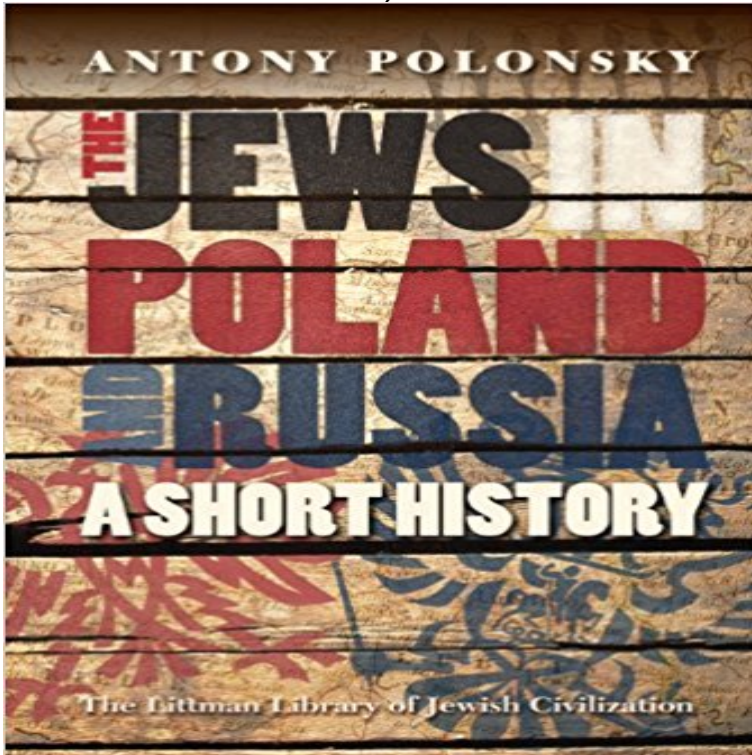


## The Jews in Poland and Russia: A Short History (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization)



For many centuries, Poland and Russia formed the heartland of the Jewish world. Right up to the Second World War, the area was home to over 40 per cent of the world's Jews. Nearly three and a half million Jews lived in Poland alone, with nearly three million more in the Soviet Union. Yet, although the majority of the Jews of Europe and the US, as well as a large proportion of the Jews of Israel, originate from these lands, and many of the major movements that have characterized the Jewish world in recent times have their origins there, the history of their Jewish communities is not well known. Rather, it is the subject of mythologizing that fails both to bring out the specific features of the Jewish civilization that emerged there and to illustrate what was lost in its destruction. Jewish life in these parts, though often poor materially, was marked by a high degree of spiritual and ideological intensity and creativity. In this book, author Antony Polonsky re-creates this lost world, brutally cut down by the Holocaust and seriously damaged by the Soviet attempt to destroy Jewish culture. It is a study that avoids both sentimentalism and the simplification of the east European Jewish experience into a story of persecution and martyrdom. The book's relevance reaches far beyond the Jewish world or the bounds of East-Central Europe, and it succeeds in providing a comprehensive overview that highlights the realities of Jewish life while also setting them in the context of the political, economic, and social realities of the time. This is an abridged version of a three-volume hardback edition which won the 2011 Kulczycki Book Prize for Polish Studies (awarded by the American Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies) and also the Pro Historia Polonorum Prize for the best book on the history of Poland published in a foreign language between 2007 and 2011 (a prize established by the Polish Senate and

awarded by the Polish Historical Association). \*\*\* Reviews of *The Jews in Poland and Russia: Volumes 1, 2 and 3: Exemplary and formidable* . . . Polonsky, as much as anyone else, has created the field of modern Jewish history as a subject to be considered and understood rather than simply a tragic past to be mourned. He is too good a historian to confuse the history of Jewish life with the German policies that brought Jewish death . . . The barely visible commitment in these three wonderful volumes is to rescue a world from polemic, for the sake of history. -- Timothy Snyder, *Wall Street Journal* \*\*\* We can only commend Antony Polonsky for his massive effort to explain seven centuries of Jewish history...[his] strength lies in his ability to illuminate intellectual and cultural developments . . . Because of the excellent bibliographies, extensive annotation, and wonderful maps . . . any reader wishing to read in greater detail about Polish and Russian Jewry will have plenty of resources to enable the search. - Alexandra S. Korros, *Jewish Quarterly* \*\*\* Masterful...In Polonsky's erudite and eminently clear treatment, the rich forest of eastern European Jewish civilization that has become obscured not only by trees, but also by debris of scholarly twigs, re-emerges in its full lushness . . . The Judaic studies academy will long be in Polonsky's debt for this sweeping work, one destined to be the authoritative classic in its field for the foreseeable future. - Allan Nadler, *Forward* \*\*\* Definitive...The scope is immense and the author does an impressive job of synthesizing a vast literature. . . This trilogy will no doubt serve as a standard history of east European Jewry for a long time. - Shaul Stampfer, *Religious Studies Review* \*\*\* Well-researched, well-written . . . a comprehensive survey . . . highly recommended. - S. Kan, *Choice* \*\*\* Stupendous. - David Frum, *The Daily Beast* \*\*\* The most important thing one can say about Antony Polonsky's *The Jews in Poland and Russia* is: get it and read it! - Theodore R. Weeks, *The Polish Review*

\*\*\* Magisterial, comprehensive...a highly original and distinctive contribution to the fields of east European as well as Jewish history...an authoritative reference for research and teaching...an eloquent and refreshing narrative and compelling analysis...overwhelming keen judgement, deep knowledge of Poland and its Jews, and remarkable critical insights that are manifest in this extraordinary book. - Michael Berkowitz, Slavonic and East European Review \*\*\* Reviews for The Jews in Poland and Russia: A Short History: \*\*\* Remarkable for its scale and ambition . . . Polonsky manages to combine great themes with fascinating detail . . . [he] has read widely in numerous languages. The erudition is impressive . . . extremely judicious in negotiating a number of notorious historiographical minefields . . . makes important distinctions between different countries in eastern Europe and consequently the different experience of the Jews . . . a magnificent, scholarly work, clearly written, with a magisterial overview of its subject. - David Herman, Jewish Renaissance [Subject: History, Jewish Studies, Polish Studies, Russian Studies]E?

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