto, requesting aid for the Mława Jews living in Odrzywół.²

In March 1941, 200 Jews deported from Jeżów, Skierniewice, Mogielnica, Przytyk, and other localities settled in Odrzywół.³ The local community, comprising 250 Jews, was unable to provide help to the 392 newcomers. A soup kitchen that had been opened for some time was closed in April 1941. That same month, the Judenrat requested assistance from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in financing housing rentals for refugees.⁴

In September 1941, the Judenrat reported that “after a thorough requisition of property from the local Jews, a Jewish quarter was established, where 716 Jews were placed.” The Judenrat also noted that some Jews left Odrzywół after the ghetto's establishment. The community was resettled to the Praga neighborhood, inhabited by only five Jewish families before the war. At the time of the ghetto's establishment, none of the houses there were Jewish-owned. There were 23 buildings in the ghetto on approximately 2 hectares (5 acres). The ghetto was never enclosed by a fence. In March 1942, the overcrowding was especially severe; the Judenrat reported an occupancy rate of 12 to 30 people to a room.⁵

The Jews in the ghetto reportedly worked raising chickens for their eggs and in agriculture.

The German authorities announced that the ghetto would be closed on January 1, 1942; Jews would no longer be permitted to leave, except for labor assignments. In April 1942, the Judenrat reported that much of its spending that year included “1,000 złoty for saving from death each of the poor Jews who were caught outside of the Jewish quarter.” In three months (January 1–April 1, 1942), 172 Jews were infected with typhus. Out of that number, 55 were hospitalized in Opoczno and Nowe Miasto. Out of 82 people that died during that period, 44 had to be transported to the Jewish cemetery in Klwów and buried there at the Judenrat's expense. The Judenrat struggled to pay for the burials as well as hospital bills.

In March 1942, nearby villages were cleared of Jewish farmers who were forced to resettle to the Odrzywół ghetto; some inhabited barns and cowsheds.

By April 1942, some form of welfare had been provided to more than one third of the ghetto's Jews. Out of its total of 632 inhabitants, 281 were locals, while the remaining 351 were newcomers.⁶

On May 23, 1942, 25 Jews were sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp. Of them, 21 had returned by July 31, 1942, having been released as “unable to work” due to “bodily injuries.” The 4 laborers who remained in Skarżysko were Lajb Abram, Azriel Huberman, Zelig Frydman, and Mendel Brajnenberg.⁷

Most secondary sources maintain that the ghetto was liquidated on August 20, 1942, at which time its 400 residents were deported to the nearby ghetto in Nowe Miasto. The Nowe Miasto ghetto was liquidated on October 22, 1942. Its residents were shipped from there to the Treblinka killing center.

SOURCES The following publications include references to the Odrzywół ghetto: Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 78, 84, 154 (table 10); Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), p. 41; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 345. Note that Pilichowski gives an unlikely date for the ghetto's liquidation—the winter of 1943—as at that time there were only a few remnant ghettos

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existing in Distrikt Radom. For example, Ujazd was the only ghetto in Kreis Tomaszow, and it had been liquidated by mid-January 1943.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/520 [AJDC]; 211/749 [JSS]; 301/2987 [Relacje]); and USHMM (RG-15.079M [Ring I]; RG-15.084M [Relacje]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.084M (AŻIH), 301/2987 (Relacje), testimony of Tadeusz Kalski, 1947; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/520 (Odrzywół); Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/749 (Odrzywół), p. 22.
2. Ibid., RG-15.079M (Ring I/599/11), reel 24.
3. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/520, p. 5.
4. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/749, pp. 9–11, 13.
5. AŻIH, 301/2987; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/749, pp. 27–29.
6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/749, pp. 28–29.
7. Ibid., p. 30.

OPATÓW

Pre-1939: Opatów (Yiddish: Apt), town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Opatów, Kreis center, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Opatów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The town of Opatów is located in southeast Poland, 29 kilometers (18 miles) northwest of Sandomierz. In 1921, there were 5,462 Jews in Opatów (62 percent of the total); on the eve of war in 1939, there were around 5,200.¹

The German army occupied Opatów on September 7, 1939. Upon entering the town the Germans set fire to three quarters of the Jewish homes in the market square (*Rynek*). The following day the Germans rounded up and held captive more than 1,000 young Poles and Jews in the local theater. The Jews were separated from the group and subjected to torture, allegedly for concealing weapons, before being released. Schools were closed, and the teachers, Polish and Jewish, as well as the local intelligentsia were sent to concentration camps. Before long, the occupying authorities announced new regulations. Jews could not go outside after sunset and could not leave the town without a special permit. Furthermore, Jews were not allowed to buy food or other products from non-Jews.

Soon the German administration started to conscript Jews for forced labor and impose large “contributions” on the Jewish community. Forced labor in Opatów was of two kinds: Jews performed work for the town council and the German army and civil authorities; in addition, 220 men had to be supplied daily for work at the “Oemler” firm, engaged in road construction. Jews aged 18 to 45 performed seven days of forced labor every two weeks.²

In October 1939, power was transferred to a German civil administration. Dr. Heinz Ritter was appointed Kreishaupt-



Majer Sztajnmán poses on a cobblestone street in the Opatów ghetto, while holding his baby daughter, Mania, ca. 1942. Note the armband on Sztajnmán's sleeve.

USHMM WS #27173, COURTESY OF MARION WEINZWEIG

mann in Opatów. The German civil administration introduced many restrictive measures for Jews including the wearing of white armbands bearing a blue Star of David. At the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, a number of Jews arrived in the Opatów region from Kalisz, Turek, Konin, and other cities. The Jews organized a Judenrat, headed by Mordechai Wejsblum, composed of former members of the pre-war Jewish Council. Its main tasks were to provide forced laborers for the Germans and coordinate the various organizations and committees established to assist the Jewish population of Opatów, including the refugees. A Jewish police force assisted the Judenrat in enforcing German demands. Responsible for Kreis Opatow was the outpost of the Security Police (Sipo-Aussendienststelle) in the nearby town of Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, headed from 1941 until 1944 by SS-Untersturmführer Hans Soltau. Based in Opatów were units of the Gendarmerie and auxiliary Polish (Blue) Police.³

From the beginning of the occupation, Jewish shops, houses, and apartments had to be surrendered to German officials and local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). Soon, however, it became

unacceptable for the German occupants that Jews and Germans should share the same space. In the summer of 1940, the Germans sent several hundred younger Jewish men to labor camps in the Lublin area. On August 31, 1940, there were 5,500 Jewish residents in Opatów, including 700 refugees. The constant influx of refugees led to a marked deterioration in living conditions for the Jews in Opatów. In September 1940, Kreishauptmann Ritter reported that plans were being made for the establishment of a ghetto and that as a first step the Jews were being forced to move out of the houses around the market square. This gave further impetus to the confiscation of Jewish businesses for the benefit of Germans.⁴

A further strain was imposed on the community in March 1941 following the arrival of a transport of 995 Jews from Vienna destined for Opatów and Łagów. Most of this transport consisted of women and children, as well as sick people and the elderly. Some initially had to be accommodated in stables in Opatów.

On April 6, 1941, the Kreishauptmann established an open ghetto (Jewish residential district) in Opatów. It was not sealed off from the surrounding area, as the Jews were still able to move around most of the town (except during the night curfew). The Jews were forced onto Berek Joselewicz Street and the adjoining alleys; more than 6,000 people were crammed into only about one fifth of the area of the town.⁵ From October 1941, signs were posted at the ghetto entrance warning that illegal crossing of the boundary would be punished with death.⁶ Survivor testimonies, however, maintain that some communication with the outside continued, particularly with peasants in the surrounding villages, as Jews sneaked out to barter or buy food.

During 1941, the overcrowding in the ghetto and worsening sanitary conditions led to an outbreak of typhus. The Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population in Poland (TOZ) promptly established a hospital, which despite lack of means was able to provide medical support to the impoverished population. Further waves of refugees arrived from neighboring towns, Łódź, and eastern Poland.⁷ Despite the hardships, on June 24, 1941, a six-grade Jewish school was opened in the ghetto. Of the 320 children enrolled, 160 received free meals at school. Almost 1,500 people benefited from the public kitchen, which distributed 550 lunches per day. The TOZ provided medical care and supplies. The employment office (Arbeitsamt) provided work for many unemployed people in jobs within and outside the town.⁸

By December 1941, the Jewish population had increased by 900 since the start of the year, and conditions for the Jews continued to deteriorate. The German police conducted a number of shootings and killings in the ghetto. They commandeered many Jews for work in forced labor camps. In the summer of 1942, about 800 young Jews, mostly men, were sent to work at the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory in Skarżysko Kamienna.⁹

By the fall of 1942, rumors of the horrors of the extermination of the Jews started to spread. The Jewish population was trying to obtain any kind of employment locally, in order

to avoid being sent away for forced labor. By September 1942, the Jewish population of Opatów had reached 7,000 people, including 1,800 refugees from other towns. On October 19, 1942, the Germans announced that all the Jews had to assemble the next day in a nearby field. Members of the SS, Ukrainian auxiliaries, and the Gendarmerie kept the Jews under close guard during the Aktion. More than 6,000 people were marched to the train station at Janice, near Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, 28 kilometers (17 miles) from Opatów. Another group capable of work was selected and sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp. Those who could not walk, especially the sick and the elderly, almost 300 people, were killed on the march. On arrival at the train station, the SS and the Ukrainians loaded the Jews into cattle cars destined for the Treblinka killing center. Around 100 Jews, mostly members of the Judenrat and Jewish Police, remained in Opatów to collect all remaining Jewish possessions and sort them out for the Germans. Once their assignment was carried out, they were taken to the Jewish cemetery and murdered. By October 21, 1942, the ghetto in Opatów had been completely liquidated.¹⁰

Around 300 Jews from Opatów survived the Holocaust, mostly in the forced labor camps. The bulk of them immigrated to Israel, the United States, and Canada after the war.

SOURCES Additional information on the history and fate of the Jewish population of Opatów can be found in the following publications: Zvi Yasheev, ed., *Apt: (Opatov); sefer zikaron le-ir ve-em be-Yisra'el asher hayetab ve-enenab 'od. Yizker-bukh tsum ondenk fun undzer geburts-sbtot in Poyln velkhe iz mer nishto* (Tel Aviv: Yotse Apt be-Yisrael, Ar. Ha-B., Kanadah, Brazil, 1966); Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 58–64.

Documentation on the persecution and destruction of the Jewish community in Opatów can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/1134, 2350, 3328, and 4951); BA-L (e.g., ZStL, II 206 AR-Z 23/64); IPN; USHMM (RG-50.120*0204; Acc.1997.A.0302; and Acc.1997.A.0124 [ŽSS], reel 37); VHF; and YVA.

Caterina Crisci

NOTES

1. USHMM, 1997.A.0124 (ŽSS), reel 37.
2. Yasheev, *Apt: (Opatov); sefer zikaron*, pp. 204, 217, 233–234; *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 6, 1940.
3. BA-L, B 162/14485, verdict of LG-Hamb, 147 Ks 3/71, December 22, 1972, p. 11.
4. Bericht des Kreishauptmanns in Opatów für den Monat August 1940, September 7, 1940, in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 95.
5. VHF, # 6919, testimony of B. Fogel; Juli-Bericht des Kreishauptmanns in Opatów, August 1, 1941, in Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 127.
6. Yasheev, *Apt: (Opatov); sefer zikaron*, pp. 223, 226.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 225, 233–234; AŻIH, 301/3328, testimony of H. Hershberg; *Gazeta Żydowska*, July 16, 1941; USHMM,

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RG-50.120*0204, oral history of S. Willenberg; Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŽSS), reel 37.

8. *Gazeta Żydowska*, July 16, 1941; USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124 (ŽSS), reel 37; VHF, # 1966, video testimony of B. Schreiberman.

9. AŽIH, 301/4951, testimony of B. Rotlewi; VHF, # 1966; USHMM, RG-50.120*0204, S. Willenberg.

10. Yasheev, *Apt: (Opatov); sefer zikaron*, pp. 234–235; AŽIH, 310/3328; VHF, # 3118, testimony of D. Blumenfeld Clenman.

OPOCZNO

Pre-1939: Opoczno (Yiddish: Opots'nab), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Tomaszow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

The town of Opoczno is located 60 kilometers (37 miles) southeast of Łódź. According to the 1921 census, the Jewish community numbered 3,376 (46.7 percent of the total population). At the outbreak of World War II, approximately 2,900 Jews (40 percent of the total population) lived in Opoczno.

The town was occupied by German troops on September 7, 1939.¹ A regime defined by plunder and abuse was installed immediately.

The Jewish Council (Judenrat) was set up in November 1939 and headed by Abram Frydlewski. It served as the Jewish representation to the German authorities. Mordecai Rosenbaum, the chairman's deputy, became a German informant, according to historian Isaiah Trunk. He later interceded on behalf of arrested relatives but kept for himself a share of the bribes intended for the Germans.

The Judenrat assigned up to 400 men daily (each conscript worked once or twice a week) for forced labor that included digging peat, paving roads, working in nearby lime pits, and clearing snow. To avoid work, one could send a substitute or pay 5 zloty for a day's exemption. The Judenrat vainly intervened on behalf of those badly beaten by the ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) and German guards. The only effective arguments were bribes. After a time, the Judenrat imposed a monthly tax on the community to pay the wages of those working for the Jewish community, including members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), as well as welfare expenses.

The number of refugees—most of them coming from Łódź—rose quickly, reaching a total of 500 people. The large group of newcomers caused increasing difficulties in maintaining hygiene, leading to an outbreak of typhus in the spring of 1940. The sick were treated by two Jewish doctors.²

In November 1940, the Germans established a ghetto in Opoczno, announcing it one morning and forcing the Jews to settle into it by noon, leaving their belongings behind. Approximately 50 Gendarmes conducted the resettlement. Those Jews who moved slowly, or attempted to flee, were shot. According to a Polish witness, approximately 200 people were killed.

The bodies were piled up on the bank of the Wąglanka River and were buried that evening in the Jewish cemetery.

The ghetto consisted of 115 houses and encompassed a compact area bordering on the Wąglanka River, including Błotna, Rzeźnicza, and Joselewicz Streets. One of the streets, since it was a key thoroughfare, could not be fenced, so the Poles remained on one side, while Jews occupied the other. It was a prime location for food smuggling until it was excluded from the ghetto.

As for ghetto housing, close to 40 people were crammed into single-family homes. Almost 1,000 people lived in temporary accommodations in the synagogue, in huts, and in barns or simply on the streets. The ghetto was surrounded by a wooden fence and barbed wire.

With the ghetto's creation, the Judenrat ordered the formation of a Jewish police force to keep its inhabitants inside.³ The son-in-law of Chairman Frydlewski, known as Profos or Protas, was the police commander. The police supervised a jail in one of the synagogue's chambers.

Inhabitants needed a permit from the German authorities or the Judenrat to leave the ghetto. Sources differ regarding smuggling activity. According to *Pinkas ha-kehillot*, it was easy and common as the German guards were readily bribed; some of the transactions were conducted during funerals at the Jewish cemetery located outside of the ghetto. Within the ghetto, illegal production of (for example) soap and bread took place. Alter Szmyszynowicz's testimony states, however, that smuggling was conducted only by Jewish and Polish policemen charging extremely high prices. Jews caught smuggling were shot. Although the labor performed outside the ghetto was poorly paid, including for numerous German enterprises, the difficulty in obtaining food caused some people to enlist voluntarily.⁴

From June 1940, the Judenrat-affiliated self-help committee (chaired by J. Chmielnicki) assisted impoverished Jews. Thanks to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) subsidies, it could open a soup kitchen, which provided 700 meals daily in early 1941. This, however, fell far short of demand. Based on these activities, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was formed in July 1941, chaired by Lejb Rabinowicz. Due to a lack of funds, the JSS was only able to develop meager support services.⁵

An epidemic hospital "Esterka," equipped with 40 beds, was set up at the end of 1941. The sick from Żarnów, Drzewica, Białaczów, and Gielniów were to be treated there as well. A public bath and disinfection center were opened at the same time.⁶

By May 1941, there were approximately 4,000 people in the ghetto, about one quarter of them refugees from Mogielnica, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Łódź, and Płock. Further waves followed, although some also left. In April 1942, there were 4,230 residents in the ghetto, including 1,400 newcomers.⁷

The Opoczno ghetto was the scene of mass executions that were carried out at the Jewish cemetery, on the banks of the Wąglanka River, near the mill, and in the streets. More than

one source refers to two mass killings. Some 100 imprisoned Jews were dragged out from their cells and machine-gunned by the Gendarmerie; the date of their murder is unknown. On April 27, 1942, 30 (or 40, according to another source) Zionists and Communists were rounded up and executed at the Wąglanka River. The victims were arrested based on a list prepared by the Judenrat. This so-called April Aktion was a part of a large-scale operation to eliminate ghetto activists in the region before the deportations to the extermination camps. Entire families were also frequently executed.

The most brutal of the local Gendarmes were Heinrich Moritz, Johann Schmiedke, and Ryszard (or Walter) Kuntz.⁸ A Luftwaffe unit, which had an observation point in Opoczno, also took part in the massacres.⁹

In June 1942, 20 escapees from forced labor assignments were seized by the ghetto police and held in the synagogue jail. The German informant, Deputy Rosenbaum, warned them that they were to be shot. Overpowering the Jewish guards, these men broke out of the jail. Rosenbaum refused to help in the pursuit and “disappeared,” although the degree to which his execution was linked to the escape remains unclear.

In July 1942, approximately 400 ghetto inhabitants were taken to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp, where they worked in the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory.¹⁰

In October 1942, a number of nearby Jewish communities were resettled into the Opoczno ghetto, including the Jews from Paradyż (250 people), Białaczów (250), Skrzynno (400), and Żarnów (more than 2,000).

The Germans liquidated the ghetto in Opoczno on October 27, 1942. The community was ordered to gather at the horse market. The sick, elderly, and those discovered in hiding were shot in the town. The deportation was conducted by a Gendarmerie unit from outside of Opoczno, local Gendarmes, and Polish and Jewish Police. The transport was directed to the Treblinka extermination camp. Only after the train's departure did the Germans realize that the sick in the hospital had been left behind. According to one testimony, Moritz machine-gunned the 100 patients and about 20 hospital personnel. Most scholarly sources report 3,000 people deported; however, this number seems to be too low and may have been closer to 4,000.

A group of 120 to 180 Jews—including the Judenrat, the Jewish Police, and a number of rich families—was left in Opoczno to clean up the ghetto and sort through remaining possessions. Soon after, the Germans announced that those who had families in Palestine could register to be exchanged for German prisoners of war (POWs) held by the Allies. Approximately 500 Jews gathered in the ghetto to register, often by forging a connection to Palestinian kin. All were sent to Treblinka by January 6, 1943.

A group of several dozen refugees from the Przysucha, Drzewica, and Opoczno ghettos joined the Communist Gwardia Ludowa (People's Guard, GL) “Wilk” partisan unit. They soon split off and set up a separate Jewish unit named GL

“Lwy” commanded by Izrael Ajenman (aka Julian Kaniewski). The squad conducted several operations, including the destruction of official documents of the Nieznanowice and Petrykozy gmina, as well as the disarmament of the Polish police precincts in Gowarczów and Rusinów. Post-1989 publications suggest that the unit murdered seven members of the Polish far-right-wing underground in Drzewica on January 22, 1943. Kaniewski and his group allegedly committed a number of other killings and robberies in the vicinity.

SOURCES Most of the information in this entry can be found in the following publications: Michał Grynberg and Maria Kotowska, eds., *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich, 1939–1945: Relacje świadków* (Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, 2003), pp. 207–216 (Alter Szymaszynowicz's diary); Danuta Dąbrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 47–52 (translation by Shalom Bronstein available on the Web at the Remember Jewish Opoczno! Web site, www.zchor.org/opocz.htm); and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 348–349. There is also some additional information in the yizkor book: Aaron Meirovitch, ed., *Sefer Opoczno* (Tel Aviv: Association of Emigrants from Opoczno and Vicinity, 1989). See also Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

Archival sources relating to the fate of the Jewish community of Opoczno can be found in APR (SORd 1907); AŻIH (210/526 [AJDC]; 211/761 [JSS]; 302/5 [Pamiętniki]); IPN (KG MO, sygn. 35/875, k. 114); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS Opoczno]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC Opoczno]; VHF; and YVA. Jolanta Kraemer and Sebastian Piłtkowski

NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC Opoczno), 210/526.
2. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS Opoczno), 211/761; Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/526; Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie*, p. 209.
3. *Gazeta Żydowska*, March 21, 1941.
4. Dąbrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 47–52; Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie*, p. 209.
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/761; *Gazeta Żydowska*, July 9, 1941.
6. *Gazeta Żydowska*, November 23, 1941.
7. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 100, 154 (table 10), 177–178; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/526, p. 23; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2004), pp. 130–131.
8. According to Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), pp. 200–201, and Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie*, pp. 209–211, the Gendarmerie also included Albert Schultze (commander), Herman Baumgarten, Richard Leufer, Paul Elsner, Paul Kuntze, Jerzy Chądzyński, Mueller, Makowski, and Gutknecht.

Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 47–52.

9. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 132.

10. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/761; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 348.

OSIEK

Pre-1939: Osiek, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Osiek is located 71 kilometers (44 miles) southeast of Kielce. There were 520 Jews living in Osiek in 1939.¹ On September 11, 1939, 164 houses owned by both Poles and Jews burned down due to heavy German bombardments, leaving 252 Jews (52 families) in the village without a roof over their heads. Some inhabitants escaped to neighboring settlements, but the German occupiers soon forced them to return.

In the fall of 1939, many Jews were mobilized into forced labor to clear the rubble from the bombings, and all Jews were ordered to wear distinguishing markings. The Jews also had to make large monetary payments to the Germans, and to assist with the implementation of their instructions the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat). In June 1940, the chairman of the Judenrat was Majer Sznajer, and Eliaz Rajter was one of its members. By this time the community's numbers had declined to 395. Out of that total, 68 Jews lived outside the village limits, and another 12 were refugees.² Harsh living conditions in Osiek caused an outbreak of disease in the summer of 1940: 35 Jews became sick with typhus and 15 with dysentery. Among these cases of illness, 5 people died.³

In August 1940, the Germans rounded up Jews from the neighboring towns and sent them to labor camps. The chairman of the Osiek Judenrat warned the men of the approaching raids and advised them to go into hiding to avoid deportation for forced labor.

Despite the critical housing situation, Kreis Opatow sent 25 Jewish deportees from Vienna to Osiek in March 1941. In total, there were 481 Jews in Osiek in August 1941, including 100 deportees and refugees, many from Kraków.⁴

The situation improved slightly with the establishment of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee based in Kraków. Responsibility for Osiek fell to a branch organized in Opatów in December 1940. A separate committee in Osiek opened a soup kitchen in August 1941, feeding about 80 people daily. In addition to these beneficiaries, 30 children were provided with breakfast. Szmul Klajner was the chairman of the committee, with Rabbi Josef Boruch Goldberg as his deputy. The kitchen operated intermittently; for example, it was closed temporarily in February 1942 due to financial constraints.⁵ According to JSS records, out of the 491 Jews registered in Osiek in May 1942, there were only 35 refugees and deportees.⁶

On the orders of Kreishauptmann Ritter in Opatów, the presence of Jews in Kreis Opatow was to be limited to 17 sites

of concentration (as opposed to a previous total of 150 Jewish settlements), effective from June 1, 1942. These 17 places were automatically recognized as ghettos from that date. Osiek was selected as one of the locations. Noncompliance with the orders for the Jews to move into the ghettos was punishable by death.

In June and July 1942, the Gestapo and Gendarmes shot 277 Poles and Jews from prisons in Sandomierz and Opatów in nearby Czarny Las on Czerwona Góra (or Czerwony Krzyż) Mountain. Among the victims were residents of Osiek and the following settlements located between Staszów and Osiek: Osieczek, Pliskowola, Strzegom, Strzegomek, Łęg near Połaniec, and Dziek; their names are unknown. The bodies were partially buried in Czarny Las, in the fields near Strzegom, in the cemetery at Osiek, and in Wiązownica.

On October 17 or 18, 1942, an unknown number of Jews from Osiek were transferred to Staszów together with some 2,000 Jews from Połaniec, following the liquidation of the Połaniec ghetto on October 18. At first, all were held on the market square in Staszów, but later they were released into the Staszów ghetto on condition that they would not return to Osiek or Połaniec.⁷

Two secondary sources report that the Osiek ghetto was liquidated on October 25, 1942, when approximately 500 of its residents were sent to the Treblinka killing center. *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, however, reports that the ghetto was liquidated on October 15, which corresponds better with the transfer of some or all the Jews to Staszów, prior to their deportation to Treblinka. During the course of the ghetto's liquidation, German forces entered Jewish homes and forcibly removed anyone who tried to evade the roundup. The sick and elderly were taken from their beds and murdered on the spot. For example, all three members of Ela Groshauz's family were shot at this time. Krzysztof Urbański notes that local Catholic priests helped the Jews of Osiek.

SOURCES The main published source concerning the Jewish community in Osiek is Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 68–70. The following publications also have some information on the fate of Osiek's Jews during the Holocaust: Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979); and *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo tarnobrzeskie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1984).

The main archival sources are AŻIH (210/529; 211/576; 211/763); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 37.
2. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).
3. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 37.
4. Ibid.
5. *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 26, 1941; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 37; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).
6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 37.
7. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, pp. 179–180; according to Joseph Goldstein, “Extracts from a Ghetto Diary,” in Elhanan Eriqkh, ed., *Sefer Stashov* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots’e Štashov be-Yisrael, 1962), p. 27, they arrived on October 17, 1942.

OSTROWIEC ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKI

Pre-1939: Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski (Yiddish: Ostrevtseb), town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Ostrowiec, Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The town of Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski is located in south-eastern Poland, 67 kilometers (42 miles) south of the city of Radom. Just before the outbreak of World War II, there were around 10,000 Jews living in Ostrowiec. In the early stages of the war, a number of Jews fled from the town with the retreating Polish army. After the defeat of the Polish forces, some of these Jews remained in the area that came under Soviet occupation.

The German army entered Ostrowiec on September 7, 1939. The violence against the Jewish population began during the first days of the occupation. Jewish stores and homes were plundered, a “contribution” of 200,000 złoty was imposed on the community, and requisitions of property and valuables began to be carried out regularly.¹ Almost immediately after the invasion, the Germans started to eliminate the local intelligentsia. During the first three days of the occupation, 10 Jews were killed in the marketplace (*Rynek*) by members of the SS and soldiers of the Wehrmacht.² Soon kidnap-



Jews from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski stand at the site of a mass grave for about 2,000 Jews shot in late 1942 and early 1943. Behind them is a portion of the vandalized Jewish cemetery, October 1945.

USHMM WS #21084, COURTESY OF RUBIN KATZ

pings and conscription to forced labor became daily events in the streets of Ostrowiec.

At the end of September 1939, the German occupiers ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (*Judenrat*). Initially the council was headed by an attorney named Seisel, who was, however, to the chagrin of the local Jews, soon replaced by I. Rubinstein. The *Judenrat*'s main tasks were to provide forced laborers for the Germans and ensure the fulfillment of German demands and regulations. In addition, it was also in charge of most welfare services, such as the establishment and management of a public kitchen and a hospital.³

Already by the beginning of October 1939, the German authorities started confiscating Jewish businesses, placing them into “trusteeships” under the direction of Poles, many of whom came from the Poznań area.⁴ In January 1940, the Germans introduced further restrictions against the Jewish population of Ostrowiec; these included mandatory registration, compulsory wearing of a white armband with a blue Star of David, and the imposition of a curfew.⁵

In the summer of 1940, Jewish men were forced to assemble in the square where the *Judenrat* building was located, under the false pretense of listening to a German communiqué. Soon, however, members of the Gestapo, the Gendarmerie, and the Polish (Blue) Police surrounded the group and selected 150 Jewish young men, who were then sent to forced labor camps in Distrikt Lublin, including those near the Bełżec extermination camp. Some of those who were deported survived the harsh conditions there and subsequently were able to return home at the end of 1940.⁶

Between December 1939 and January 1941, Ostrowiec absorbed about 1,000 refugees from the towns of Konin, Golin, and Sokołów,⁷ some 1,200 refugees from Vienna, and a number of refugees coming from Łódź and towns of the Poznań area incorporated into the Third Reich. As a result, the Jewish population of Ostrowiec rose to almost 16,000.⁸ The Jews from Konin, who arrived at the end of 1939, remarked that they were well received by the Ostrowiec community, which provided them with meals from the public kitchen, and some refugees also were invited into local family homes on Saturdays for dinner.⁹

In April 1941, the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish quarter (or open ghetto) in Ostrowiec. The Jews were given two days to move in and were allowed to bring most of their possessions with them. Poles living in the area were forced to move out. When the quarter was established, an auxiliary Jewish Police consisting of 50 members was formed; its commander was Blumenfeld. It is estimated that more than 16,000 Jews entered the unfenced Jewish quarter.¹⁰ The left side of the quarter bordered on Młynska and Pieracki Streets, while its right side was delimited by Denkowska Street. Its total surface area was 4 square kilometers (1.5 square miles).¹¹

As a result of its lack of fencing, the quarter's limits were patrolled by the Schupo and the Polish (Blue) Police; a member of the Jewish Police was stationed at each street exit. The Jewish residents were free to circulate only within the quarter and had to respect a 9:00 P.M. curfew. By 1942, the penalty for

being caught outside the ghetto was death.¹² Occasionally, however, some Jews sneaked out of the ghetto and reached the surrounding villages in order to smuggle in provisions. Other Jews were escorted out of the ghetto by the police on a daily basis, to get to their places of work, mainly in the factories and workshops of the town or as orderlies working for the Germans.¹³ Other Jews worked for German construction firms in and around Ostrowiec, such as Haumer, Loscher, A. Oemler, Hruse, R. Mende, and Travers.¹⁴ The living conditions in the Jewish quarter were extremely harsh; the Jews lived in terrible poverty. The overcrowding and the poor hygienic conditions led, in May 1941, to an outbreak of typhus.¹⁵ According to one estimate, during its entire existence about 10 percent of the inhabitants of the ghetto died from hunger and disease.¹⁶

There were also periodic roundups in the ghetto of younger Jews to be sent to various forced labor camps. On April 18, 1941, 150 Jews were sent to the armaments factories in Starachowice. Others were sent to the nearby labor camp in Bodzechów. By the fall of 1942, hundreds more Jews had been sent to work at the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) factory camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna.¹⁷

On the night of April 27–28, 1942, members of the Gestapo and the Schupo (including Ernst Thoms, Brunner, and Weiler) entered the Jewish quarter and arrested 68 people according to a list provided by the Judenrat, which was supposed to represent the members of the local leftist parties. Although the Aktion was dubbed a “Kommunistenaktion,” among those arrested were also members of the town’s intelligentsia, who had not been targeted at the start of the occupation. Some 36 of the arrested Jews were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp; and 32 were shot on the spot.¹⁸ From that day on, the killings and the repression of the Jews in Ostrowiec intensified.

On October 10, 1942, the SS and Police Leader (SSPF) in Radom, Dr. Herbert Böttcher, initiated the first mass deportation Aktion from Ostrowiec. First members of the Security Police, the SS, the Order Police, Ukrainian and Lithuanian auxiliaries, and Polish (Blue) Police surrounded the ghetto. The Jewish Police was instructed to visit all Jewish homes and announce that the Jews were to assemble the next morning in separate locations according to their work status and that they were only allowed to take a few possessions with them.¹⁹ On the first night of the Aktion, the Judenrat was eliminated, and all its remaining members were absorbed into the Jewish Police, which became responsible for life and death in the quarter.²⁰

The next morning, many old people and children were murdered right away during the roundup. All the unemployed Jews were forced to assemble in the marketplace, whereas those in possession of *Arbeitskarten* (work cards) were to gather on Florian Square facing the Labor Office. The unemployed Jews were left standing on the marketplace the whole day, witnessing the cruel murders of their kin. Later they were taken to the courtyard of the Polish elementary school on Sienkiewicz Street, where they remained without food or water, as they waited to be sent to the train station in three separate large transports spread over several days. At the train station, the

Jews were boarded onto cattle cars, 100 people per wagon. The Jewish Police spread the rumor among the Jews that they were being sent to forced labor in Ukraine.²¹ The truth, however, was that they were being sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. Those who could demonstrate some form of employment, probably at least 2,000 people, were taken by Ukrainian auxiliaries to another building, and on the following day they went back to work.²²

The Germans soon realized, however, that a large number of Jews had gone into hiding or fled the ghetto during the early phases of the Aktion. With the help of I. Rubinstein, the former head of the Judenrat, and also members of the Jewish Police, hundreds of Jews were assembled in the market square, after they had been lured out of hiding, on the false pretense that they would be sent to work in the Starachowice factory camp. Most of this group was sent to Treblinka.²³ In the course of the October deportation Aktion, hundreds of Jews were shot in Ostrowiec by members of the SS, the Gestapo, the Order Police, and Ukrainian and Lithuanian auxiliary forces. The bodies were subsequently burned and their remains buried in the Jewish cemetery in mass graves.²⁴ Overall, during the Aktion between 10,000 and 12,000 Jews were deported from Ostrowiec to the extermination camp in Treblinka.²⁵

As the deportation Aktion was being conducted, a small ghetto was established on a single street for the selected workers. As Mike Jacobs, who was selected, recalled: “We were taken to a small ghetto that had been made that day. I always wondered how they could build a wall so quickly around that small ghetto. A wooden fence, built in only one day, surrounded the entire ghetto. We were put in small rooms with bunks.”²⁶ Including others who emerged from hiding and sneaked in, probably around 3,000 people were living in the small ghetto by the end of 1942. Some of the Jews continued to work in German factories and offices, and others were engaged in clearing out remaining Jewish property from the area of the former ghetto.

On January 10, 1943, a second deportation Aktion was carried out, this time against the small ghetto. Members of the SS, the Polish (Blue) Police, the Gendarmerie, and the Ukrainian auxiliary forces surrounded the Jewish quarter and gathered 2,000 people, mostly Jews who were unable to pay the bribes necessary to be added to the registered list of workers at the factories; all were then sent to Treblinka. The Jewish Police assisted the Gestapo in finding those Jews who had gone into hiding.²⁷ On that day some 300 Jews were shot by members of the SS and the Schupo. Their corpses were burned and the remains buried in the Jewish cemetery in mass graves.²⁸

Following the second deportation Aktion, only about 1,000 Jews were left in Ostrowiec; 300 of them worked at the Jaeger factory, 600 in the main Ostrowiec armaments factory, and the other 100 consisted of members of the Jewish Police and their families and other Jews whose job was to gather for the Germans all the possessions left behind by the deportees. Following the second Aktion, preparations were made for the establishment of a forced labor camp in Ostrowiec, which was to consist of a barracks compound to hold the Jewish factory workers.²⁹

During the last phase of the ghetto's existence, a number of young Jews succeeded in escaping and tried to join up with Polish partisan groups that were active in the area. However, in one reported instance, a dozen Jews were betrayed or murdered by members of the Armia Krajowa (Polish Home Army, AK), and the wounded survivors fled back to the ghetto. Others were simply turned away by AK detachments. The Jewish population became increasingly nervous following the closure of the nearby forced labor camp in Bodzechów, in early March 1943, where some Jews originally from Ostrowiec had been working. A few Jews also fled to the Aryan side, including Roza Rosenman and Cyrla Rakocz, who were both given assistance by Ewelina Lipko-Lipzynska once they had escaped from the ghetto.³⁰

At the end of March 1943, there was a further deportation Aktion to Treblinka, which marked the final liquidation of the small ghetto.³¹ The remaining Jews after this were all in the forced labor camp. In April 1943, 110 Jewish craftsmen from Ostrowiec were selected and transferred to the forced labor camp for Jews (ZALfj) in Bliżyn, which at that time was subordinated to SSPF Böttcher.³² Subsequently other Jews were brought into the Ostrowiec labor camp from Piotrków Trybunalski, Starachowice, and the Płaszów concentration camp. The labor camp in Ostrowiec remained in existence until the evacuation of the remaining laborers in early August 1944.

SOURCES Further information on the history and the fate of the Jewish population of Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski can be found in the following publications: Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 55–58; J. Rosenberg, *Nazywam się Józef Nowak* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2004); M. Sh. Geshuri, ed., *Sefer Ostrovtsheb: Le-zikaron ule-edut* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Ostrovtsheb be-Yisrael, 1971); and M. Jacobs, *Holocaust Survivor: Mike Jacobs' Triumph over Tragedy, a Memoir*, ed. G. Jacobs (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2001).

Documentation regarding the persecution and destruction of the Jewish community of Ostrowiec can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/146, 301/2545, 301/2774, 301/2913, 301/3053, and 301/3056); BA-L (B 162/14485); IPN (ASG); USHMM (RG-15.019M, reels 2 and 14; RG-03.012*01; Acc. 1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 37); and VHF.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/3056, testimony of J. Libman; Geshuri, *Sefer Ostrovtsheb*, p. 48.
2. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 2, pp. 402–415.
3. AŻIH 301/3053, testimony of F. Klajnman; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 37, 211/764; and Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 55.
4. AŻIH, 301/2545, testimony of S. Gutwilen.
5. Geshuri, *Sefer Ostrovtsheb*, p. 49; and VHF, # 11984, testimony of Y. Baum.
6. Geshuri, *Sefer Ostrovtsheb*, pp. 51–52.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

9. M. Gelbart, ed., *Kebilat Konin bi-feribatab uve-burbanah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Konin be-Yisrael, 1968), p. 488.

10. Geshuri, *Sefer Ostrovtsheb*, p. 53; AŻIH, 301/146, testimony of S. Scherman; 301/2913, testimony of B. Judkiewicz.

11. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 14 (IPN, ASG, sygn. 47), pp. 116–117.

12. Rosenberg, *Nazywam się Józef Nowak*, p. 23; and Jacobs, *Holocaust Survivor*, p. 42.

13. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 56.

14. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 14, sygn. 47, pp. 116–117.

15. AŻIH, 301/2913; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 37, 211/765; and VHF, # 12270, testimony of J. Ancer.

16. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 14, pp. 116–117.

17. Geshuri, *Sefer Ostrovtsheb*, p. 54; Felicja Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow. Skarżysko-Kamienna Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), p. 36; Gelbart, *ebilat Konin*, p. 488.

18. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 2, p. 403; and BA-L, B 162/14485, Verdict of LG-Hamb, 147 Ks 3/71, against Ernst Hugo Thoms, December 22, 1972, p. 9. Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1990), p. 161, reports that 606 prisoners sent by the Sipo and SD in Radom were registered in Auschwitz on April 30.

19. AŻIH, 301/3056.

20. *Ibid.*, 301/2913.

21. Geshuri, *Sefer Ostrovtsheb*, pp. 64–65; AŻIH, 301/3056.

22. AŻIH, 301/146; and 301/3056.

23. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 57.

24. BA-L, B 162/14485, Verdict against Thoms, December 22, 1972, p. 17. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 2, pp. 402–415, gives a much higher figure than the German court estimate. See also AŻIH, 301/146; and 301/3056.

25. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 14, pp. 116–117; and BA-L, B 162/14485, Verdict against Thoms, December 22, 1972, p. 17.

26. Jacobs, *Holocaust Survivor*, p. 52.

27. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 57–58; AŻIH, 301/146.

28. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 2, pp. 402–415.

29. Geshuri, *Sefer Ostrovtsheb*, pp. 76–77.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78; AŻIH, 301/4953; Shmuel Krakowski and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust—Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), 1:458.

31. AŻIH, 301/2913.

32. *Ibid.*, 301/146.

OŻARÓW

Pre-1939: Ożarów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Ożarów, Kreis Opatów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Ożarów, town, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Ożarów is located 77 kilometers (48 miles) east of Kielce. There were about 3,200 Jews living in Ożarów at the outbreak of World War II, on September 1, 1939.¹

The Germans started a program of plunder, forced labor, and abuse during the first week of the occupation. The Germans nominated a Pole, Bidziński, as the mayor of Ożarów and the commander of the Polish (Blue) Police, which was subordinated to the German authorities. The Germans allowed the pre-war members of the Jewish community to retain their posts, but in early October they reconstituted this group under their own authority as a Jewish Council (Judenrat). Members of the Judenrat included Lajpcie Halpern (chairman), Szmulek Rozenwajg, Pincie Halpern, Szachne Frid, and Mojsze Szerman. The Judenrat selected the members of the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), appointing a local lawyer as its commander. One of the Judenrat's first tasks was to provide the Germans with a daily quota of 40 to 50 men for compulsory labor.²

The men were conscripted for forced labor five days a week. They were taken in trucks 10 kilometers (6 miles) outside of Ożarów, where they had to dig up large rocks and break them into slag for road construction. The laborers were supervised by Ukrainians or German-speaking guards armed with rubber truncheons. While working, they were often kicked, beaten, and called names. No food was provided. They were paid a minimum wage distributed by the Judenrat, which deducted from this amount its own administration costs. By paying a weekly tax to the Judenrat, better-off Jews could exempt themselves from forced labor. Compared to the rest, families of members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police were relatively privileged.

The German authorities frequently demanded large monetary contributions. In early 1940, all Jewish businesses and goods were confiscated. Later that year, all the town's Jews were ordered to vacate their homes and move to a designated area. They were also ordered to put signs on their doors marked *Jude* (Jew).

From the beginning of the war, the Jewish population of the village was augmented by many refugees, of which about 200 settled in Ożarów, mostly from Łódź, Warsaw, and Kraków. At the end of 1939, the Germans ordered a number of Jewish farmers from neighboring villages to move to Ożarów. On December 4, 1939, a transport of 400 deportees from Włocławek arrived, and the number of Jews in Ożarów rose to 3,941, of which 706 were refugees. The Judenrat coordinated the distribution of accommodations. Every local family was forced to admit at least one newly arrived family. Later on, the newcomers were also quartered in the prayer house. On December 3, 1940, 100 impoverished Jews from Radom were transferred to Ożarów. At the end of March 1941, 100 Jews from Vienna and a number from Kraków arrived, bringing the number of newcomers to 892 out of a total of 4,133 Jews in Ożarów.³ Around August 1941, about 400 deportees (80 families) from Łódź arrived.⁴

Fearing an epidemic in the overcrowded Jewish quarter, the Judenrat established a sanitation committee led by Andzel Bromberg. By 1940, Ożarów's Jews had been vaccinated for typhus. From March 1940, Jewish houses were inspected for cleanliness. Personal inspections and compulsory baths were

also enforced. Dr. Teodor Drach checked the men, and Dr. Anna Bobowa, the women. Thanks in large part to their efforts, between January and May 1941, only 22 Jews and 40 Poles died, with no deaths from infectious disease. Statistics for 1941, however, reveal 150 patients being quarantined in the local synagogue, 8 of whom died. The records also show that 44 Jews were born in that year. In December 1940, a soup kitchen was established on the premises of the Jewish primary school, serving 500 meals daily to the poor and deportees. The kitchen operated intermittently; for example, in November 1941, the number of daily meals served was restricted to 110.⁵

The organization of social help was transferred from the Judenrat to a newly created Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee regional office in Opatów in December 1940. A separate branch in Ożarów was set up in June 1941. The Judenrat's president, L. Halpern, chaired the committee. A local pharmacist, Maurycy Rosenberg, served as his deputy after Dr. Drach turned down the post. Poverty and hunger forced many Jews to beg for food and money in the surrounding villages disguised as Poles. Some were hired by farmers for transitory work in agriculture. The deportees from Łódź set up a separate self-help committee in August 1941, which opened another soup kitchen in February 1942.⁶

The ghetto in Ożarów was established on January 1, 1942, in the section of the village already occupied by the Jews. The Germans confiscated all goods in the ghetto, including items of little value. The ghetto was not enclosed, but large signs were posted warning that any Jews proceeding more than 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) from the village would be shot. Poles could enter and leave the ghetto freely. In April 1942, the ghetto had 4,471 residents, including 1,349 deportees. In March 1942, Aaron Bodko was shot by German Gendarmes in front of the Judenrat for smuggling food into the ghetto. In the spring of 1942, there were rumors of a Polish-Jewish gang robbing ghetto homes at night. The victims did not report these assaults for fear of reprisals.

On April 16, 1942, the Judenrat chairman, L. Halpern, took part in a conference in Sandomierz attended by the heads of the Jewish Councils from nearby ghettos. One of the questions discussed was the possibility of organizing self-defense. Participants decided to keep close ties with the Judenrat in Radom and to collect money, in order to defend themselves by bribing the Germans. According to Henryk Fařara, as a result of these efforts, the deportations from these ghettos, including Ożarów, were conducted later than in other places. Those Jews working for the Germans hoped to avoid deportation through hard work, making themselves indispensable.

In May 1942, the Judenrat registered 100 young men to be sent to labor camps. The going rate to pay for a substitute was 1,000 złoty, which only a few more wealthy Jews could afford. Those Jews remaining worked mainly for the Stuttgart-based company, Oemler, repairing the Opatów-Ożarów road. A few Jews worked in agriculture near the village.⁷

On the orders of Kreishauptmann Ritter in Opatów, effective June 1, 1942, Jews in Kreis Opatow were to be confined to only 17 points of concentration (as opposed to a previous total

of 150 settlements). Ożarów was selected as one of the permitted locations. Noncompliance was punishable by death. After the arrival of the Jews from neighboring settlements (including Lasocin), there were 4,648 Jews in the Ożarów ghetto.

On the morning of September 3, 1942, the Germans drove 3,000 Jews to the market square. The Jewish Police guarded the group while some Jews were selected for work in labor camps. About 700 young Jews were selected for the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna. The column left for the Jasice train station, 5 kilometers (3 miles) from Ożarów. Before reaching the station, the Jews were asked by the Germans if they wanted to work. Those who said they wanted to stay in Ożarów were ordered to strip naked and return to the ghetto. At the station, two nephews of a Judenrat member were removed from a cattle car before its departure. Other testimonies report that the Germans sought volunteers for HASAG by promising good treatment, decent wages, and permission to visit their families in Ożarów every two weeks. None of these promises were kept.⁸

In Ożarów itself, the Agraria Company (Lublin) set up a workshop producing straw baskets for ammunition storage in July 1942. By mid-October it employed 80 women and 126 men, with the aim of employing 400 Jews altogether. The laborers were not paid because Agraria was forced to pay the SS in Radom 5 złoty per day for each Jewish laborer. In return, Kreishauptmann Ritter, who had visited the workshop, assured the laborers that they would remain in Ożarów.⁹

The Germans liquidated the Ożarów ghetto at the end of October 1942. Most of the remaining 4,500 ghetto inhabitants were composed of the elderly, women, and children. Some were taken by wagon, and some walked to the Jasice train station. From there they were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. A significant number of Jews managed to run away en route to the station and went into hiding, either in the woods or with Poles. A group of 25 Jews was left in Ożarów to clean out the ghetto and sort Jewish possessions. Upon completion of their work, Ukrainian policemen shot them on the road to Sandomierz.

SOURCES The main source of information on the Jewish community in Ożarów is the book by Hillel Adler, *Memories of Ożarów* (Montreal: Ożarów Press, 1996). The chapter on the Holocaust is only brief. There is also an essay on the fate of Ożarów's Jews in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 39–42. The Ożarów ghetto is also mentioned in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 958–959; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 377–378.

Relevant documentation and testimonies can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/536 and 211/775-76); IPN; USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 38; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF (# 05426, 31503, 32812); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38, 211/775-76.
2. VHF, # 31503-4, testimony of Helen Klaiman, 1997.
3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/536; VHF, # 32812, testimony of Pola Klepacz-Spigelman, 1997; see also # 05426-3, testimony of Jack Fleischer, 1995.
4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 22, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38.
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC); Adler, *Memories*, p. 203.
6. *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 22, 1942.
7. Adler, *Memories*, p. 194; and USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38.
8. See VHF, #32812; and #05426-3. Both contain inconsistencies.
9. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38; VHF, # 31503-4.

PACANÓW

Pre-1939: Pacanów, village, Busko-Zdrój powiat, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Pacanow, Kreis Busko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Pacanów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Pacanów is located 30 kilometers (19 miles) southeast of Busko-Zdrój. There were 1,850 Jews living in the town in 1939.

The Germans occupied Pacanów on September 7, 1939. As the situation in Pacanów was relatively stable at the start of the occupation, many refugees fled there. The nearest Gendarmerie post was in Busko, the Kreis center; however, the Gendarmes drove through Pacanów daily, visiting another post in nearby Słupia Nowa. They would often stop in Pacanów and harass Jews by beating them or cutting off their beards in the street.

In October or November 1939, the Germans established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), with Moshe Aron as chairman. The Judenrat had the task of passing on and enforcing German orders and regulations. The Judenrat asked the Jews to surrender their valuables—gold, bronze, furs, and feather beds—to bribe the Germans and meet their demands for “contributions.”

Starting in November 1939, all Jews between the ages of 16 and 60 were subject to forced labor for up to 10 hours per day. The Judenrat was responsible for providing the requested quota of workers. A number of conscripts from Pacanów had to report to Chmielnik, and from there they were dispatched to various forced labor camps. The Pacanów Jews worked mostly in agriculture. In the summer of 1940, when assigned to picking strawberries, Jews were able to take home a small portion of their pickings as a form of payment.¹

In May 1940, there were approximately 2,200 Jews living in Pacanów, 250 of which were refugees. About 100 families lacked the basic means to support themselves. Almost all Jewish shops and businesses were now closed. Up until then, the Judenrat had been able to provide help for the refugees by

distributing potatoes, wood, and coal for heating. It also asked the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) based in Kraków for subsidies to open a soup kitchen, claiming that it was the best way to prevent outbreaks of disease in the village. The AJDC approved, and the soup kitchen was opened. In settlements where no kitchen was organized, groceries were distributed. The soup kitchen only functioned intermittently, because there was never enough money to keep it open for more than two or three weeks each month.²

To cope with the refugees and a large number of impoverished Jewish expellees arriving in the region, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), also based in Kraków, was established. The Kreis committee in Busko was established on November 4, 1940, with Jusek Topioł as its chairman. The branch in Pacanów was set up shortly afterwards. Icek Frydman was the president; the other two members were Joel Feldman and Boruch Nudel.³

In December 1940, some of the 2,000 Jews expelled from the Distrikt capital in Radom were transferred to Pacanów. The group consisted of Radom's poorest Jews, as well as deportees from other cities who had been in Radom for only a short time. There were also expellees from Łódź, Kraków, Warsaw, Płock, and Głowno. In May 1941, the number of Jews in Pacanów reached 2,645, including 785 refugees.⁴ The majority was still lodged in mass quarters, mainly in sheds or summer huts. The housing situation did not improve much with time; the last three families were only moved out of the sheds in December 1941.⁵

The date of the establishment of the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) in Pacanów is not known, but it was probably in the second half of 1940, as in neighboring Chmielnik. The German authorities created it to maintain order in the Jewish quarter. Its post was located in the southeast corner of the marketplace. Shortly before Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, Wehrmacht units were stationed in Pacanów. The terror, beatings, and arrests increased at this time, and more Jews were sent to labor camps.⁶

On May 5, 1941, after an outbreak of typhus, a hospital was set up in the village. The Sanitary Commission inspected Jewish houses and courtyards for cleanliness twice a week and disinfected the dirtiest flats with sulfur. The Judenrat provided food for the patients and paid for their treatment. In June 1941, the hospital requested a list of 98 medicines, but it received only 25 items in insufficient quantities one month later—for example, only 20 ampules of calcium and 100 aspirin pills. With so little medication, it was almost impossible to combat the epidemic. From August onward, daily checks were carried out on the cleanliness of Jews' homes. As a result, in October 1941, the epidemic died out, and the hospital was closed, only to be reopened two months later, when new typhus cases emerged. Dr. Adolf Haas was in charge of the hospital. In March 1942, three typhus patients and one with typhoid were hospitalized.⁷

An open ghetto was set up in April 1942.⁸ It consisted of 220 rooms in 125 houses located in the center of the vil-

lage. Approximately 2,828 Jews, including 903 refugees, were squeezed into this small area. On average, there were 12 or 13 people living in one room. The marketplace was to be free of Jews, so they were forced to move out. They were also forbidden to enter it to buy food. Local peasants would smuggle items into the ghetto, selling food such as fish, eggs, or potatoes; all the same, there was hunger in the ghetto. Sometime in 1942, Jews from nearby settlements were relocated into the Pacanów ghetto.⁹

In July 1942, close to 10 percent of Pacanów Jews worked in agriculture, primarily at the Wójcza Manor and in nearby Słupia. In September 1942, there were 2,785 Jews in the Pacanów ghetto. Out of this number, 147 were craftsmen and 752 laborers. About 260 Jews worked in labor camps outside Pacanów.¹⁰ A number of them worked on irrigation projects along the Strumień River, a tributary of the Vistula running through Słupia.

At the start of October 1942, a group of Germans came to Pacanów and ordered the youths in the ghetto to come out onto the street. They announced that if 2 healthy Jews from each family volunteered for labor camps, the elderly could remain in the village undisturbed. Everyone volunteered to go, but during the selection on the market square, only about 240 Jews were picked. They were marched for about 10 kilometers (6 miles) at night to Stopnica, where trucks were waiting for them. All were taken to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory in Skarżysko-Kamienna.¹¹

The liquidation of the Pacanów ghetto probably took place in early October 1942.¹² Before 5:00 A.M., the Germans gathered almost 3,000 Jews at the marketplace. According to one source, about 300 of Nowy Korczyn's Jews, who had remained to clean up the ghetto there after its liquidation, were added to the transport. From the marketplace they were marched to the train station in Szczucin; the guards beat them brutally along the way. Those who were unable to keep up with the column were shot. All were sent to the Treblinka killing center. On the day of the ghetto's liquidation, about 60 Jews were murdered. Their bodies were buried at the Jewish cemetery in Pacanów.¹³ Some members of the small Jewish cleanup commando that was left in Pacanów were later taken to one of the labor camps in Kielce.¹⁴

SOURCES The Pacanów ghetto is mentioned briefly in Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Jerzy Tomaszewski and Andrzej Żbikowski, eds., *Żydzi w Polsce: Dzieje i kultura: Leksykon* (Warsaw: Wydawn. Cyklady, 2001), p. 377.

Documentation on the Jews of Pacanów and their fate in the ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/538; 211/777; and Ring I/897); BA-L (e.g., B 162/6094); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 38; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], reel 18; and RG-15.079M [Ring I], reel 47); VHF (# 12287 and 36818); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 12287-4, testimony of Rose Herskowitz, 1996; Menashe Montzash, "In di yorn fun der Hitler okupatsye," in Efrayim Shedletski, ed., *Pinkes Kbmyelnik: Yizker-bukh nokh der borev-gevorener Yidisber kehile* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Hmyelnik be-Yisrael, 1960), pp. 729–730.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), reel 18; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38.
3. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38.
4. Ibid., RG-15.079M (Ring I), reel 47.
5. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38.
6. "Droga," by Stanisław Pytko, in *Miesięcznik Samorządowy, Z Życia Gminy*, (Styczeń, 2006), p. 12.
7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38.
8. Ibid.; other accounts vary on the date.
9. VHF, # 12287-4; # 36818-55, testimony of Helen Masch, 1997; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38.
10. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 38.
11. VHF, # 12287-4; # 36818-55.
12. According to Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 148 (table 7), 173–174, and Tomaszewski and Żbikowski, *Żydzi w Polsce*, p. 377, the deportation took place in early October 1942. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 178, and Pytko, "Droga," p. 12, date it in early November 1942.
13. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo kieleckie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1980), p. 195.
14. Joseph Goldstein, "Extracts from a Ghetto Diary," in Elhanan Erlikh, ed., *Sefer Stashov* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Stashov be-Yisrael, 1962), p. 29.

PARADYŻ

Pre-1939: Paradyż, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Paradyż, Kreis Tomaszów, Dystrykt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Paradyż, Łódź województwo, Poland

Paradyż is located 70 kilometers (43.5 miles) southeast of Łódź. The 1921 census registered 117 Jews in the village. When the war broke out in 1939, there were 100 Jews (15 families) living there.

The German occupying authorities established a Judenrat chaired by I. Kinigel. Herszel Dębowski served as the Judenrat's secretary, and in March 1941, he became also the chairman of the self-help committee then established in the village. The committee was to assist 78 deportees from Płock, who arrived in Paradyż on March 12, 1941, as well as several refugee families from Łódź and Głowno, who had settled there during the winter of 1940–1941.

There was already a significant housing shortage in the village because, as Dębowski reported, "the head of the borough removes Jews from their own small houses and replaces them with Poles." The only synagogue was also inaccessible to deportees, as a Polish school had been set up there. In the end, the newcomers were placed with local Jews, who already lived in cramped, one-room houses, thereby increasing overcrowding to 13 to 15 people per room. The Judenrat opened a soup

kitchen on March 23 that fed up to 50 people daily, but it was closed on May 8, 1941. By June 1941, there were 260 Jews living in Paradyż.¹

The following month, the Judenrat reported that many of the Jews in Paradyż, especially those from Płock, were suffering from swellings and leg boils. One of the self-help committee members, the elderly hospital attendant E. Moszkowicz, was charged with providing medical care to the Jews of Paradyż.²

A Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) branch was set up in the village in November 1941. It included Dębowski as chairman, as well as Azryel Bursztyn and Jankiel Gedalia. It reopened the soup kitchen on December 1, 1941; however, the 50 meals served daily covered only part of the community's needs.³

The Jews of Paradyż were ghettoized in January 1942, when Jews from surrounding settlements were transferred there. Dębowski described the situation in February 1942: "The Jewish population is impoverished due to restrictions on its place of residence. The number of people seeking assistance has risen significantly, because in January 70 paupers from surrounding villages were crammed into Paradyż." No one in the ghetto had permission to leave it. "Our work [of the JSS] is extremely hampered due to the lack of identity cards and permits [to leave the ghetto]," and "today, almost none of the [Paradyż] Jews can earn a living," he emphasized.⁴

After the establishment of the ghetto, the JSS tried—unsuccessfully—to procure work for some of the tailors and shoemakers from Łódź, by soliciting orders for them via the headquarters of the JSS in Kraków. Approximately 60 of the newcomers were able to find employment working in agriculture with local farmers in the summer of 1941. "Currently [February 1942], this is impossible, as a Jew must not leave Paradyż under penalty of death," reported the local JSS. Yet it hoped that 40 to 50 men and women could be employed on the surrounding estates including Wielka Wola, Dalszewice, and Stawiczki, all located 1 to 5 kilometers (0.6 to 3 miles) from Paradyż, provided that the authorities issued permission for them to leave the ghetto for work purposes. "Unfortunately we do not have special permits [to leave the ghetto] to speak with the owners or commissars of those estates," reported Dębowski.⁵

By July 1942, 18 ghetto residents were employed in road construction for the Strassenbauamt Radom (Nebenstelle Opoczno), for which they were paid a small amount. Another 20 laborers received no compensation, including 10 workers at the grain warehouse, workers for the local authorities in Wielka Wola, and those at the post office.⁶

In September 1942, there were 262 Jews living in the Paradyż ghetto, of which approximately 50 were working for the Germans.⁷

The ghetto was liquidated on October 12, 1942. Its residents were transferred to the Opoczno ghetto, which the Germans liquidated on October 27, 1942, sending the Jews gathered there to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES The following publications make reference to the fate of the Jewish community in Paradyż during World War

II: Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955), pp. 153 (table 10), 177–178; and Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), p. 185.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (211/779; 211/1039 [JSS]); and USHMM (Acc. 1997.A.0124 [JSS]).

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1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/779 (Paradyż), pp. 1–2, 8, 32.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 30, 35, 54.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 44; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1039 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), p. 62.
4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/779, pp. 52–53.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57, 74, 77–78.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 84–85.

PIŃCZÓW

Pre-1939: Pińczów, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Pinczow, Kreis Busko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Pińczów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Pińczów is located 40 kilometers (25 miles) south-southwest of Kielce. By 1939, the Jewish population numbered 3,500.

The Wehrmacht captured Pińczów on September 5, 1939. First, the town's Jews were rounded up; then women and children were separated from the men, upon which German machine guns were trained. All were held in a local church and its yard for over 24 hours while the Germans set fire to the town. An estimated 77 percent of the town's structures (of which 90 percent were Jewish-owned) were burned to the



Exterior view of a synagogue in Pińczów, 1936.
USHMM WS #77725, COURTESY OF SHALOM FOUNDATION: GOLDA TENCER-SZURMIEJ COLLECTION

ground. Homeless Jews were housed initially in a public school that was soon taken over by the Wehrmacht and turned into a warehouse. The housing situation caused a large number of Jews to move to neighboring towns; many youths fled into Soviet-controlled territory, while the remainder tried to repair their homes.

Due to the fire, most of the town's authorities had to be moved to neighboring towns; for example, the nearest Gendarmerie post was in Busko, located 16 kilometers (10 miles) away, from where its officers oversaw Pińczów's affairs. At times, German soldiers came into Pińczów from Kielce to remove certain Jews and kill them; Gendarmes from Busko also conducted such raids.

The local rabbi, Szapsia Rapoport, was ordered by an SD officer (Sicherheitsdienst) to select 12 people for nomination to the Jewish Council (Judenrat) and submit a list naming all of the town's Jewish inhabitants. Both orders were to be carried out by the next day. A chairman and his secretary were appointed on the spot. The initial composition of the Judenrat (apart from one member, Lejb Gold) is unknown. Gold's son testified that his father and the others were forced to accept their nominations and were threatened with being killed if they did "not do a good job." By March 1940, the Judenrat included I. Górski (chairman) and Mojżesz Kozłowski; it is possible that both were members from the outset.¹

Only detachments of the Polish (Blue) Police and the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) were permanently stationed in Pińczów. A man named Wilczyński commanded the Polish (Blue) Police. Szmul Fainer, whom the town's Jews reportedly feared, headed the Jewish Police. According to Stanisław Jaklewicz, its members dutifully collected the contributions imposed by the Germans, often using batons to do so.

Despite occasional German visits, life was comparatively safe and quiet in Pińczów. Jews were able to pray in private. Some reopened their businesses. Despite German-appointed Polish and ethnic German (*Volksdeutsche*) "commissars," commerce carried on, albeit in secret. According to Gold, there was no hunger, as fields and farms surrounded the town. The situation worsened, however, when Jews were confined to a ghetto, and Jewish tradesmen were no longer able to travel.

Pińczów's Jews were employed in peat cutting for which they were paid with rations of flour. They would leave Pińczów at 5:00 A.M., walking up to 9 kilometers (5.6 miles) into the forest. Additionally, they repaired roads on the orders of the German army.

Despite the initial outflow of residents, the overcrowding was so severe in Pińczów that by August 1940 there were cases of contagious diseases. There were also 197 refugees in the town by November 1940, many of them likely relatives of Jewish residents of Pińczów. The number of refugees then stabilized, rising only to 218 by January 1941.²

Sources disagree regarding the date on which an open ghetto was created in Pińczów; dates range from November 1940 to April 1942 or later. These discrepancies probably indicate that the ghetto's establishment was never formally announced, but rather that Pińczów's Jews were forbidden to

leave the town's limits on penalty of death. Travel outside of Pińczów required a permit. There is an additional report that Jews were forbidden to use the town's main streets.

On February 15, 1941, a group of Jews was sent to the labor camp in Sosnowiec. There were reportedly 3,000 Jews (including 218 refugees) living in Pińczów in May 1941. The number of deportees then doubled to 434 by September 1941, while the total number of Jews decreased to 2,991, due to deaths caused by typhus and more roundups of people sent to labor camps. Pińczów was severely overcrowded, with an average of 20 people per room.³

By March 10, 1941, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was set up in Pińczów to take over the provision of welfare from the Judenrat. The committee was chaired by Josek Fajnsztat and was assisted by Rabbi Rapoport. Its soup kitchen was launched on August 10, 1941, feeding approximately 800 impoverished Jews daily.

By April 1942, there were 3,377 Jews in the ghetto, including 400 refugees; its population increased to 3,554 by June 1942. More conscripts were sent to factories in Częstochowa and



Dudek Gold stands in front of a wooden fence inside the Pińczów ghetto, n.d. USHMM WS #97088, COURTESY OF DAVID GOLD

Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski in the summer of 1942. At this time, the kitchen fed 1,000 Jews daily. The JSS Women's Committee distributed additional rations to children 3 to 12 years old.⁴

According to survivor Leon Gross, the youth in the Pińczów ghetto set up a self-defense group about one year before the ghetto's liquidation. The group was in contact with Poles of Communist and Socialist orientation in the vicinity. For four to five weeks, the group hid an escapee from Treblinka who explained its role as a death camp. The Judenrat resented the group for disseminating this information, as it preferred to maintain the status quo and keep things calm in Pińczów. In the event of a deportation Aktion, the group planned to set Pińczów on fire; however, in the end, the group did not resist.⁵

On October 3, 1942, the Jews were instructed to report to the square in front of the brewery on Jędrzejów Street the following morning. The same day, Jews from the Wiślica and Busko-Zdrój ghettos were brought on wagons to Pińczów. They were held on the market square. The ghetto was liquidated on Sunday, October 4, 1942, when Jews from neighboring villages were also brought to Pińczów. The liquidation Aktion was carried out by the SS and Gendarmes, assisted by the Jewish Police.

About 3,000 Pińczów Jews gathered at the designated spot. Those who were discovered in hiding were not included in the transport but instantly shot. Polish firemen immediately boarded up emptied houses. The Jewish Police accompanied the Gendarmes. Approximately 150 elderly, women, and children were killed in the course of the liquidation Aktion. A number were killed or died of exhaustion on the way to Jędrzejów; the names of only two of these victims are known: Brania Josek Moszek and Splineta Brama. Upon reaching Jędrzejów, all the Jews were loaded onto trains and sent to the Treblinka killing center.⁶

Upon the column's departure from Pińczów, the corpses of dead Jews were loaded onto wagons by Polish farmers, firefighters, and the Jewish Police that the Germans had left behind following the deportation. The Jewish policemen, under supervision by the Gendarmes, buried these victims. The next day, Germans searched the empty houses for escapees and goods, again assisted by the Jewish Police. Several Jews, including a saddler and his son, were discovered and killed on the spot. Some local Poles who looted Jewish households were caught, beaten, and forced to return the goods. The hunt for hidden Jews in Pińczów lasted two days, after which the Germans departed.

In the course of the liquidation Aktion, Rabbi Rapoport presented the Gendarmes with Paraguay passports for his family. According to the postwar testimony of a relative of the rabbi, the Germans pretended to respect the passports but nevertheless attached the family to the transport to Jędrzejów; from there they went to Germany, where the family died in 1945. However, according to a pre-war neighbor, S. Jaklewicz, the rabbi was in touch with his family after the war—at first living in Switzerland, then in France, and later in Argentina.

Some of Pińczów's Jews escaped the deportation by joining two Jewish partisan units operating in the vicinity: the

“Zygmunt” detachment commanded by Zalman Fajnsztat and another commanded by Michał Majtek. Both units joined the Polish Communist Gwardia Ludowa (People’s Guard, GL) and were active until February 1944, when they incurred heavy losses.

Poles in the vicinity saved a number of Pińczów’s Jews. Some had their houses torched and were killed together with the Jews they had been sheltering when this was discovered (e.g., the Haberman family was arrested on May 1, 1943, with the Niechciał family who had hidden them; both families were executed two days later following their arrest in Busko). There are also accounts of Jews being betrayed by Poles or captured and handed over to the German authorities, who ultimately killed them.

SOURCES The ghetto in Pińczów is mentioned in the following publications: M. Shener, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kebilat Pintshev; in Pintshev togt shoyv nisbt* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Pinczow in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1970); Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 395; Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 86; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 991; and Jarosław Tambor, ed., *Spółczesność żydowska w Pińczowie* (Pińczów: Samorząd Miasta i Muzeum Regionalne w Pińczowie, 1998), p. 2.

The following archival sources were used in preparing this entry: AŻIH (210/547 [AJDC]; 211/271 [JSS]; and 301/2627 [Relacje]); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 16; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); and VHF (e.g., # 1981, 13170, 43645).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC Pińczów), 210/547, p. 1; VHF, # 1981, testimony of David Gold, 1995.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/547, pp. 21–22, 38–39, 43–44.
3. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 16, 211/271 (Busko-Zdrój), p. 14.
4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, June 24, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/547, p. 58.
5. VHF, # 13170, testimony of Leon Gross, 1996.
6. *Ibid.*, # 43645, testimony of Cela Miller, 1998.

PIONKI

Pre-1939: Pionki, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Pionki is located about 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) east-northeast of Radom. In 1939, there were 168 Jewish residents out of a total population of approximately 7,700 people. This number

increased to 327 in 1940 with the arrival of refugees, many of whom were members of residents’ extended families.

Survivor Melvin (Mendel) Gelblat named Kocki as the first chairman of the Jewish Council (Judenrat). By January 1940, its membership had increased to include S. Kirszenbaum, H. Libhaber, and Hendel.¹

Aside from the provision of social assistance (including welfare support received from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee [AJDC]), the Judenrat conscripted Jews for labor assigned by the new German administrators of Pionki. Forced labor consisted of various maintenance jobs, including the dismantling of bombed-out houses and cleaning bricks, trucks, and horses; many Jews also worked as tailors. Another group helped to enlarge a train depot and unloaded shipments for the gunpowder factory in the town. The Wehrmacht managed to reopen this badly damaged factory and a nearby power plant in 1940, also forcing its pre-war Polish laborers to work there and later conscripting Pionki’s Jews. Survivors mention an SS presence in the factory, which in fact was run by the Wehrmacht and was subordinated to the Armaments Inspectorate. Operations were under the command of Hauptmann Brandt.

Although survivor testimonies—on which this entry is mainly based—give various dates as to the ghetto’s establishment, it was most likely set up in the autumn of 1941 or at the beginning of 1942. The Germans ordered all of Pionki’s Jews to move to one of the longest streets in the northern part of Pionki—Leśna Street. The street was built up on only one side, as it faced a forest.

Similar confusion among survivors also applies to the ghetto’s physical closure: some claim it was never fenced, whereas Sam Klaiman vividly recalls escaping from the ghetto through barbed wire. Nevertheless, from the very beginning of the ghetto’s existence, Jews were forbidden to leave it. Poles, who had previously been the predominant inhabitants on Leśna Street, were evicted and forbidden to enter the ghetto, which reportedly had a small gate.

German forces and Polish (Blue) Police guarded the ghetto, the latter reportedly looking the other way when Jews were seen escaping. A Jewish police force was set up to maintain order inside the ghetto, resolve minor disputes, and report escapees. A Jewish policeman named Mendel arrested Sam Klaiman’s mother for sneaking out for firewood. Mendel held her in a shed until his wife, whom Klaiman’s father begged, freed her. This was followed by a public confrontation between Klaiman and Mendel, during which a bystander saved the former by intervening when Mendel attempted to kill him with a pick.² Two Jewish women were imprisoned in Radom for leaving the ghetto on June 24, 1942. Rywka Wajzman (née Szykman) is registered as having been “deported” on August 18, 1942. Rojza (Rosa) Gelblat (55 years old) was “executed” on August 15, 1942. The latter, presumably the mother of Melvin Gelblat, fled from the ghetto with one of her sons, who was shot while escaping on foot.³

Soon after the ghetto’s establishment, Jews from nearby villages were forced into the ghetto during the winter of

1941–1942, including some from Sokoły and Klwatka. Inhabitants of the latter place were informed of the resettlement and tried to sell their belongings for food, as they knew they would not be allowed to leave the ghetto. By August 1942, the ghetto reportedly had only 682 residents.⁴

Ghetto inmates continued to labor at the gunpowder factory, to which they were escorted daily by Jewish policemen. Shifts lasted 8 to 10 hours, with Pionki's Jews working every other day. Some volunteered for unpaid labor in order to be fed. Poles administered the works canteen and distributed the same meals of vegetables and meat to Germans and Jews. At the time, Poles were the predominant factory laborers, and from them, Pionki's Jews were able to obtain news and additional food. Yetta Rosenberg added that food rations were distributed once a week among the Jewish laborers. At some point before the ghetto's liquidation, a number of Pionki's Jews were held permanently in a barrack on the factory grounds, while the majority continued to return to the ghetto for the night.

Until the ghetto's liquidation, there were no deportations of Pionki's Jews to other localities, nor were there attempts to organize a Jewish underground movement in the ghetto or to sabotage the factory.⁵

Survivors Manny Weizman and Sam Fireman name Nachman and Baer Kaplan as the "Jewish administrators of Pionki [factory]." Reportedly, the Kaplans befriended Hauptmann Brandt and inquired whether more Jews from the ghetto could work in the factory, as they knew that the Germans wanted to replace Poles engaged in sabotage and underground activities. Shortly afterwards, the Germans liquidated the Pionki ghetto without any warning. In the final stage of the ghetto's existence, due to overcrowding, some refugees had to camp out in the street.⁶

The majority of the deportees arrived just weeks or days before the Pionki ghetto's liquidation in August 1942. Most were likely assigned to work in the gunpowder factory, including refugees from Garbatka-Letnisko, Jedlnia Letnisko (ca. 300), and Jedlnia-Poświętne (ca. 100).

The liquidation of the Pionki ghetto took place on August 20, 1942. One day before, while working in the factory, Pionki's Jewish laborers were suddenly rounded up and informed that from now on they would live on its grounds. Most of these laborers were escorted back to the ghetto to pick up clothing and bedding and were able to say brief good-byes to their families. Some of the current workers that the Germans recognized as being too old or too young were sent back to the ghetto, while others were selected for work on the spot.

In the course of the liquidation, 488 Jews unfit for labor were taken to the nearby Zwoleń ghetto (20 kilometers [12.5 miles] southeast of Pionki), which was liquidated at the end of September 1942.

Approximately 200 laborers (men and women) from the liquidated Pionki ghetto were quartered in the factory's barracks, where a labor camp was set up that same month. Pionki survivors claim that they were the first and original Jewish laborers of the camp, which existed until 1944 and grew much

larger; by January 1943, it had 850 Jewish and 3,220 Polish laborers.⁷

SOURCES The pre-war figure for the Jewish population in Pionki is from Adam Penkalla, *Akta dotyczące Żydów w radomskim Archiwum Państwowym, 1815–1950* (Jerusalem: Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People; Warsaw: ŻIH, 1998), p. 19. For changes in Pionki's Jewish population, Penkalla cites "Akta gminy Pionki (1931–1944)," vols. 13–14, 19–20; for information regarding the Pionki ghetto and the transfer of its population to Zwoleń, see "Starostwo Powiatowe w Kozienicach (1945–1950)," vols. 46–48, held in APR. Direct access to these collections was not possible for the author at the time of writing.

Figures for the population of the Pionki ghetto and for the deportees from other localities are as cited by Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955), pp. 158 (table 11), 160, 178–179. For more information on the Pionki labor camp, see Piotr Matusak, *Ruch oporu w przemyśle wojennym okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Wydawn. MON, 1983), pp. 45, 202, 277–289.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR; AŻIH (210/549); USHMM (RG-2.002*18, 23, and 26; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); and VHF (# 3041, 4331, 8996, 16678, 33774, 33775, 41649, 44958, and 45313).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/549 (Pionki), p. 1; VHF, # 16678, testimony of Melvin Gelblat, 1996.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/549, pp. 1–4; VHF, # 3041, testimony of Sam Klaiman, 1995; # 44958, testimony of Simon Braitman, 1998.
3. Kazimierz Jaroszek and Sebastian Piątkowski, *Martyrologia Żydów w więzieniu radomskim 1939–1944: Wykaz zamordowanych, zmarłych, deportowanych do obozów koncentracyjnych i obozów zagłady* (Radom: Archiwum Państwowe, 1997), pp. 17, 77; and VHF, # 16678.
4. VHF, # 33774, testimony of Bella Malc, 1997; # 44958; # 33775, testimony of Michael Maltz, 1997.
5. *Ibid.*, # 8996, testimony of Yetta Rosenberg, 1995; # 16678; # 33775.
6. *Ibid.*, # 4331-1, testimony of Sam Fireman, 1995; # 41649, testimony of Manny Weizman, 1998; # 44958.
7. *Ibid.*, # 45313-3, testimony of Tema Gutwaks, 1998; # 44958; # 3041; # 8996; and # 41649.

PIOTRKÓW TRYBUNALSKI

Pre-1939: Piotrków Trybunalski, city, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Petrikau, Kreis center, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Piotrków Trybunalski, Łódź województwo, Poland

Piotrków Trybunalski is located about 43 kilometers (27 miles) south-southeast of Łódź. The pre-war population of Piotrków consisted of 50,000 people, including about 15,000 Jews.

VOLUME II: PART A



Survivors visit the Jewish cemetery in Piotrków Trybunalski, 1945. Among those pictured is the photograph's donor, Rose Guterman (at far right). USHMM WS #06950, COURTESY OF ROSE GUTERMAN ZAR

On September 5, 1939, the Germans entered Piotrków. Killings of Jews began immediately, and the next day the Germans set fire to the Jewish quarter. What did not burn was looted. Jews, especially older religious people, were kidnapped and sent to forced labor camps where they were tortured and beaten. Other people were taken as hostages and only released after the community paid “contributions.”

In early October, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was appointed. It was headed by a Bundist leader, Zalman Tenenberg. Included were also representatives of various Zionist groups, religious factions, and members of the Artisans Union. Szymon Warszawski represented all the nonaffiliated Jews. In all the various departments, together with the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), about 500 people worked in the community services controlled by the Judenrat.

The Jewish Police was headed by the lawyer Stanisław Zilberstein and was responsible for matters of public order, supplies, and health. Its function was also to enforce cooperation on those unwilling to work, as requested by the Germans. It was composed of 45 men divided into three groups. The policemen received special hats and armbands.

On October 8, 1939, Oberbürgermeister (Lord Mayor) Hans Drechsel ordered the establishment of a ghetto in Piotrków Trybunalski, which was the first ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe. The Jews were given until October 31 to move into the designated ghetto area, which was located in an old and impoverished part of town. The borders of the ghetto were marked by signposts bearing the word *Ghetto* (in gothic script) above a white skull and cross bones on a blue background. It was not enclosed by a fence.¹

On December 1, 1939, the Stadtkommissar (Oberbürgermeister Drechsel) ordered that 1,000 Jews had to report for forced labor every day and that Jews had to wear a yellow armband. He also imposed a curfew inside the ghetto from 3:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M.² In 1940, all the Jews of Piotrków over the age of 10 were required to wear a white armband on their sleeves with a blue Star of David. Those who failed to comply were

severely punished. Some people still disobeyed the order, despite the danger.

Men born between 1914 and 1923 were registered for forced labor by the Judenrat in March 1940.³ Then in August, almost 1,000 men and boys, some only 16 years old, were sent to labor camps in the Lublin area to fortify the German-Soviet border. David Perach was among 150 initially sent to the camp at Cieszanów. The conditions were terrible: hard labor from dawn to dusk, whippings, and shootings. The most meager rations and primitive living conditions made those places a living hell. The gallant man who organized the repatriation of the laborers by negotiations and bribes was Salomon Gomborg. The young men were released in January 1941.⁴

The people of the ghetto tried their best to endure their cruel fate with dignity. The most shining example was the clandestine education organization. The teachers eager to practice their noble profession and the youngsters thirsty for knowledge formed a “bridge to humanity” by studying and organizing cultural activities such as symposia, plays, discussion groups, and musical events.⁵

The German official Ronig took over the administration of expropriated Jewish houses outside the ghetto. The Germans also appointed commissars to administer Jewish firms and stores. Forced labor involved backbreaking work. Street cleaning, repairing the roads, and serving the various German offices became a nightmare for the people. Very often the oppressors captured men, forcing them to perform harsh meaningless work just for torment. The Judenrat regularly supplied scores of Jewish workers via the Arbeitsamt (labor office). They worked, for example, draining swampy fields near the villages of Milejów and Witów, digging canals and trenches, removing tons of earth, and working up to their knees in water all day long.

Due to the resettlement of Jews by the German authorities, the ghetto population increased substantially as refugees arrived, for example, from Gniezno, Tuszyn, Łódź, Pabianice, and the regions of Poznań and Płock. The ghetto contained 182 run-down buildings in poor condition with 4,178 rooms. With nearly 20,000 Jews forced into the ghetto, there were roughly 5 people living in each room.⁶

As the population of the ghetto increased and the overcrowding intensified, outbreaks of disease reached epidemic proportions. In 1941, a typhus epidemic claimed over 1,000 victims. The newly formed sanitary committee introduced compulsory baths and the disinfection of clothing every three weeks for the inhabitants of each house. They also quarantined those houses affected. The sanitary squad consisted of 60 men, which later became the Sanitary Police.⁷

The Welfare Department of the Judenrat was very active in providing support where needed, including emergency services. They organized medical and dental clinics as well as a pharmacy. Social welfare kitchens were established for the poor, such as the unemployed and those who had lost their businesses.

A number of local companies—such as the Kara and Hortensja Glassworks; the Petrikauer Holzwerke (wood factory) owned

by Dietrich and Fischer, also known as “the Bugaj”; the Ostbahn; the Kreisgenossenschaft; and Phoenix—began to employ Jews, but young workers were given priority.

Those employed in the glassworks learned new crafts. The work itself was very hard. About 1,100 Jews worked in the Kara and Hortensja factories as glass breakers and blowers. They also loaded and unloaded soda, coal, bricks, sand, cement, and other materials. At the Kara factory the managers, Vogel, Popielowski, Mrozinski, and the many foremen, German and Polish, mistreated the workers at every opportunity. A giant glass oven cistern had to be built, and a huge, deep pit was dug for this purpose. The Jews had to remove large amounts of earth from the pit while foremen armed with sticks stood by, beating the workers. This work lasted a year, and in 1943 a new smelting pot and other small buildings were ready. The construction was completed thanks to the sweat and blood of the Jewish workers who carried all the bricks and stones.⁸

On July 5, 1941, the chairman of the Judenrat, Tenenberg, together with several Bundists on the Jewish Council were arrested, as the Germans suspected that they were cooperating with the underground. The investigation lasted 10 weeks, and those arrested were cruelly tortured to extract information. In September the arrestees were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Soon afterwards their families received telegrams informing them of the deaths of the men from various diseases. Szymon Warszawski replaced Tenenberg as chairman of the Judenrat.⁹

During the winter of 1941–1942 the German requisition of furs (*Pelzaktion*) was a further severe blow to the ghetto inmates. All heavy coats as well as furs were requisitioned. Many people became sick as a result of the loss of their winter coats. At the end of 1941, the Germans issued an order prohibiting Jews from leaving the ghetto. Jews caught outside the ghetto faced the death penalty. In early March 1942, the German administration in Piotrków ordered the ghetto to be closed by April 1, 1942. From that date, it was sealed: Jews were not permitted to leave the ghetto, and no non-Jews were allowed to enter it.¹⁰

The Germans began preparations for the deportations (*Aussiedlung*) at the beginning of September 1942 with the creation of the Small Ghetto. The block of houses encompassing the Jerozolimka, Garncarska, Zamurowa, and Staro-Warszawska Streets was fenced in with barbed wire. It was rumored that only 3,000 productive Jews would remain for work at the German factories. At this time thousands of Jews were brought into the ghetto from the neighboring towns and villages, such as Sulejów, Srocko Prywatne, Wolbórz, Gorzkowice, and others, raising the total ghetto population to some 25,000. The tension in the ghetto reached its climax on October 13, 1942. The horrifying news spread that the “Aktion” was scheduled to begin on the following day.

On the night of October 13–14, 1942, SS and Ukrainian auxiliary forces surrounded and sealed off the ghetto. The Aktion began at dawn. The first group of people was ordered to go out to the Deportation Square opposite the Jewish Hospital. The commanders of the operation—headed by SS-

Hauptsturmführer Adolf Feucht from Radom, the main deportation expert in the Generalgouvernement—stood in the center of the square. As soon as the Jews had been lined up in rows, the Nazis selected the factory workers, who were sent to their workplaces. The others were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. The quota that day was 6,000 people, or enough to fill the 52 cattle cars. Once the quota was filled, all the others were sent back to the ghetto.

During the ensuing dreadful week, the workers from the glass factory, including the Jews who were temporarily housed there, saw the trains departing for Treblinka and witnessed the trembling hands of people groping at the window gratings and their terrible cries as they were carried off to their deaths. Trains departed on Wednesday, Friday, Monday, and on Wednesday again. In total, more than 20,000 Jews were deported. About 1,000 Jews were shot during the deportation Aktion, mainly the old and sick.

This experience left deep wounds in the souls of those who witnessed it. On the day of the last transport the Nazis realized that several cars would remain empty. The quota of 6,000 had not been met. They rushed the remaining inhabitants of the Small Ghetto to the square, where Feucht passed among the ranks and selected the 300 victims he needed. He took the scholars of the Jewish community, its leaders, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and others who had belonged to the Jewish Council. Finally he came to Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau, who alone among them still kept his traditional dress and beard. The murderer pointed his cane at the rabbi: “The Jews need Rabbis there too,” he shouted. Dislodged from his position and clutching a small Torah scroll, the rabbi joined the last Treblinka transport of Piotrków Jews. With their departure the great community of illustrious, ancient Piotrków was no more.¹¹

When the workers from the Bugaj and the glass factories returned, they were housed in the Small Ghetto, in the dwellings of those who had been deported. Meanwhile, the people who had remained hidden in their houses outside the Small Ghetto filtered back in. Those several hundred “illegals” were of concern to Warszawski and his aides, who feared that the clandestine influx might provoke a further selection.¹² Indeed, soon the Germans began intensive searches assisted by the Jewish Police. The search uncovered several hundred Jews, including entire families. They were incarcerated in the Great Synagogue. Here, the murderers committed brutal atrocities with satanic pleasure. They carried infants out of the building, smashed their heads, and hurled their bodies into basin heaters over bonfires. The first group of people was sent by horse carriages to nearby Tomaszów Mazowiecki, where the deportations to Treblinka were still going on.

A month later, the Nazis assembled another group of several hundred victims from bunkers (hiding places) and the “illegals” from the Small Ghetto in the synagogue. On December 20, 1942, several hundred Jews were taken to their bitter end in the Raków Forest, first digging their own graves before they were mercilessly shot.¹³ (In July 1943, during the liquidation of the Small Ghetto, 39 small children were killed in the same location.)

Only 2,400 Jews were permitted to remain in the Small Ghetto known as the “Blok,” because of their work in vital industries; in fact, the population exceeded 3,000. Most inhabitants were employed in factories, thanks to which the group was allowed to remain. Others, however, worked in the “shop,” which produced clothing for the Germans, and at the Befehlsstelle, cleaning up the large ghetto and sorting and shipping the “goods” to Germany. A small group worked in internal services, the laundry, and in the kitchen; on food supply; at the clinic and at janitorial work; and for the Jewish Police. Prior to the December massacre in Raków, 160 people were killed in the forest on November 20, 1942.¹⁴

In February 1943, 250 people were deported to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factories in Skarżysko-Kamienna. A month later another 250, mostly women, were sent to the same place, among them the rabbi of Radoszycze (Radoszyce), Admor Itzhakl Finkler, and his family.¹⁵

On March 21, 1943, the Germans perfidiously conducted a massacre during Purim. They took 10 scholars, doctors, and lawyers, claiming that they would be exchanged for Germans from Palestine. Doctors Brams and Glatzer, attorneys Silberstein and Stein, their families, and others were brought to the Jewish cemetery, ordered to strip naked, and killed without mercy.¹⁶

In July 1943, it became known that only about 1,500 Jews were to remain in Piotrków, employed in the Kara and Hortensja Glassworks and in the Bugaj Lumberworks. The workers were destined to live within the factories’ grounds. About 1,500 excess Jews were sent to the Bliżyn camp. Three truckloads sent to Pionki, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, and Radom completed the fate of the residents of the Small Ghetto. The ghetto in Piotrków Trybunalski ceased to exist. When the transport left town in the second half of July, an official sign reading “Petrikau ist judenrein” (Piotrków is cleansed of Jews) was posted at the railroad station.¹⁷

The two labor camps that remained within the Piotrków city limits were headed by Szymon Warszawski at the Bugaj and Salamon Gombert at the Kara and Hortensja. On November 26, 1944, the remnants of the Jewish population of Piotrków were put into cattle wagons to be transported to three destinations. The majority from the glass factories and a smaller part from the Bugaj were sent to the HASAG facilities in Częstochowa—the Pelzerei, Warta, Raków, and Częstochowianka factories. The larger part of those from the Bugaj, including about 50 people from the glassworks, were sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp. The women and small children from both places were sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp.

In January 1945, only two small groups of Piotrkower were liberated at the Warta and Pelzerei in Częstochowa. The rest were sent to Buchenwald. From Ravensbrück some women from Piotrków were sent to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Only about half of the people that left Piotrków in November 1944 survived the atrocious conditions in various German concentration camps and on the death marches. By the end of 1946, about 600 Jews had registered with the Jew-

ish Committee in Piotrków, and only 150 remained in the town by December 1948.¹⁸

SOURCES The English-language yizkor book edited by Ben Giladi, *A Tale of One City: Piotrków Trybunalski* (New York: Shengold in cooperation with the Piotrkow Trybunalski Relief Association in New York, 1991), contains much material from the original yizkor book, Yaakov Malts v-Naftali (Lavi) L’au, ed., *Pyotrkov Tribunaliski veba-sevivah: Sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Vaadat ha-maarekhet shel ha-sefer shele-yad Irgun yots’e Pyotrkov be-Yisrael, 1965), including the excellent article by Dr. Joseph Kermish, “The Destruction of the Jewish Community of Piotrkow by the Nazis during World War II.” Other relevant publications include memoirs by Isaac Goodfreind, *By Fate or by Faith* (Atlanta, GA: Longstreet, 2001); Charles Kotkowsky, *Remnants (Memoir of a Survivor)* (Montreal: Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2000); Schraga Golani, *Brennendes Leben: Vom Pabianice und Piotrków in Polen durch die Lager Skarżysko Kamienna, Bliżyn, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Ohrdruf bis zur Befreiung in Buchenwald* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2004); Sidney Finkel, *Sevek and the Holocaust: The Boy Who Refused to Die* (Matteson, IL: Sidney Finkel, 2006); Yechiel Granatstein, *One Jew’s Power, One Jew’s Glory: The Life of Rav Yitzchak Shmuel Eliyahu Finkler, the Rebbe of Radoszycze, in the Ghetto and Concentration Camps* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1991); and Yisrael Meir Lau, *Al tishlah yadkha el ha-na’ar* (Tel Aviv: Yedi’ot aharonot: Sifre hemed, 2005). There are also a number of relevant articles including William Samelson, “Piotrków Trybunalski: My Ancestral Home,” in Eric J. Sterling, ed., *Life in the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), pp. 1–16; A. Brzeziński, “Eksterminacja ludności powiatu piotrkowskiego w latach 1939–1945,” in *Rocznik Łódzki* (Łódź, 1972), 16: 147–148; and many others published in *The Voice of Piotrkow Survivors*.

Documentation and testimonies regarding the fate of the Jews of Piotrków Trybunalski during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., 301/1565; Ring I/340); BA-L (206 AR-Z 32/63); FVA (# 306, 888); IPN; USHMM (RG-10.045); VHF; and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/1100, 1298, 2568, and 2576; O-3/522-26, 2777, and 3287; and O-21/4).

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NOTES

1. Decree of Hans Drechsel, *Wiadomości Piotrkowskie*, no. 5, October 8, 1939; Kermish, “The Destruction,” in Giladi, *A Tale of One City*, pp. 323–353; Finkel, *Sevek and the Holocaust*, p. 27; Mala Tribich, “A Child in the Holocaust,” *The Voice of Piotrkow Survivors*, no. 41 (140) (November–December 2005): 12–15; and Samelson, “Piotrków Trybunalski: My Ancestral Home,” p. 2; AŻIH, Ring I/340.

2. AŻIH, Ring I/340, Verordnung des Stadtkommissars von Piotrków, Drechsel, über Beschränkungen, die den im Getto befindlichen Juden auferlegt werden.

3. Bekanntmachung der Jüdischen Gemeinde in Petrikau, March 1940, republished in Giladi, *A Tale of One City*, p. 170.

4. David Perach, “The First Transport to the Labor Camp,” in Giladi, *A Tale of One City*, pp. 202–203; Kermish, “The Destruction,” p. 330.

5. Ben Giladi, "The Topic of Resistance," in Giladi, *A Tale of One City*, pp. 246–250, here p. 247.
6. Kermish, "The Destruction," pp. 331–332.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 334; *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 19, September 24, 1940.
8. Kermish, "The Destruction," p. 331.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 334, 350; Giladi, "The Topic of Resistance," p. 247.
10. Kermish, "The Destruction," p. 335; Finkel, *Sevek and the Holocaust*, p. 29.
11. Kermish, "The Destruction," pp. 338–340.
12. Sheraga Golani, *Brennendes Leben* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2004), p. 60.
13. Kermish, "The Destruction," p. 342.
14. AŻIH, 301/1565, testimony of Blanka Goldhaust; Kermish, "The Destruction," p. 341.
15. Granatstein, *One Jew's Power*, pp. 89–91.
16. Dr. Michael Lubliner, "The Purim Massacre in Piotrków," in Giladi, *A Tale of One City*, pp. 237–240.
17. Kermish, "The Destruction," p. 343; BA-L, 206 AR-Z 32/63.
18. Kermish, "The Destruction," pp. 343–344.

POŁANIEC

Pre-1939: Połaniec, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Połaniec, Kreis Opatów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Połaniec, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Połaniec is located 101 kilometers (63 miles) northeast of Kraków. In 1939, there were 864 Jews living in Połaniec.

The persecution of Połaniec's Jews began even before German troops arrived, at the hands of local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*). The Wehrmacht occupied the village on September 5, 1939, and further abuse followed soon thereafter.

The Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in October 1939. Among its members were the following: Shachne (surname likely Hanger, a carpenter), Avram Nogel, Meir Schlachter, Nehemiah Schnifer, and Shlomo Zucker. The Judenrat was held responsible for carrying out German orders. At this time, a unit of Polish (Blue) Police was organized, with Michał Peksa as its commander. The Jewish Police was likely organized in 1940.

Many Jewish refugees settled in Połaniec after the war broke out. The village lacked good road or rail connections, and with no German Gendarmerie post, Połaniec was regarded by many as a fairly safe place, where Jews were left in peace.¹ The Germans did not kill any Jews in Połaniec until early 1942.

According to the Judenrat in Połaniec, there were about 90 refugee families (mostly from Łódź) residing there by the fall of 1940. On December 3, 1940, on the orders of the Kreishauptmann in Opatów, 150 Jews were resettled from Radom to Połaniec. Some of them were already sick. Połaniec's Jews encountered problems housing this large number of people, since most houses were single-room cottages. The Judenrat solicited the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), based in Kraków, for help. Although Połaniec's Judenrat com-

plained that it never received any outside assistance, the AJDC office maintained that a delegation from Radom's Judenrat visited Połaniec and some assistance was provided. Połaniec was also advised to open a soup kitchen for the resettled Jews. At this time, charity efforts in Połaniec were bringing in approximately 100 złoty per month. The Połaniec Judenrat, however, estimated that 1,000 złoty was necessary to cover the basic needs of the Radom expellees. At the end of 1940, there were approximately 1,200 Jews living in Połaniec. In March 1941, about 300 more Jews were brought in from neighboring towns; among them a number of deportees from Vienna.²

The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), also based in Kraków, was created especially for providing social and medical relief for refugees and the needy. Połaniec was subordinated to the regional office organized in Kreis Opatów in December 1940; however, a separate committee was not established in Połaniec, and the village came under the local Staszów branch administration. It is not known when assistance to the refugees and deportees in Połaniec started, but in February 1942, the soup kitchen distributed 8,600 meals. From that month on, children up to 13 years of age received additional food rations: 150 grams (5.3 ounces) of bread and a glass of sweetened coffee.³

Sometime in 1941, the SS arrived and took hostage two Judenrat members: Schnifer and Nogel. They were to be released only upon delivery of a large ransom in silver and copper. The SS held the men in the nearby village of Łoniów, torturing them for three days until the ransom was paid.

In May 1942, Kreishauptmann Ritter in Opatów ordered the concentration of all Jews in the Kreis in only 5 towns and 12 settlements by the end of the month. Połaniec was chosen as one of the settlements, which from June 1, 1942, were to be recognized as ghettos. This was the first stage in the German plan to "cleanse" the region of Jews. The arrival of 500 more Jews from nearby settlements produced further overcrowding in the village. As living conditions deteriorated, an outbreak of typhus developed in the summer of 1942. By June 1942, the ghetto had 1,553 inhabitants.

In August or September 1942, a German Gendarme accompanied by a Polish policeman arrested Yeshayahu Rothenberg at his home, took him to the bridge near the church, and shot him. At the same time, they also shot the head of the municipal council. Rothenberg was buried at the place where he was shot. Local Jews then bribed the Gendarme for permission to retrieve Rothenberg's body and rebury it in the Jewish cemetery.

Despite Połaniec being cut off from the outside world, news of Jews being deported to unknown destinations, allegedly to labor camps, had reached the ghetto by September 1942. Połaniec's Jews were suspicious of the fact that the transports included the elderly and children, who were unable to work. By early October, the number of Jews in the ghetto had risen to 2,200, more than doubling the pre-war number. Among the new arrivals were also several Jews who had escaped from recent deportation Aktionen, including Yadzya Offman, who brought a horrific description of the Aktion in Koprzywnica. As rumors spread in mid-October of an impending Aktion in

Połaniec, many left to hide in the woods or bribed peasants to conceal them.

Some larger families divided themselves and went to separate hiding places to enhance their chances of survival. According to one testimony, there were groups of Jewish and Russian partisans in the vicinity of Połaniec, which took in some of the Jewish escapees. However, there were also instances of Jews being killed in the nearby forests by common criminals or Polish right-wing underground organizations, including elements of the Armia Krajowa (Home Army, AK). According to Moshe Szlachter, “all peasants” rid themselves of Jews who paid for shelter with the same ploy: saying that the Germans were coming to search their homes. Several Jews were even murdered after the liberation. Despite this, a number of Jews received various forms of help from local Poles. Several Poles from the area around Połaniec have been recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations.

German-led forces arrived in Połaniec on Sunday morning, October 18, 1942, to liquidate the Połaniec ghetto. They ordered all Jews to report to the marketplace within half an hour, warning people that those who did not comply would be punished by death. They allowed Jews to take with them only a few basic necessities. All who reported were formed into two rows. During the roundup, Germans and their collaborators combed the village for hidden Jews. They shot on the spot anyone they discovered.

The selection took about five hours. Jews who were deemed unfit for travel were killed in front of the others. The three small children of Azriel Knobel wandered among the dead until an SS man shot them. Dead bodies were piled up in the middle of the market square. Then a column of those Jews that remained was marched 18 kilometers (11 miles) to Staszów. Those who could not keep up with the column were shot along the way. Only at night did the Germans permit the burial of the dead at the Jewish cemetery. According to one source, 300 Jews that had remained in Połaniec were taken to Staszów on the next day, October 19, 1942. Altogether, about 2,000 Jews were deported to Staszów. Initially they were caged on the town's market square, but later they were released into the ghetto, on condition that they did not attempt to run away.

A 90-year-old rabbi was walled up in his cellar in Połaniec by his son-in-law, who then ran away. The rabbi and his two grandchildren were discovered a few days later. Although he could no longer walk, he was arrested and then sent to Staszów. During the searches of the ghetto and the surrounding area for escaped Jews and Polish partisans over the period up to June 1944, Gendarmes from Staszów and Sandomierz shot at least 55 Jews and 19 Poles.

After the liquidation of the Połaniec ghetto, the Germans destroyed the wooden Jewish houses, while stone houses were sold. The synagogue was purchased by an ethnic German and demolished for firewood. Many Torah scrolls were destroyed.

The liquidation of the Staszów ghetto took place on November 8, 1942, when almost 6,000 Jews were marched to the Szczucin train station. About 700 to 740 Jews collapsed and were shot before reaching the station. The remaining Jews

were loaded on trains and sent to their deaths at the Treblinka killing center.⁴

SOURCES Information regarding the destruction of the Jewish community of Połaniec can be found in the following publications: Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 382–384; testimony of the survivor Moshe Szlachter, article on the Web (www.plontch.net/ybta.htm); and Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/813, 2280, 2291, and 3743); BA-L (B 162/4872); IPN (IPN 0173/97, Charakterystyka no. 135, p. 4); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/3743; 301/2280.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).
3. *Gazeta Żydowska*, March 20, 1942.
4. BA-L, B 162/4872, Vorläufiger Abschlussbericht, April 21, 1960, reports that Staszów's Jews were deported to Treblinka; some other sources, e.g., AŻIH, 301/4972, indicate Bełżec as the destination.

PRZEDBÓRZ

Pre-1939: Przedbórz, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Przedborz, Kreis Konskie, Distrikt Radom, General-gouvernement; post-1998: Przedbórz, Łódź województwo, Poland

The town of Przedbórz is located 87 kilometers (54 miles) south of Łódź. On the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, Przedbórz had about 4,500 Jewish inhabitants.¹

In the course of heavy fighting, Przedbórz changed hands several times in the September 1939 campaign. As a result, 70 percent of Przedbórz was destroyed, especially the town center, which was predominantly populated by Jews. Looting, persecution, forced labor, and murder began almost from the first day of the occupation. In view of the difficult conditions, hundreds of Jews—especially the better-off—left Przedbórz permanently.²

The town's Jewish Council (Judenrat) was created soon after the Germans arrived and was made responsible for the fulfillment of all German orders. Avigdor Tannenbaum, a lumber merchant and Zionist leader, was its first chairman. By May 1940, another Zionist, Zysman Tyberg, a former vice-mayor of Przedbórz, had replaced him. Other members of the Judenrat included Dawid Frydman (deputy), Dr. Juda Kamiński, Jusek Rapoport, and Elias and Szachna Rozencawig. Most of them had been community activists before the war. A soup kitchen for the poor was established in February 1940.³

In the spring of 1940, on orders from the Kreishauptmann in Końskie, Dr. Albrecht, an open ghetto was established in Przedbórz.⁴ All of the town's Jews had to move across the

bridge to the predominantly Jewish suburb of Widoma. The ghetto consisted of Trytwa, Częstochowska, and Leśna Streets. The Poles living there had to vacate their houses. The transfer of people occurred immediately after the Germans announced the ghetto's establishment. The Jews moving in were forced to leave behind their sewing machines and other tools.

The ghetto initially had 2,800 residents. Large signs were posted on the streets warning ghetto inhabitants not to leave its confines; however, non-Jewish Poles were still allowed to enter the ghetto. Until October 1941, Jews caught outside the ghetto were fined between 5 and 50 złoty. Subsequently they faced the death penalty.⁵

Initially, there was no risk involved in smuggling food into the ghetto. One had to pass the Gendarmerie post on the bridge; but only occasionally did the Gendarmes turn people back. Yet with time, the Gendarmerie started shooting Jews for small misdemeanors—or for no reason at all. The executions were carried out at the local Jewish cemetery. A Gendarmerie by the name of Ettlér reportedly terrorized Jews and Poles. In addition to the Gendarmerie, a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was set up to maintain order inside the ghetto.

In August 1940, about 150 young Jews were sent to the Zagacie labor camp, 14 kilometers (9 miles) from Przedbórz, where they drained land along the Czarna River. The laborers received insufficient food and no bedding. The Przedbórz Judenrat was ordered to provide them with food. A month later, when 180 Przedbórz Jews were working in Zagacie, a soup kitchen was established there. On November 13, 1940, 150 men from Przedbórz were released from the camp, only to be replaced by a new group of 200. According to one source, a number of Jews were also sent to a labor camp in Częstochowa.

In November 1940, the ghetto had 3,100 inhabitants, including 100 expellees from Łódź. The social branch of the Judenrat (run by Dawid Frydman) was able to obtain some help from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) based in Kraków. The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization was set up to take over the provision of aid for poor Jews from the Jewish Councils. The Kreis committee, based in Końskie, was established on September 26, 1940. The Przedbórz branch was launched in June 1941. Dawid Gottesman became its president, with Zysman Tyberg as his deputy. In July 1941, the rations and financial resources for Przedbórz diminished considerably, and the soup kitchen had to be closed. Kraków's JSS warned Przedbórz that their subvention would be cut if the Judenrat failed to reopen the kitchen. In August, the kitchen was feeding the poor every day except Saturday. About 200 children were receiving supplementary food rations. Despite these efforts, there was never enough food to go around. At this time, there were 3,150 Jews in the ghetto, 75 of them newcomers.

During this difficult period for the community, 23 poor Jews from Mnin—near Stopnica—were resettled into the ghetto on May 23, 1941. Due to extreme overcrowding, they were housed in the synagogue with other homeless Jews. To make matters worse, the Kreishauptmann ordered that the

ghetto's boundaries were to be reduced. Trytwa Street was then excluded from the ghetto. The unsanitary living conditions led to renewed outbreaks of typhus (the first were in 1940).⁶

In June 1941, there were 3,211 Jews living in the ghetto. Around 10 percent of Przedbórz's shop owners and craftsmen were still permitted to operate their businesses. In 1941, the town's carpenters manufactured 2,500 tables for the Technisches Baubüro (Construction Office), while lathe operators filled orders for the Magister Śliwa Company in Kielce.⁷

In October 1941, typhus claimed more victims. Out of 3,000 Jews in the ghetto, the JSS estimated that over 100 were infected. Hospitals overflowing with the epidemic's victims in neighboring towns began to refuse treatment to Jews from Przedbórz. On December 3, 1941, the German authorities ordered the Jews to set up an epidemic hospital in a ruined building at 18 Wierzbowska Street. The Jews living there were given only a few hours to vacate the property.

It has been alleged that, at the request of the Radoszyce Judenrat, 67 of its most impoverished Jews were transferred to Przedbórz on December 22, 1941. Within a week, this number rose to 95. Przedbórz complained to the JSS in Kraków that Radoszyce's behavior "deserved condemnation." These recent expellees were housed in the synagogue. From then on, Przedbórz's Jewish authorities expected the continued resettlement of Jews from neighboring villages without sufficient means to help them. Finally, the deported Radoszyce Jews were sent back on February 28, 1942. This did not, however, ease the situation, as 119 Jews from Góry Mokre, Mojżeszów, Wojciechów, and other nearby settlements arrived in their stead. By April 1942, the ghetto was still not fenced, yet the number of Jews confined within it reached its peak: 4,300, including 200 expellees. The ghetto consisted of 120 houses in which there were 500 rooms. On average, at least 8 people shared 1 room.

In February 1942, the only Jewish craftspeople working in Przedbórz were some carpenters manufacturing beds for the German army. When Kraków's JSS informed the Jewish community in Przedbórz of the possibility of organizing craft workshops, it was eager to cooperate, as 150 carpenters and other craftsmen were in desperate need of employment. The workshops were established after May 1942.⁸

In either the spring or the summer of 1942, the ghetto's area was reduced when the Germans excluded its only playground. At that time a child day-care center was organized for about 125 children, aged four to eight. A nurse from the epidemic hospital, with three assistants, ran the center. Apart from two daily meals, the children were kept busy with songs, walks, gymnastics, and reading religious stories. Twice a month the children were bathed.

The ghetto in Przedbórz was liquidated on October 9, 1942. The elderly and the children were shot in the town. The Germans promised to spare eight Jewish policemen and one Judenrat member from deportation, presumably in return for their help in organizing the deportation. All nine were shot while the remaining Jews were on their way to Radomsko, 33 kilometers (20.5 miles) away. Some of the Jews were transported

on horse-drawn wagons, while the rest had to walk. Near the village of Granice many Jews attempted to escape, but the German police shot most of these people.

The Przedbórz Jews arrived in Radomsko around 2:00 p.m., and along with 5,000 local Jews, they were taken to the train station. On a rainy day, they waited in the open for a cattle train to arrive. The transport departed for the Treblinka extermination camp around 8:00 p.m., on October 10, 1942. The remainder of Radomsko's Jews were deported two days later.

In the spring of 1945, nine Jews who returned to Przedbórz were murdered in a nearby forest by a group under the leadership of Dowski, who was known as an antisemite before the war. According to Polish sources, a squad of the Narodowe Siły Zbrojne (National Armed Forces, NSZ) led by Captain Władysław Kołaciński was responsible for the murders.

SOURCES Published sources on the fate of the Jewish community in Przedbórz during the Holocaust include: Shim'on Kants, ed., *Pšedboz: 33 šbanim la-burbanah: Sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv, 1977); and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 206–208.

Relevant information on the Przedbórz ghetto can be found in the following archives: APK (Akta miasta Przedborza 578-581); AŻIH (210/566 [AJDC]; 211/828-832 [JSS]; and 301/2513 [Relacje]); BA-L (B 162/6211); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]); VHF (# 20127 and 20562); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Jerzy Tomaszewski and Andrzej Żbikowski, eds., *Żydzi w Polsce: Dzieje i kultura: Leksykon* (Warsaw: Wydawn. Cyklady, 2001), p. 377; Krzysztof Urbański, *Almanach gmin żydowskich województwa kieleckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach: FPHU “XYZ,” 2007), p. 387; Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 152 (table 9), 175–176.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/566; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 40.
3. *Ibid.*; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/566; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 40.
4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 40, gives the date of March.
5. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/566; VHF, # 20562, testimony of Eugenia Magdziarz, 1996; # 20127-38, testimony of Morris Kornberg, 1996.
6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 40.
7. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/566.
8. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 40.

PRZYGLÓW AND WŁODZIMIERZÓW

Pre-1939: Przyglów and Włodzimierzów, villages, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Przyglów and Włodzimierzów, Kreis Petrikau, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Przyglów and Włodzimierzów, Łódź województwo, Poland

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

Przyglów is located approximately 9 kilometers (5.6 miles) and Włodzimierzów 11 kilometers (6.8 miles) southeast of Piotrków Trybunalski. These neighboring villages served before the war as resorts for middle-class Jews from Łódź and Piotrków. In 1939, there were 52 Jews living in Przyglów.¹ As the community was particularly small, the Germans initially did not establish a Jewish Council (Judenrat) there but rather subjected it to the supervision of the nearby Sulejów Judenrat.

In December 1939, a number of Łódź refugees settled primarily in the summer rental cottages and villas in Przyglów and Włodzimierzów. By August 1940, the number of Jews had risen to 600, of which, according to the newly established Judenrat, 92 percent were newcomers. “In connection with this great population growth, Przyglów has been recognized as a separate entity by the Kreishauptmann,” reported the Judenrat.

The following people were members of the Judenrat: teacher Szaja wel Stanisław Głogowski as chairman, industrialist Abram M. Potasz as deputy, H. Guterman as secretary (later replaced by lawyer Maksymilian Kon), baker Moszek Altman, and Josef Goldsztajn. The Judenrat set up a self-help committee in August 1940, with the goal of equipping the summer cottages with stoves and winter bedding.²

In December 1940, there were 550 Jews living in Przyglów and Włodzimierzów. At a conference of Judenrat chairmen that took place on January 19, 1941, in Piotrków, Głogowski reported on the situation in Przyglów: “Almost all families are unemployed. Apartments are lacking beds. There is an utter lack of fuel. There are cases of death from starvation.”

Nearly 500 deportees from Jeżów, Skierniewice, and Rogów arrived at the end of February 1941, increasing the number of Jewish residents in the two villages to nearly 1,000. By March 18, 1941, a number of Jews from Głowno, Łyszkowice, and Stryków, plus 50 from Piotrków, were transferred to Przyglów. A soup kitchen that opened and struggled to serve 200 meals daily was “besieged by lines of hungry people,” reported Głogowski. It was closed by mid-May 1941.³

A branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization was established in May 1941. Its staff consisted of Judenrat members Głogowski, Kon, Altman, and Goldblum.⁴

On July 14, 1941, 100 to 120 men were taken to a labor camp in Wolbórz to regulate the Wolbórka River for the E. Jeglinsky Company. Terrible conditions in the camp, piecework, and low wages caused many laborers to run away. The Judenrat resorted to calling in the Gendarmerie to prevent work from ceasing in the camp and paid the 24 workers who remained a weekly salary of 25 złoty and a loaf of bread. Due to typhus epidemics in the vicinity, the camp was closed on November 25, 1941, on the orders of the Piotrków Arbeitsamt (labor office).⁵

In June 1941, a typhus epidemic broke out in Przyglów, populated at the time by 2,500 Jews. Some 6 to 8 persons were sharing a room. Most of the initial 18 cases of the sickness were sent to the Święta Trójca public hospital in Piotrków, while subsequently 100 persons were quarantined. Two patients had died by the end of the month.

The community employed Dr. S. Chwat and charged him with managing the Sanitation Committee. Two hospital

attendants, Krumhorn and Bajbuk, assisted Chwat. The German authorities pressured Przyglów: “The head doctor for the Kreis warns us constantly that if we cannot stop the epidemic, the isolation of our territory will be enforced.” On his orders, the community opened a public bath. In September 1941, 2,092 Jews were reported to be living in Przyglów. As of that month, the hospital in Piotrków frequently refused to admit sick people from Przyglów due to overcrowding. The epidemic reached its height in January 1942, when the local JSS reported that “20 persons were dying weekly of hunger and typhus.” Judenrat members Kon and Goldblum succumbed to the disease. Another lawyer—Abram Chojnacki—replaced Kon as secretary.

The total number of typhus victims remains unknown, but in January 1942, the Judenrat was forced to open an orphanage, initially caring for 25 children under 16 years old. Housing conditions became even more desperate after fire razed buildings housing 75 families (i.e., approximately 200 people). The number of orphans had risen to 44 by mid-April 1942. These were children of refugees from Łódź, Łowicz, Głowno, and Skierniewice. Most of them were suffering from scabies and frostbite. A refugee high school teacher from Skierniewice, Zofia Rajchman, managed the orphanage.⁶

The date on which the Przyglów ghetto was established is unknown. In April 1942, in response to a standard questionnaire regarding ghettoization, the local JSS stated that there was no Jewish quarter. At that time, the community numbered 2,251 Jews. It is most likely that around this time the authorities recognized the combined Przyglów and Włodzimierzów communities as a ghetto. It was a common German practice to announce that entire villages with predominantly Jewish populations were to be treated as ghettos. The reappearance of typhus also may have played a role. Because many families lived scattered in woodland summer houses, the Przyglów ghetto was never enclosed by a fence. Nonetheless, Jews were forbidden to leave the limits of the two villages.⁷

Residents of the ghetto received significant help from Teodor Jasiński, a Pole in charge of the population register in the Łęczno community, of which Przyglów was a part. At the request of Głogowski and Judenrat members Guterman and Daniel-Józef Uffner, Jasiński provided dozens of fake Polish identification cards for ghetto inhabitants. The Judenrat filled in fictitious Polish-sounding names that helped recipients to leave the ghetto safely. Apart from Uffner, whom Jasiński also provided with documents, Jasiński never knew the original names of the recipients. According to Uffner, thanks to “dead souls,” Jasiński was also able to obtain and smuggle flour and other produce into the ghetto. He was also the only source of radio and underground press information for the ghettoized community. In 1942 Jasiński was arrested, imprisoned in Piotrków, and later sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp.⁸

Although the typhus outbreak was contained in April 1942, 16 new cases appeared six weeks later, in June 1942.⁹ In July 1942, there were reportedly 1,945 Jews living in the ghetto.¹⁰ The ghetto was liquidated on October 13–20, 1942, when its residents were sent directly to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/570 [AJDC]; 211/798; 211/801-803; 211/837-839 [JSS]; 301/5826 [Relacje]); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); and VHF (# 30554).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/839 (Piotrków Włodzimierski), p. 29.
2. *Gazeta Żydowska*, June 3, 1941; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/837 (Piotrków Włodzimierski), pp. 1–2; 211/839, p. 29; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/570 (Piotrków Włodzimierzów), pp. 1–3.
3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/798 (Piotrków Trybunalski), pp. 4, 16–20; and 211/837, pp. 6, 10, 14, 20.
4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/837, pp. 18, 20.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 39; 211/838 (Piotrków Włodzimierski), pp. 8–9; 211/802 (Piotrków Trybunalski), pp. 34–35.
6. *Ibid.*, 211/801 (Piotrków Trybunalski), pp. 14, 64; 211/837, pp. 23, 25, 27–28; 211/838, pp. 13, 15, 19, 25; and 211/839, pp. 1–2, 9–10, 12, 23–24, 29, 32.
7. *Ibid.*, 211/802, p. 29; 211/839, p. 29.
8. AŻIH, 301/5826, testimony of Teodor Jasiński, n.d.; 301/5826, testimony of Andrzej Adrjan, 1949; 301/5826, testimony of Józef Uffner, 1961.
9. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/839, p. 51.
10. *Ibid.*, 211/803 (Piotrków Trybunalski), p. 83.

PRZYSUCHA

Pre-1939: Przysucha (Yiddish: Pshischa), village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Przysucha is located about 100 kilometers (62 miles) southeast of Łódź. There were 2,007 Jews living in Przysucha in 1939.

The Wehrmacht entered the town on September 8, 1939, and began a typical program of persecution, robbery, forced labor, and murder. Przysucha's male Jews were immediately conscripted for labor three days a week, mostly in road construction and extracting peat. People who had money paid the poor to work in their place; these people in turn were keen to work in order to receive some pay. Many Jews, especially the young, fled Przysucha at the start of the occupation; but they were soon replaced, primarily with refugees from Łódź, who began arriving in great numbers on December 15, 1939.¹

The German authorities set up a Jewish Council (Judenrat) to organize the conscription of forced laborers and communicate new laws and regulations to the community. The Judenrat chair changed several times. Archival sources confirm that Abram Rozenberg acted as the chairman in July 1940² and that Moszek Frydrych had succeeded him by February 1941.³ In April 1941, the Judenrat consisted of the following seven members: Frydrych (chairman), Berek Krajewski (deputy), Lejzor Zylbersztein (secretary), Pejsach Kozłowski, Lejbus Majzels, Chil Wajngarten, and Dr. Dawid Krongold.

In February 1942, the *Gazeta Żydowska* continued to refer to Frydrych as the chairman.⁴

In May 1940, the Judenrat counted 1,200 impoverished Jews in Przysucha, with refugees constituting a substantial part of this group. To assist the impoverished, the Judenrat set up a self-help committee and financed the distribution of bread, flour, and some meat. This effort was eventually subsidized by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). Moszek Kunowski, Jozek Finkelstein, Pinkus Kozłowski, and Moszek Przytycki distributed bread directly from bakeries in return for a signed receipt. Although helpful, this action was insufficient, and the Judenrat was concerned that a letter of complaint from “a few Łódź brawlers” had caused the AJDC to withhold its subsidies in April and May 1940.⁵

The number of refugees was constantly on the rise. By August 1940, there were approximately 2,500 Jews in town, including 437 newcomers, the majority from Łódź and Kraków.⁶

The soup kitchen opened by the self-help committee in December 1940 initially served 75 meals per day; the poorest were fed free of charge, while others paid 10 groszy.

By the end of 1940, a total of 120 patients were being treated for typhus. The only Jewish doctor in Przysucha, Dawid Krongold, attended the sick. When a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was established in Przysucha in November 1941, Dr. Krongold became its chairman.⁷

In May 1941, there were 3,360 Jews living in Przysucha, including nearly 800 newcomers. By August 1941, there were approximately 1,000 displaced Jews in Przysucha, primarily from Płock, Mława, Mogielnica, and Przytyk. By the end of 1941, new arrivals numbered more than half of the town’s pre-war Jewish population.⁸ In October 1941, 150 Jewish laborers were conscripted for road construction work.⁹

To combat the spread of disease, the Judenrat was ordered in September 1941 to set up an epidemic hospital in Przysucha. Before then, the sick had been transported to the hospital in Tomaszów Mazowiecki. The Przysucha hospital was opened in the former rabbi’s court on October 1, 1941. Within two months, 145 patients had passed through it. Furnished with 30 beds in six rooms, the hospital was too small, as sick Jews from the vicinity were also directed there. A total of 350 people were treated for typhus by the end of 1941. Although the epidemic worsened in the first months of 1942 (130 sick), the death rate, mostly of the old and undernourished, remained low. (Doctor Krongold assessed it at 2 percent.) Exacerbating matters, 159 people were diagnosed with tuberculosis.¹⁰

Although the date of the creation of the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) is unknown, the *Gazeta Żydowska* states that in February 1942 its members were collecting monthly levies imposed by the Judenrat. Funds from these collections were used in part to finance breakfasts for poor children organized by the Women’s Committee set up in September 1941 under the direction of Lea Berneman. As the Judenrat’s welfare funds were insufficient, the JSS saw to the opening of “a café,” where “the young and elderly gathered from time to time for social and consumption purposes.” Although the revenue from the café initially doubled the num-

ber of breakfasts, some local “Jewish elements” were determined to close it. To stop the harassment, Przysucha’s JSS asked the headquarters in Kraków to legalize the café immediately “under any name.” By the end of April 1942, the café was closed. At this time, there were 3,812 Jews living in Przysucha.¹¹

Although some sources report the establishment of a ghetto in 1940, late 1941, or the beginning of 1942,¹² it appears not to have come into existence until much later, on August 15, 1942.¹³ The German authorities announced that Jews living on the outskirts of Przysucha were to move to the town center and settle on a few streets around the synagogue. The ghetto was later surrounded by barbed wire, with its two gates guarded by Polish and Jewish Police. One source indicates that the Gendarmerie in Opoczno was in charge of the Przysucha ghetto. There are also testimonies stating that the ghetto was split into two separate areas, with communication between them limited to designated hours.¹⁴

Correspondence from the Przysucha branch of the JSS shows that the movements of Przysucha’s Jews were restricted by November 1941, as they were obliged to obtain “a permit for leaving the quarter’s extent.”¹⁵ Those who were found outside the quarter (and later the ghetto)—often caught smuggling or in its streets after the 7:00 p.m. curfew—were shot on the spot. Some sources state that a total of 5,000 Jews passed through the ghetto during its existence.¹⁶

From the beginning of 1942, the prospect that many of the Jews in Przysucha would become employed in workshops served to keep up their hopes of survival. The Judenrat even created its own Craftsmen’s Department run by the engineer Berneman and started to register craftsmen seeking jobs. Boasting approximately 200 knitters, Przysucha Jews had been the sole suppliers of woolen gloves to pre-war Łódź and were now ready to produce over 2,500 pairs weekly. If the workshops had been approved, an estimated 200 to 300 skilled workers and 400 helpers would have been employed.¹⁷

In April 1942, Gendarmes and Gestapo men from Tomaszów Mazowiecki shot 11 members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police. The number of dead and the date of the massacre differ depending on the source; some report that all victims were Judenrat members. An inhabitant of the nearby Drzewica ghetto claimed that the execution was in retaliation for a partisan attack. Some sources cite another mass murder of 19 or 30 Jews that presumably took place in August 1942. The total number of victims of the two executions is impossible to establish, as a German detachment destroyed evidence of the crime in 1944.

The liquidation of the Przysucha ghetto took place between October 27 and 31, 1942, when approximately 4,000 ghetto inhabitants were sent from the Opoczno train station to the Treblinka killing center. Approximately 100 Jews were killed during the liquidation Aktion. One survivor, Szymon Rozenberg, reports that 116 Jewish craftsmen and policemen remained in Przysucha. This group was subsequently sent to the Ujazd ghetto in December 1942. Adam Rutkowski estimates the number of Przysucha Jews who volunteered or were sent to Ujazd at around 300. At the beginning of January 1943,

the Ujazd ghetto was liquidated, and its inhabitants were sent to Treblinka.

A group of several dozen refugees from the Przysucha, Drzewica, and Opoczno ghettos joined the Communist Gwardia Ludowa (People's Guard, GL) "Wilk" partisan unit. They soon split off and set up a separate Jewish unit named GL "Lwy," which was commanded at first by Izrael Ajzenman (aka Julian Kaniewski "Julek") and then by a man with the alias "Siemion." The squad conducted several operations, including the destruction of documents from the local administrations in Nieznanowiec and Petrykozy, as well as the disarmament of the Polish (Blue) Police precincts in Gowarczów and Rusinów. Post-1989 publications suggest that the unit killed seven members of the Polish far-right-wing underground in Drzewica on January 22, 1943.

SOURCES The following publications include information on the fate of Przysucha's Jewish population: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 209–212; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 1036–1037; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 412.

Relevant documentation and testimonies can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/572 [AJDC]; 211/842-44 [ŻSS]; 301/3132 and 5414 [Relacje]); IPN; USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [ŻSS Przysucha], reel 41; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC Przysucha]; RG-15.084M, # 3132 and # 5414 [Relacje]; and RG-15.019M [ASG Przysucha]); VHF (# 14949); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/844, p. 34; and VHF, # 14949.
2. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/842, p. 1.
3. *Ibid.*, 211/843, pp. 1–2.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15; *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 11, 1942.
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/842. Because of this dispute, the archives of the JSS contain numerous name lists with dozens of names; some names naturally repeat.
6. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC Przysucha), 210/572, p. 5.
7. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/843, pp. 14, 60; and 211/844, p. 15; *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 7, 1941.
8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/843, pp. 5, 38–39; and 211/844, p. 34.
9. *Ibid.*, 211/843.
10. *Gazeta Żydowska*, April 8, 1942; USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/843, pp. 44, 62, 65; and 211/844, pp. 15, 34.
11. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/844; *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 11, 1942.
12. VHF, # 14949; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 209–212; Spector and Wigoder, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life*, p. 1037.
13. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG Przysucha). This date is repeated by Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 412. In

April 1942, the JSS in Przysucha stated that there was no Jewish quarter in the town; see USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/844, p. 34.

14. USHMM, RG-15.019M.

15. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/843, pp. 62–63.

16. *Ibid.*, RG-15.019M; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 412.

17. *Gazeta Żydowska*, March 27, 1942; USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124, reel 41, 211/844.

RADOM

Pre-1939: Radom, city, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Stadthauptmannschaft, center, Kreis Radom-Land and capital, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Radom is located in central Poland, approximately 100 kilometers (62 miles) southwest of Warsaw. In the months just before the German invasion, 85,112 people were residing in Radom, including 24,745 Jews (29 percent of the total population).

Units of the German army entered Radom on September 8, 1939. With the German occupation, the first anti-Jewish measures commenced, including the looting of Jewish shops and apartments, the beating and abuse of Jews, and the imposition of forced labor. During the months that followed, the antisemitic regulations imposed throughout the Generalgouvernement were also applied in Radom, as well as some specific local restrictions. For example, German officials in Radom introduced a complete ban on Jews using the city's main streets. Initially the Germans required a quota of around 100 Jewish forced laborers, rising to 1,200 by the summer of 1940. The laborers worked daily for a very low wage. Wealthier Jews were permitted to pay for substitutes, which in turn raised money to pay the laborers. In the spring of 1940, the German authorities began to transfer male Jews to labor camps established in the vicinity (in Chruslice, Kruszyna, Kacprowice, Wolanów, and other places), where they had to work in the



Entrance to the "large" ghetto in Radom, ca. 1942.

USHMM WS #08307, COURTESY OF MUZEUM OKRĘGOWE W RADOMIU

fields and on road construction. In August and September 1940, approximately 2,300 Jews were transferred to labor camps in Distrikt Lublin, including those in Bełżec, Narew, Cieszanów, and other places.¹ During the transfer, much of the Jews' property was confiscated. In addition, Jews were forced to make "contributions" of money, precious metal, bed sheets, sewing machines, furniture, and other items. The German occupation forces introduced many other discriminatory measures against the Jewish population, such as the arrest and imprisonment of numerous Jewish lawyers, physicians, and individuals who had been active in public life before the war. In so-called special Aktions (Sonderaktionen) Jewish activists in the Socialist and Communist movements were arrested and killed.²

In November 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, which exerted considerable influence over the lives of Radom's Jews. The Jewish Council of Radom had a special position—its administrative authority also extended over the Jews of neighboring towns and settlements. The official administrative title of the Radom Jewish Council was the Head of the Council of Elders of the Jewish population of the Radom District and Radom city (Der Ober-Ältestenrat der Jüdischen Bevölkerung des Distrikts Radom und Radom). The industrial entrepreneur Józef Diamant was appointed Head of the Council by the German authorities. The Jewish Council consisted of 24 members, and its entire apparatus of numerous offices employed several hundred people. The activities of the Jewish Council were in conflict: on the one hand, it had to obey and implement all German demands and orders, including roundups and contributions imposed on the Jews; on the other hand, it was actively involved in organizing Jewish welfare.³

In December 1940, the German authorities resettled 1,840 Jews from the city of Radom to other towns in the region, including Koprzywnica. The Gestapo ordered that many elderly Jews and children were among those resettled. Plans for a further resettlement of 2,000 Jews in January 1941, however, were not implemented.⁴

On April 3, 1941, the head of the city administration (Stadthauptmann), Hans Kujath, ordered the establishment of two "Jewish residential areas" (*Judenwohnbezirke*) in Radom.⁵ The two Jewish residential areas were not located next to each

other but were in separate parts of town. The first ghetto, the so-called large ghetto or "midtown ghetto," was located in that part of Radom where Jewish residents had lived for centuries. Its main street was Wałowa, from which dozens of smaller and larger streets branched out, such as Szpitalna, Żytnia, Bóżnicza, Peretza, and others. One of the main reasons for the establishment of two ghettos was the fact that the city center was filled with compact and concentrated building areas. The neighboring houses at the edge of the ghetto served as a natural "wall" or demarcation to mark the borderline of the Jewish area. An extra wall, such as was constructed for the Warsaw ghetto, was not necessary. Instead of a wall, the German authorities ordered the sealing with stone or concrete of the lower windows of the apartment buildings along the perimeter of the ghetto. The only entrance to the ghetto was located at the intersection between Rwańska and Wałowa Streets, and it was guarded by the Polish and Jewish Police. The second Jewish residential area, the so-called small ghetto, was established in the Glinice part of town, a working-class and underdeveloped part of Radom. It consisted mostly of single-story wooden houses that had very poor sanitary and living conditions. Słowacki, Biała, and Wyścigowa Streets formed the borders of the small ghetto. In spite of the fact that the ghetto area was to a large degree open, the German authorities erected only a barbed-wire fence in a few areas. The settlement of the Jews into both ghetto areas and the relocation of the Polish population out of them were conducted during April 1941.⁶ In 1941, the occupation authorities issued strict orders threatening the ghetto residents with the death penalty for leaving the ghetto area. As Mania Salinger recalled, "[I]t was announced through a loudspeaker and on posted notices that anyone leaving [the ghetto] without permission would be killed instantly."⁷ According to the available documentation, a total of some 25,700 people were residing in the two ghettos once they had been established. Among the residents were also some refugees from Łódź, who had arrived in Radom during the first months of the German occupation. There were also a number of illegal refugees from Distrikt Lublin, Warsaw, and Płock, who had decided that the Radom ghetto offered more security than their former places of residence. In the spring of 1942, the German authorities transferred Jews from the neighboring villages to Radom and some smaller groups of Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) as well. It can be estimated that at the start of "Aktion Reinhard," approximately 33,000 people were residing in the two ghettos in Radom.⁸

Living conditions in the two ghettos worsened month by month. Ration cards were issued to the Jews, but food distribution remained uneven. At the time of the establishment of the ghetto, a Jewish police force, under the command of Joachim Gajger, the head of the Labor Department, was set up. Subordinated to the Judenrat, it consisted of 150 policemen, 100 of them on duty in the midtown ghetto, the other 50 in Glinice. The Jewish Police wore dark blue armbands bearing red stripes, the Star of David, and the inscription "Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst." They were not armed but carried rubber



Jewish men and women in Radom line up to register with the German authorities, 1940.

USHMM WS #05853, COURTESY OF JERZY TOMASZEWSKI

clubs. The members of the Jewish Council, the Jewish Police, and their families had a reputation for corruption, as they were known to enjoy a better standard of living than most other Jews. Some ghetto residents made a living by trading illegally with “Aryan” partners in Radom, and a few made large profits.⁹ However, the majority of the Jewish population fell steadily deeper into poverty and misery. The lack of food (food prices rose continuously and rapidly) and the overcrowded housing conditions increased the spread of infectious diseases, especially typhus and intestinal diseases. In the third quarter of 1941, 440 cases of typhus were reported in the city of Radom.¹⁰ Hygienic conditions in both ghettos became untenable. In November 1941, the Germans posted signs around the ghetto, warning of the danger of disease and threatening that Jews from other areas who entered the ghetto would be punished by death. Those Jews used for forced labor faced the worst conditions—the male workers spent 10 hours a day unloading coal, and they received as payment no more than a slice of bread and sometimes nothing at all.¹¹

At the beginning of 1942, an estimated 4,000 Jews in the Radom ghettos were living in extreme poverty, with no source of income. The only support these people received came from the local branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), which was administered by Abram Salbe and the physician Dr. Ludwik Fastman (Fasman). This organization was given full responsibility for the welfare of ghetto residents by the Jewish Council. The JSS established three public kitchens, and these provided daily a total of 2,700 free or very inexpensive lunches (a bowl of soup and a slice of bread). It also opened three community centers that served as kindergartens for some 400 children. In addition, under the supervision of the JSS, two hospitals (one for regular patients and one for quarantine patients), two foster homes for children, and a nursing home were established. The organization also was in charge of workshops in which shoes were repaired without any payment for the needy. It provided the poorest Jews with some meager financial support and infants with milk. The JSS registered every piece of land within the ghettos (including grassland) and organized them for agricultural use under the supervision of farmers. Special attention was given to the children, to give them the opportunities to play, sing, and be involved in outdoor activities that helped them to forget the horrors of war, at least for a few moments.¹² The members of the JSS actively supported all efforts to establish cultural activities in the ghettos and to keep hopes for the future alive. They organized classes in agricultural, mechanical, metalwork, and tailoring skills, because most ghetto inmates were convinced that basic professional skills would save them from deportation. They tried to encourage ghetto residents to read books and become active in public life. The Radom ghettos had their own orchestra, a choir, and a quartet of male singers. In December 1942, the theater show “*Aby dalej . . .*” (*To Carry on . . .*) was performed—it was a parody of the Radom ghetto Jewish Council. Later, another play, “*Glinice*”, was performed.¹³

Daily life in the enclosed ghettos was characterized by an atmosphere of permanent terror inflicted by the German

occupiers. For instance, waves of arrests were carried out, against all pre-war political activists, all the kosher butchers in the city (to deny the Jews access to kosher meat), and among former representatives of public life.¹⁴ Between April 1941 and August 1942, approximately 700 Jews were arrested in Radom for a variety of reasons. These people were shot or deported to concentration camps. The largest such Aktion took place on April 27–28, 1942, under the direction of SS-Hauptsturmführer Paul Fuchs of the Radom Gestapo. This was part of a centrally coordinated wave of arrests against alleged Jewish Communists and members of the intelligentsia throughout Distrikt Radom. In the city, 70 Jews were arrested, and another 100 were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp, including Józef Diament, Joachim Gajger, and about 20 officers of the Jewish Police. After this Aktion, the German authorities ordered that Dr. Fastman become the head of the Jewish Council.¹⁵

The liquidation of both ghettos in Radom marked the start of “Aktion Reinhard” in Distrikt Radom. On the evening of August 4, 1942, the small ghetto was surrounded by heavily armed German police and a unit of Polish (Blue) Police. Then several large military searchlights were installed along the ghetto perimeter. A short time later, Polish policemen sealed the ghetto borders to prevent any attempts at escape. The German police prepared to enter the ghetto area. At 10:00 p.m., the floodlights were switched on, and the German SS, together with the Polish police, started to drive the Jews from their houses. They forced the Jews to gather at two locations. During this Aktion, several dozen Jews were shot, mostly elderly people and children. At the collection points, a selection was carried out. As a result, 1,000 young men and women were selected. These people were laborers working in factories for the needs of the Reich. The remaining ghetto residents, an estimated 8,000 people, were herded into columns and marched to the railroad station, where a train with some six to eight dozen railcars was awaiting them. After loading the wagons, it became clear that the number of Jews rounded up from the small ghetto was insufficient, as some wagons were still empty. Therefore, the German police went to the large ghetto on August 5, and at 5:00 a.m., they continued the selection among the Jews there. Using prepared lists, the police drove approximately 2,000 people out of their houses and marched them to the railroad station. After a short time, the train departed for the extermination camp at Treblinka.¹⁶

On the evening of August 17, 1942, the Germans commenced the liquidation of the large ghetto in Radom, in which about 25,000 Jews were then residing. This Aktion was supervised by the assistant to SS and Police Leader (SSPF) Herbert Böttcher in Radom, SS-Hauptsturmführer Wilhelm Blum. In an effort to avoid panic and resistance among the Jews, the German authorities falsely spread word among the Jewish Police and the Jewish workers in some factories that there would not be any deportations. The ghetto liquidation Aktion was carried out as on the first occasion: exactly at midnight, after the floodlights were switched on, the German police, Ukrainian collaborators, and members of the Jewish Police

began to chase the Jews out of their houses. The Jews were gathered at preselected locations. This roundup lasted until early the next morning, and approximately 10,000 people were herded to a train waiting on a siding. During the Aktion, many Jews were killed, including the patients of both ghetto hospitals and the inmates of the nursing homes in the large ghetto.

On August 18, 1942, the ghetto was quiet. Its remaining residents were waiting for the second phase of the Aktion. In the afternoon, the Jewish Police announced that the second phase would start at midnight. At the same time, part of the German security forces went to the courtyards of the houses and assured the Jews that those people able to work need not have anything to fear. It was known that the Jewish Police ordered their family members to go to the collection point voluntarily, to increase their chances of remaining in Radom. As a result of these efforts, most of the Jews gathered at the Stare Miasto Square by 11:00 P.M. At midnight, the floodlights were switched on again, and the German police launched the next Aktion. Approximately 3,000 men and women were selected and taken to several buildings on Szwarcikowska Street. Approximately 200 elderly, handicapped, and sick people were assembled and told that they would be transported in cars out of Radom (in fact, they were shot shortly afterwards). Hundreds of others were killed on the streets during the roundup. All the remaining Jews (around 10,000 people) were marched to the railroad station and loaded into train cars, which departed for Treblinka.¹⁷

After the Aktion, the 3,000 or so Jews capable of work (including more than 700 women), who were kept in Radom, were soon joined by hundreds of others who emerged from hiding in and around the city. Some of these people continued to work in the factories, while others had to bury the corpses of the Jews murdered locally and salvage property from the empty houses in the ghettos. In the fall of 1942, the two remnant ghettos in Radom were converted into forced labor camps—one on Szwarcikowska Street and one on Szkolna Street. Jews from the Szwarcikowska Street camp conducted various tasks such as sorting property collected from other liquidated ghettos in Distrikt Radom, digging peat, cleaning houses, and breaking up Jewish tombstones for use in road construction. A small Jewish resistance group was organized in Radom in the fall of 1942, and some Jews escaped into the countryside. It seems, however, that many of the escapees were caught and killed by German patrols, and some were even forced to return to the Radom camps.

On December 4, 1942, 800 Jews were transferred from Radom to the official remnant ghetto in Szydłowice. In January 1943, 1,500 Jews from the Szwarcikowska Street camp were deported to Treblinka. Some Jews were also transferred subsequently to other forced labor camps in the vicinity, including the camps in Wolanów and Bliżyn. The Szwarcikowska Street camp was liquidated in November 1943, when more than 100 women, children, and elderly Jews were shot.¹⁸ The remaining inmates were then transferred to other camps, including Płaszów, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, and the labor camp

for Jews on Szkolna Street. After mid-January 1944, the factory camp at Szkolna Street became a subcamp of the Majdanek concentration camp (KL Lublin-Majdanek). It was liquidated on July 26, 1944, when the remaining prisoners were transferred west towards Łódź and presumably to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

SOURCES Two yizkor books record the history and fate of Radom Jewry: Icchak Perlow, ed., *Sefer Radom* (Tel Aviv, 1961); and Alfred Lipson, ed., *A Memory Book of Radom: The Story of a Jewish Community in Poland Destroyed by the Nazis* (New York, 1963). There is also a detailed account of the Holocaust period in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 538–543. In Polish there is an account by the author of this article, Sebastian Piątkowski, *Dni życia, dni śmierci: Ludność żydowska w Radomiu w latach 1918–1950* (Warsaw, 2006), which includes a more extensive bibliography of relevant publications on this topic.

Published memoirs concerning the Radom ghettos include the following: Jacob Gutman, *A Survivor's Memoir* (Montreal: Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights, 1999); Mania Salinger, *Looking Back* (Northville, MI: Ferne Press, 2006); and Joseph Horn, *Mark It with a Stone* (New York: Barricade Books, 2008). On the labor camps that succeeded the ghetto in Radom, see Sebastian Piątkowski, "Obóz pracy przy ul. Szkolnej w Radomiu (1942–1944)," *Zeszyty Majdanka* 19 (1998): 41–44; and the entry by Evelyn Zegenhagen, "Radom [aka Radom (Szkolna Street)]," in Geoffrey Megargee, ed., *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 1, *Early Camps, Youth Camps, and Concentration Camps and Subcamps under the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), pp. 892–893.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR (GDR 956; ZP 277); AŻIH (301/28, 56, 58, 59, 2559, 4501; 302/25; 210/237; 211/428–430); BA-L (e.g., B 162/4873, 14521); IPN; USHMM (e.g., RG-50.120*0162; RG-50.407*36); VHF; and YVA (e.g., O-3/828, 1825, 2717).

Sebastian Piątkowski
trans. Katrin Reichelt

NOTES

1. Jan Franecki, "Powiat radomski w latach wojny i okupacji," *Biuletyn Kwartalny Radomskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego* 13 (1–20) (1976): 118; Sebastian Piątkowski, "Deportacje Żydów z dystryktu radomskiego do obozów pracy przymusowej na Lubelszczyźnie w 1940 roku," *Almanach Historyczny* 1 (1999): 188–189.
2. AŻIH, 301/56; 301/59; APR, GDR 956.
3. AŻIH, 302/25; Lipson, *A Memory Book of Radom*, p. 43; Sebastian Piątkowski, "Organizacja i działalność Naczelnej Rady Starszych Ludności Żydowskiej dystryktu radomskiego (1939–1942)," *BŻIH*, no. 3 (2000): 31–38.
4. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 538–541.
5. *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 38 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), Lfd. Nr. 786a, p. 213.
6. APR, ZP 277; *Dziennik Radomski*, nos. 80 and 82 (1941).

7. Salinger, *Looking Back*, p. 53.
8. AŻIH, 301/56; 301/59.
9. *Ibid.*, 301/28; 301/58; 301/59.
10. Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, eds., *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975), p. 433.
11. AŻIH, 301/28.
12. *Ibid.*, JSS, 211/428–430; AJDC, 210/237; YVA, O-3/2717; O-3/828; Piątkowski, *Dni życia*, pp. 210–212.
13. AŻIH, 301/56; JSS, 211/430.
14. Horn, *Mark It with a Stone*, p. 52.
15. BA-L, B 162/14521, Verdict of LG-Darm, December 7, 1972, pp. 31–32.
16. YVA, O-3/1825; AŻIH, 301/2559; 301/4501; Horn, *Mark It with a Stone*, p. 61.
17. YVA, O-3/1805; AŻIH, 301/56; 301/4501.
18. BA-L, B 162/4873, p. 567.

RADOMSKO

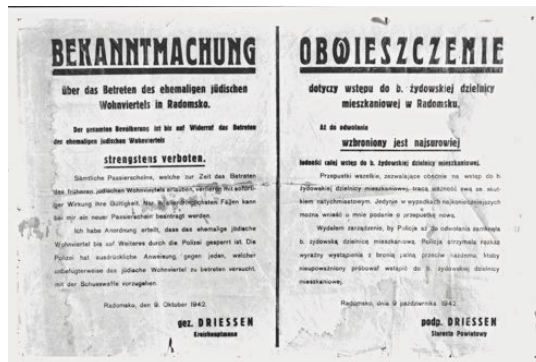
Pre-1939: Radomsko, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: center, Kreis Radomsko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Radomsko is located 134 kilometers (83 miles) east-southeast of Radom. There were 6,500 Jews living in Radomsko prior to the outbreak of World War II. Over 100 bombs fell on Radomsko's Jewish neighborhood in air raids on September 2 and 3, 1939, obliterating some streets completely and leaving 1,300 Jews homeless and over 100 dead. After gaining control of the town, the Germans put Radomsko's Jews to work clearing the rubble.¹

A ghetto was set up in December 1939. The ghetto's establishment in Radomsko was largely due to pressure from the large ethnic German (*Volksdeutsche*) population in the town, which demanded the "Aryanization" of Jewish businesses. On November 25, 1939, the Radomsko Kreishauptmann Kobelt informed his superiors that, in response to *Volksdeutsche* demands, he had excluded Jews from trade entirely. Adolf Halama was reportedly the main commissar in charge of seizing Polish and Jewish property, including accounts held in Radomsko's banks. Another reason for the ghetto's creation was the severe housing shortage, resulting from the air raids and the influx of refugees seeking shelter in Radomsko.

The ghetto's establishment was not announced in advance. When it was determined to create the ghetto, two thirds of Radomsko's Jews—those living outside the ghetto's delineated borders—were given only 20 minutes to move into the ghetto, while the Germans and local *Volksdeutsche* looted their belongings left behind. Poles living within the ghetto were reportedly allowed to stay. There is no information on guards or how the ghetto was physically enclosed, but its population of 7,000 Jews was restricted to its borders. The Polish police force was disbanded, and a newly created *Selbstschutz* (Auxiliary Police) composed of *Volksdeutsche* took over its duties.²

The ghetto was set up along one of the town's main streets, Radom (later Przędzów), and small streets leading off it, in-



Announcement in German and Polish prohibiting unauthorized entry into the former Jewish residential district in Radomsko, October 9, 1942. From the German, the text reads:

"ANNOUNCEMENT about entry into the former Jewish residential district in Radomsko.

Until further notice the entire population is strictly forbidden entry into the former Jewish residential district.

All passes permitting the bearer to enter the former Jewish residential district are henceforth invalid. Only in very urgent cases will anyone be allowed to submit to me an application for a pass.

I have issued the order that the former Jewish residential district be closed until further notice by the police. The police have explicit instructions to shoot anyone who attempts unauthorized entry into the Jewish residential district.

Radomsko, 9 October 1942

Signed DRIESSEN

Kreishauptmann"

USHMM WS #33495, COURTESY OF GFH

cluding Fabianiego, Stodolna, Wąwozowa, Rolna, Szpitalna (later Wyszyński), Joselewicz, and Mickiewiczza. According to the Jewish Council (Judenrat), there were 10 Jews living in each room. These unsanitary living conditions led to a typhus epidemic. In response, the Jewish community opened a hospital.

Tradesman Moses Berger chaired the first Judenrat located at 5 Mickiewicz Street. Reorganized in May 1941, it was then run by Wiktor Gutstadt and included two deputies, Józef Pański and Samuel Spiro (Szpiro; a pre-war community leader), Jasek Berger (treasurer), Izaak Wygodzki, and Dr. Henryk Rózewicz (in charge of health affairs). Its main function was Jewish labor conscription. As it enlisted only the poor and refugees, a crowd of Jewish laborers one day burst into the Judenrat's headquarters, demolishing the offices and driving out its members. The Judenrat called for the Gestapo's help, resulting in a three-day pogrom and looting of the ghetto.³

To better organize conscripted labor, the German authorities divided Jews into three categories: free professionals (as well as the Judenrat members) had to wear pink patches on their clothes, signifying the need to perform forced labor only when necessary; red patches, for those working three days per week; and yellow, for those laboring six days per week. At the beginning of July 1940, the Judenrat sent 400 Jews to perform drainage work in Przyrów (Kreis Radomsko). They returned

in January 1941, as did some of the laborers sent to camps in Distrikt Lublin. Out of several hundred youths sent from Radomsko and its vicinity to Maków Podhalański, 200 returned in October 1940. The Judenrat provided small benefits for the families of forced laborers, part of which was provided by those Jews unwilling to work.

The Judenrat opened a soup kitchen in June 1940 and had 3,000 applications for support by November of that year. In January 1941, there were 7,500 Jews residing in the ghetto. The 230 refugees from Łódź, Płock, and Ozorków were subsequently moved from the synagogue to a barracks, while another 120 lived with local families.

The number of Jews in the ghetto remained fairly stable throughout its existence; for example, July 1941 statistics reported 7,195 residents. Another 9,000 Jews lived in the 17 communities within Kreis Radomsko. The Radomsko Judenrat presided over all the other Jewish Councils in the Kreis.

A Jewish arbitration panel composed of 14 mediators representing all religious orientations was established to resolve conflicts among the Radomsko Jews. The Jewish Police was charged with traffic regulation and curfew supervision. The ghetto had its own post office, postmen, and clerks. There was also an epidemic hospital attended by three Jewish doctors. This hospital served all the Jews of the Kreis and provided an ambulatory clinic and a pharmacy. Despite the dire conditions, the death rate reported by the Judenrat for June 1941 stood at only 0.05 percent. The soup kitchen served 1,500 meals daily.

Some 300 or 400 Jews laboring in the so-called Work Battalion in Radomsko proper cleared rubble, performed leveling tasks, and maintained parks and squares in the summer of 1941. Three days of labor were paid at the rate of 9 to 12 zloty and 2 to 4 kilograms (4.4 to 8.8 pounds) of bread, while the other three days of the week remained unpaid. A number of workers labored in Dęblin, Garnek, and Topisz, all in the vicinity of Radomsko. By the end of September 1941, the Garnek laborers had been transferred to Topisz. A total of 140 Radomsko Jews labored there. In December 1941, 25 Jews were sent to Rudniki (near Częstochowa) to labor in lime production, and they stayed there at least until July 1942. The area of the ghetto was reportedly reduced in the autumn of 1941.

Various workshops operated in the ghetto. For example, a carpentry workshop producing beds employed approximately 100 Jews in September 1941. Craftsmen were ordered to register with the office of the Kreis Judenrat, for permission to keep their workshops open. Two fires broke out in the Mundus-Thonet furniture factory in November 1941. As a result, 180 of the factory laborers—including 35 Jews—were arrested for alleged arson and held in the Radomsko prison (set up in 1940). Some of the Jews were shot on the edge of town, as were some others after being sent to Częstochowa; the Germans deported the remainder to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

In December 1941, the German authorities intensified regulations governing the ghetto's sanitation and living conditions. Food rations were only to be issued upon the presentation of a doctor's certificate confirming vaccination, bathing, and delousing. Each building had to have a sanitation warden reporting any signs of sickness or unsanitary conditions. Inhabitation of the ghetto by nonghetto residents was strictly forbidden. Newcomers required special permission from the municipality, and later from the Kreishauptmann, prior to moving into the ghetto. Changes of address within the ghetto had to be reported within 24 hours. Noncompliance was punished with a 2,000 zloty fine and/or four weeks of arrest.

From the beginning of 1942, Jews were shot for leaving the ghetto; there were a few casualties. In March 1942, those who had moved in after June 1, 1941, were to report to the Jewish Police to obtain permission to "prolong their stay and start legalizing their residency." In April 1942, there were 220 refugees in the ghetto.⁴

From February 1942, a day-care room and additional food were provided to 400 to 600 ghetto children. An orphanage for 28 children, comprising two bedrooms and a playroom, opened in April 1942. The same month, Jews aged 3 to 70 were issued with special "sanitary IDs [identifications]" based on their forced labor assignments. The Work Battalion laborers had to bathe every 8 days. For example, 60 Jews sent in May 1942 to perform drainage work in Gidle returned to the ghetto every Sunday to bathe and be disinfected. Holders of green IDs were exempted from labor and forced to bathe only every 14 days. As of February, the renovated public bath could bathe and delouse a person in 25 minutes. A 12-man Sanitary Column of the Jewish Police was established shortly afterwards.⁵

In August 1942, the remaining non-Jewish population was forced out of the ghetto, and its area was again reduced. Poles were told that their expulsion would be only temporary. With their departure, the Germans began to concentrate in the Radomsko ghetto Jews from several localities in the Kreis, including Gomunice (500 people), Mstów (600), and Kłomnice. The deadline for completing this transfer was September 28, 1942.

The liquidation of the Radomsko ghetto started on October 9, 1942, and 5,000 local Jews, along with 3,000 Jews from the liquidated Przedbórz ghetto (33 kilometers [20.5 miles] away) in Kreis Konskie, were sent the following day to the Treblinka extermination camp. Several dozen elderly and sick Jews were selected and shot at the cemetery prior to departure. A number of Jews who were discovered in hiding or who refused to leave were also shot.

The remaining 9,000 Jews in Radomsko were held in and around the synagogue and deported to Treblinka on October 12, 1942. Then 150 Jews, composed of Judenrat members and craftsmen, were left to clear out the ghetto. The remnant ghetto attracted some Jews who emerged from their hiding places. When discovered, they were imprisoned and then shot by the Germans; very few were attached to the clean-up Kommando.

On October 29, 170 men and women were sent to the labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna, while 150 remained in the ghetto.

As large numbers of Jews had managed to evade the deportations throughout the region, on November 10, 1942, Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) Krüger ordered the establishment of four remnant “Jewish residential areas” (*Judenwohnbezirke*) in Distrikt Radom, where Jews were free to gather with the promise they would remain unmolested. Radomsko was one of these four ghettos, attracting over 4,000 Jews, but now under strict guard.⁶

On January 6, 1943, the ghetto was surrounded, and its Jews were sent to Treblinka in cattle cars, after being stripped of most of their clothes; 320 were shot at the cemetery. The next day, 250 were sent to Skarżysko. Only about 40 craftsmen were left to complete construction of the Gendarmerie building. A few months later they were dispatched to the Pionki labor camp. About 1,200 Jews who were caught during and just after the last deportation were shot in mass executions at the Jewish cemetery on January 12 and 13, 1943.⁷

SOURCES The Radomsko ghetto is discussed in the following publications: Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 80–81, 88, 118–119, 127–128, 143–144 (table 5); and Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 124–125.

The following archival sources were used to write this entry: AŻIH (210/583, 211/869, 301/31, 301/1697, 301/2090, 301/2429, 301/2813); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 42; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2813, testimony of Elias Markowicz, 1947; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 42, 211/869 (Radomsko), pp. 2, 6.

2. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 42, 211/869, pp. 2, 6–8; AŻIH, 301/2429, testimony of Uszer Grossman, 1947; 301/31, testimony of Chemia Zylbersztajn, n.d.

3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 42, 211/869, pp. 1–2, 6–8, 17; *Gazeta Żydowska*, October 10, November 9, and November 12, 1941.

4. AŻIH, 301/31; *Gazeta Żydowska*, December 12, 1941, and January 14, March 26, 1942.

5. *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 1, 13, April 5, 22, and May 6, 1942.

6. Police Decree issued by HSSPF Krüger of the Generalgouvernement, November 10, 1942, published in Tatiana Benstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), pp. 344–345.

7. AŻIH, 301/2090, testimony of Moszek Pantofel, 1947; 301/1697, testimony of Maria Widawska, n.d.; 301/2813; Rutkowski, “Martyrologia,” pp. 101, 118–119, 143–144 (table 5); *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Wojewódz-*

two piotrzkowskie (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1983), p. 91. See also Y. Lador, ed., *Kebilat Zarki; ayarah be-hayeha u-ve-kbilyonah* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Zarki in Israel, 1959), pp. 265–267.

RADOSZYCE

Pre-1939: Radoszyce, village and powiat center, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Konskie, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The village of Radoszyce is in southeast Poland, approximately 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of Kielce. There were 3,200 Jews living in the village on the eve of war in 1939. At the start of the September Campaign, the Luftwaffe bombed the village, burning much of it and causing most Jews to flee. On entering the village, the Germans took hostage 10 prominent Jews and Poles. They threatened to execute them, should any of the locals harm a German. All were released after two days.

At some date prior to June 1940, the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), with Mordka Rutkowski as its president and Lejbus Tenenbaum serving as his deputy until April 1941.¹ There was also a small German Gendarmerie unit stationed in Radoszyce.

Jews from Radoszyce worked mainly as forest workers or craftsmen and on public works.² A number of Radoszyce laborers were sent to the Zagacie camp to drain the land along the Czarna River. They were released from the camp on November 13, 1940. In that same month, 200 Jewish workers were sent from Radoszyce to Distrikt Lublin.³

The influx of refugees and deportees into Radoszyce added to the general impoverishment of the Jews. Between November 1940 and June 1941, the number of Jews increased to 2,200. Approximately 700 of them were refugees, mainly from the Warthegau region (part of Poland incorporated into the German Reich) and the Warsaw województwo. Later in 1941, Radoszyce's Jews numbered 2,400.⁴ In addition, four small Jewish settlements in the vicinity of Radoszyce were subordinated administratively to the Jewish community in Radoszyce: Pijanów (with a Jewish population of 250), Ruda Maleniecka (250), Miedzierza (20), and Grodzisko (110).

A special committee was organized by the Judenrat to assist the refugees. A small hospital was established with one Jewish attendant. A soup kitchen was opened; however, due to lack of funds, it could only provide dinners periodically. Prior to closure in April 1940, it served 450 meals daily. When it reopened in July, it was able to provide meals to only half of the village's 300 refugee families.⁵

To deal with the influx of refugees and deportees, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization, based in Kraków, was established in Radoszyce. The Kreis committee, with its headquarters in Końskie, was established on September 26, 1940, with Josef Kinderlerer as its chairman. A local office was soon set up in Radoszyce, whose five members had

to be approved by the Germans. The president of the Radoszyce JSS branch was Mordka Montag. Most of the social relief was organized by the JSS and financed from Kraków via the Końskie committee. Subsequently the work of the JSS was hindered by accusations of corruption, embezzlement of public funds, and political infighting.⁶

In the winter of 1940–1941, the Judenrat, in cooperation with the JSS, collected warm clothing for the refugees and local poor. The soup kitchen was able to provide 400 people with a warm meal daily. Bread was distributed once a week. Once a month, the Radoszyce Jews also received rations of sugar, paraffin oil, soap, and medicine. In addition, each Jew in Kreis Konskie was to receive 200 kilograms (441 pounds) of potatoes for the upcoming winter; in the end, only some of the purchased potatoes were actually delivered. After a typhus epidemic broke out in February 1941, the Radoszyce Jews received slightly more than their share—approximately 30 percent of those potatoes actually delivered.⁷

In the face of ominous threats from the German authorities, the Jewish Council took measures to contain the typhus epidemic. A special medical committee was established, and the JSS committee in Końskie promised financial help to meet the conditions that the Germans demanded. These included the enlargement of the existing hospital from one to three rooms, the establishment of an isolation ward, and the reopening of the existing baths for use six days a week. After the Radoszyce Judenrat carried out these measures, the epidemic was contained after seven Jews had died.

The governor of Distrikt Radom, Karl Lasch, ordered the establishment of a number of ghettos in the Distrikt by April 5, 1941. According to the records of the JSS, however, by the end of May, no ghetto had been established in Radoszyce, and living conditions in the village were described as bearable.⁸ However, it is almost certain that the ghetto was informally established by the gradual relocation of Jews over an extended period of time. In any case, the ghetto had been fully established by December 10, 1941, at the latest, when Konskie's Kreishauptmann announced that all villages in his Kreis with Jewish populations were automatically recognized as ghettos. He also announced that the death penalty would be applied to any Jews caught outside the ghetto. Several Jews were shot for disobeying this order.⁹ The ghetto was not fenced. Those who lived among Poles had to move to the Jewish part of the village with all of their belongings.¹⁰ In 1941, there were about 2,400 Jews in the Radoszyce ghetto, but only 529 of them were locals.

On January 11, 1942, the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was created at the request of the German authorities. Its main task was to keep order in the ghetto. The president of the Judenrat, Mordka Rutkowski, appointed Lejbus Tenenbaum as the head of the eight-man Jewish Police. Also at this time, the Union of Craftsmen in Radoszyce registered 100 Jewish craftsmen, including tailors, cobblers, haberdashers, carpenters, tinsmiths, bakers, and hairdressers, who were provided with raw materials in order to start production.¹¹

In the spring and summer of 1942, many Jewish conscripts or volunteers were sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp, where they worked in the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory.

During the same period, the Germans moved Jews from neighboring settlements into Radoszyce. In April, approximately 200 Jews were transferred from Mnin, another 200 from Nieborów, and approximately 400 from Stąporków. A number of Jews were also moved from Pijanów, Ruda Maleńicka, and Duraczów. In August 1942, approximately 100 Jews were transferred from Miedziera. This relocation of the region's Jews to Radoszyce marked the beginning of the end for Jewish settlement in the area. With this concentration, the number of ghetto residents rose from 2,400 at the end of 1941 to around 4,000 just a few months before the ghetto's liquidation in November 1942.

Deportations of Jews from Distrikt Radom commenced at the beginning of August 1942; however, the Jews in Kreis Konskie were the last to be deported, at the beginning of November. On November 3, 1942, all 4,000 Jews concentrated in Radoszyce were escorted to the train station in Końskie. This was also the first day of the deportation from the Końskie ghetto, on which 6,000 of its 9,000 inhabitants were sent together with the Radoszyce Jews to the Treblinka extermination camp.¹² Another source reports that the Radoszyce Jews were held for a few days in Końskie, and then, on November 11, they were transported to Treblinka along with the Jews of Końskie. During the Aktion in Końskie, the German police shot almost 600 Jews.

In March 1943, during the intense hunt for fugitives from the ghettos and those who had gone into hiding, the Germans murdered a number of Jews in Radoszyce. On September 29, 1944, SS forces and Gendarmes from Radoszyce shot 20 people, including both Poles and Jews. Their bodies were buried at the local cemetery. There were instances when Poles helped Jews and instances when local Poles murdered Jews in and around Radoszyce.¹³ On September 3, 1944, SS troops destroyed parts of Radoszyce in reprisal for an attack by the Home Army (Armia Krajowa, AK) partisans. The part of the village where the ghetto had stood was razed to the ground.¹⁴

SOURCES There is no single publication specifically on the Jewish community of Radoszyce. Most of the information on which this article is based can be found in the following publications: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 75–182; and Danuta Dąbrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Łódź and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 256–257.

Information on the persecution of the Jews of Radoszyce and the history of the ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/159 and 879 [JSS]; 210/588 [AJDC]);

IPN (ASG); USHMM (1997.A.0124 [JSS]; and RG-15.019M [IPN, ASG]); VHF (# 30970); and YVA (e.g., M-1/E/681).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reels 29 and 43.
2. *Ibid.*, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 15.
3. *Gazeta Żydowska*, November 22, 1940; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29.
4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29.
5. *Ibid.*, reel 43.
6. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29; see also VHF, # 30970, testimony of Maria Frocht, 1997.
7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, November 22, 1940; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29.
8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 29.
9. *Ibid.*, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 15.
10. VHF, # 30970.
11. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 11, 1942.
12. USHMM, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 15.
13. VHF, # 30970.
14. USHMM, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 15.

RAKÓW

Pre-1939: Raków, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Raków, Kreis Opatów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Raków, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Raków is located 39 kilometers (24 miles) southeast of Kielce. When the Germans entered Raków in September 1939, there were about 1,000 Jews living there. There was no Gendarmerie post stationed in the village, and for some time the German authorities left the Jews mostly undisturbed, only forcing them occasionally to pay “contributions.”

The Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) to mediate between themselves and the Jewish community, appointing Henryk (Chaim) Zielony as its chairman.¹ They also chose Zielony as commandant of the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) of about six or eight men, which had to assist the Judenrat in implementing German orders. The control of both these offices by one individual was somewhat unusual in occupied Poland. Jewish policemen were responsible for collecting monetary contributions and taxes and for rounding people up for forced labor. The opinions of survivors differ regarding the behavior of the Jewish Police, but some Jews felt that they were too eager to carry out German instructions. Very little is known about the extent to which the Jews of Raków were subjected to forced labor, although it is known that some worked clearing snow from the streets in the winter.

At the end of February 1941, a group of 400 Jews was transferred to Chmielnik from Płock and Bodzanów. These deportees had passed through the feared transfer camp at Działdowo (Soldau). Most of them arrived exhausted, brutally beaten, and without any luggage. A few days later, about 80 of them were

sent on from Chmielnik in horse wagons to Raków.² In March 1941, 108 Jews from Vienna were transferred to Raków. There were also deportees from Radom, Warsaw, Wieluń, and other places who had fled or were resettled to Raków. With the arrival of refugees and deportees, living conditions and sanitation in the village worsened. Often, three families were crowded into one room, where several people had to share a bunk bed.³

The Judenrat created a self-help committee and opened a soup kitchen, an ambulatory medical service, and an isolation ward, immediately following the deportees’ arrival. The kitchen distributed 250 meals daily. To help cope with the influx of deportees and refugees, a local branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), headquartered in Kraków, was formally established in June 1941, following the creation of the Kreis committee in Opatów. Zielony was also nominated as chairman of the JSS branch. Bernard Wajnszok acted as his deputy.

Several secondary sources indicate that an open ghetto was established in Raków in early 1940. This impression probably stems from a misreading of the account published by Mark Turkov, which states only that generally in Poland the Jewish Police was formed at the same time as the first ghettos at the start of 1940. He then states that “in Raków, no physical ghetto was ever set up.” Only on the streets leaving the shtetl were large signs put up warning that Jews were forbidden to leave the village on pain of death.⁴ This measure was probably taken in the fall of 1941, when the death penalty was introduced in the Generalgouvernement for all Jews who left their designated residential areas. Therefore, by November 1941, Raków had become a de facto “open ghetto” for the Jews living there.

The Jews lived in the poorer section near the center of the village. Fresh water had to be drawn from the nearby river. Since the open ghetto was not strictly guarded, Jews could still leave Raków and barter their remaining possessions for food with local farmers. They continued to do this even after the Germans imposed the death penalty for Jews caught leaving their residential area.⁵ On one occasion, however, a brutal Gendarme named Max caught the Jewish merchant Abish Langern outside the village. The Gendarme then tied Langern to a horse and cart and dragged him behind it until he was dead. Leaving the body at the edge of the village, Max then instructed the Judenrat to dispose of it. He also shot two Jewish youths from Raków he caught on the way to Łągów.

In April 1942, when there were 1,700 Jews living in Raków, the JSS committee assessed 400 of them as being extremely impoverished. Although the public kitchen was still open, Raków was not receiving any subsidies or medicine. Raków’s JSS appealed to the headquarters in Kraków but was informed that the Kreis committee in Opatów was responsible for allocating local resources. Two doctors—one Jewish and one Polish—were examining about 20 patients a day with barely any remuneration. The JSS was also trying to open a small hospital with at least 10 beds but was unable to obtain money to finance it. In May 1942, the JSS started an initiative to employ as many of Raków’s Jews as possible in agricultural work. Plans were made to solicit employment requests from the

owners of nearby estates, to obtain labor assignments for those capable of working.

In May 1942, Kreishauptmann Ritter in Opatów ordered the concentration of all Jews in the Kreis into only 5 towns and 12 settlements, including Raków, by the end of the month. The concentration of Jews in 17 small- and medium-sized ghettos was the first stage of the total expulsion of Jews from the region. The arrival of more Jews from nearby settlements produced further overcrowding in Raków, and living conditions deteriorated once again.

In the summer of 1942, the Gendarmerie arrived suddenly in Raków to arrest young Jews for forced labor in the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory in Skarżysko-Kamienna. Raków's youth immediately went into hiding to avoid deportation. Gendarmes, assisted by the Jewish Police under the command of Chairman Zielony, prodded with bayonets the walls and floors of Jewish houses, dragging out all who had hidden. They caught between 30 and 40 young Jews. They locked them up in the synagogue for the night, then loaded them on trucks that headed for Skarżysko the next morning.⁶

By September 1942, the Jews of Raków had received news of the pogroms and mass murders in other towns and started to prepare hiding places and sell remaining property to non-Jewish acquaintances, in expectation of a forthcoming deportation Aktion. According to one account, the Jews mostly stayed away from the synagogue and prayed at home during the High Holidays in September and even on the Sukkot holiday in early October, fearing that such a gathering would be an easy target for a German roundup. But then when news spread that the Aktion was due the next day, almost everyone went to the synagogue to pray together one last time.

Available sources differ regarding the date of the Aktion in Raków. It was most likely in early October, just after the holiday of Sukkot, as indicated by Turkov's narrative, which specifically mentions this holiday just prior to the deportation. Most other ghettos in Kreis Opatow were cleared at the end of October or in early November. Several secondary sources claim that the Germans cleared the Raków ghetto in late August 1942, with all the Jews being transferred to the Jędrzejów ghetto (60 kilometers [37 miles] to the west). This seems unlikely and probably refers to the smaller village, also called Raków, in Kreis Jędrzejow, which had far fewer Jews.

No firsthand account of the deportation Aktion has been located. From secondhand accounts, it seems that a number of Jews were murdered in Raków during the roundup. The majority were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp. Searches for those in hiding went on for weeks afterwards. Some Jewish property was sold in Raków to peasants from the surrounding villages. One family that had to abandon their hiding place in the woods after it was discovered and looted, was then repeatedly robbed by local peasants as they made their way to join the few remaining Jews in Chmielnik more than 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) away. As the Germans continued to hunt down the fugitives from the liquidated ghettos, seven Jews were killed in Raków on December 20, 1942.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

SOURCES The only publication focused on the Jewish community of Raków is the book by Mark Turkov, *Mlakab Ovsbayani dertseylt: Khronik fun undzer tsayt* (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun poylishe Yidn in Argentine, 1946). Additional information for this article comes mainly from two publications: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955).

The main documentary sources for the Jews of Raków under the German occupation are the records of the JSS available in the following archives: AŻIH (211/893 [JSS]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 43). Relevant survivor testimonies can be found in VHF (# 26627 and 31436) and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 26627, testimony of Leon Edberg, 1997.
2. Ibid., # 31436, testimony of Julie Nattel, 1997.
3. Ibid., # 31436; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 43.
4. Turkov, *Mlakab Ovsbayani dertseylt*, p. 21.
5. VHF, # 31436.
6. Ibid., # 26627; # 31436.

RAWA MAZOWIECKA

Pre-1939: Rawa Mazowiecka, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Rawa Mazowiecka is located 56 kilometers (35 miles) east of Łódź. There were 3,018 Jews living in the town in 1921 (about one third of the total population). Air raids in the initial days of the September Campaign resulted in a number of civilian casualties. German forces shot a few dozen Poles and Jews on entering Rawa Mazowiecka. Jews were rounded up on several occasions at various points in the town, harassed for no reason, and then released.

In October 1939, the Germans selected the pre-war members of the Jewish community to serve on the Jewish Council (Judenrat). According to survivor Dawid Taśma, it was chaired by Aron Doner, a grain salesman.¹ Archival sources indicate that Michal Flom presided over the Judenrat at least between February and December 1940, followed by Hersz Grynszpan in May 1941. Its membership also included the following people: Salomon Targ, Icek Szwarz, Rachmil Dorn, Szyja Średni, Lajzor Wengrów, Icek Apfelbaum, M. Szmulewicz (secretary), and Abram Bekermos.

Zylberg headed the Judenrat's Arbeitsamt (labor office); he later became the chief of the Jewish Police organized in November 1939. Judenrat members were also members of the Committee for the Relief of Refugees, established in January 1940 to help approximately 200 newcomers. The committee was chaired by Hersz Grynszpan and included only one refugee—Fizel Goldrajch of Łódź.²

Survivors maintained that the Judenrat behaved very badly towards their own and even worse towards the refugees. One of its members, Abram Bekermos, was a Gestapo informant who denounced Jews who were trading illegally in foreign currency.³

In January 1940, the Judenrat was ordered to set up a “march camp” or transit camp around Skierniewice Street on the outskirts of the town. It was to hold deportees and refugees passing through or settling in Rawa. Their numbers were considerable due to the proximity of the Generalgouvernement’s border with the Reich. Most of the newcomers at the time were from Łódź, Brzeziny, Zgierz, and Pabianice, in Reichsgau Wartheland.⁴

In the spring of 1940, the community was ordered to pay a contribution of 75,000 złoty; the Germans made the Judenrat responsible for the sum’s collection. When better-off Jews refused to pay, the Judenrat identified them to the Germans. Following a few arrests, wealthier Jews soon contributed their share. In June 1940, Zylberberg was charged with collecting tens of thousands of złoty in overdue taxes from Rawa’s Jews.

By July 1940, 80 percent of the Jewish shops on the market square had been confiscated and “given to Christians.” Jews were also barred from setting up stalls there on market days. At that time, there were 3,200 Jewish residents registered in Rawa Mazowiecka.⁵

In July 1940, the Judenrat reported to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw that “the authorities pressure us either to feed the deportees or to resettle them.” There is no information available on whether any Jews were deported at this time.⁶ Abram Zand testified that after he moved to Rawa Mazowiecka in November 1941—then already a ghetto—“the Judenrat was sending transports of paupers to Warsaw [the Warsaw ghetto].”⁷

The soup kitchen regularly fed 250 local Jews but only 148 refugees in the summer of 1940. As it was providing support for these social services, the Warsaw AJDC claimed that the Judenrat had misrepresented the number of newcomers by counting together those who were registered as residents and also transients, to whom they afforded only temporary assistance; for example, 874 refugees were reported as living in Rawa in June 1940, while in fact there were fewer than 200 such persons. By August, their number had dropped to 129, rising again to 167 in October 1940.

In August 1940, a number of Jewish males were sent to forced labor camps in Distrikt Lublin.⁸

Dawid Taśma dates the ghetto’s establishment in January or February 1941; however, secondary sources suggest that it was in March 1941. *Pinkas ha-kebilot* states that there was insufficient room for the large numbers of refugees, some of whom could not get permission to live in the ghetto and instead had to live on the town’s outskirts behind Skierniewice Street. Some of these people moved into the ghetto illegally. They were not included in the population registers, did not receive ration cards, and were at greater risk of being expelled or captured in the roundups than were the legal inhabitants.

Taśma, a Rawa Mazowiecka native, describes the Rawa ghetto as consisting of two parts. The main part encompassed the pre-war Jewish neighborhood and included Jerozolima and Berek Joselewicz Streets in the northeast. Taśma does not provide the location of the other part, but it was probably in fact the refugee camp in the vicinity of Skierniewice Street. These people had even less rights than those in the main ghetto. A special passage was constructed to connect the two ghettos, both of which were surrounded by barbed wire. As neither was sealed initially, it was possible to maintain contact with people in the surrounding areas and obtain food. The ghetto inhabitants worked for the Germans, regulating the Zawada River near Tomaszów Mazowiecki and building a bridge over the Rawka River in Rawa. Clandestinely, they also worked as artisans and sold their wares to the locals.⁹

A local Jewish doctor, Pinchas Kotok, reported that the first typhus cases occurred “solely among the newly-arrived refugees” in April 1941. A local hospital treated all the sick. When an epidemic broke out in May 1941, the hospital refused to admit those newly infected. At the time, the ghetto had 3,360 residents and, reportedly, close to 700 refugees. Rawa’s Jews were ordered to set up their own hospital; but initially the sick remained in their own households, as the community had nowhere to isolate them “in an overcrowded Jewish quarter.” A hospital staffed with 17 people was set up in June 1941, admitting also Jews from Nowe Miasto. It lacked basic provisions and was always in serious debt; by August 1941, 47 Jews were hospitalized with typhus.¹⁰

The ghetto was sealed at the beginning of 1942. At that time, the German police suddenly surrounded the Skierniewice neighborhood ghetto and transferred its inhabitants to the larger ghetto. The German authorities also stopped distributing ration cards to Jews. After the ghetto’s closure, Jewish agricultural laborers were forced to leave the ghetto under escort. Up to a dozen Jews who attempted to sneak out of the ghetto were shot during the ghetto’s existence.

On August 16, 1942, the Gestapo shot 17 Jews at the Rawa Castle who had been denounced by Judenrat member Abram Bekermos. Several members of the Judenrat were among the victims, for example, Icek Apfelbaum, Jakub Dorn, Hersz Grynszpan, and Icek Szwarc.¹¹

According to *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, a second typhus epidemic broke out in September 1942. Jewish laborers returning from the Zawada labor camp, where they had been sent for 10 days, carried the disease.

As news filtered through about the liquidation of other ghettos by October 1942, the Judenrat demanded money from the ghetto residents “for expenses connected with the eventual evasion of resettlement.” Its members promised that those who paid would be spared from deportation.

On October 26, 1942, approximately 4,000 residents of the nearby Biała Rawska ghetto were brought to Rawa, where they were held in the open in one of the market squares.

The liquidation of the Rawa Mazowiecka ghetto took place on October 27, 1942. In its course the men were separated from the women and children. The Germans announced

that 220 craftsmen would remain in the ghetto; 500 remained in the end, while some of those with families managed to stay, based on the bribes they could afford. Approximately 70 people were murdered in the course of the ghetto liquidation; the remainder were taken to the Tomaszów Mazowiecki ghetto. The newly established cleanup group was housed next to the Judenrat, which later opened a soup kitchen for those who stayed. The cleanup group collected Jewish belongings, including furniture, in the synagogue.

On the following day—October 28, 1942—all who remained in Rawa were ordered to the market square where the Gendarmerie read out the names of 220 Jews who were to stay in Rawa, including certain Jewish policemen and Judenrat members. The remainder were deported to Tomaszów later that day. Prior to their departure, each person was forced to pay 300 złoty, allegedly to cover the costs of transport to Tomaszów.

A few days later, a new list of only 37 Jews who were to remain in Rawa was announced; only 30 people remained, as a few preferred to join their families being deported to Tomaszów. A Gendarme by the name of “Sas” is mentioned as taking part in the last selection. Their subsequent fate is unknown, although some Rawa Jews may have reached the remnant ghetto in Ujazd.¹²

The Tomaszów Mazowiecki ghetto was liquidated on October 31 and November 2, 1942, when its residents were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES The following publications were used to prepare this entry: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 423; Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 153–155, 176–178; Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 257–260.

Archival sources include AŻIH (210/592 [AJDC]; 301/1440, 301/2010, 301/3182 [Relacje]); BA-L (B 162/6090); and USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2010, testimony of Dawid Taśma, 1946.
2. *Ibid.*; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/592 (Rawa Mazowiecka), pp. 3, 15, 64, 74, 98.
3. AŻIH, 301/3182, testimony of Abram Zand, n.d.; and 301/2010.
4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/592, pp. 1–2, 4–15, 35.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 68; and AŻIH, 301/2010.
6. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/592, pp. 75–76.
7. AŻIH, 301/3182.
8. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/592, pp. 77, 80, 85, 99.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 96; AŻIH, 301/2010.
10. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/592, pp. 98, 101–102.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

11. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo skierniewickie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1985), pp. 116–117; AŻIH, 301/2010.

12. AŻIH, 301/1440, testimony of Izrael Wagwajzer, 1948; and 301/2010.

RYCZYWÓŁ

Pre-1939: Ryczywół, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Ryczywół, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Ryczywół, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Ryczywół is located about 70 kilometers (44 miles) south-southeast of Warsaw. There were 135 Jews living in the village of Ryczywół (pre-war gmina Świerże Górne) at the start of World War II. Most of the village was burned down in the course of hostilities, forcing many newly homeless families to scatter throughout neighboring settlements. In June 1940, there was an outbreak of typhus. Icek Mandel, a former pre-war community leader, reported this situation to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Radom, adding, “Under these circumstances, not even a Judenrat was established.” In the absence of a governing body for the community, Mandel requested that the AJDC send all subsidies and donations to his private address.¹

In April 1941, Ryczywół Jews sent a letter to the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization, based in Kraków, protesting Mandel’s alleged misappropriation of welfare benefits. “We have no faith in him, as he did not distribute fairly the rations and money sent for us . . . but instead took a large portion for himself and was [then] unable to explain it to us.” They also underlined that they had not authorized Mandel to collect and distribute these funds. The letter’s more than 20 cosignatories selected Szmerek Neimark, Szlama Lederman (Lejderman), and Maryś Lederman as their representatives to the JSS. This presumably meant that the Jews in Ryczywół were still without any official representation recognized by the German authorities.² In 1941, reportedly 160 Jews were living in Ryczywół, including 30 newcomers.

The precise date on which the ghetto was established in Ryczywół is unknown. According to historian Jacek Młynarczyk, the Kreishauptmann Radom-Land, Dr. Friedrich Egen, in December 1941 ordered the concentration of Jews from the local villages in a number of specified places in the Kreis, including in Ryczywół. These places were designated as *Judenbezirke*, or ghettos.³ This order was presumably implemented at the beginning of 1942, as part of the overall ghettoization process.

On August 4, 1942, the Kreishauptmann Radom-Land reported to the office of population and welfare of the Governor of Distrikt Lublin that a Sonderdienst detachment had transported 69 Jews from the village of Ryczywół to the Sobibór extermination camp.⁴ That same month, reportedly 160 Jews were transferred to the Koźnice ghetto. These Jews

were then deported to the Treblinka extermination camp on the liquidation of the Kozienice ghetto in September 1942.

SOURCES The following published sources were used in the preparation of this entry: Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 158, 179; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 122; and J. Kermisz, ed., *Dokumenty i materiały do dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce*, vol. 2, *Akcje i wysiedlenia* (Łódź: 1946), pp. 55–56.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/606 [AJDC]; 211/925 [JSS]); and NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63; and USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/606 (Ryczywół), p. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211//915 (Ryczywół), pp. 1–2.
3. AŻIH, NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63, Anordnung (decree) and Zusatzordnung (amendment) of the Kreishauptmann, December 22 and 30, 1941, as cited in Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 122.
4. Kermisz, *Dokumenty i materiały*, 2: 55–56, Kreishauptmann Radom-Land to Department of Internal Administration, Office for Population Matters and Welfare in Distrikt Lublin, August 4, 1942, Ref. I/J/4/42J.

SANDOMIERZ

Pre-1939: Sandomierz (Yiddish: Tsoyzmir), town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Sandomierz is a town located 88 kilometers (55 miles) southwest of Lublin, on the west bank of the Vistula River. Just prior to the German invasion in September 1939, Sandomierz had approximately 10,000 inhabitants, of which nearly 3,000 were Jews.¹

German forces occupied the town on September 9, 1939. A regime of murder, abuse, and plunder began immediately. On September 21, 1939, members of the SD from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski arrived in Sandomierz and gathered about 30 Jews from all walks of life. From these men they appointed a Judenrat of 17 members headed by Henryk Goldberg. The Judenrat was obliged to carry out German orders and was made personally responsible for the compliance of the Jewish community. The Judenrat established five departments, including ones for housing, labor, and social assistance. It also established a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) composed of young men.²

In early October 1939, more than 1,000 Jewish refugees arrived who had been driven out of Kalisz and Sieradz follow-



Young Jewish men at forced labor hold shovels and wheelbarrows on a street in Sandomierz, 1942, with German troops in the background. Second from left [and marked with an “X”] is 20-year-old Yitzhak Goldman. USHMM WS #44343. COURTESY OF YIVO

ing the incorporation of these towns into the Reich. Other refugees arrived in 1941 from Vienna.³

From the start of the occupation, the Germans imposed forced labor on all Jewish men aged between 12 and 60. The Jews had to work for the Germans three days per week, but the wealthier ones could pay for a replacement, creating a useful source of revenue for the Judenrat’s social assistance projects. In May 1940, the Nazis rounded up about 40 Jews and sent them to various camps in Distrikt Lublin, on the border with the Soviet Union, to construct fortifications. The conditions for these laborers were very bad. The men had to work up to 12 hours a day with only meager rations. The Jewish communities and also the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) sent some aid to these camps. Most of those sent to Distrikt Lublin returned after a couple of months, but the raids to round up forced laborers continued.⁴

In October and November 1940, the Germans confiscated all Jewish real estate, and by November 1941 all Jewish stores had been transferred into Polish or German hands. In November 1940, Jews were forbidden to leave the limits of the town without special permission. Initially the punishment for disobedience was imprisonment, but from October 1941 such infractions were punishable by death. According to reports of the Polish underground, in April 1942, all Jews found illegally outside the town were summarily shot.⁵

The German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 worsened conditions for the Jews, as the Germans alleged that they sympathized with the Bolsheviks. Ration cards for Jews were introduced, limited to only 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of bread per day and 300 grams (10.6 ounces) of sugar per month. About three quarters of the Jews were now receiving assistance from the Judenrat, and no more money was being received from the AJDC.⁶ In December 1941, the German authorities demanded that the Jews surrender all their fur items for the use of the German army in Russia. The Germans were empowered to shoot any Jew retaining anything made of fur,

even if it was of no value. The Germans also established a Soviet prisoner-of-war (POW) camp in the town. Three young Jews were forced to bury the corpses of the many Soviet POWs who died there.⁷

On April 16, 1942, a meeting of the representatives of the Jewish Councils in Kreis Opatow was held. Among the questions discussed was the possibility of organizing some form of self-defense and the possibility of collecting funds to bribe the Germans.⁸

On May 13, 1942, the Opatow Kreishauptmann, Dr. Heinz Ritter, issued an order for the establishment of 17 ghettos in his Kreis, including one in Sandomierz, by June 1, 1942. As a result of this decree, a number of Jews were brought into Sandomierz from the surrounding area, bringing the total number of Jews to about 5,200, increasing the overcrowding and pressure on resources. A "Jewish residential district" (open ghetto) was established in the town, which, however, did not have a wall or fence. The district included the following streets: Joselwicza, Zamkower, Bobola, and Podwale. Those Jews living outside this area had to exchange residences with any Christians living within it.

In August 1942, the Gestapo murdered the head of the Judenrat, Henryk Goldberg, following the disappearance of Judenrat member Appelbaum, who was suspected of resistance activities.⁹ By this time the Jews of Sandomierz had a good idea of their intended fate, as refugees from the Aktions in other towns brought news of the murder of entire communities. When rumors spread in October of an impending Aktion in Sandomierz, many hid in bunkers or bribed peasants to conceal them.

On Wednesday, October 28, 1942, the Germans ordered the Jews to assemble on the market square at 7:30 A.M. Those who appeared or were found in their hiding places were driven to the railway station by the German police, assisted by Ukrainian and Latvian auxiliaries. Several hundred Jews were murdered in the town during the Aktion. About 3,000 Jews from the Sandomierz ghetto were deported to the Bełżec killing center on October 28–29, together with several thousand more from Zawichost and Klimontów. Some 300 remained behind in the "Lyceum" labor camp at the Jewish cemetery, and at least 400 more survived in hiding. Over the following days the German Gendarmerie commanded by a man named Lescher continued to shoot any Jews they uncovered.¹⁰

On November 10, 1942, the German authorities announced that Sandomierz would be one of the four remaining towns in Distrikt Radom where Jews would be permitted to reside in a "Jewish residential area" (*Judenwohnbezirk*).¹¹ Over the following weeks, many Jews came to Sandomierz out of hiding and from ghettos in the surrounding area, such as Staszów, raising the Jewish population to more than 6,000. Most remained suspicious of German intentions but simply could not find any other way to survive. One reason for this desperation was the hostile attitude of many Polish partisan groups who turned away or betrayed Jews who fled to the forests. Only relatively few escapees, such as 10-year-old Sara Glass, whose parents found her a safe refuge with Janina Szymańska in the

village of Mokrzyszów near Tarnobrzeg, were able to remain in hiding for more than a few weeks.

The "Second Ghetto," which was located in about 20 single-story houses around Jewish Street ("Yiddisher Gas") and on part of Zamkower Street, was surrounded by a fence 2 meters (6.6 feet) high and guarded by German police.¹² Conditions in the ghetto are described by one survivor as: "terrible. It was so dirty. People were lying in the streets, hungry. . . . I've never seen such filth."¹³ About 12 Jews had to share a room, and some lived in attics or on the street. Jews were able to barter remaining valuables for food with local peasants across the fence, but the meager rations issued by the Judenrat consisted only of bread and a little soup once per day. Jews had to go out of the ghetto under close guard to reach the bathhouse and had to queue for water. A communal toilet was established on an elevation towards the Christian quarter, but sanitary conditions were appalling, and disease was rife. Those who fell sick and reported to the hospital were generally murdered after just a few days. Many Jews tried to flee from this hell.¹⁴

In the summer of 1942, three forced labor camps for Jews had been established in and around Sandomierz, partly on the initiative of the Jewish Council. Some Jews based at the Lyceum camp and those at Mokoszyn outside Sandomierz were used by the Germans to dismantle Polish farmhouses in preparation for the settlement of ethnic Germans on enlarged farms. Most of the remaining inmates from these two camps were transferred to armaments factories in Radom and Starachowice-Wierzbnik in the summer of 1943. The other labor camp was inside a glassworks named Metan in Sandomierz.¹⁵

On January 7, 1943, units of the SS, the Gendarmerie, Polish police, and Latvian and Ukrainian auxiliaries surrounded the ghetto. During the night these forces threw in bombs, setting a few houses on fire, and shot at anyone who approached the ghetto fence. Then on the following morning, they rounded up and deported most of the roughly 7,000 Jews in the ghetto, together with about 100 Jews from the Metan labor camp. During the roundup the Germans selected about 300 men who were fit for work and sent them to the labor camp at Skarżysko-Kamienna. As the deportees were escorted to the railway station, the German police and their auxiliaries cruelly beat them with clubs and shot hundreds of them en route. The deportees were placed into freight cars holding more than 120 people, each destined for the Treblinka extermination camp, where they were all murdered.¹⁶

Following the Aktion, the Germans again announced that those who came out of hiding and returned to the ghetto would not be harmed, then established a "Third Ghetto." About 180 people emerged and returned to Jewish Street to join 120 Jews who had been excluded from the deportation. These Jews were employed in clearing out the ghetto. At this time the Gendarmes Lescher and Schumann frequently entered the ghetto, terrorizing and murdering Jews. On April 15, 1943, the Germans selected young and healthy Jews and sent them to the labor camp at Pionki. Those remaining, including 15 children, were shot. After the liquidation of the ghetto, the Germans ordered the demolition of the houses on Jewish Street, apart

from the synagogue building and Wasser's house. Local Poles searched through the ruins for any hidden valuables.¹⁷

The Red Army drove out the German occupants on August 18, 1944. At that time, only a handful of Jews who had hidden successfully with the assistance of Poles remained. Additional survivors returned from the Nazi camps and the interior of the Soviet Union, bringing the total registered to about 70; but by 1948 they had all left to start a new life in Israel or other countries in the West.

SOURCES A detailed account in English of the fate of the Jewish community of Sandomierz during the Holocaust can be found in the memorial book: Evah Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, ed., *Et ezkerab: Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir (Sandomiyez)* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Tsoizmir be-Yisrael: Moreshet, be'edut "a. Sh. Mordekhai Anilevits," 1993). Two Yiddish-language publications are also relevant: Amnon Ajzensztadt, *Un di erd hot nisht tsugedekt dos blut* (Toronto: Tsentrale fun di tsozmerer organizatsyes, 1962); and L. Zylberberg, *A Yeed fun Klementov Dertzeitl* (Warsaw, 1947); and one in French, *L'Extermination des Juifs en Pologne: Depositions de témoins oculaires. Cinquième Serie: Lwów-Sniatyń-Sandomierz* (Geneva, 1945).

Documents on the fate of the Jews of Sandomierz can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/47, 125, and 2927; 302/54); CDJC; FVA (# 657); IPN; NARA (NO-5257); USHMM (RG-15.019M; RG-50.155*0007); VHF; and YVA.

Martin Dean
trans. Adam Kahane

NOTES

1. Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, *Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir*, pp. 584–568.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 564. Another source dates the formation of the Judenrat in October 1939; see AŻIH, 301/47.
3. Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, *Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir*, pp. 565–562; *L'Extermination*, testimony of B.C., born 1925 [in French], located in CDJC; AŻIH, 301/47.
4. Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, *Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir*, pp. 563–561; testimony of B.C., in *L'Extermination*; AŻIH, 301/47.
5. AAN, 202/III-7, p. 79, Informacja Beżaca 14/39, April 13, 1942; USHMM, RG-02.208 (AŻIH, 302/54).
6. Testimony of B.C., in *L'Extermination*; AŻIH, 301/47.
7. Testimony of B.C., in *L'Extermination*.
8. AŻIH, 301/47.
9. Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, *Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir*, pp. 560–559; AŻIH, 301/1525.
10. Testimony of B.C., in *L'Extermination*; Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, *Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir*, pp. 557–555; AŻIH, 301/47.
11. Police Decree issued by HSSPF Krüger of the Generalgouvernement, November 10, 1942, published in Tatiana Benstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), pp. 344–345.
12. Ajzensztadt, *Un di erd hot nisht*, p. 72; Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, *Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir*, p. 555; testimony of B.C., in *L'Extermination*.
13. USHMM, RG-50.155*0007, Oral history interview with Ruth Muschkies Webber, February 2, 1987.
14. Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, *Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir*, p. 554; testimony of B.C., in *L'Extermination*.

15. Feldenkraiz-Grinbal, *Sefer kebilat Tsoizmir*, pp. 551–548.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 553–552.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 552–551; see also AŻIH, 302/94.

SĘDZISZÓW

Pre-1939: Sędziszów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Sedziszow, Kreis Jędrzejów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Sędziszów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Sędziszów is located 62 kilometers (39 miles) north of Kraków. The 1921 census registered 448 Jews living in Sędziszów.

Following the German occupation of Sędziszów in September 1939, Jews were beaten and rounded up for forced labor, which encouraged them to stay off the streets. They were further obliged to wear armbands with a Star of David. The Bet Midrash was razed by the year's end. By 1940, some Jewish shops, businesses, and nicer houses had been confiscated by the German authorities.

On the Kreishauptmann's order, elections to the Judenrat took place at the town hall in January 1940. Although voting was compulsory for all Jews, the mayor himself proposed the 12 candidates, all of whom were accepted with no objections. An owner of an iron warehouse, Załmen Szydłowski was appointed the chairman. By the year's end, some of the members had been replaced. In March 1940, the Judenrat estimated that 40 percent of the Jews in the village were refugees, most of them from nearby towns that had suffered war damage.

A Polish police force was stationed in Sędziszów. Jędrzejów's German Gendarmerie and Gestapo paid occasional visits.¹

Early in 1940, an open and unfenced ghetto was organized around the market square. Jews living there were required to admit other families. Some families, due to cramped living space, were forced to live in the synagogue. At some point that year, Jews living in nearby villages—presumably mostly farmers—were forced out and moved to nearby towns. Most of them were transferred to Jędrzejów and Wodzisław.

The basis for the ghetto's establishment in Sędziszów was possibly the decision of the German authorities to expand the train station, turning it into a major rail junction. The area populated by the town's Jews was designated for housing railway employees, and 12 buildings were erected to accommodate them. A German from Silesia named Reiz managed the Jewish laborers constructing the housing estate.²

A labor camp for Jews was established near the railway in 1940. It contained approximately 700 Jews from throughout the Kreis. The Jews from outside Sędziszów were quartered there, whereas the Sędziszów Jews laboring there returned home for the night. Work tasks included shipping-related activities and station modernization.³ Reportedly, there were a number of private companies performing various jobs at the station. It is not clear how many of the workers were forced laborers and how many—if any—had paying jobs. Some of the companies admitted limited numbers of volunteers, including women seeking the firms' protection from resettlement. The

women performed cleaning jobs and were paid with small rations (e.g., bread, soup, coffee, and tea).⁴

During the summer of 1940, the German authorities announced that the ghetto was closed, and only Jews conscripted for labor were permitted to leave. Polish and German police guarded its perimeters and were also tasked with escorting laborers to their workplaces. With the ghetto's closure, famine resulted, causing many of those escorted to work to beg for food. Despite this, there are no reports of epidemics during the ghetto's existence. The Polish Red Cross vaccinated Sędziszów's Jews for typhus in December 1940.⁵

Other jobs performed by Sędziszów Jews in 1940 included road repairs (approximately 20 laborers) and drainage works at the nearby Węgleszyn labor camp. Those laboring at the latter had been released by the year's end. In January 1941, 20 Jews were assigned to clear snow at the train station. An additional number reportedly worked at a sawmill and a mill in Tarnawa, outside of Sędziszów.⁶

In January 1941, 50 Jews expelled from Jędrzejów were transferred to Sędziszów, raising the number of ghetto inmates to 480. The Judenrat squeezed all but two families in with the ghetto's residents.⁷

In February 1942, the *Gazeta Żydowska* reported that the Judenrat had been reorganized "by its secretary Zylberberg." A sanitation committee affiliated with the Judenrat appealed to the ghetto's residents to keep their households, yards, and lavatories clean. Obtaining a permit to leave the Jewish quarter was at this time made dependent on first acquiring a delousing certificate issued by the Kreis doctor.⁸

Apparently, a number of Jews were resettled into the ghetto in early spring, although the total number of its residents had declined to 400 by April 1942. Survivor Mojżesz Najman, however, claimed that until the ghetto's liquidation, no Jews were sent to labor camps.⁹

Despite the Judenrat being reorganized, the welfare provided by its self-help committee remained limited, due to low cash reserves, to the distribution of food products provided by other organizations. In May 1942, the Sędziszów correspondent of the *Gazeta Żydowska*, J. Zaks, wrote to the Kraków Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS): "The Judenrat in our village consists primarily of the well-to-do, who can neither understand nor deal with the issue of providing help to poor laborers." J. Zaks proposed opening a soup kitchen and a branch of the JSS in Sędziszów.¹⁰

Following the registration of women aged 15 to 50 in July 1942, 50 young females were assigned to agricultural labor. They were quartered at their workplaces and were paid with money and meals. Several dozen Jews also worked at the Łownia estate, where they were brought daily on wagons and labored under the guard of two out-of-town Jewish policemen.¹¹

German police forces liquidated the Sędziszów ghetto on September 20, 1942. That morning, the ghetto was surrounded, and the Jews were ordered to gather at the square. From there, they were taken to a meadow near the train station, where they were held overnight. Jews from the liquidated ghettos of Szczekociny and Wodzisław were also brought there. The old

and sick were selected, shot, and buried in the meadow. A selection was also conducted at the labor camp, with all women, elderly, and boys less than 15 attached to the transport that left Sędziszów the next morning.¹²

Aside from the 350 Jews imprisoned in the enclosed labor camp, the Germans left in Sędziszów a handful of Jews, including the chairman Szydłowski with his family. At the beginning of November 1942, the remnant ghetto was inhabited by several dozen Jews.¹³

The 1947 to 1950 proceedings of the Kielce Appellate Court (SAK) include files on a group of policemen from the Sędziszów post and its environs who, in 1943–1944, took part in the murder of Jews found in hiding and plundered their property. The main defendant, Józef Godawa, was initially sentenced to death. Following the 1952 amnesty, his sentence was commuted to 15 years in prison. The others found guilty of some of the charges received 6 to 12 years in prison.¹⁴

SOURCES Relevant publications include the following: Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), pp. 480–481; and Waclaw Cichocki, "Sędziszów–Sędziszowscy Żydzi (1918–1943)," available at www.sedziszow.pl/?c=mdTresc-cmPokaz-352.

The following archival sources include relevant information on the Jewish community and the ghetto in Sędziszów: AŻIH (210/620, 211/489, 211/947, 301/3549, and 301/7046); IPN (SAK 203 and 203a); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reels 26 and 45); and VHF (# 30065).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/620 (Sędziszów), pp. 3, 11; AŻIH, 301/3549, testimony of Mojżesz Najman, 1948; *Gazeta Żydowska*, December 24, 1940, and January 24, 1941.

2. VHF, # 30065, testimony of Regina Kluska, 1997; AŻIH, 301/3549.

3. Józef Marszałek, *Obozy pracy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 1998), p. 77.

4. VHF, # 30065; AŻIH, 301/3549.

5. *Gazeta Żydowska*, December 24, 1940; Cichocki, "Sędziszów"; VHF, # 30065. According to AŻIH, 301/3549, there was no special living quarter for Jews; however, starting from 1941, Jews were not allowed to leave their places of residence.

6. Fąfara, *Gebenna*, pp. 480–481; *Gazeta Żydowska*, December 24, 1940, and January 24, 1941.

7. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/620, p. 41; *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 25, 1941.

8. *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 18, 1942.

9. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 45, 211/947 (Sędziszów), p. 43; *Gazeta Żydowska*, April 1, 1942; AŻIH, 301/3549.

10. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 45, 211/947, pp. 1–52; and Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/620, pp. 1–45. The AJDC and the JSS archives do not contain any data related to welfare provision at this time, for example, statistics on refugees and deportees, forced labor, epidemics, or anything that

would depict conditions in the ghetto. Please note that some of the archival information in both files on Sędziszów refers to Sędziszów Małopolski in the Ropczyce-Sędziszów powiat.

11. *Gazeta Żydowska*, July 27, 1942. Cichocki, “Sędziszów,” dates the ghetto’s liquidation in 1943.

12. AŻIH, 301/7046, testimony of Cz. Jelonek and M. Migacz, 1986; 301/3549.

13. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS) 211/489 (Jędrzejów), reel 26, pp. 51–52, 55.

14. IPN, SAK 203 and 203a, as cited in Alina Skibińska and Jakub Petelewicz, “Udział Polaków w zbrodniach na Żydach na prowincji regionu świętokrzyskiego,” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i materiały*, no. 1 (2005): 132–134.

SIECIECHÓW

Pre-1939: Sieciechów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Sieciechow, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Sieciechów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sieciechów is located 92 kilometers (57 miles) south-southeast of Warsaw. By 1939, there were 120 Jews living in the village. Following its occupation, the Jews in Sieciechów were forced to perform various jobs for the few Germans present in the village, including cleaning stables and trucks. As payment they received lunch from a canteen. Jews were obliged to wear an armband with an emblem of the Star of David; the same Star also marked their dwellings. Apart from that (according to survivor Morris Blatman), Sieciechów’s Jews were able to lead their lives more or less as usual until 1941.¹

The precise date of the ghetto’s establishment is unknown. According to historian Jacek Młynarczyk, in December 1941, Kreishauptmann Radom-Land, Dr. Friedrich Egen, ordered the concentration of Jews from the local villages in a number of specified places in the Kreis, including in Sieciechów. These places were designated as *Judenbezirke*, or Jewish ghettos.² This was presumably implemented at the beginning of 1942 as part of the overall ghettoization process. Blatman describes the ghetto as being very small and fenced. Jews were forbidden to leave it, but they still went out to buy or barter items for food.

A number of young Jews were rounded up for labor conscription, including in nearby Dęblin (in Distrikt Lublin, where Jews worked extending an airfield) and in Mozelice. The latter was an open camp 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) northwest of Sieciechów, from which Jews were able to leave temporarily.

The ghetto’s residents were to some extent aware of the impending liquidation of the ghetto in August 1942; for example, the Blatman family managed to hide all their valuables with Polish friends in nearby Nagórnik.³

On August 17, the new Kreishauptmann Radom-Land, Dr. Justus Rubehn (who had replaced Dr. Egen), ordered that all the Jews of Mariampol, Magnuszew, Mniszew, and Sieciechów were to be transferred to the Kozenice ghetto by the end of the month.⁴ The precise date of the Sieciechów ghetto liquidation is unknown, but in its course, approximately 300 ghetto

residents were transferred to the Kozenice ghetto, which was then liquidated the following month, in September 1942. All Jews concentrated in Kozenice were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES The following published sources were used to prepare this entry: Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 159, 179; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 122.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63); USHMM (Acc.2003.406.1, Aeltesten-Rat der jüd. Bevölkerung Kozenice); and VHF (# 36957, testimony of Morris Blatman, 1997; # 28457, testimony of Gerszon Blatman, 1997; # 29682, testimony of Israel Blatman, 1997). Of the three VHF testimonies, only Morris Blatman gives clear evidence regarding the existence of a ghetto, but of the three, his recollections generally provide the most detail. Israel Blatman, however, states that there was not a ghetto in Sieciechów, as he was instead sent to the Kozenice ghetto.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 36957, testimony of Morris Blatman, 1997.
2. AŻIH, NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63, Anordnung (decree) and Zustazordnung (amendment) of the Kreishauptmann, December 22 and 30, 1941, as cited in Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 122.
3. VHF, # 36957.
4. USHMM, Acc.2003.406.1, Aeltesten-Rat der jüd. Bevölkerung Kozenice, report (to the Security Police) on the mood of the Jewish population, August 31, 1942.

SIENNO

Pre-1939: Sienna, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Ilza (later Kreis Starachowice), Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sienna is located approximately 44 kilometers (27 miles) south-southeast of Radom. There were 826 Jews living in Sienna when the Germans captured the village in September 1939.¹ Following an initial wave of German brutality towards the village’s Jews, community life returned to normal in the months following the occupation. A number of refugees from the western parts of Poland decided to settle in the village.

The Germans set up a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Sienna on February 12, 1940. Rachmil Mosenberg (Mesenberg), the owner of an oil-press company, chaired the council. The other members of the 12-man Judenrat included B. Zylbersztajn, Ch. Wajcman, M.J. Goldberg, Chil Goldberg, Z. Goldberg, M. Szerman, Ch. Wajsbrot, Ch. Rubinsztajn, Ch. Kranc, M. Szyfman, and the secretary, Zylberman. The Judenrat was responsible for the conscription of forced laborers, while its members were exempted. It was further charged with orga-

VOLUME II: PART A



A Jewish family poses in their living quarters in the Sienno ghetto, n.d. USHMM WS #75069, COURTESY OF HOOVER INSTITUTION ARCHIVES, WORLD WAR II PICTORIAL COLLECTION

nizing aid for the growing number of refugees (including many from Łódź) and local needy. By June 1940, there were 1,210 Jews in Sienno, 210 of them newcomers. Although the soup kitchen was launched with the help of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), it was more often closed than open, feeding on average 200 to 250 poor daily.²

By mid-1940, two jails were set up in Sienno. The first was supervised by the German Gendarmerie, the second by a squad of Polish police subordinated to the former. Out of approximately 500 people incarcerated altogether, the Germans murdered at least 200 prisoners (the number of Jews among them is unknown). The remainder were moved to prisons in Starachowice-Wierzbnik, Radom, and Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. According to one source, there was also a German Schutzpolizei unit stationed in Sienno.

An inspection carried out by Ostrowiec's Judenrat in June 1940 revealed the Sienno Judenrat's poor bookkeeping and lack of receipts for distributed goods. The Judenrat was soon at odds with most of the institutions with which it was supposed to cooperate in assisting the community. In February 1941, in a series of inflammatory letters Chairman Mosenberg accused the AJDC of intentionally excluding Sienno from assistance, and he refused to provide a report of its activities for 1940, claiming that it "would show only a deficit." Although Jewish Councils were obliged to procure money primarily from within the community, the Sienno Judenrat "refused any responsibility" to do so whenever there was a shortage of income from welfare organizations. The AJDC replied that this attitude would negatively impact Sienno's Jews, as the New York headquarters determines allocations of financial assistance based on such reports.³

Following further expulsions of Jews from the Polish territories annexed to the Reich, the number of newcomers rose to 457 (out of a total of 1,104) by May 1941. At that time, the Judenrat assessed 700 Jews as "poverty-stricken." Close to one half of the Jewish residents of Sienno (448) were under 18 years old. Records indicate the following age distribution: 48 children aged 2 to 3, 79 children aged 3 to 7, 190 children aged 7 to 14, and 131 youths aged 14 to 18. Aside from the

soup kitchen—when it was open—there was no social assistance provided for these children.

According to the Judenrat records for May 1941, 17 Jews (out of a pre-war number of 43) were permitted to keep their stores open, while 26 Jewish craftsmen (out of a pre-war number of 61) still ran their workshops. The workshops mostly were for tailors and cobblers, employing a total of 35 Jews. Records also show that 30 Jews were performing forced labor in the Kreis, with another 30 to 50 in labor camps. During a flood in May 1941, the river washed out two bridges in Sienno and a few Jewish houses, leaving their inhabitants homeless.

The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization was set up to take over the provision of aid to poor Jews from the Jewish Councils. The Starachowice Kreis committee set up its branch in Sienno on June 7, 1941, with Herszek Zylberman as the chairman, Chil Mosenberg as his deputy, and Mendel Tarłowski as the committee's third member.⁴

The Judenrat immediately sought the dismissal of all nominees, as "adolescent and unmarried," proposing themselves for the posts as "married and wealthy." The proposed candidates included: Moszek-Josek Goldberg (chairman), Chaim-Majer Wajman (deputy), and the Judenrat's chairman, Mosenberg. From then on, the self-nominee Goldberg signed all correspondence from Sienno. The rebuffed Zylberman commented to the JSS in Kraków that the real reason behind his exclusion was his high school degree. He further stated that the Judenrat "literally did nothing" to help the impoverished Jews in Sienno, all the while falsifying their reports on the welfare of the town's inhabitants.⁵

On the orders of the Ilza Kreishauptmann, an open ghetto was established in Sienno on December 6, 1941. Ghetto residents were permitted to leave for work and to acquire food during daylight hours. A unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was organized to maintain order inside the ghetto.⁶

A new JSS committee was appointed in December 1941, including tailor Moszek Chaim Grynszpan, the Judenrat's chairman Rachmil Mosenberg (as deputy), and a tradesman, Zysman Zylberman. Despite certain misgivings, Mosenberg was chosen, as Kraków believed he would set aside his personal animosities and allow the committee to do its job. *Gazeta Żydowska* reported on the accomplishments of the reorganized JSS: keeping the soup kitchen open for seven months, setting up a committee to provide care (including breakfasts and hygiene checkups) for 140 children in the ghetto, and in addition, raising money for the soup kitchen by organizing a charity concert on February 1, 1942. The audience filled up the Judenrat's office, where a fiddle quartet conducted by Arthur Gelbart rendered pieces by Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, and Mendelssohn.⁷

A typhus epidemic broke out in the Sienno ghetto in February 1942; 47 patients were diagnosed as infected. A Polish doctor treated the patients at their homes, as there was no Jewish doctor nor a hospital set up in the village. The number of sick increased to 72 within a month; several died.

At that time, the ghetto had approximately 1,100 inhabitants. There is no information regarding the size of the ghetto or the housing conditions in it, but it is known that some of the newcomers were probably housed in mass quarters, as the *Gazeta Żydowska* notes in June, and that others were assigned to stay with local families for the Sabbath holidays.⁸

By March 1942, Mosenberg was again in conflict, withholding the Judenrat's subsidy for the purchase of goods to be distributed for the upcoming Pesach holiday and ordering the JSS to cease its activities due to lack of money. As an alternative response, Zylberman and Grynspan went from door to door and collected the necessary sum. Mosenberg instructed them to record the sum as a Judenrat subsidy. When they refused, he sought to conscript them for forced labor. Their quarrel reached its peak in June 1942, when Mosenberg had both members of the JSS arrested by the Jewish Police. They were released after 24 hours but threatened with renewed imprisonment. According to Zylberman, Mosenberg obstructed the work of the new committee, to show the community that it was just as ineffective, as when he was in charge of welfare in Sienno. Despite these threats, the kitchen reopened on July 1, 1942, with Kraków's financial help. Finally Radom's Judenrat intervened, warning Mosenberg that lack of cooperation would result in the Judenrat's dismissal.⁹

In September 1942, the Jews from the nearby settlements of Karolowa, Tarnówek, Nowa Wieś, and Wodąca were brought to the Sienno ghetto. Following their arrival, there were 2,136 Jews living in the ghetto by October 1942.¹⁰

The liquidation of the Sienno ghetto took place on October 15, 1942, with approximately 2,000 of its residents being deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Two days later on October 17, 1942, approximately 800 Jews transferred from nearby Kazanów filled the vacated ghetto in Sienno.¹¹ Soon afterwards, they were likely sent to the ghetto in Tarłów and from there to Treblinka on November 29, 1942, after that ghetto was liquidated.

A number of escapees from Sienno, Ostrowiec, Szydłowiec, Kazanów, and Hża joined a small partisan group in the Serezdki Forest near Hża. The squad commander was "Garbaty"; Hill Brawerman (alias "Baca") was the commander of its Jewish section. The squad—numbering 38 men and two women—was poorly armed. It was decimated by the Germans on December 2, 1942. Brawerman was killed in the summer of 1943.

SOURCES Information for this article comes mainly from two publications: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955).

The main documentary sources for the Jews of Sienno under German occupation are the records of the JSS and the AJDC available in the following archives: AŻIH (210/626 [AJDC]; 211/955-57 [JSS]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 46; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]). Although the above archives consist of nearly 200 pages mainly covering

the Sienno Judenrat's activities, they contain very little information on the life of Sienno's Jews before and after the ghetto's establishment.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 46.
2. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/626; *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 10, 1941. According to *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 7, 1941, the Judenrat was set up in 1939.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/626.
4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 46.
5. *Ibid.*; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/626. The three younger members of the JSS were officially dismissed in January 1942.
6. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 46.
7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 11, 1942, March 27, 1942, and June 26, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 46.
8. *Gazeta Żydowska*, June 26, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 46.
9. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 46.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," pp. 161 (table 12), 180–181; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 179; Shmuel Spector and Geofrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1180; Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 577.

SKARYSZEW

Pre-1939: Skaryszew, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The town of Skaryszew is located 14 kilometers (9 miles) southeast of Radom. In 1921, there were 820 Jews living in Skaryszew, constituting 39.6 percent of the total population. On the eve of war in 1939, 993 Jews were residing in Skaryszew.¹

Damage resulting from German air raids in September 1939 seriously affected the community. Luftwaffe bombs destroyed several dozen houses. As a result, refugees that might have settled in Skaryszew refrained from doing so for some time following the bombardments. Local Jewish families tried to rebuild their lives by moving to other localities. It is possible that during the second half of 1940, the Germans relocated some of Skaryszew's Jews to another locality within Kreis Radom-Land. In the spring of 1940, there were 1,192 Jews living in Skaryszew,² but by December the number had declined to 810, including 64 refugees (mainly deportees from Łódź and Kraków).³ At the end of 1940, however, the Germans decided to build an airfield in Przytyk, just to the northwest of Radom. Consequently, many of the Jewish residents of Przytyk resettled to Skaryszew in the spring of 1941.⁴

The Jews of Skaryszew were subjected to a variety of anti-semitic measures enforced by the Germans. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established to represent the Jews to the German authorities. On its formation, it included Rabbi Lejzor Teitelbaum, Josef Mendel Goldberg, and five tradesmen: Lejbus Szajn, Izrael Herszenhorn, Noe Zajdman, Icek Frenkel, and Abram Goldberg.⁵

In early 1941, three local ethnic Germans were appointed to run the town. Their appearance made life more difficult for the Jews; they confiscated valuables and murdered the local butcher, Yitzhak Korman. In contrast, the local Polish police chief, Roczdzinski, tried to help the Jews and assisted the Judenrat.⁶

In the second half of 1941, the number of Jews in Skaryszew began to increase considerably. This probably reflected an influx of Jews from Distrikt Warschau, looking for better living conditions in the countryside. By November 1941, there were 1,271 Jews in Skaryszew, most of whom were extremely impoverished.⁷ The Judenrat sought to ameliorate the awful living conditions for the Jews, and a public kitchen was opened to serve hot meals to the poor. At that time, the Judenrat included Salomon Zylbersztajn (chairman), baker Lejbus Zajde (deputy), and a gardener, Josef Mendel Goldberg.⁸ By 1942, there was also a branch of the Jewish Social-Self Help (JSS) active in Skaryszew.

On December 22, 1941, Kreishauptmann Dr. Friedrich Egen issued a decree on the creation of ghettos in Kreis Radom-Land. As a result a ghetto was established in Skaryszew, probably in January 1942 or at some time over the ensuing months.⁹ It encompassed numerous buildings on Kobylańska Street, as well as some houses likely located on Chomentowska, Iłża, and Poprzeczna Streets.¹⁰ The borders of the ghetto were densely constructed, and parts of the boundary were probably fenced in with barbed wire. With the ghetto's establishment, a seven-man Jewish police force was also organized.¹¹ Over the first six months of 1942, the number of residents in the enclosed Jewish quarter steadily increased, reaching 1,800 by June 1942.¹² This was due to the resettlement into the ghetto of Jews living in surrounding villages, as well as an influx of refugees from other localities. Due to extreme congestion, many ghetto residents were forced to reside in barns and sheds. Hunger prevailed in the ghetto, and epidemic disease spread among its residents. In the summer of 1942, young able-bodied Jews were registered for forced labor; about 50 young Jewish men were sent to a labor camp in Radom, and others were sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp.¹³ In the late summer of 1942, some Jewish partisans were active in the area around Skaryszew, sabotaging German vehicles and railway tracks.

The Germans transferred all the residents of the Skaryszew ghetto to Szydłowiec on August 18, 1942. The Jews gathered in Szydłowiec were deported from there to the extermination camp in Treblinka in two large transports on September 23 and 25, 1942. During the war, material evidence of the Jewish presence in Skaryszew was destroyed, including the tombstones from the Jewish cemetery, which the Germans used as road construction material.¹⁴

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

SOURCES Details regarding the location of the ghetto in Skaryszew can be found in Włodzimierz Płowiec, "II wojna światowa," in Włodzimierz Płowiec, ed., *Skaryszew—dzieje, ludzie, jarmarki końskie* (Radom, 2006), p. 21. Other relevant publications include: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 453; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków, 2004); Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 377–378; and Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 75–182.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR; AŻIH (JSS, 211/430, 963); IPN (ASG, sygn. 47, p. 170); IPN-R (SORd 273); USHMM; VHF (# 27989, 40874); and YVA.

Sebastian Piątkowski
trans. Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 159.
2. Sebastian Piątkowski, "Pomoc społeczna i działalność charytatywna w gettach dystryktu radomskiego (1939–1942)," in Marek Przeniosło, ed., *Dobroczynność i pomoc społeczna na ziemiach polskich w XIX, XX i na początku XXI wieku* (Kielce, 2008), p. 176.
3. APR, Akta miasta Skaryszew, 2.
4. "Przytyk," at www.sztetl.org.pl.
5. APR, Akta miasta Skaryszew, 2.
6. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 377–378.
7. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 159.
8. AŻIH, JSS, 211/430.
9. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 453, date its establishment in April 1942; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 377–378, in May 1942.
10. Płowiec, "II wojna światowa," p. 21.
11. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 99.
12. Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 159.
13. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 377–378; VHF, # 40874.
14. Adam Penkalla, *Żydowskie ślady w województwie kieleckim i radomskim* (Radom, 1992), p. 156; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 274.

SKARŻYSKO-KAMIENNA

Pre-1939: Skarżysko-Kamienna, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Skarżysko-Kamienna, Kreis Kielce-land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Skarżysko-Kamienna, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Skarżysko-Kamienna is located 120 kilometers (75 miles) west-southwest of Lublin, on the banks of the Kamienna River. In



Two German soldiers publicly humiliate a religious Jew in Skarżysko-Kamienna by cutting off his sidelocks, 1939–1940. USHMM WS #42683, COURTESY OF SHALOM FOUNDATION: GOLDA TENCER-SZURMIEJ COLLECTION

1937, Skarżysko-Kamienna had 19,700 inhabitants, among them 2,800 Jews, about 14 percent of the total.

Under German authority, living conditions for the Jews worsened significantly. Immediately Germans started putting Jews to forced labor. Five Jews were murdered for allegedly shirking forced labor, and other Jews were beaten and humiliated. On January 4, 1940, the special commissioner (Sonderbeauftragter) of the Nazi People's Welfare (Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt, NSV) agency in Skarżysko-Kamienna asked the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw to send cod liver oil and tea for the Jewish community and to pay the physician, Dr. Kachan, a monthly support of 300 złoty. He also requested food for the inhabitants of the city. On February 1, 1940, he requested 400 portions of typhus serum for the Jewish community.¹

The Skarżysko-Kamienna Jewish Council, headed by Rabbi Hirsh Feldman, turned to the AJDC for help. At that time, the Jewish soup kitchen provided 600 meals daily, which required the expenditure of 15,000 złoty every month. Additionally, 200 meals per day were prepared for children and

other meals for the sick and elderly. The AJDC in Warsaw had sent 3,000 złoty, but this was insufficient to combat hunger in the Jewish community, to improve the hygienic conditions in the bombed town, or to buy clothes for 360 Jewish children.²

Over the next months, food was provided from different sources. In April, the AJDC sent 1,200 kilograms (2,646 pounds) of matzot, to be given to the poorest Jews, especially refugees, for free at Passover. Some 200 additional kilograms (441 pounds) came from the Jewish community in Radom.³ In July 1940, the AJDC sent 45 kilograms (99 pounds) of sugar, 176 kilograms (388 pounds) of flour, and 21 kilograms (46 pounds) of lard, among other deliveries.⁴

In August 1940, the Jewish community reported that 90 percent of the male Jews had been drafted for forced labor. Most likely, many of them were employed by the Road Construction Group (Gruppe Strassenbau) within the Generalgouvernement, which from February 1940 was responsible for the construction of a highway between Skarżysko-Kamienna and Annopol. Others may have been sent to forced labor camps in Distrikt Lublin.⁵

In the summer of 1940, first attempts were made to concentrate the Jewish population in certain parts of the town: 240 Jewish families were crammed into a small area, which led to terrible sanitary conditions and made it difficult for Jews to reach their usual work sites.⁶ The soup kitchen delivered more than 600 portions daily, but the funds of the community were exhausted. The Jewish outpatient hospital (*Ambulatorium*) treated 195 patients in August 1940, and doctors made 195 house calls. In the fall of 1940 and the winter of 1940–1941, food was still scarce, and an unknown number of Jews were homeless. The Jewish Council therefore again turned to the AJDC for help and groceries, including 15 kilograms (33 pounds) of cheese, 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of Ovomaltine, and 5.75 kilograms (12.7 pounds) of soup cubes; and 500 złoty also were delivered.⁷ But more help was necessary to support the homeless and to buy medication for the sick. In the spring of 1941, a number of Jews from Przytyk arrived in Skarżysko-Kamienna, as the Germans were constructing an airfield in Przytyk.⁸

In April or May of 1941, the German authorities established a ghetto, or—as it was officially called—a “Jewish residential area” (*Judenwohnbezirk*) in the town. The Office for Internal Administration in Distrikt Radom instructed the Stadtkommissar in Skarżysko-Kamienna that the ghetto should not be fenced but that its inhabitants should be subjected to certain restrictions. Entering and leaving the ghetto would only be allowed for those with a special permit issued by the Stadtkommissar.⁹ Furthermore, Jews could not enter several of the main streets of the town. For disobeying these rules, Jews faced a penalty fee of 1,000 złoty or three months' imprisonment.¹⁰

The area of the ghetto was rather small, but according to German officials, it provided enough space for the 2,800 inhabitants. As Stadtkommissar Dr. Eberhard in Skarżysko-Kamienna noted on May 9, 1941, it was not necessary to fence

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in the ghetto, since no infectious diseases had been reported among the Jews within the last months. On May 5, 1941, it was reported to the Department of Interior Administration for Distrikt Radom that the ghetto had been established.¹¹ As reported in the *Gazeta Żydowska*, with the establishment of the ghetto, a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was organized in Skarżysko-Kamienna, which controlled its interior borders.¹²

In June 1940, Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) became the sole trustee of the Skarżysko Kamienna munitions plant, mainly thanks to its general manager Paul Budin, a trusted Nazi. HASAG now ran the Skarżysko-Kamienna plant as a subcontractor for the Wehrmacht's Army High Command (OKW), a situation that subsequently had important consequences for the Jews in the ghettos of Skarżysko-Kamienna and its surrounding area. Between August 1942 and the summer of 1943, Jews from all over Distrikt Radom were brought to the Skarżysko-Kamienna factory and its three camps (A, B, and C)—in total 58 transports with 17,210 people. Of these prisoners, 6,408 managed to survive.¹³ Although Jews most likely had already been employed by HASAG in mid-1940, only in late March or early April 1942 was a first group of about 2,000 local Jews brought into the plant to serve as permanent workers.

Over the next months, a complex system of interaction developed between the HASAG management in Skarżysko-Kamienna, the Judenräte, and the SS. The labor exchange began to assign Jews to work at the plants, and the regional Judenräte cooperated, since this arrangement relieved them from paying wages and providing food for the Jews concerned. Very soon, Jews even began to bribe Jewish authorities to be assigned to work in the camps, and HASAG supported this development by spreading rumors that it would be willing to accept volunteers. Working for HASAG seemed to offer some security to the Jews from deportation to a killing center. HASAG even paid the Jews a token wage and allowed them to correspond with their families.¹⁴ There was an arrangement between HASAG and the SS authorities, too: whenever the SS organized a deportation or ghetto liquidation, Jews would find the means to bribe the SS officers in charge, and these officers would notify HASAG representatives, who would arrive at the scene of the Aktion to select those Jews from the ghettos fit to work in the ammunition plants.

Nonetheless, conditions in the forced labor camp were harsh, with long hours and inadequate food. Many Jews died there of exhaustion and disease, and their corpses were delivered to the Skarżysko-Kamienna ghetto, where Jerachmiel Feldman, the son of the Judenrat head, arranged for Jewish burials.

In August 1942, the camp already held 5,500 Jews, coming from Skarżysko-Kamienna, as well as from at least 17 transports from various ghettos. At that time, the Skarżysko camp was officially declared a *Betriebslager* (factory camp), and the Radom period of the Skarżysko-Kamienna camp began, with transports arriving from all over Distrikt Radom, as SS and Police Leader (SSPF) Herbert Böttcher and SS officer Franz

Schippers organized the deportations in the region. Between September and October 1942, two deportations from the Skarżysko-Kamienna ghetto to the HASAG camp, totaling 550 people took place.¹⁵ HASAG representatives most likely were present during each deportation. But HASAG also made its selection of slave laborers work in both directions. In late September 1942, exhausted workers in the HASAG factory camp were told that their names would be put on a list and that they would be allowed to return home to the ghetto. On October 3, the company—as Felicja Karay reports—selected about 1,000 workers, who were considered unfit to work. About 500 of them were shot in a nearby forest. The others were taken to the Skarżysko-Kamienna ghetto, where SS officer Franz Schippers was in charge of an ongoing deportation Aktion. More than 3,000 Jews were gathered at a central square in the ghetto, 500 of them were chosen by HASAG managers for work in the factory camp, and the others—including those returned from the HASAG camp—were put in cattle cars and sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. Many pregnant women and elderly or sick Jews were shot in Skarżysko during the Aktion. Some Jewish children, who had been entrusted to local Poles by their desperate parents, were betrayed and handed over to the Germans.¹⁶

Karay argues that in the summer and fall of 1942 the HASAG management did not need to increase its labor force, due to the *Munitionsstop* then in force in the German armament industry. Rather, the HASAG managers may have been interested instead in the profits to be gained from accepting Jewish bribes and plundering Jewish property (from parcels sent to the factory plants as well as during the deportations).¹⁷ This practice continued until October 1942, when the HASAG camp was put under the supervision of the SSPF in Distrikt Radom, while daily organization, supervision, and administration still remained under HASAG control. In a last big “grosse Filzaktion,” on October 25, 1942, all camp inmates were bodily searched and selected. The next day, 195 of them were “dismissed” and shot. October 1942 was also the final hour for the Skarżysko-Kamienna ghetto. Amid a steep increase in the terror against the Jewish population all over Distrikt Radom, that month 29 people were hanged in Skarżysko-Kamienna.¹⁸ In January 1943, HASAG obtained the Skarżysko-Kamienna plants from the Generalgouvernement. On March 17, 1943, the Skarżysko-Kamienna synagogue and the Jewish ritual bathhouse, both property of the “former Jewish religious community in Skarżysko-Kamienna,” were declared to be ownerless and confiscated in favor of the Generalgouvernement.¹⁹ The Jewish community in Skarżysko Kamienna had ceased to exist.

In the winter of 1945–1946, Skarżysko-Kamienna Jews that had been liberated from concentration camps returned home to retrieve their property. There they were greeted with open hostility, and in February 1946, five were murdered. Three of their murderers were sentenced to death.²⁰ In 1948 in Leipzig (Soviet Zone of occupation) trials took place to determine the guilt of 25 leading HASAG managers and members of the Werkschutz; 4 people were sentenced to death; 2 received

life sentences; and 18 others were given sentences of between one and five years.²¹

SOURCES Although the history of the Skarżysko-Kamienna HASAG factory camp is well researched, there is not much information available on the history of the Jewish community in the town. The most important sources for this include Felicia Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow. Skarżysko-Kamienna Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996); Eliezer Lewin and Jerachmiel Shier, eds., *Skarżysko Book—The Yizkor Book in Memory of the Jewish Community of Skarżysko* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Skarżysko former inhabitants in Israel and USA, 1973); Yerahmiel Siyar, ed., *Skarżysko Kamienna Memorial Book: Zekbor* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Skarżysko former inhabitants in Israel and USA, 1997); Krzysytof Urbański, *Almanach gmin żydowskich województwa kieleckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach, 2007), pp. 133–135; and Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 373–376. Further information is provided by Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen. Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006); Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen. Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007); and Czesław Pili-chowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 453–454.

For information on trials against HASAG managers, members of the Werkschutz, and other people involved in the establishment of the Skarżysko-Kamienna HASAG factory camp and the extinction of the local Jewish community, see C.F. Rüter, ed., *DDR-Justiz und NS-Verbrechen. Sammlung ostdeutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1955–1990*, vols. 1–3 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press: K.G. Saur, 2000–2003); and Fritz Bauer, Adelheid L. Rüter-Ehlermann et al., eds., *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen, Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945–1999*, 26 vols. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1968–2008), among others, case 654 against Anton Ipfing, who supervised the Skarżysko-Kamienna factory camp.

Primary sources on the history of the Jewish community in Skarżysko-Kamienna and the ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/631; 301/3990); IPN (e.g., ASG, sygn. 47, p. 93; kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177; CA MSW 183/129, folder 5); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC] 210/631; RG-15.031M [Der Kreishauptmann in Kielce], file 129).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/631, NS-Volkswohlfahrt-Sonderbeauftragter Skarżysko-Kamienna to AJDC Warsaw, January 4, 1940; and the same to AJDC Warsaw, February 1, 1940.
2. Ibid., Jewish Community Skarżysko-Kamienna to AJDC Warsaw, February 16, 1940.
3. Ibid., AJDC Warsaw to Jewish Community Skarżysko-Kamienna, April 15, 1940.

4. Ibid., District Inspector Radom to Jewish Council Skarżysko-Kamienna, July 12, 1940.

5. Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, p. 159.

6. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/631, Jewish Community Skarżysko-Kamienna to AJDC Radom, August 9, 1940; and Jewish Council Skarżysko-Kamienna to AJDC Warsaw, September 23, 1940.

7. Ibid., AJDC to Jewish Council Skarżysko-Kamienna, October 23 and December 23, 1940.

8. “Przytyk,” at www.sztetl.org.pl.

9. USHMM, RG-15.031M, file 129, Amt des Chefs des Distrikts Radom, Abteilung Innere Verwaltung to Stadtkommissar Skarżysko-Kamienna, April 25, 1941.

10. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 119.

11. USHMM, RG-15.031M, file 129: note to Abteilung Innere Verwaltung beim Chef des Distrikts Radom, May 5, 1941; see also Stadtkommissar Skarżysko-Kamienna to Chef des Distrikts Radom, April 8, 1941, and Stadtkommissar Skarżysko-Kamienna to Kreishauptmann Kielce, May 9, 1941.

12. *Gazeta Żydowska*, July 7, 1941.

13. Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow*, p. 51.

14. Ibid., p. 31, also based on *Pamiętnik Dawida Rubowin-owicza* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1987), pp. 92–96.

15. Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow*, p. 36, based on Lewin and Shier, *Skarżysko Book*, p. 90.

16. Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow*, p. 38.

17. Ibid., p. 39.

18. Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, p. 198.

19. USHMM, RG-15.9031M, file 129, Einziehungsverfügung, Kreishauptmann Kielce, March 17, 1943.

20. Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow*, p. 232.

21. For more information on the trials, see Rüter, *DDR-Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*. vols. 1–3, nos. 1369, 1432, and 1511.

SKÓRKOWICE

Pre-1939: Skórkowice, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Skorkowice, Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Skórkowice, Łódź województwo, Poland

Skórkowice is located 10 kilometers (6 miles) west of Żarnów. Before the war, Skórkowice was 1 of over 30 settlements in the Machory rural community, with its seat in Marcinków. On the outbreak of World War II, there were 60 Jews residing in Skórkowice. In the fall of 1939, approximately 100 refugees from Łódź, Zgierz, Pabianice, and Ozorków settled in the village. At the beginning of March 1941, the Judenrat reported approximately 700 Jews living in the territory of the Machory community, the majority of whom were newcomers. At least half of them came within the jurisdiction of the Skórkowice Judenrat.¹

The Germans appointed Icek Wadowski as chairman of the Judenrat in Skórkowice. Other members included S. Szydłowski (secretary), Jankiel Wodowski, Ela Koziniecki, K. Frydman, and H. Czyżewski. The latter two were responsible for welfare.²

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In September 1941, a typhus epidemic broke out in Skórkowice. Many Jews also suffered from dysentery. The Judenrat engaged a nurse, and then Dr. Jan Singer from Żarnów, to attend the sick. It also set up a Sanitation Committee to control hygiene among the Jews and to isolate and feed the sick. A total of 10 patients were so gravely ill that they had to be transported to hospitals in Opoczno and Piotrków Trybunalski. By mid-February 1941, 10 Jews had died of typhus.³

While fighting off the disease, a ghetto was created in Skórkowice in January or February 1942, after 160 Jews (40 families) from the vicinity were transferred there on January 21, 1942. Until then, they had been inhabitants of the following six villages, all within 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) of Skórkowice: Klew (15 families), Siucice (13), Zawada (4), Ruszenice (3), Sulborowice (3), and Chorzew (2).

In mid-March 1942, the newly established branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Skórkowice reported to Kraków that the Jewish families who had been transferred to Skórkowice were “in a very miserable financial and living condition, as they cannot move anywhere outside the ghetto.” Many of the newcomers were peddlers, now forbidden to go about their business. There is no information as to whether the ghetto was fenced or guarded.

The ghetto was extremely overcrowded, with 15 to 20 people quartered per room. On February 14, 1942, a fire razed a house inhabited by five families. There were 320 Jews living in the ghetto at that time.⁴

The composition of the JSS committee was proposed by the Judenrat and included among its members the tradesman Koziniecki as chairman, the sales clerk Szmul Sobel, and the shoemaker Zyskind Berliner. The town’s welfare administrators and members of the Judenrat’s oversight commission (Wodowski, Frydman, and Czyżewski) protested against this selection. The ghetto residents rebelled as well, sending letters to Kraków, demanding the committee’s disbandment and refusing to pay their welfare contributions. Their main objection was to Koziniecki, “who was trusted by no one” and who, allegedly, had falsified records concerning the expenditure of welfare funds.

At the end of April 1942, chairman Wodowski wrote to the Kraków JSS: “Outrage and arguments arise daily that the Judenrat had allowed the [JSS] branch to be composed in this way.” He described the JSS branch members as “unqualified” for social work, due to general mistrust among the ghetto residents and a lack of any experience in this field. Wodowski’s request for their dismissal and the confiscation of the official JSS stamp was denied.⁵

In May 1942, there were 300 Jews living in the ghetto. In July 1942, Arbeitsamt (labor office) employees escorted 30 laborers daily out of the ghetto for drainage works within the Machory community. They drained ditches, meadows, and swamps. Some ironworkers were sent away to perform forced labor in Lwów.⁶

The date on which the Skórkowice ghetto was liquidated is unknown. Adam Rutkowski established that 300 Jews concentrated in Marcinków-Machory were transferred to the ghetto in Żarnów on October 3, 1942. It is very possible that

this was also the fate of the Jews concentrated in the Skórkowice ghetto, that is, resettlement to Żarnów at the beginning of October 1942. The Żarnów ghetto was liquidated later that month, when its residents were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp, via the Opoczno ghetto, which was liquidated on October 27, 1942.

SOURCES The article by Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 154 (table 10), 177–178, was used to prepare this entry.

Archival sources include AŻIH (211/969, 211/1039 [JSS]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/969 (Skórkowice), pp. 1, 27.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 8, 21.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 20, 27–28.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22, 25, 27, 31–32, 35, 62–63.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–30, 35–38, 40, 43, 46, 49–51; and Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1039 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), pp. 62–63.
6. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/969, pp. 52, 62–63.

SKRZYNNO

Pre-1939: Skrzywno, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Tomaszów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Skrzynno is located approximately 30 kilometers (19 miles) west of Radom. Before World War II, the Jewish population of Skrzywno was less than 200 people.

Between the summer of 1940 and the summer of 1941, up to 400 local Jews were conscripted to perform forced labor in a quarry. The material produced there was used for the building of roads and railway tracks within the framework of the “Otto Program,” a major infrastructure development project designed by the German authorities. The living conditions for the Jews working in the Otto program were tough. They had to work under the harshest conditions, and per week they received pay of only 20 złoty and a loaf of bread.

The ghetto in Skrzywno was established by an order issued on January 1, 1942, announcing that all localities with a predominantly Jewish population were to become ghettos. It is possible, however, that in Skrzywno, as one source states (Court Inquiries about Executions and Mass Graves), the order was implemented only in July of 1942. The Skrzywno ghetto held about 400 people and encompassed one quarter of the entire village.¹ The ghetto residents were permitted to leave only to work in the quarries.²

By the end of October 1942, the Jewish quarter in Skrzywno had been liquidated. Czesław Pilichowski and colleagues, Krzysztof Urbański, and Jacek Młynarczyk indicate that all the Jews were taken to the Opoczno ghetto. One source (Court

Inquiries), however, reports that the ghetto residents were resettled to the Przysucha ghetto.³ Both the Opoczno and Przysucha ghettos were liquidated at the end of October 1942.

A Polish employee of the Skrzynno gmina administration provided several dozen Polish identification cards for Jews living in the Skrzynno ghetto. These cards allowed them to move around unhindered; some recipients managed to make it to the Radom ghetto.

SOURCES The Skrzynno ghetto is mentioned in Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), pp. 154, 272; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 151, 185; Adam Rutkowski, “Hitlerowskie obozy pracy dla Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim,” *BŻIH*, nos. 17–18 (1956): 106–128; and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 78, 85, 155. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), delivers some basic facts on p. 456.

Documentary sources on the ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH, (301/4356); IPN (ASG [Court Inquiries], sygn. 51, p. 133); OKBZH-R (sygn. 101, p. 21); and USHMM (RG-15.019M [ASG]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG Skrzynno), sygn. 51, p. 133.
2. AŻIH, 301/4356, testimony of Stefan Reguła, 1949.
3. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), sygn. 51, p. 133.

SŁUPIA NOWA

Pre-1939: Słupia Nowa, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Słupia Nowa, Kreis Kielce-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Nowa Słupia, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The village’s pre-war name Słupia Nowa is currently Nowa Słupia; however, some sources still refer to the village using its previous name. Słupia is located 38 kilometers (24 miles) east of Kielce. There were 950 Jews living in Słupia at the onset of World War II.¹

Following the village’s German occupation, Gendarmes from nearby Bieliny paid frequent visits, terrorizing Słupia’s Jews by cutting off their beards with bayonets, as well as extorting money and goods. Later, whenever Bieliny Gendarmes came to the village, they killed people; these atrocities were reportedly committed by their commander, Dunkier.

A Gendarmerie post was set up in Słupia later in the occupation, most likely following the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, at which time a prisoner-of-war (POW)



Five religious Jews seized at a synagogue in Słupia Nowa on Yom Kippur are photographed shortly before the Germans murdered them, October 20, 1940.

USHMM WS #44349, COURTESY OF YIVO

camp was set up on the village’s Świąty Krzyż Hill. The Gendarmerie was based in a pre-war tourist hostel and commanded by Hans Ritter. Despite the initial absence of Germans, Słupia residents had to be on guard against a network of German collaborators, organized by Franz (or Hans) Wittek (or Witek), a Croat who had settled in Słupia before the war. Its victims comprised both Poles and Jews. Słupia’s Jews also suffered at the hands of the town’s Polish (Blue) Police force. Its commander, Stanisław Dmochowski, allegedly executed five Jews; three of them were escapees who were passing through Słupia after the ghetto liquidations in the region.

There were also traitors among the Jews. According to survivor Ana Flaumembaum, a local Jew denounced the entire Judenrat, including Flaumembaum’s father Joshua (Szyja) Kestenber, her uncle, and cousin. They were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp following their arrests.²

The date on which the Germans established the Judenrat is unknown. The first mention of its composition in June 1940 includes Mordka Kleiner, Lejb Markiewicz, and a refugee from Łódź. Moszek Grelich, a gaiter-maker, is also named as having been the chairman for a time; the period when he presided is unknown.

By April 1940, the number of Słupia’s native residents had declined by approximately 150, and there were only 870 Jews in the village, including 70 refugees (mostly from Łódź and Włocławek). From June 1940, all able-bodied men aged 16 to 60 had to perform forced labor. By then, most of the town’s Jews had lost their means of income from businesses that German authorities had expropriated and given to ethnic German (*Völkdeutsche*) or Polish “commissars.”³

By January 1941, the Jewish population of Słupia had risen to 1,127. On March 12, 1941, a transport of more than 1,000 Jews from the towns of Plock and Wyszogród (annexed to Regierungsbezirk Zichenau in the Reich) arrived in Słupia on the orders of the Kreishauptmann Kielce-Land, Eduard Jedamzik, thereby more than doubling the number of Jews in the village. Efforts to distribute some of the Plock deportees to other localities remained fruitless.

At this time a number of Jews deported from Vienna and Prague were also sent to Słupia. Some were distributed among the neighboring settlements of Słupia Stara, Grzegorzowice, and Trzcianka. Those newcomers who remained in Słupia Nowa were housed with local Jewish families all over the village. Many (mostly Wyszogród Jews) were quartered en masse in the synagogue, drawing water from the nearby Słupianka River.

The situation of the deportees and refugees deteriorated as the winter of 1941–1942 approached, since the Zichenau deportees had arrived without any resources. In October 1941, a young Włocławek deportee named Dawid described his situation in a letter to his mother: “I am barefooted, tattered, with no money or work. . . . My compatriots are unable to help me as they are selling off the remainder of their stuff for food. Our situation—that of the deportees—is horrible: misery, fear of winter, anxiety for tomorrow, extreme despair.”⁴

Some historians have accused the Judenrat of Słupia Nowa for failing to provide sufficient help to the Płock deportees. By comparison, the foreign Jews were much better off, as the Germans had allowed trains filled with their belongings to follow the transports. There were 2,000 Jews living in Słupia in May 1941, including 1,129 newcomers, rising to 2,347 inhabitants one month later. According to another source, this number had declined to 2,079 by July 1941.⁵

While the date on which an open ghetto was established remains unclear, indirect evidence points to the autumn of 1941, when the *Gazeta Żydowska* reported that, in mid-September 1941, all Judenrat sections were reorganized, that is, their staff was replaced (sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp—see above) and its headquarters was relocated from the market square to “a roomier location.” The new Kreishauptmann, Han Drechsel, appointed Rudolf Margulies as “deputy commissar” and the new Judenrat chairman. Another man named Margulies became “the commissar” and Judenrat secretary.⁶

Słupia Jews were forced into a designated area of the village (e.g., Ana Flaumembaum’s family had to vacate their house located on the market square), and their houses were taken over by Poles. Jews were allowed access only along Opatowska and Kielce Streets up to the small bridges on the river, as well as the entire length of Bodzentyn and a section of Świętokrzyska Street.

According to Flaumembaum, Jews were at first able to leave the ghetto; then, however, a strict order forbade it. Those found outside were shot, some by Commander Ritter of the Słupia Gendarmerie. Poles discovered helping Jews were also subject to the death penalty. The ghetto was reportedly unguarded at night, which enabled many of its inhabitants to sneak out to buy food from the villagers. At this time there was terrible overcrowding in the ghetto, with people dying both of typhus and hunger.⁷

In 1941, Słupia’s Jews were employed to build a stone road leading to the POW camp at Święty Krzyż. Until the establishment of the Gendarmerie post in Słupia, Jewish laborers were supervised either by Polish or Jewish policemen and were able to simulate labor or send smaller labor details than those demanded by the Germans; however, the random raids

by Gendarmes from Bieliny usually resulted in 100 Jews being coerced into roadwork, as well as beatings, house searches, and ransom demands. By autumn 1941, out of a total of 250 Jews employed, 100 labored on the roads. Another 125 worked in the “Staszic” sulfur mine in Rudki, 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) north of Słupia. The remaining 25 Jews labored in Słupia proper, performing menial and cleaning work. Most of the workers were paid 5.20 złoty per day. The others received payment in kind in the form of food. The Judenrat issued a supplementary income for working Jews, comprising one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of bread and 2.50 złoty per week.⁸

A clinic and hospital for 35 patients had been set up by November 1941. Preparations were made to relaunch the short-lived soup kitchen and initiate child care. The number of ghetto inmates continued to decline, reaching 1,775 in January 1942. At that time, 1,600 ghetto inhabitants were asking the local Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee for help, but only 350 were receiving food, as the soup kitchen was again closed.⁹

The Słupia Nowa ghetto was liquidated in September 1942, when Gendarmes accompanied by dogs and Jewish policemen chased its residents onto Świętokrzyska Street. The men were separated from the women and children. Anyone who resisted or was too weak to leave was shot inside his or her dwelling. The Germans informed Słupia’s Jews that they would be resettled to Palestine. Driven by the Germans, the town’s Jews had to jump onto horse-drawn wagons that Polish villagers were forced to provide. The remainder were chased from Słupia on foot in the direction of Bodzentyn.

All the Jews were escorted to Bodzentyn, where the local ghetto was also undergoing liquidation. There, the Słupia Jews were added to the Bodzentyn Jews, then taken to Suchedniów and from there to the Treblinka extermination camp, when the Suchedniów ghetto was liquidated on September 22, 1942.

SOURCES Relevant publications concerning the fate of the Jews of Słupia Nowa under the German occupation include E. Fafara, *Gebenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: LSW, 1983), pp. 333, 337–339, 343–344.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/640 [AJDC]; 211/997 [JSS]); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 47, 211/997 [Słupia Nowa]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/640 [Słupia Nowa]; and ITS Archive [1.1.2.1, folder 8a, and 84a]); and VHF (# 21424).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/997 (JSS Słupia Nowa), reel 47, 211/997, p. 3.
2. VHF, # 21424, testimony of Ana Flaumembaum, 1996.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/640, p. 5; and VHF, # 21424.
4. AŻIH, Ring I/562 (Ring I/663 is a copy), letter from Dawid in Nowa Słupia to his mother, October 18, 1941, as cited by Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 98–99.
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/997 (JSS), reel 47, 211/997, p. 3.

6. *Gazeta Żydowska*, November 5, 1941.
7. VHF, # 21424; Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności*, pp. 343–344. According to Stanisław Jop, “Tadeusz Rostański (Schramm),” *Teka Kom. Hist. OL PAN* 2 (2005): 144, 146, the ghetto was delineated in 1940; it is possible that, lacking a German presence in the village, the order was not enforced until a later date.
8. *Gazeta Żydowska*, November 5, 1941; Fąfara, *Gebenna ludności*, pp. 337–339; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 513.
9. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 7, 1942.

SOBKÓW

Pre-1939: Sobków, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Sobkow, Kreis Jędrzejów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Sobków, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Sobków is located 15 kilometers (9 miles) northeast of Jędrzejów. There were 565 Jews living in the village on the outbreak of World War II.

Izrael Brajbort was one of the prominent Judenrat members; names of other Judenrat personnel are unknown. In July 1940, the Judenrat entrusted Brajbort with establishing a self-help committee.¹

According to *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, in September 1940, a number of Jews were transferred to Sobków from Kreis Jędrzejów, followed later by an additional number of refugees. In the meantime, the Germans established a ghetto in Sobków, where the Jews lived under extremely crowded conditions. The Jews suffered from shortages and hunger, leading to an outbreak of typhus in the ghetto. The same source stated that ghetto residents were assigned to forced labor, while skilled workers needed by the German arms industry were sent to labor camps.²

On January 15 and 16, 1941, the Germans deported 100 Jews from Jędrzejów to Sobków.³

According to the Judenrat’s census, there were 810 Jews in Sobków at the end of May 1941; more than half of them requested assistance. At the end of October 1941, there were still 50 Jewish-owned workshops (mainly tailors and shoemakers) and five stores run by Jews open in Sobków.⁴

In June 1941, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was established with Brajbort as chairman. A soup kitchen opened later that month initially fed 170 people daily, charging 30 groszy for a meal. In October 1941, the kitchen served up to 250 meals daily.⁵

On December 16, 1941, two of the JSS members, Brajbort and Kałma Elia Goldfeld (40), drowned while crossing a ford over the Nida River on JSS business. The community appealed via the *Gazeta Żydowska* to those situated along the Nida to inform them if their bodies were found. The bodies were not found until March 31, 1942.

Following Brajbort’s death, Berek Ginsberg chaired the JSS. Lejb Wajsbaum was the manager of the soup kitchen, while Lejb Fasbirowicz served as treasurer. In May 1942, Sobków reported the same number of Jewish residents—810.⁶

The Jewish community in Sobków was liquidated on August 28, 1942, when its residents, totaling approximately 800 people, were resettled to the Jędrzejów ghetto. The Jędrzejów ghetto was liquidated on September 16, 1942, when most of the Jews concentrated there were deported to the extermination camp in Treblinka. The Germans selected fewer than 200 Jews they deemed fit for work and sent them to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna. It is possible that a few Jews resettled from Sobków were among this group.⁷

SOURCES The following publications contain information on the fate of the Jewish community of Sobków during the Holocaust: Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 96, 101, 145–146 (table 6), 172–173; Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 323–324; and *Gazeta Żydowska* (1941–1942). The existence of a ghetto in Sobków is mentioned also in Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 732.

Archival sources include AŻIH (210/642, 211/484, 211/494, 211/979); BA-L (e.g., B 162/6203); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/979 (Sobków), pp. 1–2; and *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 1 and December 31, 1941, and May 1, 1942.
2. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 324. This secondary source unfortunately does not indicate the basis for determining that a ghetto existed in Sobków.
3. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 24 and February 11, 1941; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/484 (Jędrzejów), pp. 10–13.
4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/979, pp. 1–2, 15; *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 1, 1942.
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/979, pp. 11, 17; *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 1, 1941.
6. *Gazeta Żydowska*, December 31, 1941, and May 1, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/494 (Jędrzejów), pp. 26, 40–41; and 211/979, pp. 15–17.
7. BA-L, B 162/6203, p. 569, as cited by Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 268; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 324.

SOLEC NAD WISŁĄ

Pre-1939: Solec nad Wisłą, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Solec an der Weichsel, Kreis Ilza (later Kreis Starachowice), Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Solec nad Wisłą, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

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Solec nad Wisłą is located about 10 kilometers (6 miles) east-southeast of Lipsko, on the Vistula River. In 1921, the number of Jews residing in the town was 735, which constituted 43.5 percent of the total. In 1930, the number of Jews reached its peak at 1,052, but by 1937 it had declined to 830.¹

The Jewish community of Solec was hit hard by the initial events of World War II. Shortly after the arrival of the Germans, several Jews were killed as a reprisal for shots fired at German troops in the town. In an undated letter (probably written before April 1940), the Jewish Council (Judenrat) asked the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) for help, as many Jews had become homeless due to the war, and all trades were suffering from the economic downturn. Nearly 500 members of the Jewish community were in urgent need of help.² The AJDC responded in April 1940 by sending 496 kilograms (1,093.5 pounds) of matzot, which were to be distributed for free among the poorest members of the community, especially the refugees.³ In July, more food arrived: 16 kilograms (35.3 pounds) of grits, 6 kilograms (13.2 pounds) of sugar, 42 kilograms (92.6 pounds) of flour, 6 kilograms (13.2 pounds) of lard, and 12 cans of condensed milk.⁴ In the fall of 1940, the Jewish Council reported that meals were being served to about 900 people every day, about 300 inhabitants of Solec nad Wisłą and 600 refugees.⁵ The continuous purchase of food supplies exhausted the community's funds, and in the fall of 1940, the Jewish Council again turned to Jewish aid organizations for help.⁶ The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) had opened a branch office in Solec by 1942.⁷

On December 6, 1941, Kreishauptmann Zettelmeyer in Hża ordered the creation of ghettos in a number of places under his jurisdiction, including in Solec.⁸ Most likely, a ghetto was established in Solec nad Wisłą soon thereafter, which held around 800 Jews. The Jews were permitted to leave the ghetto only to go to their sites of forced labor and also at certain times to purchase food. Otherwise, Jews faced the death penalty for leaving the ghetto without permission. Jews from the surrounding villages were also brought into the Solec ghetto.

According to survivor David Levenstadt, his family was transferred from the nearby village of Dziurków to the enclosed ghetto of Solec nad Wisłą, probably in early 1942. Living conditions there were very overcrowded and primitive, with toilet facilities outside. As he did not have a typically Jewish appearance and also had false Aryan papers, David was able to sneak out of the ghetto to obtain food for his family. At that time, the Jews in the ghetto still had some money. During his stay in the Solec ghetto, there was an outbreak of typhus. Subsequently he left the ghetto and went into hiding, where he received assistance from non-Jewish acquaintances.⁹

In September 1942, the Jews of Solec were deported to the ghetto in Tarłów. During the deportation Aktion, some of the elderly and sick Jews were killed in Solec. The Tarłów ghetto was liquidated in turn on October 29, 1942, when the inmates were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.¹⁰

At the time of the liquidation of the ghetto in Solec nad Wisłą, several of the Jews were able to find hiding places with

local Poles. In February 1943, the Germans killed three members of a Polish family, who were accused of assisting Jews.¹¹

From June 1942, Solec nad Wisłą was also the location of one of the four penal labor camps in Distrikt Radom. More than 100 Poles (together with an unknown number of Jews), who had not fulfilled their work quotas or requisitions, were kept here and had to perform hard labor, mainly building dikes and regulating rivers.¹² The camp was run by the Water Regulation Administration (Wasserwirtschaftsverwaltung), and the working and living conditions in it were extremely hard. A number of inmates died at the camp. At the end of October 1942, an attack by partisans liberated 103 inmates, and in February 1943, the camp was relocated to Jedlnia Kościelna, east of Radom.¹³

SOURCES A description of the life of the Jewish community in Solec can be found in Krzysyf Urbański, "Solec nad Wisłą," in *Almanach gmin żydowskich województwa kieleckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach, 2007), pp. 138–140; Krzysyf Urbański, *Gminy żydowskie małe w województwie kieleckim w okresie międzywojennym* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach, 2006), pp. 356–359; and Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 326–327. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), mentions Solec on p. 203; Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen. Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), on pp. 55, 166, 167, 247, 262. Solec is listed in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 463; and in Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 85, 162.

Primary sources on Solec can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/647); IPN (kolekcja "Ob," sygn. 177); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC] 210/647); and VHF (# 8400).

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NOTES

1. Urbański, "Solec nad Wisłą," p. 138.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/647, Solec Judenrat to AJDC, n.d.
3. Ibid., AJDC to Solec Judenrat, April 12, 1940.
4. Ibid., Distrikt Inspectorate Radom to Solec Judenrat, July 12, 1940.
5. Ibid., activity reports for August and September 1940.
6. Ibid., letters to American "towarzystwo 'Jeas,'" n.d., and to AJDC, November 11, 1940.
7. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 203.
8. Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, p. 247.
9. VHF, # 8400, testimony of David Levenstadt.
10. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 463.
11. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 326–327.
12. Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik*, pp. 55, 166.
13. Ibid., pp. 167, 262.

STARACHOWICE-WIERZBNIK [AKA WIERZBNIK OR STARACHOWICE]

Pre-1939: Wierzbnik, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Starachowice-Wierzbnik, Kreis Ilza (later Kreis/Starachowice), Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Starachowice, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Wierzbnik is located 43 kilometers (27 miles) south-southwest of Radom. By 1939, there were 3,880 Jews living in Wierzbnik and only 40 in adjacent Starachowice. In April 1939, both were joined under the name of Starachowice-Wierzbnik. As “Wierzbnik” was dropped from the name of the town in 1952, many sources—especially Polish ones—refer to the ghetto by the town’s present name, Starachowice.

A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was organized in Wierzbnik on November 26, 1939. It was charged with the provision of a daily quota of laborers and the assessment and collection of financial contributions extorted from each Jewish family. Comprising 20 members, the Judenrat included the following: the pre-war community activist Symcha Minberg (chairman), Moszek Birencwejg (deputy, in charge of welfare), Moshe Adler (secretary), Szmul Isser, Shlomo Einesman, Szmul Kahan, Szaja Jojne Szaerfherc, Moszek Feldman, J. Tencer, Lejbuś Morgensztern, Josek Rozenberg, and draper Rachmil Wolfowicz, who also served as the Judenrat’s liaison to the German police.

By the end of 1939, the Judenrat had created a Jewish police force commanded by Kornblum. Jeremiah Wilczek and Nathan Gelbard served in it and were tasked with arresting and jailing those who failed to pay their assessed contributions and keeping order among Wierzbnik’s Jews. Based on almost 300 interviews, mainly with survivors from Wierzbnik, Christopher R. Browning maintains that the Wierzbnik Judenrat received a “mixed” evaluation, although more survivors “were inclined toward a favorable rather than an unfavorable evaluation.” Browning adds, “[I]n contrast, the Jewish police . . . were remembered less favorably.”¹ Contemporary evidence from some of the deportees in Wierzbnik presents a more critical picture. Płock deportees, who arrived in March 1941, stated that the local Judenrat “consists of individuals that stick at nothing, and even in the eyes of local Jews, arouse the worst opinions.”²

German police forces in Starachowice consisted of a small Schutzpolizei (Schupo) detachment commanded by Rudolf Angerer (supervising the Polish [Blue] Police), as well as a 15-member Gendarmerie post. Survivors mostly refer to the Gendarmes Ertel (or Ertl) and Schmidt. As of October 1941, Walther Becker was in charge of the nearest branch office of the Security Police. Although numerous survivors testified that Becker killed and terrorized the Jews, a Hamburg court acquitted him in 1972, when he was tried for his role in the liquidation of the Wierzbnik ghetto.

In February 1940, the community was forced to pay a total of 48,735 zloty in contributions. It also had to deliver 15 laborers for menial assignments daily. The Judenrat further reported

that deportees from Aleksandrów and Wiśniowa Góra had increased the number of Jews in Wierzbnik to 3,156. On March 2, 1940, 600 Jews arrived in Wierzbnik. Within a week, another 358 Jews from Łódź were transferred for a “temporary stay.” On March 13, 1940, a transport of 960 Jews arrived from that city. As was typically the case, it was not clear how many would stay in the town. Browning estimates a total of 1,306 persons arriving on March 2 and 13 from Łódź. A short-lived soup kitchen opened, serving 300 meals daily.³

An informal census of the Judenrat registered only 374 newcomers in June 1940. Many of them soon departed, as Wierzbnik was too small to offer any means of livelihood, the forced labor was unpaid, and Jews were not employed at that time in the steel or ammunition industries in Starachowice. Browning established that Jewish labor did not commence there on a large scale until the spring of 1940. First occasional and then regular quotas of 80 to 100 people were supplied via the labor office, mainly to load and unload cargo. Later much larger numbers of Jews worked there and were assigned to more advanced tasks.⁴

The refugees, intelligentsia in particular, criticized the local self-help committee for not establishing a soup kitchen; the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) also described its bookkeeping as “a lot of fiction.” As a result, the committee was reorganized, at least partially to separate it from the Judenrat and include representatives from among the newcomers. The new 13-member committee included three refugees. It opened a soup kitchen on July 28, 1940.⁵

In August 1940, possibly more than 100 men were selected by the Judenrat and sent to labor camps in Distrikt Lublin.

In December 1940, there were 3,600 Jews living in Wierzbnik. By January 1941, the majority of them were employed in the Starachowice factories earning 4 to 6 zloty daily. In addition, laborers received supplementary ration cards (*Zusatzkarten*), which allowed them to buy additional food.⁶

In March 1941, a number of Płock deportees were transferred to Wierzbnik. An open ghetto was established soon after their arrival, with only three days’ notice, on April 2 or 12, 1941. Adam Rutkowski states that Starachowice’s mayor announced the decree establishing the ghetto only on November 20, 1941, eight months after the accomplished fact.

Signs were posted to designate the ghetto’s borders. Poles were evicted from its grounds. Jews were required to obtain permission to leave it, but Poles remained free to enter. In such a situation, obtaining food was much easier than in closed ghettos, although those Jews sneaking out were taking great risks; several people were killed for this transgression. The ghetto included sections of Rynek, Kolejowa, Iłża, Spółdzielcza, Krótka, and Targowa Streets. Up to four families shared a single-family apartment. Factory-conscripted laborers left the ghetto only in work battalions.

The situation of those Płock refugees arriving in Wierzbnik with no means was grave. A committee of people from Płockers established in Wierzbnik complained that out of all transports it was “able to keep in Wierzbnik only 300 people from Płock.” This number had increased to 400 by the end of

March 1941, after a group initially deported to Bodzentyn came in. The Judenrat withheld assistance and refused to register deportees, so precluding them from obtaining work in the factories, in hopes of getting rid of them. It also denied them contact with representatives of the Radom Judenrat visiting Wierzbnik to prevent the “revelation” of the Judenrat’s “perfidy.”⁷⁷

By the summer of 1942, Wierzbnik was known for its higher chances of survival due to the need for labor conscripts in the steel and munitions factories crucial to the German war industry, such as the Braunschweig Steel Works Corporation, a subsidiary of the Reichswerke Hermann Göring located in Starachowice. Anticipating deportations to come, Wierzbnik inmates were frantically trying to procure work permits. Leopold Rudolf Schwertner, the head of the non-German personnel in the Starachowice factory, helped many Jews to obtain work permits in return for bribes.

Following the liquidation of the Szydłowiec ghetto on September 22–23, 1942, a number of its Jews were brought to the Wierzbnik ghetto and sent to work the following day. But in the case of Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, liquidated three weeks later on October 12, over 100 able-bodied Jews were directed to newly constructed camp barracks in Starachowice, not to the ghetto. The arrival of 700 Jews from nearby Wąchock in Wierzbnik on October 23, 1942, was a sign of the ghetto’s imminent liquidation.

On October 26, 1942, the evening before the deportation, the Jewish Police went around informing ghetto residents to report to the market square at 7:00 A.M. That night, some skilled workers and Judenrat members, together with their families, were transferred to the so-called Strzelnica camp in Starachowice.

Under Becker’s command, the Germans liquidated the ghetto on October 27, 1942; 60 to 80 Jews were murdered in the course of the Aktion. While Polish and Jewish Police helped to assemble the Jews and maintain order, none of the survivors suggest that they were involved in the killings. Browning estimated that in the course of selections, 1,600 Jews, including 400 women, were selected for work in Starachowice and marched to the so-called Tartak and Strzelnica camps, and some were later transferred to the Majówka camp. The remainder, approximately 4,000 people, were loaded onto 50 cattle cars and a few passenger wagons between 2:00 and 5:00 P.M. All were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

In his postwar testimony the Judenrat chairman made the rather expansive claim: “Through my efforts I succeeded in obtaining the approval of the SS and Police Leader, Böttcher . . . to establish a work camp at the ammunition factory in Starachowice for 1,500 people.”⁷⁸

Between 60 and 70 people, including Jewish policemen, were selected to clean out the ghetto. The Kommando buried the victims in two mass graves and proceeded to sort Jewish belongings while continuing to live on its grounds. Several months later, the group was transferred to the Starachowice camp.

Browning notes: “The fact that more than 25 percent of the Jews rounded up in Wierzbnik were not sent immediately

to their deaths stands in sharp contrast to the fate of other communities in Radom district, where the deportation rate during the ghetto-liquidation actions routinely stood at 90 to 95 percent.”⁷⁹

SOURCES The most detailed account of the Starachowice-Wierzbnik ghetto is in Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), pp. 1–109. Additional information can be found in the following publications: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 83, 148, 197; Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 83–84, 92, 93, 99, 162 (table 12), 180–181; and Yerahmiel Zynger, “Days of Decline and Destruction (the Destruction of Wierzbnik),” in Mark Shutzman, ed., *Sefer Virzbnik-Starakhovits* (Tel Aviv: ha-Va’ad ha-tsuburi shel yots’e Virzbnik-Starakhovits, 1973), pp. 144–145.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APK (sygn. 46, no. 94); AŻIH (e.g., 301/155); BA-L (ZStL, 206 AR-Z 39/62; Verdict of LG-Hamb [50] 35/70); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/653, 717; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], 211/1098; RG-15.079M [Ring], I/353; RG-50.030); VHF (e.g., # 3654, 5190, 9917, 26120); and YVA (TR-10/776).

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NOTES

1. Browning, *Remembering Survival*, pp. 38–39.
2. USHMM, RG-15.079M (Ring), I/353; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/653 (Starachowice), p. 1; and 210/717 (Wierzbnik), pp. 1, 20–23; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1098 (Wierzbnik), pp. 1–2.
3. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/717, pp. 3–8.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 11; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1098, pp. 1–2.
5. *Gazeta Żydowska*, July 21, 1941; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1098, pp. 1–3, 5.
6. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 14, 1941; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/717, p. 32.
7. USHMM, RG-15.079M (Ring), I/353.
8. AŻIH, 301/155, testimony of Simche Minckerg (Symcha Minberg), 1945.
9. Browning, *Remembering Survival*, p. 296.

STASZÓW

Pre-1939: Staszów, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Staszow, Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Staszów, powiat center, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The town of Staszów is located in southeast Poland, 55 kilometers (34 miles) southeast of Kielce. The total population of Staszów in early 1939 was approaching 11,000, around half of whom were Jewish. On the night of September 7, 1939, the Germans occupied the town and immediately began a program of persecution, plunder, forced labor, and murder.

A permanent Gendarmerie post under the command of an officer named Braun was set up on October 26, 1939. There was also a small force of Polish (Blue) Police subordinated to the Gendarmerie.¹

In early November 1939, the Landrat in Opatów ordered the establishment of an eight-man Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Staszów to represent the Jews to the German administration. Jechiel Nejman was its first chairman, but because he was not sufficiently compliant for the Germans, he was dismissed and replaced by Efraim Zinger. Other members of the Judenrat included Herszl Goldberg, Lejbusz Szniper, Herszl Winer, Alter Bemel, Josef Kestenberga, and J. Kirszenbaum.

Punitive expeditions by SS units became frequent; they were accompanied by beatings and demands for contributions. With time, harassment by the Germans and the new mayor Józef Suchan (appointed in August 1940) became more systematic.²

In December 1939, the first wave of deportees arrived in Staszów from Kalisz and Sieradz, followed by some from Łódź. The Judenrat opened a soup kitchen on January 26, 1940, to assist impoverished deportees. It provided three meals a day for nearly 400 people. The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization also helped; the Kreis committee, with its headquarters in Opatów, was established on December 16, 1940, and the branch in Staszów was set up shortly afterwards. In May 1941, 2,600 people applied for social help; however, only 1,000 received it, mainly in the form of free or discounted meals, with some clothing and shoes when available.³

Following the arrival of the refugees and deportees, the Judenrat now had to deliver between 200 and 500 workers per day for forced labor. The employment office in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski issued an order that starting in July 1940, all Jews over the age of 15 had to perform forced labor two days a week. Approximately 200 Jews worked daily for the German “Oemler” Road Construction Company and also on landscaping and swamp drainage.⁴

The German authorities ordered the Judenrat to establish a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) in June 1941. At the beginning, it consisted of about a dozen members. Later, when the Germans promised that its members and their families would be protected from deportation and would be free to move to other ghettos, the number of volunteers increased to about 60. Piekarski was the chief, and Fizman served as his deputy. Both treated the Jews well; however, in some key situations the behavior of the Jewish Police was quite brutal towards their own.

On March 27, 1941, a transport of 1,000 Austrian Jews arrived in Kreis Opatow. Many came to Staszów. In the same year a number of Jews arrived in Staszów from Mielec.⁵ According to the Judenrat records, there were about 5,500 Jews living in Staszów between 1940 and January 1942; 750 of them were refugees or expellees.⁶

Due to the influx of people, sanitary conditions in the town deteriorated, and cases of typhus, typhoid, and dysentery appeared. A system of inspections and the opening of a Jewish bath helped to contain the typhus.⁷

From January 1942, Jews were forbidden to leave the town under penalty of death. From January 15, 1942, Jewish shops could operate only under the supervision of a German, an ethnic German, or a Pole.⁸ According to the JSS records, there were 200 Jewish businesses operating in May 1941, most of them manufacturing shoes.⁹

Until the ghetto was established on June 15, 1942, the Jews still lived in their own homes and—for the most part—had their own shops. With the establishment of the ghetto, they were forced to move into two separate areas of the town, one in the east and one in the west, which included the streets Złota, Długa (Gęsia), Krótka, Stodolna, and Bóźnicza and, on the other side, Dolno Rytwiańska, Górno Rytwiańska, and Kąpielowa. The marketplace and the main streets were to be free of Jews. In June 1942, the ghetto had 6,151 inhabitants. In total, 8,000 Jews passed through the ghetto during its existence.¹⁰

The ghetto was closed on July 1, 1942, with a gate across Krakowska Street. Contact between the two parts of the ghetto was limited to two to four hours per day. A 6:00 p.m. curfew was imposed. Illegal trade with nearby villages fell to a minimum, but many Jews decided to risk their lives by leaving the ghetto and buying food from Poles. Later, Jews could buy food outside the ghetto with a special permit from Mayor Suchan.¹¹

Tailoring shops were set up in August 1942, and German army uniforms were manufactured there. To equip workshops set up in the synagogue, the House of Study, and the high school, Jewish Police confiscated sewing machines from many Jews. At that time there were approximately 880 craftsmen, 360 tradesmen, and 270 laborers registered in Staszów.

At the beginning of October 1942, Staszów’s Jews learned that the Germans had deported the Jews from many of the towns nearby, and more refugees arrived. The ghetto became more crowded than ever, and sanitary conditions worsened. Besides the 5,000 Staszów Jews, there were about 2,000 Jews from other places.

Many Jews fled Staszów; some tried to hide with Poles, while others built bunkers or went to hide in the Goliw Forest. There was also an attempt to organize Jewish armed resistance by the youth of Ha-Shomer Ha-Za’ir, Zionists, and Communists, but the Polish Communist Party refused to provide arms to Jews.¹²

On November 7, 1942, Judenrat chairman Efraim Zinger was ordered to prepare a meal for SS-Obersturmführer Schildt and the 150 members of a punitive expedition that was coming to town. In the afternoon, a group of 200 Jews from Kurozweki and Szydłów arrived in Staszów. They were assembled and guarded by Ukrainian auxiliaries at the market square. Sometime on the same day, a Jew named Abraham Icek Kerbel came to Staszów with one SS man. He offered to take some Jews to a labor camp in Bodzechów near Ostrowiec for a fee of 1,000 złoty per person. Those who paid this large sum soon learned that it was a swindle.¹³

In the evening, the town was cordoned off by Germans accompanied by Ukrainian and Latvian auxiliaries and also

the Polish (Blue) and Jewish Police. Late in the evening, the Germans informed the Judenrat that the ghetto inhabitants would be deported the next day, November 8, 1942, and ordered all Jews to be present at the market square at 8:00 A.M.

The murder of Staszów's Jews started at sunrise on November 8, when two Gestapo men, Peters and Bruno, shot Zinger.¹⁴ At 10:00 A.M., almost 6,000 Jews were ordered to march to the Szczucin train station. When the column entered Kraków Street, the shooting and beating of Jews started. Those who could not keep up with the column were shot. About 700 to 740 collapsed Jews were shot and subsequently buried in a mass grave in the village of Niziny. The remaining Jews were loaded on trains and sent to their deaths at the Treblinka extermination center.¹⁵ The Polish underground press reported instances of individual armed self-defense during the deportation from Staszów.

After the column left the town, a search of the Jewish houses began, and anyone found hiding was shot on the spot. Jewish Police accompanied the search. Throughout the course of the day of the evacuation, the Germans and their auxiliaries murdered 450 Jews (189 of them were shot before the column left the town). Their bodies were buried in a mass grave at the Jewish cemetery.¹⁶

Approximately 550 workers of the tailoring workshops, 250 employees of the Oemler Company, and the Jewish Police (now transformed into a cleanup Kommando) remained in Staszów. They were quartered on Bóźnicza and Złota Streets, which were fenced off with barbed wire. Shortly after the Aktion, about 1,200 "illegal" Jews emerged from bunkers or from the forests—some denied further help by Poles—and were crowded into the small remnant ghetto.¹⁷ After the liquidation of the ghetto, the Germans auctioned Jewish property: houses, shops, and furniture. There were very few buyers, but many Poles looted Jewish houses.¹⁸

In the weeks and months following the deportations, many of the hidden Jews were murdered in the course of German-organized roundups. There were also instances when Poles revealed bunkers and other hiding places. On December 1, 1942, the Germans announced that all "illegal" Jews who remained in Staszów after the expulsions could stay alive but had to move to Sandomierz, which was proclaimed as one of the few remaining Jewish refugee towns in the Generalgouvernement. The Jews could freely travel to Sandomierz for 10 days, until December 10, 1942. When the Sandomierz ghetto was liquidated on January 10, 1943, hundreds of Staszów Jews who had moved there were sent to Treblinka.¹⁹

On December 15, 1942, Staszów's tailoring workshops were liquidated, and the Jews employed there were sent to the Poniatowa labor camp in Distrikt Lublin. All those at Poniatowa were killed when the entire camp was liquidated in November 1943. The Oemler Company camp was liquidated on June 3, 1943, and its employees were sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp and to Radom.

Despite the danger to those who gave refuge to Jews, there were a number of acts of rescue in Staszów and the surrounding villages. One of these rescuers was Maria Szczecińska, a

widow with five children who hid 14 Jews in a specially designed bunker for 22 months—from October 1942 until the liberation of Staszów in August 1944.

SOURCES Much information on the life and destruction of the Staszów Jews can be found in the yizkor book edited by Elhanan Erlich, *Sefer Stashov* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yotse Štashov be-Yisrael, 1962). The publication *The Life and the Extermination of Staszów Jews* (Staszów: Staszów Cultural Association, 1992), by Maciej Andrzej Zarębski, is largely based on *Sefer Stashov*. It was also published in Polish as *Życie i zagłada Żydów staszowskich: W 50 rocznicę zagłady gimny żydowskiej w Staszowie* (Staszów: Staszowskie Tow. Kulturalne, 1992). There are also a number of survivor testimonies, which are briefly described in Marek Józwick, ed., *Relacje z czasów zagłady: Inwentarz (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny-Institut Naukowo-Badawczy, 1998–2005)*. The Staszów ghetto is mentioned also in Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2004), pp. 182–183, 190; and in Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 116.

Documentation on the fate of the Jews in the Staszów ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/655; 211/989; and 301/13, 2790, 3633, and 4972); BA-L (e.g., B 162/4872); IPN (kolekcja "Ob," sygn. 177); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [ŻSS], reel 47; and RG-15.073M [Rady Żydowskiej], reel 1); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2790, testimony of Bina Pasmantier, Daniel Segal, and Samuel Szpic, 1947; and 301/3633, testimony of Basia Goldsztajn, 1947.
2. *Ibid.*, 301/2790; Joseph Goldstein, "Extracts from a Ghetto Diary," in Erlich, *Sefer Stashov*, pp. 26, 29; and A. Ehrlich, "The Path of Anguish and Destruction," also in *Sefer Stashov*, p. 41.
3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47.
4. AŻIH, 301/2790.
5. *Ibid.*
6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47.
7. *Ibid.*, RG- 15.073M (RŻ), reel 1; and RG-15.019M, reel 14.
8. Goldstein, "Extracts," p. 25.
9. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47.
10. *Ibid.*, RG-15.019M, reel 14; Menahem Lifshitz, "The Last Struggle," in Erlich, *Sefer Stashov*, pp. 23–24.
11. Lifshitz, "The Last Struggle," p. 24; Goldstein, "Extracts," p. 26; AŻIH, 301/2790.
12. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47; Lifshitz, "The Last Struggle," p. 23; Goldstein, "Extracts," pp. 28, 30, 32; Ehrlich, "The Path," p. 36.
13. Goldstein, "Extracts," pp. 30–31.
14. AŻIH, 301/13, testimony of Gertner, 1944; Goldstein, "Extracts," p. 32.
15. BA-L, B 162/4872, Vorl. Abschlussbericht, April 21, 1960, reports that Staszów's Jews were deported to Treblinka; some other sources, e.g., AŻIH, 301/4972, indicate the Bełżec killing center as the destination.

16. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 14; Goldstein, "Extracts," pp. 32–33.

17. Lifshitz, "The Last Struggle," p. 24; Goldstein, "Extracts," pp. 32–33; and Ehrlich, "The Path," p. 38.

18. Goldstein, "Extracts," p. 28; and Ehrlich, "The Path," pp. 38–39.

19. AŻIH, 301/4972, testimony of Meier Bydłowski, Bucharest, April 21, 1945.

STOPNICA

Pre-1939: Stopnica (Yiddish: Stavnich), village and powiat center, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Stopnitsa, Kreis Busko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Stopnica, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Stopnica is located in southeast Poland, 20 kilometers (12 miles) east-southeast of Busko-Zdrój. In 1939, the Jewish population was approximately 2,600.¹

German forces captured the town on September 8, 1939; killings, persecution, and thievery soon followed. There were only three German Gendarmes stationed in Stopnica to maintain order; there was also a small Polish police force.²

In early 1940, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established by the Germans with Taubenblat as president. The Judenrat organized a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) to keep order in the ghetto. Jews took advantage of the fact that there were very few Gendarmes in Stopnica; they could not be everywhere, so many Jews risked going to nearby villages to buy food from the farmers. Those who were caught could be shot, and some were even captured by Poles and handed over to the German police in exchange for a reward of sugar or alcohol.³ The nearest large police station was in Busko. Sometimes Germans would arrive on motorcycles and randomly terrorize Jews or shoot them in the street. To pro-



Dina Ofman wore the white cotton armband [center] while in Stopnica from 1939 to 1941.

USHMM WS #NO4572.01, COURTESY OF DINA OFMAN

tect Stopnica's Jews, the Judenrat collected money to bribe the Germans to stay away from town. Whenever Germans came to Stopnica, Jewish men went into hiding, often in places constructed especially for this purpose.⁴

From January 1940 onwards the Jews of Stopnica were subjected to forced labor. The Judenrat was responsible for providing the Germans with a specific number of workers and for paying them small wages. About 60 or 70 percent of the Jews in Stopnica would gather daily at the square at 7:00 A.M., and then they were marched to a site about 8 kilometers (5 miles) outside Stopnica to work. Usually, they worked on road construction under the eyes of German guards. If a Jewish laborer worked too slowly, these guards would take him away, after which he would never be seen again. There were also a number of Jews working at the nearby Wolica Manor. The Jews were paid with food for their work, receiving a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of wheat and 1 liter (34 ounces) of skimmed milk per day.

In the wake of the military campaign in September, the Jewish population in Stopnica was augmented by successive waves of refugees, mainly from areas of western Poland that the Germans annexed to the Reich. On December 6, 1940, 300 Jews from the Distrikt capital in Radom arrived in Stopnica. The group consisted of Radom's poorest Jews, as well as deportees from other cities and towns, including Łódź, Kraków, and Gąbin, who had been in Radom for only a short time. A group of 200 to 250 (mostly women and children) from Płock arrived on February 25, 1941. These deportees arrived without any necessities, and Stopnica's Jews were scarcely in a condition to help them. A soup kitchen was organized for their benefit in February 1941.⁵

To help cope with the influx of deportees and refugees, a local branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization was established in Stopnica on March 9, 1941, following the creation of the Kreis committee in Busko on November 4, 1940. The local branch in Stopnica received funds from the headquarters of the JSS in Kraków, and as a result it took over the organization of social relief from the Judenrat.⁶

The Kreishauptmann in Busko, Dr. Wilhelm Schäfer, ordered the establishment of several ghettos in the Kreis by April 15, 1941. Around this time, an open ghetto was created in Stopnica. Jews were strictly forbidden to leave the ghetto on penalty of death. Those who lived among Poles had to move into the Jewish quarter. These Jews were fortunate, at least in comparison with the refugees, as they were able to bring most of their furniture, bedding, and clothes with them.⁷

According to Judenrat records, there were about 1,500 laborers, 110 craftsmen, and 30 tradesmen in Stopnica in 1941. Tailoring workshops were set up, providing the craftsmen with some employment and small wages.⁸ There were about 20 or 30 stores open, including bakeries and grocers, which were still run by Jews. Jewish bakeries produced challahs and kept *cholent* (a Sabbath stew) overnight in preparation for Shabbat.

The deportees were kept in two prayer houses (110 in one, and 50 in the other), in which up to 40 people had to share one large room. Only one of the two prayer houses had some bunk

beds, while the majority of the people had to sleep on the floor. At the beginning of March 1941, the JSS described the housing conditions for the expellees as “catastrophic,” with many sick, 2 dead, a lack of medication, and deplorable sanitation. In May 1941, there were 4,600 Jews living in the ghetto.⁹ By June, 400 people had died of hunger and disease.¹⁰ While 1,900 applied for social assistance on a monthly basis, only 500 were able to receive it in the form of free or discounted meals, small loans, medication, or dry food (mainly potatoes and flour with insufficient quantities of eggs, sugar, and honey).

A hospital with 30 beds was soon opened. It was administered by the JSS and financed by the Judenrat. By the end of June 1941, it had admitted 147 patients. At that time the situation for the deportees was becoming even more desperate. They continued living in mass quarters and were given only 17 straw mattresses and six pairs of shoes. The organization of regular breakfasts and an orphanage for children whose parents had died in the ghetto became urgent matters. In August 1941, the children were receiving two cookies and a glass of milk for breakfast. Deportees were receiving a full ration of bread free of charge. About 250 poor Jews were receiving 0.5 to 2 kilograms (1.1 to 4.4 pounds) of bread per family per week. A special commission was set up to supervise its distribution.¹¹

In 1942, Jews from neighboring villages were brought into the Stopnica ghetto. There were 5,300 Jews living in Stopnica in April 1942, declining to 4,900 by June of that year. On the eve of Passover 1942, the president of the Judenrat and his son were shot. Between March and July 1942, many Jewish conscripts or volunteers were sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp, where they worked in the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory. The volunteers were assured that they would receive wages and that their wives and children remaining in Stopnica would not be accosted. Many decided to go, as they believed that they could save their families' lives and their own by working for the Germans. By the summer of 1942, rumors began to spread in Stopnica that Jews from nearby towns were being killed or deported to unknown destinations.¹²

The final liquidation of the Stopnica ghetto took place on November 5–6, 1942. It started when the Germans brought hundreds of Jews from Chmielnik to be deported together with Stopnica's Jews on November 5. German police and Ukrainian auxiliaries, with the help of the local Polish police and fire brigade, shot some 400 elderly Jews and children at the Jewish cemetery. They were buried at the Jewish cemetery, and their bodies were subsequently dug up and burned by the Germans in a mobile crematorium. Of the other Jews in the ghetto, 1,500 young men were sent to the labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna. Approximately 3,000 Jews were marched on foot to the train station in Szczucin, 20 kilometers (12 miles) southeast of Stopnica, where they were loaded onto trains and sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. Jews caught hiding in the ghetto were shot on the spot or rounded up and included in this evacuation march.

In Stopnica itself, about 200 young men and women were kept in workshops and used for road building. In January 1943, this group was either sent to the ghetto in Sandomierz or to the labor camp in Poniatowa. All those at Poniatowa were killed when the entire camp was liquidated in November 1943.

The Stopnica Jews received some help from nuns in the local hospital. According to the report of the commander of the Armia Krajowa (Home Army, AK), dated June 21, 1944, there were instances of Jews being murdered near Stopnica by forces of the Narodowe Siły Zbrojne (National Armed Forces, NSZ), a right-wing faction of the Polish resistance. During military operations in 1944–1945, Stopnica was completely destroyed; not a single house remained standing.

SOURCES Brief articles on the Jewish community of Stopnica and its fate during the Holocaust can be found in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 19:237–238; and in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1248. The Stopnica ghetto is also mentioned in the following publications: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 474.

Documentation on the persecution of the Jews in the Stopnica ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/267, 993; 210/658); BA-L (e.g., B 162/6204, 6483); IPN (kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [ŻSS], reel 47; Acc.1997.A.0404; and RG-15.022M, reel 9); VHF (more than 20 visual testimonies of survivors from Stopnica); WL (Microfilm series 34, Eye Witness Reports, reel 6); and YVA (e.g., O-3/1353; and M-1/E/1139, 1512, 1634, 1709, 1836, and 2655).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, 1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47.
2. WL, London, Microfilm series 34, Eye Witness Reports, reel 6, (Skarżysko-Kamienna) No. 675, sworn testimony of an unnamed female Jewish survivor, Paris, February 15, 1954.
3. BA-L, B 162/6483, pp. 1064, 1071, witness statements of Pinkus G. and Moise W., 1954.
4. VHF, # 16472, testimony of Steven Dyzenhaus, 1996; # 43398, testimony of Rose Feintuch, 1998; # 12471, testimony of Alice Davis, 1996; # 15389, testimony of Paula Goldhar, 1996; and # 5306, testimony of Arthur Grossman, 1995.
5. USHMM, 1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47.
6. Ibid.; Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 108.
7. VHF, # 16472.
8. USHMM, 1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47.
9. Ibid.

10. VHF, # 5690, testimony of Esther Frenkel, 1995; # 5306.

11. USHMM, 1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47.

12. VHF, # 12471; # 5690; and # 15389.

STROMIEC

Pre-1939: Stromiec, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The village of Stromiec is located 10 kilometers (6 miles) east of Białobrzegi. In 1937, there were 392 Jews living in Stromiec.

Following the German occupation of the region in September 1939, the German administration appointed a tradesman and pre-war secretary of the Jewish community, Josek (Józef) Fryszman, as the Judenrat chairman. The nearest German forces responsible for supervising the Jews in Stromiec were based at the Gendarmerie post in Białobrzegi.

On April 2, 1941, a number of Jews from the recently depopulated village of Przytyk were transferred to Stromiec.¹

As part of a larger ghettoization process of those Jews still living in the villages of Kreis Radom-Land, the Germans decided to liquidate Stromiec's community by transferring them to a larger ghetto at the end of 1941. However, according to the records of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) branch based in Radom, "Thanks to efforts of the Supreme Council of the Jewish Community in Distrikt Radom," the Germans allowed several rural communities to remain in place by creating Jewish quarters for them.

The order to establish a ghetto in Stromiec was issued by the Kreishauptmann, Dr. Egen, in December 1941 and was implemented at the beginning of January 1942. Stromiec's Judenrat was further ordered to set up a hospital and open a soup kitchen.²

According to survivor Joseph Friedman, the ghetto was set up in early 1941. The same year, Friedman claims he witnessed the shooting of a married couple caught by Gendarmes from Białobrzegi as they were returning to the ghetto. Friedman stated that Stromiec's Jews remained in their own dwellings, as the pre-war Jewish neighborhood was chosen as the ghetto's location. While Jews were forbidden to leave the area of the ghetto, Friedman does not mention it being fenced or guarded, aside from two Białobrzegi Gendarmes who visited Stromiec every other day by bicycle.³ By 1942 the ghetto had 313 residents.

When it opened on March 8, 1942, the soup kitchen was serving 170 meals daily due to the efforts of Dawid Feldberg, Herszek Mandelbaum, and Szyja Racimora. All three were later appointed as members of the JSS branch established in Stromiec in April 1942. From the start, the JSS branch was in conflict with the Judenrat, which, as a representative of the Białobrzegi JSS noted, "simply assumed a negative attitude towards the work of the JSS branch" and helped very little with the maintenance of the kitchen's services. Nonetheless, the kitchen served over 8,000 meals in April 1942.⁴

According to Friedman, the Stromiec ghetto was liquidated in mid-June 1942. This assertion is partially corroborated by the documentation of the JSS Kreis office in Radom, which indicates that July 1942 was the last month the community was scheduled for the distribution of rations and cleaning products.

The liquidation of the Stromiec ghetto and the transfer of its 300 residents to the Białobrzegi ghetto were announced only one day in advance. Children were transported on wagons, while others were forced to walk the distance of 10 kilometers (6 miles). The Białobrzegi ghetto was already overcrowded with Jews transferred there from other towns in the vicinity.⁵

On October 1 (or according to some sources, September 1), 1942, German-led forces liquidated the Białobrzegi ghetto.⁶ Approximately 3,500 Jews were formed into a column and escorted through Stromiec to the train station in Dobieszyn, from where they were dispatched to the Treblinka extermination camp. During this march, police escorts beat or shot Jews who were unable to march. Judenrat chairman Fryszman was shot while the column was passing through Ksawerów Nowy.

SOURCES The pre-war figure for the Jewish population of Stromiec is from Krzysztof Urbański, *Gminy żydowskie małe w województwie kieleckim w okresie międzywojennym* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe, 2006), pp. 407–408.

For more details on the march of Stromiec's Jews via their native village to the Dobieszyn train station, see J. Kamiński and H. Stawiarski, "Żydzi w Stromeu," in *Stromiec. 750 lat osady i parafii* (Stromiec, 1992), pp. 86–87; an excerpt is cited in Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawn. Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2004), pp. 84, 87. Urbański dates the transfer of Stromiec's Jews to Białobrzegi at the beginning of 1941 (p. 166).

Numbers for the Jewish population during the ghetto's existence are from Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955), who alternatively maintains that upon the liquidation of the Stromiec ghetto, its population was transferred to Kozienice, not Białobrzegi (see pp. 159, 179).

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (211/854-55 [JSS]; NMO [Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63]); BA-L (B 162/6305); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]); and VHF (# 1005).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/854 (Radom), p. 7.
2. Ibid, p. 5; AŻIH, NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63, Anordnung (decree) and Zustazordnung (amendment) of the Kreishauptmann, December 22 and 30, 1941, as cited in Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 122.
3. VHF, # 1005, testimony of Joseph Friedman, 1995.
4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/855 (Radom), pp. 4, 5, 28.
5. Ibid., p. 45; VHF, # 1005.

6. October 1, 1942, is given by most Jewish survivors. See BA-L, B 162/6305, pp. 191, 196, 205, 209, 223, 226, 234. Others, however, date it on September 1; see pp. 213, 217.

SUCHEDNIÓW

Pre-1939: Suchedniów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Suchedniów, Kreis Kielce-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Suchedniów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The town of Suchedniów is located 31 kilometers (19 miles) northeast of Kielce. The Jewish community of Suchedniów numbered 1,200 prior to the outbreak of World War II.

In the days that followed the German invasion, many of Suchedniów's Jews—including the community rabbi, Yisrael David Lajnman—fled eastward. The village was occupied on September 7, 1939. During one Sabbath, Germans burst into the synagogue and ordered the attending Jews to burn the Torah scrolls outside. Many of those gathered in the synagogue were taken that same day to perform forced labor on the outskirts of the village.

A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established by Germans in November 1939; it was chaired by Zelig Warszawski and included Chaim Reizman and Chaim Rozenberg. The following month, a large fine, according to one source of 500,000 złoty (although that seems too high), was imposed on the community. Then 15 local Jews, including two Judenrat members, were held hostage and freed upon receipt of the payment. By February 1940, Suchedniów's Jews were forced to wear armbands bearing the Star of David. There was a unit of German Gendarmerie and also Polish (Blue) Police based in the village.

In the first part of 1940, a number of young Jews were conscripted for work at the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna, where they were used as unpaid labor to build roads, cut trees, and unload trains. By mid-1940, all Jews were laid off, followed by the introduction of a law ordering Jews to be paid for their labor; at that time the Jews were replaced by Poles.¹

Stanley Freed, a refugee from Łódź who settled in Suchedniów during the winter of 1940, remembers Jews walking home with their prayer shawls after services. The Polish and Jewish populations were still mixed at the time. Jewish store owners would pay poorer Jews to labor in their stead, as able-bodied Jews were conscripted to maintain the roads, cut trees, and hew stone. With time, these laborers, mostly newcomers, became “professional goers”; that is, the labor was unpaid, but workers were receiving food in lieu of payment.²

By September 1940, 300 newcomers had arrived in Suchedniów. The Judenrat attracted a doctor to the village and set up a self-help committee. The committee established a soup kitchen financed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) but had to close it after two months due to a lack of funding.³

By November 1940, Wolf Sołomianik had become the chairman of the Judenrat. A. Nagiel was the Judenrat's secretary. In January 1941, there were 1,500 Jews in the town, including 350 refugees from Łódź. At this time, the committee was forced to discontinue the breakfasts fed daily to 180 poor children, as there were some cases of typhus among them. A number of children were sent to the hospital in Kielce, and their households were quarantined.⁴

On March 3, 1941, a transport of 300 Jews arrived from Płock, which had been incorporated into the Reich. On their route, they were held initially at the Działdowo (Soldau) transfer camp, where they were stripped of their belongings and starved for approximately one week before arriving in Suchedniów via Kielce. By the end of the month, a total of 650 Płock Jews arrived altogether. In April 1941, 2,100 Jews—including 900 newcomers—reportedly inhabited Suchedniów.

As early as May 1941, one of the deportees, Chaim Szafran, reported that watery soup was the only form of help Płock Jews were receiving from the Judenrat. He was paid 3 zloty for his daily labor, while a kilogram (2.2 pound) loaf of bread cost 9 zloty. He also believed that the Judenrat withheld financial assistance sent by other welfare institutions specifically for the Płock deportees; that it attempted to prevent Płock Jews from establishing their own representation in Suchedniów; and that it also prevented communication with representatives of welfare organizations visiting Suchedniów. With time, the situation for the Płock Jews deteriorated. Historians describe the attitude of the Suchedniów Judenrat towards Płock deportees as “misguided” (Krzysztof Urbański) and “reprehensible,” with a disproportionately high number of deaths caused by starvation (Adam Rutkowski).⁵

An open ghetto was established in the center of Suchedniów in the spring of 1941. According to the survivor Paula Mintz, loudspeakers and posted placards announced its establishment. The sources are not clear as to its size. While one states that three streets were included in the ghetto, others refer to just one (Handlowa Street). A curfew was introduced. The ghetto was unfenced, and there were no guards, except for boards posted at the ghetto limits announcing the death penalty for those caught crossing the ghetto boundary. Mintz recalls that Jews were very obedient and did not go outside the ghetto. Local Poles came to the ghetto to sell produce.⁶

A Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) unit of 40 men was organized to maintain order among the ghetto inhabitants. The family of Felix Brand, who moved to Suchedniów under an assumed Polish identity, had to flee the town after they were recognized as Jews and blackmailed by some members of the Jewish Police.⁷

There is no information as to when the Jews resumed their labor at the Skarżysko camp, but during the ghetto's existence, assembled labor brigades would leave the ghetto with special permission. Most were conscripts; however, there were also some volunteers. According to Anita Basen, some labor brigades were picked up each morning in Suchedniów and were driven back at night. There were also brigades, accord-

ing to Freed, that were stationed in the camp but would return to the ghetto each Saturday and then depart for another week of work on Monday morning. There is no information as to the form of payment at this time.

According to Freed, a group of 35 professional laborers from Suchedniów revolted at one point against a Jewish foreman who used to beat them and steal their food. The group refused to leave Suchedniów for Skarżysko under his supervision—this forced the Judenrat to appoint a new foreman.⁸

There were 2,375 Jews registered in Suchedniów in January 1942, 2,300 a month later, and 2,400 by June 1942. The ghetto had its own hospital, isolation ward, ambulatory, and public bath.⁹

According to *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, the Germans enlisted more Jews for forced labor in June 1942, sending them to newly built camps in the vicinity of Kielce. Between August and September 1942, 570 Jews were brought in two transports from Suchedniów to Skarżysko-Kamienna. Shortly before the ghetto's liquidation, the Germans abruptly stopped bringing Suchedniów laborers back to the ghetto and held them permanently in the camp.¹⁰

German authorities chose Suchedniów as one of the locations for the concentration of the Jews of the Kreis before sending them to the Treblinka extermination camp. By late August 1942, approximately 600 Jews from Bliżyn and 350 from Samsonów had been transferred to the Suchedniów ghetto. Shortly before the deportation, in September 1942, 3,000 Jews from the Bodzentyn ghetto were brought in. Jews who were brought in during the last two days of the ghetto's existence were quartered on an empty lot near the river. Those interned there most likely included Jews from Łączna, Ostojów, Zagnańsk, and other settlements. They were not allowed to walk around but instead were forced to sit for about two days without any blankets or shelter.

The Suchedniów ghetto was liquidated on Yom Kippur, September 21, 1942. Following a selection, able-bodied individuals were sent to the Skarżysko camp. The remainder of the ghetto's residents were sent by train to Treblinka the following morning, September 22. Sources vary as to the number of Jews sent to Treblinka (3,000–4,500). The cleanup Kommando of 250 Jews that the Germans left behind was sent to the labor camp in Bliżyn on October 14, 1942.¹¹

Following the ghetto's liquidation, local Poles helped about 30 ghetto escapees to hide. In September 1944, they also assisted members of the Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa (Jewish Fighting Organization) following the Warsaw Uprising.

SOURCES The Suchedniów ghetto is mentioned in the following publications: Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 325–326; and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2004).

The following archival sources were used in preparing this entry: AŻIH (210/664 [AJDC]; 301/1157 [Relacje]; and Ring I/171-173); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; and RG-15.079M [Ring I]); and VHF (# 2642, 5305, 8834, 10728, and 18557).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/1157, testimony of Zając, n.d.
2. VHF, # 18557, testimony of Stanley Freed, 1996.
3. *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 20, 1940.
4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/664, pp. 13, 15.
5. *Ibid.*, RG-15.079M (Ring I/171, 172, and 173).
6. VHF, # 8834, testimony of Paula Mintz, 1995; # 10728, testimony of Anita Basen, 1996; and # 5305, testimony of Helen Lefkowitz, 1995.
7. *Ibid.*, # 2642, testimony of Felix Brand, 1995.
8. *Ibid.*, # 18557; # 10728.
9. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 7, 1942.
10. VHF, # 18557; # 8834; and # 5305.
11. *Ibid.*, # 5305.

SULEJÓW

Pre-1939: Sulejów (Yiddish: Silev), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Sulejów, Kreis Petrikau, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Sulejów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Sulejów is located on the Pilica River, 14 kilometers (9 miles) east-southeast of Piotrków Trybunalski. By 1939, Sulejów had a total of 6,500 inhabitants, 1,950 of whom were Jewish.¹

Immediately following the war's outbreak, Sulejów took on approximately 3,000 Jewish refugees escaping from larger, heavily bombed cities such as Piotrków Trybunalski, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, and Radomsko, as well as other places, including Kamięńsk and Rozprza.

Although initially spared, Sulejów also suffered from numerous raids from German Stuka dive-bombers on September 3 to 5, 1939. Some sources record that more than 1,000 Jews died in the course of two air raids on Sulejów on September 4. On September 5, a final Luftwaffe raid of 14 airplanes completed the town's destruction. Out of the 93 houses occupied by Jews, 80 were razed. The town's synagogue—and its Torah scrolls—went up in flames.²

Jewish victims were buried on September 10, 1939. The death toll of Sulejów's Jewish inhabitants cannot be calculated precisely. While a few of the victims were laid to rest in the cemetery, the majority were buried in two mass graves dug just outside the cemetery's walls. Jacob Kreitman, who owned a mill where many Jews sought refuge during the bombardments, supervised the ceremony. By setting up a shelter and a public kitchen in his sawmill, Kreitman also took care of many who were wounded and left homeless.³

More than a half of the Jewish residents of Sulejów who had fled during the bombardments—that is, primarily the

wealthy and all the members of the pre-war community council—either did not return to the occupied town or returned only briefly and then left for good. Sulejów's Jews were left without leadership until November 1, 1939, when the German authorities ordered the creation of the Jewish Council (Judenrat). Henoch Weintraub (Wajntraub) was nominated as chairman of the Judenrat.⁴ From the very beginning, Sulejów's Jews were grabbed off the streets and conscripted to fix roads and build drainage works in the town's proximity.

The only source providing a date for the establishment of the Sulejów ghetto is Krzysztof Urbański, who dates it in the late autumn of 1939 (presumably around the same time as in nearby Piotrków Trybunalski in October 1939). There is no information regarding the size of the ghetto or its location; however, the correspondence of the welfare organization Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) gives its address as Konecka Street 29.

The life of the ghetto inhabitants was especially oppressive, as it was located near an important ford over the Pilica River, as well as on a strategic road between Kielce and Łódź. For these reasons, forces of the Gendarmerie and the Wehrmacht diligently guarded it. The Gendarmerie prison that was set up on Piotrków Street in 1939 consisted of two chambers and a detention room. Many arrestees were sent on to the Gestapo in Piotrków, while some were shot outside the prison or in the streets of Sulejów.

An unknown number of Jews from Sulejów were resettled to the ghetto in Piotrków Trybunalski at the end of 1939 or in the beginning of 1940, when transports of Jews were arriving there, primarily from parts of Poland incorporated into the Reich. In June 1940, the Sulejów ghetto housed 1,150 Jews. In the course of 1940, 90 Jewish workers from Sulejów were performing forced labor in labor camps, on average only 30 of them worked within Kreis Petrikau.

To ease the situation of Sulejów's Jews, a self-help committee led by the Judenrat's chairman, Henoch Weintraub, was established in April 1940. Sulejów was then sharing its subsidies with the nearby Przyglów settlement. Although there were only eight Jewish families in Przyglów before the war, the village was a summer resort with a number of intact empty lodgings, all of which had filled up quickly. By June 1940, 250 refugees and deportees from Łódź, Kraków, Płock, Głowno, Skierniewice, Stryków, Łyszkowice, Rogów, and other places had settled in Przyglów.

A number of newcomers settled in the Sulejów ghetto despite the terrible housing conditions. Available registers from January to April 1941 report 128 to 130 refugees. Unlike other ghettos, the refugee families benefited from only one third of the available social services, while the remainder were reserved for the local poor. The self-help committee set up a soup kitchen, which provided approximately 100 meals per day. Dr. I. Wajntraub oversaw an ambulatory that had been organized. By July 25, 1940, both the soup kitchen and ambulatory had been forced to close due to a lack of funds. When the kitchen was not operating, groceries were still distributed among the needy.⁵

In February 1941, the Judenrat reported to the main welfare benefactor for Sulejów's Jews—the American Jewish

Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC)—about the deteriorating economic situation, due to shrinking incomes and supplies. The same letter reports about the rising number of deaths and shortages of medicine.⁶ According to one account, some Jews were selected from the Sulejów ghetto and were transferred to the forced labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna.⁷

By August 1941, according to the Judenrat's census, the number of Jews in Sulejów had risen to 1,438. Out of that number, 192 were registered as working ("nonworking" included women, children, and forced laborers) in a total of 108 Jewish enterprises that were still permitted to operate. This included 52 workshop owners (employing another 20 Jews), 71 craftsmen, 56 laborers, and 8 professionals. On top of that, 100 men were performing forced labor. These numbers regarding the employed and forced laborers—as well as the total number of Jewish inhabitants—remained almost unchanged until the end of October 1941. The only numbers that witnessed a dramatic change were those of Jews requesting social help: rising to 750, of whom only one third received assistance.⁸

At the end of 1941, the Germans issued an order prohibiting Jews from leaving the nearby Piotrków ghetto and introduced the death penalty for Jews caught outside the ghetto. Although no similar information is available for Sulejów, it can be assumed that the same restrictions also applied there, especially for any Jews who left the town without permission.

The last registration of Sulejów's Jews took place in July 1942, counting 1,577 people. Most sources do not give a precise date for the liquidation of the ghetto, dating it only as October 1942. However, three separate records, included in *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo piotrkowskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHwP, 1985), clearly identify the date as October 15, 1942. During the course of the liquidation, the German Gendarmerie shot Dwojra and Moszek Feiman in their house. Another 7 Jews were shot by the Gestapo and Gendarmerie; the victims were Aidla, Fradla, and Berek Boruszek; Gołda Fuks; Josek Lahman; Moszek Nowak; and a woman by the first name of Brandla. The remaining Jews were expelled to the Piotrków Trybunalski ghetto, escorted by forces of the German Gendarmerie. On the way there, a 35-year-old tradesman named Gdala was shot. German postwar investigations indicate that the Jews from Sulejów were included in the next deportation from Piotrków on October 18, 1942, being sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.⁹

SOURCES There is not a single publication describing the life and the destruction of the Sulejów Jewish community. Brief descriptions and references are included in the following publications: Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ba-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 159–161; Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New

York: New York University Press, 2001); and Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004). See also Josef Kermish, "The Destruction of the Jewish Community of Piotrków," in Ben Giladi, ed., *A Tale of One City: Piotrków Trybunalski* (New York: Shengold in cooperation with the Piotrków Trybunalski Relief Association in New York, 1991).

Relevant information on the Sulejów ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/665 [AJDC]; 211/997 (ŻSS); Ring I/151); BA-L (B 162/6234); USHMM (RG-15.079 [Ring I/151]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; and Acc.1997.A.0124 [ŻSS], reel 47); VHF (# 6334); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47, 211/997.
2. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/665.
3. See *ibid.*, RG-15.079, reel 67, Ring I/151.
4. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC) 210/665, Sprawozdanie za czas od 1 listopada 1939 do 31 maja 1941 and Nr. 85/40.
5. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/665.
6. Ibid., 20 lutego 1941.
7. VHF, # 6334, testimony of Abram Edelstein, 1995.
8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ŻSS), reel 47, 211/997; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/665, Sprawozdanie za czas od 1 listopada 1939 do 31 maja 1941.
9. BA-L, B 162/6234, pp. 2259–2263, Einstellungsverfügung Sta. Giessen, March 29, 1968, as cited in Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), p. 272.

SZCZEKOCINY

Pre-1939: Szczekociny, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Jędrzejów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo śląskie, Poland

The town of Szczekociny is located 73 kilometers (45 miles) northeast of Katowice. On the eve of World War II, there were 2,590 Jews in Szczekociny, comprising approximately 700 families.¹

Following an intense battle with Polish cavalry, the German army occupied Szczekociny on September 3, 1939. With 250 houses destroyed and only 10 undamaged, Szczekociny was one of the most devastated towns in the Generalgouvernement. An estimated 60 percent of Jewish families left the town; many fled to eastern Poland, which was occupied by the Soviet Union after September 17, 1939.² Nonetheless, the German army administrator, due to fear of an epidemic, deported 200 Jews from Szczekociny to Jędrzejów and Żarnowiec during September. A few weeks later, a group of 300 Jews from Szczekociny (including a number just arrived from the town of Siewierz, in what later became Oberschlesien [incorporated into the Reich]) was transferred to Włoszczowa.

In the fall of 1939, the Jews of Szczekociny were obliged to wear armbands bearing the Star of David. Their businesses

were confiscated. The town's mayor, Johann Plutta (or Pluta), introduced a system of forced labor to clear the rubble. Each man had to work three days a week, 12 hours a day. Plutta appointed young and strong Jews as foremen. Their responsibilities included reporting to the German Gendarmerie those who dodged their assignments. At first, the punishment was 100 lashes, then 200. There were cases of people dying from these severe whippings.³

The 13-man Judenrat consisted of the pre-war members of the Jewish Council. Its premises were located at 4 Strażacka Street. Due to the lack of a consensus, the Germans quickly reduced the number of Judenrat members. The pre-war president of the community, Moszek Jakub Fajwicz (Fajwisz), chaired the Judenrat. Following his death in August 1941, Chil (Jechiel Mordechaj) Richt took over his function. Judenrat secretary H. Szwarcbaum died in a hospital in Kraków on August 22, 1941. The 40-year-old cobbler Dawid Izraelewicz served as the chairman's deputy until his death in the Jędrzejów hospital on May 25, 1942. Joel Dresner, a local tradesman, replaced him. Tannery owner Jakub Josek Ajzenberg (Ajzenberg) was also a Judenrat member. At the beginning of the occupation, the Judenrat reportedly organized a school for Jewish children.⁴

An open ghetto was set up in Szczekociny in 1940 or 1941. Located south of the market square, it included the following streets: Tylna, Strażacka, Wesoła, and the left side of Lelowska northeast of the market square. Another source places the ghetto on Leśna, Kraków, Ściegienny, and Wesoła Streets. It is possible that the ghetto's borders shifted during its existence.

Despite the ghetto being unfenced, Szczekociny's Jews could not leave it on pain of death. The exit streets were guarded. Jews caught outside the ghetto were shot by the Gendarmerie and buried in the Jewish cemetery. Polish farmers that found themselves living within the ghetto's limits were required to obtain special permits for entry and exit. Permits were also required of Jews who left the ghetto.

The ghetto was enclosed by a fence on June 22, 1941, and only after that date were Jews found outside its limits shot or sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

A five-man unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was set up by the German authorities to maintain order in the ghetto. The policemen wore yellow hats and were armed with rubber truncheons.

Following the ghetto's establishment, a typhus epidemic broke out, which caused the deaths of at least eight inmates. As there was no Jewish doctor in Szczekociny, the sick were sent to Jędrzejów, after a hospital was opened there in June 1941.

On September 18, 1940, 10 Jews were sent for labor on drainage works, most likely to Węgleszyn, located within Kreis Jędrzejów. The same year some Jews from Szczekociny reportedly labored in camps in Sędziszów and also at Skarżysko-Kamienna.

A self-help committee established by the Judenrat in Szczekociny opened a soup kitchen in December 1940. At that time, 1,245 Jews reportedly inhabited Szczekociny.⁵

On January 15 and 16, 1941, Jędrzejów's Kreishauptmann, Dr. Fritz von Balluseck, deported 150 Jews from Jędrzejów to Szczekociny. The Jews chosen were mainly the most impoverished in the Kreis center, including many refugees from other towns. The Judenrat housed most of them in the local synagogue. Terrible conditions in the still-ruined town prompted many of these deportees either to return to Jędrzejów or to move to some place else. Statistics from February 1941 mention only 69 refugees among a total of 1,300 Jews in Szczekociny. The soup kitchen was then serving 110 to 160 meals daily.⁶

By February 1941, the German authorities had set up an office of the Special Envoy for the Jewish Population in the Kreis (Sonderbeauftragter für die Jüdische Bevölkerung des Kreises Jędrzejow). The office was to handle all Jewish-related matters. Its three members were also on the Jędrzejów Judenrat and were charged with the supervision and control of all Jewish Councils in the Kreis, including that in Szczekociny.⁷

In May 1941, the ghetto was inhabited by 1,505 Jews. At that time, 100 Jews were performing unpaid labor tasks in the town allocated by the municipality in Szczekociny. Some 17 craftsmen could still operate their workshops; most were cobblers or fabricated the leather for shoes and boots. In addition, there were 30 other Jewish businesses still operating.

By March 1942, there were 1,300 Jews registered in the ghetto. In May 1942, the soup kitchen, then run by the local branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), which had been established in Szczekociny in September 1941, was serving 400 meals daily. The Judenrat members Richt, Izraelewicz, and Ajzenberg were nominated to chair the JSS Committee.⁸

At the end of August 1942, *Gazeta Żydowska* reported that almost all Jewish males had been conscripted for forced labor: 36 for the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory in Skarżysko-Kamienna, 170 to the Chemische Werke AG Brieg (probably working on road construction), and another 40 for drainage work in Lipnica. The remainder of the able-bodied labored in Szczekociny for the Trading Co-operative, for the Gendarmerie and police, and at a German boarding school. At that time, the Germans ordered the registration of women aged 15 to 50. The number of Jewish policemen had increased from 5 to 12. They assisted the sanitation committee in maintaining the ghetto's cleanliness.⁹

The concentration in Szczekociny of the Jews inhabiting the surrounding villages began most likely in August 1942 and was completed less than a week before the ghetto's liquidation. Among other towns, it included the transfer of the Jews living in Radków, Dzierżgów, Moskorzew, Słupia, and Chlevice. The transfer, announced by the German authorities, was conducted with extreme brutality; for example, six elderly women and five men were shot by Gendarmes near Radków.

The newcomers were housed in the synagogue. Prior to deportation, contributions were levied on the community. According to one source, in the days before the ghetto's liquidation, all its original residents were transferred to the grounds of the local parish, that is, into a garden behind the presbytery.

The Szczekociny ghetto was liquidated on September 20, 1942, when Gendarmes and other police units escorted all the Jews to Sędziszów located 20 kilometers (12 miles) away. In the course of the liquidation Aktion, 15 Jews are reported as having been murdered. The elderly were transported on wagons, with the others marched in rows of 4. At the Mierzawa Brook near Tarnawa village, the men were forced to wade across only so that they would become drenched.

The Jews arrived in Sędziszów just as the ghetto there was being liquidated. The Jews from the nearby Wodzisław ghetto were most likely also brought there on that day. The able-bodied were selected and sent to work at HASAG in Skarżysko-Kamienna; the remainder were sent to the Treblinka extermination center the next day.¹⁰

Following the ghetto's liquidation, the municipality organized the auction of the Jewish property left behind. Then 27 Jews remained in Szczekociny to serve the Germans as forced laborers. This group included the Judenrat chairman Richt and the secretary of the Zionist youth, Jehuda Rafałowicz. Both were executed after being accused of the illegal act of listening to radio transmissions. On November 4, 1942, the remnant ghetto was reportedly still populated by 40 Jews. There is no information as to their subsequent fates.¹¹

SOURCES The Szczekociny ghetto is described in two articles: Mirosław Skrzypczyk, "Okaleczona księga. Rzeczy, miejsca, pamięć," pp. 122–124, and Edyta Gawron, "Szczekociński Żydzi w XX wieku, na przykładzie historii rodzin Leona Zelmana i Icka Kuperberga," pp. 65–68, both in M. Galas and M. Skrzypczyk, eds., *Żydzi szczekociński. Osoby, miejsca, pamięć* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Austeria, 2008). It is also mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 489.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/673, 211/488, 211/489, 211/492, 211/1001, 301/4633, and 301/7046); and USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reels 26 and 51; and RG-15.019M [Court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, in provinces, and also in camps and ghettos]).

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1. *Gazeta Żydowska*, October 16, 1940; and USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1001 (Szczekociny), p. 1.
2. AŻIH, 301/7046, testimony of Czesław Jelonek and Mieczysław Migacz, 1986; Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 88; *Gazeta Żydowska*, October 16, 1940.
3. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 14, file 47 Kielce woj., pp. 220 and reverse (Szczekociny).
4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/673, p. 4; *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 1, 1941, June 3, 1942, and August 28, 1942; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/488 (Jędrzejów), p. 33; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1001, pp. 1–2.
5. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1001, pp. 1–2.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–32; and Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/673, p. 10.

7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 27, 1941.
8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/488, p. 33; 211/492 (Jędrzejów), pp. 18–19; and *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 11, 1942.
9. *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 28, 1942.
10. AŻIH, 301/7046; 301/4633, testimony of Róża Reiner, 1946; USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 14, file 47 Kielce woj., pp. 220 and reverse (Szczekociny).
11. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/489 (Jędrzejów), pp. 55–56; and RG-15.019M, reel 14, file 47 Kielce woj., pp. 220 and reverse (Szczekociny).

SZYDLÓW

Pre-1939: Szydłów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Szydłów, village, Kreis Busko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Szydłów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Szydłów is located 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of Kielce. There were 540 Jews living there in 1939.

When the Germans occupied Szydłów in early September 1939, Wehrmacht soldiers plundered Jewish houses, shops, and craft businesses. The stolen goods were then loaded on trucks. Theft became a part of daily life. Often, Germans would knock on any door, enter the house, and drag the man found inside into the street. They would shave his beard, torture him, or shoot him for no reason. To avoid the terror, most men spent their days in the fields or in hiding, returning to their homes for the night. Later, the Jews would set up guards to alert the Jews if Germans were approaching the town. Some men were sent to labor camps in other cities.¹

The Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established as a liaison between the German authorities and the Jews in May 1940. L. Korallnik was its president. The Judenrat collected in advance money from members of the community to be prepared for imposed “contributions” or as bribes for Germans, when they rounded up men for deportation to labor camps. The Judenrat was also charged with providing the requested quota of laborers locally, which was on average about 80 workers per day. Jews repaired roads and worked in agriculture; only some of them received meager wages. They worked all day outside the town and returned to Szydłów in the evening.² A number of conscripts had to report in Chmielnik to be assigned to forced labor outside of Szydłów. In 1941, the German “Oemler” Road Construction Company established a forced labor camp for Jews in Szydłów.

There were about 200 refugees, mainly from Łódź, living in Szydłów in the summer of 1940. According to Judenrat estimates, 80 percent of them had no resources to support themselves. Szydłów Jews, numbering at the time 180 families (800 people), were scarcely able to help them. For a time, owners of Jewish mills supported them by providing bread, but by August 1940, the mills were no longer operating. Therefore, the Judenrat demanded that the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) headquarters in Kraków provide a

monthly subsidy to open a soup kitchen. Until then, Szydłów was receiving such small quantities of groceries from the AJDC that it was physically difficult to divide them up among the over 400 people in need. Four nearby small Jewish settlements were subordinated administratively to the Judenrat in Szydłów: Kurozwęki, 250 Jews (including 70 deportees); Raczycze, 105 (40); Tuczepy, 96; and Potok, 75.³ By September 1940, the pre-war number of Jews had almost doubled, as there were 1,000 Jews living in Szydłów.

In early December 1940, the Judenrat in Radom, the Distrikt capital, enlisted thousands of its poor Jews for deportation to places in Kreis Busko and Kreis Opatow. Many of them were transferred to Szydłów. Again, all were sent without possessions or means of existence. Another group of 150 deportees was transferred to Szydłów in February 1941 from Płock and Bodzanów. These expellees had been deported via the Działdowo (Soldau) transit camp. Most of them arrived exhausted and sick with flu. Because the Judenrat in Busko was unable to maintain its deportees, a number were transferred to Szydłów with permission from the German authorities. At some point Jews from the surrounding settlements were also moved to Szydłów. There were 770 Jews living in Szydłów in May 1941 (including 170 deportees); by September 1941, the total number had risen to 1,004.

The Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), based in Kraków, was created especially for providing social and medical relief for deportees and the needy. The local branch in Szydłów was organized in March 1941.⁴ At the end of 1941, I. Dżament was its president.⁵ When malnutrition and poor hygienic conditions led to an outbreak of typhus, the Jewish Council established a hospital. The sanitation committee checked the Jewish quarter for cleanliness.⁶ On orders from the town’s mayor, a six-man unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was created in August 1941. In October 1941, a newly organized Association of Jewish Craftsmen registered 34 local craftsmen. M. Taub was elected as its president, with M. Cholewa as his deputy.⁷

In September 1941, deportees from Płock and Łódź complained to the JSS headquarters in Kraków, accusing the president of the Society for the Protection of Health (TOZ), L. Korallnik (who also held the position of president of the Judenrat), of denying them social help to which they were entitled. Unlike other towns in the Kreis, there was no soup kitchen in Szydłów, nor were they receiving their full food rations. According to the deportees, Korallnik was selling most of the food to other towns and pocketing the money, claiming to have saved it in case of illnesses. At the time, less than half of the deportees were receiving one small meal a day. More than six months after their arrival, most deportees were still quartered in shops without heating or access to water. The deportees demanded that they be represented on the TOZ committee to better manage ration distribution.⁸ A soup kitchen was opened on November 30, 1941, providing only 60 meals per day; a month later, up to 125 meals daily.⁹

On January 1, 1942, the Germans announced that the entire village of Szydłów would be recognized as a ghetto. The

punishment for leaving it was death. There were 742 Jews (226 of them were deportees) living in Szydłów in April 1942. The ghetto was not enclosed by a fence, but Szydłów's borders were still marked by medieval defensive walls. Szydłów was one of the ghettos where access for non-Jews was not forbidden. Jews had to obtain special permits to leave the town. German Gendarmes shot a number of Jews during the existence of the ghetto. On July 5, 1942, Szapsia Wajnryb was appointed as the new president of the Judenrat.¹⁰

There is somewhat contradictory information regarding the last months of the ghetto, especially regarding the number of Jews living there and the transfers to other ghettos. According to two different sources, 2,000 Jews were resettled from Szydłów to Jędrzejów. One of the sources dates the resettlement in April; the other, in June 1942.

The liquidation of the ghetto took place on October 3, 1942. On that day 150 Jews capable of work were deported to labor camps, and the remaining 1,000 were transferred to Chmielnik, where they were added to the Chmielnik transport to the Treblinka extermination camp that left three days later. On the day of the deportation, Gendarmes shot 15 Jews. Their bodies were buried in the town's Jewish cemetery. Their names are not known.

A group of about 200 Jews who had probably gone into hiding outside the village before or during the liquidation of the ghetto returned to Szydłów. They were forced into a small ghetto consisting of a few buildings. On November 7, 1942, all of them, including a number of Jews from nearby Kurozwęki, were taken to Staszów. They were collected in the market square and guarded throughout the night by Ukrainian auxiliaries without food or water. The next day, together with almost 6,000 Staszów Jews, they were ordered to march to the Szczucin train station, and from there they were sent to Treblinka.¹¹ During military operations in 1944–1945, 90 percent of Szydłów was destroyed.

SOURCES Much information on the history of Szydłów's Jews can be found in a chapter of Agnieszka Sabor, *Sztetl: Śladami żydowskich miasteczek: Działoszyce-Pińczów-Chmielnik-Szydłów-Chęciny: Przewodnik* (Kraków: Wydawn. Austeria, 2005). Other relevant publications include Krzysztof Urbański, *Almanach gmin żydowskich województwa kieleckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach: FPHU "XYZ," 2007), pp. 152–153; and the official German-censored wartime publication *Gazeta Żydowska* (1941–1942). The ghetto is also mentioned in Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1282. There is also an article by A. Penkalla, "Synagoga i gmina w Szydłowie," *BŻIH*, nos. 1–2 (1982): 57–96.

Documentation on the persecution of the Jews in the Szydłów ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/1011; and 210/677); IPN; USHMM (RG-15.019M [IPN,

ASG], reel 14; Acc. 1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; and Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]); VHF (# 02406); and YVA.

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1. VHF, # 02406-5, testimony of Helen Kupfer, 1995; USHMM, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 14.
2. USHMM, Acc. 1999.A.0154 (AJDC); *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 25, 1941; VHF, # 02406-5.
3. USHMM, Acc. 1999.A.0154 (AJDC).
4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 25, 1941.
5. *Ibid.*, December 17, 1941.
6. USHMM, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 14; VHF, # 02406-5.
7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 25, 1941.
8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS).
9. *Gazeta Żydowska*, December 17, 1941, and February 11, 1942.
10. *Ibid.*, August 5, 1942.
11. Joseph Goldstein, "Extracts from a Ghetto Diary," in Elhanan Erlich, ed., *Sefer Stashov* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yotse Ştashov be-Yisrael, 1962), pp. 30–31; USHMM, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 14.

SZYDŁOWIEC

Pre-1939: Szydłowiec, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Szydłowiec, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Szydłowiec, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Szydłowiec is located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) southwest of Radom on the Korzeniówka River. On the eve of World War II, between 7,000 and 8,500 Jews lived in the town. About 150 workshops in the clothing and shoe industries employed about 1,400 Jews.

The Luftwaffe bombed Szydłowiec on September 4, 1939. Then on September 9, German forces entered the city and soon started to implement various antisemitic measures. The houses of Jews who had tried to flee the advancing enemy forces were looted by their Polish neighbors. On September 23, the Germans burned down the synagogue. Jews were seized for forced labor, mainly to clear the rubble from war-damaged houses. Later, they were used to dig up the bodies of Polish soldiers who had been buried where they had fallen in battle. These bodies were then reburied in Christian cemeteries.¹

Soon a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, headed by Sh. Eisenberg. A Jewish police force, a Jewish labor office, and a sanitary committee were established as auxiliary organs of the Judenrat. Early in 1940, the Jewish community was forced to pay a "fine" of 5 million zloty. After already having paid 50,000 zloty a few weeks earlier, the Judenrat was unable to meet this onerous demand, and 23 prominent members of the Jewish community were executed, among them Sh. Eisenberg. He was replaced as Judenrat head by Abraham Redlich. According to survivor Abraham Finkler, the Jewish Council now planned a strategy of "intervention," using large amounts



German police inspect the household possessions of Jewish families loaded onto horse-drawn wagons, before granting admission to the Szydłowiec ghetto, 1942.

USHMM VWS #83869, COURTESY OF YVA

of money to bribe people in charge, and three members of the Jewish community—Yerakhmiel Morgenbesser, Abraham Rosenbaum, and Pinchas Steinmann—were chosen to conduct the “negotiations.”²

In March 1940, the German authorities ordered the establishment of a ghetto in the town. Due to the large number of Jews in Szydłowiec, the German plan proved to be impracticable. Instead, rules were imposed that forbade Jews from leaving their houses in the evening and at night. It was also illegal for them to use Kościuszko Street between Kielce Street and the main road leading to Radom.³

This “open ghetto” made it much easier for the Jews to remain in contact with the countryside and obtain food, but a number of Jews were shot and killed when caught outside the town trying to smuggle food back in.⁴ Nevertheless, the relatively lax conditions made Szydłowiec an attractive destination for Jews from other parts of the country. Until the end of 1941, the Jewish underground press, printed in Polish and Yiddish, circulated in the Jewish community. Szydłowiec was also home to a group of Hasidic Jews, led by a student named Matus, which, despite the harsh conditions, continued to practice an optimistic religion, celebrating earthly pleasures like dancing, singing, and increasing their families.⁵ Also, a secret kindergarten was in existence to help take care of the youngest and most helpless in the community.⁶

Many Jewish refugees arrived in Szydłowiec. Most had no means of support and depended on the local Jewish community to provide them with food and shelter.⁷ Already in the winter of 1939–1940, the Judenrat had organized a soup kitchen to reduce hunger within the Jewish community. By June 1941, conditions had become so severe that the soup kitchen was no longer able to serve daily meals and instead provided only some bread. To celebrate Passover in the spring of 1941, money and flour were handed out to 859 Jews in need.⁸ Soon the provision of bread instead of meals became the main way to feed the Szydłowiec Jews. About twice a week, the Jewish Council

distributed bread, for instance, 750.2 kilograms (1,650.4 pounds) to 338 people between August 15 and 19, 1941.

The Jewish community was also in charge of providing food and shelter for Jews who passed through Szydłowiec while being resettled to other locations. For example, on July 23, 1941, about 200 Jews, mainly women and children, arrived from Wyszogród on their way to Suchedniów and Słupia Nowa (Kielce district). The Szydłowiec Jews provided medical assistance, food for the two days of their stay, and bath and disinfection, as well as shelter in the synagogue. On the morning of their departure, each person received 2 złoty for the trip. Many of the children, the sick, and the elderly were put on carriages owned by Jews and transported to their destination.⁹

Over time, assisted by the bribes, relations between the Szydłowiec Judenrat and the various German and local authorities in Szydłowiec and Radom improved, so the situation in Szydłowiec was more favorable for the Jews than in many other ghettos.¹⁰ According to Finkler, Szydłowiec became known as the “town of refuge,” where Jews could hide under assumed names and did not have to register—apparently, the Szydłowiec Judenrat never reported the correct figures for “immigrants” and “emigrants” to the Gestapo and other authorities.¹¹ The Jewish Council had obtained the right to issue travel permits for Jews (a privilege previously reserved only for the Radom Judenrat), and these permits became an important source of income for the Szydłowiec Jews—income that enabled the council “to distribute money left and right to the ‘murderers in white gloves’ in order to save Jewish lives.”¹² As Finkler states, this task was not an easy one for the members of the council: “Who can comprehend the deep inner struggles of a Jewish Council member who wanted to remain in harmony with his conscience?”¹³

Bribing authorities turned out to be an efficient way to save Jewish lives. As ordered by the head of the German labor office, Ribitsky (or Robitzky), in the summer of 1940, lists of all unmarried men between the ages of 16 and 60 had to be prepared; rumors spread that the young men were to be sent to forced labor camps. As a result, many weddings quickly took place within the Jewish community. On August 20, 1940, men from Szydłowiec were sent to labor camps in the Lublin area, in Jósefów and Janiszów along the Vistula River near Zawichost. As a part of the road and railway construction program “Otto,” Jews from Szydłowiec also worked there in quarries and at construction sites. Furthermore, the Jewish community had to supply 500 Jews per day for work at German companies, offices, and institutions. Thanks to the good relations of the Judenrat with the Gestapo headquarters in Radom and the head of the labor office in Lublin, Dr. Hecht, the Jews succeeded in bribing officials, and on November 11, 1940, all 400 forced laborers from Szydłowiec were returned from the Janiszów forced labor camp to their hometown.¹⁴ After two weeks of rest, they had to perform forced labor in their hometown, clearing snow from the streets and doing other tasks.

On December 22, 1941, Kreishauptmann Dr. Friedrich Egen issued a decree on the establishment of ghettos in Kreis

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Radom-Land. Jews from the smaller villages had to be resettled into a number of specified locations. In Szydłowiec, the poorest area of the town was designated to become the “Jewish residential area,”¹⁵ covering only one quarter of the town. Apparently, at that time there was also a typhus epidemic in Szydłowiec.¹⁶ The Jewish Council tried to negotiate with the local authorities, claiming that it would be impossible to force all the Szydłowiec Jews together with the new arrivals into such a small area. Finkler reports that their pleas were supported by “Madame X,” who was married to a high-ranking German official in the Distrikt Radom government but was also the mistress of Karl Lasch, the governor of Distrikt Radom. When approached by the Jewish Council, Madame X persuaded the governor to allow the Szydłowiec Jews to remain in their homes and was rewarded with a trip to the Warsaw ghetto, where she received jewelry, fur coats, and watches.¹⁷ In the end, the Szydłowiec ghetto was never enclosed by a fence, but on January 1, 1942, the Jews were forbidden to go outside the town limits, which made it impossible for them to buy groceries or sell their products, except at great risk. In late August and early September 1942, up to 9,000 Jews from surrounding towns and villages, including Wolanów, Skaryszew, and Wierzbica, were brought into Szydłowiec. This brought the total number of Jews in the Szydłowiec ghetto by mid-September up to between 12,000 and 15,000 people.

The liquidation of the Szydłowiec ghetto began on September 23, 1942. At 6:00 A.M., it was surrounded by large numbers of Lithuanian and Ukrainian auxiliaries, Polish police, and local firemen, commanded by SS-Untersturmführer Franz Schippers of the headquarters of SS and Police Leader (SSPF) Herbert Böttcher, who had already supervised expulsions from other towns in the area.

The Jews had to gather at a square, the Straw Market, and Schippers announced that those who were able to pay 1,000 złoty would not be deported or could at least stay in the area, being sent to the recently established labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna.

The first deportation train left Szydłowiec on September 23, the second one, on September 25, 1942. Each train comprised 50 wagons; in this deportation, more than 10,000 people were deported. The Jews were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. Several hundred Jews were shot on the spot or on the 4-kilometer (2.5-mile) march to the railway station, among them the patients of the Jewish hospital, including Rabbi Neta Rosenberg.

A group of 150 Jews and the Jewish Police were kept in Szydłowiec to remove Jewish corpses from the roads, to collect Jewish belongings that had been left behind, and to clean out the houses. They were kept in the building of Pinkert’s tanning factory. Very soon they were joined by other Jews who had remained in hiding. Thus, the remnant group rose to about 600 people. On September 30, 1942, 50 of them were sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp, with most others following them on October 2. There they were selected. Those not fit for work at the labor camp were sent to Treblinka.

Only about 70 or 80 Jews were left behind in Szydłowiec. They were now housed at Fishl’s tannery, and conditions were worse than ever.¹⁸ As throughout the Generalgouvernement, the terror had increased, and still more Jews had emerged from hiding to find refuge in the few remaining “remnant ghettos” (*Restghettos*). In October 1942, in the Szydłowiec camp, 29 people were hanged. It was probably this severe cruelty that motivated some people to help the Jews. For example, Bazyli and Zofia Antoniak, a Ukrainian couple, assisted in hiding the two daughters of a Jewish friend. The girls were six and seven years old, and the Antoniaiks took them to relatives in Galicia who had no idea that the girls were Jewish. Once the deed of the Antoniaiks was uncovered, Bazyli was sentenced to death and his wife to three years in prison. On November 1, 1942, Jews were selected again, with the strongest ones being sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp.¹⁹ Over the following days, probably all the remaining Jews were taken to Staszów. From there they were sent to the Bełżec killing center.

But this was still not the end of the camps for Jews in Szydłowiec. Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) Krüger encountered difficulties in completing the “Final Solution of the Jewish question” as ordered by Himmler by December 1942. Therefore, on November 10, 1942, he issued a decree recognizing “Jewish residential quarters” (*Judenwohnbezirke*) in several towns in Distrikt Radom, including Szydłowiec, as well as in other towns in Distrikt Krakau and Distrikt Galizien. The goal was to lure Jews out of hiding and into these designated camps by December 1, 1942. These camps (so-called *Sammelghettos*) offered to provide shelter, food, and safety, while all Jews found outside these camps after December 1, 1942, were to be executed. On December 4, 1942, 800 (according to some sources, 1,000) Jews from Radom were brought into the new ghetto, which was located in a former tannery on the outskirts of Szydłowiec and surrounded by barbed wire. Very quickly, the population of this new Szydłowiec ghetto rose to about 5,000, mostly composed of Jews coming from the Końskie and Skaryszew regions. Again a Judenrat was established, with Yerachmiel Morgenstern as its leader. Even people from forced labor camps risked their lives by escaping from there to find a new home in the ghetto. Survivor Abraham Brojnberg describes terrible conditions in the camp including unsanitary conditions, starvation, and disease. People died everywhere, and dogs running around were carrying human limbs in their mouths—which they had torn off the corpses.²⁰ There was also an epidemic of typhus.

The new camp only existed for less than five weeks. On January 8, 1943, it was surrounded by SS and German police under the orders of the Commanding Officer of the Security Police and the SD (KdS) Radom. Food was no longer provided. On January 13, the ghetto was liquidated. About 80 people were killed during this Aktion; the others were selected. About 1,000 were sent by truck to the forced labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna, and all the others were deported by train to Treblinka.

According to one source, about 3,000 Jews from Szydłowiec survived the war, but this presumably included those who fled successfully into the Soviet Union in 1939.²¹

SOURCES A number of valuable sources are available on the history of the Jews of Szydłowiec. The most useful for the preparation of this summary was Berl Kagan, ed., *Memorial Book Szydłowiec* (New York: Shidlowtzer Benevolent Association in New York, 1989), which contains a number of personal testimonies by survivors such as E. Lifschutz, “An Outline of the History of the Jews of Szydłowiec,” pp. 21–32; Berl Kagan, “Life in Szydłowiec before the Holocaust,” pp. 86–90; Isaac Milstein, “Chronicle of the Destruction of Szydłowiec,” pp. 93–137; Abraham Finkler, “A Ghetto without Barbed Wire,” pp. 137–161; and Berl Kagan, “Summary,” pp. 345–349. Other important sources include *Żydzi Szydłowieccy* (Szydłowiec, 1997); and B. Cohen, ed., *Szydłowieczer Yizkor Bukh* (New York, 1974). The Szydłowiec ghetto and its successor camps are also described in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 557–561; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007); Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom, 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006); and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 507, no. 4867. Felicja Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), describes the creation of the HASAG factory camp and its interaction with the ghetto in the town.

Documents describing the fate of the Jews of Szydłowiec during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/55, memoirs of Abraham Finkler); BA-L (B 162/4872; 206 AR-Z 19/64; 206 AR-Z 15/65); CAHJP (HM/3540a, 6711); IPN (Sn 5/6/67); and YVA (O-2/999; O-3/3185, 3244, 3985, 4120, and 4234; M-1/E/264, 1707, and 1752; M-1/Q/452, 453; for SS officer Franz Schippers, see JM/3786, Nr. 602). Relevant collections at USHMM include Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH—AJDC), 210/676; and RG-15.019M (IPN—ASG).

Justiz und NS-Verbrechen: Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945–1999 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1968–) contains, among others, case no. 786, including the report of Johann Reichl of Polizei-Kompanie Münster about events during the liquidation of the Szydłowiec ghetto in August–September 1942 and the statement of Abraham Brojnberg about the conditions in the Szydłowiec camp at the end of 1942. These sources can also be found in BA-L, 206 AR-Z 19/64. The documentation of the trial against the Antoniaks who had tried to hide Jewish children is held at APR (sygn. Sondergericht 2).

Evelyn Zegenhagen

NOTES

1. Milstein, “Chronicle of the Destruction,” p. 98.
2. Finkler, “A Ghetto without Barbed Wire,” p. 143.
3. Milstein, “Chronicle of the Destruction,” p. 109.

4. Kagan, “Summary,” p. 346.
5. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 226, based on AŻIH, 301/55.
6. Milstein, “Chronicle of the Destruction,” p. 107.
7. Kagan, “Summary,” p. 346.
8. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/676, Jewish Council Szydłowiec report, July 9, 1941.
9. *Ibid.*, Jewish Council Szydłowiec to AJDC, July 24, 1941.
10. Kagan, “Summary,” pp. 345–349.
11. Finkler, “A Ghetto without Barbed Wire,” p. 146.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 150–151.
14. See Milstein, “Chronicle of the Destruction,” pp. 104–105; and Finkler, “A Ghetto without Barbed Wire,” pp. 151–154.
15. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 122, based on Kreishauptmann an die Bürger im Kreise Ilza, December 22, 1941, AŻIH, Niemieckie materiały okupacyjne, Fot. Dok. niem., no. 60.
16. Finkler, “A Ghetto without Barbed Wire,” p. 139.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 139–140.
18. Milstein, “Chronicle of the Destruction,” p. 129.
19. Kagan, “Summary,” p. 348.
20. BA-L, B 162/6375, pp. 802–807, statement Abraham Brojnberg, May 20, 1971. See also *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 38 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1979), Lfd. Nr. 786, pp. 207–270.
21. Kagan, “Summary,” p. 349.

TARLÓW

Pre-1939: Tarłów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Tarlow, Kreis Ilza (later Kreis Starachowice), Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Tarłów, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The village of Tarłów is located approximately 90 kilometers (56 miles) east of Kielce. Tarłów had approximately 1,500 Jewish residents at the outbreak of the war in 1939.¹ Immediately upon arriving in the village, the commander of the Wehrmacht troops summoned Tarłów’s two priests, Madejski and Wójcik, and the local rabbi. The three were ordered to go from house to house and collect all the men at the town’s school, as the commander had an announcement for them. According to one testimony, the German authorities executed a number of Jews soon after entering Tarłów.

A number of Polish and Jewish hostages from Tarłów were sent to a civilian prison camp in Zochcin (near Opatów) that had been hastily organized by the Germans. Poles and Jews from Lipsko, Opatów, Sandomierz, Zawichost, and other towns were kept there on an open field, surrounded by barbed wire. The prisoners were released within a week and returned to their homes.

The plunder of Jewish property started immediately; endless searches of Jewish houses were conducted, and the owners’ possessions were taken away in trucks. Jewish businesses were confiscated, and Jews were conscripted for forced labor.

The Germans also carried out frequent roundups; few were successful. Usually, by the time the Germans were able to surround the village, local Jews had run into the fields or hid with their Polish neighbors. There is one report of a group of escapees who were detained but were saved by a sudden downpour; as the Germans took cover in the nearest house, the Jews escaped.

The German authorities set up a Jewish Council (Judenrat) and ordered its members to collect contributions from Tarłów's Jews. According to one testimony, despite the poverty of local Jews and difficulties collecting them, the Judenrat "racked up double the sums" demanded.²

When the first deportees from Łódź were transferred to Tarłów in March 1940, the Judenrat organized a self-help committee. Deportees arrived at the peak of a serious epidemic that broke out in December 1939 and lasted until June 1940. The Judenrat appointed wealthier families to provide for their sustenance. In April 1941, alehouse owner Chaim Rychtenberg was the chairman of the Judenrat, and the pre-war community secretary Szmyszon Gruman was the Judenrat's secretary.³

In the spring of 1941, large numbers of escapees from the Warsaw ghetto, where living conditions had deteriorated, settled in Tarłów. By May 1941, there were 1,960 Jews in Tarłów, close to a quarter of them newcomers. To cope with the growing number of deportees, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization was established in Kraków to take over the provision of welfare from the Jewish Councils. Starachowice's JSS committee set up a local branch in Tarłów in September 1941. Josek Lederman led the committee; the other two members were the Judenrat's chairman Rychtenberg and the secretary Gruman. The JSS opened a soup kitchen serving initially three meals to 85 people daily.⁴

In March 1942, all the JSS members suddenly resigned, explaining that they were unable to carry on due to a lack of funds. Tarłów approved a new committee consisting of Icek Zylber, Herszek Mendelbaum, and Fiszek Zylberman. Tarłów was not authorized to make personnel changes in the JSS composition, and the headquarters refused to accept the new appointments. Then Lederman revealed the real reasons behind the resignations. He and Rychtenberg had been summoned to appear before the Sondergericht (special court) in Radom on May 12, 1942, charged with "conveying food products for the American (Jewish) Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw in April 1940." They resigned from their JSS posts, as they expected they would be convicted and wanted to give the new committee time to be ready to take over their posts. In the meantime, these charges were dropped, and the former JSS committee went back to work.⁵

An open ghetto was set up in Tarłów on May 12, 1941, in a part of the village already populated by Jews. The forced labor and deterioration of living conditions in the overcrowded ghetto resulted in a typhus epidemic. The Sanitation Column opened a delousing facility, but it was still unable to completely prevent the spread of the disease. The synagogue initially was used as a quarantine ward, and those who were

severely ill were transported on wagons to the hospital in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. When the German authorities prohibited sending the sick to Ostrowiec, the synagogue was turned into an epidemic hospital. The only doctor in Tarłów, a Pole, attended the sick for no payment, but medication, provided primarily by the AJDC, remained scant. After the Germans proclaimed the ghetto closed in December 1941, the only open pharmacy remained on the Aryan side. The epidemic lasted nine months and was eventually contained in March 1942.⁶

According to the Judenrat, by April 1942, 2,200 Jews were squeezed into the ghetto, 700 of them refugees. Besides Warsaw and Łódź, they also came from smaller towns including Józefów nad Wisłą and Zwolen. Now the JSS converted the Tarłów synagogue into a shelter for homeless Jews. Since the JSS "was convinced that refugees are dying mostly of dirt, not hunger," the synagogue was sanitized, fitted with a stove, and given beds padded with straw mattresses, a tub for washing clothes, and a broom. A Sanitation Column of 22 volunteers under the command of two honorary JSS members, Gerszoch Kuperbum and Boruch Wajnberg, kept the shelter clean.⁷

Despite the death penalty for Jews leaving the ghetto and any Poles who helped them (effective in the Kreis from December 15, 1941), hunger in the ghetto compelled Jews to risk their lives, buying food from villagers. In the Radom prison, Pinkus Wajsbium was sentenced to death for smuggling food and leaving the Tarłów ghetto.

In June 1942, German forces arrived in Tarłów and rounded up 70 young men and women. For six days they were guarded "earnestly" by the Jewish Police and unable to see their families. They all were then loaded onto a single truck and taken to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna.⁸ From July 1942, 100 Jewish laborers worked in the newly opened phosphor mine in Tarłów. The following month, the number of Jewish laborers there doubled. The nature of the work caused frequent lacerations, and a Jewish nurse was sent daily to dress the wounds.⁹

The Germans selected Tarłów as a place of concentration for Jews from Kreis Starachowice before their deportation to extermination camps. Approximately 800 Jews from Kazanów (October 17), 3,000 from Lipsko (October 17), 800 from Solec nad Wisłą (September), 400 from Chotcza and surroundings,¹⁰ 600 from Ciepeliów (October 24), and 100 from Bałtów-Pętkowice (September 24) were brought there. There are also reports of a number of Jews being transferred from Opole Lubelskie and Kozienice.¹¹

The ghetto in Tarłów was liquidated on October 29, 1942. All the ghetto's Jews were driven to the train station in Jasice, which was guarded by SS and Ukrainian militiamen. In Jasice, they were loaded onto trains destined for the Treblinka extermination camp. Approximately 100 Jews were killed before reaching the station, most of them children or the elderly. One account states that Jews were deported from Tarłów on trucks with the assistance of Jewish policemen.

The search for the ghetto escapees started on the day of its liquidation, as German troops combed nearby villages. Avail-

able sources differ regarding the number of Jews deported from Tarłów, ranging from approximately 5,000 to 10,000 people; around 8,000 is likely most accurate.

SOURCES The Tarłów ghetto is mentioned briefly in Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955); Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979); and Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 248–249.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/681, 211/101, 301/1067, 301/1513, 301/2016, 301/3678); USHMM (RG-15.084M [AŻIH Relacje]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 47; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF (e.g., # 22009); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 47.
2. AŻIH, 301/1067.
3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 47; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC).
4. AŻIH, 301/3678, testimony of Regina Gerszt, 1947; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 47.
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 47.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. AŻIH, 301/1067.
9. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 47.
10. More than 400 Jews were concentrated in Chotcza from August to late October 1942, including some brought in from a nearby labor camp. However, available sources do not use the term *ghetto* for this concentration. See *ibid.*, 211/308 (Chotcza); and AŻIH, 301/1513, testimony of Gerszon Edelman, 1946.
11. VHF, # 22009, testimony of Dora Hershman, 1996.

TOMASZÓW MAZOWIECKI

Pre-1939: Tomaszów Mazowiecki, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Tomaszów, Kreis center, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Łódź województwo, Poland

Tomaszów Mazowiecki lies approximately 60 kilometers (37 miles) southeast of Łódź on the Wolburka River. In 1939, there were approximately 13,000 Jews residing in Tomaszów, which was famous for its textile factories that were mostly owned by Jewish businessmen.

German troops occupied the town on September 6, 1939. During the first weeks of the occupation a detachment of Einsatzgruppe III (Security Police) was active in Tomaszów, searching Jewish apartments for weapons. Jews were mistreated

and about 300 were arrested, along with many non-Jews. Some 90 Jews were sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp. Many Jews were evicted from their apartments to provide living quarters for German officials; Jewish businesses were marked with a Star of David and placed under trusteeship. In November 1939, the synagogue on Jerozolim Street was set on fire, and the Jews were prevented from extinguishing it.¹

In the fall of 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat), under the leadership of Baruch Schoeps and his deputy Leibush Warsager, was established in Tomaszów. The Judenrat had to organize the collection of a large contribution for the Germans and meet their demands for forced laborers. Other tasks for the Judenrat included registering the Jews, establishing a medical support system, maintaining contact with the Jewish Councils of other ghettos, dealing with social welfare, and maintaining cultural life.

When the Nazis established the Generalgouvernement in the fall of 1939, the town became the center of Kreis Tomaszów within Distrikt Radom. The first Kreishauptmann was Dr. Fritz von Balluseck (until November 1940); he was succeeded by Dr. Karl Glehn, who served in that capacity until the town's liberation in January 1945. From May 15, 1940, the head of the Security Police outpost (Sipo-Aussendienststelle) in Tomaszów was SS-Hauptsturmführer Otto Thiel.

In 1940, a number of Jewish men were rounded up and sent to work in various labor camps in Distrikt Lublin. Around 1,000 Jews were required to perform forced labor in and around Tomaszów.

In December 1940, Kreiskommissar Glehn ordered the establishment of three separate Jewish residential districts (open ghettos) in Tomaszów. The Jews were forbidden to leave these residential districts and faced a fine of 100 zloty for their first offense; the sum increased considerably for subsequent transgressions.² Mira Ryzke Kimmelman has described the relocation efforts:

The order to move was announced at the beginning of December 1940, giving us just a few weeks to find a place to live. When the Polish population moved out of their houses, Jews were moved in. Until now most of the Tomaszów Jews lived in apartments. Now they had to squeeze into one room, in some cases two and three families to occupy one room. The Jewish Council . . . was in charge of assigning living quarters.³

Altogether about 16,000 Jews were confined within the three ghettos in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, including approximately 3,000 Jews from the surrounding villages. Only 250 houses had to provide living space for all the residents—that is, more than 60 people per house.

The Jewish Council was obliged to organize an internal ghetto police, which maintained order and guarded the ghetto borders internally. The Jewish Police was also entrusted with enforcing the fixed prices for food, shop opening hours, the cleaning of the streets, and the curfew. The German

Schutzpolizei was responsible for securing the ghetto border externally.⁴ Hans Pichler of the Schutzpolizei was the officer in charge of ghetto affairs in Tomaszów.

In the summer of 1940, the German civil administration had set the following official ration levels for Jews—2.8 kilograms (6.2 pounds) of bread, 0.2 kilograms (7 ounces) of sugar, and 0.16 kilograms (5.6 ounces) of artificial coffee per person per month—about half that for the Polish population.⁵ According to Kimmelman: “Ration cards for bread, sugar, jam, or a little margarine were issued for a whole month, but this barely sustained us for a week.”⁶

As in other ghettos of the Generalgouvernement, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization, which was based in Kraków, played an essential role in the provision of social welfare and food to the needy Jews in Tomaszów. Food, medicine, and other material deliveries were transferred to the ghetto as well as money. Using this support, the Jewish Council established two public kitchens, a special food kitchen for children, a nursing home, a medical clinic, a hospital, a hostel for refugees and Jews passing through the ghetto, and a department for housing issues.⁷ There is little information regarding religious or cultural life in the ghetto. However, Ludwik Druszcz mentions sporadic performances by a puppet cabaret.⁸ Kimmelman recalls an extensive system of clandestine schooling, and she also participated in Zionist youth activities without informing her parents.⁹

In March 1941, around 1,000 refugees from Płock arrived in the Tomaszów ghetto. At this time, about 300 Jews from Tomaszów were assigned to a forced labor camp established 6 kilometers (4 miles) outside the town in the village of Zawada to work on river canalization work. The conditions in the camp were so appalling that even the Sipo-Aussendienststelle in Tomaszów complained in October 1941 that the unsanitary and inadequate sleeping quarters rendered “the measures of the German authorities to combat typhus illusory.”¹⁰ As the Jews who fell sick were transferred back to the Tomaszów ghetto, this in turn spread typhus among the ghetto inmates.¹¹ In the third quarter of 1941, 1,129 cases of typhus were registered in Kreis Tomaszow, which was the highest rate of any Kreis in Distrikt Radom.¹²

To combat the spread of typhus, the German authorities intensified the isolation of the ghettos. In late November 1941, almost 600 refugee Jews were transferred from the Tomaszów ghetto to the ghetto in Koluszki, and more were sent to other small ghettos. The Judenrat was instructed to report immediately any of these Jews if they returned to Tomaszów, making all the Judenrat members personally responsible, on pain of death, for the enforcement of this regulation. Subsequently 33 Jews who did return were executed.¹³ By this time, the death penalty had been introduced within the Generalgouvernement for Jews caught leaving the ghettos without permission. On December 11, a circular was distributed within Distrikt Radom instructing the Stadt- und Kreishauptmänner to put up signs on the borders of the ghettos informing the Jews of this penalty.¹⁴ Initially Kreishauptmann Glehn responded by putting up such signs around all three Jewish residential dis-

tricts in Tomaszów. He also introduced new regulations, which permitted Jews to move from one ghetto to another within the town only at certain set times in columns, escorted by the Jewish Police. Only a few days later, however, Glehn ordered the two smaller residential districts (ghettos) on Szeroka Street and Władysław Street dissolved. The Jews from these areas were distributed among smaller communities nearby or were moved to the larger ghetto. Then on December 15, 1941, the remaining ghetto area was officially enclosed. Some witnesses remembered the construction of a wall, some, a fence.¹⁵ The new barrier probably consisted of a combination of a wooden and barbed-wire fence, together with the walls of the ghetto houses themselves.¹⁶ On December 20, 1941, detailed regulations concerning the houses along the ghetto perimeter were issued. All windows and doors along the perimeter were to be boarded up. The Jews residing in these houses were forbidden to use the front rooms and could only reside in the courtyards and the rear parts of the buildings.¹⁷

The ghetto that remained was located on the following streets: Kościusko, Antoni, Piłsudski, Jerozolima, Legionów, Listopada, Kieracki, Wojciechowski, Długa, Projektowa, Warszawa, Szeroka, and Niebrowska. The office of the Jewish Council was located at Cicha Street 15. This reorganization of the ghetto was combined with strict sanitary measures. Many of the Jews in the ghetto area had to have their heads shaved.¹⁸

Those Jews who had worked in various forced labor camps and working places in Tomaszów Mazowiecki before the ghetto's enclosure continued to leave the ghetto daily under the supervision of the Jewish Police, but by 1942 they were permitted to use only certain designated streets. The only income for the ghetto inmates was from the salaries working Jews received for forced labor. The average wage after the deduction of all taxes and other expenses was generally insufficient to cover even the living costs for a single person, and it was completely insufficient to feed a family.¹⁹

In the six months after the ghetto was enclosed, a number of Jewish refugees continued to arrive from other places, including towns in Distrikt Warschau, which increased the pressure on scarce living space and food.²⁰ In January 1942, a second major typhus epidemic broke out inside the Tomaszów ghetto. The ghetto hospital did not have sufficient space to treat all the infected Jews, and starvation and a lack of medicine and sanitary facilities exacerbated the problem considerably. Furthermore, during this winter, the Jews in the Tomaszów ghetto were ordered to deliver all their fur coats and other winter clothing to the German police to support the soldiers at the front in a so-called fur Aktion.²¹

On top of the disastrous living conditions in the ghetto, frequent killing Aktions, selections, and punishments for even minor transgressions decimated the ghetto population continuously. Many Jews fell victim to the so-called Shooting Order (Schiessbefehl) that allowed the German Order Police to shoot every Jew without warning if spotted outside the ghetto. As one survivor has recorded: “There was not a day, on which the Gendarmes did not kill a Jewish man or woman on the ghetto

border for buying potatoes or other foodstuffs. . . . Every day also small children went out of the ghetto to obtain a bit to eat . . . more and more of them were killed."²² Kreishauptmann Glehn reported cold-bloodedly in March 1942: "in the previous month, around 30 Jews who left the ghetto without permission and tried to flee, were shot."²³

On April 27–28, 1942, the German Security Police carried out an "intelligentsia Aktion" in the ghetto. The victims included lawyers, doctors, members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police, and pre-war Jewish activists. Many Jews were shot in the streets, allegedly for "trying to escape" as they were arrested. On the following mornings, thousands of mourning Jews accompanied the bodies, as they were taken to be buried in the Jewish cemetery outside the ghetto. A further shooting Aktion took place a few days later in early May.²⁴

For many ghetto inmates, nevertheless, a position in the Jewish Police was attractive, and many people tried to get a job there through bribery, as they believed it would protect themselves and their families from the expected deportation Aktions. During the deportations the Jewish Police were required to assist the German police in rounding up the Jews, and this earned them a very bad reputation among most of the ghetto inmates.²⁵ As rumors spread from August 1942 of the clearance of other ghettos in the region, the Jews looked to obtain a secure place of employment or to prepare hiding places in case of need. In the last days of October the other ghettos of Kreis Tomaszów were liquidated systematically.

On Saturday, October 31, 1942, the Germans commenced the liquidation of the Tomaszów ghetto. The ghetto residents living on the eastern part of Jerozolima Street were ordered to gather at the square by the Jewish hospital and to take only a few indispensable items with them. After a selection, those Jews in possession of special work papers were sent back to the yard of the hospital, while the remaining Jews were marched to the railroad station. There they were ordered to leave behind their hand luggage, to take off their shoes, and to enter the freight wagons of the train. About 120 individuals were squeezed into each wagon. The entire procedure was carried out by an SS unit that had arrived from outside the town, with the assistance of Trawniki men and local forces of the Sipo, the Order Police, and Polish (Blue) Police. During the roundup the Jews were brutally mistreated. On November 1, 1942, the empty part of the ghetto was searched, and the Jews found there were shot on the spot. On November 2, the inmates living in the second part of the ghetto were deported in the same way. Both transports—together approximately 15,000 individuals—were sent to the extermination camp in Treblinka.

After this major Aktion, probably around 900 working Jews still remained in the Tomaszów ghetto, who may have been joined by others who emerged from hiding. They resided in a small part of the former ghetto, known as "the Block," which became a remnant ghetto with many of the characteristics of a forced labor camp for Jews. In the first days of January 1943, 250 Jews were transferred from Tomaszów to the remnant ghetto in Ujazd, which itself was liquidated on January 6 with the inmates being sent to Treblinka. Also in January, the

so-called Palestine Aktion took place. As part of an exchange for German prisoners of war (POWs), 67 Jews from Tomaszów were actually released via Vienna and Turkey on to Syria and then Palestine. But most of the others who registered in January 1943 in Tomaszów and other remnant ghettos were transported away and either shot locally or sent to Treblinka.²⁶

A further Aktion took place at the time of the Purim festival, on March 21 in 1943. More than 20 members of the Jewish intelligentsia and patients at the hospital were arrested and shot at the Jewish cemetery. In the spring of 1943, groups of Jews were transferred from the Block to the forced labor camps in Pionki, Skarżysko-Kamienna, and Bliżyn. On May 29, the Block was finally liquidated, and the 650 men, women, and children there were deported to the labor camp at Bliżyn near Radom. The last 40 or so Jews were sent to the labor camp in Starachowice soon after they had cleaned out the ghetto/labor camp area.²⁷

SOURCES Information about the history and fate of the Tomaszów Jews under Nazi occupation can be found in the following publications: Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007); Mosheh Visberg, ed., *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Tomaszov-Mazovyetsk* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Tomashov-Mazovyetsk be-Yisrael, 1969); and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 123–130.

Relevant published survivor memoirs include Mira Ryczke Kimmelman, *Echoes from the Holocaust: A Memoir* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997); and Ignacy Berzynski Burnett, *My Life and My Struggle* (Sydney: Vit Publishing, 1996).

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Tomaszów during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/1031-1039; 301/1450, 3184, 4071); BA-BL (R 52II/254); BA-L (e.g., B 162/14521); IPN (Case against Ludwig Fischer and Josef Bühler); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1995 .A.522); VHF (e.g., # 15964, 44328, 48119); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. BA-L, B 162/14521 (Verdict of LG-Darm, 2 Ks 1/69, December 7, 1972, in the case against Boettig, Fuchs, and Reichl), pp. 14–15.
2. AŻIH, 301/3184, testimony of Samuel Talman; 211/1031, Glehn an Judenrat in Tomaszów, December 20, 1942; BA-L, B 162/14521, pp. 15–16.
3. Kimmelman, *Echoes*, p. 28.
4. VHF, # 48119, testimony of Ludwik Druszcz.
5. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, p. 159.
6. Kimmelman, *Echoes*, p. 29.
7. AŻIH, 211/1034, pp. 17–18.
8. VHF, # 48119.
9. Kimmelman, *Echoes*, pp. 29–31.
10. Sipo-Aussendienststelle Schlussbericht, October 16, 1941, BA-L, B 162/Vorl. Dok. Slg. Verschiedenes 301 AAm, Bl. 51, 49, as cited by Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, p. 152.

11. BA-L, B 162/14521, pp. 15–16.
12. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, p. 127.
13. Eugeniusz Fąfara, *Gębenna ludności żydowskiej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1983), pp. 120–121; and AŻIH, 301/4071, testimony of Samuel Talman, 1948.
14. BA-BL, R 52II/254, Rundschreiben Oswalds, Leiter der Abteilung Innere Verwaltung im Distrikt Radom, December 11, 1942, as cited by Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, p. 121.
15. VHF, # 48119; # 15964, testimony of Mary Siegelbaum.
16. BA-L, B 162/14521, p. 17.
17. AŻIH, 211/1031, pp. 11–14.
18. *Ibid.*, 211/1035, p. 46.
19. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, pp. 218–219.
20. AŻIH, 211/1034, p. 18.
21. BA-L, B 162/14521, p. 31.
22. AŻIH, 301/5361, testimony of E. Skórnicki, as cited by Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, p. 221.
23. IPN, Verfahren gegen Ludwig Fischer and Josef Bühler, 285, p. 18, Glehn's Lagebericht, April 8, 1942.
24. Kimmelman, *Echoes*, pp. 35–36; BA-L, B 162/14521, pp. 31–46.
25. VHF, # 44328, testimony of Riva Bojarski.
26. Testimony of Dwora Leja B, March 7, 1963, BA-L, B 162/6922, pp. 1250–1251, as cited by Młynarczyk, *Judenmord*, p. 283; Kimmelman, *Echoes*, p. 41.
27. Kimmelman, *Echoes*, pp. 42–43; BA-L, B 162/14521, p. 49; AŻIH, 301/1450.

UJAZD

Pre-1939: Ujazd, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Tomaszow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

The village of Ujazd is located 10 kilometers (6 miles) northwest of Tomaszów Mazowiecki. By 1921, out of 1,987 residents, 792 were Jewish.

An estimated 95 percent of the village was razed in the course of the September Campaign in 1939. Some Jewish residents, including Rabbi Łaznowski, fled to Łódź and then to the Warsaw region.

The Germans organized a Judenrat, chaired by Pinkus Gerber. It included S. Wygodzki and M. Feller.

Despite the substandard housing conditions, some deportees and refugees settled in the village in 1940.¹ In the spring of 1941, there were 351 Jews living in Ujazd, including 70 newcomers. In May 1941, the Judenrat reported that due to an order forbidding Jews to settle in Distrikt Warschau, “all our [former] residents returned.” It further stated that there were “scarcely three, precisely—three small houses where 500 people are located.” Apart from the returnees, the village also was visited daily by streams of Jews leaving Warsaw on their way to Piotrków Trybunalski, who were asking for help.²

In June 1940, all men and women aged 16 to 60 were forced to clear the rubble of burned buildings. As they also had to perform other forms of forced labor, the Judenrat reported that they were unable to make a living. A number of them worked on constructing the Ujazd-Lubochnia road, in the Kingeberg

sawmill, and on the estates of Ujazd and Buków, in the settlement of Ciosny. At the end of August 1940, all young Jews were sent out of the village to perform forced labor. In the summer of 1941, the community had to fully support 20 laborers working in the vicinity of Ujazd.³

In August 1941, many Jewish refugees who had died in the nearby ghetto of Koluszki were sent for burial in Ujazd, as the cemetery that served Koluszki's Jews in Brzeziny had been incorporated into the Reich. “Note,” the Ujazd Judenrat reported, “that two members of the Jewish Council are hospitalized in Tomaszów, sick with typhus they had contracted while arranging for the burial of corpses sent from Koluszki.” There was no Jewish doctor in Ujazd. By January 1942, the community's sick were being sent to a hospital in Tomaszów for treatment.⁴

A ghetto was established in Ujazd, most likely in the summer of 1942. According to Czesław Pilichowski and colleagues, the ghetto was located in the Lidera neighborhood, where Jews were permitted to inhabit 32 houses on eight streets; however, according to other sources (e.g., the Gmina Ujazd Web site), the ghetto was located on Zagajnikowa Street, from which Polish residents had been expelled.⁵

Sometime in 1942, young and healthy ghetto residents were rounded up and driven to an unknown destination, probably to be sent to perform forced labor at various camps.

The ghetto in Ujazd was liquidated at the end of October 1942. Its estimated 800 residents were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

On November 10, 1942, the Higher SS and Police Leader of the Generalgouvernement, Friedrich Krüger, issued an order creating remnant ghettos in Distrikt Radom. Ujazd was to be the only such ghetto in Kreis Tomaszow and one of only four in the entire Distrikt.⁶ A survivor of this remnant ghetto, Sophie Pollack, recalled that the Germans announced that Ujazd was declared “an exceptional ghetto.” It was announced that all those “who had hidden or escaped should feel free and safe to register” there. “Most of these people who came were young. . . . It was the cream of the ghettos: the healthiest, the smartest, those who had the most money. Everybody came there because there were not that many places to go, and whether they believed in those wonderful promises or not. . . . We wanted to believe in it,” said Pollack.⁷

The ghetto attracted approximately 2,000 Jews mostly from other places in Kreis Tomaszow, including Przysucha, Rawa Mazowiecka, Opoczno, and Drzewica. The ghetto was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by the German Gendarmerie from Tomaszów and the Polish (Blue) Police. Within the compound, the Jewish Police maintained order.

On the night of January 5, 1943, German forces surrounded the ghetto. Approximately 30 people were shot in the course of the ghetto's liquidation on the next day, January 6. The remainder of the ghetto's inmates were taken to the train station in Skrzynki. On the way, about a dozen more Jews were shot. The transport ended at the Treblinka extermination camp.⁸

SOURCES The following publications were used to prepare this entry: Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada

ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 118–119, 154 (table 10), 178; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 134, 187–189; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 534; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo piotrkowskie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1983), pp. 139–140.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/697, 211/1055); IPN (ASG); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.019M [ASG]); and VHF (# 25485).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/697 (Ujazd), pp. 9, 11; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1055 (Ujazd), p. 15.
2. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1055, pp. 8–9; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/697, p. 11.
3. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/697, pp. 2, 7, 19.
4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1055, pp. 15, 22.
5. See www.ujazd.ovh.org.
6. Police Decree issued by HSSPF Krüger of the Generalgouvernement, November 10, 1942, published in Tatiana Benzenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), pp. 344–345.
7. VHF, # 25485, testimony of Sophie Pollack, 1997.
8. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG, Ujazd), reel 14, pp. 14–23.

WIERZBICA

Pre-1939: Wierzbica, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The village of Wierzbica is located 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Radom. A Judenrat chaired by H. Hochman was established following its occupation.

By March 1941, there were 152 Jews living in the village, of which the Judenrat assessed 40 percent as unable to provide for themselves. Some 18 of these people lived entirely from the support provided by the Judenrat.

The number of residents almost doubled when 129 Jews (28 families) from the recently depopulated village of Przytyk arrived on March 10, 1941. Of those, 16 families (48 persons) were unable to pay rent. The Judenrat introduced a system of “forced dinners” by assigning 20 newcomers to local Jewish families. The Judenrat then compensated the host family with 1 złoty per meal, while the assignee paid the Judenrat 0.20 złoty.¹

As part of a larger ghettoization process of those Jews still living in the villages of Kreis Radom-Land, the Germans decided to liquidate Wierzbica’s community by transferring them

to a larger ghetto at the end of 1941. However, according to Radom’s Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS), “thanks to the efforts of the Supreme Council of Jewish Communities of the Radom District,” the Germans allowed several rural communities to remain in place by creating Jewish quarters for them. The order to establish a ghetto in Wierzbica was issued by Radom’s Kreishauptmann in December 1941. Nonetheless, resettlement to the closed ghetto was not implemented for several months.²

The leadership of the Judenrat was changed on March 1, 1942. B. Milsztajn became its new chairman. He believed that “Wierzbica never received any social help from the JSS” because the former Judenrat “did not demonstrate any activity to ease the misery of our community.” By May 1942, the community had set up its own hospital.³

Survivor Ester Hakman recalls that from March 1942 until that summer, she was able to get hired on the Zalesice estate, located 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) away from Wierzbica, to which she walked daily. She worked in agriculture and was compensated with some of the goods she harvested. Hakman’s mother was still able to barter textiles for food with villagers; her sister, a dressmaker, continued her craft in exchange for food. It was at this time that a commissioner was assigned to run Wierzbica affairs.⁴

By July 1942, there were 500 Jews living in Wierzbica, of which only 30 percent were native residents, whereas another 40 percent had been deported from Przytyk. The remaining 30 percent were Jews resettled from Pruszków, Mogielnica, and Grójec (Distrikt Warschau), who initially were deported to Jastrzab and Rogów, both located approximately 5 kilometers (3 miles) from Wierzbica.⁵

By July 17, 1942, the German authorities informed the community that an enclosed ghetto would be established in the village on August 1, 1942. It was to be surrounded by a wooden fence and barbed wire. The German authorities assigned only a few houses for the Jews, which could house 200 people only with the greatest difficulty according to the assessment of the Judenrat. For the remaining 300 people (60 families), the Germans ordered the community to build barracks. The Judenrat estimated the costs of their construction at 25,000 złoty. The Judenrat was also ordered to remodel the hospital (estimated at 4,000 złoty) and to construct a delousing facility. The date of the ghetto’s establishment (August 1, 1942) was also a deadline to complete all the construction work. The Judenrat requested financial support from the JSS in Kraków.⁶ Accordingly, the JSS was able to provide Wierzbica with 500 złoty in July 1942.⁷

Strict orders were issued for the Jews not to leave the ghetto; however, archival sources show that Boruch Sarna was arrested in Wierzbica “for leaving the ghetto” on May 8, 1942. Either this date is mistaken (i.e., possibly August 5, 1942), or it is possible that restrictions on movement were in effect before the establishment of an enclosed ghetto. Sarna was sent to the Radom prison, from which he was “deported to a camp” on August 18, 1942. There is no information as to whether anyone guarded the Wierzbica ghetto. Another resident, Wolf

Majdman, was also arrested on August 28, 1942, for exiting the ghetto. Majdman was registered as “deceased” in the Radom prison on October 16, 1942.⁸

According to Hakman, in August 1942, elderly Jews in the ghetto were rounded up and deported to the Szydłowiec ghetto. Agricultural labor was arranged at a nearby estate for approximately 400 able-bodied Jews from the ghetto, including women. The job was very desirable among Wierzbica’s Jews, as they believed it would protect them from deportation. Moreover, they were fairly well fed on the farm. At the end of each workday, the Jewish laborers would return to the ghetto. It is not clear if they were escorted.⁹

Hakman believes that the ghetto was liquidated on November 22, 1942, when the Germans decided that the workforce on the farm was no longer needed. That same day, trucks filled with Ukrainian auxiliary forces came to the village to claim young Jews. Hakman, who volunteered, believes that “a couple of hundred” youngsters volunteered with her. She recalls that the first snow of the winter fell on that day. The trucks remained in the village for several hours and left after dark. It was only on the way that the volunteers learned that they were being taken to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factory in Skarżysko-Kamienna. There is no information as to the fate of those who remained in the ghetto on that day.¹⁰

Other sources give significantly different accounts of the community’s fate; for example, *Pinkas ha-kebilot* states that the remaining Jews of Wierzbica were evacuated in 1940, presumably to labor camps in the area. Historian Adam Rutkowski dates the liquidation of the ghetto in August or the beginning of September 1942 and gives the names of two locations to which Wierzbica Jews were deported (the Kozienice and Szydłowiec ghettos).

SOURCES The following publications were used to prepare this entry: Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 585; and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955). Rutkowski refers to the community being resettled to the Kozienice ghetto (pp. 160, 179) and to the Szydłowiec ghetto (p. 101).

The following archival sources contain information on the Jewish community in Wierzbica: AŻIH (211/854-855 and 211/1107 [JSS]; and NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]); and VHF (# 1018).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1107 (Wierzbica), pp. 2–3.

2. Ibid., 211/854 (Radom), p. 5; AŻIH, NMO, Fot. Dok. Niem. nos. 60 and 63, Anordnung (decree) and Zustazordnung (amendment) of the Kreishauptmann, December 22 and 30, 1941, as cited in Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), p. 122.

3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1107, pp. 8–9.

4. VHF, # 1018, testimony of Ester Hakman, 1995.

5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1107, pp. 7–8.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., 211/855 (Radom), p. 49.

8. Kazimierz Jaroszek and Sebastian Piątkowski, *Martyrologia Żydów w więzieniu radomskim 1939–1944: Wykaz zamordowanych, zmarłych, deportowanych do obozów koncentracyjnych i obozów zagłady* (Radom: Archiwum Państwowe, 1997), pp. 67, 85.

9. VHF, # 1018.

10. Ibid.

WIŚLICA

Pre-1939: Wiślica, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Wislica, Kreis Busko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Wiślica, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Wiślica is located 62 kilometers (39 miles) northeast of Kraków. In 1939, on the eve of World War II, there were 1,437 Jews living in the town.

When the Germans attacked Poland on September 1, 1939, many Jews fled Wiślica to the east. Some escaped to the Soviet Union, where they spent the war years. However, most of these people soon returned home. The Polish army set parts of the town on fire before they retreated. German forces conquered Wiślica on September 8. After settling in, they burned down the synagogue. On the following day, all the Jews were assembled in the town square, from which they were taken to fields outside town. After being robbed they were brought back and put to work cleaning up the town. The Germans imposed a fine of 30,000 złoty on the Jews, holding 10 prominent members of the community as hostages. The community council was reorganized as a Judenrat. Some of the original council members were retained, joined by a few new ones. The chairman was Joseph Flaum; the vice-chair was David Ovzhensky. On December 1, all Jews over 10 were ordered to wear a blue Star of David on a white armband. An additional decree obligated all Jews over 18 to perform forced labor. During the first months they shoveled snow from the railroad tracks.¹

After the Generalgouvernement was set up at the end of October 1939, Wiślica was incorporated into Kreis Busko, within Distrikt Radom. In 1940, the Jews of Wiślica were ordered to pave a new road between Busko-Zdrój and Wiślica. They were also sent to perform agricultural work on estates confiscated from Polish landlords. Normal commerce ceased to exist. Output from manufacturing disappeared—textiles, leather, shoes, clothing, import-export, and retail outlets closed for lack of merchandise. Almost everyone, Jew and non-Jew, engaged in some form of illegal trade or smuggling.

The Germans permitted a few government shops—one for leather, another for textiles. Goods were sold for ration cards, available only to farmers who delivered their quota of agricultural produce. At a special warehouse, one could barter eggs for sugar. Jews would buy eggs from the farmers, trade them for sugar, and sell it for other goods or money. But after a time

the Germans put an end to this practice. Jews were also forbidden to go to the countryside, so farmers would bring their products to Jewish buyers. They, in turn, sold them to professional smugglers who came from Warsaw, Kielce, and Kraków to bring goods such as leather, clothing, or coffee to the large cities.²

The Germans sent police from Busko to search for merchandise hidden in Jewish homes. To evade these searches, Jews stored goods with Polish neighbors. In some cases the Poles simply kept the goods for themselves. In other instances, informants exposed the Polish partners. Once the Jews were deported, the caretakers “inherited” whatever was left in their care. On the weekly market day (traditionally Thursday, but later changed by the Germans to Saturday as a further hardship on religious Jews), Jews had little to offer, usually kitchen utensils or articles of clothing. Tailors and shoemakers invited customers into their houses to sell their goods. Throughout the occupation Jewish slaughterers continued to provide kosher meat, risking their lives to perform these tasks in barns rented from local farmers. An 8:00 p.m. curfew was imposed, and Jews were also forbidden to ride the trains. To reach Kraków to trade, Jews from Wiślica would go first to Opatowiec, then take the ferry that sailed between Nowy Korczyn and Kraków. This practice continued until the end of 1940.

At the end of 1940 and in early 1941, hundreds of Jewish refugees arrived in Wiślica, including many expelled from Radom, the district capital, and about 150 from Płock, which had been annexed to Germany. Other Jews came from Kraków, Warsaw, Łódź, and Sandomierz. The refugees arrived with only the clothes they stood up in. The Jews of Wiślica were scarcely prepared to deal with them. The Judenrat established a mutual-aid committee, which organized a soup kitchen for the refugees and needy locals. A small delegation was sent to Polish landlords to ask for assistance. They responded by contributing a great quantity of food, including potatoes, barley, and beans, as well as firewood for heating. The Judenrat housed the refugees from Płock in private homes. Refugees from Radom were housed in the large Bet Midrash, which was no longer in use. Bunk beds were built to accommodate them.³

In May 1941, an open ghetto (Jewish residential area) was set up in Wiślica.⁴ It consisted of 76 houses and 452 rooms and was controlled by the German authorities. All remaining Jewish property outside the ghetto was confiscated. In the summer of 1941, the German administration in Busko ordered the Wiślica Judenrat to establish a Jewish police force.⁵ The establishment of the ghetto had created unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions that increased the threat of disease. The collection of community taxes became more difficult as the numbers relying on public assistance increased. The impossible German demands for goods and money did not let up—they requested textiles, leather goods, tea, coffee, liquor, jewelry, and other items. Hunger became widespread, as access to the surrounding villages was now forbidden.⁶

In the winter of 1941–1942, the Germans confiscated all fur garments. There were daily roll calls for forced labor. The

workers received a daily ration of bread, baked at the Jewish bakery from flour provided by the Jewish community. An outbreak of typhus claimed many victims, and a community hospital was opened in response. The confiscation of Jewish-owned property was also completed, with local Polish “commissars” put in charge as the Jewish owners were dismissed. Shops for building materials, metal goods, clothing, shoemaking, tailoring, and groceries were taken over. Further restrictions were imposed. Jews were not allowed to swim in the Nida River. Men had to shave their beards. People grew increasingly depressed as all signs of normal life vanished. In the spring of 1942, Jews living in smaller nearby towns and villages were forced into Wiślica. By April 1942, the ghetto held 2,165 Jews, including 728 who had arrived from other places. Towards the end of the summer of 1942, the Germans ordered Polish workers to remove the gravestones from the old Jewish cemetery. After the final expulsion of the Jews the stones were used to pave a walkway to the train station.⁷

Tension gripped the town amid rumors of the deportations from large Jewish communities, such as Warsaw, Kielce, and Częstochowa, as well as nearby towns such as Miechów. As refugees brought word of the deportation from Działoszyce, apprehension that the same would happen in Wiślica hardened into certainty.⁸

The expulsion took place on October 3, 1942, organized by the Security Police outpost (Sipo-Aussendienststelle) in Kielce. Early in the morning, the German forces, assisted by Polish (Blue) Police and Polish work units, surrounded the city. Jews were roused from their sleep, told to pack their belongings, and ordered to the market square, where they were held under arrest. About 2,200 appeared. The local farmers were ordered to bring their wagons to transport the Jews. The head of the Judenrat bribed the police commanders to look the other way if Jews tried to flee, and a number were able to escape. Some survived; others were caught and murdered. Then all the Jews were escorted to Pińczów. The Jews of three towns—Wiślica, Busko, and Pińczów—were then taken to Jędrzejów and from there by train to the Treblinka extermination camp to be murdered on arrival.⁹

In 1942–1944, the Przeniosło family, a Polish family of seven who had farmed on 8 hectares (20 acres) of land in the village of Cieszkowy, in Kielce province, risked their lives to hide 12 Jews who had escaped from Wiślica during the liquidation of the ghetto. One of the Jews died in July 1944, but the remaining people survived and later immigrated to the United States and Israel. In 1986, some of them—including Regina Działoszycki, who was 8 years old in 1942—replied to an announcement in *Folks-Sztyme*, a Yiddish weekly in Warsaw, providing information about the family who had rescued them.¹⁰ Among other Jewish escapees from Wiślica were members of the Gordonia training kibbutz who joined up with Polish Armia Ludowa partisans in the forests.

SOURCES Articles on the destruction of the Jewish population of the town can be found in Itzhak Kazimierski, ed., *Sefer Vayslits: Dos Vayslits'er yisker-bukh* (Tel Aviv: Association

of Former Residents of Wislica, 1971), which does not, however, specifically mention the ghetto; and Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 170–174. The open ghetto in Wiślica is mentioned briefly by Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie Radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 83, 91.

Documents describing the fate of the Jews of Wiślica under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/2373); USHMMPA (# 96919); VHF; and YVA (e.g., M-31/3964).

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. Kazimierski, *Sefer Vayslits*, pp. 23–24.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.
4. M. Grynberg, *Księga Sprawiedliwych* (Warsaw: PWN, 1993).
5. For a picture of a Jewish ghetto policeman in Wiślica, see USHMMPA, # 96919.
6. Kazimierski, *Sefer Vayslits*, p. 27.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30; AŻIH, 301/2373, testimony of J. Sternberg.
10. Grynberg, *Księga Sprawiedliwych*.

WŁOSZCZOWA

Pre-1939: Włoszczowa (Yiddish: Vlotscheve), town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Włoszczowa, Kreis Jedrzejow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Włoszczowa, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Włoszczowa is located 46 kilometers (29 miles) west of Kielce. By 1939, there were 2,700 Jews living there, constituting 42 percent of the town's residents.¹ Following the town's occupation by German troops, a Gendarmerie post with its own prison was established before the end of September 1939. At this time, a number of refugees—mainly from the badly damaged towns of Szczekociny and Przedbórz nearby—settled in Włoszczowa. Groups from Poznań and Łódź followed later. Eventually the total number of refugees rose to 1,455 (28 percent of the community).

A 7-man (soon extended to 12-man) Jewish Council (Judenrat) was set up in October 1939, chaired by a local notary named Aleksander Fargel (Fargiel). The Judenrat soon had to collect a “contribution” of 80,000 złoty.²

A self-help committee was established on January 10, 1940, and it soon opened a soup kitchen with support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). A second opened on January 21, 1940.

A ghetto for over 4,000 Jews—consisting of two separate sections—was established in Włoszczowa on July 10, 1940. A number of sources define the northern ghetto's borders, for example, as enclosed by Sienkiewicz, Śliska, and Targowica Streets (aka Krzywe Koło according to one Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute [AŻIH] testimony). The southern ghetto was located around Kiliński Street. Postwar (October 1945) Polish authorities named the following streets as included in one part of the ghetto: Żwirko, Mickiewicz, Górki, Długa, Wigury, Czarnecka, and Kozia; the second reportedly included Gęsia, Przedbórz, Stodolna, Nowa, and Niecała Streets.³ An unknown number of Jews from the vicinity were also brought into the ghetto; however, in May 1942, Jews were still living in Kurzelów, Dobranica, Secemin, Radków, Oleszno, Kluczanko, Pilczyca, Krasocin, and other nearby settlements.⁴

In April 1942, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization established in Włoszczowa in July 1941 reported that an “open ghetto” existed in the town in response to a questionnaire, requesting information regarding its activities.⁵ There is, however, a source that reports a wooden fence surrounding both ghettos.⁶ Moreover, the above-mentioned AŻIH testimony states that the Jewish Police guarded the ghetto from the inside, while Ukrainian auxiliary forces guarded its exits. Notices threatened capital punishment for illegally crossing the ghetto's limits, and testimony mentions several Jews shot for this reason. Jews seeking to exit the ghetto had to obtain a special permit, as was also required of Poles trying to enter the ghetto. There were Poles reportedly living inside the ghetto's borders. There is no information regarding the forms of communication between the two ghettos or a possible street connecting the two.

A number of attempted escapes from the ghetto were reported, with those organized by individuals often failing. Some were organized with the help of bribed Germans. Each flight was followed by hefty contributions levied by the Gendarmerie, accompanied by threats to kill members of the Jewish community.⁷ Gendarmerie Lieutenant Kryjer was appointed as the ghetto commander; and two other Gendarmes, Mantke (or Mantko) and Klajmann, were also given some authority over it.⁸ Many of the killings are attributed to an ethnic German (*Volksdeutscher*) called Krwawy Julek Erdman, who was known to kill Jews for pleasure.⁹

The typhus epidemic that broke out in December 1939 had been eliminated by June 1940. The highest numbers of sick were registered in February (58) and then in April 1940 (56). The hospital had closed by October 1940, as there were then no cases of contagious disease. An ambulatory doctor's surgery opened nonetheless. Vaccinations of approximately 1,300 Jews took place in November 1940.¹⁰ Mortality among the ghetto inmates was high due to hunger and sickness. A local Pole, Stanisław Jaszewski, was charged with collecting the dead daily and burying them at the Jewish cemetery, most likely with the assistance of Jewish laborers. Typhus returned in February 1941 and was contained by May 1941.

The self-help committee statistics for June 1940 report 1,451 newcomers; however, another report (July 1940) indicates 3,000 to 4,000 refugees, “most of them illegal,” and stressed the need for urgent assistance.¹¹ With the ghetto’s establishment, as the Judenrat reported, local tradesmen and craftsmen “lost their sources of income.” Despite the introduction of charges for kitchen meals, the Włoszczowa kitchen had to be closed on September 1, 1940; Kurzelów’s was also closed soon afterwards.

That same summer, a number of Jewish laborers were sent to a camp in Cieszanów, near Lubaczów in Distrikt Lublin. All but the seven who died had returned before the year’s end.¹² There is also information on Jews laboring in Włoszczowa proper (at a sawmill), at lime quarries in Bukowa (Bukowa Góra), and on drainage works in the vicinity. The Jewish Police were responsible for the delivery of conscripted laborers. The Germans substituted members of the Jewish Police for any absentees.¹³

With time, conditions in the ghetto became harsher as the Germans continued the confiscation of Jewish possessions and demanded repeated contributions. Between 1941 and 1942, an estimated 100 Jews were murdered, either in their dwellings or at the local gallows (the so-called Górajek), on the outskirts of town. Most of the victims’ names, dates of birth, and occupations are known.¹⁴

The Włoszczowa branch of the JSS, which launched its activities in July 1941, soon reopened the soup kitchen, which served 1,200 meals daily under Rajchman’s management. Special attention was paid to children, 100 of whom were served breakfast daily.

As of February 1942, all able-bodied men were conscripted for labor. There were 4,279 Jews registered as living in the ghetto, including 1,654 refugees and deportees.

In the summer of 1942, two shipments of Jews were sent to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna; the first transport consisted of 150 laborers.¹⁵ In June 1942, on the orders of the local Arbeitsamt, the registration of women aged 15 to 55 was conducted. Local craftsmen, especially shoemakers, solicited the registration of workshops. The August 14, 1942, issue of *Gazeta Żydowska* contains correspondence from Włoszczowa that reads: “local shoemakers specializing in the production of army and work boots”; this advertisement stressed that the Włoszczowa cobblers were the only specialists of their kind in the entire region. Permission to establish such workshops, however, was most likely delayed and not issued before the ghetto was liquidated.¹⁶

The Germans liquidated the Włoszczowa ghetto in September 1942, most likely on September 18. Shortly beforehand, approximately 200 Jews from Secemin were brought in. First, the ghetto was surrounded by the Gendarmerie. Divided into groups, Gendarmes chased Jews out of their dwellings, plundering their contents, and then formed the Jews into rows 4 abreast. Many were shot in the course of the Aktion, including a woman and the newborn baby she had just delivered. A column of Włoszczowa’s Jews was marched via Kiliński and

Wiśniowa Streets to the level crossing. An awaiting train took them all to the Treblinka extermination camp. Wagons followed the march, picking up the dead.

The Germans left a number of able-bodied and wealthier Jews in the ghetto to clean it out and work in a quarry. Following yet another extortion effort by the Germans, the richest Jews—an estimated 80 to 90 people—were shot in their dwellings. About 30 Jews were left in the remnant ghetto, which was liquidated on December 9 or 10, 1942. Its inhabitants were transferred to the Radomsko ghetto.¹⁷

In 1946, according to a list prepared by the Central Committee of Polish Jews, there were 75 Jewish survivors residing in Włoszczowa.¹⁸

SOURCES The Włoszczowa ghetto is mentioned in the following publications: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja, 1979), p. 566; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 136, 172–173; Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 81; and Edyta Gawron, *Włotsbeve: Żydzi we Włoszczowie w latach 1867–1942* (Włoszczowa: Włoszczowskie Tow. Krzewienia Kultury, 2000).

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/725 [AJDC]; 211/1114 [JSS]; 301/6360 and 301/7046 [Relacje]; and USHMM (RG-15.073M [Jewish Councils 1936–1942], reel 1; RG-15.019M [Court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 51; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; and Acc.1997.A.0235 [List of Jews registered in Włoszczowa]).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.073M (Jewish Councils 1936–1942), reel 1 (Włoszczowa), p. 5.
2. *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 2, 1942; USHMM, RG-15.073M, reel 1, pp. 4–7; and Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 566.
3. AŻIH, 301/7046, testimony of Cz. Jelonek and M. Migacz, 1986, dates the ghetto’s establishment in the autumn of 1940. Also see USHMM, RG-15.019M (Włoszczowa), file 223; RG-15.073M, reel 1, pp. 16–17. Gawron, *Włotsbeve*, pp. 122, 185, gives the following configuration of the ghettos: Przedbórz, Śliska, Gęsia, Mleczarska, and Stodolna Streets; the second ghetto location is reported as being closer to the market square and Górki Street.
4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 25, 1942.
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1114, p. 12.
6. Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów*, p. 136.
7. AŻIH, 301/7046; *Gazeta Żydowska*, March 6, 1942.
8. USHMM (RG-15.019M), file 223, dates the ghetto’s establishment as being in July 1941.
9. AŻIH, 301/7046; and Gawron, *Włotsbeve*, p. 185.
10. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1114, pp. 12, 17; and RG-15.073M, reel 1, p. 21.

11. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1114, pp. 2–3, 12; and AŻIH, 301/7046.

12. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/725 (Włoszczowa), pp. 3–4, 12; and RG-15.073M, reel 1, pp. 16–18.

13. Ibid., RG-15.019M, file 223; AŻIH, 301/7046; and Gawron, *Vlotsbeve*, p. 185.

14. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo kieleckie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1980), pp. 296–298; and AŻIH, 301/7046.

15. AŻIH, 301/6360, testimony of Josek Chaim Werthaim, n.d.; Gawron, *Vlotsbeve*, p. 185; and USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1114, p. 12.

16. *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 14, 1942.

17. AŻIH, 301/7046. According to USHMM, RG-15.019M, files 223 and 224 (Włoszczowa), the main liquidation Aktion took place in August 1942.

18. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0235, List of Jews registered in Włoszczowa in 1946 by the Central Committee of Polish Jews.

WODZISŁAW

Pre-1939: Wodzisław, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Wodzisław, Kreis Jędrzejów, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Wodzisław, województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

Wodzisław is located 16 kilometers (10 miles) southwest of Jędrzejów. Sędziszów, Nagłowice, Nawarzyce, and Mstyczów belonged to the Wodzisław kehillah. At the outbreak of World War II, 2,400 Jews lived in Wodzisław.

A Judenrat consisting of 12 persons was set up in October 1939, with Izrael Mordka Norych as its chairman. Izrael Lewkowicz, Enzel Horowicz, and Chaim Unger were among its members. The Judenrat was charged with providing Jews for labor. Those who wanted to avoid forced labor conscription paid the poor to work for them.¹

The town had a small Polish (Blue) Police force, consisting at first of three and then two policemen, named Szczukocki and Machowski. The latter participated in the shooting of local Jews; after the war, he was sentenced to death by a Polish court in Kielce and executed.²

The German authorities established a Jewish quarter in Wodzisław in June 1940. It remained an open ghetto at least until the end of June 1942 and probably remained open until its partial liquidation in September 1942. The ghetto was located in the quarter mainly inhabited by Jews before the war and consisted of 200 dwellings (600 rooms). Most of the buildings in the ghetto were small huts made of wood and mud. A 13-member unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), was also set up.

Jews comprised the overwhelming majority of the village's population, which more or less rendered the entire village a ghetto, with the exception of a few streets occupied by indigenous Polish residents. By November 1940, the ghetto's residents—approximately 3,500 Jews (including 1,000 refugees)—made up 85 percent of the town's total population.³

In 1940, those Jews living in the vicinity of Sędziszów (11 kilometers [7 miles] from Wodzisław) were forced to relocate to either the Wodzisław or Jędrzejów ghettos.⁴ By August, 650 Jewish families inhabited the Wodzisław ghetto. The self-help committee, which was established at that time, was able to distribute a little cash, some clothing, flour, and lard it had received from welfare organizations.

By November 1940, living conditions had deteriorated as a result of a fire that broke out in September or October, which left more than 30 families homeless. Although most of them somehow squeezed into other Jewish households, 5 families continued to live among the debris, while another 5 camped in a nearby field. German soldiers, of whom several hundred were quartered in Wodzisław at the time of the fire, helped to extinguish it. The report of the local Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization reads: the soldiers “were treating the Jews well, they used them for labor, and fed them.” The nature of the labor Jews performed at this time is not known.⁵

On January 15 and 16, 1941, the Germans deported 300 Jews from Jędrzejów—mostly the poor and refugees from elsewhere—to Wodzisław. The Judenrat housed 20 of the families with local Jews, while the remainder were quartered en masse in the Bet Midrash. To resolve the problem of overcrowding and to prevent the spread of disease, Jędrzejów's Kreishauptmann, Dr. Fritz von Balluseck, ordered the removal of 198 people, distributing them among neighboring villages. In Wodzisław, up to 10 Jews were packed into each room.

The situation of the ghetto's inhabitants, especially those refugees who had settled in Wodzisław at the beginning of the war, had deteriorated significantly by March 1941, following the cessation of bread ration distributions by the German authorities. The reason for this action, which forced the Jews to purchase bread at exorbitant prices, was the definition of Wodzisław as a village, not a town; only towns were entitled to bread rations, while villages were to live off their own agricultural surplus. However, in May 1941, the Judenrat reported to the JSS in Kraków that “there are no businesses or houses under commissary administration.”⁶ Zofia Kuźniak confirms that until then the Jews lived more or less in peace, with schools and shops still open; Jewish workshops continued to operate even after other Jewish businesses were shut down.

There is little information about the nature of the labor performed by Jews in Wodzisław. Some Wodzisław volunteers and conscripts worked in 1941 for various private companies at the train station in Sędziszów. The number of opportunities for voluntary work was limited, but women were accepted nonetheless.⁷

By June 1941, there were 3,315 Jews in the ghetto, including 1,831 refugees. A soup kitchen opened on June 15, 1941, serving meals to 500 Jews daily, out of a total of 1,100 Jews in need. At this time, a number of cases of typhus resulted in an epidemic. As there was no Jewish doctor or hospital in Wodzisław, the sick were sent to the Jewish hospital in Jędrzejów. When the Kreishauptmann ordered compulsory vaccina-

tions for Jews, Jędrzejów's doctor, Hirszt Beer, vaccinated the Jews of Wodzisław in August 1941.⁸

An official branch of the JSS was established in Wodzisław on September 1, 1941. At that time the JSS was taking care of 700 Jews, including 110 children allotted 0.30 złoty daily for meals. The JSS-run kitchen was closed on March 1, 1942, due to lack of funds.⁹

In mid-June 1942, the SS shot approximately 50 Jews at the local cemetery. According to Kuźniak, a number of such shootings were conducted in the town in 1941, most often at night. The victims were predominantly elderly men from well-off families. In such cases the bodies were left lying in the streets and only buried the next day, as the residents had to observe the curfew during the night. Later, the shootings on the streets of the town ceased, as the Germans would summon a number of males to the market square, from where they were taken to the Jewish cemetery to be shot.¹⁰

Starting on June 11, 1942, 100 Jewish men and women were assigned to employment on nearby estates, where they also slept overnight. Despite having been assigned to the job by the Jędrzejów Arbeitsamt (labor office), 24 of the unmarried men were selected and sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp on June 23, 1942. At the end of June 1942, 3,837 Jews were reported to be living in the Wodzisław ghetto—that is, an average of 7 people per room.

In the last month of the ghetto's existence, the JSS tried to organize local workshops for the manufacture of straw boots. They were to be established under the supervision of the workshop management in Jędrzejów, but the Kreishauptmann, who insisted on German supervision, kept delaying its organization. In the end, permission for the creation of the straw-boot workshops was not granted.

The Germans liquidated the Wodzisław ghetto on or around September 20, 1942. The Jews were gathered on the market square and were marched to Sędziszów, escorted by Polish Bahnschutz (Railway Police) and Jewish Police. A large number of Jews who could not keep up were killed along the way. The column reached Sędziszów in the course of that ghetto's liquidation. That same day, the Szczekociny ghetto was also liquidated; its Jewish population was also transferred to Sędziszów. Following a selection, the old and sick were shot in the same meadow where the deportees were forced to camp out overnight. That morning, all the Jews were loaded onto trains destined for the Treblinka extermination camp.¹¹

In the course of the liquidation of the Wodzisław ghetto and the hunt for Jews in hiding that took place over the following weeks, reportedly 318 people were shot. Executions were conducted either at the Jewish cemetery or at the current playing field. Most victims were buried in Wodzisław, some in Świątniki.¹²

According to Kuźniak, the Jews in Wodzisław were alerted to the upcoming date of the ghetto liquidation. In reaction, almost all the younger people fled the town (over 1,000, according to historian Adam Rutkowski). Only the elderly and small children remained in the ghetto. For example, of the 6- to 8-person Jewish family with whom Kuźniak lived,

only Estera Fiszman with her two small children remained. An elderly man named Klajn, who during the deportation hid with two infants his family had left with him in the attic of his house, set himself on fire with petrol to commit suicide.¹³

Following the liquidation Aktion, the German authorities established a remnant ghetto in Wodzisław. At the beginning of November 1942, 90 Jews lived there, but this number reportedly grew to 300 before its liquidation that same month. On November 20, the remaining Jews were resettled to the Sandomierz ghetto.¹⁴

SOURCES The Wodzisław ghetto is mentioned in the following publications: Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1456; and Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955): 129, 146 (table 6).

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/726, 211/488–89, 211/494, 211/1115–17, and 301/3549); USHMM (RG-50.488 # 0149 [Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; and Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 51 [JSS]).

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NOTES

1. *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 25, 1941; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1116 (Wodzisław), p. 6, 211/1117 (Wodzisław), p. 12, and reel 26, 211/489 (Jędrzejów), p. 25.
2. USHMM, RG-50.488 # 0149 (Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project), interview with Zofia Kuźniak, 2002.
3. *Ibid.*; and Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1115 (Wodzisław), p. 12.
4. AŻIH, 301/3549, testimony of Mojżesz Najman, 1948.
5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1115, p. 12.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
7. USHMM, RG-50.488 # 0149; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1116, pp. 2, 6; and AŻIH, 301/3549.
8. AŻIH, 301/3549; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1115, p. 63, 211/1116, p. 12, and 211/1117, p. 7; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/726, p. 5; and *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 28, 1941.
9. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 51, 211/1116, p. 25, and 211/1117, p. 10; *Gazeta Żydowska*, February 25, 1942. Also see USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/488 (Jędrzejów), p. 13, and 211/494 (Jędrzejów), p. 26.
10. USHMM, RG-50.488 # 0149.
11. AŻIH, 301/3549; and USHMM, RG-50.488 # 0149.
12. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo kieleckie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1980), p. 306.
13. USHMM, RG-50.488 # 0149; and Rutkowski, "Martyrologia," p. 129.
14. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów: Województwo kieleckie*, p. 306; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 26, 211/489, pp. 55–56.

WOLANÓW

Pre-1939: Wolanów, village, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Wolanow, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Wolanów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Wolanów is located 13 kilometers (8 miles) southwest of Radom. On the outbreak of World War II, on September 1, 1939, there were probably around 500 Jews residing in Wolanów.¹ Archival documentation regarding their fate during the German occupation is very scant. This is due partly to the fact that from 1940 the village was included within a large German military training ground, set up by the occupying forces in the area around Radom. It encompassed a complex of training areas for anti-aircraft artillery, which were linked to two airfields constructed in their vicinity. As the Wehrmacht enforced strict security around the training grounds, only fragmentary information regarding the Jewish community could be transmitted across its borders. It is known, however, that the community was soon subjected to the anti-Jewish legislation enforced in the Generalgouvernement. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established to represent the local Jewish community. But its activities were very modest and were limited mostly to transmitting the orders of the occupiers to the Jewish residents. In the spring of 1940, Wolanów was one of the few localities in Distrikt Radom in which the Judenrat did not carry out much in the way of charitable work.²

In March 1941, the number of Jews increased to more than 600 people, following the resettlement of 26 families from the nearby town of Przytyk, which was completely evacuated for the construction of one of the airfields.³ Other Jews, such as the family of Jerachmiel Pikier, arrived in Wolanów from Distrikt Warschau to avoid being concentrated in the Warsaw ghetto. A large number of men were forced to dig peat and perform various tasks at the military training grounds, such as the construction of barracks and new roads. Pikier, for example, was employed in the summer of 1942 on construction work in the nearby village of Strzałków. It is likely that a large group of Jews was imprisoned in the labor camp situated near Wolanów in the village of Garno from 1940. Prisoners of the camp worked in airfield construction.⁴

According to a witness testimony held by the International Tracing Service (ITS), a ghetto was established in Wolanów in July 1941. Wolanów is also mentioned as one of the places where Jews were to be concentrated in Kreis-hauptmann Dr. Egen's order of December 22, 1941, on the establishment of ghettos in Kreis Radom-Land, which thereby confirmed Wolanów's status as a *Judenbezirk* or Jewish ghetto. It is likely that following this order in early 1942, more Jews from the surrounding villages were required to move there.⁵ After this date, Jews caught outside the ghetto faced the death penalty.

As houses in the village were scattered, the strict segregation of the Polish and Jewish population was probably not conducted, but rather the entire village was recognized as a ghetto. There

were probably also overcrowded living conditions among the Jews in Wolanów, due to the arrival of the Jews from Przytyk and other places. Each month the food and sanitary conditions worsened. Although the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) transferred some funds to assist with the feeding of children during the course of 1942, it was only a drop in the ocean.⁶

The ghetto was liquidated in the last days of August 1942, when all of its residents were transferred to Szydłowiec. From there, on September 23, together with others, the Jews of Wolanów were deported to the extermination camp in Treblinka.⁷ The prisoners of the labor camp in Garno faced a similar tragic fate when this camp was liquidated in August 1943.⁸ During the war, material evidence of the Jewish presence in Wolanów was destroyed, including the tombstones from the Jewish cemetery, which the Germans used to pave roads in the area.

SOURCES Published sources regarding the Wolanów ghetto include Sebastian Piątkowski, "Pomoc społeczna i działalność charytatywna w gettach dystryktu radomskiego (1939–1942)," in Marek Przeniosło, ed., *Dobroczynność i pomoc społeczna na ziemiach polskich w XIX, XX i na początku XXI wieku* (Kielce, 2008), pp. 172–177; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), p. 122; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 569.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR; AŻIH (211/430 [JSS]; NMO, nos. 60 and 63); and ITS.

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trans. Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej dystryktu radomskiego podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej," *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 160, however, states—based on a witness account—that there were 800 Jews living in Wolanów at the outbreak of the war. This number is probably too high.

2. Piątkowski, "Pomoc społeczna," pp. 172–177.

3. AŻIH, 211/430; Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków, 2004), p. 141; Adam Rutkowski, "The War and the Destruction of the Jewish Population in the Radom Region" (trans. Jerrold Landau), in *Przytyk Memorial Book* (translation of David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Przytyk* [Tel Aviv: Przytyk Societies in Israel, France, and the USA, 1973]), p. 257.

4. In Polish publications the camp in the village of Garno is often referred to as being located in Wolanów. This is incorrect. See, for example, Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 569; and Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 152. Also see "Jerachmiel (Rachmil) Pikier, about his family during and after World War II in Warka, Wolanów, and Starchowice," available at www.sztetl.org.pl. Pikier was subsequently transferred to the labor camp after the evacuation of Wolanów's Jews in August 1942.

5. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, p. 122, citing AŻIH, NMO, nos. 60 and 63, from late December 1942.

6. AŻIH, 211/430.

7. Sebastian Piątkowski, “Żydzi w Szydłowcu w latach wojny i okupacji (1939–1945),” in Jacek Wijaczka, ed., *Żydzi szydlowiccy. Materiały sesji popularnonaukowej 22 lutego 1997 roku* (Szydłowiec, 1997), p. 128.

8. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 569.

WOLBÓRZ

Pre-1939: Wolbórz, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Wolborz, Kreis Petrikau, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Wolbórz, Łódź województwo, Poland

Wolbórz is located about 39 kilometers (24 miles) southeast of Łódź. In 1939, there were 254 Jews living in Wolbórz.

A significant part of the village was razed in the course of the September Campaign; the Jewish community estimated that 75 percent of its houses were destroyed.¹ There were some German forces encamped in the village; the Jews of Wolbórz were forced to clean their quarters and perform other tasks at their behest. This labor was unpaid.

H. Młynarski was the first Judenrat chairman. Młynarski's deputy, the dentist Icchok Rosenblat, later replaced him. Rosenblat was most likely succeeded by the tailor Abram Kirszbaum. Kirszbaum was shot on Modrzewski Street by the Tomaszów Mazowiecki Gestapo and German Gendarmerie on July 23, 1942. A Jewish police force was also established in the village; Rosenblat served in this force. The police commander was shot by SS men shortly before the liquidation of the Wolbórz ghetto.

By the end of 1939, numerous refugee and deportee families from Łódź and Tuszyn had settled in the village.

In 1940, 19 local youths were sent to a labor camp in Cieszanów in Distrikt Lublin. Meanwhile in Wolbórz, approximately 30 unpaid laborers were regulating the Wolbórka River, deepening it to improve the functioning of a local mill. Work was suspended briefly in January 1941 for the remainder of the winter. At that time, on the order of the Kreis doctor, the community was forced to open a public bath. There were reportedly 427 Jews living in the village at this time.²

By May 1941, a local branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) had been established, with pre-war community leader Josek Szajnfarber as its chairman and Judenrat chairman Rosenblat serving as his deputy; another member of the pre-war leadership, the tradesman Moszek Baum, was also on the committee. The JSS committee's services were limited to the distribution of very small quantities of potatoes and sugar.³

By mid-1941, the number of locals was almost equal to the number of newcomers. In July of that year, the local JSS committee reported 182 refugees living in the village. August 1941 statistics show that there were a total of 121 children and youths under 18.

In September 1941, a typhus epidemic broke out, which remained uncontained until November 1941. The JSS managed to open a soup kitchen on November 9, 1941, which fed 40 people who were still quarantined. By December 1941, the kitchen was feeding 63 people daily. As of February 1942, the

40 poorest children in the village were fed breakfast four times a week comprising 10 grams (0.4 ounce) of bread with marmalade and chicory coffee.⁴

In May 1942, there were 424 Jews in Wolbórz, including 188 refugees. In a report dated May 5, 1942, the local JSS stated that there was no ghetto in Wolbórz. However, it noted: “Caution: over 80 percent of the Jews are living in Jewish houses [owned or occupied by Jews]. This month some families were resettled to Jewish houses. On average, up to seven persons share a room.”⁵

This resettlement most likely indicates the ghetto's establishment. Two survivors and brothers of the Judenrat chairman, Herman and Samuel Rosenblat, testified that the ghetto was open. Samuel described it as follows: “The only plus was that the ghetto was not enclosed with barbed wire, it was like a few streets designated for a ghetto, and we somehow could survive by bringing in some food.” Neither of the brothers refers to any punishment being imposed for leaving the ghetto or whether guards were posted around the perimeter. Herman stated, however, “We were not allowed to leave the immediate main square of the town.” As the ghetto's mailman, he was the only Jew permitted to go to the local post office to pick up the community's mail. The ghetto was overcrowded, with four to five families sharing a house.⁶

The ghetto was liquidated at the beginning of October 1942. Its residents were transferred to the Piotrków Trybunalski ghetto, which was liquidated in turn on October 15–21, 1942. Many of its residents, including most of the Jews from Wolbórz, were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES References to the Wolbórz ghetto can be found in Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), p. 185; and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 102, 142 (table 4), 169–170.

Archival sources include USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/732; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], 211/798, 211/1127-1130) and VHF (# 00781 and 10740).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1128 (Wolbórz), pp. 3–5; and 211/1130 (Wolbórz), p. 19.

2. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo piotrkowskie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1983), p. 147; VHF, # 10740, testimony of Herman Rosenblat, 1996; # 00781, testimony of Samuel Rosenblat, 1995; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/732 (Wolbórz), p. 2; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/798 (Piotrków Trybunalski), pp. 4–5; 211/1128, pp. 3–5, 17–19; and 211/1130, p. 7.

3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1127 (Wolbórz), p. 2; 211/798, pp. 4–5.

4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/732, p. 2; 211/1128, p. 29; 211/1129 (Wolbórz), p. 19; 211/1130, pp. 14–15, 19.

5. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1130 (Wolbórz), p. 19.

6. VHF, # 00781; # 10740.

WYŚMIERZYCE

Pre-1939: Wyśmierzyce, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Wysmierzyce, Kreis Radom-Land, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Wyśmierzyce, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Wyśmierzyce is located 45 kilometers (28 miles) northwest of Radom, on the Pilica River. On the outbreak of World War II, approximately 150 Jews were residing in the town.¹

Soon after the start of the German occupation in September 1939, the Jews of Wyśmierzyce became subject to the anti-Jewish legislation enforced throughout the Generalgouvernement. A Judenrat was established to represent the local Jewish community. According to available sources, its activities were very modest, largely limited to relaying the orders of the occupiers to the community. In the spring of 1940, Wyśmierzyce was one of the few localities in Distrikt Radom where the Judenrat apparently was not engaged in running welfare activities.²

In 1940–1941, the number of Jews in Wyśmierzyce rose significantly. The Germans sent about 40 Jewish families from Przytyk to Wyśmierzyce when the Jews of Przytyk were resettled in March 1941 to make way for the construction of an airfield.³ In addition, numerous refugees from nearby localities in Distrikt Warschau (primarily Mogielnica and Przybyszewo) settled in the town. Their influx was due to the conviction among many Jews that Wyśmierzyce was a relatively “safe” place, as the German police visited the town only rarely. Local Jews were still able to sustain themselves by peddling, running retail stores and workshops, or selling their labor to local Poles in exchange for food.⁴ Available sources imply that by the end of 1941 the number of Jews in Wyśmierzyce had reached 500. At that time, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) existed in Wyśmierzyce, most likely administered by Symcha Tenenbaum, Henoch Grynfarb, and Motek Bryner.⁵

A ghetto was established in Wyśmierzyce during the last days of May 1942. It included the following streets (present names): Zdrojowa, Wojska Polskiego, and Piotr Skarga, as well as the eastern side of the Market Square (*Rynek*), encompassing an area of approximately 2 hectares (5 acres). At that time there were 900 Jews in the ghetto, presumably including additional Jews brought in from the surrounding villages. Some of the Jews were forced to find shelter in cowsheds and barns. Sanitary conditions in the ghetto were simply disastrous, resulting in an outbreak of typhus.⁶ It is not known whether at the time of the ghetto’s establishment a Jewish police force was also organized. On June 15, the Jewish quarter was completely sealed: not a single Jew was permitted to leave the ghetto—not even temporarily. Poles were forbidden to enter the ghetto. A few days later the Germans took numerous able-bodied men from the ghetto to one of the labor camps in Distrikt Radom. As a result of this roundup, the number of people unable to sustain themselves rose to 700.⁷ Conditions in the ghetto continued to deteriorate until around August 20, when all of the ghetto’s residents were deported to the Białobrzegi ghetto.

From there, they were driven subsequently to the train station in Dobieszyn, from which they were sent to the extermination camp in Treblinka.⁸

Just before the transfer of the Jews from Wyśmierzyce to the Białobrzegi ghetto, Dr. Heling turned to the secretary of the municipality, Hieronim Sochaczewski, asking for help. A few days later, Sochaczewski provided Dr. Heling with Aryan papers for himself, his wife, and his daughter, with roughly the right ages for the family, but bearing the names of people who were deceased. Sochaczewski then hid the Helings for several days, before assisting them in their escape across the Pilica River to another town, where they survived until the arrival of the Red Army in September 1944. In 1986, Sochaczewski was recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations.

SOURCES The main published source regarding conditions in the Wyśmierzyce ghetto is Sebastian Piątkowski, “Pomoc społeczna i działalność charytatywna w gettach dystryktu radomskiego (1939–1942),” in Marek Przeniosło, ed., *Dobroczynność i pomoc społeczna na ziemiach polskich w XIX, XX i na początku XXI wieku* (Kielce, 2008), pp. 172–177. The ghetto is also mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 578.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APR; AŻIH (211/430, 1138 [JSS]); IPN; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej dystryktu radomskiego podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos 15–16 (1955): 160.
2. See Piątkowski, “Pomoc społeczna,” pp. 172–177.
3. Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków, 2004), p. 141; Adam Rutkowski, “The War and the Destruction of the Jewish Population in the Radom Region” (trans. Jerrold Landau), in *Przytyk Memorial Book* (translation of *Sefer Przytyk*, ed. David Shtokfish [Tel Aviv: Przytyk Societies in Israel, France, and the USA, 1973]), p. 257.
4. AŻIH, 211/430.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.; Tadeusz Rostkowski, “Społeczeństwo Wyśmierzyce w latach 1939–1945,” in *650 lat Wyśmierzyce* (Wyśmierzyce, 1988), p. 110.
7. AŻIH, 211/430.
8. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 578.

ŻARKI

Pre-1939: Żarki, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1940–1944: Zarki, Kreis Radomsko, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Żarki, województwo śląskie, Poland

Żarki is located on the Warta River, 26 kilometers (16 miles) southeast of Częstochowa. In 1939, 2,656 Jews lived in Żarki.

On the outbreak of World War II, many buildings in Żarki were destroyed by German bombardments. More than 150 people, including about 100 Jews, were killed. Many inhabitants tried to flee, but most were forced to return. Żarki was occupied on September 4. That day, about 1,000 Jews were ordered to gather on the central square where they were kept for hours, and some were subsequently shot. In the first weeks of occupation, a number of Jews were arrested as hostages, and one of the Jewish study centers was burned down.

Under German occupation, a known antisemite, Kovalik, became mayor of the town. Jewish houses had to be marked with the word “Jude” (Jew), Jews were not allowed to trade with non-Jews, and Jewish men were drafted for forced labor, especially to clean the streets of rubble.¹

By the end of April 1940, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) had been established in Żarki. The chairman was Yisrael Bornstein (who also was in charge of the Jewish Police), the secretary was I. Wolhendler,² and the chairman of the labor office was Moshe Rothstein. In April, the Judenrat reported on the situation of the Jews in Żarki. Of the 3,500 Jews there, most were craftsmen such as shoemakers or bootmakers. Many Jewish families had lost their homes, and there were only limited funds to help the homeless or hungry. A soup kitchen provided 300 meals per day. Jews performed forced labor, cleaning and repairing streets and squares, and Jews who owned horses had to work for local farmers. A Jewish physician, Dr. Margulies, took care of the sick and elderly.³ To ease the burden on the community, wealthier Jews were taxed, and the money was used as a relief fund, to pay “contributions” or to bribe German officials.

In May 1940, Żarki became part of Kreis Radomsko, in Distrikt Radom within the Generalgouvernement. The new Kreishauptmann imposed a “fine” of 40,000 złoty on the Jewish community, which stretched its financial reserves to the limit.⁴ On June 26, 1940, the Jewish Council reported to the



A group of Jewish men and youth from Żarki march to a forced labor site carrying shovels, June 20, 1940.
USHMM WS #16501, COURTESY OF LEAH HAMMERSTEIN SILVERSTEIN

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) that due to lack of funds the soup kitchen had to be closed, and there was almost no money left to support the refugees. Almost all Jewish businesses had been liquidated, and unemployment was rising. Starvation increasingly became a problem. To help out, the AJDC sent food and clothing in August, including 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of rice, 192 kilos (423 pounds) of flour, and 200 cans of condensed milk.⁵

In the summer of 1940, about 200 Jews from Żarki were drafted for forced labor: about 50 of them on irrigation projects for the Water Regulation Company in Częstochowa.⁶ In October 1940, the labor office in Częstochowa sent 73 Jews to a forced labor camp in Przyrów and planned to send more. Some 50 Jews also worked for the chemical plant in Brieg; 50 more worked in town, cleaning rubble; and an unknown number worked in regulating the Leśniówka River. Some Jews received a regular salary and others did not, relying instead on support from the Judenrat, raised from Jews who paid for substitutes.⁷

The dire financial situation of the Żarki Jewish community was exacerbated by the constant influx of refugees. About 250 refugees arrived from Płock after being deported from there at the end of February 1941. The Jewish community had to provide them with food, housing, and clothing. The Judenrat and the local chapter of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population in Poland (TOZ) were also in charge of administering medical aid for forced laborers from Wodzisław kept in Żarki and for forced laborers from Żarki in the camp in Przyrów.⁸ Facing all these expenses, the Judenrat repeatedly turned to the AJDC for financial help to reopen the soup kitchen and to keep the outpatient hospital running.⁹

In the spring of 1941, a group of young Jews, probably all members of the Ha-Shomer Ha-Za’ir, established a farm on formerly Jewish-owned fields near Żarki. The 14-hectare (35-acre) farm was meant to provide unpaid vocational training in agriculture for about 25 adolescents; the instructor was a Jewish farmer. The Jewish Council requested financial support for the project, mainly to buy tools and livestock.¹⁰ The farm, run by H. Bradys and M. Margulies, provided supplementary food for the Jews of Żarki, producing a wide variety of vegetables and fruits. The farm had seven geese and two ponds with fish; fruit was harvested from 162 trees and 350 bushes. According to survivors’ memoirs, even representatives of the German authorities who visited the farm were impressed by the Jews’ obvious agricultural capabilities, which defied the Germans’ antisemitic stereotypes. The farm continued to operate into 1942.¹¹

Information on the ghetto in Żarki is relatively sparse. Survivor accounts date the establishment of an open ghetto (Jewish residential area) on a few streets to the arrival of the Jews from Płock, which also led to overcrowding.¹² According to another account, following an outbreak of typhus in June 1941, local antisemites blamed the Jews for the disease and demanded the government isolate them. In response, the Kreishauptmann ordered that the “ghetto” in Żarki be enclosed

by a fence and sealed off. However, with the aid of bribes, the Jewish Council managed to get this edict reversed. Nevertheless, by the fall of 1941, Jews were forbidden to leave their places of residence and were shot if caught outside the ghetto without permission. This shut down almost all Jewish trade, especially smuggling across the border with the Reich. Now only a few specialists received official passes to go to workplaces outside the ghetto. Hunger subsequently drove more Jews to ignore the prohibition, going to nearby villages in search of food. But many were caught and shot. On each occasion the Judenrat was informed and instructed to go and collect the body.¹³

At the end of 1941, there was a renewed typhus epidemic, resulting in a number of deaths. The small hospital the Jewish community had opened was unable to do much, as it lacked drugs and medical personnel. The German authorities' response was to order the Jewish community to improve sanitary conditions by erecting a public bathhouse.

In the late summer of 1942, the Żarki Jews were scared by rumors about the liquidation of ghettos in the area and the deportation of Jews to extermination camps. In their despair, they looked for alternatives like volunteering for forced labor camps, collecting money to bribe the German authorities, or erecting places to hide in town or outside in the forests around Żarki. In late September, news reached the community that Polish farmers with horses and wagons had been instructed to arrive in town on October 6, 1942. Based on reports from other communities, the Jews knew what this meant: the horse-drawn carriages would take them to a train station, and from there they would be sent to camps. Panic spread. Some Jews tried to flee to other towns and ghettos, but for many there was no escape. On October 6, about 800 Jews were assembled at the market square, while German SS and Police, Ukrainian auxiliaries, and Polish (Blue) Police searched the town for Jews in hiding; 23 were found and shot on the spot.¹⁴

Probably due to the specific situation in Żarki—the ghetto was unfenced—about 1,600 Jews were able to flee. Most of them fled to Pilica, where the expulsions had been completed. From the 800 Jews at the market square, about 30 were selected for labor. The others were driven to Złoty Potok, the train station close to Żarki, and from there they were taken in freight cars to the Treblinka extermination camp.¹⁵

The 30 Jews held back were used to collect and sort Jewish property. Jews who had tried to escape the expulsion were caught and sent to ghettos in Pilica, Częstochowa, and Piotrków Trybunalski. The main collection ghetto for the area was in Radomsko, and many Żarki Jews were taken there. From all of these ghettos, the remaining Jews from Żarki were sent mainly to extermination camps in early 1943.¹⁶

SOURCES Relevant published sources concerning the fate of the Jewish community in Żarki during the Holocaust include the following: Y. Lador, ed., *Kebilat Zarki; ayarab be-hayeha u-ve-khilyonah* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Żarki in Israel, 1959); Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999),

pp. 216–221; Krzysztof Urbański, *Almanach gmin żydowskich województwa kieleckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach, 2007), pp. 172–175; and Krzysztof Urbański, *Gminy żydowskie małe w województwie kieleckim w okresie międzywojennym* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach, 2006), pp. 189–196. The Żarki ghetto is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 597, no. 5812.

Relevant documentation on Żarki under German occupation can be found in AAN (202/III/7); AŻIH (210/752); BA-L (B 162/6221); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH—AJDC], 210/752); VHF (e.g., # 9642, 28289, and 31493); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Lador, *Kebilat Zarki*, pp. 165, 231.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH—AJDC), 210/752, financial report of the Ältestenrat, 1940.
3. Ibid., report of Ältestenrat, April 1940.
4. Lador, *Kebilat Zarki*, p. 166.
5. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/752, various correspondence dated June 26 (Rechenschaftsbericht), July, and August 9, 1940.
6. Ibid., report for August and September 1940.
7. Ibid., report, October 1940.
8. Ibid., report of local TOŻ chapter for 1940.
9. Ibid., Ältestenrat to AJDC, January 29, 1941, and TOŻ chapter to AJDC in Kraków, February 5, 1941.
10. Lador, *Kebilat Zarki*, p. 169; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/752, correspondence of May 16 and June 12, 1941.
11. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/752; and Lador, *Kebilat Zarki*, p. 170.
12. VHF, # 28289, testimony of Joseph Dauman; # 9642, testimony of Eli Zborowski (uses the term “residential area”).
13. Lador, *Kebilat Zarki*, pp. 240–243.
14. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 219.
15. Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007), pp. 269, 302; BA-L, B 162/6221, pp. 1612 ff.
16. Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen*, pp. 276–277; BA-L, B 162/6221, p. 1534; AAN, 202/III/7, vol. 2, p. 11.

ŻARNÓW

Pre-1939: Żarnów, village, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Zarnow, Kreis Tomaszow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Żarnów, Łódź województwo, Poland

Żarnów is located 22 kilometers (14 miles) southwest of Opoczno. There were 919 Jews living in the village in 1921; by 1937 their number had risen to 1,129.

Established by the German authorities, the Jewish Council (Judenrat) included Abram Wajnberg (chairman), a shoemaker and former president of the Jewish community in Żarnów; Nuchym Lipling (deputy); and K. Nuemiller (office manager).

By January 1941, 1,494 refugees and deportees had settled in the village. A self-help committee was established on February 2, 1941, taking over the provision of social assistance by the Judenrat, including the operation of the soup kitchen, which was managed by a man named Dobraszklanka. The committee was chaired by the dentist Rachmil Klajnert and included Aron Turko (deputy), Jakub Zacharjasz (treasurer), Rubin Kuszer, and Chaim Husytowski. The three members of the committee's oversight commission were Rabbi Alter Gotszalk and the Judenrat leaders Wajnberg and Lipling.¹

The number of refugees rose to 1,643 following the arrival of 266 Jews from Płock on March 17, 1941. In April, a refugee from Płock with the first name of Felicja described her situation in Żarnów: "Very many people live like I do: for breakfast, black bread and coffee with saccharin, [and for] dinner 10 groszy [meal at the soup kitchen], for supper just like breakfast. . . . Sanitary conditions are calamitous, vermin is everywhere. The housing question is a headache only for those who have no money."

In May 1941, approximately 35 Jews were sent to a labor camp in Dęblin, where the Germans were expanding an airfield.²

In July 1941, out of an estimated 2,500 Jews residing in Żarnów, 1,500 were newcomers from Mława, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Płock, and other localities. As diseases were already spreading, the head doctor for the Kreis ordered Żarnów's Jews to establish an epidemic hospital by the end of July. Doctor Jan Singer, responsible for sanitation, stated in October 1941, "Typhus is spreading amongst deportees living in utter indigence." Soon after, the order was given to outfit the hospital with a total of 20 beds. The soup kitchen was closed to make room for the hospital but was reopened on November 11, 1941, after the Germans closed the hospital. The sick were then sent to a hospital in Opoczno. Out of 200 people who contracted typhus, 30 died by the end of December 1941.³

A branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was organized in the village in November 1941, staffed by Hersz Bromberg as chairman, Rachmil Klajnert, and Jakub Zacharjasz.⁴

By the end of January 1942, the Jews living in Żarnów had been ghettoized. On January 27, the JSS wrote to its Kraków headquarters: "As you know, the Jews are banned from leaving town. Accordingly . . . it is presently impossible to manage all affairs of the soup kitchen. . . . [A]ll efforts to buy produce for the soup kitchen, or straw and shoes for the poor, encountered enormous obstacles . . . even more so since none of the JSS members has any special permission [to leave the ghetto]." In February there were 2,200 Jews in the ghetto. In April 1942, still no one had permission to leave the town.⁵

This restriction, however, was most likely poorly enforced until shortly before the ghetto's liquidation in October 1942. Two sisters, Helen and Halina Zimm, whose families found refuge in Żarnów in 1940, do not describe it as a ghetto. Helen even testified: "luckily it was not a ghetto."⁶ *Pinkas ha-kebilot* states that it was officially an unfenced area that was designated as Jewish; however, a number of Jews continued to live in other sections of the village. This lasted until September 1942, about one month before the liquidation.

The date the Jewish Police was organized is unknown; however, in February 1942, one of its tasks was to collect taxes—"often employing force"—imposed by the Judenrat. The monthly tax at the time ranged from 700 to 900 zloty. The kitchen continued its services (e.g., in April 1942 for 350 people), and some recipients were charged 10 groszy per meal.

On the orders of the Arbeitsamt (labor office), 50 of Żarnów's poorer Jews and refugees were daily performing public works in Opoczno in the spring of 1942. Jewish laborers reportedly also worked in agriculture, on road construction, and in workshops organized by the Judenrat.⁷

In May 1942, the German authorities arrested Judenrat head Wajnberg and several other community leaders. After an 11-day questioning they were shot in a forest near Opoczno. Hillel Zachariash (Zacharjasz) became the new Judenrat chairman. Among the victims was most likely Rachmil Klajnert, whom the JSS acknowledges at the time as being "deceased." As of June 1942, Chaim Husytowski was the JSS chairman. In the summer of 1942, a number of Jews from the ghetto were sent to the Janowska labor camp on the outskirts of Lwów.⁸

The last information about the ghetto comes from the JSS report for September 1942 (dated October 2, 1942). In a section referring to changes happening in the ghetto within the reporting period, the JSS noted: "Resettlement of Jews living until now in non-Jewish houses to Jewish-owned houses." The document reports 2,025 Jews in the Żarnów ghetto.⁹ Helen Zimm testified that at the end of September the community learned about the planned resettlement to labor camps.¹⁰

The ghetto was liquidated in the second half of October 1942. Prior to this, more Jews from surrounding villages were brought in (e.g., 300 Jews from Marcinków-Machory on October 5, 1942, and possibly 300 Jews from the Skórkowice ghetto) as well as a few families from Siucice (where most of the Jewish population had already been sent to the Skórkowice ghetto in January 1942).¹¹ According to Florian Mayerski, his family was marched to the Żarnów ghetto just one day before its Jews were deported to the Opoczno ghetto. The next morning at dawn, the Germans forcefully gathered Żarnów's Jews in the market. Many elderly and disabled Jews were shot either on their way there or in their apartments. In the course of a selection, the Germans asked those with professional backgrounds to identify themselves. Approximately 50 people, including the chairman of the Judenrat, were held back, while the remainder were taken to Opoczno on trucks. The Opoczno ghetto was liquidated on October 27, 1942, when its residents were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Mayerski, who was a member of the cleanup Kommando, estimated that they buried about 30 corpses at the Jewish cemetery in Żarnów. The Kommando lived on the grounds of the ghetto. Some Jews escaped; others were most likely transferred to the Ujazd ghetto in December 1942 or January 1943.¹²

SOURCES The following publications make reference to the fate of the Jewish community of Żarnów during the Holocaust: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 132, 185; Adam Rutkowski, "Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności

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żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 155 (table 10), 177–178; Krzysztof Urbański, *Almanach gmin żydowskich województwa kieleckiego w latach 1918–1939* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach: FPHU “XYZ,” 2007), p. 177; and Danuta Dąbrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ba-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 104–105.

Relevant archival sources include AŻIH (210/754, 211/969, 211/1039, 211/1173-1175, Ring I/573); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079 [Ring I]); and VHF (# 19079, 19208, and 47850).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/754 (Żarnów), pp. 3–5; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1173 (Żarnów), pp. 3–4; 211/1174 (Żarnów), p. 2; and 211/1175 (Żarnów), pp. 9, 25.

2. *Ibid.*, RG-15.079, Ring I/537, pp. 1–4; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/754, pp. 9–10; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1173, pp. 12, 14, 25.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 29; 211/1174, pp. 1, 24, 26, 34, 38–39; and 211/1175, p. 1.

4. *Ibid.*, 211/1174, p. 29.

5. *Ibid.*, 211/1175, pp. 9–10, 12, 21.

6. VHF, # 19079, testimony of Helen Zimm, 1996; # 19208, testimony of Halina Zimm, 1996.

7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1175, pp. 12, 30; VHF, # 19079.

8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1039 (Tomaszów Mazowiecki), pp. 62–63; and 211/1175, pp. 46, 53.

9. *Ibid.*, 211/1175, pp. 61–64.

10. VHF, # 19079.

11. *Ibid.*, # 47850, testimony of Florian Mayerski, 1998; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/969 (Skórkowice), pp. 31–32.

12. VHF, # 47850.

ZAWICHOST

Pre-1939: Zawichost, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Opatow, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo świętokrzyskie, Poland

The town of Zawichost is located on the left bank of the Vistula River, 17 kilometers (11 miles) northeast of Sandomierz.

When the Germans captured Zawichost on September 9, 1939, they found about 1,500 Jews in the town. The large-scale plunder of Jewish houses started immediately, and all Jewish stores were forced to close.

In early 1940, the Germans established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in the town, nominating merchant Chaim Josef Kirszenbaum as chairman and Arnold Węgrzyn as his deputy. The Judenrat's main tasks were to organize forced labor and collect the “contributions” imposed by the Germans. As a first contribution, the Germans demanded 50,000 złoty, threatening to kill the entire community if the demand was not met. The successive contributions soon impoverished the Jews.

One day, Kirszenbaum tried to explain to the Gendarmes, who came frequently from Sandomierz, that the Jews had run out of money. They took him out of his house and beat him. Despite such episodes, the members of the Judenrat generally had a good relationship with the Gendarmes. Jewish merchants even traded with Wehrmacht soldiers returning from France to obtain items they could resell for a profit.¹

At the start, the Germans simply rounded up whomever they could catch for forced labor; later it was obligatory for all men aged between 16 and 60. The better-off Jews could avoid service by paying money to the Judenrat in return for a falsified document stating that they had performed such labor. Jews were forced to drain nearby fields and repair the levees on the banks of the Vistula River.

With the assistance of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) based in Kraków, the Judenrat sought to supply laborers with shoes and clothes. In August 1940, about 200 young and healthy Jews were sent to newly established labor camps in Distrikt Lublin, including one at Bełżec. There, they worked to fortify the banks of the Bug River (the border with the Soviet Union) and also improved highways as a part of the so-called Otto Program.²

In September 1939, approximately 200 Jews arrived in Zawichost, having fled from settlements to the west. In addition, about 130 Jews from Łódź, Kalisz, and Tarnobrzeg were resettled to Zawichost in November 1939. In December 1940, on German instructions, the Judenrat in Radom forced about 2,000 Jews to relocate to smaller towns. Approximately 100 were transferred to Zawichost without luggage or money. The Judenrat in Zawichost tried in vain to obtain money from Radom's Judenrat to assist these deportees. The Judenrat in Radom, which intentionally enlisted its own poor for resettlement, insisted that the Zawichost community treat these Jews like the other refugees and provide for them themselves.

The refugees and expellees received some assistance from the AJDC in Kraków; however, they claimed that due to the Judenrat's corruption, only a small fraction of the aid reached the intended recipients. Whenever Zawichost's indigent Jews spoke up for themselves, however, they were told “to eat stones” and “leave the Judenrat office.” In June 1940, desperate deportees described the situation to the AJDC, requesting that a special envoy be sent. The envoy inspected local conditions in December 1940. In March 1941, the Judenrat estimated there were 300 deportees in Zawichost; by April this number had risen to 400.³

To cope with the growing number of deportees, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization was established in Kraków. The Kreis committee, with its headquarters in Opatów, was established on December 16, 1940. The Zawichost branch was founded in June 1941. The chairman of the Judenrat, Kirszenbaum, and his deputy Węgrzyn, proposed that they should also be in charge of the local JSS. The Kraków headquarters approved their appointment. Fajwel Szulman was the third member of the committee. After five months, in November 1941, the committee established a soup kitchen for the deportees and local poor that distributed 200 meals per day.

After their invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the German military left the town. Authority was exercised by German Gendarmes, the SS, and collaborating Polish policemen. A 6:00 P.M. curfew was imposed on the Jews. At night, the Gendarmes enforced the blackout with raids. Whenever they found an open shutter, they arrested the inhabitants of the house and held them at the Gendarmerie station for the night. When the Germans demanded further contributions, they would take members of the Judenrat hostage and demand the goods be delivered within one or two hours.

In the summer of 1941, the Germans ordered the establishment of the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst). At first, it consisted of seven men charged with maintaining order in the Jewish neighborhood. They also collected fines demanded by the Judenrat from those who avoided forced labor or who refused to house deportees.

In November 1941, on German orders, the Judenrat collected all fur items from the town's Jews. A ghetto had not yet been established, but now Zawichost's Jews were not permitted to leave the town limits or ride in wagons. The German post office also started refusing to process Jewish shipments. A special department, affiliated with the regular post, was set up to manage the Jewish post.

In 1941, more men were sent to the labor camps in Distrikt Lublin. One of the prisoners from Zawichost escaped from the Bełżec labor camp after only six weeks. Physically broken, he weighed only 32 kilos (70.5 pounds). According to one testimony, pressured by the families of other youths sent there, Judenrat members went to Bełżec and successfully secured the return of the Jews from Zawichost. On their return in early 1942, the Judenrat enlisted the same men for work in the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition labor camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna. Jewish and Polish (Blue) Police conducted the roundup.⁴ A second group of Jews was sent to Skarżysko in the summer of 1942.

Overcrowding, combined with poor diet and hygiene, led to outbreaks of typhus, dysentery, and tuberculosis. Sanitation Commission records show that 25 Jews were treated for typhus in 1940 and 18 in 1941, resulting in the death of three patients. These numbers, however, do not reflect reality. According to health regulations, all cases of typhus had to be isolated immediately at the epidemic hospital in Sandomierz. Jews infected with typhus did not want to go to the hospital, asking to be left at home. Many of them did not receive any medical treatment. In the spring of 1942, the JSS in Zawichost requested 2,000 vaccinations for typhus and dysentery (but such a large amount could only be obtained on the black market).

Medical care in Zawichost was dispensed by Dr. Hugo Weiss, who treated Jews free of charge. In May 1942, a free dental clinic was also set up, run by Dr. Abraham Miller.

The JSS records show that 10 children were born in 1941 and 27 Jews died. In February 1942, 80 craftsmen were still running their own workshops—most of them as shoemakers and tailors. At this time there were 2,035 Jews living in Zawichost.

From January 20, 1942, the JSS fed breakfast to poor and orphaned children aged between 2 and 10. Initially, it served bread and sweetened chicory coffee to over 50 children a day.

In February 1942, the JSS reported that 829 kilograms (1,828 pounds) of potatoes had spoiled due to frost damage. The soup kitchen was unable to continue serving meals without potatoes. To illustrate the loss: in that month the kitchen issued almost 5,800 dinners using 2,040 kilograms (4,497 pounds) of potatoes. The next most common ingredients were sour cabbage (260 kilograms [573 pounds]) and beets (155 kilograms [342 pounds]). The remaining few products amounted to less than 100 kilograms (220 pounds). In February 1942, 600 poor Jews applied for social help—but only 495 received it.

In the same month, an agriculture club associated with the JSS was established to sow all empty plots and squares in the Jewish quarter with vegetables and flowers. The official aim was to decorate the town; but clearly this was to supplement their diet. The club asked Kraków for 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of beet, carrot, and onion seeds. It also requested some garlic, rhubarb, chives, and 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds) of various flower seeds. In March, with Kraków's approval, the JSS began registering laborers for agricultural work. This reflected an effort to reconnoiter nearby estates to obtain employment opportunities for Zawichost's Jews. There was also a plan to provide interest-free loans. However, these plans were never implemented.

In May 1942, Kreishauptmann Ritter in Opatów ordered the concentration of all Jews in the Kreis into only five towns (including Zawichost) and 12 settlements by the end of the month. All of these places were recognized as ghettos starting June 1, 1942. The order was in preparation for the total expulsion of Jews from the region.

The Jews who lived in the other parts of Zawichost were forced to resettle into the ghetto. It consisted of four small streets: Głęboka, Ostrowiec, Bóźniczka, and Berek Jolesiewicz. The Judenrat supervised the transfer of the newcomers.⁵ A Jew with a Paraguayan passport was also forced into the ghetto with his family despite his objections. The penalty for leaving the ghetto was death. Right after the establishment of the ghetto, its Jewish population numbered 2,145, of which 692 were deportees (another source states that there were 3,000 inhabitants).⁶

The second stage of concentrating the Jews in Kreis Opatów began in August 1942. Jews from Vienna, Annopol, Modliborzyce, Zaklików, Janów Lubelski, and other settlements were now crammed into the ghetto. As a result, the number of the ghetto's inhabitants more than doubled, rising to 5,000.⁷

The Jews in Zawichost were aware of other towns in the region being cleared of their Jewish populations. Most believed that if they worked for the Germans, they would be spared from the deportation. Those who were not working sought employment. In anticipation of the forthcoming deportation, a considerable number of Jews hid in underground bunkers within the ghetto, with Polish farmers, or in the surrounding forests.

The Germans liquidated the Zawichost ghetto on October 29, 1942. According to a secondhand account, SS troops and Ukrainian auxiliaries surrounded the town at 4:00 a.m. Klaxons were sounded, and the town's Jews were ordered to gather at the market square, leaving their doors and windows opened. The dilatory, old, and sick were shot in their houses. Accompanied by beatings and shootings, the Germans and their collaborators drove approximately 5,000 Jews about 10 kilometers (6 miles) to the nearest train station in Dwikozy. About 40 Jews were killed during the march. The rest were loaded on railcars and sent to the Bełżec extermination camp.⁸

About 80 Jewish policemen and young men remained in Zawichost to clean up and bury the dead. The deserted ghetto was stripped of its most valuable objects, which were initially stored in the Zawichost synagogue and then later sent to Germany. During the looting, several people were discovered hiding, all of whom were murdered. Two days after the ghetto's liquidation, the members of the cleanup Kommando were attached to a transport of Jews deported from Sandomierz, Klimontów, and Koprzywnica.⁹

It is estimated that about 200 Jews were killed in Zawichost during the course of the ghetto's liquidation. Their bodies were buried at the Jewish cemetery. A few months later a special detachment arrived, dug out the corpses, and burned them.¹⁰

SOURCES Much information on the life and destruction of Zawichost's Jews can be found in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 190–192. Additional information for this article comes mainly from two publications: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004); and Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 16–17 (1955).

Documentation on the fate of the Jewish community of Zawichost during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/1153-1154 [JSS]; 210/744 [AJDC]; and 301/2016 [Relacje]); IPN (ASG); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; and RG-15.019M [IPN, ASG]); VHF (# 6825 and 1843); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2016, testimony of Zofia Zysman, 1946.
2. Ibid.; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 52.
3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 52; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/744.
4. AŻIH, 301/2016.
5. Ibid.
6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 52; RG-15.019M.
7. AŻIH, 301/2016.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. See IPN, SOWr 271, p. 621 and several secondary sources. According to USHMM, RG-15.019M, however, only 20 Jews were killed in the town.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

ZWOLEŃ

Pre-1939: Zwoleń, town, Kielce województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Zwolen, Kreis Radom-Land, Distrikt Radom, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Zwoleń, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The town of Zwoleń is located 30 kilometers (19 miles) east-southeast of Radom. In 1921, there were 3,787 Jews living there (51.2 percent of the total population).

By 1939 Zwoleń had 4,500 Jewish residents. A large part of the town was destroyed in the course of the September Campaign, forcing many Jewish families to move into makeshift huts.¹

The German authorities immediately instituted a regime of forced labor and extortion, including demands for monetary contributions. Jewish hostages numbering 200 to 300 were taken to Radom and Kielce; all of them were released and allowed to return home after one month. The Jews in Zwoleń were at first randomly rounded up for work; later, the Jewish Council (Judenrat) was charged with delivering the demanded quota of laborers. Work tasks consisted of cleaning snow off roads and attending to the needs of the German army and the Gendarmerie post.

Nuchim Wolman chaired the Judenrat; its secretary was Huberman. By September 1940, W. Kirszenberg had replaced Wolman. At the end of 1939, the Germans razed the local synagogue; the Jewish cemetery was leveled in 1942. In June 1940, an estimated 3,000 Jews were living in Zwoleń.²

In June 1941, a typhus epidemic broke out. Two hospital attendants, Jakób Breslauer and Kofman Ropoport, treated the sick in a Jewish hospital that had opened by August 1941 and was outfitted with 20 beds. By May 1942, when the epidemic was contained and the hospital closed, a total of 389 Jews had been treated for the disease. Ropoport, serving also as the chief of the sanitation committee in Zwoleń, reported that many Jews were suffering from skin diseases, mostly from scabies and sores.



The Sharfa family at forced labor in Zwoleń clearing away rubble, September 23, 1940.

USHMM WS #67994, COURTESY OF YIVO

In August 1941, there were 1,034 Jewish minors living in Zwoleń. In this group there were 439 children aged 7 to 14 years, and 77 of them were under 3 years old. There was no organized help for them.³

According to survivor Lejwa Fuks, the first roundup of males for transfer to labor camps took place in August 1941. One night, the entire Judenrat was arrested, only to be released the next morning by the Gendarmerie. As a result, 36 men were sent to the Pustków labor camp. Married men were soon released, while others escaped; the 2 laborers who remained in the camp were later released due to poor health.

In October 1941, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was established to take over from the Judenrat the organization of welfare. Following its launch, the local soup kitchen served over 600 meals to poor Jews daily and 250 breakfasts to children.

Mordka Blajchman (Bichman), the pre-war chairman of the Jewish community, was appointed as the JSS chairman; Lewi Izrael and Jozek Kirszenbaum were also included on the committee. During the first six months of the kitchen's existence, 328 impoverished families received 116,376 meals. For over 85,000 meals, the JSS charged 30 groszy; the remainder of the meals were distributed free of charge.

According to Lejwa Fuks, at some point in 1941, Zwoleń's Jews were forbidden to walk the main street and the market square. Fuks dates the organization of the Jewish Police under the command of Mendel Weintraub to the same year.⁴

On January 2, 1942, Zwoleń's Jews reported to the JSS in Kraków that based on the order of the Kreishauptmann in Radom issued on December 22, 1942, a ghetto had already been established, and Jews from the vicinity were being transferred there. The Zwoleń ghetto was unfenced, but its residents were forbidden to leave the limits of the town. This ban prevented Jewish traders and peddlers, as well as those offering day-labor services, from making a living. The ghetto encompassed approximately 2 square kilometers (0.8 square mile); it was centrally located in a quarter populated by Jews before the war. The local Gendarmerie post was in charge of ghetto affairs.

Apart from those Jews who already lived within the ghetto limits, 50 Jewish families from Zwolen's peripheries (known as Praga and Szosa Puławska) and also Jews from surrounding communities were transferred into the ghetto. The latter included Klwatka in the administrative gmina of Kuczki (39 people), Lucin (15), Podgóra (24), Janów in gmina Terów (47), Sobale (7), Ulianów (13), and 1 family from each of the following settlements: Helenówka, Grabów, Sucha, Strykowiec, Bartodzieje, and Zielonka. Among the new ghetto inhabitants were also 115 Jews (24 families) who were transferred from the town of Przytyk, which had been depopulated of Jews as early as March 1941.

The JSS inquired about the possibilities of organizing a *bachshava* (youth training) and growing vegetables on the 2 hectares (5 acres) of land within the ghetto perimeter (of which 0.6 hectare [1.5 acres] consisted of adjacent garden plots). The 5 acres, however, were taken away from its Jewish owner and given to "a Christian deportee."

The local JSS estimated that at the time of the ghetto's creation in January 1942, there were 400 to 500 Jews from the city of Warsaw and other places in Distrikt Warschau living in Zwoleń illegally. With time their situation grew more serious, as Jews unable to present their *Kennkarte* (identity card) in March 1942 were "subject to the most severe retribution." Such was the case for many refugees from Łódź and Łuck, who were unable to obtain IDs due to severed postal connections or the destruction of archives in their native towns.⁵

In March 1942, the JSS estimated that there were 150 Jewish workshops in Zwoleń, of which only very few received significant production orders from the Germans. Most of them were for cobblers and tailors. Many ghetto residents were laboring in drainage and regulation of the Zwolenka River.

In April 1942, 4,500 Jews inhabited the still-open ghetto. The largest groups of newcomers were from Łódź, Warsaw, and the gminas of Kuczki, Terów, and Zwoleń. There were 239 houses in the ghetto, consisting of 676 inhabited rooms; on average, 7 people shared a room.

Between January and June 1942, the German authorities reduced the area of the ghetto on two occasions. Following the second reduction in June, the JSS reported that "hundreds of families are under a naked sky, soaked through for four days. There is no hope of finding accommodation for them, because the streets in the ghetto are mostly not built up." The JSS planned to build barracks for the homeless at an estimated cost of 30,000 złoty.⁶

According to Fuks, 200 men were sent to the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp in July 1942. On August 1, 1942, another 130 men and 10 women were sent to Skarżysko, 35 men were dispatched to Dęblin, and 40 went to Kurów. Another survivor, Perec Szapiro, stated that 200 men were sent to Dęblin in August 1942 to build a railroad for the Schultz (Szule) Company and another 100 to the Stawy village, where a labor camp was set up on the grounds of an ammunition magazine.⁷

In the summer of 1942, Zwoleń became one of the centers for the concentration of Jews in Kreis Radom-Land, before their deportation to the Treblinka extermination camp. On August 3, 1942, 1,200 Jews from the Janowiec nad Wisłą ghetto arrived. On August 20, 1942, 488 Jews from the liquidated Pionki ghetto were likewise transferred. Furthermore, on September 18, 1942, Jews from the ghettos of Jedlnia Kościelna and Garbatka-Letnisko were concentrated there.⁸

The Zwoleń ghetto was liquidated either on September 29, 1942, or sometime in October 1942. According to survivor Isaac Engel, the deportation from Zwoleń was announced several days in advance. A siren signaled that the Jews had to gather in the marketplace. From there, in batches of 500 people each, they were escorted by the Ukrainian auxiliary forces to a barbed-wire enclosure that had been set up at the Garbatka train station. All were sent to Treblinka.

An estimated 200 Jews were murdered in the course of the liquidation and were buried at the Jewish cemetery. Afterwards (probably in 1943 or 1944), a German detachment destroyed the bodies using "unknown chemicals." A small cleanup Kommando of approximately 90 people, including the chief of the

Jewish Police, was left in Zwoleń to sort out Jewish belongings and was subsequently sent to Skarżysko-Kamienna.⁹

Estimates of the number of Jews gathered in the Zwoleń ghetto prior to its liquidation vary, depending on the source. The addition of the numbers given above—taken from primary archival sources—gives a maximum number of 6,500 Jews. A court inquiry about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos conducted in Zwoleń in 1945 states that the ghetto had approximately 6,000 residents.¹⁰

Secondary sources, namely, the historian of Distrikt Radom, Adam Rutkowski, and others, estimate that 10,000 Jews were deported to Treblinka from Zwoleń. Rutkowski's numbers, however, do not add up, as in addition to the communities mentioned above as transferred to Zwoleń, Rutkowski states that 5,000 Jews from Gniewoszków, 2,000 Jews from Oblassy, 400 from Policzna, and 6,500 from Sarnów were also sent to Zwoleń. But in the case of Oblas (located 1 to 2 kilometers [0.6 to 1.2 miles] south of Przytyk), it does not appear that any Jews were living there in the summer of 1942, as all Jews were removed from there in the spring of 1941—as they were from Przytyk. The figure for Sarnów is also implausible, as it was just a tiny settlement about 1.5 kilometers (1 mile) south of Gniewoszków.

SOURCES Information regarding the Zwoleń ghetto can be found in the following sources: Krzysztof Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie radomskim* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2004), pp. 169–172; Adam Rutkowski, “Martyrologia, walka i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie radomskim podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *BŻIH*, nos. 15–16 (1955): 101,

156–160, 179–180; and Felicja Karay, *Death Comes in Yellow: Skarżysko-Kamienna Slave Labor Camp* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), p. 36.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (211/1163 [JSS]; 210/750 [AJDC]; 301/8, 301/2474 [Relacje]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.019M [ASG]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]; and Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1163 (Zwoleń), pp. 1, 52–53; and 211/1164 (Zwoleń), p. 45.
2. AŻIH, 301/2474, testimony of Lejwa Fuks, 1947; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/750, pp. 1, 6; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1163, p. 23.
3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1163, pp. 32, 34; and 211/1164, pp. 37, 39, 45, 52–54.
4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 8, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1163, pp. 48, 52; AŻIH, 301/2474.
5. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), file 47, p. 101; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1164, pp. 1, 8–11, 17–18, 25–26, 36, 45.
6. *Ibid.*, RG-15.019M (ASG), file 47, p. 101; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1164, pp. 30, 36, 45, 49.
7. AŻIH, 301/8, testimony of Perec Szapiro, 1944; 301/2474.
8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1164, pp. 61, 67.
9. AŻIH, 301/2474; according to Fuks, the Jews from the Zwoleń ghetto were sent to Dęblin and then to Treblinka. Also see USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), file 47, p. 101; Isaac Engel, 1989, available at www.holocaustcenter.org.
10. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), file 47, p. 101.

WARSAW REGION



Jews are led through the streets on their way to the railroad station during a deportation Aktion from the Siedlce ghetto, August 22–24, 1942. This is one of a series of clandestine photographs taken by a member of the Polish Home Army (AK) underground.
USHMM WS #18787, COURTESY OF IPN

WARSAW REGION (DISTRIFT WARSCHAU)

Pre-1939: parts of the Warsaw, Lublin, and Łódź województwa, Poland; 1941–1945: Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: parts of the Łódź, Lublin, and Mazowieckie województwa, Poland

The German authorities established more than 60 ghettos in Distrikt Warschau. After the first ghettos were established in the Kreise to the west of Warsaw in the late spring and summer of 1940, a large wave of ghettoization accompanied the establishment of the Warsaw ghetto in October and November. The ghettos established to the west and south of Warsaw remained only short-lived, as more than 50,000 Jews from these Kreise were then concentrated in the Warsaw ghetto by April 1941. Further ghettos were established during 1941 in the Kreise to the east of Warsaw. Then in the spring of 1942, there was a further wave of resettlement to the Warsaw ghetto. After the start of deportations to the Treblinka extermination camp in July 1942, most of the remaining ghettos were liqui-

dated in just a few months up to October. The Warsaw ghetto was the last to be liquidated in April 1943, in the face of bitter organized resistance by armed Jews, which lasted for several weeks into May.

The German authorities created Distrikt Warschau on October 26, 1939, as one of the four initial Distrikte of the Generalgouvernement, all of which were composed of parts of occupied Poland. In Distrikt Warschau, the German authorities initially created 10 Kreise (counties): Garwolin, Grojec, Lowicz, Minsk Mazowiecki, Ostrow Mazowiecka, Siedlce, Skierniewice, Sochaczew, Sokolow, and Warschau-Land, each governed by a Kreishauptmann. A Stadthauptmann governed the city of Warsaw.

The Distrikt's territory, which consisted of 16,860 square kilometers (6,510 square miles), was populated by more than 3 million people. According to a German estimate from July 1940, there were 540,000 Jews residing in the Distrikt (18 percent of the total population). This figure probably included tens of thousands of refugees and deportees, mainly from the Polish territories incorporated into Germany, who reached the Distrikt from late 1939, especially from Reichsgau Wartheland.

The chief German civil authority in the Distrikt was Gouverneur Dr. Ludwig Fischer. The SS and Police Leader (SSPF) was the senior police official in the Distrikt, subordinated to the Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) of the Generalgouvernement, Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger. The position of SSPF in Distrikt Warschau was held initially by Paul Moder; he was succeeded by Arpad Wigand in August 1941; then Dr. Ferdinand von Sammern-Frankenegg took over in an acting capacity in July 1942, to be succeeded by Jürgen Stroop from late April until September 1943. The SSPF oversaw the forces of the Sicherheitspolizei (Sipo), comprising the Gestapo, Kripo, and SD, and also those of the Ordnungspolizei (Orpo), composed of Schutzpolizei in the cities and Gendarmerie posts in the rural areas. The relevant local civil administrators, especially the Kreishauptmänner, were generally in charge of ghetto affairs. Surveillance and order were in the hands of the German Sipo and Orpo forces, with Polish and Jewish police forces performing auxiliary duties under the Germans. Jewish policemen maintained order in the ghettos and guarded their internal borders, whereas Orpo forces and Polish (Blue) Police patrolled the external boundaries.

Assuming authority from the military on October 26, 1939, the German civil administration introduced a series of antisemitic laws, which deprived the Jews of their economic, cultural, and social rights, as well as imposing forced labor. The Germans ordered the establishment of Jewish Councils (Judenräte), holding the members responsible for the implementation



A mid-1930s portrait of SS-Gruppenführer Paul Moder, the first SS- and Polizeiführer of the Warsaw District.

USHMM/PHOTOGRAPHED FROM ERNST KIENAST (ED.), DER DEUTSCHE REICHTAG 1936: III. WAHLPERIODE NACH DEM 30. JANUAR 1933; MIT ZUSTIMMUNG DES HERRN REICHTAGSPRÄSIDENTEN (BERLIN: R. V. DECKER'S VERLAG, G. SOHENCK, 1936), P. 411



An unidentified SS-Obersturmführer interrogates two Jewish resistance fighters during the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, April 19–May 16, 1943. The original German caption reads, "Jewish traitors." Pictured in the background are the SS- und Polizeiführer for the Warsaw district, SS-Brigadeführer Jürgen Stroop and, holding an automatic weapon at right, police captain Erich Steidtmann.

USHMM VWS #26549, COURTESY OF NARA

of the authorities' orders, including the selection of Jews for forced labor, the collection of taxes and "contributions," the enforcement of sanitary regulations, and the organization of welfare and medical services. From late 1939, Jews were obliged to wear white armbands bearing the Star of David.

The first ghettos in the Distrikt were established in Kreis Lowicz by May 1940. According to the personal report of the Kreishauptmann, Dr. Schwender, to the Generalgouverneur, Hans Frank, a ghetto was established in Łowicz due to the large influx of Jews from the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich and the resulting high incidence of typhus—some 200 cases in Łowicz—as well as the accompanying threat to security.¹ Around this time, five ghettos were established in Kreis Lowicz, the other four being in Łyszkowice, Kiernozia, Bolimów, and Głowno.²

On July 1, 1940, in response to SS orders giving the Jews of Mińsk Mazowiecki only 14 days to create a ghetto, the Jewish community petitioned the authorities to annul or defer the order. The Jews stressed the ruinous economic effects the order would wreak on the town's Jewish craftsmen, laborers, and shopkeepers and the inevitable threat to hygiene throughout the town. The Jews, supported by some non-Jewish residents, requested a deferral of several months so that the necessary sanitary infrastructure could be prepared in the ghetto area.³

It appears that Kreishauptmann Dr. Bittrich in Mińsk Mazowiecki put on hold creation of the ghetto for several months, but in October, Waldemar Schön, the head of the Resettlement Department for the Distrikt, visited Mińsk Mazowiecki to choose the location of the ghetto, which was then established on November 15, 1940, the same day that resettlement into the Warsaw ghetto was completed.⁴

Already in November 1939, the Germans made a first attempt to establish a ghetto in Warsaw, which, however, soon was abandoned. Then in January 1940, Schön began detailed planning for the Warsaw ghetto. In the summer of 1940, an

exclusion zone (*Sperrgebiet*) for the Jews was established, to which no additional Jews were permitted to move.⁵ On October 2, 1940, Gouverneur Fischer issued an official decree on the establishment of the Warsaw ghetto by the end of the month. As the resettlement could not be completed on time, the deadline for completing the resettlement was later extended to November 15.⁶ The borders of the ghetto were changed several times subsequently.

A considerable wave of ghetto formation accompanied the establishment of the Warsaw ghetto. In Kreis Warschau-Land, the Kreishauptmann established a number of ghettos. A small ghetto was created in Łomianki for 300 local Jews to move into by September 15, but despite bribes, it was liquidated again in November. Sixty people departed for the Włochy ghetto established in Fort Solipse, and 25 went to the Legionowo ghetto, also established on November 15, 1940. Most others fled independently to the Warsaw ghetto. The Jews left everything behind—resulting in terrible need and poverty.⁷ A larger ghetto was established in Otwock, where resettlement was completed by November 30. All the Jews of the Kreis living west of the Vistula were then concentrated in just four ghettos: Piaseczno, Włochy, Jeziorna, and Pruszków. From there they were transferred to the Warsaw ghetto in December and January 1941, as were the Jews of the Karczew ghetto, just east of the Vistula. Several open ghettos were also established in Kreis Garwolin in the fall of 1940.

By the end of 1940, six open ghettos had been established in Kreis Grojec, in Błędów, Tarczyn, Mogielnica, Góra Kalwaria, and Warka, as well as the Kreis center, Grójec. Reports from the Jewish aid committees in December mention the establishment of the ghettos in Tarczyn and Błędów.⁸ According to survivor Jerry Lista, the relocation to the ghetto in Góra Kalwaria was announced in the papers and on loudspeakers, and the Jews were given two to three days to move into the designated area. The Jews could take with them only the most necessary items.⁹ Then in January 1941, the Grojec Kreishauptmann, Zimmermann, ordered that all the Jews of the Kreis be concentrated in the six ghettos and that any Jew caught outside of a ghetto after January 27, 1941, would face the death penalty.¹⁰ This is the first example of such a shooting order, predating the similar order issued for the entire Generalgouvernement by nine months. Fear of the spread of typhus was given as a reason for these harsh restrictions, but they also served to concentrate the Jews of the Kreis in preparation for their deportation to the Warsaw ghetto shortly afterwards. In Błędów the Jews paid a renewed hefty "contribution" of 100,000 złoty in the hope that their expulsion would be deferred. But then on February 11, 1941, the Błędów Jews were marched or taken on carts to the railway station and put on trains to the Warsaw ghetto.¹¹

For Kreis Sochaczew, the Germans prepared a detailed timetable for the transfers to the Warsaw ghetto. The Jews of the Żyrardów ghetto, as well as those from Wiskitki and Mszczonów (where probably no ghettos were established), were to be transferred on February 1–9, 1941; then on February 10–14, the Jews from the Grodzisk Mazowiecki ghetto; on Febru-

ary 15–16, from the Sochaczew ghetto; and from the ghetto in Błonie on February 17, 18, and 19, 1941. The Żyrardów Jews received only 48 hours' notice and were permitted only 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of belongings on the train.¹²

The transfers from Kreise Lowicz and Skierniewice were spread over a longer period, permitting some Jews to organize the transportation of their belongings into the Warsaw ghetto. A few Jews even managed to arrange an orderly transfer to other locations in the Generalgouvernement, where ghettos had not yet been established. On March 4, 1941, the Kreishauptmann in Skierniewice reported that most of the Jews from the Skierniewice and Jeżów ghettos had moved "voluntarily" to Warsaw. In Skierniewice, only some 180 Jews remained; the Jews' removal had created a marked shortage of labor.¹³ On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, most Jews from Jeżów were put into improvised hostels for refugees, where they encountered difficulties with hygiene and medical care and experienced numerous deaths from hunger.¹⁴ Following these transfers, in April 1941, the Kreise of Sochaczew, Grojec, and Lowicz (in which Skierniewice was now incorporated) were declared to be free of Jews other than in a few labor camps.

Most of these initial ghettos in Distrikt Warschau were open ghettos, especially those that remained short-lived. For example, the ghetto in Mogielnica was not enclosed by a fence, a wall, or any barbed wire. It consisted of two or three streets near the synagogue and the Bet Midrash.¹⁵ The Włochy ghetto was established in a nineteenth-century fortress (Fort Solipse) and in Pustelnik in the Henryków and Osinki brickyard, in houses for former factory workers and barracks, completely isolated from the Polish population. The Pustelnik ghetto initially remained "open" (people left to work outside), but early in 1941, the ghetto was declared closed, and Jews could leave only with a special permit. According to the local Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) branch, this left the Jews "on the edge of destruction." The borders of a number of ghettos were marked by signs that read: "Jewish Area: Entrance Forbidden for Poles and Germans" (*Jüdische Gegend: Polen und Deutschen Eintritt verboten*).¹⁶ Among the relatively few ghettos enclosed by a fence were those in Radzymin, Siedlce, and Wołomin.

Initially, Jews were punished with heavy fines and/or imprisonment for leaving the ghettos without special permission. As mentioned, from early in 1941, more severe penalties were introduced in some Kreise, as they were being cleared of Jews. By November 1941, as elsewhere in the Generalgouvernement, the death penalty was applied throughout the Distrikt, and many Jews were shot when caught smuggling or in hiding on the Aryan side. For example, in Sarnaki the open ghetto was sealed on January 1, 1942, to prevent the spread of disease. Initially Jews did not take the posted death penalty threat seriously and continued to sneak out to barter items. But in February, a Jewish woman and her one-year-old child caught in a nearby village were arrested and shot.¹⁷

With the exception of the Warsaw ghetto, which at its peak probably held some 460,000 Jews, most of the ghettos established throughout the Distrikt were relatively small, hold-

ing from only a few hundred up to around 4,000 people. A few larger ghettos were established, for example, in Siedlce (13,000), Otwock (12,000), Węgrów (9,000), Falenica (6,000), Sokółów Podlaski (6,000), and Mińsk Mazowiecki (5,000–6,000). Generally these ghettos were among the last to be liquidated.

The administration of welfare was transferred from the Jewish Councils to the JSS to help newcomers and the local poor. Its branches opened soup kitchens, distributed food and clothing, and sought to provide for children and the elderly. The level of assistance, due to insufficient funds, was never able to meet the needs. Consequently, there was frequent friction between the JSS branches and the Jewish Councils. JSS officials were replaced as unsuitable, and some Jewish Councils were accused of corruption, favoritism, or excessive subservience to German demands.

Poverty, hunger, overcrowding, and disease were common to all of the ghettos, but access to food from outside was somewhat easier in the smaller rural ghettos or even some medium-sized ghettos in Kreis Warschau-Land. Kosher butchers from the ghettos of Miłosna, Okuniew, and Rembertów were the main source of meat for the Warsaw ghetto, supplying up to 2,000 kilograms (4,410 pounds) per month with the help of Polish smugglers.¹⁸ Whereas in the Warsaw ghetto more than 60,000 Jews (about 15 percent) died of starvation, death rates in the smaller ghettos generally were not on this scale. In Sarnaki, in the winter of 1941–1942, reportedly 100 Jews died out of 1,180 (almost 9 percent). Ration cards were issued to Jews, for example, in Żelechów, at the end of 1940, for small portions of bread, sugar, flour, meat, and jam, as well as in Warsaw.¹⁹ These meager rations were insufficient to survive and supplementary food had to be obtained wherever possible.

After the initial wave of deportations from the Warthegau at the end of 1939 and in early 1940, Distrikt Warschau was not a major destination for German resettlements. In the summer of 1940, a number of Jews were sent to forced labor camps in Distrikt Lublin, but many of these Jews returned after a few months. In the late spring or summer of 1941, several hundred Jews from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki (Regierungsbezirk Zichenau) were driven into the Distrikt. In the spring of 1942, four transports, each of around 1,000 Jews, arrived from Berlin, Theresienstadt, Hannover, and other places in the Reich to the Warsaw ghetto, where there were also a number of Jews who had converted to Christianity. Also deported to Distrikt Warschau were Roma and Sinti from Cologne and its environs; they were put in the Siedlce ghetto in the summer of 1942, along with local Roma.²⁰ Finally between February and early May 1943, more than 20,000 Jewish workers were deported from the Warsaw ghetto to the Trawniki, Poniatowa, and other labor camps in Distrikt Lublin.²¹

The process of concentrating most of the remaining Jews in ghettos in the eastern Kreise of Distrikt Warschau began in early 1941 and was completed in 1942. In Kreis Sokolow, the planned establishment of six, initially open, ghettos was announced in January 1941, but implementation lagged behind. It was not until November 1941 that many of the Jews from the surrounding villages were concentrated in these six ghettos.

Similar concentrations of Jews were carried out in Kreise Garwolin, Siedlce, and Minsk Mazowiecki, which also signaled a final wave of ghetto establishment in places such as Latowicz.²²

In the spring of 1942, a further wave of deportations to the Warsaw ghetto and ghetto consolidations commenced. In March Jews arrived in Warsaw from the nearby ghettos of Pustelnik, Okuniew, Miłosna, and Wawer. These expulsions occurred with considerable brutality, and a number of Jews were killed. In May 1942, the expulsion of the Tuszcz Jews saw about 70 Jews shot during the roundup and 300 shot on the road to Radzymin, where they were loaded onto trains headed to Warsaw.²³ In May the Jews of the Sarnaki ghetto were sent to the ghettos in Łosice and Mordy.

The organization of the deportations in Distrikt Warschau was in the hands of SSPF Dr. Ferdinand von Sammern-Frankenegg, assisted by a special deportation unit organized by Commanding Officer of the Security Police and SD (KdS) Warschau. Among the officers who played a leading role was SS-Untersturmführer Karl Brandt. These local forces had to work closely with Sonderkommando Höfle (led by SS-Sturmbannführer Hermann Höfle), which was assigned from Distrikt Lublin by SSPF Odilo Globocnik. The ghetto liquidations were implemented with the support of a number of Trawniki-trained auxiliaries (mostly from Ukraine or the Baltic states) and German Order Police units (battalions and stationary units of the Schutzpolizei and Gendarmerie). In some places units of the Polish (Blue) Police, ethnic German Sonderdienst, and Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) also assisted them.

The deportations were conducted more or less Kreis by Kreis. Deportations from the Warsaw ghetto commenced on July 22, 1942, and continued until September 21. In Warsaw there was a brief respite on August 19–21, while Jews from the ghettos in Otwock, Falenica, and Mińsk Mazowiecki were deported. In total, more than 250,000 Jews were deported to Treblinka, about 10,000 were sent to other camps for work via the so-called Dulag (*Durchgangslager*), and several thousand Jews were murdered in the city.



Laden with rounded-up Jews from Sobolew, this truck overturned shortly after the photo was taken, facilitating the Jews' escape, n.d.
USHMM WS #18822, COURTESY OF IPN

Due to the large forces assembled to clear the Warsaw ghetto, the liquidation of most other ghettos followed swiftly over just a few weeks in September and October. Jews from the ghettos of Kałuszyn, Dobrze, Mrozy, and others in Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki were deported from mid-September. The Jews from Kreis Sokolow were all deported between September 21 and 25. In late September and early October, the Jews from the ghettos of Parysów, Łaskarzew, Stoczek Łukowski, and Żelechów in Kreis Garwolin were deported via Sobolew before finally the Jews of Sobolew were dispatched in early October. Then in the first days of October, the ghettos of Radzymin, Wołomin, and Legionowo in Kreis Warschau-Land were liquidated together.

Especially in those ghettos close to Treblinka, news of the mass murders arrived from train escapees and Jews working at the camp. Many Jews tried to evade deportation by hiding in prepared bunkers. Due to the large numbers of escapees during the course of the deportations, the German authorities announced that Poles faced the death sentence for even the smallest assistance provided to Jews. As punishment for aiding Jewish escapees, it was often that entire families were gunned down and their households razed. News of such punitive actions terrified the Polish population, causing some to turn out Jews they had been helping.

Almost all the transports went to Treblinka. In a number of ghettos, a few Jews were retained to sort Jewish belongings or perform other labor tasks, in so-called small ghettos. On October 28, 1942, HSSPF Krüger ordered the recognition of six remnant ghettos within Distrikt Warschau in Warsaw, Kałuszyn, Sobolew, Kosów Lacki, Rembertów, and Siedlce.²⁴ Their main purpose was to lure out of hiding those who had evaded the deportations. Most of these remnant ghettos, apart from Warsaw, were liquidated between November 1942 and February 1943. The remnant ghetto or labor camp in Rembertów, which contained Jews from Warsaw brought to Rembertów after the liquidation of the original ghetto there, was liquidated at the end of June 1943.

After the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising, a number of Jews continued to live in a few labor camps, including that



The family of Icek Fajerszejn is deported from Stoczek, while an unidentified auxiliary looks on in the foreground, May 5, 1942.
USHMM WS #29277, COURTESY OF MORRIS ROSEN

in Karczew, which existed until the fall of 1943. Estimates of the number of Jews who escaped onto the Aryan side and went into hiding or passed as non-Jews vary, but probably exceeded 30,000. Jews on the Aryan side had to live in constant fear of denunciation or extortion by so-called *szmalcownicy* (blackmailers).

SOURCES Secondary works including coverage of the history of the Jews in the Distrikt Warschau ghettos include T. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 83–125; Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City*, trans. Emma Harris (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979); Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw 1940–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 2, *District Lublin* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2007); and Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989).

Published collections of documents include T. Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961); T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, and A. Rutkowski, eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957); Helge Grabitz and Wolfgang Scheffler, *Letzte Spuren: Fotos und Dokumente über Opfer des Endlösungswahns im Spiegel der historischen Ereignisse* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1988); Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986); and Ruta Sakowska et al., eds., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego*, 3 vols. (Warsaw: PWN, 2000).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AAN; APO; APSi; APW (e.g., Der Obmann des Judenrates in Warschau; Amt des Gouverneurs des Distriktes Warschau—Der Kommissar für den Jüdischen Wohnbezirk in Warschau); AŻIH (e.g., sygn. 200; 210; 211; 301; 302; Ring); BA-BL; BA-L; BLH; CAHJP; IPN; MA; NARA; USHMM (e.g., Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1998.A.0241 [Trial of Ludwig Fischer]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-02; RG-15.019M [IPN, ASG]; RG-15.077M [CENTOS]; RG-15.079M [Ring I]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]; RG-50); VHF; WL; YIVO; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, eds., *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975), pp. 286–287,

entry for October 10, 1940. See also the report of Schön, the head of the resettlement section in the office of the Governor of the Warsaw Distrikt, January 20, 1941, published in: Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, pp. 108–109.

2. See Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 109, citing the report of the Lowicz Kreishauptmann, dated July 20, 1940. Some sources date the establishment of the Kiernozia ghetto in March 1940—see Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Lovitsb—a shtetl in Mazovye un umgegent, seyfer zikorn* (Melbourne and Sydney, Australia: Lowicz Landsmanshaften, 1966), p. 364.

3. AŻIH, 211/702, pp. 1–4, Petition of the Jewish population of Mińsk Mazowiecki, unsigned, July 1, 1940.

4. Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 96; AŻIH, 211/702, p. 12, ghetto questionnaire, April 1, 1942.

5. USHMM, RG-15.073M, report on the activity of the Warsaw Jewish Council, from October 7, 1939, to December 31, 1940, p. 12.

6. *Warschauer Zeitung*, November 3–4, 1940. For an overview of events leading up to the establishment of the Warsaw ghetto, see Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, pp. 52–76.

7. AŻIH, Ring I/847 [874.], “Geyrush Lomianki bay Warshe,” February 12, 1941.

8. *Ibid.*, 210/680 (AJDC, Tarczyn); 210/266 (AJDC, Bledów), p. 35.

9. VHF, # 10410, testimony of Jerry Lista, 1995.

10. USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/881.

11. VHF, # 2132, testimony of Ben Zion Guttman.

12. USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/352, Kreishauptmann Sochaczew-Blonie, order concerning the clearing of the Kreis of Jews, January 31, 1941.

13. See *Ibid.*, RG-14.052 (BA-BL), R 52III/29, pp. 88, 89, Kreishauptmann Skierniewice, monthly report, March 4, 1941.

14. AŻIH, Ring I/116.

15. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 18, sygn. 61, p. 95; VHF, # 1365, testimony of Ben Stern; # 17574, testimony of Aisic Hirsch.

16. AŻIH, 301/4805, testimony of Władysława Kruszczevska (Kruszewska), 1948; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/846, pp. 3, 5–6, 15–18, 23–25; 211/1083, p. 18.

17. Dov Shual, *Sefer yizkor li-kehillat Sarnaki* (Haifa: Ir-gun yots’e Sarnaki be-Yisrael, 1968), pp. 147–169.

18. Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kehillat Rembertow, Okuniew, Milosna* (Tel Aviv: Rembertow, Okuniew and Milosna Societies in Israel, the USA, France, Mexico City, Canada, Chile, and Brazil, 1974), pp. 431–432.

19. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1176, p. 60.

20. APSi, 1290, Zarządzenia, # A67/42 (May 23, 1942).

21. Grabitz and Scheffler, *Letzte Spuren*, pp. 181, 207, 318–319. Most of these Jews were murdered during Aktion Erntefest in November 1943.

22. Berenstein, Eisenbach, and Rutkowski, *Eksterminacja Żydów*, pp. 108–109, 278–279; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/634, pp. 40–42.

23. Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 205–208.

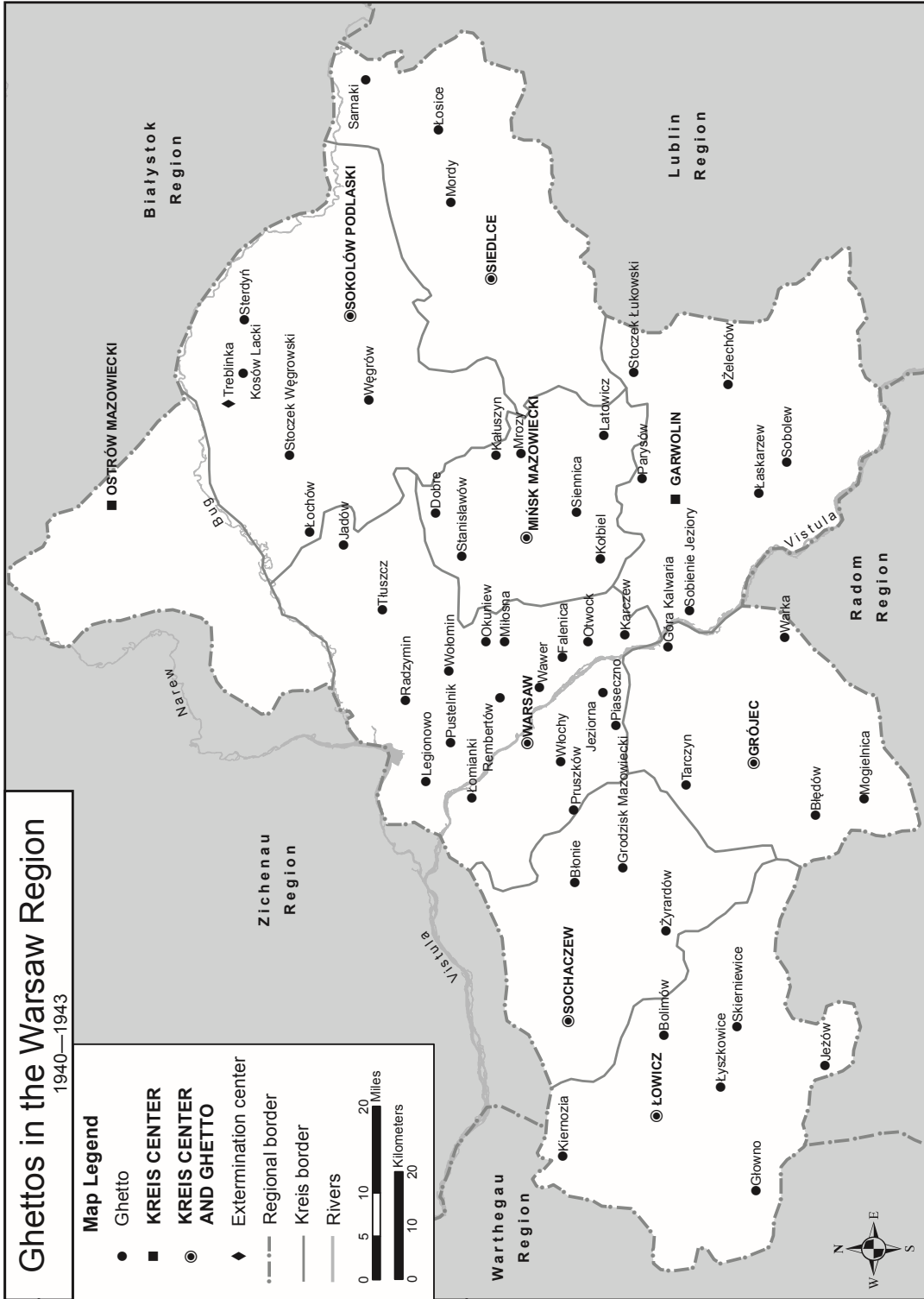
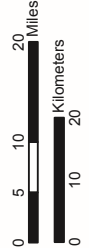
24. Police Decree issued by HSSPF Krüger, October 28, 1942, in Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, pp. 342–344.

Ghettos in the Warsaw Region

1940—1943

Map Legend

- Ghetto
- KREIS CENTER
- ⊙ KREIS CENTER AND GHETTO
- ◆ Extermination center
- - - Regional border
- Kreis border
- Rivers



Borders as of 1942

BŁĘDÓW

Pre-1939: Błędów, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Bledow, Kreis Grojec, Distrikt Warschau, General-gouvernement; post-1998: Błędów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Błędów is located 14 kilometers (9 miles) southwest of Grójec. Just before September 1, 1939, there were 957 Jews living in Błędów.¹

The Germans entered Błędów on September 8, 1939. Soon after their arrival, the German police began stealing property from Jewish homes and shops. The Jews were ordered to wear white armbands bearing a blue Star of David. On one occasion in the fall of 1939, the Germans rounded up the Jews and abused and beat them, causing the death of at least one person. The Germans also started to kidnap Jews for forced labor, requiring them to conduct humiliating work such as sweeping the streets or cleaning the houses of ethnic Germans.

In November or December 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in Błędów, chaired by Yaakov Arbutz. Soon the Jews were obliged to pay an 80,000 złoty fine, which was collected mainly from the more affluent members of the community. Local ethnic Germans were among the most active in abusing the Jews and seizing their property.

As of June 1940, 1,030 Jews were living in Błędów, including refugees from Łódź, Aleksandrów Łódzki, Zgierz, and other towns that had been incorporated into Reichsgau Wartheland. During 1940, the Jewish Aid Committee for Poor Jews in Błędów provided some financial aid and other support to the refugees and some local Jews; at least 47 different families received benefits, as reported to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) based in Warsaw.²

At the end of 1940 an open ghetto was established in Błędów, around the same time that the ghetto was also established in the Kreis center, Grójec.³ A report of the Jewish Aid Committee, dated December 3, 1940, noted that it had been unable to supply the requested information due to the recent resettlement of the Jews into the “Jewish quarter” (*dzielnica żydowska*), which was still continuing for a few days longer.⁴ The ghetto was unfenced, but initially any Jews caught outside it were severely beaten and could be punished further with a fine or a term of imprisonment.

On January 21, 1941, the Kreishauptmann in Grójec, Landrat Werner Zimmermann, issued the following order: “All Jews living outside of the towns of Błędów, Tarczyn, Mogielnica, Góra Kalwaria, Warka, and Grójec are to transfer immediately to the closest of these towns, all of which were to be considered as ghettos. The heads of the respective settlements were made personally responsible for ensuring that by January 27, 1941, no Jews still were residing on their territory.” The order also stipulated that any Jew caught outside these ghettos after January 27, 1941, would face the death penalty.⁵

In January 1941, the Jews of Błędów had to pay a further fine of 100,000 złoty. The Germans spread a rumor that if the Jews paid the fine, their expulsion to the Warsaw ghetto would

be deferred. Therefore, the Judenrat delivered the money, but then, according to survivor Ben Zion Guttman, on February 11, 1941, the Jews of Błędów were expelled to Warsaw anyway. The Jews were ordered to assemble on the market square and then had to walk 5 kilometers (3 miles) to the railway station, where they were put on trains to the Warsaw ghetto. The elderly and infirm were transported to the station on horse-driven carts.⁶ Along the way some Jews managed to escape, but many of those who sought shelter in the area were betrayed to the Germans or even murdered by local Poles.

After the war, the Jewish community in Błędów was not reconstituted.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews in Błędów during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 150–151; T. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 109; Roman Mogilanski, *The Ghetto Anthology: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Extermination of Jewry in Nazi Death Camps and Ghettos in Poland* (Los Angeles: American Congress of Jews from Poland and Survivors of Concentration Camps, 1985), p. 101. Additional information can be found in the yizkor book, *Sefer yizkor Mogielnica-Bledow* (Tel Aviv, 1972).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/266 [AJDC]; Ring I/881); USHMM (Acc. 1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.079 [Ring I]); VHF (# 2132); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk,” table 3.
2. AŻIH, 210/266.
3. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 151, however, dates the ghetto’s establishment at the end of May 1940. Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 59, dates it in late 1940.
4. AŻIH, 210/266, p. 35.
5. *Ibid.*, Ring I/881.
6. VHF, # 2132, testimony of Ben Zion Guttman; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 109, and Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 213, both date the ghetto’s liquidation in February 1941. After January 1941, there is no further correspondence between the Jewish Aid Committee for Poor Jews in Błędów and the AJDC; see AŻIH, 210/266.

BŁONIE

Pre-1939: Blonie (Yiddish: Bloyna), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Blonie, Kreis Sochaczew, Distrikt Warschau,

Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Błonie, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Błonie is located about 27 kilometers (17 miles) west-southwest of Warsaw. In 1939, about 2,800 Jews lived there.

After the German army occupied the town and the surrounding area, murders of the civilian population took place. Among the 750 people murdered in Błonie in September and October 1939, the majority were Jews.¹ On September 19 alone, 50 civilian prisoners were shot in Błonie.² A transit camp (Dulag) was created in the town for Polish prisoners of war (POWs). This camp was established in mid-September 1939 on the grounds of a former match factory.³

After the German army occupied the town, it started to seize Jews for forced labor, mainly for cleaning work.⁴ On the streets, German soldiers beat the Jews. Older, traditionally dressed Jews were kicked and humiliated. The beards of Jewish men were cut off. Jewish children were no longer permitted to go to school.⁵

In the fall of 1939, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in Błonie. Avigdor Rosenberg stood at its head. Other members included Abram Gewer, Izrael Wajselfisz, and Lajb Rozenberg. Its tasks included the payment of forced “contributions” to the German authorities and participation in the selection of forced laborers. One survivor accuses members of the Judenrat, especially Wajselfisz, of cooperating with the Gendarmes in despoiling Jewish property for his own personal gain.⁶

With support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), an aid committee was established in Błonie in March 1940 to assist those in need. It was headed by Izrael Wajcberg and included Izrael Wajselfisz and Abram Gewer of the Judenrat among its seven members. The committee provided aid to about 1,000 people under its care. It also operated a public kitchen, which prepared warm meals for 700 needy Jews, as well as organizing assistance for children.⁷

From the end of 1939, a large number of refugees and deportees arrived in Błonie in several waves. In May 1940, 617 Jews from Błów (Kreis Sochaczew), Łódź, Aleksandrów Łódzki, and other places arrived. Then in June, they were followed by another 926 expellees. Not all of these new arrivals remained in Błonie. Since these deportees were only permitted to bring with them a very limited amount of luggage, most arrived in a destitute condition, increasing the welfare burden on the Jewish Council.

On November 13, 1940, a placard posted by Kreishauptmann Karl Adolf Pott announced the imminent resettlement of the Jews from Błonie to Warsaw, while the Jews were forbidden, as of December, to leave an area in the center of town, which was to become a Jewish quarter or ghetto (*Jüdisches Wohngebiet*).⁸ Myer Glick recalls the announcement of the transfer to Warsaw and that a member of his family traveled to the Warsaw ghetto, which was still open, in preparation for the move, but could only find a single room there. However, before the move to Warsaw, Glick and his family were evicted from their apartment in Błonie, with the participation of the

Germans, and had to move in with his uncle in three overcrowded rooms.⁹ This transfer within Błonie may reflect the establishment of a ghetto there in December 1940, which, according to one source, contained about 2,100 people.¹⁰

Since the ghetto in Błonie existed for only about two months, very little information is available concerning conditions there. One surviving document indicates that on January 28, 1941, the AJDC reported that 15 kilograms (33 pounds) of sugar had been donated to the child-care facility in Błonie, thanks to a charitable gift from Switzerland. A representative of the Aid Committee for Refugees and the Poor in Błonie could collect the sugar from the CENTOS (Central Organization for Orphan Care) food depot in Warsaw.¹¹ It is doubtful that this sugar was ever transported to Błonie.

At the start of 1941, the German authorities began deporting all the Jews from the western Kreise of Distrikt Warschau—Sochaczew, Grojec, Skierniewice, Lowicz, and parts of Kreis Warschau-Land—into the Warsaw ghetto. In total during this Aktion, from January to April 1941, some 72,000 Jews were relocated.¹² The deportation of the Jews was intended to free space for 62,000 Poles deported from Reichsgau Wartheland.¹³

As of January 31, 1941, Jews were no longer permitted to leave the Błonie ghetto. Their transfer to Warsaw was scheduled for February 17–19, 1941. The Jews were to be deloused beforehand, and each Jew was permitted to take only 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of luggage, as well as sufficient food for two days. Live animals could not be transported and were to be surrendered to the mayor. Property left behind was to be confiscated, and people plundering this property were to be strictly punished.¹⁴ The Błonie Jews went by road to the Warsaw ghetto, on foot or in horse-drawn wagons, which enabled some to take a little extra luggage. Myer Glick remembers taking turns with his brother to sit atop the pile of luggage on the cart.¹⁵

At this time, the Warsaw ghetto already was overcrowded, and hunger predominated. The lot of the expellees was particularly harsh, as many had already experienced prior deportation from the Warthegau into Distrikt Warschau. On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, they were first put into quarantine for a period.¹⁶ From there, they were then in large part concentrated in public buildings within the ghetto, such as synagogues and schools, under conditions of poor sanitation and provisioning, which gave rise to sickness and hunger among them, resulting in a number of deaths.

The Jews driven from the Błonie to the Warsaw ghetto shared the fate of the remainder of Warsaw’s Jews. The majority were rounded up during the great liquidation Aktion, which began on July 22, 1942, and were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp, where they were murdered.

After the liquidation of the Błonie ghetto, the Germans destroyed the Jewish cemetery, leaving only several grave-stones in place. After the expulsion in February 1941, a few Jews who defied the resettlement order remained in Kreis Sochaczew, including in Błonie. Executions in Błonie attest to their presence. In May 1943, a Gendarme shot three Jews on the property of Aleksander Różycki, at 1 Szkolna Street.¹⁷

In February 1943, a Gendarme shot four Jews (two men, a woman, and a child).¹⁸ In June 1943, a Błonie woman, a member of the Polish underground, was arrested on the charge that she had sheltered Jews. A search conducted in her home revealed nothing. The search and arrest occurred most likely as the result of a denunciation.¹⁹ In the summer of 1944, Gendarmes shot three Jews who had been residents of Powązki village (in the former Radzików gmina) on Powstańców Street in Błonie. The bodies were buried at the site of the execution.²⁰ From 1942 to 1944, in Błonie there were numerous other executions in which people perished but for which there is no information about their specific ethnicity. Some of them may have been Jews.²¹

A large group of Jewish partisans, under the leadership of Miller, operated in the Błonie area.²² The group was composed of ghetto escapees who succeeded in securing arms and formed a partisan unit. The unit maintained good relations with a local unit of the Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa), whose leader forewarned the Jewish group of threats to their security. In 1944, the group was subordinated to a Soviet partisan unit.²³

The number of Błonie Jews who survived the war and occupation is unknown. However, after the war Jews from Błonie and Leszno established a fraternal organization.²⁴ In Błonie and the surrounding area some Jews survived in hiding; among them was Dr. Chirsz, who received assistance from a Polish family.²⁵

SOURCES References to the fate of the Jews of Błonie during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo stołeczne warszawskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHW, 1988); Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 109; and T. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 85, 115–116.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/267 [AJDC]; 211/234 [JSS]; 301/4444; 302/150, 153; Ring 1/352 [Ringelblum Archive]); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.0124 [JSS]); VHF (# 27027, 29135, and 51287); and YVA (O-3/6909, 7754; M-49/E/5748).

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NOTES

1. Barbara Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego,” in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 127.
2. Jochen Böhrer, *Auftakt zum Vernichtungskrieg: Die Wehrmacht in Polen 1939* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2006), p. 224. AŻIH, 301/4444, p. 1, testimony of Rejla Sapot, mentions 40 Jews killed at the time of the Germans’ arrival.
3. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 109.

4. YVA, O-3/6909, p. 4.
5. *Ibid.*, O-3/7754, p. 6; VHF, # 27027, testimony of Myer Glick.
6. AŻIH, 301/4444, p. 2.
7. *Ibid.*, 210/267, p. 26, AJDC letter to Błonie, March 29, 1940; Engelking, “Życie codzienne,” p. 210.
8. Centrum Kultury w Grodzisku Mazowieckim, Resettlement announcement for Grodzisk, Żyrardów, Sochaczew, and Błonie, November 13, 1940.
9. VHF, # 27027. Glick, however, does not specifically mention the existence of a ghetto in Błonie.
10. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 109, report the existence of a ghetto in Błonie, but the only source given is to an unspecified reference in the ITS archives. A labor camp also existed in Błonie, but little information is available about this camp.
11. AŻIH, 210/267, p. 58, AJDC an Hilfskomitee für Flüchtlinge und arme Juden in Błonie, January 28, 1941.
12. *Raporty Ludwiga Fischera gubernatora dystryktu warszawskiego 1939–1944* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1987), p. 259.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 259, 277.
14. See AŻIH, Ring 1/352, Anordnung betreffend Freimachung des Kreises Sochaczew-Blonie von Juden, January 31, 1941; 301/4444, dates the transfer on February 17.
15. YVA, O-3/6909, p. 6; O-3/7754, p. 8; VHF, # 27027.
16. *Raporty Ludwiga Fischera*, p. 259 (Report, Warsaw Dystrykt Chief, February 10, 1941 [for January 1941]).
17. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów . . . : Województwo stołeczne warszawskie*, p. 23.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Raporty Ludwiga Fischera*, p. 489.
20. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów . . . : Województwo stołeczne warszawskie*, p. 24.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–24.
22. YVA, O-3/2078, testimony of Tuvia Miller.
23. Engelking, “Życie codzienne,” p. 492.
24. Alina Skibińska, “Powroty ocalałych,” in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, pp. 546, 585.
25. YVA, M-49/E/5748, pp. 1–2.

BOLIMÓW

Pre-1939: Bolimów (Yiddish: Bolimov), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Bolimow, Kreis Lowicz, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Bolimów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Bolimów is located about 60 kilometers (37 miles) west-southwest of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, in 1939, there were 235 Jews living in Bolimów.

In the fall of 1939, about 120 Jews from Łowicz were transferred by the Germans to Bolimów, where they were accommodated in the Bet Midrash. Among them was the family of David Flaum, who recalls that each family had its own corner.¹

Soon after the start of the occupation, the Jews of the town were subjected to forced labor. For example, in March 1940, the Forestry Office requested the use of 40 Jewish laborers from the mayor of Bolimów. The Jews were to receive two thirds of the normal wage if they performed the required work

effectively. An account in the yizkor book confirms that a number of Jews worked in the forests around the town.²

The Bolimów ghetto was established in May or June of 1940 on the orders of the Łowicz Kreishauptmann, Regierungsrat Dr. Schwender. By this time a Jewish Council (Judenrat) had already been established in the town.³ The non-Jewish local inhabitants took over many former Jewish homes, and the Jews were concentrated in an area around Synagogue Alley (Shul Gas). David Flaum confirms that the refugee accommodation was located within the ghetto. The ghetto was surrounded by a wooden fence with barbed wire. There was also a Jewish police force, consisting of 25 men, including 5 refugees.⁴

Due to the hard work and inadequate food, many Jews suffered from hunger and exhaustion. This drove some Jews to risk leaving the ghetto to buy food from local farmers at extortionate prices.⁵

In December 1940, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Łowicz reported that there were 460 Jews then living in Bolimów, of which 110 were receiving welfare support.⁶

In early January 1941, the head of the Jewish Council (*Obmann des Judengebiet*) in the Bolimów ghetto wrote to the Central Committee of the JSS in Kraków, reporting that the three members of the JSS branch in Bolimów had been dismissed, as they were too old and unsuited for their positions. He requested that three replacements be confirmed, as they were much better suited and had the confidence of the local Jewish population.⁷

In March 1941, the Jews of Bolimów were transferred to the Warsaw ghetto, as part of a large-scale plan to clear all the Jews from the Kreise of Distrikt Warschau to the west of the city. Due to a lack of transportation, many of the Jews had to travel on foot, leaving most of their possessions behind.⁸ It is likely that a small group of Jews remained in the empty ghetto in Bolimów for a short period after the transfer, to sort out remaining Jewish property.⁹

On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, most of the Jews from Bolimów were put into improvised hostels designated for refugees. A report in the Ringelblum Archive from March 1941 noted the terrible conditions in one of these shelters based in a school building. Refugees from Bolimów were among 460 people being cared for in the facility. The report mentions difficulties encountered with hygiene and medical care and numerous deaths from hunger.¹⁰ A large number of the refugees from Bolimów died of starvation and contagious diseases in the course of their one-and-a-half-year stay in the Warsaw ghetto. Many of those who survived until the summer of 1942 were among those deported to the Treblinka extermination camp during the large-scale Aktion at that time.

Some Jews evaded deportation to Warsaw and attempted to survive in hiding in the area around Bolimów. However, they risked being betrayed by local Polish inhabitants who received a reward from the Germans for every Jew they denounced. In one instance, 21 Jews were uncovered hiding in a bunker in the forest, following a tip-off from a Polish peasant. The Jews were shot and buried on the spot. Only after the war

were their bodies exhumed and reburied in a mass grave in the Jewish cemetery in Bolimów.¹¹

SOURCES Much of this entry is based on the Łowicz yizkor book, Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Lovitsb—a sbtot in Mazovye un umgegent, seyfer zikorn* (Melbourne and Sydney, Australia: Łowicz Landsmanshaften, 1966), which contains some information regarding the fate of the Jews in Bolimów under the Nazi occupation. The ghetto in Bolimów is mentioned also in Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 66; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 113; and Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 212.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/273; 211/250, 674; Ring I/116); BA-BL (R 52III/29); USHMM (Acc. 1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-14.052; RG-15.079 [Ring]); VHF (# 6081); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 6081, testimony of David Flaum (born 1922), 1995; Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, pp. 368, 371.

2. USHMM, Acc. 1999.A.0154, 210/273, p. 5; Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, p. 371.

3. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 113, dates it in May 1940; Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Provincia noc*, p. 212, state June 11, 1940; Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, p. 370, gives the spring of 1940. See also Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 109, which cites the report of the Kreishauptmann Łowicz, July 20, 1940.

4. VHF, # 6081; Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, p. 371.

5. Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, p. 371.

6. USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124, 211/674, pp. 37–38.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

8. Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, p. 371.

9. See USHMM, RG-14.052 (BA-BL), R 52III/29, p. 57, Kreishauptmann Łowicz, situation report, March 13, 1941.

10. AŻIH, Ring I/116 [469.]

11. Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, p. 368.

DOBRE

Pre-1939: Dobre, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Dobre is located 18 kilometers (11 miles) northeast of Mińsk Mazowiecki and 48 kilometers (30 miles) east of Warsaw. In 1921, 373 Jews were living in the village, making up 34 percent of the total population of 1,097. The Jewish population of Dobre was mainly Hasidic.¹

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The Germans occupied Dobre in early September 1939, immediately after which Jews were required to wear a yellow badge on their clothing and compelled to perform hard labor. Some Jewish families fled to the Soviet Union.² Conflicting information exists on when and even whether a ghetto was created in Dobre. According to one source, a ghetto was created in November 1940 and contained roughly 1,200 people.³ According to another (the testimony of Sonia Powonzek, a native of the village), Dobre did not have a ghetto; from June 1942, Jews were merely prohibited from leaving the village.⁴ According to yet another source, Dobre did indeed have a ghetto, which housed over 500 people, including Jews from Kałuszyn, Wyszaków, Mrozów, Mińsk Mazowiecki, and Pabianice.⁵ The testimony of Stanisław Słomkowski (aka Dawid Słoń) lends credence to the notion that Dobre functioned, at the very least, as a collection point for Jews from nearby towns, since he was deported there with his wife from Dropie in late 1941 or early 1942.⁶ At the same time, it appears that some Jews from Dobre were deported to the ghetto in Kałuszyn.⁷ Lejbka Fryd, for her part, was born in Dobre but hid in Dropie during the war.⁸

A four-member Judenrat was created in Dobre in 1941. J. Furmann served as its chairman and Sendrowicz as its secretary.⁹ In Powonzek's account, Jozek Nejman, the owner of a fashion accessories shop, is named as chairman of the Judenrat.¹⁰ The Judenrat supplied Germans with Jewish laborers to dig trenches, lay pavement, and perform other types of forced labor. Relations between the Judenrat and local Jews were generally hostile. A three-member Jewish police force, including one Chil Mejnener, from a Hasidic household, operated in Dobre, as did an aid committee. The aid committee cared for 200 to 250 individuals, including some 100 refugees.¹¹

Powonzek's testimony relates that living conditions in Dobre were extremely cramped, as the Germans took the best apartments for themselves. A Gestapo detachment consisting of six SS men was present in the village. Powonzek reports that life in Dobre otherwise continued more or less as normal under German occupation. There was neither hunger nor disease; religious life continued essentially uninterrupted under a man named Brotman, who served as both *shochet* and rabbi; Jewish children continued to go to a school, which was headed by Jan Zych; and the Germans did not undertake any special discriminatory measures towards Dobre's Jews. Jews maintained relations with local Poles, but the attitude of the latter towards the former was rather negative, with the Poles often betraying the hiding places of Jews to the German authorities.¹²

The ghetto in Dobre was liquidated on September 15, 1942. The details of the liquidation and deportation process as found in extant sources differ. One reports that the Jews of Dobre were compelled to travel by foot or by horse-driven cart to the closest railway station, in Mińsk Mazowiecki, where they were herded into railcars;¹³ another reports that they were taken to nearby Stanisławów, where some were massacred on the spot, while others managed to escape.¹⁴ The sources, however, agree that the final destination for Dobre's Jews was the Treblinka extermination camp, a fate that only a

small number were able to escape, including two who were saved by Polish farmers.

SOURCES Articles on the Jewish community of Dobre can be found in the following publications: Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 178–179; and Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 316.

The book by Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007) contains information on Dobre, pp. 64–66, 168–169, 215, 347.

Further information on Dobre can also be found in Tatiana Berenstein, "Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim," *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952); and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 159–160.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Dobre under German occupation can be found in the following archival collections: AŻIH (210/28, 30 [AJDC]; 211/59, 359 [JSS]; 301/2989, 5820 [Relacje]; and BA-L (B 162/6835).

Stephen Scala

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/4380, testimony of Sonia Powonzek.
2. *Ibid.*
3. BA-L, B 162/6835, pp. 149–150.
4. AŻIH, 301/4380.
5. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, pp. 159–160.
6. AŻIH, 301/3338, testimony of Stanisław Słomkowski.
7. BA-L, B 162/6835, pp. 146–147.
8. AŻIH, 301/3501, testimony of Lejbka Fryd.
9. *Ibid.*, 211/59.
10. *Ibid.*, 301/4380.
11. *Ibid.*, 210/28, Wykaz miejscowości Komitetów Pomocy, sprawozdanie z działalności V-XII 1940 r.
12. *Ibid.*, 301/4380.
13. BA-L, B 162/6835, pp. 149–150.
14. AŻIH, 301/4380.

FALENICA

Pre-1939: Falenica, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: part of the city of Warsaw, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Falenica is located about 16 kilometers (10 miles) southeast of the center of the city of Warsaw. In September 1939, the Jewish population was about 5,300.

On September 19, 1939, many houses and stores on the Jewish streets Handlowa and Długa burned down as a result of the fighting. At the start of the German occupation, only Wehrmacht troops were stationed in Falenica; later on some SS troops arrived to replace units sent to France. The SS

commandant organized a group of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) from Falenica, who posed a real threat, as they knew the Jewish inhabitants.¹ In December 1939, the German authorities imposed a “contribution” of 80,000 zloty on Falenica (affecting both the Polish and Jewish communities).²

A number of Jews forcibly evacuated from the territories annexed to the Third Reich arrived in Falenica over the following months. In January 1940, a group of 140 Jews arrived, but it is not clear where they came from. The population increased from 5,106 in 1940 to 6,500 in August 1941.³

It is not possible to establish the precise date on which the Judenrat in Falenica was established, but it was about the same time as in Otwock (December 1939). Some correspondence between the Judenrat and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) has been preserved, starting in January 1940. The first head of the Judenrat was H. Cukerman, an assimilated Jew. After a few weeks the members of the Judenrat were arrested and shot, following a denunciation made by the ethnic German Buchholz. Then the German authorities appointed Elias Finkiel as head of the Judenrat—Finkiel had already been a member of the Judenrat and served on the committee for social assistance. Finkiel was a wealthy Jew from Warsaw and owned a farm in Miedzeszyn. The secretaries now were Mieczysław Chodźko from Łódź and H. Szancer. In 1940, other members of the Judenrat included David Goldberg, Pinkus Rozenberg, and Majer Rajner.⁴ Subsequently Szancer became the head of the Judenrat in 1942, although there is no information on precisely when he was appointed.⁵

In Falenica the commandant of the Jewish Police and the majority of the policemen were originally from Łódź. The Jewish Police also included some Jews who had been expelled from Germany in the fall of 1938 and who had settled in Falenica.⁶ The commandant of the Jewish Police was named Sziker (or Szejker). The size of the police force varied, but it was usually somewhere between 15 and 20 men. In the spring of 1942, Zimnawoda, a man who had arrived from Łódź, was appointed as commandant of the police and Sziker became his deputy. Under the new commandant, the Jewish Police showed its cruelty in rounding up people for work, as the Germans promised to spare the families of ghetto policemen if they delivered the required quota.⁷

On October 31, 1940, the Germans established a ghetto in Falenica. In terms of organizational structure, the Medem sanatorium for children in Miedzeszyn was also subordinated to the ghetto in Falenica. About 200 Jewish children resided there. Jews from Dobre, Kałuszyn, Wyszaków, and Miedzeszyn lived in the Falenica ghetto. The Jews from Wiązowna were also compelled to move into the Falenica ghetto. The Germans did not establish a ghetto there because of the small number of Jewish inhabitants. In total, some 6,500 Jews passed through the ghetto. Approximately 1,500 died from hunger and disease.

The area of the ghetto was confined by Lawinowa, Mszańska, Chryzantemy, Hiacyntowa, and Bartoszycka Streets and also segments of Bystrzycka, Walcownicza, and Patriotów

Streets on one side of the railway, excluding the power station. In Miedzeszyn the ghetto was located on the left side of the railway on the grounds of the Medem sanatorium. The ghetto was secured by a 2-meter-high (6.6-foot-high) barbed-wire fence, although it was only fenced on the side of the road and along the railway lines; the road through the forest to Radość remained open.⁸ The Polish (Blue) Police guarded the ghetto rather ineffectively on the outside. However, the Jewish Police also guarded the gates on the inside. Germans serving in a unit of 36 SS men stationed in Falenica only showed up sporadically. When they appeared, however, they would shoot anybody who attracted their attention.

The establishment of the ghetto did little to disturb the ongoing Polish-Jewish trade. To facilitate communications, the Jews took down the wire in some places, and it was never repaired. The Polish policemen tolerated this trade. Expelled Polish house owners went to examine their properties inside the ghetto. Some people even took a shortcut to the railway station in Miedzeszyn through the ghetto.⁹ Wheat was smuggled into the ghetto regularly, and a significant part of the bread made was sent to the Warsaw ghetto.

In March of 1940, due to the increasing number of people infected with typhus, the Judenrat was forced to establish a quarantine house.¹⁰ On January 10, 1941, the Falenica ghetto was sealed off so that Jews could no longer enter or leave. During the existence of the Falenica ghetto, Jews from a number of towns, such as Dobre, Kałuszyn, Wyszaków, and Mrozy, were brought into the ghetto. Sporadically, also, some Jews from Warsaw and Łódź arrived.

In May 1941, more than half of the 6,500 residents were receiving social welfare. In 1941, the Judenrat opened a hospital for the contagiously sick on the orders of the Kreishauptmann, Dr. Hermann Rupprecht.¹¹ In January and February 1942, the death rate in the ghetto was double that recorded in December. In January alone, some 2 percent of the total ghetto population died. The main cause of death was extreme exhaustion caused by hunger and frost.¹²

In the summer of 1940, Jews from the ghetto were sent to work unloading coal from trains, serving the German military forces, cleaning the streets, and doing laundry. Jewish girls were forced to clean rooms using their own underwear as rags. Forced labor tasks also included work in the surrounding forests, digging up tree roots.¹³ Jews from Falenica were sent to work in Józefów near Lublin and also at the Karczew labor camp.

At the end of 1941, the Germans established a labor camp in Falenica for work at the sawmill and construction work at Podkowa Street on water and drainage works. Some 400 people worked at this camp.

When the Germans started to build the Treblinka extermination camp and also a labor camp in Wilanów (April–May 1942), for the first time the Jewish Police organized roundups for work. Some 50 people were sent to Treblinka and 70 to Wilanów. Some Jewish policemen were sent to keep an eye on the workers in Wilanów. Their commandant was a popular German Jew, Herman Kirschrot.¹⁴

At the end of May 1942, the head of the Arbeitsamt (labor office) in Otwock, Dietz; and Hartlof (the administrator of the confiscated Najwer sawmill in Falenica) arrived in the ghetto and selected about 80 to 100 men to work in the sawmill and at building huts for the military. They were promised that they would be spared if they performed their work well. The sawmill was outside the ghetto, and every day the Jewish Police escorted the Jewish workers to the site. In August, Hartlof told the workers that the ghetto would be liquidated, and he issued them work certificates (*Arbeitscheine*) to protect them. On August 17, 1942, Jews from the small remnant ghettos or labor camps in Miłosna, Zakręt, and Wiązowna were brought to Falenica. That same day the Gendarmes from Rembertów demanded 100,000 złoty, which they received, to leave the ghetto. At the beginning of July the Polish (Blue) Police who guarded the outside of the ghetto were replaced by Ukrainian and Lithuanian guard units.

The liquidation of the Falenica ghetto took place on August 20, 1942. The Aktion was expected, as only one day earlier the Otwock ghetto had been liquidated. Shortly before the ghetto liquidation in Falenica, the Jews from Radość were brought on foot to Falenica.¹⁵ Prior to the Aktion there were some 5,000 people in the ghetto. About 200 people were killed during the liquidation operation.

At 4:00 A.M., the Polish (Blue) Police surrounded the ghetto, and at dawn some SS troops joined them. The Ukrainian and Lithuanian guards killed everyone who was not able to walk or refused to leave their house. There were some cases of resistance and also of suicide. On the same day, the Jews from Rembertów were rounded up and chased on foot to Falenica. They arrived there around 2:00 P.M. Many of them were shot on the way. Between Miedzeszyn and Falenica, 200 people were killed and subsequently buried in two mass graves. All the people were gathered between the synagogue and the railways. Around 150 children from the Medem sanatorium joined the transport with their teacher.¹⁶ After loading up, the train traveled on to Otwock to pick up the rest of the Jews who had been hiding following the liquidation of the Otwock ghetto on the previous day.¹⁷ Thirty-five people were selected to work in Treblinka. The Germans ordered the owner of the sawmill, Najwer, to choose 100 men to remain working for him. On May 7, 1943, the commandant of the German Gendarmerie in Rembertów, Lüppschau, with the Gendarmes from Rembertów and Otwock murdered all the men by throwing grenades among them and then shooting the remainder. They were buried in a mass grave behind the sawmill.¹⁸ In the ghetto about 24 Jewish policemen remained behind to guard and sort out the Jewish property that was to be sent back to Germany.

Thirty Jews from Falenica survived the war.¹⁹ No information is available concerning any postwar trials of the persons involved in the liquidation of the ghetto.

SOURCES The main published work is *Sefer Falenits*, edited by David Sztokfisz (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Falenits be-Yisrael, 1967), and *Khurbn Otwock-Falenits-Karczew* (Bamberg: Far-

valtung fun Otvotsker, Falenitser un Kartshever Landslayt in der Amerikaner Zone in Daytshland, 1948). Some information regarding the Falenica ghetto can also be found in the memoir written by Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996). The main secondary work is Jadwiga Dobrzyńska's *Falenica moja miłość po raz drugi* (Warsaw, 1996).

In the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute (AŻIH) in Warsaw, there are preserved some rudimentary materials, including the correspondence between the Judenrat in Falenica and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (210/14, AJDC) and also the Presidium of the Jewish Social Self-Help (211/383-384, JSS) in Kraków. There are also a few testimonies by survivors recorded after the war (e.g., 301/2207). One of the most important sources for the liquidation of the ghetto is the testimony of Sara Najwer (302/4496). The lack of other archival sources is due to the destruction of the building of the Falenica Jewish community in July 1943. In an operation organized by the underground Home Army, the building was set on fire to destroy any documents that could be used against the inhabitants of Falenica.

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NOTES

1. Baruch Goldstein, "In the Ghetto and on the Aryan Side," in Sztokfisz, *Sefer Falenits*, p. 249.
2. Ludwik Landau, *The Chronicle of the Years of War and Occupation*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1962), p. 146.
3. Tatiana Berenstein, "Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim," *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 83–125.
4. AŻIH, JSS, 211/383, p. 4; AJDC, 210/14, p. 35.
5. *Ibid.*, JSS, 211/383, p. 18.
6. Mieczysław Chodźko, "The Tragic Life of the Falenica Ghetto," in Sztokfisz, *Sefer Falenits*, p. 207.
7. Sztokfisz, *Sefer Falenits*, p. 253.
8. AŻIH, 301/5719, testimony of Danuta Dąbrowska, p. 1.
9. Sztokfisz, *Sefer Falenits*, p. 251; Dobrzyńska, *Falenica moja miłość po raz drugi*, pp. 116–117.
10. AŻIH, AJDC, 210/14, p. 10.
11. *Ibid.*, JSS, 211/383, pp. 35, 52.
12. *Ibid.*, JSS, 211/384, pp. 18, 25.
13. *Ibid.*, 301/2207, testimony of Srulek Lang, p. 18.
14. *Ibid.*, 301/4496, testimony of Sara Najwer, p. 1.
15. Sztokfisz, *Sefer Falenits*, p. 256.
16. Ryszard Zabłotniak, "Sanatorium Dziecka im. Włodzimierza Medema w Miedzeszynie," *Archiwum Historii i Filozofii Medycyny* 55:3–4 (1922): 322; Sztokfisz, *Sefer Falenits*, p. 212.
17. Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?* pp. 64–65; Dobrzyńska, *Falenica moja miłość po raz drugi*, pp. 121–122.
18. AŻIH, 301/4496, p. 10.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

GŁÓWNO

Pre-1939: Głowno, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Głowno, Kreis Lowicz, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Głowno, Łódź województwo, Poland

Głowno is located 29 kilometers (18 miles) northeast of Łódź. The 1921 census registered 1,430 Jews in residence. According to the community's estimates, there were 2,000 Jews in Głowno on the outbreak of World War II.¹

With the establishment of the Generalgouvernement in October 1939, Głowno became a town within Distrikt Warschau, which lay directly on the border with the Warthegau, that had been created out of Polish territory annexed to the Third Reich. By the end of 1939, the Jewish population of Głowno had more than doubled, due to the arrival of many deportees and refugees; for example, on December 29, 1939, approximately 1,600 Jews from Stryków were deported to Głowno. Documentation from the files of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) shows that the majority of the deportees were from Aleksandrów Łódzki, Łódź, Zgierz, and Stryków. Many of the newcomers soon were deported further to the east, for example, to Izbica Lubelska.²

Several times the German authorities ordered the expulsion of Głowno's Jews within 24 hours but then failed to proceed with the actual deportation; for instance, the December 6, 1939, deportation first was postponed until January 15, 1940, and then again until April. The local Jews of Głowno clashed with the newcomers, blaming them for increases in food prices and congestion. To avoid deportation, many newcomers moved to summer cottages in Głowno's suburbs of Nowy Otwock, Zakopane, and Warchałów. In January 1940, there were 2,700 newcomers in Głowno.

An Aid Committee for Poor Jews was organized in Głowno in December 1939, chaired by Juda Flamholz. The committee opened a soup kitchen that served at its peak 1,500 meals daily.

A 12-man Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in February 1940, which was chaired by Abram Rosenberg. Other members included Leon Borensztajn (deputy), Fiszel Baum, Chaim Bursztyn, Josef Klecki, Maurycy Baumerder, and Juda Flamholz. With the exception of Borensztajn, a German Jew, it consisted solely of merchants. The anonymous author of "The Głowno Timetable," preserved in the Ringelblum Archive, noted: "The Judenrat was greatly hated by the Jewish population." The Judenrat was tasked with the provision of laborers and hygiene. It immediately tried to dissolve the Aid Committee but succeeded only in October 1940, when it took over the management of the soup kitchen. By April 1940, the conflict had reached the point where both parties requested that it be resolved by a representative of the AJDC from Kraków.³

The period preceding the ghetto's establishment is described in the "Głowno Timetable":

"The military leaves Głowno [in February 1940] and the Gendarmerie arrives. The conduct of the authorities towards the Jews becomes progressively worse. Jewish shops are shut down, searches are carried out, and . . . there is a good deal of looting. Instead of the odd two dozen Jewish workers demanded up till now, the labor authorities ask for 400 to work permanently, seven days a week. Volks-

deutscher [ethnic German] Roger is in charge of labor.⁴

On April 5, 1940, an order was issued for all refugees to start leaving the town on April 8, at a rate of approximately 400 persons daily. The author of the "Głowno Timetable" noted: "The Judenrat decides that the first to leave will be the beneficiaries of the Aid Committee. None of the local Judenrat people or members of the Aid Committee are prepared to take any measures to intervene." To the great relief of the newcomers, this order was suddenly canceled.⁵

On April 18, 1940, sudden rumors spread that all deportees will be able to go to their hometowns the next day. That same day, an order for 2,000 Jews to report to the market square in the morning was issued. As most newcomers sought to avoid deportation, only several hundred of them reported to the square. The Jewish Police (created only shortly before) forced many to go to the collection point. The Germans took two Jewish policemen and one Judenrat member as hostages. A woman, who refers to herself as Nacia in her Ringelblum Archive memoir, wrote:

Furious Głownians, like raving madmen, were running from house to house. . . . [S]uddenly, through a side window of the attic, I can see that Głownians are running into a backyard next door. At the forefront, councillor [Judenrat member] Flamholz [running] with a knife. Terrible screams reverberate; chinks of broken glass can be heard. The Głowno Jews are dragging people to the market square! ". . . should we suffer because of you? People might be shot because of you. You have to go!"—that is what the Jews of Głowno are shouting.⁶

In the end, the Germans drove the 2,000 refugees to Stryków in carts. In the morning, the exhausted crowd was suddenly sent back to Głowno. At least 1 person was shot on the way back. The Germans imprisoned approximately half of those deported in a former factory building near Głowno, where they were guarded by ethnic Germans and eventually released, with only the poorest remaining there. After a while the Germans dispersed these last people as well.⁷

The ghetto in Głowno was established officially on May 12, 1940, on the orders of the Kreishauptmann in Łowicz. Despite an attempted bribe of 15,000 złoty, the Judenrat failed to prevent its establishment. The main initiator of the ghetto was an ethnic German brick factory owner by the name of Wolbert. Local Poles objected to the plan to establish the ghetto in the predominantly Polish neighborhoods of Swoboda and Cichorajka. Instead, a resort area called Nowy Otwock, beyond the southeastern border of the town, was chosen as the ghetto's location. It consisted of the following four streets: Kościuszko, Cegielniana, Spacerowa, and Mościcki. Most of the buildings in the ghetto were summer houses.⁸ In July 1940, there were 5,602 Jews in the ghetto.

A wire fence surrounded the ghetto. A Jewish police force consisting of 40 to 45 members kept order within the ghetto. The Jewish Police was divided into three sections, one of which included responsibility for sanitation. Its commanders included the Judenrat chairman and his son, B. Rozencwajg. "The [Jewish] police treated the population brutally. Extortion was a common and established practice," noted the author of the "Głowno Timetable." The Polish police guarded the single gate of the ghetto, but only during daytime. It did not interfere in internal ghetto affairs. The security of the ghetto was ultimately in the hands of the German Gendarmerie and its commander, Schwarz. Although Schwarz was unpredictable, there were no cases of ghetto residents being murdered.

An ethnic German, Lansky, was appointed as the ghetto commissar and "hygienist." He and his two assistants terrorized the Jews for five months, punishing them for excursions beyond the ghetto limits and its filthy conditions. Nacia names a man called "Ryt" as the commissar. As of May 1940, a German from Stryków named Szytler was Głowno's mayor (Bürgermeister). Along with other local ethnic Germans, he initiated the demolition of Jewish houses in Głowno. In October 1940, M. Nikolaj of Łowicz replaced Szytler.⁹

Living conditions in the ghetto were somewhat less harsh than in many others. On Rosh Hashanah in 1940, the authorities opened the synagogue for Jews to pray. For 0.50 złoty a week Jews could buy copies of the underground press. There were also soccer matches against Polish teams in the ghetto. On such occasions, the Landrat issued special permission for the Polish players to enter the ghetto. The Judenrat was in charge of issuing permits for ghetto residents to exit the ghetto, for which they had to pay. The regulations, however, were laxly enforced; the Jewish Police rarely checked the passes, as their relationship with the Germans was based on bribes.

The Jews continued to work in trade and crafts, and some even smuggled food to Warsaw. A number of Jews labored in workshops for tailoring and carpentry in Głowno. Survivor Halina Złotnik, a child at the time, remembers sneaking easily through the fence to visit farmers. Alternatively, farmers would bring their produce to the ghetto. Kosher butchers would bring cattle for slaughter through the ghetto gate or cut a hole in the fence to get them in. There was a constant war between the butchers and the Jewish Police, whom the butchers refused to bribe. The butchers also fought among themselves, denouncing each other to the Gendarmerie.¹⁰

The only Jewish doctor, Szmirgeld, managed a hospital housed in one of the ghetto's wooden cottages. Eventually, the Judenrat hired a Polish physician, Dr. Mierzejewski. Treatment conditions improved after Mierzejewski moved the hospital to a stone house, vaccinated the population against typhus, and ordered special food for the sick. Mierzejewski also improved sanitation in the ghetto: in the fall of 1940, all public toilets were closed, as they were overflowing, and German inspectors kept fining the ghetto residents for the consequent filth. The Jewish Police started to arrest those

who did not keep themselves and their surroundings clean. The Judenrat hired an increasing number of cleaners to improve sanitation.

The first roundup for labor camps in Distrikt Lublin took place on August 14, 1940. These became so frequent that Jewish youths fled to the villages to hide. Few of the laborers returned to Głowno, as conditions in the camps were horrific.

The ghetto was suddenly closed after a fire razed several Jewish houses on Łowicz Street on September 27, 1940. On Schwarz's order, the ghetto gate was nailed shut. The Jews were accused of arson, and 20 people were arrested and sent to the Łowicz prison. All exit permits were temporarily canceled. The Głowno Jews were forbidden to leave the ghetto on pain of death. One of the Gendarmes, Karl Braun, shot a woman for leaving its boundaries on September 29. After the fire, the Germans began to watch the ghetto more closely. The largest house in the ghetto was excluded from it, to straighten its borders and make the ghetto rectangular. Trees that obscured the view of the ghetto's fences were cut down. The arrestees were released from the prison at the beginning of December 1940 because there was no proof that the Jews had anything to do with the fire.¹¹ At that time, reportedly 5,300 Jews were living in the ghetto.¹²

On February 8, 1941, the Germans ordered the Judenrat to collect all 600 exit passes. Four Judenrat members were held hostage briefly, while the Jewish Police searched nearby villages to find any Jews still outside the ghetto after the order was issued. The Jewish population realized that resettlement to the Warsaw ghetto, which had already been imposed on several nearby communities, could not now be avoided. The author of the "Timetable" wrote: "In the end, conflict erupts in the Judenrat, it splits into two camps which contend with one another, slinging mutual recriminations. A committee is formed to help the poorer element leave. . . . The committee extorted money from the poorest and did nothing for them."¹³

The deportation to Warsaw was announced on February 28, 1941, for the following day, March 1. A number of Jews remained in the ghetto until March 18, 1941. During that time the ghetto size was shrinking, and Jews were expelled repeatedly from one house to another. A small number of craftsmen were transferred to the Łowicz ghetto and, from there, on to Warsaw; others were picked up off the streets of the Głowno ghetto and then transferred.

SOURCES The following publications refer to the Głowno ghetto: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 179; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 208–209; and Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 81–84, 164. Published sources include Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S." ("Oneg Shabbath")* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), pp. 120–123.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/340 [AJDC]; 211/674 [JSS]; 302/93 [Memoirs]); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079M [Ring I]; RG-02.208M [Memoirs]); and VHF (e.g., # 9631, 42996, 48980).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 3, 1941.
2. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/340 (Głowno), pp. 3–19.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2, 13–20, 35–37; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/674 (Łowicz), p. 40; RG-15.079M, Ring I/438 [743].
4. Translation of Ring I/804, “The Głowno Timetable,” in Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 120–123.
5. *Ibid.*
6. USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/438 [743].
7. *Ibid.*; Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/340, p. 24; VHF, # 9631, testimony of Sara Boden, 1995.
8. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/340, pp. 3–19; *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 3, 1941; translation of Ring I/804, “The Głowno Timetable,” in Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 120–123.
9. USHMM, RG-02.208M (Memoirs), 302/93, memoir of Halina Złotnik; translation of Ring I/804, “The Głowno Timetable,” in Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 120–123; USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/438 [743].
10. USHMM, RG-02.208M (Memoirs), 302/93, memoir of Halina Złotnik; VHF, # 48980, testimony of Emil Hecht, 1998.
11. Translation of Ring I/804, “The Głowno Timetable,” in Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 120–123.
12. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/674, p. 33.
13. Translation of Ring I/804, “The Głowno Timetable,” in Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 120–123.

GÓRA KALWARIA

Pre-1939: Góra Kalwaria (Yiddish: Ger), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Góra Kalwaria, Kreis Grojec, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Góra Kalwaria, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Góra Kalwaria is located about 32 kilometers (20 miles) south-southeast of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, the population of Góra Kalwaria was 7,000, including around 3,300 Jews. However, since the Ger rabbi, Abraham Mordecai Alter, resided in this shtetl, the number of Jews generally swelled to double this number between Rosh Hashanah and the Shavuot holiday each year. The town was a major center of prayer and study for the Ger Hasidim.

With the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, the economy was ruined. The Ger rabbi left six days after war was declared, and the following day, a large proportion of the Jews fled hurriedly without their belongings. Some went to Warsaw, others across the Vistula. Góra Kalwaria was not severely damaged by the German bombardment.

On September 8, the Germans marched into Góra Kalwaria. On their arrival German soldiers plundered Jewish property, and soon they arrested the Jewish and Christian young men who remained. The Jewish prisoners were deported to forced labor camps in Germany and not released for a couple of months. After about one week, those Jews who had returned to the town found their homes standing but emptied by looters. The German authorities confiscated goods from Jewish businesses.¹

The Germans required that between 200 and 400 Jews report for forced labor each day. One Jew, Yankl Czarnaczapka, a tailor by trade, was instructed to organize these labor details for the Germans. He claimed to be protecting the Jews from random seizures off the streets, but it soon became clear that “he protected and looked out only for his own interests.”² German regulations soon forbade the Jews from carrying out most forms of business. Instead, a new business, smuggling food and life-sustaining needs from Warsaw, developed.

The Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established on the orders of the first Kreishauptmann, Regierungsrat Dr. Klein, on January 15, 1940 (he was replaced in March 1940). It consisted of six former members of the kehillah and six new members, including its head, Mr. M.K. Skrzypek. The Judenrat took over the organization of forced laborers. Forced labor tasks included agricultural work and road construction.

In January 1940, the Jews were assembled at the magistrate’s office and were issued with numbers. The Jews then had to sew the numbers onto their armbands which they had to carry with them at all times or face punishment. The numbers were used by the Judenrat to assist in assigning people for forced labor. Excluding the sick, all Jews were required to work two or three days per week. Work on certain details was paid, while the others remained unpaid, causing considerable resentment that threatened to undermine the Judenrat’s system of labor assignments, as Jews sought to get transferred to those jobs that were paid.

The Judenrat also was responsible for collecting funds needed to cover its expenses of some 5,000 złoty per month. Collecting this money became increasingly difficult over time, and the Judenrat employed the Jewish Police, led by Czarnaczapka, to impose sanctions on those unwilling to pay.

To assist the many needy Jews in Góra Kalwaria, contact was established with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw. By March 1940, with support received from the AJDC, a soup kitchen had been opened, organized under the supervision of the Judenrat. It provided up to 1,200 meals daily at a price of 10 groszy each. Those without means received the food for free. At Passover, monetary aid and matzot were supplied to needy Jews with the aid of some 15,000 złoty from the AJDC. The kitchen continued operations until June, when the AJDC ceased providing support.³

In the summer of 1940, to meet a quota of 170 people assigned by the Jewish Council for the Kreis based in Grójec, the Jewish Police and the Gendarmes rounded up 40 Jewish youths and sent them away to work at labor camps in Kreis Hrubieszow, Distrikt Lublin. Conditions in the camps were

appalling, and a number of youths died from illness or were shot by the guards. The remainder returned home by the winter of 1940–1941, severely weakened by the ordeal.⁴

Due to concerns about the spread of typhus among both Christians and Jews, the local health authorities instructed the Jews to build a bathhouse and an isolation ward. A wall was constructed in the Bet Midrash to isolate the contagious. This work went on for a number of weeks and had to be paid for by additional taxes on the Jews. Ultimately not all of the required construction projects were completed, as they were interrupted by the expulsion of the Jews from the town.⁵

At the end of 1940, the Jews of Góra Kalwaria were confined to certain streets, including Czorny-Dwor Street, establishing an open ghetto. According to survivor Jerry Lista, the relocation was announced in the papers and on loudspeakers, and the Jews were given two to three days to move into the designated area. The Jews could take with them only the most necessary items.⁶ The Polish inhabitants had been removed from this area.⁷ Apartments were hard to come by, and the living quarters were very cramped, with about 10 people sharing one room. Jews were forbidden to leave the ghetto, and Christians were not allowed to enter. Smuggling stopped almost completely. Hygienic conditions were poor, and disease spread among the ghetto inhabitants.

In early January 1941, the Jewish Council reported that about 300 Jews had recently been resettled to Góra Kalwaria from nearby communities. In addition, there were about 100 Jewish refugees, mostly from towns in the Warthegau, living with the indigenous Jews in the Góra Kalwaria ghetto.⁸

On January 21, 1941, the Kreishauptmann in Grójec, Landrat Werner Zimmermann, issued the following order: “All Jews living outside of the towns of Błędów, Tarczyn, Mogielnica, Góra Kalwaria, Warka, and Grójec are to transfer immediately to the closest of these towns, all of which were to be considered as ghettos. The heads of the respective settlements were made personally responsible for ensuring that by January 27, 1941, no Jews still were residing on their territory.” The order also stipulated that any Jew caught outside these ghettos after January 27, 1941, would face the death penalty.⁹

As rumors spread of the transfer of the Jews to the Warsaw ghetto, Jews began to sell off their last possessions for whatever they could get. To prevent this, in early February 1941 the Kreishauptmann forbade Jews from selling their furniture to non-Jews and declared invalid all such sales after February 1, 1941. The police were instructed to prevent all attempts to transport furniture out of the ghettos of the Kreis.¹⁰

On February 25 and 26, 1941, the Jews of Góra Kalwaria were transferred to the Warsaw ghetto. As there was some warning, a few hundred managed to escape in time to other towns. Starting at 6:00 A.M., the Jews were assembled at a meeting point next to the magistrate’s office under armed guard. Each family could not take with them more than 30 kilograms (66 pounds) of luggage. They were escorted out of Góra Kalwaria to the railway station as the local Polish inhabitants watched them leave. From here they were trans-

ported in overcrowded carriages by rail to the Warsaw ghetto, being forced to change trains in Piaseczno on the way. On arrival they were required to shower and then placed the next day in quarters prepared for refugees, which included a synagogue and a disused hospital. In total some 3,000 Jews were transferred from Góra Kalwaria to the Warsaw ghetto.¹¹

The Judenrat remained in the town for another eight days to try to retrieve some property items that had been requisitioned by the German Gendarmes. They also attempted to transport remaining food supplies to the Warsaw ghetto but were only partially successful, salvaging 50 out of 400 cubic meters (65.4 out of 523.2 cubic yards) of potatoes, as the Polish Red Cross obstructed them.

Horrendous conditions of poverty and hunger faced the Jews of Góra Kalwaria in the Warsaw ghetto. Whatever they brought with them was stolen. Hundreds died in the first months and many more daily after that. Most of the remainder were deported to their deaths at the Treblinka extermination camp in the summer of 1942.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews in Góra Kalwaria during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Gregorio Saposznikow, ed., *“Meguilat Guer”* (Buenos Aires: Residentes de Guer en Argentina, 1975); Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), pp. 188–197. The Góra Kalwaria ghetto is mentioned also in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 188; Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 213; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 211–212.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/349 [AJDC]; Ring I/809, 881, 1175); BA-L (Ord. Vers. XXI); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF (e.g., # 10410, 29091); and YVA.

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. AŻIH, Ring I/809, cited here from the translation in Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, p. 191; Saposznikow, *“Meguilat Guer,”* p. 330.
2. AŻIH, Ring I/809, cited from Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, p. 191.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 192–193; AŻIH, 210/349.
4. AŻIH, Ring I/809; Saposznikow, *“Meguilat Guer,”* pp. 332–333.
5. AŻIH, Ring I/809; 210/349.
6. VHF, # 10410, testimony of Jerry Lista (born 1927), 1995; Saposznikow, *“Meguilat Guer,”* p. 333.
7. VHF, # 29091, testimony of Henryk Prajs (born 1916). This witness, however, dates the establishment of the ghetto in July 1940.
8. AŻIH, 210/349.
9. AŻIH, Ring I/881.

10. BA-L, Ordn. Vers. XXI, p. 364, Kreishauptmann Grojec an alle Bürgermeister und Gemeindevorsteher des Kreises Grojec, February 4, 1941.

11. AŻIH, Ring I/809; Saposznikow, “*Meguilat Guer*,” pp. 334–335.

GRODZISK MAZOWIECKI

Pre-1939: Grodzisk Mazowiecki (Yiddish: Grodzhisk), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Sochaczew, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Grodzisk Mazowiecki is located about 30 kilometers (19 miles) southwest of Warsaw. Before World War II, there were around 3,600 Jews living in Grodzisk, among a total population of about 17,500.

On the evening of September 8, 1939, Wehrmacht units occupied the town. The Germans first granted recognition to the Jewish group that had formed in early September to function as a social welfare committee and gave it the name “Jewish Council of Elders” (*Ältestenrat der Juden*). At first, the members were appointed by the Polish mayor, Edward Radgowski, drawing on a list provided by the former chairman of the Jewish community, Jakubowicz. Jakubowicz also headed the council, which had eight other members.¹

Antisemitic measures instituted by the authorities, originating with Kreishauptmann Karl Adolf Pott, who resided in Sochaczew, first affected the Jews’ food supply or, more specifically, that of the retailers. For instance, on November 8, 1939, by order of the Kreishauptmann, the first shops were closed, and other storefronts were painted with the word *Jude* (Jew) in red lettering.²

Soon the Jewish Council (Judenrat) was fully occupied with providing for the first refugees and deportees, who arrived in the town almost completely destitute. They included at least 1,103 persons who arrived on January 14, 1940, from the surrounding rural communities and from Łódź as well; in August 1940, an additional 543 refugees came to Grodzisk Mazowiecki, and in January 1941, there were more arrivals—around 1,200 persons, including some from Kraków. On the other hand, on October 10, 1940, around 100 inhabitants were deported to Łódź, amid great furor. Among the deportees were the chairman of the Jewish Council, Jakubowicz, and two other members of the council.³ Nonetheless, by 1941 the total number of Jews in Grodzisk had risen to approximately 6,000.⁴

The Jewish Council, under the new leadership of Bernard Kampelmacher and Samuel Lewkowicz,⁵ now had only six members, who tried rather vigorously to alleviate the Jews’ suffering. First and foremost, funds were essential for this purpose, and consequently a tax of 1 to 5 złoty per month, depending on financial capacity, was levied. In addition, a fee of 0.30 złoty for food ration cards was instituted. The council used the revenue primarily for support of the poor,⁶ a task it undertook jointly with the social welfare

committee. Its members, Maks Hutt, Samuel Lewkowicz, Fiszal Płachta, Abram Wolanowski, and Bernard Kampelmacher, however, could not count on assistance from the Kraków-based organization Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS); such help continued to be denied them, despite numerous requests. No such assistance was provided in Grodzisk, unlike the Kreis capital Sochaczew, which had a JSS representative office, although the Jewish population there numbered only 3,000.⁷ Contacts with Jewish organizations existed primarily in the form of branch offices of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population in Poland (TOZ) and the Central Organization for Orphan Care (CENTOS).⁸ Nonetheless, the social welfare committee—which used its own funds to maintain disinfection equipment, an isolation ward, an outpatient clinic with two Jewish doctors, an orphanage for 40 children, and a school with seven grades, nine teachers, and 500 pupils—was largely forced to support itself. Not even the local public kitchen, which provided around 1,000 meals daily for the poorest members of the community, most of whom were refugees, could count on assistance from Kraków.⁹

Even so, the Jewish Council was able to place about 100 children in the care of the TOZ in Warsaw. Even the religious life of the Orthodox Mizrachim was fostered; the community maintained a rabbi and a house of study—admittedly, the latter housed the office of the Jewish Council.¹⁰

In Grodzisk, too, the German occupiers used the Jews as a labor force. The first work gangs had been in operation since 1939, cleaning streets and doing construction work;¹¹ 10 to 20 Jews were always at the permanent disposal of the town commandant’s office, the regimental command, the Heeresunterkunftsverwaltung (Army Billeting Administration), and the officers’ mess. Especially hard physical labor had to be performed by those who were deployed, for example, in the auto parts factory owned by the Kobylarski brothers. To forestall the arbitrary recruiting for labor that most German agencies carried out in the initial phase of the occupation, the Jewish Council soon set up a labor battalion, in which otherwise unemployed Jews could and had to participate. The Germans instructed the council where to send these workers; their payment was also handled by the council—if it had sufficient money for this purpose.¹²

The procurement of skilled workers and other qualified personnel was the responsibility of the Arbeitsamt (labor office) in Sochaczew, which made official requests for such workers and also took care of their weekly payment or, rather, arranged for the respective employers to pay their wages. Despite these measures, unemployment among the Jews of Grodzisk was high, and would-be workers frequently came to the council and asked to be placed in a job. A notable exception to this rule was the task of road construction near the town in the summer of 1940, which was pushed ahead under the harshest conditions. In view of the German pressure, the Judenrat could spare almost no one from the rigors of this work; a subsequent report described it as a “judgment from above.”¹³

After around 150 Jews who had been arbitrarily arrested were sent to labor camps in Distrikt Lublin in three transports in October 1940, a delegation of the Jewish Council succeeded, while visiting the site, in arranging for at least the workers who had fallen ill to be returned to Grodzisk.¹⁴ This accomplishment, probably the greatest success of the council under Bernard Kampelmacher, was soon followed by the shock of the ghettoization: on November 13, 1940, a placard posted by the Kreishauptmann announced the imminent resettlement from Grodzisk to Warsaw, while the Jews were forbidden, as of December, to leave an area in the center of town, the Jewish quarter or ghetto (*Jüdisches Wohngebiet*) that was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence.¹⁵

The resettlement to Warsaw, which took place between February 12 and 20, 1940, was handled with great brutality, though no mass killing occurred; after being deloused, the Jews were allowed to take with them 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of baggage and a two-day supply of food. The deportation process is described in detail in both Jewish¹⁶ and Polish¹⁷ sources. Because Lissberg, the head of the German Kripo outpost,¹⁸ had forbidden Jews to leave the town and ordered patrols to shoot any Jew found outside of the town, only a few Jews succeeded in escaping. Only a few craftsmen remained in Grodzisk itself until summer 1941, when they too were sent to Warsaw.¹⁹

Almost all the Jews of Grodzisk—initially organized in a kind of hometown association in the Warsaw ghetto, under the leadership of Kampelmacher²⁰—shared the fate of the other inmates of the Warsaw ghetto and were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp; Kampelmacher died earlier, of typhus, in 1942. As early as the end of February 1941, a member of the Polish underground movement remarked that Grodzisk was empty without the Jews—but that the economy was profiting from their disappearance. Nonetheless, 125 survivors returned for some length of time immediately after the war.²¹

SOURCES The most significant information on Grodzisk, based on research mainly in the ŻIH archives, is found in the following publication: Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); the book also takes into account the older study by Tatiana Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk Żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 83–125. Information about the fate of the town during the war, with occasional mention of the Jews, is found in the diary of the resistance fighter Stanisław Rembek, *Dziennik okupacyjny* (Warsaw: Agawa, 2000). Little light is shed, however, by Józef Kazimierski, ed., *Dzieje Grodziska Mazowieckiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Geologiczne, 1989), which almost entirely ignores the Jews of Grodzisk.

Documents regarding the fate of the Jews of Grodzisk are preserved most notably in AŻIH in Warsaw (e.g., Ring I/8, 9, 15, 21, 320, 352, 806; 210/28 [AJDC]; 211/431 [JSS]). Copies are also available in other archives: USHMM and YVA. Yad Vashem has several accounts by survivors from Grodzisk (YVA, O-3). Local German policy is reflected in the compre-

hensive records of the Kreishauptmannschaft Sochaczew (APW, Fond 492).

Stephan Lehnstaedt

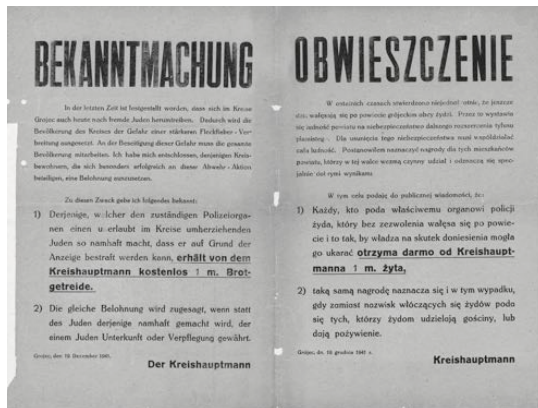
NOTES

1. AŻIH, Ring I/8, report by Bernard Kampelmacher.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. See Berenstein, “Deportacje,” pp. 115–116.
5. On Lewkowicz, see the biographical sketch written by Kampelmacher, in AŻIH, Ring I/21, undated [summer 1941].
6. AŻIH, Ring I/8, report by Bernard Kampelmacher.
7. Ibid., 211/431, letters from Kraków JSS to Social Welfare Committee in Grodzisk, November 29, 1940, and December 7, 1940. In its letters, the JSS also pointed out that a representative office could be established only by the Kreishauptmannschaft.
8. Ibid., 210/28, AJDC index of places for Distrikt Warschau, May–December 1940.
9. Ibid., 211/431, telegram from Kampelmacher to Kraków JSS, February 1, 1941.
10. Ibid., Ring I/8, report by Bernard Kampelmacher.
11. See Rembek, *Dziennik*, pp. 16–17, diary entry for February 20, 1940.
12. AŻIH, Ring I/8, report by Bernard Kampelmacher.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. See also Rembek, *Dziennik*, pp. 123–124, diary entry for October 30, 1940.
15. Centrum Kultury w Grodzisku Mazowieckim, Resettlement announcement for Grodzisk, Żyrardów, Sochaczew, and Błonie, November 13, 1940.
16. AŻIH, Ring I/9, report by Bernard Kampelmacher on the resettlement of the Jews, undated [1942]. See also Ring I/806 and Ring I/352, Anordnung betreffend Freimachung des Kreises Sochaczew-Blonie von Juden, January 31, 1941.
17. See Rembek, *Dziennik*, pp. 163–170, diary entries for February 7–14, 1941.
18. See Jacek Młynarczyk, “‘Akcja Reinhard’ w gettach prowincjonalnych dystryktu warszawskiego 1942–1943,” in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, pp. 39–74, here p. 42.
19. See Berenstein, “Deportacje,” pp. 115–116.
20. AŻIH, Ring I/320, announcement of the Grodzisk Hometown Association in the Warsaw Ghetto, March 2, 1941.
21. See Alina Skibińska, “Powroty ocalałych,” in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, pp. 505–599, here pp. 586 and 591. In Grodzisk, there was also a regional Jewish committee, with which 77 survivors were registered.

GRÓJEC

Pre-1939: Grójec (Yiddish: Gritzze), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Grojec, Kreis center, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Grójec, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Grójec is located about 45 kilometers (28 miles) south of Warsaw. On June 23, 1939, Grójec had 9,752 residents, including 5,190 Jews.



Announcement in German and Polish issued by the Kreishauptmann of the Grójec district, Werner Zimmermann, offering a reward for turning in Jews, December 19, 1941. The original text reads: "It has been recently established that in the Grójec area foreign Jews are still moving about. The residents of the Grójec area are thereby exposed to the danger of a serious outbreak of typhus. The entire population must cooperate in the elimination of this danger. I have decided to reward those residents who are particularly successful in participating in this defensive action. To this end I make the following known:

- 1) He who provides to the responsible police organization the name of an illegal and transient Jew, in such a way that leads to his capture, will receive from the Kreishauptmann 1 m. [cubic meter] of wheat.
- 2) The same reward will be given if, instead of a Jew, the name of someone who gives shelter or aid to a Jew [is provided]."

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German troops occupied the town on September 8, 1939. Shortly after the arrival of the Germans, they started to rob and persecute the Jews. Before the Germans arrived, many refugees arrived in Grójec; however, after hostilities ended, most returned home or moved on to other towns.

On September 12, the Germans assembled thousands of Polish and Jewish able-bodied men in Grójec and led them away on foot. Some of those who fell down were shot immediately along the way. The Poles were released shortly afterwards along with some Jews who paid bribes, but other Jews were taken away to places elsewhere in Poland or to Wrocław. The survivors returned to Grójec at the end of the month. In the first weeks of the occupation, the wooden synagogue was razed. Later, the Jewish cemetery was devastated, and broken tombstones were used to build a road to Kobylin, where the Kreishauptmann, Werner Zimmermann, had settled in a manor.

On January 24, 1940, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in Grójec. The following became members: Chaim Amberg, Chaim Braun, Noah Bitter, Yaakov Aaron Rechtszajd, Itzhak Brumer, Gecel Rotbard, Elai Wasserman, Szymon Zylberminc, Szlama-Majer Rozentel, Szoel Lachman, Fryd-Chil Motel, and Chaim-Szoel Groman. Noah Bitter became the chairman, and Yaakov Aaron Rechtszajd was his deputy. Later, J. Lewkowicz became the Judenrat chairman. Dr. Nathan Boim was in charge of welfare issues; Dr. F. Kotowski

managed health. In the first months of 1940, the Gestapo arrested 100 Jews in Grójec, including four members of the Judenrat, demanding a ransom of 170,000 złoty. The prisoners were not released until this sum was paid.

Each day, a designated number of Jewish laborers had to gather at the market square to perform forced labor in Grójec. The most common jobs were cleaning the town, fixing roads, and clearing snow from the roads in the winter. Apart from these tasks, repairing the sewers and irrigation work were also conducted. More wealthy Jews were able to pay for substitutes via the Judenrat.

Approximately 400 persons worked in a labor camp in Czestoniew, established to support the Luftwaffe military airport in Słomczyn. Between 1940 and 1942, six small labor camps operated in the vicinity of Grójec, in which Jews were employed in drainage for the Water Regulation Office (Wasserwirtschaftamt) along the Jeziorka River and its inflows. The camps were in Grójec (400 inmates), Jasieniec (70 inmates), Boglewska Wola, Krobów (300 inmates), Czestoniew (70 inmates), Moczydłów (existed 1942–1943), and Słomczyn (200 inmates).¹ Labor camps of the Road Construction Office of the Governor of Distrikt Warschau operated in Kreis Grojec in the following localities: Gołków, Jeżewice, and Tarczyn.² Hilfspolizei and auxiliary police, consisting of *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) and Polish (Blue) Police, respectively, guarded Jewish workers in these labor camps.³

In June 1940, 4,889 Jews were living in Grójec. Due to the deportations of Jews from Polish territories incorporated into the Reich, a number of refugees had arrived from towns such as Łódź, Aleksandrów Kujawski, Lipno, Sierpc, and Włocławek. The influx of refugees and the resulting deterioration of living conditions for the Jewish residents necessitated the creation of a committee for refugee relief affiliated with the Judenrat. Chaim Margulis led the committee. The committee received financial help from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), which covered only a part of its necessities. Apart from financial help from the AJDC, the committee also received assistance with food and clothing. The committee opened a soup kitchen, which cared for approximately 1,000 people.

The first plans for the establishment of a ghetto in Grójec probably date from the summer of 1940. Around this time 94 Jewish families were evacuated from Piłsudski and Laskowa Streets, and other Jews were also evicted from their homes to make room for Germans. This may explain why the yizkor book dates the ghetto's creation in July 1940, although it states that the dating is uncertain.⁴ The Polish doctor, responsible for health in Kreis Gojec, however, claimed after the war that through his intervention he managed to postpone the establishment of the ghetto for several months.

On November 14, 1940, the Kreishauptmann ordered the creation of a residential district for the Jews in Grójec. Consequently, a ghetto was set up in Grójec on November 25–28, 1940, in the western part of the town. The plans for the ghetto included the following streets: Kościelna, Mszczonowska, Zatylna, Lewicyńska, Mogielnicka, Stodolna, Stokowa,

Starostokowa, and Nowostokowa. According to a key letter from the Jewish Council addressed to the mayor, before the creation of the ghetto, some 2,685 Jews (in 808 rooms) and 1,027 Poles (in 414 rooms) were residing in the planned ghetto area, to which another 2,108 Jews from the eastern part of Grójec were now to be added. As a result the ghetto would become severely overcrowded, with about 6 people sharing each room. A further result of the ghetto's establishment would be the almost complete exclusion of the Jews from trade, as they would no longer have access to the market square. After November 28, any Jews still living outside the ghetto faced being severely punished.⁵ According to survivor testimony, the ghetto remained unfenced, but guards were posted at regular intervals around the perimeter.⁶

Just prior to the establishment of the ghetto, a unit of Jewish Police was organized, which was armed with wooden batons. Its duties included keeping order, collecting requisitions, and the mobilization of assigned workers for forced labor.

On January 21, 1941, the Kreishauptmann in Grójec, Zimmermann, ordered that all Jews living outside of the towns of Błędów, Tarczyn, Mogielnica, Góra Kalwaria, Warka, and Grójec were to move to these towns immediately, all of which were to be considered as ghettos. Any Jew caught elsewhere after January 27, 1941, would face the death penalty.⁷ The reason given for the transfer was that the Jews living in the countryside were not subject to necessary sanitary controls and were suspected, therefore, of spreading epidemics. However, the aim of concentrating the Jews in larger towns, such as Grójec, was to prepare for their deportation to the Warsaw ghetto.

The liquidation of the Grójec ghetto took place in the last days of February 1941. On February 25 and 26, all residents were gathered on the market square. After forming a column, they were directed to the Grójec train station. From there, they were transported to the Warsaw ghetto. The deported were allowed to take only a small amount of luggage. Cleaning squads were brought in to the deserted ghetto to collect any remaining items of value. The Jews from Grójec were resettled in the Warsaw ghetto and quarantined at 109 Leszna Street.⁸

To arrest any Jews that remained in the Kreis, an announcement, published by the Grojec Kreishauptmann on December 19, 1941, offered a reward of one cubic meter of wheat for information about Jews in hiding or persons providing them with help. To deter the population from providing help to hiding Jews, the Kreishauptmann warned that Jews were allegedly carriers of typhus.

In the course of the deportation to the Warsaw ghetto, about 100 young and healthy men were selected—craftsmen of different professions: carpenters, locksmiths, tailors, cobblers, and others—and employed to work for the German army. According to the yizkor book, in September 1942, these Jews were taken to the Warsaw ghetto and subjected to a selection. Of the group, 83 were then sent to Smolensk for forced labor as part of a larger group of men and women.

Only 3 of these men returned to Grójec after the war.⁹ Another group of Jews was quartered in a barracks near the airport in Słomczyn as forced laborers from 1942 until the summer of 1943. On July 14, vehicles transported them to a forest near Dębówka village, to ditches already dug by Soviet prisoners of war (POWs), where they were shot and buried.

There were numerous instances of local inhabitants helping and hiding Jews in Grójec and its vicinity. More than a dozen persons were honored with the title of Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

After the war, in 1945, only about 30 pre-war Jewish residents returned to Grójec. Unfortunately, 2 of them, Dr. Jerzy Grus and his wife Jadwiga, were murdered by a Polish underground organization. Other Jews left Grójec and moved to Lower Silesia, where they set up the Committee of Grójec Jews in Wrocław. By 1947, there were 82 Grójec Jews living in Lower Silesia. They were scattered among different towns of the region, mainly in Wrocław, Dzierżoniów, Legnica, and Wałbrzych.

SOURCES Relevant publications include Karolina Panz, “Losy żydowskich mieszkańców Grójca—historia Zagłady: Między pamięcią a zapomnieniem” (M.A. thesis, Warsaw University, 2006); I.B. Alterman, *Megilat Gritse* (Tel Aviv: Gritse Association in Israel, 1955); Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 172–175; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 228.

Documents on the persecution of the Jews of Grójec can be found in the following archives: APW (GM, sygn. 542, pp. 568–569); AŻIH (211/436 [JSS]; Ring I/881, 1054, and 1069; 301/4802, 5584 [Relacje]); BA-L (Ordn. Vers. XXI, p. 364); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079 [Ring]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]); VHF (e.g., # 58, 17574, 26319); and YVA (e.g., M-10/Ring I/881, 1054, and 1069).

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NOTES

1. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 317.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 276–277, 319.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
4. Alterman, *Megilat Gritse*, p. 281.
5. APW, GM, sygn. 542, pp. 568–569, as cited by Panz, “Losy żydowskich,” pp. 87–89. Panz also gives a more precise description of the ghetto boundaries actually implemented and cites also an interview with the Polish doctor.
6. VHF, # 17574, testimony of Aisic Hirsch; # 26319, testimony of David Drayer.
7. AŻIH, Ring I/881.
8. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 252; YVA, M-10, Ring I/1069.
9. Alterman, *Megilat Gritse*, pp. 294–298; AŻIH, 301/4802, testimony of Adam Bitter, 1950.

JADÓW

Pre-1939: Jadów (Yiddish: Yadov), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Jadów, Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Jadów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Jadów is located about 50 kilometers (31 miles) northeast of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, around 1,800 Jews lived there.

Following the outbreak of war, waves of refugees began to pass through Jadów, believing they would be safer in a small town. Some were fleeing east to the territories that came under Soviet rule after September 17, 1939.

After the town's occupation by German forces, some Jews began returning to Jadów. German soldiers persecuted Orthodox Jews, shaving their beards in public. Hunger developed in the town due to the economy's collapse.

A Judenrat (Jewish Council), chaired by Mojsze Zabraniecki, was established in Jadów. One of the first assignments of the Judenrat was the collection of a 150,000 złoty "contribution" imposed by the German authorities. The Germans threatened to shoot 50 hostages if their demands were not met. With great effort, only 80,000 złoty was collected. Following negotiations assisted by the ethnic German mayor, Schroeder, the German authorities accepted this sum.¹ The Jews of Jadów were subjected to the same anti-Jewish laws as throughout the Generalgouvernement. In the autumn of 1939, 529 Jewish refugees arrived in Jadów: 448 from Wyszaków and 81 from Pułtusk, Gaworów, Stok, Długosiodło, and Radzyń. A self-help committee was established, which provided assistance to some 1,000 poor and displaced Jews.²

Among the refugees from Wyszaków was Ellen Karsh, whose family found shelter in an empty auditorium, along with 10 other families. Many refugees arrived with few possessions or money, having fled from severe fires caused by German bombardments. Karsh recalls that there was no school and that she had to stand in line for bread. Sometimes the bread ran out before she reached the front of the line.³ In 1940, there were 2,591 Jews living in Jadów; as of April 1940, 802 Jewish refugees were registered there.

The Jews were obliged to perform forced labor. Initially, the Polish (Blue) Police seized Jews off the street. However, the Judenrat subsequently organized labor recruitment. Some impoverished Jews volunteered for the labor detachments to obtain some bread. From the summer of 1940, Jews from Jadów were sent to forced labor camps.

A closed ghetto was established in Jadów, after the holiday of Sukkot (October 17) in 1940. The Jews were ordered to build the ghetto fence, which was topped with barbed wire. Because the Jews, constituting almost 90 percent of the town's residents, were concentrated in just one third of the town's area, there was severe overcrowding in the ghetto, with several families sharing each apartment. The Jews attempted to increase the ghetto area through bribery, without success. They were only permitted to take with them a small amount of personal

possessions, leaving the remainder for the, mostly Polish, new occupants of their homes. The transfer was overseen by the German Gendarmerie and the Polish (Blue) Police, which also included ethnic Germans and Ukrainians. Once the ghetto was created, a unit of Jewish Police was established.⁴

In June 1941, there were 2,787 Jews in Jadów, including 2,085 local residents and 702 newcomers.⁵ Workshops for shoemakers and other trades were organized to meet the needs of the German army, police, and administration. In July 1942, 100 Jews were sent to a labor camp in Wilanów and 50 to another in Izabelin.⁶ The Jadów Judenrat sent clothing and food to these laborers.⁷

Fur garments, iron, and precious metals were collected from the Jews. The Jews also worked to build an airfield at Zawiszyn, 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) outside of Jadów. Each day a group of Jews left Jadów, returning to the ghetto after work. One day, five Jewish laborers were detained after work. On their release, equipped with special passes, they went on foot to Jadów. On the way, they met a car with Gendarmes from Tłuszcz who, without listening to any explanation, shot the laborers near the bridge over the Osownica River.⁸

There were outbreaks of disease due to overcrowding and inadequate medical care in the ghetto. Dr. Goldberg, a Jewish doctor from Warsaw, was sent to establish a hospital, but he was unable to improve the health of Jadów's Jews. To relieve the suffering of the poor, a public kitchen was established, which in January 1941 was serving 500 meals daily.⁹

There were many cases of Jews being beaten during forced labor and being shot in the streets. In the summer of 1942, the killings of Jews caught outside the ghetto intensified. On May 5, 1942, German Gendarmes shot two Jewish men; two more were shot on May 28, 1942. The Gendarmes shot another Jewish man on June 10. On August 19, 1942, Gendarmes shot four Jewish women, and another two on August 27.¹⁰

According to the yizkor book, in the summer of 1942, a group of Roma (Gypsies) was placed in the Jadów ghetto, including many children. The Jews were ordered to feed them and ensure that they remained in the ghetto. However, the Germans subsequently shot a number of them, including some children. Later, a second group arrived unannounced. These Gypsies did not enter the ghetto but were shot nearby, on the orders of Oberleutnant Lipsch. The Jews were ordered to fill in the graves.¹¹

It should be noted that the Warsaw–Małkinia Górna railway line leading to the Treblinka extermination camp passed only 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) from Jadów. As of July 1942, transports of Jews sent from the Warsaw ghetto and other localities for annihilation were passing by on this line. Many Jews managed to jump from those trains. The fugitives, who fell onto the railway tracks, were often wounded or killed by their fall. Gendarmes patrolled the vicinity and finished off the wounded. Ghetto residents heard about the trains passing by and of the Jews' attempts to escape.¹² The liquidation of the nearby Węgrów ghetto (on September 21, 1942) was especially bloody and was perceived as a warning that the liquidation of Jadów would soon follow.

The deportation Aktion in Jadów began on September 23, 1942 (the 13th day of Tishri, two days after Yom Kippur). On that day, all the Jews were ordered to gather near the cattle market. There was a warning that anyone who did not report would be shot. Armed Germans, Gendarmerie, Polish (Blue) Police, and other auxiliaries participated in the Aktion, commanded by Lipsch.¹³ Before the Aktion, the Gendarmes drank copious amounts of alcohol. Jews who did not report to the assembly point but sought to hide in their houses were shot on the spot. The conduct of the liquidation was especially bloody. The elderly, sick, and children were shot in and around the town.

Probably between 100¹⁴ and 200¹⁵ Jews were murdered in Jadów, although one witness estimated that there were up to 600 victims. The murdered Jews were buried at the Jewish cemetery. A few months later, the bodies were exhumed and transported to Węgrów, where they were burned.¹⁶

Jewelry and other valuables were taken from the Jews collected near the market square, and some Jews were tormented and shot while gathered there. After several hours, the ghetto residents were formed into a column and marched out of town; anyone who fell behind was shot.

The Jews were marched to the Łochów train station and from there deported to Treblinka, where they were gassed. During the march, the column stopped for about an hour near Zawiszyń, due to a lack of ammunition among the guards; a truck was sent to Tłuszcz to get more. Reportedly, fewer people were shot on the ensuing march from Zawiszyń to Łochów.¹⁷ After the ghetto's liquidation, some local inhabitants looted the deserted houses.

A group of 20 to 30 young men, including the chairman of the Judenrat, remained in the ghetto to sort out Jewish possessions. Upon finishing their assignment, the group was sent to the Warsaw ghetto.

Following the ghetto's liquidation, Jews discovered hiding in cellars and attics were shot by the Gendarmerie. One of the families who managed to escape at the time of the roundup was that of Finkelman. A partisan unit comprising Jadów ghetto fugitives under the leadership of Mosze Zieleniec was active subsequently in the forests surrounding Jadów.¹⁸

SOURCES Publications on the fate of the Jews of Jadów during the Holocaust include A.W. Jassni, *Sefer Yadov* (Jerusalem, 1966); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), p. 241; T. Berenstein, "Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim," *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 108; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1985), pp. 87–88. The Jadów ghetto is mentioned also in Czesław Pili-chowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 201; Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 62, 207, 297; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the*

Ghettos during the Holocaust (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 896.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/370 [AJDC]; 211/454–455 [JSS]; 301/5204; Ring I/222 and 599/35); BA-L (B 162/6852); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079 [Ring I]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]); VHF (e.g., # 27133); and YVA (e.g., O-3/2151).

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NOTES

1. Jassni, *Sefer Yadov*, p. 233.
2. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 207.
3. VHF, # 27133, testimony of Ellen Karsh (born 1925), 1997; Jassni, *Sefer Yadov*, p. 234.
4. Jassni, *Sefer Yadov*, pp. 236–237.
5. Berenstein, "Deportacje i zagłada," p. 108.
6. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 297.
7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, July 31, 1942.
8. YVA, O-3/2151, p. 1.
9. AŻIH, 211/455, as cited by Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 207.
10. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów . . . : Województwo siedleckie*, pp. 87–88.
11. Jassni, *Sefer Yadov*, pp. 247–248.
12. YVA, O-3/2151, p. 2.
13. BA-L, B 162/6852, pp. 88–90, as cited in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 62.
14. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów . . . : Województwo siedleckie*, p. 88.
15. BA-L, B 162/6852, pp. 88–90, as cited in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 62.
16. YVA, O-3/2151, p. 9.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.
18. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 207.

JEZIORNA

Pre-1939: Jeziorna (Yiddish: Yeziorna), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Konstancin-Jeziorna, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Jeziorna is located 19 kilometers (12 miles) south-southeast of Warsaw. As of September 1, 1939, there were around 655 Jews living in Jeziorna.

The Germans captured Jeziorna on September 14–16, 1939. Initially the 300 Jewish families residing in Jeziorna were permitted to remain in their homes and continued to lead more or less normal lives. The Jews were required to wear the Star of David, and Jewish children no longer attended Polish schools.

On the establishment of a German civil administration in October 1939, Jeziorna became part of Kreis Warschau-Land. The Kreishauptmann was Regierungsrat Dr. Hermann Rupprecht. The German authorities established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in early 1940. Its members included men named Szumacher, Grinstein, Działowski, Freiman, and others. The Judenrat had to fulfill the demands of the Gestapo but tried as

far as possible to protect the interests of the community.¹ The Judenrat organized Jewish forced laborers for the Germans; labor tasks included cutting down trees in a nearby wood. In June 1940, there were around 780 Jews residing in Jeziorna.

The German authorities established a ghetto in Jeziorna at some time in 1940.² Reliable information regarding the date of the ghetto's establishment is difficult to find. Jewish survivor Bella Pelcman recalled that pretty soon after the Germans' arrival, she and her family had to leave their homes and move to the ghetto. The ghetto was not enclosed by a fence, but it was not permitted to go out to the non-Jewish area, and non-Jews were not permitted to enter it. There was also a curfew until 9:00 A.M.³ Solomon Freiman's family did not have to relocate, as their house was located within the ghetto area. However, living conditions in the open ghetto were more crowded than before, due to the Jews that came in. He recalls also that one ethnic German family that owned a large property with a farm also remained in the area reserved for the Jews. The head of this household continued to sell milk to the Jews and was appointed mayor of Jeziorna by the German authorities.⁴

The ghetto in Jeziorna did not exist for long—according to Freiman's recollection, only a couple of months. Only one letter from the welfare committee of the Jews of Jeziorna has survived in the archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), dated January 16, 1941.⁵ In January 1941, the German authorities issued detailed instructions for the sealing of the Jeziorna ghetto.⁶ An internal document from the Department for Resettlement (Abteilung Umsiedlung) in the office of the Gouverneur of Distrikt Warschau, dated January 20, 1941, states that the remaining 700 Jews of Jeziorna were scheduled to be deported to the Warsaw ghetto on January 28.⁷

On January 24, 1941, the chief of the Polish (Blue) Police, Weclaw, warned Abram Konigstein, a former leader of the pre-war Jeziorna kehillah, that the Germans had issued an order to deport all the Jews on the following day. In response to this, Konigstein arranged for an ambulance to transport his family and also the town's rabbi in safety to the Warsaw ghetto before the resettlement.⁸

According to documents in the Ringelblum Archive, on January 25, 1941, the German police rounded up more than 600 Jews from the Jeziorna ghetto and transferred them to the Warsaw ghetto.⁹ Freiman recalls that "German soldiers" arrived and told the Jews to take what they could. Then all the Jews were put on trucks and transported to the Warsaw ghetto, where they were accommodated in synagogues. He notes that almost the entire town was sent to Warsaw, except for a few who managed to escape.¹⁰

On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, the Jews from Jeziorna were quarantined at 109 Leszno Street. Here they were held for dozens of hours under unpleasant conditions. A critical account by one of the expellees from Jeziorna, preserved in the Ringelblum Archive, complains that in the quarantine center bribery, corruption, and theft were rife. The deportees had to pay to collect the parcels they were entitled to and could only be released from the quarantine center early in

exchange for a bribe. A note attached to the account accuses the quarantine manager, Helber, of being a collaborator of the Gestapo.¹¹

In the Warsaw ghetto, most Jews from Jeziorna shared the fate of the other Jews concentrated there: many were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp in the summer of 1942.

SOURCES Information on the persecution of the Jewish population in Jeziorna during the Nazi occupation can be found in the following publications: T. Berenstein, "Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim," *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 106; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy bitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 240; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 270.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: APW; AŻIH (Ring I/22 [488], 821 [780], 980 [781]; 210/383; 301/2980); IPN; USHMM (RG-15.079 [Ring I]; Acc. 1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]); and VHF (e.g., # 30190, 47896).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2980, testimony of Felicja Rotstein.
2. Ibid.
3. VHF, # 47896, testimony of Bella Pelcman (born 1923), 1998.
4. Ibid., # 30190, testimony of Solomon Freiman (born 1926), 1997. Freiman estimates that the ghetto may have been established as early as January 1940, but this contradicts his own testimony that it existed only for a couple of months, as he dates its liquidation in February 1941.
5. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH), 210/383.
6. AŻIH, Ring I/980.
7. The order is partially reprinted in Josef Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Vollstrecker: Die Liquidation von 500.000 Juden im Ghetto Warschau* (Berlin: Arani, 1961), pp. 329–330.
8. AŻIH, 301/2980, pp. 1–3.
9. Ibid., Ring I/22 and 821.
10. VHF, # 30190.
11. AŻIH, Ring I/22.

JEŻÓW

Pre-1939: Jeżów (Yiddish: Yezhov), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Jezow, Kreis Skierniewice, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Jeżów, village, Łódź województwo, Poland

Jeżów is located 13 kilometers (8 miles) southwest of Skierniewice. In 1921, there were 1,048 Jews living in Jeżów.

Following the occupation of the town by the Germans in September 1939, the German authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures in the fall. Jews were forced to wear armbands bearing the Star of David, Jewish children were no longer permitted to go to school, and Jews were subjected to forced labor.

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On September 9, 1940, the Kreishauptmann in Skierniewice, Regierungsrat Dr. Rupe, reported to Gouverneur Hans Frank in Kraków that there were 1,400 Jews living in Jeżów. In addition, he reported that in Jeżów the bathing facilities were being equipped with showers, and a hot-air disinfection apparatus was also being installed.¹

The Jeżów ghetto was probably established in the fall of 1940 around the same time as the ghetto in Skierniewice, which was closed on November 15.² According to the recollections of Jewish survivor Albert Sliwin, the ghetto was apparently set up over a period of time. The Germans divided the town; they moved the Poles into the better Jewish houses and then crammed the Jews together. Even some houses were divided, half with Poles and half with Jews. "It was crazy the way they did this. It was not a regular ghetto. It would go on like this for 3 or 4 months." At the end of 1940, Albert's family left Jeżów with several other families, taking some of their possessions with them on horses and carts. They moved first to a vacation home in Włodzimierz and later ended up in the Rawa Mazowiecka ghetto.³

In the fall of 1940, at least 400 Jews in Jeżów were receiving welfare support, which included subsidized meals from a public kitchen, financed with the support of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC).⁴ A report dated January 21, 1941, noted that there were about 1,600 Jews residing in Jeżów, of which about 600 were refugees, mainly from Łódź, Stryków, Głowno, and Kraków. The last letter from the Jewish welfare committee in Jeżów is dated February 4, 1941: at this time there were 1,570 Jews, of which 552 were refugees. The welfare committee was supplying 200 meals to needy Jews each day.⁵

In late January 1941, the Jews of Jeżów were informed that they would soon be transferred to the Warsaw ghetto as part of a large-scale plan to clear all the Jews from the Kreise of Distrikt Warschau to the west of the city.

On March 4, 1941, the Kreishauptmann in Skierniewice reported that in view of the planned expulsion of all the Jews of the Kreis to the Warsaw ghetto in mid-March, most of the Jews in the Jewish residential areas (ghettos) in Skierniewice and Jeżów and at the Rogów railway station had voluntarily moved to Warsaw. In Skierniewice, there were now only about 180 Jews; in Jeżów, just over 40; and at the Rogów station, only 4. The same report noted that in the course of the departure of the Jews in February, 6,252 people had been deloused and 6,845 had been bathed. The sanitary facilities, which had been established for the Jews, remained operational and were to be used in the future for the Aryan population. The houses abandoned by the Jews were being cleaned and disinfected by work columns supervised by the disinfection staff. The removal of the Jews had resulted in a shortage both of agricultural laborers and of craftsmen.⁶

On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, most of the Jews from Jeżów were put into improvised hostels designated for refugees. A report in the Ringelblum Archive from March 1941 noted the terrible conditions in one of these shelters based in a school building. Refugees from Jeżów were among 460 peo-

ple being cared for in the facility. The report mentions difficulties encountered with hygiene and medical care and numerous deaths from hunger.⁷ A large number of the refugees from Jeżów died of starvation and contagious diseases in the Warsaw ghetto. Most of those who survived until the summer of 1942 were among those deported to the Treblinka extermination camp at that time.

SOURCES The ghetto in Jeżów is mentioned in Czesław Pili-chowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 113; and Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 212.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/384; Ring I/116); BA-BL (R 52III/29); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-14.052 [BA-BL, R 52]; RG-15.079 [Ring]); VHF (# 33609); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-14.052 (BA-BL), R 52III/23, p. 7, Kreishauptmann Skierniewice, monthly report, September 9, 1940.

2. Yitshak Perlov, ed., *Seyfer Skernyevits: Le-zeykber der fartiliktter kebileh kdosheb* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Skernivits be-Yisrael, 1955), pp. 636–637, dates the establishment of the Skierniewice ghetto in the fall, as does AŻIH, 301/2063. See also Erster Bekanntmachung über die Errichtung eines besonderen Wohngebiet für Juden in der Stadt Skierniewice, October 15, 1940, published in Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 721.

3. VHF, # 33609, testimony of Albert Sliwin, 1997.

4. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 212 USHMM, Acc. 1999.A.0154, 210/384, p. 17, indicates that in October 1940, more than 500 people were receiving support.

5. USHMM, Acc. 1999.A.0154, 210/384, p. 22.

6. See *ibid.*, RG-14.052 (BA-BL), R 52III/29, pp. 96, 88, Kreishauptmann Skierniewice, monthly report, March 4, 1941. No further information could be found about the existence of a ghetto in Rogów.

7. AŻIH, Ring I/116.

KALUSZYN

Pre-1939: Kałuszyn, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kałuszyn, Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Kałuszyn, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Kałuszyn is located 61 kilometers (38 miles) east of Warsaw. The 1921 census reported 5,033 Jews in Kałuszyn. Estimates of the number of Jews living there on the eve of World War II range from 5,200 up to 6,500.

German troops occupied Kałuszyn on September 11–12, 1939, after intense fighting. In the first weeks of occupation, the Germans executed 30 residents for having participated in



Jews are rounded up for murder in the market square of Kaluszyn, ca. 1941–1942.

USHMM WS #18569, COURTESY OF IPN

the initial resistance and began to abuse and rob the town's Jews.¹ Following this initial round of persecution, hundreds of Jews fled east to the Soviet-occupied Polish territories. As much of the town had been destroyed, those who remained built shacks as shelter for the upcoming winter or repaired their damaged houses. Others moved into mass quarters in the remains of the Bet Midrash, the Bund meetinghouse, and other community buildings. As overcrowding led to the spread of disease, the German Gendarmerie was established in nearby Mrozy (instead of Kaluszyn). Nevertheless, Kaluszyn's Jews were charged with providing furniture for the Gendarmerie's offices. A jail and a unit of Polish (Blue) Police were set up in Kaluszyn. Both the Polish (Blue) Police and German Gendarmes were corrupt and treated the Jews badly.

In November 1939, the German authorities ordered the town mayor, Pliwaczewski, to establish a 12-man Jewish Council (Judenrat). The Judenrat included many pre-war community council members who were obligated to carry out German instructions. Initially, Rubin Michelson was the Judenrat chairman. After his death (before August 1940), local dentist Abram Gamze took over. The Judenrat also included Mojsze Kisielnicki (deputy), Mojsze Berman (who chaired the Judenrat in early 1941, to be replaced again by Gamze), Jidl Pięknawieś, Mojsze Alter Guzik, Lajzer Borensztajn, Aron Rapaport, Motel Aronson, Herszel Feldman, Mordka Rinwrot, and talles maker Lis. One of the Judenrat's first tasks was to collect 10,000 złoty; to ensure its payment the Germans arrested 10 wealthy Jews.

From the very beginning, Jews were seized for forced labor that included cleaning jobs, road construction, and drainage works. In early March 1940, the Kreishauptmann in Mińsk Mazowiecki, Dr. Bittrich, ordered the mayor of Kaluszyn to register all Jewish property by March 18. Some Jews were permitted to run their own businesses for a time.

At the turn of 1939–1940, approximately 1,000 deportees from Kalisz, Łódź, and Pabianice were transferred to Kaluszyn via Mińsk Mazowiecki. Some either were transferred back to Mińsk or departed on their own initiative shortly after. For

example, 37 Jews from Pabianice settled in Kaluszyn.² Approximately 140 deportees from Mińsk Mazowiecki arrived in Kaluszyn in the autumn of 1940.³ On average, there were 210 refugees and deportees living in Kaluszyn in the second half of 1940.⁴

In the winter of 1939–1940, all Jewish males aged 18 to 45 years were registered for work in labor camps. In April 1940, 38 of those registered were taken to a labor camp in Biała Podlaska. In the summer of 1940, another group was sent to the vicinity of Janów Podlaski; many of these men returned after a few months in very bad health. At the end of that summer, German soldiers arrived in Kaluszyn to recruit Jews for the construction of the train station in Mrozy. As the work was poorly paid and nobody volunteered, the laborers were conscripted.

Opinions regarding the date of establishment and also the location of an open ghetto in Kaluszyn are divided, as the sources provide conflicting information: one reports the ghetto's delimitation in October 1940, with Kaluszyn's Jews remaining wherever they lived as the entire town was declared to be a ghetto; another dates it in September 1941, with only the northwest part of the town comprising the ghetto. Most sources, however, support the former assertion. At places where Jews lived, signs with the following inscription were posted: "Jewish Quarter—Kalushin Ghetto." Despite this, its residents were still permitted to leave the town during daylight hours, as the curfew and blackout were imposed only in the evening.

Similar discrepancies arise regarding the nature of the ghetto's enclosure and when this took place. According to Michael Kishel, the ghetto was declared closed a few months after its establishment but never fenced. Jews needed a permit to leave it safely.⁵ However, according to the Judenrat, the ghetto was still open in September 1941 and sometime afterwards surrounded by a barbed-wire fence.⁶

With the establishment of the ghetto, the Kreishauptmann ordered the Judenrat to organize a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) that included a sanitation unit. The following were its members: Goldwasser, Piasecki, Czarka, Radzyński, Gontarski, Berman, Kisielnicki, Wajnkranz, Dimentman, Gelbard, Kuska, Jaworski, Sadowski, Obronzka, Grodzicki, and Zylberman. A refugee from Łódź named Dembowicz commanded the unit.

Kaluszyn's Jewish Police was charged with maintaining order inside the ghetto. Its sanitary unit was responsible for cleanliness and also supervised an epidemic hospital that the Judenrat opened in the summer of 1941. According to Kishel: "Though the police had to obey the commands of the Germans, they did whatever they could to lighten the Jews' burden." With the ghetto's enclosure, Kaluszyn's police were ordered to prevent Jews from leaving it, but "people ignored them."⁷

In October 1940, refugees from Pabianice and Kalisz wrote to the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) that although the Judenrat had promised 9,000 złoty monthly for the soup kitchen, over the following months it not only withheld all incoming cash subsidies but even sold groceries that were supposed to be distributed free of charge. They did so to cover previous

months' debts, thereby treating the initial "contributions" as loans that were to be paid back. The soup kitchen was closed a short time later. The same letter also quotes Judenrat members as saying: "There are no people in need in Kałuszyn, but debts must be paid." Other complaints include accusations of theft, waste, and discrimination against refugees in the provision of assistance.⁸

The situation did not improve with time. News of the political infighting, mainly due to the efforts of A. Gamze to chair welfare institutions not only in Kałuszyn but also in the Kreis center Minsk, finally reached Dr. Gamsej Wielikowski in Warsaw. In October 1941, Wielikowski addressed the Judenrat as follows: "The essence does not rest in paperwork or fiction, but in real work and help for the broad multitude of the Jewish people."⁹

In March 1941, approximately 1,000 of Kałuszyn's Jews were deported to Warsaw, but most of them returned within a week. The Judenrat reported only 3,000 Jews living in the ghetto at the end of April 1941.¹⁰ By September, their number had risen to 3,166.¹¹ Around December 1941, all Jews living in the vicinity, as well as groups from Dobre, Latowicz, and Stanisławów, were ordered to move to Kałuszyn. The number of ghetto residents increased to 4,000. During the winter of 1941–1942, 40 to 45 Jews were reportedly dying each month.¹²

In the months preceding the German invasion of the Soviet Union, forced labor was intensified, and more Jews were assigned to dig trenches, fell trees, and repair roads and bridges. Poles and Germans supervised the labor. These laborers were often beaten, even executed. When the Mińsk-based Wolfe and Goebel company arrived in the spring of 1941 (immediately following the deportation to the Warsaw ghetto), very few Jews resisted poorly paid job offers for fear of new deportations. In September 1941, 500 Jews were employed and paid 5 to 8 złoty per day. A small share of the Kałuszyn Jews' bread rations was withheld by the Judenrat for the benefit of the laborers and those in most need.

After the ghetto's closure, the situation for Kałuszyn's Jews worsened considerably, as almost all of them lived from trading with neighboring villages. Therefore, despite the risks, many Jews continued trading, sneaking out mostly at night. In the course of 1941, 12 Jews were executed at the Jewish cemetery.

According to Kishel, when Kałuszyn's Jews learned of the deportations from the Warsaw ghetto in July 1942, Judenrat member Kishelnitski (actually his father) brought a number of Kałuszyn Jews from that ghetto back to their hometown with the help of the Jewish Police.¹³ The community later became aware of the liquidation of the Mińsk ghetto on August 21, 1942, and believed that their turn would come soon. Despite assurances given by the German authorities that the Kałuszyn ghetto would remain intact throughout the winter, the town's Jews did not believe them. Around this time, the Gendarmes and Gestapo tripled their demands for money and various goods. Many young Jews began to flee to the forest or to nearby camps, including Kiflev (Kuflów estate), Jeziorek, Mienia, and Siedlce.

On September 19, 1942, the chief of the Mińsk Gestapo, Schmidt, came to Kałuszyn demanding 500 laborers to be ready for work in Jeziorek the following day, which happened to be the eve of Yom Kippur. As very few Jews appeared for work, since most men chose to hide, Kishelnitski was jailed, and in spite of attempts by the Judenrat to bribe the Germans for his release, he was shot.

The liquidation of the Kałuszyn ghetto took place on September 25, 1942. The Warsaw and Mińsk deportation commando, Mrozy Gendarmerie, and Polish (Blue) Police conducted the operation, possibly assisted by Ukrainian, Latvian, and Lithuanian auxiliaries.¹⁴ According to Kishel, the Jewish Police did not take part in the liquidation; its members could move freely, and many escaped from the town. When the Judenrat chairman, Abram Gamze, categorically rejected the Gestapo request to deliver Jews for "resettlement," he was shot in his home.

The ghetto's inhabitants were ordered to assemble at the market square. Several hundred to a thousand Jews were randomly selected and shot either there or at the Jewish cemetery, where they were taken in groups. The Polish manager of the Berman plant, Sheradzinsky, succeeded in getting permission for the 30 Jews employed there to stay and work at the plant, despite having already been detained.

That night, the Jews still remaining were led to the train station in Mrozy. Although women and children were taken on wagons, the men had to run to keep up with the Germans who rode horses. These Jews were loaded into freight trains and sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. Available sources give figures in the range of 2,000 to 3,000 for the number of deportees. These disparities probably reflect either the inclusion or exclusion of those executed in Kałuszyn prior to transportation.

In November 1942, the Germans began liquidating the small camps in the vicinity and moved the conscripted laborers into a newly created ghetto/labor camp in Kałuszyn. The underlying purpose was to attract out of hiding and contain those Jews who had managed to escape the deportations, as Kałuszyn was one of only six remnant ghettos announced by Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) Krüger for Distrikt Warschau at the end of October 1942. By December, 2,000 to 2,500 Jews had been settled in the ghetto.

This ghetto was liquidated on December 9, 1942. The children were taken away first; however, they were not included in the transport (but killed on the spot). Then the adults were marched to the Mrozy train station; that evening they departed for Treblinka. A number of Jews were able to jump from the train.

Following the town's liberation by Soviet forces, three Jews allegedly were murdered in Kałuszyn: Szmuel Lew Stolarz, Nosyn Finkelsztajn, and a man named Kuski.

SOURCES The following publications include information on the fate of Kałuszyn's Jewish population: Aryeh Shamri et al., eds., *Sefer Kalushin: Gebaylikt der borev gevorener kebile* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Kalushin be-Yisrael, 1961), translated

into Hebrew by Yitshak Shoshani as *Kebilat Kalushin*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Y.L. Perets, 1977); Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 399–404; and Joseph Berman, *Autobiography of the Survivor* (West Bloomfield, MI: J. Berman, 1994).

Most of the information in this article is derived from unpublished memoir material and documentation, which can be found at the following archives: AAN; APO (Oddział AP M. St. Warszawy, Akta Miasta Kałuszyna [zespół nr 52]); AŻIH (Ring I/822-823, 210/506-510, and 211/129); BA-BL (R 52 III/29); USHMM (RG-15.079M [Ring I], reel 38; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reels 8 and 27; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-02.067*01 [statement of Michael Kishel, born Majlech Kishelnitski [Kisielnicki], translated from Yiddish]; RG-02.066*01 [Michael Kishel Holocaust memoir]; VHF (e.g., # 6526, 12547, 20270); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 20270, testimony of Paula Popowski, 1996.
2. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 27, 211/508; Barbara Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego,” in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 141.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/393, November 24, 1940, and December 4, 1940.
4. Engelking, “Życie codzienne,” pp. 216, 220.
5. VHF, # 6526, testimony of Michael Kishel, 1995.
6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 8, 211/129, Sprawozdanie z podróży służbowej odbytej po Dystrykcie Warszawskim w dniach od 8-14 września 1941; Kałuszyn’s Judenrat delegation, while visiting Gamsej Wielikowski (a member of the JSS Presidium in Warsaw and an adviser to the head of Distrikt Warschau, Dr. Ludwig Fischer) in September 1941, reported the existence of “a Jewish quarter, but open”; J.A. Młynarczyk, “‘Akcja Reinhard,’” in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 65; Berman, *Autobiography*, p. 36; VHF, # 12547, testimony of Carl Grushka, 1996.
7. USHMM, RG-02.067*01 (statement of Michael Kishel, born Majlech Kishelnitski, 1946 or 1947). It should be noted, however, that in this testimony Kishel did not reveal his own membership in the sanitation unit of the Jewish Police and also that deputy chair Kishelnitski was his father—facts subsequently revealed in his 1995 testimony, VHF, # 6526. See also USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 27, 211/508.
8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 27, 211/506-510; Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/393, October 30, 1940.
9. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 27, 211/506, October 5, 1941.
10. *Ibid.*, 211/507, April 27, 1941; A. Żbikowski, “Żydowsky przesiedleńcy z dystryktu warszawskiego w getcie warszawskim 1939–1942 (z pogranicza opisu i interpretacji),” in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 227; Młynarczyk, “‘Akcja Reinhard,’” p. 65, which erroneously dates the deportation as 1940. According to USHMM, RG-02.067*01, 2,000 Jews were deported, but half of them returned to Kałuszyn. See also BA-BL, R 52 III/29, p. 75, report of Kreishauptmann

Minsk Mazowiecki, March 5, 1941; and Dr. Josef Kermisz, “Martirologie, Viderstand un umkum fun der yiddisher kehilah in Kalushin,” in Shoshani, *Kebilat Kalushin*, pp. 324–325; both mention plans in early 1941 to resettle some Jews to the Warsaw ghetto because of overcrowding in the Kałuszyn ghetto.

11. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 8, 211/129, Sprawozdanie z podróży.

12. Młynarczyk, “‘Akcja Reinhard,’” p. 65; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 27, 211/510, January 2, 1942, and May 17, 1942.

13. USHMM, RG-02.067*01.

14. Berman, *Autobiography*, p. 37; USHMM, RG-02.067*01.

KARCZEW

Pre-1939: Karczew, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Karczew is located about 27 kilometers (17 miles) southeast of Warsaw. On the eve of the war in August 1939, about 500 Jews were living in Karczew out of a total population of some 6,000.

On September 2, 1939, German planes bombed Karczew. Many younger people fled to eastern Poland. The town was occupied in mid-September, and shortly afterwards the Germans appointed a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which put some order into the daily recruitment of forced laborers. More well-to-do members of the community paid the Judenrat to keep them off the work assignments, and the poorer people were sent to work in their place. Skilled workers were sent to work in the German barracks and in local industrial enterprises set up by the Germans.

On December 1, 1940, the German authorities ordered the establishment of a ghetto in Karczew. About 700 Jews were confined within the “Jewish residential area.” At first it was an open ghetto, which made it possible for the inhabitants to barter goods for food with the local Polish population. After a short while the ghetto was closed and such commerce was forbidden.

The records of the Jewish aid committee subordinated to the Judenrat in Karczew do not make specific reference to the existence of a ghetto, but on December 26, 1940, the committee noted that the Jews of Karczew, who mostly lived from trading with Warsaw, were now unemployed and could not afford to buy peat to heat their homes.¹

The shortage of food brought on increased hunger. The malnutrition and overcrowded conditions, in turn, led to outbreaks of disease and increased mortality. Jewish communal assistance institutions opened soup kitchens for the destitute, but there were insufficient resources to help them, and the population grew weaker and weaker by the day.

In January 1941, only a few weeks after its establishment, the Germans liquidated the ghetto. The Jewish inhabitants of Karczew were transported to the Warsaw ghetto on trucks.

With the evacuation, the Jews of Karczew were left virtually destitute on entering the Warsaw ghetto. A few Jews who had relatives in Otwock escaped from the Warsaw ghetto to join their families in the Otwock ghetto. In April 1942, the Germans established a forced labor camp in Karczew; about 400 Jews from ghettos in the region, including some from the Otwock ghetto, were crowded into huts that were erected on the grounds of the camp.² They were put to work digging water channels, and many died in the camp. In May 1943 there was an escape from the camp, which continued to exist at least until September 1943. Only a few Jews from this camp survived to the end of the war.

The 1948 yizkor book notes that relations with the local Polish population did not improve during the war.³ However, one Pole from Karczew, Albin Szerepko, has been recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations. He brought food and water to two Jewish boys, Yitzhak and Zvi Gontarski, who hid in the cowshed of the Szerepko family for more than a year. The two boys had fled to Kołbiel from the Karczew ghetto at the time of that ghetto's liquidation and returned to Karczew with their mother after the liquidation of the Kołbiel ghetto in September 1942. Szerepko's father had been employed by the boys' father, Zeev Gontarski, before the war.

SOURCES The yizkor book edited by Shimon Kanc, *Sefer Zikaron: Otvotsk-Karčev* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Otvotsk and Kartshev, 1968), is concerned primarily with Otwock but does include a small section on the pre-war history of Karczew. The earlier yizkor book edited by Benjamin Orenstein, *Kburbn Otvotsk, Falenits, Kartshev* (Bamberg: Former Residents of Otvotsk, Falenic and Kartshev in the American Zone in Germany, 1948), also includes a couple of pages on the fate of the Jews of Karczew under German occupation. There is also a brief article on the Jews of the town in Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 406–407. The Karczew ghetto is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 218; and in *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 106–107.

Documentation on the fate of the Jewish community of Karczew during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/525 [JSS]); IPN (ASG, sygn. 62, k. 257); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 211/525, Hilfskomitee beim Judenrat Karczew an Jüdisches Hilfskomitee Warschau, December 26, 1940.

2. Orenstein, *Kburbn Otvotsk, Falenits, Kartshev*, p. 43; Kanc, *Sefer Zikaron: Otvotsk-Karčev*, p. 843. The Karczew forced labor camp is mentioned in the report of a meeting on the forced labor of Warsaw Jews outside the ghetto, held in the office of the Kommissar of the Warsaw ghetto, Auerswald, on March 20, 1942; see Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Fascismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung*

und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg, 1960), pp. 234–235.

3. Orenstein, *Kburbn Otvotsk, Falenits, Kartshev*, p. 43.

KIERNOZIA

Pre-1939: Kiernozia, town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Lowicz, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Kiernozia is located about 18 kilometers (11 miles) north-northwest of Łowicz. In 1921, there were 284 Jews living in the town out of a total population of 726.

On September 2, 1939, shortly after the start of the German invasion, Kiernozia was flooded with refugees fleeing from Włocławek, Toruń, and other places to the north and west. Then on September 15, 1939, the Germans started a heavy bombardment of Kiernozia. Most residents fled to nearby villages for safety. Only around 30 Jews remained, and 20 of them were killed in the synagogue on September 16 while praying. About half of the town was severely damaged by the bombing.¹

When the Germans arrived in the town, they rounded up the entire population and drove them all on foot to Żychlin, about 17 kilometers (10.6 miles) away. The column of people, which included women and children, arrived exhausted and hungry and were detained there overnight. On the next day the Germans segregated the Jews from the rest of the detainees, requesting that they go to one side. Those who did not react quickly enough were pointed out by local ethnic Germans and severely beaten by the German guards.

The Jews of Kiernozia were held in Żychlin for another four days, during which they were required to perform forced labor together with other Jews from Żychlin. When the Kiernozia Jews reported to the German military commandant's office (Ortskommandantur) to receive their passes to return home, the Germans humiliated them, shaving off the beards of elderly Jews. On returning home, in addition to the severe destruction, the Jews found that many Jewish shops and homes had been robbed. In these difficult circumstances, the Jews did their best to help each other out. Those who had lost their homes moved in with other Jewish families—two or three families shared each of the few houses that remained. As no Jewish stores were left operating, those Jews who still had a few possessions exchanged them with local farmers for food.²

According to the detailed account in the yizkor book, the Germans established a ghetto in Kiernozia in March 1940, which would make it perhaps the first ghetto in Distrikt Warschau.³ Other sources, however, date its establishment in May 1940, at the same time that Kreishauptmann Lowicz Regierungsrat Dr. Schwender established four other ghettos in the Kreis, including that in the Kreis center of Łowicz.⁴ The yizkor book notes that the Jews were given only five days to move into two small streets on the edge of town, where no Jews had been living previously. At the same time the Germans resettled the former Polish inhabitants of the ghetto

area into the larger number of Jewish houses being vacated. The overcrowding in the ghetto created unhygienic conditions, and many Jews became sick.⁵

All Jewish men over the age of 15 were subjected to forced labor. When the ghetto was set up, some of the men were soon tasked with erecting a fence around the ghetto. German Gendarmes came to the ghetto every day and seized both young and old Jews for work. At the same time, they also stole the last few possessions from Jewish homes.⁶

Some secondary sources mention that in July 1940 about 240 Jews from the surrounding villages were brought into the Kiernozia ghetto.⁷ This seems likely, as in December 1940, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Łowicz reported that there were 650 Jews then living in Kiernozia, of which 360 were receiving welfare support.⁸

In February 1941, the Jews of Kiernozia were informed by the German authorities that they had about four weeks to prepare for their transfer to the Warsaw ghetto. In response, some Jews moved voluntarily to Warsaw before the deadline, and others sought to arrange their transfer to other parts of the Generalgouvernement where ghettos had not yet been established. According to the yizkor book, with the assistance of paid non-Jewish intermediaries, one group of 36 Jews managed to organize their successful transfer by truck to the town of Ćmielów in Distrikt Radom.⁹

In March 1941, most of the remaining Jews in Kiernozia were transferred to the Warsaw ghetto. It is likely that a small group of Jews was retained in the empty ghetto in Kiernozia for a short period after the transfer to sort out Jewish property.¹⁰

On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, many of the Jews from Kiernozia were put initially into improvised hostels designated for refugees. In the Warsaw ghetto, the Kiernozia Jews shared the harsh fates of the other Jews trapped there. Very few of them survived until the end of World War II.

SOURCES Much of this entry is based on the Łowicz yizkor book, Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Lovitsb—a shtetl in Mazovye un umgegent, seyfer zikorn* (Melbourne and Sydney, Australia: Łowicz Landmanschaften, 1966), pp. 364–365, which contains one detailed account regarding the fate of the Jews of Kiernozia under the Nazi occupation. The ghetto in Kiernozia is mentioned also in Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 313; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 231; and Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 212.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/674); BA-BL (R 52III/29); USHMM (Acc. 1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-14.052 [BA-BL R 52]); and YVA.

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, p. 364.
2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 231, date it in May 1940. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 212, state March 1940. See also Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 109, citing the report of Kreishauptmann Łowicz, dated July 20, 1940, which indicates that in May 1940 a ghetto existed in Kiernozia.

5. Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, p. 364.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 212; Miron, *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*, p. 313.

8. USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124, 211/674, pp. 37–38.

9. Shaiak, *Lovitsb*, pp. 364–365.

10. See USHMM, RG-14.052 (BA-BL), R 52III/29, p. 57, Kreishauptmann Łowicz, situation report, March 13, 1941.

KOŁBIEL

Pre-1939: Kołbiel, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kolbiel, Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Kołbiel, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Kołbiel is located 38 kilometers (24 miles) southeast of Warsaw and 14 kilometers (9 miles) southwest of Mińsk Mazowiecki. In September 1939, there were 704 Jewish inhabitants in Kołbiel.¹

German soldiers occupied the town on September 15, 1939. In the days immediately following the occupation, all the young men were ordered to gather in the local church. From there, they were sent to a military camp in Komorowo (near Ostrów Mazowiecka), where they were held for 10 days. During that time 13 of the men were shot. After that the Germans permitted them to return to Kołbiel. In November 1939, Jews over 10 years old were ordered to wear the Star of David. The German authorities ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Kołbiel. A Jewish police force was formed in November 1939. Subsequently, a Jewish aid committee was organized, which provided assistance to more than 200 people. Among them there were 110 refugees from other localities.²

A labor camp was established in Kołbiel whose inmates were assigned to regulate the Świder River. This was one of many camps established as part of a major German program for the regulation of rivers and the irrigation of fields in the Generalgouvernement.³

The German authorities established a ghetto in Kołbiel in 1941.⁴ The Jewish population was resettled into a few houses located between two streets. The ghetto was very densely populated.⁵ Many refugees arrived in Kołbiel from other areas. Among them were 157 Jews from Jakubówka and Wielgolas who were moved into the Kołbiel ghetto in November 1941.⁶ Some of around 1,000 Jews who had escaped from the Mińsk Mazowiecki ghetto during its liquidation on August 22 and 23, 1942, sought refuge in Kołbiel. At this time, the population

of the Kołbiel ghetto was around 1,100 Jews.⁷ Due to the overcrowding, the difficult sanitary conditions, and hunger, many diseases thrived in the ghetto, including an outbreak of typhus.

In August 1942, the Germans executed about 25 men from Kołbiel—15 Poles and 10 Jews—in the forest near the road to Mińsk Mazowiecki. The bodies were buried at the site of the execution. In the fall of 1942, another 30 Jewish men were murdered by the Germans.⁸

On September 27, 1942, the second day of the Sukkot holiday, German armed forces surrounded the ghetto. The Jews were taken from their homes and escorted to the train station in Pilawa. About 300 Jews—100 men, 80 women, and 120 children—were killed on the spot in Kołbiel or on the way to Pilawa.⁹

From Pilawa, the Jews were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp. The Germans retained a small group of about 50 Jews in Kołbiel to clear out the ghetto. Another 100 or so people had succeeded in evading the deportation. After a short time, many of these escapees returned to Kołbiel, where the Germans used them as forced laborers. After some time, the remaining Jews in Kołbiel were resettled to the Warsaw and other remaining ghettos. In November 1942, a large group of Jews was sent from the liquidated labor camps to Warsaw. Among these Jews were a number of Jews from Kołbiel. After Rabbi Landau from Kołbiel arrived in the Warsaw ghetto, he continued to establish yeshivot until the liquidation of the ghetto in April 1943.¹⁰

After the liquidation of the Kołbiel ghetto, many Jews were caught and killed in the area around Kołbiel. In January 1943, Gendarmes from the post in Nowa Wieś shot a Jewish family—6 children and their parents—at the cemetery in Kołbiel. In December 1943, Gendarmes killed 5 Jews—3 children and their parents—again at the Jewish cemetery in Kołbiel. In 1943, the Nazis murdered 80 Jews in the forest near Kołbiel. The bodies were buried at the site of the execution.¹¹ According to the testimony of Elijah H., the wife of the chairman of the Judenrat in Kołbiel was hidden with her child in the forest, where they initially received aid from a Polish forester; eventually, the forester denounced her to the Polish (Blue) Police. The German Gendarme Liebscher arrived; he first shot the child, then the mother.¹²

Of the pre-war Jewish population of Kołbiel, only a few families survived.

SOURCES Articles on the Jewish community of Kołbiel can be found in the following publications: Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 409–411; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 645; and Roman Mogilanski, *The Ghetto Anthology: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Extermination of Jewry in Nazi Death Camps and Ghettos in Poland* (Los Angeles: American Congress of Jews from Poland and Survivors of Concentration Camps, 1985), p. 142.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

The book edited by Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), contains brief information on the Kołbiel ghetto (pp. 15–16, 72, 230, 275–276, 317). Additional information on the ghetto and German crimes in Kołbiel can also be found in: *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 120; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 238; and *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1985), pp. 114–116.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Kołbiel under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/28 [AJDC]); BA-L (B 162/6852); IPN (AGK, Kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177; AGK, Ankiety GK, woj. warszawskie, “Egzekucje,” Kołbiel pow. Otwock; AGK, Kolekcja “Z” sygn. 488/c.s. 32; AGK, Alert ZHP, t. XV, z. 13, k. 107; AGK, Ankiety OK, Warszawa “Represje na ludności żydowskiej przed utworzeniem gett,” “Inne represje stosowane przez okupanta hitlerowskiego,” “Egzekucje,” Kołbiel, pow. Otwock; ITS; and USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

Grzegorz Kołacz

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 310/A; Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 216.
2. AŻIH, 210/28 (AJDC), Wykaz Miejscowości, Komitetów Pomocy, pp. 1–6, May 6 and June 1, 1940.
3. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 276.
4. AŻIH Web site, www.jhi.pl/pl/gminy/miasto/279.html.
5. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, pp. 409–411.
6. AGK (IPN), Kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177; IPN, GK, Zh III/31/35/68, o. pr. woj. warszawskie; AŻIH, 310/A; ITS; *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 120; T. Berenstein et al., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), p. 278; Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 216; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 238.
7. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, pp. 215–216.
8. IPN, AGK, Ankiety GK, woj. warszawskie, “Egzekucje,” Kołbiel pow. Otwock; AGK, Ankiety OK, Warszawa, “Egzekucje,” Kołbiel pow. Otwock; AGK, Kolekcja “Z” sygn. 488/c.s. 32; AGK, Alert ZHP, t. XV, z. 13, k. 107; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni*, pp. 114–115.
9. IPN, AGK, Ankiety OK, Warszawa “Represje na ludności żydowskiej przed utworzeniem gett,” “Inne represje stosowane przez okupanta hitlerowskiego,” “Egzekucje,” Kołbiel, pow. Otwock; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni*, p. 115; Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, pp. 409–11.
10. AŻIH, Ring II/338, “Wiadomości no. 3”; Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 230; Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, pp. 409–411.
11. IPN, AGK, Ankiety OK, Warszawa, “Represje na ludności żydowskiej przed utworzeniem gett,” “Inne represje stosowane przez okupanta hitlerowskiego,” “Egzekucje,” Kołbiel, pow. Otwock; AGK, Ankiety GK, woj. warszawskie; AGK,

Alert ZHP, t. XV, z. 13, k. 107; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni*, pp. 115–116.

12. BA-L, B 162/6852, testimony of Elijachu H., June 6, 1962, p. 70, as cited in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Provincia noc*, p. 72.

KOSÓW LACKI

Pre-1939: Kosów Lacki, town, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kosów Lacki, Kreis Sokolow, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Kosów Lacki, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Kosów Lacki is located about 89 kilometers (55 miles) north-east of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, the town had approximately 1,400 Jewish residents, constituting 85 percent of the total.

In the opening weeks of World War II, Kosów Lacki's location, 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) west of the Bug River, enabled an unknown number of the town's Jews to escape German occupation. Although the Germans entered Kosów Lacki on September 11, 1939, with no resistance from the Polish army, they did not remain long. As Kosów Lacki was originally assigned to the Soviet occupation zone, the Germans evacuated Kosów Lacki only two days after their arrival. The Red Army's presence in Kosów Lacki, shortly after September 17, 1939, also proved brief. The Soviets in turn evacuated the town after a few days, retreating behind the Bug River, as subsequent negotiations had placed Kosów Lacki back in the German occupation sphere. Some of the town's Jews, particularly the young, decided to leave with the Red Army.

Among the greatest pressures in the first two years of German occupation, which began in Kosów Lacki at the end of September 1939, was the sharp increase in the Jewish population, which more than doubled, from 1,400 at the start of the German occupation to 3,800 by December 1941. Part of this influx came initially from Jews denied entrance at the Soviet border who found it impossible to survive hiding in nearby forests over the winter. Another part came from German forced resettlement to consolidate Jewish communities in the Warsaw region. Seventy Jews from Prostyń were relocated to Kosów Lacki, as were Jews from Wyszaków nad Bugiem, Pułtusk, and Ostrów Mazowiecka.¹

The largest part of forced Jewish resettlement into Kosów Lacki came from German efforts to render those territories annexed to the Reich cleansed of Jews (*judenrein*). On December 13, 1939, German authorities charged the town's rabbi, Jerrucham Fishl Don, with receiving and caring for 750 Jewish deportees who had arrived from Kalisz. Even though the Germans took some of the Kalisz Jews to Sterdyń in March 1940, the sudden influx created enormous pressure on Jewish families in Kosów Lacki. Approximately 15 Kalisz families, about 70 people, were given shelter in the synagogue. Don also expected every Jew to take in as many families as they had rooms. To resolve tensions over the resulting cramped housing situation, the rabbi established a committee composed of

Jewish representatives from Kosów Lacki and Kalisz. The committee ordered Kosów Lacki's Jews to feed their Kalisz guests on Fridays and Saturdays. Don also established a kitchen and dining hall, which served hot meals free of charge to refugees and local Jews displaced by the deportees.

In the fall of 1939, the Germans ordered the creation of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) to act in the name of the town's Jewish population. In Kosów Lacki, the Judenrat, composed of pre-war kehillah functionaries, was initially chaired by Itzhak Liberman. Youth leaders from different political parties also organized, with permission from the official Judenrat, a parallel Judenrat. This youth Judenrat appears to have provided many of the ghetto's social services. It organized a sanitation committee, opened a small hospital for contagious diseases, and distributed food products to the weak, sick, and impoverished. It also created a social committee and arranged special passes enabling some, including the Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), to remain outside beyond the curfew. The date of the establishment of the Jewish Police is not known, but a 20-man force was headed by an officer named Enoch.²

Although the town's Jews were expected to meet German demands for money, furs, and exotic foodstuffs, the German insistence on forced labor posed the greatest challenge to the Judenrat. While organizing female work brigades for neighboring farms expropriated for German and Ukrainian use proved relatively easy, the Judenrat experienced difficulties finding 500 to 600 men willing to travel 145 kilometers (90 miles) by train to spend a week draining the swamp in Łęki. The main Judenrat turned to the youth Judenrat to fulfill the quota for workers in Łęki. They did so by establishing a Work Committee to assign forced labor duties. The youth Judenrat also organized a militia of Jewish youth to enforce the labor quotas. The main Judenrat also broke up a Sabbath strike of female farm laborers launched within the first weeks of their assignment. The Judenrat assisted the German police in arresting the protesters' mothers, which soon brought the strikers back to work to obtain their release.³

In his monthly report for February 1941, the Sokolow Kreishauptmann noted that the movement of Jews in the Kreis had been forbidden and that the establishment of six Jewish residential districts (*Judenwohnbezirke*), including one in Kosów Lacki, would be completed in March. Any Jews remaining in the villages were being moved to one of these six places.⁴ The same report indicated that the ghettos would be enclosed as soon as the weather permitted. However, most eyewitness testimony maintains that Kosów Lacki remained an "open ghetto," at least up until the main deportation Aktion in September 1942. It seems that as the bulk of the town's population was Jewish, the Germans designated Kosów Lacki a Judenstadt (Jewish town)—and rather than establish a separate ghetto within the town, they treated the entire town as a ghetto, refusing to allow Jews to cross the town's borders.⁵

In early 1941, the welfare expenditures of the Judenrat expanded considerably, from a monthly average in 1940 of about 800 złoty to around 6,500 złoty per month. This steep increase

resulted primarily from the new orders preventing Jews from leaving the town, as previously trade and labor in the surrounding villages had been a major source of food and income for many Jews. The Judenrat responded by launching a Bread Action in which all ghetto residents received half a kilogram (1.1 pounds) of bread free of charge, subsidized with the help of the Kraków-based American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in January and February 1941.⁶

As Germany began preparing for the invasion of the Soviet Union in the spring of 1941, Kosów Lacki's Jews were assigned the task of unloading German trains at the railroad station. Then on June 22, 1941, following the German invasion, Soviet planes bombarded Kosów Lacki, sparking a fire in which 42 people died.⁷ Jewish labor obligations were now increased, as a number of craftsmen formed the worker pool at the Treblinka labor camp, less than 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) away. In the fall of 1941, SS troops and Ukrainian guards surrounded Kosów Lacki and took local craftsmen, their assistants, and their equipment to the Treblinka labor camp on trucks. A second roundup of craftsmen took place in 1942. Because carpenter Yankel Kuklavka was not at home at this time, the Germans threatened to kill many of the town's Jews if he were not surrendered. Kuklavka subsequently managed the carpentry shop at the Treblinka labor camp.⁸

The labor camp roundups were accompanied by SS demands for material "contributions." Several weeks after a roundup, SS guards presented the Judenrat with lists of SS demands for a range of goods, from tools and building materials for the labor camp to luxury items and cash payments for the camp's German staff. To obtain the construction materials, the Jewish community disassembled buildings destroyed by Soviet bombing. The Judenrat imposed stiff taxes to meet the SS demands and resorted to harsh measures to extract exotic foodstuffs from local residents, locking up the head of the Cegal household for his refusal to turn over coffee sent from France.⁹

Some residents of Kosów Lacki's ghetto believed that the craftsmen's labor and the town's financial contributions had established a special relationship with the SS at the Treblinka labor camp. When in 1942 SS officers from the Treblinka extermination camp gave a similar list of demands to the Judenrat, it appealed directly to Theodor von Eupen, the commander of the labor camp, with some success. However, the increasing failure of bribes and ransoms to protect the Jews undermined the Judenrat's authority and provoked a leadership crisis. In early 1942, the SS murdered several craftsmen at the labor camp, including locksmith Mordechai Liberman, son of the Judenrat chairman. After losing his son, the Judenrat chairman began drinking heavily. He was found shot dead in the street. His successor, Alter Burstein, failed to secure the release from Warsaw's Pawiak Prison of three young Jewish leaders. The Judenrat's policy of levying heavy taxes to pay for ransoms came into question, particularly after the parents of Joshua Liberman received a letter telling them their son had died in the Auschwitz concentration camp.¹⁰

Jews in Kosów Lacki were relatively well informed about the terrible events unfolding around them. They had learned about the creation of the Warsaw ghetto from Jews who escaped from the capital in August 1941, seeking better conditions in Kosów Lacki's open ghetto. Polish traders who came to Kosów Lacki to hire Jewish middlemen to help them with illicit trading brought news of deportations from the Warsaw ghetto. The craftsmen at Treblinka, who continued to come home for weekends throughout 1942, reported on their construction work at Treblinka's extermination camp. Ghetto residents also gave assistance to at least three Jews who had jumped from transports headed there. The town offered similar protection and travel papers to four escapees from the extermination camp. Some younger Jews in Kosów Lacki began preparing hiding places in the early fall of 1942. The funeral for Joshua Liberman's grandfather, timber merchant Abraham Liberman, who had died naturally, provided an opportunity to mourn the impending extinction of the town's Jewish community: "Young and old, enemies and friends came to his funeral. . . . People wept bitterly and long for themselves." Survivors later recalled the funeral as "the last time that dignity and ritual accompanied the burial of a Kosów Lacki Jew."¹¹

The liquidation of the Jewish community in Kosów Lacki began on September 22, 1942. Early in the morning, Germans, Ukrainian guards, and the Polish fire department cordoned off the town. SS officers ordered the Judenrat and Jewish Police to gather all the Jews in the marketplace but separated off the families of the labor camp craftsmen in the building where the Judenrat met. SS and Ukrainian auxiliaries accompanied the Jewish Police on a house-to-house search for those in hiding, shooting those they found. Others, including a doctor, a female dentist, and at least two refugees from Warsaw, committed suicide. About 150 ghetto residents were killed trying to flee and were buried in a mass grave at the Jewish cemetery. The next day, the SS searched Polish houses throughout the town and in the surrounding countryside, killing Jews they discovered there.¹² Disagreement exists over how the 3,800 Jews from Kosów Lacki's ghetto were transported to the Treblinka death camp. In some accounts, they were escorted to the railway station and loaded into wagons; in another account, Kosów Lacki's Jews walked to Treblinka.¹³

The craftsmen's families were relocated to two narrow streets in an impoverished part of town and were ordered not to leave under penalty of death.¹⁴ Over the course of the next month, the Germans encouraged Jews who had escaped the previous roundups to return to Kosów Lacki, promising them they would not be deported. On October 28, 1942, Kosów Lacki was announced to be one of only six remaining *Judenwohnbezirke* in *Distrikt Warschau*.¹⁵ Between 50 and 100 people came out of hiding and joined the craftsmen's families. They were the target of further SS roundups in December 1942, which once again spared those families whose sons and husbands worked at the Treblinka labor camp.¹⁶ Ghetto residents became subjected to random SS violence. One evening, shortly after the second roundup, a group of SS arrived in town

“to have fun by shooting young Jewish men.” On what subsequently became remembered as “Yankel Evening,” the SS “caught several young Jewish men, including five named Yankel, and chopped their heads off with axes.”¹⁷ In February 1943, an SS unit took Kosów Lacki’s remaining Jews to the Treblinka labor camp, ostensibly to reunite them with their families.¹⁸

No more than 50 of Kosów Lacki’s Jews survived the war. Of those deported to the labor camp, only Szymon Cegiel is known to have escaped during the August 1943 uprising there. The other Jews from the ghetto who survived did so mainly thanks to acts of rescue from Poles in the countryside.¹⁹ Tragically, as many as 11 Jews who had survived the war were killed in its immediate aftermath, along with Poles, when the non-Communist underground blew up Kosów Lacki’s Citizen’s Militia building.²⁰

SOURCES The best source about the Jews of Kosów Lacki during the interwar and World War II eras is the yizkor book *Kosow Lacki* (San Francisco: Holocaust Center of Northern California, 1992), based largely on interviews with two survivors. Other survivor testimonies are from Jews who came from outside the town. The most valuable of these are the accounts of Hanna Lewkowicz, a deportee from Kalisz, who recounts her family’s unsuccessful attempt to cross into the Soviet Union along with some recollections of Kosów Lacki’s ghetto (USHMM, RG-15.079M [Ring I/478], “Podróż do Rosji. Kosów Lacki w październiku 1941 r.,” pp. 1–6, parts of which are published in “Podróż do Rosji,” in Andrzej Żbikowski et al., eds., *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, vol. 3, *Relacje z Kresów* [Warsaw: ŻIH, 2000], as well as in another partial publication in “Archiwum Ringelbluma,” *Karta*, no. 39 [2003]: 12–13). More valuable for its descriptions of day-to-day ghetto life and organization is Lewkowicz’s “Notatki o życiu przesiedleńców z Kalisza w Kosowie Lackim 1939/1941,” pp. 1–9 (USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/479). Testimony of escapees from Warsaw who lived for at least a few days in the Kosów Lacki ghetto include the accounts of Józef “Jerzy” Himelblau (AŻIH, 301/3073 [in Polish] and 301/3615 [in Yiddish]), Heniek Ostrowicz (AŻIH, 301/3534), and also Aron Czechowicz (AŻIH, 301/688), who sought refuge in the Kosów Lacki ghetto after escaping from the Treblinka extermination camp.

Further documentation on the fate of the Jews in Kosów Lacki’s ghettos can be found in the following archival collections: APSi (Akta Gminy Kosów 98); BA-BL (R 52III/29); BA-L (e.g., B 162/6846); and USHMM (Acc. 1997.A.0124 [AŻIH, JSS], reel 30, 211/573-574; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH, AJDC], 210/422 and 425).

Edward Kopówka and Laura Crago

NOTES

1. T. Berenstein, “Deportacja i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskich,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952), table 10; AŻIH, 301/2732, testimony of Rozalina Kożuchowicz, p. 1; USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/479, p. 3, and Ring I/478, pp. 6–7; APSi, Akta Gminy Kosów, 98, “Pismo Przedwodniczącego Prezydium w Kosowie do Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Warszawie z dn. 3 kwietnia 1952 roku,” p. 1; and *Kosow Lacki*, p. 23.

2. *Kosow Lacki*, pp. 24–26; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (AŻIH, JSS), 211/573, p. 6; RG-15.079M, Ring I/479, pp. 6–8.

3. *Kosow Lacki*, pp. 24–27.

4. USHMM, RG-14.025M (BA-BL), R 52III/29, Lagebericht des Kreises Sokolow-Wengrow für den Monat Februar 1941, published in T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, and A. Rutkowski, eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), p. 106.

5. This interpretation of “Judenstadt” is in *Kosow Lacki*, p. 24. According to eyewitness testimony, the ghetto remained open at least until the first German liquidation in September 1942, as mentioned in AŻIH, 301/3073, p. 1, and 301/3534, testimony of Heniek Ostrowicz (aka Kuczowski), p. 1.

6. The Judenrat’s social welfare expenditures and discussions of various campaigns to provide nourishment after the creation of the ghetto are in AŻIH, JSS, 211/573; USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/479, pp. 1–8. For AJDC assistance, see USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AŻIH, AJDC), 210/422, pp. 1–3, and 210/425, pp. 1–5.

7. See Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz et al., eds., *Raporty Ludwiga Fischera, gubernatora dystryktu warszawskiego, 1939–1944* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1987), pp. 344–345; and *Kosow Lacki*, pp. 27–28.

8. *Kosow Lacki*, pp. 28–29, 35.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–30.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 30–33.

11. AŻIH, 301/3534, p. 1; 301/688, testimony of Aron Czechowicz, p. 14; and *Kosow Lacki*, pp. 33–37.

12. *Kosow Lacki*, p. 37; AŻIH, 301/3073, pp. 3–5; 301/3534, p. 1.

13. For disagreement over methods of transportation to Treblinka, compare *Kosow Lacki*, pp. 36–37, with AŻIH, 301/688, p. 14, and the “provinces” section of the report sent from the Warsaw ghetto to the London Polish government-in-exile, “Sprawozdanie zjednoczonych organizacji antyfaszystowskich getta warszawskiego z dnia 15 listopada 1942 roku,” in Berenstein, Eisenbach, and Rutkowski, *Eksterminacja*, p. 310.

14. Survivor H. Ostrowicz claimed that after the November 1942 deportations the Germans relocated the town’s remaining Jews to a ghetto “on the [town’s] square” and physically enclosed it. Other eyewitnesses, however, do not mention the smaller ghetto’s physical enclosure. Compare here AŻIH, 301/3534, p. 1, with *Kosow Lacki*, p. 38.

15. Police Decree issued by HSSPF Krüger of the Generalgouvernement, October 28, 1942, published in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), pp. 342–344.

16. *Kosow Lacki*, pp. 38–40. BA-L, B 162/6846, p. 97, dates two roundups on December 9 and 19, 1942.

17. *Kosow Lacki*, p. 39.

18. *Ibid.*

19. See Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust—Poland*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pp. 61–62, 362–363.

20. Edward Kopówka, “Kosów Lacki,” Treblinka: unpub. draft, 2008, pp. 5–6.

ŁASKARZEW

Pre-1939: Łaskarzew, village, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Łaskarzew, Kreis Garwolin, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łaskarzew, town, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Łaskarzew is located about 75 kilometers (47 miles) southeast of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 1,252 Jews living in the village.

On September 17, 1939, the Wehrmacht shot 53 residents, of whom 30 were Jewish, in retaliation for their defense of the town. In addition, the Germans also razed 85 percent of the buildings in the village center, including the synagogue and the ritual bath. Another 27 Jews were shot on November 28, 1939.

At first, German Gendarmerie officials from the towns of Sobolew and Garwolin were in charge of affairs in Łaskarzew; a Schutzpolizei unit was later stationed in the village. A unit of Polish (Blue) Police, commanded by Kazimierz Smarzewski, was based in Łaskarzew. Smarzewski reportedly helped the local Jews, among them ghetto survivor Zygmunt (Srul) Warszawer.¹

A 12-man Judenrat was established in late 1939 with Yaakow Hersh Frimer (Jankiel Frymer) as its chairman. By January 1941, Chaim Goldberg chaired the Judenrat; tradesman Dawid Zelman was his deputy. Other Judenrat members included Mendel Zylbersztajn, A. Lerner, and S.B. Wakszal. A unit of Jewish Police was established later.

In March 1940, approximately 100 refugees from Garwolin settled in Łaskarzew. In November 1940, a second wave of Jews from Garwolin arrived, due to the partial deportation of the Jews from the Kreis center.

In April 1941, a branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was established in Łaskarzew. It was staffed mostly by members of the Judenrat; Zelman served as chairman, Zylbersztajn was his deputy, and Goldberg and Frimer were also members. The JSS committee opened a soup kitchen on May 20, 1941.²

An open ghetto was established in November 1941. The ghetto was located in the western part of the village and included the following streets: Dąbrowska, 11 Listopada, Wolska, Garbarska, and Alejowa. It housed between 1,300 and 1,500 Jews, including deportees from nearby Maciejowice, Wola Rębkowska, Górzno, and Pilawa. During its existence, approximately 200 Jews were rounded up for a nearby labor camp in Wilga. The labor consisted of digging drainage ditches along the Vistula River.³

On January 19, 1942, as reported in *Gazeta Żydowska*, it was announced that the ghetto was closed: "The Jews are not to leave the borders of the [Jewish] quarter on pain of retribution," warned the newspaper. The Poles who had property within the ghetto's perimeter were allowed access with special passes issued by the local authorities. The Jews and Poles were able to visit each other's quarters only with written permission. The Polish police were charged with checking the passes.⁴

According to survivor Warszawer, the ghetto was unguarded. Kazimierz Majewski, a teenage scout at the time, testified that although the ghetto was fenced, entering it was very easy for the Poles. Majewski's scout unit was charged with the delivery of food to ghetto residents and surveillance of the ghetto. In particular, they were to report whether there were Poles taking advantage of the Jews' situation. Warszawer, who was a ritual slaughterer, was still able to conduct some business by smuggling kosher meat into the Warsaw ghetto.⁵

By February 1942, a medical office for walk-in patients and a small hospital had been opened in the ghetto. At this time, the JSS tried to procure orders for craftsmen who still possessed their workshops (25 tailors, 25 cobblers, and three carpenters). Although the six pre-war manual tanneries were razed in 1939, the tanners were still able to produce Russian leather and were seeking employment.⁶

Survivor Estera Waldman testified that the Jews were aware of and frightened by deportations in the region. "The Bürgermeister . . . promises to keep holding back the deportation of the Jews, and for this they pay [him]." The Bürgermeister Madejski also took hostages and released them upon payment. Equally as hostile to the Poles, Madejski was sentenced to death by the Polish Underground State and executed after his transfer to Osiecko. In the course of the summer of 1942, local Jews were paving the Łaskarzew-Sobolew road. Estera Waldman has described the weeks prior to the ghetto's liquidation:

The men are escaping to the Wilga camp and pay to be admitted there, although before they were paying not to be taken to that camp. Women with children also want to be admitted to the camp, but they are not let in. They have been standing outside the "Lager" [camp] for two days begging to be let in, while their husbands remain inside advising them to run away. On the third day, the Gestapo comes and orders the surrender of all valuables, for which they promise good jobs on estates. When the women gave up everything they were walked into the forest and shot. . . . Sixty-seven women and children were murdered.⁷

The ghetto was liquidated on the morning of September 30, 1942. The Germans managed to round up only about 400 Jews and transport them to the Treblinka extermination camp via Sobolew. According to Waldman, as many as 900 Jews managed to escape the deportation and reach the forests, including the elderly rabbi. Another source, the Polish court inquiry (Ankieta Sądowno Grodzkich), contradicts Waldman's estimates, reporting 900 deported, 200 escapees, and 200 sent to the Wilga camp.

Shortly after the ghetto's liquidation, the Germans announced that they were "establishing a second ghetto," reported Waldman. She further added: "The Jews are returning from the forests." This remnant ghetto existed for about six

weeks, after which its residents were sent to Treblinka. Approximately 120 Jews were shot in the hunt for escapees of the first and final ghetto liquidations.⁸

SOURCES The following publications refer to the Łaskarzew ghetto: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 287; Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 214, 297.

Archival sources include the following: AŻIH (211/658 [JSS]; 211/393-394 [JSS]; 301/35 [Relacje]); USHMM (RG-15.019M [court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos], reels 13 and 18; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]); and VHF (# 15795, 39015).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, RG-15.019M (court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos), reel 13, p. 234; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/658 (Łaskarzew), p. 1; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1985), p. 136; VHF, # 39015, testimony of Kazimierz Majek, 1997; # 15795, testimony of Zygmunt (Srul) Warszawer, 1996; free.of.pl/l/laskare/historia_laskarzew_1939-1945_3.html.

2. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/393 (Garwolin), pp. 4, 19–20; 211/394 (Garwolin), p. 32; 211/658, pp. 4, 6.

3. Ibid., RG-15.019M, reel 18, file 52; free.of.pl/l/laskare/historia_laskarzew_1939-1945_3.html.

4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 24, 1942.

5. VHF, # 39015; # 15795.

6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/658, pp. 24–26.

7. AŻIH, 301/35, testimony of Estera Waldman, undated; free.of.pl/l/laskare/historia_laskarzew_1939-1945_3.html.

8. AŻIH, 310/35; *Rejestr miejsc*, p. 137; USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 18, file 52.

LATOWICZ

Pre-1939: Latowicz, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Latowicz is located approximately 40 kilometers (25 miles) southwest of Siedlce. According to the 1921 census, Latowicz had 416 Jewish residents.

Ninety percent of the town's Jewish buildings, including a synagogue and ritual bath, were razed in the initial days of World War II. The Germans established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which included the following members: Chaim Platek, Majer Piaskowski, Majer Akierman, Chajm Zysman, Wolf Zabielski, Mendel Szelechter, Aron Winograd, Gerszon Warszaw, Abram Berger, and Munysz Aizenberg. All were

also members of the Committee for Help to Poor Jews established to assist local homeless and refugees. Platek was the committee's president, and Piaskowski was his deputy. According to the committee's register, there were 418 Jews living in Latowicz in April 1940. Of that number, 110 people (23 families) had lost their dwellings.¹

Latowicz's Jewish organizations were also to take care of more than 130 Jews living in three-neighboring gminy at the time: 105 Jews living in gmina Jeruzal (Waliska, 3 families; Jeruzal, 5; Dębówce, 4; Lipiny, 1; Borki, 1; Płomieniec, 2; Łukowiec, 2; Wężyczyn, 1); 18 Jews living in Wielgolas (Dęby Małe, 3 families; Kamionka, 1); and 11 people from Iwowe (Iwowe, 2 families; Oleksianka, 1).²

The community began restoration of both the synagogue and the ritual bath in 1939 but was short 8,000 złoty needed to finish the project. The plan was to use the bath also as a location for the soup kitchen. In July 1940, the committee reported that Latowicz's Jews were occupying 10 percent of the pre-war households, with two to three families sharing an apartment, adding: "As regards accommodation: we would like to mention that the local authorities are clearing the Jewish families from Polish-owned buildings." By that time several dozen families had been removed already. The letter ended: "All our interventions were futile and so the Judenrat was forced to crowd those [removed families] in with other Jews." Nine additional Jewish families occupying one house were given until August 11, 1941, to move out.

Due to a few cases of typhus among the Jews, the Kreis doctor ordered the immediate establishment of a quarantine facility for 32 persons. The doctor also forced the Judenrat to finish renovation of the bath for this purpose. The severely ill were sent to a hospital in Mińsk Mazowiecki. Dr. Eliaz Piętrow treated local patients.³

By mid-September 1941, there were 600 Jews living in Latowicz. Dr. Wielikowski of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Warsaw, who inspected the village at the time, stated that there was no Jewish quarter in the village. Fifty Jews labored in the Chyżyn labor camp located 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) outside of Latowicz. The Judenrat provided them with half a kilogram (1.1 pounds) of bread daily and 10 złoty.⁴

A ghetto was established in November 1941. A German report on the concentration of Jews in Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki of March 3, 1942, states that in November 1941 "120 Jews from Jeruzal were resettled to the Jewish quarter in Latowicz."⁵

According to the Latowicz JSS branch, the relocation from Jeruzal took place a little later, at the beginning of December 1941. The number of newcomers was in fact twice that given in the above-cited German report. The registration of Jeruzal's Jews conducted on January 4, 1942, after their arrival in Latowicz, revealed 226 newcomers, of which only 118 were previously registered officially as living in the Jeruzal gmina and therefore included in the German statistics.

With the resettlement of the Jews from Jeruzal, the ghetto was declared closed. One Judenrat member lamented: "One is unable to trade at all because one cannot leave our locality as it is 'Closed for the Jews' [forbidden for the Jews to leave]."

The typhus outbreak reached epidemic proportions. At the beginning of January 1942, five infected people were transported to the Mińsk Mazowiecki hospital. The community struggled to pay hospital bills, feed the sick, maintain quarantine, and pay its guards.

In April 1942, there were 700 Jews in Latowicz. As of April 20, 27 Jews from Latowicz were conscripted to work at a labor camp in Kuflew (7 kilometers [4.4 miles] away), to which they had to walk daily. Those laborers were compensated with 20 grams (0.7 ounces) of bread and a bowl of rutabaga soup.⁶

According to J.A. Młynarczyk, a number of Jews from Latowicz were ordered to move to Kałuszyn; the date of this resettlement is unknown.

Secondary sources report that the ghetto was liquidated on October 14, 1942, when the Latowicz community was sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.

SOURCES Publications that include references to the Latowicz ghetto include Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 265; and Jacek A. Młynarczyk, “Akcja Reinhard w gettach prowincjonalnych dystryktu warszawskiego 1942–1943,” in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawn. IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 65.

The following archival sources were used in the preparation of this entry: AŻIH (210/445 [AJDC]; 211/129 and 634 [JSS]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/445 (Latowicz), pp. 6–9, 18, 23; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/634 (Latowicz), pp. 10–11.

2. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/445, p. 19.

3. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/634, pp. 10–11, 13.

4. Ibid., 211/634, p. 22, and 211/129 (Korespondencja Prezydium ŻSS z Gemisejem Wielikowskim—członkiem Prezydium ŻSS i Doradcą przy Szeffie dystryktu warszawskiego, 2 IX 1941–30 X 1941), “Sprawozdanie z podróży służbowej odbytej po dystrykcie warszawskim w dniach od 8–14 września 1941,” p. 57.

5. T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, and A. Rutkowski, eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), Document 145, pp. 278–279; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/634, pp. 40–42.

6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/634, pp. 26, 40–42.

LEGIONOWO

Pre-1939: Legionowo, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, General-gouvernement; post-1998: town, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Legionowo is located 22 kilometers (14 miles) north of Warsaw. Ludwisin, where the ghetto was located, is a southwestern neighborhood of Legionowo that borders the gmina of Jabłonna. The number of Jewish residents before the war is unknown, but it is unlikely that it exceeded 400.

A 12-man Judenrat was established in February 1940. In December of that year its members included Chil Rozenberg (chairman), Chaim Rozenberg, Abram Rozen (secretary and in charge of Jewish labor), Dr. Abraham Finkelsztejn, Hersz Finkelsztejn, Efroim Szafraniec, Szlama Sterdyner, Moszek Horowicz, Lejb Brzoza, and Motel Nizki.¹ Chana Ruta Magied wrote about the chairman Rozenberg: “I know of one incident when he acted with impropriety. It was shortly before the ghetto liquidation. The son of the Judenrat chairman was caught outside of the ghetto. Rozenberg gave the Germans some other Jew, because he wanted to save his son.”²

In January 1940, the Judenrat reported to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) that there were approximately 1,000 refugees in Legionowo benefiting from the local soup kitchen, which was financed primarily by the AJDC. The AJDC conducted an inspection and requested a list of Jews, which was conducted by the Judenrat in March 1940. It showed that there were only 588 Jews in Legionowo, and no more than 300 of them were refugees. The inspector established that a “fictitious register” had been made, falsely inflating the number of family members. The Judenrat was ordered to decrease the number of kitchen meals it delivered accordingly and reconstitute the composition of its self-help committee, led by the Judenrat chairman Rozenberg. At this time, there were refugees from the following localities in Legionowo: Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, Serock, Nasielsk, Żuromin, Bieżeń, Sierpc, Chorzele, Nowe Miasto, Włocławek, Bukowiec, Wieliszew, Lipno, Pomiechówek, Ciechanów, Różany, and Pułtusk.

Legionowo’s head (*wójt*) stated that based on a register dated April 4, 1940, there were 981 Jews living in Legionowo. That same month, the Judenrat stated there were 1,667 Jews living in the village.³

On November 19, 1940, the Judenrat wrote to the AJDC in Warsaw: “We are reporting that on November 15 [1940] a Jewish quarter was established on the territory of Legionowo; it includes [the Jewish] population of three gminas: Legionowo, Jabłonna-Henryków, and Nieporęt”—the latter having already been resettled.⁴ There is little information as to how many Jews were transferred from each of these localities, but it is known that Henryków and Płudy had no more than 200 residents—including 88 refugees—in August 1940.⁵

The ghetto was located on the periphery of Legionowo in a neighborhood called Ludwisin; some sources refer to it only by this name. Other names include Ludwisin-Legionowo, Legionowo, but also Jabłonna, due to the ghetto’s proximity to that town’s border. Hence Magied’s description: “They created [the ghetto] on Pola Ludwiński (Ludwisin Fields), between Jabłonna and Legionowo. . . . It was a pretty neighborhood, practically half-rural, green, full of orchards. The

only reason the Germans picked it for a ghetto was probably because it was so isolated. All the time they had us as if in the palm of their hand, as they could easily surround and shell [the ghetto].⁶ The following streets delineated the ghetto's borders: Sobieski, Mieszko I, Prymasowska, Kozieltulski, Pomorska, and Zygmuntowska. The Judenrat was located at 77 Chrobry Street and the soup kitchen at 55 Sobieski Street. The ghetto remained unfenced. The streets leading into the ghetto had signs posted at the ghetto border with the following inscription: "Jüdische Gegend. Polen und Wehrmacht Eintritt verboten"—Jewish Area: Entrance Forbidden for Poles and German Army Personnel.⁷

Jewish policeman and ghetto survivor Nachman Józef Kazimierski testified that a Jewish police force was established in December 1940 on the orders of the Kreishauptmann Warschau-Land, Regierungsrat Dr. Hermann Rupprecht. The selection of candidates for the Jewish Police was left to the Judenrat chairman. According to Kazimierski, Rozenberg chose "serious citizens, so there were no underhanded tricks." Feldmann was the commander of the Jewish Police; the police wore special armbands and badges, as well as navy blue hats. The Jewish Police set up a jail but "allowed the incarcerated Jews to leave [the jail] during the day and trade," reporting back to the jail at night. Because the policemen enjoyed certain privileges and were excused from forced labor, wealthier Jews paid Rozenberg money to get their sons into the force. Every day Legionowo's Jewish Police was required to provide 150 laborers for the Germans and collect them from their workplace in the evening. There was also an arbitration court in the ghetto, conducted by a lawyer named Federman and two other citizens.⁸

Apart from the localities mentioned above, Jews from the following villages were ordered to move into the Legionowo ghetto: Dąbrówka, Łomianki, Białółka Dworska, and Wiśniewo. In December 1940, the Judenrat reported around 2,500 Jews living in the ghetto. Almost half of the residents (1,200) were in need of support. Nonetheless, the soup kitchen was now closed for several months. "They live in accommodations under construction . . . which are located on a wide-open field and exposed to terrible winds," the Judenrat reported in January 1941, asking for money to buy fuel. One month later (February 1941), the ghetto was declared closed.⁹

Kazimierski wrote of life in the ghetto:

We lived well in the town. Officially, we received 210 kilograms (463 pounds) of bread and 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of sugar [a week], but nobody ever paid attention to the ration coupons. In the ghetto we had 50 small bakeries and two large [ones]. One of them baked rationed bread; the other was mine. . . . There were 50 ritual slaughterers. People were taking a risk by going to villages, buying cattle, and then herding it to Warsaw for ritual slaughter, [where it was] supervised by two slaughterers and a rabbi from Henryków.¹⁰

In April 1941, 10 Jews with typhus were sent to a hospital in Wołomin. Despite the danger of an epidemic developing, 400 deportees from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki were sent to Legionowo on May 14, 1941. Initially they were housed in the ghetto's isolation ward, consisting of five rooms, equipped with only two beds. Sixty of them left for Warsaw the next day. The local committee had no resources to help these newcomers aside from distributing some coffee to the elderly and children. As of June 1941, the committee was ordered to feed dinners to 300 laborers working for the German army in Legionowo. In July 1941, 3,000 Jews, of which 1,300 were refugees, were reported to be living in the ghetto. The soup kitchen was closed.¹¹

A typhus epidemic eventually broke out in October 1941. By that time, the ghetto had its own epidemic hospital with 30 beds. The soup kitchen reopened only on December 8, 1941, serving a mere 400 meals daily. By February 1942, the epidemic was dying out.

A number of Jews from the ghetto worked in nearby labor camps, including those at Piekiełko and Żerań. There was also a camp in Jabłonna, where approximately 400 Jews from the ghetto were taken in the summer of 1942 to work on the embankment of the Vistula River.

The first reports of Jews being shot for leaving the ghetto appeared in the summer of 1942—for example, a man and a woman were murdered on August 4, 1942; two Jews were shot on August 11; a Jewish woman was shot on August 22.¹²

Following the deportations from the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942, many escapees from those roundups started arriving in Legionowo. Kazimierski testified that the Jewish Police would take bribes of 5,000 zloty per head to legalize the fugitives in Legionowo. He also recalls how the Jews tried to save themselves by joining the Jewish Police. There were 40 policemen in the ghetto at the time of its liquidation.

The ghetto's destruction, on October 4, 1942, was unannounced, although the Polish (Blue) Police had warned some residents that it was coming. A German named Brandt, arriving with his unit from Warsaw, supervised the Aktion. Upon arrival at the Judenrat's office, the Germans announced that the Jews would be resettled to the east, where they would get land and work in agriculture. Following this, all but 10 policemen were dismissed. The Judenrat chairman was included in this group after he handed over "a sack of gold," recalled Kazimierski, who was selected as 1 of the 10 policemen. These policemen were ordered to go around the ghetto and call for all the residents to assemble on Chrobry Street, in front of the Judenrat. The 400 laborers regulating the Vistula remained in their barracks. Approximately 70 people, including the Judenrat chairman Rozenberg and the police chief Feldmann, were killed.

From the assembly point, Legionowo's Jews were taken to the Radzymin train station via Struga village. The community was deported to the Treblinka extermination camp, together with most of the remaining Jews from Wołomin and Radzymin.¹³

SOURCES Publications on the fate of the Jewish communities in the Legionowo ghetto include Jacek A. Młynarczyk, “Akcja Reinhard w gettach prowincjonalnych dystryktu warszawskiego 1942–1943,” p. 63; Barbara Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego,” pp. 206, 209; and Marta Janczewska, “Aneks,” pp. 275, 297, 304—all in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 200, 265.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/360, 210/466 [AJDC]; 211/635, 211/655, 211/1081–1083 [JSS]; 301/23 [Relacje]; USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079M [Ring I]; RG-15.084M [Relacje]); and YVA (e.g., O-3/1570).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/23 (Relacje), testimony of Nachman Józef Kazimierski; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/446 (Legionowo), pp. 5, 53.
2. Testimony of Chana Ruta Magied (YVA, O-3/1570), as cited by Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów,” p. 135.
3. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/446, pp. 6–8, 11, 15–24.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
5. *Ibid.*, 210/360 (Henryków), p. 42.
6. Testimony of Chana Ruta Magied, as cited by Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów,” p. 170.
7. Krzysztof Kołodziejczyk, “Zagłada w Dniu Radości,” *Mazowieckie To i Owo*, June 6, 2008; AŻIH, 301/23; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1081 (Warszawa), p. 5.
8. AŻIH, 301/23.
9. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/466, pp. 62–63; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/635 (Legionowo), p. 1.
10. AŻIH, 301/23, p. 53.
11. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/655 (Ludwisin), p. 3; 211/1081, p. 52; 211/1082 (Warszawa), pp. 15–16; 211/1083 (Warszawa), p. 18.
12. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo stołeczne warszawskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1985), p. 115; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/635, pp. 2, 4, 6–7; AŻIH, 301/23.
13. AŻIH, 301/23.

ŁOCHÓW

Pre-1939: Łochów (Yiddish: Lochov), village, Lublin województwoł, (later Warsaw województwo), Poland; 1939–1944: Lochow, Kreis Sokolow, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łochów, town, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

The civil parish of Łochów, on the northwestern border of the Węgrów powiat, abuts the Bug (River) National Park (Nadbużański Park Krajobrazowy). The civil parish's administrative seat, a town also named Łochów, lies about 55 kilo-

meters (34 miles) north-northeast of Warsaw and 30 kilometers (19 miles) west-northwest of Węgrów. Judel Jakowlewicz Perlis (d. 1893), a Jewish merchant from Grodno, contributed to the establishment of a Jewish settlement there. In 1876, in the forest of Baczki, an estate east of Łochów, he built a factory for manufacturing steel farm implements. On clearings north and northwest of his factory, Perlis created several villages including in Jasiorówka (1875), Ostrówek (1882), and Łopianka (1883). He encouraged Jews to build homes there.¹ Important too was the 1882 purchase of the Łochów estate by Zdzisław Zamoyski (1842–1925). He welcomed Jews to Budziska village, on his estate's western edge, to develop trade and handicrafts.²

In 1921, Jews constituted 133 (27 percent) of Baczki's 486 inhabitants, 119 (28 percent) of Budziska's 425 residents, 224 (53.2 percent) of Łopianka's 421 residents, 92 of Jasiorówka's residents, and 56 of Ostrówek's inhabitants. By 1939, Łochów's Jewish population (800) had grown by almost 40 percent. That year, 90 of Łochów's Jews worked in commerce, mostly as small traders, 260 worked in handicrafts, 41 were industrial workers, and 38 were professionals. They belonged to the Jewish council of Stok (Polish: Stoczek-Węgrowski), 11 kilometers (about 7 miles) north.³

On September 10, 1939, the German army occupied Łochów. Fearing the Germans' arrival, the Perlis and Loewenstein families joined many Jews from Łochów fleeing to territories occupied after September 17 by the Soviet Union.⁴ From October 1, the command of a German artillery unit was billeted at Perlis's factory. The Germans also seized the Zamoyski estate. They established a German Gendarmerie post there of between 10 and 15 policemen, under Karl Tetzen's command. Regional military authorities ordered the registration of Jewish property in the county and closed all Jewish enterprises on October 14, 1939. With these orders, the Germans formally expropriated Perlis's and Loewenstein's factories and placed them under German administration when they reopened in late November. (In the fall of 1941, the Germans turned half of the Loewenstein factory into the *Stamm lager* [Stalag] 333 Soviet prisoner-of-war [POW] camp.) The Germans also expropriated vacation homes in the Urle Forest, between Łochów and Jadów. These homes were moved to Łochów for offices, housing, and other venues for German military and civil administrators.⁵

On November 28, 1939, the county's new Kreishauptmann, Landrat Friedrich Schultz, ordered Łochów's Jews to nominate a Judenrat. The Judenrat's chair, Mojżesz Goldsztejn, a blacksmith, was a pre-war supervisor at Perlis's factory. A resident of Baczki, he was an activist from Poale Zion-Left. The Judenrat's assistant chair, P. Płater, was a Zionist. The Judenrat established its headquarters in Łopianka. It placed medical services under the direction of the Perlis factory physician, Zofia Kirchen. Much later, it organized a six-member Jewish police force.⁶

Local German policies towards Łochów's Jews, at first uneven, became more uniform and violent by the fall of 1940.

Soldiers quartered at the Perlis factory in Baczki treated the factory's Jews well, as did a military unit that replaced them. Jews employed there and at the Loewenstein factory, both of which operated with expanded labor forces of 500 and 300 workers, respectively, received such high wages that Distrikt Warschau administrators sent several delegations to the Baczki factory to threaten its German administrator and Jewish technical director with prison terms if workers' earnings were not cut. Jews were not ordered to wear white armbands with a blue Star of David, mandated in Kreis Sokolow in December 1939, until the fall of 1940.⁷ Outside of Baczki, Gendarmes harassed Jews, forcing those in Łopianka, Budziska, and Jasiorówka to engage in menial day labor, seizing animals and carts, and stripping stores of merchandise. In Jasiorówka, they repeatedly searched the homes of Jews with pre-war fire-arm permits. From September 1940, the Gendarmes unleashed several violent attacks against Jews, murdering three and raping adolescent girls in Łopianka. These attacks, almost always associated with Gendarme Hartmann, may have led the Judenrat to try to reduce violence with bribes.⁸

Migration also challenged Łochów's Jews. From November 1939 through 1940, Jewish refugees flooded Łochów, seeking refuge there while arranging to cross into the Soviet Union.⁹ In the winter of 1939–1940, the Germans deported to Łochów Jews from Kalisz and Wyszaków. By August 1, 1940, Jews comprised 1,200 of Łochów's 14,015 residents.¹⁰ By May 1941, 1,400 Jews, including 756 refugees, lived there. Local Jews blamed the refugees for a 1940 typhus outbreak. The Judenrat created an old-age home for refugees from Kalisz. It ordered Łochów's Jews to house the remaining refugees. It extended free medical care and provided 240 free meals daily in April 1941 to the refugees.¹¹

Appointed on June 10, 1940, the new Kreishauptmann Sokolow, Reichslandwirtschaftsrat Ernst Grams, took steps in 1941 to ghettoize Łochów's Jews. In February 1941, he forbade Jews from leaving villages where they lived without special permission. This order transformed many of Łochów's villages into open ghettos. In a February 1, 1941, report, Grams stated that Łochów was one of six places in his county in which Jews had been concentrated and promised to close the ghettos in these places as soon as the weather permitted.¹² Grams never implemented this plan fully. Łochów's Jews were ordered to be more tightly concentrated. In the fall of 1941, the Germans deported to Baczki the Jews of Ostrówek, Budziska, and Jasiorówka. The Kreishauptmann's office also ordered 359 Jews from Sadowne to Baczki by December 15, 1941.¹³ Only the Jews of Łopianka were not transferred there. The ghettos in Baczki and Łopianka were never closed. Jews moved freely around these two villages.¹⁴

The creation of open ghettos in Baczki and Łopianka pushed a large number of Jews into poverty. In May 1942, unemployment had risen by 30 percent.¹⁵ By August 1942, more than 700 Jews qualified for reduced-cost or free meals every second day. On September 10, 1942, the Judenrat chair reported his organization's financial bankruptcy. He warned that Łochów's 1,640 Jews stood on the brink of tragedy.¹⁶

By then, the Jews of Łochów realized that they would not be spared deportation to the Treblinka extermination camp. Living near the railroad leading to Małkinia, they had heard trains traveling to Treblinka, located about 34 kilometers (21 miles) northeast, throughout August 1942. They had aided several Jews who had jumped from those transports. News about the Germans murdering Jews at Treblinka also had arrived from Kosów Lacki's Jews and from local Poles. Survivors in Jadów of a July 1942 deportation there detailed how the Germans had shot hundreds of that town's Jews.¹⁷

The liquidation of Łochów's ghettos began on September 25, 1942. A large number of Baczki's and Łopianka's Jews refused to assemble for the deportation, choosing instead to hide. In Łopianka, intoxicated Gendarmes and members of the SS, assisted by Polish (Blue) Police and Ukrainian SS auxiliaries, shot Jews every few steps on the way to Łochów's train station. After selecting between 18 and 20 people for a postliquidation ghetto, the Germans ordered the Jews into wagons. The train, which departed Baczki at 3:05 p.m., stopped 25 minutes later in Sadowne to load Jews assembled there from Stoczek's ghetto. Once the train departed there at 4:48 p.m., several Jews opened one of the train wagons, about 10 minutes later. Scores were mowed down by armed guards as they jumped from the train. At 5:37 p.m., the train carrying the remainder of the Jews of Łochów and Stoczek arrived at Treblinka.¹⁸

A postliquidation ghetto was created in Budziska in a building near the Gendarmerie. When 50 survivors reported there, the Gendarmes executed 30 people who had not been issued residency permits. The postliquidation ghetto's 18 to 20 residents, tailors and shoemakers from two extended families, made boots and clothing, including leather coats, for the Gendarmes. On December 11, the Gendarmes surrounded the building that housed the ghetto. About 6 Jews managed to escape. The Gendarmes took the remaining 14 Jews to the forest, ordered them to undress, and then shot them.¹⁹

The Germans also continued to search for Jews in hiding. The day after the liquidation of the Baczki and Łopianka ghettos, Gendarmes shot more than 50 Jews found at the Perlis factory. In Budziska that day, Gendarme Hartmann shot another 30 Jews. The Germans also found and murdered Zofia Kirchen, the Judenrat physician. In September 1943, the Gendarmes shot 16 Jews in Łopianka.²⁰ They also killed Jews found hiding in Budziska and Jasiorówka. In May 1944, the Gendarmes shot 25 Jews in Kamionna village, south of Baczki.²¹ The Germans murdered the largest number of Jewish survivors in the forest areas north of Łochów, in neighboring Sadowne. There between January and February 1943, they killed about 300 Jews and escaped Soviet POWs.²² In the winter of 1942–1943, the Germans also attempted to extricate hidden Jews by taking punitive measures against Poles thought to be assisting them. These *Aktions* included an execution on January 13, 1943, of 2 Jewish women, outside of Sadowne, along with the baker Leon Lubkiewicz, his wife, and son, for having given the women bread.²³ From March 16 to 31, 1943,

the SS tortured and then executed 16 farmers from around Zarzетка (Sadowne parish), arrested about 150 others suspected of aiding Jews and escaped Soviet prisoners, stripped villagers of their livestock and agricultural stores, and then set fire to a part of Zarzетка. The number of Jews who perished in this reprisal is unknown.²⁴

Less than 25 of Budziska's Jews survived the German occupation. Most did so with aid from Poles. The Lesiński family in Ostrówek gave refuge to Rozalia Kalecka, a supervisor at Perlis's factory, her sister Tzivia, brother-in-law Menashe, and nephew Bolesław. The Grzesiak family sheltered nine-year-old Natan Najman, from Łopianka, who had jumped from the Treblinka deportation train. The Zduński family in Józefów, near Warsaw, hid 10 members of the Brzostek family, from Jasiorówka, including several survivors of Budziska's postliquidation ghetto. The Roguszewski family in Łochów hid Ida and Chana Dzierzbowicz and also Najman and his brother for a time. They also helped the Najman brothers find escaped Soviet POWs, who agreed to arrange forest hiding places for them.²⁵

Łochów's Jewish community, which numbered about 70 with returnees from the Soviet Union, was not reconstituted. After nationalist partisans attacked the Brzostek family, on March 20, 1945, fatally injuring two, the survivors in Łochów joined others already in Łódź.²⁶ The majority later immigrated to Israel, Canada, and England.

SOURCES Useful secondary accounts on the Jews of Łochów include Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 81 (Budziska), pp. 115–116 (Baczki), p. 275 (Łopianka), and p. 321 (Sadowne); as well as the more general history of the Łochów region (including a detailed chapter on the Perlis and Loewenstein families) by Stanisław Sęczyk, "Dzieje Łochowa i okolic," ed. Tadeusz Krupa (unpub. MSS, available on the Web site of the Łochów gmina at www.gminalochow.pl/historia.htm).

Documentary evidence on the history of the Jews of Łochów's ghettos can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., 211/660–661, 211/938, 301/4238, 301/4390); IPN (e.g., ASG); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 33, 211/660–661 (Łochów), and reel 45, 211/938 [Sadowne]; RG-15.019M [ASG], reel 14, vol. 45 [Warsaw woj.: Warszawa and Węgrów], 932–933 [Budziska], 936 [Jasiorówka], 938 [Kamionna], 939–941 [Łojki], 942 [Łopianka], 954 [Sadowne gmina, forest in Sadowne]); and VHF (e.g., # 04663, 14739).

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NOTES

1. Sęczyk, "Dzieje Łochowa," pp. 44–84, 87–91.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–34, 44–82.
3. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 81, 115–116, 275; and occupational statistics from a 1939 Łochów kehillah survey cited in USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 33, 211/660, p. 21 (report for the period from September 1, 1939, to July 1, 1941).

4. Sęczyk, "Dzieje Łochowa," p. 80; and VHF, # 04663, testimony of Genofewa Minor.

5. AŻIH, 301/4390, testimony of Abram Flug, p. 1; Tomasz Szczechura, "Terror okupanta w powiecie węgrowskim w latach 1939–1944," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* 27 (1977): 60; Tomasz Szczechura, "Życie i zagłada społeczności żydowskiej w powiecie węgrowskim w latach 1939–1944," *BŻIH* no. 1 (105) (January–March 1978): 39–44; and Sęczyk, "Dzieje Łochowa," p. 33.

6. AŻIH, 301/4238, testimony of Helena Brzostek, pp. 1, 3–4; and Sęczyk, "Dzieje Łochowa," p. 63.

7. AŻIH, 301/4390, pp. 1–3; and Szczechura, "Życie i zagłada," p. 44.

8. VHF, # 14739, testimony of Natan Najman; AŻIH, 301/4238, pp. 2–3; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHwP, 1985), p. 146; and Szczechura, "Życie i zagłada," p. 60.

9. AŻIH, 301/4238, p. 2.

10. August 1940 German census figures cited in Szczechura, "Życie i zagłada," p. 41.

11. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 33, 211/660, p. 15; 211/661, p. 6; and AŻIH, 301/4238, p. 2.

12. On the creation of six regional concentration points for the Jews in Kreis Sokolow, see document # 45, under the heading "Początek marca 1941. Ze sprawozdania starosty powiatu sokołowsko-węgrowskiego, Gramsa, za luty 1941," in T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, and A. Rutkowski, eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), p. 108.

13. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, pp. 81, 275; VHF, # 14739; and USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 33, 211/661, pp. 1, 9, and reel 45, 211/938, pp. 49–50, 52.

14. AŻIH, 301/4238, p. 3; and VHF, # 14739.

15. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 33, 211/661, p. 30.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–52.

17. AŻIH, 301/4238, p. 2; and VHF, # 14739.

18. Eyewitness accounts include AŻIH, 301/4238, pp. 4–5; and VHF, # 14739. The train schedule for the Łochów and Stoczek deportations appears as document # 46, under the heading "Rozkład jazdy z dnia 21.9.1942 r. pociągów transportowych do Treblinki," in "Zagłada Żydów w obozach na ziemiach polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* 13 (1960): 105–106 (Polish translation); on p. 65 F there, see photograph of original German document.

19. AŻIH, 301/4238, pp. 5–6.

20. VHF, # 14739; Sęczyk, "Dzieje Łochowa," p. 63; and USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 14, vol. 45 (Warsaw woj.: Warszawa and Węgrów), 944, pp. 1–2.

21. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 14, vol. 45, 932–933 (Budziska village, Łochów gmina), and 936 (Jasiorówka), and 938 (Kamionna), pp. 1–2; and see as well 940–941 (Łojki).

22. *Ibid.*, reel 14, vol. 45, 955 (Sadowne civil parish, forest in Sadowne), pp. 1–2.

23. Wacław Zajęczkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), p. 217; and Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 2, *Poland*, 2 pts. (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pt. 1, p. 467.

24. Waclaw Piekarski, *Obwód Armii Krajowej Sokółów Podlaski 'Sep' 'Proso,' 1930–1944* (Warsaw, 1991), pp. 25–27; Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust. Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918–1947* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1997), p. 121; Zajaczkowski, *Martyrs*, vol. 1, pp. 279–280; and *Głos Pracy*, May 13, 1943 (no. 20), reprinted in Paweł Szapiro, ed., *Wojna żydowsko-niemiecka. Polska prasa konspiracyjna 1943–1944 o powstaniu getcie Warszawy* (London: Aneks, 1992), p. 163. On these events, see also Dariusz Libionka, “Polska konspiracja wobec eksterminacji Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim,” in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc. Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 498–502.

25. Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 259, 451, and pt. 2, pp. 933, 672; AŻIH, 301/4238, pp. 7–19; VHF, # 04663; # 14739.

26. AŻIH, 301/4238, pp. 6, 14.

ŁOMIANKI

Pre-1939: Łomianki (Yiddish: Lomianki), village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Lomianki, Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łomianki, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Łomianki is located about 15 kilometers (9 miles) north-northwest of the center of Warsaw. In 1921, the Jewish population of Łomianki was 89, with another 130 Jews residing in Łomianki Górne nearby.

German forces occupied Łomianki in September 1939. In October 1939, Łomianki became part of Kreis Warschau-Land; the Kreishauptmann was Regierungsrat Dr. Hermann Rupprecht.

Information about the Jewish community of Łomianki under German occupation is very sparse. The existence of a ghetto in the village is documented in an anonymous account preserved in the Ringelblum Archive, dated February 12, 1941, titled “Expulsion from Łomianki near Warsaw.” An annotated translation of this account is included below, as it contains most of what is known about the ghetto:

In September 1940, it became known to the Jewish community in Łomianki from a secret source that the Jewish population faced the dangers of an expulsion. We immediately contacted the “Ortsleiter” Sturmführer “K” about obtaining an easement [of this order]. He received 1,200 złoty for this task. After great efforts, he succeeded in transforming the expulsion order into the establishment of a ghetto [in Łomianki]. When the ghetto began to be implemented, the number of houses assigned to the Jews was so small that there was no way they could accommodate the entire Jewish population. We were again forced to give to the same Ortsleiter an additional

1,000 złoty to give us another few houses. The final date for the transfer into the ghetto was September 15, 1940. Into this very small ghetto were also driven the Jews from the surrounding communities.

This situation only lasted until November [1940]. Then an order was issued that all the Jews had until November 10, to leave Łomianki and to depart for [Fort] Solipse and to settle into military quarters [an old fortress]. Between November 3 and November 10, we again contacted the Ortsleiter about intervening, to allow us to remain in our location. He demanded 3,000 guilders, and even if his efforts were to fail, he would still get 500 złoty. We agreed. His efforts did not succeed and we were obliged to pay the 500 złoty. In the last days, several “Volksdeutsche” [ethnic Germans] secretly informed us not to go to [Fort] Solipse, but to leave immediately for Warsaw. The ghetto in Warsaw was at that time functioning, and so some 300 people sold the possessions and provisions they had accumulated for winter, with [the expectation] that in Łomianki there would be an enclosed ghetto.

They sold [everything] at the cheapest prices and paid from 500 to 2,000 złoty to be able to get transportation to Warsaw. Some 60 people departed for [Fort] Solipse and 25 to [the ghetto] in Legionowo [also established on November 15, 1940], where they remain till today. In January, the Jews who lived in [Fort] Solipse were within a half hour, put in cars and brought to Warsaw, not permitted to take along anything other than a few bedding items. The entire Łomianki population—those who were in Warsaw, as well as those who were shipped from [Fort] Solipse to Warsaw and left everything behind—lives now in terrible need and poverty.¹

Confirmation of the arrival in the Włochy ghetto, also known as Fort Solipse, of a group of Jews from Łomianki can be found in an official Polish postwar questionnaire, signed by the deputy mayor of Włochy. According to this report, the Włochy ghetto was established on November 15, 1940. Among its roughly 300 Jewish inhabitants were many brought in from the surrounding area, including 67 from Łomianki (gmina Młociny).² Personal details of 296 Jews registered in the Włochy ghetto, including the town from which they came, were recorded by the town administration of Włochy and added to the postwar report on the ghetto as an appendix.³

The committee of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) for Kreis Warschau-Land, headed by Dr. Ignaz Schiper, reported on February 25, 1941, that among the Jews recently resettled to Warsaw were also Jews from Łomianki and Włochy.⁴ Another report dated March 25, 1941, recorded 317 Jews from Łomianki among more than 40,000 Jews recently resettled in groups into the Warsaw ghetto.⁵

SOURCES The existence of a ghetto in Łomianki is mentioned in Robert Moses Shapiro and Tadeusz Epsztein, eds., *The Warsaw Ghetto Oyneg Shabes-Ringelblum Archive: Catalog and Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), p. 189. The transfer of Jews from Łomianki to Fort Solipse is mentioned in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 208, but dated, probably erroneously, in December 1940.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Ring I/847; 211/1075, 1080 [JSS]); IPN (ASG); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079M [Ring]).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, Ring I/847 [874.], "Geyrush Łomianki bay Varshe," February 12, 1941.
2. USHMM, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 19, sygn. 62, pp. 299–312.
3. The list includes the name and surname, names of parents, profession, date of birth, and place from which each person arrived; see *ibid.*, pp. 301–312.
4. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/1080, p. 38, Protocol of meeting of JSS committee for Kreis Warschau-Land, February 25, 1941.
5. *Ibid.*, 211/1075, pp. 28–29.

ŁOSICE

Pre-1939: Łosice (Yiddish: Losbits), town, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Łosice, Kreis Siedlce, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łosice, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Łosice is located 30 kilometers (19 miles) east-northeast of Siedlce. Approximately 2,900 Jews lived in the town on the eve of the German invasion of Poland.

The Germans occupied Łosice on September 12, 1939. On September 29, control of Łosice was transferred from the Germans to the Soviets, who, however, only stayed briefly. As the Soviets subsequently pulled out in accord with the provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, many Jews left town with them. In early October, the Germans returned and reoccupied Łosice, this time permanently. The initial period of occupation was marked by general abuse of the Jews, not only by German forces but also by local Poles. The high point of early persecution came on November 29, 1939, when seven Jews were taken to the outskirts of town and executed on the pretext that they were Communists.¹

A 10-member Judenrat (Jewish Council) was created in Łosice in March 1940. The Judenrat was headed by Gershon Lewin as chairman and also included Yehoszua (Szyja) Rozen-cwajg as his deputy,² as well as Elihau Rewiczter. A unit of Jewish Police, "outfitted with ridiculous blue hats and truncheons,"³ was established under the authority of the Judenrat, as was a post office. One of the most significant functions of the

Judenrat was providing the Germans with workers to perform forced labor in and around Łosice. Some of the projects on which Jews worked included the construction of barracks outside of town and various jobs in Siedlce, the largest railway hub in the area, in anticipation of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.⁴ The provision of social services was another central area of activity for the Judenrat, which included the distribution of clothing and medicine and the operation of a soup kitchen. Starting in January 1940, adult Jews received 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds) of bread and children 0.5 kilogram (1.1 pounds) per day. The quality of meals provided by the soup kitchen varied, sometimes consisting of soup made from only water and mashed potatoes.

The demands on the Judenrat continually grew as the number of Jewish refugees in Łosice from other areas steadily increased. In March 1940, more than 200 Jewish families (numbering some 900 individuals, 70 percent of whom were children) arrived from Łódź and Poznań and the small towns of Błaszki, Kalisz, Aleksandrów Łódzki, and Ciechocinek. The result of the influx was that by December 1940 Łosice counted around 4,000 Jewish residents and, by September 1941, around 4,600.⁵ In March 1940, a letter of protest signed by both local Jews and newly arrived refugees was sent to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw to complain that the Judenrat was only acting in its own narrow interests. The letter-writers reported that Jews were dying of hunger and cold and lacked basic medical care.⁶ The memoirs of one former resident of Łosice portray the members of the Judenrat in a similarly negative light, though not without acknowledgment of the complex circumstances, which shaped their situation: "In our town those on the Judenrat were considered mere stooges, incurring less hatred than contempt and ridicule. . . . In time they acquired blank faces and false smiles, became isolated and dehumanized, and it was a measure of their fitness for the job that they could endure the ostracism of a closely knit small town. We sneered at them openly."⁷

In April 1940, the refugees from Kalisz appealed to the AJDC in Warsaw for a new supply of underwear and clothing. In the same month, the Judenrat received approximately 2,200 kilograms (4,850 pounds) of matzot from the AJDC for distribution to refugees and others in need. In June 1940, the number of those receiving assistance from the Judenrat rose to approximately 1,300 persons, including 900 refugees. On July 20, 1940, an aid committee was constituted under the authority of the Judenrat. The chairman of the committee was Abram Wajman, a refugee from Pułtusk, and the deputy chairman was Aron Szejnkloper, a member of the Judenrat.⁸ In September 1940, the committee provided meals, warm clothing, and medicine to nearly 1,600 individuals, including approximately 1,100 refugees. On September 21, 1940, Dr. D. Seid, who had been in Łosice for two months, wrote a petition to the AJDC in Warsaw calling for immediate assistance for Łosice's Jews. In response to his letter, more than 1,500 people in the town's infirmary and in private homes received medical treatment, sometimes for a small fee but often for

free. The Judenrat continued to receive monetary and material aid on a fairly regular basis from the AJDC in Warsaw, as in April 1941 when the sum of 500 złoty was provided.⁹

A ghetto was created in Łosice in late 1941.¹⁰ One native of Łosice, who dates the creation of a ghetto on December 1, 1941, describes Jews' initial reactions as "curious": "There was a deceptive feeling of strength, an illusion of safety, in living in a purely Jewish community."¹¹ At its peak (in the spring of 1942), the ghetto held upwards of 5,500 Jews, including both locals and refugees and deportees from other areas. Jews in the ghetto were compelled to perform various types of forced labor, including road repair and construction, snow removal, and agricultural work. There was no well located within the boundaries of the ghetto, and special passes were required to exit to fetch water. One Holocaust survivor from Łosice relates that Jews sometimes left the ghetto without passes (to collect water or for other reasons, such as obtaining provisions) and, if caught, were shot by the Germans on the spot,¹² as on November 16, 1941, when 7 Jews were caught outside the ghetto and executed.¹³ With people clothed in filthy rags and living in cramped accommodations in old wooden homes that stank of putrefaction and were overrun by insects, typhus and tuberculosis were rampant. To alleviate the situation, Seid, one of the ghetto's doctors, planned to create a bathing and disinfection station.¹⁴ People sometimes congregated in a rabbi's house for common prayer. The Germans became aware of this and amused themselves from time to time by abusing those they found there.¹⁵ The relationship between Jews in Łosice and nearby Sarnaki was a peculiar one, as Jews from the latter were occasionally granted permission to visit relatives in the former as well as to buy food and supplies at the market there.¹⁶ In the winter of 1941–1942, German authorities ordered the Jews of Łosice to relinquish their furs; 6 Jews who chose instead to burn theirs were executed. Around 500 Jews from the Sarnaki ghetto were transferred to Łosice in May 1942,¹⁷ exacerbating what was already a very strained situation in respect to provisions and space. The Łosice Judenrat received 1,000 złoty from the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Kraków in July 1942 and in turn requested a greater amount of aid to care for the newly arrived refugees.¹⁸

In the spring of 1942, some Jews who had escaped the deportations from Lublin and other towns arrived in Łosice. The Germans conducted searches throughout the ghetto and executed all the escapees they found. Rumors then began swirling that the Łosice ghetto itself would soon be liquidated and its inhabitants deported. At approximately the same time, the Judenrat was obliged to collect a "contribution" of 600,000 złoty imposed by the Germans on the town's Jews. The designated amount was paid, which led some to believe that liquidation and deportation might be staved off or even avoided altogether.

This belief was proven tragically wrong on August 22, 1942,¹⁹ when the SS, together with Ukrainian police detachments, sealed the ghetto, marking the start of the liquidation and deportation process. Jews were rounded up in the town

square in preparation for a forced march to the railway station in Siedlce, although some managed to avoid the German drag-net.²⁰ A number of Jews were executed both in and around Łosice and during the march to Siedlce.²¹ The Jews from the Łosice ghetto who reached Siedlce (likely around 5,000 in total) were subsequently deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Following the August deportation, the ghetto was reconstituted as a "small ghetto" or remnant ghetto, which housed between 200 and 300 Jews who had avoided deportation. The reconstituted ghetto was also intended to lure any remaining Jews in hiding out into the open, as the German authorities announced that anyone returning to the ghetto would not be punished. Gathering and sorting the possessions of those who had already been deported represented the primary occupation of Jews in the remnant ghetto. On November 27, 1942, the small ghetto was liquidated, and its inhabitants were deported to Siedlce and on to Treblinka.

Despite the Nazis' efforts, some Jews from Łosice were able to avoid deportation and the near-certain death it entailed. The family of one Renée G., who was 10 years old at the time, escaped the small ghetto with the help of a family friend and was hidden by a Polish farmer in a small pit under a pile of manure for 18 months before being liberated by the Red Army.²² Chaya Gitla Zylbersztajn and her daughter Stella escaped during the liquidation of the ghetto in August 1942, and although Chaya was killed, Stella was given shelter by a number of different Polish families and ultimately survived.²³ Sara Riwner (née Weiman), who was 9 years old in 1942, likewise survived, thanks to the refuge provided for 2 years by Roman and Maria Perycz.²⁴

SOURCES Extensive information on Łosice and its inhabitants before and during World War II can be found in the personal testimonies of Łosice natives in the yizkor book *Łosbits: Le-zeykber an umgebrakhter kebile* (Tel Aviv: Farband fun Łoshtser landsleyt in Yishroel un in di tfutes, 1963). Personal accounts of life in Łosice during World War II can also be found in Oscar Pinkus, *The House of Ashes* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, 1964); Abrachah, *Je n'oublie pas, Natantchik* (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1979); Eddi Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka: Daring to Resist, and Refusing to Die* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008); and Joshua M. Greene and Shiva Kumar, eds., *Witness: Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 2000), pp. 46, 57–65.

Secondary sources containing information on the ghetto in Łosice include Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ba-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 280–284; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 748–749; Tatiana Berenstein, "Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystryktie warszawskim," *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 122–123; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 291; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*

during the Holocaust, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), pp. 415–416; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo białskopodlaskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1984), pp. 108–113; Fred Skolnik, ed., *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 13 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA in association with Keter Publishing House Ltd., 2007), p. 211; and Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiŚ PAN, 2007), pp. 21, 52, 56–59, 67, 69, 124–125, 128, 139, 169, 217, 297, 302, 528, 533, 546, 566, 587, 591, 598.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archival collections: AŻIH (210/472 [AJDC]; 211/673 [JSS]; Ring II/304); BA-L (B 162/6876); IPN (163/6 sygn. 17 and 163/15 sygn. 49 [ASG]); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.019M [Court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos]); and VHF (e.g., # 2417, 11582).

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NOTES

1. The incident may have occurred in December 1939 and may have involved six Jews and one Pole.

2. Some sources identify Rozencwajg as head of the Judenrat and Lewin as his deputy. In one such source, Oskar Pinkus, a native of Łosice, describes Rozencwajg as “a rosy-cheeked, tiny, and clever Jew.” Pinkus, *The House of Ashes*, p. 31.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

4. For a firsthand account of forced labor in and around Łosice, see *ibid.*, pp. 37–42.

5. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada,” pp. 122–123.

6. AŻIH, 210/472 (AJDC).

7. Pinkus, *The House of Ashes*, p. 32.

8. AŻIH, 210/472.

9. *Ibid.*, 211/673 (JSS).

10. Extant sources provide conflicting data on exactly when the ghetto was established. Several claim that a ghetto was established as early as 1940, but, if correct, this was likely an open ghetto, which may have preceded the closed ghetto created towards the end of 1941.

11. Pinkus, *The House of Ashes*, p. 52.

12. Greene and Kumar, *Witness: Voices from the Holocaust*, p. 46.

13. IPN, 163/6 sygn. 17, Kwestionariusz o egzekucjach masowych i grobach masowych.

14. AŻIH, 210/472.

15. Moyshe Smolazh, “Peynen in geto,” in *Losbits: Lezeykher an umgebrakhter kebile*, pp. 249–255.

16. Pesah Perlman, “Elef yamim bageto ube-mahteret,” in Dov Shuval, ed., *Sefer yizkor li-kebilat Sarnaki* (Haifa: Irgun yots’e Sarnaki be-Yisrael, 1968), pp. 147–194.

17. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada.”

18. AŻIH, 211/673.

19. The liquidation process may have begun as early as August 19.

20. Pinkus hid with a number of other Jews in an attic and subsequently fled Łosice with the help of a Polish policeman. Pinkus, *The House of Ashes*, pp. 75–88.

21. One roughly contemporaneous source speaks of more than 50 dead (IPN, 163/6 sygn. 17, Kwestionariusz o egzekucjach masowych i grobach masowych), but the total number killed during deportation was likely larger by several degrees of magnitude. VHF, # 2417, testimony of Dave Gewitzman, reports seeing several people shot in the town at the start of the roundup.

22. Greene and Kumar, *Witness: Voices from the Holocaust*, pp. 57–65.

23. Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 2, *Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pt. 1, p. 326.

24. *Ibid.*, pt. 2, pp. 598–599.

ŁOWICZ

Pre-1939: Łowicz (Yiddish: Lovitsb), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Łowicz, Kreis center, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łowicz, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Łowicz is located 50 kilometers (31 miles) north-northeast of Łódź on the Bzura River, a tributary of the Vistula. In 1931, the Jewish population of Łowicz numbered 4,339—25 percent of the total. At the start of World War II, 1,300 Jewish families were living in Łowicz (about 5,000 people).¹

Łowicz was bombarded by the Germans on September 3, 5, and 6, 1939. A large part of the population, mostly its younger members, fled towards Warsaw. When the German forces first entered the town on September 9, 1939, the remaining male Jews were gathered in the synagogue and held there for three days without food. There were beatings and shootings. The Germans then retreated, and the Jews joyfully received the Polish forces that reentered the town. The battle for Łowicz lasted for eight days in total. More than half of the city was destroyed. When the Germans reoccupied Łowicz after September 13, their torture and humiliation of the Jews soon started again.²

On November 11, 1939, the synagogue was destroyed by fire (the Torahs were hidden previously in private homes). In December 1939, hundreds of Jewish refugees arrived from Łódź and its surroundings. The Jewish community tried to find accommodation for them, placing some in the homes of wealthier Jewish families, and it organized a soup kitchen to aid the needy. By 1940, the Jewish population in Łowicz exceeded 8,000 people, including some 3,500 refugees.

The Łowicz ghetto was created in May 1940. According to the personal report of the Kreishauptmann, Regierungsrat Dr. Schwender, to the Generalgouverneur, Hans Frank, he initiated this first ghetto in Distrikt Warschau because of the large influx of Jews from the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich and the resulting high incidence of typhus—some 200 cases having been registered in Łowicz—as well as the accompanying threat to security.³ Around this time, a total of five ghettos were established in Kreis Łowicz, the other four being in Łyszkowice, Kiernożia, Bolimów, and Głowno.⁴

Some secondary sources also report a ghetto existing in Sobota, which had a Jewish population of 356 in 1921. However, no primary sources could be found to confirm this. The absence of Sobota from the list of ghettos reported by the Kreis-hauptmann in July 1940, as well as its absence from a similar list of Jewish communities recommended for the establishment of Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) branches in December 1940, appears to indicate that no ghetto existed there.⁵

In the Łowicz ghetto there was a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which controlled a sanitary commission, a housing committee, a Jewish hospital, a Jewish artisans' house, and a bathhouse intended to serve as a delousing facility.⁶ Baruch Shapiro (Szapiro) was chairman of the Judenrat. The ghetto was located in the center of town and initially was composed of four sections. At certain times of the day the Jews were allowed to cross from one part of the ghetto to the others. The ghetto gates were guarded externally by the Polish (Blue) Police. The Polish population demanded that the ghetto be moved outside the city. The ghetto was successively reduced in size until it only occupied one and a half streets, including Zduńska Street. A high fence enclosed the reduced ghetto. Jews managed to leave the ghetto and smuggle in some food. After two months, Jews were able to purchase permits to go outside the ghetto (in exchange for a large bribe to the German authorities).⁷

There was also a Jewish police force armed with whips, which was commanded by Josef Weinshtok. Members of the police were handpicked, and most reports about the Jewish Police are quite positive, but there was some corruption due to the nature of the times. For example, there is a report that some refugees on arrival in Łowicz were required to pay an entrance fee by the Jewish Police before being allowed through the ghetto gates.⁸ On October 8, 1940, Hans Frank visited the Łowicz ghetto, and the Jewish policemen in the ghetto were provided with police hats for the occasion.

Shortly after the establishment of the ghetto, 300 Jewish workers were sent daily on the four-month project to divert the Bzura River away from town. For their work they received 200 grams (7 ounces) of bread and a thin soup. Many died, weakened and exhausted from this hard physical work. However, the Jewish Police had to ensure that the quota was filled every day. Other forced labor tasks for Jews included road construction work and cleaning sewers.⁹

There were also Jewish workshops and shops within the ghetto. The Germans supplied the ghetto with a certain amount of flour, and the Jewish Council was able to smuggle in more illegally with the aid of the Jewish Police. This was used to bake bread, which was distributed generously to aid the poor. Nevertheless, the extreme overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions led to the spread of disease. According to witness accounts, Baruch Shapiro, chairman of the Judenrat, carried out the Germans' orders but personally tried with all his might to ameliorate suffering and related to everyone with friendliness and understanding. He did all he could to accommodate the many refugees and to provide them with minimal

living conditions, given the very small budget of only some 3,000 zloty per month available to the Jewish Council.¹⁰

At the end of 1940, efforts were made to establish a branch of the JSS for Kreis Łowicz to obtain extra resources to assist with welfare efforts. Under the chairmanship of Ignacy Dąb, the JSS Kreis committee held a meeting on February 17, 1941. However, the committee was soon disbanded in March due to the resettlement of the Jews to Warsaw.¹¹

On January 22, 1941, the Jews of the Łowicz ghetto were ordered to transfer 300 Jews per day from Łowicz to the Warsaw ghetto. They were to travel on their own, but only from Łowicz to Warsaw. Some were attacked and robbed on the way, but there were few restrictions on what property they could take with them. Indeed, according to some reports, the elderly German official in charge, Meister Shans, advised them to take as much as they could.¹² Subsequently transportation and even blankets were provided for the deportations, which proceeded without the brutality usually associated with such events. Some Jews were even permitted to return on special passes to collect possessions they had left behind. By March 15, very few Jews remained in Łowicz.¹³ About 7,000 Jews had been transferred to Warsaw.¹⁴ The JSS committee in Warsaw reported in April that it was holding funds in reserve for the last remaining 3,000 Jews expected from Kreis Łowicz, but probably most of these people had managed to flee to other places within the Generalgouvernement.¹⁵

A "remnant ghetto" of 150 craftsmen who worked for the Germans and their families remained in Łowicz for another year, located in the former primary school building on Bet Midrash Street. Among their tasks was clearing up the area of the ghetto. A Jew who sneaked back to Łowicz from Warsaw at the end of 1941 noted that "the walls of the former Łowicz ghetto had been pulled down and the old Jewish stores were filled with strange non-Jewish faces." Nevertheless, he received assistance from non-Jewish former acquaintances who mailed food packages to his family in Warsaw, and he was even aided rather than betrayed by two Polish policemen he had known from before the war.¹⁶

In the Warsaw ghetto the Jews of Łowicz occupied places designated for refugees. The largest percentage of these refugees died of starvation and contagious diseases in the course of their one-and-a-half-year stay in the Warsaw ghetto. Some were recruited as laborers for various work camps. In the summer of 1942, the first transports of Jews to the Treblinka extermination camp included many of these refugees.

SOURCES Much of this entry is based on the yizkor book, Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Lovitsh—a shtet in Mazovye un umgegent, seyfer zikorn* (Melbourne and Sydney, Australia: Łowicz Landsmanshaften, 1966), which contains a number of articles related to the fate of the Jews in Łowicz under the Nazi occupation.

Additional Jewish testimonies and documentation concerning the Łowicz ghetto can be found, for example, in the

following archives: AŻIH (210/473-475; 211/674; Ring I/789); BA-BL (R 52III/29); USHMM (Acc. 1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-02.178; RG-14.052 [BA-BL R 52]; RG-15.079 [Ring]); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, pp. 65–87.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 223–225.
3. Werner Präg and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, eds., *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975), pp. 286–287, entry for October 10, 1940; see also the report of Schön, the head of the resettlement section of the Governor of the Warsaw Distrikt, January 20, 1941, published in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg, 1960), pp. 108–109.
4. See Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 109, citing the report of Kreishauptmann Lowicz, dated July 20, 1940. Some sources, however, date the establishment of the Kiernozia ghetto in March 1940; see Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, p. 364.
5. Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 109. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 462, indicate a ghetto existed in Sobota from 1940 to 1942, which is unlikely given the clearance of the Kreis by March 1941, and cite only unspecified documentation in ITS Arolsen as the source. See also USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124, 211/674, pp. 37–38, JSS Łowicz to JSS Kraków, December 27, 1940.
6. Präg and Jacobmeyer, *Das Diensttagebuch*, p. 287.
7. Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, pp. 220–233; USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/475, pp. 33–37.
8. AŻIH, Ring I/789, Report by Daniel Fligelman; USHMM, RG-02.178; Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, p. xv, “Saved from the Gas Chamber,” as told by Joseph Szemkura to G. Shaiak.
9. Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, pp. xiv–xv, G. Tcharneson-Shaiak, “A River Disappeared and with It—A Jewish Community”; USHMM, RG-02.178.
10. Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, p. xv, “Saved from the Gas Chamber,” as told by Joseph Szemkura to G. Shaiak; *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 12, August 1, 1940.
11. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/475, p. 46; Acc. 1997.A.0124, 211/674, pp. 37–38, 75.
12. Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, pp. xv–xvi.
13. Report of the Lowicz Kreishauptmann for February 1941, dated March 15, 1941, published in Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 63.
14. Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, p. 229.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 230. The yizkor book contains a facsimile of the document, which presumably comes from the archives of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in AŻIH; see also USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124.
16. Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, p. xvi, “Saved from the Gas Chamber,” as told by Joseph Szemkura to G. Shaiak.

ŁYSZKOWICE

Pre-1939: Łyszkowice (Yiddish: Lishkovits), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Łyszkowice, Kreis Lowicz, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łyszkowice, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Łyszkowice is located about 80 kilometers (50 miles) west-southwest of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 545 Jews living in the town. According to the Łowicz yizkor book, there were more than 1,000 Jews living in the town on the eve of World War II, but this number may be too high.¹

German forces occupied the town in mid-September 1939. In the first months of the occupation, the German authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures: the Jews of the town were subjected to forced labor; they were required to wear armbands bearing the Star of David; and a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established.

A number of Jews from Łyszkowice fled to the east, probably towards Warsaw, during the first days of the war. In their place, up to 300 Jewish refugees from Aleksandrów Łódzki, Brzeziny, Łódź, Zgierz, and other places arrived in the fall and the winter of 1939–1940.²

The Łyszkowice ghetto was established in May 1940 on the orders of Kreishauptmann Lowicz, Regierungsrat Dr. Schwender.³ A report on the situation of the Jews in Łyszkowice was published in the official Polish-language newspaper for Jews, the *Gazeta Żydowska*, in September 1940: “From the moment a special Jewish quarter [*dzielnica żydowska*] was established, our work was adjusted to reflect the new situation.” A labor section (Arbeitsabteilung) was created within the Judenrat, which managed to employ about 60 percent of the men. They worked on bridge construction, in agriculture and forestry, and at the local sugar factory, “Irena.” In the late summer of 1940, a group of workers was sent to Distrikt Lublin to participate in drainage work. The Judenrat also directed its attention towards sanitation in the ghetto: it appointed a sanitation committee composed of 10 men and a nurse. There was also a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) formed in the ghetto.⁴

In late December 1940, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Łowicz reported that there were around 500 Jews then living in Łyszkowice, of which some 40 percent were receiving welfare support. At this time 3 people were proposed to form a local committee of the JSS in Łyszkowice: Jakub-Dawid Kacnelbogen (a member of the Judenrat); Mojsze Nasielski (a former member of the Judenrat); and Chil-Majer Grosman (a former member of the Judenrat).⁵

However, plans for the establishment of JSS branches in Kreis Lowicz, including in Łyszkowice, were soon cut short. The Generalgouverneur’s Office for Internal Administration, Section for Population and Welfare, instructed the JSS headquarters in Kraków on March 15, 1941: “Since the resettlement of the Jews from Kreis Lowicz to Warsaw has been ordered, the establishment of a Jewish aid committee in Łowicz is no longer necessary.”⁶

In March 1941, the Jews in the Łyszkowice ghetto were transferred to the Warsaw ghetto as part of a large-scale plan to clear all the Jews from the Kreise of Distrikt Warschau to the west of the city. According to the Łowicz yizkor book, only about 300 Jews remained at this time to be resettled.⁷ On March 13, the Łowicz Kreishauptmann reported that most of the Jews had now left the Kreis, with only small groups of Jews retained in the empty ghettos for a short period after the transfer to Warsaw, to sort out Jewish property. After being cleaned and disinfected, the remaining houses in the ghetto areas were to be used to alleviate the housing shortage among the rest of the population.⁸

On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, most of the Jews from Łyszkowice were put into improvised hostels designated for refugees. Many of the refugees from Łyszkowice died of starvation and disease in the Warsaw ghetto. Most of the others were among those deported to the Treblinka extermination camp during the large-scale Aktion in the summer of 1942.

SOURCES The ghetto in Łyszkowice is mentioned in Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 445; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 302; and Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 212.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AZIH (211/674); BA-BL (R 52III/29); USHMM (Acc. 1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-14.052 [BA-BL R 52]); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Lovitsb—a shtet in Mazovye un umgegent, seyfer zikorn* (Melbourne and Sydney, Australia: Łowicz Landsmanschaften, 1966), p. 366.
2. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 212.
3. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 231, date it in May 1940; Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 212, state March 1940. See also Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 109, which cites the report of Kreishauptmann Łowicz, July 20, 1940.
4. *Gazeta Żydowska*, September 20, 1940, p. 4.
5. USHMM, Acc. 1997.A.0124, 211/674, pp. 37–38.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
7. Shaiak, *Lovitsb, seyfer zikorn*, p. 366.
8. See USHMM, RG-14.052 (BA-BL), R 52III/29, p. 57, Kreishauptmann Łowicz, situation report, March 13, 1941.

MIŁOSNA

Pre-1939: Miłosna, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Miłosna, Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Miłosna, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Miłosna is located about 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) to the east of Warsaw. In 1921, the Jewish population was 143 out of a total of 792 inhabitants. By 1939, the number of Jews in Miłosna had declined to around 100.

Miłosna was occupied on September 16, 1939. When German troops entered Miłosna, they dragged Polish and Jewish men from their homes and drove them on foot to the village of Morawiec, about 8 kilometers (5 miles) away. After being held there overnight without food or water, the men were released to go home. The Germans confiscated Jewish merchandise and stole items of value from Jewish homes. At the end of 1939, Jews were compelled to wear white armbands bearing blue Stars of David on their sleeves.

According to Hirsh Noshevski, a survivor from Miłosna, the Okuniew and Miłosna Jews shared a common Jewish Council (Judenrat), which was based in Miłosna. The council was headed initially by two Jews named Fridman and Spekman, appointed on the recommendation to the Germans of the Polish local council (gmina). These men had little aptitude or inclination for the task. Therefore, they sent an offer to a former Polish officer, Kh. Lubliner, then living in Warsaw to return to Miłosna and become head of the Judenrat. In return for a good salary, Lubliner accepted the task and is described in the yizkor book as having been an energetic and upstanding leader, who “did much to benefit the ghetto inhabitants of Miłosna and Okuniew.”¹

Information regarding the establishment of a ghetto in Miłosna is scant and somewhat contradictory. *Pinkas ha-kehillot* dates it in early 1940, but this is most likely too early. The Noshevski account states that in early 1941 the Germans ordered the establishment of a ghetto. The Jews attempted to postpone or cancel this order by appealing to the police or the mayor (wójt). Noshevski then states that as a result “no ghetto was formed,” but the Jews were moved into a separate quarter consisting of a number of houses, from which the Christians had been removed—in effect an open ghetto.² There was considerable overcrowding in the ghetto, with about four families sharing each small dwelling.

According to the yizkor book, the Jewish butchers of Miłosna, Okuniew, and Rembertów were the main source of meat for the Warsaw ghetto, supplying up to 2,000 kilograms (4,410 pounds) per month with the help of Polish smugglers. At great personal risk, they acquired cows and chickens from the local farmers, which they then slaughtered.³ At the beginning of 1942, there were about 500 people in the ghetto, including a number of families of refugees from Łódź, Kalisz, and Pabianice.

A branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) existed in Miłosna, which received small subsidies from the JSS headquarters in Kraków to provide assistance to impoverished members of the community. The correspondence concerning this support came to an end on March 20, 1942.⁴

On March 26, 1942, the Germans liquidated the Miłosna ghetto and deported the inhabitants to the Warsaw ghetto.⁵ To carry out the deportation, an SS officer came to Miłosna. As the Jewish Council received some warning, a number of Jews

fled the ghetto on the eve of the deportation Aktion. The remainder was assembled early in the morning in the courtyard of a lumber company. Here the Germans ordered the Jews to surrender their valuables. One man, who was found to have concealed some money in his pockets, was shot.⁶ Betty Horne also recalls that at least one child was killed while the Jews were assembled in the lumberyard.⁷

Horse-drawn wagons from surrounding villages arrived to transport children, the elderly, and the infirm. The other Jews were made to march behind the wagons, sometimes being urged to hurry up; those people who fell behind or collapsed were shot by the guards. On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, the Jews of Miłosna were put in a quarantine building for three days, where they also received some food.⁸

The deportees shared the fate of the Jews of Warsaw and perished at the Treblinka extermination camp. A small number were saved by Poles who provided them with hiding places.

SOURCES Relevant publications include the following: Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kebilat Rembertow, Okuniew, Milosna* (Tel Aviv: Rembertow, Okuniew and Milosna Societies in Israel, the USA, France, Mexico City, Canada, Chile, and Brazil, 1974); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4., *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 273–274. The ghetto is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 480.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/701 [JSS]; Ring I/501 and 875); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079M [Ring I/501 and 875]); VHF (# 10879); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Shimon Ahronson, “Der ayfkum un umkum fun yidishn yishuv,” pp. 411–412; and Hirsh Noshevski, “Der veg fun peyn un greyl,” p. 435—both in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilat . . . Milosna*.
2. Noshevski, “Der veg,” p. 435.
3. Zvi Noshevski, “Der shmugl in geto,” in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron le-kebilat . . . Milosna*, pp. 431–432.
4. AŻIH, 211/701.
5. Ibid., Ring I/875; Ring I/501.
6. Noshevski, “Der veg,” p. 436.
7. VHF, # 10879, testimony of Betty Horne.
8. Ibid.

MIŃSK MAZOWIECKI

Pre-1939: Mińsk Mazowiecki, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Minsk Mazowiecki, Kreis center, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Mińsk Mazowiecki, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Mińsk Mazowiecki is located about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 4,130 Jews living there out



A Jewish policeman poses with his young cousin, Guta (now Genevieve) Tyrangiel, in the Mińsk Mazowiecki ghetto, 1942.
USHMM WS #09373, COURTESY OF GENEVIEVE TYRANGIEL-BENEZRA

of a total population of 10,518. On the eve of World War II, almost 5,000 Jews lived there.

During the first days of the war, thousands of refugees from Warsaw arrived in Mińsk Mazowiecki. The Germans captured the town on September 13, 1939. On the pretext of searching for Polish soldiers in hiding, German troops broke into Jewish apartments to steal money and valuables. A few days later they began to confiscate Jewish property and kidnap Jews for forced labor. Under these circumstances, about 200 Jews fled eastward into the area occupied by the Soviet Union after September 17.¹ At the same time, refugees from other towns in western Poland that had been incorporated into the Reich arrived in Mińsk Mazowiecki, including from Łódź, Pabianice, Lipno, Kalisz, Kutno, Włocławek, and elsewhere. These movements of people continued for an entire year.

The Germans appointed a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which consisted of men from differing political backgrounds. The head of the Judenrat was Moshe Kramarz, and his deputy was Leon Wajnberg. The Judenrat had to meet German demands for various items to be delivered within a certain time. A 15-man Jewish police force was also established to assist the Judenrat, headed by Izydor (Icek) Lipczinsky, who subsequently cooperated with the underground.

In the summer of 1940, several dozen young men were sent to various labor camps in Distrikt Lublin, including those at Tomaszów Lubelski and Bełżec. When word of the horrendous conditions in the camps reached Mińsk Mazowiecki, Judenrat chair Kramarz and his deputy undertook efforts to rescue them. They succeeded in having the men released in the winter of 1940–1941.²

On July 1, 1940, in response to orders from the SS that the Jews of Mińsk Mazowiecki create a ghetto within 14 days, the Jewish community wrote a petition, with the aim of reversing or at least deferring the order. The petition stressed the order's ruinous economic effects and especially the danger to hygiene of squeezing some 6,000 Jews into the poorest section of the whole town, without an adequate water supply. The letter stressed that so far not a single case of typhus had emerged among the Jewish population and had appended to it letters

from the senior medical officials in the town and also other Polish citizens, which stressed the dangers of spreading disease if such a ghetto were to be set up. The letters requested at least a deferral of several months, to give the Jews time to establish the necessary sanitary infrastructure, such as an isolation hospital, within the designated ghetto area.³

On July 5, Adam Czerniaków, the head of the Jewish Council in the Warsaw ghetto, noted in his diary: "In Mińsk Mazowiecki, the ghetto is at hand." A few days later, however, on July 15, Czerniaków wrote: "It is rumored that there will be no ghetto in Mińsk Mazowiecki. It seems that a meeting was held yesterday in Warsaw to reach a decision on the subject of the ghetto. The verdict—no ghetto."⁴

On October 11, 1940, Kreishauptmann Dr. Bittrich confirmed that in July 1940 initial efforts to establish a ghetto had been put on hold, due to instructions from his superiors. However, in the next few days, Reichsamtsleiter Schön, the head of the Resettlement Department, was expected to visit Mińsk Mazowiecki and to make a decision on the projected location of the ghetto on the basis of the prepared plans.⁵

It appears that the Jews of Mińsk Mazowiecki gained only a few months with their protest. According to the ghetto questionnaire submitted to the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) headquarters in Kraków in April 1942, the ghetto was established on November 15, 1940.⁶ The testimony of Mojsze and Brajndla Siekierka also dates the ghetto's formation at the end of 1940. Regarding overcrowding in the ghetto, they reported that 14 people lived in their small two-room flat with a kitchen. They also indicate that a barbed-wire fence surrounded the ghetto.⁷

The area of the ghetto included Siennicka Street, where most of the houses had burned, as well as part of the marketplace (*Rynek*), Mostowa, Nadrzeczna, Błonie, Warszaw, and other streets. A total of more than 5,000 Jews were packed into the ghetto, including local Jews, refugees, and people expelled from other towns. As a result of overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions, a typhus epidemic broke out in the winter of 1940–1941. To relieve hunger, Jews would sneak out of the ghetto to buy potatoes and bread from Polish farmers.⁸

In addition to its obligation to obey German orders, the Judenrat also had to handle the affairs of the imprisoned Jewish community. Members of the Judenrat sought to protect it to the best of their ability. They provided care for refugees and people expelled from other towns. They established a department of sanitation to maintain cleanliness and to manage the Jewish hospital. The hospital director was Dr. Shimon Grynberg, the only doctor in the ghetto (himself a refugee from Łódź). The Judenrat organized a public kitchen to distribute meals on a daily basis to hundreds of impoverished people. Every day a certain number of Jews had to perform forced labor. People who still had some means were able to pay for a substitute.⁹

Some members of the Judenrat maintained ties and provided assistance to the Jewish underground, which was organized in the ghetto in 1941. Kramarz gave them 10,000 zloty to acquire arms. There were four underground groups, each

with five to six members. Some were from the ranks of Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir or the Communist Party, and others were nonaffiliated, but the groups worked together in cooperation. The overall commander was Asher Grabownik, an activist with the Communist Party in Mińsk Mazowiecki. He had escaped to the Soviet side when war broke out but returned to Mińsk Mazowiecki after the German invasion of the Soviet Union. After some time, a link was established between the Jewish underground in Mińsk Mazowiecki and underground units of the Polish Communists.¹⁰

In November 1941 an order was issued for remaining Jews from the villages to be moved into the Mińsk Mazowiecki ghetto by December 1. Ita Gartenkranz was among the Jews transferred from the village of Stojadła at this time.¹¹ In February 1942, the Kreishauptmann reported another outbreak of typhus in the Mińsk Mazowiecki ghetto. A public bath and a delousing facility were opened inside the ghetto to combat the outbreak.¹²

In the summer of 1942, rumors spread that the ghettos would be liquidated. The Judenrat hoped that they would be able to avert this by bribing German officials, but on August 21, the Germans began the liquidation.¹³ The ghetto was encircled by hundreds of German Gendarmes, Polish (Blue) Police, Sonderdienst, and Lithuanian, Latvian, and Ukrainian (Trawniki-trained) auxiliaries. On that day around 4,000 Jews were rounded up from their homes and assembled in the market square. After the Germans and their helpers had robbed them of their valuables, the Jews were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp. About 1,000 Jews refused to leave their houses and were shot on the spot. By evening, "Mińsk looked like a battlefield. There were dead bodies, puddles of blood."¹⁴

At the time of the roundup, two Gestapo men, Brandt and Handtke, arrived from Warsaw during a brief pause in the deportations from the Warsaw ghetto. In Mińsk Mazowiecki, they presented the chairman of the Judenrat, Moshe Kramarz, with a document stating that the council hereby delivered the Jews of their own free will. Kramarz tore it into small pieces and warned those around him of the real meaning of the impending "resettlement." The Gestapo men beat him and dragged him, with three other Judenrat members—Leon Weinberg, Meir-Sholem Briks, and Jacob Popowski—and several Jewish policemen, first to a camp in town, then to the Gestapo building, where they were shot.¹⁵

Only a small number of Jews were able to break out of the encircled ghetto and escape into the nearby forests. Thirteen organized into a partisan group commanded by former Polish army sergeant Yosef Wiszniewski. They acquired three rifles, two revolvers, and some hand grenades. After several months of bold actions against the Germans and their helpers, they were surrounded in their hiding place in the Łuków Forest. All but one of them was killed. Other escapees from the ghetto joined a partisan unit of the People's Guard (Gwardia Ludowa, GL).¹⁶

After the ghetto's liquidation, about 370 Jews, whose skills the Germans needed, remained in the ghetto. About 150 men

worked in facilities run by the German army at the Rudzki Factory, for the Wolfer und Goebel Company engaged on road construction, or in other places. Another 220 were put into a labor camp housed in the three-story Mikołaj Kopernik School on Siennicka Street. Over time, they were joined by several hundred others, including women and children, who had fled into the forest or other hiding places during the roundup. When the men were taken each morning to forced labor, these “illegals” hid in the camp. There were frequent searches, during which unregistered inhabitants were shot.

In the closing months of 1942, the Germans began a “selection” process at the Kopernik camp. At the end of November, about 100 men were removed to Kałuszyn. They were then deported from there to Treblinka in December. On December 24, another 218 were taken out, brought to the Jewish cemetery, forced to dig a mass grave, and shot. On January 10, 1943, the rest of the Kopernik prisoners, about 300 in all, were marked for liquidation, but they chose to resist. A group of 30 men being taken to the cemetery attacked their German escorts. Almost all were killed, but during the confusion 3 managed to escape. Those still in the school building were also determined to resist. They barricaded themselves in and resisted the attackers with whatever was at hand: stones, scrap iron, and Molotov cocktails.¹⁷

The Germans attacked the building with flamethrowers and met those who jumped out of the burning building with gunfire. Almost all were killed. According to reports, Moshe Goldstein, one of the rebels, died with a Torah scroll in his arms. The only Jews left in Mińsk Mazowiecki were the 104 workers at the Rudzki factory. They were killed on June 5, 1943.¹⁸

According to a document in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, at least 46 Jews from Mińsk Mazowiecki are known to have survived the German occupation.¹⁹ Several Jewish children were hidden in Mińsk Mazowiecki with Polish families. For example, a priest helped to transfer the infant child Guta Tyrangiel to Józef and Bronisława Jaszczuk, who defied blackmailers to preserve the child's life.²⁰

SOURCES Publications discussing the ghetto in Mińsk Mazowiecki include the following: Ephraim Shedletzky, ed., *Sefer Minsk-Mazowiecki* (Jerusalem: Minsk-Mazowiecki Societies in Israel and Abroad, 1977); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 274–279; “Minsk Mazowiecki,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 12 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), pp. 59–60; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 482–484.

Published sources concerning the Holocaust in Mińsk Mazowiecki include the following: Leyb Rokhman, *The Pit and the Trap: A Chronicle of Survival* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1983); Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 96.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/702; 301/1010, 1680, 3335, 4072, 4093, 4098, 4103, 4158, 4324, 4629, 4761, 5088, 5874; 302/101, 123,

297); BA-BL (R 52III/29); IPN (ASG, sygn. 61, p. 1118); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.019M [ASG]); VHF (e.g., # 21519, 38132); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/4098, testimony of Mojsze and Brajndla Siekierka (née Fiszbajn).

2. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 278.

3. AŻIH, 211/702, pp. 1–4, Petition of the Jewish population of Mińsk Mazowiecki, unsigned, July 1, 1940, letters of the Town Doctor and the Kreis Doctor, July 1, 1940, letter from citizens of Polish ethnicity in Mińsk Mazowiecki, July 2, 1940.

4. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kerr, eds., *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), pp. 170, 174.

5. Berenstein et al., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord*, p. 96.

6. AŻIH, 211/702, p. 12, ghetto questionnaire, April 1, 1942.

7. *Ibid.*, 301/4098.

8. VHF, # 995, testimony of Michael Sien.

9. AŻIH, 302/123, testimony of Brandla (Bronka) Siekierka (née Fiszbajn).

10. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 278.

11. AŻIH, 301/4103, testimony of Ita Gartenkranz.

12. BA-BL, R 52III/29, monthly report of the Minsk Mazowiecki Kreishauptmann, March 5, 1942.

13. AŻIH, 301/4229, testimony of Diana Kagan; VHF, # 21519, testimony of Ralph Jorden.

14. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 278; AŻIH, 301/4229.

15. Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 441.

16. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 278.

17. AŻIH, 301/1680, testimony of Efraim Siedlecki; 301/5088, testimony of Boruch Gartenkranc, Aleksander Walewski, Ludwik Michalski, and Icek Lipczyński; Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 278; VHF, # 38132, testimony of Genevieve Benezra (born October 26, 1940); # 995.

18. AŻIH, 301/1680; Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 278.

19. AŻIH, 301/4072, list of 46 Jews from Mińsk Mazowiecki who managed to survive the German occupation.

20. Shmuel Krakowski and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust—Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), p. 308; VHF, # 38132.

MOGIELNICA

Pre-1939: Mogielnica (Yiddish: Mogelnitsa), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Grojec, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Mogielnica is located 68 kilometers (42 miles) southwest of Warsaw. In 1921, 2,722 Jews were living in Mogielnica, comprising 51.1 percent of the town's total population of 5,321 people. On the eve of the German invasion in 1939, there were 3,050 Jewish inhabitants.

German mobile forces occupied Mogielnica on September 8, 1939. The town was not seriously damaged in the fighting, but on the first day, Germans set fire to the old wooden synagogue. The Germans soon began to steal Jewish property and torment Jews they caught on the streets, kidnapping them for forced labor.¹

On September 14, 1939 (Rosh Hashanah), the Germans dragged Hasidim and Orthodox Jews out of the Bet Midrash, including Rabbi Pinchas Osełka (Osalka) and another rabbi. They took them to the market square and pulled out their beards and side locks. They compelled them to sing holiday songs and dance. According to one testimony, a majority of the Poles, who observed this, clapped their hands and laughed. Some Poles even helped the Germans and beat the Jews. In the fall of 1939, the Germans converted the Bet Midrash into a stable for horses. Torah scrolls and other holy books were burned in the market square.²

The German authorities banned Jewish children from attending primary schools and ordered Jews to wear the Star of David.³ In October 1939, the German authorities ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat) and a Jewish police force. Józef Falc was appointed as chairman of the Judenrat. Other Judenrat members included Abraham Milsztajn and Chaim Danner. Majlech Osełka, Rabbi Osełka's son, was head of the Jewish Police, which reportedly had a good reputation.⁴

On the establishment of a German civil administration in October 1939, Mogielnica became part of Kreis Grojec. Initially there was little German presence in Mogielnica. German officials from Grójec visited occasionally to rob the Jews and make demands. To contain the damage, the Judenrat in Mogielnica negotiated with the Kreishauptmann to pay a weekly "contribution" of butter, eggs, and other items. As a result, the Jews in Mogielnica remained largely unmolested for a time.⁵

In December 1939, on the initiative of Sara Skotnicka and Majlech Osełka, the Jews of Mogielnica established an Aid Committee for Refugees and Indigent Jews. Fajwel Rajnbenbach was its chairman. An audit commission oversaw its operations.⁶ In 1940, the aid committee provided assistance to more than 700 people, including 500 refugees and 150 children.⁷

In the first six months of 1940, 23 percent of the aid committee's funds (7,215 złoty) came from private donations. Additional funds came from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), which provided 21,000 złoty (68 percent), and from the Society for the Protection of Health (TOZ). In addition, a small fee was charged for some meals. A public soup kitchen was opened on February 7, 1940, and until June 1940, 73 percent (30,000 złoty) of all aid committee funds went to the soup kitchen. The remainder was used for medical assistance (doctors visits, free baths, vaccines against typhus, and sugar or milk for sick people, children, and pregnant

women), for building repairs, or for buying fuel. The soup kitchen distributed three quarters of a liter of soup (about 3 cups) and 200 grams (7 ounces) of bread on every day except Saturdays to needy Jews.⁸

In April 1940, there were 2,774 Jews residing in Mogielnica. Among them there were 500 refugees, mainly from Łódź and other towns in the Warthegau. Refugees were placed in private houses and in Jewish community buildings, including two small prayer houses. In June 1940, some Jewish businesses were still operating, including four bakeries, five groceries, three ironmongers, two restaurants, and a pharmacy.⁹

Probably in the summer or fall of 1940, a German Gendarmerie post was established in Mogielnica.¹⁰ Then at some time before January 20, 1941, probably in late November 1940 (as was the case in Grójec), the German authorities established an open ghetto in Mogielnica. According to one survivor's recollection, it was at the beginning of 1940, but this appears to be too early.¹¹ The ghetto was not enclosed by a fence, a wall, or any barbed wire. It consisted of two or three streets near the synagogue and the Bet Midrash.¹²

According to Jakov Rotbart, after the creation of the ghetto, life became more difficult for the Jews. Bribery still served to weaken the effects of some German regulations. For example, the full quota of forced laborers for clearing snow was not always sent. However, by this time the Judenrat had imposed a progressive tax on the community, to pay forced laborers recruited from among the unemployed Jews 4 złoty per day and to meet the German "contributions."¹³

On January 21, 1941, the German authorities decreed that in Kreis Grojec the Jews could live only in the following towns designated as ghettos: Błędów, Tarczyn, Mogielnica, Góra Kalwaria, Warka, and Grójec. In addition, all Jewish families from nearby villages and towns had to move into one of these ghettos. Any Jew caught outside the ghettos after January 27, 1941, would face the death penalty.¹⁴ As a result of this decree and the previous influx of Jews from the Warthegau, the Jewish population of Mogielnica had risen to 4,000 people by February 1941.

The ghetto was very densely populated. According to one survivor, her 5-person family had to share cramped quarters with another 10 Jews, and people slept on the floor.¹⁵ Due to the overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, and hunger, many diseases spread within the ghetto, including typhus. Those infected were removed from their homes and placed in the hospital, which had two or three rooms for quarantine purposes.¹⁶

On February 27–28, 1941, about 4,000 Jews from the Mogielnica ghetto were resettled to the Warsaw ghetto. At 4:00 or 5:00 a.m., the Germans arrived with dogs and started to drive people from their houses. Most Jews could take with them only the clothes they hastily put on and some food. They were transported on military trucks to the Mogielnica railway station. From there, the Jews were sent in cattle wagons to the Warsaw ghetto.¹⁷ On February 27, 950 Jews were sent to Warsaw; the rest were transported the next day. Some people of means paid large sums to hire trucks to move some of their remaining belongings. The Judenrat also secured a few trucks,

by bribery, to move food supplies into the Warsaw ghetto. Since the Judenrat did receive some advance warning of the transfer, a number of Jews were able to flee to nearby towns in Distrikt Radom, including Białobrzegi, Opoczno, Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, and Klwów, where ghettos had not yet been formed.¹⁸

In Warsaw, most of the Jews from Mogielnica were accommodated in so-called refugee shelters—that is, they were placed in schools, synagogues, and prayer houses. Hundreds of people lived in each shelter. Conditions there were very bad. People slept on military beds or on the floor. Usually they received only (one cup) of soup per day. People died from starvation and disease, especially typhus.¹⁹ The Jews of Mogielnica expelled to the Warsaw ghetto shared the fate of the rest of the ghetto's population. Most were deported and killed in the first major deportation Aktion, which started in July 1942, when Jews from the refugee shelters were among the first to be sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Following the deportation of the Jews to Warsaw, a few Jews went into hiding in and around Mogielnica for at least part of the remaining period of German occupation: among them were Aisic Hirsch and Szmul Cyrkiel.²⁰ In August 1943, 3 Jews were caught near Mogielnica and shot in the Mogielnica Forest.²¹ From June 9, 1944, until the end of the occupation, Maria Kisielnicka in Mogielnica helped to conceal Jerzy Sowa on false documents (as Jerzy Kulesza), and later she also provided similar aid to Sonia Blium and Jadzia Szitkie.²² After World War II, only about 30 Jewish survivors returned to live, at least for a time, in Mogielnica.

SOURCES Articles on the Jewish community of Mogielnica can be found in the following publications: Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 269–273; and Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 839. Additional information can be found in the yizkor book, *Sefer yizkor Mogielnica-Bledow* (Tel Aviv, 1972).

The book by Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), contains brief information on Mogielnica (pp. 213, 256, 339, 587).

Additional information on the ghetto and German crimes in Mogielnica can also be found in Tatiana Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w Dystrykcie Warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 325; and *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo radomskie* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, 1985), pp. 110–111.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Mogielnica under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/280 [AJDC]; Ring I/116; Ring I/881; 301/2564, 5176 [Relacje]); IPN (ASG, sygn. 43-45 and sygn.

61, k. 95; Kolekcja “Ob,” sygn. 177; Zb. zesp. szcz., sygn. 145); USHMM (RG-15.019M [ASG], reels 13 and 18, sygn. 43-45 and sygn. 61, p. 95; Acc.1996.A.0028); and VHF (# 01365, 17574).

Grzegorz Kołacz

NOTES

1. VHF, # 01365, testimony of Ben (Bieniek) Stern; # 17574, testimony of Aisic Hirsch.
2. VHF, # 17574; Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, pp. 269–273.
3. VHF, # 17574; # 01365.
4. AŻIH, 210/280 (AJDC), Sprawozdanie z pobytu w Mogielnicy k. Grójca, June 7, 1940, p. 1 (9); USHMM, Acc.1996.A.0028, Bulletin no. 5 (September 14, 1947), pp. 6–8, a report on Jewish life in Mogielnica from September 1939 to February 1941 by Jakov Rotbart—this source includes a more extensive list of Judenrat members.
5. USHMM, Acc.1996.A.0028, Bulletin no. 5, pp. 6–8.
6. AŻIH, 210/280, Sprawozdanie, June 7, 1940, p. 1 (9).
7. *Ibid.*, letter of June 1, 1940, p. 6.
8. *Ibid.*, 210/280, Sprawozdanie, June 7, 1940, pp. 1–6 (9–14).
9. *Ibid.*, p. 2 (10).
10. USHMM, Acc.1996.A.0028, Bulletin no. 5, pp. 6–8.
11. VHF, # 01365.
12. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 18, sygn. 61, p. 95; VHF, # 01365; # 17574; Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, pp. 269–273.
13. USHMM, Acc.1996.A.0028, Bulletin no. 5, pp. 6–8.
14. AŻIH, Ring I/881.
15. VHF, # 17574.
16. *Ibid.*, # 01365; Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, pp. 269–273.
17. VHF, # 17574.
18. USHMM, Acc.1996.A.0028, Bulletin no. 5, pp. 6–8.
19. AŻIH, Ring I/116; VHF, # 17574.
20. VHF, # 17574; AŻIH, 301/2564, testimony of Szmul Cyrkiel.
21. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 13, sygn. 43-45.
22. AŻIH, 301/5176, testimony of Maria Kisielnicka.

MORDY

Pre-1939: Mordy, town, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Siedlce, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Mordy is located 108 kilometers (67 miles) east of Warsaw and 18 kilometers (11 miles) east-northeast of Siedlce. The Jews were mainly Hasidim who were petty agricultural merchants, traders, and craftsmen. The Jewish community of about 1,750 residents comprised about half the town's residents on the eve of World War II.¹

In the first weeks of World War II, a fire, sparked by German aerial bombardment, destroyed a part of Mordy. German soldiers who occupied the town shot Mordechai Laski, a disabled World War I veteran. The Germans evacuated Mordy two days later, under the territorial provisions outlined in the secret

protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. A new Soviet-German agreement on borders and friendship, signed on September 28, 1939, returned Mordy, and all other Soviet-occupied territories west of the Bug River, to German hegemony. In Mordy, the Germans appointed a local ethnic German named Eckhart as the local police chief. Otherwise, the direct assertion of German authority remained limited through 1941.²

A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in Mordy, possibly in September though more likely in November 1939. In March 1940, its chair was Moszko (or Mosze) Waga. Waga was succeeded perhaps by Moshe Gershon Lewenberg, head of the pre-war kehillah. Other Judenrat members included Aaron Fajnzilber and Mordechaj (Mordko) Furman, both of whom had represented the Revisionists in the pre-war kehillah.³

Initially lightly guarded and located about 23 kilometers (14 miles) south of a Bug River crossing, Mordy served as a way station for Jewish refugees fleeing to the Soviet Union. Local Jews and Poles joined together to form smuggling networks to bring refugees to the border. Those turned away often ended up staying in Mordy until they succeeded in crossing the Bug. Some gave up and settled in the town.⁴

Mordy also became a center of forced Jewish migration, with 172 refugees, largely from Łódź, deported there by May 1940. In June, another 259 Jews from Łódź, Kalisz, and Poznań were expelled there. By July 1940, 512 deportees were living in the town.⁵ Several dozen more Jews from Mława were deported there in the summer of 1940. Two thousand Jews resided in Mordy in January 1941.⁶

Initially, the Judenrat's main tasks were to assist refugees and expellees and to respond to demands from German authorities in Siedlce. In June 1940, the Judenrat provided free daily meals in a community kitchen for 180 adult and 250 child refugees as well as 50 meals for impoverished local Jews.⁷ In the spring of 1941, it also distributed packages sent from Warsaw to 500 laborers draining swamps at a forced labor camp established on the Przebłucki estate, just outside Mordy.⁸ That same year, the Judenrat responded to German demands for a monetary "contribution," collected by representatives sent from Siedlce.⁹ From the summer of 1941, the Judenrat also filled quotas for the forced labor camp located on the Przebłucki estate.¹⁰ Beginning in the spring of 1942, Jews from Mordy were sent for similar water melioration work at another forced labor camp at Bartków Nowy, about 3 kilometers (2 miles) from Korczew. This camp conscripted between 400 and 600 Jews, with Mordy's Jews comprising a significant part of the labor force.¹¹

An open ghetto was established in Mordy shortly after Germany's June 22, 1941, invasion of the Soviet Union. Jews, particularly refugees, were concentrated in the southern part of the town in the pre-war Jewish neighborhood. In November 1941, Mordy's Jews were confined to a ghetto, located on a few streets, in the southern section of town. The ghetto was not fenced. Signs were posted there, listing punishments for Jews and non-Jews found leaving or entering the ghetto.¹² Placed in charge of the ghetto, Eckhart, the local police chief, dem-

onstrated flexibility in his interactions with the Judenrat, responding positively, for instance, to requests to exempt certain Jews from forced labor.¹³

The ghetto's population significantly increased in this period. At the end of December 1941, the Germans deported to the Mordy ghetto Jews from local villages surrounding the town, including from Królowa Niwa, Przesmyki, Stok Ruski, and Tarków. That month, 3,195 Jews were concentrated in the Mordy ghetto. In May 1942, the Germans deported 500 Jews from Sarnaki to Mordy. By August 1942, 3,817 Jews were living in the ghetto.¹⁴

In 1942, Germans exercised more direct authority over Mordy. After 15 of the town's Jews escaped from the nearby forced labor camp, a group of SS arrived in Mordy and threatened to punish collectively the ghetto's Jews if the escapees were not turned over. The Judenrat yielded to the German demand. The escapees were not seen again. A new police chief, Pulfer, more stringently enforced the restrictions that confined Mordy's Jews to the ghetto. That year, Gendarmes executed several Jews caught outside the ghetto, smuggling food.¹⁵

The extermination of Mordy's Jews began on Saturday, August 22, 1942. That day, the Germans executed as many as 100 Jews in Mordy.¹⁶ The remaining Jews, including the refugees, about 3,500 people, were marched to Siedlce's market square to join Jews from the ghettos in Siedlce and Łosice. While awaiting deportation, the Jews were subjected to increasingly random shootings by the SS guards. Deprived of water in sweltering heat, the Jews gathered in Siedlce were marched to the train station there on Monday, August 23, and then loaded into railroad wagons destined for the Treblinka extermination camp. The Germans liquidated the labor camp at Bartków Nowy on October 22, 1942. Its inmates were shot and buried in a mass grave on the grounds of the camp. The Germans liquidated the forced labor camp at Mordy in about March 1943. Its inmates also were shot at the camp.¹⁷

About 20 Jewish survivors returned to Mordy after the war. However, in May 1945, partisans, believed to have been from the anti-Communist underground, murdered between 2 and 12 of the town's Jews.¹⁸ After the murders, the remaining Jews left Mordy, moving first to Warsaw and later emigrating from Poland.

SOURCES Useful published sources include the account in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 7, Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 295–297, available in two different English translations, the first by Adv. Meir Garbarz Gover, available at jewishgen.org, and the second in Arnon Rubin, ed., *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 2, *District Lublin* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2007), pp. 203–204.

A number of eyewitness testimonies by Jewish survivors from Mordy can be found at AJA (e.g., Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1918–1979, series C, subseries 3, C214/3). Other relevant archival documentation on the fate of the Jews in Mordy during the Holocaust include the following: USHMM (e.g.,

Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC, 210/501]; RG-15.019M [ASG, reel 6, 17/959, and reel 15, 49/143]; and RG-15.079M [reel 14, Ring I/389]; VHF (e.g., # 01851, 4407, 9317, and 13697); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. VHF, # 4407, testimony of Bronia Golstadt; and # 01851, testimony of Arthur File; and Gitel Donath, *My Bones Don't Rest in Auschwitz: A Lonely Battle to Survive German Tyranny* (Montreal: Kaplan Publishing, 1999), p. 10.

2. "Mordy," in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, p. 203.

3. In Polish-language documentation, Moshe Gershon Lewenberg's name appears as Moszko Gerszon Leberberg. Mordy's Judenrat membership can be found at USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/501 (Mordy), p. 3. In the 1940 filing with AJDC, Lewenberg is listed only as a Judenrat member, although subsequently he may have become the Judenrat chair.

4. VHF, # 4407; # 27150, testimony of Leopold Zylberman; # 01851; # 20620, testimony of Rachela Malinger.

5. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/501, p. 13.

6. *Ibid.*, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel # 45, 211/949 (Siedlce), p. 14; "Mordy," in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, pp. 203–204; Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 280–287, available in an English translation by Gil Levy, at jewishgen.org. Jews expelled from Mława are reported in Mordy's AJDC correspondence as early as July 15, 1940; see USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/501, p. 13. Postwar Polish court documentation claims that 4,500 Jews passed through the ghetto in total; see RG-15.019M (ASG), reel # 15, 49 (Lublin), 143 (miasto Mordy), Kwestionariusz o obozach, p. 1.

7. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/501, p. 4.

8. "Mordy," *Gazeta Żydowska*, May 23, 1941, no. 41, p. 6; USHMM, RG-15.079M, reel 14, Ring I/389, Relacja Abrama Erlicha z obozu pracy przymusowej w Mordach koło Siedlec, p. 2; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel # 8, 211/127, Korespondencja Prezydium ŻSS z Gamsejem Wielikowskim-członkiem Prezydium Ż.S.S. i Doradcą przy Szefie Dystryktu Warszawskiego, 1 IV 1941-30 V 1941, pp. 27–28.

9. "Mordy," in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, p. 203.

10. Marta Janczewska, "Obozy pracy przymusowej dla Żydów na terenie dystryktu warszawskiego," in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc. Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 296–297.

11. Edward Kopówka, "Obozy pracy przymusowej w Szczegłacinie i Bartkowie Nowym k. Siedlec," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, no. 4 (2002): 518–519. The largest part of this camp's labor force came from Sokołów Podlaski's ghetto.

12. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel # 15, 49 (Lublin), 143 (miasto Mordy), p. 1.

13. "Mordy," in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, pp. 203–204.

14. See the document labeled no. 145, under the heading "3 marca 1942, Warszawa—Zastępca komisarza dzielnicy żydowskiej w Warszawie, Grassler, do Wydziału 'Raumordnung' w dystrykcie warszawskim w sprawie koncentracji Żydów w poszczególnych powiatach," in T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, and A. Rutkowski, eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach*

polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), p. 277 (in German) and p. 279 (in Polish); and T. Berenstein, "Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim," *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 277.

15. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel # 15, 49/143, p. 2; and "Mordy," in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, p. 204.

16. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel # 6, 17 (Lublin Districts: Radzyń and Siedlce), 959 (m. Mordy), Kwestionariusz o egzekucjach masowych i grobach masowych, pp. 1–2; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1985), p. 173; and Edi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel. The Story of an Escape from Treblinka*, ed. Noah Lasman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002), pp. 30–31. The precise number of Jews who were killed in Mordy during the ghetto's liquidation is unknown. Postwar Polish court documentation gives the figure of 200 Jews killed, but this is probably for the entire period from 1942 to 1944.

17. VHF, # 13697, testimony of Renia Lipska-Micznik.

18. For differences in the number of Jews murdered, compare "Mordy," in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, p. 204, with the account found under "Mordy" on the Cmentarze żydowskie w Polsce (Jewish cemeteries in Poland) Web site at kirkuty.xip.pl/mordy.htm.

MROZY

Pre-1939: Mrozy, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Mrozy is located about 50 kilometers (31 miles) east of Mińsk Mazowiecki. In 1921 there were 306 Jews living in the village; the total population stood at 508.

The village and its train station were heavily bombed during the initial days of the September 1939 campaign. Thirty-two Jews, including some refugees, lost their lives in the course of these air raids. Many residents were left homeless. The Germans established a Gendarmerie post in the village.

Only a few names of the German-established Judenrat are known, including its chairman Bencjon Rozenblitt, Joel Cieszyński, and A. Szejn (secretary). Despite accommodation shortages, 150 refugees had settled in Mrozy by January 1940. A self-help committee was established to care for the newcomers, as well as locals whose dwellings were destroyed. In July 1940, the committee comprised chairman Chaim Alter Jakubowicz of Pabianice, Chaim Mendlewicz of Pabianice, and four locals: Josek Tenenbaum, Joel Cieszyński, Bencjon Rozenblitt, and Szlama Turyn. With support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), the committee managed to open a short-lived soup kitchen. Mrozy alderman Schulc transferred the building to the Polish Red Cross on August 15, 1940.¹

Although the AJDC help was completely inadequate (e.g., 25 kilograms [55 pounds] of vegetable fat rationed out between

May and September 1940), its distribution divided the community into two camps—locals and newcomers. One of Mrozy's native committee members wrote to the AJDC in August 1940: "Nowhere are there such barbarous and heartless people as in Mrozy. Those who should give assistance [because they can afford it] are crying and complaining about our committee [asking] why we put refugees before [locals]?" He requested more help for the refugees than for the locals, ending the letter: "Let the locals understand what it is to be a refugee—that he is a human that needs to live. They [locals] do not understand this."

That same month, there were 507 Jews in Mrozy, according to the committee. There were also newcomers from Kalisz, Pabianice, Ostrzeszów, and Puławy. In November 1940, out of the total of 555 Jews, 243 were refugees and 312 were locals. The committee reportedly distributed 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of bread daily for the needy, doubling that amount on Saturdays. The committee was dissolved by the Judenrat in January 1941 and subsequently replaced by a similar body that was affiliated with the Judenrat.²

The Germans established a number of ghettos in Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki in the autumn of 1940. Based on correspondence dated December 13, 1940, the self-help committee reported that there was no plan to establish a ghetto in Mrozy: "This week we had a terrible worry that they were going to deport us. But somehow, as it seems to us, we will succeed in prolonging the deadline for deportation."

Instead of deportation, an open ghetto was established in Mrozy one year later, in November 1941. A German report on the concentration of the Jews in Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki of March 3, 1942, states that in November 1941, "138 Jews from Cegłów were resettled to a Jewish quarter in Mrozy."³ A native Cegłów family, which included Teresa Körner (Chaja Esterstein), was among those resettled. Körner recalls Jews from the vicinity also being forced to move to Mrozy.⁴

With the resettlement of Jews from smaller settlements in the autumn of 1941, the Mrozy ghetto was closed. It was never fenced; rather, placards proclaiming the death penalty for leaving the ghetto without special permission were posted at its borders. A number of the ghetto's residents performed forced labor at the local train station, while others were assigned to drainage works.

Secondary sources report that the number of the ghetto's inhabitants rose to approximately 1,000 before its liquidation, which is dated as September 1942 or "autumn" of that year by those sources available.

The ghetto's liquidation was conducted by the local Gendarmerie. Mrozy's Jews were gathered in the ghetto and then sent by train to the Treblinka extermination camp. The Germans likely left behind a number of Jews for conscription to a small labor camp nearby. A Kamiński—who escaped deportation from Kałuszyn—testified that some of the escapees were looking for jobs in a labor camp in Mrozy. *Rejestr miejsc* states that several dozen Jews laboring in nearby drainage works were shot in the autumn of 1943; however, this date may be inaccurate by as much as one year, as those laborers were likely shot

as soon as it was too cold to continue working (i.e., in late 1942).⁵

SOURCES The Mrozy ghetto is briefly mentioned by Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 327; and Jacek A. Młynarczyk, "Akcja Reinhard w gettach prowincjonalnych dystryktu warszawskiego 1942–1943," in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawn. IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 66; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 501.

Archival sources include AŻIH (210/502 [AJDC]); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); VHF (# 19794); and YVA (e.g., O-3/2824).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/502 (Mrozy), pp. 8, 14–15, 32, 38.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 18–19, 25, 27, 32–33, 38.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 37; T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, and A. Rutkowski, eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), Document 145, pp. 278–279.

4. See M. Melchior, "Uciekinierzy z gett po 'stronie aryjskiej' na prowincji dystryktu warszawskiego—sposoby przetrwania," in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, p. 328, for a summary of YVA, O-3/2824, T. Körner's testimony; VHF, # 19794, testimony of Teresa Körner (born 1929), 1996. Here Körner dates the resettlement to Mrozy in approximately the spring of 1941 and believes it was at that time most likely an open ghetto.

5. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1985), p. 175; summary of YVA, O-3/842, A. Kamiński's testimony, as cited by M. Janczewska, "Obozy pracy dla Żydów na terenie dystryktu warszawskiego," in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, pp. 303–304.

OKUNIEW

Pre-1939: Okuniew, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Okuniew is located about 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) to the east-northeast of Warsaw. In 1921, the Jewish population was 489 out of a total of 1,891 inhabitants. Under German occupation, there were reportedly 84 Jewish families living in Okuniew.

Okuniew fell to the Germans on September 28, 1939. Within the first days of the occupation the Germans murdered two Jews. Various decrees and restrictions were soon imposed on the Jews, especially the performance of forced labor. Jews were required to wear special armbands, and Jewish children were

forbidden to attend school. Maria Segal, however, recalls that Jewish children attended school secretly at night, to continue with their education.¹

In October 1939, a German civil administration was established, and Okuniew became part of Kreis Warschau-Land. The Kreishauptmann was Dr. Rupprecht.

Little information is available concerning the fate of the Jews of Okuniew under German occupation. For example, the yizkor book contains no survivor testimonies. According to the accounts of Zvi and Hirsh Noshevski, survivors from nearby Miłosna, the Okuniew and Miłosna Jews shared a common Jewish Council (Judenrat), which was based in Miłosna. The council was headed initially by two Jews named Fridman and Spekman, who had been recommended to the Germans by the Polish local council (gmina). These men had little aptitude or inclination for the task. Therefore, they sent an offer to a former Polish officer, Kh. Lubliner, then living in Warsaw, to return to Miłosna and become head of the Judenrat. In return for a good salary, Lubliner accepted the task and is described in the yizkor book as having been an energetic and upstanding leader who “did much to benefit the ghetto inhabitants of Miłosna and Okuniew.”²

The standard Polish reference work by Czesław Pilichowski indicates that a ghetto existed for about 500 Jews in Okuniew. This was likely established in early 1941, at the same time as that in nearby Miłosna, and was probably an open ghetto.³ According to contemporary Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) records, about 450 Jews were residing in Okuniew in mid-January 1941 under difficult conditions and in need of aid. On May 8, 1941, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) sent 250 złoty to the Jews of Okuniew for social relief, which had been received there by mid-June.⁴

According to documents preserved in the Ringelblum Archive, the Jews of Okuniew were expelled on March 25, 1942, and resettled into the Warsaw ghetto. During the expulsion, at least 15 named Jews are known to have been killed.⁵

Maria Segal, who was only six years old at the time, recalled that there was a great commotion and screams in the night on the eve of the expulsion. Her parents were very concerned about what was going to happen and tried to reassure her. They made name tags for the children to wear round their necks during the journey, lest they become separated. In the early morning hours, “rasping German voices shouted through loudspeakers for all Jews to leave their homes and congregate on the town plaza.” The Jews were then escorted to Warsaw, with most men driven on foot, while children and the elderly were put on horse-pulled carts. The Jews could only take a very limited amount of luggage with them. Maria, with her sister, was separated from her parents, being placed on a cart for the journey. She heard shots in the distance as the carts drove away. It took the whole day to reach Warsaw. Some of those marching on foot, who could not keep up, were shot by the guards on the journey. On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, everyone was forced to take communal showers.⁶

From the Warsaw ghetto, nearly all of the remaining Jews were subsequently deported to the Treblinka extermination

camp. Maria Segal was smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto with the help of a Polish family from Okuniew, for whom she then minded cows. While living there on the Aryan side, she learned that two other Jews, who were hiding in Okuniew, had been denounced and shot at the local cemetery.⁷

SOURCES Publications regarding the fate of the Jews of Okuniew during the Holocaust include the following: Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kebilat Rembertow, Okuniew, Miłosna* (Tel Aviv: Rembertow, Okuniew and Miłosna Societies in Israel, the USA, France, Mexico City, Canada, Chile, and Brazil, 1974); Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), p. 139; and Maria Segal, *Maria's Story: Childhood Memories of the Holocaust* (Santa Barbara, CA: Boehm Group, 2009). The ghetto is mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 345.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/750 [JSS]; Ring I/501 and 875); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079M [Ring I/501 and 875]; RG-15.084M [Relacje]; RG-50.060*0069); VHF (# 43650); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Segal, *Maria's Story*, pp. 11–12; VHF, # 43650, testimony of Maria Segal.
2. Shimon Ahronson, “Der ayfkum un umkum fun yidishn yishuv,” pp. 411–412; and Hirsh Noshevski, “Der veg fun peyn un greyl,” 435—both in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron*.
3. Regarding the establishment of the Miłosna ghetto, see Noshevski, “Der veg fun peyn un greyl,” p. 435.
4. AŻIH, 211/750.
5. Ibid., Ring I/875; Ring I/501.
6. Segal, *Maria's Story*, pp. 11–12; VHF, # 43650. Understandably, the dating in Maria's accounts is inaccurate regarding certain details.
7. Segal, *Maria's Story*, pp. 21–22.

OTWOCK

Pre-1939: Otwock, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Otwock is located about 22 kilometers (14 miles) southeast of Warsaw. By September 1, 1939, the Jewish population had reached 10,689 out of a total 19,916. In November 1941 the Jewish population was 12,634, and in 1942, 12,030.¹

The German army entered Otwock on September 14, 1939. The military administration lasted until October 25, 1939, when Otwock became part of Distrikt Warschau. Based in Otwock were units of the Gendarmerie, the Schutzpolizei, an outpost of the Kripo (Criminal Police), and the Gestapo. The pre-war mayor of the city, Jan Gadomski, was reinstated in his

position. The Polish police was reactivated, with Captain Bronisław Marchlewicz as its chief.

Immediately after entering the town, the Germans started to persecute the Jews. They forcibly cut off the beards of Jewish men, looted Jewish houses and stores, and arbitrarily arrested Jews for forced labor. The head of the Arbeitsamt (labor office), Hugo Dietz, dragged Jews from the synagogue on Aleksander Street on Saturdays. The Jews were forced to dig ditches and clean the villas of German officers. In October 1939, Germans burned down several synagogues in Otwock. Two other synagogues, one of them the Wajnberg synagogue, were destroyed later, in 1940.

The first murder took place on November 11, 1939, in the Śródborów Forest. The Germans shot three Jewish men for alleged illegal activities. In December 1939, the Kreishauptmann Warschau-Land, Dr. Hermann Rupprecht, imposed a contribution of 100,000 zloty on Otwock's Jewish community.

According to Cael Perechodnik, a Jewish policeman, the relationship between Poles and Jews, "except [for] sporadic events, was correct, although condescending."² One problem was the difficulty many Jews encountered in retrieving household goods given to Poles for safekeeping, as well as deteriorating relations in those cases where Jews had signed over their businesses to Poles. The general attitude of the German authorities towards Jews, apart from the occasional repressive actions, was initially tolerable. Gadowski, the wartime mayor of Otwock, earned a bad reputation in the Jewish community, as he signed off on all the anti-Jewish directives issued by the Kreishauptmann.

The Jewish Council (Judenrat) in Otwock was elected at the end of December 1939. It consisted of 24 people, including the most prominent Jews. The head was Izaak Lesman; his deputy was Mojżesz Kagan.³ Four of the members had been on the pre-war Community Council. Rabbis Rubin Zejman and Berysz Lejzor Janowski and 12 doctors also worked for the Judenrat.⁴

The Judenrat was responsible for delivering workers for forced labor, collecting valuables for the Germans, and organizing food supplies and social welfare services. Very soon the Judenrat was officiously fulfilling all German orders. The attitude of the German authorities and the local administration towards the Judenrat was initially not so stringent, but by the second half of 1942 it had become more hostile.

In July 1941, the German authorities dismissed Lesman as head of the Judenrat and dissolved the entire council for reasons that are unclear. The new head was Szymon Górewicz, and his deputy was Borys Chorążycki. Six members had also served on the first Judenrat.⁵ Guta Kac-Kucyk recalled that members of the Judenrat were unable to satisfy the increasingly cruel German demands. Emanuel Ringelblum noted in May 1941: "In Otwock, 100 employees of the Jewish community were taken to labor camps, because they did not deliver the appointed number of [workers]."⁶

The ghetto in Otwock was established in the fall of 1940. It was the second largest ghetto in Distrikt Warschau. Throughout the two years of its existence, more than 12,000 people

were incarcerated there altogether. The first steps to create the ghetto in Otwock were taken in September–October 1940, when Jews had to leave the areas of Sopiców and part of Śródborów and move to the center of town.⁷ On November 4, 1940, the Kreishauptmann established two Jewish quarters in Otwock: a health resort area and a residential area.⁸ The residential area consisted of "The Little Town" (also called "Shtetl") and the "Central ghetto," separated by the railway. From the Central ghetto to the Shtetl there was access across the railway track (near Samorządowa Street).⁹

The health resort ghetto did not have restricted borders. It contained Jewish medical institutions: hospitals, sanatoriums, and *pensions* (small hotels). The existence of these institutions and the resort character of Otwock were probably the reasons for the creation of a health resort ghetto. On the orders of the German authorities the sanatorium "Brijus" became the only place accepting Jewish tuberculosis patients in the Generalgouvernement. "Zofiówka" became the only place for nervous and mentally ill Jews. CENTOS (the Central Organization for Orphan Care) maintained in the health resort ghetto a shelter for child refugees, an Educational-Therapeutic Institute, and a ward for children in Zofiówka.¹⁰

The move into the ghetto was completed on November 30, 1940. The relative freedom that persisted inside the ghetto even induced some people to come to Otwock. For example, some Jews from Karczew, who were expelled to Warsaw in 1941, moved into the Otwock ghetto. Initially the ghetto was not sealed, so it was possible to leave it. As a result, the smuggling of food was not very difficult. The craftsmen sold their products to the people of the town and the surrounding area. Some ghetto inmates received food packages from relatives in the Soviet Union. Later the ghetto was partly fenced in, and Jews could not leave the ghetto under penalty of death. The Germans sealed the ghetto on January 15, 1941. To leave the ghetto one had to have a special permit. The columns of workers were allowed to leave for work under escort. Later orders were issued for the erection of wooden or wire fences. Still, the ghetto was only poorly fenced off, and Jews often left it, especially at night. As a result, the Kreishauptmann demanded from the Polish (Blue) Police that they guard the borders on a regular basis. Six policemen were assigned to control it from July 16, 1941.

After that date, several Jews were killed almost every day for leaving the ghetto, shot by Germans on the spot and buried in the fields. When conditions in the ghetto became worse, more people tried to leave. Very often they were caught by Poles, who, after robbing them, handed them over to the Polish (Blue) Police. They were reported to the Gendarmerie in Rembertów, which sent a unit to shoot them once a few people had been collected together.¹¹

The strict closing off of the ghetto and the lack of contact between its three sections forced the Judenrat to form separate branches: members of the Judenrat and clerks working for the Judenrat lived in each section. Contact was maintained by phone or by special delegates.

In the fall of 1941 there was a typhus epidemic in Otwock, which became the official reason for fencing both sides of the

railway along the length of the Central ghetto and Shtetl ghetto.¹² There was no longer any connection between the health resort, the Central ghetto, and the Shtetl.

The Jewish Police in Otwock was organized in November 1940 to help facilitate the transfer of Jews into the ghetto. At first it consisted of the commandant Bernard Kronenberg, his deputy Efroim Rykner, and 30 policemen. Formally, but not actually, it was subordinated to the Polish (Blue) Police in the Generalgouvernement. In May 1941, there were 100 policemen and a commandant.¹³ The police were divided into different sections: patrol, administrative, hospital, and sanitary. The Jewish Police was not popular due to corruption. The police selected people for forced labor and took them to the Arbeitsamt. Those who had money bought themselves out, and the poor were sent to work.

The Judenrat was obliged to supply a specific number of workers to German units stationed in Otwock, on average some 85 to 100 workers per day. They worked cleaning the town and the ghetto. Most people tried to avoid being sent to work, and very often the Jewish Police employed force to round them up, even killing some who resisted. In the summer of 1940, the German authorities sent young men to forced labor camps in Distrikt Lublin. The wealthy paid money, and the poor were sent to the camps. Some 300 Otwock Jews were sent to the labor camps in Józefów, Biała Podlaska, Bełżec, Tyszowce, and Zamość.¹⁴ In August 1940, 50 Jewish men from Otwock were sent to the Tyszowce labor camp. They worked on construction projects regulating the Huczwa River. In December the camp was liquidated, and people were released back to their ghettos.¹⁵

In April 1942, some 400 Jewish men from Otwock were sent to the labor camp in Karczew. The inmates worked on a land reclamation scheme. The close proximity to the ghetto played a key role in the life of inmates, who could receive support from their families and for the first few months the workers were even able to go to the ghetto for Shabbat.

In July 1942, the Jewish commandant of the Karczew camp, Welwel Kolkowicz, had to pay a large bribe to Inspector Frank for the camp to continue operating. Otherwise the workers were to be killed.¹⁶ The workers in the camp stayed in contact with a Polish policeman, whose sons belonged to the underground Home Army. There were plans for resistance, but these were not realized due to the lack of any arms.

In January 1942, some 150 to 200 men were sent to the Treblinka forced labor camp to work on the construction of the Treblinka extermination camp. Postwar documents indicate that 175 men were sent there in January and dozens more in February. They were among the first victims of the gas chambers.¹⁷ Three men from Otwock survived the liquidation of the camp.

Only a very small percentage of the Jews in the ghetto conducted any form of paid work. Some of these worked in the hospitals and sanatoriums. In 1941, there were 436 businesses in the ghetto: mainly engaged in trade and handicrafts or garret-craftsmen.¹⁸ Among the craftsmen were tailors, shoemakers, and blacksmiths.

Most people earned money selling their belongings to the Poles. Those who did not have anything left took their food to the Warsaw ghetto to sell, especially 10- to 12-year-old children. Until the closing of the Shtetl ghetto, Poles and Jews traded regularly there.

There were six communal kitchens operating in the summer of 1941. Sickness and hunger increased considerably at the end of that year after the closing of the ghetto.

At first Jewish patients were treated in the Polish hospitals, but soon they had to be moved to separate Jewish wards. Because of the typhus epidemic and dysentery, the Judenrat had to organize an isolation hospital. Starting in August 1941, death rates increased due to the spread of contagious diseases. The winter of 1941–1942 brought the highest rates of sickness due to typhus. In December 1941 the mortality rate was 3.6 percent, and over the next two months it increased to 10 percent.¹⁹

The health resort ghetto became the center of cultural life, because a lot of Jewish intellectuals were receiving treatment there. A literature group was established, and lectures on history and literature were presented. There were some forms of conspiratorial learning in the ghetto. There were underground classes and also a *cheder*. Observant Jews studied the Talmud regularly. The meat from Otwock was ritually slaughtered and smuggled into the Warsaw ghetto by young, non-Jewish-looking girls. The meat had certificates of kashruth signed by *shochetim*.

In July 1942 the commandant of the Gendarmerie in Rembertów, Lüppschau, came to Otwock. He demanded from the commandant of the Jewish Police expensive gifts and in return gave assurances that the Otwock ghetto would be spared. On August 18, 1942, Major Karl Brandt, a Gestapo officer and one of the organizers of the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, came to Otwock with a few officers and ordered the ghetto area to be surrounded by a wall. He also dismissed the chairman of the Jewish Council in Otwock, Szymon Górewicz, appointing Bernard Kronenberg, the chief of the Jewish Police, to replace him.²⁰ According to Calel Perechodnik's memoirs, Kronenberg received a warning letter from a former commander of the Otwock Jewish Police—Efroim Rykner, who wrote about the threat of deportation. The news spread rapidly around the ghetto.

Part of the staff of Zofiówka received warnings from a Polish policeman about an upcoming Aktion, and the staff of the sanatoriums and hospitals escaped to Warsaw, using an ambulance. Some of the orderlies bleached their hair to disguise themselves as "Aryans." Many doctors committed suicide.

The liquidation Aktion began on August 19, 1942; it was carried out by Ukrainian auxiliaries and other SS troops. The Germans ordered people to leave their houses and gather in the main ghetto, and from there the Germans led them to the loading platform. The place for the final concentration of Otwock's Jews was on the site where a new workshop was planned. There, Jewish workers cut down trees and enclosed the square with a barbed-wire fence.²¹ The commandant of the Rembertów Gendarmerie, Lüppschau, the Inspector of the Karczew camp, Frank, and the chief of the Arbeitsamt, Dietz, all came

to Otwock to supervise the loading of the trains. Some 8,000 Jews were deported from Otwock during this Aktion.

The liquidation Aktion in the resort ghetto was particularly brutal. In the sanatoriums “Brijus” and “Zofiówka,” everyone who was unable to move or who was mentally ill was shot on the spot. Children from the sanatoriums were not shot, as the Germans did not want to waste bullets. Instead, they smashed children’s heads against the walls. On Reymont Street, 600 people were shot.

Abraham Willendorf, a Jewish policeman, publicly renounced his police insignia and joined his family. Two men escaped from the train—Jurek Grandowski and Berek Kejzman.

The Aktion was repeated on the following day. The Jewish policemen stayed behind to clean up the ghetto. Some of them were sent to the hospital Zofiówka to bury the corpses of the murdered Jews. In December 1942, after finishing the work, the policemen were sent to the labor camp in Karczew. From there some of the policemen and 200 workers unfit to work were sent to the Warsaw ghetto. In May 1943, the head prisoner of the Karczew camp, Welwel Kolkowicz, decided to escape and advised his fellow workers to do the same. The camp existed until at least September 1943. Some of the policemen worked in camps in Rembertów and Piekiełko.

After the ghetto’s liquidation, the hunt for hidden Jews and their murder continued for four weeks. Germans and Ukrainian auxiliaries searched houses and cellars. In the mass graves located between Reymont and Słowacki Streets, 1,500 people were buried. Similar graves were dug also in the woods surrounding the town and in air-raid shelters. About 3,000 people were captured and shot in the course of the operation.²² Some children from CENTOS remained in the woods in hiding until the spring of 1943. Poles denounced most of them. Some children had prepared hideouts in the woods. Even those children who were deliberately given to Poles by their parents were mostly abandoned or left in Catholic convents. Otwock nuns from the congregation of Saint Elizabeth, who led the orphanage “Promyk,” saved about 20 to 30 Jewish children. The chief of the Polish (Blue) Police, Captain Bronisław Marchlewicz, and Ludwik Wolski, a priest from the Wincenty à Paulo parish, forged baptismal certificates to save Jewish children. Meanwhile, ordinary Poles together with Germans busied themselves in looting Jewish goods.

Some 400 former Jewish inhabitants of Otwock returned to the town at the end of the war. Some of them had spent the war in the Soviet Union. Nobody from that group remained in Poland.

SOURCES There are two yizkor books published by the survivors: Benjamin Orenstein, ed., *Kburbn Otvotsk, Falenits, Kartshev* (Bamberg: Former Residents of Otvotsk, Falenic and Kartshev in the American Zone in Germany, 1948); and Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer Zikaron: Otvotsk-Karchev* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Otvotsk and Kartshev, 1968). One of the most important sources on the history of the Otwock ghetto and its liquidation is a memoir written by a Jewish policeman in the ghetto, Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?* (Westview Press, 1996). A secondary source focused on the Otwock

ghetto is a book written by this author, *The Jewish Population of Otwock during the Second World War* (Warsaw: Jewish Historical Institute, 2002).

The main archival sources are located in the State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw (APW), Otwock Branch, where many documents produced by the Judenrat and the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) are preserved. These documents can be found in the file Records of the City of Otwock, 1939–1942 (Akta miasta Otwocka, 643, 861, 896, 898, 925, 934, 1010, 1022, 1023, 1053, 1057, 1060, 1062, 1063, 1068). Some useful documents can be found in the records of the State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw: Kreishauptmannschaft Warschau-Land and Amt des Gouverners des Distrikts Warschau. Other materials were obtained from the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute (e.g., AŻIH, 313/46, 87; Ring 1/373). These include documents of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (210, AJDC) and the Jewish Social Self-Help (211/771 [JSS]), which give an insight into the economic situation in the Otwock ghetto. There are also several testimonies written by survivors (e.g., 301/4064, 4121, 5913 [Relacje]).

Sylvia Szymanska-Smolkin

NOTES

1. APW, Akta miasta Otwocka, 643, p. 60; 896, p. 27; 898, p. 1; 934, p. 38; 1022, p. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
3. *Ibid.*, 1053, pp. 282–283.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 250.
5. *Ibid.*, 1060, p. 124.
6. Emanuel Ringelblum, *The Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto* (Warsaw, 1983), p. 284.
7. APW, 861, p. 1; Ludwik Landau, *Chronicles of the Years of War and Occupation*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1962), p. 744.
8. APW, 1057, p. 74.
9. Kanc, *Sefer Zikaron*, p. 876; APW, 1057, p. 74.
10. APW, 1022, pp. 8–9.
11. Lucjan Chojczyk, “Komisariat przy Sienkiewicza,” in *Mówią wieki* (1996), p. 17.
12. APW, 1010, pp. 192, 195–196; Ringelblum, *The Chronicle*, p. 343.
13. APW, 925, p. 73.
14. *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 28, November 23, 1940.
15. AŻIH, Ring 1/373, pp. 1–10; Orenstein, *Kburbn Otvotsk, Falenits, Kartshev*, pp. 8–10.
16. Orenstein, *Kburbn Otvotsk, Falenits, Kartshev*, p. 23.
17. AŻIH, 313/87, Nissenszal; 313/46, Zygmunt Herzig’s case, p. 5; Z. Łukasiewicz, “Obóz pracy w Treblince,” *Bulletin of the Main Commission for Investigation of German Crimes in Poland* 3 (1947): 113, 121; Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?*, p. 12.
18. APW, 1023, pp. 1–9.
19. R. Zabłotniak, “Sanatorium Towarzystwa Opieki nad Biednymi Gruźliczo Chorymi Żydami ‘Marpe’ (1907–1924–1942),” *BŻIH*, nos. 1–2 (165–166) (1993): 106–109; “Sanatoria żydowskie w Otwocku (1939–1942) w pięćdziesiątą rocznicę zagłady,” *Zdrowie Publiczne* 55:3–4 (1992): 551–553; *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 81, September 5, 1941.
20. Kanc, *Sefer Zikaron*, p. 940; Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?*, pp. 20, 27.
21. Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?*, p. 20; AŻIH, 301/4064, p. 6.

22. AŻIH, 301/4064, pp. 7–8; 301/4326, testimony of Zalmen Cwi Golden, p. 8; T. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 93.

PARYSÓW

Pre-1939: Parysów, village, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Parysow, Kreis Garwolin, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Parysów, town, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Parysów is located about 53 kilometers (33 miles) southeast of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 1,906 Jews in Parysów; the village’s total population stood at 3,388. By 1939, there were 300 Jewish families living in Parysów.

Unlike many other localities in the Kreis, Parysów was not damaged in the course of the September 1939 campaign and so was subsequently flooded with refugees, including many Jews from Garwolin.

The Germans established a 12-man Judenrat, chaired by the tradesman Aharon Glatstein, with another tradesman, Jankiel Cymlich (Yaakov Zimlich), as his deputy. Other members of the Judenrat included Icek Goldman, Chil Borowski, Berek Drzewnowski, Moshe Chaim Poskolinski, and Aron Chełmer as secretary.¹ The Germans soon withdrew from the village, placing Polish (Blue) Police in charge of maintaining order. A Jewish police force was also later formed to enforce German orders, including labor conscription.

On May 17, 1940, 149 Jews who had been forced out of Garwolin arrived in Parysów. Another 202 deportees from Górzno, Wola Rębkowska, and Pilawa arrived on October 20, 1940. A survey conducted that same month reported 3,115 Jews in Parysów.²

An open ghetto was established in Parysów in November 1940, consisting of three streets in the southeastern part of the village and including Borowska Street (on which the synagogue stood) and one side of Garwolin Street. Poles who owned property within the ghetto boundaries could remain there, on request. The Jews were allowed to take their belongings with them, including artisan tools, despite the lack of space to set up their workshops. Owners of horses and wagons faced the same difficulty.³

There are no reports of the ghetto being guarded or closed or its inhabitants being executed for leaving its borders; however, Gestapo agents would sometimes come to the ghetto and beat up Jews in the streets.

On December 10, 1940, about 70 deportee families from Garwolin—by then almost entirely depleted of Jews—were transferred to Parysów. The Judenrat estimated the number of Jews at 3,500. In a letter to the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) office in Warsaw, it reported that the “overcrowding cannot be described.”⁴

The Germans ordered the organization of a Jewish police force with Judenrat member Moshe Chaim Poskolinski as its commander. It consisted of approximately 12 men from Parysów

and Garwolin. The jail, due to lack of space, was set up in a windowless corridor of the synagogue. An inner wall was built to separate it from the remainder of the space, where the refugees were quartered. Later a fire brigade, commanded by Tuvia Miller, was organized in the ghetto. There were many volunteers, as the work guaranteed exemption from forced labor.

A cooperative of Jewish and Polish artisans was organized in the ghetto. The Jewish craftsmen produced the goods, while Poles, who were not barred from traveling, sold them. Yet the majority of the ghetto’s residents lacked any paid employment and suffered from hunger. In addition, the community was forced to pay three large “contributions” to the German authorities; jewelry and money for the last two had to be extorted by the Jewish Police.

Impoverishment within the Jewish community forced many to resort to theft. Local farmers complained to the Polish police that their produce was being stolen from the fields. The local Jews in turn accused the refugees, who then claimed that the thefts were committed by the locals. The Polish police and the Judenrat warned the Jewish Police to restore order. Despite the hunger, pious Jews maintained religious practices including eating kosher meat, Sabbath prayers, and celebrating the High Holidays.⁵

On April 26, 1941, a local branch of the JSS was established in Parysów. The merchant Abraham Lejzer Raplański of Garwolin served as the chairman, and Izak Fajgenbaum was his deputy. The committee also included Icek Goldman, Jankiel Cymlech, Lejb Rolfus, and Aron Chełmer. The JSS was able to provide very little help. In February 1942, out of 2,078 Jews applying for meals from the soup kitchen, only 105 were recipients.

In the autumn of 1941, after an outbreak of typhus, the German authorities ordered a hospital opened. Despite the epidemic, more Jews from Garwolin, which by this time had been made *judenrein* (cleansed of Jews), were to be relocated to Parysów by November 20, 1941. Tuvia Miller was the hospital’s administrator. The only doctor—a woman named Warchower—was its director. The hospital inspection conducted by the Garwolin JSS in January 1942 described it as “neglected.” The inspectors recommended that “the arrival of a male Jewish doctor, who would organize the work at the hospital, is desirable.” The report summed up the situation in the ghetto: “Terrible misery prevails in Parysów in every way.”⁶

In 1942, the ghetto’s Jews worked in two nearby labor camps. A 50-man labor brigade worked in Chyżyn, where they were straightening the Świder River channel. On reports that laborers were beaten while working knee deep in water, the Judenrat refused to send the Jews there the next day but later gave in, after the Germans issued a warning. Those who were assigned for labor in the Wilga camp—possibly as many as 100 Jews—demanded that the Judenrat provide transport. The 20-kilometer (12-mile) exhausting march to Wilga left the workers too weak to work, thereby resulting in severe beatings. Although a vehicle was eventually provided, the physical violence continued. Once barracks were built on the camp’s grounds, the Parysów Jews refused to go to work, for fear of

being detained there. The Jewish police force was unable to compel them to go to work; as a last resort, it would lock up the designated laborers in the middle of the night and then send them off to the camp in the morning. All of Parysów's Jews were desperately trying to avoid work in both camps.

A number of Jews were also working on road construction, 3 kilometers (2 miles) from Parysów, in the village of Wilchta. "The Jewish Police drove us to labor," testified one of the ghetto's survivors, Meier Herc.⁷

In May 1942, the Germans arrested three members of the Judenrat, including the police chief Poskolinski. All were shot near the road to Garwolin. In June 1942, the Judenrat chairman, Glatstein, and his father, a slaughterer, were charged with the illegal killing of a cow. Arrested and taken to Garwolin, they never returned. Jankiel Cymlich was appointed as the new chairman. Tuvia Miller took charge of the police force.

At the beginning of September 1942, the Germans requested larger numbers of laborers to be sent to Chyżyn and for road construction. Approximately 600 Jews at that time worked to meet the deadline for the paving of the Parysów-Głusków road, including the elderly Rabbi Morgenstern. The deadline was met after some Poles with road-paving equipment helped to finish the job.⁸

Shortly before the ghetto's liquidation, the Germans changed the Judenrat chairman for the last time, replacing Cymlich with Moshe Munk, who was immediately tasked with collecting the last large contribution. In anticipation of the ghetto's liquidation, many Jews tried to save themselves by running to the Chyżyn camp.

In mid-September 1942 (possibly September 18), without notice, 3,000 Jews from the liquidated Stoczek Łukowski ghetto were brought into the Parysów ghetto. The Germans demanded that the Judenrat provide them with housing.

The destruction of the Parysów ghetto was also unannounced. The streets leading from the ghetto were blocked off on September 27, 1942, by Germans and Polish police. Residents of the ghetto were then chased to the market square. Meier Herc described the liquidation: "The Jews set off from the market square towards the train station in Pilawa, such that they had to cover 9 kilometers [5.6 miles] on foot. Recorded music was played from an automobile. Women and children were seated on wagons. The sick and weak were shot on the spot—on the square. And in this manner 150 persons were killed." From Pilawa, the community was sent to the Treblinka extermination camp by train.⁹

Thirty Jews were registered as being shot by the German Gendarmerie from October 2–4, 1942, in a hunt for ghetto survivors. Among the victims were 3 members of the Morski family and 11 of the Borucki family.¹⁰

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews of Parysów under German occupation can be found in the following publications: Y. Granatstein, ed., *Sefer Parisov* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Parysów in Israel, 1971); Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 405–406.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/541 [AJDC]; 211/393-95, 211/784 [JSS]; 301/4104 [Relacje]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.019M [Court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/541 (Parysów), pp. 47–48; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/ 393 (Garwolin), pp. 33, 45.
2. Ibid., Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/541, pp. 24–30, 47–48.
3. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 405; Granatstein, *Sefer Parisov*, p. 332.
4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/541, pp. 47–49.
5. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 405; Granatstein, *Sefer Parisov*, pp. 332–333, 337, 340–341.
6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/394 (Garwolin), pp. 24–25, 45, 49; 211/395 (Garwolin), pp. 36–37; and 211/784 (Parysów), p. 5; Granatstein, *Sefer Parisov*, pp. 333, 336–337, 339.
7. Granatstein, *Sefer Parisov*, p. 334; USHMM, RG-15.019M (Court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos), reel 18, file 55; testimony of Meier Herc, AŻIH, 301/4104 (Relacje), as quoted in Barbara Engelking, "Życie codzienne w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego," in B. Engelking, J. Leociak, and D. Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 203–204.
8. Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 406; Granatstein, *Sefer Parisov*, pp. 340–341.
9. Testimony of Meier Herc, AŻIH, 301/4104, as quoted in Engelking, "Życie codzienne," pp. 203–204; Wein, Freundlich, and Orbach, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce*, p. 406; Granatstein, *Sefer Parisov*, pp. 340–342.
10. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, IPN, 1985), pp. 193–194.

PIASECZNO

Pre-1939: Piaseczno, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Piaseczno is located 18 kilometers (11 miles) south of Warsaw. In 1921, 2,256 Jews were living in Piaseczno, representing 40.2 percent of the town's total population (5,615 people). In the interwar period, numerous Jewish political organizations and professional bodies existed, which took an active part in the social and political life of the town.

German mobile forces entered Piaseczno on September 6, 1939. From the first day of the occupation, Wehrmacht soldiers executed inhabitants of Piaseczno, both Polish and Jewish. On September 9, 1939, 22 Polish prisoners of war (POWs) and

Jews were shot in Piaseczno; one day later, Wehrmacht soldiers killed 2 young Jews on Chiliczowskiej Street.¹ In response, many Piaseczno Jews fled to Warsaw and to Soviet-occupied eastern Poland; at the same time though, approximately 1,000 Jewish refugees from various parts of the country arrived in the town, raising the number of Jewish inhabitants to approximately 3,500.²

On the establishment of a German civil administration on October 26, 1939, Piaseczno became part of Kreis Warschau-Land. In December 1939, the Ortskommandantur in Piaseczno ordered the Jews to wear the Star of David, marked the doors of Jewish homes and enterprises with yellow paint, and forced the Jewish community to pay a “contribution” of 30,000 złoty.³

In January 1940, the German authorities ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), consisting of 12 persons. The Judenrat established a welfare committee under the direction of Boruch Higier. The welfare committee was responsible both for the distribution of food provided with support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) and for the collection of funds to help the poorest members of the Jewish community. In the period from February 4 to July 25, 1940, the Welfare Committee distributed 1,764 meals and 1,500 kilograms (3,307 pounds) of bread.⁴

In the spring of 1940 the Jews of Piaseczno were apparently struck by excessive violence that was perpetrated by the local Polish population with tacit approval of the German administration.⁵

The Jews of Piaseczno had to serve as unpaid workers for the German army and local farmers in the area surrounding Piaseczno. On March 15, 1940, 61 Jews resettled from Łódź and Garwolin arrived in Piaseczno, followed by another 185 deportees in June 1940.⁶

In the summer of 1940, the Kreishauptmann Warschau-Land ordered the German mayor of Piaseczno to present a proposal for the establishment of a ghetto in Piaseczno by August 1, 1940. On July 23, 1940, the Judenrat, however, forwarded a memorandum to the Kreishauptmann, trying to convince him of the impractical nature of German plans to establish a ghetto in the town.⁷ Nevertheless, in November 1940, the Jews of Piaseczno were forced to move into the ghetto, which was established in the southern part of the town, along Świętojańska, Jerozolima, Topolowa, Czajewicz, and Krótka Streets.⁸

The ghetto existed for only around three months. In two waves the Jewish community of Piaseczno was deported to the Warsaw ghetto. On December 4, 1940, approximately 1,000 Jews were expelled from Piaseczno and forced into the Warsaw ghetto. The Jews were either herded on trucks or had to walk the entire distance of 18 kilometers (11 miles) to Warsaw on foot, carrying bundles with their possessions on their backs. On their arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, some Jews were placed into quarantine facilities and the others simply dispersed.⁹ In a second wave, between January 22 and January 27, 1941, on the orders of the Department for Resettlement (Abteilung Umsiedlung) in the office of the Gouverneur of Distrikt Warschau, the remaining Jews of Piaseczno (about 1,000

people) were deported to the Warsaw ghetto. In Warsaw, these Jews were housed initially in a reception camp at 46 Grzybowska Street and were reported to be in desperate need of assistance.¹⁰ Among them was also Kelman Szapiro, who would become the last rabbi of the Warsaw ghetto. His handwritten manuscripts survived the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto as part of the Ringelblum Archive and represent a unique Orthodox response to the Holocaust.¹¹

The homes of the Jews in Piaseczno were taken over in the spring of 1941 by Polish citizens from the Bydgoszcz area, who themselves had been expelled from their homes to make way for ethnic Germans who had arrived from the Baltic states.

The Jews of Piaseczno shared the fate of the other Jews in the Warsaw ghetto. Many of them were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp and murdered there in the summer of 1942.

SOURCES Articles on the fate of the Jewish community of Piaseczno during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ba-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 346–347; Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 984–985; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 583.

Additional relevant information can be found in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowinia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); Tatiana Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952); and Józef Kazimierski, “Miasto Piaseczno i powiat piaseczyński w latach wojny i okupacji hitlerowskiej,” in Jerzy Antoniewicz, ed., *Studia i materiały do dziejów Piaseczna i powiatu piaseczyńskiego* (Warsaw, 1973), pp. 253–268; and on the following Polish homepages: www.sztetl.org and www.studnia.org.

Documentation on the Jewish community of Piaseczno under German occupation can be found in the following archives: APW (877, k. 9); AŻIH (210/543 [AJDC]; 211/1071; Ring II); PAPP (3325 and 3312, k. 247–248); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.079M [Ring II]).

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1. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: województwo stołeczne warszawskie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1988), pp. 227–228.
2. APW, Starostwo Powiatowe Warszawskie (SPW), 877, k. 9; Kazimierski, “Miasto Piaseczno,” p. 263.
3. APW, SPW, 877, k. 9; Kazimierski, “Miasto Piaseczno,” p. 263.
4. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/543.
5. Tomasz Szarota, *U progu zagłady: Zajścia antyżydowskie i pogromy w okupowanej Europie: Warszawa, Paryż, Amsterdam, Antwerpia, Kowno* (Warsaw, 2000), p. 32.

6. Berenstein, "Deportacje," pp. 106–107.
7. PAPP, akta m. Piaseczna, 3325 and 3312, k. 247–248; Kazimierski, "Miasto Piaseczno," p. 263.
8. PAPP, 3213, k. 11; APW, SPW, 877, k. 9; Kazimierski, "Miasto Piaseczno," p. 263.
9. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kerr, eds., *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), p. 222.
10. The order is reprinted in Josef Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Vollstrecker: Die Liquidation von 500.000 Juden im Ghetto Warschau* (Berlin, 1961), pp. 329–330; see also AŻIH, 211/1071, p. 41, undated note in German about "Aussiedlungen im Distrikt Warschau," probably about February 10, 1941.
11. USHMM, RG-15.079M, reels 58 and 61 (Ring II/431, Ring II/370, Ring II/432).

PRUSZKÓW

Pre-1939: Pruszków (Yiddish: Pruschkov), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Pruszków, Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Pruszków, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Pruszków is an industrial town located about 17 kilometers (10.6 miles) southwest of Warsaw. In 1921, 971 of the town's 15,132 residents were Jews; by 1931, the Jewish community had increased to 1,288, in a total population of 23,647.

After a summer of rumors and speculation about the looming war, the Jews of Pruszków devised several plans of action, often marked by generational conflict. Following the outbreak of war, many men made their way to Warsaw, where they were caught in the three-week siege of the city. Young people with leftist or Communist leanings headed eastward towards Soviet territory. The women and the older members of the community generally stayed put.¹

The German army entered Pruszków after about one week of the German invasion of Poland and was welcomed by the local ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) with salt and flowers. Some believe this gesture saved the town from widespread damage and destruction.² Although many Jews had fled the town, thousands of others attempting to reach Warsaw did not get past Pruszków. The local Jews put them up in schools and private homes, but many slept on the streets. Soup kitchens were opened and blankets distributed. Many refugees moved on after the fall of Warsaw, whereas many local Jews who had fled to Warsaw or Soviet territory began to return. The Germans ordered the shops of Pruszków to reopen and normal routines to be resumed.³

Nevertheless, each day brought new demands and decrees from the German authorities. Jewish schools were closed. Jews could not use the trains, except for one car designated for their use.⁴ Jews over the age of 14 had to wear white armbands with a blue Star of David. In October 1939, the Judenrat was established, headed by a Jew from Łódź, Yitzhak Koenigstein. Each day, Jews up to the age of 60 had to report for forced labor, which was coordinated by the Judenrat. An exemption could be purchased by paying a fee, with unemployed youth

sent as replacements.⁵ Jews worked without pay in workshops at the rail yards, loading ammunition boxes, and cleaning trains.⁶ Ration cards were distributed, but the available supplies were less than the allotment. Sickness was curtailed by strict attention to cleanliness. The local Jewish doctors had left, and the Polish doctors would not risk the danger of treating a Jew.⁷ Others, however, mention the presence of refugee doctors in Pruszków, who helped to contain an outbreak of typhus.⁸

Even with the relative stability of the first year of occupation, Jews suffered numerous acts of oppression. On the first Yom Kippur (September 23, 1939), Polish youth, at the instigation of the Germans, attacked Jewish worshippers. Mentally ill Jews at the psychiatric hospital in Tworki were removed and murdered. During the harsh winter of 1939–1940, the townspeople dismantled the wooden synagogue for firewood. The Torah scrolls, however, were rescued and hidden on the grounds of the cemetery.⁹

In the fall of 1940, the situation worsened considerably. A fine of 50,000 zloty was imposed on the community. On October 12–13, 1940, a ghetto was established in a tiny sector of town near the paint factory of a Jew named Ehrenreich. The ghetto was packed with at least 1,000 people (other sources say 1,300 to 1,600), with several families to a room. Those moving in had to leave behind most of their property.¹⁰ Despite the overcrowding and degradation, only one case of suicide was recorded.¹¹

At first the ghetto was an open one, and Jews were allowed to leave it from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.¹² Jews earned a livelihood by petty trade and smuggling. Jewish youth established an underground elementary school and attempted to organize a library. There was a drama group, and the local branch of a Zionist youth group, "Dror," continued to meet. The young people began to build a school from the dismantled materials of a synagogue building outside the ghetto, but the project was never completed.¹³

Chiel Rajchman has described forced labor conditions in the ghetto: "Three times a week we were taken to the railroad labor camp, and we worked there without pay and we were harassed and beaten."¹⁴ A branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) was operating in Pruszków by early January 1941; at this time about 300 Jews were receiving assistance.¹⁵

There were increasing rumors in the winter of 1940–1941 that the Jews were being transferred from the small ghettos around Warsaw to the Warsaw ghetto. Pruszków's turn came at the end of January 1941, when the Judenrat was informed that the ghetto would be eliminated and its inhabitants moved to Warsaw. The inhabitants of the Pruszków ghetto were surrounded and closed in for 10 days before being loaded onto a train for Warsaw.¹⁶ People were allowed to take their belongings, but most were limited to 20 kilograms (44 pounds).¹⁷

According to one contemporary report, 1,200 Jews were transferred from Pruszków to Warsaw. On arrival in Warsaw the Jews were quarantined. To expedite their release, the Pruszków Jews had to pay another large fee. Once they were released, the authorities still kept their baggage, linen, and bedding

until the sum of 5,000 złoty was paid. “The collection of this sum took longer than 10 days, so the refugees of Pruszków had to go for two weeks without bedding and without underwear to change, until they managed to scrape together the ransom.”¹⁸

The fate of the Pruszków Jews was entwined with that of the Warsaw ghetto. A few young people from Pruszków participated in the April 1943 uprising of the Warsaw ghetto.¹⁹

About 180 men were left behind to continue as forced laborers in the workshops at the rail yards. They were housed in one building, which they called the “white house,”²⁰ surrounded by a high wall. A few managed to escape, but by the summer of 1942 the rest had been sent to the Warsaw ghetto. Many of them were soon deported from there to the Treblinka extermination camp.²¹

Only a few dozen Jews from Pruszków survived the war, mostly with the help of non-Jewish local acquaintances and a few sympathetic farmers.

SOURCES Information about the fate of the Jews of Pruszków can be found in the following publications: D. Brodsky, ed., *Sefer Pruszkow, Nadzin ve-ha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Pruszków in Israel, 1967); “Pruszkow,” in Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 372–376; and Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 407.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., 301/5563, 5630; Ring I/892; 211/827 [JSS]); IPN (ASG, sygn. 62, k. 279–280); USHMM (e.g., RG-50.030*0185; Acc.1997.0124 [JSS]); VHF (e.g., # 1829, 7464); and YVA.

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- Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 375.
- Brodsky, *Sefer Pruszkow*, p. 215.
- Ibid.*, p. 216.
- Ibid.*, p. 253.
- Ibid.*, p. 217.
- Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 375.
- Brodsky, *Sefer Pruszkow*, p. 217.
- Ibid.*, p. 251.
- Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 375.
- Bill Tammeus, *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland during the Holocaust* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009), p. 108; VHF, # 1829, testimony of Bella Elsa Thorn, 1995.
- Brodsky, *Sefer Pruszkow*, p. 217.
- VHF, # 7464, testimony of Jerry Koenig, 1995.
- Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 375; Brodsky, *Sefer Pruszkow*, p. 218.
- USHMM, RG-50.030*0185, interview with Chiel Rajchman, December 7, 1988.
- AŻIH, 211/827 (JSS), p. 6.
- Brodsky, *Sefer Pruszkow*, p. 218.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

18. Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), pp. 295, 297.

19. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 376.

20. Brodsky, *Sefer Pruszkow*, p. 251.

21. USHMM, RG-50.030*0185; Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, pp. 375–376.

PUSTELNIK (MARKI-PUSTELNIK OR MARKI)

Pre-1939: Pustelnik (village), Marki (village), Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Pustelnik (suburb of Marki), town, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Prior to World War II, Pustelnik was a village in the Marki gmina. At that time, Marki was a larger village nearby. The Jewish communities of Pustelnik and Marki, residing along the Radzymin-Warsaw road, about 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) north-northeast of Warsaw, considered themselves as a single community. Marki was the center of community life, as it was the older Jewish settlement and the rabbi’s seat. According to the 1921 census, there were 156 Jews living in Marki (total population 2,529) and 368 in Pustelnik (total population 1,956). The Germans established a ghetto in 1940 that was constructed for all the Jews of the Marki gmina.

According to survivor Szlama Kutnowski, the Germans established a system of labor conscription following the occupation of Marki in 1939. Under this regimen, local Jews were subjected to forced labor three days a week. Berek Jarzembki, a Pustelnik native, testified that the Germans also took some men from his village for labor; otherwise, the Germans did not bother the village’s Jews much. There is more information on the pre-ghetto life of the Jews in Pustelnik, as the Judenrat (chaired by Litman) and its self-help committee (established in January 1940) were both located there.

On the outbreak of war, “a large number of trading firms were liquidated and factories immobilized,” as was reported by the Pustelnik self-help committee to Warsaw when asking for help. Until June 1940, with the assistance of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), the self-help committee operated a soup kitchen and provided medical assistance.¹

Pustelnik’s ghetto—for which all the Jews of the Marki gmina were designated—was established at the end of 1940, most likely in December. The ghetto was located on Duża Street, approximately 2 to 4 kilometers (1.2 to 2.5 miles) northeast of Pustelnik. It was surrounded by barbed wire but unguarded. The Germans did not establish a Jewish police force, leaving the maintenance of order in the hands of the Judenrat.²

On January 7, 1941, the self-help committee described the situation: “Presently, due to the establishment of ghettos, our

material situation is catastrophic.” The initial plan to establish a ghetto where the Jews already resided, “along the Warsaw-Radzymin road and the narrow gauge station went up in smoke. Consequently we were deported from our residences to a brickyard, Henryków and Osinki . . . far away from roads and contact. [We were placed] in houses for [former] factory workers and barracks, completely secluded and isolated from the Polish population.” The committee emphasized that relocation to the ghetto caused the remainder of Jewish businesses to close. The committee estimated that by January 1941, 75 percent of the Jews in the ghetto lacked any source of income. Seven hundred people were requesting assistance.³

Initially the Jews were still allowed to leave the ghetto. The then 12-year-old Kutnowski recalls going to Marki to work. Nearby was a forest, approximately 60 meters (197 feet) from the ghetto fence, where Jews would pick blueberries or gather wood for heating. Housing conditions in the ghetto were appalling. Kutnowski described his family’s living quarters as follows: “We were living in a garage. The floor was made of bricks. There was no roof, so we made one out of planks.”⁴

By April 1941, the ghetto was declared closed. The self-help committee’s report for January–April 1941 reads: “From the moment the ghetto was closed, the local population is on the edge of destruction.” By May 1941, there were 850 Jews in the ghetto, including 598 refugees. The committee added: “Jews employed in the ceramic works and on other German details are earning 3 to 4 złoty per day, which in present conditions amounts to nothing.” It is not clear whether the aforementioned “ceramic works” refers to the Henryków and Osinki brickyard or another factory outside of the ghetto’s borders. In the same report, the committee also cited recent rumors of the resettlement of the ghetto’s population to Warsaw, which were forcing Pustelnik’s Jews to sell off their remaining belongings.⁵

The ghetto was liquidated on March 26, 1942. Its inhabitants were deported to the Warsaw ghetto. Berek Jarzembski states that the community, which was permitted only to take personal baggage, was deported on wagons and trucks. Kutnowski, who at the time of the Aktion was on one of his smuggling trips, testified: “When I returned home as usual, I did not find anyone. The barracks were razed and many people were killed.”⁶ *Gazeta Żydowska* reported that the deportees arrived in the Warsaw ghetto in the last days of March and were sent for quarantine at 109 Leszno Street.⁷

Pinkas ha-kebilot, which does not mention the ghetto’s establishment, asserts that it was liquidated on April 6, 1942. In the course of its destruction, the SS reportedly riddled Torah scrolls with bullets and threw them into a fire. The Jews who rushed to save them—170 people—were shot, including the community rabbi Mendelsohn.

SOURCES The following publications make reference to the fate of the Jewish communities of Marki and Pustelnik: Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 414; Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jeru-

salem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 268–269; and Barbara Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego,” in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 168–169, 188, 206, 209.

Archival sources on the ghetto include AŻIH (211/846, 211/1080, 211/1083 [JSS]; 301/273, 301/4805 [Relacje]); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.019M [ASG]; and RG-15.084M [Relacje]); and VHF (# 27561).

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1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/846 (Pustelnik), pp. 1, 3–5, 25; 211/1080 (Warszawa), p. 39; VHF, # 27561, testimony of Berek Jarzembski, 1997; AŻIH, 301/273, testimony of Szlama Kutnowski, 1945.

2. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 19, sygn. 62, file 260; VHF, # 27561; AŻIH, 301/273.

3. AŻIH, 301/4805, testimony of Władysława Kruszczevska (Kruszewska), 1948; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/846, pp. 3, 5–6, 15–18, 23–24. Lists of food distribution, e.g., in April 1941, show addresses of the majority of ghetto residents as “Henryków” and a minority as “Osinki.”

4. VHF, # 27561; AŻIH, 301/4805; and 301/273.

5. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/1083 (Warszawa), p. 18; and 211/846, pp. 23–25. Secondary sources, e.g., Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, estimate 1,200 residents of the ghetto.

6. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 19, sygn. 62, file 260; VHF, # 27561; AŻIH, 301/4805.

7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, April 19, 1942.

RADZYMIN

Pre-1939: Radzymin, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Radzymin is located about 20 kilometers (12 miles) north-northeast of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 2,209 Jews residing there, out of a total population of 4,201. In 1939, there were 3,867 Jews in Radzymin.¹

On September 3, 1939, German planes bombed Radzymin, killing 30 Jews. As the German forces drew near, many Jews fled towards the Soviet border. The German army entered the town on September 24, and assaults on the Jewish population commenced immediately—tearing off men’s beards, giving them physical beatings, and robbing them.² On October 26, a German civil administration took over from the German military: Radzymin became part of Distrikt Warschau. In November, 14 prominent members of the community were shot to death. In December, Jews were ordered to wear the Star of David, and a 7:00 P.M. curfew was imposed. Nevertheless, despite the harsh circumstances, most people maintained a relatively routine existence.³

From the start of the occupation, Germans and Poles carried out acts of robbery and looting against Jewish homes and

businesses. On three occasions over the initial few months, fines amounting to thousands of złoty were imposed on the Jewish community. Soon after their arrival the German authorities forced the officials of the Jewish community to form a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which had to assist with the implementation of German orders, including the collection of fines. The head of the Judenrat was initially David Israelski, succeeded at the end of 1941 by Meir Winterman. Jews were pressed into forced labor and sent off to work in the forests and peat bogs. The Judenrat had to provide about 300 men per day for forced labor.⁴

At the end of 1940, the German Kreishauptmann for Kreis Warschau-Land, Regierungsrat Dr. Hermann Rupprecht, ordered the establishment of a ghetto in Radzymin, which was also to include 60 Jewish families from the ghetto in Wołomin. Despite some technical difficulties, the ghetto had been set up by December 25, 1940, and was surrounded with barbed wire. It was located at the junction of Warszawska and Zjawieńska [Zjawieńska] Streets, including 36 houses, mostly along these two streets. The Germans placed signs at the entrance reading: "Entry to the Ghetto Strictly Forbidden for Germans and Poles!"⁵ A unit of Jewish Police was also established under the command of Bunim Radzyminski to maintain order within the ghetto. The creation of the ghetto completed the liquidation of Jewish shops located outside the ghetto, and the empty shops now gave the former flourishing commercial quarter the appearance of a deserted cemetery.⁶

In addition to the local population, the Radzymin ghetto also contained refugees from Serock, Pułtusk, Wyszaków, and Konstancin. In March 1941, refugees poured in from towns and villages in western Poland, including Mława, Przasnysz, Rypin, and other places. By July 1941, the ghetto population had reached 3,000, of whom about 800 were refugees.⁷ The restrictions and overcrowded conditions, alongside a significant jump in the cost of food, led to severe malnutrition and disease, including an outbreak of typhus. The poor, who quickly exhausted their limited resources, were the first to die. A soup kitchen was set up to distribute one meal a day to those most in need, but before long even the more well-to-do had sold off all their possessions and become destitute. The only ones who had a source of livelihood were the tailors and shoemakers who, at great risk, could smuggle their goods to peasants in exchange for food.⁸ On July 23, 1941, a ghetto inmate sent a postcard to his brother in Brooklyn. Its brief message encapsulates the dire straits in the ghetto: "We are eating as on Yom Kippur, clothed as at Purim, and dwelling as at Sukkot."⁹

In the fall of 1941, the situation in the ghetto continued to deteriorate. The death penalty was introduced for any Jews caught outside, making it even more dangerous for children and others to smuggle in urgently needed food in exchange for clothing and other items.¹⁰ In the winter of 1941–1942, the Germans confiscated furs and warm garments from a ghetto that was already stricken by hunger and epidemics.

In March 1942 the ghetto population numbered 2,800, including 550 refugees. In the period from July 1941 to March 1942 about 200 Jews died from starvation and typhus. Follow-

ing the liquidation of the Tłuszcz ghetto on May 27, 1942, during which the Jews were sent via Radzymin to the Warsaw ghetto, some Jews from Tłuszcz found refuge in the Radzymin ghetto.¹¹ In the summer of 1942, about 100 men were taken to a work camp at Izabelin, where they put in 10 hours a day of backbreaking work in the peat bogs.¹²

The massive deportation from the Warsaw ghetto, which began in July 1942, was the start of the systematic liquidation of all the ghettos in the surrounding areas. Among the few ghettos that remained by September were those in Radzymin, Wołomin, and Legionowo.¹³ The end of the Jewish community of Radzymin came on October 3, which coincided with the holiday of Simchat Torah, celebrating the joy of Torah. All the Jews were brought to the train station. Several men danced with the Torahs at the adjoining synagogue, and quite remarkably, the German officer in command allowed them to continue. The Jews from Wołomin and Legionowo were brought to Radzymin for inclusion in the deportation to the Treblinka extermination camp. Altogether some 12,000 people were sent to their deaths.¹⁴

On the previous evening, before the trains rolled, about 200 young people broke through the ghetto fence and scattered into the nearby forests. Several young men from Radzymin who participated in the Warsaw Uprising were killed in the course of the revolt. After the trains left the station the local Poles and ethnic Germans swarmed over the Jewish houses, taking whatever possessions were left.¹⁵

About 70 men working at the forced labor camp at Izabelin were excluded from the deportation. They were taken out and shot on October 24, 1942, except for a few who escaped into the forests. Only a few Jews from Radzymin survived the war. Most who had escaped the final deportation were caught and killed, often betrayed by informers.¹⁶

SOURCES Publications on the history of the Jews of Radzymin and their fate during the Holocaust include the following: Gershon Hel, ed., *Sefer zikaron le-kehillat Radzymin* (Tel Aviv: Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora, 1975); and Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 424–427. Additional information on the ghetto in Radzymin can be found in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 422.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Radzymin under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/2910; 211/881-882; and Ring II, PH/41-1-5); IPN (OK Warszawa, Ds 66/67); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 43; RG-15.084 [Relacje]; RG-15.079 [Ring]); VHF; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Hel, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 18.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 264; Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland, vol. 4, Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 426.
4. Hel, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 21.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 245–248. A sketch map of the ghetto can be found on these pages.

6. Michael Kossower, “La Destruction,” in *ibid.*, p. 46.

7. Hel, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 21; and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 426.

8. Hel, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 264.

9. Cited in Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy* (London: William Collins, 1986), p. 177.

10. AŻIH, 301/2910, testimony of Tomasz Lewinski. At the age of nine Tomasz participated in smuggling until he escaped from the ghetto in April 1942; Kossower, “La Destruction,” p. 48.

11. Hel, *Sefer zikaron*, pp. 20–21; and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 426.

12. Hel, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 265; Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 422.

13. Hel, *Sefer zikaron*, p. 264.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 268; Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), p. 587.

16. Hel, *Sefer zikaron*, pp. 270, 427.

REMBERTÓW

Pre-1939: Rembertów, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Rembertów, Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Rembertów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Rembertów is located about 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) east of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 369 Jews living in Rembertów; the total population stood at 1,375.

Upon entering, the Germans established a system of forced labor with a daily quota of 50 workers. The labor was performed at various German military installations and at the ammunition factory “Pocisk.”

Meir Tenenbaum was appointed as chairman of the Jewish Council (Judenrat). At the end of 1939, the Judenrat established a Committee for Aid to Poor Jews, with 38-year-old Srul Bialer as president. Other members included A. Rozenzajn (deputy), Lejb Witkowski (secretary), and Sz. Dorn. The committee established a soup kitchen located at 6 Okuniew Street, with its offices located next door at 8 Okuniew Street.

By July 1940, there were over 230 refugees in Rembertów; this number had risen to 274 by the following December. The majority of the refugees came from Kalisz and Sieradz. The total number of Jews in October 1940 stood at 1,380, increasing again after approximately 300 Jews arrived from Łódź in March 1941.¹

A ghetto was established in Rembertów in 1940. Survivor Stanisław Rudnicki (who escaped from Warsaw after establishment of the ghetto there) described Rembertów on his arrival as “not tight.” Although the ghetto was surrounded by barbed wire, it was fairly easy to leave. Irene Rubinstein, who arrived in Rembertów just days before the ghetto liquidation

recalls that only parts of the ghetto were blocked off by barbed wire.² The ghetto borders were delineated by the following streets: Okuniew, Artyleryjska, Koliewuka, Mariańska, and Kościuszko.

In January 1941, the committee for Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) reported that it was caring for 750 Jews, of which 500 benefited from the soup kitchen, while the remainder received food and medical help from Dr. Artur Rajcher. The Kalisz deportees, unhappy with the level of support they were getting, desperately pleaded for help and an inspection by a representative from Warsaw’s JSS branch. The refugees reported:

Clothing and footwear, which was to be distributed primarily among deportees, had been given to Rembertów locals. Not one of us got anything. . . . They [the committee members] divide everything amongst themselves and sell the rest. Our “great lords” beg and plead on our behalf to Warsaw, while we, the refugees, live in wretched conditions. We get only a thin soup for 20 groszy.³

With the emergence of the first case of typhus in February or March 1941, the ghetto was closed, initially for two weeks. When the second case of typhus was registered, the closure was extended “for an indefinite period,” as reported by Dr. Rajcher and chairman Bialer on April 24, 1941. The closure meant that the majority of the ghetto inhabitants, employed by the Germans outside of the ghetto, lost their minimal income. Food prices in the ghetto increased, and the soup kitchen was closed. The letter summed up the situation as follows: “It is difficult to imagine the depression of the population, which is simply hungry. It [the situation] threatens to further spread disease and, what’s worse, [is likely to cause] the deportation of the Jewish population from Rembertów.” There are no statistics available on the typhus outbreak or whether an epidemic followed.⁴

In the spring of 1941, the Judenrat implemented a program sowing all plots of land in the ghetto with vegetables, hoping to use the crops to feed the community. In August 1941, the Judenrat requested 1,000 złoty from the JSS in Warsaw to sow the remaining plots with rutabaga.

Relations between the Judenrat and the welfare committee (reestablished in 1941 as a branch of the JSS) deteriorated with time. In October 1941, the Warsaw JSS informed the headquarters in Kraków of “the fierce conflict between Tenenbaum and Bialer,” after Tenenbaum intercepted money the JSS had sent for its branch in Rembertów. “Because the JSS encounters various obstacles [from the Judenrat] it is unable to continue its activity,” concluded the Warsaw office.⁵

In May 1942, the JSS reported that several hundred of Rembertów’s Jews (including women) were performing labor for the military at the following sites: “Sortierbetrieb [at ‘Pocisk’], Munitionslager [‘Pocisk’], Ostbahn, and Durchgangslager.” The laborers would leave the ghetto and come back from work under an escort assigned by the German authorities,

assisted by the Jewish Police; the latter also “assisted the laborers during work.” The hourly rate of pay was between 26 and 48 groszy. At some work posts, laborers were also receiving a bowl of soup.⁶

The ghetto was liquidated on August 20, 1942.⁷ Survivor Stanisław Rudnicki recalls being woken up by screams and the sounds of shots. Tadeusz Łomankiewicz, who had permission to enter the ghetto as an employee of the local power station, testified that the Pocisk workers were not allowed to leave the ghetto for work that day. All the Jews were collected in front of the Judenrat building. Those who did not leave their dwellings were shot inside by the German Gendarmerie. The same day the Germans ordered the burial of their bodies in a ditch near the Judenrat.

The remainder of the ghetto inmates was then driven to Falenica. From there, the community was deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.⁸

On October 28, 1942, Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, the SS and Police Leader in the Generalgouvernement, ordered the establishment of six remnant ghettos in Distrikt Warsaw. Rembertów was announced as one of the locations. According to Rembertów native Łomankiewicz, as early as mid-September the Germans began fencing off parts of the former ghetto. “The fence was tight, and one could not compare it to the fence of the first ghetto. At the end of September—or in early October—approximately 300 Jews from Warsaw arrived in cars,” testified Łomankiewicz. He also estimated that “90 percent of them were members of the intelligentsia—doctors, dentists, lawyers and merchants.”

The ghetto laborers were escorted daily to the Pocisk factory by two or three soldiers stationed at the airfield. The ghetto’s sole gate was guarded by two Germans. The Jewish Police still functioned. Łomankiewicz estimates that this (remnant) ghetto (or forced labor camp) was liquidated at the end of May or the beginning of June 1943, when its residents were suddenly deported by railway cars to Treblinka.⁹

Some secondary sources do not mention the remnant ghetto (e.g., *Pinkas ha-kebilot*), or they state that although ordered, it was never actually established (e.g., Ruta Sakowska). Both report that two labor camps were established after the August 1942 liquidation. The Ringelblum Archives also include evidence on the existence of a labor camp located at 6 Kościusko Street. According to *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, in June 1943 the Gestapo murdered about 1,000 inmates. The last 50 Jews in Rembertów were murdered in August 1943.¹⁰

SOURCES For references on the fate of the Jewish community of Rembertów, see the following: Jacek A. Młynarczyk, “Akcja Reinhard w gettach prowincjonalnych dystryktu warszawskiego 1942–1943,” p. 69; Barbara Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego,” pp. 206, 209; and Marta Janczewska, “Aneks,” pp. 318—all in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informa-*

tor encyklopedyczny (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), pp. 255–256; Ruta Sakowska et al., eds., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, vol. 3 (Warsaw: PWN, 1997), p. 279; and Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 433–434.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/594 [AJDC]; 211/904, 211/1081-1084 [JSS]; 301/5636, 301/4742, 301/4817 [Relacje]); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079M [Ring II/270/4, 5, and 7]; and RG-15.084M [Relacje]); and VHF (# 43738).

Jolanta Kraemer

NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/594 (Rembertów), pp. 21, 24, 27–28, 38; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/901 (Rembertów), p. 6; 211/1082 (Warszawa), p. 19; and 211/1084 (Warszawa), p. 63.
2. VHF, # 43738, testimony of Irene Rubinstein, 1998; AŻIH, 301/5636 (Relacje), testimony of Stanisław Rudnicki, 1959.
3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/901, pp. 1–2, 4–5.
4. *Ibid.*, 211/1081 (Warszawa), p. 34.
5. *Ibid.*, 211/1083 (Warszawa), p. 44; and 211/1084, pp. 49, 69–70, 86.
6. *Ibid.*, 211/901, p. 14; AŻIH, 301/5636.
7. AŻIH, 301/4742, testimony of Adolf Fingrut, 1950.
8. *Ibid.*, 301/4817, testimony of Tadeusz Łomankiewicz, 1950; and 301/5636.
9. *Ibid.*, 301/4817.
10. *Ibid.*, Ring II/270/4, 5, and 7.

SARNAKI

Pre-1939: Sarnaki, town, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Siedlce, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sarnaki is located about 130 kilometers (81 miles) east of Warsaw. In 1921, the Jewish population was 1,198 out of a total population of 1,588. Estimates of the Jewish population in 1939 range from 1,400 to 2,000.

Following the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, the Bug River became the new border between the Generalgouvernement and the Soviet Union, according to the secret Soviet-German agreement that divided the country. Sarnaki is located just a few miles to the west of the river. Many of Sarnaki’s Jewish residents had relatives residing in Siemiatycze, on the other side of the Bug. Therefore, about half of the Jewish population escaped Sarnaki to the Soviet-administered area. Some Jews escaped after the Germans entered the town and started harassing the Jews. On one occasion, Rabbi Abraham Kac and other Jews were forced to remove horse excrement from a stable with their bare hands.

The German authorities expelled thousands of Jews from the Reichsgau Wartheland (part of Poland that Germany an-

nexed) at the end of 1939. As a result, in the winter of 1939–1940, more than 800 Jewish deportees from Błaszki, near Kalisz, arrived in Sarnaki. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established to take care of the many issues that arose because of the presence of so many refugees. In March 1941, the chairman of the Jewish Council, Zajf, sent a letter to the headquarters of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization in Kraków, asking for assistance. In his letter he described the efforts of the local Jewish population to help the new arrivals. The number of refugees in need of help exceeded the size of the indigenous Jewish population.¹

The Jewish Council received financial help from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), which enabled them to purchase bread and distribute it among the poor. A few slices of bread a day per person was all that could be distributed. A newly established soup kitchen distributed approximately 5,500 portions in May 1941.²

In early 1941, the Germans used Jewish forced laborers from Sarnaki for building strategic roads in preparation for the June invasion of the Soviet Union. The wall surrounding the Jewish cemetery was taken apart, and the stones were used for road construction. That same winter, the forced laborers were used to install a phone line between Sarnaki and Zabuże. The local peasants provided horse-drawn carts to transport the laborers.³ Many Jewish women had to work on Polish farms; this was considered a fortunate assignment, as it allowed them to obtain additional food for their families.

The Germans destroyed the great synagogue in Sarnaki soon after the invasion in September 1939. In the winter of 1940–1941, the wooden boards disappeared into the ovens of Polish deportees, who had arrived from Pomerania. The remains of the synagogue burned down as a result of a Soviet air raid on June 22, 1941, the first day of the German invasion of the USSR.

In the fall of 1941, the German authorities established a “separate Jewish quarter,” or open ghetto, in Sarnaki, although the announcement that it would be set up was probably made some time in advance.⁴ Jews from several nearby villages, including Górki, Łysów, and Kornica, were brought into the Sarnaki ghetto in November 1941, bringing the total population up to 1,180.⁵ These Jews were compressed within a small area, so that at least 10 or 15 people had to share a single room. Those moving into the ghetto were only permitted to take with them what they could carry in their arms. The ghetto was located near the marketplace between the streets of May 3rd, Szkolna, Berek Joselewicz, and Kolejowa. Many of the houses within the ghetto had been burned down in September 1939.

In December 1941, the Germans declared that soon the ghetto would be sealed to prevent the spread of disease. The deadline for sealing the ghetto was January 1, 1942. The authorities posted signs on the streets leading to the ghetto, proclaiming that anyone leaving or entering it without permission faced the death penalty. The ghetto remained unfenced, however, and only loosely guarded by the Polish (Blue) Police.

Initially, the Sarnaki Jews did not take the warning about the death penalty too seriously. Some Jews still left the ghetto at night to barter items for food, and Poles also came to the ghetto to order work from Jewish tailors and shoemakers.⁶

Jews working outside the ghetto received permits to go to their workplaces, which included the railway station and cutting wood in the forest. The Jewish Police escorted them every day. This work provided the main connection with the outside world. The new, more stringent restrictions caused hunger to intensify among the Jews, and according to Pesach Perlman, about 100 Jews died in the winter of 1941–1942. No Jews were shot for leaving the ghetto in January 1942, but in February, a Jewish woman and her one-year-old infant were arrested by the Polish (Blue) Police in a neighboring village. Despite appeals for their release, an official of the German police arrived and shot them at the Jewish cemetery.⁷

The Germans allowed a Polish man, Władysław Panczerski, to take out the dead from the ghetto and bury them at the Jewish cemetery. This was against the Jewish tradition, and Rabbi Kac received permission for one Jew to accompany Panczerski and be present during the burials.

The most powerful man on the Sarnaki Jewish Council was Gabriel Zucker, who reportedly took advantage of his position. He and his family did not suffer from hunger like the other Jews in the ghetto and ignored appeals from the poor for assistance.⁸

On May 15, 1942, the Germans ordered the transfer of most of the Jews in the Sarnaki ghetto to the ghettos in Łosice and Mordy, with probably around 500 going to each. The Jews had to hire local Poles with their carts to transfer them to their destination. The Judenrat paid for the transfer of the poorer Jews to the Mordy ghetto.

Eighty young men were selected to stay behind and clear out the ghetto. Their families were taken to the Łosice ghetto, and they were able to visit them once a week.⁹ The Sarnaki ghetto was turned into a labor camp, which existed for a few more months. Accounts as to the fate of the group of Jewish workers in Sarnaki differ. According to one source, officers of the Gestapo and the German police shot most of the laborers, although a few young men escaped and survived in hiding. Another source reports that the men were transferred to Plateków and were then deported by train to the Treblinka extermination camp from there.¹⁰

On August 19–20, 1942, the Jews from the Łosice and Mordy ghettos were marched to the marketplace in Siedlce. On Saturday, August 22, 1942, almost all the Jews were deported from the Siedlce railroad station to Treblinka.

According to the account of Jakub Chaszki, about 50 or 60 Jews escaped to the surrounding villages and forests at the time of the final roundups in August. The German and Polish (Blue) Police conducted intensive searches for them over the ensuing weeks and months. Local Poles were reluctant to assist Jews, as the Germans also threatened them with the death penalty. Nevertheless, about 20 Jews managed to survive until July 1944, when the Red Army drove the

Germans from the area. These Jews left Poland for Israel and other countries after the war.¹¹

SOURCES The main published source on the Sarnaki ghetto is the yizkor book, edited by Dov Shuval, *Sefer yizkor li-kebilat Sarnaki* (Haifa: Irgun yots'e Sarnaki be-Yisrael, 1968). Secondary sources containing information on the ghetto in Sarnaki include Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 691; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 445; and T. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952). In addition, there is a short article by Rafał Zubkowicz, “Okupacyjne losy Żydów w Sarnakach,” available at www.nawschodzie.pl.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/942, 211/619, 211/942, 301/2591 and 301/2271); IPN (ASG, sygn. 49, p. 147); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.019M [ASG]); VHF (# 41835); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 211/942.
2. *Ibid.*, 210/619.
3. Testimony of Wincenty Cybulski, as cited in Zubkowicz, “Okupacyjne losy Żydów w Sarnakach.”
4. AŻIH, 301/2591, testimony of Jakub Chaszkieś, dates it in the fall of 1941. Miron, *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*, p. 691, dates it in September 1941.
5. T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, and A. Rutkowski, eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), Document 145, p. 277.
6. Testimony of Pesach Perlman, in Shuval, *Sefer yizkor li-kebilat Sarnaki*, pp. 147–169; VHF, # 41835, testimony of Leon Rosenberg.
7. Testimony of Pesach Perlman, in Shuval, *Sefer yizkor li-kebilat Sarnaki*, pp. 147–169.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. The respective sources are Miron, *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*, p. 691; and Jacek Andrzej Młynarczek, “Akcja Reinhard’ w gettach prowincjonalnych dystryktu warszawskiego 1942–1943,” in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 39–74, here pp. 58–59.
11. AŻIH, 301/2591.

SIEDLCE

Pre-1939: Siedlce (Yiddish: Shedlits), city, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Siedlce, Distrikt Warschau, General-gouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Siedlce lies 90 kilometers (56 miles) east of Warsaw. On the eve of World War II, its 17,000 Jewish residents formed about half the population.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945



A unit of German soldiers views the burning of the synagogue in Siedlce, December 24, 1939.

USHMM WS #09534, COURTESY OF IPN

In 1939, from September 1 to September 9, German air attacks and attendant fires devastated Siedlce. Jews lived in 80 percent of homes destroyed, constituted 75 percent of the 2,000 city residents made homeless, and comprised the majority of the 600 civilians who died.¹ The Germans occupied Siedlce on September 11. On September 15, they rounded up more than 1,000 men (Christians and Jews). They shot dead 56 of them during a forced march to a prison in Węgrów and a labor camp in Ostrołęka. At the labor camp, Siedlce’s Jews were beaten, starved, and humiliated by having their beards torn off.²

On September 29, 1939, the Germans evacuated Siedlce to make way for a brief Soviet occupation. When the Red Army withdrew behind the Bug River in early October, as many as 2,000 Jews accompanied them.

Upon reoccupying Siedlce on October 9, 1939, German soldiers broke into the synagogue, beat Jews praying there, and fired at those attempting escape. On Christmas Eve, the Germans set the synagogue on fire. They also plundered Jewish homes and stores and rounded up Jews for forced labor. In November, the Germans arrested the most prominent Jewish intellectuals, professionals, and businessmen and demanded 100,000 złoty for their release.³

After receiving the ransom, the Germans ordered a Jewish Council established. The 25-person body officially was led by Icchak Nachem Weintraub, head of the Zionist movement and religious community since 1926. Owing to Weintraub’s advanced age, its acting leader was physician Henryk Loebel, chair of the Jewish Council’s health division. Avraham Bressler commanded the 50-person unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst).

The Jewish Council’s Social Welfare Division struggled to care for the impoverished. Aid from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) was insufficient to support 3,500 of the neediest Jews and about 1,000 refugees, many from nearby localities, including Kosów Lacki, Łosice, Mordy, Sokółów Podlaski, and Węgrów. A kitchen opened in October 1940 to feed the hungry closed by December.

The Jewish Council's labor department, led by Izrael Friedman, organized compulsory forced labor conscription. From January 1940, about 500 Siedlce Jews unloaded shipments of food at the military base outside town. From the spring of 1940, another 1,500 reported daily to reclaim land on the Liwiec River. Siedlce Jews also filled labor quotas at the Reckman Construction Company, which from January 1941 used 500 to 1,000 Jewish laborers to improve rail lines; at Kiesgrube, a labor camp established in the fall of 1941 near a gravel pit on the Siedlce-Łuków rail line; at the Gęsi Borek glassworks; and at the Wolfe and Goebel Construction Company. From early 1941, this last firm conscripted 2,000 local Jews to improve the Trakt Brzeski. Women worked mainly in agricultural labor.

In response to German demands, the Jewish Council paid 20,000 złoty in December 1939 and 100,000 złoty in November 1940. It offered money to ameliorate violence, as occurred on March 23, 1941, after the Germans avenged a soldier's death. In what became known as Siedlce's "German pogrom," they ransacked Jewish houses, murdered at least 6 Jews, injured more than 100, and arrested countless others. When the Germans threatened to shoot the arrested Jews, the Jewish Council bought their freedom for 100,000 złoty.⁴

Small, underground self-defense groups formed. Before the Germans expropriated their printing business, the Goldberg family shared German military and administrative orders they published, with a pre-war Polish friend, the head of the Peasant Battalion for Independence, a populist wing of the underground Polish Armed Organization. The Goldbergs also printed falsified documents for the organization. More violent forms of protest included the November 1939 murder of a Pole for collaborating with two German soldiers in expropriating goods from the Goldstein brothers' tailoring shops. In November 1940, some Jewish blacksmiths led by Chaim Mejer, working with Polish Socialist Party (PPS) activist Władysław Makarek, planted charges along the rail lines. In the winter of 1941–1942, acting Jewish Council chair Henryk Loebel asked Zionist youth to form an underground opposition group. This effort collapsed when the Polish contact, "Tadeusz" Żelazowski, was killed by the Gestapo.⁵

Following the April 1940 registration of all Jewish men aged 16 to 60 for labor conscription and a street-by-street census that November, the Germans moved, on August 2, 1941, to create a ghetto. The plan involved crowding 13,000 Jews into an area where 3,589 Jews and 369 Christians had lived. The ghetto was bordered in the east by Błonie Street and in the south by Piłsudski Street. Its southwesternmost tip was on Kochanowski Avenue. It followed an irregular pattern everywhere else. The neighborhood included portions of 11 streets, including parts of Jatkowa, Asłanowicz, Browarna, and May 1 Streets. On October 1, the ghetto was surrounded with barbed wire. Those without special permission were forbidden from entering or exiting the ghetto. Some 500 to 1,500 people evaded ghettoization by fleeing to other towns without ghettos, such as Międzyrzec Podlaski.⁶

In November 1941, the Germans ordered all the Jews from nearby villages to report to the ghetto. Among the villages

covered in the order were those in the following pre-war gminy: Czuryły, Domanice, Krześlin, Niwiski, Skórzec, Skupie, Stara Wieś, Suchożebry, Wiśniew, Wodynie, Zbuczyn, and Żeliszew. Late that year, Roma (Gypsies) and Sinti from Cologne and its environs, including Hürth, were deported to the ghetto. On May 23, 1942, Roma from Kreis Siedlce were given until June 15 to report to the ghetto.⁷

Such crowding provoked disease and starvation. Rooms of 10 square meters (108 square feet) housed as many as 15 people. Residents spilled into hallways, and some camped outside. In the winter of 1941–1942, a typhus epidemic daily claimed 18 to 25 lives.⁸

At first, many ghetto residents, particularly craftsmen, were able to sneak from the ghetto to take orders from their former Polish customers. Poles also entered the ghetto to trade, putting on armbands with the Jewish Star, required of all Siedlce Jews from December 1940. In January 1942, the Germans cracked down by executing 10 Jews they caught outside the ghetto.⁹

With the ghetto's enclosure, the Jewish administration appeared increasingly complicit in German policies. Jewish Police and sanitation forces violently enforced orders, encouraged by German promises that such compliance would save their members' lives. Sanitation force members beat women for not adequately clearing snow and assaulted others for refusing to accept more boarders in overcrowded homes.¹⁰ When, on March 3, 1942, 10 Jews, accused of shirking work obligations, were executed, the Jewish Council, under pressure from German authorities, issued a statement supporting the authorities' actions.¹¹

Survivors' accounts uniformly describe the moral deterioration of ghetto residents. To escape forced labor, the rich bribed officials or paid poorer Jews to fill their places. Residents fought over limited material resources. Notable exceptions were the Hassidic followers of the tzaddik of Radzyń who maintained their religious faith, devoted hours to collecting and organizing Jewish religious works, and assisted anyone who asked. "They formed an island in a sea of inhuman behavior, where it was considered normal to strip a corpse of everything that might be useful," one survivor later recalled.¹²

Under these conditions, self-defense proved difficult and came mainly from those with outside connections. Jan Emil Karpiński (Emanuel Alberg), a pre-war law student at Wilno University, received passes from the Jewish Council chair to teach illicitly non-Jewish children outside the ghetto. Through connections with one of his student's fathers, he met pharmacist Olszakowski, an underground PPS leader in Siedlce. Olszakowski provided Karpiński with underground newspapers to distribute in the ghetto. Abram Halber worked at the garage of the Criminal Police, where Junuszkiewicz (pseudonym Kornaga), a member of the underground Polish Home Army (AK), provided him with news of planned German arrests, forced labor roundups, and executions. Halber then warned the ghetto residents. Halber also distributed newspapers, arms, and ammunition to AK members.¹³

Jewish Council members clung to the hope the German need for laborers would save the Siedlce Jews. The Germans

fostered this misconception by portraying the liquidation of the nearby Mińsk Mazowiecki ghetto as retribution for the refusal of its residents to meet their labor obligations.¹⁴ Other Jews feared the worst, particularly from August 20, 1942, the day on which members of a Jewish work brigade reported they had unloaded a stalled freight car (en route to the Treblinka killing center). The workers found the wagon filled with the bodies of more than 100 Jews from Radom who had suffocated when a fire engulfed their train's locomotive. No one believed the Germans' claim that the dead were prisoners being moved to another jail, particularly after someone recognized family members among the victims.¹⁵

At dawn, on Saturday, August 22, 1942, Germans, mainly from the local offices of the SS and Sonderdienst, assisted by the Polish (Blue) Police, surrounded the ghetto. Also participating in the four-day liquidation were a detachment of Border Police (*Grenzpolizei*) from Platerów and a force of Ukrainian SS auxiliaries, probably part of Commanding Officer of the Security Police and SD (*KdS*) Warsaw or *Sonderkommando Höfle*. SS-Obersturmführer Erhard Schulz directed the Aktion. Schulz gave the 10,000 ghetto residents until 10:00 A.M. to report to the square by the Jewish cemetery. Ukrainian auxiliaries and Sonderdienst patrols drove Jews from the ghetto, shooting dead those who refused to leave or were too infirm to comply. At the square, the doomed were forced to sit in a crouched position for at least 30 hours in unbearable heat. The German head of the local Labor Office pleaded with Schulz to spare craftsmen and laborers from expulsion. At about 2:00 P.M., Schulz ordered Jewish men, aged 15 to 40, to line up at the Jewish cemetery. Over the next 5 hours, he chose 600 men to retain for labor.

As the heat in the square grew intense, the Germans resorted to violence to enforce order. When Jewish Council member Furman rose to his feet around 11:00 A.M., to ask for a delivery of water, he was shot dead. The Germans then deployed machine guns, aiming at those who defied the orders to remain crouched. By midafternoon, as the Germans began quenching their thirst with beer, the violence became more random, with intoxicated policemen, led by *KdS* commander Julius Dube, indiscriminately firing into the crowd. When the Polish fire department finally sprayed water on the assembled Jews in the evening, more than 2,000 had been killed by gunshots. Shots also rang from the cemetery, where the Germans were executing those found hiding in the ghetto as well as Jews from some work details.¹⁶

Violence continued on Sunday, August 23, 1942. During the late-afternoon march to the train station, of approximately 17,000 Jews, including around 8,000 newly arrived from the ghettos of Mordy and Łosice (among them the Jews from Sarnaki, resettled in May in Mordy and Łosice), the Germans shot dead those who fled the march. At the station, several German soldiers sprayed bullets into the crowd and into already loaded railway wagons. In the ghetto, the Germans and Ukrainian auxiliaries continued to uncover and shoot Jews in hiding. On this day, about 200 to 300 Jews perished. In addition, on August 24, a group of local SS, led by Albert Fabisch,

the Stadtkommissar of Siedlce, murdered at the Jewish hospital 60 patients and 40 personnel, including Jewish Council chair Loebel.¹⁷

The 600 men retained for labor were ordered to the north-western part of the old ghetto. Within a week, an additional 1,500 to 2,000 survivors from Siedlce, including many Roma, as well as Jewish women and children, filled this "small" or "triangular" ghetto bounded by Sokołowski, Aslanowicz, and November 11 Streets. An October 28, 1942, order by Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, head of the SS and Police (*Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer, HSSPF*) in the *Generalgouvernement*, further increased the population in the reconstituted ghetto. The order announced that Siedlce would be one of six remaining "Jewish residential areas" in *Distrikt Warschau* and promised safety to Jews there. The order drew another 1,500 to 2,500 Jews to the ghetto, including fugitives from ghetto liquidations in Łosice, Węgrów, Kałuszyn, Sokołów Podlaski, Międzyrzec Podlaski, and Łuków.¹⁸

The final liquidation of the Siedlce ghetto began on November 25, 1942. That day, the Germans moved the residents of the triangular ghetto to the *Gęsi Borek* encampment, about 3 kilometers (2 miles) away. The transfer was allegedly to control a typhus outbreak in the small ghetto. The Germans gave the appearance that *Gęsi Borek* would be its residents' permanent and peaceful home by issuing Jewish Council members three-month residence passes, looking aside as ghetto inhabitants violated orders to bring in only what they could carry, and allowing the Jews and Roma to barter freely with Polish peasants.

Some remember that the final liquidation of the *Gęsi Borek* ghetto occurred three days later, on November 28, when the Germans, assisted by Polish (Blue) Police, rounded up the residents, including some Roma, and marched them to the Niwiski railway station (in Brzoszków village). The elderly *Ichak Nachem Weintraub*, titular head of the Jewish Council, led the procession.¹⁹ Another account places the ghetto liquidation on December 3. It holds that when no railway cars were waiting at Niwiski, the procession was marched back to *Gęsi Borek*. There, the Jews and Roma were packed into a closely guarded building. German *Gendarmes* then called people out by name, including all those with Jewish Council connections, and executed them. The Polish (Blue) Police commander shot Avraham Bressler, chief of the Jewish Police. The next morning, on December 4, the remaining Jews and Roma were marched again to the railway station.²⁰

Although a number of those in the procession donned prayer garments, a larger group, including craftsmen and members of the Jewish Police, resisted deportation. Master locksmith Symcha Wilk, Meloch Halber, and several other men smuggled tools onto the transport and forced open the doors to their wagons, permitting a large number of individuals, including Rabbi Aria Nejmán, to jump from the train. The guards on the train murdered those who remained behind. When the train arrived at the Treblinka extermination camp, Jewish prisoners unloading the transport discovered the wagons full of thousands of naked, beaten, bullet-ridden corpses.²¹

As many as 200 to 300 people survived the German extermination of the Jewish and Roma communities of Siedlce. Emil Karpiński, Dawid and Ida Tenenbojm, and a few others arranged for false identity papers, enabling them to pass as Poles. Others, such as Herzel Kave, joined by friends Kiwerant and Nelkienbojm, stowed away on trains they believed to be taking men or materials beyond the borders of the Generalgouvernement or the Reich. Another group of agricultural laborers, originally from Siedlce, assigned to an estate in Drupia, fled to the woods in November 1942 after the Polish overseer warned them he had received orders to turn them over to the Gestapo. The laborers formed a 30-person armed partisan unit, which conducted operations around Luków.²²

A number of Poles sheltered Jews. Four pre-war friends of Cypora Jabłoń-Zonszajn took care of her one-year-old daughter Rachel.²³ The family of postal worker Witold Kozłowski found hiding places for another 8 Jews, including former neighbors Rachel and Izrael Halberstadt and Rabbi Aria Neiman.²⁴ In (Stare) Opole-Sabinka, the family of Czesław Osiński, a pre-war secondary school director and PPS leader, hid 17 Jews, including E. Landau, a nurse wounded during the liquidation of the Jewish hospital.²⁵

However, far fewer survived to see the war's end. Some, including Abram Halber, died of illnesses contracted in the ghetto. Twenty-one of the 30 partisans perished in combat operations. The Germans killed Jews they found hiding during routine patrols. Still others, including several Jews who jumped from the train heading towards Treblinka and 16 of the 17 Jews hidden by Osiński, are believed to have been killed by Poles.²⁶

Of the fewer than 150 Jewish survivors, only Rachel and Izrael Halberstadt remained in Siedlce after the war. At post-war trials in East Germany, Willi Richter and Edmund Langer, two former members of the Grenzpolizei detachment in Platérów, were convicted of numerous crimes, including murders committed during the Siedlce ghetto liquidations. They received life sentences.

SOURCES Coauthor Edward Kopówka has written *Żydzi Siedleccy* (Siedlce, 2001), which discusses the experiences of Jews, Roma, and Sinti in the Siedlce ghetto. The book's bibliography and detailed footnotes including references in a number of languages offer an important departure point for those interested in researching the Siedlce ghetto. The yizkor books, Elimelekh Faynzilber, ed., *Af di burves fun mayn beym: Hurbn Shedlets* (Tel Aviv: 1952) and *Sefer yizkor li-kehillat Shedlets* (Buenos Aires: ha-Irgunim shel yots'e Shedlits be-Yisrael uve-Argeṭiṭah, 1956), also contain substantial secondary coverage and testimonies from survivors. The second book has been cited here in a partial, unpublished Polish translation, by Adam Bielecki, titled "Księgi pamięci," available at APSi, used by author Kopówka in his research.

Published memoirs by survivors discussing the fate of the Siedlce Jewish community include Gittel Donath, *My Bones Don't Rest in Auschwitz: A Lonely Battle to Survive German Tyranny* (Montreal: Kaplan Publishing, 1999); the testimony of Gedali Niewiadomski, in Henryk Grynberg, *Children of Zion*, trans. Jacqueline Mitchell (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998); Nelli Rotbart, *A Long Journey: A Holocaust*

Memoir and After: Poland, Soviet Union, Canada (Montreal: Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, 2002); Edi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel: The Story of an Escape from Treblinka*, ed. Noah Lasman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002); Samuel Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1992); and Eta Wróbel, *My Life, My Way: The Extraordinary Memoir of a Jewish Partisan in World War II Poland* (New York: Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, 2006).

Among the more important witness statements are Noah Lasman, *Pięćdziesiąt kilometrów od Treblinka* (Warsaw: Borgin, 1994), available in an earlier Hebrew-language edition; Emil Karpiński, "Wspomnienia z okresu okupacji," *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1989): 65–89; and Agata Dąbrowska, ed., "Pamiętnik Cypory Jabłoń-Zonszajn ur. w 1915 r. i zamieszkałej w Siedlcach do 1942 r.," in *Szkice podlaskie*, no. 9 (2000): 228–244, with the last available in a partial English translation, "Siedlce Memoirs," at the Aktion Reinhard Death Camps Web site. The USHMM is the repository for the original manuscripts of Karpiński and Jabłoń-Zonszajn and in the latter case additional materials from Zofia (Olszakowska) Glazer and Irena Zawadzka, two of the aid givers of Rachel Jabłoń-Zonszajn. For this reason, the memoirs are cited in the entry as USHMM, 2003.84.1, and USHMM, 1.2002.3, respectively.

Secondary accounts in Polish considered important include for the March 1941 "German pogrom" Wanda Więch-Tchorzewska, "Zróżła do dziejów okupacji hitlerowskiej na Podlasiu południowo-zachodnim," in Władysław Ważniewski, ed., *Podlasie w czasie II wojny światowej* (Siedlce: Wyższa Szkoła Rolniczo-Pedagogiczna w Siedlcach, 1997); and the unpublished manuscript, held at the Ossolineum (i.e., ZNiO), by Lucjan Koć, "Pomóc i współpraca z ludnością żydowską ludności wiejskiej powiatu siedleckiego z uwzględnieniem sytuacji zagadnień żydowskich innych powiatów Podlasia—w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej w Polsce," also covering Jewish self-defense before, during, and after the ghetto's establishment, discussing efforts to develop and maintain communication between Jewish Socialists in Warsaw and Siedlce, and describing Polish-Christian assistance. In addition to Koć, Jewish resistance is covered by Emil Karpiński, Eta Wróbel, and Stanisława Lewandowska, *Ruch oporu na Podlasiu* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 1976).

Also considered of primary importance are the testimonies and historical materials collected by Jontel (Jankiel) Goldman for the Siedlce branch of the State Commission for Historical Preservation (Państwowa Służba Ochrony Zabytków, Województwo mazowieckie, Oddział terenowy w Siedlcach) in conjunction with plans (only some realized) to establish several monuments to commemorate the Jewish community, available in an unpublished manuscript, W. Sobczyk, ed., "Cmentarz-pomnik męczeństwa narodu żydowskiego w Siedlcach" (Unpub. MMS, Siedlce, 1961), at the organization's Siedlce archives. Contemporary press coverage includes "Siedlce," *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 1, January 3, 1941, p. 5.

Coverage of the Roma and Sinti in the Siedlce ghetto can be found in the aforementioned memoirs of Jewish survivors Weinstein and Karpiński and in the more scholarly Michael Zimmerman, *Rassenutopie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische Lösung der Zigeunerfrage* (Hamburg, 1996), pp. 278–283; and Karola Fings and Frank Sparing, *Rassismus-Lager-Völkermord: Die nationalsozialistische Zigeunerverfolgung in Köln* (Cologne: Emons, 2005), pp. 219–222.

German orders pertaining to the Siedlce ghetto and documentation related to the efforts of Leon Feiner, Jan Karski, and the Polish London government-in-exile to make known its liquidation in the West appear in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw, 1957), pp. 277–279, 310–314. Also important is *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKB-ZHwP, 1985); and *DDR-Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), Lfd. Nr. 1035 and Lfd. Nr. 1038, respectively, for the postwar trials of Willi Richter and Edmund Langer.

Photographs taken for the Karski report are available at APSi; the visual iconography and diary of Hubert Pfoch, a German soldier, are discussed in Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness: From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder, a Study of Franz Stangl* (London, 1974), pp. 158–159.

A large amount of documentation exists on the Poles who aided Jewish fugitives, with the most significant in English Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 2, *Poland*, 2 pts. (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pp. 87–88, 166, 326, 390, 568, 789, 862, 927–928. An important testimony by Zofia Olszakowska-Glazer is located on the Web site of the Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej at www.ceo.org.pl/portal/b_wiadomosci_doc?docId=37891.

Unpublished documentation relating to the Siedlce ghetto can be found in the following archives: AAN; APSi (e.g., 36 [2362, 2364, 2368], 62 [334/2], 334/2, 1290); AŻIH (e.g., 210/621–622; 211 [126, p. 9; 949–950]; 301 [5758, 5867, 6307, 6383, 6436, 6517]; 313/41); BA-L (e.g., B 162/6873 and 6878); FVA; IPN (e.g., ASG, GKBZHwP [OKBZH-Si, 26/30]); USHMM (Acc.1996.A.0223 [AŻIH 313]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [AŻIH 211]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH 210]; RG-10.114; RG-15.019M [IPN, ASG] [49/151–159]; RG-50.488*0171); VHF (e.g., # 2828, 24291, 30396, 35649, 39119, 42698, 42918); and YVA (e.g., O-16 [1589, 2555, 3303, 4178]). The Muzeum Walki i Męczeństwa w Treblince (Museum of Struggle and Martyrdom in Treblinka), directed by Edward Kopówka, also has unique holdings pertaining to the Siedlce ghetto.

Edward Kopówka and Laura Crago

NOTES

1. IPN, GKBZHwP, OKBZH-Si, 26/30; USHMM, Acc. 1999.A.0154 (AŻIH), 210/622, p. 18.
2. Testimony of Herzel Kawe (Kawe), in “Księga pamięci,” p. 635.
3. Donath, *My Bones*, pp. 8–9, 19–20.
4. BA-L, B 162/6873, pp. 322–323; ZNiO, Koć, “Pomoc i współpraca,” p. 120; “Księga pamięci,” pp. 706–707; Donath, *My Bones*, pp. 56–57.
5. USHMM, 2003.84.1, pp. 5–6.
6. APSi, 36 (Akta miasta Siedlce), 2362 (Wykaz ludności getta siedleckiego 7.11.1941), 2364 (Zniszczenia wojenne 1939), 2368 (Stan ludności 1940), and 1290 (Zbiór afiszy okupacyjnych powiatu siedleckiego), Ogłoszenie # 1 (August 2, 1941); Donath, *My Bones*, pp. 67–69.
7. APSi, 1290, Zarządzenia, # 1 (November 25, 1941), # A67/42 (May 23, 1942).

8. USHMM, Acc.1996.A.0223, 313/41, p. 80.
9. Ibid., p. 95; RG-50.488*0171, interview with Henryk Maliszewski; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów*, p. 236.
10. USHMM, Acc.1996.A.0223, 313/41, pp. 40–45, 80–81, 85–90, 94.
11. Ibid., 2003.84.1, pp. 3, 7; VHF, # 24291, testimony of Aria Leib (Nejman) Newman.
12. Lasman, *Pięćdziesiąt kilometrów*, pp. 7–9.
13. USHMM, 2003.84.1, pp. 8–9; AŻIH, 301/6307, testimony of Izaak Halber, pp. 1–3.
14. USHMM, 1.2002.3, “Pamiętnik,” p. 1, 2003.84.1, p. 9.
15. Ida Jomtov-Tenenbojm testimony, in “Księga pamięci,” p. 650; Faynzilber, *Hurbn Shedlets*, pp. 34–35.
16. USHMM, 2003.84.1, pp. 12–13; Kawe, in “Księga pamięci,” pp. 635–636.
17. Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, pp. 29–35; BA-L, B 162/6873, p. 323; USHMM, 2003.84.1, pp. 7–15, 1.2002.3, pp. 1–4, 7; Lasman, *Pięćdziesiąt kilometrów*, pp. 22–24.
18. USHMM, 1.2002.3, pp. 5–6, 2003.84.1, pp. 12–18; Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, p. 110.
19. Goldman, “Materiał historyczny,” in Sobczyk, “Cmentarz-pomnik,” p. 23; Jomtov-Tenenbojm, in “Księga pamięci,” pp. 670–671.
20. Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, pp. 110–113.
21. USHMM, RG-10.114; VHF, # 24291; Willenberg, *Revolt*, pp. 46–47.
22. AŻIH, 301/6383, testimony of Ela Gorzeliński.
23. USHMM, 1.2002.3, Szymon Jabłoń and Rachel Zon-szajn letters.
24. AŻIH, 301/5758, testimony of Witold Kowalski, pp. 1–2; 301/6436, Rachel and Israel Halberstadt declaration, pp. 1–4; VHF, # 24291; # 35649, testimony of Janusz Kowalski.
25. VHF, # 39119, testimony of Bogdan Osiński.
26. Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, p. 113; VHF, # 24291; # 39119.

SIENNICA

Pre-1939: Siennica, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Siennica is located 50 kilometers (31 miles) east-southeast of Warsaw and 10 kilometers (6 miles) south of Mińsk Mazowiecki. In 1921, 560 Jews were living in Siennica, comprising 56.7 percent of the town's total population. In September 1939, there were 704 Jewish inhabitants in Siennica.

German soldiers occupied the town on September 13, 1939. All inhabitants of Siennica, Jews and Poles, were rounded up and held in the church of the local monastery. According to one testimony, a German officer ordered the priest to send one man with a message for the Polish army, which had established a defense line 3 kilometers (2 miles) from Siennica. The man had to present the Polish officer with an ultimatum—that if they did not retreat or surrender, the Germans would burn alive all the hostages in the church. The Polish forces soon retreated, and the Germans released the hostages.¹

The same day, the Germans set fire to the town. Around 80 percent of the buildings in Siennica were burned to the ground, including 43 of the 46 Jewish homes.² On that day, Wehrmacht soldiers killed 24 people, Poles and Jews from Siennica and the surrounding area. These murders were probably a reprisal Aktion, following the killing of a German soldier in the vicinity.³

From the first months of the occupation, the Jews were required to perform forced labor. In October 1939, the German authorities sent to Garwolin a group of Jewish men, all aged over 13 years, where they lived in barracks and worked. After one month there they returned.⁴ Jews from Siennica also worked on the construction of roads for the German firm of Schmidt.⁵ A group of Jewish men from Siennica was taken to the labor camp in Jozefów and worked on the regulation of the Vistula River and on the irrigation of the fields.⁶

There were not any German soldiers or German police based directly in Siennica, but German Gendarmes visited Siennica regularly from Mińsk Mazowiecki, once or twice per day.⁷

The German authorities ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), a Jewish police force, and later a Jewish Social-Self Help (JSS) organization in Siennica. The Judenrat and the Jewish police force each had 12 members.⁸ Lejb Kózka was appointed as the chairman of the Judenrat in Siennica. Aron Lubelski was the secretary of the Judenrat. Also among the members of the Judenrat were L. Goldsztejn, Sz. Jablonka, and A. Stokfisz (their signatures can be found on Judenrat documentation from 1941).⁹

The JSS and its aid committee provided assistance to more than 200 people.¹⁰ Among them there were mostly inhabitants of Siennica, whose houses and property had been burned (296 Jews in January 1941), and refugees from other localities (48 people in January 1941).¹¹

The aid committee was able to provide assistance, thanks to donations from members of the Jewish community in Siennica, which provided about 25 percent of the necessary funds.¹² Additional funds for social assistance came from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) and the central offices of the JSS in Kraków. These funds were mainly used to buy food and fuel (wood and coal). The support received from the AJDC in February, March, and April 1940 enabled the aid committee to open a public soup kitchen.¹³

The JSS organization in Siennica received between 400 and 600 złoty of support from the AJDC and the JSS every two months in 1941. Half of this came from the AJDC and half from the JSS. All of these donations were applied to the provision of material support (mainly food).¹⁴

The German authorities established a ghetto in Siennica in November 1941. Throughout November, the Judenrat in Siennica tried to convince the Germans to permit the Jews to remain in Siennica and not to resettle them into a ghetto in another town. On November 23, the Germans decided that the Jews could stay in Siennica and that a ghetto would be set up there. In addition, all Jewish families from the nearby villages had to move into the ghetto. As a result of this decision,

around 30 Jewish families were moved into the Siennica ghetto, leading to a deterioration of living conditions in the ghetto.¹⁵

The ghetto was not enclosed by a fence or a wall or even any barbed wire. There were only signs posted that Jews were not permitted to leave the ghetto area.¹⁶

According to some testimonies, a major event in the Siennica ghetto was the short visit of a rabbi from Otwock in 1942. He went into hiding during the liquidation of the Otwock ghetto and was then denounced. When the Germans caught him, he told them that he would give them a large amount of gold if they would let him go to a camp where Jews were still living. Apparently the Germans agreed to this. On his way to the camp, he stopped in Siennica to pray in the synagogue. All of the town's Jews were waiting for him and the message he would give them. After the prayer, he told them: "If you are still staying in the town, it means that God has chosen you to stay and that you will go back to work and you will survive."¹⁷

The Siennica ghetto was liquidated on October 18, 1942. According to the testimonies of survivors, four German soldiers arrived in the town on the day prior to the liquidation. They ordered the Judenrat members to assemble in the pharmacy. The Germans told them that at 8:00 A.M. on the following day all the Jews of Siennica would have to go to the town of Mrozy and no Jews would be permitted to stay in Siennica. According to survivor testimony, the Judenrat was given the choice that either the Jews themselves could organize the resettlement to Mrozy or the Germans would send armed units to implement it. The members of the Judenrat were aware that the deployment of German forces would doubtless entail considerable brutality and the killing of Jews on the spot. Therefore, the Judenrat decided to organize and implement the transfer itself.¹⁸

On the following day, October 18, 1942, at 5:00 A.M.,¹⁹ the column of Jews with horse wagons carrying the old and the sick traveled the 16 kilometers (10 miles) to the town of Mrozy, where the railway station was located. The column was escorted by the Jewish Police, and survivors maintain that they did not see any German or Polish police involved. After several hours, at 4:00 P.M., the column arrived at the Mrozy railway station, and from here they were sent on to the extermination camp at Treblinka.²⁰

Some of the Jews from Siennica, after arriving in Mrozy, organized themselves and escaped to the village of Mienia, where there was a farm on which the Germans had created a labor camp for Jews. Some of these Jews managed to survive the war.²¹

SOURCES Articles on the Jewish community of Siennica can be found in Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), p. 437; and in Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life before and during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: New York University Press, 2001), p. 1180.

The book by Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007)

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contains brief information on the Siennica ghetto, pp. 168, 169, 216.

Additional information on the ghetto and German crimes in Siennica can also be found in *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952), 120; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 451; and *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWP, 1985), p. 347.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Siennica under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/624 [AJDC Siennica]; 211/953 [JSS Siennica]); IPN (AGK, Kolekcja "Ob," sygn. 177); USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 13); and VHF (# 398, 3813, 39094).

Grzegorz Kołacz

NOTES

1. VHF, # 3813, testimony of George Shedletzky.
2. AŻIH, 210/624 (AJDC Siennica), p. 3, report of February 13, 1941.
3. USHMM (RG-15.019M, reel 13); *Rejestr miejsc . . . : Województwo siedleckie*, p. 347.
4. VHF, # 3813.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. AŻIH, 210/624, pp. 1–3; 211/953 (JSS Siennica, 1941–1942), pp. 1–29.
10. Ibid., 210/28 (AJDC), p. 6, report of June 1, 1940.
11. Ibid., 210/624, p. 1.
12. Ibid.; 211/953.
13. Ibid., 210/624, p. 3.
14. Ibid., 211/953.
15. Ibid.
16. VHF, # 3813.
17. Ibid., # 398, testimony of Ben Shedletzky.
18. Ibid.
19. The ghetto was liquidated on October 18, 1942, but Ben Shedletzky, who provides this description, dates it in July 1942.
20. VHF, # 398; and # 3813.
21. Ibid., # 398; and # 3813.

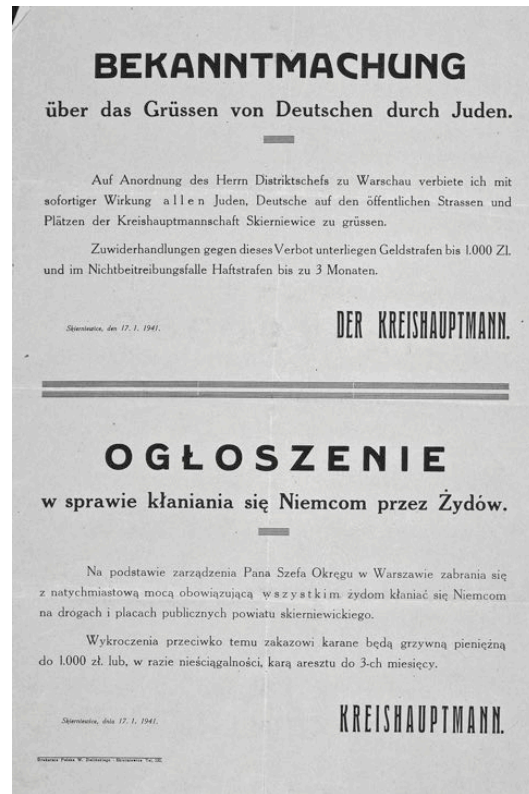
SKIERNIEWICE

Pre-1939: Skierniewice (Yiddish: Skerneyevits), town, Łódź województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: center of Kreis Skierniewice, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Łódź województwo, Poland

Skierniewice is located 66 kilometers (41 miles) southwest of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 4,333 Jews living in the town. A similar number of Jews were residing there on the eve of World War II.

Following the capture of the town on September 9, 1939, the Germans seized Jews and humiliated them at the market square, violently plucking out their beards. Jewish property was plundered during the first days of the occupation.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945



Announcement in German and Polish issued by the Kreishauptmann of Skierniewice on January 17, 1941, proclaiming a new regulation that prohibits Jews from greeting Germans on the streets or in public places. The announcement reads: "Announcement about the greeting of Germans by Jews.

By the command of the District Chief of Warsaw, I prohibit all Jews from greeting Germans on the streets and public places in the city of Skierniewice. This is effective immediately.

Resistance to this prohibition will result in a fine of up to 1,000 zloty. If the person cannot afford to pay this fine, he will be punished with a jail sentence no longer than 3 months.

Skierniewice, January 17, 1941.

The Kreishauptmann"

USHMM WS #N64834, COURTESY OF MUZEUM NIEPODLEGŁOŚCI

At the end of October 1939, the Kreishauptmann in Skierniewice, Regierungsrat Dr. Rupe, ordered Jews to wear arm-bands bearing the Star of David and established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which was headed by the teacher Herman Guzik. His deputy was Alter Lewkowicz. The Judenrat was required to deliver a specific number of Jewish forced laborers aged 12 to 60 each day. Soon the Judenrat permitted better-off Jews to pay for substitutes, who received 5 zloty per day. The Jews worked at the military barracks, at the train station, and for the town authority. At the end of 1939, the Germans burned down the main synagogue and also desecrated the Torah scrolls in the shtiblekh (prayer house) of the Ger Hasidim.¹

In the last months of 1939 and in 1940, some 2,500 Jewish refugees arrived in Skierniewice, almost all of them after fleeing or being expelled from those parts of Poland that had been annexed to the Reich, including from Łódź, Zgierz, Aleksandrów Łódzki, Brzeziny, and Włocławek. They arrived in a weary and impoverished condition, and the Jews of Skierniewice appealed to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) for financial assistance. The Judenrat used the money they received to supply beds and heating stoves for the refugees; it also opened an infirmary and a public kitchen for them. Subsequently these welfare services came to benefit the native Jews of Skierniewice as well, when conditions in the town deteriorated further.² By the fall of 1940, at least 1,300 Jews in Skierniewice were receiving welfare support.³

On September 9, 1940, the Skierniewice Kreishauptmann reported to Generalgouverneur Hans Frank in Kraków that 200 Jews from his Kreis had been sent to the collection point in Warsaw, for transfer to labor camps in Distrikt Lublin.⁴

On October 15, 1940, the Kreishauptmann published an announcement (*Bekanntmachung*) about the establishment of a special residential area for Jews in the town of Skierniewice. The announcement included a map, which marked the area of the ghetto. The Jews were given until November 15 to move into the ghetto, and all non-Jews also had to be evacuated by this date. The chairman of the Jewish Council was made responsible for the allocation of apartments within the ghetto. The ghetto was to be surrounded with walls, but only fences were to block those streets that formed part of the ghetto boundary.⁵

The ghetto was located in the most dilapidated neighborhood of the town. Its streets included Batory (Piotrków), Stryków, Raweska, Jawia, the alley of the rabbi's house, and the alley of the *mikveh*. Soon it was enclosed by a high fence with just one gate to either exit or enter, on Raweska Street. Piotrków Street, which passed through the ghetto, was out of bounds for the Jews; they had to cross it on a wooden bridge.⁶

Living conditions in the ghetto were very overcrowded, with three or four families sharing a house. Some houses had no heating or indoor plumbing. One survivor recalls that the outhouses were overflowing due to the lack of a proper sewage system, but the human excrement was then sold to the local farmers as fertilizer.⁷ In the ghetto there was also a unit of Jewish Police, a post office, and a Jewish hospital directed by Dr. Rosenthal.

In January or February 1941, the more than 6,000 Jews in the Skierniewice ghetto were informed that they would have to transfer to the Warsaw ghetto by March. This was part of a large-scale plan to clear all the Jews from the Kreise of Distrikt Warschau to the west of the city. Some Jews were able to transport some of their possessions with them to Warsaw on wagons rented from non-Jews. The departure took place in an orderly fashion without aggressive intervention by the German police.

On March 4, 1941, the Kreishauptmann in Skierniewice reported that in view of the planned expulsion of all the Jews of the Kreis to the Warsaw ghetto by mid-March, most of the

Jews in the Jewish residential areas (ghettos) in Skierniewice, in Jeżów, and at the Rogów railway station had voluntarily moved to Warsaw. In Skierniewice, there were now only about 180 Jews. The same report noted that in the course of the departure of the Jews in February, 6,252 people had been deloused and 6,845 had been bathed. The sanitary facilities, which had been established for the Jews, remained operational and were to be used in the future for the Aryan population. The houses abandoned by the Jews were being cleaned and disinfected by work columns supervised by the disinfection staff. The removal of the Jews had resulted in a shortage both of agricultural laborers and of craftsmen.⁸

At the time of the Jews' departure from the town, Zenon Drzewiecki, a Pole, who worked for the town's welfare administration but also had links to the Polish underground, gave temporary shelter in an Old People's Home to a number of Jews who had gone into hiding. However, it was too dangerous for them to stay there for long, and they had to be moved to safer locations.⁹

On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, most of the Jews from Skierniewice were put into improvised hostels designated for refugees. It appears that not all of the Jews from Skierniewice were registered in the group hostels, and some are known to have gone to other towns in the Generalgouvernement, such as Rawa Mazowiecka, Biała Rawska, and Przygłów, where they had relatives or contacts. A JSS report dated March 21, 1940, noted that 3,300 Jews from Skierniewice were among the more than 40,000 Jews recently arrived in the Warsaw ghetto as part of organized groups.¹⁰

A large number of the refugees from Skierniewice died of starvation and contagious diseases in the Warsaw ghetto. Some left for other places in the Generalgouvernement, and a few even returned to Skierniewice to live on the Aryan side. Many of the Skierniewice Jews in the Warsaw ghetto who survived until the summer of 1942 were among those deported to the Treblinka extermination camp at that time.

Only 43 Jews are known to have returned to Skierniewice in 1945.

SOURCES Publications concerning the fate of the Jews of Skierniewice during the Holocaust include the following: Yitshak Perlov, ed., *Seyfer Skernyevits: Le-zeykher der fartilikter kebileh kdosh* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Skernivits be-Yisrael, 1955); Danuta Dabrowska and Abraham Wein, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland, vol. 1, Lodz and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), pp. 166–171; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 720–722.

The ghetto in Skierniewice is mentioned also in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 113; and Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowinia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 212.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/633; 211/967, 1075; 301/2063; 302/213; Ring I/908); BA-BL (R 52III/29); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]); RG-14.052 [BA-BL, R 52];

RG-15.079 [Ring]); VHF (e.g., # 214, 10031, 32285); and YVA (e.g., O-3/2933, O-3/3186; O-6/21).

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/2063, testimony of Zenon Drzewiecki; 302/213, testimony of Zenon Drzewiecki; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/967, p. 2; Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 166–171.
2. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 166–171.
3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/967, p. 8. Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Provincia noc*, p. 212, give the figure of 1,500.
4. USHMM, RG-14.052 (BA-BL), R 52III/23, p. 18, Kreishauptmann Skierniewice, monthly report, September 9, 1941.
5. See Erster Bekanntmachung über die Errichtung eines besonderen Wohngebiet für Juden in der Stadt Skierniewice, October 15, 1940 (YVA, O-6/21), published in Miron, *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*, p. 721. The accompanying text, however, states only that the ghetto was established in October 1940.
6. Dabrowska and Wein, *Pinkas ha-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 1, *Lodz and Its Region*, pp. 166–171. VHF, # 214, testimony of Anna Fischer, 1994, also mentions the bridge. See also Perlov, *Seyfer Skernyevits*, pp. 456–457.
7. VHF, # 214; and # 32285, testimony of Adam Sulkowicz, 1997.
8. See USHMM, RG-14.052 (BA-BL), R 52III/29, pp. 88, 96, Kreishauptmann Skierniewice, monthly report, March 4, 1941.
9. AŻIH, 301/2063; 302/213.
10. Perlov, *Seyfer Skernyevits*, p. 431; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1075, pp. 28–29.

SOBIENIE JEZIORY

Pre-1939: Sobienie Jeziory, village, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Kreis Garwolin, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sobienie Jeziory is located 42 kilometers (26 miles) south-east of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 1,439 Jews in Sobienie Jeziory. They comprised just over 76 percent of the village's population.

The Germans established a ghetto in the village in September 1941, 11 months after Distrikt Warschau chief Ludvig Fischer's October 2, 1940, order to establish ghettos for the region's Jews.¹ The ghetto, which spanned about 75 percent of the town, covered the territory bordered by Warszawska, Piwońska, and Garwolińska Streets. Little is known about the ghetto's subsequent administration. A Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, headed by A. Friedsohn, a metal goods store owner and political activist in the interwar period. The date of its establishment is unclear. Friedsohn also headed the town's Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee.² The existence of a Jewish police force is not mentioned in known accounts of ghetto life.

The ghetto experienced population growth, as the Germans used it as a regional concentration point for Jews from neighboring towns and villages en route to extermination camps. In February 1941, 2,250 Jews were living in the village. By October 1941, a month after the ghetto's establishment, the population had expanded to 3,680. Some accounts claim the ghetto's population in the fall of 1941 was much greater, with some 6,000 residents. Greater consensus exists over the ghetto's overall population peaking at the beginning of September 1942, though here, too, population statistics differ. According to some estimates, at the end of that month, on the eve of the ghetto's liquidation, more than 8,000 people were confined there, but these figures are likely too high. Other evidence suggests that by then Sobienie Jeziory's ghetto population may have been reduced considerably, with a part of the village's Jews deported earlier. Although Sobienie Jeziory's ghetto contained escapees from larger ghettos, including the Warsaw ghetto, the overwhelming majority of its population came from the surrounding area, especially nearby villages and towns. In January 1941, Jewish residents of Sobienie Jeziory included deportees and refugees from Falenica, Wilga, Osieck, Piaseczno, Karczew, Górzno, Pilawa, Otwock, Góra Kalwaria, Garwolin, and Huta Dąbrowa.³

The 17 German policemen assigned to the local Gendarmerie post, under the leadership of Kreis commander Roechel, engaged in antisemitic acts and violence against the Jewish population and limited the access of ghetto residents to illicit food supplies. Local police officials desecrated the Jewish cemetery, ordering the removal of its headstones for the construction of a walkway and a patio at the Gendarmerie post in the pre-war Catholic parish rectory. Some eyewitnesses later attested that the local Gendarmes gathered daily "to hunt Jews on the ghetto's streets." Officers Gatzke, an ethnic German from Silesia, and Lentz gained reputations as "notorious Jew hunters," who "competed over the number they killed."⁴ As the German police unleashed random violence, they also curtailed efforts by some local Christians to supplement the ghetto's food resources. On June 15, 1942, the Germans halted the most regular of these actions, biweekly deliveries of carts of potatoes from Sobienie Szlacheckie, the estate of Sobienie Jeziory's original founder. They arrested the estate's owner, widow Countess Zofia Jezierska, and her fiancé Michał Jaczyński.⁵

Under these conditions, starvation and illness became widespread among the Jews by the summer of 1942. A young Christian observer, who crossed regularly into the ghetto to play with a Jewish school friend, reported that by mid-1942 the ghetto's streets were "littered with living corpses of bone," dying of starvation and typhus. In his opinion, hunger and disease claimed the lives of between 15 and 20 ghetto residents daily. Official post-World War II court documentation sets the figure a bit lower, claiming that between 4 and 15 residents perished each day in the ghetto.⁶

The Judenrat responded by organizing social relief. It established a hospital to accommodate the sick. It also distributed free daily dinners in a small community kitchen. The

Judenrat, though, appears to have been unable to raise levies or even secure some form of loan from the town's Jews to finance an expansion of social services. At the end of March 1941, for instance, the community kitchen could provide meals for no more than 700 residents, whereas the Judenrat saw a need to offer 1,000 such meals. In a funding request that month to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) for an expanded kitchen facility, Friedsohn explained that his village's poverty made it impossible to consider taxing the town's Jewish inhabitants. The transfer of some of the Jews to the Wilga forced labor camp, on the outskirts of Sobienie Jeziory, did reduce the number of hungry mouths in the town. But when 8 men perished there from beatings at the end of April 1941, the Judenrat communicated with an underground commission of doctors from the Warsaw ghetto, investigating conditions in forced labor camps in the region.⁷

An unknown, though relatively large, number of Jews responded to starvation either by moving to other ghettos or by leaving temporarily in search for food. In mid-1941, Jacob Epstein, an arrival from the Warsaw ghetto, quickly realized that conditions in Sobienie Jeziory—with its vigilant police force seemingly oblivious to bribes and its starving population—could not sustain the illicit activities had helped him survive in Warsaw. After just two days in the town, he arranged a pass, through his uncle, chair of the Judenrat, to stay with an aunt in Garwolin, about 22 kilometers (14 miles) east of Sobienie Jeziory.⁸ A larger portion of Sobienie Jeziory's residents who left the ghetto appear to have done so temporarily and more illicitly, usually at night, with some risking denunciation by knocking on the doors of the town's Christians to ask for food.⁹

Efforts to seek food outside the ghetto sparked violent German police reprisals and ultimately had consequences for the treatment of Jews found living outside of ghettos in the Warsaw region as a whole. In a December 22, 1941, letter to Dr. Jan Wielikowski, Warsaw-based adviser for the JSS, Friedsohn explained that “day after day” in Sobienie Jeziory “the Germans shoot Jews for having left the ghetto.” Friedsohn inquired about whether the JSS could intervene with the local police in Sobienie Jeziory so that in the future the Germans would notify the town's Judenrat of the names of the Jews they had killed and where they had buried them.¹⁰ German officials apparently exploited Friedsohn's letter to escalate violence against Jews living outside ghettos throughout the Warsaw region. On January 9, 1942, Heinz Auerswald, from April 1941 to November 1942, the commissioner for “Jewish residential districts” (ghettos) in Distrikt Warschau, circulated Friedsohn's letter as part of a longer memo in which he demanded police officials throughout the Distrikt take “effective action” against Jews found outside the ghettos.¹¹

As Friedsohn's note indicates, in Sobienie Jeziory local police rigidly enforced the shoot-to-kill orders that applied to Jews found outside of ghettos from the end of 1941. Although the list is far from complete, Poland's Institute of National Memory has documented more than 110 cases in which German police in Sobienie Jeziory murdered Jews for being out-

side the ghetto. In the largest single incident, village police officials executed more than 25 Jews from the ghetto in Otwock, 22.5 kilometers (14 miles) to the north, found hidden in underbrush outside of Sobienie Jeziory. The remaining documented executions tend to be of individuals caught searching for food beyond the ghetto's confines. Police from the local Gendarmerie, for instance, executed 4 men and 3 women in the Jewish cemetery at the end of 1941. They killed another 5 Jews—2 of them women—in the first half of 1942. In August 1942, the Germans shot 50 more Jews, including a pregnant woman, for being outside the ghetto without permission.¹²

The liquidation of Sobienie Jeziory's ghetto occurred on Sunday, September 27, 1942. At dawn, German SS surrounded the town. Police from the Gendarmerie, again supported by the SS, ordered the entire ghetto population to the main square at 9:00 A.M. Those who refused to comply were shot in their homes. At the square, one of the policemen explained that the town's Jews were to be sent to Ukraine “to work the land.” The police next collected the Jews' money and valuables. The old and infirm were then placed on wagons. From the town square, the Jews were marched to the train station in Pilawa. Guards brutally beat them along the way. Those who were unable to keep up with the column were shot, “with the entire path of the march strewn with corpses.” At the Pilawa railway station, the Germans shot Judenrat chair Friedsohn in the midst of a farewell speech “full of dramatic overtones.” Sobienie Jeziory's Jews were then loaded into trains and sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.¹³

After the ghetto's liquidation, members of the police searched for and killed Jews they found remaining in the town. In the first week, they executed at least 25 more Jews, including 11 members of the family of Wigdor Kleiman, a pre-war store owner, and 4 abandoned children. As late as January 1943, the police were still uncovering survivors in fields adjoining the village. In November 1943, a fire of suspicious origins destroyed the former ghetto. Still unknown is whether the fire was set by German police trying to root out Jewish escapees, by Poles looting the empty ghetto, or accidentally by Jews still in hiding.¹⁴

No more than 20 of Sobienie Jeziory's Jews are thought to have survived the war. Jacob Epstein, who had come from Garwolin, survived the liquidation of the region's ghettos at the home of an ethnic German on a nearby farm. Bolesław Wójcik, another Jew from Sobienie Jeziory, hid with the Polish Legat family, residents of Pilawa.¹⁵ Abram and Felicia Gwiżdża, a married couple, survived the war in Sobienie Jeziory hidden by the Grzędas, local Polish farmers. In 1941, Felicia gave birth to another survivor, their daughter, who was rescued by the family of her Polish midwife. Monko's son Mieczysław also interceded after the war to reunite the child with her parents.¹⁶ A sixth survivor, also an infant when she was surrendered by her mother to a local Polish woman, was not reunited with her family until almost 60 years after the war's conclusion. Because her parents had both perished in the Holocaust, the Polish family who had rescued the child refused to return her to a surviving aunt, Aliza Kuperman-Nachmany.

Inspired by her mother's determination to find the girl, Kuperman-Nachmany's daughter Emmunah ultimately reunited the family.¹⁷

SOURCES The largest number of eyewitness testimonies remain in the private possession of Father Jerzy Marion Cygan, who recorded them for his book *Dzieje parafii Sobienie Jeziory* (Biała Podlaska, 2001).

Documentation on Sobienie Jeziory's ghetto can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/641, 211/978, 301/5490); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 47, 211/978; RG-15.019M [ASG], reel 18, 61 [Warsaw woj.], 59, pp. 1–2; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH, AJDC], 210/641; and RG-15.079M, reel 3, Ring I/25, reel 14, I/409, and reel 22, Ring I/546); VHF (# 14342, 18718, 30190, and 43653); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. See T. Berenstein et al., eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), pp. 100–102 (in German) and p. 106 (in Polish trans.).

2. Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 461; and USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), reel 47, 211/978, “Korespondencja Prezydium ŻSS z Delegaturą ŻSS w Sobieniach Jeziorach,” pp. 1–4.

3. See T. Berenstein, “Deportacja i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskich,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 118–119. The high figure of 9,380 people comes from the 1945 questionnaire on ghettos filled out by regional administrators in Poland. This questionnaire lists the “average” number of ghetto residents in Sobienie Jeziory as 4,453 people; see USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 18, 61 (Warsaw woj.), 59 (Sobienie Jeziory), pp. 1–2. The 3,680 population figure is cited in Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 392.

4. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 18, 61/59, p. 1; Maja Jaszewska, “Trzecie pokolenie sprawiedliwych,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, July 27, 2003; Cygan, *Dzieje parafii*, p. 231.

5. Anna Poray, “Polish Righteous” (unpub. MSS, PALC).

6. H. Kowalczyk, “Wspomnienia” (unpub. MSS, PAEK), pp. 4–5; and USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 18, 61/59, p. 1.

7. USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 18, 61/59, p. 1; Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/641 (Sobienie Jeziory), pp. 1–5; RG-15.079M, reel 14, Ring I/409, “A barikht fun a lager in Sobin,” and reel 3, Ring I/26, “Relacja—wyciągi z protokołów oględzin lekarskich i zeznań w sprawie—wyciągi z protokołów oględzin lekarskich i zeznań w sprawie bicia i rozstrzeliwania więźniów w obozach pracy przymusowej: Piekło, Nakło, Wilga, Garwolin, Mordy, Łąki, Stok Ruski, Drewnica, Sobienie-Jeziory, Kałuszyn, Roztok,” p. 14.

8. VHF, # 14342, testimony of Jacob Epstein. See also USHMM, RG-15.079M, reel 22, Ring I/546.

9. Examples of individual Christian material aid to Jews who sought food outside the ghetto can be found in A. Mońka-Staniakowa, “Tajne nauczanie w Sobieniach Jeziorach,” *Szkie podlaskie* (1996): 102; and Cygan, *Dzieje parafii*, pp. 231–233.

10. The document can be found under the heading “Komisarz dzielnicy żydowskiej w Warszawie, Auerswald, do sta-

rostów powiatowych o sankcjach karnych wobec Żydów za opuszczanie gett,” in Berenstein et al., eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów*, pp. 124–125.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 124 (in Polish) and p. 125 (in German).

12. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1943: województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHWp, 1985), pp. 250–254. The execution of the Otwock escapees is covered also in J. Lempkowski, “Ród (wspomnienia)” (unpub. MSS, PAEK), pp. 219–220.

13. Kowalczyk, “Wspomnienia,” p. 5; Cygan, *Dzieje parafii*, p. 233; Mońka-Staniakowa, “Tajne nauczanie,” p. 102; B. Wójcik, “Wspomnienia lat wojny i konspiracji” (unpub. MSS, PAEK, 1973), pp. 12–13; Lempkowski, “Ród,” pp. 219–220; AŻIH, 301/5490, testimony of Drożdżasz Sura, p. 1; and USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel 18, 61/59, p. 1.

14. *Rejestr miejsc*, pp. 251, 254; Lempkowski, “Ród,” pp. 219–220; Cygan, *Dzieje parafii*, p. 233; and Mońka-Staniakowa, “Tajne nauczanie,” p. 103.

15. VHF, # 14342; and testimony of Mrs. Przychalska (Sobienie Jeziory: unpub. testimonies in the possession of Jerzy Marion Cygan). According to Przychalska, Wójcik assumed the surname of his Polish rescuers and served as head of Wilga powiat after the war.

16. Mieczysław Monko identifies the village in which he, his wife, and his mother saved the child as Sobienie Jeziory, in VHF, # 43653, testimony of Mieczysław Monko. The town is not specified in the entry in Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 2, *Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pt. 1, p. 526.

17. Kuperman-Nachmany immigrated to Israel after the war but returned regularly to Poland, with her daughter, in an unsuccessful search for her niece. The Nachmanys' story is retold in Aleksander Klugman, “Podwójna ofiara polskich Sprawiedliwych,” *Więź*, no. 7 (July 2007): 58–59; and presented in a larger historical context of the war and immediate post-war periods by Emmunah Nachmany-Gafney, *Le'avot bat-suyim: Hotsaot yeladim Yehudim mi-bate Notsrim be-Folan le-abar ha-Sboah* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005).

SOBOLEW

Pre-1939: Sobolew, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland;

1939–1944: Kreis Garwolin, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sobolew is located 18 kilometers (11 miles) south of Garwolin and 71 kilometers (44 miles) southeast of Warsaw. At the start of World War II, approximately 840 Jews were living in Sobolew, making up more than half of the village's population.

Sobolew was occupied by the Germans on September 17, 1939. Very early on in the occupation of the town, the Jews of Sobolew were summoned to the train station to hear an address from the local SS commandant in which he insulted and threatened them and stated that all of Sobolew's Jews would be dead before the Soviets would arrive to save them.¹ Following the speech, the Germans humiliated 3 esteemed Jews by chasing them through town and keeping them locked up for 10 days



A young woman wears an armband in the Sobolew ghetto, December 1942.

USHMM WS #23230, COURTESY OF KALMAN HOROWITZ

in a stable. Soon afterwards, a curfew was imposed on the Jewish residents of Sobolew, who were forbidden to be on the street after 6:00 P.M. Near the end of 1939, a 12-member Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established under the leadership of Yisrael Farber, which was responsible mainly for providing the Germans with laborers. The laborers broke stones on the road between Lublin and Warsaw and cleared away snow, among other activities.² The Judenrat included 5 Jewish policemen.

During the war, Sobolew's Jewish population grew to roughly 1,600 people, approximately 600 of whom were refugees from other towns.³ A group of over 100 Jewish families deported from Maciejowice to Sobolew on October 23, 1940,⁴ formed the largest group of refugees in the village. A letter from November 4, 1940, described the difficult conditions facing the new arrivals: "Their situation is simply desperate. They're being accommodated in attics, they're living five to six families per room. We're at a loss since all of our local aid sources have been exhausted. We remain without clothing, without shoes, and without any possibility of getting even a small piece of bread."⁵ An aid committee operated in Sobolew under the auspices of the Jewish Council and was responsible

for the care of approximately 500 individuals.⁶ The committee ran a soup kitchen and a clinic.

A ghetto was created in Sobolew in the course of 1941⁷ and may have been preceded by an open ghetto established in the fall of 1940. The ghetto housed approximately 2,000 individuals, including many Jews from nearby towns, and saw at least one outbreak of typhus.⁸ Pesakh Kuperman reports that he was able to leave the ghetto at night to sell his possessions to local Poles and to buy potatoes, flour, and bread.⁹ Moyshe Grinkorn relates that Poles smuggled bread and other food into the ghetto to sell to Jews who could afford to buy such items.¹⁰ In the summer of 1942, 17 Jews were caught while trying to cross the border of the ghetto. On the orders of Dr. Freudenthal, the head of Kreis Garwolin, the 17 fugitives were executed.¹¹ During the German occupation, an estimated 150 Jews and Poles from Sobolew and surrounding localities were executed in Sobolew and their corpses buried in a mass grave in a nearby forest.¹²

The deportation of Jews from Kreis Garwolin began in September 1942, at which time Sobolew, as the only town in the immediate area with a railway link, became a collection and transportation center. Jews from ghettos in the vicinity were brought to Sobolew and then loaded onto trains headed for the Treblinka extermination camp. Halina Cymbrowicz (née Gedanken) relates that Jews from her hometown of Żelechów were either taken by cart or, if they were able, forced to travel by foot to Sobolew.¹³ Between September 27 and 30, Jews who had been brought to Sobolew from the ghettos in Parysów, Łaskarzew, Stoczek Łukowski, and Żelechów were herded into freight cars and taken to the Treblinka extermination camp. The deportees were ordered to hand over their gold, money, and other valuables and were informed through an interpreter that noncompliance would be punished by death. As they were being loaded into the cars, "they were bludgeoned and beaten with sticks for so long that the last four didn't make it in. The doors were then closed from the outside. Barbed wire had been affixed to the upper windows beforehand."¹⁴ The liquidation of the Sobolew ghetto itself followed in October 1942, with its inhabitants likewise sent to Treblinka. It was approximately at this time as well that Jewish labor units in and around Sobolew were liquidated. Some of the prisoners who made up the labor units were killed on the spot; some were sent to Treblinka.¹⁵

In October–November 1942, following the liquidation of the ghetto, a separate remnant ghetto was established in Sobolew as a "collection point" in a German attempt to coax the remaining Jews in the area out of their hiding places. The German authorities announced that Jews who came to the ghetto would be able to live and work as normal. Estera Borensztain, a native of Sobolew hiding in the countryside at the time, returned with her mother and two younger brothers to the re-established ghetto, where they lived together with two other families in a single room: "[T]his did not, however, last very long."¹⁶ The second ghetto was liquidated in January 1943, at which time a "selection" was made: the elderly were killed immediately, while the young and able-bodied were loaded onto railcars and transported to Treblinka.

SOURCES Extensive information on Sobolew and its inhabitants before and during World War II can be found in the personal testimonies of Sobolew natives in the yizkor book, Mosheh Levani, ed., *Sefer Laskazshev un Sobolev* (Paris: Di Gezelshaft Laskazshev-Sobolev in Frankraykh, 1960).

The book by Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), contains information on Sobolew, pp. 52–53, 59–60, 68–69, 168, 206, 214.

Further information on Sobolew can also be found in Tatiana Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952); and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettoes during the Holocaust*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), pp. 732–733.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Sobolew under German occupation can be found in the following archival collections: AŻIH (210/28, 30 [AJDC]; 211/980 [JSS]; 301/2989, 5820 [Relacje]; 310/A; Ring I/851); BA-L (B 162/6820, 6822, 6876); and IPN (163/18 sygn. 42 and sygn. 61 [ASG]).

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NOTES

1. See multiple accounts in Levani, *Sefer Laskazshev un Sobolev*.
2. IPN, 163/18, sygn. 61, Kwestionariusz o obozach.
3. AŻIH, 210/28 (AJDC), Wykaz miejscowości Komitetów Pomocy, sprawozdanie z działalności V-XII 1940 r.
4. *Ibid.*, 210/30 (AJDC), Dystrykt warszawski, różne wykazy, b.d.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. The date named in various sources ranges from February to December 1941.
8. IPN, 163/18, sygn. 61, Kwestionariusz o obozach.
9. Pesakh Kuperman, “Mayne iberlebungen in di gehenem-tsaytn,” in Levani, *Sefer Laskazshev un Sobolev*, pp. 563–569.
10. Moyshe Grinkorn, “A sobolever yid ratevet zikh,” in Levani, *Sefer Laskazshev un Sobolev*, pp. 574–598.
11. BA-L, B 162/6820, p. 62.
12. IPN, 163/18 sygn. 42, Kwestionariusz o egzekucjach masowych i grobach masowych.
13. AŻIH, 301/5820, testimony of Halina Cymbrowicz.
14. BA-L, B 162/6822, pp. 10 ff, testimony of Stanisław W., November 13, 1967.
15. *Ibid.*, B 162/6876, p. 562.
16. AŻIH, 301/2989, testimony of Estera Borensztain.

SOCHACZEW

Pre-1939: Sochaczew (Yiddish: Sokhatshev), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: center of Kreis Sochaczew Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sochaczew is located 56 kilometers (35 miles) west of Warsaw. The Jewish population of the town was 2,419 (48 percent) in 1921. On the eve of World War II, the Jewish population numbered about 4,000.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS, 1933–1945

As awareness of the impending invasion and German occupation increased, local Poles affixed crosses and icons to their houses. During the first week of the war, before the German army reached Sochaczew, many Jews fled eastward towards Warsaw and beyond. About 200 made it into areas occupied by the Soviets after September 17, 1939, enabling many of them to survive the war. Sochaczew was the center of bitter fighting from September 9 to 17, 1939, in the Battle of the Bzura, as the Germans encountered stiffening resistance near Warsaw. Once the town was secured, the first victims of the occupation were elderly and sick Jews, pulled from their houses by German soldiers and murdered in cold blood. About 100 houses belonging to Jews who had fled were set on fire. At the end of September, during the festival of the Sukkot holiday, several hundred Hasidic Jews were forced onto the streets, harassed, beaten, and made to dance to the music of a band. Their beards and side locks were cut off. As the battles subsided, many who had fled returned to Sochaczew. They found their homes occupied by Poles or burned to the ground. They were forced to find shelter in cellars, attics, and storage sheds. In January 1940, 400 refugees from other towns arrived and were taken in by the Jews of Sochaczew.¹

A local ethnic German (*Volksdeutscher*), Julian Prouze, was appointed mayor of the town. An auxiliary police force (*Sonderdienst*) was recruited to assist him. Jews were kidnapped for forced labor on a daily basis. They were put to work rebuilding the damaged bridge over the Bzura River, digging canals, draining marshes, and clearing the rubble of bombed buildings (including the 700-year-old church). Some were sent to fortify an airfield at Bielice, using gravestones stolen from the Jewish cemetery. Mayor Prouze also made a profit by selling the bricks from damaged Jewish houses.² In January 1940, Prouze announced the creation of an 18-member Judenrat, drawn from a list of prominent local figures. The chairman was a merchant, Yaakov Biederman. A Jewish police unit was also established, headed by Menashe Knott.³ The Judenrat was ordered to organize the daily work assignments, but anyone who could pay 1 złoty a day to the Judenrat was left off the work roster. Tensions within the Judenrat led Biederman to resign and be replaced by Yitzhak Gelbstein, a tailor who had ingratiated himself with the Germans. Under his leadership the Judenrat extorted valuables from the Jews, supposedly to bribe the authorities, but allegedly much ended up in their own pockets.⁴

One night in January 1941, the *Sonderdienst* conducted a search of Jewish houses. They took whatever they wanted and beat the Jews brutally. They also arrested two Jews, Aharon Zelig Marienfeld and Aryeh Szmelc. According to one account, Szmelc and Marienfeld had worked together with local ethnic Germans in trading on the black market. The German police now tortured and murdered them, as they knew too much. At dawn, the German authorities ordered the Judenrat to bury their mutilated corpses in the Jewish cemetery.⁵

By mid-January 1941, plans were made to establish a ghetto in Sochaczew, following the establishment of a ghetto in Żyrardów in mid-December 1940. Since it would be too small for

the entire population, about 900 Jews were rounded up and, on January 18, 1941, sent to the Żyrardów ghetto.⁶ The Jews living in the villages of Kreis Sochaczew were also instructed by Kreishauptmann Pott to move to the ghetto in Żyrardów at this time.⁷ In Sochaczew, those who could pay the Judenrat were allowed to remain. On the next day they were resettled into the ghetto. Each person was permitted to bring along only 3 kilograms (6.6 pounds) of personal possessions.⁸ Jewish houses outside the ghetto area were burned. On January 24, the ghetto area was slightly enlarged and then enclosed with a high barbed-wire fence. It was guarded by German police on the outside and by Jewish Police within. Poles were also strictly forbidden to enter the ghetto, which covered the areas of Staszic, Toruńska, and Farnej Streets, as well as Kościuszko Square. The narrow confines of the ghetto caused overcrowding, with five people to a room and every available space put to use—storage sheds, attics, and cellars. Food was scarce and hunger widespread. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) operated a free kitchen, which provided one warm meal a day to about half of the ghetto inhabitants. The AJDC also distributed packages of clothing, food, and money.⁹

On January 31, 1941, the German authorities informed the remaining Jews that soon the ghetto would be liquidated and that they were forbidden to leave the ghetto area. The date scheduled for the expulsion from the Sochaczew ghetto was February 15–16, 1941.¹⁰ At that time, the Germans instructed all the remaining Jews in Sochaczew, about 1,800 people, to move to the Warsaw ghetto. They were permitted to take with them 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of luggage and food for two days. A few, including the Judenrat leaders and their families, were transported on wagons. The rest went on foot. In the ensuing confusion the captain of the Jewish Police, Menashe Knott, was shot by Priwer, the Gestapo commander, after a quarrel about boots that were ordered but not delivered.¹¹ In his report for February 1941, Kreishauptmann Pott noted that the Jewish real estate properties were being registered.¹²

Julian Prouze demanded that 150 Jews be brought back from Warsaw as laborers. All but 21 were sent back when the work was finished. Those who stayed worked a little longer and then were taken to the nearby forest and murdered. A number of Jews who escaped during the expulsions tried to hide in smaller towns or in the countryside. Many were children who wandered about in search of food and shelter. A bounty of liquor or sugar was offered to anyone who caught or turned in a Jew. Pits were dug in the Jewish cemetery, where they threw the bodies of those who were caught and killed. Only very few survived.¹³ The fate of the Jews sent from Sochaczew to Warsaw was the same as the others in the capital city.

The accounts in the yizkor book mention two non-Jews who sought to protect the Jews during the early months of the occupation. They were a pharmacist, Jan Silwa, who helped some to hide, and the daughter of the butcher, Balcarska, who used her influence with the German commander, Blashchik, to ease some of the restrictive conditions.¹⁴

A handful of survivors returned to Sochaczew after the war to erect a memorial on the grounds of the cemetery.

SOURCES The yizkor book, edited by A.S. Stein and Gavriel Weisman, *Pinkas Sochaczew* (Jerusalem: Former Residents of Sochaczew in Israel, 1962) in Hebrew and Yiddish, contains a number of personal accounts by survivors from the town. There is also a short article on the Jewish community of Sochaczew in Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 311–318. The book by Paweł Fijałkowski, *Żydzi sochaczewscy* (Sochaczew: Muzeum Ziemi Sochaczewskiej i Pola Bitwy nad Bzurą, 1989), has information on the ghetto on pages 22–23 and also contains a very brief summary in English. Additional information on the ghetto can also be found in the *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952); 85, 115–116; and in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 462.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Sochaczew under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., Ring I/352, 914); BA-BL (R 52III/29); IPN; USHMM (e.g., RG-14.025M; RG-15.019M; RG-15.079M [Ring I]; RG-50.120*0140); VHF; and YVA.

Samuel Fishman and Martin Dean

NOTES

1. Stein and Weisman, *Pinkas Sochaczew*, p. 729.
2. USHMM, RG-15.079M (AŻIH), Ring I/914.
3. Stein and Weisman, *Pinkas Sochaczew*, p. 730.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 414; USHMM, RG-15.079M (AŻIH), Ring I/914.
6. Mardekhai V. Bernshteyn, ed., *Pinkes Zshirardov, Amshinov un Viskit: Yizker-bukh tsu der gesbikhte fun di kebiles . . .* (Buenos Aires: Di landlayt-faraynen in Amerike, Yisroel, Frankraykh, Argentine, 1961), p. 454, mentions the arrival of 900 Jewish refugees from Sochaczew at this time.
7. *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 11, February 7, 1941.
8. Stein and Weisman, *Pinkas Sochaczew*, p. 730. According to another account by Chaim Weisz, “Dates to Remember,” from the same book, pp. 450–451, an “open ghetto” was established on November 1, 1941, and the Jews were expelled to Żyrardów on November 15, 1941. Most sources, however, seem to support the dating of these events in January and February 1941.
9. Stein and Weisman, *Pinkas Sochaczew*, p. 731.
10. USHMM, RG-15.079M (AŻIH), Ring I/352, Kreishauptmann Sochaczew-Blonie, order concerning the clearing of the Kreis of Jews, January 31, 1941; RG-50.120*0140, Oral History interview with Zeev Sheinvald, May 20, 1993, tape IV, confirms the deportation took place on February 15, 1941.
11. *Ibid.*, RG-15.079M (AŻIH), Ring I/352; Stein and Weisman, *Pinkas Sochaczew*, pp. 732, 744.
12. USHMM, RG-14.025M (BA-BL), R 52III/29, p. 95, Kreishauptmann Sochaczew-Blonie, monthly report for February 1941.
13. Stein and Weisman, *Pinkas Sochaczew*, p. 733.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 730.

SOKOŁÓW PODLASKI

Pre-1939: Sokołów Podlaski, town, initially Lublin województwo (later Warsaw województwo) Poland; 1939–1944: Sokolow, Kreis center, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Sokołów Podlaski, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sokołów Podlaski is located 102 kilometers (about 63 miles) east-northeast of Warsaw. The town was home to nearly 6,000 Jews on the eve of World War II.¹

In the first weeks of World War II, German military operations inflicted significant damage on the town, particularly on its Jewish community. On September 7, 1939, German airplanes bombarded Długa Street, killing seven or eight people. On Thursday, September 7, a larger German attack destroyed part of the town's center, killing many people, primarily Jews living on Mały Rynek, Rogowski, and Piękna Streets.

The Germans retreated from the town in the third week of September, and the Red Army briefly took over Sokołów Podlaski on September 27. A new Soviet-German agreement, however, soon returned Sokołów to German hegemony. About

1,000 of the town's Jews evacuated with the Red Army. Throughout 1940, Jews continued to cross the Bug River illegally.²

The German military returned to Sokołów on October 11, 1939, and embarked on a series of antisemitic attacks. German soldiers harassed Jews, cutting off their beards with knives. When groups of Polish youth also beat several Jews, the Germans arrested the offenders and sentenced them to six months in jail.³ German soldiers conducted numerous seizures of property in Jewish stores in November 1939, forcing many to close down.⁴ German soldiers also arbitrarily conscripted Jews for labor.⁵

German civil administrators continued in the footsteps of their military predecessors. Landrat Friedrich Schultz was appointed Kreishauptmann for Kreis Sokolow on November 11, 1939. A week later, he ordered Sokołów's mayor to arrest 15 prominent Jews and demanded the Jewish community pay a ransom of 15,000 złoty. After succeeding Schultz on June 10, 1940, the new Kreishauptmann, Reichslandwirtschaftsrat Ernst Grams, ordered city officials to dismantle the town's largest Jewish cemetery.⁶

At the end of November 1939, the town's mayor ordered the creation of a Jewish Council (Judenrat). Its first chairman, Chaim Jakob Szpadel, died soon after being nominated. Nuchym Lewin then became the Judenrat's chair. The Judenrat's labor office was headed by Icko Szlachme and Kalman Rosen. The Judenrat also created a Jewish police force, composed of about 30 officers. It was headed first by Josel Rozenswaig and later by Shwartzbard. The police also established a Jewish jail in the Bet Midrash, mainly to incarcerate those who did not pay dues demanded by the Judenrat.⁷

With the formation of the Judenrat, the Germans demanded a series of payments from Sokołów Podlaski's Jewish community. These included another contribution of 80,000 złoty in December 1939 and a third payment in January 1940 of 100,000 złoty. To secure money for these payments, the Judenrat ordered that men pay monthly dues, ranging from 700 up to 1,200 złoty.⁸

From mid-1940, the Germans undertook a series of measures that gradually established an open ghetto in Sokołów Podlaski. In the fall of 1940, to create a separate Christian neighborhood for German officials, Grams ordered the expulsion of Jews from pre-war Christian neighborhoods. Jews who lived and worked there were moved onto two streets surrounding the main synagogue, in the center of town, where most Jews had lived before the war. The order initiated the period of the so-called open ghetto. Jews were still allowed to move freely about the town, but they could not live or operate stores in Sokołów Podlaski's Christian neighborhoods. Christians who lived in the so-called Jewish neighborhood were not expelled from it.⁹

In the last days of July 1941, or perhaps on August 1, the Germans created a closed ghetto in Sokołów Podlaski. Because the town's pre-war Jewish neighborhood contained Długa Street, a major northwest-to-southeast thoroughfare connecting the town's two main non-Jewish neighborhoods, German plans might have called originally for the expulsion of Jews



Jewish survivors watch as Poles exhume a mass grave in Sokołów Podlaski, 1945.

USHMM WS #15077, COURTESY OF HYMAN KAWER

from a large part of the pre-war Jewish neighborhood and their concentration in only one of the neighborhoods divided by the street. Negotiations between the Judenrat and German officials and another round of bribes supposedly forestalled these German plans.¹⁰ Instead, to make Długa Street accessible to non-Jewish traffic, the Germans created two ghettos in Sokołów Podlaski, one of which ran east of Długa Street and the other west of the same street to the Cetynia River. The houses on both sides of Długa Street were enclosed behind barbed wire. Jews who resided in homes there were ordered to brick over windows and doors facing that street. In both ghettos, roads that formerly had intersected with Długa Street were blocked off by 3-meter-high (almost 10-foot-high) brick walls, topped with shards of broken glass.

The first ghetto, located on a large part of the western side of the pre-war Jewish neighborhood, formed a rough diamond-like shape territorially. Its extreme eastern edge was bounded by Długa Street and one side of Siedlecka Street. Its western edge was at the intersection of Bóźnicza Street and the eastern side of Winnice Street. This ghetto contained five additional streets: Szeroka, Nowa, Niecała, Szkolna, and Próżna Streets. The entrance to this first ghetto was on Bóźnicza Street. The town's second, or eastern ghetto, roughly followed the streets found within it. These included Długa, Szewski Rynek, a part of Wilczyński, Krótka, Piękna, and Przechodnia Streets. It also included Mały Rynek Street. The entrance to this second ghetto was at the intersection of Szewski Rynek and Wilczyński Streets. This ghetto was surrounded mostly by barbed wire, with a wooden fence erected around its southernmost tip. Residents could cross between the two ghettos through a passageway in the Bet Midrash, which also housed the ghetto's jail.

Jews could leave the two ghettos only with special permission. A few Poles who continued to live in the ghetto were issued special passes. Otherwise, Poles also were forbidden from entering the ghetto. Under the control of Dr. Hermann, from the Kreishauptmann's office, the ghetto was heavily guarded. Barriers were erected in front of the entrances to both ghettos. Polish (Blue) Police and German Gendarmes guarded the exterior of the ghettos' gates. Jewish policemen guarded the ghetto internally, including the passage between the two ghettos.¹¹

In September 1941, 5,080 Jews were confined to the ghetto.¹² These numbers included 684 Jews who had settled in Sokołów Podlaski by December 29, 1939, and an additional 915 Jews who had arrived there before June 1, 1940. The majority of these new arrivals had been forcibly expelled by the Germans from Kalisz, Pułtusk, Kałuszyn, and Aleksandrów Łódzki.¹³ In November 1941, the Germans also began ordering 316 Jews from villages and agricultural settlements located east and south of Sokołów Podlaski, including from Kudelczyn, Korczew, Repki, Wyrozemy, and Kowiesy, to move to the ghetto. This transfer was to be completed by December 15, 1941.¹⁴

The Judenrat faced great difficulties in finding homes for these expellees. By September 1941, rooms in the ghetto housed an average of six people.¹⁵ As the ghetto was established

around the Jewish neighborhood, most Jewish businesses continued to operate, with only a handful, including a bakery, being forced to close preexisting facilities and reopen in the ghetto. Children were sent to illicit schools, some with classes in Hebrew, others in Polish.¹⁶

Forced labor became more structured with the ghetto's closure. Six hundred residents left the ghetto daily to work at a number of Luftwaffe facilities. Another 200 Jews, employed as craftsmen at these facilities, lived there.¹⁷ In the summer and fall of 1941, town officials also conscripted 50 Jewish workers to construct walkways in the town using headstones from the Jewish cemetery on Bóźnicza Street. Another team of conscripts worked to level the cemetery.¹⁸

From the fall of 1941, an increasing number of ghetto residents, ultimately several hundred, were assigned to water irrigation work at two forced labor camps near Korczew, the first located in Szczegłacin and the second in Bartków Nowy. Initially the workers reported only for monthlong stints, receiving 10 złoty per day for their families. A supplementary bread ration was also paid for by the Judenrat from fees paid by people to be exempted from forced labor.¹⁹

The ghetto's closure nonetheless provoked unemployment, particularly among craftsmen. Two hundred tailors and 400 shoemakers lost their former Polish clientele. In September 1941, these craftsmen sought permission to establish cooperative workshops in the ghetto to fill orders from German firms and the Luftwaffe. However, the central authorities in Distrikt Warschau denied their request, and no workshops were ever established inside the ghetto.²⁰

Draconian food distribution and rationing policies pursued by Kreishauptmann Grams provoked hunger within weeks of the ghetto's closure. Because Grams had constricted deliveries of vegetables to the ghetto to 10 cartloads daily, the Judenrat could not supply ghetto residents with their full rations. Equally disconcerting was Grams's refusal in September 1941 to make available winter food rations to either Jews or Poles. Nor were the Judenrat's charity institutions able to respond to the crisis. Unable to afford to purchase food at market rates, the Judenrat's community kitchen did not reopen. Charity assistance to orphans and children continued but was circumscribed, with only orphans being fed daily. Grams did agree in late September 1941 to allow the Judenrat to bring 30 carts of vegetables daily into the ghetto and also authorized the release of food to Jewish charity organizations. But these promises were too little, too late. Large parts of the promised food remained in government and Judenrat storehouses as the onset of winter made roads impassible, preventing deliveries to the ghetto.²¹

As these policies combined to provoke hunger and a typhus epidemic in the fall and winter of 1941, scores of Jews began leaving the ghetto illicitly in search of food. A few Poles threw food items over the ghetto fence. Others agreed to receive packages sent by Jewish family members living abroad.²² Far more frequently, store owners and traders sneaked out with light industrial goods to trade for food to stock the ghetto's stores. They relied on bribes and payments—to Jewish, Pol-

ish, and German police—to get out and back into the ghetto safely. Unable to afford bribes, Jewish craftsmen took more risks when engaging in barter, as the penalty for leaving the ghetto was death. In the fall of 1941, for instance, Gendarme Edward Poppe shot a Jewish shoemaker for being outside the ghetto.²³

The Judenrat's inability to provide basic social services, its increasing corruption, and its insistence on filling forced labor quotas made it appear increasingly complicit to many ghetto residents. In the spring of 1942, Jews called up for work in the Szczegłacin labor camp discovered that the Judenrat had cut supplemental bread rations to 200 grams (7 ounces) and had opened a special store only for Judenrat employees. Feeling betrayed, the conscripts assigned to the camp refused to assemble. The Jewish Police went from house to house, beating those participating in the protest.²⁴ In December 1941, moreover, the Judenrat had assigned 15 young workers to labor duties at the Treblinka labor camp, located just 34 kilometers (21 miles) north of Sokołów Podlaski. About half of them perished at the camp. When most of the survivors returned home as invalids, wounded by frostbite, it seemed unthinkable that the Judenrat would continue to draft workers for labor assignments there. Then, in early June, workers from Sokołów Podlaski were called up to construct the Treblinka extermination camp. The men sent there failed to return home.²⁵

By the summer of 1942, the ghetto's Jews, fearing a larger roundup, began formulating strategies to avoid deportation to Treblinka. A number started building hiding places in their homes. Others either paid the Judenrat premiums to secure agricultural work or voluntarily signed up for work at Szczegłacin, believing it was safer than remaining in the ghetto.²⁶ On August 24, 1942, posters appeared in the ghetto containing orders, signed by Grams, limiting entry there to registered residents and voiding all Jewish travel passes.²⁷ Some ghetto residents opted to remain at the estates where they had been working, and others decided to surrender their children to Polish Christians.²⁸

The extermination of Sokołów Podlaski's Jews began early on September 22. That day, local German police and security forces (Gestapo and Kripo), an auxiliary SS Ukrainian detachment, and Polish (Blue) Police surrounded the ghetto. As elsewhere in Kreis Sokolow, the roundup of the ghetto's Jews was bloody, because many residents—about 2,000 out of 6,000 people—did not assemble at the market square, choosing instead to hide. In the searches that followed, between 1,500 and 2,000 Jews found in hiding places were shot. The Germans selected between 100 and 120 Jews from those at the square to form a postliquidation labor force. The remainder of the town's Jews, between 4,000 and 5,000 people, were marched to the train station and deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.²⁹

The Germans exterminated the surviving remnants of Sokołów Podlaski's Jewish community over the next two months. Six days after the ghetto's liquidation, German officers rounded up Jews who worked and lived at the town's military facilities, with only those who labored at the military

hospital escaping death. That same evening, on September 26, 1942, the head of the Distrikt Warschau Sonderkommando shot 4 members of the Judenrat, including its chair, Lewin.³⁰ The Germans liquidated the two forced labor camps in Szczegłacin and at Bartków Nowy on October 22, 1942. The Jews conscripted there at the time of the liquidation were shot and buried in a mass grave.³¹ Those Jews who worked at Sokołów's German military hospital were shot on November 7.³² Before the end of November, the Germans assembled the about 100 Jews from the ghetto's postliquidation labor force and shot almost all of them. A few surviving members of the Judenrat and of the Jewish Police are thought to have been sent to the Treblinka labor camp. The last remaining groups of Jewish forced laborers from Sokołów were murdered in March 1943.³³ In March 1944, a Sonderkommando 1005 unit exhumed the bodies of the Jews killed in Sokołów Podlaski during the ghetto's liquidation. They were transported to Węgrów and burned there in a makeshift crematorium.³⁴

Not more than 50 of the ghetto's residents are thought to have survived the ghetto's liquidation. Two of them, Reuwen Rozenberg and Anszel (Antshel) Fabiarz, had joined the partisans operating in the forests outside of Sokołów.³⁵ Hersh Biderman, his young son, and two sisters were hidden by the Jaworski family, Biderman's pre-war friends.³⁶ The Pietraszko family, overseers of the Czekanów estate in Jabłonna Lacka civil parish, hid 16 Jews from the Sokołów ghetto, many of whom had been working in agriculture during the ghetto's liquidation.³⁷ Shaindla Lender, Golda Hochberg, and Perl Morgenshtern, who had survived the liquidation of the Szczegłacin forced labor camp, secured Polish work papers from Kazimierz Miłobędzki.³⁸

Sokołów Podlaski's Jewish community was not reconstituted. After several postwar incidents during the Polish Home Army's insurgency against the postwar Communist government, including the deaths of 10 Jews in Kosów Lacki, survivors began leaving the country, immigrating to France, Israel, Argentina, Nicaragua, and the United States.

SOURCES Published primary sources include memoirs by Marian Pietrzak, *Sokołów Podlaski dawniej i dziś* (Sokołów Podlaski: Czar-Media, 2002); and Zdzisław Rozbici, "To widziały oczy moje," in Wiktoria Liwowska, ed., *Czarny rok . . . czarne lata* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Dzieci Holocaustu w Polsce, 1996). A number of yizkor books commemorate the town's Jewish past: *Yoyvl-bukh: Gevidmet dem ondenken fun di kdoysbim un martirer fun Sokolov* (New York: Di Sosayeti, 1946); *Mayn borev shtetl Sokolov: Schilderungen, bilder un portretn fun a shtot ungekumene Yidn* (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-Farband fun Poylishe Yidn in Argentine, 1946); *In shtotn fun Treblinka (kburbn Sokolov-Podliaski)* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yots'e Sokolov-Podliaski be-Yisrael, 1957); *Sefer ha-zikaron. Sokolov-Podliask* (Tel Aviv: Yots'e Sokolov-Podliask be-Yisrael, Sokolover Landsmanshaft in Amerike, 1962); as well as the account in Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 339–342, available in two different English translations in Arnon Rubín, ed., *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics*

Today, vol. 2, *District Lublin* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2007), pp. 260–264; and a second version online on the Jewishgen Web site at www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00339.html.

Documentation on the Jewish community of Sokołów Podlaski during the Holocaust can be found at APSi; AŻIH (e.g., 301/1186, 301/2505, 301/3079, 301/3979, 301/4085, 301/4507); BA-L (e.g., B 162/6843); FVA (e.g., # HVT-2318); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC], 210/646; Acc.1997.A.0124 [ŻSS], reel 8, 211/129, pp. 40–47; RG-15.019M [ASG], reel 19, 45 [Warsaw woj.], 244 [Sokołów Podlaski]; Acc.1998.A.0017 [e.g., Aaron Elster Memoir]; and RG-50.488*0171 [e.g., Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project—Kazimierz Miłobędzki interview]); and VHF (e.g., # 08257, 10131, 23494).

Edward Kopówka and Laura Crago

NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/3979, testimony of Szepesl Grynberg, p. 1 (typescript).
2. Ibid. See also VHF, # 08527, testimony of Aaron Elster; # 23494, testimony of Pearl (Morgenstern) Newman; and # 10131, testimony of Fay (Rothstein) Kief.
3. AŻIH, 301/4085, testimony of Josek (also Josef or Józef) Kopytko, pp. 10–12.
4. Ibid., 301/3979, p. 3.
5. Ibid., 301/4085, pp. 6–7.
6. Ibid., 301/3979, pp. 2–3; and Pietrzak, *Sokołów*, pp. 34–35.
7. “Sokołów Podlaski,” in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, p. 263; and AŻIH, 301/3979, pp. 2–5; and 301/4085, pp. 1–2.
8. AŻIH, 301/4085, pp. 7–8; 301/3979, p. 5; and VHF, # 10131.
9. The period of the so-called open ghetto is covered in “Sokołów Podlaski,” in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, p. 263; and Edward Kopówka, “Getto w Sokołowie Podlaskim,” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, no. 3 (2005): 376–377.
10. AŻIH, 301/3979, pp. 3–4. This source states that the Germans later decreased the ghetto’s size several times.
11. Physical descriptions of the shape of the ghetto can be found in VHF, # 10131; AŻIH, 301/3979, pp. 3–4; 301/4085, pp. 50–51; Pietrzak, *Sokołów*, pp. 20–23; and Kopówka, “Getto,” pp. 376–377. Regarding the date of the ghetto’s enclosure, see USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel # 8, 211/129, p. 40.
12. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel # 8, 211/129, p. 40.
13. T. Berenstein, “Deportacja i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952): 124–125. See also USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154, 210/646 (Sokołów Podlaski), pp. 1–13.
14. For the local deportations, see Tatiana Berenstein, et al., eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*. Zbiór dokumentów (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), p. 278 (in German) and p. 279 (in Polish); and APSi, Akta Miasta Węgrów, 46, Korespondencja ogólna. Rok 1941, Okólnik nr. 50 z dn. 9 grudnia 1941, signed by Dr. Hermann, p. 45.
15. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel # 8, 211/129, p. 41.
16. VHF, # 10131; and Pietrzak, *Sokołów*, pp. 22–23.
17. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel # 8, 211/129, pp. 40–41.
18. Pietrzak, *Sokołów*, pp. 34–35. See also AŻIH, 301/3979, p. 3.
19. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel # 8, 211/129, p. 43. See also, for example, Edward Kopówka, “Obozy pracy przymusowej w Szczegłacinie i Bartkowie Nowym k. Siedlec,” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, no. 4 (2002): 515–519.
20. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel # 8, 211/129, pp. 41–44, 46.
21. Ibid., pp. 41–42, and reel # 45, 211/950 (Siedlce), pp. 13, 30–46.
22. On the typhus epidemic, see K. Witt, “Sokołów Podlaski w latach 1939–1950,” in Józef Kazimierski, ed., *Dzieje Sokołowa Podlaskiego i jego regionu* (Warsaw: PWN, 1982), p. 219. Christian assistance to Jews is covered in the eyewitness account by Zdzisław Rozbici, “To widziały oczy moje,” in Wiktoria Liwowska, ed., *Czarny rok . . . czarne lata* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Dzieci Holocaustu w Polsce, 1996), p. 392.
23. Pietrzak, *Sokołów*, pp. 19–20; VHF, # 08257, and FVA, # HVT-2318, Irene B. Holocaust testimony.
24. AŻIH, 301/4085, pp. 13–14.
25. Ibid., pp. 4, 50; and 301/1186, testimony of Szmul Miedziński, pp. 1–3.
26. VHF, # 08257; # 23494; and FVA, # HVT-2318. See also AŻIH, 301/2505, testimony of Józef Kopytko, p. 1 (Polish typescript).
27. APSi, 48, Zbiór afiszów okupacyjnych pow. Sokołów Podlaski.
28. VHF, # 08257; FVA, # HVT-2318; and AŻIH, 301/4085, pp. 22–23.
29. Eyewitness accounts of the liquidation of Sokołów Podlaski’s ghetto include AŻIH, 301/4085, pp. 22–49, 53; 301/3979, p. 5; 301/4507, testimony of Alek Hamburger, pp. 1–4; USHMM, Acc.1998.A.0017, Aaron Elster memoir, pp. 2–3; VHF, # 08257; # 10131; BA-L, B 162/6843, Deposition of Smicha P., March 13, 1962, p. 24, and Deposition of Szabtaj G., March 28, 1962, p. 32; and Rozbici, “To widziały,” pp. 393–394. See, as well, USHMM, RG-15.019M, (ASG), reel 19, 45/244, pp. 1–2.
30. AŻIH, 301/3979, p. 4; VHF, # 10131; and the controversial memoir, parts of which have been republished in Józef Górski, “Na przełomie dziejów,” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i materiały*, no. 2 (2006): 288–291.
31. AŻIH, 301/4085, pp. 39–40; and VHF, # 23494.
32. AŻIH, 301/4507, p. 2.
33. For brief discussions of the fates of Jews in the postliquidation ghetto, see VHF, # 08257; # 23494; USHMM, Acc.1998.A.0017, p. 4; and FVA, # HVT-2318.
34. Pietrzak, *Sokołów*, pp. 42–43, 45–46.
35. “Sokołów Podlaski,” in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, p. 264; and AŻIH, 301/3079, testimony of Abraham (or Antshel) Fabiarz, pp. 6–8 (typescript).
36. VHF, # 08257; USHMM, Acc.1998.A.0017, pp. 3–4; and Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 2, *Poland*, 2 pts. (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pt. 1, pp. 309–310. See also VHF, # 10131.
37. AŻIH, 301/4085, pp. 75–114.
38. For Miłobędzki, see USHMM, RG-50.488*0171, Polish Witnesses to the Holocaust Project, testimony of Kazimierz Miłobędzki; VHF, # 23494; Joanna Lenart, “Sprawiedliwy z Sokołowa,” *Przegląd*, no. 48 (102) (November 26, 2001): 30–31; and Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 518–519, and pp. 83–84, for Bednarz.

STANISŁAWÓW (MAZOWIECKI)

Pre-1939: Stanisławów, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Stanisławów, Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Stanisławów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Stanisławów is located 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) north of Mińsk Mazowiecki. According to the 1921 census, there were 495 Jews living in Stanisławów, representing approximately one quarter of the village population.

In May 1940, the self-help committee, which was affiliated with the Jewish Council (Judenrat), reported the arrival of several refugee families from Łuszcz and Warsaw. The committee opened a soup kitchen, which, due to financial problems, closed soon afterwards.

That same month, the Judenrat dismissed three non-Judenrat members of the committee (A. Miodowski, I. Żółty, and M. Berger), “due to misunderstandings existing between members of the committee.” The trio was replaced by Benjamin Kaufman, Rafał Stokowski, and Chaim Płatkiewicz, all of whom were members of the Judenrat. Menachem Gelbard chaired the committee. Other members of the committee included Jankiel Warszawski (deputy), Pejsach Jakubowski, and Szlama Zylbernagel. The last four committee members were likely Judenrat members as well; Gelbard was possibly the Judenrat chairman.¹

The existence of a ghetto in Stanisławów is mentioned for the first time in a German report of March 3, 1942, on the concentration of Jews in Kreis Minsk Mazowiecki, which states that in November 1941, 32 Jews from Glinianki and 33 from Dęby Wielkie “were resettled to a Jewish quarter in Stanisławów.”² Secondary sources report that there were either 400 or 700 Jews assembled in the Stanisławów ghetto.

There are no details available about life in the ghetto. Its survivors do not mention any physical enclosure or penalty for leaving it—for example, the memoir of Brandla Bronka Siekierkowa (Siekierka). Three members of the Siekierka family, who reached Stanisławów at the beginning of September 1942, never refer to it as a ghetto but describe it as a place where Jews were concentrated after the liquidation of the ghettos in Mińsk Mazowiecki and other nearby towns: “The Germans announced to all corners that in Stanisławów the Jews will remain alive, [and therefore] they should come out of their hiding places, that they will get a job, and will be able to live.”³

In the first part of September 1942, approximately 500 Jews from the nearby Dobre ghetto were ordered to be transferred to Stanisławów. Sonia Powronzek described the living conditions there upon her arrival: “There was a terrible crush in Stanisławów because the Jews from surrounding towns and villages were deported there. Several families shared two rooms.”⁴ A number of the ghetto residents were selected for labor at the Rokman (or Rekman) Company in Siedlce, where they worked on the railway tracks.⁵

The liquidation of the Stanisławów ghetto was unannounced; nonetheless, as Mojsze Siekierka testified, the Jews sensed it

coming after laborers were released by the Rokman Company. The town was surrounded at night by the German Gendarmerie and Polish (Blue) Police. The Siekierka family, whose house bordered the Aryan side, managed to flee after being warned by a Pole.⁶

A number of the ghetto survivors (e.g., Brandla Siekierkowa, Fala Róża, and Berek Róża) date the liquidation on the first day of the Sukkot holiday, September 25, 1942. It was on that day that the community was deported to the Treblinka extermination camp.⁷

SOURCES The fate of the Jews of Stanisławów during the Holocaust is mentioned briefly in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 467; and Barbara Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego,” in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leo-ciak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 215–216.

The following archival sources were used to prepare this entry: AŻIH (210/651 [AJDC]; 211/987 [JSS]; 301/3338, 301/3681, 301/4098, 301/4380, 301/5108 [Relacje]; 302/123 [Pamiętniki]); and USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [AŻIH, JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AŻIH, AJDC]; RG-02.208 [AŻIH, Pamiętniki]; RG-15.084 [AŻIH, Relacje]).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/651 (Stanisławów), pp. 1, 3–4.
2. T. Berenstein, A. Eisenbach, and A. Rutkowski, eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), Document 145, pp. 278–279.
3. AŻIH, 302/123 (Pamiętniki), Brandla Bronka Siekierkowa (Siekierka), III zeszyt, pp. 47–56; 301/4098 (Relacje), testimony of Mojsze Siekierka, 1949; 301/3681 (Relacje), Władysław Siekierka, 1948.
4. Ibid., 301/3338 (Relacje), testimony of Stanisław Słomkowski aka Dawid Słoń, 1948; and 301/4380 (Relacje), testimony of Sonia Powronzek, 1949 (note that Powronzek testified that there was no ghetto in Dobre).
5. Ibid., 301/4098.
6. Ibid.; 301/3338; 301/3681; 302/123; and 301/4158, testimony of Brandla Siekierka, 1949.
7. Ibid., 301/5108 (Relacje), testimony of Fala Róża and Berek Róża, undated; 302/123; 301/4158.

STERDYŃ

Pre-1939: Sterdyń (Yiddish: Sterdin or Esterdin), village, initially Lublin województwo (later Warsaw województwo) Poland; 1939–1944: Sterdyn, Kreis Sokolow, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Sterdyń, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Sterdyń (or Sterdyń-Osada, as it was formally known) is located 21 kilometers (13 miles) north of Sokołów Podlaski and

9.7 kilometers (6 miles) east of Kosów Lacki. On the eve of World War II, 686 Jews lived in Sterdyń. They comprised 87.5 percent of the village population.¹

The Germans occupied Sterdyń on September 14, 1939, the evening of Rosh Hashanah. They immediately began breaking into the town's Jewish stores to rob them of their merchandise. German military authorities also closed the village's synagogue. The German occupation left the village without its rabbi. In Otwock at a sanitarium caring for his dying father when the war broke out, Rabbi Morgenstern did not return to Sterdyń after the Germans closed its synagogue. Instead, he moved to Warsaw, probably to attend to his father's burial. In November 1939, the Germans ordered Sterdyń's Jews to nominate a Judenrat. The six- to eight-person Judenrat, composed of the Jewish community's elders, included Shaja Winograd. The Judenrat created a 10- to 12-member Jewish police force, led by Trębacz.²

During the war, voluntary and forced Jewish migration doubled Sterdyń's Jewish community. In September and November 1939, many families with ties to Sterdyń flocked there from larger cities, including Warsaw, believing it would be easier in wartime to find food in a small agricultural village. During the winter of 1939–1940, the Germans forcibly deported to Sterdyń about 800 Jews, mostly from Kalisz.³ In December 1941 and January 1942, the Germans expelled to Sterdyń another 103 Jews from the nearby civil parish of Jabłonna Lacka and from the settlement at Chruszczewka.⁴ The Judenrat found housing for the refugees. In January 1940, it also provided more than 300 subsidized meals and organized a shoe drive for them.⁵

The Germans also ordered the Judenrat to fill regular forced labor quotas. The village's Jews were conscripted for agricultural labor at several nearby estates expropriated by the Germans. Some also worked draining swamps in Łęki.⁶

Appointed Kreishauptmann Sokolow, Reichslandwirtschaftsrat Ernst Grams, on June 10, 1940, created an open ghetto in Sterdyń. From January 1941, Jews living there were forbidden to leave the village without special permission. Grams appears to have intended for the ghetto to be enclosed. In a February 1, 1941, report, he stated that Sterdyń was one of six places in his county in which Jews had been concentrated and promised to close the ghettos in all of these places as soon as weather permitted.⁷ Grams never implemented this plan fully. In Sterdyń, the ghetto remained unfenced, with Jews there confined to the village.⁸

Forewarned by local Poles several days before Yom Kippur 1942 about German plans to liquidate Sterdyń's ghetto, the Judenrat announced the impending liquidation of their community on September 22. About 700 of the village's 1,200 Jews found hiding places in forests, villages, and estates surrounding Sterdyń. When the Germans arrived the next morning to liquidate the ghetto, they found only 500 of the village's Jews there. Those who did not seek shelter were marched, on foot by some accounts, to their deaths at the Treblinka extermination camp, located 26.3 kilometers (16 miles) northwest of Sterdyń. Over the next two days, the Germans extricated

between 270 and 300 Jews from hiding places. These Jews were shot in Sterdyń and buried in a mass grave there.⁹

Beginning in the winter of 1942–1943, the Germans embarked on a series of measures to find Jews from Sterdyń still in hiding. To discern where Jews were sheltered, the Germans planted at least one agent in the forest surrounding part of the town. Based on his information, the Germans began rounding up and executing Jews who had survived the ghetto's liquidation. In March and April 1943, for instance, the Germans murdered 1 Jewish woman and 3 Jewish children. In the autumn, German Gendarmes executed 40 Jewish men, women, and children.¹⁰ The Germans simultaneously took punitive measures against Poles known to be hiding Jews from Sterdyń. The best documented of these reprisal Aktions was on February 24, 1943, at the Paulinów estate just south of Sterdyń. There the Germans shot 10 Poles suspected of providing food and shelter to Jews from Sterdyń.¹¹ From March 25 to April 23, 1943, the Germans executed as many as 47 other Poles and may have arrested 140 others suspected of rendering assistance to Sterdyń's Jews.¹² These reprisals, coupled as they were with similar punitive actions in Sądowne, near the Łochów and Stoczek Węgrowski ghettos, provoked many Polish villagers to renege on promises of assistance they had extended to Sterdyń's Jews. Following the reprisals, some Poles purportedly murdered Jews they had agreed initially to protect.¹³

Under these conditions, fewer than 30 of Sterdyń's Jews survived the war. These included Regina "Rivka" Rosenberg, born in Wyszaków, whose family had moved in with the family of her uncle and aunt in Sterdyń at the end of September 1939. Also counted among the survivors are 5 members of Zila Fuchs's family, escapees of the ghetto at Kosów Lacki, who sought shelter in their pre-war village of Nowe Mersy, 2.5 kilometers (1.5 miles) northwest of Sterdyń, with the family of Erazm "Razek" Augustyniak, a former employee of Zila's father.¹⁴ Twenty partisans led by Pinchas Lerman, from Sterdyń, survived the war in the nearby forest. This group also included escapees from the August 1943 Treblinka uprising.¹⁵

Sterdyń's Jewish community was not reconstituted after the war. About 20 survivors gathered initially in the home of Rosenberg's uncle in Sterdyń. They dispersed within a month of liberation in August 1944, moving to other towns, before leaving Poland mainly for Israel and the United States.

SOURCES A number of important published sources are available, including "Sterdyń Sokołowski," *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 14, February 18, 1941, p. 7; Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ha-kehilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), p. 350, available in English translation in Arnon Rubin, ed., *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 2, *District Lublin* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2007), pp. 264–265; and Zila Fuks, *Ze'akot lelo kol* (Tel Aviv: I.L. Peretz Publishing, 1988), a chapter of which appears in English translation as "Life in Hiding: Razek's Barn. An Excerpt from *Silent Screams*," in Esther Fuks, ed., *Women and the Holocaust: Narrative and Representa-*

tion (Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1999), pp. 127–134.

Documentary evidence for the Jewish community of Sterdyń during the Holocaust can be found at AŻIH (e.g., 301/4174 and 4771); USHMM (e.g., RG-15.019M [ASG, reel 13, vol. 44, pp. 736–737]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]); and VHF (e.g., # 33494, 41841).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/4174, testimony of Abraham Sukno, pp. 1–2.
2. Ibid.; VHF, # 33494, testimony of Perl (Morgenstern) Newman; # 41841, testimony of Regina “Rivka” Rosenberg.
3. AŻIH, 301/4174, pp. 2–3, 6; and VHF, # 41841.
4. See T. Berenstein et al., eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), p. 278 (in German) and p. 279 (in Polish).
5. “Sterdyń Sokołowski,” p. 7.
6. AŻIH, 301/4174, pp. 3–4; and VHF, # 41841.
7. On the creation of six regional concentration points for the Jews in Kreis Sokolow, see Document # 45 in Berenstein et al., *Eksterminacja Żydów*, p. 108. This report also includes mention of the provisions that prohibited Jews from leaving the towns to which they had been confined.
8. VHF, # 41841.
9. Ibid.; AŻIH, 301/4174, pp. 8–9; and USHMM, RG-15.019M (ASG), reel # 13, vol. 44 (Warsaw woj.), pp. 736–737 (Sterdyń-Osada). The postwar Polish court documentation for Sterdyń claims that between September 23 and 24, 1942, the Germans murdered 393 Jews, Poles, and Soviet POWs in and around Sterdyń-Osada. However, some of the Poles and Soviet POWs probably were murdered in subsequent German punitive actions. The figure cited here for the number of Jews killed in Sterdyń during the ghetto liquidation comes from AŻIH documentation.
10. *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHwP, 1985), p. 268.
11. More information on the Paulinów pacification is provided in Wacław Piekarski, *Obwód Armii Krajowej Sokołów Podlaski ‘Sęp’ ‘Praso,’ 1930–1944* (Warsaw, 1991), pp. 26–27; the article in the nationalist *Głos Pracy*, May 13, 1943 (no. 20), reprinted in Paweł Szapiro, ed., *Wojna żydowsko-niemiecka. Polska prasa konspiracyjna 1943–1944 o powstaniu w getcie Warszawy* (London: Aneks, 1992), p. 163; Wacław Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), pp. 199–200, 228; and The Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against the Polish Nation, IPN, and the Polish Society for the Righteous Among Nations, *Those Who Helped. Polish Rescuers during the Holocaust*, 2 pts. (Warsaw, 1996), pt. 2, pp. 79, 102, 124–125.
12. The figure of 47 is from Mariusz Bechta, *Rewolucja—mit-bandytyzm* (Warsaw and Białą Podlaska, 2000), p. 83; and Piekarski, *Obwód*, p. 37. See also Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, p. 228.
13. VHF, # 41841.
14. Fuks, “Life in Hiding: Rzek’s Barn,” pp. 127–134; and Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*,

vol. 2, *Poland*, 2 pts. (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pt. 1, pp. 61–62. Also useful is the account by Fuchs’s daughter Esther Fuchs, “Exile, Daughterhood, and Writing. Representing the Shoah as a Personal Memory,” in Ronit Lentin, ed., *Re-presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), pp. 253–268.

15. AŻIH, 301/4771, testimony of Pinchas Lerman, pp. 1–3. See also Shmuel Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed. Jewish Armed Resistance in Poland, 1942–1944* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1984), p. 244.

STOCZEK ŁUKOWSKI

Pre-1939: Stoczek Łukowski, town, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Stoczek Łukowski, Kreis Garwolin, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Stoczek Łukowski, Lublin województwo, Poland

Stoczek Łukowski is located about 75 kilometers (47 miles) southeast of Warsaw, on the Świder River. In 1939, the population figure was 4,118, with around 60 percent being Jews.

Stoczek felt the first effects of the war as early as September 10, 1939, when the Germans began bombing the town. With the arrival of the Wehrmacht two days later, a catastrophic fire broke out in which 80 percent of the predominantly wooden buildings, including the synagogue, burned to the ground. In the following two years, these structures were replaced by barrackslike buildings.¹

One of the first steps taken by the new holders of power was to change the administrative affiliation of the town; previously part of the Lublin województwo, it now was assigned to Kreis Garwolin within Distrikt Warschau.² Until April 1941, the Kreishauptmann—and therefore the person with local responsibility for Jewish policy in the first years of the war—was Dr. Hans Klein. He was succeeded by Dr. Carl Freudenthal, who was notable for his especially radical policy regarding the local inhabitants.³



The burned-out Jewish quarter in Stoczek Łukowski, after September 12, 1939.

USHMM WS #49699, COURTESY OF TOM SALMON

In the very first months of the occupation, the Jews were subjected to persecution by the National Socialists, including not only registration but also seizure of assets and robbery. In addition, a curfew was introduced.⁴ In 1939, there were about 2,200 Jews living in Stoczek, and by November 1940 that number had declined to 1,956, as many took flight, mainly heading eastward towards the Soviet-occupied regions of Poland. At the same time, there were already 225 Jewish expellees living in the town, most of whom had been forced out of the neighboring village of Prawda and were compelled to resettle resulting from an Aktion that took place on December 13, 1940.⁵ Even in late January 1941, the figure of approximately 2,000 Jews in Stoczek still remained valid.⁶ Because the Nazi holders of power sought to concentrate the Jewish population still further, however, new refugees from other places in Kreis Garwolin soon arrived. By July 1941, the number of Jews in Stoczek had risen to 2,450, and in April 1942, it reached 2,950⁷ (by other estimates, 3,300), around 15 percent of all the Jews in Kreis Garwolin.⁸

In the fall of 1940, the Jews in Stoczek were moved into an open, unfenced ghetto; they were not allowed to leave this area, however.⁹ More precise information regarding the date on which the ghetto was established is not available, as is quite frequently the case in Distrikt Warschau.¹⁰ Nonetheless, certain particulars of Jewish life under the occupation can be provided. For example, it is known that the Judenrat, which was created by the Germans in late 1939 or early 1940, soon set up a Jewish social welfare relief committee, which organized distributions of goods to 600 needy people, thanks to support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), and also issued 500 daily food rations through a distribution office.¹¹

The relief committee was headed by Aron Heller, the chairman of the Judenrat, a 60-year-old businessman who had played a role in Stoczek's public life as a juror before the war.¹² Heller also represented Stoczek as the official Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) delegate in Kreis Garwolin, where he was assisted by Wolf Tykociński. At the municipal level, the JSS committee, which also organized special collections in winter, included other Judenrat members as well: Heller's deputy, Szmuel Nachtajfer, who was a shoemaker, and the trader Lejb Perkal and baker Majer Szulim Goldschmidt, who had been town councilmen in Stoczek before the war and thus were among the local notables.¹³

Stoczek Łukowski was the first ghetto in Kreis Garwolin to be liquidated in the course of Aktion Reinhard. Around September 18, 1942, the Jews, in a brutal Aktion, were driven on foot by German, Ukrainian, and Polish policemen and SS units towards the ghetto of Parysów, a good 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) to the west. Around 200 of them were shot before leaving Stoczek or along the route of their march. From Parysów, a few days later, the Germans deported the Jews to the Treblinka extermination camp.¹⁴

SOURCES Relevant facts and sparse details on Stoczek can be found in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz

Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), and T. Berenstein, "Deportacje i zagłada skupisk Żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim," *BŻIH*, no. 3 (1952): 83–125. Further information, based on survivor testimonies at Yad Vashem, is available in Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 2, *District Lublin* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2007). A book on the town's history widely ignores its Jewish inhabitants: Adam Budzyński and Józef Filipczuk, *Stoczek Łukowski. Z dziejów miasta* (Stoczek Łukowski: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Stoczka, 1996), but it is useful for a general assessment.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Stoczek can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/28, 211/399); BA-L (B 162/6816); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]); and YVA (O-3 and O-93; O-4/334).

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NOTES

1. See Budzyński and Filipczuk, *Stoczek*, p. 119 ff.
2. See Berenstein, "Deportacje," p. 84.
3. See Markus Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen Kreisbaupfleute im besetzten Polen—Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte* (Göttingen, 2009), pp. 146, 442.
4. See Rubin, *Rise*, p. 266.
5. See Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, "'Akcja Reinhard' w gettach prowincjonalnych dystryktu warszawskiego 1942–1943," in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, pp. 39–74, here p. 59.
6. AŻIH, 211/399, letter from the Stoczek Judenrat to JSS Kraków, January 26, 1941.
7. See Berenstein, "Deportacje," p. 118.
8. See Barbara Engelking, "Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego," in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, pp. 119–221, here p. 214. On the total number in the Kreis, see AŻIH, 211/399, Letter from the Stoczek Judenrat to JSS Kraków, January 26, 1941.
9. Engelking, "Życie codzienne Żydów," p. 214.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 168–169.
11. AŻIH, 210/28, AJDC index of places for Distrikt Warschau, May–December 1940.
12. *Ibid.*, 211/399, Correspondence between the JSS Kraków and the Judenrat in Stoczek Łukowski from October 1940 to February 15, 1941.
13. *Ibid.*, List of candidates for the JSS elections in Garwolin, February 1941.
14. BA-L, B 162/6816, p. 21, statement of Jakob F., May 30, 1962, as cited in Młynarczyk, "'Akcja Reinhard,'" p. 60; Berenstein, "Deportacje," p. 118.

STOCZEK WĘGROWSKI

Pre-1939: Stoczek Węgrowski (Yiddish: Stok bey Vengrov), village, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Stoczek-Węgrowski, Kreis Sokolow, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Stoczek, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Stoczek Węgrowski is located about 70 kilometers (44 miles) northeast of Warsaw. In 1921, there were 1,221 Jews living there out of a total population of 1,636.

On September 10, 1939, German forces bombarded the town, setting on fire the synagogue and destroying most of the houses. Many Jews fled into the fields in panic and on their return discovered that their homes and possessions were lost. The Germans first entered Stoczek a few days later but soon retreated under the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact; then the town was briefly occupied by the Red Army in the second half of September. A number of young Jewish men exploited this opportunity and escaped across the Soviet border, before the Germans returned again about two weeks later, after the Nazi-Soviet agreement had been revised. Subsequently, Jewish refugees from all over Poland also came to the region, with the aim of crossing into the Soviet Union. However, border security was considerably tightened by 1940, causing some of the refugees to settle in Stoczek.¹

In the first weeks of the occupation, Germans, assisted by some local hooligans, looted what remained in Jewish homes and stores. By early in 1940, the German authorities had established a Jewish Council (Judenrat) and a Jewish police force to assist with the enforcement of anti-Jewish decrees and demands. At least one account in the *yizkor* book speaks bitterly of the behavior of the members of these institutions, as they sometimes arrested fellow Jews and also extracted onerous taxes from them. The account's author refuses to mention their names.²

In a February 1, 1941, report, the Kreishauptmann Sokolow, Reichslandwirtschaftsrat Ernst Grams, stated that Stoczek was one of six concentration points for Jews (*Judenwohnbezirke*) in the Kreis. He intended to enclose these ghettos as soon as the weather permitted. Any Jews remaining in the villages were to be moved to one of these six concentration points. From February 1941, the Germans forbade Jews from leaving the towns' boundaries.³ It seems, however, that Grams never implemented this plan fully. In Stoczek, as was the case also, for example, in Węgrów and Kosów Lacki, the ghetto remained open up until September 1942.

The testimony of Jewish survivors is fairly consistent on this point. Chaim Kwiatek maintains that no ghetto was established in Stoczek ("keyn geto is in shtot nit gewen"). At the same time he notes that Jews from surrounding villages, including from Osówno, Prostyń, Korytnica, Grębków, Grochów (phonetic: Gerech), and other places, were concentrated in Stoczek, although at some point this process of concentration ceased. This resulted in three or four families residing in each home. Due to this overcrowding, an epidemic of typhus broke out in which about 20 percent of the Jews died.⁴

Heim Tshelkhanovietski recalls that when the Germans set up the ghettos in the towns, they said that Stoczek was too small to have a ghetto. The result was that the Jews of Stoczek had to pay a large sum of money to the relevant German officials to be allowed to remain in place. A condition of their re-

maining in Stoczek was that they were not allowed to leave the town. Any Jew caught outside Stoczek was shot.⁵

Finally, Ali Yankl Teytelbaym notes that no closed or sealed ghetto existed in Stoczek, but Jews who left the town were shot without warning. However, Poles were still able to come into town, and they traded with the Jews, although under these conditions, they were able to dictate the prices, as the Jews still hoped somehow to survive.⁶

In November 1941, the Germans ordered that 302 additional Jews relocate to the open ghetto in Stoczek, including those from the villages of Prostyń, Stara Wieś, and Miedzna. At the same time, another 269 Jews from Korytnica, Ossówno, Sinołęka, and Borze were concentrated in the open ghetto in Grębków.⁷ If Kwiatek's testimony is correct, it is possible that the Jews concentrated in Grębków were subsequently consolidated, in 1942, in Stoczek. (Unfortunately, no detailed information could be found concerning the ghetto in Grębków, and therefore no separate entry for it has been included in this volume.) According to Czesław Pilichowski and others, some 2,000 Jews were collected in the Stoczek ghetto altogether.⁸

On May 15, 1942, the Judenrat in Stoczek was ordered to provide 35 (according to one source, 135) men for forced labor construction work at the Treblinka extermination camp. The families of these men remained behind in Stoczek. Some contact remained with the Jews of Stoczek for several more weeks, as the Germans permitted deliveries of food and washed clothes to the laborers, which also enabled messages to be passed between the two groups. In this way quite detailed information about the killings in Treblinka became known to the Jews of Stoczek, which was also confirmed by Jews who had jumped from the trains or escaped from Treblinka and sought refuge in Stoczek.⁹

Among the last communications from Stoczek Węgrowski is a short letter dated September 4, 1942, which was sent to the Warsaw ghetto and has been preserved in the Ringelblum Archive.¹⁰ According to one survivor account, most of the remaining men from Stoczek were deported on or around September 11, either to Treblinka or to labor camps in the region, leaving behind mostly women and children.¹¹

The Germans liquidated the Stoczek ghetto on September 24–25, 1942. According to Pilichowski and colleagues, 188 Jews were shot in and around the town, and the remainder were sent to the Sadowne train station.¹² On September 25, 1942, a train, which was carrying Jews from the ghettos of Baczki and Łopianka (near Łochów), stopped at 3:30 P.M. in Sadowne to load Jews assembled there from Stoczek's ghetto. Once the train departed there at 4:48 P.M., several Jews opened one of the train wagons, about 10 minutes later. Scores were mowed down by armed guards as the Jews jumped from the train. At 5:37 P.M., the train carrying the remainder of the Jews of Łochów and Stoczek arrived at the Treblinka extermination camp. Stoczek Jews working at Treblinka learned of the murder of their women and children just a few hours after their arrival in the camp, as some last messages of farewell were passed on by other prisoners.¹³

As they were aware of their likely fate, a number of Jews from Stoczek avoided the final roundups by hiding in prepared bunkers in and around the town. However, intensive searches for Jews continued in the region for many more months, and some Jews were betrayed by local peasants, who were rewarded by the Germans with material goods for denouncing Jews in hiding. Only a few Jews from the Stoczek ghetto survived until the Germans were driven from the region by the Red Army in the summer of 1944.

SOURCES The yizkor book *Pinkas Stok (bey Vengrov)* (Buenos Aires: Residentes de Stok en la Argentina, 1974) contains several accounts concerning the wartime period. The existence of a ghetto in Stoczek Węgrowski is mentioned in the following secondary sources: Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 759–760; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 473; and Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 2, *District Lublin* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2007), pp. 266–268.

Published documents making reference to the ghetto or Jewish residential area in Stoczek include T. Berenstein et al., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), pp. 106, 278, 279.

Documentary sources on the Jews of Stoczek during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (301/668; Ring II/275 and 295); BA-BL (R 52III/29); USHMM (RG-14.052 [BA-BL, R 52]; RG-15.079M [Ring]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]); VHF, #14739; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Ch. Frabish-Vardi, “Shnot ha’milchamah 1939–1945 bestock,” in *Pinkas Stok*, pp. 402–411; Rubin, *The Rise and Fall*, vol. 2, *District Lublin*, pp. 266–268.
2. Ali Yankl Teytelbaym, “Epes fun di natsishe tseitn in Stok bes der milhomah,” in *Pinkas Stok*, pp. 436–437.
3. USHMM, RG-14.025M (BA-BL), R 52III/29, Lagebericht des Kreises Sokolow für den Monat Februar 1941, published in Berenstein et al., *Eksterminacja Żydów*, pp. 106–108.
4. AŻIH, 301/668, testimony of Chaim Kwiatek.
5. Heim Tshekhanovietski, “Fun Stok keyn Treblinke un di dervartete bafreyung,” in *Pinkas Stok*, p. 423.
6. Teytelbaym, “Epes fun di natsishe tseitn,” p. 437.
7. Berenstein et al., *Eksterminacja Żydów*, p. 278 (in German) and p. 279 (in Polish).
8. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 473.
9. Tshekhanovietski, “Fun Stok keyn Treblinke,” pp. 423–425. See also *Pinkas Stok*, pp. 432, 438, which both give the figure of 35 Jews; and AŻIH, Ring II/295, published in translation in Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), pp. 710–716.
10. AŻIH, Ring II/275.
11. *Pinkas Stok*, p. 438.
12. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 473.

13. See AŻIH, 301/4238, pp. 4–5; and VHF, # 14739. The train schedule for the Łochów and Stoczek deportations appears as Document # 46, under the heading “Rozkład jazdy z dnia 21.9.1942 r. pociągów transportowych do Treblinki,” in the document collection “Zagłada Żydów w obozach na ziemiach polskich,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* 13 (1960): 105–106 (Polish translation) and p. 65 F (photograph of original German document); see also *Pinkas Stok*, p. 426.

TARCZYŃ

Pre-1939: Tarczyn (Yiddish: Tartchin), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Grojec, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Tarczyn is located about 30 kilometers (19 miles) south-southwest of Warsaw. According to the 1921 census, there were 1,457 Jews living in the town, comprising 56.5 percent of the total population.

As the German army approached Tarczyn, many Jews escaped to the east. Tarczyn was occupied in mid-September 1939. According to reports in the Ringelblum Archive, there was a major fire in Tarczyn in September 1939 at the time of the German occupation. In addition, there was a temporary expulsion of male Poles and Jews from Tarczyn at this time.¹ When the Generalgouvernement was set up by the Germans in late October 1939, Tarczyn became a part of Kreis Grojec. The Kreishauptmann was initially Regierungsrat Dr. Klein; in March 1940, he was replaced by Landrat Werner Zimmermann.

From the period 1939 to 1941, the German authorities introduced a series of anti-Jewish measures in Tarczyn. They confiscated Jewish property, ordered the Jews to wear distinguishing armbands, and registered the population. The Jews were also required to perform forced labor. The Germans appointed a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which assisted with the provision of forced laborers. Hundreds of Jews were requisitioned daily for building roads and cutting down trees.

In early 1940, there were 1,540 Jews residing in Tarczyn, including refugees. The Jewish community established an aid committee, which included L. Najberg and P. Higer, who ran the public kitchen. It received financial support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). These funds were used to provide aid to at least 400 needy Jews in the town, including the operation of the soup kitchen. The kitchen was temporarily closed in the summer of 1940; it reopened again on August 18 but was closed again in mid-October.² There were about 60 refugees from other towns living in Tarczyn.

On December 6, 1940, the aid committee in Tarczyn reported to the AJDC in Kraków that currently “we were busy with establishing a Jewish quarter [open ghetto] in Tarczyn.”³ The ghetto was guarded by the Polish (Blue) Police. According to survivor Sylvia Kolski, her family exchanged their apartment with a Christian family who lived within the designated

ghetto area. There was no wall or fence around the ghetto, but the Jews were not permitted to go to the Catholic side.⁴ Nonetheless, illegal trade continued with the local Polish population who supplied food to the ghetto in exchange for valuables and personal belongings.

On January 21, 1941, the Kreishauptmann in Grójec, Landrat Zimmermann, issued the following order: "All Jews living outside of the towns of Błędów, Tarczyn, Mogielnica, Góra Kalwaria, Warka, and Grójec are to transfer immediately to the closest of these towns, all of which were to be considered as ghettos. The heads of the respective settlements were made personally responsible for ensuring that by January 27, 1941, no Jews still were residing on their territory." The order also stipulated that any Jew caught outside these ghettos after January 27, 1941, would face the death penalty.⁵

The Tarczyn ghetto was liquidated on February 28, 1941, when all the Jews—around 1,600 people—were resettled into the Warsaw ghetto.⁶ According to Henry Leshno, who was 15 years old at the time, the Germans announced beforehand that all the Jews were to move to Warsaw. They were able to take with them only their own personal belongings.⁷ From the ghetto in Warsaw, most of the Tarczyn Jews were deported in July through September 1942 to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Only a handful of Jews from Tarczyn managed to survive the German occupation, some of them being hidden in the homes of local Polish inhabitants. In the village of Stefanówka, near Tarczyn, there was a man who was engaged in tracking down Jews in hiding. He uncovered two sisters, who were hiding in Stefanówka, but they managed to bribe him to avoid being denounced.⁸

SOURCES Publications on the fate of the Jews of Tarczyn during the Holocaust include Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 229–230. The Tarczyn ghetto is mentioned also in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 514; Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowinia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 213; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 807.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/680 [AJDC]; 301/2493 and 5340 [Relacje]; Ring I/809, 881, 920, 921, 1175); BA-L (Ordn. Vers. XXI); USHMM (Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.079M [Ring I]; RG-15.084M [Relacje]; RG-50.030*0114); VHF (e.g., # 26012, 49983); and YVA.

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trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. AŻIH, Ring I/920 and 921.
2. Ibid., 210/680 (AJDC).
3. Ibid.; Ring I/920, however, dates the ghetto's establishment in January 1941.

4. VHF, # 49983, testimony of Sylvia Kolski (born 1925); USHMM, RG-50.030*0114, interview with Sylvia Kolski.

5. AŻIH, Ring I/881.

6. Ibid., Ring I/920 and 921, date the ghetto's liquidation on February 28, 1941. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 514, give the figure of 1,600 ghetto inhabitants but erroneously date its liquidation on February 28, 1942.

7. VHF, # 26012, testimony of Henry Leshno (born 1925).

8. AŻIH, 301/5340.

ŁUSZCZ

Pre-1939: Thuszcz, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Thuszcz, initially center of Kreis Radzymin, then Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Thuszcz, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Thuszcz is located 38 kilometers (24 miles) northeast of Warsaw. In 1921, the Jewish population was 437, out of a total population of 1,102.

On September 3, 1939, the Luftwaffe heavily bombarded Thuszcz, as it lay on the main railroad from Warsaw to Białystok. Since they were constructed of wood, many Jewish houses burned down in the ensuing fire. Several Jews were killed in the bombardment, and many others fled to the surrounding villages. German forces occupied the town on September 14, 1939. When the Jews celebrated the High Holidays a few days later, many were still staying with peasant acquaintances in the surrounding villages.¹ Soon after their arrival, the Germans started to harass the Jews, impress them for forced labor, cut off their beards, and beat them. They seized Jewish property during searches and required requisitions.

In October 1939, the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), chaired by Gutman Popowski. With the transfer to civilian rule on October 26, 1939, Thuszcz initially became part of Kreis Radzymin in Distrikt Warschau; subsequently Kreis Radzymin was incorporated within Kreis Warschau-Land. In the town, the main German presence was a squad of 12 Gendarmes headed by Wachtmeister Stein. Popowski tried to ease the burden on the Jews by giving the Gendarmes gifts of boots, watches, or even silk stockings and diamond rings for their women. In the fall of 1939 and the ensuing winter, a number of Jews fled to the Soviet-occupied zone of Poland; then the Jewish population of the town, including refugees, was about 740.

In September 1940, the Germans established a ghetto in Thuszcz. The Jews were forced to move out of their homes and were resettled into the homes of Polish peasants just outside of town. The peasants were moved into the houses vacated by the Jews. There was terrible overcrowding in the ghetto, where the Jews were packed together very tightly. There was no running water, and Jews were only permitted to go and collect water once per day.² In January 1941, 685 people living in the Thuszcz ghetto were receiving potato rations with the aid of the local branch of the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS).³

In the summer of 1941, a typhus epidemic broke out in the ghetto, causing the Germans to seal it off. The Jews were warned that they would be shot if they tried to leave. Since the Jews made a living primarily by selling clothing and other items to the Polish peasants in return for food products, some of which were resold in Warsaw, the new restrictions dealt a serious blow to the Jewish population. To overcome this, chairman Popowski paid Wachtmeister Stein 1,000 złoty per week and other bribes for the Gendarmerie to turn a blind eye and permit trading to continue. According to the deal, Jewish craftsmen (tailors, carpenters, and others) were permitted to sell their goods to the peasants. Within a short time, however, several Jews were caught and shot for being outside the ghetto. In response, the Judenrat increased the level of the bribes, but no real security existed, and the risks for smugglers were high, which also caused black market prices to rise.³

Since Popowski was the only Jew officially permitted to leave the ghetto, he went one day to collect a sum of money on behalf of a Jewish woman from the town's post office. When the German official refused to serve him, Popowski complained and nearly got shot for his pains. Two weeks later he was lured out to the post office on a false pretext and was arrested by the Gestapo. Having handed over the keys and accounts to the rest of the Judenrat, he was then taken to the Pawiak prison in Warsaw. From there he was transferred to the Auschwitz concentration camp, where he reportedly died after only a few weeks.⁵

Meir Taub succeeded Popowski as Judenrat chairman. Conditions in the ghetto deteriorated further during the winter of 1941–1942. Jews were dying every day from starvation and disease, and more Jews were shot for leaving the ghetto. Searches conducted inside the ghetto for illegal possession of fur, silk, or leather items resulted in hefty fines or extortionate demands from the Gendarmes. The Polish (Blue) Police also extorted money from the Jews.

By the spring of 1942 rumors spread about the imminent liquidation of the ghetto, following the expulsion of the Jews from other nearby towns, including Pustelnik and Wawer. The Jews learned that local Poles had appealed to the Landrat in Radzymin for the Jews to be driven out of Tłuszcz, merely out of spite.⁶

On Monday, May 25, 1942, a Polish policeman requested that a uniform he had ordered from a Jewish tailor be ready the same day, as all the Jews were soon to be driven out of town. This report soon spread panic among the Jews. Since an elderly Jew had just died, on May 26 Reb Yaakov Joseph Bruckman and the head of the Jewish Police, Berl Gelbard, decided themselves to take the body to be buried in the nearby town of Jadów to try to find out if there was any substance behind the rumors. They agreed in advance that if there was no danger they would both return, but if the rumor appeared to be true, Reb Bruckman would remain in Jadów.⁷

On the night of May 26, 1942, Berl Gelbard returned to Tłuszcz alone with news from the Jadów Judenrat that the liquidation of the Tłuszcz ghetto was planned for the next day. At 4:00 A.M. the next morning, German Border Police (Grenz-

polizei), Polish (Blue) Police, and Gendarmerie forces under the command of Oberleutnant Lipsch (the Gendarmerie commander in Kreis Warschau-Land) surrounded the ghetto. The Jews were instructed to assemble on the market square, and here a selection took place. The men aged between 16 and 30 were sent to labor camps, including the one at Wilanów. A group of Jews was forced to remove the furniture from the Jewish houses and put it on the square. Most other possessions, including any valuables, were taken from the Jews before their departure, supposedly in payment for their transportation costs. About 70 Jews were shot in Tłuszcz at the time of the roundup. Among those killed was a family accused of hiding some leather, many of the Jews who had worked for the Gendarmerie, and a local Jewish woman who was shot by Wachtmeister Stein personally as he thought that she was too beautiful. The Germans loaded the women and children onto carts, which drove off towards Radzymin. About one hour later the remaining men were sent after the women and children on foot with instructions to run and catch up to them. The Germans shot another 300 or so people on the road to Radzymin, as they failed to keep up with the column. The corpses were buried quickly by Polish auxiliaries wearing red armbands who followed along behind.⁸

In Radzymin, the Gendarmerie and Border Police robbed and beat the Jews again. The Germans then loaded the remaining Jews onto railway cars, and, then closer to Warsaw, the Jews were loaded onto overcrowded trams and sent to the Warsaw ghetto. On arrival they were disinfected in a quarantine section before entering the ghetto.⁹

A note preserved in the files of the JSS in Kraków, recording a message sent by a representative of the JSS for Kreis Warschau-Land, reports that of more than 800 Jews resettled from Tłuszcz on May 27, 1942, only 582 people reached the quarantine section of the Warsaw ghetto, without any personal property or money. They arrived in a terrible state, many of the men barefoot. Unofficial information revealed that 65 people were selected at Marki along the way to perform agricultural work in Wilanów. Another 65 people were reportedly deported from Tłuszcz, who never arrived in quarantine nor were redirected to Wilanów.¹⁰

On the same day that the Jews were driven out of Tłuszcz, Oberleutnant Lipsch went to Jadów and demanded that the Judenrat there hand over Reb Bruckman or he would kill several of its members. On learning of this, the rabbi decided to give himself up. The Gendarmes forced him to dance, beat him, and then shot him. His body was thrown into a deep ditch in the center of the market.¹¹

SOURCES Publications on the history of the Jews of Tłuszcz and their fate during the Holocaust include Mendl Gelbart, ed., *Sefer zikaron li-kebilat Tlushtsb* (Tel Aviv, 1971); Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S." ("Oneg Shabbath")* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), pp. 201–208; and Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 233–235. Additional information on the

ghetto in Tłuszcz can be found in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 519.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Tłuszcz under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/1030 [JSS]; Ring I/222); IPN (ASG, sygn. 62, p. 221); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 48; RG-15.079 [Ring I]); and YVA (e.g., O-21/4).

Martin Dean

NOTES

1. M. Perel, “Der anheym fun suf fun shtetlekh Tlushtsh,” in Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Tlushtsh*, pp. 134–137.

2. Dara Mozer-Shkalinik, “Meyne Melhomah Iberlebungen,” in Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Tlushtsh*, p. 138.

3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 48 (AŻIH, 211/1030), report of the JSS branch in Tłuszcz to the JSS central office in Kraków, January 31, 1941. The report also includes a list of family names and the number of persons in each family.

4. AŻIH, Ring I/222, published in Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 202–203.

5. Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, p. 203.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 203–204.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 204–205.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 205–208. Also see Michal Kossover, “Di lkvuidatsie fun Tlushtsher geto,” pp. 125–126, and Dara Mozer-Shkalinik, “Meyne Melhomah Iberlebungen,” pp. 140–141—both in Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Tlushtsh*.

9. Asher Seymon, “Melhomah Iberlebungen,” in Gelbart, *Sefer zikaron li-kehillat Tlushtsh*, pp. 182–183; Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, p. 208.

10. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 210/1085, p. 50.

11. Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 208–209; Kossover, “Di lkvuidatsie fun Tlushtsher geto,” pp. 127–128. There are some discrepancies between these two accounts, but the gist is very similar.

WARKA

Pre-1939: Warka (Yiddish: Vurka), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Kreis Grojec, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Warka is located on the left bank of the Pilica River about 53 kilometers (33 miles) south-southeast of Warsaw. In 1921, the Jewish population was 2,176, out of a total of 4,306. On the eve of World War II, there were approximately 3,000 Jews living in Warka.

The German occupation of Warka began in September 1939. One resident of Warka recalls that the Germans “came into town on Friday night, September 8, 1939. The next morning, they began to round up people to work on clearing the highway between Warka and Góra Kalwaria. The roundups continued daily. Jews were seized to clear the highway and the streets, to carry water, and to cook for the army. While at work, they were tortured and beaten terribly.”¹ Although some Jews remained in Warka at the time of German occupation, many



A wooden synagogue in Warka, ca. 1938.
USHMM WS #07084, COURTESY OF JERZY FICOWSKI

had already fled to the east, into the area that came under Soviet occupation.

After the Germans occupied Warka, they began to search Jewish homes, seize Jewish property, and cut off the beards of Jewish men. The Germans banned the practice of kosher slaughter; however, Warka’s Jewish population continued to illegally. The Germans also appointed a new mayor of Warka—a woman called Kosmal, who was of ethnic German origin—and a new chief of police—a man called Weitknecht (also an ethnic German).²

In October 1939, after the holiday of Sukkot, the synagogue, Bet Midrash, and the *mikveh* were set on fire by the Germans and burned. Jewish residents attempted to extinguish the flames; however, a cordon of soldiers encircled the entire Jewish quarter and opened fire at the oncoming Jews, forcing them to return to their homes. Rabbi Yanovisky and his son attempted to save two Torah scrolls; however, German soldiers shot and killed them.³ The Germans also imposed monetary “contributions” on the Jewish population of Warka. In some accounts this was a ransom to release Jews taken hostage, and in others it was a punishment for failing to meet the quota of forced laborers. The Germans also threatened to increase the amount demanded if the sum was not delivered on time.⁴

In early 1940, the Germans ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which took over the task of

supplying forced laborers. Members of the Warka Judenrat included Werchajzer Uszer (head), Dawid Mokotow, Moszek Chaim Lipszyc, Icek Putermilch, Berek Lander, Moszek Weber, Lejbus Blatman, Lejb Zymler, Zurek Sztajbok, Chaim Feldman, and Aaron Kohn. Subsequently Icek Putermilch became chairman of the Judenrat.⁵ The Germans ordered all Jews over the age of 12 to wear the Star of David on their right sleeve.

During 1940, an aid committee was active in Warka, providing assistance to some 700 needy Jews. The committee corresponded initially with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) in Warsaw and subsequently also with the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) headquarters in Kraków.⁶

The Germans established a ghetto in Warka on November 28, 1940.⁷ The ghetto area covered several streets, with Santorski Street at its center. The entire Jewish population was forced to abandon their homes and move into the congested ghetto area.⁸

On December 8, 1940, the Jewish Council reported: "A Jewish district was introduced in Warka, this district numbers 400 households along with stores, it contains 2,200 Jews, in addition to this, in the last months a great number of displaced persons came to Warka from Głowaczów, Piaseczno, and Warsaw."⁹ Therefore, in total the Warka ghetto may have contained up to 2,800 Jews, including those brought in from neighboring villages.¹⁰

The ghetto population managed to survive by bartering their remaining possessions with Polish farmers from the surrounding area in exchange for food. Initially, it was possible for Jews to leave the ghetto in the morning and return in the evening. One survivor, Jack Berman, recalls going out of the ghetto to perform forced labor chopping wood. The lack of living space, poor hygiene, and inadequate medical care resulted in a high mortality rate among the Jews.¹¹

According to one account, on December 31, 1940, soldiers surrounded the entire town and ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) were dispatched to every Jewish home. They made a careful search of each household and collected all of the Jews' belongings in one place. The next day, officials came and registered all the Jews' possessions, informing them that they would be responsible for ensuring that nothing was missing.¹² On January 21, 1941, the Kreishauptmann in Grójec, Landrat Zimmermann, ordered that any Jew caught outside the ghettos in Kreis Grojec after January 27, 1941, would face the death penalty.¹³ Shortly afterwards, in early February 1941, the Kreishauptmann issued a further decree forbidding the Jews from selling their furniture to non-Jews.¹⁴ In preparation for the expulsion of the Jews from Warka, the German authorities wanted to ensure the complete confiscation of all Jewish property.

News of the liquidation of other ghettos in nearby towns and their deportation to the Warsaw ghetto had reached the Jews of Warka at this time, spreading fear among them. The liquidation of the Warka ghetto took place on February 20–21, 1941. The Jewish quarter was surrounded by armed policemen, ethnic Germans, and other auxiliary forces. The German

authorities instructed the Jews to gather in front of the municipality. Each individual was allowed to take with them only 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of luggage. The assembled men, women, and children were beaten badly in front of the municipality building.¹⁵ Then the order was given to march in the direction of the railroad station, located a few kilometers outside the town. Those unable to walk and small children were loaded onto horse-driven carts. At the train station the Jews were loaded onto waiting cattle cars by SS guards. The cars were locked from the outside and then transported the Jews to the Warsaw ghetto. On arrival at the ghetto they were met by two German policemen on the outside and two Jewish policemen on the inside.¹⁶

The majority of the Jews of Warka shared the fate of most of the other Jews of the Warsaw ghetto: they were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp from the summer of 1942. Only a few Jews from Warka survived the Holocaust. Among them were several people who escaped from the Warka ghetto on the eve of its liquidation and fled to other towns in the Generalgouvernement. They then survived the remainder of the occupation on false papers, in hiding, or under harsh conditions in various camps.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jews of Warka during the Holocaust can be found in the following publications: *Vurka; sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Vurka Society in Israel, 1976); Shimon Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland during the Holocaust* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1987), pp. 310–313. The Warka ghetto is mentioned also in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 538; Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 213; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), p. 896.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (210/703 [AJDC]; 211/1066 [JSS]; 301/3003; 302/264; Ring I/809, 881, 1175); BA-L (Ord. Vers. XXI); USHMM (RG-15.084 [Relacje]; Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154); VHF (e.g., # 20954, 29086, 35130); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem*, p. 310.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 312; David Gersht, "The Ghetto in Warka and Its Liquidation," in *Vurka; sefer zikaron*, pp. 361–379.
4. VHF, # 35130, testimony of Helen Sadik; Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem*, p. 311.
5. AŻIH, 211/1066, p. 4, report to the JSS in Kraków, January 7, 1941.
6. *Ibid.*; 210/703.
7. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 538.
8. Gersht, "The Ghetto in Warka," pp. 361–379; VHF, # 35130.
9. AŻIH, 210/703, p. 49.

10. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 538.
11. Gersht, "The Ghetto in Warka," pp. 361–379; VHF, # 20954, testimony of Jack Berman.
12. Huberband, *Kiddush Hasbem*, p. 313.
13. AŻIH, Ring I/881.
14. BA-L, Ordn. Vers. XXI, p. 364, Kreishauptmann Grojec an alle Bürgermeister und Gemeindevorsteher des Kreises Grojec, February 4, 1941.
15. Huberband, *Kiddush Hasbem*, p. 313.
16. Gersht, "The Ghetto in Warka," pp. 361–379.

WARSAW

Pre-1939: Warsaw (Polish: Warszawa), city, capital of Poland, and center; Warsaw województwo; 1939–1945: Warschau, Stadt, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Warsaw, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Warsaw is located 137 kilometers (85 miles) northeast of Łódź. In 1939, on the eve of war, the approximately 380,000 Jews living there comprised just less than one quarter of the city's total population of around 1.3 million.

Following the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Warsaw came under siege for three weeks. The continuous bombardment of the city during the siege killed and injured many people, including large numbers of Jews. A mass exodus of inhabitants and the Polish political leadership began. Among those who fled were the leaders of Polish Jewry, such as Maurycy Meisel, head of the Warsaw Jewish Community Council. The German army entered Warsaw on September 27, 1939. Both systematic and impromptu persecution, abuse, theft, forced labor, and murder began immediately. In February 1940, there were some 394,000 Jews in Warsaw, including tens of thousands of Jewish refugees.

In October 1940, Ludwig Fischer, the Gouverneur of Distrikt Warschau, decreed the establishment of a ghetto by the end of the month.¹ The Jewish community had to pay for the ghetto wall, and Jewish forced labor built it. It was 3 meters high (9.8 feet) and 18 kilometers (11 miles) long. Hundreds of thousands of Jews, carrying their possessions, moved into the area designated as the ghetto. As the resettlement could not be completed on time, the German authorities extended the deadline for the Jews to move into the ghetto to November 15.²

The establishment of the ghetto was a precipitating factor in the economic and physical liquidation of the Jewish population; because most inhabitants could no longer work, food supplies were grossly inadequate, and diseases soon ran rampant.

The ghetto stretched over only 2.4 percent of the city's area in one of the poorest districts of northern Warsaw. The number of ghetto inhabitants actually grew after it was established. More than 50,000 additional Jews from smaller Jewish communities around Warsaw were forcibly moved into the ghetto in the first three months of 1941, and other refugees and expelled entered the ghetto subsequently. These mostly impoverished newcomers were among the first to be stricken by



Young Jewish men conduct a business transaction over the Warsaw ghetto wall, n.d.

USHMM WS #05923, COURTESY OF JERZY TOMASZEWSKI

epidemics and malnutrition, and many did not survive for long.³ By April 1941, due to the large influx, there were some 460,000 Jews living in the ghetto. Soon the population began to dwindle, however, because of overcrowding, sickness, and malnutrition. With the ghetto closed off, most of the inhabitants could no longer earn a living, a situation that accelerated the process of impoverishment and deprivation. From August 1941, about 4,000 to 5,000 people died per month, as a typhus epidemic peaked in the fall of that year. In total, more than 60,000 deaths were recorded between January 1941 and the end of July 1942.⁴

In October 1939, the Germans appointed Adam Czerniaków to head the Jewish Council (Judenrat). From the start, the Judenrat served as the liaison between the Germans and the Jews. The Judenrat conducted population censuses, provided lists of those assigned to forced labor, and paid ransoms for people under arrest. The men Czerniaków selected to be members of the Judenrat had been, before the war, political

activists and party members. Among them were some people whose main concern was the general welfare, but others appeared to be simple collaborators. Almost from the start, the public viewed the Judenrat as corrupt because some officials accepted bribes from people seeking help or information about kidnapped or missing persons.

The Judenrat tried to cope with the Jews' day-to-day needs while also fulfilling German demands. It numbered about 25 departments and 6,000 workers. Its responsibilities were varied: provision of food and drink, prevention of the spread of disease, removal of sewerage and garbage, maintaining public order, firefighting, allocation of accommodations, and tracking and registering the inhabitants. It oversaw the establishment of hospitals and clinics, cultural activities and education, welfare and mutual-aid institutions, and orphanages.

The Jewish Police, which the Judenrat supervised, was embroiled in controversy. German orders established it at the same time as the ghetto. Józef Szeryński, a convert to Christianity who had held a senior position in the Polish police, was its chief. Most policemen were educated and members of established, often assimilated families. More than a few police assisted in smuggling food or smuggled it themselves. They also helped distribute food and provide aid to the needy. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the Jewish public, the Jewish Police became the embodiment of evil and public corruption.⁵ They escorted the work details operating outside the ghetto, collected taxes, searched for absentees, and in the end, seized Jews for deportation.

Another entity in the ghetto was known as the "Thirteen," named after the address of its headquarters on Leszno Street; it was a kind of enforcement unit under the German Security Police. Its function was to keep an eye on whatever was happening in the ghetto. Abraham Gancwajch headed it. On the surface, the Thirteen ran the "Office to Combat Usury and Profiteering in the Jewish Quarter of Warsaw"; in practice, its task was to inform on all smugglers and secret economic activity to the Gestapo, frequently using this knowledge to blackmail those they uncovered.⁶

The official daily food ration in the ghetto was about 180 calories per person. Starvation led to incidents of violence and stealing food on the street. People lost their composure, women engaged in prostitution, and there were even incidents of cannibalism. Against this background, food smuggling was essential to the ghetto's survival. About 80 percent of the food that entered the ghetto was smuggled. Smuggling was done by individuals, by organized groups, and in large measure, by children. The smuggled goods kept various food programs and soup kitchens going. Many smugglers were caught, beaten, and shot, including young children. The professional smugglers became members of the ghetto elite, living it up on their profits, patronizing the more than 60 restaurants and clubs in the ghetto. By contrast, most of the population lived under conditions of terrible poverty. The Nazis exploited the appearance of prominent wealth next to abject poverty for anti-Jewish propaganda.



"Vendor of Jewish Stars," by Halina Olomucki, 1941.
USHMM WS #73574, COURTESY OF HALINA OLOMUCKI

Some goods were brought into the ghetto by means of the German Transfer Station (Transferstelle), and illegal industries and handicrafts quickly developed. Raw materials were brought into the ghetto and fashioned into various goods, such as brushes, garments, and electric products. Finished products were smuggled out of the ghetto and sold. In the spring of 1941, the Germans recognized the ghetto as a center of industry and commerce, and by summer German owners of wood, fur, and textile firms began to come in. The German industrialist Walther Többens set up a large textile firm. There was also a factory for brush manufacturing. The pay for work in these firms was poor, generally a daily food ration. Work also continued at many unofficial sites, arranged with the knowledge of the Germans or thanks to the bribery of the watchmen and the Jewish, German, or Polish police.

About a third of the ghetto population was children (about 150,000), many of whom were refugee children, who arrived in the ghetto with, or sometimes without, their parents. They

roamed about barefoot, begging for charity. Many were involved in smuggling, as errand boys, or in peddling cigarettes, bread, and matches. Some sustained themselves as street performers.

Jewish society within the ghetto tried to maintain the activity of voluntary organizations helping the weak and the needy. Aside from the Judenrat and its departments, a number of bodies functioned under the aegis of the Jewish Social Self-Help–Coordinating Commission (JSS–CC, later renamed ŻTOS in October 1940, then JSS in November 1941). Initially some financial support for Jewish welfare efforts was provided directly by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). From February 1941, the JSS received AJDC funds and supervised their distribution in consultation with the Judenrat.

From early 1941, the Judenrat strengthened its influence over the welfare organizations, preferring to extend assistance to people working on various projects, as opposed to the destitute. For example, in the summer of 1941, the Judenrat clashed with welfare activists over proposals for wealthy inhabitants to surrender their ration cards or to be taxed more to support the poor. These initiatives were blocked by the Judenrat despite Czerniaków's initial support. Therefore, the ghetto inhabitants' attitude towards the various charitable organizations was more positive than their attitude towards the Judenrat, which they saw as a tool of the Germans.

Aid continued to be extended to incapacitated people as well as to children in orphanages, refugees, and the elderly. In the summer of 1941, the number of meals served daily by public kitchens increased to 100,000, as the Germans briefly sought to increase the productivity of the ghetto. As Emanuel Ringelblum commented, however: "It is the beggars and the corpses who have won us this small concession. Besides, typhus has done its part." The number of meals served declined again in the fall, once the Germans withdrew support for the feeding program.⁷

Other welfare agencies active within the ghetto included TOZ (Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population in Poland) and CENTOS (Central Organization for Orphan Care). After the United States entered the war in December 1941, the AJDC funds from abroad largely dried up, and the welfare organizations struggled to maintain their aid programs. Even then it continued to provide assistance for illicit activity, such as funding printing presses and educational institutions.

In all the large ghettos, including Warsaw, despite the official German ban on most educational activity, there were educational and cultural networks. In the Warsaw ghetto there were elementary schools, middle schools, and vocational courses, such as a nursing school. There were university-level lectures, literary creativity in Yiddish, Polish, and Hebrew, and theater and orchestra performances. There was also scholarly research, including historical studies. One of the most important of the cultural institutions was called "Oneg Shabbath," the underground archive of the Warsaw ghetto, which the historian Emanuel Ringelblum directed. The Ringelblum Archive documented whatever transpired in the ghetto. It also acquired

written testimonies about the extermination camps and succeeded in transmitting the documents to the Polish government-in-exile in London. Eventually the archival material was hidden in metal containers and milk cans, which were buried in different places in the ghetto. Almost the entire archive team died in the Holocaust, but much of the material was recovered after the war.

The Germans quickly banned religious services, so Jews held services in secret. In the spring of 1941, the ban was lifted, and the synagogue on Tłomackie Street reopened with a festive ceremony. However, it was hard to maintain religious duties, observe holidays, and keep kosher under ghetto conditions. The Nazis were especially abusive towards observant Jews with side curls, beards, and head coverings. And inevitably, some lost their faith in the face of the suffering they experienced.⁸

Members of the Zionist and other youth movements (including Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir, with about 800 members) were prominent in the social and cultural activity of the large ghettos, as well as in smuggling food. In a period when most of the communal leaders escaped to the Soviet Union and the Jews of Warsaw remained without leadership, the members of these youth movements displayed great civic responsibility. Whereas the older people struggled to cope with dislocations in social frameworks and community life, the members of the youth movements adjusted more easily to ghetto life and quickly renewed organized group activity.

The youth movements developed study groups, schools, and soup kitchens and helped feed children and adults. They also sent emissaries to youth movements in other ghettos to establish links and share information. Couriers, both male and female, maintained these contacts at great personal risk. Other young people contributed to the underground press. Information about events in Poland and in the world appeared in the newspapers, which also covered life in the ghetto. With the start of the transports to the extermination camps, the publication of newspapers was temporarily interrupted. Later, the press resumed with a more limited scope, publishing information about the true character of the transports.

By January 1942, word had arrived in Warsaw about the murder of the Jews of Wilno at Ponary and the German mass killings in the cities of eastern Poland. Accounts of the murder of Jews at the Chełmno extermination camp also began to arrive in February.⁹ Couriers who traveled in eastern Poland also reported on the transports that started in March 1942, first to Bełżec and then to other extermination camps. Persistent rumors about deportations swirled around the ghetto in July 1942. Czerniaków tried to get information from the German officers with whom he had contact. Most of them denied the rumors. On July 21, however, all the other members of the Judenrat were arrested. On the next day Czerniaków wrote these words in his diary: "We were told that all the Jews irrespective of sex and age, with certain exceptions, will be deported to the East. By 4:00 P.M. today a contingent of 6,000 people must be provided. And this (at the minimum) will be the daily quota."¹⁰ On July 23, having unsuccessfully pleaded

for the lives of orphaned children and unwilling to aid in killing his own people, Czerniaków committed suicide.

At the start of the deportations, the Germans persuaded the Jews to assemble at the Umschlagplatz, a freight yard, by promising to give everyone who reported three loaves of bread and a portion of jam. At first, most of the Jews who arrived at the Umschlagplatz did not understand that the transports to the east meant death at the Treblinka extermination camp. Later on, as they learned the truth, they hoped that their work documents from the firms operating in the ghetto would free them from the transports. But the Germans emptied streets and whole apartment buildings in the process of evacuation. The Jewish Police were forced to collect people until its size was drastically reduced, and then many of its members themselves were deported on September 21.

In the course of the first great deportation Aktion, which took place from the end of July until the middle of September 1942, more than 260,000 people were deported—almost all to be murdered at Treblinka—and the living area of the ghetto shrank. About 60,000 of the Jews who remained alive moved to dwellings in the center of the ghetto near the area of the workshops; many of these people were now living illegally.

Word of the extermination camps, which started reaching Warsaw early in 1942, convinced members of the youth groups to organize for armed self-defense. The Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB), which united members of Hechalutz, Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir, Dror, and Bnai Akiva, was established in July as the transports began. At first two key leaders of the ŻOB were Józef Kaplan and Szmuel Bresław of Ha-Shomer Ha-Za'ir. However, they were caught at the beginning of September, apparently because of informants, after they had succeeded in acquiring a few weapons. The underground collapsed but began to reorganize in October. At that time members of the Bund and representatives of Zionist organizations and parties joined the ŻOB. In the meantime, members of Betar formed an additional military structure in the ghetto, the Jewish Military Organization (ŻZW, known after January 1943 as

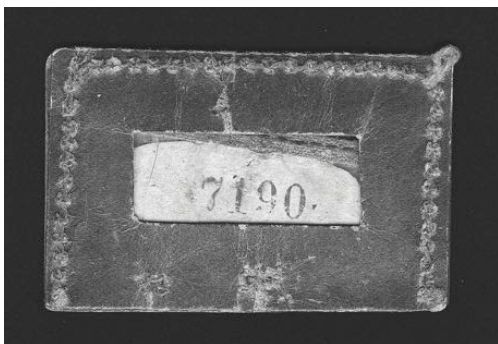
the Jewish Military Union). This organization had good connections with the Polish underground (Armia Krajowa [Polish Home Army], AK) and apparently succeeded in obtaining more arms than the ŻOB. The two groups had their differences, but a short time before the great revolt, the ŻZW did agree to fight alongside the ŻOB, while not being absorbed into it.

The first attempt at an uprising took place in January 1943 in response to the second deportation Aktion, and sporadic attacks on German and Ukrainian personnel continued for the next three months. The January revolt convinced the Jews that the Germans would try to liquidate the ghetto, and therefore they began to prepare hiding places for the future. Hundreds of bunkers were built, some of them dug beneath buildings that had already been destroyed in September 1939. The headquarters of the revolt was based initially at 29 Miła Street and later in the bunker at 18 Miła Street.¹¹ The standing of the ŻOB grew stronger as a result of the January uprising, and it earned the support of many of the Jews who remained in the ghetto. A short time before the revolt there were about 800 fighters in the two underground groups.

In preparation for the liquidation of the ghetto, the Germans organized the transfer of more than 20,000 Jewish workers with their production units from the Warsaw ghetto to the Trawniki, Poniatowa, and other labor camps in Distrikt Lublin, starting in February and continuing into the uprising in early May 1943.¹² The Germans assumed that the Jews would forcefully oppose deportation, as they had in January. On the morning of April 19, 1943, they entered the ghetto with a force of 2,000 soldiers, accompanied by tanks. The Germans expected to make short work of the poorly armed fighters, but the main struggle went on for more than four weeks, with sporadic fighting afterwards. Eventually the Germans had to blast and burn the fighters out of their positions. The Germans discovered the headquarters of the ŻOB in the bunker at 18 Miła Street on May 8. After German forces blocked all exits and several hundred civilians emerged, the ŻOB commander Mordechaj Anielewicz committed suicide along with some 120 Jewish fighters, as the Germans dropped in poison gas. In September 1943, the Germans destroyed the remaining buildings and the ghetto walls. Most of the Jews still in hiding were apparently killed in this action, but a few individuals survived in the area until the end of the war.

The Warsaw ghetto revolt became one of the most significant occurrences in the history of the Jewish people. At the beginning, no one gave the ghetto any chance to hold out. But this seemingly hopeless struggle showed that even the years of the Nazi terror regime and the passivity in the Polish surroundings were not enough to break the fighting spirit of the youth movement members and the ghetto dwellers. The revolt became a symbol of resistance and heroism.

At the end of the revolt more than 20,000 Jews were left in Warsaw, in hiding or on the Aryan side, but it is impossible to know how many survived the war. The Germans established a concentration camp in the ruins of the ghetto to salvage building materials.¹³



An identification tag issued to Gina Tabaczynska, when she was detained with other personnel of the Schultz & Co. factory in the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942. Those who held these tags were presumed to be exempt from deportation.

USHMM WS #16638, COURTESY OF EUGENIA TABACZYNSKA STRUT

SOURCES Among the many publications on the Warsaw ghetto, the following titles in English can be recommended: Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City*, trans. Emma Harris (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Israel Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939–1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt*, trans. Ina Friedman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Samuel D. Kasow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); and Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw 1940–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002). More extensive bibliographies can be found in these and other publications.

Published primary sources include the following: Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961); Mary Berg, *Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary by Mary Berg*, ed. S.L. Schneiderman (New York: L.B. Fischer, 1945); Helge Grabitz and Wolfgang Scheffler, *Letzte Spuren: Fotos und Dokumente über Opfer des Endlösungswahns im Spiegel der historischen Ereignisse* (Berlin: Hentrich, 1988); Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kerr, eds., *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979); J. Katsh, ed., *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (New York, 1965); Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986); Abraham Lewin, *A Cup of Tears: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); *Report concerning the Uprising in the Ghetto of Warsaw and the Liquidation of the Jewish Residential Area*, trans. D. Dąbrowska (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1958); Ruta Sakowska et al., eds., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego*, 3 vols. (Warsaw: PWN, 2000); and Jacob Sloan, ed. and trans., *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emanuel Ringelblum* (1958; New York: Schocken, 1974).

Among the many memoirs by survivors, the following are worthy of mention: J. David, *A Square of Sky: Recollections of My Childhood* (New York, 1964); Janusz Korczak, *The Warsaw Ghetto Memoirs of Janusz Korczak*, trans. with an introduction by E.P. Kulawiec (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1978); Zivia Lubetkin, *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House and Am Oved Publishing House, 1981); Vladka Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto*, trans. Steven Meed (New York: Holocaust Library, 1993); and Władysław Szpilman, *The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man’s Survival in Warsaw, 1939–1945* (New York: Picador USA, 1999).

The recent publication of *The Warsaw Ghetto Oyneg Shabes-Ringelblum Archive: Catalog and Guide*, ed. Robert Moses Shapiro and Tadeusz Epszstein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, 2009) and the digitization of these unique records have greatly increased their accessibility.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AAN (202/II 26-29); APW (e.g., Der Obmann des Judenrates in Warschau; Amt des Gouverneurs des Distriktes Warschau—Der Kommissar für den Jüdischen Wohnbezirk in Warschau); AŻIH (e.g., sygn. 200; 210; 211; 301; 302; Ring I); BA-BL; BA-L; BLH; CAHJP; IPN (e.g., ASG); MA; NARA;

USHMM (e.g., Acc. 1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1998.A.0241 [Trial of Ludwig Fischer]; RG-02; RG-15.019M [IPN, ASG]; RG-15.077M [CENTOS]; RG-15.079 [Ring]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]; RG-50); VHF; YIVO; and YVA (e.g., O-3; O-16; O-33).

Miri Freilich and Martin Dean
trans. Samuel Fishman

NOTES

1. An English translation of the October decree establishing the ghetto is published in Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 102.

2. An overview of events leading up to the establishment of the ghetto can be found in *ibid.*, pp. 52–76. Also see *Warschauer Zeitung*, November 3–4, 1940.

3. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1075, pp. 28–29; AŻIH, Ring I/116.

4. Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, pp. 48–49; USHMM, RG-15.073M, *Der Jüdische Wohnbezirk in Warschau (Zahlen und Tatsachen)*, Warschau, June 1942; see also Grabitz and Scheffler, *Letzte Spuren*, p. 177.

5. USHMM, RG-15.079, Ring I/115, published in Kermish, *To Live with Honor*, pp. 304–309.

6. See Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, pp. 218–232.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 307–308; Sloan, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 192.

8. Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, p. 207; Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, pp. 647–648.

9. USHMM, RG-15.079, Ring I/412 [1115.].

10. Hilberg, Staron, and Kerr, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow*, pp. 383–384.

11. Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, p. 786.

12. Grabitz and Scheffler, *Letzte Spuren*, pp. 181, 207, 318–319. Most of these Jews were murdered during Aktion Erntefest (Harvest Festival) in November 1943. See also the entries for **Poniatowa** and **Trawniki**—both in **Lublin Main Camp**—in volume I of the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*.

13. See **Warschau Main Camp** entry in volume I of the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*.

WAWER

Pre-1939: Wawer, village, Warsaw województwo, Poland;
1939–1945: Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, General-
gouvernement; post-1998: województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Wawer is located about 10 kilometers (6 miles) east-southeast of the center of Warsaw. As of September 1, 1939, there were around 1,300 Jews living in Wawer.

German forces occupied Wawer in September 1939. In the fall of 1939, Jews were required to perform forced labor and to pay “contributions” imposed by the German authorities. Jews were forced to wear the Star of David, and a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established, headed by Menachem Kestenbergl. In October 1939, Wawer became part of Kreis Warschau-Land; the Kreishauptmann was Regierungsrat Dr. Hermann Rupprecht.

On the night of December 26–27, 1939, on the orders of Unterleutnant Max Daume, the 2nd and 3rd Companies of

the 6th Battalion of the 31st Regiment of the Order Police (Ordnungspolizei) carried out a special “pacification” Aktion in the area of Wawer and Anin, near Warsaw. The Aktion was a reprisal for the shooting on the previous day of two officers from the German 538th Construction Battalion, stationed in Wawer. The two men were killed in a town restaurant by Marian Prasuł and Stanisław Dąbek. The Germans then arrested 120 Polish, Jewish, and Russian men, aged 16 to 70, and sentenced 114 of them to death. The executioners used machine guns, and the killings took place publicly in the square between Błękitna and Spizowa Streets. The following Jews were among those shot: Elja Brajzman, Jankiel Czerwonka, Szachna Desau, Aron Fogelnest, Elias Nusselbaum, Lejbuś Platkowski, Jankiel Rosenberg, Uszer Rosenberg, Herszek Szajman, and Lejbuś Szajman. The bodies of the victims first were buried in a provisional grave, then were exhumed on June 25–27, 1940, on the orders of the Kreishauptmann. The “Eternity” (Wieczność) Association sent the remains of 11 of the victims to the city of Warsaw.¹

After the events of December 27, 1939, in fear of further reprisals by the Germans, one Jewish man fled with his mother and two sisters to stay with his father in Opatów. His father was a painter, who had painted the local synagogue in Opatów.² By June 1, 1940, around 60 Jewish refugees had arrived in Wawer.³

Sources differ regarding the date on which the Wawer ghetto was established. The first documentary reference to the ghetto is a letter from the Kreishauptmann Warschau-Land to the Wawer Judenrat, dated November 30, 1940. In the letter, the Kreishauptmann issued various instructions concerning sanitary conditions in the recently established ghetto (*Jüdisches Wohngebiet*). This implies that the ghetto had been established just prior to this, some time in November 1940.⁴

Due to a shortage of apartments in the ghetto area, the Judenrat was permitted to erect special barracks, and also four adjoining buildings were to be added to the ghetto, to be used to house sick beds and a quarantine section. However, the Judenrat had to take down provisional wooden walls set up in the larger buildings for privacy, creating instead a corridor system with separate quarters, for sanitary reasons. In addition, a sanitation column was to be established to enforce sanitary regulations, and the Jews were to be vaccinated against typhus at the cost of 0.50 złoty per head. The Judenrat was also obliged to prepare a list of the Jews in each apartment and to establish a bathing facility by the end of the year.⁵

A postwar Polish report indicates that the ghetto was located in Czaplówizna, within the Wawer gmina, in an area known as “Kolonja Różyczka.” It encompassed an area of about 5 hectares (12.4 acres) on Klasztorna Street. On the grounds of the ghetto, there were no factories, but some Jews performed artisanal work in their own homes.⁶

In Wawer, a Jewish welfare committee was active to assist the refugees and local Jews in need. It received support from the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) committee for Kreis Warschau-Land, headed by Dr. Ignaz (Icchak) Schiper. On March 20, 1941, the board of the Jewish welfare committee

referred to a letter from the Kreishauptmann ordering the establishment of a hospital, a quarantine section, and a steam bath. The committee had the space to set these up but no money to fix and open the bath. In the letter, the committee also requested 10 blankets, sheets, pillow cases, white aprons, men’s and women’s shirts, dressing gowns, and pajamas. The letter was signed by the head of the Judenrat, M. Kestenberg.⁷

On May 25, 1941, the board in Wawer sent the following note to the JSS in Warsaw: “We are waiting . . . hungry, sick, swollen, and ragged . . . mainly elderly and children, all miserable. It is so bad for us now that we can find no words to describe it. We beg you to help us!” The JSS reported providing aid to some 500 people in Wawer.⁸

A further appeal from the Judenrat in Wawer, on August 18, 1941, noted that a severe outbreak of typhus had struck the ghetto. The Germans had ordered the ghetto to be closed, and the Jews were completely cut off from the outside world. The letter concluded: “We are starving. Help us.”⁹ As a result of the epidemic, five Jews died.

In March 1942, there were approximately 950 Jews residing in the Wawer ghetto.¹⁰ According to Manes Puterman, the German authorities liquidated the ghetto on Thursday, March 23, 1942.¹¹ At the time of the ghetto liquidation, the German police shot around 10 sick and bedridden Jews locally. The remaining inmates of the ghetto were resettled into the Warsaw ghetto. During the transport to Warsaw, more than a dozen Jews were shot and buried in unmarked graves along the way.¹² Confirmation of the timing of the transfer can be found in a report preserved in the Ringelblum Archive concerning the ghetto in Tłuszcz. This noted that at the start of April, two weeks before Passover (April 16), news had arrived of the expulsion of the Jews from Pustelnik and Wawer.¹³

At the time of the ghetto’s liquidation in late March 1942, a number of Jews avoided the roundup and managed to find shelter with non-Jews in and around Wawer. For example, four members of the Frydman family found refuge with their old acquaintances, the Kupidłowska family. The Frydmans remained hidden successfully for two and a half years until the Germans were driven from the area. Other Jews who fled from the Warsaw ghetto also found temporary shelter in a specially prepared hiding place in Wawer set up with the help of Żegota (the Polish Council of Aid for Jews). Not all the Jews were able to hide successfully. On March 3, 1944, two Poles and two Jews, who had been in hiding in Wawer during the occupation, were shot on the street while trying to escape.¹⁴

After the war, “the crimes in Wawer” committed on December 27, 1939, were tried by the Polish Supreme National Tribunal (Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy). On March 3, 1947, the court sentenced Max Daume to death. Friedrich Wilhelm Wenzel also was sentenced to death by the Regional Court (Sąd Wojewódzki) in Warsaw in 1951.

SOURCES Information on the fate of the Jewish population of Wawer during the German occupation can be found in the following publications: T. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1

(1952); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 556; and Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 923–924.

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (Ring I/222 and 501b; 211/1081, 1082, 1084, 1087 [JSS]; 301/447, 1134, 2747 [Relacje]); IPN (ASG); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.019M [IPN, ASG]; RG-15.079M [Ring]; RG-15.084 [Relacje]); and YVA (e.g., M.31).

Monika Tomkiewicz and Martin Dean
trans. Steven Seegel

NOTES

1. H. Pawłowicz, *Wawer, 27 grudnia 1939 roku* (Warsaw, 1962), pp. 30, 111–115; S. Płowski, “Wawer,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* (Warsaw) 6 (1951): 125–130; W. Bartoszewski, *Warszawski pierścień śmierci* (Warsaw, 1970), pp. 53–58.
2. AŻIH, 301/1134, testimony of Samuel Wilenberg, p. 1.
3. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada,” table 2a.
4. AŻIH, 211/1081, p. 48, Kreishauptmann Warschau-Land an den Judenrat in Kol. Różycka Gem. Wawer, November 30, 1940. According to the report of Manes Puterman from Wawer, the German authorities established a ghetto in Wawer on November 10, 1941 [sic]; it appears likely that Puterman was mistaken by one year; see AŻIH, Ring I/501b [938.], report of Manes Puterman.
5. Ibid., 211/1081, p. 48.
6. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 556; IPN, ASG, reel 19, vol. 62, pp. 294 and verso.
7. Ruta Sakowska, “Icchak Schiper w getcie warszawskim. Działalność opiekuńcza,” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, no. 4 (216) (December 2005): 487; AŻIH, 211/1081, p. 34a.
8. AŻIH, 211/1082, pp. 2, 22.
9. Ibid., 211/1084, p. 41.
10. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 556.
11. Ibid., date it also in March 1942; AŻIH, Ring I/501b [938.].
12. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 556; IPN, ASG, vol. 62, pp. 294 and verso; Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada,” p. 88; AŻIH, 301/447, testimony of Helena Lewińska, 1945.
13. Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), p. 204, from Ring I/222.
14. Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust—Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pp. 396, 414–415, 423–424; H. Wierzychowski, *Anin, Wawer* (Warsaw, 1971), p. 83.

WĘGRÓW

Pre-1939: Węgrów (Yiddish: Vengrov), town, initially Lublin województwo, then on April 1, 1938, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Wegrow, Kreis Sokolow, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Węgrów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Węgrów is located alongside the Liwiec River, about 71 kilometers (44 miles) east-northeast of Warsaw. By September 1, 1939, there were 9,200 Jews living among the 92,226 residents of the Węgrów powiat. The Jews were concentrated mainly in the town of Węgrów, comprising two thirds of the town's 11,000 residents.

Upon occupying Węgrów on September 10, 1939, German soldiers engaged in antisemitic attacks. In the first week, they arrested and then executed a number of the town's wealthiest Jews.¹ Węgrów's German military administration also closed the town's synagogues. On Yom Kippur (September 23, 1939), the Germans discovered a private prayer service and dragged the men to the market square, where they ordered them to dance and sing. On this occasion they murdered Rabbi Jaakov Mendel Morgenstern by bayoneting him in the stomach.²

On November 28, 1939, the county's new Kreishauptmann, Landrat Friedrich Schultz, ordered Węgrów's Jews to create a Judenrat. The Judenrat's chair was Mordechai Zajman, and Shmuel Halberstadt served as vice president. The Judenrat also established a Jewish police force of 10 to 15 men headed by Noach Kochman, and medical services were placed under the direction of Dr. Melchoir. By mid-October, a German Gendarmerie post of 10 to 15 men, commanded by Oberleutnant Müller, patrolled Węgrów. A military detachment, directed by Commandant Scherle, also was stationed there.³

In the first months of the war, 390 Jews arrived in Węgrów, most of them fleeing from larger cities. By August 1940, the Germans had deported an additional 1,000 Jews there, mainly from Piotrków, Aleksandrów Łódzki, Kalisz, and Pułtusk. By September 1940, there were about 8,500 Jews living in Węgrów. By the end of December 1941, the Germans had ordered to Węgrów another 255 Jews, including those from the villages of Ruchna, Jaczew, Jarnice, and Wyszków. Expellees from this last village included its rabbi, who assumed the functions of the murdered Morgenstern. Jews forcibly deported to Węgrów in



Two Jewish policemen, presumably in the Węgrów ghetto, n.d. USHMM WS #05514, COURTESY OF LEOPOLD PAGE PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

this period included those from areas east of the town, such as from Grochów Szlachecki.⁴

The new arrivals were mainly destitute, with many of them begging for food. The Judenrat extended food assistance to the deportees, who comprised nearly half of the town's 2,500 most impoverished Jews by August 1940. In 1940, the Judenrat's Housing Authority also ordered Jews from Węgrów who lived in homes with more than one room to surrender remaining rooms to the emigrants. Even so, there was insufficient housing for the refugees, with some living in attics.⁵

Jews in Węgrów also faced increasingly more organized forced labor roundups. In 1939 and 1940, patrols of German soldiers and police arbitrarily conscripted hundreds of Jewish men to work at various army barracks. Tasks included gardening, latrine cleaning, and purchasing groceries. By the end of 1940, the Judenrat's Arbeitsamt (labor office) was assigning men to specific tasks. In 1940 and 1941, 250 Jews from Węgrów worked at a freight terminal near Sokołów Podlaski, unloading sacks of wheat. Others worked near the village of Liw, on the Liwiec River, about 8 kilometers (5 miles) from Węgrów, replacing bridge pilings destroyed in September 1939. Several hundred others were sent to a forced labor camp near Mordy to drain marshland. In September 1941, a large number was called up to work on a similar project in Łęki, and others labored in agriculture. By late 1941, part of Węgrów's forced labor quota was for craftsmen to work at the Treblinka forced labor camp. From May 1942, Jews from Węgrów also formed the initial labor pool used to build the Treblinka extermination camp.⁶

Hoping to forestall larger labor quotas, deportations, and the creation of a closed ghetto in Węgrów, the Judenrat organized internal taxes to raise money for gifts and payments to German authorities. It negotiated for smaller labor quotas by bribing German officials with diamonds, gold, fur coats, and leather boots. When German demands for labor increased at the end of 1940, the Judenrat imposed higher taxes to pay for larger bribes. In the first half of 1941, the Germans threatened to deport Węgrów's Jews to the Warsaw ghetto if a large demand was not met. A second large payment was made in the early summer of 1942 to avert the creation of a closed ghetto in Węgrów.⁷

As this evidence suggests, the town's ghetto remained open. Appointed Kreishauptmann of Sokołów Podlaski on June 10, 1940, Reichslandwirtschaftsrat Ernst Grams appears to have intended its closure. In a February 1, 1941, report, he stated that Węgrów was one of six concentration points for Jews in the Kreis and promised to close these ghettos as soon as weather permitted.⁸ Grams never implemented this plan fully. In Węgrów, as well as in Stoczek Węgrowski and Łochów, the ghettos remained open. Many eyewitnesses in Węgrów later claimed that the Germans nonetheless had created a Jewish quarter, as migrants and expellees were housed in the southern part of town, where Jews had been most heavily concentrated before the war. But many Polish Christians continued to live in this neighborhood. Some Jews continued to reside outside the Jewish neighborhood. Until Yom Kippur 1942, Jews were allowed

free movement about the town, except perhaps for a few streets that housed German administrative and residential buildings. From February 1941, the Germans forbade Jews from leaving the town's boundaries.⁹

The February 1941 prohibition on Jewish movement beyond Węgrów brought a drastic deterioration in Jewish living conditions. Most Jewish business owners could not sustain operations by the end of 1941. Some traveled illicitly to the Warsaw ghetto for merchandise to stock their stores. A far larger number had to close their businesses. Some were wholly or partially expropriated by Poles. Under these conditions, poverty became widespread, as unemployment consumed virtually all those not employed by official Judenrat institutions. Most Jews now hovered on the edge of starvation, due to the prohibition on Jewish movement and the refusal of Grams's administration to make winter food rations available to Jews and Poles. The majority of Węgrów's Jews sought charity assistance in September 1941. The Judenrat, which reopened its community kitchen to feed the destitute, could provide meals only for 1,200 people. In early 1941 and again later that year, typhus epidemics ravaged the Jewish community.¹⁰

To secure money to pay bribes and to meet quotas for forced labor, the Judenrat resorted from mid-1941 to authoritarian measures. The Jewish Police arrested several families to extort money from them, and by July 1942, it even raided the homes of Jews behind on their taxes, conscripting able-bodied men for forced labor.¹¹

Although Węgrów's ghetto remained open, the town's Jews realized by the summer of 1942 that they would not be excluded from deportations to the Treblinka extermination camp. Suspicions about the camp heightened in July 1942 after forced laborers from Węgrów working there did not return home. In July, the wives of German military and police officials in Węgrów told Jews who worked for them to hide their valuables. Then, on August 24, 1942, posters were hung in Węgrów signed by Grams restricting access to Jewish neighborhoods only to registered residents and voiding all Jewish travel passes. The majority of the town's Jews realized that Grams's orders signaled their impending deaths. Many Jews constructed hiding places in their homes, and some arranged shelter with local farmers, usually in exchange for advance payment. Fearing the Germans would send them to their deaths on Yom Kippur, private services were begun early. The *Shacharis* (services of morning prayer) and *Musaf* (additional service recited on festive days) were prayed on Sunday, September 20, 1942, on the evening of Yom Kippur, with weeping interrupting the cantor at one such service during the *Unesaneh Tokef* (liturgical poem).¹²

The Germans' extermination of Węgrów's Jews began at dawn on Yom Kippur (Monday, September 21, 1942). Members of the SS, aided by Ukrainian auxiliaries, German Gendarmes, and Polish (Blue) Police, surrounded the town. Then they went from house to house, ordering the Jews—approximately 9,000 people—to the town's square. Those who refused or were too old or infirm to comply were shot in their homes. By some accounts, the Germans murdered some 600 Jews in the first

two hours of the roundup. More than 2,000 Jews perished from gunshots in Węgrów before this first effort to exterminate Węgrów's Jews ended. Only 100 to 200 of the town's Jews were selected to form a postliquidation labor force. In the late afternoon, the remainder of those assembled, between 3,500 and 5,000 people, were marched 17 kilometers (10.6 miles) to the train station in Sokołów Podlaski. Along the way, the Germans shot those who failed to keep pace with the march. A large group of young Jews—reacting to a prearranged signal—fled en masse into the woods. Although an unknown number of them were shot, some survived. The march's remaining Jews, placed on wagons at the train station, were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.

In Węgrów, the SS, German Gendarmes, and Polish (Blue) Police began searching for more than 2,000 Jews believed to be hiding. In the following days, an unknown number, possibly more than 1,400, were extricated from their hiding places and shot at the cemetery. After a week the SS departed and responsibility for pursuing Jews still in hiding fell to the Gendarmerie.¹³

In Węgrów, Christian complicity accompanied the murder of Jews in hiding. The Germans initially asked members of the Polish volunteer fire department to help them locate hidden Jews. Fire department members soon surpassed the Germans engaged in this task. Local members of the Polish (Blue) Police also participated at the outset in executions of Węgrów's Jews. The German police came to rely heavily on both forces to search for and execute Jews in hiding. Extricated from hiding by teams of firemen, groups of Jews usually were accompanied to the cemetery by one member of the Gendarmerie and six armed members of the Polish (Blue) Police. The firemen provided further reinforcement, surrounding the armed guards. Polish workers buried the dead. As payment the Poles received clothing that had belonged to the executed Jews. The fire department and their Polish followers became known as "the dentists" for the gold that they stripped from the mouths of Jews murdered at the cemetery.¹⁴

After locking up members of the postliquidation Jewish labor force for several weeks in an armory, the Germans organized an enclosed ghetto in Węgrów during the second week of November. Located on the corner of the main market square and Gdańsk Street, the ghetto was policed by German Gendarmes. Those who resided there, including some who had survived the Yom Kippur roundup in hiding, were required to repair Jewish homes and businesses to prepare them for transfer to local non-Jews. German police patrolled the ghetto, which had between 150 and 300 residents, executing Jews they found there during the day for evading work. At night, they confined most of the ghetto's residents to the basement of a large building on the corner of the square. The ghetto was administered by a Judenrat, which remained briefly under the direction of Mordechai Zajman. About another 100 Jews were allowed to remain outside the ghetto, as they were registered as workers necessary for the German war effort. Another 100 to 200 Jews refused to register with the Germans, preferring to remain in hiding. On the night of April 26–27, 1943, the

Germans surrounded the ghetto and the homes of Jews officially living outside of it. That night, they shot the majority of the town's surviving Jews. The search for those in hiding continued through at least June 10, when the Germans executed about 10 Jews.¹⁵

In March 1944, a team from Sonderkommando 1005, the unit charged with obliterating traces of mass killings, arrived in Węgrów. In April, the officers of the Sonderkommando forced a tightly guarded group of Jewish prisoners, probably from Łódź, to dig up the remains of the Jews executed in Węgrów and burn them.¹⁶

No more than 100 of Węgrów's Jews are thought to have survived the war. Some did so by making their way to Mordy to join a forced labor camp, at which Jews continued to work. Most of the remainder of Węgrów's Jews depended on the assistance of local Poles. Several young children were brought into the homes of Polish families. These included Gitel Przepiórka, 3 years old when her mother turned her over to the Kowalczyks in the summer of 1942; Zofia Shenberg, an abandoned infant discovered by Marianna Ruszkowska in Węgrów on Yom Kippur 1942; Lusja Fabiarz found by Pelagia Vogelgesang on May 1, 1943; and the 10-year-old Sara Nortman who survived the ghetto liquidations living with the Buczyński family.¹⁷ Other Poles extended assistance to Węgrów's adult Jews, some in exchange for compensation. Zbigniew Bucholc, a Pole employed at Węgrów's labor office, arranged false documents for members of the Friedman family, which enabled them to travel as non-Jews to positions in Lwów. Similar papers enabled Ella Picot and her niece, Halusha Gross, to walk off the market square during the liquidation of the town's Jews on Yom Kippur 1942.¹⁸ The Potockis in Węgrów, the Czyżewskis in Pieńki, the Toefels in Jarnice, and the Korczak and Bujalski families in Zajac all extended shelter at some time to 10 members of the Bielowski (also known as the Bielawski or Biel) family, enabling them to survive the war.¹⁹

Węgrów's Jewish community was not reconstituted after the war. A majority of the few Jews who returned to the town soon immigrated to England, Canada, the United States, Argentina, and Israel. The only one of Węgrów's 13 Torahs known to have survived the Holocaust is located today at the Sixth & I Historic Synagogue in Washington, DC.²⁰

SOURCES A number of important published sources are available, including the memoirs by Shraga Feivel Bielawski (Fajwel Bielowski), *The Last Jew from Wegrow* (New York: Praeger, 1991), and by Nelli Rotbart, *A Long Journey: A Holocaust Memoir and After: Poland, Soviet Union, Canada* (Montreal: Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, 2002); as well as the yizkor book, *Kehilat Vengrov: Sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at yots'e Vengrov be-Yisrael be-hishtatfut yots'e Vengrov ba-Argentinah, 1961).

Documentary sources on the Jews of Węgrów during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., 301/38, 301/687, 301/3387, 301/4875, and 301/6043); BA-L (e.g., B 162/6843, 6845, and 6873); USHMM (e.g., Acc.1997.A.0124 [ZSS, reel 50, 211/1091]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC, 210/708];

RG-15.019M, reel 14 [ASG, 45 Warsaw woj.]; VHF (e.g., # 13697, 17292, 18608, 23573, 26871, 32778, 34246, 35694, 45830, 51043); and YVA (e.g., O-33/1066).

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NOTES

1. AŻIH, 301/6043, Władysław Okulus, “Największa tragedia w dziejach Węgrowa,” p. 1.

2. *Ibid.*, 301/38, testimony of Fajwel Bielowski, pp. 1–2; see also his account in Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 20–22; and under his Americanized name, VHF, # 34246, testimony of Phillip Biel; # 23573, testimony of Sara Kaye; *Kehilat Wengrow*, pp. 62, 116.

3. Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 22, 32, 47–48; VHF, # 35694, testimony of Henry Miller; and Tomasz Szczechura, “Terror okupanta w powiecie węgrowskim w latach 1939–1944,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce* 27 (1977): 57–59.

4. For population figures and the origins of the migrants, see, among others, T. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (January–June 1952): 95; Tomasz Szczechura, “Życie i zagłada społeczności żydowskiej w powiecie węgrowskim w latach 1939–1944,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (January–March 1978): 40–42; T. Berenstein et al., eds., *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej: Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1957), p. 278 (in German) and p. 279 (in Polish); AŻIH, 301/6043 (introduction); and 301/38, pp. 1–2; Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 22–24; and Barbara Engelking, “Życie codzienne Żydów w miasteczkach dystryktu warszawskiego,” in Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc. Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), p. 219.

5. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/708 (Węgrów), pp. 39, 47–48; Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, p. 23; and VHF, # 34246; # 35694; and # 17292, testimony of Nellie Kapsan.

6. Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 23, 30, 36, 38, 41–43, 46, 39; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (ZSS), reel # 8, 211/129, p. 43, and reel # 50, 211/1091 (Węgrów), p. 10; VHF, # 13697, testimony of Renia Lipska-Micznik, 1996; and # 34246; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, “Treblinka—obóz śmierci ‘akcji Reinhardt,’” in Dariusz Libionka, ed., *Akcja Reinhardt. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: IPN, 2004), pp. 217–218.

7. Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 23–34, 27, 48, 38, 46; AŻIH, 301/6043, p. 2; and VHF, # 23573, testimony of Sara Kaye; # 45830, testimony of Leokadia Michalska.

8. On the creation of six regional concentration points for the Jews in Kreis Sokolow Węgrowski, see Document # 45 in Berenstein et al., *Eksterminacja Żydów*, p. 108.

9. AŻIH, 301/6043, pp. 1–2; 301/3387, p. 1; VHF, # 32778, testimony of Maria Borowska; # 51043, testimony of Ella Picot; # 35694; # 45830; Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, p. 29; and Szczechura, “Życie i zagłada,” p. 44. Available sources differ on whether the concentration of Jews in Węgrów should be regarded as a ghetto or not. For example, Bielawski says “there was no ghetto” in Węgrów but goes on to say that all the town’s “Jews had been concentrated in one area. Only in a very few cases did Jews live together with Christians.” In their VHF testimonies, Borowska, Picot, Miller, and Michalska all discuss

“Aryan” or “Christian” and “Jewish” sections of town, with Picot describing the town’s main square as “neutral ground.”

10. Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 38, 43–44, 46, 49; VHF, # 32778; # 35694; # 17292; and USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 50, 211/1091 (Węgrów), p. 10. The failure of Grams’s administration to deliver food rations to Jews and Poles in Kreis Sokolow is the subject of USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel # 8, 211/129, pp. 45–47; reel # 44, 211/912, p. 20; and reel # 45, 211/950 (Siedlce), pp. 13, 30–46.

11. Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 46–49; and VHF, # 35694.

12. Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 45, 48, 53–56; VHF, # 26871, testimony of Perla Orenstein; and Szczechura, “Życie i zagłada,” p. 46.

13. Szczechura, “Życie i zagłada,” pp. 46–47; AŻIH, 301/6043, pp. 3, 5; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, “‘Akcja Reinhardt’ w gettach prowincjonalnych dystryktu warszawskiego, 1942–1943,” in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Provincia noc*, p. 67; Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 57–62; and VHF, # 35694; # 51043; # 32778; # 34246; # 26871; and # 45830. Agreement exists over the bloody nature of the Germans’ liquidation of the Węgrów ghetto, but discrepancies emerge in the documentation over the number of Jews murdered in Węgrów. Młynarczyk, for example, cites a testimony by a member of Węgrów’s Jewish police force, who worked over the course of two days to remove the bodies of 2,000 Jews murdered in Węgrów; see BA-L, B 162/6843, testimony of Ruwen F., June 12, 1962, p. 55.

14. On Polish collaboration, see the account of Władysław Okulus, AŻIH, 301/6043, pp. 4–7, 9–10, and those of Fajwel Bielowski: AŻIH, 301/38, p. 2; Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 57–67; and VHF, # 34246. Equally useful are the smaller treatments by eyewitness Hillel Zydman, titled, in English translation, “‘Good Neighbors’ as Beasts of Prey,” and by Ephraim Przepiurka, “The Way Wengrow Was Destroyed by Its Inhabitants,” in *Kehilat Wengrow*, pp. 63–65. See, too, VHF, # 13697.

15. Szczechura, “Życie i zagłada,” p. 48; Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 77, 80–86, 97–101, 106–107 114–115; AŻIH, 301/6043, pp. 5, 7; 301/4875, testimony of Pelagia Vogelgesang, p. 1; and VHF, # 23573.

16. AŻIH, 301/6043, pp. 8–9; 301/4875, p. 7; and Szczechura, “Życie i zagłada,” p. 49.

17. These children’s survival accounts are retold in Gloria Glantz, “A Child’s Journey,” *Holocaust/Genocide Project: Survivors Speak* (June 2001), pp. 6–7, on the Web site of the International Education and Resource Network, at www.earn.org/hgp/aeti/aeti-2001/2-SS.PDF; VHF, # 10888, testimony of Gloria Glantz; # 23573; Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 2, *Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), pt. 2, pp. 683, 842–843; AŻIH, 301/4875, pp. 1–10.

18. AŻIH, 301/3387, pp. 1–4; and VHF, # 32778.

19. VHF, # 35694; and Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 111–144.

20. AŻIH, 301/4875, p. 9; Bielawski, *The Last Jew*, pp. 145–162; and David Brooks, “A Time to Dance, and Mourn,” *New York Times*, February 28, 2004.

WŁOCHY

Pre-1939: Włochy, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Włochy, Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Włochy, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Włochy is located on the outskirts of Warsaw, about 8 kilometers (5 miles) southwest of the city center. Only a few Jewish families were living in Włochy on the eve of war in 1939.

Włochy was occupied by the Germans at the end of September 1939. In late October a German civil administration took over the region from the military. Włochy became part of Kreis Warschau-Land; the Kreishauptmann was Regierungsrat Dr. Hermann Rupprecht.

Jewish residents of Włochy were subjected to a number of persecutory measures from early in the occupation. They had to wear white armbands bearing the Star of David; they had to perform forced labor; and their property was confiscated. At some time before the summer of 1940, a Jewish Council (Judenrat) was established in Włochy.

Information regarding the Włochy ghetto is scant, mainly because no survivor testimonies could be located for this town. A report from the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Warsaw notes that at the end of October a deadline had been set of November 15, 1940, for the resettlement of the Jews from the Włochy gmina and surrounding areas, some 700 people into Fort Solipse (aka Fort V, a nineteenth-century fort located outside the town). As the fortress was in an absolutely ruined condition, the gmina of Pruszków had offered to take in some of the Jews intended to go to Fort Solipse.¹

The establishment of the ghetto is confirmed in an official Polish postwar questionnaire, signed by the deputy mayor of Włochy. According to this report, the ghetto indeed was established on November 15, 1940. In total, around 300 Jews were brought into the Włochy ghetto, but only 17 of them were originally from Włochy. Among the others, there were 130 from Ożarów due west of Warsaw, 67 from Łomianki (gmina Młociny), 50 from the nearby gmina of Falenty, 14 from Okęcie, 12 from Warsaw, 6 from Piastów, and 6 from Skorosze. The ghetto measured about 4,860 square meters (1.2 acres) in area. Jews living in the ghetto worked in the bakery located there, in the slaughterhouse, and in workshops for sewing, tailoring, and shoemaking. Some craftsmen also received orders from the local residents of Włochy. There was no communal kitchen in the ghetto, so families had to fend for themselves. The head of the Judenrat was Jozek Ferszt. He permitted some wealthy Jews to leave the ghetto to visit the town in return for a payment. In the initial weeks, two members of the Polish (Blue) Police guarded the Jewish families in the ghetto. Subsequently German Gendarmes took over from them, and they escorted all the Jews to Warsaw.²

According to an account in the Ringelblum Archive, in early November, the Jews of Łomianki were given only until November 10 to leave Łomianki and to depart for [Fort] Solipse. Following a tip-off from local ethnic Germans, however, many of the Jews from Łomianki decided instead to move directly to the Warsaw ghetto, while another 25 moved to the ghetto established in Legionowo. The anonymous report states that around 60 Jews from Łomianki departed for [Fort] Solipse in mid-November 1940.³

Personal details of 296 Jews registered in the ghetto, including the town from which they came, were recorded by the

town administration of Włochy and added to the postwar report on the ghetto as an appendix.⁴

According to a letter addressed to the JSS in Warsaw from the Włochy Judenrat, dated January 1, 1941, there were 274 Jewish residents in the Jewish quarter (*dzielnica Żydowska*). These people consisted mainly of women and children, who were in extreme need of material support. The letter complained in particular about a tax or “contribution” of 5 złoty per head, which had been imposed on the Jews of Włochy by the Kreishauptmann. The Judenrat requested that the JSS intervene with the Kreishauptmann to have this onerous tax rescinded. The last correspondence from the Judenrat in Włochy to the JSS is dated January 13, 1941.⁵ The JSS in Warsaw noted on January 16 that all the resettled Jews from around Włochy had been accommodated in Fort Solipse and were making urgent appeals for assistance in the form of bread and heating materials.⁶

An internal document from the Department for Resettlement (Abteilung Umsiedlung) in the office of the Gouverneur of Distrikt Warschau, dated January 20, 1941, states that the remaining 320 Jews in Włochy were scheduled to be deported to the Warsaw ghetto on February 3, 1941.⁷ It appears that the transfer may have occurred a few days earlier. According to the anonymous account concerning Łomianki in the Ringelblum Archive: “In January, the Jews who lived in [Fort] Solipse were within a half hour, put in vehicles and brought to Warsaw. [They were] not permitted to take anything with them other than a few bedding items. The entire Łomianki population—those who were in Warsaw, as well as those who were shipped from [Fort] Solipse to Warsaw and left everything behind—lives now in terrible need and poverty.”⁸ An article in the *Gazeta Żydowska*, dated February 18, 1941, noted that Jews from Włochy were among the recent arrivals in the Warsaw ghetto.⁹

After the ghetto liquidation, all the remaining Jewish property was confiscated by the Germans. The Jews transferred to the Warsaw ghetto shared the fate of most other Jews there. Jews from Włochy were among those who died from cold, starvation, and disease in the winter of 1941–1942. The majority were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp in the summer and fall of 1942.

After the liquidation of the ghetto in Włochy, there were several Poles in the town who provided shelter to Jews. After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto on June 30, 1942, Maria Klimczuk-Miron and her son were hidden in the home of Anna and Zygmunt Wróbel until the end of the occupation.¹⁰ Jadwiga Gedychowa, who lived in Włochy at 5 Sowińska Street, also cared for five members of a Jewish family.¹¹ Alicja Prechner hid on the “Aryan” side in Włochy, as did two other Jewish survivors, Irene Faitlowicz and Irene Rubinstein.¹² Unfortunately none of these survivors are able to provide information regarding the Włochy ghetto.

SOURCES Information on the Jewish population in Włochy during the Nazi occupation can be found in the following publications: T. Berenstein, “Deportacje i zagłada skupisk żydowskich w dystrykcie warszawskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 1 (1952); Czesław

Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 556; and Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007), pp. 208, 210.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews in Włochy during the Holocaust can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (211/124, 125, 1108 [JSS]; 301/2737, 5843 [Relacje]); IPN (ASG, sygn. 62, pp. 299–312); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [AŻIH, JSS]; RG-15.019M [IPN, ASG]; RG-15.079M [Ring]; RG-15.084 [AŻIH, Relacje]); and VHF (e.g., # 12272, 43738).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124 (AŻIH), 211/124, pp. 32–33, report of Dr. G. Wielikowski to JSS in Kraków, October 30, 1940.
2. Ibid., RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 19, sygn. 62, pp. 299–312.
3. Ibid., RG-15.079M, Ring I/847 [874.], “Geyrush Lomianki bay Varshe,” February 12, 1941.
4. The list includes the name and surname, names of parents, profession, date of birth, and place from which each person arrived; see *ibid.*, RG-15.019M (IPN, ASG), reel 19, sygn. 62, pp. 301–312.
5. Ibid., Acc.1997.A.0124 (AŻIH), 211/1108, Włochy Judenrat letters to JSS, January 1 and 13, 1941.
6. Ibid., 211/125, undated note in German about “Ausiedlungen im Distrikt Warschau,” January 16, 1941.
7. The order is partially reprinted in Josef Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Vollstrecker: Die Liquidation von 500.000 Juden im Ghetto Warschau* (Berlin: Arani, 1961), pp. 329–330.
8. USHMM, RG-15.079M, Ring I/847 [874.].
9. *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 14, February 18, 1941. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 19, sygn. 62, p. 299, however, dates the ghetto’s liquidation on February 26, 1941.
10. AŻIH, 301/5843, testimony of Anna and Zygmunt Wróbel.
11. Michał Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych* (Warsaw, 1993), p. 147.
12. AŻIH, 301/2737, testimony of Alicja Prechner; VHF, # 12272, testimony of Irene Faitlowicz; # 43738, testimony of Irene Rubinstein.

WOŁOMIN (AKA SOSNÓWKA)

Pre-1939: Wołomin, town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1944: Wolomin, Kreis Warschau-Land, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Wołomin, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Wołomin is located 19 kilometers (12 miles) northeast of Warsaw. The Jewish population in 1921 was 3,079, 49.3 percent of the total population. About 100 Jews living in villages nearby were also linked to the Wołomin community. By 1939, as a result of Polish economic policies and other disruptions,

the number of Jews in Wołomin had declined to 3,000, only 22 percent of the total population.¹

On the first day of World War II, the Germans bombed Wołomin, hitting neighborhoods that were predominantly Jewish and causing much damage and loss of life. The town was taken on September 13, 1939. From the first day the Germans tormented the Jews, stealing their possessions, robbing their stores, and grabbing men off the streets for forced labor. The most respected members of the community were ordered to sweep the streets and dance with their brooms. The Bet Midrash was burned together with the Torah scrolls on October 4, 1939.²

Many people fled eastward into areas taken by the Soviet army. In November, the occupiers also ordered the formation of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), chaired by Yaakov Blumberg. The Judenrat’s function was to meet all German demands; it had to organize forced labor groups and deliver money (“contributions”) and valuables. It was assisted in its functions by a Jewish police force. At the end of 1939, Jews over the age of 12 were ordered to wear the Star of David. From the beginning of the occupation Jews were subject to random shootings. When these occurred, the Judenrat was notified and ordered to bury the victims.³

In October 1940, the Germans ordered the establishment of a ghetto in Wołomin.⁴ The ghetto was composed of two neighborhoods. Jews were evicted from their homes and taken to the nearby settlement of Sosnówka,⁵ which consisted mainly of summer houses. The Jews were put in the houses of the Polish farmers, who in turn were moved into the Jewish homes. The “nicer” neighborhood on the edge of Wołomin was for members of the Judenrat, the Jewish Police, and prominent members of the community. The larger and more crowded neighborhood was for the others. At first it was an “open ghetto” with a population of 2,800 Jews, including 600 refugees expelled from Pułtusk, Wyszaków, Serock, and Nasielsk. Later on some displaced Jews arrived from Radzymin.⁶

Conditions in the ghetto were extremely overcrowded. Fourteen people, for example, were jammed into a small house with two rooms, a kitchen, and an attic.⁷ There was a severe shortage of food, which had to be obtained at inflated prices from local Poles by bartering valuables and personal possessions. Jewish artisans and craftsmen were able to exchange their finished goods for food. Others did not fare so well. Within the ghetto there was a bakery, to which farmers brought their grain. Jews ground the grain into flour on concealed hand mills, and the farmers smuggled the bread into Warsaw.⁸

There were two young Jewish women from Wołomin who had “Aryan” features that enabled them to engage in smuggling. They would travel by train to the outskirts of Warsaw, board a tram that passed by the Warsaw ghetto (but was not allowed to discharge passengers), and bribe the driver to slow down so they could jump off the tram. Then they would bribe their way into the ghetto, exchange bread for clothing, and make their way back to the ghetto in Sosnówka. The clothing was traded to the farmers for more grain to bake more bread.⁹

There is a brief note of a wedding in the ghetto, without music, singing, or dancing. Instead of rejoicing, the families in attendance read psalms as a source of consolation. Jewish marriages were forbidden, so the wedding was seen as an act of defiance. There is no mention of dates or names.¹⁰

A local “currency” was created by which needy Jews could “pay” for their free hot meals. The ghetto leaders also established an orphanage and formed a sanitation department to supervise cleanliness and run the local hospital. The physicians in charge were Drs. Resnik and Freik. Jews engaged in forced labor left the ghetto each day to work on the railroad tracks and on the estates of Polish gentry. Hundreds of young people were sent to work at camps in Lipnik, Izabelin, and Wilanów. Three hundred youths worked in a labor camp on the farm of Count Potocki.¹¹

At some time in the first half of 1941 (according to one account, in June), barbed wire was strung around the ghetto, making it an “enclosed ghetto.” The Germans placed signs at the entrance reading: “Beware, Infectious Diseases: Entry for ‘Aryans’ Forbidden!” The entrance to the ghetto was guarded by Jewish policemen.¹² In February 1941, the number of ghetto inhabitants reached 3,000. Hundreds died from starvation, overcrowded conditions, and disease, especially typhus. The Germans imposed a fine of 2,000 zloty on anyone caught smuggling food. Sometimes the smugglers, including children, were shot on the spot. Among the worst perpetrators was an SS officer named Nowak.¹³

By the summer of 1942, word arrived that the Warsaw ghetto was being liquidated. Several survivors recall the train transports to the Treblinka extermination camp that passed within sight of the Wołomin ghetto. One woman wrote:

I remember the trains. Day and night they rolled from Warsaw on the way to Treblinka. I could see the faces pressed against the small openings of the cattle cars. I could hear the cries of women and children. Often notes were thrown to the ground by someone in the transport warning: “Save yourselves,” or “Do something, we are on our way to destruction.” But of course, there was nothing we could do. It was too late. We were exhausted, starved, diseased, beaten.¹⁴

The Jews in the Sosnówka ghetto knew that nearly all the other ghettos in the vicinity had been liquidated and their day was coming soon. They frantically sought places to conceal themselves, in improvised hiding spots, underground bunkers, or the thick forests.¹⁵ All those attempting to escape and caught by the local police were taken off to be killed in some unknown place. Many Poles were indifferent to the fate of the Jews or even hostile towards them; however, several Polish families, including Antony Kleimak and his wife who rescued two Jewish families, took considerable risks to aid escaped Jews.¹⁶

At the beginning of October, the Germans liquidated the Wołomin orphanage, taking the children into the forest and murdering them. The destruction of the ghetto community

began on the night of October 2, 1942,¹⁷ which was the holiday of Shemini Atzeret. By morning SS and Polish (Blue) Police had surrounded the ghetto. The Jews were driven from their houses into the village square. Anyone resisting was shot. Only a few managed to escape. They were taken to Radzymin and sent along with the Jews of that town to Treblinka. Around the same time the 300 youths working on the farm of Count Potocki were taken out and shot.¹⁸ Polish sources indicate that as many as 620 Jews were shot altogether in and around Wołomin at the time of the ghetto liquidation.¹⁹

SOURCES Publications on the history of the Jews of Wołomin and their fate during the Holocaust include the following: Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron kebilat Wolomin* (Tel Aviv: Wolomin Society, 1971); and Abraham Wein, ed., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1989), pp. 184–186. The ghetto in Wołomin is also mentioned in Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 570; and Martin Weinmann, with Anne Kaiser and Ursula Krause-Schmitt, eds., *Das nationalsozialistische Lagersystem (CCP)* (prepared originally by ITS in 1949–1951; repr., with new introductory matter, Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1990), p. 690.

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jews of Wołomin under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., 211/1132-33 [JSS]; Ring II, PH/41-1-5); IPN (ASG, sygn. 62, p. 222); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS], reel 52); VHF (e.g., # 10331, 14868, 18625, 30068, 39044); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kebilat Wolomin*, p. 36; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 21 (Detroit: Thomson Gale/Keter, 2007), p. 153.
2. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kebilat Wolomin*, p. 382; Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 186; VHF, # 10331, testimony of Solomon Aidelson.
3. Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 186; VHF, # 14868, testimony of Henry Kruger; # 18625, testimony of Kuba Markusfeld; Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kebilat Wolomin*, p. 381.
4. VHF, # 10331.
5. In 1921, Sosnówka had a Jewish population of 20; *Blackbook of Localities Whose Jewish Population Was Exterminated by the Nazis* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1965). The ghetto in Sosnówka is referred to in some sources as Kobyłka. In fact this was part of the Wołomin ghetto.
6. Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 186; AŻIH, 211/1132, p. 3, report dated December 30, 1940.
7. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kebilat Wolomin*, p. 385.
8. Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 186; VHF, # 18625.
9. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kebilat Wolomin*, p. 388.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 397. One child survivor also recalls celebrating her fifth birthday party in the ghetto with several friends; VHF, # 39044, testimony of Rita Ross.
11. Wein, *Pinkas ba-kebilot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 186; AŻIH, 211/1133; VHF, # 18625.

12. Kapl Berman, “Meyn iberlebenishn in geto,” in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kehillat Wolomin*, p. 418; VHF, # 14868; # 39044; # 10331, dates the enclosure of the ghetto in June 1941, linking it to the German attack on the Soviet Union.

13. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 186; AŽIH, 211/1133; Berman, “Meyn iberlebenishn in geto,” p. 418; VHF, # 14868; # 10331.

14. Riva Kopyto Pfeffer, “Volomin Remembered,” in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kehillat Wolomin*, p. 582 (English-language entry); see also VHF, # 10331.

15. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kehillat Wolomin*, pp. 383–385; VHF, # 10331.

16. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 186. Among those named as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem is Eleonora Warszawska of Wołomin, who hid the Rubinstein family after they escaped from the ghetto; see Shmuel Krakowski and Sara Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust—Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), p. 849. VHF, # 14868, Kruger mentions the hostile attitude of some Poles he encountered after escaping from the ghetto.

17. Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kehillat Wolomin*, p. 389; Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), p. 587.

18. Wein, *Pinkas ha-kehillot: Poland*, vol. 4, *Warsaw and Its Region*, p. 186; VHF, # 10331.

19. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 570.

ŻELECHÓW

Pre-1939: Żelechów, town, Lublin województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Zelechow, Kreis Garwolin, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Żelechów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Żelechów is located 85 kilometers (53 miles) southeast of Warsaw. By 1921, it had 4,806 Jewish residents.

On entering Żelechów in September 1939, the Germans burned the synagogue. Soon after, a number of Jews from the shelled town of Garwolin arrived.



Deportation of Jews from the Żelechów ghetto, September 30, 1942. USHMM WS #50433, COURTESY OF IPN

In November 1939, the new authorities established a Jewish Council (Judenrat), initially chaired by Israel Mordecai Engel. Szulim Finkelsztajn (Shalom Finkelstein), the pre-war leader of Żelechów’s Zionists, soon replaced Engel. The Judenrat also included Dawid Kesselbrener (deputy), the craftsman Welwel Szprynger (Velvel Shpringer), Moses Weislander, and the tradesman Chaim Dawid Altman.

Altman also chaired the Judenrat affiliated self-help committee, which included the following members: Łódź journalist Izrael Lichtenstein (also in charge of the soup kitchen), Lipno refugee Dawid Bromberg, and Majer Dobrzyński of Łaskarzew. In the course of 1940, the kitchen operated for only 156 days. The Judenrat, the self-help committee, and the soup kitchen were located at 28 Piłsudski Street.

One of the Judenrat’s first assignments was the selection of 150 Jews for labor on a German managed estate in Jarczew. Survivor Halina Gedanken recalls that after the ghetto’s establishment, these laborers, having been provided with proof of employment, were permitted to walk the 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) to the estate unescorted.

By the summer of 1940, Żelechów’s Jews were obliged to pay rent to continue living in their houses. Shops and businesses were either confiscated or assigned to a non-Jewish commissar. In July and August 1940, 1,200 refugees from Warsaw and Maciejowice arrived. At the end of this period, a medical office for ambulatory patients managed by gynecologist Dr. Mordechaj Szkop was organized.¹

In October 1940, an open ghetto was established in Żelechów. The ghetto was unfenced, but the Jews, as survivor Dwora Shamai recalls, knew where the borders were. The center of the town—with its marketplace and adjacent streets—was assigned to the ghetto, as many of Żelechów’s Jews already lived there. The following streets were included in the ghetto: Chłopiński, Traugutt, Kościuszko, 11 Listopada, and Piłsudski. Those Poles living within this area were forcibly removed and consigned to Jewish houses outside the ghetto.

Poles were allowed access to the ghetto. In addition, the Tuesday market continued to operate in the town’s market square, with non-Jewish participants also receiving access. With rumors of deportations circulating by the summer of 1942, posts were erected around the ghetto in preparation for establishing a fence, but the job was never completed.²

In December 1940, a Jewish police force was established, commanded by Mejlach Szarfhar. One of the policemen—Bromberg—was later shot by the Germans. Subsequently, a 50-man fire brigade was established. Its members were exempted from forced labor and permitted to leave the ghetto.

Confiscations and house searches became more and more frequent. Living conditions in the overcrowded dwellings deteriorated. For example, in January 1941, the Judenrat reported: “Due to the establishment of a Jewish quarter in Żelechów, living conditions are terrible.” Of the 18,000 Jews in the Kreis, 12,000 were living in Żelechów by February 1942. (This total includes the 600 Jews transferred there from Stoczek Łukowski on February 9, 1941). The soup kitchen served 1,000 meals daily; half of them for 5 groszy each, the other half for no payment.

Since the Kreis center, Garwolin, had been almost completely depopulated of Jews, the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Kraków considered establishing its main branch for the Kreis elsewhere, with Żelechów a strong candidate, as it contained the most Jews. This office would supervise welfare assistance for the remainder of the Kreis, with smaller local branch organizations to be established in the other towns, where Jews still resided. Finkelsztajn sent numerous memoranda to Kraków insisting that Żelechów should be the Kreis seat, but the existing Żelechów self-help committee, consisting mostly of refugees, who claimed Finkelsztajn was corrupt to the bone, successfully undermined his credibility. Other localities were also against the establishment of the seat in Żelechów, particularly as the German Kreis authorities were based in Garwolin. Nevertheless, Finkelsztajn defended his position: “Neither Stoczek, Parysów, nor any other gossipy, malicious types from Żelechów, can guarantee credible insight [on who is able to provide social assistance], but we—and only we—deserve this trust.”³

In April 1941, “due to [unhealthy] relations between local activists” in Żelechów, and despite the fact that the Germans had expelled all but 36 Jewish families from Garwolin, Kraków decided to establish the Kreis JSS committee there. Finkelsztajn finally fought his way onto the Kreis JSS committee by proposing that he should be included in it so as “not to encounter obstacles.” As of July 1941, he was a member, along with Jonathan Klepfisz and J. Wasserman.

The local branch of the JSS was established in Żelechów in April 1941. It included Dr. Mordechaj Szkop (as chairman), Dawid Bromberg (as deputy), Izrael Lichtenstein, Dawid Kesselbrenner, Chil Judensznajder, Jankiel Lejb Goldcwaig, and Wolf Springer; membership was reduced to the initial three by July 1941. Nonetheless, Judenrat-JSS relations did not improve. In May 1941, Szkop wrote to Kraków, “Finkelsztajn felt that a potato and an ounce of bread are slipping from his hands. [He] began to terrorize me in ways unacceptable . . . to force me to resign.” Although this committee also offered to include Finkelsztajn, so as to be able to work in a “peaceful atmosphere,” relations only worsened with time. The committee continued to give examples of Finkelsztajn’s fraud. The JSS members claimed that they were not allowed to leave the ghetto due to Finkelsztajn’s actions.⁴

Following the start of the German-Soviet war in June 1941, Jews could leave the ghetto only for reasons of conscripted labor. That same month, four young Jews were caught smuggling sugar into the ghetto and sentenced to death; a fifth person was shot by the Germans when trying to exchange a fur for food with farmers.

In June 1941, with deteriorating sanitary conditions and cases of typhus appearing in the ghetto, the authorities ordered the opening of a 20-bed hospital. What came to be an epidemic reached its peak in August and September of 1941. By the end of that year, 637 Jews had been treated for typhus. With only 19 cases in January and 9 in February 1942, the epidemic was then considered to have been contained. At its height, during September 1941, a number of Jews were taken

to the nearby labor camp in Wilga, where they dug drainage ditches near the Vistula River.⁵

In November 1941, “due to the forcible expulsion of Jews from some towns in the Kreis,” 900 additional Jews were resettled to Żelechów. The community was informed of their arrival on November 15, 1941—only five days beforehand. The newcomers included almost all the remaining Jews from Garwolin (which then became free of Jews), as well as residents of Huta Dąbrowa, Koryczany, and other villages.

As of November 1941, the Jews were allowed to live in only six localities within the Kreis: Parysów, Sobienie Jeziory, Stoczek Łukowski, Sobolew, Łaskarzew, and Żelechów. In December 1941, the Kreishauptmann moved the JSS seat to Żelechów, as both Wasserman and Klepfisz had been transferred there.

In December 1941, 3 Jews were hanged in the market square (a female teacher, a policeman, and a tradesman). In January 1942, there were reportedly 11,000 Jews living in the ghetto. Increasing poverty caused one third of the ghetto’s population to apply for winter aid, consisting of fuel and potatoes. Over 2,500 Jews applied for soup kitchen meals, yet only 1,600 were available.

The situation of the incoming refugees was especially difficult. In February 1942, Szkop sent the following comment to Kraków: “The Jewish cemetery has expanded thanks to the hospitality of local citizens towards their refugee brothers.” Moreover, “a refugee, as unwanted, is abused, and humiliated.”⁶

On March 4, 1942, the Judenrat opened a one-room orphanage for 20 children, which the JSS termed a “children’s cage.” As the power struggle continued, the Kreishauptmann ordered the deportation of Dr. Szkop to Sobienie by March 15, 1942; the deadline subsequently was postponed for one month. In the meantime, Szkop’s coworkers reported: “Szkop is of late afraid to visit the JSS office, believing that for this price, Finkelsztajn will allow him to stay.” Finkelsztajn denied any involvement. Klepfisz—who replaced Szkop in April—was arrested on June 7, 1942, and sent to the Wilga camp.⁷

In mid-July 1942, the Germans shot Finkelsztajn. Lichtenstein was nominated as the new chairman of a reorganized Judenrat. By mid-August 1942, Gedalia Kijewski had replaced him. A number of executions took place in the course of the summer in Żelechów, including those of the Polish Bürgermeister Ludwik Pudło and policeman Władysław Rybak, both of whom were sympathetic to Jews.

In July 1942, 400 laborers were sent to Wilga and 300 to Mińsk Mazowiecki. Those sent to Mińsk were repairing the Mińsk-Siedlce road for the Wolfer und Goebel Company. Another 200 Żelechów laborers worked on the Dęblin-Ryki road for the Schaling Company. On September 18, 1942, the Kreishauptmann permitted the opening of workshops in Żelechów; however, there was work for only 20 carpenters, who were ordered to make windows and doors for 18 barracks.⁸

According to *Pinkas ha-kebilot*, a Jewish underground organization existed in the ghetto under the command of Isaac Weislander. It gathered clothing and food for Russian prisoners of war (POWs) who had fled from a nearby camp. Weislander was killed after some Poles informed on him, and the

group was disbanded. According to *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos*, Yosef Melinkowski was the leader of the Żelechów underground.

Terror in the ghetto intensified just prior to its liquidation. In the course of September and early October 1942, over 700 Jews were shot and buried in 14 mass graves. According to Gedanken, the community sensed the approaching liquidation. The Germans did not announce it. On the contrary, “to mislead the Jews” they ordered shoes from cobblers one day before the liquidation.⁹

The ghetto was surrounded on September 30, 1942. In the morning, accompanied by the sound of sirens, Żelechów’s Jews were chased out onto the square, on which there stood the remains of the burned-out synagogue. Approximately 70 persons were killed during the Aktion. The remainder were taken to the train station in Sobolew (20 kilometers [12 miles] to the southwest), and from there they were sent to the Treblinka extermination camp.

The Germans left only the following Jews in Żelechów: 50 members of the fire brigade, the Jewish Police, and 25 craftsmen. The task of the firemen was to bury the dead and then sort Jewish property. Upon completing these tasks, they were sent to the Wilga camp, and then to another camp near Sobolew. The craftsmen continued working in the former study house until they were murdered on February 28, 1943. All the members of the Jewish Police, approximately 20 people including its commander Szarfharc, were shot at the Jewish cemetery in the spring of 1943.¹⁰

Several of the ghetto’s residents who had fled the deportation joined a partisan group led by Samuel Olshak. In 1943, the unit became more active, thanks to weapons airdropped by the Soviets. Its actions included operations to free Soviet POWs from a camp near Dęblin-Irena, as well as the destruction of railways and highways in the Dęblin-Lubartów area.

SOURCES The following publications include information on the Żelechów ghetto: Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Provincia noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2007); Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 598; Abraham Wein, Bracha Freundlich, and Wila Orbach, eds., *Pinkas ba-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 7, *Lublin and Kielce* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), pp. 199–203; Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 975–977.

Archival sources include AŻIH (210/755 [AJDC]; 211/394, 211/1176–1180 [JSS]; 301/4800, 301/5820 [Relacje]); IPN (ASG); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; Acc.1999.A.0154 [AJDC]; RG-15.019M [Court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos]); and VHF (# 12350, 30347).

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NOTES

1. USHMM, Acc.1999.A.0154 (AJDC), 210/755 (Żelechów), p. 8; Acc.1997.A.0124 (JSS), 211/1176 (Żelechów), pp. 1, 7–8,

12–13; AŻIH, 301/5820, testimony of Halina Gedanken; *Gazeta Żydowska*, March 6, 1942.

2. VHF, # 12350, testimony of Dwora Shamai, 1996; # 30347, testimony of Janusz Sierczyński, 1997; AŻIH, 301/5820; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/1179 (Żelechów), p. 43.

3. *Gazeta Żydowska*, March 6, 1942; VHF, # 30347; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/1177 (Żelechów), pp. 2–8, 12–15, 38; 211/1178 (Żelechów), p. 51.

4. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/394 (Garwolin), pp. 19, 42–44, 57, 63; 211/1176, pp. 29, 49–51; 211/1177, pp. 6, 16–18, 22, 25–26; 211/1178, pp. 29–31; and 211/1179, pp. 19–21.

5. *Ibid.*, 211/1177, pp. 27, 35–36, 50; 211/1178, pp. 3, 8–9; and 211/1179, p. 35.

6. *Gazeta Żydowska*, January 9, 1942; AŻIH, 301/4800, testimony of Jankiel Grynblat, 1950; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/1178, pp. 40–42, 47, 59, 64–65; and 211/1179, pp. 5–6, 19–21, 40.

7. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/1179, pp. 36–37, 53–54, 68–69, 73; 211/1180 (Żelechów), p. 3; *Gazeta Żydowska*, March 29, 1942.

8. AŻIH, 301/5820; *Gazeta Żydowska*, August 16, 1942; USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/1180, pp. 17–18, 21, 33; *Rejestr miejsc i faktów zbrodni popełnionych przez okupanta hitlerowskiego na ziemiach polskich w latach 1939–1945: Województwo siedleckie* (Warsaw: GKBZHwP, IPN, 1985), pp. 337–338.

9. AŻIH, 301/5820.

10. USHMM, RG-15.019M (Court inquiries about executions and mass graves in districts, provinces, camps, and ghettos), reel 13, file 307-308; AŻIH, 301/5820; *Rejestr miejsc*, p. 339.

ŻYRARDÓW

Pre-1939: Żyrardów (Yiddish: Zsibirardov), town, Warsaw województwo, Poland; 1939–1945: Zyrardow, Kreis Sochaczew, Distrikt Warschau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: Żyrardów, województwo mazowieckie, Poland

Żyrardów is located about 45 kilometers (28 miles) southwest of Warsaw. It is named after Philip Girard (Żyraud), the French inventor of the spinning mill, who first set up spinning mills in Poland in 1825. In 1921, there were 2,547 Jews living in Żyrardów, comprising 12 percent of the total population. On the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, there were more than 3,000 Jews in Żyrardów, out of a total population of more than 30,000.

In the war’s first days, there was great panic as thousands of fleeing refugees passed through and the Luftwaffe bombed the town. Some local Jews also sought to escape. A few made it across the border into areas under Soviet control, but most were forced to return by the rapid German advance. German forces captured the town on September 8, 1939. Jewish properties were plundered by the local Polish population, as well as by “Poles” who were recognized as ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) by the new authorities. The Germans held refugees from Łódź for two weeks in an open stadium, without cover from the rain. The refugees were greatly helped by local Jews, who brought them food and clothing.¹



The deportation of Jews from the Żyrardów ghetto, n.d.
USHMM WS #81229, COURTESY OF IPN

In October 1939, the German military authorities ordered the establishment of a Jewish Council (Judenrat), which was headed by Jacob Baran (formerly a member of the *Mizrachi* political party).² On October 26, 1939, a German civil administration took over from the German military: Żyrardów was incorporated into Kreis Sochaczew. The Kreishauptmann was Landrat Pott. The head of the Judenrat, Baran, believed that “money will soften the heart of the German,” and he collected contributions from all segments of the Jewish population to bribe the Germans.³ Following the initial abuses and forced labor, there was a period of relative quiet in Żyrardów, with the required number of laborers being provided daily by the Judenrat.⁴

In July 1940, the Jewish population of the town was about 3,200, including some 1,000 refugees, mostly from parts of Poland annexed to the Reich, and almost all in desperate need.⁵ In December 1939, the Judenrat had established a public kitchen, which by January 1941 was serving 700 meals per day and also distributing food products to 600 needy people.⁶ Under the authority of the Judenrat, a Jewish court was established for the Jews of the town, regulating mainly disputes between Jewish tenants and subtenants; its decisions were also recognized by the other local courts.⁷

In December 1940, the Germans established a Jewish residential area (*dzielnica żydowska*), or open ghetto, in Żyrardów.⁸ The Jews were given until December 15 to move into the specified ghetto area, which lay within the following streets (German names): Familienstrasse, 1. Maistrasse, and Bahnhofstrasse. Some houses on the streets leading to Bahnhofstrasse were excluded from the ghetto. The Jews were permitted to take their smaller household items (*Hausrat*) with them but officially were supposed to leave the furniture (*Einrichtungsgegenstände*) behind. Accommodation within the Jewish quarter was to be assigned by the Judenrat. After December 15, Jews were not permitted to leave the ghetto. To assist with the transfer, a 50-member unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) was established. The Jews were obliged to report to the authorities the addresses of all the apartments vacated by the move into the ghetto.⁹

In the second half of January 1941, 900 Jews from Sochaczew, and additional Jews from other places in the Kreis, including Mszczonów, were moved into the Żyrardów ghetto. A telegram from the Jewish Council in Żyrardów was received on January 19 by the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) in Warsaw that read: “Very many Jews from Sochaczew have arrived—requesting immediate help.” The Judenrat housed a number of the new arrivals in the synagogue, where they were subjected to severe beatings and abuse from the German Gendarmerie.¹⁰ Due to the short period of its existence, there were no serious outbreaks of disease in the Żyrardów ghetto and only a few deaths from illness or starvation.

On January 31, 1941, the Germans issued an instruction to the Judenrat that all the Jews were to be transferred to the Warsaw ghetto within 48 hours, taking with them no more than 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of their belongings.¹¹ Although Baran had known about the deportation plan before, he kept it secret, hoping somehow to forestall it through bribes. Therefore, no one was prepared when the news of the resettlement was announced.¹²

On February 1, 1941, German forces surrounded the Jewish residential area, and going from house to house, they took the Jews out to waiting railcars, separating men from women.¹³ The Jews were transported for one day and one night without being told their destination. Upon arrival in Warsaw, everyone was ordered to undress and taken to the bath; their clothing was steamed, and women’s hair was cut.

Some secondary sources indicate that similar short-lived ghettos were also established in the neighboring towns of Mszczonów and Wiskitki (Yiddish: *Viskit*).¹⁴ The available contemporary documentation does not appear to confirm this, although it remains unclear. According to a report in the *Gazeta Żydowska*, dated January 24, 1941, at that time it was still not known whether the Jews of Mszczonów would remain in place or be transferred to the Jewish quarter in Żyrardów. A subsequent report dated January 28 mentions a 6:00 P.M. curfew in Mszczonów and that exceptions were permitted only for those with special permits.¹⁵ The Kreishauptmann’s January 30 order concerning the clearing of Jews from the Kreis mentions that henceforth the Jews were confined to their residential

areas (*Wohngebiete*). However, the same order lists Żyrardów, Wiskitki, and Mszczonów together for transfer to the Warsaw ghetto between February 1 and 9—implying, perhaps, that all these Jews were to be expelled via the Żyrardów ghetto.¹⁶

Firsthand accounts of the events in Mszczonów could not be located. However, two survivors from Wiskitki both report that in the period just before the expulsion to Warsaw the Jewish Council faced repeated demands for contributions from the Germans. The Jews surrendered all their remaining jewelry, silver, and gold, as each time they were assured that if they paid, the Germans would not create a ghetto in Wiskitki. Neither of them states that a ghetto was created but rather that on February 4 the Jews of Wiskitki were marched through the snow to Żyrardów, where they spent one night in the deserted ghetto, six or seven families to a room, before being sent on to the Warsaw ghetto the next day. Fajga Wołkowicz confirmed that two days earlier the Jews of Żyrardów had been expelled to Warsaw but noted that the Żyrardów Judenrat head, Baran, and his helpers were still there to supervise the loading of the Wiskitki Jews.¹⁷ Already on February 3, a permit was issued by the branch of the Arbeitsamt (labor office) in Żyrardów for one of its employees to remove salvaged Jewish property from the Jewish residential area.¹⁸ On February 11, 1941, the *Gazeta Żydowska* reported the arrival of 600 Jews from Żyrardów in the Warsaw ghetto; these Jews were sent for disinfection at a facility on Spokojnej Street.¹⁹

During the last months of 1941 and the first of 1942, a severe typhus epidemic in the Warsaw ghetto claimed the lives of many Jews from Żyrardów and its surrounding areas. The worst conditions of hunger and disease came in January 1942.²⁰ Jacob Baron, the former head of the Żyrardów Judenrat, registered for “volunteer” work in the Warsaw ghetto and never returned after the war.²¹ The majority of the remaining Jews from Żyrardów were deported to the extermination camps from Warsaw in the summer and fall of 1942.

A number of Jews from Żyrardów played an active role in the Warsaw Uprising in April and May 1943.²² Among those who were killed in the fighting was Itzhak Bloistein—one of the organizers of the uprising and the commander of a Dror (Freedom) detachment. Other fighters from Żyrardów who laid down their lives included Itzhak Greenboim, Aaron Halzband, Moshe Ziegler, Feivl Schwarzstein, and the Jewish women Irke Yakobowitch and Roize Blumstein.²³

Abraham Margolis from Żyrardów was a member of the group who planned the uprising at the Sobibór extermination camp. Margolis was 1 of 47 Jews known to have successfully escaped from the camp and survived the war.²⁴

SOURCES Much of this entry is based on the yizkor book, Mardekhai V. Bernshteyn, ed., *Pinkes Zshirardov, Amsbinov un Viskit: Yizker-bukh tsu der gesbikhte fun di kebiles . . .* (Buenos Aires: Di landlayt-faraynen in Amerike, Yisroel, Frankraykh, Argentine, 1961). Additional information on the Jewish population of the town can be found in Elżbieta Hulka-Laskowska, *Żyrardowscy Żydzi w mojej pamięci* (Żyrardów: Stacja Naukowa MOBN, 1985).

Documentation regarding the fate of the Jewish communities of Żyrardów, Mszczonów, and Wiskitki under German occupation can be found in the following archives: AŻIH (e.g., Ring I/328/2, 352, 353, 458, 947, 1261; and 211/1071 and 1190); USHMM (Acc.1997.A.0124 [JSS]; RG-15.079M [AŻIH, Ring]); VHF (e.g., # 11002); and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, pp. 453–454. According to another account in AŻIH, Ring I/458, published in Joseph Kermish, ed., *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor!: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives “O.S.” (“Oneg Shabbath”)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), p. 230, the sports stadium camp held mostly Polish POWs. This account notes that “Jewish soldiers had to suffer much abuse from their Polish colleagues” and that “city people brought plenty of food, but demanded high prices.”

2. Isruel Milnbak, “Der ershter Pogrom un nach im,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 482.

3. M. Boymerder, “In Iene Teg,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 466.

4. Etarah Blumenshtayn, “Geblibn Eyne,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 525.

5. Rukhl Fogel, “Dos gevein fun Zshirardover geto,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 473.

6. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 54 (AŻIH, 211/1190), correspondence of the Jewish Council of Elders and Aid Committee in Żyrardów with the JSS in Kraków. These documents are also published in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, pp. 455–462.

7. Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 454; see also Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (1972; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 181.

8. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 54 (AŻIH, 211/1190), Żyrardów, January 14, 1941, letter to JSS in Kraków.

9. *Ibid.*, RG-15.079M (AŻIH), Ring I/353; see also Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 454.

10. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, 211/1071, p. 56; Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 454; *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 11, February 7, 1941. Avraham Margulis, “Sobibor—Dos Schechtheuz far Mentshn,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 506, however, dates the transfer of Jews from Mszczonów, Wiskitki, and Sochaczew in December 1941. See also Paweł Fijałkowski, *Żydzi sochaczewscy* (Sochaczew: Muzeum Ziemi Sochaczewskiej i Pola Bitwy nad Bzura, 1989), p. 22; and Milnbak, “Der ershter Pogrom,” p. 484, which dates the transfer in January 1941.

11. USHMM, RG-15.079M (AŻIH), Ring I/352, Kreis-hauptmann Sochaczew-Blonie, order concerning the clearing of the Kreis of Jews, January 31, 1941.

12. Fogel, “Dos gevein,” p. 469.

13. Berel Vaytser, “Vie azoy mir hobn sikh geratevet,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 517.

14. For example, Guy Miron, ed., *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), pp. 503–504, describes an open ghetto in Mszczonów; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy bitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator*

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- encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 564, mentions a ghetto in Wiskitki.
15. *Gazeta Żydowska*, nos. 7–8, January 24 and 28, 1941.
 16. USHMM, RG-15.079M (AŻIH), Ring I/352.
 17. VHF, # 11002, testimony of Samuel Feldman; AŻIH, 301/5992, testimony of Fajga Wołkowicz.
 18. USHMM, RG-15.079M (AŻIH), Ring I/328/2.
 19. *Gazeta Żydowska*, no. 12, February 11, 1941.
 20. See Kermish, *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor*, pp. 326–327.
 21. Freyde Sheradzki, “Zvishn lebn un teut,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 502.
 22. “Die finf Zshirardover heldn,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, pp. 497–500.
 23. Yosele Yakubovitch, “Begegnishn mit Zshirardover Yidn,” in Bernshteyn, *Pinkes Zshirardov*, p. 569.
 24. Margulis, “Sobibor,” pp. 507–515. The 47 survivors are listed in Jules Schelvis, *Sobibor: A History of a Nazi Death Camp* (Oxford: Berg in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2007), p. 168.

KRAKÓW REGION



View of the Kraków ghetto gate, ca. 1941. The text in Yiddish reads Yidisher Voynbazirk (Jewish residential district).
USHMM WS #73170, COURTESY OF IPN

KRAKÓW REGION (DISTRIFT KRAKAU)

Pre-1939: parts of the Kraków, Kielce, and Lwów województwa, Poland; 1941–1945: Distrikt Krakau, Generalgouvernement; post-1998: parts of województwa podkarpackie, małopolskie, and świętokrzyskie, Poland

Distrikt Krakau was established by the German authorities on October 26, 1939, as one of the four initial Distrikte of the Generalgouvernement. On this date the city of Kraków became the capital of the Generalgouvernement, where Generalgouverneur Hans Frank soon took up residence in the Wawel Castle, as well as the capital of Distrikt Krakau. The Distrikt was divided into 12 Kreise (counties), each governed by a Kreishauptmann. The Kreise were Debica, Jaroslau, Jasło, Krakauland, Krosno, Miechów, Neumarkt, Neu-Sandez, Przemysl, Reichshof, Sanok, and Tarnów.

According to German statistics from 1940, Distrikt Krakau held more than 200,000 Jews, exceeding 5 percent of the total population.¹ These statistics, however, are likely an underestimate, as they do not fully reflect the large influx of Jewish refugees that arrived at the end of 1939 from Polish territories incorporated into the Reich.

The chief German civil authority in the Distrikt was initially Distrikt governor Dr. Otto Gustav Wächter, who was succeeded first by Richard Wendler, then by Dr. Ludwig Losacker (provisionally), and finally by Dr. Kurt von Burgsdorff. The SS and Police Leader (SSPF) was the senior police official in the Distrikt, subordinated to the Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) of the Generalgouvernement, SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger. The position of SSPF in Distrikt Krakau was held in the following succession: Hans Walter Zech, SS-Oberführer Julian Scherner, and finally SS-Sturmbannführer Willi Haase. The SSPF oversaw the forces of the Sicherheitspolizei (Sipo) in the Distrikt and also those of the Ordnungspolizei (Orpo), which included both the Schutzpolizei (Schupo) in the cities and the Gendarmerie in the smaller towns and rural areas. The relevant local civil administrators, the Kreishauptmänner and their subordinates, were generally in charge of ghetto affairs. Surveillance and order were in the hands of the German Sipo and Orpo forces. The Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) kept order in the ghettos, guarding their internal borders, whereas Orpo forces and Polish (Blue) Police patrolled the ghettos externally.

Taking over authority from the military on October 26, 1939, the German civil administration introduced a series of antisemitic laws that deprived the Jews of their economic, cultural, and social rights and regulated forced labor.² On November 28, 1939, the Generalgouverneur ordered the establishment of Jewish Councils (Judenräte) for each Jewish community.³ The members were to be held personally responsible for the implementation of German orders. The main tasks of the Jewish Councils included the organization of

forced labor, the collection of taxes and contributions, registration, the enforcement of sanitary regulations, and the organization of welfare and medical services. As of December 1, 1939, all Jews were obliged to wear armbands bearing the Star of David.⁴

Several improvised ghettos—for example, in Pruchnik, Sanok, and Leżajsk and, according to one source, also in Przeworsk—were established in Distrikt Krakau at the end of 1939. These ghettos were formed in response to the Soviet authorities closing the frontier to further immigration by Jews. Once German expulsion efforts in various border towns had failed to drive all the Jews across the border, in some places those that remained were forced to move together in specific parts of town. These early, improvised ghettos were established around November or December 1939, that is, just after the first documented ghetto in Piotrków Trybunalski (Distrikt Radom).

In the summer of 1940, Generalgouverneur Hans Frank announced a temporary halt to ghetto establishment. Nevertheless, in some towns, such as Tarnów, the first stage of ghettoization commenced with the exclusion of Jews from specific streets in the center of town. The main development at this time was the removal of Jews from the capital city of Kraków, as Stadthauptmann Dr. Carl Schmid sought to reduce considerably its Jewish population of more than 60,000 people. Initially Jews were encouraged to leave voluntarily. In response, tens of thousands of Jews left Kraków, mainly for other towns in the Distrikt: for example, some 4,000 fled to Tarnów and another 1,000 to Miechów. Then from November 1940 until March 1941, about 10,000 Jews were deported from the city of Kraków into Distrikt Lublin.

The establishment of the Kraków ghetto in March 1941 was followed by a wave of ghetto creation in the spring of 1941: additional ghettos were set up, for example, in Miechów, Bochnia, Jasło, and Wolbrom. Most of these ghettos were initially unfenced, although some were enclosed subsequently. In Miechów, the Judenrat was instructed to build a 5-meter-high (16.4-foot-high) wall topped with barbed wire. Jews continued to work outside the ghettos, facilitating the smuggling in of food to support the ghetto inhabitants.

The administration of welfare was transferred from the Jewish Councils to the Jewish Social Self-Help (JSS) organization, which had set up branches in most places with a significant Jewish population by mid-1941. The JSS branches opened soup kitchens, distributed food and clothing, and sought to provide for children and the elderly. The level of assistance was generally insufficient to meet the dire needs of the Jewish



Jews forced out of Mysłenice taking their household possessions on horsedrawn wagons, under the supervision of Kraków district officials, on August 22, 1942. Maria Gorniesiewicz clandestinely photographed this scene from the balcony of her second-story apartment. USHMM WS #38494 COURTESY OF SHALOM FOUNDATION: GOLDA TENCER-SZURMIEJ COLLECTION

population, but it served to ameliorate conditions for the poorest Jews. Jewish Councils were criticized for their treatment of refugees, alleged corruption, and favoritism. However, the Judenräte inevitably faced “choiceless choices,” which also produced a high turnover among their leadership. A number were killed for failing to meet the incessant and impossible German demands. The Judenräte’s most common response to German pressure was bribery, but this had little chance of success in the long term, as Jewish financial resources became exhausted.

Following another brief halt to ghettoization, ordered by Hans Frank in the summer of 1941s, a more intense wave of ghetto establishment started towards the end of that year. Among the reasons for the Germans to establish ghettos were concerns about the spread of typhus among the Jews, the desire to control black market activities, and the acquisition of space in the cities and towns. On October 25, 1941, Generalgouverneur Frank decreed that henceforth Jews leaving their place of residence without permission were subject to the death penalty.⁵ Although formal ghettoization was not as widespread as in Distrikt Radom, more than 25 additional ghettos were established between October 1941 and February 1942 in Distrikt Krakau, many of them unfenced. Several of these were in Kreis Reichshof, where on December 17, 1941, Kreishauptmann Dr. Heinz Ehaus had ordered the establishment of Jewish quarters, setting dates for them to be closed. In Rzeszów,

the closing order was effective on January 10, 1942; for the remainder of the Kreis, it was February 1, 1942. In Kolbuszowa, also in Kreis Reichshof, where a ghetto had been established previously in June 1941, on January 5, 1942, posters were put up around the ghetto, prohibiting Germans and other “Aryans” from entering the ghetto without a special pass.⁶

The new more stringent movement restrictions severely impacted Jewish communities. Jews now had to risk their lives to buy or barter for food with villagers. In the spring and early summer of 1942, there was a further wave of consolidation, as Jews in many smaller communities were moved to the nearest towns. In some regions, this process of consolidation had started earlier. For example, about 2,000 Jews from the surrounding region had been concentrated in the Nowy Targ ghetto in May 1941, as the Germans attempted to clear the border region near Slovakia of Jews.⁷ Some towns, such as Mszana Dolna, were named as concentration points for Jews, but no separate residential district (ghetto) was established there.⁸

As living conditions for Jews deteriorated in the first half of 1942, the terror of the Gestapo also intensified. In February 1942, the Security Police shot about 50 Jews in Jasło who had been allowed to return from Eastern Galicia in the fall of 1941. A similar Aktion was conducted in Tarnów a few weeks later. These people were deemed suspect as they had lived under Soviet rule. In the spring of 1942, the Security Police also seized and killed prominent Jewish social and political activists in a number of ghettos in Distrikt Krakau, especially any Jews known to be Communists, Socialists, or Zionists. For example, the head of the Gestapo in Nowy Sącz, SS-Obersturmführer Heinrich Hamann, received orders from the Commanding Officer of the Security Police and the SD (KdS) in Kraków to arrest and shoot all Jews in the Kreis known to be Communists or to sympathize with them. In response, Hamann obtained an old membership list for the Poalei Zion (left-wing Zionist) movement and ordered that all those on the list be arrested with the assistance of the Jewish Councils and Jewish Police. When the head of the Judenrat in Grybów attempted to limit the effects of this order, arresting only 20 people from a much longer list, Hamann ordered the shooting of 5 members each from the Judenrat and the Jewish Police.⁹ Similar “anti-Communist” Aktions took place, for example, in Rzeszów and Dąbrowa Tarnowska. The goal was to terrorize Jews and forestall efforts at resistance just prior to the deportations. At the same time, the Germans were rounding up young Jews for work in labor camps within the Distrikt, including those in Biesiadka, Pustków, and Płaszów.

In March 1942, the complete expulsion of the Jews from Mielec provided an indication of the terrible fate awaiting the Jewish communities of Distrikt Krakau. In a brutal Aktion, about 500 people were murdered in and around the town, 750 were selected for the Pustków camp, and another 3,000 were deported to various towns in Distrikt Lublin.

In 1942, the Jewish Councils and the JSS conducted a campaign to find employment for as many Jews as possible. Attempts were made to secure work for Jews, including women,



Religious Jews from Jasło, rounded up for forced labor or deportation, are crowded onto the back of a truck, ca. 1940.

USHMM WS #08311, COURTESY OF MUZEUM OKRĘGOWE W RADOMIU



Jews are ferried from Sandomierz to the Kraków ghetto, 1940.
USHMM WS #14688, COURTESY OF ARCHIWUM DOKUMENTACJI MECHANICZNEJ

in agriculture and to establish workshops and vocational training courses. As news spread of large-scale deportations, there was a growing conviction that only those whom the Germans considered useful would be spared.

The organization of the deportations was in the hands of the SSPF and his staff. The ghetto liquidation Aktions were implemented by the German Security Police assisted by a number of Trawniki-trained auxiliaries and German Order Police units. In some places, units of the Polish (Blue) Police and Jewish Police were involved in the roundups. The Construction Service (Baudienst) organization, made up of conscripted Polish young men, was occasionally tasked with digging and filling in mass graves.

The main wave of deportation Aktions in Distrikt Krakau took place between June 1 and mid-September 1942—that is, within a period of only three and a half months. All of these transports were directed to the Bełżec extermination center. The first deportation Aktion took place on June 1 to June 8, 1942, from the Kraków ghetto. An additional group of Jews from Słomniki was added to this transport. Another large-scale deportation then followed from the Tarnów ghetto. The remaining deportations were carried out more or less Kreis by Kreis, as follows: Reichshof and Debica in July; Jaroslau, Krosno, Jasło, Neu-Sandez, Neumarkt, and Krakau-Land in August; Miechow, Sanok, and Tarnow in September. A further large-scale Aktion was conducted in the Kraków ghetto at the end of October, while most of the smaller remnant ghettos were cleared in November 1942.¹⁰ It seems that in a number of places Jews continued to live in their former houses, without ghettoization, right up to the deportations, as, for example, in Skalbierz, while for a few locations, there is inadequate documentation to determine whether a ghetto was established.¹¹

The concentration process connected with the deportations, however, did produce a further wave of ghetto establishment. In Kreis Tarnow, ghettos were established in Dąbrowa Tar-

nowska, Brzesko, Tuchów, Zakliczyn, and Żabno in the summer of 1942 to serve as concentration points up to the main deportation Aktions in mid-September 1942.¹² At the time of the deportations, Kreishauptmann Dr. Kipke issued proclamations threatening Poles with the death penalty for concealing Jews and ordering them not to buy or receive Jewish property.¹³

Some ghettos were set up only a few weeks before the deportations, as was the case in Sędziszów Małopolski and Ropczyce. In other places, such as Słomniki and Radomyśl Wielki, the announcement of a “ghetto” by the German authorities was used mainly as a ruse to allay Jews’ fears during the period of concentration.

Two large collection ghettos were established in the Kreis centers of Dębica and Rzeszów, which held most of the Jews of their respective Kreis just prior to deportation. Some Jews were transferred twice during the period of consolidation. For example, the Jews of the Ropczyce ghetto were transferred first to the Sędziszów Małopolski ghetto before being deported to Bełżec via the Dębica ghetto. In most places, the sick and the elderly, as well as those uncovered in hiding or resisting deportation, were shot locally.

At several locations in Distrikt Krakau, almost all the Jews were shot not far from their places of residence, rather than being deported to Bełżec. In Mszana Dolna, where no ghetto had been established, more than 880 of the town’s 1,029 Jews were shot on the orders of Heinrich Hamann on August 19, 1942, just outside the town.¹⁴ In Rzepliennik Strzyżewski, after the selection of 30 Jews to be sent to the Gorlice ghetto, the remaining 364 Jews were shot in the nearby Dąbry Forest, located only about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) from the ghetto. Similar mass shootings were conducted against the Jews from the ghettos in Jasienica Rosielna, Kołaczyce, Jodłowa, and Brzozów.

In Kreis Sanok, the Germans established a transit camp for Jews at Zasław, about 8 kilometers (5 miles) south of Sanok. In early September 1942, most of the Jews of Kreis Sanok (more than 10,000 people) were brought to the camp and crammed into barracks suitable for only about 500. They were then deported to Bełżec in three large transports over the

ensuing days. In December 1942, around 700 of the last Jews from Sanok were murdered close to the camp.¹⁵ Similar transit camps existed at Pełkinie in Kreis Jaroslau and at Słomniki in Kreis Miechow, where Jews were held under horrendous conditions for several days prior to their deportation to Bełżec.

During the deportation Aktions, many of the able-bodied Jews were selected out and sent to labor camps. Following most deportations, a few Jews, often from the Jewish Police and the Judenrat, were retained to sort Jewish belongings or perform other labor tasks in so-called remnant ghettos. These registered Jews were often soon joined by others who had evaded the roundups by hiding. In a few locations, a form of remnant ghetto was established where no ghetto had existed prior to the main deportation Aktion. This was the case, for example, in Proszowice and in Pilica where, a few days after the deportations, the German authorities announced that Jews would be permitted to return to live in remnant ghettos. One of the main aims of such remnant ghettos was to lure additional Jews out of hiding.

On November 10, 1942, HSSPF Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger issued an order creating five official remnant ghettos in Distrikt Krakau. They were established in Kraków, Bochnia, Tarnów, Rzeszów, and Przemyśl.¹⁶ Their purpose was to lure out of hiding those who had evaded the deportations by promising them safety and work. A number of Jews were transferred to these places in November from other unofficial remnant ghettos. However, in many places the remaining Jews were shot or transferred to work camps. The five official ghettos had each been divided by December 1942 into “A” and “B” ghettos, with the former for working Jews and the latter for women, children, and the elderly, incapable of work. The A ghettos were gradually converted into labor camps over the ensuing months, while the situation of the Jews in the B ghettos became desperate with periodic selections and inadequate food supplies.

Jewish resistance movements were active in several ghettos in Distrikt Krakau. Bochnia had a branch of the Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa (Jewish Fighting Organization, ŻOB), which was linked to the larger organizations in Kraków and Warsaw. The ŻOB in the Kraków ghetto carried out several attacks in and around the city, including the bombing of the Cyganeria and Esplanada Cafés in December 1942. Several ghetto fighters were captured in the aftermath of these operations, however, severely disrupting the organization’s effectiveness. Other forms of resistance included the dissemination of the underground press, the smuggling of weapons, the preparation of bunkers, and mass escapes from several places just prior to deportation Aktions.

On December 31, 1942, according to the Korherr report, there were about 37,000 Jews remaining in Distrikt Krakau.¹⁷ These “legal” Jews were now all confined either in the five main remnant ghettos or in various enclosed camps, including those in Pustków, Mielec, Płaszów, and other locations.

The five remnant ghettos in Kraków, Tarnów, Przemyśl, Rzeszów, and Bochnia had all been liquidated by the end of September 1943. The labor camps, which succeeded the A ghettos, however, were in some cases not finally liquidated

until February 1944, with many of the remaining Jews being transferred to other labor camps.

SOURCES Surprisingly, no comprehensive monograph has yet been prepared on the fate of the Jews of Distrikt Krakau during the Holocaust. Secondary works with coverage of the history of the Jewish communities of the region include the following: E. Podhorizer-Sandel, “O zagładzie Żydów w dystemie krakowskim,” *BŻIH*, no. 30 (1959): 87–109; Czesław Pilichowski et al., eds., *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939–1945: Informator encyklopedyczny* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979); Danuta Dabrowska, Abraham Wein, and Aharon Weiss, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 2, *Eastern Galicia* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1980); Abraham Wein and Aharon Weiss, eds., *Pinkas ha-kebilot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities: Poland*, vol. 3, *Galicia and Western Silesia* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984); Adam Bartosz, *Tarnowskie judaica* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo PTTK “Kraj,” 1992); Stanisław Poradowski, “Zagłada Żydów rzeszowskich,” pts. 3 and 4, *BŻIH* (1987–1988); and Andrzej Potocki, *Żydz i Podkarpackiem* (Rzeszów: Libra, 2004).

Relevant documentation can be found in the following archives: AAN; APKra; AŻIH; BA-BL; BA-L; FVA; IPN; MOR; NARA; USHMM; USHMMPA; VHF; YIVO; and YVA.

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NOTES

1. Auszüge aus einem Bericht der Regierung des Generalgouvernements über die Lage der jüdischen Bevölkerung . . . bis Juli 1940, in Tatiana Berenstein et al., eds., *Faschismus, Getto, Massenmord: Dokumentation über Ausrottung und Widerstand der Juden in Polen während des zweiten Weltkrieges [FGM]* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1961), p. 86.

2. For a more extensive list of restrictions, see *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 27 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), Lfd. Nr. 667a, pp. 350–354.

3. Verordnung des Generalgouverneurs H. Frank über die Einsetzung von Judenräten, in Berenstein et al., *FGM*, p. 71.

4. Anordnung: Kennzeichnung der Juden im Distrikt Krakau, signed Wächter, November 18, 1939 in Marian Domanski, *Fleeing from the Hunter* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2010).

5. *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs*, 1941, p. 595.

6. USHMMPA, WS # N64876, Polizeiliche Anordnung, signed Dr. Ehaus, January 5, 1942.

7. Pilichowski et al., *Obozy hitlerowskie*, p. 342; Report of the Kreishauptmann in Nowy Targ for the period from September 17, 1939, to May 31, 1941, in Berenstein et al., *FGM*, p. 64.

8. *JuNS-V*, vol. 24 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), Lfd. Nr. 635, p. 308; AŻIH, 211/710.

9. Shlomo Zalman Lehrer and Leizer Strassman, *The Vanished City of Tszanz* (Southfield, MI: Targum, 1997), p. 312; *JuNS-V*, vol. 24, Lfd. Nr. 635, p. 357.

10. For a concise overview, see Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 387–388.

11. Concerning Skalbierz, see PAIH, testimony of Zeev Lida, December 17, 1997: “It’s hard to call it a ghetto, even though we were not allowed to leave. They did not concentrate

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us in a specific street. We stayed in the same houses.” Other possible sites of ghettos include Żołyńia (see www.zolynia.org/about-new.html—unfortunately, the information on this Web site could not be verified from other sources) and also Charsznica, where a small remnant ghetto for 25 Jews may have existed in the fall of 1942 (see VHF, # 37148, testimony of Solomon Salat; and AŻIH, 301/5484).

12. USHMM, Acc.1997.A.0124, reel 48, protocol of the JSS in Tarnów, July 31, 1942. See also *Gazeta Żydowska*, July 31, 1942.

13. *JuNS-V*, vol. 32 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), Lfd. Nr. 710a, pp. 390–391; and vol. 35 (Am-

sterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), Lfd. Nr. 775, p. 303.

14. USHMM, RG-15.019M, reel 3, “Kwestionariusz o egzekucjach masowych i grobach masowych,” doc. 264; AŻIH, 301/1715, testimony of Abraham Borger; *JuNS-V*, vol. 24, Lfd. Nr. 635, pp. 397–403.

15. BA-L, B 162/14494, pp. 17–18; AŻIH, 301/3246, 301/3556, 301/4916.

16. Police Decree issued by HSSPF Krüger of the Generalgouvernement, November 10, 1942, published in Berenstein et al., *FGM*, pp. 344–345.

17. Korherr report, March 23, 1943, in *ibid.*, p. 348.



Borders as of 1942