Sources for the History of Jews in Polish Lands during the Nineteenth Century in the Collections of the Central Archives of Historical Records (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, AGAD).*

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At the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a very large proportion of world Jewry lived in Poland. After the country lost its independence Jews found themselves in three different political systems: the Russian, Prussian and Austrian. The situation of Jews was most difficult within the Russian partition; the Kingdom of Poland (also referred to as the Congress Kingdom or Congress Poland) and the ‘annexed provinces’—those formerly Polish territories directly incorporated into the tsarist Empire. In Congress Poland in 1865 there were about 400 Jewish communities which contained 720,000 people, and by 1885 their number had grown to 1,090,000. The community boundaries of the different Jewish communities were defined the ruling of the Governor (Namiestnik) of the Kingdom of Poland on 20 March 1822 after the abolition of the Jewish kahals by the decree of 20 December 1821/ 1 January 1822. Rulings by the Government Commissions for Religion and Public Education, (Komisja Rządowa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego) and Internal Affairs (Komisja Rządowa Spraw Wewnętrznych) gradually established the organization of the communities, originally known as parishes, later called synagogue districts, run by the synagogue boards. Jews were mostly urban and their concentration in the towns was increased by the Russian authorities’ policy of expelling Jews from the countryside. In 1827 over 80 per cent of Jews lived in towns, the largest concentration in Warsaw, then the world’s largest Jewish community. Jews worked mostly in handicrafts and commerce and were well established in services as publicans, brewers and innkeepers. A fair number were employed in banks. Only during the second half of the nineteenth century did increasing numbers of Jews, mostly petty salesmen, peddlers and middlemen, join the masses of artisans and workers in large factories. They now became active in the Polish workers’ movement and started forming their own Jewish trade unions, educational and cultural societies and charities. Another important phenomenon that affected the Jewish population in the Congress Kingdom in the late nineteenth century was the Zionist movement which galvanized Jewish political life.

The economic situation, lifestyle and the degree of piety of the Jews in the Austrian partition (Galicia) were comparable to those in the Kingdom. The Jewish population of Galicia, however, was more influenced by Western culture. During the second half of the nineteenth century, living in an autonomous province governed by Poles, Jews did not encounter very great obstacles to their struggle for emancipation and, in theory at least, gained equal rights. At the end of the eighteenth century, Galician Jews were concentrated in 141 religious communities recognized by the Act of Tolerance of 7 May 1789, by which Emperor Joseph II established general rules for their organization and later confirmed and enlarged by the imperial decree of 21 March 1890. The final division of Jewish population among religious communities was determined by the order
of 2 April 1891 of the Religion and Education Ministry. By now there were 252 Jewish religious communities in the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, including the Grand Duchy of Kraków, incorporated into the province in 1846. Jews were decidedly more numerous in eastern Galicia than in the western part, but were found everywhere in the province. Their concentration in east Galicia was directly related to the structure of land ownership. Here private estates owned by the great nobility as well as private towns prevailed which facilitated Jewish settlement. In the western part the rule de non tolerandis Judaeis was operated in many towns. The first modern population census in the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy was only held in 1880; as a result statistical data for Galicia have to be considered with caution. In 1821 it is estimated there were around 218,000 Jews here, whose number had risen by 1830 to over 250,000. The economic situation in Galicia, the proverbial ‘Galician misery’, the lack of possibility for social advancement caused large-scale Jewish emigration; only Russian Jews emigrated in larger numbers.

The situation of Jews in the territories of the Prussian partition (Southern and New Eastern Prussia) differed from that under the Russian and Austrian administrations. Following the partitions, a large number of Jews found themselves within the borders of the Prussian state. After the first partition the Prussian government began deporting poor Jews to Poland, keeping only the affluent: merchants, industrialists, and the like. Representatives of the Jewish elites called for the abolition of enforced transfer to communities, the opening of all branches of commerce and crafts to Jews and the annulment of special taxes and restrictions. The Prussian wars with Napoleonic France as well as increasing industrialization and urbanization hastened the emancipation and Germanization of Jews, who participated in these processes. Jews under the Prussian partition were organized in communities governed by their own statutes. Their organization was based on the Prussian ordinance of 23 July 1847. In 1816, 52,000 Jews lived in the Great Duchy of Poznań and by 1825 their number had risen to 65,000. From 1833, their number decreased as a result of emigration which was encouraged by the Prussian authorities.

Most documents relating to the history of Jews in the Polish lands of the post-partition era can be found in the nineteenth century collections of records produced by Polish government offices and institutions at the time of the Duchy of Warsaw and by the governmental authorities of the Russian partition (of the Kingdom of Poland in its constitutional period and subsequently, when autonomy was done away with, the government offices which were unified with those of the tsarist Empire). Some archival sources from the records of Austrian ministries are held in AGAD. These are mostly materials from the offices of the Imperial-Royal ministries which contain information relating to Polish lands. The least numerous records are those of the Prussian authorities, primarily of the activities of the General Directories of the Southern Prussia and New Eastern Prussia departments for the years 1793-1806. In our discussion, the Austrian and Prussian partitions have at times been omitted for lack of sources.

The surviving documents contain information related to various aspects of Jewish life: its legal bases within three different political systems, urban laws, settlement and official injunctions and interdictions, employment in handicrafts, trade, and industry,
taxation, military service, religious communities, schools and hospitals, traditions and customs related to life style and religious faith, participation in cultural life in its broad sense, and involvement in the workers’ movement during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Numerous source materials contain information on the general question of the ‘governance’ of Jews. This type of material can be found in the files of the General Directory, Department of Southern Prussia, section I in particular in the collection ‘On Jews of Southern Prussia’ (1793-1804); these files also contain statistics on Jews in the Poznań Department for the years 1795-1797. Similar materials are to be found in the Department of New Eastern Prussia. For Austria and Russia, there are part VI of the Imperial-Royal Interior Ministry, ‘Jewish Affairs’, 1901; the State Council and Council of Ministers of the Duchy of Warsaw files on ‘Matters Concerning the Jewish Community’, 1808-18121; the Government War Commission ‘Records Concerning Decrees for the Jews’, 1831; the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance, ‘Records of Ordinances Related to Jews’, 1820-1866; the ordinances of the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland, 1837; the 1st Council of State of the Kingdom of Poland, regulations ‘On the governance of Jews’ from 1817, as well as the Government Commission for Internal Affairs, ‘Governance of Jews in the Kingdom of Poland’ 1807-1866 and ‘Acta Generalia on the Governance of Jews’ 1815-1845, and in the ministerial files of Senator Novosiltsov’s Office, general decrees by the government of the Kingdom of Poland related to Jews, 1815-1824. In the Collection of Records of the Mińsk Section of the Warsaw Society for Preservation of Antiquities, there are documents on the ‘governance’ of Jews in the ‘annexed territories’ in the files from the office of the Military Governor of Vilna for 1831-1833. In addition, in the collection of documents of the General Directory. Department of South Prussia, part VI, there are records related to the Jewish population inhabiting different towns of this Department, arranged in alphabetical order. Many collections also contain records of legal and administrative disputes involving persons of Jewish origin (among them the records of the State Council and the Council of Ministers of the Duchy of Warsaw for the years 1811-1812); similar material abounds in the records of the Councils of State, the Administrative Council2 and the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland (these are mainly court records of the public treasury of proceedings against Jews for failing to fulfill contracts for the lease of the kosher tax or to distill liquor). Interesting material is found in the files dealing with ‘aid to the Jews ruined by war in 1831’ from the years 1852-1863 (only one volume – no. 24 – survives).

The fundamental problem for Jews of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Kingdom of Poland was that legislation failed to include them in civil society. The Constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw of July 1807 and its supplement of December of the same year as well as the Civil Code modeled on the Napoleonic Code did declare Jews equal to other citizens. In practice however these laws were never implemented. Decrees differentiated between political and civic rights. Among political rights were active and passive voting rights (the right to sit in such bodies and to vote for representatives to them) to the Lower House of Parliament (Sejm) and self-governing bodies and the right to hold offices. The civic sphere covered the right to exercise civil rights, the right to freedom, equality before
law and the courts, freedom of religion, access to public service, municipal law, education, free movement and equal taxation.

In 1808 Friedrich Augustus, King of Saxony, as the Duke of Warsaw, signed decrees depriving Jews of the right to vote and of all political rights. Ostensibly these rights were suspended for ten years (as in a similar 1803 French edict concerning Alsatian Jews). Further restrictions soon followed limiting the right of free settlement, economic activity and education and imposing additional taxes exclusively on Jews. In practice the Prussian edict of 1797, the Generaljudentrenglement, remained in force. The ‘Principles’ of the May constitution of 1791, the November Constitution of the Kingdom of Poland and the Organic Statute of December 1815 all denied Jews political and civil rights. Article 36 of the ‘Principles’ read: ‘Israelites will keep their civil rights to which they are entitled by the current edicts and ordinances; specific regulations will determine the conditions facilitating their wider exercise of social rights.’ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Poland proclaimed equality in civil rights only for adherents of Christian denominations while the Organic Statute declared that only those inhabitants of the Kingdom who had previously enjoyed civil rights could be considered citizens.

In early 1817 the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland decided that all decrees and ordinances restricting the Jewish population should retain their legal force. The decision was preceded by the rejection of Senator Nicholas Novosiltsov’s project to regulate the Jewish question by the Council of State of the Kingdom. The new Civil Code of 1825 stated merely: ‘Jews will benefit from those civil rights of which they have not been deprived by a royal or the Governor’s decrees’. As in the period of the Duchy of Warsaw, from mid-1815 groups of wealthy burghers and of the emerging Jewish intelligentsia submitted petitions requesting civil rights to the Russian tsar Alexander I, to Prince Adam Czartoryski and to Senator Novosiltsov. All were rejected.

In 1825, following the Russian model, a Committee for Jewish Affairs (the ‘Jewish Committee’) was established in the Kingdom of Poland. Its task was to study the legislation governing Jews and present its opinions and conclusions on the matter. Among its activities, the Committee prepared proposals for Jewish schools, agrarian settlement, Jewish districts, and Jewish handicrafts. The Committee’s Advisory Council, made up of Jews, called for political equality as a starting point for all reforms.

Civil rights were formally guaranteed to Jews by the Organic Statute of the Kingdom of Poland proclaimed in 1832 after suppression of the November uprising. In practice the authorities maintained the earlier legal position, in spite of numerous petitions, mostly from groups of Jewish merchants and entrepreneurs. These groups principally requested urban citizenship which would facilitate their economic activity and make possible the acquisition of real property and the freedom to settle in cities formerly barred to them. The Administrative Council rejected those petitions, yet occasionally, as a special favour, gave an individual the right to acquire land.

In 1837 the tsar Nicholas I dissolved the Jewish Committee and ordered the Administrative Council to prepare a new ‘Ordinance for the Jews’ in the light of the Russian decree of 1835. From 1843 the tsar himself, on the Governor’s recommendation, granted prosperous Jews the privilege of purchasing landed estates on condition that they then settled twenty-five Jewish families on them. Such Jews could buy real estate, live in
the area of their purchase and manage commercial and industrial establishments there. This was described as granting the Jews ‘civil rights’.

In the 1840s Jews were allowed to apply for the ‘honorary citizenship’ introduced by tsar Nicholas I in 1832. This was not widely granted in the Kingdom of Poland but was received by some scores of individuals. Among them was Jakub Epstein, a former officer of the Polish military, who at that time headed the Executive Council of the Warsaw Jewish hospital.

In 1846 Sir Moses Montefiore, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, visited Russia and the Kingdom of Poland. His memorial on the situation of Jews in the Kingdom as well as suggestions from Petersburg regarding the need for a uniform system of laws for Jews were unanimously rejected by the Government Commission for Justice, the Government Commission for Internal Affairs and the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance.

Finally Margrave Aleksander Wielopolski presented to the Council of State a proposal for a decree, accepted in June 1861, by which Jews received the right to vote for and serve on municipal and local councils. He subsequently proposed the abolition of all restrictions on the purchase and lease of urban and landed real estate by Jews and on their right to live in cities and the countryside. He maintained restrictions on trade, handicraft, industry and taxation. In November 1862 a further decision was made to abolish from 1863 taxes for kosher food, public entertainment and the sale of liquor. In response to this situation, in its June 1863 declaration, the rebel National Government, in a proclamation, ‘To Our Polish Brothers of the Mosaic Faith’, granted Jews full and unconditional equal rights.

In 1873, the Governor of the Kingdom of Poland Theodor Berg sent a report to Petersburg on the situation of the Jewish population. Jews could only hold local government offices, such as wójt, chief officer of a group of villages, soltys, a village head, or ławnik, a councilman in areas inhabited exclusively by Jews. In spite of the 1866 decision by the Committee for the Kingdom of Poland permitting Jewish college graduates to hold positions in the administration, in reality this had not taken place. The ban on production and sale of alcohol to Christians by Jews was still in effect and there were separate registries of public records for people of Jewish faith.

The Central Archives of Historical Records (AGAD) possesses many records concerning the legal position of Jews. Among them are the many proposals already mentioned relating to the ‘governance’ of Jews, as well as to specific problems or persons. The files of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of the Duchy of Warsaw contain the decrees of Friedrich Augustus on the suspension of the edict of 7 September 1808, the edict denying the right of active suffrage to Jews (the right to serve on legislative bodies), and that of 17 October 1808 suspending Jews’ political rights for 10 years. They also contain the report by Justice Minister Feliks Łubiński to Friedrich Augustus explaining the reasons for the restriction of the rights which the Jews had been guaranteed by the constitution of 5 April 1808.

In the archives of the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland there are petitions of Jews for honorary citizenship, including one from the Lublin rabbi Esel Askinazel in 1859, and for permission to buy a landed estate from Ignacy Dawidson in
1859 and from Michał and Beniamin Kassman in 1860. A petition by factory owner Mamlok dated 1864 requested permission for Jews to be advisory excise inspectors for factory owners. The files from Senator Novosiltsov’s office include requests in 1816 by the entrepreneur Salomon Samson Neumark for a permit to purchase land and by a Warsaw banker Berman Rosen ‘to be made a citizen of the Kingdom of Poland’.

Some 1834 material concerning the Committee for Jewish Affairs has been preserved in the collection of the Central Religious Authorities of the Kingdom of Poland (Centralne Władze Wyznaniowe Królestwa Polskiego), along with the 1837-1842 files of the ‘former Jewish Committee,’ ‘administrative regulations’ for people of Judaic faith for the years 1829-1867, and some undated ‘papers related to a Jewish reform’. In addition, in the volumes of the Kalisz Voivodship Commission/Government of the Warsaw Province there are documents from 1825-1826 on the setting up a Committee for rules and regulations related to Jews.

The minutes of the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland contain information on petitions relating to the agreement with the Peasant Committee to settle the Jewish question, on Prince Czartoryski’s report on Jews and the debate over it, on the decision to suspend confirmation of the law concerning Jews (prepared by Novosiltsov) and on the decision to make the rules ‘for Jews (illegal aliens) in the country without paying residence dues’ more rigorous. There are documents on the decision of the Administrative Council to present the tsar with a proposal for the ‘governance of the Jewish population’ in 1817 and two Jewish petitions dated 1820 and 1830, sent to the tsar calling for ‘improving the life and promoting the civilization of the Jewish people’ and granting equal rights to Jews, Christians and Muslims. These materials are complemented by a report of 1828-1829 of the Government Commission for Religion and Public Education concerning reform of Jews which was also sent to other Commissions for their opinions.

In these files there is also the 1821 decision by the Administrative Council, according to which within the next six months all Jews in the Kingdom of Poland were to ‘document the family names they have been using until then’ and an ordinance of the tsar from 1830 requiring that passports for the Jews leaving the Kingdom for Russia be clearly marked as Jewish. In the records of the Governor’s Passport Office for the 1830s there are dozens of passport petitions by Jews for travel to Russia, as well as to such popular resorts as Cieplice, Karlsbad, Marienbad and Terenczyn. At the same time the files of the Warsaw Criminal Court for the 1870s contain scores of cases against Jews who had left the country illegally.

The 1827-1829 proceedings of the Committee appointed to introduce reforms for Jews and the proposals by Mathias Rosen, a member of the Council of State of the Kingdom of Poland, for equal rights for Jews and Christians, can be found in the records of the first and third and Councils of State. In the records of the Government Council for Internal Affairs for the years 1844-1858 can be found its comments concerning the governance of Jews in response to Petersburg ‘Jewish Committee’ and to the suggestions of Moses Montefiore. These records also contain documents related to the civil rights of Jews between 1808 and 1851 (5 volumes); to Jews in the Kingdom of Poland acquiring permanent family names in the years 1821-1857 (4 volumes); to honorary citizenship for
Jews, 1841-1867 (6 volumes; about sixty people were granted this right) and ‘acta
generalia on the governance of Jews’ for the years 1815-1845 (3 volumes). Individual
volumes contain legal proposals, documents concerning the Jewish Committee and many
personal petitions, mostly appeals for rights of citizenship, for the purchase of property
and for freedom of settlement (among them, from the businessman and industrialist
Berek Szmul Sonnenberg, the merchant and banker Jakub Epstein, and the publisher and
bookseller Nathan Glucksberg).

In the proceedings of the Executive Committee (Komitet Urządzący) of the
Kingdom of Poland two essential pieces of information can be found related to the
election of the chief officers (wójtowie) in villages inhabited by Jewish agricultural
settlers (1864) and the nomination of honorary councilmen among Jews (1868).

An important factor restricting the civil rights of Jews was the fact that they were
denied the right to settle freely in towns and villages. In 1816 the authorities initiated a
large-scale expulsion of Jews from the countryside. The Committee for Jewish Affairs
debated the matter Jewish residence in villages. In the years 1838-1841 delegates from all
the provinces appealed to the Kingdom’s authorities with proposals to encourage Jewish
agricultural settlement. In February 1843 the Viceroy instructed the Committee to prepare
a bill on this matter.

Numerous towns had the privilege de non tolerandis Judaeis which meant that
Jews expelled from villages could not settle in them. This ban concerned mainly royal
towns, but also ‘post-clergy’ towns (formerly property of the Catholic Church), as well as
some private towns. The Government Commission for Internal Affairs instructed urban
authorities to expel Jews who settled in such towns without the appropriate permit. In
towns theoretically open to Jews, starting from the period of the Duchy of Warsaw,
separate Jewish districts (rewiry) were created. The first such district was organized in
Warsaw in 1809 when Jews were forbidden to live in the main streets of the town with
the exception of some representatives of the largely assimilated wealthy bourgeoisie and
educated classes. The last such district was formed in Radom after the November rising.
In 1833 the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland stopped creating new
Jewish districts. In the 1860s, of 453 cities and towns of the Kingdom, 90 were entirely
forbidden to Jews, while 31 had separate Jewish districts. In addition, Jews were banned
from settling in the Old Polish Basin (Zagłębie Staropolskie, an industrial area in the
centre of the country), on government estates, and within twenty-one kilometres of the
border. As mentioned above, the authorities granted the right to purchase land and real
estate in cities as a special privilege. From 1843 this privilege was granted to prosperous
merchants and industrialists.

Many files related to these matters are found in the collection: Kalisz Voivodship
Commission. They contain information on acquiring and purchasing property, houses and
land by Jews in the towns of the Kalisz voivodship and later in the Warsaw province:
Kalisz, Sompolno, Dobre, Golina, Turek, Tuliszów, Uniejów, and Wieruszów in 1827-
1867, and also about on establishing a district for Jews in Koło (1818-1862).

Among the documents of the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland there
is an 1865 collective plea by peasants from the communities of Turośl and Czerwone to
have Jews expelled from that area and a petition by Warsaw Jews not to diminish the
In the minutes of the Administrative Council, information can be found about a projected report from 1816 about expelling Jews from villages and documents on the ban of settlement in cities or on certain streets (in 1821 in Warsaw, on Żabia, Graniczną, Królewską, Nowy Świat and Leszno streets). Notes from the years 1822-1823 describe the excessive ‘crowding’ of Jews in apartments, the ban on settlement in Warsaw of Jews from the Kingdom and abroad and that for non-agricultural Jews within three miles from the border date. There is an 1822 file on ‘settling homeless Jews’ and an 1824 agreement to allow settlement in certain areas.


There are also individual agreements permitting settlement by Jews in forbidden streets, among them for Itzig Bauertz of Warsaw who had supported the government’s plan for the ‘governance for Jews’ and the scholar Abraham Stern, the only Jewish member of the Royal Society of Friends of Sciences. Individual agreements also allow purchase of real estate, for example by Nathan Glucksberg and Jakub Epstein. In some cases, such permission was refused, as in the case of Michał Ettiger-Rawski, a member of the Advisory Chamber of the Jewish Committee.

In the collection of Government Commission for Internal Affairs, there are many references to Jewish settlement in the Kingdom. There are documents on urban settlement in general for 1821-1863 (5 volumes) and for individual towns: Kalisz, for the years 1811-1860, Łowicz, 1812-1861, Piotrków, 1858-1861, Rawa, 1851-1861, Kielce, 1822-1863, Radom, 1810-1862, Krasnystaw, 1822-1860, and Lublin, 1811-1867. A large collection of records relates to designated streets: these include ‘records on fulfilling the royal decrees of 1809 on the ban of Jews living on Warsaw’s principal streets’, the increase in the number of ‘exempted streets’ of Warsaw in 1857-1861, rulings on the removal of Jews from the more prominent streets in the city of Warsaw for the years 1809-1863 (4 volumes), records of removal of Jews from these streets for 1824-1862 (24 volumes) as well as the decisions of 1816-1863 to ‘diminish the influx of Jews into Warsaw (24 volumes) and their implementation,1824-1863 as well as the implementation of similar decisions for ‘the whole Kingdom’ 1841-1853 (2 volumes). Some 1855-1864 records on ‘the deportation of Jews from the town of Łomża for false denunciations’ are preserved. Similar documents are also found in the archives of the Central Authorities of the November Uprising, relating to Jews wishing to move into the ‘exempted streets’ and to the formation of separate districts for the Jewish population (1831).

Rural settlement of Jews on cultivated lands is the subject of two volumes of files from 1823-1861. The problem of land ownership and real estate also emerges in the records of settling Jews on suburban and urban farms in Kraków in 1843-1844, of purchasing houses in Warsaw from 1827-1862 (17 volumes), of accepting fees from Jews for authorization of rental of premises in Warsaw, 1830-1842 and rules of purchase of land and urban real estate by Jews, 1850-1863 (2 volumes), as well as the matter of
landed estates in Jewish hands in 1849-1861. Fourteen volumes of records from 1808-1865 contain data on the purchase of real estate by Jews in the Kingdom of Poland as a whole. Public records (1834-1862, 10 volumes) list Jewish inhabitants of Warsaw, which is related to the permission of registering Jews in the Warsaw public registry for the years 1843-1849. Documents ‘concerning permission for Jews to inhabit the streets restricted to them’ and ‘about the purchase of houses and country property by Jews’ from 1810-1812 date to the period of the Duchy of Warsaw.

In addition some documents from the era of the Duchy of Warsaw in the collection the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance deal with resettling Jews from one department to another (Bydgoszcz to Poznań), 1811-1812, while among the documents of the Central Authorities of the November Uprising information can be found on Jews settled within three miles of the border (1831). In addition, the collection of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs, 1823-1852 (4 volumes) contains records related to the restriction of Jewish settlement in the strip along the border, and deportation of Jews from the Austrian and Prussian sides during 1851-1867 (6 volumes) Some sparse records (Office of the Warsaw Governor General) include information about Jewish attempts to get permission to remain within the border zone (Jakub Szejnbaum in 1905). A few documents in the archives of the General Directory, Department of Southern Prussia record cases of deportation of Jews from within the country to New Eastern and Southern Prussia (1806).

Records of the economic activity permitted to Jews are more numerous. The Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland holds many individual petitions for liquor licenses and Winawer’s appeal on behalf of the Warsaw bar-keepers to end fees for the retail sale of alcohol in 1864. The 1828 announcement of the project by the Government Commission for Religion and Public Education to ‘encourage Jews to find employment in crafts’ can be found in the minutes of the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland.

In the Government Commission for Internal Affairs there is a case of an 1850-1851 lease of an inn, of the exclusion of Jews from profiting from liquor sales in cities between 1857-1862, of the removal of Jews from roadside inns between 1840-1856 and ‘acta generalia concerning the ban on sales, production and serving alcohol by Jews’ for 1811-1816 (among them, a printed leaflet from 1807). Records of a marketplace in Nalewki Street in Warsaw date from 1865-1866. Among the files of the Central Authorities of the November Uprising there are documents confirming grants of liquor licenses and permitting Jewish distillers to profit from their trade (1831). Records of rental of an inn and tavern in Łazienki, and of former brickyard cottages, 1832-1839, are contained in the files of the Stewardship of Łazienki and Belweder. The archives of the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance (Komisja Rządowa Przychodów i Skarbu) hold many documents related to leases and administration of liquor retail (eternal, fiscal and so on) by Jews in villages, towns and estates which after the 1845 administrative reorganization found themselves within the provincial area of Radom and, in particular for the Kielce area between 1848-1869. Among the documentation is information on liquor sales in an inn near Jędrzejów in the county of Kielce leased to a Jew, Rajzman Zysman, and later to Leibush Bergin (1855-1864); documents for leases
(in 1850/52, 1853/55, 1855/56, and 1857/59) of a tavern in the town of Kurzelów to Jews: Herszko Landau, Majer Rozenkrantz, and others; Szmul Krantz’s and Kiwa Ringelmacher’s lease of a pub at an estate of Suchedniów in the Opoczno county for 1848/50; that in Szydłów, Stopnica county, leased to Aron Gerfinke, Wolf Jarmolowicz, Abraham Moszkowski and others in the years 1850-1866; also in Żarnów, Olkus county, leased to Szymon Rotner, Herszko Ledennan and Szachma Finkielhaus for 1853-1862. Legal restrictions on economic activity by the Jewish population frequently led to breaking the rules and to Jews being taken to court. This type of material prevails in the files of the Commission of Mazowsze Voievodship/Government of the Warsaw Province (Komisja Województwa Mazowieckiego/Rządu Gubernialnego Warszawskiego). There are about two thousand files concerning accusations of Jews of fraud. These are charges by the Fiscal and Sales Office (Urząd Skarbowy i Urząd Konsumpcyjny) of the fraudulent sale of cigarettes, tobacco, beer and tobacco ‘objects,’ without a license and without payment of sale taxes (such as the case of the Tax Office of the town of Warka against Icek Rozenblat, innkeeper, for non payment of a sale tax on mead,’ 1854-1855).

Among the files in Senator Novosiltsov’s Office are denunciations by Jews turned informers against their co-religionists—by Chaim Mortkowicz Dolicki in the case of goods smuggling in 1817 and by Gerberg about an unlicensed pub and sales of vodka in Przedecz in 1823—and a request by Jews to allow transfer of goods through the Jurburg customs in 1826. Among the cases in the Warsaw Court of Commerce there are appeals by Szlama Feinmesser, a merchant, in the years 1866-1893, to have the money owed him returned. With reference to ‘criminal’ activity, the Central Religious Authorities of the Kingdom of Poland hold documents concerning ‘feeding Jewish prisoners’ for 1824-1825.

There are scores of cases in the archives of the Insurance Board (Dyrekcja Ubezpieczeń) concerning economic activity. They deal with payments for goods lost or damaged in transport by water, mostly grain (Samuel A. Fraenkel), sugar (Leopold Kronenberg), iron, timber, cement and rags. Among the files of the Warsaw Industrial Committee are Dawid Rosenblum’s requests for a certificate allowing him to purchase land for construction of a factory, and the Warsaw police chief’s appraisal of Mejer Feinkund’s application to open a lace and curtain factory. In the archives of the Bank of Poland (Bank Polski) there are dozens of volumes for the years 1859-1885 related to contacts with the Commercial House of Mendelsohn and Company in Berlin and the Bank’s correspondence with A. Fraenkel, as well as Józef and Jan Epstein in the period 1840-1877.

A small number of related documents can also be found in the archives of the Prussian and Austrian partitions. There are requests by Jewish families in Southern Prussia to open businesses and for privileges and licenses (General Directory, Department of Southern Prussia, 1796-1805), and also prosecutions for the illegal sale of alcohol (Imperial-Royal Ministry of Trade and Industry in 1906), as well as an appeal against the Viceroy’s decision concerning a breach of regulations by the company of Natan Welzer and Sender Kimaiel in Lopuszno (1914).

The AGAD collection holds considerable information concerning the heavy taxation of Jews. Besides the taxes paid by the rest of the population, Jews were obliged
to pay fees ‘on account of their origin’. In the Duchy of Warsaw, the tax was collected as
the long-established poll tax. The 1809 Diet introduced a tax on kosher meat. Executive
regulations allowed this tax to be levied at a fixed annual amount on Jewish families. In
this way the new tax became merely a resuscitated version of the traditional poll tax. In
the Kingdom of Poland, Jews had to pay a military service tax, (‘rekrutowy, popisowy’),
which is discussed below; as well as a ‘consumption,’ ‘kosher,’ tax for meat
sold to Jews: the market price of the meat was increased by a separate tax for ritual
slaughter. Another, (the ‘consensus’ tax, szynkowe) was paid by Jews on the production,
sale and service of liquor, plus all kinds of fees (akcyzy), a ticket tax (opłaty biletowe) for
every day spent in a town by someone who was not a permanent resident; plus real estate
tax, rental tax, city taxes (‘candle,’ ‘bath’, market stall taxes, etc), as well as dues paid to
the religious community. Foreign Jews visiting the Kingdom of Poland were required to
pay the ‘gleitzoll’ (tax for entry). In January 1863, the kosher, entertainment, and
consensus taxes were abolished.

In the Prussian partition, too, special taxes and fees had to be paid, among others,
for working in particular professions; these were collected by the kahals for the
government. In the Austrian partition Jews paid heavy taxes, as did the rest of the
Austrian population. War taxes were exacted in connection with the military and political
situation. In 1778, persons of Jewish origin paid ten per cent of their income, as well as
taxes for ‘tolerance’ or ‘protection’ and a property tax. Since those were difficult to
collect, they were replaced with fees related to Jewish rituals. In 1784, a kosher meat tax
was introduced and a special agency was charged with its collection. In 1797, the
‘protection’ and ‘tolerance’ taxes were abolished, and another ‘light’ or ‘candle’ tax was
introduced, paid per lamp or candle in a synagogue or private home during religious
services, holidays, funerals and so on. The right to vote in the kahal depended on the
number of candles paid for.

Only a few related documents are preserved in the Prussian archives. There are
records of taxes Jews paid in the Kalisz department in 1803-1804 and in Poznań, 1804.
(General Directory, Department of Southern Prussia). The richest material on Jewish
taxes can be found in the files of the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance
(Komisja Rządowa Przychodów i Skarbu) in the Kingdom of Poland, including the area
around Kielce (dopusławy kielecki), although these concern mainly the Duchy of Warsaw.
There are records of Jewish taxes on kosher meat in the Bydgoszcz Department for 1809-
1814 and in the Poznań Department for 1808-1815, of the kosher tax in the Kraków
Department/Voivodship, 1810-1823, information about poor Jewish families ‘on the
subject of adjustment of the kosher tax’, lists, invoices, and tables of Jewish families
regarding distribution of kosher meat taxes within the Kraków voivodship (actually,
Department: during the years 1811/1812, in the counties (powiats) of Dąbrowa,
Kalvaria, Łomża, Mariampol, Sejny, Tykocin (the Łomża Department), Odolanów,
Ostrzeszów (Kalisz Dept), in Warsaw and the Warsaw Department, for the years 1809-
1812, records of classification of kahals by the taxes paid (in Inowrocław in the
Bydgoszcz Department, 1813; in the Kalisz Department, 1809-1812; in Będzin for 1810;
in the Kraków Voivodship: in Sobków (Stopnica county) for 1816, Włoszczowa (Kielce
county) for 1835-1839, Książ Wielki (Miechów county), 1818. The records of the Central
Authorities of the November Uprising also hold documents related to the payment of the kosher tax during the uprising (1831). Other sources contain a collection of testimonials documenting the poverty of Jews who could not afford to pay the kosher tax in the Łomża Department in 1814; files of Jewish taxes taken over from the governments of: Prussia (Poznań Department, 1812, Kraków Department/Voievodship: counties of Piłica and Lelów, 1810-1817) and Austria for 1810-1816; material related to the distribution of Jewish taxes in the Siedlce county (Siedlce Department) in 1810, as well as rolls of the liquor tax from the countryside, inns and taverns in the counties of Kamień, Bydgoszcz, Wałcz, Radziejów, Kowal, Chełmno, Brześć, Michałów (Bydgoszcz Department), Wieluń, Sieradz (Kalisz Department), Krobia, Pyzdry, Krotoaszyn, Międzyrzecz, Wschowa, Powidz, Śrem, Babimost, Gniezno, Kościan, Wągrowiec, Oborniki, Poznań, Środa (Department Poznań), Sochaczew, Czersk, Stanisławów, Rawa (Warsaw Department), for 1812-1813. In the minutes of the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland, family and draft taxes for 1821 and 1824 are mentioned, as well as ticket, contract and kosher taxes and a fee referred to as ‘krupka’ (for grain). In the Government Commissio for Internal Affairs documents ‘related to the kosher and krupka taxes’ for 1809-1811 can be found, as well as some concerning the kosher tax for 1809-1868, the taxes and organization of Warsaw Jewry in 1808, the payments required of the Sandomierz Jews for tolerance and market space (brukowy) for 1814-1830, on the ‘gleitzoll’ between 1837-1851, along with files linked to the matters of payment of the ticket revenue by foreign Jews in Warsaw between 1822-1867 (20 volumes); in the collection of the Council of Ministers of the Duchy of Warsaw there is a proposal from 1811-1812 to abolish the ticket tax for Jews, records of the taxes for kosher meat, 1812-1813 and of the consumption tax for slaughtering cattle, 1811-1812.

In Senator Novisiltsov’s Office archives there is a collective request from Jews for abolishing the ‘gleitzoll’ for 1816, and cases from 1820-1826 linked to the ‘gleitzoll’ and ‘gleitpass’ levied on Jews, together with individual petitions for release from these taxes. In the files of the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland there are documents freeing Jews from fees in the city of Kraków in 1820, an 1864 proposal to renew the kosher tax, and in the files of the Central Religious Authorities of the Kingdom of Poland, appeals by Jews to be released from payments for selling liquor (‘oplata stempla od konsensów’) for 1819-1852.

Considerable information can be found in the archive on Jewish military service. After the Duchy of Warsaw was created in 1808, Jews became subject to the universal draft. The majority of the Jewish population objected to this and in 1812 the Government agreed to release Jews from the duty to serve in the military in exchange for a high fee; the official explanation was Jews’ unsuitability for martial life because of their religious obligations and customs. The rule releasing Jews from the army for an annual sum remained in force during the constitutional period of the Kingdom of Poland. The royal edict of 26 January/7 February (subsequently confirmed by the Governor’s rulings of 19 August and 6 December of the same year) stated that while Jews were subject to the military draft, they were permitted to avoid military service by paying a special fee. The amount of the fee was agreed upon with the representative of the Jewish communities; the agreement was based on the assumption that ‘Jews are exempt from serving in the
military both in peace and war until they have been granted political rights’. The arrangement was advantageous to the authorities, since they profited from the taxes; besides, Jewish military service might have spurred their push for civil rights and freedoms. A government proposal during November Uprising, accepted by the Diet, freed Jews from military service in exchange for a quadrupled draft tax. On 14/26 September 1843 a decree of the tsar, modeled on the 1827 regulations in Russia, imposed military service on Jews, except for rabbis, foremen in Jewish factories and Jewish settlers, as well as converts. Once they had completed military service, Jews were freed from the kosher and ticket taxes, allowed to settle in the border zone and apply for membership in craft guilds (Administrative Council, 28 March/ 9 April 1850). Within the Prussian partition Jews were also obliged to serve in the military; in the Austrian partition Galician Jews became subject to draft in 1788. In 1790, Emperor Leopold II replaced personal service by Jews with a tax. However in 1804, because of manpower needs of the Napoleonic wars, Jews again were being drafted.

In the collection of the AGAD there is relatively little information on the subject of military service. The existing documents are related to Jewish service in army transportation (General Directory, Department of Southern Prussia), the payment of the draft taxes by Jews and the release from military service for payment (archives of the November Uprising Central Authorities, 1830-1831 and the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance concerning departments of Bydgoszcz, 1812-1814 and Poznań, 1809-1814 for the time of the Duchy of Warsaw). There are also documents on the Kielce district in the documents of the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance Commission related to the ‘draft’ tax levied on Jews in the Kraków voivodship in 1812-1820 and in 1825-1848, as well as information on the refusal to reduce the draft tax paid by the kahal in Żarnowiec, in the Kraków county and voivodeship in 1818 and requests to annul seizure of property for the non-payment of the draft tax by the kahal in Szydlów, Stopnica county, Kraków voivodeship. In Senator Novosiltsov’s Office files general documents can be found regarding Jewish military obligations in the Kingdom of Poland in 1826-1827.

The 1827 archives of the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland contain permission for retired Jewish soldiers to live in Warsaw on condition that they abandoned all visible signs of their religion, above all traditional dress. The November Uprising Central Authorities hold some interesting documents concerning the Jewish Municipal Guard formed in 1831 (with 1268 Jews). In addition, in the files of the Mazowsze Voivodship Commission/Warsaw Provincial Government there is material ‘on the subject of ways to carry out the inspection of Jews on the military register’ for 1842-1844 and ‘on the subject of reviewing Jewish settlements for the purpose of drafting Jews into the army’ for the years 1844-1866. These files contain among others records of Jews in agricultural colonies in which, as holders of perpetual leases, they were entitled to release from military service for 50 years.

Documents of the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland contain an 1860 request by Hersch Krapiwko to be appointed an army supplier and in the Senator Novosiltsov’s Office files there is an 1814 contract for Berek Sonnenberg to supply military hospitals.
An element uniting all Jews was their religion, regarded by state authorities as proof of their ‘lack of civilization’. Jews were duty bound to observe many commands and prohibitions (as in the dietary laws) and to perform many rituals and related prayers. Traditional Jewish garb marked them as alien. The archives of the Central Religious Authorities of the Kingdom of Poland preserve documents from 1821-1871 on ‘performance of religious rituals by Jews,’ Jewish marriage and divorce certificates for 1823-1869 (6 volumes), records of payments for Jewish marriages 1823-1845, plus the abolition of Jewish burial societies (28 March 1822) and other Jewish associations, 1822-1859 (2 volumes).

Documents from 1817-1858 relate to Jewish religious oaths, those from 1818-1871 on the ‘ban on Jewish ropes and barriers (the eruv),’ as well as prohibition on ‘sales of crab apples and Easter palms by persons of Jewish persuasion’ from 1824-1833. There are additional records related to the ‘kosher slaughter of cattle for Jews’, 1856-1864 (2 volumes) and maintaining regulations on the slaughter of cattle, 1839-1856 (2 volumes), among them an 1812 printed order by the Minister of Finances on lease holding, on the kosher tax, and an instruction administering purchase and sale of kosher giblets to Warsaw’s poor Jews, 1843.

There are records of English missionary activity among Jews in 1822-1869 (6 volumes), and 1821-1871 material associated with converts; the 1818-1819 sources deal with ‘prophets of Judaic faith’ and those of 1823-1871 with hasidim. Other documents worth mentioning associated with the Jewish religion are ‘a medal minted for Israelite girls’ confirmation’ from 1843, collections for Jews in Palestine, 1836-1861 as well as records concerning the ban on sale of Christian books and employing Christians as house servants by Jews for the years 1819-1863 (2 volumes).

In the minutes of the Administrative Council there is information concerning accusations against Jews ‘of killing Christian children’ and court trials (1816, 1817, 1818, 1824), acceptance of religious practices by what were described as ‘Hassids or kitajowcy’ from 1818 (the Central Religious Authorities of the Kingdom of Poland also contains files related to ‘kitajowcy’ for the same year) and overseeing Jewish religious collections and control of money from 1821. In 1816, a dispute between administrative and judicial authorities over the mayor of Nasielsk’s destruction of a Jewish ‘kuczka’ (sukkah erected for the Feast of Tabernacles) was investigated. In the same collection there is also a permit for the London Society for Conversion of Jews to start their mission in the Kingdom of Poland in 1823, as well as the prohibition of Christian employment in Jewish homes, issued by the Government Commission for Religion and Education but disputed by the Government Commission for Internal Affairs in 1824. An 1818 note provides information about the Administrative Council’s acceptance of Jewish pledges and oaths in commercial contracts which it was hoped would ensure their enforcement and an 1830 plan to enforce Jewish compliance with the rulings on family law, related to the earlier (1824) paper by Ezechiel (Stanislaw) Hoge on the ‘inappropriateness’ of early marriages among Jews. The matter of marriage registration appears also in the records of the 1st Council of State of the Kingdom of Poland in the rulings ‘concerning forcing Jews to comply with marriage laws’ (1826-1830).
Among the files of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs are documents concerning kosher giblets for Jews in Warsaw for 1824-1864 (6 volumes), ‘murder of Christian children by Jews,’ 1816-1847, English missionaries, 1822-1835 and 8 volumes on change of traditional Jewish garb, 1845-1867, as well as records on ‘Jewish conversions in the Kingdom of Poland’ for 1845-1860. In Senator Novosiltsoff’s Office there is material related to the Bible Society and the English missionaries who came to Warsaw to convert Jews, 1816-1829, and allegations of Jewish ritual murder of ‘Christian youths,’ 1816-1818.

In the collection of the Mazowsze Voivodship Commission – Department of Religion, there are several scores of cases concerning bequests by Jews (among them, Berek Sonnenberg’s famous legacy): donations of money and goods for Jewish communities, synagogues, schools and hospitals. The Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland holds material from 1863 concerning enlargement of the Warsaw Jewish cemetery.

Another factor strengthening Jewish communal solidarity was the Jewish system of self-government. Until 1821, kahals were the basic form of communal administration. The decree of 20 December 1821/1 January 1822 replaced them with synagogue boards whose control was limited to matters of religion. In practice, they were also required to represent the Jews to the state authorities.

In 1830, ‘Jewish parishes’ (parafie żydowskie) were transformed into districts under the supervision of the synagogue boards. Their powers included:

1. Spiritual matters – overseeing and maintaining the clergy and synagogue employees. The rabbinate possessed superior authority in matters of religion and ritual. The rabbi headed the rabbinical court (which decided matters by arbitration). In March 1821, synagogues lost the right to administer registries of Jewish family records. In September 1830, however, the Administrative Council reversed this decision, putting the rabbis or their assistants in charge of this task;

2. Organization and management of poorhouses, orphanages, old folk homes, and help to beggars;

3. Administration of and financial aid to Jewish hospitals;

4. Upkeep of Jewish cemeteries, mainly with funeral fees;

5. Distribution and collection of draft taxes. This was an important function of the Kahals until 1844. The government authorities set a yearly lump-sum and how it was to be implemented in individual provinces, charging the community councils with the responsibility for its allocation on counties, townships and families;

6. Additional responsibilities included the maintenance of Jewish primary schools (which were under supervision of the government authorities of education), representation of Jewish society to state and municipal governments, petitioning the government in matters relevant to the Jewish population, issuing certificates of poverty, good behaviour, documents required for passports, and numerous others in matters of administration and finances.

In 1861, an attempt was made to limit functions of synagogue boards. There were proposals to transform them into consistories, on the French model, responsible
exclusively for Jewish religious needs, without the right to represent Jews before the authorities.

In the collection ‘Central Religious Authorities of the Kingdom of Poland’, one can find rich material related to the functioning of the kahals and synagogue boards. There are files of the kahal accounts, 1810-1815; a description of kahal accounts in the Bydgoszcz department, 1810-1811; kahal debts in the so-called former Prussian provinces, 1858-1869 and a list of the ‘former Galician provinces where kahals are located’; a list of funds invested in kahals in the counties of Kraków and Kalisz provinces for 1823-1824 as well as accounts of the funds in the hands of the kahals in the Kraków and Kalisz provinces from 1823-4; problems arising from the liquidation of the debts of the kahal in Kolo between 1822 and 1856 and in Pyzdry between 1809 and 1824. There are also documents concerning the organization of kahals in the provinces of Sandomierz, Augustów, Kraków and Podlasie in the years 1810 and 1812. Other documents describe the appointment of synagogue boards and the regulation of dues and fees in Jewish communities between 1810-1870 (9 volumes) and the organization of Jewish communities between 1821-1857 (3 volumes). The same group of documents contains files concerning synagogues (along with their drawings of their plans) from the years 1818-1860, synagogue employment from 1822-1871, the management of finances and reports on the spending of synagogue funds for 1825-1863 (among them, printed regulations by the Kalisz and Augustów Voievodship Commissions concerning the accounts and the collection of taxes and synagogue funds from 1826). A proposal on ‘regulations on distances between synagogues and Russian Orthodox churches’ dates from 1844. Senator Novosiltsov’s Office contains documents related to the kahals and Jewish schools in the Kingdom of Poland between 1824 and 1828.

The files on individual Jewish communities from the whole area of the Kingdom of Poland are the most numerous comprising 400 volumes. They are principally concerned with the subject of finances, employment, the construction and upkeep of synagogues (costs, bids, and distribution of collection money). Clashes between the Synagogue board and the community, individual residents, real estate- or land owners are also dealt with. Documents are found concerning appointment of rabbis and election of board members. Among the Warsaw community records there is a letter by a student Waldenberg to General Chłopicki, leader of the November Uprising, petitioning for the post of the board secretary in order to support the Uprising; there is also an appeal by the Warsaw synagogue board to the provincial communities and rabbis to warn their coreligionists against the sin of denunciation, arguing that informers ‘bring upon themselves shameful death’ and ‘expose the whole population to hatred.’ Among the records of the Military Headquarters of the Kingdom of Poland nevertheless, a denunciation by the Jew Jakielewicz can be found revealing a rebel hiding place during the summer of 1863.

From the period of the January Uprising records are preserved concerning rabbi Ber Meisels’ negotiations on behalf of the Uprising Authorities. Among the minutes of the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland there is an 1817 report on the functioning of the kahals and their debts, an 1819 case of appointing a delegation to determine kahal debts (for the voievodships of: Kraków, Sandomierz, Lublin, Podlasie
and Mazowsze), a document describing the appointment of delegates in 1821 to estimate the kahal debts from the former Prussian partition, and an imperial decree of 1822 liquidating the kahals and charging the Voivodship Commissions and the Warsaw Municipality with the task of collecting taxes from the Jewish population. There is also information about an 1821 agreement between the Płock Voivodship Commission and the Chorzéle kahal, a ruling regarding fees for correspondence between synagogue boards and the government authorities, as well as the release of the boards from payment of the stamp duty. An 1827 order by the Government Commission for Religion and Public Education charges municipal treasurers with the responsibility for synagogue accounts, and an 1830 permit grants the Pyzdry synagogue board damages for the synagogue burned in 1814.

Among the surviving records of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs there are 1842 documents of the Warsaw synagogues, on the Jewish community in Kraków (for 1865-1868) and in Warsaw (1867-1868) as well as files concerning the employment fee (składka etatowa) paid by Warsaw Jews in 1845-1847 and material on a dispute between the Wyszogród Jewish community with the public treasury about various fees and contributions in 1842-1844.

Among the transcripts of the Governing Committee (Komitet Urzędzący) in the Kingdom of Poland decisions are decisions related to the responsibilities of the staff of Russian Orthodox churches and Jewish synagogues (1867).

Rich material concerning the organization and functioning of Jewish communities in the Kingdom of Poland can be found among the groups of documents from the provincial level: the Kalisz Voivodship Commission/Warsaw Provincial Government and the Mazowsze Voivodship Commission/ Warsaw Provincial Government. These files are related to the organization of Jewish communities for 1817-1819 and 1824-1845 (Kalisz Voivodship Commission and 1857-1859 (Mazowsze Voivodship Commission), to the appointment of rabbis with their credentials (1821-1842) and to the abolition of kahals and estimates of their debts, 1822-1866.

Other material in the collection includes correspondence on religious matters from 1820, as well as many documents concerning the synagogue councils and the income and debts of ‘parishes’ in the area covered by the jurisdiction of the Commission. These include Burzenin, Częstochowa, Dobre, Kalisz, Kłeczew, Koło, Konin, Pyzdry, Stawiszyn, Uniejów, Wieruszów, Warta, Złoczew, Lutomiersk, Piątek, Sieradz, Słupca, Władysławów, Zagórów, Turek, Szczerców, Warka, Nowe Miasto, Sochaczew, Mszczonów, Mogielnica, Mińsk Mazowiecki, Kołbiel and Bielawy. These documents date from 1821 to 1868. There is also considerable information about the building of synagogues in Kalisz, Konin, Sieradz, Wieluń, Stawiszyn and Warta from 1818 to 1846. Such documents include those describing the agreement between its creditors and the Kalisz synagogue, which were incorporated into the documents of the Kalisz Region in 1792 (they were confirmed in 1813 by the Kalisz Commission and in 1824 by that of Mazovia). In addition, in the documents of the Kalisz Voivodship Commission, we find mention of the taking over of the synagogue revenues by the municipal treasury between 1826 and 1833 as well as documents of Jewish divorces between 1826 and 1836. The material in the Mazovia Voivodship Commission is rich in information on the
organization and finances of local communities and synagogue boards. It includes documents ‘on the subject of the employees and expenditures of synagogues’ for the years 1859 to 1872, documents giving the budgets of synagogues for the years 1849-1866 (among others, four volumes dealing with the accounts of the synagogue in the town of Skulsk for the years 1846, 1847, 1848 and 1849); documents detailing the income and expenditure of the synagogal ‘parish’ in Karczew for the years 1849 to 1871; the list of employees of the synagogal treasury in Koło for the years 1851 to 1857 and receipts for the contributions to the synagogue in Kutno and the Kutno district (8 volumes for the years 1859, 1867-85 and 1888).

In relation to this topic, one should also mention the general account of all synagogues in the Department of Poznań together with their property and indebtedness contained in the collection General Directory, Department of Southern Prussia. The Religious Office of the Imperial-Royal Ministry of Religions and Education in the Habsburg Monarch has a collection for the years between 1861 and 1897 dealing with Jewish trading in Catholic religious objects (articles for the Mass, altar adornments, priestly garb).

Schools at all levels functioning in all the three partitions played an important role in integrating and assimilating Jewish students. At the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, the majority of Jewish youth attended Jewish religious schools of various levels and this situation continued until the end of the nineteenth century. Every community had a school, as children’s education was considered a moral duty. In 1818, the government of the Kingdom of Poland established public primary schools for Jewish children. By 1868 twenty-nine had been created. Jewish youth attended also the general primary schools maintained with municipal funds as well as county schools, both academic and vocational. Jewish schools (heders) were maintained by religious communities. There were also private Jewish girls schools similar to the state schools, with a general educational curriculum. The small number of Jewish students in public schools was a result of the official policy, intended to maintain legal restrictions of Jews as well as economic and religious separation. Jews could not teach in public schools, only in the separate schools for Jewish children. Jews who wanted to live on ‘restricted’ streets in towns had to be able to read and write Polish or a ‘foreign’ language, and send their children to government schools. An important role in educating Jewish intelligentsia was played by the Warsaw Rabbinical School, founded in 1826 and maintained by revenue from the kosher tax. However, during the thirty-six years of its existence not a single rabbi graduated from it and, in practice, it was a middle-level secular school. Its alumni became teachers or went on to study at universities. From 1845 the Kingdom’s Jewish youth was allowed to continue their studies in Russia. A few Jewish students were enrolled in the Warsaw Engineering School, the Medical Academy and the Academy of Fine Arts.

In the Austrian partition the situation was similar. From 1785 in Galicia secular schools for Jewish youth were established with a German curriculum but were not extremely popular. Jews were also allowed to study in German or Polish schools. The German language was obligatory. Later secular primary schools with the curricula of the state schools or vocational schools were established for Jewish children. Altogether in
fourteen cities in Galicia there were officially certified Jewish schools of various kinds and levels. Jewish students also attended academic and vocational high schools.

In the records of the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland for 1859 we find a project for reorganizing Jewish schools and the improvement of the position of the Jews put together by the Tugendfreind association. In the collection of the Central Religious Authorities of the Kingdom of Poland, there have been preserved the documents of the Rabbinical School for the years 1823 to 1871, while in the minutes of the Administrative Council for 1818, there is a project for the creation of a Higher Jewish School (the standards for this school are also to be found in the First Council of State of the Kingdom of Poland). There is also the proposal for the salary of the proposed supervisor of the Rabbinical School, a plan for funding Jewish primary schools from the money remaining after the dissolution of the Warsaw kahal, the decision of the tsar approving the creation of a fund in the state budget to pay for the Rabbinical School in 1825 and a series of documents dealing with the acquisition by the Rabbinical School of premises on Gwardiacka street in Warsaw in 1826 and 1827. The reports of the Commission for Religious Denominations and Public Education in the records of the Third Council of State of the Kingdom of Poland provide rich material on the question of Jewish schooling in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the records of the Central Authorities of Education (Centralne Władze Oświatowe) there is preserved a memorandum of Abraham Buchner from 1859 on the question of the Rabbinic School—it contains a description of the Talmud, a short history of the Jewish people and a proposal to create a Higher Hebrew School and Hebrew vocational schools. There is also material on Jewish schools between 1817 and 1852 in the collection of the Kalisz Voivodship Commission.

Material connected with Jewish education in the Austrian partition is to be found in the collection of the Imperial-Royal Ministry of Denominations and Education. This includes documents dealing with Jewish education in general as well as teacher training colleges and Jewish schools in Lwów as well as the state funds provided for their maintenance between 1900 and 1901. There are also documents of the provincial Educational Council, which include the finances of the Israelitischer Normalschulfond for the years 1874 to 1918 and primary Jewish education for the years 1852 to 1919.

Limited material exists on the participation of Jews in cultural and scholarly life in the files of the Warsaw Censorship Committee. There are official permits for publishing a Jewish community weekly Handel i Rzemiosło edited by Izaak Mendelsburg and a monthly Rozwój edited by Chasia Szkolnik in 1913. In the files of the Warsaw Governor General there is a request from Leopold Blumenthal for permission to open a branch of the Esperanto Society, under the name ‘Warsaw Branch of Esperantists’. In the minutes of the Administrative Council for 1826 there is a proposal for banning the import of Jewish books from abroad. The growth of social and cultural consciousness, as well as a certain religious revival among the Jews of the Austrian partition is also reflected in the statutes of different Jewish organizations preserved in the Imperial-Royal Ministry of the Interior. Among these are the Union of Jewish Women in Kraków, the Trade Association of Jewish Coachmen and Wagoners in Lwów, the prayer association, ‘Ben Amuna’ in Rabka, the Havura Biker Holim in Rzeszów and the Union of the Orthodox (Akwas
Haredim) in Tarnopol. The archives also contain the statute of the Association of the ‘Jewish Popular University.

In the documents of government offices operating in the Kingdom of Poland there are files dealing with health care—information on the building of a hospital and public bath for the Jewish community of Kalisz in the years 1835 to 1846, documents on the funding of the Jewish hospital there in the years 1845 to 1865 and documents on the Jewish hospital in Łęczyca for the year 1818-1821 (these are in the records of the Kalisz Voivodship Commission/Warsaw Voivodship Commission). There is also information on the granting of a loan to the Jewish hospital in Warsaw in 1868 in the records of the Governing Committee for the Kingdom of Poland.

The records of the Administrative Council for 1824 contain the records of the provision of funding for the Jewish hospital in Warsaw from the funds remaining after the dissolution of the kahal as do the files of the Central Religious Authority which also contain the records of the hospital itself for the years 1821 to 1836. The richest source on this topic is to be found in the collection of the Hospital Central Supervisory Council. This contains the records of the Jewish hospital in Chęciny for the years 1820 to 1853, for that in Kozińce for the years 1862 to 1864, that in Opoczno for the years 1840 to 1848, that in Radom for the years 1848 to 1878 and that in Mińsk Mazowiecki for the years 1865 to 1871. In addition there are records on the support for building a hospital and a shelter for poor Jews in Chmielnik and Łęczyca and of scores of legacies of Jews to support institutions providing health care or shelter for Jews.

In the files of the Medical Office of the Warsaw Province (Urzędu Lekarskiego Guberni Warszawskiej) there are documents on the punishments meted out to Jewish doctors in Kalisz in the years 1849-1854 as well as the personal files of Jewish felchers (medical orderlies) from Kalisz, Konin, Rawa and Piotrków Trybunalski as well as those of Jewish midwives from Rawa, Sochaczew, Kalisz, Piotrków Trybunalski and Kutno. In the Chancellery of the Governor General of Warsaw there are the records of many organizations of a charitable character, among the the Society for Medical Aid to poor sick Jews, the Society for Aid to Jewish shop assistants as well as other organizations set up to help this group. The Chancellery of the Governor General of Warsaw was in the second half of the nineteenth century the principal office responsible for supervision of the activity of societies and unions—as a result its records have to be consulted above all to investigate how the authorities supervised the ‘proper’ functioning of such bodies, which could be used as fronts for illegal political activity.

A very important aspect of the activity of Jews in the Russian partition and their political awakening was their participation in the workers’ movement. Sources on this topic are to be found above all in the files of government offices and in the legal records dating from after the administrative union of the Kingdom of Poland and Russia for the period 1874 to 1918. The most important of these offices were the Chancellery of the Governor-General of Warsaw, the Assistant to the Governor-General of Warsaw for Police Matters, the Warsaw Court and Procurator of the Warsaw Court.

Jewish participation in the country’s political life and, above all, in workers’ organizations, increased in the second half of the nineteenth century with the growing influx of Jews into industry and crafts (this was a period marked by the development of
big factories and industrial workshops). Exploitation and persecution met with resistance; at the same time, the Jewish intelligentsia joined the organization of Jewish workers’ unions. The first separate political act by Jews occurred in 1870 in Białystok and Vilna. Jewish workers’ groups were organized here and there was a drive towards creation of a Social-Democrat workers’ party. In 1897 the ‘Algemeyner yidisher arbeterbund fun Poylin, Lite un Russland’ (General Jewish Workers’ Alliance of Poland, Lithuania and Russia), usually known as the Bund, was created. Jews were also involved with the Polish workers’ movement—in the autonomous Jewish group within the ‘Proletariat’ party, the Jewish Workers’ Union in Warsaw and the Jewish Organization of the Polish Socialist Party. The emerging Zionist movement was also growing in strength. In 1897 in Mińsk the first group calling itself Poalei tsion (the Workers of Zion) was organized. The Bund became an unquestioned authority with enormous following during the 1905 revolution, the peak moment of its history before the First World War.

The AGAD contains the following documents: records of political trials from the second half of the nineteenth century with the involvement of some activists of the Jewish workers’ movement (the Warsaw Court); accusations of hiding illegal publications and brochures mostly in Łódź (for example, the indictment of Abram Nusyn Blajwajs for distributing leaflets in Łódź in 1905-07), the public reading of leaflets with commentaries, hiding of brochures (the indictment of Mendel Sztejnbok in 1904 under article 252 of the Penal Code for preserving Polish Socialist Party flyers), Bund publications, Jewish and Russian revolutionary literature, PPS-Proletariat’s periodicals, the distribution of the Bund May 1st appeals and information about underground meetings of the Bund members (among them ‘On a meeting of Warsaw Jewish Bund members in apartment 31, 40 Smocza St., 1904-1905) held in the folders of the Procurator of the Warsaw Court, the Chancellory of the Governor-General of Warsaw, the Assistant to the Governor-General of Warsaw for Police Matters. Attached documents provide evidence for the charges and also of criminal offenses. Those are Russian translations of declarations and articles from Glos Bundu, the paper of the Bund’s Central Committee, among them the article ‘Symptoms of economic revival and our tasks’(1911); from the Yiddish daily Haynt, for example on organizing Jews in Russia and other countries, about a reunion of Mizrachists (Orthodox Zionists) in Berlin and a proposal by the General Jewish Congress on the situation of Russian and other Jews in 1911 and an article in the Yiddish daily Der fraynd on the fourth Zionist-Socialist party conference in Austria in 1911. There are a considerable number of proclamations in Yiddish—a May 1st 1911 address by the Bund Central Committee that was printed in edition of 20,000 copies, another by the Central Committee of the Russian Zionist Organization published in Vilna in 1907. Occasionally some anti-Jewish accents turn up (an example, a leaflet ‘The Jew – Who is He?’ printed in Łódź in 1910 by Stanisław Wesołowski). These documents also contain criminal accusations. A letter by an accused Lejbuś Fuchs from Piotrków has been preserved, starting with the words: ‘How are things at home; write why you don’t come to visit?’ of 1912, along with a denunciation of him (‘Respectable Prosecutor, Sir! Your honour probably does not know Lejbuś Fuchs, who forged an enormous number of promissory notes’).
Among the material preserved in the Warsaw Governor-General’s Office, in addition to those on union or political party members records of ordinary people can be found can be found. These include requests for permission to engage in business as owners or managers of printing presses, bookstores, libraries, or stamp producers and on. This accounts for a large number of Jewish names in those documents (Abram Wortman, Liman Wajzer, Certla Ketner, Mejr Berensztejn, etc.)

Problems of this type find hardly any equivalent in the records of the Austrian partition offices held by the AGAD, even though in the second part of the nineteenth century a political revival among the Jewish population also took place; various political options appeared: Polish or German assimilation, hasidim, Orthodoxy, Zionism. Large parties and political organizations were active: Poalei-Zion (1904), the Jewish Social-Democratic Party (1906) as well as smaller groups. The Imperial-Royal Ministry for Internal Affairs produced only one folder containing cases of infringement on Jewish political rights in 1911.

There are more documents from the Austrian records on the First World War. The Austrian armies’ records numerous Jewish names among soldiers and prisoners of war in the Austrian armies’ records and among those charged by military courts in 1915 and 1916 for desertion or spying. Somewhat less material is to be found in the files ‘Imperial German Occupation Authorities in the Kingdom of Poland (Administration Head)’. This material includes an appeal of 26 March 1917 to Polish youth of Jewish descent by the Berek Joselewicz Command of Scouting Units. Among documents in this files there are immigrants’ letters from the United States to families back home which were never delivered—several scores of them are by Jews. In the files of the Imperial German Governor-Generalship there is also a request in 1918 by a Jewish woman Herrek Penczyna for the release of her father, Herszel Abram Penczyna, from a prisoner of war camp in Frankfurt.

The AGAD retains registers of birth, death and marriage certificates from Jewish communities in the areas beyond the Bug river (above all, Eastern Galicia) that after the Second World War found themselves outside the borders of Poland; these are valuable sources of Jewish history. These documents were sent to the AGAD from various government archives and offices, above all the Public Registers Office for Warsaw City (Urzęd Stanu Cywilnego Warszawa). This office still holds birth, death and marriage records for the territories beyond the Bug river. After one hundred years from the date of closing records, these are handed over to AGAD in accordance with the circular of the Minister of the Interior of 14 February 1987 designating the archive as the central body for collecting material of the former eastern territories of the Polish Republic. Above all, this involves metrical books from the pre-war Jewish communities lying east of the Bug river.

In 2012, this collection of metrical records contained over 3000 volumes from the years between 1814 and 1939, mainly records of births, marriages, and deaths, as well as a few personal record cards. In accordance with the decree of Emperor Joseph of 15 March 1782 and a subsequent ruling concerning the registration of births, Catholic priests were entrusted with keeping Jewish registries. The Toleration decree of 7 May 1789 introduced fundamental changes in laws concerning Jews, who were now allowed to
worship unimpeded and whose synagogues were given equal rights with Catholic churches. Rabbis now took over the keeping of registries. A decree of 10 July 1868 confirmed that these registers were legal documents and their ultimate control by Catholic priests was ended. This rule was abolished by the Imperial-Royal Ministry for Internal Affairs on 15 March 1875 and the keeping of registry books for Jews was entrusted to civil servants. They were under the control of the Starosta, to whom each Jewish community was obliged to send one of the two copies of its metrical records. The existing metrical books were closed and handed over to the relevant officials for their use. Jewish birth, marriage and death records acquired the status of full legal documents only after Poland became independent in 1918. At the same time, in accordance with the Presidential decree of 16 March 1928, the state obtained the right of supervision over the activities of rabbis and imposed on Jewish religious communities the obligation to send duplicates of birth, death and marriage records to the appropriate governmental office.

The metrical books preserved in AGAD are very varied in character both in form and content. The oldest have a very simple form of recording and contain only the most essential facts concerning the infant born, the married couple or the deceased. The books created later were organized according to norms laid down by the government and applied in every Jewish community and contain much more information. They are recorded in German. In the interwar period, a revised Polish set of requirements was introduced. There are different types of registry books. Jewish communities which covered a small area and had a small number of members created books which cover a large number of years, whereas large communities (Lwów, Tarnopol, Stryj) have separate books for every calendar year. In each book, entries include those for people living in the town as well as all villages which fell under its jurisdiction. The metrical books in AGAD include originals, copies and extracts—entries which cover a limited period of time. In particular, there is often information on the marriage of a couple with the recognition of their children as legitimate (rabbinical marriages were not recognized by authorities and described as ‘alleged’ — hence the large number of ‘illegitimate’ children recorded in registers. In metrical books and identification documents there are also records compiled by rabbis or by starostowie as well as confirmation of the validity of documents and correspondence about them.

Apart from the metrical books of Jewish communities in East Galicia, AGAD also possesses vestigial official documentation relating to these bodies. Such documentation exists in relation to over 80 eleven communities in East Galicia.

The functioning of religious communities in Galicia was governed by the imperial decrees and authorized by the local powers’ guidelines defining the rules for their organization. The country’s political administration could change the rules and disband the community’s leadership if their activity was considered harmful for the public order of the region. The highest authority resolving controversial matters of Jewish communities was the Imperial-Royal Ministry of Religion and Education. To facilitate control over the Jewish population, this ministry issued a ruling on 21 January 1897 requiring an official cadastral classification of all real estate in each district for the purpose of assessing liability to tax, with detailed information concerning the Jews living within that community. After Poland regained its independence, Jewish communities
joined the Jewish Religious Union, established on 1 December 1916, and legalized by the Head of State of the Polish Government on 7 February 1919. By order of the President of the Republic of 14 October 1927, this decree included also Kraków, Lwów, Tarnopol and Stanisławów voevodships, the territories of the former Austrian partition. The March 1921 constitution assured the Jewish communities organized in the Union the right to govern themselves in accordance with their own statutes recognized by the state, mostly based on the nineteenth century laws.

The documents on these communities date from the years 1838-1942, and their number varies from a single community record (such as the birth register from the parish of Busko) to a much fuller record, as for the community of Tarnopol. The oldest document in the 1838 series belongs to in the file of the parish of Lwów and the recent from Obertyn—a 1942 communication of the Horodenka Judenrat to the Obertyn register’s office.

Among the records are birth certificates, banns, marriage and death certificates produced by the parishes and copies of registration certificates; there is also correspondence with the district officials, minutes of activities, records of banns (the religious communities of Sambor, Śniatyn, Zalożce). Preserved are also the forms for the first report of the medical professions for 1941 and 1942 (the community of Brody, Bursztyn, Kozowa, Rohatyn, Zawalów); records of residents and questionnaires for them kept by Bureau of Population Records (the community of Korolówka). Many different files are preserved from the community of Tarnopol—fifty-two files in all including the civil registry (birth, marriage, death and banns certificates); executive documents related to the inheritance after Majer Byk’s death; books of accounts of the city of Tarnopol; a card-index of the persons inhabiting the Jewish community; minutes of activities and financial records (balance-sheet, community budget and fees, expense estimate, tax matters, aide, etc.) The only divorce register preserved in this archive is from a community outside Galicia’s territory, within the borders of the former Russian partition (the Mosaic community of Torczyn in Volhynia).

Information concerning Galician Jewish communities is contained also in the group of records: ‘Imperial-Royal Ministry of Religion and Education’. These are records of Jewish communities for 1852-1917 (unfortunately, only those with the ‘L’ initial) and for 1852-1918 (S-St only). They deal with the organization of the communities, elections of the board, fees and subventions. They also include appeals against administrative decrees and community regulations (among them, a nineteenth century one from Stanisławów and printed statutes of the community in Lvov). In additional, there are records of the Kraków Jewish community, 1861-1915. In the group of documents of the Imperial-Royal Ministry for Internal Affairs the statute of the Jewish religious community in Jordanów (county of Myślenice) is preserved.

Jewish registry books kept in the AGAD and other archives as well as in registers offices have been included in the project of Jewish Records Indexing Poland (Canada). The agreement was signed between the Central Management of State Archives and the representatives of the Jewish Records Indexing project in 1997 and covered the period up to 2006. Information on it can be found on the Internet at: http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl and http://www.jewishgen.org/databases. Before starting genealogical research, one
should check if the birth certificates of a given community have already been indexed. The indexes include all the items in the registry, with the numbers of volume, year and document as well as basic personal data.⁷

The AGAD records discussed in the present article are clearly an extremely valuable source on the social conditions of the population of Jewish descent on Polish lands in the nineteenth century, various spheres of its activities, its struggle for civil and political rights and so on. This article is the product of a large scale-search in the inventories prepared for the collection of the nineteenth century records kept there. However, only items clearly related to Jewish problems have been included. General documents (army records, population censuses, petitions for change of name, municipal records) have been omitted even though they doubtlessly contain material related to this problem since this is not indicated in their inventories.

SUMMARY

The records relating to the history of Jews in Polish lands during the post-partition era held by the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw can be found in collections of documents produced by Polish offices and institutions functioning in the Duchy of Warsaw and by the Russian occupation authorities (the Kingdom of Poland in the constitutional, autonomy and subsequently in the period when the Kingdom was subordinated to Russian administrative control). A small group of documents was generated by the Prussian (departments of South and New Eastern Prussia) and the Austrian authorities.

This material is a source of information about various aspects of the life of the Jewish population shedding light on the restricted nature of its political, social and civil rights. The fundamental problem of Jews in the Duchy of Warsaw and the Kingdom of Poland was their lack of political and, in part, of public and civil rights. This state of affairs was sanctioned by legislation – the 1807 constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw, the 1815 constitution of the Kingdom of Poland, the 1825 Civil Code (modeled on the Napoleonic Code) and the Organic Statute of 1832.

The legal situation of Jews was to be re-organized by numerous projects for the ‘governance of Jews’ preserved in the files of the Secretariat of State of the Kingdom of Poland, its Administrative Council, the Central Religious Authorities of the Kingdom of Poland, the Government Commission for Internal Affairs, as well as the 1st and 3rd Councils of State of the Kingdom of Poland. In these files can also be found appeals and memoranda by the religious community boards and groups of people about ‘improving the existence and speeding up civilization of the Jewish masses.’

The problems of unauthorized Jewish settlement in villages and towns, of creating Jewish districts (rewiry) in the cities of the Kingdom, lists of the streets from which Jews were banned, reports on removal of Jews from the forbidden places and permits to purchase urban property are found among the files of the Secretariat of State, the Kalisz Voievodship Commission, the Government Commission for Internal Affairs, the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance and the Warsaw Governor General.
Problems relating to economic issues—mostly relating to permits to produce and sell alcohol, to the ejection of Jews from roadside inns in commercial areas, as well as court trials of Jews accused of fraud while trading in cigarettes, tobacco, and selling beer without a permit, can be found in the archive of the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance, and the Mazowsze Voievodship Commission.

The taxation system of Jews, apart from the taxes obligatory for all inhabitants of the Kingdom, burdened Jews with additional dues: a fee for kosher meat, draft tax (popisowy) in connection with military service, consumption tax and so on. The cities levied all kinds of municipal tolls: for ‘candles,’ ‘baths,’ or ‘market stall rents.’ Foreign Jews visiting the Kingdom paid a ‘gleitzoll’ for a temporary stay. Documents related to taxes are among the department files of the Southern and New Eastern Prussia, the Administrative Council, Secretariat of State, Government Commission for Internal Affairs and the most numerous, in the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance.

The majority of draft age Jews did not serve in the army, in exchange for which they paid ‘a general sum’ (draft tax). Documents related to it and the records of Jewish participation in the November Uprising, as well as veterans of Jewish descent are among the archives: the November Uprising Central Authorities, the Government Commission for Revenue and Finance, the Administrative Council and the Mazowsze Voievodship Commission.

The authorities were united in their belief that what kept the Jews ‘uncivilized,’ was their Mosaic religion. Material on attempts to regulate Jewish religious practice can be found in the archives of the Central Religious Authority. This large collection is composed of the Jewish community records from the territory of the Kingdom of Poland (400 communities), records of synagogue boards and their funds, kahals and their accounts (as well as matters related to the abolition of the kahals in 1822). Documents related to this matter are kept in the collections: Administrative Council, Governing Committee in the Kingdom of Poland, Kalisz Voievodship Commission, Mazowsze Voievodship Commission and Austrian Ministry of Religion and Education.

An important role in integration and assimilation was played by public and religious schools for Jewish children and youth. Related information can be found in the archives of the Secretariat of State, Central Religious Authorities, the 1st and 3rd Councils of State, Central Authorities of Education and Austrian Ministry of Religion and Education. Among the files of the Main Welfare Council (Rada Główowna Opiekuńcza) records of Jewish hospitals, welfare societies and poor houses are found.

The second part of the nineteenth century saw a flood of the population of Jewish origin into industrial factories in cities. This resulted in the growing participation of Jews in trade unions and political movements, reflected by records of the Warsaw Judicial Chamber, Prosecutor of the Warsaw Judicial Chamber, Office of the Warsaw Governor General and his Aide. They relate mainly to the General Jewish Workers’ Union of Poland, Lithuania and Russia (the Bund). Those records occasionally have an anti-Jewish tone.

An extremely important group of documents kept by AGAD are Jewish registers from the South-Eastern border areas of the former Polish Republic (Eastern Galicia).
These are registers of birth, marriages and deaths, occasionally indexed alphabetically, from scores of Jewish communities in these areas. A small number of office records from these communities has also been preserved. They are supplemented by records related to Jewish communities in the collection of Imperial-Royal Ministry of Religion and Education.

Notes

* This text represents a modified and enlarged version of the article published in a joint work Źródła archiwalne do dziejów Żydów w Polsce. (Archival Sources for the History of Jews in Poland, Warsaw 2001, 31-56.
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1. Among the documents there is a 1796 printed leaflet titled: ‘Essui sur l’état actuel des Juifs de Pologne et leur perfectibilité.’
2. The Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland functioned in the years 1815-1867; information in this text is limited to the years 1815-1830, for this is the period covered by the compiled and published outlines of the Council’s protocols.
4. The majority of drafts and drawings has been removed from the records and transferred to the AGAD’s cartography collection.
5. Initially there was a separate Committee for Hebrew Censorship, later included in the Warsaw Censorship Committee.
6. This material was treated differently than the rest of the archives related to the activity of the Israelite religious communities in the Kingdom of Poland because of its specific character ñ it originated in the territory which after the WWII were located outside Polish borders.
7. According to the current ‘Ruling on Registries’, registries and parish records closed before passage of 100 years, are not available for personal perusal.

Translated by Maya Peretz