

Timeline

Piotrkow Holocaust

by

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September 1, 1939

Germany invades Poland [Photo](#)

September 4, 1939

One thousand Piotrkow Jews fleeing the German invasion are killed in nearby [Sulejow](#) by German planes strafing the town and dropping bombs.

September 5, 1939

Germans invade Piotrkow Trybunalski

September 1939

About 2,000 Piotrkow Jews escape to the Soviet Union

October 1939

The Gestapo establishes a *Judenrat*, headed by former vice president of the Jewish Council, Zalman Tenenberg, a member of the Jewish socialist [Bund](#) organization. Tenenberg surrounds himself with twenty-three co-workers, mostly party members, some of whom had served on the Council before the war.

October 8, 1939

German Civil Commissar Hans Drexel orders the establishment of a ghetto, the first in German-occupied Poland

October 28, 1939

The ghetto is established. Jews are forced to leave their homes and move into the ghetto.

November 7, 1939

Jews from the [Warthegau](#) are expelled to Piotrkow, among other cities.

November 29, 1939

Hans Drexel presents the *Judenrat* with a decree demanding 350,000 zlotys. Three hostages are held until payment is made. Later, more money and goods are demanded, impoverishing Piotrkow's Jews.

December 13, 1939

Sixty-five Jews from [Gniezno](#), probably the last of the community, arrived in Piotrkow Trybunalski.

1939-40

About 8,000 Jewish refugees from neighboring towns and villages arrive, many from [Warsaw](#), [Lodz](#) and its vicinity, [Belchatow](#) and Kalisz, in addition to those exiled to Piotrkow by the Germans from the villages of Pomerania, [Plock](#) and [Gniezno](#) and their vicinities.

February 18, 1940

Two German sergeants seize and rape two Jewish girls at the Jewish cemetery.

July 1940

Some Jews are taken to two nearby swamps and forced to dig ditches and canals. Many die of pneumonia or tuberculosis. A census of the ghetto was taken. Nearly a thousand men are gathered and sent to the Hrubieszow, [Belzec](#), Dzikow, Cieszanow and [Plaszow](#) labor camps.

September 1940

A ransom is collected by the Jewish community in exchange for the return of Piotrkow men in brutal Lublin camps.

March 14, 1941

On March 4, 1941, 600 Jews from Drobin are deported via Dzialdowo, arriving in Piotrkow Trybunalski ten days later. Of the 600 Drobniner Jews who were brought to Piotrkow, only six were alive at war's end.

June and July 1941

A Polish courier traveling on behalf of the Bund's Central Committee is arrested. Underground activities of the Bund are uncovered and members go into hiding. The Gestapo arrests many Bund members and the *Judenrat* chairman, Zalman Tenenberg, who is sent to [Auschwitz](#) and murdered. Szymon Warszawski subsequently becomes *Judenrat* chairman.

September 13, 1941

Eleven members of the *Judenrat* reach the end of two months of torture. One of them is Jacob Berliner, who gives himself up after eluding capture.

November 17, 1941

Eight Jews are shot for smuggling food into the ghetto.

1941

A typhus epidemic sweeps through the ghetto.

October 14, 1942

[The Piotrkow "action" begins](#): at 2:00 in the morning, the ghetto is surrounded by SS men and Ukrainians.

October 14-21, 1942

Liquidation of the ghetto is begun: about 1,000 Jews (including the sick) are shot and 22,000 Jews are deported from the ghetto to Treblinka death camp and gassed, including Rabbi Lau, the last rabbi of Piotrkow; 500 escape to forest nearby.

October 21, 1942

About 4,000 Jews remain in the ghetto, about half of those illegally.

October-November, 1942

The Gestapo brings "illegals" found in cellars and hiding places to the synagogue. They are sent to Tomaszów Mazowiecki and deported to Treblinka together with the Jews of Tomaszów.

November 19, 1942

One hundred "illegals," mostly old people, are brought to the synagogue, then led away and shot in the nearby Raków forest.

November 25, 1942

The *Judenrat* chairman orders the "illegals" to register. A few days later, they are picked up by the Jewish police, jailed in the synagogue and held without food or water.

November 1942

Yeshayahu and Tova Weinstock give themselves up at the synagogue to exchange places with their children, who are saved. Other acts of heroism occur to attempt to save Jews held in the synagogue.

December 19, 1942

Forty-two men are taken from the synagogue and led to the Rakow forest. They are given spades and shovels and ordered to dig five long ditches. The men are shot after a struggle with the Germans, with a few escaping.

December 19-20, 1942

The Gestapo take Jews from the synagogue to the Rakow forest in groups of fifty to be shot. Many are killed near the synagogue attempting to escape. In the Rakow forest, a total of 560 Jews are shot. The dead are buried in a mass grave together with the wounded, a few of whom manage to dig themselves out.

March 21, 1943 (Purim 5703)

A "[Purim Massacre](#)" to avenge the ten sons of Haman occurs in Piotrkow. Jews living legally in the ghetto are told that ten volunteers with university degrees are needed for an exchange with German citizens living in the settlement of Sarona, in Palestine. The chosen include: the lawyer Zilberstein (then Jewish Police Commander) with his wife; pediatrician Dr. Maurycy Brams with his wife, 16-year-old daughter (Hannah/Ania) and his sister-in-law; young lawyer Szymon Stein; psychiatrist Dr. Leon Glatter. They are driven around the city until nightfall, then taken to the cemetery. SS officers and gendarmes hold derisive speeches, before ordering the Jews to undress and be shot.

end of July, 1943

The Nazis agree to permit 1,720 Jews to remain in the ghetto – 1,000 of the near Bugaj and the rest in the glass factories. They deport 1,500 "excess" Jews from the small ghetto to camps in Bilzin, Pionki and Starachowice. The Nazis separate children from their parents who are being sent to Bilzin; the children are murdered with great cruelty.

August 1, 1943

Glass workers (about 720) are quartered near the glass works Kara and Hortensja and woodworkers of the Bugaj camp (about 1,100) are housed in their barracks. The workers of the "Shop"(needle trade) are shipped out to Blyzin. The "illegals" are executed.

September, 1943

The Nazis discover that more than agreed number of Jews remain in Piotrkow. One hundred workers — 91 men and 9 women — are selected from the Bugaj and the glass factories and deported to the Dietrich-Fischer wood factories in Tropau, Sudetenland. None of the men survive and are last seen at the Berlin railroad station, just before the collapse of the Nazi regime.

November 24, 1944

The last Jews in Piotrkow are deported: some to [Buchenwald](#), [Bergen-Belsen](#) and [Mauthausen](#) camps. Some inmates from the Bugaj were directly evacuated to Buchenwald. Some prisoners are taken to [Czestochowa](#) and unloaded. Of these, some male prisoners are taken to Buchenwald or remain in Czestochowa, and women prisoners, with a some young girls, are taken to [Ravensbrück](#).

January 16, 1945

Piotrkow is liberated by the Soviet Army. Jews who survive in [Auschwitz](#), Czestochowa, on the Aryan side, return and register in the Gmina; most leave shortly after.

1945

After liberation, Poles murder three Jews who return to Piotrkow: the engaged couple, Sala Uszerowicz and Lajzer Malc, and Mrs. Rachel Rolnik.

Sources

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