

A response to the many disheartening articles printed in major newspapers about the so-called "Polish Ghettos."

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Holocaust Encyclopedia

The term "ghetto" originated from the name of the Jewish quarter in Venice, established in 1516, in which the Venetian authorities compelled the city's Jews to live. Various authorities, ranging from local municipal authorities to the Austrian Emperor Charles V, ordered the creation of other ghettos for Jews in Frankfurt, Rome, Prague, and other cities in the 16th and 17th centuries.

During World War II, ghettos were city districts (often enclosed) in which the Germans concentrated the municipal and sometimes regional Jewish population and forced them to live under miserable conditions. Ghettos isolated Jews by separating Jewish communities from the non-Jewish population and from other Jewish communities. The Germans established at least 1,000 ghettos in German-occupied and annexed Poland and the Soviet Union alone. German occupation authorities established the first ghetto in Poland in Piotrków Trybunalski in October 1939.

The Germans regarded the establishment of ghettos as a provisional measure to control and segregate Jews while the Nazi leadership in Berlin deliberated upon options to realize the goal of removing the Jewish population. In many places ghettoization lasted a relatively short time. Some ghettos existed for only a few days, others for months or years. With the implementation of the "Final Solution" (the plan to murder all European Jews) beginning in late 1941, the Germans systematically destroyed the ghettos. The Germans and their auxiliaries either shot ghetto residents in mass graves located nearby or deported them, usually by train, to killing centers where they were murdered. German SS and police authorities deported a small minority of Jews from ghettos to forced-labor camps and concentration camps.

There were three types of ghettos: closed ghettos, open ghettos, and destruction ghettos.

The largest ghetto in Poland was the Warsaw ghetto, where over 400,000 Jews were crowded into an area of 1.3 square miles. Other major ghettos were established in the cities of Łódź, Krakow, Białystok, Lvov, Lublin, Vilna, Kovno, Częstochowa, and Minsk. Tens of thousands of western European Jews were also deported to ghettos in the east.

The Germans ordered Jews residing in ghettos to wear identifying badges or armbands and also required many Jews to perform forced labor for the German Reich. Daily life in the ghettos was administered by Nazi-appointed Jewish councils (Judenraete). A ghetto police force enforced the orders of the German authorities and the ordinances of the Jewish councils, including the facilitation of deportations to killing centers. Jewish police officials, like Jewish council members, served at the whim of the German authorities. The Germans did not hesitate to kill Jewish policemen who were perceived to have failed to carry out orders.

Jews responded to the ghetto restrictions with a variety of resistance efforts. Ghetto residents frequently engaged in so-called illegal activities, such as smuggling food, medicine, weapons or intelligence across the ghetto walls, often without the knowledge or approval of the Jewish councils. Some Jewish councils and some individual council members tolerated or encouraged the illicit trade because the goods were necessary to keep ghetto residents alive. Although the Germans generally demonstrated little concern in

principle about religious worship, attendance at cultural events, or participation in youth movements inside the ghetto walls, they often perceived a "security threat" in any social gathering and would move ruthlessly to incarcerate or kill perceived ringleaders and participants. The Germans generally forbade any form of consistent schooling or education.

In some ghettos, members of Jewish resistance movements staged armed uprisings. The largest of these was the Warsaw ghetto uprising in spring 1943. There were also violent revolts in Vilna, Białystok, Częstochowa, and several smaller ghettos. In August 1944, German SS and police completed the destruction of the last major ghetto, in Łódź.

In Hungary, ghettoization did not begin until the spring of 1944, after the Germans invaded and occupied the country. In less than three months, the Hungarian gendarmerie, in coordination with German deportation experts from the Reich Main Office for Security (Reichssicherheitshauptamt-RSHA), concentrated nearly 440,000 Jews from all over Hungary, except for the capital city, Budapest, in short-term "destruction ghettos" and deported them into German custody at the Hungarian border. The Germans deported most of the Hungarian Jews to the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing center. In Budapest, Hungarian authorities required the Jews to confine themselves to marked houses (so-called Star of David houses). A few weeks after the leaders of the fascist Arrow Cross movement seized power in a German-sponsored coup on October 15, 1944, the Arrow Cross government formally established a ghetto in Budapest, in which about 63,000 Jews lived in a 0.1 square mile area. Approximately 25,000 Jews who carried certificates that they stood under the protection of a neutral power were confined in an "international ghetto" at another location in the city. In January 1945, Soviet forces liberated that part of Budapest in which the two ghettos were, respectively, located and liberated the nearly 90,000 Jewish residents.

During the Holocaust, ghettos were a central step in the Nazi process of control, dehumanization, and mass murder of the Jews.

Resources

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Jewish Ghettos in Poland during WWII

By: **Ewa Kurek**, Ph.D., Historian

Dr. Kurek received her doctorate in history from the Catholic University of Lublin in Poland. She is the author of four books and numerous articles devoted to the history of World War II.

For more than twenty years with brief interruptions, I have been engaged in research regarding Polish-Jewish relations and trying to understand the puzzles of WWII and the Holocaust in Poland. ***

It is not an easy task. As the years pass, I have found, again and again, new

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Reflections on Kielce and Communism: The Obstacle of the Kielce Pogrom to Polish-Jewish Reconciliation

By: **Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski**

Putting to Rest

World War II's Spirit of Hatred

Part 2

The Kielce Pogrom in a Nutshell

A "pogrom", a Russian word that translates to "devastation," is defined as "an organized massacre, especially of Jews in Russia, such as 1881, 1903, and 1905." (The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, 1989.) Anti-Jewish violence in Russia was usually started with a false accusation that a ritual murder had been perpetrated on Christian children by local Jews. Violence directed against the Jews that occurred on July 4, 1946, in the town of Kielce, referred to as the Kielce Pogrom, is aptly named for several reasons. For one, it was indeed organized. And as it will be explained in detail, it was organized by the Soviet-controlled terror apparatus in Poland, a captured country which was under Soviet occupation at the time. This pogrom, although not on Russian soil, was arranged by a totalitarian leadership centered in Russia and it was started with the same technique of planting a false accusation that a ritual murder had been perpetrated on Christian children. And as even the common dictionary definition shows, this is not the first time Russians have instigated this type of activity.

In the Kielce Pogrom, an uprising occurred over the span of many hours that resulted in the death of 41 Polish citizens: 39 Jews, and two gentiles. It was a horrible crime, and regrettably, there was some complicity among a very small number of gentile Poles in this inexcusable violence. Some of these Polish criminals, as will be pointed out, were tried and convicted for their crimes. The reports, however, of the involvement of a mob of 15,000 cheering Polish citizens are completely untrue. Also, the idea that the uprising was of a spontaneous nature is also untrue. As it will be shown in this study, this event was carefully provoked and staged by the Soviet occupiers at that time. This event was staged to achieve specific political purposes dictated by Moscow's global strategy including Europe and the Middle East.

The Soviet-Nazi Partnership

Why would Soviets want to stage an uprising that would embarrass Poland? After all, didn't both Poland and the Soviets fight alongside of Britain and the other allies in World War II? Didn't Hitler's German army invade both Poland and the Soviet Union, and isn't "the enemy of my enemy my friend?"

There is general public awareness that the United States and the Soviet Union were World War II partners in the Allied fight against Nazi Germany. Many fewer, however, are aware of the nearly two-year Nazi-Soviet partnership embodied in the *German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty, which was signed on September 28, 1939.* It divided all of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union and contained secret provisions for the mutual extermination of potential Polish opponents of both Germany and the USSR. Both Germany and the USSR agreed to control their respective parts of Poland. This meant taking all necessary measures to contain and prevent the emergence of any potential Polish actions toward either Germany or the USSR, and then communicating with each other on the progress made toward the goals of the treaty. The treaty lasted until Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. Soviet

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Poland's Solidarity † priest Jankowski dies

WARSAW, Poland – A July 12, 2010 AP article by Vanessa Gera reports that Henryk Jankowski, a Polish priest who gained prominence in the 1980s by supporting Lech Wałęsa's Solidarity movement but who later saw his reputation marred by anti-Semitism and suspicions of pedophilia, died Monday evening in Gdańsk, the city's mayor said. He was 73.

Mayor Pawel Adamowicz announced Jankowski's death on Facebook, saying the prelate died at 8:05 p.m. local time. He did not give a cause of death but Polish media reports noted that the priest had battled diabetes for years.

Jankowski, the parish priest for the St. Brygida Church in Gdańsk, came to national prominence when he celebrated Masses for shipyard workers striking under Wałęsa's leadership - resistance that paved the way for communism's eventual demise. Along the way he won the nickname "Solidarity's chaplain," but he was one of many priests who waded into dangerous waters to support Solidarity's struggle for freedom against repressive - and atheist - communist rule.

"We do not forget the role that he played in the history of our country and city," Adamowicz said.

Another prominent anti-communist priest, Jerzy Popiełuszko, was tortured and killed by communist secret agents in 1984 for his activism, and beatified in Warsaw in early June for that martyrdom.

The reputation that Jankowski built up with his support for freedom took a terrible battering in the years after communism's collapse due to anti-Semitic remarks.

He was also investigated on allegations that he sexually abused a minor, though he was never convicted. He insisted he was innocent, but called the accusations a slander campaign orchestrated by "Jews and Judeo-Communists."

In 1997, Jankowski was barred by Roman Catholic authorities from giving sermons for one year following repeated anti-Semitic remarks. During one homily, for instance, he said that members of "the Jewish minority cannot be tolerated in the Polish government."

The news agency PAP reported a funeral Mass is planned for him in his church, St. Brygida. †

On Amazon.com... This review is from: Książę (Fr.) Henryk Jankowski "nie ma za co przepraszać" (Polish Edition) (Perfect Paperback)

Father Jankowski Never Equated the Swastika With the Star of David, April 10, 2009

By: **Jan Peczkis**

"Scholar and Thinker"

FATHER HENRYK JANKOWSKI HAS NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR is the title of this book. To begin with, the priest's actual view of Jews is a balanced one, recognizing both good and bad deeds by Jews. (p. 86).

As for the June 11, 1995 sermon, here's what correspondent Jarosław Popek of the leftist and Judeocentric GAZETA WYBORCZA wrote that Father Jankowski said (p. 80): "We cannot tolerate any longer the rule of those who haven't declared whether they come from Moscow or Israel."

Here's what Fr. Jankowski actually said: "The representatives you elected... ostensibly Poles, but who had declared their origins from Israel or from Moscow."

Popek also quoted Jankowski as saying:

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